

Canadian Secret Chili Recipe Review

BY DYLAN HOLTMEIER

I GOT THIS RECIPE from one of my high school friend's mothers a few years ago. She didn't explain how this recipe is Canadian, or why it's a secret. Maybe the air of mystery adds to the chili? She told me she makes this when she doesn't feel like cooking or when a bunch of people are coming over for a party. This chili is a reliable crowd pleaser that doesn't require much time to make, and results in well balanced flavor with depth. I usually make sure to add some salt right away with the onion. This brings out the moisture of the onion faster and allows them to brown and develop a more complex flavor faster. If you don't have Worcestershire sauce, you can add soy sauce or anything else that contributes a salty, savory flavor. I do recommend making this with beer, with or without alcohol, as I think it adds some extra oomph in how it tastes, but if you don't have beer or are too young to get some, this chili is still worth making. I also recommend adding some form of spice to this, I think it takes it to another level, but know your own spice abilities.

INSTRUCTIONS

In a large pot on medium heat, brown the hamburger with onion, salt and pepper. Add the green pepper, garlic powder, and chili powder. Cook for a few minutes, until the green pepper starts to soften. Add the beer (or water) to deglaze the pot and cook until the alcohol smell subsides. Add the rest of the ingredients. Turn up to high and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and allow to simmer for 15 minutes. Turn off the heat and let it sit for a little while, up to 2 hours, then serve with desired toppings. Cheese, sour cream, or tortilla chips would be good.



INGREDIENTS:

1 lb hamburger (or any ground meat)
 1 medium onion, diced
 1 tsp salt
 1 tsp pepper
 1 green pepper, chopped
 1 tbsp garlic powder
 1 tbsp chili powder
 1/2 tsp cumin
 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce (can substitute soy sauce)
 1 can diced tomatoes
 2 cans red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
 4 oz beer (or water or non-alcoholic beer)
 1 small can of tomato soup
 Cayenne and pepper flakes to taste

The Magical, Midnight Front: A Book Review

BY HAMZA ISMAIL

REQUIRED READINGS ARE a pain no matter the class or instructor, so it's good to go out and try a new book. I am a manga euthanist, and I generally stray towards the fantasy genre. It's a reliable genre that has produced many memorable books for me; however, change is an incumbent part of life. I decided to not change my literary palette but update it just a bit. The book I read was "The Midnight Front" by David Mack.

The story starts off like any fantasy story. A young protagonist, Cade Martin, finds himself on a hero's journey as he avenges the loss of his parents. The setting of the book, World War II, was a refresher for me. It creates a unique magical twist on modern history. Cade joins a covert magical squad called the Midnight Front. The plot takes off as it has a ton of action which is right up my style. The main character honestly didn't stand out to me, but the side characters did. They have such disparate personalities that it's easy to tell who is who as each character has their own distinct voice. Plus, they do resemble a family as they care for one another save for a couple of exceptions.

What I liked was the magical system. The characters are magicians, which is a plus for me, but the way in which they use magic is different. They have to create contracts with demons and there are consequences to using magic. Consequences are a foreign term in Young Adult literature, but the fact that the magic has pros and cons makes it easier to digest; although, there are flaws to this system. One flaw is that the magical powers aren't exactly well defined. Another aspect I liked is how careful the author was in regards to history. World War II is an especially touchy subject for obvious reasons, but the author doesn't glamorize the Allies side at all. He accurately depicts the horrors of war and the scars they leave on all soldiers. He could've easily used some magical spell to wipe the trauma off our characters, but he didn't.

There were some things I didn't like. The plot does seem to drag on in certain areas, especially in the middle act. The climax of the story is set up well but it's used as a subversion for the real crisis. It feels forced, and dare I say, deus ex machina? There are some gore and bloody moments. One character is forced into a concentration camp, and if that's not your cup of tea, I'd suggest skipping some pages. The ending was not my favorite. All I can say is, if you pull a trigger, you can't just wipe away the bullet.

All in all, "Midnight Front" is an enjoyable read. The fact that the author wove together history and fantasy is a real treat. I'd suggest reading this book if you are a history lover. There are a ton of names, dates, and organizations learned.



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