



Beneath the Dark Ice

Greig Beck

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From debut thriller author Greig Beck comes *Beneath the Dark Ice*, a mix of the scientific and the supernatural ...

When a plane crashes into the Antarctic ice, exposing an enormous cave system, a rescue and research team is dispatched. Twenty-four hours later, all contact is lost.

Captain Alex Hunter and his highly trained commandos, along with a team of scientists, are fast tracked to the hot zone to find out what went wrong. Meanwhile, the alluring petrobiologist Aimee Weir is sent to follow up on the detection of a vast underground reservoir. If the unidentified substance proves to be oil, every country in the world will want to know about it—even wage war over it. Or worse.

Once suspended into the caves, Alex, Aimee, and the others can't locate a single survivor—or even a trace of their remains. Nor is there a energy source, only specters of the dead haunting the tunnels. But soon they will discover that something very much alive is brewing beneath the surface. It is a force that dates back to the very dawn of time—an ancient terror that hunts and kills to survive...

Beneath the Dark Ice Details

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From Reader Review Beneath the Dark Ice for online ebook

Oscar says

En la Antártida, se ha estrellado una avioneta, descubriendo con su colisión un laberinto de cuevas ancestrales. Tras este suceso, un grupo de científicos, encabezado por Tom Hendsen, especializado en biología y combustibles fósiles, y 28 boinas verdes, se trasladan a la zona del impacto. Pero horas después se ha perdido el contacto con este grupo. Tras estos sucesos, el gobierno estadounidense decide enviar un grupo más especializado para determinar qué ha sucedido exactamente con los desaparecidos, así como para seguir investigando la posible existencia de fuentes de combustible fósil. Este grupo lo conforman Aimee Weir, una bióloga, alumna de Hendsen, un petrobiólogo, una espeleóloga, un arqueólogo, dos doctores, y cinco soldados HAWC, una unidad de élite capitaneada por Alex Hunter, un supersoldado con el nombre en clave Arcadia. Sin embargo, no estarán preparados para lo que encontrarán a su llegada a la Antártida.

‘Proyecto Arcadia’ (Beneath the Dark Ice, 2009), del australiano Greig Beck, es una espectacular aventura, frenética, que no da respiro al lector en ningún momento, de modo que sus 300 páginas se leen de un tirón. Mezcla de ciencia ficción, tecnothriller, terror y aventura, abunda sobre todo en esta última. Tiene toques de ‘En las montañas de la locura’, de Lovecraft, y también de Jules Verne y H.G. Wells, así como ciertas reminiscencias de películas como ‘Depredador’ o ‘Alien’. Añadir también, que esta es la primera novela de una serie protagonizada por Alex Hunter.

En definitiva, acción, aventuras y algo de terror, en una historia muy disfrutable.

The Pirate Ghost (Formerly known as the Curmudgeon) says

This review is written to satisfy suggested guidelines for "Group Discussion" as a "Group Read" in the Action Adventure Aficionados Discussion Group. It may not conform to a review format that your used to.

1. What did you think of the beginning?

I felt the beginning was a bit rushed, and the sense of urgency whisked us off into the story without much information. That's par for the course with action/adventure stories so that makes it par for the course. I would have liked more information on Aimee and Tom as well as the other "Red-Shirts" in the HAWC team. We got a couple of them hung around well into the story. They kind of seemed like shadows in the beginning.

Still, it was par for the course and went smoothly enough. I'd give it a B- which is well better than passable.

Did it set a tone for an action-packed book?

I think it more set the cadence for the book. This is going to be fast paced, get ready, on your mark GO! I think it left more questions in my mind than answers I might have liked to start the story with.

Did the rest live up to it?

Absolutely not. It just kept getting better and better, so, I'd say the rest exceeded my expectations from the way it started.

2. How about the characters?

(view spoiler) That said, the Human, wounded side of Hunter came across as pretty cool to me. I liked the "overcoming adversity theme."

Aimee could have had a more prominent role, but I loved it when (view spoiler) I was never sure what he relationship with Tom was supposed to be, and, it didn't matter. I approve of the way she was written in general, equally important compared to the other "cubes" and "redshirts" but nobody was on par with Alex Hunter.

