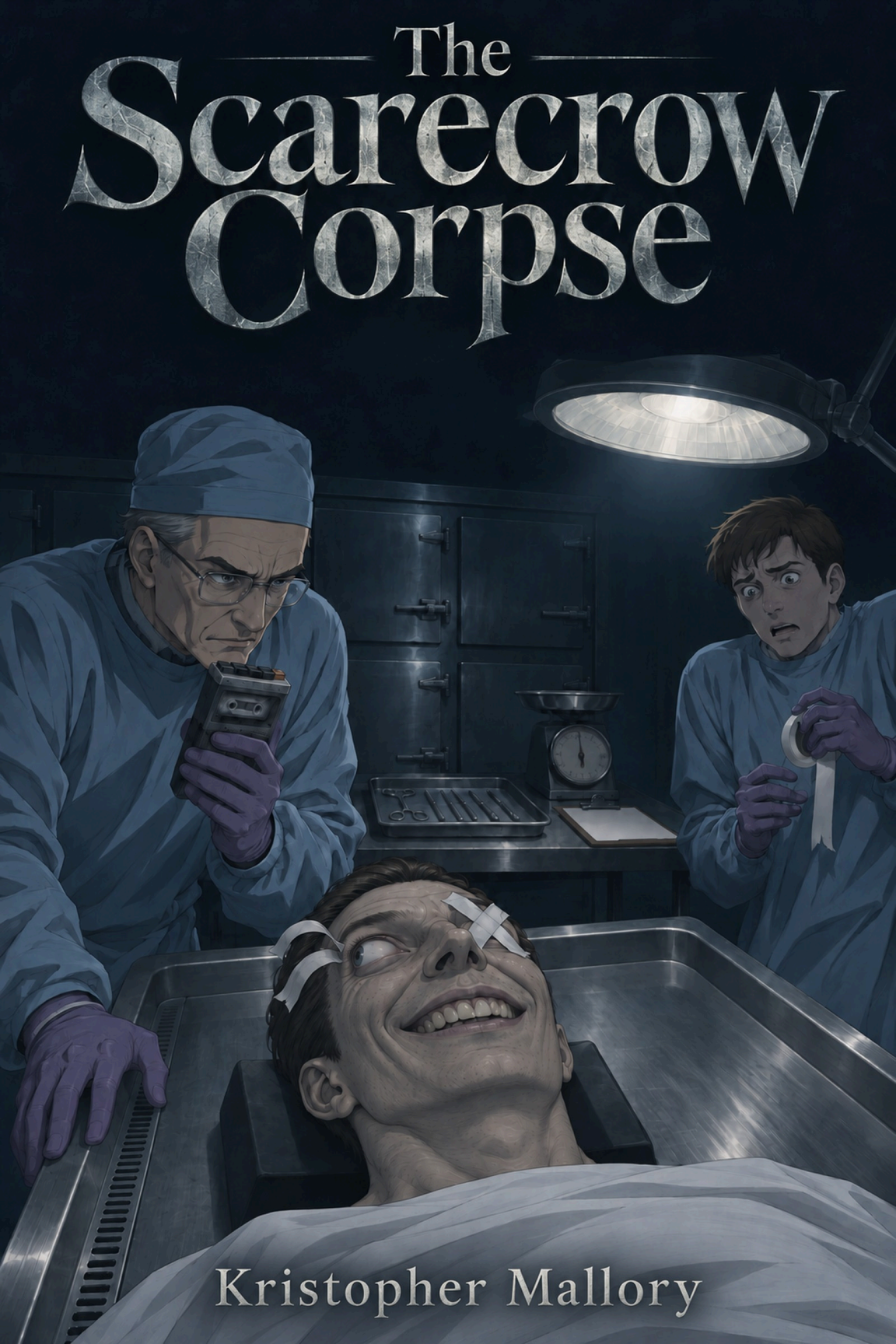
The Scarecrow Corpse



Kristopher Mallory

The Scarecrow Corpse

by

Kristopher Mallory

The Scarecrow Corpse

A NoSleep Short

Copyright



www.StealthFiction.com

The Scarecrow Corpse

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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

Gillian

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

Special Thanks

For the fans of scary stories told as if they really happened.
Maybe they did?

