Blizzard Angel



Kristopher Mallory

Blizzard Angel

by

Kristopher Mallory

Blizzard Angel

A Mystery

Copyright



www.StealthFiction.com

Blizzard Angel

eBook Edition
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Universal Transmission

The Little Old Lady

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Attempted

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What People Are Saying about Kris's Stories

I Know What They Are:

"Brilliant. Everything came together at the end and I got chills as I finished it. Well done." – *Asaroki*

The Special Christmas Ornaments of Mr. Everett:

"Quite a story, mixing snowy Christmas magic with delightfully dark humored chills." – *leavnsoon*

Another Small Burn:

"That would make a fantastic Novella or novel, I was sad when it ended and wanted more." – *smoore*

The Death Agreement:

"Oftentimes, these no sleep series have humungous let-downs for endings. Not the case at all here. Bravo, sir." – *jerk--alert*

Special Thanks

For Her.

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Blizzard Angel

“Every angel is terrifying.”
~ Rainer Maria Rilke, Duino Elegies (trans. Stephen Mitchell)

Blizzard Angels return during the winter storms.

The message had come via text, but I heard her say the words just the same. If you've loved someone, then you'll know that's how it is.

I didn't respond at the time because life was doing what life does best — providing distractions. I wondered if the message arrived when I was talking to the customer at work who needed a tire rotation. Maybe it came in while I was watching the baseball game at the bar? Or could it have been later that night after I had already gotten into bed, half asleep? In any case, I can't remember when it arrived or where I was, only that I meant to reply to her later. But when later came, I had forgotten.

The next morning, I received a call from an unfamiliar area code. The voice on the other end of the line spoke with rigid professional authority. I heard the words 'abandoned' and 'car.' The discovery was made, they said, five miles away from anything resembling a road in a place called Red River — a place I'd never heard of.

They said they had found my car half-buried in a snowdrift, and the only thing of value inside was an old cellphone. They wanted to know who was driving.

Confused, I looked out the window, and sure enough, my old Honda was parked right where I had left it. "I think you've got the wrong number," I said. "I'm looking at my car right now. Who is this again?"

"Cass County Sheriff's Office, Red River Station."

The sheriff read off the description. As he did, my heart skipped a beat. Not a Honda. The cold feeling of dread stabbed through me. Yes, the car he was talking about was registered under my name. But it wasn't *my* car. It belonged to her.

Still not believing, I hung up the phone, promising to call back soon. Then I dialed everyone I knew, pleading for a few dollars, and managed to collect just enough for a ticket from Miami International to Fargo, North Dakota.

On the plane, I thought long and hard about the situation.

Why did she leave? Where had she been going?

The Red River Valley? I found it on the map and checked twice to be sure: two thousand miles away from home, almost to the Canadian border. It would have taken days to get there. On top of that, neither of us had ever left Florida before. And she'd never even seen snow, let alone driven in it. All I can say is that everything had seemed fine when we spoke three days before.

Was she running from something? I wondered. Then I heard her voice in my head again:

Blizzard Angels return during the winter storms.

What does that even mean?

When her voice spoke next, it wasn't in my head but somewhere in front of me.

"Ice," she said in a raspy voice.

I looked up and saw her, clear as crystal, walking down the aisle. Only something was terribly wrong. Her eyes were milky white, and her skin was a sickly shade of blue with black patches of frostbite.

"Ice?" It was a question this time. Drawing near, she reached a hand out towards me, and I recoiled in sheer terror, squeezing my eyes shut.

"Ice?" The word came a third time, but was that still her voice?

I hesitantly opened my eyes.

She was gone, and a flight attendant stood where she had been a moment before, seemingly confused. "Sir?" she asked. "Would you like ice for your beverage?"

"No. I'm…" I shook my head. "I'm okay."

But I wasn't okay. For a moment, I almost broke down completely. I took in deep breaths and let them out slowly, knowing I would begin to sob the moment I stopped, so I continued to focus on breathing through the rest of the flight. By the time the wheels touched down, I seemed calm from the controlled hyperventilation, even if I wasn't.

Sheriff's deputies met me outside the terminal. They said little to each other and even less to me as we made our way to the station. I tried to pry

some information out of them, but they gave away nothing. Only glancing at each other before turning their gaze back to the highway.

