



Disowned

Sarah Addison-Fox

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Two countries, two choices, one life

When Kyraenean slave Celeste risks her life to reach the free nation of Etraea, a country filled with technology and wealth, she unknowingly sets off a chain of events that will change her life forever.

After escaping her new owner, Celeste awakens in the home of an Etraean soldier, sworn to protect the fragile peace.

For Corporal Mick Haynes, life is simple. Follow the rules, do your job and work your way up the ranks. Getting shot and finding a wanted slave at his family's farm wasn't part of the plan.

When a Kyraenean bounty hunter locates Celeste, Mick's loyalty will be stretched to the limit.

With war on the horizon, Celeste faces two impossible choices. Both securing her freedom, but both at a cost she could never have imagined.

Will Etraea provide the freedom she's longed for or shackle her to an entirely new master?

Disowned Details

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From Reader Review Disowned for online ebook

Karis says

When one of my close Goodreads friends messaged me asking if I would like to alpha read for her, I said yes a bit fearfully, not sure what to expect out of her debut novel. What if the writing was horrible or I didn't like the plot? I would be stuck reading it! And how would I politely say I disliked it to my GR friend that I had become close with over the past couple of months? Let me just say that I shouldn't have worried. I. Loved. This. Book! Loved it! The night Sarah added to Goodreads and set up her author profile, I was up till 1 A.M. emailing her ecstatically and sitting in front of my computer with a goofy smirk plastered to my face. Really ask my brother; he's my sole witness in this case. (I think he found it amusing to see his usually intelligent sister reduced to a fangirling blubbling mess.)

So, what is it about *Disowned*, book one in the Allegiance series by Sarah Addison-Fox, that has caused my excessive fangirling and driven me to disturb the lives of so many of my friends and family by loudly and repeatedly declaring to them that they need to read this book? So, many things did. First off, the writing quality went above and beyond my expectations. I couldn't believe that this was only Sarah's first book. Secondly, I loved the characters- they are all so individually awesome and unique to themselves. The Haynes family has completely won me over! Maggie is such a dear mothering spirit. And her kids- Joe and Sadie- are little dears, especially Sadie, I fell in love with her when she drew that picture of a mermaid for Celeste. *heart shatters* One of Sarah's strong writing points is in her dialogue among the characters, which definitely impressed me.

Also, the setting is very unique. It is not your typical medieval fantasy world, but rather a world in a limbo setting between modern and medieval times. So, electricity, rifles, and a few other modern conveniences make their appearance, but there are horses instead of cars and an old fashion feel to the entire book. Another neat thing about the setting is the unique landscape that she's portrayed, much of it based off the New Zealand fauna and landscape that is so familiar to the author.

And then there's the plot. Celeste is a run-away slave from Kyræna, an underdeveloped country of spiritual darkness where slavery is rampant. Etraea is a land where she hopes to find freedom. But is freedom ever even possible for a slave? Mick is an injured soldier returning to recover at home only to find out that his family is harboring an illegal fugitive. Mick is honor bound to turn Celeste in according to a treaty that is just barely holding together the fragile peace between Kyræna and Etraea. Mick's family, and especially his mother Maggie, seem determined to protect Celeste. Why, do they insist on complicating everything? And poor Celeste is painfully learning how to trust and trying to adjust to being around people who actually care and love each other.

It really is a struggle for Mick to understand Celeste's POV; he very much begrudges Celeste's very presence as well as little things like her accidentally sitting in his seat at the table for supper. For Mick who thinks of life as a series of problems for him to systematically solve, Celeste is going to prove to be his biggest problem yet.

I love the Haynes family's impact on Celeste. As it is with any Christians who truly live their faith, they can't help but attract Celeste with their faith in Etra (God). Their prayers to Him are far more personal and different than the prayers she's seen given to the many gods of Kyræna. I am looking forward to seeing more of this aspect in the next book in the series.

