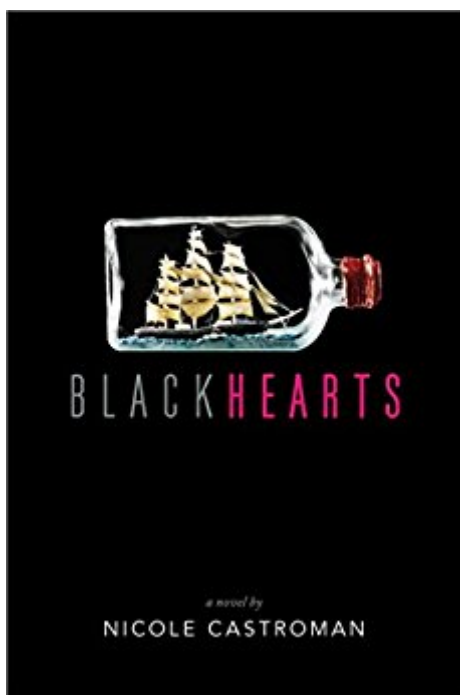


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Blackhearts



Synopsis

In this stunningly creative debut *Teach*—“filled with well-drawn characters and smoldering passion.” (Booklist) Nicole Castroman reimagines the origins of history’s most infamous pirate—Blackbeard. When Edward Teach Drummond, son of one of Bristol’s richest merchants, returns home from a year at sea, he finds his life in shambles. Betrothed to a girl he doesn’t love and sick of the high society he was born into, all Teach wants is to return to the vast ocean he calls home. There’s just one problem: he must convince his father to let him leave and never come back. Following the death of her parents, Anne Barrett is left penniless. Though she’s barely worked a day in her life, Anne takes a job as a maid in the home of Master Drummond. Lonely days stretch into weeks and Anne longs to escape the confines of her now mundane life. How will she ever achieve her dream of sailing to Curaçao—her mother’s birthplace—when she’s trapped in England? From the moment Teach and Anne meet, they set the world ablaze. Drawn together by a shared desire for freedom, but kept apart by Teach’s father, their love is as passionate as it is forbidden. Faced with an impossible choice, Teach and Anne must decide whether to chase their dreams and leave England forever—or follow their hearts and stay together.

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Customer Reviews

Whether you've always been curious to know more about Blackbeard before he became such a notorious pirate or your interest was piqued after reading this book's description, Nicole Castroman's **BLACKHEARTS** promises to more than satisfy. The author's imagining of Teach's earlier life with the girl who captured his heart reveals a life that is just as exciting as his life at sea. Deception, betrayal, secrets, lies, and forbidden romance are only a handful of the things that await readers and characters alike in this riveting tale.

Anne Barrett was looking for any way to escape the prison that was the Drummond household. She did not fit in with the other staff and being a maid would never earn her the money she needed to afford passage on a ship headed to the West Indies, a place she thought she might be able to call home. She had a plan. It was risky. And while she knew there was a real chance it would fall apart, that she'd be captured and forced to stay, she never imagined having a reason she might want to.

Edward Drummond hated the fact that he had to return home to a job he didn't enjoy and a life he didn't want. His time at sea didn't quench his thirst for it, rather it ignited a passion in him to captain a ship, set sail, and leave the land behind. But with a promise made that his father is dead set on ensuring he keep, a plan for his future that has already been mapped out, and no means of securing a ship on his own, it seems his dream of a life at sea will only ever be that. A dream. And while he wants to honor his commitments, the prospect of living a life on land feels like a fate worse than death. At least until he meets a girl just as alluring as the sea.

Nicole Castroman imagined a story that is stunning and romantic and heartbreaking and spellbinding. It has moments that are funny and heartwarming and others that are nail-biting and suspenseful. Its two main characters, Anne and Teach, are immensely likable. It offers a couple of twists to keep things interesting. And it delivers a conclusion that will leave you desperate for more.

