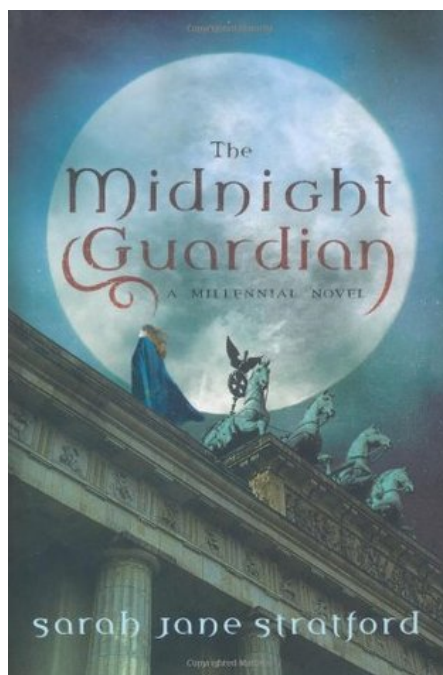




The Midnight Guardian

Sarah-Jane Stratford

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It's 1938, and the tentacles of Hitler's terrifying Third Reich have commenced their stranglehold on Europe. The Nazi empire will soon be clean of all bloodlines deemed tainted or undesirable...including vampires.

London's ancient tribunal of vampires is aghast at the destruction taking place on the Continent. Though vampires try not to interfere with human politics, Hitler's terrible plans force them into action. They resolve to send five of their most formidable vampires to Berlin—millennials that have lived over 1000 years and whose age and wisdom make them close to invulnerable—to infiltrate, disrupt, and destroy the growing Nazi war machine.

The brilliant and beautiful millennial Brigit is loath to go, but her powers are needed if the mission is to have any chance of success. She must summon all her strength to endure the separation from her lover Eamon, whom she made almost eight centuries ago, but whose lack of millennial status makes him an unacceptable choice for this operation. Though he longs to join her, his duty to Brigit is best served from afar, by nurturing their deep psychic connection and reinforcing her spirit with his fierce devotion and memories of his tender embrace.

But as the millennials attempt to penetrate and sabotage Hitler's armies, they discover that the Nazis are more capable than any human force they've yet encountered and more monstrous than they'd ever imagined. Forced to take bolder, more dangerous steps, they soon attract the attention of specially trained vampire hunters loyal to Hitler and his vision of a vampire-free Europe. Exposed, deep inside enemy territory, with vicious Nazi officers and hunters at her heels, Brigit must attempt a daring escape from the Continent, guarding precious cargo that marks the only hope of salvaging their mission.

The Midnight Guardian Details

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Author : Sarah-Jane Stratford

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From Reader Review The Midnight Guardian for online ebook

Donna says

Good lord that's a long blurb. Blurbal diarrhea. Anyway, DNF. The concept seems interesting enough. Anything about the European theater during World War II will catch my attention. Throw in vampires and I'm there. But the execution left much to be desired. It was just exceptionally slow-moving, a lot of contemplating on a train ride, talking at parties, and not much else. Frankly, I was bored. I don't like being bored reading a vampire book. Vampires aren't supposed to be boring. Yet authors continue proving me wrong on that front. I mean, this book had all the elements of being totally awesome: vampires, Nazis, plot to overthrow the Third Reich, the potential for slaughter. Sounds like a fanged up Quentin Tarantino movie.

But the plot took itself far too seriously and the vampires were insanely TSTL. I'm not sure how one can live past 1,000 years and complain that their species nearly ran out of food during something like The Great War or the Black Death. For serious? Ever hear of a boat? You're effing vampires and you fail to grasp the concept of hunting and gathering? I was really taken aback by that, that the purpose of stopping the Reich from succeeding was to keep their food supply up. Does only Europe exist in this world? Really?

That was a big hurdle for me. The other was the talking heads. All they did was talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. Good mother's ass DO SOMETHING. You're effing vampires and you have to infiltrate the Third Reich like the other dissenting humans do? How about just laying the vampire smack down and ripping Hitler's throat out of his neck? Problem solved. Blame it on a rogue lawn mower to hide your identities, done. But nooooooooooooo. They have to go all Valkyrie and take it down like humans would. Lame. Why make them vampires to begin with if they're not actually going to act like vampires for something like this?

