



The Store

Bentley Little

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Store

Bentley Little

The Store Bentley Little

In a small Arizona town, a man counts his blessings: a loving wife, two teenage daughters, and a job that allows him to work at home. Then "The Store" announces plans to open a local outlet, which will surely finish off the small downtown shops. His concerns grow when "The Store's" builders ignore all the town's zoning laws during its construction. Then dead animals are found on "The Store's" grounds. Inside, customers are hounded by obnoxious sales people, and strange products appear on the shelves. Before long the town's remaining small shop owners disappear, and "The Store" spreads its influence to the city council and the police force, taking over the town! It's up to one man to confront "The Store's" mysterious owner and to save his community, his family, and his life!

The Store Details

Date : Published (first published 1996)

ISBN :

Author : Bentley Little

Format : Kindle Edition 436 pages

Genre : Horror, Fiction, Thriller, Fantasy

 [Download The Store ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Store ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Store Bentley Little

From Reader Review The Store for online ebook

Jaksen says

Horrible book. HorriBLE not horror.

Story of a store taking over a town, getting progressively worse while the people in its midst get sucked in, mowed over, brainwashed, and destroyed. With a book like this I need a character I can believe in, or relate to, who - in the midst of horrible events, makes decisions, even if they fail that I can accept. I couldn't with this one, and I'm a huge fan of King's 'The Stand.' (Read it three times, the original, looong version.)

But this book? Nope. Read until about 100 pages from the end and skimmed the rest.

Not a fan.

Joshua Dodd says

Another amazing one from the craziness that is Bentley Little's mind! This story was captivating and harrowing. Holy crap this one had its claws in me! I ended up reading this in AZ staying at my sisters between Phoenix and Tuscon, boy was that a fitting environment! The store moves into lovely Juniper AZ and the shenanigans ensue! I truly loved the characters in this one, Bill was written in a way that I could understand his plight AS WELL AS he response for almost the whole novel. That's a rarity imo, but somehow Little pulled it off. The Store and its complete take over was frighteningly real and full of twists and turns that left me guessing and pressed me to keep reading. Very good read, well written, and horrifyingly real. Makes me second guess my Costco membership.....

Lol.

Kasia says

Bentley has real charm and wit when it comes to picking random, ordinary objects and professions and twisting them to the point where the reader will walk away with a certain healthy degree of some new fear for something as mundane as a store, a house or even their own mailman...that said The Store was a lot of fun, it's a fast read that tackles an interesting subject, a seemingly innocent store (part of a chain) that takes over the town, literally! The craziness that ensues as inhabitants starts to notice a shift of power, or rather diminishment of their freedoms, is quite entertaining and it's surprising how far they will let it go on until some truly unfortunate things start to happen.

A small, quiet town of Juniper, Arizona, falls pretty to a monster, one made of concrete, lots of gray concrete and villainous employees who will not only sell you that microwave but also tell you what to put into it, and if you cant pay, well, let's hope you didn't get too attached to that new baby, or some body part or what not.. payments must be made...this isn't a gross and gruesome read (not on every page) and in fact is pretty realistic and has some humor to it, but it's very creepy and the whole time, from the very beginning when

animals start to die around the building site of the new store, you just know that something is off.. the main characters were sympathetic enough to make me care, so when they started doing some very opposite to "yes I want to live" things I was cringing, but all in good fun.

- Kasia S.

Brian Rosenberger says

The Store is one of my favorite Bentley Little novels. A chain store much like Walmart opens in small town America, intent on putting the Mom and Pop stores out of business, one way or another.

Systematically, The Store sinks its corporate claws into the town, from maintaining the police force, corrupting the city council, and imposing a curfew. Woe to those caught trespassing after dark.

Miss a payment on a microwave, The Store will repossess your newborn. What's the deal with all the dead animals within the boundaries of The Store's property? Just what are the mysterious Night Managers and what is Store President's Newman King's sinister goal?

Full of great scenes, dark humor, and just weird enough to keep you guessing what's next. I love The Store even more upon a second reading. But that doesn't mean I'd shop there.

