



## Halls of Ivy (Halls of Ivy, #1)

*Roland Nuñez*

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### **Halls of Ivy (Halls of Ivy, #1)** Roland Nuñez

It began with the suicides. They're calling it the crisis of Sun Valley University, and all the blame lies on one doctoral student.

Cheyenne Winters went too far. She was only there to conduct research for her dissertation, but three student suicides that occurred shortly before she arrived piqued her interest. Her interviews with twenty-one freshmen revealed that the suicides were not only related, but the university administration had been covering them up.

Now Cheyenne is involved in a major conspiracy threatening her own future and the lives of the students she came to study.

The novel's narration alternates between Cheyenne and the freshmen she interviews, detailing their adjustment to Sun Valley University and their connection to the suicides.

This is the first book in the *Halls of Ivy* series.

### **About the series:**

Sun Valley University is well-known for its prestige and quality education. Inside the campus gates, however, there lies a different story. Cheyenne Winters' visit to Sun Valley University initiates a chain of events involving deceit, corruption, and betrayal, ultimately bringing the downfall of a once-pristine university. What is the crisis of Sun Valley University? Who is involved, and why is Cheyenne Winters on trial for it? Find out by reading the university thriller series *Halls of Ivy*.

### **Halls of Ivy (Halls of Ivy, #1) Details**

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Author : Roland Nuñez

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## From Reader Review Halls of Ivy (Halls of Ivy, #1) for online ebook

### Michael says

This book is overall pretty great. Taking place in a university, the mystery novel is a fresh idea. It follows the perspectives of some students who all share an orientation class, as well as the perspective of Cheyenne Winters, a student affairs professional. I really enjoyed how three different storytelling methods all helped uncover the mystery of the suicides. The three ways that told the story (student interviews, Cheyenne's first person view, and a third person view) were hard to follow at first. After the first few chapters though, the different methods started to flow fairly smoothly.

The story has a slow start, explaining the university setting and the characters. It did seem to have too slow of a start. Although it is slow-paced, it is also very informative. Being a high school graduate that's about to start college, it gave me insight into college life and told me what to expect. After a few chapters, the story starts to pick up. In come three student suicides, all related to the negligence of the university faculty and staff. I didn't think the mystery was very deep early on in the book, since you were informed of the cause of the suicides right away. The mystery picks up when the students hear a rumor of a fourth suicide that will possibly happen soon. The book does a great job in keeping you guessing which of the students is suicidal. The book sums up all of the plots well, and leaves only small glimpses into the next book in the series.

Overall I really liked Halls of Ivy. I liked the storytelling method used in particular. The author was able to keep all three methods going without any slip-ups, and the interview chapters seemed very real to me. As an upcoming college freshman reading a book about college freshmen, this book was informative, and also kept me on my toes with the darker, more complex mystery towards the later chapters. I'd recommend it to any mystery reader looking for something fresh.

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### Stephanie says

This may be because I'm a freshman but this book shows what can happen within one year and how devastating (and amazing) it can be. Yes, some of it may seem extreme, however I feel it's a good representation of how different college is from anything you've ever experienced before.

Universities can be very political - trying to climb their way to the coveted #1 spot - yet I hope that they still care about their students as much as Cheyenne Winters & Nancy did.

Back to the book, not your typical crime drama, as it is set at an university, but I would say that's a good thing. The characters, generally seem to be real with the exception of the mysterious Mattie yet it happens when juggling nineteen Mavericks (freshman) plus the seven or-so others that are constantly in the book. Overall, a good read definitely worth all of its 270-something pages and a great start to the series.

My compliments to the writer, Mr. Nuñez. Thank you for creating a wonderful look into the "college experience".

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### Kaitlyn Oruska says

### My Favorite Lines:

“We also went to church every Sunday, but barely. It was an English-speaking church, so of course little miss Hispanic didn’t feel comfortable there. At least she went. The last thing I needed was for her shyness to scare God away.”

“I feel really bad that I had to leave them that way, but I didn’t feel like I had a future at home. I needed more from my life. More than what my family could give me.”

“With everything in life there is a level of risk. Unlike in the perfect-scenario case studies we did in school, the issues we deal with in life do not always have a resolution, and we will sometimes lose.”

