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By Love Bewitched Details

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From Reader Review By Love Bewitched for online ebook

Suzanne says

I think the descriptions of loving the girl that was so young and lost was very well writtenlots of good angst

KatieV says

Heroine was hero's ward. He decides he wants to marry her when she gets older, even though she is plain. He rapes her on Halloween night when she tries to leave him. Actually this could have been good in a sick, kinky sort of way but the plain, mousey heroine kinda ruined it. Plus I never felt his supposed 'love' for her.

Verity says

It has all my fav ingredients, Guardian - Ward, May - December (37 y/o hero / 20 y/o heroine), forced seduction (reminiscent of Anne Mather = Melting Fire - 1 of my all-time fav step-sibs theme), uber Alpha / dominant / over-protective hero (who can play piano ! be still my heart !), bespectacled heroine, but there's a tinge of cweepiness to it, 'cuz the hero inexplicably keeps calling heroine : "child / my child / my dear child". These terms of endearment are prolly equal to "baby" in contemps / erotica, which I have no objections to, but when U read @ least a dozen of this in the span of a 190-page HP & the sulky heroine shows her young age in the silly, hurtful darts she throws @ hero, it's hella weird. Talk 'bout lack of variety. Controlling Hero also utters a classic line : "U'll come to my bed whenever I click my fingers." Hey, how about "Sit, Ubu, sit !... Good dog!" ?!? WOOF ! Plus, we have the recycled near-miscarriage scene most prevalent in HPlania, heroine tumbles down the stairs. And whazzup w/ the distant relation thingy ? Not a fan of that angle. It pains me to rate it lower than 5* 'cuz the writing is luvly & has lotsa entertainment values, but I couldn't quite get past the innumerable mentions of "child", as if VW wanted to remind the readers that despite their huge age disparity & personalities incompatibility, Luv is blind =)~

Megzy says

[Yes she got rapped by her guardian/fiance... but her nasty behavior started long before that night. She had a barb wire tongue and would push, and push, and push hoping he would snap, and he did... not that I accept what he did. I really resented her w

sbf20112011 says

I don't have any problem with this premise, but I skimmed most of the book because it was so silly. Mostly the heroine berating the hero childishly.

Chantal ❤️? says

Wow was this one messed up!

She ran away after he raped her on Halloween night she calmly decides to have an abortion.

Like being a shop girl was a great choice of career!? Is she nuts???

He would have had to pay and I would have had him up on charges.

He needed to rethink his methods.

Really? Like she was going to find you more acceptable after you rape her asshole!

Read at your own risk but don't say you weren't warned. Unless, you're reading this review after you already read the book, then I'm really sorry.

We win some we lose some.

thadine says

Dinah has been Jason Devrel's ward since she became an orphan at nine years old. Once she finished college they ended up getting engaged but one night she overhears two women speculating on Jason's reasons for marrying her; the women believe that the only reason a rich, attractive man like Jason would marry the quiet and plain Dinah is to avoid gossip about their guardian/ward relationship. At this point I started to actively dislike Dinah. She is incredibly immature. She just goes ahead and believes what she has heard and decides to run away with a broken heart without even confronting Jason. The whole thing doesn't even make sense. If he's worried about his reputation, he could always marry someone else, or encourage Dinah to get a job and move out. Anyway, Jason finds Dinah madly packing her bags to leave and they get into an argument concluding with Jason raping her. Yes, he rapes her. This is no "forced seduction" but straight out violent rape. It was at this point that I started to actively dislike Jason. Not surprisingly, in the morning Dinah runs away. Two months later, Jason manages to track her down only to discover that she is pregnant. He persuades her to marry him and give the baby to him, after which he will give her a divorce with a healthy settlement.

