



The Magician's Daughter

Judith Janeway

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Magician Valentine Hill always introduces her act by announcing Reality is an illusion. Illusion is reality, and nothing is what it seems. When Valentine is reunited with her grifter mother, nothing is what it seems becomes true in real life. A wealthy socialite turns out to be a ruthless criminal, a car mechanic a psycho killer, and a cab driver a seductive gangster. When an FBI agent who'd befriended her is killed, Valentine takes on the hated role of a con artist to get evidence to put the criminals away. Will her skills as a magician prove enough to help her maintain the illusion?

The Magician's Daughter Details

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Author : Judith Janeway

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From Reader Review The Magician's Daughter for online ebook

Victor Gentile says

Judith Janeway in her new book, “The Magician’s Daughter” Book One in the Valentine Hill Mystery series published by Poisoned Pen Press introduces us to Valentine Hill .

From the back cover: Magician Valentine Hill always begins her act with: “Reality is illusion. Illusion is reality, and nothing is what it seems.” Valentine herself is a case in point: she is unquestionably real, but she has no legal existence. Her mother, a skilled con artist, has never revealed Valentine’s real age, birth place or her father’s identity—except to say that he was a magician.

No grifter herself, the scrupulous Valentine has spent years searching for her evasive mother, desperate to learn the basic facts of who she is. Literally, to get a life. Robbed of her stake in Vegas, she chases it to San Francisco where a series of odd events reunites her with her mother who, Valentine is sure, despite her respectable façade, is playing one of the city’s super rich. And Valentine quickly enters a world where truly nothing is what it seems. A socialite is a ruthless criminal, a car mechanic a psycho killer, and a cab driver a seductive gangster. After a friendly FBI agent is killed, Valentine forces herself into playing a grifter’s role to put the criminals –and her mother –away. Or at the very least, get what she wants from mom. Will her skills as a magician prove enough to help her maintain the illusion?

If you think about it for a moment being a magician is really no different from being a con artist. The magician deceives you by creating a false reality, so does a con artist. The real difference is that we want the magician to deceive while we do not want the con artist at all. Valentine is on a search to find out all her real birth information. For that she needs to find her mother. And she actually does. that is when she finds trouble. And a dead body. And it spirals out of control from there. The story hums along at a fast pace as Valentine is working to figure out just what is going on. Valentine is an amazing character. The pain she reveals about her past and the search for her birth details give real depth to her character. “The Magician’s Daughter” is loaded with twists and turns and red herrings that will leave you guessing all the while you are flipping pages to find out what happens next. Ms. Janeway has provided us with a marvelous character in Valentine and I look forward to reading about her next adventure.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Poisoned Pen Press. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission’s 16 CFR, Part 255: “Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising.”

Christina says

A lovely, fast-paced adventure crime novel, with a good dose of mystery, humour and romance. Valentine Hill doesn't lie, swear or hit people (unless they hit her first), but when a chance encounter leads her to San Francisco in a bid to find her mother (a selfish con artist) and get back her money from a friend who robbed her of her savings, she finds she needs to do all three. Embroiled in a world of FBI-murdering hitmen, suspicious taxi drivers, her mother's scams and a powerful-but-dangerous businessman, Valentine has to revert to her magic tricks to uncover the mysteries that surround her and, more importantly, to save herself.

This was a fun read, with likeable characters, plenty of mystery, a spattering of (sometimes unexpected) bodies and lots of twists and turns.

*I received a free, advance copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for my unbiased review.

Gigi says

A fun caper-like mystery featuring young street magician The Great Valentina, who's been trying to track down her con artist mother to find out exactly who she is. This was one of those books where I kept telling myself "just one more page..." and then found it to be an hour later.

A Reader's Heaven says

(I received a free copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.)

