



Menfreya in the Morning

Victoria Holt

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For Harriet Delvaney, the great house of Menfreya, standing like a fortress on the Cornish coast, had always been a citadel of happiness and high spirits. Not until she herself came to Menfreya as a bride did Harriet discover the secret family legend of infidelity, jealousy and murder. And not until the legend seemed to come dangerously to life did Harriet begin to believe the old story that when the tower clock of Menfreya stopped, someone was about to die . . .

Menfreya in the Morning Details

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From Reader Review Menfreya in the Morning for online ebook

Karen says

Best romantic novels for people who hate romance...

O.K., so you'd never, even under the administration of medicinal amounts of methylated spirits, be able to mistake a Victoria Holt novel for Great Literature. But you just can't beat them for unadulterated, unabashed, gothic-y, romantic, mysterious fun. Menfreya in the Morning is one of the finest in the Holt canon since it features an ugly, awkward rich girl who gets the guy as opposed to a poor, beautiful girl or a rich, beautiful girl (how I hate those ones). Also features devil-may-care gentlemen, conniving governesses looking to take the Mrs' place, and psychotic nannies.

Ms. Holt wrote about a thousand other books of the same genus and species as Menfreya in the Morning but if you power through them all and your thirst remains unslaked, Ms. Holt also wrote a carriageful of "Royal" romances under the name Jean Plaidy. To be frank, they're pretty horrid. If it's royal romantic hijinks you want, you're better off with Carolly Erickson's outstandingly written and not at all boring biographies of royal women. Take a look at a list of them, [here](#).

Nenia ? Queen of Literary Trash, Protector of Out-of-Print Gems, Khaleesi of Bodice Rippers, Mother of Smut, the Unrepentant, Breaker of Convention ? Campbell says

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I read this book for the Unapologetic Romance Readers' New Years 2017 Reading Challenge. For more info about what this is, [click here](#).

The best question to ask yourself before picking up this novel is: "Did I enjoy Daphne du Maurier's REBECCA?" MENFREYA is REBECCA redux; a romance about a young, insecure woman who doesn't feel as if she deserves the man who whisks her away to the magnificent house of her dreams - and also a mystery, involving death, murder, secrets, and an insidious other woman.

Honestly, it's magnificent how so many of Victoria Holt's (or Jean Plaidy's or Philippa Carr's - they're all the same novels) are good, considering how quickly she churned them out. Granted, there are some rather glaring misses on her repertoire, but the bijous outweigh the blights. I keep coming back to her again and again, which says something because quite often there's no sex, and often no romance even until the very end. I come for the atmosphere, and the layers of mystery and strange events, with the Eyresque heroine at the focal point of it all, steadfastly navigating through the oddities & terrors.

Harriet Delvaney is an interesting and sympathetic character because unlike so many other gothic heroines,

she isn't beautiful; she's plain with good but unremarkable features, and a limp. Her father resents her, since her mother died in childbirth, and at one point she actually attempts to run away...to Menfreya, where she's friends with the Menfreys, especially their children Bevil and Gwennan. (Those *names*, though - omg.) The Menfrey's are everything she wishes she was: beautiful, mysterious, with a rich, epic family history that is both dark and romantic and doomed.

As Harriet grows older, she becomes clever, sarcastic, and bitter. She's in love with Bevil, but his ease with women makes her heartbroken and insecure. Various people around her die in unpleasant ways, diminishing the already small circle of people who care about her at all. She gets more and more involved with the Menfreys, and her fascination with them continues even when they tumble off their respective pedestals to reveal the flaws in their seeming perfection. And even when she does finally marry, it isn't what she expects: her marriage is plagued with insecurities and suspicions that her husband only married her for her fortune, that he's seeing other women on the side, and, toward the end, that someone might actually be trying to murder her to steal her husband!

MENFREYA is probably one of my favorite Holt novels to date. There's a lot of emotion in this book, and passion too. Harriet is a great heroine, who is selfish but also smart, and whose insecurities actually feel relatable. Bevil is a more typical gothic hero, in the sense that you're never 100% sure whether he's hero or villain until the end. The difference, I think, is that Bevil's sinister attributes were more realistic, like his cold anger and tendency towards mockery (and there's a rape/forced seduction scene in here, that's of the blink-and-you'll-miss-it variety). The atmosphere of this book, which is set in Cornwall, is so gloomy and dramatic, but romantic and a little fanciful. Honestly, it's like you took Dodie Smith's I CAPTURE THE CASTLE and du Maurier's REBECCA and mashed them up to glorious effect. A must-read - *especially* if you're a fan of Holt already, like me.

Here's a picture of the lovely hard cover I had with my fancy Pokemon card bookmark:

4 stars!

