



Gods & Monsters

Lyn Benedict

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View our feature on Lyn Benedict's *Gods & Monsters*. Sylvie Lightner is no ordinary P.I. She specializes in cases involving the unusual and unbelievable. When she finds the bodies of five women in the Florida Everglades, Sylvie believes them to be the work of a serial killer and passes the buck. But when the bodies wake and shift shape, killing the police, Sylvie finds herself at the head of a potentially lethal investigation.

Gods & Monsters Details

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Author : Lyn Benedict

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From Reader Review Gods & Monsters for online ebook

OpenBookSociety.com says

Review brought to you by OBS staff member Heidi

Beware of spoilers

Sylvie Lightner is back on the case in the third installment of the Shadows Inquiries series by Lyn Benedict. This time Sylvie is looking for a missing woman and the case turns out to be more than she bargained for (as usual) when she discovers five dead women floating in a lake. She calls the police in on the case and everyone is stunned when the police are attacked by the dead women.

Sylvie ends up bringing her favorite necromancer, Tierney Wales, in on the case to help get to the bottom of what's going on. Together they discover that a powerful and cursed sorcerer has the women under his spell as a way to fight the effects of his curse. But he quickly burns through his victims and then must replace them. Sylvie and Wells are on a race against the clock to find the God that cursed him and convince him to lift the curse so the sorcerer will release the women before it's too late for Sylvie's missing woman.

I was really hoping that this series was going to continue to build and get better, but unfortunately this installment fell flat for me and was an excruciatingly slow read even though it was barely over 300 pages.

I did like Wells in this book, but found his character in this installment to seem more and more like Wright from Ghosts & Echoes the longer I kept reading. But it was nice to see a budding relationship forming for him and Alex!!

I also liked that at the end of this book Sylvie starts questioning herself and what it means to be the "New Lilith". It gives us a glimpse of what's to come in future installments although I'm not convinced that I'll be reading that far into the series as it struggles to hold my interest.

I really didn't like this book. I thought the idea of a sorcerer using innocent people to counter-act a curse to be interesting and creative, but everything seemed so drawn out that it was just boring to me. I struggled with what to rate it and settled on a disappointing two stars out of five.

Tia says

This novel was still a little sad but overall better than the second novel in this series. 'Adam' is Adam no longer, her lover has completely taken over his body and now is going home to 'Adams' wife and child. It was horribly sad that she was losing him to this, it tore my heart out.

Jacqueline says

Extra 1/3 star

Julia says

Where as the first book ends in tears, and the second in ashes, this book ends with a sense of hope. Everything Sylvie has weathered and withstood comes to bear, and like a diamond she's all the more thrilling for the pressure. Benedict vividly interweaves the fantastic and the mundane, and has a gift for finding a sentence that stops me in my tracks (There was a fight scene that took me several pages to shake off, talk about visceral). In this world, a dead bad guy is still a person's body, you're better off if the gods doesn't hear your prayers, and no fight is won without a cost. This series gathers steam from book one onward, and I finished *GODS & MONSTERS* with a victorious smile on my face and hope in my breast. Sylvie's world isn't getting any easier, but her indomitable will makes it easier and easier to believe in some hard brand of happy endings.

Full review at All Things Urban Fantasy.

Robert 'Rev. Bob' says

Well, that's a heckuva thing...

Book three picks up a month after book two, just long enough to clear most of the debris and bring in some new elements. This is definitely a "keep building" series, as opposed to a purely episodic "another book, another case" setup. If you aren't up to speed with both earlier books, this one will leave you pretty much lost, dazed, and confused. This series does not spend a good deal of effort on explaining That Which Has Gone Before, and as I noted in my review of the first book, even it just hit the ground running and left the reader to scramble to catch up. Luckily, I just finished book two and have book four waiting; that's the best way to read these.

