



The Magician's Lie: A Novel

By Greer Macallister

Download now

Read Online →

The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister

A USA Today Bestseller!

"[A] well-paced, evocative, and adventurous historical novel..."? ***Publishers Weekly*, STARRED Review**

"This is a book in which storylines twist, spiral and come together again in an ending as explosive as a poof of smoke from your chimney...or a top hat." ? **Oprah.com**

***Water for Elephants* meets *The Night Circus* in *The Magician's Lie*, a debut novel in which the country's most notorious female illusionist stands accused of her husband's murder - and she has only one night to convince a small-town policeman of her innocence.**

The Amazing Arden is the most famous female illusionist of her day, renowned for her notorious trick of sawing a man in half on stage. One night in Waterloo, Iowa, with young policeman Virgil Holt watching from the audience, she swaps her trademark saw for a fire ax. Is it a new version of the illusion, or an all-too-real murder? When Arden's husband is found lifeless beneath the stage later that night, the answer seems clear.

But when Virgil happens upon the fleeing magician and takes her into custody, she has a very different story to tell. Even handcuffed and alone, Arden is far from powerless-and what she reveals is as unbelievable as it is spellbinding. Over the course of one eerie night, Virgil must decide whether to turn Arden in or set her free... and it will take all he has to see through the smoke and mirrors.

"Smart, intricately plotted...a richly imagined thriller." ? **PEOPLE** magazine

"This debut novel is historical fiction that blends magic, mystery, and romance."? **Boston Globe**, Pick of the Week

"It's a captivating yarn.... Macallister, like the Amazing Arden, mesmerizes her audience. No sleight of hand is necessary. An ambitious heroine and a captivating tale are all the magic she needs."? **Washington Post**

 [Download The Magician's Lie: A Novel ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Magician's Lie: A Novel ...pdf](#)

The Magician's Lie: A Novel

By Greer Macallister

The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister

A USA Today Bestseller!

"[A] well-paced, evocative, and adventurous historical novel..."? *Publishers Weekly*, **STARRED Review**

"This is a book in which storylines twist, spiral and come together again in an ending as explosive as a poof of smoke from your chimney...or a top hat." ? **Oprah.com**

***Water for Elephants* meets *The Night Circus* in *The Magician's Lie*, a debut novel in which the country's most notorious female illusionist stands accused of her husband's murder - and she has only one night to convince a small-town policeman of her innocence.**

The Amazing Arden is the most famous female illusionist of her day, renowned for her notorious trick of sawing a man in half on stage. One night in Waterloo, Iowa, with young policeman Virgil Holt watching from the audience, she swaps her trademark saw for a fire ax. Is it a new version of the illusion, or an all-too-real murder? When Arden's husband is found lifeless beneath the stage later that night, the answer seems clear.

But when Virgil happens upon the fleeing magician and takes her into custody, she has a very different story to tell. Even handcuffed and alone, Arden is far from powerless-and what she reveals is as unbelievable as it is spellbinding. Over the course of one eerie night, Virgil must decide whether to turn Arden in or set her free... and it will take all he has to see through the smoke and mirrors.

"Smart, intricately plotted...a richly imagined thriller." ? *PEOPLE* magazine

"This debut novel is historical fiction that blends magic, mystery, and romance."? *Boston Globe*, Pick of the Week

"It's a captivating yarn.... Macallister, like the Amazing Arden, mesmerizes her audience. No sleight of hand is necessary. An ambitious heroine and a captivating tale are all the magic she needs."? *Washington Post*

The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #340259 in Books
- Brand: Sourcebooks Landmark
- Published on: 2015-10-06
- Released on: 2015-10-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.20" h x .90" w x 5.40" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Paperback

- 352 pages

 [Download The Magician's Lie: A Novel ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Magician's Lie: A Novel ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister

Editorial Review

Review

"In The "Magician's Lie", Greer Macallister has created a rich tapestry of mystery, magic, and lost love. The novel drew me in with its lush details and edge-of-your-seat plot. The tale of the tragic Amazing Arden, a female magician, will have you questioning how the truth of a tale can be different than the material facts, and how what you feel can be stronger than the soundest logic." - Margaret Dilloway, author of *How to Be an American Housewife* and *The Care and Handling of Roses with Thorns*

"Twisted together with magic, a drenching touch of evil, betrayal, love, and wonderful storytelling will make this a tale you won't soon forget. Is her story real, or a magician's lie?" - Becky Milner, *Vintage Books* (Vancouver WA)

"Greer Macallister handles the reader with the command and brilliance of a world class ringmaster. The "Magician's Lie" is a mesmerizing novel of illusion, secrets, and suspense. Bravo!" - Erika Robuck, author of *Call Me Zelda* and *Fallen Beauty*

"The Magician's Lie is riveting, compelling, beautiful, frightening, evocative and above all magical. Don't miss this immersive novel of suspense and wonder from an exciting new voice in historical fiction!" - International Bestseller M.J. Rose

"A suspenseful and well-researched tale of magic, secrets and betrayal that will keep you guessing until the end." - J. Courtney Sullivan, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Engagements* and *Maine*

"Like her heroine the Amazing Arden, Greer Macallister has created a blend of magic that is sure to delight her audience. The "Magician's Lie" is a rich tale of heart-stopping plot turns, glittering prose, and a cast of complex, compelling characters. Reader beware: those who enter Macallister's delicious world of magic and mystery won't wish to leave!" - Allison Pataki, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Traitor's Wife*

"In The "Magician's Lie," Greer Macallister has created a rich tapestry of mystery, magic, and lost love. The novel drew me in with its lush details and edge-of-your-seat plot. The tale of the tragic Amazing Arden, a female magician, will have you questioning how the truth of a tale can be different than the material facts, and how what you feel can be stronger than the soundest logic." - Margaret Dilloway, author of *How to Be an American Housewife* and *The Care and Handling of Roses with Thorns*

"[A] well-paced, evocative, and adventurous historical novel..." - *Publishers Weekly*

"A little taste of *The Night Circus*, and little salt of *Water for Elephants*, The "Magician's Lie" by Greer Macallister is a wonderful combination of magic, vaudeville and the drama of a secret life." - Annie Philbrick, *Bank Square Books*, Mystic CT

"In her historical fiction debut, Macallister... has created a captivating world of enchantment and mystery that readers will be loath to leave." - *Library Journal*

"Greer Macallister's novel will surely capture the imagination of all readers waiting impatiently for the next *Water for Elephants*... intense character development, spot-on historical references, and page-turning action." - Nancy Simpson-Brice, *Book Vault* (Oskaloosa, IA)

"Readers may well compare Greer's novel to *The Night Circus*, as it revolves around the mysterious world of magic and illusions... the story is spun like a bard's hypnotic tale. By the end, the reader is left wondering what is real and what is illusion." - RT Book Reviews

About the Author

Raised in the Midwest, Greer Macallister is a poet, short story writer, playwright and novelist whose work has appeared in publications such as *The North American Review*, *The Missouri Review*, and *The Messenger*. Her plays have been performed at American University, where she earned her MFA in Creative Writing. She lives with her family in Brooklyn.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

Chapter One

Waterloo, Iowa

July 23, 1905

Six o'clock in the evening

Tonight, I will do the impossible.

The impossible is nothing new to me. As I do every night, I will make people believe things that aren't true. I will show them worlds that never existed, events that never happened. I will weave a web of beautiful illusion to snare them, a glittering trap that drags them willingly with me into the magical, false, spellbinding world.

Before that, I will gather my strength. I will remain motionless, barely even breathing, here in this chair, while preparations happen around me, to me. I feel the feathery touch of brushes on my cheeks, on my chin, as my face is made up for the stage. I feel a heavy thumb press down on my eyelid. Another hand lightly, lightly edges it with kohl. Fingers twist and pin my hair into place, snap a heavy gilded bracelet onto my wrist. It's not possible to ignore the hands, but I focus on not reacting to them, on not reacting to anything.

