



The Circus of the Damned

Cornelia Grey

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

The Circus of the Damned

Cornelia Grey

The Circus of the Damned Cornelia Grey

Magician Gilbert Blake has spent his entire life conning drunkards in the seediest pubs in the darkest towns, careful to hide the true depths of his power. But when he spends a little too much time in Shadowsea and the infamous slumlord Count Reuben gets wind of his abilities, hiding within the Circus of the Damned may be Gilbert's only chance at survival.

But there's more to the Circus than meets the eye. Every time a performer dies, a new one must take his place, or the entire circus suffers the consequences. And while the handsome ringmaster Jesse isn't one to coerce unwilling performers into giving up their souls to the devil, a recent death in their ranks makes Gilbert exactly what they need.

Yet the longer Gilbert stays with the Circus, the more danger he seems to bring them. Being with Jesse is more than Gilbert could have hoped for, but as Count Reuben's men continue to search for Gilbert and the Circus loses another performer, they all face running out of time long before the Devil claims his due.

The Circus of the Damned Details

Date : Published November 3rd 2014 by Riptide Publishing

ISBN : 9781626491656

Author : Cornelia Grey

Format : ebook 347 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Romance, M M Romance, Science Fiction, Steampunk, Paranormal

 [Download The Circus of the Damned ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Circus of the Damned ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Circus of the Damned Cornelia Grey

From Reader Review The Circus of the Damned for online ebook

Britt Marczak says

I received an ARC from Netgalley in exchange of an honest review

I was initially drawn to the title because I have such a weakness for circuses. Then I saw it was a bit steampunk (big plus!) and m/m to boot (major plus)! So, basically, I had equally high expectations, and a lot of dread that it wouldn't be done well at all.

It turns out that I had nothing to worry about.

There were some nitpicky things that bothered me, the biggest being that there were SO many minor characters that weren't fleshed out enough for me to differentiate between them. By the end, I was pretty sure on who was who, but some of the very minor characters in the circus blended together. I wish they would have all felt a bit more real.

But minor things aside, I found myself enjoying this book for the most part. There's a book before this one, Farfarello's story, I think, that I hadn't read before this one. I'm quite interested to go back and read that one, but having not read it made no difference in reading this book, which was a relief.

Most of the time, this felt like a YA novel, and Gilbert felt like a teen to me. But that didn't bother me. There was a good amount of action, some very nice romantic themes going on, and it was a pretty unique read. The relationship between Gilbert and Jesse was refreshing to read, because there was never any shame. Maybe that's due to this alternate steampunkish world, but I'm used to reading some type of *But-this-is-wrong, we-can't* internal dialogue. There was none of that, and it was lovely. With that said, I felt like their relationship could have been...deeper? I think I felt more emotion behind the backstory between Farfarello and Jesse than I did about Gilbert and Jesse. It just felt very surface-level, like the rest of the characters. Even still, I liked it.

It didn't blow my mind with its amazingness, but it's a fun circus read, and they're one of my guilty pleasures.

Glad I had the chance to read this one.

Bark says

I'm giving this one 3 stars. I liked it but it was hard for me to get through and I found it far too easy to put down when I finished a short chapter. I know that probably makes no sense at all so I'll try to explain.

Gilbert finds himself in a bind when he's caught using magic to bilk some sucker out of his money. Now he has a hoard of angry fellows chasing after him. He lands in a most unusual place called the "Circus of the Damned" and begs them to allow him to hide. The ringmaster says something like, "Sure you handsome scoundrel you, but now you are stuck with us FOREVER! And when you die, your soul belongs to the devil. Mwahaha!" Gilbert agrees. I guess it's better than getting your head bashed in, right? Also, the ringmaster is hot and Gilbert has a thing for hot guys. Truth be told, were I Gilbert, I would've said yes too.

Sounds like a fun, exciting, possibly sexy little read, hmmm? Well, it *almost* is. I'm not sure where it went

wrong but it kept losing me. I guess there are too many characters in the sideshow that are there just to be there to round out the cast. I wanted to know them better. If you're going to pop into a scene and make me scour my brain trying to remember who you are, what you look like and what your "talent" was all about, the least you can do is let me get to know your personality for all the effort. But that wasn't really the case. The main focus was placed on building the atmosphere surrounding the story and creating the back-story that brought about the circus and though it was beautifully done, I wish the book had been longer and included better character interaction. In a book like this, I am looking for emotional intensity, or funny banter and *something* more than fabulous atmosphere.

