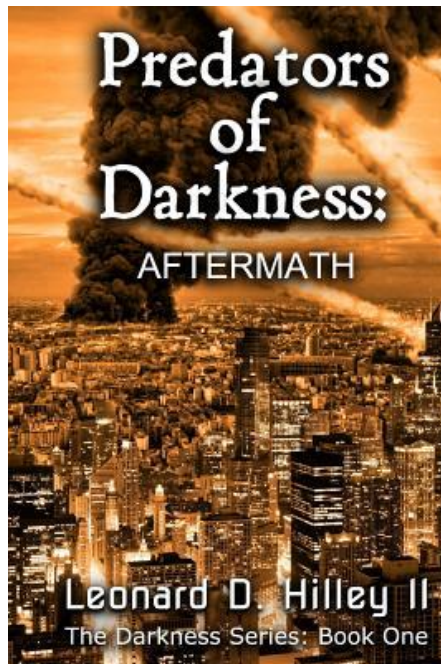




Predators of Darkness: Aftermath: Book One of the Darkness Series

Leonard D. Hilley II

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The desolate streets of downtown Pittsburgh in 2073 are a reminder of the missile attack that forever changed the lives of the surviving scientists and students hidden in the fallout shelter of Helmsby's Genetic Research Center. Believing themselves to be the only survivors, they station themselves inside the center until food supplies near depletion. Thinking the fallout has lessened, they emerge three years later to discover strange creatures patrolling the streets in search of human flesh and blood. The creatures possess the ability to shift their genomes and alter their appearances by realigning their genetic sequences. Daniel Hutchinson soon discovers mysteries more frightening than the shifters. The tip of Pittsburgh has been fenced off. Low-flying helicopters observe the streets. He ponders the question: Were the shifters released as simply part of a military experiment with humans being their prey?

Predators of Darkness: Aftermath: Book One of the Darkness Series Details

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Leonard D. Hilley II

From Reader Review Predators of Darkness: Aftermath: Book One of the Darkness Series for online ebook

John says

Interesting plot, but sometimes too many details

If you like post-apocalyptic stories mashed up with sci-fi, this book is for you. It's about the aftermath of a supposed nuclear attack on Pittsburgh in the near future, which caused some creatures to evolve into predatory beasts.

The main characters were fairly well-drawn, but a lot of the supporting characters were superfluous. Basically they were cannon fodder, for lack of a better term. This is fine. Not all characters can have large parts in books. But it would have been nice to get them a little bit better established before killing them off. (Oh, yeah, there's a lot of death in this book. Spoiler alert.)

My main issue with the book is that there were regularly these random sentences that gave odd detail to what a character was thinking or dealing with that, yes, would probably be a thought in the character's head, but is something that, when put on the page, takes me out of the action going on. The one in particular that really threw me is when one character was injured and really stiff, it was mentioned that she thought of a relative's battle with rheumatoid arthritis. Completely unnecessary detail. I can agree that she would be thinking about that, but it's not something that needed to be put on the page.

Overall, though, the book is pretty well-written. Action moved at a decent pace, characters didn't seem to behave wildly out of character (unless it was part of the plot--I won't spoil why it would be part of the plot, though), and there were a few twists I didn't see coming. There were some plot twists that I saw coming from a mile away, but those didn't lessen the action for me.

I will probably read the rest of the books in the series, just because I have an irrational need to complete most series. Plus, the characters that remained alive are still interesting and I want to find out what happens to them.

Heather says

As I read the first couple of chapters I couldn't help but think this book was Jurassic Park meets Resident Evil meets 28 Days...the further into the book I got the more I wondered if this author knows something we don't know, is he trying to warn us? The premise of this story could well be based on truth. Is this really a work of fiction? The possibilities are astounding and quite frightening. I couldn't put Predators of Darkness down for several minutes after I finished reading it.

Now to close the curtains, lock the doors, turn on some lights and read the next installment in the series...Beyond the Darkness

Tai says

The plot premise got me through but it was a challenge not to give up on this book.

Why I struggled with this book?

