



Threads of Malice

Tamara Jones

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In this relentlessly gripping thriller, Compton Crook Award winner Tamara Siler Jones weaves together her unique blend of fantasy, forensics, and suspense to create a world terrorized by a killer out of our darkest nightmares. Now one man must follow a trail of savaged victims to save an innocent life hanging by the slimmest of hopes....

One by one, young men in the kingdom's outer reaches are vanishing into the dark. So far, two bodies have washed up on the local riverbank. But Dubric Byerly, head of security at Castle Faldorrah, soon realizes there are countless more victims...for it's his curse to be forever haunted by the ghosts of those whose deaths demand justice.

The latest to vanish is Braoin, a seventeen-year-old painter whose mother came to Dubric's aid when he most needed it. All Dubric knows is that the boy is still alive. But time is running out, and it isn't only Braoin's life hanging in the balance. If Dubric can't untangle the twisted web of clues and lies and find his way to the killer, one of his own pages will be the next to die....

From the Paperback edition.

Threads of Malice Details

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From Reader Review Threads of Malice for online ebook

Alethea says

This series is billed as forensic fantasy, although this particular volume might better be called forensic fantasy horror, as it's particularly bleak and gruesome. I found it interesting, and entertaining in its way, but I'm not certain either my stomach or my nerves are going to be up to reading it again...

Still, as with the first in the series, it's an interesting genre mashup, and I could definitely wish for more of the breed.

A.C. Williams says

Spectacular read. Captivating and engaging from beginning to end. I loved Ghosts in the Snow, so I was eager to dive into Threads of Malice. This book was far more disturbing, though. The stakes were higher, and there is a lot more action. A lot more darkness. A lot more grit. But it was masterfully and tastefully done. A great read!

C Joy says

It took me a while to read this because it belongs to my "public reads" section. The first few chapters were quite a bore and I felt that I started at the middle because of the lack of introduction to new characters. One has to adapt to the different terms used (month = moon, hour = bell, phase = week, summer = year), and while reading it I had a fairly good idea of their medieval ways.

As the story went on, I found myself turning page after page of mystery, it kept me guessing, and even speculated on the most unlikely suspect but I still got it wrong, and for that I loved the story. I only gave it a 4 because the gay angle really bothered me, although it was written vividly, I still can't imagine it. If it were a movie I'd close my eyes. I don't have anything against gay men, but I can't stand the rape.

I liked how everything was written, the gruesome tragedy those boys suffered, the mutilated bodies' descriptions, and the paranormal angle of the story. Most of the characters from "Ghosts in the Snow" reappeared in this book and we get a closer look at Dien's family. Dubric made startling progress with his love life and although I didn't enjoy those scenes I still appreciated that he fell in love again and that love was returned.

Another thing I liked is the balance of things, in the midst of the investigation, the boys' lives are in constant danger in the Reach, we can still read about the blossoming love story between Lars and Jess (Dien's daughter). I hope I get to see more of them in the third installment.

Lastly, I also liked that this book set me on the edge, and light-hearted at the same time because of the excellent writing style. In every story there's always conflict and with it the solution, but somewhere along the story there's a tragedy, and I'm not going to spoil it for those planning to read this.

Tara says

Ahhhhh, man. I really love this series.

So this is really just smut for the horror lovers. Like, the general concept is really awesome. It's about a man who is plagued by the ghosts of the wrongfully murdered until he manages to resolve the case. But over the course of time, the ghosts become more concrete in the living world. So much so that they are able to effect it to some capacity! And they themselves become violently dangerous.

This is pure smut for violence. It's so delightful. LOL It's so disgusting, I love it. I need more of it!!!!

If you're bothered by triggers of the sexual variety or triggers for seemingly needless violence, you'll hate this.

Valerie says

An odd forensic mystery/fantasy about a man who sees the ghosts of dead people until he can prove who murdered them.

Lolly's Library says

WARNING**WARNING***

If you are easily disgusted, if you are at all squeamish, if you are put off by graphic descriptions of violence, do not, I repeat, DO NOT read this book. To quote a review from the *Sequential Tart*, "For a nice, Mid-West housewife, Jones is a sick lady. I mean that in the nicest way."

In The Reach, the semi-wild outer lands of the kingdom of Faldorrah, young men are disappearing, being taken by someone, something unknown. Two molested and mangled bodies have washed up onto the shores of the local river, prompting Dubric Byerly and his investigative team to travel north, into The Reach and into the grip of dark and malevolent magic.

