



FRESH MEAT
DEFINITIVE EDITION

"WARNING"

"This novel contains graphic depictions of violence, gore, disturbing imagery, religious concepts, sexual innuendos, and moments of grief and sadness, not to mention cannibalism. These themes may be triggering for readers sensitive to death, trauma, or mental horror; please read at your own discretion."

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Anthony L. Soto.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this book:

To all those who have supported me since day one and who were previously recognized in the first edition:

You know who you are!

Thank you! XOXO

This book is dedicated to all the horror fans out there!

To all the horror writers, creators, and content producers who, like me, love this genre.

To all the non-horror folks who took a chance reading this book.

To all the indie writers who manage the impossible with full-time careers, family, and other responsibilities—people who, no matter what, put in the work toward their passion: that of creative writing.

To you all! Don't stop dreaming.

Not now, not ever!

Keep bringing your words and your worlds to life!

But above all, don't stop writing!

You rock!

#Respect #Supportindieauthors

To all who took the time to read the original release,

Fresh Meat: A Horror Novel (April 2024).

Thank you for critiquing it positively, negatively, or in between.

To all my new fans and followers!

But above all, to those who believe in this world, its characters, and its future!

I hope you enjoy this second revised edition of
Fresh Meat: A Horror Novel.
With better editing, pacing, and structure, not to
mention the new story content added in the form of
The Lost Chapters (2025).

This is the definitive edition.
Enjoy Fresh Meat! As originally intended.

A.L. Sato

PREFACE

Opening Quote

*"When people think of death as a reality and
the process of dying,
one usually finds two kinds of people.
The ones that embrace it and the ones that
fear it.
Many from both camps would wonder: Is this
it? Is this how I go?
A question that goes unanswered until that
day arrives.
But I can almost guarantee you this:
Most people never envision their death as
the main course of someone's dinner.
That is the stuff nightmares are made of."*

- A. L. Soto (2023)

Regarding the setting...

Depending on your definition of seclusion, there are several hundred to a thousand towns categorized as "Secluded."

The United States alone has anywhere between 100 to 500 secluded municipalities.

Northern Maine has 10-15 secluded towns due to low population density, limited access, and highly remote locations.

Those 10-15 towns are towns we know of... but what about the unknown towns that remain hidden deep in the woods?

At 3.5 million acres, the Northern Woods of Maine provides the perfect setting for the forgotten, the old, the abandoned, and the dangerous.

What if I tell you there are still a few unexplored settlements hidden deep in these woods where the laws of society do not apply?

One town, in particular, is rooted in mystery, secrecy, a forgotten religion, and whose residents have a profoundly fucked up way of living.

**“Welcome to Rowe.
Where the Flesh gets its due.”**

A FORK IN THE ROAD

A couple is traveling together, cruising down a dark road in northern Maine, flanked by trees for miles. The narrow streets, surrounded by trees, could be more consistently elevated. This area is remote and far from most of the state's main population centers. They're on their way home from a vacation by a cabin in the woods.

Inside the car, the male driver talks on his phone while his female partner lies beside him, feeling bored and upset. Frustrated by a weak connection, she struggles to use her phone, which fails due to the dense woods surrounding them. This lack of connectivity significantly interferes with her plans to browse for junk on her phone to pass the time.

"This phone is acting so slow, yet you can have a conversation with your job just fine; I don't get it," the woman said in a frustrated tone.

"I don't care what it takes; just close the deal," the man yelled, ignoring his partner's comments.

"Did you hear what I said?" the woman asked the man who kept speaking on the phone. He did not respond. "Steve, I'm talking to you!" she yelled.

"Listen, sorry, could you give me a minute? My wife is talking to me, and apparently, it can't wait." He turned to her and noticed that she was annoyed. "What is it? This is an important phone call, Kyra."

Kyra remained quiet and crossed her arms instead of speaking to her husband.

"Well, what is it?" Steve asked again, but she remained silent. "Fine, whatever," he added, turning his attention to the phone again. "I'm sorry about that; my wife just needed attention," Steve said, annoyed, while Kyra could hear the person on the other end of the phone laughing at his unnecessary comment.

"It isn't funny, you asshole," she said, very upset.

"Now we're name-calling each other? Fine, Kyra, grow up already," Steve was annoyed.

