



# La Vida Vampire

*Nancy Haddock*

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**La Vida Vampire** Nancy Haddock

**First in a delightfully irreverent new series-and second to none when it comes to beautiful 227-year-old career women.**

Being dead isn't all it's cracked up to be. Take it from Francesca Marinelli, trapped underground for over 200 years and rediscovered during the renovation of a Victorian mansion in historic St. Augustine. A tourist attraction herself, she's well suited for a job as an Old Ghost Town Tour guide. Francesca's due for a new lease on afterlife-and with enough sunblock, she can finally live it.

Unfortunately, everything she learned about men is a little dated. And when people in her tour group turn up dead, naturally the police suspect her. After all, she is a vampire. Which is why a crazed vampire-hunting vigilante squad is out to get her as well. Between the dead bodies, the stalkers, and a seriously non-existent love life, she's starting to wish she was dead. Or at least buried, where she was safe.

## La Vida Vampire Details

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Author : Nancy Haddock

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# From Reader Review La Vida Vampire for online ebook

## Jacob Proffitt says

Despite a rocky start and some questionable elements, I ended up rather liking this book. It's kind of like your best friend's kid sister who has a crush on you—cute, eager to please, doesn't *quite* embarrass herself irreparably and isn't so annoying that you want her to actually go away.

Francesca Marinelli is *not* your typical vampire—both in the Urban Fantasy arena as well as in her own milieu. She's perky, frugal, patient, and willing to be pleased with even half-hearted efforts to get along. In short, she's just likeable and you really want her to succeed in her (admittedly meager) goals. She has to deal with prejudice and other vampires who think they're all that and government “protection” (i.e. registration and regulations) and hunky government agents.

As a story, there are a lot of moving parts and some of them don't align terribly well. Agent Saber is way too willing (and sometimes even eager) to let her in on his investigations. The bad guys' motives are stock and a bit too pat. Her rescuer and best friend is generous to a fault and motivated by pure altruism. Best friend's boyfriend is completely accommodating and supportive. And I'm still undecided about the ghosts being both regularly perceivable and still uncommon enough that people take ghost tours. That kind of thing.

Fortunately, there's enough innate charm and originality that I didn't mind going along. In the end, it was a quick, light read that I ended up liking.

**A note on Steamy:** There's an explicit sex scene and scattered foreplay (uh, and a little afterplay), all near the end. I understand why Haddock went with it and it's important enough to the story and characters that I can't really cry foul. It didn't even change the tone of the book and it really could have if it hadn't been handled as well as it was. Still, I wish it hadn't been included because it makes it hard for me to recommend to my teenage daughter who would otherwise really like the story.

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## Jess says

The beginning of this book was so boring to me. It moved really slow to the point that I was about to just toss it and put it on my abandoned shelf, but I kept plugging along and it became better as it went. Especially when Saber showed up, I became more interested.

I might read the next in the series just because I felt sort of cheated with this book. Throughout the whole thing it kept building up to one event, and then nothing came of it. I'm thinking that the next book will address this unfulfilled plot line.. but that was a pretty cheap shot by the author.

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## Kim says

Oh my stupid, stupid vampire candy. Trashy, funny, dumb. Vampires are sort of a protected species, and they drink blood substitute from cans, and the protagonist is a psychic who gives historical tours in costume, and there's a protector who doesn't like vampires except he likes her. Also, she's been buried underground for

200 years so she has to learn about dating.

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### **Jenna says**

I don't usually like vampire books - never tried Anne Rice, stopped after one Sookie Stackhouse book (although I love Charlaine Harris's Harper Connolly series...), and never made it through all of Laurell Hamilton's Anita Blake series - but I'm really enjoying this so far. The setting - Saint Augustine, the oldest town in the US - doesn't exactly hurt, either, and Nancy Haddock nails it. I'm visiting vicariously, and having a ball!

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### **Erin \*Proud Book Hoarder\* says**

I dug Saber and found him a hot hero of the story, but then sexual scenes did little for me. Still, the book was fun. Heroine is almost too pure but she's also amusing and I enjoy her outlook on things. The Ghost tours are a hoot and there were genuinely laugh-out-loud moments in this story. Very cute paranormal romance that doesn't focus too much on the relationship, but actually has depth, a good mystery story, and various layers. All sidekicks and friends were well designed, interesting, and dimensional. A bit let down on who the villain was, found it a bit too easy and they thought it was him for awhile before, so there was little suspense when it turned out they were right. Loved how the author used the settings and rich history of St. Augustine Florida for the story as well. Reading the second starting today.

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### **Alison says**

The debut novel from Nancy Haddock is a nice light read, with a dash of history, a dollop of crime, lashings of fun and a few nice bursts of steam to heat things up.

