



Consumption

Heather Herrman

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For fans of Stephen King, Joe Hill, and Sarah Langan comes a thrilling new vision of American horror. In Heather Herrman's heart-pounding debut novel, evil is ready to feed—and it's got one hell of an appetite.

In the wake of tragedy, John and Erma Scott are heading west in search of a new life. So when car trouble strands them in sleepy Cavus, Montana, they decide to stay for a while, charmed by the friendly residents and the surrounding ambiance. Here, they hope, is the healing balm that their marriage needs.

Then John and Erma find themselves in a fight not just to save their marriage, but their very lives. For this is no ordinary town. Its quiet streets conceal a dark and bloody secret that has slumbered for centuries. Now, that secret is awake . . . and it's hungry.

Like a slow infection, evil is spreading through Cavus. Soon John and Erma—along with the local sheriff, an undocumented immigrant, a traumatized teenage girl, and an old man with terrible secrets of his own—must join together to battle an all-consuming force that has set its sights on its prey: the entire human race.

Consumption Details

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From Reader Review Consumption for online ebook

Lou Sytsma says

Many horror books are purported to be the next thing fans of Stephen King should be sure to read. Almost every time such claims turn out to be false. Almost.

But not this time. Heather Herrman shares King's ability to create characters that seem alive and that we come to care about. Consumption is in many ways like King's second book - Salem's Lot in concept and reminds me of Carrie in execution. A small town hides a dark secret. One that preys on its habitants time and time again. This time, the darkness is poised to escape out of the isolated town of Cavus, Montana and out into the rest of the world unless a small band of disparate people join together to form a dysfunctional family to protect each other's back and face the Feeder.

Herrman writes with a deft hand handling character, setting and - all important in a horror story - pacing. This is a real page turner with nary a dull section. The real strength of the book are the weaknesses each of the protagonists are embued with. It makes them more alive and makes their struggle to overcome evil all that more engrossing. We are pretty sure what the outcome will be but Herrman keeps us on the edge of our seats guessing how it will all come to pass until the very end.

Heather Herrman is a writer I definitely plan to keep an eye on.

Ionia says

Fast paced, quick-witted and unpredictable.

As one can expect with any Hydra book, this one definitely has some gross out factor, so if that bothers you in a horror book, then you may want to pass. As for the rest of us, who don't mind some well placed gore and darker visions of humanity, I say read it.

There are some classic horror moments here. Couple stranded on the side of the road, dog who almost becomes dead dog in the first few chapters, and those lead into an all out brawl of good vs. evil later in the story.

The author did a good job of introducing her characters and making them vulnerable to the odds against them pretty early in the story. She also didn't wait forever for the darker aspects of the book to come out. I think Stephen King was a pretty fair comparison. She certainly has the characters internal thoughts and introspection down, just as he does.

For a debut novel, I was really surprised by how smoothly this story flowed and how complex the back story for the evil at work was. I think if you are a fan of horror, then this is an author you should keep an eye on.

This review is based on a complimentary copy from the publisher and provided through Netgalley. All opinions are my own.

David Bernstein says

Consumption is an engaging, imaginative and frightening read. It's small town horror, but there's nothing small about the novel. It's packed with a plethora of fleshed out characters and action. It moves along nicely, never getting bogged down with stuff the reader doesn't care about. The "creatures" are nasty and quite vicious and I loved the back story about them and the town. Consumption is an all around solid book and has just the right amount of story, character, blood and guts to satisfy a wide range of readers, from hardcore horror fans to dark thriller readers who enjoy the supernatural/creature feature.

Wendy O'connell says

Consumption is a great twist on the apocalyptic zombie genre, because it adds a philosophical aspect to 'consuming' folks. These 'Walkers' not only eat flesh, but the soul of a human being. This carnage of flesh eating monsters is contained within the small town, Cavus. If this apocalypse is contained within its Plato cave, then the world will be saved a soul, or two.

This plot line of saving, introduces a number of would-be heroes, and heroines. The first two are Erma and John, a couple on the road to mending their marriage. The oppositional dynamics of loss and need drew me to these two characters; I found myself rooting for them, and not just Cavus. For example, they both wanted a family, but one of them was terribly afraid to start one, and that fear was swallowing them both. I would have liked to have seen more of Erma and John, but as mentioned there were too many other characters sketched in, but not truly developed as well as the first two, Erma, and John.

