



## **Snowspelled**

*Stephanie Burgis*

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**In nineteenth-century Angland, magic is reserved for gentlemen while ladies attend to the more practical business of politics. But Cassandra Harwood has never followed the rules...**

Four months ago, Cassandra Harwood was the first woman magician in Angland, and she was betrothed to the brilliant, intense love of her life.

Now Cassandra is trapped in a snowbound house party deep in the elven dales, surrounded by bickering gentleman magicians, manipulative lady politicians, her own interfering family members, and, worst of all, her infuriatingly stubborn ex-fiancé, who refuses to understand that she's given him up for his own good.

But the greatest danger of all lies outside the manor in the falling snow, where a powerful and malevolent elf-lord lurks...and Cassandra lost all of her own magic four months ago.

To save herself, Cassandra will have to discover exactly what inner powers she still possesses – and risk everything to win a new kind of happiness.

A witty and sparkling romantic fantasy novella that opens a brand-new series for adults from the author of *Kat, Incorrigible*, *Masks and Shadows* and *Congress of Secrets*.

## **Volume I of The Harwood Spellbook**

### **Snowspelled Details**

Date : Published September 4th 2017 by Five Fathoms Press

ISBN :

Author : Stephanie Burgis

Format : ebook 168 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Romance, Novella, Historical, Historical Fiction, Magic

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## From Reader Review Snowspelled for online ebook

### Leseparatist says

I read this courtesy of the gracious author. Thank you! :)

A Solstice read for Yuletide.

I enjoyed this short romantic fantasy novel quite a lot. It was light, fluffy and fun, with nice - and kind! - characters and thoughtfully developed themes. There's nothing particularly groundbreaking about its treatment of gender, perhaps, with the partial role reversal, but the way the author weaved her ideas with the world and distributed information without info-dumping (but while giving all the useful knowledge at the right time) was particularly enjoyable.

I felt like it could have used some fleshing out, plot-wise, but the disability theme was, for me at least, nicely done. And the protagonist's family (brother and sister-in-law) were delightful to read about.

I look forward to the next volume!

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### Y.S. Lee says

This is a sweet, succinct, perfectly pitched romance set in an alternative Regency "Angland" with magic and gender politics. Cassandra Harwood is a feisty, headstrong heroine (not unlike Burgis's middle-grade heroines, Aventurine in The Dragon with a Chocolate Heart and Kat in Kat, Incorrigible/A Most Improper Magick) and there's so much pleasure in watching her develop emotionally. The family relationships are classic Burgis (Cassandra's strong friendship with her sister-in-law, Amy, is especially delightful) and I really want to know more about the family and its circle. Utterly delightful.

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### All Things Urban Fantasy says

Review courtesy of All Things Urban Fantasy.

My only complaint about SNOWSPELLED is that it is too short! Leaving me desperate for the next book in the The Harwood Spellbook series, SNOWSPELLED is an adorable romantic novella with a bit of a mystery. It's exactly what I would have expected from the author of KAT, INCORRIGIBLE.

SNOWSPELLED starts right in the middle of a conversation between two of the main characters and immediately sucks you in. Cassandra is intriguing and her sister-in-law Amy is stubborn and mischievous. Not only are those two delightful to read and learn about, but I love the relationships throughout the novella, shown in short scenes but managing to feel very natural, as if the reader knows the history of the characters.

The world building was excellently done, as aspects of the world were explained as they came up. Most of the major questions I had were deftly answered, though there are some aspects I am definitely curious about. I think that mostly comes from the length of the story, and the fact that it is a novella - not everything can be

dealt with in this first installment. It's definitely a fascinating world, though, with a matriarchal society with magic and elves!

All in all, I wholeheartedly recommend SNOWSPELLED if you like historical fantasy, romance or are even just looking for something a little different to read. I can't wait for THORNBBOUND, the next book in the series!

Sexual content: Kissing, implied sex.

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### **(Tori-Smexybooks) smexys\_sidekick says**

Originally reviewed at SmexyBooks-<http://smexybooks.com/2017/09/review-...>

Favorite Quote: "...there is more to you than your magic. There always was."

Reviewed by Tori

Snowspelled is a historical fantasy novella set in the alternative world of Angland. Its history dates back to Queen Boudicca (Boadicea) and her war against the Romans. Only in here, she succeeded in defeating the Romans and driving them out of what is modern-day Britain. In this world, women dominate the political arena and the men control the magic. Both humans and various paranormal entities coexist in this world and survive through delicate treaties. This story revolves around the rewriting of one such treaty and one woman's journey to rediscover herself after a huge loss.

