



Panacea

F. Paul Wilson

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Two secret societies vie for control of the ultimate medical miracle--Panacea--in the latest novel by *New York Times* bestselling author F. Paul Wilson.

Medical examiner Laura Fanning has two charred corpses and no answers. Both bear a mysterious tattoo but exhibit no known cause of death. Their only connection to one another is a string of puzzling miracle cures. Her preliminary investigation points to a cult in the possession of the fabled panacea--the substance that can cure all ills--but that's impossible.

Laura finds herself unknowingly enmeshed in an ancient conflict between the secretive keepers of the panacea and the equally secretive and far more deadly group known only as 536, a brotherhood that fervently believes God intended for humanity to suffer, not be cured. Laura doesn't believe in the panacea, but that doesn't prevent the agents of 536 from trying to kill her.

A reclusive, terminally ill billionaire hires Laura to research the *possibility* of the panacea. The billionaire's own body guard, Rick Hayden, a mercenary who isn't who he pretends to be, has to keep her alive as they race to find the legendary panacea before the agents of 536 can destroy it.

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Panacea Details

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From Reader Review Panacea for online ebook

Scott Bell says

Have you read F. Paul Wilson before? If not, don't start here. Go back and start at least with the first Repairman Jack and follow it through until Wilson weaves in his supernatural elements and his "Secret History of the World" stuff.

Now.

If you are still reading, and enjoying, his "Secret History" concept of indifferent supernatural beings collecting realities like a kid collects marbles, then you should jump into Panacea without a qualm.

If you stopped reading Repairman Jack with a WTF? expression and a sincere dismay at the way a decent writer royally screwed up a great series, then you'll probably regard Panacea the same way.

Unfortunately, I fall into the latter category. Decent writing and a good mystery wrapped in a blanket of existential nonsense and metaphysical bullshit. I read it through for the characters, which appealed despite the left turn into the same Repairman Jack world I'd abandoned years ago.

Wilson fans will love this. If you're not, approach with caution.

Vicky says

For centuries, two secret societies have waged war against each other; one wishes to destroy the panacea and the other seeks to keep it from the general public because it has too much potential to upset the order of humanity. Medical Examiner Laura Henning has two bodies that should not have died; their bodies are perfect and healthy. But, they were incinerated after they died, so identifying them has been a chore. Both bodies bear a strange tattoo, a stick wrapped with a snake, two lines and a shooting star. What does it mean? Laura is hired by a reclusive billionaire to investigate and she goes to Central America, home of the Mayan Indians, along with her bodyguard, Rick Hayden. They are pursued by an organization known as 536, an ultra-secretive Catholic brotherhood. As the body count piles up, Laura learns more about Rick; can she really trust him, is he who she has been told he is? If you like Dean Koontz, Stephen King and Dan Brown, you need to be reading F. Paul Wilson as well.

Mommacat says

Review and interview with FPW will be published on Cat after Dark in July!

Bria says

Mind-numbing.

This plot is a little overused, especially after the The Da Vinci Code series and the The Historian. Its interesting to follow an attractive couple search into the world's history for forgotten lore, the Holy Grail, explanations for human existence and visit exotic places, but in these cases, and with Panacea, the plot and characters only serve as a thin veil for the author's soapbox about what they view as worthy viewpoints about religion, history and humans.

If you want to make fun of religion, fine. It's incredibly easy to because most religions have miracles and stories that don't make sense unless you ardently believe in them, but at least make your storyline interesting, believable and original.

Wilson just recycled the jokes about Catholicism and created his 536 cult from them. Besides being shady, backwards, bloodthirsty monks, there is very little to their cult and even their most ardent follower, Fife, has no issues breaking free of their most revered beliefs when tested. This was so hypocritical and negated every single description Wilson had used of the cult up to Fife's betrayal. If Fife was really a member of such a cult, he would have died before he drank that potion. Cults don't last thousands of years when their followers can't even follow their central belief. They last because the followers are unable to turn their backs on the ideology or tolerate any proof that their cult is wrong. Wilson demonstrated through Fife's actions and his inability to even explain in simple terms why he hated the Panaceans (especially at the end of the book when his rhetoric goes down the toilet and he can't even convince his followers), that Wilson had no idea how to describe a cult, had no respect or knowledge about ardent religious followers and couldn't tie his own plot together.

Because if Fife wasn't really the evil mastermind that he was described to be throughout the book, then why were Laura and Rick running from him and scared of him in the first place?

Besides the poor explanations of the cult, Laura and Rick had no personality and charisma and just spouted off random ideas about human existence that clearly came from the author and not from their characters.

Overall the only redeeming quality of this book was that at least 536AD was a real event so Wilson must have completed some basic research.

