



The Nightmarys

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Timothy July has been having nightmares. About his brother, who is in a coma after being wounded in Iraq; about his best friend, Stuart, who is behaving like a jerk; about the old biology specimens in jars lining the walls of his classroom; and about Abigail, the new girl who seems to be a magnet for trouble. Or perhaps she is the cause.

Suddenly Timothy's nightmares are coming true. His brother, his face decaying, approaches Timothy on the street. Stuart ends up in the hospital, terrified that monsters are stalking him. And the specimen jars are tormenting not only Timothy but his teacher as well.

What is the secret in Abigail's past that is the key to these horrors? And can Timothy figure it out before his nightmares become a deadly reality?

A follow-up to the well-received *Stone Child*, Dan Poblocki's second novel will have his readers mesmerized until the last page—and sleeping with the lights on.

The Nightmarys Details

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Author : Dan Poblocki

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From Reader Review The Nightmarys for online ebook

Arminzerella says

When Timothy July gets partnered with classmate Abigail Tremens for a research project, he starts seeing terrible and frightening things. Afraid that he's going crazy, he lets Abigail in on his visions. That's when she tells him that it's happening to her, too. And somehow, it's her fault. Abigail believes that she's being haunted by the Nightmarys – a couple of mean girls from her former school – and that they're trying to "help" her by terrorizing anyone who upsets her. Why are they helping her? To get her to follow them somewhere she doesn't want to go. But not even Abigail knows the whole story; it's much more complicated than she realizes, and involves a curse on her family that extends back to her grandmother's childhood. Before their lives can return to normal, Timothy and Abigail must work together to solve this frightening mystery.

"The Nightmarys" is a great title, but it suffers from a surfeit of ideas. As a result, this stumbles around a lot. There were some seriously spooky moments, but confusing plotting takes away from the terror. You find out that the Nightmarys are two real girls (they're not even dead) who were mean to Abigail, and she's somehow haunted by them (which doesn't make any sense) when she moves because she's been cursed by this mystical jawbone (wait, what?), but the name is based on one of her favorite horror books, which may or may not be related? Clunky. And that's not even the half of it. It's not that it's hard to figure out what's happening – it's just cluttered, and there are way too many convenient plot devices. Still, it probably won't matter to readers who like a fast-paced story and want to be scared – this definitely qualifies as spine-tingling, and Timothy and Abigail are mostly likeable, capable characters.

Anne says

This is a great children's (10 to 14 year old?) horror story!

While it is definitely geared toward a younger audience, there were a few creepy scenes in it that gave me some nice little chills.

Parents Beware!

If you have a kid who has trouble sleeping, because they think something is going to get them as soon as the lights go out, this may not be the wisest choice in literature. *I'm just saying...*

Mark Miller says

I thoroughly enjoyed The Nightmarys by Dan Poblocki.

While not exactly a sequel, this book far exceeds its predecessor, The Stone Child. The author manages to create a more intriguing story set on a richer canvas with deeper, more realized characters.

This is intended to be a middle-grade or young adult story, but it kept my attention throughout. I even related to the emotions and thoughts of the main character, Timothy July. Timothy is well-rounded and the reader is able to connect with him. The added element of Timothy's brother being a soldier wounded in the Middle

East made this character more than a simple cardboard cutout going through the steps of solving a mystery.

The story itself had the tense supernatural mystery for which the author is known. Timothy July is assigned a special class project and is paired up with the new girl, Abigail, a loner. Their trip to the museum drops them into a decades old web of secrets. Soon the line between reality and terrible imagination becomes blurred as Timothy and Abigail struggle to find the truth. I liked that it was not a simple one, two, three easy-to-solve mystery. The characters had to work to discover the truth and that, to me, is always more satisfying.

There were also a few surprises that connected the world of *The Nightmarys* to *The Stone Child*. Also, the author appeared to put considerable effort into the mythology behind his plot. As in his first book, there is a lot going on with the supernatural elements that might be over the head of younger readers, but bringing my own background knowledge made it that much more enjoyable for me.

There are some genuinely frightening sequences that makes this story not for everyone. However, if you like to be scared, then *The Nightmarys* is definitely worth your time.

