



A Dark & Winding Road

Matthew Weber

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Brace yourself for eleven twisted tales from the small towns of America's Deep South. From forest monsters and demons of vengeance to devious children with wicked intent, Matthew Weber serves up eleven tales of murder and mayhem to keep you shivering in suspense. This new selection of stories, all set in the Heart of Dixie, chronicles the hidden horrors of small town America. After-school fights lead to blood-covered bodies, everyday neighbors hide hideous secrets, and unspeakable horrors lurk around every corner. Fast-paced, fun and downright frightening, A Dark & Winding Road is an action-packed entry into the wild world of genre fiction.

A Dark & Winding Road Details

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From Reader Review A Dark & Winding Road for online ebook

Paula says

Wow, what an utterly engaging book. Travel down A Dark and Winding Road and you will find 11 quite unusual short stories, all horrific in their own unique way. These are the stories of subtle terror that I find so stimulating, the type that make you sit up and say, "Damn, I didn't see that coming. I loved it

Guard the Park gives new meaning to the idiom "No good deed goes unpunished." Two old men while away their time reminiscing the past and keeping an eye on the neighborhood park. What could possibly go wrong?

The Shady Brake Baptist Fall Festival, it's Halloween night and Zack Kinsley is stuck going to the Baptist Church party with his mom in lieu of trick or treating with his friends. No SCARY costumes allowed. But, what happens when one kid dares to be different? EEK! The old church fest will never be the same.

In The Clinic we find a dark tale regarding a problematic kid. Alex Tyler is one seriously disturbed child. Unable to handle him, he's parents reach out yet again to one more place for answers and hopefully results. Sometimes the end justifies the means.

Ha! Eye of the Pig, I love that title, I love this story. Poor Bernie Everson, co-owner of the local grocery store; always trying to do right and it just doesn't make a difference. It took finding the pig head in a bin of bacon to set the day's events in motion. A cheating wife, a lying brother, HOW much can a man take?

Rules are meant to be broken, we hear that all the time but sometimes there are consequences. Just ask Mrs. Desharden in Rules are Rules she can tell you first hand what could happen, oh wait maybe not.

Sometimes bad things happen to good people and then sometimes those good people get revenge. Check out Suzie's Dead End, I think it's more like the beginning for her!

Remember the warning when you first started driving "Never stop for hitch hikers"? In The Hitch we are reminded that sometimes the hitcher should be careful of whom he accepts a ride from or.....

Bobby's Holiday Wish List such a cheery title, eh. This is my favorite of the bunch. Little Bobby is just trying to do the right thing when he talks to Santa, but alas things don't always work out for the best.

My Own Personal Monster, like Aesop's The Slave and the Lion, Vanessa is there to help, but will that be enough?

Never Trust a Hippie is a bit like "never judge a book by its cover." We all have preconceived notions that can get in the way of making the right choice. That's exactly what happens here at the local watering hole.

Hmm, Summon a Demon in Five Easy Steps, what drives a child to bully another? Nick has been picked on one too many times. Now it's his turn and revenge is SWEET or is it?

I hope I've whetted your appetite enough to entice you to pick up your own copy, wickedly delicious!

donna coddrey says

A great read

For all those who love the strange eerie and macabre with an ironic twist. This book was interesting and a real page turner.

Robert McGough says

The second collection of shorts I have read by the author, and just as great as the first (Teeth Marks). These stories were so good I devoured the collection in one night, which didn't exactly help my sleep, but was totally worth it.

David Dubrow says

Matthew Weber's *A Dark and Winding Road* is a collection of eleven short horror stories set below America's Mason-Dixon line. Several take place in the town of Trapper Valley, a place one might call the Derry of the Deep South.

Good short stories are like a slap in the face: something snappy to get your attention. A short story happens to you. A novel's more like a dance: you go along with the writer, let him lead you where he wants you to go.

Weber's stories, in large part, try to straddle that line, and as such, some of the punch gets lost. At some point, you need to end the story. You need to leave us breathless and thinking about it. That doesn't always happen here, and we're sometimes fed more than we want to eat. Nevertheless, they're well-written, with powerful descriptions and some very funny scenes.

One thing that Weber wants to do is show us all the horror, all the gore, and how he does so is through shifting points of view. Nothing gets suggested in *A Dark and Winding Road*: you see it happen live and in color. This works in stories like *Summon a Demon in Five Easy Steps*, where he describes a truly brutal act of schoolyard violence, but dilutes the impact of the revenge tale *Eye of the Pig*.

The stories, in order:

Guard the Park is almost a microcosm of the whole book: supernatural justice is dispensed to worldly villains, in this case some thugs terrorizing a local park. A little long, a little too much build-up, but the end is satisfying. Ling chasing after her dog and shouting, "Hauhs, where ah you!" is hysterical.

