

Title: The Paleontologist

Author: Luke Dumas

Genre: Horror

Tagline:

The Paleontologist follows Dr. Simon Nealy, a dinosaur expert who returns to his hometown in Pennsylvania during the COVID-19 pandemic to work at the Hawthorne Museum of Natural History. Here, he works to uncover the mystery behind his sister's disappearance twelve years ago, but something lurks in the shadows and the basement of Hawthorne Museum.

Summary:

Simon Nealy, overridden with guilt over his sister's disappearance returns to the Hawthorne Museum of Natural History where she was last seen. While in the museum, he starts seeing and hearing things and comes across the journals of the previous paleontologist. He realizes there is a real, living killer hiding in the shadows. This human killer is mimicking an old cultural tradition by using ground-up bones to perform spiritual acts. Simon connects the killer with to his sister Morgan's cold case and finds the killer had been hiding in the corners of the museum's basement. He solves his sister's disappearance and finds closure to the past that haunted him.

Analysis:

The premise of the story is very promising, and the writing style is well-done. The horror aspect was well woven into the story and urged me to continue reading. However, the setting of The Paleontologist—COVID Pandemic-- is not ideal as it hindered me from staying inside the story. The constant mask reference kept pulling me out of the plot. Additionally, Simon's character was hard to connect with because he seemed to have a victim complex. Everything about his character was negative; his height, his sexuality, his relationship with his ex-boyfriend, his interactions with other people, etc. It was hard finding something to like about him.

Overall, if the setting timeline and main character were different, this story would be amazing.