

# HORRORWEEN



18th Ed.

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# Dancing With Werewolves & Darren Lee Compton!

Welcome Darren! Thank you so much for accepting our invitation for this spooky E-mag! For our readers, can you please introduce yourself?

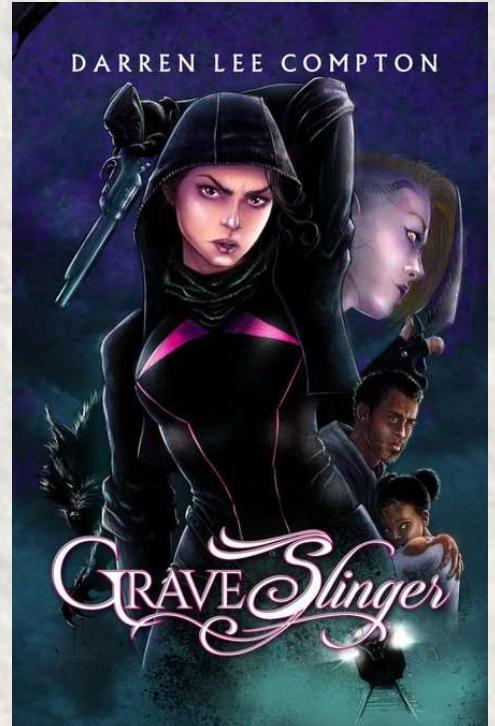


Thank you for the invitation!

My name is [Darren Lee Compton](#), and I'm a storyteller, be it through writing or illustrating. Ever since I was little, horror and comic books have been my prime focus. I was a distracted student, frequently drawing in class (sometimes got in trouble, other times a teacher would test if *I'm at least listening and would be surprised I have been* - this is likely where I developed my multitasking skills) and filling up notebooks with story ideas - usually involving werewolves.

Darren, you have a fantastic book, [Graveslinger](#), that [was reviewed by us at Scribbles Worth Book Reviews](#), and your book was highly regarded by our toughest reviewer! How has your experience with Scribble's Worth Book Reviews been so far, as an Indie writer?

It's been great. [It was a fair and thorough review](#), and even though it wasn't perfect I'm glad they enjoyed it. I've been impressed by how much help [Scribbles Worth](#) has been in sharing [Graveslinger](#). Being a little guy, I don't have a very far reach, so their help lifting me up has been generous.



# GRAVE Slinger

A monster hunting romp with werewolves, ghouls, & demons wrecking the Pacific Northwest. Fiya isn't thrilled.

*"...if you are looking for a ghoulishly good time, Graveslinger is an engaging tale that is part urban fantasy, part mystery, and all horror."*

- Booktrib

*"I applaud Darren Compton on his masterful use of descriptive language. He was able to deftly paint pictures with his words that were transportive and seemed to come alive. It enabled me to become fully engulfed by the story and often his ability to engage all the senses, (I swear there were a couple instances where I felt I could smell, taste and hear the words emanating from the pages), made me feel like I was watching a 3-D film with Taste and Smell-O-Vision!"*

- Scribble's Worth



Check Darren Lee Compton out at  
Goodreads & Bookbub

[www.darrenleecompton.com](http://www.darrenleecompton.com)

Available to purchase online at  
Amazon & Barnes & Noble

(Get [your copy on Amazon](#) / Read the [full review here](#))

Have you always written books or is this activity relatively new to you? I started writing as far back as middle school, but for a long time, I focused more on art - because I thought that was what I was

supposed to do. Most were short stories, and there were a few attempts at novels, but I never finished them.

I tried writing as a Pantser first, making it up as I go, which **didn't** work out for me. I often grew bored and never knew where to go anyway.

[Graveslinger](#) is the first novel I ever finished, which I first meticulously planned out as a graphic novel, so when I dived head first into the first draft I already had a strong skeleton to work from. Honestly, it feels like this is something I **should've** focused on a long time ago.

What drove you to start writing horror Darren? What captivated you in the genre?

To me, **there's** an excitement with horror that gives me the same rush as a rollercoaster. Even with the slow-burn stories, **I'm** excited, rarely scared, but the thrill is always there. I **love** monsters – werewolves especially.

People suggest “**write** what you **know**” and **it's** the genre I know best. One day I may step out from the genre, but for now, **it's** the sandbox I want to play in. *Is it a surprise Halloween season is my favorite time of year?*

Which lessons did you learn, and helped you evolve into the writer you are today as you were getting "the grips" of horror?

1) Continuously write until **it's** finished, no matter how ugly it is.

2) **Don't** edit as you write, you may never finish. Save the editing for after, **that's** what second and third (and fourth, fifth, sixths, & so on) drafts are for. Just get the story done. If I **didn't** learn this, I may never have finished [Graveslinger](#) at all.



- 3) Tension works great if you ease up on the gas every once in a while. Give the audience a break otherwise it will lead to exhaustion. I think relief is necessary. It's like a roller coaster getting ready to climb again before another drop.
- 4) You can be violent without being overly gory (unless you're Clive Barker, that man writes uber-gore beautifully).

Note; One thing I worked against the grain was the use of flashbacks. I never knew how hated flashbacks were in the writing community, the advice was consistently “**don’t** use them,” but, I think they provide great insight into your **character’s** background. Sure, maybe **don’t** jump to a flashback *all the time* - choose your placement with them appropriately, but **don’t** use them at all? Sorry, I **couldn’t** abide.

In your opinion, what is the most important aspect when writing horror? Build characters so you care about their situation. I think that's what made Stephen King's horror so strong. Maybe you **don’t** have to over-develop every character in the story, but at least do it for your core cast.

Let's talk about your fantastic book. [Graveslinger](#). For those who haven't read it, [or our review](#), what is the book about?

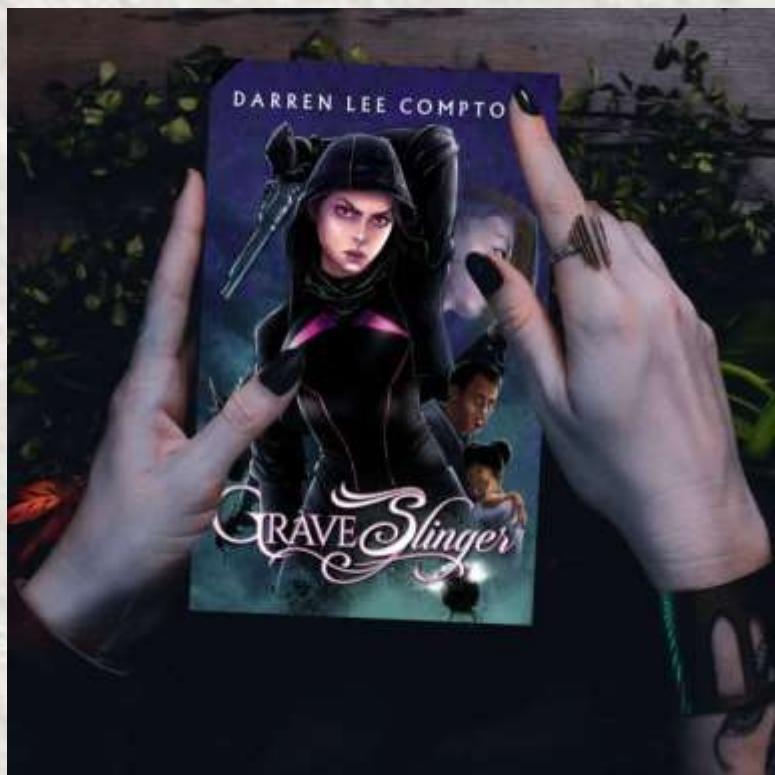
It's about a supernatural hunter-by-occupation stepping up to be a hero while forced off duty.

