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Maryrose Wood, The Duchess Of Northumberland

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A dark, gothic tale of romance... and murder.

The latest book in the grippingly dark series, The Poison Diaries.

Our heroine, Jessamine, has lost her faith in the men she loved, and her innocence as well. She turns to the dark side and plots to kill her father, using his own poisons, before becoming an assassin, a poisoner for hire. Can she recover from her heartache and reunite with her true love, Weed? Find out in this thrilling story where poisons, darkness and horror are a part of everyday life, and love is the only cure.

Nightshade Details

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Author : Maryrose Wood , The Duchess Of Northumberland

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From Reader Review Nightshade for online ebook

Jake Rideout says

This review will ****SPOIL**** the first book. If you haven't read it, please stop here!

No, seriously, stop.

Okay, you asked for it.

At the end of book one, Weed and Jessamine were separated. Now, in Weed's absence, Jessamine is beginning to change. She has taken over her father's apothecary business while he devotes all of his time to his poisons. She remembers the things that Oleander showed her during her illness, and she wonders what secrets her father has hidden from her all these years. Slowly, she recovers her health--but her heart is still waiting for Weed to come back.

Finally Jessamine turns to the Prince of Poisons to reveal the truth of Weed's whereabouts. But once Oleander has her in his grip, he is unwilling to let go.

This book is much darker than the first in the series. Oleander continues to exact payment from Jessamine and Weed, even after they think they have nothing left to give. It was a little hard to watch Jessamine self-destruct, but I found Weed's chapters intriguing. He's such an interesting character.

Of course, Maryrose Wood leaves us hanging at the end.

Susan Mann says

How to start? Wow, I really was expecting it to carry on from where the first book in the Poison Diaries trilogy, the Poison Diaries left off with Jessamine recovering from her illness and carrying on looking after the gardens and her father. Not forgetting pining over Weed. Maybe running away to find out. Well it didn't quite start like that, it did start right after where book 1 left off, however this book became darker than I could ever have imagined.

The prince of poisons, Oleander, was filling Jessamine's mind, who was she to argue. I loved book 1, I loved everything about it, you can read my review, I loved the setting, the characters and the garden. Jessamine was innocent and naive in the last book, she was still a little naive but she was far from innocent. She is a lot more confident about herself in the book and crossed over to the dark side. After what happened back at the Abbey we follow Jessamine around on her travels.

The narration changed to Weed at times which was nice and we got to get inside his mind and find out how he was trying to find Jessamine. However Oleander, was playing with her emotions, will he help her find her way to her one true love.

The ending was just wow, what an ending. I have to read book 3 as soon as. It will leave you gasping for more and staring a blank page, wishing for words to appear.

One thing I missed was more of the gardens being in. Don't get me wrong there are still plenty of plants in there to keep me going. I also wished there was more Jessamine and Weed time together, there just wasn't enough of that in this book. Fingers crossed for book 3.

I would highly recommend this series. Its dark and gothic, with a great romance. This book was one fast paced, exciting ride from start to finish. It was dark and twisted and I loved it. This is a real page turner.

Amelia says

My god, way to rip a girl's heart out and stamp on it! *Nightshade*, like the first The Poison Diaries is perverse and a bit strange, a drug induced dream of a book. Beautiful and confusing.

Well worth a read. I only hope Weed hasn't been too destroyed by the bizarre choice to change authors and make it "more raunchy" (<http://www.thejournal.co.uk/news/nort...>).

Andrew says

I will admit I was not sure what I was going to be met with this book. Following on the complete gamble of reading the first book The Poison Diaries I realised that there as a sequel and thought why not see where it was all going.

Yes this book is written for a specific audience which I suspect was not me however I was impressed by the style of writing and the incredibly dark nature of the story.

But to start at the beginning - I do enjoy trying random books which catch my eye- that could be a title in a fellow readers feed all the way to distinctive cover or even just a random work on a bookshelf it can be one of a number of reasons. The Poison Diaries was one of them. *Nightshade* its sequel has an equally seductive appeal to it.

But what of the story - well it is set a short time after the events that ended the last book however you very quickly realise that the stage on which this story is set is so much bigger. Before it was a "cozy" little affair if such a word is suitable now you have a story which spans countries and I for one enjoyed it all the more.

