



The Dark Garden

Eden Bradley

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If you loved *Fifty Shades of Grey* . . . get ready to enter *The Dark Garden*.

A deliciously potent tale of one woman's quest for self-discovery.

Rowan Cassidy likes to be in charge—especially in her personal life. As a mistress at Club Privé, the most exclusive bondage/S & M club on the West Coast, Rowan can live out her dominant fantasies safely, and with complete control—until the night Christian Thorne walks in. Self-confident and sophisticated, he's a natural dominant if Rowan's ever seen one. Yet she can't stop thinking about him and imagining his touch.

Christian has returned home, hoping to break free from his dissatisfaction and malaise—and discovers the cure in Rowan. He's dying to get his skilled hands on her and watch her surrender, to unlock the mystery of her that captivates him. Determined to be her master, he makes Rowan a daring proposition: give herself over to him for thirty days.

Rowan finds Christian's offer terrifying—and impossible to resist. But abandoning herself to Christian's power might be more than she can handle. . . . Or it might be the realization of her true nature and the dark garden within her. There will be only one way to find out. And once the game has begun, there's no turning back.

The Dark Garden Details

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From Reader Review The Dark Garden for online ebook

Michele says

iked this book alot...lots of sex with some story added...I need a cigarette (I dont smoke lol)

Ashley Williams says

FINALLY.. a BDSM book that isn't about a millionaire swooning a virgin and trying to turn her to the dark side (lol). I think everyone now knows what BDSM is about (since reading Fifty) and doesn't need a whole tutorial in every book. That's the main reason why I like this book, it cuts out all of the pain-is-pleasure, give-yourself-to-me, do-you-trust-me.. yada-yada. Its just a simple, wonderfully written, luxuriously steamy, BDSM romance novel.

I liked that this book was a little more sadistic than most are used to, but was also very loving. This book had a main story and a small side story, which I am having a hard time trying to decide which one I like the best. Honestly the sadist in me likes April's side story a bit better, she was truly submissive and didn't fight her feelings.. but interestingly enough she was the strongest character in the whole book.

I love the cover art, it is so simple and elegant yet the flowers are artfully placed in a sensual embrace. The story is written in the third person POV, which caused a bit of a connection issue with the characters. I did like being able to see from Christian's POV.

Swoonworthy Points: 8

There were several erotic scenes, but my favourite scene was when Christian was sketching Rowan.. it was lovely and hot!! Plus there's a cast of Pure Alpha Male Doms that know how to take control of a room!

Memorable Quotes

...sometimes when we're finding ourselves, we find things we never expected, things we weren't necessarily looking for...

The point is, knowing who we are, accepting our own truth, is the most precious gift we can give ourselves, no matter what we have to overcome to do it.

Summary

Rowan a Domme meets Christian another Dom at a BDSM nightclub. One look in her eye and Christian knows that he wants to dominate Rowan. Christian makes Rowan an offer she's too stubborn to refuse, and with that she has to spend 30 under his whim. Meanwhile, a new sub to the club, April has attracted the attention of Decker, the most experienced Dom in the club.

The two couples have to learn to compromise, give and take, breakdown and then pick things back up.

I you are in need of a quick sexy read that will tempt a bit of your naughty side, then this is the book for you.

I was provide this ARC via Netgalley and Random House Publishing Group-Bantam in exchange for an

honest review.

Kate says

DNF at 50%. Well, there went 3 hours I'm never getting back. On the plus side it was written better than FSOG (Ana Steele wasn't a character, so of course it was)...that is, if you have a strong aversion to plot and characters with even the slightest bit of substance.

Mini rant: I can't stand in books when characters are drawn to each other because they suspect there's "something more" to the other, WITHOUT HAVING A FREAKING CONVERSATION WITH EACH OTHER. There's absolutely no way you can tell there's more to a person than meets the eye without saying a word, or a gesture or anything to each other. This is always done in shitty romance/eroticas. I'm so bored of it. Authors: force your characters to communicate. I don't care how, text, square dance, speak Klingon...whatever! But for gods sake, one glance and a raise of an eyebrow does not equal an emotional connection!!!

