



Buster Voodoo

Mason James Cole

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"...one of the best horror novels I've read in the last five years, ranking right up there with Joe Hill's *NOS4A2*. Buy it and read it. You won't be disappointed."

— Bryan Smith, author of *HOUSE OF BLOOD* and *THE KILLING KIND*

Permuted Press proudly presents a chilling new novel of fear and hope that paints a portrait of New Orleans' deepest wounds using the language and symbols of her past: magic, voodoo, and faith.

BUSTER VOODOO

Fear is no stranger to Dixon Green.

Growing up the son of a Voodoo priestess in a poor black neighborhood in 1940's New Orleans, Dixon has witnessed pain, violence, desperation, and death. When children start to disappear in the Tremé, people suspect that feral dogs are to blame, or perhaps a roogaroo—a werewolf. But soon, when Dixon's sister goes missing, word spreads that a terrifying legend is to blame: Buster Voodoo is back.

Nearly sixty years later, Dixon works as a janitor at a second-rate theme park where he's biding his time with a bottle in his hand. Downtrodden and lonesome, his life is devoid of the magic and mystery of his childhood. That all changes when children begin to disappear into the darkness of Marie Laveau's Zombie Nightmare, a Voodoo-themed dark-ride.

Only Dixon seems to realize what's happening and only Dixon knows how to fight it. As he begins to question his sanity—did Buster Voodoo really kidnap all those children or is he just losing his grip on reality?—a deadly force looms on the horizon that is far more powerful than any boogeyman: Hurricane Katrina.

In a gripping interlaced narrative that builds to a devastating climax, Dixon uncovers the terrible realities behind his sister's disappearance—and his mother's dark secrets—as he struggles to survive the dark days that follow in Katrina's wake.

Mason James Cole, author of the cult hit *Pray To Stay Dead*, returns with a chilling novel that contrasts the horrors of the imagination with the horrors of the real world.

Suspenseful and heartrending, *Buster Voodoo* is a fever-dream that reads like Stephen King by way of Flannery O'Connor—a glimpse of a sad world on the brink of disaster and the story of one man who is trying to unravel the haunting mystery of his childhood.

"In the New Orleans of *BUSTER VOODOO*, magic and death court each other like lovers, but this is no romantic tale of French Quarter courtyards and gas-lit alleys; its brutality and its beauty live in the meaner streets. This is a story of deep blood ties, murder, and a storm that drowned a city.

"Avoiding the clichés and cutting to the absolute, often ugly truth of the place, Mason James Cole is writing

about New Orleans and its environs as well as any living author.”

— Poppy Z. Brite, author of LOST SOULS and LIQUOR

Buster Voodoo Details

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Author : Mason James Cole

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From Reader Review Buster Voodoo for online ebook

Cate says

A well-paced, engaging read that uses real-life and fictional horror to address the "left behind" sensibility of New Orleans. I would've enjoyed stronger/more nuanced secondary characters, but the protagonist is well drawn, and the story held my attention.

Tiffany says

It was an interesting book from start to finish. There were few slow points and I did not want to stop reading. The book was not predictable like a lot of books I have read recently and I appreciated that as well. I hope there will be a follow up and I look forward to reading it if so!!!

C.T. Phipps says

Buster Voodoo is a horror novel. I say this, at the beginning, because there should be no confusion about what sort of novel this is. A lot of novels put the word "horror" in front of themselves but very few are actually about terrifying the reader.

They're about monsters, weirdness, or scares but rarely horror-horror. True horror is something beyond mere fright. Horror is about unsettling the reader. You can scare a reader but for a true horror novel, you need to make them disquieted with the world.

Buster Voodoo is one of the rare novels which does so.

The titular monster is a scare legend about a boogeyman-type figure in New Orleans. There have been a series of child-disappearances sixty years in the past and a number of them in the present day. A young boy, later an old man, named Dixon had an experience in a haunted house which leads him to believe he might have some knowledge of what's really happening to the unwanted children going missing in his theme park.

