



A Dying Fall

Elly Griffiths

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Ruth's old friend Dan Golding dies in a house fire. But before he died Dan wrote to Ruth telling her that he had made a ground-breaking archaeological discovery. Could this find be linked to his death and who are the sinister neo-Nazi group who were threatening Dan? Ruth makes the trip to Blackpool to investigate, wary of encroaching on DCI Harry Nelson's home ground. Soon Ruth is embroiled in a mystery that involves the Pendle Witches, King Arthur and – scariest of all – Nelson's mother.

There are forces at work in the town that threaten all that Ruth holds dear. But, in the final showdown on Blackpool Pleasure Beach, it is Cathbad who faces the greatest danger of all.

A Dying Fall Details

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From Reader Review A Dying Fall for online ebook

Tanja Berg says

Another perfectly decent installment in the series. As usual the relationship between the familiar cast is what's most interesting. The murder mystery involves an old school friend of Ruth's, who thought he might have found the remains of King Arthur.

Brenda says

This is the fifth book in the Ruth Galloway series, and it was an enjoyable read. The usual characters make an appearance, although Clough and Judy had minor roles. With the setting changing to the north in Blackpool, where Nelson was raised, there are several new characters in this book. The storyline is based on the finding of King Arthur's skeleton, and Ruth's expertise is needed. Cathbad plays a major role, and I'm guessing there are some changes afoot for the next book.

Susan Johnson says

Another great book in the series about Ruth Galloway, a forensics archeologist in Norfolk England. This chubby, fiercely independent bone expert is called in to look at some, possibly fame producing, bones that her friend from her university days has uncovered. Her friend was murdered and they needed an expert to investigate if these bones were King Arthur's. Even if they're not, there is a treasure trove of historical artifacts to be explored.

Ruth travels north on this expedition accompanied by her 18 month old daughter, Kate, and her friend, the druid Cathbad. Kate's father, policeman Nelson, takes his summer vacation in the same locale to visit his mother. They investigate Kate's friend's murder and then a druid friend of Cathbad dies. Ruth starts receiving messages to leave the bones alone. There are plenty of twists and turns and the murderer's identity surprised me.

I can not recommend this series more highly. These books are well written and the characters are interesting. I love that nothing is run of the mill and how these characters grow. The series should be read in order but that's just a delightful task. Now, I'm sad that I finished the series (I accidentally started with the last one) and can't wait until a new one is published.

Jo Chambers says

It's always a pleasure to read the next installment of the Ruth Galloway crime series. Ruth and Co. are like old friends now! In this fifth book, Ruth travels up to Blackpool to investigate the death of an old college friend, Dan, who has died in a house fire. It soon becomes apparent that the fire was no accident and seems to be linked with Dan's recent discovery of the possible bones of the legendary King Arthur. Add some shady Neo Nazis into the mix and our friends are soon in a spot of bother! A great climax to the book too - I was on the edge of my seat! Highly recommended to all crime fans.

Steven says

A Dying Fall by Elly Griffiths
Published 2013, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Stars: ★★★★★?
Review also posted at: Slapdash & Sundry

This was probably my favorite one since the first one. Plenty of suspects, a different locale that set our team on edge, actual danger for some of the characters, and...

I thought I had the killer(s?) figured out, but I was pleasantly surprised to find that I was wrong.

Highly entertaining one, this. :)

Cynthia says

Who was Arthur?

I find Elly Griffiths's books very enjoyable. They're set in interesting parts of England. They always incorporate tidbits from archeology and history. And the main character Ruth Galloway and her buddies lead interesting lives and they're likeable. Reading her books is a bit like keeping up with well loved friends.

This is the third of her books I've read though it's the fifth in the series so I've missed a few chapters in Ruth's life but I did not feel lost. Griffiths alludes to past events in passing and as a nod to her long time readers but this doesn't detract from the current book's action. In this installment Ruth takes her one and a half year old daughter Kate on holiday to Blackpool along with her Druid friend Cathbad. Ostensibly she's there to examine some bones and relics an old college friend dug up right before his untimely death. Of course Ruth's life is never that easy and her old friend, the policeman Nelson, shows up to complicate things...as do some bad guys who try and thwart her.

