



From Under the Mountain (Trident Chronicles, #1)

C.M. Spivey

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As the second child of the Aridan imperial family, nineteen-year-old Guerline knows exactly what is expected of her: be unobtrusive, be compliant, and do not fall in love with her low-born companion, Eva. She has succeeded at only two of those.

But before her feelings for Eva can become a point of contention for the royal house, Guerline's calm and narrow life is ripped away from her—in the course of a single night—and she is abruptly cast in the role of empress.

Faced with a council that aggressively fears the four witch clans charged with protecting Arido and believes they are, in fact, waging war against the humans, Guerline struggles to maintain order. As her control over the land crumbles, she learns that the war is rooted in a conflict much older than she realized—one centuries in the making, which is now crawling from under the mountain and into the light. With the fate of Arido hanging in the balance, Guerline must decide who to trust when even her closest councilors seem to have an agenda.

Darkly cinematic, *From Under the Mountain* pairs the sweeping landscape of epic fantasy with the personal journey of finding one's voice in the world, posing the question: how do you define evil, when everything society tells you is a lie?

From Under the Mountain (Trident Chronicles, #1) Details

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Author : C.M. Spivey

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From Reader Review From Under the Mountain (Trident Chronicles, #1) for online ebook

Sydney Richardson says

From Under the Mountain is a stimulating dark fantasy novel – filled with brilliant, whimsical writing and political (and somewhat religious) subtext I found to be quite riveting. I was enthralled with Cait's distinct voice and level of detail – down to the items they wore, the rooms/caverns they would enter – everything was elaborately portrayed.

When I first was reading this story, I was really excited to get to know Guerline's character. While there were multiple POVs and distinctive characters to follow in this book, I have to say my favorite parts of this story really were the witches. Chapter 3 is really where I was hooked into the story. I was intrigued by them, their back stories and powers. I found the details that Cait provided to be fascinating – especially about the Thiymen witches. How color in their skin, hair, eyes, meant life and it was drained from them – it was exquisitely portrayed. Even though these witches were losing their life slowly over many years, I still found them quite lovely.

Honestly, I would LOVE to read a backstory on the witches with Lisyne.

The details about Kanika remembering Fiona taking her to the barrier in the mountain between life and death – the impressions of the hands and screaming faces – it was beautiful and terrifying. I loved that part.

Although this isn't really considered a romance novel, there was a love story within the plot (an odd love triangle, almost) – and I don't mean that in a bad way. I found the romantic side of FUTM to be realistic. So many novels these days rush in to romance and love at a level that makes me cringe. Cait's portrayal of Eva and Guerline's love for one another was beautifully articulated and I never once felt the cringe factor. Cait gets bonus points for me on that one.

One thing I love about some of my favorite fantasy novels (Harry Potter, LOTR) is their portrayal of good and bad – and sometimes the blurred lines between the two. In novels such as those, I found distinct moments I can relate to in our world, our reality: There were some really high points in FUTM that really made me think and feel that same feeling I got from the best fantasy novels out there.

The questions the characters had over politics, the Gods and their way of life, I found to be realistic (even though this was a fantasy novel). And by that I mean I understood many of their choices and questions that came up about if they were following or doing the right thing.

This is the first book by Cait that I have read, and I am thrilled at the prospect of reading more. While the story did conclude itself nicely, it was left open for possibly a second novel – and I do hope there is one!

Few things: [few spoilers ahead, so if you haven't read it – stop now]

I really wished to have seen Guerline's thought process about how Ianthe was the thing from under the mountain. I had come to the conclusion myself, but I had read other scenes, that Guerline wasn't really a part of. I didn't see her line of thought come to that conclusion and it felt rather abrupt when she did finally realize it. [side note: Guerline's nickname (Lina) – wasn't really a fan of it. Her full name has so much character, and I really would have just stuck with her full name.]

I had mixed feelings about Evaline's character (which I think was what the author wanted). I really wish her characterization had gone deeper into her psyche and provided us with an explanation as to why she hated the witches/magic so much.