"You know what? Maybe we should continue this call later and talk to you in the morning," the man on the phone said.

"Sure, sorry about that. What time?" Steve asked as the man on the phone hung up.

He then looked at his wife angrily. "There, you happy? That phone call cost us a few thousand dollars. I don't think he's going to deal in the morning. Thank you, Kyra."

"That's all you seem to care about, your stupid job; you spent the entire time away working; this was supposed to be a break," Kyra responded, frustration evident.

"No, wait a minute. You know that's not true," Steve responded as he noticed the phone's GPS lose its signal. He tried to reconnect the cell but to no avail. "Great. Kyra, where's your phone?"

"That's what I'm trying to tell you: my phone has no signal, but you never listen to me."

Steve stood quietly in order not to fight anymore.

"I guess we're going in blind for a bit then until we get reception; we'll just keep driving east like we were."

"Steve, whatever you say, just get us home," Kyra said as she turned to her right, placed her back against him, and faced the dark woods.

"Are we going to do this right now?" Steve yelled while Kyra remained quiet. "Fine, have it your way."

They remained quiet for a few minutes until Steve started to slow down.

Kyra quickly sat up. "Why are you slowing down?"

"Look, it's a fork in the road, and I'm unsure which way to go."

"Oh, I don't know either. Check your phone to see if yours is back online; I assure you, mine isn't."

Steve swore in anger as he realized his phone was still down. "Pick one."

"Why me?"

"Because you have the street smarts! Plus, as I see it, both roads point east."

"Fine, give me a second." Kyra tried to open the phone's map app, but it didn't load. She looked around in the darkness to see if she could make out any landmarks she might remember, but there was nothing. Therefore, she decided to take a guess.

"If I remember correctly, it's that way." She pointed to the left path.

"Are you sure?" Steve asked.

"Pretty sure."

"Alright, then off we go." Steve placed his foot on the accelerator and took the left fork.

Both individuals remained silent as they traversed the road until Steve spoke. "I'm sorry, Kyra, I mean it."

She looked at him, slightly surprised yet still upset. "Thanks, but just know I'm still mad at you."

"What can I do to make it up to you?"

"Well, for starters, get me home, and second, quit that stupid job."

"You know I can't do that, at least not right now. I'm too deep into this."

"Well, you need to decide what's more important. I'll leave it at that," Kyra said with determination.

Steve's demeanor changed back to upset. He stared at her with anger and frustration while she looked out the window. He continued staring at her and reached out to grab her shoulder.

"Stop it, Steve, just pay attention to the road and get me home; then we'll talk," she stated affirmatively.

He ignored her request, glancing at the road before suddenly swerving the car, but not without hitting something first.

"What the hell was that? I told you to focus on the road," Kyra was now furious.

Steve stood quietly as he stopped the car, knowing he had messed up. He nervously looked past the rearview mirror when he stopped the car, hoping it wasn't a living creature he had just hit.

"You hit something. What was it?"

"I don't know, Kyra," he responded, somewhat scared, as he noticed a shape lying on the floor.

Steve exited the car.

"Where are you going?" Kyra asked.

"To check it out, it may have been someone who now clearly needs our help."

"Forget it, Steve. It's dark out, and we're far from anything. This is the middle of nowhere. Leave it; it's probably just a dog or a raccoon. Those things can have rabies."

Steve looked at her in disbelief. Nonetheless, he closed the door and went to check it out. Kyra also slowly exited the car but didn't go past her door. She was afraid and tried to keep a safe distance as Steve slowly approached the shape on the ground. Kyra grabbed her phone and looked for a signal but found none, in case she needed to call 911.

"Steve, please be careful," she whispered.

"Don't worry, everything will be alright," he said as he made it to the shape. "So, what do we have here?" He tipped the body over; as it revealed itself, it freaked him out and, in the process, fell back to the ground.

"What is it?" Kyra asked, her concern evident.

Steve gathers his courage, gets back up, and inspects again, finding nothing more than a crash dummy.

"It's just a crash dummy," he said as he started laughing with relief.

"A crash dummy? For real?" Kyra shouted, bewildered.

"Yeah, I'm not sure why it's out here; it's a rather odd place for a dummy," Steve yelled.

Kyra sighed, "Well, that's a relief; it's a good thing it wasn't an animal or a person. Can we go now?"

