



## Autumn in Carthage

*Christopher Zenos*

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**The nether side of passion is madness.**

Nathan Price is a college professor with crippling impairments, seeking escape from his prison of necessity. One day, in a package of seventeenth-century documents from Salem Village, he stumbles across a letter by his best friend, Jamie, who had disappeared six months before. The document is dated 1692—the height of the Witch Trials. The only potential lead: a single mention of Carthage, a tiny town in the Wisconsin northern highland.

The mystery catapults Nathan from Chicago to the Wisconsin wilderness. There, he meets Alanna, heir to an astonishing Mittel-European legacy of power and sacrifice. In her, and in the gentle townsfolk of Carthage, Nathan finds the refuge for which he has long yearned. But Simon, the town elder, is driven by demons of his own, and may well be entangled in Jamie's disappearance and that of several Carthaginians. As darkness stretches toward Alanna, Nathan may have no choice but to risk it all...

Moving from the grimness of Chicago's South Side to the Wisconsin hinterlands to seventeenth-century Salem, this is a story of love, of sacrifice, of terrible passions—and of two wounded souls quietly reaching for the deep peace of sanctuary.

## Autumn in Carthage Details

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# From Reader Review Autumn in Carthage for online ebook

## Mamabear 406 says

### Poorly edited.

The story may have been good, but I will never know. The sentence structure drove me crazy. Words capitalized in the middle of sentences that did not need to be. Short, one word sentences. Really?! I gave up after a few pages. This book needs professional editing. The biggest mistake self- published authors make is NOT investing in an editor. It is absolutely crucial for a novel to be taken seriously.

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## Katherine says

This was a fine read. It develops slowly, but the characters carried the story, and it haunted me oddly afterward. (To me, that is the mark of a good read.)

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## James says

29th of May. Technically not the date I finished the book but was definitely the day I finished with it. I hated, with intense passion, the protagonist. I hate the smug, sanctimonious, anal bead of a character with such intensity that everything else about the book became irrelevant. I'm sure the story would have been interesting, perhaps even enjoyable, but that self - satisfied prick had to ruin it. Perhaps the story even necessitated his personality as he develops and realises he's an oily stain on a bathroom towel and changes himself. I wouldn't know. What I do know is that he reminds of far too many people I've met during my life and who I've gone through much pain to avoid ever since, in the case of this book I urge all of you to do the same. In fact, no I don't...read it and see for yourself how much a fictional character can make you want to kill hitchhikers and wear their skin, just to witness some humility in the human race and purge the smugness this novel stuffs into your head.

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## Bandit says

This is an odd one to review. Objectively it had a lot going for it...small town with a secret, time traveling, witch hunts in Salem, a love story. It just all added up to something like romance novel, with time traveling, kind of fantasyish. While the writing was fairly good and occasionally even really good, it nevertheless failed to engage, ending up a quick read of steadily decreasing interest. And for all the talk of author's struggles with sanity, the main character was presumably meant to reflect that and yet his mental state was barely grazed, brain barely being mentioned in favor of an anatomically lower located organ. Surely, there is

a market for this type of story, just wasn't my thing really.

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## **Linda Galella says**

### **Odd**

yet enjoyable book about traveling thru history and back again by a clan of people born to the life some 600 years. This is not a typical time travel book. It's much more erudite but I'm not sure it needs to be. The main character is a professor and a true "man of letters" who stumbles across a posting from his best friend that appears to be from the 17th century Salem, Massachusetts during the witch trials! He heads off on his sabbatical, conveniently scheduled, to locate his friend and ends up in a tiny German influenced town in northern Wisconsin. Lots of pastoral descriptions, decent dialogue and good character development round out this interesting novel. If you're looking for something a bit different to read, give "Autumn in Carthage" a try.

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## **Jennifer (JC-S) says**

'You can only save so many.'

Nathan Price is a college professor in Chicago, looking forward to a year's sabbatical and uninterrupted research. Nathan seeks escape in historical research, the past is free from personal problems, or so he thinks. As he opens a package of seventeenth century documents from an old Salem trading family, he finds a letter written by his best friend Jamie, who disappeared six months ago. The letter is dated 1692, contains a reference to Carthage in Wisconsin. How can this be?

Nathan travels to Carthage in search of Jamie, meets Alanna and finds a refuge for himself. But all is not well in Carthage, which has some mysteries of its own. Some Carthaginians are missing, and as Nathan becomes more attracted to Alanna, he wants to know more about the mysteries of Carthage. Could Simon, the town elder, be involved in the mystery of those missing? Is Alanna safe? And what is the significance of 1692?

'For someone who claimed to like her solitude, she had an awful lot of threads tying her to life.'

