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A man can go missing in New York City. A life can disappear. Teeth can sharpen, skin go pale, eyes reject the sun. One day, you're human. The next, you're a vampire, with an un-dying taste for blood.

Bottomfeeder Details

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From Reader Review Bottomfeeder for online ebook

Walter Greatshell says

I've been a fan of Bob Fingerman's comic artwork since first discovering it in Heavy Metal magazine in the '80s. He's a genius at creating painfully-recognizable characters, and putting them in painfully grotesque (or just plain painful) situations. So it should come as no surprise that his debut novel, Bottomfeeder, is as gruesomely funny as it is. It's a vampire story about how bloody annoying it is to be a vampire, which is something I've been waiting to hear for a long time. Seriously, why would a vampire give a damn about looking cool? Did you ever work the night shift?--it sucks. Fingerman taps into the angst of a guy whose entire life is roaming the city streets and subways after last call, feeding on smelly bums and deviants. It's funny, it's ugly, it's classic Fingerman!

Alan says

I really liked the thought of the story but the way it was told was garbage. This would have been a great book if it wasn't for the pathetic attempts at being edgy by pointlessly describing people in shitty ways. I get it, author dude, you probably hate pc culture or whatever.

Kati says

"Bottomfeeder" by B. H. Fingerman is a book about vampires. But it's not your usual action/adventure stuff, it's more of a psychological thriller about a guy who happens to be a vampire and he is bored and lonely until he meets other vampires and then he is bored together with them and it's all raw and dirty and... very disappointing.

Phil Merman has been a vampire for 27 years. He was turned at the age of 27 but he doesn't know how or why. He feeds of the low-life in the slums, he kills them and simply "lives" from one night to another. He has a rather boring job - he transfers photographs from paper to the electronic form - and he especially loves the murder victims pictures (that are described in vivid details). There is only one guy that he still stays in touch with from the days of his youth, Shelley, but this little guy is getting on his nerves night after night. And then he meets another vampire who brings him into this little vampire circle, all upper ten thousand, and he goes hunting with him, suddenly killing with fervor. Until said vampire is killed by one of his victims and Phil makes a startling discovery...

Okay, my opinion? Boring with a capital B. If you love vampire books with humor, action, adventure etc., you know, the usual vampire books, don't buy this one. "Bottomfeeder" strains too much to be a psychological something, but comes out empty. For dozens and dozens of pages, literally nothing happens, there is no suspense, no real action, just the description of Phil's boring life. Page after page. In the end, I started skipping not only paragraphs but whole pages.

Phil is an un-likable hero, all grey around the edges, there is nothing special about him at all - and maybe that was author's intention, to make him just your normal John in the crowd. But when I read a book, I want to be entertained, not smacked in the face with boredom.

The only interesting thing about this book is the discovery of Phil's vampire origin and the sorta twisted gay romance. But even that wasn't enough to hold my interest. I give it one star out of five, a thing I've never done before. But it's been a long time since I yawned my way through a book like this.

Anthony Duncan says

This book takes a look at the vampire genre and shows us what happens to vampires who are very young and therefore haven't amassed any type of wealth or fortune and can't really care for themselves. It also give us a look a who aren't flawlessly beautiful like the vampires in the Anne Rice novels.

What goes on with vampires who are stuck in dead end menial jobs? What happens when people who are say homeless are accidentally turned?

Enka-Candler Library says

No sparkly, pansy vampires here. Just our guy Phil, who works at night and sleeps in the day. Oh, and drinks the blood of bums once in awhile. That is, until he finds more of his kind. Lots of dark humor here--not a bad little story.

--Leisa

Trixie Fontaine says

For some reason I *want* to only give this book three stars but that would be a lie; I didn't just "like it", I actually "REALLY liked it".

I'm not familiar with Fingerman's other work, but just being aware of his background as a cartoonist/illustrator/writer in Heavy Metal magazine, etc. (along with just his name . . . FINGERMAN) helped put his mildly offensive style of writing into context. It was entertaining and unpretentious. I could totally imagine this guy writing the book and whenever he couldn't think of something really clever, just jotting down some admission from his protagonist of his failure to be witty or think of the right turn of phrase and moving along with the story and cartoonily offensive stereotypes of black people, gay men, etc. I'll admit, I totally LOL'd at Shelley.