"Just give me a minute; I'm going to move it to the side of the road so that no one else can get hurt."

"Need help?"

"No, it's all right; I've got this. It shouldn't be too heavy."

"Alright, I'm going back inside the car. Is that okay?"

"Go for it," Steve said to her as he knelt before the dummy.

As he proceeded to grab it, he heard Kyra yell again, "Steve, I swear, one day, I'm going to kill you."

"Please do, Kyra," Steve muttered, hoping it was true. He grabbed the dummy and spoke to it as he pushed it. "Well, let's move you to the side of the road now, just a bit. I don't want you causing any more accidents. Then again, you guys love accidents."

Kyra sat in the car, checking her phone, as two shadowy figures approached Steve in the rear-view mirror.

They were attacking him with a machete. Two silent but deadly strikes took him out quickly while Kyra remained oblivious. Then, suddenly, it got quiet. She looked back through the rearview mirror but did not see Steve—just the dummy. She slowly opened her car door to get a better view. "Steve, this is not the time or place for kid games. Come on, knock it off. I want to go home." Steve did not respond; all that could be heard was the breeze moving through the trees.

Somewhat concerned and now entirely out of the car, she walked

toward the trunk, where she stopped moving further. She called for Steve again, "Steve, Steve, where the hell did you go? If you don't show your face in thirty seconds, I'm getting in the driver's seat and leaving you stranded here in the dark, all alone...." This last part made her feel nervous.

When she did not receive an answer, she hesitantly walked toward the dummy, remaining cautious. As she approached, she continued calling Steve.

From the empty, dark spaces between the trees, you could see the two silhouettes staring at her, with Steve's lifeless body lying at their knees against a tree.

Because it was dark, their presence was practically invisible.

Kyra made it to the dummy and found blood splattered all over the ground upon close inspection. "Oh my God! Steve!" She took two steps back when she heard whispers.

"Flesh over there."

This raised her panic level to an all-time high; she did the only thing she could think of at this point: run back to the car as fast as possible.

A silhouette ran out of the woods to chase her, getting close enough to grab her, but she managed to shake him off. She reached the driver's side, placed her foot on the pedal, and sped off into the darkness.

"Steve," was all she could say as she cried in horror while speeding down the dark roads.

After a few minutes, she saw a sign:

"Welcome to Rowe, where the flesh gets its due. Pop. 363."

"Yes," Kyra said excitedly. "The cops will help me out." She clung to a new sense of hope.

Upon further driving into town, she saw some bright lights in the distance. She slowed the car down to get her bearings when another dark figure rose from the back seat of her car. Kyra was too focused on the road to notice. That quickly changed when the dark figure reached behind her ear and whispered a simple word: "Flesh."

Kyra turned her head in fear when she was attacked.

Outside the car, the only sound was Kyra's relentless screaming, which lasted just a minute until she was no longer heard.

When the silence began, we saw the man in the backseat finally exit the car, take the driver's seat, and continue into town.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Anthony was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1985 to Puerto Rican parents and raised in Springfield, Massachusetts. Being Hispanic by nature has blessed Anthony with being bilingual; he is fluent in English and Spanish.

Anthony has experience in management-related business situations, specifically restaurant management. He is an expert in people development, sales building, and profit management.

In addition to being a restaurant coach, teacher, and leader with supervisory skills, he has studied business, economics, technology, marketing, and professional presence, among other related subjects. When he is not helping others or spending time with friends and his family, he enjoys writing and traveling.

Anthony has taken online novel writing courses and in-person scriptwriting classes in Boston to support his writing goals, where his

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true passion lies.

He is also very knowledgeable about office-related technological apps from Windows and Apple.

Anthony Soto's mind has been creating stories since childhood in the early 1990s. Like most adults, reality kicked in, and Anthony got busy with life. Yet, his mind has never stopped daydreaming, dreaming, and creating his fictitious worlds, which he often visits till this day—always in his mind but never on paper.

Until now, Anthony has decided to finally share one of his stories and write his first novel.

Anthony is grateful that you took the time to read this book and is looking forward to your journey together. He hopes you enjoyed Fresh Meat.

Stay tuned for more...

A.L. Soto

To learn more about him, follow his blog or stay current on his future books.

Don't forget to check out his collection of short stories available on his site.

Visit him at <https://www.anthony-soto.com>.



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