This book was incredibly disturbing. Jason himself says that he has tried to be a father to Dinah, and he is constantly calling her "child" or "my girl". In fact he addresses her using those terms right before he rapes her. Dinah is naturally quite traumatised by this; bad enough to be raped, but to have it done by the man who raised her whom she loved and trusted is obviously much worse. Also, keeping in mind that this book was written in a time when girls who had illegitimate children were ostracised and you can see Dinah's turmoil and the reason why she agrees to marry Jason. Both of them are quite frank that he raped her, though Jason tries to imply at one point that he suspects she enjoyed some of it. This just made me sick. It's common for child abusers to claim the complicity of their victims. Dinah is not a child, but she is about 17 years younger than Jason and obviously sees him as an authority figure. Jason concedes that Dinah has every reason to hate him now and claims to accept it, yet he then goes on to reprimand her for her bitterness and lack of joie de vie. Gee, you think being raped and impregnated by your father figure then forced to marry and live with him might just spoil your mood? As for Dinah, she gets all caught up in "dealing" with now having to see Jason as her husband instead of her father. I found this quite odd considering they were actually planning on

getting married before he raped her anyway. Surely she would already have worked through those conflicts? Apparently not. Generally speaking, I found Dinah's responses reasonable, even her conflicted emotions regarding Jason. She is simultaneously attracted to and revolted by him. She feels used and dirty and wants to feel attractive, but he's the only man around. I actually found her quite realistic, but then before you know it she's happily jumping into bed with him and declaring her love. That's about when I wanted to throw up. This relationship was sick. Don't bother reading this unless you want an interesting psychological study.

Tia says

My only issue with this novel was the hero raped the heroine. It isn't taken seriously in the novel and the heroine is plenty angry when she finds out she must marry the hero because he made her pregnant. I can see exactly how the heroine felt and although her insults and quick whips of tongue, she was underlined betrayed by a man she loved. Eventually it all turned out well.

bookjunkie says

I'm usually really into these guardian-ward, he's-obsessed-with-her kinds of stories, but this one... He was crazy, she was crazy, it was too much. He raped, chased, and controlled her with all the smothering singlemindedness of a basement-dungeon sicko. She hated him with zero sign of love underneath and wielded her pregnancy like a sledgehammer to beat him with.

Basically, I didn't find it terribly romantic. Kinda fun, but not romantic.

Twiggy says

I read the first 30 pages and then skim read to the end.

This was pretty dire and the heroine was beyond annoying.

She grows up as Jason's ward. He then asks her to marry him. Dinah overhears 2 old biddies saying he is only marrying her out of pity and for some reason decides that this must be right and that she will run away. She tells him that she is leaving for London. It turns out that her ultimate ambition in life is to work in a department store - I kid you not. They argue and he then forces himself upon her. She runs away.

Two months later Jason finds her, in the department store (living the dream) . They meet up. She tells him she hates him. He wants her to come home and marry him so he can make it up to her. He becomes suspicious and it emerges she is pregnant. She talks about a termination but he convinces her to marry him on the basis that he will look after the baby and she can get a divorce if she wants after the birth.

for the next 100 or so pages, dinah complains constantly about everything. She hates the hero, she hates being married, she wants to be independent (in the department store?), she makes continual reference to the rape, she hates being pregnant, she hates the jewelry he gives her, she hates the house etc etc etc

Throughout this Jason is remarkably patient and forbearing due to his guilt over what happened. Although in

many respects he should be the bad guy, the heroine is such a pain in the neck and such an immature moany wind bag that the reader's sympathy lies with Jason. If dinah was so opposed to him, she should not have married him.

In the end she finally comes around and they have the requisite hea.

I really didn't care.

If she had taken a flying leap off a cliff, I would have cheered.

Not a keeper.

Leona says

Something about this book just felt off key to me, almost like an untuned piano.

Heroine is raped by her guardian, on the night she decides to leave him. She decides to flee because she overhears two nasty women discussing how unattractive she is, and speculating that the hero (most eligible man about town) can't possibly love her. It seems our heroine is not your average HP beauty queen. I guess it's true that those that eavesdrop never hear anything good about themselves. Bent out of shape by these comments, she packs her suitcases and hands back the engagement ring to our Hero. Hero, blindsided and angered by her actions, stoops low and commits the unthinkable and unforgivable.

Six weeks later, the hero searches out the heroine to bring her back home and discovers she is in a delicate situation. They are forced to marry. Hero agrees to give heroine a divorce if she leaves the child with him. The rest of the book is actually the heroine berating the hero.