For a first in series I understand that there will need to be some build-up and back story so I can understand what is going on but in this book I felt as if the back story was an after thought thrown in to explain why the author decided this course was taken. The story didn't flow for me an obstacle would need to be overcome, a build-up in anticipation for how the obstacle would be solved and then problem solved in a way you weren't expecting which is fine if you had some clues or lead in to the it being a possibility. For instance when a character does some spectacular thing I should not be going WTH?!? I should be cheering the character on not wondering why I am just learning this important characteristic half way through the book with not mention or hint of it before. I'm all for character development but don't just throw pieces at me as you need it to make your story work.

Characters well I don't feel like I connected with any of them. I didn't get a real sense of who any of them were as they all sounded the same. The book switched point of views through out the book which I'm all for (take me to where the action is). However it all came across the same word choice, attitude, thinking pattern no variety at all which shouldn't be the case when I am suppose to be seeing through multiple people's point of view.

The dialogue was primitive, thankfully it wasn't that much of it. For me no emotions were brought forth other than my WTH?!? moments when I just couldn't believe what just came out of a characters mouth.

Why I stuck with the book?

The plot premise was intriguing. I liked the concept and wanted to see where it would lead me.

Mainly the fact that I hate leaving books or anything for that matter unfinished so unless it is extremely painful I will usually push through to the end.

I was enough enticed by the plot to finish this book but I will not be continuing with this series as I have no investment in the characters and I am not curious enough to know what happens next to attempt to get through the next book. 2 Stars because I liked it enough to finish it.

Diana (Offbeat Vagabond) says

Review posted here:

<http://offbeatvagabond.blogspot.com/2011/07/indie-book-review-predators-of-darkness.html>

I didn't know what to expect when I got this book from the author. Again, just wanted to read it, didn't bother reading the summary. Well that wouldn't have made a difference because the description isn't enough to show how incredible this was. I don't think I have come across a book with this many layers. You think you have things figured out until you are given a curveball out of nowhere. This was such an amazing experience; I can't wait to start the next one.

Predators of Darkness: Aftermath is about a group of survivors in the city of Pittsburg. Pittsburg has been hit by a nuclear missile and thanks to a well prepared scientist on a school campus, he gathers as much people as he can. This group of people has been in hiding for three years. They are running low on supplies and have to be extra careful when leaving their sanctuary. You see, after the missile attack, strange creatures quickly

roamed the streets. They are called shifters. They are quick and very difficult to kill. If they aren't taken down, they eat you. If you are a woman, they rape you and then they eat you. This is why women aren't allowed to leave. But it seems that makes no difference when they find out that there is a murderer amongst them and the one person that knew that did it, was attack by the seemingly impossible flying shifter.

But after a seemingly normal scavenger hunt, our lead Daniel comes back with nothing. His best friend Lucas, however, brings back plenty of supplies and a woman named Lydia who quickly takes an interest in Daniel. Their stories don't make sense and they are all suspicious of them. Daniel has to figure out who the murderer is that is living amongst them, try to figure out if his best friend and the new woman are worth trusting and worse, he is slowly finding out his friend and scientist that saved all their lives has been holding very valuable information from them all. Information that can save all their lives.

I LOVED THIS!!! I honestly could not believe I have not heard of this before. Actually I can't believe this isn't a movie yet. There seems to be a lot going on, but it actually ties in together so beautifully it nearly brought a tear to my eye. There is so much suspense in this book it might kill you. You honestly will be surprised; every page will leave you with your mouth hanging wide open.

The plot of Predators of Darkness is deep and complex. I absolutely must compliment Hilley for a plot like this. So layered and insane. I am trying to be careful with what I say here because the plot is full of surprises and one wrong thing will give it away. But trust me; you won't see half of things coming until they knock you over.

The characters are engaging. I loved Daniel. He was strong and cared for his friends. He always has his guard up and he is smart. My favorite character was actually Julia. She is in love with Daniel, but she is scared to tell him. She comes off so timid and shy, but she is a tough cookie. She does so many little things in this book to protect Daniel that he doesn't know about. I love that she is always protecting him when he is making a big mistake.

