



## Beyond: A Ghost Story

*Graham McNamee*

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## **Beyond: A Ghost Story** Graham McNamee

Jane is not your typical teen. She and her best friend Lexi call themselves the Creep Sisters. Only Lexi knows why Jane is different from anyone else: Her own shadow seems to pull her into near-fatal accidents. Jane is determined to find out why these terrifying things happen, and to overcome her shadow enemy. Her sleuthing with Lexi connects her own horrors to the secret history of a serial killer.

## **Beyond: A Ghost Story Details**

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Author : Graham McNamee

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# From Reader Review Beyond: A Ghost Story for online ebook

## Dekota says

this book was about a girl Jane who's shadow is trying to kill her in near fatal accidents. She finally gets the courage to go and find out why all this crazy stuff keeps happening to her.

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## Annette says

Beyond: A Ghost Story has an interesting premise and just enough creep factor to keep you on the edge of your seat.

Sara (she's called Jane in the blurb on the back of the book but Sara in the ARC) is recovering from a near-death experience. She still has the nail from the nail gun in her head. She was dead and brought back to life. Unfortunately, this seems to be a trend in Sara's life. She drank drain cleaner, grabbed a downed electric wire that was live, and almost got hit by a train before this most recent event.

The only person, besides Sara, who knows what is going on is Sara's best friend, Lexi. Sara is haunted by her shadow. At times, her shadow leaves her body and makes Sara do things to harm herself (like pick up a nail gun, hold it to her head, and press the trigger.)

Sara has nightmares and walks in her sleep. Her shadow sends her to places she doesn't understand. Throughout Beyond: A Ghost Story, Lexi and Sara try to figure out why Sara is haunted. There is a reason-- this isn't just a random thing. I enjoyed how it all works out. McNamee has mixed the real with the supernatural in a very interesting way.

I did have to suspend some disbelief regarding the parents, doctors, and other adults, as is often the case. After all the things their daughter has gone through, she still manages to convince them that these are all "accidents???" Not likely.

Beyond: A Ghost Story is short, easy to read, and engaging. Something is always happening -- there isn't any down time. I can easily recommend this to reluctant readers who like ghost stories. Beyond: A Ghost Story isn't super scary, and is more suited to the middle school crowd or younger teens.

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## Brandy says

Jane has survived poisoning, electrocution, a near-collision with a train, and most recently, a nail gun to the head. She's not accident-prone, or even suicidal, like people believe. Her shadow is trying to kill her.

Creepy, atmospheric teen thriller that reminds me of my middle-school days, curled up in a chair reading RL Stine's *Fear street* novels with all the lights on, though with slightly older appeal--8th grade and up, maybe, for those looking for a light scare.

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## **Jasmine Kaypour says**

This book was phenomenol! This book was extremely easy to understand, but also had some difficult vocabulary too. The book had many character changes and had a very important theme. Lexi, Jane and Janes parents all changed. Lexi changed because she went from overprotective to calm. "Im not worried anymore evr since you surgery ive learned to calm down." (209). This shows that Janes surgery and being done with all of her ghost and shadow creatures calmed Lexi down a lot! JAne changed from being afraid to confident. JAnes ghost used to haunt her, but when she actually came in contact with it for the first real time and touched his hand she realized that he wasnt bad. He was afraid too! "Leo i know what you have been through, please just follow me and ill protect you. I promise." (227). This shows that she is willing to save him and is not afraid like she used to be. Janes parents changed like Lexi did. They went from overproreective to calm. The moral of the story or the theme of the story is that you should never be afraid of something, and you should take action against what is bothering you because you will learn to solve your problems.

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## **Krista (CubicleBlindness Reviews) says**

The story opens up with Jane attending doctors meetings to discuss the removal of a nail that is lodged in her skull. Something that doesn't seem to surprise her as she has lived through several other near-death situations throughout her young life. Electrocution, poisoning and a near miss by a train.

