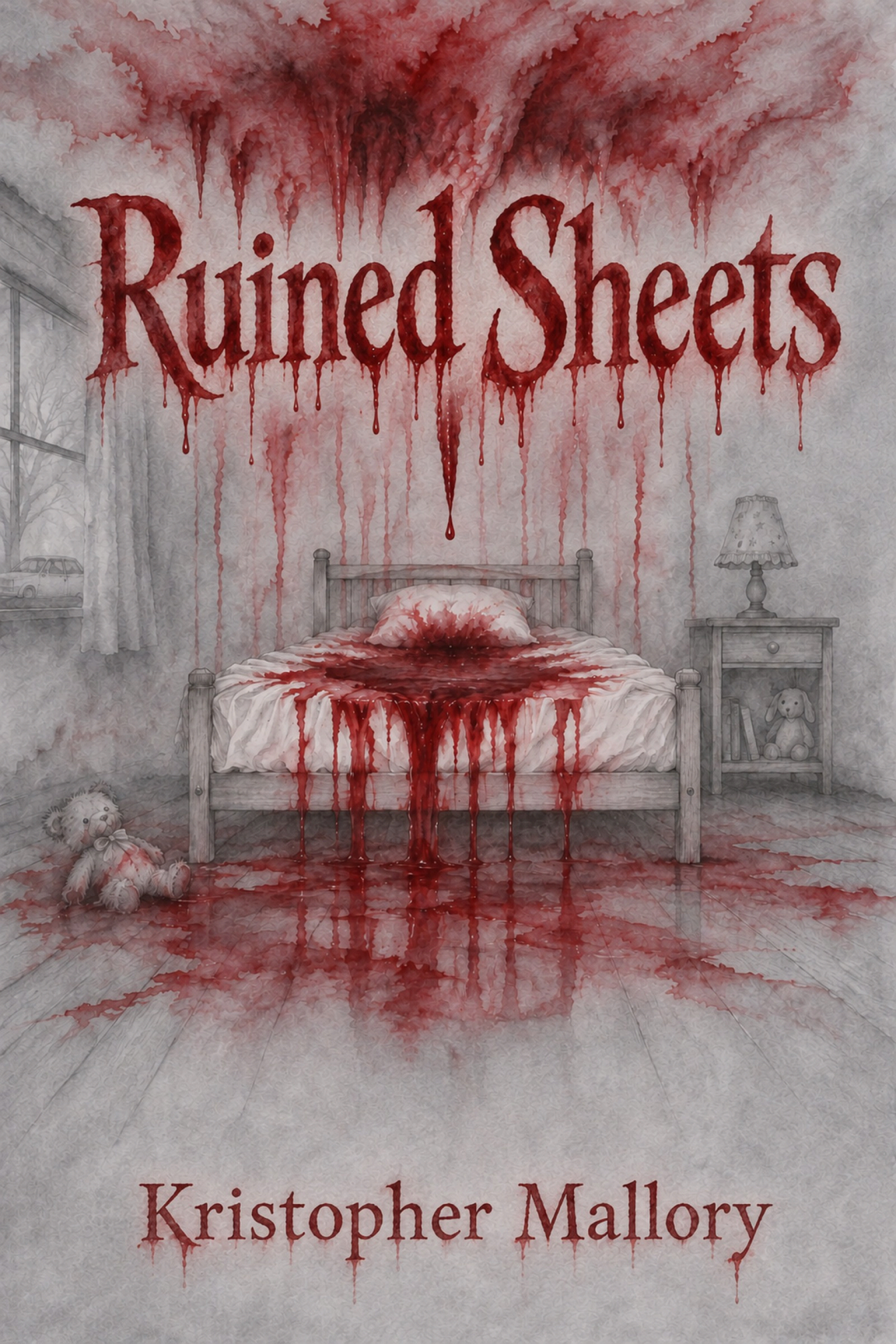

Ruined Sheets
Kristopher Mallory

Ruined Sheets

by

Kristopher Mallory

Ruined Sheets

A NoSleep Short

Copyright



www.StealthFiction.com

Ruined Sheets

eBook Edition
eBook ISBN: 9798237095203
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Long-Term Investment