[\(Read all the reviews of the book here\)](#)

Fiya **doesn’t** really care if she gets paid, she just knows in her gut it's the right thing to do, and will continue fighting to protect others until **there’s** nothing left to fight.



We get glimpses of her upbringing as an orphaned girl being raised by Rutger Bronson, another full-time hunter of the supernatural, as well as the present-day plot dealing with a cult of demons attempting to raise their lord from the dead. This cult



hires werewolf mercenaries for muscle. And I let "a little" zombie plague called Ghoul Fever run amock in the background. Fun times.

Our reviewer, Reviewblr, made high praises of your approach of the "human monster" in the book and the twist you made on that. What drove you to write that?

While it's easy to have supernatural monsters be the

bad guys, I'm not going to let humans off the hook.

I think human trafficking is one of the scariest things imaginable, especially for minors. Not to mention serial killers hiding in plain sight.

I think the idea of a human monster being scarier than supernatural monsters is because we are human, yet with all the documentaries out there...we still don't truly understand our dark side, and that's why I think the human monster is scarier. The human monster can **really** happen. Could that also mean I can have supernatural monsters that aren't villains? It's possible.

A female-centered book. How challenging was it, for you, to write a woman as your MC, and so relatable to the reader, especially women?

I'm flattered to hear this. It **didn't** feel that difficult to me.

I was never a “man’s man” type growing up (*and believe me*, it felt worse as a kid in Texas), but I did have a lot of female friends, so I would *hear* them (even if I **didn't** understand it, I would still listen because sometimes that’s all they really needed - someone to vent to).

I’ve heard their stories about what happened to them. Being empathetic, and paying attention to others around me, probably lent a hand. I guess being in that position made it less challenging for me to write a woman. I **didn't** even see it as an obstacle.

The positive marks from female beta readers helped make me believe in myself and what I was writing. I figured as long as I built the female MC up like a real person, I **shouldn't** have a problem.



I think the biggest compliment on this has been from my sister. She **doesn't** read much, if at all, but she's read Graveslinger and brought attention specifically to Fiya’s introduction and how real it felt.

I think having a female protagonist just feels natural in the horror genre. Sure I’ve spiced it up with pulpy action so it **isn't** a *conventional* creepy horror story, but it’s still in the ballpark - and it just felt right having a woman front and center. They’re often seen as more vulnerable, so the urge to have them triumph and

overcome the beasts is stronger, and when they **do**...it's so much more satisfying.

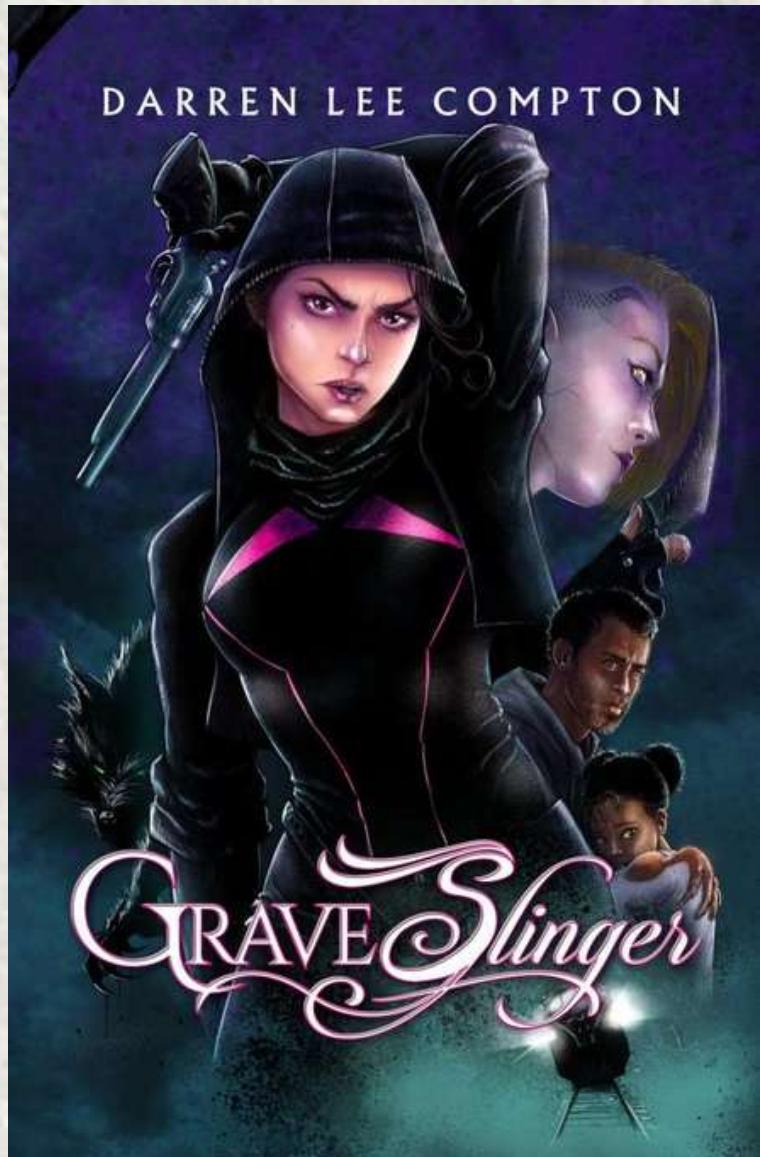
You make the INCREDIBLE covers of [Graveslinger](#). Can you tell us about the process of making them?

A **chore!** I'm kidding, *a little*. I've been nitpicky over my art, it's been difficult settling on a piece for a cover. I went through four complete paintings before the final cover, not counting sketch ideas and rough drafts.

I prefer illustrating with real paint and pencils, but unfortunately, I can't seem to photograph them well enough for proper reproduction, so I've forced myself to learn how to paint digitally.

Plus, I could at least do my own artwork for the covers if I never get picked up from a traditional publisher.

I prefer illustrated covers, like old pulp novels or anything Drew Struzan painted, so I want to continue that tradition. Since I like to post the progress of my [art on social media](#), cover reveals won't exactly be surprising, which is a drawback I guess but I like sharing my progress when I can.



# Scribble's Worth

Book Reviews

Still about the covers, there are many interesting elements on it, for sure, and I love the way it was designed from the start to "wrap" the physical book. Can you talk a little about the first cover in particular?

Sure! I took a vote on social media and the people overwhelmingly voted that they preferred wrap covers, so that's what I went for.

FIYA PRATT DIAZ HAS ONE JOB:  
MAKING SURE THE DEAD STAYS DEAD.  
IT USED TO PAY VERY WELL.

