



# Kind Nepenthe

*Matthew V. Brockmeyer*

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## **Kind Nepenthe** Matthew V. Brockmeyer

Rebecca thought she'd find a hippie paradise when she moved to the desolate back hills of Humboldt County. A place to commune with nature and teach her five-year-old daughter how to live off the land. Instead she discovered a nightmare.

Coyote is a washed-up pot grower. Strung out on pills and dealing with dropping prices and looming legalization, he wonders if it's even worth it anymore.

Diesel Dan abandoned his son for a life of methamphetamine and prison. Now he wants to make amends. He's going to be a grandfather. But his son is on the same dark road of drugs and violence that once consumed him.

These characters will come together in an explosive ending that will leave you stunned and breathless. But more than just a gripping horror novel, *Kind Nepenthe* is a deep examination into the nature of love and greed, lost ideals, and the essence of evil in one of the last frontiers of the American West.

## **Kind Nepenthe Details**

Date : Published July 27th 2017 by Black Rose Writing

ISBN : 9781612969091

Author : Matthew V. Brockmeyer

Format : Paperback 244 pages

Genre : Horror, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery

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**Download and Read Free Online Kind Nepenthe Matthew V. Brockmeyer**

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# From Reader Review *Kind Nepenthe* for online ebook

## Steve says

I received this from Netgalley quite a long time ago in exchange for an honest review. Don't judge me. ;)

This was a very long slow burn of a story, and it was a struggle to keep reading; it really didn't hold my attention. Most of the characters were unlikable, and I really had a hard time caring much for any of them.

I think if the author had chosen either horror or hick-noir, one or the other, the entire book might have been more cohesive story. As written, it felt like to me that it couldn't find its identity. The writing wasn't bad, though, and I'll definitely be looking for more by this author.

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## Jerry says

I grew up not too far from where this book takes place. Maybe that's what drew me to this story... or maybe it was that the title is interesting. Not sure. It was ok. The weed descriptions might have been the best part of the book. The characters kept my interest. All (but one) were very flawed in some way, but strangely, some sympathy was to be found with most of them. However, some of the events toward the end were just not believable to me. The actions of certain characters didn't fit. The buildup didn't work. This story was bordering on a 4 for me until I was 3/4 of the way thru. Although frantic and fast paced, the end just fell flat.

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## GD says

*Kind Nepenthe* is the first published novel by emerging horror author Matthew V. Brockmeyer and its publication portends even greater horrors to come. Brockmeyer has written a suspenseful mashup of the crime and supernatural horror genres that deserves the label "page turner."

The novel starts with a careful and interesting introduction to the ensemble of characters. The author takes care to develop each of them as realistic people with developed pasts, motivations, and world views. Most of these characters are engaged in drug crimes and are more-or-less unsavory. But even if I couldn't identify with them, I felt sympathy for them. There are a couple of genuinely nice people who get in over their heads, and some others that are just crap sack petty criminals, and a few actually evil ones, including one that is already dead. It is to the authors credit that every one of them was interesting and human enough—except perhaps the ghost—to make me care when bad things happened to them. And very bad things happen indeed, to almost everyone.

I won't give away any more plot details, but if you wanted two things to compare the book to, the first would be Stephen King's *The Shining*. Things would go badly for most of the characters anyway, things that stem from their own foibles and character flaws, but a vengeful ghost catalyzes the situation, like an arsonist adding accelerant to a house fire. The novel could work as a straight up crime story, but the supernatural element was deftly handled and added much to the proceedings. The other thing I'd compare this book to is a game of Jenga: the story builds and builds, each unstable block built on the ones below it, until the climax where the entire structure collapses in a wonderful crash of murder and mayhem.

I am friends with the author, read a pre-press version, and also was provided a review copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Keith Chawgo says**

Matthew V Brockmeyer's debut novel looks at life through an alternative lifestyle lens and has accomplished an ultramodern horror thriller that has something for everyone.

Lending itself to new fiction genre, Brockmeyer has done something within his novel that seldom new writers do today. He lets his characters breathe, live and be nurtured within the confines of the story. His characters are fully realised within their settings but never fall into the stereotypes that most new writers fall into. He has overcome the traps to provide the reader with characters who are fleshed out through their compromises, dreams, weaknesses and strengths.