Oddly enough, in retrospect this feels a lot like a Cthulhu Mythos book. Sylvie is very much a small fish in a very big sea, and it is made excruciatingly clear here that One Does Not Attract The Attention Of Gods. All of the classic Mythos literary elements are present - by which I don't mean that Dagon or a certain Mad Arab or a university in New England show up, but that there are loads of parallels and elements that serve the same purpose. An ancient god, arcane sigils in the hands of a mad sorcerer, warped monsters, misguided researchers, corrupted and/or transformed people - it's all here, complete with reality-shattering side effects. Heck, there's even an archaeologist who stumbles across...well, that would be telling.

And yet...it's not depressing. That's the big drawback of so much Mythos fiction, that everyone knows Things Are Hopeless and so there's this crushing sense of despair that pervades the whole story. That's not the case here, at all. Maybe it's just that Sylvie stays too busy to reflect on much, but there's an admirably utilitarian sense of Get Things Done that chases the gloom away. (Well, most of it, anyway.)

While I can't recommend this unless you've read the first two volumes, it's an excellent entry in the series. Especially if, as mentioned, you like a side of otherworldly indifference and collateral damage with your higher powers.

May says

Like the author's style but can't stand the heroine of this book so I won't be seeking more. She doesn't come across as smart or interesting- so I don't want to follow her around on any more adventures!

Note: copy received for review (@ smexybooks)- not purchased.

Schnauch says

Although I'm really tired of Lilith's ancestor as the protagonist, I still enjoyed this book.

I liked the mystery and didn't see any of the twists coming, which I appreciate.

I do feel like atheists are getting screwed in Benedict's world though.

I'm glad Sylvie is expanding her circle a little. It's probably good for her.

L Bongiorno says

Another great and exciting read. As a side note, I find it disturbing that Demalion is living that cops life with his wife, that is so not right. How can she not tell and how can he not have explained what happened?? She deserves to know and mourn her husband, and he can still help her financially and keep the job...

Shelley says

Rating 4.0 Banana Splits

Genre: Urban Fantasy

Review

Gods & Monsters, by Lyn Benedict, is the third installment in the Shadows & Inquiries series featuring Sylvie Lightner. Lightner runs a private investigative business called Shadows Inquiries. Some in local law enforcement as well as the ISI (Internal Surveillance & Investigations which is run by the government), believe Lightner is a loose cannon and a vigilante whose hatred of the Magicus Mundi makes her a danger to everyone around her.

They even consider her more of a threat than Gods, mad sorcerers, necromancers, and witches who have crossed Lightner's path and ended up paying the price including someone who worked for her.

Lightner has been in the middle of some really bizarre and earth shattering events over the course of the last two books. She has gone up against Gods, killed Lilith who was in her direct descendant line, and watched as her friends Demalion and Alex Figueroa-Smith were put in harm's way. She lost the friendship of a powerful witch who ended up losing her powers after coming in contact with the God of Justice in Chicago.

Only Alex has escaped mostly unscathed but for the grace of the God Eros, and now is Sylvie's business partner since Sylvie can't seem to get rid of her.

This book ups that ante even more and brings back one of my favorite characters, Erinya the Fury, back to the series. Erinya was last seen chasing Demalion's ghost in order to devour it after the events of Sins & Shadows. You definitely must consider reading each book in order so that you get the feel of what Sylvie is going through and how she has grown over the course of this series.

Each book has really increased the pressure on Lightner to continue to fight for her life, while remaining out of the hands of the ISI and others who want to bring her down. She is a hard-ass, and definitely shoots first, and asks questions later sort of gal. The fact that she is considered a vigilante shouldn't shy anyone away from this series. She has to be that way or people around her die.

The story really begins at the end of Ghosts & Echoes when Sylvie asked a werewolf friend of hers Tatya, to be on the lookout for a missing woman that was last seen in the Everglades. Not only does Tatya find the missing woman, but 4 others as well. Then Sylvie finds out that she is against a very powerful sorcerer who wants to become a God, and calls in Tierney (Ghoul) Wales for help.

