



The Dig

Michael Siemsen

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A mysterious woven metal artifact is found at a paleontological dig in Africa. Mystified experts, confounded by the impossible timeline they receive from traditional dating methods, call upon a stubborn twenty-something with a unique talent. Matthew Turner's gift is also his curse: whenever he touches an object, his consciousness is flooded with the thoughts and feelings of those who touched it before him, be it last week or centuries ago. It's a talent that many covet, some fear, and almost no one understands.

Despite being exploited as a child and tormented by the unpleasant experiences imprinted on him from the various items he's "read," Matt agrees to travel from New York to the forests of Kenya. There, threatened by unknown enemies, and helped by a beautiful but prickly ally who begins to understand his strange ability, his mind journeys back in geological time to make a discovery so shocking that it forces us to rewrite all human history.

The Dig Details

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From Reader Review The Dig for online ebook

Rachell Coe says

I can hardly find words to express how captivated I was by this unique and wonderful story!!!! It had my attention from beginning to end and wouldn't let it go until I'd spent a sleepless night reading the whole thing!

Normally, I HATE reading books that follow two timelines (I like to focus on one thing at a time -- I also don't like my peas and carrots to touch.) But the stories from both the present and the past had me riveted. When it was time to move on from one to the other, I constantly found myself torn between wanting to continue the timeline I was reading, or starting the next one.

I also loved how the author (Michael Siemsen) developed Matthew Turners character and abilities. At first, he wasn't the most likable of protagonists, but when you learn what Matthew had to suffer for his powers and what he had gone through, you understand. Even better, Matthew Siemsen explored many of the questions the average person would raise when learning about this type of ability (it drives me nuts when authors don't answer glaring and obvious questions about their characters that arise while reading.)

My ONLY complaint is that the second Matthew Turner book hasn't been published yet -- so I'm going to have to wait to read it!

Susan Hamilton says

I was pretty disappointed with this book. It was definitely an intriguing idea for a novel, with a lot of potential, but sadly, that potential wasn't realized. If I were the kind of person who can just stop reading, I would have. I just kept hoping it would get better. The characterization is weak, which doesn't help with the plot. There just wasn't any one character who made me get invested. There are two sequels to this book. I won't be reading either one.

Nancy says

Couldn't read it fast enough! Great protagonist with an interesting power/weakness. Drama, tension, light romance. Great world building, VERY inventive. Devourit!

Danielle says

The premise is intriguing: teen can touch things and know what previous people touching it were thinking. Basically he knows the history of an object. Cool, right?

Except the author goes to great pains to tell us how this kid has to wear gloves all the time (sort of like Rogue) and how he has to have everything BRAND NEW so the items don't have a history. But I couldn't

get past the glaring omission of how new things are NOT the same as untouched things. You think that car with zero miles on it has never been touched by anyone? How about those clothes you just bought? Staying in a new hotel? How did the sheets get on the bed? What about buying an orange at the grocery store and all the people who have picked up that orange? Author tries to say, "well, yeah, people only leave impressions when they're really emotional!" And yet we're following an entire story from impressions left on this one tiny piece of clothing. "They're just really emotional people!" Keep trying to plug that hole, Mr. Author.

There's also Really Bad Dialog between Matt and Tuni, and a pathetic attempt at creating a love interest. And there's something that apparently was done wrong at the dig site, but I can't really figure out what or why. Jackhammers were used when they shouldn't have been. And it seems like Rheeze was intending to plant an object as if he found it there, but why? Why dig up genuine artifacts from other sites then pretend you found it somewhere else? That seems like a lot of work for absolutely no reason. UPDATE: the author gives a reason, but I still think it's lame to spend time digging up ACTUAL artifacts and then moving them elsewhere. How did he come across all these artifacts he can plant?

Also, the ending was LAME and hurried. "What? I only have 20 more pages to write? The end, happily ever after, but wait, out-of-place cliff hanger in case I decide to write a sequel!"

And what was with the police officer who began every sentence with "ha ha ha!"?? I couldn't parse any of his dialog into rational, real-life intonations.

Other questions:

(view spoiler)

The other story line isn't much more impressive. I can't keep the character names straight, and I can't picture what a clawtooth looks like.

Barb says

When evaluating scifi I don't apply the same expectations as I do when reading "fine literature". I suppose that would be like comparing mud wrestling to the ballet. I don't expect complex characters nor plots within plots, nor even much in the way of character development, there is comfort in knowing that people who are evil are all evil and good people are really good people.

