



Four Rubbings

Jennifer L. Hotes

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Fourteen-year old Josie, haunted by the death of her mother, leads her best friends to an ancient cemetery to rub graves on Halloween. The night the barrier between the dead and the living is as thin as muslin, Josie's convinced she will come away with proof of her mother's spirit at last when the evening takes an unexpected turn as the teens gravitate four ways into the haunted grounds.

Set against the backdrop of the rainy Pacific Northwest, four graves will be rubbed, touching off a series of events that will rattle their once mundane lives. From the lonely World War II hero to an accused witch, the people buried beneath the stones have stories that need an ending. The journey to unravel the mysteries leaves the friends wondering if the graves would've been better off left alone.

Four Rubbings Details

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Author : Jennifer L. Hotes

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From Reader Review Four Rubbings for online ebook

Ron Gallacher says

I enjoyed the first-person narrative style of this book. Although it did take me a few chapters to get used to the narrators changing over. But I was quickly captivated by this story. Indeed changing the narrator really helped me to understand the psyche of the Baby Group and Grace too.

I was fascinated to learn the legend that the Blarney Stone was thought to be a piece of the Stone of Scone. I grew up near to a ruined 16th century castle, not too far from where the Stone of Scone now rests. I was reminded that, as a child, I would often play with friends, in the graveyard by the castle.

I loved the chapter where Seth and his father go kayaking together in the Mercer Slough, set against the backdrop of the 1856 conflict between the Native Americans and settlers.

Without giving too much away from the ending, it definitely leaves you on tenterhooks, looking forward to the next book in the series. Wherever the Stone Witch series goes next, I know I will be going too. If this is YA fiction, I guess I am glad to be Y.

Gale Martin says

Jennifer Hotes' *Four Rubbings* is an exquisitely wrought YA novel full of beauty, intrigue, and adventure that is crafted with love and care.

Throughout the work, her prose is lush and lovely. Her words and the descriptions created from them shine like polished stones, like those that devoted survivors place on top of the headstones of their dearly departed. Also quite beautiful are the characters of the four teen stars of the novel. They are all resourceful, grounded, compassionate, and loving, despite their less than perfect home lives.

While adventurous, these young people are rarely reckless. As a former teacher of YA Lit to children exactly their age, this is an important distinction. At times they often behave better and more responsibly than the adults in this book. But these teen characters don't come off as too perfect. They show disappointment, frustration, impatience, and even romantic feelings for each other. At fourteen years old, it's only natural these four friends since childhood might develop little crushes on their friends as they mature, and they do.

This is important because the population that this book is written for wants characters they can relate to a lot more than characters their parents want them to read about.

Overall, *Four Rubbings* is an absorbing and fulfilling read. As plotted, it begs for a sequel.

Charlotte Gerber says

Four Rubbings is a story about a group of young adults who decide to make rubbings of gravestones one Halloween night. This isn't a ghost story, however. After they complete the rubbings, they research the

people who have died and try to help them to resolve any unfinished business and to find peace.

The story is written by weaving short vignettes of each young adult's journey together. Josie, Casey, Blaze and Seth each tell their stories from their own point of view. Included are poignant back stories about their families, which include death, love, loss, and longing.

Josie, the individual who came up with the idea to do the rubbings, has more to tell, due in part to the unusual story about her mother's heart (I won't divulge more or it would be a spoiler). I felt that her story was only just beginning, as the ending promised that there was much more to come with a sequel.

There is a lot going on in this book, and some may be put off if they have a short attention span. It is not a quick read, nor a book that can be skimmed to 'get the gist of it.' Each little story must be read in its entirety to understand its connection to the rest of the story. If you put in the effort, you will be rewarded in the end.

