



Death on the Sapphire

R.J. Koreto

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An extraordinary woman living in extraordinary times, Lady Frances Ffolkes is an Edwardian-era suffragette who has an uncanny ability to attract danger and romance.

When Major Colcombe, a family friend and war veteran, dies under mysterious circumstances, Lady Frances discovers that he was working on a manuscript about South Africa's bloody Boer War, which reportedly revealed a scandalous mistake that cost the lives of many brave soldiers. Now, it's up to Frances and her loyal lady's maid, June Mallow, to track down the missing manuscript and bring the killer to justice. Despite clashes with Scotland Yard and the British Secret Service, Frances never backs down and finds herself in several very unfortunate positions--and one very fortunate love triangle.

Death on the Sapphire is R. J. Koreto's witty and winsome debut of a series that is sure to be fan favorite for years to come.

Death on the Sapphire Details

Date : Published June 14th 2016 by Crooked Lane Books

ISBN : 9781629535906

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Format : Hardcover 292 pages

Genre : Mystery, Historical, Historical Fiction, Historical Mystery, Fiction, European Literature, British Literature

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From Reader Review Death on the Sapphire for online ebook

Jessica Robbins says

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

Linda says

It is 1906, and Lady Frances Ffolkes is an unconventional young lady—she wants women to be treated as equals, and to be given the right to vote. She and her intrepid maid, Mallow, are determined to solve the mystery of a missing manuscript, despite all of the obstacles presented by men who think they should stay out of such dangerous business. An excellent historical mystery with engaging characters.

Diane Lynn says

Set in London, 1906

Lady Frances Ffolkes is a very independent and modern lady for her time. She speaks on women's suffrage, works in a soup kitchen, and is always looking for ways to improve the lives of those less fortunate. She also controls her own finances and lives in a residence hotel for ladies, mostly for the freedom it gives her.

The story begins with a missing manuscript after the death of a family friend. The manuscript concerned a battle and a group of soldiers during the Boer Wars. Frances and her maid, June Mallow, go about solving the mystery.

I found the mystery to be rather ho-hum. The reader isn't given all the clues, it's more of a reveal. It also became a little silly towards the end. But my biggest complaint is that I felt I was constantly being instructed about customs and society during Edwardian times.

I received this book in a Goodreads giveaway.

Mary Morris says

Do not miss this book

A woman before her time brings us into the twentieth century and solves a crime while doing it. So much history of the social strata of the first few years of women's suffer age.

Lady Francis could be appropriate for this day and age. I can see her leading the "Me Too Movement" and a woman's right to chose. Read these books in reverse order and was not disappointed. Looking forward to the fourth book starring Lady Francis fFolks.

Kathy Martin says

This mystery was an excellent introduction to an intrepid heroine and life in 1906 England. Lady Frances Ffolkes is the daughter and sister of a Marquess. However, she doesn't fit very well into the society lady mold. She was sent to America to attend Vassar. Now back home in London, she is living in an exclusive lady's hotel being served by her loyal maid June Mallow. She fills her days with committee meetings and charitable activities. She is a suffragette.

When the sister of a family friend - Major Daniel Colcombe - comes to beg assistance in locating her late brother's manuscript, Franny finds herself in an investigation that has many implications. She learns more about Danny's role in the Boer War and the contents of his missing manuscript.

She also encounters others who want the manuscript for various reasons. Both the Special Branch and the Secret Service are interested in locating it. So are others with different political agendas. Franny's investigations wind their way through the upper classes of Britain.

Franny also is being courted by two very different men. Lord Gareth Blaine is exciting and runs with the fast crowd. Henry Wheaton is the family solicitor and a very successful lawyer. Franny isn't interested in marriage yet which she views as putting an end to her work as a suffragette.

I liked the setting of this mystery. England in 1906 was going through many social changes. Lady Frances is a intriguing combination of the old views of class and privilege and the new more modern equality. She expects that her name and family connections will give her priority with the police who should be delighted to serve her. At the same time, she sees what it is like for the poor when she spends her evenings working in a soup kitchen. Her relationship with her maid also reflects this conflict. June is proud to serve in an upper class family. She delights in her position. She is quick to defend her mistress from those who are too familiar. But Lady Frances and June are also forming a friendship and a partnership in the mystery.

Fans of female amateur detectives and fans of historical mysteries will enjoy this one. I look forward to further adventures for Lady Frances.

Nancy H says

With a heroine every bit as wonderful as Maisie Dobbs or Kate Shackleton, this story is set in early twentieth-century London. When Lady Frances Ffolke learns of the mysterious death of a friend of her brother, and a missing manuscript which would damage many reputations in high society circles of London, she decides to investigate. She is already in some disgrace with her family because of her suffragist views and choice of living independently, but this life style gives her the freedom to track down the solution to several deaths and to locate the missing manuscript. Of course, along the way, she just happens to meet some eligible bachelors who just might possibly make her change her views on marriage.

