



## Devil's Embrace

*Catherine Coulter*

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## **Devil's Embrace** Catherine Coulter

For beautiful Cassie, the seething city of Genoa seems a world away from her 18th-century estate where she was raised. Until she meets Lord Anthony Welles, the brutally handsome aristocrat who swears that he will win Cassie's heart, even as he conquers her body. And on the eve of her wedding to another man, Anthony proves that he will stop at nothing to be with the woman he loves...

## **Devil's Embrace Details**

Date : Published (first published 1982)

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Author : Catherine Coulter

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Genre : Romance, Historical Romance, Historical



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# From Reader Review Devil's Embrace for online ebook

## Naksed says

[Heroine gets, quite literally, ripped apart in a gang-rape perpetrated on her by the b

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## BJ Rose says

WARNING! SPOILER IN THIS REVIEW!!

I just finished my reread of this book, which I would not have done if not for the BHB challenge! So I knew about the abduction and rape - what a wonderful lover! (*Just in case you didn't recognize it, that was sarcasm!!*) - and the gang rape that comes later, and really expected those events to negate everything else. That said, I'm surprised at how much I enjoyed the *rest* of the book. I loved the sailing activities and descriptions, and almost-travelogue approach to descriptions of Genoa and Italian countryside. And as a history buff, I thoroughly enjoyed the British look at the 'irritating rebellion' in the Colonies. Setting aside the rapes (which it's impossible to do), this would have been a weak 4\*, so I'm giving it a weak 3\*

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## WhiskeyintheJar/Kyraryker says

No, thank you.

After the gang rape I kind of fast forward through reading this :/

It did start off kind of interestingly wild, childhood love, kidnapping, and drama lama but as it approached the half way point it started to drag and the last half just wasn't interesting. Our supposed hero Anthony doesn't really make an appearance, except to kidnap and then rape the heroine, he mostly hangs around waiting for the heroine to agree to marry him. Our heroine Cassie is 18-20yrs old in the story and is written fairly well, it's just that the only material she has is to react to men wanting to rape her and/or marry her. There wasn't even any wild fun shipwrecks or the heroine picking up a sword, although she does shoot hero at one point; it was lacking the wild kookiness dramatic flare that brings me back to these old bodice rippers. This is best lost to the annals of time.

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## Nona says

ok so I had to pick it up due to the hype.. much older man, abduction, rape and on and on... I'm glad I did though. Maybe it's because I married my husband at the ripe old age of twenty, keep in mind my dshing hero in real life is sixteen years my senior. so the age thing, while it shocked some, didn't phase me. I like a good abduction, don't mind a rape or whatever the more drama and chaos usually the better I like it but Devil's Embrace wasn't anything special, to me.

I see why the Ladies love and hate Anthony, yes his ego was large and in charge, hmmph, and yes he was one of the most self entitled men but really was he all that bad or just stubborn and deseparte to have his own

way at the cost of all others? again spoilt little boy grows up to be over bearing Lord! And Cassie, well geez, she was just so smart and so stupid I found I was ranting at her, "you hussy"... "why you deserved that you little shit"! anyways far from my favorite heroine but ok I didn't write this so I can't be true dissapointed in it as I did finish it and it didnt get thrown at the wall.

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## Karla says

### **This review is packed full of spoilers with a dash of salty language.**

I'm not normally shocked or totally squicked by a bodice ripper. I laughed during *Savage Surrender*, with its callous asshole hero Garth McClelland and the rape-a-minute plot. There have been other books with gang rapes and less-than-stellar heroes that had me riveted to the plot and characters. (Hello! *Stormfire*?) But this book is the first one to actually creep me the hell out. I only kept reading to see if Coulter would pull out a cheap trick at the end to make the horror that had come before all puppies and kittens. (She did.) To top it all off, the non-existent plot was boring as hell.