Overall, read this book. Immediately! It is sci-fi, but it is incredibly realistic and scary. It is dark, well-paced, and suspenseful. Man I wish I can say more, but like I said, you won't see the awesomeness until it hits you. I won't spoil you, but I am close to doing so. I could talk about this forever. I promise you will have a hard time putting this down. Mr. Hilley, you are brilliant!

Emily says

Have you ever read a book that, when you finished it, you had to check all the doors and windows? Reading Predators of Darkness: Aftermath was like that. It's a post-apocalyptic thriller where nightmarish creatures hunt human survivors in the streets and nobody knows where their next meal or breath is coming from.

These creatures that are so problematic and endemic in the story are referred to as shifters, but don't let that term imply some kind of cuddly secret society or misunderstood group of dudes looking to be understood. These are genetic experiments gone horribly wrong, and they want to eat you and leave nothing left. One of the critical elements in this story involves the human survivors and one of their leaders, Daniel, having to figure out for themselves if all of these creatures are truly "bad," if anything that exists purely on instincts can be viewed that way, or if there's something more to the story.

With enemies at the gates and a conspiracy afoot (just how did the shifters manage to start running the streets

of Pittsburgh anyway, and what if it wasn't an accident?) the few survivors living in a bomb shelter under a genetics lab have enough to worry about, but they have their own infighting and drama to deal with too. Each character is struggling to keep body and soul together in the face of ever-worsening odds, and just like in any high pressure situation, some people rise and some people fall, and true colors are shown all around. Everyone assumes that they're the only ones with ulterior motives or the only ones running a con; needless to say, that's not the case.

I admit that I found the struggles against the environment and the bigger conspiracy to be way more interesting than the infighting and maneuvering for position that occurs inside the bunker. Daniel and Lucas, our fearless leaders, don't always think with their big heads, if you know what I mean, and it leads to some bad decisions and convenient ignoring of the facts that in turn cause some big problems for our motley crew. The character Lydia, especially, should have raised some questions for everyone, and indeed a few people do question what's going on with her, but the folks in charge don't see important details right away for sure.

The plot thickens, and thickens quickly. Spies have infiltrated the bomb shelter. More dastardly genetic experiments are in the works. What seems true may not be, on the inside or the outside. There is a talking cat. Through it all, the reader has to keep alert to keep up with the twisting, turning plot and the incredible detail. It bears mentioning that this is the first story in a trilogy, so not all details get wrapped up tidily here at the end, and questions about morality and its origin are raised; it will certainly be interesting to see how these questions get answered in future installments.

This is a seriously creepy book, with the perfect combination of "they're coming to eat you" creature feature with "don't go in the basement" horror. The best post-apocalyptic or dystopian stories for me are the ones that strike as truly plausible, so if you don't mind, I need to go make sure the doors are locked again.

Elishia says

What would you do if you survived a nuclear fallout? How would you survive?

Predators of Darkness is perfect for sci-fi lovers. The world Hilley has created is devastating, which leaves you only to imagine how you could survive in world filled with genetic monsters caused by what appears, at first, to be a nuclear fallout. You are taken on ride with Hilley's characters as they try to uncover what happened to their world. Sometimes I found the dialog between the characters to be mechanical and lacking emotion. But once I jumped over that hurdle I was thrown into an exciting ride with twists and plot turns that kept me guessing until the end. And I was pleasantly surprised by the romance elements that were thrown in.

TheBookAddictedGirl says

4½*

I was lucky enough to get an email from the author asking if I would like to read this book, the other two in the series, and then if I'd like to interview him. Of course, how could I say no? The blurb drew me in, the premise was brilliant. And, after finishing the book, I can honestly say that I loved it! So thank you, Leonard D. Hilley II!

From the first sentence, I was hooked. This was mainly because I wasn't sure whether I should laugh or not. The sentence was:
"Dropping a cat from the top ledge of a ten-story office building was not the best way to remain hidden, but it was necessary."

