



# Chimera

*Mira Grant*

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## **Chimera** Mira Grant

The final book in Mira Grant's terrifying Parasitology trilogy.

The outbreak has spread, tearing apart the foundations of society, as implanted tapeworms have turned their human hosts into a seemingly mindless mob.

Sal and her family are trapped between bad and worse, and must find a way to compromise between the two sides of their nature before the battle becomes large enough to destroy humanity, and everything that humanity has built...including the chimera.

The broken doors are closing. Can Sal make it home?

## **Chimera Details**

Date : Published November 24th 2015 by Orbit

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Author : Mira Grant

Format : Hardcover 496 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Horror, Zombies, Fiction, Dystopia

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# From Reader Review Chimera for online ebook

## Bradley says

Okay, there's still no zombies in this book, not that I was actually expecting any, but all those Throwbacks are such a close fit, I just had to add the descriptor.

How did the trilogy end? Was it a satisfying ride? Did it fulfill all my expectations?

It was okay. It didn't quite wow me like Newsflesh did. I enjoyed the feel of falling deeper into Sal's viewpoint all the way from book one and having a slow burn, and it did promise to have a pretty interesting finale. So now that I've made it through book three, did it fill the promise?

Yes, and no. I got the feeling that the story was there and the expected grandness of destruction was also there, but at the same time, it just wasn't *pulled off*.

It didn't suck. Loose ends were picked up. Sal got to confront or engage with all the interested parties, and no one was left unscathed. She wasn't a real fighter, after all, and being a family-gal will only get her a so-so epic rating, but I still feel like the series could have shined *more*.

Perhaps I didn't like the feeling that the entire tale felt like we were being pulled from one camp to another like the a tide, or like the we just had to touch all the bases once before settling on one final solution. It simply didn't wow me, but it did give me some closure, and for that, I'm grateful.

I love my parasites. Brain parasites are always going to be precious to me. I just wish... well, I just wish that Tansy had been allowed to grow and flourish in the series. She's just NOT INTERESTING as a coma victim. Sorry. She was so damn awesome, too. I never wanted to have her live out her days on the page as the victim. She had so much LIFE in her!

\*sigh\* Could my one complaint drag down the enjoyment of the entire novel? Or even two novels?

Possibly. Likely, even. \*sigh\*

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## ? Kimberly says

Grant takes us into the not so distant future, introduces us to a world on the cutting edge of medical technology, and shows us how miracle medical cures could be society's downfall. Eerily realistic it highlighted financial greed, humanity's search for the magic pill and ponders how far in the name of science is too far.

Since the beginning of the trilogy Grant has presented multiple perspectives some in diary format, audio messages, and others in scientific documents. Throughout the trilogy, we have watched the transformation and growth of protagonist Sal as she finds herself caught on both sides of this war. We witness good characters, greedy characters, sympathetic characters and villains who will make you shiver. Human and parasites alike fall into these categories. I love that Grant did not make this a battle against good and evil, but gave it a realistic perspective where both sides need to compromise.

One of the things that impressed me with the trilogy and particularly Chimera is that Grant blurs the lines between humans and tapeworms. The characters played a large role in this transformation. Sal in particular as well as her brother Adam and her sister Tansy changed my perspective. While this is classified as horror and yes in the beginning, I shivered it slowly became more about the characters and made me ponder humanity's advancement. Could the ultimate medical cure be our downfall? Is our search for eternal youth, diet pills and carefree eating going to be our undoing?

Grant once again weaves in humor, tender moments and surprises that tugged at my heartstrings and made me giggle. She highlights strong characters who can accept and those whom are close minded presenting a realistic look at what if. She made me care and I became completely engrossed in the outcome. I feared for them, cried for them, loathed others, and damn it she made the unthinkable loveable.

"Sometimes I miss lying to myself about the things that make my life complicated."-SAL

"Wow"said Fishy. "I don't think I heard a single full stop in there. You know, when you start talking entirely in comma splices, you're probably ready for a time-out and a tranquilizer."

