



Captivate

Vanessa Garden

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In a glittering underwater world, nothing is as it seems...

For the past twelve months since her parents' death, seventeen-year-old Miranda Sun has harboured a dark secret — a secret that has strained the close relationship she once shared with her older sister, Lauren. In an effort to repair this broken bond, Miranda's grandparents whisk the siblings away on a secluded beach holiday. Except before Miranda gets a chance to confess her life-changing secret, she's dragged underwater by a mysterious stranger while taking a midnight swim.

Awakening days later, Miranda discovers that she's being held captive in a glittering underwater city by an arrogant young man named Marko...the King of this underwater civilisation.

Nineteen-year-old Marko intends to marry Miranda in order to keep his crown from falling into the sinister clutches of his half-brother, Damir. There's only one problem. Miranda is desperate to return home to right things with her sister and she wants nothing to do with Marko. Trying to secure her freedom, Miranda quickly forms an alliance with Robbie — Marko's personal guard. However, she soon discovers that even underwater, people are hiding dangerous secrets...

Captivate Details

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From Reader Review Captivate for online ebook

Gina - Behind the Pages says

Review: Captivate (Submerged Sun #1) by Vanessa Garden Thanks to Harlequin Australia for sending me a copy for reviewCaptivating; the one word that perfectly describes this book from start to finish.4.5....I absolutely fell in love with this book. Everything picks up straight away and we get thrown into life in Marin. Garden creates a stunning underwater world.We first learn about Miranda and her life in Aus. I can instantly imagine her grandparents shack as well as the surrounds. Miranda is such an easy to like character, and we instantly connect with her. We get thrown into a whirlwind of emotion when she gets taken, we are as angry and confused as she is when she wakes up. Our feelings already in-sync with hers, even though we are just a few chapters into the novel! And no matter how much we want Miranda to get home, we too, are falling in love with Marin and everything in it! When we see Marin for the first time, I was awe-struck. This was nothing that I was expecting. I was thinking that the people of Marin were some paranormal kind of creature, but nope, think again, and prepare to be amazed at what the reality is!This isn't like other books where we only agree with some of what the main character is doing or saying. Even with her jealousy of her sister, Lauren, I instantly relate to Miranda about not being noticed compared to her sister. It is so easy to relate to this feeling, because it could be towards anyone, friend or sibling, so we know exactly how Miranda feels.I honestly didn't predict anything in this book, EXCEPT THAT SILVIA IS EVIL!! (ok, this isn't even confirmed yet. *anxiously waiting for next book*), it kept me on my toes and the middle-ending of the book kept me on the edge of my seat!Even though there is no actual love triangle in this book, I am horrified to say that I kind of made it one. I LOVE ROBBIE!! There, I said it. From the start, I was cheering for him. But! Just as Miranda starts to fall for Marko, I do too!! I can't believe this is happening, because I want Miranda & Robbie! I got so frustrated because of my conflicting emotions, even though nothing was happening between Miranda & Robbie, I wish it did. At the end, I start questioning my feelings. Marko is amazing too! I don't know what is happening to me, you all know how much I hate love triangles! Somebody virtually slap me.There are some secrets that Miranda hides from her sister, and this keeps us on edge, because we get so close to finding out through the book, but then, when we find it all out in the end and it's a little of a disappointment. All the build up to this and it's not even a dramatic thing. I don't go 'oh!!', or even become shocked from it. But the ending is all about sisterhood, and it makes us feel like we want a connection like that to our own siblings. This is the only reason why I haven't rated this book a 5!When I said before that this book is captivating, I was not joking around. Once you finish this book, you sit back, sigh, and go WOW! Not really 'wow', as in explosive, but in an 'I can't believe all that just happened' kind of way. It is only when you finish this book that, I think this really sinks in. You don't realize the potential of the next book until that last chapter. It completely sets the next book in the series, and I can't wait!!

Sabrina says

Checkout my full review on my blog!! <http://omgbooksandmorebooks.blogspot....>

Everything about this book is unique. The world building, characters, and the overall plot. This book is definitely out of the box. Though I wish there was more about the underwater world, I really enjoyed Captivate. Honestly, I picked up this book because of the cover. There is a love triangle. It did bug me at some points but I looked past it. I felt so many emotions while reading this book. I was sad for Miranda, her kidnapping, and her confusing relationship with Robbie and Marko. The premise of this book is emotional. Miranda's haunted past and Marko's underwater world in the brink of extinction. The ending really broke my heart. I can't wait for book 2.

Aussie bookworm says

The Plot

Miranda has a terrible secret, everyone around her dies.

Miranda and her sister go for a midnight swim, her life is changed forever when a stranger drags her into an underwater city.

Miranda is kept Captive and told that the fate of the city is resting on her shoulders, the women of Marin have become barren, and they need someone who is fertile to marry their young handsome King to produce a heir to the throne.

The Romance

A Love Triangle that is so up and down that you have no Idea which team to go for.

Miranda struggles as a captive, as you would expect, but while the handsome King tries to woo her and make her feel comfortable in the underwater city, she is given the Kings most trustworthy and personal best friend as her guard not necessarily to keep her locked up like you would think but to ensure her safety. As they are forced to spend time together Robbie and Miranda become close and develop feelings for each other, Miranda uses this to convince Robbie that he needs to help her escape.

