Mega Millions



Kristopher Mallory

Mega Millions

by

Kristopher Mallory

Mega Millions

An absurdly surreal short comedy.

Copyright



www.StealthFiction.com

Mega Millions

Second eBook Edition, 2026

First published 2014

eBook ISBN: 9781311041937

Copyright © 2014 Kristopher Mallory

Cover art by Kristopher Mallory, made with AI image tools

~~~~

eBook License Notes:

You may not use, reproduce or transmit in any manner, any part of this book without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations used in critical articles and reviews, or in accordance with federal Fair Use laws. All rights are reserved.

Disclaimer:

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are products of the author's imagination, or the author has used them fictitiously.
~~~~

Other Releases by Kristopher Mallory

The Diary

A Gift Of Bone

Ruined Sheets

The Scarecrow Corpse

Attempted

Watchtowers of Carthage Key

Another Small Burn

The Absinthe Smuggler

The Special Christmas Ornaments of Mr. Everett

The Death Agreement

These Bad Dreams Combined

I Know What They Are

What People Are Saying about Kris's Stories

The Death Agreement:

"This is all so confusing and mind blowingly awesome." – *Jesslikewoah*

I Know What They Are:

"This is absolutely amazing. Has me a bit paranoid as I get deja vu quite a bit, hopefully not too many good futures have passed me by..." – *Niamhel*

Master Stargazer:

"Hands down one of the best short sci fi books I have read, and I have read a lot." – *rickamente*

These Bad Dreams Combined:

"I have no idea WTF is going on here, but I'm fascinated!" – *ali3443*

Dedication:

Dedicated to Dan Guntherson.

Table of Contents

Copyright
Other Releases
What People Are Saying
Dedication

Chapter 1 – One Of These Days
Chapter 2 – Some Kind Of Joke
Chapter 3 – Sun Or Snow?
Chapter 4 – Still Very Much Insane
Chapter 5 – Like Being At Home

About the Story
About the Author
What's Next?
Hear It Read Aloud
More from Kristopher Mallory
More from Stealth Fiction

Mega Millions

“A lottery is a taxation
Upon all the fools in creation;
And heaven be praised,
It is easily raised,
Credulity’s always in fashion.”

~ Henry Fielding, *The Lottery*

Mega Millions

Chapter 1 – One Of These Days

Joshua Harris waited in line at the liquor store to pay for a case of beer. As he approached the cash register, he noticed the advertisement for the Mega Millions. Josh never played the lottery. He knew it was for suckers. Besides, he had more important things to spend money on: beer, beef jerky, and potato chips.

The man in front of Josh paid for his wine and exited the store. Josh didn't move; instead, he stared dumbly at the jackpot advertisement. The old woman behind Josh gave him a nudge.

"Sorry," Josh said and stepped forward. "I must have been daydreaming."

"About winning?" The old woman sighed. "It'd be nice."

"Huh?"

"The jackpot, of course."

"Oh, yeah, right," Josh said. Actually, he hadn't been thinking about the jackpot at all. Instead, he was considering how many beers he'd be able to drink before Michelle would cuss him out. He said to the cashier, "Hey Kelly, how much is that up to now?"

Kelly scanned the adult magazine on the conveyor belt and put it in a paper bag along with Josh's snacks. "999 million. Largest jackpot ever."

The old woman said, "Someone's dream is about to come true."

"Crazy," Kelly replied.

"Crazy," Josh agreed, thinking about all the beer he could buy. "You know what? I'll get a ticket."

Kelly raised an eyebrow. "Just one?"

"Yeah, one will be fine."

"What numbers do you want? I'll key them in."

"Hell, I don't know." Josh picked up a lottery brochure and looked over the list of numbers printed on the back. He pointed at random

numbers and quietly read them off, then he thought better of picking that way. After placing the brochure back, he grabbed a tiny, green pencil and a number selection sheet. “Uhhh,” Josh said and filled in the six numbers that came to mind.

Kelly held out her hand, and Josh gave her the slip.

“Good luck,” the old woman said.

“No luck needed,” Josh replied. “I have a real good feeling about this.”

Kelly loaded the beer into the paper bag then handed the lottery ticket back to Josh along with his change.

Josh stuffed the ticket into his wallet, and in the process, dropped most of his change on the floor. “Oops,” Josh said, rushing out of the liquor store, leaving Kelly and the old woman to pick up his mess.

As the door closed behind him, Josh heard the old woman grumble, “What an assho—”

By the time Josh made it home, he’d completely forgotten about purchasing the ticket. With his long and hard day done, he sat in his favorite recliner, drank beer after beer, and watched a college football game. After a while, he fell asleep, and a few hours later, he awoke to the annoying and loud voice of an infomercial pitchman trying to sell Josh some new super-tool with a supercharged rotating this or that, just like always.

Josh left the television on and groggily made his way upstairs.

Michelle, Josh’s wife, was jarred from sleep by the sound of Josh tripping over his own jeans as he tried to take them off. She was never happy to be woken up like that, Josh knew, and since it happened so often, he should have known that she wasn’t happily married in general. In fact, Josh should have known that Michelle was sick of it all, but mostly she was sick of Josh.

There were plenty of other things Josh should have known, as well. Michelle worked hard, took care of the house, did the shopping, made the meals, and even took out the damned garbage. When she wasn’t busting her ass on things that needed to be done around the house, she worked out

on the treadmill and attended a Pilates class to keep in shape. She had always been a determined self-starter.

Josh was a determined lazy-ass. He did absolutely nothing around the house except drink beer and watch sports. He was an unkempt, overweight slob. She could have forgiven all of it, every single unattractive quality, but what she couldn't forgive—the one thing that pissed her off most of all—was that Josh refused to come to bed at a reasonable time.

Michelle groaned loudly when Josh finally managed to belly-flop onto the mattress.

Josh cleared his throat. "Oh, did I wake you?"

"No," Michelle said. "My eyes are closed because I enjoy looking at the back of my eyelids."

Not paying attention to what she had said, Josh simply replied, "That's nice." A few moments later, he poked her in the back and said, "Hey, Shelly, you wanna…."

"No!"

"Geez." Josh rolled on his side and wiggled around to get comfortable. Seconds later he began snoring while Michelle cursed that day back in high school when she had first met him.

At this exact moment, on the television downstairs, a breaking news report claimed that lottery agents were busy tracking down the sole winning ticket of the largest ever jackpot. The reporter said that the ticket had been purchased at a liquor store in a suburb of Madison, Wisconsin—the same liquor store where Josh always buys his beer.

Shortly before midnight, Josh did one last thing on what may have been the luckiest day of his life: He farted loudly, waking Michelle once more.