For fans of the trilogy Chimera packs a punch and delivers a nail-biting final book with twists and turns before closing with an open-ending that left me deeply satisfied. Of course, it also left room for novellas in this world, something Grant does these marvelously and I gobble them up like candy. If you read this Ms. Grant, I would like Fishy's story and for the love of all that is holy, I need a copy of Don't Go Out Alone. Copy provided by publisher. This review was originally posted on Caffeinated Book Reviewer

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## **Lindsay says**

I've not been terribly excited about this trilogy. It's overlong and there are no twists anywhere.

Sal is back with her father and the evil head of Symbogen, having given herself up so that her fiance and a friend can escape. Meanwhile, the megalomaniac tapeworm\* Sherman has enacted his master plan and infected the water supply with clones of Sal's tapeworm having removed her personality information and made it even more invasive. So Sal needs to escape the military version of the CDC and get back to Dr Cale so that they can stop Sherman somehow!

Like the previous books this is about several groups of people driven by their own agendas and morals, and the various attempts by them to control Sal and the other groups. It's also about endless repetition of Sal wanting everyone to survive and loving everyone, including the Sleepwalkers. To her credit, this book is where she comes into her own and actually takes some control of this stuff, but she's still more at the mercy of the other groups than directing their action.

The ending is ok, but like Sal, I wanted a bit more of an *ending* for at least one character.

\* Ok, I got to use "megalomaniac tapeworm" in a sentence. Bonus star!

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## **Kerri (Book Hoarder) says**

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## **Erin (PT) says**

To be honest, though I've given each book a decent rating, I've struggled with this trilogy a lot, and that makes it hard to gauge quite how I feel about it, and this final novel. I read this with my husband, and in the subsequent discussion after reading, we really crystallized some why I had such a hard time.

First of all, the trilogy was supposed to be a duology. I think it shows. Each novel of the trilogy had a certain feeling of flabbiness to it, too much stuff happening that felt like it went nowhere or took too long to get where it was going. It would've been so much better if it had been tightened up into just two books.

Secondly, I think it's a mash-up of genres that don't necessarily work that well together? That is, apocalyptic fic and more-or-less zombie apocalypse fic create certain expectations about what kind of story this is going to be. But really, this is more a coming-of-age story. To be fair to Grant, it would be really difficult to write the coming-of-age story of a body-possessing tapeworm without the backdrop she's given us, but it still wasn't what I was expecting and I don't know how well it mashes up together.

Because my biggest problem throughout and especially in *Chimera* is that I spent most of it not really knowing where it was going. That's not to say I was expecting--or wanting--predictability. I don't. I always give higher credit to stories that I have no idea where they'll end up. But I want to know, in broad strokes, what kind of story I'm reading. The expectations of an apocalyptic story are fundamentally different than those of a coming of age story and if I go into it expecting one, it's going to ruin my experience of the other. It feels like a bait and switch.

Throughout the trilogy, we know this apocalypse is happening and that there are two sides, the tapeworms and the humans. There's a conflict there. However, Sal spends most of her time and thoughts being neutral in this conflict, and she spends a lot of her time and loyalty with Dr. Cale who is also neutral. And Sal--and to a greater or lesser extent, Dr. Cale and crew--is our protagonist and presented as "the right side". And, as a result, it doesn't seem to MATTER much who wins in this conflict. So as I said before, it makes me, as the reader, wonder, "Okay, well, what AM I supposed to care about?" And I don't think it's really clear enough. Not until around two-thirds of the way through *Chimera*, when Sal finally has a clear goal and makes a clear decision about who and what she's supporting.

Grant is an excellent writer; in the microcosm, I found the story engrossing. When I was reading, I found myself swept up in it and entertained. But when I put it down, I found myself without a whole lot of desire to pick it up again, and I read a number of other things in the course of reading this. It's a difficult thing to resolve and leaves me still very conflicted about the story as a whole.

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## **Samantha says**

By the end of book three I wanted to throw the book at Grant every time the words "broken doors" popped up. It got to be so annoyingly repetitive. Broken doors. Broken doors. Broken. Doors. BROKEN DOORS! DO YOU GET THE MESSAGE?! DO YOU???

