



# Pretty Dead

*Francesca Lia Block*

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## **Pretty Dead** Francesca Lia Block

People pity me, but mostly they feel envy. I have all the luxury and freedom a girl my age could want.

Something is happening to Charlotte Emerson. Like the fires that are ravaging the hills of Los Angeles, it consumes her from the inside out. But whether it is her eternal loneliness, the memory of her brother, the return of her first love, or the brooding, magnetic Jared—she cannot say. What if it's something more . . .

Something to do with the sudden tear in her perfect nails. The heat she feels when she's with Jared. The blood rushing once again to her cheeks and throughout her veins.

For Charlotte is a vampire, witness to almost a century's worth of death and destruction. But not since she was a human girl has mortality touched her.

*In what way will you be transformed?*

Until now.

## **Pretty Dead Details**

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Author : Francesca Lia Block

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# From Reader Review *Pretty Dead* for online ebook

## Amanda says

The cover drew me in, even though I feel as if vampires have been overdone lately and far too often I find myself reading the same story with a different title. But this novel is eloquently written and not your run-of-the-mill teen vampire love story. Throughout the entire novel Charlotte's grief and depression can be felt. I find myself filled with sympathy for her loss. Otherwise the book falls emotionally flat.

It is not often that you get to hear of a vampire's past. Sure, they've lived 100 years, but what was the Holocaust like? In *Pretty Dead* Charlotte shares the horrors of the past with you. It sounds incredible to live for eternity, but this novel reminds you that humanity and love are more important. I do wish that there was more on the fact that Charlotte was a vampire. You could exchange the word vampire for immortal and you'd practically have the same story. Overall this one falls short for me.

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## Sue says

*Pretty Dead* just plain ole' sucked. Sorry, but I don't have any better way of expressing it. I thought Charlotte's relationship with her brother, Charles, was confusing at the least. A couple of statements seem to imply that she felt more of a romantic love than a brotherly love towards him. It was creepy. They swam naked together. She compared Charles' and her boyfriend's bodies. Seriously, something was not right there. Aside from the creepy "in love with my brother" theme going on, the "real" love interest was baffling as well. Here in the real world, I would have called Charlotte a rebound girlfriend to Jared not a true love...it seemed to be more about sex than anything else. I didn't really get the connection. Ok, yea there was that nice little conversation where he told her how he sees her and he was spot on. But there was nothing more to it! And then there's William...I didn't really understand him. I never did understand the reason why he followed Charlotte for so long. It it just because he was obsessed with her? Also all of the references to brand labels got to be a little excessive...it became exhausting. I didn't like the characters, the plot, the new "rule" that Block introduced to the vampire world (the one that allows the vamp to turn back to a mortal!) I didn't understand how Charlotte couldn't remember killing Emily? Was it supposed to be William's compulsion? I am unable to think of one redeeming quality that *Pretty Dead* possessed.

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## Kim says

I am sad.

I know that this is nothing new. An invisible wall of despondency surrounds me. I could rival any teenager with a slew of Gothic poetry. (*Bring it on, Bella... I can take you.*)

Anyway, this wall... it keeps people at bay. There are certain words that they will not use around me. (*Like saying to a blind man 'But, don't you see?'*) Mostly I am okay with this. It saves me from thinking, I can play a role, it eases people, and I feel safe. The problem is that other stuff, the stuff that I want to get through, is also kept at bay. Like that feeling you get when you are reading and a certain passage makes you shudder (*people say 'someone is walking on your grave'.*) I miss having words bring tears to my eyes. This will come back, I hope. It's just that sometimes, it's not soon enough.

Take for instance, Francesca Lia Block. When I was 20, I devoured her Dangerous Angels: The Weetzie Bat Books series. I sat on subway platforms and saw the Hollywood Hills; I imagined that the broken girls sitting under weeping willows had guardian angels. I saw my future self, with children who wore taffeta gowns and combat boots to school because they wanted to, whose innocence and genuine trust would take on the big bad world and win. What's this called? Hope? Inspiration? I can't remember. (*Instead, I have My Chemical Romance Tees and 10-year-old daughters who haven't believed in Santa in years, but just decided to fill me in.*)

Anyway, Francesca used to give me this. I poured through her work, I felt the wonder and to use the cliché, had a spring in my step. Oh, to be so young. I guess I was hoping that this still rang true, I realize that I'm a lifetime away from that girl that used to see Harry Houdini's mansion when she thought of Hollywood. I'm jaded, guarded, I believe in the Miracle Mile now.