I go through the act inside my head, rehearsing my patter and my gestures, seeing the whole night unfold. I welcome the crowd and take charge of the theater. I produce hats from nothingness. I transport coins through the air with a snap of my fingers, turning gold into nothing into gold again. The details of each scene bloom and dive and swarm through my head as I picture the evening from first curtain to final bow, here in the chair, silent and still. Without giving any outward sign, I dance on the inside, hearing every trilling and tender note of the music, practicing every elegant step.

When it's time, I rise on command and step into the dress held out for me, bowing my head. The dress is always last. This is how we proceed every night, and at least in this way, tonight is the same as every other. The hands close up the back of the dress, waist to neck, and then turn me around to pass three tiny buttons through three tiny loops, covering my throat, and my costume is complete.

Onstage I will act as I always act. I will do many impossible things. I will make mysteries of scarves and coins, enchant the audience sweetly, misdirect their attention to take them by surprise. I will entertain and flatter. Then I will close the show, as I always do, with the Halved Man. I will cut a man in two, severing him through his trunk, and he will scream for mercy as the blood pours forth. The audience will be unable to believe what they see, but neither will they be able to reject it. It will look entirely real.

Then I will heal him. He will spring up whole again, wiping away the blood from an expanse of flawless skin, as if there had never been a wound. My healing powers are legendary, though no one really knows their true extent. They don't know how I wish away my own injuries, the cuts and bruises, the burns, the broken bones. It isn't part of my legend, but it's part of my life.

I'm escorted to the stage, as I always am, another set of footfalls moving exactly in concert with mine.

This is the routine now, every night.

This is the life of the most famed female illusionist in the world, very nearly the only one in existence, the life I have made for myself through luck and talent and sheer will. This is the life I have decided to leave behind. This is the life I will end.

Tonight, I will escape my torturer, once and for all time.

Tonight, I will kill him.

Seven o'clock in the evening

The magician raises the ax high over her head, lets it hang there a moment, then brings it down in one broad stroke.

The sound of splintering wood rings through the theater. At the same time, there's a scream. It sounds like an animal, but Holt knows it's a man. It's the man in the box, a box the woman onstage just drove an ax straight into. Blood gushes out over the sides of the box, pooling wetly on the floor. He almost vomits.

The blood's got to be fake. This is an act, he reminds himself, all an act.

His friend Mose whispers, "Like I told you, right? Never seen anything like it!"

"Never," agrees Officer Holt.

As latecomers, they're standing all the way at the back, behind the seated crowd, and he looks over the heads of several hundred silent Iowans, holding their collective breath. Even from here, he has a clear view of the stage. Earlier in the magician's act, there were elaborate sets, like a life-size replica of ancient Rome, with a dozen dancing slave girls and lute players galore. Now there is only the magician, and her ax, and a man's head and feet protruding from the ends of a long box like a coffin on tall wheels, now half-split through the middle and seemingly soaked with blood.

She raises the ax and swings it down again, workmanlike, as if it were only wood she's splitting. The man bellows once, twice more, and then falls silent.

The audience waits.

When the magician tosses away the ax, it clatters to the floor with a sharp report, but she doesn't seem to hear it. She lays her bare hands on the splintered wood and slowly, slowly pushes the two halves of the broken, bloody box apart. She shoves half of the box offstage to the right, returns to the center, and shoves the other half offstage to the left.

Holt finds himself leaning forward, rapt.

At the edges of the stage, ribbons of black smoke rise in slow currents. The smoke swirls and grows,

spreading in inky clouds toward stage center, until the magician-standing with her long, pale arms thrust into the air, waiting-is swallowed whole.

There is a noise like a thunderclap, and the black smoke turns white.

Another noise, and the smoke is gone altogether, along with the magician.

