



Natchez Burning (Penn Cage)

By Greg Iles

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'Extraordinarily entertaining and fiendishly suspenseful' (Stephen King). The stunning new Penn Cage thriller in which a shocking murder from the 1960s finds new life - and victims - in the present. Penn Cage is facing a son's worst nightmare - having his father stand accused of murder. Worse, each effort to defend the legendary Dr Tom Cage unearths new, shocking secrets, leaving Penn to question whether he ever really knew his father at all. At issue is the murder of Viola Turner, once Tom Cage's nurse, before being transferred to Chicago, now back in Natchez and a corpse in her sister's house. What was the relationship between Tom, Viola, and the 'Double Eagle Club', an ultra-violent group of hardened men who considered themselves smarter, tougher, and more elite than their peers in the FBI-infiltrated Ku Klux Klan? In Natchez, where the past is never truly 'past', long-buried secrets turn lethal when exposed to the light of day. For Penn Cage, the cost of solving this case will be no exception.

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Natchez Burning (Penn Cage) By Greg Iles Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #6579463 in Books
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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, May 2014: Greg Iles has written a sprawling, gothic, suspenseful, emotional, page-turner of a book. In doing so, he's confronted the darkest secrets of his home state of Mississippi. Shifting between the 1960s (not a pretty period in Mississippi history) and the present, it's the story of a respected doctor accused of murdering his former nurse, an African-American woman who has returned to Natchez after many years up north. The doctor's son, Penn Cage (featured in previous Iles novels), is a former prosecutor, now the mayor of Natchez, whose attempts to clear his father bring him face to face with a fringe KKK sect, men who personify the South's historic evils. Packed to the point of overflow with racial politics, family secrets, illicit love, corruption, racism, brutality, and fear, this 800-page book is really a father-son story. Yet, as Iles suggests in the opening pages: "Perhaps we expect too much of our fathers." Though it's sometimes easier not to acknowledge life's most uncomfortable truths, as one character puts it, "Sooner or later, everything comes to the surface, doesn't it?" Smart, funny, and sexy, you'll keep thinking about it long after the violent final pages. --*Neal Thompson*



Joseph Finder

Guest Review by Joseph Finder, New York Times bestselling author of *Paranoia*, *Buried Secrets*, and the forthcoming *Suspicion* (On Sale 5/27/14).

Greg Iles's long-awaited new novel is a big deal, and I do mean big. In this age of 140-character tweets and text messages, there's something wonderfully old-fashioned about the pleasure of losing yourself in the fully realized, immersive fictional world of a 788-page story. I'm reminded of Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove* (945 pages), or the great sagas of Herman Wouk, James Michener, and James Clavell. The best big novels, like Iles's instant classic, *Natchez Burning*, pull you in so deep that you're utterly transported; they don't seem long at all.

I've always been a big fan of Greg Iles' work. From *Spandau Phoenix* to *Turning Angel*, and his most recent, *The Devil's Punchbowl* (just to name a few favorites), he never repeats himself. He's a graceful writer who knows how to tell a gripping, fast-moving story—without sacrificing texture or fully fleshed-out characters.

The central plot of *Natchez Burning* starts with Mayor Penn Cage, an attorney Iles introduced in 1999's *The Quiet Game*, learning that his father, the town's most beloved physician, is about to be charged with murder.

The victim? Dr. Cage's former nurse, Viola Turner, who came home to Natchez to die after a nearly 40-year absence.

Did his father assist in Viola's suicide? Penn would believe it: his father did the same for Penn's own wife when she was dying of cancer, years before. But as the town's corrupt district attorney pursues the case, it becomes clear that Viola's death was no gentle passage into that good night. In fact, a crusading local reporter has video evidence that Viola died in pain and fear. Penn refuses to believe his father had anything to do with that.

Iles weaves this multi-generational web like a master, keeping Penn Cage at the center even as we see his father, Dr. Tom Cage, in both past and present, along with the many citizens of Natchez and its sister community in Louisiana, just across the Mississippi River.

