
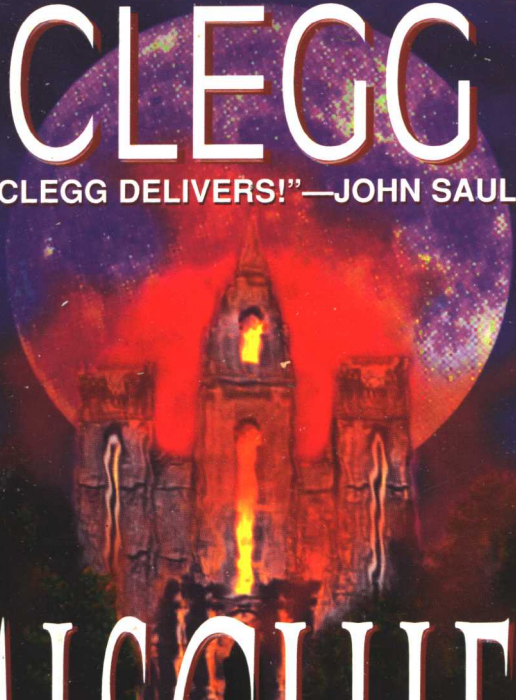


WINNER OF THE BRAM STOKER AWARD!

# DOUGLAS CLEGG

"CLEGG DELIVERS!"—JOHN SAUL



# MISCHIEF

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# DOUGLAS CLEGG

LEISURE BOOKS



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"Every bit as good as the best works of Stephen King, Peter Straub, or Dan Simmons. What is most remarkable is not how well Clegg provides chills, but how quickly he is able to do so."

—*Hellnotes*

"Clegg's imagery is intense, horrific, but he paints with a poet's hand. Horror at its finest."

—*Publishers Weekly* (Starred Review)

"Unforgettable!"

—*The Washington Post*

"Doug Clegg is one of horror's most captivating voices."

—*BookLovers*

"Clegg possesses a master's unsparing touch for horror. [*You Come When I Call You* is] a brilliant achievement of occult fiction."

—*Rue Morgue*

"Douglas Clegg's short stories can chill the spine so effectively that the reader should keep paramedics on standby!"

—Dean Koontz

"*You Come When I Call You* is the first major literary event in the genre for the year. I've never had a work of fiction affect me more deeply. This is an absolute must read!"

—Garrett Peck, *Hellnotes*

"Douglas Clegg's writing is like a potent drink that goes down with deceptive smoothness—right before it knocks you on your derriere."

—*Horroronline*

## MORE PRAISE FOR DOUGLAS CLEGG!

"Clegg has cooler ideas and is much more of a stylist than either Saul or Koontz."

—*Dallas Morning News*

"Clegg's gifts as a teller of grim tales are disconcerting and affecting."

—*Locus*

"Clegg is a wonderful writer. He knows how to deliver the goods."

—*World of Fandom*

"Parts of *The Halloween Man* bring back fond memories of both Straub's *Ghost Story* and McCammon's *Boy's Life*, but Clegg adds his own unique touches in this high class horror novel. A memorable contribution to the genre."

—*Masters of Terror*

"Douglas Clegg has raised the stakes; for himself, as well as for the genre he writes in."

—*FrightNet*

"Doug Clegg has proved himself one of the masters of the supernatural thriller."

—Edward Lee, *BarnesandNoble.Com*

"*The Halloween Man* is a stunning horror novel, written with a degree of conviction that is rare these days."

—Fiona Webster, *Amazon.com*

"Reminded me of King and McCammon at their best. I was awestruck."

—*The Scream Factory*

"Packed with vivid imagery; a broadly scoped, but fast-paced plot; powerful, evocative writing; superb characterization; and facile intelligence, *The Halloween Man* is more than its blurbage could ever convey."

—Paula Guran, *DarkEcho*

## DOWN IN THE CRYPT

The steps down were worn and slippery; damp scum of some kind covered them. Jim took them slowly, one at a time, until he reached the fifth step down, and then he was in the crypt.

He shone the flashlight around—various names were on the graves, and two table graves rose at the center of the marble floor.

Jim made sure that no one was lurking at any corner of the crypt. Then he went to the great slabs that lay on top of the two graves at the middle of the small, square room. He shined the light upon one.

It read:

*Genevieve Campion Gravesend. Died at her beloved Balmoral Cottage, Fenwick, Connecticut, during the year of our Lord 1891.*

A bas relief rose at the foot of the crypt of a curious but beautiful angel, with wings that seemed to come from its scalp and sweep along its shoulders.

Jim turned the light on the other grave. It was perfectly smooth alabaster. He touched the stone, and felt its ice. There was no name, no image, nothing upon it. He set the flashlight on Genevieve's crypt, its light aimed for the edge of the other's lid.

It was the doorway to Death, and he had to open it.

He pressed his fingers beneath the slab, but it didn't budge. His wrist ached from the effort.