Suddenly you have a glimpse of a world which shares the good and the bad which for me creates (and I apologise for the pun its not intended) a world of opportunities and I suspect further stories to explore.

I will not spoil the story for those interested in reading it - but I will admit that it is surprisingly deeper (and darker) than I was expecting and far more enjoyable for it.

Heidi says

Nightshade: Poison Diaries Book Two

Four stars: A return to the garden with a superior sequel.

Jessamine returns from the brink of death to find her beloved Weed gone. Left behind are the shriveling remnants of their budding love; bitten by the deadly frost of betrayal. Jessamine loses her innocence and tenderness after she sees the bald roots of truth, attached to the vine of lies that ensnares her. Her entire existence adulterated with her father's injurious greed and insatiable lust for knowledge of poisons. With a shocking act she slashes free of her father, the deceit and all the vestiges of her life. Fleeing Northumberland Jessamine intends on reuniting with Weed but the Prince of Poison has other insidious, ulterior motives in mind for her. During her convalescence the deadly Prince Oleander entwined his infectious tendrils into Jessamine's mind. Now with each passing day his toxins course through her veins corrupting and altering the beautiful, delicate flower that was once Jessamine. The dainty petals shrivel and fall away to expose a girl with darkened hair, withered emotions, a bitter heart and lethal intentions. Will Weed be able to find the antidote to save Jessamine from the Dark Prince and prevent an assassination? Will their love somehow survive and flourish again?

What I Liked:

*The transformations of both Weed and Jessamine. When Jessamine first begins to change she takes on the responsibilities of her father and earns a reputation as a noble healer. As the virulent whisperings from Oleander grow louder she sheds the name Jessamine and becomes Rowan. I thought the choice of name was interesting as the wood of rowan trees was once thought to have magical properties and offer protection from malevolent beings. As Rowan, she is capable, independent and compassionate. I liked this new girl; no longer timid and naive. Then as she succumbs under the septic spell of the Poison Prince she lets herself be lulled by laudanum. Drugged and poisoned she drifts in and out of reality forgetting Weed and her pain. She evolves into the deadly Belladonna. She is now a vicious, lethal assassin for hire. This aspect of Jessamine is dark and depraved but still fascinating. She is representative of the noxious side of Nature. Meanwhile, Weed wanders lost in the forest hearing only the calling of the plants. Disheveled and apathetic he is in the throes of despair. The flowers and leaves at first murmur that Jessamine is well but then the news of her whereabouts terminates. Repeatedly he asks all his botanical allies for any information regarding the pretty blossom with golden hair and they have no reply, for Jessamine ceases to exist. He drags himself from the woods, cleans up and vows to rescue her from the clutches of The Dark Prince. He is now certain of his identity, he no longer hides or recoils from his gift. He is capable, strong, handsome and determined. I definitely liked the new Weed. He is symbolic of the light, that embodies the healing and helpful characteristics of Nature.

*The voices of the plants are louder in this book. This time there are many, varied species all lending their unique utterances. Far from the disturbed plants of the poison garden, exist the wise plants of the famed Orto botanico in Italy. Plants spilling with knowledge of goodness, healing, changing of the seasons and the balance necessitated by Nature. I love the personification of the plants. I am impressed by the in depth knowledge displayed, not only of the species of plants and their medicinal uses but also of the history of botany and the evolution of thought on plants through the ages. I think we all forget the absolute importance of the vegetation around us. Life would cease without it. I was glad the author emphasized this vital point. After reading these books I have gained a new appreciation for the greenery that surrounds me.

*The plot of this book surpasses it's predecessor. Even though Jessamine morphs into a murderer, the overall story is not as corrupt and unsettling as The Poison Diaries. The metamorphosis of Jessamine and Weed from diminutive to forceful was a vast improvement. I enjoyed the movement of the story from

England to Italy. The traveling allowed the introduction of interesting new secondary characters. I also appreciated the inclusion of a minor plot involving a revolutionary movement in England and a conspiratorial plot of assassination.

