



The Dark Enquiry

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Partners now in marriage and in trade, Lady Julia and Nicholas Brisbane have finally returned from abroad to set up housekeeping in London. But merging their respective collections of gadgets, pets and servants leaves little room for the harried newlyweds themselves, let alone Brisbane's private enquiry business.

Among the more unlikely clients: Julia's very proper brother, Lord Bellmont, who swears Brisbane to secrecy about his case. Not about to be left out of anything concerning her beloved--if eccentric--family, spirited Julia soon picks up the trail of the investigation.

It leads to the exclusive Spirit Club, where the alluring Madame Séraphine holds evening séances--and not a few powerful gentlemen in thrall. From this eerie enclave unfolds a lurid tangle of dark deeds, whose tendrils crush reputations and throttle trust.

Shocked to find their investigation spun into salacious newspaper headlines, bristling at the tension it causes between them, the Brisbanes find they must unite or fall. For Bellmont's sake--and more--they'll face myriad dangers born of dark secrets, the kind men kill to keep....

The Dark Enquiry Details

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From Reader Review The Dark Enquiry for online ebook

Mary says

The Dark Enquiry is the fifth book in the Lady Julia Grey series. Brisbane and Lady Julia have returned to London, and Brisbane resumes his private enquiry business. Lady Julia would desperately like to be an equal partner in his business, and she feels she has much to offer in the way of detective skills; Brisbane, on the other hand, views her as a complication, an irresistible but exasperating complication. In trying to prove herself a worthy partner, Lady Julia unexpectedly discovers that her older brother, the proper and disapproving Belmont, has secretly hired Brisbane's services. She is determined to learn the reason why, and her sleuthing leads her to The Ghost Club and to Madame Seraphine, a mysterious woman whose seances are popular with the powerful, the well-connected, and those with secrets to keep.

It's certain now that I read too many of these too close together. Lady Julia's antics were not charming so much as annoying. I expected her to have learned some skills and subtlety, but she goes traipsing around London in a fake moustache. (That's only when she's not blowing out the windows of the house with her ultra-explosive magic disappearing powder. No joke.) The mystery was really kind of absurd, and I hated the supernatural deus ex machina conclusion. And yet.....despite all my whiiiiining, I'll probably still read the next one in the series. I guess that's a testament to how much I like these characters. Even when they annoy me, I keep coming back for more.

Allison (The Allure of Books) says

The Dark Enquiry by Deanna Raybourn is the fifth book in the truly spectacular Lady Julia series. Y'all, I can't even explain to you how much I love these books. Julia and Brisbane are definitely among my most beloved characters of all time. Both Gothic and mystical flairs give this series an atmosphere unlike any other. If you haven't checked these books out yet, what are you waiting for?

Like I've mentioned in past reviews, the first book of the series begins like so:

"To say that I met Nicholas Brisbane over my husband's dead body is not entirely accurate. Edward, it should be noted, was still twitching upon the floor."

Now, if you can read that line and resist from plunging straight into the book - you're stronger than I am. I read that opener...fell hook, line and sinker for these books and haven't looked back.

Anyway....as to this book specifically (I'll try to avoid spoilers, but if you aren't familiar with the other books you might want to steer clear). Another truly awesome addition. Once again, none of the tension and spark is missing from the interactions within the Brisbane household. They are still constantly working to try and find a balance between Julia's safety and her happiness (by that, I mean her wanting to be Brisbane's work partner and him wanting to lock her up to keep her out of danger).

This case actually falls a little too close to home for Julia - her stuffy brother Belmont, who has in the past had no use for Brisbane, enlists him for help. They then end up in the middle of a mystery involving a dead medium. I couldn't think of a better plot for these characters if I tried - like I mentioned above, the series is already Gothic and mystical in tone due to the mysterious (and delicious) Brisbane...so adding in an actual mystic is just icing on the cake.

So, when Julie ferrets out that Belmont actually stooped to asking Brisbane for help - she remains hard on his heels, determined to help him whether he wants it or not. Turns out that the case ends up more personal than any of them realized - involving not only more of Julia's family history...but Brisbane's as well. Learning more about his murky background was ridiculously exciting, y'all.