Then there are murmurs from the front of the theater. A disturbance in the audience, shifting motions, turning heads. Something's happening in the front row. Holt can't see what it is, trapped in the back with his roiling gut. He wants to surge forward. He burns to know how this all ends.

All at once, everywhere around him, applause breaks out, so loud it hurts his head. People gasp, whisper, cheer. The magician is on the stage again-how, when did she get there?-with her arms outstretched once more. The sight of her takes what's left of his breath away. Her face floats like a moon above the high neckline of her sparkling black dress. One porcelain cheek is splashed with blood.

Then he sees what has amazed the audience. She welcomes to the stage the man from the box, whole again. The man grins and waves. Once broken, now healed, as if the horror and the blood of minutes before had never been.

It's too much for Holt, and he turns tail, pushes open the back doors, stands panting in the lobby. He hears Mose follow him, not too close behind. He stares at the nearest unmoving thing to try to steady his head. It's a poster for the magician, the Amazing Arden. She stares out proudly with one blue eye and one that's half blue, half brown. Her body hovers above a halved coffin. Strange stuff. There are other words too blurred for him to read. The fault is probably not in the words.

Mose says, "Steady there, Virgil," and claps him on the back.

"Not sure why you thought this would help," Holt tells him dryly.

"Take your mind off your troubles."

"Kind of you to try."

"If magic won't distract you, I know what will," Mose says and leads him down the street to a tavern, half-empty, friendly, dark.

They drink and talk of innocuous things: whether the lack of rain is stunting this year's corn, how little Janesville has changed in twenty years, how the taste of lousy gin seems to get better the more of it you drink. They don't talk about Mose's promotion, or their rivalry, or Iris, or Holt's bad news. Holt asks politely about Prudie and the baby but is relieved when Mose only says that they're well. Talking about their wives could open doors Holt doesn't want opened tonight.

They are still there three hours later when the door of the tavern bangs open and someone calls, "Sheriff Huber!" While Mose leaps up to answer, Holt remains on his stool. He sits by himself and drinks yet more gin he should leave alone. Unlikely he'll ever be sheriff. His hand creeps toward the small of his back from habit. He forces it back down.

When Mose calls to him, it takes a few long moments for him to hear and stir himself from his reverie.

"Holt! Up and out," says Mose.

"What?"

"It's a police matter." He points at Holt. "And you're police."

"Twenty miles down the road. Not here."

"Doesn't matter. You won't be there in an official capacity. But you're going to want to see this."

Holt rises as best he can and follows.

A few hours' time has transformed the theater and not for the better. The house lights have been turned all the way up, making visible the wear on the empty seat cushions, the stained and faded carpet. The voices of a small crowd near the stage carry all the way back as the two of them head up the center aisle.

Holt catches the metallic tang of blood on the air right away. The bile rises in his throat again, and he fights to keep it down. Pouring cheap gin on top of today's news and tonight's gore has hollowed him out like a rotten stump.

He keeps moving, forcing himself forward, even when he hears Mose frame the question, "All right, who found the body?"

"Stagehand," says one of the men in uniform. There are several, standing in a tight circle in front of the stage, heads down, staring through an open trap door. Holt joins the circle and follows their gazes down. Underneath the stage, there are another half dozen officers, clustered around the remains of the Halved Man trick. Where there are more officers, there are more lamps, and the space under the stage is almost as bright as day. He can see clearly despite the distance and the drink.

The long, coffin-like box is split in half, nearly pulped in the center by the magician's ax. The stains near the center are cherry-red, clearly fake stage blood, but the spreading pool of liquid around the base of the box is a darker red, somewhere between wine and rust. One half of the box is empty. A man's dead body has been jammed into the other half. As he watches, two of the officers free the body from the box. When he sees what sorry shape the dead man is in, he stops watching.

Mose calls gruffly to one of the officers onstage. "And they're sure who it is?"