Besides the enjoyable characters the best part of book is the clever use of the King Arthur legend. Ruth is on the trail of a completely new angle to the story and not everyone wants it to be told! A group of local White supremacists will stop at nothing to keep their assumed power and the secret the bones tell. Luckily Ruth has Nelson and Cathbad and other friends on her side but once again can't keep herself and her daughter out of harm's way. The mystery is interesting even if it IS cleared up a bit too simply and with a sleight of hand that will have some readers objecting. Griffiths's books aren't so much about the outcome though, they're about the journey and this is once again a fun one.

This review is based on an advanced reading copy received from the publisher.

Ellen says

A Dying Fall by Elly Griffiths.

This author clearly does not run out of original ideas or the creativity in expressing them. My thanks to Elly Griffiths for choosing to become an author and most importantly for creating The very realistic character of Ruth Galloway.

Ruth learns of the tragic death of her old university chum Dan Golding. apparently Dan was killed while trying to escape from a house fire. Neighbors just arriving home immediately called the fire brigade but it was too late. Dan could not be revived.

Then Ruth receives a letter from Dan dated just prior to his death asking for her expertise in his archaeological find. He may have uncovered the remains of King Arthur.

This is without a doubt one of my favorite books in the Ruth Galloway series and one of the most intense and involved stories to date. Highly recommended.

Lela says

As always, I love the writing of Elly Griffiths and impatiently wait for the next book every time. She grabs from the first sentence with this one and doesn't let go! The story was really good but I wasn't as taken with the actual "mystery." It's really not that difficult to figure it out even though it's supposed to be a real surprise, I think. What I love the most are the characters and she gave me a real scare toward the end of the book. Naughty, naughty! (I'm shaking my finger at her.) If you haven't tried this series, it's well worth starting now!

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Sam H Arnold says

I am a huge fan of Elly Griffiths and this book does not disappoint at all. All the familiar characters are back such as Ruth, Cathbad and Nelson. This book also characteristically introduces new characters in an easy fashion. The story follows the main characters as they investigate the murder of a childhood friend of Ruth's.

I love the mystery and intrigue that this author serves up with a little splatter of history. I have to say the history is not so evident in this novel and for me personally this was a little disappointing. The story is normally fast paced and pulls the reader along. I love the development of Cathbad in this book and we get to spend a lot more time with him. I have to say he is one of my favourite characters.

This is a brilliant edition to the series as well as being a welcome standalone for anyone who has not read the previous books. Well worth picking up thoroughly enjoyable.

Bettie? says

[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)]

Ingrid says

I'm becoming very fond of Ruth Galloway. In book 5 of the series she has to go to the Blackpool area to have a look at some bones. The tension builds up slowly but keeps you interested.

Millie says

This is my least favorite of the series so far. I found the plot to be pretty thin with too many characters and very little depth. I also find that I like Ruth less and less with each book. Her lack of self-esteem and feelings of inferiority are becoming annoying; she doesn't even correct Nelson when he calls their daughter Katie instead of Kate. She needs to return to her role as Nelson's crime solving partner and drop the pathetic mother role.

Jacqui says

This may be the last of Elly Griffiths' Ruth Galloway series I read. It has nothing to do with Griffiths' writing skills--she's wonderful. Her dialogue is crisp, her settings vibrant and enticing, her plot engaging. I even love most of the characters--who couldn't be enchanted by the Druid Cathbad with a heart of gold and the easy-going attitude toward life we would all love to emulate. I can easily understand why it's a Mary Higgins Clark award-winner.

The problem is Ruth Galloway--the main character. I don't like her.