Although Jane's parents have known her whole life she is prone to "accidents" Jane knows that it is something else, something that is a part of her that is causing her accidents. Her Shadow. She has only been able to reveal the truth about what is happening to her best friend Lexi, who has an attraction to the dark, goth and creep herself. She is an artist with an open mind and helps Jane piece together what could possibly be happening to her.

A ghost story that involves a kind of possession that is beyond the here and now. A very fast paced read that has great character dynamics. I loved the relationship that Lexi and Jane share. But also the caring, supportive and healthy relationship she has with her parents.

There is no swearing in the book, but it does contain some scenes and references to violence and abuse.

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## **Amanda says**

A good, straight-forward ghost story with enough of a twist to be unique. A great hi-lo pick that reads fast but still feels old enough for teens to enjoy. Like the setting as well, was almost it's own character.

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## **? Kimberly says**

3.5 coffee cups

Beyond offers up a perfectly creepy ghost story with a twist that should delight young readers. McNamee delivered a tale filled with creepy goodness involving a ghost and a killer. This was a fast paced, easy read and I was thoroughly entertained.

The tale begins when we meet Jane. She has had several near death accidents and the most recent has her walking around with a nail in her head. Her parents think she is accident prone, others think she is suicidal but Jane knows the truth. Jane lives with her doting parents. Her Mom owns a Flower shop and her Dad is the local sheriff. They call Jane their miracle baby, because Jane wasn't breathing at birth. Since then there have been dozens of accident. Jane's parents worry about her, and encourage her to be safe, but they don't know that Jane's own shadow is trying to kill her! The tale that unfolds is suspenseful as Jane and Lexi try to stop her shadow and maybe even a killer.

Jane and Lexi refer to themselves as the "Creep Sisters". Due to all of her strange near death situations, kids at school tend to stare at, gossip about or ignore Jane. She sleepwalks, cannot drive and begins having nightmares that become day-mares. She has a love interest and it is delightfully sweet. Lexi is her outspoken, confident friend who dresses like the grim reaper's daughter. She loves her camera and film. I liked her quirky, humorous attitude and would have loved her as a friend. She is the perfect friend for Jane and the two had me laughing. I loved that the parents were involved in Jane's life, although she never confided in them about her shadow. The shadow and an unearthed body made the tale creepy and suspenseful.

McNamee wove a suspenseful ghost story and I liked the twists he brought to it. I won't spoil anything, but the shadow and the how and why, was cool. I also liked the secondary plot and how it all tied together. The ending scenes were climatic, followed by some closure. This book is the perfect introduction to horror for young readers. I thought the tale was well paced and clever. It is relatively short in length. The hardcover addition is roughly 226 pages but it offered up some creepy suspense perfect for the fall "spooky" season.

Beyond is perfect for young readers in search of a creepy ghost story. I enjoyed McNamee's writing style and look forward to checking out some of his other works.

I want to thank Random house for providing this finished copy in exchange for my unbiased review.  
Kimba the Caffeinated Book Reviewer

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**Nancy♥The♥Bookaholic says**

~~4.5 HEARTS~~

Before I discovered romance books I was into Horror and Paranormal books, so reading this was a touch of nostalgia for me. I believe in the afterlife. I believe there's an in-between world. I also believe that souls get stuck in the in-between world when they have unfinished business. This book was about a soul that could not or did not feel worthy of going into the light because of horrific things that happened to him while he was alive. I have an open mind and I believe in all of these things so it made this book much more interesting to read.

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**Roberta R. (Offbeat YA) says**

Rated 2.5 really.

**Excerpt from my review - originally published at Offbeat YA.**

**Pros:** Interesting premise. Lead you can empathise with. Peculiar sidekick. Family plays a big role.

**Cons:** Main characters lack depth. Their friendship feels a bit unlikely. Massive use of colloquial/informal speech (understood subject).

**WARNING!:** Kid abuse is implied. There's tension and psychological horror, and the ending is pretty intense. Nothing terribly scary though.

**Will appeal to:** First-time horror/supernatural readers.

Premise...despite my rating, this is not a bad book. I had a few problems with it, but in all honesty, I think that, as a horror/supernatural novel for beginners, it delivers. I'd recommend it to young teens who are dipping their toes in the genres.

