



Just Beneath My Skin by Darren Greer

Readalikes

Burgess Boys by Elizabeth Strout

Jake, in *Just Beneath My Skin*, returns home to face the poor choices that he had made as a young man. *Burgess Boys* by Elizabeth Strout is also a novel about homecoming. It features three siblings who are reunited to face a family crisis and must deal with the incident that tore the family apart.

Caught by Lisa Moore

David Slaney begins his criminal career in Newfoundland with drug smuggling, only to take the fall for the crime and spends years in prison. Following his escape he returns to his life of crime. *Caught* and *Just Beneath My Skin* share an east coast setting, young male protagonists who choose negative paths in life, and a suspenseful and unexpected ending.

The Death of Sweet Mister by Daniel Woodrell

Shug Akins, or Sweet Mister, is an overweight thirteen year old boy who is beloved by his mother, but abused by and fearful of his father who is cruel, an addict and a career criminal. Shug, like Nathan, is growing up in poverty and in an incredibly insecure household with a seemingly bleak future. Both these novels feature characters that are authentic and flawed, and convey a strong sense of place.

Manhood for Amateurs: pleasures and regrets of a husband, father and son by Michael Chabon

A major theme in *Just Beneath My Skin* is the intergenerational relationships between men. In Michael Chabon's collection of non-fiction essays he explores the blending of traditional gender roles and caring for children. He writes about the closer emotional relationship he has with his children than he experienced with his own father.

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

Like *Just Beneath My Skin*, the characters in *The Outsiders* are from a rough part of town and struggling to work hard and overcome their roots for the sake of their younger male family members. A father-son relationship is at the heart of *Just Beneath My Skin*, while the focus is on brothers in *The Outsiders*. Both books feature sudden violence and close male friends who are bad influences.

Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha by Roddy Doyle

Just Beneath My Skin is told in alternating voices, that of Jake and Nathan. Having the child Nathan's voice gives the novel depth and emotional resonance. Roddy Doyle's *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* also features a child narrator who must endure the dissolution of his parents' marriage.

The Pursuit of Happyness by Chris Gardner

Just Beneath My Skin is a novel about men and the different sides of masculinity ranging from hard and violent to nurturing. *The Pursuit of Happyness* by Chris Gardner is a work of nonfiction that reflects on the experience of a man who grew up with a violent stepfather in an impoverished urban setting who was to go on to raise a son as a single father.

Twenty-Six by Leo McKay

Twenty-Six by Leo McKay is another One Book Nova Scotia selection. Like *Just Beneath My Skin* it is set in a rural Nova Scotia community where economic hardship is a reality. *Twenty Six* is defined by a large scale tragedy while the characters in *Just Beneath My Skin* experience tragedy, while on a smaller scale, which still has devastating consequences.

Tyler's Cape by Darren Greer

If you enjoyed *Just Beneath My Skin*, consider this previous work by author Darren Greer. The setting plays a big role in both stories, as they take place in small Nova Scotia towns. They also feature similar characters: strong familial relationships between males (Luke with his two older brothers in *Tyler's Cape*, Jake and Nathan in *Just Beneath My Skin*). In addition, both the families in the stories are governed by mothers who are hard on their children, sometimes to the point of abuse.

When the Saints by Sarah Mian

This novel is also set in rural Nova Scotia and features a woman who returns to her childhood home to face the violence and addiction that dismantled her family. Like *Just Beneath My Skin*, *When the Saints* features characters with authentic voices who, despite having lived through trauma, are brave enough to face the past in order to achieve redemption.

Winter's Bone by Daniel Woodrell

Ree Dolly goes in search of her father who has deserted the family and skipped out on charges that he ran a crystal meth lab. If her father does not return for his court date the family, already in dire straits will lose their home. Ree must mix with very dangerous people in order to save her family. *Winter's Bone* shares with *Just Beneath My Skin* a gritty writing style, a bleak tone and unreliable parents. *Winter's Bone*, like *Just Beneath My Skin* would appeal to young adult readers.