The background history of the area is slightly hinted at but never really fully realised which adds mood and atmosphere to the piece. We only know what each of the characters knows which adds an essence to the proceedings as the story unfolds. Using this device really enhances the book as we are dealing with untrustworthy narrators telling us either an urban myth or a ghost story. The truth can be embellished or maybe it can be taken at face value, it is up to the reader to decide.

The slow burn for over half of the book really carries your interests and drives you forward to start to care for these characters. Even the secondary characters are well written within their own idiosyncrasies. There is a low life element to the story but it does deal with the human heart and people who are always trying hard to succeed but always doing down the wrong road to achieve it.

As the story unfolds, we find ourselves going through the labyrinthine of paranoia, distrustfulness and life's realities smacking each of the characters firmly in the face. This starts the descent into madness which may do with the ghostly occurrences or each of the characters personal demons manifesting through bad decisions and their recreational vices.

Matthew V Brockmeyer has really masterfully handled all the strands of his story with an artistic and professional hand. He involves the reader into his world and actually makes you care for the outcome. The same material through another writer would have come off as pulp fiction or novel you read and get on to the next one. Kind Nepenthe sticks with you long after the last page is turned. He is a writer to take note of because if this book is anything to go by, there is some fantastic stuff coming our way. His writing style is very precise but artfully crafted and has given the world an ultramodern ghost story with archetypical characters in a dramatic thriller. This is an author to take note of because we haven't seen the best of him yet. Fantastic read and one that is highly recommended. This is a definite 5 out of 5 read.

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### **Emily says**

I want to say up front that I don't think I'm the right reader for Kind Nepenthe. This is not a bad book at all, but it just didn't work for my personal tastes. Matthew Brockmeyer can tell a story, and this is a well-written novel. It's perfect for the right readers - I read it with my friend Mindi, and she adored it. I just had a hard time maintaining interest.

It takes a bit for the story to get going, and I was expecting the horror aspect to go a bit deeper. The cover of the book refers to it as a "savage tale of terror", which I suppose is subjective. I was surprised that the paranormal aspect seemed to be put in the back burner, so my expectations had a lot to do with how I ended up feeling about the book.

Kind Nepenthe is a character-driven story with unlikable characters, which is fine with me, but I needed something more to capture my attention. I felt that the story was lacking suspense - when everything got crazy at the end, it was too little, too late for me.

There are different POVs, and I thought some of the stories would be a little more connected, but it still worked out well enough. This story is pretty bleak, and I did enjoy that aspect.

Although Kind Nepenthe didn't really work for me, I would try another book from Matthew Brockmeyer. I read one of his short stories this week in *Collected Christmas Horror Shorts Vol. 2* & loved it. Thank you so much to the author for sending me a copy to review.

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### **K.N. says**

Something haunts Homicide Hill in Humboldt County, California – something that doesn't want anyone to leave. Brockmeyer has a real gift for description and creates a bucolic landscape with ominous undertones. Each berry, leaf or hen threatens a thorn or piercing beak.

Brockmeyer crafted sympathetic characters from some pretty raw and gritty materials: ex-convicts, meth-heads, a pot king – and then drops in earnest Rebecca and her sweet daughter as two bright lights in this dark mixture. I sank right into this community of characters – right into their world – seeing it through their eyes and finding their perspectives real and sometimes terrifying.

Like a campfire stoked through a lonesome night, the story burns with suspense, ready to burst into a horrifying flame at any moment. This book is a real page-turner of taut, character-driven scenes and building, haunting suspense. I will be actively looking for more by this author.

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### **Daniel Barnett says**

A graceful slow burn that boils over with a righteous series of twists and turns, Kind Nepenthe builds intrigue into dread and dread into some seriously delicious shocks. Not a tale for readers who need a silver lining in their stories or their characters—this one sticks its hands into the guts of the human underbelly and makes a great bloody mess.

I'll definitely be reading more Matthew Brockmeyer, who, for transparency's sake, I've had a few conversations with on Facebook and consider to be a nice dude. I was a fan of his work before we began to chat, but I thought I'd mention our acquaintanceship (I looked it up and that's totally a real word) in case you feel that it might make this review biased.

