



In the Serpent's Coils

Tiffany Trent

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Fairies can be downright dangerous!

In the Serpent's Coils marks the debut of **Hallowmere**, a dark, edgy historical fantasy series that teens won't be able to put down!

Ever since her parents died in the Civil War, Corrine's dreams have been filled with fairies warning her of impending peril. When she's sent to live at Falston Manor, Corrine thinks she's escaped the danger stalking her. Instead the dreams grow stronger, just as girls begin disappearing from school.

In the Serpent's Coils Details

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From Reader Review In the Serpent's Coils for online ebook

Alyssa says

The Civil War has just ended. The country is on the mend. Corrine Jameson awakes to discover everything she cares for is gone. Her parents are dead and she herself barely escapes a severe illness. With nowhere else to go, she is sent to Falston Manor, a boarding school run by a family friend. On first arriving, Corrine learns of the harsh world she never experienced when living on her family farm. She does make friends, but also must deal with strict teachers and cruel schoolmates. On top of that, Corrine continues to have frightening dreams, and find ancient love letters all dealing with the fey. While being unable to escape her frightening visions, she is also at a loss with whom to trust. As girls from Falston disappear, Corrine must unearth the truth before it is too late.

The cover for this book piqued my interest. I also love a good supernatural mystery and have been in need of a new series to read. In Tiffany Trent's first book of the series, In the Serpent's Coils, she delivers just what I was looking for.

Corrine is a girl who wakes up with nothing and must survive on her own. As she is sent to Falston, she is determined to keep a stiff upper lip and not let teachers like Miss de Mornay, and classmates like Melanie, get the better of her. Corrine is a well written character who has a strong sense of survival, yet is also a gentle and caring person. I grew to like Corrine very much. She is curious about the strange happenings at Falston and wants her friends to be kept safe.

There was one element of the story that kept nagging at me as I read. Corrine makes some frustrating choices. Now, having finished the book, it is clear these events had to take place. Also, it is refreshing that the main character did not blindly make all the right decisions, as such would never happen in reality.

I have not read historical fiction for quite some time, and I enjoyed it very much. It was very easy to let the story take me right into Falston Manor in the 1800s with Corrine.

The text is written so beautifully that I was able to admire Trent's writing skill and her imaginative story telling separately; together they created a wonderful novel. All in all, I loved the book and will be picking up the next, By Venom's Sweet Sting.

Samantha says

In the Serpent's Coils was a scary fairy story set in post Civil War America. We meet the main character, Corinne, as she wakes up in her uncle's house with no idea how she got there. Soon she is told her mother died of a fever that almost claimed her own life, leaving her an orphan since her father was lost in the battle at Petersburg. Corinne's Uncle William is stern and after she defies his strict rules too many times he packs her off to Falston Manor, a girls' reform school. Falston is everything her life in Maryland with her parents was not. The teachers are strict, the food is bad and the girls are locked into their rooms when they aren't in classes. The book slows here for awhile, despite Corrine's numerous nightmares filled with fairies and witches and her discovery of love letters a monk sent to a nun in the 1300s. But the plot picks up again. Corinne is trapped at this harsh boarding school. She believes the fairies or Fey to be her friends and the witches and their captain her enemies. But among the students and teachers, who is there to trust? While this

book isn't completely original, it is enjoyable and often compelling. The story is like a nightmare in many ways, with the prison-like Falston Manor, mysterious cloaked figures that are always there, always watching, and sinister adults who don't believe you're in danger. I wouldn't call this book fast-paced but it was good. I couldn't help comparing it to *A Great and Terrible Beauty*, because the stories are similar- a brooding boarding school, a Victorian era setting, disturbing magical goings on, and a band of misfit girls who join together. Libba Bray's *A Great and Terrible Beauty* is the better novel, but I still recommend this first installment in the Hallowmere series.

Celia says

I find it odd when I read the acknowledgements in a book and discover that an author's whose writing I have found cliched and uninspiring gives profuse thanks to authors I admire for all their encouragement. I guess enjoying someone's writing doesn't mean you'll share their taste in other books.

In the Serpent's Coils was one of those books - it starts off fairly promisingly, when Corrine's parents die, and her uncle sends her off to reform school after she has a close encounter with the fae. The reform school is suitably creepy, and several girls there have disappeared. But then the story doesn't progress from there - Corrine starts discovering old letters and the fae do creepy things. Corrine spends half her time trotting off to class and moaning at how hard she finds her French lessons, and wondering dopily whether the fae could mean her any harm. The plot wanders about schizophrenically and nothing is resolved - we all head off the Scotland on the last page, ready for a sequel. Which I don't be reading, needless to say.

