



# The Black Lion

*By Jude Deveraux*

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A Classic Love Story of a Fearless Lord and the Woman Who Tamed Him

Darkly handsome and rich beyond imagining, the bold English conqueror was called “the Black Lion” for his lionlike ferocity. He had no match among enemies, or women . . . until he met Lyonene, the green-eyed beauty whose fiery spirit equaled his own.

Through a whirlwind romance and stormy marriage, she endured every peril to be by his side, until vicious lies and jealousy drove her into danger. Now only the fierce Black Lion can save her—for he alone has the courage to destroy the ruthless plot threatening to shatter the bond of love the Lion and his lady vowed would never be broken . . .

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## The Black Lyon By Jude Deveraux Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Review

The bold English conqueror was called the Black Lyon for his lionlike fierceness. he had no match among enemies, or women -- until he met Lyonene, the green-eyed beauty whose fiery spirit matched his own. Through a whirlwind romance and stormy marriage, she endured every peril to be by his side, until jealous and vicious lies drove her across the Irish Sea and into grave danger. Only one man could save her. Only the fierce Black Lyon had the courage to destroy the ruthless plot that had driven them apart and threatened the bond of love they had vowed could never be broken. Jude Deveraux is a master storyteller, and The Black Lyon continues to justify the enthusiasm of her legions of fans as one of her best! -- *Midwest Book Review*

### About the Author

Jude Deveraux is the author of historical and contemporary women's fiction featuring women of strong character and gorgeous, exciting men. Jude has had more than thirty books on the *New York Times* bestsellers list, 60 million copies in print, and has been translated into 18 languages. When she's not writing, she enjoys reading murder mysteries, working in her garden, and in boxing class she likes to show much younger males that she can throw a mean right cross.

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## Chapter One

Lyonene could hear Lucy's heavy step on the stone stairs and snuggled deeper beneath the thick coverlet. The January winds whistled outside the old donion, threads of cold air cutting under the wooden shutters, but her bed was warm and she planned to put off leaving it as long as possible.

"Lady Lyonene." Lucy pulled the bed-curtains back. She was an old woman now and far too fat. She'd been with Lyonene since the girl's birth and was much like a mother to her. "The lady your mother bids you dress in your gold tunic with the green surcoat and mantle."

Lyonene, who had turned toward the light only reluctantly, now looked with interest at Lucy. "The green mantle and surcoat?"

"There is a guest, an important guest, and you are to wear your finest clothes for the introductions."

Lyonene threw back the bedclothes and put a small foot on the rush-covered oak floor. The shutters were closed tightly against the cold winter, and the only light came from the small fireplace and the tallow candle on the tall iron stand by the bed. The soft glow highlighted the full curves of her slim young body. Lucy helped her mistress into the thin linen shift and then the woolen tunic, the tightness of which emphasized her womanly body. The sideless surcoat hid nothing.

"Know you this guest? He is friend to my father?"

"Oh no, my lady." Lucy fastened the thin leather belt about Lyonene's slim waist. "He is an earl, a man your father has not met, and he is a young man.,,

Lyonene stopped and stared at her maid. "He is handsome? He is a handsome young earl, fair, and rides a

white stallion?" Lyonene teased the old woman.

"You shall see soon enough. Now get your comb so I may remove some of the tangles from your hair."

Lyonene obeyed and then asked, "Tell me more of him. What color are his eyes? His hair?"

"Black. As black as the Devil's eyes."

Both women looked up to see Gressy and Meg entering the small chamber with armfuls of clean linen for the bed. Gressy, the older girl, spoke. "It is an earl come, and not just any of the king's earls, but the great Black Lion himself."

"And black he is, too," Meg added.

"His eyes and hair are black as Satan's. Even his horse is all black."

Lyonene looked at them in horror. She had heard stories of the Black Lion since she was but a girl--stories of strength and courage. But each story was misted with a sense of evil, that perhaps his strength was ill-gotten. "You are sure it is the Black Lion and no other?" Her voice was quiet.

"No other man could have such a look. I vow he gave me gooseflesh just to be near him." Gressy gave her mistress an intense look.

Lucy stepped forward. "Cease your foolish prattle! You'll scare the poor girl. Now get on with your work. I must go below to the Lady Melite." She gave Lyonene's hair a final combing and settled the transparent circle of silk in place with a thin gold fillet. "Now be still and do not muss yourself." She paused at the door, pointing a warning finger at Meg and Gressy. "And no more of this gossip. If black hair made us part of the Devil, there'd be a lot of us dreading the Day of Glory." She sniffed and patted the little bit of gray hair that showed at her temple between the barrette, a piece of linen that totally concealed her neck and chin, and the cascading veil that extended to her shoulders. Lucy imagined that her own locks were still the soot-black of her youth.

When the door was closed, Lyonene sank to the stone windowseat. "Tell me of him," she whispered.

"He is a large man ... "

"Strong . . ." Meg interrupted, but then, at Gressy's quelling look, she went obediently to her side of Lyonene's bed to catch the billowing sheet.

"Aye," Gressy continued, looking back at Lyonene and feeling confident in her audience. Lyonene would be the mistress of her own castle someday, but for now there was one area where Gressy was superior, and that was, in her knowledge of men. "He's the Black Lion and named for his Devil's blackness and for having the fierceness of a lion. It is said he can unseat twenty men at a tourney and that in Wales, in the wars there, he could hack a man or his horse in half with one blow."

Lyonene felt her face drain of color, and this encouraged Gressy to elaborate on half-heard tales.

"It is said his first wife tried to kill herself to escape him."

Lyonene gasped and involuntarily crossed herself. Suicide was a mortal sin.

"And the seven men--seven devils--he has near him . . ." Meg inserted, too excited to fear Gressy.

"Aye," Gressy said, her voice conspiratorial. "He travels with seven men, great huge men, black-haired all, but none so black as the Lion on his black horse."

"He has come here and I am to meet him?" Lyonene could not keep the fear from her voice.

"Aye. Your father and mother are below now with him. No one denies the Black Lion a request, however small." She straightened. "Come, Meg, we must go to prepare a room for this Devil's knight." She left the room, the wideeyed Meg trailing behind with the dirty laundry. Gressy was smugly pleased that she had caught the undivided attention of the two girls, for she considered them both girls, although neither was more than two years younger than she.

Outside the heavy door, Meg found her voice. "Is it true, Gressy, that this man is a spawn of the Devil?"

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#### **Araceli Burns:**

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**Lisa Shumaker:**

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