



Gilded Destiny

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A woman's memory returns when she falls in love with the monster who took it from her.

Calli tattoos her skin to fill the holes in her memory, thanks to an accident that left her mind damaged and empty. But a nasty encounter with a fired employee leaves her in the arms of her unlikely savior: Nycholas, a predatory, serpentine Vesper on the run from his brutal master.

Nycholas' clandestine world holds the secrets to mankind's origin and survival... but he only wants one thing before his time is up: a few colorful nights with Calli, the fragile, tattooed, human woman he pursued and saved.

The more Calli learns about Nycholas, the more her own darkened memories return to her. Despite her haunted past, she loses herself to passion and desire with her immortal captor.

Now, Calli must overcome the demons of her past, or allow Nycholas to kiss her memories away and spare her the trauma of loving a doomed immortal. But each choice comes with dire consequences – some that endanger not only herself, but her family as well.

Gilded Destiny Details

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From Reader Review Gilded Destiny for online ebook

A. Walters says

Wow...where to start. I was lucky to be given an ARC of Gilded Destiny. So thank you Nola! This story has a bit of everything. Paranormal action, suspense, drama, a bit of romance, and the aching feeling at the end that you have to read MORE! Because now that I've finished, I'm dying to know what happens next! Nola has created a creative and unique world and mythology based around the Garden of Eden story. I was a bit taken a back at first (because how can a half man/half snake be sexy?) but by the end I wanted my own slice of hot Vesper action. ;-) The plot is fluid and the main character's voice is strong and likable. The only critique I have is the time line...it's a bit hard to follow. But other than that, this is an interesting and well told story and I look forward to reading more from this author!

Abby Cavenaugh says

I wasn't sure what to expect from this book, but I must say it totally exceeded whatever expectations I had!!!

The Vespers-- half-man, half-snake-- honestly terrify the crap out of me. In the first scene in which a Vesper eats a human, I stared at my computer with my mouth hanging open, completely creeped out and disgusted. But, Nola Sarina has a way of making at least a few of these creatures likable. You start to root for them... at least two of them, anyway. That is some wonderful storytelling!!!

There are just a few things I would change, but they're not major. I felt that at some points some of the Vespers seemed like such regal, powerful creatures and then they said, "Fuck fucking shit!" and it threw me off slightly. Like, why does this creature talk like my Marine ex-husband? Lol! The only other thing that bothered me, and only just a little, was that I kind of didn't like the way parts of the ending were summarized. Not that Nola should've gone into great detail about years passing, but I still LOVED the book.

At its heart, it's a beautiful, tragic love story. A star-crossed lovers story that it takes an amazing mind to tell.

Paula says

I loved this story!

In Gilded Destiny, Nola Sarina introduces us to a whole new kind of paranormal character, the Vespers, a seductive blend of dark and light, love and death, power and servitude. Even though this is a novella, Sarina does an excellent job of building a rich, complete and believable world, and she pulls us into it with expert ease. Sarina's strong, clean writing lets the story unfold with seamless elegance, moving from gritty to sensual to gripping without faltering. The pacing is excellent, lingering on the characters and their love story, yet with action moving fast enough to pull readers through the pages. Once you start reading, you won't want to put this one down!

Here's a quick synopsis, with only a few spoilers.

Calli is a tattoo artist with a hole in her past. Five years ago she disappeared, and when she returned a year later, she had no memory of where she had been. All she knows is she was in a terrible accident which left her scared both inside and out. When a beautiful, inhuman man walks into her shop one night, she knows she should be terrified, but something about him stirs her in ways she thought she had lost forever. When he returns to save her from a drunken attacker, she makes a leap of faith to trust him and in turn, to get her life back. But the peace and passion they share is destined to be short-lived.

Nycholas is a Vesper, a blending of human, demon and serpent, cursed to spend eternity protecting humans—and feeding from them. He's been on the run for years, fleeing from his cruel and oppressive Master, but now that he has found Calli again, it is time to make a stand. His only hope for freedom is in defying his Master, yet that path leads to certain death. Nycholas asks Calli for only three nights--three amazing nights--but before he goes, he must find a way to protect her from his Vesper brothers and their powerful Master.

The Vespers are not simply another kind of sparkly paranormal monster. They do bad things to humans and to each other, yet Nola Sarina makes them sympathetic despite their darkness. Like all good monsters, the Vespers are quite human, and the balance of blackness and beauty in Nycholas' soul will make you love him even more.

Read this story. It will make you laugh and sigh and cry, but it will definitely leave you wanting more!

Daniele Lanzarotta says

Instead of giving you another synopsis within my review, I'm going to get right to the point so that you can get to this awesome book even faster.