It was a truth universally acknowledged that women were the more pragmatic sex; that was why we were expected to run the government, while the men attended to the more mystical and imaginative realm of magic.

The novella opens with our heroine Cassandra Harwood, conversing with her sister in law, Amy Harwood. Cassandra is displeased to have been coerced into attending an important politically motivated house party and upon learning her former fiance will also be there.

When Cassandra and her party arrive at their destination, they learn that the hostess's niece and her party have suffered a mishap and are now lost in the surrounding woods. The hostess is putting together a search party and Cassandra volunteers to help search, needing to get away from all the looks of pity being tossed her way and to avoid her ex-fiance. Unfortunately, he follows her, determined to discover why she broke their engagement.

A nasty winter storm and a chance meeting with a vindictive elven prince leaves Cassandra in a bind. A bind that could lead to a fate worse than death if she doesn't figure out exactly what is going on and who is responsible.

I picked this novella on a whim, intrigued by the concept of a historical fantasy that portrays an alternative world separating men and women through magic and politics but not in the way one might expect. The first in a series, Snowspelled opens the doorway to a clever little world, introducing us to a cast of well-defined characters and setting the stage for the overarching storyline. Strong descriptive narrative, a charming second

chance romance, and an engaging storyline grab your attention from the very beginning as Burgis uses familiar parameters to explain to us her world and it's residents.

The atmosphere is a curious mixture of hope, intrigue, and humor as we begin to learn more about Cassandra and the reasons behind her broken engagement; which goes far in explaining more about this world and its flaws. Cassandra is a relatable heroine. Bold, intelligent, witty, and forthright, her actions are perfectly understandable for someone who has lost something they worked very hard for. She pushed against the status quo, attempting to seize her destiny, and lost. Her feelings of failure are understandable though those close to her do what they can to show her she has more to offer than she believes.

Not every man could do spellwork, of course, even in our elite cohort, just as I couldn't possibly have been the first woman to be born with that natural ability. I was only the first to be bold enough, brash enough and ? most of all ?lucky enough, in our modern era, to finally break free of the roles we'd all been assigned centuries earlier, and win a public space for myself that others might follow.

A diverse cast of characters helps to define and develop this world with their different personalities and agendas. The relationships in here are quite affectionate and well crafted. Even though the scenes are short, Burgus does an excellent job of conveying the feelings experienced by all those interacting. Multiple pathways are opened and I can't wait to see where they all eventually lead to. I enjoyed seeing the strong bonds Cassandra has with her brother and sister in law. No matter what has happened, they all have each other's backs. I also found myself smiling at Cassandra's attempts to protect her ex-fiance's honor which highlights the gender switching in here in terms of historical etiquette/ properties. Cassandra worries about being seen alone with her ex-fiance and compromising him so she avoids him as best she can. Her brother's attempts to force them to be caught are amusing.

"It's like watching an opera, but far better because there's so much less tuneless shrieking involved. No, it's all wordless emoting and high drama with you two and ? ow!"

I did have a couple issues with the story concerning the mystery and conflict. Everything we see and hear relies on Cassandra so it has a disconnected feel to it at times. I would have liked to have experienced first hand what happened to Cassandra in the past and how she solves the mystery but this being a novella, I can understand the time restraints. Hopefully, Burgis will divulge deeper into the elven/human history and Cassandra's struggle to become a magician and her downfall as the series progresses.

Regardless of my issues, Snowspelled was an enjoyable bit of escapism, perfect for fans of lighter regency romantic fantasies. I am looking forward to the second book in the series, Thordbond, which is set to release in 2018.

Grade: B-

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### **kari says**

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I clearly don't read enough romance to tell how this book fits within the genre, but I can tell you that it's a beautiful, wholesome story about finding and giving acceptance, and I enjoyed it very much.

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## **Jenia says**

Ahhh so perfect!!! Wish it was longer!

- Perfect power couple romance
- Perfect sibling + sibling-in-law relationship
- Fun world and magic
- Super heartwarming
- TOO CUTE

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## **Lindsay says**

The country of Angland parallels Regency England, but it's a place where magic is real, elves and trolls are an ever-present threat, and the country is ruled by the members of the Boudiccate, the long-standing council of gentlewomen who are charged with the protection of the realm. It's a Regency England where race, sexuality and gender are mostly non-issues, although there are some fairly strict gender roles.