It is difficult to categorise this novel: it is mostly set in the present in Chicago and Wisconsin, but some aspects are set in the seventeenth century around the time of the Salem Witch Trials. Nathan and Alanna are the principal characters, each carrying their own demons and scars from the past. There are elements of mystery and time travel, of the blight that mental illness can cast over lives, of the redemptive power of love, and of the difficulties of choice. Christopher Zenos almost lost me early in the book, with talk of the slaying of trees and the fryage (of food), but I was intrigued by Nathan and wanted to know more about the mysterious people of Carthage. The story builds gradually and held my attention – through slaying and fryage and some improbabilities. And the ending? Well, it worked for me.

'You have to live while you still have days of sunshine ahead of you.'

Note: I was offered and accepted a copy of this book for review purposes.

## **Juanita says**

Review: **Autumn In Carthage** by Christopher Zenos. 11/22/2017

The story starts off slow but it didn't take long to capture my interest. I thought it was well written, I enjoyed the characters once I figure out who was who and the story was entertaining. The death of some characters throughout the book, especially the ones you really liked was a bummer but the story must go on... There was mysterious time travel within the story and how mental illness can cast over lives, the redemptive power of love, and all the difficulties of choice.

The main character Nathan Price is a college professor looking forward to a year's uninterrupted sabbatical, doing historical research when he received some data he requested from a museum in Salem, Massachusetts. While going over the papers he came across a reference concerning Jamie, his friend who has been missing for months. This new information made him decide to go to Carthage, Wisconsin to work on his book and look into the disappearance of his friend.

Carthage was a small quiet community and when Nathan got there he checked into the picturesque Inn the town offered. He was first welcomed by Gerry the innkeeper, chef, and bar tender. At some point during his meal Nathan mentioned to Gerry and Alanna who was one of the locals, the reason he chose Carthage for a visit. Right off Nathan felt a change in the welcoming atmosphere and as the story unfolds Nathan and the reader will gradually find out why... There are still more variety of personalities to be introduced, some profanity throughout, and a couple of explicit sex scenes to overcome but all and all the second half of the book was better....

Many readers mentioned something Zenos wrote that memorized them as it did me.

"Too much unvoiced misery, too many people lost and alone ~in marriages, relationships, nestled within their families ~well trained through threat of social rejection to keep pain carefully hidden."

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## **Melissa says**

It started out all right, kind of intriguing. And just kept going downhill. TOO MUCH EXPOSITION!!!! I cringed every time I read the word "groin", which was far too often. The love story was so sickeningly sentimental, it made me angry and took up way too much of the book. And the relationship was really shallow... Some mystical force pulls them together and they both kind of have multiple personality disorder (or whatever the unspecified "issues" were) so duh they should be together forever. That's not even getting to the horrible take on time travel...

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## **Sandy Benitez says**

I received this book free in exchange for a review from Early Reviewers and was excited about diving into this read. The cover is stunning with the image of the ancient mansion, the differing shades of green and yellow, and the style of the title, especially the word "Carthage" in what looks like old world script.

I really wasn't sure what the book was about beyond what was stated in the brief summary but it sounded intriguing. The story begins with Nathan, a college professor, receiving a mysterious package from his best friend Jamie, who disappeared six months earlier. The package contained a letter from Jamie, dated 1692, from Salem which was when the Witch Trials began. This is where the reader starts wondering what the heck is going on, a letter from the past from someone in the present world? How could this be possible? I immediately thought of time travel, something along those lines.

The letter from Jamie referenced a small, secluded town called Carthage in Wisconsin. This is the next phase in the story, when Nathan decides to travel there, hoping to either find his friend Jamie or get information as to what happened to him. In Carthage, Nathan meets many local townspeople, including a beautiful red-headed woman named Alanna. They become close and eventually fall in love, and this is when Alanna tells him what is going on in this small community. She tells Nathan that they are Flectors (time travelers) and go back in time periodically to "fix" certain tragedies in history that caused death or destruction but not to the point where it totally disrupts the past.

I was hoping the story would include a trip back in time, because it would have been lacking if it wasn't there. It was interesting to get a small glimpse into Salem and how the people back then would have dressed and spoken to each other. You felt as though you were back in Salem and also realized that was a time period you'd probably rather not want to experience, especially during the Witch Trials.

The story ends with Nathan receiving a package from a descendant of Jamie and Ester (his wife from Salem). Jamie chose to stay in the past so that he could be with his newfound love Ester. They eventually moved up north into Canada and had several children. The package contained a letter from Jamie to Nathan, wishing him well and generally just letting Nathan know that he made the right decision to stay in the past and that he was happy with Ester. The letter seemed bittersweet to me, as a reader. It was sad to think he gave up the modern world and all his friends but he realized he was happiest staying in the past with Ester.

Overall, this was an interesting book and a little different from the norm. There were several characters in the story which at times made it difficult to follow or remember who was who. I also felt that the romance between Nathan and Alanna seemed very sudden considering they didn't know each other that long. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes time travel, suspense, and mystery stories.

