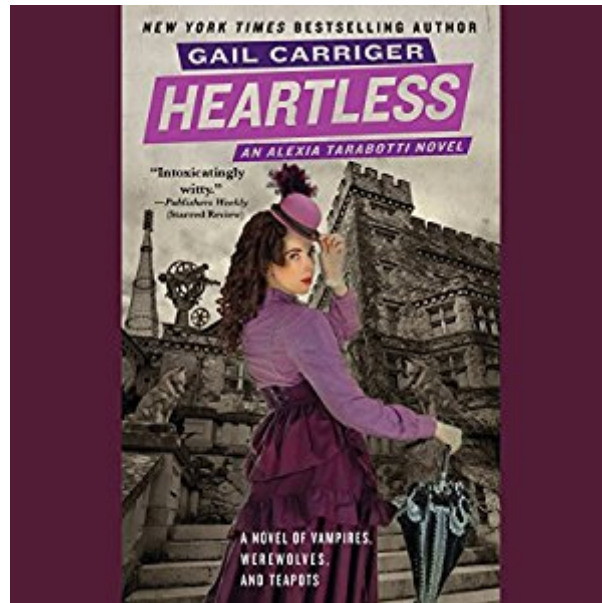


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Heartless: The Parasol Protectorate, The Fourth



Synopsis

Lady Alexia Maccon, soulless, is at it again, only this time the trouble is not her fault. When a mad ghost threatens the queen, Alexia is on the case, following a trail that leads her deep into her husband's past. Top that off with a sister who has joined the suffragette movement (shocking!), Madame Lefoux's latest mechanical invention, and a plague of zombie porcupines and Alexia barely has time to remember she happens to be eight months pregnant. Will Alexia manage to determine who is trying to kill Queen Victoria before it is too late? Is it the vampires again or is there a traitor lurking about in wolf's clothing? And what, exactly, has taken up residence in Lord Akeldama's second best closet?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Few things in life are more delightful than a new Alexia Tarabotti book. In HEARTLESS, the best installment since the debut, every single page is embellished with equal parts wit and farce. The Parasol Protectorate series, a comedy of manners set in a paranormal steampunk Britain, chronicles the adventures of Lady Alexia Tarabotti and her latest escapades involve attempting to thwart an assassination plot on the Queen, keeping the local vampire hive from killing her yet again, and finding a solution to a former vampire wannabe's unwilling induction to the werewolf pack...all while eight months pregnant. I'm going to be using the word delightful a lot in this review because it so perfectly describes nearly every aspect of HEARTLESS from the absurdly charming characters, to the outlandishly entertaining plot, and the endlessly witty--and thoroughly British--writing. Never a

dull page, never a flat line, and never a wasted opportunity for preposterous frivolity. All of the characters we've grown to love and loath over the series are present in HEARTLESS, most prominently Lord Akeldama, Biffy, and Professor Lyall. We learn a number of very revealing details about the latter as well as Alexia's father. One of my complaints about the last two books was how little page time Alexia and her husband shared since their relationship and interaction was one of the things that made the first book so fantastic. I have nothing to complain about on that point in HEARTLESS. Alexia and Conall are together in nearly every other scene. I loved watching him fuss over her because of her pregnancy and then grit his teeth when he had to let her run off--or waddle off as Alexia called walking at eight months pregnant--into potential danger. The end of HEARTLESS was unbelievably good.

I really wanted to like this book. I fell in love with the characters in the first one, but felt the quality had deteriorated with each subsequent book. This may be it for me. My biggest problem is Alexia. She has become completely unlikeable; no longer the funny, quirky pragmatist she started out as. Here, she makes a series of questionable decisions that result in dire consequences for herself and those around her, and rather than seeming logical, they just seemed stupid, and at times, cruel. She also comes off as a doormat, for example, with the vampire queen and hive. She seems eternally forgiving of the actions of those who don't deserve it (vampire queen, her sister...) and a stickler against those who deserve compassion (Lefoux). **possible spoilers** Lord Maccon has been unwittingly manipulated by two packs, wrongfully abandoned his pregnant wife, is so inept at BUR he can't build a case against vampires trying to kill his wife (who don't seem to be hiding their efforts all that well), decides to give his child away to a vampire he doesn't trust (with no recourse should the vampire up and leave with the child), and lets himself and his pack be evicted from their home (including having his wife who had just given birth immediately kicked out). He's a bad husband, terrible government agent, and worse pack leader. What happened to the gruff, but lovable and capable romantic lead? I can't even articulate my horror at the Acaldama adoption and pack relocation. **definite spoilers** The only thing I enjoyed was Lyall, and the author even managed to ruin that.

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