Monica - (view spoiler) She's okay.... (blink).

Matt – Cute nerdy kid with a crush on the hottie cave crawler. He worked for me. (view spoiler).

Tank - wish we could have known more about him. He turned out to be a very cool (as in fun to read) character.

Monster – liked the monster. Very scary, cunning, frightening and cool.

Assorted Cubes and Red-shirts – They worked well enough for me.

Mostly the cast worked for me. The HAWCs were interesting and we didn't get to attached to any of them but Tank. I'm not so sure the dude with the katana was worth the image since he didn't get a chance to use it. (view spoiler)

Despite negative comments here, overall, for an Action/Adventure story, I'd give the characters a B.

Were they vivid and real-life?

Alex was "Larger than life" almost like a comic book character and the HAWCs came across as "Shades of Alex Hunter." The rest were very talented and capable people that came across as real life. It was interesting that I learned most of what I liked about them along the way, rather than in a pre-programed data dump as they were introduced. To me that's a good thing. So often the supporting cast are data –dump introduced and cardboard cutout characters by function. These guys were the opposite it seemed like (view spoiler) but that's par for the course.

Did you root for them in their struggles?

Yes. No doubt. I liked the HAWC Team and the Civilian counterparts. The Russians were cool, everybody needs a bad guy and, Russians are into corporate espionage now. Since the Communist Party Government folded, the KGB had to work somewhere. By the middle of the book, I enjoyed knowing everybody (left) whom I was supposed to be cheering for.

3. Overall plotting and storyline--Did this work for you?

Yes. It's pretty standard Action-Adventure fare and it worked well. Kind of Matt Riely's Ice Station meets

Rollins Subterranean yet it managed to forge new ground with the monster. The pace was pretty fast and there was a lot of action. The sub-plot of Alex Hunter wasn't as impressive (that alone gets maybe a C+ or a B- from me) but taken with the rest of it I'd give it a solid B-B+ which, for me compares nicely with other books from the same genre.

There could have been a little more complexity, but, in general I'm not sure where or how. There was a sub-plot we didn't get fully explained with the Russians (not the Alex-Rostov story but something else) and, it went okay. The scientific Data supports Antarctica's ice cap melting until the land beneath was exposed, the rest of it, why not? Most A/A writers have written something like that in a story somewhere. I wanted more information because I liked what I read so, that's one of those good things that sounds bad coming from me.

What did you think of the story?

I think it's a good fun Action Adventure story told in a more traditional-modern action-adventure style that will likely never get old. At times it read like a comic book, in ways that are good if you like comic books (which I do) in others it reminded me of a host of sci-fi movies of similar plot and make up. The pace was fast and the villains scary-fun both beasties and humans. I could have lived without Super-Alex, but even that was well balanced by such a powerful monster that kept them all on the run. I think it qualifies for the terms "adrenalin pumping and heart racing" adventure story. There is room to grow Alex Hunter's story in both directions (before and after this one) and, an opportunity to make a pitch for TBI in military veterans getting the care that they need mixed into a story that anyone who likes action stories can enjoy.

The love-story angle was too "light" and unresolved, it was working for me, but for some reason, I just can't see Alex Hunter on a date. So, if you're in the "yuk, romance, ew-girl-stuff club with Spanky and Alfalfa (yes, that's a "Little Rascals" reference not one for "kinky health food") this will not bother you. If you have a soft chewy caramel center, you might think this left some room for romance without it being intrusive.

Fun story, make a good show.

4. Any take home themes you got from this book?

Sexy hard bodied young people in spandex can work anywhere...even in the arctic!

Aside from that, I don't know about any themes. I think there is room for a "wounded warrior" theme with Alex Hunter, but I didn't get that here. Hell, this is Action Adventure pseudo-sci-fi who needs a message?

5. What did you like best about this book?

The writing. Specifically, I liked the way the characters grew into people as I read it even though it started with cardboard cut outs. By mid book the main characters separated themselves from the Cubes into the "Red-Shirts" and I liked that I was surprised who was left at the 75% mark.