Regarding strict gender roles, Cassandra Harwood is a magician, the first woman to be trained at the Great Library and one of the best two wizards of her generation. The other is her ex-fiancé, Rajaram Wrexham. They broke up at Cassandra's insistence as a result of a horrible accident four months ago that has left Cassandra permanently unable to cast spells and unwilling to saddle her fiancé with such a damaged spouse.

After spending the time since the accident avoiding him, political events within Angland and manipulation by her sister-in-law see both Cassandra and Wrexham at the same manor house for a week while the country prepares for an important ceremony marking a peace treaty with the elves. And then Cassandra finds herself a pawn in the politics between the two realms.

This was fun and works well both as a fantasy story and an alt-world regency romance. Cassandra and Wrexham's relationship is wonderful and so is Cassandra's struggle to define meaning in her life after losing what has been the primary driver of it so far. The supporting cast is also well portrayed with believable motivations and actions. Recommended.

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## **Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says**

3.5 stars. On sale today, Sept. 4, 2017! Final review, first posted on Fantasy Literature:

*Snowspelled*, the first book in the new HARWOOD SPELLBOOK fantasy series by Stephanie Burgis, is a fun, light read, right at the intersection of magical fantasy and Regency romance, with a twist of alternative history. We are in Angland, not England, and there's a time-honored treaty between humans and elves, with the humans paying a toll to live on elven lands. Cassandra Harwood, her brother Jonathan, and sister-in-law Amy travel to a week-long house party at Cosgrove Manor, deep in elven lands, an area guarded by trolls who allow you to pass only if you have paid the necessary tax and have an official, glowing stamp on your carriage.

Cassandra is a brilliant, dedicated magician. Though still held back by the gentleman's network of male magicians, she has become the first officially recognized woman magician in the country. Or at least she

was, until a powerful magical spell she tried to cast four months ago went badly awry. Now casting even the simplest spell would kill her.

To avoid hampering her former fiancé Wrexham, another superb magician, in his career, she cut him loose two months ago ... but he seems to be reluctant to disappear from her life. Which might in fact be a good thing, given that Cassandra has inadvertently run afoul of a malicious elf lord while at the Cosgrove house party, where an unnatural snowstorm has trapped the entire group and upset the local troll population. Now Cassandra has one week to figure out which magician at the party has meddled with the weather and caused the unnaturally strong snowstorm, or she'll be in the elf lord's power. Can she do it without her magic?

*Snowspelled* will appeal to readers who like light Regency-inspired fantasies like *Sorcery & Cecelia: or The Enchanted Chocolate Pot*. This one's got a little more adult content (read: a non-explicit bedroom scene) and some amusing twists on traditional Regency society rules. Almost invariably, the magicians are gentleman, while the ladies control politics. After dinner, the women all go off to discuss politics while the men remain at the table until they are notified that the ladies are ready for the men to join them. These gender-based roles are traditional rather than innate, though, and Cassandra and others are trying to soften their rigidity:

Not every man could do spellwork, of course, even in our elite cohort, just as I couldn't possibly have been the first woman to be born with that natural ability. I was only the first to be bold enough, brash enough and ? most of all ?lucky enough, in our modern era, to finally break free of the roles we'd all been assigned centuries earlier, and win a public space for myself that others might follow.

Another interesting twist in this alternative Regency England is that race and sexuality are non-issues: Rajaram Wrexham is part Maratha (this world's India); Cassandra's sister-in-law Amy has dark brown skin, but it's the fact that she's married to a non-magician, Cassandra's brother Jonathan, that holds Amy back politically, not the color of her skin. Cassandra helps a lesbian couple with some magical questions without blinking an eye. There are other strict societal rules, however, that take the place of these, and some traditional ideas (like being compromised and obligated to marry if a couple is caught in the act of kissing) remain the same.

The characters in *Snowspelled* aren't particularly multifaceted, and the plot is light rather than deep or complex. For readers of historical romances, the relationship between Cassandra and Wrexham follows a timeworn path, and the hindrances to the romance are an overfamiliar mix of the self-sacrifice trope and the misunderstanding trope, resolved with eyebrow-raising speed once the couple finally gets around to really communicating. But their yearning looks across the room do allow for some amusing commentary by observers:

"We should sell tickets," my brother told me. "It's like watching an opera, but far better because there's so much less tuneless shrieking involved. No, it's all wordless emoting and high drama with you two and ? *ow!*!"

*Snowspelled* is a pleasant and quick read, and Cassandra has some intriguing plans for the future at the end of this story. I'm interested to see where THE HARWOOD SPELLBOOK series goes next.