Jessica Howard says

A very entertaining and atmospheric Edwardian mystery. Full review for Shelf Awareness.

Kathy says

I enjoyed this introduction to a young progressive woman of the Edwardian period who determines that she is the one to help uncover the mystery surrounding the death of a childhood friend as well as the disappearance of a manuscript he had written documenting a particular battle in the Boer War. I will definitely read any following books in this series because it has been quite a while since I have read a book that just made me smile.

Barbara says

I received an ARC of this book to review for Library Journal. Read my review there when it is published.

J. Else says

Lady Frances Ffolkes is an extremely busy woman. Along with chairing the Women's Political Equality movement, meetings with the Ladies' Educational Improvement Club, volunteering at the soup kitchen, and managing her own finances while living independently in Edwardian-era London (specifically 1906), she also finds herself hunting for a lost manuscript. After her friend, Major Daniel Colcombe, dies under mysterious circumstances, his war manuscript, a record of his activities during South Africa's bloody Boer War, goes missing. Lady Frances quickly discovers that it may contain scandalous secrets, and that her friend's death may not have been an accident. With the help of her loyal maid, June Mallow, Lady Frances goes toe-to-toe with Scotland Yard, the British Secret Service, and greedy politicians in a quest to recover her friend's stolen war memoir. But there are men following close on Lady Frances's heels who would do anything to keep the truth about what happened on South Africa's Sapphire River a secret.

The characters and setting of this book breathe so deeply that readers are easily drawn into the story. The dialogue and character mannerisms build up the novel's authenticity in an enchanting way. Lady Frances is a thoughtful, witty, and mature woman. While she may be the daughter of a marquess, she works hard and approaches each challenge with sensibility and courage. She's often undervalued and underestimated for being "just a woman," but Lady Frances rises to the occasion each time – and I loved every minute. The author never rushes, so plot and character development are things to savor, and leading ladies like Frances are marvelous to read about.

With a memorable heroine, rich atmosphere, and intriguing mystery, Koreto has created a book that will engage and entertain readers. I eagerly await book 2. Highly recommended!

I read this as a reviewer for the Historical Novel Society. Review posted via their website at:

<https://historicalnovelsociety.org/re...>

APPEARED IN: HNR Issue 77 (August 2016)

Linley says

A great way to chill on the sofa. This novel tries a little hard, but the net result is fun (and I would love the publisher to fix the awful cover picture!)

Recommended to older readers who like their main character to have some oomph!

QNPoohBear says

Lady Frances Ffolkes has embarrassed her noble family by campaigning for women's suffrage, volunteering at a soup kitchen and moving to a hotel for ladies with only her maid for a chaperone. Conventional Lady Frances is not, but she IS a loyal friend and when a family friend, Kat Colcombe, comes crying for help finding her late brother Daniel's missing manuscript, Lady Frances is only too happy to help. She begins to have her suspicions that Danny, an ex-soldier, did not die in a gun cleaning accident nor did he commit suicide. The manuscript he was working on was a memoir of his service during the Boer War- a war that most people want to forget. Lady Frances vows to obtain justice for Danny and those who died a horrific death in South Africa. As Frances investigates, she attracts the attention of Scotland Yard, the Secret Service, two suitors and who knows how many villains!

This is a fabulous light mystery set in the early 20th century. It is similar to a cozy mystery, not having much violence and no gore with a light romance. Though not set in a small town, the story is similar to a cozy mystery because it features an amateur sleuth and focuses on solving the mystery behind the murder and largely on character development. At first I felt like the reader was dropped into a story in progress. I had questions about why Lady Frances knew the Superintendent and how and where she had been educated. The answers come out slowly as Frances fills other characters in on her backstory. Then I couldn't put it down! I didn't guess who the villain was but I did guess someone else would turn up dead halfway through and who and why. I only gave this 4 stars instead of 5 because of that slow reveal backstory and also because there were too many characters to keep track of and some of the history felt forced into the story and not part of the story. My only other quibble would be that Frances and Mallow spend a LOT of time discussing fashion yet the details are sketchy. What designers is Frances wearing? What exactly do her clothes look like? There are some great resources out there. Let Frances show off her designer gowns!

I love Lady Frances! She's intelligent, feisty, shrewd, with a touch of the naivety that comes from being a woman of her class in her time. She fights for what she wants and knows how to get it. I love how she handles the men who doubt her intelligence and how she is one step ahead of the police. She isn't too modern for her time. She wants to be bold and daring and claim the century as her own, but she is also sometimes really innocent and ignorant at times. I didn't get a sense that Frances was a modern woman plunked down into the Edwardian era. She does resemble women like the Pankhursts. Frances is so kind hearted without being generous to a fault. She wants to solve the world's problems and that may cause her some problems later on.

