



City Infernal

Edward Lee

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Hell is a city. Forget the old-fashioned sulphurous pit you may have read about. Over the millennia, Hell has evolved into a bustling metropolis with looming skyscrapers, crowded streets, systemized evil, and atrocity as the status quo.

Cassie thought she knew all about Hell. But when her twin sister, Lissa, committed suicide, Cassie found that she was able to travel to the real thing—the city itself. Now, even though she's still alive, Cassie is heading straight to Hell to find Lissa. And the sights she sees as she walks among the damned will never be in any tourist guidebook.

City Infernal Details

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Author : Edward Lee

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From Reader Review City Infernal for online ebook

Stephen says

2.0 stars. This book was a disappointment because I was really expecting to enjoy it based on the premise. The only real positive thing I can say about the book is that many of the descriptions of Hell were pretty cool (in a Saturday night gore-fest kind of way). However, after a while even those began to come across more like slapstick horror rather than truly frightening. The book was decent and a fast read but it could have been so much better.

Sebastian Crow says

Ed Lee is always a blast. Picked this up at a flea market for a buck and was delighted to find it was as good as his other work. Not for the faint of heart, Lee is unrelenting and brutal. Loved every single page.

Bandit says

First in the series. Very imaginative. Severely messed up :)

Keith A says

I really thought this was going to be an interesting read based on the premise. It turned out to be complete trash. Horrible writing that seemed to be written for young adults.

Tim says

This. Book. Is. Shit.

Nothing in it was remotely scary or well written.

It....I cannot do this.

goddamn it sucked.

Daniel says

I get it: Hell has become a city (named Mephistopolis - I guess creativity is lacking there) that thrives on pain and suffering and Satan is the big-daddy CEO who lives in the 666 tower in the center of town. Ok, then

what?

I asked myself that question for nearly 400 pages, and the answers were few and mostly feeble. So I moved on to the sequel in hopes of better story, and discovered . . .

Robert Beveridge says

Edward Lee, *City Infernal* (Leisure, 2003)

Edward Lee has been around, it seems, just about forever as far as horror authors go. During the eighties, he was considered one of the rising stars, going so far as to get some of his stories in the then-groundbreaking *Night Visions* anthology (and "Doing Colfax" will never be erased from my memory). Then the horror market died. Lee, unlike many of his brethren, continued to publish in small specialty presses. Those books are now worth a small fortune. And he still continues to publish; his newest novel, as of this writing, is *City Infernal*. And a typical Edward Lee gut-churner it is.

Cassie and Lissa are identical twins who are enamored of the early nineties goth scene in DC. Lissa catches her boyfriend kissing Cassie, at which point she kills both him and herself. Their mother is long gone, so Cassie and her father are left on their own. A couple of years later, the two of them move out to the country. The house they move to just happens to be a gateway to hell, inhabited by three of hell's outcasts, Xeke, Via, and Hush. Through them, Cassie may finally get a chance to do what she's wanted to since the incident: apologize to her sister.

Okay, so extreme horror is no longer the shock that it was when Lee published "Doing Colfax," the characters have only a shade more depth than cardboard cutouts, and the whole thing is really kind of predictable (though he does throw in a few twists, some explicit and some implied, at the end that will catch the reader off-guard). So why, then, is Ed Lee's stuff such a fun read?

Good question, and one to which I really don't have an answer. *City Infernal* is more *Ghouls* than it is *The Bighead*; you're not going to find anything groundbreaking, and in the harsh light of day this will likely end up being considered one of Lee's minor novels rather than a piece of the classic Lee canon. But still, it's a ball. He creates the Mehistopolis, the major city in hell, as lovingly as China Mieville creates Perdido Street Station's New Crobuzon, and has just as much fun describing it. The Mehistopolis is what Dickens could have done with his place descriptions in *A Tale of Two Cities* if he hadn't been so stultifyingly verbose.

I will warn you, a good number of horror fans will probably be bored off their butts with this book. But as Adam Parfrey said of the music of NON, "to the chosen few, it is pure balm for the soul." *** ½

Roberto Andonie says

I'm embarrassed by how much I enjoyed this dumb book. It was a decadent, self indulgent experience akin to binge-watch that reality show about those guys getting killed by their pets, while eating deep fried crap and drinking beer for a full weekend. Every now and then realizing how bad this is, while trying to ignore the shame of how much I'm liking it, and the guilt at knowing I would continue with it.

I don't know who to recommend it to, though.

Its full of (unintentional) cringe-worthy scenes, and eyes turning situations. The characters are 2 dimensional, with little to no development. It fails almost on everything else: It's not scary at all and the plot and plot twists are ridiculous. Whenever a character trait gets in the middle of the plot, that trait gets dumped just like that. Its full of Deus ex machina events. Its not a good story, but somehow the book is really fun. The pace is very fast, which goes well with the book. Also the promise of the premise (The gory adventures in hell) is delivered abundantly, and early on. The descriptions of hell are super entertaining and gross. It's just easy, gratifying trash. I binge read the last half of the book until 5 am, and ended completely satisfied. I suppose that if you like action/horror B-movies, stuff about hell, gore, gothic teenagers and stuff like that, you will enjoy it a lot. This is a really fun, really bad, but absolutely readable book.

