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Those who go for cold, queasy horror will embrace the latest shocker from Stoker-winner Lebbon (*Fears Unnamed*). When a dangerous military experiment on England's Salisbury Plain goes fatally awry, the authorities hastily and secretly bury the bodies of a dozen soldiers and a few other victims. The body of one soldier, Steven, is supposedly returned to his parents, but the coffin is empty. Ten years later, Steven's still grieving father, Tom, locates the place of burial. But when Tom excavates the site, he discovers not his son's remains but the moldering corpse of a little girl animated by a peculiar form of life. Lots more nastiness follows. Fans who prefer their horror to have a sense of humanity should look elsewhere.

Berserk Details

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Author : Tim Lebbon

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From Reader Review Berserk for online ebook

William M. says

I've had issues with most of Tim Lebbon's past novels, although I do enjoy his novellas -- which is where I think his strength lies (the shorter format). However, Berserk has showed a solid improvement in his skills. He's brought together a tight story using only a few characters and really got inside their head. Lebbon planted just enough seeds throughout the book to keep the suspense building at a steady pace. I enjoyed this original story and found the ending to be particularly strong. If this is any indication of the new Tim Lebbon, I'll be looking forward to more of his work. Great writing. Recommended.

Adam Wilson says

Having read five of his books, Tim Lebbon has become yet another hit or miss author with me. I haven't really loved any of the books that I have read of his but I

haven't really hated any of his either. Berserk falls somewhere in the middle. I will say that the short novel starts off very well which made me expect it to continue

being very well through the whole thing. The writing is great, the 55-year-old protagonist (if you can consider Tom to be a protagonist) is interesting and likeable

enough, and the build up is paced perfectly. Unfortunately, it is building up to a whole lot of nothing much. To show how this book takes such a wrong turn right after

setting you up for something awesome, I want you to imagine yourself in a car with Tim Lebbon at the wheel. He is driving along wonderfully, not breaking any laws,

playing listenable music on the radio, and talking about his loving family or dog or whatever. You are sitting there enjoying the ride and you thank him for taking what

appears to be a unique route to your destination instead of going in the boring, familiar direction most other "drivers" want to go. Then, just when you tilt your seat

back a bit and are really starting to get comfortable, Lebbon begins blasting Metallica's Death Magnetic on the radio, starts cutting off other drivers bigger than him

who are driving cars bigger than yours, Repeatedly farts while laughing and preventing you from rolling down any of the windows, starts drinking some PBR in full view

of the cops, turns down a muddy dirt road with a sign at its entrance reading "KEEP OUT BECAUSE THIS ROAD IS SHIT." Then, the next thing you know, you are being raped

by cannibal bunnies with purple eyes and, well you get my point. The second Lebbon started writing about little vampire/zombie girls shooting visions of her past into

Tom's head, Berserk goes off the rails and it is all down hill from there. Like I said, the prose is wonderful and the entire book isn't bad, but it could have been so

much better. Alas, it is another three-star memory that won't remain in my memory for long.

DeAnna Knippling says

The beginning of this is sooooo good. And then it gets tired. I skimmed. The plot ran on rails after a certain point. Despite the blood and guts, it was a mild book, if that makes sense. I felt like there was a more interesting book that almost got written, a kind of Rashomon of horror, but didn't because of contract stuff. Fly free, secret horror novel. Fly free. Will probably check out more books by the author. That opening. It's gonna take off at some point.

11811 (Eleven) says

I set this aside at 78% for a while because it was a bit boring and now decided to push through to the end. Turns out, it ends at 80%. The rest is previews of other books.

I'm happy this ended when it did. It was about a 2.5. Not that bad. Not that good.

Ken McKinley says

I've always heard the saying you don't judge a book by its cover and I can say that I haven't picked out a book that way since I was a kid wandering around the adult fiction section for the first time at the local bookstore. Well that bookstore met its demise by the wrecking ball long ago. Since then, I've expanded my reading horizons in a more systematic way. First, it was through the recommendations of like-minded friends. In the last couple of years, it's been through the recommendations of my like-minded Goodreads friends and Tim Lebbon was one of those recommended that I should check out. So, when looking through his work, I came across Berserk and its cover with the creepy girl with grayish-green skin and evil eyes peeking... No, leering out at you. What a great cover! I had to see what it was about. I'm pleased to tell you, the story behind that cover is just as creepy.

