



The Silver Devil

Teresa Denys

Download now

Read Online →

The Silver Devil

Teresa Denys

The Silver Devil Teresa Denys

Amid the gilded opulence and dark intrigue of Renaissance Italy grew a love that knew no bounds....

No woman's heart is safe from the Silver Devil. From the moment he sees the beautiful Felicia, he must have her. Overnight he changes Felicia's nightmare world of tavern drudgery into an erotic adventure as his royal mistress. He is the Duke of Cabria who holds his subjects in constant fear. He is troubled. He is ruthless. And Felicia is hopelessly in love with him - though at times he seems like the devil incarnate....

The Silver Devil Details

Date : Published May 12th 1984 by Ballantine Books (first published 1978)

ISBN : 9780345289926

Author : Teresa Denys

Format : Mass Market Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Dark, Historical Fiction

 [Download The Silver Devil ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Silver Devil ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Silver Devil Teresa Denys

From Reader Review The Silver Devil for online ebook

Stacia (the 2010 club) says

[If your answer is yes, you're in luck! Keep reading! (hide spoiler)]

SueBee★bring me an alpha!★ says

SEE BELOW how you can read on Kindle for FREE!

???????1/2! The Silver Devil (stand-alone). In dangerous times, The Duke of Cambria is intrigued & distracted by his new play-thing Felicia!

“Sprawled catlike in the silver chair, he was watching me; I could feel his eyes resting on my bare shoulders as actual as a touch.”

The Silver Devil (stand-alone) takes place in Italy, year 1605.

Orphan **Felicia Guardi** is living a Cinderella-life existence at the mercy of her half-brother and his evil wife when she catches the eye the **Duke of Cambria, Demonico Giordano della Raffaele, Lord of Marches aka the Silver Devil**. She is whisked away to the palace to become his **mistress** and is quickly embroiled into court life rich on scandal, lust, sex, envy and danger.

“He was watching me scientifically; there was no emotion in him at all. There was an assessing gleam in the hooded black eyes, a satiric set to his mouth, and I knew with fatal clarity that I had been duped.”

With silver-blond hair, obsidian eyes and uncanny beauty Demonico, The Duke of Cambria **bewitches men and woman alike** and is known for his sinister seduction, toying with his conquests until he gets bored. But when Felicia holds her own against his manipulations he refuses to let her go. **Demonico is distracted in traitorous and villainous times** when he should be fighting for his Dukedom...

“I knew then, looking up at him, that I had been deceiving myself, calling this feeling by any name but love. Lust for the beautiful animal who had seduced me, fear of the vicious tyrant, compassion for the haunted man who cried like a lost child in my arms—they were only part of what I felt for him.”

Twelve words to describe **Demonico Giordano della Raffaele, The Duke of Cambria, Lord of Marches aka the Silver Devil**: Cunning, manipulative, spoiled, aloof, possessive, devious, complex, enigmatic, intense, mercurial, punitive and ruthless.

Nine words to describe **Felicia Guardi**: Smart, naïve, innocent, feisty, strong, independent, resilient, reflective and loyal.

The Silver Devil, is told from Felicia's POV, allowing Demonico to remain the enigma he is to the rest of the world. It's an **all-consuming tale offering the best of era life, intrigue, danger, lust and scandal** driven by Demonico's larger-than-life persona, but carried by the unique girl that will bring him to his knees.

Spectacular plot! Classic historical! Legendary anti-hero!

“Domenico's smile was breathtakingly beautiful, but his devil's look blazed behind it.”

Hero: ★★★★★

Heroine: ★★★★★

Plot: ★★★★★

Storytelling: ★★★★★

Sexual tension: ★★★★★

Sex scenes: ★★★1/2

Story ending: ★★★★★1/2

OVERALL RATING: ???????1/2

Angst: | **HIGH FOCUS** |

Darkness: | **HIGH FOCUS** |

Humor: | **LOW FOCUS** |

Kink: | **MEDIUM FOCUS** |

Romance: | **HIGH FOCUS** |

Sex frequency: | **MEDIUM FOCUS** |

Suspense: | **HIGH FOCUS** |

30-day FREE trial: <https://goo.gl/Aaeof1>

1) Read in ScribD App on phone/iPad

2) How to read it as MOBI on Kindle >>> (view spoiler)

boogenhagen says

This is a fabulous historical study based on real life accounts of various members of the Borgia's and de Medici's melded into one very interesting character. The H, and I use that lightly, is so overwhelmingly a man of his times that I can practically breathe the wax scented air. Every other character, including the h, comes in a very second to the character that is Domenico. You can really see where Machiavelli got his inspiration for The Prince or where Teresa Denys got hers.

Just a note here for historical purposes. TD did her research really well, including the various acts of bi-sexuality that the H displays. That bi-sexuality is a hold over from medieval times, it wasn't who you were doing, it was more who was doing what to whom. A powerful man could, would and did use the act of penetration to enforce his will or his dominance. While not widely talked about, it happened and contrary to modern belief, that did not diminish a man in the eyes of peers.

Also the torture and the elimination of various characters in various ways are all documented acts of one ruler or another. TD did not have to use her imagination to have Domenico do these things, they are all actual things real Italian rulers did.

TD's talent was to give background and depth to the men who committed these acts, and while it may be a very unusual romance, TSD is a brilliant look at a way of life modern readers will never know.

HJ says

Re-read 8/2013

Oh, I know this old bodice-ripper sets off a plethora of hot-buttons for many readers. Fortunately - not for me.

All of those hot-button issues aside, this is a very well-written, cult-classic, book. The tone is very dark; Felicia's first person narrative detailed, enlightening, but not omniscient. Truly, though she is presented with all of the facts (albeit, ambiguous facts), she doesn't put things together very well in her naivety of the deviousness of Domenico's world. This actually makes things more challenging for the reader - to pick up on the nuances that are Domenico, to look past his 'devilishness,' and see his true motives and feelings for her.

In real life, Domenico would be a dangerous sociopath, but in Romancelandia, he is a romantic, over-the-top, jealous, possessive hero of the first degree.