I also love Mallow! June Mallow is not your typical ladies' maid. She's learned a lot from watching Frances. Frances treats Mallow more like a sister than a servant. They have gotten into mischief together, experienced tragedy and now they are sleuthing partners. She's loyal to Frances but not in a subservient way. I think Mallow enjoys the sleuthing they are doing together in this book. It gives her a chance to use her brains.

Major Daniel Colcombe, the victim, sounds like he was a really great person. Though he was an adventuring type, he was kind, loyal and brave. He went through hell and survived only to get murdered. That is so unfair. Some parts of his story surprised me but others did not.

Frances has two suitors who could not be more different. Lord Gareth is a fun-loving, pleasure seeking second son whose kisses are divine. I did not like him or trust him from their first meeting. Frances seems to trust him but can he keep that trust? Hal is a nerdy solicitor but because of Frances, he has revised his beliefs about what women are capable of, which makes him wonderful in my eyes (Frances agrees). His mother is

pushing him towards Frances, that much is obvious, but he kindly plays along with his mother's schemes. He's kind, caring and considerate. Too bad he's kind of nerdy and shy.

The other major characters are government and military men hiding dark secrets that could have led to Danny's missing manuscript and possible murder. None of them were all that appealing and I had a hard time keeping them all straight.

The Inspector on the case is a good foil for Frances. He's wry, observant and doesn't seem to doubt her intelligence. I was surprised by him. Could he be a potential suitor? Not in this book but I'm hoping in the future.

Read this if you love Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries TV series. Frances and Mallow reminded me of Phryne and Dot.

There are some scenes of wartime violence and one barroom brawl scene. There is also hints of men wanting improper things from ladies and a subplot revolving around a child born out of wedlock.

Linda says

"I'm trusting you, Franny. I'm giving you this information in return for which you won't get involved in something you shouldn't. Now does that satisfy your curiosity?"

Kinda like puttin' a bowl of colorful M&M's in front of a dazzled toddler. Guaranteed to catch the eye and leave a trail of evidence behind.....

Lady Frances Ffolkes (Don't ya love that spelling, folks?) involves herself in a multitude of life situations here in 1906. She's certainly not typical of the Edwardian ladies of her upper social class who leave their calling cards on sterling silver trays. Frances Ffolkes is associated not only with double consonants, but with double continents as well being a product of England/Europe and of being educated in America. She's a gem of a woman who dabbles in women's suffrage rights and serious causes involving the poor and the voiceless.

Although wrapped in a gorgeous cover, *Death on the Sapphire* is not a piece of empty fluff. R. J. Koreto hands his heroine a solid and weighty set of circumstances involving a missing manuscript. Frances has been alerted to the theft by her friend, Kat Colcombe, whose brother had written this manuscript before passing away recently. Daniel Colcombe was a member of the Empire Light Horse Brigade involved in the bloody battles of the Boer War in South Africa. Koreto fills us in on the horrors of this war and the incredible impact it had on the British soldiers who fought it.

As the story unfolds, Frances believes that this was no accidental death. The deeper she digs, the higher the smoke wafts. Someone doesn't want anyone else to read what is contained in this manuscript. Koreto arms Frances with a new lady's maid named June Mallow as the two women work together to unmask the thief. Mallow brings a practical voice and a bevy of life experiences to this duo. Both women, on different social levels, run into demeaning male roadblocks so evident during this time period.

Death on the Sapphire is the first book of this series. I'm very intrigued as to what new adventures Lady Frances will find herself facing in the next two books. I've read Koreto's book, *Alice & the Assassin*, some time back and enjoyed that fictional snippet into the life of mischievous Alice Roosevelt as a young girl. Teddy Roosevelt certainly had his hands full.

Death on the Sapphire has the scaffolding of life typical during the Edwardian period, but it also has the crisp snap of determined women seeking more than just aprons and spotless white gloves. A very entertaining read.

Sharon Schlegel says

Good story. I hope there are more in the series.

Shelby Kollin says

"It will do me good. Down at the hall, everyone's heart is broken. Perhaps I need reminding there are worse things in life than being courted by a cad."

The above quote is just a small example to show Franny's beautiful character. This novel started off boring me to no end. I very nearly gave up. Every chapter started with picking out the lady's outfit for whichever the day's events would entail. There was hardly anything interesting happening for the first 100 pages or so. However, it really turned around for the better. Both Franny and Mallow's characters really flourished through out and I grew to love them both. This was an easy read and a fun mystery. I enjoyed it.