Lebbon introduces us to Tom, a husband who is still grieving with his wife over the loss of their only child, Steven, twenty years earlier. Steven had been in the army and was apparently killed in an accident at a military base. The details of which were kept secret by the government. Tom and his wife buried an empty casket. Steven's body was supposedly never recovered. This has never set well with Tom. One night, he overhears two soldiers talking about that fateful accident in a local pub and learns that his his son was buried in a mass grave not far from there. If this sounds like an "uh oh" moment, you're right. But the "uh oh" isn't the fact that a distraught father took a shovel out to a deserted army base and broke in to do some digging. The "uh oh" is in what he dug up and the aftermath of it. Lebbon weaves a creepy and eerie (there are those two words again) tale dripping with atmosphere and good characterization. Although, watching what Tom does throughout the story is like witnessing a train wreck unfold and you can't look away, you understand where he's coming from. You feel his anguish and despair controlling his decisions. While I may have preferred a different ending, Berserk was a chillingly fun ride.

4 out of 5 stars

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Tomás says

Una novela de fantasía bastante oscura, adulta y bien construida que resalta entre otros trabajos de género que tanto abundan hoy en día, más destinados a un público juvenil que busca una y otra vez los mismos tópicos.

Hay un personaje principal atormentado, el bueno de la película, y otros personajes que se van uniendo a la historia moviéndose solo por conveniencia y de dudosa moralidad. Los "monstruos" que presenta el autor están bien desarrollados y las situaciones en las que el realismo deja paso a lo fantástico, están escritos de manera más que correcta.

La novela es del 2006 y este autor británico parece tener una voz fresca, se nota su personalidad y también se nota una influencia del gore más salvaje de los años 80 (autores como Barker, Ketchum, Laymon, etc), habiendo en la novela una violencia bastante bien escrita, repugnante a veces, pero que en ningún momentos parece estar de más.

Una buena lectura y un autor más al cual prestarle atención próximamente.

Nick says

My first read of a Tim Lebbon book and I liked it! Got two more Lebbon books on my shelves and looking forward to reading them. There were three factors that got me interested in this book. First, the title. Berserk. Don't know what it is about the word but sounds great! I like the reaction it gets when people ask me what I am reading. Second, the cover. This was a Kindle read and I detest the poor, awful, non-creative photoshop covers on Kindle books. Berserk has an excellent Kindle cover. A horror cover that could grace a paperback. Third, this is a British horror story.

So, my attention captured with those three factors I read the synopsis. A military cover up of a dangerous experiment which resulted in the death of our main characters son. He goes looking for his son which leads to horror unleashed. Got to read this! The story is that of Good vs Evil, Human vs Berserker. Except it is not as simple as that. Who is truly evil? Who deserves our sympathy? The lines are blurred. It is a story of loss. All the characters have lost someone or something and this loss is what drives their behaviour.

The story builds well with both creepy and gory moments. The pace does slow at times and the characters reminiscing and memories can get slightly repetitive but this was another enjoyable British read in my British marathon of A Cry In The Night, The Concrete Grove and Chimera.

John Bruni says

Another excellent Tim Lebbon book! I had a lot of fun following this story of a grieving father who finds out his son might actually be alive and winds up digging up a mass grave and discovering the mummy of a supernatural little girl and going cross-country on the run from a military man who wants to kill him and the girl. That's about the most regular way I can describe this crazy story. When the protagonist is digging up the mass grave, it's kind of like the reverse of the scene in *PET SEMATARY* when Louis Creed takes his dead son to the Micmac burial ground. It's got the same imagery and the same vibe. Very creepy. The only problem I found with this book was near the end with Cole. I didn't buy some of his motivations. Aside from that, this is a wonderful book and definitely worth your time.