Diana says

After losing her parents Corrine is to stay at her Uncle William, but Corrine is sick and sees things she can't really understand. To get rid of her sickness and hopefully her visions she does something she shouldn't have done and her uncle sends her to live at Falston Manor. Falston Manor is a reformation school for young ladies but Corrine is still having visions. But Corrine has more to worry about after what she did at her uncle's the Captain has been following her and what is it about witches? And what is it the weird letters is saying about the fay?

In the serpent's coils is the first book in the Hallowmere series and is a very interesting book. I was entertained all the way through the book. There is never a boring moment as Corrine is trying to figure out what is happening and who is the good ones and who are the evil ones. If you're tired of fairies always being the good guys you should try this book.

Tattered Cover Book Store says

This is considered a "teen historical fantasy" novel, the first in a new series called Hallowmere. I have to say it hooked me pretty hard. Set in recent post civil war times, it concerns orphan Corrine who is sent to live at a rather strange girls reform school by a seemingly uncaring and harsh uncle. The school is as grim as you might imagine, with a cold headmistress and an extremely unusual population with a whole lot of secrets. Like girls that have gone missing (who may have been sacrifices of some sort), strange, nearly vampiric Fey

living in the bushes just outside the gates, voodoo dolls and strange rites in the middle of the night. It's creepy, engrossing, and very well written. The second book in the series, *By Venom's Sweet Sting*, comes out in December. Book 3, *Between Golden Jaws*, is scheduled for April of 2008.

-Jackie B

Emily Michelle says

I wanted to like this book a lot more than I did. The premise is great--a girl finds herself caught in the struggle between the Hallowed and the Unhallowed fey--and Trent melds elements from folklore and fairy tales with a deft hand. The book is dark and wonderfully creepy, while still being appropriate for a YA audience.

That said, I simply could not get myself to like the heroine. At her best, she is dull and has few admirable qualities. At her worst, she is really quite stupid. She does something foolish and uninformed at the beginning of the book, and it causes mayhem and gets her in a huge amount of trouble and sent to a reform school. A few weeks later, someone else asks her to do the exact same thing again, *and she does*. It leads to, you guessed it, more mayhem and destruction. I know she's only fifteen years old, but really, I don't know many fifteen year olds who are quite that dense. Of course you don't want your hero to be superhuman and never make a mistake, but hers are so many and so stupid that I had trouble rooting for her.

Everything in the book except Corrine is really fascinating, so I'm going to keep reading the series out of a hope that Corrine will someday get a clue. If she does, I will probably like this book more.

Rachael says

In the Serpent's Coils is a wonderful new fantasy book that I read just a little while ago. It is filled with disaster, secret love letters, confusion, secret meetings, and the mysterious Fey.

At the beginning of the story, Corrine is sent to live with her uncle. There, she finds out that her mother is dead, and she has her first encounter with the people under the hawthorn bush. It seems like the hawthorn people are helping her, by curing her of her illness, but something isn't quite right.

By helping the hawthorn people, Corrine is sent away, although she isn't quite sure why. Throughout the book, there are a lot of secrets held by the adults, which often lead to trouble. There is more trouble in the form of a boy names Rory. Soon, Corrine doesn't know who to trust. This leads to even more disaster.

I found this book interesting and easy to read. It was also very educational because it takes place right after the civil war came to a close. The mystery and secrets involved held me intrigued until the end of the story. I can't wait for the sequel, *By Venom's Sweet Sting*, to be published. I would recommend this to any fantasy readers who haven't found any new and good fantasy books to read, because this is a fantastic choice.

Sookie says

Corrine, a girl who has survived the Ague fever and the death of her mother, is sent to boarding school in post-civil war Virginia by her Uncle William. Corrine has been frequently plagued by strange dreams and visions--visions of fairies and of her mother. Painful dreams. As she is settled in to Falston Reformatory School, she hopes she can escape the dreams--instead, they follow her. And she learns of a secret--a terrible secret about those who run Falston and about girls who were taken. Plus there are mysteries to be solved--whatever happened to her father? And what are the fairies, and what do they want from her?

Hallowmere is my favorite kind of book--involving boarding schools, fairies, secrets, old letters, and people who are not what they seem. Even though it was a bit darker than I was expecting--I still enjoyed it, and I'll be picking up the sequel this December. The only qualms I had with the book was that it was not whole--it's true that not every end can tied, but I felt like the book wasn't complete, and perhaps more could be explained. Still, it's worth the read.

