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Felix Castor returns in Mike Carey's second instalment of supernatural noir.

Victims Details

Date : Published June 28th 1990 by Little Brown and Company (first published 1987)

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Author : Shaun Hutson

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Laura says

Shaun Hutson i find are always very easy reads. Theres always a monster aspect of some kind, whether its fake or real in the book.

I really enjoyed Victims. There was a brilliant twist at the end which i don't think anyone could have guessed.

I'd suggest this to people who enjoy a good ol slasher read with plenty of gore, blood and sex.

Hayley says

I had such hopes for this. I know that I came in expecting it to be a lot cornier than it was, but I didn't expect it to leave such a bad taste in my mouth. The gore and male gaze stuff is very uncomfortable to read, but that is at least obvious and easy to make a judgement on. You either can't stand it or you can, and I trust that most readers will instinctively have a feel for that. I just felt that the main character was too similar to the main villain for me to make a connection with. There was nothing about him that I could empathise with, and it just removed whatever stakes there were because nothing good could come of either of them "winning". The fact that the part of the main premise that I was really looking forward to was largely superfluous is just the cherry on top of my disappointment. I guess I'd recommend this if you like your horror gory and in bad taste, but quite honestly I'd give it a miss.

Bandit says

Was originally gonna give it less stars, but the twist ending got an extra rating. Didn't see it coming. In general not a particularly original story with an overwhelming amount of gore and guts and morally suspect characters. The victim theory and the special effects making aspect were interesting. Fast paced, quick read. 3 stars.

Dreadlocksmile says

Hutson launches in to this interesting and inspired approach towards the slasher genre. His experimental notion that some people are born to be murder victims rather than the murderer choosing the victims, is an interesting gruesome twist on the idea of fate. Hutson dives into the storyline of this twisted tale, with the usual mounds of splatter that we have come to expect from him. The plot is an interesting tapestry of different characters experiences that gradually weave themselves together to form the completed tale. The novel races from page to page as the bodies pile up and the action bursts through the pages.

Victims is not his best novel but more a standard Hutson offering. It's enjoyable to read and gripping from the start. It was originally published by W.H. Allen back in 1987 and formed his twenty-second full length

novel (which includes his novels under the names Wolf Kruger, Stefan Rostov, Tom Lambert, Nick Blake and Robert Neville). Definitely worth a read.

Oh, and watch out for the infamous 'foetus in the microwave' scene. Truly gruesome and disturbed.

Ian Noakes says

I read this book over 20 years ago, and although the details have started to fade a little- the emotions I experienced whilst reading it haven't: a roller coaster ride of thrills, chills, twists and turns. Loved it!

Lulu says

Yeah, it was entertaining. Lot's of great horror and gore. I just got really really tired of reading the line, "Miller took another swig from his hip flask". We get it. Give it a rest.

M.G. Mason says

I love this 70s style horror. Even though this was written in 1987, it has a very earthy British graphic horror feel to it very reminiscent of the earlier work of James Herbert. There's something very honest, grounded and realistic about its gritty feel and it's something I feel we have lost in modern horror fiction which has become glossy and in a way – quite sanitised. Some reviewers have described it as "pulpy" and it certainly hearkens back to a bygone age.

Frank Miller is a special effects designer, world famous and in demand from Hollywood using the best available designs for the film industry. Horrifyingly, something goes wrong with one of his inventions and he ends up in a hospital... not quite sure what is going on, he gets snippets of conversation here and there and it turns out he has lost the use of his eyes. All is not lost though, a trailblazing surgeon is offering to try out experimental surgery to give him an eye transplant. Frank goes for it but what happens next is where the story truly begins.

At first all seems normal... and then the blackouts start...

There is also a killer on the loose, killing women and mutilating their bodies horrifically that they appear to be a homage to Miller's work, and they are each murder a copycat of a famous British murderer of the previous few decades. Are the eye transplant and the killings linked?

Frank Miller thinks so and it seems his new eye can tell him who is going to be next.

At under 300 pages, I was concerned it would feel a little too short. It's paced quite nicely though and Hutson knows how to get down to the nitty gritty of a story. There's no lengthy character building or story setting here, no long ponderous reflections on the nature of the character's life and where he thinks it is going, no dense back story to give us context – no, Hutson has a story to tell us and he just gets right to it. Not that the characters are one dimensional, they are not, but they are identifiable.

Some say that horror has become too sanitised, others say that it tries to take itself too seriously. Those arguments are not invalid – if you are one of those who feel that way then this is the sort of book that might be for you.