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## **Mindi says**

This book was sent to me by the author in exchange for an honest review.

How am I getting so lucky with my book selection lately? Actually, this one is all my friend Emily. She wanted to read it before the end of the year, so I've been buddy reading it with her and our friend Karlee. Yesterday afternoon I was about 20% into it. Last night I picked it up in bed, and finished the rest of it with a burning desire to know the fate of the characters. And that's definitely the strongest part of this novel. The characters are fantastic. Also, a haunted marijauna compound? Yes, please! Who would even think of that? Well, Brockmeyer. And that's another reason this book is so good.

Let's talk a bit about the characters, because if I dig the characters I'll read about them doing anything. There are a few major players in this book. Rebecca and her boyfriend Calendula (yeah, I know) move into a dilapidated pot compound with Rebecca's young daughter Megan in order to care for the grow house while the owner is away selling his last crop. The place is a dump, and reported to be haunted, but it should be a short gig, and Rebecca dreams of making enough money for the three of them to buy their own place and live off the land.

Coyote is the owner of the compound. He bought it while the original owner was in jail, after a bunch of bikers had lived there. They trashed the place and Coyote never bothered to fix or clean up any of it other than the building with the grow house. Before the bikers the place was a hippie commune. Coyote is a heavy drug user, and basically a complete jerk. He's not getting the same money for his product since a couple of states legalized pot, and it's making him even more dependent on crack and hookers to drown his sorrows.

The final group of players include Diesel, an ex-con who is trying to go straight so that he can finally have the family he always wanted. His son DJ's girlfriend Katie is pregnant, and Diesel can't wait to be a grandfather. The problem is he's still dealing meth, and using the drug regularly. DJ holds a grudge against his father about the land the compound sits on. It used to be in their family but they lost it. And not only that, but Coyote owes them a lot of money for helping him set up the grow house. Diesel wants to give Coyote a chance to make good on the money, but DJ is tired of waiting and fed up with his old man.

And then there are the ghosts! But you will discover them as you read. Brockmeyer writes some seriously creepy moments with the ghosts. Anytime you add a small kid into the mix, ghosts are going to be way creepier. And these ghosts are a lot like the ghosts who haunt the Overlook Hotel. Much like *The Shining*, the ghosts in *Kind Nepenthe* aren't happy being dead, and they resent the living.

Eventually all of the major characters will come together in a brilliant showdown. Even though she's obviously flawed I love the character of Rebecca, and the entire time I just wanted to whisk Megan and her away from the compound. Once the climax of the book builds to a jaw-dropping conclusion, I was left shocked and so delighted. This book came out of nowhere and I absolutely love it. I can't recommend it enough.

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## **David says**

What do you get if you combine the parts of *Bates Motel* that didn't involve Norma and Norman with Stanley Kubrick's version of *The Shining*, with a little bit of Charles Manson mixed in? You get this

incredible and incredibly disturbing supernatural drug noir novel.

Rebecca, her boyfriend Calendula, and her daughter Megan live in a pot-growing commune in Northern California, working for a man known only as The Coyote. Nearby, Diesel and his son D. J. work fixing cars, waiting for the birth of D. J.'s child. It's all pretty nice and very low-key...if it could only stay that way. Instead, everything and everyone quickly devolves in this gut-punch of a book. Highly recommended.

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## **Arah-Lynda says**

**Nepenthe: a potion used by the ancients to induce forgetfulness of pain or sorrow  
something capable of causing oblivion of grief or suffering**

Merriam-Webster

*Rebecca Hawthorne couldn't deny it anymore. Her little girl had grown strange since they'd moved to Coyote's compound. And it wasn't just her obsession with ghosts and her refusal to use the outhouse. Or her compulsion to find all the dead ravens in the forest and play with them like they were toys. Stacking them up into shimmering black pyramids, their wings entangled, beaks hanging open.*

*No it was something deeper.*

*A fog seemed to have settled on her, hazing her once lively five-year-old glow, the way a bright pane of glass might slowly turn opaque from the elements: her head always lowered, as though weighted down by thought, her eyes dull and haggard. And no matter how much Rebecca tried to cheer her up, that moody grayness remained.*

Coyote's compound is in the back hills of Humboldt County, California, on a reportedly haunted piece of land called Homicide Hill. It boasts a large grow room for his hydroponic marijuana. Rebecca has brought her five year old daughter Megan to this place and hopes to teach her how to live off the land, by cultivating her own crops. Her boyfriend Calendula has been taking care of all the pot plants and ensuring the generator never stops.

