



# One With the Darkness

*Susan Squires*

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## **One With the Darkness** Susan Squires

Contessa Donnatella di Poliziano has power, beauty, and—as a vampire—eternal life. Her overwhelming regret is a mistake she made centuries ago when she chose not to transform her one true love, Jergan, into a vampire too. Donnatella's choice has deprived her of the only true love she's ever known. But just as all seems lost, the discovery of a 300-year-old note leads her to a gift left by her old friend, Leonardo da Vinci: a machine to take her back in time to rewrite the history of her heart...

Once back in time, Donnatella's memory of the intervening years is lost. Yet when she sees the breathtaking Jergan from afar, she feels like she has always known him. The instant attraction she feels draws them together. For Donnatella, the romance is tantalizing, awakening a passion that feels both old and new. But as the two fall in love again, a new danger threatens to tear them apart. Now Jergan's love for Donnatella will be tested in a most perilous way—and if he fails, the two lovers will be separated again...for eternity.

## **One With the Darkness Details**

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Author : Susan Squires

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## From Reader Review One With the Darkness for online ebook

### Brandi Poole says

I had a hard time sitting down and actually reading this. The plot was good, characters were good but for some reason I would get very bored after a few pages.

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### Rachel Graft says

Book #6 of The Companion Series - Wow took me 5 days to read it - could not put it down. I love it that each book compliments the next in the series. On to Book 7 - short story in Dead After Dark.

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### J. Kahele says

Donnatella di Poliziano is a 2500-year-old vampire who has experienced loss and tragedy and has learned it was part of being immortal. But there is one regret she has the loss of her one true love, Jergan. While readying herself for a ball, she finds a hidden letter that was written 300 years earlier by her friend, Michelangelo. The letter directs her to a place where she finds a book and a large machine. She opens the book and realizes it is written by her friend Leonardo da Vinci. Inside the book he reveals that the machine is a time machine, which can take her back to reunite her with Jergan. Is this the second chance she has been looking for, to be with Jergan? And this time will she turn him, so he can also claim immortality, giving her eternity with her one true love.

What an exquisite book. This was a read that I read until the last page, without even batting an eye, it was how engaging it was and the writing puts you into the era of the story. Loved it.

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### Shawna says

The Companion Bundle Two is a compilation of three Paranormal/historical novels by Susan Squires. One With the Night is the first book in the bundle and is the love story of Jane Blundell and Callan Kilkenny. Both have become vampires unwillingly, one by accident and one by force, but both share a common goal, to rid themselves of the disease and the only person who might be able to help them is Jane's father. Neither expects to find love and when they do they both fight it, hoping they can find a cure and move on with their lives, but fate has other plans for them.

In Book Two, One With the Shadows, you get to meet Kate Malone, a tarot card reader and Gian Urbano. Their paths cross when Kate steals an emerald that Gian needs. When their paths cross it takes them both on a path they never expected to be on.

The last book in this bundle is One With the Darkness. Contessa Donnatella di Poliziano travels back in time to find the love of her life she let slip away many years ago. The only problem is that not only does she lose her memory when she gets there; she has also changed the entire course of history. She may not have her memory but the moment she sees Jergan she starts to fall in love with him all over. But can their love survive the test of time?

This historical/paranormal romance bundle was a good read. I enjoyed going back in time with all of the characters and following them on their journeys.

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## Barbara ★ says

I've given every book in this series 3 stars and this is no different. I enjoyed the characters - well at least Livia and Jergan - but the setting is one of my least favorite. I hate the period in history where the Roman's dominated the world. It's Gaius this and Cassius that - all the Romans have the same names just in different order so it's impossible to keep track of who's who. I found this book to be disturbing and a little over the top sexually. The time travel element was interesting but the name dropping was too strange.

