



Demon's Bride

Zoe Archer

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Leo Bailey may have been born into poverty, but ruthless business sense and sparkling intelligence have made money worries a thing of his past. It doesn't hurt that the devil himself has granted Leo the ability to read the future."

Demon's Bride Details

Date : Published May 1st 2012 by Zebra (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9781420122282

Author : Zoe Archer

Format : Mass Market Paperback 370 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Paranormal, Romance, Paranormal Romance, Historical Romance, Historical, Demons

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From Reader Review Demon's Bride for online ebook

All Things Urban Fantasy says

As one of those rare instances when a sequel outperforms its predecessor, **DEMON'S BRIDE** is a thrilling blend of gothic romance and dark magic that offers a well-paced mix of suspense, romance, and action. These elements were well-balanced and fun, and while Archer's writing style perfectly compliments this period romance, I would have liked to feel a deeper emotional connection with our hero and heroine.

Perhaps my criticism stems from the fact that the gothic romance that opens **DEMON'S BRIDE** was my favorite part of the book, bringing to mind the delicious darkness of **REBECCA** or **JANE EYRE**. I loved how Archer treats Leo's pact with the Devil like the "big secret" romance trope, a strategy that works very well here. I doubt any hero's secret ever required such an interesting twist at the end, as Anne has to slay demons alongside the usual "forgive and forget" devices. As much as I enjoyed the sinister beginnings of this book, I had a harder time switching gears to active opposition of dark forces. The Devil and his minions are so powerful in this mythology that the ending action sequences are always a bit jarring. In **DEMON'S BRIDE**, however, Anne and Leo's confrontations with demons were interspersed with exposition that gave me time to absorb before the next action sequence. With such a powerful foe, these reaction and strategy scenes were an essential part of keeping me involved in the story.

Though both the action and romance portions of **DEMON'S BRIDE** definitely worked better than **DEMON'S KISS**, I was still missing the deeper connection with Anne and Leo that could have garnered an extra bat. The world building has me very engaged, however, and both Rosalind and the unrepentant Brahm received unexpected very unexpected twists at the end. That is enough to ensure that I'll be back for more *Hellraisers*, if only to see what other rogues have a hope of being saved.

Sexual Content: Several sex scenes.

Lucy Dosch says

Leo Bailey was born the poor son of a saddler. He used his brains and his determination to crawl out of poverty, but that is not enough for Leo. Leo gladly makes a deal with the devil for the ability to see the future and the financial ruin of his competitors, so he can not only grow his own wealth, but to take down those of the aristocracy who will always look down on him no matter how much money he acquires. He makes his deal with the devil with no thought as to what the cost may truly be to him.

Leo also knows the only way into the ranks of the aristocracy for someone like him is to wed a nobleman's daughter. He chooses quiet Anne Hartfield, the daughter of a Duke who is on the verge of poverty. Except once the marriage night approaches, Anne is overwrought with nerves. Since Leo's parents were a love match, he doesn't want to force himself on his new wife as his aristocratic brethren would have done. So Leo offers to wait on the consummation of their marriage until they have had an opportunity to get to know each other.

As Leo and Anne get to know each other and their mutual respect grows, Leo cannot believe how lucky he is in his choice of a wife, and as the love grows between them, Leo knows that he cannot allow Anne to ever know of his about his deal with the devil, but can one hide that much sin. The epic fight for Leo's soul begins once Anne claims his heart.

I looked several times at Devil's Kiss when it came out and I kept wavering back and forth whether I wanted to read what was Book 1 of this series. When I read the back cover of this one, the premise definitely caught my attention and I put it on my TBR list. This was a great story and the most interesting part is that at the beginning of this story, the hero and heroine from Book 1 begin as our antagonists. As we soon learn, they are truly the protagonists as they are trying to save the souls of the Hellraisers, all five of whom have made a similar deal in trade for different powers granted from the devil. With the help of Whit and Zora, Leo and Anne fight the demons to reclaim Leo's soul before it is too late and the darkness consumes him.

Anne starts out in our story as a very shy woman, but she grows into a powerful and determined heroine as our story goes on with the Leo support, and as the love and respect grow between them. Sadly, we see the foundation created between them torn apart once Anne finds out the truth about Leo, especially considering the darkness was so deep in Leo that although he knew he couldn't let Anne find out about his powers, it took him a looonng time for him to figure out that he needs to let go of that power to reclaim his soul and rebuild that foundation with his wife.

