



Visions and Shadows

Michelle Horst

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How do you sleep while your planet is dying?
Where would you turn to when your world turns on you?
Have you lived a life worthy of being selected as a chosen one?
Or... were you one of those who treated me like a freak?
Where you one of those who lived a selfish life?
I can only take ten from this dying world.

My name is Alchera and I have to save ten chosen humans, while fighting the shadows growing in my mind.
'Hope is the heartbeat of the soul'

WARNING:

This book is recommended for 18+
It contains scenes with sex and violence.

Visions and Shadows Details

Date : Published September 29th 2009
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Author : Michelle Horst
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Genre : Fantasy, Romance, Paranormal, Young Adult, Suspense, Angels

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From Reader Review Visions and Shadows for online ebook

Liza says

You read the book. You step back. And you look at life differently from this moment on.

This book shut me up-- while reading and after reading. Vaalbara gave me a breath of fresh air. I felt the vivid descriptions. Michelle's way with words are amazing and you can really read how much she put her head on this while making the story.

Vaalbara is a new world I left my heart in. I have totally felt every detail that Michelle has worded this book. I love how the characters were made into life. Firstly with Raighne and Alchera, to their relatives and friends on the other side of the Earth. This is not just your typical out-of-this-world love story but it also talks about the beauty and the ugliness of the world and human. Somehow, Vaalbara set fire in my heart to advocate goodwill.

Going back to Raighne and Alchera's love story, I really love it so much! Michelle put enough sprinkle of swoon- worthy and hot scenes between them. I kind of liked Carter during the late parts of the book but I'm glad that Michelle put a definitive happy-ever-after.

This book was made with a smart mind. I loved reading between the lines on the things that were said here that are really happening in real life. The wisdom that was made to life by the characters are very real and relatable, even some have really struck me.

All in all, Vaalbara: Visions and Shadows has aroused my imaginative mind. This genre is not dead. I want more! More of Raighne and Alchera. More of Vaalbara.

Johann says

I have not yet had the privilege to read the entire book, although I was honored to see some insights. So for me to comment on the book at this stage would be unfair.

However I have got the enormous privilege of knowing Michelle the author as a friend. I admire her work, her passion and excitement when sharing this project. I remember the first time she told me about it. Although it was via Facebook I could feel the energy and excitement.

The author of this book is an extraordinary person, and thus I believe that her work will be among the legends one day.

Well Done, Michelle

PS: please stand up against pirate downloading to ensure that these wonderful up and coming artists are not cheated out of their passion. That is the least you and I can do.....Pirating is theft!

Conny says

This is my first review of a book and this one really deserves it. The first thing I have to say is that I honestly bought it because I've read that the character Ryan/Raighne is based on Ian Somerhalder, which I adore as an actor and as a human being. I've been afraid that the story might be some teenie-crap but here's the truth:

I love this book. I've devoured this book. I couldn't stop reading it once I've started and I have literally have lived every single word written in it.

I cannot even count the thousands of pages I've read in my almost 34 years on this planet as a bookworm but I have never read a book written with more heart and soul than this one. You can feel every word, you can feel the passion, the love, the fear and the desperation of the characters.

Raighne is SO Ian Somerhalder as we, as fans and supporter, know him. The passion and commitment of this man (talking about Raighne as well as about Ian) is unbelievable, it's stunning. If you once have hugged Ian (like I had the chance to do) you can understand the calming and loving aura of Ryan/Raighne.

Vaalbara Visions & Shadows made me laugh my ass off, made me cry my soul out (because it 1. is a beautiful story about (not only) two souls belonging to each other and 2. it visualizes the condition of our planet and humanity in a kinda frightening way) and made me sigh again and again. It made me fear for my sons and my family and friends future on this planet, which we destroy every single day. And it made me afraid that there won't be a Vaalbara for us once the time has come.

This isn't only a book for Ian-lovers or teen-romance- and/or fantasy-lovers. This is a book for each and every one of us and it should really give us food for thought.

I thank Michelle Horst with all my heart and soul for writing this book and I am waiting eagerly for a sequel.

