

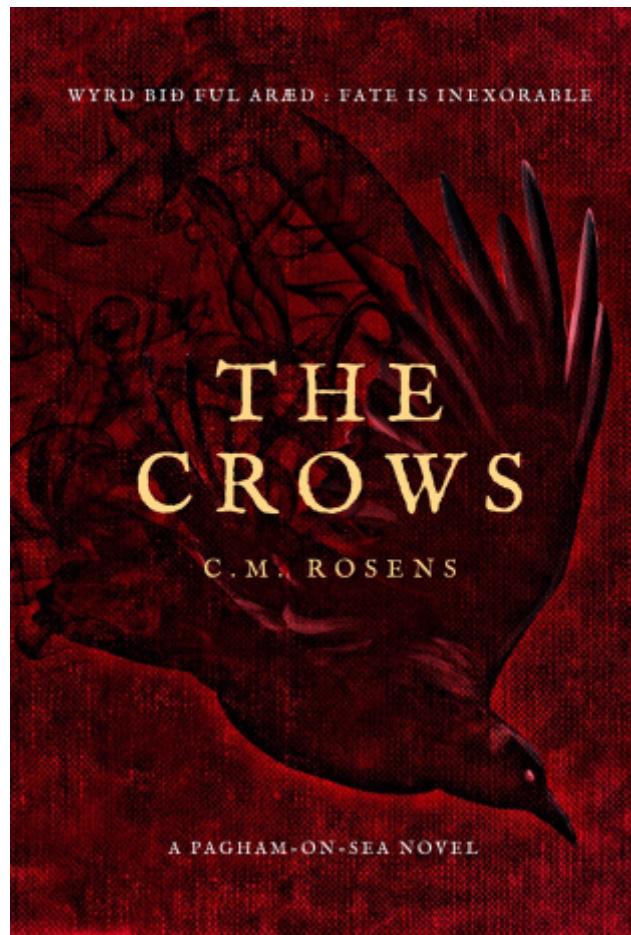
Meredith Debonnaire

book reviews, writing, and observations from fantasyland.

Book Review: The Crows by C.M Rosens

26 MAY 2020 6 Comments

by Meredith in Book Review Tags: Book review, Book review: the Crows by CM Rosens, CM Rosens, Fate is inexorable, gothic horror, haunted house, meredith debonnaire, Pagham on sea, The Crows



"You won't fit in there, Caroline."

This is a fantastically surprising work of gothic horror. I loved it. Every single time I thought I had an idea of what the plot was doing the plot twisted around and bit me, gleefully. So for example, at the beginning we have Carrie Rickards, who has recently left a (terrible) relationship and somewhat impulsively/compulsively bought a crumbling ruin of a house (known as the Crows) and spent all her money doing it up. And so as a reader I thought "oh yeah, gothic horror, single woman in a spooky house it's gonna do That Thing where it's all Atmospheric and maybe there is a plausibly

deniable ghost". And then we get the POV of her neighbour, who knows that Carrie will die in 33 days because he read it in the entrails of the girl he just killed. And for the first of many times, I went "OH WHAT?!" It was GREAT!

So we have Carrie, a compelling main character who I instantly enjoyed, and her neighbour Ricky, who was... a lot less disturbing than he should have been for a cannibalistic bloke living in the woods with a truly messed up family. And a very strange town, Pagham-On-Sea. And an author who *really* knows how to twist a plot around a reader. One of the things I really adored was the way that mundanity crept into everything: *The Crows* is definitely strange, in a supernatural and disturbed way, but Carrie is less worried about that than she is about trying to get a job to pay the bills. There's a dead werewolf in the living room and she's finding out increasingly odd things about the town she's moved to, and her neighbour is really *really* weird, but also her job is a zero hours contract and her ex is harassing her and well, frankly those last two are more upsetting. C.M. Rosens kept startling me with surprising breaks from the sort of story patterns I'm used to while sneaking important foreshadowing in the back, or sneaking it in so blatantly that I just... forgot about it? Ten pages from the end I was still going "EEEEEEEEE Hoooww is this going to eenndddd?" and my lovelies, I was *not* disappointed!



Himself by Tom Brown, internal illustration for *The Crows*

The Crows is a book that has all the ingredients for a classic gothic horror: a stubborn and compelling protagonist, some ghosts, an excellently old house (is it alive?), a desperately creepy neighbour, a setting that was so alive it might eat you, and years and years of small-town family history and feuding. But it takes all those ingredients and just... completely goes to town with them in the most wildly enjoyable way possible, and definitely leans into the horror... It's also illustrated by the wonderful Tom Brown, which is certainly a joy. And I just tried to search for an example of the inner illustrations and have found that C.M. Rosens has a whole lot of extra Pagham-On-Sea content on her blog so um, I shall be going to read *all of that now*.

Rating: read this. Don't plant what you don't want to grow...

 Buy Me a Coffee

(<https://ko-fi.com/A2162Z9K>)

6 Comments (+add yours?)

1. cmrosens

May 26, 2020 @ 12:12:41

Reblogged this on [C. M. Rosens](#) and commented:

Another wonderful review for my first novel, THE CROWS! Follow Meredith Debonnaire for some great reviews, original fiction and more. Check out her book, TALES FROM TANTAMOUNT – cover art by Tom Brown who did the internal illustrations for THE CROWS.

REPLY

2. Nimue Brown

May 27, 2020 @ 08:17:22

I have a crush on pretty much everything and everyone in this book.

REPLY

o **Meredith**

May 27, 2020 @ 21:42:40

I think I mainly had a crush on the house. I was just like YES YES THE HOUSE YES I WOULD INDEED HAVE DONE MANY A THING WITH THE HOUSE AVATAR EVEN WHAT WITH THE GARGOYLE xD

REPLY

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