So that's what slowed me down. What kept me reading were, interestingly enough, the unique characters and the sense of family they all found with each other. I kept hoping for that emotional connection to take over and though there were glimpses (enough to keep me reading), in the end, I wasn't satisfied. The main romance feels a bit rushed and squeezed into the plot. The sexy times were sexy enough but would've been so much better had I felt like the two were deeply in love or even deeply in lust. I just wasn't feeling it 100%.

Dead inside? Perhaps.

There's so much promise in the writing that I will try the next book in the series despite all of my whining. I have a feeling that once the author gets the pacing and character issues sorted out she is going to write something that will be unforgettable and I can't wait to read it.

Lisa *-* GiViNg It To YoU * LoCk StOck & TwO SmOkInG BaRrELs says

4 Devilishly Good Stars

Yes I've been on the bottle again...the one that say's DRINK ME!!

That there shit is sooooo good....it takes you to places beyond your wildest dreams.

Your mind goes into sensory overdrive...

This time I ran into a charming rouge.... by the name of Gilbert Blake 'magician'

Gilbert finds himself in a spot of bother whilst conning some good folk ~~or shall we say.... not so good~~ out of their moneychased thru the wonderfully colourful streets of Shadowseawith nowhere left to run, he is offered help by a rather strange bunch of individuals whom belong to a *travelling circus*but it comes at a cost!!

But there's more to the Circus than meets the eye!!

This story is such a visual treat, with characters with names such as Bristlesprout, Skunktongue *Ewww* and mechanical elephants, and Octopus men.....and..... ***beautiful red haired Ringmasters.***

Yes Gilbert, and that Red Haired Ringmaster by the name of Jesse were hot together.... let me tell you.

But lurking in the moonlight.....the devilishly handsome ***Devil*** himself Farfarello holds lots of the answers to Gilbert's questions.

Would you make a deal with the devil, that's exactly what the Young Ringmaster of the Circus Of Damned did!!!!

This the my 1st Conelia Grey novel I've had the pleasure of reading...and I'm sure it won't be my last.

ARC kindly provided by NetGalley and Riptide in exchange for an honest review. Thank you so much

Teri says

Buddy Read!

Thanks to my fellow buddy readers, I have serious Circus issues and was afraid to read this alone, but with you guys its like watching with the lights on! So Thanks!

I don't want to spoil, so I will be very careful to stay general.

I like the writing, I really do, I will definitely be reading more from Cornelia Grey, but I have to be honest as well, the first 40% was just not...enough. I guess as far as setting the scene, the first 40% did that, it was dark and damp and creepy and we get an idea of the life Gilbert is living and all that, but I found myself being like--"Let's get to it."

I felt like there were maybe some lost opportunity where things could have been developing between Jesse and Gilbert.

I think that things really hit their stride once we got to see the show. It was amazing, vivid, scary and still...exhilarating, even though I was scared. Ugh...creeeeepy. But the show really gave us insight into not

only the characters, but how Gilbert thought about and saw the characters.

When we get Jesse and Gilbert, I love it. Wish their was more! I feel their connection only in those moments, or when Gilbert is tormenting himself in his head.

The ending wasn't what I thought either, and at first I was looking for a "Wait, what?" gif to post, but then I thought, ya know, I think I'm okay with it. Maybe it was the only way it could end really.

So I did enjoy, just wish it was a little heavier on the romance and connection between the characters, maybe even less overall description of stuff and scenery and more building the relationships between everyone. But seriously, I really liked it, definitely would read more from this author and love all my fellow BR-ers for putting up with my crazy updates. Love you guys!

Anyta Sunday says

...

This story was a true visual spectacle, from start to finish.

OMG, everything about it was perfect, literally **EVERYTHING!** Why the hell did I wait so long to pop my Steampunk cherry?! **slaps myself upside the head**.

I especially loved the descriptive word Cornelia penned; it *seriously* brought the story to life for me and not many books can do that. And as for Gilbert and Jesse, well, they were just so intense and hot. My new favourite M/M pairing, I'd do practically *anything* for more of them. Not that the story needs it, I'm just greedy for more. So, so greedy for more.

