



## Dark Surrender

*Erica Ridley*

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**Dark Surrender** Erica Ridley  
TRAPPED IN DARKNESS . . .

Violet Whitechapel committed an unspeakable crime to save a child. To escape the hangman's noose, she takes refuge in a crumbling abbey with secrets darker than her own. When its master offers her a temporary post, Violet cannot say no. Just as she begins to see him in a new light, her past catches up to her and endangers them all.

THEIR PASSION BURNS BRIGHT . . .

Alistair Waldegrave keeps his daughter imprisoned in the black heart of his Gothic abbey. As he searches for a cure to the disease the villagers call demonic, his new governess brings much needed light into their lives. But how can the passion between them survive the darkness encroaching from outside their sheltered walls?

## Dark Surrender Details

Date : Published February 28th 2014 by Intrepid Reads

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Author : Erica Ridley

Format : Kindle Edition 388 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Gothic

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## From Reader Review Dark Surrender for online ebook

### Linda says

Received Arc from NetGalley and intrepid reads for an honest review.

I have to admit that when I first read the book blurb I was unsure if this book would hold my interest but I have to say I was hooked within the first two pages.

Our heroine Violet Whitechapel, is a strong young woman, who has had a hard life, lived on the streets of Whitechapel off scraps an orphan, and at the mercy of adults who would take advantage of her at any and every turn. Until, she was given an opportunity to live at a school for young girls. Her opportunity provided her food, shelter, education and later a position as an art teacher. Violet, loved working with the girls, using art to draw them out of their shells until the school's benefactor passed away. The heir Percy Livingstone took over, was forcing them all out and to make the day of his visit worse, Violet was forced to fight him and his friend off, whom she caught taking liberties with one of her students, believing she accidentally killed them saving herself and the student, Violet flees.

Exhausted, out of money she finds herself on the doorstep of Waldegrave Abbey seeking shelter, surprised to actually find that it is inhabited.

Waldegrave abbey is a very dark, dismal place, the windows all double boarded and locks on every door, but even more disturbing is its owner Allistar Waldegrave he is pale, his clothing of fine quality, but at the very least ten years out of date, he claims the windows are boarded up to protect himself and his daughter from the sun since they suffer from an acute allergy to it, but she sees no daughter. Upon finding out that Violet is governess he offers her the position as one to his daughter for a sizable sum and she would have someplace to live and hide.

Lilly Waldegrave at first is a wild, rude, unruly child but Violet sees through her to the heart of her, she sees the little girl who wants love, who wants safety. I have to admit that Lilly pulled at my heart strings and the relationship

that her and Violet forms, helps to drive the attraction of Allistar to Violet. The more interaction you read between these three characters the more you realize that Allistair at first may seem more of a Warden for his daughter, but actually loves her to the extreme and the past ten years of his life has been devoted to nothing but finding a cure for her and ensuring her safety in a world where people's fears put her in more danger! his protection of her though has put them at odds, but Violet's influence starts to turn them into a family.

Allistair's attraction to Violet over the months becomes more and more difficult to fight and Violet's attraction to him surprises herself since her previous experience with men has never been good.

Can these two work through Violet's secrets, Allistair's secrets? Can Allistair find a cure for Lilly? Will Violet be arrested for murder? So many questions, so worth the read to get the answers!

If I have not said it or inferred it, this book was great, definitely not what I expected at first which only goes to prove do not judge a book solely by its blurb.

Er

## Karla Brandenburg says

### For lovers of Gothic romance

Ms. Ridley has fashioned yet another fine Gothic romance. Impossible choices, who is trapped and who seeks sanctuary? The only criticism might be more steam than was absolutely necessary, too much "nipping" and in the end (spoiler alert) she gives him head and they all live happily ever after. A strong story, and I'm not averse to the steamy parts, but Victoria Holt managed to write dozens of Gothics without any.

