



## Secrets of Hallstead House

*Amy M. Reade*

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*"You are not wanted here. Go away from Hallstead Island or you will be very sorry you stayed."*

Macy Stoddard had hoped to ease the grief of losing her parents in a fiery car crash by accepting a job as a private nurse to the wealthy and widowed Alexandria Hallstead. But her first sight of Hallstead House is of a dark and forbidding home. She quickly finds its winding halls and shadowy rooms filled with secrets and suspicions. Alex seems happy to have Macy's help, but others on the island, including Alex's sinister servants and hostile relatives, are far less welcoming. Watching eyes, veiled threats...slowly, surely, the menacing spirit of Hallstead Island closes in around Macy. And she can only wonder if her story will become just one of the many secrets of Hallstead House...

## Secrets of Hallstead House Details

Date : Published by eKensington (first published January 1st 2014)

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Author : Amy M. Reade

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## From Reader Review Secrets of Hallstead House for online ebook

### Nancy LiPetri says

This novel reminded me of the Phyllis Whitney mysteries I used to enjoy. It's a soothing read with the first surprising twist, for me, at page 100. The cover art and the Thousand Islands setting drew me in. I enjoyed learning about a new locale.

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### Giovana (Rosennette laBOOK Blog) says

This review was originally posted at Corazones Literarios... This book was giving by the publisher through BBT vía Netgalley in exchange of a honest review...

The Secrets of Hallstead House was a great read. Well constructed mystery and lovely characters.

Macy is a nurse who is running away from the sadness that her life had became. Thanks to that, she accepted a job as a private nurse to the wealthy Alexandria Hallstead, but when she arrived in the house, weird things started to happen and danger surround every single step she made into the house.

*What I like?*

I think that everything fix very well together. The characters were great and lovely and every single one of them has something to give into the story. The romance was wonderful, and cute, melting the heart with all the adorable situations. And also the mystery was great, I like it very much; keep me wonder who was the killer and who made all the things to Macy, also the tricks and twist inside the story were real and believable.

*What I didn't like?*

The rhythm was little slow and sometimes I think that even became boring. But I think that is the only flaw of the book. Because everything else was really great.

Overall this was a cute and I enjoy everything very much. The mystery was entertaining and involving, but the rhythm of the novel was slow.

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### Cary Frates says

SHH certainly does not have the pace of a barn-burner, but its gentle ride-along and lovely writing make for a good read. Macy Stoddard is called to a new job in a location I never knew existed – Thousand Islands, NY, on the St. Lawrence River – to be a personal rehab nurse for an elderly woman. Very early on, Macy must face the realization she is not wanted there by almost every household member, other than the lady who owns the house and is her charge. Nevertheless, Macy perseveres, even as events unfold that none in the household could have foreseen.

At times the story takes on the flavor of a tourist guide as we visit islands, villages, and learn (perhaps a bit much of) the local history, but otherwise, the story is charming and worthy of a few quiet hours of reading

enjoyment.

Well Done.

A complimentary copy provided by author/publisher for an honest review.

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## **Robyn Koshel says**

Macy goes to Hallstead house after a personal tragedy to nurse the elderly Alexandria Halstead. Left alone in a gloomy mansion, she starts to uncover it's dark secret.

Secrets of Hallstead house is almost like a Gothic cozy mystery with plenty of red-herrings and sleight of hand. It is the perfect afternoon read with touches of Daphne Du Maurier and Mary Stewart. As well as being a kind of who done it, there is a charming romance too. Secrets of Hallstead house is set around the Thousand Isles and the St. Lawrence river and Amy Reade describes the locations in stunning detail. This is the perfect book to curl up on the couch with on a rainy day.

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## **Becky says**

I loved the setting of this book--the Thousand Islands (really, as one of the character points out, it's more like 1,800 islands--but "thousand" is much more catchy, obviously) is an awesome location. Having been there many times for family vacations, I can attest first hand that the many islands and hundreds of vacation (and otherwise) homes there could inspire legions of stories.

(Naturally my personal favorite is Boldt Castle--so imagine my excitement when Macy and Pete get a private tour!

See? Seriously, it's probably at least 50% of the reason I read this book in the first place.)

Setting the novel in one of those summer homes, on one of those privately owned islands was a great idea. Older home, creepy servants with major axes to grind, secrets galore...

However, the rest of the novel never quite delivers what the setting promised. For one thing, there's far more "suspense" than "romance" here--and a lot of the suspense isn't really all that--well, suspenseful. There's a lot of vague threats thrown around, but even Macy doesn't really seem all that scared by them for the most part. When one character who was initially very nasty to her has a complete turn around at the end, the reasons given for the earlier attitude don't really make sense for a person of that age. (I know, that sentence is terrible, but I was trying very hard not to reveal the character's gender and spoil anything.)