Not that I condone rape, but this actually could have been a wonderfully written "angst fest" that just never materialized. The heroines fits of anger, came off more like a child denied a piece of candy than a woman who was brutally assaulted by someone she should have been able to trust. Her constant fixation on her looks and the deprecating comments about wearing glasses was absurd. Finally, I never really felt the chemistry between the two. It felt anything but electric and at times a bit incestuous.

There are some great HP's out there written in the 60's and 70's, that have stood the test of time. But for me, this just isn't one of them.

Naksed says

Suddenly the petals of the reluctant flower sprang open and the bee slithered inside, emitting a triumphant buzzing as he plundered the pollen. Jason abruptly shifted his gaze to Dinah...

All at once, she felt her heart pounding beneath her casual shirt and a potent little quiver went through her, placing its dart at the apex of her body.

Well, nobody can accuse Violet Winspear of lacking humor, even if it is very, very dark humor. Her ubiquitous honey bee has been sucking the nectar of quivering flowers through most of her books (one was even titled "Love is the Honey") just as her broody Alpha males have been forcing their way into the hearts and other anatomical regions of their honeyed ladies.

This book will definitely creep out most readers as it gives out vibes of pedophiles grooming their childish targets not to mention plenty of non-con and dub-con scenes between the two protagonists. Most of VW's romances focus on huge age gaps between hero and heroine, which is actually not unique to her as most Harlequin and in fact most vintage romances (such as all those Regency guardian-ward stories) prefer that trope, but in *By Love Bewitched* VW actually puts the issue at the forefront, having many secondary characters and the heroine herself pondering on how the hero has been "training" her to be his wife since she became his orphaned ward at the tender age of 9.

As it is with all books of VW, this layer of the story is only the surface one. For the readers who are patient enough to meticulously decipher her code-riddled books, and really kind of step back and assess the characters and background of both protagonists on the evidence of many, scattered clues that are slowly revealed through her writing, you may find that the issues are not so black and white as that.

Jason reminded me more of the lost, lonely, and socially awkward child version of Charles Foster Kane, left to fend for himself in a gloomy though gigantic mansion, cut off from ordinary social interaction due to the unimaginable wealth and status bestowed upon him like a boulder heaped upon his frail childish shoulders rather than some of those immoral, supremely confident, ravishing rakes from salacious bodice-rippers.

Rosebud!...

And Dinah certainly was no shrinking violet. There is a streak of cruelty in her that is pretty stomach-curdling. Other readers might not agree with me but for all her constant whining that she was at the mercy of a controlling, autocratic Jason, I saw her as the one holding the whip in that relationship and mercilessly cracking it on him in order to back him into a corner and submit to her domination of him. She even had resentment against the baby she was carrying, and not because it was the reminder of the night that Jason forced himself on her, but because she was jealous, yes jealous!, of the baby potentially usurping her primary role in his life. I thought she was quite bloodthirsty and reminded me of the savage, greedy, obsessive, all-consuming love of that great psychopath played by Gene Tierney in *Leave Her to Heaven*.

There's nothing wrong with her. It's just that she loves too much.

This was another of VW's fascinating reads that ended up with very botched ending. What gives? Did she just get bored with her stories and just end them with a whimper instead of a bang?

Here we have all these untied threads regarding an OM (a rather romantic painter who is obviously besotted with his muse, the heroine, and hints at all sorts of drama surrounding the unveiling of his portrait of her, which we NEVER get around to) and an OW (a woman who plunged to her death while driving on the windy road leading to the hero's rather isolated mansion, and the heroine then morbidly chooses to clothe herself in one of the dead woman's dresses, leading to a violent confrontation with the hero) and so it was really a let down that VW chose to end the story on a rather flimsy HEA triggered by another of those

convenient Harlequin life or death experiences that bring two otherwise brutally antagonistic protagonists together in a lovey dovey reunion.

Amanda Sheila says

Well, my friend happen to be own it and between classes, she loaned it to me so I read it. Quite quick reading and.. I don't like it.