### What I Thought:

Halls of Ivy was very different from any book I’ve read before. It centers around narrator Cheyenne Winters and her investigation into Sun Valley University, and the rash of suicides they’ve had.

I really liked the idea of this book, and the way it was presented. It was a thriller, but it also presented real issues that I’m sure effect college students all around. I can’t speak from experience, as I never attended college myself, but a lot of interactions in this book I feel would be realistic to the college experience.

This book was written in a different style than what I’m accustomed to, but it worked for it. Some chapters were written in Cheyenne’s point of view, others in third person about various other characters, some were transcripts from Cheyenne’s interviews with those students, and others were papers the students were asked to write at the beginning of the school year, about themselves.

Most of the characters presented in this book were likable. I especially liked Mitch and Lisa, as they seemed to have the strongest personalities, in my opinion. Other characters were mentioned but not explored, but when you have more than 20 characters in one book, that’s more than understandable!

This is the first in a four part series, so it should be interesting to see where the characters go from here. I feel like this book would make an amazing mini-series or television show, so that we could get to know the characters a little more intimately, and warrant more time to each one.

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### Kelli says

The book Halls of Ivy was received free of charge through the LibraryThing Member Giveaway program. I am not being reimbursed by anyone associated with LibraryThing, GoodReads, the author, the publisher, or any of their subsidiaries for my review of this book.

Well, I finished Halls of Ivy on 5/10/2013. It was actually a pretty good read, once I got past all the to and fro in the format. It was hard keeping up with what was going on as we'd start off with a 3rd person presentation of what Cheyenne Winters was up to, then we'd have a 1st person essay/bio, then we'd go to a "transcribed interview," and then back to 3rd person Cheyenne. Not only that, it was hard keeping up with the time. It starts in January with Cheyenne coming on the scene of the University and a suicide, then a bio that was written in August, then an interview that was done sometime, no date given, then another bio from August, then the narrative jumps back to before Cheyenne arrived at Sun Valley University to Orientation in August. It really was quite difficult to keep up with at first, but after a while, you sort of get into a rhythm with it, and it's not so bad. I think the author did a fairly decent job keeping up with the three different

writing styles he used, though in my opinion, it would have been better had he just stuck to one style, either first person or third person, and left the whole transcribed interview thing out of it.

While it took me longer to get invested in this book than usual because of the confusion I felt about the constantly switching styles, I still enjoyed the story. I can't say anything as to whether the author was realistic about college life or even freshman college life as unfortunately, except for a couple of semesters at the local community college when I was a bit older, college was not one of my available life paths after high school. However, the author does a good job of presenting a mystery that becomes more and more complicated and convoluted as time progresses. Some of the story, however, reads like the informational pamphlets they hand out in doctor's offices or health clinics, and the climax wasn't really that unexpected or surprising. I can't tell you what it is as that'll give too much away, but the climax was a bit cliché. The detective showing up just as Cheyenne almost had it handled and thus messing everything up was a nifty little twist, but not enough to make the ending fresh.

Overall, I enjoyed the book and would recommend it to others. I have noticed that an advanced copy for Halls of Ivy: Pathfinder is up for a giveaway on either LibraryThing or GoodReads, I don't remember which at the moment, and I have entered for it. Apparently, Cheyenne stays on at SVU, and I want to know what the heck possessed her to do that with the crummy way the administration treated her. If I don't win, I'll go ahead and buy the paperback when it comes out. So, Mr. Nunez (sorry, I don't know how to do that thingy above the "n") has at least one paying customer for his next book that he wouldn't have had had I not read Halls of Ivy.

I registered a book at BookCrossing.com!  
<http://www.BookCrossing.com/journal/11871605>

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## Fran says

Halls of Ivy  
Roland Nunez

Cheyenne Winters is doing her doctoral dissertation at Sun Valley University in Florida. Her purpose is to do an ethnographic study and hopefully help students adjust to college life. Finding her way around the college campus was not easy at first and the reception committee not exactly jumping through hoops when she arrived. A four-month study involving interviewing many of the freshman students, helping them to adjust was just part of what she was going to do. Entering the college grounds Cheyenne wondered why there was an ambulance and police cars. Meeting with Travis Coleman the Associate Director of Housing would not enlighten her too much, nor would he tell her very much other than there were three suicides and the cause related to everyone seemed to be depression. Next, she met Shandra Giles the Dean of Students who was meeting with the police officer in charge of the suicide cases. Neither one seemed that receptive to her and one that warned her about following the rules staying under the radar. So, what were they hiding?

