



Chasing the Sandman

Brandon Meyers

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A man discovers Death is a passenger on his train car. A contract killer rises from the grave to finish one last job. A young boy is given a magical pen with the power to bring anything he draws to life.

This collection of 22 macabre short stories rides the spectrum of dreamland's darker regions, and is guaranteed to give you the chills and stretch the limits of your imagination.

Chasing the Sandman Details

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From Reader Review Chasing the Sandman for online ebook

Andrew Leon says

...let's get to the technicals. As is generally the case with independently published books, this one could have used an editor; however, it wasn't too bad. Other than the repeated issue with the comma after the conjunction with an independent clause following (my current peeve), there were no consistent errors. Just the occasional typo and left out word. All in all, it's a pretty good job that would say is a B. If not for that one comma thing, I'd say a B+ to an A-, but, then, there's the comma thing. That's probably a bigger issue for me than, well, pretty much everyone else, though (and I have a whole post about commas coming up; won't that be fun!).

But let's look at the book itself. Great title, right? I think it's a great title. My only issue with it is that it didn't seem to have any relation to the stories within the book. Often, with a collection like this as with the title of an album, the title will have something to do with a theme for the stories or with one story in particular. There are no stories with the same title nor is the line used anywhere, so, unless I missed the theme, it's just a cool title. I'm not sure how I feel about that, although I'm sure it won't bother a lot of people. That's probably just me and my hang up with titles, but you can blame that on Samuel Delaney.

Jumping into the book, though, there is a lot of good to be said about it. Most of the stories are quite good with a twist that you can see coming but can't quite figure out. It makes them interesting in a way that most things of this genre are not. In fact, I'd love to go through them individually, but I don't think I could say anything of substance about them that wouldn't give away more than you'd want to know, so I'm not going to do that.

I will say that the first story hooked me immediately, for reasons I can't say, and kept me going even though... well, see, I can't say that, either. What I can say is that "Graveyard Shift" is a freaky story even though I think it probably shouldn't be, and that says a lot for the author. It made my skin crawl, and I'm not even afraid of... yeah, see, I can't say that.

"Runaway Train" is unusual and sad. Sort of a unique perspective.

"Spirit House" is great even though I saw where it was going. But, see, it's one of those that I really wanted to be longer. I felt stifled by the shortness of it.

"Spirit of Christmas" is one where you think you know what's going to happen but the author pulls one over on you. You know there must be some twist coming, but you just can't figure out what it could be, and, then, when it happens, you smack your forehead. Brilliant!

Amidst all the horror slips "Into the Deep," a great little sci-fi piece that hints at a lot more. There's a bigger story there, but the one that's told is a good one.

"Seeking Shade" is great. I probably have a particular fondness for it due to its shadowy theme. There are some interesting things going on there and more to be told, I'm sure.

And I loved "1st Appearance"! The comic book thing is right up my alley and is the kind of thing any comic nerd dreams about. Okay, well, probably the second thing any comic nerd dreams about, but we can't talk about the first one in polite company. Okay, so, really, the main thing any comic nerd dreams about is getting

super powers, but if you leave that one off the list... Just forget that I'm talking. Except keep reading.

All of that aside, the story I liked most, "Spilled Ink," was also the one I was frustrated with. It's a great example of what I think of as a story that's too short. It's a great idea and well written, except the author makes a couple leaps of logic that I have to assume were made to the story an acceptable length, except that I would much rather that it be twice as long or three times as long to get all the story in there rather than have it be whittled down. So I think it's a great story, but it's definitely too short.

As is the last story, "Denatured," although I didn't like that one as much. However, I might have liked it a lot more if it didn't feel so sparse. The ironic thing about that is that I think "Spilled Ink" and "Denatured" are the longest stories in the collection.

With 21 shorts, there were only a few that I didn't care for at all, and, I think, that's saying something. Generally speaking, for me, in a collection like this, I'd only be finding a few I actually liked, and I'd be dismissing the rest as inconsequential, but this whole collection, for the most part, really kept me going.