I was given an ARC of this Gilded Destiny in exchange for an honest review. This is one of those books that men and women will both enjoy. Gilded Destiny has the perfect combination of action and romance. Nola Sarina's Vespers are unique and very interesting, especially when it comes to their eating habits, which are quite disturbing.... The characters are intriguing and full of mysteries, some of which I hope will be answered very soon!

Heather book whore & shifter slut extrordinaire says

This book was provided to me as a R2R. I rate this book as a solid four stars. This book is the first published work from this author and I expect to see many more, possibly even a continuation of the world and characters she has created in this novella.

We meet Calli as she closes up her tattoo shop for the evening, once again feeling uncomfortable with the "friend/apprentice" she hired as a favor to someone. We learn that Calli was in a "car accident" and was left with a scar, short term memory issues and a missing year of her life. The author does an excellent job of portraying the environment of not only the tattoo shop but the world that surrounds it from Calli's POV. We see her using the "reminders" she has developed since the accident to make her feel comfortable in a world she can't remember. We also see the darkness and despair that coats all she experiences since waking up four years ago; missing that year as well as something else she is unable to define. Nycholas enters our story late

one night when he comes into the shop after Freddy has left, finding Calli alone and scaring her into fainting and eventually running, attempting to escape Nycholas once she realizes he is not human.

Thus begins the long, dark, tortuous road that the author takes us down as we follow Calli and Nycholas as they run; first to avoid death then eventually to embrace their destinies and the path that life, or whatever it is called, has laid out for them.

The author shows us the bond between these two and as we read, we begin to understand exactly what these two have endured to be together for a few stolen moments. We experience the darkness that surrounds both Calli and Nycholas, for very different reasons. We feel the terror and horror that Calli experiences as she learns who and what Nycholas is and the world view that he must live in. We feel the lust and other emotions these two experience for and around each other, especailly as the love they have for each other is remembered.

I must admit that this book was a bit dark for me and I, personally, felt somewhat uncomfortable reading parts of it. Having said that, nothing detracts from my admiration for the storytelling and creative abilities of this author. The environment and emotions she is able to envoke in the reader are terrifying and breathtaking at the same time, much as the book is. I did find some of the secondary characters to be somewhat thin compared to the depth we have in our main characters but I think the length of this novella and direction of this story hindered a lot of understanding of the family we meet as the story goes on. Perhaps further books in this world will fill in these spaces and answer the lingering questions the author has left as the book ends.

I definitely recommend this book for those who enjoy the darker side of PNR. There was certainly some sex in these books but not really any romance and definetely nothing that would define this as an eroic novel. All in all, I am happy to have been given the chance to read this book and am interested to see whatever this author presents in the future.

Michelle Johnson says

Disclaimer: I am the agent who represents this book, so I clearly have a bias toward my client and her project. Even so, the following is my honest opinion of this book:

Nola Sarina's twist on Original Sin gives birth to a new monster - one which gains our empathy as quickly as our dread.

In this, the first novella of the series, Nola has crafted a beautiful love story within the trappings of her urban fantasy world of the Vespers... and one you will see carries on to another generation.

It's a quick read and a page-turner that will leave you hungry for more. And more you will have!

Dee Lindsay says

I just finished reading this sultry, knee-buckling paranormal romance written by my author friend Nola Sarina, and I was left wanting to know more. The characters are vivid, the writing evocative, and Nola's sexy vespers announce their presence on the paranormal scene with dark, imaginative flair--an intriguing twist to

the ageless story of original sin.

The storyline drew me in quickly--the vespers were a creative new concept, and the image of the vespers traveling on trains was both chilling and fitting (will I ever look at midnight train rides the same way again?). Oh, that rusty, dark, cold-metal feeling of the abandoned train yard for a lair--yes! It was a thing of my nightmares! Perfect.

There were a few details I craved --the creation story behind the vespers, more about Nycholas' development into a vesper that could understand love, and of course, more about Levitiqas, since I feel I need to know my enemies well-- but I also felt the author did a great job of opening up her world in the short amount of time a novella allows for.

Funnily enough, I found myself attaching to Levi even though he was not our main heartthrob. Nycholas was hot and mysterious, to be sure, but Levi was the glass of tall, dark, and handsome that I needed. I could picture him immediately as he walked into the story, and his badassery combined with his vulnerability made him all the more appealing.

The ending really did it for me. I wasn't expecting that warm, fuzzy feeling you get at the end of certain novels, nope, not with the thick, dark, sticky-tar feeling of evil that drenched this world. I could only hope that there would be a little glimmer of light left--some sort of rebellious phoenix that would rise from the ashes, and I got it! Yay!! I was left with the distinct impression that there would be future installments including Desiree kicking things in the balls, and that's all a girl could ask for.