The Shady Brake Baptist Fall Festival went a little long, also. The depiction of small town life in the south was funny and realistic.

In *The Clinic*, I expected a cautionary tale of governmental overreach, but the story went elsewhere.

Eye of the Pig was a straight up revenge story with an unnecessary coda.

A physically abusive teacher can't deal with the changing times in Rules Are Rules.

Suzie's Dead End is one of my favorite stories, not least because it's tighter than the others.

Despite that you know where The Hitch is going halfway through, it's still a good read.

Bobby's Holiday Wish List needed a lot more work to tighten it up; the changing point of view didn't help the pacing or impact.

There was a great deal to like in My Own Personal Monster in both writing and characterization. Very enjoyable.

In Never Trust a Hippie, we learn the dangers of hero worship.

Summon a Demon in Five Easy Steps is another strong story, with some disturbing scenes and a fairly tight plot.

There's a lot to like in Weber's A Dark and Winding Road, and a lot to be frightened of. Pick it up and get reading.

Ember Shane says

Horror; Short Story Collection

Nicely done. Very talented writing. Fast-paced with some twists. Probably not something you want to read if you're at home by yourself in the middle of the night. I *might* have gasped a time or two while gripping the edges of my Kindle.

I appreciated the disclaimer/warning at the beginning. Included were warnings that the following stories contained "death, graphic violence, profanity, blasphemy, sexual content, and other themes and images that commonly disturb". This statement should also probably include these themes as also related to children.

Of the eleven stories, my favorites include The Clinic, My Own Personal Monster, and The Hitch.

The Clinic, while definitely fitting into the horror genre, also flirts with crossing over into the psychological thriller genre. The MC is basically an evil child who is coming into adulthood and his parents are at a loss as to what to do with him. They've run out of options. I would have loved this story to have been longer. If Weber ever rewrites this as a full-length novel, I'm definitely all in.

My Own Personal Monster... because no horror collection is complete without a sasquatch story. Not only the subject matter, and the engaging writing, but I also very much enjoyed the ending. I really thought it was going to go another way.

The Hitch is about a hitchhiker who seems to be having some problems. I can't say too much without giving away the spoiler, but I can say I appreciated Weber's craftsmanship of the story/narration.

My least favorite of the eleven stories was Bobby's Holiday Wish List. It was well-written. In fact, it was

even one of the stories that made me audibly gasp. It's only my least favorite due to the subject matter being a little too dark for my taste.

I also feel compelled to mention that the editing on this book was impeccable. Props to the editor. And cover designer.

Five stars!!

Kathy Custer says

A few tales of creepy.

Not a long read but a fairly good one. Would recommend for those who like creepy/scary tales. This is several stories to get the chills worked up.

Allie says

“A Dark & Winding Road” hooked me from the first story. I read this entire collection of creepy, sinister and twisted tales in one sitting. In a book such as this collection of short stories I would normally read a couple through the course of several days. Not this one. I devoured it. Upon finishing one I couldn't wait to see what horror awaited me in the next one. It is exceptionally well-written. I didn't spot a single typo or grammatical error. I appreciate an author who cares enough about their craft to thoroughly edit and this book is an example of one who does just that. Each story gave me that fully satisfied feeling of having completed a novel within just a few pages of fabulous storytelling. Each story also took me through a plethora of emotions.

I found each twisted tale thrilling in its own right, but I do have a couple favorites. In the very first story “Guard the Park” I was introduced to two elderly gentlemen, Walter and Charlie. They each have suffered personal losses that would break most people. However, these two have golden hearts and have developed a bond with one another through their visits to the local park. Their kindness extends to the many animals that inhabit the park and the people they meet there. Walter and Charlie have witnessed criminal elements and low-life individuals slowly taking over their park who make it unsafe for goodly folks to enjoy. When they intervene to protect a woman from one of the scumbags who now claim the park as their own, they set off a series of events in motion that lead to tragic events. Though the story itself is full of events that will sadden and anger, the ending is superbly gratifying and left me with a wicked smirk on my face.

“Eye of the Pig” introduced me to Bernie Everson, a small town supermarket owner who has tried to do the right thing all of his life only to be regarded as a pushover. He is treated as a joke by his brother, completely disrespected by his unfaithful wife and viewed as a relatively weak man by his employees and the community. Bernie begins to crack as the stress of managing the supermarket and his wife's widely known whorish ways take a psychological toll. I was absolutely shocked when I discovered exactly how depraved Bernie truly was.

The entire book is a great read. Each story will invoke emotions and thoughts that will make you wonder about your own twisted mentality. I know I did. The tales are dark, but the characters are relatable and the

choices they make, though not always the best, are understandable by some measures. If you enjoy suspenseful, sinister, thrilling tales that might just have you examining your own mentality, this is the perfect book.
