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Nerves, John Palisano, Bad Moon Books, 2012, 0985194006, 9780985194000, . .

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Something strange has changed in Josiah. He has awoken with the power to give life to the dead. And he isn't the only one with an amazing new ability. Halfway across the world, his brother Horace discovers his very presence can kill. The brothers' powers are not a secret to everyone, however. The vampiric witch Ogam plans to claim them for his own. The only hope for the brothers' safety is to escape to the otherworld known as Alta, where they can realize the true power of their supernatural gifts. Will they be able to defeat Ogam ,or will he take their love, their family, and their very souls?

An inventive, action packed fever dream... my best advice to wary readers sitting down to NERVES: go with it. You aren't going to have every question answered. You may get answers to questions you never thought of, or you may create questions from your questions. Don't worry about that. If you need a book to explain everything, seek some cozy legal thriller. A surreal dark fantasy like this one doesn't set out to keep you comfortably informed; it sets out to stoke the fires of your imagination and get your heart racing for causes unknown. John Palisano has done that with NERVES. I loved it.

Nerves is an intriguing debut novel by the talented writer, John Palisano, who weaves together a vast world of magic and suspense. From page one, the reader is immersed into a war of ominous characters who battle not only amongst each other, but also with their own personal demons. Prepare for the unexpected: This novel has countless twists of the bizarre and unexpected that will keep you guessing the entire way through.

I gave this book 3 1/2 stars because it was more than OK. It was weird and interesting. The writing was good. The story moved-that's the big thing. The story has to move and a lot of first time writers I have noticed have major flaws in their work and I just cringe when I read it. But this author hit most of the right notes. He also didn't have spelling or grammatical errors which always throw me off-so that's good.

The story was entertaining albeit bizarre and some things I didn't find explained. I have nothing to compare it to, so really I can't say what it reminds me of. There are some supernatural characters in it and I feel like I do not want to like them in the beginning. But then I leaned towards liking one of them and of course the witch Ogam I hate, so then their plot to kill him, I could get behind.

The debut novel by John Palisano, NERVES, is a story of witchcraft, magic, faith, and oddity. It's also a story of brothers and family. The plot centers around Josiah and Horace, two brothers, each of whom have been granted special gifts: the former the ability to extend his nerves through his

fingertips (and do all sorts of cool stuff with them, like restoring life to the dead), while conversely the latter seems to suck the life out of anyone he's in contact with, until eventually that person dies. The two are being pursued by a witch named Ogam, one of the most interesting villains I've encountered in a while, who is wanting to collect on a debt that's owed. Meanwhile, the brothers are trying to escape and make it back to their sick mother, a white witch in her own right, lying in a bed back at home. This all culminates in a fantastic climax that's really a highlight of the book.

NERVES has its ups and downs moments, but for the most part it's very fast-paced, and allows for quick reading that is also deep in content. Palisano draws from a variety of different sources to create his interesting milieu: spirituality, myth, magic, and even rock and roll. His characters are well-drawn without being too self-absorbed as to hinder the flight of the plot. The result, for me at least, is around Clive Barker meets "The Stand," with plenty more attention given to the underlying current of spiritual and philosophical ideas--however this never overshadows the entertainment value of the book. And let's get this straight, NERVES is action-packed! The first scene alone is enough to get any action junkie on board.

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John Palisano is well known to readers of Horror Library, Darkness On The Edge, Lovecraft eZine, Phobophobia, Lovecraft eZine, Harvest Hill, Halloween Spirits, the Bram Stoker nominated Midnight Walk, and many other publications. NERVES is his latest novel. "Available Light" was nominated for the Bram Stoker Award® in 2013. John's had a colorful history. He began writing at an early age, with his first publications in college fanzines and newspapers at Emerson in Boston. He's worked for over a decade in Hollywood for people like Ridley Scott and Marcus Nispel. He's recently been working as a screenwriter and has seen much success with over a dozen short story sales and his novel NERVES gaining critical and reader acclaim. There's more where that all came from. Lots more. You can visit him at [www.johnpalisano.us](http://www.johnpalisano.us) where you can learn about the writer and his upcoming projects.