Michael Hicks says

My original THE STORE audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.

In the very late 1990s/early 2000s, I worked at a local big-box retail store for several years while attending college. Employees had to attend pointless, monthly bull sessions, apparently to remind us on a regular basis of how awesome this particular retail chain was and why it should be oh so meaningful to us meagerly paid employees. At one point, my department manager notified me that the higher-ups were preparing to fire me because I was putting in too many hours at school and not enough on the sales floor, trying to con customers into up-selling their CD purchases with overpriced protection plans. If I hadn't already mentally checked out on that loathsome job, threatening to fire me for going to school was certainly the clincher.

Maybe it's because of those years of personal dissatisfaction busting my hump for The Man that I was so able to completely relate to Bentley Little's The Store. I dug the heck out of this book, and nearly all of it was totally on-point for me.

The small town of Juniper, Arizona is about to receive its first high-end, discount retail store – think Walmart and you'd be on the right track. While jogging past the soon-to-be-demolished, and once protected, land, Bill notices dead animals on the lot. (As one character states later, "The Store is built on blood!") To say that's merely the beginning of The Store's impact on Juniper is to woefully undersell this retailer's impact. Soon enough, the town's small business owners are in a fight not just for their livelihoods, but for their very lives. The Store sweeps over Juniper like locusts, destroying everything – and everyone – in its path. And that's just for starters!

The Store is very much a work of social horror, and it has an important message at its core regarding the nature of consumerism and capitalism and highly powerful and influential corporatism versus government. While there are supernatural elements at play throughout, the most frightening aspects of the story are the ones that are absolutely real. It's positively sinister to watch how The Store corrupts Juniper and its inhabitants, its many various tentacles reaching into the community to sow both paranoia and complicity. The cult-like nature of The Store's employees, the manager's fervent dedication to the retail outlet, and the bullying nature of a mega-wealthy retail giant and its corporate lobbying against a small-town local government are all disquietingly familiar. Although some of these horrors operate on a metaphorical level, they still resound a little too close for comfort.

Despite some scenes of violence and one unsettling and graphic sex scene, The Store is a work of quiet horror, and Little ensnares readers with a heavy, dark atmosphere and a highly unsettling tone exacerbated by small-town politics and plenty of personal conflicts. David Stifel excels at narrating Little's writing, luring listeners in with his friendly, relatable tone, even as a sense of creeping dread mounts. He has a quiet approach that works perfectly in tandem with the material he is reading, giving the listening experience a personable intimacy. As a combined force, Little and Stifel certainly sank their hooks in deep for me, and I was appropriately wowed by both.

The Store was my first experience with Bentley Little's work, and while it's not entirely perfect (although I found it to be a little too long, I wish a bit more focus had been paid on fleshing out some of the supernatural elements) it was certainly highly satisfying. Little is now an author whose work I'll be checking out more of in the future.

[Audiobook provided for review by the audiobookreviewer.com]

Mindi says

I really don't want to write this review! So many people love this book, and I was pulled in, but then somewhere in the middle things really slowed down, only to speed up for the final, repugnant, and dare I say mostly inexplicable last act. I have no idea how to rate this, and I'm still struggling with my feelings. So that's the best time to write a review, right?

Also, things are about to get super spoilery up in here, so if you are interested in reading The Store definitely stop right here. I'm going to have to talk about some big spoilers in order to explain why this book didn't quite work for me overall.

OK, so if you're still reading I'm going to assume you have either already read The Store, or you just don't care. I've read a number of reviews here on Goodreads, and I've heard people say good things about this book, and Little in general, so I was excited to read this one. It's also on a list I'm working through of the 50 Scariest Books of All Time. I can understand why this book made the list, even if it wasn't exactly one of my favorites. The concept of a discount retail chain slowly taking over America is definitely scary, but we'll get back to that in a moment.

The beginning had me hooked. Juniper Arizona is a small town where residents either shop from local businesses, or make a trip to visit the closest mall. There are no big businesses in Juniper, and that makes it perfect for The Store, a ridiculously named discount chain that only exists in tiny towns with no WalMart or other large retail presence. The Store has an agenda, and it starts with taking over small town America.

