



A Rescue For A Queen

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The eleventh enthralling adventure to feature Ursula Blanchard, reluctant spy in the service of Queen Elizabeth I. February, 1571. Ursula is once more plunged into affairs of the state when she escorts her foster daughter Margaret to the Netherlands to meet her suitor. The queen's spymaster, Sir William Cecil, learns that the wealthy Italian banker Roberto Ridolfi will be hosting their forthcoming wedding – a man who he fears may once again be plotting to put Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. But Ursula is also about to come face-to-face with her greatest enemy – and the exiled Countess of Northumberland is not the only figure from Ursula's past to put in a surprising appearance.

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From Reader Review A Rescue For A Queen for online ebook

Jane Bigelow says

I hadn't read one of the Ursula Blanchard series in quite awhile, and I wonder if that's one reason I enjoyed it more than some of the other Goodreads readers seem to have done. I enjoy the period details--accurate, where I'm able to judge--and the way that even minor characters such as Master van Weede have real personalities. And oh, my, can Buckley ever do suspense! Kidnappings, counter-kidnappings, runs for the border, oh yeah.

I love Ursula, even when she makes bad decisions. Indeed, sometimes I love her because she makes bad decisions. Lust overcomes good sense. Well, if I had an ex-husband (or is he?) like Matthew de la Roche, I might have the same problem! Handsome, witty, and capable of daring rescues, the man's certainly attractive even if his rescue methods are a bit cold-blooded.

For me, the reminders of who's who came in handy. I can readily see that they might be annoying to someone who's reading the series in more rapid succession. It's the problem that any long-running series faces: P.G. Wodehouse used to suggest that his constant readers go have a walk in the garden while he brought the new folks up to date. He would then do so with a neat little bit of exposition which you could skip if you really wanted to, though it was so witty that I never did. Current authors are strongly discouraged from doing this; slipping it in bit by bit is thought more natural. I'm not sure I agree.

I don't find Dale's jealousy repetitive. I think it's progressing. And I wonder what the author is going to do with that and certain other issues in the next book. We're getting close to the point where Elizabeth I was forced to overcome her reluctance to execute another anointed queen and order Mary Stuart's death.

Karen says

This 11th installment in Fiona Buckley's Ursula Blanchard series was better than her previous effort "Queen's Bounty," which was frankly boring. Unlike other readers I don't have a problem with Buckley re-introducing Matthew de la Roche in "A Rescue for a Queen" (you just KNEW he was going to show up again after Ursula found out he was still alive, or else what was the point of bringing him back?) or Ursula's sleeping with him again (because let's face it, lust can make us do really stupid things) or with Dale's hysterical jealousy of Ursula and Brockley (I actually know some people like that).

What I do have a problem with is the way Ursula can't stand up to Cecil and the Queen and "Just Say No" to the way they manipulate her into going on really lame missions in a quest for vague information which puts her into dangerous situations. Cecil has said that he doesn't really like sending women on dangerous missions and Queen Elizabeth presumably doesn't want to put her half-sister in peril, so they should understand if Ursula tells them, "Sorry, not this time." But I guess if she did that, Buckley wouldn't have a series to write about anymore, would she? It just seems like the way they maneuvered her into this latest mission was a little too much.

The coincidences are also a little too much in this book (Roberto Ridolfi just HAPPENS to be related to the man Ursula's ward intends to marry and is hosting the wedding. How convenient!) but coincidences seem to be a stock in trade of mystery writers.

I started reading this series not because I'm a fan of mysteries per se, but because I'm fascinated with the Elizabethan era and was interested in how Buckley would portray a female espionage agent in that time. I thought she did really well in the earlier books of the series (read "To Shield The Queen," "Queen's Ransom," "To Ruin A Queen," and "A Pawn for A Queen"), but it seems like the latest books are getting a little contrived.

I will still keep reading this series for now to see if Buckley manages to recapture the spark that made me fall in love with it in the first place, but I think I'll borrow the next book from the library before deciding whether to spend money on it.

Susan says

The eleventh enthralling adventure to feature Ursula Blanchard, reluctant spy in the service of Queen Elizabeth I. February, 1571. Ursula is once more plunged into affairs of the state when she escorts her foster daughter Margaret to the Netherlands to meet her suitor. The queen's spymaster, Sir William Cecil, learns that the wealthy Italian banker Roberto Ridolfi will be hosting their forthcoming wedding – a man who he fears may once again be plotting to put Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. But Ursula is also about to come face-to-face with her greatest enemy – and the exiled Countess of Northumberland is not the only figure from Ursula's past to put in a surprising appearance.

Ursula is a realist who gets unintentionally used by the court of Queen Elizabeth to spy. As people reveal their intentions, she is ever more in danger. SPOILER:

She is also a bit modern- sleeping with a former husband and getting pregnant, which she accepts. She is a bit of an agnostic in a pious world.

Julie says

Perhaps I should stop reading these books, despite my deep affection for them, because I find them really frustrating. They look and sound a bit like the books I love, but are shallower, or more repetitive.

Karen says

I found this book deeply flawed and terribly frustrating. Dale and Brockley are acting like two middle-schoolers in their first relationship. Ursula has the moral fortitude of a banana. And, by the way, it is not usually that easy for a woman in her mid-thirties to get pregnant THAT easily.

