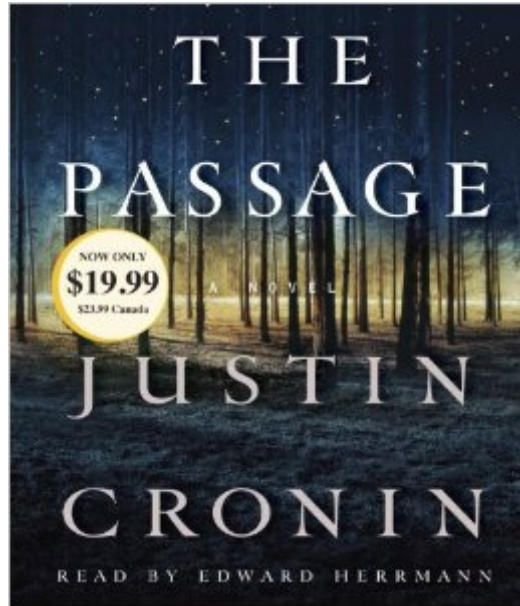


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The Passage: A Novel (Book One Of The Passage Trilogy)



Synopsis

It happened fast. Thirty-two minutes for one world to die, another to be born. First, the unthinkable: a security breach at a secret U.S. government facility unleashes the monstrous product of a chilling military experiment. Then, the unspeakable: a night of chaos and carnage gives way to sunrise on a nation, and ultimately a world, forever altered. All that remains for the stunned survivors is the long fight ahead and a future ruled by fear—of darkness, of death, of a fate far worse. As civilization swiftly crumbles into a primal landscape of predators and prey, two people flee in search of sanctuary. FBI agent Brad Wolgast is a good man haunted by what he's done in the line of duty. Six-year-old orphan Amy Harper Bellafonte is a refugee from the doomed scientific project that has triggered apocalypse. He is determined to protect her from the horror set loose by her captors. But for Amy, escaping the bloody fallout is only the beginning of a much longer odyssey—spanning miles and decades—towards the time and place where she must finish what should never have begun. With *The Passage*, award-winning author Justin Cronin has written both a relentlessly suspenseful adventure and an epic chronicle of human endurance in the face of unprecedented catastrophe and unimaginable danger. Its inventive storytelling, masterful prose, and depth of human insight mark it as a crucial and transcendent work of modern fiction.

Book Information

Series: Passage Trilogy

Audio CD

Publisher: Random House Audio; Abridged edition (September 11, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0449806944

ISBN-13: 978-0449806944

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1.2 x 5.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (3,519 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

It has been a while since I've encountered a horror novel of such magnitude and scope, but Justin

Cronin's hefty tome "The Passage" seems poised to announce itself as the latest true "horror epic." It's about time too! Ambitious and thought-provoking, but filled with propulsive action and bloodshed, "The Passage" is the thinking person's genre thrill ride. This massive book starts in the near future with a pretty unique combination of vampiric lore meshed with science gone awry. But Cronin, while nailing these explosive first chapters, has much more up his sleeve. The expansive (and sometimes it seems the story will never end) plot resets several times until we have followed the confrontations to their inevitable conclusion many generations later. The comparisons to Stephen King's "The Stand" seem apt and, I believe, will be widespread. And in case anyone has a passing interest on where I fall on "The Stand," I think it's the best book of its type that I've ever read. Although the books are quite different in plotting and structure, thematically they share much. From the veritable destruction of the world as we know it, to the efforts to rebuild some semblance of a new world order, to the ultimate confrontation between good and evil replete with the requisite supernatural underpinnings--both books challenge ordinary citizens to rise to extraordinary levels to champion the human cause. In the right hands, these apocalyptic epics can be unforgettable--and I'll just say that Cronin's hands are quite capable. Don't misunderstand the King reference, however, "The Passage" stands as its own unique portrait of a ravaged future. It's just that there are so few horror novels that set out to accomplish so much in storytelling.

Justin Cronin's 766 page, 2 + pound, mammoth epic of a novel, nearly gave me bursitis in my elbows, from hoisting it up in the air over a three night period. For the first 250 pages, I thought the pain was worth it; it was enthralling. Then the storyline jumps almost a century into the future, with a host of total strangers' inking out survival in the post-apocalyptic, virus infested world. I was shaking my head in total disbelief. Just who were these people, why should I care about them, and what happened to those I had become so invested in, besides the obvious, that is, my favorite character was presumed dead. Unbelievable! I kept trudging on thinking, 'I'll soon be reunited with a couple of them.' Well, not exactly! The structure of the book became my enemy, spoiling much of the enjoyment and crashing the ride. There have only been a few books that I resorted to 'skimming' through in my entire reading history. I'm normally driven to read every word. However, I felt that there was so much filler, and situational redundancy, that wasn't integral toward driving the plot, that I simply lost the personal investment. I did revive my flagging attention span toward the end. Unfortunately, the end left me scratching my head, too, not quite comprehending the spiritual, and metaphysical viewpoints setting up for the sequel. I resigned that we were moving from man's fight for survival toward the fantasy realm. In my personal assessment, this was throwing too many

berries into the pie. The military, bio-warfare, experiment gone awry, is not a new theme, but I had high expectations for this epic after reading the marketing campaign. I did not feel that it offered competition for 'The Stand,' or 'I am Legend,' both of which offered unforgettable characters.

If this review sounds disjointed, meandering and incoherent, forgive me, because I am exhausted. My eyes are gritty and I have a cramp in my hand because I fell asleep on it. I got this book on Tuesday, read until my eyes were blurry and then snuck out of bed to sit in the icy cold living room so late at night (or early, depending on your point of view) to finish this book. I'm not exaggerating when I say that this book is addictive. First of all, I should tell you a little about my reading history. I've read The Stand, The Strain, Andromeda Strain, Red Storm Rising, One Second After, The Descent and World War Z, I could go on, but if you recognize any of these titles you will know that I have a thing for everything-goes-to-hell books. The Passage, in my opinion, is as good as, if not better than the best of these novels. I've gotten a bit jaded in my reading. Not only does it take more to shock me, it takes more characters, more excitement and mystery to keep me reading past the first five pages. When I read about the Passage on one of my favorite book review sites, I was interested, but not jumping up and down with glee to read it. After all, this was a book about Vampires. I've read a lot of vampire fiction lately, and the bloodthirsty fangs just aren't as thrilling to me as they used to be. There's just two kinds of vamp books, good vamps and bad vamps. Count Dracula, Lestat, Angel and Spike would run away from the vamps in this book. But, from the first chapter, I was drawn in by the characters. The destined for tragedy Jeanette, Wolgast, whose life has become one long waiting line, Amy, an innocent child with frighteningly wise eyes.

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