Mark Miller is the author of The Empyrical Tales fantasy adventure series from Comfort Publishing. Book 1: *The Fourth Queen* and Book 2: *The Lost Queen* are available now. Miller has also co-written *A Prince in Trenton, Seriously?* with Giovanni Gelati as part of Trestle Press's Author's Lab and is headlining the ongoing spiritual introspective series *Mark Miller's One*. He has a background in motion picture production and elementary education. Please visit www.MillerWords.com and follow his blog at EmpyricalTales.blogspot.com or find him on Facebook at Facebook.com/EmpyricalTales.

Eileen Lepetit says

It's late, but you can't fall asleep. It seems like your parents are having an argument and then you hear a door slam. Hmm; that's probably not good. Looking around the room, you notice the light in your closet is on - except it wasn't on when you went to bed. Weird...

Getting up, you move to the door a little reluctantly. Sure; you might have left the light on and forgotten. I mean, there's a lot of stuff going on in your life right now. Gripping the handle, you pull the door towards you - slowly - and find...

Oh, I'm not going to tell you. If you want to know what Timothy July finds in his closet, you'll just have to read *The Nightmarys* by Dan Poblocki. Let's just say, though, that the author does a great job of coming up with page after page of really creepy images.

It seems that Timothy is seeing things. His history project partner, Abigail, a new student at school, seems to be seeing things as well - scary things, the kind of things that wait for you in the dark in the corner of your room when you try to sleep. Things Abigail calls, "The Nightmarys."

Actually, quite a few of the people in Timothy's life are seeing things. Could it have something to do with a mystery from a long time past or that freaky guy in the long trench coat who keeps showing up in weird places? Uh, I'm gonna' have to say "yes."

The Nightmarys is a really fun, creepy book. That said, it is also a story for students a bit younger than those

for whom I usually write reviews. I'd say this is a very middle school book - although definitely entertaining for anyone. I liked it quite a lot, but I was aware of the lack of maturity in the characters. Everyone who's twelve acts like he's twelve - and that's probably the way it should be.

Keira N says

1)The reader was able to experience the crimes or crisis that the main character , Timothy July, saw. In this book, there are several events that could be classified as a crisis. For example, Timothy encounters a stairway up a hill. On this stairway, there is a graffiti dragon that somehow peels off of the pavement and attacks Timothy, whilst being two dimensional. The majority of the story deals with finding the person who is responsible for the crime. The crime, in this case, is who stole the jawbone that possesses powers to make people hallucinate and make their fears become reality.

The main characters, Timothy and Abigail, are fully aware that they are in danger. They know that they are in danger because they are experiencing hallucinations that physically harm them and ask them to do things for them.

At some point, I did feel worried for the characters. My main concern was the characters ,for the majority, were either elderly or children, so I feared that they would die because of their inability to defend themselves. I would recommend this book to people who are easily frightened, because this book is anti-climactic. I would definitely not recommend this book to horror lovers, because it is very disappointing due to its slim amount of action and gore.

Audrey says

"Your father's journal was in the safe?" said Abigail.

"I slipped it into my coat pocket when that librarian wasn't looking," said Jack. "No one ever suspects the old man." He winked. "We get away with so much."

Synopsis: In the fine John Bellairs tradition of Old Men Are Fucking Dangerous, Y'All, an old man kidnaps children in Massachusetts and Shirley Jackson arm-wrestles Michael McDowell to get them back.

Bear with me on this.

I started talking about John Bellairs' theme of Crazy Old Men Will Destroy Us All over at Smash Attack Reads yesterday, and I remain convinced that this is one of two main takeaways from Bellairs' books. The other is Listen To Children, but that's not what's important right now. What's important is that I must find and consume Dan Poblocki's new book*, which apparently takes place in an abandoned mental asylum because sometimes your prayers to the gods really do get answered.

In *The Nightmarys*, there's a boy with ineffective parents, a Gulf War vet brother and a complicated friendship. He meets up with a girl with an awesome matriarchal family and creepy-ass nightmares: specifically nightmares about two mean girls from her old school (both named Mary) who now manifest in her bedroom at night looking like something slumped out of a sump pump but with frilly dresses. There's a trip to a museum, swimming practice, a cranky librarian, a lighthouse, a decades-old mystery, a cursed book, some bat-shit crazy old men and a variety of awesome hallucinations.

At least I hope they're hallucinations. And therein lies the best part of the book: the hallucinightmares. (What else can you call it when your nightmares invade your waking space?)

Like this, for example:

[Timothy] noticed that his own closet light was on. At the base of the door, a small white line reflected onto the dark wood floor. The light had not been on when he'd gotten into bed an hour earlier.

