

*The Serpent's Spell*

Rae Bridgman

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Reviewed by Regan Windsor for Reader Views (9/06)

Welcome to Gruffud's Academy, where the curriculum includes numeristics, verbology, and botanicals and the students learn to play games such as snapdragon; a battle of wits between shadows. The academy is located in a mystical pocket of Winnipeg in the secret city of Middlegate.

Wil arrives at Middlegate from Toronto with nothing except the clothes on his back, his snake Esme, and the medallion and ring his grandmother has given him. A fire has caused her death and he is sent to live with a set of aunts and cousin he was until now unaware of. Their existence, however, turns out to be the first of many family secrets Wil is soon to discover.

As Wil and his cousin Sophie begin the school year, a cloud of mystery surrounds the slaughter of hundreds of snakes in the nearby pits of Narcisse. While on a fieldtrip to see the snakes, Wil and Sophie stumble upon a discovery which begins a magical journey of friendship and adventure.

Things soon begin to turn dangerous as they search for the significance of Wil's medallion and its implication in the mysterious circumstances that ensue. With kidnappings, sorcery, serpents, and shadow duals the reader is left breathless with anticipation.

"The Serpent's Spell" is a delight for all readers! Rae Bridgman adds sorceress zeal with a numeric table of contents, Latin verbiage, and sketchings that bring the magic of snakes and sorcery alive. In a novel destined to be the next Harry Potter of fantasy, Bridgman delivers a festively imaginative tale. As this first adventure ends, the reader is left with one key question....when will the next adventure begin?