But nothing that I'm telling you will fully be able to explain why I love *Disowned* so much. You need to read it for yourself! I've read it completely over three times (and enjoyed it every time) as I've alpha read for

Sarah, which has been an infinite delight for me. Every time I've read a new version of the book, I've seen it improve and get even better which I did not think was possible at the beginning. It's been amazing to see! I would definitely recommend *Disowned* to fans of clean Christian non-magical fantasy. Do get a copy! It's beyond an amazing book!

Mikayla says

I picked this book up for free on Kindle, and I am very glad I didn't pay for it.

First off, here are some things I *did* like about the book:

1. The characters were very vivid. They shined through the pages, making you feel like you knew them personally.
2. The writing style was solid. It kept me turning the pages.
3. I loved Mick's family. They were awesome, lovable people.

What I didn't like so much:

1. The number one reason this book got such a low rating for me was all the references to nudity. I have a very good imagination, so this was a bit disturbing how many times Celeste was without clothes. Even in her memory's of being a slave there were a lot of mentions of it and what they wanted to use her as. Now I will say, it was always for a good reason, but I really hated it and felt it could have been avoided.
2. Mick is a jerk. Now, he isn't a Christian, so I'll give him some slack, but I really wanted to punch him repeatedly. He hates Celeste until she turns up in a pretty dress, then he's all over her. He can't keep his eyes off her... especially when she shows up in a tight shirt. He also cusses (mildly) several times and is drunk at one point.
3. I felt lost through a lot of the book. I could never figure out what kind of setting it was in.
4. Other than mentioning God briefly several times, there was almost no Christian content.

Overall, I think a lot of people would like this book, but it was not my kind of book at all. Because of the negative content, I would not recommend it to anyone under 14.

Ivie says

**This book was free on kindle as part of a celebration of the author's birthday. I snagged it while it was free.*

Another day, another book review. This book had a lot of ups and downs for me.

Story World

The story world was unique. Two countries that border each other, one has slaves, the other is where slaves escape to hide.

Plot

The plot follows the main character, Celeste, as well as the family she finds herself in. The book has multiple point of views, all in third person. Celeste has many ups and downs in her adventures.

Characters

Celeste- She's an escaped slave who often tries to run from the family who's brought her in. She has trust issues, understandably.

Mick- A soldier who's on leave to visit his family. He believes in following the law and reporting escaped slaves. He finds out something life changing. I feel like he was too calm about it, but his character does seem to take things and process them quickly.

Maggie and Ethan- Parents of Mick. They take Celeste in.

Joe and Sadie- Brother and sister of Mick. They love Celeste immediately.

Content

Very mild swearing, human trafficking resemblances, alluding to what Celeste would be doing as a slave as she was older now, some violence.

Overall

The writing was well done and there weren't any errors that I spotted. The book seemed a bit too slow for my liking, but that's how setting up the world goes. Honestly, I do hope to read the second book. While this was a slower read, it does hold a lot of action as well.

Kate Willis says

Me: *opens book to see if it's any good* Me hours later: *still reading*

Since this is the first book in the series, I can tell that a lot of things are still being set up, but I'm already enjoying the medieval-ish feel of the fantasy world. Ethan, Maggie, and the children were such sweet characters! I especially liked how Ethan was portrayed as strong but also sensitive. I felt all the suspense in the first few chapters (and even when Mick came home) deeply. The sense of hiding, waiting, and danger was really strong.

And can we talk about the heroine? She didn't come as some perfect, superlady "chosen one". Nope, she was realistic, scared, and had to train. (And I loved her reasons for training too--not feminist or anything, just practical.) A+ for that! Also, her medical skills are fantastic. I'm excited to see how those serve her as the adventure pans out. *huge grin*

I was a little disappointed that Etra didn't figure into the story more, but hopefully that will pick up as the series goes on. Also, I can't decide about Asher. He's...confusing. ;) I really loved the monks. :D

There were a few things that took away from my enjoyment, but they're really just personal preference. It's more of "it's me, not the book" thing. ;) As a young woman, I hated reading about Celeste's "evaluation". It wasn't a long description, just very bluntly put and not something I'd like to read about in a book I've picked up for entertainment. This book overall wasn't very violent, but the knife fight in the woods (especially the aftermath *shudders*) was a bit too much for me. (I'm always the one who asks for knife fights to be filtered out of movies, though.)

