



The Venus Complex

Barbie Wilde

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A man rises out of an abyss of frustration and rage and creates works of art out of destruction, goddesses out of mere dental hygienists and beauty out of death. It's also about the sickness and obsession that is LOVE. Enter into Michael's world through the pages of his personal journal, where every diseased thought, disturbing dream, politically incorrect rant and sexually explicit murder highlights his journey from zero to psycho.

The Venus Complex Details

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Author : Barbie Wilde

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From Reader Review *The Venus Complex* for online ebook

Sarah Hall says

I have an undying appreciation for stories that are creatively unpleasant, and this is easily one of the most creatively unpleasant things I've ever read. The back cover compares it to *American Psycho*, which made me scoff and roll my eyes before my reading commenced. Now that I've ingested the whole thing, though, it's actually a very astute comparison. I don't think I've ever read a book this wholeheartedly dedicated to exploring such a thoroughly repulsive and irredeemable character since *American Psycho*. In terms of sexually violent stories it actually eclipses Poppy Z. Brite's *Exquisite Corpse*, the book I'd previously held as an untouchable benchmark for such literature. Although I still think *Exquisite Corpse* is the more finely written book, Wilde's novel eclipses it in terms of sheer ballsy nerve.

As the preceding comparisons might have tipped you off, this is the kind of highly positive review that should probably come with a disclaimer. Like, don't read this just because I'm giving it five stars. If spending 230 pages deep in the mindset of a misogynistic necrophiliac serial killer doesn't sound like your thing then you should probably disregard this review. If, though, you have an appreciation for works that serve up artistry and disgust with equal proportion, this might be for you.

J K says

First impressions now I've completed this book in record time - if I had to be murdered by any serial killer at all, then this is the guy that I'd pick. More sensual than *Dexter*, less punchable than *Patrick Bateman*, this is a romp with a very purposeful, very smart and utterly irredeemable monster. But the emphasis is more on sex than torture, and the erotic aspects are played out in a way that feels very fitting for a book by a former *Hell Raiser Cenobite*.

So twisted and wrong, but extremely well-written and hugely enjoyable.

kohey says

It is beautifully written, and cynical in a nasty way, but much too graphic for me, though I like her choice of words.

It depicts a dark, sexual world imagined by a crazy pervert from beginning to end.

Bill says

This has been on my tbr for a while, solely based on the Daniele Serra cover art alone. Then I saw a review from my GR friend Paul (and progress status from Charlene) for "*Voices of the Damned*" which is the new story collection from Barbie coming out later this year, I believe. That lit a wee fire under me to finally check out this one out and I'm glad I did.

The Venus Complex is the story of Professor Michael Friday, told in first person narrative thru the entries in his personal journal. Kind of like an internal psycho blog. First person narratives have a tendency to grate on me occasionally and that was almost the case here, but Barbie really kept it moving along nicely.

Professor Michael Friday is one sick puppy. Actually, he believes he is coming into his own...finally. He is an artist. Ok, he is definitely a sick puppy and spreading his form of sickness around. Nobody wants what dude is putting out there into the universe. Unless you are into mayhem and death.

A twisted, satisfying and recommended read. I will be checking out her new one, for sure.

Tamara Romero says

This novel is a winner. Barbie Wilde has a huge talent to build up a masculin protagonist from his insides. As a reader I felt 'forced' (in a good way) to empathize with the killer Michael Friday in a disturbing 'dexterian' way. The novel seems well researched and has a very interesting erotic approach that reminded me to the cenobite imagery. You'll definitely enjoy it if you liked American Psycho. The Venus Complex is catchy and a real pageturner! I'd love to read more Barbie Wilde's works soon.

Mandy DeGeit says

The Venus Complex, by Barbie Wilde, follows the main character's descent into madness by way of his diary. After a car accident, Michael is left to rehabilitate physically and mentally. While his body may have healed, his mind takes a turn for the worse. A college professor and art lover, he puts his life on hold and immerses himself in the study of becoming a serial killer. Plagued by his dreams, he acts out on his most depraved thoughts, which in turn spurs on the darkness just a little bit more. He meets Elene, and so begins the struggle between his dual lives.

Barbie Wilde has an excellent grasp of the male POV as she walks us through the creation of a killer. She takes the reader on a journey into the mind of a twisted individual, as he comes to terms with who and what he really is.

This tightly-written page-turner is not for the faint of heart. It contains some (amazingly written) graphic sex and death scenes.

Step into the shoes of a serial killer with The Venus Complex.

