



As Shadows Fade

Colleen Gleason

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Vampires have met their match with Victoria Gardella, but now the huntress faces an even greater evil as London is besieged by malevolent entities no mortal was ever meant to encounter...

Directly descended from the very first vampire hunter in the Gardella family, Victoria knows she must continue the lineage so humanity will have protectors against the undead. While Sebastian Vioget appears to both the perfect warrior and lover to ensure the Gardella Legacy, Victoria cannot forget Max Pesaro--the former slayer still haunted by the vampire queen Lilith's obsession with him.

But it is Lilith's obsession that may save all of humanity. Demons, enemies of both mortals and the undead, have found their way to earth. To defeat them, vampires and slayers must fight side by side. But Lilith wants Max in return for her cooperation--a small price for the world, but too high a price for Victoria.

As Shadows Fade Details

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Author : Colleen Gleason

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From Reader Review As Shadows Fade for online ebook

JAIME says

2 stars. Because I fkn hate love triangles. Especially where one party becomes so wronged that they are a shadow of their former selves. How am I supposed to identify or root for a person who practically showed no remorse in destroying another?

The story may have been quite okay otherwise.

Mary says

I still have questions! Will read the next ones in the spinoff.

Romanticamente Fantasy says

Eccoci arrivati all'ultimo capitolo della saga dei Gardella, anzi penultimo, dato che l'autrice ha scritto anche una novella su Max, che leggerò a breve.

Per me è stato un colpo al cuore, un susseguirsi di colpi di scena.

È uno di quei libri che ti tengono incollata dalla prima all'ultima pagina e vorresti leggere, leggere, leggere e continuare farlo all'infinito, dimenticandoti di tutto e tutti, anche della padella sul fuoco, ma allo stesso tempo vorresti che non finisse mai. Uno di quei libri che, giunti al termine, ti strappano il cuore per poi rimetterlo al suo posto con l'ultima parola, uno di quelli che ricorderai tra i più belli mai letti di quel genere e, soprattutto, uno di quei volumi che ti fa scrivere una recensione di getto, senza nemmeno pensare alle parole.

Qui la lotta tra bene e male giunge al termine, è l'epilogo di tutto e di tutti, è la fase finale dove i giochi avranno una conclusione e dove gli intrecci di odio e amore troveranno un lieto fine.

Vedremo una Victoria sempre più impavida, che mette davanti il dovere di Illa Gardella, il capo di tutti i Cacciatori, ma che, con un moto di istinto, segue il suo cuore, dopo aver combattuto lotte interiori e fisiche per tutto il corso della storia. Vedremo un Max che finalmente prende la sua decisione, ai più conosciuta o sperata, e un Sebastian che si immolerà per la buona causa.

Le scene erotiche, seppur minori in questo ultimo capitolo, non sono mai volgari o pesanti, ma sempre perfettamente dosate e descritte.

La Gleason ha creato una storia e dei personaggi davvero formidabili e ben caratterizzati, ti affezioni a ognuno di loro e allo stesso tempo li odi tutti, a volte vorresti prenderli a sberle, ma allo stesso tempo li ami per le scelte che prendono... perché in fondo sono loro che ne portano il peso, non la scrittrice stessa, vivono la storia e non se la fanno imporre da nessuno!

“Non volevo amarti, ma non posso evitarlo. Non voglio stare senza di te, ma lo farò Victoria! Maledizione! Non voglio che succeda di nuovo. Non metterò ancora a repentaglio la tua vita. Così deve essere.”

Maljka - per RFS

Shelley says

Rating: 4.0 stars

Setting: London in the Victorian Age

As Shadows Fade is the last book in the Gardella Vampire Chronicles that has followed Victoria Gardella Grantworth De Lacy, Illa Gardella of the Venators, as well as Maximillan Pesaro, and Sebastian Vioget. The story picks up two weeks after the conclusion of When Twilight Burns when Max finally admits his feelings for Victoria.

We have followed Victoria over the course of this series, or for two years of her life. We watch as she is told by her great-aunt Eustacia that she is the heir to the Gardella family legacy, and a Venator (vampire hunter.) We watched as she was nearly turned by Beauregard into a vampire, as well as her overwhelming sadness at watching her husband Phillip be turned into a vampire by Lilith, then having to kill him..POOF! I shall miss the poofing.