It got better from there. I was drawn into Pittsburgh, 2071, and a world after a missile attack that's left only a few bands of survivors. And, to make things worse, there are horrifying creatures, known as 'shifters'. The name comes from how they are able to change their form, "manipulate their own genomes" into any shape they want. But the mutation has left them hungry for human flesh. On top of that, they can heal themselves of just about anything, even grow back limbs. Which makes them insanely hard to kill: not such a good thing for our male protagonist, Daniel. But, the shifters are genetically impossible: how can anything evolve so much in three years? They shouldn't be here. So how are they? Who – or what – is behind them?

Leonard D. Hilley's world was brilliantly thought out, and felt very real, almost like I was there – which is, can I just say, a terrifying feeling. The way Hilley slowly reveals snippets of information was addictive, and I loved how there were so many mysteries, lies, secrets and twists, all of which left me reeling.

The characters were brilliant too: Daniel, the leader, who was brave and strong, but haunted by the past: lives he's lost, his memories, nightmares. He was easily likeable, and I admired him. One of the characters that intrigued me the most was Dr. Helmsby: I couldn't quite figure him out. He was undeniably brilliant, driven, slightly obsessive and a charismatic genius, yet was at the same time slightly distant. I just got a feeling, as I read about him... that he knew more than he was telling... Lucas was insane, a risk-taker, and Daniel's second-in-command: reckless and slightly unhinged – in my opinion, anyway. Finally, Julia – who was in love with Daniel – was smart, brave and funny: very easy to like.

Something unique about this book is that it doesn't skirt around subjects like death, violence and... um, sex-esque scenes. I could tell it was written for mid teens – and may I just say, the writing was brilliant – and it definitely didn't talk down to them, like some books do, which I think they'll appreciate. What with that, the non-stop action, suspense and violence, I know that adrenaline-junkie-fifteen-plus-teenagers will love *Predators of Darkness: Aftermath*, especially with the strong sci-fi undercurrents. It's also one of those books that just grabs you from the word go, pulls you in, and takes you on a break-neck-speed adventure that you just can't leave until the book – or the series- is finished.

What I loved most was the message: humans should be careful when they mess with science. If one person gets the information and wants to use it for the wrong reasons, then, bam! We're in a world like *Predators of Darkness*. It honestly isn't a stretch to imagine. If you don't fully understand what you're doing, it can go bad, very bad. The thought was there all through the book, and it terrified me. It should terrify you too...

From the ending, I know there has to be more, that there's worse to come. And I can't wait to re-enter the world, and find out where it goes next...

Jackie says

Fear What Lurks In The Shadows

The desolate streets of downtown Pittsburgh in 2073 are a reminder of the missile attack that forever changed the lives of the surviving scientists and students hidden in the fallout shelter of Helmsby's Genetic Research Center. Believing themselves to be the only survivors, they station themselves inside the center until food supplies near depletion. Thinking the fallout has lessened, they emerge three years later to

discover strange creatures patrolling the streets in search of human flesh and blood. The creatures possess the ability to shift their genomes and alter their appearances by realigning their genetic sequences. Daniel Hutchinson, their leader, teams with Lucas Ridale and together they set out to scavenge the area for food and supplies with the hope to find other survivors. But Daniel's most recent journey uncovers mysteries more frightening than the shifters. He discovers the tip of Pittsburgh has been fenced off from the rest of the area. Low-flying helicopters observe the streets, making him ponder the question: Were the shifters released as simply part of a military experiment with humans being their prey?

This book blurb/synopsis summing up the book comes from Goodreads and I can truly say it does a great job without spoiling a wonderful story, and I refuse to do so either.

First I really do have to thank Leonard D Hilley II for sending me an email asking if I would like to read and honestly review Predators of Darkness: Aftermath ! I truly could not believe the eye to detail in the world that he built for this series, not only that but the sheer reality of just how much a scenario like the one the author lays out in the story is quite possibly something we may face one day!

I have loved several movies in the last few years that mix Sci-Fi, Urban Fantasy and fantastical scary moments that leave viewers holding their breath and watching in awe as the stories unfold... Predators of Darkness: Aftermath is one of those stories! It is not a movie but after immersing myself in the book for the past day I think it should be... The action is fast paced, the descriptions of the interactions between the "shifters" and the "survivors" are at times a little on the gory side but well within the scheme of the story... I truly enjoyed reading about all the trials and tribulations faced by Daniel, Lucas, Julia and the other characters as they are introduced... Daniel and the rest are just ordinary people who are faced with extreme choices to stay alive and it is how the author plays out those choices that really captures the readers imagination, you can actually feel a part of this story it is that gritty and real!