Searching for the latest missing boy, Dubric, haunted as he is by the ghosts who've died unavenged, soon realizes the deaths are far more in number than he could've imagined. Now, more than one boy's life hangs in the balance. The safety of Dubric's pages, Otlee and Lars, two young men ripe for the taking, is endangered by the plague of evil magic, once thought to have been wiped off the face of the earth, which threatens to rise again. Following the tangled skein of clues leads Dubric into a confrontation with the most venomous of evil images, a foe Dubric fought once before many decades ago in the soul-scarring Mage Wars. Will Dubric have the strength to vanquish this evil once and for all, before it destroys everyone and everything he loves?

I thought the first book was quite graphic and gory, but it was just a prelude to the violence depicted in **Threads of Malice**. Now, for me, that's not a problem as I'm not a squeamish person, but I'm not kidding

about the warning I posted above. If you've got a strong stomach, then by all means, go ahead and read this book. If not, please don't, although you will be missing out on some mighty compelling and powerful storytelling. Jones' books are not all about the violence; each story weaves a complex mixture of romance, faith, family, and ordinary heartbreak into the horrendous crimes which sit at the heart of each book. One might not think that tender scenes of budding love and innocent courtship could fit amongst scenes of such brutal horror, yet they do, providing a balanced counterpoint of lightness to the weighty bleakness of the crimes. Tamara Siler Jones isn't a familiar name in the fantasy genre, but I think it's high time she gets some well-deserved notice.

Jen says

I had forgotten how much I love this series. It's been over a year since I read the first one, and I fell for it hard. Dubric Byrley is the Castellan of Faldorrah, meaning he's the overall law-enforcement for an entire kingdom. He also has a big problem - he sees the ghosts of murdered souls until he avenges their murders. Not only is that a little creepy, but it causes him physical pain. And when the ghosts have been around for a while, they gain the ability to actually touch and move things, and so they can torment him by tossing his notes and things when he's taken too long to solve their murders. In this book of the series, someone has been taking the boys of the Reach, a rural area of Faldorrah, from thin air in the middle of the night. The local people believed it was a night spirit, and that's why no one ever found any remains of the boys - until a body washes up in the river. When Dubric arrives and inspects the body, it's clear that it's been brutally abused, both beaten and viciously raped, with a weird thread coming from the temple of the head. Dubric and his team immediately begin investigations, but when his youngest page disappears in broad daylight and he finds out his oldest page is at the top of the kidnapper's hit list, Dubric realizes he's running out of time. The story is pretty gruesome, but it's one of those can't-put-it-down books where the story is really interesting the whole way through and moves extremely quickly. It's not the kind of book to make me reflect on the world and my place in it, but it's a damn good mystery novel!

Quartknee says

Haunting and evocative... this reads like a gruesome suspense thriller which is probably why I tore through it so quickly. It's rare for me to read fantasy but the characters and this world are bleak but somehow quite relatable and far more realistic than much of the more fantastical entries in the fantasy genre.

The investigation is a bit more straight-forward and less circuitous than the first book. It's easy to see after completing this book that the author has honed not only her ideas but also her craft. While I suspected the ultimate culprit, I was never 100% certain until the 'whodunit' was revealed. At that point, I could think back and review how so many clues were just hidden in plain sight and much like Bray's painting in Maeve's bathroom. Seen one way and the clues are easy to dismiss as benign or innocent but seen via the mirror of review, their dark legacy is clear and unmistakable.

Karissa says

This is the second book by Jones that features Dubric Byrley as the lead investigator. All in all these books are much more heavy on the horror than the fantasy.

In this book Dubric and crew end up going to the Reaches to investigate the disappearance of a number of young men/boys. The residents of the area are convinced that "the dark" is stealing the boys and that there is nothing to be done. Dubric believes that the disappearances are a simple case of a serial killer being on the loose. Things end up being more complicated than Dubric could have guessed.

I thought this book was much better than the first book of the series. Dubric and Lars are great characters. The story is well written and well put together. There is a lot of action, lots of plot twists and turns, and the characters have a lot of depth and are interesting. This really is a well-written series, it's just not my type of series.

I have trouble reading these books because they go outside my areas of comfort regarding the blood, gore, and torture in them. This book crosses into uncomfortable, hard to read about areas for me. They are also very scary and I am not big into scary books, they tend to creep me out and give me nightmares. The only reason this book is considered fantasy is because it takes place in a fantasy type realm (castles, pages, etc.) and it touches lightly on dealing with magic. The book is definitely more of a horror/crime type novel.

So, while this book is superbly writing, the characters are very unique, and the plot is deftly twisted...I won't be reading any more of these books because they are too scary for me. Laugh if you like, but my husband was getting sick of me turning all the lights on in the house at night, so no more of these scary books for me.