Sarah Baethge says

Vaalbara: Visions & Shadows by Michelle Horst is an exciting tale that focuses on the 18 year-old Aislinn as she comes to realize that nothing about her life is quite the way she has long accepted it to be. Aislinn is an interesting character who finds herself with no past, at least not until she was found alone at the age of 13. She has no close friends (unless you count an imaginary platypus), an incurable stutter, and a general dark outlook on life. Unexpectedly, one day she finds herself befriended by a strange new boy named Ryan. Aislinn comes to learn through him that her unusual, often demeaning life has long been planned out and given to her purposely. Not only that, but she and Ryan are secretly immortal. If that's not enough, he tells her she has been divinely appointed to pick out 10 people that she will see in visions to take for the beginnings of a new world! O by the way, Earth and all life as is known is coming to an end. You know; an apocalyptic, biblical, End of Days?

What it eventually comes down to is that Alcherra(Aislinn), Raighne(Ryan) and a few others have only 10 days to travel around the Earth and collect the people they are counting on Alcherra's visions for. It is a grand adventure with no time to be wasted, and the most terrifying villains attempting to prevent their success. The team can Magically travel through waterfalls, but that's not much of a help as the destruction of the world begins through earthquake, tidal wave, and horribly destructive winds. Knowing death itself is racing against them, can the heroes find and secure everyone they need in time?

Bryanna says

Title: Vaalbara: Visions and Shadows (Vaalbara #1)

Author: Michelle Horst

Website: <http://michellehorstauthor.wordpress....>

Rating: 4.5/5

Vaalbara: Visions and Shadows is a spectacular young-adult fantasy novel that combines danger, mystery, romance, and thrill into a fast-paced, action-packed book. Ms. Horst is a brilliant author who brings that magical land of Vaalbara to life bursting with vivid colours, images, and much more to meet the eye.

Aislinn Calder the main character is a beautiful sixteen-year old girl who sees herself as nothing more than an outcast doomed to live through the rest of her high school years alone - and maybe with her imaginary friend, Sid. Aislinn spends most of her time in the forest outside her adopted family's home sketching a waterfall that haunts her dreams. The natural wonder flows around breath-taking scenery and landscapes in a forbidden land.

Life seems to be fairly normal for Aislinn until she meets Ryan Eames, a charming and handsome young man who immediately takes an interest in her. A secretive young fellow, Ryan blows down all the barriers Aislinn has built and turns her world upside down. However, there is more to Ryan than he lets on. Shadowing the Earth plant is the ancient, secret world of Vaalbara. Raighne, aka Ryan is on a mission to retrieve Aislinn and bring her back to her homeland of Vaalbara where she can rightfully take her place as Princess Alchera. She will reign beside her two older sisters, Princess Alandra and Princess Fleur, and her brother, Prince Aurian under the watchful eye of their parents.

Time is at stake and the moment Alchera steps foot in Vaalbara, the clock starts ticking. The Earth is doomed to end and the existence of the entire human race depends on Alchera. She is destined to save ten humans and she will choose them from following her dreams. The Chosen will be saved from the crumbling planet and continue to live out their days in Vaalbara, where their skills will be honed for the next generation of man.

However, the journey that Alchera will have to take is not as clear as she thought it would be. Fate has set out a dangerous course that Alchera will have to face, one that will not only test her physical strength but also her endurance.

However, she will not be alone in this adventure. Alchera will have the assistance from Raighne and of course, her faithful sidekick, Sid.

The journey will be hard and tedious. Wills will be tested, but in the end, will it be enough?

Vaalbara: Visions and Shadows is a magnificent read and you will lose yourself in each detailed page. The characters and wondrous plot will keep you hooked until the very last, riveting word.

book provided by author for honest review

Eva Patricia Erkinger says

What can I say about this book...?!

First of all, I fell in love with it as soon as I started the first lines. A good friend of mine introduced me to VVS and I thought I could give it a try. Now I'm happy she did.

I didn't know what I should expect from this story. I think the sum isn't telling you anything about the actual story, but it's fascinating how a young girl named Aislinn/Alchera became such an important character. She is definitely young in her way, but such a grown up in others. She never failed to amaze me!

Her guardian Ryan/Raighne remembered me of a strong man that is willing to sacrifice everything to keep his charge alive and healthy. He has a great heart that's worth of a king! You will love him from the first moment you read of him!

