



Ganymede

Cherie Priest

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The air pirate Andan Cly is going straight. Well, *straighter*. Although he's happy to run alcohol guns wherever the money's good, he doesn't think the world needs more sap, or its increasingly ugly side-effects. But becoming legit is easier said than done, and Cly's first legal gig—a supply run for the Seattle Underground—will be paid for by sap money.

New Orleans is not Cly's first pick for a shopping run. He loved the Big Easy once, back when he also loved a beautiful mixed-race prostitute named Josephine Early—but that was a decade ago, and he hasn't looked back since. Jo's still thinking about him, though, or so he learns when he gets a telegram about a peculiar piloting job. It's a chance to complete two lucrative jobs at once, one he can't refuse. He sends his old paramour a note and heads for New Orleans, with no idea of what he's in for—or what she wants him to fly.

But he won't be flying. Not exactly. Hidden at the bottom of Lake Pontchartrain lurks an astonishing war machine, an immense submersible called the *Ganymede*. This prototype could end the war, if only anyone had the faintest idea of how to operate it.... If only they could sneak it past the Southern forces at the mouth of the Mississippi River... If only it hadn't killed most of the men who'd ever set foot inside it.

But it's those "if onlys" that will decide whether Cly and his crew will end up in the history books, or at the bottom of the ocean.

Ganymede Details

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From Reader Review Ganymede for online ebook

Jason says

3 Stars

I would have given this book a lesser rating if it wasn't so fun to read. Cherie Priest has created a wonderfully fun and imaginative alt history USA and done it in an awesome steampunk fashion. This was my least favorite of the four novels so far and to me it had the smallest scope. It was even smaller than Clementine which is a Novella.

This book works on the foundation that the first three books have built. Without the wonderful world building in them, this one would not have worked. Overall, it is a lesser book than both Boneshaker and Dreadnought, but it is still a fun fast read. This book lacks any depth and contains no real twists or surprises. It does play a little with the rotters(zombies), and they are discussed in detail by our main characters. Like all Priest novels our main hero is a strong woman that I both liked and rooted for.

There really was not enough in this book. Too litte action, too small a story line, too little zombies, and not enough dirigibles to make this a great read. I highly recommend The Clockwork Century series to those that enjoy steampunk or alt history American stories. Cherie Priest is one of my favorite authors and is worth checking out.

Alex Wells says

First, full disclosure: I won a copy of this book through Goodreads. And I was very excited, first, because I've been waiting forever to get my paws on this fourth book in Cherie Priest's Clockwork Century series, and second, because I hardly ever win anything.

I'm a big fan of Priest's American steampunk, which is less about corsets and manners, and more about riveting adventure and female heroines who defy the conventions of the Victorian age. I really liked Boneshaker, but I was just crazy about Dreadnought, which featured a steampunked train, a tough civil war nurse, and a supporting cast of train-riders who made the book impossible to put down. In Ganymede, Priest introduces a new heroine, while bringing back of a few characters from the earlier books in a way that seamlessly involves their stories. I found the pace of this book slightly slower and more thoughtful than her previous ones, although there is no lack of action in the opening pages. Ganymede is also set mostly in New Orleans, and she spends time developing the setting of this sultry turn-of-the-century city. I felt like my interest really picked up when she finally shows us what Ganymede is and the white-knuckle ride begins. She is adept at describing the various devices and machines that make up the heart of her stories, and I felt I was inside with the rest of the characters. This book can easily stand alone, but to get the most out of it, you might want to pick up one or all of her three others in the series.

Tiyana White says

Ganymede is the fourth addition to the *Clockwork Century* universe, coming after *Boneshaker*, *Clementine*, and *Dreadnought* (in that order)**—all of which are centered around a steampunk alternate history in which

the American Civil War has carried on for nearly decades longer than in real life. The story follows two main characters: former lovers Andan Cly, the air pirate fans got to meet first in *Boneshaker*, and Josephine Early, a biracial prostitute and Union spy who is new to the series.

I'd do a rundown of what it's about, but that's what that summary way up at the top of the page is for!

What I Liked

Airship pirates, New Orleanian prostitutes, Texas Rangers, a submarine, spies, a Voodoo queen, zombies... *Ganymede* has got them all. For those who have been following the series all along, we get the treat of seeing some past characters make appearances, though I won't say who (besides Andan, of course). As for new characters, a particularly interesting one for me—perhaps because of her mystery—was the Voodoo practitioner Marie Laveau, who was based on the real-life figure. I really wanted to learn more about her, though. It's a shame we didn't get to see more of her in action.

