



Desire Has No Mercy

Violet Winspear

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The memory of the night haunted her.

Julia Van Holden hated Rome Demario for what he had done to her, but she couldn't erase him from her thoughts. Because of one brief, passionate moment of revenge he had taken her innocence--and had given her his child.

Rome had succeeded in wrecking her life, and her only hope of piecing it together again was to do as he suggested and marry him.

But what kind of marriage would it be--she hating him, he despising her as much as he desired her?

Desire Has No Mercy Details

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From Reader Review Desire Has No Mercy for online ebook

Naksed says

Her eyes were fixed wide and tormented on the Italian features she had tried so hard to blot from her mind... a look Bernini had surely visualised when he painted the canvas she had seen in the Borghese art gallery in Rome, leaning over the seduced Proserpina.

The Rape of Proserpina, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 1621 or 1622.

Holy Guacamole. When she wrote *Desire has no mercy*, Violet Winspear came to PLAY.

I venture to guess most readers will dislike the heroine Julia because she keeps her bitchiness volume set at max for the entire novel except for the last page, but after having met so many of VW's nauseatingly doormatty heroines, I have to say that I, for one liked and empathized with her, especially given the horrific trauma she has to endure at the hands of the hero right before the beginning of the story. She goes to him for mercy after her sister racks up debts at his casino and he exchanges one night of sex with her in return for the sister's IOUs.

VW was so clever to have the scene between Julia and Rome happen off the page and prior to the beginning of the action. As the plot unravels, through the characters' dialogues and their inner monologues, that awful scene starts to morph into something a little murkier, a little greyer. What really happened that fateful night between the protagonists when he took her to his private apartment above his casino in Naples?

She had felt the power of his physical passion, so unlike anything she had imagined... He would understand the dark desires a woman might feel...might need to have gratified. At the thought, Julia blushed and felt as if waves of alarm and awareness singed the very roots of her being.

As the reader moves towards the conclusion of the story, a question is posed: Did the heroine object to the hero's forced seduction of her as a matter of principle or was her real objection that he did it purely out of revenge and not out of a specific desire for her? The interpretation is left open but I think the title of the book says it all.

As we find out soon, that night at the Naples Casino was not the first interaction between these two star-crossed lovers although Romeo and Juliet, they are not, despite their eerily similar monikers of Rome and Julia. The vendetta, if you can call it that, was definitely one-sided, with Rome resenting the wealthy, upper-class family of Julia, while Julia's grandmother probably would have not given a thought to the mere insects that Rome and his house-cleaning mother represented.

Julia believes that Rome's actions towards her stem from a single-minded revenge simmering for decades against her due to an incident when as a child, Rome maliciously dumped some strawberry ice cream on pampered little Julia's shiny party shoes, causing Julia's grandmother to unceremoniously fire Rome's mother and speeding up her destitution, decline and eventual death.

Again, the question is posed to the reader whether that version of events is true and Rome did in fact dish out a cold and calculating retribution that he had been patiently waiting for his entire life. Or did something more

complicated happen between these two when they were reunited in Naples years afterwards, something that had been simmering between them when they were children but they were too young to even understand at that time.

"I saw you one day in the market place at Naples buying a wickerwork bag from a vendor and right away, I knew who you were. The girl in the rose-coloured dress, shyly holding out a strawberry ice to a boy who couldn't believe the dandelion hair was real but whose raging pride made him drop the ice cream all over your best shoes. Great big tears filled your eyes and I was about to swallow my pride and say I was sorry when your grandmother came storming out after you and made my mother pay for those tears."

For those romance readers who delight in deciphering the codes used in the books of this genre, this will be a literary feast because VW drops her clues perfectly throughout the story. And while the theme of the book is very dark, the book is not without its own kind of humor. The banter between the shrewish Julia and the dominant Rome was a lot more akin to *The Taming of the Shrew* than *Romeo and Juliet*. For example, Rome awkwardly tries to woo Julia by gifting her with an extravagant necklace, to which she gives a polite but subdued thanks. He gets angry and she taunts:

"What would other women do? Lick your shoes?"

"Not my shoes, Julia."

Now that was very bold of VW, who normally does not go for that bawdy humor but I must admit she does it extremely well here, in this and many other scenes of this nature. There are other passages where she refers to the rocky incline above a beach as the "groin" of rock and considers her friend's inquiries as "stabbing" questions lol. This right after a scene where she and Rome finally consummate their marriage on that very beach.

Despite its non p.c. trope, I immensely enjoyed *Desire has no mercy* and I think it is one of the best books that Violet Winspear has written. I recommend it for fans of hers and generally, fans of vintage romances.

