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Donnerville librarian Jane Kerry receives an envelope containing a 50-dollar bill and a note instructing her to "look homeward, angel" and signed "MOG (Master of Games)." So begins The Game—pushing Jane into crazy, immoral, and criminal actions. When she tries to quit, MOG has other ideas.

In the Dark Details

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Katy says

I just LOVED this Laymon book - I couldn't put it down! It was, let's be honest, extremely disturbing, and as with many of his other books I at times questioned my psychological state for enjoying it, but his writing style was so sublime and this story such a unique idea (at least I've never seen anything else like it before or since) that I couldn't help but be impressed by the sheer audacity of it - I can't really outline it without creating spoilers, but trust me -if you are a horror fan, you will love this book. I was less impressed with the publisher's copy editing staff, but even that couldn't sufficiently distract me from this story. This book is a wowzer!

Kevin Groosalugg says

I don't know how to feel about this book. It's my first Richard Laymon novel, and I wonder how he's written 30 books before this and still manages to write like an amateur. It's like a college professor told him to be more descriptive so he decided to rehash the same descriptions of mundane objects over and over again and triple the size of the book. The plot is pretty straightforward: A woman finds an envelope with a note sending her on a quest, when she completes the quest she gets money and a new quest. With more of a payoff each time, how far will she go? The author is obviously obsessed with a woman's body as most descriptions are how her robe brushed against her thigh or how there were grass blades in her pubic hair. The character progression bordered on comical, I can't understand how the characters introduced in the beginning were so casual about the events that took place and their actions in response to them. The motives behind everyone's actions were contrived and ridiculous, why why why did they do the things they did--all of them? It's as if Mr. Laymon knows nothing of how the human body (or the world) works either - If I were to go out one night and climb up on a statue, then the next night I were to run a mile or so, my body would NOT be noticeably changed! I could go on and on about how this book is anything but well written. However, despite all this, I was reading this and a novel by one of my favorite authors at the same time and THIS was the one I was excited to read!? What does that say about me!?!? This was a bad book but I liked it. I actually enjoyed reading it....I guess I was sucked in, believable or not I wanted to see what would happen next.

Paulo "paper books always" Carvalho says

Another Laymon novel.

What can you expect?

Sex, action and some Horror.

So, this girl starts playing a game with a person that entitles himself as MOG (Master of Games). First of is all simple - if you discover the clue you gain some money (always double the amount of the previous clue) and the next clue. The firsts couples of ones are simple, go somewhere, talk with someone but as the reward goes up, 1600 dollars or such it starts getting more difficult or bold - go someplace that a dog is guarding; go to a house and sleep in a coffin and such...

As the story progress it starts getting creepy with MOG living messages on our protagonist body and she craving for more... At the same time, she meets a guy and becomes involved with him and we get a lot of sex

scenes.

So, is this book good or not? Well, if you are a woman maybe not because the main protagonist starts to become a craving little whore who would do a guy for money... so what Laymon is saying is that if you offer 2000\$ to a woman - she would sleep with you. After all is just sex right?

But, the question remains... what were you capable of doing for 40,000\$ or 128,000\$ - would you have sex with someone? Would you be a slave for a day? Kill someone? Kill an animal? What? I bet most of you are saying - nah I wouldn't but.... we don't know. Maybe we would if the right combination occur...

Shaun Horton says

[
Jane is your stereotypical librarian character, out of shape, nervous, well-read, and sexually repressed. One day she finds an envelope on her seat with money and a clue. Figuring out the clue leads to another envelope with more money and another clue, and so on and s

Ruth says

One of the best books he wrote!

Brina says

Nachdem ich bereits "Das Haus" von Richard Laymon gelesen habe und davon begeistert war, stand für mich schnell fest, dass ich auch weitere Bücher des Autors lesen möchte. Meine Wahl fiel dabei auf "Das Spiel", das von der Kurzbeschreibung sehr spannend klang. Nun, Spannung war letztendlich tatsächlich da, allerdings besitzt die Geschichte auch so manche Schwäche.

Auffällig ist hierbei, dass Richard Laymon die Geschichte an sich zwar sehr spannend beschreibt, ihm allerdings auch vollkommen egal zu sein scheint, ob man die Figuren sympathisch findet oder eben nicht. Diese sind zwar an sich gut ausgearbeitet, allerdings findet man hier keinen einzigen Sympathieträger, womit ich dann doch ein kleines Problem habe. Dennoch fand ich die Idee an sich, dass Jane , mitsamt ihres Begleiters Brace, immer wieder Aufgaben erfüllen muss und dafür belohnt wird, sehr interessant, nur leider gab es für mich dabei zu viele Logikfehler, über die ich nicht hinwegsehen konnte.

Jane gehört zu den Figuren, die ich absolut nicht ins Herz schließen konnte, denn sie ist mir viel zu egoistisch und geldgeil veranlagt, sodass sie mir fast von der Seite an unsympathisch war. Zwar sind diese Charakterzüge durchaus wichtig, um dieses "Spiel", geleitet vom "Master of Games", tatsächlich durchzuziehen, allerdings hat mir bei ihr insgesamt das gewisse Etwas gefehlt. Dazu gab es mir bei dem Spiel, bzw. dessen Aufgaben zu viele Zufälle, die zum Teil die Spannung aus der Geschichte herausgenommen haben.

