



## Torn and Frayed

*Rodd Clark*

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*Conscience isn't something all people are born with...*

Gabriel Church is a portrait in contrast. It would be easy to get lost in his pale-blue eyes, ache with the need to feel the strength of his masculine frame. He appears to be nothing but animal and instinct. The only people who know the full depth of that truth are dead, murdered, or two thousand miles away.

Gabe is a serial killer, and for the first time in his life, he has more on his mind than his own survival. This time he is running from Seattle to protect the only person he thinks innocent in his laundry list of crime and murder: Christian Maxwell, his biographer and unexpected lover.

Drawn to a place he never thought to return, Gabe finds new and different realities. Realities that insist he let go of his tragic past, those incredible perceptions of God, and his own divinity. He must open his eyes to what the love of a good man can do to heal a broken soul.

## **Torn and Frayed Details**

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## From Reader Review Torn and Frayed for online ebook

### **Melissa Mendoza says**

**Title:**Torn and Frayed

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**Rating:** 4 stars out of 5

**Blurb:**

Gabe is a serial killer. For the first time in his life, he has more on his mind than his own survival. This time he is running from Seattle to protect the only person he thinks innocent in his laundry list of crime and murder: Christian Maxwell, his biographer and unexpected lover. Drawn to a place he never thought to return, Gabe finds new and different realities. Realities that insist he let go of his tragic past, those incredible perceptions of God, and his own divinity. He must open his eyes to what the love of a good man can do to heal a broken soul.

But when the killer is confronted by his own willingness to love and sacrifice, he is forced to ultimately ask the question: Just how far will he go to save a life . . . when all he's ever done is take them?

“It has been a strange time for Gabe. All of that had been new and should’ve felt unaccustomed and alien to him. But somehow it seemed comforting in a way he wouldn’t have guessed, that was if he’d spent any time thinking on it.”

Wow this book definitely keeps you on your toes! It’s so twisted and dark, I loved it! Gabe is a dark man, he’s a serial killer. But he’s now forced to protect his love Christian from danger, but what he didn’t expect was to fall for the man. But can this serial killers dark heart find love?

I loved the way this book flowed so well and kept me on my toes!! There’s a twist at every turn and so worth the read!!

## Karolina Cebula says

Review in English and Polish || Recenzja po angielsku i polsku

It's been two months since Gabriel left Seattle and resumed his endless journey around the country. Although during this time the man has returned to his old habits, he can't stop thinking about his beloved, who irreversibly changed something in him and whom he simply misses. Torn between who he was and who he became, beating his thoughts and feelings that he did not even suspect to ever know, Gabriel visits the St. Joseph's Church, where he meets Father Albert Kait. Unable to resist the need to talk to another person, Gabe decides to confess and ask the priest for help in finding answers to some of his questions. Meanwhile, in Seattle Chris's world falls apart when Detective Scott Keen starts to work on an unresolved case of Shea Baltimore's murder. The man begins to sniff around with such intensity that eventually he's hot on Christian's trail. As a result, Chris starts to panic and fears the worst. When the young writer tells Gabriel that he may be in trouble, his beloved immediately decides to return to Seattle. However this decision is likely to have some unforeseen consequences.

"Torn and Frayed", second installment of the three-volume "The Gabriel Church Tales" series, is noticeably different from the previous part, as it is definitely darker and goes deeper into the psyche of the serial killer. One of the reasons leading to those differences is the fact that while traveling alongside Gabe and having a full insight into his thoughts and desires concerning the issues that are bothering him at the moment, we notice that they relate not only to Christian, but more often their central point are the murders. While "Rubble and the Wreckage" focused largely on the feelings between two main characters and to some extent on their mutual understanding, in "Torn and Frayed" definitely more emphasis is placed on Gabriel Church himself, and consequently on motives guiding him to each murder he committed. This is all the more important because, in the end, we reach the very core of the mechanisms that fuel him, and that's exactly the thing he couldn't properly explain to Christian and the reader in the first volume. The light surrounding his victims, that was mentioned previously but was rather vaguely presented by the protagonist, now becomes much clearer to us and with each passing moment we somehow understand it better. Also the concept of God's mission is scrupulously presented, which completes the image of the white-lighters and makes us notice more clearly than ever that Gabe really needs some medical help, not just a lover who loves him immensely.

I would also like to write a few words about the character of Father Albert Kait, whom Rodd Clark introduces in this volume of his story. At the very beginning I must say that I consider this idea as the most understandable and I admit that I really liked it. First of all, the character of a forgiving and devoted priest suits the vibe of the novel perfectly, when we take into account Gabriel's conviction that by killing white-lighters he follows God's will. What's more, the issue of the psyche also comes into play, since following Gabe's process of thinking with each page, we notice that his need for faith in his own beliefs became greater, same as his want to ask someone the questions that bother him has increased. I have the impression that if our serial killer didn't walk into the church and didn't talk to Father Albert, he would probably suffocate at some point because of his raging thoughts. He just had to spit everything out, and the priest was the best option in this case. In addition, the appearance of Father Kait in "Torn and Frayed" allowed both Gabriel and the reader to find out if Gabe's feelings for Christian are not a simple attachment which could be a result of their sincere conversations and ordinary friendship, since this option was believable from the very beginning of their acquaintance. However, this is not all, because by reawakening some memories from Gabriel's childhood, the church itself cast some more light on him as a character and on the possible source of his madness, motives and justifications of murders. In short, the author really knew what he was doing when he decided to introduce in this volume of the series this particular secondary character. Finally let me

add that in the context of the first half of the novel, the character of the priest, the church and the confession also have a great aesthetic significance, as they fit in perfectly with the story's vibe.