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## Julianna says

Reviewed for THC Reviews

"4.5 stars" *One with the Darkness* is a cross-over book, bridging two of Susan Squires' series. It is book #6 in the *Companion* series, featuring Donatella, a vampire who was introduced in the previous book, *One with the Shadows*, as the hero, Gian Urbano's mother. This is the love story of Gian's parents who met in ancient Rome. It is also the first book in the spin-off, *DaVinci Time Travel* series, as it follows Donatella's efforts to right the worst mistake she'd ever made in her centuries-long life by not turning her one true love into a vampire all those years ago. Instead, she watched him grow old and die, believing she couldn't break the vampire code, which dictated that born vampires should never turn humans into vampires, and has lived with her deepest regret for hundreds of years since. To accomplish her task, she travels back in time to the moment when she met her husband, using a time machine invented by her good friend, Leonardo DaVinci.

Donatella, who was known throughout most of the story as Livia Quintus Lucellus, the name which she went by in ancient Rome, is a strong, determined woman. She has spent the many long years of her life cultivating a persona as a woman of power and wealth. Even though historically women were often subject to a man's whims, she always found ways to place herself right in the thick of important events, in an attempt to influence their outcome for the greater good. In her role in ancient Rome, she was the mastermind behind the plot to assassinate Caligula. How that all turned out and how her future self traveling back in time affected the previous outcome was the stuff of good time travel stories. I also enjoyed how much of an influence she had on historical events, and how she essentially used her machinations as a way to help prevent some of the boredom and ennui that is so common to the vampires in this series. It was like the wheels in her head were always turning, working on figuring out how to make the world a better place, which is exactly what I would probably be doing if I had a lifespan as long as hers. Livia is an honorable woman who has developed a distaste for the slavery that was so common in ancient Rome. She buys slaves out of necessity, but always treats them with kindness and respect, and always eventually grants them their freedom. As a result, most of her slaves are so grateful, they are happy to stay on after being freed as paid household help. This same treatment extended to Jergan when she bought him, and because of that, her relationship with him began as one based on mutual respect of the other's honorable nature.

Although a barbarian from ancient Britannia, Jergan is an intelligent man who was well-educated by his father about matters pertaining to the world at large. He can speak Latin and knows his geography equally as well as he knows how to farm his family's land. When Rome invaded, Jergan took up arms and became an accomplished warrior and military leader, fighting for his country and their allies. Eventually though, he was captured by the Romans and taken back to the city to be sold as a slave. When Livia buys him, he's initially pretty surly toward her, at least in his own mind, but he quickly comes to realize that his fate could have been far worse than acting as a bodyguard for a beautiful and honorable woman who treats him well as long as he's willing to perform his job satisfactorily. Even if he didn't, he knew she wouldn't beat him like most

masters would, but rather she'd return him to the slave market to take his chances with someone else. That thought didn't appeal, so Jergan was more than willing to offer his protection to a woman who is so unlike all the other Romans he's met so far. I think it was the fact that she was so different that made him fall for her so quickly, but of course, he doesn't know at first just how different she is. I like that when Jergan slowly started finding out about Livia's powers, he didn't automatically jump to the conclusion that she was evil or not to be trusted. He used the analytical ability and good sense taught to him by his father to think things through and found that he honestly wasn't frightened of her powers at all. He just took each new revelation in stride, and ultimately, felt like an ordinary human like him wasn't worthy of an extraordinary creature like her.

As I mentioned Livia and Jergan's romance is one that at first is based on mutual admiration of the honor they see in one another. That seed grows quickly, as Livia realizes within only a few days that she can trust this barbarian. She may not truly need him to preserve her life, but she instinctively knows she can trust him with her plot against the Emperor as well as her secret of being a vampire, which she reveals to him slowly. I liked that Livia showed Jergan right from the start that he could trust her by taking personal responsibility for his well-being, bathing, clothing and properly feeding him, which he initially doesn't understand. To him, it seems like she's debasing herself with a slave. I also like that although she was quite attracted to him, she didn't choose to sleep with him right away, even though it was a common practice in Rome for slave owners to use their slaves in such a way. When she finally does give in to her passion, she is careful to make sure that he isn't doing it because he feels obligated by his position and that their desire is mutual. For a long time, Livia struggles with whether turning Jergan would be the right thing to do and whether he would even want such a thing. Not only does she think that he may find the prospect distasteful, she worries that he won't be staying with her and once free, would rather return to his home in Britannia. Of course, it took until the final pages of the book for them to both get over their doubts about the other and to lay all their cards on the table, but that moment along with the epilogue were very affirming of their love and rightness for one another. No matter what they were doing Livia and Jergan simply made a great team, who were always looking out for one another and were great friends as well as lovers.

