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A Stranger Thing (Ever-Expanding Universe)



Synopsis

In this witty, adventurous sequel to *Mothership*, Elvie Nara is back on earth—but her life (including her new baby) is still pretty out there! “Irreverent humor makes this work of science fiction a comic treat.” (>). Pregnancy was pretty rough for sixteen-year-old Elvie Nara, what with the morning sickness, constant food cravings, and the alien race war she found herself in the middle of. But if she thought giving birth to an extraterrestrial’s baby would be the hard part, she was sorely mistaken. After Elvie’s baby is not what was expected, the Almiri completely freak out. Suddenly Elvie’s supposed allies have shipped her—along with her father, her best friend, Ducky, and her maybe-boyfriend, boneheaded Almiri commando Cole Archer—off to a remote “retention facility” (aka alien jail) in Antarctica. Talk about cold. But things really get complicated when a new group of hybrid aliens arrive with information that sends Elvie’s world spinning. Before long, Elvie is trekking across the bottom of the Earth with a band of friends and frenemies to uncover the secrets of her own origin. Will Elvie ever be able to convince the Almiri that a conspiracy to conquer the planet is a greater threat than a sixteen-year-old girl and a newborn who won’t stop crying?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up—in the not-too-distant future, on an Earth where alien Almiri have now revealed themselves, 16-year-old Elvie Nara has just given birth to a half-alien baby. According to everything

she's been told, all mixed-race babies have a "dongle," so how could her little goober have "girl parts?" In *Mothership* (S & S, 2012), readers met Elvie and the baby's father, the swooningly handsome but not overly bright Cole, an Almiri. The Almiri have been on Earth for centuries, originally passing as gods and then passing as humans, advancing science and exploration for their own eventual gain. Elvie, Cole, baby Olivia, and several others are sent to Antarctica for their own protection from a militaristic alien race, the Jin'Kai. At Camp Crozier, they are taken under the wing of Titus Oates. The Jin'Kai turn up at the camp, along with Elvie's mother (who was presumed dead), and soon Elvie leaves baby Olivia behind to help retrieve important computer files from a crashed intergalactic vessel. The authors have good command of snarky teen-speak, and Elvie has plenty of colorful expression and amusing turns of phrase. The action-filled plot depends more on chase scenes than character development, though this installment will go over well with those looking for lighthearted, escapist science fiction. —Maggie Knapp, Trinity Valley School, Fort Worth, TX

This first sequel to the sci-fi comedy *Mothership* (2012) continues its wry banter as a human girl — or is she? — fights to keep her half-alien baby safe from both the good aliens and the bad ones. After giving birth to her half-alien daughter, Elvie finds herself imprisoned on Earth instead of in a spaceship. Elvie's baby's daddy, the staggeringly handsome but equally stupid Cole, certainly is an alien Almiri — but Almiri can't have daughters, can they? Whatever. The new family has wound up in Antarctica with other undesirables, at an underground facility run by fearless leader Oates. The plot thickens when rivals arrive, sending the group racing on dogsleds across the frozen continent in search of Elvie's crashed spaceship. Although attacked by killer whales, Elvie reaches the ship, where she finds that she did not manage to kill the evil Dr. Marsden in the first book. Leicht and Neal keep the main focus of the series on comedy but weave in enough suspense to keep the pages turning. It really is funny, thanks to Elvie's wry inner commentary, Cole's oh-so-sincere but painfully slow mental processes and the fizzy mix of characters. Even during the final action scenes they introduce a new character, a highly developed baby that Elvie calls "Bok Choy," as that is the child's dominant vocabulary. Who knew science fiction about unwed motherhood could be so very hysterical? (Science fiction. 12 & up) (Kirkus) Who knew science fiction about unwed motherhood could be so very hysterical? (Kirkus) Elvie's snarky voice and wise-cracking humor are the perfect complement to the inventive, fast-paced action scenes, which include an attack by human hybrids, more battles with the other aliens, a coordinated pursuit by killer whales,

and so much more. The non-stop suspense and the cliffhanger ending will have readers on the edge of their seats and left impatiently waiting for the final installment of Elvie's adventures. The irreverent humor and earthy language make this work of science fiction a comic treat for older teens." (VOYA)

As part two of the "Ever Expanding Universe" series, this book does an excellent job starting where book one, *Mothership*, left off. There is no stretch of time between *Mothership* and *A Stranger Thing*. A nice touch with this series is the last chapter of the previous book is the first chapter of the next book, that way you get a brief refresher. This part of the series is full of suspense and dread. The entire second act is like walking on eggshells, just waiting for something to happen! Of the three books, this was the most addicting one to read. Whereas *Mothership* gave you some answers to your questions, *A Stranger Thing* comes by and gives you the truth on many but sets up many, many more questions that aren't addressed till its own sequel, *The World Forgot*. As with the previous installment, the novel is well written, characters are expanded upon, and unlike *Mothership*, we get the first glimpse of an actual physical description of our protagonist, Elvie Nara. The first act is extremely heartwarming while the third and final act brings us to the end and sets up the plot for part three.