*I received a free copy of this book from the author for review. Thanks!*

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## **katayou Masoodi says**

a very engaging and exciting short story. Interesting world and how the magic and the politics worked, looking forward to reading the other adventures. The people all were very nice and likeable, though they were a lot like the kat stories, not very complex sides to the characters and the heroes and the villains being quite defined as heroes and villains.

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## **Mara says**

3 1/2

A novella with an interesting reverse gender fantasy world (no, it's not attractive the other way round either). At 4 \$ I honestly found it expensive. But I can't deny she's good at them.

Here's a good review:

[www.goodreads.com/review/show/2053522541](http://www.goodreads.com/review/show/2053522541)

I'm keen to read a novel in this world.

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## **Veronica says**

This was a cute little novella dealing with magic and elves in a regency era-ish, fictional place called England. Cassandra Harwood, facing the loss of her magic, and Wrexham, the former fiancé she's trying not to compromise (despite how much he wants her to), make for a charming lead pair. The meat of the story is lacking in substance and the mystery is...well, it just **isn't**, but it was entertaining in its own light-hearted, fluffy way. I'd read more.

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## **Alyisha says**

"Snowspelled" is an adult historical fiction/fantasy novella by Stephanie Burgis, featuring corsets, protection spells, and lumbering trolls, set in 19th century England. In Burgis' world, women are politicians & men, magicians. Cassandra Harwood is a rebel-magician who's recently lost her magic & her fiancé; after an impetuous bargain is mistakenly made, it's up to her to save her society from Elven destruction.

The gender flips are fun (e.g. men can be "hopelessly compromised"). Because it's historical fiction, the imbalance is acceptable, understandable, & kind-of silly (instead of grating, as it can be in modern times; this isn't a case of substituting one form of gender inequality for another. It's very tongue-in-cheek). Burgis deftly captures big emotions in a small amount of pages. CHOICE is a big deal, along with openness, honesty, ambition, love, and family. I'm always thrilled with her inclination to put "non-traditional" relationships in a very traditional setting & time period. It's so much fun & it warms my progressive heart.

"Snowspelled" is a quick story (too quick!) with lots of heart. I only wish it had been longer!

Note: I received an e-ARC (upon request) from the author.

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### **Aliette says**

A tensely romantic adventure in an English manor in the midst of a snowstorm. Manners, magic and an irresistible ex-fiancé--a fun and fluffy comfort read to be gulped down in one go. I really enjoyed reading this one.

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### **Stephanie says**

\*\*\*ETA: And it's out today as an ebook AND a paperback. Hooray!!!

This novella was my escape-/just-for-fun/comfort-writing project after the stress of last year's election, and I hope that it'll be a fun, comforting escape for readers as well. It's also the first in a brand new series! I'd describe these novellas as the equivalent of my Kat books but aimed squarely at adults, so: frothy, magical, fun and DEEPLY romantic. If you liked Courting Magic, you'll definitely like these!

ETA: And you can read Chapter One online already! <https://www.stephanieburgis.com/books...>

And another ETA: You can now read an excerpt from later in the book (a supper party that includes romantic tension, ruthless family teasing, and the worst weather wizard ever!) at USA Today's Happy Ever After blog: <http://happyeverafter.usatoday.com/20...>

You can buy the ebook edition AND get the paperback from  
Amazon.com: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/B073QWQF1X/...>

Barnes & Noble (ebook only): <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/snow...>

Amazon.co.uk (ebook and paperback): <https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B073QWQF1...>

Waterstones (paperback only): <https://www.waterstones.com/book/snow...> (I do NOT know why they're listing it for a higher price than I've set for the UK edition - I'm really sorry about that, guys, and I hope it will fix itself SOON! But I love and support Waterstones as a bookstore, so I couldn't possibly leave it off this list.)

Kobo (ebook only): <https://www.kobo.com/gb/en/ebook/snow...>

and Smashwords (ebook only): <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view...>

I am so happy to finally be able to share this with you guys! I love this family and these characters.

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### **Sheila says**

4 stars--I really liked it.

This is a short and sweet fantasy romance. (More of a novella actually.) It barely scratches the surface of plot, character, or setting, but it's so cozy and fun that I found it quite satisfying. I've been reading a lot of things lately that I found dark or depressing, so this was a nice break.

Lady diplomats, dapper magicians, and ice-cold elf lords abound here, and I love all those things. (And look at that gorgeous cover!) Recommended for readers of Sharon Shinn, etc.

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