I know part of it had to with Alcander – and some kind of hold he and the thing from under the mountain had on her. But she had such fear of Alcander, so I really was confused why she seemed okay with siding with him in regards to opinions about the witches and magic. At one point it is suggested he was controlling her from the dead, but I wondered how he did that while he was living.

I was really hoping at some point we would learn something about her childhood (before she was sold to Guerline's family) that would make her hate them so. I wanted her character to have a reason for those feelings towards witches – and more than just Alcander's influence.

I wish that there had been one or possibly two chapters that gave us a little bit of the perspective of Ianthe/the creature from under the mountain. Or even Alcander after he died. I would have loved to see Cait writing the level of darkness those characters possessed.

Acacia says

I loved it

It would have been a four or five star book but unfortunately I was unable to connect with the characters until near the end.

I sat for a while after reading it and decided that even though I had trouble connecting with the characters the book was still an absolute joy to read and reading it has put in a good mood.

Jordan says

READ THIS BOOK IF:

You're looking for an epic fantasy with an abundance of diverse creatures

You're all about the adventure

Self discovery is your game, romance is second

You've been hungering for an LGBT fantasy because let's face it, they're like unicorns. Actually, there are probably more unicorns than gay people in fantasy.

<https://youngadultbookmadness.wordpress.com/2017/07/13/review-under-the-mountain-by-ashley-monica/>

Emleigh says

From Under the Mountain immediately hooked me with its characters and world building. I was very excited to read a fantasy with queer characters and characters of color, and it delivered on that front.

I did find it a bit frustrating because so many great ideas introduced in the book seemed hastily or barely explored. I would have loved to see more detailed character development from Guerline. Evadine's story was also disappointing in that it was one of the most intriguing parts of the story, but it seemed as though it was discarded rather unceremoniously with no closure. Ianthe also deserved something more. I wanted whole chapters of her history and motivations.

All that being said, *From Under the Mountain* was an enjoyable read, and I will probably read more from C.M. Spivey.

Anna says

After a very long stint in being burned by independent literature, I'd initially been a little skeptical. It was the first book chosen for the Asexual Book Club, and I found myself pleasantly surprised.

What's this? Dark-skinned people? Alphabet soup people? PEOPLE WHO ARE BOTH?! What nonsense is this?! Glorious nonsense, actually. I'd been bombarded with literature that was nothing more than the rape fantasies of the fedora-wearing crowd, and I wanted to cry from relief not only because this was a book with a cast of characters that literally spanned a rainbow, but because it's an intriguing world that I was easily immersed in.

Did it have its rougher points? Most definitely. High fantasy doesn't exist without its usual list of tropes, but I found the characters refreshing and interesting and emotionally-charged. It also has its staccato passages, but realizing that this was the first in a series made it bearable. '*From Under the Mountain*' is the worldbuilding book, and I eagerly await the rest of the story as it unfolds in the sequels.

Marie says

I very much enjoyed this from a world building perspective. I'm very much looking forward to the reading the sequel.

A few things bothered me about this though. Will try to talk about them both without spoilers.

Firstly, this book was on a list of books with ace rep and the ace rep was so slight (and I don't even know for sure if the characters I think were ace actually were) that it may as well not have been there at all. Side character rep is great, but I was looking for more than just a character who happened to be ace but where that was not explored in any way.

The other thing that bugged me was the (extremely quick and casual) death of a queer character. There was a lot of potential for that character and the relationship they were a part of in terms of conflict and growth. Their death felt unnecessary and I don't see how it furthered the story at all.

Sara says

I can't wait to be part of the book release fashion show this January. To find out more about the book, and the show, check out our IndieGoGo Campaign: <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/fa...>

Tiffany Rose says

Let's be real here, reviews are hard. Or at least for me they are. They feel even harder when I have to describe something like *From Under The Mountain*. It starts slow like all of this genre does, but then becomes a friend. The world and the characters bit by bit reveal themselves to you. And my main questions while reading become 'what are they up to' and 'are they okay'?