Least?

That's hard to say. I can comment negatively on all sorts of stuff, but the truth is nothing stands out as "I can't stand it bad." Probably I would say Alex Hunter's Super-Human-ness. I think it might have also made room for a more complete and salient relationship between Alex Hunter and Aimee.

Why?

It wasn't necessary. He could have managed everything he managed if he was just a very savvy, alert, intelligent (wounded) special forces soldier. I just felt the hints at romance were kind of revealed as a tease. Preston and Childs proved that you can have sexy characters, no sex and no romantic relationships and still get your story to work great in Reliquary. I don't like the hints. I don't mind Romance. I don't need it in an AA story. I enjoy it if it's there. Just don't tease the bears.

6. Overall rating out of 5 stars?

Let's see.. hmm.... Carry the one... divide by... add in bonus points (view spoiler) so... I'll mark it at 4 stars (for the benefit of the doubt) and rate it at 3.5. (which is a good score from me, if you have followed my reviews.)

It was a lot of fun to read and, not strikingly different than other books in the same genre. A lot of fun goes a long way. I'm up for the next one. (I should also note that I see lots of room for the characters to grow and become very interesting in the next book(s)...the few that are left that is.
(view spoiler)

3.5 Stars (rate at 4 for lots of potential)

7. Would you read any other books from this author?

Definitely. I'd like to see where this goes for at least another book or so.

8. Books like this you'd recommend?

This is in keeping with Matthew Riely's Scarecrow series, James Rollins Sigma Force (though not as complicated) and Andy McDermott's Atlantis series. It has potential to lean towards more military oriented action adventure stories like Ludlum and Lynds Code Red One series or more espionage related stories but I would point out that it's not as "complicated" in the plot department as those guys.

Bottom line, despite what this might look like, I liked the book. It's an easy read, professional publisher quality (which means I don't see much of a distinction between being an I-pub and any other book run through the publishing mill). It has a fast pace and fun characters and it's really fun to read.

Trish says

Oh boy. *2.5 stars, very generously rounded up*

People who know me and my reading habits a little also know that I started liking military thrillers / military scifi as soon as I gave the genre a chance. This was largely thanks to Matthew Reilly, an Australian author who likes his action a liiiittle over the top but still manages to create cool treasure hunts or fun fighting sequences.

I was told that Greig Beck is like Matthew Reilly and together with the premise of this book (ancient ruins under Antarctica, a VERY old monster lurking there), I was sold. Sadly, it was a complete let-down.

It wasn't BAD per se (in fact, it was still much better than the other military sci-fi book I read this year), but

everything just left me cold. Nothing could move me (in a positive way), I didn't like ANY of the characters, the monster was just MEH and I spotted quite a number of things that were either flat-out wrong (things even I know about so an author should know these things too, especially after some research) or supposed to show a character's ignorance - I'm still not entirely sure which of the two.

Anyway, this is a story about Alex Hunter, a member of the elite American special forces team HAWCs (they recruit from the best special forces units and are therefore the uber-special-forces-team because the SEALs or Delta aren't already special enough). Alex has a problem because after an incident in the past (as touched upon in the novella I read prior to this novel), he is left with an increasing rage (he was always "temperamental" but now it's getting out of hand) and some superpowers like extremely heightened senses, super strength etc.

After a corporate jet crashes in the Antarctic, revealing a vast underground system of caverns, he and his team accompany a team of scientists that investigates the crash site after the initial search-and-rescue team has vanished without a trace. But what they find in the cave beneath Antarctica is even worse than the Russian assassin on Alex's heels (we met this lovely man in the afore-mentioned novella too).

Several things irked me especially:

1) The author didn't bother to research and correctly name tier 1 military groups in the US (the Rangers, for example, are NOT tier 1 but at least one former Ranger is a member of HAWCs despite them only recruiting from tier 1 units).

2) Either a name from the novella was recycled or we're actually talking about the same person who has gotten a different background here as opposed to the novella (I'm talking about (view spoiler)).