I'm also not a big fan of vampire novels so I can't judge the book on the basis of its merit as a supernatural>vampire novel. I just found it entertaining and relaxing from the perspective of a minor misanthropist. Can't say the ending was a big surprise. Or even a small one. But it was a fun, enjoyable read that ummmm . . . I could relate to in some ways (is that what all vamp fans say?).

Edited to add: A couple of hours after finishing this book with bedtime approaching I am wishing it had been twice as long so I could've stretched out reading it longer. Because nothing in the house seems as fun to me. Also? After seeing some of the other reviews I want to make a note that what I found mildly offensive was not the sex stuff or whatever those other prudes found distasteful. I thought all of the dick notes and references to being in dire need of pussy and sex stuff were perfectly timed and spaced out so as to be a natural part of a curmudgeonly Jewish vampire's life.

Justin says

In *Bottomfeeder*, the debut novel by B.H. Fingerman, we meet Phil Merman, a vampire living in New York City. He doesn't know how he became a vampire or why. He just knows that he hasn't aged a day since it happened, can't survive exposure to sunlight, and needs to feed regularly, which means killing an awful lot of people.

Bottomfeeder is sort of like *Interview with the Vampire*, only the vampire in question is an otherwise unremarkable, white-collar Jewish guy with a lousy job, lousy wardrobe, and a positively depressing social life. Like Rice's protagonist, Phil doesn't know much about how vampires came to be or what their limitations are, is conflicted when he finally encounters more of his kind, and struggles with the morality of what he has to do in order to stay alive. Unlike Rice, however, Fingerman explores these concepts with wry, self-deprecating humor, sarcasm and razor-sharp dialogue instead of brooding and melancholia. *Bottomfeeder* is not as over the top funny as Christopher Moore's vampire novels, but has a similar feel.

I loved the pace, tone and language in this book. It was a quick read, made me laugh out loud at times, and when it ended I simultaneously wanted more and knew it was the perfect place to say goodbye. Fingerman knocked it out of the park on his first at-bat. I can't wait to see what he comes up with next.

Dan Regan says

I read this years ago but it still stands out as a very unique take on the vampire genre. Very dark and depressing. "*Bottomfeeder*" had some very hard to swallow moments and some great twists. I will definitely pick this up for another read someday.

Jamie says

Slacker-whiney-bored-emotionally-stunted-lonely-guilt-ridden-homophobic-Jewish-vampire-guy wanders through New York City for a quarter of a century and suddenly one day finds a kindred playgroup.

Bottomfeeder reads very much like a graphic novel sans artwork. It's sort of a gawky-teen-coming-of-age fantasy story even though the protagonist is a fifty-year-old vampire. There's lots of cartoonish violence and sex, stereotyped supporting characters, involuntary and embarrassing bodily changes, awkward attempts at friendship/intimacy, and an acute introduction to an exotic-bigger-badder world.

I wanted to like this book but it wasn't really that engaging, or novel or scary. I wasn't interested in the characters and the violence and gore weren't that frightening. The attempted hedonistic elements of the story were too caricatured (think back to the days of Friday night Cinemax) to pack much of a punch.

Candiss says

Bottomfeeder by Bob Fingerman was gritty, grotesque, laugh-out-loud funny, and somehow (despite the supernatural underpinnings) believable. I originally discovered this book when looking for something to suggest to my boyfriend for reading on a plane trip, and as he's a fan of Bob Fingerman's graphic novel work, I thought this would be good for him. Then I ended up having it re-recommended to me by him. The circle of stories, or some-such...but I'm glad to have read it.