Detective Scott Keen to whom Rodd Clark has devoted a lot of space in this volume, also plays a very important role. However, his mentioned role in this novel is not limited to his police duties and pursuing Shea Baltimore's murderer. By making Keen almost the third main character of "Torn and Frayed", the author fully made a use of him from the beginning to the end. It is thanks to Scott Keen that we know if his investigation is moving forward and how close he is to discover something significant in the case he works on. But that's not all, because sometimes we can almost feel his breath on Chris' and Gabe's necks. Thanks to adding this secondary character to the narration, at some point with each read page our excitement and care for the two lovers increases incredibly. In one moment, our heart rate grows unimaginably, the heart beats like crazy, our hands sweat and we literally are not able to stop reading. The sky could fall on our heads, and we would not even notice it. It is really an invaluable and fantastic experience when we have the opportunity to feel the events we are reading about with our whole body, because the author masterfully bind our lives with his novel. What can I say, Rodd Clark really has an unimaginable talent for it.

As you can clearly see, "Torn and Frayed" is another really perfect part of the addictive three-volume story about Gabriel Church. However, there is one more thing I would like to mention, which made the biggest impression on me when I was reading this novel. Namely it's the way in which Rodd Clark presented Gabriel in this volume. On the one hand, we see that the murderer begins to change to some extent, thanks to Christian and the time they spent together. Gabe seems to us to become more human, as he begins to feel the need to open up to people, to seek company and as he feels a whole range of emotions he has never experienced before. Sometimes we have the impression that he becomes a cute puppy in love. And yet, at the same time, the author puts much more emphasis on the fact that Gabriel is a murderer who can kill with his bare hands. I would even risk saying that sometimes he is almost frightening, and the reason behind it is probably the fact that this time we are actually eyewitnesses of how Gabriel kills white-lighters. A man who, with childlike joy and innocence, throws himself on a soft, comfortable bed, is someone who, within few moments, devises a plan to kill an accidentally met person and enforces it with incredible precision and complete lack of remorse or hesitation. And these two faces of Gabriel Church are juxtaposed together in "Torn and Frayed" in such a way that the reader begins to wonder if it's really all right for them to like someone like Gabe so much.

In summary, "Torn and Frayed" is a truly exceptional and well-written novel that stimulates our emotions and makes us forget about the whole world as we allow it to absorb us completely. And it's all thanks to a great writing style, a thrilling plot, incredible psychological depth and perfectly constructed characters who are memorable and easily conquer reader's heart. To be honest, I didn't even think I could become even more addicted to "The Gabriel Church Tales", yet that's exactly what happened when I read "Torn and Frayed".

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Od kiedy Gabriel opu?ci? Seattle i ponownie podj?? swoj? nieko?cz?c? si? podr? po kraju, min??y ju? dwa miesi?ce. Chocia? przez ten czas m??czyzna powr?ci? do swoich starych nawyk?w, nie potrafi przesta? my?le? o ukochanym, który nieodwracalnie co? w nim zmieni? i za którym mimowolnie t?skni. Rozdarty mi?dzy tym kim by?, a kim si? sta?, bij?c si? ze swoimi my?lami oraz uczuciami, o które nawet si? nie podejrzewa?, Gabriel w ko?cu trafia do ko?cio?a pod wezwaniem ?wi?tego Józefa, gdzie poznaje ojca Alberta Kaita. Nie mog?c oprze? si? potrzebnie rozmowy z drugim cz?owiekiem, Gabe postanawia wyspowiada? si? i poprosi? ksi?dza o pomoc w znalezieniu odpowiedzi na pytania, jakie sobie stawia. Tymczasem w Seattle zaczyna robi? si? gor?co, kiedy nieroziwi?zan? spraw? zabójstwa Shei Baltimore przejmuje detektyw Scott Keen. M??czyzna zaczyna w?szy? z tak? intensywno?ci?, ?e ostatecznie trafia na

trop Christiana, który spanikowany obawia się najgorszego. Kiedy mody pisarz wyznaje Gabrielowi, że może być w tarapatach, jego ukochany od razu decyduje się na powrót do miasta, a to wie się z nieprzewidzianymi wcześniejszymi konsekwencjami.

„Torn and Frayed”, druga odsiona trzytomowej serii „The Gabriel Church Tales”, zauważa się od poprzedniej części, jako że jest zdecydowanie mroczniejsza i sięga o wiele głębiej w psychikę seryjnego mordercy. A to dzięki temu, że podróżująca u boku Gabe'a i majczka pełna wglądu w jego myśli i pragnienia kręcone wokół nurtujących go w danej chwili kwestii, ocieramy się już nie tylko o te dotyczące Christiana, ale coraz częściej trafiamy na takie, których centralnym punktem jest morderstwo. Zauważmy bowiem, że o ile „Rubble and the Wreckage” skupia się w ogromnej mierze na rodzycym się miłością głownymi bohaterami uczuciu i do pewnego stopnia wzajemnym zrozumieniu, w „Torn and Frayed” zdecydowanie większość nacisk zostaje położony na samego Gabriela Churcha, a co za tym idzie na motywów kierujących się kądem poprzednim przez niego morderstwem. Jest to tym istotniejsze, że w końcu docieramy niejako do samego rdzenia napędzających go mechanizmów, których nie było on w stanie wyjawić. Dokładniej Christianowi, a tym samym także czytelnikowi. Wspomniane w poprzednim tomie, ale raczej mglisto przedstawione przez niego świat otaczający jego ofiary, teraz staje się dla nas o wiele wyraźniejsze i z każdą chwilą wydaje się być dla nas coraz bardziej zrozumiałe. Także pojście wyznaczonej mu przez Boga misji zostaje nam bardzo skrupulatnie odmalowane, dzięki czemu dopejnia obrazu białego światła i sprawia, że wyraźniej niż kiedykolwiek dostrzegamy fakt, iż Gabe naprawdę potrzebuje pomocy specjalisty, a nie tylko kochającego go bezgranicznie kochanka.