And The Not So Much:

*What exactly is Prince Oleander? I am still uncertain of this character. Is he a construct of Jessamine's mind? An infective virus wrought from her numerous exposures to toxins? A delusion? A demon born from the contamination of the Poison garden, who seeks a corporeal body? I hope in the final book it will be clarified.

*While I was intrigued with the story revolving around the overthrow of the King, I felt it didn't quite come to fruition; this plot line cut off and remained dangling. I will be interested to see if this thread resurfaces in book three.

*Another shocking, cliffhanger. The reader is left abandoned in the throes of winter; with many unanswered questions.

Nighshade is a strong sequel. I enjoyed this story better than the first. The main characters, burst forth and surprise you with their new identities. The plants have a great deal of wisdom to impart so take time to carefully listen to their rustling leaves and heed their advice. Unfortunately, this book leaves us suspended in winter, hoping that young love will survive the change of the seasons.

Favorite Quotations:

“I thought love was a rare orchid that bloomed only once—but once it bloomed, it bloomed forever.”

“His laughter falls like a rain of ice. There is no end to the wickedness of humans, is there?”

“The plant that cures also kills.”

“Revolution is a healing plague that leaps across the borders and spreads from one nation to the next.”

“And whatever weapon the people fear gives power to those who wield it.”

“Seasons change, Weed. Winter comes, and you cannot stand in the way of it. One must accept that.”

“Sometimes a change from the old is good. Change is natural, like the change of seasons. Not to be feared.”

Cass - Words on Paper says

Wow.

I can not believe the sequel is releasing this year -- I had no idea! I'm actually quite excited about this one. The Poison Diaries was by no means perfect, but I do remember being thrown on an emotional rollercoaster. I love that the cover of this one matches the first one. :)

3.5/5

I really enjoyed some parts of it, but I do feel as though it was rushed as we get to the end. I do love how

dark this book was; it was all certainly compelling, I just wanted to know what happens next! But... overall, I'll say this book was okay, but if it was fleshed out a bit more it could have been amazing.

I do love following characters descend into darkness. Jessamine's progression was heartbreakingly tragic and beautiful. Their love story, her's and Weed's, was quite frustrating to read, but I appreciate that the author took risks and didn't go for a straight-forward, happy ending. It doesn't mean I was satisfied by it, but I appreciate the risk nonetheless.

Mable says

4.5 stars. It would have been a perfect 5 IF IT WASN'T FOR THAT ENDING!!! I almost threw this book across the room. It made me that furious, in a good way, BUT STILL!!! Now I have to wait a grueling year to find out the conclusion to this awesome trilogy :(2012 can't come fast enough!

Caitlin says

This series keeps reminding me of Rappaccini's Daughter, which is a plus. It feels like a dark fairy tale, like how a fairy tale is supposed to be: disturbing and questionable entertainment for children, yet the kind of story children flock to nonetheless.

It can be a bit oppressively dark, but I enjoyed it and look forward to the next one.

Natalie says

Total let down. I was so excited to read this second book and as I read it got more and more disappointing. I don't even know if I would bother reading the third book.

The first book, "Poison Diaries" had an ethereal quality. It was dark, but magically delicious. This book was just dark and it got gloomier and gloomier as the story went on. Jessamine seemed to do a complete 180. Characters must grow and in the first book Jessamine lost some of her innocence, but still remained pure and steadfast. In this book she becomes...I don't know, evil is a little strong, but it's like becomes a completely different person. A person I don't like. She does hideous things and doesn't seem to show much remorse.

Weed's character heads the opposite direction. He grows more and learns how to be more social. Of course he gets more and more attractive. By the end, I was just hoping we could totally get rid of Jessamine and give Weed someone more deserving.

The writing was confusing at times as it switched between Weed's and Jessamine's narratives. There was no clue when the switch would happen and it would take a minute to adjust.

I don't like the direction the author took this book. It seems like the story spiraled out into some weird dream-like psychosis. Too bad, since the first one was so great. I might skim-read the next book in the series, but we'll have to see. It's not at the top of my list.

Angel Cade says

I. Love. It!

I'm in love with this series. I cannot wait for the third and final installment to publish so that I finally know what happens!

I'm saying this again: This is *not* a love story. There's only a portion, a minuscule part in the book involving both the characters together in the same place and that isn't romance either. This book is so much more than that.

