



# Stainless

*Todd Grimson*

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## **Stainless** Todd Grimson

Resurrecting a horrifying and romantic narrative that broke fresh ground for its genre, this newly rereleased novel sets a vampire story in contemporary Los Angeles—the pleasure dome of late 1990s sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll culture. Unlike the vampires that came before her, Justine does not shun crosses, she watches horror movies on television, and she sets upon her prey in an almost apologetic way, never killing her victims but leaving them unconscious instead. She soon finds herself entwined in a very human sexual relationship with Keith, a down-on-his-luck rock guitarist whose hands have recently been mangled by a gang of drug dealers. Justine nurtures Keith out of his depression and drug addiction as he in turn becomes her lover and accomplice in her nocturnal predations. The relationship between the undead and the living is realistically and tragically portrayed as Keith acts both as Justine's enabler and unwitting nemesis and, in this classic role reversal, ends up having to destroy the one he loves in order to save her.

## **Stainless Details**

Date : Published January 18th 2012 by Schaffner Press, Inc. (first published February 1st 1996)

ISBN : 9781936182237

Author : Todd Grimson

Format : Paperback 240 pages

Genre : Paranormal, Vampires, Horror, Fiction

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## **From Reader Review Stainless for online ebook**

### **Werner says**

I've decided, in order to give a truer picture of my reading tastes and history, to keep this shelf for books I definitely have no intention of returning to and finishing. This one qualifies eminently! It was recommended to me several years ago by an Internet pen pal of mine at the time, apparently because he knew I'd written a vampire novella. (There's NO similarity between the two works!) After about two chapters, I had my fill of foul language, unlikeable characters, and moral nihilism.

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### **Erik says**

Surreal, edgy, unique. I thought the story dragged a bit in the middle and ended abruptly, but overall it was an interesting twist on vampires so I'll cut the book some slack.

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### **Aggie says**

This is the third time I read this book and I still like it, despite the fact that most of the characters are miserable people. It is dark, gritty, and Justine's enemy is truly ruthless and demented. I like Keith and Justine even though I knew they were doomed from the get go.

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### **Carly Wallace says**

Hea y'all Anne here with my second review for Todd Grimson. Stainless a modern romance with a gothic old school style that brings back fond memories of Vampires that turn to dust and rip humans to shreds when hungry. Oh the good old days, and Todd takes you right back there and shows you what it would really be like to love an immortal who has lived centuries. The characters are well built with detailed pasts that lend to their position in current living arrangements. I really love this book because love isn't always sparkly and sweet it can come over time and be dark and haunting and sometimes you must deal with the past before it comes back to haunt you. Justine is deadly and beautiful, who wouldn't be terrified of her but on the same note who wouldn't love her? Keith is a broken musician on a downward spiral after his talent is rendered useless. Two people couldn't be more unlike yet need each other so much. Great writing dark and gothic in nature take you to places only the bravest of souls would dare travel. 5 out of 5 stars for Stainless by Todd Grimson and be warned for the dramatic twists that will have your mouth hanging open and your palms sweating.

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### **Sabrina says**

This is the second book I have read by Todd and I loved this one even more than the first. He writes horror Paranormal that reminds me of classic gothic horror writers.

Justine is a vampire who has memory problems but has moments when she can remember her past. She is almost child like at times but only adds to her character. Keith is a down on his luck guitarist with a troubled past. But they manage to come together and fall in love.

But what they don't know is somebody from Justine's past is coming back to cause problems. What happens next is sad and shocking but it only adds to the book.

If you want a book that makes you feel like your reading a classic horror book that is set in modern times than pick up any of Todd Grimson's books. I promise you won't be sorry. 5/5 stars

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### **Paranormal Reads says**

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### **Kate Deeks says**

I did not expect a small-press local author vampire book to be well written. Not a big fan of serial-killer or gore content, I was still moved by Grimson's artful writing. A writer like this loves stories, and is good to their readers, despite the rough subject matter. Grimson's approach to vampires couldn't be described as fresh, but his vamps are not tired either. I liked the very LA setting- the characters were part of their place without Grimson needing to tell us all about every detail.

I want to read more of Grimson's writing, and would recommend this book to anyone who likes vampire, violence, strange romance, or well done stories.

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### **Elke says**

I desperately wanted to like this novel and regarding the positive ratings it received so far, I now feel like an alien misfit stumbling into the wrong party and being pointed at behind my back. But. I just did not like this book. Period.

This novel was just so boring and I constantly felt on the brink of coma because of its somniferous effect. I

had to constantly reread pages because I forgot what they were about the moment I turned them. Sentences that stretched like chewing gum and somewhere along the way lost their meaning. Scenes that were fabulously dull and uninteresting. Sudden jumps introducing new characters that I didn't care for, either.