3) The scientists portrayed in this have GOT to be the stupidest smart people on the planet. I mean, I get (view spoiler).

4) EVERYONE is a stereo-type and a really bad / unrealistic one at times even. These types of books always have at least some generic characters but even those can be fun if done right. These weren't done right. The soldiers were downright incompetent. Even if they had been fresh recruits, their behaviour would have been a bad joke. Just plain STUPID.

The Russians too, by the way. (view spoiler).

5) The monster. Another big sigh. I like monsters. I like Jules Verne. I like prehistoric animals that have somehow survived even if the science is murky. But this thing ... (view spoiler) just too much at the same time.

6) Alex. I get that we need an indestructible superhero. Heck, I enjoyed all those movies with Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone and others so I don't really care about a realistic plot. But there were so many lines about this guy that just threw me right out of the story. Like him having only been "average" before the superpowers thing - then why the hell did he get his own team??? Or how he responds to the constant flirting - is what gave him those superpowers a kind of super-viagra too (it wasn't actually that bad but everytime it was even only brushed upon, I immediately got annoyed as hell, also because it seemed the author wanted to cover all his bases and only therefore included it in the book)???

7) (view spoiler)

Maybe it was the wooden dialogues or the horrible character interactions. I don't know. In any case, there was no emotional impact (and we're talking about me, the emotional fluffball).

So while lots of people died - and not in nice ways - even the way they died didn't feel right to me at times.
feels cheated

I liked the pseudo-political commentary about fossil fuels and the international affairs (the different plots of the countries) as well as the claustrophobic feel of the cave/tunnels when they were being hunted. Moreover, I'm a sucker for Olmec and Mayan legends, and versions of the Atlantis and Kraken myths. Since I like

archeology and pseudo-science in such books (the more accurate, the better however, and the author didn't always get evolutionary processes right), I also liked the bit about the cephalopods in general as well as the whole discovery/exploration angle (it reminded me a bit of the set-up for the "Alien vs Predator" movie which I also enjoyed), but that alone just wasn't enough to make me really enjoy this.

Bottom line: the author mentioned in the intro that he got compared to, amongst others, Jules Verne. Well, a monster doesn't make you Jules Verne. Sorry. JV was a master in getting technical stuff right so the readers almost couldn't distinguish between reality and fiction, enabling them to immerse themselves so much in those stories. Greig Beck got lots of technical stuff plain wrong (simple stuff that would have been very quick and easy to research). A real shame.

Stefan Svartling says

This was actually quite good. Interesting story, easy reading and a lot of suspense. A bit too much action though.

Raj says

Meet Alex Hunter! The new Super-genetically-modified-soldier who leads a super secret rescue-cum-scientific mission across (and beneath) the Antarctic ice.

I must say that this book borrows elements - good ones - from a plethora of great action/adventure books I've read (James Rollins' books come to mind) , and amalgamates into one mostly-entertaining ride. Considering it was the Writer's first book, I'll give him leverage that despite several points where I just wanted to give up, I never did and read my way till the end. Can't call it a literary classic, but it achieved its purpose and had me mostly-captivated till the end. I'm not sure I'll read the next installment in the series - the premise certainly sounds interesting though!

Go for it as a break from all the deep stuff you've been reading. I give it a 3.5 star rating.

Darren Manson says

I remember first looking for a new author and I read the back of under the dark ice.

Having been an avid reader of another Australian author I thought at first glance there were some comparisons to another book based in Antarctica and so, I put the book back on the shelf for about another 12 months or more.

Then out of intrigue I finally bought it. (well actually more boredom from no other books that interest me, but anyway.)

Wow. What a great first book. I quickly dismissed any previous assumptions I held in regards to the content.

I have now read your books a number of times and am waiting excitedly for your next instalment.

I disagree with some of the reviews. i dont buy a FICTION book to be dazzled by technical exactness.

I buy fiction for a quick escape from reality and this book did exactly that.

I think the character development has come with the next books and for someone looking for a great read then i recommend this whole heartily.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

Let me preface this review by saying that one of my favorite books of all time is an action/adventure novel set in Antarctica. So I was trying so hard not to compare them. Trying hard (sighs dramatically)!