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## Kagama-the Literaturevixen says

This was recommended to me by a friend who knew about my love of historical romances and gothics. I am sorry but I didn't feel it :/

Review to come-

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## Dianne says

If you are looking for high action, fainting damsels and a tale that scampers in and around the Ton of London, you won't find it in Erica Ridley's **Dark Surrender**. What you will find is a dark romance with a gothic feel in a world shrouded in darkness, secrets and the kind of love that transcends the ages; the love of a parent for their child that opens the door to the magic of loving the soiled angel that has graced this existence. Young Lilly has ever only seen the sunshine once, and the pain it caused has sent her into a world of boarded up windows and darkness. Her father, Alistair has sworn to find a cure for her rare condition, but the small village their Abbey overlooks fears a vampire is in their midst. Enter Violet, bedraggled and near complete exhaustion after having run from a crime she committed in an effort to save an innocent young girl from the brutal attentions of two wealthy and powerful monsters. Lilly is unmanageable, wild, and miserably unhappy until the desperate Violet comes into her life and brings joy and color to her bleak world. Seeing the magic Violet has brought into their home, Alistair finds he is attracted to a woman he cannot possibly deserve. Violet has secrets that may be uncovered at any time. Alistair has been living a lie for as long as his daughter has been alive. Will their lies keep them apart, will words spoken in anger be the straw that breaks the fragile tendrils of their love or will a nine-year-old open their eyes with the wisdom of her words?

Erica Ridley pulled me back in time, when proprieties were ever so important, gossip and fear of the unknown spread like wildfire and medical science was as much myth and guesswork as anything else. Violet's life has been harsh, made her the woman she is today, skittish around men and their intentions, but she does know what she wants. She is a survivor up against the wall. Alistair has been a hermit for so long, locked up in his darkened house, all he knows is the love he has for his daughter. He is strong, yet insecure, very caring, yet unable to show his feelings. Ms. Ridley has created the perfect amount of darkness shrouding the world of these characters, the bleak existence is painful to read about, and the gossip from the village has me wondering if this young child was in fact, a vampire of sorts. She has set a pace that is smooth and lingering, reflecting the mood of the story and the desolation of the characters' existence. Beautiful, deep and darkly enchanting, **Dark Surrender** comes to life under Erica Ridley's guidance.

I received this ARC edition from Intrepid Reads in exchange for my honest review.

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## Lydia says

Awww, who knew that Erica Ridley could write something so adorable? Well... Ok, I admit it, I knew. After having read two exquisite books from her, I swear I can expect romantic and hot and not be disappointed. Every. Single. Time.

Violet Whitechapel is running from the law. Trying desperately to find a place to hide and start her life anew, she stumbles upon a couple of grave stones at an abbey's yard - and this is where her life changes. Meeting the lord of the abbey, Alistair Waldegrave, the woman decides to strike a deal in order for him to let her stay. She has one month to act as his daughter's governess. If she makes things work, she may even be free of trouble sooner than she thought. But Violet's pursuers are not the only ones causing a mess in the quiet life of the abbey. And with her and Alistair getting closer, pasts and feelings will make things harder and more complicated. Can she trust the man not to hurt her? Or will he prove to be just like all the men in her life so far?

Quite different from what I expected, and yet not one to disappoint, *Dark Surrender* was a sweet read that left me all warm and fuzzy inside - and yet, knowing Ridley, there was bound to be some sexual tension. And wonderful, toe-curling love-making. Oh, there was all of that. And then some!

See, in this particular book, the reader gets to wait a long while before they're given the first TRUE sex scene. That would have been weird in many cases, but with the delicate spot in which both Violet and Alistair were, it was very understandable. And when it finally happened... Oh, I swear I saw stars!

The only problem was with Alistair. I mean, yeah, I get where he's coming from, but there were times I thought he was the one wearing the skirts. All those hot and cold moments were nice, and worked perfectly for the suspense, but after some time, his attitude really called for someone to tell him to grow a set already.

Violet, I have no problem with. The woman was wonderful, adorable, and made me cry many times thanks to her tremendous patience while people around her kept hurting her, expecting to be forgiven with a simple apology, just because she was way too kind and held no grudges.

All in all, it was a nice story, longer than the others I've read from this author, but still a delight to read. Although a bit different from the usual, I admit it was nice to see that Ridley doesn't have a specific way to write, but embraces variety in her work - and the many plot twists and serious, less humorous than her usual, storytelling proved as much~

\*\*\*I was given a review copy from a LibraryThing Member Giveaway in exchange for an honest review. The opinion stated in this review is solely mine, and no compensation was given or taken to alter it.\*\*\*

Find this and other reviews at: <http://cupcakesandpopcorn.wordpress.com/>

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### **Ionia says**

"Dark Surrender" by Erica Ridley is another fine example of this author's ability to create stories that stay with the reader. Her books are atmospheric and ripe with chemistry and tension between her characters.

