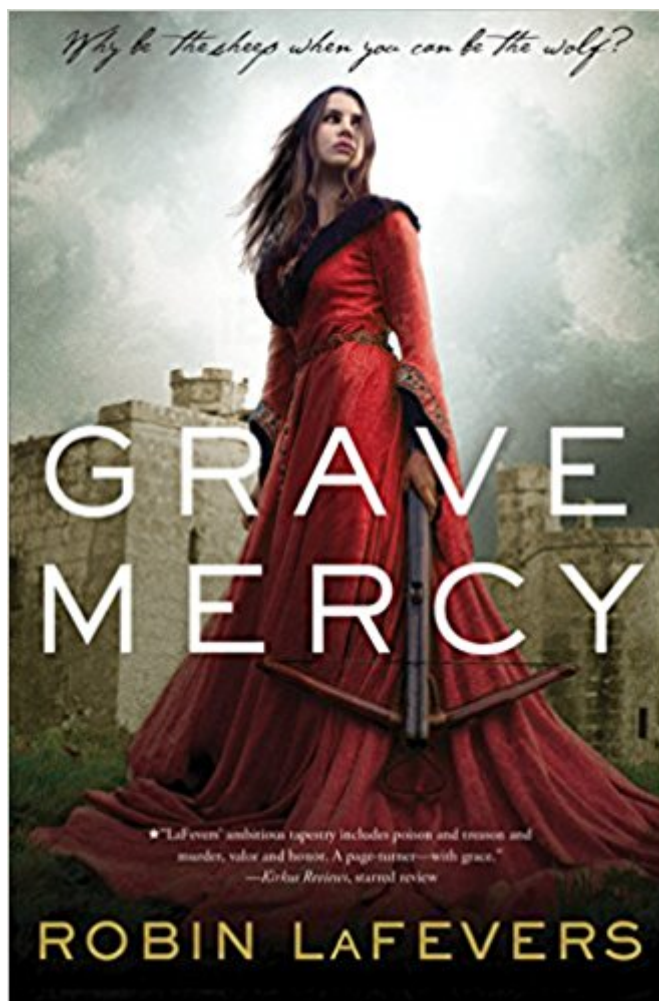


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Grave Mercy: His Fair Assassin, Book 1



Synopsis

[set star] "Fiction and history coalesce in a rich, ripping tale of assassinations, political intrigue and religion. . . . LaFevers's ambitious tapestry includes poison and treason and murder, valor and honor and slow love, suspense and sexuality and mercy. A page-turner "with grace." --Kirkus Reviews, starred review Seventeen-year-old Ismae escapes from the brutality of an arranged marriage to the respite of the convent of St. Mortain. Here she learns that the god of Death has blessed her with dangerous gifts and a violent destiny. To claim her new life, she must destroy the lives of others. But how can she deliver Death's vengeance upon a target who has stolen her heart?

Book Information

Series: His Fair Assassin (Book 1)

Paperback: 576 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (March 5, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0544022491

ISBN-13: 978-0544022492

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.4 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 801 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #99,553 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Family > Marriage & Divorce #92 in Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Europe #175 in Books > Teens > Romance > Historical