I do expect a well-written story that grabs me and holds me and makes me wonder what is coming next. Think Indiana Jones; not a complex character nor were the stories deep and meaningful but they sure were loaded with action and the good guys always won, against all odds, and had a great time doing it.

Almost all SciFi is plot-driven, not character driven, and I think of it as full of action but no angst. There are only so many "What if this really is all there is?" questions I can deal with in my lifetime and then I want to read about the bad guys losing, and the good guy getting the girl, and saving the world.

Siemens does well, the story is intriguing, the setting interesting and I stayed up way past my bedtime trying to find out what happened next.

The only jarring item in the whole book was the emphasis on "new" items, I'm sure other reviewers have pointed out that rare is the thing that has not passed through someone's hand. However by that time he had

me and I was willing to suspend disbelief and decide that well maybe an inspector's touch doesn't imprint much.

Kylie D says

An okay book that sees Matt Turner able to get imprint from anything that touches his skin that has once touched another person. His mind is transported into their bodies and times and sees what is happening in their lives. He is called to an archaeological dig in Kenya where a discovery of a piece of what seems to be metal clothing has been found, but normal methods have dated it to 150 million year old! When he touches the article he is transported back to a prehistoric, but intelligent humanoid settlement during the times of the dinosaurs (yeah I know...)

The premise is silly, but not unenjoyable, as we go back in time to try to save the people from an asteroid that's predicted to hit. I did find myself invested in the story, in both timelines, and I had to read on to find out what happened. Entertaining, but farfetched.

AudioBookReviewer says

My original The Dig audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.

The Dig by Michael Siemsen is the first novel in the Matt Turner series. Matt Turner has a unique gift that allows him to read emotional and mental imprints that people leave behind on objects when they touch them and everyone leaves behind an imprint. This leaves Matt Turner nearly incapable of touching any objects that other humans have interacted with. This 25 year old, however, works on occasion with archaeologists. By capitalizing on his abilities, the archaeologists are able to make discoveries that would have been otherwise impossible. And this also has the added bonus of making Matt extremely rich. When Matt comes into contact with a woven metal artifact, he finds himself at a dig in Kenya, engrossed in the artifact and facing foes with unknown plans to subvert the truth finding.

This novel really sucked me in. I was really excited about the premise as soon as I realized that Matt was reading imprints from artifacts. It is a unique idea and I am impressed with how well thought out it was. There are two stories that are ongoing: the present day, and the story of the artifact. Both of these stories are interwoven seamlessly and build in intensity together as the novel progresses. I thought the highs and lows of the plot were satisfying and I loved the end. I really loved the artifact story and implications of artifact on modern society. The many different points of view throughout the novel added to the depth of the story and understanding the motivations of the different characters. While I originally found Matt to be irritating, overtime I understood his character more and I came to be more on his side. I thought all of the main characters were well developed and Matt specifically seemed grew over the course of the novel. While the developing romance between Tuni and Matt was not unexpected, it was not necessarily bad. The characters in the artifact story were also well-developed, which added to emotional force of that story and made it exciting. There is also an epilogue that begins the story for the next book.

Chris Patton did a great job with the narration. He captured Matt Turner's immature personality well and he comes off as an entitled and weird young adult with specific needs that make him socially awkward. The changes in the voicing of the different characters are done well. The production quality is also good. I would recommend this novel to anyone who loves mysteries, history, and seeing history through the eyes of modern

society.

Audiobook provided for review by the publisher.

Wal.li says

Ausgrabung

Matt Turner, Mitte 20, ist dabei seine brandneue Wohnung zu beziehen. Er ist zu Geld gekommen und glaubt, endlich sei er frei. Doch weit gefehlt, seine Fähigkeiten sind weiterhin gefragt und sein ehemaliger Auftraggeber wird zu seinem neuen Auftraggeber. Matt hat die Gabe, mitzuerleben, was Besitzer von Gegenständen erlebt, erlitten haben, wenn er diese Gegenstände berührt. Für ihn ist es Segen und Fluch zugleich, denn so müssen seine eigenen Sachen immer neu und unberührt sein. Und die Besitzer der Gegenstände, deren Hintergrund er bestimmen soll, haben häufig keine schönen Erlebnisse hinter sich. Matt erleidet die Leben der anderen. Und doch lässt er sich breitschlagen, ein besonderes Artefakt zu berühren.

