

## Review of *Lyra Rayne: Ground Zero*

by Greg Thomas

With *Lyra Rayne: Ground Zero* Strickland gives us a superhero we can take home to meet our mother. Yes, a *female* character, and one you will love. This is the first book in what promises to be an abundant series, introducing the hero and giving us her origin story.

The book explores the question what happens when someone is suddenly given great powers. Do they relish the moment? Do they embrace the godly gift? Do they freak out, wishing it had never happened? Do they regret the choices that led to this event, knowing their life has changed forever?

In Lyra's case, all of the above seem to be the answer. Our heroine goes through a roller-coaster of emotions about her new powers and their implications. Implications such as how to best put such powers to use. Endowed with a protective nature, Lyra, by default, assumes the role of helper to others, but learns early on that things can backfire on you even when you have the best of intentions. Power is a double-edged sword she is learning to wield, sometimes in clumsy, dangerous fashion. And even as she is struggling to master her new powers an adversary arises with none of the qualms of conscience our heroine has. Their titanic struggle makes for one helluva thrill ride.

This book has all the trappings of a Hollywood blockbuster. The acute sensory detail put us front and center in an intense, cinematic experience. One can easily see this book made into a feature length film and it's easy to imagine casting directors drooling at such an opportunity. Mentally casting the film offers nearly as much enjoyment as reading the story itself.

And not to neglect the love story. Strickland tosses a compelling and believable romance into the mix, with a timely twist of its own. You will find yourself cheering not just for Lyra, but for Lyra's special someone. (Face it: it ain't easy having a superhero for a girlfriend!) Surely a good deal of Lyra's appeal is that that her superpowers do not make her any less vulnerable emotionally.

Strickland sets us up beautifully for a sequel. Just as one crisis gets settled, another shadowy problem arrives to take its place. We are left screaming for the next chapter. Please don't make us wait too long, Bryan! (There's also a number of other non-Lyra works in development mentioned on his website; we soon could see *multiple series'* issuing from the same pen.)

All in all, a superb first novel. Strickland's very human characters, dramatic pacing and timing of plot elements keeps us engaged from cover to cover and he leaves us with the assurance that there is plenty more where that came from.