Camille says

This book was VERY interesting. It's not something that I recommend reading while you're eating if you're easily grossed out. And probably not a good idea to read it when you have to sleep alone, like I did. The ending wasn't as good as the rest of the book, which was a little disappointing. But overall, a very good book and very interesting!

Tressa says

The plot was OK as were some of the one-dimensional characters, but the description of hell was worth the price of the book.

The idea of hell and being punished for an eternity has always freaked me out, but some of the eternal punishments mentioned in City Infernal affected me in a bad way--e.g., being processed as insect dung, jammed into a metal can and thrown into a pit of fire, or strung up and used as a demon's breeding mare so he can sacrifice your offspring over and over again.

Lee's descriptions of the inhabitants and daily business of Mephistopolis were interesting to say the least.

Erin *Proud Book Hoarder* says

Edward Lee again goes full frontal on the gore assault front. This beginning of a series is worthy with its world-building, unusual premise, and build-up.

Since I'm more of a character-orientated reader than a plot-driven one, the characters being a bit one-dimensional wasn't welcome. Cassie's powers seem to come too easily without training but again, that belongs in the story. She's reasonably likeable, although her sister is not. The dad is also enjoyable but was kept in the background as fodder. Cassie's sidekicks were amusing for the most part with their dialogue lines and motivations, although that can amp up the cheese sometimes.

The monsters? Creepy as can get. Lee takes time to focus on a large assortment of horrifying demons, abilities, scenarios, and gritty details - things he gets kudos for. The internal battles are particularly interesting and work well with the world building he's constructed.

I can't complain on the pacing at all - from a surprising family drama in the beginning to almost constant horror through a creative hell. Lee is talented with convincing dialogue but I'm hoping the second book makes me warm up to the main players more.

Justin says

Before reading this I saw a lot of reviews saying it is worth reading just for Edward Lee's depiction of hell. Being an Edward Lee fan I expected it to be good but what surprised me is that his visions are more about the miserable living conditions than the pain and torture that is usually written about. Yes there is torture involved but I have read that before, one of my favorite parts is how they bust open sewage lines and walk around in a combination of excrement and corps sludge just to keep their feet from burning off on the super hot streets. I don't want to give anything away but there is a lot of creative ideas here that give the book some originality rather than just trying to be more extreme in the graphic description than any of the other books about hell. Guided tour of misery aside this book had a good story as well, there was a lot of magic in it that at times was pretty cool and at other times seemed like an easy answer to whatever dilemma they were facing.

Marvin says

Of all the Dante's Infernal rip-offs I've read...and that's quite a few books...This may be the strangest. The author scuttles the seven circles completely and goes for a cross between The Land of Oz and Detroit. However, Mr. Lee does have a nice plot going for him; Goth twin is guilty about "causing" her other twin's suicide and discovers a way to go to hell to ask for forgiveness. The plot is actually a bit more complex than that. But the plot is secondary to the machinations of Hell's politics and the gross-out descriptions of its citizens. Genre-wise, this fits a bit more into urban fantasy than horror despite a number of horrific happenings. I actually enjoyed it but was a bit annoyed to find out it is a first of a series. I sincerely believe there should be a mandatory tag on first books in series: "Danger: the author will leave you hanging in a transparent attempt to bilk you of more of your hard-earned money." If there was a pay-off at the end I would be giving this four stars, but now only three...maybe three and a half.

Phil Elmore says

I bought "City Infernal" used through one of Amazon's shops after the ad in the back of another horror novel caught my eye. I was intrigued by the idea of Hell as a city of horrors and curious as to how Lee would envision it. I enjoyed the same idea in the novelization of the film "Constantine" and was looking for more.

Lee surprised me with a remarkably entertaining and frequently fresh look at an old subject -- what would Hell be like? He creates a mythos around his Mephistopolis, the City of Hell, that I found compelling and absorbing. At times unpleasant and sometimes so hyperbolic that it borders on the ridiculous (though never quite getting there), the horrific City of Hell is something I envision in almost cartoon terms. I could see an animated movie of this emerge quite easily, but not a live action film. This is a version of the Hell that should remain entirely in the realm of fantasy; it is most enjoyable on those terms.

When I put the book down after finishing it (it was hard to put it down before then), I immediately wanted

more and went looking for the sequel. That book was "Infernal Angel."

John says

If you want to read about a fun romp through Hell and back again, with a lot of gruesome imagery and tongue-in-cheek humor, then this book is for you! Unfortunately, with this author's rep, I was expecting a horror story. What I got felt like an R-rated, overly long Scooby Doo episode.

But YOU might like it more!