Julz says

Wow! Didn't realize it took me that long to read this one (six months). So you already know that it doesn't exactly grab you by the jugular.

This is the story of a couple who knew each other as children. She was the spoiled granddaughter of a haughty old lady who grew to be a haughty prig herself. The hero was the housekeeper's son who grew up angry when the little twit got his mother fired from her job because he dumped ice cream on her shoes. The H was emotionally devastated from watching his mother lower herself and begging for her job and grows up determined to give her a better life.

Fast forward and we meet the H&h years later. He owns a casino and she's a snooty hoity toity art salesperson or something. She saves her little sister from the consequences of her own mistakes and ends up preggo by the H (casino/debts/h pays...you know the deal). She hates it (the baby) and wants to stay in her cold, emotionless existence with her equally cold and emotionally void boyfriend, but the H wouldn't hear of

it and insists they get married at least until the baby is born, then he'll take the baby and she can go on her merry way.

He turns out to be a nice guy (he does things like gets on the floor to play with a train set. *Awww!*) who tries like hell to please the h and melt her icy cold heart but fat chance. She remains a screeching harpy through the entire story, throwing his every nice deed in his face (once, literally), talking down to him, and making sure he knew that she hated him and the baby for taking her away from the life she should be living with the other man.

I kept hoping that a hot mistress would turn up and she'd have her nose rubbed in it good. Unfortunately, after she almost loses the baby and their love is expressed (Feh! My ass!) they get their HEA, the most undeserved one in harley history if you ask me. And her declarations at the end? Double feh! As if I'd believe she felt anything above freezing her whole adult life.

Not many where I've hated the heroine through the whole story. Sound like your deal? Have at it.

Melanie♥ says

3.5 stars. Very old school. She appears to hate him until the last few pages. It's clear (even without his POV) that he wanted her from the very beginning. It took her until the last few pages to realize it. Wrapped up a bit too abruptly.

♥Aicha~high~on~books♥ says

What an absolutely shabby book!!!

All through the book there was a constant chant in my head of "GIMME A BREAK!" or "NOT AGAIN!!"
There is bad ...and then there is this book.

All through the book the h kept saying how much she hated the H and how her circumstances were forced upon her. I wanted to shake her hard and tell her to grow up already!

Then suddenly, somewhere in the middle of the last page, she finds her one and true love!

Sorry but I m not buying it!

I would say avoid this book at all costs.

Reading Vogue would be a better time investment!

Jen says

This is rather radical as it depicts a woman falling pregnant to a man before marriage (oooh aaah, we say today). It was satisfying to see poor Julie antagonise Rome to no end, although you kind of feel for the guy after a while (!).

Rating: 3.5/5

Preeti ♥? (Romance She Reads) says

I think I can safely say that no HP reader likes to read about a haughty, spoilt and hostile h who thinks she is superior because of her class, family and pure blonde looks but also one who goes on and on about how she's been wronged when it wasn't quite that way. Vintage books do not clarify on consent quite as clearly as it's done these days.

Her constant drama of a Victorian maiden with outraged modesty was tiresome when it was clear that the H had not really forced her but she had made a deal of a night in his bed for her sister's debts. The consent at time of the actual deed might have become dubious though (view spoiler)

So the fact was that she traded her body and then hated the H for it, and ruined the books for us by turning into a snapping shrew. Why not blame herself or the sister for putting her in the situation.

It doesn't help that the H is their one time maid's son who has grown up with few chips on his own shoulder courtesy the ill treatment of his mother at her family's hands. From working class Italian he went onto become a rich casino owner.

She gets pregnant and then her hate grows to include her unborn baby, who she is determined to 'lose' one way or the other. I tried to get that into perspective but after a while it seemed like that the 'poor me' h had no redeeming quality.

"Look at me—halfway up those beach steps I had to stop for breath like some obese senior citizen! I'm not like this because of love, Lucie. I'm like this because of—" ..and this was in the second last chapter.

But VW's allegories and wordplay are something else. I couldn't stop grinning after reading this.

*His words died to incoherency, passion was released in him and there was no restraining it—it swept over both of them, and distant yet close Julia heard the sea as it **came and went in the groin** of rock.*

And later, the maid asks....

*"Did Mr Rome **join** you on the beach?" Lucie added.*

*Julia winced at the **stabbing** significance the words had for her.*

But still the story had some charm and conviction (if one manages to persevere and read on). The H was something else- an alpha hot, easygoing Italian and obviously besotted with the h. The H tried to deal with her constant spitefulness with indulgent humor and quiet caring but nothing thaws the spiteful shrew. And there were times I felt exhausted by her constant bickering.