Speaking of spoilers, there's a huge surprise at about 43% of the book that comes completely out of left field. There's absolutely no foreshadowing for it. And I guess that's probably my biggest issue with the book as a whole--a lot of it feels like it's just a bunch of scenes thrown together. Some are connected, some are not--a lot seem to exist merely to up the "creepy atmosphere" factor--and overall this makes the story feel disjointed.

With a bit more plotting and a lot more weaving together of the various characters and elements, though, you could have one heck of a story here. What we have instead is an okay read--a decent first effort, but nothing outstanding.

Rating: 3 stars / C+

*I received a complimentary copy in exchange for an honest review.*

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## **My Book Addiction and More MBA says**

SECRETS OF HALLSTEAD HOUSE by Amy M. Reade is Romantic Suspense. This is the tale of Macy Stoddard. Her adventures while working on Hallstead Island, as a Rehab nurse to Alexandria Hallstead, she is trying to come to terms with the death of her parents. What she discovers is so much more than secrets and nursing. Written in first person. She encounters threats, hostility, and more than secrets.

This is not a fast paced story, but is well written with many facets to the characters and the story. Good reading for a lazy afternoon. Received for an honest review.

Rating: 4

Heat rating: Mild

Reviewed by: AprilR, courtesy of My Book Addiction and More

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## **Moon Shine Art Spot ~ Lisa says**

Macy Stoddard had hoped to ease the grief of losing her parents in a fiery car crash by accepting a job as a private nurse to the wealthy and widowed Alexandria Hallstead. But her first sight of Summerplace is of a dark and forbidding home. She quickly finds its winding halls and shadowy rooms filled with secrets and suspicions. Alex seems happy to have Macy's help, but others on the island, including Alex's sinister servants and hostile relatives, are far less welcoming. Watching eyes, veiled threats...slowly, surely, the menacing spirit of Hallstead Island closes in around Macy. And she can only wonder if her story will become just one of the many secrets of Hallstead House...

### **REVIEW:**

The Secrets of Hallstead House was definitely full of secrets, even secrets about Macy (the new nurse) that she did not even know herself. This wonderfully suspicious story was full of beautiful descriptions of the setting. The house is among many islands that have only one home on them and the main travel is done via boat to town or to visit others. This was fascinating to me since I live nowhere near that type of situation.

Alex and Macy get along great from the beginning when Macy arrives to be Alex's nurse, doing exercises to

assist Alex's recovery from a broken hip. Alex is apparently one of the only people who want Macy on the island though.

Action and suspense picks up quickly as Macy goes from having a rock thrown through her bedroom door, her album taken, getting locked & blocked into rooms, to finally much worse.

The book seemed to take on an old type mystery where there are a few suspects and they try different methods to "smoke" them out. The culprit is thought to have murdered Alex's daughter and husband already, at different times that were then thought accidents. OH, I'm afraid not. As more is uncovered the situation becomes more deadly.

\* I hate spoilers, but Macy finds that she is personally invested in seeing the murderer caught, not just as a duty to a patient, but for a much more important reason as well. I won't tell! You have to read it.

I loved this advanced reader's copy I received for an honest review. The characters were mysterious enough to keep me guessing and I loved that the story did actually have an ending rather than go on & on.

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### **Melina says**

This was an amazing first novel by Amy Reade. Once I started it, I almost, literally, could not put it down. It kept my attention from the moment I started it, till the chilling ending. This book was very well written and that made it very easy to read. It was set in a great place and the descriptions were wonderful. It was also filled with believable characters. If you are looking for a suspenseful read that reminds you of Victoria Holt or Phyllis Whitney, then this is the book for you. Great job Amy, I am anxiously awaiting your next novel!

I received a complimentary copy of this book for my honest review.

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### **Mary Brown says**

The Secrets Of Hallstead House by Amy M. Reade is the story of Macy Stoddard's adventures while working on Hallstead Island. She goes there to get away from a broken heart caused by the death of her parents. She takes a job as a private nurse for Alexandria Halstead, who seems happy to have her. But many others are not so pleased with her presence. Macy begins getting threats and then things go from bad to worse. Will Macy survive her time on the island or will she lose her life to the Secrets of Hallstead House?

There are many twists and turns throughout the book that made it nearly impossible to figure out the mystery on my own. That is one of the things I like best about the book. The author is very descriptive in her writing style and because of that I felt like I was there on the island. I also felt like I was right inside Hallstead House and that was rather creepy. Which was a good thing. not a creepy thing!

The book is written in the first person perspective and that is not my favorite point of view. I have never cared for reading books in the first person, but that is just my own opinion. Also, at times. I felt there was too

much description in the writing concerning actions and at times the book felt a little wordy. Again these are only my opinions and preferences and another reader may enjoy those aspects of the book.

I would recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a good mystery, and those who like to be drawn into the setting as they read. I believe this is Amy M. Reade's first book and I will definitely be looking for more books by this author.

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### **sue says**

Excellent!

When Macy went to work at Hallstead House as a personal nurse to Alexandria Hallstead she was trying to come to terms with her parents death in an horrific accident which caused both of their deaths. But Macy discovered more than just being there as a nurse.