"One of these days, Josh," Michelle said. "One of these days."

Chapter 2 – Some Kind Of Joke

The next morning Michelle left for work before Josh had even woken up. As she drove, she thought about how much she adored her job. Mostly it was because of the people she worked with, but also because it allowed her to keep a separate, secret bank account. Her grand plan was to one day run away to a tropical island, where a Romance Novel Hunk would make her forget all about the Pillsbury Dough Boy husband of hers.

It wasn't that Michelle didn't love Josh; he simply drove her crazy… batshit crazy. Besides, the word love, she knew, was fairly relative. A person could come to love all sorts of things—like Brussels sprouts, for example. They stink, they look nasty, but if that were all there was to eat, well….

If someone were to ask Josh what Michelle did for a living, he wouldn't have had the slightest clue. Sometimes he thought she was a maid and other times he thought she was a babysitter. It all depended on what she was wearing on any given day, and whether he liked her outfit or not.

For the record, Michelle was an office manager. And she hadn't just started working a new job, as Josh seemed to think. She had been working at the same place for years. She'd explained that to Josh time and time again, but it was a futile effort.

While Michelle clocked in to begin her shift at work, Josh was still sleeping soundly. Thanks to an elaborate alarm system, he never had to worry about getting up too late.

The system went something like this: First, he would hit the snooze button on the alarm clock, which Michelle turned on for him each night. When that alarm went off for the second time, he would hit snooze again. Next, he would turn off the alarm clock completely and fall back to sleep. Then all he needed to do is wait for the final step, which was the telephone ringing and ringing until he couldn't stand it any longer.

"Ehhhhhhhhhhloooow," Josh grumbled into the phone.

“You’re still in bed? Damn it! Get your lazy ass to work, Josh, or I swear…one of these days I’m goi—”

Josh hung up the phone, happy to have such a fail-proof alarm.

Instead of skipping breakfast, Josh skipped the shower, the shave, and the toothbrush. Breakfast was, after all, most important. Michelle had explained to him that breakfast wasn’t most important; rather, it was the most important meal of the day, and personal hygiene should always come slightly higher than watching cartoons in skid marked underwear while gorging on a supersized portion of Lucky Charms. Josh never saw the validity of Michelle’s argument.

Josh finished eating. He left his dishes unwashed in the sink and the box of cereal open on the counter. After that, he scratched his ass, slipped into his clothes—the same clothes he wore the day before—and headed off to work.

At the exact moment Josh started the car, he was officially two hours late, which, for Josh, was right on schedule. Some people at the office where Josh worked couldn’t figure out the mystery of how someone could constantly be late and not get fired. Though everyone was too afraid to ask, the answer was quite simple: Months ago, Michelle had phoned Josh’s boss, Dan Guntherson, and asked that Josh’s hours be changed. Instead of arriving at nine like everyone else, she requested Josh’s arrival time be set for noon. Neither Michelle nor Dan Guntherson had bothered to tell Josh of the change, so technically he was always on time and didn’t even know it.

There was one drawback to the otherwise perfect plan. Instead of leaving work at five like everyone else in the office, Josh often stayed until eight—mostly because he would fall asleep around four and no one ever bothered to wake him. In that manner, Josh always got the full day’s hours, but since he thought his workday started at nine, he had grown an enlarged sense of self-worth for all the overtime he had put in over the years. Josh was amazed, absolutely mind-blown, that the company hadn’t recognized

his value and promoted him to senior management, though he was positive that recognition would happen any day.

As Josh drove to work that afternoon, he noticed things around town seemed much livelier than usual. There were camera crews in front of the liquor store, people were in the parking lot holding balloons, and everyone was smiling. A huge banner stretched across the highway: "Congratulations, Madison! We Got Us A Winner!"

Josh couldn't figure out what all the hubbub was about. He shrugged and wondered if maybe the circus was coming to town. "Ooh," he said, smiling. Then the smile turned to a frown, and he huffed. "Shelly will have a fit if I go. She never lets me have any fun."

While still thinking about elephants and circus clowns, Josh walked into the office building to find everyone huddled together, talking about the big news. Madison was a small place where everyone knew almost everyone else, so right then, most people were keeping an eye on the television, waiting for the news reporter's announcement.

"Well, we all showed up, so clearly none of us won." Dan Guntherson laughed.

"Can you imagine?" Joe from accounting said. "I bet the lucky bastard is already on a jet to the Bahamas."

"They're probably scared to come forward," Dan Guntherson said. "You know, all the vultures come out of the woodwork when they smell money. What do you think, Josh?"

"Huh?" Josh was daydreaming about tightrope walkers falling to their deaths.

Dan Guntherson gestured to the television.

"Oh," Josh said. "The circus. Yeah, I don't think I'm going to go this year."

Everyone laughed.

"You're right!" Abdul from marketing slapped Josh on the back. "There's a circus out there, and none of us are invited!"

Everyone laughed again.

Dan Guntherson punched Josh in the shoulder. “Good one!”

“Err, thanks,” Josh said, not understanding what was so funny about a second-rate circus.

“Seriously though,” Dan Guntherson said, “I can’t believe one of our own hit nearly a billion dollars. God, what I wouldn’t do to have a share of that.”

“I’d sell out my own grandmother for only half a mil,” Lisa from the mailroom said, nodding her head with that not-bad look on her face.

“I’d buy bitcoins!” Ken the intern shouted. “Lots a lots a lots a bitcoin, yeah!”

“And Christ,” Dan Guntherson continued, “the numbers they played… it’s no wonder there was only one winner. It must have been some kind of joke.”

Everyone, except for Josh, burst out laughing again.

Josh furrowed his brow and looked at each of his coworkers huddled around the television. The burned-out light bulb in his head momentarily caught a spark. He whispered, “What a second…” Then tapped his finger on his chin. “I don’t think the circus is coming. Did someone…?” He wondered how to word his next sentence so he wouldn’t appear to be as stupid as he knew Dan Guntherson really was. He cleared his throat and said, “Gee, you know the darnedest thing happened last night. I kind of fell asleep early, fellas. I don’t have all the details on the jackpot. What do you mean the numbers had to be a joke?”

Candy from human resources giggled. “You didn’t hear that part?”

Everyone hushed each other.

“No, I guess I didn’t,” Josh said and scratched his head, wondering why people were giving him a hard time.

“Aces, Josh!” Dan Guntherson said. “Get this —the numbers the person played, the numbers that won the biggest jackpot of all time…”

Josh slowly took in a breath and held it.

“One,” Dan Guntherson said.

Josh nodded. “One? Yeah? Go on, Dan, my man.”

Seemingly unable to contain his amusement any longer, Dan Guntherson blurted out, “Two-three-four-five-six!”