Thanks for a great ride, Nola.

Looking forward to immersing myself in future novels by this talented woman.

Dee

Christine Hughes says

I was lucky enough to do a small beta read for this novella. I was so intrigued by Nola's imagination and description. I was quickly able to formulate mental images and get immediately on board with the romance between Callie and Nycholas. The story was fast paced and clean - she chose her words carefully and there was nothing frivolous. I must say, after reading this, I am terribly intrigued as to what happens next in the story as this one set up what follows nicely. I can't wait to read the follow-up novels in the series. I highly recommend - it's a quick read and a real page turner. Just when I thought paranormal couldn't get more interesting, Ms. Sarina quickly dashed any possible doubts I could have. Vespers aren't your average paranormal vampire.... What's been written is a fresh take - no sparkles here! I loved that I was intrigued by the horror of the Vespers but still invested enough to care about them. Not only has she invented a new character to fear and love but se's twisted the Biblical FanFic to a new level.

Emily Faith says

I finally got reading this and it was great. I love the imagination!!

Julia Mills says

This is the first work by Nola Sarina and I definitely hope it is not her last! Actually I hope she continues this story because when it ended I had "book hangover". I could not believe there wasn't more.

I was thoroughly enthralled with the relationship between Calli and Nicolyas. It was crazy, passionate, deep, dark and totally captivating. I will not spoil it for all of you that really need to read it but I will tell you that theirs was a love that could overcome almost **EVERYTHING!**

I had no clue what a Vesper was and snakes are not my thing but I will tell you, SIGN ME UP for a Vesper lover! Nola's view of a human/paranormal couple was incredibly innovative and very very sensual! I also appreciated the fact that we readers were well aware of the couples sexual desire and their inability to keep their hands off of each other without having to have a "blow by blow".

I really really hope that Nola continues this story line and it becomes a series because Levi, Dizzy and Festus definitely need their stories told!

Rachel says

Wow! There are no words to describe this book. Awesome novella! I love trying new authors and after reading the synopsis of the book, which grabbed my attention, I had to give it a try. I had no clue what the paranormal aspect of the book was, but was intrigued to figure it out. Soo glad that I did. I tore through it so quickly, it was that good.

A brief recap: Our main character, Calli, suffered an accident 5 years ago and as a result her short term memory as well as an entire year of her life are gone. Through tattoos she's tried to fill the void of her life. One night, in walks Nycholas and Calli's world changes forever. What Calli doesn't realize is that Nycholas knows why she can't remember anything from 5 years ago... and as a result he's been on the run from his master ever since. While Nycholas would never intentionally hurt Calli, he has made a decision but wants one last thing from her - three nights...that's it. Calli soon realizes what happened to her in the past and the secret that Nycholas is keeping has to do with her.

From the beginning you know that Calli and Nycholas have a shared past and you can feel the intensity of their emotions/love for one another through their interactions. Its heartbreakingly what these two have gone through to be together and Calli must prepare herself for the decision that Nycholas has made. I don't want to give too much away, as you really should read this. I will say this, though - Go back and re-read the opening page a second time after you finish. The intensity of Calli's love and remarks will sink in and tie in with the book ending.

And Ms. Sarina, all I can say is this...where can I find me a Nycholas! I think I've added another name to my list of book boyfriends :) Can't wait for the rest of the books!

Sharon says

E-book gifted by author for review

I have to say right from the start I did not read the write up for this book so I had no idea what I was in for. I tend not to read the blurb for the books I have been given to read for review so I get the whole experience without knowing what the story is all about. I can not believe that this is a début novella. Nola writes like a seasoned pro, the story is flawless and the characters are written so beautifully and with such depth of description. What really amazes me is that this is a novella but it feels like a full-length novel, there is so much going on all at once that I am surprised the author managed to keep it to the length that she did, which just goes to show the talent that this author possesses.

It is refreshing to see a new creature that has joined the ranks of the immortals, so many authors go for the safe option of vampires etc, not that there is anything wrong with that because I am a sucker for the vampire novel. The race of Vespers is one that I found rather interesting to read about. Another thing I love about the story is the mythology of where their origins come from, having something to back up their existence is always essential. I instantly connected to all the characters and felt myself entering into their world instead of just reading about it. I honestly hope that the author will take this novella and turn it into a series as there are so many places she can go with such a wonderful start.

I will not say too much more because I do not want to give any of the story away but I have to say if you do not grab a copy of this book you will be missing out on the talents of a wonderful author. Definitely, one to add the TBR list.

Stephanie says

4 1/2 Stars

**** DISCLAIMER**** I was sent a copy of this novella in exchange for an honest review.

This compelling novel kept me reading and full of surprises all the way to the end. It took a few pages for me to get into the swing of the novella, once I did it was a great and exciting read. I felt for Calli and Nycholas, their passion and fear came through as did their strength and destiny.

