



Halton Cray

N.B. Roberts

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When Alexandra Turner takes a job at the eerie Tudor mansion, Halton Cray, she needs all her wit and spirit to cope with the enigmatic Thom Rues. While a near constant fog envelopes the estate, Alex begins questioning the bizarre things she's seeing around him, as gossip circulates that Thom is more than just different. Determined not to let rumours influence her, Alex tries to learn who he really is, even as he provokes her with his dark sense of humour. But discovery of Thom's terrible secret propels Alex's life in a direction she could have never predicted.

Halton Cray is a contemporary paranormal romance and dark adventure inspired by Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre. The first book in the Shadows of the World series.

Halton Cray Details

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Author : N.B. Roberts

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From Reader Review Halton Cray for online ebook

Charlene says

Obviously the fact that this book is inspired by Jane Eyre made me want to read it - and I have to say in one aspect this book totally honors the connection. That aspect being the chemistry between the two leads. While I was a bit iffy on them initially - because Thom Rues was sometimes unattractively abrasive and I really wanted Alex to stand up to him more and keep up her side of the banter - but eventually their growing romance won me over. The story itself doesn't really bear a lot of similarity to the plot structure of Jane Eyre, but draws more on the major elements, like the dynamic and the rocky progression in the romance, a very ominous house, and a big secret, and I think because it is more of its own story, that helped make this a very absorbing read on its own. Especially when it came to finding out what Thom was hiding.

I don't want to reveal too much about the secret because I think it's a great surprise, and the explanation behind it was really well done. There's a real impact in the reason why Thom and Alex are separated because it is a conflict that is very difficult to resolve. Often with stories inspired by Jane Eyre, that reason can seem pretty weak, but that is not the case here. However, it is resolved somewhat in this book, and probably that plot point is the one thing I had the most problems with in the story. Because the way the problem is done away with, really stretched believability for me even though this book does dabble a bit in fantasy. It just took me out of the story, and I had to decide to go with it, to really start enjoying the book again.

This was an absorbing read for me though, because of the atmosphere and the gradual sparks between the two main characters. Alex is a very relatable character, and Thom is so darkly magnetic once you get to know him (which is a great reflection on the character of Rochester.) The suspense of not knowing Thom's secret in the first half the book really carried the story for me as well, because there are so many hints and clues, but it's nearly impossible to put them all together. The author really created something very different with Thom. The dark atmosphere is enhanced by some really creepy scenes in this book, and in particular a great scene where Halton Cray loses power in the middle of a big storm and in the middle of a party. Some of the guests get a little panicky, and I was really caught up in the pervasive feeling of dread and suspense in that scene.

As a Jane Eyre fan, I would recommend this book as an interesting modernized version, but with the focus more on it being a great, dark Gothic tale. It's a little overwrought, with tons of atmosphere which is just perfect in capturing the Gothic tone. I'm definitely looking forward to the next installment of Alex and Thom's story!

Cynthia says

Review is also posted on Let's Say It's A Blog.

OMG.OMG.OMG.OMG!!!

Oh. My. God.

Halton Cray is the best young-adult fantasy book I ever read my whole life!

Really. I'm not exaggerating things here. I'm stating the fact.

Truthfully, I am not really into fantasy or paranormal type of books. I love young adults, but I never really

fancy those with fantasy feels inside. I did read several young adult fantasies that (mostly) contained forbidden love between human and mysterious characters but not even one has ‘kicked’ the romance radar inside me. Until Halton Cray.

Halton Cray is a love story that inspired by Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre. I have to admit that this was the main reason I chose to add this book on my tbr list this December. The story started with the heroine of this book, Alexandra Turner, who was kind of ‘forced’ to work part time in a little shop inside Halton Cray, an old building that people believed was haunted by the former heir, Sir Halton Cray. All this happened so sudden and rather strange but she agreed anyway. Meeting an annoying stranger who turned out the curator in Halton Cray, experiencing eerie situations almost everyday, and having a boss who was obviously disliked her didn’t make brave-curious Alex to back off from working there. Later, she even found herself rather enjoying working there for some reasons... or a reason, maybe.

Thomas Rues was the curator in Halton Cray. In Alex’s eyes, Thom was the most irritating man she has ever met. Added with all those strange auras radiated from his direction, Thom became the most evitable guy in Halton Cray’s area. But there was something that oddly pulling Alex closer to him. Being Alex, she broke the spell people had encircled on Thom in her own way that blew away them both.