To their credit, they were vampires when it came to feeding. Merciless, brutal and without a concern for their victims. I applaud that in a land where vampires have all but been neutered. I only wish they applied this side of themselves more to the overall plot instead of just talking their way through things.

I don't know if this is an alternate historical fiction. It would make sense if it were, otherwise I already know the ending and the vampires are going to lose since their mission is to prevent the war from happening. Really, it's kind of like watching Titanic and not knowing the ship sinks at the end. But I don't know if this is the case because I obviously didn't get that far. I don't even think I made it until my token half-way point, I just started begrudging reading it so much. It was just dull. If you want to give me vampires, then give me the shit that goes along with them do. The book had so much potential . . . I want to see what Tarantino would do with it.

Lawral says

This was a fun and engrossing read. It splits, very early on, into two storylines. One follows Brigit and the rest of the Millennial vampires, as they try to take down the emerging Nazi empire by infiltrating its ranks and/or seducing men in high places. Brigit is joined by Cleland, Mors, Swefred and Meaghan on her trip to Germany. It is only safe for vampires over a millennium old to voluntarily walk into a country quickly filling with vampire hunters. Swefred and Meaghan, together since the beginning of time it would seem, have each other and Mors has been single and loving it for his whole millennium long and more life, but Brigit and Cleland both have to leave their partners behind in London.

Much is made of Brigit and Eamon's love and heartbreak over their distance throughout the book, Brigit is

the main character after all, but Cleland and his partner Padriac (both men, in case you aren't well versed in really old Irish names) also suffer through their separation. Cleland and Padriac's love is portrayed as just as true, long-lasting and, above all, normal as that of Brigit and Eamon's, even if it doesn't get as much page space devoted to it. The only "problems" that arise out of their homosexuality is Cleland's annoyance at having to seduce Nazi wives and the prison cell in which they found Padriac on his last night as a human hundreds of years ago.

The other story, the one that sucked me in, shows Brigit trying to sneak back to London on a train of German soldiers and possibly vampire hunters. She is escorting "precious cargo," which is why she has to take such a public route and is constantly in danger of being caught with forged papers, revealed as a vampire, or having to change trains in broad daylight. The way that loyalties change in the face of the force of the Nazis becomes so interesting in this storyline, but to talk about any of it would be to give too much away. Some liberty is taken with the vampire myth, what they can and cannot do, but it still remains a horror story of sorts. Except that you will side with the monsters.

Kara Cardwell says

I enjoyed this book. It was refreshing because it reminded me of a time before Twilight. Yes people there were vampire books before the Twilight saga. Don't get me wrong, I like the Twilight series but I loved that this book really can't be compared to it. When I first started reading this book, I had to adjust to the fact that this was an adult book and not YA. Since this is an adult book nothing had to be held back. There is definitely violence in this book but I thought the author worded all those scenes very well, I call it artistic violence. I thought that the involvement of Nazis in this book was very unique and creative. If I had ever thought of an idea like this I would never have come up with a good enough way to turn it into a novel worth reading or writing. I loved the characters, especially Mors and I'm hoping that the next Millennial novel expand what I know about him as well as Eamon and Brigit's relationship. After seeing what they'd gone through in their life before they ended up together makes me appreciate their relationship especially because of Brigit. Her feeling of wanting love and being afraid that she'd never find it is a common fear that I could relate to. The only thing I didn't like (which was mostly my fault) is that not all the story is told in the same time, meaning that the chapters would switch from the past to the present about every other chapter (more or less). I didn't notice at first so I was very confused for a while in the beginning. I really enjoyed this book and can't wait for the next book in the series. This book gets an A. :)

Jenny / Wondrous Reads says

I don't normally read many adult novels, but every now and then, one will catch my eye. As soon as I knew that The Midnight Guardian mixed vampires and the Second World War -- two of my favourite subjects to read about -- I knew I had to give it a go. I'm so glad I did!

I love the vampire mythology of the Millennials, thousand-year-old vampires that are super strong and harder to kill. It takes a lot of hunting for me to find something different in the vampire genre, so I was pleasantly surprised to find that the Millennials fit into what I was looking for. Brigit is the main focus of The Midnight Guardian, and her present, as well as her past, is documented in great detail. Her soulmate Eamon recounts Brigit's early life, both human and vampire, and her existence spans hundreds of years, starting back when the Vikings were around.