Meanwhile King Marko is a Frustrated, Cranky and brooding (but he has good reason for it since his brother is trying to overthrow him and his people are suffering being unable to have children.)

Marko tries to get to know Miranda without pushing her into a loveless relationship he tries to befriend her and in the process falls in love with her, Miranda has feelings in return but are conflicted because she is being held captive.

For once instead of going for the moody bad boy I am firmly on Team Robbie, although Marko is only trying to do what is best for his people he has a habit of acting like a child.

The Good

Miranda lives her life in the shadow of her beautiful sister, which makes her very insecure and lacking self confidence, Marko makes Miranda aware that even though she isn't model thin or stunningly beautiful, she is amazing and beautiful in her own way, this is why he loves her.

Miranda is torn between her life on land and fixing her relationships with her estranged family, and a life in a glittering, beautiful underwater city with a man she is falling in love with.

The Bad

I could not pick a lot of faults with this book, it is amazingly written however a bit more emotional depth concerning Marko would have been great so I could connect better to his Character.

Conclusion

I read this book in nearly one sitting I could not put it down, so Captivate has earned it's spot on my favourite Shelf.

I have never felt so many emotions in reading a book, the heartbreak of Miranda's family situation to her kidnapping and the up and down confusing relationship between Marko, Robbie and Miranda, make Captivate a truly memorable original story.

Captivate is from an Amazing Debut Australian Author, I highly recommend it and I cannot wait for the story to continue.

Coco.V says

FREE on Amazon today (11/17/2017)!

Naomi says

Captivate was an exciting tale that totally took me by surprise. I was expecting a mermaid tale, but it had a different twist to it. Imagine a city, deep in the ocean, where humans first moved to at their own free will. It was amazing, beautiful and sweet.

Miranda was swimming with her sister when she was taken to this city, Marin. She was basically kidnapped and held against her will. The longer she stayed there though, the more she became to like it, but it came at a price. Her feelings were thrown into jeopardy and in the end she was torn between the family that she left at home and the new friends and family she was forming in Marin.

Miranda, being only 16 has been through a lot of heart ache and when she was bought to Marin and she couldn't believe her luck. She managed to get through each day though and I thought that she became stronger every day. She comes across as quite a strong character and doesn't shy away from telling people what she really thinks. When she breaks down it is usually behind closed doors.

There are two guys that become close to her and have the potential to steal her heart and I found it hard to choose which one I liked the most. Marko, the king of Marin or his best friend and guard, Robbie who was also her kidnapper. I liked both boys and they both harbour feelings for Miranda in their own ways. I enjoyed watching these relationships develop as Miranda was finally able to feel more comfortable and form relationships/friendships with people.

The plot is quite exciting as there is a lot of danger threatening Marko and Miranda; Marko's fugitive brother Damir. He wants to take over Marin and is willing to do anything to get it. It was a very exciting part of the story and Miranda constantly needs to watch her back. I enjoyed Vanessa's writing style and how descriptive she was of the underwater city and I was mesmerised by the details she put into it. I am looking forward to see what happens next, after that thrilling ending.

I received a copy of this book from Harlequin Australia in exchange for an honest review.

Vanessa Garden says

It's New Year's Eve, the eve of Captivate's official release date so I thought I'd pop in and wish you all a fantastic New Year with much love, laughter and prosperity!

It has been a long road to publication, but an enjoyable one. Getting Captivate published with my dream publisher, Harlequin Teen Australia, and getting to share Miranda's story with you all is an absolute dream come true.

I hope you enjoy reading Captivate. I love reading reviews and I'd like to thank readers and reviewers in advance for taking the time out to read and/or post your thoughts here on Goodreads.

Have an amazing 2014!!!

Vanessa xoxo

Rochelle says

It was the gorgeous cover that drew me to Captivate, and underwater worlds have always fascinated me, so I just had to read this book. The underwater world in this book was different than I expected, with it's own unique twist.

Miranda is kidnapped and forced to live in this underwater world. She is told she is to marry the king, Marko. Miranda is determined to be free, trying to escape anyway she can. She is guarded by Robbie, a handsome boy not much older than her. She becomes close to him, hoping he will like her enough to let her go.

Robbie is like a brother to the king, loyal to him, but despite this, he finds himself softening towards Miranda.

Marko is handsome and also not much older than Miranda. He is just as opposed to the union as Miranda, but he will do what he must to save his kingdom. He and Miranda clash at every meeting, until they start to really get to know each other.

But Miranda is not safe, no one can be trusted. The king's brother has spies in the palace and he will not stop until he has Miranda.

Achingly romantic, Captivate will take your heart to places you never expected. It has many twists and turns that will keep you eagerly turning the pages, especially towards the end as the action intensifies. The ending will leave you on the edge of your seat and I can't wait to dive into the next book(thankfully I have a copy.) Captivate was a captivating ya romantic thriller that I would highly recommend.

Shannon (Giraffe Days) says

It's been a year since seventeen-year-old Miranda Sun's parents were killed in a terrible car accident, but she's still harbouring a secret guilt that has damaged her relationship with her older, beautiful sister Lauren. That January, when their grandparents take them to the family shack by the beach at Bob's Bay for two

weeks of summer holiday, Miranda is finally preparing herself to open up to Lauren when her situation drastically changes, and she disappears while taking a midnight swim.