Kilka słów chciałabym także napisać na temat postaci ojca Alberta Kaita, którego Rodd Clark wprowadza w tym tomie do swojej historii. Na samym pocztku musiał zaznaczyć, iż uważa się to posunięcie za jak najbardziej zrozumiałe i przyznaje, że naprawdę przypadku mi ono do gustu. Po pierwsze, postawa wyrozumiałego i oddanego swojemu powołaniu księdza idealnie pasuje do klimatu powieści, kiedy wieemy pod uwagę przekonanie Gabriela o tym, iż zabijając białego światła wykonuje wolę Boga. Co więcej, w grę wchodzi tu także kwestia psychiki, jako że kiedyż z tego powodu stroną tok myślenia Gabe'a zauważamy, że jego potrzeba utwierdzenia się w swoich przekonaniach stawa się coraz więcej, podobnie jak zwierzęta jego potrzeba zadania komuś nurtujących go pytań. Mam nadzieję, że gdyby nasz seryjny morderca nie zatrzymał się przed kochaniem i nie podjął rozmowy z ojcem Albertem, zaczęłby się w pewnym momencie dusić. On po prostu musiał wszystko z siebie wyrzucić, a ksiądz był w tym wypadku najlepszą opcją. Ponadto, pojawienie się w „Torn and Frayed” ojca Kaita pozwoliło zarówno Gabrielowi, jak i czytelnikom przekonać się, czy uczucia mordercy względem Christiana nie wzrosły się po prostu z przywiązania białego tego wynikiem prowadzonych przez nich szczególnych rozmów oraz zwykłej przyjaźni, jako że taka opcja istniała przecież od samego pocztku ich znajomości. To jednak nie wszystko, ponieważ także sam budynek kochania poprzez obudzenie w Gabrielu wspomnianego z czasów dzieciństwa, rzucił trochę więcej światła na jego postawę oraz możliwość tego, o której szaleństwa, motywów i usprawiedliwień poprzednich morderstw. Krótko mówiąc, autor naprawdę wiedział, co robi, kiedy decydował się na wprowadzenie do tego tomu serii takiej, a nie innej postaci pomocniczej. Na koniec dodam jeszcze, że w kontekście pierwszej powieści kochania ksiądz, kochanie oraz spowiedź mają również ogromne znaczenie estetyczne, ponieważ idealnie wpisują się w otoczenie Gabe'a w tamtym momencie Gabriela atmosfery.

W tym tomie naprawdę widać? wątła? rola? odgrywa również detektyw Scott Keen, któremu Rodd Clark powierza? i naprawdę sporo miejsca. Jego rola w powieści nie ogranicza się jednak wyłącznie do wykonywania policyjnych obowiązków i śledztwa mordercy Shei Baltimore. Czyścić z Keena niemal trzeciego głownego bohatera „Torn and Frayed”, autor wykorzystał go w pełni od pocztku do końca. To wątła? nie dziękuje Scottowi Keenowi wiemy na jakim etapie znajduje się jego śledztwo i jak bliski jest odkrycia czego? znaczącego w sprawie, który prowadzi. Ma?o tego, miejscami niemal czujemy jego oddech na karkach Chrisa i Gabe'a. Zastosowany przez autora zabieg sprawi, że w pewnym momencie nasza eksplikacja oraz

troksa o dwójk? kochanków wzrasta wr?cz niesamowicie z ka?d? czytan? stron?. W przeci?gu jednej chwili nasze t?tno wzrasta niewyobra?alnie, serce bije jak szalone, d?onie nam si? poc? i dos?ownie nie jeste?my w stanie oderwa? si? od lektury. Niebo mog?oby nam spa?? na g?owy, a my nawet by?my tego nie zauwa?yli. To naprawd? bezcenne i fantastyczne prze?ycie, kiedy mamy okazj? ca?ym cia?em odczuwa? wydarzenia, o których czytamy i to dlatego, ?e autor zdo?a? po mistrzowski sple?? nasze ?ycie ze swoj? powie?ci?. Co tu du?o mówi?, Rodd Clark naprawd? ma do tego niewyobra?alny talent.