There was Star, a typical, troubled teen and her potential boyfriend, Javier. Neither of these characters moved past surface feelings of anger and loss. I didn't find myself rooting as hard for them as Erma and John, despite the fact that Star and Javier had tremendous loss in the book. Other characters included, Riley, your stereotypical sheriff with baggage, his daughter, Izzy and his crazy Aunt Bunny. The last two good folks introduced was Jessi and Pill, a married couple in direct contrast to Erma and John. I wish I'd seen more of them, and sooner.

The bad guy, Grady was so evil you couldn't bleach him good. There was no dual nature to Grady. He was plain bad, and not very interesting; however, he served his purpose making Consumption follow-through to a pleasing, if not bloody favored ending. I would recommend this book to adults who like a fast read with writing similar to that of Joe Hill, but horror closer to Stephen King's ideal where evil is evil and there's no in-between.

Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says

Welcome to Cavus, Montana. A charming little town with friendly residents and an intriguing history. Once upon a time the Indians that lived close by called this land bad and refused to settle there, but that was a long time ago and sure there have been some odd events now and then. Like young Lucy that apparently ate her husband and then disappeared and, of course, the well-known mining accident that claimed all the residents except one person. But that was a long time ago, this is a sweet ordinary town. And, now the yearly festival his here and it's bound to be an exceptional event...

John and Erma are traveling across the country to start anew and happen to get stranded in the town because of car problem. But it's such a charming town with friendly people so they decided to go to the festival and when the car is fixed continue travel. But something is really wrong in the town, people are acting strange and could it be something true to the old saying that the land is cursed?

Reading this book was like riding a rollercoaster. Everything starts slowly and suddenly it's free fall and it you just have to cling to the handles and just enjoy the ride. Well, it's a bit different when it comes to this book since riding a rollercoaster wagon doesn't include gore, blood, and horror.

I really liked the interesting back-story with the mining accident. I just knew that there must have been something more than just an accident and I eagerly turned the pages to learn what the hell is wrong with the people and the city, what really happened in the past?

This is a book for people with a strong stomach. The story can be a bit nasty and there are children involved in this story and if you have a problem with that should you probably not read it. I actually could take it better than I usually do, but I think that's because it's not a thriller, but a horror book. I find crime closer the reality actually worse than things that are paranormal. But as a horror book it's really good, well written and interesting and there are no parts that bog down the story. In other words a really good horror book!

I received this copy from the publisher through NetGalley and from TLC Book Tours in return for an honest review!

Blendy says

3.5 "Evil is an asshole in a yellow slicker" Stars

There are certain books, that while you are reading them, you wonder to yourself, "Hmmm, what the fuck am I reading???" and then there are others that you think, "WHAT.IN.THE.FUCK am I reading???"...well, for me, my feelings while reading *Consumption* fell right in between those two reactions...it was more of a, "Hmmm...this is weird..WHOA! What in the fucking hell???" Even though it seems like it would be a scary read, it really wasn't for me, I wasn't scared in the least, but I was disturbed. Very, *very* disturbed.

About midway through this book, I was fairly certain that I hated it, but I kept reading it because, unknown to me at the time, Ms. Herrman had planted the seed of a little sicko in my head within those first few chapters and it was morbidly curious as to what would happen next, what other atrocities would be done and it needed to know how this book would end. Imagine my surprise as well when I found myself actually fucking tearing up during reading this...TWICE! Here's the thing, though *Consumption* is a profoundly disturbing tale and is filled with horrible things, beneath all the terrible and wrongness, there is a pretty beautiful lesson to be learned. Now, not everyone will walk away from this seeing some hidden meaning, hell, for all I know, there isn't really one and my mind just conjured one up to make sense of everything that I just read (minds can be a very powerful thing!), but hidden agenda or not, I don't think a single person can walk away from this one and not at least wonder, when it comes to the battle between good and evil, what side would you be an agent for?

