



Valley of the Scarecrow

Gord Rollo

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Gord Rollo's chilling homage to slasher films!

During the great depression, a small backwoods community in Iowa face even more difficult times than most, having to endure the slowly fading sanity of their leader, Reverend Joshua Miller. When it is clear the man has slipped beyond the edge of reason and perhaps signed a deal with the devil, the citizens unite to stop him any way they can, breaking into the church to lash the reverend to his wooden altar cross then boarding up the windows and doors to leave him to fate and God's judgment. The people of Oak Valley then abandoned their town to the cornfields and woods; ending the madness for what they hoped was forever.

They were wrong!

Seventy-four years later, the corn and trees have taken back the area and not much is left of the once thriving little community but Joshua Miller's desecrated church still stands, and within its boarded up and sun-baked walls something that used to be a holy man waits for whoever is unfortunate enough to release him from his cross...

THE SCARECROW WILL WALK AT MIDNIGHT

Valley of the Scarecrow Details

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Author : Gord Rollo

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From Reader Review Valley of the Scarecrow for online ebook

Dan says

This is a difficult rating to select. Depending on where you are coming from as a horror fan will make all the difference in what you think of Valley of the Scarecrow.

In this effort Gord Rollo pays homage to the slasher movie era. Admittedly that era is not for everyone, and a great many people dislike it. I happen to enjoy them, both for the popcorn munching fun factor and the nostalgia.

Rollo hits the nail on the head in recapturing the slasher era feel. Not the sheer brilliance of Carpenter's Halloween, but the over-the-top fun of the early Friday the 13th efforts, The Final Terror, and more. The characters are stereotypical, and that seems to be intentional to stay "in character" with the era.

I like the pacing, and the prose is fine. Valley is a horror novel which doesn't aspire to break new ground. It just wants you to have fun.

If you are a fan of the cheese which the slasher era epitomized, then this is a 4 star selection. If you don't like those movies, then this is 2 star selection. I took the average...yeah probably not the best decision. But there you have it.

Jeffrey Keeten says

On Saturday afternoons I sometimes like to put the SyFy Channel on and mute it and occasionally glance at the screen to see some two-dimensional annoying characters get eaten or eviscerated by a monster or evil fiend. I like this because I can read or do laundry and not have to give very much attention over to a B rated movie. Unfortunately Valley of the Scarecrow is a low budget B movie in book form. The characters remind me of the stick figures I used to draw when I was three, resembling people, but really not having anything substantial to give them form or a brain. After reading Strange Magic I was expecting a lot more from Valley of the Scarecrow. I did not expect to find stilted dialogue, sentence structure problems, almost zero character development. I would pause in my reading, gobsmacked by some horrible line, to reread the sentence. To say the least this was a distraction from really falling into the book and letting the plot take me to Miller's Grove. I couldn't wait for the Reverend Joshua Miller to awaken and destroy these people in various nefarious ways, but I had to grit my teeth to get to the payoff. I didn't identify with any of these people which in itself is not a problem if the book is well written and the plot takes off like a rocket. One of the characters, Lizzie, the only thing I can remember about her is she gets "horny" when it rains. Dan has muscles. Pat takes pictures. Kelly is 5'10". Rich is Dan's sidekick. Kim has big boobs and is sexually attracted to Dan. They are basically all red shirts and just fodder for the Reverend.

I have a sneaking suspicion that this was an earlier novel, hanging out in a drawer, and after he had a few other novels accepted this was pulled back out of the drawer and given a hatch job makeover. Some books are best left in the drawer or published as an airport horror novel under a pseudonym.

Rebecca McNutt says

If you grew up with all those 70's and 80's horror films and love creepy stories, this novel is definitely one you'll want to read. Set in a rural town where evil lurks in the shadows, *Scarecrow* is an excellent book and really worth reading.

A.R. says

This is a great dark tale of the supernatural in Iowa, and though no one in the Midwest says "Bleedin'" any more than they say "Blimey," the brilliant subject matter allows you to overlook it. How can one lose with a horror story about a scarecrow?

RachelvlehcaR says

I was disappointing in this book. I was looking forward to it and drove right in, especially reading this in October. I ended up disappointed and it took a very long time to actually get into the action and death. There was a lot of buildup and nothing really happened until the last quarter of the book. This isn't what I expected for a book about a deadly killer Scarecrow.

It reminded me of one of those cheesy slasher 80's movies but this wasn't going for a lot of gore so you missed out on a lot.

(view spoiler)

Peter says

The year was 1936 and the community of Miller's Grove was faced with a problem with their spiritual leader Joshua Miller. The community of Miller's Grove once put their trust in this man but something dark and evil has taken him over. The towns people believe that the Reverend Miller had signed a contract with the man in black. Angus Tucker and a group of elders were going to the church to destroy Joshua Miller. Angus and the elders hung the Reverend from a cross on the altar of his own church. Miller said that he would get his revenge one day. After the crucifixion, the towns people boarded up Joshua Miller's church. The citizen of Miller's Grove pack up all their belongings and left there for good. 74 years later Joshua Miller's church is still standing. Inside the church the Reverend body still hangs from the cross. Evil still lurks inside the church in the forgotten town of Miller's Grove.