Fabulous story! I can't wait to see what happens next.

See more at <http://ebookobsessed.com>

Beth Dawkins says

Anne, an impoverished Barron's daughter married a stranger, Leopold Bailey. She knows he has secrets, and is more than a little intimidated by her new handsome husband. Like the other Hellraisers Leo was given a gift, the gift of prophesy, by the devil. Born as a saddler's son, he has become the Demon of the Exchange. He topples men's fortunes and stacks his own. With his gift he has acquired much, even a wife among the peers of London's elite. With her by his side more doors will open for him, and nothing can stop him, until he ends up in love with her.

This is the second book in the Hellraisers series. This one could be read as a standalone. The first book is about a different couple, but also holds the story of how the Hellraisers were given gifts by the devil. Demon's Bride is a lot like the first, it felt like it followed the same formula. There are some differences in the ending, but not enough to set it apart.

Like with the first novel it does an excellent job of putting the reader into the time period. I even think the heroine felt more realistic than the first. She is a lady of her time and has more of an excuse to deal with the issues in her marriage. She did marry a man for convenience, and knew it might be rocky. She really has very little to complain about—other than that pact he made with the devil. Their falling in love is steamy, and those steamy scenes are done very well. The first half of the book is them falling for one another, and his mounting insecurities.

The main problem for me was that I felt as if I had read this book before. It was so like the first one that I could predict each step Leo and Ann went through. The action scenes, like the romantic scenes are done well, but there is a serious lack of tension in them. The ending should have been exciting, but it felt far too predictable for me. There is a little twist that reminds the readers that nothing is truly safe, but it wasn't enough. I wanted to feel much more for the ending than what I did.

I would like to read the next one, just because so far it looks like it might be a little different than the first two. I am hoping it isn't the same plot. I will say that the characters in the second book are better than the first, but the tension they build together does not carry through to the end. I never felt like our main couple

was really in danger, nor did I believe they really thought they were in any danger. I really want there to be more to it.

Ute says

Wow - Demon's Bride by Zoe Archer is all I want in a book : plenty of excitement , a fast moving plot , great well developed characters and love ...in short : one of the best books I have read in a long time (and I read a lot).

This particular book is the second book of the trilogy of the The Hellraiser series from the very talented author Zoe Archer , but can be read as a stand alone. It plays in the 18 th century England - 5 friends sealing a pact with the devil and after receiving their " gifts" realizing very slowly - one by one - what they did and what that pact really included.

Demon's Bride is the story of one of these Hellraisers and one , nobody who loves a well written historical novel with romance and PRN elements , should miss.

I already downloaded the last of the trilogy - ready to be read and already sad that it is the last one.....but thank God , Ms Archer has more books to read :)

Bookaholics says

Demon Bride by Zoe Archer
Paranormal Romance –May 1st, 2012
4 stars

As the second in the author's paranormal Hellraisers series, the handsome but ruthlessly money hunger Leopold Bailey must determine if love is more important than security.

Poor Anne Hartfield doesn't know what her new marriage will bring. Impoverished but coming from a titled family, her new husband is darkly enigmatic. No one knows very much about Leopold Bailey's rise to riches except that he always seems to conquer those who might try to crush him. Due to his fabulous wealthy, he had gained the hand of Lady Anne in exchange for much needed funds. Neither knows each other well but Leopold wants her connections.

However, the sweet, mousy Anne has decided that she will no longer stay in the background as a proper lady should and begins to become more assertive. This new side to Anne fascinates Leo, and he finds that he can trust her. But his biggest secret is that his rise to wealth has been aided by the Devil who has marked him as a Hellraiser. And as such Leo has been given the skill to foresee the future. But Leo is in danger of losing his soul should he continue on this path of destruction. Can Leo redeem himself before it is too late or will the rest of the Hellraisers get to him first?

This is a fascinating new series. Each of the Hellraisers has certain powers according to their pact with the Devil. Each is marked and as they become more corrupted, the mark grows until their soul is all that remains for the Devil to take. Each Hellraiser has reasons for their pact. I liked how the author makes the 'bad' guy into the hero and makes the reader sympathetic to Leo's unswerving need for money and status. His poor and troubled past drives him to want more power and control. Yet it is when he meets the gentle Anne who has

surprising strength and faith in him, that he sees that there is more to life. At first, Anne really seems like a mouse and it was vastly enjoyable to read her break free and stand on her own, even against Leo. This romance has added drama as Anne is imbued with powers that help her fight the Devil and save Leo from a mysterious source.