The decision to set this story in the throes of WWII worried me initially. I didn't want it to be poorly executed, or to glorify that terrible period of history. Stratford doesn't take anything lightly, and takes great care in portraying the Nazis exactly as they were. Hitler is mentioned, but never featured, and I think that was the right thing to do. There's a point when fiction can blur too much with reality, making it unbelievable and distasteful, and Stratford succeeds in never crossing that line.

The Midnight Guardian is written intelligently, with a style and content suitable for the YA audience. There are a few gruesome, violent vampire scenes, but it's nothing too bad. The few sex scenes are written with taste and, while not quite as tame as what you'd find in a typical YA book, aren't overly explicit. Don't be put off by this book living on adult shelves, as it's worthy of being read by a much wider audience.

An unusual setting, clever characters and interesting vampire lore make The Midnight Guardian a fantastic debut novel. Stratford knows what she's talking about, and her love of history is engrained on every page. It's a welcome addition to the hordes of vampire stories out there, and I can't wait for the next book in the series.

(4.5/5)

Lisa Paitz says

REVIEW SUMMARY: A new take on the vampire with a kick-butt heroine too.

BRIEF SYNOPSIS: Alternate history vampires infiltrate Germany to stop The Third Reich.

MY REVIEW:

PROS: Stratford's lush voice brings weight to a fantastical and potentially over-the-top alternate history story.

CONS: Stratford's lush voice might be too much work for some readers who expect a lighter treatment.

BOTTOM LINE: The Midnight Guardian breathes new life into the undead. I definitely enjoyed this book.

Even before being turned into a vampire, main character Brigit (nee Brigantia nee Hilda) was a woman apart in an early 900s Briton community near York, England. This independent streak is what drew the attention of one particular vampire, but this same quality later sets Brigit apart from other vampires and enables her to survive when others cannot. Alone among her vampire clan, Brigit seems to have the power of fire -- a burning demon within in addition to the vampiric demon who has possessed her for over a thousand years.

The story proper begins in 1936 when England's remaining vampire clan sends its oldest members, all "Millennials," to Germany to thwart The Third Reich. This over-the-top premise is given dimension by Stratford's lush narrative voice, which I loved. While I often stick to and enjoy grittier reads, Stratford's dense prose fit that of a thousand year old character, grounded the plot, and enabled me to suspend my disbelief for the duration of the story.

While many of the vivid characters, the least of which Brigit, stayed with me when I put this book down, some may find the story structure somewhat disorienting. Stratford jumps the story back and forth from Germany in 1936 and 1940 to 917 (thereabouts) and 12th Century York. The technique does add tension and suspense to the story, but I found myself slightly confused a few times. Stratford holds a Master's in medieval history and since The Midnight Guardian is slated to be the first in a trilogy, I'm hoping for more information on Brigit's eternal love Eamon, formerly Jacob of Emmanuel from a Jewish community in the aforementioned 12th Century York.

In addition to Brigit's fundamental independence, another facet that lends originality to this story is the presence of a Jewish vampire. In Stratford's vampire world, Jews turned into vampires retain more of their original human soul and can pass as human more easily than other vampires. I don't want to spoil the ending, but it is this quality of Eamon's that partly enables Brigit to survive her main ordeal. That a Jewish vampire like Eamon holds onto at least part of his original soul is a telling irony juxtaposed against the "souless" epithet several of the Nazi characters voice more than once against Jews. This is not a topic I have so far in my reading seen dealt with in any other vampire story.

I also appreciated that Stratford didn't shy away from depicting the ferocity of her vampires. The reader fully witnesses the brutality with which the vampires can deal with humans and the bloody consequences their enemies face. Despite this power, the story exploits the weaknesses of Brigit and her cohorts to increase the stakes very well. I'm definitely looking forward to future installments of the Millennial trilogy. If you enjoy a good vampire story as well as some historical details, you will like The Midnight Guardian.

This review can also be found here: <http://www.sfsignal.com/archives/2010...>

Laura says

Sospechaba que incluiría vampiros, y no me equivoqué. Empezó algo flojo, pero siguió de forma tal que del aburrimiento pasé a la irritación. Los nazis son malos, muy malos, y los vampiros deben de defender su fuente de alimentación, la humanidad. Sí, sí, capto.