I couldn't agree more with the long suffering Lucie, the maid..

"You know what he should do, miss." Lucie smoothed the bedcovers. 'He should give your bottom a few spanks.'

'That would be good for the precious son and heir,' Julia scoffed.

'He's tucked away too nice and cosy to take harm from Mr Rome, whether he spanks you or canoodles with you'"

The author alludes to 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'Taming of the Shrew'. The first perhaps because of their names (Rome and Julia) and the family enmity of sorts, and the second is self-explanatory. But there wasn't any taming on his part. He was just his normal caring, generous self. A very likable and lovable H, if in the vintage mould.

A more suitable title would have been 'The shrew has no mercy'!

Chitra *CJ* says

"Desire has no Mercy" is the story of whiny Julia and Rome---- and this will be a RANT.

The names of the characters and the story is a rough play on "Romeo and Juliet".. except you would really want to push Julie into Buffalo Bill's pit.

So I know this book was published in 1979, therefore was no sex-all drama-drink during pregnancy era- but what honestly annoyed me was dearest Julia.

She had a very self righteous OTT aggravating attitude! She complains about the "misdeeds" done to her by her hero from page 1- even though it was she who got the H's mother fired which led to him being destitute as a kid- she who went to ask for his help in forgiving her sisters IOUs- and she who kept talking of reputations, how she doesn't want to marry below her social standing and constantly trying and talking about deliberately miscarrying their kid. Her hatred was just plain annoying, because hormonal or not- she came on as a plain bitch.

Being from medical background, I feel the woman has full rights to her body and whatever fetus she is carrying- but the repeated threats of inducing abortion by the h were a bit uncomfortable to read- along with the h's constant chiding of the hero and wanting to be with OM.

The reason I rate this book 1 is because of the hero- he had his moments of anger- but if I was in his place- I'd have had worse fits of rage because the h was THAT BAD.

You deserved so much better Rome!

Did like Lucie though.

So, yes- I hated the shrew of the heroine and I honestly wished I could smack some sense into her until the very end, and more. HATED HER.

Egh, instead of reading this- get some anti hypertensives instead because this will make you mad.

Safe

1/5

Sultry Steamy Reading says

Please check out my review of this book and other books at:

<http://www.sultrysteamyreading.com/20...>

This book has an outdated theme. Seriously, most women these days no longer have to worry about carrying a man's child, or of what a man thinks of her when she has gambling debts.

However, I am giving this book three stars because it was written in a way where you can understand where the heroine is coming from. The hero was also portrayed successfully as a complicated man who has learned his life lessons and was dealt a hard hand when he was young.

I don't always agree with their arguments, but I get what the author wants to relay. The small tokens of wisdom as well from a secondary character is nice and subtle but is not lost in the love story.

Roub says

absolutely loved it !!the heroine was mean in a childish way but i loved it !! she did not overdo it and it changed from the usual harlequins where the heroine enjoyed being forced and realised that's what she wanted. no here it was not the case. she did not let rome dominate her and she despised him for forcing her and was going to have an abortion. who wants to have a baby by someone who forced her !? she was right !! the book did not describe the sex scenes, that's the only thing lacking in the book. neway it's still a 5 star :-)

Kiki says

I get it, I really do, heroines a bitch, probably a whore too. But the thing is a whore has the right to change her mind anytime she wants, and once she dies, if you don't listen, hey buddy sorry to break it to you, but that's kinda sorta rape. And making a deal using her body makes her a whore, but him either insinuating, or accepting that deal, what does that make him? If we take the backdrop of the whole romance genre and the ease of the situation away and put this in a real life situation between a prostitute and her client, isn't the man the reason why she has to do the job? Her sister may have put her in the hard place where he could ask for her to offer her body, but at the end of the day HE asked for it. No matter what he should no longer be a likeable character. Heroine kinda has every right to hate him. I can see what people mean by he didn't force her. But I hope you also can understand when I say he KINDA did. If she has to make the deal, clearly not much choice was left. Once a protagonist takes advantage of a situation in such behaviour it kinda becomes irredeemable.?Look, I know I'm turning a light romance novel into something big, but, that's how it looks to me and that's how the society has reached the point it has today.

iamGamz says

Rome and Julia knew each other from childhood. Julia was the granddaughter of a wealthy, snobbish woman and Rome was the son of one of the grandmother's cleaners. During a birthday party Julia saw Rome looking in on the fun and offered him a dish of strawberry ice cream. He threw it on her lovely shoes and she cried. That caused Rome's mother to lose her job and made Rome hate Julia's family.