As we raise the curtain on this story, Victoria is now focused on the fact that she has actually picked the man who she really loves, and to some readers, like me, it wasn't all that surprising. Oh sure, Sebastian played his charm card over and over again with Victoria, but he is a playboy who I never saw settling down with Victoria. We knew that Max had feelings for Victoria since the beginning after he watched Victoria slay her own vampire turned husband. The only thing that remained left undone, was Max's connection to the vampire queen Lilith the Dark. That was taken care of when he gave up his powers.

In this, the final story, it's not the vampires who are causing all the problems. It's Demons. Or as Wayren states nicely, those who fell after following Lucifer's attempt to overthrow heaven. These demons appear as dark smoke, not as individuals. Wayren actually plays a small part in this story as well, since the demons seem intent on harming her. Then, of course, there is the fact that we actually find out what Wayren is. Wayren has been the keeper of the Venator library, as well as the person who records, and holds many of their secrets. She is also (view spoiler). It is Wayren that tells Max that he has to become a Venator once again in order to stop Lilith and protect Victoria.

In the final scheme of things, this book was pretty good and a fitting ending for the series overall. We got to look at the fight between the demons and vampires that has bone back since the beginning after Judas turned Lilith into a vampire. The loose end that is Lilith, was tied up nicely, as well as a shocking surprise that centers fully on Sebastian and his so called prophecy that Wayren somehow already knew about.(view spoiler)

The biggest surprise of the story and the series as well? (view spoiler) All I can say is...whoa! Didn't see that coming! The only sadness I have is that the series has ended. I love this setting, and the characters. Yes, at times, Victoria can be a handful and not all that bright at not running into danger when she supposedly knows better. Still wondering if there will ever be a spin off that follows Sebastian's path to America. One can only hope.

Romance Novel TV says

Reviewed by Kati Dancy for Romance Novel TV

Publisher: Penguin

5 stars out of 5

Look, I'm a fan of Colleen Gleason. A big one — frankly, with extremely good reason. In the Gardella Vampire Chronicles she has created a singular heroine, Lady Victoria Gardella Grantworth, who is both a lady of ton and, more importantly, Illa Gardella, the leader of the Venators — those who are chosen to battle the vampires who prey on humankind, generally without anyone being the wiser for it. In the past four books, we've watched Victoria make her debut in society (while ingeniously wearing stakes in her hair), marry, become a widow, lose several people close to her, kill vampires, save the world a couple of times, and *most* importantly, find herself drawn to two intriguing, dynamic men who are vastly different, and yet each with their own appeal. Sebastian Vioget is a Venator, one who has had a very close relationship with Victoria, even as his loyalties have been called into question in past books. Maxamillion Pesaro was a Venator, who had to give up his powers due to his complicated and frightening past with Lillith, the Vampire Queen. Max is a cranky, headstrong, dominating man who has clashed many, many times with Victoria about almost any topic you can think of. Victoria is drawn to both, as are fans of the series. There is a pronounced divide between the fans. They tend to fall into one of two camps: Team Sebastian or Team Max. I'll say nothing about the love triangle except that at the end of *When Twilight Burns* (book 4 in the series), Victoria made a choice between the two men. The choice is far more fleshed out in this book.

The events of *As Shadows Fade* precipitate several major revelations about the series. First, we finally learn about Wayren, the seemingly all knowing advisor of the Venators. We learn about her history and where she came from, and about her calling to assist the Venators in their mission. We also have an opportunity to witness the Trial, which is the admission of a Venator into the ranks. We revisit Max's twisted relationship with Lillith, and in fact have the opportunity to see her in her lair. But most importantly, we find that the world has a new menace, demons. The demons have been escaping Hell through a minute crack in the seal between the two worlds. If you thought the vampires were bad, they've got nothing on the demons. One of the first things the demons do is kidnap Wayren. As Victoria, Max and Sebastian work together to rescue her, they also learn that they must travel to Prague to find a magical orb that has the power to seal the crack. They are told that they must collect five rings that allow the wearer to plunge their hands into an enchanted pool where the orb is located. There's one big problem, Lillith is in possession of two of the rings, meaning that Max must go back and face the Vampire Queen who has an inextricable tie to him. Will Max be able to get the rings back so that the Venators may save the world? Was Victoria's choice at the end of book 4 the one she sticks with? Will fans of the series be pleased with the series conclusion?

