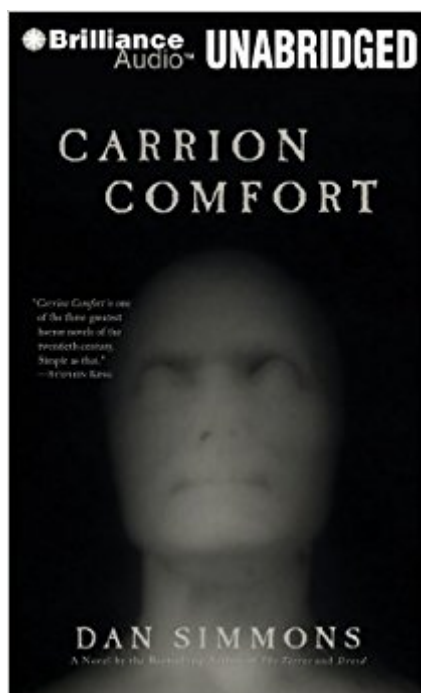


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# Carrion Comfort



## Synopsis

The Past...Caught behind the lines of Hitler's Final Solution, Saul Laski is one of the multitudes destined to die in the notorious Chelmno extermination camp. Until he rises to meet his fate and finds himself face-to-face with an evil far older, and far greater, than the Nazis themselves....The Present...Compelled by the encounter to survive at all costs, so begins a journey that for Saul will span decades and cross continents, plunging into the darkest corners of twentieth-century history to reveal a secret society of beings who throughout the ages may exist behind the world's most horrible and violent events. Killing from a distance, they are people with the psychic ability to use humans: read their minds, subjugate them to their wills, experience through their senses, and force them to acts of unspeakable aggression. Each year, three of the most powerful of this hidden order meet to discuss their triumphs of bloodshed and destruction. But at this reunion, something will go terribly wrong. Saul's quest is about to reach its elusive object, drawing hunter and hunted alike into a struggle that will plumb the depths of mankind's attraction to violence, and determine the future of the world itself. [Carrion Comfort is] one of the few major reinventions of the vampire concept, on a par with Jack Finney's Invasion of the Body Snatchers, Richard Matheson's I Am Legend, and Stephen King's Salem's Lot.

DAVID MORRELL

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The second novel by World Fantasy Award-winner Simmons ( The Song of Kali ) is a 636-page epic that draws on a variety of genres--horror, science fiction, political thriller, Hollywood roman a clef. It

centers around a small number of "mind vampires" who can subjugate other people to their wills, read their minds, experience through their senses. The immensely powerful vampires use others, often bloodily, and often in frivolous "games" (hunting human prey, chess games with human pieces, and so on). Opposing them are Saul Laski, a psychologist and concentration-camp survivor, who is devoted to tracking down the Nazi vampire von Borchert; Natalie Preston, whose father inadvertently and fatally crossed the path of a pawn of the ancient, dotty vampire Melanie Fuller; Sheriff Bobby Joe Gentry, dragged in while investigating the multiple murders that marked the departure of Melanie Fuller from Charleston; and a host of other normals and vampires whose lives impinge on those of the principals. While he could profitably have trimmed the novel by a third, Simmons has produced, overall, a compelling thriller. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

• Publishers Weekly • ...a compelling thriller. • ...very good fun. A satisfying story that delivers everything it promises. • Kirkus Reviews --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

