



A Density of Souls

By Christopher Rice

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Four childhood friends in present-day New Orleans are torn apart by envy, passion, and a secret murder.

Five years ago, Meredith, Brandon, Greg, and Stephen quickly discover the fragile boundaries between friendship and betrayal as they enter high school and form new allegiances. Meredith, Brandon, and Greg gain popularity, while Stephen is viciously treated as an outcast. Then two violent deaths destroy the already delicate bonds of their friendship.

When the friends are drawn back together, new facts about their mutual history are exposed and what was held to be a tragic accident is revealed as murder. As the true story emerges, other secrets begin to unravel with more dangerous, far-reaching consequences.

A Density of Souls is a stunning debut novel that uncovers the darker side of the teenage psyche.

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A Density of Souls By Christopher Rice Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #910919 in Books
- Published on: 2014-12-09
- Released on: 2014-12-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x 1.00" w x 5.50" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 371 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Take the sensuous, fecund New Orleans setting, add a generous helping of tangled Southern family history, and season liberally with a sensitive teenage boy rejected by his friends and frightened of his own homoerotic impulses and you wouldn't be surprised to discover that the novel containing all of the above was written by someone named Rice. But a few paragraphs into the first page, it's clear that Anne Rice's son's first novel isn't about vampires or witches and does not otherwise read like one of her exceedingly popular books. The only family resemblance is in the setting, the sexual orientation of the lovingly described male characters, and the scent of overripe magnolias.

There's murder, suicide, and madness at the heart of this rather clumsy coming-of-age story, which focuses on the youthful friendship of Stephen Conlin, Meredith Ducote, Greg Darby, and Brandon Charbonnet. This friendship is destroyed by a sexual incident that takes place just before the foursome enters Cannon, an exclusive prep school. There, Stephen is ostracized by his former friends, now the most popular kids on campus, who'd just as soon forget their own complicity in the event. Envy, passion, and rage drive the narrative, but the emotions are as juvenile as the characters, and the long passages depicting the rituals and cruelties of high school, from pep rallies to football games, slow down the pace without really illuminating character or motivation. The novel reads like a roman à clef. Rice might have been wiser to tell someone else's story rather than his own. --*Jane Adams*

From Publishers Weekly

Chronicling the lives of four tormented youths, 21-year-old author Rice's earnestly overwritten debut novel flails wildly and suffers from an identity crisis as awkward and vivid as that of his soul-seared characters. Yet the book offers an intriguing, complex story, a hard-nosed, lyrical, teenage take on Peyton Place set in contemporary New Orleans. The tangle of a plot grows weedlike when former childhood friends enter high school and find their loyalties have dramatically shifted. Popular, budding bulimic Meredith Ducote is a closet alcoholic whose diaries brim with morose aphorisms on her wretched life; Greg Darby and Brandon Charbonnet are boisterously homophobic high school jocks; and Stephen Conlin, whose father committed suicide, is the sensitive homosexual boy who quickly becomes the victim of cruelty and derision from the school's popular crowd, led by Greg and Brandon. But the two bullies are covering up a painful childhood secret in their persecution of Stephen, a secret Meredith knows. Before the novel reveals this secret during the overwrought climax set during a devastating hurricane, one character dies, another has an emotional breakdown, a parent is institutionalized, a gay bar is bombed by a militant hate group, a concealed paternity is discovered and several families are broken up. Rice is sensitive to the emotional undercurrents that compel teenagers to both mask and wallow in their intense feeling, but the atmosphere of juvenile angst that pervades the novel is as gluey and suffocating as a hot summer on the bayou. 20-city author tour. (Aug.)

doubt is why the name "Rice" dominates the book's jacket.
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From [Booklist](#)

Anne Rice's son's first novel is a gothic, filled with looming buildings, fiercely guarded secrets, and tormented characters. It opens in a graveyard with four friends playing hide-and-seek. When these four friends (Meredith, Stephen, Brandon, and Greg) enter high school, their relationships change drastically. Now football players, Brandon and Greg ostracize and ridicule Stephen for being gay. Meredith allies herself with the popular crowd and begins dating Greg. Their world is jarred again when Greg's younger brother Alex is killed, and Greg commits suicide. From this point, the story jumps ahead five years, as Jordan,

Brandon's older brother, returns home and tries to find out what happened to Brandon, who was sent away from home shortly after Greg's suicide. In his quest to find out what happened to his brother, Jordan discovers more about this huge cast of characters than he bargained for. From this point, the narrative really takes off as the characters are forced to deal with each other and with their own inner demons. Although the gothic gloom is a little heavy for the high-school scenes, the torments Stephen is forced to endure at the hands of his former friends are painfully realistic. That the author's parents are both writers (father Stan is a poet) will generate interest in this novel, but its originality and merits stand on their own. *Kristine Huntley*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sarah Jackson:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important for all of us. The book A Density of Souls had been making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The book A Density of Souls is not only giving you more new information but also to get your friend when you feel bored. You can spend your own spend time to read your publication. Try to make relationship with the book A Density of Souls. You never truly feel lose out for everything in case you read some books.

Anna Raynor:

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