About the Story

When I first found r/nosleep, it felt like coming home. Here was a place for the kind of short fiction I loved writing just for myself.

For a long time, my stories had a very small audience. I posted them on my website, reread them until I convinced myself they were *okay*, and then tried to guilt three or four friends into reading them.

On NoSleep, I felt sure I could write something new just for its readers. So on a lunch break, I sat down and typed as fast as I could, melding two ideas: how creepy the D.C. Metro is late at night, when no one else is around, and how the people running the country from D.C. were completely brainless. Wherever you fall politically, I figured that was something we could all agree on.

But this story isn't only mine. It belongs just as much to the narrators who chose to bring it to life, and I feel so lucky to have met some of them, and to have worked with them on so many other things since.

And an extra special thank you to Markiplier: any time I think of this story, it's his voice I hear. There's more on that at the end of the book.

Thank you for reading, and for listening.
Kris

Table of Contents

Copyright
Other Releases
Special Thanks
About the Story

The Scarecrow Corpse

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

The Scarecrow Corpse

“A good story really gets inside your head.”

~ Someone, probably

This is an email I received from an old friend.
I haven’t heard back from him, and I hope he’s okay.

As you know, I am (was) in training to be a coroner. My education was almost complete, and I had been working a paid internship with a well-known medical examiner in the Washington, D.C. area. All that changed a few hours ago when I was fired from the office for refusing to participate in what I believe to be a cover-up. Even though they ‘warned me’ about ‘consequences’ for leaking any information about this case, my conscience wouldn’t be clear if I kept quiet. This is something people need to know.

A few days ago we received a call from the Metro police about a possible body discovered on the Red Line. Since working here, we’ve responded to a few calls in the subway system. The first time it was a woman who tripped over someone’s rolling suitcase while trying to pass by on the escalators. She ended up with a broken neck. Twice we went out there for a heart attack. Once for a late-night mugging that went bad. The poor guy was stabbed repeatedly in the stomach even though he handed over his watch and wallet as the mugger requested.

So far I haven’t seen anything especially gory, and it was a bit of a letdown when the dispatch officer said the man was found just sitting on the train. (Is it wrong that I’ve been looking forward to a call about someone either jumping or being pushed in front of a train?) The interesting thing is the wording of the dispatch request. “Possible body.” If the word ‘possible’ is in front of body, maybe it’s the paramedics that should be responding and not the coroner’s office.

When we arrived, the paramedics actually were on the scene, so we figured it was just a miscommunication and we were called out prematurely. Police tape blocked off the whole entire station platform. From our view at the top of the escalators, we could tell something wasn’t right. The paramedics stood outside the door to the train car, and they weren’t actually doing anything except arguing and pointing at a body slumped up against a window inside. We could have left, but since it was a slow evening, we decided to take a look anyway just to see what was going on.

As we approached, I overheard some of the conversation between the two paramedics. “He’s dead, right?” said the older of the two. “Dead people don’t do…that.” Do what? I thought. Once they saw us, they quickly agreed that the man was dead and promptly left the scene to us. Clearly this wasn’t a call they wanted to handle; I can understand that.

The police weren’t much help either. I chatted with the officers on the scene while the doc went in to take a look at the man on the train. One of the detectives commented that there weren’t any clear signs of foul play. The witnesses all claimed the guy just sat down like everyone else and then he stopped breathing. Natural causes, I thought, seemed like a pretty cut-and-dried case, but when I looked over my shoulder at the doc, he seemed… confused.

“Look at this,” he said to me as I walked into the train. As I approached, it seemed like the man was just napping like a lot of the train riders do when they know their stop won’t be coming up for a while.

“Look at what?” I asked.

“His eyes.”

The man’s head was forward with his chin to his chest so that I had to kneel down to get a good look at his face. As I was doing this, the doc was talking out loud like he tends to do, just going over his mental checklist. “Not breathing. No pulse. His skin is cold to the touch. Approximate time of death: 6 to 8 hours ago.”

I’m in the aisle of the train trying to make do with a pin flashlight since the dim lighting on the train wasn’t helping things much. The man’s eyes were open, and they seemed to be staring at me. It’s not uncommon, so I lean in closer, hoping to figure out what it is the doc wanted me to see so that I don’t look like an idiot, and then… he blinked.