The whole office exploded in hysterical cackling. Everyone seemed so caught up in the joke, Josh thought that none of them noticed all the blood draining from his face. His hands trembled as he reached into the front pockets of the pants he’d worn the day prior. “One…two…three…four…five…six,” he said, fishing around for the lotto ticket. “One…two…three…four…five…six.”

The ticket wasn’t there.

Josh replayed the memory of buying his beer. He pictured himself looking at all the numbers from which he could choose. Hell, he’d thought. The first six numbers are as good as any, right?

Josh silently retreated from the still-laughing office workers. He hid in the bathroom to figure out what he should do next. He fished around in his pockets again, with both hands that time, checking each nook and cranny several different ways. When that still didn’t uncover the ticket, he resorted to taking off his pants and shaking them. Crumpled receipts, a bottle cap, a used, crusty tissue, a gum wrapper, a penny, lint, no ticket!

Josh knew with one-hundred percent certainty that he was Madison, Wisconsin’s big winner. All he needed to do was find the proof. He paced across the pee-stained floor in front of the urinals and finally decided the best solution would be to call for help. He went into one of the stalls, dialed information, and asked to be connected to the lottery office.

When a friendly female voice thanked him for calling, Josh immediately began to tell her about his problem, but he had mistaken a recording for an operator and screamed, “Shit! Shit! Shit!”

Everyone in the office stopped laughing.

After pressing zero twice, followed by three, followed by five, followed by nine, followed by zero again, Josh was finally passed on to a live person, who promptly transferred him to ‘someone in another department who could help,’ which, as it turned out, was back to the same recording, resulting in a scream, followed by, “Shiiiit!”

Josh ignored the soft murmurs coming from right outside the bathroom door. He managed to hit the right series of numbers, and a chirpy man answered. “Lotto Department! How may I help you?”

“Yeah, uh…. Hi. I’m Josh Harris. I purchased a ticket the other day. It turns out I’m the winner. The big winner, I mean. I won the Mega Millions. You know that one, right? Yeah, of course you do. Sorry. So, anyway, I won and you’re looking for me. I need to know what to do to get my money…. Can you help with that?”

As if reading off a script, the lottery agent said, “Certainly! I’m happy to assist, Mr. Harris. Thank you for playing the lottery, and congratulations. If you could read me the twenty-four-digit verification code found on the back of the—”

“Wait,” Josh interrupted.

“Mr. Harris?”

“There’s a problem, you see. Slight problem, really. It’s just that I can’t find the ticket. I think I may have lost it.”

“Oh, I do see, sir.” The lottery agent cleared his throat. “Let me get some additional information, and we can go over options. You’re saying you won the jackpot, and then you lost the ticket?”

“Yes.”

“Gotcha! So in other words, you want me to get the agency to pay out an obscenely large sum of money to you, taking just your word that you are the winner?”

“Exactly.”

The lottery agent had paused for a long time. Finally, he said, “That is not a problem at all, Mr. Harris! I believe I have a solution!”

“Wonderful!” Josh had screamed and jumped around the bathroom stall.

“Wonderful, indeed! I’m going to read you a long paragraph which will inform you that you are completely and utterly out of luck, and you are not to call back. Are you ready?”

As the lottery agent had quickly read off the official ‘no ticket policy,’ Josh screamed, “No! Come on! Wait! Don’t hang…please, please don’t hang…. Shit! Shit! Shit!”

“Everything all right?” Dan Guntherson said and walked into the bathroom. He sniffed the air and chuckled. “Sounded like you might have eaten bad Chinese food.”

“Fine,” Josh said.

“Josh, buddy, They’re all out there with these disgustedly horrified expressions, you know.”

“How about a little privacy, Dan? I’m a bit, uh, busy in here.”

“Right-o, I don’t want to interrupt.” Dan Guntherson sniffed again. “I just drew the short straw to come and make sure you didn’t need any medical assistance. Not dying or anything?”

“Not yet,” Josh said. “Well, I will be if I don’t find it?”

“Uhhh, you lost it?”

“It wasn’t my fault. It could have gone anywhere.”

“Ah, one of those phantoms, I see. That isn’t so bad! Hope the rest comes out okay!”

“Me too.”

Dan Guntherson left the bathroom, and Josh heard a roar of laughter.

Despite how the situation might have appeared to Dan Guntherson, Josh wasn’t having a severe case of diarrhea, nor had he experienced a phantom turd. No, his problem was much worse. He went through the long process of calling the lottery department again.

“Lotto Department! How may I help you?”

“Hi, this is Josh Har—”

The agent laughed and promptly hung up on him.

Josh shoved his phone into his pocket and ran out of the bathroom so quickly that he plowed into Dan Guntherson, knocking him over. Not bothering to help Dan back to his feet, Josh yelled, “Sorry, everyone! I just got royally fucked in there!”

Dan Guntherson’s jaw dropped.

“Exactly!” Josh said, and rushed out the front door.

Chapter 3 – Sun Or Snow?

The first thing Michelle noticed when she pulled into the driveway was her couch sitting in the front lawn along with nearly everything else she owned. Before the scene could fully register, she saw Josh pop his head out of the house and throw her grandmother's vase, which then shattered on the porch steps.

"Josh!" Michelle screamed through the window of her car.

Josh looked up, muttered a quick, "Oh, hi, Shelly," then went back to throwing things out into the yard.

"What the fuck are you doing to my house, Josh? Are you mad?"

"Yeah, actually," Josh said. "I am pretty pissed off."

Michelle clenched her fists, rested them on her hips, and tapped her foot impatiently. "I demand you explain yourself right this instant."

Josh dropped the cable box on the pavement, then ran back inside and grabbed a lamp from one of the end tables. "Shelly…baby…I was going to come home and tell you to pack your bags because I just won the lottery. You were supposed to be super-excited and say, 'Should I pack for the sun or the snow?' Then I was going to say, 'It don't fuckin' matter, Shelly! Just pack your shit and get the hell out!'" Josh tossed the lamp, which Michelle caught. He threw his head back and laughed hysterically.

"I'm not in the mood for your stupid jokes! Stop what you are doing!"

Josh held up a finger. "One big joke," he corrected. "It's gotta be here somewhere!"

Michelle raised her arms above her head. "Fine! Whatever! I give up! I'm going to take a bath and I expect you to have my house put back together in an hour, or I swear to God, I'm going to have someone come get you. Do not test me, Josh."

"Just wait, Shelly. I'll show you," Josh said, while dragging the loveseat through the doorway. "I know it's here somewhere."

Michelle sighed. "Whatever!" She climbed over the loveseat. "Just make sure it's all back where it was when I come down."