As Shadows Fade ranks right up with *The Rest Falls Away* as my favorite of the entire series. We've come to know these characters so well at this point, and the tension between the love triangle is magnificently written. Gleason manages to dole out information seamlessly so you can't even really pause in shock over the bomb she's just dropped because the action is barreling forward at such an exciting pace. The final book enriches the ties between the characters and allows us to see more deeply into the male protagonists' minds, which is a treat. The book is perfectly paced with intimate moments and incredibly exciting action scenes which will have you turning pages as quickly as possible.

As a long time fan of the series, I couldn't have been more satisfied with the ending, as every question about I ever had and every wish I had for the characters was addressed. If you are a fan of the series, I can't recommend *As Shadows Fade* enough. If you're new to the series, you should absolutely start at the beginning, *The Rest Falls Away*, in order to truly appreciate the evolution of Victoria as a character. *As Shadows Fade* is a perfectly written close to a series that I have loved and yes, obsessed a bit over. I will miss the Venators terribly and can only hope that one day we have an opportunity to visit their world again.

This is the fifth and final book in the Gardella Vampire Chronicles. It did a nice job of tying things up and resolving the main story. I really enjoyed the characters, the action, and the plot involving the evil Lilith.

All of the characters we have come to know and love are here in this book. There is lots of Sebastian, Max, Lilith, and Victoria. They must hunt for the five rings of Jubei in order to obtain an orb of Lilith's that will allow them to send the demons back home.

There is a lot of angst between Max and Victoria in this book. Max doesn't want to be involved with Victoria because he feels that his human status will put her in danger and make it so that he can't protect her like he should. Victoria knows that Max loves her and is unwilling to give up that love for something safer. There are lots of deliciously tense scenes between these two and they have excellent chemistry together. Really these interactions really made the book and they are what we've all been waiting for from book 1!

I felt very bad for Sebastian throughout. Victoria has made her choice clear, but Sebastian refuses to give up. He goes the extra mile again and again for Victoria trying to grab her attention. He truly and strongly believes that Max is unfeeling and uncaring and totally not worthy of Victoria. We learn a lot about the tension and history between Sebastian and Max in this book as well. Sebastian's story is the only one that is really left at loose ends.

I love the quest-type feel to the story as well and how our heroes have to hunt down these strange objects. Adding to the plot is the idea of Victoria being the last Gardella and how she has a duty to continue the Gardella line. It was interesting to watch her try to cope with the idea of her having a child with her current duties as a Venator.

There are some excellent action scenes where Max, Sebastian, and Victoria all fight back to back in some wonderfully demonic battles. As with previous books this book continues to remind me of a Victorian Buffy the Vampire Slayer...with more adult sex scenes.

This book was a fun and quick read. It was engaging and entertaining and did a wonderful job wrapping up the series. The only loose end really is Sebastian's story. Imagine my excitement when I heard that Sebastian's story will be continued in a spin-off series starting with Roaring Midnight, which released on June 18th!

Overall a very well done and satisfying conclusion to this series. I love the interactions between Victoria and Max and enjoyed learning the history between Max and Sebastian. There are some excellent action scenes as well and I enjoyed the quest-like feel to the plot. The addition of demons added a whole new level of danger to the story too. This whole series is recommended to fans of vampire slaying stories that have a bit of romance in them. I absolutely cannot wait to read Sebastian's story in Roaring Midnight!

Megan says

This is book 5, also the final book, in the Gardella Vampire Chronicles. I am sad to see this series come to an end, but I felt that it was wrapped up fairly successfully with most major questions answered. However, I still had a few questions I think Ms. Gleason did her best to answer. But, there were a couple questions that were left a little too ambiguously for me. For instance, what EXACTLY is Sebastian Vioget's roll as a Venator now that he's a vampire. Ms. Gleason eludes to the fact that Wayren (who we now know is an angel) will be leaving the Venators and they will now have Sebastian as a guide since he knows many things about a vampire. Sebastian it seems wants to go to America with the Venator Michalas. However, above takes place at the end of the book, I seem to be getting ahead of myself.