## BIZARRE FRIENDSHIP

First off, the blurb is not accurate. Jane would, indeed, be a fairly typical teen, if not for her shadow trying to kill her since she was a kid. Now, her best Lexi is definitely the not typical half of their small team, with her goth appearance and her penchant for shooting videos that, more often than not, revolve around dead and decomposing animals. Mind you, I enjoyed the descriptions of Lexi's photography and videomaking, because the author was able to convey both her passion for those artistic media and her "vision". What I didn't buy was Lexi's friendship with Jane to begin with. It sounds like Lexi originally went after Jane because she was a freak in some respect, courtesy of one of her "incidents" that had left her hands burned. Yes, Lexi is protective of Jane, and helpful when it comes to investigate her scary situation, but still I was never able to get a real sense of their friendship.

## PECULIAR SHADOW

The mystery behind Jane's predicament was what kept the book going for me. I do believe it's an original spin on the "killer shadow" myth. The connection between Jane and such shadow, the reason why it tries to kill her, the reason why it has a life of its own to begin with - it was fascinating to read. If the Goosebumps or Point Horror series still existed, Beyond would make for a solid addition to both...even more sophisticated than some of their original books, I can safely say. [...]

**Whole review here**

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## Mara says

I had never read Graham McNamee's work before and this was a good book to begin with. Short, fast-paced and spooky, it's the perfect late-night read. Jane is being haunted by a force that wants her dead. She and her best friend, Lexi, try to find out the source. I loved the "Creep Sisters" idea and thought Lexi was a great character. Jane was good, too-- although descriptions of her constant fatigue were, well, exhausting (even though that was the point). Although there was a scene at the very end that didn't seem to mesh with everything and I wanted one more brief scene with the therapist at the end, this was a really good read.

"My life has turned into a multiple choice of horrors. Pick one." (page 153)

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## **Garry says**

Wow!

I will run, not walk, to get the other books by Graham McNamee.

An intriguing concept: a young girl who has a near-death experience but survives to be haunted by... A compelling story: the concept is developed slowly and carefully, nuance and depth added piece by piece leading ultimately to an exciting and rewarding conclusion. Realistic, complex characters with depth: Jane and her best friend Lexi are interesting without verging on the annoyingly precocious adolescents of an adult's fantasy. Brilliant writing: McNamee excels at developing truly scary, unsettling scenes that build with tension and visual detail that conveys the horror without the sense you are reading descriptions for CGI special effects.

In short, a book that delivers on every level and in every way.

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## **Misty Baker says**

I am a rabid Stephen King fan. It's just a fact of life in my house (kinda like breathing, or my inability to change out the garbage bag in the kitchen.) If there is a new book. I will buy it. Do not try to stop me or I will bite of your pinky toe. So when I got a catalog from Hachette in December with a book in it that said "If Stephen King wrote YA..." I knew I had to read it.

I will admit, my expectations weren't all that high. It is Stephen King after all, and if you are going to throw around the king of screams name like it's two dollar popcorn, then you better have the balls (lady or otherwise) to back it up. And by balls I mean a very compelling way to write something horribly disturbing. (But I'm sure y'all got that. You are a smart bunch of book monkeys after all.)

Anyways...a few hours in to the book I ran across this passage:

"Pulled from my doze, I try to open my eyes. But they won't open! Must be sticky with too much mascara gunk and sleep sand. I start rubbing and feel something weird. What is this? Under my fingertips it feels like I've got false eyelashes stuck on, gluing my eyes shut. But I never wear those. I try to pull whatever it is off, but it won't come loose. It seems more like...thread? Stitches! As If my lids are sewn shut."

and instantly knew that Graham McNamee was the real deal.

"Jane is not your typical teen. She and her best friend Lexi call themselves the Creep Sisters. Only Lexi knows why Jane is different from anyone else: Her own shadow seems to pull her into near-fatal accidents. Jane is determined to find out why these terrifying things happen, and to overcome her shadow enemy. Her sleuthing with Lexi connects her own horrors to the secret history of a serial killer."

