



Diana of the Crossways

George Meredith

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After her unhappy marriage, we watch the beautiful and witty Diana as she is followed by a trail of suitors. Her sparkling repartee and the author's intellectualized philosophy give this novel unusual depth. Nine 90-minute cassettes and one 60.

Diana of the Crossways Details

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Author : George Meredith

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From Reader Review Diana of the Crossways for online ebook

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

This book was really, really difficult to get into. I just couldn't do it. George Meredith knew the woman that he based the vivacious Diana off of. Meh, I just couldn't finish it.

Lucy says

Reading the first 150 pages was like swimming in jelly. Then suddenly the novel came to life and I couldn't put it down. Don't be put off by Meredith's having based it on a real person - he may have used Caroline Norton as inspiration, but of course there is no actual affair, no children involved, and the politics is vague in the extreme. The characters are wholly plausible - poor Emma, the devoted invalid friend with the flaky husband, Miss Asper subsuming her passions in pseudo-Catholicism, and the splendidly drawn Dacier, a real rotter but so badly treated by the heroine. OK, Meredith does get a bit waves-breaking-on-the-shore when it comes to the romance, but he was a Victorian writer after all. You'd forgive him a lot of that for the description of Dacier burning Diana's last letter (it takes several pages.)

I'd recommend the Project Gutenberg version - at the end there are the etext editor's bookmarks, all the best aphorisms crammed together!

Abigail says

A pretty dull read. The characters are not interesting, and Meredith's style is very hard to get into and overly ornate.

Sagula says

It was a torment to read. The characters are improbable and artificial, the language and style are stilted, and the plot predictable and clumsily constructed.

Ellen says

It was very difficult for me to actually persist and finish this book. Meredith's language is convoluted and muddled; often I would have to re-read sentences in order to get an understanding of what was being said. And no one, absolutely no one of any era, speaks in the manner in which the characters in this book do!

The story is of a young woman, Diana, who has married a man with whom she doesn't get along, and has left him. She's divorced him, which apparently has destroyed his life. As time goes on, Diana becomes involved with several men, but is unable to maintain a relationship with most of them. I can see why: Diana is flirtatious and moody, changes her mind frequently, and in general makes life difficult for these men.

Without saying more I will tell you that she does end up with someone, and by the time that happens the reader has been prepped well and expects this outcome.

The most important relationship in Diana's life is not with the men, but rather with her best friend, Lady Emma Dunstane. Emma stands by Diana through all the scandals that result from Diana's behavior, and takes care of her when Diana gets herself in trouble. Emma is like the "angel of the house", the stereotypical Victorian good woman; although there seems to be a slight undertone of lesbianism here, nothing comes of it and Emma is as delighted as anyone when Diana at last settles down.

I'm fairly certain that I will attempt to read another novel by Meredith in the hopes that the next one might prove why Meredith's reputation is so good. In one of her "Common Reader" essays, Virginia Woolf expresses her mixed feelings regarding Meredith's style and novels. I'll re-read this essay and shall choose the next Meredith novel I'll attempt from Woolf's recommendations.

If you are a serious Victorian literature lover, go ahead and read this novel. You may enjoy it much more than I.

Happyreader says

Highly recommended in Vivian Gornick's *The End of the Novel of Love*.

Amanda Himes says

This is a wonderful yet neglected novel; those who enjoy fiction by George Eliot or Charles Dickens would like it.

Richard Epstein says

Critics are always trying to resuscitate George Meredith, explaining with patience, learning, and obdurate fortitude that his novels are unfairly neglected. They may be neglected (well, they *are* neglected), but "unfairly" is a matter of opinion. I have begun many volumes of Meredith, but I have finished few.

David Madden says

This is one of the greatest early feminist novels [so is Meredith's *THE EGOIST*:], and Meredith's witty, satirical style is among the greatest [along with Hugo and Faulkner:].

Waverly Fitzgerald says

It took a while to get through Meredith's slow, fussy, didactic and sometimes turgid prose, especially the first

chapter. But what a story, when you finally get to it! Diana of the Crossways is a unique heroine, impetuous, headstrong, vibrant, passionate and in every way in trouble in a Victorian society that sexualizes every relationship between a man and woman. The relationship between Diana and her best friend, Lady Emma, is physically affectionate and emotionally intense in a way we probably associate with romantic love. Read Vivian Gornick's wonderful essay on "The End of the Novel of Love" if you want to see what makes this book so special.

Lizzie says

Having a little public-domain e-book downloading spree.

Rama says

Even though the book's more than a century old, this's some of the most beautiful, sophisticated and original prose that one can encounter. Content doesn't matter when it is art for art's sake.

Sarah Sammis says

The book was a gift from my father before I went to college. I ended up reading it at long last while sitting in a laundry mat in Alhambra. It made the rather dull chore go by quickly.

Patrizia says

Lo stile dell'autore è decisamente maschile: serio, intricato, fastidiosamente elusivo nei passaggi cruciali; e il primo capitolo sembra addirittura scritto con l'intento di scoraggiare i potenziali lettori. Ma i personaggi sono affascinanti, e la storia è di quelle che appassionano: una giovane e bella donna di origine irlandese, caratterizzata (e in qualche misura oppressa) da un'intelligenza vivace, acuta, che si rivelerà preziosa per tutti i personaggi maschili (politici, scrittori, banchieri, avvocati, editori) con i quali viene in contatto, si scontra con la difficoltà di conciliare questa sua dote/condanna con il desiderio naturale di ogni donna (di ogni essere umano) di amare ed essere amata.

Il libro è stato scritto nel 1886, in piena epoca vittoriana, e si sarebbe tentati di guardare a quel mondo con il distacco di chi ha ormai alle spalle un compiuto processo di emancipazione femminile, inaspettatamente prefigurato nel romanzo in una casuale comunicazione epistolare: "Mr. Braddock, who appears to have no distaste for conversations with me, assures me he expects the day to come when women will be encouraged to work at crafts and professions for their independence".

Ma la protagonista, Mrs Warwick, prendendo posto in una carrozza di terza classe del treno che la riporterà (assolutamente sola) dal Sussex a Londra, alle rimproveranze di chi la vorrebbe accompagnare con la scusa di proteggerne l'incolumità, ribatte pronunciando un panegirico del gentiluomo inglese del tempo, di qualunque livello sociale:

"...and unprotected no woman is in England, if she is a third-class traveller. That is my experience of the class; and I shall return among my natural protectors – the most unselfishly chivalrous to women in the whole world"

Steph Su says

This is a Victorian work of fiction, based on the life of notorious socialite Caroline Norton, who married a bad man, wrote pro-feminist literature, and got involved with several political figures. As a result, reading *DIANA OF THE CROSSWAYS* is a curious combination of knowing it's fiction that's heavily based on real events, and trying to get lost in the emotional sensations that Meredith tries for with his all-over-the-place writing. Unfortunately, this book is REALLY HARD to read: Meredith's sensory writing is less narrative and more modernist abstract experiment. Plus, it doesn't help that the entirety of the plot was summed up in my first line, and is really nothing special, nor does Meredith succeed in playing up what could be an intriguing story.
