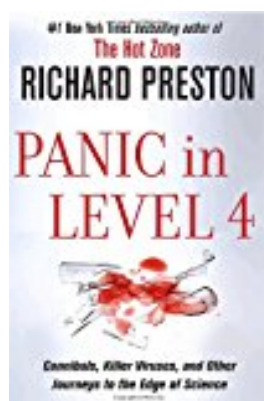


[PDF] Panic In Level 4: Cannibals, Killer Viruses, And Other Journeys To The Edge Of Science

Richard Preston - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: Panic in Level 4: Cannibals,
Author: Richard Preston
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly The title of *New Yorker* contributor Preston's new collection refers to the subject of his bestselling *The Hot Zone*: a series of rooms in a government biohazard laboratory where scientists work with virulent pathogens like the Ebola viruses that would be devastating in the

hands of terrorists. The essays (all from the *New Yorker*) cover such scientific matters as a profile of controversial über-genome mapper Craig Venter; a gene that leads people to cannibalize themselves; and two Russian-Jewish émigré scientists who built a monster computer in their cramped apartment to puzzle out patterns in the value of pi. Preston's essay on the destruction of large swaths of eastern U.S. forests by insect parasites accidentally brought into the country from abroad is the shortest but most compelling. Preston might have done more to update his pieces; for example, the Marburg virus was found in bats last year, supporting his hypothesis that they are the reservoir for Ebola. But Preston's fans will enjoy his showing how few degrees of separation there are between far-flung areas of scientific endeavors. Illus. (June)

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From School Library Journal Adult/High School—Preston gets to the heart of these nonfiction essays by placing himself in the center of the story. The "panic" of the book's title refers to his own when his biohazard suit was breached and he feared he may have been exposed to one of the deadliest known viruses. Two of the pieces involve the brothers Chudnovsky, mathematicians so closely dependent on one another that they refer to themselves as The Mathematician. The author was able to disappear as an interviewer to the extent that he became part of the brothers' portrait. At one point, one Chudnovsky says to the other: "The interviewer answers our questions.... The interviewer becomes a person in the story." Preston used this skill of blending into his accounts to his advantage. Whether he was strapping on gear to climb mammoth hemlocks with arborists trying to understand the diseases killing the great trees of the world or acting as an off-road driver for a couple of men with the disease of self-cannibalization, Preston fit in like a good supporting actor who also happened to be the cameraman, writer, and director. Teens will find these stories compelling. The author has the eyes and language of a fine novelist, but he has the mind of a scientist who is trying to understand some of the most fascinating mysteries of our age.—*Will Marston, Berkeley Public Library, CA*

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