Aside from that, here are some other issues I have with this book/series: Sal is a semi-annoying almost

overly moralist character. (These books should have been about Tansy. That would have been a series worth reading!) Also the question of the sleepwalkers/throwbacks shambling around muttering "Sal" was never answered or explained in a satisfactory manner, so why bother including it numerous times? Juniper seemed like an unnecessary and failed attempt to tug at some heart strings even though she was primarily a toss away character... it was very odd.

While something about this book was obviously compelling enough to entice me to finish the series, it is hands down Grant/McGuire's worst work. I would under no circumstances recommend this to any of my friends.

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## **karen says**

*Forgiveness was for people who didn't have as much to lose.*

this is the third part in mira grant's parasitology trilogy. but hopefully, fingers crossed, not the end of the *story*. not that it doesn't wrap up well - it ends in a satisfying place, but as any mira grant fan knows, there's always more to the story than can fit comfortably in a trilogy. and that's why she has written 6 novellas and short stories branching out from her newflesh series, with a fourth, full-length standalone book to be published in 2016 (!!!!yayyyyy!!!!!!) and just because she hasn't yet written any parasitology offshoots, some of us have our fingers crossed into little twisty finger-tangles hoping this series will eventually get the same treatment. (and i'm also hoping for a published, illustrated version of *Don't Go Out Alone* with the same desperate hopefulness i have for the publication of the graphic novel from Station Eleven)

because grant writes characters and situations i never want to see the end of.

and i'm not the only one, as is clear by lena's comment in the thread: *Have you started? How's it going? How much Tansy is there? I need Tansy!!!* to answer that question, not that much. and it's ... complicated. if tansy is your favorite character in these books (and she should be, or there's something wrong with you), you might want to go back and reread the first two, because her adorable badassery is not a part of the story here. again, it's ... complicated.

this is still a great book, and it has many of the elements you expect from a book in this series - the concept that "person" doesn't always mean "human," the idea of moral subjectivity; that perspective goes a long way towards determining good and evil - *How many people's motives didn't match up with what I'd taken for their actions? How many villains were the heroes of their own stories?*, the quirky but oh-so-true observations of someone with a unique perception of the human body - *Teeth always felt so big when you touched them with a tongue, and so small when you touched them with a finger*, the humor, and above all - survival.

*Being a monster is not the same as being a bad person. It just means you're willing to eat the world if that's what you have to do to keep yourself alive.*

there's plenty of harrowing action (k-mart is always terrifying in books like this), much more character development, a chess game-ish juggling of risk and situational trust and unexpected alliances, and some new developments on the sleepwalker front:

(view spoiler)

overall, i did not love this trilogy as much as i loved the newsflesh series. i love the concept like crazy - it is completely original and offers fascinating possibilities and discussion-potential, but sal is not a character i've ever felt cuddly towards. i love her observations and i love sal-and-nathan, but this series has always been more about the ideas and the secondary characters for me. which, when you take tansy out of the picture, just leaves a giant tansy-shaped hole in my heart. this is definitely a more cerebral/philosophical trilogy than the "oh my god i love every single character and fear for them in every single chapter" emotional roller coaster of newsflesh. which ironically, makes me want parasitology e-novellas even more, since they aren't usually about the "stars," but are more about the situation, from new perspectives, and the situation is fantastic.

bottom line - i love mira grant with all of my heart and whether she writes about zombies or the thing this book is about, or mermaids, or beecher/keller fanfic (please please please!!) i will read it and read it enthusiastically. just bring it to me.

\*\*\*\*\*

best birthday week ever!

\*\*\*\*\*

november is the cruelest month...

although at least i will have something to be thankful for while i'm cramming turkey into my face.

come to my blog!

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## Eric says

I feel really bad about this but apparently that time has come where I now misplace my love of one theme/book onto another. Not that I was uninterested in the story of Sal and her badassness but really there was a book about 7 years ago that focused on alien "worms" coming and taking over the world and "The Resistance" and the struggle with going native. An oversimplification? Maybe, but I loved that book. I want more of that book. Sadly, Twilight seems to be the only cash cow in her mind :(

So back to the book in hand. I still very much enjoyed it but once I realized what was happening something was lost. I couldn't look at it the same way anymore. Some little things fell by the wayside (how exactly did Juniper exist??) and honestly what I'd really really like is a full version of "Don't Go Out Alone".