Wrong Way Charlie

Prepared Fresh

Road Trip Down A Dark Memory Lane

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

Watchtowers of Carthage Key:

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

The Death Agreement:

"This is award winning writing material right here. Big props to Kristopher Mallory." – *thequietintrovert*

Another Small Burn:

"I would read an entire book series about this" – *ThunderStruck*

The Special Christmas Ornaments of Mr. Everett:

"Ow my chest hurts from holding my breath through most of the story. Very unique and well wriiten, best of luck to you and your town." – *JannaSwag*

Special Thanks

To brand-new sheets.

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Ruined Sheets

“The sins of the father are to be laid upon the children.”

~ William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice

The third time the police arrested me for child abuse, I tried to run from the crime-scene bedroom, still clenching my boy's blood-soaked sheets.

Officer Wallace slapped on the cuffs, then threw me into the back of his car as the paramedics were loading my catatonic seven-year-old into an ambulance.

Strapped to the gurney, face awash in gore, eyes wide, my boy looked like a corpse. Suddenly, he snapped out of the trance and reached out with both hands, breaking the paramedics' restraints. "Daddy! Daddy!"

I slammed my shoulder into the cruiser's door and screamed. It wasn't any use. Seconds later, the ambulance pulled away in one direction, then the cruiser went another while I still thrashed around in the back, cursing the witness.

Wallace stared at me in the rearview more than he watched the foggy road ahead of him. After a while, I calmed down and closed my eyes. I knew what kind of treatment awaited, but there wasn't anything else I could do but play the game.

At the station, Wallace and his partner showed me photos of my boy's bedroom. The brand-new white sheets I had just purchased for him were stained bright red. Pools of crimson spread across the floor where the blood had flowed over the edge of his mattress. The walls seemed as if they were crying red tears. Stalactites of slaughter hung in congealed masses from the ceiling. Complete carnage. No one should have survived.

And yet, my boy did.

I rolled my eyes, then slammed my chained fists on the table. "It's not the first time. You aren't showing me anything I haven't seen before!"

Hatred burned in Wallace's eyes, the kind reserved for subhuman waste or disease-spreading rats. "You hurt him in the past? Or are you saying you've hurt other children?" When I didn't answer, he jumped up from his chair, grabbed my T-shirt, and stood within an inch of my face. The corners of his eyes spasmed, and he clenched his jaw before baring his teeth. "Give me a reason, you sick fuck."

I knew then what kind of man I was dealing with and laughed despite myself. “A reason? Fine, how’s this: Those pictures are mild in comparison to last time, and the time before that, and the time befo—”

Wallace’s partner whispered, “What in God’s name did you do to that poor child?”

Without turning away from Wallace, I said, “Not another word until you let me see my boy.”

Wallace threw me back down into the chair. “Get this piece of shit out of my sight!”

I sat up straight, smoothed my blood-splattered T-shirt, and did my best to keep a smug grin on my face. Being the monster they wanted wasn’t easy, but I knew from experience he would likely hurt me if I tried to play the concerned, innocent father card.

The whole time I’d been thinking about my boy, swarmed by social workers and doctors. Luckily, he knew better than to talk. Daddy had taught him well.

After I’d spent a sleepless night on a hard cot stinking of piss, Wallace’s partner called my name and let me out of the holding cell. The sheet of paper he handed me had been stamped in red with the words: Charges Dropped.

I collected my belongings, made a few quick phone calls, then stood outside waiting for a taxi in the thick morning fog. It had rained again, and the light mist blowing in the wind cooled my face. Freedom felt great. I couldn’t wait to find my boy.

Wallace came running out of the police station. I knew he wanted to rough me up, or worse. For fifteen minutes he stared daggers into the side of my head. Finally, he said, “The Captain let you free, and he wouldn’t tell me why.”