"Confirmation from these two," says the officer, indicating a pair of trembling girls off to the side. They clutch each other's sleeves and wipe their eyes over and over again. "Tell them what you told me." But the girls are unable to string a sentence together, and at last the officer says, "It's her husband."

"Whose husband?" asks Holt, thinking he means one of the girls.

"The magician's."

Mose says, "So where's the magician?"

"Nobody knows."

"Obviously, we'd like to talk to her."

"Obviously."

Her trick, her husband, almost certainly her doing. Of course she's wanted for questioning. Holt pictures that ax falling again, the matter-of-fact way she brought it down, without hesitation. The image is so clear in his head that he thinks he feels the blade.

He should go home. He didn't sleep last night, just lay in his bed in a panic, and it's starting to catch up with him.

He taps his friend on the shoulder and says, "Listen, I'm going to get on the road."

"Just let me-"

"No, you need to stay. Good luck, Sheriff Huber. I think you may need it."

"Why don't you stay the night?" Mose asks. "We've plenty of room."

"No, thank you. Really need to get home. Iris'll worry," he says, all of which is true.

Outside in the warm night, the summer air does little to clear his head. He swings his leg over his horse and lowers himself into the saddle inch by inch, angry that he has to be careful about it. The alcohol has dulled the pain enough that he can almost forget it, but not quite. It still gnaws. He's sore from the doctor's poking and prodding, as if the wound itself weren't bad enough. At least he can put this place and this day behind him now. He turns the horse's head toward Janesville.

Fifteen miles down the road, still five miles from home, he slows at the crossroads. The night is silent and warm. For a moment, he pictures himself turning right. Continuing east toward Chicago and Ohio and New York City and the Atlantic Ocean, none of which he's ever seen. Throwing caution to the wind and spurring the horse as fast as he can go, galloping across the open flat land till they're both gasping. Hunger is what makes up his mind in the moment. The lighted window of a restaurant just before the bend, perched here for travelers at all hours, draws him. The road will be there afterward either way.

He ties his horse out front, goes inside, takes a seat. Late as it is, just past midnight, the only other customer is a gentleman in the corner with his head down on the table like he's asleep. Reading the menu, Holt wipes his face with a handkerchief and feels the alcohol sweating out of his pores. He asks for coffee, but this time of night, they don't have a pot ready, and the waitress disappears to put one on fresh. Every single thing on the bill of fare sounds delicious. Fried ham and creamed hominy, roly-poly pudding, and blueberry pie. He could hardly go wrong, whatever he chooses. As Iris says, hunger is the best sauce. He loses himself for a moment, thinking of her. She doesn't yet know the news he heard today. He isn't sure what to tell her. Or what to tell anyone. No doubt they'll force him to resign, give up his position as the town's only police officer. Who will he be then? Would Iris still love a nobody, if that's who he becomes?

The bell atop the door frame jingles. He glances up from the menu for just a moment, and when he does, the whole world shifts.

In the doorway is a young woman in a long cloak, gripping a valise. Since he last saw her, she has wiped the fake blood from her cheek.

He wastes no time, standing from his chair and meeting her in the doorway, before she can step farther inside. He reaches for her elbow and says, "Ma'am?"

She seems much smaller now than she did onstage. She stares up at him with those odd, mismatched eyes. One blue eye, like a regular eye, the left one. The right one, half brown, half blue. Divided right down the

middle, straight as a plumb line. Even if her sparkling black gown weren't peeking out from under her cloak, which it is, the eyes would have given her away.

He says in a clear, firm voice, "I'm Officer Virgil Holt of the Janesville Police Department. I'm placing you under arrest, ma'am. On suspicion of murder."

"Murder!" she exclaims, blinking, her hand flying to cover her lips. "Sir?"

"Don't be alarmed, ma'am. Just come with me and we'll discuss it," he says, reaching for her elbow, which he almost manages to hold for a moment before she bolts.