I jump back as quickly as a mongoose would jump away from a cobra.

“What the fu…” I tried to say.

“Exactly,” the doc said.

“Gotta be just a muscle spasm, right?”

“You would think,” he said, “but watch this.” He grabs the guy by the hair and pulls his head back. With his other hand, he waves a finger in front of the man’s open eyes, which then begin to follow along as the doc moves his finger left and right. Then the man looked at me and blinked again.

“Have you ever seen anything like this before?” I ask.

“Nope.”

“And he’s dead?”

“As a doornail.”

We let the officer in charge know that we couldn’t determine the cause of death on site. A full autopsy would need to be performed to make any kind of determination. She made a note in the report that this body had a tendency to follow you with its eyes and occasionally blink. Off the record, she told me the whole case bothered her. The man, she said, didn’t have any identification, credit cards, watch, jewelry, a phone, or even money. All they found on him was a train ticket and a napkin.

Once we had him back at the office, we changed into our examination coveralls. I was asked to deal with his clothing. The man watched me the whole time as I stripped off his business suit. He even winked at me once. Also, a few odd things were noted about the clothing. First, he wasn’t wearing any undergarments. Normally, people wear a T-shirt, boxers or briefs, and socks. This guy wore none of those things, but for some reason he had on two belts, one over the other.

The doc switched on his tape recorder and then turned on the buzz saw. I watched as he performed the Y-incision, and I made a mental note of his perfect technique so that I could try and do it better next time. I’m telling you the doc is a real artist. Next came the enjoyable cracking sound as the ribcage was pried open. All while this was happening, the man’s eyes watched us. I could almost swear he was smiling too.

Over the next hour, the doc made notes as he did the exam. He handed me each organ to be weighed and cataloged. There was nothing strange or out of the ordinary about any of the internal organs.

“Okay,” the doc said. “Let’s take a look inside his head. I want to see what’s causing the eye movement.”

“Listen, do you mind if we tape the eyes shut first?”

I’m trying to remain as professional as I can, but the constant blinking is unnerving me. The doc didn’t mind, so I took some suture tape and worked up the courage to manually close the guy’s eyelids and taped them down. Immediately, they started moving fast. His whole face was convulsing and contorting itself, trying to break free of the tape.

“I don’t think he likes that,” the doc said, and then he removed the tape from the man’s eyes. The violent motions stopped right away, and he winked at the doc.

“This isn’t natural,” I said.

“There’s a scientific reason for everything. It’s our job to find it,” the doc replied.

“But he actually fought to get the tape off his eyes.”

“I guess he wants to watch. Now do you want to remove the skull, or should I?”

I’m too shaken to handle the equipment, so I watch as the doc works the saw around the man’s skull. The bastard is smiling. I’m sure of it. He’s staring at me and blinking his left eye, then his right eye back and forth. I hear the familiar popping sound caused by the top of a skull being pulled off.

“Whoa. Okay…” the doctor says.

“What is it?” I ask as I’m walking around to see what he’s seeing. The man’s eyes follow me, of course.

“I think I might have to call this one in.”

Dear God.

The brain was missing.

“Doc?” I ask.

“Not now. Pack up and go home. I’ll finish cleaning this up.” He’s saying this as he’s already dialing a number on the phone.

“But…”

“Just go. I’ll call you later.” It isn’t a request. I know when to shut up and listen. I make my way to the door knowing that the man is still staring at me.

“And don’t say anything to anyone.”

The doc never called me back. Each time I tried to reach him, it went to voicemail. I tried to go back the next day; security wouldn’t let me into the building. They said I was to await further instructions while on paid leave. That was four days ago.

This morning I heard a knock at my door. It’s a man who said he was with the medical examiner’s office, but he looks as if he’s with the CIA, FBI, NSA, or some other 3-letter agency. He asks if he can come in to talk. I open the door to let him in, and as I do, I notice two other similarly dressed men sitting in a black Suburban across the street.

The folder he hands me is a case file for the John Doe who was found on the train. All the notes about the eye movement and the blinking were removed. There was no mention of anything out of the ordinary, let alone a missing brain. It’s already got the doc’s signature on it, and this man is asking for me to sign it as well.