All I remember is that it's a story about a female vampire and her human caretaker who fall in love, another vampire who seeks revenge and a melodramatic corny ending. Everything in between blurs into white noise.

Though I understand the writing is not bad and may be perceived as a literary revelation, I couldn't care less about it. I will only remember that the book is about a female vampire and her human caretaker who fall in love, another vampire who seeks revenge and a melodramatic corny ending. The last ten pages were ok (probably because the longed for end was near) but everything else blurs into white noise. This book just did not work for me at all. Highly recommended for people suffering from insomnia.

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### **Sarah Grey says**

I read this book when it came out and am thrilled to see that it has been re-released. A delightful antidote to the sparkling vampire trend. Dark, moody, and beautifully written.

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### **Hugo says**

A romance of addiction, portraying vampirism as a languid afterlife, love an affectation, and sex as soulful need, written in a lulling prose, jazzed like punk poetry.

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### **Marlene says**

For all my reviews go to <http://www.readingreality.net/>

Stainless by Todd Grimson has the subtitle "A Modern Romance." I'm not sure I'd call it a romance. I would definitely call it a tale of obsessions. Both obsessive love and obsessive hate played a role in this story. And compulsion. I certainly felt compelled to finish once I'd started.

Human beings have found a surprising number of addictive substances to cure their addictions. Morphine was once thought to cure alcoholism. It was a case where the cure was just as bad as the original disease, since it replaced one addiction for another.

Stainless opens with Keith, a former junkie, describing how he was cured of his heroin addiction. A vampire bit him. Justine needed a human to take care of her house during the day, to drive her around looking for people to bite at night. In other words, Justine needed a Renfield. She picked Keith because he clearly had nothing to lose. Vampire bites are addictive, but it's a much more functional addiction than heroin, at least if the vampire chooses it to be. It can also, of course, also be fatal.

Keith used to be lead guitar player for a hot rock band, SMX. But just because the name sounds like "smacks" doesn't mean he actually used to do smack. The drugs came later, after his girlfriend killed herself and her other boyfriend decided it was Keith's fault. So he sent his goons over to break Keith's hands.

Without his music, Keith finally did descend into the drugs that everyone thought he'd been doing all along. And that's where Justine found him. Doped up, strung out, and on the edge of suicide.

She saved him because she needed a pretty "Renfield" who wouldn't give any more of a damn about life or death than she did. After 400 years as a vampire, Justine was nearly as strung out as Keith. But her survival instinct was a bit stronger. Being an apex predator will do that. And Justine has managed to forget a whole lot more than she remembers of her 400 years of "living." It makes things easier.

But because Keith doesn't care whether he lives or dies, he doesn't pass judgements on Justine's behavior. Slowly, these two extremely wounded creatures build a shaky bridge towards each other, based on mutual need. They need each other to have a reason to go on living. People have found love in stranger places.

Love makes everyone vulnerable. Even vampires.

And there's a new vampire in town. Someone from Justine's past. Who is so, so very good at exploiting vulnerabilities. Human vulnerabilities and vampire vulnerabilities. And he's been waiting years to strike back at the vamp who made him. His time has come.

Escape Rating C+: I got sucked into this book. Pun both intended and not. The story started out slow, but once it picked up steam, I couldn't let it go, or it didn't let me go. The ending was inevitable, but it was the right, true and correct ending. Some stories are like that, there's just no other way for them to go.

Stainless had to be set in LA, because the Hollywood movie myths played a part in the story. The evil vamp's history in the shady background of Hollywood was definitely integral to the plot. But I also kept thinking that the whole "live fast, die young, leave a beautiful corpse" concept served as a kind of meta-background in my head as I read.

As interesting as all the obsessions were, there were just a few too many points of view. Not just the action, but the actual point of view kept switching from Keith to Justine to David (the bad vampire) to different members of his minions, to the doctor who wants to use Justine's "blood" as a healing agent, and around and around. It was too easy to get lost among the shifting POVs.

And speaking of David...the bad vamp was not just born during the Hollywood of the 1920s, he was over-the-top melodramatic like a Hollywood set from the 1920s. Or at least he was to my tastes. Yours may vary.

For more of my thoughts on Stainless, head on over to Book Lovers Inc.

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### **Jason Brown (Toastx2) says**

Vampires are hard pressed to be new and exciting. Where Dracula is outdated, Stainless is cutting edge. Where Todd Grimson is subtle and poetic, Anne Rice would be overtly heavy handed. Where this book shines, so would characters from Poppy Z Brite's "Exquisite Corpse". This book is not for all readers, it is dark. sexual (often disturbingly), and not handed to readers on a platter.

