

★ **All These Sunken Souls: A Black Horror Anthology**

Circe Moskowitz, Editor

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There are more frightening things to be haunted by than ghosts in Circe Moskowitz's horror anthology *All These Sunken Souls*. Intense teenage emotions, the pressure of looming adulthood, generational traumas, and the stress of being Black in society are all heightened by the sinister, dreadful addition of creatures lurking in dark corners.

The anthology is intentional in centering Black experiences. In some stories, that manifests as explicit references to skin color, Black spiritual traditions, and racist interactions and microaggressions. In other stories, it manifests in implicit cues like family gatherings in small Southern towns, presided over by feared elders, and neighbors separated by more than wide fields. The atmosphere of the collection is heavy with unmet needs, unspoken desires, and unintended consequences.

Relationships serve as the backbone for many stories. The girls at the center of Liselle Sambury's "All My Best Friends are Dead" are willing to fight the spirit of a local urban legend that possessed and replaced their new friend after a sleepover prank gone awry. Frey and Adam should be celebrating their anniversary, but a change in plans finds them locked in a bloody battle at a Welsh country house in Joel Rochester's "I Love Your Eyes." In Joelle Wellington's "The Consumption of Vienna Montrose," a tumbledown manor feeds on the emotions and bodily fluids of its new owner, who's the most recent in a long line of women with the same name. Whether romantic, familial, or platonic, the relationships ground the stories, allowing the fantastical horror elements to emerge via slow, uneasy, unexpected twists.

With stories that shift from reality-based fears of murderous home intruders into fever dreams of demonic pacts and flesh-eating zombies, *All These Sunken Souls* is a chilling horror anthology that hides its terrors among what's mundane.

DONTANÁ MCPHERSON-JOSEPH (November / December 2023)

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