



Upon A Pale Horse

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A controversial, frightening bio-thriller that blurs the line between truth and fiction, Upon A Pale Horse raises disturbing questions about the man-made origin of nightmare epidemics, and posits a conspiracy so plausible that it will linger long after the novel's shocking conclusion.

When young attorney Jeffrey Rutherford's brother is killed in a plane crash minutes after takeoff from JFK, his life is turned upside down - especially when he discovers that his brother's career wasn't what it seemed. Jeffrey's staid existence is upended as he races to unravel a Gordian knot of deceit and betrayal, and ultimately must battle an unstoppable adversary bent on systematic global genocide.

Upon A Pale Horse Details

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Author : Russell Blake

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From Reader Review Upon A Pale Horse for online ebook

Dr Matt says

One of the most disappointing SF books I've read in a while.

The author can certainly turn a phrase so my objection is not with the style or mechanics of his writing. But the book suffers from several major flaws I could just not get by:

- Characterization is totally predictable and wooden. Basically all males are 30 something versions of your garden variety frat guy. Thin and uninteresting. Women-- well, let's just say they are here for decoration.

- Plot-- painfully slow to develop. I was 40% through the book before the author finally took up the promising thread with which the book started.

The author also goes to great lengths to provide a "believable" basis for the plot by going back over history of the HIV virus. This is totally unnecessary. I think most readers will allow an author enough room to get the mechanism of his plot running. There is even a whole appendix in the back re-hashing the same history of HIV. (NOTE: Unfortunately I am a research Biologist with a specialty in Immunology and I was involved in much of the science during the HIV years and know there are huge holes in the author's premise. It ruined it for me. Even so, I always try to give any author the benefit of the doubt. I wish the author had just insisted we believe the plot mechanism works.

- The ending was totally disappointing.

I got this book because of many good reviews. I must be VERY different so maybe take my review with a grain of salt, but I thought this book was not worth the price or the effort.

Chris Chang says

It's my first time reading any of Russell Blake's books and the first thing that stands out is his excellent use of prose and good vocabulary. This book is written very smoothly; that is a major plus for me when I scour for books to read on the train/in the car. You could peruse this book as a casual read like me (I read it on my phone) or read it seriously curled up in a corner at home as well.

While the plot may not be as unpredictable or full of twists everywhere compared to other books, it suffices for an interesting read and there're still several parts where it makes the reader wonder what's going on (like the cow experiments) and want to read on. The fact that the author included some research of his own (at the back of the book) regarding the possible truth of the plot of this book in reality intrigues me. It does offer the reader some headroom to think about whether such events really could happen in real life. After all, a lot of government secret schemes do remain well hidden from the public eye, which leads citizens to wonder "who guards the guards?"

All in all, this was an enjoyable read and I highly recommend it.

Terry Parrish says

An interesting subject and book. Can't remember if I remembered this or not. Happened so long ago and I was in High School. We didn't pay much attention to the news that much back then. And we were teenagers, at that. Like Mr. Blake says, this will make you stop and think and do your own research. Seems I do recall talk about cattle mutilations, but had to check for myself. I never believed the UFO and aliens theory, though. What would they need with the blood from a cow? And like Mr. Blake, I believe everyone should read this book and make up your own mind. My other thing is I hope nothing in this book every comes to pass. Lord help us if it ever did.

Yoon says

Wow. READ THIS BOOK! If you are my friend and you want to read it but don't want to buy it, just let me know, I'll buy it for you. KK?

Kent Hohlfeld says

This book was not very good in my opinion. I was a little surprised at the number of 4-star reviews. The most obvious problem was the ease with which a decades-long conspiracy is unraveled in a matter of days by a 20-something lawyer who stumbles on the "truth" a week earlier. The second problem is that key plot points center around conspiracy theories that have been peddled by the internet and anti-vaccine activists for years. According to this author, vaccines are little more than a way for corporate and military elites to test and deliver new viruses to poor and minority communities around the world. Anyone debunking these theories are just shills for the conspiracy. It's that kind of circular logic that leads to measles outbreaks and people on respirators because people are afraid to get their kids vaccinated or get a flu shot. The presence of appendices at the end appears to indicate the author actually believes at least some of his pilot's conspiracies. It's a quick read and not the worst book I have ever read, but not it's also nothing special.

Blacknext says

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Jeffrey Rutherford's brother was killed in an "accidental" plane crash, shot down by an influential group of people wanting Jeffrey's brother silenced to prevent him from disrupting their plans. Not only was this gr

Nathaniel says

Russell Blake is an incredibly prolific and incredibly successful self-published author. I've been following his blog for a few months now, and I was curious to give one of his books a read.

