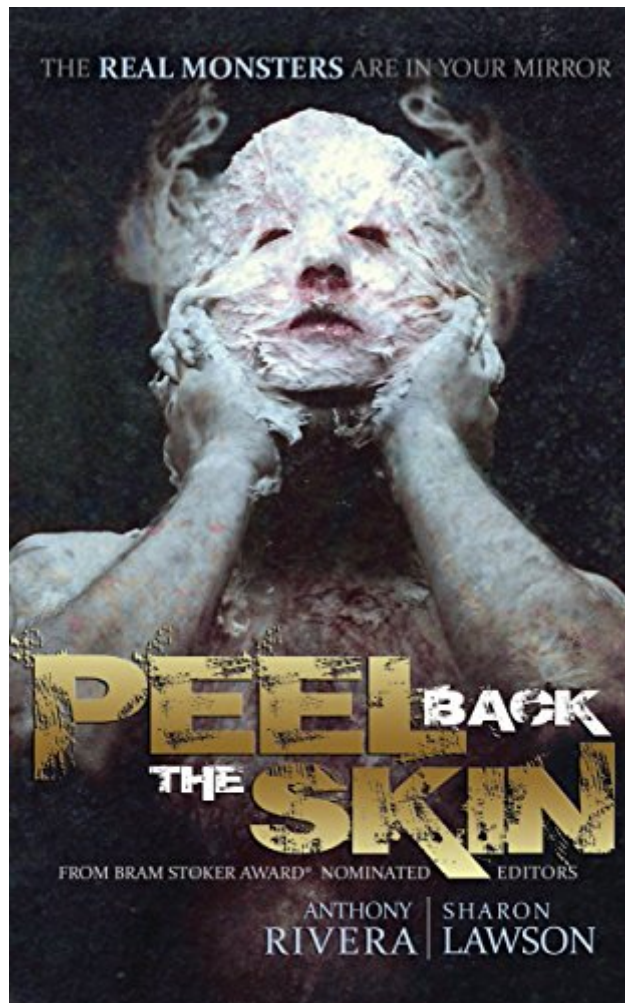


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# Peel Back The Skin: Anthology Of Horror Stories



## Synopsis

They're among us. They live down the street, in the apartment next door and even in our own homes. They're the real monsters. And they stare back at us from our bathroom mirrors. PEEL BACK THE SKIN is a powerhouse anthology of terror that strips away the human mask from the real monsters of our time -- mankind. Featuring a star-studded cast of award-winning authors from the horror, dark fantasy, speculative fiction, transgressive, bizzaro, extreme horror and thriller genres, PEEL BACK THE SKIN is the next game-changing release from Grey Matter Press. PEEL BACK THE SKIN includes fifteen all-new works of fiction from Jonathan Maberry, Ray Garton, Tim Lebbon, Graham Masterton, Yvonne Navarro, Ed Kurtz, Durand Sheng Welsh, James Lowder, Joe McKinney, Lucy Taylor, Charles Austin Muir, Erik Williams, Nancy A. Collins, John McCallum Swain and William Meikle. From Bram Stoker Award-nominated editors Anthony Rivera and Sharon Lawson. FEATURING: "Mystic" by Jonathan Maberry - A tattooed vigilante cursed with a terrifying gift comes to the aid of those among us who need retribution most. "The Protector" by Tim Lebbon - The son of an alcoholic father slips into a world of dark imagination to deal with a devastating horror of his own. "Moth Frenzy" by Lucy Taylor - The strange disappearance of a young Native American girl triggers a terrifying nightmare that stalks her shattered family. "Family Bible" by Ed Kurtz - Religious fanaticism in the segregated South exposes an unspeakable horror and the ignorance in which it thrives. "Life, or Whatever Passes for It" by Durand Sheng Welsh - An AWOL Vietnam veteran hiding out among a group of vagabonds in Florida learns the real horrors of life and death. "The Shed" by Joe McKinney - The father of a young girl is drawn into a devastating emotional struggle as he tries to get a grip on an ageless fear. "The Greatest Gift" by Graham Masterton - The grieving fiancée of a car crash victim takes disturbing steps to put her shattered life back together. "The Lady of the Minch" by William Meikle - A widower struggling with the death of his wife resorts to desperate measures to deal with an evil that terrorizes him. "Beholder" by John McCallum Swain - Childhood friends are lured into a dangerous game that forces them to relive the inescapable horrors of their past. "Orphans of the Air" by James Lowder - A mysterious evil is kidnapping and maiming children in gang-ridden Chicago and their would-be savior may be even more deadly. "Party Monster" by Charles Austin Muir - A series of devastating events threaten the sanity of an unstable man as he grapples with the reality of his broken life. "Gator Lake" by Nancy A. Collins - Preparing his vacation home for sale in a backwoods community, a man comes face to face with inhumanity. "Superheated" by Yvonne Navarro - Abduction and brutality are a lethal combination for a woman and her captor in the heat of the Arizona desert. "Burning Leaves on an Autumn Day" by Ray Garton - The lives of a group of neighbors spiral out of control as an