Just a note that there are a few instances of d*** and b****y, and a soldier gets very drunk. Also, a young man notices a woman's shape a couple times, making me want to kick him.

Best quote: Ethan hefted Mick up. "He's out cold." He dragged Mick back inside to the bed. "Oh, good," Mick slurred. "I think I'll join him."

Altogether, I enjoyed this dystopian adventure and am interested to see how the rest of the series goes. ;)

Shantelle says

This was such a great fantasy book - I'm utterly intrigued to see what happens next! *Disowned* by Sarah Addison-Fox follows the life of a slave girl and the dear family who takes her in. It had action, suspense, tenderness, and some budding romance. I love the characters (*though disappointed with the path Celeste's on*) and can hardly wait to see how their lives progress. I was thrilled to see that there's a solid faith aspect, by all appearance. And ... yes! I'm just excited about having discovered an amazing new fantasy world! Check this one out, friends!

Caution: There are a couple instances where a swear word is used. And there's a little violence/gore.

Katie Hanna says

Thoughts:

- Ethan and Maggie are a sweet couple. <3
 - Mick = #nothanks #y'allcanhavehim
 - I really admire Celeste for her independence. That girl knows what's up and she won't let anybody push her around. Me like. *nods*
 - Can't she marry Asher tho?? I LIKE Asher. He's funny and down-to-earth.
 - Also, I really hope Celeste becomes a soldier in the next book. To heck with convention. Let her realize her potential. She's good at this stuff.
 - The setting is . . . quite interesting, really. It's not much like any other fantasy book I've read. It's kind of a mishmash of several cultures and aesthetics; sometimes it felt like the Old West, other times it felt more like Africa, and so on. Which is rather cool.
 - The concept of warrior monks intrigues me. #hardcore
 - I really like the ending!!! It doesn't try to wrap everything up in a neat bow & finish it off. It allows room for the story to continue to grow and expand. I'm curious what happens next :)
-

Katelyn Buxton says

Another reviewer mentioned that this book stands out for its quietness and homeyness, and if that isn't a good description of *Disowned*, I don't know what is. It's not action-packed, full of heroes that never go wrong, no—it's filled with real people living real lives with real problems. I was invested in Celeste's life from the very beginning, since the story begins *in medias res*, and once she found herself in a home with people that *didn't* see her as an object—and in fact wanted nothing more for her than her welfare—well, it

was then that her healing began. Granted, it takes a while, but that makes it realistic.

As for the characters, Celeste is rough-around-the-edges, having spent almost her entire life in slavery, Mick is lovable and humorous despite being rough-around-the-edges in a different way, Maggie is the picture of strong, affectionate motherhood, Sadie and Joe are sweet, Ethan a big teddy bear (I mean really xD), and Asher... is Asher. *sidelong still-suspicious glance*

I also loved seeing a Christian homeschool family depicted in such a relatable way! It's not something you see very often in fiction, and it brought back memories of my childhood. The Haynes' faith in Etra (God) seemed natural, and wasn't pushed on Celeste, but they made no effort to hide it, and when she asked to be taught from Etra's book, Maggie was ready and willing. That said, there was a different religion in Kyraenea. Though it wasn't described in detail, it was a nice addition! It's another thing that made Celeste's world so achingly familiar and realistic.

The "stuff" comes in the form of brief instances of smoking, drinking (including Someone getting very drunk), a very light smattering of swear words (two or three times total?), injuries being described in a fair amount of detail (which might bother some—I'm not squeamish), a couple instances where a male observer took extra notice of female beauty, and the fact that working the mines isn't the only kind of slavery Celeste's people engage in... there's also one that involves a revealing red dress. That sort of thing is always difficult to think about, especially as a woman, but it was handled tactfully, and in the end, I had no objection to it being there.

My only non-"stuff" dislikes are mainly about the... vagueness?... of the physical appearance of the world. There was a lot of world building, but I found myself missing a mental image for the kinds of structures to be found in a typical Etraean village. They had electricity, so it seemed fairly modern, but Celeste observed early on that they were more advanced than Kyraenea, so I wasn't sure whether the world took a more fantasy or sci-fi or modern-with-a-hint-of-fantasy leaning. I guess I'll learn more about that in the next book, after the way this one ended, but it would have helped to have a little more detail there.