Thomas and his daughter, Liama, escape captivity from a strange cult, finding help in the hands of Fiya Pratt Diaz, a supernatural hunter who specializes in dealing with the undead. Together the three uncover the truth behind the cult members and their release of the deadly plague known as Ghoul Fever in the Seattle area. It seems that the cult has something even bigger up their sleeves though and they'll do anything to bring Thomas and Liama back, including hiring a pack of werewolves to retrieve the father and daughter.

With the stakes growing more dire than ever, can Fiya overcome her own doubts and reservations to survive and do what's right despite terrible odds?

"I'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF READING THIS BOOK, AND IT'S FANTASTIC. TALENTED SON OF BITCH, FOR SURE. REMEMBER THIS TITLE, FOLKS, CAUSE IT'S A GOOD ONE."

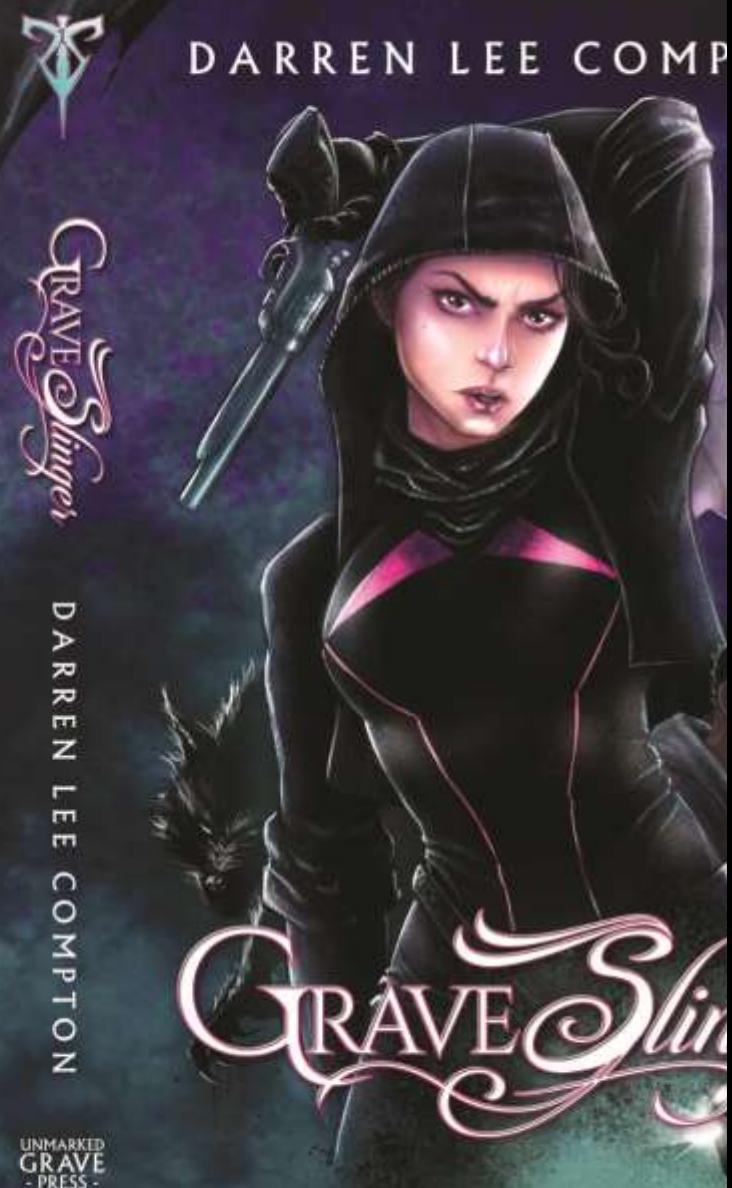
SETH MILLER, THE HORROR SYNDICATE.COM

"DARREN LEE COMPTON RE-IMAGINES THE ZOMBIE GENRE TO STELLAR NEW HEIGHTS WHILE SHOWCASING AN OUTSTANDING NEW FEMALE ACTION HERO."

ARTHUR BARILLAS, AUTHOR OF THE SISTERHOOD OF LIGHT SERIES

COVER ART AND DESIGN BY DARREN LEE COMPTON

TRIGGER WARNING: GRAPHIC VIOLENCE  
ADULT LANGUAGE & SEXUAL ASSAULT



The composition itself is definitely more of a homage to the type of posters Drew Struzan would illustrate (his Indiana Jones and

the Temple of Doom poster is my favorite), and I tried to make sure the core cast was represented on the cover - though someone, in particular, is missing (I just **couldn't** find the room to squeeze Rutger in). I wanted to have more elements, but some beta readers believed they **could've** been too "spoilery" so I backed off.

Though vague, I wanted to represent a demonic wingspan, and still have ghouls present in the artwork, and left them wrapped around the back.

Where can people get Graveslinger and know more about it?

Right now it's available on both [Amazon](#) and [Barnes & Noble.com](#) for purchase.

Ok, a new book is coming, and the cover is almost done. Where can people get sneak peeks of it?

It's coming along, slowly but surely. Wrath of the Worm Wraith is next in line, and while it is its own story, some unanswered questions [in Graveslinger](#) are dealt with. I'm also starting to polish the rough draft of the third book, Breath of Blood - a vampire tale blended with a murder mystery game held at a Hotel in the mountains, which was fun to write. It is very much inspired by Agatha Christie stories, but with Fiya hunting a Vampire in the middle of it.



My free time isn't what it used to be, but I'm doing my best to use it wisely. [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) are the best places to spot me in the wild. Sometimes it's me venting, sometimes it's an art update, and other times it's me just giving myself a pat on the back. Facebook would be the one to probably get to know me better since I'm more interactive with friends and family there.

In addition to social media, after I polish *Wrath of the Worm* *Wrath* a couple more times, I may slip a sample on my website, [www.darrenleecompton.com](http://www.darrenleecompton.com), as I did with [Graveslinger](#). A random snippet to get the juices flowing.

Darren, before we go, can you share your favourite part of *Graveslinger* with us?

It's a tie. First, [the interlude chapter First Blood](#), where Fiya joins Rutger on her first big monster hunt. I enjoyed the character building and the break from the main storyline. I feel like I really had a chance to build the bond between them. And to talk up how good In & Out Burger pickles are.

The other is the climax, the entire sequence. The action was a rush to write, and I still had the same thrill going through and editing it with every pass. It's the most "comic-book" feeling of the entire book and what everything was leading to. In my head, it's the most vivid, and I admit it would've been incredible to draw ... if I had the patience to put in that level of artwork.

4- Thank you so much for being here with us Darren! Cheers!

Thank you for having me, it's been a pleasure. Happy Halloween!



# Sky Curse By Janet Kravetz

[Sky Curse](#) is the [first book in Janet Kravetz's](#) genre-blurring The Chosen Five series. In this sci-fi dystopian-themed novel, the author takes readers into the *not-so-distant* future, where humanity has brought Earth to its knees. Climate change is rampant and the dangerous weather is unpredictable. The population has overwhelmed the planet, and humans are using advanced technology to “evolve”—into cyborgs. Not only that, but AI are a step away from knowing they can run things.

The process has begun to shift away from Earth to another moon farther out in the solar system. It is believed by most humans that the Earth has now run its course, and things

are too far out of hand. They don't think the planet is capable of being saved, but Cecilia believes differently. She wishes to leave Earth herself, however, her dreams indicate a different path is the one she must follow.