~Sookie

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Marta Morrison for TeensReadToo.com

"I do believe in fairies! I do! I do! "

So begins the chant in the middle of PETER PAN to save Tinkerbell from dying. In Tiffany Trent's first book of the HALLOWMERE series, IN THE SERPENT'S COILS, you had better believe in fairies or you may find yourself dead.

The book opens to find Corrine, our heroine, deathly ill at her Uncle's home. She finds out that her beloved mother has died, and her father had died a few years before while fighting on the side of the North in the Civil War. She hardly knows her uncle and she quickly gets on his bad side.

While there at his home she starts having nightmares of the Fey, which are very confusing. She doesn't obey her uncle and gets sent to Falston, a boarding school for girls. The girls here are mostly unwanted. They get sent to Falston for many reasons, but mainly because their families don't want them. At Falston, they are treated like they are criminals.

They are locked in their rooms at night and are escorted wherever they go. The dreams that Corrine had in Virginia are now intensified. She is haunted by the Fey and is confused about who to trust, the witches who run the school, the priest, the very handsome groundskeeper who keeps saving her, and, of course, the Fey.

Things are not as they seem and the action is plentiful. This was a well-written and quite enjoyable story. It gave me some nice shivers and is the perfect fall book.

"I do believe in fairies! I do! I do!"

Faith says

I met Tiffany Trent, the author of this fantastic book, at the World Fantasy Convention last November. She did a reading from the book at one of the sessions I attended, and I knew I'd like it. It was finally released this past Tuesday (8/28), and I got a copy of it last night.

Wow!

I liked it even better than I had expected. And trust me, that's saying a lot, because I had high expectations for the book. Set in postbellum Washington D.C. and Virginia, Corrine's father is presumed dead after a battle. She and her mother had gone to Washington where her mother was working as a nurse.

Corrine wakes up to learn that her beloved mother is dead, and the locket that bears her parents' pictures is gone. She is her uncle's home, from whom her mother had been estranged, and her whole world has turned on end. She's still recovering from a serious illness, and she wants her mother's trunk that her uncle refuses—for the time being, at least—to give to her. But one day the mysterious creatures under the hawthorn tell her that they will grant her wish if she brings them a stone that reposes in her uncle's study. She complies, and is given in return two doses of something that resembles a dried sparrow's heart. Not only does she recover from her illness, but her uncle's den has been ransacked and her mother's trunk forced open.

When Corrine tells her uncle about the creatures under the hawthorne, he is shocked and angered, and sends her away to a reform school for young ladies. The school is like nothing Corrine could have imagined, and she very slowly begins to make some friends. But she's also having dreams and visions.

She doesn't know who she can trust, and when her missing locket is returned to her, she makes a choice. The repercussions of that decision send ripples of shock throughout the school and Corrine's life is altered in ways she could not have imagined.

This is the first volume in a series of ten; the next is due out in December of 2007. I can't recommend this any more highly.

Erin says

In the Serpent's Coils is the first book of the Hallowmere series, my most recent foray into fantasy novels with truly cheesy cover art.

Although I read Tiffany Trent's debut in record time, I had the feeling throughout that I'd somehow traveled this road before. Maybe it's just that when you get stuck on a specific genre (and I'll admit, I've read quite a few books along this same vein lately), they all seem to run together. But this book reminded me so strongly of Libba Bray's Gemma Doyle books, it was sometimes confusing.

In this introduction to the Hallowmere series, we meet the young heroine, Corrine. The novel opens with Corrine awakening from the augue (swamp fever) in post-Civil War Washington DC. Her father never returned from serving the Union army, and her battlefield nurse mother has died of the same disease that sickened Corrine. Orphaned, she is sent to live with her estranged uncle William, who informs the 16-year-old that he has no use or affection for children, and basically to stay out of his way.

Corrine is a curious and bright girl, so she quickly gets herself into trouble by meddling in Uncle Williams affairs and losing a precious artifact. As punishment, she is promptly sent away to a reformatory school for young ladies south of the Mason-Dixon line. More prison than school, her new home is filled with less-than-friendly classmates, strange teachers and haunting visions and dreams that begin almost immediately upon her arrival. Corrine spends this first book of the series learning about the history of the war with the Fae, her role in the battle against the unhallowed and of the Fairy Prince's strange fascination with her.

Overall, I enjoyed the book, but I wouldn't call it a must-read. I plan to read the rest of the series (because I happen to have them on-hand), but I'm not BURNING to know what happens next. I'd call *In the Serpent's Coils* a pleasant -- if somewhat predictable -- journey over familiar literary territory. Fans of Libba Bray or Melissa Marr's *Wicked Lovely* series will enjoy Trent's take on the "friends under the hill", and if nothing else, it's a quick read that doesn't require a lot of brainpower. Sometimes, that's the formula for the perfect literary escape!