But I'm ahead of myself. This latest book penned by Elly Griffiths, "A Dying Fall" (Houghton Mifflin 2013) dwells on that rich content we armchair anthropologists love--ancient bones with stories to tell. In this case, a colleague of Galloway's (Dan Golding) discovers them, contacts Ruth, but dies in a mysterious house fire before he can discuss his find. As luck would have it, the friend's employer (a struggling college) invites Galloway (a well-known expert in this field) to evaluate what should be a 1500-year old skeleton. She quickly realizes the bones that likely caused her friend's death have been replaced by worthless substitutes. It doesn't take long for Golding's killer to set his/her sights on Ruth and worse, her toddler daughter, Ruth uses her considerable intellect, her enigmatic friend Cathbad, and the father of her daughter DCI Nelson to unravel the mystery even as other lives are claimed in the murderer's effort to stop Ruth from uncovering the truth.

Sounds wonderful, doesn't it? And it is, despite being one of those present tense books that always take me a few chapters to get used to. Griffiths, like Elizabeth George, puts you smack amidst the English landscape in

her scenes, characterizations, language, customs. Here are two examples:

"They eat takeaways in front of 'Doctor Who'"

"Beyond Ruth's fence, the long grass is tawny and gold with the occasional flash of dark blue water as the marsh leads out to the sea. In the distance, the sand glimmers like a mirage, and further still, the sea comes whispering in to shore, heralded by the seagulls flying high above the waves."

Griffiths seamlessly weaves Ruth's personal life into the plot--a daunting task that many author's cannot do--without being distracting. And archeology is a thread always present:

"She loves the mixture of painstaking order and backbreaking work, hauling earth about like a navvy one minute and dusting the sand away from a shard of bone the next. She loves the sight of a neat trench, its sides perfectly straight, the soil below exposed in clear layers."

"You can't go backwards, only forwards. Every archaeologist knows that. Time is a matter of layers, of strata, each firmly fixed in its own context."

But quickly, I tired of Ruth Galloway's short-tempered, curmudgeonly approach to life. Where she started out smart and clever, quickly she became whiny and opinionated, escalating to close-minded. Is that the English stoicism gone amuck? Or is she so full of herself, so wrapped up in the World of Ruth, she can't find room to be understanding, patient, or even consider that others might have a thought worth listening to? When I asked my PLN whether they considered it a mistake to craft an unlikable main character, many thought it was OK if that character was interesting enough.

So is Ruth? You decide. If you don't mind difficult main characters, there is an awful lot to recommend this book.

Kathy says

I just finished this fifth book in the Ruth Galloway series, and I find myself in that place of grief for readers who have read all there is published so far in a favorite series. It has, however, been a glorious week of reading, as I have devoured this series from its beginning. I read one a day, and I am not normally a fast reader. I simply couldn't wait to see what was going to happen next. It is the stuff of which readers dream and the well-deserved winner of the Mary Higgins Clark Award.

The school term at North Norwich University is ending for Ruth Galloway, who teaches archaeology, when she receives news of an old university school chum's death in a tragic house fire in Lancashire. The following day she receives a letter from this same schoolmate, Dan Golding, asking for her help concerning a skeleton he has recently uncovered, a find that he states could be a major archaeological event. Golding also mentions that he is afraid, but he doesn't say of what. Within a few days, Ruth has a call from the head of Dan's department at Pendle University, a call requesting her to lend expertise in identifying the bones from Dan's excavation. She decides to take her summer holiday in Lancashire so that she can examine the bones. Accompanying Ruth are her toddler daughter Kate and her Druid friend Cathbad. As is often the case, Ruth's former married lover and Kate's father, DCI Harry Nelson, also ends up in the same local as Ruth. He is vacationing with his wife in his hometown and visiting family. Ruth has ignored several phone texts advising her not to come to Lancashire, and she is soon confronted with a shadowy hate organization that views murder as an acceptable means to prevent the bones discovered by her dead friend from being examined or

publicized. With Ruth's and Kate's lives increasingly in danger, Nelson becomes involved in a police investigation into Dan Golding's death conducted by his hometown police friend. The twists and turns that I've come to love in this series prove a challenge for all who are trying to follow a trail of bones and history to solve a mystery. In the process, Ruth identifies some truths for her personal life, too.