Todd Russell says

The one thing you don't want to hear in a bar is that they didn't really bury your son like you thought ten years ago, they buried "something else." And then to overhear: *They kept monsters*. What begins very strong with a distraught father returning to the burial ground of his soldier son and immediate reader interest soon sees the energy fizzling.

Once the father finds what's really in the burial ground, it makes for what should be an intriguing, suspenseful, perhaps even horrifying read. However, it becomes a bit tedious in parts with the Natasha berserker antagonist being way too annoying instead of scary. The nonstop referencing of Tom, the father, as "Daddy!" becomes like nails on a chalkboard. I kept reading to find out what happened to Steven, Tom's son, but that was lost in multiple, somewhat repetitive fights between a soldier on a mission to put the berserker and Tom down.

Couple this with some lousy Kindle paragraph formatting (why doesn't the publisher see this problem and fix the paragraph indentation???) and it makes this a sometimes good, sometimes irritating reading experience. Four stars for the story, three stars for the writing, two stars for the characterization and average to three stars overall. I did like some parts, especially the beginning. Most of the time I was disappointed, not scared, by the berserkers. 4,134 of 5,866 Kindle Locations (FYI: Berserk ends at 71% of 100%, the last 29% are previews for other novels. Most of which are by other authors).

Janie Johnson says

Chose this for my third read of Spook season. This is also a first time read for me with this author. It was not really all that scary, but it was quite disturbing with our characters slow decent into insanity. I also found that the author has a very poetic style of writing which is quite odd with this type of book.

I enjoyed the characters of this story as well. It was hard though to decipher who was actually good and who was bad. The 2 main characters both has similar personalities and both went through some big changes because of the berserkers. I loved watching them yield to this insanity that the berserker was all about. You have one character trying to stop it all, and one who is more nurturing, the story goes on from there. It truly made me feel like I too was losing my mind.

I would read more by this author, mostly because of his style of writing. It was very poetic, and it easily flowed, making for a pretty quick read. Managed to finish this before spook season ended! Great choice of

book I think!

Kelly says

Jim Lebbon's Berserk gave me nightmares – want some??!!

None of us are new to the story of the bereaved father in search of the truth to find out how his military-enlisted son truly died, only to find that the conspiracies that are whispered in the streets and on the internet may in fact be true. What sets this book apart from all the other clones is skill. Traditional in appearance only, the plot is intense and imaginative. The story explores the darker aspects of humanity and all that it is capable of, but what lies underneath is far more powerful. I'd love to tell you what I took from it, but hey, it's personal; and that is what makes Lebbon one of the most powerful writers today. He instills inspiration that while it can be absorbed and used, changes with each reader's perspective. That, people, is talent!

Pulsing with desperation and hunger, the atmosphere will cling to your skin; leaving traces of blood and tears. You can feel the madness and betrayal seeping into the very air you breathe, contaminating everyone and everything that surrounds you; be prepared. Slow and comfortable at first, the pace soon excels to an almost cruel speed. Never pausing in between the action, the momentum is carried on adrenaline and preservation. With your heart racing and the sweat building, you'll be swept up in tension and suspense until the climax; leaving you shaking, soaked, and slightly giddy. It's a beautiful thing.

A powerful combination of thought-provoking prose, and unequivocal terror, Lebbon's style of writing is definitive. His writing is classical, grammar polished, and his imagery is gentle, but effective. His voice is almost parental; showing you the horror that exist in the world, yet still trying to shield your eyes from the depravity in it. This is true in every aspect of his work, but shines in his cast. The characters all have the potential to be completely amoral, some even walk that line, but they are never entirely evil. Each character is fractured; be it emotionally, spiritually, or physically. Both Tom and Cole are traumatized from the events in their life; the difference between the two was how they took it into themselves. Though these two are the main characters, the entire cast is easy to identify with, and grow attached to. I promise, by the end of the book you will remember each player, and mourn their absence.

-As posted on Horror-Web

Jeff French says

3.5 stars

"They kept monsters there"...