First off, the hero Anthony Welles, Earl of Clare. Where to start with this guy? Anthony has all the attributes of a psycho stalker. He has been watching Cassie for years. He knows her habits. He is so observant of her that he can read her moods and thoughts. He feels that he is the only one who can offer what she wants and needs. He is the only one able to fulfill her as a person and as a woman.

Are you dialing the cops yet?

Add to that the fact that he was in love with her mother in his pubescent years. After Cassie's mother died and when he could, he infiltrated Cassie's home by sending his cousin incognito to be Cassie's governess. The cousin taught Cassie Italian and "groomed" her to be suitable for him when the time was right.

Even ickier? Cassie was *five* when his cousin arrived to start this little covert operation.

Which makes Cassie's pregnancy 6 months or so after her abduction by him so hilarious because when she accuses him of deliberately doing that to her, he says that he couldn't have *possibly* planned *that*.

Of course not. You only banged her every day from Day 2 (except for those Aunt Flow days). I mean, *pregnancy*? How did *that* happen?

I think he should get a job in SPECTRE or Quantum, or whatever they're calling it these days. Omniscient string-pulling is right up his alley.

He's not all Powercock awesometude, though. His plan was to court Cassie during her Season in London and win her that way, but when her childhood friend Edward returned from serving overseas in India, she called off her Season and was going to marry him right then and there. Oh no! Since Cassie has **forced his hand**, he has to kidnap her and show her how much he loves her! *He has to!*

Just pause for a moment and reflect. His entire adulthood has been focused around marrying Cassie (completely pathetic in itself) and he has brought all his resources to bear on achieving that end without her knowledge or that of her family. And he feels completely justified in his aim and his methods.

That, dear readers, is what creeped me the fuck out.

Cassie has a natural reaction to being kidnapped, at first. Sheer terror and anger. How dare he presume to know what she wants and decide what's best for her? (And, seriously, the smug coming off Anthony at every turn was intolerable.) But from the get-go, he insists that she be naked when she goes to bed and otherwise demeans and orders her about at every turn, all the while insisting she has the free will to realize they're made for each other. Look, I usually carp at heroes that are sensitive metrosexuals in centuries past, but I'm not all that fond of dead mother-loving, kindergarten-aged daughter-obsessing control freaks either.

But Cassie feels her body respond because Anthony is such a peerless lover and she thinks she's an immoral whore and, as far as I can tell, sort of resigns herself to him. From that seed a love grows that only comes out into the open when she gets gang-raped by hired thugs and Anthony seems peachy-keen in comparison. (Again, as far as I can tell. Coulter tended to emphasize fingers probing wet folds and brushing dusky nipples over any psychological attention.)

I didn't much care for Cassie, either. Horny, spitfire virgins? Yeah, no thanks. If Coulter had perhaps given her characters something to DO, maybe I'd have liked it more, but she didn't. In the beginning in England, Cassie and her fiancé Edward paw each other, then she gets abducted by Anthony and the action is confined to his yacht where they fight, shag, and fight in a mobius strip, and then they go to Italy where we remain enclosed in a villa for pages upon pages with the same fight/fuck/fight cycle replayed over and over. And then Cassie runs off to New York to find Edward. *Oh yay!* I think. This bit about Edward being an officer during the Revolution sounds good! And this is where the story *really* lost me because.....

*Dear Cassie,*

*So Edward doesn't remember that you don't like tea! But Anthony does! So fucking what? While you were growing up and Anthony was maintaining a 24/7 offshore patrol by your home watching your every movement with one hand on a spyglass and the other in his pants, Edward was in disease-ridden India preserving the English empire that you are oh so proud of, and then risking getting his nuts blown off in America. He doesn't remember you don't fucking like tea. Suck it up. And when you ran off to him for his protection against Big Bad Anthony, he screwed you before you were all sopping wet and you were all hurty for a bit afterward. Soooooooooo inconsiderate compared to Anthony! You know, Anthony? The guy who tied you to a bed and raped you because he felt you needed to be shown how devoted he is to you? Yeah, **that** Anthony.*

*You. Stupid. Twat.*

*No love,  
Me*

Yes, it was the peevish harping of "But I've never liked tea, Edward!" that broke me. Apparently Cassie prefers to have a stalker boyfriend who knows so much about her that the usual "getting to know each other" is redundant and unnecessary.