This paranormal romance is compelling as men who have made a deal with the devil must make a choice between what they thought they wanted most and true love.

Reviewed by Steph from the Bookaholics Romance Book Club

Toni says

When I read the first installment of the series, I could see the building blocks being laid and set. Since Ms. Archer had accomplished that task so well in Devil's Kiss, she released the second installment of the Hellraisers series; Demon's Bride, full steam and doesn't look back.

Leo Bailey was gifted from the Devil, the ability to see the future by. All he needs is an item from a person and he can see the disasters that will plague the owner. He then uses that knowledge for evil and personal gain. Either pushing that person towards their inevitable disastrous future or plainly betting against them. Leo's passion is the exchange market and he uses his talent to control every aspect of it. Because of his cunning and skill, he is simply known as Demon.

While Anne Hartfield may be the daughter of a baron, she knew from the very beginning her marriage to Leo was not a love match. He dutifully wooed and courted her, but the love spark was never there. All her hopes blossomed on her wedding night to only be crushed just as quickly. Now she is determined to make the best of her marriage. She will do everything in her power to win her husband's heart.

From the first "I Do's" things begin to change for these two people. Neither expected what was in store for them and quickly things begin to turn. Good, evil and other forces are converging to shape the future. It's too bad Leo can't see what is ahead for himself, because he never expected to fall in love with his wife and that very well may ruin his life forever.

In my opinion, Ms. Archer has improved on the series. I loved how Demon's Bride had more of a sinister feeling to it. You can't help but hate the Hellraisers. They are marvelously evil, encompassing all of man's sins. While their power may focus on one attribute, you can feel the lust, greed, wickedness and power radiating off of all them. Ms. Archer did an outstanding job writing them with malevolence and still make them all seem human.

I enjoyed how Anne was so willing to make the best of her circumstances and didn't cower. She showed such strength throughout the story, when most women of that time would have crumbled. The turmoil that she put Leo through was just as delightful. Everyday his reserve was crumbling as he fell for Anne.

I was utterly shocked at some of the sad developments in the story. In an odd way, I can agree with the choices that were made, though they must have been hard decisions to make for the storyline. I am absolutely bewildered and have no idea which direction the series will take now. This new development has thrown me and I actually find it wonderful. Ms. Archer has removed the predictability that some series encounter and she has made me want the next story even the more.

Demon's Bride is a remarkable historical paranormal that has a familiarity feel to it right along with an

unpredictability too. Zoe Archer has written an innovative novel that is sexy, beautiful and suspenseful.

Stephanie G says

Anne, an impoverished Barron's daughter married a stranger, Leopold Bailey. She knows he has secrets, and is more than a little intimidated by her new handsome husband. Like the other Hellraisers Leo was given a gift, the gift of prophesy, by the devil. Born as a saddler's son, he has become the Demon of the Exchange. He topples men's fortunes and stacks his own. With his gift he has acquired much, even a wife among the peers of London's elite. With her by his side more doors will open for him, and nothing can stop him, until he ends up in love with her.

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The main problem for me was that I felt as if I had read this book before. It was so like the first one that I could predict each step Leo and Ann went through. The action scenes, like the romantic scenes are done well, but there is a serious lack of tension in them. The ending should have been exciting, but it felt far too predictable for me. There is a little twist that reminds the readers that nothing is truly safe, but it wasn't enough. I wanted to feel much more for the ending than what I did.

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- Beth (Guest Reviewer)

Angela Carr (Under the Covers Book Blog) says

Read April 15-21, 2012

Review also posted at [Under the Covers Book Blog](#)

Ms. Zoe Archer did not disappoint. This 2nd installment of the Hellraisers is just as good as the first and then some.

Leopold Bailey, the son of a saddler, has made a deal with the Devil. As all of the Hellraisers, each of them now possess a power gifted by the Devil himself to be used in exchange for their souls. The problem is that the more they use their power the more of their soul is consumed by the devil and more evil is unleashed

around them.