This is poison-filled book.

It picks up where the Poison Diaries left off, with Weed up-and-away after he serves Prince Oleander in order to save his beloved, Jessamine. Jess has recovered and is devastated to find no Weed when she wakes up. The father, that sonabitch, Luxton weaves a fabricated story and Jess mourns Weed's loss from her life.

But not for long, she doesn't dwell in her misery for Oleander has plans for her. And plans she executes! Oh boy.

You could see there was a total 180 flip in her character. From naive, innocent, obliging sweet Jessamine to vengeful, abandoned, betrayed, poisonous Belladonna. Yet her heart belongs to that unruly haired boy. And Oleander would do everything in his power to keep her away from him?

What for?

The sinister devil has plans of his own. The bigger picture, as it is. And Jessamine, his lovely, is a pawn, a means for that execution. And his master plan... though childish and immature, because well, what do plants have in for politics, human on at that? But the first step, the push that he gave Jess...

Meanwhile, Weed is lost. He's no where accepted again. For he carries the burden of his sins, the burden of loss of his beloved and the burden of hearing endless sounds of plants. So he begins anew, he knows Oleander is upto something and his beloved is caught right in the middle of it. She isn't safe and Weed would do everything in his power to save Jessamine from Oleander. There's only one thing left to do: Find Oleander, kill him, take Jessamine away.

But oh, the nature has its own plans, too. Plans, plans, plans! Who's is gonna work? I'll tell you. No one's.

What follows is two parallel stories, two characters going in opposite direction. One emerging from the dark and embracing light; the other blowing out the light and embracing dark.

Its a thrill to see how Oleander deceives and manipulates Jessamine until she no longer resembles her old self. Until she has forgotten about Weed. And it's even thrilling to watch Weed come to peace with his power, with his gift and using it to put an end to evil.

And oh, the little tidbits along the journey! Rye, especially! That man, I can say, was special. Cunning, sneaky, sly, yet oh-so-adoring! He didn't deserve what he got, but that's life. I hoped there'd be something more between him and Jessamine, even though I'm on total Weed's team. But I was cheering when Rye came swoooooooping down as the Dark Irish Knight! :3 But that fucker Oleander ruined it all.

But of course, there's that fuckin' oleander plant! Prince Poison. How I wished I could twist his silver hair around my wrist and yank him back to the ground and bury his fuckin' face underneath it. Oh, I forgot: He is fuckin' buried in the ground! The poisonous plant!

"He will pay the price someday, for that garden already has a master. One who will allow no pretenders to the throne."

"I have no need of doors. All the locked gates in the world could not contain me. I enter when and where I wish. I hold the key to every poisoned heart."

I hated him. I hated him throughout the novel. His... his pride, the malice he has in his voice, his sinister thoughts, which he kept saying over and over again like a litany for his 'lovely' Belladonna.

Fffine, I admit that his POV we got in Night Shade was... impressive. He's so sly, he's so... nimble with his details that you *can't* help but be impressed with it! Hatred on its own. I *hated* Oleander, mind, but his cunning-ness was so freaking mind-boggling!

I definitely wanna see more of Weed, Jess and (a little) of Oleander in the last installment! The way they left things. Oh Jess! Jess! :'(

Michelle O'Boyle says

Now, if you have not read The Poison Diaries then you need to get out there and pick up a copy. I also would like to make it known that I LOVE the cover art. It is what drew me to this series. I started reading The Poison Diaries without even knowing what it was about. I think that makes for a great cover. I liked the first

book, but the second book was just packed full of intrigue. Whereas the first book was set all at Jessamine's cottage this one takes you across the English countryside and ends in Italy.

If you have not read the first book I would stop reading now because I cannot promise there will not be a few spoilers to the first book. I will do my best to not give too much away for those that are patiently waiting for October 25th to get here.

The story starts where the other ended. Jessamine is still living with her Father at the cottage, but she no longer has that innocent glow about her. She has been changed by her sickness, the departure of Weed, and has lost all her faith in her father. Weed is sulking far away from Jessamine and seems to have no real purpose now that he has lost Jessamine. The best thing about this book compared to the first is that it is action paced from here on out. I mean it was like overload with all the changes that were taking place. Jessamine makes a deal with Oleander (Prince of Poisons) that if she does what he asks, then Oleander promises to lead her to Weed. But if we learned anything from the first book that is going to come at a steep price.