Lynda Dickson says

Grace, the cemetery caretaker, spots four youths rubbing headstones on Halloween and, thankful that they aren't there to vandalize, she sends a prayer to God. Little does she realize that this prayer will lead each of the teens on a strange journey with the gravesites' occupants. Fourteen-year-old Josie sets out to rub her mother's headstone, but is drawn to that of a witch instead; Casey, who lives in the shadow of her older brother, rubs the headstone of a baby boy whose parents still show him more attention than she has ever received; Blaze, whose mother is an atheist, rubs the headstone of a priest; and Seth, who is having a troubled relationship with his father, rubs the headstone of a dead soldier with no living relatives. As each teen finds out more about the subject of their rubbing, they are forced to come to terms with an important aspect of their own lives. Even Grace will be affected by the events set in motion on Halloween night.

The chapters are told from the alternating points-of-view of Grace, Josie, Casey, Blaze, and Seth, with the cute chapter headings indicating who is narrating each chapter. This book is beautifully written and contains some lovely descriptive passages. There is a lot of detail that is not strictly necessary but that adds an extra dimension to the narrative. I came to know each of these characters very well, and I was invested in their stories. This is a complex tale of friendship, love, family, and history.

A pleasure to read.

I received this book in return for an honest review.

Full blog post: <http://booksdirectonline.blogspot.com...>

Toni Michelle-Editor says

I received this book in exchange for an honest review.

I flippin' loved Four Rubbings!!! I couldn't put the book down for one second: No drinks, food, bathroom or stretching breaks! Absolutely nothing could pull me away from it. Once I finished reading it, had to research

information regarding rubbing headstones. 394 pages of awesomeness!
If you love paranormal reads, you will love this book!!!

Kay LaLone says

Four teens go to a graveyard on Halloween and each one is drawn to a tombstone to rub. As they learn about the dead person, they each solve their own mystery. Great characters. Loved this story.

Sarah says

A plodding, spooky story:

I found the novel 'Four Rubbings' different to other teenage fiction that I have read. This is a spooky story, (probably best read around Halloween!) and follows the lives of four teenagers who try to find out more about the gravestone they have, quite literally, taken a pencil rubbing from. However, the teenagers have a lot more on their plate than just finding out about the graves and this takes the form of how all of them live in dysfunctional families. As such, I found parts of it quite sad that the teenagers could not find acceptance and had more responsibilities on their shoulders than kids their age should.

The novel switches between all four teenagers so readers are always able to keep up with the mystery that each character is unravelling. At the same time, it was refreshing to read about their different interpretations on events, and, more in the second half of the novel, their changing feelings towards one another. However, at times I did find that Hotes got a little distracted by the family issues that were within each story and this certainly slowed the pace of the story for me.

Each of the lives that the characters investigate are really different. Hotes cleverly makes links to the family life that the teenagers are living with and I found myself always trying to make parallels between the two. I would have liked to read more about Seth and Blaze's mysteries and I think these take more of a back-seat; Hotes instead brings their family life to the foreground and how this changes over the course of the novel. The truly spooky element lies with Josie, who is still mourning for her mother and the secrets she uncovers about her life, whilst at the same time learning more about her "rubbings": the grave of a suspected witch. Josie's actions at trying to find answers make this novel read more like a mystery and I found the climax more chilling than the rest of the story. Indeed, Hotes certainly sets the novel up for a sequel very well and I was keen to know what happens next in the story.

I enjoyed reading this novel and was keen to find out the answers to all of the little mysteries that built up in the story. I was hoping this book would have more pace and excitement, but instead this is more about feelings rather than actions. I think this would probably appeal to teenagers who specifically enjoy reading spooky stories with a good mystery but would recommend it to all as a young adult novel that is a little bit different from the rest.

Jen Gilbert says

What a fun book! As a local to Seattle, it was fun to read about places I have been. And Jennifer does a great job making your heart yearn for the characters and experience their joy and fear right along with them. As we near Halloween and the fall, I highly recommend this for curling up next to the fire while it is blustery outside reading.

Christina says

I gave this to my 11year old daughter as Christmas gift. This is what she thought.

