



Goat Dance

Douglas Clegg

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From Douglas Clegg, award-winning author of *The Hour Before Dark* and *The Abandoned*, comes a novel of unimaginable terror and heart-pounding suspense. What secrets lie within the ancient place known as the Goat Dance? A Haunted Lake . . . Seven-year-old Teddy Amory should have died that winter's day on Clear Lake, when she fell through the ice while skating with her older brother, Jake. But something got inside her that day . . . something terrifying . . . A Haunted Town . . . Nightmarish forces lurk in the mountains of Virginia, and a shadowy darkness has begun to spread like a shroud over the living. Now a town must face its terrifying past as a possessed child threatens to unleash an unspeakable horror . . .

Goat Dance Details

Date : Published April 1st 2006 by Wildside Press (first published 1989)

ISBN : 9780809556557

Author : Douglas Clegg

Format : Paperback 408 pages

Genre : Horror, Thriller

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From Reader Review Goat Dance for online ebook

Dreadlocksmile says

First published back in 1989, 'Goat Dance' was Douglas Clegg's second full length novel to be published. With a multitude of different covers for each separate publication, everone of them portraying some grotesque and darkly imaginative artwork, you know exactly what sort of novel you'll be getting when you pick up 'Goat Dance'.

True to the cover artwork, Clegg unleashes a multitude of obscene and horrifying moments within the tale that strike great similarities to that of the master of dark imagination, Clive Barker. Clegg time and time again reaches out far into the depths of his creative writing, dragging back with him such monstrosities; you'll feel truly immersed in a world of corruption on many occasions within this eerie tale.

Set in a small town named Pontefract which is located within Virginia, Clegg starts out his tale with the introduction of the easily lovable character of Malcolm Coffey (nicknamed throughout the novel as 'Cup'). Coffey is lured back to Pontefract after a serious of haunting nightmares and strange phonecalls that all lead him back to his hometown.

Once back in Pontefract, the dark and evil truth that has been lurking within the town for centuries begins to reveal itself. Good townspeople turn to murderous savages, mutilating their loved ones in the most disturbing ways under the influence of this great power. Coffey eventually seeks help from a collection of old friends to bring an end to the corruption that lies at the heart of the town.

Running the length of the main storyline, Clegg has carefully spun a number of intricate subplots that eventually weave themselves into the main fabric of the story. One of these such subplots is Coffey's developing relationship with the girl Lily Cammack. Throughout the tale, the reader is invited to be drawn closer to the love Coffey has for Lily, which is so well portrayed that you can almost feel the same love and devotion towards the girl as Coffey clearly does.

Characterization is nothing short of spectacular throughout the tale. For a novel drawing on so many emotional levels, this was obviously an important aspect of the writing process, in order for the storyline to effectively deliver on so many different subtle levels.

Pieces of the storyline gradually begin to fit together as the story progresses, until the whole picture is finally clear in an almost apocalyptic reality. Suspense mounts throughout, and with the grand finale drawing closer and closer, Clegg unleashes all hell on the reader, showing his ability to delve into seemingly limitless depths of imagination.

With definite similarities in style with that of Clive Barker and Mark Morris, 'Goat Dance' draws heavily upon the human characteristics of well defined characters whose lives are submerged in a world that seems to be more of a nightmare than anything else.

The conclusion is well thought out and executed in a very satisfying manner. As a whole the book seems to take the reader on a journey that is longer than the sum of its 422 pages. This is more than likely down to the beautiful characterisation that draws the reader into each and every one of their lives.

Sarah says

This was my first Clegg novel, and I am very very pleased. Contrary to popular belief, there IS an art to writing good horror. King certainly has the chops for it, as does Dan Simmons and I am happy to add Clegg to my list.

This is a well crafted story from beginning to end, I liked the characters, even though some were deeply flawed. Good writing and scares all around.

The key is enough horror without the kitchen sink feeling, and this novel delivered. Eerie, evocative and visceral in perfect measure.

J.K. Grice says

GOAT DANCE was my second Clegg book, and it's not as well written as NEVERLAND. This story starts off fine, but toward the last, Clegg is throwing everything but the kitchen sink at you. It becomes a bloody jumbled mess that I was just wanting to end before it did. Not a great horror book.

Brandon says

Douglas Clegg. Very prolific, pretty highly revered and currently living in my state, according to his Facebook page. Qualifies for to-be-read status for sure.

And so it was. Goat Dance ended up in my queue almost a year ago as the place to start with Clegg. The author's first novel, a tremendously hokey-gorgeous cover, reviews alluding to lots of gruesome gore, and nominated for Stoker in the time of its release...all solidifying facts as the place to begin checking out Clegg.

Problem was this...last summer, when I originally started reading it, I had just come off quite a few straight-forward breakneck paced books, most of which were to the brim with gore, which at that particular point in time was exactly what I was looking for.

