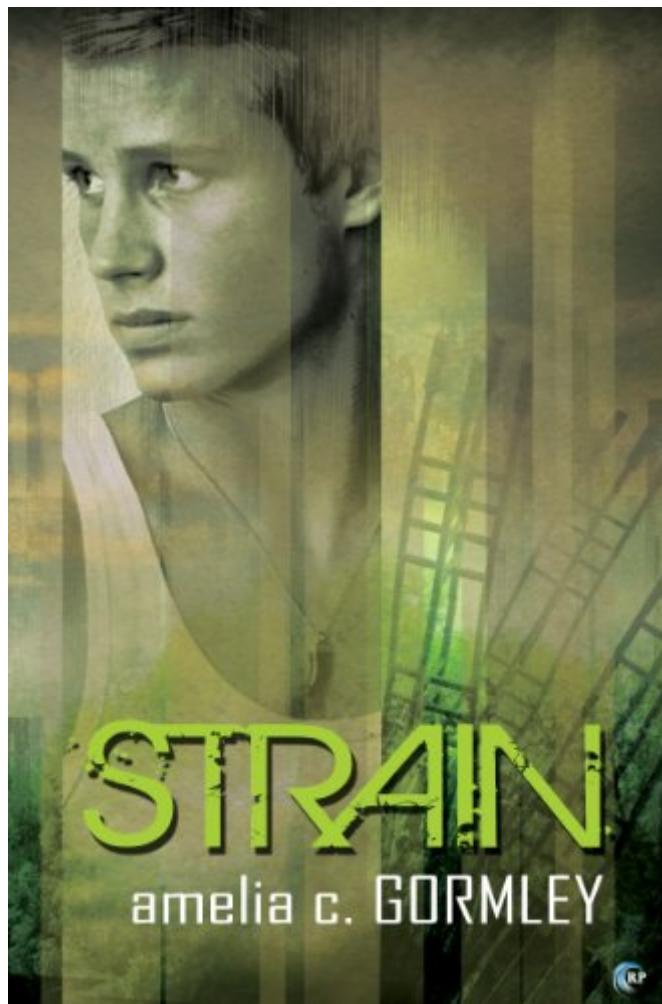


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# Strain



## Synopsis

In a world with little hope and no rules, the only thing they have to lose is themselves. Rhys Cooper is a dead man. Cut off from the world since childhood, he's finally exposed to the lethal virus that wiped out most of the human race. Now his only hope for survival is infection by another strain that might provide immunity. But it's sexually transmitted, and the degradation he feels at submitting to the entire squad of soldiers that rescued him eclipses any potential for pleasure • except with Darius, the squadron's respected, capable leader. Sergeant Darius Murrell has seen too much death and too little humanity. He's spent a decade putting plague victims out of their misery and escorting survivors to a safe haven he can never enjoy. He'd rather help Rhys live than put him down, so when Rhys can't reconcile himself to doing what's necessary to survive, Darius is forced to save Rhys in spite of himself. But with each passing day, it looks less and less likely that Rhys can be saved. And that means that Darius might soon have to put a bullet in the head of the one person in years who reminds him of what it means to be human. Word count: 104,300; page count: 375

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## Customer Reviews

I admit, I went into this with the idea this book was going to be poorly disguised porn. As another reviewer put it, the plot sounded completely implausible as a real story. But the book was a great price and the other reviews were encouraging...This was not porn at all. This was a very serious book actually, and it completely blew me a way!It was not the happiest of storylines and there was no easy resolution. Instead it was a very realistic look at the world that existed in that universe and was incredibly well written.I highly recommend this book.