In this installment we learn who Victoria wants to be with, which we pretty much knew from the end of book 4, but this book confirms it. Victoria and Max Pesaro are in love. Max, though, has lost his Venator status. They all have to travel to Prague because they learn that The Midiverse Portal is open, and demons are streaming through it. In order to close it they have to don The Five Rings of Jubai (of which they have three, Lilith has the other two) and put their hand into a pool on Muntii Fagaras which in it contains Tached's Orb- which can seal the Portal when moonlight streams through the orb onto the Portal. So, they all set off. Max

decides to go through the Trial to become a Venator again, so he can be useful and harder to kill. He has to fast, pray, and not sleep for three days. At the end of the third day is when he is locked in a room with a vampire and has to kill it. But, during the battle he has to swipe the vampire's blood on his *vis bulla*. Of course, this is Max, and he succeeds.

Max leaves in the middle of the night (without Victoria's knowledge) with Sebastian to go to Lilith, Queen of the Vampires, and Judas Iscariot's daughter, to trade himself for the last 2 rings. Lilith agrees to the trade and tells Max that she will turn him into a vampire, but he had been drinking holy water, so she has to wait until that is out of his system to turn him. Sebastian leaves with the rings; he (and a very upset) and Victoria go to the pool and Sebastian puts on the rings and gets the Tached's Orb. However, Sebastian feels a pyramid object in the pool and puzzles at it, but we, the reader, never finds out what it is. After they have the orb the rings become fused with Sebastian's fingers and can't come off. The next night Victoria goes to the Portal to close it, which succeeds. During the battle she comes across Max, who she mistakes for a demon at first. Sebastian had left to go to Lilith to trade himself and the Five Rings for Max's freedom. Sebastian believes that this is a prophesy that he read and if he does it he believes it will save his first Giulia's soul. Giulia was Max's sister who Sebastian had to kill after she became a vampire. After the Portal is closed Max, Victoria, and a few other Venators go to save Sebastian.

A demon had told Victoria that the way to kill Lilith was to use a virgin Ash stake that is still so new it's green. Of course, she doesn't know if he is telling the truth or not, but it was worth a shot. They all battle into her layer. Victoria finds Sebastian, who is now a vampire, after a long struggle kills Lilith. Fortunately, Sebastian hasn't drunk human blood, so he is not damned. Wayren appears and basically tells everyone that Sebastian saved Giulia's soul, even though nothing magical happens. Michalas goes and gets an animal so Sebastian can drink its blood. Max learns that Victoria is carrying his child and so they get married. They eventually return to London to be a part of Lady Melly's (Victoria's mom) wedding. She marries the new, and older, Marques of Rockley.

Ms. Gleason has three new historical vampire novels coming out in 2011. They are non-Gardella... but the question is... is it going to be about Sebastian and his HEA? I sure hope so. I want to know what happens to him, and what that pyramid object was in the pool on Muntii Fagaras...

Zeek says

The most romantic of Colleen Gleason's Gardella Chronicles* As Shadows Fade is the 5th and last, according to the author.

The book begins just weeks after the fourth novel in the series, When Twilight Burns, and ties the entire set of novels together with an ending that made me sigh in satisfaction.

Victoria, Illa Gardella and Vampire Slayer extraordinaire, has finally made her choice in the infamous Max/Sebastian/Victoria love triangle. In addition, the action remains on point as we finally get to the end of an arching thread that's run throughout the series- that is the end of Lilith, Queen of the Vamps.

Much of ASF is Victoria dealing with her choices, and getting the men in her life to line up with them, as well as dealing with the evil that has arisen around her. Rather than just Lilith and her band of vamps, there is a menacing force of demons popping up and it is Victoria's job to figure out why and how to deal with them once and for all.

Which of course she does- with the help of the venators (demon/vamp slayers to you and me) and Wayren, a wise source of knowledge who first appeared few books back. (And yes it is finally revealed exactly who, or more accurately what, Wayren is!).

Danger is all about them once again but its nothing they can't handle and though the plotting and action in ASF is as tight as always- it's the romance that will grab you!