Vaalbara - the world where Alchera was born is almost like earth, but the people from this world itself have an oldfashioned attitude. But it's not a bad thing, just very different from the human world. I like the thought that loving and fighting for each other means more than wealth and corruption. Mankind will learn that with their given lives.

Aside from a growing love between Alchera and Raighne an inevitable destruction of our beloved earth and their mankind is going down. And I think that's the main reason I loved and hated this book at the same time. I felt with Alchera and her followers and their fate to deal with all those what was crushing down on them. The author made me feel so strong for those characters, which was very captivating!

If you love mother nature, believe that love and faith are able to heal you, read this book. It's worth your time and you will love it as I did!

Thank you Michelle for writing such an amazing story. I'm looking forward for an sequel!!!

Conny says

I'm looking at the world with different eyes ... this book makes me think a lot.

Frank Tibbetts says

Vaalbara: Visions and Shadows, is one of the most beautiful, imaginative books I have ever read! Misfit, Aislinn, cannot seem to find her place in the world as we know it. Obsessed with the safety and security of her waterfall, it is the only place that she can be at peace. Although she can read palms and write poetry, she is considered a freak.

One day, a handsome young man by the name of Ryan appears at school and he is immediately taken with Aislinn, whom everyone alienates. As the two seem destined for love, Ryan tells her of Vaalbara one night, and takes her through a trip through her beloved waterfall. Aislinn is transformed into her true, immortal self, known as Alchera, the beautiful Princess of Vaalbara.

Author Michelle Horst takes us through a fast paced adventure through this riveting novel in which Alchera must truly learn to forgive; for it is her destiny to save ten chosen human beings from the destruction of the Earth.

One of the things that I admire most about this book, is the author's ability to control so many characters in this novel. Each one has such a deep and meaningful purpose and personality. I never found any of them simply "vague" or used as "fillers". This is a VERY well thought out, strategic story, and I was glued to every word.

The romance in this book had my heart beating so fast! Michelle truly knows the meaning of "true-love," passion and romance, and she makes every steamy word drip from the pages like sizzling honey. I couldn't put this book down.

Vaalbara is the new Garden of Eden, dear readers, and it is truly a masterpiece destined for greatness!

Rickie Shaver says

Just finished, Loved it I was sucked into it immediately and couldn't put it down!!! I have to say I have not wanted to read a book so much since twilight. The character dynamic did not turn out exactly the way I would have done it but either way the book rocked! Curious to see what her next book will be like.

Dana says

What to say about a book like this???

I never wrote a review on a book, but this one deserves 6 stars instead of those possible 5 stars and because of this I write a review.

Wow, this book took me far away to Vaalbara and when I close my eyes I'm still with all those wonderful characters I fell in love with!

Aislinn/Alchera is a very disarming person and I shared all her tears, sorrows and laughter with her. And of course I loved with her! Raighne was our hero, our light in the dark, our... everything. I'm still insanely jealous of her ;)

Michelle Horst wrote a book to entertain us with those lovely characters, but it is also a book about our earth and how we all (all human beings) treat it. People destroy our nature and our planet day by day and most of them do not realise it or they don't care. This book is about destruction of our beloved nature, it is about a new Deluge and Vaalbara is Noah's Ark. 10 humans get the chance to make a new start, everyone else is doomed.

Everyone should read this book and ask himself: Would they choose me to go to Vaalbara? Or will I stay on earth when nature fights back? I think many people would overthink their way of living of this could be our end.

Well, enough of those sad thoughts, this book really was over too fast. I sucked in every single word, and I would have also done it with 500 pages more.

One of the best books I have EVER read.

Dan Wright says

Whilst I don't try and give away too much in my reviews, in terms of important plot points and that stuff, in order to do a rounded review, I will be mentioning some plot points. So before I start, just beware that this review does contain some spoilers.

Aislinn is a young teenage girl that is kind of an outcast in her society – what with no real parents to speak of and with a rather disturbing talent of being able to see into the future. She thinks that her luck is in when she meets a handsome new boy at school called Ryan – who seems attracted to her for reasons she can't understand. Turns out that this boy is actually from the land of Vaalbara and his real name is Raighne and he's here to take Aislinn back home. Turns out that Aislinn's real name is Alchera and she is a Princess of the land. She is told that the end of the world is approaching and it's her duty to rescue the ten Chosen, who are the ones to carry on the human race after the end. She has ten days to rescue them before Earth is destroyed – so no pressure then!