Virginia says

Tammy's book is amazing. Great characters in a future setting after the world that we know has been destroyed and the rest of civilization is creeping back toward civilization. Though the story is supposed to be 500 years in the future, it has a medieval feel with castles and Pages. Dubric is the detective who is haunted by the spirits of the dead until he can solve their murders. He is the law in the area, in his sixties he is scarred from a fire in the past and suffers from arthritis but still an appealing character. This story is more graphic than her first but she did warn me. It is about a Gacy like serial killer so what he does is disturbing. I think she handles the subject well pulling you into the story because you have to find out if any of Dubric's young Pages survive. I will definitely read the third in the series now.

Michael Kucharski says

. Ghad, was this book brutal to its characters, a fine tradition started by Katherine Kurtz. It is an edge of your seat read, and even though I read it with long breaks/interruptions, I was left exhausted by the end of it. Granted exhausted but satisfied, not pleased but satisfied. As I said about Ghosts in the Snow, this is not for the weak at heart. Even though Denny has assured me that although the third book is perhaps better than the first and second novels, it is a little less brutal, I am going to give myself a month or so before I go out and pick it up.

Katherine says

I was given this book from one of my preschool students. His mom works for the Tribune and brought us in all the new books that they had to read and review. I picked this one thinking that it sounded interesting.

Wow, this book is disturbing. I still have images of horror running through my mind when I think of this one. I would not recommend this one if you are weak of heart. It is hard to understand how people can be so cruel to each other, especially young people. I would definitely not let my husband read this, he sees this in real life everyday, he doesn't need to read about it to.

Aaron Bunce says

Threads of Malice warrants an emotional, gut response, because...well, it's a book that demands one. Dubric, Lars, Dien, and Otlee all return in this book, traveling into the Reach to investigate some rather alarming rumors. The story that follows is a methodical, gut wrenching, and at times heartbreaking, thriller. Backstory deepens, characters bond, and our bond with them is strengthened in effect. It is shocking and gruesome, but for a reason. Don't listen to anyone that tries to tell you otherwise. There are moments of agony, moments of triumph (you go Lars), and moments that just may bring you to your knees. I felt emotionally tethered to the story, and the characters, which is something I can't often claim. Threads of Malice doesn't just suck you deeper into the Jones's vivid, fantastical world, but it forces us to address some of the more deeply seated and less oft explored sentiments: what it means to be human, and the chaotic and horribly complex components therein. As I said above, gut wrenching and undeniable, and in the end, masterful. Bravo!

Jennifer says

The second novel in the Dubric Bryerly series, I enjoyed this one more than the first novel, *Ghosts in the Snow*. While "Snow" was enjoyable, it was not as well paced, and seemed to lack the quick pacing and easy chemistry between its four leads that this novel had. I'll be interested to see if the third book continues the upward swing.

Threads of Malice is a dark, twisted horror story at first glance, more so even than "Ghosts." The mystery element only becomes clear a few chapters in--when it is finally determined that yes, there is an actual person behind the disappearing boys and their subsequent murders. The interlinked towns, the b-story line with Lars and the Sawworths, and the thread of Stuart and the Conrys ended up weaving together much better than the first novel, where I felt a little surprised by the ending. In this book, Jones seems much more confident as an author, and better able to weave the threads of the plot together (not unlike the villains of the piece weaving their own, malicious cloth).

There is a stronger supernatural element in this book than in "Ghosts," and the rules of Dubric's curse are more clearly defined. Jones also doesn't shy away from causing permanent damage to her four main characters in turn: First Dubric, then Otlee, then Dien, and finally Lars (in the slightly ridiculous yet chilling climax).

I really enjoy the rich world and the strong characters Jones writes here, as well as the mystery plot, and the well-written horror. This is shaping up to be an excellent series, and I'm very pleased overall with the first two books.

Captain Sir Roddy, R.N. (Ret.) says

Threads of Malice is a genuine, dyed-in-the-wool (pun intended) thriller that will absolutely keep you riveted to the edge of your seat. There are some seriously horrifying "OMG" moments in this extremely well-written fantasy mystery. Tamara Siler Jones has carved herself out a rather unique niche in current fantasy fiction--she calls it "forensic fantasy"--with her main protagonist of Castellan Dubric Bryerly, a survivor of the 'Mage Wars' and now the 'Chief of Security' in his Lord's castle. Young men are being murdered, one after the other, but who is doing the killing and why? This is loaded with mystery, magic, and some crazy-good old-fashioned suspense. This is a terrific series of novels, from a terrific new writer. I really do recommend that you read the first in the series, *Ghost In the Snow*, before reading this though.