What first caught my attention about this novel was the way the characters were introduced using a bit of mystery and intrigue. I was immediately taken with the main character and the recalling of her past that began to emerge as the story progressed.

The dialogue was well handled in this novel, seeming appropriate for the setting and the time period. The dark and Gothic feel of this book was not as strong as expected, but I thought it worked for the individual story.

I did contemplate whether or not the main character would have become taken with her mysterious love interest so soon when she'd previously been treated so unfairly by men, but in the end that didn't make much difference to the overall story.

There were a few unexpected plot twists and a lot of tense moments that made for good reading. I would recommend this book to those who enjoy a bit darker and more complex romance.

This review is based on a complimentary copy from Netgalley and the publisher. All opinions are my own.

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### **Pamela(AllHoney) says**

Violet Whitechapel has had a hard life and now she's on the run. She ends up at an old abbey and finds herself the governess of a nine year old girl. Alastair Waldegrave is a father who wants only the best for his child but a horrible medical condition forces them to live in seclusion in the old abbey.

I really wanted to like this more but I found it hard to get through it. The plot was interesting but it didn't reach its potential for me. It was barely okay for me personally but other readers seem to like it so it may be one of those "it's me not you" things.

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### **Isa Lavinia says**

**arc received from Intrepid Reads through netgalley**

**tw: attempted child rape, mentions of abuse**

Violet Whitechapel, a teacher at an orphanage for girls, saves one of her charges from a brutal crime and, in doing so, murders the perpetrator. To avoid the gallows, she takes what little money she has and runs away, eventually reaching Waldegrave Abbey, home to Alistair Waldegrave.

Waldegrave Abbey is a dismal place, one the villagers swear harbours a demonic creature: a vampire.

In fact, Alistair lives in reclusion and darkness, searching for a cure for his daughter Lilly's illness: a rare and extreme sensitivity to sunlight, making exposure to the sun as good as fatal.

A fugitive from justice, Violet agrees to be Lilly's governess.

I must admit this all sounds a lot like Alejandro Amenábar's *The Others*, starring Nicole Kidman: shuttered windows, skeleton keys and doors being firmly shut as soon as they're opened, darkness everywhere, and a child who cannot withstand sunlight.

And though it could have followed the film's atmosphere this never really became a gothic mystery. Since we get Alistair's POV along with Violet's, whatever mystery there was - even if it remained as such to Violet, was not a mystery to the reader. It is, however, gothic fiction: a decrepit abbey, darkness, tales of horror, and plenty of melodrama.

I have a tendency to nitpick, but bear in mind that, in this case, everything I point out though it may be a failing in the book, in no way hinders the delight of the reading experience. This is a good book. A 3 star rating, for me, means "**I like it!**" - and I really did like this book.

First the things I didn't much care for:

Violet is a woman who has known nothing but abuse at the hands of men since her earliest childhood. She distrusts them, and with good reason. Which is why it's so jarring and difficult to believe when she has trouble containing her lustful thoughts when meeting the strange and creepy (let's admit it) Alistair. Here is a man who, at first, she isn't even sure has an actual daughter - Violet thinks he made the child up to lure her into staying so he could rape her. With this in mind, she sits by him and dreamily admires his aristocratic features, and wonders how his lips might feel upon her skin. I mean... what.

Of course, Lilly, Alistair's daughter is quite real, and as it turns out Alistair may, in fact, be a genuinely good man... who suffers from really unsettling mood swings, abandoning Violet in complete darkness in a maze of tunnels, shouting at her, ripping a dress from her hands and tearing it to pieces and basically acting like a complete psycho. Pardon the neuronormative ableism, but... really. The Heathcliff-crazy thing is just not attractive.

Then there's the fact that Violet's side of the romance progressed too quickly, as I've pointed out - she was abused, she's worked all her life with abused little girls, and suddenly she's all over this man she just met literally 92 pages ago, most of which she spent with his daughter, or with him acting unbalanced?

And on that topic, I found it extremely unsettling that the passionate moments Violet and Alistair shared with each other would, 9 times out of 10, start with him making a tearful confession about his fatherly feelings for his ill daughter, I mean, literally:

*"This miracle you wrought, it's... How can I... There are no words for... Oh, did you see her?  
She actually—"*  
*Violet rose on her toes and pressed her lips to his.*

No, girl! There is a time and a place for sexy times, and it's not when you interrupt a dude talking about his sick child's progress towards a somewhat less dismal existence! Come on, now!

