The Skinwalker Lore of *Stealing Breath* is partially based on true Navajo legend. Every attempt has been made to provide proper credit to the authors or owners of the material quoted in this publication. I do not claim ownership of original works referred to in this publication. No copyright infringement intended.

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Introduction

Welcome to the world of *Stealing Breath*.

Included in this document is a combination of historical information and fiction, based on the world I created in my novel.

In the world-building phase of writing my book, I was determined to find something unique, something fresh. I'd grown tired of reading about vampires, and I wanted to something new.

I searched high and low for supernatural beings that were largely unheard of. When I stumbled upon the Skinwalker, I knew I’d found what I was looking for.

I hope you enjoy reading about the Skinwalker of *Stealing Breath*. And if you’re scared, that’s okay too.

Joanne
What is a Skinwalker?

Skinwalker.

A word not to be uttered out loud, for to do so, one might attract the evil Skinwalker, bringing terrible pain, illness and even death to oneself or one’s family.

In the Navajo culture, Skinwalkers have been a creature to be feared for generations, for many terrible tragedies have been attributed to the existence of these malevolent beings.

The Skinwalker is an evil shaman with supernatural powers, practitioners of ‘Bad Medicine’ or dark magic; men or women who have earned the highest level of priesthood.

Induction as a Skinwalker is simple and very specific; the evil witch must commit a cultural taboo, usually the murder of a relative. Most Skinwalker ‘candidates’ are already evil people, their murderous, violent tendencies coming in handy in the process of becoming a Skinwalker. In fact, most Skinwalker aspirants are greedy, angry, envious and spiteful. But once the taboo act has been committed, the Skinwalker is evil to the core, nearing that of a full-fledged demonic being.
The Navajo people have long known of the supernatural powers of the evil Skinwalker. Mind-reading is used to understand the fears and weaknesses of the victims and use it against them. They can also perfectly mimic animal and human noises as a way to bait their chosen prey. For example, many accounts involve Skinwalkers imitating the sound of a child crying or the sound of a relative or friend calling for help to lure victims from safety of their dwelling.

Skin-Walking

Skinwalkers who have managed to attain the highest level of priesthood have access to even more advanced evil powers, including the ability to steal the skin of their chosen victim. Once a person has locked eyes with the glowing yellow eyes of the Skinwalker, the creature can absorb into them and take full possession of their body. The victim loses all control over their own behaviour, yet remains completely aware and conscious of the possession and all of the terrible actions of the Skinwalker within them. It is said that to survive an attempted body hijacking by a Skinwalker, the victim must have a particularly strong will; making it more difficult for the Skinwalker to seize control of their body.
Bad Medicine

Skinwalker participate in blasphemous rituals in secret, the activities quite similar to the European equivalent of Black Mass. Some practices involve the use of human remains to create specific curses to injure or murder the desired victim.

Using the knowledge of Navajo healers, the Skinwalker uses such practices to harm rather than heal. Ritual, prayer, chants and herbal remedies are used to control supernatural forces in order to create illness, bad luck and even death. Skinwalkers have been known to source the DNA of their victims, such as hair, nails, saliva, blood or use the spit, hair, or personal objects to make person-specific curses.

One of the most abhorrent ingredients commonly used by Skinwalkers is the use of a white powder made of ground infant bones to curse their victims. This powder is often referred to as “corpse powder”, or “immobilization powder”. It is used to immobilize their victim by bowing it into their face, causing the victim’s tongue to first swell up, turn black, eventually choking them. It will often result in seizures, paralysis, and finally, death.

Occasionally, a Skinwalker will target an entire household or family, in which case he will pour the corpse powder into the chimney, and when the powder reaches fire, will result in immediate illness and death for all residents.

A portion of Skinwalkers practice Necromancy, raising spirits of the dead and sometimes reanimating the decomposing corpse, to be used as against their enemies.
Surviving the Skinwalker

Speaking of the Skinwalker is strictly prohibited in Navajo culture. While it is difficult to know specifically why this is the case, it can be assumed the reason is due to fear of somehow attracting the Skinwalker, or drawing the attention of the Skinwalker, as avoidance of the evil intention of a Skinwalker is really the only way to ensure safety.

Killing a Skinwalker is nearly impossible, and can only be completed successfully by an extremely powerful Shaman. The Shaman is aware of the evil spells of the Skinwalker, and can use those very spells against the Skinwalker. Only one other reported attempt to kill a Skinwalker successfully is known, where bullets used to shoot the creature had been dipped in white ash, and the creature had been shot through the head. Reportedly the Skinwalker will remain unharmed if the bullet strikes anywhere else on the body, but if the bullet reaches the head, the Skinwalker will bleed yellow.

Personal Accounts

The following stories are from an internet site called www.Rense.com:

One story told on the Navajo reservation in Arizona concerns a woman who delivered newspapers in the early morning hours. She claims that, during her rounds, she heard a scratching on the passenger door of her vehicle. Her baby was in the car seat next to her. The door flung open and she saw the horrifying form of a creature she described as half-man, half-beast, with glowing red eyes and a gnarly arm that was reaching for her child. She fought it off, managed to pull the door closed, then pounded the gas pedal and sped off. To her horror, she says, the creature ran along with the car and continued to try to open the door. It stayed with her until she screeched up to an all-night convenience store. She ran inside, screaming and hysterical, but when the store employee dashed outside, the being had vanished. Outsiders may view the story skeptically, and any number of alternative explanations might be suggested, but it is taken seriously on the Navajo reservation.
Although Skinwalkers are generally believed to prey only on Native Americans, there are recent reports from Anglos claiming they had encountered Skinwalkers while driving on or near tribal lands. One New Mexico Highway Patrol officer told us that while patrolling a stretch of highway south of Gallup, New Mexico, he had had two separate encounters with a ghastly creature that seemingly attached itself to the door of his vehicle. During the first encounter, the veteran law enforcement officer said the unearthly being appeared to be wearing a ghostly mask as it kept pace with his patrol car. To his horror, he realized that the ghoulish specter wasn't attached to his door after all. Instead, he said, it was running alongside his vehicle as he cruised down the highway at a high rate of speed.

The officer said he had a nearly identical experience in the same area a few days later. He was shaken to his core by these encounters, but didn't realize that he would soon get some confirmation that what he had seen was real. While having coffee with a fellow highway patrolman not long after the second incident, the cop cautiously described his twin experiences. To his amazement, the second officer admitted having his own encounter with a white-masked ghoul, a being that appeared out of nowhere and then somehow kept pace with his cruiser as he sped across the desert. The first officer told us that he still patrols the same stretch of highway and that he is petrified every time he enters the area.

http://www.rense.com/general77/skin.htm

Hunt for the Skinwalker

According to local residents in Utah, a property known as the Skinwalker Ranch is a well-known location of various inexplicable and often terrible, paranormal activities. A first article about the ranch was reported on in the Salt Lake City, Utah Deseret News, followed by an article in the Las Vegas Mercury. The author of these articles was journalist George Knapp, who later went on to author the book HUNT FOR THE SKINWALKER, with co-author, Colm Kelleher, which chronicles the strange and mysterious events at the Skinwalker Ranch.
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