He lifted the flashlight again, and directed the beam to the walls. There were a few markers on the wall, but someone had written across the wall in what might've been blood:

*WAIT FOR WHAT WILL COME.*

Other *Leisure* books by Douglas Clegg:

**YOU COME WHEN I CALL YOU**

**THE NIGHTMARE CHRONICLES**

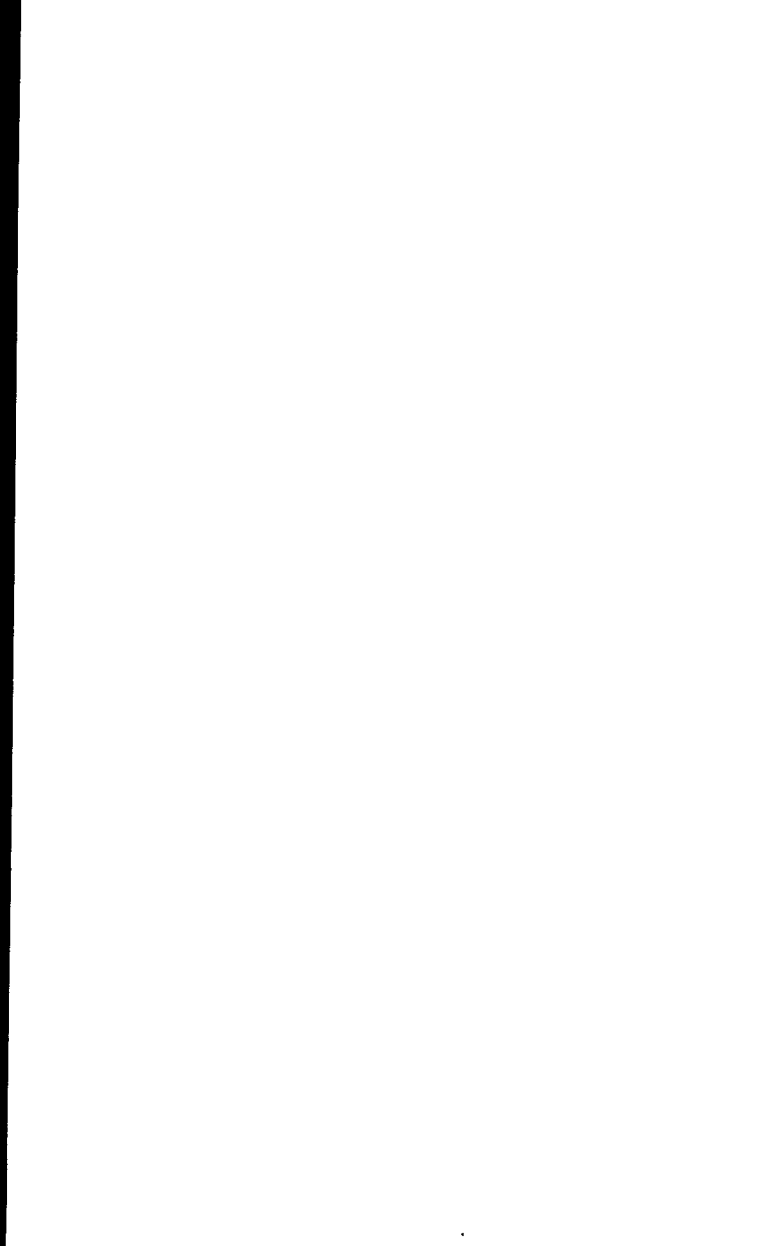
**THE HALLOWEEN MAN**

## *For Don D'Auria*

*Thanks to the team at Hearst, led by Jennifer Marek, for the wonderful stuff. Special thank yous to Kate with a Z., Andrew LeCount, Maria Liu, and the whole .com gang. As always, thank you to Rich Chizmar and Cemetery Dance Publications, and Dorchester Publishing. Special thanks to Tommy Dreiling. Above all, this one could not have been written without Raul Silva.*

Be sure to check out Douglas Clegg's website at:  
<http://www.douglasclegg.com> or e-mail  
Doug at [dclegg@douglasclegg.com](mailto:dclegg@douglasclegg.com)





MISCHIEF



Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

In one sense a poet, however sublime, is limited by his mental power and capacity, and by the circumstances of the molecular changes in the brain. . . . Let me explain in a few words how the question of Magick may be defined as the practical ability to set in right motion the necessary forces. . . .

—Aleister Crowley

Once upon a time there was a boy named Jack who lived with his poor mother. All they had left was one cow, and one day Jack went to market with the cow to sell it so he and his mother could eat. But on the way, he met an old woman who offered him three magic beans in exchange for the cow. "These will bring great fortune to whoever plants them in his garden."