There is nothing more freightening than the realization that your own body is betraying you. Ok, that's not really true. Your shadow betraying you is worse. In Jane's case...it's deadly. But...let's start at chapter one, shall we?

I remember dying.  
After I got injured my heart stopped and I flat-lined.  
I was done and gone. But I wasn't alone.  
There was something waiting for me when I died. Something dark and cold tried to take my soul away.  
When they brought me back to life I escaped from it. Left it behind.  
But what if it came back with me, followed me home like a hungry stray?

There you go...chapter one. In its entirety, and in my humble opinion genius.

You know that old saying "sometimes less is more?" Well, McNamee nailed it. Instead of rambling for pages he kept things short, sweet (uh hum, ok, maybe not sweet...exactly) and to the point. Each chapter read more like flash fiction than a precursor to bigger and better things, and because of this the books pace was incredibly fast. Now, don't misunderstand me...I'm not saying that the plot stalled from chapter to chapter, it didn't. What I'm saying is that McNamee found an incredibly stimulating way to cluster all of the pertinent information into its own individual chapter.

Huh?

Think of it this way.

A question was posed. (How in the world did she die?)

An answer was given. (Oh, — to the —. Got it.)

And in the end...all of those seemingly random answers led to a "Oh hell no!!!" moment of pure literary magic. (Wait....are you trying to tell me that her SHADOW reached down, picked up — and — her in the —? Whoa!"

Leaving out all of the unnecessary babble only made what was on the page seem that much more important. For example:

It's like I'm caught in some kind of dream., keeping me here. Slowly, I lean forward to peer into that gap.  
So dark down there, where the light barely reaches...  
An eye stares back at me. Pressed to the hole.  
Screaming, I fall back. I scramble away till I hit the wall.  
Wake up! Now!  
That's not real. Not real.  
I'm shivering so bad I can't stand.  
Across the floor I see something move in the gap. Reaching up. Fingers. Muddy fingers, crawling like spider legs. Feeling around the edges of the hole.  
Searching.

This passage could have easily span three of four paragraph, hell....a page. Instead it's blunt delivery rouses stark emotions. As if YOU are the one in the room, experiencing the panic and loss of control. Not Jane.

As for the rest (aka the plot, the character building...the ending) they were all significantly better than I ever could have imagined. Right down to the part where I was overwhelmed with pity for Jane's shadow. Is McNamee the next Stephen King? That's debatable. But his ability to suck you in with a few poetically creepy stanzas and a jaw dropping ending definitely has him headed in the right direction.



In short...I liked it.

If you fancy ghost stories, this one will not disappoint. If you find yourself disturbed by them...you should probably head in the other direction. This one is chock-full of crazies!

Happy reading my fellow Kindle-ites and remember: sometimes pain does actually equal gain.

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### **Daisy says**

So, back when I was a sweet little tween, I was easily freaked out by Fear Street books and the like (especially the Cheerleader series, CREEPED ME OUT, I wouldn't go showering after games at the gym is noone was around anymore, the girl dying because of boiling shower and steam still haunts me). And though I don't really read or watch scary stuff much these days, I figured this would get me back to those days in which I LOVED them.

Unfortunately, it didn't quite work out that way for me.

You see, the whole time I was reading it, I felt like I *\*should\** be scared of everything happening, but I never really felt it myself. Maybe it was because I never really connected to Jane and didn't feel the horror she must have been experiencing. I didn't feel much of anything while reading this book except for a mild curiosity about how it would all end.

Jane and Lexi seemed like a good team friendwise, though I was kinda annoyed that they also seemed to be taking this whole Jane almost being killed by her shadow multiple times less seriously than I would have liked. I mean, I couldn't get over the fact that they waited till the fourth time before starting to investigate it. Don't we have internet for this? I get not wanting to tell her parents for fear they'd lock her away, but not even wondering who or what was doing that to her seemed sorta naive. Especially after the last nail in head incident.

