



# Bloodspell

*Amalie Howard*

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**Bloodspell** Amalie Howard

The spell was simple...

*Cruentus Protectum* (Defend the Blood)

But what do you do if your blood is your enemy?

Victoria Warrick has always known she was different. An outcast at school, she is no stranger to adversity. But when she receives an old journal for her seventeenth birthday, nothing prepares her for the dark secrets it holds -- much less one that reveals she's a witch with unimaginable power.

What's more, when she meets the dazzling but enigmatic Christian Devereux, she has no idea how much her life is about to change. Enemies will hunt her. Friends will turn on her. The terrible curse that makes her blood run black will stop at nothing to control her. And Christian has a sinister secret of his own...

Without knowing whom to trust, can Victoria survive her blood's deadly desires? Or will she lose everything, including herself?

## Bloodspell Details

Date : Published June 1st 2011 by Langdon Street Press (first published May 25th 2011)

ISBN : 9781936782116

Author : Amalie Howard

Format : Paperback 394 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Fantasy, Paranormal, Witches, Vampires, Romance

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# From Reader Review Bloodspell for online ebook

## Brodie says

Amalie Howard manages to take two elements we see used in hundreds of different ways across an enormous number of YA books and breathe such a fresh new life into them. She stayed true to the darker aspects of witches and vampires while adding her own original spin on the mythology. Rather than just imply that, 'yes, this vampire is good and does not kill, but still struggles to keep his fangs in place' she shows the conflicting emotions, the terrible all-consuming temptation and she allows her characters to falter. Both Christian and Victoria, while battling the darker urges within them both, are trying to gain control. But they aren't foolproof. They slip up. The darker side takes control sometimes. And I love that she doesn't gloss over the consequences. People die. Blood is shed. The flaws and mistakes are what make these characters 'human'.

Relationships between witches and vampires has been forbidden for centuries. So they're also battling with the fact that they're basically starcrossed lovers, neither are permitted by the laws to come together in such a way. But how can you choose not to love someone?

The blood pulsing through Victoria's veins - the one with dark, terrible urges. That fights for control. For sacrifice. For death - the one she calls the Cruentus Curse, is the very same blood that Christian's twin brother, Lucian is hunting. The vampires call the one with this blood Le Sang Noir. And Lucian wants her badly. Her abilities can give him the power and control he craves, not only over the vampires but possibly the witch clans too. But what he doesn't fully realise is the danger of this blood's temptation. Let's just say, that blood running through her veins? It's badass... in all kinds of horrific ways.

I also have to make note of the setting. We not only see the US, but beautiful Paris too! Christian and Victoria both make a few trips (pretty easy to travel between continents when you're a vamp who can fly and a witch with the ability to teleport) to Paris to visit the vampire Council. In the media release I received for the book, it said that Amalie has visited 141 cities in 18 countries (WHOA!), her travels definitely paid off because they give a great backdrop for the novel.

There's also a ton of action and fight scenes to keep readers on their toes. It does not shy away from bloodlust and the violence that you would expect from a guy who craves blood or a girl harbouring a murderous curse within her veins. Bloodspell is everything you could ask for when two supernatural worlds collide together. Amalie explores the darker side of vampires and witches all while maintaining the bond between our two main characters and their struggle to make their love work.

A unique and compelling mythology, deliciously forbidden romance, headstrong characters and a dark, haunting vibe that will keep you hooked until the very last page. I'm so happy this is only the first book in the series, I cannot wait to dive back into this world again!

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## Kitty Austin says

### AMALIE HOWARD'S "BLOODSPELL" (A REVIEW)

Move over Stephenie Meyer! I must say that I enjoyed this book much better. The fact that the heroine is not

so completely dependent on others to always save her was not only refreshing but much more exciting! Victoria is a young woman on the brink of losing everything when she finds out that her heritage is far more than it seems. She's tortured by the history of her grandmother and in complete denial until she learns from her familiar, a cat by the name of Leto that all is not lost.

Meeting Christian Devereux is just the tip of the iceberg as she starts to feel as though she's finally found someone that can fully understand her, only to realize that their relationship is ill-fated and definitely not condoned by either side of the vast spectrum of the supernatural world. It's a story that grabs you up and holds on tight giving you no choice but to stay the course and see what happens next.