Rant over.

Nia says

I love Eden Bradley because she knows how to write BDSM erotica in a very classy, delicate, smart and romantic way. In *The Dark Garden*, we are introduced to two couples. Each character is strong and successful and has their own set of limits and expectations when it comes to love, sex and BDSM.

Rowan has issues that she has dealt with by becoming a Domme. Christian instantly recognizes her naturally submissive nature and the chemical attraction between them and he sets out to discover the real Rowan. She agrees with the condition that they do not have sex. This really made the story for me, because there is nothing hotter than a man who will do anything to please a woman, all the while knowing that he won't get anything in return. There are no twisted plot lines, manipulative scenes or evil intentions present in this novel. The other couple - April and Decker, start out as a typical BDSM D/s relationship which quickly develops into a hot, steamy and erotic story.

I also loved that the techniques were different. How many books have you read that are set at the typical BDSM club with public flogging, nipple clamps and the ever-present hanging cross? Well, this book doesn't have the typical cookie cutter story. All hot scenes occur at home, bringing a sense of private intensity and closeness that you can relate to. Loved the toys! Vampire gloves anyone?

I loved *The Dark Garden*! Make sure to add it to your To-Read list if you like well-written romantic BDSM.

*Thank you Eden Bradley, Random House Publishing Group and NetGalley for providing me with *The Dark Garden* in exchange for an honest review.*

Krystal says

Saw this book at Target. It says right on the cover *"If you loved Fifty Shades of Grey, then you'll love this."* Instantly bought it.

Meet Rowan:

Mistress. Suppressing her past. Fighting eternal happiness. Pride the size of Mt. Rushmore. ~~Secret author.~~

Meet Christian:

A Dom. Old member of Prive. Spent 5 years in Europe. Sculpts chicks out of marble. **Fabio hair.**

He seemed hot until they whip out the Fabio hair.

And we meet April and **Decker** :

That's when I fell in love with this book.

& then they go right back to Christian and Rowan...

& then after like two chapters it would go back to Decker and April and suddenly I felt a rush of excitement to actually continue reading this book!

After a short & beautiful scene between those two, it would go right back to Christian and Rowan...

and I literally would look ahead in the book to see how much I had to read before I would get to the next Decker and April scene...

Basically, if this book was completely about Decker and April, I'd put this baby on my favorites shelf and reread it at least 50 times before the year is over. I gave this book 3 stars because while the Christian and Rowan parts were decent, it was the Decker and April parts that kept me hanging on, craving more, and almost in tears.

Books like this always piss me off because I am forced to choose which couple I like best... & for some

reason, I almost always end up in love with the couple you barely ever see. If this book was just about Rowan and Christian, alright, then maybe I'd be into them more, BUT because they threw in Decker and April, Rowan and Christian **INSTANTLY** lost my attention the second April and that sexy super Dom man Decker walked in.

Overall:

More Decker & April. Less Rowan & Christian. Better yet, split this story into two so they can each have a spot light and not have either couple steal their thunder.

Dee says

First line of the Synopsis....

If you loved Fifty Shades of Grey. . . get ready to enter The Dark Garden.

Ah, no thanks.

Anas Attic Book Blog says

Read more of my reviews and ramblings at Ana's Attic Sexy Tales

The Dark Garden by Eden Bradley was an artistic, sensual BDSM-lite novel. It wasn't so much about the club, or the toys, or the sex, but much more about discovering your true self. The novel was well written, and told in a very classy, sensual way.

Rowan is a Domme, at least at first. But she is feeling some dissatisfaction with this position. It just isn't as fulfilling as it used to be. At one time she was submissive, but after a terrible relationship in college, she decided that nobody would ever take advantage of her again. So she became a Top. One evening, a gorgeous hunk of Dom, Christian, walks into the club, and there is an instant connection and attraction between them. He quickly sees that she is hiding a submissive persona underneath that Domme facade.

Christian is an artist who just came back from 6 years in Europe. Primarily a sculpture (stone) he can't help but want to draw her, paint her and sculpt her. Why?