I especially enjoyed meeting the "shifter" **Morton** and seeing the mystery of how and why he came to be unfold, he was a bit of *lightness* in a very *dark* setting! Although there were a couple of places where I got a little queasy the entire reading experience from beginning to end was smooth and interesting, indeed it was very thought provoking as well!

For those of us who love books that manage to encompass multiple genres in a unique way this is the one you truly need to get a copy of and devour, it is not something you will put down once you open that first page and meet Daniel and the rest!

Now after being allowed the pleasure of reading book one am really hoping that book #2 Beyond the Darkness and book #3 The Game Of Pawns are just as riveting because after reading their respective back cover blurbs I have to continue this series! I truly feel that others who read book one will agree with me and continue to read the books as long as the author continues to write them!

David King says

When Leonard D. Hilley II sent me an email and asked me if I would like to read and review "Predators of Darkness" along with the next two in the series I wasn't sure at first if I should do it. This is because taking on three books from an author I hadn't read was a bit of a risk, but the synopsis and premise drew me in and in the end I was unable to say no. Now that I have finished this first book in the series I can honestly say that I am glad I took the risk as I loved the story and am happy to say that I am already 70% of the way through

the sequel!

The story is set in 2073 in the city of Pittsburgh after it has been hit by a nuclear strike that has wiped out most of the city and its inhabitants. However, thanks to a well prepared scientist, several students and staff members have survived in an underground bunker beneath the University Campus. However, after several years when they leave their sanctuary to forage for more supplies they find strange and deadly creatures called Shifters now roaming the streets. These creatures heal quickly, can change their bodies and appearance, are savage killers and love to hunt down those humans that are still alive.

The story follows several of the survivors from the underground bunker in this world whose numbers have been diminishing due to the seemingly never ending, rapidly evolving Shifters. When the leader of the group Daniel finds some information out in the ruined city, he realises there may be a way to actually save the remnants of the group and finally live a decent life. He just now has to try and uncover a murderer in their group, understand the strange objectives of the scientist who originally saved all their lives and finally decide if his best friend is someone he can really trust.

As someone that loves dystopian sci-fi stories and horror it was probably no wonder that I really enjoyed this book. The plot is exciting, entertaining, fast paced and also interestingly complex with several great surprises thrown in along the way. There was also some great sub-plots and layers that seemed at times to be very random and insane but they all came together nicely in the end with a rather satisfying conclusion. The action is also quite constant with danger lurking around every corner which really keeps the suspense level up high. I would have to say that the book isn't for the faint hearted though as the author isn't afraid to detail the violence, blood, gore and downright savagery of the world he has created.

In regards to the characters, I found the main character Daniel to be rather engaging and easy to like. Even in the primitive society that has now evolved where the group's leaders were chosen and even paired off with women via physical violence, he is still a decent, yet haunted man who is trying his best for everyone. He and the other main characters were all well written and I found them all to be rather interesting if at times a little bit type cast. One issue I did have is that sometimes they did specific things that seemed rather stupid and unrealistic for people who had survived so much already and were blatantly just a way to move the plot on in a specific direction.

The secondary characters were rather weak and were nothing more than cardboard cut-outs with a few words here and there to describe who they were. In a way, this made it hard for you to really care about them and it didn't really provide you with a feeling of a close group fighting against adversity. Therefore, the best secondary characters in the book seem to be the Shifters themselves and these are more than adequately detailed. These intelligent, sexually deviant, savage and downright dangerous creatures are really the stuff of nightmares. I found them to be really impressive "monsters" and it was also nice to see them contrasted by a "good" Shifter that appears later in the story and adds a little bit of comic relief to the story.