The pain and anguish of being a teen on the verge of graduation and womanhood mixes triumphantly with the added angst of not knowing exactly who you are and finding out that you have vast power that is not always under your complete control. There is action in this book! Something I found sadly lacking in Stephenie Meyer's novels. Amalie is capable of writing great fight scenes that you have no choice but to envision perfectly in your mind's eye. This story is different and exciting and not your average run of the mill YA supernatural fiction. It has teeth that aren't afraid to bite! You don't feel as though the characters in this story are all vulnerable as they each have their own vivid qualities that make them unique and in some cases deadly!

Amalie Howard is definitely destined to become the next big thing in YA supernatural writing. I can't wait to see what she brings to the table next and after reading this story I hope to see far more of Christian and Victoria in the near future!

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## Isamlq says

### 1.5/5

You know that character, that dark, broody one with a secret so big that it has the character push others away? Well, there were two of those in *Blood Spell*; all very Edward meets Edward. This same fact allowed for a cycle of I love him/her but must not for his/her sake. Whiplash is what followed the break neck speed at which they changed moods. Neither of them could stick to a decision made; both of them blew hot then cold then hot again. 'Twas mind boggling... this never ending on then off then on again!

Things were not aided by a tendency towards telling rather than showing what was. For in one instance, things actually went along the lines of "Christian was a *vampire*! All that was missing was spooky music and a thunder-lightning duo! Not good I tell you.

I've been trying to squeeze out a positive and yet the same still eludes me, for none of the characters were developed, none of them talked like you'd think one normally does. None of them provided me something to like, or even to dislike. The baddies were laughably one simple in what they wanted. I had hoped to get a little of something more from the telepathic kitty cat. Yet, even from his end things came up dry. Neither the goodies (Holly) nor the baddies added anything to the story. And speak of the baddies! Dear god... there be an **evil twin**. 'Nuf said.

Yet, the biggest issue I have with BS is Tori. For one who claimed to be "nothing but clear with what she wanted" as it dealt with Christian, she really, honestly, truthfully was anything but! Not that she was alone

on that front because as I said, there are two broody ones here. Christian was no better with his Step One: Push her away. Step Two: Follow her around like a sad puppy. Step Three: Get pissed when she'd be with others. Step Four: Grovel for forgiveness. Step Five: back to Step one. This pattern is one they both held to time and again!

Nope. Nope. Nope \*shakes head\*

**1.5/5**

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## **Lillian ? Cloud 9 Books ? says**

**\*\*\*\*\* 3.5 Stars \*\*\*\*\***

The writing lacks a certain finesse; which is a shame because the fantasy is pretty great.

The adventure is fun and exciting, but I just wish the author dived into the story a bit more and embellished certain scenes. I also think the story could have been planned out better.

Victoria's decision making skills are also terrible, but overall.... I really enjoyed it. Will I proceed to book #2? Yes.

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## **Lindsay says**

To be honest, the synopsis doesn't do the book justice. And to be fair, the book shares similar plot devices with other books which feature an 'outsider' female and a vampire male love interest. I've read those books and their fallen angel counterparts. It made me nervous to pick this book up for that reason, as I've found some of those other YA offerings to be rather boring.

Here's the difference between them and Amalie Howard's Bloospell: her writing is better, her characters more dynamic, and the plot far richer and more compelling. This is a great read, and it takes the washed out 'supernatural forbidden love' premise, adds some twists and makes it exciting to read again. Truly a breath of fresh air!

Let's talk writing. At first, I was worried. Until page 16, I wasn't into the story. I didn't care for the dialogue, and I just wasn't engaged. Then BAM! Victoria turns 17, the clouds parted, the sun shined, and Ahhhhh! I was hooked. The writing picked up, and it pretty much flowed from there on out. Victoria is a sort of tragic

character: she's lost both parents to a horrific car accident, she always been an odd one and feels very alone, and she is attacked, both verbally and physically by her classmates. She moves onto another school after turning 17, and that's where the story really begins. Howard is a debut author, and here are some instances of using cliched phrases, and there are a few, very few, awkward moments. However, there is an eloquence to her simple word choices that make the book flow easily and really grabs your attention. It's been a while, but I truly didn't want to put the book down. I just wrote this review today, and I am itching to get back to it and reread a few things.