¿Algo nuevo, interesante, que no me de ganas de tirar el libro hacia la pared? No, nada. Relaciones trilladas, teorías absurdas, personajes con los que no sentía empatía sino ganas que los nazis los descubrieran para que dejasen de jorobar, y la lista sigue. Lo dejé a las cincuenta páginas, creo, si no antes. Muy olvidable.

Viviana says

Mi tema con este libro es... ¿por qué diantres es tan poco conocido? ¡Es un libro de vampiros fantástico! Cada línea temporal (por decirlo de una manera) me tenía atrapadísima, todas fueron fantásticas de leer. El tipo de vampiros presentes aquí.. wow. Me encantaron.

Tengo un problema eso sí... ¿¡POR QUÉ NADIE HA HECHO FANART!?! Necesito fanarts de Brigit y Eamon en mi vida.

Y sí, valió completamente la pena esperar. Este libro me fascinó.

Elizabeth Eslami says

With its relentless tension, original characters, and cinematic imagery, Sarah Jane Stratford's novel, The Midnight Guardian, casts an undeniable and unforgettable spell.

Deftly re-imagining our darkest period, Stratford introduces us to a fascinating group of millennial vampires grappling with their own role in history, from fearless leader Mors, who harbors a perpetual secret, to the enigmatic and enchanting Brigit, a modern feminist and seductress who knows her own heart, whether beating or still. As the vampires embark on a perilous journey to infiltrate and sabotage the Nazis, Stratford ambitiously explores the vampires' debt to and dependence upon humans, as well as issues of race and class,

and what it means, ultimately, to be human.

A thrilling work of historical fiction, *The Midnight Guardian* makes us forget what we think we know about vampires, challenges us to imagine a different version of history, and opens us up to a world of infinite possibilities.

Donna says

The debut novel, **The Midnight Guardian** by Sarah Jane Stratford is filled with historical facts woven into the storyline, and gives you a real sense of what the atmosphere must of been like in Germany before and during World War II in Europe, dreadful and gray feeling. Sarah Jane Stratford brings home the real horror of the travesties the Jewish went through in the hands of the Nazis and times before.

The vampires in **The Midnight Guardian** have been said to be similar to Anne Rice's vamps and I have to agree. They horrific when transformed into their vampire state. And they are just as cold and calculating about their views on humans as their food source, which is the reason for their interference with Nazis. They are trying to prevent another world war, since the Great War devastated their food supply. But you'll find these terrifying and beautiful vampires are mostly monogamous, loyal and are very passionate in their relationships.

At the beginning of the book, I had a hard time getting into the story, it just wasn't grabbing me. I didn't feel much of a connection with Brigit, who was the main narrator at the start. It wasn't until Eamon's point of view, several chapters in, that my interest in the story started to pick up. Through Eamon, I started to get a better sense of who Brigit was. My curiosity was piqued about the beginnings of Brigit's and Eamon's lives as vampires as well as their story as a couple. Here's an excerpt from Eamon when he was first turned:

The fangs were out before the eyes turned red. He felt them elongate and found it a peculiar and exquisite sensation. She struggled and he enjoyed that, too. The round, wriggling little body. The obnoxious flesh she's wanted him to touch. She'd wanted his mouth on her, although she would not have been above spitting at his sister.

"You bought my bread, but you would have died rather than break it with me. Still, let's have one last supper together, shall we? Well, your last. My first."

The secondary characters, in all their evil glory both the vampires and the Nazis, certainly added to the plot of the book. The one that grab my attention the most was Mors. He's not just a millennial vampire but a double millennial, who has been undead for over two thousand years. I've always been attracted the character that has that devil-may-care attitude, who lives for the excitement of adventure and chaos. That's who Mors is.

Over all, **The Midnight Guardian** gives you a feeling of a cloak and dagger spy mystery with paranormal elements. To me, there are almost two stories being told at once in this novel. One story being the mystery of the precious cargo Brigit is trying to bring back to England and the other, the love story of Brigit and Eamon. By the end of the book, Sarah Jane Stratford had me liking and cheering for even the worst of the vampires in this story along with an even greater disgust for the Nazi Party and those affiliated with it.

