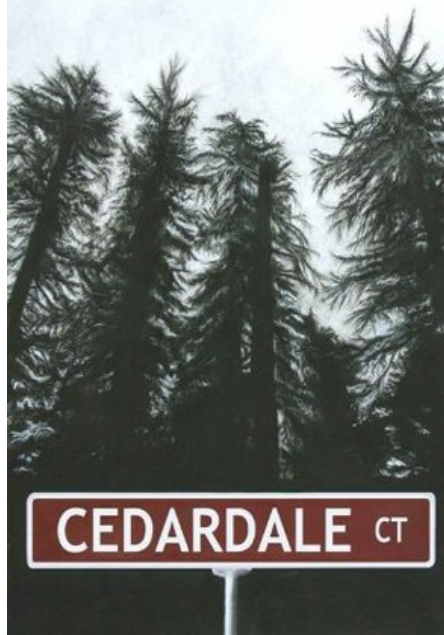


NATHAN LEE CHRISTENSEN



# Cedardale Court

*Nathan Lee Christensen*

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## **Cedardale Court** Nathan Lee Christensen

Full of daring fools, haunting old flames, and brimming with panicked villainy, the Oregon countryside was supposed to solve Canner Connelly's problems, not make them worse. But, after their well-intentioned move, the safety and peace of mind he's longed for since the passing of his wife, for him and his daughter, Chloe, might be out of sight forever.

\*A neo-gothic fabulation, bordered on the lines of hysterical realism, wrapped up in a quirky little murder mystery\*

## **Cedardale Court Details**

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# **From Reader Review Cedardale Court for online ebook**

## **Rubysbooks says**

### About the book

Picture a small town, where everyone knows everyone. You know when your neighbor is having a fight with his wife, when the old lady living next door is cooking, when somebody new is into town or when your neighbor is physically abusing his wife. Every day is the same and news travel really fast. So when a body is found chopped into hundreds of pieces after an accident, everyone knows about it. The victim is a school teacher with a lot of secrets.

The characters in this book are amazing. You have the grumpy old guy in love with his neighbor, the nice old lady next door, the couple that fights every single day, the depressed guy who doesn't have the will to "not die". In the middle of this town full of colorful characters Canner Connelly and his daughter, Chloe, try to find peace, to escape from the suffering that has been haunting them for the past 10 years.

### What I liked

I loved how the author managed to get inside every character's mind, the way Mr. Christensen leaves the reader to get to know all of them better. And I think he does it wonderfully. It didn't leave me with a sense of exhaustion or with the feeling that I didn't need to know a certain detail. And he did so, while keeping the mystery and the suspense up to date and it didn't feel like the action wasn't moving. You have many subplots that develop or are revealed while the main plot is moving forward. Even if at times a subplot forces you to turn back in time, you actually understand the reasons for that.

Every character has a voice and I think it's what gives this book a complex feeling.

### What I didn't like

It's not exactly a thing that I didn't like, it's more of a question of how I viewed Chloe. She didn't seem like a ten year old girl to me. I felt her more like a twelve, even thirteen year old girl. And it's not because she's more mature than the other girls her age. Maybe it's because of her story and the story of her parents, that may have forced her to act like she's older.

I think this is a good book and for being a debut novel, I think it's even more amazing. I definitely enjoyed reading this book and I can't wait for the next book by Mr. Christensen.

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## **Unabridged Bookshelf says**

Cedardale Court by Nathan Lee Christensen is an interesting, unique twisting trail of a murder mystery, but it is also more than just a murder mystery. The story revolves around a group of characters, and through throughout the novel each sort of gets the chance to tell their story. The story starts with Canner and his daughter Chloe moving to Oregon to start a new life. They are moving in with Canner's Uncle Henry on Cedardale Court. While they think this is the start to a new life, the next morning they are confronted by the horrors of a severed hand being dropped in their bushes.

While the focus of the story involves the murder, it is also, about how everyone handles the murder. It is also a lot about how the past shapes the future for the all the characters in the story. The story is experience through not only Canner, and Chloe's eyes, but other characters such as Henry as well. It gives the story a unique perspective, and really adds to the story.

This story has a bit of everything murder, kidnapping, ghosts, and scarecrows. At first, I was not sure what to think of this book, but after reading the first few chapters, I started to get hooked. By the end of the book, I was speechless. I would have to say this is an interesting tales with so many elements, I could never see what was going to happen next. For me, that is what makes this book great, because I could not predict the next chapter.

