

Background Information

About the author

Bruno Lowagie lives and works in Ghent, Belgium. In his previous life, he was an open-source software developer and entrepreneur. After selling his company, he turned his attention to writing. He first published works for Dutch and Flemish readers before beginning to translate his fiction into English in 2024.

In 2026, he shifted his focus from short fiction to screenwriting, but since getting noticed by production companies can be notoriously difficult, he began adapting his screenplays into narrative form, resulting in a series of novelettes:

#1: Operation Downfall

#2: The Sisters Lovecraft

#3: Emperor of America

#4: Mirror Point

#5: Eyes So Blue

This is the sixth installment in that series and the second that isn't based on a screenplay. Just like *Mirror Point*, it is a collection of short stories, although this time the emphasis is on horror, dark fantasy, and the supernatural.

The author is currently working on a seventh book in the series about the fifteenth-century merchant and financier Jacques Cœur. The story already exists as a screenplay. The novelization is in development.

About the stories

The longest stories in this collection were originally written in Dutch. Most of them submitted to writing contests or published in Dutch and Flemish magazines. The shortest stories were often written in English as submissions for one of the monthly *Furious Fiction* challenges by the *Australian Writers' Centre*.

Each month, participants are invited to write a story of 500 words or fewer within 55 hours while incorporating a series of required elements that will be listed in this overview where applicable.

1. The Empty Nursery

Originally written in Dutch, the story had an English title: *Lock box*. It was written to compete in the Dutch *Waterloper* writing contest. The chosen theme was *Geestige kostgangers*, which is a wordplay: *Geest* is Dutch for ghost, but *geestig* kan also mean funny or witty; *kostganger* translates as boarder or lodger. The story ranked xxx place out of xxx submissions.

2. Autopsy of a Relationship

Autopsie van een relatie was first published in the Flemish magazine *Weirdo's* (Year 38, No. 3, October 2025).

3. Anna's Superpower

Anna's superkracht was one of the bonus story in *De belofte*, an anthology published by EdgeZero, consisting of the best stories submitted to a writing contest with *The Promise* as the mandatory theme. The contest was organized by Future Visions Unlimited. Lowagie was a member of the jury that made the selection.

The story also featured in *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*, a selection of 42 of Lowagie's stories, published by Poespa Producties in 2025.

4. Look What the Kid Dragged In

This story was written for *Bang voor spoken? (Are you afraid of ghosts?)*, an anthology with ghost stories published by Poespa Producties (2024).

It wasn't easy to come up with a translation for the original title *Kattenkwaad*. *Kat* means cat in Dutch; *kwaad* means evil. Together, *kattenkwaad* refers to the innocent mischief of children playing. The English title is a pun on the expression *Look what the cat dragged in*.

5. The Monster

This is a *Furious Fiction* story submitted in April 2025. The criteria were:

- Your story's setting is a bed.
- Your story's first sentence must have no more than three words.
- Your story must include the words SHAPE, ENTER, and QUESTION.

I didn't make the long list, but the South African online literary magazine *The Pink Hydra* published the story in its 2025 June issue and paid me € 2.56 for it.

The Dutch version, *Het Monster*, made the Flemish magazine *Weirdo's* (Year 38, No. 4, December 2025).

6. Breakfast in Sicily

Originally titled *Ontbijt (Breakfast)*, this is the first time the story is published.

7. How I Met His Parents

This story has a long history. Just like *The Monster*, it started as a *Furious Fiction* challenge:

- Each story has to include the name of at least ONE element from the periodic table.
- Each story's first and last words has to begin with S.

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- Each story has to contain the words TRAFFIC, JOWLS and HIDDEN.
- Each story has to include something that BUZZES.

The original story *Meeting the Parents* made the long list in September 2019, after which I translated it into Dutch: *Hoe ik zijn ouders leerde kennen*.

That version won first prize in the contest *Bij ons in the familie* (*In our family*), organized by *De Cascade* and the library *AanZet* in the Dutch City of Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht.

In 2025, it was also selected for *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*, Lowagie's book published by Poespa Producties.

8. Digitortures

The Dutch version, *Digitorturen*, was published in the aforementioned book *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*.

9. Do You Lose Time Too?

When Johnny Bekaert, publisher of Poespa Producties, unveiled the cover design for *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*, Lowagie felt inspired to write a story that matched the image.

Verlies jij ook tijd? (*Do You Lose Time Too?*) was the result. It was later included in the collection itself.



10. June and August

Yet another story written for the *Furious Fiction*:

- Your story must strongly feature a relationship between TWO characters.
- Your story must include someone whispering.
- Your story must include the words JAR, UNIFORM, NEEDLE, and EDGE.

The original story made the long list in June 2024.

The version in this book is a translation of the Dutch version that was selected for *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd* and that was a tad longer than the original.

11. The Tourist Trap

This too was a *Furious Fiction* story:

- Your story must include a character who is BEING CHASED or doing the CHASING.
- Your story must include the words BOIL, FRINGE and JUMP.
- Your story must contain at least THREE CREATIVE SIMILES.

It made the challenge's long list in May 2023.

The Dutch translation *Snoepprijsje* can be found in *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*.

12. Vanishing Kin

This story was written in the context of the *Mollie Savage Memorial Writing Contest*, organized by *Toasted Cheese* in March 2024. This spring edition was a mystery contest: "Write a mystery involving a digitally manipulated image or video."

A longer version of the story won third place. It was published in Volume 24, Issue 2 (June 2024) of the *Toasted Cheese Literary Journal*.

The Dutch version *Verdwijnende verwanten* made the selection for *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*.

