



Vesper

Jeff Sampson

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Emily Webb is a geek. And she's happy that way. Content hiding under hoodies and curling up to watch old horror flicks, she's never been the kind of girl who sneaks out for midnight parties. And she's definitely not the kind of girl who starts fights or flirts with other girls' boyfriends. Until one night Emily finds herself doing exactly that . . . the same night one of her classmates—also named Emily—is found mysteriously murdered.

The thing is, Emily doesn't know why she's doing any of this. By day, she's the same old boring Emily, but by night, she turns into a thrill seeker. With every nightfall, Emily gets wilder until it's no longer just her personality that changes. Her body can do things it never could before: Emily is now strong, fast, and utterly fearless. And soon Emily realizes that she's not just coming out of her shell . . . there's something much bigger going on. Is she bewitched by the soul of the other, murdered Emily? Or is Emily Webb becoming something else entirely—something not human?

As Emily hunts for answers, she finds out that she's not the only one this is happening to—some of her classmates are changing as well. Who is turning these teens into monsters—and how many people will they kill to get what they want?

Vesper Details

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From Reader Review Vesper for online ebook

Tina (Fantastic Book Review) says

Sampson definitely created mysterious page turner with VESPER. I read this book in one sitting as it was hard for me to put it down. The transcripts sprinkled throughout the book added more mystery and intrigue to the unfolding events surrounding Emily's strange transformations. I was thrown by one of her personas especially if you go by the synopsis of the book. It was a very interesting turn of events since it deviated from traditional myths which were a great thing. It only made me want to find out more about what was happening to her.

Emily's normally quite shy, geeky, and dresses to keep from being noticed. Then out of nowhere, she's a completely different person where she's confident, brave, and she's exhibiting some kick-ass abilities. She's a real Jekyll & Hyde. Her antics were quite entertaining as I followed along while she tried to put the puzzle pieces together surrounding her life and the mysterious murders in her town.

VESPER had so many interesting details layered in mystery and the premise really got my attention. There are so many things I want to know about the characters now especially with how the book ended. I look forward to reading the next installment in this series.

Patrícia says

RATING: 4 stars.

Here's another book that surprised me. Maybe because I had little to no expectations about it as the only thing I actually knew about it was that it was a werewolf story.

But now, after finishing it, I am impressed with the book. Not because it is a masterpiece, but because it just stands out among all the young adult urban fantasy I've read this year. And that *is* something, because with so many books of this genre coming out every month it's certainly difficult to be original.

Emily Webb is not popular. She doesn't think she's pretty. And she *knows* she's a geek. Most of the time she doesn't mind having only one friend and wearing loose clothes to hide her body (of which she is ashamed). Except sometimes... she wonders... how it would be like to be a confident girl, with a confident walk and even some superpowers...

But one thing is imagining and another, completely different thing is having it happen. Really happen.

Because suddenly Emily doesn't need her glasses to see clearly; she is fast, strong and... confident.

What is happening to Emily? Why is she suddenly feeling like she is in a movie adaptation of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde?

Here's the main reason I liked this book: Emily. I could identify myself with her. She was shy and had doubts about her body and sometimes wished she had the courage to stand up to people. I think she was very human and I can imagine that many girls feel like Emily. I don't know if all of them want superpowers (I know I wanted to be a witch when I started reading Harry Potter... but it's a secret. :D), but certainly every girl in the world has at one point or another felt inadequate and uncomfortable.

So, Emily is a relatable sort of character who suffers a transformation that allows her to be as sassy, outspoken and self-assured as she wants. It's easy to see the appeal, I think. I also liked the fact that Sampson actually cared about development of his protagonist and that we can see Emily actually changing and growing.

The story wasn't anything special really. It was Emily's journey, Emily's change that drove this book and made it interesting.

There were characters that could have been introduced earlier to the story (like Spencer; we know he is there, but his role is not very prominent although he is an important character) and some parts that felt rushed (the last chapters), but overall "Vespers" was a nice read.