Goat Dance just isn't that. In fact, it's a bit jarring in its sporadic storytelling at first, takes a bit to get into.

So, it went back to the shelves, and I picked up something else more suited to my taste at the time.

It circled back around recently, with its cover beckoning to me, and being in the mood for something a bit more in-depth than my usual comfort zone.

My experience was quite different this time around. I still didn't love Goat Dance, but for a while, in the thick of the book, I really thought I might. Honestly, I may even, for the first time ever, think that the hyperviolence at the end of the book, seems to be one of the downfalls...

Let me explain.

The book starts all over the place, telling about 10 narratives at once, from all different media sources. You've gotta pay more attention than one should have to, to get into it. But man, once you're into it, you

are into it.

About a hundred pages in, I was completely hooked, mesmerized even. There were moments of literary brilliance, stuff you don't really see in books with ridiculous stepbacks revealing a goat-demon-man in a swirling flame lake of suffering somebodies.

Clegg at his best, is a truly fantastic writer. Maybe one of the best I can think of, from an ability to use words in such an artful way...at times...but this brilliance is only hinted at. I really can't wait to check out some of his later work, as I am sure this is a craft he masters later in his career.

For the thick of the novel, I was totally in. Pontefract, Virginia, it's many, many characters and locations became my second home.

And then, in the final act, where all sorts of nasty hell breaks loose, where I usually am applauding, the whole thing kinda just...falls to bits.

From it's disorienting beginning, it settles into a great groove, but then just fizzles with a mile a minute monster and gorefest. I'm typing these words and almost cannot believe what I am saying.

I'm not sure I've ever felt so mixed on a novel. There's a lot going on here and a lot to enjoy. Plenty of shocks, plenty of gore, plenty of surprises...it's just very non-linear for a very long time. The reader becomes used to this, starts to respect and enjoy it. When it just becomes a relatively standard horror tale for its last hundred pages, you just feel a bit let down. Or maybe even like you're reading a different book?

Anyway, I've somehow gotten to the almost end of my review and not mentioned what the hell the thing is about. So, I'll do that.

Goat Dance is a discombobulated novel telling the many stories of a town called Pontefract, with an evil history. It mostly hones in around one main character, Cup Coffey, but weaves about a hundred subplots in and around him. Cup has been called back to the town by a girl he loved, and really never gave up loving. He arrives to an absolute shit-show of supernatural proportions and finds he is quite tied to it all.

My recommendation is give it a try, you might dig it.... and I'm recommending I give Clegg another try too. But for me, this one was just way too all over the place in the end.

That is not to discredit the author's tremendous writing ability. There were moments where I was moved to almost tears by the great writing.

It's just that writing dissolves into a mish-mash of inside-out men and aluminum toothed vagina-women...which in another novel, would be fantastic. It just doesn't really make much sense here.

originally posted on my blog at <http://UndivineInterventions.blogspot...>

3/5

Neil Nabbefeld says

Read this when it first came out and it still sits in my mind as one of the best horror novels written. It comes at you sideways with a complex plot that will keep you on edge.

I have a hard time writing reviews that summarise what's in a book. I'd rather let a reader know that their investment of time will be well worth it... Be surprised and let the story take you.

Scott Kinkade says

This book was all over the place. Lots of characters that were difficult to keep track of and scenes that were at once gory and then dreamlike. It seemed like the author was attempting to mix horror with philosophy but the outcome was sloppy and confusing. The end could not come fast enough. Case in point that just because an author, whose writing I like, recommends a book, does not mean I will enjoy it.

Cari says

Ummmm... No.

I was really in the mood to read a horror novel due to a cold front moving in that had me experiencing major fall fever. Starting Douglas Clegg's *Goat Dance* quickly cured me of that. It was simply just a *little too much*. It's extremely bizarre and entirely too long.

The book had a fairly promising beginning, as it starts out with a young girl nearly drowning in a lake and emerging with something evil inside of her, but the story quickly moved away from her and started alternating between multiple characters in the town of Pontefract, Virginia. I HATE that! I feel that very few authors can successfully feature multiple (as in more than two, or even three) points-of-view and still fully develop the characters and make the plot flow smoothly. (*Okay I'm totally talking about Stephen King here. He is THE KING when it comes to his ability to write this way.*) I felt a little confused as to who was who throughout the book, with the only characters really making any impression at all were Teddy and Coffey, as I felt they were the only two characters whose personalities were developed enough for a reader to form a connection with them.

Although I was disappointed in this book, but I must give credit where credit is due. There are some truly horrific images that will play out in your mind as you read this. It's also really descriptive, which often makes it pretty grotesque. It made me a little queasy at times, which is hard to do to a nurse! So, if that's what you are looking for, by all means, read this!

Overall, this was just not a very good reading experience for me. I LOVE horror novels, but not this one. It was like a whacked-out, less refined version of King's *'Salem's Lot*. Like, really wacked out... It had such potential to be great, but it took a really weird route (what the crap is a "pocket lips"!?! Gross!). *On a sidenote, I hate to keep comparing this to Stephen King, but he just really sets the standards for the horror genre, so I can't help myself.*

??

