



## Stolen Remains

*Christine Trent*

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After establishing her reputation as one of London's most highly regarded undertakers, Violet Harper decided to take her practice to the wilds of the American West. But when her mother falls ill, Violet and her husband Samuel are summoned back to England, where her skills are as sought-after as ever. She's honored to undertake the funeral of Anthony Fairmont, the Viscount Raybourn, a close friend of Queen Victoria's who died in suspicious circumstances--but it's difficult to perform her services when his body disappears. . .

As the viscount's undertaker, all eyes are on Violet as the Fairmonts and Scotland Yard begin the search for his earthly remains. Forced to exhume her latent talents as a sleuth to preserve her good name, Violet's own investigation takes her from servants' quarters, to the halls of Windsor Castle, to the tombs of ancient Egypt--and the Fairmont family's secrets quickly begin to unravel like a mummy's wrappings. But the closer Violet gets to the truth, the closer she gets to becoming the next missing body. . .

Wrought with both heartfelt bravery and breathtaking suspense, *Stolen Remains* is a captivating tale of death and deception set against the indelible backdrop of Victorian London.

## Praise for Lady of Ashes

"Rich with historical incidents and details." --*Publishers Weekly*

"A book you can sink your teeth into, with characters you'll fall in love with." --*Mystery Scene Magazine*

## Stolen Remains Details

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Author : Christine Trent

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## From Reader Review Stolen Remains for online ebook

### Melanie says

3 1/2 stars. The series is getting better (I didn't love the first book in the series). The story does have some predictable plot points and others that don't make sense but was a better read.

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### Nidofito says

Without Violet's troubled marital life, her romance with Sam and not enough bodies to be prepared for funerals to distract me, I could not muster any interest in this murder mystery. Add to that the incredibly selfish and rude people, from the Queen to the Inspectors that Violet had to deal with, made me very grumpy. I still have trouble understanding the reason for the murder and the fate of the murderers was comical and entirely too convenient. There were maybe two or three instances where I got curious about the mystery but besides that the story was flat and boring.

One thing I did enjoy was reading the author's note at the end which tells the research done to create a historically accurate setting. Unfortunately, there is only so much a nice setting can do if the characters themselves (besides Violet and Sam) are absolute shit. I'm not sure if I want to continue reading this series.

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### Lindsay says

This book is neither suspenseful, nor is it well written. I had to skim through the last half and was bored through the end.

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### Charles says

I read this out of sequence. It was the last remaining in order to complete the series. I had benefit of having read all the others prior to reading this installment... that may have been both good and bad. Bad, in that I didn't get to experience the full experience of watching the main characters develop as intended. Bad in that I didn't get to experience the artistry of the author as it matured. Good, in that I had a yardstick by which to measure and a familiarity with the characters that allowed me to perhaps read more into them.

I certainly didn't see the surprises at the end. I had no idea...and in part that was by design by the author's efforts. She didn't give us a lot to establish a sense a pattern or outcome or to develop a suspicion of any individual as a suspect. Important elements were not even hinted at and totally hidden until the very end. This in itself was both good and bad. Good in that I was totally taken off guard by what had truly happened. Bad in that I feel I was cheated by having no sense of what layed underneath the covers.

There was also a very convenient Perry Mason confession that I found totally unlikely to happen and a convenient dispatching of the guilty parties.

Although it felt disconnected and often repeating elements in order to fill pages I really did enjoy the read. I love the writing style of the author - the history lessons that accompany each installment - the insight into the Victorian era society.

I do hope Ms. Trent will continue the series.

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### **Kay Dee says**

below is my review of book one in the series which i read right before starting this one. i DNF this one.

i liked it as a historical fiction book. i would have liked it more if i wasn't expecting it to be a mystery.

i mean a killer is introduced in the first part of the book and then..... no mention.... no deaths waiting..... nope.. oh the killer speaks again..... waiting... hmm some a death yes this must be the murderer..um nope. oh is it this one nope ok this one. well ok then. our very cool lady mortician will immediately be suspicious and go investigate since the book is more than halfway done..um nop..now.. nope..oh ok now.

sigh and then when the killer is finally revealed it is a total Agatha Christie cheat. ya know how Christie would introduce a character that was very minor and totally not involved in the main characters lives or even mentioned again until the murder is close to being solved. yup, that is this.

again if i wasn't expecting a mystery but just a historical fiction novel then this would have been way more enjoyable. but since it was touted as a mystery series i was disappointed. i started book 2 but was immediately confused because they were not in the place they or time where they left off in book 1. i am sure that was explained eventually but i stopped reading because of that confusion/frustration before she got to it. i am sure some of the frustration was probably leftover from book 1 taking so long to get to the murder mystery. i read them back to back.

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### **Cathy says**

This time the mystery came first. That makes it a better book for me than the first. There is still plenty of history. But hopefully in the next book the queen will not play a role. My ability to suspend disbelief in that regard has reached its limits.

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### **Ann says**

I loved the first book in this series and was truly hoping that this book would live up to the last one. It did in a lot of ways: the story was engrossing, the characters were very well written and the plot was excellent. I

also like the mixture of historical fact with fiction. The only thing is that, unfortunately, this series is going the way of some of the others in the ilk. The heroine does the policeman's job and does things that would never be allowed. She makes the police seem like inept buffoons and without her they would never solve the case. She questions suspects and follows people and then is surprised when they retaliate. Ms. Trent, I beg you not to take the easy way out but portray this woman as she should be, honorable, trustworthy, reliable and sensible.

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### **Kimberly Ann says**

This was a treat: an interesting & compelling read, which I read in one day!