Then there's the fact that Violet suspects she may be a prisoner in the abbey. She confronts Alistair about this, asking him if he'd lock her up to keep her from escaping, and he jokingly says yes, and she finds this funny, and one more reason to trust him...

Like, if I were living with a dude and I went, "LOL J/W WOULD YOU LOCK ME AWAY FOREVER?" and he went, "LMAO I WOULD". My first reaction would **not** be, *\*fist-bump\** "TRUST!"

Obviously that's not how it actually went down in the book, but basically... you get my point.

## **BUT!**

Alistair, for all his weird, creepy, unbalanced behaviour, does evolve into a normal person and even I, a notorious reviewer for finding fault in every thing, ended up liking him.

And Violet was a lovely character, she was a survivor through and through, and she really wanted to help others who had been in her situation.

And of course, best of all, there is Lilly. Lilly is 9 years old and has been a prisoner inside her own room for the entirety of her existence. She knows going out into the sunlight would kill her, but she's reached the point where she just doesn't care. It took great writing skill on Ridley's part to write Lilly - she acted out, she did deplorable things, biting, hitting, kicking, ruining people's efforts to care for her, but she was always sympathetic. That takes talent. Pity Lilly will most likely eventually die of skin cancer, though...

Furthermore, yes, I did complain about Violet being all over Alistair way too soon in the book - but no one need fear that this is insta-love or that the romance is rushed. Lust, perhaps, but the romance is slow and a delight to read. As is the progression in these characters' relationships with each other.

If you like gothic fiction with a well-developed plot and a nice romance, be sure to read this book!

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## **Karma♥Bites ^.^~ says**

*\* ARC provided by author/publisher via NetGalley (via anthology/box set, Tempted by His Touch)\**

Query: I bought this box set but brilliant soul that I am, forgot & requested from NG. So technically, FTC disclosure required or no? *\*ponders\**

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OK, getting back on saddle & returning to this book, started about a month or so ago... b4 RL decided to not play nice. Good news is no back-tracking required b/c I still remember much of the storyline. Which says a LOT, no? :)

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## **R J McKay says**

Violet Whitechapel , grew up on the streets of London, scraping to survive. It wasn't until she found her way to the girls' school run by Mr. Percy Livingstone that her life began to turn around. The school provided her with safety and security, as well as an education. It was there that she discovered her love of the arts. But when the school benefactor passed away, the new heir decided quickly to close the school. Reeling from this news, Violet goes to her studio, only to find this same man, along with his assistant, attempting to molest one of her young pupils. Between Violet and the girl, they were able to fight off the men, however, a fire started

accidentally. Thinking she caused the death of at least one of the men, Violet fled.

Exhausted, hungry and dirty from running, she collapses on the property of Waldegrave Abbey where Alastair Waldegrave and his young daughter live. But it is not a typical house for a typical family. Lillian suffers from "sun sickness" and is unable to bear the touch of the sun on her skin. Hoping to keep her safe, her Father keeps her confined in one room of the house. All of the windows are boarded up, in an attempt to keep Lillian safe. But this results in Lily acting outrageously, kicking and biting anyone who comes near. Violet arrival is seen by Alastair as an answer to his prayers. And even more surprising, Violet and Lily hit it right off. Slowly, Violet is able to use her own life experiences to bring love and laughter into this dark and forbidding Abbey.

But even as Alastair and Violet work toward creating a life for Lily, there are other problems threatening their happiness. The villagers, with their ignorance, think those who live in the Abbey are vampires and their fear threatens to spill over. And the man who Violet attacked, is using this fear to seek his own revenge. And both Alastair and Violet have their own secrets they are holding close.

This story is a wonderful Gothic tale with romance and a bit of suspense thrown into keep the reader on the edge of their seat.

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### **Trish says**

The story begins with the "unspeakable act" that involves Violet Whitechapel. Where the story becomes alive is when Violet arrives at Waldegrave Abby.

Violet is running for her life and happens upon the Abby just as she is about to drop from exhaustion. She is taken in and offered a job as a governess to a heathen of a child, Lillian.

Alistair Waldegrave is the master of the Abby and will sacrifice everything to keep his daughter safe. He is in search of a cure for a terrible disease that keeps his daughter imprisoned in darkness and away from any sunlight.

Alistair comes off as a bit of an ass at times and runs hot and cold so much, that poor Violet's head spins right off her head. He redeemed himself to me though. He was willing to try to be less of an ass, willing to eat crow and admit his faults and admit how clueless he is at relationships.