If that weren't enough, Lightner is still trying to find a way to keep Odalys Hargrove, who is a powerful witch and necromancer, behind bars for her part in bringing rich dead people back to life so that they can take over the bodies of teenagers and be beautiful and powerful once again.

As I said, I love the fact that Erinya is back in this story. She is extremely fierce and has no problem with her mission of eliminating those who are deemed unworthy (IE pedophiles, and anyone who hurts children.) Erinya and Sylvie may not be bosom buddies, but they are woven from the same fabric and the belief in justice for those who are most in need. Erinya realizes that Sylvie is keeping a secret, but is unable to find out what it is before she is transformed. (Nuff said without spoiling the ending.)

We are definitely heading into an area where some major secrets about Sylvie are ready to be revealed. What that will mean to her relationship with Alex and Demalion is yet to be determined.

Dangerous Romance Book Reviews says

For those of you who miss the early days of the Anita Blake series, when she was a loner and a tough cookie who lived by her own set of rules, only let one or two people in close and fought on the side of right ...you'll like God's and Monsters, there is a lot in common. Sylvie isn't a necromancer, but she is forced to work with one and she does have something seriously screwed up going on inside of her powerwise.

Sylvie Lightner runs an investigative office called Shadow's inquiries. She also just happens to be the new Lilith, something she is not really happy about. Her lover Demalion died in the last book and was brought back to life in the body of another man. A married man. In order to keep him hidden from those who killed him in the first place, he has had to assume the life of the man whose body he is inhabiting and both he and Sylvie have to stay away from each other. Their phone calls to each other are poignant and quite sad.

Sylvie (or Shadow's as all the bad guys seem to call her) is trying to find out what is going on in the

Everglades, as women are disappearing and somehow being used to fuel a Sorcerers attempt to become a minor diety, which is very bad news for Miami. Sylvie has alienated the very community she needs help from the most, so she is forced to turn to someone whose very profession makes her skin crawl. He happens to also look like a scrawny sweet college kid . Alex, her personal assistant and all around overly trusting computer savvy best friend may be falling for him, which is a complication Sylvie doesn't need.

People are dying or disappearing all over Miami and there are stories of shape shifters tearing up restaurants. Someone Slyvie put in jail has a hit on her in the magical community and the ISI, a secret government organization has decided Sylvie is dangerous and are following her all around town, making her job trying to stop an ancient evil all the more difficult.

I hadn't read the previous books in the series but I was able to keep up and follow along nicely. Gods and Monsters had just the right balance of grit, horror and snark. There were funny lines and interesting characters and it read like a good old fashioned mystery that just happened to have supernatural elements, my favorite blend.

Fantasy Literature says

A subplot in Ghosts & Echoes involved Sylvie and a werewolf, Tatya, looking into the disappearance of a young woman in the Everglades. Lyn Benedict picks that thread back up at the beginning of Gods & Monsters. The woman has been found dead in the swamps, along with four others. Sylvie doesn't want to get personally involved in this case, so she calls the police — but when the police move the bodies, one explodes into flame and the other four shift into animals. Three policemen are killed and some injured, including Adelio Suarez, a cop with whom Sylvie has an uneasy alliance. Now she's involved whether she wants to be or not.

A many-layered plot unfolds, featuring a sorcerer with a diabolical scheme and a god trying to re-awaken. Sylvie has to piece together what's going on and how the women are involved, all ... Read More: <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/reviews/gods-monsters/>

All Things Urban Fantasy says

While the Urban Fantasy genre is no stranger to dark and twisty heroines (think Dante Valentine and Anita Blake), Sylvie Lightner's inner engine of anger isn't powered by horrific abuse or childhood trauma, but rather the preternatural legacy of her bloodline. Of all the magical "super powers" to grow into, Sylvie's is an unyielding will that just will not give in to some magics. I love how Benedict juxtaposes glimpses Sylvie's happy childhood and family with the *Magicus Mundi*. The *Magicus Mundi* is our world's magical underbelly, where defeating bad guys sometimes means hiding a body from the cops, you're usually better off if the gods don't hear your prayers, and no fight is won without a cost.