Magician Valentine Hill always introduces her act by announcing "Reality is an illusion. Illusion is reality, and nothing is what it seems." When Valentine is reunited with her grifter mother, "nothing is what it seems" becomes true in real life. A wealthy socialite turns out to be a ruthless criminal, a car mechanic a psycho killer, and a cab driver a seductive gangster. When an FBI agent who'd befriended her is killed, Valentine takes on the hated role of a con artist to get evidence to put the criminals away. Will her skills as a magician prove enough to help her maintain the illusion?

"The Magician's Daughter" follows Valentine on her trek to track down her mother (who she hasn't seen for close to a decade) to find out the truth about herself. She has never really known anything about her basic life: who her father is and where or when she was born. These are important issues for her. Her mother, Elizabeth, is a con-artist, who lures one unsuspecting male into her life after another, conning them out of their life savings and then leaving them for her next target.

When Valentine gets close to her mother, she is assaulted and left for dead. When she wakes, there is a dead body beside her and she is taken in by a FBI agent. She then gets involved in an operation to take down a seriously bad guy and things really start to pick up from there...

Valentine is an enjoyable character - certainly the standout in this book. She is tough, yet scared of elevators. She is funny and has a quick wit, but she knows when to shut up and listen. She has an amazing talent for remembering anything that is put in front of her and an eye for detail that would make her an asset in any investigation.

Among the other characters, I really liked Rico (even if he was a bit of a jerk at times) and Ashley (although we could have used a bit more of her in the story.) There may have been too many characters at times for my liking, especially in the FBI/police side of things but otherwise the balance was pretty good.

I would really liked to have seen some more magic. I went into reading this with the idea that there would be a lot of magic on display but we really only got two performances. I think one or two more would have been really good.

Overall, this was an enjoyable mystery/thriller with lots of twists and turns, shady characters, and a good dose of humour. Recommended!

Paul

ARH

Debbie says

Read from free e-galley given to me by Poisoned Pen Press and Net Galley.

This was a great story and would definitely be a good YA book. There were so many tricks and illusions going on in this book that definitely kept me entertained.

Valentine a magician/illusionist grew up learning to con and being conned by her con artist mother until she went to live with her aunt. An aunt who taught her from right and wrong. Suddenly she's thrown into a whole lot of wrong and she can't tell who's conning who.

Lots of goons, lots of agents playing goons and several goobs make this a sort of madcap adventure that I thoroughly enjoyed. I definitely recommend!

Mauojenn ~ *Mouthy Jenn* ~ says

NetGalley book review

This book had a lot going on in it. First the MC was looking for answers from her con-artist mother and then she went looking for a killer using her magician skills. I liked the main character a lot and the others grew on me. Fun and a little suspenseful all rolled in one.

Ellen Klock says

I liked the magic.

Valentine has studied to become a magician to emulate her unidentified father. The problem is that Valentine Hill doesn't have a social security number, a date of birth, or a location of where she was born. Her only ID is a series of library cards from the different cities where she's resided over the years. Her occupations have been limited to under the table pursuits, including her current job as an assistant street magician in Vegas, where she gets a clue that her missing mother is in California. Valentine hasn't seen Elizabeth in nine years. The only reason to hunt her abusive, con artist mom down now is so that Valentine can finally get a clue to her heritage. The scars on Valentine's arms reminds her of a brutal childhood where she was forced to participate in scamming men for their money. As a backlash to these traumatic experiences, Valentine vows to always tell the truth. Yet the people who surround Valentine have not made any such promises, so it's no surprise that partner Jeff steals her secret stash of funds to get to San Francisco to join a band. And so the adventure begins.

The plot in *The Magician's Daughter* by Judith Janeway is fast paced and confusing as every character's intention is suspect. The truth is as allusive as a magic trick. Just as the reader thinks they have a handle on what is happening, there is a twist. Sometimes the misdirection is interesting and at other times it's annoying, plus the character development has been sacrificed to the plotline. Ironically, Valentine has sworn off

violence, yet there is some malicious mischief as well as several gruesome murders surrounding her adventures. The surprise ending nicely ties up numerous loose ends.