They struggle in the doorway, and the bell jingles madly as he maneuvers her outside. As they jostle and his shoulder slams into the door frame, the thought strikes him-he shouldn't be doing this, it's dangerous-and he relaxes his grip just a little.

She breaks free and runs as he stumbles, righting himself quickly, but not quickly enough to hold her. When he looks up, he sees her untying his horse and neatly balancing on the rail to hop up onto its back. He lets her. Because when he whistles for his horse, it brings her over to him, and he smoothly mounts up into the saddle behind her while she's still figuring out whether to jump. The horse knows him well enough that he doesn't even need the reins. He locks both arms around the magician.

"Don't fight," he says. "We both fall off and get trampled, that helps no one."

She still struggles for a moment but seems too afraid of falling off the horse to put her whole self into it. She seems even smaller to him now. The top of her head is just under his chin, and her hair is twisted into ropes and knotted together. A clove hitch, like a hunter would use.

"I didn't murder anyone," she says, her voice hoarse and uncertain. "Who's murdered?"

He doesn't answer. Back in the restaurant doorway, he can see a shadow. Either the waitress coming out to see what's happened, or that other patron, if the noise woke him. Best to go before anyone sees. He can't stay here and conduct an interrogation on the back of a horse. He needs to find out what she knows, what she did.

North then...or south? If she's guilty, he should take her back to the theater in Waterloo immediately and hand her over. Mose is probably still there. But the horse, eager for his hay bed, starts moving in the direction of Janesville, and Holt lets himself-lets both of them-be carried. He'll sober up on the way. He can always bring her back. He's an officer of the law and bound to do the right thing, except he's not sure what the right thing is just now.

If she's guilty, she'll be the most famous criminal in the state in years. And he'll be the one who brought her in. They won't be able to force him out then, wounded or not. He needs all this to go his way. She could change everything.

Holt's head is buzzing and clouded, but the horse knows the way home.

Janesville, Iowa

Half past eleven o'clock in the evening

The station is a single room, not much more than a wooden box with a door on it. There's a chair and a desk and a window. Only the gas lamp on the street outside gives any light to see by. He drops her into the plain wood chair like a heavy bag of feed, a solid dead weight. She sags forward. Her reddish hair, now escaped

from its intricate knot, is a nest. He pulls away her cloak and valise and throws them near the door, which he locks, then grabs his uniform belt from the nearby hook and buckles it on in haste. Wearing his gun helps clear his head a little. He turns back toward her and sees she isn't moving. As he steps closer to examine her in the dim light, his foot slips on loose sequins. He loses his footing a moment, unsteady.

She is up out of the chair on her feet, a blur of motion. Instinct kicks in. He throws himself at her, arms around her knees, and brings them both crashing to the floor. Again he tells himself these exertions are dangerous. It's exactly what the doctor said not to do. But the doctor couldn't have foreseen this circumstance, and anyway, now he's in it.

He hears the air go out of her lungs. He's breathless too but recovers faster. A second chance. This time, he'll do better. He hauls her body up onto the chair again, shoves her against its back, and secures her wrists to the chair with the pair of handcuffs from his belt.

Will it be enough?

Officer Holt goes to his desk, feeling his way in the dark and shoving his own chair out of the way, and retrieves four more pairs of handcuffs. He'd use more if he had them. He affixes all four pairs to her slim wrists, one after another after another, to total five. He loops the chains through the chair back's straight wooden slats as he goes.

She's breathing. He can see her shoulders rising and falling. Mose told him all about her on the way to the theater. That half-brown eye is believed to be the source of her power. She uses it to hypnotize the audience into swallowing her illusions. He should avoid looking into it, just to be safe.

Just as the last cuff clicks into place, her voice ragged, she says, "I am not an escape artist. Perhaps you've mistaken me."

"I know what you are," he tells the magician.

"You have the advantage of me then," she replies.

"I told you, I'm a police officer."

"And yet you wear no uniform and you smell like a wet dog drowned in gin."