Truly one of my favorite books, despite it's increasingly non-politically correct nature.

Fre06 Begum says

I don't give 5 stars easily but this book is truly one of the best books I have ever read!! Domenico is truly one of the nastiest male leads you will ever read he is an anti hero who kills at whim and is so cold he is also bi sexual something I would normally find off putting but as I read the book I became so engrossed that I almost forgot about it. Even though he does not become good in the end you can feel his obsession with the

female lead from the first time he saw her you can also see his resolve in making sure that he would always keep her. The language at first is a bit difficult to get into but once you do it flows nicely. The female lead is accepting of her role as his mistress but for some reason I did not find that off putting as I normally would I think in the end she knew she had no power over her situation and she was being sensible. If you like a book where a completely unredeemable male lead falls in love with a common woman to the point of obsession you will love this book as much as I did if I could I would rate this a 10 stars!! This is a dark read with death betrayal and love but no cheating which I loved if you have not tried it I urge you to read it!!!!

Tammy Walton Grant says

Some Spoilerish Stuff about Content If You Haven't Read This Yet

1978. What inappropriate books was I reading the year I was eleven? Let's see: Scruples, Punish the Sinners (ugh, gave me nightmares), The Other Side of Midnight, Valerie Sherwood and old Harlequin Romances. Throw in the odd Nancy Drew and Judy Blume book (including a smuggled copy of Forever) and you can see how I ended up as such a twisted adult.

Anyhow, I gotta say I never saw this book lying around anywhere back then. I did read Shanna that summer, which probably gave rise to all the other inappropriate reading I did. My mom bought me The Flame and the Flower and The Wolf and the Dove (mostly to shut me up after I read Shanna), but I'm sure she would have put an immediate kibosh on a cover that looked like this one. Yowza!

So anyway, here I am, 33 years later and finally getting a chance to read it.

I'm glad I didn't read this as an 11 or 12 year old -- frankly, it would have bored the shit out of me back then. It's in the first person and there's barely any sex in it! At least, sex that is described, and that's what titillated little me was looking for back then.

Read this as an adult, however, and it takes on an entirely new dimension. This is quite a story. I'm not going to describe it here; this review is mostly my thoughts on having read it.

I normally don't care for first person POV, mostly because of the obvious limitations on the story-telling . When first person is done badly, it stinks to high heaven. That's not the case with this book at all. The narration was beautifully done. You're right there with Felicia, without feeling like she is specifically describing things to you. Teresa Denys was very talented.

When I started reading the book, and got to the first "love scene" (oh, who am I kidding, he capital R -raped her) I thought I was going to be in trouble.

"I do not know how long it was before I realized he had left me. A white hand touched my cheek, and I opened my eyes and saw the blood thick under this fingernails."

Holy crap! I thought. What did he DO to her that there is that much blood? Then a few paragraphs later:

"My answer was smothered against his mouth. Every movement was pain, pain that he had inflicted; the coverlet underneath me was slimy with blood, and between my thighs was burning agony."

But, before long there was no more mention of cuts and bruises from her evenings with Domenico and I breathed a little easier. Or maybe there were and I just ignored them. :)

As a matter of fact, once that chapter was done the book settled down into a very entertaining read. I know it was marketed as a romance ("*amid the gilded opulence and dark intrigue of Renaissance Italy grew a love that knew no bounds...*") but I thought it ran closer to straight historical fiction. Scratch that. This is the way historical romances used to be written. In 1978 this WAS a historical romance.

Ooops, off track again.

Anyhow, it was a pretty compelling story once I got into it, full of intrigue and betrayal, love and stunning cruelty, jealousy and revenge, (Karla, no wonder you LOVED this one!) and by the end there was even a grovelling Hero and a pretty standard HEA.

I thought that Felicia was a bit dim from time to time and did a couple of really stupid things, but hey. She hasn't had the benefit of reading a couple of hundred historical romances like I have, so how would she know that everything he did was because he actually loved her?

And Domenico -- oh, what a *bastard*. The first Hero I've ever read about who goes into throes of anger so great he practically passes out. He's absolutely ruthless, domineering, spoiled and cruel. Stunning in his physical beauty, he takes his pleasure where he sees it - be it with men, soldiers or women. On the other hand, he has nightmares (DUH!) and is tormented by his role in the death of his stepmother. Just the kind of guy who, as Dr. Phil says, needs a soft place to fall. All kidding aside though, he didn't seem unrealistic for his time to me. Those Italians were a pretty mean bunch.

So here 's the bottom line:

Am I glad I read it? Yup

Would I recommend it? Only to people whose tastes I'm familiar with.

Did I like it? As a dark, Renaissance gothicky-type story, yes. As a romance, I'm not sure. If this was 1978, you bet - they were all like that then. Nowadays I like a little more navel-gazing in my romances.

Would I read Denys' other book? In a second. She sure can tell a story.

And thanks to my friend Karla (Mossy Love Grotto), without whom I would never have picked this up.

4 stars.

Jaya says

The things we do for the sake of challenges (+_+)

Despite of my continuous unholy amusement towards our man, the Duke from Hell, and irreverence regarding the supposed brutalities and horrors, I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

There I award 4 stars! for I laughed my entire way through this unintentionally funny book.

Candace says

I don't read too many historical romances, but every once in a while it is nice to change it up. When I read a friend's review for this one, it sounded like just my type of story. I have a thing for despicable, often abusive, heroes. I love reading stories about the type of guys that you'd run screaming from in real life. It's a hang-up of mine, I guess.

Set in the 1600's, 'The Silver Devil' tells the story of the Duke of Cambria, aka Domenico. Used to getting his way at any cost, he is cold, selfish and often cruel. When he sets eyes on Felicia one afternoon, he decides that he will have her by any means necessary.

When Felicia wakes up in an unknown place, she is soon made aware of her circumstances. A young virgin, Felicia is terrified when she is told that she is to be the newest plaything for the Duke. She resigns herself to a fate worse than death.