Neja says

Books written by Victoria Holt are so cheesy, but sometimes that's exactly what you need. I've read a looooot of her books when I was 14/15 years old..that was the last time I've read them. I absolutely loved them at the time. I'm thinking of reading one of her books just for the old times sake! =)

Charybdis says

Harriet Delaney is an unwanted child. Her mother died giving birth to her and her father, a Member of Parliament, has never stopped blaming Harriet. She is not a pretty child and walks with a limp, so the only thing that may get her a husband is her status as an heiress. Her father's constituency is in Cornwall, and while living there, Harriet is enchanted by the neighbouring castle of the Menfrey family, Menfreya. She befriends the daughter of the house, who is of her age, and secretly hopes the older brother, Bevil, might fall in love with her so she can become a Menfrey herself. The Menfreys have rather a reputation: they're charming people but can be ruthless as well. Menfreya is an old castle with turrets, buttresses and machicolated towers, a lot of history and above all: secrets.

The story is set up carefully and told in Victoria Holt's inimitably captivating way. There's never a dull moment. Harriet is like a real person telling you about her childhood as a sullen and angry little girl, feeling unloved because she's plain and retaliating by cultivating a sharp tongue. We suffer with her when she needs to have her London season together with two very pretty cousins but enjoy her small barbs and ultimately her victory when she finds herself a husband before them. Then, after her marriage, we understand why she becomes jealous when she notices her husband's roving eye. Does he really love her? Can she trust him?

A few times I felt Harriet measured by double standards. It seems her love was mostly for Menfreya and if Bevil hadn't been living there, she wouldn't even have noticed him. She only started to know Bevil after they became engaged. Then suddenly the girl who had nothing and who was resigned to the fate that nobody would love her for herself, wanted all: Not only the beautiful castle, but also its master and its master's undivided love. So what if Bevil had married her for her money? She married him for Menfreya. Her fortune would be used for Menfreya, her first love.

Ranchhand says

I have just joined this blog, because of this book. Loved it so much as a young woman. Victoria Holt books set the stage for my teen and early adult love life. Wanted the drama, romance and gothic setting. I married, finally, 30 years later, to a man from England! I have a ranch instead of a castle. He does not ride the horses but he saves me each day from myself and others.

I'll never forget the LAST line: (something like this)
" nothing's quite as beautiful and Manfreya in the morning". The unanswered angst is still deep inside of me.

Clark says

The story was okay, not life changing or anything. Not as good as The Legend of the Seventh Virgin or The India Fan. I can't say that I could really relate with Harriet Delvaney since she really didn't have much of a personality. For all her bravado that she will not be cowed or ruled by her husband, he only has to kiss or give her a kind word and she'll be all putty in his hands.

The ending was a bit of a shocker, because I truly didn't see it coming. That, in itself, was a disappointment because this person has been with Harriet through thick and thin and what this person did was the absolute betrayal. Though it was done in the guise of love, it was twisted and I didn't quite like it so much.

I also can't fathom why Harriet will allow her husband to hire his former lover as their governess. It is really so stupid of her. If I were in her shoes, I would have moved heaven and earth just to get rid of Jessica Trelarken. I would have pointed out that if it weren't for MY MONEY, they would be facing utter ruin, so they better give in to my wishes if they know what's good for them.

It was good however that it was cleared out that Jessica and Bevil weren't lovers anymore. Still, it will not be a bad idea to keep a close eye on her. After all, snakes are usually harmless until one strikes to bite you.

Cat The Curious says

I read this years ago, long before goodreads existed. This book made me cry literal tears. It's time for a re-read.

Arismere says

Acredito que este foi o primeiro livro escrito por Victoria Holt que eu li, muitos anos atrás. A capa me chamou a atenção em primeiro lugar e depois a sinopse do livro. Não me arrependi nem um pouco, pois simplesmente amei a leitura. A mistura de romance com suspense/mistério me encanta e Victoria Holt é muito boa fazendo isso, pelo menos na maior parte de seus livros.

A história tem como protagonista Harriet e nós a conhecemos através de seus pensamentos quando está com 13 anos. A menina é rejeitada por um pai frio e distante, que vive para o mundo da política. Seu único consolo é a amizade que mantém com a filha mais jovem da família Menfrey (e que regula de idade com ela), Gwennan.

Harriet é simplesmente obcecada pela família e pela casa desta, Menfrea, além de ser profundamente apaixonada por Bevil, irmão mais velho de Gwennan e que a trata como se fossem irmãos.

A parte inicial do livro é rápida, contando o passado de Harriet desde a tenra infância, mostrando a que pé anda aos 13 anos e dando uma pincelada no que acontece nos anos que antecedem sua vida adulta.

Detalhes que fizeram eu gostar ainda mais da menina: o fato dela ser corajosa, decidida, ter um fantástico senso de humor e uma língua rápida. Além disso Harriet é manca por conta de um problema na hora do parto.