To add insult to injury in this turgid little turd of shame, there wasn't even much of a plot. What "plot" there was had Anthony's half-brother and his mistress Giovanna conniving to dispose of Cassie for inheritance purposes (this is where the gang-rape/"Anthony is awesome!" epiphany came in). This "plot" was wrapped up in the last page with a letter describing how they met their end. Therefore, at least about 95% of the book

was Cassie and Anthony fighting and screwing, Cassie running away to Edward and Anthony coming after her. Boring. Boring boring boring! I can take lots of WTFery if there's a plot. This one was total fail.

I had no idea that Coulter wrote such relentless smut in her books either. That was boring too. I'm sure there's more I hated about it, but to be honest, the "Every Breath You Take" Psychoboy act by Anthony Welles left me pretty well gobsmacked and incoherent. I'm only barely able to cobble my thoughts together in this ranty little mess of a review. Coulter did pull out some "it's not as bad as you think!" asides to explain away Anthony's seemingly stalker habits ("I stopped loving your mother. I love *you* as a person!" and "I installed my cousin as your governess to make sure you were raised right because your dad was neglectful.") I'm not buying either BS excuse. Both sound like lame little ploys to downplay the omgjesuschristareyoukidding me behavior of Anthony. I'm still convinced his house has a secret room of taxidermied blonde chicks that look like Cassie.

In the course of writing this, I've pingponged back and forth between 2 stars and 1. I have no idea which one really reflects my opinion. I'll go for 2 stars because it *is* one of the more notorious bodice rippers out there and everyone interested in the genre should read it, for good or ill. I'm glad I did, strangely enough. Just don't expect much of a plot. But if you like to read about a couple going hammer and tongs at each other in and out of bed, **and nothing else**, then you might like it.

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## **Regan Walker says**

ONE ENTHRALLING ROMANCE! I COULD NOT PUT IT DOWN!

This was Coulter's first long historical romance, published in 1985, and it is a superbly written, heart stopping, action-filled story that I could not put down. Literally. I do not recommend you begin it in the evening as I did. That night I did not sleep until nearly dawn. Forget the low reviews, and set aside your 21st century sensibilities and go with what may be one of the most enthralling romances I've read in a long time. Certainly it's a classic that affected the genre of historical romance—and well worth the read just for that!

Set in the late 18th century (I estimate 1775-76), it tells the story of highborn 18-year-old Cassie Brougham, who on the day before her marriage to a Viscount she has loved for years, is abducted by 34-year-old Anthony Wells, the Earl of Clare, who has been watching her since she was a child all the while believing she is his perfect mate. Though Anthony's intention is marriage, that doesn't stop him from rape to claim her, nor imprisonment, first on his yacht and then in his Italian villa, as he tries to persuade her to marry him. Cassie hates him for what he has done to her life (as well she should and Coulter does that really well), but succumbs to the passion he calls forth each time he makes love to her. You can feel the terrible conflict within this strong-willed, courageous girl as she feels she has no choices. Even her attempt to escape comes to naught. (There's a bit of the Stockholm syndrome working here, I do believe.)

The plot is intricate and intriguing with lots of action and lots of mystery. The characters are richly drawn, including the hero who has a noble side notwithstanding his selfish and brutal act of taking another man's bride. But the heroine is the one who really garnered my sympathy. She faces mad dogs and Englishmen and manages to overcome every challenge to gain the respect of all. I highly recommend it.

The second book is THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER.

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## Patricia says

I'm sure I will read books worse than this, but at this point, I can't remember being as angry about a novel than I am right now.

Here's how it started: Someone mentioned bodice rippers, and I felt the need to read one. This here was available for some reason, so I started it and have realized that reading rape-scenes comes with degrees of anger.

