



Fade to Blue

Hank Scheer

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Fade to Blue is an exciting thriller in which a scientist tries to stay alive after creating a brain-destroying drug that others want.

In Hank Scheer's thriller *Fade to Blue*, a scientist's unauthorized experiment puts her life in danger.

Sarah is working toward a cure for Alzheimer's disease. When her boss declines to authorize one of her proposed experiments, Sarah decides to carry it out anyway. However, what she hopes will prove to be the cure for Alzheimer's turns out to have a more sinister use: it destroys all brain functions, effectively causing brain death.

When Sarah is introduced to Marcel, her life takes a swift and dangerous turn. Soon, she's running for her life across continents, trying to outwit a man who seems to have eyes everywhere—and also worrying about the professional consequences of her actions, should she ever make it home.

The novel is intriguing, but it moves between its events with too-rapid speed. Sarah struggles to stay ahead; so does Marcel. Both leads are intelligent and confident, though she is reckless where he is cautious; their interactions are involving because of the way that their personalities complement and contrast one another's. The question of who will win each successive battle of their wills is used to maintain investment throughout the ever-shifting chase.

However, audiences are clued into more information than is available to Sarah, particularly when Marcel's perspective is centered: he shares pertinent information that Sarah is unaware of. Thus, the book's continued suspense becomes less about what will happen next and more about how it will happen. The audience is privy to facts such as that Marcel has installed a GPS tracker in Sarah's shoe, for example; she is confused about how he keeps catching up to her, but outsiders are not.

The secondary cast is vibrant and varied; their personalities are distinctive, and their conversations have a charming effect. Sarah's combative exchanges with René, a French inspector whose penchant for sarcasm matches hers, add particular color. And the well-described settings further flesh out and ground the otherwise dizzying, swift-moving story, with details as of a woman sharing a sandwich with her dog in the background of a busy scene.

Working toward an open-ended but triumphant conclusion, *Fade to Blue* is an exciting thriller in which a scientist tries to stay alive after creating a brain-destroying drug that others want.

CAROLINA CIUCCI (January 19, 2023)

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