Once we made it to the station, I quickly realized that the sheriff was as stern in appearance and attitude as he had sounded over the phone. But it was his skin that caused the hairs on my arms to rise. He had the same pale complexion as the vision I had of her on the plane. Whatever was going to happen here, whatever I would learn, I knew it wouldn't be good.

"Did you find her yet, Sheriff? Is she alright?"

"We're still looking but—"

"You're not looking hard enough."

"— there isn't a lot to go on."

"She's out there somewhere," I said, gesturing towards the window. "And the three of you are in here sitting on your asses."

One of the deputies grabbed me by the arm and walked me to one of the side offices. He told me in a not-so-friendly tone to keep it down. I paced the small office and watched the sheriff as he poured two cups of coffee. Then he opened the door, stepped into the office, and asked me to calm down and have a seat.

It's not that I didn't realize how irrationally I was behaving, but at the time it was better than the alternative. If I didn't use my anger, then I knew despair would surely take hold.

I turned away from the sheriff and stared out the window, watching the skies change from white to a blackish-gray. I felt the temperature drop further with each gust of wind that pounded against the pane of glass. He was speaking, but I only paid partial attention; the real me, the person I wanted to be, was back in Florida, lying on the beach, holding her hand as the sun set. "This is nice," I said to her, and she smiled.

"By now…" the sheriff said more loudly, breaking the fantasy. "By now the river should be solid enough to walk on."

"What was that?" I asked.

"Haven't you heard a word I've been saying?"

"No, I…"

He sighed. “It isn’t that we haven’t been wanting to look for your… *girlfriend?”*

I said nothing, leaving his question hanging.

“We couldn’t do anything,” he continued. “There’s only one way, and it isn’t safe during the day. But now we can go.”

“We?”

“Yeah, we. That is, if you’re coming?”

I looked outside again and was confused to see how dark it had gotten in just those few short seconds.

“Where?”

“Wasn’t sure how to tell you over the phone.” He dragged both hands down his face and cracked his neck. “When we found the car, the driver’s side door had been left wide open. There were footprints in the snow leading into the woods. We followed them as far as we could, as far as the river. That’s where we saw it.”

It felt like something was lodged in my throat. I imagined a quivering insect trying to tear its way free. I tried to swallow, but the choking sensation persisted. Only by clenching my jaw could I speak past the pain through gritted teeth.

“You saw what, Sheriff?”

“A snow angel.”

“What?”

“I said, a snow angel. You know, like the ones kids make in the backyard on Christmas? It was out in the middle of the river. That’s where the tracks ended. That’s where we think…” His voice trailed off, letting the implication sit.

“I’m ready,” I whispered.

As I walked through the door to the frozen waste outside, I overheard the dispatcher muttering to someone, something about finding another angel on the river. It didn’t register at the time because I was reading a sign hung above the exit: Red River Valley — More blizzards than anywhere else in the U.S.

Outside, my face stung as the snow hit and melted to slush, which then transformed into a thin sheet of ice.

“Blizzard Angels return during the winter storms,” I said to myself, suddenly knowing I would never hear her voice again.

“What was that?” the sheriff yelled over the wind.

All I could do was shake my head.

“Follow me!”

And I did.

We drove in silence, the heater blasting on high.

Twenty minutes later, we arrived at the edge of a patch of trees, nothing else around in any direction. Even then, we didn’t speak. The sheriff nodded and stepped from the snow tractor. I followed suit, and together we trudged our way down a narrow path, following vague indentations of small footprints in the snow.

Then we made it to the break in the trees where a wide scar of pristine powder stretched to the horizon, the river hidden beneath the mostly undisturbed white splendor.

The sheriff and I stopped at the bank, and I looked at each tiny footprint in turn, imagining her dancing towards center stage where the real show would begin.

Snow angels, I knew, would live on for a time if the weather was right, and hers had held up amazingly well.

The sheriff looked at me. “You don’t have to go out there. We can go back if you want.”

“No. I need to do this,” I replied and took a step forward.

We walked just beside her footprints, close enough to see each one clearly but careful not to disturb them.

Finally, we made it to our destination. I took a deep breath, the cold burning my lungs, and looked around slowly one more time. I was hoping to see something, anything, that would hint at her having continued to the other side of the river. Nothing. Nothing else but the angel.