Another thing I liked was the attention to detail that Priest showed when it came to the settings. You really get the sense that she knows these places: Seattle, New Orleans, the swamps. Maybe at times we got just a little too much description—how many scents can the human nose really pick up on all at once?—but I did appreciate it nonetheless. Also, Priest gives us a lot of great details about how the submarine works, how the crew worked to navigate it, etc. I found that interesting.

Lastly, I liked some of romance at the beginning; I thought it was cute.

What I Wasn't So Keen On

The history between Andan and Josephine held the potential for *a lot* of tension and conflict. With them being former lovers, I'd expected a few sparks to fly—and they do, but I wonder if it was enough. There were a few power struggles here and there, but...I guess I was expecting more. (Though, maybe that's actually a good thing. *shrugs*)

There was also a certain reveal that popped up with one of the characters, which I was a little confuddled on. It seems recently there's been a huge surge with authors wanting to include more characters who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered in their stories. I've got nothing against this, but when it is done I feel like it needs to be well-integrated. If it's sprung on you at the last minute then is never mentioned again, then why use it in the first place? Mere shock factor doesn't cut it for me. If it's supposed to shock, then shouldn't it also continue to add more tension throughout the rest of the story (at least until it's resolved)?

I won't spoil who's who and what, but I will say the reveal of character which occurred in this light didn't hold any real significance for me. I wasn't shocked (that seemed to be the intent) so much as left scratching my head, wondering why it mattered in the scope of the larger story. (And if it shouldn't matter, then why make such a big deal about it?)

The Verdict

For Cherie Priest, steampunk is all about having fun, and I believe she delivers plenty of this with *Ganymede*. It may not be my *favorite* story in the *Clockwork Century* series, but I did enjoy reading it. I liked spending time with the characters and thought they were all full of personality and pluck. Sometimes, though, I wish she would take things a little further—like with Marie Laveau—but in some cases it could be she's just saving some action for future novels. In any case, I think I'll stick around for the next to find out

how it all ends. ;)

**For newcomers to the *Clockwork Century*: I wouldn't say you'd *have* to read the other books in this series first to get a hold on what's going on, but as with any series you'd have a fuller reading experience if you did. If there's one book I would recommend reading before *Ganymede*, though, it would be *Boneshaker*--just because it gives you a clear picture of where all of the events in the following books are stemming from. Besides the war, there's one other major event that's affecting the overarching plot.

It all started in Seattle...

Dawn Vanniman says

The gist of the story is that there's a submarine that the confederate supporters need to get out of New Orleans - this is an alternate universe story. Josephine, owner of a bordello, recruits an old flame to pilot it out. There's Texans, Voodoo Queens, Zombies and Pirates.

With all that going on, why did I get so bored? It wasn't the writing, Ms. Priest is descriptive and her writing flows easily. It was mostly the characters.

I couldn't bring myself to care about Josephine. I wanted to, she's a strong single woman running a bordello in New Orleans, dealing with all the mean Texans and helping the Confederates - what's not to like? But Josephine just came across as a cold fish. If Josephine and her old flame, Andan Cly, had such a big love affair, why isn't there more tension between them? I mean, we actually hear more about their relationship through Cly's thoughts than through Josephine.

There's also very little conflict between the characters - the mainly African-American rebels didn't bat an eye when Josephine brought a mainly White group into their hideout. Seriously? Then, when one character turns out to be transsexual, it is presented in a awkward way and then just put aside as if to say 'Oh. I see. Well, carry on.' I was confused as to why the character had to be outed at all. I mean, did GANYMEDE need some LGBT-ness? What was up with that? It made no sense to the story.

The Voodoo Queen seemed as if she were simply a delivery tool. There was no way to get from A to B, so she was tucked in to be a bridge.

Overall, the storyline was good, the writing is fabulous, but the characters left much to be desired.

Jammies says

There is no way for me to do a sensible, scholarly review of this book or any of the books in the *Clockwork Century* series. All I can say is that I loved this, and that Ms. Priest had me before Marie Laveau but I squealed in delight when she appeared. I'm thrilled with the gentle, low-key touch of romance as well as the breathless action, and just delighted to pieces with the whole book.

