

THE DEVIL'S GRAVE

A Collection of Short
Crime & Horror Stories

by

Rena Aliston



The Devil's Grave: The Devil's Reign Book 1
A Collection of Short Crime & Horror Stories
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Dedication

For my Ancestors.
Those who came before.
Those who will come after.

Content Warning

This is a crime and horror short story collection with dark themes. This book may contain content that triggers some readers, including death, murder, and abuse (domestic, physical, verbal).

For a full list of warnings, please refer to the book details page on my official website.

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Contents

Branded (Drabble)	1
Dr. Sam (Drabble)	2
Death's Choir (Drabble)	3
Feed (Drabble)	4
Doomed (Drabble)	5
The Doll Maker (Flash Fiction)	7
Obstinate (Drabble)	13
The Hunt (Drabble)	14
The Watcher (Drabble)	15
Concubine (Drabble)	16
Avenge (Drabble)	17
One Million (Short Story)	19
Encounter (Drabble)	27
The Vault (Drabble)	28
Proffer (Drabble)	29
Ashore (Drabble)	30
Death's Veil (Drabble)	31
Lily (Flash Fiction)	33
Twenty (Drabble)	37
Family (Drabble)	38
Janice (Drabble)	39
Enraptured (Drabble)	40
Resurfaced (Drabble)	41
The Forest (Short Story)	43
The Attempt (Drabble)	53
The Promise (Drabble)	54
The Heist (Drabble)	55
Therapy (Drabble)	56
Blood Or Gold (Drabble)	57
Cramps (Flash Fiction)	59
The House (Flash Fiction)	63

One Bite (Drabble)	67
The Last Light (Drabble)	68
Next (Drabble)	69
Death (Drabble)	70
The Rocks (Drabble)	71
The Fight (Short Story)	73
Yesterday (Drabble)	81
Assumptions (Drabble)	82
The Devil's Grave (Drabble)	83
Drama (Drabble)	84
Tongues (Drabble)	85
Shadows Path (Flash Fiction)	87
Grandma (Drabble)	91
Death's Void (Drabble)	92
One Shot (Drabble)	93
Entranced (Drabble)	94
The Path (Drabble)	95
The Power (Short Story)	97
Jump (Drabble)	105
Unkept Promises (Drabble)	106
Conquered (Drabble)	107
Forever (Drabble)	108
The Visitation (Drabble)	109
Waiting (Flash Fiction)	111
Last Night (Flash Fiction)	113
Mr. Parker (Drabble)	117
The Catalyst (Drabble)	118
The Suffering (Drabble)	119
Waiting (Drabble)	120
The Awakening (Drabble)	121
Boonfall (Short Story)	123
The Possession (Drabble)	133
The Last Dance (Drabble)	134
Holy (Drabble)	135

The Clock (Drabble)	136
The Echo (Drabble)	137
Once Upon A Time (Short Story)	139
Three Keys (Drabble)	145
Judgment (Drabble)	146
Heart Stealer (Drabble)	147
The Spell (Drabble)	148
The First (Drabble)	149
The Sight (Short Story)	151
Acknowledgments	159
Nefarious Tales	161
More Books By Rena Aliston	163
About Rena Aliston	165

Rena Aliston

Death's Choir

MY SHADOW CREPT below the pier last night, hovering over an innocent smile. My pain sung, blotting out another's light.

I sat alone, pondering this existence. I'd become him, the one who invited the serpent into our home. I'd become what I fought so hard against, yet secretly craved.

My hands sought repentance. I told myself, *what happened last night would never happen again*, but my tongue told tales, for I'd already planned the finale—his finale.

My shadow will creep and pain will sing again, but this time for the one who deserved to be serenaded by death's choir.

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Avenge

NO ONE ANTICIPATED the ravishing tide that swept through the village. The blood-stained streets smelled of rotten flesh. Our boots, soaked in mud, trampled over corpses as many carried their deceased to the center of town.

We huddled together. Some released their anguish through tears, while others wailed to the gods, begging for relief. A storm cut through their cries, washing away crimes bestowed by the night.

Many scattered, retreating into their homes. But nine of us remained. Our eyes surveyed the remnants of our ancestors as we grabbed our swords and mounted our horses, promising to avenge their murders.

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One Million

I ENTERED THE competition on a whim. Wasn't expecting to win, but I did. One million dollars. I just had to spend one night in the house. But not just any house—the Baker house, which was haunted.

Sitting in the back of the limousine, I clutched onto my overnight bag. My mother's words blasted against my eardrum—*Stay away from the Baker house. Many have come and gone, but death's shadow remains.*

Nothing anyone said was ever proven, but speculation was enough to keep everyone away. Of course, a few strays tested the waters. Some came out unscathed. Not everyone was lucky, though.

Stories circulated around town. A few escapees started a podcast, interviewing other survivors. Each with their own rendition of what happened.

I didn't believe everything I heard. But the stories flooded back as the limousine pulled up in front of the house.

A small crowd formed at the end of the street. Citizens applauded, showing their support. The others weren't as friendly—congregating across the street, holding up warning signs.

