



Silver Lies

Ann Parker

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They all came to Leadville with the same purpose: Get in. Get rich. Get out. As 1879 draws to a close, this Rocky Mountain boomtown has infected the world with silver fever. It's not much different than the dot.com mania or the corporate scams that heat up over a century later. Unfortunately for Joe Rose, a precious-metals assayer, death stakes its own claim. Joe's body is found trampled into the muck behind Inez Stannert's saloon. Inez already had much more to deal with than pouring shots of Taos Lightning and cleaning up a corpse. A lady educated on the East Coast, she has a past that doesn't bear close scrutiny, including her elopement with a gambling man who has recently disappeared. Most townsfolk, including Inez's business partner, Abe Jackson, dismiss Joe's death as an accident. Death, after all, is no stranger in Leadville. But Inez wonders: Why was this loving husband and father carrying a brass token good for "one free screw" at the parlor house of Denver madam Mattie Silks? When Joe's widow Emma asks Inez to settle Joe's affairs, almost against her will, Inez uncovers skewed assays, bogus greenbacks, and blackmail. Lies and secrets run deep in Colorado, secrets more likely to lead to a hanging than to today's congressional hearings or country-club prisons for the crooked and the greedy. Then again, maybe Joe's murder was purely personal....

Silver Lies Details

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From Reader Review Silver Lies for online ebook

Mirah W says

I really enjoyed this start to a new series. Parker made the characters realistic and I felt like I was taken back in time to Leadville. Inez is a complex character and her life has some serious ups and downs. And the Reverend is not exactly who he appears to be. It's all very interesting and I can't wait to read more!

Peggy says

This was a pleasant surprise! I "purchased" it and the third book in the series for free from Amazon some time ago. Was very good and I'm looking forward to reading the 2nd one in the series as a library loan.

This is a historical mystery series that takes place in Leadville, Colorado in the late 1870's and early 1880's during the Silver Rush. The main character, Inez Stannert, owns a saloon with her missing husband's partner, Abe Jackson. Actually the back story of her husband is only a small part of the book. The actual mystery concerns the murdered husband of Inez's friend.

What drew me into the story were the details of life in Leadville, which was actually a real mining town, and the interactions between the numerous characters. Inez is a complicated woman who's past is revealed a little at a time. In fact most of the characters have "shady" pasts and that is part of the charm of the book. I almost felt like I was reading an episode from the TV show "Maverick" although this is a much grittier telling of the West.

A very strong beginning for this series!

Edith Maxwell says

I loved this story. This historical milieu comes alive, and the mystery kept me turning pages. Am now turning to the rest of the series.

Paula says

Inez is co owner of the Silver Queen Saloon. Her husband left her and she's not sure where he is. One of her patrons, and husband of her good friend is found dead behind her establishment. Inez does not trust the Sheriff and decides to find the killer herself and gets into a lot of trouble.

I love stories about Leadville. I've been there many times and enjoy reading about the early days. This was a good story and the author didn't try to get by with just the famous and colorful people that lived there. She made a good story out of unknowns. I'll read the next in the series to see where it goes from here.

Xyra says

Very interesting. Great for historical fiction and mystery lovers.

The setting is great! I've never been to Leadville, Colorado (a real town), but I have been to Virginia City, Nevada so I could easily picture the town layout, the business streets, residential areas, church, opera house, and outlying mines. The best part is the author didn't try to make it Hollywood pretty. She gave us all the muck and mire one would encounter in a time without indoor plumbing or paved roads.

Inez is a good hearted woman who has some business sense. She owns and runs a saloon with her partner, Abe. When a friend turns up dead outside the back door of her business the wheels start turning to figure out who killed Joe and why. The journey is not without peril; in fact, the story is filled with action, adventure, intrigue, and even a bit of fluff (aka romance). I don't understand why she made some of the decisions she made and wish we had more details, but they may have cluttered up the main plot. Plus adding some details may have muddied the biographies of real people who show up in Inez's life. (Bat Masterson makes an appearance; he's written more handsomely than the images found online.)

This isn't quite a "cozy" mystery. This is a step or two up with regards to violence and lawlessness. While our main character is openminded in some regards, she can be quite cruel in others. Inez is no Miss Marple or Nancy Drew. Reminds me a bit of Mae West or Kitty Russell (the later I know only from my mother's musings and a rerun on TV now and then).

The entire story is quite exciting. When you think one clue is figured out a nifty little twist comes along. However, I did figure out one thing long before Inez did and kept yelling at her when her line of thinking returned to the forefront. So if you routinely read mysteries, you might have this somewhat solved early on. Don't let that deter you from enjoying the rest of the story. It's a worthwhile read.

I really liked this book. The story is well written and filled with intrigue; setting well described; and characters believable. Near the end I didn't want to put it down and am suffering slightly from sleep deprivation because of it.

Misfit says

A Historical Mystery High in the Colorado Rockies. It's the end of 1879 in Leadville, Colorado's "Cloud City" and Joe Rose is found dead outside of Inez Stannert's saloon. Thus begins the mystery, and many plot twists, turns and big surprises until the very end. Who killed Joe? Is Inez's husband dead or missing? Is the new minister really a minister? Is he a good guy or a bad guy? What does the surprise visit from Bat Masterson and his knowledge of the minister's past portend for the growing attraction between Inez and Reverend Sands? Is there some mystery in Emma Rose's past no one knows about? Is someone passing counterfeit currency? Who? To say more would give the whole story away, which I don't like to do.