Chris says

This is really two stories and I found the one about Josephine to be far more interesting. Most likely because she was a more compelling character. While it was nice touching place with people in Seattle, the story only really flowed when Josephine was on stage. She is an interesting character, and Priest does a good job of capturing conflicting loyalties. What makes Josephine cool is that she is a lady who can shoot though her skirts.

Vicente L Ruiz says

Wonderful new book in The Clockwork Century series.

To me, there's something odd with the way Priest writes: I find myself waiting for things to start happening, you know, *really* start happening, when all of a sudden I'm 100+ pages into the book and, looking back, lots of things have already happened -but of course! That's how smoothly the action flows in *Ganymede* as well.

Nevertheless, if nothing else I'm a sucker for good world-building. And all along the book, sometimes quite obviously and sometimes behind the scenes, there's a whole lot of it going on. And I just love it. Mind me, over here in Spain we're not so well-versed about the American Civil War (and its time), so every new installment of the series sees me web-checking which of the facts presented are real, which ones are invented, and which ones are (so cleverly) manipulated. It's great to see how everything falls into place, how every little piece of the Clockwork Century US map falls in place to slowly reveal the big picture.

Obviously, all of it while following the adventures of the characters in the book. It's also a curious fact how every book focuses on a different set of characters, but keeping the coherence of the whole series. It leaves you yearning to learn more of those characters you loved from previous books, while at the same time allowing new readers to pick up any book. Very clever.

In short, this is a great work. Priest is one of the two main reasons (the second one being her removed at birth "sister" Gail Carriger) why I am very much in a steampunk mode as of late. Where Carriger provides witty, funny and British steampunk, Priest offers grimy, dirty, American steampunk. And I love both.

All that, and I haven't even mentioned I hate anything with zombies on it. That's a measure of Priest's mastery, because her rotters are not (so far) an overwhelming presence, but a problem waiting to be addressed. But not for long.

I'm anxiously waiting for the next book, *Inexplicables*. I hope it is at least half as good as *Ganymede* is.

Jennie says

I think Cherie Priest has some great ideas but needs a little help with execution.

I like the speculative aspect (20 years into the Civil War, Texas is still its own republic, Seattle is a blighted waste). I like the way she writes action scenes: her zombie battles are fun and when her characters are actually in the middle of a fight, it's exciting.

The biggest flaw I find in Priest's writing is her tendency to over-explain everything. There's a lot of telling about what happened instead of showing, there's a lot of setting up just how spunky and independent her female characters are, and god I GET it: Andan Cly is tall! A smart reader doesn't have to be reminded of how tall he is every frickin' time he has to duck his head or someone has to crane to look up at him. The first 12 references to his height were plenty, I assure you.

Her pacing, something I've semi-complained about since *Clementine*, still needs a little work. It often feels like she runs out of things for her characters to do so she just ends the story at whatever point that she got bored. This particular story is set in New Orleans, which has a growing zombie problem, and the focus was on the submarine, of all things! How can we be in New Orleans with zombies, and barely get any zombies?

Priest also likes to throw in random details without any followup (as in a "shocking" revelation about one character at a point in the book where it doesn't matter at all and is actually just stupid and distracting).

Still, it looks like things might start to get interesting and the rotters/zombies might come back to the forefront like they were in *Boneshaker*, I hope...?

Janet Martin says

If only all steampunk was this good!! While not as strong as the first 2 books in this series, *Ganymede* expands the world begun in *Boneshaker* and *Dreadnought*. The alternative US is still caught up in a Civil War, and the free blacks of Louisiana are determined to undermine both the Confederacy and the Republic of Texas by delivering a functional submarine to a Union ship anchored in the Gulf of Mexico. It's a wonderful adventure, well read by Edoardo Ballerini.

Melissa McShane says

I really wish I was connecting with this series better. I like the setting a lot, and the alternate history is very well thought out. But even though the characters are well-rounded, I have trouble caring about them, and I feel like I should. It's like I enjoy the concept of these characters--brothel madam, her former lover-slash-air pilot, the Texas Ranger who showed up in the previous book...actually, I think I like him a lot. In general, this seems like a mismatch with the reader rather than a criticism of the book. Four stars for the setting and craft, three for not liking the characters, and I'm rounding up because I admire what Priest is doing here.