Take just a moment with me and focus on those three lines.

Read them again.

Now, think back to your younger self -- hell, think about your self last night in bed, because let me tell you: if I had been in bed for an hour, and I was positive that the light in my closet had not been on when I'd gotten into the bed but I can see it on now? I would have some sort of moment of the sort where you're torn between running screaming from the room and just lying there quietly shitting yourself unconscious.

It's a great moment, the kind of thing that was basically always happening in *The Haunting of Hill House* and Michael McDowell's books, this kind of terror of the mundane: things that should be dependable with their constancy refuse to cooperate. And there are more than a few in this book AND THEY'RE ALL AWESOME.

Additionally, I have the paperback version of this book and it's just really well designed. I know that's dorky but hello, look where you are. The cover's great, the book is a strange and hand-happy size, the paper's nice and thick, the font is actually lickable (I checked) and there are epigraphssssssss yessssssss. My only complaint is that the title on the cover has been puffed up with some weird font effects thing, but I'll live. I can soldier on past that.

Oh, and this book passes the Bechdel Test. :D

According the Acknowledgements section (yes, I do read those -- introductions too), part of the book was inspired by a series of Victorian ghost paintings by Charles Beyer, so now, if you'll excuse me, I'm off to track those down. If I'm not back in a week, send help. Just don't leave my closet light on, because I know for certain that my closet doesn't even have a light, so I'm just opening that door with a flamethrower.

*His first book involves banishing monster lake-dogs, and as I am generally pro-monster-lake-dogs, I'm going to skip books where they get banished. Or even whupped on the tentacle-laden snouts with a rolled-up newspaper. It is just how I roll, people.

Teresa Barrera says

Hm, not sure where to start. The cover no doubt drew me in and I was anxious to read about the Nightmarys as the title seemed to make me think the story revolved around them. The Nightmarys were in the story, but weren't the main creep factor of the story.

I somewhat enjoyed this book, yet felt it dragged and I felt like I was getting the clues before the characters. I liked the plot around the cursed artifact and the creepy things the characters experienced. I just didn't feel a strong connection as I would of liked and have to admit I felt lost at times.

Maybe I'm just on a reading slump and couldn't quite connect or it just wasn't a book for me. But, give it a read and see for yourselves because everyone has different reading experiences.

Robert Kent says

the big question: Is Dan Poblocki's The Nightmarys scary or not? You tell me:

A little after midnight, she awoke to a soft tapping on glass. Before she even opened her eyes, Abigail feared what she would see at the window--two faces, smiling at her.

Timothy screamed and fell backward, landing halfway down the stairs. He watched, paralyzed, as a thin brown arm reached through the broken window for the lock. Its skeletal fingers turned the knob, and slowly, the front door creaked open.

The corpse stood in the entrance, the dawn lighting the sky in the distance. The creature's white hair lay limp across its skull. The bottom half of its face was missing. Its empty eye sockets were barely visible, but Timothy felt their blackness dig into his chest. The corpse clutched at the wood frame and dragged its feet across the threshold.

Scared, Esteemed Reader? I must admit Mr. Poblocki gave even the piranha-loving ninja a few goosebumps. If you don't care for horror, you've probably stopped reading this review already. But if you like things that go bump in the night, pick up a copy of The Nightmarys or come on back next week and try to win one.

So there you go. I've established my criteria for a horror book review: scary, not scary. The Nightmarys is scary, therefore my review is done and in record time. Now I have only to tell you about the book, we'll talk a little craft, and then we'll all go get a taco.

The plot is as follows: Timothy July partners up with Abigail Tremens for a school project and while they're at the museum doing research, Timothy experiences the first of many waking nightmares. He discovers a book there that helps him to unravel a mystery that has something to do with a writer named Nathaniel Olmstead, who astute readers will recognize from Poblocki's first book, The Stone Child. Shortly thereafter,

Timothy's buddy is attacked by another nightmare image as is his teacher. There's a supernatural force prowling about and Timothy's new friend Abigail knows more about it than she's letting on.

Eventually, after some other events I won't spoil for you, Abigail spills the details about two girls named Mary she used to know:

Oddly, Mary Brown was white, and Mary White was black; they were both beautiful...

