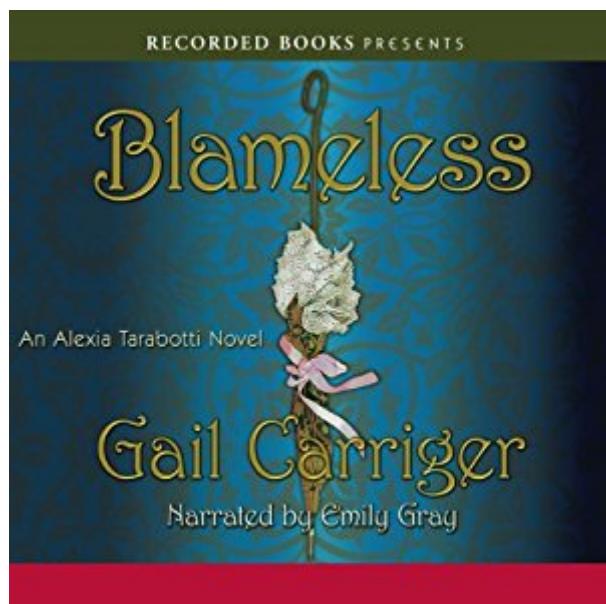


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Blameless: An Alexia Tarabotti Novel



Synopsis

Gail Carriger's best-selling Parasol Protectorate series reimagines Victorian England with vampires, werewolves, and a dash of steampunk. *Blameless* is the third in the series starring the parasol-wielding Lady Alexia Maccon, formerly Alexia Tarabotti. After news spreads of her delicate condition—a surprise to everyone since she's married to a werewolf—Alexia is desperate to escape the London gossip. So she heads to Italy for a change of scenery.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I went into this seriously hoping that this book would redeem the godawful cliffhanger in the last one, because up to that point I'd really enjoyed the series. And I don't mean godawful in the sense of I hate cliffhangers, I mean godawful as in who has their primary love interest go off on their wife like that and expect them to remain sympathetic? Especially when the reason for her apparent infidelity is so painfully obvious that it's obvious to everyone with half a brain? Nope. It didn't. It's quite literally one of the worst mishandled bungle of a relationship I have ever seen. First Maccon spends the first quarter of the book being hit with the stupid stick in order to be a drunken jackass to everyone around him while his pregnant wife is in danger. Obviously, this was necessary for the plot to advance to get Alexia into Italy, but there had to be a better way of doing that than making your heroine's romance interest into an unmitigated asshat. By the time he disappeared from most of the book, I was glad enough to see him gone. Then...well, I won't go into details because it would be spoilery. Suffice to say that I would have thrown the book across the room at the reconciliation scene if I hadn't been reading it on my iPad. It may, in fact, be the least satisfactory reconciliation

scene ever. Honestly, I half read it as an abusive relationship at this point. Certainly, I'd have a hard time believing that Maccon holds Alexia in any great regard after this. He may love her in his own way and he certainly desires her, but I don't believe he has any respect for her at all. I enjoyed the rest of this, and I'm sure everyone who enjoyed the first two would as well. It had the same sparkle that the first one had, with Alexia's very distinct voice and thoroughly enjoyable steampunk adventures. I greatly enjoyed the side character's stories, and loved Professor Lyall's bigger role, and Akeldama's dilemma, Madame Lefoux's adventures and inventions, and even Ivy showing that she has some wit underneath all those hats. The Templar storyline was fun, and had a lot of promise for future books, and I really enjoyed the steampunk technology crossed with vampires and werewolves and preternatural. I'd love to find out more about Alexia's father after this, in particular. But, barring a friend whose opinion I trust telling me that she's not bungling any relationships in future books in this series, I probably won't be reading any more. It's a shame, since I do enjoy them, and enjoyed this one when Maccon wasn't onscreen. But I just hate to watch characters butchered like that, no matter how witty and charming the rest of the book is.