GODS & MONSTERS reminded me afresh that Lyn Benedict has a gift for intertwining the fantastic with the mundane and creating a story that stops me in my tracks. Sylvie's world is dark, dangerous, and as magically treacherous as it is realistic. Though I enjoyed the first two books in the series, **GODS & MONSTERS** is definitely my hands down favorite thus far.

Given the growing pains and events Sylvie has muscled her way through in books one and two, I would not recommend trying to jump right into the series with **GODS & MONSTERS**. New readers should not be put off of the series by the losses Sylvie suffers in prior books, however. Benedict certainly puts her readers through the emotional wringer, but that makes the victories all the sweeter when they arrive.

Case in point would be Sylvie's love life, one of the most complex I've ever encountered. While she and Demalion are separated by distance (and a lot of heartbreaking emotional baggage) for this entire book, I finished the last page eager to pick up where they left off. I finished **GODS & MONSTERS** with a victorious smile on my face and hope in my breast. Sylvie's world doesn't get any gentler, but her indomitable will makes it easier and easier to believe in some hard brand of happy endings.

Sexual Content: Threat of sexual violence.

Kelly says

A subplot in *Ghosts & Echoes* involved Sylvie and a werewolf, Tatya, looking into the disappearance of a young woman in the Everglades. Lyn Benedict picks that thread back up at the beginning of *Gods & Monsters*. The woman has been found dead in the swamps, along with four others. Sylvie doesn't want to get personally involved in this case, so she calls the police — but when the police move the bodies, one explodes into flame and the other four shift into animals. Three policemen are killed and some injured, including Adelio Suarez, a cop with whom Sylvie has an uneasy alliance. Now she's involved whether she wants to be or not.

A many-layered plot unfolds, featuring a sorcerer with a diabolical scheme and a god trying to re-awaken. Sylvie has to piece together what's going on and how the women are involved, all the while dodging threats from enemies she made in the previous book. Benedict stays in control of the complex plot throughout, never letting it devolve into a confusing mess even when the reader doesn't have all the pieces yet.

Also fantastic is the way Benedict weaves in bits of the previous books. This starts with the opening scene in the Everglades, and later we encounter other "ripples" from earlier events and a character I didn't expect to see again (and was really tickled to see again!). While each *SHADOWS INQUIRIES* book so far has been a self-contained story, every event has consequences that carry over into the subsequent books. One non-spoilery example is that Sylvie alienated Miami's witch community in book two, and so when she needs magical help this time, her options are limited and she ends up working with someone whose magical path makes her skin crawl.

The writing continues to be excellent. Benedict evokes a dark mood but breaks it up with occasional snarky humor, such as when Sylvie draws a magic symbol on an enemy's door. She thinks it's just a bluff, something she made up on the spot:

"It's not like I go around memorizing random magical sigils. It's probably some company's logo. I've probably just invoked the wrath of Starbucks on her ass."

(But of course the sigil ends up being another little detail whose importance becomes clear much later!)

Overall, *Gods & Monsters* is another strong entry in a strong series. It can be read alone but some events will be more meaningful to readers who've been following along. Benedict continues to deliver good writing,

original choices of antagonists, and overall, urban fantasy that doesn't fall into cliché. I wish we'd seen more of Demalion this time, but I have to admit that the way Benedict handles Demalion is another example of the series' originality. Read these books! You're missing out.

Caitlin says

It was a good book to pull out and read when I needed something to do. There seemed to be so much going on at the beginning that I had a little trouble remembering all the characters, their histories, and their relationships with each other. I'm sure it was easier to pick up if you'd read the previous books.

