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Bobby never meant to kill his lover. He couldn't explain the morbid impulse that gripped him. Then it happened again when a playful race with a passing jogger spawned an animalistic urge. Now only the gruesome thrill of the hunt could satisfy his terrible hunger.

The Nightwalker Details

Date : Published April 7th 1981 by Signet / NAL (first published 1979)

ISBN : 9780451097200

Author : Thomas Tessier

Format : Paperback 183 pages

Genre : Horror, Shapeshifters, Werewolves, Fiction

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From Reader Review The Nightwalker for online ebook

Ken McKinley says

I remember seeing The Nightwalker on some list of must-reads by Stephen King. I knew most of the books on the list, but the Nightwalker was one that I hadn't heard of. So, on a trip perusing through my local used bookstore, low and behold, there it was. I snatched it up and it sat dormant in my TBR pile for some time. Lately, I've been trying to make a dent in the aforementioned pile and The Nightwalker's time had finally come. For those of you that don't know, The Nightwalker is a werewolf novel that doesn't feel like werewolf novel. In fact, the whole time I was reading it, I kept thinking "this feels like An American Werewolf in London". The story telling has many of the same qualities. It's fast paced. You don't know quite what's going on and once you think you do, you still don't know how they're going to end the story. There's obviously the fact that the protagonist is American and yes, he's in London, but beyond that, the the storytelling has the same gritty quality to it.

Bobby is an American in London that is in a relationship with an English girl he met not long ago. Lately, Bobby isn't feeling right. He's overcome with these sudden urges and that he can't control. One minute he's fine, the next his hands start tingling and eventually rage consumes him and someone ends up dead. It's getting worse and worse and he's afraid to examine it. In fact, he's starting to like it.

Like I said, The Nightwalker is a werewolf story that doesn't like to let you know that it's a werewolf story. There's no encounter with a werewolf that starts the story off. No bite or scratch. In fact, Tessier teases you with the idea that it might be from reincarnation and curse from long ago that suddenly awakens. I really enjoyed the vagueness of the origins and the storytelling, in general. It lets you come to your own conclusions and I think it fit the story perfectly.

4 1/2 Bottles of Ginseng out of 5

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Mark R. says

Here's a pretty decent werewolf novel. The main character is a bit unlikeable--it's often hard to tell whether he's actually bothered or not by the deaths he causes when he transforms, though it's clear he doesn't particularly enjoy the thought of transforming. Some of that ambiguity works, but at other times, just makes me wish we had some other character to follow around for a while.

The supporting characters are pretty one-dimensional, except for a girl who appears halfway into the story,

named Angel. She's well-written, but isn't given an awful lot to do.

The reader can never be certain whether or not our guy is truly turning into an animal, or if his physical changes are purely psychological. It shares this aspect with the superior novel "Werewolf of Paris," and I'm not sure how I feel about it. Part of me wanted to know what exactly this bastard looked like, but at the same time, I understood and respected Tessier's decision not to spell it out for me.

The Leisure Books edition comes with a "bonus" novella, that is actually somewhat better than "The Nightwalker." I'd recommend picking up the version that includes "The Dreams of Dr. Ladybank," because it's quite good and a nice companion to "The Nightwalker."

Douglas Gibson says

A decent werewolf book, could have been better plot-wise, but the writing style was so creative and interesting that it kept me intrigued. What I like most about this book is that if you take out the constant use of the "F" word this book is totally written in the style of a Universal Studio's Monster movie, or maybe the Val Lewton horror production team over at RKO- there's a culturally insensitive gypsy fortune teller, shadowy walks through Hyde Park (cue the German Expressionist lighting) and English Bobbies chasing the werewolf with torches! This book was a great way to wrap up my fall horror reading!

Randolph says

Whoa, I don't look at ratings or reviews until after I've read something but this book is just a little over 3 stars! That means most people don't get it or know what it was really about. Tessier is a tough author to categorize. He never writes the same novel twice and he rarely even crosses the same genre twice. And he's not very prolific. Because of this he has little loyal following and a lot of people build an expectation from reading just one of his novels or stories and this leads to both disappointment and a tendency for readers not to understand what is really going on. Tessier is not going to write the same book twice and he is not going to try to do the same thing twice, so forget that from the start and read the book again if you only gave it 2 or 3 stars; expect the unexpected.