As Cheyenne's initial visit with Giles continued she learned about the retention rate of freshman students and the likelihood of many of them not graduating. Interviews beginning and we meet 21 students in the freshman class whose personalities are all different but whose concerns and voices almost seem the same. Most are not rich and this is not an Ivy League college by any means. Their parents sent them to this school because it was affordable and had a good academic rating so we meet Benjamin Blake and learn his story. His mother is single and is a cleaning lady trying to make ends meet. Just being able to afford school is a big feat. The author shares Brian's interview with Cheyenne in Chapter 2 when we learn about his first

impressions, how he got accustomed to the lifestyle of Sun Valley and dealing with roommates, making friends and just trying to adjust to college life. Each student and each interview that is shared seems different as all of the 21 students have different background and are at this school for different reasons yet there seems to one constant: many are depressed, some seem to be more concerned with partying and using drugs or alcohol, some are haunted by the suicides and others seem afraid to remain in Miller Hall due to the lingering thought of a ghost that might be haunting it.

Luca and Mitch have their own agendas and have pulled off what if caught just might get them expelled. A project to interview someone in their field to learn more about the area they are studying and what their job description entails. What Luca does is quite ingenious but will he and Luca get caught? Vandalism, bullies, threats, sorority life and much more are just part of what the author spotlights in this novel and what freshman college students need to be aware of before making a choice in which school to attend. As you get to know some of the others you will meet Miyu, Ashley and Alia as they discuss the sorority that Ashley is the President of and why joining one could ruin friendships. Renzo who is superficial and only cares about himself, Luca looking for the easy way out and does not hesitate to threaten others.

Rachel and Sarah are also interviewed and are roommates each with different viewpoints in many areas. But, Rachel is a victim of one shrewd guy that eventually decides to branch out and leave her in his dust you might say. The sad part is Dylan is the only reason she decided to attend this college. Girls need to know that guys are often hurtful, mean and will do anything to further their own goals no matter who gets hurt in the interim.

A flashback to a fire that takes place in this hall, the RA in panic mode and the end result a note in Ryan's handwriting foretelling what was to come next. Thinking that the reason she was there was "to the study and systematic recording of human cultures; also: a descriptive work produced from such research ." <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictio...> Cheyenne realized that she might be too involved and should bet back to what she was supposed to do.

Something happens to change things as another student commits suicide and Cheyenne comes face to face with her own flaws, demons and problems as Nancy lays it on straight and tries to enlighten her into the fact that this college is about the students and with real problems and not everything can be solved and she is too involved in the suicides and not doing what she came there to do. Did she really care or was she really out to solve this case? But, when she goes over her notes from the interviews something gels and a connection is made. Why do some students feel stressed out? What in the suicide note would bring it all together? A prestigious university plagues with problems that most face. Supposedly excelling in academics and customer service but this university has within its hallowed halls many ghosts, secrets, lies and betrayals. Will Cheyenne Winters uncover them all? Gabriella Monson a student with limited skills in English. Tobias Gray a really smart young man but not overly outgoing. Amy Caldwell, beautiful, smart, an accounting student with a secret of her own. Alia Atieno a student from Kenya concerned about her friend Miyu. Prejudice, hate, jealousies, depression and a school so consumed with hiding the truth that when things happen no one seems surprised and the reactions almost sterile as more notes are found and Ryan, Tyler, Kimberly and Ben are found dead but why? Guilt, fear or something else? Why?

So, what are they hiding and what is Second Chance? What was its primary goal? How did it change? Just why are they noticing Cheyenne, why do the students feel she is trying to solve this case and how will that affect her study? Is she in danger? When Cheyenne questioned on student she would learn more about Second Chance, another would be raped and some would withdraw from the University. A downward spiral that would set off a chain of events that would shake Cheyenne's innermost core.