And as the author included parts (the transcripts) that take place much later in Emily's life, I guess I'll have to read the second book in the series to see what else happens to her: how she will find her pack and how the relationship with her "mate". Oh and everything about BioZenith. I'll just have to keep reading until I know as much as Emily seems to know in this first book.

Overall: this is an introductory book to the series, clearly. It focuses on Emily's experiences while changing and has a very simple plot that is there just to help Emily in her 'journey'. The "transcripts" that appear throughout hint at a deeper story and several plot lines that include other supernaturals and the rest of Emily's pack. These transcripts represent Emily's present while the book is a recounting of Emily's past so if the reader wants to know more he'll just have to read the other books. I think I will. :)

Camilla says

I ended up finished this book in no time! Turns out that the plot is much, much more than it seems which had me dying to find out what happens every step of the way during this cool mystery. This book was so much fun, so exciting and just plain awesome. The characters were great and there were so many unexpected twists that had me saying "No way?! AWESOME!" No seriously, this book was so cool. The cover definitely gives a sneak peek at the mystery that lies within this great novel. Man, I am so pumped for the sequel, I want to know what happens next!

Okay, now for what's so darn cool about this book.

The beginning starts off with Emily Webb learning the fact that a fellow student who is also named Emily was found dead. Turns out that someone shot her and the weird part was that she was in her pajamas, just walking down the street. No one knows why. Her death is very tragic, and it has many students crying and mourning the loss of a great girl.

Emily never knew the other Emily very well. She just knew her as the other Emily. Emily Webb keeps to herself and isn't the type to socialize with all of the other students. She only hangs out with her best friend, so when she learns about the other Emily's death, she isn't sad because she knew her very well, she is saddened by the fact that they didn't even get to get to know each other.

Emily learns about the death from a call from her best friend. The weird thing is is that as she answered the phone, she was getting ready to leave the house. She had one leg over the windowsill, ready to leave in the middle of the night. The phone call seemed to wake her from a trance, and snap her back to reality. She doesn't know what came over her to make her want to do such a thing. She is the opposite of that.

This sudden death is only the beginning of the strange things that happens in Emily's life. Every night, around 8:14, Emily becomes a different person. She turns into a thrill seeking, rebellious teenager who escapes the house every single night. She notices that her senses heighten, and that she becomes a stronger person overall. Every night, she becomes another Emily... one that steals her sister's clothes, sneaks out to hit on guys and tries to steal another girl's boyfriend.

She doesn't know what is happening to her when 8:00 rolls along. She notices that every night, the "change" becomes less painful. This is where the mystery starts to unravel within Emily's life. She has to figure out if any of this has to do with the other Emily's death, and how she can stop daytime Emily from turning into her rebellious nighttime version. As she discovers more about the change, twists and turns arise within this mystery.

This is an awesome mystery with SO MANY twists and turns. Trust me, there is a lot of depth to the plot that makes it so awesome. The ending was crazy, and I am dying to read the sequel. This definitely exceeded any expectations I had about this debut novel!

Donnie Williams says

Jeff Sampson's debut YA novel, "Vesper," is like a welcome breath of fresh air for anyone craving a little girl power. I was lucky enough to receive an advanced reader copy of the book, and I found myself so hooked that I blew through the story in just a few hours.

"Vesper" has the soul of "Jekyll & Hyde" with the wit and female empowerment vibe of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," and the mixture makes for quite the page-turner. Just when you think you have a handle on where the story is going, the author throws in another unexpected twist and takes things in a completely original direction. All of the characters, even down to the minor supporting players, are well-drawn and memorable, and the book has several laugh-out-loud moments between the many suspenseful beats. Best of all, Emily Webb is a heroine who is smart, funny, fierce, and relatable.

This book is a much-needed antidote to all the paranormal romance hoo-ha plaguing YA literature. Finally, we have a heroine who can kick some butt. All hail Emily Webb!

