



## Strangewood

*Christopher Golden*

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The young son of a popular children's book author vanishes into the dangerous fictional world his father created. And it's going to take more than a vivid imagination to get him back alive.

First time in trade--the acclaimed contemporary horror classic by Bram Stoker Award-winner Christopher Golden. With a new introduction by the author.

## **Strangewood Details**

Date : Published September 7th 2004 by Roc (first published October 1st 1999)

ISBN : 9780451460035

Author : Christopher Golden

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Genre : Fantasy, Horror, Fiction, Dark Fantasy

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## From Reader Review Strangewood for online ebook

### Erin says

Strangewood is another dark fantasy by Christopher Golden that positively oozes imagination. In a genre that is cluttered with cookie cutter plots, cardboard characters and recycled stories, his editors and publishers must kick up their heels with joy every time he pitches a new story. Because no one is going to accuse Golden of unoriginality.

The fundamental question posed in Strangewood is: do authors create the fantastic worlds and characters they write about, or are they merely borrowing things that already existed?

Thomas is a wildly successful children's fantasy writer, author of the colorful Strangewood series and likened to AA Milne and Frank Baum. But the characters in the real Strangewood -- the land that exists outside the pages of Thomas' books -- is filled with much more malevolent creatures than the Hundred Acre Wood or the Land of Oz. Even worse, Strangewood has fallen into disrepair since Thomas stopped writing about it, and its once friendly creatures are at war.

Thomas is less worried about Strangewood and more worried about his personal life. He's recently divorced and the father of a five-year-old son, Nathan. Unfortunately, the problems in his two worlds collide -- and escalate -- when creatures from his books seem to be stalking him and Nathan. First, Nathan claims his imaginary friend Crabapple has been murdered. Then, Nathan suddenly slips into a coma for which doctors have no explanation -- and awakens in Strangewood. Of course, Thomas is charged with the task of finding his way to Strangewood to save his son from the products of his own imagination. While there, he has to figure out a way to save Strangewood, too.

Much like other books by Golden that I've read recently (The Myth Hunters and The Boys Are Back In Town) I absolutely loved Strangewood. Golden writes children very convincingly -- so convincingly, in fact, I was at times bothered by the pain and emotional distress suffered by Nathan in this book. However, as a mom of a similar five-year-old boy, it probably hit a bit too close to home for me. The Strangewood residents were all fantastically colorful and inventive, and the land itself was just as magical as anything Lewis Carroll dreamed up for his own Wonderland. The only part of the book that fell a bit flat for me was Nathan's mother, Emily, and her awkward love interest, Joe. Ugh. I didn't feel sympathetic about her and didn't find her very relatable as a mother, or believable as a person faced with the situations she encounters. She grated on me so much it was tempting to skim over her plot sections toward the end.

Every book I've read by Golden has been a wonderful journey. I would recommend him to anyone looking for something "different" to read; anyone that loves horror or fantasy but is burned out on fairies and vampires; or anyone that loves the old, classic childhood tales of our youth. You won't be disappointed.

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### Melissa Quezado says

Quando a mágica realmente existe... o livro é bem legal é um pouco triste também. Maa cheio de aventura e prende um pouco o leitor. Em algumas horas fica bem cansativo, mas depois já começa adrenalina de novo. Recomendo!

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### **Robi says**

To be honest, I couldn't get through this book. I stopped around Chapter 7 and handed the book to my roommate. I told him that if he read it and it got better to let me know. I am not to impressed. First of all, it is way too Winnie the pooh for me. I mean the main character, T.J Randall aka Thomas Randall is an author who writes a children's series called Strangewood. The characters are a boy, his best friend, who just happens to be a bear, a grumpy midget , etc. I never understood the hype of Winnie but if you like him maybe you can get through this. I mean instead of bees and their honey you will get bees and their peanut butter but same concept. Okay back to the story, you have Thomas, his ex wife, and their son, Nathan. First couple of chapters is introducing you to the characters and what exactly is going on between them, the divorced couple still trying to cope and their son who they feel they have failed. The ex who is moving on with her life and the husband who still wishes there was a relationship. I can tell you that the book stopped holding my attention when, after Nathan has fallen into a comatose state, which the doctors have no cure or a clue as to why, the author spends three pages in describing the mother, ex wife's, ordeal with her boyfriend and how she feels that even though her son is laying in a bed in a coma she has to have a life. Ummm, okay. Your son is in a coma. Who cares about your life? This is when I shut the book, looked at my roommate and said HERE. If it gets any better let me know but I still doubt I will finish it. I know that others probably enjoyed this book but it was just NOT for me.

