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Douglas Clegg

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The subways of Manhattan are only the first stage of Jake Richmond's descent into the vast subterranean passageways beneath the city -- and the discovery of a mystery and a terror greater than any human being could imagine.

Naomi went into the tunnels to destroy herself...but found an even more terrible fate awaiting her in the twisting corridors. And now, the man who loves Naomi must find her...and bring her back to the world of the living, a world where a New York brownstone holds a burial ground of those accused of witchcraft, where the secrets of the living may be found within the ancient diary of a witch, and where a creature known only as the Serpent has escaped its bounds at last.

Naomi Details

Date : Published April 1st 2001 by Leisure Books (first published 1998)

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Author : Douglas Clegg

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From Reader Review Naomi for online ebook

Amy says

The only thing that kept me reading Naomi is my own anxiety that I face at the prospect of leaving a book unread once I have turned that first page. In addition to being just . . . awful, the pages were riddled with juvenile spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. I am deeply disappointed that Naomi was my first exposure to the writing of Clegg because I couldn't read it with the nostalgia of his previously devored and loved works. Perhaps the author just did not execute an idea in a way that does it justice, it didn't reach its fullest potential. I am hesitant to read Clegg again, but I may with some gentle coaxing; there are some instances where I do like to be proved wrong. Suggestions welcome!

Randy Evans says

If anyone would have asked me about this book when I was at 25% though it I would have said don't start it, at 30% I would have said "hang on". Now at the end I have to say it was pretty good. Like many books it had a slow start and it was kinda like waiting for water to boil but once the bubbles start popping up it only went faster and got hotter. I,m glad I took the time to read it. Like they say "you can't judge a book by it's cover" well you can't know a book or story unless you see it though to the ending.

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

I'm usually a devoted follower of Clegg, and have been itching to read Naomi since I learned of its birth. It wasn't the beautiful, wrapped up, pretty bundle I dreamed of though instead it was rather confusing, mislead, a bit jumbled, and tainted with weakness in a few spots.

For redeeming qualities, the story held a few. The idea was unique enough, and it's always fun to read about ancient witches and all that entailed in the 'older days'. Some of the characters, particularly Maddie, were rewarding to read through, and since it was hard to figure out much of the time which canal the story would end up passing through, I was kept on my toes a bit to see what would pop up next.

What earned lower points on the scale was that the beginning was a bit confusing and hopped around a bit, many of the underground scenes were just too muddled to follow, making it harder to keep my interest at high peaks, and some of the scenes were so bizarre they induced mild headaches.

Jake seemed like a decent guy never getting the good side of things. The ending of the novel didn't serve him justice like I thought it would. He comes across as the protagonist but at the end seems to just be there for a ploy in a larger game, not coming to a straight resolution of his own.

Maddie was strongly written; I dug her determined personality and felt for her issues. The story surrounding her scenes was the most entertaining. I kept waiting for a wrap up where'd the two would meet or at least cross lines, but this never happened. Naomi wasn't as big a deal as one would think when reading the back blurb story is told through her eyes at the beginning but never beyond that point.

While I don't fault Clegg's characters that much, the story didn't work well with them involved.

Each scene was alive with action but each scene also lacked a degree of consistency. I found myself wanting to speed read or skip to get back to the continuance of a sub-story line. The beginning was confusing, while interesting. The middle stayed confusing and started branching off into too many different lines. The ending was the strongest area, especially the last chapter or so. Even though Jake didn't get all he deserved, the resolution served up a nice, ironic justice and happy ending of sorts for another central character.

The style is narrative and literary. At times it flows smoothly, yet at other times comes across a bit stiffer. Because of the point of view and style used, not much suspense was incorporated through the characters, and any attachment I formed with them was more from reading about their plight, not experiencing it.

Although Naomi didn't fail in every way, it failed where it needed to succeed the most. The story was inconsistent, the pacing unsteady, the characters good but not focused on evenly, and the style withdrawn. Give it a chance if you're a follower of Clegg, but if you're a newbie sampling his work, try others by him instead.