I nodded.

Wallace took a step back. “I don’t know what the fuck is going on, but this isn’t over.”

I nodded again, knowing exactly what he thought of me, knowing how confused and angry he would be without answers. Out of the corner of my eye, I watched him seething and wondered if the next time he put his hand on his service weapon, he was going to shoot me in the back of the head.

The taxi pulled up. I let out a relieved sigh and climbed inside. “Hospital. Quick.” The driver went to pull away. “No, wait,” I said, and the car came to a stop. I wound down the window. “Follow me if you want to see something.”

Wallace nodded, his face giving nothing away. I took the blank expression to mean he still wanted to kill me. I nodded back, smiled, then tapped the door, signaling the driver to go.

At the hospital roundabout, my boy waited outside in a wheelchair, smiling. Two women in scrubs stood behind him, pale and visibly frightened. The second I exited the taxi, my boy, looking good as new, ran and jumped into my arms. The two women approached me almost cautiously, while Wallace edged along to the side, mouth hanging open.

I hugged my boy as if I hadn’t seen him in years. “What did you tell them?”

“Nothing, Daddy. Are we going to have to move again?”

I nodded. “It isn’t your fault. The old lady next door heard your screams before I could mask them.”

Wallace shook his head. “He was… I saw… How?”

One of my boy’s doctors said, “Once we cleared away all the blood…”

The other finished, “We couldn’t find a mark. Not a single cut, scratch, or bruise. Far as we can tell, he’s a perfectly healthy little boy.”

My boy tugged at my sleeve. “Can we go, Daddy?”

“Yeah.” I climbed into the taxi still holding him tight.

“Wait!” Wallace leaned in the window. “Is this some sick joke? I saw what you did to that child. I saw the room.”

I closed my eyes. “As you can see, he’s perfectly fine.”

“That doesn’t make any sense.”

“I never said it would.”

“You told me you’ve done worse, made it clear you’ve hurt other kids. I have that on tape.”

“Listen to your tape again. I said I’ve seen it happen before.”

Wallace narrowed his eyes. “Think you’re smart? Throwing animal blood over a kid, mentally torturing him, that’s enough to put you away.” He smiled, leaned closer, and whispered, “Even if it isn’t. I won’t let this go. I’ll stop you myself.”

I hugged my boy tighter, remembering how sour events can turn when some would-be hero has it out for you based on preconceived notions and tinfoil-hat theories about a child’s well-being. My boy lost his mother to a vigilante, murdered to protect him from harm that she never inflicted. Since then, I’ve learned to adapt. My act at the supposed crime scene, my attitude at the station, the invitation for Wallace to follow, even what I would say to him next…calculated damage control. All of it to protect my boy.

“You want me dead, but you aren’t the first person who’s threatened me and my boy. I would tell you to leave it to the caseworkers, but, Officer, have you taken a look around?”

Wallace turned toward the doctors. “Where are they? Where’s that man from social services?”

One of the doctors swallowed hard. “Gone. Said there was nothing he could do.”

I bit my thumbnail, wondering how many more times I would need to deal with a situation like this. “Tell him what you found, please, Doctor?”

The doctors looked at each other, then at Wallace. “We thought it had to be animal blood,” one of them said.

“It wasn’t,” the other added. “The blood is definitely human.”

“It’s my boy’s blood,” I said. “And they know it.”

Both doctors nodded.

“Yes, we triple-checked,” one of them said. “The blood is a match for the child.”

The other stepped forward. “Sir, we would like to keep him for some further tests.”

I sighed. “No tests. Never again. Thank you both for cleaning my boy up.”

They nodded, then turned and walked back into the hospital, muttering something about devils and miracles.

Wallace seemed to deflate. He knelt and stared at my boy. The rain had picked up again, and it made it look as if he were crying. He opened his mouth, but I put up my hand.