Suffice it to say that this was a jolly good mystery that kept me guessing until the very end, and I especially enjoyed going on a trip through the Rockies and the mining towns of days gone by, although you can still find many of those towns still there and thriving on the tourist trade. Five stars, and I look forward to starting the sequel, Iron Ties.

Knewmyer says

[who rescues herself, thank you very much (hide spoiler)]

Lynn says

Silver Lies is the first book in the Silver Rush Mystery series that takes place in Leadville, Colorado in 1979. The silver rush is on. Inez Stannert is the main character. She co-owns the Lucky Lady Saloon along with her husband Mark and Abe Jackson. Her husband Mark has disappeared. She does not know if he is alive or dead.

Inez is feisty and strong willed. She can ride, shoot and runs a high stakes gambling game in addition to entering the game. In the prologue, a murder occurs and Inez seems to be the only one who wants to get to the bottom of the murder. She becomes a sleuth and there are more crimes to follow.

The author is very good at slowly revealing the past of the characters. There is good reason most of the characters want that past to stay buried. There are some surprises but if you think about the times, it was probably due for the need of survival. The book was over 400 pages which I thought was a little long. Bat Masterton made an appearance which I thought detracted from the story line. He didn't add to the story for me but took me out of it at times. At this time, there are 6 books in the series.

Kathleen Ernst says

The first book in a wonderful series. I have enjoyed getting to know the strong female protagonist, and the glimpses of boomtown life in old Colorado. Highly recommended!

Pamoliverio says

Although at one point I thought the book dragged, I ended up enjoying the mixture of mystery, romance, western and historical fiction. It was good to have a strong woman protagonist, and mixed race characters.

Mike says

~4.5 stars rounded up.

It's not often that a book does a lot of world building and has plot lines that do not really go anywhere but that makes the world seem more real. There are many fleshed out characters who add to the mystery but like real life, they may end up at a dead end, and that's fantastic, especially if this is intended to be a series.

The chapters were short, usually about six pages, which made the book go by fast. I enjoyed it and was able to finish the book in just a few days.

I have one nitpick and one problem with the book. SPOILERS if you need them:

SPOILERS!!!!

My nitpick: what was the point of adding Bat Masterson? It's a fictional story, why include a known historical figure into it when he does not even do all that much? To bring up a Star Wars reference, it's like when the fans go nuts when they first see the Millennium Falcon in the new Star Wars films. "Oh yay, I understand what that is, I have to cheer." It's unnecessary.

My problem: The story follows a strong female lead who is able to figure out so much on her own, but she needs to be rescued by her male love interest at the end of the story. Good job on figuring out everything and killing your captor, but you're trapped in a snowstorm. Please wait while the men the story (and your love interest) who solved the mystery independently arrest everyone and then rescue you before you die from the cold.

Susan Swanson says

I really liked it. The characters are complex and are not always what they seem on the surface. And I especially like that they are very human and very flawed. The heroine is not picture perfect. She and the people surrounding her have different motivations at different times. And they even stop to ponder their own needs and wants from time to time. The mystery is also complex and although the final conclusion is foreshadowed, how all the puzzle pieces fit together keeps you interested through the end. But it's the historical details that make this book come to life. This is no pristine, clean version of the wild west. There is plenty of mud and snow and bodily fluids. And there are corsets and buttons and lucifers (matches) and tons of tiny details that really enrich the story.

Robin says

This took me a while to get into - it was nearly half way through before I felt like it really captured me. I'm not sure if that was the book or just me because it was very well written. I just didn't find the characters and plot very interesting at first. But once it started to pick up, it became hard to put down and I wound up enjoying it.

LJ says

SILVER LIES (Historical-Colorado-1879) – VG+

Parker, Ann – 1st in series

Poisoned Pen Press, 2003

Inez Stannert lives in Leadville, Colorado at the height of the silver boom. She shoots, plays poker, owns a salon along with her partner Abe, a free black man, and has a husband who has been missing for eight months. When local assay-agent Joe Ross is found dead in the alley next to Inez' saloon, she promises to help

his pregnant widow and son settle Joe's business interests. What she finds are secrets, greed, graft, danger and an attraction to J.B Sands, a minister—or is he?

*** Parker has written a wonderful first book. Her descriptions of 1870's Leadville are vivid and integral to the story. Her characters are diverse, real, interesting and fully developed. Inez is a smart, independent woman, capable of holding her own yet will doubts and insecurities of her own. Her dialogue is appropriate to the period. The plot is interesting and compelling; it caused me to read way too late into the night in order to finish it in one read. There is a romance, but it doesn't overwhelm the story or the character and very good suspense. I highly recommend this book.

Donna says

3.5 stars

This was a fun and easy read. I love historical fiction in this time period. This had a taste of the wild west charm....thugs, get rich schemes, saloons, etc. I love that. I liked the way the author inserted social dilemmas of the day into the story. There were also some great twists in the plot that kept things flowing. The characters were well drawn and I especially enjoyed Inez and the preacher.