Halls Of Ivy takes readers inside the lives of 21 college students, their problems, fears and an administration so corrupt that one young researcher would risk it all in order to protect so many others. What is next for Cheyenne? Will she be let go from the research program? What about the administration of this college?

Who will return? Who will leave? What happens next? Read Halls of Ivy Pathfinder to find out. Who was behind the suicides? What caused these students to take their own lives? The surprise twist and turns within the final chapters will clarify it all.

Author Roland Nunez gives readers an upfront look at the inside of a college that makes readers wonder whether this is fact or fiction. One novel that will give you much pause for thought and encourage parents to research colleges for more than just their academic standings before enrolling their high school graduates as freshman. Every school has to post an online criminal report, incident report and drug use report to let parents know more about the school. Safety reports are posted it. Research can be valuable and Halls Of Ivy: You decide if you would want to attend Sun Valley University! This is a must read for parents, educators, college students and young adults.

Fran Lewis: reviewer

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## **M.C. Crocker says**

I received a copy of this book free and did a review in exchange.

Halls of Ivy is New Adult novel that focuses on a series of suicides that have been occurring on a college campus that aren't quite what they appear to be. As it turns out these suicides may actually have more nefarious connections than just suicide, something along the lines of murder. Over all, the concept of the book sounded promising but I found the execution to be severely lacking.

As a fan of murder mystery, and a writer of said genre, I have come to have certain expectations of a murder mystery. What I would qualify as a fantastic mystery, is one where I cannot figure out who the murder is as I am reading, yet when I get to the end I can look back and ask myself how did I miss all the clues that were laid out here, here and here. That was not the case in Halls of Ivy. To be honest, I wouldn't call Halls of Ivy to even be a good mystery. There was no mystery or true investigative line that one could follow along and try to puzzle things together along with the protagonist. It was a presentation of scenes with no connections between how this one event lead to this next event or what impact certain things had on others. To be honest book was more set up and less murder mystery.

The cause behind the suicides was not even mentioned or indicated until the last third of the book and when the cause was brought up there was no question that it was the cause of the suicides. It wasn't enough for a case to be made properly to like say the police or an authority figure but in the world of writing there was no question, and the character even was strongly inclined to say this is more than likely the cause – allow me to dig deeper to verify this. This left no mystery and the book was more set up and filler than an actual mystery.

As the blurb says on the back of the book Cheyenne Winters was interviewing 21 students which indicates that it was a large cast list for the story but all the same there were several characters that added no substance to the core story or were just added filler to help make a conclusion easy and convenient. It felt a little like it

was a matter of let's make our villain a little worse and have them rape someone and by having the villain do that it helps the police realize that there is real danger with this person (despite the fact that there was more than enough that indicated that there was a real danger) it wasn't till it was revealed that they raped a person that they were considered a dangerous threat.

Another issue I found myself having with the book was how often it jumped in time and formatting. The book starts in 3rd person where Cheyenne is facing a committee about the school crisis and shifts to 1st person of Cheyenne telling her story to shift again to a student bio followed by a student interview. This is all well and good and is an interesting way to present a story yet the execution was severely lacking as there were also instances where after an interview the story would shift to 3rd person focusing on the students, before shifting to something else the next chapter. This was annoying and got confusing especially considering that Cheyenne came to the school late in the school year and interviews were when she was there at the school and the 3rd person narrative focusing on the students jumped to a previous point in the school year such as the first day of the school year and student orientation. Then there were scenes in the 3rd person narrative that seemed to be in the present rather than past. Then as the story progressed the time line seemed to coalesce and become one cohesive thing but all of it was in 3rd person even the parts that were focused on Cheyenne, which was very confusing and frustrating to me.

Additionally, the student bios were not always prevalent to the story and were present throughout the story till page 251 (this is a 272 page book). I personally feel that a character bio is irrelevant and pointless at this point particularly when the mystery and story is being wrapped up.