I closed my eyes before exiting the limousine,

The Devil's Grave

begging for my mother's strength. The back door swung open. Forcing myself out of the car, I stepped up on the sidewalk.

Michael Atkins ran the competition. He raised his arms to the crowd before positioning himself in front of me. A smile spread across his face, pushing his cheeks up toward his eyes as the sun reflected off of his white teeth. "Tasha, are you ready?"

"I guess."

He stepped to the side as cheers traveled up the sidewalk. My feet slid across the concrete. Heart pounding through my chest, I knew the clock wouldn't start until I made it inside. Another step. Another.

I turned around, looking toward the crowd, pushing forth a nervous smile, before making my way up the concrete steps, onto the porch, and inside the house. My body jolted as the door slammed behind me.

My eyes penetrated the dark room, searching for a place to set my bag. A lone table rested against the far wall. I set my bag on top, unzipped it, and pulled out a battery-operated lantern.

The stairs were to the left of the table. I glanced at the bottom step. My eyes traveled to the top. Backing away, *twenty-four hours* entered my mind, running like a mantra. I continued to inspect the first floor, moving from room to room, closing doors behind me.

I made my way back to the main area of the house, running toward the window as the limousine pulled away and drove down the street. The crowds disappeared as the streetlight came on.

Ashore

ALL I REMEMBERED about yesterday was her body washing ashore. We had coffee in the morning, strolled along the beach in the afternoon.

My hands trembled as I reached for the car door. I sunk into the seat and drifted away. A closed fist beating against the glass broke my concentration. I rolled down the window and forced a smile to part my lips. "Yes, officer?"

"Here's my card, if you remember anything."

"Thank you." I grabbed the card, rolled up the window, and watched as her parents consoled each other.

What had I done and why couldn't I remember?

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Resurfaced

IT HAD BEEN ages since I let the monster take over. Buried within time's abyss resided this untamable part of me. But I did it. I managed to suffocate the fervor it held.

A normal life was all I craved, and I had that for eight years. Eight years of living a life without the temptation to taste death's tears.

But as I sat there, staring at her body as it laid on the floor in a pool of blood, I was aware that I had once again lost control. The monster resurfaced, and I feared this time for good.

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Shadows Path

I WALKED SHADOWS Path, hoping for a glimpse of the forbidden. Red and blue flashes embraced the dimming lights of Heaven. Darkness fell as silence enveloped the once busy stretch of land known to locals as Death's Path.

Some people believed when the winds blew toward the west, darkness reigned and danger approached when the wind's soft whisper disappeared. No winds blew through Shadows Path and whispers were seldom heard.

For the past year, stories circulated around town about the misfortunes fallen upon those who journeyed down the road. No hit-and-run accidents ever spoken of—no madman ever found. A part of me trembled at the thought of being out there alone, while another part awakened with excitement.

Shards of glass marked the path of Bobby Thornton, the latest victim in a long trail of mysterious deaths. Bobby was twenty-three years old and known for traveling the road on his way back from Boston's Liquors. He was found with his eyes gouged out and both wrists slit. According to Mrs. Thornton, Bobby received a raise and promotion a week prior. Suicide was the last thing on his mind.

The Devil's Grave

A little further up the road was the chalk outline of Betty Timmons. She was a local hairdresser and known for possessing one of the most kind-hearted spirits you'd ever come across. According to the police report, her car broke down a mile into Shadows Path. Not far from town, she decided to walk the rest of the way.

Betty never made it home. She was found the next morning decapitated.

The local police department investigated twenty-nine unsolved murders along the path. No witnesses, fingerprints, or suspects.

As I recalled the descriptions and locations of each body, a faint moan came from my left. Laughing from my right. Looking both ways, I saw nothing.

Footprints beat against the pavement behind me. I turned—nothing. “Hold it together, kiddo. You’ve got a long night ahead of you.” Embracing the silence, I continued my journey down Shadows Path.

Gazing into the night sky, I noticed the beauty surrounding me. The paved road. The fresh air. Even the grass had a perfect trim.

“Hmmm. This must be where they found Jason Briggs’ body.” Jason Briggs, local delivery driver—his death was the most mysterious. They never found his torso. According to the autopsy report, it was a perfect cut.

Looking closer at the grass, I saw fresh blood splatter. Contemplating on whether to turn back into town, I realized how far I had already traveled down the

Acknowledgments

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If you loved the book, I would greatly appreciate a short review on the page where you purchased the book. Reviews make a huge difference in helping new readers.

Pilahú:k! (Thank you!)

ABOUT RENA ALISTON

Rena Aliston is an American Indian (Saponi) writer of dark poetry, micro-fiction, flash fiction, short stories, and crime/thriller and horror novellas.

She is the author of *Shadows and Mirrors: A Dark Poetry Collection* and *Woven Tales: Selected Poems*. Previously writing under the name Ofira Sephiroth, Rena is the author of four poetry books - *Damnation Begins*, *Baptism By Blood*, *Versified Darkness*, and *Versified Delusions*.



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