When you read a new author, there is always that 'getting to know each other' period that can at times be rough. With this book, it was a bit rough. Wasn't sure about the way he told his story. I couldn't get a feel for the characters. Some felt a little thin to me. I told myself to give it a chance. Glad I did. But as I kept reading, I got drawn deeper into this story. This is one of those 'wait for it' type reads. And yes, Beck does deliver.

Warning to the Wise: Stay out of deep caves!

Oh man. It just kept getting worse. I really have an issue with creepy crawly stuff and Beck kept it coming. I had no idea that the storyline would go in this direction. This is one of those books where I was highly vocal as I read. A whole chorus of "Ugh! Yuck! OMG! Ick! That's nasty." You get the idea. I'm a bit claustrophobic and since I don't like creepy-crawly stuff, you definitely won't catch me going into some prehistoric cave after reading this book. I mean, I love animals and nature, but this place was freaky! I like that uncrossable barrier between hidden ecosystems in which humans are scrumptious prey. Very much, thank you! My innate fear of contagion was going crazy in that place!

Alex Hunter. He's the man!

While my true Special Forces literary husband will always be Shane "Scarecrow" Schofield, I have to say that Alex is pretty cool. I love his super-abilities. And he's a very humble kind of guy. He's all about the mission, and he is a protector. Honorable. He's not on some ego trip. I even liked how he had to stop himself from hulking out. That was kind of different--in a good way. I will be reading more of his adventures.

Man, the body count!

This is one of those books where people are dying right and left. And in nasty ways. Oh, that poor guy with the you know whats eating him up. Ugh! It sucked! I liked a lot of characters who didn't make it. And that tool, you know which one I meant, he caused a particularly painful death for one of the guys. He bit the dust in a nasty way, so he didn't get off scot-free. But still, the loser! This is one of those books that you shouldn't get attached to any characters, 'cause you never know....

Cold Settings Are Awesome!

I love cold weather and I have this strange love for Antarctica. I was excited to read another book set there. This book is kind of a cheat in that regard. Because they end up underground and it's warm and like a tropical type (in a really strange way) ecosystem, we don't get a lot of cold weather action. In a way that was

cool, because I was not allowed to draw comparisons to my beloved book of all books. If you know me, you know which book I am talking about.

The Adversaries

Don't get me wrong. I love me some Russian characters. But that Uli is such a jerk. I couldn't stand him. A sadistic, evil, horrible, thug. He lacked some depth for me, and I couldn't even think he was a cool villain. He was just a jerk. Like a particularly psychotic schoolyard bully. The whole Russian part didn't really do much for me anyway. I think that it did add some tension to the story, but fundamentally, this is more of a man versus nature conflict story. That part got my attention much more. Ugh, huge slug-monsters and worms. Ick!

Overall Thoughts

This was a good action/adventure novel. While not perfect, it has some things to commend it, namely, creeptastic moments where the characters are pitted against icky prehistoric gross monsters. I liked the high-tech weaponry, especially that gas-projectile gun (very cool). And a pretty cool lead with some awesome abilities. Aimee was very likable too. She knew her stuff and her personality was good. I will read more of this author, and stay my butt out of deep, subterranean caves!

Recommend it with reservations!

Rizwan says

Its an okay adventure thriller, not bad, but nothing of greatness or even very good also. In the middle the story became a bit boring and one note for me, caving caving caving tracking tracking tracking... I had to almost steel myself to finish it (I always try to finish a book after I started it). Although I have to say the climax was better than the middle parts which is why it was worth the time, and at least one unexpected death surprised me.

The various research-based and adventure-based writings of Beck were good, but the characterizations, character-interactions and dialogs felt too wooden and weak, and he couldn't always provided the necessary emotional impacts that were needed, specially about the deaths of the side-characters, so all those gruesome deaths didn't have much impact on me which definitely should've been otherwise. The author drawn out the darkness, danger, terror and sheer claustrophobia of the dark underground caves & tunnels very well, as well as the thrills, chills and horrors of the relentless pursuit and attacks of that terrifying giant prehistoric squid-like creature... But I really missed a proper human villain and action through out the story.