Upon A Pale Horse is a stand-alone thriller, rather than one of his ongoing series, and that made it an ideal choice for to pick up and read with low investment.

As thrillers go it was perfectly serviceable. On the plus side, it had some conspiratorial (but very plausible) research alleging that the HIV virus was human-made. The book even came with some remarks at the end showing where all the research came from, much like Michael Crichton did in State of Fear. That added credibility. I also didn't see the resolution coming until it came, but Blake didn't make a lot of suspense out of this opportunity. How do you stop a conspiracy that has been decades in the making if you're just one guy with only a day or two to stop it? That's a very, very tense situation, but it felt so hopeless that I couldn't really care. Then it was solved in a clever way but, given the lack of caring leading up to it, the payoff was minimal.

As for the bad, I've already started on that. The book just lacked punch. There's basically no action whatsoever. The hero is just a young lawyer who happens to have a perfect memory (which is needed for one key plot point). There were also zero twists and turns. The plot went in a perfectly straight line from inciting incident to resolution, complete with the obligatory dangling thread at the end for a potential follow up.

There was one betrayal, but the character was so obviously set up for that sole purpose that you knew it was coming from literally the first page. And even the protagonist figured it out before any harm could come of it, so it was sort of pointless except to sort of check a box on a list of "things a thriller should have."

All-in-all, it was a decent book. I guess if you can churn a couple of those out every single year for several years in row you can make a name--and a fortune--for yourself.

Steven Konkoly says

This is Russell Blake at his best. A perfect blending of Ludlum-esque international conspiracy, "The Firm" like intrigue and Crichton-level biomedical detail. Nobody can take a conspiracy theory and spin it into a convincing, high stakes "cat and mouse" game like Blake. If you think Upon a Pale Horse is just "another medical thriller," you couldn't be more sorely mistaken.

Blake's ambitious, finely executed story pits a resourceful attorney, Jeffrey Rutherford, against a ruthless cabal, in a race against time to stop a jaw-dropping plot to unleash the apocalypse and cleanse the world. The background conspiracy fueling Blake's plot is exquisitely (and frighteningly) weaved, leaving the reader with a well-founded sense of urgency and dread. Tightly staged across two continents, Rutherford's plight will keep you affixed to the screen, as David takes on Goliath in an unforgettable end game.

The intrigue, deception, and twists alone are well worth the price of admission, along with a blistering plot; but as an author well versed in bioweapons, virology and pandemic research, I have to give Blake credit for doing his homework. His pandemic information is accurate, accessible and damn scary...his scenario will leave you sleepless, wondering what lurks around the next corner. Trust me, if Blake's instincts are correct, you don't want to know.

Gae-Lynn Woods says

Looking for the next read you can't put down? Pick this one up. Great characters, a fast plot, and a premise that's scary as hell - all guaranteed to hold your attention. This is not your standard medical thriller. If you're looking for a read that'll leave you feeling warm and fuzzy about the world and those with the money and

power to control it, move along. If, on the other hand, you love a plausible tale about a few greedy individuals who risk billions of human lives and justify their actions as being 'for the greater good', this is the book for you.

Read UPON A PALE HORSE for its lightning pace, its surprising twists and turns, and Blake's devious imagination. Enjoy the shiver at the thought that there might be a shred of truth in the stunning horror he weaves. Then read the Afterword where Blake shares his research and be chilled at the pure possibility that the fiction might already be reality.

Nobody writes a conspiracy thriller like Russell Blake. If you haven't read one of his books yet, UPON A PALE HORSE is an excellent place to start. Highly recommended.

Frenchie says

I haven't read a Russell Blake for ages. So, I was delighted to find this one on my Kindle.... It is different from his usual conspiracy thrillers, I found it not as fast and furious as some of his other books (like the Jet series, one of my absolute favourites) though it was very well written and thrilling enough... if this happened, and it could, it is horrific to think of the consequences.

Upon A Pale Horse has been labelled as a bio-thriller and it is ok with me.... a group of terrorists (aha, not the kind you expect) want to... oh, hang on, if I carry on, I would give the plot away.

Read for yourself if you are a fan of Russell Blake or read it to discover a truly fascinating author. I have read many of his books and I never got bored.