In summary, this book is a cracking Sci-Fi Horror novel which takes an action packed end of the world scenario and mixes it with dangerous shape-shifting monsters, conspiracy and even the odd bit of romance. Basically, if you enjoy post apocalyptic horror and like to read books that don't take the safe and obvious route then I think you will love this novel.

This and other reviews, along with book related discussions can be found on my blog: Books & Things

Jennifer Chase says

What happens after a nuclear missile strikes the downtown Pittsburgh area in the year 2073? Daniel Hutchinson and his best friend Lucas Ridale are the only link to survival and finding food for a small group of people taking refuge in a research building. To make matters worse, there are bloodthirsty shifters ready to tear humans apart if they leave their indoor safety.

Predators of Darkness is the epitome of what you want in a sci-fi thriller with plenty of action, adventure, suspense, science fiction, and even some romance. I was surprised to find out that this was Hilley's debut novel because it was well written and professionally crafted. I was instantly drawn into the dark, uncertain world through the survivor's eyes. Their outlook didn't look good, but I was driven to find out what would happen to them and how it would all play out in the end. The characters were full of depth and strong, even the ones that I didn't particularly like. I love the aspect that everyone had a story and drive to get what they ultimately wanted.

I highly recommend this book for anyone who enjoys sci-fi thrillers. You won't be disappointed. There are plenty of surprises. This author has two other books available and I can't wait to begin reading the next installment.

Kelly says

I'm going to start this review by telling a little story of my own. Grab a cup of joe, this might be a little wordy. Via e-mail, I received a request from Mr. Hilley to review this book. I'm assuming he saw our Book Lover's Hideaway blog from a blog tour or something, and wrote requesting the review. In my Cinderella world though, I'm going to say that he saw some of my reviews posted on Goodreads or on the blog and was so stunned by my book-reading-and-reporting capabilities, that he just HAD to have me read his books. Yeah, that's the story I'm going to stick with. ANYWAY, I wrote him back and on the off chance that he HAS read some of my previous reviews, I wanted to let him know that I am a brutally honest reviewer. I do not candy coat my reviews. I offer my honest opinions. You know what? He still wanted me to read his book! For some reason, our e-mailed conversations impressed upon me that this author is really a cool guy. I liked him immediately. BUT, I wasn't going to let that get in the way of my honest review right? Of course right.

Then he told me that this book had some shifters in it, but it wasn't really a romance type of book. That's okay too, because as many of you know, I am pushing myself to step outside of my true love, paranormal romance, and go into other book genres. It hasn't been too successful for me either has it? In fact, I just shelved a book in historical fiction (my third try in this genre) the other day because I couldn't stick with it. So along comes this book which is a Sci-Fi book. Okay, Jurassic Park was Sci-Fi and I loved that book when I was younger. It was truly one of the most scary books I've ever read. I was the one who saw I am Legend and loved that. So I was game to give this book a shot.

With all that background, I am here to tell you that if this book is Sci-Fi? I love it! And to quote the famous song, "if loving you is wrong, I don't want to be right." This was a fantastic ride into a world I hope never happens but could and you never doubt that for one moment while you are reading this book. I kept telling my husband while I was reading it how good this book was. ::nudge, nudge:: Honey, this book is REALLY good. "Are you surprised?" he asks me. "Yes. It's a sci-fi book!"

It's Pittsburgh in the year 2071 (I would be a mere 112) and boy are we in bad shape. There's been a missile

attack (the description really made me think of the movie “The Day After” with Jason Robards from back in the late 70’s I believe) and we are introduced to some of the surviving students, scientists and other folk that have taken cover in Helmsby’s Genetic Research Center’s fallout shelter. The survivors come out looking for new supplies via their leader, Daniel Hutchinson, and his best friend, Lucas Ridale. The world is now an ugly place. Like life forms with glowing eyes that eat human flesh. Things that rape women with uncontrollable desires. (I have to interject here, the shifters have the ability to inject the women they are raping with a drug of sorts that makes them just love doing the nasty. Isn’t it just like a man to dream this up? Hehehe) These creatures have the ability to shift their appearances back and forth as well as heal from certain types of wounds. They are almost indestructible. Yanno, nothing can come back from a good beheading though and that’s the case here as well.