Lastly, the ending seemed lacking, we never reach a conclusion of the hearing for Cheyenne, we only get what she thinks will be the results of the hearing, and there are several things that happen in the last chapter of the epilogue that have no bearing on the story at all save to potentially set up a second book which is advertised in the back of this first book. The advertisement for the second book in some ways reveals that Cheyenne's predictions about her career is wrong but we don't get the results of the hearing or the purpose really of why Cheyenne is the focus of the hearing either when she was one of many people involved in the school suicide crisis.

Overall, I feel like the story of the book was poorly executed and there was a lot of fat and filler to be found in the story. The best thing I can guess with a lot of these extra characters who had little to no bearing on the main story itself is because they are going to potentially play a part in the next book. Of course, this is only a guess on my part and I could be wrong and that these random side characters who did nothing more than take up space and time were just that side characters taking up space and time. It is hard to say – and to be honest I have no desire to find out – this book was a difficult read for me and it was also difficult to follow along at times. This is why I'll give this book a 2 page rating. It had a good premise and concept, but very poor execution.

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## Georgia says

Halls of Ivy by Roland Nunez is the first book in the series of the same name.

First sentence: "I would like to call forth Ms. Winters. Please state your full name and occupation."

## PLOT

Cheyenne Winters is a Student Affairs professional. Her job is to aid university students during their time at



college. In order to achieve her PhD, she has come to Sun Valley University in Florida to carry out an ethnographic study on its students. For four months she will watch, listen and discover everything about her assigned students- those in Dr. Garcia's class. Twenty-one students, one big secret.

Because Sun Valley has had a rash of suicides. Lynn Sawyer is the detective in charge of the case, but it isn't going well. Cheyenne is hoping to do better. The day she arrives is the day of the third suicide. As she gets to know the campus and its students better, she discovers darker aspects. There are rumours that the victims were forced into suicide. Rumours of a cult. The university claims they were a result of depression. But in a school full of thousands of students, gossip is everywhere. The longer Cheyenne stays, the more obsessed she becomes with helping the students she has become close to.

## REVIEW

The story begins in January, when Cheyenne arrives, and is told through a series of flashbacks to the start of the school year in August, continuing to the end of the year in May. The writing is interspersed with biographies of the twenty-one students Cheyenne is studying, and told from many different points of view. With so many different peoples voices, it can dissolve into mindless chatter sometimes, and gets quite confused. Especially as a lot of the characters are irrelevant to the plot.

The story starts off as a jumbled mass of events, with no clear direction. There is a thin thread of plot we have to go on- the mystery of the suicides- but it's not really addressed much. Instead the book focuses on random events, occasionally recounting those surrounding the suicides.

Now and then, the story will mention problems that a lot of students encounter when going to university for the first time. Money, workload, peer pressure, problems assimilating, identity, depression, but each topic is only glanced over, so can seem quite superficial. Depression, in particular, is a large part of this book, but it's never really addressed. Not the symptoms (bar a couple), not the dangers and not 'treatments'. It's depression without the depression. It's more like depression from somebody else's point of view.

This book is an enormous jigsaw puzzle. I almost felt the need to create mind maps to process all the information we are bombarded with. A lot of this turns out to be irrelevant, but as this is supposedly a mystery, you never know what could be integral. Turns out practically. It was like doing a 3000 piece puzzle without the box. I just had to try to make connections, find pieces that fit together, and hope that everything would become clear by the end. Continuing the puzzle metaphor, the big picture in this case is rather like an endless sky of blue (all the exact same blue) with one piece devoted to a red balloon. All the other 2999 pieces that you tried to fit into place are just background noise. Static that has no relevance.

The story is stretched thin, and the book drags because of it. Most of the time it felt like absolutely nothing was happening. One of the main reasons for this is that the book is too focused on aspects of university life. I appreciate an author setting the scene, but I don't need all the details about the administration, etc that goes into this fictional university. It adds nothing, and bogs down the story.

There is no real conclusion to this story. In fact, there's not much of an ending at all. The 'culprit' is found, but the story trails off. It feels like the writer wrote the entire series as one big story, then chopped it up into individual books of the desired length. That is not how good writing works. The ending was safe and unexciting. 300 pages of 'clues' led to about five for the 'big reveal'.