That said, this book was decently enjoyable. I liked Sylvie enough to root for her, and I liked that her story revolved on outside forces and not internal angst or her love life, as so many books with a heroine tend to do. I appreciated that Sylvie was not necessarily a LIKEABLE person, but she was the kind who would make hard decisions and get the job done, which was necessary in her line of business. She also invested herself in her friends, which was nice to see--again, heroines often prove their "toughness" by having no time for friends, or dismissing others as just not UNDERSTANDING them. (Bella Swan of Twilight comes to mind.)

I would definitely read the other books in this series, as the time spent reading this book was fairly enjoyable.

Kim says

I enjoyed the first book in the series, but had difficulty getting through the second one. This third entry in Shadows Inquiries was excellent though. Sylvie is a real kickass heroine, not just some chick in tight leather pants with an attitude.

Sillylittlefishey says

I was really hoping that this series would continue to get better but this one fell flat for me. I liked the premise of it but the pace of the book was too slow for my liking.

Visit link for full review
<http://openbooksociety.com/article/ly...>

Kara-karina says

4.5/5

Lyn Benedict is such an understated author, and her books are awesome! They are everything I love about urban fantasy: a hard, kick ass, smart heroine, wonderful sidekicks, plenty of villains of magical variety and non-stop action.

If you haven't read previous two books, please do it first, because this review will contain spoilers for book 1 and 2.

The book literally starts where the previous left. Odalis is in prison and Sylvie takes on a seemingly easy case of disappeared wife. Aha! She thought her previous case would be boring, and we all know how it ended.

While investigating her case, Sylvie discovers that her client's wife is one of the several kidnapped victims, whose life energies are being drained by a sorcerer in a really bizarre ritual. The women look dead but they walk and they turn into wild animals.

The case quickly becomes extremely dangerous, what with the sorcerer mixed with gods, certain people bent on magical revenge and stupid ISI agents taking closer look at miss Shadows.

As usual it takes famous Shadows willpower to set things right, and apparently there is the new Lilith in town...

I loved it! The book is packed full of action and crammed with tension, with Ghoul and Marco playing Sylvie's sidekicks, and even my favorite Fury making a star appearance.

I also admire that Lyn Benedict isn't afraid to kill one of the characters in every book she writes. This just make the plot more real and the writing much more intense. The ending had such amazing possibilities that I can't wait to get my hands on the next book!

I would recommend it to any fan of urban fantasy. Just make sure you read first two books in order.

Chelsea says

The best entry in the series so far, much more even than previous books.

Wales didn't seem entirely consistent with his appearance in second book in the series, but then, we barely knew him at all there.

Looking forward to the fourth...

Charlotte says

A pity that I read this book first instead of the first few books before this. However, this is book mostly standing on its own with the current plot. There were characters that must have been introduced in the first few books so I was lost at times when it involved them.

Throughout the reading, all I wanted to do was to get to the ending fast. To me, the gods and monsters in this book is about destruction. Another point of view instead of gods offering hope in our lives. It's a divergent on its own. A different view.

Stacy says

Reviewed by <http://urbanfantasyinvestigations.blogspot.com/2014/07/gods-monsters.html>...

Sylvie has been through a lot and learned a lot about her self since book one in the Shadows Inquiries series. I'm going to start out by saying I really missed having Demalion by her side and I really hope he returns in book 4. Wales from book 2 comes back and helps a ton with the case that Sylvie is working. He was a great addition to her team and I hope that he stays on. There is also the return of another character from a previous book but I cant tell you who as it would give away the surprise. The plot has many layers that are peeled back as the story progresses. The pacing gave the right amount of information at the right times. The mysteries remained mysteries until the perfect moment of reveal. **GODS & MONSTERS** was a great addition to the series, I would recommend you start at book one **SINS & SHADOWS** though as there are continuing story lines within the new events and you might have a hard time following along.
