



## Bleeding London

*Geoff Nicholson*

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## **Bleeding London** Geoff Nicholson

Mick is on his way to the Smoke from the provinces. He's got six guys to find with only their names to go on and no more help than the phone book and an A-Z. Stuart is determined to walk each of the capital's roads, streets and alleyways. But what will he do when there's nothing left of his A-Z but blacked out pages? Judy is set on creating her own unique map of each of the metropolis' boroughs...an A-Z of sex in the city.

## **Bleeding London Details**

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Author : Geoff Nicholson

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## From Reader Review Bleeding London for online ebook

### **Jo says**

I am now a Geoff Nicholson fan. I loved this book.

I first heard about via the Royal Photographic Society Bleeding London Project, and was intrigued enough to buy the book, and I'm so glad I did. I thought it was witty, well written, and had great characters (and one of those being London itself.) Loved how each of the narratives overlapped in to a gripping conclusion.

Would definitely like to see a Channel 4 series made of this novel. Will re-read it in the future too.

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### **Debbie says**

A rollicking good read, but not one for your old mum!

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### **Tony says**

This wonderful novel is ideally enjoyed while living in or visiting London, seeing as how the city is a central character in it. With his typical offbeat humor, Nicholson weaves together the lives and stories of three of its denizens. Stuart is the owner of a company that does walking tours of London; burned out, he has decided to walk every single street in London in a quest for fulfillment and meaning. Julie is a native Londoner, although half-Japanese and thus is constantly being forced to prove herself a native. She keeps detailed maps of the locations of all her sexual encounters, as well as those of her partners. Mick is a Sheffielder whose stripper girlfriend was gang-raped by six well-to-do Londoners. He's come down to the unfamiliar city he hates in order to mete out some revenge. Both these and the supporting cast are wonderfully drawn characters, their paths through London are a treat.

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### **Nicolas Chinardet says**

I came to this book after taking part in a project by the Royal Photographic Society. The idea, inspired by the book and named after it, was for participants to help create a collection of pictures of all the streets in London (as per the AtoZ) over one year.

This is a quirky, very entertaining book, with seams of dark humour running through it, but it is possibly a flawed one. It's one of those where all the various, apparently disparate, storylines comes together in the end in a neatly tied bow. Except that in this case the bow is rather sloppily tied. It all feels a little messy and as if the story has lost its original momentum and the author perhaps ran out of ideas on how to bring everything to a satisfactory conclusion.

This means the experience of reading this tome is not altogether satisfying but remains enjoyable for the

most part.

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### **Daniel Villines says**

There are many words that could be used to describe *Bleeding London*. Eclectic would be at the top of the list. Time and characters jump around from chapter to chapter to such an extent that the book becomes a bit confusing. I found myself wondering where I was in time, at times. However, the book still works and the plot is still convincing.

The characters that comprise *Bleeding London* are equally eclectic. They are interesting in many different ways. Each character has their own quirky mannerisms and obsessions, but most of all, they are all vulnerable to a reality that is half-manufactured by their minds. But so are we all in one way or another, and from this perspective I found that I could understand their view on life as they saw it. Again, this sounds confusing, but it still works.

Finally, there is London. This book brings London out of the background and makes the city a part of the story. The city exists in maps and it exists in places. At times, the people of the City simmer and vibrate to illuminate certain places that are unique within London and that uniqueness shines through. While I've read many works of historical fiction, this book is something else: it's a genuine work of geographical fiction.

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### **TheGirlBytheSeaofCortez says**

I love satire. I love London. I love the writing of Geoff Nicholson. With all of that in mind, *Bleeding London* seemed like the perfect book for me. For those not familiar with the prolific Nicholson, you can expect to find, in his books, lots of black comedy, lots of kinky sex, grim grittiness, and almost unbelievable plot lines. Nicholson has taken on a variety of subjects (foot fetishes, compulsive shopping, Hollywood, VW bugs, and publishing, to name just a few), many of them offbeat, and as he tears them limb from figurative limb, he shows no mercy, something that causes me to like him even more. If you're going to read satire, after all, you want *satire*, not some watered-down story that provokes little more than boredom and a desire to finish the book as soon as possible.

In *Bleeding London*, Nicholson satirizes London, of course, through the eyes of three very different, but equally bizarre, characters, two of them native Londoners, and the third, a visitor from Sheffield.

Mick Wilton, the visitor from Sheffield, is by far, the most highly developed character and the one with the most depth. Mick is an ex-bouncer, but he's not, by any means, an everyday bouncer. Mick loves books and literature and he is, in many ways, a modern day Don Quixote, for Mick has come to London to avenge the alleged gang rape of his stripper girlfriend, Gabby. Mick has devised what he believes will be a "fitting end" for each of the six men involved in Gabby's ordeal. Mick dislikes London, at least at first, and lets us know it. He says London is:

*...hard and scruffy and cold and affectionless, a place where terrible things happened or were made to happen; and the sooner he could cease contact with it the better.*

Mick's plan to summarily dispatch Gabby's attackers lacks but one essential element, an element made even

more essential by the fact that Mick is new to the city...a good map.