It stings that she's right. Now that his hands are free, he lights the lamp. "I'm a police officer, and you're a suspect in my custody. Those are the facts."

"Are they? And what am I suspected of?"

"As I told you when I arrested you, ma'am, you are suspected of murder."

"Whose?"

"Your husband's."

"Husband? Me? That's a laugh." And she does laugh, a short dry bark. But she shifts in her seat.

"Not a laugh. A fact. Your husband was murdered in Waterloo."

"Clearly, we're not in Waterloo anymore, are we? They have buildings. And electric lights. And a police

force that isn't made up of twelve-year-olds. Is that a mustache on your face or a pigeon feather?"

He opens his mouth to strike back and then shuts it again. He shouldn't be in this situation, but he is, and he needs to make the most of it. Whether he finds her company unpleasant doesn't matter. Whether she is a murderess is the only question. Once he has his answer, the right course will be clear.

"I'll thank you not to insult me, ma'am," he says and moves his hand a few inches, resting it on the butt of his gun.

Her eyes flick down and then up again, and he knows she gets his meaning.

"Please," she says, in a softer voice. "No more 'ma'am.' Call me Arden."

"Due respect again, m-" He swallows the end of the word. "Due respect, I'm certain that's not your real name."

"It's the only name that matters, isn't it? The one on the posters. The Amazing Arden, the Alluring Arden, the All-Powerful Arden. Depending on the poster, depending on the town. And what town is this?"

"It's called Janesville," he says.

"Not very big, is it?"

"Big enough."

She says nothing for a few moments, and then her bravado seems to crumble all at once. "This is ludicrous," she says, sounding half strangled. "I don't-I don't even know-if it's-I didn't kill anyone, officer."

He expects to find her looking up at his face, watching him, reading him. But she is only staring down at her boots.

"Ma'am?" says Officer Holt.

When she meets his eyes, he sees the wetness on her cheeks. She's crying. Now that she's still and silent and facing him, she doesn't look like a powerful enchantress. She looks like an exhausted young woman in the grip of enormous sadness, helpless beyond words. It almost melts his heart. Almost.

He pulls the handkerchief from his pocket but immediately sees his mistake. He can't offer it to her. With five pairs of handcuffs holding her wrists fast to the chair, she doesn't have a hand free to take it.

"Just dab at my eyes, please," she says and raises her face toward him. "The salt stings."

He can't help but notice, while wiping the tears from her cheeks, that her skin is smooth and lovely. There's something childlike about her, though she's certainly not a child. If he had to guess, he'd put her about halfway between twenty and thirty. A little older than he is, but not by much.

"Thank you. Now, due respect, Officer Holt," she says, sounding resigned. "Let me say this again. I am not an escape artist. I am an illusionist. I could conjure a dove from nothingness if you like. Or I could pour a glass of milk into a hat, which will later prove to be empty. That's my business."

"You know your business. I know mine."

Her soft voice turning more insistent, she says, "Look, you're a lawman. I understand. You think you need to do this. But you don't. We can end this now. Let me go."

"And why would I?"

"If you don't, you're killing me. Is that what you want? To be my executioner?" She stares up at him fiercely, and he wants to feel superior, looking down on her, but he doesn't. It's the eyes. The half-brown eye, to be specific. As if she can see him on the outside and the inside at the same time. He doesn't want to be seen.

"It's not up to me. You'll get a trial."

"The supposed witches of Salem got trials," she says with obvious bitterness, "for all the good it did them."

He unfolds and refolds his damp, streaked handkerchief. "I can promise you a fair shake."

"Can you? Some think a trial with a judge and jury is justice, sure. Other people have a different idea of it. People who'd lock me up with vagrants and violators and let things take their natural course."

He can hear the edge of desperation in her voice now but can't tell whether she's put it there on purpose. He answers firmly. "Ma'am, I'm sorry; I have no choice."

"We always have a choice. Sometimes it's just the will we lack. And again with 'ma'am'? You won't call me Arden?"