If you like horror and suspense, this is definitely something you should check out. You can see hints of the humor and wording from The Missing Link in here, and that, to me, is very interesting. Interesting in that I can see how the Brandon half of Beer works with the Bryan half to make their stuff work. But, again, that's probably just me. Overall, I'd give the collection a good B hedging to the higher side of the B. The stories are definitely above average and do a good job of defying expectations. You go read it and let me know which ones you like best. That's kind of the most fun with short story collections anyway. Especially if you love one that I hated. Okay, so I didn't hate any of them, but, with 21 stories, there have to be a few on the lower end of the scale.

Bryan Pedas says

Perhaps my favorite thing about short story collections is picking out the gems - the stories that shine brighter than the rest. The stories you actually remember after reading the full volume. And I think what surprised me most about this collection was just how many gems there were within, and how many I was still thinking about long after I read this.

To simply call Chasing the Sandman a collection of macabre short stories is actually selling this title a little short. Each story is so wildly diverse, and imaginative, and creative, and well written that it takes you all over the map and back again in a manner that isn't outlandish nor is it weird. Science fiction. Horror. Whimsy. Ghost tales. You get a bit of everything but you don't find yourself asking, why is this here? Instead, you find yourself wondering what comes next, a question asked in anticipation.

The premises to a good many of these stories are incredibly unique and imaginative, premises I've not seen anywhere else. And most of these stories have very clever endings that I didn't see coming (I'd like to consider myself a good predictor of endings). None of the stories drag on or leave you bored, and none of the stories seem like filler.

This is a very, very solid collection of short stories, full of gems that you'll still be chewing over in your mind even after you've read them, and I definitely would recommend it.

Personal favorites: Spilled Ink, Marbles, Runaway Train.

Zack says

Local author Brandon Meyers's collection of macabre tales *Chasing the Sandman*, available now for order online and at local bookstores, including Mutiny Information Cafe, puts this reviewer in mind of the 1930s pulp fiction era, when countless writers, including H.P. Lovecraft, Ray Bradbury, and Robert E. Howard, were published regularly in a vital, bustling market including magazines like *Weird Tales*, inspiring latter fantasists, like *Twilight Zone* creator Rod Serling, to found a whole new strata of uncertainty and enchantment, more horror and mystery around every corner.

Leaves are starting to turn red and fall from the trees, Halloween is coming right up, and the tales in *Chasing the Sandman* are perfectly timed to chill your literary spine. With tales like "Graveyard Shift," in which police officer Mickey O'Houlihan stumbles across the lair of a gigantic spider and roasts it alive before passing out, "A View From the Top," wherein brother and sister Alex and Elsa Laurio must outwit the sadistic keeper of a sadistic trial by fate masquerading as a hedge maze, or "1st Appearance" where readers learn of farting Lane Donovan's visitation by Whippoorwill, "one of comicdom's less popular silver age heroes," in a tale presenting comic strip panels as dimensional doorways, Meyers has proven his worth as a distinctive and powerful new voice among local underground writers. He has authored one other novel, *The Oasis*, a darkly fantastic love story set in a contemporary mental hospital, and co authored several with his best friend and co-administrator of the webcomic *A Beer for the Shower*, Bryan Pedas. Among these is *The Sensationally Absurd Life and Times of Slim Dyson*, which imbues its Mile High setting with a refreshingly reflexive humor in the form of a modern allegory on being good-natured in a cash mad world. With the stories in *Chasing the Sandman*, Meyers has shown himself as far more than a keen humorist. He is also a skilled technician of the mob vignette, as seen in "Table Stakes," the mad science project gone wrong (see "Into the Deep"), and the Halloween chestnut ("Stone Cold Love").

Meyers and Pedas have impressed me strongly with their collaborations and individual creations as fellow strivers in the same direction, who have decided, whether consciously or not, to reestablish those days of pulp vitality in our personal writing lives. While the majority of what I've published so far has been drawn directly from life experience and fictionalized, the stories in this volume have impressed me with the worthiness of utter fiction as a mode of expression. That is, I think he's making this stuff up . . .

Jack says

Horror Short Stories

I liked this collection oh horror stories. Thought it was well written. Good variety of stories. The author has a great imagination.

Leighah says

not too bad a collection of short stories

Rachel says

Fun Collection An enjoyable collection of macabre short stories.