Overall I was intrigued and entertained but if I am going to recommend any of the authors work I am still going to fall back on Feed or Apocalypse Scenario #683: The Box (cause frankly that little short story still gives me nightmares). Alright back to work. Hope you all are well. Be sure to take your meds today and don't be lazy about it. Peace.

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## **Christina (A Reader of Fictions) says**

If I wanted to, I could probably write a long rant about *Chimera* and *Parasitology* as a whole. But I'm too disappointed and I just don't fucking care enough, which is really the biggest problem. After finally being won over by book one, books two and three frustrated me no end, and I'm left just glad that it's over.

The plot of both *Symbiont* and *Chimera* can be summed up in one word: kidnapping. For 1000 pages, someone is always getting kidnapped. Then they have to go rescue them. Then they're all so happy to be together again for like two chapters. Then someone gets kidnapped. Usually it's Sal, but sometimes it's other people for variety (see: Tansy, see most of Dr. Cale's team). I'm sick of the kidnapping, and I'm sick of Sal's stupid sacrificial rescue plans. I'm sick of it all.

After *Parasite*, I was riding high. I loved the whole cast so much. That held in through much of *Symbiont*, but by just a bit of the way into *Chimera*, I no longer gave a shit about anyone. There's no character development. They all end the same way they were at the start. Basically the only change anyone goes through is Sal finding a chimera kid and deciding she has major mom feels. OH BOY WHAT A NECESSARY PLOT ELEMENT. The villains are boring and flat. The heroes are too.

Read the hell out of *Newsflesh*. Maybe don't read this.

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## **SmartBitches says**

### **Full review at Smart Bitches, Trashy Books**

*Chimera* is the final book in the *Parasitology* Trilogy by Mira Grant. Having reviewed the first two books, *Parasite* and *Symbiont*, I felt obligated to read and review the conclusion.

Technically, this review is a DNF because I read the first 70 pages, threw a fit, and then skipped around to get the feel of the rest of the book. I read large chunks of the middle as well as the last eighty pages, but I never read the entire book cover to cover. This book was such a disappointment, not just because it was bad, but also because Mira Grant's other writing has been so, so good – seriously, please read the *Newsflesh* Trilogy and leave the *Parasitology* Trilogy alone.

This book is destroyed by its relentless use of filler. Writers fill their books with extra stuff all the time for excellent reasons. Maybe the character has a thought digression or an experience because it reveals something about the character. Maybe there's background because we need to know what's happening with the setting and the story. But *Chimera* is the conclusion to the series. If Sal's characters, and the place and story concept, are not clear, then we are in real trouble. This book is full of digressions and passages of over-explaining that tell the reader absolutely nothing new.

The *Parasite* Trilogy was weird because it feels like a first-time book. If a new author wrote this, I'd say, "Well, this was loaded with horrible problems but there's also some great stuff so this is an up and coming writer to watch." But Grant isn't a first time writer. I don't want all her books to be the same (I'm not looking for a new version of *Newsflesh*) but I do feel like Grant set a high bar for herself, and this series falls way, way, way short.



It's always hard to follow a big success. While the Parasitology Trilogy lacks the economy and compelling characters that made the Newsflesh trilogy so good, it has interesting ideas. Mira Grant remains an auto-buy for me, but with caution.

- Carrie S.

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### **Justine says**

3.5 stars

This is decent finish to the trilogy that ties up most of the loose ends. Overall I enjoyed the series, but it felt slightly overwritten and long in parts. Grant's skill as a writer made up for that flaw for the most part. As a whole the series was a solid 3.5 stars.

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### **Amanda says**

3.5 stars

This was a (mostly) satisfying conclusion to the trilogy. I just can't help but feel somewhat disappointed though. I don't think the trilogy as a whole lived up to the promise of the first book. I think some of the most interesting characters (like Tansy) were wasted. That being said though I did really enjoy it and I want to read more (a lot) more by this author.

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### **Jeann (Happy Indulgence) says**

This review appears on Happy Indulgence. Check it out for more reviews!

Reading this series is always a delightfully horrific and philosophical experience. Being centered around a scientific experiment gone wrong, causing tapeworms that were meant to be the end of human disease and suffering to overtake their hosts, it gets pretty squeamish during some parts.