Highly Recommended.

ARC kindly provided by NetGalley in exchange for an honest review. Thank you so much

Anyta Sunday says

I am SO excited!

4.75

Almost brilliant.

Love, love, love, hate.

AMAZING and frustrating.

A favorite author now for sure.

This would have been perfect but for the romance, which had promise. Which could have been more. Which almost was...

And then wasn't.

The fault starts at 40ish% where the spark between him and Jesse fizzles. Why does it fizzle? Because out of the blue Gilbert switches into this nice, considerate, please-and-sorry guy (which jarred from his rough and cheeky intro--and the awesome hate-want tension we first get with Gilbert and Jesse). Anyway, the tension bleeds out and I was left all 'but-but-but...'

Because it didn't have to be like that. A few wee tweaks and the tension could have rocked.

There is this scene that comes later with their first kiss. Dynamite (more of this, plreeeease). If only that lull hadn't happened before it.

And then the blah after it. So much conflict is inherent in this book. But it needed drawing out to increase stakes of romance!!!

In the end, it feels like Gilbert's story is only an intermediary one. Farferello and Jesse seemed to have more history and spark.

But listen to me nag on! I swear I only do it because I LOVED the story so much and I greedily wanted more!

This is a wonderful compelling story with such a colorful and unique heart!

It's delicious.

I'll be reading more and more from this author. My betvis she'll get better and better and blow us all away!

:~)

Marte - Thunderella says

[affair with the Ringmaster of the Circus, J

Alisa says

Wow..this book was really good. I had never read this author before but was so intrigued with the concept of the book that I had to try it. I am now a huge fan of this author and have already read two more of her books since this one.

This story is a mild steampunk setting. Gilbert is a magician who makes a living as a street/pub scam artist. He runs afoul of a very powerful bad guy and in making a run for it runs into Jesse and his group of "freaks". Jessie is the powerful ringmaster for the Circus of the Damned. Jesse tells Gilbert they will help him but he has to join their circus. The catch? Gilbert will never be able to leave and if they don't meet the requirements of the circus their souls will all be sent to Hell. Gilbert joins, thinking he can escape at a later time but he soon finds out he can not.

There is a lot of adventure in this story and a lot of interesting and quirky characters. There's magic and circus freaks and a very interesting devil. The best part of the story to me was the love story between Gilbert and Jessie and the complicated and kind of sad history between the devil Farfarello and Jessie. If you're looking for a unique plot with a bit of everything in it this is definitely a book to try.

Optimist ?King's Wench? & MANTIES Champion says

3.5 Stars

First, let's talk about this cover. By a show of hands, who else thinks that dude on the cover looks like Gandy?

Bad Gandy?

Naughty Gandy?

groans

The cover alone was enough to make me pick this up.

Honestly, I've surprised myself with my recent run on circus reads. Who knew I'd take to this setting? I don't do clowns. I don't understand why people like them. Clowns are freaky. I skimmed the few clown segments in this one. Thankfully, he is not the main character.

My first experience with this author was Benjamin Pepperwhistle which knocked my socks clean off. *Circus of the Damned* is quieter than Benjamin. It's also what I would characterize as a slow burn. Ordinarily, slow burns are not my thing. I like my pages set on **FIRE!** But, if you give me an entertaining story I'm usually appeased which is what happened here.

I can't say enough good things about the way Ms. Grey builds a story, the imagery she evokes and the way she uses language. I find her writing to be extremely creative and her stories flow easily. *The Circus of the Damned* was no exception. True, it didn't grab me the way Benjamin did, but it's still a solid read.

When we first meet Gilbert he's in a sticky situation and it quickly becomes clear that this is par for his course. He's been fending for himself for a very long time and his backstory is tragic. That backstory coupled with his abilities has made him a lone wolf until he stumbles headfirst into a band of... odd individuals who offer him a deal he can't or won't refuse with an angry mob on his tail out for his blood.

Aside: I swear I could not get *Devil Went Down to Georgia* by The Charlie Daniels Band out of my head. Over and over!