April says

When the lights go down in the city, Emily Webb becomes a different person. She turns more badass and less movie-geek/ book worm. Vesper by Jeff Sampson begins with a confidential interview of someone codenamed Vesper 1 by another person deemed A. Savage. What ensues is Emily's story and several little mysteries. I almost don't know whether to call this a paranormal or a mystery. However, I do know that I quite enjoyed Vesper.

[Click here to read the rest of my review](#)

Lina says

I would like to thank HarperCollins Publishers, for sending this book for me to read.

Throughout reading, *Vesper*, I had mixed feelings about it due to certain characterization.

The synopsis portrays lead character, Emily Webb as a geek who is happy her with herself. However, in the beginning, it seems as if Emily is uncomfortable within her own skin, which comes of, mainly, due to her "best friend" Megan. I found Megan to be really annoying character. She is one of those girls who has been so overlooked by the popular crowd that she decides that anything "cool" is horrible. When Emily starts going through these weird changes where her "dark" side comes out, Megan starts calling her "slutty" for showing off cleavage and flirting with guys. If I was Emily I would have dropped her like a brick.

"Nightmare" Emily, is a very fun character to read about, she is a hedonist who grabs life by the balls and laughs. Whenever she came out the book took a whole new, and compelling, light. She is what kept me reading and hoping that the two Emily's would meet and become one.

The event that jump-starts our protagonist's main story, is the death of Emily Cooke, the "other Emily" and how it starts to effect her. Emily Webb starts to think that the darkness inside of her is the ghost of the late Emily. Every night she seems to come alive and become the very antithesis of herself. It's like a less dramatic "Black Swan" type deal.

A very slow start, the story does eventually progress towards the end, which comes together with a very strong sequel hook. There was a lot of red herring to try and keep readers guessing what was really going on with Emily. For in the end what really mattered most was the epiphany near the end as showed that the character was developing into her own person and that made reading all the other stuff worth it.

Besides the character of Megan, the only real problem I had with this book was the constant name-dropping to make Emily seem like a geek. It was as if the writer was trying to make us know "yeah she's one of you, she loved *Dr. Who*, *Lord of the Ring*, etc." For me all that stuff just comes off as weak characterization.

Overall a light read and I would probably pay to read the next installment.

3.0

Sam says

The beginning was interesting. The middle was *yawn* sleepy. The end woke me up and had me ranting. And that, was not in the good way.

BORING. And quite repulsive in a few things. How it ended? Meh. Sampson can't write gore. I didn't even flinch. Plot? Double meh. The only motivating factor to read this book was the fact that I enjoyed the protagonist (I've forgotten her name already - not a good sign) making a fool out of herself. It was the only thing I found entertaining. I enjoyed thinking about her acting stupid and basically being socially deficient. Fantastic. This book has turned me into a sadist.

Frankly, I didn't care at all. Sampson failed on all levels to have me RELATE to this character. To have me EMPATHIZE with the character. Heck, he failed to even make a CONNECTION between me and this character. Oh, wait. Sorry. He DID make a connection. WE ARE BOTH GIRLS. Bravo, Mr. Sampson, sir. Bravo! I have never read a book where the protagonist was a GIRL!

I couldn't even drool over any of the boys. I had been bored into an animalistic state, where my only hope of satisfaction could perhaps come out of imagining a good-looking guy smiling at me from his fictional life. I couldn't even have that.

I think Vesper was written toward a female audience, but jeez, Sampson writes like he's targeting male juveniles. He fails on all levels to properly display a woman. YES. HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HOW A FREAKIN' GIRL ACTS. Can I just say? Girls are far more complicated. We have cliques. We gossip. We can be evil, back-stabbing creatures. Our friendship doesn't rely on, "Hey, wassup? You like movies? I like movies! We're BFFs (like totally)!" Popular girls do not just go about befriending computer geeks in random. There has to be a connection. We don't make friends just because we both like one single thing.