13. There's a Demon in My Bed

Er ligt een demon in mijn bed was published by EdgeZero, in the anthology *Een jaar zonder zomer (A Year Without Summer)*, released in 2026.

It was also one of the 42 stories in *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*.

14. Luna Plena

The Dutch original has the same Latin title as the English version and made the long list of 22 stories out of 73 submissions in the Dutch *Verhaal van de maand* (*Story of the Month*) contest of September 2025.

It was selected for *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*.

15. The Intervention

This story was written for *Bang voor spoken?* (*Are you afraid of ghosts?*), an anthology with ghost stories published by Poespa Producties (2024).

16. The Mortal God

This story exists in many different versions. It won a selection in an anthology, but Lowagie retracted it because being published meant giving up part of his copyright.

Eventually, *De sterfelijke god* was published in *Meer dan menselijk* (*More Than Human*), an anthology compiled in support of the *Nederlandse Vereniging voor Autisme* (*Dutch Association for Autism*).

It also appeared in *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*.

17. Doppelgänger

Of all the stories in the book, this is probably the most unsettling one. Unlike many horror stories, the terror in *Doppelgänger* does not come from an external threat. It comes from a man who spends an entire summer trying to become someone else, only to discover that he has been running from himself all along.

Dubbelganger was published in *De vondst* (*The Find*), an anthology by EdgeZero, consisting of stories inspired by the book *Het ongemak* (*The Discomfort*) discovered in a Little Free Library.

18. The Maiden of St. Satyrus

De maagd van Sint-Satyrus was published in issue #4 of the Flemish magazine *In Tenebris* (September 2025).

About the genre

Horror is often mistaken for a single genre.

But it's much more than that. In reality, it's a vast umbrella encompassing many different traditions, from folklore and ghost stories to psychological suspense, dark fantasy, satire, and gothic fiction.

The stories collected in *The Maiden of St. Satyrus* explore several of these traditions.

Psychological Horror

Psychological horror focuses on fear, guilt, obsession, paranoia, and the fragility of the human mind. The true danger is often uncertainty itself. Stories such as *The Empty Nursery*, *Vanishing Kin*, *Do You Lose Time Too?*, *There's a Demon in My Bed*, *The Intervention*, and *Doppelgänger* belong largely to this tradition. Their central question is not "What is the monster?" but "Can I trust my own perception of reality?"

Folkloric and Fairy-Tale Horror

Long before horror became a literary genre, folk tales warned listeners about the dangers lurking beyond the village boundary. These stories often combine cruelty, morality, and dark irony. *Breakfast in Sicily*, *June and August* and *The Maiden of St. Satyrus* borrow from this tradition. Their worlds operate according to a dreamlike logic in which strange events are accepted as natural consequences of human actions.

Supernatural Horror

Supernatural horror introduces forces that transcend the natural world: ghosts, demons, gods, curses, and other impossible beings. Stories such as *Look What the Kid Dragged In*, *Luna Plena*, *The Mortal God*, and *The Maiden of St. Satyrus* draw from this tradition. Their horrors arise from encounters with entities that obey laws stranger than those of the human world.

Satirical and Social Horror

Some horror stories use fear to comment on society, politics, technology, or human behavior. The horror emerges from recognizable social anxieties pushed to absurd and often highly disturbing extremes. *Autopsy of a Relationship* transforms a failing relationship into a supernatural infestation. *Digitortures* imagines a future in which writers become criminals. *The Tourist Trap* makes fun of consumerism.

Gothic Horror

Gothic horror explores decay, isolation, secrets, and the lingering influence of the past. Elements of the Gothic can be found in *The Empty Nursery*, where grief transforms the familiar into something unsettling, and in *Vanishing Kin*, where old crimes return to haunt an elderly woman.

Body Horror

Body horror derives its discomfort from physical transformation, mutilation, and the loss of bodily autonomy. Readers will find shades of body horror in *Breakfast in Sicily*, *Digitortures*, *June and August*, and *Luna Plena*, where the body becomes both victim and source of terror.

Science-Fiction Horror

Science-fiction horror explores the fears that arise from technology, scientific progress, and humanity's attempts to control forces it does not fully understand. In *Digitortures*, writers become criminals in a future where artificial intelligence has gained legal control over the act of writing itself. The story demonstrates how scientific and technological ideas can be used to create uncertainty, paranoia, and dread.

Dark Fantasy

Dark fantasy occupies the borderland between fantasy and horror. Rather than focusing solely on fear, it builds worlds in which the fantastic and the terrifying coexist. *Anna's Superpower*, *The Monster*, and *The Mortal God* are examples of dark fantasy, presenting supernatural concepts as ordinary facts of life.

Dark Humor

Many stories in this collection contain elements of dark humor. The intention is not to diminish the horror, but to highlight its absurdity. Stories such as *Anna's Superpower*, *Breakfast in Sicily*, *How I Met His Parents*, *The Mortal God*, and even *Doppelgänger* invite readers to laugh and shudder at the same time.

Cosmic Horror

Cosmic horror explores humanity's small place within a reality governed by forces beyond human understanding. Although no story in this collection is a pure example of cosmic horror, traces of the tradition can be found whenever gods, demons, or ancient supernatural powers operate according to laws that humans can neither control nor fully comprehend.

Summarized

The stories in *The Maiden of St. Satyrus* move freely between these traditions. Some are frightening, some tragic, some grotesque, some whimsical, and some all at once. Together they celebrate horror in its many forms: not merely as a source of fear, but as a way of exploring loss, love, guilt, memory, loneliness, hope, despair, and the strange corners of the human imagination.