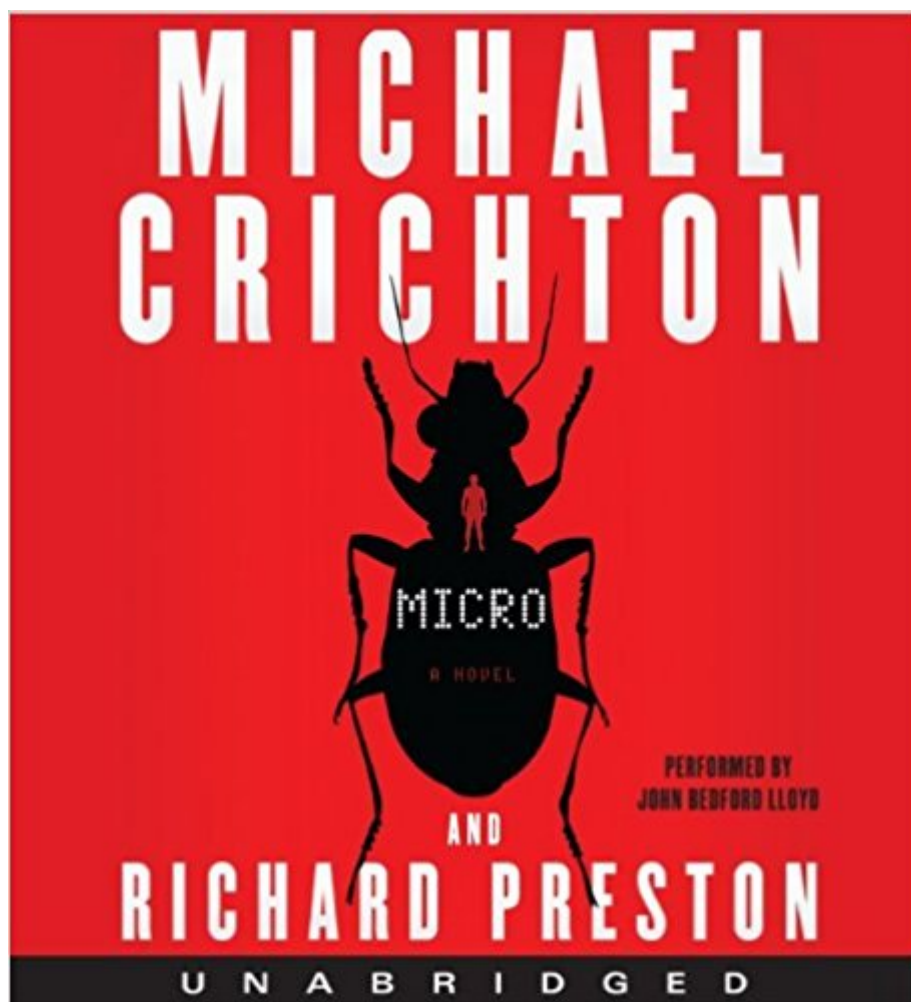


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Micro



Synopsis

In a locked Honolulu office building, three men are found dead, covered in ultrafine, razor-sharp cuts. The only clue left behind is a tiny bladed robot. In the lush forests of Oahu, trillions of microorganisms are being discovered, feeding a search for priceless drugs. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, seven graduate students are recruited by a microbiology start-up and dispatched to a mysterious lab in Hawaii, where they are promised access to tools that will open a whole new scientific frontier. But once in the Oahu rain forest, the scientists are thrust into a hostile wilderness where they find themselves prey to a technology of radical and unbridled power. To survive, they must harness the inherent forces of nature itself. An instant classic, *Micro* pits nature against technology in vintage Crichton fashion. Completed by visionary science writer Richard Preston, this boundary-pushing thriller melds scientific fact with pulse-pounding fiction to create yet another masterpiece of sophisticated, cutting-edge entertainment.

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Customer Reviews

I was, and am, a huge fan of Michael Crichton's work. I never had very high expectations for this final novel, but that's no reflection on the choice of Richard Preston to complete the work. In any case, for better or worse, *Micro* lived up to my tempered expectations. Like several of Crichton's earlier novels, *Micro* has a high concept hook. Most nanotech companies fabricate on a nano scale, but Nanigen MicroTechnologies has developed revolutionary shrinking technology. Not only can they reduce machines and robots, they can reduce living beings and then return them to full size. I

won't get into all the details of the novel's set-up, but seven graduate students learn about this technology the hard way once they become a threat to Nanigen's president. Seven against one is much easier to manage when the seven (and one unlucky Nanigen employee) are half an inch tall. Before they can be dispatched quickly, however, the students escape into Hawaii's verdant "micro world." Crichton's strengths and weaknesses as a storyteller remain consistent. His primary characters are more archetypes than individuals. Rather than Rick, Erika, Amar, and Karen, these students quickly show themselves to be the Leader, the Warrior, the Know It All, the Weasel, and so forth. Each has an assigned role to fulfill. Some barely live long enough to become typecast, because the micro world is treacherous. When you're half an inch tall, a beetle is not unlike a rhinoceros. Luckily, these students are unusually well prepared to survive their hostile surroundings--or unusually well informed about the danger they're in--depending on how you look at it. Among them there are experts in insects and arachnids, poisons and venoms, and the chemical defenses of plants and animals.

I think I have read almost all of Michael Crichton's "science thriller adventure" novels, and seen most of the movies based on them -- "The Andromeda Strain" (the original) and "Jurassic Park" being the best, or at least most enjoyable, in my opinion. It's my great hope that "Micro", Crichton's last book (finished after his death by Richard Preston) never gets adapted into a movie... although in a time when stupid ideas get made into huge, stupid movies, it probably will. "Micro" begins somewhat promisingly, with the mysterious deaths of several men, killed with a succession of tiny cuts inflicted by unseen forces. And then it goes downhill. No, that's too mild -- it CAREENS downhill. We're introduced to seven graduate students from Massachusetts -- none of them at all memorable as characters -- who are induced to come to Hawaii to work with a new company called Nanigen. Within a short time of their arrival, they are lured into a room where a big machine shrinks them down to roughly one-half an inch tall... and a chapter or so later, they are struggling to survive in the Hawaiian jungle, fighting for their lives against insects and other creatures, as well as natural phenomena which are now potentially fatal at their vastly reduced size. Now, that's a premise which could have been a lot of fun. I'm a big fan of stories of people being shrunk down and having to deal with life at a tiny size -- "The Incredible Shrinking Man" is one of my favorite movies. It's a scenario filled with opportunities for wonder, excitement and peril. Of course, it helps -- no, it's NECESSARY -- to support such a ludicrous premise with consistent logic, and people it with characters you can care about.

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