The technology in this book is truly advanced. The author details cyborgs, enhanced DNA, PowerNap pillows, learning while “dreaming,” and *so* much more. Technology has advanced rapidly, but with the advancements of technology have come serious dangers.

The world is divided. The middle class no longer exists, and poverty is rampant.

While this book is largely fiction, steeply based in the science fiction realm with dystopian highlights and overtures, there is more than meets the eye. As [you dig deeper into this book](#),

you'll discover some educational nuggets buried here and there. These elements take this book's storytelling to the next level, and Kravetz brings the point home by talking about particulars so many of us are familiar with.

This book has a slow start. That much is a fact. However, once the story really gets underway, it will capture your attention and even pull you to the edge of your seat. The drama will entice you to find out what happens next, and The Sky Curse's blurred genres will surprise you and have you cheering for the characters to turn the tide and save all who call Earth their home.

Book Score: 8.5

[Get your copies on Amazon](#)



## Cybernetic Horrors & Dreadful Tchills with The Legendary, Matt Adcock!

THIRD TIME, IN A YEAR! (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> appearance) Well, congratulations, you have just beat a record my friend. Welcome Matt! How are you been doing lately?



BOOM – I'm so excited to be back ([again](#)), this is the by far the best writer's resource and source of inspiration out there!!

Thank you Matt, we really appreciate it. How's the podcast growing? You reached 1000 downloads a few weeks back, congratulations!

Being co-host of [Hosts In The Shell](#) podcast is an absolute joy ([E-mag about them](#)). If you've ever wondered what might happen when two middle-aged men rocking unhealthy fascinations with all things cyberpunk are let loose to interview fans of various cyber-media – well, I [have good](#)



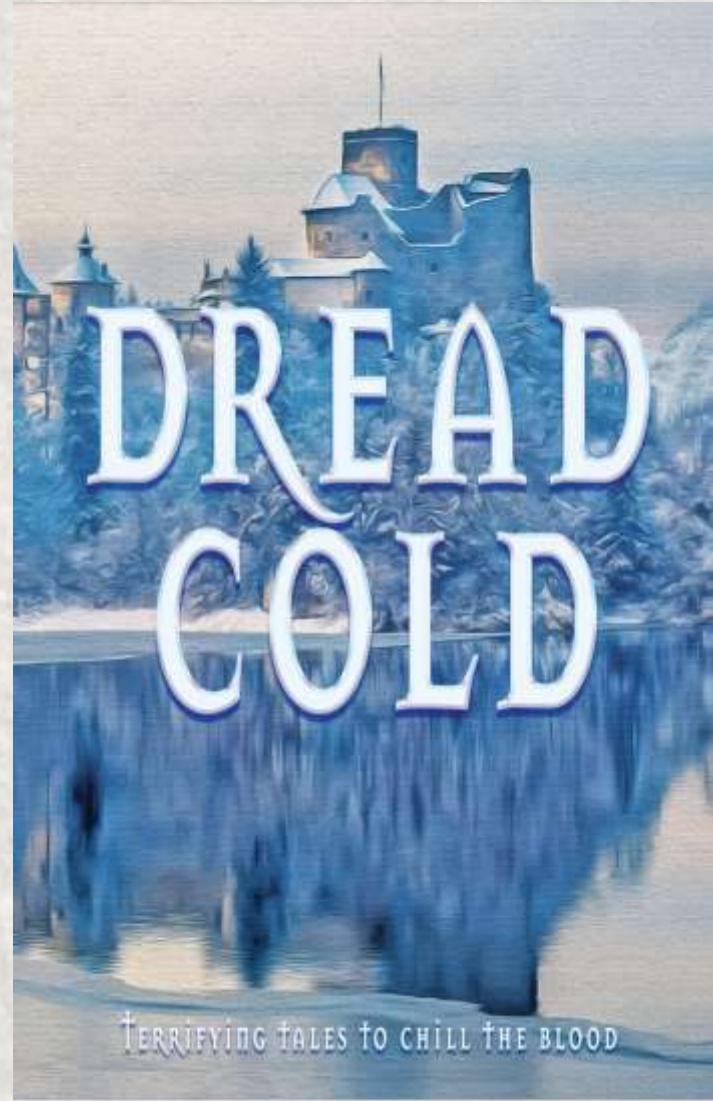
news for you...

Let's kick it, shall we? On the first appearance, Matt, you told us that you had horror projects coming, and they are now out, and ready for spooky season. Please tell us a little about them.

Well first up is new horror anthology DREAD COLD from Fantastic Books which they describe thus: *'Here comes the fear. Inspired by a lonely vista – white snow, a still blue lake, a castle on a hill – authors were challenged to weave their magic.'* It includes competition winner, The Loop, by novelist Mark Henderson and an invited contribution from guest editor and award-winning horror author, Matt Adcock (*you may have heard of him* ) who also wrote the foreword.

(Available in Amazon US &UK)

This collection is not for the faint hearted. You have been warned. I'm also querying another scary short which is about the witch drownings a local river... more on that one day soon!?



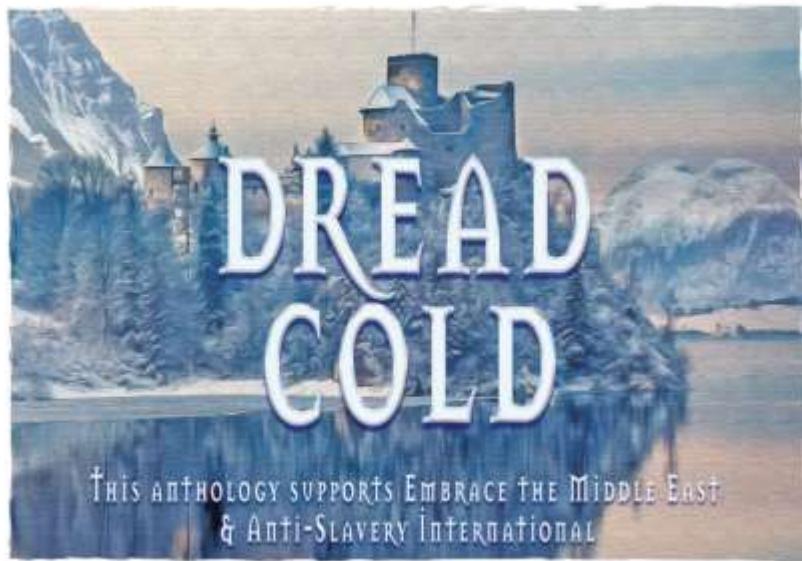
Yes. Matt, what drove you to write this new story in particular?

I have a darkness within me – and when I saw this competition to write a scary story I felt compelled to unleash that darkness. My story 'The Power of Darkness to Reach Out and Touch Us' features a very disturbing exposure to complete darkness experiment – make of that what you will...

What is the current reception of readers? I mean, we know you are a great author, but, horror is a mile or two from cyberpunk and satire.

People seem to be liking it, by 'liking it' I mean 'looking at me with slight fear in their eyes because I must have a serious psychosis to come up with such grim stuff'. [The book is selling well](#) though

which is great because proceeds from it go to excellent charities who are standing for justice – so it's not all bad.



## HERE COMES THE FEAR

Inspired by a lonely vista – white snow, a still blue lake, a castle on a hill – these authors weave their magic.