I expected an increase in pace at some point during this story, I expected payoff, I expected more than I got. I trudged through it. There is so much information thrown at you that it becomes a chore to try and process. When you get to the end and find you didn't need the majority of it, it's like a slap to the face. Why should I put this much effort into reading a book, if the book isn't going to put effort into itself. If this is supposed to be a thriller it does not achieve that. There is no pace, and everything is bogged down by inconsequential

details. A thriller, by definition, should thrill.

Some students are mentioned and never heard from again. For one student in particular, I felt this was a huge oversight. Whether or not their fate will be revisited in the next book is irrelevant. If you want your readers to care about the characters, don't ignore their stories. Don't leave an ambiguous comment that reveals nothing about their ending.

I can see what this book was trying to accomplish, but (in my opinion) it failed. If it was trying to describe university life it went overboard. Yes, university has its problems, as do the students- anybody could tell you that, but the story puts heavy focus on depression and corruption without ever really focusing on the good aspects of university life. I'm sure there are universities that have corruption within them, but that is not the majority. Not to mention that for a book that focuses on depression, it doesn't really go into it. Some students are depressed. Here's a couple symptoms. Now I can just say 'depressed' and that's enough, right? No. If you are going to touch on hard issues like depression, suicide and rape you need to do them right. It has to be more than a glancing comment. You need to invest time into them. All of them. Don't just say that 'rape is bad and it hurts people', actually go deeper. You cannot include topics like that on a superficial level and expect it to work.

For a book whose main character cares so strongly for the students, this book tells us surprisingly little about them. Yes I know there is a second book, but what's my incentive to read that if I don't care about the characters? 'Oh, so and so has a problem. Isn't that bad? Shouldn't we do something? We should do something.' And that's it. It's never revisited. We have no idea what happens to the student. Whether or not they got the help they needed is as ambiguous as everything else in this book. This book does exactly what it claims the 'corrupt officials' of its story does- not care about its students.

The characters weren't so bad, but they are nothing special, and certainly nothing that could save this book for me. I got nothing out of this story. I wish I could say that I did. I diligently followed what little plot there was, connected the dots- all that jazz- and I got nothing out of it but a weak, slapdash ending that was supposed to shock me into a realization that i just didn't care about. The best bit about this book was when it finished.

Perhaps this just wasn't my story, but the whole thing had me apathetic till the end. There may be redeeming features, but they're overpowered by everything else. Everyone is different, and I'm sure someone will enjoy this book, but it's not me.

Disclaimer: I received this book in a giveaway. This is not a sponsored review. All opinions are 100% my own.

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## Jacquelyn says

I think it's a great start. I liked the storyline a lot, but I think that the writing isn't quite perfected yet. Other reviews have criticized the switching between narration styles, but I actually really loved the way that everything was presented through the alternating narration and interview transcripts. My critique is just that there were places where I feel he kind of over explained things like the role of a student affairs professional. It started sounding to me a little like when someone's getting defensive about how important their job is (not that I don't think student affairs professionals are important). I just think that sometimes things could have been a little more subtle and give the reader a bit more credit for figuring things out on their own.

I will probably keep an eye out for his future writings. Like I said, the plot was good and creative. It would make a good summer read.

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### **L.F. Falconer says**

Roland Nunez has a good plot idea with this and a strong grasp on language, but I'm sorry to say that I could not finish this book. It started out with promise, then quickly fell flat. It reads more like a clinical document than a suspense mystery. The suspense was too sparse, too little, too late. The plethora of characters, though each well individualized, was extremely difficult to keep up with and while I fully support innovation and a pioneering spirit in writing, I felt the student bios and interviews really bogged the story down. The bios I might have been able to tolerate, but the interviews were worded in an unrealistic manner; waxing poetic with lengthy descriptions of the campus or reciting long conversations word for word made them too hard to believe. I reached the point of groaning each time another one presented itself. I was also disoriented by the shifting point of view. I could never quite place myself with any particular character and soon found I could care less about any of them. When the students started dropping like flies, it no longer mattered to me. I had already lost interest.