He spent too much time describing the protagonist (whatever her name is)'s outfits. You don't need to go into detail EVERY FREAKIN' TIME SHE PUTS CLOTHES ON. We girls don't want to read about precisely how "slutty" her clothes were. Just tell us she was wearing a slinky dress. End. Cool. I don't need, "With sequins and a v-neckline framed with ruffs. I matched it with super-tall leather pumps with buckles on the side that made my hips sway like crazy. After doing my makeup (only thing he didn't elaborate on) and topping it off with a silk scarf that was gauzy and see-through..." LIKE, WHAT THE HECK? I GET IT. PLEASE BE MORE ECONOMICAL WITH YOUR WORDS SO I CAN SPEND LESS TIME READING YOUR BOOK.

So yeah. I had a problem with the book. In fact - the whole thing was a problem. The book IS a problem. The only thing bumping this piece of tree from one star to two is the idea. It was overall kind of meh once we got to the werewolf part, which is around the time that I stuck a twig down my throat and retched in my toilet. But the interview and narration-ish idea? Hm. OKAY. Hence, two stars. Oh boy, am I feeling generous today.

Teno Q. says

With the recent surge in paranormal fiction - the vampires, the werewolves, the fairies, the dark angels et al - I was relieved to find a 2011 novel that *wasn't* about one of those. But guess what? It was! It turned out that Emily's "transformation" turns her into one-of-the-above. But I won't tell you which. Spoilers, you know.

So, what a beeping surprise, right? And here I thought the author would make up something of his own to perplex us. He could've easily made the one-of-the-above into a spirit possessing Emily for revenge, or, god help us, use his imagination. But no. Anyway, moving on.

How many times have I seen this? How many times? When will people think up something new? Lab experiment goes wrong, turns regular homo sapiens into freaky superhumans with enhanced strength, smell, speed, sight, blah blah. Evil biotech company somewhere in the background. Is that not, like, the basis of half of all comic superhero origins?

Only this time, it happens out of nowhere, no explanation at all - Emily did not take any secret chemical

enhancement formula, did not get bitten by any radioactive insect - She just magically turned into Superwoman overnight. While this is probably explained in the very obviously planned sequel, that doesn't make the *current* non-existent reasoning any more plausible or easier to digest.

After all, what mousy wallflowerly loner girl in high school *doesn't* want to transform into an ass-kicking, bitchy, slutty, confident crusader against the horrors of murder overnight? Wish fulfillment much?

But of course it's not wish fulfillment; the author is male. And I'm not surprised that he is. Not surprised at all. The whole book stinks of someone who has **no** freaking idea what it's like to be a girl in high school. I would know, because *I* do. And *I* know how tiring these stupid jock-and-cheerleader-and-rich-girls-versus-loner-girls-who-are-perfectly-normal-yet-somehow-can't-for-the-life-of-them-fit-in clichés are, since they aren't even *close* to the truth.

If only the the author's prose weren't so incredibly dull, without any distinction or sense of style, I could almost forgive him.

Not.

I could go on and on, but I think I've ranted enough for one book. So, bottom line: not a new book I would recommend for reading. Just an old, tired, assortment of overused ~~tr~~opes ideas that fully deserve the bland prose they're written in.

graveyardgremlin (formerly faeriemyst) says

The start of VESPERS immediately caught my attention with the transcript of an interview with Emily Webb, the protagonist, and an agent of the mysterious Vesper Company. This led to the first chapter where no time is wasted getting straight to the story. Emily is every introverted, insecure, don't-make-a-scene-or-stand-out girl out there, which made her very relatable to me; as a teen, I was just like her. Her transformations into Nighttime Emily, as she called herself, were well-done but I felt the author could have stretched a little further than the "wild child" persona he gave Emily during those times. I got a bit bored when she was in that stage and liked when she went back to Daytime Emily, her normal self, much better. At first, I was a little disappointed in where the story actually went, mainly what Emily ended up being (and that's all I'm saying, no spoilers here), but I accepted and enjoyed it anyway. The middle of the book lagged and I was afraid it would end up an average read, with too much wild behavior and not as much development as I would have liked. However, toward the end the story picked up and kept me riveted; it's always a good thing for an author to end his or her book on a high note. This isn't a YA book with romance as its central focus, but it does have its place in the story and doesn't overwhelm the main plot. The book as a whole could have been deeper than it was, but it's still a good start to the Deviants series and opened up numerous possibilities, with many unanswered questions for future endeavors. The use of six or so transcripts interspersed throughout the book was a nice element and I quite enjoyed them; the entire book could have easily been written this way. This would probably appeal more to teenagers but some adults would enjoy it as well. I did. THE VESPERS is a breeze to read, briskly-paced, and has a few snicker-worthy moments; maybe it's not perfect, but it's far from bad and I had a good time reading it.

