



## What Immortal Hand

*Johnny Worthen*

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**What Immortal Hand** Johnny Worthen  
Michael is called of God; just not that God.

What begins as a routine investigation of a hijacked truck turns into a desperate and personal quest for memories, faith, and meaning. The answers to these, for Michael Oswald, like the strangled cries of a thousand murdered travelers, is found in the dark heart of an ancient cult of killers.

Literary and dark, What Immortal Hand is a road trip across American wastelands and into the depths of spiritual darkness, where the Dark Mother, Kali, has set up house in the New World, and her children, the Thuggee cult of ancient India, are alive and thriving.

Well researched and imagined, in the tradition of Dan Simmons' Song of Kali, throbbing with symbolism and epic undertones, What Immortal Hand answers William's Blake famous question from The Tyger: "What immortal hand or eye, Could frame thy fearful symmetry?" It is the Goddess Kali, consort of Shiva, Lord of Destruction. Through her worshipers, the Faithful Tigers—The Thugs of old, she culls the roads of travelers and prepares the fires of renewal.

## What Immortal Hand Details

Date : Published September 2017 by Omnium Gatherum

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Author : Johnny Worthen

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## From Reader Review What Immortal Hand for online ebook

### **Johnny Worthen says**

I really went down the rabbit hole to write this one, beginning with a simple road thriller and ending in the depths of philosophical destruction. I consider it one of my best. It is a psychological and theological horror. Adult, literary, and haunting.

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### **Audrey says**

I can't say I "liked" this story the whole time, but it is a well-crafted work of art. The story begins with Michael Oswald, an insurance claim investigator, searching for a missing truck driver and his cargo. He drives all over Nevada and Utah and Northern California. I had just finished this drive myself when I started the book. (I even have family in Alturas.)

It starts off as a mystery but things are a little off. Why are all these people calling him "J" names? And why does he keep losing time? The story gradually goes into something really dark—mass murder, cults, and a forgotten past.

There's some occasional strong language and occasional sexual content. I received a free ARC for review, so I hope the copy editing isn't finished yet.

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### **Elisa says**

I received an ARC from the author for an honest review.

I love Johnny Worthen. I haven't read a book of his I didn't enjoy. This book is one that sticks with you for days, thinking of the darker side of humanity and just how darkness is normalized in a person's upbringing.

The following is an excerpt from my blog:

*What Immortal Hand* is a book that starts in the realm of what we think of as reality, but slowly and surely it takes us to the realm of impossibility. We learn that visions of demons and the Mother Goddess are not the result of illness or madness, but of something worse. As the story progresses, we see Michael Oswald descend from normalcy to...something more. The brilliance of Johnny Worthen's book is how it delves into the psyche of both Michael's and the readers' minds. What starts out as hardly fathomable, beyond moral sensibilities, slowly changes until evil is good and good is mundane. At the end, what happens seems perfectly normal and almost...right. And that, dear readers, is the most frightening thing of all.

To read my entire review, visit <https://elliereadsblog.wordpress.com/...>

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### **Meri1077 says**

Love this book!! It always keeps you guessing which side is Michael on. Will good overcome evil? I am not a fast reader, and I'll admit that I'd rather wait for the movie sometimes, but this book had me locking myself away in my room so that I could read on! Undisturbed!!

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### **Sakina Murdock says**

What Immortal Hand, by Johnny Worthen is a well-paced road mystery that steps up the weirdness gradually until it's in full flow, and the end is only the beginning, for some.

Michael Oswald is a survivor. A washed up, almost ready to cash it all in, survivor. An disreputable insurance investigator, he finds himself on the trail of a missing HGV, its medical laser cargo, and its driver, simultaneously sliding down a slippery slope to face his own past and future. People keep happening to Michael, but he's drawn to them too, and his realisation of who he is and why, grows in the prose of Johnny Worthen's latest masterpiece.

Intricately worked, What Immortal Hand is a masterpiece in timing. Its gradual crescendo of a number of themes brings the story to a close that feels temporary. Worthen's writing is as calm and economical as ever, and while he never stints on the description, his writing is a pleasure to read. Every sentence is worth a re-read.