I just cannot get enough of this series. All the books are so dark and sophisticated - the dialogue and characterization very deep and masterfully written. I couldn't dig up a complaint if I tried. I seriously can't recommend reading this series enough. (Oh yeah - plus: can you beat the gorgeous covers? Love them.)

Holly says

SPOILER WARNING: I hate to do this but it's become impossible to talk about this series without mentioning a major spoiler from DARK ROAD TO DARJEELING. If you have any interest in reading this series please go pick up SILENT IN THE GRAVE and the two "Silents" which precede it first. I promise you you won't be disappointed. ;)

Freshly arrived from a murder investigation in India, Lady Julia is back in a routine at the Brisbane residence in London. Routine meaning her new routine – getting used to everyday married life and honing her detective skills, which include the most shockingly unladylike interests such as working with gunpowder and mastering the use of firearms. Unfortunately – and a fact to which the neighbors, servants, and her family can attest – she is not having much success. Julia's brother Plum, who remains in the employ of Brisbane is nearly as concerned as her husband himself. In fact Brisbane may be regretting promising Julia equal partnership in his work as he continues to unsuccessfully quell his constant concern for her safety. To allay his fears Brisbane sends her to a quieter investigation in the country; however, his plan backfires when Julia discovers that her oldest brother, parliament member and staunch Tory Lord Belmont has been secretly meeting with Brisbane. Most perplexing is that it's no secret the two men have never taken a liking to one another – so why now, and behind Julia's back? Concerned for both the safety of Brisbane and the public reputation of her brother, Julia unknowingly puts herself at the scene of a murder by following Brisbane to a séance at the popular Spirit Club. When she learns that the victim is connected to her brother, she finds that herself and Brisbane need each other more than ever on an investigation that may very personally affect Julia and the entire March family.

DARK ROAD TO DARJEELING left Julia and Brisbane in such an interesting place personally and professionally, and happily THE DARK ENQUIRY picks up right where they left off while returning to where the series began: in London. After offering her unsolicited help in the three murder investigations leading up to their marriage, Julia desperately wants to continue her partnership in Brisbane's detective work, pushing to be more intimately involved than ever. However Brisbane, after covering up and saving her from her more amateurish mistakes time and time again remains wary of full involvement in a profession which can be both dirty and unforgiving. As both sides are clearly and equally in the right, all you can hope for is that Julia and Brisbane reach a compromise, how ever far away, that satisfies both parties. The resolution of their understandable concerns was a luring conflict I was dying to see play out.

Besides the nuanced characterization I've come to expect, the sense of place in THE DARK ENQUIRY is absorbing. Victorian London is a far cry from India but just as lushly and vividly drawn. Deanna Raybourn knows her setting as inside and out as her time period and it shows in how it envelopes you. I have serious love for the haunting scenes in Highgate cemetery and the gritty exchanges in the back alleys of London. As always the eccentric March family are a hoot and a dynamic character in and of themselves. I enjoyed becoming more acquainted with Belmont and Plum and smiled during every passage with Julia's quirky father. While always leaving a little to the imagination, the Brisbane revelation was also very welcome. I'd

deal with a never completely solved mystery of man for Brisbane to have a claim on my heart. Most of all I loved stepping into Julia's obstinate yet charming shoes. Doesn't every woman have the secret desire to moonlight as a spy and detective? It's incredibly thrilling and rewarding to see the direction her relationship with Brisbane takes during the unpredictable and surprising investigation. In what is becoming typical Raybourn fashion, the tantalizing last page has left me pining for more of Julia, Brisbane, and their next locale. If I could only have my fix preferably like, now.

Felicia says

Well I have a HUGE soft spot for this series. The last book was a TAD off for me, but very excited that this one took it back to awesomeville. In fact, it might be my favorite since the first two! I am absolutely in love with Lady Julia and her point of view. The writing is so impeccable, it really sets the Victorian tone, but at the same time we enjoy the POV of a modern, liberated woman. Most people try to shove modern sensibilities into history and make it WHOLLY unbelievable, but with these characters I really to buy into it. Love love the subtle humor.

The mystery in this installment is really intriguing, I was offguard a lot of the time following the plot and was immersed in the crime solving throughout. I loved Brisbane in this, I felt like his mysterious affliction is a bit weird but author sold it and I was VERY invested in the relationship now that they're together. The romance was subtle, no R rated scenes, but very well done. I root for them as a couple, for sure, which is rare after you get them together.