I couldn't find any definite information about the next Millennial novel, other than Sarah is working on it. I'm hoping it will be on Mors.

Beth says

This is one of the better fiction books that I have read for a while--interesting premise (Vampires go after the Nazis) and execution. The characters were interesting, and Stratford manages to tell her story and not change the flow of history (that much). While the ending was a little disappointing (she set up several compelling villains, whom the heroine dispatches far too easily), I enjoyed this overall.

Jens Kuhn says

I was intrigued by the plot of this novel when I first read about it on a blog about vampire books. I bought it as soon as it was out and I wasn't disappointed. The author perfectly combines the two genres I love the most, so I didn't really have a chance.

When I started reading it I at first did have some difficulties with the several timelines and frequent time-hopping. But that soon ceased when I got drawn into the world she created. The vampire characters are positively loveable (forget the Cullens) and the atmosphere is breathtaking.

There are some minor historic flaws, which might annoy the besserwisser (Stuttgart was one of Germany's major railway stations in the 1940ies, not a place where only a few would have gotten off) but who cares about things like that - it's fiction after all.

I am delighted to have found this new star on the horizon and am so much looking forward to the sequel(s). The idea of the millennia vampires in itself guarantees that there can be an indefinite number of them. Just put one of them in the Napoleonic era and I'd be in heaven.

Levi says

At first the frequent timeline shifts are rather distracting and unwelcome. Eventually this begins to feel natural and works into semi-comfortable pattern as I knew more of what to expect. The setting is nearly perfect, Vampires vs Nazis. A battle anyone would practically welcome, although the vampires end up feeling like the good guys despite the fact that they are ultimately trying to protect their food supply. The characters really are somewhat believable despite the thousand plus year lifespan. Overall a mostly satisfying read, could be a little better in parts but this authors first book does not disappoint.

Traci says

Vampires fighting Nazis, at first for the good of their food supply (you know, people. yummy, yummy people) and then just because SRSLY Nazis are assholes. So yes, vampires attempting to undermine Nazis, and it all ties in with lovely bits of history, which is one of the coolest things about vampires, in my opinion, all that first person history! The author creates great vampire lore, the key for this book being that, once the

first thousand years pass, a vampire gets even stronger and much much harder to kill. This causes Millennial Brigit to have to leave her 800 year old lover Eamon behind when she and 4 other Millennials go to create chaos within the Nazi regime. So, History + Angst + some bloody vampire vengeance = yes you should read it.

Karol says

This is a riveting tale of millennial vampires who try to destroy the Nazis, a story that is full of fascinating historical detail such as the Viking invasion of England that leads to the genesis of the heroine, Brigantia, later Brigit, and the York pogrom that leads to the making of her lover, Eamon. The story unfolds like a mystery, moving back and forth in time, so that you are never once sure what will happen to Eamon who stays in England to fight and Brigit who goes with a core group of vampires to Germany where the Nazis are convinced that they have cleared the country of vampires with their elite vampire hunting corps, the Nachtsperre. It is a constant cliff hanger that is also a moving love story and a darkly comic thriller that transcends any one genre so that you simply fall into the story of these vampires who are as vulnerable as everyone else, so that they are a sort of metaphor for all of us, the frailties and dreams, the loneliness and the fight to survive. It will surprise you at every turn, through the last page.

harlequin {Stephanie} says

Please keep in mind this is a review of the first 80 pages. I could not coerce or even trick myself into picking this up again.

I feel bad giving it one star since the writing was beautiful. It was the characters, relationship & story progression that have forced me to reduce to one star.

The story: To sum up we get a bit of back story and find out Brigit & Eamon are both cold blooded murdering vampires who are in passionate 'Romeo&Juliet' love. I don't hate the coldblooded angle, however, it never really says why they kill their food. Seems illogical if hitler is doing such a great job of wiping out your kind as well as your food supply. " Cutting off your nose to spite your face " as the saying goes. New, but missing the logic to it.

Other than that there's a boring party & some business on a train that gets us nowhere.

The relationship: I rather prefer relationships that have already begun when starting a story. Sometimes the meet & greet is boring due to the old adage of "everyone's doing it". I do want that fill in, but I don't mind waiting for it.

This story on the other hand latches onto the love between Brigit & Eamon without showing cause. Your told to accept the chemistry between the characters rather than shown.