I try to tell him the file’s wrong, but he holds up a hand to stop me from speaking. “This is how it happened. Sign it,” he said. I ask about the doc. I want to know why I haven’t heard from him. He says the doc has been ‘let go.’ The way he says it makes me think the worst. I refuse to sign it and ask to speak to the director of the medical examiner’s office. The man informs me that would be impossible and that I am to be fired.

But fired isn’t the word he used. The word he used was ‘terminated.’

He leaves when I ask him to go, but he warns me that mentioning this to anyone would have serious consequences. As soon as the door closed behind him, I packed a bag and took off. I saw that a black Suburban was parked at the end of my street, and I might just be paranoid, but I think it pulled out after I did. Just in case I was being followed, I changed direction several times. When I felt safe enough, I pulled into a nearby residential neighborhood and found an open Wi-Fi signal.

I think something strange is going on in D.C., maybe elsewhere as well. I don't know what it could be, but I feel like the doc and I stumbled onto something we weren't supposed to know about, and now we're in danger. I found the doc's home number online. When I called, it went straight to voicemail. I tried to leave a message for him, but the line went dead once I began talking. If someone is monitoring my phone calls, it's possible my car is bugged too, and they already know exactly where I am.

Again, maybe I'm just paranoid (or crazy). Maybe there is a completely logical explanation for the scarecrow corpse that stares and blinks and winks and smiles. I can't imagine how anything like that could exist or why. I'm scared, really, really scared. I decided the only thing to do would be to write this and email it out to everyone I know. Hopefully this information will make it to someone…

If you've received this and haven't heard back from me by tomorrow, then I'm probably dead, and you'll know what I've written is true.

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

Hear It Read Aloud

Some stories are better heard in the dark.

The Scarecrow Corpse has a complete audio narration, read by Joey Patel, a digital voice. It runs 12 minutes and it's free: play it online, or download it as an MP3 or an audiobook with chapters.

Since The Scarecrow Corpse first appeared on r/nosleep in July 2012, more than a dozen narrators have read it aloud. The amazing NoSleep Podcast was first, a month later, in Season 2, Episode 8.

The *definitive* version, in my opinion, arrived in May 2014 from Chilling Tales for Dark Nights, the horror storytelling channel and podcast Craig Groshek started in 2012 to bring audio theater back from the dead. For it they brought in Markiplier: Mark Fischbach, one of YouTube's biggest stars, famous for screaming his way through horror games, with close to 39 million subscribers. Jeff Clement, always spectacular, built the sound design around his reading.

That recording has traveled further than any other story I've written to date. Counting the original upload, an animated version, a contest reading, a 2026 re-release and the two compilations it opens, Chilling Tales' versions of The Scarecrow Corpse have been viewed close to a million times (November 2026).

Listen free at stealthfiction.com

What's Next?

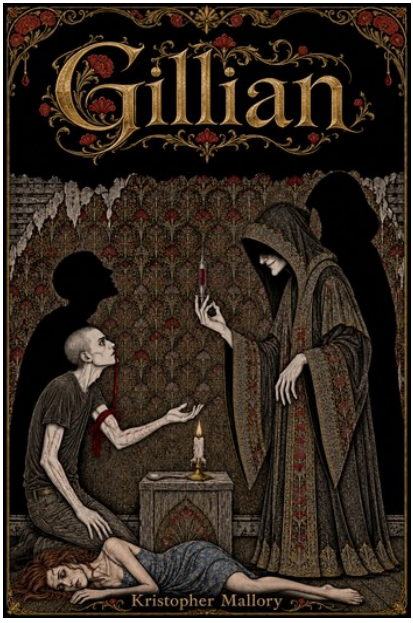
LET ME TELL YOU HOW I LOST MY EYES

A Short Story Collection by Sammy Fowler

Coming one day. Maybe. Probably not.