I think Miss Lillian stole the show. She is so precious and lovely. She may have been forced to be a recluse but she had spirit and spunk. Lovely story of how the three started working together to be happy and overcome the hardships instead of snipping and blaming each other.

Loved the supporting characters Mr. Roper, Ms. Tumsen, and Cook. I enjoyed the book. I will definitely read another book from this author.

ARC provided thru Netgalley, publisher Intrepid Reads, author Erica Ridley - Thank you

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### **Yodamom says**

Violet, an art teacher at a school commits a crime that sends her running for her life. When she acts to save another from an unspeakable horror her future is marked and the gallows are following her. She is used to being afraid and alone, she is an orphan, left to survive on the streets until the school gave her a chance and a career. She runs till she drops on a grave marker and ends up in a boarded up abby with a master with many dark secrets of his own. Her goal is to find a place to hide while saving money for a chance to clear her name. She accepted a job as his dark child's governess.

Alistar, the dark lord of the abby has been living with secrets so long he can't remember the truth anymore. His wife dead his daughter something no man nor woman will tend to. He is the only one capable, and even he comes away with bloodied bits on his body. His offer to this scruffy woman to be his child's governess was an act of desperation. He paid her a huge amount of coin to do it and he had no expectations of her staying. He has bigger goals to worry over, he must find a cure, he has to, it is his only path in life, no matter the cost. He is hard, distant and formal.

Violet instantly bonds with his child, she see's herself and her struggle in this broken girl. She struggles to break through her armor and teach her about the world. There a bond might slowly build if only..

The story takes us to the horrible path of the villagers and their belief in dark tales and monsters. They have torches, pitch forks and wagging tongues, and slow witted minds.

What I liked-I enjoyed the gothic feel and the way trust was slowly built between the child and Violet. The abbey was beautifully described and had me yearning to see it myself. Alistar, was a great father character, strong and devoted. I ended up liking him in the end after wanting to smack him many times. The hunt for the cure was an interesting look at medicine in those times and off the mark it was.

What didn't pass- Violet, she took every chance to throw herself at the man with uncontrollable hunger. She had worked so hard to become more than what she had been treated as while on the streets only to lust without control. She did this in a time where it is unacceptable and he kept turning her away. Then he would waggle his tongue and fondle her only to drop her like a hot potato at the last moment. The moments were weird, uncomfortable and not moments I would call "loving times." There was just too much of this it was over the top tease and unbelievable. There was a lot undone. The stained glass was talked about so much and it just faded into the story. I really wanted to know what happened to it. I also missed finding out what happened to the girl she saved and the school ? I wanted those holes filled.

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## Julie says

Dark Surrender by Erica Ridley is a 2014 Intrepid publication. I was provided a copy of this book by the publisher and Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

When Violet Whitechapel, an orphan that thought she had finally found a place to land comes upon a child in danger she rushed to intervene and commits a terrible crime in the process. Now on the run from the authorities, Violet finds refuge in a crumbling Abbey as a governess to a nine year old child named Lillian. Lillian has "sun sickness" and must always remain in the dark. She is difficult to handle because she has never been properly socialized and does not understand her father's actions.

Alistiar's sole purpose in life is to find a cure for his daughter's malady. He also lives in the dark and spends his time contacting scientist and doctors searching for a way to cure his daughter. Violet's appearance in his life changes so many things for him and his daughter. The attraction between Alistair and Violet grows daily and the progress Lilly makes is slow but promising as Violet helps father and daughter overcome some of the resentment and misunderstandings they have.

Violet will learn that she is being sought after by the law and they are much closer than she thought. She will also learn she is not the only one with a few dark secrets.

This historical romance that raises a toast to the Gothic genre, has a dark and moody tone mixing traditional Gothic with traditional historical romance and it turns out to be a good match, at least in this instance.

Fiercely loyal staff, rumors of vampires, suspicions, a dark shadowy abbey and a man that has left his wife's

room like a shrine but finds himself falling in love with Violet sets the stage for this unique story. Alistair doesn't know Violet's story of course and although she will eventually have to come clean about how she came to be at the Abbey, other areas of her young life remain obscure allowing Alastair to continue on with a fantasy about who Violet really is, all the while harboring some pretty dark secrets of his own. The old double standard comes into play as Alastair makes judgments about Violet that are hypocritical to say the least. This attitude will have far reaching and devastating consequences for Lily who has blossomed under Violet's care.