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Honored to be amongst genre vets Joe R. Lansdale, Jack Ketchum, Jason Brock, William F. Nolan and Stephen King in remembering one of my favorite authors and people, Richard Matheson, in the newest issue of Dark Discoveries. I was honored to videotape Richard's acceptance speech for winning Vampire Novel of the Century at the year before last's Bram Stoker Awards. This reflection was my remembrance of that day. He will definitely be missed; I'm glad for a chance that memory is being shared.

Thrilled to find "The Geminis"; will be included in CHIRAL MAD 2. "The Geminis" is a Weird Tale that centers around two musicians, who find unrequited love, and the music they make together, fends off some terrifying events from happening. They are like a right and left hand, spiritually, emotionally, and most importantly, musically.

Happy to have participated in this stellar lineup of authors who've gone through NaNoWriMo and went on to publish their project. I love this time of year. I know a lot of critics dismiss it, but I find it invigorating to have to hit a daily word count. And I love the community aspect. Of course, in many

of our cases, what we produced in November was only the beginning. NERVES took a couple more rewrites, and several more months of writing before it found a final version. Then there was the long walk toward publication.

This is really exciting. As a lifelong reader of Fangoria, having an article in an issue is an amazing full-circle thing for me. I was lucky to interview Robert Englund, Danielle Harris, and director Rob Hall for the latest issue. We talked about their new campaign for the 'Fear Clinic' movie. Thanks to Chris Alexander and the crew at Fangoria for having me along. Please check out the issue and let them and me know what you think.

KillerCon is a special place. Christopher Rice nailed it when he told the crowd he liked it because there weren't any awards. Ellen Datlow remarked it was one of her favorites because it was small and intimate. For me? KillerCon is a catalyst on many levels. It's inspiring being around so many folks who've become close friends. On the flip side, Vegas brings out a lot of bittersweet memories.

How can I forget those who have passed? A few years ago, my life in shambles from a brutal divorce, my dear friend Michael Louis Calvillo pulled me in to a hall, sat me down, and filled me with positivity and joy. Whenever I see those weird geometric carpets, I'm taken right back to that moment. Just inside, Adam Niswander and his wife were holding an insanely crowded party. I can still taste the moonshine he offered me, and those weird meatballs. Both men were so wonderful. I'll always miss them.

Speaking of that pesky divorce, it's still knocking me on my butt financially. Without the kindness of PS Gifford, Roy Robbins, Christopher Boyle and Steven Booth, there'd have been no me at the convention this year. Here's to next year, and my helping them in return. Wrath James Wright always puts on one hell of a show each year. Nods to him and the great team: Bailey Hunter, Mason Bundschuh, Matt Czarnowski, Misty Dahl, Rena Mason, Stacy Scranton-Morgan, Mercedes M. Yardley, and RJ Cavender.

We made great time getting to the convention from Los Angeles. When we were in the Mojave, traffic slowed and there was an ominous black plume of smoke ahead. When we finally passed, we saw a boat had been set on fire. It was destroyed. The car towing it? Fine. My imagination went into full swing. Had to have been some kind of contraband they torched when the cops pulled them over. Who the hell brings a boat to the Mojave?

There were groups that crawled the strip and went to the Goreatorium, but I passed on those and met up with some old friends. Found Michael Bailey and we wandered the casino floor and the shops. There was an arcade with a four person Pac Man machine. We vowed to grab people and return, but we never made it. Soon, though, we ran into other people. It didn't take long for the first party to start, where most folks made appearances. Somehow, I was up until about 2:30am. It's real easy to get talking to people and find time gone. I camped out on Roy's floor, my mind racing all night long. So exciting to be around so many great creative people.

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