Das Cover ist für mich jetzt nicht gerade der größte Hingucker, passt allerdings hervorragend zur Geschichte, sodass man bei dieser Gestaltung nicht meckern kann. Die Kurzbeschreibung liest sich sehr spannend und war mit der Grund, weshalb ich dem Buch unbedingt eine Chance geben wollte.

Kurz gesagt: "Das Spiel" ist an sich sehr interessant, leidet aber enorm unter den Figuren, mit denen ich bis zum Schluss nicht warm wurde. Gleichzeitig haben sich in die Geschichte zu viele Logikfehler eingeschlichen, sodass ich diese an sich zwar gut, aber nicht überragend fand. Dennoch: Für Laymon-Fans ein absolutes Muss.

Addy says

Wow, this book was just so damn entertaining! It never really slowed down for me. If it wasn't so long, I could've read it in a single sitting time permitting of course. The characters were a little unbelievable but likeable. I really enjoyed the concept of a master of games sending poor Jane around doing stupid and dangerous tasks for money. Makes me think if I would've played the game. Maybe...lol. Being able to be in Jane's mind and see her every move was fun. There were some crazy moments and things that will stay with me forever but when a book does that for me it's because it's a good book. The ending had a twist and I felt like it wasn't rushed. It was a good ending though it left some unanswered questions. In the end, it leaves me wanting to read another Laymon. Yay!

Mslupiluu says

Mein erster und bestimmt nicht mein letzter Laymon! Sehr besonders und spannend!

Toby says

Naja, war eher nicht so mein Fall. Besonders der Schluss war sehr trashig... insgesamt kaum Horror.

Kaisu says

Mal wieder ein recht guter Laymon!

Dora says

Young librarian Jane finds a note addressed to her on her chair at work one night. Inside? A fifty dollar bill and the promise of more if she follows the clues. What starts out as a scavenger hunt turns into a deadly test of wills and morals as Jane finds herself doing more dangerous (and depraved) things for the promise of bigger and bigger payouts. This, then, is "The Dark", another in the long series of completely ridiculous horror novels from inexplicably popular author Richard Laymon.

Mind you, it's an interesting premise; an anonymous "benefactor" who slowly doles out the carrots so that you never see the stick until it's too late. And, for a while, Laymon shows restraint and gives us a story with a fairly believable progression of circumstances. Jane gets help from the laughably named Brace, and winds up scaling a statue in the dark for her next prize, only to find the clues become more cryptic and her trials become more dangerous as she goes. It all winds up in a showdown that reads like someone dropped the

script for Saw into a bucket of afternoon soap operas.

The problem I have with Laymon's stories is that he always goes too far. I don't mean that he writes about things I find offensive, although that's clearly what he's trying for, but rather that he takes his tragedies and his horrors leaps and bounds beyond what is reasonable until they become completely ridiculous. At one point, someone vomits into Jane's mouth; if you think that sounds gross, I promise you that by the time the story gets to that point everything will be so outlandish that you'll find it hysterical. He piles bizarre situations on top of his heroine in an effort to make you uneasy and breathless with suspense, but instead winds up with a chain of events that feel cartoonishly overblown. Nobody behaves rationally, and nobody is ever interesting, because they're always two-dimensional stereotypes.

So why do I read his books if I find them so poorly done? After so long, his books have become to me the horror equivalent of those terrible bodice-ripper novels that clog supermarket shelves. I read them because they're exceedingly simple and never take more than an afternoon, and have a tendency to give me hysterics more than once. "Oh, that Richard," I chuckle to myself, perhaps with my fists on my hips, '50's sitcom mom style, with an affectionate wag of my head, "what's he gone and done this time?" Only, instead of knocking over the family heirloom vase or putting a slingshot pebble through Old Man Wilson's window, he's putting a naked hairless man in a church bell-tower throwing bullets at our hapless protagonist. I'm not sure if his books are so bad they're awesome, or just awesomely bad.

Long story short; The Dark is paperback junk food and should not ever be taken seriously.

Rade says

So you got Jane, a librarian who one day finds an envelope with her name on it. Inside of it are few sentences inviting her to play a game from a person called MOG (Master of Games). In the first letter was \$50 bucks and it keeps increasing as she goes from one location to the next. Most of the challenges revolve around her figuring out places in the town where the story takes place.

The challenges get progressively harder and/or dangerous but she keeps at it because the money is enticing. I do agree that after the whole graveyard incident she should have given up but I think even I would consider continuing knowing the money waiting for me at the next location is doubled. Jane was a nice character but she can be a bit stupid. She cares way too much about what guys think of her body and she seems to hate a guy she meets one minute while the next she hopes he will come to her and sweep her off her feet.

I found the book pretty entertaining. The chapters were pretty short so the story just glided on with no interruptions. I don't like overly happy endings though (not saying this one was) but considering the people Jane dealt with, I thought she will come out of it barely alive and screaming bloody murder as she ran to her car to escape the nightmare she got herself in.