Being a huge fan of Gothic novels I couldn't resist this one when it was offered on Netgalley. I wasn't disappointed. My hats off to Erica Ridley for attempting such a difficult task. Mixing Gothic and more modern romance expectations would have to be a challenge. I thought she did a wonderful job of staying true to the Gothic genre while keeping the historical romance readers happy at the same time. Yes, this is a much more somber romance and atypical from what most of us think of when we think of Historical Romance. The younger readers may also be completely unfamiliar with true Gothic stories and hopefully this book will inspire some to discover this genre and maybe even help bring it back to popularity again. This one gets 4 stars.

( Besides the obvious Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights Gothic literature that so many think of , try looking into the "horrid" novels Jane Austen mentions in Northanger Abbey and then check out Dorothy Eden, Barbara Michaels, Dorothy Daniels, and other Gothic Romance authors from the 1960's and 70's. Some of these do have supernatural elements, but most do not. It's more a an atmospheric tone than anything else. )

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## Cinzia says

This book took me a little bit back in time, in a period in which I was a little fixated with the Gothic genre. Violet Whitechapel committed an unspeakable crime to save a child. To escape the hangman's noose, she takes refuge in a crumbling abbey with secrets darker than her own. When its master offers her a temporary post, Violet cannot say no. Just as she begins to see him in a new light, her past catches up to her and endangers them all.

Alistair Waldegrave keeps his daughter imprisoned in the black heart of his Gothic abbey. As he searches for a cure to the disease the villagers call demonic, his new governess brings much needed light into their lives. But how can the passion between them survive the darkness encroaching from outside their sheltered walls?

I always loved these dark settings, full of mystery and secrets.

Dark Surrender doesn't have anything paranormal in itself, although some details of its characters could make it to believe, even ... in a few moments the descriptions of certain contemporary realities are all too realistic, such as the less-than-rosy life of orphaned children, grew up on the streets of London, and abuses of which they were victims.

The beginning of the book is very tough.

I loved all the characters in this book.

Violet, as she likes to call herself is a survived the horrors of her childhood, and she is really willing to do anything to prevent other children from face a life similar to her. An exceptional woman, sensitive and full of talent and thanks to her experience is able to "read" the emotions of Lily, she understands what this child feels about her condemnation from birth to live segregated due her rare disease.

Alistair, Lily's father is truly amazing, so devoted body and soul to protect his daughter and try to find a cure for her, while receiving in return from Lily the most complete indifference, if not her outbursts of anger, and words that can truly hurt deeply.

Violet manages to give these people a chance to find a meeting point to make them move and try to built a relationship that seems to be compromised at all.

Alistair tries to ignore the deep attraction he feels for Violet and puts her on a pedestal from which the woman sooner or later is bound to fall.

Violet's past once came to the surface could lead her away from Lily and Alistair, but the woman is not the only one hiding secrets and sooner or later the nodes come home to roost.

It's a nice story, really well written and I loved it.

Thanks to Netgalley and Intrepid Reads for the book.

Questo libro mi ha riportata un po' indietro nel tempo, in un periodo nel quale ero un po' fissata con il genere gotico.

Violet Whitechapel ha commesso un crimine terribile per salvare una ragazzina.

Per sfuggire al cappio del boia, trova rifugio in un'abbazia in rovina che nasconde segreti più oscuri dei suoi. Quando il proprietario le offre un posto di lavoro temporaneo, la donna non può dire di no. Non appena Violet comincia a vedere l'uomo sotto una luce diversa, il suo passato viene scoperto, mettendoli tutti in pericolo.

Alistair Waldergrave tiene la figlia imprigionata nel punto più nascosto e inaccessibile della sua abbazia. Mentre è alla ricerca di una cura per una malattia che le persone del villaggio credono essere legata a qualcosa di demoniaco, la sua nuova governante riesce a portare con la sua presenza la luce di cui avevano bisogno nelle loro vite. Ma come può sopravvivere la passione che nasce tra di loro, alla oscurità che li minaccia al di fuori dei muri dell'abbazia?

Ho sempre amato queste ambientazioni cupe, ricche di mistero e segreti.

Dark Surrender non ha niente di paranormal in sé, anche se alcuni particolari dei suoi personaggi potrebbero farlo credere, anzi... in alcuni momenti le descrizioni di alcune realtà dell'epoca sono fin troppo realistiche, come per esempio la vita tutt'altro che rosea dei bambini orfani, cresciuti per le strade di Londra, e gli abusi dei quali erano vittime.