I read the whole series. The only problem is the kill rate is too high for the comedy. A second rate author kills off too many people as they don't know how to write a plot or develop more than two characters.

I really enjoyed the first book, but this one is even better. The pacing of the story and the action is really great. Also, the main character grows so much and really comes into her own in this book. So many cool twists and turns, I can't wait for book number 3!!

OMG, I am still crying, this book's end is simply CLIFFHANGER. At the beginning the characters were very annoying but as the story progresses they start to sound less crazy, I really recommend this book. A pretty good sequel.

Clearly the author has gone to great lengths to present a full and complete story. It is equally obvious that this story was SO long that the publisher needed to break it up to fit in standard paperback format. Completely understandable. However, the way this story just as in the first book

breaks off in the middle of an action event or a critical situation while great for anticipation and sales is not so great for the overall enjoyment of the story. Something could also be said for getting rid of characters who don't contribute more than their genetic material to the plot line.

Awesome book but too short, I mean 200 and something pages only? Loved Both books in this new series but I still think book 2 was too short.

It took a longer time to get the book than what I expected it to. which was not a good thing since it was a gift.

This book got me interested in this trilogy. Or rather, the cover did. Our main heroine, Elvie, is decked out in shiny black latex(?) pants and a white coat, very possibly for the snow environment of the story. She is firing a raygun at someone or something, and in her right arm she carries her daughter Olivia. It is a cover that hints a solid action-packed story with a complicated, tough heroine. Unfortunately, the sequel doesn't live up to the coolness of the cover. "A Stranger Thing" picks up from the last book, where 16-year-old Elvie is taken to an Almiri camp in Antarctica for safety with her friend Ducky, her father, and her boyfriend/baby daddy Cole Archer. There they meet other Almiri (all handsome males) who broke The Code (i.e. they didn't just sleep with the one girl they were each assigned to). However, a band of renegades, Almiri/human hybrids (the Enosi) led by Elvie's long lost mother, Zee, randomly arrive to get a man who just wandered onto the camp. An Almiri/human hybrid named Bernard who is described as having long hair and a long beard. Elvie's mother, who is found out to be an Almiri/human hybrid, connects with Elvie's father since he thought she was dead. And, randomly, Zee, Elvie's father, Bernard, Cole, and Oates another Almiri who broke the code form a group to head to the Echidna from the previous book to look for any secret Jin'Kai machinery or files. (Note: How is it the Echidna crash landed coincidentally in the same area as where Elvie and her friends were being held? Wouldn't that get the attention of the Earth authorities as well as the Almiri?) Another plot issue comes up that isn't clear: The babies that the teenage girls give birth to are supposed to be Almiri: male and handsome. And, they are technically 'hybrids.' Yet, the hybrids in the story are shunned because they are either female, or not so handsome males like Bernard. Also, it is also said these hybrids are a threat to Almiri existence since they can procreate with both Almiri and humans. (This doesn't make sense if Almiri are actively seeking out human women to impregnate to begin with, whether or not it's 'systematically' since it begs the question: Are humans and these hybrids supposed to not procreate? And, wasn't

this Almiri system in place so the human race wouldn't phase out since a pregnancy from an Almiri results in a barren womb). Again: Why impregnate human women if certain types of hybrids aren't wanted or anticipated? Getting back to our story: The group, on sleds pulled by dogs, are attacked by orca whales which results in the death of Bernard. However, they eventually make it to the Echidna and meet up with Dr. Mardsen who was able to survive the crash. They also come up against Devestators (one of the weird Jin'Kai creatures which is described as looking like an xenomorph from the Alien films) and find a Jin'Kai boy, the product of a slain student from the previous novel. Some Almiri from the camp also turn up and make known they want to overtake the leader, an Almiri who looks like (and turns out to be) James Dean and who is Elvie's grandfather on Zee's side of the family. Zee leaves with Dr. Mardsen, since she's holding a grudge against the Jin'kai (because of the entire 'wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am' way of thinking) taking Elvie's child with her. And thus, we end on a cliff hanger. Now, if this all sounded confusing, it was. I was unable to get a sense of the environment during the action scenes. And, I was unable to really get a sense of motivation from a lot of the characters. Things happen too conveniently for Elvie and our heroes at times, and not much is explained in regards to how the Almiri operate and Jin'Kai operate. As it stands, I don't see how I'm supposed to root for the Jin'Kai or Almiri - they both seem bad with the Jin'Kai being more violent than the Almiri. However, as a completion-ist, I am going to read the final part of this trilogy: "The World Forgot."

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