Zum einen ist Matt Turner noch ein junger Schnösel, zum anderen allerdings hat er in seinem Leben schon eine Menge mitgemacht. Sein Vater, ein Polizist, hat seine Gabe während Matts Kindheit ausgenutzt, um Kriminalfälle zu lösen, ohne dabei zu bedenken, dass Matt in die Opfer eintaucht, wenn er deren Besitzgegenstände berührt. So ist es wohl schon eine ausgleichende Gerechtigkeit, wenn Matt jetzt auf eigenen Füßen steht und mit dem Geld rumprotzt. Das neue Artefakt, das an einer Ausgrabungsstätte in Kenia gefunden wurde, kann es eigentlich nicht geben. Nach den technischen Altersbestimmungen ist es älter als jede je da gewesene Zivilisation. Nach heutigem Kenntnisstand unmöglich. Und so soll Matts Gabe dabei helfen, das wahre Alter zu bestimmen oder herauszufinden, ob es schon vor den Menschen intelligente Wesen gegeben haben kann.

Das Gedanken-Experiment einer früheren Zivilisation ist schon bestechend. Das Rumgezerre derer, die Matts Gabe nutzen wollen, ist glaubhaft geschildert. Doch Matt als großes Kind, noch nicht ganz erwachsen, mit 25 sollte er doch schon etwas weiter sein. Zu Beginn wird diese Seite Matts beschrieben, während im Mittelteil sehr fesselnd geschildert wird, wie Matt sich dem Artefakt hingibt und wie die Informationen aufgenommen werden. Zum Schluss hin, ist Matt etwas abgeschnitten von den Ereignissen, so dass auch der Leser gewisse Dinge quasi aus zweiter Hand erfährt. Diese Art der Aufteilung mag nicht jedem gefallen, doch insgesamt unterhält Abenteuerroman mit Bezug zur Vorgeschichte doch sehr gut.

3,5 Sterne

Marlene says

Matthew has the ability to read objects. He becomes the last person to have held it. He feels their feelings, hears their thoughts, sees what they see. It's a difficult situation and certainly not any easier to live with when faced with touching a public door knob or light switch.

I did not like this story and will not be reading any more of them. The characters were shallow and difficult to believe. The situation was hokey from the start.

Perrin Pring says

I bought *The Dig* several years ago, back when it and *Wool* were the top sci-fi e-books on Amazon. I finally got around to reading it, and I have to say, it wasn't nearly as good as I was hoping.

Following Matt Turner, a mid-twenty something male who can read object imprints just by touching them, the story moves to Africa where he works on a mysterious archeological dig. There a strange metal fabric is found, and Turner is called into 'read' it and hopefully date it.

As I type this, such a plot sounds pretty interesting. What I actually got were really flat characters, and a pretty un compelling second plot. The second plot follows the 'people' of the metal fabric, and their flight to flee a giant asteroid that one of the tribe members has foreseen.

Overall, I found most of the story very two-dimensional. I've read some reviews that say readers don't care about this when it comes to sci-fi and to that craziness I'll say, you're reading the wrong sci-fi.

Also, Tuni, the love interest, is clearly written by a young man. She's everything a bro would hope for, and in no way did I find her to be a believable female character. I am not saying that Siemsen was sexist in her portrayal, rather she was just so perfect in terms of what man would want out of a woman, she was less believable as a female character and totally believable as a male creation.

Overall I wasn't that into *The Dig*. The story wasn't that unique, the telling of it didn't sweep me away, and most of the characters came off as caricatures.

Not a book I'll recommend.

Janice says

The premise of this story intrigued me. The protagonist is a young man with a remarkable ability. He can read "imprints" off of inanimate objects simply by touching them. He goes into a trance in which he relives the history of the object.

What doesn't make sense is that he is so sensitive, that he must have everything brand new so that he doesn't pick up impressions of people who may have handled the object. Staying in a hotel is out of the question unless it is a brand new resort and he is the first guest to stay in his room, sleep in the bed, use the towels, etc. I guess it doesn't matter than workmen have hauled the bed into the room, the maid has made the bed with the new linens, that a carpet layer sat on his knees on the carpet as he stretched it. And how could he eat food prepared by another person. Chefs are constantly touching the food with their hands.

I don't think the author went the distance in making his story plausible.

It was a double mystery. Something not quite right was going on at the archeological dig in Kenya. There

was only one time that I felt anxious enough about the mystery to keep me turning the pages.

The second mystery was embroiled in the past that was revealed with Matthew's reading of a metallic fabric discovered in the dig.

Another glitch in my mind was the inconsistency of the terminology used in the prehistoric language. In one part, the prehistoric people talked of a sky stripe that was going to hit the earth. Then, they called it an asteroid. Suddenly changing the word from sky stripe to asteroid should have been caught by an editor.

