



Soulstice

Simon Holt

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The Vours: Evil, demonic beings that inhabit human bodies on Sorry Night, the darkest hours of the winter solstice.

Six month...

Since Reggie first discovered the existence of the Vours in a tattered journal. Since she learned to overcome her fear and destroyed a Vour to save Henry.

Now as the summer solstice approaches, the Vours still haunt Reggie, but only in her dreams - until one night, when an unexpected visitor turns her nightmares into reality.

Terrifying, nail-biting, and grossly intriguing, *Solstice*, Book 2 in the Devouring series, will haunt you until the very end.

Soulstice Details

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From Reader Review Soulstice for online ebook

Donna says

You know, it's books like this that make me want to haul ass to my local used book store and scour the shelves of YA horror of the days of yore (which I'll be doing on Saturday, thanks). The Devouring series is proof positive that you can have kick ass YA reading material without some derivative love triangle (or romance in general) mucking things up.

Steph from Reviewer X and I talked about this when we were at BEA. How many YA books out there do you know of that don't involve some kind of romance? Ding ding ding! I have one right here! But there are so many counting fingers left over . . .

Yes, Reggie has a crush but what fifteen-year-old doesn't? The difference here is that that's as far as it went before Vour! Quinn was sunk into a frozen lake. No pining, no losing a sense of self, no moping. Just a crush before the shit hit the fan.

And then we get Soulstice which just takes the fucked-upedness to a whole new level. The mystery behind Eb is finally revealed and Reggie has to compromise the very thing she believes in in order to get the help she so desperately needs to fight the Vours. I can't talk about it without actually spoiling these little tidbits of information but damn, I loved them. And I just can't get enough of the fearscape that Reggie makes her way into. They're just . . . things of nightmares. Not "OMG what am I going to do without my boyfriend?" nightmares but true-on Nightmare on Elm Street, you wake up and check to make sure your arms are still attached, nightmares. God I love it.

And the characters. If the fearscape aren't enough, the characters and whole loads of love. Henry is one of the most multi-dimensional characters I've ever read. Reggie . . . I just like Reggie. She's a good, solid, well-rounded character that, despite the circumstances, comes off as real. You can actually believe that she could be a real chick. She's just normal. And Aaron is Reggie's Ducky but he's so much more than that. The kid takes a beating and just keeps on kicking. It shows just how strong the friendship is between those two. The father is a little cardboard but he barely plays a role so I can easily overlook that. And don't forget Eben. That guy is just love right there. The persistence he has with what he does would make any teenager envious. And it does in the book.

I have to say, this one didn't penetrate my defenses like it did in the first one but here, we know what the Vours are. To me, the mystery is what's the scariest. The unknown. We know what they are now and we know they're bastards so the fear is kind of gone. Well, at least the boogidy-boogidy fear, anyway. There are still many things left in this book to creep a person out, that's for damn sure.

So while the actual 'freaked out in the dark' horror element of the first book is gone, Soulstice escalated the series just to the other side of that. Now you know what these things are and you know exactly what they can do to you . . . right? When you think you have the dark all figured out, it throws you a blood-covered curve ball.

An excellent sequel and what a smarmy place to end it! Now I have to wait until the third comes out! Damn you, publishing schedules! Gah!

Miss Clark says

2.5 ish

This second book in *The Devouring* series is faster paced, gives more information, but ends even more abruptly, leaving you faced with a very long wait to discover what happens to Regina and her family. And with a book as tense as this, that is not at all enjoyable and for me that makes it a difficult book to read. I would definitely want to have all the books in the series available before I started them, but they have both been very quick reads. Despite the over-the-top horror scenes, the language (apart from several swear words) has been very mild for a modern up end YA novel, which has been a pleasant change.