However, these are just words strung haplessly together and I'm evading the review... per usual. If you've stuck with me this far, you might as well continue.

Francesca decides to take on the V word. I'm sure she's written about it before. Before Bella and Edward, when it was still just a flighty subject written by women in long flowing gowns. I just can't recall a whole book on the subject. She is still in the Hollywood Hills, her girls are still broken and looking for rapture, her boys are still beautiful and lost. The words still flow and I can still see the desperation in their dancing and their sunset on the beaches. L.A. is still the wonderland that it was in 1990. (*But, I'm different.*) I wish I could still be that girl, I wish that I could still feel that awe. I wish that it only took a book, taffeta and combat boots to make me believe.

I am sorry Francesca, I let you down.

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## Greta is Erikasbuddy says

Pretty Dead was a story about a girl vampire. And not just ANY Girl vampire.... Actually, it was a story about a girl vampire who's pretty much moving backwards and can't figure out why. Instead of dining on pouches of blood she's starting to eat regular old people food.

This book wasn't the best by FLB that I have read. I read a review that said someone must have told FLB that vampires were in so she had to write one too.... well, I agree....I think this was written just because of popularity and not because something inside FLB told her to. Probably a publisher or an agent thought it was a good idea. I for one don't think that FLB's heart was in it. It wasn't magical.

The story was good but I think it could have been better. I guess they all can't be winners :)

I can't wait to read her next book but this just wasn't something I would want to read again and again.

The cover's pretty, though :)

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## **Brianna says**

I admit, I closed this book after like 3 pages. I am sick of this author's characters looking EXACTLY the same. Have some flaws already.

Jutting, curved hip bones.

Swan neck.

Plump lips.

Perfect breasts.

Long, lean limbs.

Mostly quotes up there. I just... This was me giving the author another try and I couldn't get past that. Maybe I'll give the book another try but after however many books of hers I've read, I am tired of all the main characters being skinny perfect things. The one time she wrote a 'flawed' character, the book was a quest for this 'fat' girl to be 'thin'.

I guess I am just not into that shallow of character development. I've read books like that before and they leave me feeling disgusted at the end.

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## **Lillie Roberts says**

Charlotte Emerson is devastated. Once a care free teen, twin to Charles, but when he succumbs to rheumatic fever, she loses him... lost to her forever, lost to her parents, and to those who enjoyed his essence. She's sick and tired, sick with his lost, tired of the pain. When into her live walk the mysterious William Stone Elliot, he offers takes away the loss and to gives something else in return.

William Stone Elliot, made vampire, has long sought the one to accompany him on his travels through the destruction created by mankind; his art, his muse, his desire. As bombs fall over Paris he remarks "Isn't it beautiful." He sees artistry in destruction. Is Charlotte the one to walk through death with him?

Now Char is irrevocably tied to William who made her what she is today. Pretty Dead.

Pretty Dead by Francesca Lia Block is a book of what it's like to wake up a teenage forever. Forever Pretty. Forever Dead. Forever the Pretty Dead. No way to move forward, no way to go back, and after innumerable years as an immortal, Charlotte would like a chance at being human, to undo what's been done. William is what happened to Charlotte when her brother, Charles, died, when she thought she would die too. When her parents wanted to die, who forgot she existed. But, instead of death, William brings another kind of life, immortal life. William views life (death and destruction) as art, it's always a work of wonder and beauty, what the mortals will inflict upon themselves. What they will inflict upon the mortals. And Will's greatest work of art is Charlotte. Only she doesn't want to be anymore.