“Because you're beautiful to me. Because I love the lines of your body, the shape of your face, even your hands. Your bone structure is perfect. And maybe because I never want to forget you.”

But more than that, he is drawn to her, and his desire to discover more consumes him immediately. Though Rowan is attracted to him, (in fact, she fantasizes about him), she knows nothing can happen because they are both tops.

Until Christian proposes a deal: 30 days he Tops, she bottoms. No sex. Just to see if what her true nature is. Though Rowan finally accepts the challenge, she has a lot of difficulty with it. She constantly denies her own

nature, has panic attacks and runs away. Christian is extremely patient and pushes her limits while being patient and loving. He is the perfect Dom.

He wrapped his fist in her glorious cascade of dark hair, pulled her hair back firmly, and spoke softly into her ear.

“You’re doing beautifully, Rowan. But I have more in store for you. Are you ready?”

She gasped.

“Are you?” He tugged a little harder on her hair. “Tell me.”

“Yes!” she hissed.

At first, there is no sex, just Christian dominating Rowan. There is lots of flogging and a new toy I had never heard of, a “vampire glove”, a leather glove with sharp points in the fingers. There is a lot of ‘going into subspace’ which sounds awesome, but I couldn’t see ever turning my brain off that much for something like that to happen to me.

There is also another couple in this book, April, Rowan’s friend, and a sub from the club, and Decker, a Dom who doesn’t commit. I enjoyed their story, and would have loved to have read more about them.

Likes:

- There were a lot of beautiful, artistic descriptions throughout the book.
- Christian’s patience with Rowan.
- Watching Rowan’s journey to self discovery

Dislikes:

- Though I loved April and Decker’s story, it was more like reading two books in one. I just didn’t think they needed to be in the same book. I would rather have read two shorter novellas.
- There was talk about what happened to Rowan, but we either never really find out all the details, or it doesn’t seem like enough to change her that drastically.

My Rating: 3.75 stars 4.25 for heat

I enjoyed this book very much and recommend it. Something held me back from totally falling in love though. I didn’t love Rowan’s character, and though I loved April and Decker’s story, I found that it distracted me from Rowan and Christian.

Side note: This book was originally published in 2007, and re-released with a new cover and a new blurb adding it to the “if you liked Fifty Shades” category. ***Random House sent me the copy in exchange for a fair review.

Spoiler Whore-Mommoa says

4.5 stars

Of all the "dominant" males I've read, Christian Thorne can be my dom anytime. I absolutely love love love

the way he took care of Rowan. He just didn't fuck her right away. He took the time to get thru to her and the sensuality he gave her made my heart flutter.

Side story with April and Decker I also really enjoyed. I just wish we had Decker's POV and why he didn't want to fall in love with April. I also kinda wished April would have gone to Club Prive and have submitted to another Dom in front of Decker to show him what he gave up. IMO, she forgave him too easily after finding another subbie at his home. Again, wish we had his POV.

Over all review: Loved the book for the sensuality of the story.

Taryn says

This review was posted at My Secret Romance

One thing I really enjoy about Eden's writing is that she makes a smooth entrance for you into the lifestyle of BDSM. There's a huge percentage of readers who like to read it, but don't know the depth of that kind of relationship. Eden does an exceptional job with it. She makes it understandable and pleasurable, while at the same time telling a story. It's why I like her books so much. She doesn't have the readers dive head first into a shallow end. She makes it desirable and sensual and leaves you almost begging to experience it. I have to say, subspace sounds like an intensely erotic place to be in.

Rowan is truly a reluctant submissive. A past relationship left Rowan unable to trust anyone. She closed off her heart and took control of her life. With the need to be in charge, Rowan is now a mistress at an exclusive club in California. It's where she has power over herself and the people under her. She will never be at the mercy of another man after what happened....until Christian Thorne walks in and changes her life irrevocably.

