



Chocolate Lenin

Graham Diamond

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RISING SHADOW said-- If you're interested in satirical speculative fiction, and want to read something different, Chocolate Lenin is a fantastic book for you. A satire set in near-future Russia. Awash with light and charm, the story involves a crazed scientist's attempt at creating a new revolution as he causes pandemonium and uproar across the world. A small, quirky, elite team must find a way to stop him.

Chocolate Lenin Details

Date : Published May 18th 2012 by Lion Books (first published April 29th 2012)

ISBN : 9780615594033

Author : Graham Diamond

Format : Paperback 341 pages

Genre : Fiction, Science Fiction, Alternate History, Speculative Fiction

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From Reader Review Chocolate Lenin for online ebook

Hedvah Campeas-Cohen says

A clever humorous look at today's insane world of tech, science, and social media. The world is on the edge of reeling with the appearance of a returned Vladimir Lenin. Five stars!

Seregil of Rhiminee says

Before I write anything else, I'll mention that this review is based on the last draft of Chocolate Lenin before publisher editing, so this is more of a preview than an actual review.

Chocolate Lenin is an interesting satire/fantasy/thriller set in the near-future Russia. It blends science fiction, adventure and thriller genres in an entertaining way (it's difficult to combine these different genres, but in this case everything works perfectly). It's a story about how a crazy scientist manages to recreate Lenin and what happens afterwards, when a special group tries to control things and stop a new revolution from happening. Chocolate Lenin is a humorous and different kind of a book, because Graham Diamond has a slightly twisted sense of humour.

Here's a bit of information about some of the characters and my thoughts about them:

- Vladimir (Vlad) Petrovsky works hard to get everything ready for the eagerly anticipated constitutional celebration of the democratic New Russian Federation. He has problems with his wife, because he works too hard.
- Boris Sokolov is an older man who tells Vlad about Dr. Mikhail Sunavich's work etc and asks Vlad's help. Boris and Vlad are old acquaintances (Boris has provided Vlad information on several government projects).
- Rabbi Asher Isaac Titlebaum is a physicist, who became a rabbi. He's a fascinating character.
- Alina Vera Galina is a scientist who has worked with Mikhail Sunavich and Asher Isaac Titlebaum. She's an interesting character, because she seems to be a bit reserved and suspicious about people around her.
- The American man, Floyd Dingus, is also an interesting character. He works for the Department of Agriculture and is sent to check the factory.
- Madam Zaza, the psychic, is also quite a character. Her brief appearance was memorable.
- The recreated Lenin is a fascinating character, because he has the same political views as the original Lenin. He's just a bit different kind of a character, because he isn't actually quite human.

The author has created believable and three-dimensional characters who have their own problems and motives, so the character development works nicely and supports the story. I especially liked the way the author wrote about Vlad's life. I also enjoyed reading about the relationship between Alina Vera and Vlad. The author handled it exceptionally well, because Alina Vera and Vlad were strangers when they met, but gradually they began to trust each other as well as they could.

The members of the special group are different from each other (some of them are quite quirky), but they all have to work together in order to succeed in their mission, so there's a bit of tension between them. This adds depth to the story.

Character interaction is good and the dialogues are believable (certain dialogues are a bit over-the-top, but that's a good thing, because this is a satirical book). The story flows nicely and it's difficult to stop reading it,

because the author has several funny surprises in store for the reader.

Writing satirical speculative fiction can be a bit difficult, but fortunately there are authors who can write it and Graham Diamond seems to be one of these authors. Graham Diamond writes fluently and engagingly about different subjects from politics to social situations. I'm sure that the author's zany humour will delight several readers. I think it's nice that the author has chosen to write about the recreation of Lenin, because this subject gives him quite a lot of room to write richly and satirically about Russian way of life and culture.

There are several funny and memorable scenes in this book. For example, it was interesting to read about Ivan Pushkin's (a factory worker) encounter with the new Lenin. It was also delightful to read how the new Lenin had trouble getting out of the city and how he talked to strangers. The new Lenin's speeches were very interesting and amusing, because he spoke with heartfelt passion to his comrades. The conversations of the members of the special group were also entertaining (as an example I can mention that it was difficult not to laugh out loud when the members talked about the new Lenin's life force formulae).

I'm glad I had a chance to read Chocolate Lenin, because I enjoyed reading it. It was a nice surprise - the story fascinated me and I had to find out what happens at the end of the book. This book appealed to my sense of humour, because I've always liked good satirical fiction. It also made me want to read more books by Graham Diamond, because he seems to be a talented author (I'll try to read more of his books in the near future).

Chocolate Lenin is a unique and satirical look at Russian society, culture, media, life and politics. People who are familiar with Russian history and Russian way of life will probably get the most out of this book, but other readers will also like it, because the author writes fluently about the events (if you're not familiar with Russian history and Lenin etc, you may want to read this article). If you're interested in satirical speculative fiction and want to read something different, Chocolate Lenin is a fantastic book for you. This book can also be recommended to readers who aren't familiar with speculative fiction, because it will without a doubt appeal to readers who are interested in satirical and humorous books.