Miranda is caught by a stranger, dragged underwater and kidnapped. She wakes, days later and still groggy from the drugs that helped transport her, in a very strange place. Completely alone and scared, Miranda is slowly introduced to the mysterious underwater city of Marin, somewhere in the Pacific Ocean. Lit by glowing crystals, oxygenated by hidden air shafts, Marin's origins are unknown but the founder of the current civilisation, Frano Tollin, a pharmaceutical entrepreneur and explorer, speculated about an ancient civilisation that built it but died out. Now Tollin's descendents rule in his place: Marko, a young and temperamental nineteen-year-old king, and his older sister, Sylvia. But things aren't as glowing and utopian in Marin as they might seem.

Marko's older brother and Sylvia's twin, Damir, is in hiding somewhere in the city. A dark and twisted mind, Damir wants to follow in Frano Tollin's footsteps and experiment on young women in the insane attempt to create a real mermaid. Tollin's nightmarish experiments focussed on cutting women's legs open and sewing them together to form a tail, among other things, and if Damir ruled Marin the nightmares would continue. Marko has been made king in his place, but his rule is tenuous if he cannot secure an heir.

This is Marin's other problem: there are no children. No babies are born. The women who live here are infertile. Barren. And thus Sylvia's selfish plan: to capture a girl from the surface and bring her to the city to marry Marko and have his children. She sends Marko's personal guard, Robbie, to find a girl, and it's Miranda who is caught - not Lauren, her beautiful, popular older sister. When Marko learns that Miranda is not even of legal age yet, he's furious, but with the threat of being fed to the sharks, the wedding is still going ahead.

Miranda's fear turns to curiosity, but she never stops planning to escape. When she learns that the one way to the surface is accessed via Marko's suite, she decides that convincing Robbie to let her go is the only means available. But even as she befriends the young guardsman, she begins to get to know Marko and the city of Marin, and fall under its spell.

Captivate combines the old and the new in creating a romantic fantasy story that touches on gothic horror. The premise is interesting, and even though it employs many tropes that aren't original, the character of Miranda and the Garden's writing made it feel fresh. And while it looked like it was going to have a romantic triangle like so many other YA stories ("yawn"), it actually doesn't, which was very pleasing. In fact, the way the characters evolve and grow was one of the things I liked best about *Captivate* - especially Marko. He's a complex, interesting character who seems at first too obvious and one-dimensional, but who gradually becomes much more interesting and charismatic as the story progresses.

But I should talk about the book's weak points, because it is a bit of a biggie. Stories like this one hinge on the world-building, and if the world-building is shaky then everything that follows feels a bit flimsy. The problem with *Captivate* is the premise, the point of abducting Miranda in the first place and bringing her to Marin - though Marin itself was a little under-developed for me, especially in regards to how they get air, food and water, not to mention building materials, clothing etc.

The glitch is the infertility premise. A fairly common trope in speculative fiction, it can be a great motivator for action. Unfortunately, it didn't really make sense here. The entire population of Marin consists of two kinds of people: those that were born there (though no one has been born there in eighteen years), and those who are brought there. The cause of the infertility problem, they speculate, is related to being removed from the sun and moon and life cycles in general, though they don't know for sure. Only, if people are continuously - not often, but continuously over time - brought to Marin (rescued from near-drownings, or suicide attempts, mostly), then does it not follow that their population will be refreshed with fertile women? Like Miranda? Miranda was captured and brought against her will, but why not simply invite or rescue a

woman instead? They'd done it before. If Miranda was brought to Marin to have babies, then infertility does not happen straight away; therefore plenty of other women in Marin should also be able to have children. It didn't make sense, and so the whole plot was shaky because of it. If it had made more sense, with no holes in it, then it would have been quite powerful because the notion of dying civilisations and places bereft of children will always resonate with us.

The story was strongest in the development of the characters, and the novel's sense of atmosphere. There was a tantalising, uncomfortable tinge of fear to the whole story and setting that I particularly enjoyed; I wouldn't have minded a bit more of it though that might have been too much. It's that shade of menace and *dark forbidden things* to what is otherwise something of a utopia that really makes the concept work, and adds tension to the plot. You don't know who to trust, or what's really going, and the taint of Frano Tollin's plans and experiments linger. It nicely balances the fantasy and romance elements of the story, giving it maturity and extra layers.

Another strength was Miranda herself. She narrates (and not, thankfully, in present tense, might I add!) and her voice is solid. She's convincing and undergoes a gradual change influenced by her new surroundings and situation. There was chemistry between her and Marko, though it was shadowed by that sense of suspicion, distrust and uncertainty that pervades the story in general, making their relationship that bit more interesting than it might otherwise have been. She has tenacity, and balances adolescent insecurities and selfishness with a growing sense of compassion, empathy and understanding. By the end, I had grown very fond and proud of her and wanted very much to find out what happened next.

Speaking of, the ending was spot-on. In terms of: no cliffhanger, not forgetting the overall abduction plot or the people she'd left behind, and in setting the stage for a real, legitimate relationship with an abductor. In that sense, it was very satisfying, as was seeing just how much Miranda had matured by the end. I wish the world of this underwater city had been more tightly formed and explained, because if the nuts-and-bolts of the story were stronger this would have been excellent all round. As it is, I'm caught up enough in Miranda's story, and curious about what's going on in Marin, to want to read more of this new series.

My thanks to the publisher for a copy of this book.