Natchez Burning is an epic, a saga, but it's also a thriller. We feel the panic and terror of young Jimmy Revels as he walks into the Double Eagles' trap in 1968. And the rage and despair of Lincoln Turner, Viola's son, who doesn't know the truth of his own origins. We feel Caitlin Masters' desperate need to tell the story through the newspaper she publishes. Sustaining all of this tension for almost 800 pages is no small feat. It's a testament to Greg Iles's power as a storyteller.

Iles doesn't tie up all the loose ends. Natchez Burning is just the first installment in what promises to be an extraordinary trilogy built upon the premise that, in some pockets of the South, the Civil War hasn't ended. "Appomattox hadn't ended anything," a character thinks early in the story, in a scene set in 1968. "[It] had merely heralded an intermission." As William Faulkner said (and this book's narrator quotes), "The past is never dead. It's not even past." In Natchez Burning, the sins and unpunished crimes of the generations who fought integration and civil rights are visited upon their children and grandchildren, claiming victims almost half a century later.

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review It's been half a decade since Iles' last Penn Cage novel, but, oh boy, was it worth the wait! Penn, still getting his feet under him after being elected mayor of Natchez, Mississippi, is shocked to learn that his father, Dr. Tom Cage, is about to be charged with murder in the death of a local woman, a nurse who worked with Dr. Cage back in the 1960s. Stymied by his father's refusal to discuss the case, Penn digs into the past to uncover the truth and discovers long-buried secrets about his community and his own family. Natchez Burning (the title is surely a nod to the infamous "Mississippi Burning" murder case of the 1960s, and others like it) is the first of a planned trilogy. The story ends in mid-stride, leaving us on the edge of our seats, but that's not a criticism. This beautifully written novel represents some of the author's finest work, with sharper characterizations and a story of especially deep emotional resonance, and we eagerly await volume two. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Several of Iles' thrillers have found their way to best-seller lists, but his new publisher is touting this one (his first novel in five years) as a breakout book and seems ready to put marketing dollars behind that claim. --David Pitt

Review

Praise for NATCHEZ BURNING: "The thriller of the year, of the decade even ... The first of a projected

trilogy, Natchez Burning is Penn Cage's fourth outing. But you don't need to read its predecessors to be wholly consumed by this wonderful book. Buy, read, and marvel' The Times 'Terrific, engrossing' Sunday Times 'A tale that is both riveting in detail and amazing in its sheer scope' Sun 'Often seen as a John Grisham imitator, Iles clearly outperforms the master of the Deep South thriller in this angry yet engrossing novel' Sunday Times 'Extraordinarily entertaining and fiendishly suspenseful. I defy you to start it and find a way to put it down ...This is an amazing work of popular fiction' STEPHEN KING 'I don't know how Iles did it, but every single one of the 700+ pages of NATCHEZ BURNING is a cliffhanger that will keep you devouring just one more chapter before you put it down to eat, work, or go to bed. A mystery rooted in the real-life racial divides of the Deep South, this ambitious, unique novel is the perfect marriage of a history lesson and a thriller. Greg? You owe me some sleep!' JODI PICOULT 'Natchez Burning is just flat-out terrific, written with all the fire of its title. With its scope and passion and its themes about race, violence, tradition, and the eternal smouldering anger of the South, it brings to mind Thomas Wolfe and William Faulkner, even while its cagey plot and restless energy keeps you flying through the pages. Greg Iles is back and truly better than ever' SCOTT TUROW Praise for previous Greg Iles novels: 'A scorching read' John Grisham 'A rarity. A thriller that really thrills' Stephen King 'An incredible web of intrigue and suspense' Clive Cussler 'My favourite kind of novel ... Ambitious in its scope and superbly satisfying in its execution' Dan Brown 'Iles is a great thriller writer' Independent

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joshua Orvis:

The feeling that you get from Natchez Burning (Penn Cage) will be the more deep you looking the information that hide in the words the more you get thinking about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to recognise but Natchez Burning (Penn Cage) giving you excitement feeling of reading. The article writer conveys their point in a number of way that can be understood by simply anyone who read it because the author of this publication is well-known enough. This particular book also makes your own personal vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this kind of Natchez Burning (Penn Cage) instantly.

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