Is it an ancient castle or a modern hotel? Is the horror dressed in darkness waiting in the dungeons, or as an innocent by the side of the water?

Includes competition winner, The Loop, by novelist *Mark Henderson* and an invited contribution from guest editor and award-winning author, *Matt Adcock*.

Scare yourself and support charities too - a donation from sales will go to Embrace the Middle East and Anti-Slavery International.



To get *Dread Cold* scan the QR code or visit <https://getbook.at/DreadCold> or [fantasticbooksstore.com](http://fantasticbooksstore.com)



Can you share some comments on this particular work to our readers?

Sure a guy called Stuart [on Amazon](#) wrote: "These gripping stories will inspire fear, anxiety, and the dread of the title. You'll feel the cold, the inescapable chill that numbs the body while leaving the mind free to

dwell on the inevitable fate facing the protagonists encountering such horrors."

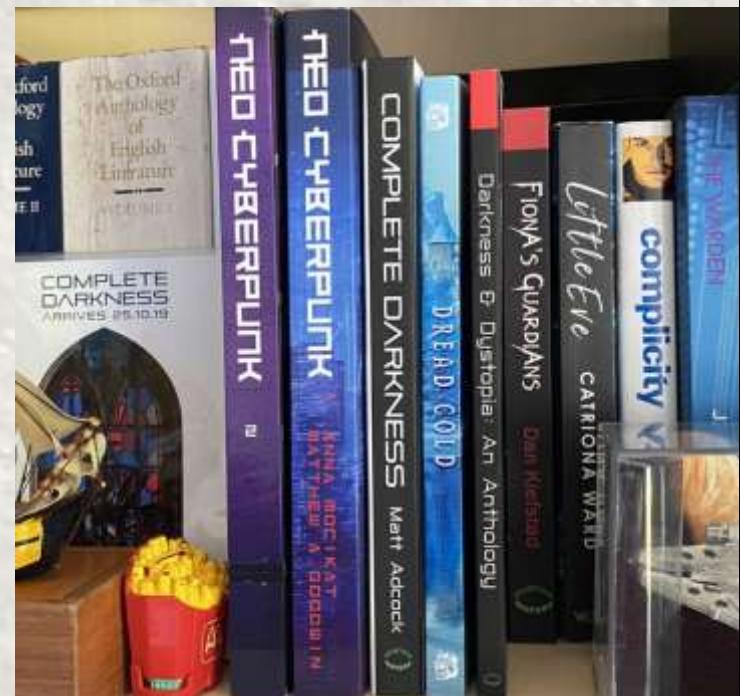
And another guy [on Goodreads](#) put: “Adcock shows the catastrophic effect of sustained total darkness on the human mind, in hair-raising detail. His scary novel [Complete Darkness](#), won critical accolades after its publication in 2019...” I think he made the connection between there being some scary elements [of my novel](#) and this [new short story](#).

Matt, I've been scratching my head a little on this. From Cyberpunk to Horror. How did that happen? Did you wake up one morning and said: “Ah, let me scare the living hell out of my beloved readers? Hahahahaha.”

As that [last reviewer](#) noted – there isn't really a massive jump from grim things happening in a future cyberpunk world to horrific stuff happening now. I've always been a horror fan, I was that kid reading the James Herbert books in the school library – it's the rollercoaster thrill of scaring or witnessing something very grim but then being able to put it down and walk back to ‘normal’ life.

What were the challenges you encountered in this transition, albeit temporary, from Cyberpunk and brutally relatable and funny sexy books in the future, to haunting castles?

It was a fun challenge to write limited to present day tech and come up with a story that hopefully people will remember with a shudder for years... Why are humans capable of atrocious deeds? Getting to explore a purely evil mind was a fascinating change of focus – a bit like moving between courses at a dinner – if [Complete Darkness](#) was a tasty rare steak, [The Power of Darkness](#) is perhaps a very spicy cheeseboard, best served with a decent Rioja?



Can you tell us a little of the backstory, the back-stage that was involved in writing this story?

The Power of Darkness – was my first effort at a competition entry. So when the organisers liked it so much that they asked me to help judge the other entries and edit the book with them it was a huge opportunity. There is a fear when you put yourself out there to be judged, and the stories were judged ‘blind’ so that was interesting in itself. I would have just be happy to have got some nice feedback – but to be the ‘invited contributor’ is an honour!

What is the coolest part of writing horror books? We felt a touch of macabre on your awesome novel and comic book, Complete Darkness, too. Did you decide to throttle on that, or there is no correlation?

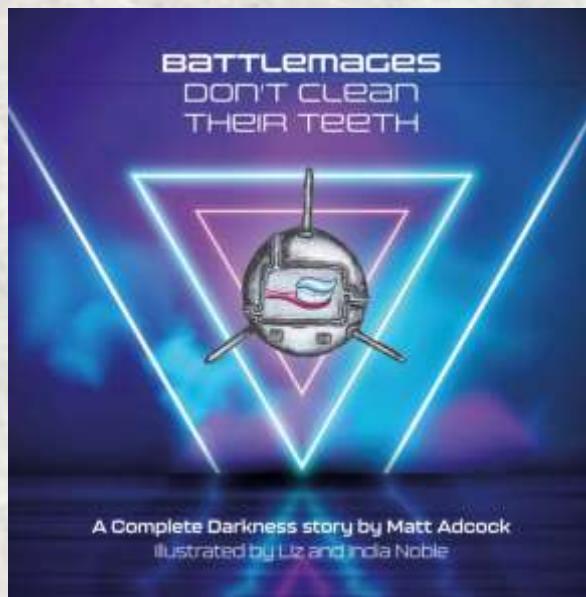
You got it man – what I like about speculative fiction be it sci-fi or horror is that the limits of ‘normal’ are off. You can take things to extremes that **you’d** hope would never become a reality. The concept \*slight spoiler\* of someone who just enjoys watching other people die – for their own amusement \*Spoiler ends\* excited me...



Where can people get this new book of yours and what can we expect next?

DREAD COLD is available everywhere – Amazon is probably easiest. And oooh boy I have such sights to show you in the future. First up I’ve just finished a Young Adult ‘my first cyberpunk’ picture

book which features characters from [Complete Darkness](#) in a spin off short called Battlemages Don't Clean Their Teeth'.



It is illustrated by a talented mother and daughter team, India who's 16 is autistic and so we decided to make her version of the characters like GiX and Cleric20 etc black and white so readers of any age can colour them in – as a kind of dress the heroes as you'd like – kind of a mindfulness exercise (or just your chance to play dress up). There will be an online gallery on social media that readers can send pics of

their coloured pages in to too (which will nab them some merchandise!).

Then there's issue two of [the Complete Darkness comic](#) which includes some colour pages for the first time. The next full Darkmatters Novel 'Inherent Darkness' and a '90s set heist thriller novel influenced by Point Break, Heat and erm the film Aliens.



People can subscribe to your blog to keep themselves updated on your works, or the podcast is better at the moment?

Ha – [my blog](#) is where I review stuff I like, films, games, books etc – let me know if you think you'd like a review on there

\*[cough like the one of Julio's work](#)\*.