Courtney says

Jake Richmond moved to Manhattan to escape the ugly memories of Carthage, Virginia. It was in Carthage that Jake fell in love with his childhood friend, Naomi Cross. When something bad happened to Naomi as a teenager...something that she couldn't talk about...she left town and moved to New York City. It wasn't long before Jake followed her. Though Jake looked for his lost love, he never found her until it was too late. Instead, he started a career as a writer, got married, and had a child. When Jake's wife leaves him for another man, he once more begins his search for Naomi, only to find out that she committed suicide by jumping in front of a subway train a few months before. The body of Naomi may have been torn apart by the train, but not her spirit - she is destined to return to help destroy an evil that caused her death hundreds of years before...

Roger says

A few brief words on Naomi. Douglas Clegg has proven in the past that he can deliver spooks and sparks-in other words he can write a scary book. I am saddened to say Naomi is not on a par with Clegg's other works. Though all plotlines are eventually tied up, this book does not stretch suspension of disbelief it tears it in twain. A horror novel taking place in the labyrinth of tunnels beneath New York City seems like such a natural too. I was expecting a kind of retelling of Orpheus and Eurydice instead I got a lot of phantasmagorical claptrap. Not Clegg's best novel-maybe my own expectations sabotaged me? I think this might have been a better book if seventy of the first hundred pages were pared away. I realize that might have made for an awkward length-too long to be a short story too short to be a novel-but I think it would have made a better story.

Geoff says

My first Douglass Clegg book of many, I'm sure. A great story about a witch burning by a priest, who also had previously raped the witch as a child. The witch imprisons him in a hell beneath the earth by a curse. Under the earth happens to be under New York City. The Priest, now known as the serpent, is about to escape his chains, and Naomi has to come back from the dead to prevent it.

This was a pretty good story. Easy to read, full of surprises, and not overly long. He told the story without inserting in unnecessary character development, just for the sake.

Karen says

This was an ok read, but the story kinda got lost between the past and present, and the supernatural just wasn't believable. The was well paced, the characters in their own rights well developed, and the plot had promise. Unfortunately, the past and present read like two separate stories, even at the height of action when the supernatural and present came together, they failed to marry smoothly. There were to many inconsistencies.

Dacia says

I honestly went into this book thinking it was going to be GREAT! (after all the good reviews he has). It took me almost to page 100 to get into the book (way too long to get interested). It was just OK after that, I love to read horror but this one was somewhat of a disappointment. All that being said, it was not the worst and it did get much better, just have patience. A glimpse into what could be lurking in the depths of the earth and a bit of what could be in the afterlife. I may in the future try reading another one of this authors books.

Barry says

Terrific, overall. I got a bit confused with some of the intersecting plotlines, and all the Capitalizations of Certain Beings and Characters made for some Confusion at times as to whom was important or not, or even just what one's significance was in the overall plot. I also was most enchanted by Jake's love for Naomi, coupled with the vivid images of the haunted city called Manhattan; this was paired off with lots of references to a thoroughly unpleasant woman making genuinely fascinating discoveries about her property, and references to goings-on in the Below (subways, etc.). So, it got a little distracted/distracting at times, and I'm not sure exactly how the Jake/Naomi storyline fit in with the Serpent/Below/etc. plot--but whatever: RICH atmosphere and a couple of beautifully-rendered characters made this, my first Douglas Clegg book, a guarantee that it won't be my last. Well done!

Jeff O'Brien says

It's hard for me to write a review of any Douglas Clegg book without gushing about how he is my literary hero and asking questions like "why the fuck is the world so ignorant to this man's brilliance?"

That being said, Naomi is the most imaginative book of Clegg's that I have read so far. After reading the synopsis I expected a good old spooky tale about a girl killing herself in a New York subway station and a bunch of creepy stuff taking place in the dark tunnels below NYC. To say that's what you'll get from this book would be obscenely underselling to the product. At times I thought back to Clive Barker's Midnight Meat Train and said "that was good, but this is way better."

I myself like to know as little about a book as possible before I read it, so I will end my description there.

Thank you, Douglas Clegg, for taking me on yet another fantastic journey.

Brandy says

A Sad Story, Spread Through 100's of Years

I sometimes got bogged down in places, but before I was thoroughly put off, the story would pick up again, until I finally was able to finish it.

Mr .Clegg is an author whose work I have read and enjoyed in other works. This is not a particularly easy read, but if you enjoy reading stories of depraved bastards getting their just desserts through curses, this is your book.

Jenn says

A little convoluted but still good scary fun.

Daniel Russell says

At this rate I think I'll be reading through all Douglas Clegg's books in the first half of 2010! This makes three in as many months with Mischief waiting on the shelf.