** SPOILERS ahead of book #2 'Changeless' ** Gail Carriger's second instalment of the Parasol Protectorate ended on a doozy of a cliff-hanger. At the end of 'Changeless' our buxom heroine discovered she was pregnant, and her werewolf husband Conall Maccon accused her of infidelity and kicked her out of his house. When 'Blameless' begins Alexia is living in the aftermath of scandal. She has become the talk of London town for Conall's abandonment, and when word gets out about Alexia's delicate condition, she is kicked out of her mother's house too. Everyone is convinced that Alexia was unfaithful to Lord Maccon because he is a werewolf and therefore dead, and thereby unable to procreate. But everyone seems to be forgetting that Alexia Tarabotti is a prenatural soulless - the first female soulless in history, and therefore an anomaly. Desperate to prove everyone (namely Conall) wrong about the legitimacy of her unborn child, Alexia decides to travel to Italy and uncover information about her prenatural self. Gail Carriger's books are a breath of fresh air. Her 'Parasol Protectorate' series is historical paranormal romance with a healthy dose of Steampunk. In a word: 'fabulous'. Gail Carriger is probably the most unique voice in the paranormal genre to date, and she continues her magnificence in 'Blameless'. This instalment sees Alexia Tarabotti in the uncomfortable quandary of being abandoned and pregnant. But Alexia is a heroine made of tough stuff, with a backbone of steel and enviable etiquette. In 'Blameless' Alexia really shines and proves her mettle - she faces down London gossip-mongers, nightgown-wearing Templars, rampaging vampires and killer ladybugs. Oh yes, Alexia Tarabotti is probably at her finest

when she is backed into a corner, armed only with her Italian fortitude and weaponized parasol. But 'Blameless' also reveals a softer side to Alexia, mainly triggered by her 'infant-inconvenience'. The moments when Alexia allows herself to crumble and wallow are wonderful if only because they make her recovery that much braver. 'Blameless' also concentrates a lot on the series secondary characters. Accompanying Alexia to Italy is Madame Lefoux, the androgynous French inventor and hat-shop owner. I love Lefoux for her top-hat costuming, but also because she cares so deeply (and unrequitedly) for Alexia. There's definite chemistry on Lefoux's side for Alexia, and I love reading the heated remarks and undercurrents between these two women... I can't wait for the time when those unreturned feelings boil to the surface. Then there's Professor Lyall, Beta werewolf-second to Lord Conall Maccon. Poor Lyall has a lot to contend with in this book, looking after his depressed Alpha while trying to navigate vampire politics. I absolutely adore Lyall; he's an immaculately dressed sheep-enthusiast (don't go getting the wrong idea...) who can turn into a proficient and vicious fighter when needs be. I really like the contrasting combination of Lyall's Beta ruthlessness - he's at once a well-dressed intellectual, and a formidable werewolf. I would love to read Lyall get a love-interest at some point in the series, because I think he would be very interesting when he falls in love. I'd even like it if Lyall got his own spin-off series, because I think he's interesting enough to be his own protagonist (provided he gets his own love interest). Everybody's favourite secondary character, Lord Akeldama, does make an appearance in 'Blameless', albeit a small one. However, his storyline in the book will have repercussions in future novels... I don't want to give anything away, but Akeldama's love life just got interesting. Conall Macon has a relatively small role in 'Blameless'. But his minimalist role is understandable, what with being heartbroken and all. Regardless, Conall is at his absolute funniest in 'Blameless'. Once again I don't want to give anything away, but look forward to formaldehyde-soaked musings and a drunken werewolf fight. Hilarious! One of the best things in any Parasol Protectorate novel is the ludicrously ingenious Steampunk inventions. In 'Changeless' it was the introduction of the dirigible (complete with attached teapot), and in 'Blameless' it is "homicidal mechanical dripping ladybugs" (yes, they are as cool as they sound!). Carriger seems to have an endless imagination for Steampunk contraptions, and I cannot wait to see what she comes up with next. My one complaint with 'Blameless' was not enough Conall/Alexia goodness. Of course the storyline explains the reason for their lack of page-time together... but I love their relationship so much and they bounce off one another with such charming velocity that the book is a little lacking for not having enough scenes with the two of them. The need is further highlighted by their short time together which is entirely romantic, sweet and leaves you wanting *more* of the mushy stuff. One thing that Gail Carriger does very

successfully in 'Blameless' is secure the longevity of her Parasol Protectorate series. I don't want to give anything away, but Carriger has set up a storyline of ensured durability that will likely take many more books (fingers crossed!) to unfold. The last page of 'Blameless' will have you jitterbugging for the next instalment, a far-away July 2011 wait (entitled 'Heartless')... but it will be well worth it!

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