Phantoms in the Empty Parking Lot



Kristopher Mallory

Phantoms in the Empty Parking Lot

by

Kristopher Mallory

Phantoms in the Empty Parking Lot

A True Story

Copyright



www.StealthFiction.com

Phantoms in the Empty Parking Lot

eBook Edition
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Wrong Way Charlie

Prepared Fresh

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She's Not Human

Universal Transmission

The Little Old Lady

The Price To See The Dead

Attempted

A Gift Of Bone

Payphone

What People Are Saying about Kris's Stories

The Death Agreement:

"Not often I seat through four hours of a story and I still want more. My hat off to the author of this incredible story!" – *thetruth*

Watchtowers of Carthage Key:

"Mysterious ruins, otherworldly horrors, the narrator questioning his own sanity, and the setting itself is the monster - very Lovecraftian!" – *notoriouswhitemoth*

What I've Learned of the GPS Glitch:

"Well that was fucking terrifying, I was dead set with an aliens theory but ok, dreams aren't completely crushed." – *DrunkenHobo-Patnor*

The Special Christmas Ornaments of Mr. Everett:

"Great read, very well-written, and I totally believe this." – *NoobZeke*

Special Thanks

For Dean Koontz.

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Phantoms in the Empty Parking Lot

“This thing is what wiped out the dinosaurs! It's a pretty tough fucking customer!”

~ Timothy Flyte, Phantoms (1998)

This is a completely true story that happened to me back in 1998.

I'm sure some of you are familiar with the author, Dean Koontz. I was a big fan of his books during my teen years. (Still am to an extent.) So you can imagine how excited I was to hear that his book *Phantoms* was being made into a movie. I didn't quite mark the date on my calendar or anything like that, but I knew that I would be one of the first ones in the door to see it.

Before I go on, it's important for me to explain that I lived only a few blocks from the mall (Marley Station Mall, Glen Burnie, MD). To be honest, I always thought that it was a bigger mall than one would expect to be in an area like ours. It never got really busy there, except on weekends maybe, but as a teenager I considered myself lucky to have a place to go hang out, work, eat, watch movies, even if the place was dead on some nights.

As much as I wanted to make the weekend premiere of *Phantoms*, I ended up missing it. I was still determined to go, so I went ahead and ordered a ticket over the phone for the late-night Monday showing, then packed a few canned Cokes in my JNCO jeans and headed out the door.

The theater ended up being almost empty. Maybe 2 or 3 people besides myself. I took a seat in the middle and watched what I thought to be one of the best and creepiest horror movies I had ever seen up to that point. (Note: Besides *Dawn of the Dead*. Nothing can beat that.)

The film let out; I guess it was roughly around 12:45 to 1:15 AM. Everything is closed. No one is around. I walk out the back door, the one that is for employees only, because it would save me a few minutes walking home.

The exit led to the back parking lot. Try to picture this. It's a decent-sized mall, so the lot is pretty big. All I see is a huge empty lot and beyond that, nothing but pitch-black woods. The lighting from the parking lot was fairly dim. Most of the lights were off; some were even flickering. No ambient light or sound from the highway around the front side of the mall bled back here.

It's also cold, so I'm shivering slightly as I start walking through this empty parking lot. My goal is to make it to the tree line and then follow that around to the highway. All I can hear is my own footsteps and my own breathing.

Then I see something about 30 feet in front of me. It's sitting in the shadows between the Swiss-cheese-shaped light pattern. It looks to be the size of a small cat.

I stop. I look. I think it's moving. But it's dark. It's cold. I'm alone. I've just watched a pretty scary film. So it's probably nothing. Nothing but my mind fucking with me.

I think it's probably an empty fast-food bag or a crumpled-up black T-shirt. I think it's anything non-living. So I keep walking, determined not to change my course over something so stupid.

I take a few more steps. Did it just move? What the fuck. I stop. I look. It did move. Fuck. Then logic kicks in again. It's windy out. Whatever it is, it's not alive.

So I continue walking. And here's where my bad storytelling breaks down even further because I don't know how to describe in a logical, coherent order what happened next.