Many years later Julia's sister had a gambling debt that she didn't want her snooty fiancé and his family to know about her debt so she asked Julia to clear up the problem for her. Lo and behold the casino owner is none other than Rome. As payment for the debt and after being insulted by Julia he gave her an option. Pay for the debt by spending the night with him or he tells the unsuspecting fiancé.

Choosing her sister's stupidity over her virginity, she spends the night with Rome. Two months later she's at her sister's wedding and Rome shows up. He takes one look at her and knows she's pregnant with his child.

He offers marriage, she threatens abortion. He forces her hand and makes her marry him and move to a beautiful home in Italy.

Throughout the ENTIRE book the h was an absolute bitch to the H. He tried. She blamed him for the pregnancy as if she didn't make the decision she did. She threatened to get rid of the baby. Even thinking up ways to force a miscarriage. Every time the H tries to hand her an olive branch, she throws it back in his face - literally at one time.

I despised this h. It wasn't until the very last page that she realized that she was in love?! I finished the book only because I needed to see how long the h would keep up her childish, petty behavior. And good lord it was never ending!

If you want to read about a spoiled, vindictive, rich girl, this is the book for you. Otherwise, just save yourself the agony and don't bother reading it!!!

Leona says

This is one of those older angst ridden "you done me wrong" reads. I liked the heroine, she gave as good as she got...and though, we do not get Rome's point of view, the author does a good job in drawing a complex man who is wildly attracted to the heroine. I never once doubted his motives.

My only wish, I would have liked the ending to be drawn out more. I felt a little cheated in that things wrapped up a little too quickly.....

KatieV says

3.5 stars. Definitely old school as has been stated before. Those triggered by consent issues should be wary.

This is one story that would have definitely been better served by being longer than the category format allows.

The h is not easy to like at times. She was raised in the high society Knickerbocker type NY style. Her grandmother was a huge snob and very much Victorian in her attitudes. Julia couldn't help but be shaped by the way she was raised. She was a snob, even if she may not have considered herself one and she was VERY sexually repressed.

However, you do see glimpses that she was innately a much more generous person when it came to the lower classes than her grandmother. The scene where she gave the H ice cream when they were children showed that she had a heart and didn't like seeing someone left out. Unfortunately, we don't get to see much of that side of the heroine again.

The inclusion of her old nursemaid, Lucie, was the only way that we saw her true self. She didn't treat the nursemaid like a slave but more of a mother figure. It also highlighted how very immature the h was. She acted very much like a child at times, throwing tantrums against the H and Lucie would have to calm her and tuck her in bed, etc.

I could understand her anger toward the hero. Personally, I think she should have let her sister take responsibility for herself, but I suppose she felt like she was responsible as the older sister to try and get her out of the bind she was in with gambling debts and therefore keep her upcoming marriage untarnished.

This is a book that wouldn't be written today. There are lots of shades of gray when it comes to sex and consent. The hero did have culpability in this. He offered the heroine a sleazy deal (her body for the gambling debts) and then when she got scared and turned all snobbish, insulting Miss High and Mighty, he got angry and there was a forced seduction type of scenario.

Then again, she had said she'd pay the debts that way... Sort of like a combo of consensual prostitution and forced seduction I'd say.

Lots of issues around the h's repression and her shame at part of her enjoying sex with the hero.

She ends up pregnant and frankly horrified by it. She considers abortion, which was a very risky move for the author to take, especially in an HP. It will likely turn some people completely off since it is such a divisive subject.

This was a gripping read, but could definitely have benefited from being longer. I really wanted to see the H/h together when they weren't bickering. The resolution was quite quick, as most HPs are, but particularly quick in many of the oldies that tended to be sans epilogue.

I do think it was obvious how the H felt from the beginning and lots of hints that the h's feelings weren't what she wanted/thought them to be. She was so jealous of the idea of other women and even jealous of the fact that the H cared more about the baby than her. She does deal with her issues by trying to hurt the H though. He certainly wasn't blameless, but at times it's hard not to want to pinch her as it's so obvious he's trying.

Megzy says

4.5 stars

Another book that could have been a 5 star if she didn't end it all too quickly. I really enjoyed the angst. The author does a terrific job in building the characters. Nothing is black or white.

Jacqueline says

Oh my goodness, what a bicker fest. Most of the book was taken up with incredibly long scenes where all they did was verbally attack each other and sad to say it was mostly the heroine. I wanted to tell her to just shut the F*** up. It might not have been so bad but the scenes were each 10 to 15 pages long. You just got tired of it. I can stand the bickering if there was some other sort of stuff going on in between but it was all the same until the end where she magically realizes that she loves him. You could tell all along that he loved her although I don't see why.