Jessamine truly becomes a different person as she follows Oleander's instructions. Even changes her name, personality, and physical features (hair, sink color, and dress). It was interesting to see how Wood takes Jessamine to these different places and watching her change into what Oleander wants is hard at times. You are cheering for this innocent girl to hang on to all she was, while watching her lose herself.

The book switches between Jessamine and Weed, which was fantastic because I really enjoyed the little bit of narration we received from his perspective in first book. Weed decides to ignore Oleander and return to Jessamine, but as with most romance books it was too late. His decision to stop wallowing in self pity was what made his changes so great. In the first book he was this scared little weed hiding in the cellar and you start to see him change into this complex man. After reading all of Thomas Luxton's book of horrors it leads him to go to the Orto Botanico di Padova at the University of Padua, Italy. Weed believes that he will find the answer to where Jessamine is and how to help her if he just makes it there, Signora Baglioni does not disappoint.

I do not want to give away too much of the amazing details of *Nightshade* because I truly believe it is best to take the roller coaster ride yourself. This one ends without a true cliffhanger, but more of a "I have no idea where this story is going!" I would not be surprised to see a certain character show up in the final book, but unless you have read both books I cannot tell you who. Just know you heard it here first if that character does show up. I loved the bits of history included in story, especially the use of Mithradates VI Eupator, King of Pontos. Those who are history people will love how Wood does not vary too much from his actual story.

The *Poison Diaries: Nightshade* was very enjoyable to read and I think I liked it more than the first book because so much was happening in this book. It will be interesting to see how this series ends which is currently expected to be out in April of 2012, so a great birthday idea for me.

Misty says

Just to warn you: there really is no way to write a review of a 2nd book in a series without revealing some secrets from the first book. This is especially true where this series is concerned, so this review will contain spoilers for book one!

I mentioned in my review of *The Poison Diaries* that I liked it better after having read *Nightshade*. It brought some things together for me, but mostly I think it was because the ending to TPD takes such a strange turn that I think your mind needs time to adjust, and there just *wasn't* time before the book ended. I mean, yes, you've been somewhat prepared for talking plants from Weed's revelations, but then *to actually have plants talking* - and plotting murder and world domination - is just a little strange. It takes a big adjustment. A lot of willing suspension of disbelief. But by book 2, it almost seems natural. Partly, I think this is because not just poisonous plants are doing the talking. You start to get a feel for the different "personalities" of the plants, and they become more like characters. But I think it's also because of the way it's narrated - more in Weed's voice, and where Jessamine is concerned, she's no longer fevered, so it reads less...manic, I guess. Whatever the reason, it works now, and makes the ending of TPD go down a little better.

Where it seemed to touch on magical realism in book one, I think it takes a pretty firm turn into magical realism in *Nightshade*. It also goes really, really dark. Wood explores some pretty deep, scary waters for a YA book, which, coupled with the magical realist feel, is really interesting. When you think "dark" in YA, you tend to think emotional contemporary blahblah. This is a completely different kind of dark, a story of control and manipulation and completely losing oneself to it. It's very Gothic feeling, and I kept thinking as I was reading that it would make such a good, strange little movie. (You know, if you could figure out a way to make Oleander scary and not just silly onscreen.) It's told in that delicious car-crash-in-slow-mo way that just grips you and makes you certain that it's going to be a first-rate tragedy. [I mean Tragedy-capital-T; you know, the cosmic irony, world is against us, every step I take in what I think is the right direction makes everything worse...that type of thing.]

Part of what makes this work so well is the split narration between Jessamine, who is slowly losing herself with the help of Oleander, and Weed, who is coming into his own. I wasn't a big fan of the split narration in book one, but here it really works. There is good balance to their story arcs, and getting to see every false step from two angles, seeing it all plotted out by Oleander, and how successful he is at pulling the strings, really contributes to the Gothic tragedy feeling. I also just plain liked Weed's voice in this, so I was happy to be in his thoughts and have his world opened up more. He keeps it all together, but it's Jessamine who steals the show. I mentioned at the end of my TPD review that book 2 is definitely worth reading because Jessamine is kickass, and I meant that. She is...dark and dangerous and a complete 180 from the charmingly naive girl she was in the beginning. And what's more, it's believable. It's sometimes painful to watch, and you sometimes want to cheer for her and sometimes want to yell at her, and it all just works to push us toward an ending you can't help but fear.