Jak wi?c wyra?nie wida?, „Torn and Frayed” jest kolejn? naprawd? perfekcyjn? cz??ci? uzale?nij?cej trzytomowej opowie?ci o Gabrielu Churchu. Jest jednak jeszcze jedna rzecz, o której chcia?abym wspomnie?, a która zrobi?a na mnie najwi?ksze wra?enie podczas lektury tej powie?ci. Chodzi mianowicie o sposób, w jaki w tym tomie Rodd Clark przedstawi? Gabriela. Z jednej strony widzimy bowiem, ?e morderca zaczyna si? w pewnym stopniu zmienia?, na co wp?yw mia? Christian i czas jaki wspólnie sp?dzili. Gabe wydaje si? nam stawa? bardziej ludzki, jako ?e zaczyna odczuwa? potrzeb? otwarcia si? na ludzi, towarzystwa, poznaje ca?? gam? emocji, których dot?d nie odczuwa?. Miejscami mamy wra?enie, ?e staje si? s?odkim zakochanym szczeniakiem. A jednak w tym samym czasie autor o wiele wyra?niej ni? dotychczas k?adzie nacisk na fakt, ?e Gabriel jest morderc?, który potrafi zabija? go?ymi r?kami. Zaryzykowa?abym nawet stwierdzenie, ?e czasami jest wr?cz przera?aj?cy, na co mo?e mie? wp?yw fakt, i? tym razem jeste?my tak naprawd? naocznymi ?wiadkami tego, jak Gabriel zabija bia?o-?wietlnych. M??czyna, który z dzieci?c? rado?ci? i niewinno?ci? rzuca si? na mi?kkie, wygodne ?ó?ko, jest kim? kto w przeci?gu kilku chwil obmy?la plan zabicia przypadkowo spotkanego cz?owieka i egzekwuje go z niesamowit? precyzj? oraz ca?kowitym brakiem wyrzutów sumienia czy wahania. I w?a?nie te dwa oblicza Gabriela Churcha zostaj? ze sob? zestawione w „Torn and Frayed” w taki sposób, ?e czytelnik zaczyna si? waha?, czy aby na pewno powinien darzy? sympati? kogo? takiego, jak Gabe.

Podsumowuj?c, „Torn and Frayed” to powie?? naprawd? wyj?tkowa i doskonale napisana, która pobudza nasze emocje i sprawia, ?e zapominamy o ca?ym ?wiecie pozwalaj?c jej poch?on?? si? bez reszty. A wszystko to za spraw? ?wietnego stylu, trzymaj?cej w napi?ciu fabu?y, niesamowitej psychologicznej g??bi oraz doskonale skonstruowanych bohaterów, którzy zapadaj? nam w pamii? i podbijaj? serce. Nawet nie s?dzi?am, ?e mog? jeszcze bardziej uzale?ni? si? od „The Gabriel Church Tales”, a w?a?nie to mia?o miejsce, kiedy czyta?am „Torn and Frayed”.

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## Lamar says

Surprisingly good even I haven't read the first instrument of this series but rather good for a M/M romance book.

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## Mark says

**So the chase is on or it was and then it wasn't!** I must admit this second book had me intrigued from the word go. In the first book, Rubble and the Wreckage, Gabriel leaves Christian and hits the road. Once again driven by self-preservation and not wanting to get Christian tangled up in his life.

He lands up in San Antonio and after arriving wanders into a church that catches his interest. In the first book we learnt that Gabriel has a rather twisted relationship with religion embedded deep in his childhood memories and in the second book he meets Father Kait and develops a fascinating relationship with him on a

platonic level. Father Kait becomes his confessor and Gabriel can release some of the things that have been burdening him. Of course he doesn't give anything away about his murders but it was fascinating to read all the same. I loved this relationship that the two had developed. Rodd's writing really gets to grips with the psyche of his characters. The conversations between Father Kait and Gabe are philosophical and extremely thought provoking giving the reader something to chew over and ponder on for days. I know I was mulling a lot of the conversation around in my head for quite a while. You are drawn into their inner most thoughts and this is what I love about these books so far. As I said in my first review a real mind f\*\*\* on many levels but listening to Gabe opening up to Father Kait was intriguing all the same. Still doesn't excuse what he does but it definitely gives the reader a hell of a ride in the mind of serial murderer Gabriel Church.

For someone who never lets himself get emotionally attached to anyone he is still haunted with is time spent with Christian. The internal struggle is palpable, he is in all intense and purposes, Torn and Frayed between the attachment he has formed with Christian but knowing his lifestyle would never let him form any kind of relationship. I could feel the tug-o-war going on inside him and to get this straight in his head he uses Father Kait to talk to.

However, in the this book we are introduced to a new character and that is Detective Scott Keen. He works cold cases, murders that most have given up on and have no more leads. He is given a file and picks up Christian's scent in Gabriel's last murder although Christian was only involved by default. Christian is now in a flat spin of panic and as providence will have it Gabriel decides to phone Christian as he wants to hear his voice. Is he missing Christian? Well I guess he is but Gabriel would never admit this to himself as that would be forming a relationship now, wouldn't it? I love the totally f\*\*\*\*\* up relationship that these guys have. The love is there but this is pushed to the back of Gabriel's mind as it's just not possible for him to admit this to anyone let alone himself.

Gabe returns to Seattle to help Christian out of his predicament. Here the book really heats up and the cat and mouse game begins. Detective Keen has no idea who he's dealing with and doesn't know how close to danger he's flying. The whole outcome is breathtaking and for the first time I'm hoping that the murderer actually gets away with the crime. Crazy, right? But as I said in my review for the first book you can't but not help liking Gabriel or at least understand this complicated character. It goes against everything you have been taught. How does it all play out in the end? Well, it was exciting as any thriller I have read to date. More I'm not giving away as you'll have to read the book.