This book is dark and disturbing and in some instances downright weird and for me, while reading this my moral compass was going absolutely haywire. There were a few tense moments in which I was sure lightning was going to strike me dead where I lay for reading some of the content within this book and I

was uncomfortable as hell during a lot of it, but I always say, if someone is brave enough to write it, then I'll be brave enough to read it. I was brave enough to read it. Just barely though.

Overall, this book is NOT for everyone and if you are the slightest bit squeamish about violence, death or impiety, then you need to stay away from this one, there is a healthy dose of all that and more throughout this read. If you enjoy darker reads that showcase the darker side of humanity, evil and nothing is off-limits to you, then this is your book. I have read a few Stephen King and Joe Hill novels – the KINGs (no pun intended) of dark and disturbing – and I can say that while not as dark and scary as some of the books I have read from them, Ms. Herrman's *Consumption* can be thrown in with that lot and that is saying something.

Happy reading, until next time...

I would like to thank NetGalley and Random House Publishing Group – Hydra for the ARC of this title in exchange for an honest review.

Glenn Rolfe says

Heather Herrman's debut horror novel, *Consumption*, is a ride through the small town of Cavus.

Cavus is cursed by something called, The Feeders. They devour souls and flourish off the sins of man. The only thing preventing The Feeders from bringing a full-blown hell to Earth is a small group of people thrown together by fate. When The Feeders reveal themselves, the fate of Cavus and the world is left to the only uninfected humans still standing in the cursed town.

I enjoyed the characters. Star, Erma, and Officer Riley carry this piece along quite well. Herrman doesn't play it safe along the way, either. She lets the story dictate the fate of those we follow. That's refreshing. Too often today, especially with newer writers, we see them take the easiest path or play to the readers. Herrman goes full-speed ahead, shying away from no horror, as she explores every nasty facet of the curse and its affect on the "good" people of Cavus. It's raw, it's brutal, it's in your face. Just the way good horror should be. At the same time, Herrman weaves real life problems into this fantastic, dark world. The struggles of a married couple, the loss of family, the frustration of a father separated from his baby girl. This book give you plenty of fright, but makes it all stick with believable characters their personal plights.

Consumption is reminiscent of the macabre works of Bentley Little. That is a huge compliment to Merrman. I can't wait to see what the author does next!

I give *Consumption* 4 Stars.

Jeanne says

I got this book from Netgally as an advanced read:

I really enjoyed reading this book. The story line was intriguing and the characters came alive as I was reading. I read this book late into the night when I should have been sleeping because I had to know what

was happening. As I learned more about the characters, I wanted to them to make it through the story. The twists of the story kept me guessing and the writing was very good. I am glad I found this story!

Ellen Gail says

"Don't fight it. Just admit it. Admit your sins, man. They're beautiful. You're beautiful, you humans with your dirt and your filth and your sins. It's the trying to cover them that's wrong."

Hmmmm maybe 3.5 stars? I can't make up my mind about this. I very much enjoyed the mind-fuckery aspects and the growing sense of dread that built throughout the first half. I thought the switching perspectives, especially John and Erma, and the way they all eventually collided was really smartly interwoven. It was also weird as fuck sometimes, which I usually appreciate.

Breathe, two, three, four. Imagine yourself on a river. A motherfucking river with two dead bodies and a corpse with a tail. Hallelujah.

All of the weirdness was clearly building to something. All the creepy and tantalizing hints of the the badness that was to come promised to be dark and icky. *Feeders*...shudder. I couldn't wait to find out what was going on!

Humans were born to consume, to be consumed by their desires.

I was disappointed when the Feeders (view spoiler) felt very derivative of zombies. I'm all for a some zombie chomping action, but there had been such great creepiness and mystery building, then it all dissolved into a people feast.

Overall, I'd call *Consumption* good horror, but not great. It's entertaining and worth finishing if you start, but unfortunately it didn't deliver on the grand suspense that was built at the beginning.

Renea says

I received this book as a Net galley ARC and it did not disappoint. The novel's beginning is truly clever as it might have you thinking, this is about greedy land barons and the lengths they will go to for riches. In a way it is, but not the riches your and I would think, it is so much more. This book reminds me of a cross between Stephen Kings "The Regulators" and the movie "Fallen".