The pages fly by as you read their tale. The reader is grabbed from the beginning and it doesn't let go until the very last page, and when you reach the end, you are trying to turn the page and you realize that's it. It's done. You are left on a razor's edge and holding your breath wanting more and waiting.

Despite a slightly disorienting timeline, Nola doesn't give you a frame of reference at the top, you read and realize its been a few years or several years since the last page, other than that, I loved this novel. The intricacies and twists are what most mystery/romance/paranormal romance readers look for.

Marilyn's Book Blog says

This is a novella, so I obviously can't go into too much detail about the contents of the book because I don't want to give anything away. This was the first time I was introduced to a Vesper...I actually had no clue what it was. When I began the novella, I assumed it was going to include a vampire, but that is not what a Vesper is. It is half-snake, half-human. Nycholas, the main Vesper in the novella, is extremely attractive but has black spiderveins all over which are originally thought to be tattoos but is really his veins. His skin is also very pale and somewhat translucent, and, of course, he is cold blooded.

OK, so now that we all know what a Vesper is, we can move on to the rest of the story. We meet Calli who owns a tattoo shop and five years earlier was in a car accident that causes her to have problems with her memory. She is a very pretty girl minus a scar that runs down her face that she only knows came from the accident. She can't really remember anything about it. She seems OK with life, but she is not entirely happy.

Then, she meets Nycholas. She has a weird combination of attraction and fear toward him, but the attraction wins out. Deep down, she doesn't really feel like he will hurt her. Nycholas plans to stay away from her but doesn't really want to. When he comes back for her, she is being mistreated by her former employee Freddy, and Nycholas steps in to help her. This is when we can truly see what a Vesper is capable of....he bites Freddy which causes him to begin to shrivel up. Then, Nycholas's jaw unhinges and he eats Freddy.

That is the one part of the novella that I had a hard time wrapping my head around. First off, I'm not crazy about snakes, so I couldn't get that image out of my mind. But, I didn't like the thought of his jaw unhinging and eating people. I think I would have maybe liked it better if the bite took care of the job.

Anyway, Nycholas and Calli form a bond in the short time they are together. It is obvious that Nycholas really cares for her and just wants to be with her. He is also forceful and a little rough, but Calli likes that and finds comfort in it.

"When I tell you not to look," he said, "do not look. If I tell you to run, run. And when I tell you it's time for you to let go of me, you do it, without question. Is that understood?"

Calli slowly starts to have some things come back to her through her memory which serve as an excellent twist for a novella. I don't want to say anything about it because I don't want to give out any spoilers, but I will say it made me very curious as to how things would turn out.

"Can you set aside how bad I am for two more nights, to be with me? If you find it eats at you, I can blank it from you when we're finished."

I couldn't help but finding myself really liking Nycholas and rooting for him. You have to be prepared that this novella does not necessarily have a happily ever after, but it is not sad either. It evolves to other characters within the story. It does end with a cliffhanger that will leave you wanting more.

Gilded Destiny is getting four stars from me. Once again, it is a novella, but it thoroughly tells the story. Ms. Sarina was able to get an incredible amount of information in such a small text, and it leaves the reader curious as to what will happen next!

For all of my reviews check out my blog www.marilynbookblogger.blogspot.com

Future Slayer Girl says

Ok, first off I feel like I was hit with a freight train!

Second, this is like the paranormal romance equivalent to Song of Fire and Ice Series--nothing good ever happens to anyone!

Third, my masochist says that this is one of the best and original new paranormal romance series I have read in quite some time!

Did I want to throw my Kindle out the window after I read this?! Um, yes! I mean I was like, OH MY GOD! Someone cut Lavitiqas's head off already! I mean really! He's the issue! Can I cut his head off? Please? I promise to be super quick about it and come in like a ninja and just SLICE AND DICE! Then I will leave in the shadows and cackle once I get in the privacy in my own home!

I want to say UGH! Then I want to cry! Then I want to shake Nola Sarina for how she ended that. I WANT NYCHOLAS BACK NOW!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I'm gonna pout like a tween that didn't get Justin Bieber tickets for weeks over this ending! However, I started book two--there might be hope for some redemption??

Strongly written, highly engaging, and it brought me up and out of my slump! Two very fine thumbs up.

Only one think I had issue with. She world builds and explains the Vespers. However, she hints at 'the garden, the apple, adam and eve, and protecting humans' But we get no real story as to how the Vesper's play the role in the Garden of Eden. I get it is a series and you don't want to unravel all your plot twists in the first installment. However, I feel this information might work in our favor for future books so we 'get' the head Vesper's more. Just a thought.