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## **Kristi (Books and Needlepoint) says**

I find that the more I enjoy the book, the harder it is to write the review - and this book falls into that category. I really liked Nathan. He was an accomplished professor, seemed to be well-liked by his peers and his students, but was still flawed with some unnamed mental disorder. Rather than diminishing his capabilities though, I thought this gave him a greater understanding as to the differences in people and while it may not have made him more accepting, it gave him a different viewpoint. I loved this passage in one of the earlier chapters, upon overhearing a group of young men discussing a date who had claimed she was

bipolar - and laughing about the world being full of crazies.

We are not less than you, you cowardly little snot. We are more than you. We live every day in a world made by and for you, with burdens that would bring you to your knees -- and still manage to outperform you. (p18) So anyone, Nathan travels to Carthage, Wisconsin in search of his friend Jamie. He is not sure what he is looking for and comes upon a town while friendly enough, seems to be harboring secrets and mysteries at every turn. In Alanna he finds a kindred spirit, and is almost afraid to hope that they might have a future together. She slowly lets him in on the town's big secret, which is that they are time travelers.

The author has written this book in such a way, as time travel does not seem farfetched at all, but just an alternate life style. It was not "science fictiony" at all and fit well with the demeanor of the community and the location. While Carthage seemed like any number of other small communities you might find in the midwest, there were subtle differences that made you realize it was special, wealthy. The author was so descriptive in telling about Carthage and the surrounding countryside, that I had to look online to see if a Carthage, Wisconsin really existed. (It does not.)

You meet a lot of characters early on in the book, and if you don't pay attention to the chapter subtitles, you might become confused as to who is narrating. The narrators all bring their own flavor to the story, as they should with their different viewpoints.

I liked the tie-in of Salem and the witch trials. If Carthaginians and their abilities were discovered, people might very well treat them as they did the so-called witches in Salem. Salem was a very misunderstood community, but there were a few who took in the misplaced Carthaginians, with their funny dress and accent, and helped them remain as inconspicuous as possible.

The novel wrapped things up in the end, very satisfactorily for me, and I am very glad that I read this book. I wonder if there are any other books in the works regarding escapades of other time travelers in this community.

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### **Katherine says**

#### **Really Good!**

Hard to understand at first but it starts getting interesting. The intrigue of the linked characters and how things turn out keep you guessing.

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### **MaryAlice says**

good premise, but too many characters, lacked cohesion....just wanted it to be over.

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### **Katie Cross says**

I'm having a hard time categorizing how I felt about this book.

Pro's:

- I reminds me of a summer walk. Rambling. Descriptive. Non-intense. If you like a meandering read, you'll like this.
- Zenos does a great job of getting a different angle on time travel and witches. This is definitely not a book that you're going to read about anywhere else, and it's trope and cliché free. Bonus.
- I liked most of the characters. They had me from the get-go. He makes them multi-dimensional in many aspects.
- Zenos has a way with words that led to me dog-earing the pages so I could make them Goodreads quotes.

#### Con's

- The Salem Witch trials, which seemed to be a major tenant, have VERY little to do with this book until the very end. That disappointed me. I felt like the blurb wasn't quite accurate with the actual plot.
- I had to really push through this story because of the meanderingness of it. I'm used to faster, more intense reads, so it's not something I pulled the rating down for.
- I felt that the MC, because he wasn't a time-traveller with the rest of them, was just an aside in the book. He mostly floated along, going with the flow, not even understanding everything they explained at some points. I think the story would have been more engaging if he had more to do with it.
- This has a lot of characters that the reader rarely interacts with, so I didn't really know them and had a hard time keeping track of them, so by the end, when these characters came into play more, it meant less. While the ending picks up pace, it didn't do much to move me because there were so many characters that were mostly just names.
- His descriptions of time travel and other things started to ramble, IMO, and lost my attention in a few spots.

Overall, I'll give this book a solid three stars. I can see how it's not for everyone, but it's not a book that I regret reading by any means. I would look out for more of his work in the future.

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### **Dolly Mastrangelo says**

#### **Fantastic unusual story**

This story will take you for a ride. From times as we know them, driven by a professor through unexpected and tumultuous times into time travel. But all with a sense of reality! This could really happen. You will find yourself locked in this story with the joys, surprises and heartbreaks, to the lovely end.

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### **Deb says**

There was just something missing in this book. Initially I thought perhaps it was the second book in a series, but that doesn't appear to be the case. I just don't feel that I got enough background on Nathan to understand



him. I felt like I had come into the middle of a story somehow. The long explanation about the mechanics of the time travel almost made me close the book entirely. This book had an interesting premise, I just don't feel it lived up to its potential. And I don't get the subtitle, "the nether side of passion is madness." Huh? I can't figure out how that fits the story at all. On the plus side, I liked the epilogue that gave the "after story" of the characters.

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