The citizens of Juniper are told that The Store coming to Juniper is a great opportunity for local jobs, even though the town makes a lot of concessions for the chain. The protagonist, Bill Davis, knows there is something not right with the store from very beginning, and he's correct. Unfortunately, his daughter wants to get a part time job there, and after a string of weird occurrences that reinforce his distaste for the retailer, he goes with his family to opening day, and suddenly realizes that there's a lot to like about the store, and maybe it wouldn't be so terrible to let his daughter work there.

The biggest complaint I'm seeing from readers is that none of the townspeople would actually do any of the things that The Store makes them do for a job there. I agree that no sane person would degrade themselves for a part-time job, but the impression I got very early in the novel was that once you are inside The Store you are under some sort of influence that essentially brainwashes you into doing things you know aren't right. Sam doesn't want to do any of the things the creepy manager demands of her during her interview, but she's powerless to get up and walk out because she's under The Store's control. It's likely that she didn't even make the decision to get a job there herself, and that she was already brainwashed before the interview.

The reason all of this can happen is that the owner and CEO of The Store, Newman King, isn't human. We never learn exactly what he is, (he seems a bit like a vampire to me, which make sense, because The Store sucks the life out of every town it enters), but it's clear that his influence affects the townspeople in every town that has The Store, which is essentially how he is able to slowly take over every aspect of the town. All of the local businesses or forced to close, and then The Store's presence expands to full control of the town. The Store eventually earns control of the city council, the police department, fire department, and even the school system. Newman King sucks the lifeblood out of these small towns, and then controls them fully.

At some point Bill starts to realize that The Store has gone too far, and he does everything he can to get his daughters to stop working there. The Store has an ironclad contract though, and after a bit of research Bill realizes he's going to have to go higher up if he wants to stop The Store and save his family. Eventually he pesters Newman King with enough emails that the man invites him to use his private jet for a personal interview at his corporate office. Bill has always been the main person in town to really fight the arrival of The Store, so he feels confident that he can stand up to Newman King.

Of course, since King is a brainwashing vampire, he immediately offers Bill a manager position at any store location, and tells him that once he becomes a store manager he can do whatever he wants to run it. Bill immediately thinks this is a great idea, although the tiny sane part of him that still exists knows that in reality it's terrible. He's powerless though, and eventually goes through a long training process that totally breaks him down, and then gives him every luxury he could ever want. By the end of training Bill is at the top of the class, and he goes home to Juniper to run the store. (Only first, he commits an act that he can never take back, and when he learns the truth about that act, it has horrifying repercussions.)

I feel like I'm taking too long to get to the point. The point is, if everyone in Juniper is under mind control, that sort of discounts the entire ending of the book. Because as acting store manager, Bill makes the decision to undermine Newman King, and band together with the other managers across the country to take him down. And he comes up with this plan INSIDE THE STORE. Why is Bill the only person in the country to finally break the brainwashing effect, and then convince hundreds of other brainwashed managers to follow along with his plan? It's never explained, and though Newman King declares on more than one occasion that he IS The Store, he's killed in one of his own buildings. Just because his employees decided to start to defy him.

On a side note, I'm not going to say exactly what Bill does on his last night of training, but when he finds out the truth, I can't believe that it doesn't completely ruin his life or cause him to utterly give up. It's that

appalling, and I'm kind of disappointed that I didn't see it coming, because as soon as Newman King reveals what Bill has done, it's obvious that it's the best way for King to control him. Instead, Bill's terrible act causes him to construct his elaborate plan, and for some reason it's hard for me to buy that. Clearly Bill is no longer under the influence of mind control, so why doesn't his indiscretion haunt him more? I think Little assumes that this act enrages him enough to want to do anything to bring down King, but I can't imagine any man being able to ever get over something like that and just continue on with his life.