Nick says

Wilson fucking rocks. A fast tight thriller with cults, conspiracies, and unseen cosmic forces manipulating the world. Ties in nicely to his secret history of the world mega arch while being completely stand alone. I would love to see Rick Hayden team up with Repairman Jack!

Tammy says

The nitty-gritty: A fast-paced, globe-trotting adventure, with plenty of mystery, humor and characters that will grow on you.

In my “old” book collecting days, F. Paul Wilson was one of the authors whose books I bought and read, but it’s been years since I’ve even thought about him, until Tor asked me if I’d like to read his latest. He’s one of Stephen King’s contemporaries and published his first book in 1976, and I was curious to see what he was up to. Most authors don’t have that kind of staying power, but F. Paul Wilson, like King, has proven he’s a born storyteller, and I can attest to the fact that he hasn’t lost his edge. If anything, he’s better than I remember.

Panacea was a wild adventure ride across several continents, as our characters search for the elusive “panacea” that may or may not be real, which can cure any disease. Wilson combines all the elements I love in just under 400 pages—adventure, action, humor, danger, mystery, fantastic characters and perfect pacing. If there was ever a “summer read,” then ***Panacea*** is it. I love my thoughtful literary science fiction and complex fantasy, but honestly, nothing beats a down-and-dirty adventure story.

Laura Fanning is a medical examiner who is routinely called to murder sites to investigate bodies, but she’s never seen anything quite like this. Within days of each other, two victims turn up with mysterious similarities: they both have an odd tattoo on their backs, and both bodies were set on fire. Found amidst the aftermath of the fires were planters full of soil, which suggests that the victims had been growing something in their apartments.

Meanwhile, a secret group that call themselves the Brotherhood are trying to track down the panacea, said to be a miracle cure. Their goal isn’t to use it, however, but to destroy everyone associated with it. When Laura is approached by a dying billionaire named Stahlman and offered a huge sum of money to find him a life-saving dose of the panacea, her first impulse is to say no—although such a big payday would set her ill daughter Marissa up for life. But Laura is a woman of science and knows there is no such thing as a panacea. However, her interest is piqued and she heads off to Mexico with Stahlman’s bodyguard Rick Hayden to see what she can find.

But Laura and Rick have plenty of surprises in store for them, as the Brotherhood will do anything to stop them from finding the panacea. Caught up in a battle between religion and science, and maybe something otherworldly, Laura becomes even more determined to find the elusive cure. But with an army of fanatics after her, will she and Rick survive their adventure?

Panacea was such a fun read from the get-go, and when I said it had perfect pacing, I wasn’t kidding. There was never a dull moment, and yet Wilson included plenty of quieter scenes where the characters use dialog to explain the ancient history of the panacea and solve the clues that keep popping up on their journey. You have to give the author credit for his forty plus years of writing experience. Wilson is the epitome of a “seasoned writer,” and after reading so many debuts recently, it was pure joy to sit back and watch a master at work.

Even though the characters are chasing something that supposedly doesn’t exist, Wilson adds plenty of facts to support his idea that there *could* be such a potion, and he even suggests that its origins might be from another planet (although most of the story feels grounded right here on Earth). A big part of what I loved about this story was the detailed history and evolution of the panacea from ancient times to the present day, a secret that has been handed down for generations by “panaceans” who carefully cultivate the plant that the drug comes from. I also loved the fact that he made one of the main characters a doctor, which sets up a delightful quandary for Laura who, as a scientist, knows that such a thing cannot exist, and yet she’s seen some inexplicable things that point to a medical mystery that even she can’t explain.

So let's talk about the characters. I absolutely loved Laura and Rick, both as individuals and as a team. And let me be upfront and tell you that there isn't a romance between them. Laura can't stand Rick when she first meets him—she knows instinctively that he's hiding something—but the more time they spend together, the more he surprises her. There is the *possibility* of romance, but in this book, at least, it never surfaces.

Rick is introduced as a muscle-bound body guard with little or no social skills. When he and Laura are thrown together, neither one is very happy about it. And while Rick is great in an emergency—not only does he claim to have been a Navy SEAL, but he carries around a package of zip ties wherever he goes and tells Laura that there are “a thousand and one uses” for them—his tendency to kill those who get in his way scares Laura to death. But it isn't long before she realizes there is a *lot* more to him than meets the eye. Rick is also the comic relief in the story, and I loved his funny banter with Laura. Each time he pulled out a zip tie to fix (or kill!) something, I laughed out loud.

A slimy member of the Brotherhood named Nelson was the perfect "bad guy," a religious fanatic who sees the panacea as a threat to the world. Nelson's beliefs are also tested, after he discovers he has terminal cancer, and he wonders if his devotion to the Brotherhood is strong enough for him to resist taking the panacea (if indeed he ever got the chance).