Leo's gift is the ability to see one's future. He used this gift wisely to gain power and wealth but his long time desire to be accepted by the people who treated him poorly was not within his grasp. Leo will never be of noble birth and the only way to get similar recognition is to marry with name and station. With evil and greed, will it ever be enough?....

Ann Hartfield, daughter of a Barron, knew exactly what she married into. She married a man who has made his own wealth and she knew exactly of his family background. But what she didn't know was that the man she married had deep secrets.

I must say that I enjoyed this book a lot. The character build up was well done. Both Ann and Leo had grown in a respectable time within the book. Ann grew from this demurred woman to a strong willed heroine who can take care of herself. And Leo, well, we already know he's a greedy man, but his realization of his predicament was well done. He did not just wake up and said... "oh, I'm so SOL". He had time to see what he might be losing.....

The best was their romance. Although they were married for business, they both decided to take the time to get to know each other and up until the very end Ms. Archer made it to the point that...trust is not easily given. Of course, because of his love, Leo will definitely take the challenge.

We got a good amount of Whit and Bram in this book which I loved. Bram is one hottie Hellraiser to watch out for, mark my words. I think he is the most intriguing of them all. We also get a glimpse of John and Edmund, which I thought was NOT enough of. The ladies Zora, Livia and Rosalind were also there briefly.

By the end of this book, we are left with half of the Hellraisers with their souls still to be saved. I was left with my mouth open with one question in mind: Did that just happened? Oh yes, an unexpected outcome just for our couple to get their HEA. I cannot wait to see what Ms. Archer has for the next book.

*ARC provided by author

A Voracious Reader (a.k.a. Carol) says

*Book source ~ ARC. My review is voluntary and honest.

Leo Bailey was born to a saddle maker, but he has bigger plans for himself. Even though the aristocracy turns down their collective nose at a commoner that doesn't stop Leo from making money hand-over-fist in an effort to buy his way into the elite crowd. Once he's obscenely rich all he needs to do is buy himself a titled wife. The Honorable Anne Hartfield, the daughter of an impoverished baron, is who he chooses. He rushes the marriage and afterwards, as he gets to know her better, he falls in love. But how will she react when she finds out, in order to make even more money, he made a deal with the devil?

This book started out with such promise. A man who has an uncanny money sense, making a fortune in the Market, who along with his Hellraiser friends, decides to make a deal with the devil in order to make even more money who falls in love with the woman he buys to be his wife. Their love story alongside his ego-driven plans make for an interesting tale. However, it drags on in parts, Leo is mostly unlikeable, and the paranormal stuff that should have been fascinating and exciting, falls flat. Overall, a disappointing read.

Laura says

I wanted something easy to read that I wouldn't have to take seriously and boy did this fit the bill. Is it good? Eh, that wasn't the point.

Also kind of fascinating to see the trope of the bad boy saved by the love of a good woman play out so literally, as she helps him save his literal soul from the actual devil.

Kimberly says

Blue Ribbon Rating: 3.5 out of 5

[Original Review Link](#)

Leopold Bailey was born a saddler's son, but his intelligence, determination and ruthlessness have made him the Demon of the Exchange. But the lords, who are impressed by his business sense, still shun Leo for his "common" blood. So Leo does the most logical thing and marries the daughter of an impoverished baron. But quiet, ladylike Anne Hartfield isn't a woman whom Leo can simply marry and forget. She makes him yearn for more than money or power – she makes him want to win her love. There's just one problem...

Leo and his fellow Hellraisers have sold their souls to the devil in exchange for power. Leo doesn't want to give up his power to see the future, not when he can use the magic to ruin those who would look down on him and not when he can use his wealth to give Anne everything she deserves. Leo's determined to keep his pact with the devil a secret from his wife, but there are others who seek to help the Hellraisers, and they won't let Anne stay in the dark for long. It's only a matter of time before Leo will have to choose between unimaginable power and the bride who has stolen his heart.

The stakes that author Zoë Archer set in her first HELLRAISERS book, DEVIL'S KISS, are raised in DEMON'S BRIDE. The effect of the Hellraisers' pact with the devil is spreading across London, which means DEMON'S BRIDE is packed with adrenaline-filled scenes.

