



The Silver Metal Lover

By Tanith Lee

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Love is made of more than mere flesh and blood....

Tanith Lee is one of the most thought-provoking and imaginative authors of our time. In this unforgettably poignant novel, Lee has created a classic tale--a beautiful, tragic, erotic, and ultimately triumphant love story of the future.

For sixteen-year-old Jane, life is a mystery she despairs of ever mastering. She and her friends are the idle, pampered children of the privileged class, living in luxury on an Earth remade by natural disaster. Until Jane's life is changed forever by a chance encounter with a robot minstrel with auburn hair and silver skin, whose songs ignite in her a desperate and inexplicable passion.

Jane is certain that Silver is more than just a machine built to please. And she will give up everything to prove it. So she escapes into the city's violent, decaying slums to embrace a love bordering on madness. Or is it something more? Has Jane glimpsed in Silver something no one else has dared to see--not even the robot or his creators? A love so perfect it must be destroyed, for no human could ever compete?

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for **The Silver Metal Lover**:

"Deftly written, moving, funny, totally convincing...this is quite simply the best sci-fi romance I've read in ages."

--**Daily News**, New York

"Tanith Lee has another winner in **The Silver Metal Lover**. It's an aluminum soufflé that's both amusing and touching."

--**Asimov's Science Fiction**

"The strengths of [**The Silver Metal Lover**] lie in the vivid vision of [Lee's] world--exotic and a little frightening, but quite believable....One of Lee's most fully realized creations."

--**Publishers Weekly**

"Lee continues to distinguish herself with her ability to bring flesh and blood to the worlds of the future. For those who like emotion and feeling in their SF, **The Silver Metal Lover** is highly recommended."

--**Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Review**

From the Inside Flap

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Egyptia was standing at the foot of the Grand Stairway that leads up to the Theatra Concordacis. She was wearing gilt makeup, and a blue velvet mantle lined with lemon silk, and people were looking at her. A topaz hung in the center of her forehead. She made a wild gesture at me.

"Jane! Jane!"

"Hallo."

"Oh, Jane."

"Yes?"

"Oh, Jane. Oh, Jane."

"Shall we go up?"

She flung up her arm, and I blushed. She made me feel insignificant, superior and uneasy. As I was analyzing this, I saw someone hurrying over, a man, who grasped Egyptia's raised arm excitedly.

"All right," he said. "Tell me your number."

Egyptia and I stared at him. His eyes were popping.

"Go away," Egyptia said. Her own eyes filled with tears. She couldn't bear the stupid things life did to her.

"No. I can pay. I've never seen anything like it. I heard it was lifelike, but Jesus. You. I'll take you. Just give me your registration number--wait--you don't have one, do you, that's the other type. Okay, it's alphabetical, isn't it? Somebody said it's to do with the metal. You'd be gold, wouldn't you? G.O.L.D.? Am I right?"

Egyptia lifted her eyes to the tall building tops, like Jehane at the stake. Suddenly I knew what was happening.

"You've made a mistake," I said to the man.

"You can't have it," he said. "What do you want it for? Mirror-Biased, are you? Well, you go and find a real girl. Young bit of stuff like you shouldn't have any trouble."

"She isn't," I insisted.

"She? It's an it."

"No." I felt on fire. "She's my friend. She isn't a Sophisticated Format robot."

"Yes it is. They said. Operating on the Grand Stairway."

"No."

"Oh, God!" cried Egyptia. Unlike the rest of us, He didn't answer.

"It's all right, Egyptia. Please, please," I said to the man, "she isn't a robot. Go away, or I'll press my code for the police."

I wished at once I hadn't said it. He, like Egyptia and me, was rich, and would have his own code round his neck or on his wrist or built into a button. I felt I'd been very discourteous and rash, but I couldn't think of anything else to do.

"Well," he said. "I'll write to Electronic Metals and complain. A piece of my mind."

(I saw this as some sort of surgical operation, the relevant slice delivered in a box.)

But Egyptia spun to him abruptly. She fixed him with her eyes which matched the topaz, and screeched

wordlessly like a mad bird of prey. The man who thought she was a robot backed sideways along the steps. Egyptia seemed to close her soul to us both. She flung her mantle round herself and stalked away up the stairs.

I watched her go, not really wanting to follow. Mother would say I should, in order to observe and be responsible.

It was a beautiful day in autumn, a sort of toasted day. The sides of the buildings were warm, the glass mellow, and the sky was wonderful, very high and far off. I didn't want to think about the man or about Egyptia. I wanted to think about something that was part of the day, and of me. Without warning, I felt a kind of pang, somewhere between my ribs and my spine. It might have been indigestion, but it was like a key turning. It seemed as if I knew something very important, and only had to wait a moment and I would recall what it was. But though I stood there for about five minutes, I didn't, and the feeling faded with a dim, sweet ache. It was like being in love, the moment when, just before the visual ends, I knew I must walk away into the night or morning without him. Awful. Yet marvelous. Marvelous to be able to feel. I put this down because it may have a psychological bearing on what comes next.