The characters are good, but I wish that we actually got to know them better. Henry, Regina and Aaron are a little too distant from the reader and I would like some more small, intimate details that allowed us to really know them and not merely their fears. That said, the relationships between that core trio are the one thing that intrigued me about the first book (since horror is not my genre at all), and that continued through this installment, though this time around I was also trying to figure out what will happen and just what exactly they are up against.

"There is something special about you, my dear. To have ingested that poison and not been driven completely insane - I don't know how you did it, but I know that it makes you the key. Your ability to pass through dimensions whenever you choose - its remarkable. The Vours have been trying to do it for years. Now you will show us how."

And that is pretty much what this story is about. Regina has somehow managed to do what no one else ever has: defeated a Vour and gained access to their dimension. And the Vours want whatever ability it is that she has so that they can cross between their world and our's without restriction. They have been confined to crossing over on but one night a year, Sorry Night, but they are hoping to change all that. And they will do everything possible to figure out what it is.

At the end, Eben has seemingly died, Aaron is dropping Quinn off in Boston, and Regina has just been committed to a psychiatric institution by her father. (Which means the Vours probably have control of her.)And it is a whole year's wait for the next book.

Naomi says

Not as good as the first, but definitely still good. And nasty scary. Tons of decapitated animals made me sick, that's just horrible and disturbing, and that's why it only gets a four of five. It was very interesting at the end, I knew he unloaded the gun, I was practically shouting at her, check the bullets! Make sure they're there! Wah!

The ending, I don't get it! This is just my guess: Either (1)Since it was a woman after it was a man, I'm assuming the vours were just making her see things and she was only getting a shot (2)Reggie has been

captured by the vours and she did get kidnapped, but then woke up to realize that had happened some time before. Though I doubt after giving that long speech to her dad, he would actually just throw her in there. Maybe, since it does sound crazy, but not likely since she would freak out if he took her to Thornewood, maybe somewhere else, just not there...I don't know, I'm having tons of other ideas even while I'm writing this.

This book was definitely hard to put down and it kept me entertained. I usually never read any horror books, and this series has really drawn me in, I can't wait for the next. It was fast-paced. Eben's past was revealed, thank goodness, I thought I'd just keep wondering forever! Henry is crazy, and I hope he does get better. I do think however, this series will definitely end in Reggie's death. Face it, if she's alive the vours will keep coming for her, if she dies though, then the vours will go on living, taking over bodies only on the Winter Soulstice again....I'd hate to see Reggie die, but I'm not seeing another way. Unless she keeps fighting until she dies in old age, that's the only endings I'm seeing. I don't know how she could destroy the vours world. Unless she destroys the path between the vour and human world, which can't be done since it's in human brains. I'll stop now. Please read this book series.

Yan says

I swear this series is out to get me. I read *Devouring*, *Soulstice's* prequel, on Sorry Night, and guess what else? Turns out not only do the Vours come out during then but also on my birthday! June 21st, summer solstice. Case in point, this series is really out to get me.

Soulstice really outdid *The Devouring* by a much larger margin than I had anticipated. There was a whole new factor of fear. This time it was not the physical fear—spiders, clowns, and killer mothers—but rather desolation, fear of oneself, and guilt. It is more of the essence and the ever lingering taste that never fully leaves unlike the more physical fears. The tone of the novel developed into a larger reader's group from the child-like stance to the more teenage/young adult. I much prefer this type of story as the characters can be empathized. Spiders and clowns are fine but children typically grow out of that fear as they age and yet guilt and isolation will forever be a part of you.

As far as the characterization goes, we focus more between Quinn and Reggie now. I have come to grow fond of Quinn, who knows why. He has that dry humor that I seem to enjoy quite a bit and the interaction with Reggie was cute. It was like two feisty little kittens that made that smile. Maybe not kittens per se...

Reggie was an independent person that stood up when no one else would. That was what I really appreciate. I have come across some many female leads that depend on someone so much that irritates me. She was a kick-butt heroine!

