



The Parliament of Blood

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

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Book

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London, 1886 and a crowd assemble to witness the unwrapping of a mummy in the British Museum. What only a few know is that the body inside is the Lord of the Undead, ready to lead his vampire henchmen to victory over ordinary mortals, recruiting as many as possible of them to the world of the 'undead'.

What has become a standard mix of characters in this type of historical fantasy is used to good effect here ? the streetwise pickpocket, the worthy but lowly young man, the beautiful maiden, just out of reach socially, her father and other elders (including a curator from the BM and an expert in the relatively new science of photography) pitted against the lofty actor, the crazed but powerful diva and members of the nobility.

I learned more than I wanted to about vampires from this book so if of similarly nervous disposition, avoid it! I'd recommend avoidance for other reasons too ? the jarring mix of contemporary language with Victorian-speak, the perhaps too clever tongue in cheek references, the general expectation that everyone wants to be scared in this sort of way. I found it unpleasant more than anything, and the story weak despite a certain logic. That Richards is the 'best-selling author of the BBC **Doctor Who** books' will be recommendation enough for some.

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