The book is told from the POV perspective of Alchera and she is a strong heroine – starting off as kinda vulnerable and insecure of herself then gaining strength as the book carries on. Often she has conversations with an invisible friend called Sid, which are actually some of the funniest scenes in the book. So she is definitely a good heroine for this novel – especially considering some of the challenges she is about to face. Seeing as this book does have a very religious context to it, she could be considered a kind of Jobe/Jesus character.

Now, I have to be honest, I am in two minds of how I felt about the actual story of this book. Most Young Adult books I've read tended to be upbeat and with a positive feel to them for the most part. This book, I have to be honest, I found to be a little depressing and dark. I'm not saying that YA books can't be dark – after all, *The Hunger Games* has some pretty dark themes to it and even *Harry Potter* could be pretty dark sometimes. But I can't help but thinking that maybe *Vaalbara: Visions and Shadows* is probably a little TOO dark in places. After all, it's dealing with the end of the world and the death of an entire race – that is not a small subject.

I think my biggest problem with it is that I couldn't identify with any of the characters from Vaalbara itself. They seemed to be completely ambivalent and uncaring to the destruction of the human race – with the exception of the Chosen. Even some of the heroes I found to be cold and uncaring, so I really couldn't support them. Also, I didn't like the fact that Alchera (despite showing some feelings against this initially) made NO attempt to try and stop this from happening and just went along with it. She didn't have to have succeeded – but for me the story would have been better if she at least made an attempt to save her people, so that her humanity wasn't entirely gone. There was also a quite nasty torture scene in the middle of the book that I thought was maybe a little too unnecessary and graphic.

Now, I know the above may sound like I'm being overly negative – but I have to admit I am actually also impressed with it. I like it that Michelle Horst doesn't conform to a lot of YA conventions and does something different. And in fairness to the book, there are some extremely dramatic moments in the book and we do feel Alchera's suffering as she progresses – but we do also have some humour to balance it out. There is somewhat of a happy ending as well – I just wasn't sure I was satisfied with the way the story went about before it got to that moment as it seemed to glance over the fact that many people had died.

I appear to have conflicting emotions about this one. One part of me thinks that it's a very dramatic and powerful novel that goes against a lot of YA conventions – the other thinks that it's too dark and depressing and this may potentially put some readers off. However, I am going to meet this half-way because I don't think this is a bad novel in any way and it actually does have a positive message at its heart. If you are prepared to have an open mind and don't mind the dark content, then check this one out and be prepared to lose yourself in the drama of the piece.

Melissa Cheslog says

Amazing! Captivating! Action Packed! Exciting! Beautiful! Suspenseful! Well-Written! I absolutely loved this book. I was instantly drawn into this story of Aislinn a teenage girl trying to get through high school when suddenly there is a new boy in school and he is interested in her. She has been known as a "freak" since being found in the woods five years before. The town psychic predicted that she would one day save people and be a hero. She has been a loner with no friends living in the basement of the Marks family. When Ryan the new kid comes in and wants to be her friend she is very skeptical. Soon though she ends up confiding in him and he ends up being more than what she ever could have thought. She continues to have nightmare involving a girl named Alchera and a place called Vaalbara. Ryan holds the key to her understanding this all. What comes next is a fantastic and exciting journey. I was transpired by the author's writing. I loved this whole story. I couldn't put it down. Absolutely one of the best books I have ever read!

Rachel Marks says

Normally, I tend to go with YA paranormal romances but occasionally I step out my comfort zone and read something different. I heard about Vaalbara: Visions and Shadows from a fellow blogger. Just from her description of this YA Fantasy I was excited to read it. In all honesty it has been a long time since I have been fully captivated with a book like I was with this one.

What I think I loved most about this book was how vivid the world was the Michelle Horst created. With the actual descriptions of the world, and the likable characters, I became so engrossed with the story that I could not put it down. Michelle Horst has an amazing way of writing that makes you feel like you are apart of the story. The characters had so much personality that I ended up feeling like I knew them personally by the end of the book.