Yolanda Sfetsos says

I heard about this book on Twitter. Someone mentioned that it was written by the female cenobite, so of course I had to check it out. ;)

Michael Friday is one sick puppy. After a car accident that kills his wife--which he causes because he finds out she is cheating on him--he survives, and months of rehabilitation later he goes home. But his life is not a comfortable place to be. He's constantly bored and spends too much time alone. He becomes addicted to trashy TV even though he despises it. And it's not until he has a very vivid dream about a dead girl that he realises what it is that's missing from his life.

So he starts on a horrible and disgusting path of chasing the high he can only capture while killing someone. But that isn't enough, and when he spots the beautiful Doctor Elene Sheppard, he decides he's going to create a serial killer persona. One that will get her attention, and because he's focusing on what he teaches--art history--she might just need his help to solve the case...

OMG. This book. It's one of those books that is so well written I was hooked from the first word. It's a story that made me squirm many times, to the point where I actually felt dirty just by reading it. The subject matter is one that we're all familiar with--serial killers--and while I've read many books from the POV of one, this guy's sexually depraved fantasies and actions were very disturbing.

He makes no apologies for his immoral thoughts or desires. He's one-track minded and obsessed with getting what he wants. While I'd like to admire his determination, the subject of his obsession deterred me from doing so.

If you like reading wicked stories dripping with raw descriptions, or are just curious about this book, go ahead and read it. But if you're squeamish, stay away from it. Luckily, I've been reading and enjoying horror for many years, so I could keep what I was reading at a distance.

I have to admire Barbie Wilde for writing such an intense thriller, starring a very awful person. I'm not sure if it was because of the brain damage he got from the accident, or just because he's one sick puppy... but Michael is despicable. I'm glad he's a fictional character.

Having said that, this was a great book! The fact that the author hooked me in and kept me intrigued all the way through--no matter how uncomfortable I got--says just how good a writer Barbie is!

Paul Nelson says

The Venus Complex is a provocative journey into a psychopathic consciousness that is one of the most gripping and disturbing mind trips I've read. Told in a journal entry style first person narration, the first time we meet Michael Friday is the recounting of his wife's death in a car accident. His wife was cheating on him, his accusation and her reaction bring about a clean definitive snap of his mind, from normal to implacable killer and here lies the beginning of a jaunt that nibbles the edges of sanity until there's only one possible outcome.

During his recovery, he experiences a kind of rage that transpires normal cohesive thought, rage at anything and everything, coupled with dreams of a sexual nature that interlace intense pleasure with violence. Then he starts to get bored, starts to look at serial killers and twelve months after the death of his wife, she takes her revenge in a disturbing dream that sees her bite his 'you know what' off. That's it he's flipped, he needs sex desperately and it's off to find a prostitute, one that for a few extra dollars, agrees to be tied up, big mistake. His first, no, second kill but this is the one that intimately describes his thoughts and actions as he steals the woman's last breath.

That's it, job done, he's going to create a serial killer, all for the woman he's been stalking, Elene, his obsession, the psychologist who teaches at his school and also helps the police with profiling. Michael is an Art History Professor and his research now, serial killers, biographies, avoiding capture.

This is consensual sex ending in orgasm, autoerotic asphyxiation taken to a lethal end, exquisitely described, I would say beautifully described but at the end of the day, it's murder and sounds slightly wrong. Michael is clever, there's defined process all the way through his indulgence, making sure the victim receives the ultimate pleasure as she takes her last breath, right up to the point of a massive clean-up operation and his victim, left artistically posed. His Venus Complex, profession inspiring his new and exciting hobby, and Venus is of course the goddess of love.

'Never did she look lovelier than in death, because what is life but an eager rushing towards the terrible inevitability of oblivion? Death is the great peace and we shall all embrace it with eager joy.'

A dark, erotically laced glimpse, no, glare into a killers mind, a mind you simply don't want to leave and you can't help liking the guy, you don't want him to get caught, you might even want him to continue his game, OK I'll admit I did but only because he's such a disturbingly audacious character and the writing is absolutely sublime. The explicit murder recitals are completely riveting, delicate and passionate, erotic and unsettling, the Professor's dreams and nightmares are as enthralling as his rants, obsessive behaviour and descent into the chasm of Paraphilia and lust murder. Finally the ending, unexpected, titillating, fulfilling, for our protagonist anyway and bloody perfect, find out for yourself.

Highly recommended.

Also posted at <http://paulnelson.booklikes.com/post/...>

Karl says

Perhaps 4 1/2 stars.

Michael Friday the narrator of this book, a wanna be serial killer, a college professor, a complete sicko, of Barbie Wilde's first novel "The Venus Complex" is clever enough to research the history of serial killers and where they went wrong (available at a library or book store near you) prior to embarking on his new venture of a killing spree a well-planned out killing spree.