“Yeah, yeah,” Josh said. “It won’t matter once I find it.”

Michelle rolled her eyes, then stomped up the steps. “You’ve been warned.”

Josh waved her warning away as he tried to decide if he should work on the kitchen next, or the bedroom.

An hour later, Michelle, wearing her robe, spied on Josh through the foggy upstairs bathroom window. She watched as he carried item after item outside, tearing each apart before moving on to the next. She noticed that the neighbors were watching, too.

Michelle knew something had to be done. She hesitated only a moment before picking up her cell. She dialed a number, and someone answered on the third ring.

“Hi Karen,” Michelle said. “How are you?” … “That’s great.” … “No, I’m not okay. I think my husband is on drugs.” … “Yeah, uh huh.” … “Yeah, he looks high as a kite.” … “No, I had no idea. Can you, you know?” … “You can? Great! Thank you, Karen!” … “Oh, I’m sure one night will do it. Can you send ’em now?” … “Thanks again. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Michelle went downstairs and sat on the porch steps to wait. Josh continued to run in and out of the house. Each time he came back outside, he carried a new item.

In and out, Michelle watched Josh until finally he stepped from the house, staring thoughtfully at the toaster. He inspected the lever, turned it upside down, shook it, then with a shrug, tossed it into the grass.

As he was about to go back inside to liberate another appliance, Michelle reached out and grabbed his wrist. “Josh,” she said calmly. “Look, I’m not even mad. See? It’s just me, your concerned, loving wife.”

Josh narrowed his eyes.

“Seriously,” Michelle said. “This isn’t a trap. I’m not going to go nuclear.”

Josh smiled. “Wanna help me carry the dining room table?”

Michelle took a deep breath. “Please tell me what in God’s name you’re on.”

“On?” Josh’s eyes went wide. He pulled away from Michelle’s grasp and began digging through the soil of a potted plant.

“Obviously you’re stoned. So which is it—Acid? Mushrooms, maybe? God, please don’t tell me bath salts. I’d rather not have you try to eat my face off.”

“I’m not high! You’ll see.”

“It’s that spice stuff, the fake marijuana, ain’t it?” Michelle nodded. “Karen says that stuff rots your brain.” She shrugged. “That’d explain a lot, actually”

“Oh, geez, Shelly! Give me a few more minutes. Just a few more lousy minutes is all I need.”

Michelle stood as a white van pulled up to the curb in front of their house. “I’m sorry, Josh. Do you remember that vacation you were talking about? Sun or snow?” Michelle smiled. “I think it’s time for you to pack your bags.”

“Yeah, that’s the idea…as soon as I find my ticket.” Josh didn’t notice the two huge men dressed in white scrubs sneaking up behind him.

To keep Josh distracted, Michelle asked, “Find what?”

“To find my ti—” Josh’s arms were grabbed from behind. “’Ey! What the fuck?”

“Don’t fight them. They’re going to take you somewhere to relax.”

“No, wait, you don’t understand,” Josh protested as the two men dragged him into the back of the van.

“Michelle!” Josh begged.

“You’ll be okay. It’s just for a little while.”

“No, listen to me!” Josh pressed his face to the Van’s barred back window. “I won, Shelly. I swear! I have the winning ticket. Well, I mean, I did have it. I lost it!”

The two men smiled at Michelle, then climbed into the front seats.

“It’ll only be the night.”

“Bullshit!”

Michelle nodded thoughtfully. “Yeah, Josh, you’re right. I think you’re gonna need a few days to cool off.”

“Oh, come on, Shelly!” Josh screamed. “I bought it at the liquor store. Kelly handed me the change and the ticket. I stuffed it all in my wallet, and then I went home and got drunk…but now it’s gone.”

Michelle bit her index finger as the van slowly pulled away.

Josh yelled, “We have to keep looking! We have to—” His jaw dropped, and his eyes went wide. “Wallet,” he whispered. “Hold up! Stop the goddamn van. Shit! It’s in my wallet! I forgot to check my wallet! Stop the van! My wallet is on the nightstand, and the ticket is in the wallet. Michelle, please, tell them to stop. I’m not crazy! You hear me? I’m not crazy!” Josh’s voice faded as the van turned the corner.

“My mother was right about him,” Michelle said to herself.

Michelle sat on the loveseat as Mrs. Tricia, the next-door neighbor, came over to greet her. She was the same old woman who had been standing behind Josh at the liquor store when he had purchased his ticket.

“What was all that about, dear?” Mrs. Tricia asked.

“Oh, nothing, Mrs. Tricia. Josh’s on his way to Spring Grove.”

“The mental institution? Oh my.”

“Yeah. I work there, you know.”

“I didn’t.”

“Nothing fancy. It’s not much more than an administrative assistant position. The job does have its perks, though. For instance, if an immediate family member suffers a mental breakdown, they provide a free three-night stay.”

“You’re not kidding, are you, dear?”

“Not at all.” Michelle smiled. “You’d be surprised how often the employees take advantage of the program.”

“I see. Do you need help getting your furniture back inside?”

“No, I’ll handle it. Thank you.”

“Okay, have a good night, dear.”

“You too,” Michelle said as Mrs. Tricia walked back toward her house.

Michelle stood again and turned in a circle, surveying the mess. Sighing, she fell back onto the loveseat, made herself comfortable, and stared at the stars. “Claiming he won the lotto.” She laughed. “Certifiably crazy!”

Michelle had known it would be a waste of time to linger on Josh’s behavior. She realized it wasn’t even the stupidest thing the man had done in all their years of marriage. She thought about their history together and laughed louder at the absurdity. “I must be the one who’s nuts,” she said, trying to stifle the hysterical snickering. “Why else would I stay married to him?”

After the period of reflection, Michelle pulled the sofa back into the house. Little by little, she cleaned up the rest of the disaster area, growing angrier as she uncovered each broken heirloom. “I ought to let the bastard stew for a good, long while!” She picked up her favorite carousel horse figurine and dropped broken pieces into the trashcan. “Years!”

Though angry, Michelle smiled at the thought of Josh being carted away, and she remembered the stark, raving-mad look on his face as he spouted the nonsense about the ticket being in his wallet. “Certifiably crazy!” she said again.

Though Michelle knew nothing would be inside Josh’s wallet, she decided to have a peek anyway….

Chapter 4 – Still Very Much Insane

Josh sat in the office of Spring Grove's new head doctor, pleading his case.

"Doc," Josh said. "I think I'm ready to get out of here."

"Err, okay," the doctor said while cleaning his glasses. "Please tell me everything."