Note: There is quite a few sexual imagery in this book so if you don't like that, stay away from this novel. I heard Laymon often has these kinds of situations in his books but it did not bother me at all. I am still going to read more of his books.

Katie says

Bullshit!....bullshit. I'm not even going to finish this book. I'm to chapter 18 and I'm just done. And

personally I'm pretty pissed off at this book because it started off so awesome! I couldn't put it down. The characters were extremely likeable, it was funny yet thrilling at the same time, then it just got stupid. Or rather the main character just got stupid, completely brain dead more like.

Anyone who has read this please tell me one good reason why, after what happened in the graveyard would she even think of continuing with this? And not even be that upset or shocked! The motivations of the main character, Jane are just non existent. And you just keep thinking that she can't be that stupid! It's so upsetting because you reeeeaally want to like this book, but can't get around the retarded turn it takes. ./

Kristen says

So you're a loner type who has let your figure go a bit flabby while you work at the local library. Suddenly one day you find an envelope with your name on it sitting on your chair. You open it to find a clue, much like a scavenger hunt and a fifty dollar bill. What do you do? Why you develop a penchant for culottes, stick a malfunctioning switchblade in the breast pocket of your blouse and start hunting for the next clue... of course you need to find a token hot guy that can actually answer all of the clues for you because you're a bit of an idiot, (fashion sense aside) and as the money doubles with each envelope you need to leave your sanity aside because things are about to get hairy.

How far would you be willing to go for money? How much danger would you be willing to face for four hundred dollars? Eight hundred? Sixteen hundred? Are you willing to fight nasty animals? Tromp about in spooky houses? Break and enter? How about murder? The game starts out innocently enough; an envelope here or there with money in it and a clue leading Jane, the local librarian, to the next envelope with double the money. The mysterious individual leaving the envelopes identifies him or her self only as MOG or Master of Games. Jane falls hook line and sinker for the game, not that she's poor and dying for the money (it almost would have been more believable if she had a dying child at home that she needed money to cure or something.) Jane is bored, so very bored, and lonely. She's apparently been without proper companionship for quite some time... so her mysterious benefactor is not only adding a bit of excitement to her life, (along with the cash and danger) but allows her a level of fantasy about a mysterious admirer who just might really love her. But she has Brace – the ridiculously named man she met at the library after receiving her first note... is he in on it? It seems rather convenient that he showed up just after the first note... can she trust him? Lucky for her she met him though because he seems to know the answers to all of MOG's clues, and of course he has to be around for Jane to have all of the necessary Laymon-esque fantasies and sex scenes.

“In the Dark” is a fast read for just under 500 pages; the concept of the game is fun to read about, although you won't be able to guess any of the clues on your own because they all lead to places in the town that the story takes place in. It is fun to see just how far Jane is willing to go for such a pitiful amount of money, true it doubles each time... but I assure you that most of you would have a much higher price to do what she does, if you would be willing to do it at all. As a character, Jane is a complete dolt... she's selfish, immature, and seems to think she's funny when she's more irritating than anything, on top of that she apparently only owns culottes, her panties are always sweaty, her nipples tend to always be sensitive, and she apparently walks around with her boobs way out in front because they get injured or nearly injured about once every 5 pages or so. She's also a ridiculously deep sleeper, without the common sense to change the locks on her doors after someone has been in and out of her house at will. Brace, our token male hero or bad guy in disguise (you never can tell with Laymon) is a Lit professor who is unbelievably tolerant of being slapped, punched, cut, stalked and beaten up for the love of a woman he has known for less than a week.

In the end I guess Laymon had to make Jane a selfish retard because if she had any sense the book would have been far shorter because after the graveyard incident a normal person would have said “screw this” and if Brace wasn't such a forgiving guy, he wouldn't have been able to tell her where to go for all of her clues.

As a book, this was very entertaining, there was some gore which is typical of Laymon, but it doesn't come until the last 150 pages or so of the book. As always with a Laymon book there is plenty of talk of women's anatomy, rape, brutality against women, and lots of sex. Laymon does a wonderful job of making some of the scenes very creepy, what he does a terrible job at is wrapping up the story at the end and giving the reader a satisfying "Oh, I get it" moment. When MOG is revealed there is no explanation in regards to the game, the selection of Jane, or many other strange things. Still, even though the ending left a little to be desired, this was one of Laymon's best books I have read so far. I recommend it for Laymon fans, and to fans of horror that can tolerate a stupid lead character and lots of talk about panties and breast sweat.

Justin says

an ok read, yes all the complaints in this thread (this is cut and posted from a group read discussion) are valid but if you have read any other laymon novels you knew what you where getting into. This one might have overdone it a bit more than his others though. Honestly I enjoyed it for what it was but it was my least favorite laymon novel so far, the first half bored the hell out of me and the final showdown in the church was so drawn out probably in an attempt to have enough action to balance out the incredibly long buildup that I was actually bored with that also. I will round my rating up to 3 stars