By far my favorite of the series, mostly because I couldn't be more pleased with who Victoria chooses- (Really, was there ever any other choice for her?)- ASF gets a 4.5 out of 5 from me!

Tammie King says

Roxanne of Night Owl Romance
4.5 / 5 Hearts - Reviewer Top Pick

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Online at: <http://www.nightowlromance.com/nightow...>

The final book in the Gardella Vampire Chronicles, *As Shadows Fade*, opens with Victoria trying to figure out how to deal with her new "relationship" with Max. At the end of *When Twilight Burns* Victoria and Max declared their feelings for each other in a passionate way. Max admitted he loved Victoria, but couldn't be with her and left her there...alone...stricken and trying to decipher what the hell had just happened.

Now Victoria is trying to coax Max back into her bed, gently as she doesn't want to spook him or he'll run far, far away as he tends to do. She wants him to be with her and forget the troubles and everything that entails though how can anyone forget Victoria is Illa Gardella and Max is a Venator without his powers. They each constantly have to worry about each other getting killed.

While Max and Victoria are dealing with their issues, the threat of evil has them once again fighting for their lives and for mankind, but this time not only do they have to fight vampires they have to fight...demons. That's bad. And to make matters worse they have to team up with the Queen of the Vampires, Lilith. So not good since she has an unnatural obsession with Max. Max chooses to go through the Trial to become a Venator again and Victoria is afraid he won't survive or if he does that will only make him more appealing to Lilith.

Ever present Sebastian is still pining away for Victoria not wanting to accept that she has made her choice with Max. Poor Sebastian is also dreaming about his past that he can't get away from, Giulia, Max's sister turned vampire that he had to stake.

Things are complicated and not looking good for any of the Venators. It doesn't look like Max will ever accept a relationship with Victoria if they even survive the ordeal at hand. And Sebastian seems to be slipping away into a place that does not bode well for him.

I am sad to see the Gardella Chronicles end. Even though I am a vampire fan it didn't bother me that Gleason's vampires are all bad guys, no exceptions. Gleason has always made a very clear distinction between good and bad, right and wrong, evil and not evil in this series. Too bad life isn't so clearly defined, but it worked for Victoria and the Venators...until this final book where Gleason seems to break her own rules and pushes the limits she set in her world of vampires and Venators. An interesting way to go out with

a bang.

The main outcome of *As Shadows Fade* is what I expected though the twists and turns along the way had me wondering if it was actually going to happen, there were some close calls and some oh no's throughout the story that left me guessing and second guessing for awhile. Some of the story twists left me saying "wow, I didn't see that coming". A few things happened that were not expected at all. But there were also a few things left hanging, the prism in the pool, and Giulia...I might have to reread the end because I am unclear about her soul. And I can't believe how Sebastian finally manned up to his duties but what he did...it really blurs the lines that Gleason had so finitely drawn between good and evil...but Sebastian always kinda did that didn't he?

Gleason penned an amazing tale that kept me turning the page wanting to know how it was going to end. *As Shadows fade* was a fabulous book to finish off the series, I just hate saying goodbye to Victoria she was a wonderful character.

The Flooze says

A fitting end to an exciting series. As Victoria, Max, and Sebastian engage in their final battles, the tension is at an all-time high. Gleason's ability to switch between character perspectives with ease grants the reader an enlightening and thorough knowledge of everyone's emotions and motivations. We feel their anguish and confusion, their passion and panic as they deal with human, demonic, and vampiric temptations.

The end, though bittersweet in some ways, is also ultimately appropriate. For those obsessed with HEAs, you'll have some satisfaction. For those who don't like things wrapped all too neatly, you, too, will have your dash of trepidation to make things feel more realistic.

Still, despite feeling pleased with Gleason's wrap-up, I'm sad to have the series come to end. It leaves off at a logical place in the characters' lives, but I could easily see the potential for a spin-off and I do hope Gleason plans one.

Heather *Awkward Queen and Unicorn Twin* says

[I haven't shipped Max and Victoria since the first book. I didn't know enough about him then to realize what an ass he was. Back then, he was just mysterio

Yvonne (bookishpanda) says

As Shadows Fade is the fifth book and also the conclusion to the *Gardella Vampire Chronicles*. It has benn quite a while since I read the other four books of the series but the author did a great job at "explaining" everything that previously happened so I was up to date without looking anything up.

