



The Nightmare Chronicles

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It begins in an old tenement with a horrifying crime. It continues after midnight, when a young boy, held captive in a basement, is filled with unearthly visions of fantastic and frightening worlds. How could his kidnappers know that the ransom would be their own souls? For, as the hours pass, the boy's nightmares invade his captors like parasites-and soon, they become real.

This audiobook also contains the short stories "Underworld," "O Rare and Most Esquisite," "The Rendering Man," "The Fruit of Her Womb," "The Hurting Season," "Chosen," "The Night Before Alec Got Married," "Only Connect," "The Little Mermaid," "Damned if You Do," and "The Ripening Sweetness of Late Afternoon." You can also listen to the acclaimed novelettes, "White Chapel" and "I am Infinite, I Contain Multitudes."

The Nightmare Chronicles Details

Date : Published September 1st 1999 by Leisure Books

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Author : Douglas Clegg

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From Reader Review The Nightmare Chronicles for online ebook

Robin Edman says

These stories are so good! Each time I finished a story, I told myself to remember the title because that one was going to deserve mention as my favorite. They're all my favorites, that's how good these stories are!

I don't think I would want to spend so much time in the dark parts of my heart to be able to produce such stories as these, but I'm glad that Mr. Clegg can do it. A few of these stories had to be painful to write.

What sets this author apart from other horror writers is his extreme literacy -- glorious words just flow one after the other. And yet the work is completely approachable. Anybody can read it and follow it, because it's just that well crafted.

I've called Mr. Clegg the master of the novella. It would seem that he is the master of the short story as well.

Eric Weule says

"The Little Mermaid" disturbed me on so many levels. Most of Clegg's work does, but that story has stayed with me for a long, long time. Good collection of stories. All of which will haunt you a little bit.

Hellcat Mental says

A variety of short stories ranging from creepy, to weird, to damn disturbing. I loved it! There were a few that were kind of so-so, and a few that were amazing and a lot of just really good yarns. Highly recommend!

Jenn says

Loaned to me by my brother. (Well, actually, he left it at Mum and Dad's house and I commandeered it knowing I'd be able to finish reading it before I met up with him next!)

I was able to finish it and enjoyed almost all of the stories in there. I will have to look for more books by Douglas. I didn't find them scary, but I did find some of them super creepy! And if it doesn't rain tomorrow, my brother will get his book back!!

Brooke says

Did I read the right book? This was a collection of 13 stories. No intro or afterward, and nothing about a demon boy being held captive unloading these nightmares on his captors. That being said, the stories

themselves were indeed creepy and well written. I hated the endings on almost every single one of them. There wasn't an ending at all. Each and every one left me asking, "What the hell?!" Maybe I have outgrown horror. Right now there is so much more horror in sci-fi than anywhere else.

Erin *Proud Book Hoarder* says

Thirteen chilling tales of terror from one of the masters of the horror story.

Like many anthologies, this one focuses around one central story, and boy is this story creepy! A small boy has been kidnapped by merciless and rather ignorant captors, who soon find they may as well have captured the devil himself. Through cruel teasing, surreal visions and deep insight, the little lad delights in terrifying his tormentors by filling their minds with various stories.

Underworld stands out the most. Effectively chilling and almost supernaturally eerie, it focuses on the young couple expecting their first child. Sounds normal enough until they run into an empty restaurant, and the young woman soon disappears. The ending of this story hints at much more to come, and seems to tie end with the boy himself.

White Chapel is one of the more unusual tales, digging into some pretty uncharted territory with a unique ending. Longer and more intense than some of the others, this one shows human sickness in its many twisted forms, as well as a fascinating connection with myths and gods.

Rare and Most Exquisite, being a favorite of mine, has a young boy being told by an older man in a nursing home his past and "true love". Several emotions are strongly conveyed, from bittersweet infatuation, envy, greed, betrayal, hunger, and more. I assure you, the ending will make your stomach drop.

Only Connect is a slightly confusing telling where I wasn't sure where I was from one minute to the next. It all weaves together at the end and leaves a satisfying taste in the mouth.

The Fruit of her womb is more of a ghost/possession type and also holds its share of surprises. The main character, James, is interesting and I enjoyed going through the changes with him. There were some creepy spots, such as with the pig, and I loved hearing about the theories and background involved in the story. In the end I wasn't sure what I thought of the ending definitely not a happy-ever-after scenario.