And I kinda wanted to shake Jane right before the big moment in which you can see from miles away SOMETHING BAD is going to happen. I mean, seriously? That was SO predictable. And the whole unraveling of the who, what and where of things was a bit too convenient for me.

I did think that the ghost part of the who and why of it was pretty interesting and I just wish I had felt more involved with the story. I think the main reason why I finished it, was that it was a quick read and I knew it wouldn't take hours of my life to stick with it. It wasn't badly written, for me there just wasn't a connection and because of that no sense of fear, which is kinda what you need for a book that's supposed to be creepy (I'm assuming things here, I could be wrong).

My rating: 2 stars

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### **Daniel Bonk says**

I read the book "BEYOND". I think this book is great because it's about a girl named Jane dying multiple times and trying to avoid her shadow that's seems to be trying to kill her. Later in the book she meets this

demon face to face while she died again and she seemed to have got away, or did she. Ever since she meet her shadow she has been seeing things and feels as if she's being watched.

I liked this book because of its intense moments and crazy encounters, but I would have changed the characters because they're not so much engaged and I would also change some of the settings, some of them are weird like a refrigerator.

A quote I liked was "I remember dying" (page 1). That's another reason why I liked this book is because it catches my attention. I liked this quote because it gets right to the point and it's not like most books where it takes forever to figure out what's happening.

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## **Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says**

Beyond is the second young adult book by a Canadian male author I've read in the last year (first was The Repossession by Sam Hawksmoor), they were both published by Hodder, and they're both original and refreshing. I'm even more picky and difficult with horror than I am with steampunk, which is why I'm especially happy to report that the horror parts of this story met my extremely high standards. But I'm getting ahead of myself here...

Jane is afraid of her own shadow... literally. Every time she faces any kind of danger, her mind goes numb and her shadow takes control, moving Jane's body towards peril instead of away from it. If there's one thing Jane can be sure of, it's that she's not making it up; her best friend Lexi witnessed her shadow trying to force her to throw herself in front of a train. But since it's not a story she can actually share without ensuring a bed in the psychiatric ward, everyone including her parents thinks she's suicidal. It's up to Lexi and Jane to find a pattern and discover the mystery and horror behind Jane's shadow.

Although Beyond wasn't without its problems, the idea behind it was thrilling and so very original. It was unlike anything I've read before, and the mystery kept me on my toes until the very end. It wasn't easy to even try to guess the outcome of this, or the solution to the mystery, and the premise behind it was simply exhilarating. There's nothing creepier than being threatened by your own shadow... it's the only thing you can never hide from, and seeing it take over, start moving on its own and even control your movements is a waking nightmare. \*shudders\* Poor Jane.

The writing style was also fairly unusual. McNamee prefers short sentences that create a steady staccato rhythm; in that, he reminded me of Lisa McMann, whose Wake trilogy I happen to like very much. Generally, I adore this sort of thing – any peculiarity in someone's style is enough to keep me interested and fascinated even when the plot becomes tiresome. McNamee wasn't consistent enough to be truly impressive like McMann, but his writing still made the book more memorable for me.

However, I don't understand why Jane couldn't have been a teenage boy instead. The story would have worked just as well, if not better, from a male point of view, and quite frankly, McNamee knows about teenage girls about as much as I know about quantum mechanics. Jane and Lexi both thought and acted more like adolescent boys than sixteen-year-old girls, and this was especially apparent in their romantic endeavors. That is not how girls think about boys, Mr. McNamee, not even close, and that is not how girls talk to each other. Suffice it to say that changing this to a male protagonist wouldn't take much work at all – a simple name change (from Jane to John, since we're being original and all) would have been enough. No other modifications would be necessary, the voice is already distinctly male. This, too, is the second time that I've encountered this problem lately, the first being Vesper by Jeff Sampson.

Nevertheless, few books truly scare me anymore, and *Beyond* made me want to sleep with my lights on for the first time in many months. McNamee is an excellent horror author with a unique style, but he should definitely stick with male protagonists from now on, in which case I'll probably read whatever he writes next.

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