



Natchez Burning: A Novel (Penn Cage Book 4)

By Greg Iles

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From #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Greg Iles comes the first novel in his Natchez Burning trilogy—which also includes *The Bone Tree* and the upcoming *Mississippi Blood*—an epic trilogy that interweaves crimes, lies, and secrets past and present in a mesmerizing thriller featuring Southern lawyer and former prosecutor Penn Cage.

Raised in the southern splendor of Natchez, Mississippi, Penn Cage learned all he knows of duty from his father, Dr. Tom Cage. But now the beloved family doctor has been accused of murdering the African American nurse with whom he worked in the dark days of the 1960s. Once a crusading prosecutor, Penn is determined to save his father, but Tom, stubbornly invoking doctor-patient privilege, refuses even to speak in his own defense.

Penn's quest for the truth sends him deep into his father's past, where a sexually charged secret lies. More chilling, this long-buried sin is only one thread in a conspiracy of greed and murder involving the vicious Double Eagles, an offshoot of the KKK controlled by some of the most powerful men in the state. Aided by a dedicated reporter privy to Natchez's oldest secrets and by his fiancée, Caitlin Masters, Penn uncovers a trail of corruption and brutality that places his family squarely in the Double Eagles' crosshairs.

With every step costing blood and faith, Penn is forced to confront the most wrenching dilemma of his life: Does a man of honor choose his father or the truth?

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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

"A whopping tale, filled with enough cliff-hanging crises for an old summer-long movie-serial. Yet there are

still enough unresolved matters at the end of *Natchez Burning* for two already-promised sequels.” (**Wall Street Journal**)

“Every single page of *Natchez Burning* is a cliffhanger that will keep you devouring just one more chapter before you put it down.” (**Jodi Picoult**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Storyteller*)

“*Natchez Burning* is just flat-out terrific . . . its themes about race, violence, tradition, and the eternal smoldering anger of the South [bring] to mind Thomas Wolfe and William Faulkner . . . Greg Iles is back and truly better than ever.” (**Scott Turow**, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author)

“*Natchez Burning* is 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**)

“A searing tale of racial hatreds and redemption in the modern South, courtesy of Southern storyteller extraordinaire Iles. . . . A memorable, harrowing tale.” (**Kirkus Reviews** (starred review))

“An absorbing and electrifying tale that thriller fans will be sure to devour.” (**Library Journal** (starred review))

“Much more than a thriller, Iles’s deftly plotted fourth Penn Cage novel doesn’t flag for a moment . . . This superlative novel’s main strength comes from the lead’s struggle to balance family and honor.” (**Publishers Weekly** (starred review))

“It’s been half a decade since Iles’ last Penn Cage novel, but, oh boy, was it worth the wait! . . . 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.” (**Booklist** (starred review))

“*Natchez Burning* excels as a contemporary thriller . . . utterly—and chillingly—believable. Epic.” (**Clarion-Ledger** (Jackson, MS))

“*Natchez Burning* obliterates the artificial distinction between genre and literary fiction with passion, grace and considerable style. This is Greg Iles at his formidable best. It’s good to have him back.” (**Washington Post**)

“The thriller of the year, of the decade even, is *Natchez Burning*... 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 (London))

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rachel Robertson:

As people who live in the modest era should be change about what going on or information even knowledge to make all of them keep up with the era that is always change and advance. Some of you maybe can update themselves by examining books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to a person is you don't know what kind you should start with. This *Natchez Burning: A Novel* (Penn Cage Book 4) is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and need in this era.

Dennis Scott:

This Natchez Burning: A Novel (Penn Cage Book 4) are usually reliable for you who want to be described as a successful person, why. The reason of this Natchez Burning: A Novel (Penn Cage Book 4) can be one of the great books you must have is usually giving you more than just simple reading food but feed you actually with information that possibly will shock your earlier knowledge. This book is definitely handy, you can bring it almost everywhere and whenever your conditions throughout the e-book and printed types. Beside that this Natchez Burning: A Novel (Penn Cage Book 4) giving you an enormous of experience like rich vocabulary, giving you tryout of critical thinking that we know it useful in your day task. So , let's have it and revel in reading.

Jeffrey Osburn:

That publication can make you to feel relax. This specific book Natchez Burning: A Novel (Penn Cage Book 4) was bright colored and of course has pictures around. As we know that book Natchez Burning: A Novel (Penn Cage Book 4) has many kinds or category. Start from kids until youngsters. For example Naruto or Private eye Conan you can read and think that you are the character on there. Therefore not at all of book usually are make you bored, any it offers you feel happy, fun and relax. Try to choose the best book for yourself and try to like reading that will.

Scott Harrington:

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