



Gods and Monsters

V.R. Christensen , B. Lloyd (Illustrator)

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As a widower, Nathaniel Durham has the monumental responsibility of finding suitable husbands for his two daughters. Flirtatious and changeable Bethany might have nearly anyone, but she seems determined to toss her suitors away almost the moment they arrive. Laynie, on the other hand, far behind her sister in looks and charm, is of especial concern to her father. And so, when Harold Vaughn returns home to inherit, it seems the problem, at least for one of his daughters, is solved. Only which daughter will it be?

Even his girls cannot quite decide, and so, to cool the rivalry, the sisters are sent to an aunt's, where they are thrown into the path of other young and eligible gentlemen—and a new rivalry begins.

Meanwhile, Mr. Durham, lonely for intelligent companionship, hires a gentleman to read to him several nights a week, but Mr. Holbrook is off limits to his coquettish girls. With varying degrees of reluctance, they honor the agreement. At least Beth does for herself, but if its possible Mr. Holbrook might provide a distraction for her sister while she decides which gentleman she prefers for herself, well...what harm can there be?

Some, it seems. When Laynie, accident prone and determined to get herself into any fix that comes her way, falls from a horse, it sets in motion a series of events that expose Mr. Holbrook as a man of questionable integrity. Is it possible Mr. Durham's hired companion is capable of the wrongs laid at his door? Is it possible Laynie has been mistaken in esteeming him as a man of character?

Is it possible to know anyone truly?

Between the manufactured innocence of a young woman and the championed exploits of every man, what happens when the two opposing doctrines collide?

Gods and Monsters Details

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From Reader Review Gods and Monsters for online ebook

Rebecca says

3 i guess

I seem incapable of deciding what I think of this book at present. Not sure why. Nothing wrong with it beyond a wrong word error. I liked the MC. Perhaps the fact that I am sick is making me feel blah about everything.

Laura says

[I was really quite flabbergasted with Emerson as a villain, about his motivations and desires in life, and I know at one point we got a POV for him, but it still didn't really help explain him to me better. I also feel like dying was too easy an out for him. I wanted him to live with what he sowed.

It was al

Theresa says

A slow story of women needing to be rescued...

I've read and enjoyed both previous books on V.R. Christiansen's Metamorphosis series. This one while not terrible, was unfortunately, not as enjoyable.

Two things stood out for me as attributes that really decreased my enjoyment. First, was the metamorphosis of the main character, Lainie (aka Alayna). She is the younger, quieter, kinder and more thoughtful sister to Beth who is throughout most likely of the book, flirty, self-centered, narcissistic, entitled and avaricious. Second, I dislike slow pacing and repetition.

Beth's and Lainie's respective metamorphoses are decidedly different and it was Lainie's transformation that soured me on this book. Without going into much detail, Lainie morphs into the textbook description of a personality ripe for abuse. She becomes a totally self-sacrificing, self-deprecating, excuse making target for Emerson's abuse. She transforms from a reasonably spunky Victorian woman into a flinching, cowering mop praying for someone to "rescue" her. If it were not for her sister and a good friend who step up to help her, Lainie would have had a long, unhappy life ahead of her.

Apart from a main character that I came to dislike, I also felt that the pacing was very slow and leaned itself to repetition. There was an awful lot of questioning whether the characters meant what they said and a lot of wondering "what does it all mean?" There was also a bit too much angst ridden handwrapping on the part of Holbrook, the male protagonist. Finally, as with many period romance novels, all of the main characters could have medaled in Olympic-level conclusion jumping which only served to complicate relationships and slow the story down.

Bottom line: Women were beginning to flex their political and social voices by 1897, the time period in which this book was set. That's one reason, I suppose, that I came to have issues with how Lainie's character devolved. I have issues with women who need to be rescued.

Melanie Melancon says

Metamorphosis Series

The three books in this series are a must read for anyone who enjoys historical fiction. Each is a stand alone novel rich in its Victorian England setting. The prose is reminiscent of that used in books of the late nineteenth century, but instead of being difficult to read, the writing puts the reader right there in the British countryside. The characters fairly represent both the good and bad of that period.

Although I am not normally a fan of this genre, I found myself completely captivated by each one of these novels. I just wish the author had written a fourth one.

Darlene Williams says

Don't bypass this book...

Christensen has done it again. I have yet to meet a book by this author that I have not thoroughly enjoyed. Intelligent romance with complex characters that captivate the reader. Definitely recommended.

Karen says

It was long which usually allows for some depth, witty banter lush scenery & great characters. However, this is not one of those novels.