In the end, however, everything about *Disowned* is so down-to-earth, that what I just mentioned interfered very little with my enjoyment of it. The effect of war on a man, the highly-researched injuries, treatments and symptoms, the way it embraces every messy detail of life, including upchuck, water rings on the table, dishes, and the occasional bit of family tension... seriously, you guys. Read it! It's refreshing in its quiet power.

Victoria Lynn says

Review to come after publication. . .

Lila Kims says

Going into this book, I hardly had a doubt in my mind that I was going to like it. I make that assumption a lot, and this time, I wasn't disappointed at all! (I guess the only reason it isn't five stars is that it's such a quiet book. It didn't slam me to the ground and scream in my face with its awesomeness. But it was still REALLY, REALLY good.)

Also going into this book, I didn't quite know what I was expecting (other than loveliness). It was one of

those that even though I may have read the synopsis, I just didn't know what I was about to plunge into.

And what did I find, you ask? Well...

- I found a family. This family is called the Haynes family, and they are epic. Joe and Sadie are the most precious of the precious. <3 <3 Like... I feel like YA needs more innocent little children like these two darling kiddos.

The sibling love is one of my best parts of this book! The way Joe looks up to Mick as a role model melts my heart, and the care and compassion Mick shows to both him and Sadie is just... UGH, I LOVE YOU FOR THAT, MICK. I mean, the guy does have some issues, but I'm a fangirl anyway and I can't wait to see how he grows. <3

And then Ethan and Maggie are incredible parents - the type that YA needs more of, if you ask me. I especially loved the relationship that develops between Maggie and Celeste.

- OKAY, SO CELESTE. I literally just started *Dissemble*, but her arc is STUNNING in this book alone! A super likable protagonist to root for and sympathize with, Celeste is the perfect blend of strong and weak. GO, CELESTE!!!

The plot was slow-burning, but the family won me over so quickly that I didn't even care as long as the Haynes were on the scene. The intrigue over Celeste and all the problems and conflicts that came with her slave status kept me hungrily reading on. And then it picked up speed! OH BOY, DID IT PICK UP. Suddenly things were getting suuuuuper intense, and my heart was beating fast. By the end of the novel, I was breathless.

- I've seen some people complaining about the cliffhanger ending, but I have NO problem with the way the author cut it off. It was tastefully done, and I wouldn't have it any other way. Every story needs a strong beginning, middle, and end, and *Disowned* had all three. But trilogies are special, you see, and although the first book in any trilogy must be a **story** in itself (duh), it's almost just as important that it be the **set-up** for the rest of the series. If it doesn't leave enough things hanging, what are the chances a reader is gonna come out of it saying, "OH MY GOODNESS, I NEED THE NEXT ONE"?

Overall, I really enjoyed this book and I can't wait to see more of these incredible characters and this incredible fantasy world. <3

Abigail McKenna says

OKAY. I have calmed down and had time to chew on this story and now I think I can write a review. Maybe. We'll see how this goes.

series playlist here: <https://open.spotify.com/user/mylittl...>

First thing to be made aware of: I read this book in one day. The whole thing. In a day. A day where we went to Disney, too. But during the two hour round trip and when I got home (and immediately crawled into bed with this book in hand), I devoured this story and I loved every second of it.

The characters weren't my favorite at the beginning. Well, actually, I take that back, I loved Mick's family from the minute we met them. They're great. But Mick and Celeste? I think they just kind of showed traits

that usually bother me in fiction. But they grew! And there was character development! YAY!

The world, y'all. THE. WORLD. That was 100% my favorite part of this book and it may just be me who is so obsessed with it but I am obsessed with it. And I cannot wait for book 2. Like seriously, GIVE IT TO ME NOW.

cough Okay I'm done. I really liked it. 4.5 stars (with the half star taken off for a bit of language and the aforementioned original dislike of the characters)

Victoria Lynn says

4.5 stars. Review coming. . .