"I read this after Christmas on break. I couldn't put it down. My friend's mom passed away from cancer last year and so this was pretty sad to be reminded of it. But it's a great story with really good characters. I was really excited to learn this is first book of a series. Because this was eery. Creepy. Interesting. All enjoyable. And the rubbing kit that the author sent as part of the package was really cool. I look forward to trying it when it dries out here. And I want to get the next book too."

Lynne says

Four Rubbings (The Stone Witch Series) (Volume 1)

In the first few chapters, we meet four young teens who go to an ancient cemetery on Halloween ... not to be hoodlums or vandalize, but to do headstone rubbings on four graves (1 each).

The book follows the kids as they research 'their' graves learning the stories behind who is buried there (a baby, a war hero, a priest and an accused witch) and they soon discover the spirits have unfinished business and stories that need to be solved before they can rest peacefully.

Overall, Four Rubbings is a book about loss and death, good families with small problems and dysfunctional families with huge problems, and especially the power behind lifetime friendship.

It's about disappointment, nightmares and breaking out of the familiar and comfort zones as well as about love and trust and loyalty.

It is mysterious, haunting and sometimes kind of creepy .. but it was always interesting and kept me turning pages wanting to learn more about the kids, their personal issues, and their spirits.

I wanted to see them resolve their own lives as well as the lives of their spirits. In the end, there was satisfying closure for most the characters, however, there was enough of an open ending to lead the way for a sequel (which I am looking forward to reading!)

I wouldn't describe this book as Christian-Fiction, however there is a touch of contemporary Christianity that flows nicely throughout the book, especially with one of the teens and their storyline.

This book definitely has some great spook factor and chilling ghost stories throughout, but not anything that will cause distress.

I would recommend to readers 12-14 and older as I think adults will enjoy this book just as much as the younger audience.

Great read year round, although I do wish I'd read this in October, it's the perfect ghost story book.

**I won this book in a GoodReads first-reads giveaway listed by the author Jennifer Hotes (<http://www.booktrope.com>) Thank you Goodreads and Jennifer for the opportunity to read and review this spectacularly spooky book!

Tara says

I've loved YA thrillers since I was a kid - "Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark" was one of my first favorite books; Lois Duncan was one of my favorite childhood authors; and I was thrilled to death to receive a personal letter from Betty Ren Wright when I was in third grade or so. (I still have that letter somewhere). As I grew older, I never outgrew my love of scary stories. Although I also read "grown-up" horror stories (Stephen King will always be my #1 favorite author), I still enjoy YA horror as well. "Four Rubbings" by Jennifer Hotes is one of those YA horror books that's scary and entertaining while also being well-written enough for adults to enjoy.

Four Rubbings tells the tale of four teenagers - self-labeled "The Baby Group," as they've been friends since infancy - and what happens when they decide to try to connect with the dead by doing gravestone rubbings on Halloween. The story delves individually into the minds of each of the four teens - Josie, Casey, Blaze, and Seth. Josie, the leader of the group and the one who originally came up with the idea of doing the grave rubbings on Halloween, tragically lost her mother years previously, and sees this activity as a way to try to "reach out" to her mom and try to connect with her. She encourages the other three teens to find a grave that "calls" to them... and they do.

You learn more about each teen's back story as they each get a chance to relate their own experiences of what their graveyard adventure through point-of-view shifts between the characters (although Josie, as the leader and primary character, gets the most page-time). And these aren't dumbed-down teenagers. These kids are portrayed as intelligent and well-spoken, with the ability to reflect on the things that are happening and on their personal reactions.

This book delivers the thrills and chills, and the ending will leave you wanting more and hoping that the author will continue Josie and the Baby Group's story soon. I plan to share this book with my own teenagers, who've inherited my love of scary stories. I wouldn't be surprised if they want to go do grave rubbings next Halloween after reading this book!