‘The toughest reflection is that of truth, which is only visible to some.’

God, I want so badly to write more about the story but I don’t know how without exposing some spoilers and I DON’T WANT TO. I want people to start reading this without any further information about the content because this book has so many surprises that will totally blow your minds!

I really had a high expectation on this book. And damn was this book beyond what I wanted! Every page had made me excited and wanted more and more. I felt like throwing my reader across the room and buy a new one everytime the scene became awe-freaking-somely mind-blowing. God, I love every single thing on this book. The characters, both main characters, are so lovable I want to ship them my whole life. Alexandra is one adorable stubborn girl with all her witty persona. Same as her, Thom is also damn witty even though he successfully covered it with his cold appearance. I really really reallyyyyyyyyyyyyy loved the banters between them! Heck, it was damn funny! I had to suppress my urge to laugh out loud while my mom was around. Despite the horror-stricken scenes, I enjoyed every second of it a lot (*although I had to read it during days instead of at night because yeah, I am just lame like that*). The romance is so strong I LOVE IT!! Here is my favorite quote from the book:

‘Beware!’ spoke the amorous voice to Psyche in the darkness. ‘Beware, my beloved! Seek not to discover my true face or shape, lest thou shalt meet with a very great sorrow. For love cannot dwell where there is no trust.’

God knows what a sucker I am for romance and funny reads. Well, Halton Cray manages to give it all to me. The ending is something beyond your imagination and I LOVE IT SO DAMN MUCH!! Oh God, just how many I’ve said I love this book I just want to say it over and over again...

N.B. Roberts is so brilliant! The joke she slipped inside the story was so funny. The ‘Alex Turner’ one was so hilarious! I am still having a hard time believing this is her debut novel. **HALTON CRAY IS DEFINITELY TOO FREAKING AWESOME TO BE A DEBUT NOVEL!!!**

God, everyone should read this book! Like... RIGHT. NOW.

My most favorite part of this book is the chapter after epilogue: Excerpt. YES! Halton Cray is the first book of Shadows of the World series. This baby is gonna have a sister called **The 13th Baronet**. God, asdfhaghlsjdhfg I cannot wait!!

Xeniya says

4 stars!

I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

I would've given this book even more stars, if not for my "self-inflicted" boundary that only a few special books in my life time will get a 5 starred rating.

I will start with a statement: I don't like YA. Even though it seems I've been reading quite a bit of it lately. You see, when we're talking about romance, I'm not into hand-holding and star-gazing. I don't feel that just lovingly looking into someone's eyes is enough. Call me carnal. I've been called dirty-minded before. So, naturally, Young Adult novels are usually too mellow, too naive for me, and I don't think I've given any such a novel more than 3 stars. Just because they always lack carnality.

Possible spoilers ahead!

What is special with this book is that I almost didn't feel the lack of sex. Almost. The story is so well written and the characters are so entertaining, the plot full of twists... I just didn't need it so badly. Not that I would have complained if there was some steamy scenes :)

I wasn't expecting anything from this book, really. It's not my usual read. However, I've been very surprised at how quickly I got pulled into the world.

I've read some of the other reviews, and it seems that you either love Thom, or hate him. I'm in the "love" group. I always appreciate intelligent, funny and sarcastic characters. Even when said sarcasm borders with plain abusiveness. I know some will find it a little bit too much. I didn't. I liked Thom and his wit, I loved Alex and her strength.

What I liked even more is the suspense, the story-building and the plot twist I didn't really expect (and I thought I knew). What I didn't like is Thom becoming a bit too mushy at the end, and Alex being too stubborn at times. But it's romance, and I guess this falls into why I don't like YA generally.

However, because of the overall impression, what would usually be a reason for me to rate a book with 3 stars, this one gets 4. Well deserved. Just because this is a debut novel, I would give it even more! So well written, a real enjoyment!

Oh and btw. I really like the cover design! It's usual for indie and debut authors to not have very good covers. Not many of them can afford a real designer so it all falls down to doing it them selves. And N.B. did it great! Really great!

I recommend it to anybody who likes well written scary stories, paranormal and fantasy novels and slow-building romances with funny and witty characters! Actually, everybody should try it!