L'inizio del libro è molto tosto.

Ho amato i personaggi di questo libro.

Violet, come ama definirsi lei è una sopravvissuta agli orrori della sua infanzia, ed è disposta veramente a tutto per evitare che altri bambini debbano affrontare una vita simile alla sua. Una donna eccezionale, sensibile e piena di talento e grazie alla sua esperienza riesce a "leggere" le emozioni di Lily, capire quello di cui ha bisogno questa bambina, condannata sin dalla nascita a vivere segregata a causa della sua rara malattia.

Alistair il padre di Lily è veramente eccezionale, si dedica anima e corpo a proteggere la figlia e tentare di trovare una cura per lei, pur ricevendo in cambio da Lily la più completa indifferenza, se non i suoi scoppi di ira e parole capaci di ferire nel profondo.

Violet riesce a dare a queste due persone la possibilità di trovare un punto di incontro per farle avvicinare e tentare di recuperare un rapporto che sembra oramai essere compromesso del tutto.

Alistair tenta di ignorare la profonda attrazione che prova per Violet e la mette su un piedistallo dal quale la donna prima o poi è destinata a cadere.

Il passato di Violet una volta venuto a galla potrebbe causare il suo allontanamento da Lily e Alistair, ma la donna non è l'unica a nascondere segreti e prima o poi i nodi vengono al pettine.

È una bella storia, veramente ben scritta.

Ringrazio Netgalley e la Intrepid Reads per il libro.

## Gaele says

I was excited to try another story by this author, having read a paranormal romantic comedy from her last year, and I was not disappointed by *Dark Surrender*. A gothic story with a heavy feel of the darker moments in *Wuthering Heights*, the unique elements and clever characterizations kept me devouring the pages.

Violet Whitechapel has spent her life striving for an independent life doing what she loves: teaching and encouraging girls to use their brains and their own determination to fulfil their own lives, with or without a marriage and family. When the benefactor of the school dies, and his heir takes over the management, things take a dramatic change. Violet doesn't like the new management, or the changes, and when she encounters him abusing one of the girls in her care, she fights back to free the girl. Unfortunately, the abuser is killed and Violet runs, fearing she will be charged with murder.

Her scampering from London leads her to seek refuge in a deserted (so she thinks) Abbey that looks over a small village. Imagine her surprise and shock when she finds the abbey is occupied by a strangely terse and pale man and his young and untenable daughter.

Alistair has retreated to the dark, dank and isolated abbey to keep his daughter safe as he seeks a cure for her allergy to the sun. Yes, Solar urticaria is a real disease: exposure to sunlight for Lily means pain, hives, sores and discomfort. So, Lily at the tender age of 9 has never been outside to play, in fact she has rarely left her room as her well-intentioned father has confined her within the dark building. Lily is unhappy and bored, and exhibits those feelings by acting out: biting, scratching, screeching and rudely declining all efforts to ease her day.

Alistair has reached the end of his rope: nothing he knows to do is working, and his deep love for Lily has her reactions paining him. Of course, he's also feeling the pressure and hopelessness of parenting a child that cannot go outside, and the options for friends are limited as the little village believes him to be a monster. When he finds a bedraggled Violet, he offers her a governess position, well paid, to perhaps bring Lily some education and manners, and free him to seek a cure.

It was hard to NOT empathize with all of the characters: one had only to read and feel their deep emotional pain and concerns, and to see their insecurities. Violet's reaction to Alistair, even with her distrust of men was understandable, even if her actions were far more forward for the time. Alistair was moody, irascible and often subject to rage: but most of that I saw as the feelings of impotency regarding Lily and her condition. And Lily: while she was an unmitigated brat, you could not help but empathize with her: imagine a life full of darkness and no chance to go outside: to change the scene in front of your eyes every day. That would be wearing for an adult, let alone a child.

These three become the only thing that they can: a family, often dysfunctional, angry and railing at one another: but their connection is real and valid and palpable. A slowly growing romance between Alistair and Violet, and the gradual ability to share their own past hurts and secrets felt real and viable, and the inclusion of interior point of view monologues from all of the characters helped greatly in their development and gives readers an appreciation of their own perspectives.

I received an eArc copy of the title from the publisher via NetGalley for purpose of honest review. I was not compensated for this review: all conclusions are my own responsibility.

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