Over the course of many weeks, Felicia eventually grows fond of the Duke, despite his less than pleasant disposition. The kind man and tender lover that he is privately, contrasts sharply with the cruel and calculating man he is in public. Watching how easily he dismisses his closest acquaintances with little regard, she fears the day that he will grow tired of her.

Domenico was definitely a tough character to like. He takes Felicia by force and shows little regard for her feelings for much of the book. At the same time, he treats her with just enough tenderness to keep masochistic readers like me hanging in there.

I can't resist a bad guy that is almost irredeemable. Domenico fits the bill perfectly. Just when I thought he'd crossed the point of no return, he'd go and show another side of himself. He was every bit as endearing as he was infuriating.

If, like me, you love stories about really bad guys that turn over a new leaf for the woman they love, then this is a good choice. It doesn't come quickly or easily though. You will have to hang in there to the very end to get the transformation you crave. Domenico was a tough one to break.

Overall, I really enjoyed this historical romance. I found the characters and storyline to be very interesting. I did have to slow down a little to make sense of the language, but for a novel set in the 1600's, it was easier to follow than I had anticipated. I'm certainly no authority on this romance sub genre, but I thought this was a fantastic read.

Leona says

Well that was one heck of a ride. Phew..... Mr. Silver Devil himself. Not exactly choir boy material.

This story felt very real to me. It was a true depiction of renaissance life with dukes and lords and kings and their total power over common people. The heroine was complex in her own right. At first she appeared incredibly simple and naive. Yet as the story evolves you understand she is the victim of circumstances being illiterate, imprisoned within her own home, beaten and abused and eventually sold for silver pieces. She is powerless to change anything and is reduced to praying for death once the Silver Devil tires of her because the future of a discarded mistress is too brutal for anyone to endure.

At first, I wanted her to be much more cunning and I was disappointed when she wasn't. But then I came to realize that she never had the skills or ability to pull herself out of the mire. Consequently she confuses lust for love and finds herself enslaved physically and mentally to the hero.

The hero is a merciless, ruthless, cruel, sadistic, monster, but he knows his way around the sheets (with men and women) and he holds everyone around him in his power. While most are blinded by his charms and anxious to warm his bed, there are few who would just as soon see him dead. The story is hauntingly filled with lies, treachery and treason which adds another dimension, excitement and complexity to the story.

This book isn't for the faint of heart (which I usually am), but it is surprisingly good and has the power to suck you right in.

I absolutely loved it!

Seffra says

Minus stars...if that was an option...
DNF @ 59%

RANT FULL OF SPOILERS!

I tried, my friends, I tried...
This book...

I can't believe I put myself through that. So I found this book based on my recs on Goodreads since I read The Golden Dynasty . So say this book is even similar to The Golden Dynasty is an INSULT.

Okay, so we start off with a girl who is dealt a horrible hand and is basically a slave to her brother. His wife and him treat her the absolute worst and I felt like she deserved better in life.

I was excited when I read her interaction with whatever the Duke's name was, he's not even worth racking my brain for his name.

Well to say the Duke was a complete and UTTER ASSHOLEEEEE is such an understatement..

So get this, he rapes the female and then she's feeling things for him and willingly sleeps with him over and over again...why??? He never showed you even the slightest bit of affection....I doubt he's THAT good in bed girl...

So apparently after a couple nights in bed with that insufferable ass-butt, "she knew she was in love with him"

WHAAATTTT????????

Yup... this book has rape, a rape that the Heroine doesn't think it's rape... and INSTA-LOVE. Two very big No-nos in my books.

Then, then. THEN!!!! OHHHHH GUESS WHAT THIS STAND UP GUY DOES WHEN HE THINKS THE HEROINE IS SLEEPING WITH SOMEONE ELSE...
HE NOT ONLY KILLS THE POOR INNOCENT, SWEET MAN BUT TORTURES HIM, TEARS HIM APART via TORTURE TABLE.....

Yup, soooooo true love quality there....

For some reason, I decided to stick it through and keep reading, thinking it would get better. Was I right?

That would be a HELL NO.

So she decides to leave but OF COURSE the asshole Duke catches her and kills all the people involved to punish her and they resume their weird sex-ship....like that's all they do.. SEX and little miss innocent is all in love with him. Keep in mind, he has shown no growth as a character.

I ended my torture there..I couldn't keep going if I wanted to remain sane. The writing wasn't even mind-blowingly awesome, to be quite honest, Denys lacks emotion in her work. Her characters undergo these life altering events that don't change them as a person, or they just don't feel anything. The pacing is WAY off... I don't get how someone can fall in love with their rapist in just a few days...when again, there was no growth of character. But, also maybe because she hasn't known kindness so she takes this sorry excuse of a man as a kind-ish man..??..

This book was just awful and I honestly wish I could get back my time that I spent reading this horrendous "story." I put "story" in parenthesis because...it didn't feel at all like a full blown story with character growth, rising action, plot, or just conflict (besides him going all psycho!!!) but like their relationship was at a standstill at 59%!!!!!!!

Yup, I'm done.

Michele ~ la Smoocherina says

Pre-read impression- Ok. After reading that this book has been put on shelves varying from recommends to: Girly girls to "tall, dark and psycho". I'm crazy curious as to what my beloved ringleader Searock is getting me into. No matter, with her leading the charge, it'll be fun. :)

Review-
3.5 Stars

So, we're takin' it back. That's right ladies and gents, cats and kittens! All the way back to a book written in 1978 about a story in 1605. Bringing you today's hits and yesterday's favorites! Especially if those favorites are "forced consent" and "hemorrhagic virginity loss" and one of my favorites "gang rape". (I don't know technically if it's considered gang rape if four guys hold you down while another does the raping, but they're all complicit, so I'm calling it gang rape). So, stay right where you are, don't touch that dial!

So you might be saying, "Michele, why are you reading a historical bodice ripper with FADE TO BLACK LOVE SCENES when you could be reading Breathe by one of your favorite authors, KA?" I'll tell you why, in one word, **Searock**. And I'd do it again. If Searock asked me to group read the Bible cover to cover, I'd probably do it, but I'd beg for the children's version. (Searock- please don't call my bluff on this one).

