

★ **The Vermilion Emporium****Jamie Pacton**

Peachtree Teen (Nov 1, 2022)

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The magic system of Jamie Pacton's delightful, haunting fantasy novel *The Vermilion Emporium* pays tribute to the Radium Girls, who met tragic ends.

Quinta is an orphan who fears she will never live up to her mother's magical life. Twain, also orphaned, scrambles to survive. The teenagers bond after a chance encounter that brings them to the doorstep of the Vermilion Emporium, a shop with magical goods that beckons to them both. Though the knowledge of how to make starlight lace has been lost for generations, Quinta and Twain stumble upon those very secrets and learn about the dangers inherent in accessing magic that everyone, from gossips to scholars to monarchs, wants.

At first, Quinta is nettlesome and Twain is distant, but their starlight project draws them closer and earns them a wealthy patron. Despite Quinta's determination not to become attached, she begins to develop feelings for Twain, though it is uncertain whether their paths will continue to intertwine. Malicious forces then conspire to separate the teenagers, and they each encounter the dangers tied to this particular form of magic, which can suck the very life out of its users. The backdrop of the Vermilion Emporium, a shop that is much more than it seems, injects yet more wonder into a world that is largely devoid of magic itself, apart from the starlight lace that Quinta and Twain make together. And the notion that magic demands sacrifice is handled in deft and sensitive ways. While nothing comes without a price, those who learn to love and change for the better are rewarded.

A fantasy novel clothed in romance and adventure, *The Vermilion Emporium* weaves together themes of loyalty and destiny, delivering a heartfelt and dazzling triumph.

JEANA JORGENSEN (November / December 2022)

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