So, structurally I have problems. I can buy into the idea that Newman King can brainwash an entire town, but it's hard for me to reconcile how Bill and his second daughter are able to fight it. (I didn't mention it earlier, but Bill's other daughter ends up working at The Store, and she does things to help her dad that go completely against the concept of her being brainwashed. How can you only be brainwashed part of the time?)

OK, so I feel like I've rambled enough. I'm going to read back through this and try to decide on my rating for The Store. There are some truly disturbing things that happen in this novel, but I think the pacing is off in places, and characters do things that can't really be explained. I would say the scariest part of this book is consumerism, and the idea that a corporation could actually gain the kind of control that The Store eventually does in towns all across America. This country does have an intense love for WalMart and Target. Unfortunately, that type of brainwashing is all too real.

Chris Dietzel says

Little starts with what is truly a 5-Star premise: taking the idea of a store that is similar to Wal-Mart and turning it's arrival to a small town into a horror story. A lot of the book was great and worthy of reading for multiple reasons. The only part that detracted for me was Little's combination of ghoulish and supernatural horror elements with very realistic unfavorable elements (tax breaks for the store, etc.). They worked separately but there were times when the combination of the two seemed silly. Other than that, a great addition to the genre.

Alondra says

4 Stars

Now, that was fun.

Wal-mart on steroids; taking over a town near you.

I loved each and every character; some despicable and some just naive...and some, have a much darker side.

There is some hope, but very little. In the end our characters fight the good fight; but is it enough??

Come on in; they have everything you want or could ever need. (Think Needful Things on acid).

M.P. Johnson says

Shop At Death-Mart

This book escalates brilliantly. At first, *The Store* is just like any other chain retail store. Scummy, yes, but evil? The evil comes out slowly, logically and a way that is totally terrifying. I was doubly shocked. There was the initial shock coming from the book. Then there was the secondary shock when I realized I was actually being shocked by a book about an evil chain store. A lot of that comes from the fact that I'm personally guilty of some of the rationalizations used by the characters in supporting a soulless chain store instead of local businesses, and I could see myself going those few steps further if put in the character's positions. Furthermore, the way this book demonstrates scale, subtly showing that this is not just an issue in Juniper, where the story takes place, but in small towns across the country, is pretty fantastic. This has quickly become one of my favorite books.

Cody | codysbookshelf says

As is the norm with Bentley Little's brand of horror, *The Store* — a dark satirical stab at the state of commerce circa 1998 — wrings terror out of the ordinary. A corporate giant, *The Store*, moves to the small town of Juniper and soon becomes the locale's main source of employment. Fairly mundane, right? Little takes this concept and twists it up, dices it into pieces, and the end result is a long scream of a novel: a nightmare the reader will not soon forget.

I like to think it takes a lot to shock me, but Bentley Little always manages to pull one (or three) over on this reader. Several passages — Hell, entire chapters — in this novel made my skin crawl, made my mouth fall open in surprise. That isn't hyperbole; Little is the real deal, and this story is so terrifying because, though it could never real happen, it is an ingenious commentary on the brutality of modern American capitalism. And Little takes such a wide, all-encompassing theme as capitalism and brings it down to scale; he makes it approachable.

Despite the slow opening chapters and occasionally clunky prose, this is a terrifying book that I will not forget any time soon . . . especially when I'm browsing the vegetables at Wal-Mart and am asked by an employee if he, or she, can help me find what I'm looking for.

Lisa says

Uggghhh! This book had so many, many chances to become an excellent book!! A lot of the scenes it set up, it didn't follow through with! I feel like it was the generic version of *Needful Things* in a way. This was not a page turner for me because it kept me wanting more. I kept turning pages expecting/hoping for more and it fell very flat.

mark monday says

Bentley Little established himself as the premier expert of institutional deconstruction with *The Store*. This is a smart and fast-paced novel, and its attack on consumer culture is so obvious yet so smoothly encapsulated within the traditional horror genre, that the genuinely sharp critique - the entire reason for this novel's existence - may pass almost unnoticed by the frequent and possibly jaded horror reader.