So historical is not my thing and this book made me realize why. Battles. Christ on a crutch. Like I give a flying ape shit if they came from the west or the north. That he hit him with his spear and he parried with his knife, that the horse was running, galloping or cantering, that blah, blah, blah, blah, blah-boring.

The intrigue is another. Siblings betraying one another. Your Uncle the archbishop is not to be trusted, he has his own agenda. Who doesn't in this book? Your father's third wife poisoned her own husband because she thought it would make you happy and land you in her bed. But instead, you send her away without tugging her. Tsk tsk, a woman scorned. That will come back to bite you in the balls, Duke.

Felicia, is our heroine?? A bar wench who one night, very unusually, was given a "cordial" or two by Antonio, the half brother that detests her. You know, the one that makes her work as a bar wench at his inn, scrub the floors, clean his house top to bottom, for room and board. How's this for intrigue? At one point, I thought Felicia was The Duke's half sister! Felicia thought it too. And this was after the schtupping had begun! But alas, no. It was a lie perpetrated by current handmaiden to Felicia/last whore who warmed the Duke's bed and now warms Sandro the bastard Brother's bed, as she was casted off. She wanted back in the Duke's bed. I mean, who wouldn't? (The man must have a prized cock, that's all I can figure.) She got sent to care for lepers for that tall tale. And that was getting off easy. Felicia smiled at a footboy and it got him tortured and killed. I was rooting for Felicia to run away with the footboy. Seriously. Make your way to the New World together. Ask for the Indians. They'll be nice to you, just be nice to them back. No more intrigue! No more backstabbing! Eat Maize and live in peace. Sure! One of you will die on the journey, but what the hell!

Oh! As an aside. Felicia drinks those cordials from her brother and wakes up in a strange place and soon finds out that she is to be the Duke's whore. Well, yay! A girl can't ask for more than that! I mean the first question out of my mouth would be, "I beg of you sir, have you any pudding?" No, just kidding, it would be, "I beg of you sir, how the fuck did I get here? Is there a Wizard and an Emerald City nearby? Where's Toto? I could sure use a field of poppies right now. I'm not even scared of flying monkeys. Bring 'em on!"

Then sir would be like, "She's batshit crazy! She'll fit right in amongst royalty. Good show!"

So shortly after Felicia has a "forced consent" loss of her virginity...[I'm going to parlay this into a mini-discussion about that term. "Forced consent" to me, means rape. But in this instance, in a different time, when a woman's only other choice is to become a beggar or a whore, I'd call it "forced consent". Because better to be the whore to one, than whore to many. Unless that many is a pack of sexy shape shifting werewolves that want to share you and keep you in sexual bliss 24/7. Then, I say bring it on! I'll be your whore! But I digress...] Shortly after she is stripped of her virginity, she comes to love the Duke. A moment after she realizes this, he shows her pictures of women and asks her to help him pick his new bride. *Stage whispers to Felicia* "Pick the ugly bitch! Wait! Sometimes the ugly ones are good in bed! Pick the manliest one. Oh no, wait, the Duke had an affair with a man for a dozen years. Shit! Pick the the one that looks like a shrew. Well, you were kind of a mousy shrew at first. Now look at you! Ah fuck it! Close your eyes and point or do eeny-meeny-miney-moe. Wait, do you have that yet in 1605? Eeny-meeny-miney-moe-catch-a tiger.. Huh? *rears back incredulously* What's a tiger? Oh forget it! Close your eyes and point."

But the Duke is just so darned lovable. For instance: When they are in the tavern and the inn-keeper's wife is being raped, Felicia begs the Duke to make it stop, but he refuses. And holds her tight so that she can't interfere. Ah, but she still can't help but love him. What a gem!

You see, he has nightmares that only she can soothe away. Oh, his tortured soul. If only he'd let her care for him. From the beginning, other men at court say that when the Duke tires of her, which should say, be in a day or two, they will ask that she be given to them. Because that's what he does with his castoffs, he gives them to other men. What's not to love about this guy? Right? I mean, I could see why any girl would fall for a guy that slept with her in a pool of her own blood, the night he took her virginity, then made her ride with him the next day on the hunt, side saddle. [Another discussion- sidesaddle is bullshit! Who comes up with this stuff? You're just a woman. So what if you break your neck? Just don't hurt the horse, wench.]. That Duke, he's a keeper.

One thing that bothered me, haha, was that when Felicia was barwench at her Brother's Inn, she had no self confidence. Took all manner of abuse that her half brother and his wife could dig out. But once she came to court, she instantaneously knew how to behave, how to dance, when to kneel and curtesy. And she was never a wallflower in dealing with these other men pursuing her. Maybe it was borne out of necessity, but it was quite a transformation. Maybe it 'cause she was getting a little sumpin' sumpin', works wonders on the self esteem to be the whore of a Duke.

To entertain myself, I took on the language of the book while reading it. As in, "Dearest husband of mine, would you be so kind as to gather the soiled livery so that I may tend to it?" My hubby just rolled his eyes. But livery is such a weird name for clothing. I always think that livery must smell like onions. Does anyone else think that?

But hey, it had a happy ending.

I can't wait sink my teeth into some KA. All I know is Breathe better contain the words: cock, suck, thrust, mouth, pussy, come, clit, knees, and maybe pounding. Or I am going lose my mind! It may be lost already to the Silver Devil. One can't help but to love him.

Sarah Mac says

What a delightfully odd book. :)

There's much here that's traditional bodice-ripper material. The heroine (Felicia) is raped by the hero (Domenico), yet she reluctantly comes to love & adore her captor. Her circumstances are more akin to slavery than courtship; she's a bought woman from common background, which gives her no standing except as Domenico's bedwarmer. But whether by choice or necessity, Felicia follows her abusive hero through thick & thin -- much of which includes violent happenings & "no, no, yes!" sexual encounters. While dealing with the downsides of her troubled relationship with Domenico, she comes to know the many sides of her lover's personality...which ultimately leads to the confrontation in which our emotionally challenged hero must admit he's equally in love with her.