The writing style however was disjointed. It has been rumored that Simon Holt does not exist but rather it is an assembly line of writers that forms this so called "Simon Holt". Personally I do not care if it means that we will get quality books such as the *Soulstice* and *The Devouring* has proven. But the difference in style can be detected when we switched from Aaron and Reggie. It slightly disrupts the flow of the book in my opinion.

Overall: *Soulstice* surprised me in the most pleasant way with its unexpected twists and great scare tactics. I look forward to the third installment of the *Devouring* series.

Cait S says

This series continues to impress. Thankfully it doesn't seem to suffer from the "THAT WAS TERRIBLE" Second Book Syndrome that so many series deal with. It did lose a little bit of the creepy factor from the first book, it just wasn't as scary. Other than that though a very solid follow up and an AWESOME set up for book #3!

Karen says

Another 5/5! This book was just as good as the first book!

In this second book to the trilogy, Reggie is visited by a character in the first book who we are not expecting. She greets this meeting not too happily and after this person proposes that she help in a certain way, she is even more weary of what is actually going on. But in the end she decides to help and is thrown into a mess because of it.

Also, in this book, Reggie decides to continue going into peoples fearscape in the hopes of freeing them from their nightmares and reuniting them with their bodies.

The Kassner twins play a big part in the first and middle parts of this book, we learn what Eben is really up to and we get to enjoy the great writing in this book also. The descriptions and details in this book are just as good as the first.

There are some surprises and twists and the ending is so good! I was actually a little disappointed when I thought it was going to end a certain way, but then it did a twist and I ended up being very happy!!

Lucy says

Six months after the events of *The Devouring*, Reggie Holloway is still haunted by nightmares of Vours and fearscape, but aside from the terrifying dreams, she hasn't seen anything of the Vours since she saved her little brother from possession.

But the memory of her awful encounter haunts her daily. Her little brother Henry is still suffering from nightmares and having violent episodes. Her best friend Aaron is worried about her. And the investigation into the disappearance of town golden boy Quinn Waters--who is currently drowned at the bottom of a lake after being possessed by a Vour--is getting closer to home every day.

And that's when the Vours begin to attack again. First it's terrifying visions. Then they move on Aaron.

That's when Quinn shows up. Turns out he survived being almost frozen and drowned, and now the Vours are after him, because he's so imperfect. He suggests a dangerous team-up to Reggie, and she has no choice but to accept.

As Reggie investigates deeper and deeper into the current resurgence of Vour activity, she learns some frightening things about the origins and true nature of the Vours. But will her newfound knowledge be enough to save her from a second Vour attack?

This book starts MUCH stronger than the previous. There is already a palpable sense of tension in the air from the first page, and Reggie is an exhausted but valient warrior against horror. In some places, Reggie begins to remind me almost of a sort of Buffy character--only instead of being chosen, she's made her own choices.

There are plenty of twists and turns in this book, as well as actual new information. Too many times, a series feels drawn out and like you aren't really discovering anything new with each additional book. This may be the second book in a series, but it definitely feels meaty and weighty on its own. The details we learn about the Vours are fascinating and compelling, and raise this from a bloody, gory horror novel for the sake of being gory to something fascinating and compelling (with plenty of gross-out creepiness, don't worry.)

This is another strong, top-notch teen horror novel that's actually gross and scary enough to compell serious horror fans. I gulped it down, and I'll continue to wait eagerly for the next installment.

Stephanie says

Another nightmarish delight that Simon has brought to us. It's everything that I had expected and more – more scary, more intense and more mystery.

What I loved about Soulstice is obviously the plot. Even though some parts of the book are really creepy, it's so intense and gripping that there's no way I could put it down. I loved how Soulstice can allow me to convey so many emotions – sadness, horror, disgust, anticipation, exhilaration and many more. Since I can usually predict the endings of most books especially if it's obvious as hell, Soulstice surprises me in more ways than one. Those who seem to be enemies in The Devouring come together as allies. And as new allies are found, new enemies are still being unearthed – it's a very gripping tale, I tell you.