If you are looking for a light weight, fun adventure - hocus pocus - here is your next read.

My one regret is that there wasn't a little more slight of hand. Then this book would have been truly magical.

The first in a series featuring our heroine Valentine Hill, with future opportunities to flesh out some of the supporting characters.

Three stars.

I wish to thank Netgalley and Poison Pen Press for this ARC download in exchange for an honest review.

Mallory (toweroftomes) says

Originally published on my blog The Leaning Tower of Tomes: <https://leaningtoweroftomes.wordpress...>

The Magician's Daughter was a super-fun, super-fast story about a young magician who gets caught up in her con artist mother's dealings. I wasn't really sure what to expect going into this, as I've barely read any mysteries besides Nancy Drew, but I went in with an open mind. Well, even though the first chapter was only partially interesting, the writing moved really quickly and I just kept turning pages... I was so pleasantly surprised at how much I enjoyed this book.

Basically, it's your typical spunky heroine trying to take down an upper-class, high-powered baddie. Spunky heroine in question is named Valentine Hill. She's makes a living doing magic shows. She seems to be a very skilled magician, but her sleazy assistant/almost-boyfriend steals all her money and says he won't give it back until she joins him in San Francisco. In the meantime, Valentine's been searching for answers about herself and her father, and has been looking for her slippery mother Elizabeth for answers.

Elizabeth was a piece of work, a type of person I was honestly glad Valentine didn't know that closely. Valentine herself was pretty cool. She made some dumb decisions but was so likeable and no-nonsense that I forgave her. I thought her fear of elevators was an interesting touch, and led me to wonder--what happened to her in her youth that paralyzed her about getting trapped in one of them? Throughout the book, Val does find out a few answers to her own back story, but not everything is resolved--especially when it comes to Elizabeth, whom Val refuses to refer to as "mom".

The mystery was interesting enough, but there were instances where I lost interest or simply forgot a few details. I wasn't that keen on most of the characters. I didn't feel much toward Phil. I wish that Ashley had played a larger role. But I did really enjoy Rico, although I knew there was something fishy about him from that very first cab ride. ;-)

Before I wrap this review up, let me mention that I wish there had been more instances of Valentine performing magic tricks. There were at least two instances of her doing a show, but I would have liked more of this unique detail entwined in the overall mystery. *The Magician's Daughter* was a really enjoyable story that surprised me and I will definitely be looking for the next book in Valentine's saga. ♦

**I received this book from the publisher in exchange for review consideration. This in no way affects my review; all opinions are my own. Thank you, Poisoned Pen Press!*

What's the most recent mystery you read?
Are you interested in *The Magician's Daughter*?
Comment below letting me know!
And, as always, happy reading!

The Magician's Daughter: A Valentine Hill Mystery by Judith Janeway. | My copy: Galley, 227 pages, Poisoned Pen Press, releases February 10th, 2015. | Source: Publisher. | View on Goodreads here.

Fiona Leung says

(I received a copy from NetGalley in exchange for my honest review)

The *Magician's Daughter* is about Valentine Hill, who is a magician herself. She has lost contact with her mom 9 years ago and have been searching endlessly for her. She doesn't know how old she is or when and where she was born. She doesn't know who her father is, except that her mom has said that he's a magician.

While performing in Las Vegas one day, she found a lead to her mom. She decided to pursue it however all her savings was taken by her assistant Jeff.

Valentine decided to go to San Francisco where her mom is supposed to be but once she got to her apartment, there was a man Dwayne who tried to attack her. Dwayne told Valentine that her mom was just there but it appears she has then fled. Dwayne knocked Valentine out and when she woke up there was a dead body next to her.

