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The Crows by CM Rosens

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Carrie Rickard, leaving an abusive relationship back in London, tries to escape her own past by throwing herself into her restoration project: Fairwood House, known to locals of Pagham-on-Sea as The Crows. Unable to resist as it whispers to her, Carrie's obsession only grows when she discovers it was the site of a gruesome unsolved murder.

As Carrie digs deeper into the mystery surrounding the bloodless child stuffed up the kitchen chimney in the 1950s, she awakens dark and dangerous forces that threaten her own life.

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mouthed modern-day Merlin in a hoody and a tracksuit, who claims he can see the future. But Ricky, as obsessed with The Crows as Carrie is, has an agenda and several secrets of his own, not least of which are what's really under his hood, and what he's got in the cellar...

...Is his offer of help sincere? Or is he the reason she's doomed?

A new resident arriving in an established setting is a theme that arrives in many genres. Many a murder mystery has a stranger upsetting the applecart, it usually triggers a gunfight in a western and in horror it may unearth something a lot more unpleasant! In CM Rosens' a young woman's fascination with a dilapidated house with an infamous reputation in the small town it resides changes her life and makes her realise all is not as it seems.

Carrie has after a very bad relationship been a bit lost in life but when she saw Fairwood House (known as the Crows) due to its many feathered residents) she knew she had to own it and bring it back to its full glory even if that's taken all the money she has. What Carrie had not

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is human, alive or non-magical and Fairwood too has many secrets inside it including gruesome murder no one wants to enquire touch about, Carrie though must do so even if that's taken out her life very much on the line.

I really enjoyed this novel as it's quite different to your usual creepy house story. Indeed the house is more Carrie's protection in quite unexpected ways. What we have here feels very much like the starting point of a series where rather than LA or the Pacific North West we find a secret world of magic, strange creatures and conspiracies all on the doorstep in one of those quiet British seaside towns you usually pass through without stopping. Now we find that's the right thing to do if you don't want to be killed or eaten!

I liked Carrie who is the newcomer and finds herself plunged into all these histories and little secrets. She's vulnerable and in need of a new life (and cash) her arc is one of someone refunding the confidence that a horrible relationship has brought down on her. Intriguingly she gets often running into the enigmatic and dangerous Ricky her

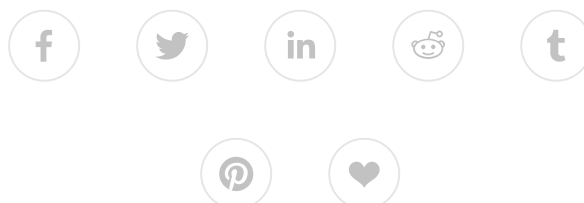
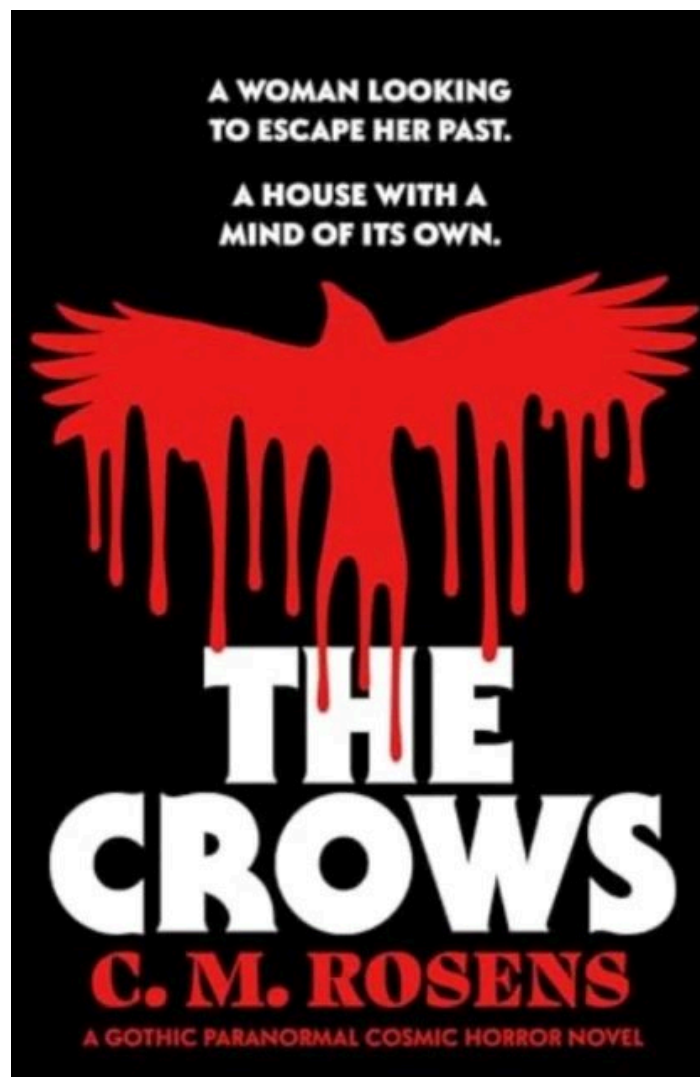
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There is a fascinating chemistry between these two and Carrie actually finds she doesn't seem to mind his strange habits provided he is honest about them. It feels very much the start of something but I'd had liked a little bit more exploration of why Carrie's moral compass is changing so much.

The mystery too is really interesting as it helps makes the town of Pagham-On-Sea much bigger and stranger. Fortune telling here is real, as see ghosts and the undead and a lot more. It's got a great atmosphere of small British town decay and something darker behind the houses, supermarkets and even historical society meetings. The central one is a good old murder mystery but with added attempts on Carrie's life and a wealth of suspects to untangle their connection to The Crows. It changes Carrie in quite an unexpected way and opens up more stories. I would have liked the path Carrie to go from new resident to believer to be a little more organic and there could have been a few earlier conversations with her to explain things that may have increased the pace but it's a overall very interesting read - the monster attacks scene is very well delivered!

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stories that play with the usual tropes. It feels a series with a lot of potential and with all the groundwork this story lays I'll be interested to see where Rosens goes with it next.



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