As for the ending itself, I have to say I loved it. Now, this comes with a caution, because, just as in book one, I think this is the type of ending that may really piss people off. It is certainly not for fans of the cliff-hanger ending. But, going back to the movie comparison, the whole thing feels very episodic and it works for me. The feel of the ending is really haunting and an interesting blend of optimism and pessimism. It's perfectly in keeping with the darker tone of the book, and I respect it as a result. And I have to say, without giving anything away, the final image is just... just brilliant.

So if you've read book one and were on the fence about whether to continue the series, I would strongly urge it. It's really going some interesting places, and I think you'll like the two books almost as a set. If you haven't read book one, but ignored my spoilers warning and read this review, and now have your interest piqued (talking plants? Oleander? Tragedy?), I would strongly recommend picking up both books at the same time, so that you can head straight into *Nightshade* after finishing TPD. Don't worry, they're both quick reads...

Sarah says

After really enjoying The Poison Diaries I have to admit I was excited to get my hands on an advanced copy of Nightshade and I couldn't wait to start reading it. Although Nightshade goes in a completely different direction to the one I was expecting and is a lot darker than The Poison Diaries I still really enjoyed it. In fact I think I liked it even more because it managed to surprise me! The story is a quick read and one I was able to whizz through in one day, the action is fast paced and you never know quite what will happen next which definitely kept me turning the pages.

Jessamine has done a lot of growing up since the first book, the discoveries she made about her father have changed her dramatically and I was pleased to see her stand up for herself more this time around. Although there were times I wanted to shake her for listening to Oleander it was easy to see why she turned to him. With Weed missing and her trust in her father destroyed she has nowhere else to turn and this makes her an easy target for the prince of poisons. If Jessamine is to have any chance of finding Weed she has to hope that Oleander will help her but he has plans of his own and it isn't going to be easy for her to remain focused on her goal.

Weed is also searching for Jessamine but even the plants don't seem to know where she is. Weed is having to try and fit into the human world while he tries to find his lost love and I enjoyed seeing things through his eyes, he actually becomes much more comfortable around people which was nice to see. I still love Weed's character but I was a bit disappointed that we don't really get to see as much of him in this installment. While this was understandable considering what is happening I missed reading about him and hope he is more prominent in the next book.

Nightshade is a much faster paced read than the first book but it is still a beautifully descriptive story and I loved the setting of the gardens that Weed finds himself in during his quest to find Jessamine. I can't say too much because I don't want to give spoilers but I liked the contrast between the new garden and Thomas Luxton's poison one. The story ended on a killer cliffhanger and I can't wait to read the final book in the series and see how things turn out, I wonder if the author will manage to surprise me again with the direction the story takes next?

If you haven't started this series yet I'd highly recommend picking up your copy of The Poison Diaries now, the series is totally different to anything else I've read and stands out all the more because of that.

Dark Faerie Tales says

Review courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales.

Quick & Dirty: This is a dark tale filled with betrayal, passion, and murder. With interesting characters and a fascinating plot.

Opening Sentence: I wake, as I usually do, to the sound of Weed's voice.

The Review:

Jessamine is devastated. She survived the strange illness that over took her body recently, but she woke to find that her beloved Weed had abandoned her. She was brought back to health by her father and he told her that Weed no longer cared for her and fled. She never quite believed him, and she had strange dreams while she was ill. Dreams of her father and his true nature. As the seasons pass Jessamine becomes more and more desperate to find Weed. Help comes in an unexpected way. Prince Oleander is the Prince of Poison and he offers to help reunite Jessamine with Weed. The Prince is from the poison garden, he is not flesh and blood but his influence is all too real. He has a steep price that must be paid for his help: Jessamine must kill her father. After the deed is done Jessamine abandons the only home she has ever known and the Dark Prince is her only companion. As she searches for Weed, the Dark Prince pulls her more and more into his dark web until she is no longer the girl she used to be. She becomes an assassin for hire, and soon she loses herself and starts to forget. She still loves Weed but will he love the girl she has become?