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### **Samantha Boyette says**

This is my second time reading this book, it's been ages since the first but I enjoyed it just as much as I remembered. It's another one of those books that captures the way fairy tales originally were. The characters that populate Stragewood are as fanciful and imaginative as anything out of Oz but with a blackness to them.

Blurring the lines between what is imagination and what is real, this book alternates between the real world and that of Strangewood. Neither realm is doing too good. In the real world Thomas Randall's son is in a coma with no medical reason. In Strangewood he's been kidnapped by the evil Jackel Lantern in order to lure Thomas back to Strangewood, a world he didn't create, but which he has molded over the years even though he'd forgotten the truth of it.

Greatly imaginative, dark, wonderful. I still love this book.

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### **P. Aaron Potter says**

I feel like this book accomplished what Lev Grossman was \*trying\* to do in The Magicians.

With the post-Potter resurgence of fantasy, it is natural that adult readers ask what's in the genre for those of us too old and jaded to completely swallow the idealized universe fantasy often offers us? Golden's answer to the question is a picaresque novel in which our adult protagonist returns to the Oz-like fantasy world he thought he had simply imagined when young, this time searching for a real-world, pragmatic purpose to all the spells, magic, and talking animals.

Emotionally, the narrative works a lot better than most takes on the question. The story drags a bit at times, and we tire of our hero's constant questioning of his own mind. Give up and go with it for a while, won't you? You're harshing my suspension of disbelief! Still, the inhabitants of Strangewood are fascinating in a post-Freudian sort of way, and if the ending is a bit melancholy, it's ambiguous enough that we can hope a sequel might offer an optimistic resolution.

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### **Mari says**

The forward to this book intrigued me, and it really did live up to the expectation set by that. I've read several books from Christopher Golden but this one really seemed to show the full extent of his imagination and ability to blend fantasy and real life together into one seamless story.

I would have maybe made the boy a couple years older... it felt really odd at first that the understood Strangewood so well that he knew Y place came after X in Strangewood, yet he wasn't even old enough to read yet... there's a limit to how well a 5 year old could understand the topographical context of what his father was telling him.

It was also a bit of a sad book, more so than other ones. But still, enjoyable. I'm interested now in seeing why a lot of people on here rated it lower than I did.

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### **Kelly says**

Picture with me if you will, a trip that sounded exciting the minute you saw the brochure. You gather with you all the necessary provisions to hold you over for a few hours, and you're off. Except that as soon as you get on the highway you hit traffic. Then it finally lets up and you cruise without problems straight on until you come to your destination, only to find out it closed down. You know that feeling of anger, frustration and utter disappointment you have right now? Well, welcome to my world!

More dark fantasy than horror, the plot reads like a mix between The Neverending Story and a Barker-like rendition of Winnie The Pooh. Although this particular brand of tale has been told a jillion times, golden does add his, albeit unusual, touch to it. With a comic book feel to it, Golden often strays from the plot and delves a little too close for comfort into the often distracted parents. The pace in the book is rambunctious and disorderly. The introduction is painfully slow to only pick up speed just after the beginning of chapter four. Afterwards the pace maintains a rapid flow only to fizzle out at the climax.

The atmosphere is constantly changing and morphing into another mood entirely. It would have even worked if the transitioning had been a little smoother and a lot less obvious. The style of writing is Golden's most endearing and lasting talent. The man can weave a sentence with untouchable finesse. He writes as if he were talking directly to you without presumption or arrogance.

Okay now here is where Golden completely lost me, the characters. The parents come off as self-involved adults who spend more time in their own heads and less focusing on their immediate concern- their son. The characters in Strangeland reminded me so much of Cap'n Crunch, Puff the Magic Dragon and Beauty and

The Beast that I spent half the time laughing. The only authentic player in the story was the boy. Although Golden does seem to have trouble writing adults, he can put on the skin of a child with skillful ease.

My rating? I give it a 2. Next time you're at the library, pick this book up. If nothing else, you'll get a kick out of re-visiting old childhood pals.

-As reviewed for Horror-Web.com

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### **Craig says**

Many authors have played with the idea of literary imaginary worlds interacting with the reality of their author/creators, some with limited or lackluster results, and some with really good stories... Hubbard's Typewriter in the Sky for example. Golden's Strangewood is one of the best; it's an experimental and eerie novel, a very thought-provoking and worthwhile piece, certainly one of his best. I recommend it highly. One interesting little side-note to it is that the main character is Thomas Randall, a writer of children's books, and a few years after it was published Golden used that name as a pseudonym on a series of spooky y.a. novels that he wrote.