Problem is Rebecca has noticed a change in Calendula as well as her daughter. He has grown strangely feral up here in these hills. She is eager to get this crop harvested, get paid and get gone from this place.

If you are looking for likeable characters, you best look away because there is not a one to be found here.

Likeable or not these people are credible, they have histories, hopes and dreams, much like us. They have made poor choices in life and continue to do so while all the while exposing children to those same poor choices. Vicious cycle that.

I will admit that I was skeptical at first, I mean seriously it was hard to get behind these people. But Brockmeyer drew me in with his steady hand, his slow burning prose and undeniable sense of place. I came to know that compound, the history of the land and people long since gone. The revolving perspectives gave me insight to their innermost thoughts, their fears and plans for a better life. It is disquieting sometimes to find yourself rooting for such unsavoury characters, characters that have shown you their heart, their hand and their hope.

And then there was the dead whose spirit permeated this place and tapped into fears still forming, ever

growing.

Of course I could not help but think of *The Shining*, no doubt comparisons will be made, but rest assured that Brockmeyer's story can stand impervious and resolute on its own creative legs.

I'm still thinking about choices made, influences germinated and destinies cast in shadow.

Kind Nepenthe gets a solid 4 stars from me.

My sincere thanks to Black Rose Writing, Matthew V. Brockmeyer and NetGalley.

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### **Maxine (Booklover Catlady) says**

It's taken me a while to do this review after finishing this astonishing novel. This is one of those books that has stayed with me ever since I read it and I keep thinking back to it a lot. Unforgettable. Do you want to know how impressed I was with this novel? **Well, it's skipped both the long list and the short list of my Top 17 Reads of 2017 and has simply landed in the Top 17 Reads of 2017. I just need to place it within its rightly spot at the end of the year.** Not many books get to that place that quickly.

Kind Nepenthe is like nothing else I have ever read. It blends so many fantastic genres; horror, paranormal, contemporary fiction, mystery fiction, crime fiction and is just one of a kind in my humble opinion. **The plot slinks around your mind slowly, infests your brain until you are so absorbed you lose track of time and place.** I was supremely impressed by the way Matthew V. Brockmeyer has paced this book, he builds the scene and location beautifully and introduces us to key characters until we feel like we have known them for a really long time. There was not one boring moment reading this novel.

The more the plot unraveled, the more different characters came into play, the more creepy moments that were inserted to give me chills the more enthralled I was. **It takes a hold of you and doesn't let go.** I was very impressed with the obvious research that the author has done for this novel in regards to the illegal marijuana growing industry, the detail is stunning. You can't help but see and smell this illegal world when reading this book. I probably now know more than I would from a non-fiction book on the subject and freaking loved it!

Our main couple is watching over seasonal marijuana crops. There is a young child with them. In a cabin, pretty much in the middle of nowhere land. A land of modern day hippies and rednecks.

But they are **not alone** where they are, there is something sinister, dark and brooding at play. The spirits have been stirred. Something wicked this way comes. As the work and location become more oppressive, it starts to really impact on the relationship dynamics between this loved-up couple and a beautiful bouncy spirited child. Something is not right.

You know I don't do plot spoilers but I have to tell you that there is a point in this book where the pace just



starts to be cranked up and up. **I was sucked in and mesmerized, frantically flicking pages on my Kindle, desperate for more. I could not have predicted any part of this book, certainly not the exceptional reveals and twists that really make this book something very special. The ending and lead up to the ending was just mind-blowing! It shocks, stuns and takes your breath away. It was so visceral, so visual and at times not easy to digest. It was very powerful imagery. This book NEEDS to be made into a movie. I am happy to do the casting for it.**

Kind Nepenthe is a novel that would be enjoyed by anyone who loves their books. If you particularly like your fiction with a dark tinge, a touch of horror, ghostly things that defy explanation then you will absolutely love this book. I loved Matthew's writing style, his imagination and the delivery of this novel. 5 whopping great stars from me, this goes down as one of my all-time favourite books.