Oh, and here's another great thing about this book. Obviously, there is a romance, but what the synopsis can't tell you is that Howard's writing of it is very sensual. Not slutty. Not sexy. Sensual. She really appeals to your senses as you read it, and that made the romance more compelling in a way that I haven't read in YA. Observe:

*The words stuck in her throat as Christian unclenched his jaw and forced himself to face her, gently grasping her shoulders. Liquid silver started stared into molten jade, and he touched his lips to hers, the kiss tentative at first, as if he were afraid to give himself over to it. But as the warmth within her bloomed, decimating walls and reason, his lips sank into the softness of hers with desperate urgency. Victoria dug her fingers into his arms, caught. It felt as though her life began and ended in that kiss.*

Kind of hot, huh?

The fact that Bloodspell is also written from both Christian and Victoria's points-of-view also makes the story more compelling, particularly as Christian's character becomes more developed. While he occasionally displays the "I want you, but I'm too dangerous for you," syndrome, the interesting twist here is that Victoria is a witch, and not just any witch, but The Witch. She's lethal, and it's not a stretch to say that she is more so than Christian. If need be, she could kill Christian. Boyfriend better watch his neck, because no one is putting this baby in a corner. If he every tried to put her up against a rock so he could take care of a sitch, she'd be like, "Yeah, okay. Bare your fags while me and and my awesome witch amulet make short work of this." Okay, maybe not, because Victoria is actually a kind and laid back character, but there's no doubt that her powers are badass. There seems to be a respect between the two in acknowledgement for the what the other is, both the good and the bad. There's something feral in them both and at times attempts to posses them. For Christian, it's his bloodlust, and for Victoria, it's her blood, or rather, the power in it. While Christian does show his "I gotta protect her" jones, it never felt possessive or stalkerish to me, as it has in other books. It felt more like a practical response to an actual threat to Victoria. She is brand new to this world; he's been in it as a vampire for almost two hundred years. He knows exactly what she's up against, and at the same time acknowledges that she likely is every bit the potential danger her enemies fear her to be. Added into the mix are secondary characters that are much more than filler - every one of them has a purpose, and it was SO refreshing to find they are not merely background noise.

Here's what makes this book a standout in urban fantasy/paranormal YA: Howard entwines personal, family, and mythical history and adds in a good dash of the 1800s. It feels seamless and makes the plot so interesting. Howard is descriptive, but not overly so, and thus the world building here is done naturally and as-it's-needed. The history and the world building combine and produce a story that is rife with politics, rivalries, betrayal, violence, and yes, death. In other YA paranormal/UF books, it sometimes can feel like that it's romance painted with a supernatural brush. In Bloodspell. the paranormal element feels like an established world with its very own conflicted history in which a Romeo and Juliet type romance takes place. It makes the story richer, the stakes higher, and I certainly am looking forward to #2. The last critique I

would give this book is that the ending could be shorter and more tightly written - it's a tad drawn out, but overall, Bloodspell is a great twist and a welcome addition to the young adult section. I recommend it.

Who I think will like this book - fans of:

-Revolution by Jennifer Donnelly: Bloodspell isn't as emotional as this one, but both Donnelly and Howard are good with research and historical detail.

-Nightshade by Andrea Cremer: completely different books, but both have that world building and political intrigue that really keeps the plot moving.

-The Greyfriar by Clay Griffith and Susan Griffith: no, it's not steampunk in the least, but there's something about the descriptions of how things are run, as in people, not clockworks and gears, that had me thinking about the world building in steampunk.

-Also, if you are a fan of Denise and Spade in the Night Huntress/Night Huntress World series by Jeaniene Frost, you may also like Christian and Victoria. They reminded me a little of them.

3.75/4.0 (would have been a very, very solid 4-stars if the ending hadn't gone long - the middle is awesome).

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## **Wanda says**

This book was so good. It's not your typical YA. Girls loves boy and boy loves her back. Thee end. No that's not how this book works. It's more defined more emotional. It's not your Cinderella story that's for sure. But it won't leave you hanging in the love part either.