...Together the Marys were an entity, the likes of which Abigail had never seen before. She didn't like it, and she decided she didn't like them. So Abigail gave them a taste of their own medicine. She made up a nasty name for the two girls: the Nightmarys, of course. To Abigail's horror, the girls liked it, and it stuck. They wore it like a badge of honor.

The Nightmarys begin haunting Abigail after she's moved. Did the girls die, you ask? Ahh, but that would be a spoiler. The important thing is that two supernatural entities are following Abigail around and causing her waking nightmares. And she can't shake them, no matter what she does:

"I actually thought I could hide from them. I dyed my hair. I was planning on sleeping on the couch in the living room tonight. I thought maybe they wouldn't recognize me..."

Does Abigale overcome the Nightmarys or do they drive her insane? Does Timothy July banish the Nightmarys away forever or at least until the sequel? Naturally, I'm not going to tell you. Instead, I'd like to share with you two passages from one scene and then we'll see about that taco.

The Nightmarys opens with a classic teaser scene. I know different writing guides refer to this opening under different terms, but I've always liked "teaser" scene. Most horror novels open with them. Probably the most famous is the opening of the film version of Jaws: naked chick swims in the ocean at night, dies a guesome death, establishing the presence of the shark and the need of a hero to rid us of the shark. It also makes a promise to the audience that though we're about to spend some time learning about the characters and establishing the premise, we're going to see more shark at some point and our characters must interact with it, for good or ill. As for examples from books, Pennywise the clown has a chat with Georgie and murders him in the first few chapters of Stephen King's *It*, a woman is stopped and chased by cannibals in the first chapter of Jack Ketchum's *Off Season*, and a nearly restored Voldemort kills a man at the beginning of Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (by far my favorite of the Potter books).

In the prologue, or "prelude," of The Nightmarys, we meet Abigale's grandmother, though we don't know who she is yet, as she is haunted in a laundry room. It's a very effective scene and the suspense it promises hooks us through the opening chapters of character and premise introduction. It's a shame more novels don't open with a teaser scene like this one. First, notice how effectively Poblocki establishes the setting and mood in a few sentences:

The corridor was longer than she recalled. The light was dim. The pipes hung from the low ceiling, craning at wicked angles every which way. A bitter scent lingered in the air.

Nothing good could possibly happen in such a place. Secondly, I want to draw attention to a rhythm game Poblocki plays with the reader. Notice the way he uses the same sentence pattern three times, lulling the reader a bit, and then suddenly breaks the pattern to great effect:

With a huff, she rolled up her sleeve and reached in, digging through the wet clothes. Finding nothing

unusual, she closed the lid. Whirring, the machine started up again.

But before she sat down, the thumping noise returned.

To read an interview with author Dan Poblocki or to read other interview with writers and literary agents, check out my blog at www.middlegradeninja.blogspot.com

Camden Johnson says

Woo! First book of 2019 :) I bought this book at goodwill a year or two ago since it sounded interesting. I have to say that I was pleasantly surprised with this book. It was a refreshing take on those pre-teen/early teen horror stories that authors try to make. I love the concept of your worst fears being used against you. I think the ending was a bit meh but I overall enjoyed the book in total. The chapters were short and I loved how the author segmented between some chapters. I might have to check out some more books from this author since I genuinely enjoyed this book.

Matt Garcia says

This was a good YA horror novel. The author managed to create some tense and creepy scenes that I found satisfying. I usually don't expect anything even remotely scary from contemporary YA horror but this surprised me. The plot was interesting and it reminded me a little of the Goonies in only the most generic sense. The characters were solid although they were nothing special. The villain was a bit weak in my opinion and their reveal was abrupt and a bit rushed in my opinion. The pacing was very quick and the story is filled with almost non-stop action which is always a plus. The conclusion was satisfying and it fit the tone of the book well. This was a pleasant surprise for me. I randomly came across the book at the library and I remembered hearing some buzz about it a while back and decided to give it a try. The cover art alone sold me but the story contained within is also enjoyable. This gives me hope that not all contemporary YA horror is watered down, tame, and boring.

Missie says

<http://www.theunreadreader.com/2010/0...>

I'm really struggling to know what to say about this book. Although the cover art (which totally drew me in) and even the book title are rather intriguing, I really can't say I felt the same way about the story. Maybe it would have resonated better with its target audience, but I've read many a YA book before, and I can't quite place my finger on why I found this book to be rather drabbish.