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Jevron McCrory says

A genuinely enjoyable, pulpy horror!

Nicely paced with an intriguing concept, a neat and self contained horror who-done-it that doesn't out stay it's welcome.

I've actually read this a few times, it's that much fun!

A seriously welcome and alternative optional title to the laborious, edit-needed, often yawn worthy ramblings of horror maestro, Stephen King. A story doesn't **ALWAYS** require seven hundred plus pages!

Thomas Strömquist says

Even though I managed to get a hold of this one as a horror-starved late teen (at a time when it was not easy finding horror novels and movies) I could not bring myself to like it in the least. I did re-read (or, skim is probably more accurate) it a couple of years ago to find that my opinion hadn't changed.

I did read a couple of interviews with the author; he went to great lengths explaining that he does not read, is not interested in literature, but only in making money, football, Iron Maiden and shooting guns. I'm not saying there is *anything* wrong with any of that - but it does explain a few things. Hutson states that he writes thrash, I can only agree.

My only other experience is that I once owned and watched the remarkable (remarkable for being made that is) "Slugs" on VHS. In Hutson's defence, he claimed to hate that movie, but I don't know, it did bring a laugh or two anyway!

Robert says

Great Novel,

Victims centres around a special effects man who loses his sight when an effect goes wrong.

He gets an eye implant which , whilst re-couperating begins to give him the power to see potential murder victims.

Quite a handy ability to have when theres a serial killer stalking the area.

Tony Warren says

Very good, typical Shaun Hutson.

J. W. Stammers says

After reading Hutson's *Deadhead* (1993) back in 2011, whereby an entire chapter is dedicated to the rape of an under-aged girl, I knew to expect scenes that would make me squirm in my seat. Safe to say, I wasn't disappointed; thankfully, no young girls were raped in this story. Instead we get some rather brutal descriptions of bones breaking and blood spurting, a pervert ejaculating onto a TV screen, and a dead baby cooked in an oven.

Frank Miller, the protagonist, is a special effects artist working on a horror movie. An accident on set results in Miller being blinded and needing an eye transplant, whereby he receives the eye of a killer. Miller then begins to see an aura surrounding certain people in photos, which he later discovers means they're going to be murdered. Question is: can this new ability be used to apprehend a serial killer mimicking the crimes of convicted murderers?

I have mixed feelings about this book. Hutson does what he does best, he ensures the reader feels uncomfortable from cover to cover. The language is simple, which makes the book an easy read as well as leaves no ambiguity in the images Hutson creates and keeps the reader hooked (assuming you're not too squeamish). He also keeps you engrossed with short chapters and cliffhangers, in no time at all--and I'm a slow reader--you've read between ten and twenty chapters and still want to read on. There are also a few plot twists and red herrings to keep you intrigued, I nearly worked out the major plot twist at the end but Hutson was able to make me doubt myself. Furthermore, I don't think there's a film or TV company out there that could adapt this book and keep the graphic content--except, maybe, HBO. Hutson is unafraid to push boundaries and write what some writers are afraid of--and possibly wouldn't get away with--writing.

However, the book definitely has its issues. The premise is interesting and is a concept I haven't come across before, but then I'm not that well read. But I feel there's so much untapped potential. Also, Miller's ability was necessary for him to be where he was at the end, but the ability made little impact on the ending. There is a cool plot twist and plenty of satisfying violence with plenty of gorgeously described gore, an enjoyable ending but not satisfying; Miller's power neither helped nor hindered him towards the end. I'm also not convinced that the characters' actions were logical. If it wasn't for the fact the reader is told it's a killer's eye, we would never know because Miller never thinks to investigate why he can see victims, he just accepts it. The reveal of the killer's identity was cool, but their motivations seemed forced and somewhat cheesy. The killer's endgame was either non-existent or I missed it. Why the killer chose to reveal themselves at that time was also unclear. Most of the characters were portrayed as arseholes every time they appeared on the page, few to no redeeming qualities in sight. Obvious pervert was obvious, even to the woman he was perving on. A man killed his girlfriend, but it seemed unrealistic because no prior history of abuse was suggested. Everything is written through the male gaze, which will likely put some readers off this book.

Overall, the book is a thrill ride from start to finish with Hutson sparing no gory details. It's an easy read and should keep you hooked. However, you're likely to find some of the characters' actions to be illogical and

you'll really have to suspend your disbelief during certain segments. It isn't for everyone, and I'd only recommend it to horror fans who can borrow the book or get it super cheap.

RATING: 3/5

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