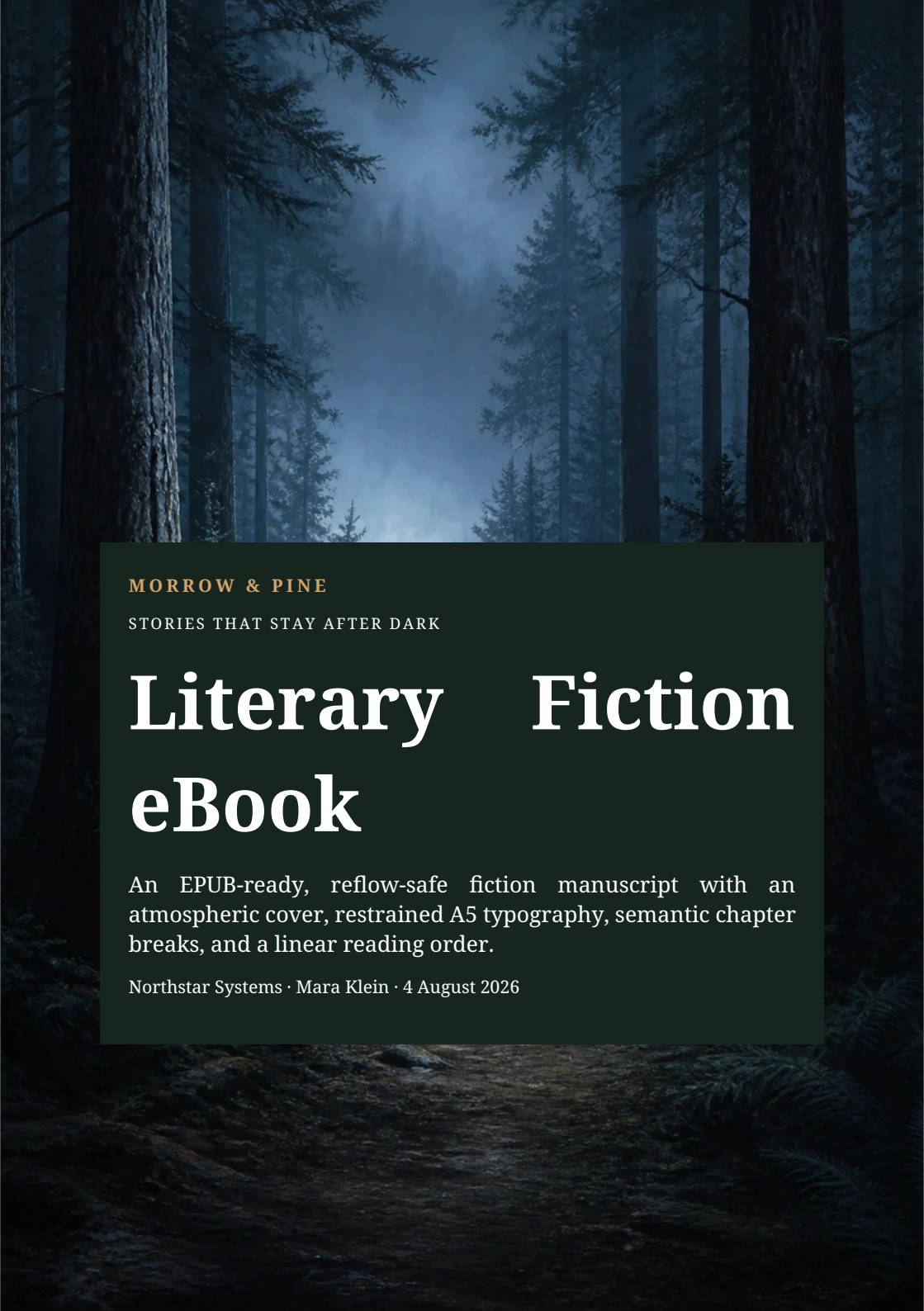




MORROW & PINE

STORIES THAT STAY AFTER DARK

Literary Fiction eBook

An EPUB-ready, reflow-safe fiction manuscript with an atmospheric cover, restrained A5 typography, semantic chapter breaks, and a linear reading order.

Northstar Systems · Mara Klein · 4 August 2026

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About this book

An EPUB-ready, reflow-safe fiction manuscript with an atmospheric cover, restrained A5 typography, semantic chapter breaks, and a linear reading order.

The road through Bellweather Wood

On the morning the birds fell silent, Mara found a second set of footprints beside her own.

They began at the old boundary stone and followed the lane as precisely as a shadow. Yet the ground was wet, and no one walked beside her. Mara stopped. The smaller prints stopped too.

Beyond the hedge, Bellweather Wood held the last of the night. Its branches crossed above the road like ink strokes, and somewhere inside them a bell rang once, though the chapel had been empty for eighty years.

She should have turned toward the village. Instead, she stepped over the ditch and entered the trees.

A house without windows

The path ended where every map showed open ground.

The house was narrow and tall, built from stone the color of rain. No glass reflected the pale morning. No chimney marked its roof. Only a red door interrupted the wall.

On the step rested a parcel wrapped in brown paper. Her name was written across it in the careful hand of her missing brother.

Inside was a brass key and a note with six words: Do not let the house remember you.

What the walls kept

Every room offered a life she might have lived.

Behind the first door she saw herself at twelve, laughing in the orchard. Behind the next, she was old and seated beside a man whose face she could not hold in memory.

The house did not show the past or the future. It showed bargains, each complete enough to feel like regret.

At the top of the stairs, her brother waited in a room filled with winter light.

The last bell

To leave the wood, one memory had to remain behind.

Mara understood then why the village had forgotten the chapel, the road, and every person the wood had taken. Escape was never free; it was merely paid for by someone who survived.

She placed the brass key on the floor and chose the memory the house wanted least: the sound of her brother saying her name.

When the bell rang again, birds rose from the trees in a single black wave, and two sets of footprints led back toward the village.

Publication notes

This manuscript uses semantic headings, paragraphs, alternative text, and a linear reading order. The structure is suitable for later reflow-oriented EPUB conversion while remaining directly exportable as PDF and DOCX today.