At the heart of the story, however, are Leo and Anne. Of all the Hellraisers' bargains, Leo's is the one that I understand the most. He's brilliant and hard working, but society seems to spit on him more often than not. Making a pact with the devil was obviously not the best idea Leo's ever had, but Ms. Archer made his motives – and Leo himself – sympathetic. Anne, in turn, is a very different heroine from Zora, the heroine of DEVIL'S KISS. Anne is a gently bred young lady who doesn't really believe in the devil or demons, and thus seems ill-equipped to handle a high-stakes battle of good versus evil. But Anne rises to the challenge, showing so much courage, love and strength that you can't help but admire her.

The action in DEMON'S BRIDE is plentiful, and some of the twists and turns that Ms. Archer delivers managed to shock me. There was actually a scene that had me yelling "Noooooo!" at the book. And I definitely finished DEMON'S BRIDE with a number of questions, which isn't a bad thing, except for the fact that I have to wait for the third HELLRAISERS book to see if my questions will be answered.

As I've said above, DEMON'S BRIDE is the second HELLRAISERS book, but for those who haven't read the delightful DEVIL'S KISS, Ms. Archer provides enough information in DEMON'S BRIDE that readers new to the series can easily follow along, though the small, but significant, parts Whit and Zora play will

definitely make you want to read DEVIL'S KISS. That being said, for the best reading experience, the series should be read in order. The influence the devil's "gifts" has had on the Hellraisers is definitely more marked in DEMON'S BRIDE and thus the danger the men are in is made all the more clear.

I finished DEMON'S BRIDE with mixed emotions, and I won't spoil the book by revealing why. However, I will say that Leo and Anne are two strong, endearing protagonists that readers will fall for and their romance was incredibly satisfying. Like its predecessor in the HELLRAISERS series, DEMON'S BRIDE is a unique, engaging read. Now, when can I get my hands on SINNER'S HEART?

Note: My review was written for Romance Junkies and is cross-posted here courtesy of Romance Junkies.

Minna says

Demon's Bride is the book that the first book WANTED to be. This was a **huge** improvement over *Devil's Kiss*.

Leo is a self-made man who has bargained with the Devil for the ability to read the future (although he is specifically interested in *financial* futures) by touching the coins of others. His strongest desires are to make a lot of money, ruin his enemies, and be accepted in the ranks of the peers. In the pursuit of accomplishing goal #3 Leo marries Anne, the daughter of an impoverished (desperate) baron. Despite being basically virtual strangers, the two grow a friendship, then an attraction, then a tenuous love. However, Leo's supernatural abilities and their consequences drive a wedge between Leo and Anne, leading up to an explosive conclusion.

We see the return of Whit and Zora, the less-than-convincing couple from *Devil's Kiss*. They continue to be unconvincing in this installment. The other Hellraisers are back too, and Archer's description of their aura of menace was actually a little spooky. What I like best was Anne and Leo's relationship. It seemed to come together gradually considering the pace of the book, and their tentative conversations and interactions were sweet and believable. Anne's confusion over Leo's actions and situation was totally believable and her disappointment in him (and his response to it) was genuine. I am NOT A FAN of The Grovel in romance novels but this one was deserved (what could possibly be more reprehensible than selling your soul to the Devil?! not to mention lots of other shady actions, including tricking Anne into helping him). Leo's Grovelling was plausible and, thank God, neither protracted nor forgiven too quickly. Anne didn't set out to make him suffer but she WAS disappointed in, and hurt by, him and didn't mind that he knew it.

Two notes:

+ I enjoyed that this novel was set in the Georgian period. A nice change from the Regency. I don't know if I noticed this in Book 1? Possibly not, as gypsies don't exactly wear panniers.

+ I am very much looking forward to seeing how (or even if) the author intends to redeem John. Obviously - no spoilers - Bram is intended for Book 3, based on the Book 2's conclusion (and Goodreads synopsis of Book 3, lol!) but John is clearly going All Bad. We'll see. I'm looking forward to it.

This was such a better book than Book #1 that I will definitely wait around to read #3.

E_bookpushers says

Review originally published at The Bookpushers.

Publisher: Zebra

Publish Date: May 1st

How I got this book: ARC from the author

HELL TO PAY

Leo Bailey may have been born to poverty, but ruthless business sense and sparkling intelligence have made money worries a thing of his past. It doesn't hurt that the Devil himself has granted Leo the ability to read the future.

But even infallible predictions are a *déclassé* commoner's trick to some members of the ton. They'll never see Leo as their equal—one good reason to prove himself their better. And a noble marriage is an obvious start.