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### **Ashley says**

In Halls of Ivy, Doctoral candidate Cheyenne Winters is visiting the fictional Sun Valley University, located in central Florida. The purpose of her four month visit is to conduct research to complete her dissertation. Things are not going as she expected, however. Upon her arrival to the campus, she was greeted by hostile administrators and the police investigating the suicide of a student. Undaunted, Cheyenne settles in and begins the process of interviewing 21 freshmen students on their college expectations, needs and experiences. Against her better judgment, Cheyenne finds herself becoming emotionally attached to several students. Then, another student commits suicide. This suicide sets off a chain of events that drags Cheyenne into the middle of the investigation, further alienating her from the administration and jeopardizing her research. What happens next brings to light a secret society, student bullying, and university corruption. Cheyenne must decide what is most important – her Doctoral dissertation and her professional future or doing the right thing and saving lives.

I liked this book. I like mysteries and this one kept me guessing. The character of Cheyenne was relatable and likable. I found myself wanting her to be successful and expose the problems within this fictional university. Because I live in Florida, the locales were familiar and I could relate all too well to the complaints about the weather.

There were a few flaws with this book that prevented me from giving it a rating of 5 stars. First, it was very long. It took me a very long time to read this book. At points, it felt like irrelevant things were being discussed just for the sake of lengthening the book.

Second, there were so many characters – 30 plus – that, other than Cheyenne, it was very difficult, if not impossible, to become attached to them. Some characters were given one chapter or one mention in one of the “transcribed interviews” and then never heard from again. Others were brought into the narrative in such a way that I couldn’t figure out who they were or how they fit into the story. With the plethora of characters, I had to keep going back in the book to recall who they were and how they fit in. This contributed to the amount of time it took me to read this book.

Third, the writing style was a little confusing. Nunez switched between four different points of view in the structure of the book. The book consisted of one page biographies written by the students, transcriptions of the interviews Cheyenne conducted with the students, a 3rd person narrative of events from Cheyenne's point of view, and a 3rd person narrative of events from various students points of view. The timeline jumped around as well. We started with Cheyenne arriving on campus in January, jumped back to August with the students arriving on campus at the beginning of the academic year, then to the student written biographies, then to the narratives written from the students' point of view, back to Cheyenne's point of view, and so on. It made it very difficult to follow the sequence of events. I found myself wishing that I had kept a journal of characters that I could refer back to, which may have helped me to keep track of who was who.

Lastly, I felt like the book should have ended about 50 pages before it did. It seemed that after the mystery was solved, there was a lot of talking that was unnecessary and a final incident that was unneeded, and was never resolved. This book is the first of a series with the same characters, so perhaps the last 50 pages were setting up the reader for the next book.

Overall I did enjoy this book, and would recommend it.

Review by Rebecca Kinnie  
Closed the Cover

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## **Emma Faragher says**

I actually wanted to give this book 3 and a half stars but goodreads doesn't allow half stars.

I received this book as a free review copy.

Let me start by saying that I'm not an avid mystery reader. But whilst I don't have a lot of experience with them, I have been known to dip my toes in occasionally. It's a genre for people who love to figure things out, and can generally remember lots of information they read. I am both of these things. Which may be both a blessing and a curse with this book. Perhaps an experienced reader would have figured out the twists, but I was left rather shocked when they were revealed. Shocked in a good way, that is.

When I first heard about this book my thoughts fled to a show we used to watch called Veronica Mars. A mystery set in an American collage, it certainly had similarities. In fact I could see some of the storylines in this book making a good series on TV. But it is actually very different to the teenage detective story.

For starters, the main character is a PHD student doing her dissertation, not a young PI. In fact it does read a bit like a piece of academic writing with a storyline woven in.

The opening prologue really draws you in. With a mystery set out and the main character voice set out in a concise and frustratingly general way. It's rather difficult not to keep going just to find out the premise of the prologue. I found that to be true even later on in the book. That it was building up back towards this one scene, but this time we'd know what it was about.

Told through the many voices of the class Ms Cheyenne Winters interviews for her student affairs PHD, the story is intriguing. Winters starts off with a basic study of collage life, but soon get pulled into the greater mystery of serial suicides about campus. Hints of conspiracy and cover up pepper the story.