“Maybe in the spring,” the sheriff said as he knelt and brushed away layers of snow. Then he shone his flashlight through the thick ice and shook his head. “There’s nothing we can do until then.”

“But how?” How could she have fallen through the ice without ruining her perfect snow angel?

“I haven’t got the slightest idea. It’s been the same every time.”

For a second, I was confused, then remembered overhearing what the dispatcher had said: They found another angel on the river.

I stared at the snow and ice until my feet went numb and the sheriff ushered me back towards the waiting warmth of the snow tractor. As we trudged along, I knew I would never have all the answers. And not knowing is the worst feeling. I remembered that was a common saying, and she used to tell me that common sayings are common because they are usually true.

I would never know *how,* and the only hint at the *why* would be the last text I ever received from her.

Blizzard Angels return during the winter storms.

The End.



About the Author



Born near Baltimore, Maryland, Kris has been writing short fiction since he was a kid. First sharing his ramblings on Stealth Fiction and then on Reddit, where most of his stories were posted to r/nosleep. His stories have been featured on The NoSleep Podcast, Chilling Tales for Dark Nights, Tales to Terrify, and Horror on the Rocks. The recording of The Scarecrow Corpse, read by Markiplier, has been heard hundreds of thousands of times. He lives in Melbourne, Australia, with his wife. And occasionally, he turns into a strawberry.

More stories: StealthFiction.com

What's Next?

LET ME TELL YOU HOW I LOST MY EYES

A Short Story Collection by Sammy Fowler

Coming one day. Maybe. Probably not.

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Hear It Read Aloud

Some stories are better heard in the dark.

Blizzard Angel has a complete audio narration, read by Jay, a digital voice. It runs 11 minutes and it's free: play it online, or download it as an MP3 or an audiobook with chapters.

Listen free at stealthfiction.com

More from Kristopher Mallory



RUINED SHEETS

This supernatural horror story is now available as an eBook. For more information on this book, please visit Stealth Fiction.

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A father is arrested for the third time after his boy's bedroom is found soaked in blood, and he knows the charges will be dropped again.

~~~~~

Praise for Ruined Sheets:

"You'll want to know why, and then you won't. Unsettling to the very last line." – *Stealth Fiction*



I Know What They Are

This short horror story is now available. For more information on this book, please visit Stealth Fiction.

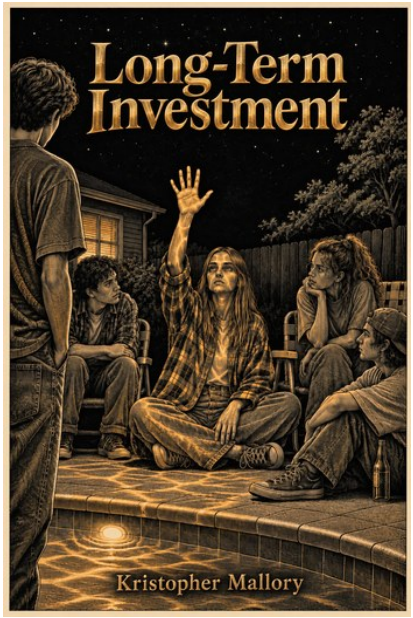
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A young woman interacts with the city's homeless population as she walks to work each morning. Her life takes a turn into strange territory when she meets a homeless lady wearing a lab coat and holding a sign that reads: I know what they are.

~~~~~

Praise for I Know What They Are:

"Brilliant. Everything came together at the end and I got chills as I finished it. Well done." – *Asaroki*



LONG-TERM INVESTMENT

This occult horror story is now available as an eBook. For more information on this book, please visit Stealth Fiction.

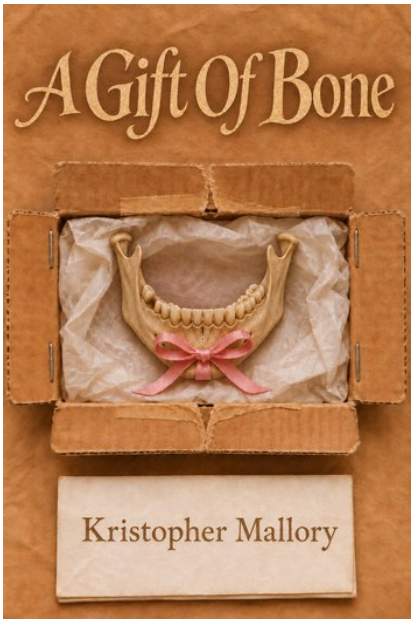
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Sammy keeps something he bought from Kristi Kurtis for five dollars at a teenage pool party, and as her life comes apart she still wants it back.