Bookish Anne Hartfield, daughter of a baron, is hardly the flashiest miss on the marriage market. But her thoughtful reserve complements Leo's brash boldness in an attraction neither can deny. A whirlwind courtship sweeps Anne and Leo into a smoldering marriage before either can believe their luck. But happiness built on Leo's dark powers can't last. Soon, Anne will have to save her husband...or lose her heart...

This blurb came from the author's website here.

I was lucky enough to be able to review the first book of Ms Archer's Hellraisers series *Devil's Kiss* last year and I really enjoyed it. As a result when we were offered the opportunity to review *Demon's Bride* I leaped at the chance. Once again Ms Archer sucked me in from the very start. You do need to read *Devil's Kiss* first because that provides information about The Hellraisers, their goals, how the initial bargain was struck and the potential consequences of that bargain. *Demon's Bride* begins shortly after the tumultuous events end in book one.

I have read about arranged marriages, betrothals from birth, and marriages for a price but I have never seen a wedding feast where that was so explicitly known between bride and groom yet the majority of the guests were oblivious. The feast and the night that followed seemed to set the tone for their relationship. He kept his relationship with the other Hellraisers and their common bond a secret but was completely open about his drive for financial success and how he planned to use the wedding feast invitation as a way to soften up some of his potential targets. While Leo could have claimed his rights as Anne's husband the very first night instead, after noticing her trepidation was growing he decided to seduce her over time and not press until she was ready.

I really enjoyed how both Leo and Anne decided to make the best of what they had and to make something good of it. Their conversations about growing up, their goals and how Anne volunteered to do things she really didn't enjoy for the purposes of helping her husband were wonderful to see. This was a breath of fresh air compared to the majority of the historical that I have read where the burden of making the marriage work falls mainly on the wife. Yet despite their growing bond the specter of Leo's bargain with the Devil and his secrets hangs over them. As thoughts of Anne started distracting Leo from causing the financial downfall of other men on the 'Change, the Devil's representative started working harder to gain control of Leo's soul. Ms Archer kept the action going because while Leo was dealing with the Devil, the 'Change, his plans with the other Hellraisers to hunt down and destroy James Sherbourne, Earl of Whitney, the hero of *Devil's Kiss* Anne was receiving warnings about her husband and his friends by a female ghost and by the selfsame Whitney.

It was really intriguing to watch both Anne and Leo grow and struggle emotionally throughout the book.

They dealt with doubts about each other, doubts about the relationship they had been building, and doubts about their individual self-worth. Each had to individually confront their fears and decide which path they were going to take towards their future. Some rather interesting events occurred at the end, which I think will lead to some rather tense times for the remaining Hellraisers.

Ms Archer provided me with action, high stakes, a sweet romance, and some serious curiosity about what happens next.

I give Demon's Bride an A

Susan (susayq ~) says

This is what I hoped for with the first book in this series!

There was an amazing love story with great action. We got to watch Leo and Anne fall in love. Then we got to watch it all come crumbling down because Anne found out Leo's secret, that he had traded his soul to the Devil for the ability to see the future in business dealings. Leo realized not just the wrongness of giving the Devil his soul, but that he would do anything to be with Anne and save her. Thankfully, the love they built was strong enough for her to help him defeat the demons sent to harm him and help him get his soul back.

At the end when the other Hellraisers came to confront Leo and Whit (the hero from the first book) and Edmund (view spoiler)

With the way this book was so drastically different from the first, I'm now looking forward to the next one in the series.

Dark Faerie Tales says

Review Courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales

Quick & Dirty: A deal with the Devil is disaster in disguise.

Opening Sentence: The Honorable Anne Hartfield had married a stranger.

The Review:

If heaven and hell do exist, would you make a deal with the Devil if it meant having a hold on your wildest desires?

In a scary look into the minds of man, this novel shines a spotlight on the human condition complete with the insecurities, greed, lust and desires of five ne'er do wells known as the Hellraisers. A name given to them by society, and boy have they earned it. While staying at the estate of one of their members, they become bored and go looking for more trouble to get into. Their quest for iniquity leads them to a Gypsy settlement where they toss their money around in an attempt to have fun. For one of them, the endeavor is falling slightly flat. So, when it is discovered that nearby is an old set of Roman ruins claimed to harbor evil, he and the others

can't help but be intrigued, and decide to check it out, despite the warnings of the Gypsies. Warnings they should have heeded, for encased in an enchanted box within these ruins is the very essence of the devil, and is released when these five decide to play Pandora. In a supposed display of gratitude, the devil, or Mr. Holliday as he wants to be known, bestows a gift upon each of the men, each one specifically designed to give them exactly what they want in life. And in exchange, all he required is a small token from each man.