R.F. Gammon says

This book wasn't a loud, dominating book.

It wasn't an incredibly explosive, streaking star kind of book.

No, Disowned stands out in its quietness, its hominess, its drive to depict a family full of love. It may not be as ambitious as the Lunar Chronicles or as violent as the Blades of Acktar, but that's okay.

Disowned is, first and foremost, I think, a story about family.

It's about the family Celeste seeks without realizing it and the one she finds. It's about how your loved ones can heal so many wounds (and even if they can't cure them all, they still provide the safe arms to run to.) The thing that spoke most to my heart was that the theme of adoption is central. Celeste's real family was awful to her. It's the family she finds once she's escaped slavery that is where she is finally able to feel safe, and loved, and happy.

And I loved that.

This isn't my typical format for a review, but I'm making an exception for this book. Disowned quietly took a place at the top of my Kindle, and has planted itself in my heart and dug its way deep into my affections. Well done, Ms. Addison-Fox. Well done. Now please hurry up with the sequel. XD

(And btw I totally ship Celeste and Mick...)

Sarah Grace says

DAHMMMM! 12 billion trillion stars!! Review to come when I can think clearly. ;)

Grace Morris says

I loved this book soooo much!!! It was sooo good!!! 5 Stars!!! =D

This book was everything I wanted it to be. Small bits of action. Lovable characters. Believable world. Great writing style.

One of the biggest themes in the story is family. We have this very lovable family who still had flaws and arguments and problems. But they were always able to make it right with one another, they still loved one another. I really loved Sandi and how she made Celeste a hand drawn picture to try to help her feel better.

The thing that was really was cool in the story was when Celeste comes and interrupts their normal lives, they didn't turn her away but helped her with open arms and with joy. Sure some of the members of the family had some doubts but that didn't stop them from helping.

I also really liked the homeschooling aspect of this book. It felt kinda nice to read about that for a change, being homeschooled myself.

Celeste was just a strong character! She wasn't like overly strong that she could get through everything. No, she got through stuff but felt the effects of each event she went through. She was scared. And she should be. But the minute she was faced with an opposed force she'd fought tooth and nail to survive.

I wasn't really sure about Mick at first. He was doing his job and believed in his job. Well, there were sometimes I question if he really believed in his job or not. But the downright thing is that he is loyal to his country. I can admire that. But the price he was willing to pay for his country was a little shocking, I will admit to that.

And Asher! I wasn't sure about him at first either, but.... YES!

One of the things that did concern me was how some of the characters seem to accept other characters too quickly. I mean, who wouldn't like Maggie and her family, they are so kind and peaceful as a whole, why wouldn't you like them? I just thought that maybe some of the characters were like okay even with some of the circumstance going on.

Content in Book:

1. Slaves. And young kids being disowned by their parents and sold into slavery.
2. A scene that alludes what happens to female slaves when they are too old to work in the mines. Not very descriptive.
3. Mentions of worshipping other gods.
4. Mentions of a war. Not too descriptive.
5. Some mentions of head wounds and other injuries, including gunshot injuries and knife stabs.
6. Some violence. (Hand-to-hand combat, with a knife, with guns, hair pulling, trying to choke someone, setting stuff on fire on purpose, mentions of a bombing).

7. Tattoos and a mark to brand a slave on their arm.

8. Smoking.

9. Alcohol and someone getting drunk.

Who Would I Recommend This Book To:

Those who love dystopians. Those who like strong stories about families.

Will I Read The Next Book:

YES!!! I REALLY LOVED THIS BOOK!!!! Already reading Dissemble!

Nicki Chapelway says

What a story! Wow, this is such a different story than what I've read before. I liked that it was a fantasy world, but one on the cusp of the industrial era with electricity and technology, I've never come across this before.

This story is a little slower than most stories that I usually read, but it still has plenty of interesting scenes, and I was left turning the pages unable to put it down, not knowing what would happen next.

I would have to say that Mick was probably my favorite character. He may have been the most annoying of the characters, but that was because he was the most human and that was why I liked him the best. It was watching the male version of me run around *winces*

His family was adorable, Asher hilarious, and I really like Celeste. And yeah, I ship Mick with Celeste, have since Mick first came on the scene. Shameless shipper here.