“This has happened before so many times. He wakes up screaming and covered in his own blood, more than could fit in his little body.”

“How am I supposed to believe this?”

“I don’t expect you to believe anything. I asked you here because I don’t want you to be a problem for us. We need to move and change our identities again before the doctors send in their report.”

“How often does *it* happen?”

“Every few months. Sometimes every day of the week; it varies. The longest lapse was two years, four through six. When it happens, I clean him up. If we’re caught, we leave, fast. There are people who want to lock him up and study this. I can’t let that happen.” I looked down at my boy. “Besides, it’s just an accident during the night, nothing to be ashamed of, right, buddy?”

“Right, Daddy.”

I smiled.

Wallace clicked his tongue. “This is insane.”

“Maybe so, but it’s true.” I pressed my palms to my boy’s ears. “I’ve been dealing with his condition since he was born. The blood used to terrify me, but it’s not what scares me anymore. While waking him from the screaming, he’s begun to speak.”

Wallace scratched his ear. He lowered his tone and said, “What does he say?”

I pressed a little harder on my boy's ears. "'The blood debt…will…be…paid. The blood debt…will…be…paid.'" I took my hands away and nudged my boy playfully in the side. "You ready to get home so we can pack?"

"Ready."

"That's my boy."

As the taxi pulled off, I thought about the 9mm backup plan locked in the safe at home. So far, I hadn't needed to take a life to protect my boy.

I turned and nodded at Officer Wallace standing in the middle of the road, hoping that he'd stay away. He faded into the morning fog until there was nothing left except a clean white sheet of mist.

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

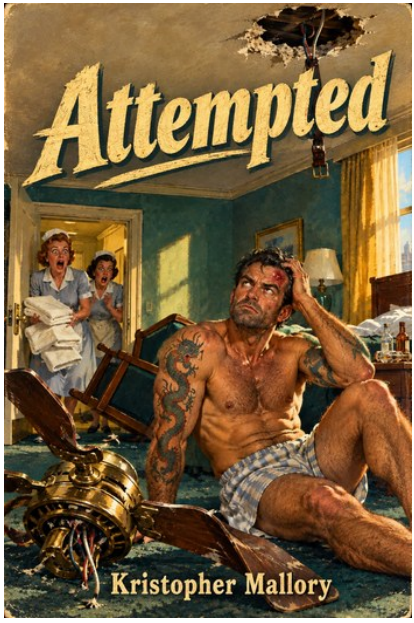
Some stories are better heard in the dark.

Ruined Sheets has a complete audio narration, read by James, 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.

Ruined Sheets was first read aloud on The NoSleep Podcast in February 2015, in Season 5, Episode 3, performed by Sammy Raynor, Jessica McEvoy and David Cummings, six weeks after the story appeared on r/nosleep. Chilling Tales for Dark Nights then put it in front of two rounds of its Evil Idol narration contest: Marshall Ragsdale read it in 2016 and Joe Walz in 2017, and between them those two readings have been played some twenty thousand times on YouTube. Marshall Ragsdale's 2016 reading is the one linked below.

Listen free at stealthfiction.com

More from Kristopher Mallory



ATTEMPTED

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

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A former detective spends almost all his money on a decent hotel room to go out in style, then finds that dying is the one case he can't close.

~~~~~

Praise for Attempted:

"Grim and sharp, and funnier than it has any right to be." – *Stealth Fiction*



I Know What They Are

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

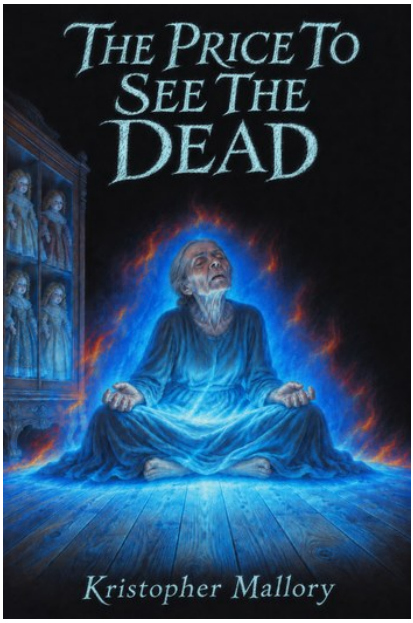
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A young woman interacts with the city's homeless population as she walks to work each morning. Her life takes a turn into strange territory when she meets a homeless lady wearing a lab coat and holding a sign that reads: I know what they are.