Dinah's 9 years old when she come and stay under Jason's (wait, does the name right?) protection. But then she bloomed and Jason asked her to marry him. She said yes gladly but she heard bad words about her soon-to-marriage, she left. But right before she left him, he forced himself to her and now she's pregnant..

I'm intrigued at first. I kind of like the idea when Hero "forced" himself to heroine and ended up with humongous guilt, but this book failed in delivering those idea.

There are practically NO happy moment right until the very end. If I were Dinah, I ran and ran and only stop when he kneel before me to beg for my apology. I admire her stubbornness and the way she sticks to her feelings that he hurt her. So, nice one.

And Jason (it's his name, right?), he's a pure jackass. Don't like him at all. Zilch.

Could've been better.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

This is a guardian/ward romance, and it's a little twisted, I suppose. I must confess that I always feel a little kinky for liking this book. Oh, well. So this is how the story goes, Dinah came to live with Jason Devrel when her parents die. He sees her grow up, and plans to marry her when she gets old enough. In his mind, she is his. It doesn't even occur to him that she might want to move away and have her own life separate from him. I don't think Jason really realized that he fell in love with her as a child and the natural progression is to marry her as a woman. Dinah has feelings of hero worship and awe for her guardian, and it never occurs to her that he has marriage plans for him. In her mind, he's too far above her. When she has her coming of age party, she overhears women putting her down, and decides she doesn't want to live in the high class world that she doesn't fit in with her bookish nature, awkward looks, and her owl-eyed, glasses-wearing self. Jason comes in when she is packing and is livid that she is going to try to run away. For the first time in their relationship, he loses that cool, withdrawn demeanor that is typical for him. In his mind, she belongs to him. He shows her that physically. And Dinah is pretty traumatized. Afterwards, he feels remorse, but Dinah runs off.

The book actually starts a few months after this incident on Halloween night. Jason finds Dinah working in a department store. It turns out he got her pregnant. He convinces her to come back home, and to marry him so that his heir can be legitimate. He promises he will let her go when the baby is born.

This romance may not work for everyone. For one thing, it's a little kinky to seduce your guardian. And this book has rape, or forced seduction. It's not horribly done or wince-worthy to read. You really don't see

anything, just that vague description that the older books give when there is a sensual moment.

Winspear doesn't write like modern writers. There is an old fashioned feel to her writing. The sensuality is very mild, and more suggestive than anything. The relationship develops slowly, and there's that whole paternalistic vibe in Jason's treatment of Dinah.

The reason why I like this book is because of the fact that Jason is a cold, withdrawn man who doesn't care about much of anything, but Dinah somehow comes into his lonely life and gives him life and inspires love in him. I really like romances where the hero is the one who's more in love than the heroine. He's not expecting to fall in love, but it hits him like a semi. And I must admit, there is something about the older Harlequin Presents that always gets to me. They are so dramatic and out there. I mean in real life, who has a rich guardian who's going to marry you when you come of age? Who gets a painter to come make a portrait of his wife? Only in the pages of a Harlequin Presents book.

It's one of those books where the heroine doesn't fall head over heels first. It takes her a while to realize that she does love Jason, and that love had been hidden in her heart because of their relationship, and also because of the very cold, standoffish demeanor that Jason has. Plus she's holding a grudge that he got her pregnant and now she has to be married to him until the baby is born. At first she isn't too keen on being pregnant, but then she realizes when has a fall that she really does want the baby. In a way, it's kind of refreshing to have a heroine who is reluctant to be a wife and mother. Not all women are instantly maternal and have dreams of happy wifedom.

While I don't defend what Jason did, and I thought Dinah was pretty immature and withdrawn, I like reading this book. The thing about fiction is that you don't always agree with what is done or what you read about, but at the same time, you can enjoy a book and get something out of reading it. This is one of those books. For that reason, it is a keeper for me.

seton says

Creepy as heck but I found it rather compelling. Needless to say, damn unPC but Winspear is a very good writer, if a bit on the poetical, flowery side.

There are references to The Honey is Bitter in the book. Too bad Barry Sothern never got his own HEA.