Yeah, I know...some people get their knickers in a twist over these tropes. Like Christine Monson's excellent but brutal *Stormfire*, this is a touchstone work in the bodice-ripper genre -- and there's a reason *The Silver Devil* is branded as such. It incorporates all that makes some readers shriek & rant about women's rights & toss the book aside in favor of bland Regency romances with their cuddlebug woobie-rakes. But as I said in my review of *Stormfire*, this oh-so-notorious book has much to be appreciated by a more open-minded (or less squeamish) reader.

Denys' style is lyrical & lush -- more dense than the average BR, but not wordy per se. It's a very dark, gothic style; violence & beauty coexist in close confines, often in the same scene...or even the same paragraph. There are some gruesome images in this book, & they're described in picturesque, loving detail -- the same as the instances of beauty & love. (Example: Felicia's virginity-taking is brutal & bloody, yet so elegantly written.) But despite a sweeping backdrop of grandeur & battle, each scene is claustrophobic & intensely personal. Karla's review describes the story in terms of an opera, & I'd agree with that. Each scene has the feel of a gloomy, isolated stage piece that highlights the cast & their melodramatic antics. (And yes, I can imagine the dialogue in song, complete with uber-dramatic Italian solos & grandiose hand gestures. :D)

Furthermore, *The Silver Devil* is narrated first-person by Felicia alone. There are no infodumps on history or culture. Unless the reader has already studied up on Renaissance Italy culture, they'll flounder until the names, places, & relationships become more familiar -- which is no accident, I'm sure. Like Felicia, the reader is forced to rely on context & dialogue to gain their footing.

Bottom line: it's not a book for stupid people. *looks askew at the current crop of Lowest Common Denominator romances* Would I recommend it for general audiences? Probably not. Beautiful writing & style points aside, Domenico is a jerk of the highest order; his commanding neediness drove me nuts, & lowered the rating to four stars. (view spoiler)

...But would I recommend *The Silver Devil* for more daring readers of romantic historical fiction? Absolutely -- especially those who are tired of the modernized-and-sanitized army of cuddlebug woobie-rakes. (Blech.)

N.B. Much thanks to Karla for lending me her copy. :)

KatieV says

This wasn't a romance. The ~~hero~~ villain was completely and utterly (insert hysterical mad laughter) insane. I know many other reviews have spoiled this more than adequately, so I won't go into examples. I can deal with an anti-hero as long as he finds some sort of redemption or learns to look at the world a bit differently. I don't expect them to become paragons, actually that would be absurd. But I do expect some sort of emotional awakening. This guy wasn't capable of that. He was a sociopath.

I think some people like this for the crazy factor and it has plenty of that. I have some glorious train wreck books I enjoy for the same reason. However, this one was just too ick with all the tortures and cruelty. Plus - and this may offend some people - I just can't get into a man who has sex with other men. I don't believe I'm being anti-gay/bi-sexual. As far as I'm concerned people can sleep with whoever they want. However, for me to find a man sexually attractive/romantic hero material he needs to be straight with a capital S. That's just my taste.

mark monday says

UPDATED REVIEW

Romance Is Horror! just as the little voice in the back of my head has often whispered to me during various awkward moments.

The Silver Devil is an historical romance with a twist. the twist: i loved it. the feverishly sweaty and grotesque atmosphere, the constant viciousness and savagery, the insanely operatic characters... incredible. and, surprise, the writing is highly accomplished. overall it was fascinating. the whole thing was so luridly gothic an experience that at times it became hard for me to wrap my mind around. in a good way!

okay i've read more *about* bodice rippers than actually experienced them. i understand that brutish man-boys are the standard. that women often fall into two categories: inexplicably independent (for the historical time period depicted) or - in the case of the The Silver Devil - virginal proto-nuns. this novel pitches these two archetypes of Man & Woman so beyond that template that the effect is genuinely surreal. the brutality and rapiness was extreme. normally this is something that would upset me. and yet... and yet... everything came together in such an intense fashion that i began to see it as an un-romance. a kind of extreme-relationship novel with a hair-raisingly demanding dom and a heroine who is so deranged in her passivity that she comes across as the ultimate subjugate-me-please sub. but in the end it was as i mentioned at the start: A Tale of Horror. that was really the only way i could take this seriously - and because of the strength of the writing, i did take it seriously. i did not read this with a droll sense of irony because this shit is good, man. the intensity sort of made me feel high at times.

the heroine is a young, sheltered, abused naif. and yet a glass-half-full sorta gal. so devoid of all maliciousness or need for revenge that she basically comes across as a severely developmentally disabled girl-woman. she moved from being a sad character to a pathetic character to a character who attained a bizarre transcendence in the extremity of her submissiveness. she is Pure Victim. and the genuine horror of her story is her unexplainable love for the worst, most evil hero i've come across since i don't know when. it is like she was hypnotized by a devil. The Silver Devil! once i began to see this as a story of extreme psychological terror and so rejected it as a romance, it really came together for me in a way i did not expect. i

was on the edge of my seat constantly, just waiting for the next hellish trial that she would be put through. her terrorized first-person perspective on the world around her only strengthened the horror of it all. this is a deeply realized historical novel with a consistently grim tone. one that describes terrible smells of rot and death as a constant, castles as places of nightmare, appealing rascally types who turn around and laughingly engage in gang rape, sybaritic aristocrats who cover their faces in dead-white make-up as if they are miming the undead, irrational rulers who view their people as slaves to be used and killed, unending misogyny, devious deviants who love incest and pederasty, the works. this is a world of abominations and it is all brilliantly described as a genuine living hell.

ah, romance! ah, horror!