~~~~~

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*



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.

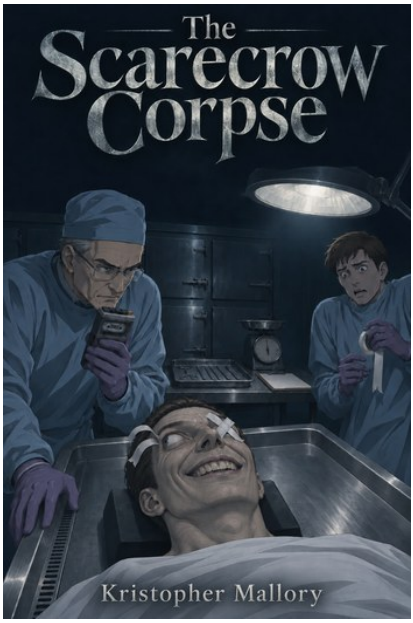
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After a crash kills one of the McCormick twins, the sisters still talk every night, and Madame Sosostris comes to make their parents see the dead too.

~~~~~

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*



THE SCARECROW CORPSE

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

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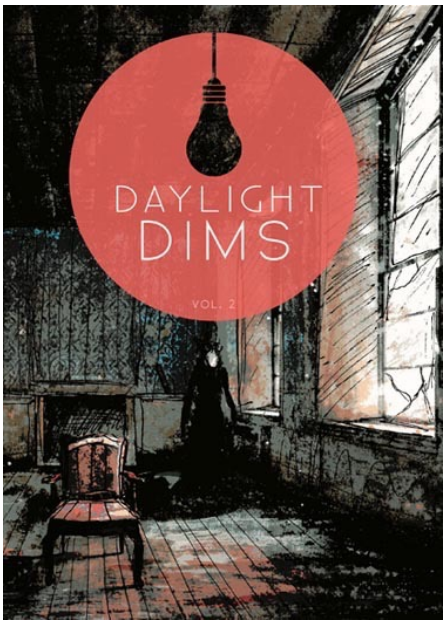
A coroner's intern is called to a body found on the Washington Metro Red Line, and it is not quite a body.

~~~~~

Praise for The Scarecrow Corpse:

"Paranoid, grisly and deeply creepy, a conspiracy that keeps going deeper." – *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.

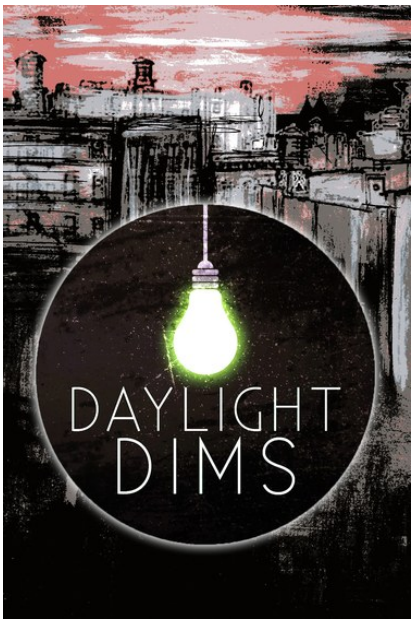
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Darkness descends again. Daylight Dims Volume Two features thirteen stories that cross the genres of surreal, dark fantasy, and heart-pounding dread. This annual horror anthology is guaranteed to twist your perception of horror. From the common, comfortable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

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“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.

~~~~~

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"*