And here is my only complaint about the story. There are just *too* many sick and dying characters who are desperate to get their hands on the cure-all. Each time a new one was introduced with some awful disease, I admit I started to roll my eyes!

But that's just a small personal complaint. F. Paul Wilson has written a story that not only entertains but gives the reader plenty to think about. I've always said that I love reading books where I learn something, and I learned plenty by the time I finished *Panacea*. The intricate plot will keep readers on their toes, trying to untangle all the strange coincidences the characters find themselves involved in, and the search for the panacea—the ultimate goal of the story—will keep them reading to the very surprising and satisfying end. I've heard talk that this might be the start to a series, and I couldn't be happier. I'll eagerly follow Laura and Rick on their next adventure.

Big thanks to the publisher for supplying a review copy. This review originally appeared on Books, Bones & Buffy

Scott Sigler says

A flat-out modern-day thriller with a wild scifi concept that delivers. F. Paul Wilson has been doing great work for a long time, and this book is no exception. PANACEA reads like a movie — fast scenes that deliver key information, moving the story forward. I'll be shocked if this isn't immediately by a big studio.

Amy says

Wow did I dislike this book. The only thing I liked about it was the concept. I loathed every one of the trite and cookie-cutter characters, the predictable plot, and the middle school book-report-esque writing style. And don't ever get me started on the ridiculous romance and the caricature that was the female protagonist. . If it wasn't for a book club I would not have finished this truly atrocious book.

Reeda Booke says

A great conspiracy thriller, except for the part where they make Christians the evil ones. That seems to be the thing nowadays, in a lot of books. It's getting old.

David Brian says

How far would you go to attain the ultimate cure-all?

Laura Hanning leads a complicated life. Single mother of a young daughter, Laura also manages to hold down a job as the chief Medical examiner in her hometown. As if life isn't busy enough, charred bodies begin turning up on her beat, and each of them is marked with identical tattoos.

An elderly billionaire approaches Laura, imploring that she use her medical knowledge to help him track down the drug which could save his life. He talks of a mysterious cure-all known as the panacea, and tells her that the cremated bodies are victims in a war between rival factions; the Panaceans, who watch over and protect the fabled drug; and a mysterious religious cult known as 536, who consider the cure-all to be a blasphemy against God's mandate that mankind is born to suffer.

Laura is skeptical with regards the existence of the panacea, but the billionaire offers her a sizable sum of money to at least attempt in finding the drug. And she needs money to cover her daughter's growing medical bills.

The billionaire insists that his personal bodyguard accompanies Laura during her quest for the drug, though she is less than pleased with this as something doesn't quite seem right with Rick Hayden. As Laura will learn soon enough, Rick is a fella with secrets of his own.

The search becomes a continent hopping pursuit involving hired assassins, corrupt government agents, religious cults, (possibly) supernatural happenings, and more than a few murders.

With an interesting premise, Panacea is a nicely crafted blend of action, adventure, theology, and science fiction, that'll keep you turning the pages. Good book!

Elisa says

3.5 stars. Fun book. Really enjoyed.

The only thing, I wish I cared more about our main character, I just didn't have much of an emotional attachment, meaning I didn't need to speed read to find out if everything turns out ok.

But, interesting idea, and I think this is just the beginning, because I still have some questions...

Kathy says

I have zero experience reading science fiction - until now.* I was caught up in the story from the start due to the interesting characters the book opens with as the Medical Examiner has some puzzles to resolve as she examines the bodies of a couple of males, one a young boy she knew and one a young man who had served as his PT assistant. It becomes apparent that something unexplainable had cured both of these specimens and she is soon approached to find the source of the healing agent, or panacea.

There is plenty of action on the medical side of things as well as government agencies following everything this ME is doing. It all results in a very entertaining read.

I must admit that as a young girl I did enjoy Rod Serling's Twilight Zone...but that was a family viewing experience. In this case I might just try another book or two in this genre. I may have been missing out, eh?
*Dec 20 Edit: Must correct since I recalled truly enjoying stories written by Goodreads author John Grant that do fall in the category of science fiction. Some can be found in the wonderful collection Tell No Lies.

?nci Puyan says

<http://illekitap.blogspot.com.tr/2018...>

Ne kitapt? ama... Ç?kt???ndan beri ilgimi ve merak?m? çeken bir kitapt? Lanet ve nedense daha çok gerilim ve biraz ürpertici bir gerilim beklemini?tim kitaptan ama kendimi Dan Brown kitapları?ndan birinin filminin içinde buldum sanki.

Cidden öyleydi. yani hiç Dan Brown okumad?m ama filmlerini izliyorum ve ?unu söyleyeyim ki bence onun türünde kurgular yaratan bir yazar bence.