The Rendering Man, disturbing on multiple levels, was about the sickest of them all. One of the more memorable segments as well, this story tells of Thalia, a woman whose tale is told from early childhood years to old age, all surrounding the same man. Entertaining to sift through, and the ending made it worth the wait of slower parts.

The Night Before Alec got married is another favorite. Told through the eyes of Alec's best friend, a man getting together a surprise "gift" for his best friend as a bachelor party present, this one is so off the wall that you could never expect the turnout. Great ending too, and the characters humor seeps through the pages.

The Ripening Sweetness of Late Afternoon was one I enjoyed least, although it wasn't a bad idea. A man returns to his hometown after finding religion and wanting repentance. The pace was a little slow and the ending a bit! sudden and grim. I didn't comprehend as much as I would have liked to and found myself wanting to jump forward to the next story.

Chosen is about Rob, a man in an apartment building who encounters some of the most bizarre stuff imaginable. His next-door neighbor isn't all she seems, and as I read through it I was repulsed, then fascinated, then surprised. All great emotions to be evoked in a reader, especially in such a short period of time.

The Little Mermaid was also darkly morbid, following in the same vein as many of the previous stories. Molly is a woman who meets this great guy on the beach or so she assumes. The whole scenario is wicked and depressing; I can't give away more without spoiling but this is also one of the better ones.

Damned If You Do wasn't bad but I didn't find it too interesting after the first few pages. Told basically through one character we get a feel for why he does what he does, but other than that there wasn't much substance.

The Hurting Season, my least favorite, is unique like the others.

A friend recommended Clegg to me and I can see now why he's so popular. This man doesn't do amateur play; this short story collection is a carnival ride that will leave you screaming for more.

C hocked full of amazingly different stories that don't hold anything back, keeping the imagination running in overdrive, overfilling the senses, almost to the point of a nervous breakdown.

R ich in atmosphere, eerie scenes, some suspenseful, dark and morbid.

E asily read, written in a simple to understand style, with poetic-like prose used when it benefits.

E xcellent themes and ideas, the majority of them original, many surprising.

P owerful characters, most of them easily latched on to.

Y ields when it needs to, speeds up when its better for the stories. Pace is tight and used for the maximum impact.

William says

A fantastic collection of stories by a very underrated author. A few of the stories reminded me of the classic Books Of Blood by Clive Barker, and I rate this collection just as highly.

Conal Cochran says

Rightful winner of a Stoker for Best Horror Collection, this book is great. A word of advice: Don't get distracted by the wraparound story. It's like The Illustrated Man: The wraparound is a MacGuffin to get you on your way. It's like the rocket boosters a space shuttle uses that fall away after launch. It's scaffolding.

Anyway, the stories: Note: Semi-spoilers here.

"Underworld." Urban ghost story that's pretty predictable, although the end gives things an interesting twist.

"White Chapel." Stellar work--easily something that could have been in one of Clive Barker's Books of Blood (in terms of quality, content, and themes).

"O Rare and Most Exquisite." Erotic fantasy with a nasty touch; combines pathos and rage and dread all in one fable of love. The sort of work that shows "dark fantasy" isn't just a euphemism for horror.

"The Fruit of Her Womb." Kinda like Bradbury's "The Scythe," only more horrific in its denouement.

"The Rendering Man." Many people consider this story a masterpiece. It is very, VERY good; I think it's a little too long and disjointed, but YMMV.

"The Night Before Alec Got Married." Or, American Wedding as written and directed by David Cronenberg. EARLY Cronenberg. This is a hilarious sendup of fratboy sexuality, and a repellent body-horror story.

I'll add the rest later.

Mae says

pretty good book. you can describe it as being half supernatural and half psychosis. some of what is written is really twisted. just a note: it is sort of a full story, yet a bunch of short stories at the same time.

David Marlow says

Awesome stories, had me hooked!