The men either lacked spines or character & 2 try to throw over the women they love to 'save' a woman who chose another. The women cruel or naively headstrong

Carla Smith says

For fans of this genre, Gods & Monsters is a must add to you bookshelf. If you have read any of the previous books in the series, Gods and Monsters does not fail to delight. The attention to detail is exquisite, the characters well developed, and I found myself feeling as if I was standing in the corner of a room. a mute observer, watching as the action unfolded - and counting my lucky stars I did not live in this era!

A great read!

Virginia Tican says

This is one very dry and long-winding read but despite its sometimes convoluted storytelling style it managed to hold my interest till I reached The End. We have a truly devious villain in Emerson. One who really knows how to manipulate people and reputations and even character (innate integrity and the appearance of respectability). I have an issue about Grace's hole-in-corner-like marriage (to the extent of forsaking even her inheritance), why did the Phillipses not reveal to the Durhams the reason for the hasty marriage (if Emerson has indeed compromised Grace) thus preventing yet another victim in Laynie and why should Mr. Durham readily believe Emerson's lies about Holbrook when he just met the man rather than wait for Holbrook's version before making a final judgement? It rather looks like Wickham and Mr. Darcy in P&P and to think that Holbrook was never ever been as "prideful" as the misunderstood Mr. Darcy. And yet being unscrupulous always wins over being honorable, probably because of the lack of ethics and fair play involved. A sad yet tragic reality.

Shelly says

Not my favorite of Christensen's work but interesting study of petty, jealous sibling rivalry. Good writing of under-toned feelings. Made me feel like some of the old "rules of society" might still be good to be adhered to today! Yeah, I know, I'm a prude, deal with it.

I'll be on the look out for the next work by this very capable author.

Wanda Liendro says

OMG !! I love this book

The characters are do well developed that you feel like you know them personally. Two sisters ready for marriage, can't stop fighting and backbiting. A young man known to them both, returns from school to inherit the family title. Then the games begin. You won't regret reading this one.

Wytzia Raspe says

A book that reminded me of 19th century novels like those written by Jane Austen. Two girls are of marriageable age and live with an elderly father. Dad has a candidate in mind for his younger one but the young man rather likes the older daughter. At first we get to know them as a very serious naive girl and a jealous flirty one. It is obvious that in those days girls of a good background could only wait for a good candidate to come and ask for their hand in marriage. Gossips could destroy one's prospects altogether. So we see the two girls grow up and deal with challenges. A father who is sinking into Alzheimer's, blackmail, poverty. Some things are spelled out, some things you have to read between the lines with our own more worldly knowledge.

It was amusing to read that in those days you were regarded old when a man was past 30. Or that when a man became a widower he was expected to marry soon again to keep his urges at bay.

No sexscenes and things only hinted at. Somehow that enhances the story.

Can really recommend buying it. A 6 stars out of 5 when you like a complicated story that displays real feelings and that needs intellect. The Gods and Monsters must be the men in the women's lives.

Kathy Barter says

Really four and a half star

This book is truly a treasure to read. Two sisters and their widowed father, a push to get the daughters married and out of the house make for a good story. Various setbacks, problems, villains, make it a good story.

Melissa says

I wrote a great review and then it got deleted! SO I'll sum up. This was a bit on the long side like a true Jane Austen book a bit wordy but I wanted every word. It was a good story. It got a little sad and I really wanted to smack these two self sacrificing people upside the head but in the end it all worked out. Well written, well developed complex characters. Very well done.

Emmaa22 says

This is the second book by this author which I have really enjoyed. The historical settings are beautiful and the characters beautifully put-together. I'm sure some will hate me to compare this to Austen, but I really felt the similarities in style and content. Although basically a romance, there is a lot more involved.

Diane Ritter says

I typically enjoy reading books that take place in this time and place, and while I understand that this type of literature moves more slowly, I must admit that there were parts of this book that felt like a real chore to get through.

I am starting to agree somewhat with previous reviewers that the author tends to make her stories overly long just for the sake of writing long stories.

This book focused once again on women and their lack of personhood in Victorian England. Two sisters, Beth and Laynie, need husbands according to their widowed father. He just doesn't have much of a clue about how to make that happen.

There is some interesting dynamic between the two sisters--with the older sister, Beth, being the one who most folks think is the more attractive of the two. So, it becomes a little interesting when Laynie becomes the pursued sister by a couple of the male characters. But is it because she is naive and somewhat easily manipulated...or is it something more than that?

Being the younger of two sisters myself, and in a similar situation, it was easy to find myself rooting for the younger sister, Laynie. Of course, it all works out in the end, and each sister ends up with the right man. There is also a thread connecting this book to *Cry of the Peacock*, so it will be interesting to see if the author continues in that same vein going forward into another novel, or if she decides to do something altogether different.
