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JANUARY 2026

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# SPECULATIVE FICTION IRELAND

*January Newsletter*



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Greetings fellow darklings,

What a month, huh? I would know. I have been busy perfecting my role as the newest SFI Co-ordinator, curating the best possible environment for all science-fiction, fantasy and horror fanatics. Hint: there's a LOT to come. System overload...

Some quick fire news to begin with:

- A new collaborative publishing project is in place, initiated by our one and only Gatekeeper. From what I have been told, this will be launched at the end of May in Roe River Books, in Dundalk. And possibly, the same day will feature *Channel the Dark Volume 2* launch... Stay tuned.
- SFI members will get a free and exclusive copy of the e-zine, which will feature author spotlights, competitions, samples of SFI members work, articles and essays from booksellers, and more! More information on that is pending...

Furthermore, in this newsletter, I'll be sharing updates from our SFI authors, including new projects, past publications, and other news. And... drum roll... an exclusive look at the *Channel The Dark Vol. 2* introduction!

Hold on, I am expressing a lot more excitement than I should.

Rebooting...

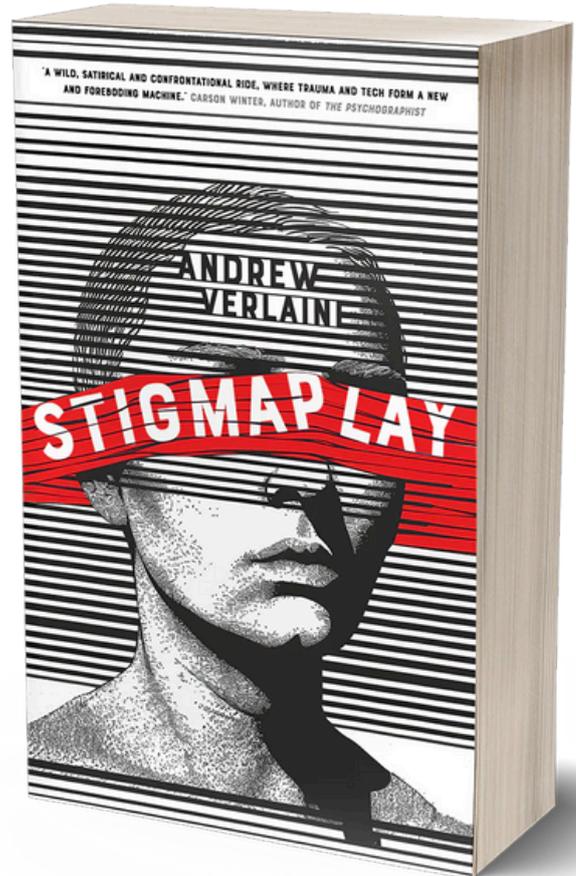
# SFI Authors News

ANDREW VERLAINE, AUTHOR OF *STIGMAPLAY*

SFI member Andrew Verlaine's *StigmaPlay*, published by Vine Leaves Press in February 2025, will be reaching its first year anniversary. *StigmaPlay* thwarts the use of virtual reality by allowing users to enter a simulation where they experience life through various personality disorders, ranging from suicidal tendencies to eating disorders, and others. June experiences the VR narrative through Dr. Virgil Birmingham, a psychiatrist whose clients struggle in the aftermath of a shooting spree. But as June delves deeper, her reality begins to intertwine with her new virtual reality, especially when she realises the committee behind the project are keeping something secret.

As the book explores the limitless possibilities of technology and likewise its destructive use, Andrew asks you to prepare because "virtual reality may be closer to home than we ever imagined".

Oh and happy one year anniversary to *StigmaPlay*. Now available to purchase on [Vine Leaves Press](#).



ROBBIE SHEERIN, AUTHOR OF *BITE SIZED FICTION*, *THE ORB* AND MORE

Welcoming our newest SFI member, Robbie Sheerin, originally from Scotland but now residing in the United States; he is an author of many works of fiction and non-fiction. Primarily a specialist in science fiction, our participant also enjoys dabbling with general fiction, writing two short story collections. Although, you will find his work online on various platforms and in paperback. In fact, if you're ever glazing your eyes over the US channels or news outlets online, you will witness Robbie's work featured in Andover Bookstore's commercial feature for credit card machines. How exciting...

In other news, Robbie is in the process of wrapping up his second novel and first non-science fiction titled *Fractured Memory*, which is a murder mystery set — in what I was told — a unique time period... Keep your eyes peeled for news on this release.

Robbie's masterful pieces will also be featuring in the *Channel the Dark Anthology Vol. 2* and his current, published catalogue is available [here](#).

DAVID O'MAHONY & HIS LITANY OF WORK

David O'Mahony, a long time member, has an abundance of work to share with us. Where do I begin?

