



Queen of Hearts

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Lady Georgiana Rannoch, thirty-fifth in line for the British throne, knows how to play the part of an almost royal—but now she's off to Hollywood, where she must reprise her role as sleuth or risk starring in an all-too-convincing death scene ...

My mother, the glamorous and much-married actress, is hearing wedding bells once again—which is why she must hop across the pond for a quickie divorce in Reno. To offer my moral support, and since all expenses are paid by her new hubby-to-be, Max, I agree to make the voyage with her.

Crossing the Atlantic, with adventure in the air and wealthy men aboard, Mother all but forgets about Max and matrimony—especially when movie mogul Cy Goldman insists on casting her in his next picture.

Meanwhile, I find myself caught up in the secret investigation of a suspected jewel thief. Lucky for me, the lead investigator happens to be my dashing beau, Darcy!

Mother's movie and Darcy's larceny lead everyone to Cy's Hollywood home, where the likes of Charlie Chaplin are hanging about and there's enough romantic intrigue to fill a double feature. But we hardly get a chance to work out the sleeping arrangements before Cy turns up dead—as if there wasn't enough drama already...

Queen of Hearts Details

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From Reader Review Queen of Hearts for online ebook

Kylie Sparks says

I'm over this series. As another reviewer put it, Rhys Bowen phoned this one in. It's painfully cliched and poorly plotted. Georgiana becomes less likeable with every book as she whines about her charmed life and bitches at her maid.

Kathy Davie says

Eighth in the Her Royal Spyness historical mystery series and revolving around Lady Georgiana Rannoch as she sails off to America.

My Take

Georgie's mummy drives me bats. She's so totally clueless when it comes to her own daughter. She's got money up the wazoo but never does anything to help her penniless daughter. Well, except to point out that her daughter could simply take up with a rich man, if only she weren't so huge and homely... So it was a total treat to read about Mummy actually paying for a wardrobe for Georgie. It's also too funny to read how very snobbish Mummy is as she puts down most of the people around her for being so very common. Her, the daughter of a Cockney who starred on the stage.

I do hope she marries Max and that Max loses everything. Nothing against Max, I just want Mummy to be incredibly poor and for Georgie to have money, put that shoe on the other foot.

Aboard ship, it's more of the snobbish and nosy. You'll adore the comment Georgie throws back at Mrs. Simpson, lol. Meoww. Oh, lord, then there's Lady Porter's question of the captain, asking if "ships like this sink very often". I loved the captain's response *more laughter*. Oh, boy, this is followed by Jerry's snide comment.

Poor Georgie. Every time she's about to get some, Queenie shows up to save the day. Then there's the day when Queenie quits. Yeahh! She irritates the heck out of me, although Georgie drives me even more nuts that she keeps her. Then again, I can understand why.

Ya know, Bowen never does explain how the bracelet gets returned. Why doesn't Georgie tell Darcy about that moment of total smoothness when Algie introduces himself to Goldman?

I must say, Belinda certainly surprises me. I thought she had her mind set on one thing, turns out it was the other thing, lol.

Darcy is such a sweetheart. Understanding, loving, and so anxious to make enough money to support the woman he loves the way he thinks she needs to live. It's Darcy who keeps bringing me back. I'm curious to know just what he really does, who he works for. And I'm curious to find out if he ever does make that fortune he wants.

It's a whirlwind trip for Georgie. Wined and dined by movie stars, a fit of jealousy on Darcy's part, murder, mayhem, tension between the stars, and it seems as if everyone on board the ship shows up in Hollywood. Even Darcy gets in on the act.

The Story

It's Mummy again. Desperate for discrete companionship on her necessary journey to the depths of America, she arrives with a flourish at Kingsdowne Place (see *Heirs and Graces*, 7) and drags Georgie off with her.

For once, Mummy forks out for clothes for Georgie, but of course, for purely selfish reasons. It does work well for Georgie and is certainly good for her ego as she's romanced by famous actors in Hollywood while Mummy fills her time with making a terrible movie. Meanwhile cat burglars and murderers are afoot.

The Characters

Lady Georgiana Rannoch is the daughter of a duke, a cousin to His Majesty King George and to the Princess Elizabeth, and too poor for words. **Queenie Hepplewhite** is her very inept maid. Mummy is **Claire Daniels**, a leading lady on the stage who would have stayed married to the duke except it required she live at Castle Rannoch. Instead she bolted, and she hasn't stopped. She's taken up with one man after another and the latest, **Max von Stroheim**, wants to marry her. **Homer Clegg**, a Texan, is her current husband whom she hasn't seen in ages. **Granddad**, Claire's dad, is a retired London bobby. **Claudette** is Claire's maid.