It's post-apocalyptic Earth, Oregon, actually. There was a terrible virus, which rampantly spread through the world's population and basically turned people into zombies, killing most, and dooming the rest. Not only that, but several forms of the virus are airborne (that's really bad news).As with quite a few post-apocalyptic survivors, Rhys Cooper has lived most of his life in a rural religious commune, and when zombies break into his family's compound, he gets exposed. Lucky for him, the regional task force full of super human soldiers finds him, and they have an idea for a cure for him|but Rhys isn't going to like it.I'm pretty sure the inspiration for this story started thusly: Wouldn't it be hot if there was this guy, and though he's reluctant at first, he agrees to have relations with a bunch of really hot dudes? Nonstop. For weeks. Because it will save his life because he has some kind of virus, or something. Yeah|and they have like antibodies in their reproductive secretions, that can only be received a certain way, because those tissues are super absorbent! Yes, brilliant!And it works. Wow. This story was hot.I couldn't very well label the genre M/M, now could I? And M/M/M didn't work either. Let's just say it's explicit, and involves lots of partners, but there is a single pairing in the romance portion of the story for Rhys. There's also a fair amount of BDSM, and as much as I enjoy BDSM in my stories, these aspects weren't really the main focus for me. They were more about flavoring the soldier's personalities and their rough lives, and how they deal with that stress.The world was gritty and intense. The soldiers in the task force take Rhys with them (so they can "inoculate" him), as they wander the Pacific Northwest, trying to rid the world of the zombie virus threat. But they are also infected, because the same virus that nearly wiped out the world, also mutated in them to make them faster and stronger. This means

they can't really mingle with the common populace, so they live a rootless existence, checking the perimeters of every town, cut off from the rest of humanity, and also trying to save them. It had Superman vibes. But with bondage. And lots of unprotected intercourse (with lube). All in all, I felt bad for Rhys. He had a pretty terrible childhood, being stuck in a religious commune that repressed him socially, and his family literally starved him out of rations as punishment for his sins. And then his heroes ended up being these overly masculine social rejects, who have some pretty gnarly ideas on how to get off. And Rhys goes for it, because it's all he has. And he enjoys it because it's all he has. The reasons for his enjoyment are most definitely a psychologist's worst nightmare, and his desires to be needed and wanted in this capacity are certainly messed up. And it taints nearly everything in the story. But it works. Because not all stories (especially not post-apocalyptic ones) are happy. And even though I can't say that Rhys finds his happy ending, I think he finds a happy enough ending, and a place in this screwed up world, which is all most of us can say by the end of it.

This is the first book by Amelia C. Gormley that I've read. And now I'm adding her to my "Must Read" list. This was an amazing book from start to finish, and one that I didn't want to end. Her characters were real, and while the book may feature an apocalyptic virus and zombie-like monstrosities, the real story is one of survival and healing from an emotionally abusive past. Rhys is a young man ready to sacrifice himself to save his loved ones when he comes across Darius and his company of "Jugs" out trying to save what's left of humanity. The catch is that in order to survive, Rhys has to allow Darius and anyone else in the company the right to sexually take him, any time, any place. There's a bit more to it than that, of course, but Amelia makes some great use of dubcon, domination and submission, and multiple partners. The sex is both emotional and hot, with just enough of both elements to make it work. I've read dubcon that just made me shudder, but the way it is handled here didn't give me any problems at all. In fact, I loved it. The relationship between Rhys and Darius is also suitably stormy, and there's a bad guy to watch out for as well. The book pulled me along from start to finish with virtually no lag. I would recommend this book for those who enjoy steamy M/M in any kind of a paranormal setting, including science fiction and thriller, or who like D/s and dubcon. Even if you don't typically read zombie fiction (I don't), I'd totally recommend it. About these

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This book was soooo good... I loved the world the author built... And the characters were so well developed.. Darius and Rhys were the main characters but the secondary characters were so in depth as well they were all MC's to me... I would love another book by this author to continue the story!!! I was hooked from the 1st few pages... This is also a new author to me.. So glad I found her!!!

This book dealt with much more than I expected. It is set in a post-apocalyptic world, so deals with a lot of death, destruction, and pain. But in that world, Rhys is a bright light of innocence and youth. He makes this book lighter, especially as he discovers the bonds between and beauty in the rough soldiers, the Jugs. I loved the premise, the world building, and the actual biological knowledge behind the different strains of the virus and their effects. The disparities between the different characters made their interactions interesting and unpredictable. Also, the story itself, including the ending, didn't happen as I expected, which is a very good thing. This is a book about making beauty and grabbing what happiness you can in a harsh environment. All the characters were complex and very natural to the story. I loved how Darius also changed, grew as a person along with his feelings for Rhys, allowing him to give to Rhys what he needed. Everything in this book was handled well and put together smoothly. From the forced couplings to save Rhys (mirroring the rough world and contrasting Rhys's idealized view of sex and love), to the nature of the virus, to the origin of the virus, to their survival, to the growth of the characters, and beyond. This is a quick and involved read, you won't want to put it down. I was very engrossed and pulling for each of the characters. Five full stars for this read, I recommend it fully.

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