Zuleeza says

A copy was provided by Harlequin Australia in exchange for an honest review.

BREATH TAKING UNDERWATER COVER!!!

Should've known better, right? To be fair, it wasn't particularly bad, but it was definitely strange and cliché.

The book reminded me a lot of *Cruel Beauty* by Rosamund Hodge (the 'kidnapping to be made a bride for the king' part) and *Renegade* by J.A. Souders (the 'underwater city surrounded by dark mysteries' part). Sadly, I did not like this book as much as I liked the two aforementioned books.

Captivate doesn't waste time getting to the action. By action, I mean the kidnapping (that sounds so wrong). So, we don't get to know the dynamics of Miranda's relationship with her sister and her grandparents very well. While I appreciate the 'hit the ground rolling' opening, it was hard for me to feel Miranda's desperation to go back home because I wasn't being shown the strength of her family bond. Granted, we were told that Miranda harbours a secret she's been intending to tell her sister, Lauren and she wants to seek her

forgiveness, but I think it helps if a brief details of Miranda's relationship with Lauren before their parents died was provided so that the readers can establish an emotional connection with Miranda.

Well, I was hoping for that so, so much because honestly, I did not like Lauren at all, so if only I could learn something good about her, then I could probably empathise more with Miranda and her wish to be back home. Here's Lauren's quote that irritates me so much;

Mum always used to say I had the metabolism of a racehorse- "With the stumpy body of a Shetland pony", Lauren would add with a smirk.

WHAT KIND OF OLDER SISTER TALKS TO HER YOUNGER SISTER LIKE THAT? Uh.

(view spoiler)

Alright, enough about Lauren.

At first, I found Miranda as easy to like. She is cautious and sceptical of everyone she meets in Marin. She doesn't only say she wants to go home, she takes actions - she tries to remember Marin's layout, she plans her next moves, she gets to the good side of people who might help her escape and praise da lord, she doesn't get attracted to ANY male beings in Marin although they are well, kinda hot.

At first.

mild spoilers ahead

Now, please explain me what happened from Chapter Twenty and onwards? If the book was sort of 'yeah, okay, maybe' before that, after this chapter the book just takes a sharp dive into the abyss the of the deepest hell-hole. Like, seriously. The book threw me off so badly, I was even wondering if a different author had wrote this last third of the book.

Miranda suddenly loses her ability to think straight, makes bad decisions after bad decisions. AND SHE LIES. SO.MANY.FREAKING.TIMES.

Also, she suddenly gets attracted to both Marko and to some extent, Robbie. Marko is basically the kidnapper for the first two-third of the book, and honestly, I don't think he's making any significant efforts to make Miranda likes her, so yeah, when in Chapter Twenty, they are throwing the love word all around, I was like 'whaaaaaat?'. Only after that that they are beginning to really warming up to each other. Isn't that bizarre?

Anyway, they were a few things I noticed that make this book a bit ethically questionable.

1. Stockholm Syndrome is an icky subject. And I don't think the book handles this theme really well. Captivate tries to romanticise kidnapping too much and that doesn't sit very well to me. I remember reading *Stolen by Lucy Christopher* which kinda romanticises kidnapping as well but in the end, it still hammers down the message that kidnapping is wrong. The fact that the whole city agrees to the kidnapping, that is just disturbing, no matter how desperate you are.

2. My inner feminism raged when Miranda was kidnapped (of course) and (view spoiler)

3. (view spoiler)

4. If it's feasible for Marin to trade everything for pearls, I don't understand why it's not feasible to just offer a girl to come WILLINGLY to Marin for diplomatic or charitable reasons. If the girl doesn't like it, then let her go and offer another girl. I'm sure they can sign an agreement or something to keep the secret. There MUST be a girl who would've enjoy living underwater (someone who hates meat and sunlight and has no family for example) instead of ripping a random girl from her family. Ugh.

5. Fertility dance. I'm not sure if this is ethically questionable. It's just bizarre.

Anyway, there are still a few unanswered mysteries and the story could be heading towards a darker path in Book 2. So since I got a copy of Impulse as well, I will be reading the sequel soon.

Booknut says

'But with each passing moment in these unfamiliar surroundings with all these strange people, and after eating all of these fish meals, I almost started believing that we were actually underwater.

It was impossible, though; completely impossible.'

Prepare to dive into an enthralling tale that will capture your heart and captivate your mind.

Vanessa Garden's *Captivate* brings to life the YA genre, with a refreshing twist on what's going on in the ocean's mesmerising depths.

With an underwater civilisation, a fight for a crown, and a dangerous attraction, the tale of Miranda Sun is sure to become a fast favourite with readers - introducing them to a world so like our own...lying just beneath the surface.

Will Miranda choose love or duty? Her past...or her future?

Ada says

Ok so I thought it was a mermaid book at first, I was expecting this...

But it turns out that it's an underwater civilization where everybody is human and apparently none of the women there are able to have children.

Then the King, Marko, and his sister Sasha (I changed her name cause Sasha sounds more like an evil name) come up with the brilliant idea of kidnapping a girl from a beach and they send Marko's best friend the lead

guard and he gets the wrong girl because she was suppose to be 18 years old...

(How he kidnapped her)

Anyway this girl, Miranda, is a 17 year old girl who thinks she kills everybody she loves because her parents had died like the year before in a car crash (which she thought she caused) and her best friend Aiden was lost at sea after a fight with her.