Darcy O'Mara is the heir to an impoverished Irish estate, in love with Georgie, and spends most of his time jaunting about the world on secret missions.

Aboard the Berengaria sailing for America

Captain Harrison is in command. The passengers include **Sir Digby and Lady Porter**, **Montmorency "Tubby" Halliday** is a reporter for the *Daily Mail*, **Princess Promila**, **Mrs. Simpson** (yes, that one), and the klutzy **Algie Broxley-Foggett** sent to America to become a man.

Cyrus Goldman is the impresario of Golden Pictures, and **Stella Brightwell** is his mistress and star. Stella was also part of a talented twin act — **Gertie and Flossie Oldham**. **Flossie** became **Bella Brightwell**. **Helen Goldman** is Cy's wife and lives in New York. Mostly. **Juan de Castillo** is a member of an impoverished Spanish family. **Freddie** is Stella's ex. **Ronnie Green** is Goldman's assistant. **Maria** is his housekeeper at Alhambra II, the tacky castle Cy is building up in the hills. **Jimmy** is the gatekeeper.

In Hollywood

Barbara Kindell, a gossip columnist, tries to slip inside Georgie's guard. **Charlie Chaplin** really likes Georgie, all that lovely innocence, unspoiled, and long legs. **Dolores Hanford** and her husband and friends are some of the tacky nouveau riche. **Craig Hart** is an international star with an interest in Georgie and a need to get married.

Errol Flynn, **Bing Crosby**, and **Norma Shearer** get a mention.

Sheriff Billings is with Ventura County Sheriff's Department. **Deputy Hanson** will guard the suspect.

Belinda Warburton-Stoke, a.k.a., Mademoiselle Dubois, is Georgie's friend. And no longer welcome at home. **Wanda** will play the part of Mummy in Reno while Mummy goes off to act.

Kingsdowne Place

The dowager **Duchess Edwina Eynsford** and her half dotty sisters, **Princess Charlotte Orlovski** (she's into spiritualism) and the wrongly named **Virginia**, are having tea with Georgie. **Edie** is the head housemaid.

The Cover and Title

The cover is the woodcut design that has appeared on earlier books. This time it's a cruise ship in the background with Georgie in a green suit holding onto her cloche and leaning into a stiff wind. There's a man in a fedora and cream trench coat behind her and a woman with dark hair wearing what looks like a cross

between a poke bonnet and a shepherdess hat. The trademark burgundy ribbon with a picot trim spans the lower part of the cover with the title and series information on it.

The title is all about Georgie, for she is the new *Queen of Hearts*.

Meg says

Very good addition to this fun series.

Mind you, there were several snide comments in there that would not be politically correct today, but were, unfortunately, acceptable at the time (1930's). So I just had to keep that in mind whenever I ran into these.

The mc's mother also said some rather cruel things to her, but then she has always been portrayed as self-centered and entitled, so I had to take these for what they were, as well.

Looking forward to the mc's next adventure!

Martha says

I didn't like this book as much as the others in the series. The murder was solved in a very clunky manner and the end result was kind of lame. The American characters were very one dimensional and using Charlie Chaplin didn't add anything. The second to last chapter could have been left out altogether since the relationship between Georgie and Darcy is not developing. The author should either have them marry and work as a sleuthing team or drop the relationship altogether.

kari says

I like Georgie. She is one smart cookie and she stays true to her values and ideas. However, she did make some mistakes in this book(kissing another man, telling herself it was all innocent, but enjoying the attention from a big movie star) and I'm growing weary of her waiting and waiting and waiting for Darcy as he is also waiting for her. I get it. If he likes it he should put a ring on it. Got it. So, please Ms. Bowen, come up with a way that they can finally get married. It wouldn't affect her ability to solve crimes, maybe it would make it better. They could be together in their adventures. Really, enough already.

The mystery takes a l o n g time to roll out. The real heart of the book doesn't start until maybe 150 pages in or more. That isn't great storytelling, in my opinion.

What I did like were the intersecting crimes. Is there one criminal? Two? That was well done. And in this one, all the clues are apparent, if you know how to put them together.

So, I'm looking forward to the next installment, but with some reservations.