As the central character, Captain Alex Hunter was not bad, he's a super-soldier with many superpowered abilities just like Marvel's Captain America, added with Spideysense like Spider-Man's and even a little regenerative ability from Wolverine thrown in the mix. Still the character was not that interesting, too wooden for my taste.

I don't know if this is the first book by Beck, if it was I hope he overcame these small problems in the next books. Over all an okay timepass adventure in my opinion. 3.5 out of 5 stars.

Ninoska Goris says

Español - English

El jet privado de un millonario cae en el Antártico y abre la entrada a una cueva subglacial de millones de años. Un grupo va a rescatarlo, pero también a investigar las posibilidades de que exista petróleo dentro. Todos desaparecen sin dejar rastro.

Al designar al personal del nuevo grupo eligen a los mejores en sus áreas y para dirigir la expedición se ha elegido no menos que a Alex Hunter, nombre en clave Arcadia.

Al adentrarse en la cueva Alex Hunter se da cuenta que no están solos. La fauna que habita en estas cuevas ha tenido millones de años para evolucionar y el resultado es escalofriante.

Este libro está lleno de clichés y me encantan! Esta lleno de acción. No te aburrirá un solo segundo.

Mi única queja es el epílogo con el cliff hanger para el segundo libro. No era necesario. Ya me tenían atrapada.

???

A millionaire's private jet crashes into the Antarctic and opens an entrance to a million-years-old subglacial cave. A group is going to rescue them, but also to investigate the possibilities that there is oil inside. All of them disappear without a trace.

In designating the staff of the new group they choose the best ones in their areas and to lead the expedition no less than Alex Hunter, codenamed Arcadia, has been chosen.

As they enter the cave Alex Hunter realizes that they are not alone. The fauna that inhabits these caves has had millions of years to evolve and the result is creepy.

This book is full of clichés and I love it! It is full of action. It will not bore you for a second.

My only complaint is the epilogue with the cliff hanger for the second book. It was not necessary. You already had me trapped.

?Susan? says

This is a fast action thriller that if you are going to enjoy you must remember that it is fiction not science. When a group of scientists and special ops officers go missing in the artic while on a discovery mission, another and the next best crew are sent after them on a rescue/recovery mission.

What starts out as a rescue quickly becomes an adventure of survival miles under the ice cap. The scientists and soldiers alike are amazed and horrified by the entities they encounter, many who may have, most likely, not seen the light of day for eons. Jurassic Park in the Dark is what it reminded me of, a very primitive place where man is not the top of the food chain.

If you can check science at the door and open your mind to a 007 like character, this expedition may be for you.

Rizwan says

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Ausjim says

I have several complaints about this book. Firstly the author displays a severe lack of knowledge in regards to the technical detail he raises in the book. Second a complete lack of knowledge of military structure in regards to the relationship between different units and ranks. Third I found the writing style very start stop, with jarring pauses in the story for clumsy descriptive moments (think Fennimore Coopers last of the Mohicans). Fourth there were several pretty illogical leaps.

In terms of the third complaint, I suppose that is something that will improve as he writes more novels. In regards to my first and second however, I found it pretty insulting really. You could go to a public library and find out what the relationship is between Navy SEALs and Green Berets. Instead he just made up some 'level of training' trash, where SF are at 2nd level and when you progress to some other level you become a SEAL. Just ridiculous.

Technical descriptions of weapons systems showed a parroting of technical information with no actual understanding of what

It meant. Understanding of evolutionary processes were also poor and at times incorrect.

I listened to this as an audio book which included an authors intro. He mentioned in that that he had been compared to Jules Verne. Well, one thing Verne was exceptional at was a technical understanding of that of which he wrote. This kind of accuracy allows the reader to suspend disbelief for the fantastic parts as they fit into an otherwise believable world. Beck fails completely at this. By giving a fantastic (and farcical) description of things that are real and require no imagination, when he gets to the fantastic parts I've already said "this guy doesn't know what he's talking about" and he leaves me wondering why I would like to listen to the imaginings of someone who understands so little of which he writes.