Vickey Foggin says

Cherie Priest has good ideas but struggles to string them together. This book about a reforming air pirate and a madam secreting an experimental sub out of New Orleans is poorly edited so I'd give it a miss. She makes a stylistic choice for a lot of things to happen "offscreen" which I don't get. Words are free. It's not as if she needs to spend her special effects budget wisely. Example: when the crew members are getting to know each other and working out the unlabelled controls of the dangerous sub, we watch the scene from the viewpoint of someone super bored, sitting on the shore, for hours, watching the occasional ripple of water across the

surface of the lake. WHY? This was just a tedious drag.

Kim says

The third book in the fantastic Clockwork Century series does not disappoint. There are so many things to love about it. We get to see more of minor characters from the earlier books, in particular airship Captain Andan Cly. I love the way the overall story of the series (the part with zombies) happens mostly in the background of the books, as a B story to whatever is most important in the major character's life. I wish we saw more of Texas Ranger Korman, but I have hope for the future. (Argh, this review is rambling, but I'm on opiates here...) The most important thing is that I LOVE the main character, Josephine Early. A free woman of color in a New Orleans under the Confederacy and occupied by the Republic of Texas. A madam of a brothel and a spy for the Union. Not much interested in romance, past or present. Fiercely protective of her brother, her ladies, and her plans to demolish the Confederacy. In short, Miss Early ROCKS. Oh, and also the book is about a confederate submarine that has been captured by bayou rebel Union sympathizers. And there are zombies. And Marie Laveau.

Honestly, this may be my favorite book of the series. *Boneshaker* is great, but I didn't connect to the characters as much as I do here. I loved *Dreadnaught*, but I wanted to go deeper into the characters instead of focusing so much on the action. For whatever reason, I didn't feel at all unsatisfied by this book. In fact, it's made me anxious to reread the previous ones, so I'll probably be doing that soon.

And now my husband can stop pestering me to read faster so he can have it. And if I had the money, I'd be buying copies of the whole series for everyone in my airship, but alas, I'll have to resort to badgering them into buying their own.

Jason Pettus says

(Reprinted from the Chicago Center for Literature and Photography [cclapcenter.com]. I am the original author of this essay, as well as the owner of CCLaP; it is not being reprinted illegally.)

Regular readers will of course already be familiar with Cherie Priest's remarkable steampunk series known as "The Clockwork Century;" back in 2009 I reviewed the first volume *Boneshaker* (best described as Victorian zombies meet Doom-style videogame in the bowels of subterranean Seattle), while last year I took on *Dreadnought*, in which we follow a souped-up locomotive as it winds its way across the Great Plains, deals with a now two-decade-long Civil War, and confronts giant iron military robots. And now we have the third novel in the series, *Ganymede*, which has yet another impossibly engaging hook to hold together its rambling plot: it's the story of this alt-history's very first submarine, built and lost by the Confederates, rediscovered by a black female brothel owner in New Orleans who secretly works for the Union, salvaged and piloted by a burly zeppelin owner whose usual job is shipping smuggled goods, and with the whole situation complicated by the Texas Republican Army, defiant pirate guerrillas, and shadowy Chinese entrepreneurs.

And indeed, as you can see, there's a good reason that a growing number of people are starting to call this perhaps the greatest steampunk series in the history of the genre*; and that's because with each volume, Priest squeezes in several novels' worth of flabbergasting ideas, making each story expansive as hell while

still keeping a tight control over the three-act structure. (And please realize, by the way, that it's not just these three novels that make up this series, but also a handful of standalone stories and novellas, plus a comprehensive website.) One of my favorite genre novelists working today, and a fangirl who walks the walk just as well as her readers (her cosplay convention outfits are almost as famous as the books themselves), *Ganymede* comes with a strong recommendation, and is the exact kind of title for those who only read one steampunk book a year.

Out of 10: **9.0**, or **10** for steampunk fans

*Well, okay, it's hard to beat the steampunk novel that started them all, William Gibson and Bruce Sterling's *The Difference Engine*; but still.

Sarah says

[Not really a spoiler, but just in case someone complains...just wanted to say that this book lacked a bit of the tension of the others, since I was fairly certain everyone I cared about was going to survive. Most

Cherie says

The stories keep getting better and better.