Michael Friday as part of his grieving process and rehabilitation after his beautiful wife's untimely death, caused by Friday, he is asked to begin a journal to help him cope with his feelings and thoughts thus he begins to divulge the insanity of the man. Friday's hatred of mankind, his hatred of Television, his hatred of most everything but for satisfying his carnal cravings that his imagination has mapped out for him.

Friday's violent sexual compulsions become unbearable strong, until he has no choice but to act them out. We follow through his journal, his impeccable planning, step by step which he clearly documents. We see the sex crimes and killings, he commits in intimate detail. We are there for the cleanup he does after each crime. And we watch him get bolder and bolder as his successes increase.

We watch him toy with the law when his “art of killing” is not appreciated as much by the law and the media as he wants them to.

The novel is full of sex, violence, extreme horror and many more unpleasant events. For those faint of heart or obverse to such things, nothing is left unsaid or unshown. Be warned.

Ms. Wilde played the roll of the female cenobite in the original “Hellraiser” movie. That said, her imagination is so much more intense and raw then any part she played. She is also a hell of a writer. I look forward to her collection of short stories just published.

Here is an ad for the book:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bNne...>

Andrew says

I came in with high expectations for this book after reading a previous Barbie Wilde tale. The excellent Sister Cilice was a highlight of the short story collection Hellbound Hearts, an anthology set in the Hellraiser universe, and filled with weird and wonderful cenobites. I’ll admit I’m a bit of a Hellraiser fanatic. So the fact that Barbie Wilde played one of my favorite cenobites from Hellraiser II, meant she was already in my good graces and thankfully the book lived up to my initial excitement levels.

The tale begins brutally when Professor Michael Friday, discovers his wife is cheating on him and decides to end things permanently for both of them by deliberately driving into a tree. He survives the car crash and something changes in him during his recovery and rehabilitation. He begins having vivid dreams of death and sex (mostly in that order). Michael was an art historian and university lecturer at Syracuse before the accident, but having lost the emotional engagement to life and frustrated by his disconnect from the traditional art that had been his passion, he seeks meaning and purpose and it takes him a while to find it.

The story is told entirely through journal entries from Michael. The journaling was the idea of his therapist to help him vent his anger and frustration. This is one very frustrated man, sickened by pretty much all humanity with the exception of women whom he sees differently. Throughout the journal entries he gives examples of what has enraged and sickened him each day, mostly large issues from AIDS and political corruption, to fundamentalist Christians. For a time it the rage that is the only way that he can feel, dead to all other stimuli, with the exception of his dreams. These dreams are disturbing, erotic and the place where the growing demons in his mind manifest themselves. As the journal entries progress, his detachment and disconnect from society and normal human contact deepens. We follow him on his journey and his descent beyond moral constraints.

Michael finally finds a new purpose in life when he meets, well he doesn’t meet her, let’s say discovers, psychologist Elene on a visit back to his university. Unable to feel confident enough to meet the object of his infatuation, he stalks her and discovers she is an author who has written about serial killers. He finds purpose in his life and feels alive again after deciding to focus his energy into becoming a serial killer. Thus the Venus Project is born. He gets to sexually enjoy his victims and leave his auteur’s mark to arouse the interest of Elene, when she sees an interesting killer working in her own town. Michael’s plan, the Venus Project, begins in earnest. He murders carefully selected women and leaves them in poses from paintings with a

Venus connection, complete with quotes and alchemy symbols written on them in marker pen to confuse the authorities. Elene is assigned to help the police with the case and an art expert is needed to help with the investigation, so as part of the grand plan, Michael is recruited and he gets to work with Elene. As they work together and the plot progresses he finds his obsessed image of her as the unblemished Venus, comes in to question.

One of the most striking aspects of the book is the first person narrative in the form of the journal entries. It's an interesting way to tell the story and it works really well. You're brought in to the twisted mind of Michael and his dark perspective on the world. The entries where he's meticulously planning his crimes and his knowledge of police procedures are really fascinating. Every few entries, one will be a rant about a major world issue. Some of the themes of the book are his disgust with politics, religion, wealth and society in general. His rants throughout the book and the passion and focus that he puts in to them brought to mind the way Patrick Bateman in American Psycho would talk about Huey Lewis and the News, or Phil Collins. The major theme though, is that of gender. He has such a distorted view of women, showing no respect except for his chosen Venus, and even that changes. He sees women as weak, no more than helpless prey and sexual objects, and he is driven by the need to dominate, control and possess them. Closely tied to the discussion of gender by author Wilde, is that of sexual violence. There is a great deal of this violence in the book, more of it in his disturbing dreams that drive him, than in reality, but both are shocking. Undoubtedly his issues with women come from his mother and his adulterous ex-wife Angie.