Jumping back and forth in the time line, the narrative is at times hard to follow. There are a lot of characters, all with relatively small parts; who tell the story between them. This leads to a very rounded, if piecemeal storyline. It certainly kept me guessing, with a gradual build up throughout the book. However there wasn't all that much action. The action scenes weren't my favourite, some of them felt rushed, or were more hinted about than actual told. But this did fit in well with the rest of the style.

It was quite unemotional in it's telling, as I said, a bit like a piece of academic writing. The transcripts of interviews used to tell most of the story read like exactly that. Transcripts of study interviews. The in between narrative also switched between times and characters, making it difficult to really get into any specific one. Although I did come to like all of the students, I felt that I didn't really know them all that well.

I can't really comment on how realistic the collage was, since I'm British and go to a British uni. There were plenty of aspects I did recognise however; people trying to fit in; people moving rooms to get away from arguments were just a few concepts. Although I think that British introductions at uni seem to involve a lot more alcohol! That's something to remember for British readers, 18 year olds starting collage can't drink in the US! I kept forgetting, oops.

So overall, it is a good read and a worthwhile addition to your library. And at 77p for the kindle version, it's a bargain too!

Reading time: took about 5 hours, a good solid length book (I read fast)

Happy Reading

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### **Kyle Wendy Skultety (gimmethatbook.com) says**

I had to give up on this after about 75 pages. The premise was good but the writing wasn't interesting enough to hold my interest, and the plot jumped around from person to person, mixed in with student's personal blurbs. Just didn't feel like I was enjoying it, and I didn't even care to find out who was the killer.

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### **Carol-Ann says**

With all due respect to the author, I must say I found this book to be a meandering tale of university life. The book blurb promised something exciting, but many incidents were vague and unfinished and the plot very thin. There were no real characters to identify with. There seemed to be many gaps and abrupt, unfinished endings, which left me frustrated. Although it does contain an interesting look at the first challenging year of university life, it is probably more likely to be a book that students planning to enter a university might like to read, and perhaps some of the parents. It might also serve as a caution to parents to thoroughly research universities and associated personnel before enrolling any children.

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### **Cate says**

This book is the first in a series, Halls of Ivy, and centres around campus life.

I've never read a fiction book written quite like this one. Opening with a prologue the Author compels the reader to continue reading to discover how we came to this point, and in that respect it is well written and, at the same time, very deceptive as it promises more than it actually delivers.

It is composed of, what can only be described as biographies and transcripts of interviews the main female lead conducts with numerous college students; a third person narrative from the lead character and various students, all combining to make it seem more like reading a dissertation with a plot woven in, rather than an actual novel. Because of the way it is written, it did not have any deep character development, although the Author took steps to start placing the foundations of a back story and interesting character traits for the female lead, in preparation for future books in this series that she might appear in. One flaw the reader soon discovers about the lead is their way of narrating events, she does it in a very disconnected, concise and clinical way, almost as if she is continually giving evidence throughout this books pages. As to the rest of the characters, there are lots of them as can be expected in a campus life book, they all have generally small parts in the telling of the story and this leads to the reader not being able to really connect with any of them although, as in real life, there are some we like and some we just can't warm to.

Location descriptions for Florida are very good, even down to the general complaint about the weather, but apart from that there was nothing in this book that really made it stand out in my mind and made me feel as if I were there observing the storyline unfold.

The idea behind this novel is very good, and taking place as it does on campus, it provides the Author with plenty of material for upcoming books in this series. This is a great little mystery book and fits very comfortably in that genre, so I am recommending it to those who are lovers of a good mystery and like to figure things out.

Originally reviewed on: <http://catesbooknuthut.wordpress.com/...>

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## Debbie says

I received this book free from the author on Goodreads in exchange for a review.

A great book about a woman, Cheyenne Winters, doing a dissertation about college life at Sun Valley University who stumbles upon a suicide trend.

The story, including the notes and interviews of Cheyenne, was very well written and really kept me intrigued. While there were a lot of characters involved (it does take place at a college), it wasn't that hard to keep track of them because of the letters each student had written to introduce themselves to Cheyenne.

An interesting story with an in depth character study of Freshmen (Mavericks, in this case) that is very intriguing and held my interest throughout.

I would highly recommend this book.

