

The Frighteners: A Journey through Our Cultural Fascination with the Macabre

Peter Laws

Skyhorse Publishing (Sep 4, 2018)

Hardcover \$24.99 (320pp)

978-1-5107-2676-5

In *The Frighteners: A Journey Through Our Cultural Fascination with the Macabre*, Reverend Peter Laws simultaneously serves as scholarly tour guide and terror-driven participant through terrains inhabited by vampires, biblical characters, horror movies, zombies, video games, murderabilia, historical ruins, and fairy tales. Logic seems to justify the argument that today's fascination with violence parallels increasingly violent cultures—until, without warning, common sense falls prey to meticulously documented studies, quotes, examples, and statistics.

Can a Baptist minister enamored of the dark side persuasively argue that devotion to a clerical profession and a lifelong passion for horror are not as contradictory as they appear? Can he prove his hypothesis that voluntary exposure to terror and death benefits society, while regulating such exposure could harm it? Through a unique blend of personal experience, research, and humor, he can and does.

Each chapter launches adventure upon adventure. Laws chases growling dogs in Transylvania, shoots his way free from zombies in a nuclear bunker, and hunts ghosts in a hotel specializing in slashed and crushed throats. *The Frighteners* excels at the one skill most lacking in everything around ghosts, zombies, and growling dogs: conversation. Whether Laws is chatting with the experts, fellow horror aficionados, or himself, or imagining what others are saying to themselves, the book's dialogue is as entertaining, informative, and insightful as it is hilarious.

Yet adventure and conversation are only two of many ingredients employed to fuel this daunting exploration. Others include: literary, historical, cultural, biblical, psychological, sociological, media-driven, and paranormal perspectives and evidence.

Regardless of whether *The Frighteners* is better categorized as a humorous memoir or a sociological study, Laws accurately sums up its psychological impact with: "Be who you want to be, okay? Be *you*."

LINDA THORLAKSON (September/October 2018)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.