This thing, which I was so sure was just a paper bag, or whatever, suddenly lunged at me about 4 feet in a matter of seconds. My brain processed this in a split second: The wind had died down right before it happened, so I knew it wasn't the wind. At the same time, I knew it wasn't a cat, a rat, a possum, or anything… normal. I gasped and jumped back and wanted to run, but thought it would chase me.

So what did I do? I took a step toward it. Like a boss.

I was thinking, 'Fuck you, dark scary moving thing in the parking lot.' And 'So this is why people have gone missing around here.'

For each step I took, it seemed to take a step too. Well, not really a step, more like a "scatter." It entered the light as I made my way to within about 5 feet of it.

No Sleep, let me tell you. What. The. Fuck. This thing… Size of a sewer rat. It was insect-like. It had 6 to 8 legs. Pretty long antler-feeler things. The eyes were more like a crab's. They were shiny solid black on stalks that were retracted and moved forward. It had wings like a wasp. Its body was covered in striped black/tan fur. And there were 3 smaller ones huddled next to it!

It must have only been a few seconds that we looked at each other, but I'm telling you it felt like forever. Then suddenly it flapped its wings and shot off towards the woods at high speed. I assume the smaller ones took off too because all that was left was like a small, shiny, wet trail on the ground from where it had scampered towards me.

I ran home. I never told anyone about what I saw. Who the hell would believe it? That was the last time I ever went to a late movie at the mall alone, and the last time I ever left past dark without having a ride. And I never saw it again.

I'll close by saying this story is 100% true. It is the first time I've ever told it. I didn't pre-write this. I'm not going to edit it for grammar or spelling. And I'm never going to tell it again. Believe it or don't.

6:05 PM, January 13th, 2011.

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

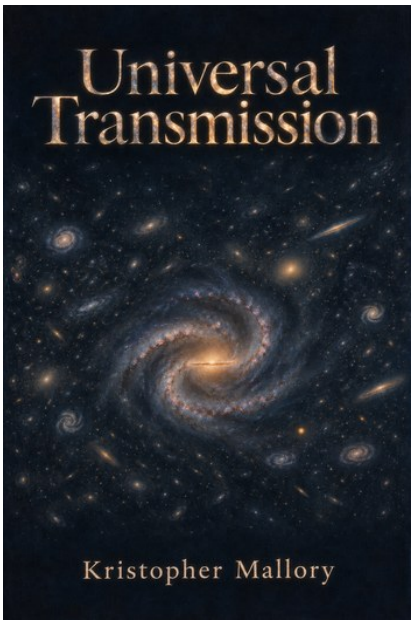
Some stories are better heard in the dark.

Phantoms in the Empty Parking Lot has a complete audio narration, read by Davis, a digital voice. It runs 6 minutes and it's free: play it online, or download it as an MP3 or an audiobook with chapters.

It was first read aloud on TheDevilsInterval in February 2018. That reading is on the same page.

Listen free at stealthfiction.com

More from Kristopher Mallory



UNIVERSAL TRANSMISSION

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

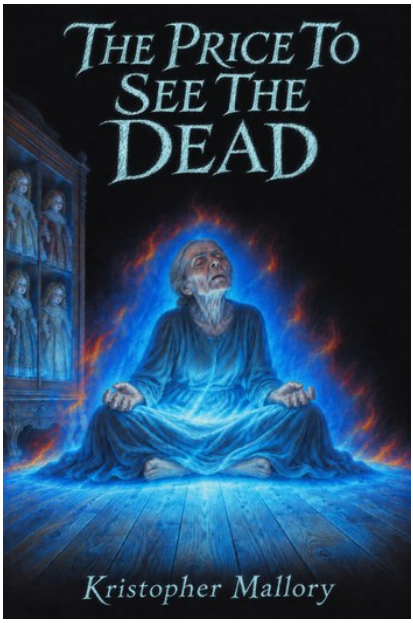
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A scan of Planet 3 gives its species a 95.5 percent chance of self-annihilation, then the transmission opens to every living thing at once.