I have to say I really like the sass and intelligence Chloe has, even if she is only ten. Her father is overprotected since he lost his wife in childbirth, but you can see how much he truly loves his daughter. I think that is the other element of the story that I love so much, because while there was murder and intrigue. There was still this family just try to adjust and move on with their lives in a new town. This book is for adults due to the swearing and violence involved in the book.

**\*\*Unabridged Bookshelf received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review\*\***

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## **Melanie says**

Canner and his ten-year-old daughter move in with his Uncle Henry in a small neighborhood. Their bags are not even unpacked yet but it doesn't stop the drama from unfolding right in front of their eyes. It all starts with a drainage problem and a severed hand. For a small community the people sure have a lot of secrets! A murderer (or murderers) is (are) on the loose. Whether they want it or not, Canner and his daughter are involved in the investigation and it's up to Canner to keep him and his daughter safe. No one can be trusted, not even a friendly neighbor...

I had no idea what to expect of this book. I had never heard of a neo-gothic murder mystery before but I had to give this book a try. Oh boy, am I glad I did! The plot is fast-paced and full of mystery. From chapter to chapter, you never know what to expect.

You think you know the characters really well but then you're left truly shocked. The storyline is so engrossing. I think it has to do with the fact that the characters are depicted so realistically. Canner is raising his daughter alone after his wife died ten years ago. He's the overprotective dad and will do anything to keep his daughter safe. He's still mourning his wife's death and seems to see her ghost. Chloe the daughter is very mature for her age. She's the one keeping everything together. Uncle Henry has a few skeletons in his closet

and a mysterious scarecrow on his porch...Cedardale Court has a fun and diverse group of characters.

The author has done a fantastic job writing this book. I can't wait to see what he has next in store for us. I really recommend you read this book. It might exceed your expectations like it did for me.

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### **Robin or Roberta says**

First time author, Christensen, has created a great murder mystery. I am always amazed how people can come up with great characters and send them through a story that makes me want to find out what happens to them, cheer when something great happens to the "good characters" and cheer again when the "bad characters" get what's coming to them. And this book is no exception. And I love the author's style. I even laughed out loud, and also said, "ewww!". I can't wait for his next book.

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### **Siobian says**

Canner Connelly has been raising his daughter, Chloe, alone since his wife died during birth ten years ago. He is fearful, rundown, and lets his mourning for his wife control his and Chloe's life. When they move in with Uncle Henry for a little while until they can come up with a better plan, they expect that it will be calm and peaceful in the small town. However, the morning after they arrive, it is discovered that someone has killed a woman, chopped her up into tiny pieces, and thrown them in the sewer below their house in Cedardale Court. As the police try to determine who she was, why she was killed, and who did it, Canner and Chloe try to decide if moving in with Henry was the best idea after all.

This wasn't your average mystery story. The story was more about Canner and Chloe making terms with their new life, the love story behind Henry and his neighbor, Jane, and two men who are trying to hide all their connections with the murder victim while the question of who the killer is kind of fades into the background. To be honest, this was the first mystery that I have read where I didn't really worry about trying to figure out who did it because I was too caught up in everything else that was going on. When I finally found out who the killer was, I was genuinely surprised because I never saw it coming. The characters were realistic and likable and there really weren't any of the stereotypical roles you find in many mysteries, such as the bumbling sheriff or the overzealous detective. The writing style was easy to read and was pretty humorous. Overall, it was a quick, enjoyable read that I would recommend to someone looking for a mystery that thinks out of the box.

\*Please note, I received a copy of this novel from the author in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Catherine Estrada says**

I totally just realized that there are a lot of "C" names in this book! Random!

Completely irrelevant observations aside, Cedardale Court is definitely on the fringes of my typical genres,

but I am really glad that I had the opportunity to read this. It's a murder mystery that just keeps escalating into a tangled mess, and it was virtually impossible to predict what would happen next. There's blackmail, infidelity, and crazy long term secrets that are just dumbfounding, and the author keeps them all straight and ties them together nicely. With a plot like this, it would be really easy to leave loose ends or drop the ball on something, and I was delighted to find that that didn't happen at all.

Cedardale Court is a random cul de sac street, which is really close to home for me since I live on a cul de sac. There's the typical drama and whatnot associated with a small town feeling and a group of people in close proximity to each other, and when Canner and Chloe move in they have no idea what they're getting into. Chloe is a dream character - witty, sarcastic, funny... I adored her. And the hugely mixed bag that makes up the rest of the cast of characters are all unique, well developed, and interesting.

I thoroughly enjoyed this, especially as I got further into it and had more "you've got to be kidding me" moments. Seriously, you've got to check it out, even if mysteries typically aren't your thing, this is worth reading.