Linda Lou McCall says

I absolutely LOVED all of the previous books in this series! When I saw that a new one was available, I didn't bother with the reviews - I just purchased it. The characters are still well-developed and narrator

Katherine Kellgren continues in her masterful vien. But the story falls flat here. First, I like British novels because.....well, they take place in the UK! This one has our familiar crew in the U.S. with not so believeable "American" characters. I don't like my posh aristocrats mixed in with "cowboys" and one-dimensional "Hollywood" players. Even "Charlie Chaplin" was lame in his cameo appearance. How can an author fail to replicate a famous legendary person like Chaplin with as much documentation upon which to draw, to say nothing of his huge body of work on FILM? As for lead character, Lady Georgiana "Georgie" Rannoch, and the love of her life, the handsome, sexy, Irish nobleman Darcy O'Mara still leaving readers with the now-stale cliffhanger on whether they WILL or whether they WON'T, I'm over it! Everyone else in these "Royal Spyness" novels are overtly having big-time sex in the early 20th century, especially Georgie's BFF, Belinda, who would be considered a "golddigging hood rat" even by modern standards. Even Georgie's mother acts "ratchet" when it comes to sex and she's (usually) married! Both Georgie and Darcy are past legal age, in love, and wickedly attracted to one another. It defies imagination that they continue to spend the night together sharing nothing more than a kiss! I could have dealt with the poor plot line if Georgie and Darcy had done the "nasty" this time! OR I could go along with the chastity angle, if this book was targeted for the Young Adult market and ALL of the "sex-capades" among the other characters wasn't so rampant and blatant. Come on, Rhys Bowen, two broke aristocrats abstaining until they have money is no longer credible!

?Susan? says

In this fun addition to the series Georgiana is off on an adventure to the America's with her Mother. Her mother is quite a piece of work, she is a famous actress who has made marriage into an art form. When she recieves a new marriage proposal from a very wealthy German she must get to Nevada to file for a divorce from her current oil barron husband.

They sail to New York, do some shopping, and then they are off to the Reno Court House. When they find out there is a waiting period, Georgiana's mother decides there is no way that she is waiting in Reno, which at that time, was a bleak, desolate, desert town. Hollywood is their next stop and much more of a bustling, luxurious town of inflated egos. After settling in, a famous director that they met on the ship ride to New York invites them to a weekend getaway at a his mountain mansion. The other guests attending the event make up a prestigious list of who's who in Hollywood. Soon after arriving disaster strikes and there is a murder. This is when the story very much turns into a game of "Clue", very Agatha Christie like. Everyone is a suspect and many of them have a motive.

Rhys Bowen really brought California to life and made it fun to imagine how it was back in the 30's. Another great combination of creative writing and wonderful narration by Katherine Kellgren.

Poonam says

2.5 stars

I like reading cozy mysteries and apart from Dame Christie I hadn't found any other writer that wrote satisfactory cozy mysteries. But after starting this series I have to say I have clearly a favorite cozy mystery series from recent times.

This is the 8th book in the series and even though this book is a standalone from the mystery perspective, I would suggest to read this series in order as there are recurring characters (and it's more fun when you know the nature of these characters) and also there is a build-up romance between Georgina (our main protagonist)

and Mr. Darcy.

This story is different than the other books of this series as most of the other books are set among British Royalty but here the setting is in Hollywood.

"You movie types live in a fantasy world, don't you?"

There are some real Hollywood personalities that make an appearance (like Charlie Chaplin) and I really enjoyed how they have been interwoven within the story.

There are 2 different mysteries- one involving a jewel thief and the other where the producer of a studio is found murdered. **Is there a connection to the robberies and the murder? We find the answer to this by the end of the story.**

For me the story started off well and progressed well but it became over-dramatic at the end (**similar to climax of a Hollywood movie**). I could have done without that additional drama but still a decent one time read.

Caitlin Benallack says

These are consistently lovely cozy mysteries.

Are they great literature? No.

Are they the literary equivalent of a cupcake with sprinkles? Yes.