(I felt like she was really calm for being a CAPTIVE lol.)

She tried to run away once and failed miserably, and then they told her that they brought her there as a breeder so she can have the kings babies. She took that information with a little to much ease for my liking. I don't know about you but I would have been like...

Later on she tried to persuade the king's best friend help her escape. He told her he wanted to help her but couldn't because he was loyal to his king and best friend. Anyways in the meantime they took her around the city and showed her around...

(view spoiler)

The end.

(During my time reading the book I imagine Miranda like this...

)

The only two things that made me want to pull out all off my hair were her feelings and that she wasn't aggressive I was like...

You have been kidnapped...

MAN UP!!!!

And those feelings...

Still a great and very entertaining book tho... I liked it!!!!

Shaheen says

Captivate is an ambitious novel, and although I saw a lot of potential in the blurb, I have to confess I'm mostly disappointed by it.

Here is the premise of *Captivate*: Marko is the king of an under-water settlement of humans, and he's usurped his psychotic elder brother Damir's throne. His people can no longer reproduce, a side effect of living underground with no sunlight and other things that humans generally need to survive. His elder sister, and Damir's twin, suggests kidnapping a girl from the surface to be Marko's queen, bringing in fresh blood and allowing him to produce an heir, which will secure his claim to the throne.

All my problems with this novel stem from that basic premise. The Marin to have surprisingly archaic laws given that the first settlers of this underground city were some of the brightest and most progressive minds of their time. It doesn't make sense to me that they would reproduce the kinds of laws that made living underwater so attractive to in the first place. The postulation that Marko needs to produce an heir to keep his throne is ridiculous - although he has deposed his elder brother, it's been well established that basically no one wants the psycho who likes to experiment on his citizens to turn them into merpeople as the King. It also implies that if Drake could find a human and reproduce with her, his claim to the throne would become stronger. It seems like the lawmakers of the Marin really stuffed up on this one.

The second thing that baffles me about this book is the apparent need to kidnap a non-Marin girl and force her to become Queen so that she can produce an heir. Just having Miranda there, and maybe having a baby, doesn't solve the issue: all the other Marin couples will still not be able to reproduce. But even before this inconsistency, there's the very idea that kidnapping a human girl is the best way to go about solving the issue of Marko's heirs. It's mentioned that Marko goes to the surface every month to trade pearls for supplies that

his people need (very ill-considered, given that his brother apparently poses a threat) and I can't see why he couldn't also go to the surface to seduce a girl Edward-Cullen-style into living with him as his Queen. I also can't see why they couldn't just steal genetic material from a fertility clinic or similar. Yes it's barbaric and morally wrong, but a community who sees nothing wrong with regularly tossing people to sharks and kidnapping a 16 year old girl can hardly cling to that reasoning. The only explanation given in the book is the requirement of marriage before producing a baby, which is ludicrous anyway considering the baby will be created in a test tube.

So the world-building could be significantly improved on. What about the rest of the book? The characters are predictable and bland, the romances are flat, and there is barely anything that kept my interest.

Miranda is this naive, blundering, self-pitying character that I couldn't like at all, but I did grudgingly admire her determination to escape her imprisonment. She examines her room for weaknesses and hidden exits, puts all her strength into breaking the one vent she sees in her room, and makes many attempts at escaping, which I applauded. However, her motivations for escape seem to hinge on her need to reveal some dark secret to her sister concerning the night of their parents' death. When she does make it back and tell her sister the secret (which wasn't even a secret, it was absolutely anti-climactic), Miranda immediately starts thinking "well that's done, now I want to return to the weird underwater people who kidnapped me and kept me against my will for six weeks and tried to force me to become their Queen so they could harvest my reproductive material". Yeah. She doesn't even think of trying to reconnect and bond with her sister, doesn't resolve to spend more time with her family to appreciate them, in the light of her absence and how close she was to never see them again. Nope. Miranda's raring to go back and spend time with the two boys she's met while she'd been kidnapped.

The romance in the novel is uncomfortably reminiscent of Stockholm Syndrome and I had a hard time believing any of it. Robbie is my favourite character from the book, and when his feelings for Miranda blurred between friendship and something more I was a little excited, but predictably Miranda finds herself falling for Marko as well. Marko is quick to anger and violence, and really quite scary, but yes, let's all fall for him because he's incredibly handsome, and forget the part where he puts his best friend in a shark tank.

So, I didn't much like *Captivate*: it could have been a lot better. In particular, the world needs a lot more thought behind it, the characters could have been more developed, and the plot more refined. But a lot of other people have liked it, and if you pick it up, I hope you do too :)

A copy of this book was provided by the publisher for review.
You can read more of my reviews at [**Speculating on SpecFic**](#) .

Stacey (Sassy Book Lovers) says

I only just finished *Captivate* a short while ago and everything is still swirling around in my brain. Not sure where to start lol...

Ok, well firstly the cover, well I'm sure we can all agree it's absolutely stunning! The story that lies within matches the cover to a T, which is awesome! This story was a different experience for me, from all the books I've read not alot revolve around the sea, especially an underwater city. An underwater city, could you even imagine it? ^_^

Now to the story.... Miranda was out swimming with her sister, when she found herself being pulled under the water. When she awoke, she was in a strange bed and in a fancy room surrounded with mermaid pictures.

