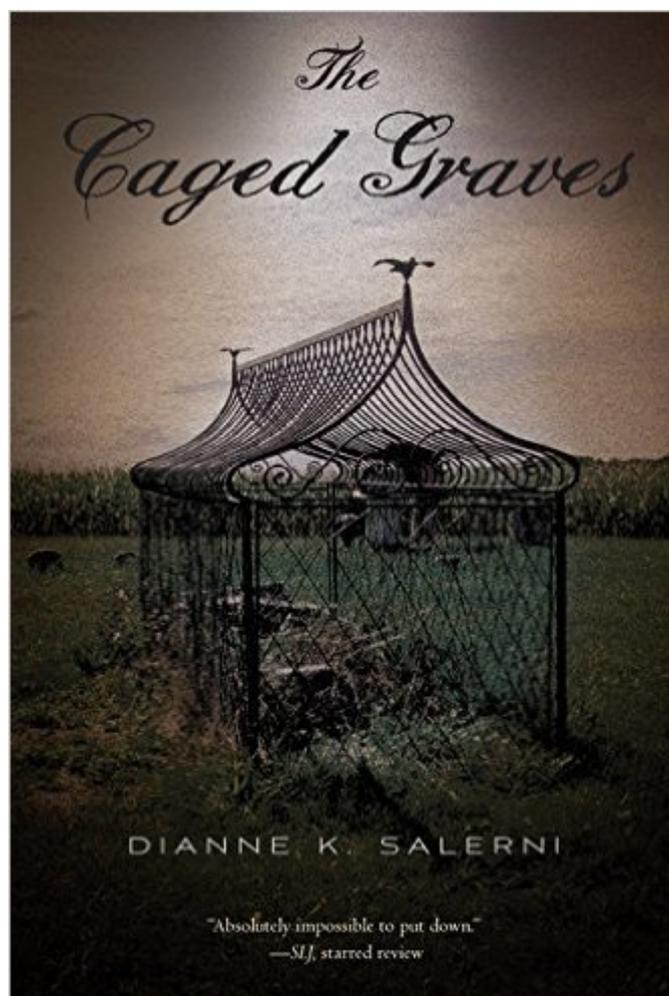


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The Caged Graves



Synopsis

The year is 1867, and seventeen-year-old Verity Boone is excited to return to Catawissa, Pennsylvania, the hometown she left when she was just a baby. Now she will finally meet the fianc  she knows only through letters! Soon, however, she discovers two strangely caged graves . . . and learns that one of them is her own mother's. Verity swears she'll get to the bottom of why her mother was buried in an unhallowed ground • in this suspenseful teen mystery that swirls with rumors of witchcraft, buried gold from the days of the War of Independence, and even more shocking family secrets.

Book Information

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (August 26, 2014)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars • See all reviews (70 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #418,610 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #31 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > Civil War Period #200 in Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Historical #202 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > New Experiences

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Verity Boone at age two years, was taken from her father, shortly after her mother's unforeseen death, in order to have the chance to have a normal life while being raised with her cousins in her Aunt's home. Now Verity is 17 years old and has promised to marry a respectable young man from her home town of Catawissa, Pennsylvania. When she arrives at her father's home nothing is familiar to her. She did not receive a very warm welcome from anyone including her father. Something was not right, maybe she was being ill treated because people were jealous that she was to marry the most sought after bachelor in Catawissa. But then as time goes by it is apparent it was more of the fact she was her mother's daughter. Stories of witchcraft were whispered behind her

back. There are many secrets leading up to her mother's death and even at this time in her life when she should be enjoying the preparations for her wedding she is forced to face a life and death situation with no one to turn to for help. If this had been a movie, which I think it should be, you would be sitting on the edge of your seat and would not dare to go to the restroom or to get popcorn. Yep, it is that good. I did not want to put the book down I took it everywhere with me. Yes even to the restroom. The author has done a bang up job on this book. You will find high anxiety, greed, action, mystery, romance and redemption all through this book. What a creative imagination this author has put to work in her writing. I hope to be reading more of her books soon. I highly recommend this book. Disclosure: I received a copy of this book from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt/Netgalley for review. I was in no way compensated for this review. This review is my honest opinion.