Amz Stryker says

Halton Cray was absolutely delightful! Though it starts off a little slow, it does well to build up the mystery around the male romantic lead, Thom, and engage the reader's intrigue about him. Right away I loved Alex, the main character, who struck me as rational and down-to-earth, qualities I'm not used to seeing in female leads of romance novels. There's a constant struggle throughout the novel inside her, whether to follow her head or her heart, and luckily, she follows her heart when it counts the most.

Thom is incredibly charming and irresistible, and like Alex, I found his personality a breath of fresh air when compared to the love interests I've read of in romances before. He's got a biting wit, and once Alex learns the way to engage him is not to get ruffled, but shoot it right back, it results in some very enjoyable banter! (Though I admit, I've always been a sucker for character banter.) He's also deliciously flawed in character, and can be quite selfish at times, which was enjoyable. After a few interactions, I was dying for them to get together, and when they finally did, I had to put the book down a while and let it sink in, before I read the next part and the inevitably bad things happened.

Towards the last fourth of the book, the action picks up a bit, and comes to a satisfying conclusion. Halton Cray is not without its plot twists, of course, and they were very well executed! The teaser chapter for the second book has me dying to know what happens next, and Alex and Thom are just such a fun couple, I can't wait to read more of them!

Vie says

Whoa! I like how N.B. Roberts mixed her stories into more than one genre. It has mystery and romance and paranormal and horror and made Halton Cray has its own unique from another series.

Our main heroine, Alex, just got her second job in a famous haunted mansion named Halton Cray. Then she begin a push-and-pull friendship with Thom, a curator who lives in there. The romance is slow moving but I enjoyed their so-called-friendship progress.

Thom has a mysterious vibe that he often being described as "the ghost" but Alex (what I really love about her) is a strong headed girl, she refuse to believe it and begin to wonder about him.

I can't say much about Halton Cray because of that twist. What I could said is that N.B. Roberts is genius for creating it! I did tried to guess what was exactly he is but I really really didn't expect that. Guys, you need to give Halton Cray a chance and read the twist by yourself!

Halton Cray is derivative story from Jane Eyre and everyone is curious because of this. I often heard so many Jane Eyre's quote out there but I never had interest to read Jane Eyre before. After reading this, I think I need to read Jane Eyre. :)

Remarkable quote:

"You're confusing friend with acquaintance," he replied, taking a different book from one of his healthily stocked shelves, and carrying it to his chair to examine it. "She is no more your friend than Mrs Evans is mine. You know her, are civil towards her, and happy to keep her as a contact, which would all amount to no more than an acquaintance. That is the difference! Because you trust friends, Alex, and confide in friends"

Penny says

I enjoyed the book quite a bit.

Halton Cray has pretty great moments, while others are more mediocre.

It has a slow build up, but very intriguing. There are some parts that drag a bit, while others are so interesting you can't take your eyes away from the words. There is suspense and mystery. There is a moment that, giving the right circumstances in which you read it, it can be even scary. Since I was reading it alone at night, at around 2 in the morning, I became scared shitless for a while and **amused** at the same time. Let me tell you, those are an odd pair of emotions to put together but **it was fantastic. I became really excited about the book from that moment on.**

I had some issues with the book that prevented me from giving it 5 stars:

- It made no sense to me that the book was so chaste since the MCs (Alex and Thom) were 21 and 31 years old. That has decreased my rating considerably. **I would have given it more stars with a more mature content.** Then towards the end, the characters changed. Thom lost some of his spark (personality wise), as if love had mellowed him, I missed his deviousness and playfulness; while Alex became preteen-like regarding sexual closeness. **I really missed more PASSION and smut in here.**
- There were normal, everyday situations I didn't find very logical or completely believable: (view spoiler) I just don't see a logical explanation to justify any of those actions. The first is excused by saying they don't need distractions and the second by saying those are all the cloths she has. I am sorry but that is ridiculous, impractical and honestly, just plain weird. {Who does that? Maybe preteens would, but as sure as hell not rational adults.}

However, despite those issues, **the supernatural part was fantastic.** It surprised me. I wasn't expecting it to be so **subtle and original.** In a world where all paranormal stuff has become cliché, **it was very refreshing.** I think the author did a great job here and I applaud her for it.