The ending twist was sad, I kinda wish that hadn't happened, but oh well, can't wait for the next!!

Alba Turunen says

4'5 Estrellas, pero como me ha dejado muy satisfecha, y me ha recordado a los primeros libros de la serie, me siento generosa y le doy las 5.

En ésta entrega Julia y Brisbane han vuelto a Londres, a una cómoda rutina en la que han conseguido una casa para su nueva vida, mientras que mantienen la casa de soltero de Brisbane como oficina y despacho para los nuevos casos de Brisbane. Una vez en casa, y acomodándose a su nueva vida tras una larga luna de miel ¿Qué más podría pasarles? Un nuevo caso, ésta vez muy cercano a ellos. Bellmont, el hermano mayor de Julia está pasando por serias dificultades que podrían poner en peligro su carrera política y su vida social, y precisa la ayuda de Brisbane para que sus secretos no salgan a la luz.

En éste libro encontraremos un poco de todo con sus dosis justas; un misterio referente a unas cartas perdidas, una medium que es más de lo que parece y de mucha importancia en la trama, y espionaje que puede poner en peligro al Imperio Británico. Todo ello muy bien ambientado, con el estilo único de ésta escritora, y que en cada libro nos recuerda que se ha basado en Sherlock Holmes para crear a Brisbane.

Sin ser tan truculento como otros libros anteriores, en "Tiempos de claroscuro", encontramos una trama más sustanciosa, y más verosímil. Además que se nota el trabajo detectivesco que ha creado Deanna Raybourn, dejando pequeños rastros en cada capítulo hasta que llegas al final para descubrir al probable asesino/espía/chantajista, si es que en realidad lo hay.

En los libros anteriores podría haber tramas, capítulos o historias que no interesaran para la investigación

principal, pero ésta novela te mete desde el principio en lo que será el libro, y me ha dejado muy muy satisfecha, pues hasta el final no podías saber realmente qué iba a ocurrir. Si soy sincera en los últimos capítulos descubrí al sospechoso, pero eso es muy personal para cada lector.

En lo que atañe a Julia y Brisbane, en los primeros capítulos estaba algo cabreada, sobre todo con Julia, que en libros anteriores demostraba menos sensatez que un crío de cinco años, y parecía que en ésta novela sería igual. Que sí, que puedo entender que quiere ser de ayuda a Brisbane, pero mientras él ha tenido treinta años de experiencia para llegar a ser el detective que es, ella no es más que una aficionada. Por si fuera poco, Brisbane sabe lo que hace y por qué, y teniendo la relación que tienen no me cabía en la cabeza que entre ellos hubiera tantos secretos y desconfianza (que es lo que me decepcionó en el libro anterior). Así que agradezco que en éste libro la escritora haya sabido llevar mejor su relación y romance, pues Julia acaba mostrando algo de sensatez y Brisbane sabe que si no quiere ponerla en peligro, tiene que llevarla con él.

A pesar de que la trama acaba bastante cerrada, el final me ha dejado con la impresión de que habrá más, pero no he visto que la escritora haya escrito más libros de ésta pareja, sólo relatos cortos entre medias y alguno después. De ser así, agradecería a la editorial que nos publicaran todos los relatos de la serie en una antología para desvelar algunas cosas que han quedado sin cerrar, o por lo menos un buen epílogo de la serie.

Josie Jaffrey says

This fifth and final instalment in the Lady Julia series marks a return to form. It's a twisty murder mystery full of intrigue.

This review contains spoilers, so beware!

The premise of the novel (the murder of a self-proclaimed medium) was pleasingly dark and engaging. I enjoyed the intricacy of the plot and the constant second-guessing during the course of the investigation.

I also really enjoyed the parts of the story that take place in the Romany camp, although I find it highly improbable that it would have been possible for Lady Julia to take a wild dormouse as a pet that lived in her bodice. That was slightly ridiculous.

I was also pleased to see Brisbane and Julia finally discussing their problems and sorting them out. For once, their arguments about Julia's involvement in Brisbane's work felt convincing and not just a laboured plot device. The revelations in this book go some way to explaining that tension in past books (although I have still not changed my opinion that it was badly handled).