The characters, Reggie, Quinn, Aaron and Henry are fascinating to read about. They are well developed characters and Reggie has an admirable mind. She's very strong-willed despite all the gross things that happen in the fearscape and she has a courage that is usually not found among teens today. She's willing to go after the people she cares about and save them. Even people she hasn't known for long, she's willing to go after them. I find that remarkably admirable and I wish some of her courage rubs off on me.

Quinn is confusing, I have to admit. I couldn't tell whether or not he was on Reggie's side because at times, he seemed to do everything he could to scare her and other times, he would help her in more ways than one. However, despite the way he acts, I think that deep down, he really wanted to help her. I couldn't recognize what was the relationship between him and Reggie, if it was only a partner relationship or something more, as in a romantic sense of way. All in all, he was fascinating to read about and I was happy that Simon had included him in the second novel.

The ending was a cliff-hanger. I can't even believe how much a cliff-hanger it was. So it was pretty depressing when I finished the last page and was like...that's all?! Well, the good thing is that there's definitely a third book otherwise...I'm gonna sue.

Overall, *Soulstice* is an extraordinary sequel to *The Devouring* and I'm sure that no one will be disappointed – except for the bogus ending but only because it's a HUGE cliff-hanger.

BOOK BUTTERFLY says

Six months after the events of *The Devouring*, Reggie Halloway still hasn't seen any sign of the Vours. Aside from terrifying dreams and disturbing memories, all has been quiet in her world. I knew it was only a matter of time before all hell broke loose though, and this made me extremely jumpy right from the get-go. So when sweet, docile Henry (the Vour free version, that is) was involved in a violent episode at school, it was pretty easy to ascertain that this was "game on!" From that point on it was non stop action and nail biting suspense. First stop-the police station, where Aaron undergoes the most terrifying interrogation I've ever heard of. Then, one night as she is sleeping, Reggie hears a certain someone murmuring "Wakey, Wakey!" But it wasn't just a dream- he was alive and in her bedroom- in the dark. (First of all, the thought of waking up to find someone is in my room watching me sleep is frightening enough. When you add in the fact that this is a person who was supposed to be dead, well I can't even imagine that kind of shock! Oh and by the way- he's pretty disturbed (to say the least) from being frozen and nearly drowned too! The twist is that instead of coming after Reggie, he suggests a tentative alliance. The Vours are now after him and he needs all the help he can get. Reggie really has no choice but to reluctantly agree. But will their tense team-up be enough to save the people in her life from a second round of Vour attacks?

Reggie is an exhausted by valiant crusader against the Vours and she proves again that to save those she loves, there's nothing she won't do. But *Soulstice* is more than just a bloody, gory horror novel--it's fascinating and horribly compelling (not to mention terribly creepy). When the book kicked off, there was already so much tension in the air, you could cut it with a knife. We already know from *The Devouring* what dangers lurk in dark places - we found out that yes, there are monsters in the closet and yes, they are coming for you! But while *The Devouring* centered around our physical fears - killer clowns, spiders, demented mothers, etc, *Soulstice* instead explores deeper issues and also provides more insight into the Vours themselves, making for a thrilling sequel. One piece of advice- these books are not for the faint of heart, and don't make the mistake of thinking you can read them at night and then drift off into a peaceful slumber!

Nikki (Wicked Awesome Books) says

Six months have passed since Reggie entered her younger brother Henry's fearscape and expelled the Vour that had taken over his body. Six months since handsome, popular Quinn turned out to be a Vour and Reggie's best friend Aaron battled him to the death. Six months since Eben, the owner of the bookstore and Reggie's boss, turned out to be a lot more than just a kind old bookstore owner. In those six months, winter turned to spring, which turned to summer and school is letting up. Henry has been having more than a few problems at school and his memories about the Vours have begun to haunt him. Reggie's nightmares are terrifying, but not as much as the late night visitor that she never expected. The Vours are up to something and the summer solstice is their deadline. They're after Reggie and she's not quite sure what their endgame is. After Aaron is accused of murder and terrorized by a Vour, Reggie holds the weight of everything alone and she has no choice but to join forces with her nighttime visitor and risk her own life in the process. With the summer solstice rapidly approaching, Aaron, Reggie, and her unexpected ally must find a way to stop the

Vours before their devious plans can be set in motion.