Judy King says

I stumbled onto this book, the 11th in a series of mysteries from the 1500s. Now I'm anxious to uncover earlier (and later) stories in this well-written saga about the Englishwoman who not only solves crimes, she occasionally takes on intelligence gathering for the crown.

Kathy says

This series continues to be very entertaining and always fun.

Jane Irish Nelson says

When her ward, Margaret becomes betrothed to a Dutchman, Ursula, accompanied by her servants, the Brockleys, travels to the Netherlands to see Margaret both wed and settled. Once there, she discovers that her presence can be useful to Cecil, in investigating a potential plot against Queen Elizabeth. Despite danger to herself and her servants, Ursula reluctantly undertakes the mission, never guessing how long and dangerous the road home may become. Recommended.

Michell Karnes says

Ursula a lady during the Elizabethan era is sent on a mission by Lord Burhley and her half sister the Queen to find evidence that Norfolk is planning to aid Mary Stuart in her quest for the Scottish throne and Elizabeth's as well. This mystery is well done and I hope to read more by this author.

Joanna says

I was so excited to discover that Fiona Buckley had started publishing new books in the Ursula Blanchard series. I only wish that my excitement had continued as I read through these later installments in the series.

One of the hallmarks of a good series is that you become familiar with, and really get to know, the recurring characters that the author has created. Unfortunately, Buckley seems to need to remind the reader - or maybe herself - of who each member of the cast is every single time that they appear. One solution to this problem would be to reduce the cast included per novel. Another would be to trust that the reader remembers that Fran Dale and Roger Brockley are married, that Dale does not always trust Brockley and Ursula, and that Brockley and Ursula almost became more than manservant and mistress one specific night many many years ago - without having to mention it over and over again. Seriously, it comes up so much that, with Ursula being the narrator, you begin to feel that the lady doth protest too much.

Also, Ursula is at her best when she is trying to ferret out information for Queen Elizabeth. In this installment, it feels as if there is no specific information that she is trying to obtain. They are simply playing a game of putting her in deeper and deeper peril until such time as their enemies may reveal themselves and she can report back. Meh. Also, the book harkens back to the early books in the series and has Ursula be rescued from a kidnapping by good old Matthew de la Roche. Which is fine, but feels tired by this point in the series.

Although I didn't find this book to be especially satisfying, it did cure me of wishing for more installments of the series. The sparkle and suspense of the earlier books is sorely lacking.

Carol says

Two and a half stars. I enjoy this series but found this book disappointing. Ursula and company traveled from one place to another, constantly saying it was time to go back to England, and then disaster would strike, preventing them from leaving, and leading to a new crisis. I hope this isn't a sign of a deterioration in this series.

Kathleen Buckley says

I have enjoyed the series. I like historical novels with period detail, and I particularly like that the characters change over the course of the series, as people do in real life. The characters are likable (I really can't like a book if I can't like the characters) and seem generally not untrue to the period.

Amy says

I really like these Ursula Blanchard mysteries. I like the characters, especially the strong women and the strong and compassionate men (Brockley and John Ryder). This one was up to the mark with excitement and historical detail.

Beth says

I feel like I'm being generous in giving three stars. Like other readers here, I loved the original series and was thrilled when Fiona Buckley revived the series! But I don't feel the magical spark that the earlier books had. I'm frankly sick of Dale being so hysterically jealous of Ursula and Brockley. Maybe I'm naive, but I think there is more than one kind of love, as even Dale admits in this current book. Brockley loves Dale or he wouldn't have married her. And unless there is a cruel streak to Brockley that we haven't seen, he would never deliberately hurt his wife, even though his conflicting feelings for Ursula are very real and true as well. There can be an intense love and even attraction between two people in the kind of situation that Brockley and Ursula are in, but it doesn't follow that they have to act on it (which they got close to once, but aren't we all human and haven't we all been tempted by the forbidden?). Dale is just so insecure in her marriage I just want to slap her at this point and tell her to get over it.

Also: I hope I'm not the only person who wishes Matthew de la Roche would fall off a cliff and die a horrible death. WHY did Fiona Buckley have to throw HIM into the mix yet again? Yes, I can understand Ursula having a physical and emotional obsession over him - clearly the chemistry between them is magnetic. But if she can show such restraint with Brockley, WHY can she not do the same with Matthew? It's like she loses all her common sense and wisdom as soon as he walks in the door, even though he's a Catholic conspiring left and right to have her half-sister Elizabeth I dethroned and executed (whom she's so loyal to and risks her life for in more and more absurd ways as this series drags on). She KNOWS he's trouble and KNOWS it's a bad idea - and sleeps with him anyway (view spoiler)

Forgive my rant, I'm mostly venting out of disappointment and frustration. I think I'm done with this series. I think at some point I'll read the individual books I loved so much way back when. But the new ones? I think I'll just conveniently forget they exist.

Julia says

I enjoy Ursula, her schemes, the characters, and the detail. I really appreciate the historical accuracy, even though the Spanish Inquisition repulses me beyond belief. I enjoyed the change of pace, in that Ursula not only has to find information but who is also traitorous to the Queen. I appreciate the new perspective that Elizabeth's decision to execute her sister, Mary, came after long, exhaustive periods of trying for alternative means to a solution. It caused me to do research to see if this was rather a writer's device or historical representation, and I'm glad to know that Fiona has stuck with the more truthful representation of details in her Ursula stories. I will continue reading the series and appreciate the change of pace.