I cannot say what else she discovered or that would be giving one heck of a spoiler.

What I can say is, this book had me gripped from cover to cover and I had to stay with it until the end. Some did not welcome Macy into the Hallstead fold and many creepy things and terrible threats were made on her person. Just who, or which was causing her to fear for her life?

She got offered another job by the agency she worked for, so now this left her in a dilemma as to, should she go? or should she stay?

Alexandria Hallstead was a sweet lovely old lady recovering from a hip operation hence why Macy was there. Or was it?

I've not heard of this author until now.

I already requested to read this from Net galley and was accepted by Kensington Books then I saw the blog tour for it, so I hopped on that too. I would love to get the word out and encourage you all to read this book, you won't regret it. It had me guessing right to the end.

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### **TKay says**

If you can't sleep, or your life is so full of excitement that you're craving a night of boredom, I recommend "Secrets of Hallstead House."

This author is operating under the misconception that endless pages of ornate description equals good writing. She relies on strings of adjectives to set the tone, and over-uses adverbs to color the sparse yet banal dialogue. Every tiny, nitpicking detail is faithfully relayed. As a result, the plot crawls forward with all the momentum of a dehydrated snail.

I've read worse books, but never one that wasn't self-published. I got it because of the glowing reviews on

Amazon, but I'm now convinced those reviews were written by family and friends of the author.

If you're immortal and have endless years of eternal youth ahead of you, then you can probably afford to kill a little time with this book. Since I'm not that young anymore, I didn't have time to waste on this mediocre effort. I wouldn't recommend it to any of my friends.

I do feel bad about filling in the "Date I finished this book" because I couldn't finish it. It might be more accurate to state that it finished me. At any rate, I'm finished WITH it. If you have any sense, you won't even start it.

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### **Amy says**

This was a fairly blah debut novel. Macy Stodderd, at the ripe old age of 20, wants a fresh start. And she is a nurse? Can you become a nurse that quickly? Anyway, she heads off to some island to be a private nurse for an elderly woman who broke a hip. There was some mystery, a super bland romance that confused me because there was very little character development, a pretty obvious reveal, and then it was over.

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### **Sarah says**

Family mystery:

Family ties, deceit and a murder mystery, 'Secrets of Hallstead House' becomes a "who dunnit" story as readers follow Macy in her search for answers. With a bit of romance and plenty of characters to suspect, I found myself pointing the finger of blame towards many of the cast.

That being said, I did hope that there would be a bit more substance to the mystery that Macy is trying to solve. True, I did not predict the ending but the red herrings became quite obvious as the plot developed. As I have already mentioned, I suspected many characters and think this was because I was hoping author would offer something a little "juicier" than what this novel provides.

Nonetheless, I was pleasantly surprised by some of the directions that the plot took and thought that this made 'Secrets of Hallstead House' more of a refreshing read. I don't think this was maintained throughout the story and am sorry to say that I found it lacking in pace at times.

This is the first book that I have read by author and whilst I enjoyed the secrets that Macy uncovers, wish there had been many more twists and turns along the way. It is a little too wordy with too much intricate detail being provided and I think this lessened my enjoyment of the story. However, if you are after a quick mystery read one afternoon, then I think this would be a suitable choice because there are enough surprises to keep you guessing, even if it is just a little bit.

This book was provided to me by the author in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Elizabeth H. says**

I really enjoyed the book. I loved the twists and turns and dark secrets revealed in the story. I love reading these kinds of books because I always enjoy puzzling out the mysteries as the story goes along to see if I'm correct at the end. I also enjoyed the history of Boldt Castle and the Thousand Islands areas that were featured in the story. I ended up Googling all the places mentioned to get a feel for what the characters experienced.

I think the reader should experience the mystery for themselves so I won't mention any details about it but I wished there was more development in the relationship between Macy and Pete, the boat captain/handyman. They had some holding hands and kissing moments but I didn't feel any chemistry between the couple; the focus of the story is solely on Macy and Alex's relationship and discovering who the murder(s) are. This was an exciting slow-building mystery that had me on the edge of my seat. It's also a promising start for this debut author.

\*\*\*I was gifted an eBook copy from the publisher in exchange for an honest review. All conclusions reached are my own\*\*\*

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## **Reeca Elliott says**

I really enjoyed some aspects of this book and some I did not. I absolutely loved reading about the Thousand Islands. I did not know this place existed. I would love to travel and see these wonderful islands and the homes that inhabit them.

Some areas of the book are little overly dramatic and very contrived. I did guess the plot and the perpetrator, so the story held very little surprises for me.

I did enjoy reading about the mysteries of the house. Hallstead House is the perfect setting for this suspenseful novel. It made the story very gothic and almost scary in places.

Secrets of Hallstead house is not a bad read. It is very suspenseful, even if predictable and the setting is just fabulous.

I received this book from Netgalley for an honest opinion

3 out of 5 stars

<http://reecapieces.com>

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