Naomi opens with the titular character, whom we are shown to be a manic depressive, descend into the NYC subway, intent of jumping in front of the first train and splattering herself all over the tracks. Things don't exactly go to plan, and instead she is saved by...something.

Jake Richards was Naomi's childhood sweetheart and has also escaped the stifling and devout Virginian town of Carthage to NYC. Unbeknown to him, he has been living in close proximity to Naomi, and as his life crumbles around him, he finds himself thinking about her more and more. Mere 'would of, could of, should of' thoughts quickly lament into obsession.

Jake finds out about Naomi's 'death', and his crusade leads him to piece together her life, to learn of the person she'd become. The deeper he descends, the more he believes that Naomi isn't dead, but is still alive somewhere beneath the city, and suffering...

This is the main thread of the novel, which weaves around the tales of a street kid living in the Below, the sewers and abandoned subways, and his quest to stop the evil that's escaped there. Also, we have Maddy, a struggling property tycoon whose Brownstone has revealed proof that witch trials took place in NYC. While battling with a tosser from the museum (who is trying to swindle her out of the property), Maddy comes into possession of a diary, allegedly belonging to one of the slain witches.

One thing I felt straight off the bat with this novel: it's a deeper, more literary book than I expected. Yes, I have got on my soapbox in the past when other readers have complained about Leisure Horror books for their explicit gore and paper thin characters, asking, what did you expect when you bought it? However, this one is out of left field. You could go at Naomi with a pair of scissors, snip out certain passages, certain paragraphs, and the result would be a nifty little collection of poetry about NYC. Beautiful stuff. It might

sound cliché to say that the city itself felt like a character, but it's true. Scenes are set perfectly, as well as King did in Duma Key.

Is this the same writer who wrote *The Infinite*? The problems that dogged that book with the character backgrounds are handled with style and panache here, which adds to the steadily deepening mystery. All the characters are interesting and dark. In fact, at times, this is a very bleak book which makes the reader sympathise with the characters more. Naomi's depression, Jake's sense of being lost, Maddy's desperation not to lose her money...it's not a feel good book, which is great because it wouldn't work that way. At times the sense of hopelessness (especially with Jake as he struggles through his drastically changed life) is the driving force.

The stand out image for me lies at the roots of the city. A perfect mix of fantasy and the contemporary, and again, very, very dark.

My only slight criticism (and this is on behalf of an average reader seeking tradition horror, not my personal opinion) is that there is little gore and killing in this novel. The more graphic incidents are told or discussed, and there are very few deaths. But this is not what the book is about. It's dark fiction, subtle, not out and out horror.

A deliciously dark little number with enough meat to interest even the literary types. Deserves to sit on anyone's shelf.

Sue says

Witches in the subways! What's not to love about that concept? Cool horror book, well written and although I plodded through the first couple of chapters, I'm glad I hung in until I got to the good stuff.

Shannon says

This book is amazing! I have literally spent over a decade trying to find it, it is that good! I have a mysterious and interesting bond with this book I can't explain. I bought this book around 10 to 15 years ago at my local Dollar General for a couple bucks. I read it and fell in love with it. I was in my teens and liked to write stories and began to name some of my characters Naomi after the character. However, shortly after finishing it, it mysteriously disappeared. I looked behind furniture, under furniture, and tore apart my house, nothing. I tried to find another copy, but there were no more at the store. I tried other places, but found that I could not remember the authors name to save my life and when I described it no one had heard of it. I then moved and was hoping that packing everything I own would help me find it again, but I didn't. And so began a decade long obsession with this book. I typed it in search engines, including details I could remember. I did try goodreads at one point a long time ago and nothing. I had begun to think I was crazy and imagined this book. I would periodically think about it and wish I could find it so I could read it again. Tonight there was a big thunderstorm and I couldn't sleep. For some reason I thought of the book as I was scrolling through some kindle books. My goodreads app was there and I just typed it in. I was disappointed when it didn't immediately pop up. I was going to give up and then decided to scroll all the books. I was scrolling and suddenly I saw a cover I recognized. I've finally found it. I read the synopsis and confirmed this is it. Would I recommend it yes. This book has haunted me for years and I never forgot it. Not many books can do that. I'll admit it's not for everyone, but if you like a good suspense, you will.

