



# Dark Corners

R. J. Davies



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Contact through <https://rjdavies.ca>

Online Edition

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Standing in the hallway, looking at the long dark corridor, the grey cement walls uninviting and dutiful. He swallowed hard and knew he had to keep going. Where was he? He didn't recognize this hallway. A foreboding sense of doom clung to every air molecule surrounding him. With each step, he wondered if it would be his last. Each footstep echoed louder than it should. Coming to the end of the hallway, he stopped. Looking right, then left, just more hallways. They look the same, another long hallway that goes off in both directions. Turning around, he looked back the way he came; the hallway disappeared into darkness.

Not a whole lot of options. Frowning, he looked back to the left, then to the right. They looked identical. No indicators, no signs, no marks, nothing indicating that there was an exit. An end to this hallway madness. Sighing heavily, he turned and went left. This hallway was like the last one.

Halfway down there was a doorway, no door. Just an opening in the wall in the shape of a doorway. Stopping in front of it. The room beyond was shrouded in darkness. Everywhere he went, these dark corners threatened to swallow him whole. Dare he enter? If he did, was there something in there waiting for him? Waiting to eat him? Kill him? Looking up and down the hallway, he didn't have many options. Go back the way he came, keep going down the ominous hallway that didn't look like there was an end in sight, or

enter this lonely dark room. Room? He was assuming there was a room once he stepped through the doorway. It might be a room, an exit, or nothing?

He didn't seem to have the best options. It was a room better than standing out in the hallway that went on forever. Stepping through the door, the light flickered and buzzed above him and finally made the effort to illuminate the room.

Old, dusty, abandoned, and empty. Was it an office? The walls on both sides of the room were lined with cubicles that were about four and a half feet tall. Dingy, grey cement cubicles painted a dark greenish grey. In the middle of the room, two rows of cubicles back-to-back, the same as the ones along the walls. A thick layer of dust covered the tops of the cubicles.

He started to cross the room and noticed that the cubicles were not office space; they were all bathroom stalls. Bathroom stalls? There was no label outside this room to indicate male/female. Was it a general bathroom for everyone? If so, why would the stall walls be only halfway up? You could peek in on the next person. It was semi-private, not private. Swallowing hard, he felt like an intruder, but he kept pressing forward. Crossing the room, he noticed the floor tiles in there were also dark green marble. The toilets in each of the stalls were all metal, with a layer of dust covering each of them.

He was almost at the door when he heard a roar coming from the hallway, the lights flickered and dimmed, then came back strong with a low hum. What the hell was that? It sounds like a large animal. Reaching the door, he noticed the wall was flanked with stone sinks and silver spouts. There was another roar. It sounded like it was far off, but he didn't

want to wait around to see who or what was attached to it. Grabbing the door handle, he opened the door and found a set of stairs leading down. Down to what?

He didn't like it. Not one bit, his heart started beating faster, the stairs reminded him of the staircase they had when he was a kid that led down to their basement. He never liked going down to the basement, but his mother would get him to go down and grab things from their cold room. This staircase reminded him of that. Old fears crept up from the pit of his stomach. He just wanted to go home, be somewhere safe and far away from whatever this was.

With each step, it made his skin crawl; the roar caused dust to drop from above him. Self-preservation kept him moving forward. His foot reached the bottom of the stairs, and he blinked to let his eyes adjust. Taking a step forward, he found himself outside. Turning to look behind him, the stairs were gone. Dreaming? He had to be dreaming; it was the only thing that made sense. The air smelled sweet, the star shone brightly in the sky, and there was a gentle breeze.

"Kevin," a familiar voice made him jump.

"Danny?" he turned again, and his brother, who died two years ago, was standing in front of him.

"It's been a long time."

He nodded. "Where are we?"

"An in-between place."

"I'm dreaming," he smiled.

“No, not really. This is just another world. Kind of similar to where you came from but different.”

He closed the distance between them and hugged his brother in a big bear hug. “We missed you, man.”

“I know. That’s why I offered to come see you.”

“Come see me?”

“Yeah.” His brother hugged him back. “Come, I want to show you things.”

“Show me what?”

Danny put an arm around him and led him across the lawn. “Kevin, we’ve been trying to reach out to everyone in your world, not too many are catching on to the message though.”

“What’s the message?”

“Our universes are colliding.”

“What? That sounds serious. What can we do?”

“Well, there are some steps we can take that will help preserve as much as we can.”

The familiar roar echoed across the yard. Kevin paused and looked behind them.

“What is that?”

“Distractions, Kevin, focus,” Danny continued to talk about time rifts, universes colliding, and something about dark corners of the cranks.

Kevin was having a hard time focusing on Danny’s words; the stars above were being swallowed by the dark clouds rolling in. The air felt thin and cold. “Danny,” Kevin shivered. His eyes were closing.

“Come on, Kev, focus! Fight it!”

He tried to fight it, but his eyelids felt heavy.

Two months later ....

“Hey, Kev, it’s Mom’s birthday. Did you book the restaurant?”

“Yeah, I just checked the reservations, Dan, relax.” Kevin felt slightly annoyed; his little brother was such a control freak. He felt guilty thinking that. It was true, but why did he feel guilty?

“They are going to meet us there, right?”

“Yes, that’s the plan, relax, I got this. It’s going to be a great evening.”

“I know you do, I just feel like I’m on borrowed time, and I just don’t know what to do about it.”

“Are you sick?” Kevin asked suspiciously.

“No, no, I don’t know where that came from,” Danny laughed it off.

“Okay, just relax, Dan, it’s going to be a great evening.”

“Alright, I have a couple more things to do, I’ll see you there.”

“Sounds good,” he hung up and felt an odd urge in the pit of his stomach to keep his brother safe. In the back of his mind, a soft, gentle whisper snuck up on him, ‘dark corners are everywhere.’