Halfway through, I expected I'd be awarding the book five stars, but the ending blindsided me. After such detailed, enjoyable character development, the last few pages of the story seemed a bit disconcertingly abrupt and thus out of balance with the rest of the narrative. It occurred to me that perhaps this was intentional, sucker punching the reader upside the head with the same sort of out-of-left-field "whahappnd?" feeling the protagonist himself must have felt - both at the end of the story and on several previous, eventful occasions in his existence. But as this is pure speculation on my part, I feel compelled to go with my gut and chop a little off the top due to the jarring effect of the final bits of the book.

Perhaps I'm being unfair. Fingerman told a great story, and while I suppose it makes me sound unsavory and not fit for polite company, I genuinely liked Phil, the protagonist. Monster that he was, he was a likable monster. Phil acted sensibly and realistically. Phil, for all his inhumanity, was extraordinarily human. Unlike so many characters in unusual circumstances, Phil acted like I thought a person should act, given those circumstances. Phil was smart, at least most of the time. Phil had a personal code and his own set of standards and practices which he tried to follow - something I value greatly in a person and which is all too rare. So yes, I liked Phil immensely and wished him well throughout the story, although his situation didn't always afford him the simple luxury of wellness.

I appreciated the different angle of this story; I like a rousing undead yarn as much as the next gal, but let's just say I'm a fan of neither the sexpot fiend slinking through many "urban fantasy" stories nor of the soulless sparkle of the powdery ever-teen moping about the fantasies of every girl and her grandmother of late, either. Fingerman has a much more realistic ride in store for ol' Phil, and while glamorous it's not, at least it didn't leave me feeling adolescent, incredulous, naive or vaguely hypocritical. Phil is a sarcastic, jaded, book-readin', cranky old man in a young fella's body, and I'm very much down with that vibe. Those ethereal, vapid, bloodsucking stereotypes can step the hell off Philip Merman's lawn and learn to like it!

Yes, this was often gory. Gross, even. But it never seemed gratuitous to me. I'm sorry, but you just can't go around making omelets all day and not get your velvet cape eggy, you know? The violence made perfect sense. But I suppose I should shy the sensitive-tummy types away, so here's my good deed of the day: If visceral descriptions of death and dying, in all their sticky variety, bother you, look elsewhere for your reading enjoyment. "Death by misadventure", indeed...

And I laughed. A lot. With unabashed gusto. Fingerman pokes fun at everything - the living, the dead, the undead, society, fashion, fad, perhaps even himself - with the gnarly finger of a practiced curmudgeon, and it's refreshing. If you have a mature attitude, a warped sense of humor, and something of a jaded opinion of humanity in general, this is for you.

Chase says

DNF page 55. Weird stream of consciousness writing style that I don't particularly care for. Main character's narration comes off whiny and dickish at once, and the plot has failed to prove itself compelling. Cannot recommend.

Amanda says

You know that scene at the end of *Interview With the Vampire's* film version where Lestat takes over the journalist's car? As he adjusts his lace sleeves, he notices Louis's voice on the cassette tape, and says, "Oh, Louis, Louis. Still whining, Louis. Have you heard enough? I've had to listen to that for centuries." That's the way I felt about *Bottomfeeder*. Oh, Philip, Philip. Still whining, Philip. For 200+ pages. It's safe to say that I've heard enough.

Bottomfeeder tells the story of Phil Merman, a Jewish vampire who is suffering a midlife crisis. Turned at 27 by an unknown attacker, Phil is now 54--half of his life spent as a mortal, half amongst the undead. After his inability to explain his new lifestyle to his wife or his (now deceased) parents, Phil has led a circumspect, solitary existence. He works at night for a photo archive (typically archiving photos of grisly crime scenes), lives in modest accommodations, and only hunts for the criminal and deviant elements among the homeless population. He's never sought out others like him and has rejected all human relationships--with the exception of Shelley, a sad alcoholic whose friendship Phil can't quite shake.

All of this changes when Phil meets Eddie Frye, another vampire who introduces Phil to vampire society--from bacchanalian bloodbaths, to a home for special needs vampires, to vampire group therapy. Suddenly Phil finds himself craving something other than blood: interaction with his own kind. As the friendship between Phil and Eddie solidifies, his relationship with Shelley deteriorates with potentially dangerous consequences.