Lots of people get in touch to say that they listen to [the](#)



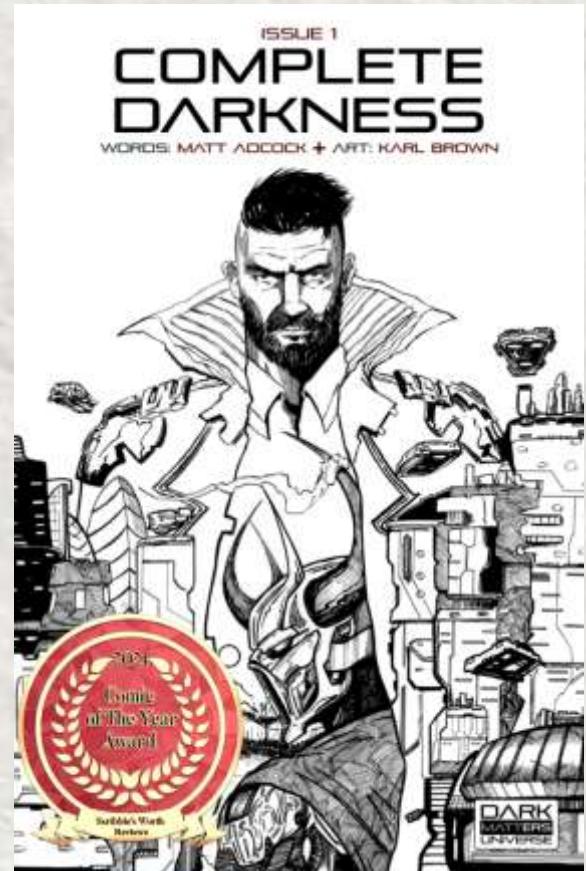
[podcast](#) even if they're not cyberpunk fans as apparently Jon is a fun guy to hang out with ([and he most definitely is!](#)).

Do you have a message for your fans, like us, and for people that haven't yet read your books?

Thank you – yes my message is [BUY AND READ MY BOOKS / COMICS](#) etc... ([reviews here](#)) Ha – just kidding – but it is always great when people read my stuff and let me know what they think. I'm happy if you like it or even if you **don't**, one person recently put a 2 star review of four words: 'Too Sci-fi, Too Horny' which made me wonder how repressed that reader must be?

Thank you so much for being here with us again Matt! It was a total pleasure, as always! Cheers!

It's an honour - I love what you're doing for the writing community!!



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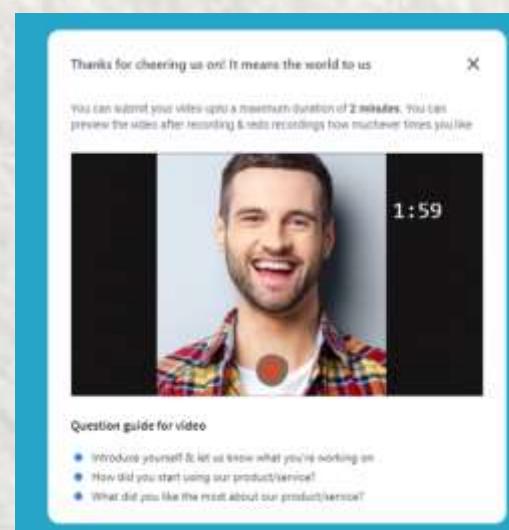
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# THE QUEEN is BACK!! Let Horror rule under Julie!



Your Highness, welcome back to our E-mag. It is such a pleasure to have you here with us again! How have you been doing lately?

Thank you, Julio. I'm always delighted to participate in your E-mag ([1<sup>st</sup>](#), [2<sup>nd</sup>](#), [3<sup>rd</sup>](#), appearances). I've been doing quite well, spending the past five and a half months in Scotland with my writing partner, [Derek R. King](#), creating, writing, and teaching. Thank you for asking.



Most welcome, Your Highness. Before we go to your most recent escapes to more Royal Parts of the world, we have to know: When did it start? When did you say: "You know what? I'm going to scare the hell out of people, and I'm going to be amazing at it"?

Well, I hope I am amazing at it, but [my journey as a writer](#) didn't begin until after I completed my degrees in my fifties (which, by the way, I'm still in- barely). What can I say? I'm a late bloomer. But I never set out to scare readers *per se*. I set out to expose the shadows lurking within man and to be fair, that's scary as hell.

Did you have any spooky influences in your early life? Any movies, cartoons, experiences, or books?

Yes, the house I lived in as a small child was old and creepy, especially the basement. It didn't help that we, my siblings and I, knew our grandmother, who previously lived in the house, had fallen down the basement stairs to her death. Plus, in this same basement, there was this hole, a recess in the wall, carved out of the earth- dirt walls, top, and bottom, too, and it was dark, actually pitch black like a void into nowhere. Scary!

Also, I remember sneaking down the hallway to watch the original TV series Dark Shadows from around the corner. I was supposed to be asleep. It was my first exposure to vampires. Terrifying, too, when you are five, but I loved it. My parents also were huge fans of Hitchcock and the Twilight Zone series. Both definitely influence my horror writing style.

Finally, because it was real, the most horrifying event was to see my mother in her casket. I will never forget the image of her. I was only eight years old.

In your vast experience, Your Highness, what drives people to scare other people through words?

I suppose there are a variety of reasons. Some may enjoy having the ability to frighten others. Some may be exorcising their own demons. Others may feel compelled to write a particular story.

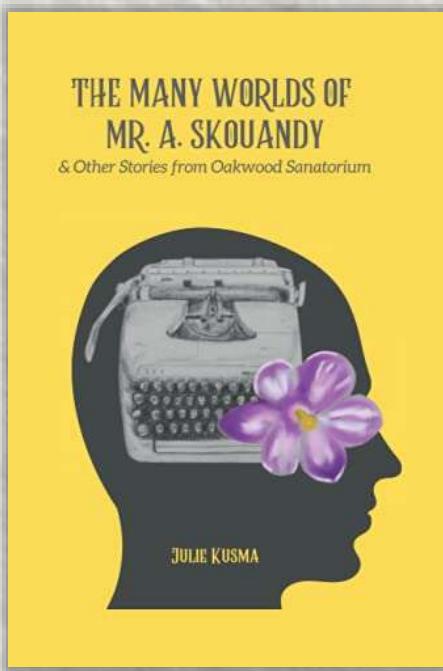


What drives you to scare the hell out of us in your books?

The latter motivation is me. I have stories pop into my head, and those characters keep talking until I write the story down.

What is the scariest book that you have written so far, as per readers' reviews?

The most terrifying story I've written is [The Many Worlds of Mr. A. Skouandy and Other Stories from Oakwood Sanatorium](#). The



depth of the psychological aspect is terrifying but it hasn't been widely read yet. *As per reader reviews* (on [Amazon](#) & [Goodreads](#)), stories from [Stuck That Way & Other Quandaries](#) would rank pretty high because of the realness of the situations-psychological horror, is the scariest, I believe.

Now, my 50-word micro fictions on my website ([Julie-Kusma.com](#)) always get kudos for being frightening. My most recent micros are part of my Scottish Gothic series inspired by the beautifully haunting landscapes in Scotland. I hope your readers [will check them out and subscribe too.](#)



One of your partners-in-crime, (and editing), [Jill Yoder](#), is building the [Scarefest-Inn series](#) with you for quite a while now. Can you talk a little about how that came to be?