Halton Cray is some kind of cross between The Haunting of Hill House by Shirley Jackson, The Vampire Chronicles by Anne Rice, and Twilight. I must say that it ended up being **a great combination.**

While I was reading, I was seeing everything in my head like it was a movie. So, I would absolutely go to the cinema if this book is someday made into a film.

I am so looking forward for the next installment. I will definitely be reading this series.

P.S.: I love the cover. :D

Re-read:

My original rating of this book was 3.5 stars. Later, I decided to give it the full 4 star rating. I changed my mind after reading a few other books of the genre and rereading this one. However, I must say that I am disappointed at the huge delay for The 13th Baronet's publication date. The date has been pushed back repeatedly, it just keeps changing, to the point where it has become frustrating.

Kirstin says

What a great story! Beautiful imagery gave each setting a unique glow. I loved the haunting atmosphere, especially surrounding the Cray. Thom was quite a character and had me smiling the whole book due to his quick wit and humor. Great read. Well done!

Laura says

I loved this story! I didn't want to put it down. I loved it most because, while it shared elements with 'Jane Eyre,' it wasn't just a modern version of it. It is its own story and full of surprises! I also loved the development of the relationship between the characters. Their banter with each other is exquisite. This is a perfect rainy-day novel, but it is more than that, too. Scenes from this book will stay with me, independent of the way 'Jane Eyre' has influenced it (though I did love those echoes when I noted them!). I am so looking forward to reading the sequel. Thank you for deciding to continue Thom and Alex's story.

Art says

A very enjoyable read!

This was my second Jane Eyre inspired story in a row after reading the original, prompted by my other half who being a Bronte devotee took to recommending these "spin offs". Both of the books were as different as could be from the classic but imaginative and entertaining in their own ways. They would not normally be on my radar, but I have to say, it has been a worthwhile diversion.

Halton Cray is well worth a read. I could, like other readers detect the "Janian" overtones of the two main characters relationship but then I was forewarned so this is probably not a surprise. What was a surprise was the plot-line twist and then gathering pace as it rushed to its climax, which was all very addictive. Where the first part of the story is more considered and absorbing, it grabs you and turns into quite the page turner. This was, in my opinion at least, very well constructed by the author, who has obviously put great thought into the text as a whole down to the always relevant quotes and snippets introducing each chapter which were at times quirky and entertaining in their own right. Back to the main body though and I particularly liked some of the seemingly novel paranormal elements too, I'd like to explain further which ones because they relate to the nature of a certain character but won't spoil anyone else's enjoyment. See for yourselves.

Sara says

This really was a beautiful book that I fell in love with.

I really enjoyed watching the relationship develop between Thom and Alex their teasing had me chuckling out loud. (husband raising an eyebrow at me!) They really have a connection with each other, but would it blossom into anything more, especially with the dark secret Thom is hiding? It makes you question where your boundaries would be.

Halton Cray was brought to life through the stunning description and the additional characters that you encounter along the way.

Each Chapter began with a quote or a piece of poetry that was unique to that section, it's a small detail but one I really appreciate in a book.

I can't wait for the next book and to see where that will take me!

Courtney Wells says

Took me longer than usual to get through due to the holidays but it's an interesting spin on supernatural intrigue/paranormal romance. More of a cozy take on those genres than anything in-your-face about it but since Jane Eyre is an inspiration I can't be too surprised.

Up front and fair warning - I didn't like Thom. He rubbed me wrong the entire novel because he seems like a guy who confuses bullying with teasing. Between that and much of the romance being fueled by smitten tendencies I wasn't really sucked into that facet of the story. My tastes, not necessarily everyone's.

I'd recommend this to anybody who wants a paranormal romance that reads like a ghost story. if that's of interest, it should be a nice read.

meghann says

2016 Re-read: Still Love

Jane Eyre is my absolute favorite book. I mean, I have a quote from it freaking tattooed on my neck. So I was excited when I heard about this contemporary story inspired by Jane Eyre, but with a paranormal twist. I. Loved. It.

I thought Alex was such a great character. She was strong, sarcastic and enjoyed spending time in old haunted mansions. My kind of girl. I also loved Thom. He was kind of manic-y in his interactions with Alex, but in the best possible way. Does that even make sense? I couldn't wait to find out what his "madwoman in the attic" flaw would be, and it did not disappoint.

And I wish Halton Cray was a real place. I would be there in a heartbeat. Such a great story, and I'm so excited to read the second book when it comes out!