I heartily recommend it to all fans of action/adventure/fiction books

Shawn Hopkins says

Sleep much? Not after reading Blake's latest pulse-pounder. Upon A Pale Horse is a ride that takes the reader through a fun house of horrors too scary to be called entertainment. Though somehow he manages to get you interested in the characters even while you're tearing through the pages in hopes of discovering that his premise is nothing but a practical joke - you know, a note from the author that says, "Ha! Had you, didn't I? Don't worry, this is just fiction, go back to your lolly pops and rainbows." I warn you, reader, there is a note from the author...but it pretty much says the exact opposite. Many will read this, or start to read this, and fall into some preset scoff mode. I've heard such a reaction to this topic before. You know, all the typical responses - name calling, fingers in the ear, the mature stuff. As if calling someone a name is the trump card to the information presented. There's a proverb that says, He who answers a matter before hearing it is a fool. I think we would all be wise to hear Blake's message, consider his research, put aside the world we wish we lived in, and look at the evidence objectively. It's too scary not to. Is this a fun read? No, because we live in a world that not so long ago was putting people in ovens. If something like that was allowed to happen, anything is possible. Especially if those behind such experiments were later given jobs by other governments to continue their research. Oh, but I'm getting into the story now, and I don't want to give anything away. Will our refusal to believe that something like this could ever happen be the very thing that ensures that it will? Check out Blake's cautionary and exposing tale of a future we all hope never to see.

Bob says

The first of a boxed set of kindle thrillers finds a young lawyer Jeffrey Rutherford receiving the news that his older brother has been killed in a plane crash after taking off from NY. Making quick plans for leave he leaves San Francisco for DC and the memorial service as well to get a start on closing up his brothers affairs. When he returns to CA he gets a call from a Headhunter with the prospect of a much better paying job. He is flown in a private jet to DC for interviews and ends taking the job. When he tries to contact his brothers girlfriend whom he had met at the memorial, he finds out she had been killed by a hit and run driver a few days before. When Jeff takes the job with much greater pay and a company car he meets a beautiful young woman and quickly forms a relationship. As he is working in his brothers apartment Jeff finds in his jacket pocket a pawn stub that the girl friend had given to him at the memorial. Going to cash it in he reclaims his brothers expensive guitar. Later when he tries to play it for his new girlfriend he finds that it doesn't work. Later he takes it apart and finds a hidden note from his brother that starts him on dangerous path to uncover a sinister plot with world wide consequences, a path rife with murder and betrayals. Russell Blake does a good thriller for sure.

Kim Cano says

Being the documentary-watching conspiracy theory queen, I looked forward to reading this book. And although I was unfamiliar with this particular subject, and found learning its details interesting, I have to say I wasn't overly shocked. I found myself easily believing what was presented could be possible, maybe a by-product of being so jaded from previous shows I'd seen.

In addition to being an all-around excellent thriller, I also felt it was a great story about brothers. There are too few of those out there, I think.

Also, I've read many Russell Blake books and find them to have a lot of words I think I know but am not positive I could define if put on the spot. This time I created a running list on a notepad as I read. The list grew quite long, and in the end I discovered the strangest thing: none of the words were repeated. Every time I found a new one to add to the list, I'd check and it wasn't on there yet. I'm surprised that is possible, as most authors fall in love with a few descriptive phrases and they show up again and again. Here they were each used only once. That's pretty darn impressive.

gail thompson says

Incompetents and superheroes

This was a two star for me. The first 20, (although, short) chapters were sleep inducing. When you finally got into the meat of the plot it was implausible and I will admit I skimmed more than I read. There were pages and pages on AIDS history yet very little time devoted to the killer flu which was the actual "antagonist" of the story. Then a whole lot of time devoted to the investigation of a girlfriend that did very little to move the story forward. Our superhero does in 72 hours what pioneering researchers couldn't do in decades AND the bad guys well, let's just say I have absolutely no idea what happens to the bad guys.

Mr. Blake has a pleasant voice and writes in a way that's easy to read but needs a little more depth to keep me interested in his work.

Danielle says

Better for getting you thinking than as an actual read

I appreciated the author indicating at the end of the book what research he gathered in an attempt to make it clear which aspects of the book were fictitious and which were based in fact; I wondered about this as I was reading the novel and had my answer at the end. The novel itself is okay, but became much more interesting once the focus shifted to the scientific aspects. It seemed to move very quickly once that shift was made and I wish the ratio were more in favor of the science and history. The personal storyline, while I understand was necessary to a degree, wasn't as good and should have been pared back. Overall a worthwhile read for learning some interesting facts about a disease that doesn't get much attention for this aspect of controversy, but I would prefer to read about it in a more straightforward manner.