For me this book is a great psychological thriller with a warped M/M romance thrown in. The writing of Rodd Clark is detailed and empathetic of his characters, letting the reader delve right into the psyche of Gabriel Church. Maybe it's a place you want or don't want to go but just the thrill of going somewhere you normally wouldn't, pushing your boundaries, questioning rights and wrongs, makes for a super book and an exciting read. Can't wait for the next book.

4.5 Stars

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### **Lisa says**

To me this book seemed to take a long time to get to the story. There was alot of time spent in the past especially in Gabe's talks with the priest.

Yes, he was back to murdering and there were gory scenes.

I guess there will be a third book but am wondering how it will play out. I think he either needs to be caught or go away with Christian and make a life somewhere.

My heart just about broke when he left Christian again.

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### **Andrea Goodell says**

This is book two and you should read in order.

While in book one, we spend the whole time learning about the deeds that Gabe had been up to during his career. In this one, we find out more about the man himself. What made him, why he ran, why he came back how he's going to deal.

Normally I'm not a fan of a book that is mainly a character talking to himself, but for the first half of this book, we've got Gabe running away from Chris and the situation. So while he's running, he's talking, telling us his story. Then he runs into Pastor Kait, then he becomes a confessor.

The second half, is Gabe coming back to Chris and getting resolution to his life. While back we run into a Det. Keen which adds another layer to this very thought provoking story.

I know it's probably not a healthy relationship but I do love these two together. They are really good for each other. As good as a serial killer/co-dependent writer can be. Be aware, this is not your normal roses and wine perfect ending novel.

I was given a copy in exchange for an honest review by Crystals Many reviewers

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### **K says**

I was excited to get back into the mind of Gabriel Church, and see where he has been since he left Christian Maxwell behind. The murder of Shea Baltimore was the catalyst that sent Gabe back on the run and left an almost despondent Christian in his rear view mirror to deal with the aftermath of that unexpected, and most regrettable, fateful act.

**Torn and Frayed**, by Rodd Clark takes the readers on an all-encompassing journey back to Gabe's childhood as he reminisces about his life and what it may have been like had it went a different route or had different parents.

He remembers his Mother as someone weak, who wouldn't stand up against her husband or fight for her child when he stood in the crosshairs of his father's wrath. He is, at times, disgusted by her behavior, but also feels sadness as he realizes the toll it has taken on her to stay with the devil, aka Bennett Church.

As Gabe drives from one destination to the next in his old Dodge pick-up he appears as though he doesn't have a care in the world. I get the feeling he is surprised by his own musings that frequently lead him to Christian and the loss he feels with his absence.

I, also, get the impression that he finds himself in new territory to not only feel but to admit to his feelings

that he may actually love Christian. No one, other than Chris, has ever came close to the real Gabriel and he admits to himself that he misses Christian more than he would have thought possible.

According to Gabe, in order to forget bad memories you need to make new ones. But, what used to come so easily has now become, almost impossible, as thoughts of Christian consume and plague his mind.

Leaving Christian behind was the right thing to do, according to Gabe, who was only looking out for Chris' best interest. But, after weeks turn into months, with no contact, whatsoever, he becomes almost giddy with anticipation when he decides to end his desolation of solitude and call Christian.

Gabe likes to come across as unscathed by what he considers his celestial calling. It's his duty, as he sees it, to kill the "white lighters." Why else would he see them and the light that illuminates them, if not to kill? He's always had a peaceful recollection of his life's work, but something has changed with the murder of Shea Baltimore.

"He believed his Lord directed him to kill, and still believed Fate put every divine soul in his path to complete that cycle. He believed that his life and story had already been prewritten, that he was just running lines on stage, like a dress rehearsal before the opening."

— Gabriel Church - Torn and Frayed

He can't sleep because too many faces invade his conscience. He starts to doubt himself and ponders frequently with what-ifs. The scariest and alarming change of all, for this reader, is his predatory and all consuming mentality of taking lives outside of the "*white-lighters*."

I had (past-tense) reasons to believe that he could possibly become a changed man and even to a certain point, feel regret for the lives taken by his hands. Now, I'm not sure if he can or if he even wants too.

With that said, I still believe it's possible for Gabriel to become a changed man, if not for himself then for Christian. I want Gabe to find peace and love and I think he can as long as Christian believes in him.

Christian Maxwell is a mess, plain and simple. Without Gabriel by his side he seems to have lost his footing. He comes across as almost obsessed with needing Gabe and losing whatever credibility he had as a responsible, successful and productive adult.

He misses Gabe immensely, however, he holds no ill-willed feelings towards him for leaving him behind. He understands Gabe more than anyone ever has. Of course, he's the only person Gabe has ever confided in at this in-depth level, and through their earlier meetings when writing Gabe's story was a likelihood, he became privy to the sins Gabriel had committed.

He sees behind the lies, the omission, and the deeper level that makes up Gabriel, and yet... he now seems not to care about any of his past. Or, maybe just more willing to ignore it. At first, Christian was, at the very least, concerned with Gabe's acts of murder, but now I get the feeling that if he could run off with Gabriel, he would do so in a heartbeat.

Leaving his life, his work, and his family behind is something that Christian would do immediately if Gabriel said the words, let's go. I feel like Christian almost rejoices in these new feelings of being a rebel that Gabriel brings out in him.