3.5 stars

Note: There is some graphic violence, only one scene really, but it's there.

Allison says

This book started out boring and crappy, and it ended up interesting and not-crappy.

Emily Webb (Em Dub) undergoes a transformation from dull, hoodie-wearing Daytime Emily to wild, gotta-show-my-womanly-attributes Nighttime Emily after the death of the other Emily (Em Cee). Personally I could care less about Daytime Emily. She didn't do much except judge people and shut up when her obnoxious friend Megan (Meganyuckyuck, the nickname matches her maturity) wanted her to. Em Dub was afraid to be herself and have fun because Meganyuckyuck had a bad experience with popular people a billion years ago. Boo hoo cry me a river! Actually, don't. I don't want Meganyuckyuck soaking my library books with her poor little tears. Every time she appeared, she always managed to bring up the popular people. There was one part that really bothered me, when Meganyuckyuck was making fun of the people crying over Em Cee's death. Sure I wouldn't cry for the death of someone I didn't know but I would NOT make fun of the people who cried and cared about the deceased. She also said Em Cee deserved to die because she was destined to be the next Paris Hilton. Meganyuckyuck is a real piece of work, like a pile of dog crap that even the flies won't touch. She even did some major slut-shaming on Em Dub and it seemed to rub off on her because Em Dub eventually called herself a were-slut. I had to drop a star because Meganyuckyuck took up way too many pages with her yuckiness. Because of her, my favorite line, thought by the awesome Nighttime Emily, was,

"I was pretty, I was strong, I was graceful. And I was wasting it by being stuck in my house with big-nosed, bitter, boring Megan Reed."

I can't say this book was good but it wasn't bad so not-crappy is the best way I can describe this. Nighttime Emily was what made this book not-crappy. She wasn't afraid or held back by Meganyuckyuck. When Nighttime Emily slipped some sleeping pills into Meganyuckyuck's milkshake has to be my most favorite scene with my least favorite character. Nighttime Emily went clubbing, partying and even attempted to kill a few relationships. I'm not so thrilled about the last part but it's what the wild girl did and she did it without a second thought. I wish I could be like that, doing stuff without a second thought, not the boyfriend stealing. I hate boyfriend stealing because it hurts the girlfriend. Until I am as fearless, Nighttime Emily can be my inspiration. She would have been spectacular if her narrative wasn't practically the same as Daytime Emily.

When I was reading, I kept thinking this was a boy's fantasy. Geeky guy gets the hot girl, that sort of thing. It was cute for a while but I got over it because I didn't really like anything besides Nighttime Emily. I was too busy being pissed that the words actually, poor, and totally were abused. Teenagers don't go around saying, "You poor thing, poor girl, poor squirrel. Actually that's totally off. Did she actually smile at me? She totally didn't." Maybe I'm being a hypocrite because I use the words maybe and awesome a lot but this was written by a grownup. I don't know why but I always have a lot of expectations for grownups.

Em Cee was fleshed out more than I expected. I thought she would just be a dead girl, like in the dead girl in Girl Parts. When she was called the next Paris Hilton by Meganyuckyuck, I knew I would like her. But I wonder if things would be different if Em Cee hadn't shared her name with Em Dub. Would Em Dub feel a connection to Em Cee? Daytime Emily was pretty interesting when she suspected Em Cee was taking over her body. Would Em Dub have felt something for Em Cee? Em Dub eventually thought Em Cee was cool because she liked photography. Would she feel the same if Em Cee had liked fashion? No, probably not.