David has recently surpassed the mark of having 65 stories accepted! Publishing in 2026 a ghost story in *Ghastliest Ports* (Rogue Planet Press) and a monster romance piece in *Twisted Trysts* (Dead Fox Publishing). David tells me, "That's romance that's definitely not NSFW!"

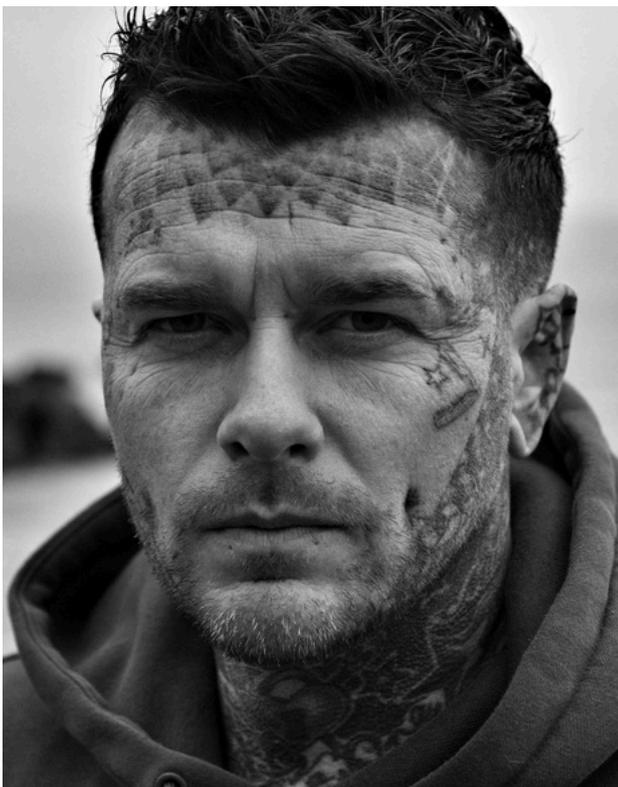
David expects to publish three more books this year including his next collection, *In the House of Sorrows* (originally a novelette called *The Paths Beyond*) will be out later this year; his novella *Dishevelled in Silhouette*, a ghost/curse story, and another novel called *The Undying* — slightly unhinged, featuring undead ghouls and old folk cults — what more could one want? In addition, David has also written a children's book, *Butterfly Heart*, initially written for his daughter (who is expecting a sequel, awww...) which he's hoping to publish.

Amid the mountain of short stories there's a cosmic/supernatural horror novel, *Worlds Without End*, and an Ireland-based supernatural novel called *Beneath the Surface*. There's ANOTHER vampire novella in the works too, and he has TWO more collections planned for release in 2027: *We Bury the Dead and Pretend it Matters* (main theme is hell, undead, etc), and a dark fantasy, *While We Still Have Strength to Dream*.

Can we agree that we all would like to have David's work etiquette? I know I would.

I would like to remind SFI authors that now is your chance to be able to feature your work on our website, so that we can happily promote and have it available for purchase directly through us. We currently have David O Mahony's work, *The Ties That Bind*, a short story collection available in our [SFI store](#).

INTRODUCING... BAZ BLACK, THE NEW INSTRUCTOR FOR SCREENWRITING CLASSES



We welcome another addition to our SFI team — the award-winning director, writer, producer and actor best known for his roles in *Kin*, *Brassic* and *Dublin Crust* — Baz Black. Baz will be one of our first hosts of the year to introduce a screenplay writing course, hosted by Temple Dark Books. If you are interested in pursuing screenwriting, here is your chance to learn more! Accumulate heaps of new skills including how to structure your story, build character development and dialogue, and write to industry standards.

The first class will take place on February 18, 2026 at 7-9pm (online). Details will be published on [templedarkbooks.com](https://templedarkbooks.com) and you can book your slot [here](#).

MEMBER TESTIMONIAL

Another one of our newest members, Sean Richardson, offers a powerful testimonial to leave you reflecting on as we reach the end of our authors' news:

"I am glad to be part of this community and am most looking forward to the release of *Channel the Dark Vol 2*, and seeing my work therein. As a writer hoping to publish my novels one day and as someone who has struggled with dyslexia, this has been one hell of a climb. But this is the start, and as so many before me have said, the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, but it is having the determination to continue on to the end that we must hold tight to."

## Channel the Dark Anthology, Volume 2

I should be thrilled (but I must reserve all my energy for the end) to announce that the Gatekeeper and his helpers are currently working on the latest edition of the *Channel the Dark* anthology (all hail the Gatekeeper! Applause, applause). This is a charity anthology supporting suicide prevention and mental health awareness in association with SOSAD Ireland (learn more at [sosadireland.ie](http://sosadireland.ie)). In a similar makeup to the previous volume, the second volume will also feature work from our SFI authors, so if you are interested in participating, make sure to join our cult... I mean, organisation. SFI is waiting for you.

