



Whisper Down the Lane

A Novel

By Clay McLeod Chapman

Richard doesn't have a past. For him, there is only the present: a new marriage to Tamara, a first chance at fatherhood to her son Elijah, a quiet but pleasant life as an art teacher at Elijah's elementary school, and the dream of becoming a real artist someday. Then the body of a rabbit, ritualistically murdered, appears on the school playground with a birthday card for Richard tucked underneath. Richard doesn't have a birthday, but Sean does.

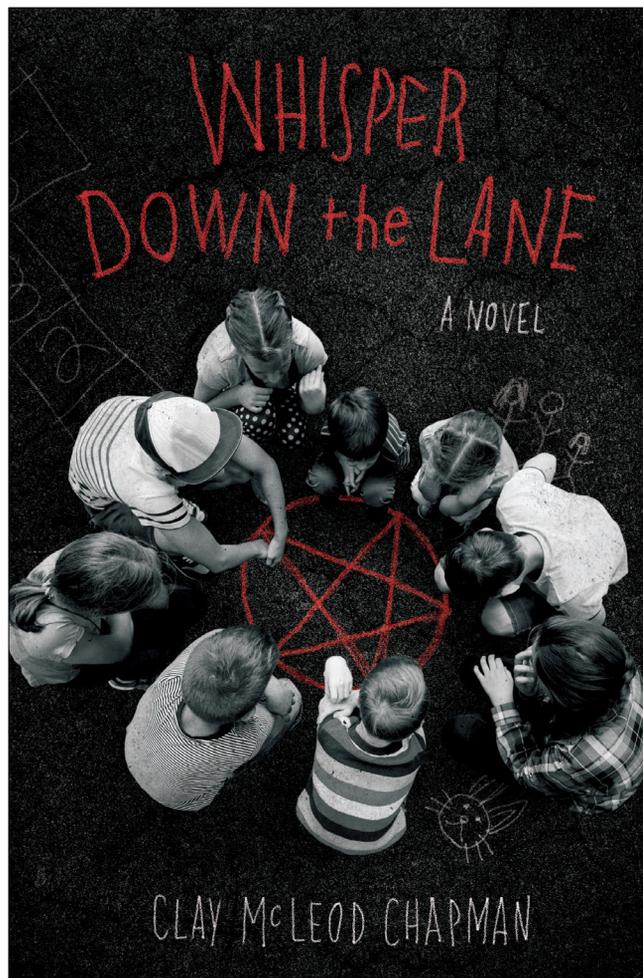
Sean is a six-year-old boy in 1980s Virginia. His father has just walked out and his mother is juggling multiple jobs while living on food stamps. Meanwhile, all the grown-ups in his life seem worried. Cult leaders, serial killers, and stranger danger is on the rise, with moral crusaders and televangelists stoking the fires of panic. In this pressure cooker environment, Sean's school sends a note to parents alerting them that a teacher is under investigation. Sean likes Mr. Woodhouse, but when his mother asks if the bruises caused by the school bully were really caused by Mr. Woodhouse, a few small lies spiral into a terrible tragedy. Now, thirty years later, those lies have come back to haunt Richard: someone knows who he really is—and they're out for revenge.

Inspired by the McMartin preschool trial and the Satanic Panic of the '80s, this novel from the critically praised author of *The Remaking* delivers a nuanced portrait of parenthood and mass hysteria.



CLAY MCLEOD CHAPMAN is the creator of the storytelling session "The Pumpkin Pie Show" and the author of *rest area*, *nothing untoward*, and the Tribe trilogy. He is the co-author of the middle grade novel *Wendell and Wild*, with *Nightmare Before Christmas* director Henry Selick. In the world of comics, Chapman's work includes *Lazaretto*, *Iron Fist: Phantom Limb*, and *Edge of Spiderverse*, among others. He also writes for the screen, including *The Boy* (SXSW 2015), *Henley* (Sundance 2012), and *late bloomer* (Sundance 2005).

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From the author of *The Remaking* comes a true-crime-inspired horror novel about a young boy whose fabrications about his elementary school teachers contributed to the Satanic Panic of the '80s, forcing him to hide his identity into adulthood until someone re-creates his old lies thirty years later...

Subject:

Fiction - Horror;
 Fiction - Thrillers - Psychological
 Fiction - Occult & Supernatural

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