I decided to read this after finishing Simmons' more recent novel, *Drood*, which I liked very much. *Drood* was my first reading by this author, who is pretty prolific, so I wasn't sure which novel of his to try next. *Carrion Comfort* sounded like a horror story involving psychic powers, which intrigued me, so I purchased it. The author's introduction explains that this was written early in his career, and details some interesting history about troubles with the editing and publishing of this novel. I found that interesting, but readers without any interest in the publishing world would likely not enjoy the intro. Forging ahead to read the novel itself, I found that *Carrion Comfort* is indeed amateurish compared to *Drood*. Parts were very tedious while other segments were better. I really got bored with the middle of the book and had to force myself to slog through action scenes that just felt aimless to me. However, I'm not a fan of action thrillers anyway, so someone else might find those parts easier to read. My favorite parts of this book were the segments written from the point of view of the psychic character named Melanie. Although she's unlikable, her view point felt very authentic. The ending of this novel was not bad, with a satisfying conclusion that tied up the loose ends. The plot is ambitious, with a lot of characters and a wide scope, and I could see foreshadowing of certain elements that the author re-imagined when he wrote *Drood*, which is much more polished and fascinating a story -- also much more literary. *Carrion Comfort* (a bad title in my opinion) is not really a horror story, but more of an action thriller with psychic powers thrown into the mix. Readers who

like studying an author's development may enjoy it on that level, and readers of action thrillers may like it. But if you want literary elegance, you probably will find this rather "clunky." Simmons is an excellent writer now, but this early work of his shows how far his skills have come. I recommend reading *Drood* instead of this, if you've never read anything by Simmons.

Wow - what a read. The author poured his heart and soul into this book (read the prologue). This book is looong, but well worth the read. There are so many twists and turns; you never know what's going to happen next. I took a chance on this one based on reviews, and am glad I did.

I loved the book "the Terror" couldn't get through "Drood" finished "Carrion Comfort" and while parts of the book were engrossing there were too many times that it just drug on and on....When I was first learning how to write I was advised that if it didn't move the story forward leave it out, too many times I felt that way about this novel. It could have easily been 200 pages shorter, this isn't the 18th century and while Charles Dickens wrote novels that served to entertain people through the winter, not to mention he was paid by the word, that is not the case today. There were too many times during this novel I simply wanted to scream "why won't this book just end". When I was finally finished I found I wasn't, the epilogue followed not to wrap things up but to leave threads of the story open and to leave the reader with unresolved feelings. I haven't felt this disappointed in a book since I read Steven King's book "Needful Things" and felt that Mr. King simply got bored or wrote himself into a corner and resorted to a cheat to finis this book (which I would give 2 stars) hence 3 for Carrion Comfort.

*Carrion Comfort* is another jaw-dropping horror novel penned by one of my favorite authors, Dan Simmons. This one is quite long, and though there were a few minor instances of tedium, on the whole this was an amazing read. This is a book about revenge. Saul Laski, a former Jewish prisoner in a death-camp during the Holocaust was 'used' (his mind taken over) by a man who he calls 'the Oberst'. Saul will stop at nothing to hunt this man down. But, this is the tip of the ice-berg -In the world there exists a small population of 'mind-vampires' who have the ability to slip into people's minds and control their actions. This is just a game to them. Mere mortals are just toys - they are even used as chess pieces in a couple instances. Once a year the mind-vampires visit an island, which is privately owned by a highly respected billionaire, so they can play a game where they use people to kill each other, the one with the most points wins. I'm not going to dig any further into the plot, but I will say it is quite deep and fairly complex - though easy to follow. *Carrion Comfort* has a

fairly large cast of characters, most of which are fleshed out nicely. Multiple threads spawn, which are all in third-person except for one which is told in the first-person view of a mind-vampire named Melanie Fuller (who will go down as one of my all-time favorite villains!). I really dug how Simmons weaved the plots together, allowing the reader to experience certain events from various perspectives. Overall this is a great read, which I give a 4.5/5 (rounded to 5 for ). Check it out!

I had tried to listen to this a couple times on audio book but couldn't really get past a couple chapters, after finishing *The Terror* I decided to give it another try. I really like Dan Simmons, his books are well prepared and really draw in - they just seem to lack a bit of the chill-factor I get from other places, I would recommend him to anyone looking for a lazy read, but if you are looking for a real scare factor you may want to look elsewhere.

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