What we have here is a slim little novel with an overworked horror trope. It's a pretty original lycanthropy story but certainly not the best I've ever read. If that was all it was, three stars, but oh dear reader, there is so much more going on here than in your average Stephen King novel. Tessier is leaving clues all over the place that lycanthropy is not what he wants you to really think about. He's going to not only subliminate the trope, he's going to bend the genre a little at the same time.

Why does Bobby consider Hyde Park his particular "spot" in London? Why does he pick up a copy of The Man in the High Castle by Philip K. Dick? Why the seeming digression into a real or imagined past life as a Zombie in the Caribbean? Contrast Bobby's pure (as in uncluttered) thoughts as a lycanthrope against his unsatisfying but depraved lifestyle in his normal life. Why a seemingly digressive dream or vision right at the penultimate moment? Think about fate and coincidence and people trapped in a life they never made, either physically or mentally.

This novel is very tightly wound. Tessier is spare in his prose and every word carries meaning. Most people will pick this up and race through it thinking, "that was an okay werewolf story," but they've missed more than the half of it. Read it again slowly and look up any overt cultural references you don't know, like the Dick novel that you *should* have already read. Think symbolism.

Jeffrey Keeten says

"In the dream he had become something else, but he did not know what it was. Less than human, impossible to define. He could only be certain that he had changed, as if everything about him had undergone some unique metamorphosis. Yet he remained the same person beneath it all, with the same brain and emotional makeup.

Or did he?"

Bobby Ives survived a tour in Vietnam, or at least he thinks he did, and is now living in London. He has a pretty girlfriend who adores him, an inexpensive flat, and enough pension money to live off as long as he keeps within his modest means.

As the days pass by, he starts to experience some moments of disassociation. His hands begin to flare with white heat. He starts having dreams of past lives where he died horrible deaths. Out in public, he starts to feel like an alien observing the natives, incapable of comprehending their daily desires.

"All these people moving about, busy, preoccupied and methodical, enjoying themselves spending money. Impulsive or discerning, it didn't matter; as a group they radiated an air of confidence and self-assurance, as if this was a basic part of the larger cycle of their lives. They knew what they were doing, even the many tourists in their peculiar way. In the midst of them all, Ives felt like a random item in a building full of specifics."

He starts to have impulses.

"His nostrils flared as he detected something. The man's sweat? It must be! Like a thin beam, a ribbon of warm scent. Spoor."

He starts to feel like Hyde Park is his and his alone. All of London needs to understand they wander through those carefully trimmed hedges and expanses of green grass at their peril.

Who is he? What is he? What form of madness is this?

In desperation, he sees a clairvoyant named Miss Tanith who sees a future full of darkness, blood, despair, and rage imprinted into the lines of his hands. She sees the face of his future and it is misshapen like Dr. Jekyll's other half.

Any brief illusions he has that he can control what is happening to himself are quickly dispelled. He is his own truth.

After reading *Fog Heart* by Thomas Tessier, which is excellent, I knew I'd found a writer who was going to write books that would light my brain up like a pinball machine on tilt. He takes old legends and makes them

new. He takes situations that have been used time and again as the basis of novels and twists them into something a bit more insidious. He infuses gothic elements that give his novels more chilling atmosphere. Even though I knew some things about this book before reading it I was still enamored with the way he spooled out the relevant details in a frugal way that left me guessing when he would actually reveal what was going on with Bobby Ives. Tessier left me with lingering questions, points to ponder about what had happened to Ives. If the subject does not know, how is the reader to know? In real life the answers are rarely completely known. We are surrounded by mysteries and why shouldn't our novels resemble life?

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Alan Taylor says

An American Werewolf in London... Or possibly not.