Tom Wolfem says

This book totally surprised me.

It's eloquent, lovely and, right when you least expect it, creepy as hell. Alex and Thom are amazing, intelligent and playful; their chemistry and quirks were a delight to immerse in. I don't think I've fallen for a

cast of characters so quickly and so hard before. I was rooting for them the whole time, so much so that I was hesitant to see how it finally came together; afraid the build-up would be too much for the revelation. It wasn't. Halton Cray isn't about jump-scares and swooning, it's a slow and relentless burn that won't let go until the end: holding you in merciless apprehension, waiting for the beauty of the spell to be broken and the world to come crashing in. You won't be disappointed.

An absolute must read if you enjoy intelligent characters, elegant writing and original ideas. An amazing debut novel from a clearly skilled writer and a fantastic storyteller.

N.B. says

I openly rate my book because I am confident it is a good read, has originality and an absorbing 'slow burn' romance... with a little creepy horror thrown in for good measure.

A little more about Halton Cray –

Jane Eyre was my inspiration for writing Halton Cray, though it is not a modern retelling of that gothic tale. I wanted to recreate Jane and Rochester's powerful romance in my own setting of a haunted Tudor mansion based somewhat on a real house near which I grew up in southeast England.

Twenty-one year old plain looking Alex takes a part-time job at the historic house, Halton Cray, as a favour to her friend. There she meets the sardonic curator, Thom, under circumstances that cause her much taunting from him. Although Alex sees Thom as a rather plain looking man, everybody else sees something different... something quite sinister. Those people just can't help gossiping about him. But Alex discovers she has something in common with Thom, and determines to know him for herself, even as he continues to provoke her with his harsh sense of humour. He clearly has a dark secret, and when Alex discovers what it is, she must choose whether to accept the consequences of who he is, or stand up for what she believes in even if it means parting with the man she loves.

For more reviews of Halton Cray please see www.amazon.com/Halton-Cray-Shadows-Wo...

Rae King says

I received this book in exchange for an honest review.

This novel is **absolutely** mesmerizing. If I could give it 100 stars, I would!

The protagonist, Alex, is a lovable twenty-one year old female. She starts working at a mansion in England called Halton Cray. The mansion is filled with a history of ghost stories, with people always claiming to see spirits on the grounds.

She soon meets the mysterious curator, Thom, and they embark on a push and pull friendship that had me

begging for more. Thom is mean and sarcastic towards Alex and she holds her ground. The banter between these two characters is laugh out loud funny at times and always addicting. Everyone else at the Cray is put off by Thom, calling him 'the ghost', suspicious of his behavior. But Alex feels feels a connection to Thom and wants to learn more about him. I felt the same pull as Alex towards Thom's character, always eager to see him. It didn't hurt that I pictured him like this ...

N.B. Robert's writing style is top notch. The world that she created is beautifully descriptive. **I was at the Cray with Thom and Alex!** It was painful to be pulled away. The Cray itself was incredibly haunting. As strange things started to happen, I felt just as anxious as the characters in the story. During a Christmas party in the mansion, a blackout occurred and I actually felt scared! It was during this blackout that Alex started to realize that something peculiar was going on with Thom and that her feelings were growing stronger. The mystery surrounding Thom was probably the most addicting part of this story. I made plenty of predictions - I thought I knew! - but I didn't anticipate the secret that finally came to light.

It was *dark - creative - sinister - sad*

I couldn't have asked for a better twist. After the big reveal, a new storyline starts to take shape. Unfortunately, I can't talk about much of anything without giving away spoilers. This is definitely a book that thrives on unanswered questions, making it all the more thrilling.

I felt such excitement while reading this book. I am wildly impressed with N.B. Robert's storytelling ability, along with the impressive imagery and emotion that flew off of these pages.

I cannot categorize this novel in any one genre. It had mystery, romance, horror, and paranormal elements. It explores the curiosities surrounding life and death, having deep and dark themes. Every chapter opened up with a different quote, many from classic works of literature. These quotes related to the story and helped take me deeper into it on an emotional level.

I think it's safe to say that this novel was near perfection for me. I have no complaints. Only one question.

When will I get to read the second installment???

Thank you, N.B. Roberts, you are Brilliant!!!

<http://meetmybookboyfriend.wordpress.com>