Pretty Dead is the tale of what happens when a vampire doesn't want immortality anymore. When she wants to turn back the clock. When she wants to grow up, live life, be normal. It's also the story of a girl jealous of what another has, and when she offered the opportunity to take her friend's place, she does. Francesca Lia Block is a new author for me, but this won't be her last book I read. I was impressed with her take on vampirism, if the clock can be turned back, and what if anything can make it happen. There's this intricate relationship between the characters, Charlotte is hiding from William, and hiding what she is. Emily is

hiding the facts of her life and what she wants to be, what she wants to have, under the guise of Charlotte's best friend. Jared is hiding from life, especially life after Emily. If you want to try a different type of YA paranormal romance, try this one. It's a quick read, approximately two hours cover to cover. There's some action, emotion twisting loss, and realization of what life's all about. It's a read YA lovers will not want to miss. If you'd like more information about Ms. Block or her books, please visit her website.

I received my copy of *Pretty Dead* in a contest held by Bitten by Books. All opinions expressed are my own.

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## Commodore says

I'm guessing I'll always have a soft spot for Francesca Lia Block. I liken it to Jack Kerouac: either you found this author at the right time in your life and he/she really spoke to you, and so for the rest of your life you look on their works fondly, even if you grow up enough to see the flaws that are there, or you didn't.

So yes, this book isn't the best book ever. It's not even the best among Francesca Lia Block books. There are parts where things aren't quite properly explained, Charlotte is the most perfectly perfect who ever perfected, and Jared may or may not be the reincarnation of Charlotte's twin brother (which didn't really bother me). But I loved it all the same.

One review I read before picking up this book said that it, "didn't bring anything new to the vampire genre." But given the last time the teen vampire genre was given a major shakedown, we were all "treated" to vampires that sparkled and a heavy-handed abstinence message. And for all of Edward's "No, I won't change you, being a vampire is the *worst*," Meyer gave them no real flaws, and thus no reason not to aspire to be them. Charlotte does have everything, but you get a sense of her desperate loneliness, and that a life of wandering around with William, looking at pretty things and watching destruction in equal measure, was really sad and unfulfilling. I liked the divide between artists and vampires, how one could *be* an object of creativity as a vampire, but not make anything themselves. That is a truly sad position to me.

I'd buy the book, but I wish I could find another cover. One without that stupid visual, which I think is more CW than FLB, and one without a promo from that *dreadful* Cassandra Clare.

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## AH says

Pretty Disappointing.

As I read *Pretty Dead* by Francesca Lia Block, a thought got stuck in my head. Why would you go back and relive high school if you were immortal? If you already had a nice home, a fancy car, and nice clothes, why would go back to that awkwardness? Yes, I know they did it in another YA book about vampires, but at least in that book, the characters *tried* to fit in, in their own special ways.

The main character Charlotte seems to stick out like a sore thumb. She has it all – a beautiful beachfront home, lovely original artwork, money, a fancy car, and beautiful designer clothes. So much emphasis is on materialistic things. It literally felt like every sentence began with “I was wearing a dress by \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank with your favorite designer). Once or twice, I wouldn’t mind, but the incessant talk of designer

clothes became tiresome.

Then there is the rather disjointed feeling of the book. Part of the book is written as kind of a journal of Charlotte's early life as a vampire and a procurer of "food" for her maker. This could have been really fascinating, after all Charlotte lived through some very interesting time periods. Instead it felt like a primer on fashion through the ages.

The book is relatively short and a quick read. It just left me a little unsatisfied because I had heard such great things about this author.

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## **Mandy Brouse says**

I'm not sure how to best start this review, but my very first reaction, even after reading the first PAGE of *Pretty Dead*, was "wow. Really? Wow".

Francesca Lia Block's writing astonished me. I was almost unprepared to read this book. I'm going to copy out the first paragraph because after I read it my mind shifted gears, knowing I was about to read something totally different:

Teenage girls are powerful creatures. I remember; I was once one of them. They are relentless and underutilized. They want what they want, and they will do what they must to get it. Love, possessions, beauty, food, sweets, friends. Unless they are crushed so hard as to give up. But then they are just as relentless, only seeking different things. Destruction, annihilation. Unless they can find a way to birth something beautiful out of themselves. In this way teenage girls and Night's children are not that much different, are we?

