



Manassas author Victor Rook uses holiday shopping as fodder for short story



Victor Rook’s collection of stories is set in 2021, with characters seeking vengeance on bad drivers, horrible bosses and cyberbullies. (Courtesy of Victor Rook)

By Sarah Lane December 7 at 7:56 PM

Black Friday elicits different responses from different people. Some can’t wait to shop pre-dawn holiday sales. Some set the day aside to shop locally. Still others boycott mass consumerism altogether. For [Victor Rook](#), watching the chaos of Black Friday on the news last year inspired a dark, satirical short story.

In “Black Friday Revenge,” a father seeks retribution after his son is trampled to death during the annual shopping extravaganza. The father lures shoppers to an abandoned warehouse and makes them play

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shopping games to survive.

That story and several others are in the Manassas author's latest book, "[People Who Need to Die](#)."

"People get a kick out of the title because it's so straightforward and shocking in a funny way," said Rook, 51.

The collection of short stories is set in the year 2021, with characters seeking vengeance on the likes of bad drivers, horrible bosses and cyberbullies.

Rook, who says he was influenced by Stephen King, Augusten Burroughs and David Sedaris, said "it was fun coming up with clever ways to 'off' bad people. No one in the book is shot with a gun, for example."

One of his favorite tales from the collection explores how a sweet, elderly woman living in Lake Jackson, Va., deals with mean neighbors.

"When I heard the stories from his book, I was brought back to the days of the old television series "Tales From the Crypt," said Kathy Moya, a member of [Write by the Rails](#), the Prince William County chapter of the [Virginia Writers Club](#). "The stories are creepy but laced with humor."

The compilation is a departure from Rook's two previous books. "[Musings of a Dysfunctional Life](#),"

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which began as a series of personal anecdotes he wrote after his mother died in 2008, was published in 2010. ["In Search of Good Times"](#) is about a man who thinks that the families he sees on television sitcoms are real. It was published last year.

"The short stories were easier to write than a full-length novel because I could change scenarios and characters and start anew each time," he said.

After a 13-year career in computer and information technology, Rook now freelances as a Web designer, author and filmmaker. His books have been self-published.

Rook recently joined Write by the Rails, which meets monthly at Trinity Episcopal Church in Manassas. He said he has enjoyed the company of other local authors.

"The support from other authors has been tremendous," Rook said. "Through collaborative efforts, we are able to organize author events and promote the literary community."

Rook will sign copies of "People Who Need to Die" from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Dec. 20 at 2nd and Charles bookstore, 2904 Prince William Pkwy., Woodbridge.