I really enjoyed the setting of *One with the Darkness*. I haven't read many romances set in ancient Rome, so that alone made it somewhat unique. While I haven't done a great deal of study on the Roman Empire, I know enough to feel confident in saying that the author did her homework well. Many real-life personages were included as supporting characters including Caligula himself, his uncle, Claudius, two of his sisters, Cassius Chaerea, a high-ranking member of the Praetorian Guard, and quite possibly actual members of the Roman Senate as well. Of course, the author put her own intriguing spin on events and took a bit of creative license, but all in all, I really felt like I'd taken a trip back to when Rome was at the height of power in the world.

Overall, I enjoyed reading *One with the Darkness*. There were only two small things that made me knock off the half star. I'm all for a good tortured hero, but Susan Squires kind of seems to be taking it a bit far in this series. Not a single hero thus far has escaped being brutally raped and tortured at the hands of sadistic women. In the beginning of the series, it was relatively novel, but now it's starting to get a little old. I will admit that in this book, the torment to which Jergan was subjected wasn't as extreme as in some of the earlier books of the series, but I still have to wonder what's up with that. I tried to shrug it off though, and just chalk it up to being one of Ms. Squires' writing quirks. The other thing was Jergan making love to Livia not long after he was raped without there having been opportunity for, or mention of, a bath or any kind of clean-up in between. I'm not usually bothered by many things of this nature in romance (not like many other readers are), but this just seemed rather icky to me. However, I simply tried not to think about it too much. Otherwise, this is a solid and well-written story that made for some pleasant reading, and it certainly won't turn me off to reading more of this talented author's work in the future. In fact, I'm very much looking forward to finishing the *Companion* series and continuing with the *DaVinci Time Travel* series, especially since time traveling is a favorite trope of mine when it's done well, as it is here.

**Note:** The love scenes between the hero and heroine are steamy but contain nothing outside the norm for a romance novel. However, there are a couple of scenes in which Livia and Jergan attend parties being thrown by Roman dignitaries in which the decadence of the culture is shown in the form of orgiastic practices. There is also mention of a man having sex with a young girl and multiple mentions of incest between the Emperor and his sisters. These things are mostly shown via Livia and Jergan's observations of the things going on around them and aren't really described in great detail. There is, however, one graphic scene of the hero being raped and tortured.

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### **Amarilli Settantatre says**

vampiri + antica Roma + Leonardo da Vinci  
Un time travel un po' tirato, però Jergan merita

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### **Zinnia says**

One of the best vampire historical novels I've ever read.

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### **Cher says**

2000 y.o. vampiress finds a time machine her good buddy Leonardo DaVinci left especially for her...uses it to go back to when she met her hubby, buying him as a slave, in early Rome...the idea is to turn him into a vampire even though that's forbidden so that they can be 2getha 4eva...the historical research is scant, the characterization asserted rather than portrayed, but I'm feeling very ill lately & it's about all I can manage to concentrate on...also the ludicrous touches make it entertaining...OMG this was hilarious! it just could not get anymore derivative...I bust out laughing when the author slipped in at the end that Boticelli used the heroic pair for his most famous paintings

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### **Paranormal Romance says**

As long as the heroine has lived, she has only a few regrets. The one she lays heaviest on her breast is the choice to leave her lover as a mortal and what him die when she could haven't given him eternal life. Now, she has a chance to right this wrong. Thanks you Leonardo and his time machine. She's sent back to Roman times to the day before she sees the hero for the first time but she loses her memory and becomes the woman she was at the time. The heroine feels this pressing urge to go to the market, that her destiny is waiting for her there. For appearances sake she requires a bodyguard but in reality she's far stronger than any mortal and only decapitation can kill her. But she must keep up the image of a loyal Roman woman, well, at least until the plot to assassinate the emperor is carried out. So she searches the see of slaves for sale, knowing in her heart that she's looking for one man in particular. When she sees him, she's struck by a sense of familiarity, that they have met before. She buys him at full price without a hint of regret and takes him home. There, she offers him a choice. Either he'll remain under her house and promise her loyalty and obedience or she'll return him to the market where he'll surely be sold to a brothel. He accepts her as his master. The hero is not broken regardless of his whippings and other injuries. His pride and honor demand he never submit to whenever tortures or rape this woman has in store for him. But he's confused to realize he's to receive