If I were to break this novel up into acts, the first act would be fantastic. There is lots of mystery as Tom delves into the past to find out what really happened to his son, and unknowingly puts himself and others in danger

The second act is a bit of a disappointment. The story dissolves into one big chase scene. There is a marked decrease in tension and I found myself losing interest at points.

Things pick up again in the third act. The showdown between the humans and the berserkers is excellent. Finally we get to learn why Natasha is so special and Tom's fate is revealed.

Lebbon never explains why Cole hates Natasha so much. Sure he hates all Berserkers, but he seems to especially despise her. From what the reader is told, she doesn't seem any worse than the rest of them. Sadly the author doesn't elaborate.

The best thing about Berserk is Natasha. She is manipulative, cunning, and resourceful. You can feel the malice pouring from her (not bad for a corpse haha). I love the way she taunts Cole relentlessly and practically pushes him over the edge. She is a great character.

Berserk is almost a 4 star read, but is let down by a less than suspenseful second act.

Erin ? *Proud Book Hoarder* says

Tense scenes are tight and strong, chocked to the brim with action and heart pounding suspense. Gore is not spared here, yet it's not all the book is about. The plot is original in some aspects, all too familiar in others, yet succeeds in the way its delivered. The ending is a bit of a surprise to me, as I figured one of the characters would turn out more dark than she portrayed to Tom, and I can't say the finale was as satisfying as I'd like. The map of this book is still fun to follow, however, and the twists and turns along the way are entertaining.

Characters ring tried and true, working with the scenes to produce the maximum appeal, and the pacing doesn't let up. At times the isolation of Tom and the child, Natasha, with the villain Cole can grow slightly repetitive, since it keeps continuing, but the flashbacks injected on each characters part helps ease the pain.

All in all this is another Leisure horror book that's written with fans of the macabre in mind, aiming at keeping them happy and working. Lebbon has a special talent all his own, something different, unique, dark, and ultimately satisfying.

Darlene Harris says

A very strange, but very good book. This one is different, doesn't really go down any path you'd expect and it was nice and refreshing. Some of it struck me as a little too strange, but in the end this was a whole lot of fun.

El says

When I was a teenager I used to be into these sorts of horror books, the kinds I'd find in the paperback section of the used bookstores, the ones that didn't seem to be that popular otherwise, but their covers (usually) spoke to me because there'd be a freakish-looking child on the cover, or some other sort of terrifying image. Things like John Coyne's *Hobgoblin* or Whitley Strieber's *Billy*. I usually would find a few before or during family summer vacations to read on the road. Authors like John Saul or Bentley Little or Robert R. McCammon.

I have no memory of any of them now, outside of their covers. I see some of those covers now and I can tell you exactly where we were when I found that copy (used bookstore in Madison, for example) or where we were when I was reading (on the road in Canada, for example). Just don't ask me any questions about their plots.

This is one of those books I would have found in a bookstore and snatched up because a) creepy cover, b) zombies?, and c) have you ever heard of this book? Nope, probably not, so therefore it would need my love.

This particular book came to me from my friend and coworker about, guh, five years ago? We're self-proclaimed horror book and movie aficionados, we've seen countless horror movies in the theaters since we've worked together, and we reference *Rosemary's Baby* pretty regularly. This book has moved to three different apartments with me, I keep packing it and unpacking it and each time I'd be all "Man, will I ever read this?"

Well, now I did. Yay for Halloween reading.

It's not the worst thing I've ever read, but it's also certainly not the best. It's a fun read, most of the time, though occasionally I'd find myself snorting out loud and muttering "Yeah, like *that's* real." Like *any* of this is real. It's about zombie-like folk called *berserkers*. What did I expect?

There are some nice, creepy-like moments, but overall I found it just to be an okay read. It's very British on occasion, like when the back end of the car is referred to as a *boot* instead of a trunk. This has no bearing on the story itself but for whatever reason it constantly amused me.

It's a fast enough read, so if you're into this sort of thing, it's worth a quick read. Enjoy it. Have a good time with it. What it really did for me is make me want to take a road trip to Madison.