Fancesca Marinelli: vampire, tour guide, and really really normal. In fact, she's so decidedly normal that she's almost boring. Think Queen Betsy, but with more brains and less snark. However, Nancy Haddock uses her job as a tour guide through a haunted ghost town as an excuse to share with us a few choice titbits of St Augustine history. I am assuming it's accurate, but it's a great idea even if it's not, and really did add something to the story. In fact, I'm going to assume that the history sharing idea came first, and the tour guide bit was chosen as the delivery method.

My two biggest issues with this story:

The Americanisms – sorry guys, I'm not from the USA, so things like the constant references to “HGTV” really fell flat with me. I'm sure people from St Augustine, Daytona areas would have loved this book, the local knowledge was great, but unfortunately I managed to recognise the inside jokes, but felt a little left out at not getting them (I also didn't get the Gidget references).

My other problem was with the Francesca's history. This is book one in the series and she's been a vampire for over 200 years. 204 of those years were trapped in a coffin. We get these glimpses of the day her flatmate Maggie found her, we get references to the new law “VPA” (Vampire Protection Act), but there is a distinct feeling that I've missed an entire book. I am hoping that a short story is released that cleans all this up.

As a side play we've got Cosmil the wizard. It's a little bizarre, but I assume will come into focus later in the series. It's almost like a different story and has more of a traditional fantasy/sword & sorcery feel to it that just doesn't quite mesh with the urban fantasy style of the rest of the story. I am intrigued to see how Ms Haddock develops this side story, particularly with the mysterious Triton.

Don't let my review so far make you think I didn't enjoy this story – I really did! It's nice and light. I loved the crime element. There's nothing gory or overtly sexual, there is a bit of steam in the one sex scene, but was more a cosy warm than hot.

I think the whole series is going to have that chicken soup feel -something to enjoy when you're feeling a bit blue or under the weather. The plot isn't overly complicated, but there is enough mystery and intrigue to keep the interest high. The sex scenes aren't so intense that they take up most of the book – more have that first love feel about them (without all the Sunday nice chick flick drama).

It's definitely going to be interesting to see if the rest of the series maintains this really nice feel, I can only hope so.

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## **WildAboutBones says**

This is the first in Haddock's Oldest City Vampire urban fantasy romance series set in St. Augustine, FL featuring vampires, a wizard, shape shifters, a vampire hating society, a former vampire hunter turned paranormal expert/consultant for law enforcement, an unknown evil on its way, a murder mystery and a unlikely romance.

I was unfamiliar with this series until I won the third book in the series, *Always the Vampire*, from a contest *Coffee Time Romance* was holding for the author. I decided to wait and read the series in order.

Cesca, has recently been unearthed after 200+ years trapped in a coffin wrapped in silver chains under an old Victorian house. She just wants to fit in and be normal. She has a new job as a ghost tours tour guide while she studies online for her GED as well as taking other continuing education classes. She takes dance lessons and plays bridge once a week. She doesn't bite humans and gets queasy at the smell of blood.

Her first night on the job finds her with a vampire racist (or would that be speciest?) and a strange honeymooning french couple on the tour. When the french newlywed wife is found floating dead in the ocean with fang marks on her by Cesca and her roommate's boyfriend while surfing, yes she surfs too, she becomes one of the suspects.

Saber is an ex-vampire hunter who is now working for law enforcement as a preternatural expert/consultant. He doesn't know what to think about Cesca. She defies everything he knows about vampires and he can't help but be attracted to her.

Cesca and Saber team up to find out who the real killer is and the chemistry between them rocks. Oh, did I forget mention she's a 227 year old virgin?

This is a light-hearted, humorous and fun paranormal romance/urban fantasy which I think fans of both genre's will enjoy. I can't wait to read the rest of the series to see what is in store for Cesca.

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## Marsha says

2.5 stars. This feels like the author has added vampires to a standard mystery romance and I just don't really understand why. The role of vampirism in this novel is complete weak-sauce and the story could easily be edited to exclude it without losing much. While it's clear Cesca is intended to be unique, what actually occurs is she is watered down and uninteresting.

I actually decided to read this to discover how the author handled Cesca's transition to the modern world. This would have been fascinating. Unfortunately, she chose to introduce a device that completely jumps over this transitional experience while transforming the heroine into generic romance girl. It just seems such a waste to have a 19th century heroine turn out to be just your 21st century surfer girl...completely boring.

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## Walter says

I believe I may be the first male ever to read this book.

It's a fun read by a local author who isn't afraid to break all the rules of the genre. Our hero is a vampire who doesn't bite people, goes out in the daylight, hates the smell of blood, avoids using her vampire powers, and is a virgin for *most* of the story. She also hates her hair. The other vampires in town are more traditional, and we never find out why Cesca is so different.

A dead body is found in the surf, and Cesca is both a suspect in the case as well as a possible next victim. The police assign a vampire hunter to watch over her, and he makes her feel all tingly.

OK, the story is a little lame, but it's fun to pick out the local landmarks.

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## Shanon says

I didn't dislike this book. I didn't love it either. I wasn't drawn into the story like I wanted to be. I am curious enough about things that I will probably read the 2nd book - but I'm in no rush.

