



## The Narrows

*Ronald Malfi*

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*The town of Stillwater has a very unwelcome resident.*

The town of Stillwater has been dying—the long and painful death of a town ravaged by floods and haunted by the ghosts of all who had lived there. Yet this most recent flood has brought something with it—a creature that nests among the good folks of Stillwater... and feeds off them. The children who haven't disappeared whisper the same word—“vampire.” But they're wrong. What has come to Stillwater is something much more horrific.

## The Narrows Details

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Author : Ronald Malfi

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## From Reader Review The Narrows for online ebook

### Carl Alves says

In The Narrows the dying town of Stillwater, located in the mountains of Maryland, sets the tone of desolation and hopelessness that permeates the novel. Floods have ravaged the town for a number of years, causing most of the residents to leave and the industry that once supported the town to shrink away. The floods also brought in a monstrous entity that is killing the townspeople and taking possession of its children.

The Narrows is a brilliantly written novel written by Ronald Malfi. The novel equally blends elements of mystery, suspense and horror, and is gripping from beginning to end. Malfi uses a slow build, starting with nothing overtly horrific, but giving hints as to what will come. He does a good job of introducing well-written characters including Stillwater's sheriff, who is holding onto Stillwater like a man grasping a life preserver. Naturally, he doesn't know what to make of the town's new predator as he puts together pieces suggesting that something all together unnatural is loose in the town.

The novel is reminiscent of Stephen King's Salem's Lot and Scott Nicholson's The Harvest. The writing quality is top notch. His prose has a lyrical quality to it. The suspense ultimately builds to a crescendo as Journale faces off in a fight to the finish with the creature haunting his town. With this novel, Malfi has established himself as a modern master of horror. If you haven't read any of his novels, then you are missing out spell-binding horror. The Narrows would be a good place to start on your journey into the mind of Ronald Malfi.

Carl Alves - author of Blood Street

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### Elke says

What a great read!

I appreciated the slow pace with which this novel develops, which reminded me of a King novel. You get to know the inhabitants of Stillwater so well you feel deeply with them when the horror slowly creeps over their little town.

The horror scenes are given sparsely, which makes them all the more intense each time they strike.

Where other horror stories simply rely on chapter after chapter of gore and bloodshed, The Narrows provides an elaborate plot and complex characters.

While the word vampire is mentioned in the story, The Narrows is nowhere near a typical vampire story and can only be described as such in the widest sense - it's far better than that.

Highest recommendation.

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### Melissa says

**FIVE STAR HORROR.** Perhaps the best horror novel I've read since I was 14 years old (nearly 30 years ago!) sitting in a recliner one snowy day completely absorbed in Stephen King's Salem's Lot. Malfi is, in my opinion, right up there with the greats: King, Simmons, McCammon. This audio book kept me company on my drive from Phoenix to Los Angeles, on a five mile hike, and two work commutes. There was never a dull moment in The Narrows; I was never bored. Every character came alive, the suspense built layer by layer, the plot never faded into obscurity. I plan to read everything that is Ronald Malfi. Highly recommended.

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### **Char says**

I read this book with my Shelfari group. I've read a few of Mr. Malfi's works before and enjoyed them, so I was looking forward to immersing myself in this novel. My excitement was not unwarranted.

The thing that stands out the most for me with this author is his style of writing. It's literary and almost lyrical at times. The descriptions are excellent and the style allows Mr. Malfi to take his time building this town and its people, without becoming boring. I can't help but make comparisons to another novel I recently read, Harvest Home, by Thomas Tryon. Tryon is another author skilled at "evil in a small town" story building. This book stood up to the comparison.

The second thing that stood out about this book is that it's actually scary, and I don't scare easy. The true horrors weren't quite visible at first, but as this tale gained momentum, the terrors became almost too visible. Like that X-Files episode with the thing in the pipes...you finally saw it-and immediately wished you hadn't. Because the scares were only half glimpsed at first, my imagination worked overtime filling in the blanks.

The third and last thing that made this read special for me was the imagination and the originality of it.

So overall, we have fantastic writing, with outstanding atmosphere and set building, real scares and originality. I ask you, what more could you ask for in a horror story? My highest recommendation!

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### **Peter says**

The small town of Stillwater, Maryland is dying a slow death. Each year the population decreases because of the floods. Store close up and people move away. A small boy is found wash up in the Narrows. This is the beginning of a plague that strikes this small town. Cows and goats were found with their heads decapitated. Their heads were nowhere to be found. What type of creature inhabits this town? Ronald Malfi weaves this tale of vampires like only he can. Malfi is an excellent storyteller and writer. This story does reminds me a little of Salem's Lot by King. I would recommend this book to readers who like Horror!