"My wife Michelle…you know Michelle, right? Anyway, my wife mistakenly had me committed. She thought I was on drugs, you see. Doc, let me tell ya, I wasn't. I just misplaced a very important piece of paper worth millions and millions of dollars, so it's just a big misunderstanding. This kind of thing happens all the time, I bet. Besides, she told me that I would only be in here a night or two, but I'm telling ya, it's been a lot, lot longer. She must be mad at me, or something. I don't even know why. So you gotta get me outta here, okay?"

"Hmmm," the doctor said, biting on an arm of his glasses. "I'm not so sure we're ready yet, Joshua. It seems you're still showing signs of, um, a, uh, delusion. This is based on your…err…." The doctor quickly searched his desk, scattering papers. He picked up a clipboard. "Ah, here we are," the doctor said. "Your…err…erm…."

Josh cocked his head to the side and squinted his eyes. "Chart?"

"Chart! Yes, that's it exactly. So it is abundantly clear to me, looking over this chart, that you're obviously, uh…you're obviously not ready to return to society."

"Doc?" Josh bit his bottom lip.

"Yes, Joshua?"

"You've got the clipboard upside-down."

The doctor paused for a moment, then turned the clipboard right-side up, pausing a moment longer. He seemed to be choosing his words carefully, then finally said, "That's great, Joshua. I was, uh, testing you. Yes, that's it. It was a test!"

"Testing me, Doc?"

“Precisely! Now I know that you are well aware of your surroundings! A good thing, Joshua, a truly good thing!”

Josh raised his eyebrows. He didn’t like the doctor one bit. Maybe it was his annoyingly loud voice, or his overly peppy attitude, but something about the man rubbed him the wrong way. “Thanks,” Josh said sarcastically.

“This new development is very, very promising!”

“Wait…so you’re going to let me out then?” Josh’s heart rate quickened, and he wanted to jump up and shout for joy.

With a huge smile spread across his rat-like face, the doctor cheerfully said, “No way in hell. You’re still very much insane, Joshua. What kind of doctor would I be if I let out every crazy person just because they asked nicely?”

Josh’s shoulders dropped. He looked at the calendar on the doctor’s desk. “I’ve been here two months now,” he sighed. “This is bullshit, Doc.”

“Wow, two months? Gosh, that’s a long time. I’ve been here six hours!”

“You just started working at Spring Grove?”

“Yes, it’s a really fantastic production. I’m extremely lucky to have the job. Many others auditioned, but as I’m sure you can tell, my skills are far superior.”

For a moment, Josh thought the doctor might actually be a mental patient who had snuck into the office when the staff wasn’t paying attention. Josh was sure that no one would hire a bozo of that magnitude to run a mental institution.

Josh mumbled, “They wouldn’t, would they?”

“What was that, Joshua?”

“Oh, nothing,” Josh said. “It is nice and all that you got the job here. I just want to go home. Can you tell me when that might be?”

“Hmm…I’m not so sure about that. It seems you’re still showing signs of, uh, a, um…ah yes, delusions.”

“Doc?” Josh asked, confused. “You’ve already said that.”

The doctor held up a finger and rapidly nodded several times. “This is based on your…err…erm….”

“Chart.”

“Yes.” The doctor grinned. “Chart. Thank you.”

Josh swallowed hard. He shook his head, then ran his palms down his face. “I want to go back to my room now.”

“Ah, don’t be so bland, Joshua. Your wife is here to see you. The boys in the white coats will escort you to the visiting room. I do hope that this gig works out for me and we can have a chat again. Good day to you, sir!”

The same two men who had retrieved Josh at Michelle’s request walked into the room and grabbed him out of the chair.

Josh said to the orderlies, “Easy, Bruno and Clevis. Just a sec.”

One of the large men replied, “Our names are Mike and Tobias.”

The other said, “Mr. Harris, please stop calling us Bruno and Clevis. We have feelings, too, okay?”

“Yeah,” the first one said. “Keep it up, and we’ll put you back in the straitjacket.”

“Sure, sure, whatever,” Josh said, admiring the men’s matching and meticulously groomed unibrows. He looked toward the doctor and clicked his tongue. “Doc, do I know you from somewhere? You seem really familiar.”

The doctor grinned. “Nope, I don’t think so. I just flew in from California. It’s my first time in the great state of Wisconsin!”

Josh narrowed his eyes. “No. I’m pretty sure I do.”

As the orderlies turned Josh toward the door, he tried to remember where he had met the doctor before.

“Your wife is waiting,” the doctor said. “Bruno, Clevis, take him to the visiting room now. Goodbye, Joshua!”

The orderlies looked at each other, sighed, then picked Josh up by the shoulders and carried him to the waiting room.

Chapter 5 – Like Being At Home

Josh sat down and waited for Michelle, who was at the nurse's station laughing with her coworker, Karen. Quickly getting bored, he decided to strike up a conversation with a few of Spring Grove's other patients.

"Blah. Blah. Blah-Blah," he said to the woman sitting at the table to his left. The woman didn't seem to hear him, so he said it again louder. "Blah! Blah! Blah-Blah!"

The woman smiled, laughed, then waved her finger at him. She said something absolutely incoherent.

"Good one, Brook!" Josh said, and they both laughed together.

Brook didn't speak English, Josh Knew. Well, not English in the traditional sense. Instead of words, she just babbled, earning her the nickname from him, Babbling Brook. After his first month in Spring Grove, Josh had successfully figured out a way of communicating with her by using a combination of three sounds: Blah, Goo, and Uh.

Breaking down the communication barrier was an amazing achievement, though his method was questionable. Josh had started out by pretending to understand Brook, but somehow he had forgotten the pretending part. Brook, however, never had a communications problem. In fact, she was a certified genius. Her I.Q. was one of the highest in the state. She just preferred to remain quiet and had done so until Josh had begun making odd noises at her. She had decided to play along when Josh spoke to her because, well, she thought Josh was mentally challenged.

At a table to the left sat Ted, one of Josh's other friends.

"Hey Ted," Josh said. "How's that case of herpes treating you?"

"I never got the herpes," Ted said sadly. "You know that. But on the bright side, I'm infected with a bitchin' case of Teddies right now."

"Way to go, Ted."

"Thanks, buddy. Any luck finding that lotto ticket?"

"Not yet," Josh said. He leaned forward and whispered, "I can only look after the lights go out. Otherwise, these bastards will never let me

outta here."

"Hey, listen," Ted whispered back, "while you're looking, do me a solid…if you happen to come by someone with herpes…send 'em to my room, would ya?"

"I'll do that."

Ted grinned. "Thanks."