Our main character is Victoria, also known as *Illa Gardella*, and she's a vampire hunter. In this last

installment she finally wants to rid the world of the vampire queen Lilith with a little help of Max Pesaro, Sebastian Vioget and two other Venators. She has to make some difficult decisions ... and yes, even the one we're dying to know since the beginning - who will she choose - Max or Sebastian?

I, for myself, am okay with her decision. I won't spoil anything but you're either in Max' Team or in Sebastian's, although I really liked both characters. **Sebastian Vioget** is charming, cheeky but totally different to the first books. He's now a fierce Venator and tries to protect "his" people and - for me - he has grown the most. When I think back to who he was at first and now ... there's so much more to him than any other character, in my opinion. Yes, I'm Team Sebastian. I love him to pieces!

That's also why my heart broke for him in this book. Like, so much. We knew what plagued him, what scared him and what helped him through various situations. The decisions he made were hard and sacrificing and I admire him for his strength. He did all those things to protect his loved ones and even the ones he couldn't stand at first. There's just so much good about him. *sigh*

I also think that **Max Pesaro** is a great man, so I totally get why Victoria couldn't really decide. Although he's somewhat different to Vioget he's probably also the safest choice. He's protective, brave, devoted and in his presence you just have to feel safe. I also really liked him in this book because we finally got some emotions out of him! He was always this reserved guy when it came to his feelings, I'm glad it changed a bit because I really needed to know.

Victoria is as badass as ever. I always liked that she's a strong, independent woman and knows how to fight. She never let anyone push her around and always made her own decisions, no matter how stupid they were. She had to go through a lot but in the end that only made her stronger. Plus, she's also funny and sarcastic which is damn awesome!

The ending is ... well, satisfying although I wished there would have been a bit more answers. I have more questions now than when I started the book but overall it was a good, thrilling conclusion with lots of action. So, if you've already read this far you should definitely pick up the last book and complete the series! It's really worth it and I enjoyed the majority of the book - the ones with Sebastian the most, of course. :P

www.aworldbetweenfoldedpages.blogspot.com

Carole (Carole's Random Life in Books) says

This review can also be found at Carole's Random Life in Books.

I ended up liking this book quite a lot. I have really had a great time with this vampire hunter series set in the Regency period and I was eager to see how everything would wrap up in this final installment. I had some ideas about where things might go in this book and I wasn't completely wrong but there were more than a few surprises worked in along the way as well. I am pretty satisfied with how everything came to an end.

Demons are making their way into the world. Demons are a danger not only to humans but vampires also have a lot to lose with their increased presence. Demons are hard to fight and even harder to overcome. There are a few special items that could help in defeating this enemy but in order to use them, Victoria and the other vampire hunters must enlist the help of one of their greatest enemies, Lilith, the vampire queen. I couldn't wait to see how things would finally wrap up with this master vampire and seeing the members of the group working with her was intense. She has had such a unique hold over Max throughout the series and I knew that things would get exciting when the vampire hunters were finally able to deal with her.

The characters in this series are really well done. The group of vampire hunters were on the road for much of this book so there were not quite so many characters throughout the book as some of the other books. Victoria has become such a strong leader and is willing to sacrifice if that is what is required of her. I do like the fact that she does still want things for herself and actively works to make those things happen. Max has been through a lot over the course of the story and he takes on another huge obstacle in this installment. He has proven that he will do whatever it takes to help make the world a safer place. Sebastian has also changed throughout the series. He isn't as afraid to show how much he cares and actively pursues what he wants in this installment. He is also a very brave man that can be very honorable when given the opportunity.

My one complaint about this book was the love triangle that took center stage at the start of the book. I really wish that this element to the story would have just been left out. One love interest was more than enough in my opinion. The love triangle was really set up in the previous installment in the series but this was where things were really dealt with. Victoria knows what she wants and doesn't waver in that decision which I really appreciated. I was pretty sure how the romantic element of the story would pan out before I ever started reading this book and I was right for the most part. The way that story worked out in the end made the whole triangle make a lot more sense to me and I was really satisfied with how everything turned out.

