



Death Among Rubies

R.J. Koreto

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Lady Frances Ffolkes is incensed when she finds out that her dear friends Gwendolyn and Thomasina have been subject to vicious threats. Promising to uncover their attacker, she travels with them to Kestrel's Eyrie, the fabled estate belonging to Gwen's family. But soon Frances faces an even greater problem, when Gwen's father, a powerful diplomat, is stabbed to death with his prized ruby dagger.

Frances, with her loyal maid June Mallow at her side, jumps right into interrogating the estate's numbered guests: a charming Turkish diplomat with a habit of sneaking off into the night, a brash American heiress with lofty dreams of becoming mistress of the Eyrie, two gossiping widows with their own scandalous secrets, and Gwen's own aunt tasked with keeping the affairs of the estate in order among the chaos of the investigation. But as the case unfolds, Frances's righteous conviction might just be the very thing that leads danger--and even more death--to her own doorstep.

Old sins do indeed cast long shadows in *Death Among Rubies*, a delightful closed-room mystery in the vein of Agatha Christie and the second in R.J. Koreto's effortlessly charming historical series.

Death Among Rubies Details

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Author : R.J. Koreto

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From Reader Review Death Among Rubies for online ebook

Lisa says

My favorite part is still June Mallow.

Susan says

Suffragette Lady Frances Ffolkes accompanies her sweet friend Gwen and Gwen's protective friend Tommie to the famed mansion that Gwen's family has inhabited for generations, Kestrel's Eyrie, only to find that the house-party has turned deadly. Gwen's father is dead, and Frances knows that the public will demand an arrest, even if it means spreading rumors about Gwen and Tommie's relationship.

J. Else says

Death Among Rubies is R.J. Koreto's second novel in the Lady Frances "Franny" Ffolkes historical mystery series. In this story, Franny accompanies her friends, Gwendolyn and Thomasina, to Gwen's family estate for a quiet weekend working on suffragette projects. Instead, she finds out that her friends have been threatened, and Gwen's father has been stabbed to death with a ruby dagger that is rumored to be cursed. What's a lady to do?

If you're looking for a book with a large, diverse cast of women who become wrapped up in solving a murder to save their friend from being wrongfully accused, you will definitely enjoy this book. If you're looking for a charming Edwardian-era mystery, you will also enjoy this book. This series has no explicit situations or language – which is very much appreciated.

A few critiques. Early on, it's obvious who the culprit is, so parts of the investigation feel unnecessary. While there are plenty of antagonists to Franny's sleuthing, there aren't many twists and turns to the mystery. Also, some of the sentences could have used more polish. A couple of times, they read like unfinished thoughts, and the next opens with a conjunction. Restructuring certain sentences would have clarified Koreto's ideas.

Conversely, the character dialogue is fantastic. The female leads are simply wonderful. Who doesn't love a comeback like this one from Franny: "I am also sorry for losing my temper and calling the inspector an imbecile and coward. It was rude of me to publicize those facts."

I enjoyed seeing characters and relationships from the first book develop. I can tell the writer loves this time period, as he handles the era's mannerisms and conventions masterfully. All in all, this is a delightful read, though not as strong as the first book (which I loved).

Review posted via the Historical Novel Society at <https://historicalnovelsociety.org/re...>

Mary Miller says

I read his first book (Death on the Sapphire) and knew I would enjoy his second book Death Among Rubies, will read Death of the Emerald in November when the book comes out. His style is simple and to the point, I love the Lady Frances character and maybe, a little bit of Downton Abbey. You will enjoy a different book style

Katie Bee says

I enjoyed this book a lot. Sure, the culprit's pretty easy to guess, and there's the occasional anachronism, but overall it's a pleasant read with fun characters. I liked basically everyone involved - my favorite is Mallow. And I will always be a fan of historical mysteries that include happy lesbians - even if their friends' tolerance level is a little unbelievable for the period, I don't care, I like it that way.

I mistakenly thought this was the first book of the series, and will now definitely be checking out the rest of the series. The book does stand alone very well, though.

Amanda Languirand says

Amazing. Loved it! Cannot wait to start #3!

Georgia says

Read books one and three. 5* for them. This one was good but was a little slow!

Mara Pemberton says

Enjoyed two books I listened to in this series. Looking forward to the next book coming in Nov.2017.

Julia says

The first part of this book jumped around too much trying to introduce all the characters. Or perhaps my problem was that I hadn't read the first book with the main character. Either way, the writing left a lot to be desired. Eventually I got far enough in that I could keep people straight.

The story made me think it could be re-titled as "Murder at Downton Abbey". The murder takes place during a house party. Characters include a Turkish man with a secret (which reminded me of Mr Pamuke), an American heiress in England to get married (as Cora had done), and several suffragists who may be more than just good friends. Part of the solution comes from servants' gossip as Lady Frances and her personal maid discuss the case. Most of the below-stairs cast only appear long enough to give information and then aren't mentioned again.