I had never read Thomas Tessier although his name was familiar to me from interviews with Stephen King and Peter Straub in which his name cropped up so I suppose I picked this up partly due to nostalgia and also because Hyde Park, across from which I work three days a week, features strongly in the story. Bobby Ives, an American Vietnam vet living in 1970s London, may be a werewolf, a lycanthrope. He certainly prowls Hyde Park at night, seems to go through physical transformations, and he murders people at random, not through choice but driven by some feral instinct. Tessier keeps this all very mysterious, Ives' appearance is never specifically described in traditional werewolf terms and there is a suspicion that it may be his own insane imaginings that drives him.

The book is very much a product of its time. The language is slightly stilted and old-fashioned, the dialogue melodramatic, the prose mannered and well-constructed but in a detached, gothic style. The story feels very like the Hammer-horror movies of the time. There are no sympathetic characters. Ives, who appears to subsist on honey, ginseng and vitamin C, is not a tragic hero. He is unlikeable and seems to watch what is happening to him in a very dispassionate fashion, at one point, having just viciously killed two people, "he picked up an apple absently and began eating it. That settled him."

And yet, I enjoyed it. It is not King, or Straub but it does have a certain charm. The depiction of '70s London, the pubs closed in the afternoons, the emerging punk scene, is well-done. I suspect that, had I read this as a teenager when I discovered King, Straub, Ramsey Campbell, I might have loved it. As it is, I am glad I read it but it will never join the greats.

Zakary McGaha says

My first Tessier novel. It's a pretty decent werewolf story and the writing is great. It felt a little confined though, even despite the short length.

DJMikeG says

When a book is covered in recommendations from Stephen King, Peter Straub, Robert Bloch and has a

foreword by Jack Ketchum, you go into it with high expectations. This book failed to meet my expectations. Some artful passages and chilling imagery, but no likeable characters or emotional connection make this a flat read.

Scott says

This is a short novel about a Vietnam veteran living in London who finds himself falling into unexplainable fits of rage, violence and, eventually, murder. I hesitate to call it a werewolf novel; lycanthropy is discussed late in the story, but it bears none of the typical markings of such tales. In fact, there is a certain ambiguity about the entire situation. Although written in third person, we get a good look at things from the main character's perspective, and since he tends to black out when it happens, we have little more information than he does. Until the end.

Some good sex in this too, if you don't mind blood play.

The Centipede Press limited edition also includes the story "The Dreams of Dr Ladybank," about a psychiatrist who discovers he is able to project thoughts and commands into the mind of one of his patients.

Sarah Joint says

Very grim. I think it's a good horror novel that's a bit more realistic than most. What it lacks in sympathy and familiarity with the main character, it makes up for in detail. Most horror novels require a lot more suspension of belief. Even though he seems to be turning into some fearsome creature... it's so well done it starts to seem plausible.

Bobby is an American veteran living in London. He doesn't work, and stays in most of the time. His lovely girlfriend Annie starts to encourage him to go out and interact with the world more. He's hesitant at first, and it's clear he would be happiest at home with Annie, who he'd like to move in. Their relationship seems quite normal and pleasant. It's not meant to last, though. Bobby starts to have strange symptoms that come on quickly and completely randomly. He refuses to believe they're migraines, even though Annie and the doctor she arranged for him to see think so. He's also had some kind of flashback that he's convinced is about a previous life. The attacks get more and more intense until it's undeniably clear that something terrible is happening to Bobby... maybe he's going crazy. Maybe he's turning into someone or something else. His physical changes are nothing compared to what's happening internally... to his brain and personality. He seems to be becoming a predator, and fast.

Thank you to Net Galley and Endeavour Press for allowing me to read an ARC. This review is as always, honest and unbiased.