I didn't hate this book, but it didn't live up to my expectations.

Richard Hein says

Finding myself in need of something quick to read, I browsed through Amazon's Kindle books and let myself be pulled along with the crowd. Having done enough Fantasy for a bit, I slogged through the Science Fiction list, and found *The Dig* by Michael Siemsen. It had high reviews and an interesting premise – discovery of an anachronistic item in pre-historic geological strata. Let me be pretty blunt – I eat this sort of stuff up. I can't really offer up a reason why, but the idea of uncovering as-yet-undiscovered societies millions of years before they should exist... well, that's sort of my weakness. Maybe that's why I always enjoyed the Stargate TV Franchise (all 3 of them). This is, after all the second such book I've read in that vein within the last six months.

So, how does it stack up to the anticipation? Acceptable. It delivers on exactly what I thought it would. It's just that everything else is somewhat lacking. I'm probably giving it higher marks because this genre is like heroin to me, but I can certainly say I enjoyed it. It hit the right notes – archaeology, ancient and undiscovered civilization, anticipation of the reveal. For that alone, I would recommend it – if you, like me, enjoy this genre.

If you don't, well, don't go in expecting a phenomenal example of exceptional writing. There's zero character progression anywhere, really. Each introduced player on the page stays very static and rigid as they progress through the book, serving only to continue the unveiling of the hidden society. The bad guy is mustache-twirling in his machinations. The main protagonist has a special ability that unveils the plot as the book progresses, but really does nothing else except relate the story. The love interest exists... that's about the best I can say. They fall for each other based entirely on the writer shooing them together, without any real growth in the story.

The book jumps perspectives within chapter with no lead in or break, leading to varying levels of disorientation. The actual story of the anachronistic society isn't terribly engaging, though it serves well enough for my purpose – not every plot need to be wheels within wheels of complexity, so I won't dock it many points here. As I said, I eat this sort of stuff up, quality of prose be damned.

There isn't much plot – the book is two stories told across 150 million years, without much progression beyond "here is the story". There's no significant twists, and the ending is completely written in a way that will bring a sequel. Still... I enjoyed it. I've mentioned before on this blog that I don't need poetic prose or twists within twists to rate a book as good. I was entertained for the few hours it took to read, it pushed the right buttons and had me reading it in one sitting. If this sort of plot is your thing, you might certainly enjoy it.

I'll give it 3.5 out of 5 stars.

Carole says

I'm not typically a fan of a lot of sci fi because there's often do much arcane technology, geography, language, etc., involved that I feel smothered and overwhelmed by it. Nevertheless, I enjoyed this book very much. The main character, Matt, can psychically "read" objects as if he were the person they once belonged to. This amazing gift powers the story of an archeological dig in Kenya, Africa, and helps uncover a previously unknown race of people that existed a long long time ago. Their story and the contemporary story of the archeological team run parallel with Matt bridging them. Both stories were complicated and interesting. One was a journey into the unknown and the other was a mystery story. I was pulled deeply into both stories and glad to follow them to their conclusions.

Elise says

I read "The Dig" on a Kindle...if I'd had a paper copy, I would have realized I was getting near the end of the book and been prepared for it to be over...alas, I was not. Suddenly there was an epilogue and I was not ready for the story to just end the way it did. So, if you look at it one way, I felt the ending was too abrupt, but looking at it another way, I guess I was left wanting more...never a bad thing. In fact, Siemsen left it in such a way that practically begs for a sequel.

The story (if you can suspend disbelief) was exciting and interesting. Due to the main character's ability to experience the emotions imprinted on physical objects, we switch back and forth between characters in the present and those in the prehistoric past (evolutionarily speaking, pre-human) in a way that often left me on the edge of my seat because cliff hangers were occurring in both timelines. There were parts where the dialog felt a little forced, otherwise the writing style reminded me of early Michael Crichton, (the good stuff!). If you're looking for a fast-paced read and don't feel the need to nit-pic the scientific details, I think you'll really enjoy "The Dig". Can't wait for the next one!

Superstromb says

Funny story: I'm reading this book and super into it but thinking to myself "damn, I wish I could picture what these people and places look like...why the hell don't grown-up books get to have pictures? Are we so mature and sophisticated that we don't ever need them anymore?" And a few pages later is this illustration (on my kindle!) filling up the screen. Completely satisfied my questions.

I think there were 2 or 3 more throughout the book so I was real happy. Now I am going to start some kind of activist group to demand more illustrations in adult fiction books!!! Who's with me???heheeheeha (oh, and this is a good book aside from the pictures)