Christian's life without Gabe has become riddled with anxiety and he becomes panic stricken with thoughts of the police finding him. Even though he didn't actually commit the murder of Shea Baltimore, he knows that Gabe's actions were due to his jealousy and the verbal atrocities he spewed that fateful day. And, recently, he suffers from nightmares or visions his mind conjures up becoming almost delirious, at times,

At some point, someone is going to have to pay for that regretful moment of - act before you think. And, with the police closing in on Christian, his thoughts of fleeing are barreling down on him fast.

Seeing Gabriel, after two months without any contact, sets Christian's world right again. He couldn't have strolled back into Chris' life at a more appropriate time.

Now that he's back, Christian is more than willing to hand over his worries and fears to Gabe to smooth over and solve. Christian loves the feeling of Gabe being his protector, and is more than willing to let him handle the detective that has been calling.

Their reunion finds them frantic for contact and sex and Gabe tries to keep the details of his time away, to himself, by keeping Christian focused on their sexual rendezvous. Gabe has a plan and he's not interested in sharing it with Christian. However, I believe Christian knows deep down Gabe's intentions and accepts the consequences of his plan.

***Before Gabriel*** – Christian's ethics and morals knew right from wrong. Now, I'm not so sure what Christian believes. I think he believes in the power of Gabe, and as long as he can be with him that's all that matters.

Will he continue to feel the same if Gabriel leaves him behind again? Will he pick up his life and try to get back on solid ground? I'm left with wondering when enough will be enough and if Christian would ever consider turning on Gabriel.

I don't have any answers, yet as the book comes to a close leaving Christian in limbo as well as myself. I have many questions that have no answers but I'm positive the author will give them to us in due time.

I continue to be amazed by the author's resourcefulness and ingenuity and I am fascinated by the way he narrates the story giving the reader an insight into the characters and surroundings that otherwise we may not see.

The Gabriel Church Tales are complex and intense and I experience many emotions as I read. Normally, I think most of us would want to see a killer get his penance for his wrongdoings. We want to see justice prevail and the families left behind get their closure.

Here's where I say my feelings change because having an inside look at the mind and thought process of Gabe you have sympathy for his plight. But, that will only take a person so far, because without a doubt, Gabe is fucked up and I'm pretty sure fucked up he will stay. I would have said Christian was definitely the stable one between the two, but now... I'm not so sure.

I highly recommend this series and it's imperative you read them in order to fully understand the psychological thrill Rodd Clark is taking us on.

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\*\*Received copy of this book in exchange for an honest review from the publisher\*\*

## **Pam Kay says**

This was another brilliantly written novel by Rodd Clark of the Gabriel Church Tales. #2 in the series, the saga continues with Gabe leaving Christian in Seattle after he has murdered an artist. Gabe is trying to make sure Christian is not tied to this one. He continues his journey reflecting about his past life and how his father made an impact on his life. Gabe continues to be haunted by his relationship with Christian and leaving him behind. Gabe knew they both felt the love that stood between them. As he continues from state to state he ends up in San Antonio. He goes by St. Joseph's church and meets Father Kait. Not really sure why he was there, but the two formed a bond of understanding and that was what Gabe was looking for, not forgiveness, but someone who would understand him. He ends up killing another white lighter, who Gabe feels is his mission from God to kill certain people who have a white light around them and send them to heaven. When he calls Christian, he finds out that a detective wants to talk to Christian about the murdered girl. Gabe knew he had to go back to Seattle and help Christian. This is a very intense, complicated story, with sex, love, drama, and murder. I highly recommend it.

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## **Gay Media Review says**

<http://gaymediareviews.weebly.com/blog/torn-and-frayed-a-gabriel-church-tale-book-2-by-rodd-clark>

Torn and Frayed-A Gabriel Church Tale-Book 2 by Rodd Clark

Serial killer Gabe is a very complex killer and for the first time in his life there's more on his mind than just surviving. Now in book 2 Gabe is running from Seattle in order to protect his biographer and lover a.k.a. Christian. Gabe never believed he would be back here but he is and he must now make the best of it. He has to let go of his past and insecurities in order to have the love from Christian but can he change who he really is?

Gabe is being haunted from his amazing time with Christian and he can't forget about his biographer as Christian got into his heart very deep unlike anybody ever has. Gabe is torn with his feelings for Christian and his reality of what his life is that doesn't really allow for love or a relationship but he can't let Christian go. He now really needs to speak to Father Kit to help him figure it all out and let's hope the father can really help.

The author introduces a new character of detective Scott Keen who investigates cold cases that everyone has forgotten about. So he opens up Gabe's last murder case and Christian is slightly involved. Christian is very nervous and he needs to hear from Gabe. He calls Christian, so is he missing him and will he let Christian know how much she loves him, I doubt it but let's hope for the best.

I love the second book very much and the complicated relationship between Gabe and Christian was even more messed up but I just love these guys and the love they have for each other even though they can't except it or admit to it. What a brilliant psychological MM novel this was and it had me glued to every word, this author has created a beautiful, riveting, intense, unique and hot novel and I couldn't even get enough of these men and they're very unique story. Rodd Clark created an intriguing book that at times you would want to be a part of and at times too scared to death to even think of being a part of. His brilliant writing was so spot on and detailed that I was so impressed with how he created a wonderful story. I highly recommend this novel Torn and Frayed by Rodd Clark to EVERYONE!!!

"Complimentary copy provided by author/publisher for an honest review."

