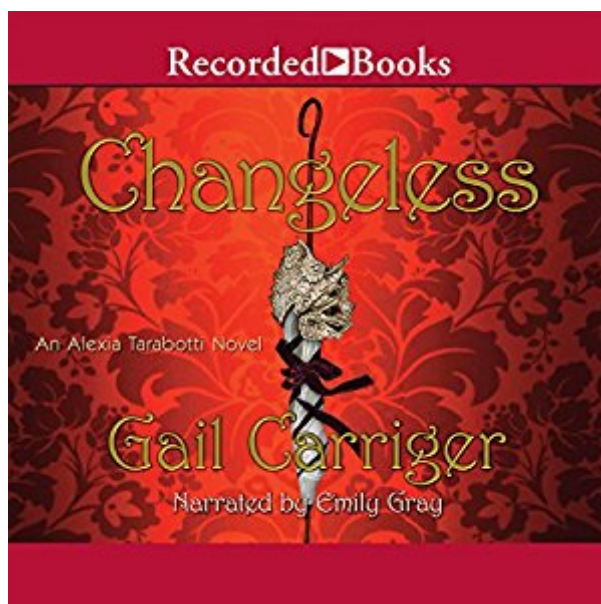


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Changeless: An Alexia Tarabotti Novel, Book 2



Synopsis

Gail Carriger created a fascinating steampunk vision of Victorian England in her "intoxicatingly witty" (Publishers Weekly, starred review) debut novel *Soulless*—the first in the best-selling *Parasol Protectorate* series. *Changeless* is the second in the series and finds Alexia Tarabotti, now the Lady Woolsey, quite put out after her werewolf husband goes missing. So, armed with her trusty parasol, Alexia boards a dirigible and heads for Scotland to find him.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

You will notice that I gave this four stars, but that my review still has reservations. The Plot: Plenty of people have summed up the plot, so I will not be doing that here. Besides, I'm prone to giving away spoilers, so best to avoid this altogether. To start, the good: Loved, loved, LOVED this book as much as the original. The character interactions were as smooth and amusing, the humor was ever-present, the pacing was good, and the story overall was delectable. I am impatient to receive the third book simply because I enjoy this series, not because of the cheap authorial trick utilized. I would recommend it highly to almost anyone who loves werewolves, vampires, Steampunk, Victorian romances, the Victorian era, or just tea and parasols. The Bad: CLIFFHANGER ENDING. This was a cheap and shoddy gimmick that I feel the author should be shot for. I feel it demeaned her story, her writing ability AND her readers. It was like the author, in an orgy of self-destructive tendencies, was jumping up and down screaming; "my writing sucks, and this is the only way I can get my readers to stay!!" The Ugly: More thorough editing, PLEASE. I was yanked out

of the text at least once by an inconsistency involving the showing of the parasol, and later with logistical questions of its use. I was annoyed by the amazing dumbing down of Ivy (though amused at the same time--worth the ride!), and more-so by the deliberate out-of-character denseness of Alexia herself regarding a certain matter.

Ugh. Please don't force me to read the next book in a series by introducing major new plot elements a few pages from the end and leaving them totally unresolved. I want to go on with a series because I'm enjoying spending time in that world, not because I was tricked by a cliffhanger ending. The ending of *Changeless* just left me with a bad taste in my mouth. Of course, I'm more forgiving of these underhanded tactics when I've been thoroughly enjoying the reading experience up to that point. Unfortunately, I can't quite say that that was the case here. It took about half the book before I was really engaged in the story at all, and even then there were elements that irked me. I read in an author interview that while *Soulless* was structured like a romance, *Changeless* was supposed to be more like a mystery. Unfortunately, I think that some of the silliness that worked so well in a lighthearted romance didn't quite hit the mark here. It was one thing for Alexia's empty-headed friend Ivy Hisselpenny to be concerned only with hats and manners when there wasn't really much at stake, or at least nothing that wasn't being concealed from her; but in the context of someone hanging on for dear life, at risk of plummeting to sure death at any moment, or when people were being poisoned or shot at, her absolute idiocy was just grating--not to mention that I couldn't think too highly of Alexia for secretly laughing at her supposed friend all the time. I also think that *Changeless* in general is lacking some of the interest of *Soulless* because the world is already established, and we mainly have to rely on plot and characters to keep us engaged now.

I had the pleasure of devouring this book yesterday. The second in the Parasol Protectorate series, *Changeless* is as witty, smart and fun as its predecessor, *Soulless*, which I also recommend most highly. Gail Carriger is clearly a talented writer, capable of creating a unique and detailed world, clever dialogue, and relatable and believable characters. I didn't know much about steampunk before reading *Soulless*, but now I am hooked on the genre - if only all other steampunk offerings were as great as the Parasol Protectorate series! I won't go into too much detail about the plot. Suffice it to say, almost everyone from book 1 is here, too. Alexia Tarabotti, having married werewolf alpha Connall Maccon, through series of events ends up traveling to Scotland on a dirigible, accompanied by assorted friends and family. The denouement takes place in Scotland, where she learns a lot about her husband's past. The mystery this time around isn't as strong as the

one in the first book; instead, several supporting characters get more attention. Still, the book is fast paced and gives further insight into the fascinating world of Gail Carriger's Victorian Britain. I feel that *Changeless* is less plot driven and more character driven than the first book in the series. This is by no means a disadvantage; Carriger's characterization is certainly strong enough. I'm particularly happy with how Alexia's relationship with Connall is progressing. Throughout the book, the two have an easy familiarity that is all barbs and sarcasm on the outside, and deep affection on the inside. However, not everything is rosy and perfect - their relationship is tested in several ways. I will not spoil this for you - and I highly recommend NOT to read the preview of her third book until you've finished this one.

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