CasualDebris says

There is not a single story in the collection I did not like, and there are at least three that really stand out. What I like about Clegg, or at least about these stories, is that they are well written, patiently constructed, with a healthy emphasis on characterization. The stories are framed by a narrative in which a woman named Alice and her two sons have kidnapped a boy for ransom. It turns out that this boy is not quite of this world, and has the ability to project nightmares onto his captors. The nightmares he projects are the thirteen stories. While the framing narrative is unnecessary, and not as well constructed as the stories themselves, it is still nonetheless interesting.

There are a number of themes & ideas that appear throughout the work. There is emphasis on religion, relationships and skin. Religion appears in various forms, from misled zealots to avenging angel-monsters. Relationships vary throughout, from unfaithful lovers to masculine prison love, and all forms of familial relations, and it's the tightness of some of the relationships that makes the threats in the stories all the more frightening.

Finally, skin makes several appearances throughout. Clegg deals frequently with human skin and the strange worlds that we hide underneath. We have skins acting as trophies, metamorphosing, housing other creatures and even embodying strange worlds. We even receive brief lessons regarding insects and exoskeletons, that, unlike us, have their soft spots safely on the inside. Overall, the skins in these stories generated a better framework than the story of Alice and the kidnapped boy-devil, and I enjoyed Clegg's ideas regarding skin so much that I waited for its appearance in each piece.

For my full-length review of the collection & its individual stories, please visit [Casual Debris](#).

Patrick says

There were some pleasantly creepy moments in this short story collection I found for \$2.95 in the dark, dank basement of Chicago's historic used store, Myopic Books. Highlights include stories about a retiree and his wife settling into a house that had previously been the setting for a father's dismemberment and hiding of the body parts of his family, a depression-era girl's fateful encounter with the town renderer, a town hero returning to try and atone for his sins, which were cause for a mandatory curfew, the consequences of which breaking are a fate worse than death, a guy who is really into mermaids, a man who digs holes in his backyard while listening to talk radio really loud, and "The Hurting Season," which is just a good title.

Chy says

Okay, so it didn't just completely mess me up this time, and I'm not even sure exactly why it did ten or so years ago. I don't see in the ending, the major whatever I was sure was going to be there.

Now, it did seriously mess with my Chi on the way through. Some of these stories are---whew.

But. More on that when I finally catch up in *A Writer's Gotta Read*. I now owe it five reviews.

The Behrg says

Clegg writes stories no one else could tell. Each of these short stories seems like a tale plucked from a longer work, with worlds created that could hold a novel-length work with ease. As with any short story compilation there are exceptional shorts and acceptable shorts, thankfully this one had more of the former. A worthwhile - if demented - read.

Patrick says

I remember casually browsing a thrift book store (the best stores in the world) and asking the cashier where the horror section was. She pointed me in the direction and I followed. I glanced through the various horror books looking for something interesting to read. *The Nightmare Chronicles* caught my eye, so I read the back flap and flipped through it a bit. I purchased the book and started reading. While the book took me a long while to finish, I can safely say that it is probably the best horror book I have read. It's been years since I've read it, so my memory may be rusty though the book is quite outstanding.

The Nightmare Chronicles is a collection of 13 short horror stories tied in with an actual story. A group of criminals capture a young boy in order to collect an amount of ransom money. However, one of them, Alice, soon discovers that the young boy has terrifying powers. He has some sort of psychic ability that allows him to project nightmarish visions into Alice's head and thus the nightmare begins.

The stories vary in quality, but what Douglas Clegg writes it just as good as any short story Clive Barker ever wrote. His stories are very strange but that's what makes them good. They're so odd and unique that they leave quite an impression on the reader when they're done. Some of them do suffer from being too long, such as "White Chapel" and "Only Connect." Some of them such as "The Night Before Alec Got Married," "I am Infinite; I Contain Multitudes," and "The Little Mermaid" rely on shock value to entertain the reader. Even though his stories are rather disturbing, they don't rely on gore or bloodshed, but rather mental imagery that the reader cannot forget. None of the stories, except for maybe "Hurting Season" ever really seem run-of-the-mill and Douglas Clegg always seems to have fresh and interesting ideas. Just read "Damned If You Do," a rather fun horror story that doesn't appear like any other I've read.

There's not a whole lot I can say about the book without re-reading it and refreshing my memory except that any fan of short horror stories or Creepypasta should pick up this underrated gem from an overlooked author because his stories are simply magnificent.