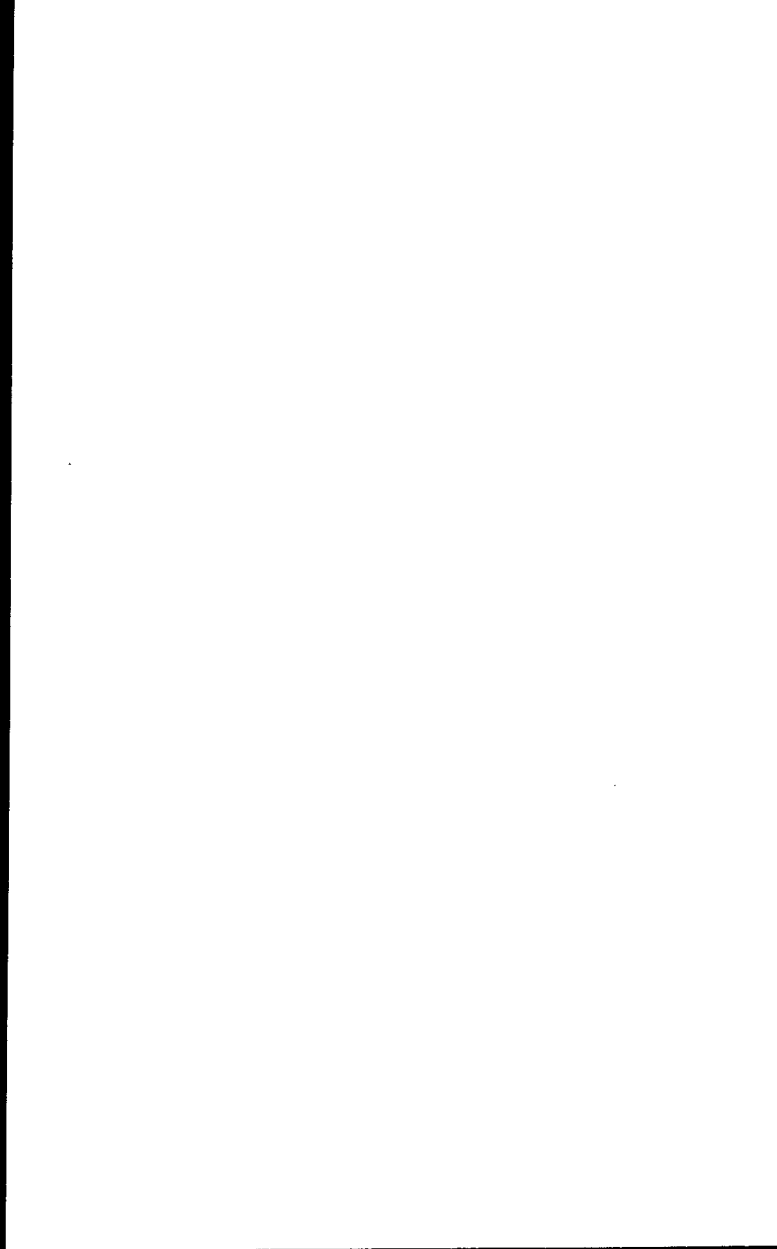
"How will something so small bring fortune, crone?" Jack asked.

"There is a place," the woman said, "that is beyond the world, but to reach it, one must take chances. What do you want more than anything in the world, boy?"

Jack thought for a minute and then told her.

—from a retelling of the classic fairy tale,

"Jack and the Beanstalk"



## *Prologue*

"What do you want more than anything else in the world?"

"You know. I already told you."

"Say it."

"You can't bring back the dead."

"There's a way to do it."

"It's a game," he said, mostly to himself. "It's only a game, right? Like a room in my mind. It is a game."

"If you say so. Believe what you want. No one ever said you couldn't."

"It has to be," he said. "It's some kind of game. A test. Part of the initiation."

The wind brushed through his hair as he stood at the open window, looking down.

## Douglas Clegg

It was a hell of a long drop. He stood on the ledge at the top of the tower. He imagined dropping a water balloon and counting till ten before it hit the pavement. That's what it would be like. He'd drop and then it would all be over.

"Every game has its rules. I just need to know what the rules of this one are," he said, hoping the other boy would tell him something—anything—that would give away this game.

He kept feeling the tug of the earth—not gravity, but the need to be there, the need to leave the tower and return to the ground again. He couldn't keep from looking down.

The more he looked at the distance between where he stood and the earth below, the more interesting it became. It didn't seem like a fall, it seemed like he could just step over into it, as if . . . his eyes were playing tricks on him . . . but it was as if it weren't a long way down at all.

The other boy stood behind him and whispered, "It's just like a corridor, isn't it? You look down and see the drive and the stones and the fountain, but it changes when you watch it, the edge of your vision wraps around it; and it becomes a long corridor and it makes you feel as if you could just step out into it, and walk that long way to its end, to find out what waits there for you. You can't go back because you know what waits for you there. You can't stay where you are. You must go forward."

"What's there?" he asked.

## *Mischief*

"What you want. More than anything."

"No," he said.

"Go on. You'll see. You can't stay on the ledge, can you? You can't go back. You know what's there. You can only go on. You want to, I can tell."

"What's there?" he repeated.

But the boy behind him didn't answer. He may have stepped away.

"It has to be a game," he said. "This can't be real. This can't be."

He stood alone at the top of the tower.  
And then, he stepped off the ledge.