D.M. says

The debut novel of Jennifer Hotes is not only a spooky Halloween tale. In case you don't know the premise, four teenagers rub the headstones of four graves on Halloween night. Their leader, fourteen year-old Josie Jameson, tasks them with learning about the life of the person whose gravestone they rubbed. As the teenagers investigate their cemetery residents, they simultaneously embark on four journeys of self-discovery.

As the four teens learn about their dead, the reader learns about the teens and the challenges they face. Each of the graves relates specifically to its teen. Seth has a difficult relationship with his father— his dead person has an unknown son. Casey feels invisible in her over-achieving household—her grave houses a dearly loved child. Blaze tries to understand his growing spirituality—a religious patriarch lies in his grave. Josie wants to

connect with her long-deceased mother—and she does in atmospheric passages that made goose bumps erupt on this reader's skin.

Teenagers will recognize themselves and their friends in this novel's characters. Older readers will remember the insecurity of adolescence and the importance of a few loyal friends. Mrs. Hotes clearly understands the self-doubt, need to belong, and drive for independence inherent in teenagers. Her four teens are believable, likable, and wonderfully flawed.

Four Rubbings may initially sound like a creepy YA novel. One of the storylines does deliver the requisite tingling of spine and raising of hair. But this novel is much more than that. At its core, Four Rubbings is a story of the bumpy transition from childhood to adulthood, the dysfunction in every family, and the utter necessity of friends to get us through.

Maryjo says

I received this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

This was a really fun book! It's based on four middle-grade teens who set out to rub gravestones on Halloween night. As they set out to learn more about the person under their gravestone, they each go through their own personal discovery and growth. This book was very well written. It was fast paced and kept me engaged in the story and characters. I would recommend this book to any and all who enjoy YA with a splash of paranormal. Great book! Can't wait for the next one in the series!

Leta Hawk says

Well, the first thing I have to say is that I made the mistake of taking this book along on vacation, thinking it would be a quick, carefree read to while away the hours on the drive to and from our destination (no, I was not the one driving, lol). As it turns out, I spent almost all my spare time on vacation reading this book because I really didn't want to put it down; I wanted to find out what happened next. The plot was really engaging, and it was a decidedly different twist on the typical teen ghost story. I also enjoyed the fact that the ghost story was only a small part of the entire plot. The characters, for the most part, were well-developed and relatable, and I really found myself pulling for them to get their issues resolved.

There were a few minor issues I had with the story:

*The story switched POV's with each chapter. I liked the fact that we got a glimpse of the action from multiple viewpoints, but at times I had trouble keeping straight who was telling a particular chapter. Also, because there were times that we saw the same scenes from multiple viewpoints, things got repetitive at times, and I sometimes got a bit lost as to how much time had passed between chapters.

*One thing that made me scratch my head towards the end of the book was Josie receiving the journal of Bain's daughter Regan. It just seemed unrealistic that an Irish genealogical society would send her an entire original journal as a thank you for solving a family mystery. A copy of it, maybe, but the original?

*Here and there I found some grammar/sentence structure issues that made me have to reread a sentence, but these errors weren't excessive and didn't pull me out of the story.

Overall, this was a brilliant story, and I'm interested in reading the second book in the series.

**I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Ina Zajac says

I am about 50 pages in and loving this book.

The multi point of view is written in a way that is not only easy to follow, but also clever. I love the concept, but even more than that, I am already feeling these characters. Hotes made me cry big time - already. Runaway Bunny? Seriously? How could I not cry. Wow, Jennifer Hotes, so beautiful. Great stuff. Can't wait to get back to reading this afternoon.

Finished tonight. Wow! What a glorious, emotional read. I should mention that my father died of cancer many years ago, and I still miss him dearly. Perhaps Four Rubbings spoke to me so thoroughly because I understand what it's like to be so desperate to remember one's own parent, taken too soon. I fell easily into the rhythm of this story. The writing is beautifully charged, and the characters are utterly believable. Hotes is not only a poised writer, but a captivating storyteller as well. I am really looking forward to reading more from Jennifer Hotes.