Rob Kolb says

The literary equivalent of a bad 80s slasher, and I mean that in the best way possible. Valley of the Scarecrow uses basic horror tropes to its advantage in this bloody, scare filled joy ride.

Cats of Ulthar February Weird Fiction says

Review of Valley of the Scarecrow
5 stars

Did I find this book SCARY? You bet. Imaginative? Ditto. Enthralling? Yep of course. So what more do you need to know ?

“Valley of the Scarecrow” is one of those horror stories that postulates the existence of actual evil, not just psychological misfitting, but real, down-to-earth (or down-to-Hades) evil. Way back during the Great Depression in America, a community of Scottish immigrants following the directives of their pastor, found their crops bountiful and prospering. The problem was, the preacher was enriching himself at the expense of surrounding communities, and he wasn’t growing these incredibly expansive crops through prayer. Instead, he had dealt himself and the Community to “the Man in Black.” Worse comes to worse, and a group of men from the small community unite to stop this devilishness, in a horrifying way.

Decades later, the son of one of that number, now in his eighties, makes the mistake of mentioning the anecdote to his granddaughter, and speaks of the Reverend’s treasure. Greed is set afoot, and she and her ex-boyfriend and several of their best friends decide to hunt the lost community and dig up the treasure, wherever and whatever it may be. Treasure is not all they discover, though.

Daniel Drago says

I can see this book totally as a great Horror Movie. The pacing was fantastic and it was a very fast read. Gord did an excellent job with the main protagonist Kelly and you cared what happened to her and her friends. The novel did have some cliché moments but this is a Horror story after all and I felt they worked perfect within the context of the story. Joshua Miller was an excellent villain and even though he doesn't make an appearance until half way through the novel the story still held a great atmosphere and a good backstory which could have been expanded upon further.

This was a perfect Halloween read and another strong outing from Gord Rollo. Probably my favorite of his so far but I still need to read a couple of more. Looking forward to his next and hopefully a sequel.

Ursula Kelly says

I absolutely love Gord Rollo.....real 'old fashioned' horror. This particular book made me picture a real teen horror type movie.... What I loved was there wasn't a 'happy ever after' with certain characters surviving holiday style and the end was brill.....

Kaisersoze says

Having had Gord Rollo on my TBR pile for quite some time, I nominated **Valley of the Scarecrow** for a monthly group read here on Goodreads. Several other members of the Paced Reading Horror and Thrillers group joined me.

To each of them, I apologise.

Valley of the Scarecrow failed to work for me on multiple levels. The characters experienced zero development, the supernatural slasher threat took far too long to get off his cross and do something, and the only surprise through the whole novel was kind of laughable (view spoiler). The partial saving graces of the novel were the occasional gory kill scene and the inventive way the surviving characters aim to deal with the undead scarecrow menace.

In short, if you're going to spend over half a novel shuffling your characters into mortal danger position, the reader should care about a large proportion of them by the time that you do. Ideally, this would occur by making them relatable and/or worthy of empathy. **Valley of the Scarecrow** achieves neither, so it becomes an exercise in patience, waiting for the scarecrow to finally start slashing. Unfortunately for this novel, when he does, it's already too little, too late.

2 Resurrected Reverends for **Valley of the Scarecrow**.

Monster says

A small Iowa town has a dark past tracing back to the 1930s. While other neighboring communities fell victim to drought and disease that plagued the Midwest, Miller's Grove continued to thrive; crops swelled and their leader, Reverend Joshua Miller, believes all thanks belongs to him. Instead of sharing the bounty, he gouges the neighboring communities for every bit of cash and gold they own as payment for his endless supply of grain. When his followers witness the Reverend's devilish dealings, they cut their ties to the devil by stringing the Reverend to a cross inside their church, boarding him up inside, and abandoning the town.

Now, in present day Cedar Rapids, Iowa, rumors of Miller's Grove have resurfaced. Kelly Tucker learns that her grandfather bore witness to the events of 1936- and also learns of the gold and jewels reportedly stashed away. Against her grandfather's vehement protests, Kelly decides to seek the treasure. Kelly and her friends set out to find Miller's Grove and its hidden treasure, stumble upon the church, and discover a still-bountiful cornfield. Their search turns up far more than they bargained for when they awaken the Reverend Joshua Miller, still tied to the cross, and very, very angry with his lost flock of followers. Instead of finding the treasure, Kelly and her friends need to find a way out of the woods and to safety before the Reverend takes a sickle to their necks.

Valley of the Scarecrow reminds me of the perfect 80s horror flick; a sort of twisted combination of the Children of the Corn meets Michael Meyers in Halloween. It even reads just like an 80s horror flick, from the oversexed teenagers who always do exactly what they shouldn't do and get killed for it, to the lone teenager survivor, to the "oh-my-God-no-way"! death and dismemberment scenes. The tale can be a bit predictable at times, but that's what always made 80s horror flicks so great, too. You know exactly what's going to happen and want to scream at the characters not to do it, but of course, they don't listen. And just

with any good 80s horror movie, in Valley of the Scarecrow, the tale ends with the Reverend angrier than ever and ready for more blood – leaving the plot wide open for a sequel. I thoroughly enjoyed Valley of the Scarecrow and look forward to more of Gord Rollo's horrific tales in the future.