the hero is something else. and to me, entirely unattractive - and so the horror remained constant. this was not a remotely arousing novel and yet i was enthralled by the excessive perversity on display. it was easy to *never* sympathize with the twisted, sickening hero (just as it was easy to long for his punishment and demise) because the author portrays him as evil incarnate... he bullies and terrorizes and rapes and beats the heroine FROM BEGINNING TO END. all that plus he mocks and laughs at her on a regular basis too, exulting in her pain and the bruises he inflicts upon her. again, not romance: horror. imagine a Rupert Everett type (except with silver hair, 'natch): bisexual, mordantly witty, high-handed, suave, always fashionable, always cutting. now combine him with an emo thug from the hbo series Oz who goes violently berserk and throws insane tantrums on a daily basis, tortures people who look at his girl the wrong way, lives to inspire fear, and gets a boner over every one of his disgustingly callous, meaninglessly mean-spirited acts... imagine a petulant man-child who sets dogs on his oldest friend and former lover, and who in turn is depicted as either a kind of unreasoning, ravening dog himself or even more frequently, as a smug and self-satisfied cat who sharpens his claws on human mice... hey, that's our hero. or our villain. he stays this way FROM BEGINNING TO END. if you read this one, you are entitled to that warning. and this one too: this novel has a happy ending. a happy ending where he is not redeemed in any way except he has finally been able to declare his love. Teresa Denys stays completely true to her hellish vision of the time period, her beyond-repulsive characters, her version of "love". there is an admirable and rather fiendish purity to that.

so yeah, i loved this one. but it wasn't just the Ken Russell level of grotesque abandon that won me over. the writing was lush and beautiful, yet remarkably free of sentiment and consistently invested in showing life as one diabolic tableau after another. Teresa Denys has an uncompromisingly bleak world view. this is a dark, dark book. love as a trap for fools and villains. life as death. ah, romance! ah, horror!

"The darkness seemed to breathe, pressing down on me like a hot, thick blanket. Here and there were gleams of light from the last embers of the torches, and the blackness was peopled by innumerable small sounds. Sighs of lassitude, stertorous breathing, the rustle of garments and the kiss of flesh, quietening into a silence of exhaustion; the court's lust had spent itself in one hectic surge, and soon would come the bitter aftermath. I sat staring into space, seeing in the darkness pictures of the gluttony and debauchery to which fear of tomorrow had spurred the Cabrian nobles. The masque of the Seven Deadly Sins played before our faces, sung and chanted, with servants of each Sin's train engulfing the whole hall in a miasma of vivid colour: the spilling dishes, the flowing wine, the sighs and screams of the court as the torches were doused one by one."

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

YE OLDE PLACEHOLDER REVIEW

'tis the season...

13 TALES OF TERROR: BOOK 11

oh my God, what the fuck! i'm not sure i've read anything like this before. sweet Jesus this was crazy. so i think i have finally gotten the appeal of bodice rippers, thanks Teresa Denys. this was an intensely sadistic and violent gothic, and hey, i love that. IT THROBS. "romance" as straight up horror. and the writing was excellent. i need to think about this one a little bit more before i write a review because right now i feel like i'm having ptsd from some kind of violent assault. but for now here are some things to illustrate my broken mind after having read this nightmare:

(view spoiler)

Naksed says

He sat on his horse unmoving, a somber black figure in startling contrast to the vivid colors about him, the sun dazzling on his white gold hair. Unlike the duke and his bastard, there was no laughter in his face, and his eyes were not searching the housefronts for diversion-instead, he was staring intently straight up at my window.

Poor Felicia Guardi. Not bad enough that she is a reviled bastard toiling away, Cinderella-like, at the inn of her portly brother and his shrewish wife in the 15th century, but now she has unbeknownst to her caught the eye of Domenico della Raffaele, heir to the Dukedom of Cabria, in the fictitious southern city of Fidena, Italy. And if she thinks this is going to mean hearts and flowers, she is in for a rude awakening. For Domenico does not court, certainly not an unprotected tavern wench. He takes what he wants.

A voice, soft and almost teasing, stopped me in my tracks.

“Little crow!”

When I felt his fingertips against my cheek, I flinched as I would have done from a brand. But he turned my face up to him as casually as he might have turned a rose to smell it, and unwarily I looked straight up into his eyes.

They were black; so dark that they were unfathomable, and impossibly, horrifyingly dark in that fair face. I thought of Lucifer as I looked at him, of a demon's eyes in the face of a fallen angel. Then, as I watched, a strange light began to grow in them-the darkness was swallowed up in a brilliance that made them blaze silver. I caught my breath, and the room, the house, the whole city, was suddenly breathless

with waiting.

Next thing you know, her brother sells her for thirty pieces of silver and she is swept to the Duke's castle, a corrupt, rotten, debauched hellmouth where she is caught in the intrigues of political and bed rivals alike.

Felicia's first person narrative is so emotionally poignant, realistic and strong that you cannot help, as the reader, to feel as she feels, see as she sees, tremble as she trembles. The character of Domenico, seen through her eyes, is a magnificent and charismatic but always aloof and distant, cold and cruel figure.

Nevertheless, Felicia, for all her vulnerability, has pride, common sense, loyalty and bravery. These inner qualities, more than her pretty looks, are what ensnares Domenico in turn, and has his entire court gaping at the unprecedented obsession that his newest mistress has engendered in him.

The struggle of their personalities is mighty even though the scales are so imbalanced, with Felicia fighting him at every turn. But in my opinion, despite the odds, she is the one to come out on top.

The silver devil is also a swashbuckler of a novel, with some nice Gothic touches, very vivid descriptions of battles, some awful torture and assassination scenes, and a couple of heart-stopping duels. A perfect pace, with enough plot twists and turns to ensure that it never becomes boring, repetitive or predictable.

I loved *The Silver Devil* from the first to the last word. Heartbreaking that this book is one of only two known to have been penned by this talented author, whose life was tragically cut short, and about whom we know so little.

Bgurl (don't h8 me cuz I'm honestful) says

***The Silver Devil* by Teresa Denys: 4 “Uncomfortably Good” Stars.**

He bought her for thirty pieces of silver, drugged her, dragged her from her home, held her captive in his cellar, subjected her to the scorn of his cohorts, surrounded her with jealous former lovers, and took her virginity in the most violent and humiliating way.