Oscar says

Tom es un oficinista de más de cincuenta años que vive felizmente casado con su esposa Jo. Se acerca el aniversario de la muerte de su hijo Steven, y el triste recuerdo de su desaparición sigue estando más que presente. Su hijo, paracaidista del ejército británico, murió mientras realizaba unas maniobras en las llanuras de Salisbury. Al empezar la novela, Tom escucha una extraña conversación de dos individuos en un pub que le lleva a pensar que lo ocurrido a su hijo tal vez no fuese un accidente. A partir de aquí, Tom se embarcará en un cruzada aterradora.

'Berserk' (2005), del británico Tim Lebbon es una novela de terror trepidante, de esas que no puedes soltar hasta llegar al final. Se lee muy fácilmente, la historia es muy buena, la narración ágil y la prosa correcta. Quizás el final no llegue a ser lo satisfactoria que uno esperaría, pero bueno, como se suele decir, el viaje vale la pena.

Joshua Allen says

From the first word, *Berserk* is a fast-paced thrill of a horror novel. Driven by a need to know the true fate of his son, Tom travels to the site of his son's supposed burial ground, only to find instead the corpse of a little girl, held by chains and promising him answers if he frees her. They flee the vicious Mr. Wolf, a man who will stop at nothing to kill the girl once and for all.

A rarity in the horror genre, *Berserk* is not only an entertaining read, it is also an interesting character study. Filled with rich, complex characters whose individual motivations Lebbon lays out for us in keen detail. We understand the antagonist as well as the protagonist, and we never quite know who to root for, by we end up so swept up by the ride that it becomes irrelevant. Complete with an explosive conclusion, *Berserk* has whetted my appetite for more horror and more of Tim Lebbon.

Martin Rondina says

Berserk es un libro que me ha llamado mucho la atención. Primero porque no es muy conocido y encontrarlo fué de pura suerte y segundo porque no hay mucha información del mismo. Así que cuando lo encontré, no dude en llevarlo, y eso fué una excelente decisión. Es un libro corto, de unas 280 páginas aproximadamente. En la historia vamos a conocer a un padre angustiado por la muerte de su hijo ya desde hace 10 años, quien descubrirá de un día para otro, que la muerte de su hijo encierra un misterio sin resolver y sobretodo una gran mentira. No todo era como se creía, y Tom se verá envuelto en un conflicto que encierra a un terrible experimento gubernamental, los Berserkers.

La verdad es que el libro se lee de una sentada, la lectura es muy ágil y fluye rapidísimo. En mi caso me enganchó desde las primeras páginas, hace tiempo que un libro no lo lograba tan rápido. Es la primera vez que leo algo de Tim Lebbon y realmente quede sorprendido, lo que más destaco son las descripciones sangrientas que hace en el libro, tan literales y crudas, algo que no se ve en muchos autores del género. El libro en ningún momento decayó, mantiene siempre un ritmo ágil y fuerte, eso hace que la lectura sea muy agradable. Quizá algunos elementos del final me hubiese gustado que se abarquen de otra manera o hacerlos un poco más extensos, pero eso es solo una opinión personal y subjetiva, realmente creo que de inicio a fin se da muy bien, es un libro que me ha gustado y lo recomiendo!

Maicie says

Ten years ago Tom's only son was listed as a casualty of friendly fire and sent home in a sealed casket. One day he overhears a couple of military men talking in a bar and he learns that his son's death might involve something more sinister. He begins a quest to discover answers.

I picked this book up because of the cover. The picture of the little girl is crazy scary. And nothing is scarier than an evil child.

Good story but I felt like I was on a long car trip through the flat plains of Kansas. I kept asking myself, "Are we there yet?"

Helen says

A vivid and compelling story of one man's obsession with his son's death, and another's long-held conviction that he made a mistake in not finishing the job of wiping out something he viewed as 'evil'. While there were some usual horror clichés; the eternal battle between the forces of good and evil and so on, the build-up allows room for ambiguity, aside from the main protagonist I wasn't sure who I should be rooting for, further adding to the frenetic pace of the story. A truly exciting read with excellent descriptive content which provided a graphic, intense movie-like experience for the reader. I'm really starting to like Lebbon's work, and will be on the lookout for more!