I began to imagine Egyptia acting death in the Theatra, and dying. So finally I went up the Grand Stairway.

At the top is a terrace with a fountain. The fountain pours over an arch of glass, and you can stand under the glass with the fountain pouring, and not get wet. Across from the fountain is the scruffy peeling facade of the once splendid Theatra. A ticking clockwork lion was pacing about by the door. I hadn't seen anything quite like it, and wondered if this was the Sophisticated Format. Then something caught my eye.

It was the sun gleaming rich and rare on auburn.

I looked, and bathed my eyes in the color. I know red shouldn't be soothing to the eyes, but it was.

Then I saw what the red was. It was the long hair of a young man who was standing with his back to me, talking to a group of five or six people.

Then he began to sing. The voice was so unexpected. I went hot again, with embarrassment again, because someone was singing at the top of his lungs in a crowded busy place. At the same moment, I was delighted. It was a beautiful voice, like a minstrel's, but futuristic, as if time were playing in a circle inside the notes. If only I could sing, I vaguely thought as I heard him. How wonderful to have such sounds pour effortlessly from your throat.

There were bits of mirror on his jacket, glinting, and I wondered if he was there for an interview, like Egyptia, and warming up outside. Then he stopped singing, and turned around and I thought: Suppose he's ugly? And he went on turning, and I saw his profile and he wasn't ugly. And then, pointing something out to the small gathering about him, he turned fully toward me, not seeing me. He was handsome, and his eyes were like two russet stars. Yes, they were exactly like stars. And his skin seemed only pale, as if there were an actor's makeup on it, and then I saw it was silver--face, throat, the V of chest inside the open-necked shirt, the hands that came from the dripping lace at his cuffs. Silver that flushed into almost natural shadings and colors against the bones, the lips, the nails. But silver. Silver.

It was very silly. I started to cry. It was awful. I didn't know what to do. My mother would have been pleased, as it meant my basic emotions--whatever they were--were being allowed full and free reign. But she'd also have expected me to control myself. And I couldn't.

So I walked under the fountain and stared at it till the tears stopped in envy. And then I was puzzled as to why I'd cried at all.

When I came out, the crowd, about twenty now, was dispersing. They would all have taken his registration, or whatever, but most of them couldn't afford him.

I stood and gazed at him, curious to see if he'd just switch himself off when the crowd went away. But he didn't. He began to stroll up and down. He had a guitar slung over his shoulder I hadn't noticed, and he started to caress melodies out of it. It was crazy.

Then, quite abruptly and inevitably, he registered that someone else was watching after all, and he came toward *me*.

I was frightened. He was a robot and he seemed just like a man, and he scared me in a way I couldn't explain. I would have run away like a child, but I was too frightened to run.

He came within three feet of me, and he smiled at me. Total coordination. All the muscles, even those of his face. He seemed perfectly human, utterly natural, except he was too beautiful to be either.

"Hallo," he said.

"Are you--" I said.

"Am I?"

"Are you--the--are you a robot?"

"Yes. Registration Silver. That is S.I.L.V.E.R. which stands for Silver Ionized Locomotive Verisimulated Electronic Robot. Neat, isn't it?"

"No," I said. "No." Again without warning, I began once more to cry.

His smile faded. He looked concerned, his eyes were like pools of fulvous lead. His reactions were superb. I hated him. I wished he were a box on wheels, or I wished he were human.

"What's the matter?" he said eventually, and very gently, making it much worse. "The idea is for me to amuse you. I seem to be failing. Am I intruding on some sort of personal grief?"

"You horrible thing," I whispered. "How dare you stand there and talk to me?"

The reactions were astounding. His eyes went flat and wicked. He gave me the coldest smile I ever saw, and bowed to me. He really did turn on his heel, and he walked directly away from me.

I wished the concrete would open and swallow me. I truly wished it. I wanted to be ten years old and run home to my mother, who might comfort or lecture me, but who would be omnipotent. Or I wanted to be a hundred and twenty, and wise, and not care.

Anyway, I raced off the terrace, and to Clovis.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

George Carter:

Information is provisions for people to get better life, information these days can get by anyone with everywhere. The information can be a expertise or any news even a problem. What people must be consider if those information which is inside the former life are hard to be find than now could be taking seriously which one is suitable to believe or which one often the resource are convinced. If you get the unstable resource then you obtain it as your main information it will have huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen in you if you take The Silver Metal Lover as the daily resource information.

Ryan Connors:

Many people spending their time by playing outside using friends, fun activity along with family or just watching TV all day long. You can have new activity to pay your whole day by studying a book. Ugh, you think reading a book will surely hard because you have to take the book everywhere? It ok you can have the e-book, getting everywhere you want in your Smartphone. Like The Silver Metal Lover which is finding the e-book version. So , try out this book? Let's find.

Cora Conte:

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