What I also love about this story was the budding relationship between Alchira and Raighne. I am a sucker for a good romance, and this one just swept me off my feet. An added bonus is the love triangle the ultimately forms between Alchira, Raighne and Carter which will certainly leave fans on different sides of who Alchira should end up with.

If you are looking for a great YA book that is different from all the rest I highly suggest checking this one out. I cannot wait to see where Michelle Horst takes us with this series.

Amy Lignor says

Aislinn is our heroine - Ryan our hero. Yet, all readers should know that those are the names that will only be spoken in the normal, everyday world of high school. Aislinn is famous for her sarcasm. In fact, this writer found her to be a soul mate considering that sarcasm (as Jon Stewart has shown) is really the language that America best understands. Aislinn is normal, per se, but she has always felt like there was something far grander out there for her that she could feel in her soul, yet could only talk to her friend, Sid, about. Sid, a true sloth with the ultimate attitude will also become a favorite of ALL readers.

Always being a girl out of place, Aislinn blushes, stutters, feels odd - basically, she's your typical teenage girl. But this truly fantastical secret that is held within her heart, brain, and soul is something that creates the nightmares that disturb her waking life; frightening dreams that feel so realistic she can barely breathe at times.

Her life begins to change rather quickly when a new student named Ryan comes to town, and this handsome stranger sparks feelings in Aislinn that she never knew she owned. Her sarcasm is the way she gets through life, but as this new "heartthrob" continues to follow her around, Aislinn begins to notice some odd quirks about the 'new guy' that feeds her with more than just sarcastic lines. Ryan speaks as if he's from another time and place, and the stories he unleashes upon Aislinn have her monumentally confused. Is the guy crazy? After all, most 'hotties' are; their egos, alone, have grown so large they can barely balance themselves enough to smile and chew gum at the same time, let alone be normal.

As readers become drawn in by the overtones of a huge romance in the making - with trials and tribulations that vamps and werewolves have never even seen - facts are uncovered that show Aislinn the dreams causing her sleepless nights and painful days are actually...quite real. The names change as Aislinn leaves herself behind for Alchera - the girl she always was; and she follows Ryan, her actual guardian named Raighne who has been sent to bring her back home.

Going from living a life with no one who cared about her, Alchera suddenly receives a warrior sister who is SO un-accepting of Alchera that she can't even imagine how they came from the same mother; to inheriting yet another sibling who actually roams in the realm of angels; to discovering her parents - complete and utter strangers - who know far more about Alchera than she would like. Dealing with this whole new 'family unit,' Alchera is thrust into a world that was already 'set up' for her to live in - to train in - and to go on a journey that may just tear her apart.

As Raighne stays by her side and focuses on being her guardian and her beloved, Alchera must soon contend with Adeth - a monstrous immortal who will do anything to make sure that Alchera's journey does not succeed. And, Carter, the monster's son, who - in a twist of fate - goes from torturer to confidant in the blink of an eye. The only man who seems to understand Alchera's dreams and heartaches, and will do anything to help her.

The romance is beyond thrilling, and the ultimate decision of who Alchera SHOULD be with, versus who she wants to be with, will have readers panting over every page. On top of everything else, the journey to find a group of truly 'chosen' people, will have readers wondering how on earth Alchera and Raighne will survive.

The YA market, as we all know, is saturated with the stories of vampires; authors wanting desperately to imitate or duplicate the 'vamp family' everyone fell in love with and stood beside from twilight to a breaking

dawn. But as 'Forks' recedes into that good night and Vaalbara steps into the limelight, readers will be rewarded with characters who are so interesting, funny, fresh, and mouth-wateringly DIFFEREN'T from all the other titles out there right now, that the YA audience will be beside themselves with glee.

Pamela Lilley says

Oh my. Loved this book so much. Not really sure where to start. A fantasy adventure romance, that takes you between Earth and Vaalbara. It follows 18 year old Alchera and her family in her quest to build a new world. A beautifully written book that makes you wish with all your heart that the world we live in today was a better place. There is of course the love interest, her super hot guardian Raighne, and the sexual tension between them both is palpable, will they, won't they? Wonderful story that I couldn't put down. Highly recommend.