After the event at her mom's apartment, she got into a cab in search of Jeff. However when she got there, Jeff was nowhere to be found and instead was confronted by his sister's abusive boyfriend. Valentine failed to retrieve her money and had nowhere to go. Fortunately the cab driver Rico offered his friend's loft apartment for her to stay. She was skeptical at first but she did stay there in the end.

Valentine became friends with one of the FBI officers at the scene of her mom's apartment called Phil. Phil informed Valentine that her mom Elizabeth was in fact working for the FBI. Valentine didn't believe it however since her mom is a con artist, and has now gone missing.

She found Elizabeth by chance when she visited Ashley, whom she met at Las Vegas after she performed her show. Ashley's father is a wealthy businessman Bobby Kroy and has been dating Valentine's mom. Valentine was invited to stay with them at their massive house with tight security.

Kroy has been involved in some dealings and Valentine wanted to help the FBI to gather evidence on Kroy. She found out that Rico was a Confidential Informant helping the FBI. She has also gradually started to fall for Rico, especially after they shared a brief kiss at the loft apartment.

In the end everything went as planned, Kroy's evidence was enough to put him behind bars, and it was revealed that Rico was in fact a Special Agent working for the Treasury Enforcement Agency. He confessed his feelings for Valentine and then he told her everything she needed to know about herself - her date of birth and place of birth - so she can finally get her birth certificate and social security.

Overall, I really enjoyed this story. It was fast paced and I liked Valentine. She's strong and independent. However I would have loved it more if she could've found out who her real father was.

Beatrice says

I received an e-arc of this book from the publisher via NetGalley in exchange for my honest review. This did not influence my opinion of the book in any way.

I love me a good thief/con artist story, and this one made for a perfectly enjoyable read. We follow Valentine Hill as she tries to find her con artist mother in order to discover where she was born and who her father is. Unfortunately, things don't quite go as planned, and Valentine is left to face a not-too-brilliant-but-very-murderous mechanic, the FBI, a very rich criminal and her mother's latest scam.

I liked Valentine well enough, even though I had some trouble connecting with her at the beginning. I particularly enjoyed seeing her slowly slip into her old role of con artist to help the FBI find evidence against the person who killed her friend. Of course, I was sure something was going to go wrong with her plan at some point, but the author gave me a good time guessing, and I was actually quite surprised with a couple of twists towards the end.

[image]

I was slightly disappointed by the secondary characters. I just felt like there was a lot of focus on Valentine herself, which was great, but the rest of the cast was a little left behind and not particularly developed. There was a hint of romance, which was actually fairly sweet, but still didn't take over the whole story, leaving the spotlight to Valentine's greatest illusion yet. The great variety of people portrayed and the fast pace of the story really kept me going. I was very curious to see how the story would end, and if Valentine would pull it off. Overall, a very enjoyable read, at times even incredibly funny, perfect if you like stories filled with danger and deceit.

Originally published on Book for Thought.

Ann Denee says

A fast-paced, easy-read mystery which I thoroughly enjoyed as a break from some heavier reading I'm doing.

Jackie R says

A quick fun read. I'm giving it four stars just because I found it entertaining and the main character actually interesting.

Crystal says

Valentine Hill is a street magician. Her mother, a con artist, took off about 9 years ago. Valentine has been looking for her for quite some time. She always refers to her by her name, Elizabeth, because she never really acted like a mom. She is determined to find her so she can find out her birthday, where she was born,

and who her father is. One day, after doing a street show in Vegas, a teenage girl, Ashley, starts talking to her and says she looks just like her dad's girlfriend, Beth. Valentine finds out all she can in the few minutes they talk. Ashley invites Valentine to come visit in San Francisco and leaves her phone number with her. As Valentine goes to her room to get her things together to go find Elizabeth, she notices someone has ransacked her room and stolen all her money. She finds a note from Jeff, a guy who has deluded himself into thinking he is her boyfriend, saying he went to San Francisco for a big break for his band. He wants her to come out there and claims he will give her the money back when she gets there.

