



O'Hurley's Return: Skin Deep Without A Trace (The O'hurleys)

By Nora Roberts

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Skin Deep

Chantel O'Hurley has parlayed talent, breathtaking beauty-and indomitable will-into stardom. But though she needs Quinn Doran's protection now, the sexy, cynical P.I. Utterly infuriates her. . .threatening to melt her icy façade and ignite her heart.

Without a Trace

A life of adventure and intrigue has left Trace O'Hurley bitter and world-weary. But in the innocent arms of spirited damsel-in-distress Gillian Fitzpatrick, Trace finds himself longing for the life-and family-he left behind.

New York Times bestselling author Nora Roberts creates unforgettable families--so prepare to be captivated by the O'Hurley's, whose lives are as remarkable as their unconventional beginnings. The dazzling O'Hurley triplets and their renegade older brother have each followed a very different destiny. Now the family is reunited in this special 2-in-1 volume.

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Editorial Review

Review

"With clear-eyed, concise vision and a sure pen, Roberts nails her characters and settings with awesome precision, drawing readers into a vividly rendered world of family-centered warmth and unquestionable magic."

-Library Journal

"Her stories have fueled the dreams of twenty-five million readers."

-Chicago Tribune

"Roberts' bestselling novels are some of the best in the romance genre. They are thoughtfully plotted, well-written stories

featuring fascinating characters."

-USA TODAY

"A superb author...Ms. Roberts is an enormously gifted writer whose incredible range and intensity guarantee the very best of reading."

-Rave Reviews

"A consistently entertaining writer."

-USA TODAY

"The publishing world might be hard-pressed to find an author with a more diverse style or fertile imagination than Roberts."

-Publishers Weekly

About the Author

Nora Roberts is the number-one New York Times bestselling author of more than 200 novels, including *The Collector*, *Whiskey Beach*, *The Witness*, and many more. She is also the author of the bestselling futuristic suspense series written under the pen name J. D. Robb. There are more than 500 million copies of her books in print.

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The house was big and cool and white. In the early-morning hours, a breeze came through the terrace doors Chantel had left unlatched, bringing in the scents of the garden. Across the lawn, hidden from the main house by trees, was a gazebo, painted white, with wisteria climbing up the trellises. Sometimes, when the wind was right, Chantel could catch the perfume from her bedroom window.

On the east side of the lawn was an elaborate marble fountain. It was quiet now. She rarely had it turned on when she was alone. Near it was the pool, an octagonal stone affair skirted by a wide patio and flanked by another, smaller, white house. There was a tennis court beyond a grove of trees, but it had been weeks since she'd had the time or the inclination to pick up a racket.

Surrounding the estate was a stone fence, twice as tall as a man, that alternately gave her a sense of security or the feeling of being hemmed in. Still, inside the house, with its lofty ceilings and cool white walls, she

often forgot about the fence and the security system and the electronic gate; it was the price she paid for the fame she had always wanted.

The servants' quarters were in the west wing, on the first floor. No one stirred there now. It was barely dawn, and she was alone. There were times Chantel preferred it that way.

As she bundled her hair under a hat, she didn't bother to check the results in the three-foot mirror in her dressing room. The long shirt and flat-heeled shoes she wore were chosen for comfort, not for elegance. The face that had broken men's hearts and stirred women's envy was left untouched by cosmetics. Chantel protected it by pulling down the brim of her hat and slipping on enormous sunglasses. As she picked up the bag that held everything she thought she would need for the day, the intercom beside the door buzzed.

She checked her watch. Five forty-five. Then she pushed the button. "Right on time."

"Good morning, Miss O'Hurley."

"Good morning, Robert. I'll be right down." After flipping the switch that released the front gate, Chantel started down the wide double staircase that led to the main floor. The mahogany rail felt like satin under her fingers as she trailed them down. Overhead, a chandelier hung, its prisms quiet in the dim light. The marble floor shone like glass. The house was a suitable showcase for the star she had worked to become. Chantel had yet to take any of it for granted. It was a dream that had rolled from, then into, other dreams, and it took time and effort and skill to maintain. But then she'd been working all her life and felt entitled to the benefits she had begun to reap.

As she walked to the front door, the phone began to ring.

Damn it, had they changed the call on her? Because she was up and the servants weren't, Chantel crossed the hall to the library and lifted the receiver. "Hello." Automatically she picked up a pen and prepared to make a note.