The book summary pretty much tells you all you need to know. Two middle school kids, Timothy and Abigail are having living nightmares. Timothy's involve his brother and a shadowy figure, and Abigail's revolve around two girls named Mary that used to pick on her at her old school. Soon they discover that they must team up to help save each other from their worst dreams.

There seemed to be a lot of foreshadowing that pretty much lead you to the predictable conclusions,

especially surrounding the mystery of why the nightmares were affecting the people in the story. While it took the characters a bit longer to figure it out, I didn't find enjoyment in unraveling the clues before they did. For mysteries, I prefer being along for the ride, not leading it.

I know the story is intended to be a mystery/thriller, but I also felt like maybe some comic relief was needed to keep things fresh and moving along. It all its outlandishness, the story just fell a little flat for me. I suppose one scene in which a graffiti dragon became animated and attacked Timothy was meant to provide something different, but I still couldn't find it very exciting. Again, maybe a grade school student reading this book would.

Overall, quick read with some great descriptive elements, but not as fun to read as I hoped it would have been.

Holly says

I've been reading a lot of middle grade horror/ghost stories lately and Dan Poblocki's books looked right up my alley. You have to admit - the cover art is pretty amazing. Unfortunately, the story itself...wasn't so much.

Even if I haven't been thrilled with all of them, almost all of the middle grade books I've been reading lately have been fairly well-written (and some were crafted *extremely* well). The *Nightmarys* had really bad writing, in my opinion, and that was the main problem with this book. I found myself having trouble understanding what was going on while reading and while I at first blamed it on being tired, I quickly realized the problem was the writing. It's weirdly choppy, contains too many clauses, and didn't altogether make sense. I was surprised that this book could have gotten past an editor and was published by a well-known publishing house. You'd think they'd have fixed a little at least...There were multiple problems going on here. The dialogue was laughably bad and unbelievable. And then we have the plot. The main thread of the story was interesting - involving a cursed relic that allows its bearer to control the fears of others. The problem was that there were so many threads that the story completely unraveled. It was a little hard to follow and I wonder if a kid could actually follow it all either.

One of the strangest things about this book was realizing that the "Nightmarys" didn't fit with the plot at all and were mostly irrelevant. But that's the title! And the cover art! But why would the jawbone from an ancient tribe have seemingly Victorian-type ghosts protecting it? Huh? My first thought was that the title "Nightmarys" must have come first with the story following. Reading the acknowledgement at the end made me realize was that I wasn't far off - the author had a "dream" about ghostly little girls and that was the kickoff for the rest of the story. Apparently his original idea got away from him a little, because if you read *The Nightmarys* you'll see how irrelevant these ghost girls are. It's too bad, because creepy ghost girls are always interesting. What we have instead is a convoluted ghost story with too much happening all at once.

As you can tell, I was not impressed. *The Nightmarys* was a lot scarier than other middle grade stories I've read lately, so that *was* a plus (for me). I don't go into a middle grade horror book expecting or even wanting to be scared, but I'm always pleasantly surprised if the author manages to make a book creepy enough to bother adults a little. It wasn't overly scary or anything, but even I felt a chill creep up my spine at some of the imagery (the prelude and interludes were definitely the best parts here). I can see 11 to 14-year-old boys really eating this up. A sensitive child may be overly frightened, however - so proceed with caution. A teen older than 14 probably wouldn't enjoy this much, so ignore those who have tagged this as "young adult."

This is a solidly upper middle grade read. And as for grown persons - I'd skip this. There are plenty of superior middle grade horror stories out there and there's no reason to read this one. It's too bad, because I really expected I'd like this. Oh well. 2 out of 5 stars.

Tyler King says

This book is awful. There is barely any horror and the main plot is a boy that is in an argument with his best friend. It is impossible to get hooked and is very slow throughout the whole story with few action and scary parts. I got this book to be scared and it was extremely boring and a disappointment. 10/10 would NOT read this or recommend it for anyone looking for a scare. It might be good for younger people but not for teens or older.

Mary says

While creepy in some parts the writing was a bit disconnected and there were too many moments where it was like "wow! Now wasn't that lucky that that just HAPPENED to work?"

Lori says

The Nightmarys terrified my 10-year-old. She read portions of the book aloud to me, and literally yanked the book I was reading out of my hands to force this one on me.

Unfortunately, meh.

I can see why the creepy bits bothered her. But I can't wait till she's old enough to tackle some real horror.