QNPoohBear says

Lady Frances is still scandalizing her family with trips to Bohemian weekends with friends and her women's suffrage activities. When she learns her fellow suffrage friends Gwen and Tommie are being threatened, she is incensed. Everyone who knows Gwen and Tommie knows they love each other very much and their love is pure and noble. Gwen wouldn't even understand "baser feelings" and Tommie is trying desperately to keep Gwen from finding out about the threatening notes as it would upset Gwen terribly. Franny is determined to get to the bottom of the mystery. She accompanies her friends to Gwen's family estate, Kestrel's Eyrie, only to discover a new mystery. Gwern's father, a diplomat, is murdered by a prized Turkish dagger encrusted with rubies. His death follows a dinner party attended by representatives of France, America and the Ottoman Empire. The local police inspector wants to blame an outside gang for the murder, but with Scotland Yard appearing on the scene, Frances suspects the murder was politically motivated. Then her Inspector friend returns to London and Franny is left with the misogynistic local fool who seems to be determined to pin the blame on Tommie. Gwen can't let that happen! She is determined to save her friend and help Gwen figure out her new life as mistress of Kestrel's Eyrie.

This is another great Edwardian mystery, in the vein of Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries (TV show not the books). Kudos to the author for fully understanding what women wanted and worked for. He writes in the voice of a woman very well. I am impressed. Bravo also for including diversity where it makes sense. Here we have a same sex couple and the author acknowledges that their relationship goes beyond sisterhood bonds but doesn't have anything to do with "baser feelings." He also acknowledges that gently bred women like Gwen wouldn't have the language to express their feelings or have knowledge of "baser feelings." I really liked the inclusion of this couple in the story. They helped elevate the story beyond the basic murder mystery, which in truth, wasn't that difficult to figure out. I realized the "why" early on but I wasn't sure about "who" until the other suspects were eliminated. There is more than one death in this novel and they're very tragic.

I took off one star because Lady Frances is just a bit too much in this novel. In the first book in the series, she was a plausible Edwardian woman. In this one she pushes and pushes, deliberately sets out to investigate and thwart the police, and investigates on her own in a place that could be hiding a killer. All of these things just pushed her a bit beyond believability. I still really like her and admire her. I would never be so brave in her place. I do find her non-investigative actions very accurate for the time. I would join her in the suffrage group. I love the idea of an organization for women to support other women. Franny's relationship status has changed in this novel. Her romance is sweet but a bit awkward. I don't really get a sense of anything beyond mutual admiration and friendship between them, but most marriages of the time were built on less. Franny has a lot to do before she marries, however! She isn't about to submit to or obey any man!

The major supporting characters are three young women around Franny's age. Gwen Krestel, a young woman of means, is very sweet but a not the brightest woman around. She makes up for her lack of sharp wits with her kind and caring nature. She also has hidden depths that come out during the investigation. I couldn't help but like her as much as Franny does. I felt very sorry for Gwen because her mother died when she was young and her father largely ignored her. She was left to be raised in a great mausoleum of a house without love and affection. I did not like her father much. Franny acknowledges her own father was much the same and Mr. Aubert probably would be as well. The women in this story are more sympathetic characters. Gwen's friend Tommie comes from a more middle class background. While she hasn't had the monetary advantages Gwen has had, they both grew up rather lonely. Tommie is a bit too timid and unsure of herself for me to really embrace her as a friend, but she is loyal and devoted to Gwen. I did love how she supported Gwen and never left her friend's side.

The other woman is Effie Hardiman, an American woman of the nouveau riche class. I did not like how Miss Hardiman and her father were portrayed as kind of stupid and ignorant. Their speech patterns show they're

less educated and cultured than Franny, Gwen, and even Tommie. I did like Effie most of the time. Like her new friends, she grew up without a loving family. Her father would do anything for her but he is largely consumed with his business and doesn't easily seem to understand his daughter. There were times when I did not like Effie. I didn't understand her motivation except a desire NOT to return to Buffalo's fierce winters.

There are several other women in this story who play supporting roles. Franny's maid Mallow is awesome. She doesn't bat an eyelash at anything Franny asks her to do. Mallow is devoted and loyal but not above a bit of mischief when it suits her needs. I love Mallow! There's also two widows, Mrs. Sweet and Mrs. Bellinger who are murder suspects. Betsy Tanner is an old servant, born on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo. She's an august personage among the villagers and even I found her a bit intimidating. She would be fascinating to talk to. Finally, there's Mrs. Blake, mistress of Krestel's Eyrie. She's a relative by marriage but took over running the Eyrie when Gwen's mother died. She's a tough woman. I didn't like her obsessive devotion to the Eyrie, her cousin by marriage or her son. Yet I do feel sorry for her. As Franny acknowledges, single women had absolutely nothing. The widows in the story shed light on the darker side of Edwardian life.