Like moths to a flame. (As written in the book) That's exactly how Victoria and Christian are with each other in this paranormal YA. Their relationship at first were hot and cold. But Victoria in no way can resist Christian when he wasn't acting like a jerk. She was hooked onto him and they were hot together.

When Christian wasn't being a jerk and he lowered his guards, you can actually see how much he really cares for Tori (Victoria). And I actually felt it. There was a scene where Christian had to go away to take care of some business and he calls Victoria, just to urge her to be careful. He insists that she stays in company of her friends and not to go anywhere alone. Because he feared for her safety. He showed such a soft side to him with her that no one got to see but her. Here's a small scene....

"What do you want?" She repeated.

Christian swallowed, his eyes tormented.

He could never let her go.

"You. It's always been you."

If that scene didn't make you "aww" and possibly clutch your hand over your heart. I don't know what will. If my man told me that I'd be melting on the floor. Though he is romantic, so I shouldn't say that. But that's for a different blog post.

Victoria, being the witch that she is has to be careful. Because, they are people out there looking to take what she has. And what she has it's a blessing and a curse at the same time. Those that want it, don't know what they asking for, because those that have it, wish they didn't. So believe me when I tell you there's lots of action in this book. There's lots of magic and spells going around in this book. It has a bit of everything.

And if I can't convince you enough to go check this book out! Check out what Seventeen Magazine has to say about it. Here's a small portion on what they wrote:

You'll love it if... you're sick of all the lovey-dovey stuff other books can't seem to leave out of their supernatural stories. There is just the right amount of romance here, but it doesn't overpower the plot. The fight scenes are terrific, and much more satisfying than listening to people whine about wanting to be together forever!

Need I say I loved this book? NO? Good. Because I do. It was definitely a different read. It gets boring to read that the girls and guy gets together at the end with no consequences. But in this one, so much is at stake and they sacrifice so much just to be together. And that's what makes it different! It's actually refreshing to read a book that you can't actually predict. So let's not just make this a summer read like Seventeen magazine says. Let's also make it a cold season read too. It's good enough to curl up under your quilt and get lost in the world that Amalie created! A 5/5 stars and a Definite "Good Choice for Reading".

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## **Katy says**

**Please note:** I read and reviewed this book in October, 2011. I'm adding the disclosure that I received a copy of this book from JKS Communications (the author's publicist) in exchange for an honest review, and also updating the formatting.

**My Synopsis:** Victoria was more or less a normal girl – her parents were killed when she was nine and she has subsequently lived with a woman she calls Aunt Holly, who was a very close friend of her grandmother. She is attending a private prep school in a small town in Maine called St. Xavier's when she turns 17 – and everything changes. She discovers that she is the latest in a line of powerful witches, whose main strength lies in their blood. When she transfers to a different school for her senior year, she meets the handsome and enigmatic Christian Devereaux – their attraction is immediate. Their love is forbidden. Will she gain control of her blood magic, or will it control her? And will she and Christian be able to overcome centuries of mistrust and hatred to allow their love to grow, or will the inevitable problems arising from their differences drive them apart?

**My Thoughts:** This debut novel from Amalie Howard is a really amazing book. I was absolutely enthralled by the story as I was reading it. The struggles that Victoria goes through trying to maintain her equilibrium and control her magic, while at the same time dealing with school and friends and all sorts of normal teenage problems spoke volumes about her personal strength. The only thing that drove me nuts was that the whole relationship with Christian was filled with misunderstandings and tantrums – you know the sort. As Buffy said – *Love makes you do the wacky* – and Victoria and Christian are definitely doing the wacky all the time through the book. It got old by the 3rd argument about the same thing. But then I don't have a lot of patience with romance stuff; I think most people wouldn't have a problem with it, because it is pretty typical romance fare. Fortunately for me, there is plenty of action and plot and character development to keep my mind active. Overall, I really enjoyed the book and can highly recommend it to folks who enjoy paranormal/fantasy/vampires and witches and werewolves ohmy! Give it a read – and I hope to see many more books by this talented author in the future.

