



## The Poisoned Serpent

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## **The Poisoned Serpent** Joan Wolf

Norman England has little to celebrate in the new year of 1140. The country is immersed in a bitter civil war from which no one is immune, including Hugh de Leon, heir to an earldom. His Uncle Guy has arranged his marriage to the spoiled daughter of the newly named Earl of Lincoln. It is a merger that will combine two of the land's largest fortunes -- and give the de Leons unparalleled power. Hugh's heart, however, belongs to the Lady Cristen, and he will do everything he can -- including eloping -- to make her his own.

His plan is simple enough--until the new Earl of Lincoln is murdered, and a friend of Hugh's is accused of the crime. Though he has little time in which to foil his uncle's arrangement, Hugh cannot see an innocent man wrongly hanged. To save his friend and marry the woman he loves, Hugh must work fast to track down a deadly -- and wily -- serpent. But when he grabs it by the tail, can he avoid its poisonous bite?

## **The Poisoned Serpent Details**

Date : Published June 2001 by Avon (first published May 2000)

ISBN : 9780061097461

Author : Joan Wolf

Format : Mass Market Paperback 367 pages

Genre : Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Historical Mystery, Medieval, Historical Romance

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## **From Reader Review The Poisoned Serpent for online ebook**

### **Kate says**

3.5>? again, not quite a 4! I liked it though-I can't really put my finger on what it lacked, but I'll still be reading the third, because as always, I need closure! I'm such a sucker! =p

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### **Joan says**

This is a sequel to No Dark Place. It got off to a slow start but once the pace picked up it was engaging. Wolf's characters are not well developed but she created a well crafted story.

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### **Rusty says**

Enjoyed reading about Hugh and his rag to riches story, whose friendship compels him to investigate a murder to establish the innocence of a friend. Gilbert DeBeaute, Earl of Lincoln, is killed, stabbed by an unknown person. Bernard Radvers, friend of Hugh De Leon, the nephew and newly discovered heir to the Earl of Wiltshire, is accused of the murder. Bernard was found by the body holding the dagger that killed the earl.

It is believed that Bernard killed the earl because of the betrothal of Hugh to his lovely, spoiled daughter, Elizabeth. Hugh resents his uncle's betrothal arrangement because he is in love with Cristin. And, because of his friendship with Bernard investigate the murder and those who might have done it. His spoiled and beautiful daughter, Elizabeth, expects everyone to admire her beauty and wants to be present when Bernard is executed for her father's murder. The reader walks with Hugh as he uncovers the murderer and what happens as a result to prove the man's guilt.

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### **Lorraine says**

Joan Wolf's The Poisoned Serpent, a medieval mystery, is the last of her books that I have. As I read it, the plot and the writing seemed too simplistic for Ms. Wolf. The ending I enjoyed. She employed a medieval tradition that was used quite often to solve a problem no matter how serious. The tradition itself was very definitely serious, but until society became more sophisticated, this was one way legal issues were solved. That was a great way to draw the book to the end.

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### **Claudia says**

Probably 3.5 stars. This book held my interest on the arc trainer at the gym. I would definitely read this author again.

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## **Ruth says**

The first book of these medieval mysteries was more background story than mystery, but this second one is excellent. The reader is almost as surprised as the other characters by the logical leaps that Hugh makes, until he finally gets around to explaining them. I really do wish Wolf would come out with more, but since she wrote this in 2000, and hasn't come out with any more since, I guess it's just these two.

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## **Sandra says**

I enjoyed the mystery and I love the relationship between Cristen and Hugh. They love each other and support each other. Favourite line - Hugh saying "But of course I told Cristen" when talking about something that he saw as a child but has never discussed with anyone since.

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## **Annette says**

This is a great read. The year is 1140 and we are taken there as though it were yesterday. The detail is exquisite.

Hugh is the heir to an earldom. He wants to marry Lady Cristen, but the approval does not appear to be forthcoming from all the powerful men involved. Hugh has been promised to another, and it appears that is set in stone. In that time, when noble families married it was not simply a marriage, it was a distinct sign of alliance and power.

There is a murder. The murdered man was powerful and his death throws many political plans into disarray. Worst of all, the accused is Bernard, a friend of Hugh's and most importantly, he is an innocent man. Hugh will investigate to find the guilty party and to prove Bernard innocence.

The story is very well plotted and the reader is led from one interesting event to another. We find that Hugh is a brilliant man who is aware of the world in which he lives. He is also a kind man. He ends up with people, children and dogs who all become a part of his life. It is all because he knows that their best hope is in a place that has love, understanding and goodness.

Cristen is the perfect woman for him. She is also bright and she understands the way the world works. Her knowledge is the perfect asset for living a life with Hugh. She is willing to do whatever it may take to help Hugh. Her faith in his ability to do the right thing is unfailing.

The story has romance as well as mystery. The intrigue and political maneuvering seems to be very true to life for the time period.

This is a very well written story. Ms Wolf is a talented story teller. The reader is led in the direction of adventure and mystery. Her characters are very human people. Even though they exist in medieval time, they appear to be quite real and capable of surviving in any time and place. Each of the secondary characters is an integral part of the story.

If you want a well written book, that will take you on a wonderful adventure, this is a book for you. I bet you will love it as much as I did.