I get what Fingerman was going for here--a vampire novel that is not the prototypical, romanticized vampire story most audiences have come to expect. And I do admire him for challenging these traditions. The lives led by his vampires are probably more realistic in terms of what vampirism would really mean. The isolation, loneliness, and compromised moral code are the tip of the iceberg (or fang, however you want to look at it). There's also the heightened senses, which are not pleasant. With heightened smell, sight, and taste, Phil becomes uncomfortably aware of how disgusting humans are. He can smell the unpleasant odors beneath the deodorants and fragrances; see the dry skin, stray hairs, and pimples as though through a magnifying glass; he can taste the layers of I-don't-want-to-tell-you-what-but-Fingerman-will on the necks of his unwashed victims. It would be like if you were put in a pen full of shit-smeared cattle and told to wander around until you found one you actually wanted to eat for dinner.

And that was an aspect of the novel I did not enjoy in the least. This novel triggered my gag reflexes far more often than I care to admit. I'm not talking about the blood and gore--that I can take. But Fingerman takes great joy in describing every ashy ass crack, every piss sodden newspaper, every used condom. I swear that every 10 or so pages he would bring in some hygienically challenged crazy person just to catalog every disgusting bodily function possible. Or he would have the main character step on a fluid filled condom. Apparently, New York is a condom-strewn wonderland.

The one thing that did keep my attention is the dark humor throughout which made Phil's voice engaging, when he wasn't whining about his circumstances. And I must say that, although I had one major plot twist figured out that factored into Phil's unnatural origins, it still led to an amazingly apropos ending.

Cross posted at [This Insignificant Cinder](#)

Craig says

One of the best books I've read all year. Really hope there's a sequel!

neil says

This was a lot of fun. I've forgotten how long it's been since I've read a fun, easy read. It only took about 3 hours to read, so it's good airplane food, so long as you don't mind reading about middle aged depressed vampires while flying.

Matthew Tait says

That's not a very poetic title, I know. But neither is the tone of *Bottomfeeder* - a novel that lingers refreshingly with me right now writing these words. Having just completed it, the positive effect of the book is instantaneous: with this paragraph I sound like Phil Merman, our narrator. Sarcastic. Cynical. But above all, utterly hilarious.

Phil Merman is a vampire. Converted by an unknown assailant years before, he's a fifty-four year old immortal living in the flesh of a young man. He's lost his marriage, his friends, and most other things mere mortals hold dear. Phil spends most nights working a regular job. A semi-regular job. If digitally cleaning up photos of dead people is considered regular. Murders, suicides, drive-by shootings - everything New York's finest has to offer. A vampire still has to pay the bills, and the only down-sides are the hunger pangs that creep in staring at all that spilled sustenance. After knocking off it's time for the hunt to begin. But Phil's still a nice guy; it isn't easy to murder to stay alive. So Phil becomes a bottomfeeder . . . sucking the life out of the lowest common denominator: bums and hobos, addicts and degenerates. At least no one will miss them. And making his dinner appear to be victims of nothing than mere muggings guarantees he'll never get caught . .

Personally, the novel resonated with me. B.H. Fingerman's take on modern life is pessimistic but many of you will nod at his keen observations regarding the boring hum-drum of life: rushing through activities just to look busy in front of others; counting down the hours to fill our voids with food, sex, sleep , or, in the vampire's case, hunting. The truth hurts, but B.H. Fingerman has also made the truth laugh-out-loud funny. And being cynical is just an unpleasant way of telling the truth. Phil's not a God, but he looks down on humanity like one. His nature is supercilious - and a tad too much like this narrators as to be scary.

Bottomfinger is an original take on the vampire novel, with few drawbacks. Like the speech impediment of one our main characters, it stutters a little at the start but slowly builds in crescendo. We journey with Phil as he comes out of his isolated shell, hooking up with others of his tribe and learning valuable lessons on the

way. The dialogue is quite realistic, at least, as far as English slang and regular talk is concerned.

The book has already received some high praise from some legends in the genre. Fifty pages in I knew I was dealing with an instant cult-classic.