Customer Reviews

Best Books of the Month, April 2012: Seventeen-year-old Ismae was fathered by Saint Mortain, the God of Death, and one dark and stormy night, she is brought to a mysterious convent where his many daughters are trained as assassins. When she is given an important assignment to protect the Duchess of Brittany and kill the traitor in her court, Ismae begins to learn that being a handmaiden of Death may not mean what the nuns taught her. But her burgeoning independence comes with consequences, and the fate of an entire country--and the only man she could ever love--hangs in the balance. Set in medieval France with historically accurate details, *Grave Mercy* is the first book in a gritty, fast-paced trilogy, and gives thrilling new meaning to the term "girl power." --Juliet Disparte --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Starred Review In the late fifteenth century, Mortain, the god of death, has sired Ismae to be his handmaiden. She will carry out his wishes by working through the Convent, where she has found refuge from a brutal father and husband. After learning the Convent's wily warfare and womanly arts, and being apprenticed to Sister Serafina (poisons mistress and Convent healer), 17-year-old Ismae is sent to the high court of Brittany, ostensibly as the cousin (aka mistress) of the Breton noble Duval "but, in truth, she is there as a spy. Her tacit assignment is to protect the young duchess by assassinating Duval if he proves to be a traitor, a charge made more difficult because of the couple's attraction to each other. LaFevers has written a dark, sophisticated novel true to the fairy-tale conventions of castles, high courts, and good versus evil, and spiced with poison potions; violent (and sometimes merciful) assassinations; subtle seductions; and gentle, perfect love. With characters that will inspire the imagination, a plot that nods to history while defying accuracy, and a love story that promises more in the second book, this is sure to attract feminist readers and romantics alike. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** With a \$100,000 marketing campaign, including national print, online, and social-media outreach; a video trailer; and a vintage T-shirt promotion, the publisher is pushing LaFevers's novel in a big way. Grades 9-12. --Frances Bradburn --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This book was over 500 pages and yet after finishing it, I felt like not much happened. I've seen some great reviews on , Goodreads and also on Booktube and I guess I might be the outlier here, but I just didn't connect with the book. It's hard to really pinpoint why so I'll try my best to do so here. **Writing style** - I think the writing style really got to me. The book opened up with a really exciting scene but it slowed soon after that and it never really picked up again. I think what really got to me was the first person present tense narrative as well as the linear writing style. Linear writing meaning, "I woke up and had breakfast. After breakfast we needed to leave. We were on the road for two days only to rest our horses...etc." I'm not really sure how to explain this further, but I like the books I read to have more inner dialogue and immersive detail. I want to understand the world, the characters, and why they do what they do...especially in a book categorized as fantasy. **Characters** - No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't connect to Ismae. Again, this might go back to my complaints about the writing style, but I felt like her character was set up so well, but was executed poorly. She had a really interesting and harsh past. I mean her parents didn't want her! Although she mentions this in the book, but there's not enough inner dialogue for me to understand how she's feeling because of her past or how her past might have molded her into the person she is at present time.

She has this weird connection and attraction to Gavriel but then we're not given enough reasons why that is. Gavriel also wasn't developed enough and we as readers don't understand him at all because we're seeing him through Ismae's eyes. So by the time the "love" happened, I didn't buy it. It's really sad because I felt like these characters had such great potential. Plot - I understand where Robin Lafevers was going with the plot. And I saw the potential political intrigue but it didn't do it for me. Maybe this was an epic fantasy written for the YA genre, but I've read other fantasy novels written for teens, and I know teens are not dumb. However, this plot felt like it was dumbed down. I felt like the whole novel, I was reading about who the Duchess should marry. And the political reasons for why she should or should not marry someone was not well explained. If it was explained, it was at surface level, making it unbelievable. I really wanted to like this book because it was intriguing just reading the cover flap. And I heard that the sequel is better, but because of the writing style, I sadly will not be continuing with this series.

This book has been on my TBR for years now and with my new love of audiobooks I finally got around to it and my gosh this book was so good. I also loved how different it was from a majority of books I've read. It was a nice change of pace. Grave Mercy is the kind of read that builds slowly. It gets off to a slower pace and everything unfurls bit by bit. This holds true for the romance too. It is a very slow burn, but then as the story builds it combusts. It's intense and the love grows over time, which I think made it sweeter. And while the romance is growing there are plot turns left and right. All the political scheming made my head spin and I never knew who to trust. When you think the story is going one way, it ends up going in a completely different direction. I loved that it kept me on my toes and kept me questioning. Ismae is a great character. She is multilayered and complex and realistic. She thinks she knows exactly what she wants in life, but once she gets out on her own she begins to question and finally become her own person. I loved watching her discover herself and I also loved watching her be a badass assassin. She is a great blend - she is awesome but still realistic and relatable. I wish she had learned to trust her gut quicker because her gut was usually right, but it was all part of her journey. I also loved Gavriel for more reasons than I probably have time to mention. Most importantly I loved his devotion to his sisters. Nobody came before them and he was clearly willing to do anything for them and I admired that so much. He was smart and stubborn and strong. Simply a great character. All in all, Grave Mercy was a very good read and I can't believe it took me this long to get to it. A great blend of historical and fantasy that is not to be missed. Audiobook Comments: The narrator for Grave Mercy was very good. I felt like she read at a good pace and there was good distinction between the

different characters. I would definitely listen to something she narrates again.

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