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## Inara says

Francesca "Cesca" Marinelli was recently rescued from her underground prison where she spent the last two hundred years locked up by her vampire sire King Normand. As a human she had psychic abilities and that was the reason Normand made her a vampire because he wanted to control her powers and use them for his own advantage. But Cesca wasn't your average vampire and one day an enraged vampire King trapped her in her prison before he and his "court" was burned and every vampire was killed.

Free again Cesca only wants to keep her life as normal as possible with a job, friends and hopefully someday a boyfriend who isn't put off by her being a vampire. Today's vampires have become a kind of protected species closely monitored by the Vampire Protection Agency. She doesn't have to drink blood from a human

anymore, vampires now live of bottled blood. Cesca even can go out in daylight although she never figured out the reason why this is possible for her. On her first night of her new job as a ghost tour guide she meets a bunch of weird people who are all a bit too much interested in her. She even gets threatened by a vampire hater. When the same people show up at her second night tour she doesn't believe in coincidence anymore and when a visitor of this group is killed with little bite marks on the body Cesca becomes prime suspect because she's the only vampire in town. Cesca decides to take matters into her own hands and to prove her innocence...

I really liked the book and the characters! Cesca's an old fashioned vampire, still a virgin who tries to adjust to modern life and blend in to have a normal life and relationship. She's doing Internet studies, learns how to surf and to dance Salsa, and even is a member of a bridge club. The book is written from Cesca's POV and we have glimpses into her past scattered throughout the book. There's of course romance and when she meets Deke Sabers, a preternatural crimes special investigator and former vampire hunter she's at once attracted to him but Sabers doesn't seem to return her feelings. The main focus of this book however is on solving the murder mystery and there are many suspects so you don't figure out at once who the villain is. So don't expect too much love scenes! There are many loose ends e.g. who is the old wizard and his magical cat? What happened to Cesca's childhood friend Triton a shape shifter who suddenly disappeared? What's the Void? These questions keep me interested and I'm looking forward to the next installment in this series!

Website of the author: <http://www.nancyhaddock.com/>

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### **Denese says**

I enjoyed reading this, but it was obviously a "first" book. The romance was incredibly trite, but the main character was likable and the vampire element was tweaked just enough to make it enjoyably different. It would have been a much better book without the standard romance blarney. I'm hoping that the next books (of course there will be more) are less awkward.

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### **Lynda Warnock says**

Cesca Marinelli is not your usual vampire. She worries about her manners; takes night classes and never drinks in public. She doesn't use her vampire powers (at least that's what she tells herself) and just wants to live a normal "afterlife."

Deke Saber is a very sexy special investigator. He is assigned to check out all vampire, were, and other-worldly incidents. When Saber first meets Cesca he's sure she's just like all the other vampires he's met and sure she's guilty of the murder he was called in to help investigate.

Things get stranger and Cesca's life is threatened so Saber volunteers to be her body guard...but he wants to do much more than just guard it.

This is a very cute story including suspense, murder and a giggle or two. You can't help but fall in love with Cesca -- for a 227 year old vampire she is so innocent. Saber is one hot man and together they give off more than their share of sparks. There is a side story involving a magical being, magical cat and shape-shifting dolphin but it is not built out in La Vida Vampire.

La Vida Vampire is set in St. Augustine, Florida and you get a real flavor for the place from the descriptive settings by author Nancy Haddock. I really enjoyed this story and the characters. It is a nice light quick-paced read.

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### **Anita says**

I got to chapter 3 and just couldn't take it anymore - this is a poorly written book. It's a contemporary/urban fantasy set in Florida with a vampire heroine and a few assorted other creatures that eventually make appearances in the story. I'm sad I didn't like it more because I found the premise so interesting: the heroine was locked up in a coffin as a punishment by her head vamp, but then he was killed and she was stuck for 200 years until a renovation unearths her. Both the back story (immigrant parents, self-important head vamp, her psychic abilities) and the adjustment to modern life could have been really interesting. Instead, those are glossed over in favor of a plot by crazys to kill her, her love of surfing and interior design, her desire to loose her virginity, her new job as a tour leader, and the reappearance of her old shape-shifting boyfriend. Boooring! It's not even saucy enough to count as true chick lit. Not worth the time.

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### **Jenne says**

3.5

I liked this, it was a light and easy read. A tad cheesy but a good break from the dark and intense. Cesca is not your typical vampire. She's trying to live a normal human life, the smell of blood grosses her out, and she works as a haunted tour guide. She has vamp power potential but doesn't really use it. There's a murder she inadvertently gets caught up in and the who done it is the primary plot of this. Saber is a paranormal cop who's called into the investigation. When Cesca is obviously threatened he takes up bodyguard detail. There's sparks between them but they each get on one another's nerves. This had a Georgina Kincaid feel to me in the sense of the quirky characters and I'll read more in the series. Definitely worth the read when you're in the mood for something light and easy going.

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