



## Professor's Keeper

*Nicole Dennis*

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## **Professor's Keeper** Nicole Dennis

Child prodigy, scientist, and, professor Alistair Tarrellton knows research, not people. Hiding behind glasses and an overstated vocabulary, he faces panic attacks and headaches if situations become too uncomfortable. As head of the college's bioinformatics area of study, he teaches classes and runs two labs, but he prefers to hide in his private one at home. A stop at the grocery store on his way home one night puts Alistair in the middle of a botched robbery. While a panic attack freezes him, he watches former Marine Rhys Blackwood take command with ease, and one touch from this powerful man pushes away Alistair's fear. Rhys quickly invites himself into Alistair's home and life, and while part of Alistair doesn't believe he can afford the distraction of a relationship, the rest of him wants the other man to never leave.

## **Professor's Keeper Details**

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# From Reader Review Professor's Keeper for online ebook

**Cole Riann says**

*Review posted at Brief Encounters Reviews.*

Alistair, who is simply called “The Professor”, is definitely absent-minded and quite mad, though his constant time in the safety of his lab is not to brew up crazy experiments, but some very important chemical research for several world governments. After a very difficult day of having to stand up in front of his students and teach, where he feels the most uncomfortable, The Professor stops at a nearby store he frequently visits on his way home to get some ingredients for that night’s dinner. Only, just as he is greeted by a very handsome Marine, the store is robbed and gunpoint. The very forward and competent veteran quickly takes care of the situation, leading The Professor into another anxiety attack. To his surprise, the close proximity of the sexy Marine named Rhys does much more to calm his nerves than the tension ball he constantly squeezes in his pocket. The real problem, though, is that apparently Rhys has taken a liking to The Professor and sees that he needs a keeper, thus inviting himself over for dinner and into his very structured life.

Though the heart of this story is quite cute, I had several problems with the writing that took most of the joy for me. First, I didn’t quite understand what Rhys saw in The Professor. He is completely socially inept and has no clue how to have a personal relationship with anyone. Therefore, the relationship is completely one-sided. While I could see Rhys maybe being a masochist and taking care of The Professor without anything in return for a while, I just couldn’t see it happening in the long-run. After all, his behavior isn’t just something he can turn off on a dime, it is the fundamental way he was raised and his very early and established behavior of deflection. Something like that just doesn’t change overnight.

Secondly, I had a huge problem with much of the writing. Much of this should have been caught during editing, because I really felt like the writing choices didn’t serve the purpose they were obviously meant to have. There’s a very specific way that the author writes The Professor’s speech when he is nervous (which is most of the time, honestly.) The best way to describe it is that he speaks just like Sheldon from The Big Bang Theory. Here, in response to Sam’s (the shopkeeper) inquiry into his health after the robbery and his panic attack:

I’m reaching an acceptable level of normalization. I find myself rather embarrassed for my reactions,’ Alistair said.

Where this overly stilted dialogue works well in a comedy, I felt like it fell a little bit flat here. That’s pretty much how he talks about... 50% of the time. I felt like the author wanted to show through the writing how The Professor’s nervousness alienates him from the world, because he erects his wall of intelligence in front of everyone else. The problem I found with that is that it is really the only way we’re shown his behavior through the writing. If this were written in first person with The Professor as the narrator and some other behavioral things thrown in to make a unique voice, it would have worked, but as it is, I felt like it alienated *me* from the story. Not only did the strange way of speaking throw me out of the flow of the story, but I often found that the words just didn’t seem well chosen, in the dialogue and the narration. “...slipping back into

scientist mode at the sight of his beloved laboratory lighting up with his presence in the room”, and “...you lit all the right buttons inside me.” Now, I know that I got picky as soon as the dialogue started bothering me, but little things like awkward word choices (buttons lighting up instead of being pushed, and the personification of the laboratory) and Rhys’ voice bleeding into a quasi-Professor tone at times become much more visible when something else drew my critical eye.