Most people have some sort of experience with sexual assault and most readers have had to read books where abusive behaviour was romantacised, yet this book - so far - takes the cake and became downright unbearable. It's not that I'm angry, although I am, but that I hate how this book made me feel: Powerless.

I know that a lot of 80ies noves were attempts to get agency back over our experiences with sexual assault and rape and that a lot of authors explored those themes in sometimes unhealthy ways, etc etc. I don't give a fuck, this was bad and made me angry and reading other reviews makes me pretty sure that not all bodice rippers are this fucking toxic.

A more insightful review: this one.

I'm now off, attempting to cope with this awful reading experience; in case it wasn't obvious - I don't recommend.

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## Shari Kay says

[ h is gang raped. had sex with OM after H. Creepy H (hide spoiler)]

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## Mermarie says

Oh wow, Jesus Christ on a crutch. This literary piece emphasizes and stands as a catalyst against for every arbitrary guideline by an author, that we've embraced even in the most shoddy of stories(Stormfire?).

He practically had her **floor-planned** since she was FIVE! And this is why, in my abject misery, I strive to discern its meaning; I knew from the very instant when she shot the hero, and *didn't* reload, that her usefulness and entertainment factor was at its end for me.

Generally in most bodice-ripper pieces, we're accustomed to the hero's unruly antics--torture tactics and control management, but I've found it's mostly a product of revenge. This novel accumulates every dastardly premise and attempted to gloss it over as an act of affection. The cocktail of nefarious scheming, life-long plans against a motherless child, eventually leading to training rapes, clown-car rapes by hired thugs, keep-me-pretty confinement, and all I've left out--were implied to be conditions of love itself. It really adds insult to injury, because the hero started off in this mindset, and never really purged himself of its vulgar ideology..or perhaps the author assumes the reader isn't capable of discerning the revenge-driven plot actions

to that of actions manifested on the hero's own accord for the heroine's own good and well-being.....

Book #2... Anthony buries Cassie alive but promises her a shopping spree, once she's thinned down enough to wear his mother's exhumed ballgowns. >.<

So appalled, I barely even blinked through the flies rollerskatin' across my eyeballs. Sorry, Coulter..I need a purpose driven evil, not a figure who has the rudimentary senses of a reptile.

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### **Emily says**

I unapologetically loved this book. It reminded alot of Christine Monson's "Stormfire" (which I am obsessed with). This book, like many in its genre, is not for the faint of heart. There's kidnapping, rape, gang rape, psychological abuse, stalking, etc. In fact, the hero is a psycho stalker that, if he were to live in 2012, would be on America's Most Wanted. I found Anthony to be a kind of fun-loving stalker as opposed to Sean Culhane in Stormfire who was just a serious psycho. I mean, after he initially beds the heroine against her will, he turns into a charmer of sorts. The plot goes quickly, I read it in two evenings. Classic 1980s bodice-ripper. Read it for the incredulous expression you'll have on your face alone. There were countless "Holy sh\*t" moments for me where I just could not believe how the heroine could be so thick. "Cassie, I kidnapped you for your own good! I needed to rape you! Can't you see the sense in that?" Well, I'm paraphrasing here. Devil's Embrace is definitely entertainment.

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### **FlibBityFLoob says**

If there was ever a book where I didn't want the heroine to remain with any of the love interests in the book, it was this one. Seriously, the two men in this book were complete and total a-holes. \*sigh\* No redemptive qualities in either of them. Where was my fiery ex-pirate from Gentle Rogue when I needed him? :)

Then again, I didn't particularly like the heroine, either. She was a simpering wimpy girl, and not the spitfire heroine I would have preferred, even if she shot a pistol in the book.

I have to agree with the authors of Beyond Heaving Bosoms who on page 77 admitted that the character of Anthony Welles was a character who was an "alphahole hero we'd like to slap around some". All I can say is: me, too. I'm not sure who could possibly think that this hero had redemptive qualities, and the heroine's ex-fiance was not any better himself. UGH.