She'd been kidnapped and taken to an underwater city called, Marin. Where she was expected to marry the King and bare his child to save the city. This King happens to be a scary, yet very handsome man.

Despite Miranda's circumstances she finds herself developing feelings for this certain King, as feelings started to grow, danger reared it's ugly head and Miranda's life was being threatened. The Kings half-brother, Damir, was determined to do everything he could to overtake the throne. He had spies everywhere, a few lurking through the castle watching their every move.

Robbie, Miranda's captor. He was completely consumed with guilt over what he'd done. He has half fighting to stay true to his King, his best friend. While the other half wishes nothing but to help Miranda escape back home to her family.

The characters are easy to form connections with, I enjoyed being along this adventure with them. With such a gripping storyline, you'll find yourself compelled to come back for more. This is definitely one underwater world worth discovering, I feel there is more to come here, Miranda's story isn't over yet. -_^

~Tina~ says

Our story begins on a midnight swim in Bob's bay, Australia. Lauren and Miranda are visiting their grandparents and spend every summer at the old holiday shack since they were born. It was the first time in almost a year the sisters spend any real time together or were really speaking to each other since the death of their parents, but before they could clear the air about what really happened on that faithful night, Miranda gets dragged underwater, drugged and taken captive. When she wakes she finds herself in a large bed, in a beautiful room filled with mermaid art, and shockingly discovers she's under the deep blue sea in an underwater civilization.

Marin city is ruled by the young king, Marko, who is trying to perverse and protect his underwater palace by producing an heir so as to prevent his twisted older brother, Damir from taking over the throne. The only problem is, Marin's women are barren and no child has been born in eighteen years. So Marko, went along with his sister Sylvia's, decision to capture a young women from above, make her his queen and bear his child. While this doesn't exactly sit well with Marko, what real choice does he have if he wants to save his diminishing civilization and protect it from his sadistic brother who is obsessed with the idea of cutting up girls legs open and sewing them together to make mermaids tales?

Captivate turned out to be something much different then I originally thought it was. Truth, I thought this was about mermaids, and while it kinda relates to it in a very unusual and nontraditional way, it really isn't a mermaid book after all. But I'm actually glad that this turned out to be something else entirely. The concept is really quite nifty. I liked the idea of a vast civilization deep under the sea, ruled by a firm but kind king and learning about the history and traditions. I also thought it was pretty wicked to have an evil brother who liked to experiment on girls and turn them into mermaids. It's sick of course, but the conflict and threat was still freaky cool. And even though there is the question between right and wrong regarding Miranda's captivity, despite her circumstance, like her, I too was mesmerized and curious about this world and couldn't wait to explore more.

Marin is a stunning thriving city complete with built in oxygen vents, trees, plant life and even birds. It's filled with thousands of people who have either come to the city willingly or been saved as drowning victims.

I really liked Miranda. She's a feisty little thing that's full of spunk and fight. Even though everyone seemed to be genuinely kind to her, she never stopped planning her escape. But the more she stayed in Marin, the

more intrigued she became and eventually started to have feelings in her new-found friendships and was compelled enough to even want to stay.

Robbie is my favorite character. He was the one who originally took Miranda when she was enjoying her midnight swim with her sister and while he's really the one to blame, he was just playing the part of the ever loyal guard to his best friend and king and was only doing his duty. His regret and remorse weighed heavily in his eyes and ever gesture. He hates what he had to do and makes sure that Miranda is as comfortable as possible. I liked how understanding, protective and kind he was, and really, he was the only friend Miranda had.

Marko was hard to like at first, but I think it was only because it took so long for Miranda to 'want' to get to know him. Understandably of course, but when she finally did we see a side to Marko that I'm sure not even his kingdom sees. He's an arrogant and overly confident man but can also be playful, tender, sweet and alluring. He makes Miranda feel valued and attractive for the first time in her life. So while the connection may have took awhile to get there, eventually Marko won Miranda's heart, as it did mine.

I did however have a little issue with how he treated Robbie at one point of the story, but since it worked out in the end, it's easy to overlook.

All in all, I rather liked this book. The ideas might be a little far fetched for some, but it's a solid and unique concept with wonderful world building and back story. Vanessa Garden's writing is absorbing and smart and the characters are beautifully put together, making me feel invested from minute one. There isn't a love triangle, but it's well on it's way of becoming one and since I like both guys, it'll be interesting to see what happens. The ending was satisfying and quite perfect when you're looking at it from a redeeming angle. But I also know the story doesn't end here and I'm really looking forward to seeing where Miranda's story will venture next.

Anatea Oroz says

This review is also posted on my blog, [Anatea's Bookshelf](#).

Let's talk about surprising! I must say that I only skimmed through the book description before I started reading it, thinking it is probably some paranormal book with mermaids in it. But this is *NOT* a paranormal book about mermaids, at least, there are no mermaids in this book, I can't say there won't be any mermaids in the next books in the series. What else is surprising about *Captivate*, I didn't expect it to be this good, but it was, and I ended up really loving the book!

The story starts when Miranda is kidnapped by Robbie, King Marko's personal guard. Marko is the King of an underwater city called Marin and his citizens are in danger. Miranda is brought there to bare Marko's child and help continue the royal line. While all she tries is escape, a lot of unexpected things happen before she even realizes she is in danger and maybe in love with Marko.