Johnny Worthen often references spirituality in his novels, but it isn't what you might expect from someone who lives in Salt Lake City, Utah. There's a darkness and a sense of struggle to the spirituality you find in these pages, not least the acknowledgement to the god herself. The murders hold a message—or maybe just the keys to the box that holds the message—and I won't be the one to reveal it and spoil the intrigue. This may be a book you need to read a couple of times to make sure you catch all the early references, be warned!

If you like things weird, and you're looking for a book that's deeper than your average 'investigation' novel, What Immortal Hand is worth a look. On the other hand, if you're not looking for a dark spiritual journey in the middle of your perfectly respectable insurance investigation, you may wish to check out one of his other novels.

I received this as an ARC from the author.

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### **Troy says**

I thought it was going to be as interesting as some of Johnny's other works. A few chapters in it was going well. Then, a few chapters before the 2nd section, everything blew up. I was shocked. I didn't see it coming. This is a good book.

I think if you're looking for something that is interesting, and fun, this is the one to look at.

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## **Tony Henrichsen says**

What Immortal Hand is at once a surreal journey into darkness, and firmly grounded in a person that I can believe. I don't always like Michael Oswald, but I always believe him as a person and want to see where his journey goes. I was intrigued from the beginning, and the story did not disappoint. It took several twists and turns that I didn't see coming, and that is always a very sweet treat. If you feel like stepping into the dark, then don't hesitate to pick up this book.

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## **Paul Genesse says**

What Immortal Hand by Johnny Worthen is a brilliant novel. It's a cross between Neil Gaiman's American Gods and vintage Stephen King. It's literary horror, but are the main character's visions/fever dreams proof of his madness, or is he being shown the future and the past by Kali, the Goddess of Death?

Michael Oswald is a tough investigator going down a dark road. A mystery to find a missing person becomes a personal journey as Michael learns about his demons.

The main character is extremely well crafted, the writing is impressive and engaging. The story pulled me into the Nevada badlands at 90 miles an hour. It made me think and wonder, and want to read more. I loved it.

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## **Daniel Yocom says**

For me, this is the first time I have seen a story that starts in Wendover, which sits on the border of Nevada and Utah. Having lived for over 40 years in the Salt Lake valley, I have traveled to many of the locations and over the roads in Johnny Worthen's What Immortal Hand. It was a hook for me, and the story drew me in deeper.

Michael Oswald is hitting a mid-life crisis. Life has been going in the wrong direction for a while. He has gone through a divorce and his kids are living in another state with their mom and her new husband. His job is one he despises, and he despises himself for doing it. He no longer has a house, or apartment, preferring to live out of his car and the occasional motel room.

Now he's even losing it mentally, he is experiencing hallucinations and blacking out. We see Michael grasping for something to cling onto, something to help him get grounded. He starts exploring his past to find out who he really is.

Just about everyone goes through a time in their life where they feel lost, and losing. Like Michael, we look for something to ground us. Something to help us get an understanding about who we are and where we come from.

Self-discovery can be a dark path. For some it is darker than others. Science has proven that our brains block out the memories of pain. Then, when we go digging through our thoughts to find what is missing we must deal with it in some manner. Isn't that the idea of going to therapy? After we find what we are looking for, we still have to decide what to do with it. Where we take it into the future.

In *What Immortal Hand*, Johnny Worthen (published by Omnium Gatherum) has created a 300-page journey of discovery with dark twists and turns. A psychological horror story for adults that contemplates those losses we have, the memories we are missing. Then, the inner battle we face when we learn about ourselves.

Join Michael on his dark adventure of discovery. Find out where it leads him. Decide if digging into your past is something you want to do to find out who you are, where you are from, and where you want to go.

Originally published on Guild Master Gaming

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### **Laurie says**

How do I negotiate rooting for a murderer? Breathlessly anticipating and then being elated by the acceptance into a family of unrelenting cruelty?

Is it like, NIMBY? I support what you're doing and why you're doing it, just leave me and mine alone? Maybe. Of course, you can't support a streak and not accept that you, too, will soon be dead. And very likely at the hands of those you condone.