"I wish I could see you right now." The familiar whisper had her palms going damp, and the pen slipped out of her hand and fell soundlessly on the fresh blotter. "Why did you change your number? You're not afraid of me, are you? You mustn't be afraid of me, Chantel. I won't hurt you. I just want to touch you. Just touch you. Are you getting dressed? Are you—"

With a cry of despair, Chantel slammed down the receiver. The sound of her breathing in the big, empty house seemed to echo back to her. It was starting again.

Minutes later, her driver noticed only that she didn't give him the easy, flirtatious smile she usually greeted him with before she climbed into the back of the limo. Once inside, Chantel tipped her head back, closed her eyes and willed herself to calm. She had to face the camera in a few hours and give it her best. That was her job. That was her life. Nothing could be allowed to interfere with that, not even the fear of a whisper over the phone or an anonymous letter.

By the time the limo passed through the studio gates, Chantel had herself under control again. She should be safe here, shouldn't she? Here she could pour herself into the work that still fascinated her. Inside the dozens of big domed buildings, magic happened, and she was part of it. Even the ugliness was just pretend. Murder, mayhem and passion could all be simulated. Fan-tasyland, her sister Maddy called it, and that was true enough. But, Chantel thought with a smile, you had to work your tail off to make the fantasy real.

She was sitting in makeup at six-thirty and having her hair fussed over and styled by seven. They were in the first week of shooting, and everything seemed fresh and new. Chantel read over her lines while the stylist arranged her hair into the flowing silver-blond mane her character would wear that day.

"Such incredible bulk," the stylist murmured as she aimed the hand-held dryer. "I know women who would sell their blue-chip stocks for hair as thick as this. And the color!" She bent down to eye level to look in the mirror at the results of her work. "Even I have a hard time believing it's natural."

"My grandmother on my father's side." Chantel turned her head a bit to check her left profile. "I'm supposed to be twenty in this scene, Margo. Am I going to pull it off?"

With a laugh, the stringy redhead stood back. "That's the least of your worries. It's a shame they're going to dump rain all over this." She gave Chantel's hair a final fluff.

"You're telling me." Chantel stood when the bib was removed. "Thanks, Margo." Before she'd taken two steps, her assistant was at her elbow. Chantel had hired him because he was young and eager and had no ambitions to be an actor. "Are you going to crack the whip, Larry?"

Larry Washington flushed and stuttered, as he always did during his first five minutes around Chantel. He was short and well built, fresh out of college, and had a mind that soaked up details. His biggest ambition at the moment was to own a Mercedes. "Oh, you know I'd never do that, Miss O'Hurley."

Chantel patted his shoulder, making his blood pressure soar. "Somebody has to. Larry, I'd appreciate it if you'd scout up the assistant director and tell him I'm in my trailer. I'm going to hide out there until they're ready to rehearse." Her co-star came into view carrying a cigarette and what Chantel accurately gauged to be a filthy hangover.

"Would you like me to bring you some coffee, Miss O'Hurley?" As he asked, Larry shifted to distance himself. Everyone with brains had quickly figured out that it was best to avoid Sean Carter when he was dealing with the morning after.

"Yes, thanks." Chantel nodded to a few members of the crew as they tightened up the works on the first set, a train station, complete with tracks, passenger cars and a depot. She'd say her desperate goodbyes to her lover there. She could only hope he'd gotten his headache under control by then.

Larry kept pace with her as she crossed the set, walking under lights and around cables. "I wanted to remind you about your interview this afternoon. The reporter from *Star Gaze* is due here at twelve-thirty. Dean from publicity said he'd sit in with you if you wanted."

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Shiela Steen:

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This O'Hurley's Return: Skin DeepWithout A Trace (The O'hurleys) book is just not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you will get by reading this book is definitely information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper anyone read a lot of information you will get. That O'Hurley's Return: Skin DeepWithout A Trace (The O'hurleys) without we recognize teach the one who studying it become critical in imagining and analyzing. Don't become worry O'Hurley's Return: Skin DeepWithout A Trace (The O'hurleys) can bring if you are and not make your carrier space or bookshelves' grow to be full because you can have it in the lovely laptop even cellphone. This O'Hurley's Return: Skin DeepWithout A Trace (The O'hurleys) having great arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

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