Em Dub's transformation was paced just right and I didn't predict her to transform the way she did. I didn't expect this to be science fiction either. That was a pleasant surprise, considering I haven't read sci-fi since

Across the Universe and The Gardener. Hope the sci-fi element gets stronger in Havoc: A Deviants Novel, because I was convinced this was a paranormal. I should have been tipped off because Em Dub was being detained by the Vesper Company. In my mind, company = sci-fi.

Vesper is far from being my favorite but it's fun and different from most YA coming out this year. So if you have nothing else to read and can get over Meganyuckyuck's yuckiness, you won't regret reading this.

Maja (The Nocturnal Library) says

1.5 stars

Well, color me disappointed. I'll try to keep this short and very clear: I expected a lot from Vesper. Perhaps I was curious because a male author wrote from a teenage girl's perspective - it usually works so well when it's the other way around (case in point: White Cat or Anna Dressed in Blood). That's not something that happens very often and I wanted to find out if it worked. It didn't. I feel like I've wasted a lot of time and got nothing but annoyance in return.

Emily Webb is a horribly insecure 16-year-old. She only has one friend, she rarely leaves the house unless it's to go to school and she avoids confrontations at all costs. One night her classmate Emily Cooke gets shot and dies and, at the same time, our Emily starts behaving very strangely. The two things are seemingly unconnected, but as Emily experiences complete change of personality night after night, she starts suspecting that the other Emily found a way to possess her.

Suddenly she's sneaking out the window every night, crashing parties and judging people by their smell. A small voice inside her head is making her do things she never even thought of doing before. She is stronger and faster at night, nothing like the clumsy Daytime Emily. Her best friend is convinced that Emily's trying to ditch her for the cool kids and her parents have grounded her for the first time ever.

It all sounds very interesting, but in reality it was dull and unconvincing. Everything about this book was wrong. Emily's voice was that of a not-too-bright 12-year-old. Her best friend Maggie was downright obnoxious and instead of worrying about the kids that were getting shot, I found myself wishing that someone would shoot her just to shut her up. The pacing was yet another disaster: after being utterly bored and skimming through the last 150 pages, the ending came as a shock and left me completely confused. One minute Emily was at school dealing with one issue and apologizing to her idiot best friend, and the next she was inside the company that changed her and other kids like her, all her fellow deviants were organized, and they were fighting back. And then it all stopped. Huh?

So to make the long story short: the characters were flat, the pacing was all wrong and the romance...
shudders.... Let's not even go there.

I think it's safe to say that I won't be reading the sequel.

For this review and more, visit The Nocturnal Library

Jenny says

This review originally posted at: <http://supernaturalsnark.blogspot.com...>

Actual Rating: 2.5/5

MY THOUGHTS

Vesper is a story that leaves us in a state of suspended indecision, our emotions in constant flux as we mentally debate the merits and drawbacks of what we've just read. It's not a book that's easy to categorize or assign a label such as "good" or "bad", and this sense of being undefinable stems mostly from a complete and utter lack of knowledge despite having read clean through cover to cover. Mr. Sampson has written a novel with overwhelming potential and the potent promise for future substance, yet the story we are given lacks that which it promises so strongly. Reading Emily's story is like reading a three-hundred page prologue where interesting events are set in motion and we're taunted with the barest whispers of information, but just as we are getting excited to delve into the richness we know is just waiting for us to savor, we find ourselves on the final page, having been given a shell of a story and denied the filling we so crave.