Another thing I'll forever be grateful for is there is no shock for shock value here. I got to enjoy the diversity without having to tolerate bull to get there. There was some gory, and spooky things but they all felt like a true part of this world.

While I length of the paperback lends itself akin to a weapon, I just might use it as such if I could have all the questions above answered now. Is Theo okay? Will he stay okay? How about my baby girl Guerline? Ahem, I mean four out of five stars to *From Under The Mountain*.

Christina says

This book took me way too long to read. It's well written and I enjoyed parts of this book. Guerline was certainly my favorite character, but there just wasn't enough of her for my taste. There were so many different pov's that I was confused more than once, and I found myself bored from it. I like the occasional fantasy novel, but *From Under The Mountain* was just not for me. If you're more into fantasy than I am, which wouldn't be hard, this book is definitely for you.

Cecilia says

I CANT COME UP WITH WORDS TO DESCRIBE HOW HYPED AND WEEPY I AM RIGHT NOW. BUT READ THIS BOOK OKAY? OKAY. Full review to come when I'm done screaming???

J.M. Frey says

If you like the sort of multi-POV, intricately plotted and world-built multi-generational fantasy novels popularized by George RR Martin, then I have the book for you!

"From Under the Mountain" follows the fallout when a great evil escapes from its sealed prison, and the rot and desiccation it spreads across the fantasy map. The story follows some of the most powerful witches in the world, along with the Empress, and how this slow-creeping horror affects them and the people they are responsible. But it also shows how the smallest, the least powerful, and the most dependent are affected as well, which is just plain good storytelling.

What I liked best was the fresh take on the origins and uses of magic. So many fantasy books copycat classical understandings of races, creatures, and magical systems, and Spivey breathes new life and adds a

fresh interpretation to hoary old tropes.

More than that, "From Under the Mountain" focuses on the strength of female relationships and their importance - mothers and daughters, sisters in blood and in vow, childhood friends, and lovers. It's nice to see such a wide variety of relationships, and a wide range of friendships, loves, and animosities.

And luckily the front of the book holds a *Dramatis Personae* guide (I'm horrid with remembering who's who)!

If I could ask for anything, it would be for an entire other book detailing the relationship between Fiona and Silas. I adore Spivey's version of Dragons.

Kisa Whipkey says

There is so much to love about this novel that I almost don't know where to start. But first, let me say that although Amazon and other retailers seem to be primarily classing this as f/f romance, it is not. There is romance, yes, and it does feature a beautifully rendered f/f love story, but this book is, in fact, a brilliant example of dark fantasy done well.

Spivey establishes her prowess in the genre right from the first page, where we're introduced to protagonist Guerline standing over the decaying, yet alive, bodies of her parents. This horrifying, slightly gruesome scene is merely a harbinger for what's to come though, as Spivey proceeds to kill off the entire Imperial family — with the exception of Guerline, of course — by the end of the first chapter.

Suddenly thrust into a role she never expected to fill, the young empress has to navigate not only the intricacies of unraveling her own identity from what others expect her to be but the nuances of running a country poised on the brink of war. Humanity is turning against the witch-lords who have guarded the empire's borders for centuries, and Guerline finds herself dealing with radical opinions on both sides. But the rift between human and witch, magic and politics is only the beginning of Guerline's problems, as a creature that has been sealed away from the world for a millennium is finally about to get its revenge.

Spivey's writing sings off the page with a cinematic flair that evoked the feel of a Studio Ghibli film, but the rotating, more traditional approach to the POV and fact that no one is as safe as they seem brought up visions of George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* series. And I have to say that the blending of those two is nothing less than stunning.

But the thing that has always resonated most for me in Spivey's work is her ability to create a fully realized cast of diverse characters and a world so richly textured it makes you want to live there indefinitely. Arido's plight may encompass the standard sprawling map of high fantasy, but every detail is painstakingly accounted for, and the repercussions of what seem like small acts are felt throughout in an impressive example of the butterfly effect.