My thanks to Elly Griffiths for creating the wonderful world of Ruth Galloway, Harry Nelson, Cathbad, Kate, and all the rest of the amazing characters in this series. Your storylines keep me spellbound, and the settings entrance me. I can hardly wait until I can sit down with these fictional friends once again.

Rachel Hall says

Dying Fall is the fifth fantastic novel in the much loved Dr Ruth Galloway series and sees Ruth and the gang on tour, straying into the birthplace of DCI Harry Nelson and the delights of Blackpool Pleasure Beach! Once again Elly Griffiths has managed to combine a dose of the continuing soap opera on the Saltmarsh with a stimulating mystery, finding new areas for Ruth to explore which prove both fascinating and eye-opening. Dying Fall sees Kate now eighteen-months-old and Ruth combining motherhood with her working life as a specialist in forensic archaeology, resident at the University of North Norfolk. At forty-two, Ruth is casually involved with Dr Max Grey who she met in the course of a previous case, although swiftly fleeing from any mention of commitment and still drawn to the strong masculinity of the blunt DCI Harry Nelson. Disconcerted by the strange pull of the sexist, abrupt Nelson, Ruth, Nelson and his wife, Michelle are still getting to grips with the delicacy of Kate being his biological child, and the two night affair that took place.

Dying Fall swiftly introduces the mystery element with Ruth getting a call from her ex-flat mate from her student days at UCL and the news that fellow student, Dan Golding, has become the victim of a house fire. Interestingly, Dan is the only other member of their archaeology course to still be involved in the unglamorous work of an academic, surprisingly occupying a role at the lowly Pendle University. Having stirred the memories and commiserated, Ruth is somewhat surprised to get a handwritten letter from Dan the very next day. Twenty years since their student heydays, Dan is seeking Ruth's expertise in identifying what he believes to have been a 'significant discovery', and the note of fear she reads between the lines is all too clear. Nelson's contact in his old stomping ground confirms suspicious circumstances surrounding Dan's death, eventually launching a murder enquiry. Hot on the heels, Dan's boss invites Ruth to inspect his findings and Cathbad and Kate accompany her as she ventures into territory she staunchly associates with Nelson. It is with a sense of relief that Ruth discovers Nelson and Michelle are using up Nelson's annual holiday allowance visiting his family when she realises what Dan seems to have stumbled across. Dan mentioned the Raven King in his letter, but could it seriously relate to the tomb of the legendary King Arthur and why are Pendle University attracting the attention of white supremacists? Someone clearly wants Ruth to stay well away as she receives a series of menacing text messages putting Kate in danger and the furtive behaviour of the odd assortment of characters who populate Dan's academic life do nothing to quell Ruth's apprehension at just what Dan has uncovered.

This fifth novel has all the components which have made this series a firm favourite amongst crime fiction fans; namely excellent characterisation, old fashioned good honest humour and a unique mystery element. For a series uncovering old bones, Griffiths laces each with a genuine tension. In contrast to the fourth novel, Ruth is pleasantly back centre stage and at the coalface of the revelations. The novels in the series are undoubtedly best enjoyed in the correct order, as the continuing relationships of those in Ruth's life are an essential feature of each. Despite Elly Griffiths knowing how many fans admire the overweight, insecure and wonderfully ordinary modern woman, and the goings on outside of her work, she never neglects the mystery element managing to furnish her readers with a satisfying level of archaeological knowledge along the way. Dying Fall is once again a rousing success and Elly Griffiths wit is the icing on the cake, serving up the

repartee between Ruth and the various men in her life. From references to the druid grapevine to Nelson's mother confusing Cathbad's name and calling him Cuthbert, Elly Griffiths never neglects Ruth's passion for archaeology and her focus is always on the bones... The humour and feel good factor are the added extras!

The Dr Ruth Galloway series is without a doubt the standout continuing series in current crime fiction and Elly Griffiths heartily deserves the success her characters have brought her.