There's some language, but not much. Other than that, it's clean.

I am VERY interested in how this series continues. I still have so many questions and I can't wait to see how the story progresses!

Many thanks to the author for the copy which she provided. I received a complimentary copy of this novel. I was not required to post a positive review and all views and opinions are my own.

Deborah O'Carroll says

(Review originally posted on my book blog: <https://thepagedreamer.wordpress.com/...>)

What a unique, enjoyable book!

The story kept me absorbed and guessing, and it's a nice mix of action/thrilling, and life sequences with character moments. There's a dash of romance which was alternately cute and frustrating—just say what you

mean, already, characters! (The usual. ;)) It could be raw and real and emotional and deal with war and things, but also be lighthearted and fun at other times. Quite balanced and well-written. :) Anyway, I liked the story and I can't wait to see where it goes next!

On to characters!

Mick was my favorite; I loved him! The soldier type, he has a temper and a gruff exterior at times, but he's goodhearted and loyal, and has a wry sense of humor. His dialog was the best. :D It was also neat picking out his relationships with everyone around him, like his family and Celeste and Asher.

Celeste was a good heroine and I liked how the author did a great job with her outlook on things clearly showing how foreign the more "normal" world of Mick and his family was to her, since Celeste is from the country with which his homeland is at war. I loved Mick and Celeste figuring each other out after being at odds.

Mick's family, the Haynes, were so nice. ^_^ Having an entire family as central characters was a sweet and refreshing element! I liked how they were just good people, and a tight-knit little group. We have Maggie and Ethan, the parents (who share POV switching back and forth with Mick and Celeste), who were both such homely, good people; Maggie's so sweet and motherly, and Ethan's a solid, strong sort of father-figure. Then there's Joe and Sadie, the little siblings of Mick; they're fun, though I was occasionally unsure what age they're supposed to be. A lot of the lightheartedness comes from them. :)

Other characters were intriguing, particularly Mick's friend Asher (I'd like to find out more about him), and the monks who we saw a few times, though not as much as I thought at first. Everyone was very individual and came to life on the page! :)

The setting was very interesting! Some might call it non-magical fantasy, but there's nothing fantastical about it—it's merely non-historical countries in another land. Hence the newly-named genre Kingdom Adventure, which this book definitely belongs to. :) I thought it might be medieval-esque, but while it does have dashes of that (with a monastery and things), it ended up feeling almost more like a frontier western type of era, 1800s perhaps, with a smidge of more modern feel too. There are guns, horses, potbellied stoves, and a little town with shops, as well as an organized military and intelligence which felt more modern with a lot of the wording, and electricity is a new thing so there's lightbulbs... But apparently there's a queen and there are many references to the Crown, so the western feel doesn't totally fit. I guess it's like non-magical fantasy meets western meets kingdom meets almost-modern. :) Anyway, the point is that it felt very unique! A few times some of the elements didn't mesh totally for me, but on the whole it felt like its own individual land that I've now become familiar with. ^_^ That's one of the fun things about Fantasy and Kingdom Adventure—the feel of the world and getting to know it. I hope to go back to this land of Etraea sometime!

Content-wise, for those who wish to know, it's a little bit gritty at times, so I'd recommend it to slightly older teens. There's a little bit of gruesomeness due to war, and some other references/things which might make it more PG-13, but fairly mild. And there's a faith element which was nicely integrated, since there's an allegorical God and so forth. I liked how faith-filled the Haynes family was. :)

That ending! It didn't cliff-hanger, exactly, but it sort of... stopped rather suddenly, and there are quite a few questions left hanging, including some big changes. I keep wondering what happens next (I want the next scene!) and I'm extremely curious to find out what will happen in later books! I want to know what happens with Mick and Celeste and their stories!

Overall, I enjoyed it very much indeed! ^_^ It was just... really good, and I loved the characters! <3 (And and -- book 2, where are you?!) I recommend it to anyone who likes a good adventure story, and I'll be watching for more books by this author! :D

I received a free e-copy of this book from the author (many thanks!). These opinions are my own.