Christian Thorne is an intense dominate, which makes him off limits for Rowan. It's too bad too, she's wanted him since the moment she's laid eyes on him. They're both aware of the electricity between them so Christian makes Rowan a proposition: She must submit to him for 30 days to see if she is a submissive. Christian believes she's not a dominate, that deep down she is a sub. Naturally, Rowan balks at the idea. She knows what she is....How can Christian think she's not a dominate...What nerve he has to question her like this! Rowan is hesitant to this agreement but she can't stop thinking about him so finally she says yes. But there is one stipulation to this agreement- no sex at all.

Rowan's transition isn't easy. It's going to take a lot of work on Christian's part, which he already knows. In one of the first scenes they have together, Christian binds Rowan lightly with flowering vines. It was so beautiful and romantic to read and play out! Rowan was completely caught off guard by it. She nearly has a panic attack and flees, leaving Christian to see there is more than meets the eye with Rowan. He wants to help her, get her to open and let go of this monster from her past. Christian wants to show her she has power too underneath him. Rowan is realizing what a challenge this is for her and she's afraid she will walk away less intact than ever before. But the passion they share and the emotions they bring forth of each other will put them in a position neither of them expected. Is Rowan truly a reluctant submissive?

There is a side story with Rowan's friend, April, that takes place in this book as well. I really enjoyed that story as much as I enjoyed Rowan's....maybe even more.

Here are some of my favorite parts of this book:

He wrapped his fist in her glorious cascade of dark hair, pulled her hair back firmly, and spoke softly into her ear.

"You're doing beautifully, Rowan. But I have more in store for you. Are you ready?"

She gasped.

"Are you?" He tugged a little harder on her hair. "Tell me."

"Yes!" she hissed.

"God damn it, Rowan," he muttered.

She blinked. Was he angry with her? Hadn't she pleased him?

Then, "You'll be the death of me, girl."

She smiled. April was right. She still had some power here.

"It is, even now, at the end of winter. I love the driftwood that's washed up on shore. The shapes and the textures are so sinuous, so beautiful. It's like a still life. Like a garden of dead wood, with the sand the dry earth. Yet it's not really dead, is it? It's strangely alive, just...stilled. Serene." -Rowan

Because you're beautiful to me. Because I love the lines of your body, the shape of your face, even your hands. Your bone structure is perfect. And maybe because I never want to forget you." -Christian to Rowan, after Rowan asked why Christian wants to paint her.

And all around them the dark sky hid the stars and the rain fell, washing the earth clean."

Early dawn. The sky glowed with shades of pink and gold as the sun made its way over the horizon, fighting through a thin layer of mist to light the sky in a spectacular blaze of color.

Wanderlust says

Cover & Title - 4 out of 5

Favorite Line - "I'm going to make love to you, my Rowan."

She smiled. "Yes..."

"And then I'm going to tie you up, work you over with my hands."

"Yes!"

"And then I'm going to make love to you again, for the next eighty years."

"Yes, Christian. I am yours."

He kissed her again; her lips, her chin, her cheeks, then whispered, "And I am yours."

Favorite Character - April

This book was totally mesmerizing. It was a really beautiful discovery of BDSM, love & fulfillment. It was sensual & artistic. The book was written in from multiple points of view. The story consisted of two couples;

Rowan & Christian and Decker & April. I really liked all of the characters. I loved the support Rowan & April offered each other it seemed like a lovely friendship.

The sex scenes in this book were very steamy. There were loads of masturbation scenes as well which make me feel really naughty (in a good way) reading for some reason, i guess because they are so personal *shrug* The book was not smiles & light but yet it didn't get me down, i liked that. I was constantly interested & intrigued throughout the book. I was on the edge of my seat by the end, hoping, *praying* for a happy ending for them both. I was not disappointed by the ending, everything i could of wanted & more.

I would recommend this book & I would read more by this author.

[Click here to visit my book review blog](#)

?? Carmen the Bootyshaker Temptress ?? says

I really enjoyed the two sides of this story. You get to see what happened before and what is happening now. An enjoyable and hot read.