There IS romance though! You’ve got Daniel’s kind of wife and a fellow survivor who has the hots for Daniels AND, enter a mysterious hot enchilada that kicks kind of wife’s ass for the title of Daniel’s new squeeze. (Leave THAT for a man to think up too eh? Hehehe) It was great excitement . If I had any complaint about this book it was that. The romance could have been just a tad more. But hey, I understand this isn’t a romance genre book. But it COULD be with a little tweak here and there.

So the story follows Daniel through some scary and mysterious discoveries. All sorts of questions about people around him arise. Are they who they say there are? The bad guys, these shifters, how did they evolve so quickly and how did they get there? Could they be part of some military experiment??? There is lots of gore, moments where I had to go ewwww, but, thankfully, there were NO moments where I didn’t understand what was going on. The plot points were clear and thought out and they sucked you in and held you there. I loved it!

Now, I am certainly not qualified to point to great literary classical authors. I can't point out exquisite proses in literature. But I know a good, fun read when I well, read one. This book is very fast paced, super exciting and one that I would imagine most people, whether or not they are sci-fi addicted, would pick up and read and enjoy. I would highly recommend and even URGE any one of you to get this book and read it. I am almost positive you'll enjoy it. As of the writing of this review, there are 2 other books in this series, Beyond the Darkness and The Game of Pawns. I’m kinda hoping that Mr. Hilley still loves my reviewing skills and wants me to review them as well. If not, I’m gonna have to buy them because this is a story I must have more of. Thank you Mr. Hilley, for the pleasure of reviewing this book.

What I liked: I loved the erotic undertones to this book. It didn’t make the pages turn, but when it was hot, it was sizzling hot. Or, it was gross. Both sides of the erotic coin were very much on display.

What I disliked: The story is sometimes is very close to truth and what possibly could happen. It’s not a far reach at all and that fact alone is something I don’t like. Unfortunately, there’s nothing anybody can do about that is there?

Bea Charmed says

There's a lot to like about this book - an intriguing plot, filled with conspiracies and twists and turns, that's an intriguing blend of mystery, thriller, science fiction, dystopia, and urban fantasy, with some romance mixed in; lots of action; and dialogue that can be sharp.

There were also a fair number of things that didn't work - the dialogue and prose could be stilted; copy editing issues that by themselves were mostly minor but occurred often enough to be annoying; an utter

inability to write believable romance scenes, and, most disturbingly to me, what appears to be a strong case of misogyny on the author's part.

The romance and sex scenes alternately had me rolling my eyes and laughing at their awfulness. A friend thanked me for providing her with giggles as I shared excerpts from the book. Some examples:

- 1) "Her stomach felt like a net full of excited butterflies as her hormones excited places in her body where she'd never experienced sensations before." Also, this sentence needs some serious punctuation help
- 2) "The burning passion hidden in her heart unleashed from its prison." Purple prose AND cliches.
- 3) The scene, too long to share here, where Daniel is in a drugged sleep and still manages to have sex, complete with ejaculation, all while asleep. He also brings his partner to orgasm. This may be possible, but it's unlikely, there's the whole matter of consent, and...eeeewwwww.

None of the characters were completely likable, all had their flaws and unpleasant traits, but that helped to make them feel more real. Oddly, the author doesn't seem to have intended that. Two of the main characters, Daniel and Julia, the ones I believe we are meant to root for, he periodically describes in glowing terms but then has them say or do things that contradict those descriptions. Julia is described as "...disposition was sweet, and she was respectful of those she worked with." This same sweet, respectful woman drugs one woman and attacks another, a patient that she is supposed to be treating, yet the author writes as if he sees no contradiction.

Daniel has been seeing a woman, Johanna, who is supposedly his mate, but he admits in his thoughts that he's only using her for sex and he doesn't even like her. As it happens, she is using him for sex and also to maintain her social standing in the colony. He promises another woman that if she defeats Johanna in battle, that they will become mates. Instead of honoring that promise when she wins, he hooks up with someone else. So, on the one hand, the characters are believably flawed but on the other hand, they can be obnoxious or downright nasty. There really are no black and white characters; all of them, whether identified as good or bad, are shades of gray.

