

Day Dreamer

Thanya Olenyk

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(308pp)

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Day Dreamer is a familiar love story between a human girl and a mythical being.

A vampire lover and a mysterious man fall hard for each other in Thanya Olenyk's young adult novel *Day Dreamer*.

Evangeline is talented at keeping her life together. She has loving parents, keeps her body strong with regular exercise, does well in school, and has a busy social calendar. She's ready for college and the new starts that it will bring. But then she meets Gabriel, a goth, at a local bar; the son of one of her professors, he's mysterious, and she can't stop thinking about him. She feels a magnetic, energetic pull to him that she's never experienced before.

Gabriel, in turn, takes to Evangeline, charmed by her fascination with vampires and her life philosophies. But their burgeoning love story is interrupted when Gabriel disappears, citing a family emergency. Evangeline is sent into a tailspin, feeling that her once perfectly curated world is falling down around her.

The book begins with an invitation into Evangeline's way of thinking: she is a self-proclaimed artist, and she is sure that she sees the world in a different way than many other people can. Evangeline also narrates the story that follows. However, her storytelling belies her self-perception: her descriptions of the world around her are bland, and she understands other people in stereotypical terms, dismissing them as goths, jocks, and geeks. Further, her confidence is quickly undermined when she meets Gabriel, whom she's eager to have notice her. Gabriel, in turn, validates Evangeline's perception that she is different from other girls, including the droves of beautiful women who try to win his affections.

The result is a derivative and unconvincing love story: Evangeline and Gabriel are fast to fall for each other, despite apparent obstacles; there are heavy hints that Gabriel may be extraordinary, though the particulars of what makes him unique are not confirmed. And despite the couple's heady connection, the story moves slowly, undermined by straightforward details about Evangeline's collegiate days and new friendships that distract from her thoughts of Gabriel.

The novel is light on descriptions and heavy on conversations, the latter of which are frequent—indeed, the primary vehicle for moving the story along. But people's exchanges are too formal, flattening the cast and their relationships with one another. And the story is light on action until its conclusion, which features a terrifying event that forces Evangeline into self-defense mode and sets up the novel's sequel.

A young woman navigates a budding relationship with an elusive, intriguing man in the supernatural love story *Day Dreamer*.

LEAH WEBSTER (October 11, 2022)

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