Is Buster Voodoo real or just the figment of a child's mind to give explanation to an all-too-mundane evil? Mason James Cole leaves the reader in doubt for much of the story as we deal with memories, imagination, and religious faith in the perspective of a deeply troubled man. Much of the novel is about dealing with Dixon's troubled relationship with his family and their history. Dixon's mother was an amateur occultist as well as a believer in Voodoo, practicing her faith while also conning white customers into believing in chicanery.

Dixon doesn't believe in Voodoo or, if he does, he's got a child's understanding of the religion due to his past experiences. What he does remember, however, is his friends and sister's disappearance during the events of the past. His sister returned, but his friends didn't, and he's starting to wonder if history is about to repeat itself.

Much of the novel's flavor comes from Dixon's troubled mind. He works in a failing theme park, has a failed

marriage with no children, poorly remembered childhood trauma, and a family with a history of mental illness. New Orleans takes on a sinister overcast as we see him deal with everything from racism to child abuse to suspicions of the hidden corruption all around him.

H.P. Lovecraft was a master of combining hidden family secrets and tragedies alongside incomprehensible evils. I find it amusing that one of the books which really manages to capture the sense of Noir and horror he managed is a book from the perspective of a black protagonist.

The treatment of Voodoo in the book, despite its somewhat questionable title, is respectful even as its up to the reader whether the people are following their religion correctly. It's also questionable whether anything magical is happening at all, again, until the very end.

The book, eventually, ties with Hurricane Katrina as the capstone for the horrors afflicting Dixon's life. The mixture of real-world events and supernatural horror could have come off as exploitative but works well here. I can't, actually, think of anything I dislike about this book. If I were to press anything, I'd say some of the language in the book is racially charged but it's directed at our protagonist as a daily part of his troubled life.

I.e. there's an in-story reason for it.

In short, this is a very spooky novel. I was troubled by it and left thinking about what it meant after finishing it, which means it was the best kind of horror novel.

10/10

Brandon Youcheff says

I received this book through a goodreads giveaway. I thoroughly enjoyed this narrative. The story is set in two time periods and alternates between the 1940's and the mid 2000's. Each timeline is centered on Dixon Green and his family and mixes a supernatural horror with real world horror in a way that I have not often found. Each time period keeps you interested and wanting to know more as the chapters progress. Mr. Cole has done an excellent job in showing real life horror, mixing it with a creepy supernatural presence, and tying the two together in a way that leaves the reader satisfied yet still curious at the end. I will definitely be reading more works by this author.

Farha Hasan says

The book starts off really well and paints a vivid picture of 1940s New Orleans. The storyline goes back and forth between the present and the past. The events of the past are really creepy and keep you reading. The present is not nearly as interesting as the past. As the storyline progresses some of the wholes are filled in and the book finally ends ambiguously.

Overall, I found the storyline completely different than what I've read in the past and that's one of the things I liked best about it. I liked the whole ghosts and voodoo aspects of the book.

Kara says

What a story author Mason James Cole can weave! I devoured this book in a little over a day after becoming engrossed in the story the moment young Dixon Green set foot in mysterious Empty House. Flashing between 1948 and 2005 New Orleans (the City as much of a character as the protagonist himself), readers live these eras through Dixon's experiences as he remembers unspeakable crimes of the 40s and similarly tragic events of 2005.

When children go missing in the Treme in 1948, issues of spirituality (Voodoo, Christianity) and humanity (race, segregation) arise. Fifty years later, the same issues plague Dixon. Like Dixon himself, the reader can never be completely sure whether the evil is real and human, actual yet supernatural, or even imagined in Dixon's weary mind. Regardless, Mason James Cole's truly creepy tale will have you glancing over your shoulder, wondering if Buster Voodoo is hovering nearby.

La_Revenant says

You know how there are times in your life when you stumble upon something that is so great that you just want to savor it and hold it close and not share it? That is how I feel about Buster Voodoo. It is a book I can sit down and reread and still become enthralled in the story.