*Pretty Dead* is a book about vampires unlike any other teen vampire novel published now. It has a classic Anne Rice sensibility; old world vampires and the weight of the universe. But it's also about true love, it's magic, and centuries-old boredom, brother to destruction. Sadly, the cover is misleading. This story has real weight to it, and the cover is too light; it has this cute candy-sweetheart look, where the story has this deep passion and intensity. The story is also surprisingly erotic, definately for an older reader. It's a powerful read.

Read the rest of this review on my blog: <http://eoseventeen.blogspot.com/2009/...>

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## **Grace says**

before reading: I suspect FLB + vampires = hilarious. But will it be worse than *Twilight*?

Comparison to *Twilight*: This doesn't seem to have the overt ideological problems of *Twilight*, but it was also a less engaging read than the half of *Twilight* I read, and had plenty of small details that were problematic. It also didn't really give any developed vampire mythology, but was just about a few random vampires (but they were somehow at the root of many of the worlds greatest tragedies). FLB seemed to be trying to make a statement about teenage girlhood (two meanings of "the V word" on page 73) or about the

similarities between vampires and artists, but honestly all I got out of it was that vampires are really annoying.

Typical FLB things that bothered me:

1. Naming the designer of a piece of clothing does not describe how it looks (or only does to a very limited audience)! And I just didn't buy that the vampires would want to wear the trendy clothes of every decade, or the way FLB made Charlotte describe her own appearance.
2. Block kept writing little things about how powerful teenage girls are, but then basically says that Emily can't process her rape and remain a living girl? I guess becoming a vampire is better than suicide, but if those are the only two choices the character had what is the choice FLB is presenting to the real kids who are reading this? Besides that, Char can only be really freed from the man who thinks he made her by a. falling in love with a boy and b. sacrificing another girl to replace her with her maker--how is this empowering?
3. Racial/cultural exotification--being multiracial is what makes Jared beautiful (though he's "embarrassed" by it), and of course when William ties Char to a bed he uses a ripped kimono and she calls him master in Japanese (in response to Hiroshima)

This review isn't well written/hasn't covered everything I think about the book, but I'm not going to waste more time writing this than I did reading the book.

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## **Shirley :) says**

Charlotte Emerson used to be a normal girl. One who would run through the fields and play with her twin brother Charles. Though a deep connection they shared was that they communicated by mind and feelings. They were inseparable and loved each other endlessly. But one day Charles dies with Rheumatic Fever. Charlotte never speaks and never acts like herself since then. One night though, Charlotte meets the "notoriously handsome" William Stone Eliot. But what Charlotte doesn't know as she meets him is what he is. She knows that something about William is deeply nerving. But she cannot find words to say what he is. Vampire. She begins to feel attraction and jealousy for William. He too falls for Charlotte. Her blonde hair, full lips, blue eyes and long legs make her his perfect prey. William turns Charlotte into a vampire after she asks him. She doesn't realize how impulsively she decided this. Without thinking of how'd she spend an eternity with sorrow and pain because she is without her Charles and everyone who she seems to find a way to love, dying, and she keeps living. Until she meets Emily. A girl who helped Charlotte find herself and notice the beauty everything possesses. Everything that is alive. Everything that is living. Everything that dies. But when Emily passes, Jared begins to notice Charlotte. Weirdly, because Jared was Emily's boyfriend until she died. Jared notices Charlotte. Her beauty within, her way of walking as if lived many years, her long words and her loving and caring actions. Charlotte begins to fall in love with Jared because he speaks to her as if he knew her life. Speaks to her as if he knew who Charlotte was more than she did herself. He speaks to her, her human side, but still loves her how she is and what she is. But suddenly William is back in Charlotte's life after many years of no encounter with him, after many years of leaving William because every time he is around something horribly wrong always happens. But this time William isn't alone. He has turned Emily. And Jared knowing Charlotte's secret want to be immortalized by William to be with Charlotte forever. But Charlotte does not want that for Jared because she knows he doesn't understand the suffering it brings. But Jared becomes brainwashed to a point where Charlotte realizes one of her great mistakes. That it was Charlotte herself that killed Emily because of how jealous she was of Emily being a human and having Jared there that truly loved her. Something Charlotte was afraid but yearning to have. Jared now knowing this



began to look at Charlotte as a monster. Something she was portrayed as. They never spoke after that for a long time because Charlotte felt in deep sorrow thinking Jared would forgive her mistake and look past the beast that took over and at her, her true self. Until one day Jared came to apologize to Charlotte and Charlotte realized because William had turned Emily into his vampire now, Charlotte was now human. Something she regretted abandoning. Her humanity. It was back and although she knew herself that her mortal life was to end one day she did not care for she possessed the beauty and name of a human not a monster.