I would recommend this series to others. This is the fifth and final installment in a series that really does have to be read in order since each book builds on the last. I have had such a great time watching this group of characters change and learn to work as a team to make the world a safer place. I definitely plan to read more from Gleason very soon.

Initial Thoughts

I ended up liking this one. At the start of the book, I was a bit disappointed that the focus seemed to be almost entirely on Victoria's romantic life. I would have been happy to just leave the whole love triangle thing out of this series. The book did get back to the vampire hunting action I wanted to see and there were a few surprising revelations. All in all this was an exiting story.

Katie(babs) says

As Shadow's Fade is the final book in Colleen Gleason's outstanding Gardella Vampire Chronicles. This Victorian Paranormal series has great action, suspense, drama and romance. The hardest part for an author must be writing the final book in a series they have invested so much work and emotion into. The same goes for the reader.

This is a bittersweet review on my part because not only did I have absolute joy in reading about an amazing heroine in Victoria Gardella, Grantworth de Lacy, but had wonderful discussions with my fellow bloggers about the series. I also had some great conversations with Colleen who has so much to give the publishing world in the next years to come.

The hardest part about writing a review for As Shadows Fade is the big spoiler in the book of who does Victoria ends up with? Is it that seductive yet naughty Sebastian Voget who showed Victoria such incredible passion or is it Maximilian Pesaro, Victoria's fellow Venator who pushes her away even though he longs to hold her in his embrace? Most of you may know that Colleen's fans are either on Team Sebastian or Team Max. I am a Team Sebastian girl, whereas Kati from Adventures in Katidom is in Max's corner. She and I would share countless emails about why we think our man of choice is perfect for Victoria. In As Shadows Fade, Victoria does end up with one of them. That is one of the joys in reading this latest from Colleen. After all the heartache and loss Victoria has gone through, Colleen has allowed Victoria to have some fun. She had a small taste of joy from her husband, who she had to kill in the first book, The Rest Falls Away, because he

became a vampire. Now that Victoria is a little bit wiser and more mature, she is no longer a girl experiencing love for the first time. She is a woman who wants passion and everything that comes with it. She wants a man she can love with her whole heart and soul and who will love her in return.

When Victoria and her man of choice decide to be with each other, it is a great thing. Victoria is one happy lady throughout *As Shadows Fade*. This is the most sexual of all the books in this series. After all the hard work Victoria has done, she is given her reward, so to speak. Yup, Victoria has a great deal of sex. She has tender lovemaking, fast passionate nookie, and one such scene at an inn where the walls shake. Her lover is one feisty and lusty fellow.

I have to say that the love triangle between Sebastian, Victoria and Max is so well written. Colleen wrote it in such a way that whichever man Victoria chose, it would have worked. By the end of *When Twilight Burns*, it is pretty much a given who Victoria wants to spend her life with. Sebastian is the man who her body responds to, while Max is the man of her heart.

Even though the romance is an important part in *As Shadows Fade*, the other is defeating the evil vampire queen Lillith who has been a thorn in both Victoria and Max's side. Lillith is to blame for Max's angst, which made me give him the nickname Broody Max. In the past, Victoria had to work hard to defeat her enemy. Now in *As Shadows Fade* it is Max who must overcome those obstacles in order to save his life. He is nothing unless he is a Venator, just as Victoria is. Max is given the ultimate test where if he doesn't succeed he will perish.

Not only are there vampires to deal with, but demons that also have their own reasons for destroying Lillith and her followers. Will Victoria work with one evil side to defeat the other?

As Shadows Fade is a most excellent book. Perhaps it is because I have been on a serious Urban Fantasy glom, but I felt *As Shadows Fade* was a great Historical Urban Fantasy if there can be such a thing. Again, when it comes to Urban Fantasy, it all comes down to the strong "kick-ass" heroine. Victoria is definitely this. She has become a leader and the ultimate fighter who even though has backup, doesn't necessarily need it.

Colleen made sure to end everything perfectly and that elusive HEA has become a reality for Victoria. Colleen gives Victoria everything she has ever wanted, as well as her readers.

As Shadows Fade will be placed in my top 10 book list for 2009. This is an outstanding, well written book. It ends a series that I am so happy to have read. If you haven't read Colleen Gleason's *Gardella Vampire Chronicles*, you should.