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### **Ana T. says**

Following the first book where Hugh has to find the truth about his past we find him again when he has already been established as the Earl of Wiltshire rightful heir. This doesn't bring him only joy because he has just been told by his uncle that he has betrothed him to the daughter of the Earl of Lincoln. The plan is to join the two most powerful families in the land and gain more power and riches. But Hugh is set and determined to marry only Cristen, his long-time love, although she doesn't belong to a rich and influential family.

The plot thickens when the Earl of Lincoln is murdered and one of Hugh's friends is suspected of being the killer just to help Hugh become the next Earl and get all his riches through his marriage to his daughter.

Hugh is alerted to Bernard Radver's arrest and decides to travel to Lincoln and see if he can unravel the mystery of who killed the Earl of Lincoln. There he meets again Richard Canville, the son of the current Sheriff, whom he has known from childhood. It is apparent from the beginning that there's past history between Hugh and Richard. Hugh evades Richard's attempts at friendship trying to keep him at arm's length. In Lincoln is also Elizabeth de Beauté, the young daughter of the murdered Earl, who seems as determined as Hugh not to have their betrothal be valid. Finally, Cristen proves that she is also a strong woman as she sets to Lincoln determined to help Hugh and stay with him till the truth is discovered.

Although there is a strong historical background I think in this book the attention is centered more in the detective story. Through his interview of witnesses and his deduction skills Hugh attempts to prove that his friend is innocent and that the guilt lays elsewhere. It does provide an interesting look into a medieval city's life with its castle and its inhabitants but also with the common people going about their daily activities of selling and buying goods, attending fairs, playing games or just caring about family.

As the previous book of the series this *The Poisoned Serpent* is a compelling read even if at times Hugh seems almost too perfect to be true. I thought Wolf was planning a series but it seems there are just these two books. I wish she had written more because I think they were great reads.

Grade: 4/5

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### **Clotilde Martinez says**

In the second book of the series, Hugh Corbaille now known as Hugh de Leon and heir of Earl of Wilshire is madly in love with Cristen Haslin whose father was the knight who recognized Hugh as the kidnapped child in the first book. Hugh's uncle Guy, the Earl of Wilshire has arranged that Hugh marry Elizabeth Debeaute the beautiful daughter of the Earl of Lincoln. At the same time, a thorn from Hugh's past comes back to his life and the people around Hugh cannot figure why Hugh hates Richard Canville, the son of the Sheriff of Lincoln. Before Hugh can objected to this marriage, his soon to be father in law is found stabbed to death and the suspect is no other than Hugh's childhood friend Bernard. Hugh does not believed that his friend

murdered the Earl of Lincoln and decides to track down the real murderer and bring that man to justice.

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## **Benjamin Thomas says**

The second of only two novels in Ms Wolf's "Medieval Mystery" series, this one is a definite step up from the first. While I enjoyed the plot of the first, I had felt the writing style seemed to be amateur at best. This one settled into a fine murder mystery plot and, indeed was an enjoyable read. The story elements wrapped up nicely so need for a third novel.

The writing has definitely improved. The phrasing was not clumsy as before and the pacing of the plot was appropriate. I don't wish to give the impression that I am some sort of English professor but I do read a lot of novels and seldom are the times when the prose jolts me out of the narrative flow as frequently as the first novel did. Here, although much better, the author still provides a few too many adverbial phrases ("he said smilingly" or "she exclaimed excitedly") which can really bug me after a while. In addition, the main character and his fiancé are just too perfect. He is handsome, humble, a perfect orator, and a commanding presence in every room he enters. She is beautiful, practical, and a master healer. No flaws for either one and they both always make the right decisions.

All in all, this is a simple, straightforward historical murder mystery that is a quick read. Just don't expect depth of character.

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## **George says**

#2 in this early 12th century English mystery series. England is on the verge of civil war between dual claimants to the English throne: Stephen and his half sister Matilda. It is now 1139 and it has been determined the Hugh is the lost son and ashaky arrangement has been made between Hugh and his uncle that Hugh will be his heir. There is still a lot of intrigue and plotting as the struggle between Stephen and Matilda for the crown continues. Hugh becomes involved again when a close friend is accused of murdering the newly appointed Earl of Lincoln.

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## **Bettye McKee says**

### **In the reign of King Stephen**

All of England is in a perpetual state of unrest during the reign of King Stephen. There is an endless struggle to stay a step ahead of the forces of the Empress Matilda in order to keep possession of the throne.

The barons are in a constant state of flux with their loyalty, depending on which will provide them the greatest benefit. Some of this power comes through arranging profitable marriages for their dependents.

Hugh requests permission to marry Cristen but is told he must instead marry Elizabeth de Beaute`. Then there is a murder, Lady Elizabeth's father. A castle groom is murdered. Then a third murder causes much confusion as it could not have been committed by their suspect as he was in jail.

If you're not familiar with the works of Joan Wolf, you've been missing a real treat.

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**Michele bookloverforever says**

a very wily young Fox puts its a very wily old one and wins the hand of his lady beloved....set in the 12th century English civil war....the one empress Maude/Matilda began and her son, Henry II finished....

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**Joan says**

Just really enjoyed this book, the characters, the story, the great history and details. A very good story teller.

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