He agrees to join the circus of the damned in the heat of the moment and soon regrets it. This circus is comprised of a ragtag family of "freaks", as they refer to themselves, including a tentacle man, a dwarf, a dancing bear, a freakishly strong woman, a clown *shudders*, a mechanical elephant, conjoined twins, a fortune teller and the ringmaster, Jesse. WHO'S A GINGER!

DOUBLE FINGER GUN BONUS POINTS THERE! GANDY AND A GINGER!

A ginger with tattoos! Even better. Jesse is mysterious and beautiful and Gilbert is attracted to him instantly. He and Gilbert dance around each other for quite some time while Gilbert keeps trying to escape the circus only to find himself back there again and again. I found Gilbert's actions and reactions to be authentic and, at times, humorous. Once he stops running he and Jesse make a nice couple and did have one especially sexy scene involving magic.

The story is predicated on this conflict between Farfarello (the devil), Count Reuben (a crime boss of sorts in Shadowsea), Jesse and Gilbert. Without going into spoiler-land, I found the motivation behind Count Reuben's obsession lackluster. I was looking for something more convoluted or elaborate. What I got was 'he's the bad guy! (insert evil cackle and/or stroking a cat weirdly)'. I also found the backstory of the deal struck between Farfarello and Jesse anticlimactic. The world building is difficult for me to pin down. At times it reads historical (turn of the century) and others it reads AU, but I've not read all the books in this series so perhaps it was addressed in an earlier work.

On a positive note, the buildup to the showdown and the actual showdown were both exciting and the conclusion was gratifying. I would recommend *The Circus of the Damned* mainly for the writing and imagery. Ms. Grey can tell a tale and I'll certainly read other offerings from her. Maybe even more circus stories.

K.J. Charles says

Oooh, this was interesting. Beautiful writing and wonderfully vivid description. The opening scenes with crappy selfish card cheat Gilbert running from retribution, finding himself trapped in a hell circus, and having hot hostility with sexy ringmaster were terrific.

I rather felt I'd have liked to see the author carry on her convictions more. I could believe in Gilbert's deep-down decency coming to the surface, but I wasn't entirely sure I fully bought into the romance element. Love comes very quickly, Jesse seems awfully naive for his lifespan, and the history between him and Farfarello the devil was unavoidably more interesting because, devil. I felt that this book secretly wanted to be a fabulous dark fantasy with erotic elements but without a HEA. Maybe that's just me. (Also the whole 'souls to Satan' aspect seemed a little glossed over in the happy ending, unless I missed something?)

I would definitely recommend this - very well written, great creepiness and head and shoulders above most. And if you have not had your fill of damned carnivals, try the non-romance *The Necromancer*, terrific dark comedy about a totally unrepentant bastard who is actually perfectly happy about gathering souls for perdition.

Wart Hill says

You can read this and other reviews at [Things I Find While Shelving](#)

I received a free ARC via the publisher. This fact has no bearing on my review.

I wanted to love this. OH how much I wanted to love this! I love stories about deals with devils and especially when they involve circuses (Johannes Cabal the Necromancer is a massive favorite of mine).

Unfortunately the love affair was not to continue with The Circus of the Damned. Not because it's bad - it's actually good. Well written, interesting plot, good characters...

It's all just too fast.

Everything. From Blake accepting his life at the circus to the way his relationship develops with Jesse. It's all so quick, it was more like reading a fairy tale - which in and of itself isn't a bad thing, but I just felt like it all needed to slow down and develop more.

So I liked it, but I didn't love it.

Sadie Forsythe says

CUTE! Just so stinking cute. This is the first Cornelia Grey book I've had the pleasure of reading, but you can bet your last flimsy dollar I'll be on the lookout for more. Thumbs up.

Gilbert's open appreciation of Jesse was a pleasure to read and Jesse wasn't anything like I expected. I expected him to be the heavy, creepy circus master, but none of it worked out quite like I expected and I'm not complaining. Actually, I expected the whole thing to be dark, but it isn't. It's almost light and fluffy in a YA sort of way if you overlook the cursing and sex. But again, I'm not complaining. I enjoyed the heck out of it.

There was a quietly bisexual lead falling in love with a beautiful man, a cast containing a satisfying variety of age, gender, color, even species (I think), a few yummy, but in no way smutty sex scenes, some evocative writing, interesting side characters (though there are a lot of them), some light steampunk elements and a HEA ending. Plenty to recommend this novel to any number of readers.