Book Description: "The year is 1867, and seventeen-year-old Verity Boone is excited to return from Worcester, Massachusetts, to Catawissa, Pennsylvania, the hometown she left when she was just a baby. Now she will finally meet the fianc  she knows only through letters. Soon, however, she discovers two strangely caged graves . . . and learns that one of them is her own mother's. Verity swears she'll get to the bottom of why her mother was buried in "unhallowed ground" in this suspenseful teen mystery that swirls with rumors of witchcraft, buried gold from the days of the War of Independence, and even more shocking family secrets. "The cover of the book is a little creepy if not disturbing. A large ornate and elaborate yet beautiful framework resembling a conservatory without the glass. Placed oddly enough in the middle of a cemetery. A closer look reveals a headstone or possibly more within this "iron cage". This image alone is enough to question, "why"? What is the mystery surrounding these graves? Set almost 150 years ago, Salerni constructs a well written historical fiction mystery. She transports the reader to a different time and place by crafting a suspenseful plot with mysterious and complex characters. Based on the cover and lack of willingness and acknowledgement from the townspeople, you get the sense that these graves are very unsettling. The authors note at the end of the book was very intriguing. There really are caged graves in Catawissa and in her research Salerni found no explanation for the cages thus her inspiration for the story. Due to the sometimes adult subject matter and storyline being a bit dark and gruesome at times, I personally feel this book would be a bit heavy and challenging for younger readers and therefore would recommend this book to teens - 7th/8th grade and older.

Wow. This was a unique and enthralling novel if I've ever read one. There is so much to say about

this novel that I can't possibly fit it all into this review, or even, necessarily, into words. I was actually taken aback by how much I truly enjoyed it. One of the most captivating aspects of *THE CAGED GRAVES* is the atmosphere. There is something very unsettling about the graves from the first mention of them and Verity's mother, and this unsettling feeling is only amplified by the various reactions by everyone whenever they are brought up. This was not a fast-paced, plot driven novel, though it absolutely had its exciting scenes, but I really enjoyed how that allowed the setting and the atmosphere to take over, as well as putting character relationships center stage. I absolutely loved the way the relationships overall were dealt with, but I want to touch specifically on a few. First, Verity almost expects her meeting with Nate, her betrothed, to bring love at first sight, as their only contact since Verity had moved away from Catawissa as a child was in the last year through romantic and endearing letters. It was interesting seeing a trope so commonly complained about in YA like "insta-love" turned right on its head, with the main character expecting it and it not turning out that way at all. The depth of the relationship that develops between them is genuine in its uncertainty and its rockiness, which made them a lovable couple even when they fought. Another well-hated trope, the love triangle, is used exactly as it should be in this novel. When Verity feels distanced from Nate, she finds herself falling for Jones, an apprentice to the local doctor and completely unforgiving in his feelings for Verity, an engaged woman. The reason this was done so well is in the way Verity struggles not only to determine who she has true feelings for and who she simply enjoys flirting with, but also with the entire concept of love, which, at 17, is possibly the most realistic and honest way she could feel. Of all the relationships, though, Verity's awkward one with her father was probably the most touching. He has to adjust to having a teenage daughter thrust into his life after not having lived with her since she was a toddler. He clearly has no idea what to do with her, nor she with him, but the way they grow on and begin to understand each other is really heart-warming in its small but significant moments. While the plot of the novel was not, as I mentioned above, fast-moving, because of the significant focus on characters and atmosphere, it was certainly not boring or underdeveloped. The mystery surrounding the graves, Verity's mother, and the circumstances of her death, along with the ongoing strange occurrences in Catawissa make for an extremely intriguing plot with a surprising conclusion (in more ways than one)! I thought this was a really wonderful novel, in all., where each element mixed with the others perfectly to create a story I could not mentally pull myself away from. 5 stars! *I received an advance review copy of the novel from the publisher in exchange for a fair and honest review*

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