If the western is the most conservative of genres, then horror is surely the most reactionary. Both genres leave themselves open for regular deconstruction, but for some reason the western has gained acceptance as a serious genre, while horror still struggles. On the one hand, it is hard to see why: both genres have their critically respected authors who sell a lot of books (Cormac McCarthy, Stephen King) and both genres have thousands of paperback examples of dross that is easily available in all chain outlets – so why is the western seen as classic, while horror is seen as disreputable, an embarrassment? But on the other hand, it is very easy to see why. Horror is not a respected genre when viewing it as the embodiment of reactionary tendencies within human nature. These are tendencies that are in some ways shameful – a fear of sex, so sexuality is made horrific; a fear of violence and the unknown, so violence becomes both a threat and an object of fetishization. It is somehow less embarrassing to discuss the embodiment of conservative values in the traditional western or the deconstruction of those values in the atypical western, than it is to discuss the straight-up enjoyment of things that no supposedly healthy person should be considering for too long. Themes such as "Sex As A Threatening Disease" or "Violence As A Passion Akin To Sex"... are perhaps rather awkward to discuss for the person who has a vested interest in not appearing to be *rather creepy*.

Bentley Little is that rare example of the horror writer who doesn't exist within the typical fear-of-sex, fear-of-violence continuum of most within the genre (King & Straub being his far more famous brothers with similar perspectives). I don't know if the man is a liberal or a progressive or a libertarian, and I don't really care. What I find to be completely refreshing is that his fears appear to be primarily based not around the potential of violence visited upon the traditional family unit (although it is there, to a point) or around fear of sex/fear of the body (although that is there as well, but understated and certainly not fetishized)... Bentley's horror explores the discomfort of comforting institutions like the chain store, the university, the post office.

In *The Store*, his multi-pronged attack on consumer culture is clear and straightforward. The protagonist hates it and so does the author. I don't usually expect that kind of lucid renunciation of capitalism from this most reactionary of genres.

As usual, his writing is straightforward, almost transparent. The plot moves quickly but inexorably, the characters are simply depicted and all the more real for it. And the attack on the potential of dehumanization within consumerism, within capitalism, is both vivid and furious.

LKM says

This book was just so all over the place, that I just don't know what to rate it. 2? 2,5? 3? I think I'll settle with a 2, just because it had such a disappointing ending (but I was ready to rate it a 3 or 4 at the start).

Which takes me to...

The start - actually about the first half of the book was quite alright. It was slow paced which might alienate

some, but I found I enjoyed the writing style, and it had several creepy scenes that built up suspense and made me wonder what was going on with/in The Store. I can't say I loved the characters, they were all pretty bland in my opinion, but I could overlook that because the suspense it built. If you will, it was mostly showing, not so much telling.

And then, somewhere between halfway or so and onward, it became... awful. On the last 2-3 chapters, it was completely telling, and showing almost nothing. (view spoiler) The ending amounted to nothing, (view spoiler), and in my opinion made very little sense and was awfully silly. Corny? Cheesy? Something like that.

So in all, the ending ruined it for me, a real shame considering I was quite enjoying it at first.

Bill says

No, no, no.

I have been meaning to read Bentley Little for well over twenty years, but his arguably best, The Store, has been so hard to find.

Recently it has been released for Kindle, so I was pretty quick to grab it.

23% in I had to stop.

As I've said in other reviews, I don't care how depraved things can get. In fact, the more depraved, the better! What I can't stand, though, are writers who defy human nature in their characters.

Even though this happens 23% in, I'll still protect this as a spoiler to that point.

(view spoiler)

If you can accept that as how a character would react, then sure, give The Store a try. You'll probably love it. I may have loved it when I was twelve. But I have no time for authors that are so out of touch with what people would logically do.

Adam Light says

Very entertaining and engrossing story about a chain of retail department stores, generically named The Store. When one of them opens in a small town, everything goes to hell as it gains more and more control over the town.

A friend asked me if reading this right after Little's superb The Association due to the similar theme, and I can't say it did. However, I will say that The Association was the better of the two.

Still, this book was high entertainment with a wicked black humor and plenty of satire and creeping dread typical of Bentley Little at the top of his game.