Jen says

So I think I might be more into the BD part than the SM part of "BDSM". This book is all about the SM part. The Dark Garden is about Rowan, who likes to be in control at all times. She is like this because of a past hurt when she tried to be a submissive person. Christian is also a Dom and feels that Rowan really is a sub and needs to show her the truth about herself. Christian asks for 30 days to convince Rowan that she really is a sub. The rest of the story is about Christian breaking down Rowan's defenses and proving it to her.

Like I said, this book is total SM. The couple actually makes a deal that there will be no intercourse. I did learn all kinds of interesting things about SM. It was very clear that the author is familiar with the area or did a lot of research.

-subspace- the place where a sub goes to be able to tolerate and even enjoy the pain. A half-conscious, if you will

- vampire glove- A toy that has little needles on the end used for spanking

- lots of floggers....

Anyway, I was just not emotionally involved with this couple. There is another couple in the story that I liked much better. So if you are really into SM, then this is the book for you, but don't go in expecting much else.

Tracee Gleichner says

I wanted to like this book. I really did. And I have read quite a few erotica novels in my time. I don't read too many of them anymore, not because I dislike them but there isn't much of a story line most of the time.

Unfortunately, that is exactly how I felt about this book. The book is based on Rowan, a dominatrix who works in a club for doms and subs. She loves her job but lately has found she doesn't really want to "play."

She isn't sure why this is happening, but her life is about to change when Christian walks in. Christian is also

a dom but is immediately attracted to Rowan – the feeling is mutual. He offers a game of sorts – for her to give him 30 days to explore a different side – a more submissive side of herself, and she agrees although somewhat reluctantly. She has a past secret, something that makes her never want to be submissive to anyone.

I was hoping it would be some sort of earth shattering secret but it wasn't. I was hoping that this book would have some kind of plot twist but it didn't. It focused mostly on the sexual aspect of the encounters that Rowan and Christian, and April and Decker had. I found it to be quite boring and actually started skimming through some of the pages. I don't need to hear about the same type of sexual play numerous times to get the idea. I just wanted more. And to be honest, I found the "relationship" that formed between April and Decker to be more interesting.

I know that I am one of the few who feel this way after reading the other reviews on Amazon, so feel free to give it a shot. I'd love to know what you think/thought.

Mrs. Missive says

This was one of those books that totally killed any ability to do housework. I could not put this book down. It grabbed me from the first chapter and I was hooked.

I saw myself in Rowan's shoes more than I saw her. I was drawn that deeply into the story, and I think I identified with the character on such a multitude of levels.

I usually stay far away from any story dealing with a recovering rape victim, and I wasn't aware that was an aspect in this story until I was insanely vested in the book. But the author handled it so well and with just enough detail and emotion that I was blown away.

Rowan is taken to explore the submissive side she has blocked and in doing so she discovers what and who she really wants to be.

I also loved that there was more than just BDSM style sex involved in this book. There were romantic elements as well and that is what really made me love this book. The tenderness that went along with it was great.

Truthfully I could have done without most of April's story and loved this book as a novella instead. I understand why she was there as a friend, and how her story told Rowan so many things about her own situation, but it felt added in at times. And at other times, perhaps the page breaks on the kindle didn't help, I would have to re-read to figure out which character I was listening to. I could be prejudiced because I saw so much of myself in Rowan, and didn't identify well with April, but it felt a little unnecessary to me.

All in all I loved this book, and it was well worth the higher price tag.

Jessica says

The Dark Garden has to be one of the worst books I've ever read. The description says that it's similar to 50

Shades which it's not. Unless you count that both books have Dom's named Christian. There was no plot in this book and it was wicked boring. I would skip pages and skim over paragraphs because I couldn't wait for this book to end. I found that I like the secondary storyline about April & Decker better. They're the only reason i gave this book 1 star. I couldn't stand Rowan and Christian & I had no connection to them. I thought Christian was a pansy and I hated that the author gave him long hair that he would 'smooth out'. Ugh, and Rowan was a self pitying 'I had a bad boyfriend in the past' whiner.

I know this book was written before 50 and was most likely re-released because of the 50 phenomenon. They need to stop saying its like 50 though because at least 50 had a plot and likable characters.
