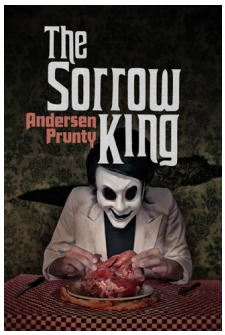
THE SORROW KING (Grindhouse Press, coming April 26) is a frighteningly tragic story about a young man’s slow descent into madness. The teenagers of a small town are killing themselves at an alarming rate. Newspapers are referring to this mass hysteria as “The Suicide Virus.” This supernatural tale offers a lot of scares, while taking a bleak and realistic look at disenchanted youth.



Just like in her dreams, Mary Lovell finds herself making out with the popular high school jock. Their passionate kiss suddenly turns creepily sour. The all-star jock shifts his head and starts vomiting, hurling spiders from his mouth. The spiders crawl all over the jock’s body, devouring his skin. Then, the army of tiny flesheaters spin their web around Mary, trapping the young girl inside her car.

When the police arrive, they discover Mary dead inside the garage. With no evidence of forced entry, the authorities assume the teenage driver might have locked herself inside, with the gas running and died from inhaling carbon monoxide. Mary just became another statistic in the growing suicide rate of Gethsemane, Ohio.

In a trancelike state, Steven Wrigley unexpectedly writes Mary’s name on a piece of paper, along with the other supposed suicides. Though he cannot prove a connection among them, Steven knows something suspicious is going on. The suicide virus seems capable of infecting a person as if it were some kind of flu.

Elise Devon stood outside Mary’s garage the night of her actual murder. She hides the real reason why students are killing themselves. Something ancient and evil is lurking in the moonlight. The Sorrow King is growing stronger, feeding on the fears on his victims. The dead are becoming restless as they haunt Steven in his dreams, pleading with him to do something.

But can Steven solve their murders and keep his sanity at the same time?

Author Andersen Prunty (MORNING IS DEAD) offers multilayered plots from three perspectives. Prunty uses a variety of storytelling techniques—flashbacks within flashbacks and a story within a story—to keep the plot moving. At its core, the narrative revolves around a family drama: the love/hate relationship between father and son. Prunty’s writing style is at its best when conveying the deep emotions of his young protagonist.

Prunty takes a different route when portraying his teenagers in love. The author veers away from self-absorption, which comes naturally to numerous young adult narratives. Rather than depict the whimsical aspect of teen romance, Prunty focuses on the despair and heartache of teenage angst. Like a car crash waiting to happen, Steven is falling in love with the wrong type of girl.

THE SORROW KING strives on its relatable characters and slow-building menace. The book is an absorbing fine read, while managing to ask important questions about suicide. You can order this novel and MORNING IS DEAD from the official Grindhouse Press website here .

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