Clarion Review

General

Boogeymen and Bedtime Stories
Michael Bosi
iUniverse
978-1-4401-4501-8
Two Stars (out of Five)

Charlie looks across a village green. He notices that the shadows of the people seem to be dragging heavy iron balls attached to chains. However, the humans themselves are unencumbered by any medieval torture devices. Observing with him is a terrifying beast of a man, a horrible reflection of death itself, familiar to all humanity as the orchestrator of their worst nightmares. But the Boogeyman's counsel is already well-known and Charlie is unafraid. The Boogeyman explains that the weights are "a lifetime of accumulated guilt and fear." Because most people are unaware of any alternative, they must continue to pull their amassed defenses and illusions with them wherever they go.

A philosophical and metaphysical discussion wrapped in a novel, *Boogeymen and Bedtime Stories* follows the interactions between the Boogeyman, who appears in multiple guises and acts as a guide to mind-expanding experiences, and Charlie, a contemplative man who intends to explore the question of life's purpose while on a hiatus from work. "It has often been said," the Boogeyman teases, "that man should never ask 'why.'…You have asked me to show what your own mind has been subtly whispering your entire life. You desire to make your life useful, yet your mind holds fast to the misunderstandings that you've fastened over the years."

The Boogeyman whisks Charlie through time and space, showing him the true nature of the universe and how, through the filter of the mind, shaped by biology and experience, each person's version of the world is an artificial construct, broken down into bite-sized pieces rather than seen as a unified whole. Bosi uses real-life scientists, mathematicians, theorists, and musicians to do some of the heavy idea-lifting by having the wandering pair peek over the brilliant men's shoulders as they contemplate their work.

Charlie and the Boogeyman's discussions range from the role of creativity in

transcending day-to-day experience to the unifying concept of symmetry. The book feels like a mix of *A Christmas Carol*, *The Matrix*, and a journey with Carlos Castaneda and his teacher Don Juan Matus.

Bosi is the author of a previous book on the subject of how to perceive life's journey, called *Roads to Knowhere*. He is also a bass player and poet.

This could be a mind-expanding book, written to allow people to change the way they experience their lives, if it weren't riddled with clichés, misused words, and typos. The prose also sometimes gets bogged down in complicated philosophical constructs.

Bosi is at his best when he is illustrating an idea with an image as seen through the eyes of Charlie. Through a series of tricks and visions and musings, the Boogeyman succeeds in transforming Charlie into a higher form of being. Readers who go along for the ride will find themselves in a slightly altered world when they return.