Mark says

Bobby Ives, an ex-pat American living quietly in London, is a Vietnam Vet who keeps to himself, apart from his relationship with Annie. But things have happened to Bobby - a mistaken death listing in Vietnam and a

bizarre dream of ghoulish goings-on in Guadelope - and then Annie dies, perhaps at his hands. A werewolf novel of sorts, this is a brisk read and very well written but once we pass the mid-point, it lurches into unpleasantness - Ives' violently sexual relationship with a street-girl - that it never really recovers from and interest does wane. Ives spends a lot of time moping, both does and doesn't accept his condition, believes the dream more (which seems silly after a while) and then the climax doesn't deliver anything powerful at all - it's almost like an afterthought. Some of it is clever - Ives relationship becomes more unpleasant as the wolf takes over and the attacks are oblique enough that it's only through the eyes of two unfortunate policeman that we realise he does change - but ultimately, it wasn't enough for me. As an aside, there were a couple of sequences that made me wonder if Mr Tessier (this was published in 1979) thought about suing John Landis over "An American Werewolf In London" (1981). Well-written and gripping (at least in the first half), this isn't a bad book by any means but didn't really work for me.

andy?? says

Just finished this, my (long time coming) introduction to Tessier, in one sitting. Very impressed!
Perfect choice of cover painting for the Centipede Press edition too - A Night Of Love by Max Ernst.

Kristine Muslim says

Werewolves and shapeshifters have been extensively chronicled and romanticized in the most mediocre ways possible (with the Twilight series as the most famous catastrophe to date). Thomas Tessier's The Nightwalker is an intelligent, original treatment of lycanthropy, which is definitely not for people who read the work of Stephenie Meyer.

The changes in Bobby Ives, the main character, may or may not be psychological in nature. The backdrop of the story is London, and there are exciting references to the underground punk rock scene. The prose styling is excellent as Thomas Tessier is also a poet.

Anna says

οι λυκάνθρωποι είναι λίγο αδικημένοι απ' τη γενικήτερη βιβλιογραφία, εν? πολλ? βιβλ?α που αναφέρονται σε αυτο?ς δεν θεωρούνται ιδιαίτερα καλ? - κ?τι αντ?στοιχο συμβαίνει και με τις ταινίες που τους αφορο?ν. Στο παρ?ν βιβλ?ο, λοιπ?ν, ο ?ρω?ς μας, εν? θεωρητικ? ζει μια φυσιολογικ? ζω? - σχετικ? π?ντα με τι εννοο?με φυσιολογικ? β?βαια - αρχ?ζει να βλ?πει παρ?ξενα ?νεια, τα οπο?α ?χι μ?νο δεν λ?νε να τον αψ?σουν, αλλ? γ?νονται ολο?να και περισσ?τερο ζωνταν? και ολο?να και περισσ?τερο συχν?. Συμβουλευ?μενος μ?ντισσες και χαρτορ?χτρες, μαθα?νει τελικ? που χ?νεται ?λες τις ν?χτες. Η αλ?θεια αυτ? ?μω? δεν ε?ναι ιδια?τερα ευχ?ριστη, αλλ? οι επιλογ?ς για να την αλλ?ξει λ?γες. Το αποτ?λεσμα, π?ντως, για εμ?ς ε?ναι ?να πολ? ενδιαφ?ρον μυθιστ?ρημα τρ?μου, με τον ?ρωα εγ? προσωπικ? να τον βρ?σκω αξιαγ?πητο και να συμπ?σχω στο δρ?μα του!!!

William M. says

I really appreciated Tessier's new and refreshing approach to the werewolf mythology. While I don't think all the historical elements came together as cohesively as they should have, I had a good time reading this. I would have preferred to not even know what the book was about since the werewolf idea doesn't come into play for quite a while into the story.

Tessier's technical and creative writing is excellent, but like many of his other books, his tempo is completely off. Certain scenes are nicely slow and atmospheric and then, without warning, events happen very quickly, leaving out what I feel are crucial details, mood, and tone. Then things abruptly slow back down before spastically speeding up again. It almost felt like Tessier writes every day and then takes a few weeks off and can't quite get back into the groove of the story.

My only other issue is the slightly unsatisfying ending. Tessier managed to pull everything together but I think it felt too short and rushed. Regardless, I enjoy his writing and ever since reading his amazing book, *Finishing Touches*, I'll always pick up his work.