This book is not so much a Vampire novel as it is a highly readable analysis of human tragedy. Originally published in 1996, Grimson's Stainless is a jewel in the vamp genre that appears to have been overlooked as

a just another piece of pretty glass. It seems to have aged perfectly, coming back into print with a fist-full of mid-1990's authenticity; Where characters still listen to tape cassettes along side compact discs, and Godflesh is still an industrial/metal band whose name is recognized. Because of the time-capsule effect and the concise wording, this book really shines as something different than the norm on the market today. The same authenticity lended to it by age differentiates it from modern works trying to ride a hipster trend of anachronistic verbiage.. You read this book and it IS 1996 again.

The story itself is nothing new. What is different here is the writing style and the approach.

Vampire, vamp thrall, insert some conflict here, but instead of inflated undead ego or a sparkly love story, you have something a bit unusual. Stainless follows (in most areas) Justine and Keith. Justine is a vampire of unknown age. She is essentially illiterate, immigrated to the US from France, and has a tough time remembering the details of her life, whether by age or the trauma of non-life it is unclear.. She is stuck in survival mode, moving day to day and attempting to remain detached from what she has become.

Keith is a broken man, alive in Los Angeles, guitarist from a now defunct band, his ex-girlfriend dead in South America by suicide. Gangsters have broken all his finger bones, destroying his career. Keith is not a standard Thrall. He helps here even when she is not lording over his consciousness with a hypnotic leash. He has no desire to become immortal, he does not want money or power, all he wants to do is learn more about this undead woman that pays him attention.

Justine, likewise is not the standard vamp. Sure, she has all the conscience issues associated with modern vampire "soul investigation", but it is not all encompassing. She is written in a manner that makes her shuffle between hot and cold personalities, sometimes caring for others, and often full predatory disregard. She refuses to kill or turn Keith, fascinated by his seemingly suicidal relationship with an arbitrary bearer of death.

The novel is primarily from the perspective of non-vampire humans who are involved, though some chapters focus from an undead POV. In all cases, the text can vary from beautifully descriptive to stuttering and disjointed. This stylization depends entirely on the character and his/her/it's mindset or occasionally tenuous grasp on reality.

Other characters exist as well, but will not be mentioned here except that one or two of them are just damned evil..

Certain sections of this book were highly quotable

Excerpt, Keith on the topic of his venomous black congealed blood filled killing machine of a girlfriend's possibility of having a soul:

"It is not a modern question, this consideration of soul. He leaves behind in an instant the nervous irreverence with which one might ordinarily banter about such an unknowable, metaphysical concept– he finds within himself an uneasy but hard-core reverence that he can connect to Justine like a sticky tentacle answering her need."

New paperback edition of this book goes on sale in February, distributed by Schaffner Press.

If you prefer the original cover, or would like it sooner/cheaper, copies from the 1990's can still be found via Amazon "On-The-Cheap". It's worth the cost of a new book however, and you would be supporting a small publishing\* (edit- correction) house, so get the nice and shiny new version. They use such high quality materials that the ink is incredibly bold, the page incredibly white, and the lettering is able to be felt by bare

fingers on each page.. Pretty awesome all in all from a reading aesthetic perspective.

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xpost <https://toastx2.blogspot.com/>

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### **Ryan Daley says**

A cult classic from the mid-90s gets a reprint. Grimson's bleak, effective vampire romance features some ugly characters doing very ugly things, but excellent writing helps offset the dreariness.

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### **Jennifer Estep says**

Stainless: A Modern Romance by Todd Grimson is a vampire book.

Keith was a musician until his hands were ruined. Now, he serves as a sort of caretaker to Justine, a vampire. Together, Keith and Justine wonder about her existence as a vampire, why she is the way that she is, and the strange emotional connection that they share. Also in the mix are a variety of other characters, including Keith's doctor, an author who wants to include Keith in a book, and another vampire who has a history with Justine. Slowly, all of these characters come together -- with brutal, deadly consequences.

The title says that this is a romance, but the book has more of a literary fiction feel. I'm not a huge fan of literary fiction, which may be part of the reason why the book didn't work for me.

I didn't really connect with any of the characters in the story. Keith is interesting, and I enjoyed some of his thoughts on music and musicians. However, Justine doesn't have all that much personality. She sort of goes back and forth between the present and her dream-like memories, and I just didn't get a sense of what she's really like.

Also, not much detail is given about vampires, what they're capable of, etc. I know this isn't a straight-up fantasy, but I would have liked more detail regarding the vampire world building. Plus, as the book goes along, you have more and more characters doing more and more horrific things to each other. This is not a book to read if you are expecting any sort of a happy ending.

Overall, this one didn't work for me, but if you're looking for a different take on vampires, you might want to check it out.

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### **Daddy Bookworm says**

LESS THAN ZERO meets vampires.

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