Favorite Quote

“You picked a bad time to get shot.”

Mick raised an eyebrow. “Is there a good time to get shot?”

Gray Cox says

Wow.

This book is so unique in so many ways. I echo the thoughts of other reviewers when I say how quaint and sweet it is.

It's not flashy or loud and booming like so many books are nowadays, instead it lets the storyline prove itself. And prove itself it does.

Simply beautiful.

Britt says

Though 'Disowned' is a fantasy novel by a New Zealand author, I feel like big aspects of the plot can easily be applied to slavery in the USA's own history.

I'll admit that, yes, the first chapter was a little hard for me to sink into right away, but once I did, the characters and imagery became so real to me that it was quite incredible, I LOVE the overall plot — as I said above, it definitely reminds me of slavery in the USA's own history — and the characters, especially Celeste and Mick, felt especially real and true for their ages and rankings. They — especially Celeste — read in ways that both seems natural for their settings, while also appealing to modern readers who don't live in fantasy lands.

I was approached by the author to read and review Disowned because she wanted to know whether 'Disowned' was a little too preachy or not. However, while I definitely am not much of a religious person, I didn't find the religious aspects very forced-upon at all. Personally, I'm not sure whether the non-preachiness has to do with the fact that their Higher Being isn't called God — instead, rather, he's called Etra — but I think the book does a good job of interweaving religion even for readers who may not be particularly fond of the subject. Plus, the aspect is woven naturally into their lives so the times that religion IS mentioned, it reads like it's MEANT to be there — not just used to be a tool of preachy preachiness. If that makes sense. I really, really like how Celeste and Mick's relationship unfolds throughout the book. Mick approaches her with caution at first, as he should, but I like how Celeste, though shy and understandably nervous, can actually take a stand for herself as well — especially so in the barn scene when she was trying to sneak off with the horse. Celeste is timid, but she also has a backbone, which I LOVE — too many times in YA it seems like it's just one or the other with main (especially female) characters.

Overall, I actually enjoyed this book a lot more than what I was expecting. Celeste and Mick are both likable and read very naturally, and I would recommend to any fantasy lover! As I said before, I don't know if this

was intentional, but I loved how fantasy interweaves with the historical parallels, and religion is dealt with in a way that I can respect. A highly worthy read!

Angela R. Watts says

This book was gripping (I read it one sitting, y'all...).

The writing style was fun and easy to follow.

The story and themes are realistically portrayed and strong. I was always interested and things flowed evenly. There were a few 'major' decisions that I had some issue with but nothing that I can't give leeway to, considering the characters/motivations overall.

The characters were awesome -- good and bad characters, they were well done. While I adored them... there were some times where I got a bit frustrated, especially halfway through the book and onward. There was some choices that just seemed way more logical... but they weren't chosen, and, yo, bad things happened because of that. I can understand the reasons for different decisions, but... still. And, spoilers about one thing that bugged me slightly: (view spoiler)

Overall, I loved this book. It made me laugh (even when I should've not... ha...) and the characters were fantastic in the plot. ALSO: ASHER. YOOO. I have an Asher in my novel Seek so it was soo funny 'cause they have so much in common.

Sarah says

4.5 stars *I received a free copy in exchange for my honest review*

First, Sarah's from New Zealand, which means not only is the book chock full of British spellings, but there are also awesome British styled words. Like "smelt" instead of "smelled" or "learnt" instead of "learned". I loved it!

The book does say "d- it" twice, which might not be a bad word in New Zealand. She also uses "bloody", which isn't bad here in the U.S. Just a caution.

But the book was very good. Sadie and Joe were pretty cute and I liked the characters. There are several plot twists and it's almost comical to see Celeste having no clue about things. I feel like there is still so much story to learn (I want to hear Maggie's story) and of course, Celeste gets a some weighty information that I hoped is fleshed out in future books. The ending is kind of mean.

While calling Etra "Lord" was a bit much, I so appreciated that the God-figure was named differently. It is a fantasy world after all. The things like electricity and a few other things like that were a bit off, but you could forget that most of the time.