That's part of the appeal of the Parasitology series, the pure horror of knowing that some of the people you interact with are no longer human. Instead, they're tapeworms living in human brains, either driving the human hosts into a zombie-like state or becoming a rare incidence of chimera, who think and even believe that they're that human.

What's even more fascinating about this series, is the realism that this could actually happen 13 years from now. If a new technology came out that could cure all diseases, that could safeguard you from any cold or virus, that could prolong your lifespan and give you quality of life – would you take it no matter the cost?

Chimera is the third book in the series and it asks all the tough questions. It's multi-layered and complex, contrasting morality with prejudice, survival and human instinct, and the radical views of opposing groups when it comes to humanity. Whether it's the military faction who has the firepower to wipe out all zombies, to Dr Cale in her hand to creating these monsters, and to a tapeworm scientist who just wants to preserve his

species. Time and time again you'll be asking yourself – who is right? Who is wrong? What is right? What is wrong?

Sal is a strong character with the pure determination to survive, to right any wrongs that have been made, to protect her loved ones and to reunite her family. Following her through all three books, she's come a long way from the confused accident survivor we met in the first book. Even in *Chimera*, she hasn't figured everything out. The one thing I admire about Sal is that, she relies on her determination to succeed to push herself forward, no matter how hopeless, no matter how risky or dangerous the circumstance. Because Sal would rather act and fail, than to sit around doing nothing, and that's how she's succeeded thus far. But it hasn't been without failure or without consequence.

Being the third in the series, *Chimera* is actually quite slow moving. But if you've read any of Mira Grant's books, you'll know that she favours the detail, bringing forth a vivid world that comes to life, multi-dimensional characters that you can root for and philosophical questions on mankind and survival.

The ending also doesn't solve the worlds' problems, but it just addresses this little patch of North America that has been affected by sleepwalkers. More warm and fuzzy moments between Sal and Nathan would have been welcome too, but this story was never about the romance.

If you love science, horror and philosophy, this series will absolutely blow you away with its pure detail of a scientific experiment gone wrong. It never ever skimps on character development, scientific methodology or the morality of different factions. I never thought I'd enjoy a book about tapeworms, but anything that Mira Grant writes deserves to be read. If you can't stand the thought of tapeworms, but wouldn't mind the rest, check out *Feed*, which is one of my all-time favourite books!

*I received a review copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review.*

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## **WendyB says**

Just couldn't rate this higher. After reading all three books in the series, I had enough of the repetitions. Condensed down, might have made one respectable read but stretched out over three books... sorry this was just one big repetitive, boring mess.

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## **Celine says**

Mira Grant - of *Feed* fame - has finished another wonderful science-fiction trilogy, proving again that she knows how to write good endings.

In the final *Parasitology* book, the tapeworms are spreading. Countless people are getting infected and turned into mindless husks, incapable of complex thought, ruled by their instincts. It is up to Sal and her friends to save the world - but the world doesn't seem to want to be saved.

An issue that is incredibly prevalent in science-fiction is a lack of character growth and development. More often than not, sci-fi characters are mere sock-puppets, mouth-pieces for the author to express a certain

message. Grant (the pseudonym of Seanan McGuire) takes a solid science-based concept, and combines it with characters that feel *real*.

At the core of the Parasitology trilogy lies the story of Sal coming into herself. She is the focus of the books, and *Chimera* shows the final part of her journey into accepting what and who she is, and finding her place in a broken world. Because so much careful attention is spent on Sal's development, I felt that some other characters were done a bit short. I would have loved to read more from the points of view of other key characters - the short pieces of autobiographical writing at the start of chapters provided a welcome insight into their minds, but I was left wanting to know more.

Like all the other books I have read by Grant, the science in the Parasitology novels is sound. The fact that a character like Sal takes the spotlight does not mean that Grant lets the worldbuilding slide. *Chimera* is well researched, though the subject matter - parasites! tape worms! - might put people off from reading these books.

*Chimera* answers all of the questions raised throughout the trilogy in a satisfactory manner, and has all the elements I look for in a science-fiction. Grant has yet to disappoint me in anything she writes.

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