The relationship between the pair as a husband-and-wife investigation team was exactly what I had hoped the past couple of books would be. It was a little bittersweet in that respect, because I would have liked to have seen more of that before the conclusion of the series.

Additionally, we finally see Brisbane using his 'sight' for a useful purpose in this book. I had assumed on starting this series that his clairvoyance would be a major plot device, and was surprised that it has been suppressed and ignored for the vast majority of the books. Until this final instalment, it has seemed rather redundant. Again, I rather wish the author had made use of it sooner.

All in all, this was a satisfying resolution to the series and I will definitely be reading the few short stories that follow it.

The good:

I loved Sir Morgan. What an excellent character. I really hope we see more of him in the three short stories that follow this final book in the Lady Julia series.

The bad:

Julia's pregnancy was gratuitous. I disliked the fact that she was made to miscarry simply to impress on her the dangers of Brisbane's work. It felt unsavoury.

The ugly:

In my Kindle copy, there were repeated instances of missing spaces or paragraph breaks.

The quote:

" 'They have different accents in America.'
Brisbane smiled. 'Just as we do here.'
I waved a hand. 'They all sound alike to me.' "

This book was recommended to Josie by the Wallingford Bookshop.

Linda Baker says

I was delighted to get the galley for The Dark Enquiry and meet Deanna Raybourn at the same time as I have been a fan of the series since the first book, Silent in the Grave. Silent in the Grave has one of the best "grabber" openings ever---"To say that I met Nicholas Brisbane over my husband's dead body is not entirely accurate. Edward, it should be noted, was still twitching upon the floor". If that doesn't catch your attention, nothing will! One of the thing I enjoy most about the series is the way Ms. Raybourn plays with classic forms in her books, from whodunit to country house murder to gothic thriller.

The Dark Enquiry carries on the quality seen in the previous four books with a solid mystery and a good foundation for a long running series-I hope! The enigmatic half gypsy, half Scots Brisbane is becoming less inscrutable and more willing to show his feelings. Julia is becoming his investigative partner in truth, yet coming to understand why Brisbane is often overbearingly protective of her. So often a series with a romantic partnership comes to a halt after marriage, but I think Ms. Raybourn has jumped that hurdle. Both Julia and Brisbane are so complex that I can foresee enough complications to keep me interested.

Some, but not all of Julia's huge and eccentric family make an appearance and "The Mad Marches" are as entertaining and exasperating as ever. However, I do miss Monk, Brisbane's former mentor and majordomo. Hopefully, we will see more of him in the future.

Shaye Lowe says

I loved the development of Brisbane and Julia into married life. I was thrilled with the growing love between them and 10 pages from the end the entire series is ruined for me. I get that Julia likes the excitement of

working the cases but it is completely ridiculous to me that she doesn't understand the danger in what she is doing. It amounts to her dismissing what Brisbane does as trivial and so simple even a sheltered lady in waiting can do it. But what really upset me about the conclusion to this book was that she knew or at least suspected her condition and she still went traipsing after a murderer. It made me dislike the character of Julia so much that I will not be reading any more of the series. I truly regret that I pre-ordered the next novella. Horrible ending IMO

Barb says

I was really disappointed by this installment of the Lady Julia series. I am not easily offended and I appreciate sick humor but there were a few things that I had difficulty with and was surprised that Deanna Raybourn included in this story.

I didn't care for the view of Julia as somewhat flakey and I hate to say it but this story reminded me of Tahsa Alexander's Lady Emily books.

I have always been a huge fan of Deanna Raybourn and I feel like I am being disloyal by posting this unfavorable review but I have to be honest, I was really disappointed by this installment. I hope the next one will be better but maybe this series has fizzled out.

Lori says

Deanna Raybourn, Lady Julia, and her "yummy" husband, Brisbane, just keep getting better. I loved this addition to the series. Raybourn is an expert at creating setting and the way that she reveals her characters to the reader just leaves us wanting to know more (especially about the wonderful, Nicholas Brisbane). The dialogue is witty without being absurd, and the sparks fly between the two main characters. I read these stories for the characters, but the mysteries are nicely plotted and have a Gothic feel. (Oh, how I loved Gothic mysteries as a young reader.) In this particular installment, Raybourn peels a few more layers of the mysterious Brisbane and readers are given another glimpse of his gypsy family. In addition, there are more interactions with members of Julia's large family -- her indomitable father, the Earl March; her stuffy older brother Belmont; her recently bereaved sister, Portia; the colorful Plum, and the youngest brother Valerius. These interactions only add to the marvelous complexity of the main characters. This novel made me laugh and cry out loud and that is always a sign to me of time well spent.