The need for a map brings Mick into contact with Judy Tanaka, a London born, half-English, half-Japanese bookseller with, putting it quite mildly, a voracious sexual appetite. As Judy puts it:

*When sex is good, I feel as though I'm disappearing, being pulverized...so that I'm nothing, just particles of air pollution, debris, particles of soot and skin floating through the air and settling on the city.*

Judy has a *need* to "know" London, that is, she feels, as pressing and urgent as is Nick's. Judy's desires, however, have nothing to do with revenge and everything to do with lust. Judy believes that every square inch of London must, at one time or another, have been occupied by lovers engaged in the act of making love and she intends to replicate this feat, herself. Judy's views on maps are, to say the least, all-encompassing:

*Sometimes, I think I'd like to be tattooed....All across my back. With a map of the London Underground system. Or perhaps not just a tattoo, more of a form of scarification, so that the scar tissue would be raised, a little like Braille, to represent the lines and stations. And I could stand naked in the entrance halls of tube stations and blind men and women would come up to me, and run their hands over me, over the tattoos, until they'd worked out their routes. Maybe they wouldn't even have to be blind.*

Well, I told you it was a *little* kinky. But, it's also great fun.

Judy's carnal desires bring her into contact with another native Londoner, a man most appropriately named Stuart London. Stuart and his wife, Anita, are the owners of "The London Walker," a business that caters to those who want to see London on foot (and really, is there any other way?). Stuart's and Anita's walks aren't just ordinary walks, however. Each one has a theme. There is "The London Crime Walk," the "Art Walk," "The Holmes and Watson Walk," and many more.

While Anita finds this business quite fulfilling, forty-year-old Stuart is experiencing a premature midlife crisis of sorts and feels he needs more. London, he says:

*...contains all the data from which the ideal city might be constructed; a visible, hard city of angels.*

Stuart sets an ambitious task for himself when he decides to walk every street in London. But, as fate would have it, Judy Tanaka decides to apply for a position at "The London Walker" and her passion and Stuart's merge...for a time.

The stories of Mick, Judy and Stuart, who are each following a private "life map," intersect, merge, diverge, then intersect again. While all three are bizarre characters, Mick, as stated previously, is the one with the most depth. As he comes to realize that Gabby's version of what happened at the bachelor party where she was allegedly raped may have been less than truthful, Mick becomes quite sympathetic as well. Sadly, Judy and Stuart, at least in my opinion, are a little clichéd, but Mick is so wonderfully drawn, I could overlook that.

*Bleeding London* is filled with all the skewed comedy and elaborate plotting one associates with Geoff Nicholson, but this book is a little more brutal, a little more violent. The book is fast paced (I read it in one afternoon in my back garden and I'm not a fast reader), but never at the expense of substance. The dénouement, however, was a little disappointing for me. While it certainly doesn't spoil the book, I felt Nicholson could have done better. Still, *Bleeding London* is one of my favorite Nicholson works, probably second only to *Bedlam Burning*.

*Bleeding London* is drenched in the atmosphere of London, itself. As Mick, Judy and Stuart traverse street after street and borough after borough, the reader gets a real "feel" for London and its inhabitants. As Nicholson writes:

*London is mythical too, created in the image of each of its inhabitants, newly imagined with each new citizen, with each new attempt to describe it.*

While I didn't find Nicholson's effort perfect, I did like it a lot and was glad I toured London, bizarre as this trip was, with Judy, Stuart and especially, with Mick.

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### **Tony Kerkhove says**

Drie mensen, met elk hun boeiende verhaallijn, hebben een totaal verschillende krankzinnige missie uit te voeren in een stad waar ze ooit hopen mee 'klaar' te zijn.

Plezante page-turner, ideaal voor mensen die al net iets te vaak in London zijn geweest.

Niet vies zijn van wat bizarre seks- en geweldscènes kan ook geen kwaad.

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### **Ana says**

ok so maybe to a few people the shelves i chose for this book would seem weird, but to me they really make sense, after reading the book.

i was surprised at how good this book is, beacuse the first time i tried to read it i actually found it really dull and i felt nothing was special about it! i was wrong, oh so wrong. now i'm kind of torn between giving it three or four stars, but i think i'm gonna settle at three and half, though i can't atually give that grade.

i truly enjoyed the main character, a potentially deadly bodyguard with a set of principles that he applied any way he cared, at any time. of course, i wouldn't want to meet a guy like that, or be one of his enemies. Mick was nicely created, really straight-forward, i kind of bonded with him the most, from the three principal (or what i think were principal) characters.