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## **Colleen Houck says**

What I really liked about this book was all the deadly spells. Never would have thought about eviscerating an enemy from the inside out or making their blood boil in their veins. Also like vampires who can fly.

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## **Emily says**

Victoria Warrick is used to being bullied but after an incident has her put in the hospital and losing most of her blood, she doesn't return. At seventeen years old, Victoria heads to a new school out of town where no one knows her history. She meets Christian Devereux right away and there is a chemistry neither can deny but for some reason Christian warns her away. The problem is as much as Christian warns her away they keep finding themselves in each other's paths.

Christian knows what Victoria is even though she seems to not. He also knows that witches and vampires do not mix, but he can't stay away from Victoria. When they finally confide in one another their feelings they work to stop the enemies who are intent on taking her and Christian is put in a position that will betray everything he is.

I liked this one quite a bit but it was a bit angsty in parts. I thought this was well written and liked how the story unfolded. Felt for Christian, he is in a bit of a bind with Victoria but he cannot deny his feelings. Great read.

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## **Jessica says**

I am in love with my friends. Not just with hot, hunky Christian, not just with Victoria's beautifully broken story, not even just with the amazing writing in this book, but honestly with the whole package. It has been a long time since a paranormal book has really taken my breath away. So long in fact, that I thought I was done with the concept of vampires, witches and the like. Bloodspell has officially changed my mind, and I'm smitten.

Let me start with the characters. For those of you out there who simply must fall in love with your characters in order to enjoy a book, welcome to your Eden. Victoria and Christian are gorgeously written, and perfectly flawed. See, there is no set line drawn between the "good" and "bad" sides of what the two of them are. Amalie Howard shows the inner battle of emotions that goes on in each of them. The all-consuming need to give in to their baser instincts. They make mistakes. They let the darkness within them take over at times. It's this flawed existence that makes them so amazing and so believable.

What I loved most of all was how Bloodspell takes everything that you know about witches and vampires, and blends it perfectly with brand new content. Lovers of both of these paranormal creatures will appreciate how Howard sticks to what we already know, and just adds in more fantastic back story for you to fall in love with. The blood that burns in Victoria's veins is well, rather vicious! Her powers have the potential to be dark and terrifying, or of course to be used for good. Add in the fact that her and Christian are not even supposed to be friends, much less more, and you have a recipe for a book that will keep you reading no matter what else you are supposed to be doing. Don't start this book if you need to be somewhere, or eat, or really anything else.

The action and fight scenes in this story are descriptive, and I liked how the violence that occurs with these two sets of paranormal creatures wasn't masked over. There is bloodlust. There is violence. Scenes happen where people die and their blood spills upon the Earth. It's not overly gory, but it's there. To me it was an essential part of the story to show that, no matter how composed they look on the outside, Victoria and Christian are constantly fighting that inner demon that is wanting to get out.

A delicious combination of older mythology, new powers, forbidden romance, and so much more, *Bloodspell* is a book that I cannot wait to read again. Luckily this is the first in a series. I cannot wait to see more from Amalie Howard and her vivid characters. Seriously, this has the highest seal of approval that little old me can give a book. LOVE! Go grab a copy and dive in. Let the darkness consume you.

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### **Beth says**

Victoria Warrick was orphaned at an early age. Raised by her grandmother's friend, she lives her life on the outside of society because she is "different". On her 17th birthday, she receives a special gift from her deceased grandmother...a pendant and a journal which unlocks the secrets to her very powerful blood. But is her blood and its power a blessing or a curse?

Christian Devereux, vampire with a conscience, and Victoria quickly develop strong feelings for each other but they can't be together. 1st – It is forbidden by vampire and witch law. 2nd – Victoria's blood calls and kills vampires. I was sold from the beginning on this new and exciting plot but got a little discouraged by the... I love you but I can't have you... I'm going to have you anyway...I can't have you... the ping ponging between Christian and Victoria happens through out most of this book and became a bit of an overkill for me.

Yes, it did have similarities to Bella and Edward although Victoria had her own powers and abilities which was definitely a plus.

**Bloodspell** is a very interesting and original twist to a vampire/teen girl love story. I enjoyed reading this book overlooking the ping pong issue. I appreciated the new story line and take on the vampire/witch dynamic and will be interested to see where it goes from here.