Some things in *Captivated* were quite predictable but it didn't bother me much. I was so engrossed in the story that I didn't even think about those things. The plot was really great and the worldbuilding was done very nicely. I loved finding out about the city of Marin and the people who lived there.

I loved how determined Miranda was to escape and to return to her family, even after she realized she has feelings for Marko. She was kidnapped, thrown into a world that only exists in dreams, but she stayed strong and focused on her goal. Marko, on the other hand, was a great King. He had a lot of stuff to deal with and he always tried to do what is best for his people. Despite his impulsive character, I really liked him in the end. As far as the romance goes, I think it could be done better, but I still enjoyed it. It wasn't an insta-love, but maybe a little stereotypical?

What got to me the most, is the ending. What a cliffhanger! I honestly couldn't believe the book ended the way it did. I know I will be counting days until the next book comes out.

All in all, *Captivate* was a great book with an amazing story development. Maybe there are books placed underwater, but *Vanessa Garden's* writing brings in a fresh breath and just makes you fall in love with its characters and the city of Marin.

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Kirke says

The whole mermaid thing seems to be coming up more and more in books and I have been intrigued by it, but so far the books I've read weren't able to deliver.

After reading *Captivate* I felt like half of the book was missing, there were so many holes in it and lack of explanation, description and development.

First of all, kidnapping a girl to force her into marriage and conceiving children is never the right idea. Taking the wrong girl, since Miranda is only seventeen and not of age, is completely stupid. Besides she wasn't specially chosen, no, she was just at the wrong place at the wrong time. Seriously, Robbie gets the order from Sylvia (Marko's sister) to go to the surface and bring back a woman. That's it. No more details.

The whole reason Miranda is down there, is because nobody can produce children anymore. So here is hoping she doesn't have any fertility problems or she would have been kidnapped for nothing.

The biggest problem I have with the story is how nothing seems logical. Marko is nineteen and king, but his dad got murdered by Marko's older brother when he was still young, like ten years old. So Damir has been in hiding since then and Marko has been king since the murder? Why didn't Damir take the throne back then? Also there is this law of who has an heir first gets to be king. Which means if Damir gets someone pregnant first he would be king?

Another weird thing. Damir has been living in the underworld. Which I first took very literal, since I was still in the believe of them being some kind of mermaids, so there might have been something involved with gods. But no, the underworld just pretty much means the bad side of town. How big is this city that you can't find one guy and throw him in the cellar? It's not like the dude has any special powers or anything, he's just human, like they all are.

Them being regular humans was also kind of disappointing. They all pretty much chose to live down on the bottom of the ocean. Vanessa Garden tries to portray it as some magical place, but honestly I wasn't feeling it. To me it felt more like living under a dome, with a dark sky and surviving on artificial light. It's just a big prison to me.

Also all the people who've chosen to live there are supposed to be very rich or very smart, so to me it seems weird they would go to tactics like kidnapping someone to save their people. Which in fact isn't a solution to their problem. All the other women and girls still wouldn't be able to get children.

This relates to Marko not choosing his own wife. He goes to the surface once a month to trade their pearls for other goods. So the guy has had contacts with humans on the surface, why not try to find a girl who likes him and convince her to come back down with him and start a family. Once again, why the kidnapping?

I've been left with too many questions for me to like the story. There will be a second book, but I won't be reading it. I do believe if Vanessa Garden would have gone deeper into certain areas and characters this could have been a good book. As it is now, I really am not feeling it.

Nemo (The Moonlight Library) says

Miranda Sun had been taken against her will to the underwater city of Marin where she is expected to marry the king and bear his children to help boost the barren population. But Miranda is desperate to get home and make up with her sister after the tragic death of her parents. Meanwhile the king's brother, the exiled firstborn, is a threat to the city. Will Miranda succumb to the lure of the underwater Marin or will she find her freedom?

I liked Miranda as a character. She had all the angst and over-dramatic tendencies of my favourite Disney princesses. She spent an awful lot of time weeping and sorry for herself but wasn't afraid to try to take matters into her own hands and made many good attempts to escape. She was in an awful situation, kidnapped and dragged to the bottom of the ocean, and she spent an awful lot of time locked away by herself or being forced against her will to participate, forced to work for this horrible place with the threat of execution over her head. Her one redemption was Marko, the young king of Marin, and I was glad she found a sort of happiness there.

I also liked how Miranda was supposed to be chubby or fat (a far cry for your typical 'thin and clumsy' YA heroine), although it was a bit hard to accept this when she referred to her own sister as a Barbie and her sister envied her 'curves', and said the only parts of her borrowed clothes that would be stretched out were the boobs and bum. I figured that meant Miranda had curves, but Miranda saw herself as fat and unattractive, which fair nearly broke my heart when someone actually did find her beautiful and she couldn't believe them.

I really liked how the plot dove right in and within the first chapter we were in Marin with Miranda, trying to figure out how she could possibly escape an escapeless fortress. I felt so sorry for her as the entire population thought she was there willingly to save them and all placed their hopes in her. Miranda wasn't even seventeen and an absolute prude, so I often felt her own embarrassment when people referred to her having the king's babies. There was so much pressure on her to do her part to help a kingdom she wasn't a part of and didn't want to be a part of. It wasn't even fair, because Miranda was chosen accidentally and also at random. I feel like Marko, who often visited the surface to trade, could have developed an on-land romance with a girl and convinced her to come underwater and marry him and make lots of babies instead of kidnapping a frightened innocent girl against her will. After all, Marin is going to have to convince a hell of a lot more human girls to procreate to keep the population going, as everyone is barren and Miranda can hardly be expected to boost the entire population.