Eu sei que é um clichê, mas o livro tem uma sequência que me encanta: quando as meninas decidem ir escondidas a um baile a fantasia oferecido pelo pai de Harriet. Ela encontram roupas guardadas em baús em Menfrey (que é um castelo cheio de surpresas e lendas) e usam eles juntamente com máscaras. Eu dei pulinhos de alegria nesta parte :-D

Bem, a certo ponto do livro Bevil começa a mostrar interesse por Harriet (a esta altura muita água já passou debaixo desta ponte) e nós nos vemos no mesmo dilema que ela: ele a ama ou está apenas interessado no dinheiro que ela havia herdado? Para complicar tudo uma antiga namorada de Bevil se torna a governanta do filho de Gwennan e o famoso relógio da torre de Menfrea para... sendo que ele só para quando alguém da família morrerá em alguns dias. Detalhe: Harriet está grávida de um bebê Menfrey, então... a coitada fica numa posição terrível.

É realmente um livro fantástico, e parece sempre pesado de suspense. Não sei como Victoria Holt conseguiu isso, já que só após o casamento de Harriet é que os acontecimentos misteriosos tem lugar. Acho que é porque desde o início Harriet narra a história de forma empolgante, que me fez querer saber cada vez mais o que havia acontecido com todos aqueles personagens carismáticos.

Nelly says

The plot is very similar to that of Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier. But it has some interesting themes such as, surprisingly, marital rape.

Angela says

Lovely 'Victorian gothic' trashy romance ??

LJ says

MENFREYA IN THE MORNING (Suspense/Romance-England-Victorian) – G+
Holt, Victoria – standalone
Fawcett Crest, 1966, US Paperback

First Sentence: To see Menfreya at its best was to see it in the morning.

Harriet Delvaney has loved Menfreya; the house and the family and all they have represented to her since she was a girl. As a bride at Manfreya, she finds herself dealing with feelings of jealousy and fears of infidelity. She has heard the ghost stories and legend but now the old clock, supposed to signify the death of a family member, has stopped.

I hadn't read this book in 40+ years but found it held up very well. Holt does a very good job of showing the impact of parents who consistently undermine a child's self-esteem. She also conveys the social structure and morays of the period. What is lacking is a strong empathy for the protagonist and the building of suspense. Both elements are there, but not as effectively as in some of Holt's other books. I enjoyed re-visiting this book, but wasn't knocked out by it.

Sheryl Tribble says

Holt's male characters rarely come alive for me, although Bevis does more so than the guys in the last few I've read. But her heroines often have a headstrong friend who reminds me of one of my own dear friends, and Gwennan is one of those, so I enjoy the relationship between Gwennan and Harriet (although not so thrilled at how it ends).

Read this first in the Reader's Digest Condensed version, some forty years back, and it's interesting to compare the two. I'm not sure if I have a preference, but if memory serves, the differences are significant. The full book has a darker tone, for sure.

This is more true to the classic gothic style of the 60's and 70's than some of Holt's are; Holt generally includes a house that's nearly a character in its own right, but in this book the heroine feels relatively helpless, alone, and besieged through nearly the whole book, which Holt is less likely to do. The plot also relies more on happenstance than hers usually do --the poisoning of the heroine and her maid, and how that

happened, particularly annoyed me.

Loved this as a kid because I could so relate to the heroine's relationship with her father. As an adult I'm more critical, but it's still a good summer read -- or a good read when you're feeling poorly, which is why I picked it up. I found it interesting and entertaining, and the plot pulled me along.

Julz says

3.5 stars

This is one that I had to take a break from because it was so freaking depressing. The first half of the book focuses on the heroine's childhood and all the events that made it such a sad existence. You have to read it too or you won't understand the power of events that happen in her adulthood (well, you could but it won't have nearly the same impact I imagine.)

The second half of the book perks right up, but I read it constantly on edge and in a straight out state of anxiety when the OW stuff started up. I could really feel the influence of her upbringing on her interpretation of situations as well as how hard of a hit she took to her self image and security after each questionable event.

Not all of the doubts could be blamed on her own perceptions. Some of the characters just egged you on to believe the worst. People you admired and looked up to with the heroine's eyes of child in the first half of the book start showing their warts after her marriage, making you want to just smack a person at times.

The hero, although never squeaky clean, turns out to be a darker character than we thought and makes you wonder just what he's capable of or will be in the future (I really wonder if this is the type of man someone with her security issues should be married to).

There's a back story of ancient ancestors which influence where the mind goes plus there's that out of the blue surprise tacked on at the end that Holt likes so well.

If you like uber angsty (read depressing) gothics that leave you wondering what is really in store for the future for the H & h, then this one should fit the bill.

Rage says

[At one point, Harriet is convinced that he's having an affair with Jessica, and when she tries to get the truth from him, he responds to her attitude with physical violence. The implication is that after beating her, he has sex with her while she's pleading with him to stop. Harriet says