Emily herself is as difficult to decipher as the story of which she is narrator. She starts out as the quiet, somewhat geeky, easy-to-overlook teenager with whom we can easily see ourselves eventually connecting, but with the fall of night she becomes a girl plagued by none of the inhibitions that hamper daytime Emily's social life. She quickly sheds the sweetness and innocence we've come to appreciate and embraces her latent "popular girl" behavior, thereby rendering her a complete stranger we're not sure we really want to know. She has few redeeming qualities while in this altered state of being, and any explanation for either this version of Emily or the full werewolf version of Emily remains a complete mystery. All we know with any amount of certainty is that sometime in the vicinity of eight o'clock in the evening Emily short circuits and transforms, maintaining an awareness of her daytime persona, but ultimately not caring what effect her shenanigans will have on her as long as she's having fun now.

A great deal of nighttime Emily's "fun" centers around the alluring draw of a certain musky scent her werewolf-self identifies as belonging to her mate. The search for a mate would have been a perfectly acceptable storyline if we were just provided a few of the why's for this particular behavior. We are given no explanation for her search, and once she finds the one she's been so inexplicably drawn to, we have no idea whether or not he is equally drawn to her, thus negating any potential for a romance that would have helped us understand this animalistic pull. While we are provided a hint as to the reason for Emily's physical changes, the lack of information regarding all other aspects of the story becomes increasingly frustrating, leaving us blinking in disbelief upon reaching the conclusion, shocked by the fact that we've read a full length novel but have learned virtually nothing about either the characters or the trials they face.

Periodically, Emily's narration is interrupted by the transcripts of an interview between her (though she's identified as Vesper 1) and an older gentleman who knows her secret, a deviation from the story that doesn't seem all that necessary until the end. Between the last page of the story itself and the final page of the transcript, a significant group of occurrences seem to have taken place, resulting in an Emily who is now far more informed and knowledgeable about her condition and what it means, yet we as readers remain outsiders—an unfortunate circumstance that cements our detachment from this story as the interest that was undeniably piqued is whispered away in a haze of confusion. Vesper is certainly full of potential, perhaps potential that will be mercifully tapped into in coming books, but it reads as a lengthy introduction to future events as opposed to a stand alone first installment.

Rating: 2.5/5

Brianna (The Book Vixen) says

Review copy provided by publisher

DNF - page 126

Why I Read this Book: I only just heard about *Vesper* about a couple weeks ago. Then it showed up in the mail. The cover is captivating and the blurb sounded interesting so I decided to give it a go.

What I Liked: *Vesper*'s set-up was interesting and different. The first thing you read is a transcript of the interrogation of Vesper 1 (Emily). The book then takes you through Emily's retelling of the events that lead her to that interrogation room. Every so often there is a break from Emily's flashback with an update on the interrogation progress.

Emily is an interesting character, one with a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde complex. During the day she is geeky, fly-under-the-radar Emily. At night, her kick-ass side comes out and she's like a super hero with special powers.

What I Didn't Like: The book is told in first person narrative, from Emily's POV. While I like enjoy knowing what the protagonist is thinking, in this case it felt like there was too much thinking. It felt like Emily was over-analyzing everything.

Vesper is a very slow paced read, too slow for me. I kept waiting for something to happen, something that would give me a hint as to what is going on, but I just couldn't wait any longer. I got half way through the book and I still had no idea what was going on with Emily or why.

For the most part, reading a book from a 16-year old female's POV written by a male author went unnoticed. The author created a female character that would be easy to portray from a male writer's standpoint, by making her a geek and not a girly-girl. The only thing that sounded strange to me was Emily's use of the word "décolletage" to describe her chest. I didn't use the word when I was a teenager, let alone know the word existed. But that was the only thing that felt out of place from what part of the book I did read.

Overall Impression: While *Vesper* was well-written and the writing style was fluid, it's snail-like pacing just didn't work for me. If you don't mind a slow build up that takes up more than half the book, then *Vesper* might be for you.

Review originally posted on The Book Vixen.

Amber says

3 1/2

Emily Webb likes Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Lord of the Rings and reading. She does not go clubbing, she does not believe in wearing clothes that will show off her assets, and she definitely does not have an interest in boys. That all suddenly changes when a girl, whose name is also Emily, turns up dead and Emily Webb finds her self flirting with guys and sneaking out of her window for a night on the town. Samson

creates an interesting tale about a girl desperate for answers with a paranormal twist.

