



The Frozen Sea

Rosanne Dingli

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The Frozen Sea is a literary adventure, and an exploration of what it means to be alone. Its characters leap from the pages of literary history to haunt and disturb the present. Rosanne Dingli adds to the Bryn Awbrey series with an evocative exploration of words and perceptions, which stays with the reader long after the last page is turned.

During an unseasonal cold snap in Venice, Loretta Groombridge seeks employment. Her uncle's legacy is running out, and she is lonely. Eccentric Welsh professor Bryn Awbrey and his secretive house guest Daphne Foy plunge her deep into a literary mystery, which becomes riskier the more they discover. Daphne's certainty that an undiscovered manuscript by Franz Kafka lies hidden in Venice is too unrealistic to be true. Loretta's degree is not enough to arm her for the dilemma, and neither is her ability to deal with disappointment and fear. A frightening attack robs her of dignity and peace of mind. When she takes a break, a fire in the night summons her back, and almost robs her of all she loves in Venice. The risk-filled history of the ancient city seems transported to the present.

The Frozen Sea Details

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From Reader Review The Frozen Sea for online ebook

Margaret Sutherland says

As Bryn Awbrey suggests, “All one needs for a good mystery, especially if it’s about literature, or art, or music, is a famous name.” We can accept his view, having met him in other Rosanne Dingli books. Warm, erudite, eccentric and expansive, he once again dominates a cast of less resolved characters all connected by a quest for lost love letters written to a famous literary figure.

The quest twists and turns through the confusing layout of Venice, portrayed here with vivid authenticity. The old buildings and the everyday waterbus stops, restaurants, bridges and churches take readers through the streets of this city, rugged up in coats, gloves, scarves and boots to defeat the icy weather. In a similar way, characters are vividly defined by possessions...the blue Art Deco jug, the yellow teapot, the Alibaba stove, bright shirts patterned with cats, pigs or owls.

Loretta, a young Australian woman living temporarily in Venice, gratefully accepts Bryn’s offer of a job. She is to sort, curate and cull his hoard of papers. When a second Australian woman shows up on Bryn’s doorstep, he welcomes her at face value. For a short while Loretta believes she has made a friend. It is lonely, living in a foreign place. But Tikki clearly has another agenda, and her warmth fades. She appears to be scheming, and her plans result in doubt and danger to those who befriended her. It seems that Tikki is not capable of genuine warmth or affection. She is the epitome of self-centred greed, leaving friendships when it suits her.

The title of this novel, “The Frozen Sea”, has nothing to do with geography and everything to do with human caring. It was Kafka who wrote, “A book must be the axe for the frozen sea within us.” As we follow the convoluted turns of this mystery, we may look within, considering to what extent The Frozen Sea affects us all.

Sharon Lippincott says

I had clicked Buy within 40 seconds of seeing a link to Rosanne Dingli’s latest novel featuring Bryn Awbrey. I’ve been waiting months to read it, and it did not disappoint. While some things are different in each of Dingli’s numerous novels, many things stay the same. Differences include fresh characters. The Frozen Sea features Loretta Groombridge as the female protagonist, with Daphne “Titti” Foy as the mystery’s focal point. Professor Bryn Awbrey retains the calm charm, enthusiasm, insightful mind, and yellow teapot he has come to be known for.

Other differences that remain the same are Dingli’s flair for detail and deep devotion to art. In this case art takes the form of literature, focusing on Franz Kafka with details of both his writing career and lost correspondence with a lover. Each of the three Bryn Awbrey titles is set in Venice, and each leaves me feeling I’ve just returned from a guided tour of the city, with new venues each time. Dingli is a docent par excellence! Her devotion to history is also in play, this time exploring the history of Jews in the Ghetto area of Venice.

What kept me up half the night flipping pages? The story does not flow in a straight line. Back story is laced into current narrative. Focus jumps from one character to the next. Readers must piece things together just as

we do in life where stories emerge bit-by-bit. Fortunately that isn't hard to do. Another gripping aspect is Dingli's flair for leaving unpinned grenades at the end of many chapters. I had to read on to find out what happened next, though I realized that might be 29 pages ahead.

Perhaps her ability to breathe vivid life into characters did the most to make the story compelling. Such simple behaviors as clicking a pen, feeling the cold through a heavy coat, or breathing a sigh of loneliness make each one unique and human in every respect. I had to know more, and then still more about what made them tick.

This book stands firmly on its own feet, and if you haven't already read the previous two volumes in this series, you may want to follow it up with *The Hidden Auditorium* and *According to Luke*.