all-too-real horror threatens their suburban community."The Long Bright Descent" by Erik Williams - Two men engage in a battle of interstate road rage that has dire consequences for all those they come into contact with.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A well-written and edited collection of horror stories that can be read at any time of the year, not just at Halloween. There's a little bit of everything for everyone here. Some of the stories are psychological, some have supernatural kinks thrown in, some are reminiscent of slasher-flicks. All of these stories deal with human response to the darkness. Many of the stories also include references to other authors, creating a to-read list for anyone who's interested in making note of them. I'm a life-long lover of both the horror genre and short story collections which is probably why I received a free advanced reader's copy of this book in exchange for a review. I enjoyed all of the stories in this anthology. The only problem I experienced was that some of the physical responses to pain momentarily kicked me out of certain stories and I had to remind myself of research suggesting that psychopaths don't register pain like normal people before I could go on. Keep that in mind while you read (that statement might spoil a couple of the stories...if so, I apologize). The majority of stories

depict human monsters. Tim Lebbon's 'The Protector' and Joe McKinney's 'The Shed' examines what happens when the monsters are close enough to be called family, while Yvonne Navarro's 'Superheated' and Ray Garton's 'Burning Leaves on an Autumn Day' explores the monsters who live nearby, on the periphery of the main characters' lives. 'Family Bible' by Ed Kurtz illustrates how mental problems may be taught and reinforced within the family while Graham Masterton's 'The Greatest Gift' shows us how two folks with psychological issues can feed each other's demons.

What a great time it is to be a reader of dark fiction. 2016 has seen readers swamped with books of exceptional high quality. If you are a regular here then you will probably be aware of my affinity towards Chicago's premier publisher of speculative fiction, Grey Matter Press. I haven't been disappointed with anything I have read by these guys and this latest anthology release 'Peel Back the Skin' is probably my favorite collection yet. One glimpse of the table of contents shows a veritable feast of fantastic writers. It's a table of contents that oozes quality and the cover art is fantastic (as usual). 'Peel Back the Skin' looks at monsters. Not the kind of monsters we saw in Pacific Rim, but the kind that lurk in your local neighborhood, the kind that stare back at you from the mirror or the kind that live under the same roof as you. Some of the writers in here have used this theme in a unique and terrifying new light. Things get off to an incredible start with Jonathan Maberry's 'Mystic' - a dark noir story about a private investigator who seeks retribution for the dead. It's a dark, seedy tale that drips with malevolence and atmosphere. I stopped at the end of this one, went back to the start and read it again - it's that damn good. A short story from Tim Lebbon is up next and whilst completely different to Maberry's tale, Lebbon doesn't drop the ball. Instead we have a story that can be uncomfortable to read, but is brilliant in its execution and styling, mashing up fantasy with reality. Elsewhere, there were another couple of stories that really stood out for this reader: 'The Greatest Gift' by Graham Masterton made me squirm. I couldn't believe where the story was going! It follows a road accident where a man is burned and seriously disfigured.

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