Join me and Matthew V. Brockmeyer for the fantastic official launch party of Kind Nepenthe on Facebook! We kick off at 7:00pm UK time until 9:30pm on Wednesday 9th August 2017. There will be live chat with Matthew, grand prizes including an 113-year-old anthology of Edgar Allan Poe stories, t-shirts and loads of fantastic books to be won by many great supporting authors. You just need to turn up online! This is how you find the event, there are already over 600 people attending! <https://www.facebook.com/events/24851...>

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## **Cats of Ulthar February Weird Fiction says**

Review of KIND NEPENTHE  
by Matthew V. Brockmeyer

Beautifully scenic, but humanity renders it depressing: Southern Humboldt County in Northern California. KIND NEPENTHE is a literate horror novel (I loved the epigrams the author's chosen), but I prefer to categorize it as Northern California drug culture noir. Populated by an almost completely sorry cast of lowlifes, KIND NEPENTHE only allows some to surface briefly, to try to be "somebody" with purpose, and then submerges them again. Rebecca wants to be completely organic, and be a sterling mother. Calendula (Mark) is a permaculture designer, or so he hopes. Diesel wants a second chance through his soon-to-be born grandchild, not to mess up as he did with his son and his wife. Actually, the only "winners" in this patch of noir are the hauntings...and we're never really certain what their foundation is, although we see it acted out in certain formerly living individuals. Mr. Brockmeyer does a sort of Henry James-ish horror, the kind that you

know is present, but too shadowy and unspecific to get really frightened...until the end, when literally everything and everybody goes raving insane in a fast-paced few pages rolling like a bullet train.

{On a personal note, while I read KIND NEPENTHE, I also commenced another drug culture noir, this one set in New Mexico. Life imitates art.}

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## Dustin says

DISCLOSURE: I received a copy from the author, in exchange for an honest review. My opinions are my own.

**Beneath the surface was a subtle and malignant threat that was haunting and potentially catastrophic.**

Going into Matthew Brockmeyer's *Kind Nepenthe*, I only had a vague sense of expectation. As with most stories, that's usually best. Within the first thirty pages, he'd achieved the nearly unachievable: he'd gotten a firm grip on his characters, in ways which were admirable and binding. In the hands of the average wordslinger, such a feat might feel strained, even contrived; inexplicably, he gave the impression of breezing through his prose, lending a wholly natural feel to everything. And on a subconscious level, I needed him to expand on what he had; however, I could have never predicted the literary spell he would weave. He cast it over me like a net.

Some of the greatest stories emphasize **tone, mood**, and perhaps equally, **place**. In such stories, locale becomes not just a pivotal character, but an invisible force. You get that here in spades. Like peeling away myriad layers of an onion, Brockmeyer fundamentally took the foundation of his setting, and built upon that development.

Mystifying me further was the realization that although I'd thought I knew that world (had, in fact, described it as one "we know all too well,") I wasn't familiar with it at all. Not really. It wasn't etched in stone, but rather fluid; constantly in flux, changing with supply and demand. The author wasn't interested in superficialities. It was, and in a lot of ways still is, a misunderstood world.

Incidentally, I suspect that *Kind Nepenthe* was partially inspired by the passing of Proposition 64, circa November, 2016.

<https://www.vcstar.com/videos/news/lo...>

Furthermore, he made me care about the characters, gradually and firmly. Especially Rebecca and Megan--the former was dealt a nasty deck of cards, and despite those situations and those that followed, she tried hard to give herself and her daughter a better life; and Megan, because she was an adorable, precocious five year old; because she was disturbed.

Time lapsed. A revelation hit me, which was staggering and which I should have anticipated, but somehow

didn't: the development of Humboldt County (synonymous with California's emerald triangle,) was more than it appeared. He was communicating something obviously important to him: the preservation of our environment, on an ecological scale.

That hit me hard.

His prose didn't just flow, it was simplistic and beautiful, endearing despite the story's dark subject matter.

It was creepy, too (**feel** its malicious intent. Yet its strengths weren't only in the creep factor (though there were plenty,) or in recurring themes or the fleshing out of characters. They were those things, but Brockmeyer's tale was simultaneously suspenseful. Harrowing.