Valentine called Ashley and found out where Elizabeth was living. She gets to her apartment, finds the door open, and a rather large muscled man inside. This is where Valentine's life starts getting all mixed up. . . People are being killed. There are people claiming to be undercover FBI agents, cops, mobsters, cab drivers, and more. Only Valentine has no idea who anyone really is or who to trust.

Valentine ends up working her way into Elizabeth's current con, plus working undercover with the FBI to take down the same guy Elizabeth is working with.

This was a great story, it kept me engaged from the first page to the last. A great mystery with so many twists and turns. Just when you think you know what is really going on, BAM, another twist to keep you scratching your head! Good character development with a fast paced story line. Oh and I *loved* the ending :)

* I received an advance copy in return for an honest review.

Laura says

Magician Valentine Hill can make lots of things disappear and reappear. Unfortunately that talent does not apply to the thing she wants most in the world. No amount of magic can produce her missing birth certificate. Without it, she doesn't know the place or year she was born, and is skeptical her con artist mom told her the right day of her birth either. The only thing she has been told about her father is that he is a magician.

She was raised with a mother that could step into any role from socialite to barfly depending upon the lifestyle of her current husband. She forced her daughter into the role of accomplice in a series of elaborate cons. She lived a nomadic life, always moving on, changing names and living with a new husband that Valentine was instructed to call "uncle". This life blew up when Valentine was in her early teens so she moved in with her Aunt June. That was nine years ago, and the last time she saw her mother. June straightened her out by teaching Valentine the rules that she now lives by:

Never lie

Never swear

Never hit anyone – unless they hit you first

Purely by chance, she meets someone that can give her a clue as to where her mother is. She's been searching for the elusive Elizabeth Hill since her Aunt June died. This could be the break she needed to locate her and somehow make her give up the information about her birth that Valentine needs.

Instead of finding her mother, she finds trouble. And a dead body. The chain of events that follow are faster than a street magician's hands. Before she knows it, Valentine is mixed up with mobsters, FBI agents and a very dangerous operation that could stop her search – forever.

The Magician's Daughter is the first in the series of three Valentine Hill Mysteries. This cozy series had me hooked from the first chapter. I love Valentine. She is spunky and smart. The pain she reveals about her past and the search for her birth details give depth to her character. The supporting characters are interesting, unusual and some of them are not who they seem to be. At one point, Valentine describes them as "What is

with this family? All of them are gun-carrying crazies. Scary crazy at that...”.

That tiny snippet of dialog spotlights the humor Janeway masterfully weaves into the plot. Just when you think you’ve figured out the next turn, she throws a smoke bomb on your theory with the grace of a natural magician – or I should say a very skilled writer. The nail-biting end comes to a satisfying conclusion, wrapping up the story right before the last chapter. But wait! There’s more! There is nothing better than a mystery that continues to the last pages and answers all the reader’s questions.

I wanted this book to be longer, because the characters and story were so interesting. But knowing there are two more in the series coming soon is my consolation prize. I’ll be watching the bookstores to snatch up book two before the ink dries.

Summer will be here soon and this is the perfect beach/vacation read.. If you can’t wait that long, take it on Spring Break. The Magician’s Daughter is a great anytime read. You won’t be disappointed, and everyone could use a little magic in their life.

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DISCLOSURE OF MATERIAL CONNECTION: I have a material connection because I received a review copy that I can keep for consideration in preparing to write this content. I was not expected to return this item after my review.

Suzanne says

Fast, cute, good dialog, some surprises, well developed characters and best of all a protagonist that keeps the reader interested and exceedingly curious about the next chapter. The author has experience with romance novels and there is definitely a romance vibe that comes through the story, but it doesn't detract from the mystery at hand. This is a fun book to read and as the first in a series, a great introduction to a new cast of characters. I received this book from the publisher thru NetGalley in exchange for an honest review, which I am pleased to provide.