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Praise for Long-Term Investment:

"Starts as a teenage memory and turns into a slow, cold dread you won't shake for days." – *Stealth Fiction*



A GIFT OF BONE

This crime horror story is now available on Amazon. For more information on this book, please visit Stealth Fiction.

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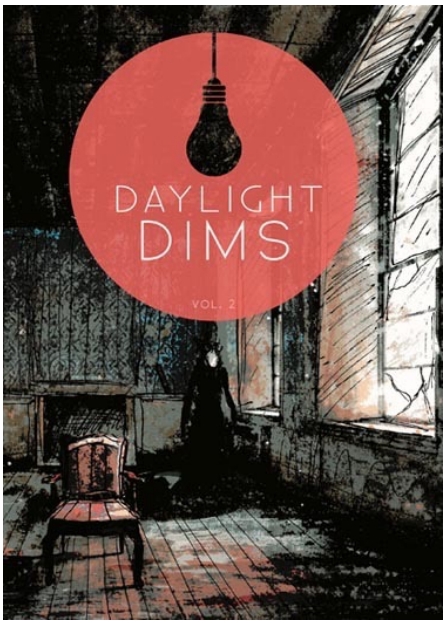
Ten cities so far have each received a gift from the Gifter, and the retired investigator who knows the old case best still won't come back.

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Praise for A Gift Of Bone:

"A cold, patient crime horror that saves its worst gift for last." – *Stealth Fiction*

More from Stealth Fiction



DAYLIGHT DIMS
VOLUME TWO

This horror anthology is now available. For more information on this book, please visit the Daylight Dims website.

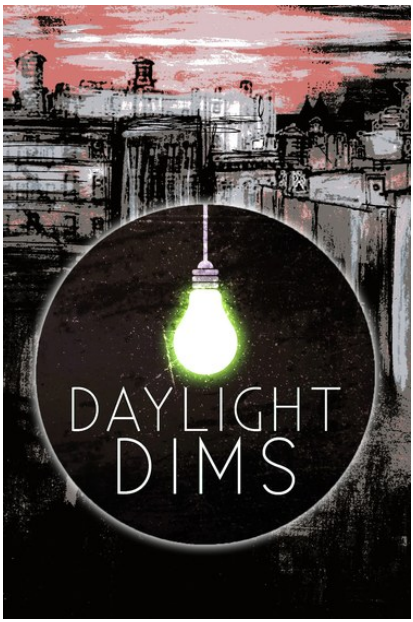
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Darkness descends again. Daylight Dims Volume Two features thirteen stories that cross the genres of surreal, dark fantasy, and heart-pounding dread. This annual horror anthology is guaranteed to twist your perception of horror. From the common, comfortable tropes to the more taboo, these handpicked tales have a literary aspect designed to showcase what true horror can be.

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Praise for Daylight Dims Vol. 2:

“This was probably one of the most entertaining collections of horror stories I've ever read. And I don't say this to suck up or to stroke any tail feathers. I was happy to have the opportunity to read through this before release, and I implore anyone on the fence about picking this up to do themselves a favor and take the plunge into the abyss. You will not be disappointed.” – *Human Gravy*



DAYLIGHT DIMS

VOLUME ONE

Second Edition — now with two new stories from the editors.

This horror anthology is now available. For more information on this book, please visit the Daylight Dims website.

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The editors chose 13 stories from over 100 premium submissions. DD contains some of the best horror around.

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Praise for Daylight Dims:

"This is a fantastic horror anthology. All 13 stories are exquisite. The book was not what I expected initially, as I thought that it might be all vampire or werewolf tales. Not so! These are original stories from authors of the macabre. From dark fantasy and pure suspense to classic horror tales, it shows the extraordinary scope of fantastical fright fiction. The stories in this anthology are a tour de force of fear, which will haunt you, terrify you, and stay with you." – S. Mahaffey, *"neverjudge"*