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### **karen says**

spoooooky!

i am still trying to find a horror novel that scares me, because my fatal flaw is an inability to be scared by books. if you are sick of hearing me say this, we must have been friends for a while, so instead of being

bored by my repetition, you should be grateful we are so close.

as far as scary books go, this one was one of the better ones. some horror novels are all about the payoff, the splatter, the quicktime monster jump-out. this one is more about building atmosphere to better get you when your guard is let down. and the writing is really solid. this is set in maryland, in a small town in a valley prone to devastating floods situated between mountains that cause the sunrise to appear later, and the sunset earlier. it is one of those small towns that traps you, even when you think you have left it for good. and it is slowly dying - there are boarded-up buildings and factories, the farmland isn't what it used to be, the river has been poisoned by run-off and three-eyed toads are not uncommon. and now something very odd is happening.

it begins with an infestation of bats.

nothing to see here, just us innocent bats. just a strange blip in nature's bounty...

but then the livestock-mutilations begin. and that's never a good thing. either you have satanists, or vampires, or chupacabra. and we are all sick of vampires, right?? (although i do think there are still some good ones being written, like Burden Kansas) but i promise you, and the book-synopsis promises you, this is not a vampire story.

and you know how it goes, "first they came for the cattle..." and then the young boys start going missing. and then the adults. and people start to catch glimpses of both their newly-, and their long-deceased loved ones. das unheimliche, indeed.

i appreciated the build in this one. he really took his time with the suspense-elements, escalating the tension ever so slowly, and creating the perfect trap.

my only complaint is a problem that is entirely my own, in my reading and visualization abilities. (view spoiler)

and while i slept just fine last night (sigh), it was definitely a creepy book, and people who are more susceptible to horror novels (sigh) will probably have to leave the lights on.

do it.

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### **Bandit says**

I'm not a huge fan of vampire stories, but if I do read them, I can only hope they should all be as good and as original as The Narrows. As a matter of fact, vampires or not, I hope to read more genre books as good and original as this one was. I remember reading The Boy in the Lot a while back on kindle, it was a free short story, sort of a teaser for The Narrows and it was pretty good, it intrigued me, but it didn't really prepare me for how awesome this book was going to be. The thing with The Narrows is just the quality, the writing is exceptional...Malfi does a phenomenal job of describing a small dying town and its hopeless complacent inhabitants and then he plunges them all into a deeply claustrophobic terror. It starts off as a coming of age story and ends up as a creature feature, never once losing its momentum, the slowly mounting dread, the

sensation of the ground giving way (figuratively and literally in this case), the gradual slip into the blood sucking brain eating madness of it all. There is plenty of gore and suspense, but the strength of the book is really its strong narrative and sympathetic characters. Good to the last page, I enjoyed the epilogue as well, although I thought that the second part of it was a tad out of sync with the rest of the book. I can see how it worked, though. This was exactly the kind of can't put it down have to see what happens oh wow scary story that a genre fan hopes to find when opening a new book. Highly recommended.

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### **Manuel Antão says**

If you're into stuff like this, you can read the full review.

"The Narrows" or "How Horror Became Scary Again" by Ronald Malfi

My first Malfi novel and it won't be my last.

In the last few years I shied away from the horror genre. I always got the feeling of *déjà vu*. Malfi made me want to read Horror again.

I've always felt that Horror works better as a short story than in long form (novel). Of course exceptions abound, but they just confirm this rule. "The Narrows" is one of those novels (like "The Stand" by King was as well).

You can read the rest of this review elsewhere.

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### **Alisi ? wants to read too many books ? says**

How did this book get such a high rating? No, wait, I've got one better: how is the same author that wrote Little Girls. I totally didn't like that book but the writing is SO much better. What little plot there is shines in comparison.

This book is filled with horrible, stupid people. Not horrible in the sense that they get up to mischief, though. Sorry to break that to you. It's just... I have no words.

This is a small town and children are going missing left and right, while cattle is being mutilated. You'd think that would motivate SOMEONE into panicking, but nope. NOT EVEN THE CHILDREN'S PARENTS. I shit you not. Was there even one missing poster posted? So you have that.

And on the other side of things, you have utterly stupid and incompetent police officers. The police were written so badly that it made me wonder if the author knew even the bare bones minimum of police procedural. I truly mean this. This is so not the case of an author watching a ton of CSI.

Like, for example, they go to this woman's house because she basically said monsters killed her hubby. They get there, see a shotgun, see spent bullets, see what they think is blood and other stuff. What does this police

guy do? Oh, he picks up the shell with his bare hands. He scrapes his nails along what looks like it could be evidence. He asks the other officer to see if it looks the same as at the animal killings, and when the guy just shrugs, he's totally cool with ignoring it.

He doesn't call crime scene people in. He has his officer put on plastic gloves when handling the gun and he has to explain why he needs to do that. Like finger prints are things this officer has never heard of because.

It's going to rain but whatever. No pictures. No securing the scene. Nope. Let's just move along.

Oh, or like how he thinks he's found a dead kid so he orders his men to transport the body to the police station. What? No photos. No nothing. We'll just ruin the entire crime scene and send the body to a place that isn't equipped to deal with them.

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God, I need some alcohol.

**Erin \*Proud Book Hoarder\* says**

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Creepy and well done! Review soon

**WendyB says**

The opening scene was a strong start but after that the story lost momentum. Too much filler masquerading as unneeded background on the various characters. Generally had a creepy feel. A big deal was made in the very beginning about Halloween being just two weeks away but not enough was done with it. Good but still kinda missed the mark.

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**Latasha says**

it was ok. the "vampires" were new and creative. the characters were ok but I didn't get attached to any of them.

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**John says**

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This was pretty good!

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**Chris Berko says**

Solid Malfi but not his best IMO, that belongs to Bone White. The first third really hit me personally

emotionally which also added to my fright later because as the tension was being elevated I actually felt something for the characters as to who they were and not just what was happening to them. I always get my money's worth with this author and would recommend anything I've read by him so far, of which this is the fifth piece of fiction. 4.3 overall from me.

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### **Bill says**

Something sinister is afoot in the small town of Stillwater. Down by the Narrows, kids are disappearing, livestock is being slaughtered and the entire town is in danger of dying out.

Very well written. Atmospheric and appropriately spooky.

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