I felt that the romance was well developed. I personally didn't like Marko very much, and although I love romances where the heroine and love interest don't like each other to begin with, I felt that there could have been more redemption from Marko to draw me to like him more. I could admire from afar the beginning of their tenderness, but I always felt that there was supposed to be something going on with Robbie as well. It wasn't a love triangle, but I felt like it was supposed to be, or at least it was supposed to feel like one, and I didn't feel it. Miranda was inexperienced and falling for the wrong boy and she never really thought about falling in love with the person who kidnapped her. I also felt that because we were constantly reminded of Marin's pull and allure that in the end when Miranda did admit her feelings that it was more Stockholm Syndrome, or at least not authentic. I think I would have preferred the romance if it was clearer that she wanted to stay in Marin because of her own feelings and not because of the allure that affected everyone.

I also feel a little disappointed because Marko was your typical foul-tempered, physical, drop-dead gorgeous love interest. It's really not hard to feel attraction to someone who's insanely attractive. I felt that Captivate was following the lines of Beauty and the Beast with a young girl needing to fall in love with the royal leader to save the people, but there was no beast! Marko had a foul temper but he was a hunk and a half and I didn't feel much of a struggle or conflict from Miranda when it came to finding him attractive and leading to her wanting to sleep with him. Sure, he was holding her against her will, but I seriously doubt many teen girls would be able to resist the charms of a doting hottie patottie for long. I think I would have liked this better if Marko wasn't gorgeous, if Miranda had to see past his unattractive outside to the beauty within. Imagine if Belle had been held at the castle with a handsome prince: I hardly think the last petal would have fallen from the rose if she had been! There was no conflict – it felt assured Miranda would fall for Marko. There was no 'would she, wouldn't she?'

There was something about Miranda's voice and narration that led me to really feel her own helplessness and frustration at her situation. She was both treasured and disposable, locked away for her own safety yet threatened with execution. It would be enough to drive one mad! It also smacked of Gothicism, with the young innocent female being held captive by the older (not by much, though!) male, and I do love Gothic novels. Overall I feel that this was a decent introduction into what will hopefully develop into a next book, and I would rather like to see more of Marko and find out what happens in the future.

Thanks to HarlequinTeen for providing this advanced reader copy for an honest review.

Nicki Markus says

Captivate started slowly and I wasn't sure if I'd enjoy it, but about a third in, I suddenly found myself getting more and more drawn into the story and by the halfway mark I was keen to see how it would end.

The book takes a different slant on the mermaid idea, defying expectations right from the word go. The characters are perhaps a little too stereotypically YA at times as I found myself anticipating their every move, having seen a similar thing countless times before, but the plot interest made up for that and created an overall enjoyable read.

The only thing I would say is that I felt the problem facing Marin a little inflated since I could easily think of ways to deal with the issue that didn't involve kidnapping one young girl. I was also confused as to how one girl would solve the long term issues... but I put that aside and tried to just enjoy the adventure.

I might not rush to reread this book, but I would definitely read future books in the series and I can recommend this underwater tale to YA fans of books such as Hush, Hush and Fallen who are looking to leave the skies and take to the seas.

I received this book as a free review copy from the publisher.

Char ? Denae says

Oh wow! I really loved this book! So original and consuming! It just grabbed me from the beginning and I couldn't put it down. I finished it in one sitting.

At first, I thought it was going to be a mermaid/merman story but the whole, city-under-the-sea thing was

really cool, and I loved the possible-submerged-space-ship angle. The descriptions of the city were perfect, not overdone but just enough to let your imagination take over, and the crystals were a very unique touch.

I felt I could really connect with the characters and understand why they were feeling the way they were. Miranda seemed to feel and do, what I would expect someone to do in her place. I loved Robbie from the beginning, although he was the one to steal Miranda away from her family. He seemed to be a good person who felt split by loyalty and what was right. I really didn't like Marko, at all, and, when he began to redeem himself somewhat, I resisted liking him. He did grow on me, eventually, although I hated his punishment of Robbie. His decision was explained very well, and he showed obvious remorse for what he had to do, but I was still mad at him. I was also a bit conflicted about the outcome of the 'love triangle' (I won't elaborate so as not to spoil the outcome for others). I wasn't quite sure who I wanted Miranda to end up with and I swayed back and forth on my feelings for both guys. To me, this is a sign of a good book. When the reader is so drawn into the story that their feelings are involved, I think the author has definitely done their job.

Even though the ending was a bit of a cliff-hanger, I was satisfied with it and am really looking forward to reading the next book.

Angelique The Gilded Pages says

Um, yes! This book was everything. I couldn't find a single thing that I disliked.

Robbie and Marko? They were so drool worthy, especially Robbie.

I loved the setting, the characters, the action, and the plot. Marin and it's plight were really interesting, and the idea that they "take" girls from the surface really caught my attention.

The ending tore my heart apart for both Marko and Miranda. I can't wait to see what happens in the next book, because this book was so exciting.

This is NOT a mermaid book. I thought it was when I saw the cover and read that there was an underwater city. It was not what I was expecting at all. I was pleasantly surprised and impressed by this book.

Now, where is book 2?!