To be quite honest when I first read this synopsis and decided to buy it, I did not think that there would be any paranormal element in this novel, but there most definitely was. Although it was not what I was expecting, I did enjoy the novel. It was always a surprise to see what "Nighttime/Bad" Emily would do next, and each night Nighttime Emily got more and more ballsy! The plot was paced very well, the action occurs over a week in which the author hints that Emily may not be as human as she assumed she was. Chapter by chapter the audience is given clues as to what is causing this sudden change in Emily until all is revealed and explained. I felt that everything was wrapped up in a neat little package, setting the novel up for its sequel, Havoc.

The characters did what they were supposed to do. Daytime Emily was good, nighttime Emily was bad, and her best friend Megan was just....a pain in the ass to put it bluntly. Megan is one of the girls who tried to be popular back in elementary school, was shunned by a popular girl and has hated the world ever since. I felt that the characters, especially Daytime Emily, could use some more depth. Daytime Emily was able to pick out the flaws and logic behind Megan's actions, but she was never able to sew within herself. I truly believe that there is something more to her than a geeky girl who is content to stay home every weekend to watch bad 80s films. She must have some hidden thoughts that she can share about herself, but we don't get a glimpse into her inner workings. Nighttime Emily was just the opposite, she did rather than thought and was quick to squash out of the voice of Daytime Emily. I understand that the author had a Jekyll and Mr. Hyde thing going on, but I wanted characters who were more than just "bad" and "good" even if they were two sides to the same person. The other secondary characters kind of just hang out in the background even though quite a few of them play a very big role in the plot. This book does hint at a love story which is so bare right now that I don't know if I can even come up with the words to comment on it. Basically the love interest is being set up for the second novel.

The writing was spot on. There was never a lull and I was completely captured in the story for the entirety of the novel. The author also throws in a lot of nerdy pop culture references which were entertaining and made me happy that my nerdiness came in handy (by the way, ten points to you Mr. Jeff Samson for the Cowboy Bebop reference). I liked that the perspective switched throughout the novel. The story mainly focused on Emily but every five chapters or so, the writing style would change to a transcription between two people: FS and V1 discussing "vespers" and "deviants."

Vespers was a really fun read and I enjoyed it a lot. The writing was littered with nerd culture references, the characters could have used a little more work, but the plot was enticing regardless of if it was not what I was expecting.

I recommend this for those who love a good paranormal novel, probably those who are fans of the X-Men as well.

Michael says

A kind of mix of Westerfeld and *Heroes* (when it was good) and *Veronica Mars*, but entirely its own beast.

Of late, the teen genre paranormal romances announce themselves as such, with the single element the author is playing with brayed about on the cover. *Bored by Wolves!* or *Fairy Tail* or *Fallen Angel Boy* or what-have-you. Such books are all about cashing in by being as obvious as possible. Want paranormal romance?

Here's a vampire angel zombie you can love! And so on. You know you're reaching the nadir of a trend when mere labeling is enough to make a book a success.

Which is one of the most refreshing things about *Vesper*. There are genre elements in here, but they're not the ones you expect, and they're not being used in a manner you'll expect. Sampson has bigger aims than mere sort-of-boy-meets-sort-of-girl, and one of the novel's many joys is just how often you realize that you don't quite know what is going on.

And the book is written with a crispness that is rare in a genre that is all too indulgent of overheated, flabby prose. Sampson isn't one to linger forever on a boy's steely gaze, the lines of his jaw, his rock hard abs, etc.—those sorts of calculatedly gooey details that basically make so much of today's teen paranormal romance come off as soft porn for thirteen-year-olds.

Instead, he's got a story to tell. And it's a doozy of a page-turner. The only disappointment is that when it is over we realize it is only the beginning of a larger story.

Can't wait for the next.
