

Reviews

'From start to finish, this is a book that is extremely difficult to put down! A beautiful, smart woman and the guy every woman dreams of are fighting not only against feelings forbidden according to ancient law, but for the lives of hundreds of people. You can almost touch the tension in this book. I cannot wait for the next installment from this author.'

Laura Clarke a Financial Advisor

'I'm not normally one for fiction, let alone fantasy so I picked up this book with a tiny bit of apprehension. A five star book for me is one that I have to tear myself away from and this has to be one of the better 5 star books I've read recently.

I could not put it down, regardless of whether I fit in the target demographic or not. I have no idea why I was so enamoured with this particular story but it just grabbed me, literally from the first chapter.

If you have an imagination and are willing to suspend your disbelief then you might enjoy this story. It's an extremely enjoyable read to while away a few hours but if your usual reading material tends to be the classics and nothing more, then this book is probably not for you. Arousing in places, the story builds up nicely and the 'will they won't they' effect of Hayden and Amelia is engaging and fun. As a bit of a techie geek I enjoyed the GPS references. Her Vampire Guardian held my interest to the end - which many more literary books fail to do.'

Mark Mahabir a Senior IT Consultant

The Art of Romance: Book 1
Her Vampire Guardian

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The Art of Romance: Book 1 – Her Vampire Guardian
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Introduction

Temptation is defined as a desire to do something wrong or unwise, desire; as a strong feeling of wanting.

For vampire guardian Hayden, Dr Amelia Jameson is the more accurate description. She's thrown the scientist stereotype out of the window! She's sexy, sassy and too tempting to be good, but when a break-in at her lab puts her in danger, it becomes evident there is nothing in this world - or the next - that Hayden won't do to protect her.

With passion and secrets building between them, can this unlikely couple resist each other? Or will they give into to their most primal needs and suffer the consequences?

Chapter One

“How bad is the damage?”

Amelia Jameson did an inventory of her surroundings for the third time. Her eyes took in the devastation but she didn't see anything, her senses were engrossed in the soft, soothing voice emanating from the other end of her cell. It was like molten honey on a hot summer's day.

“Amelia! Are you hurt?!” How quickly that honey set to a hard, aggressive, urgent voice, demanding.

“I'm fine, but everything's destroyed.” The lab had been trashed. Computers were smashed, tables were upturned and the floor was littered with paper. Hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of equipment lay scattered on the floor tiles in a million pieces. The walls of her laboratory were a standard clinical white, except for the window. It stretched from wall to wall and ceiling to floor, overlooking the city, but at 9 p.m., it was now dark outside. The night sky painted the glass black, creating a mirror that reflected the chaos. She stood there, staring at her reflection in the window. How did she end up here?

“I need to see for myself. Stay where you are, I'll be there in a few minutes.” His voice was strained as he ended the call. What did he need to see for himself - the destruction, or that she was

okay? She shook the idea out of her head before she let it take root. She was not going there.

Carefully, she made her way from one end of the lab to the other towards the vault, being careful not to disrupt any evidence. Glass crunched with each step as she neared the metal frame. There could be only one motive and as she placed her right index finger on the touch pad, she feared the worst. She held her breath and counted down the 8 seconds needed for fingerprint recognition. The panel flashed green three times before the door opened with a hiss. Empty.

“No, no, no!” She started to pace the room as she put a trembling palm to her forehead. Strong arms caught her as she turned, and pulled her into a solid body. The scents of coffee and vanilla filled her head, making her feel woozy. The aroma had unknowingly infiltrated her life over the past few months; normally she stayed away from caffeine but lately she’d found herself ordering a shot of vanilla in her latte. How pathetic.

His face was a distraction, so she saved that for last, knowing she wouldn’t be able to form a coherent thought as soon as she caught a glimpse. For now, she savoured his embrace, let herself melt into him as she felt every line of his body against her and saw every plane through his tight dark shirt. Reluctantly, she stepped back and looked up severing physical contact but, oh, how he held her with his eyes. Beautiful, deep eyes, so rich they resembled chocolate and espresso. Her

mouth started to water as she continued her usual inventory. His eyes were framed by long dark lashes that cast shadows upon his cheek, his jaw was dusted with dark stubble and his hair's texture was delicious - dark and glossy, and just long enough for her to run her fingers through and fist her hands in.

She shook the images out of her head; that could never happen, not for them. He wasn't just a vampire guardian, he was her guardian and there were rules against any kind of intimacy, it just complicated things. It occurred to her then that he always dressed in dark clothing, maybe it was a vampire thing. He was beautiful. He was midnight and equally as thrilling. She'd spent countless nights lusting after him. She had longed for him to turn up at her door and say that the law had been rewritten and that she could finally see those roped muscles she'd caught a glimpse of beneath his shirt. But it would never happen, could never happen, and the sooner she got over this stupid infatuation, the sooner she could find a real boyfriend. Someone to fulfill the fantasies she'd been building up over the last three months.