Kusanagi says

Dernier tome format roman des aventures de Lady Julia et Nicholas Brisbane...

Un tome où l'on en apprend plus sur le passé de Brisbane, sur certains des aspects de son travail...

Un tome qui met aussi en avant les relations (et les conflits) à l'intérieur de la famille March.

Un tome qui se faufile dans une histoire d'espionnage, lorgnant à la fois sur certaines des aventures de

Sherlock Holmes, mais aussi sur le couple créé par Agatha Christie de Tuppence et Tommy Beredford (j'ai envie de les relire maintenant c'est malin)

Un tome qui va voir aussi évoluer la relation à la fois dans le couple et dans le travail de Nicholas et Julia.... parce que même si Nicholas laisse Julia s'immiscer dans ses enquêtes, les dangers encourus dans ce travail le stressent beaucoup. Et comme Julia est plutôt du genre à foncer tête baissée dès qu'elle a une idée... j'aime beaucoup comment cet aspect là de leur relation est traité, avec un Nicholas qu'on sent hyper-protecteur mais qui lâche du lest (sauf que le stress c'est mauvais pour lui à un autre niveau...) et Julia qui comprend fort bien ce désir de protection chez lui mais qui décide quand même qu'elle est partenaire autant qu'épouse...

Un tome qui conclue fort bien un cycle d'aventure mais qui peut aussi en annoncer un nouveau....

Noelia says

Tiempos de claroscuro

De nuevo en Londres y con el toque cómico de encajar a todos los sirvientes de los dos en el mismo hogar, y con Brisbane por fin aceptando, con la boca pequeña, a Julia como a una social igual. Una investigación que parece poca cosa se convierte en algo muy complicado, como es habitual en esta serie. La autora sigue manteniendo su elegante prosa y sus elaborados casos como centro de la historia sin perder su brillante sentido del humor, y la endulza con la historia de Julia y Brisbane como telón de fondo.

Allison says

This was fun, for the most part. The part that started to drag was Julia getting lectured and chastened by both her husband and father. I know it's appropriate to the time period, but still. Yes, she's reckless. No, she never listens to any advice. But why should marrying Brisbane have changed any of that? Isn't it time to come to terms with this and find a suitable compromise? I believe it's driven the plots as far as it can.

Thankfully, the last part of the book moved beyond this tired conflict to the mystery at hand. I did feel that the mystery was only haphazardly explored throughout, but that did leave a surprise or two at the end. I've decided I don't really read this series for a tight, convoluted mystery, though. None of the sequels have been able to match up to the first book on that score, but I enjoy them nonetheless. This is more about Julia and Brisbane's relationship (which we get to see plenty of in this one), the scrapes Julia gets herself into by being impetuous, the rescuing Brisbane has to do, and the other relationships to both of them (Julia's siblings, the gypsies, etc). I love all the characters, including the minor ones and the villains - well, except for when they're being completely exasperating. And of course I love the Victorian setting, which Raybourn brings to life wonderfully. That's what I love to read this series for.

So I'm looking forward to the next one! The last couple of pages made it clear there will be another, and I'll be watching for it.

Jenny Q says

If you haven't read the Lady Julia Grey series, then I must ask you...WHY NOT??? Though I shouldn't scold

you. I only picked up the first book this past February. But I fell in love while reading *Silent in the Grave*, and I went out and got all of the other books in the series and read them back-to-back--they're that good!

I won't delve too much into the plot because I don't want to let any spoilers slip, but I will tell you why I thought this book was another fantastic addition to a fantastic series! Julia and Brisbane are so much fun to read about. In fact, they made my list of the top ten love stories in literature. With each new novel I feel like I'm picking up with an old friend--a clever, witty, stylish, outrageous friend and her hubba-hubba hot husband!