And why was Craig named enemy?

There's nothing better than reading a book that takes you somewhere you aren't expecting to go. So many times, I've been let down by a story seeming to twist a different way than I do, but in the end it corkscrews back into boredom and predictability. *What Immortal Hand* twisted and kept twisting, snagging at the bits of my brain that need to understand and care for others. That want only the best for everyone. That hope each person succeeds in their greatest desire. Even when that desire is crushing a windpipe and squeezing out essence of kidney by hand to make a sugary paste. I loved this book. I don't want to know these people or even glimpse a dark halo. I don't want them to be betrayed either. I'm so confused. I shock myself.

How can I have such a strong bond with so little glue?

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### **Jonathan Humphries says**

I received this free as a ARC from the author for an honest review.

Now, to be transparent, I know Johnny Worthen. That said, I told him I'd be honest, and at first, I was REALLY nervous I was going to have to rate this lower. At the beginning of the book I was having a hard time connecting to the MC. I just didn't relate to him in any way. And it started out as a slow build. So a book with a slower start and a character I couldn't identify with... that's not always a good sign.

But I knew there was more to it. I trusted the moments of foreshadowing, hoping they'd pay off. And I found myself truly enjoying where the story took me. I'm not going to lie, this will likely end up being a book with fairly mixed reviews. It'll probably be a love it or hate it situation. But I felt like there was a cool theme that Worthen let ME discover. In fact, I'm not convinced what I got out of the theme was his intention at all, which I love. It didn't feel overbearing like he was trying to make some sort of statement, but rather left it at a deeper level for the reader to ponder and come to their own conclusions.

I found several typos that probably should have been caught, but I can't complain that much about those. If you want an intriguing read, check this one out.

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### **Michael Glassford says**

“What Immortal Hand.” Some embrace the light, others seek the dark. But Michael Oswald espouses whatever comes naturally. Call it good or bad, it’s simply human. This road trip through Utah, Nevada, and California detours through the depths of a man’s soul. Mile after mile, the true horror lies within, as everything is fair game, nothing is sacred; unless it is. The prose are smart, witty, and subtle. The story drives at a methodical pace, like the cement seams of the highway lulling you into a false sense of security, tha-thump-tha-thump-tha-thumping, all the while accelerating it’s engine to push you over the cliff. Many times, I stopped reading to look at the front cover to remind myself I wasn’t reading a Tony Hillerman novel. No, Detective Chee was not in this story, but What Immortal Hand could be it’s long lost cousin from Eastern lands; equally thrilling, mezmorizing, and well written. I read late into the night because I had to know. Bravo. I recommend this book and can’t wait to read more by Johnny Worthen.

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### **Ian Welke says**

Fast paced, fun, and unsettling in all the right ways.

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### **Laurie Heath says**

I love a book with layers and this book is like an onion....layer after layer. There is so much depth and so much to chew on in What Immortal Hand. The main character is a man with his own secrets and layers...and when he peels them back it carries him to a crossroad that many wouldn't want to face. This book explores spirituality, family tragedy and secrets, fidelity and so much more. This is a story worth reading again and again...and I know I'll be reading it a second and possibly third time. It's going to live with me for a long time and I can't say that about a lot of books.

My one complaint is it could really use another go-round with a copy editor. It truly is a masterpiece and those errors detracted from the art enough to distract me. I suspect that will be remedied before the publisher prints further copies.

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### **September Roberts says**

Dark, beautiful, and harrowing, Johnny Worthen takes his readers on a journey they'll never forget. Like a great mystery, there are hints sprinkled throughout the book that reveal what this story is really about: creation, preservation, and destruction. Mostly destruction.

When I started reading What Immortal Hand, I had no idea what to expect. Even now, I couldn't begin to try and put it into a category and find myself at a loss for words when describing it to others. At times it is lovely and heart-breaking and others it is terrifying and gritty. Johnny walks the line between reality and fantasy, reverence and disregard, good and evil, blurring everything together into one profound story that

will haunt you for the rest of your life.

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