Josh knew that Theodore Redmond Jr. had wanted to be an actor since he was a child. His break had come when he landed a series of commercials for a company that sold a herpes cream. Because that was his big chance to make it as an actor, Ted thought it would be a good idea to contract the disease to play the role better. He had launched a national campaign looking for someone to infect him by posting a series of online classified ads. After all was said and done, he had contracted syphilis, gonorrhea, and several other curable sexually transmitted diseases.

During one of Ted's later check-ups, his doctor noticed an infection which had never been seen before. They had named it "Teddies" in his honor. Unfortunately for Ted, the product he was supposed to promote really did work, so no matter how hard he had tried, he never managed to catch herpes.

Thinking he couldn't give a good performance without the right STD, Ted had lost the acting job to some two-bit hack that did a series of infomercials selling some new super-tool with a supercharged rotating this or that. Ted's agent, who had lost his commission when the herpes deal fell through, realized that his client was insane, so he tricked Ted into signing some papers and stuck him in Spring Grove. "I've got the perfect project for you," Ted's agent had said to him. "Just hold tight here, kid. I'll be back later." Supposedly while Ted waited, his agent was busy pitching a film idea based on Ted's life.

While Josh chatted with Ted about the benefits of certain STDs, Michelle finally walked away from the nurses' station wearing a huge smile as she strolled over.

"Shelly, baby," Josh said. "I haven't seen you in months!"

“Honey,” Michelle said excitedly. “I’ve got great news.”

Josh jumped up and screamed, “I’m getting out of here?”

“No, silly.” Michelle laughed. “Of course not. What I came here to say is—”

“Penis!” someone blurted out.

After the one-word outburst, the man who had screamed didn’t say anything else; he just looked around the room as if unsure who had shouted.

“Well, that was certainly random,” Michelle said.

“Yeah, that’s Cameron. They put him in here for some incident involving hot dogs on a subway train. Long story. But what the hell, Shelly? Why am I still in here? You said a few days! You really need to work on your time management skills. And why haven’t you come to see me?”

Michelle reached across the table and took Josh’s hand. “I’ve been working to get you out. It got complicated.”

“What good is being filthy stinking rich if I’m stuck in here? Tell them to let me out of here so I can cash in the ticket. You found it in my wallet, right?”

Michelle sighed. “Like I said, it’s complicated, Josh. The doctors swear you had a complete mental breakdown, that you’re stuck in your own little world. They tell me that you refuse to admit the jackpot wasn’t real.”

“Wasn’t real? I’m not crazy,” Josh protested. “I purchased the ticket! I won! Ask Kelly at the liquor store. She sold it to me. She’ll tell you.”

Michelle sat silent.

“Call her. Call her right now. They’ll have to let me go. I know where I had put the ticket. We can have it all, I’m telling ya, Shelly.”

Michelle took a deep breath and said, “This kind of outburst is exactly why the doctors haven’t let you have visitors.”

“That’s the stupidest thing I’ve ever heard. All I need do is talk to just a few people to get this all cleared up. Why in the hell won’t they let me do that?”

“Oh, Josh, I don’t know how to say this to you.”

“Say what?”

Tears fell from Michelle’s eyes. “The doctors thought that if someone told you the truth…you’d dig yourself deeper into this fantasy.”

“It’s not a fantasy. The doctors are complete fucking idiots. I won the jackpot!” Josh lowered his voice to a whisper. “Quick, let me borrow your cell. I’ll call Kelly.”

Michelle shook her head.

Josh’s jaw dropped. “Shelly, come on. We only have a minute or two before those Neanderthals drag me back to my room.”

“Josh, I know this will be difficult to hear, but you need to hear it anyway…Kelly can’t help. You didn’t win the lottery. There’s no ticket.”

Josh pulls his hand away. “Yes, there is. An old lady was there, too. I ain’t ever seen her before, but we can find her. She’ll tell ya.”

“No,” Michelle said. “The day they took you, do you remember how you moved all the furniture outside?”

Josh leaned forward and spoke quickly. “Look, I’m sorry about that stupid vase. I’ll buy you a new one. Hell, I’ll buy you one from the Ming Dynasty if that would make you happy. Just help me get out of here.”

Michelle rolled her eyes. “I know you would, dear. But you’re not listening to me. Remember what you said as the van pulled away? You said it was in your wallet. I thought that maybe, just maybe, what if you were telling the truth? I checked. There wasn’t anything in it…except a condom, but we’ll talk about that later, mister.”

Josh looked at the table sheepishly.

“Forget the condom,” Michelle said. “I looked all over the house and found nothing. Like an idiot, I even called the liquor store. What I’m saying to you is that I did talk to Kelly.”

“Yeah, good! She told you I bought the ticket with the winning numbers, right?”

“No.”

“No? What the hell do you mean, no?”

“No, I’m sorry. Kelly even said there wasn’t a jackpot. Couple million, normal amount and such, but nothing in the range like the one you were spouting about. She said that you came in to buy your beer like you always do, and then you sort of zoned out at the register.”

“Bullshit, she’s lying!”

“Why would she lie? She called your name a few times until you snapped out of it and paid for the beer. So you see, there never was a Mega Millions jackpot ticket.”

“Nope,” Josh said. “I bought it, then went to work and everyone there was talking about it. Call Dan Guntherson. Go on, call him, he’ll tell you.”

“I spoke to Dan Guntherson, too,” Michelle said.

“And?”

“And he told me you came to work acting strange. Everyone was talking about the circus coming to town, then out of the blue you turned pale and ran to the bathroom. He said you were up to something weird in there. When I pressed him on what you were doing, he got embarrassed and wouldn’t say.”

Josh’s face turned bright red. “I was on the phone with the lotto people!”

“Yeah, okay, Josh. If you say so.”

“I was!”

“Then one of your coworkers said that you burst out of the bathroom and knocked Dan Guntherson over before running out of the building like a lunatic? Do I have that part right?”

“Yeah, well…” Josh stared at his hands. He shook his head and muttered, “It happened like that, but that’s not how it happened. Christ, Shelly, you’re making me sound nuts.”

Michelle shrugged and raised her palms. “Listen to yourself. The doctors say they won’t let you out until you admit the 999 million was all in your imagination.”

“I can’t do that.”

“You had a breakdown. It happens to people sometimes. Don’t be ashamed.”

“I’ll never admit to a lie! I won! I’m a goddamn millionaire!”

Michelle patted his hand and smiled reassuringly. “I know you won’t say it was in your head, but that means they won’t let you out.”

“But I hate it here,” Josh whined. “I don’t feel safe around all of these crazy assholes.”

“It’s perfectly safe. They haven’t had an incident since that murder-suicide mess.”

“What!” Josh nearly fell out of his chair.

“Oh, relax.” Michelle waved her hand dismissively. “Happened years ago. This bunch isn’t nearly as psychotic as those ones were, as far as I know.” She smiled and added, “Well, you might wanna watch out for that guy over there in the corner. He looks mean.”