When the story first starts, Julia seems pleasant and sweet; she also suffers from unrequited love and is jealous of the woman who has the man she wants. In short order, Hilley shows us that she is not so sweet or kind: She's so jealous that she slips birth control pills into the other woman's daily vitamin regimen: " "Estrogen?" Johanna frowned. "Isn't that like for birth control?" Julia smiled. "Exactly." Johanna's face flushed red. "You sorry bitch! You're the reason I've not gotten pregnant. I'm not sterile. All this time you've been giving me birth control pills? How could you? Why would you do this to me?" " So much for Julia being sweet and respectful.

Hilley starts out with women falling into the old, worn out, useless cliches of women being saints or sluts. Over the course of the book, Hilley turns all the key female characters, and some of the minor ones, into bitchy, nasty women. He appears to have a low opinion of women. One such example: "Cadby laughed. "That's been arranged, sir. Brenda is going to kill him." "Brenda? She won't kill him. They were intimate at one time." "At one time," Cadby said. "But love-scorned women, what do you do with them? Besides, I offered her a promotion." Charming. Not.

The story held my interest for the most part but I had trouble getting past the really bad romance writing and his apparent dislike of women. It's the first in a series so I hope both of those will improve.

I received a PDF from the author for review. The review first appeared at my blog - <http://beasbooknook.blogspot.com/2011...>

Amber Adamchuk says

I was given the opportunity to read this book from the author himself, which is an honor. I am not normally a reader of end of the world, or disaster books. However I have found this book to hold my interest throughout. I find myself picturing the creatures described and the living conditions, and hope this never happens but knowing it's not that far fetched with science. Once you hit the middle and start to learn the who, what, when, and some of the why...you don't want to put the book down for all the twist and turns involved, I found myself attempting to speed read (ha ha) but to have to slow down and pay attention as to not miss any detail. I recommend this book to those who enjoy a good story line, with action, adventure, sci-fi, love, betrayal, and mystery all rolled into one book.

This book makes you sit back and think...what will come of the world one day if the wrong people get their hands on the right information.

Of course now I have to get the second book to see what happens next.

Ashley says

Wow! That's all I have to say. Wow! This book completely took me by surprise. A very pleasant surprise at that. I was captivated from the very first sentence, all the way to the very end. And of course it's left open for another book! I am so happy for that! It was really hard for me to put this book down. The book is very well thought out, so many twists and turns you don't have time to get bored. The way he goes into detail just blows my mind. Predators of Darkness played like a movie running through my head. I have so much to say about this book but it seems like everything is connected in one way or another, and I don't want to giveaway any details. This is a must read. I don't understand why more people don't know about this series! Go check it out, you can read the first chapter for free! This book is definitely one of my top 5 favorites!

Avery says

I think that if "Æon Flux", the "Resident Evil" films, and "Shade's Children" by Garth Nix were to have a child, this would book would be the result.

When I first started reading this book I found myself growing increasingly frustrated with it because it was so far removed from what I typically read (YA UF/ PNR) and I seriously considered not finishing it. However, I decided to press on (because I hate to not finish a book) and as I delved deeper into the book, I found myself enjoying the book more and more and I could only shake my head at my earlier ridiculousness. This is not only the best dystopian/ sci-fi-ish book that I have read before, but also one of the most original.

You would think that there would be too much going on in this book- from shifters to clones to a Gollum-like creature to corrupt military personnel- but there really isn't. There wasn't any point in this book that I thought to myself, "Gosh, he really did include the kitchen sink didn't he?" The world building in this book is impeccable, as is the character development, and after reading it and thinking about all of the different layers Leonard wrote, well, my mind is blown. Furthermore, because the book is so fast-paced you are truly kept on the edge of your seat while reading this book and you cannot help but want to consume it all in one sitting.

This book has totally made me a hardcore sci-fi convert and I find that to be so astounding because, as previously mentioned, I was previously a strict YA PNR/ UF reader. What this shows is that Leonard is a literary genius and that he is able to bridge the gap between countless genres.