The men in this story are not as colorful or interesting as the women. Hal, Franny's lawyer friend, is very kind but bland. He does have a sense of humor and accepts Franny for who she is. Gwen's cousin, Christopher Blake, is Gwen's only childhood friend and second cousin. He seems like a considerate young man though he stands to inherit everything if Gwen should predecease him. Does he want or need the property badly enough to kill? Then there's the Turkish gentleman who has a lot of secrets. He seems a bit cowardly and his heart and mind are not on politics or religion.

I am super happy the library bought this book for me to read when I requested it. This one kept me reading too late on work nights and even when I had a brief bit of downtime at work. I hope the library buys the third one that came out yesterday!

Content:

Mild violence

Talk of mistresses

Read this if you love watching *Downtown Abbey* or *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* on TV.

Ronda says

Thoroughly enjoyable romp into Victorian sensibilities with a view towards women's rights and the madness of intelligence undervalued and lights hidden under a bushel. Lady Frances and Mallow are among my favorite Victorian sleuths.

Mary Morris says

Multi tasking Diversity

Wonderful characters portrayed with the social standards of 1906, yet modern day issues included. A woman far ahead of her time with wit and intelligence she refuses to hide. She solves a murder while portraying herself as the loyal opposition to the male dominated milieu of her time. A great read!

Jessica Robbins says

For complete review check out my blog at <https://booksaplentybookreviews.blogs...>

Linda says

"Oh, I'm in for it, thought Frances. Very well. She girded herself for battle and said goodbye to her friends."

And Lady Frances Ffolkes knows something about girding. She's battled with the best of 'em. Lady Frances is a woman not defined by the Edwardian era in which she finds herself. She has the means and the motive to step outside of these defined roles of womanhood. Armor can certainly be worn under all those petticoats.

Someone is posing serious threats toward two of her friends, Gwendolyn and Thomasina. Lady Frances doesn't take this lightly and accompanies them to Gwen's family estate, Kestrel's Erie. The expansive mansion is filled with guests that have been invited by Gwen's father, Sir Calleford, a renowned diplomat.

Shock travels the winding stairways like nature's lightning when Sir Calleford is found in his study stabbed with a curved ruby dagger that was among his treasured artifacts. Gwen, timid and reserved, takes to her bed in complete disbelief. Tommie and Lady Frances do all that they can to console her. Reality sets in that this gentle soul is now the mistress of this sprawling estate.

R.J. Koreto places the likes of an Agatha Christie story frame in the hands of the reader. We have a visiting Turkish diplomat and his aide, two French visitors, an American manufacturing monarch and his young adult daughter, two widows staying in cottages near the gardens, a handsome catch of a cousin, a pushy housekeeper, and a bevy of servants. Now one of these has had the feel of that ancient weapon in their hands.

But Sir Calleford is not the only one with a stilled heart. Two other bodies eventually stir onto the scene. The local county police are in over their heads. Lady Frances can't help herself. Her analytical nature is in overdrive. She can spot a miniscule tinge of blood a mile away and buried underground. With the assistance of her astute ladies maid, June Mallow, Frances is one step ahead of them all. Just who would want this diplomat murdered and why are these other two even in the body count?

Koreto's Lady Frances appears in this second book of the series with all the more forwardness and full-on direct attitude that we found in the first book. Not all women of this era were complacent and carbon copies of wilting flowers. History proves that many a woman bucked the system and grabbed the reins. I'm looking forward to book #3, Death at the Emerald with Lady Frances in the driver's seat, I'm sure.

Kathy Martin says

Lady Frances Ffolkes and her loyal maid Mallow are off on another adventure. This time Lady Frances is going to a house party with her friends Gwendolyn and Thomasina. The party is being held at Gwendolyn's father's estate. He is a noted diplomat and among the guests are the French Ambassador and his wife, a Turkish man named Mr. Mehmet, and an American father and daughter, along with a variety of notable locals.

When Gwendolyn's father is found stabbed to death with a Turkish dagger from his collection, the mystery begins. Who wanted him dead? Lady Frances is also dealing with some rumors that say that Gwendolyn and Thomasina have an improper relationship which could be damaging to their reputations if it spread. Lady Frances has to deal with the rumor while trying to solve the mystery. She is up against the mores of the day which say that a woman should not even be interested in that sort of thing. She has to battle a local police inspector who wants to blame the crime on a roving gang of strangers but who is led to suspecting Thomasina.

Lady Frances calls in a policeman from the Special Branch in London who worked with her on her first case but who doesn't really have jurisdiction until the local police call him in. The local police have no desire to do that. Lady Frances also calls in her boyfriend who is a noted London lawyer to protect Gwen's interests.

Soon another couple of murders happen and Lady Frances has a more difficult case to solve. She has quite a number of suspects and a wide variety of motives to sort through too. But Lady Frances is up to the task. Assisted by her loyal maid Mallow she sorts through all the possibilities and brings the culprit to justice - sort of.

This historical mystery is firmly set in the Victoria era where women's rights are just a hope for the future and where class distinctions are just beginning to blur. This was an engaging story and an enjoyable read.