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More from Kristopher Mallory



GILLIAN

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

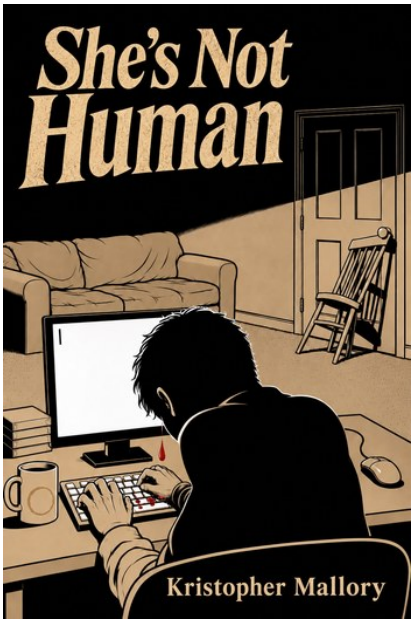
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Some addictions run deep and others summon demons too strong to overcome.

~~~~~

Praise for Gillian:

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



SHE'S NOT HUMAN

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

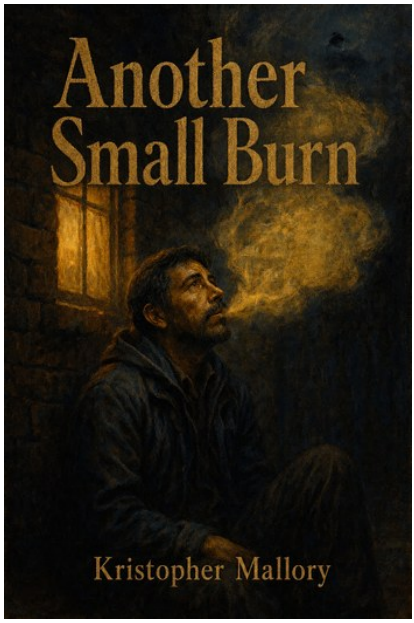
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Nose bleeding onto the keyboard, a man types out his side of the story while the woman he has locked in the bedroom begs him to open the door.

~~~~~

Praise for She's Not Human:

"You'll change your mind about who to believe three times before the last line." – *Stealth Fiction*



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*



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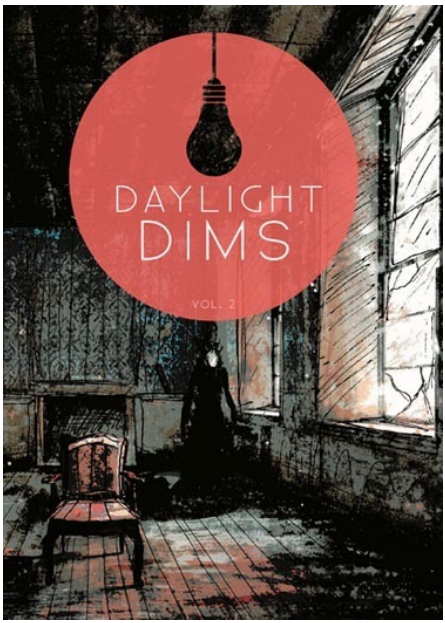
A father is arrested for the third time after his boy's bedroom is found soaked in blood, and he knows the charges will be dropped again.

~~~~~

Praise for Ruined Sheets:

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

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.

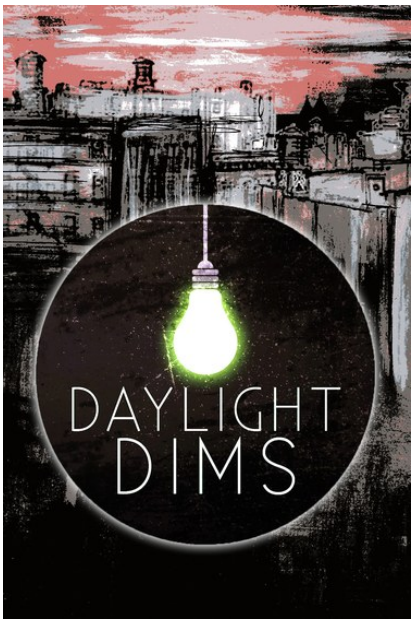
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Darkness descends again. Daylight Dims Volume Two features thirteen stories that cross the genres of surreal, dark fantasy, and heart-pounding dread. This annual horror anthology is guaranteed to twist your perception of horror. From the common, comfortable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

~~~~~

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.

~~~~~

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"*