Mrs. Violet Harper, widow of London undertaker Mr. Morgan, now running a funeral business in Colorado is currently visiting her sick mother in England.

Lord Raybourn, recently returned from Egypt where he was keeping tabs on Prince Albert Edward & the building of the Suez Canal by the French, is found dead of a gunshot wound to his face by his housekeeper and soon to be wife Mrs. Peet.

Violet is summoned by Queen Victoria to take over the preparations of the body and funeral of the now deceased Lord Raybourn , as well to ask questions about his death...

Due to the nature & extent of facial disfigurement of the corpse, Violet locks the coffin. After agreeing to open it for Mrs. Peet, so that she might take hair for a mourning brooch, Mrs. Peet is found dead, hanged by her neck.

Meanwhile, both Lord Raybourn's Valet & Cook have gone missing and then someone steals Lord Raybourn's remains demanding a ransom for their return.

In the house with Violet are the family:

- \* Stephen, 2nd son is the new Lord Rayburn; as his eldest brother Cedric, was assumed dead in the Crimean War
- \* Katherine, Stephen's wife
- \* Dorothy Fairmont, Lord Raybourn's eldest daughter whom he forced into spinsterhood
- \* Eleanor "Nelly" Bishop, Lord Raybourn's youngest daughter, whom he forced into an unwanted marriage & out of a career in journalism
- \* Gordon Bishop, Nelly's husband
- \* Toby Bishop, Nelly's & Gordon's son who always seems to disappear

Working against Violet is Inspector Hurst of Scotland Yard, who would prefer the death of Lord Raybourn be ruled suicide, but isn't quite convinced.

There were many twists and turns, the family members were written so that they appeared to the reader opposite of their true character.

The dialog was easy to read, the various practices of preparing a body for burial & a family for mourning was very interesting.

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### **Sallee says**

This is the second volume in the Lady of Ashes mystery series about Victorian undertaker, Violet Harper. I found the plot had many twists and turns, the characters were interesting and the story line intriguing. I have not read the first one in this series although I have heard it was much better. I will continue with this series as I found it entertaining.

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### **Ionia says**

3.5 stars

I didn't dislike this book, but I felt it was a simple continuation of "Lady of Ashes" and didn't really add a lot of substance. This book started off really interesting, and I enjoyed the first few chapters a lot, but after a while it seemed that it was just repeating things that had already happened in a slightly different scenario.

Still this is a good book full of wonderfully descriptive writing. I would definitely say that if you like books filled with darker subject matter and a true Gothic feel, then this book is one you will want to read.

I enjoyed the dialogue and liked the way the main character handled obstacles in her way. She is a unique character with a strong will.

Overall this was a very well written book, with a lot of interesting mysteries to be uncovered.

This review is based on a complimentary copy from the publisher and provided through Netgalley. All opinions are my own.

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### **Ashleigh Willett says**

A great read, had no idea who did it until the end. Really enjoying reading through this series!

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### **Quillracer says**

I can't remember ever giving up on a book after only 18 pages. Until now.

Four chapter into the story and we've met several members of British Royalty, the victim, and assorted secondary characters. By now, the main character(s) should be well established in our minds. They haven't even made an appearance yet.

If I'm ever to the point where I'm so desperate for something to read, I'm ready to pick up the phone book, I might – *might* – try this book again. But I highly doubt it.

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### **Hilary says**

Sadly, this one didn't live up to the promise of the first. Everything seemed too contrived, from Violet's presence to some convenient appearances (including an overly-detailed explanation of someone's adventures told without apology despite the content and the audience).

Queen Victoria is strange and somewhat random in her requests. Violet's respect for the dead is still present, and there are a few little details, but for the most part her profession is incidental. I think Violet's friends and family made her interactions more natural, whereas here she was isolated most of the time. I'm also left wondering whether Paddington really had a crowded departure board at that time.

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### **Lorraine says**

Believe it or not, I had fun reading this book, and I rate it 4 1/2 stars. There is a twist at the end I did not expect, and with the subject being death with the main character being a female undertaker, one would think that it would not be fun, but it was for me. Being an avid Anglophile, I climbed right into the Victorian setting with the Queen involved in solving the first murder working with Mrs. Harper, the undertaker. The author shows the reader all aspects of London during Queen Victoria's reign even going into White Chapel before Jack the Ripper though which was fine by me. This series has great promise for Anglophiles and people who just like mysteries and London, of course. I heartily recommend Stolen Remains !

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### **Erin says**

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot....>

Christine Trent's Stolen Remains, the sequel to Lady of Ashes, left me in mind of A Royal Likeness and that isn't a good thing. Unlike most of Trent's readers, I found her first sequel lacked the appeal of its predecessor and here again, I feel the story failed to replicate the magic of the original publication.

Lady of Ashes struck me for a couple of reasons, the first among them being the detailed insight the story gave to the undertaker's profession. Unfortunately this element all but disappears in Stolen Remains. Have no fear, Violet is still practicing, but I was very disappointed at Trent's decision to downplay the details of her craft in favor of the mystery at hand.

On that note, I also failed to see the entertainment value in Trent's whodunit. Call me crazy, but the whole thing seemed way too coincidental. Violet just happens to be in London, just happens to have her supplies, Queen Victoria just happens to renew their far-fetched association... Give me a break.

Already frustrated with the direction and tone of the piece, Trent's self-promotional nod to her earlier novels annoyed me even further. The Laurent Doll Shop isn't essential to this series and the fact that scenes continue to take place here comes off as both amateurish and awkward.

There is a lot of buzz regarding the impending publication of A Virtuous Death and The Mourning Bells, but

can't say I'm among those dying to get my hands on either tome.

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