Weed left Jessamine to save her life. He left to live in the forest by himself where he still could ask the plants how his beautiful Jessamine fared. He soon comes to learn that she has left her home and is under the power of the Dark Poison Prince. Weed knows that Jessamine needs help but he has no way of finding her. He asks the plants for help but they refuse to give it out of fear. He decides to travel to a special garden in Venice to seek help from the plants there. Upon arrival, he is able to learn much about his talent and the evil plot the Prince is planning. He knows that Jessamine is in trouble and he hopes that he can save her before it is too late.

Jessamine was a very interesting character in this book. She changes drastically from the first book. She was so innocent and naïve before and now she has become quite a vixen. She felt so lost after Weed left that she turns to the evil Prince for comfort. She becomes a murderer with no remorse and no feelings. The only thing that stirs her old self is the thought of Weed. I liked this version of Jessamine a little bit better than the first book. It felt like she actually did something instead of just standing idly by while her life slips away. She still is very easily persuaded which is frustrating. I don't like the decisions she makes in this book, but I found her intriguing.

Weed grows to be a better person. He still loves Jessamine very much, but I feel that he won't let his love for her hinder his decisions as much. He is very devoted to Jessamine and he does everything in his power to be with her again. He knows that she isn't herself right now and he is a very forgiving person for he too is not perfect. I felt that he was able to take his evil side and use it for good. I really enjoyed his character and I am excited to see where his story leads.

This book was darker and more sinister than the first one. The plot kept me very interested the whole way through. I loved the story and I quite enjoyed getting to know the characters better. It was interesting to read from Jessamine's point of view now that she has become more of a villain than a heroine, but I found that I really enjoyed it. There was defiantly a cliffhanger ending and I honestly can't wait for the next book to come out. I would highly recommend this series to fans of dark fantasy books it will not disappoint.

Notable Scene:

Thank you for your bounty, Oleander, Prince of Poisons, I think. Thank you for all that Mr. Pratt has already received, and all that my father is receiving still, as the poison twists like bramble in his gut, burns within his brain, presses like a boulder upon his heart.

I am ready. I see myself in the mirror: myself, and not myself. Father thought I had grown to look like my mother. No more.

I pause for a moment on my way out of the cottage, to say a silent good-bye to my kitchen garden, my cooking herbs and medicinal plants, my teas and dyes. They have served me well, for so many years. I am sorry they will soon be neglected and over grown.

But that is the way of gardens. Old plants wither, and new ones sprout. The strongest plants survive at the expense of the weak. Even the most well-tended bed turns to a jungle in a season, without the gardener's restraining hand.

You learn quickly, lovely. I am impressed.

Take me to Weed. I am ready.

FTC Advisory: Harper Collins provided me with a copy of Nightshade. No goody bags, sponsorships, "material connections," or bribes were exchanged for my review.

Kirsty says

Nightshade is the second book in the poison diaries series.

Nightshade is a very different book to the first instalment in the series. I found it to be much darker especially in how Jessamine was written. I also thought it was much more fast paced and exciting and enjoyed it even more than book one.

For me the biggest change from book one was in how Jessamine is written. She has changed an awful lot since book one became a much confident and self assured but darker character. I actually loved this about her as I found it book one she was often quite passive. I loved how she went about her way and stuck up for herself much more forcefully throughout the book.

The story itself was much more fast paced and exciting than book one. I loved following Jessamine on her travels around the country whilst she was on the run and I loved seeing the different personas she took on in order to keep hidden.

I also loved the medical history references in this book. The history geek in me loved that the characters went to Padua to study medicine following in the footsteps of the great medical pioneers of Renaissance period.

I was left at times with this book feeling a need to have read more with Weed and Jessamine together (although I desperately hope this is addressed in book three) as they really did not have any time together in the book which is the main thing I really liked about book one.

All in all definitely a series to watch out for if you haven't started it which in my opinion gets stronger as the story goes on. I cannot wait for book three now