"What did you keep in here?" His voice broke through her thoughts and brought her back to the present.

"This isn't just a break-in, Hayden. Everything valuable has been broken - well, almost everything." She stepped away from the vault to

emphasize her point. “My research and samples are missing”.

‘Sympathy for the Devil’ by The Rolling Stones had become such a familiar tune since meeting Hayden and, instead of shouting, he calmly pulled his cell from his jacket and answered it.

Please allow me to introduce myself, I’m a man of wealth and taste... Yeah, she could definitely see the relevance in the song.

Now it was his turn to pace, talking too fast to for her to keep up; she had to walk over to the window to stop herself from reaching out to him. She just stood there, looking out into the city as raindrops beat against the glass. Someone, somewhere down there, had the power to bring chaos and destruction to Minnesota and it would be all her fault.

A few minutes later, Hayden’s reflection appeared behind hers. The contrast between them was staggering. He was everything she wasn’t, and the realization made her sick to her stomach.

“That was Elijah. There’s good news and there’s bad news.” She leaned forward, pressed her forehead against the cool glass and closed her eyes. If she felt nauseous before, it was nothing compared to the dread churning in her gut. She inhaled deeply then let it go in one quick exhalation. A hundred things ran through her mind. Elijah was head of the vampire clan in Minnesota - did he see her as a liability to their cause? Were they cutting her loose, no longer

willing to protect anyone who couldn't even protect her own research? How could she have been so stupid?!

"What's the bad news?" Best to get it over with, she thought. He rested a firm hand on her shoulder, silently giving her support, he'd never know how much that meant to her.

"The break-in is a complication, but one he hadn't ruled out. He's got Jackson speaking to contacts to see if he can find out anything useful."

From what Hayden had told her, the clan was split into three ranks: Guardian, Defender and Warrior. In short, Defenders were all about the tactics. They were the brains of the operation, deciding when, where, who and how to go about a situation. Warriors were front line. They were sent in to get the job done and Guardians, well, in her opinion, they were just glorified babysitters.

"And the good news?"

"Until this mess is sorted we're going to hang out. You're not leaving my side, Em."

"That's good news?" Until she'd met Hayden, her father was the only one who called her Em. Hearing it from Hayden made her heart race every time the word left his lips. It was personal, endearing and reminded her of her father in a way that wasn't too painful to remember.

"I think so. At least I'll finally get to find out what you do with your Friday evenings." He did that brooding thing with his eyes, as if he was stripping away the walls around her soul before

changing the direction of the conversation. “Clean up will be here soon, there’s no need for us to stick around. You look like you could use a hot shower. I’ll drive you home.”

It was a Friday like any other. He’d picked her up from her apartment this morning and driven her to work, all the time imagining the conversation they would have if he asked to accompany her again this evening. They’d had this conversation near enough every day since they’d met, and still he didn’t tire of it. If he was being honest, he loved the fire in her eyes and the tone she used when she turned him down. That was the only condition she insisted upon when she agreed to the protection detail - that Friday evenings were her own. He could drop her off at home every day and stay all night if necessary, except for Fridays. At the time it was easy enough to agree to but as each week passed it became a challenge, another piece to the Amelia puzzle he wanted to know.

Now a whirlpool of emotions flooded his system, crashing like tidal waves. He couldn’t control his anger at whoever had trashed the lab, and his anger at himself. He was supposed to be keeping watch over her and this was the second time in as many months she’d been close to being hurt. The first was little over a week into the protection detail. He’d given her a little space when she went on a date - even then he’d hated the thought of someone else gazing at her from across a table, brushing their fingers against hers

and trying for a goodnight kiss at the end of the evening. He'd followed the pair from bar to bar, staying in the shadows. Amelia wasn't the sort of girl who'd offer herself so quickly, so when the jerk had walked her home and then tried to push his way into her apartment, he had taken great satisfaction in unleashing a world of pain on the guy. Last thing he heard he was just about breathing on his own now. Pity.

Something dark had unfurled inside him that night. Sure, he was her guardian, but this was something more. Instinctively he knew that if harm ever came to Amelia he'd be hurting too - the only way that that should be possible would be if they were mated. Two souls becoming one; but they hadn't mated, and they couldn't. There was too much at stake for him, yet still, the thought of her finding happiness with another man made him want to grab her by the waist and challenge any man, vampire or beast who thought they could take her from him. Ultimately he knew he'd have to let her go. He'd always be her guardian, her protector, but they could never be anything more; the sooner he dealt with that the easier his life would be.

He looked every inch of her over while he waited for her to put the CCTV tape into her bag and grab some papers. He told himself it was just to ensure she wasn't harmed - that was his job after all. Although he was a vampire, he was also