We meet two of the main characters as they are on a cross-country trip and get a glimpse into their lives and what they view as the beginning of the end to their marriage. Having the need to stop due to mechanical problems, they soon realize what they thought was insurmountable is actually peanuts compare to what's going on in small town USA. It's as if they've stepped off the side of the high-way and into the Twilight Zone. The author feeds (no pun intended) the reader just enough through out the book to have you really

thinking what in the world is going on? As the book progresses, you feel as if you know what's happening, but like a horrific nightmare, you block out reality as this can't possibly be happening, it's the only way for you to stay sane.

Humanity's sins and avarice's are put on display and you wonder how the small band of warriors can overcome such odds. It's been done before, but do these individuals have what it takes, in order to stop the horror from escaping.

The story flows and your interests never wanes as the book leads up to the Festival's Feast, the simplicity of the overall plan is mind-boggling as man's greed is all that they really need to succeed. A thrilling ride from my first read with this author, one that will definitely be added to my must read!!!

Bree Garcia says

4.5 stars, really.

To be honest, I requested this book on NetGalley because it said for fans of Stephen King and Joe Hill, and those are two of my favorite writers. Also, they're kind of big shoes to fill. Luckily, Heather Herrman does not disappoint.

John and Erma Scott are on a trip across the United States in order to start over. While their marriage is falling apart, they both deal with it in different ways. But then they come across quaint Cavus, Montana, and they're suddenly fighting for something bigger than just their marriage. An evil sickness, older than time itself, is spreading through this town, and the infected are trying to make sure that it moves outside the borders, all across the world. John and Erma are quickly joined by an unforgettable band of characters: Riley, the local sheriff who just wants to make a wonderful home for his young daughter; Javier, an undocumented immigrant that lives for his mother and sister; Star, a teenage girl trying to deal with the death of her mother and the mentally checking out of her father; and Pill, an old man that knows way more about Cavus than he's letting on.

When I first started this book, it reminded me a little of *Desperation* by Stephen King, but then it took its own unique twist. Where, at first, I was so concerned with Erma and John being okay with each other, soon I was concerned with them just surviving the little town. Every character that the author added suddenly became both a survivor and a carrier in my eyes. I did know who to trust and who was already infected. The sickness that invades Cavus is relentless and terrifying, because anyone can contract it and all it takes is a little mistake.

One of my favorite things in this novel was that no one was exempt from getting this disease. The old, young, men, women, children, they were all susceptible. The author also didn't shy away from describing what happens to them. It's not gory, but very disturbing. For example, one of the teenagers that contracts the disease suddenly becomes a completely sexual being and rather forcefully hits on poor, bewildered Javier. Then she starts eating candles. It's insane, but in the best way possible. I found myself laughing at certain parts, and then becoming absolutely horrified with myself for laughing, because it's not funny. It's shocking and surprising, and I think I had to laugh if I didn't want to curl up under my blanket and hide for the rest of the book.

Autumn Is Azathoth The Haunted Reading Room says

Review: CONSUMPTION by Heather Herrman

CONSUMPTION is pure unrelenting horror, finally a "new" twist; very scary and definitely not the routinized "vamps-werewolves-serial killers-zombies" tropes. CONSUMPTION has an almost-Lovecraftian overtone (I won't spoil the suspense by pointing out where it surfaces). Most amazing, this novel provided something I've not experienced in a long time: a brooding atmosphere that perturbed me and put me on edge from the very first page, not despair but the imminent intuition that "something is so very wrong in this town." Heather Herrman proves herself to be an "author to watch."

Frank Errington says

Review copy

Something terrible happened before the fire that destroyed Cavus, Montana, in 1937. Now, it's happening again.

There was a lot I liked about Consumption. For example, the story of how John and Erma met and fell in love was magical; wonderfully crafted, ultimately believable, which made what happened next so heartbreakingly.

I also liked the story of Lucy McClarin, told through her journal, the circus, and what happened in 1937.

Then there's the Black Squirrel Festival and finally, the Feeder and its influence over the people in this small Montana town.