This will be available to purchase on the Temple Dark Books website, with more details on its release coming soon. For now, the Gatekeeper has permitted us a sneak peek of the second volume. Isn't he very generous?

Read it?

Yes

Yes

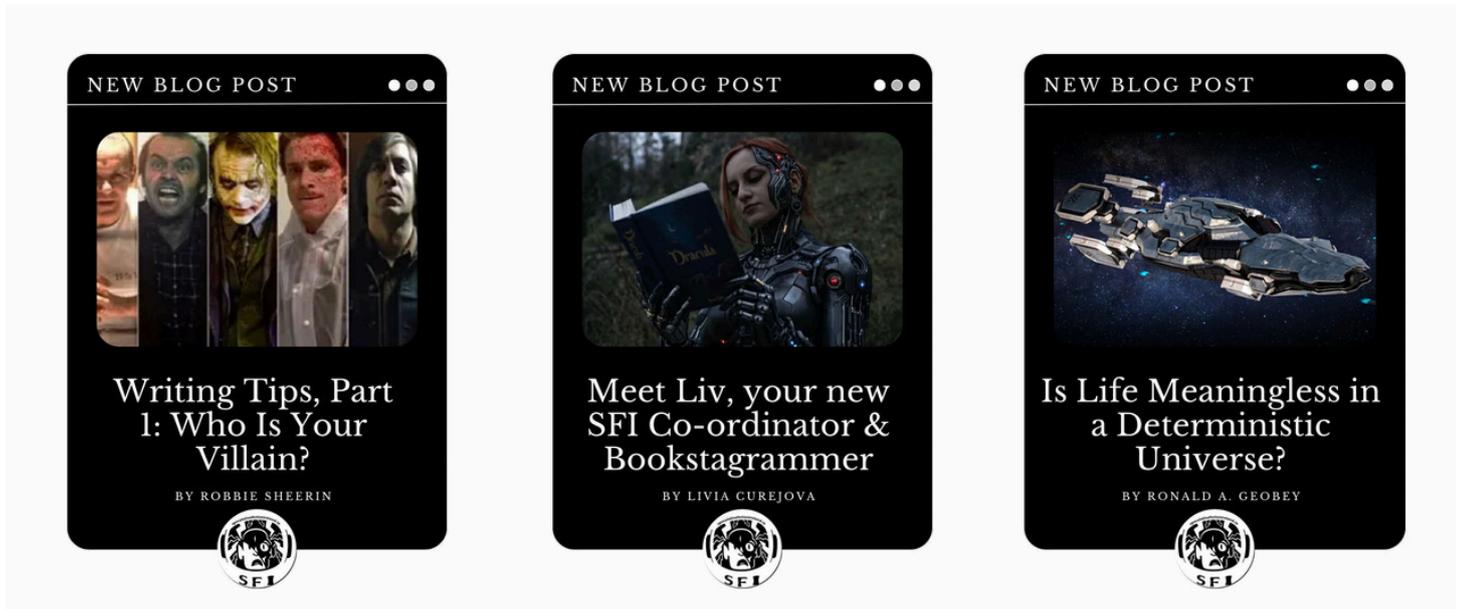
No



COVER ART FOR *CHANNEL THE DARK VOL. 2*,  
BY BEKKA BJORKE

# Newest blog posts

This month's blog posts have been fruitful and abundant. If you have missed my very exciting introduction to SFI, then why are you still reading this? Start, now. Below, I have also featured some popular blogs posts of January, stemming from the thought-provoking, existential questions posed by our director of operations where he explores whether meaning still exists when outcomes are inevitable, using *Kiranis*, his 7 book story, as an example in writing. While Robbie Sheerin breaks down how to write a convincing villain, what it takes to bring your readers on a journey and the best way to keep them engaged in his writing tips part 1, 2 & 3.



Start

MY FINAL, BRILLIANT THOUGHTS

There you have it, my non fellow humans. Our journey is over for this month.

We have learned all there is about the Gatekeeper's intentions for us (the brilliant e-zine, an exciting collaboration with Roe River Books and the trajectory of the second volume of the *Channel the Dark* anthology). Some of our SFI authors have told us about their recent discoveries and up to no goods, including new releases to keep us on waiting on bated breath. Meanwhile, I have written a luscious blog (okay, AND Ronald and Robbie) to keep you occupied.

Till next time.

Shutting down,  
Liv,  
Highly intelligent assistant and SFI Co-ordinator