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Praise for Universal Transmission:

"Big, strange and unsettling, a story that makes the whole planet feel very small." – *Stealth Fiction*



THE PRICE TO SEE THE DEAD

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

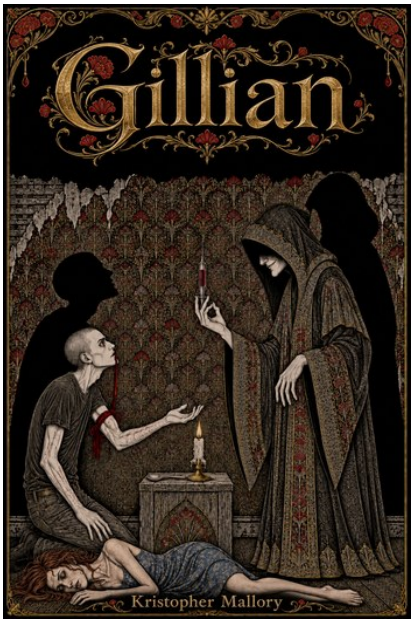
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After a crash kills one of the McCormick twins, the sisters still talk every night, and Madame Sosostris comes to make their parents see the dead too.

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Praise for The Price To See The Dead:

"Grief, a stage medium and a bargain nobody should make. Tender and chilling at once." – *Stealth Fiction*



GILLIAN

This dark fairy tale is now available as an eBook. For more information on this book, please visit Stealth Fiction.

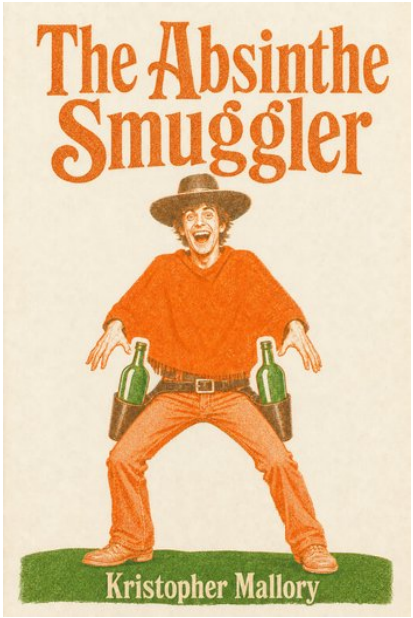
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Some addictions run deep and others summon demons too strong to overcome.

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Praise for Gillian:

"A fairy tale with the sugar scraped off, and a love story that refuses to stay buried." – *Stealth Fiction*



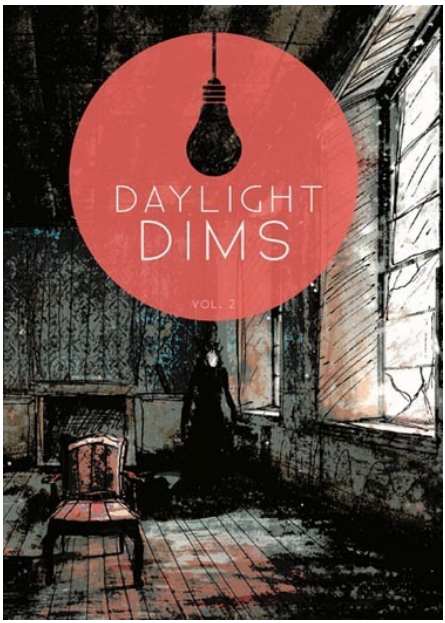
THE ABSINTHE SMUGGLER

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

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

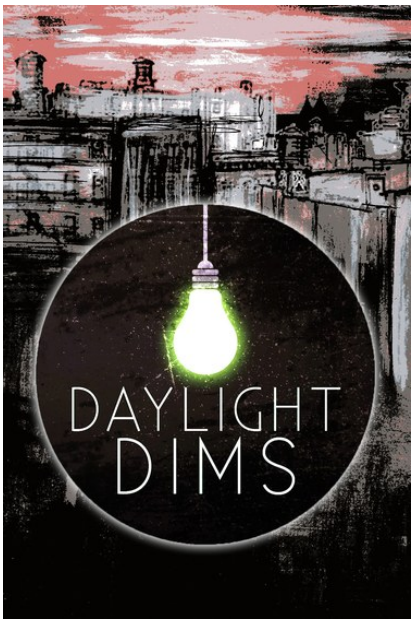
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Darkness descends again. Daylight Dims Volume Two features thirteen stories that cross the genres of surreal, dark fantasy, and heart-pounding dread. This annual horror anthology is guaranteed to twist your perception of horror. From the common, comfortable 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"*