"No." He folds his arms and avoids her gaze. He stares out the room's only window, as if she's not even interesting enough to look at, which of course she is. All else aside, she's a beautiful woman. But there is too much else to put aside.

Beyond the window, it is pitch-black. Darker than it should be. The gas lamp must have gone out, and now nothing is visible. No grass, no streets, no trees, no town. Just black. They call this the dead of night for a reason.

"Officer," she says at last, "could you at least do one small thing for me? Could you unbutton my collar? I-it's a little difficult to breathe."

It could be a trick, of course, but he wants her to trust him. So he reaches out for the buttons at her throat, taking care not to look her in the eye and keeping the hip with the gun on it on her far side, well out of reach.

There are three tiny buttons on the high lace collar of her gown, and once all three are open, he can see the vulnerable hollow at the base of her throat. He can also see a deep bruise across the front of her neck, a spreading purple mess roughly an inch high and several inches across. He spreads the lace of the collar open with his fingers to get a closer look. The bruise is a single thick line running side to side, as if someone had tried to behead her with something blunt. It is more pink than blue, with no yellow or green at the edges.

"Is this fresh?" he says. "It looks fresh."

"It doesn't matter."

He takes out the handkerchief to dab lightly at her tears, which have started again.

"It's entirely your choice, officer," she says. "To turn me in or let me go."

She's right, of course. He has to make the decision. Capturing a notorious murderess would change everything for him, but at the same time, what if she's innocent? The truth of what she's saying can't be denied. The law is perfect. The men in charge of executing it are not.

"Tell me then," he says. "Tell me what happened."

She does something he has not yet seen her do. Not in the posters. Not onstage. And certainly not since he recognized and apprehended her in that restaurant.

She smiles.

The Amazing Arden looks at him out of her half-brown eye, tilts her head, and asks, "Where does a person's story begin?"

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nick Jansen:

What do you think of book? It is just for students as they are still students or this for all people in the world, exactly what the best subject for that? Simply you can be answered for that problem above. Every person has distinct personality and hobby per other. Don't to be pressured someone or something that they don't desire do that. You must know how great along with important the book *The Magician's Lie: A Novel*. All type of book is it possible to see on many options. You can look for the internet options or other social media.

Charles Wright:

Do you really one of the book lovers? If so, do you ever feeling doubt if you are in the book store? Try and pick one book that you find out the inside because don't evaluate book by its deal with may doesn't work here is difficult job because you are afraid that the inside maybe not while fantastic as in the outside appear likes. Maybe you answer may be *The Magician's Lie: A Novel* why because the great cover that make you consider with regards to the content will not disappoint an individual. The inside or content is usually fantastic as the outside or even cover. Your reading sixth sense will directly make suggestions to pick up this book.

Tia Sargent:

Reading a book to get new life style in this season; every people loves to read a book. When you study a book you can get a lots of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, due to the fact book has a lot of information in it. The information that you will get depend on what forms of book that you have read. In order to get information about your study, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself you can read a fiction books, this kind of us novel, comics, and also soon. The *The Magician's Lie: A Novel* provide you with a new experience in reading through a book.

Alma Lewis:

A number of people said that they feel weary when they reading a book. They are directly felt this when they get a half portions of the book. You can choose the actual book *The Magician's Lie: A Novel* to make your own reading is interesting. Your own personal skill of reading talent is developing when you like reading. Try to choose very simple book to make you enjoy to see it and mingle the sensation about book and looking at especially. It is to be very first opinion for you to like to start a book and read it. Beside that the guide *The Magician's Lie: A Novel* can to be a newly purchased friend when you're sense alone and confuse with the information must you're doing of that time.

Download and Read Online *The Magician's Lie: A Novel* By Greer Macallister #9IY6UNZXDJ8

Read The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister for online ebook

The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister books to read online.

Online The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister ebook PDF download

The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister Doc

The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister Mobipocket

The Magician's Lie: A Novel By Greer Macallister EPub