Jill and I actually attended the same university at the same time, and then both accepted positions as content writers for Coffee House Writers at the same time. That's where our friendship began. We are the best of friends, and in one of our conversations, we came up with the idea of writing a series together. We decided to use an 'epistolary' style where the entire story is revealed through the exchange of letters. And, since both of our names begin with the letter J, it became "The 'Dear J' Letters."

So far in this series, we have created 'Between Friends', 'Polarized', 'They', 'Reunion', and the current 'Scarefest Inn'. Julio starts with a J. Would you like a guest appearance in our letters?



**I'd** be honored, **we'll** see. Your Grace, what is the main difference between you and Jill when it comes to scaring people in that series? For those who haven't read it yet.

We are similar in our presentation of horror-like aspects as we both enjoy psychological horror. Both of our voices are a little different, but that makes our collaborations more interesting for sure.

Can you share your favorite part of this series with our readers?

I found Between Friends quite interesting as Jill and I both found the storyline too close to our personal experiences. And to tell you the

truth, I think we would buy a cottage like in the story and love meeting there to vacation together.

An inside-scoop here for our readers: Will we ever have a book of about or based on this [fantastic horror web-series](#)?

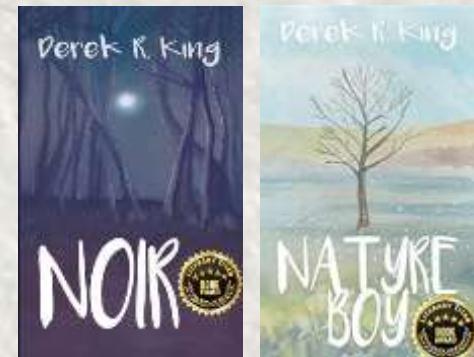
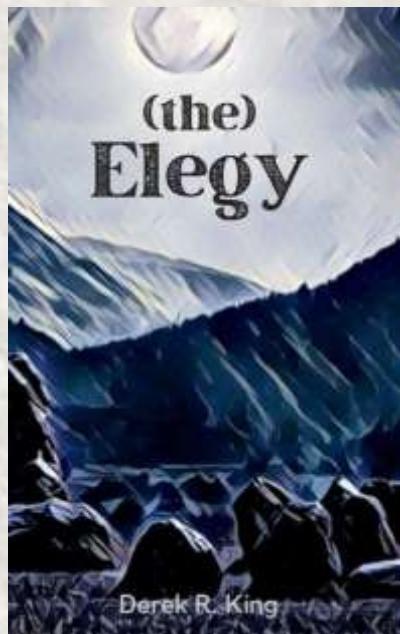
Jill and I have discussed this, and yes, we will compile a collection based on "[The 'Dear J' Letters](#)."

The UK! We know, that, the "Royal Couple", has met, and wrote books while you were in the UK! Three books, is that it? Can you tell us about those?

Actually, as solo projects, while I was in Scotland, I finished [The Crooked Crone & Other Mystifications](#) (releases Nov 1 and is available for [preorder now](#)), and I wrote [Which Witch Are You? An Inspirational Halloween Oracle](#) (YA), and [The Circus is in Town](#) (Children's Picture Book).



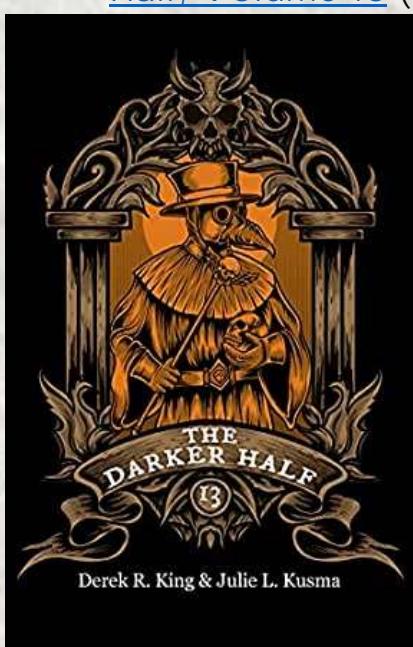
Together, Derek R. King and I wrote and [released Our Halloween: Mysteries, Monsters, & More](#) (Family Holiday Keepsake), [Jaggy Little Babies](#) (Picture Book), [Alphabites: The Alphabet One Bite at a Time](#) (Preschool Concept Book), [Amore, The Lighter Half, Volume 2](#) (Love Poetry), [The Enchanted Faerie Realm](#) (Children's Poetry Book), [The Poetry Mouse](#) (Children's Storybook), and [Our Planets: Moons, Myths, & More](#) (Family Educational).



Derek released [\(the\) Elegy](#) (the third in his trilogy of poetry, including [Noir](#) and [Natyre Boy](#), which releases Oct 7 and is available for preorder), and [Urban](#) (a new gritty and hip poetry collection releasing Nov 1 and is available for [preorder now](#)). That is since my arrival in Scotland on Mar 30 through mid-September. So just a few more than three. LOL

You, Julie, and Derek have a very dark dynamics, in the good sense of the term. He is The King Of Noir, and You, The Queen of Horror. I know we talked a little about this [on our previous E-mag](#), but not on the macabre side. How does this work out between the two of you?

Well, I think at our creepy best, we write things like [The Darker Half, Volume 13](#) (Gothic Poetry), and [Santa's Claws, The Darker Half, Volume 12](#) (Dark Holiday Poetry). But we want to write inspirational, lovey, cute things too. Humorous for both of us, given our writing pasts, we have found a delightful way of bringing our King of Noir and Queen of Horror together in light-hearted books like [Jaggy Little Babies](#) and [Alphabites: The Alphabet One Bite at a Time](#). We also have more dark books for