This copy of **Bloodspell** was given to me by Langdon Street Press in exchange for a honest review. This book is set for publication on June 1, 2012.

For More Reviews check out:

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### **Precious says**

Originally posted at Fragments of Life.

Victoria – Tori – was an outcast at her school. She never really thought much about it. But what she didn't know then was that there was more to it. On her seventeenth birthday, her aunt Holly gave her a gift from her grandmother. The journal inside it held her family's history and secret. She found out that she was a strong witch just like her ancestors. She struggled to accept this reality, even coming to the point that she intentionally stayed away from the journal and kept herself busy so that she would not think about it.

I have read novels about vampires and witches loathing each other but nothing comes close to Bloodspell. The history between vampires and witches that Howard weaved was captivating and heart-wrenching. I enjoyed reading about Tori's ancestry. The journal itself generated so much intrigue that it has become one of the things that I looked forward to.

Tori's blood was dangerous, craving spilled blood, death and sacrifice. It sang of dark desires and dark pleasures, infusing Tori with its evil nature. Not wanting to be like her ancestor, she struggled to control the blood, to prove that she was the master. I found Tori very human despite her gifts. She had that careful, sincere and concerned spark inside her that never vanished even as she embraced her powers. She sided with caution and refused to give in to her blood.

Tori and Christian's relationship was a difficult one. Aside from it being forbidden, both of them were experiencing the strain between them as they both struggled to control their inner demons. Their moments together were so sweet that they made me smile. But at other times, I was gripping the book, emotionally aching from their problems. Christian craved Tori's blood and he had to reign in the beast inside him, to make sure that he never slipped whenever they were together. Tori knew that her blood wanted to kill – even Christian – and took precautions too.

The action in Bloodspell was written well. It was as savage, inhuman and magical as the characters. I loved how the scenes reflected the true nature of vampires and witches. The aftermath of the fight scenes were also shown. During these scenes, the emotions of the characters, particularly Tori's, were explored. Tori often felt disgust and fear as she remembered her joy at killing and winning. She was still vulnerable inside even though she was strong. The drawbacks of being a witch was as great as her power.

Bloodspell is a captivating tale of forbidden love bloodlust and danger. Deliciously dark, fast paced and beautifully written, this novel will get the attention of paranormal romance readers. I highly recommend this! This reminded me of Vampire Diaries (the TV series) when it comes to suspense, action and unpredictability.

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### **Amalie Howard says**

I'm totally biased because I wrote it and love it! :) Hopefully you will also!

Bloodspell was selected as a SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE Summer Beach Read!!!

Look for more reviews, interviews and press features on the Bloodspell website. Check out the book trailer too in the Goodreads video section of my profile or on the Bloodspell website, and let me know what you think.

Enjoy Bloodspell!! :)

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## **Laura's Book Addiction says**

### **4.5 STARS**

Bloodspell is more than just your average YA vampire novel. Amalie Howard took something as unoriginal as vampire's and made it into something original and I love her take of vamps and witches.

The story begins with Victoria on her 17th birthday and what her aunt Holly gives her as a present from her dead grandma she receives a music box, Journal and a amulet necklace. As her day at school starts her powers start to manifest and she has no idea what is happening to her then comes the accident that forces her to go to a new school.

At the new school she meets Christian who is a 175 year old vamp with the most silver eyes Tori has ever seen. Tori doesn't know how to take his Jekyll and Hyde complex towards her but what she doesn't know is that it is against the law for vampire's and witches to be together and he constantly fights against himself for a taste of her blood and his need and the laws to be with her.

What I loved the most about Bloodspell has to be that the main character Victoria (Tori for short) isn't just the some helpless girl with no friends who falls for the vamp boy. She is a kick ass witch even if she doesn't know it straight away.

I loved all the other character's such as Angie, aunt Holly, Charla, Lucian and Gabe even with him being soooooo evil. I also really loved that it was told from Tori and Christian POV with was a nice surprise as I thought the book was just going to be Tori's voice.

Bloodspell is the story of blood, vamps, witches, war and a book that will sweep you away into a brand new world of paranormal romance you won't want to miss.