I hate saying “I really wanted to like this book because...”. Most of the time that doesn’t make much sense, but here I think it does. I felt like this story had a lot of potential, but unfortunately I couldn’t get past the writing and never really felt the connection between the couple. Therefore, I have to grade this one lower than I wanted to.

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### **Samuel says**

there was a beginning and end but what happened to the middle?

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### **A??ela W. says**

This was a short quick read that I thought was ok. Alistair Tarrellton was a child prodigy, scientist, and, professor and he has know people skills at all. Rhys Blackwood is a former Marine who takes charge when he goes to the grocery store while Alistair freezes. I thought that it was kind of creepy that Rhy just invites himself to live with Alistair. I also had trouble connecting to Alistair he was too absentminded for me. This was my first time reading this author. This book was well written with no errors in grammar or spelling.

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### **Leaundra says**

Loved it! Rhys and Alistair were a perfect match. Rhys got Alistair!!

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### **Jennifer?Pher? says**

Suspending belief and all, I liked it, it worked.

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### **Kathleen says**

The concept for this story was very intriguing. An absent minded, social inept professor is rescued during a grocery store hold up by an injured, retired marine. Cue hurt comfort story. However, for some reason this story didn't really connect with its potential. While I understand that the professor had an awkward way of speaking because of his personality, I felt like all the dialogue was stilted, not just the professor's. Also, Rhys was by turns overbearing and a bit creepy. He also acted a bit like a doormat a lot of the times. His character did not feel cohesive. It was also odd that he decided he wanted to move in with Alistair after only knowing him a few hours. The relationship seemed uneven, unrealistic and awkward. I am not sure if this stems from

the fact that she was *trying* to make Alistair awkward and just didn't succeed in the writing of it or if her writing is just awkward. I would definitely be willing to try another of Nicole's books to see because the underlying plot was interesting and I see potential but this one did not do it for me. **2 stars**.

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## Karel says

**4/15/2013 Edit:** Re-read what I said about this book. I must have been drunk. Character-driven story? I think I meant awkward-kink-device-driven story.

MCs were written awfully, and for a short, character-driven story, it pretty much stoned this story dead.

Alistair talks like a thesaurus, or maybe a fast food cashier. Would you like some big words with that sentence, sir? And the answer would be yes every time. It's painful reading his conversations. It's like reading an encyclopaedia article, except an encyclopaedia article isn't even half that stilted.

Meanwhile, Rhys is like the poster boy for stranger danger. He pretty much stalked Alistair, followed him home, browbeat him into letting him into the house, used his kitchen (wouldn't be surprised if Mr. Creepy drugged his dinner while he was at it) and basically intimidated Alistair into letting him stay. I bet if you look up the Yellow Pages for Professional Creep you'll see this guy listed there.

Overall, an unpleasant and awkward read.

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## LauraSt says

This was just ridiculous

The idea was promising, a child prodigy/professor/scientist and an ex military man meet in the middle of a robbery, oh but it was GOLD!

Problem... Alistair was so antisocial it wasn't even funny, and suddenly he meets Rhys and he feels safe and the panic attacks stop and three seconds later Rhys decides to move with him and be his caretaker and protect him from bills, what the fucking fuck!!??

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## Serena Yates says

The somewhat unusual combination of an absent-minded professor and a take-charge ex-Marine made me smile. And even though the reasons why these two work so well together are not clear, I found myself smiling at the single-minded dedication with which the Marine went after Alistair. Love's workings are meant to be mysterious, and even the professor has to admit it in the end: love is not logical, but his feelings for Rhys are very real.

Alistair is one of the nerdiest, most intelligent, and least socially able people I have ever read about. Everything from his behaviour to his life choices and speech patterns is consistent with his genius-level and very theoretical intelligence. Outside the laboratory and his very safe environment he really is much like the 6-year old kid he was when he entered university. I guess that explains why he never grew up much beyond that social/emotional level.

Rhys is more patient than a saint! He clearly is very attracted to Alistair and feels extremely protective of him. He takes a lot of crap from his as well – it must be true love. When Alistair does come out of his shell, though, it is clearly more than worth the wait. Every professor should have a keeper like Rhys!