In this latest installment the Brisbanes are back in London after their exotic (and exciting) honeymoon voyage to Egypt and India. After Brisbane's initial rejection of Julia's involvement and Julia's hilarious attempt at undercover detection, Julia's uptight brother Belmont becomes their first official case together. And Monty's been a naughty boy, indeed! The Brisbanes are pulled into a sinister tale of blackmail, spiritualism, espionage, and murder. This case is much darker and more dangerous than their previous exploits. With national security threatened and the stakes higher than ever, Julia's life is in danger, and Brisbane's protective instincts are kicked into overdrive.

In the previous book, *Dark Road to Darjeeling*, the Brisbanes experienced some growing pains as they tried to adjust to married life. It was very realistic, but it was also sad to see two people who loved each other so much have such a hard time of it. I'm happy to say that in *The Dark Enquiry*, the Brisbanes are able to resolve their differences and work together as a true team. I loved every minute of watching these two together--investigating, collaborating, bantering, and quarrelling...and trying to keep their hands off each other! They even spend some time in the gypsy camp, which turned out to be one of my favorite parts of the story, because I love to see Brisbane embrace that part of his heritage, and I'm hungry for every little truth revealed about that intensely private and mysterious man.

Julia's eccentric family is all present and accounted for, with Plum playing his part as Brisbane's new employee. Julia also gains an intriguing new family member who has an important part in the story and lends even more insight into Brisbane's past. The mystery culminates in a heartpounding climactic scene in which I did not figure out "whodunit" before it was revealed, and in which, in a tragic twist, Julia experiences a devastating loss that tore my heart out. Fans of this delightfully entertaining and beautifully written series will not be disappointed, and this fan is already counting the days to book number six!

Amy says

[that her bit of heroism at the end of the book results in a miscarriage, making her unable to have children. This happened to the heroine in Tasha Alexander's series as well. I can understand that motherhood might be difficult for a crime-fighting Victorian woman...but these are upper-class women who could conceivably leave their children with the nurse

Giedre says

3.5/5

Amateur lady sleuth + professional dude sleuth. Victorian society, murder & romance. I read all five of them, so obviously it's a pretty good series. Even if I wanted to knock the protagonists' heads together sometimes.

Angela says

Completed the series. Overall I liked the series. The mystery in this book was a little underwhelming compared to previous books and was my least favourite of the series. It did end Lady Julia Grey's story nicely and left the way open for future books.

Lauren says

The Dark Enquiry

4 Stars

Marriage to a private enquiry agent has become a frustrating enterprise for Lady Julia as her husband still strives to protect her from his professional life just as she longs to become a full partner in his endeavors. Julia gets her wish after following Brisbane to a clandestine meeting and witnessing what appears to be the murder of a psychic medium. As Julia and Brisbane investigate the strange death, they must learn to work together or lose everything, for the foe they face is willing to sacrifice anyone and anything for their ultimate goal.

While not quite my favorite installment in the series (that is reserved for **Silent on the Moor**), **The Dark Enquiry** is certainly one of the more intense and exciting additions and I am sad that it is also the final full length novel.

The highlight of the story is the development of Brisbane and Julia's relationship as they finally begin working together both in and outside of the marriage bed. Brisbane comes to accept that he cannot protect Julia from every danger and that the best he can do is provide her with the necessary tools and information for her to deal with the darker and seedier side of his work. Likewise, Julia comes to realize not only the very real risks involved in being Brisbane's partner, but also the extent of his love for her and the lengths he will go to in order to keep her safe.

The mystery is interesting with several compelling twists and turns and one particularly enigmatic character who could Raybourn could do well to give his own series if she were so inclined. The villain came as a surprise although, in hindsight, there are plenty of clues to the ultimate explanation.

The secondary characters are well written and add depth and nuance to the story. Julia is introduced to additional members of Brisbane's gypsy family and there are also developments in the lives of her own siblings. Portia is settling into motherhood; Belmont finds himself in a sticky situation, and Plum may finally have met his match.

All in all, a solid addition to the series although there are one or two developments that were disappointing such as (view spoiler) The next few installments are novellas, which I don't usually read but I might give a try if only to catch up on the Brisbanes and the Marches.