Michael Brookes says

This book is a bit of a mixed bag. It starts off well, with some good pacing, cracking writing and really drawing you into the characters. The core story is a familiar one with dark secrets and ancient evil, but it's

told in an engaging way. It flits between the present and the adolescence of one of the main characters - Cup. This is handled well and doesn't cloud the story.

However the book loses its way as it gets going. It has a King feel to the story with the small town feel and over indulgent journey through the characters' lives. Unfortunately the author's writing isn't consistently as slick as King at his best so the bulk of story really outstays its welcome. I don't mind long books if the content deserves it, but there's too much repetition here, so a lot of it feels like pointless filler.

On a few points I almost gave up on it completely - however it does have some saving graces that kept me going to the end. The story itself is interesting and when it does progress it brings some well thought out twists with it.

And while the writing isn't consistently great in places there are some flashes of genius that are a joy to read. They also bring some really dark and well imagined moments of horror - that are then diluted by their repetition, but they remained strong enough to keep me reading.

It comes together again for the ending and the pace becomes more frantic. As I said at the beginning the book is a mixed bag - I enjoyed reading it, but it required more perseverance than it should have needed.

Jimmy says

This is a great horror novel! It has everything I'm looking for and come to expect from this genre. It made me not want to put it down, and stay up all night reading. Not to suggest that this book is just like/copying/plagiarism, but to give you an idea. For me Goat Dance is the perfect combination of Stephen King's Bag of Bones & Dean Koontz's Phantoms. It has been a while since an author has shocked me, grossed me out, and left me in such a wonderful state of scared out of my mind awe. I will be looking forward to reading more of his work.

Tanya Simon says

When I read this book for the first time, I realized that this was what I wanted to write. In your face horror, gore, terror, etc. No censoring the darkness. Clegg's books fill the space inside your head and outside with dread and dark places. I have enjoyed many of them, but this one was my first and when I was finished I was stunned.

Jeanne25 says

I was torn between a rating of 3 and that of 4. Again - I wish we could give half stars. This book was divided into 3 parts. The intro grabbed my attention. I am glad it did so because the first two parts seemed to drag for me and without the prologue I am sure I would have given up. I know I considered it several times. The end of Part Two started picking up the pace. By the time I was in Part Three, I was hooked. Maybe it was my imagination but I detected some Stephen King influence in the story (especially It and Needful Things.) Since I just finished it, I haven't looked to see if there is a sequel yet. I liked the ending and how it allowed for a sequel.

Kimberly says

Douglas Clegg has a great way of taking a small town and infusing it with the most appalling forms of evil imaginable. The beginning was a little confusing to me, with the introduction of all the characters, but once I'd gotten past that the story really took off. The visceral imagery was incredible! There were times when I actually felt the sensation of something akin to what a character was going through. I've long been a fan of Clegg's work, and this novel is no exception!

Recommended!

Cathy says

I quite enjoyed Clegg's "The Attraction" -- a tight, vivid, well-written, character-driven exercise in survival horror what was hair-raising with being mean-spirited. The companion novella that came with it was a nice Victorian pastiche "books one should not open" piece. I had earlier read "The Hour Before Dark," which was unimpressive but readable enough. So I was quite pleased to find Goat Dance so affordable on Kindle, and the sample I downloaded was nicely written.

Unfortunately, this first novel turns out to be a bit of a mess. Parts are very well-done indeed, especially the flashbacks to the Dire Events at a tony prep school and the town's unsavory history. Unpleasant events at a movie theater are also well-handled. But the longer the book goes on, the less controlled it becomes, and Clegg tries to compensate for his unravelling plot with buckets of gore, body fluids, and random grossness. The last third of the book is just a murky, ugly fiasco, and squanders whatever good will we have built up in the earlier sections.

Don't pick this up as your first Clegg experience, and don't completely write him off if you hated this.

Edwin Baeyens says

My review: <https://boekenzolder.blogspot.be/2017...>

Jennifer says

Oh the suspense!!! From the first page to the last page this book is filled with it! Scary, gruesome, great story line, great characters. Yes there were spots that I was kinda freaked out to walk through a dark room ;) A few issues...read this on my Nook and it was filled with places where there was a period and should of been a comma and a handful of words that didn't fit...kinda like when you type something then go back and change the words but don't delete all of the original words first. Not enough to not read this book though. Another thing is the description makes it sound like this book is about little Teddy Amory...and it is, to an extent. The story line is centered around her but a majority of the story is about other characters, the history of the town, and the evil spreading through the town. Every few or so chapters take you back to Teddy and what is happening to her and what she is going through but I personally think the description is a little misleading.

This is a wonderful frightening story and would highly recommend to anyone wanting a scare!