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## **Michelle says**

I was contacted by the author himself to give the book a chance then to post my thoughts, whether I loved or hated it. I have to admit it has taken a while to get around to reading it due to the influx of books I had received, this week being a 'work free week' gave me time to sit and read some books and try to make my way through the ever growing pile. From the moment I started *Cedardale Court* I had one thought, why didn't I start this sooner??

*Cedardale Court* introduces us to Canner and his daughter Chloe as they are moving from their previous home, to go to move in with Uncle Henry. Their first day there is full of surprise, when a car crashing into a water hydrant results in bones and body part being unearthed. The police are quickly involved and we get to follow different characters as they tell their own stories that all meet up in the final chapters to conclude with a great ending. Occasionally *Cedardale Court* goes back to 30 years prior, to Jane and her husband, and we get to watch their story unfold and find out what happened to him.

I really liked getting to see into the lives of other people and not just Canner, Chloe and Henry, and seeing how their story started and how it links and intertwines with others stories. I enjoyed seeing the plot slowly unravel, with false hints and clues thrown in to distract me from finding out who did it and I was kept guessing right to the end about who it was and was surprised by the result.

Throughout *Cedardale Court* you get to see new bonds formed between relatives that end up being strong and secure, and tentative bonds formed as a last resort between neighbours. We get to see the relationship between Canner and Chloe develop more and I feel like although moving wasn't the best thing for them to begin with, by the end of the book I felt they were much closer and understood each other more.

I really enjoyed reading *Cedardale Court* and look forward to reading more of Nathan's work. My favourite quote had to be this, I actually laughed out loud reading it.

“I'm starting to see how life isn't so much about success as it is about sucking just a little less

than everyone else."

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## **Olga says**

When Mr. Christensen e-mailed asking to review his book he had me at "neo-gothic murder mystery". I had no idea what such a novel was and decided this was the perfect time to find out, and let me tell you, I'm glad I did. This book turned out to be a very enjoyable read with great characters, plenty of plot twists, some laughs, engaging writing and a surprise ending.

Christensen's characters are so different and so quirky in their own unique ways that it's hard to pick a favorite. I loved the spunky 10-year-old Chloe, her perpetually paranoid dad who sees his deceased wife's ghost on a regular basis, the good old Uncle Henry, the take-charge detective Birch and even Charlie the cat who gets his own time in the spotlight and adds to the charm. The villains were a total surprise and not just because of their identities. I just never expected them to be quite the kind of people they were, or became, and that made the story more intense.

I really enjoyed Mr. Christensen's writing. It was fun and easy to read, the dialogue felt fresh and realistic and moved right along, and I felt that the voice was perfect for this story. There were some minor spelling issues and grammatical errors in places where editing obviously took place, so I think the book would benefit if someone read it through with a fresh eye and corrected those problem areas.

I had a lot of fun with this book and would recommend it to those who enjoy an offbeat murder mystery and aren't put off by occasional grammatical or spelling error.

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## **? Kimberly says**

Cedardale Court is a mystery with lots of twists in a small town in Oregon. This is the first published work of indie author Nathan Lee Christensen and I thoroughly enjoyed this captivating tale. I started and finished it in a day. There were a few grammatical errors, but once I began they disappeared.

The characters of Cedardale Court are all unique, quirky and have secrets. Christensen gave each of his characters depth and spun a believable tale of secrets, lies, love and murder. My favorite character was 10 year old Chloe, the daughter of Canner Connelly. I pictured her as a young Dakota Fanning. She is smart, witty, and wise beyond her years and has a keen understanding of others.

Cedardale Courts deals with a present day murder and the disappearance of a wife beating punk thirty years ago. It is told from a third POV and I was grateful for that, as it moves back and forth from present to past. The tale Christensen weaves regarding the murders, was fascinating with a few twists, I never saw coming. I highly recommend you check out this up and coming author and his novel Cedardale Court. Fans of mysteries and murder thrillers are sure to love it.

I await the release of his next novel, Vida Seca Lane.

I want to thank author Nathan Lee Christensen for the ARC of this novel in exchange for my unbiased review.

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## **Wendy Hines says**

Canner has tried his best to raise his daughter Chloe. His wife passed away at her birth, so he has had to do it all alone. With the economy in the dire straits it is, Canner knows he needs help. Fortunately, his Uncle Henry has agreed to let them come and stay with him awhile until they get back on their feet. Canner hasn't been to Cedardale Court since he was a child, but when they arrive, he sees that it hasn't changed much.