Simon Holt unleashes another bone-chilling tale with *Soulstice*. Reggie is once again haunted by the Vours, but this time she forms an alliance with one and the consequences could be dire. The alliance with this Vour is making Reggie feel empathy for him. She begins to not only work with the Vour, but begin to trust him. Reggie is the type of person who is passionate about the people and the experiences in her life. *The Devouring* showed exactly how much she can love someone and how far she would go to protect that person. Henry means everything to Reggie and the knowledge that the Vours may be able to unleash their horrors on the rest of the world scares Reggie more than she would like. Because of this fact, she feels obligated and almost responsible to be the one to do something.

Reggie's ventures into other individual's fearscape hold much more gruesome horrors and terrifying creatures this time around. Holt paints a bloody, gory image throughout each layer of the fearscape and he does so with a resounding terror. It's impossible not to feel at least a little bit of the fear and isolation that Reggie must conquer, but the overwhelming feeling of despair really resonated with me. The Vours take these children and for years they are trapped in a fearscape with nothing but their most horrible nightmares brought to life. Reggie braves these things over and over again because she is the only one who can. Once Reggie discovers that there is a group of people called Tracers who track down Vours and destroy them, she won't stand for their destruction at the expense of the human they have taken over. Things are changing for Reggie and it's hard to discern if those changes are good or bad.

One thing is for sure, and that is *Soulstice* is a fantastic, if not gruesome, follow up to a creepy tale. Holt expands upon the mythology he created and develops a deeper, more involved world where the Vours have more purpose than to simply wreak havoc on poor human souls. There is tons of action this time around as well. Reggie is constantly on the move and Aaron is able to move outside of his role as just a geek and get his hands dirty. Reggie's relationship with Henry was essential to *The Devouring*, but it takes backseat this time around. Their love and devotion to one another is still evident, but Reggie's constant action doesn't allow the reader to linger on it. All of the action makes *Soulstice* feel like a less passionate and character-driven story, in comparison to *The Devouring*, but I'm still looking forward to the next installment. I have to say that the ending was predictable, but it still had the desired effect and I'm seriously aching to see where the story goes now.

Opening line (from prologue): I kept my eyes closed, smelling the buttered popcorn and cotton candy, hearing the ding-dings of the Midway games, feeling the warm sun on my skin. ~ pg. 1

Opening line (from chapter 1): *Six months*, Reggie Halloway thought Friday morning as the hot water from the shower poured down her chilled flesh. ~ pg. 5

Favorite line: What if rescuing a soul from the fearscape was just dooming it to a different kind of hell in the real world? And dooming other innocent victims to those psychotic crimes? ~ pg. 61

Wrighty says

It's been six months since Reggie first discovered and fought against the Vours, malicious and demonic beings that inhabit human bodies on the eve of the Winter Solstice. The Vours still haunt Reggie, but only in her dreams-until one night, when an unexpected visitor turns her nightmares into reality. The battle against evil continues in *Soulstice*, the second book in the thrilling *The Devouring* series.

I received the second book before the first, *The Devouring*, so I had to read these out of order. I really hate to do that and I just got book #1 so I'll be starting again from the beginning. While I obviously missed out on the background information provided earlier I still was able to follow along in *Soultice* easily enough. From what I have read in other reviews the background has been established in the first book so this one jumps right into the action.

Reggie fears the Vours are planning more evil. No longer are they limited to attacking only in the winter. Summer *Soultice* is coming and the Vours will be able to enter humans and prey on their fears. Only Reggie can stop them with her ability to protect others when she enters their dreamscapes. But there is more danger than anyone realized. The Vours have assimilated with humans and there are more than expected. And they could be anywhere, within anyone.