Melody says

I hate not finishing a series. But this series which showed so much promise has gone steadily downhill. In the first 7 pages of this book the heroine has already said and done 6 ridiculous things. She has gone from a

competent, intelligent woman at the beginning of book one to nothing but a figure of ridicule. She stumbles around ruining all her detective husband's careful plans. She is always wrong about who is innocent and who is guilty. And now she has blown up portions of his house 4 times. Her only skill is as bait since she always ends up confronting the villain alone (after first suspecting everyone else.) Yet she inexplicably thinks he accepts her as his full, equal partner. I simply can't read anymore.

Angie says

Oh, how I love this series. I'm sure you all know very well just how much I love this series. I look forward to the new installment in Lady Julia's and Mr. Nicholas Brisbane's adventures all the year long. And by the time I get my hands on the latest book, I feel justified engaging in a little happy dancing as I have exhibited uncommon patience going so long without their inimitable company. And that's essentially what I did when I saw THE DARK ENQUIRY pop up on NetGalley. They came through for me last year with Dark Road to Darjeeling and they came through once again this year. Speaking of titles, I'm liking the new page the series has turned with the inclusion of "dark" in the titles. I liked how the first three "silent" titles reflected what the reader would find in those installments, and I'm enjoying the darker turn the tone of books four and five have taken. Also--the covers. I got a particular kick when I ran across the passage where Julia wears this exact dress in the book. Peacock feathers and all. It gives me a little thrill whenever the cover gods get little things like that right.

A Warning: If you have not read the previous four books, please proceed with the utmost caution. Beyond this point, there be unavoidable spoilers. I highly recommend doing yourself a favor you won't regret and procuring a copy of the first book and applying yourself assiduously to plumbing its marvelous depths. Go on, now. Quick like a bunny!

Lady Julia and Brisbane are finally returned home to London from their harrowing adventure abroad. For awhile their attentions and faculties are occupied setting up house in their new home and puttering about Brisbane's private enquiry office. Julia has taken up a number of new interests and hobbies, including explosives and photography, in the manner only she can. That is to say, with both striking verve and incendiary results. But it isn't long before real life comes back to haunt them both in the form of Julia's oldest (and stuffiest) brother Belmont. It is only by the merest chance that Julia discovers the scintillating fact that Belmont has become Brisbane's latest client. And when both Brisbane and Belmont warn her off in no uncertain terms, she becomes even more determined to ferret out which of Brisbane's various and sundry skills Monty could possibly be in such desperate need of. And so, quite literally following in her husband's footsteps, she goes undercover herself and follows him to the popular (if somewhat questionable) Spirit Club. It is there that she finds a little more than she bargained for in the form of a disturbing séance, a number of powerful and colorful patrons, and--of course--a dead body. Forced to combine their powers of deduction in order to survive, Julia and Brisbane are thrown into an investigation so serpentine it may prove their undoing.

THE DARK ENQUIRY was exactly the book I was hoping it would be. I found myself instantly involved at its inception, wildly satisfied at its conclusion, and utterly absorbed with everything in between. It was surprisingly soothing to be back in London once more, back where it all began, yet with two such changed, yet familiar protagonists. I was fascinated to see how Julia and Brisbane handled their still evolving relationship in the midst of their old turf, their old friends, and especially their old ghosts. The results were both beautiful and painful. My heart felt squeezed on both ends of the spectrum. You see, the nature of this particular mystery was very personal. And not just in that it involved Julia's brother. The reach of its twisty tentacles stretched across several Marches as well as back quite a ways into Brisbane's murky past. More private details come out into the light of day than anyone is comfortable with, and the whole array is so

deftly handled that I simply sat back and applauded such consummate storytelling at work. It's an emotional experience following your favorite characters as they are put through such subtle and refining paces. I find myself holding my breath, never quite certain whether or not they will emerge intact. I thoroughly enjoyed Plum's involvement in this case and continue to get enormous enjoyment from his fledgling working relationship with Brisbane in general. It was, as always, a delight to spend any time at all with Lord March. And I can never see too much of Aquinas or Fleur or Portia. But, in the end, it's always about Julia and Brisbane. It was from that first arresting sentence of *Silent in the Grave*, and it will be for as long as this superb and sophisticated series continues. I ached for them and was proud of them in this book and I will read about them for as long as the talented Deanna Raybourn cares to write about them. Finest kind and an instant entry on my Best of 2011 list.

THE DARK ENQUIRY is due out June 21st.