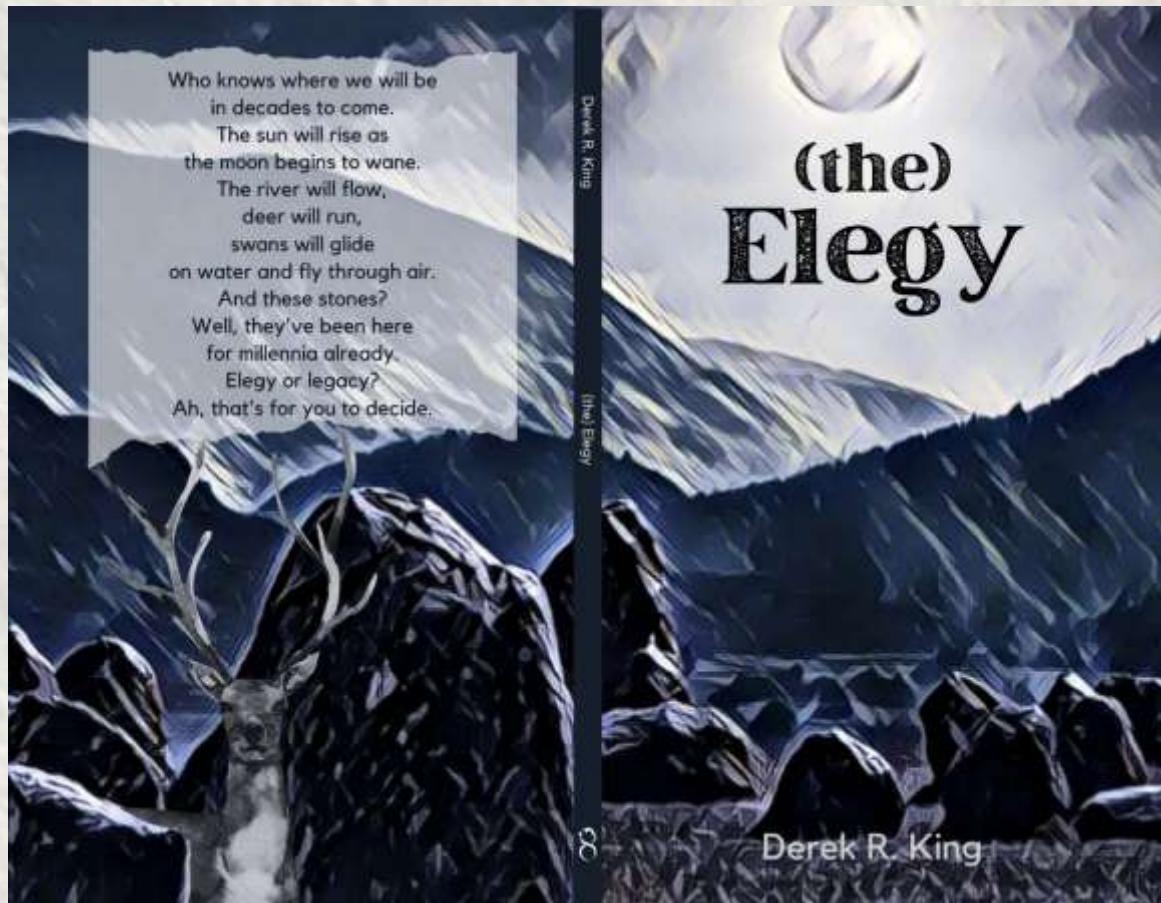


adults, like the 2023 release of Twisted Tales, The Darker Half, Volume 10.

But if we are both in dark mode, we can get extremely dark. *So much* so that we don't write that stuff down. Usually, one of us leans that way, and the other lifts the **other's** darker mood into the light.

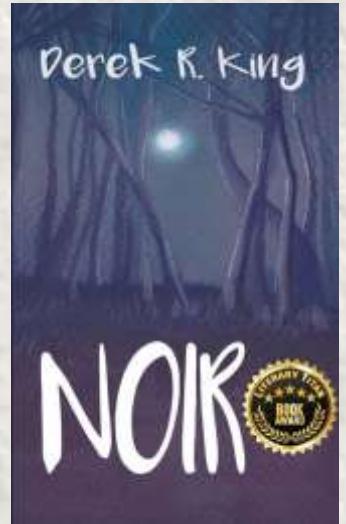
Derek told me, on a tweet, that you made some of the covers for his books, which are very cool, by the way. The deer and the moonlight, where did that come from? What made you think of that image?

Ha! So funny you mention the cover for [\(the\) Elegy](#). The deer was Derek's idea, and I said no, that won't work. He insisted, so I said let me see what I can do- that's how the deer made its way on the cover. And, by the way, Derek was right. It looks amazing. I did the cover for Urban too. It's funky, and we love it.



You know [Derek's Noir poetry](#) better than most of us, and you are a poetess yourself, but Derek has more books in the Noir part, so, which spooky books of his would you recommend?

[Noir is my favorite](#). There are so many poems in it I relate to, like 'Poison' with lines like "*In a hollow, empty room, filled with darkness, filled with gloom...*" and 'The Healing Despair' with "*Feel the poison in the mist, sense its pain, feel it twist.*" [This collection of dark poetry is superb](#). But wait until you read Urban. This gritty collection may become number one for me.



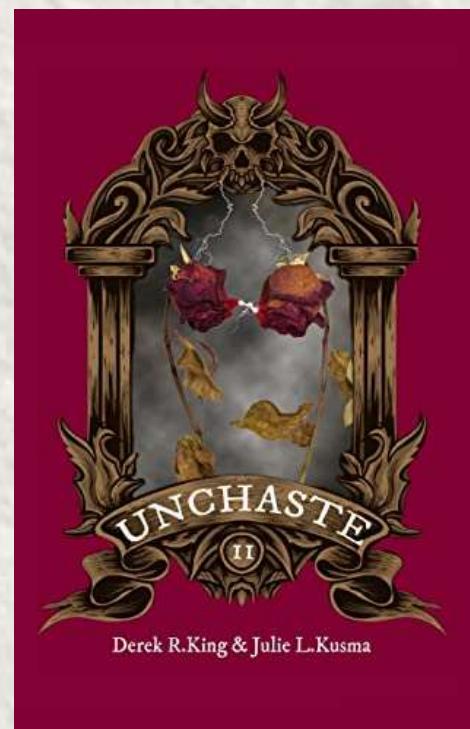
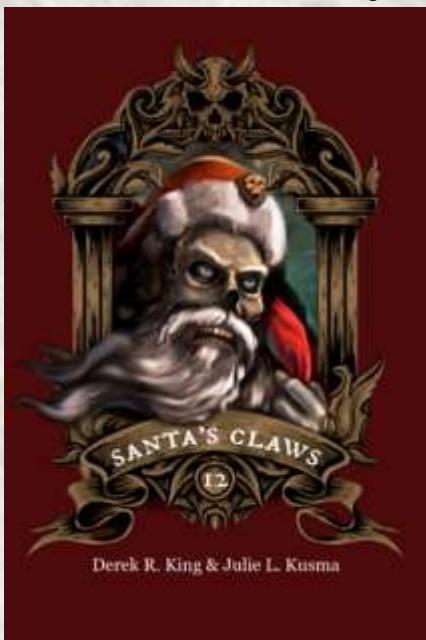
Which books that you two wrote together that will freak people out?

From a scary aspect, [Santa's Claws](#) is dark and disturbing because

the gothic poetry is centered around Christmas themes. But freaked out *in other ways*, probably [Unchaste](#), a collection of sultry poetry, because it seems out of our wheelhouse, but it's not.

We both are willing and able to write what comes to us despite the genre. We are both very pleased that this book, [Unchaste, The Darker Half, Volume 11](#), was just placed in five UK university libraries:

The Bodleian Library Oxford University, the Cambridge University Library, National Library of Scotland, National Library of Wales, and Trinity College Dublin. Amazing!



Truly glorious! On your next projects, will we get UK haunted castles in your stories soon? Or something more macabre?

[On my website](#), I've been releasing '[Scottish Gothic](#),' a series of 50-word horror micro fictions based on things I've seen and experienced in Scotland. But we have two stories that come to mind that we will write soon. Both dark. Both are based on Scottish folklore.

Thank you so much, Your Highness, for being here with us and shedding your grace upon our readers. Would you bless us with some words of departure towards all of your readers and fans?

I shall leave you with this—

May your days be full of light.  
May the only darkness that finds you  
reach out from pages of books.  
But if the dark finds you alone at night,  
may you have the courage,  
like the characters hidden on your Nook,  
to defend your honor, to protect your heart,  
to give you light, even a tiny spark.  
You're never alone,  
for I'm right here.  
I'm always with you,  
I'm your shadow, my dear.  
With love, the Queen of Horror.



**Julie Kusma**

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