This story has plenty of action, suspense and horror. I was anxious to see what would happen next with the endless possibilities of the dreamscape. There were many twists and turns as details of the Vours emerge. The cliffhanger ending has left me so anxious for the third and final installment. You'll be sleeping with the lights on after you read this one!

Sue Moro says

This was an excellent sequel to *The Devouring*! I read book one quite awhile ago, but I was able to dive right back into the story without the need of a re-read. The book kept me on the edge of my seat the whole time, and now I can't wait to read book three and see how it all ends!

Anne says

2.5 stars

I didn't think there was much of a plot advancement in this book. It felt like a shorter version of the 1st book. She still has a creepy attraction to Quinn, Aaron is still hanging on her like a puppy, and you don't learn much more about the Vours.

All in all a pretty blah book, but the cliffhanger at the end makes it impossible *not* to go ahead and try to read the last book.

I've already invested this much time in this series, so why not finish it out?

kari says

NO CLIFFHANGER ENDING!!! NO!NO!NO!

I don't like this at all.

I can't say that I like this series, more that I'm curious about where the story is going to go. The Vours are something different though, which is good, not vampires or werewolves and actually much more scary than either of those.

Also, there are some editing errors which bothered me. Examples: At one point Reggie is looking after her injured leg and she wasn't ever injured on her leg. I re-read that part three times to see if somehow I'd missed it. Not okay. And at the hospital, the nurse says a patient had an epileptic fit; no one in the medical

community would say that, it's a seizure.

This installment is a bit better than the first book as it takes off right away. However, you'll definitely need to have read the first book or most of this one won't really make sense and every book in a series should be a complete enough story to stand on its own, just my opinion. If I have to have the other book right there to keep referencing back who is this and what happened to them, well, that isn't okay.

Reggie continues to battle the Vours in the way that only she is able to do. There are some surprises in this book which I did like.

Reggie's father comes off as completely stupid and that bothers me. First he pays no attention to her or her brother and the one time she needs him, he completely betrays her. Why wouldn't he take the time to ask his son about the story Reggie tells or her friend Aaron or anyone? His reaction seems unthinking, unfeeling and cruel and he seems to not like his own daughter throughout most of the book.

It does set up well for the third book, but this much of a cliffhanger is too much. Not happy.

Caidyn (SEMI-HIATUS; BW Reviews; he/him/his) says

This review can also be found on my blog!

This book continues six months after the events in *The Devouring* and, let me tell you, it's good but it isn't as good.

I still love Reggie and Aaron, but the story gets a little odd. It felt like it was less about character development and getting me to care about the story — which I did in *The Devouring* because who doesn't love an older sister teaching her brother to save himself? — than about hitting the next plot points so the stepping stone was in place for book three.

And, while that's fine and dandy, it didn't feel as well woven into the story. It felt obvious that Holt was keeping his end game in mind rather than it organically happening and making me go "Oh!" when I read the third book in the series. (Which I have read and, at the time of reading this, had no memory of.)

As I said, I enjoyed the characters and I wanted to see everything turn out okay for them, but I wasn't impressed by these things being introduced to it. Vours hatching some plot so they can be powerful during the summer solstice, when they're least powerful? Tracers, who kill Vours and anyone touched by Vours? This weird world the Vours live in that is a world but also isn't?

It simply made me go "huh" and want it to end because I didn't feel like it was well done.

Of course, the horror Holt gave me was thrilling, but it didn't have the personal connection like the first book did. It felt like it was stretching thin already and it should have stopped before it petered out completely.

I know those are a lot of cons for a book I'm giving four stars, but, at the time of writing this, I just finished the third book and the negatives stand out more than the positives. I enjoyed this book and it gave me hope for the next one, but it still wasn't as impressive.