Every paragraph amplified the mounting pressure, lending additional mysteriousness, without overwhelming the reader. I felt everything converging, and vaguely envisioned a looming catastrophe. In those moments, though, it felt almost subdued. Subtle. He was intentionally holding back, and for me, that's what really made the novel tick. That's the beauty of his creation.

I shouldn't have experienced such pure joy.

The frequent drug references and use (not strictly marijuana, either,) as well as excessive vulgarities and explicit sex are usually off-putting, but they worked because nothing was forced. He wrote with utmost honesty, and there's nothing more admirable than that.

Soon afterward, things got real serious, very fast. Just when I thought he was apt to ratchet the tension and supernatural further, he held back. He knew exactly when to lay low, and when to speed up. At the same time, he brought the various key players together, in ways which were consistently organic, addictive, and unpredictable. For those reasons alone, I grew to respect him in a big way.

Most of the character's weren't very likeable. The realization was gradual and simultaneously abrupt. Throughout the novel, there were a few that I liked, or at the very least, a few whom I felt had some redeeming qualities. They actually recognized the need for change, and desired to effect said change. I think it was quite the feat, and an admirable one-- to create that balance because on the one hand, he made me care about them; on the other side, I didn't loathe individuals such as DJ or Coyote, but their actions were beyond reprehensible.

In the end, this was a complicated story with a lot of heart. Like a bad car crash, there was a sense of what the aftermath might be, but I couldn't look away. I wanted to look away, but I didn't. I couldn't. The culmination was one that I've come to genuinely respect lately, and that which some of the best stories in literature possess: an **earned** ending.

Reminiscent of King's *The Shining* (with the tone and mood of Kubrick's cinematic invention,) as well as *The Exorcist*, and Peter Straub's *Ghost Story*, Brockmeyer achieved something different here. I'd never read anything quite like it. Essentially, it was the story that I wanted *Ghost Story* to be.

The highest recommendation!

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## **Gatorman says**

Wow, what a wild ride. The story of a cast of sad-sack characters trying to find their own version of success in the Northern California marijuana growing country starts off tame but moves in its own sneaky way towards a fateful conclusion filled with anger, loss, regret and desperation. Don't want to give away any spoilers but be assured that it earns its horror moniker. The less you know going in, the better. A bit too short to be on a heavier 5-star level but that's a minor quibble. A gripping, well-written literary cyclone. 4.5 stars. Highly recommended.

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## **Tracy Robinson says**

Full review to come for Sci-Fi and Scary - stay tuned :)

From the Sci-Fi and Scary review:

Matthew V. Brockmeyer's debut novel is a gripping thriller, sometimes billed as a country noir. Thrillers aren't usually something focused on here for Sci-Fi & Scary, but I think there is enough of the supernatural to also consider this, at times, a piece that fits within the horror genre.

I waited until the end to look up possible meanings for the title; nepenthe is defined as "a drug or drink, or the plant yielding it, mentioned by ancient writers as having the power to bring forgetfulness of sorrow or trouble. anything inducing a pleasurable sensation of forgetfulness, especially of sorrow or trouble", and this certainly fits as 100% of the adult characters in this novel turn to some form of pharmaceutical assistance (weed, meth, crack, alcohol, etc) in order to numb themselves to various maladies they encounter. The synopsis above does a decent job of outlining what happens in the novel, so I will simply focus on the writing and the horror elements.

I admit it took me until I was almost halfway through the novel to really be invested in what was happening, this book was sitting at a 3 rating at that point and I really struggled to get to that point. From then on, especially during the breakneck speed of the last 20%, I was hooked. The seemingly disparate storylines came together, questions I had regarding the plot were answered, and the horror elements really kicked in.

The horror itself is mostly supernatural and internal, we know the land is supposedly haunted (a few ghostly characters pop in and out), but I think most of the horror comes in from the steady and then rapid decline in sanity of Calendula (one of the main characters) and the everyday horrors that life brings for the other adults. We see their gradual and then rapid descent into madness, despair, and the tragedy that ultimately and inevitably occurs.

I would like to see what else Brockmeyer can do within the horror genre – those are the parts, the sections where he really gets down to business, that intrigued me the most.

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