“Oh god, I want to go home.”

“I’m kidding. But let’s be honest here…. If they let you out, all you’ll do is search for a ticket that doesn’t exist. That isn’t going to help anything. At least here you can get the care you need.”

“Would you please tell Dan Guntherson and Kelly to visit me so I can hear this directly from them? I think that would help.”

“Would that I could,” Michelle said, sounding disappointed. “Two weeks after you arrived here, someone bought out the company. They moved the business to India. They offered all current employees a huge raise if they agreed to relocate to the new Mumbai headquarters. Dan Guntherson and the rest of them are all gone.”

“And Kelly from the liquor store? Could she come see me?”

“Gone too,” Michelle said. “Believe it or not, Dan Guntherson hired her to fill your position when it became clear you weren’t getting out any time soon.”

Josh slouched in his seat. “I got fired?”

“Yeah, pretty much.”

“And she got the raise that should have been mine?”

“Mmmhmm, moved right along with the rest of them.”

“Perfect. Just friggin’ perfect. Those ungrateful a-holes.” Josh slapped his hands to his face. “I’m sorry, Shelly.”

“For what?”

“If this hadn’t happened…if I hadn’t had a breakdown…I would’ve gotten that job. We could’ve moved overseas. I know you would’ve loved that.”

“I’m not mad. None of this was your fault.”

“But—”

“Really, it’s all right, sweetheart.” Michelle patted Josh’s hand. “All I want is for you to work on getting better. Can you do that for me?”

“But I’m stuck in here for God knows how long.”

Michelle smiled. “Listen, I’ve been working with the new doctor. I think we found a way to make your time a little more enjoyable.”

“How? I’m in a mental institution if you haven’t noticed.”

“Well, for starters, all of your office friends contributed to your get-well-soon fund. I used the money to buy you a nice recliner, feature-packed with a built-in heat and massage. You’re gonna love it.”

“Really?”

“Yes. I also got you a seventy-inch 4K television. Oh, and you’ll have a section of the activities room reserved for you, too.”

“I guess that will make things a little easier,” Josh said. “But how’d you manage to reserve a section just for me? And how are we affording all of this?”

“That’s the best part. The institution agreed to cover the costs of your treatment as part of my benefits package. It’s a great plan.”

“Oh,” Josh said. “I’m surprised they would offer that to the kitchen staff.”

Michelle clenched her jaw shut and pursed her lips. “Yeah,” she said, straining to keep a smile. “Me too.”

“Still, it isn’t like home.”

“Well, wait a second. That’s not all…what’s the one thing you enjoyed most when you came home after work?”

“I don’t know. What?”

“You come home, sit in your chair, watch a game, and what else do you do?”

“Uh, masturba—?”

“No!” Michelle rolled her eyes. “Jesus, Josh. Other than that.”

Josh shrugged.

Michelle sighed. “Come on, this is an easy one. You come home, sit down, watch a game, and drink what?”

Josh’s eyes widened. “Beer!”

Michelle nodded.

“You managed to get me beer?”

“Yup, the new doctor is very reasonable. I’ve arranged for the orderlies to supply you with a six-pack a day during the week and a twelve-pack on the weekends.”

“Wow! Now that is like being at home.”

“You’re my husband, and I want you to be happy. You can sleep in, have fun, and relax. Why don’t we go see the new setup?”

The orderlies escorted Michelle and Josh to the activities room. They walked hand in hand, that’s to say, Josh and Michelle, not the orderlies. For the first time in two months, Josh was smiling.

Upon arrival, Josh immediately plopped down in his new chair. One of the orderlies turned on the massager, and the other tuned the television to the sports network. As he reclined, Michelle popped the tab on one of Josh’s favorite beers and handed it to him.

“Perfect,” Josh said. “This is really something. Thanks, Shelly. Thanks, Bruno. Thanks, Clevis.”

Tobias and Mike smiled at Josh.

Michelle kissed Josh on the forehead. “I have to go now.”

Josh had already tuned out the world.

Michelle shook her head and patted Josh's shoulder. "Love you," she said and walked over to meet the orderlies standing by the door.

Just then, a commercial came on, breaking Josh's attention away from the television. Josh turned to see Michelle walking out of the room. "Oh, hey, Shelly?"

"Yes?"

Josh scratched his head. "If it wasn't real, how'd you know the jackpot was 999 million? Did I tell you that?"

Michelle cocked her head to the side. "Oh, Josh, if you want to get out of here, you really need to let that fantasy go. It's the only way."

Josh smiled. "You're right. I'm going to sit here and relax. I'll drink my beer and watch a game."

"Perfect."

"Bye, Shelly."

"I'll come to visit as soon as I can."

Michelle waved goodbye and continued out the door, followed by the orderlies. "Make sure he stays happy. That is your primary job. Remember that."

Mike and Tobias replied in unison, "Yes, ma'am."

"Good."

The two orderlies nodded before departing toward the nursing station.

After Michelle cleared the new, tightened security, she reached into her purse, brought out her cell, and quickly dialed a number.

"Hello to you, too!" … "Yes, I'm fine. I'm leaving Spring Grove now." … "Yeah, Josh is fine too. Don't worry, he's happy. I'm calling to see if you received the package today?" … "I won't be hearing from you again?" … "Great." … "Well, I got to go. Enjoy Mumbai and don't spend it all in one place." Michelle laughed. "Yeah, well, I still have to give Ted's agent a call. He's expecting his share, too. Those bouncers you mentioned are working out great for security, too. No one will bother him." … "Will do. Take care, Kelly. Give my best to Dan Guntherson and the rest of the guys.

Oh, and my best to Mrs. Tricia. Pleasure working with you, sweetheart. Ciao."

Michelle dropped her cell back into her purse. She grabbed her car keys and hit the remote start.

In the parking lot, a Lamborghini roared to life. Smiling, Michelle jumped in the driver's seat. She carefully put her expensive jewelry back on, each ring worth more than most people make in a year, each necklace worth more than a middle-class home. She pulled a pair of designer sunglasses down over her eyes and adjusted the rearview mirror to get a better look at herself. "One of these days. Told you so, Josh." She smiled, blew herself a kiss, and slammed on the gas.

At the same moment, Josh heard a car burning rubber out of the parking lot. "Show-off," he muttered.

As Michelle drove toward the setting sun, she passed a sign that read:

NEW OWNERSHIP—SPRING GROVE IS NOW THE JOSHUA HARRIS INSTITUTION—NO TRESPASSING!

Just then, a new commercial began playing on the station Josh had been watching. It was for a product designed to help prevent the spread of genital herpes. A man and woman were horseback riding. They were both smiling, and the man said, "I've got herpes, but I don't let it control my life."