On their first day at Henry's, the neighbors fight and set off a chain of events that leads to the sewage backing up through the housing division. The stench is bad enough, but Henry finds a severed hand in his bush. That leads to the authorities doing a complete search and finding many pieces of a body. A school teacher has been missing for a few days, so they believe it could be her.

All of the action around his house stirs old memories for Henry. His neighbor, Jane, had a violent relationship with her husband Joe. He beat her daily and it brings back the time that Henry wanted to set Joe straight. Now, even though he has been in love with Jane for years, and she is now unmarried, he knows that he can't ask her to stay. She has informed him she's moving and Henry isn't sure what to do to convince her to change her mind.

Between the small town characters, the murder investigation and a look into not only Henry's life, but Canner and Chloe's and other characters, Cedardale Court is an engrossing read. I found myself immersed in their everyday lives. Impeccable writing stirred curiosity into me, leading me to stay up far longer than I should to keep turning the pages. A marvelous book, crammed with many reader pleasures - murder, adventure, kidnapping, romance and characters that make you wish you could linger inside just a wee bit longer. Highly recommend!

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## **Linda Bryan says**

**A real "thriller!"**

**A real "thriller!"**

Unique characters! Surprising twists and turns. A definitely different storyline complete with some old fashion style romance. Loved the little girl Chloe.

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## **Jackie says**

### **Synopsis**

Cedardale Court is a neo-gothic murder mystery with enough fools and old flames to keep you happily mixed up for most of a long weekend. When Canner Connelly and his daughter, Chloe, move in with their



Uncle Henry, and a simple drainage problem turns a normal Sunday morning into a slighter darker affair, it's not easy to tell where everyone might end up, or even if they'll make it there at all.

### **My Thoughts**

This was one of those books you open up the first page and dive in and never look up until you turn that last page. The fact that it takes place in a small town was one of the reasons why I chose to accept reading it for review in the first place and my instinct proved correct. The neighborhood of Cedardale Court is a veritable hot bed of intrigues, it seems like for every new secret revealed there are two more just waiting to be unearthed. Not only are the characters portrayed realistically but I can see them living next door and going about their daily routines. It is a testimony to the author's skill that once you meet Uncle Henry, Canner, Chloe, Jane, Birch and the rest you will be unable to stop reading until all the secrets are outed, all the skeletons unearthed, all the mysteries surrounding the murder are solved and all the loose ends are tied up. Be ready to enjoy the ghoulish humor of the coroner, the sarcastic wise mouthed Chloe, the overprotective Canner and the gruff but kindly Uncle Henry as they will stay with you long after the tale is told. Welcome to Cedardale Court, a neighborhood that manages to shelter the most mundane souls who are not all quite what they seem on the surface!

*[This was an e-copy given to me by author via Smashwords coupon in exchange for an honest review and all thoughts are my own and in no way influenced by the author.]*

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### **Tammy says**

Cedardale Court is a delightful romp through the high drama of parental paranoia, unrequited love, blackmail, and murder. The cast of characters are interesting and imperfect and I loved them. Canner and Chloe are a father and daughter looking for a new and better life. Crippled by his fear of losing his daughter and haunted by visions of his dead wife, Canner is hoping that their move to his Uncle Henry's home in Oregon will gain stability for Chloe.

Chloe is a smart and precocious ten year old wanting her father to be happy and will do whatever is needed to help him.

Henry has lived alone most of his life and is uncertain of how things will go. His secret love for his neighbor Jane has defined him and his actions for two decades leaving him unprepared for a new family. Jane has waited patiently for Henry but secrets of her own has made her decide to leave Cedardale Court forever. The remaining cast are just as torn in their lives but are as wonderfully imagined as our main characters. Nathan Lee Christensen weaves an entertaining soap opera of murder and mayhem that kept me enthralled throughout. He allows his readers to flit seamlessly into the minds of all of his characters giving us a point-of-view that pulls us in and makes us feel as if we were part of the story.

The author deserves every one of this 5 Star rating due to his mastery of immersing his reader completely and telling a complex story effortlessly. Plus, it was just plain fun.