When I opened Buster Voodoo up I was immediately sucked into Dixon's story. The story jumps back and forth between Dixon's memories of his boyhood and the place he is currently at in life. Dixon, and his family, dealt with some horrible things during his boyhood, children went missing in his neighborhood and some people were blaming it on Buster Voodoo.

Who is Buster Voodoo, you might ask? He was a massive Creole who murdered his wife and eight boys when he discovered that none of the boys were his blood. His wife cursed him before she died, stealing his face. Now there was a black hole where his face used to be and it was said he could steal whatever face he chose and that he had the ability to wear it like a mask. It is also said that he was driven out of town but there were some that thought he had never left, that he remained "in the shadows between houses and under beds and within the closets."

(Paraphrased from Buster Voodoo, Mason James Cole, 2014, p. 21)

Jump from boy to the older Dixon, a man who is getting on in years, a man who finds himself working a dead-end job at a theme park. A theme park where history appears to be repeating Dixon's childhood horrors, children are once again going missing, this time on one of the rides. It is as if they never even existed. Dixon delves into the mystery and discovers something horrifying, which causes him to question his sanity.

...He could think of nothing but the dark ride and of the kids who had vanished into it, and of the large old man in the white suit—the way he clutched his top hat to his chest, the look on his face when Dixon asked him why he'd taken the children.

No one wanted them. No one at all, but I did.

(Buster Voodoo, Mason James Cole, 2014, p.102)

The story segues to Hurricane Katrina and the devastation she wrought while still focusing on Dixon and his experience riding out the hurricane. After Hurricane Katrina the story reaches a point of culmination. It was definitely my kind of ending, which left me wondering many things. There are also some wonderfully poignant moments over the course of this narrative, some of which centered on Dixon and his interactions with his sister; others focused on Dixon contemplating who he was deep down and what he believed and the dismal place life had brought him to; this, I believe, is the heart of the story.

Deliciously Devoured,

La Revenant

Bill Gauthier says

BUSTER VOODOO is Mason James Cole's second novel. Weighing in under 200 pages, it has the feel of a 800-page novel, and I mean that in the best way possible. Cole's prose is confident and spot-on, showing a maturity that his first novel, PRAY TO STAY DEAD, gave us glimpses of. Textured and unsettling, this short novel is the real deal. Cole belongs with a major publisher. Wake up, New York!

Jessie says

won in goodreads giveaway

There were times when I felt lost in the plot, but then I began to understand that so did Dixon. Not being able to distinguish reality from what may be in just his mind, Dixon takes us on a frightening journey, rotating from past and present, to create the truth. I loved the legend and culture put into this story. The beliefs of stories passed down and rituals in various cultures plays into everyday life everywhere. This short story is made for everyone and with real, true events happening as the story goes on, it is a different kind of scary from the world of Stephen King. Buster is the boogeyman from every child's nightmare. And in some cases, as I learned from Dixon, adults too!!!

Sydney Cleary says

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book. The imagery paints a perfect picture and the plot is unpredictable. The only problem I had with this book is the amount of swearing in it, although that is just personal opinion. I would recommend this book to people who like mystery/suspense. *WON OFF GOODREADS*

Julie Bumgarner Hinojos says

I have a new favorite author! Mason James Cole has written a book that was hard to put down! His style of writing drew me in. Suspense, magic and humanity. Loved the characters, Mason James Cole's writing brings them to life. I recommend this book for anyone who is a fan of Stephen King and Dean Koontz.

Even when putting the book down Dixon was in my thoughts. Great book! I look forward to reading more

from this author!

Eliza says

This was by far one of the best books I have received through goodreads giveaway. The plot was enticing. I loved the switch narrative and found it hard to decide which time period I liked more. The sense of a dual mystery kept me wanting to know more about the past and the future. Buster Voodoo exceeded my expectations. I didn't expect the story line to be so dynamic or captivating. It was a dark story and nothing seemed romanticized or forced. My one major criticism would be that the ending seemed unclear, somewhat of a mystery in itself. It gave resolution enough to be satisfied, but I felt as though the reader could have been left with more.