Stuart didn't really impress me, but i do have to say that he has been met with a kind of a weird ending. i mean, when it first started, i took Stuart as he was, i listened to his story, i tried to understand it. up until the end, he got to be really annoying and i just wanted for it to get over, all his blabbering and his londoneer obsessions.

judy - cute gal, she can really hold grudges. must be beacuse she's half japanese. or half londonese. or who cares what.

gabby - what. a. bitch.

sooo, i should recommend this to a few friends. really enjoyed it. hope i'll read something else from this

author.

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### **Laura says**

"Yeah, when I first came here I hated London and I hated the people who lived here; too soft, too rich, too southern. But lately it's not been that straightforward. For instance, I like cars, I find them interesting, and London's full of interesting cars ... And obviously it's partly a question of money, obviously there's more cash around in London than in Sheffield, but somehow it's more than that. People here like things that are a bit different, a bit special ... It's funny but I suppose I've started to like this place. London. I like the money and the variety and the river and the desirable properties. I like the pubs and the architecture and the people and the restaurants. And inevitably a bit of me is envious.

... I've never really felt as if I belonged anywhere ... and it never bothered me. I'm not sure if I belong in London or not, but now I'm here I don't really want to go back to Sheffield. And it's troubling me. How is a person like me meant to fit in to all this?" -p264

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### **georginagem says**

aspects of this book were entertaining but it didn't really hang together

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### **Jason Williams says**

This book started out with tremendous promise, but it really fell through for me in the last 150 pages or so, and the ending didn't redeem this for me. I love cities and walking through them, and I liked the urban-rural and racial tensions that Nicholson touched on, but overall I would have liked to see Bleeding London's metaphorical side go in a different direction. It wasn't necessarily superficial or one-dimensional in its characters, it's just that some parts felt incomplete (i.e. character or plot development) and others unnecessary (dragged out descriptions of otherwise meaningless observations jotted as diary entries).

Worth a read if you like (or dislike) London, otherwise I'd say look elsewhere. I'm staying positive and giving it three stars, because I don't want the negatives to detract too much from what I liked about it. And it started off great.

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### **Jen says**

closer to what I've been looking for in non-boring London/UK history and insight; Bryson's 'Notes from a small island' was too complain-y and too few with the good stuff, 'Bleeding London' covered more but quickly and the fiction bit was only so-so. ~~going to take my chances next with 'London: the novel' with fingers crossed...~~ 1152 pages? TOME. ugh.

adendum: the character of the London walker would today poop at Google Maps' London Street View 360. HE WOULD POOP.

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### **Andreea says**

When i bought it it was because they say it was thrilling, amusing, an ode to a great city...well, I should have learnt by now not to trust the critics in having the same taste for literature. I didn't find it neither thrilling, nor amusing....just bad bizarre sometimes, presumptuous, and boring...

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### **Adina says**

I received this one as a gift from my mum probably 10 years ago because we both love London. I tried to read it then but I did not manage more than 20-30 pages. I decided to try again and this time it was better. I liked it in a way although it was strange and not something I would normally read.

There are three main characters, one more particular than the other. Nick, from Sheffield, comes to London to revenge her stripper girlfriend who was gang raped by 6 men. He only has the name of the guilty ones but he manages to find them. His choice of punishment is sometimes funny, sometimes grotesque, however it always accompanied by a peculiar conversation between the punisher and victim. Stuart London, is the co-owner of a successful London guided walking tours company, almost retired because he lacked organising skills and his tours became more detailed than a normal tourist would care. He leaves the job to his wife, who does a great job to keep the business going. Due to lack of purpose, he decides to travel by foot on each street from the A to Z London Map and to write about his experience. Judy Tanaka, a Londoner of Japanese origin, decides to make a map with all the places she had sex. The three characters meet with each other at different moments and they influence each others lives.

As you can see from the plot, it involves quite a bit of sex although it is not an erotic novel. There is also a bit of violence and quite a lot of London History and locations details.

I am giving it three stars because it was something new and I enjoyed myself while reading, most of the time. However, I don't think I would recommend this novel to somebody else.

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### **Stephanie Jane (Literary Flits) says**

Although the blurb is intriguing, I didn't expect much from this novel but was running out of options in the book exchange at our current campsite so picked it out. Bleeding London is actually pretty good! The three central human characters are interesting, if not completely rounded, and I liked the way London itself almost became another character in its own right. The story is dark in places but I identified with the obsessive walking angle. Perhaps the intertwining of the stories is too contrived, but it's a good read nonetheless.

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