If you like stories about opposites that attract, if a wounded ex-Marine and a hyper-intelligent professor seem like an interesting pairing to you, and if very hot action between the sheets (or rather, on the sofa) is your thing, you may like this story.

NOTE: This book was provided by Silver Publishing for the purpose of a review on QMO Books.

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### **Kinny says**

I usually like Nicole Dennis stories but this one bored me a bit. Ex marine just moves in and does the housework like an unpaid maid. I did not feel the connection with these two. Love felt one sided to me most of the time then HEA. HUH?

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### **Elsbeth says**

Writing was okay but the romance wasn't there and it was yaoi style.  
Plus it was too expensive for what it was...should be more like 99 cents.

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### **Sapphera says**

Overall this book was incredibly stilted. The action focused itself round what just appears to be love at first sight from the marine, but he was forced into being a side character to the professors focus on his work. Although this authors writing style was smooth and a easy flow to read, Alistair's language just felt like the sentence had been written normally then attacked by a thesaurus. It reminded me of Joey from Friends trying to sound more mature until he ended up changing his name to 'baby kangaroo' it was too unnatural.

There are little mistakes everywhere, some pointed out in other reviews, the one that I picked up on was the emails being sent to "Japan, France, Australia and here" yet the conference occurred with French, Japanese, Italian and Boston scientists.

When he said goodbye to the French scientist, he used 'bonjour' which is only used as goodbye by Canadians, to a European that would have been daft saying hello to her.

In the end the 'distance' that the professor put between the outside world and himself, put a distance between

this being a nice flowing read, to a forced and clumsy execution. There was too much work put into trying to make this accurate, rather than making it enjoyable, causing it to jump about and to make the budding relationship more of a side plot. The character interactions were good, they were just overwhelmed by unimportant jargon that became too much of the focus.

Will try to read more from this author, to see if this is just a one off issue caused by a bad focus or an ongoing issue, but I don't plan to do this anytime soon.

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### **Portia says**

Alistair is the quintessential goofy professor. He got his first college degree while kids his age were still learning to tie their shoes. He is a certified genius with zero social skills. He may be able to map the human genome with his eyes closed, but he could really use a keeper in his personal life. Rhys is a wounded soldier who finds taking care of Alistair is more fun than rehab.

I hate to say it, but this is the first Nicole Dennis book that I enjoyed start to finish. She writes really sweet romances that just don't appeal to my jaded nature. Professor's Keeper was sweet but not too sappy. Alistair is the cutest thing. He reminds me a lot of the Criminal Minds character Dr. Spencer Reid. He uses big words when he's nervous. (\* Note: I would have given this story a higher rating, except for the fact that sometimes Alistair fell out of character and used words that were not consistent with his history or education.) Rhys may be big and strong, but since being forced to leave the military, he's kind of lost. Taking care of Alistair gives him a reason to wake up in the morning. He is organized and patient and just what Alistair need. And sexually, Alistair takes to intimacy like a duck to water. I got a bit nervous, when after only 4 hours Rhys invited himself to move into Allister's home. But, while they shared a living space, Alistair asked the right questions to let me know he was not a complete codependent git. The guys take things pretty slow and everything is not champagne and roses. Trust me, when I say, Alistair can throw one hell of a temper tantrum. The I Loves you came early, but it wasn't too far outside the realm of plausibility.

I also had a few hiccups with medical procedure and the whole burn rehab process, but most people wouldn't notice. Me...major distraction. All in all, like I said, this is a sweet romance and I enjoyed reading it.

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### **Catherine says**

**\*\*\* 2.5 Stars \*\*\***

A cute short story about an unlikely couple. Unfortunately, between the insta-love and the fact that the voice of Rhys was consistently inconsistent (flip-flopping between extremely proper and good 'ole boy), it had some definite issues.

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### **Sair says**

very short story

Started out really strong with lots of interesting details - the lessons, the phobias, the coping mechanisms, the

robbery, the house, the siblings .... then it trickled away to not much substance at all. I'd recommend that this promising author flesh it out more. I like the gentle romantic style she has, but a stronger finish would be much appreciated.

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