

ELITE GUARDIANS [1]

ALWAYS WATCHING

A NOVEL

LYNETTE EASON



a division of Baker Publishing Group
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Lynette Eason, *Always Watching*
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Published by Revell
a division of Baker Publishing Group
P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287
www.revellbooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Eason, Lynette.

Title: Always watching : a novel / Lynette Eason.

Description: Grand Rapids, MI : Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group.

[2016] | Series: Elite guardians ; 1

Identifiers: LCCN 2015037005 | ISBN 9780800723262 (softcover)

Subjects: LCSH: Bodyguards—Fiction. | Celebrities—Fiction. | Stalkers—Fiction. |

GSAFD: Suspense fiction. | Mystery fiction. | Christian fiction.

Classification: LC PS3605.A79 A79 2016 | DDC 813/.6—dc23 LC record available at
<http://lcn.loc.gov/2015037005>

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Published in association with Tamela Hancock Murray, The Steve Laube Agency, 5025 N. Central Ave., #635, Phoenix, AZ 85012

16 17 18 19 20 21 22 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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As always, this book wouldn't be possible without the love and support of my family, so I dedicate it to you. Jack, Lauryn, and Will, I love you like crazy.

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[1]

THURSDAY EVENING

The music played in the background while the charity's benefactors finished their dinner. A few danced, some chatted. Others looked slightly bored with the whole thing.

But one person caught her eye.

She watched the elegantly dressed female from across the room. She fit in nicely with the crowd, blended well. But stood out in one regard.

"He's mine," she whispered. "He's mine and you can't have him. Go away." No one knew what it had taken for her to get here tonight. No one knew the work she'd put in to making sure she was at this event. No one. And no one was going to ruin it either.

So what should she do? She had seen the woman following him, watching him, her eyes tracking his every movement, never leaving him alone. Even following him to the bathroom and back. Oh, she was discreet. She never made a move to approach, but she watched.

Her heart thumped in time with the upbeat music. How could

she get him to see her? Truly see that they belonged together and had belonged together . . . forever?

Grudgingly, she admitted that the woman was pretty. Dark hair and eyes. Just the kind of woman he would be attracted to. “Well, you can’t have him.” She paused to draw in a deep breath and take another bite of her orange-glazed duck.

It would be fine.

She chewed, swallowed, and looked up. And met the eyes of the woman across the room. She dropped her gaze back to her plate. Why was she looking at her? Did she see something? Could she know what she was thinking?

Another deep breath. Of course not. She couldn’t get stupid now. She glanced at the man who’d stolen her heart. And some fat cow at his side. Why had he brought her? She reached for her glass.

“Are you all right? You look like you’re agitated.”

She nearly choked on the sip of tea. “Agitated?” As good a word as any, she supposed. She placed the glass back on the table and forced a smile. “No. I’m just fine, thank you.”

“Good, I’m glad.” He took the seat next to her. “You look beautiful tonight.”

She swallowed, despising the lump in her throat. “Thank you.”

“I’m glad you could make it.”

Was he? She glanced at the woman across the room again. “I wouldn’t have missed it.” Good, she was getting her composure back.

“Of course not. You deserve this.”

She stared at him. “I do?” Then blinked and gave a small laugh. Thankfully, it came out low and amused, not coarse and nervous like she felt.

“You do. I think you deserve to have whatever makes you

happy.” He smiled and his white teeth flashed bright in his tanned face.

She tilted her head. “Are you flirting with me?” Because if he was, he was out of luck. Her heart was already taken.

He chuckled. “Would you like to dance?”

“You want to dance? With me?”

“I asked, didn’t I?”

“Then I’d love to.” Maybe *he* would see and would take note. She rose and placed her hand in his. Then glanced back at the woman across the room. The other woman’s eyes were back on Wade.

The fury renewed its desire to come out, to spill over onto the woman. But she held it back.

“Is there a problem?” her dance partner asked.

“What do you mean?”

“You seem tense.”

“I’m fine.”

He nodded in the woman’s direction. “You don’t like her?”

She stiffened. “I don’t know her.”

“At least you didn’t pretend to misunderstand who I was talking about. I like that.”

She was in control. She could handle this. She smiled up at him. “Forget her. I already know what you do. Why don’t you tell me something about yourself that I won’t read in the papers.” She listened with one ear while her gaze drifted back to the woman who couldn’t seem to keep her eyes off Wade. Yes, it might be time to do something about her. But that was fine. She’d killed for him before, she’d have no trouble doing it again.