Here is the Summary: *Full of daring fools, haunting old flames, and brimming with panicked villainy, Cedardale Court captures the final days of Canner Connelly's ten year struggle; his quiet avoidance of*

*death. Despite his best efforts, and a well-intentioned move to the Oregon countryside, the safety and peace-of-mind he's longed for since the passing of his wife, for him and his daughter, Chloe, finally appears to be within reach. But, upon waking the next morning, the promising start at Uncle Henry's falls rather short as the sun comes up over the tree line, and the ever inept inhabitants of Cedardale Court begin to start their days. A domestic dispute, a little reckless driving, and a broken fire hydrant later, what normally might have been a very enjoyable Sunday quickly turns into a slightly darker affair as a severed human hand, well, half of one really, turns up in Uncle Henry's bushes. Things only get messier, and more frightfully uncertain as, one by one, the secrets that have so carefully been kept, for so very long, start to unravel for everyone. For Canner and Chloe, amidst the drunkenness, burgling, kidnapping, extortions and murders of the people around them, suddenly it's no longer a struggle to maintain normalcy, or even an attempt to deny the familiar ghosts lurking around every corner; it's now a question of whether or not they'll come out of this with their wits, or if they'll even make it out at all. In the face of the monstrously absurd, this little neighborhood, this absolutely out of control cul-de-sac, might serve as the key to opening the door for Canner and Chloe's new life, or it might be exactly what it appears to be; the gateway to the undoing of them all.*

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## **Larissa Hinton says**

Read the full review, on my blog here: <http://teacherwritebookaholicohmy.blo...>

When I first read this book, I was swept away with the refreshing talent. The ease at which he weaves a story is amazing.

However, as the story continued on I started noticing some bad habits that crept in the way in the way of a great story.

The thing is, there are rules in fiction writing. I don't mind when authors break these rules, especially the tell versus show rule. This rule basically says that instead of telling us about the character, you show us the character.

For example instead of the writer saying John is sad, the author is suppose to describe how John looks, feels, and acts when he is sad. There is a key difference there.

Now, like I said before, I don't mind when an author breaks the rules. Some authors actually make their living breaking the rules. However, when an author breaks the rule on every page, at every moment they can. It just starts to annoy me. Especially when it starts to interfere with every good part of the book.

So let's break this down further.

Characters: Now, as much as I love the characters, they all seemed the same. Or at least have the same type of humor and the same type of speak and the same actions.

Jane and Chloe sound exactly the same. And yet, Jane has to be above 30 years old and Chloe is ten. The vocabulary that Chloe has is extraordinary for a ten year old and her humor is above her age.

Alec and Steven sound the same. The same sort of voice unfortunately.

Fortunately, Canner and Uncle Henry definitely sounded different.

Dialogue: Like I mentioned, a lot of the characters sounded a lot alike. I wish that the author would have made the extra effort to make sure that each character got their own voice.

Unfortunately that didn't happen.

Additionally, I think there were moments where the author summarized what was spoken instead of showing us or including us in the conversation.

Plot: I think the plot worked out well. The only problem I had was with the ending.

Setting: I like the setting. A small town gone wrong. It's very interesting getting to know the quirks of the small town.

Ending: What was the problem with the ending?

Too convenient.

I just think it all happened nice and with a big bow on it. But that's just me.

Overall: Would I recommend this book?

Tough call. I would say yes, if you don't mind what I mind. The same voice characters, the ending, and the typos. There are some typos, but not enough to make me want to circle them.

I could just be picky (which I've been accused of), but I know what I like. This author writes wonderfully, but maybe it's just not suited for my taste. Maybe you'll like him better.

This just my opinion versus others who have fallen in love with his quirky style and wit. So I would advise giving him at least a chance (by reading the sample) if you're looking for a quirky mystery.

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## **TC says**

Canner has spent ten years treading water after the death of his wife. He has wrapped daughter Chloe in cotton wool and tried to protect her from every possible danger. Now in an attempt to move their lives on they arrive to live with his Uncle Henry in Cedardale Court. In an apparently tranquil setting in the Oregon countryside he is hoping for a fresh start. What he gets instead is a living nightmare. It starts when a retreating flood in the road reveals a human hand, and finishes with a dramatic finale, taking in dangerous old passions and a kidnapping along the way.

This is a quirky dark murder mystery with a couple of great twists at the end. Far from being a rural utopia Cedardale Court turns out to harbour more than it's fair share of fiends. While the tale that unravels is faintly disturbing there are glimmers of humour to be found, mostly at the expense of Canner and the absurd situation he has found himself in. Out of the frying pan into the fire sprang to mind! I appreciated the way the author wove together several strands of the plot and found the style fluid with some great turns of phrase.

While Canner comes across as almost bumbling, the way he cares for Chloe is endearing, and I found her a sassy young girl who is old beyond her years and a real match of wits for her father. Even some of the characters who probably shouldn't have been likable were, because of the way their stories were presented. The author has created strong characters who pack a real punch (in some cases literally)

This book has a few grim moments but will probably appeal to readers who appreciate a bit of black humour served up with their murder mysteries.

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