Reviewed by Paul at Gay Media Reviews

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### **Tracy~Bayou Book Junkie says**

4.5 Stars

\*\*copy provided by author/publisher in exchange for an honest review\*\*

After Christian's feelings for Gabe become too serious, he does something that puts them both at risk. Gabe is left to clean up the mess with a murder. Gabe has to take care of a witness, that Christian created in a state of jealousy. Gabe is now traveling across the U.S., but still can't get Chris out of his mind. As much as Gabe would like to deny it, when it comes to Chris he has fallen in love. Not that he'll ever admit that, but his actions show it.

This definitely isn't your mushy romance, but it's as sweet as a serial killer can be I guess. While I loved the storyline and enjoyed visiting these characters again, I wish the author's writing wasn't so "wordy". I find, as I did in book one things are explained to the finest detail, and it makes for a tedious read. I found myself wanting to skim ahead and get to the action. I'm not removing any stars for this, because it's just me. Some people love extremely detailed reads, I don't.

All in all this was an enjoyable read. It had a little bit of romance and it made me want to root for Gabe and Chris to get away with murder. So in that respect Rodd accomplished something astounding. The story is well thought out and well written. Highly recommend!!

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### **Erin says**

This sequel to RUBBLE AND THE WRECKAGE has torn and frayed my nerve ends to the extent that it's difficult to write about it. This book is a careening ride to hell in an old Dodge truck, its slick tires and rusty chassis eating the miles along the hard pavement of southwestern U.S. highways, up the spine of California, to the bones of the northwest its driver had once left behind. It's a road trip through a diseased mind. It's the odyssey of a killer, and it's the voyage of a pitiable soul seeking God.

Gabriel Church is a taker of life. Not just a murderer, but an intelligent serial killer on a kind of archangelic mission of salvation. His victims, ones he calls "white lighters," are random people he imagines needing his brand of final salvation. In killing them, he releases each one to God. And so the deaths, rather than bringing remorse, are to him a kind of personal relief, souls given up to a waiting God.

He is smart, and he is bat-guano crazy. He seeks confessors—his former lover Christian, the old priest—not to unburden his soul but to better understand his deep self, to discover why he kills and how God receives

these sacrifices.

But Gabriel meets up with one of life's ironies that even he does not clearly see, until too late. He falls in love. And in loving, in trying to protect the man Chris, he becomes the kind of man he despises, a man like his own father.

From a stylistic point of view, the author jabs and wounds us with the words BENT and TWISTED, repeated so often they must reflect Gabe's own psyche. Interestingly, I do not recall reading the words "torn" or "frayed" anywhere in the novel TORN AND FRAYED. It's up to the reader to see the fibers of this man's mind slowly raveling out, turning him into a true psychotic, as his mind bends and twists until he commits a planned, savage act. The reader senses that this final act—committed in the name of love—will bring about his destruction.

In many ways, this sequel is better than the first. Once the action begins to wind up, the pace becomes more and more terrifying in its race to the end. The writer explores the mind of Gabriel through the lens of an old church window, one that casts a certain light never forgotten by the young boy who is somehow "bent" by that light refracted through the stained glass. The author more clearly defines the role of confessor in this book than he did in the first novel; and he is at pains to trace the origin of the archangel Gabriel to help explain his aberrations.

Ironically, the "love story" here is more the love between Gabe and an old priest than it is the passion between the two younger men. I found this part of the book most heart-snatching and sorrowful.

I give this disturbing novel five stars. It's relentless in its exploration of a mind gone off its tracks, spiraling God-knows where. There will be a sequel, I'm sure; and I look forward to seeing whether the author mends the frayed ends and straightens the "bent" mind ... or whether Gabriel Church will indeed go down in a "white light" of bullets, as he himself foresees ... or whether the author will bring it to some other shuddering, memorable end.

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### **Lorraine Lesar says**

Now I have to be truthful here, the thought of reading a book about a psychopathic killer, who's doing God's work (well, sort of.....remember he's a psychopath!) didn't immediately grab me and it took quite a few pages to get into this storyline, but once I did, I was grabbed in a voyeuristic sort of way. I was looking as an outsider, watching the storyline unfold but getting emotionally involved at the same time and before I knew it, had read the book practically in one sitting.

Gabriel really is a true psychopath – when he's with Christian, he's a totally different person as opposed to when he's killing people in God's name and this was the truly scary part, because the author did such a fantastic job on Gabriel's mixed-up character.

Gabriel has gotten away with killing people for years, he's meticulous and no one knows except Christian, whom he left in book 1 in order to "save him". But he's made a mistake and Christian is going to pay for that error, unless Gabriel re-enters his life.

The book raises many questions, one of them being "in love, how far are you prepared to go to protect the person you love? What levels will your conscience allow? I'll let you think on that one.

The author was devilishly clever, I thought that Gabriel was mellowing and the author was going to change direction and take us on a different route entirely, until the episode with the Police Officer.....it proved that Gabriel is what he is and that he's not going to change!

Very, very different read for me. It held my interest in a kind of morbid fascination way and that itself is quite disturbing, but that is why I called the author "devilishly clever", he got me to read something that I wasn't 100% comfortable with! But found it engrossing nevertheless. I wouldn't class this as a romance (my normal genre), it was more in the line of a thriller, but you may disagree with that?

If you are looking for something outside your normal comfort zone, this is definitely worth checking out.

\*I would like to thank the author for the privilege and opportunity of reading this ARC. My review was an honest opinion of the book\*

[Threebooksovertherainbow.wordpress.com](http://Threebooksovertherainbow.wordpress.com)

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### **Breann says**

3.5 hearts

Gabriel Church is on the run. After years of fulfilling - what he claims to be - his calling from God, he's done something that just might get him caught.