When she smiled at a boy, he tortured and killed him. When she tried to escape, he hung those who assisted her. When a woman tried to drive them apart, he banished her to a leper colony. When a childhood friend conspired against them, he had starving dogs tear him limb from limb.

He seduced and impregnated servant girls, passed mistresses off to his friends, tried to curse his father

into an early grave, and drove his stepmother to suicide after having relations with her on the chapel floor.

HE IS SPOILED, NARCISSISTIC, JADED, AND VOLATILE.

He is Domenico Giordano della Raffaele, Duke of Cabria and Lord of the Marches, and he should NOT be lovable, but he IS.

HE IS BEAUTIFUL, BRAVE, CHARMING, AND PASSIONATE.

And when it comes to Felicia, the girl he bought for thirty pieces of silver, the one to whom he asserts, "*It is your vocation to love me above all others*":

So, like all the others – the men and women, boyhood friends, and stepmothers alike – Felicia falls in love with His Grace, The Duke of Cabria.

***The Silver Devil*, by Teresa Denys, is not a comfortable read.**

Like it's hero, the feelings it evokes are not kind or merciful. Felicia's first person narrative so vividly describes her every feeling, her every thought, and her every conclusion, that it's as if you're experiencing all of The Duke's actions – his transgressions, his commands, his whispered seductions and possessive caresses - from within *her* skin. Her confusion becomes your confusion; her fear, your fear; her pain, your pain; her rapture, your rapture; and, her love, your love. By the time the story reaches its dramatic climax, you're thoroughly convinced that His Grace is everything Felicia believes him to be: an over-indulged, inconstant, opportunist, incapable of returning her love.

That's when we finally hear Domenico's side of the story; and with it, all of the unkind and unmerciful emotions *finally* come to an end. Suddenly, a whole new set of feelings roll through you, ones that are refreshingly sweet and tender. And when they continue to linger long after the story comes to an end, you know, with undue certainty, that despite the discomfort; *The Silver Devil* was an uncomfortably good read.

For information about my rating system, see my profile page.

A SHOUT OUT TO Fre06:

I can't tell you how grateful I am for the recommendation. It's nice to read a really well written book. One where you get lost in the world of the main character. Thanks for recommending it to me. I hope someday I can return the favor.

Regan Walker says

Enthralling, Terrible and Wonderful, a Classic set in 17th century Italy

This was my first by Denys. Her only other novel is *The Flesh And The Devil*, which is also wonderful. Both

are set in 17th century Europe.

The Silver Devil begins in 1605 north of Naples, Italy, at the time of the plague. It tells the story of Felicia Guardi, a commoner beauty who comes to the attention of Domenico della Raffaele, the new Duke of Calabria, the one they call the "Silver Devil."

When her mother died, Felicia learned from her brother that she was bastard born. Forced by him and his wife to live in their house as a servant, Felicia becomes a sort of Cinderella. Though Felicia has had a hard life, she has virtue, integrity and wisdom that outshine all those around her. Surely that is what Domenico saw when he chanced to glimpse her. Without her knowing it, Domenico buys Felicia from her half brother who drugs her so she can be taken to the duke's palace.

Already ruined by having been taken to the duke, Felicia nevertheless fights the man who would have her ("a demon's eyes in the face of a fallen angel"... "as graceful as a leopard and as treacherous as murder"). After he takes her maidenhead, she realizes she has no choice but to stay with him until he tires of her, which according to what she is told, may be very soon as he runs through mistresses quickly. But Felicia is unlike any woman Domenico has ever known and he does not cast her off.

Having just come to power, Domenico is aware of the seething treachery swirling around him. There are those who would prefer to see his half brother Alessandro rule the duchy. And Domenico knows he must take a wife and sire an heir so there are choices to be made. But Felicia has fallen in love with him ("...it was then, as I went to him like a falcon flying to his fist, that I realized I loved him"); and even knowing she will be set aside, she stays.

I can't say enough good about this classic. Brilliantly written with attention to detail reflecting much research into the era and the politics of the time, it is a fascinating story of warring families and the vicious actions some take to stay in power. The prose is nearly lyrical at times and Denys' writing is truly beautiful in its descriptions. Few authors could do it so well.

The plot is intricate and captured me from the start. Though told from the first person (we are only ever in Felicia's head), it works for an intriguing story as we can only wonder what the Silver Devil is thinking behind his black eyes. Felicia is a wonderful heroine, and though he was often wicked, Domenico was a very worthy alpha male hero. I did not want to put it down. I highly recommend this one and it's going on my Best Bodice Ripper list, My Favorite Heroes & Heroines list and my Top 20 list!

You'll have to get it used, but get it! It's a keeper.

Mizuki says

Hell...I'd never managed to read through the pdf version of a 300+ novel within three or so days!

Thoughts after reading:

Just...What The Hell Had I Just Read!?

(Link: <http://vampirekiki.deviantart.com/art...>)

That...that's just mind-blowing in a crazy manner!

It's a damn difficult book to rate, on one hand I'm intrigued by the outstanding, sensual writing, the vivid sense of dread expressed through said writing, the fine details and the roller coaster ride which is the main story. On the other hand, I rolled my eyes (with a few '*No it can't be!*' exclams) at how the plots go over-the-top at times and the ending is *ways* too unrealistic *and* **the hero, a.k.a the main love interest in this book, is an irredeemable asshole.**

To spice things up, this guy is also a torturer, a cold-blooded killer and a rapist. Although I can almost appreciate how unapologetic this guy had been for an entire book.

I mean, when comparing with Domenico Giordano della Raffaella, Lothaire the Enemy Of Old from Immortals After Dark series suddenly looks like he is Mr. Nice.

To be very honest, if you didn't happen to have a morbid curiosity over this book, if you didn't happen to have some sort of sadistic threads within you (yes I have some within me, shocking), I don't think you should be reading this book.

One of my Goodreads friend commented that "*reading this book is like watching Caligula*"...and she is right.