I'll admit that I was left a little empty by the conclusion, I'd expected something different, it's certainly not a disappointing ending, just not what I'd expected. His deviation from his Venus Project and transition to a new project for some reason didn't sit quite right with me. On the whole, this a great read, we're taken inside a maniac's head and accompany him through his journey. I look forward to what's coming next from Barbie Wilde.

Lee Howard says

I love dark crime, and this is by far the darkest story I've ever read. I felt guilty for enjoying it so much. THE VENUS COMPLEX is deep in social commentary, yet tense and fast-paced, dizzyingly bold in its perversion. Like a serial killer obsessed with his next victim, I could not turn away from its decadent sadism.

Following the tradition of Ellis's AMERICAN PSYCHO and Oates's ZOMBIE, Barbie Wilde has broken new ground in the field of dark crime fiction. If you like the lurid and shocking, you'll love THE VENUS COMPLEX. It's DEXTER without a moral code.

John J Questore says

Wow ! Just, wow ! Barbie Wilde played the Female Cenobite in Hellbound: Hellraiser II - and if you thought she was great in that, you'll love her as an author.

What can be said about The Venus Complex that hasn't already been said?

It has been compared to American Psycho - maybe, but I found Bret Easton Ellis' writing to be long, drawn-out and wishing the book would end so I wouldn't have to choke down another endless stream of babbling

consciousness that added nothing to the story. This isn't true of Wilde's writing. I found myself eagerly devouring each page and at no time found myself bored. Also, Michael (the main character) is much more methodical and human than Patrick (the main character in American Psycho).

It has been compared to Dexter - well, I am unfortunately unfamiliar with that show so I cannot confirm, nor deny, the comparison.

What I can say is it is more than worth the read. Showing Michael's mental breakdown in diary form is fantastic - it stops being a narrative and actually becomes a story. That's rare in today's age. And it is done brilliantly.

This is one of the best novels I have read in a long time - I hope she decides to put pen to paper and write another.

Thomas Strömquist says

Some good and very effective elements in this one, but ultimately unsatisfying.

American Psycho. Well, that was unavoidable, so I thought I'd just get it out of the way at once. Michael Friday is (a not all the way convincing) art professor that wrecks his car to off his cheating wife, a plan that works great. After his own lengthy rehabilitation (well, it didn't work *great* great) his murderous and sexual urges becomes stronger and stronger and he ultimately acts out on them.

Written in journal/diary entries, the narrative places us right inside Friday's head and let me assure you, it's not a very nice place to be. Especially nasty it gets when he ponders more everyday things because once in a while he'll let on something that you agree with and it's always an unpleasant feeling when you bond with someone who turns out to be someone you'd rather not sympathize with. His pathology does not ring all the way true at times, but wasn't off in a way that disturbed me. The fact that both him and his target for obsession were professors (she in psychology) rang a bit more untrue, but it may be me that have too much belief in how professors should act and reason.

The book is well written but have an overload of explicit descriptions of sex acts, that segue all too readily into violence, really unsettling at times and I'm sure that's the purpose. The story is well written, but even on these quite few pages gets repetitive and doesn't really offer anything new or unexpected. A solid three-star read up until the quite disappointing end, which made me pull one off. A solid Goodread's "It was OK" will be my say.

This was a buddy read with my 5-star buddy, Janie and that was the best part, really.

M.J. Meade says

This novel was so fun to read. It is written as the personal diary of a sophisticated college professor as he finds his true 'purpose' in life—being an artistic serial killer! The main character, Michael Friday, recounts his crimes in gruesome and erotic detail that isn't for the faint of heart. If you enjoy dark crime, serial killers, and horror erotica, you're missing out if you haven't given this book a chance.

Janie C. says

I really like the cover art of this book. It's creative and edgy-looking, bordering on the abstract. That's what I expected the book to be like. Personally, I was disappointed. The story is told through journal entries of a man who allows his obsessions and his fantasies to become reality. The details are graphic, sexual and violent, but they are also carefully controlled. I didn't feel as if I was looking through the eyes of a madman. Instead, I clinically observed the thoughts of a rational man hungry to feed his desires. This man was not likeable, and being in his head made me uncomfortable. As he moved from scheming to actually acting upon his urges, I felt like I was reading an average porn/crime drama. There was no art to it. Ultimately, I didn't care about anyone in this book.

Thank you to my good friend Thomas, who plodded through it with me. If it wasn't for him, this may have been a dnf for me.