The story starts where book 1 ended, Gabriel had left Christian in an effort to save him. After Gabriel killed Shea, he knew things would go south and thought if he stayed away from Christian that he would be protecting him.

Read my full review [here!](#)

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### **Diverse says**

This is book two of this series and just like with Book 1 (Rubble and the Wreckage) I barely breathed. It's a very suspenseful story. Gabriel Church is a serial killer. He's cold, malicious, somewhat detached. He's also got the charming magnetism that draws his prey. Rodd Clark does an outstanding job of making a chill go up your spine with Gabriel. However, he does have a softness. As much as a serial killer can that is, and it's in the form of his biographer and ex-lover Christian Maxwell. That relationship is equally as suspenseful as the plot. Gabriel finds himself, in this book, running to get to Christian to protect him. It's a rather unselfish move for someone like him and it really makes you cheer for him... I questioned my own morals when it came to Gabe LOL.

Scott Kenn is a third MC in this book. He's a detective assigned to investigate the murder of Shea Baltimore... I won't give things away so you'll have to wait and see. It add A LOT of excitement to this already insanely thrilling tale. It also has potential to cause problems for Gabe and Christian.

Torn and Frayed is a dark tale, it's not about superheros it's about the bad guys and how they oddly make us

hope for them. It's beautifully written and you can't help but love getting into these character's heads.

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## Lily says

Not having encountered the first book in the Gabriel Church series, *Rubble and the Wreckage*, before reading this story, I checked out the blurb and some of the reviews for #1 and formed an outline of the original plot. It seems the most important elements are recapped in *Torn and Frayed*.

Gabriel Church is a serial killer on the run. He'd been prepared to tell the world how and why he'd despatched so many victims over the years. Christian Maxwell is the biographer who unofficially interviewed him and planned to record his life story. They became friends then lovers, but their relationship faltered when Christian's jealousy results in the death of Shea Baltimore at the hands of Gabriel.

*Torn and Frayed* continues the story with Gabriel on the run from Christian as well as the law. His thoughts continually return to the ex-lover he has left behind. He's trying to resist the pull to return to the man he obviously misses.

Rodd Clark's omniscient story-telling style provides the viewpoint of various characters, focusing mostly on Gabriel, Christian and Scott Kenn, the detective who tracks down serial killers. As a result, the reader discovers a few facts the characters themselves don't know about and this provides hints for the future plot.

The narrative builds steadily to the mid-point until Gabriel decides to contact his ex-lover again. These well-written chapters provide the background to the story and the main characters, sometimes rather repetitively referring to the main events from Book 1, emphasizing that Gabriel is on the run and missing Christian. Internal monologues and backstory are interwoven with present day events as Gabriel is drawn back to Seattle.

The excitement builds when Detective Scott Kenn is allocated the case of Shea Baltimore and he closes in on the murder suspect. It's a race against time to see who will get to Christian first. Will Gabriel make it back in time to rescue Christian from the inquisitive detective and will the two lovers go on the run together as Christian now hopes?

Despite being an unrepentant serial killer, Gabriel's character is shown to be capable of love and compassion. The reader sympathises with his predicament and is drawn into willing him to succeed. You don't want him to be caught or delayed, you want him to be reunited with his ex-lover. Rodd Clark has you rooting for these baddies. For both of them, because Christian is to some extent culpable for the murder of Shea, even though he didn't directly kill her.

Gabriel is shown to be a cold yet shrewd man, and the reader is never quite sure what his intentions are or if he'll act out of character. His mood swings swiftly to dark and brooding, making it feasible he could commit any crime. He believes he is doing God's work by dispatching his victims and he justifies the murder of others in his attempt to protect his lover. His motives appear logical within the context of the story. To Christian, his reasoning seems calculated and his beliefs unassailable. He is reluctant to question Gabriel's actions and, despite his love, is rightly wary of him.

Gabriel Church presents himself as a likeable character with plenty of magnetism. He can be charming,

endearing and sexy as hell when need be. As his story unfolds, the reader feels sorry for his horrendous past, his abusive childhood, and his lonely adult life. We're on his side. He is not portrayed as a crazy man as such. He is patient and clever, capable of planning ahead and solving the problems he encounters. He knows what to do in difficult situations and Christian trusts him to sort things out for the both of them.

The few sex scenes are skimmed over and not a main feature of the story. So although the book pivots on his love for Christian there's not a lot of romance. You feel Gabriel's desire and need to be with his lover and that he is capable of love and affection. It is the deeds he does for Christian that demonstrate he is more than this heartless serial killer. He is willing to sacrifice his life to protect his lover and save him from jail. He sees his fate as part of God's will and his earlier visits to a priest hint at him questioning this vocation. In return, Christian loves Gabriel despite his knowledge of the killings and considers leaving his family, career and way of life to join Gabriel on the run. He knows the details of Gabriel's previous crimes, but has chosen not to inform the police.

I enjoyed reading this story, particularly the suspense and exciting page-turning events as the book reaches its climax.

The story is not over yet. There are clues scattered along the way that will need to be dealt with in Book 3. So, while I wait I'm going back to read Book 1 and discover more about the serial killer and his biographer.

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\*\*\* Pre-proof copy of this book was provided by the author in exchange for an honest review\*\*\*