BLACKHEARTS is not a pirate story, but rather a pirate-in-the-making story. And while there are no swashbuckling tales of adventure on the high seas for Anne and Teach, there is definitely some adventure and plenty of romance. It is a beautifully written, remarkably well-researched, gorgeous must-read that weaves together fact with fiction to bring to life many of the missing pieces from one of history's most famous pirates.

Nicole Castroman's *Blackhearts* was pure magic! For me, this read was definitely charting new waters for me. As it's more of a historical fiction novel. No magic, no paranormal, no fantasy. The only thing that drew my eye to this was the fact that it's a pirate story! An origin one at that! I don't really know much about Blackbeard, other than what *Pirates of the Caribbean* has taught me, and let's face it I haven't seen that particular movie (for it was the last one without Orlando, right?) in years. But yay for a new one coming out this year! Back to the topic on hand! While this is an origin story about Blackbeard, I was a bit more upset that there weren't pirates really in the story. But in a way, it makes sense. Edward Teach's Drummond wasn't born a pirate. If anything he was born a boy of privilege who longed for something more. He went away for a year to sail on his father ship and when he comes home, there's an unexpected surprise waiting for him. Anne was a delight! She's our leading lady and cohort of the novel. She's hit hard times after the deaths of her parents and since she's basically only half white, she's looked down upon. She is a maid in the Drummond household and her first introduction to Teach was quite memorable, though Teach would say otherwise! The two don't really hit it off right away, but then they begin spending more time together and soon a friendship is formed because they're a lot like the other one. If only Teach wasn't engaged to be married to an upper-class halfwit. And yeah, his bride to be, Patience, is no winning lady. I really enjoyed the gradual relationship growth between Teach and Anne. It wasn't a direct hate to love, it was a nice slower paced kind. And I think that's what makes it more heartwarming. Amidst this budding relationship we still have a little bit going on, for soon Teach is accused of piracy and this is a time when all pirates are sent to the gallows. Then we have the fact that Anne has been taking a few items from around the house in order to buy her way onto a ship to possibly visit the West Indies where her mother came from before she was sold into slavery. But life changes fast for Anne when her identity comes to light in the Drummond household. And there are still more secrets going around! *Blackhearts* is definitely a different kind of read. Not even touching on the pirate origin story, but it's different because of other things too. For one the pacing is rather slow, I'll admit, but at the same time you hardly seem to notice. The plot may move slow, but the character development is truly spot on. We're seeing two different people who started out hating one another begin to

grow closer and fall slowly in love. And then naturally, disaster strikes again and again! We all initially thought this might be a standalone that ends with a terrible cliffhanger, but we now know that it's a trilogy! Initially I thought it was a duology, but apparently there's going to be another one after Blacksouls! Which totally has me wondering what might be happening! The course is set for the next novel, I won't tell you what that is of course, but it's a cliffhanger so you can pretty much imagine we need to get ourselves back on level ground. Where the next adventure might take us is unclear. I would like to think there might be a better sense of adventure in the next one. This one was good, but the story itself was a little lacking for me. But again I will say the characters more than make up for it! I felt such a range of emotions too! The fact that our characters are of two different races in their given time period which is set in 1697, you pretty much know that wasn't a good time for peace, also presents its own tension. Let alone the fact that Teach's father is an ass. As I said, a lot of emotions going on with me when reading this one! And the ending, god I don't know how all you people who read this when it came out have managed to survive for this long! It was quite the gut puncher! I am so glad I can immediately turn to Blacksouls! But I do fear for the worst with that ending too. I thought I heard it too ended with a scream-worthy cliffhanger! Eegads I'm in trouble! Lol! I shall be sure to let you all know how I will fare when I get around to reviewing the sequel! Blackhearts is a must read for any pirate loving fan! True, we aren't hanging out with the Pirates of the Caribbean in this one, but we're meeting a most famed pirate in his early days of youth. That can be an exciting thing in and of itself! Overall Rating 4/5 stars

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