Robin says

I swore if there wasn't some sort of progress in Georgie and Darcy's relationship I was going to swear off reading this mystery series. Or progress in Georgie's life situation. Neither happened, and on top of that Queenie, the quintessential hapless, comedic, idiosyncratic character, is no longer an endearing touch of whimsy, but a one-note joke that has been told too many times and is irritating. Further, it has gone on to the point that Georgie's soft-heartedness is now a glaring weakness that makes it harder and harder to respect her character, regardless of her cleverness at solving mysteries. Unlike Bowen's other series, that are rooted in a geographical place and with characters who are rooted solidly in relationships and work that allow for day-to-day rhythms and growth, Georgie is stuck in no-win territory. While Georgie's position as 35th in line to the throne and cousin to the king (as well as daughter of a former famous actress and rich tramp) provide interesting and exotic locales for mystery plots, the peripatetic nature of the series also means that there is little character development. Georgie is no closer to being able to support herself or have a home. Darcy, equally lacking funds and his job requiring constant travel, is no closer to being able to settle down and marry, nor is he around long enough to truly understand how precarious Georgie's situation is. (It is also getting a little ridiculous that no matter where Georgie ends up, from Eastern Europe to Southern California, Darcy's latest mission takes him to the same place.) The supporting cast other than Georgie's maternal grandpa, are selfish, careless, one note characters. Most of all Georgie is passive in most areas of her life, letting others take advantage without a peep from her. The mystery surrounding the murder of a movie mogul's death was light and enjoyable with a clever twist or two, and I probably will read the 9th novel in the

series . . . maybe. But a novel series of any genre with the same cast of characters requires growth and depth over the course of the series, as Bowen has demonstrated with Molly Murphy and Evan Evans. Lady Georgiana Rannoch is not being as well-served by her creator.

Jonathan says

In *Queen of Hearts* Georgie accompanies her mother to America so her mother can get a quickie divorce in Reno, but on the way they are invited to take part in a movie production in Hollywood. But when Georgie stumbles into the investigation of a jewel thief and then a dead body is found Georgie must investigate before another person is knocked off. It's great going back to a series that you love because it feels like you're revisiting old friends. That was the case with this book, it was another stunning book in an amazing series.

All of the main characters appear in this book, Georgie, Darcy, Queenie, and even Belinda all take a huge role throughout the book. Georgie's mother is also one of the huge characters, and I must say, no matter how rude she is, I actually like her and think she's hilarious. With real people, such as the Astors and Charlie Chaplin, appearing or being mentioned in this book it adds a sense of credibility to the book, even though it is plainly fiction, and I really love when Ms. Bowen shows these people who really did live and how she imagines them, it usually ends up amazing.

The mystery was well-plotted though the killer's actions after the reveal were more surprising to me than the actual killer. I must say this was probably one of the most intense endings (by endings I mean last 5 or so chapters of the book) I've read in awhile in a mystery and somehow it fit.

Overall a really good mystery as always, with good, solid characters, and the right amount of humor. *Queen of Hearts* gets 5/5 stars. I can't wait for the next one coming in less than a week!

Susan Johnson says

Lady Georgiana is the star of one of my favorite cozy mystery novel series. She is thirty-fifth in line for the royal throne and poor as a church mouse. Her mother is a famous actress who neglects her and her brother runs the family castle in Scotland crippled by her father's gambling debts. Georgie is plucky though and often sent on errands by the Queen that seem to involve dead bodies.

In this addition her mother decides to travel to Reno to get a quickie divorce from her Texan husband so she can marry her current lover, a rich German industrialist. She decides Georgie should accompany her so they set off on an ocean liner first class. There are stolen jewels and a mysterious splash in the water. Was it a body? While on board they meet a rich movie studio owner who decides to cast Georgie's mother in his newest movie.

Once in Hollywood, they go with assorted other characters to the studio heads private estate, obviously modeled on Hearst Castle, where the executive is murdered. Georgie's boyfriend, Darcy, turns up to investigate the jewel theft and the murder. Charlie Chaplin even makes an appearance as a notorious womanizer.

It is just a lot of silly fun. I have a good time when I read them and I enjoyed this one very much.

Empress Reece (Hooked on Books) says

A really nice easy read. I just wish georgianna and Darcy would get married already! When am i going to meet Mr. Darcy! Lol Rhys Bowen, you need to crank them out faster!! Cant get enough of the Royal Spyness or Molly Murphy series

Mark Baker says

Georgie is off to America with her mother, actress Claire Daniels. But their Atlantic crossing is marred by a jewel thief and a possible murder that only Georgie witnesses. And the danger follows them when they hit America and head to Hollywood of the 1930's.

Despite the number of miles the characters cover, the plot holds together well and we still get to see many of the series regulars, who were charming as always. Being an entertainment junky, I enjoyed this fictional look at old Hollywood and seeing the real people who made cameos over the course of the book. All told, another great read in a fun series.

Read my full review at [Carstairs Considers](#).

Vanessa says

What a disappointment. This is a good book and fun as you'd expect right up until the last quarter or so, when the author suddenly realizes the need to tie up all the plot points she's opened up and proceeds to do so in the clunkiest way possible. The deductions are straight out of Encyclopedia Brown, and the setting and characters mostly wasted. This makes me think the series is just running out of steam.