Veronique says

3.5

Are you in need of an adventure story? Well, this first novel relating Alex Hunter's exploits should hit the spot. We have thrilling action scenes, each more convoluted than the previous one, extreme conditions, and danger lurking everywhere.

Beck obviously loved the old classics from Edgar Rice Burroughs, Jules Verne and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, with a pinch of Lovecraft, and used all of this, adding a little sprinkling of scifi/horror and a lot of military story. It creates an explosive mixture, but you'll need to suspend your disbelief in order to enjoy it.

All the characters are stereotyped and yet, you can't help but warm up to this mottled crew (not Silex, of course) and wonder who is going to survive. In a similar fashion to all those monster and disaster films, you know people are going to be picked one by one, but in what order and in what manner is still compelling. The plot is thin too but really I didn't mind - I was having too much fun...

N.B. I do recommend to read the prequel novella - Arcadian Genesis - about Alex as it will make his skills more 'believable', ish :O)

Bradley says

Technothriller gun-porn for people who like ancient monsters.

Does it sound like it's up your alley? Then good, this one's pretty decent at what it does. Plenty of action, some political commentary, but what it really has a lot of is super-competence and/or super-powers for its main character.

Alex is a freak of nature thanks to that bullet in his brain. Woo!

Now let's keep him in charge of his team of crack commandos and watch as the scientists they're protecting die in horrible ways deep in the ice. Woo!

Like I said, if this is your cup of tea, it's pretty decent.

If you like more ideas in your SF or you want more magic in your gun-fantasy or if you want sheer terror in your horror, you might want to look a little further afield. This book covers a lot of rather a lot of familiar

territory. Even the main characters fit the mold perfectly. There's not a lot of surprises to behold. At all.

But it's Gun-Porn! Woo! It's all about setting the right expectations. :)

David Sven says

1 Star!!! This book is ridiculous! The premise is just BS!

I mean, sure, I can imagine how having a bullet lodged in your head might unlock neural pathways so instead of using 10% of your brain (if you believe that myth) you're using a whole lot more and maybe that would be very useful as a soldier. Might even amp up the aggression so high you have to go around sniffing green apples to calm down. Yeah - green apples work...apparently. And maybe you could possibly call up enough adrenaline at will to exert a bit more strength and speed. But come on! You're still flesh and blood Alex Hunter! If you had the strength to exert enough force to shift that immovable boulder your bones would still shatter before the rock moves! And seeing in the dark? Like Riddick?

Ok Greig Beck - I'll give you 1.5 stars for making me associate super soldier Alex Hunter with Riddick.

So a plane crashes in Antarctica, making a big hole which reveals a large underground cave system. The US, are keen on the possibility of oil - because there won't be any more oil in ten years right? So not keen on being just over a decade away from driving Flinstones style, the US send in a search and rescue along with a team of scientists to scout about for oil. And then Nada - Nobody hears from them again.

So then they send in the best of the best - Alex (Riddick) Hunter and his Team of elite badasses to try and work out what made people disappear - oh, and don't forget the second team of scientists to go look for oil - strictly as a secondary objective of course.

And then the Russians send in there super soldiers because they want to make sure the Americans run out of oil before they do so they don't want any new oil being discovered. And then in a dozen years they can laugh at the yanks and say "Ha Ha! We have better cars than you do even if the manuals in Russian cars all begin with "Before starting make sure you tighten all nuts and bolts." All good so far.

And then they encounter THIS!

YEAH BABY!!! That bumps you to 2 Stars!

I can't believe I finished this book. As stupid as the premise of Alex Hunter super soldier was I was glued to the pages. I tried to pull my face away but it was stuck to the pages. The story hooked me in with it's tentacles and sucked me into it's maw! The pacing was frenetic. Hardly any dull spots - maybe the Journey to the Centre of the Earth section where they wander about smelling the blood worms was slow for two seconds. But I finished the book. How did that happen?

This is ridiculous. I'm even thinking about reading the next book - that's how ridiculous things have gotten.

That's gotta be worth a grudging

3 stars