Harmless fun, right? For the devil couldn't possibly be lying to them, could he??

I admit to stealing that opener from my own review of the first novel in this series. No plagiarism involved, just the necessity of repetition since these two books are of the same series with the same beginning, and basic premise.

In this book we witness the goings on in the life of Hellraiser Leopold Bailey, the only one of the five without the benefit of noble birth. A situation he rectifies by becoming rather wealthy in his own right. By joining up with the other Hellraisers, he has found his place to fit in, if only with a handful of the high and mighty. His gift from the devil allows him to see the financial future of anyone he meets, and all he needs is one of their coins. That is until his geminus, or evil twin who is the Devil's servant, grants him a bit more power, giving him the ability to see more of the future and now he can do it with any item.

We begin on the day of his wedding, where he hopes to gain entry to higher society by marrying an impoverished baron's daughter. The Honorable Anne Hartfield is painfully aware that her marriage is not one made out of love; it is but a business arrangement between her husband and father. She remains hopeful, however, and things begin looking up when her husband actually seems to care about her feelings, he starts giving her gifts, taking her out. He even lets her in on a special little secret; he's a collector of coins that once belonged to those who are his betters, ones who have treated him badly. And wouldn't it be fun if she could collect them too?

In this book, as in the first one, our heroine is visited by Livia, the ghost of the last person to defeat Mr. Holliday, who also bestows a gift upon Anne, the gift of wind. Besides gifts, Livia is also the bearer of bad news. It seems Leo has made a bad deal with the Devil and everyone, including Anne, shall suffer the consequences. By the time that Leo's great secret is revealed, the pair have actually fallen for each other, and when Anne discovers she has been used as a pawn in some of his evil schemes, she no longer has faith in her husband, and their relationship stands on a tightrope.

The tightrope is easily passed when Anne and Leo join Whit and Zora, along with Livia, in a battle against Mr. Holliday's demon lackeys, and then the rest of the Hellraisers themselves.

As good as the first, in my humble opinion. How long until the next installment?

Notable Scene:

Terror, exhaustion, and anger all seethed within her. This nightmare world—she wanted nothing more to do with it. Energy coalesced through her limbs, the force of a hundred storms. When the first demon rushed her once more, she let out a primal, furious scream, a battle cry, as she flung out her hands and unleashed the tempest inside.

"I have been lied to, manipulated, betrayed," she said through clenched teeth. "Made fearful. No more."

The beast made a frantic, enraged sound as it fought against the gale. But Anne's wrath could not be contained. She let everything run riot, letting slip any control she might have possessed. The demon struggled, and then, with a shriek, it was caught on the storm she had created. Like a leaf, it spun on the wind backward. Higher. It clawed uselessly at the air to stop its mad flight. She was unrelenting.

Anne continued to blast the creature with the force of her magic, and it tumbled back through the sky. Toward the nearby towering Pagoda that rose ten stories above the ground. The demon tried to stop its ascent by clinging to a gilded dragon on the corner of one of the Pagoda's roofs. The ornament snapped away, and the demon was flung high, higher. Until it reached the very top of the Pagoda.

It saw Anne's intent and let out one final scream of outrage. She refused to yield. Manipulating her magic, she brought the demon up, then dropped it—directly onto the Pagoda's spire. Skewering the demon. The spire stabbed through its chest, and the creature's dying howl rose up to the dark night sky before trailing away into silence.

The last remaining demon looked to where its compatriot lay dead. It turned panicked eyes to Anne, then to Leo. She reveled in seeing the creature's fear.

With a frightened yelp, it spun around and flew away. Its wings beating against the air, it disappeared into the darkness like the last vestiges of a bad dream.

The Hellraisers Series:

1. Devil's Kiss
2. Demon's Bride
3. Sinner's Heart

FTC Advisory: Kensington/Zebra provided me with a copy of Demon's Bride. No goody bags, sponsorships, "material connections," or bribes were exchanged for my review.