Ki kurgu süper!

F. Paul Wilson, san?r?m ülkemizde ilk defa kitab? yay?nlanan bir yazar ve oldukça ak?c? ve merak uyandı?r?c? bir kurguyla kar??m?za ç?k?yor. Ba?larda biraz s?k?c? gelmi?ti, konuya girene kadar neyin en oldu?unu bilmeden okumak çok zor gelmi?ti ama sabredip de ilk 100 ü devirdikten sonra yazar?n kurgudaki gücüne ve hikayeye hayran kald?m.

Bir akt? ki... en son b?rakt???mda kitap bitmi?ti.

K?saca kitab?n konusuna de?inmeyece?im arka kapak yaz?c? yeterince konuyu aç?kl?yor zaten ki böyle kitaplarda çok fazla detay vermek ister istemez spoilere kaçır bu yüzden konuya dair çok detaylı? bir yorum yapmayaca??m. Dedi'im gibi arka kapak yaz?s? yeterince aç?klay?c?.

Ancak kitaba dair söylemek istediklerim var... kitapta beni ürperten şeyler vardı bunlar kesinlikle kurgu değildi de günümüzde güçlü insanlar'n elinde barındırılıyorlar? teknolojik imkanlar'n korkutucu yanlarıydı. 536 Kardeşlik tarikat'n'n elinde bulundurdukları güç ve imkanla yaptıkları... bunun günümüzde de rastlanabilecek şeyler olduğunu bilmek.. cidden ürpertici. Ki bütün dünya cidden güçlülerin elinde olduğunu göster önüne seriyor.

Laura'n'n ve Rick'in pes etmeden kökleri araması... hep bir iz takip etmeleri ve bu yolculukluk sırasında hiç tahmin edilemeyecek noktalardan gelen bilgiler ve hikayeler cidden süperdi. Adam bu kurgu için harbi kafa patlatmış dedi.

Laura ve Rick'in sonunda amaca ulaşmaları ve sonları süperdi. Kitabın sonunda sevinsem mi üzülsem mi bilemedim çünkü elinizde ilahi sayılabilecek bir güçte ilaç var ve bu ilaç her şeyi iyileştirebiliyor ama sizin sadece sizin sayılabilecek hastaya verme imkanı oluyor... bir seçim yapmak ve kurtulan böyle bir imkan varken.. çok zor olsa gerek.

Kitaba dair o kadar söylemek istediğim şey var ki... aşırı korkuyorum spoiler olacak diye bu yüzden susmak zorunda kalıyorum. Ama bunu söyleyebilirim ki yorumun başında dediğim gibi Dan Brown kitapları türünde belirli bir şeyin peşinde ipuçları çözerek bir şeyler bulmayı seviyorsan mutlaka denemeniz gereken bir kitap. Ahsen ben bayıldım.

Cidden çok beğendim ve bu kitap The ICE Sequence serisinin ilk kitabıymış ve dilerim Arkadya ikinci kitabı da kısa zamanda yayınlar. F. Paul Wilson, benim radarıma giren bir yazar kendisi bundan sonra.

Kozmokitap says

Ölen cinayetler, yanmış cesetler ve bunları inceleyen bir adli tıp uzmanı... Tedavisi olmayan farklı rahatsızlıklardan kurtulan, tamamen iyileşen insanlar... ki farklı tarikat... Biri insanlar iyileştiriyor diğeri ise tanrı'nın iktidarı için bu tarikatın peşinde olanlar.... Bilimin ve mantığın sınırlarını zorlayan bir iksir ve bu iksirin peşindeki insanlar...

Kitabın başları biraz yavaş akıp konuya dahil olmam zor olsa da sonunda öyle bir balıklama atladım ki konuya, beni çelmeye kimsenin gücü yetmedi. Böyle oldu um her saniyeyi kitap okumak için değerlendirdim. Karakterler ile farklı coğrafyalara gittim, iksirin içeriği hakkında teoriler ürettim. İçeriği tam bir ok oldu benim için. Kitabı çok sevdim ve devam kitabının başlıması sabırsızlıkla bekliyorum.

Skip says

A devoted fan of the Repairman Jack series, I was excited to see a new book by FPW. A battle is underway to protect our destroy a cure for any sickness, essentially a full health reset as you might find in a video game. The 536 Brotherhood thinks it's devil spawned while its creators use it to heal the deserving. A terminally ill billionaire hires an industrious and motivated coroner (Dr. Laura Fanning) to find him a dose, and she needs the money for her sick daughter's safety. She is joined by a mysterious, but skilled bodyguard. Traipsing around the world, Laura is tenacious, battling the bad guys. Classic struggle between good and evil. Recommended.