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### **~Sara~ says**

The 30 year old Earl of Clare falls in love with the 14 year old Cassandra because he had a teenage infatuation with her pregnant mother. Hmmm... When she is 18, he kidnaps her the day before her wedding to her sweetheart who has just come back from war. Even though he barely knows her, and she thinks of him like an uncle, he is sure that he is the right man for her and is determined to marry her. Wow!!! This is why I don't read historical romances written in the 80's. I'm only on page 50 but I'm very worried about how much worse this will get!



Much worse apparently. On page 62, Anthony says "I won't hurt you, Cassandra, you know that." just before he ties her to the bedposts and rapes her while she cries. Aww, how sweet he is. So kind and loving.

Well, I'm done - I made it to page 86. I don't have a problem with difficult subjects like an older man falling in love with a child, kidnap and rape but the whole, 'I love you, I'm raping you for your own good' and the worst bodice ripping flowery language you can conceive of is just too much for me. I'm on to (much) better things!

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### **Shar says**

Romance? More like a study of Stockholm Syndrome!

A truly disgusting and twisted story. I thought the so called 'hero' was the villain until I skipped to the end.

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### **Dani "The REAL Cullens\_Girl since 2002" says**

**\*\*comes out from under the bed\*\***

Yes I liked this book. Yes, it was degrading, yes both the heroes in this story were complete IDIOTS. Yes, the heroine was a simpering mess and made some pretty lame choices.

That being said, I still enjoyed this book. It was degrading, unbelievable, and made me want to beat every character. Yet, I found myself not wanting to put this book down. I still think it was well written, and although a darker romance, I thoroughly enjoyed myself. IT'S FICTION. Not real-life. It was an escape for me, and an enjoyable one at that.

In true bodice-ripper fashion there is love, kid-napping, adventure, villains, exotic locations and in the end a happy ending (if you like the kidnap, rape, seduce, beat, rape, seduce, escape, chase after you, but I love you anyway sort of thing)

It was an entertaining read and that's all I can ask for in a book. and \*GASPS\* I'll probably read it again.

**\*\*promise you won't throw too many tomatoes at me please\*\***

Rating: 4 stars

Warning: Kidnapping, Rape, Torture, Love Triangle

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### **Veronica says**

At first I was gonna be like,

*"um, it was meh. Didn't like it all that much" \*ducks back down\**

but you know what...

I happened to enjoy this story very much. And I don't care.

And to all you readers who are ashamed to like this story,

because you should never be ashamed about what you enjoy to read. People will have their opinions just like you are entitled to have your own. Read whatever you want, just as long as you keep reading!

I in no way agree with the way our main male protagonist, the earl, went about in seducing Cassandra. But it's was still a damn good story for me. The earl's intentions were selfishly conducted. He got to decide that he would become Cassandra's husband, not her, and that was not very.... loving nor understanding, something he kept telling Cassandra that he was. Why not woo her? Don't rape her and hope to gain her affections by seducing her with your apparently amazing lovemaking.

The only reason I was able to even like the earl's character was that he in no way wanted to "hurt" Cassie. He didn't want her just to take her for one night and abandon her. He wanted to marry her and please her... against her (very malleable) will, no doubt. I know that this sounds all wrong, it sounds wrong to me too. But if this is wrong..... well, then... I guess, *I don't want to be right* (I was being sarcastic....no? okay.)

Cassandra was cursed with good looks and arousing every man in sight. Mhm. Or so it seemed. She does *actually* get raped (in this instance not by the earl), which I believe is one of the negative things other readers are talking about in the book. It's kind of a brutal scene actually. But I really doubt this type of stuff didn't occur, and it just so happened to have happened to our protagonist; it was real, harsh and real, and yes, disturbing.

Anyway, I really did enjoy this story, just be aware of the contents in this book. Those other readers negative opinions/reviews on the book are there for a reason, one I don't quite agree with, but take in mind that not everyone hated it and not everyone loved it. Read for yourself, judge for yourself.

Now,

Good day.

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