Recommended for adult horror fiction collections in public libraries.

Contains: sexual content, graphic language, gore, violence

Reviewed by: Kelly Fann

Ken McKinley says

A homage to the slasher films of the 1980s with a few twists and turns. A body is found inside the walls of an old Iowa theater in a hidden sealed room. Now in an assisted-living facility, Kelly's grandfather has been harboring a secret from his childhood past for all these years. A forgotten small town deserted since the 1930s, buried in the thick woods of rural Iowa. The old, dilapidated church still boarded up after all this time and inside still remains the Reverend Joshua Miller where he was last left by the towns people - lashed to the church's old wooden cross. His body mumified from decades of intense, dry heat and intertwined with old, dried cornstalks that have grown up through the rotting floor. The townspeople long gone to their graves thinking that the evil that took over Reverend Miller and caused them to turn against the town's founder was dead too. But evil never dies. It simply waits for it's time to be resurrected again.

I loved the premise of Valley of the Scarecrow. The Iowa setting was different than most stories and I loved the back history of what happened in Miller's Grove in the 1930s. It gave the slasher story a unique place to grow from. That's a hard thing to do from a tired horror genre. Rollo weaves the interesting characters and events from the past into the present day storyline. He succeeds for the most part, but still falls in some of the traps that make the slasher scene a worn out one. You have the group of college age kids - the oversexed boyfriend and girlfriend, the awkward artistic type, the slutty bimbo, the token black guy, and the normal, all-american girl that you know is going to survive until the end. The other thing that kept sticking out like a sore thumb is that Rollo kept having his midwestern characters say the word Bloody all the time - bloody hell, I can't see a bloody thing, it might be worth a bloody fortune, etc. I'm from the midwest and I've been to Iowa. I have yet to run across any native Iowan that says the word bloody to describe anything that doesn't have blood running down it. Also, a couple of the characters come across a stash of Agent Orange that their dad happened to have stockpiled. OK, I needed this to be a little more fleshed out. Where the hell would he get a banned military defoliant that was never legal to use in the states? It would be like pulling a fully operational tank out of the barn without explaining how they got their hands on it. But other than that, the story was rather enjoyable. If you can overlook a few of the flaws, there are enough creepy moments to make it worth the read. Rollo does a good job at wrapping the material he has all together.

3 1/2 dessicated scarecrows out of 5

You can also follow my reviews at the following links:

<https://kenmckinley.wordpress.com>

<https://www.goodreads.com/user/show/5...>

Bradley Convissar says

Let's be honest here... this book is a written form of a B-movie horror film. Six kids hear about the legend of Miller's Grove and the treasure that may be there. Even though they are warned not to go, guess what? They go. And as they look for the treasure, they do something stupid that awakens the monster and they are whacked one by one. This really isn't a spoiler because you know this is going to happen from the very beginning. Anyway, the writing is sharp, the villain is neat, and the ending leaves the opening for a sequel. Of you are looking for King/Barker - esque psychological horror, this is not for you. But if you are looking for a quick read full of blood and gore, then by all means, take a peak.

Geoff says

SLIGHT SPOILER ALERT

This book is like the summary depicts. It's a slasher type of book that feels like a book version of Friday the 13th; teenagers camping out and they get killed one by one, etcetera. Since the concept of the book wasn't meant to be difficult, this book isn't rocket science, but Gord Rollo delivers in what he tried to do. It's a fun slasher book that was a good read.

Now the story is not gruesome or anything (nothing like his book Jigsaw), as the story is really pulled along by the mythology Rollo sets up. The back story as to what is happening is at the forefront, whereas the slasher parts and character development are lesser parts. And I thought the mythology was pretty decent and fun to read.

The mythology is about an old farming village called Miller's Grove, named after the Reverend Miller, where a group of settlers were farming in the 1900's. But things started to get weird when the Great Depression hit and Miller's Grove started turning out great crops, and the village was rolling in money while all the surrounding farmers couldn't farm anything. Suspicion grew in the village as to why this was occurring and it came back to the reverend Miller, who was in league with The Dark Man or the Devil as some believed. So the settlers left and left Reverend Miller crucified inside his church. Now fast forward to the current day and one of the ancestors of the village is a girl named Kelly, and she goes back to Miller's Grove to find the gold that was supposedly left behind when the villagers left the grove. And she brings her young friends with her to search for the money, and as you can expect all hell breaks loose.

As I said I liked the story, but I'll give it 3 out of 5 stars because it's a lightweight story and focuses more on scares. But I still recommend reading it if you like Rollo, as I enjoyed it. It also comes with a bonus short story that shows the village when it is starting to turn evil. It's a great accompaniment to the novel.