### **Favourite Quotes=**

- "Christian knew he was being reckless when it came to Tori Warrick. But for some reason he couldn't control himself when he was around her. He hadn't felt his human age in years but something about her made him feel like a fumbling awkward teenager."

- "For the first time, Victoria understood that the gray area between right and wrong had become larger, and more indistinct. Things, once simple, were more complicated. Black and white blurred into each other, and with this strange power of hers, intent wouldn't always be enough, it could always be twisted."

- "Don't be afraid of who you are. You cannot hope to control your power if you do not understand it and who you are. You must protect yourself at all cost, even against those you...love"

- "When we fall in love, it's for forever"

All in all I can't wait to read book two and whatever book's Amalie Howard writes next.

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## Fangs for the Fantasy says

I can't. It's no use, I just can't finish this book. The characters, their contrived, useless conflicts, the intriguing world that is hopelessly undeveloped and, above all, the immense cliché abuse just defeat me, Not only can I not finish this book but, since I was tempted to DNF it after a mere 10%, going any further would be unfair to the other DNF books that I finally gave up on.

Now, saying you're tempted to give up by 10% is pretty extreme – but this book begins with so many of the classic clichés, tropes and general fails that I was cringing.

Firstly, we have a prologue paragraph telling us there's a law that forbids vampires and witches from consorting.

Right, folks, who can tell me what the plot is about? If you answered "it's about a vampire and a witch falling in love" have a cookie. I have no idea why we have this new habit of giving away the plot in the opening prelude, especially when you have damn little plot, but it has to end.

Then we have a girl, bullied at school with dead parents (mark off two more points on your checklist). She has super special powers she just doesn't want because she wants to be normal, wooooo! Yes, it's another teenager with super powers who just wants to be like everyone else – like every teenager never. Mark another cliché off the checklist. Oh and she has a book that may guide her about her specialness but she just can't bring herself to read it because it's just too awful

She goes to a new school and meets a vampire (no he's not labelled as such but after the opening prelude why even pretend this is supposed to be a secret). And ZOMG he's hot and awesome and hot and sexy and hot and has an amazing voice and he's hot – this goes on for a few paragraphs.

Then we switch to his POV - actually, brief interlude for a side rant: the book keeps doing this. There's no chapter break or anything else, we're suddenly in Christian's head rather than Victoria's – suddenly her thoughts are a mystery and his are an open book. Then we whiplash back again – no rhyme or reason, no necessity, just constantly switching back and forth clumsily to allow more exposition

And yes, it's all about showing AND telling. If Victoria thinks Christian looks sad, she will describe his sadness, then we'll go into Christian's head to describe that yes, he is indeed sad. Interspaced with massive infodumping that is repeatedly shown or can easily be inferred but the author treats the audience like we're a bunch of concussed kittens who can't read any subtext at all. Which is probably why the opening paragraph appears just in case we didn't get the not-so-subtle-clues on the way.

Anyway, I was distracted by the awful writing – back to the first 10%: so we then enter Christian's head (and yes, he's a several hundred year old vampire going to school because... no, no reason, just because. After all, of course your 200 year old Parisian vampire aristocrat is going to go to a private school in rural Washingto - errr, Maine!) and he finds her awesome/sexy/hot/pure/wonderful/compelling/amazing/etc etc etc.

At this point I think they passed each other in a corridor. They have had zero meaningful interaction but both think the other is the most amazing thing in the world ever.

But there's more! Because not only are we going to have that old forbidden love thing coming to bite them on the arse, but it turns out that good/musty vampire Christian who never ever kills to feed because he's a good vampire, can't resist her! She smells so good, he can't be near her or he will drain her dry, nomnomnomnomnom! She just smells SO GOOD TO Edward- sorry, Christian. Can't imagine why I mixed them up.

Finish off with a pretentious hobby – am I the only one who sees a trend in poorly characterised YA protagonists having a pretentious hobby dropped on them to provide some rough attempt at character building and make them seem extra special and not like their shallow, lesser peers? It's usually classical literature, classical music or long dead artists. In this case it's classical music (we get to long dead artists later for a twofer).

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