Turtle says

I'll admit right off the top that I'm not one for vampire books. I've had bad experiences with them. Either I hate them for the gore or I hate them because they are just terrible works of literature (see the entire *Twilight* saga for details).

But I took an enjoyable class in college taught by the author of this series. Tiffany Trent often used samples from her own work in our class and I was impressed by her style of writing. So I went to a book signing after school and picked up one of her books.

It took me awhile to get around to reading it. But now that I have I wish I had picked up the rest of the series while I was there. I heard that the series was discontinued. This is really disheartening news. How can books like *Fifty Shades* become best sellers but little jewels like these be overlooked? It's just a darn shame.

Anyway, obviously I enjoyed the book. I liked the post-civil war setting which had to be the major selling point of this book for me. I love "historical" fantasies, (I'm actually not sure what else to call them). The time period setting really shades the events of the story and makes everything more gritty and real for me. I get the best of both worlds. Fantasy that I love and history that I love. Put together, makes for an awesome combination.

I enjoyed the characters and the depictions of magic. Honestly I didn't really have anything bad to say about the book, save for that maybe it ended too soon.

You can tell that Tiffany Trent put a lot of love into this book. And it's these kind of books that I really enjoy reading.

Eva says

Characters

The characters weren't bad, they were just...super bland. None of them, even the main character, were developed in any way, and I just never connected with any of them. The friendships between Corinne, Ilona, and Christina happened too fast and just because they were in the same club together. That's it. No similar hobbies or interests, it's just because they hang out after dark to rebel against being locked in their rooms. What sort of idiotic teachers don't check the locks on the windows?

The romance (?) between Corinne and Rory was not a real thing. If anything, it was some sort of accidental manipulation. It was so forced and fast it was simply *unbelievable*. Corinne thinks Rory is in love with her, and she claims to "know him!" but everybody else can see that he's hiding something. He obviously has a thing for Christina, and even *she* stays away. Corinne is so lovestruck but she barely knows his first name. I don't understand this girl. You need something else to do.

Story

The story, like the characters, was just bland. I think it has a lot of potential for development in the next books, but I really struggled to get through this one. Nothing offended me or was overly terrible, I just couldn't get into the book. I have a real hard time believing that Corinne is the sanest one in the series. She's terrible when it comes to guys, and never takes the time to get to know her friends. She's also terrible at following the directions and part of the problem is because she can't even *understand them*. The ending did pick up a bit, but due to the overall effects of the book I don't think I'll be reading the next ones.

1.5/5

An idea with some potential fell flat with dull and unbelievable characters, and relationships that didn't have real substance or explanation.

BizarreLibrary says

The Civil War has just ended. The country is on the mend. Corrine Jameson awakes to discover everything she cares for is gone. Her parents are dead and she herself barely escapes a severe illness. With nowhere else to go, she is sent to Falston Manor, a boarding school run by a family friend. On first arriving, Corrine learns of the harsh world she never experienced when living on her family farm. She does make friends, but also must deal with strict teachers and cruel schoolmates. On top of that, Corrine continues to have frightening dreams, and find ancient love letters all dealing with the fey. While being unable to escape her frightening visions, she is also at a loss with whom to trust. As girls from Falston disappear, Corrine must unearth the truth before it is too late.

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gentle and caring person. I grew to like Corrine very much. She is curious about the strange happenings at Falston and wants her friends to be kept safe.

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I have not read historical fiction for quite some time, and I enjoyed it very much. It was very easy to let the story take me right into Falston Manor in the 1800s with Corrine.

The text is written so beautifully that I was able to admire Trent's writing skill and her imaginative story telling separately; together they created a wonderful novel. All in all, I loved the book and will be picking up the next, *By Venom's Sweet Sting*.

Nicole Bunge says

Interesting historical YA read.

Main character is Corrine, a recently orphaned girl, takes place a few years after the end of the Civil War. She has dreams of fairies, and waking visions. She's 15?16?, and after her mother's death, is sent to live with her Uncle. She snoops and talks to the fey, and then is sent to a reform school.

Basically, none of the adults will talk to her, or explain anything and then she finds some love letters from the 1300s... it gets odd.

Still, it's well thought out, realistic and has proper historical detailing. The characters behave realistically in their respective roles (adults, young ladies of the time, newly freed slaves), and it's an interesting take on the Fey vs Mortals.

It's the first in a series, intriguing enough I'll follow it. Doesn't exactly end in a cliff-hanger, but close enough. I like that it doesn't give things away (some are still confusingly unresolved) or have big mocking soliloquy reveals. It's sinister and luscious, but not graphic or bloody.