For the longest time, it seems something big is about to happen, but it just remains hidden. There are moments of brilliance in Heather Hermann's writing and at times what is happening in Cavus is truly disturbing. As a reader, you just need to be patient with this story, when it all comes together, it does so with a big bang, and it all works rather well.

Overall, this is quite an imaginative horror story. I love the words the author has for her mother in the acknowledgments, "Mom, if it helps you can pretend this is just a children's book for adults." That it is.

Consumption is available as an e-book from Hydra, an imprint of Random House.

Recommended.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

John and Erma are on their way to start a new life. They've had recent marriage problems and hope to start anew. Then they start through a small town by the name of Cavus, Montana. They have car trouble and are picked up by the local sheriff who tells them that their luck is shot because everyone is getting ready for the "Squirrel festival" and no one will have time to fix their car. He takes them to his aunt's house until their car

can be fixed.

town that won't let you leave-you know this shit is not going to end well

You then get to "meet" some of the town's characters and realize this is not Kansas, Dorothy. The sheriff's former deputy had recently quit his job after losing his wife and his teenage daughter Star knows that something isn't right with dear old dad lately. Then there is that body of the woman at the kitchen table with her face ate off.

Erma and John decide that the town is charming and it's helping them to put their past aside so they decide to attend the town's squirrel festival. They can leave later, they think.

The town has a population of black squirrels that date back to the town's beginnings where the whole town was killed except for one girl and all the squirrels.

Now along with this part of the story weaved in between chapters you are given some of the back story about what weirdness is going on. For the biggest part of the book the reader is just teased with bits and pieces. People either eating or being made eat parts of dirt?

Weirdo running around in a ratty yellow raincoat.

Those are just some of the happenings in this sleepy little town.

Now for why I'm rating it 2.5 stars rounded up to 3. I like my horror to at least be in a realm of possibility for some reason. If it's not possible at least be weird enough to keep my fickle mind entertained. This book came close but no cigar. I got frustrated with it and just wanted the ending to hurry up. It was pretty predictable but it's not the worst I've ever read. All in all I would recommend if you are in the mood for some people eating nom noms.

I received a copy of this book from Netgalley.

Marvin says

When I read a blurb on a book that compares it to Stephen King, I cringe a little. Sometimes it seems like every horror author wants to be Stephen King. I can't blame them. I want to be Stephen King. But those public relation drones in the advertising division of that mainstream publishing company wants you to be Stephen King because that is where the big bucks are. If I ever do write the great American horror novel, I plan to have a provision in my contract that says, "DO NOT COMPARE ME WITH STEPHEN KING!"

But the blurb on Heather Herman's novel, *Consumption* does compare her to Stephen King...and Joe Hill...and the lesser known but in the same ball park Sarah Langan. That will probably be fortunate or unfortunate depending on the reader. But there is no doubt that *Consumption* is dependent on a formula for mainstream horror. We have a couple with issues going into a situation that will make or break them. There is a nondescript small town with a mysterious event about to take place, in this case the Black Squirrel

Festival. We have a cast of dozens, all with their own level B issues. And finally, a dark and seemingly invulnerable terror. I've seen this all before. Yet *Consumption* starts out promising. There is a slow but nice build-up. We get some tragic happenings that foreshadow worst to come. For the first half of the novel, I was envisioning a scenario that raises the book out of the formula and into something different.

What went wrong? For starters our promised monsters called the Feeders didn't impress. Essentially they are a take-off on zombies; smart, hard to identify but still zombie-like nonetheless. With the nice build-up I expected more. Then there is the cast of dozens. No one really stood out. John and Erma seem to be the most obvious protagonists with their relationship issues and the faint glimmer of hope that we see at the beginning. But nothing really develops from there and we are thrown into a soup of extras all vying for the brass ring. When we finally find the catalyst that knows what is going on we have crossed the point of no return and are headed for "don't care."

Yes, *Consumption* is formula but that doesn't mean it can't work. Robert McCammon's first few books were all formula yet there was something about the writing that jumped out at you and made it live. I just don't see that here. While Hermann had a great idea and can write very well, the story overall becomes weighed down with too much filling, not enough uniqueness and not enough awe. It is mildly entertaining but eventually forgettable. There are some good, maybe even great things in it but just not enough for me to recommend it.