Josh leaned closer and squinted. "Hey, wait a minute…. Goddamn, that guy looks exactly like my new doctor."

FIN


NEW OWNERSHIP -
SPRING GROVE IS
NOW THE
JOSHUA HARRIS
INSTITUTION -
NO TRESPASSING!

About the Story

Mega Millions is an old story from my teenage years. It's been in the pile for a long time. I've edited it over the years, just making changes to see how it might evolve. It's always had that fun, absurd feel for me, and I hoped that readers would find it fun, too. Special thanks go out to AtomGray.

Spring Grove is where a lot of crazy characters wound up. You might see it mentioned elsewhere.

Thanks for reading.

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.

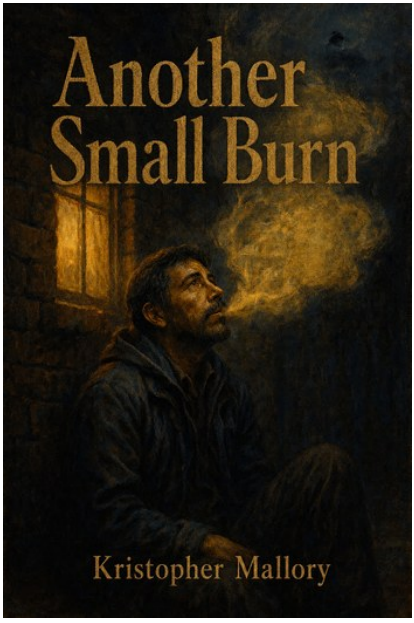
~~~~~
~~~~~

Hear It Read Aloud

Hear Mega Millions read aloud in its own Stealth Fiction narration, free at StealthFiction.com.

Listen on StealthFiction.com

More from Kristopher Mallory



ANOTHER SMALL BURN

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

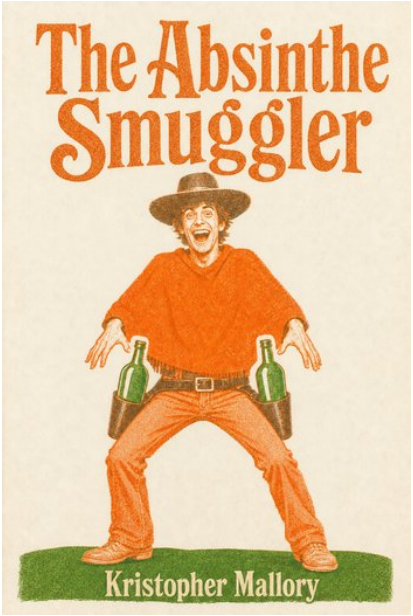
~~~~~

Carlos can burn any memory into magic, the way everyone can now; the hard part is choosing which ones he can live without.

~~~~~

Praise for Another Small Burn:

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



THE ABSINTHE SMUGGLER

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

~~~~~

A teenager on holiday in Madrid promises his friends two bottles of the green fairy, and customs turns out to be the easy part.
~~~~~



THE SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS OF MR. EVERETT

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

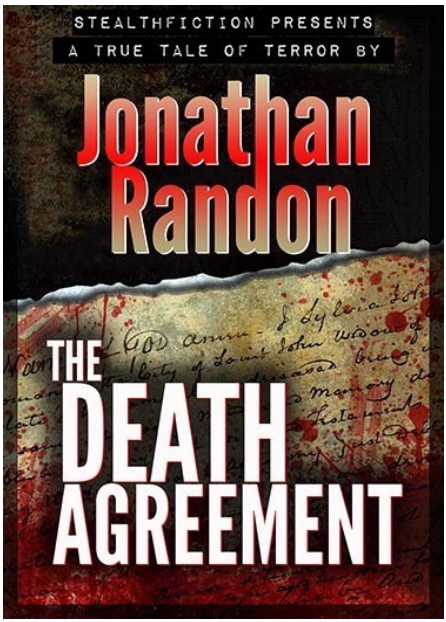
~~~~~

Christmas Eve, a blizzard, and Hank agrees to sit with old Mr. Everett, twenty-two-time winner of the town's decoration contest, who insists he is not going crazy.

~~~~~

Praise for The Special Christmas Ornaments of Mr. Everett:

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



THE DEATH AGREEMENT

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

~~~~~

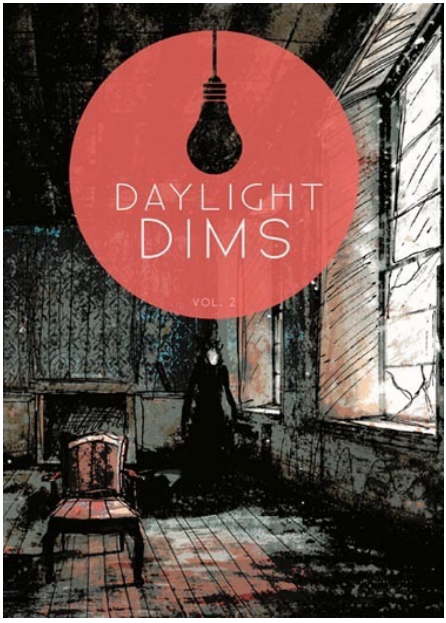
We made a pact. He lived up to his end by dying. I tried to live up to my end by following The Death Agreement.

What you will find within these pages is a true recounting of a man's life as seen through my eyes. It's almost an impossible task when some of what you see can't be real and what is real you may refuse to see… My name is Jon Randon and I'm going to tell you a story.

Praise for The Death Agreement:

"This was one of the best things I've ever read." – *GrandMoffJed*
~~~~~

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.

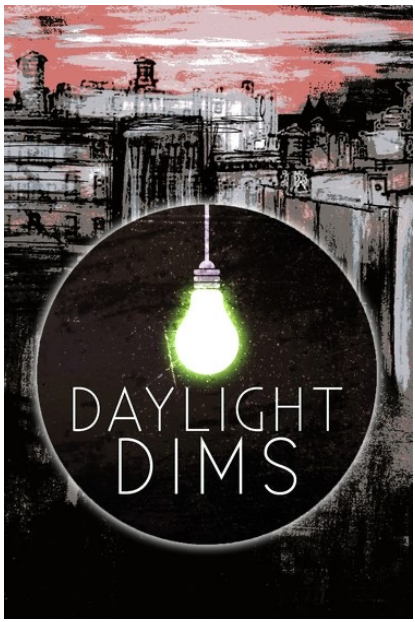
~~~~~

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.

~~~~~

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 Stealth Fiction.

~~~~~

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

~~~~~

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"*