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### **Karl says**

This is number 124 of 250 of the leather bound slipcased edition signed and numbered by Christopher Golden.

Forward by Graham Joyce  
Introduction by Bentley Little  
Illustrations by Richard Kirk  
Afterword by Christopher Golden

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### **J.K. Grice says**

I'm a big Christopher Golden fan, but I could not even finish STRANGEWOOD. The story became to ludicrous to suspend disbelief. This book didn't work for me at all.

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### **Erin \*Proud Book Hoarder\* says**

Strangewood, you are a strange one. You sounded so exciting. Blending fantasy with writing and writer lifestyle, making a written world in a book come to life. Instead I was lost and downright bored half the time. The shame of it all. I almost felt annoyed after reading this book because of the letdown I felt after being so excited about the promised adventure that sounded so unique.

We all crave uniqueness after we've read so many books - some genres start blending together since they share and embrace tropes and cliches that readers come to know and expect. You've read one serial killer

story, you recognize twists in others. You've read horror with a particular creature, you're basically an expert on ways to try and make that creature stand out next. You've read so many mysteries, it becomes easier to solve the riddles through spotting red herrings and eyeing the least suspected culprits. Strangewood seemed like a potential breath of fresh air because it seemed like it would be so different from the get-go.

Pacing is a hindrance. The beginning takes too long to start up the demented storyline with drawn out foreshadowing. During this slow buildup I should have warmed to the main characters, but it felt disjointed. The situation with the child custody situation is a personal pet peeve and tugged on my heartstrings, in a bad and distracting way. When the fantasy came into play, it was slow paced and rather humdrum. The invented characters were so unique they were awkward. It felt like childhood characters - demented ones - trying to make themselves work into an adult story where they just didn't.

Christopher Golden is a new-to-me author, and fortunately I did enjoy his writing style. It's direct and evenly flowing. He has imagination for sure, but the pacing needs work, some of the scenes felt awkward, and characters didn't come across as anything more than plot devices with suitable personality quirks just suited to get a plot point of the story started. The biggest letdown was definitely the invented creatures for the story, though. They just don't work.

While I did like a twist at the end, this was a chore to read. I hope I find more success with another Golden book.

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### **C. Lorion says**

Wow! I read Myth Hunters by this author a few years ago and liked it so much I had to try some of his other books, but hadn't bought another one until now and I was not disappointed in the least. Wonderful characters to root for and against, a fantastical other world, and clean, crisp writing. Not too mention an involving storyline that had me crying at the end. Well done, Mr. Golden.

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### **Eduardo says**

A S T O N I S H I N G, both the concept and characters are fully developed in this amazing book, I often found myself either sympathizing or disagreeing with characters and their actions, no one is completely good or bad here, they all have reasons for the things they are doing and although sometimes horrific you find yourself justifying their actions, this makes them very real. Do yourself a favor pick this book up NOW! A word about my edition: This masterpiece is currently out of print in common form, I'm lucky enough to have gotten a Limited Edition published by Earthling ([earthlingpub.com](http://earthlingpub.com)), I have to say it's a thing of beauty; they still have copies so if you are even remotely interested order one up today, you will not regret it.

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### **Cathleen McEachern says**

#### **Awesome adult fantasy**

I literally couldn't put it down. It was like someone (Golden) mixed Labyrinth and Winnie the Pooh, added

cursing and made it for adults. It's fast paced and enthralling. For most of the novel, I kept thinking to myself, "I can't believe this is a book. It's so wonderfully bizarre." That thought would occur simultaneously with, "I can't believe how much I'm enjoying this. I've read a few of Golden's works and this is by far my favorite.

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### **Audrey says**

Gave up on this one about 50 or 60 pages in. Usually I'm not so quick to judge, but I don't have time or energy to waste reading a book that I don't like.

From what I read, the characters are unfortunately very lacking. The plot reminds me of *Widdershins* by Charles de Lint, in that both novels are about people who find that worlds or characters they thought were only parts of their imagination are suddenly coming alive (or were always alive though the creator didn't know it) and giving them hell. I enjoyed *Widdershins*, but there's not enough that I like either about the writing style or characters in Golden's novel to keep me reading something that's even superficially a similar story to de Lint's.

I may give it a try another time, though I doubt it. This is probably one that will get traded in to my favorite used book store.

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