neither. In fact, her household is full of freed slaves who speak very highly of the heroine's kindness. She tends his woman with a soft touch and she feeds him from her own table. Sure he has trouble with referring to her as Mistress or My Lady but all in all, he feels she is a good person and the idea of protecting her from attack makes him feel like a man again. Though she stated at the beginning she would not use him sexually, he begins to long for her. She is beautiful and kind and he desires her. She too desire him very deeply. A voice inside her head whispers of a closer connection that what a few days should have established but soon after he comes into her life, she knows that she's fallen quite deeply in love with him. But Rome is not a safe place. The emperor is crazy and unstable, quick to murder or worse. The plot to kill him is taking time and puts a target on her back and in turn puts the hero in danger. If word should get out of her betrayal she'll be executed. But it doesn't take much to catch the eye of Caligula or his sisters and the hero is eye catching. She tries to protect him but soon he falls into their clutches. Torture and rape follow while a desperate heroine tries to find a way to free him. She manages briefly before they are recaptured, this time the emperor is aware of her abilities and she fears she'll never be able to save her love from death. The voice in her head, this future her, speaks of a machine, a device to take them both to safety. But getting to this machine will take everything the hero and heroine got. This was a marvelous book made better on account of the rich historical aspects. Caligula as a villain is cream of the crop and I've always been fascinated with him, with ancient Rome in general. The storyline was well developed and intriguing, the politics and overall filthy excess of the people of Rome made for an atmosphere more grounded than the typical paranormal romance. The rape scene was disturbing yes, but I applauded the author for not shying away from the gruesome aspects of the time period. The chemistry between the characters was great. The hero was amazing, so strong and able to shoulder all the pain and anguish thrust upon him. The heroine was amazing, a light in a very dark time of history-ironic because the sunlight could be the death of her. Over all I am quite pleased with this story and greatly admire this author's dedication to bring historical figures back to life in a genre I so love.

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### **Auguste says**

found in the dollar bin at the local discount store - now I know why. The writing was fine but the story just wasn't all there. The climax of the book was 'eh..who cares?' It read like part of a serial - where readers should know and already be familiar with the character, but I don't think it is. Not terrible but not terrific.

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### **Bookaholics says**

One With the Darkness by Susan Squires

Mass paperback – June 3, 2008

4 Stars

Susan Squires excels at the dark, tormented heroes. But I have been long awaiting another book that features another powerful female vampire.

In *One With the Darkness*, the Contessa Donnatella di Poliziano is a vampire who has everything. She is beautiful, rich, and blessed with immortality. However, she cannot forget her lost love Jergan. Jergan died as a human because she never had the courage to turn him into a vampire. Centuries later, she still mourns his loss.

When she suddenly receives the gift of time travel, the Contessa boldly goes back to find Jergan and correct her grievous mistake and make him a vampire, too. The only problem is when she returns to the past, she has

no memory of Jergan! Will history repeat itself or will the Contessa finally find true happiness?

Susan Squires excels at creating dark tormented heroes and in One With the Darkness she does just that. Her writing is richly detailed and exotic and that is clearly demonstrated in the captivating Contessa. It is always refreshing when the heroine is the older and 'wiser' character. This book was a delightful read. The only disparity I found was at the end of the book. The Contessa is supposed to be a clever and confident woman with initiative, but in the end, she is easily manipulated and loses heart! Although this situation did add incredible tension to the story I felt this wavering of the heroine's true character was not consistent or true to nature. This was a strong book but the end left me with mixed feelings.

Reviewed by Steph at Bookaholics Romance Book Club

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### **Leigh says**

This book took a really weird turn from the rest of her series. Not sure I was entirely into the story.

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