I liked this book a lot because of the vivid pictures I formed in my head from the clear details and beautiful wording. I recommend this book to teens and anyone who likes vampires or books of deep, true passion. I liked how the author described every person and scenery and wrote the worded meanings beautifully. My favorite quote is, " (...\*will write it in a moment\*) "

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### **Trisha says**

Hmmm...this was an interesting concept, but I didn't like how it was executed.

So, the idea that a vampire might be able to go back and become human again. Interesting, I thought. Charlotte seems to be going through that transition as she gets her bearings living alone and being closer to humans than she has in a long time.

But the writing. It's flowery and arts-y. Like a long winded poem, only more detached and confusing. The chapters are more like diary entries, only lacking emotion but just windy breezy weird ideas all thrown together with sudden sporadic dialogue.

I don't understand why Jared liked her.

Charlotte talked about her breasts more than anyone else in the whole book.

William is never fully developed and is, instead, this convenient typical "bad guy" - I think he might even have a manic laugh.

Emily. Did we ever understand her? She was never flushed out except as just someone else that was jealous of Charlotte's things. Funny, they were both so jealous of each other.

meh. I gave an extra star for the cover - I do love it.

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### **Krys says**

Sigh, oh Francesca Lia Block... you had me at wine and seductions of young, impressionable beauties with satin ball gowns and Portishead. I always am impressed with Block's writing ability and her nuance, particularly in how she couples words and imbues them with about ten different meanings. Eventually I want to read everything that Block writes, and I am slowly working my way through it all... must make a point of reading the Weetzie Bat books soon... mental note. I've written it on the internet...so it must be so.

So why the four stars if I liked it so much? Well, even though I liked it and I can't identify anything particularly, glowingly wrong about "Pretty Dead" I can't quite give it a perfect rating. I wasn't crazy wowed.

It was good, I enjoyed the writing, I enjoyed the story. It was just...just.

The story itself is a vampire story, one of those through the sprawling ages, present at every major world/cultural event kind of vampire story. It actually reminds me a touch of Virginia Woolf's "Orlando" in places...the continuing immortality...the changes that Charlotte goes through... the angst...very Orlando-esque. And, in typical Block fashion it rounds itself off in a very comforting way.

It's good, it's just doesn't have that extra "Oh my gods gush!" factor. Still, an under perfect Block book is still lightyears ahead of many others. This won't disappoint the vampire fans looking for a new book

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### **~Tina~ says**

There is a lot of potential in this book. The writing is very well done but this plot line and it's characters are very strange and confusing.

In short, This book is weird and not for me.

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### **Trin says**

I read this because I was excited to see a Teenage Vampire Book in which the *female* half of the romantic pair has fangs. Block certainly goes in a different direction than most of the books in this genre--*Pretty Dead* is darker, and a whole lot sexier. But it's still not particularly *good*. There's nothing empowering or even all that interesting about Vampire Charlotte; she became a vampire at the teeth of a controlling douche who still rules a great deal of her thoughts, and she became rich by seducing an older guy and then waiting for him to die. (I'd make a cheap Anna Nicole Smith joke, but I guess that'd be tacky now. Rats.) And while Block can certainly spin some sensual prose, it feels meaningless to me. Careless. Just as this book's characters are careless: it's like reading *Daisy Buchanan, Vampyre*. (Stop with the Vamp Darcy idiocies, publishers, and have a go at that!) For example: toward the end of the book, a bunch of people die in an explosion that Charlotte has a chance to stop, but she--and the reader?--apparently isn't required to care because the main characters get their happy ending. Yeah. Guess what? I no longer care about *you*, dead girl.

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