All in all, this is a gorgeous debut by an author who has clearly only begun her to literary stardom, and I cannot recommend it enough. If you're a fan of high fantasy rife with political intrigue and the classic good vs evil scenario, if you enjoy dark fantasy with a fantastically creepy edge, or if you simply wish to escape into a world that treats everyone — regardless of gender or race or sexual orientation — with respect, then

this is the book for you. Seriously, go read it. It's amazing.

Disclaimer: I was the acquiring editor for this title, however all opinions stated are my own and were not influenced by bias or compensation.

Kathleen says

A great fantasy world! Magic, witches, shape-shifters, dragons, and a dark force! Oh my! I loved following Guerline on her journey from uncertain, scared girl to Empress. The romance was touching and real, but didn't take over the story...the fight to save the world, the struggle to be heard.

The witches were fantastic! Four sisters, four clans all having their own magic and place in the world.

But for me? I love a deliciously evil character. Ianthe gave me chills.

So many scenes will stay tucked in my heart forever...the barrier, the fountain, the final battle.

A fun new fantasy.

Sinead (Huntress of Diverse Books) says

Check out my book blog for more book reviews and other bookish posts!

I read the prequel of From Under The Mountain, which is called The Traitor's Tunnel and immediately fell in love with the universe. Here is my review of the prequel. I knew I wanted to read more and luckily the first book of the main series, had already been released.

It's #ownvoices for asexual and transgender representation.

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While reading this book, I felt completely immersed in the world. That is how good the worldbuilding is. It's so realistic, which might sound weird, considering there are witches, dragons, and shapeshifters, but that's how it is. The witches and the differences in their magic were the best described of these groups, and really very intriguing. I couldn't decide though in which witch way I'd like to go because they're all fascinating. There is the possibility of an interesting story arc with the dragons, since we found out about them more slowly and I'm pretty sure they'll be receiving larger roles in the next books. The shapeshifters were a beautiful mystery, no matter how much I found out about them, I couldn't stop wanting to know more. While the worldbuilding around these groups is solid, I felt like the conflicts between the humans, witches, dragons, and shapeshifters were erased during the last chapters. I found this disappointing since a lot of the book had been devoted to discussing the conflicts between these groups, and in the end it didn't play any role in the final battle. I'm hoping that the next book will discuss the dynamics between these groups in more detail. The world is quite creepy as well, so I had the shivers off and on (but I do scare easily!).

I liked how the religion in this society is constructed and what one of the characters said about the gods after she got to know them. I'm not going to say more because that would be a spoiler.

I was very invested in Guerline and rooting for her all the time, especially since she genuinely tries to do her best with the few governing skills that she has acquired over the years. Shout out to Theodore (main

character from The Traitor's Tunnel) for being such a good person and supporting her. Also shout out to Bridget, who has a storyline that is kept quite separate from that of her brother's (i.e. Theodore), but still just as awesome as he is. I was so annoyed with Eva as a character though, and I'm hoping that the next book describes her motivations and choices in more detail. I don't like her, that much is clear.

I appreciated the last part of the novel, which contained a short description of Arido, the region in which the series takes place, as it both taught me more about the world as well as gave my imagination nourishment for possible future scenarios.

I enjoy title references that are sprinkled into the text, so that's something you can look forward to in this book, if you're like me. I also think the title is really fitting to the book, and because of that I'm very intrigued to see what is going to "from out of the forest", which is the title of sequel.

I enjoyed From Under The Mountain very much, and am excited about the sequel From Out Of The Forest, which is coming out in 2018. If you're unsure about the novel, I recommend reading the novella first, since it gives you a good introduction to the universe and some of the minor characters of the novel.

Trigger warning: attempted sexual assault.

Rana says

Fucking brilliant. A fantasy novel that kicks ass at world-building and wraps up the story in one book. No need for a trilogy when it's great writing. Loved its sense of real diversity.