My only complaint is that I never really felt like I got to know the characters in any depth. I got to know what was happening around them and what they did, but not *them* and I really wanted to. But that's a relatively small criticism for something I enjoyed as much as I did this one.

Note: I received a free ARC from Netgalley.

Cornelia Grey says

'The Circus of the Damned' inspiration board on Pinterest:

<http://www.pinterest.com/corneliagre...>

Spot the characters!

Ami says

When I first found out that Cornelia Grey – one of my most beloved underrated authors – was finally releasing her first NOVEL, I was absolutely excited. Especially when the story is part of her paranormal

romance series, *Deal with a Devil*, which includes book 1 *Devil at the Crossroads* released last year.

While Farfarello, the devil that starred in *Devil at the Crossroads*, makes an appearance in this novel, this is not his story. This is a story of Gilbert Blake, a magician who uses his power to con drunkards and then finds himself being saved from the men of crime lord, Count Reuben, by joining Circus of the Damned only to realize that by joining, he has signed away his soul and he cannot run away.

For me, *The Circus of the Damned* was a personal journey of Gilbert Blake – and less of a *romance* (which I'll explain later). See, despite his magic, Gilbert never sees himself as one of the *freaks*. In fact, he hates the word. There is nothing physically wrong with him, Gilbert is an actual magician, so thinks of himself above these sideshow people.

It wasn't like he couldn't appear perfectly normal if he wanted to. Live a perfectly ordinary life. Walk on the street without anyone looking at him twice. People didn't stare at him in horror, didn't recoil from him, didn't laugh. He could stop doing magic and forget about it and be just like everybody else, if he'd so choose.

"It's different," he managed to say, his throat closing.

Until Gilbert learns about the people in the circus – and befriends them and he realizes that for the first time in his life, he belongs. He has his family right here, among the freaks. He doesn't have to be afraid of his magic anymore. And Gilbert starts to care for these people. For me, this journey of personal growth is the core of the story. Apart from the magic and the threat from the crime lord and the paranormal steampunk-ish aspect, this is a story of someone who learns about himself and his priorities in life and how he comes to appreciate people who are, well, different.

The secondary characters are charming. We have an octopus man, a muscled-lady, joined-at-the-hip twins, a ginger-bearded dwarf, a deathly pale girl, a wooden toy that speak, a mechanical clock-work elephant, a bear, and of course, the ringmaster himself, Jesse, who is also a master of fire. They round-up this ragtag circus family and I found myself caring for each and every one of them as well.

Then we have the circus performances!! Oh wow, those were mesmerizing as well!! I actually held my breath when I read them because I could see it with my mind's eye, how those performances felt otherworldly, especially when Gilbert was performing his magic. I wished there were more of those in the book – alas, these circus people must also fight for their lives from the threat of Count Reuben *pout*.

The romance, however, was a little underwhelming. I neither felt nor believed that Gilbert's feeling towards Jesse was love. The emotional connection wasn't there, even if the two men struck friendship and shared their deepest fear and had erotic moments. In fact, I felt that Jesse had better emotional turmoil with Farfarello – as lovers who didn't exactly part ways on good terms. For me, what Gilbert and Jesse were experiencing felt like lust at best, which made me question whether Gilbert was making the right decision in the end.

Underwhelming romance aside, *The Circus of the Damned* is a story filled with magical moments, colorful characters, and gripping action. Cornelia Grey once again made a satisfied reader out of me and I cannot wait for the third story from this series.

The ARC is provided by the publisher for an exchange of fair and honest review. No high rating is required for any ARC received.

Julio Genao says

holy god, was this annoying.

if it wasn't the MC refusing to accept his circumstances for the first third, it was continuity stuff like the fortune teller "shutting her eyes" when she supposedly never opened them in the first place.

the voice was all over the place—everyone talked like american teenagers—and the writing was...

the writing was...

...see, it's complicated, because there's some good stuff here, some nice flashes of imagination—but it's ruined every time by poor choices, repetition, or just plain poor execution.

and the editing, as evidenced by the repetition and continuity errors, was straight-up garbage.

and i about shat my eyeballs out when i got to the "ebony fingers."