However, I have to tell you *that* is exactly part of the fun of reading *The Silver Devil*, Teresa Denys push everything to the extreme and she didn't hold things back, she went into places where other romance novelists rarely visit, and OMG I just love it!

As to the late Miss Denys, we know so little about this lady, but by reading this book I at least can tell she had a lot of guts, a fine taste for Gothic-style writing and a lavish imagination. I must wonder how the ending of this book would have turned out if Miss Denys didn't have to limit herself to the typical romance cliches of a (view spoiler)

And here's a damn good review from Bgurl, with splendid jpgs: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Karla says

4.5 stars

I was already predisposed to like this since Denys' *The Flesh and the Devil* blew me away. She'd had to have really screwed up to make me dislike it. In the end, this book was just as good.

The first person POV of the heroine didn't bug me at all (sometimes it does), and I thought it perfectly complemented the story of an illiterate tavern maid plucked out of her lowly life and station and placed among the glittering and utterly foreign court of the local Duke. She's adrift, uncertain, and scared, and the use of the first person conveyed her journey from innocent girl to entrapped (and enchanted) mistress perfectly. I also thought that it made Domenico just as attractively and terrifyingly mysterious to the reader (well, this one anyway!) as Felicia herself found him to be.

Denys wrote so many beautiful passages capturing Felicia's tormented thoughts and emotions in Domenico's

web that it's impossible to quote them all, but suffice to say that the tone was very dark and gothic and evocative of the times without being detailed on the historical end of things. Even though I wasn't told every little thing about 16th century Italy and court etiquette and manners, the settings, characters, and atmosphere of paranoia, decadence, and bloody state rivalries were all very clear. It's one of those "I felt like I was *right there*" stories.

Also, while I'm not a fan of the hero grovel, I did enjoy this one immensely. Talk about grand gestures. It was just as broad and absolute as the story that came before it was dark and crazy, and the "staginess" of it (if you will) fit in with the melodramatic sweep of the plot and florid characters. Right from the get-go, it seemed like ripe material for an opera and I spent the entire book thinking of it in those terms. Made for a very pleasurable experience and inspired my dream cast.

I'm dinging it a half star for the last quarter of the book where the plot started to slog a bit and I was impatient for Domenico and Felicia to finally come to an open dialogue (for lack of a better term). Their pride really kept the grease from getting in the gears to keep things rolling.

Denys is a very studied writer, one of the very very few where I can see the painstaking care of her craft and not get annoyed at the artificiality of it. The sheer beauty of some of the passages, the way she can paint a scene, convey a glance or caress or whisper have few equals in my reading experience. She can couch the horrific and terrifying in such a way that it seems like a song (because in real life Domenico and Felipe Tristan in "The Flesh and the Devil" would have any sane woman running for the exits or grabbing a gun). She's a master of creating a beautiful blend of people and place and plots to make an intriguing, surreal "romance."

(The spoiler tag isn't for a spoiler, but contains my dream cast so the page doesn't go a mile long.)

(view spoiler)

Willow says

This review has mild spoilers in it. :)

A few weeks ago, I saw a post where they were discussing the difference between old bodice rippers and modern romance novels. At the time, I couldn't quite put my thoughts into words. I've been thinking about it though, and I'm convinced the main difference is a plot strategy where the hero and the villain are pretty much the same character. This provides lots of sexual tension and conflict for the heroine, plus it adds many hilarious WTF moments, like, *huh...are you serious...so now they're in love? No way! LOL*

I've always loved old bodice rippers and it bums me out they've become so politically incorrect that authors don't write them anymore. I can read the old ones though. ?

So does *Silver Devil* fit the typical BR mold? Well, yes... and no. Clearly Domenico is a villain. He's a psychopath, tyrant who terrifies his people. Domenico has a man's legs broken because the man is taller than him. He tells a scribe to write up his own death warrant because the scribe doesn't write fast enough. And he has a handsome boy tortured and killed because Felicia smiles at the him. Domenico never really regrets his cruelty either. You don't see him brooding about his past murders. He's not evolved enough to have an epiphany at the end of the book about who he really is. So the only thing that changes is that the heroine becomes so besotted by Domenico that she doesn't care that he's a total nutcase. In fact, I don't see a happy ending for Felicia. Domenico is so self-absorbed that I'm convinced he will dump her in a few years for a younger woman, and she will be forced to grin and bear it.

So is this romance? Well...the love scenes are intense and passionate. Does that count?

I actually read *Silver Devil* before when I was teenager and I had forgotten most of it. But I do remember at the time, I was appalled at what a horrible person Domenico was. He certainly wasn't my idea of a dreamboat hero. Felicia struck me as weak and wimpy for falling for him, throwing away her moral integrity simply because she loves him. "*But I love him,*" is the whiniest reason in the world to stay with someone and this did not endear me to her.

I look at *Silver Devil* totally different now. While it fails as a romance, I think it's excellent historical fiction. Teresa Denys is masterful at pulling you into the seventeenth century. She lived in Italy and paints Cabria with visceral color and depth. I feel like she truly captures the personalities and thoughts of time period too. Domenico fits perfectly the self-absorbed and jaded Duke who disposes of human life without a single thought. History is dotted with people like him. Felicia comes from the bottom level of society, so of course she is meek and weak. Her position is precarious and she's well aware of that. For her, it must be intoxicating to go from being completely powerless to someone people bow to. Who wouldn't throw away some of their moral integrity to be apart of it? So while Felicia may not admit it to herself, I think she's attracted to the power as much as she is to Domenico. So it's not just love that keeps her attached to him, although she'd like to believe it.

These characters make sense to me. They are complicated and full blooded.

In conclusion, I think *Silver Devil* is a tale about a villain; an evil tyrant that everyone is trying to overthrow. The good guys are trying to kill him, but they fail miserably. The people of Cabria would be much better off with a different ruler, but the Silver Devil has uncanny luck. And this story is told through the eyes of his mistress who grows to love him.

In the end, the bad guys win. It's not a happy ending. Funny though, Teresa Denys writes so well, you end up rooting for the bad guys.