Coyora Dokusho says

This book was bad.

There were a few amusing parts, but mostly the parts that were "satiric" were just facepalmingly idiotic. (>.<) I winced and ran away several times, but for some reason was determined to finish to SEE HOW IT ENDS. The author attempted to use lofty language, but words were used incorrectly several times. The prose was dense and repetitive. The ending was fairly satisfying.

If anyone is an actual Russian and read this, I'd be interested in how accurate the portrayal is.

Richie de Almeida says

D U L L. The dialog was consistently bland from beginning to end, and about 80% of the text is dialog. This reads like a short story that got over-inflated. It might have been entertaining but the characters are bland and

differ only in name. Probably more interesting if you prefer made-for-TV movies.

Ayesandarmoe says

This is a light read which will keep you entertaining until near the end, when it gets boring and predictable. But if you are interested in historical fiction, this is a good book to read.

Anna says

Occasionally I come across an entry in that tragic sub-genre of books: the Wasted Opportunity. Such cases involve a brilliant concept that doesn't live up to its promise, usually as a result of sub-par writing and sexist themes. Previous examples include *The Dewey Decimal System* and *The Break*. I regret to say that 'Chocolate Lenin' must be added to this list. I really wanted to like it, but was rather disappointed. The conceit is of course wonderful: a mad scientist animates a clone of Lenin, who immediately resumes revolutionary activities. Sadly, the execution is flawed. I slogged through hoping it would pick up, but this was not to be. The essential issues are as follows:

1. The narrative centres upon a team set up to stop Lenin and unfortunately they aren't very interesting. Vlad's self-pity was especially tedious and recurred with baffling frequency. At all times, I wanted to know what was going on with Clone Lenin and the mad scientist who created him. Not only were they hardly featured at all, but ultimately (view spoiler)
2. Everything that happens is communicated by laborious, stolid dialogue. There is no notion of showing rather than telling. This is probably the greatest problem, as it makes the book seem much longer than it is and undercuts any tension. From the blurb, the reader might reasonably expect a thriller. Which this is not.
3. The female characters are all shrewish, generally pathetic caricatures that exist for men, from the scientist who wishes she hadn't sacrificed marriage and children for her career, to Lenin's conniving girlfriend, to the gypsy that sees visions of the future. Even the female Russian president is described in terms of her clothing, make-up, and general attractiveness to men. It's all very depressing and tedious male gaze stuff. An example (said to a man, of course):

"Happiness only meant a fulfilling career for me then. That's what I convinced myself I wanted, the only thing I wanted. But it turned hollow, empty, and lonely. Sometimes I feel I eschewed so much for a microscope. It makes me sound awfully shallow, doesn't it?" Her inflection was wistful.

Because becoming a research scientist is so very shallow a pursuit. At the end, this character gets together with a man and decides to start a family, of course. I nearly rolled my eyes out of their sockets.

4. This final problem would have been hard to avoid, given that the book was published in 2012: as a satire, it hasn't aged well. In fact, it seems weirdly optimistic. In this fictional world, Russia is under threat from Clone Lenin's reawakened insurrection, as well as (view spoiler). In fact democracy has long been dead in

Russia, as far as I can tell from recent books about it, so this concern seems outdated. There is no Putin analogue, which is very odd. Russian-US relations seem vastly more sane and sensible than is actually the case in 2018, even without a clone of Lenin running around. Reality has quashed satire, I guess.

Litany of complaints notwithstanding, I was periodically amused by the sheer batshit nonsense of the whole thing. For instance, Clone Lenin is perpetually tipsy because the cloning process used rum! Generally the po-faced seriousness dragged, but occasionally a character seemed to realise how fundamentally ridiculous it all was and came out with a line like: "Has everyone gone mental?" protested Dimsky. "Are we chasing a walking, talking *chocolate bar*?"

Now and again the satire still hit the mark:

"Look what's going on at Lenin's tomb, and how do we deal with that? The lines to view his corpse grow longer by the day. People want to know if that stiff under glass is real or not. If it is, who's this uncanny imitation? Everyone's suspicious and jaded, even normal, decent people are confused. What a farce. Everyone knows Lenin is *dead*."

"Knowing and believing aren't always the same," said Vlad with unexpected severity. "That's the nature of this crisis; the longer it continues, the more confusing it gets. Half the country thinks the body on display is bogus, that there never was any authentic corpse in the crypt, just a wax replica. Perception is reality."

This reminded me of the cover for Slavoj Žižek's book *Lenin 2017: Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through*, which looks so like a campaign poster that upon seeing it I speculated on Lenin's reanimated corpse becoming president of America with Žižek as vice-president. It would hardly be the most absurd political development of the decade. Someone should write that satirical novel, as sadly 'Chocolate Lenin' does not live up to its premise.

Graham says

RISING SHADOW REVIEW of
CHOCOLATE LENIN

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