



2005

# I, Coriander

Jessica Farmer

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### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Farmer, Jessica (2005) "I, Coriander," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 26 : Iss. 2 , Article 23.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol26/iss2/23>

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Gardner, Sally. *I, Coriander*. Dial Books, 2005. ISBN 0803730993. \$16.99. 280 pp.

Reviewer: Jessica Farmer

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Fairy tales; Historical Fiction;

Subject: Magic--Juvenile fiction; Fairies--Juvenile fiction; Mothers and daughters--Juvenile fiction; Book--Reviews;

Coriander, a young girl in 17th century London, is awash in magical mystery. Between her mother's unexpected death, the discovery that her mother had been a real life fairy, and mysterious silver shoes that appear on her doorstep, Coriander doesn't know what to do. Her father leaves her with her wicked step mother and an evil Puritan preacher so he can go into hiding and escape hanging for treason. Her life with Maud and Arise is terrible because they take away everything that she has ever loved. When they finally make good on the threat to kill her by locking her up in a chest, Coriander unknowingly draws on the magical powers she has always had. She is somehow transported to an incredible land filled with fairies. This land is not without its problems, however--problems that Coriander must help resolve. She finds a fairy prince who is about to be married against his will. Feeling an undeniable connection with him, Coriander convinces the Prince to refuse to marry and that she will help him defeat the evil queen Rosmore who threatened to kill him if he didn't marry her daughter. She realizes that the only way to resolve all her conflicts is to find the fairy shadow her mother hid to remain in the human world. As soon as Coriander finds this shadow and returns it to its rightful owner, her father will come home, Prince Tycho will be free from danger, and she will once again have the whimsical, peaceful life that she longs for more than anything.

This is an entertaining story, full of suspense and whimsy. Gardner is a delightful writer, using beautifully descriptive writing to tell the story. The beginning was slightly confusing and it was hard to figure out what was happening, but she does a good job of explaining all of the storylines and tying up loose ends at the conclusion. The British history incorporated about Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans is very interesting and educational. Gardner does a wonderful job of weaving historical facts with the adventurous fairytale. A great read for those who love both fantasy and British history.