



The Queen's Exiles

Barbara Kyle

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1572. Europe is in turmoil. In the Netherlands the streets are red with the blood of those who dare to oppose the brutal Spanish occupation. A vengeful faction of exiled English Catholics is plotting to overthrow Queen Elizabeth and install her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots on the throne. But amid the unrest, one resourceful young woman has made a lucrative enterprise ...

Scottish-born Fenella Doorn rules like a queen over a privateer's haven on the Isle of Sark. Her success at salvaging crippled vessels affords her gold and security, and it is on one of these ships that she meets wealthy Baron—and privateer—Adam Thornleigh. Secretly drawn to him, Fenella can't refuse when Adam enlists her to join him in war-torn Brussels to help find his traitorous wife, Frances—and the children she's taken from him.

But Fenella's own bold actions have put a price on her head. Now Adam and Fenella's lives are in peril as they race across Europe in an attempt to rescue his young ones, defend the crown, and restore the peace that few can remember.

The Queen's Exiles Details

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From Reader Review The Queen's Exiles for online ebook

Erin Al-Mehairi says

The Queen's Exiles, by author Barbara Kyle and published by Kensington, is the sixth book in her Thornleigh Saga, which though can be read as stand-alone novels also follow the Thornleigh family through several Tudor monarchies in England. This novel, set in 1572, takes to the high seas and Kyle asks readers to put on their sea-faring legs.

For those readers and Tudor reading dissenters, let me quell your concerns about there being yet another Tudor era novel. There is enough intrigue and war and political concocting, let alone the world playing the game of Risk, that there are so many stories to tell. As with many of the new Tudor novels that are taking an outside approach to Tudor reign, and really telling new and exciting stories that abound from the surrounding areas of England during Tudor rule, Kyle brings to us the important, less told, and thrilling story of the Spanish empire, and the fate of the Netherlands, during the time of Elizabeth I.

Not only does Kyle's book allude to us just how amazing Elizabeth I was for holding down England during a time when Spain pretty much ruled everyone and had all the riches to be found, she also told the story of Spanish control of the Netherlands, the resilient William of Orange who led the Dutch resistance, with support from Elizabeth, and the Sea Beggars, those Dutch who defied Spain on the seas and ended up part of a pawn in Elizabeth I plan to stay apart from Spain.

I was thrilled when I really learned that her book brought this to light, as some of my ancestors were Dutch. My Protestant forefather left his British roots in England for the Netherlands, to Haarlem and then Amsterdam, and married a Dutch woman having children, living there after the Netherlands declared their own independence from Spain in 1581 (being "official" after 1648 long after they accomplished so much on their own, like setting up the Dutch India Trading Co. in 1602, a fortification in 1620, and heading to the New World to create New Amsterdam, which was an official Dutch settlement by 1664, later becoming Manhattan. My ancestor, born to the English immigrant and the Dutch woman in 1610 in Amsterdam, was part of the handful of men sent to the New World accomplish this task of setting up New Amsterdam and created a life there, in Harlem, where he is buried today).

I digress, but I was excited as it's rare to find a mainstream historical read that tells the story of the Dutch resistance and conflict with the Spanish. I applaud Kyle for her research and her passion for this cause and appreciate her historical research and fervor in bringing this part of the era to readers!

However, the book that Kyle writes was not only a history lesson about this part of the past, though the story surrounds it, but more about her ambitious and riveting female character, the Scottish-born Fenella Doorn, who again runs into Baron Adam Thornleigh (of whom she met in a previous book) while she's living on the Isle of Sark and repairing ships. However, though a minor character before in the series, she all but takes the strong lead in The Queen's Exiles. If you read the first chapter of Kyle's book, you'll see that Fenella's character begins with a bang! She bold, ambitious, strong, and assertive! She is courageous, passionate, and loyal! Immediately, I know that Fenella is a woman who takes no flack from men like the arrogant and vile Spanish seamen. She demands respect and she gets it. Makes me jump with joy to see such a strong female character.

Kyle's plot and the prose kicks into overdrive from the first chapter and never lets up. Kyle's sea-faring descriptions, dialogue, and details made me feel as if I was riding on the waves myself. When Adam

convinces Fenella to join his pursuit of his wife and children in Brussels, more unfolds in the plot, sending intrigue, turmoil, and adventure rippling throughout the book. I despised the Spanish Duke of Alba, who is in control of overseeing the Low Countries (which is the lower part of the Netherlands, then Belgium and Flanders). I appreciated the manner in which Kyle penned this conflicting side and showed us how the Spanish ruined the lives of these independent Dutch people for their trading, goods, and ports. He slaughtered so many Dutchman.

Though this alarming history was woven into her tale of adventure and action, her book was foremost about Fenella and Adam, creating a bond between them in which they leaned on each other for survival. It's a well-rounded novel offering the best of most everything a reader would want out of a book!

Overall, Kyle creates her usual blend of historical authenticity with an imaginative story that propels the Thornleigh Saga on as a must-read series and brings to light some aspects of history not commonly told. If you're looking for a good historical fiction read that takes you off dry land for the summer and to the adventurous high seas of history, head to the dock with *The Queen's Exiles*!

Given a copy of the book in exchange for honest review. See more reviews on www.hookofabook.wordpress.com.

Ashley Steiner says

I received a copy of this book for free from NetGalley and the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

Okay, guys. I totally judged a book by its cover. At first, I dismissed this because I thought the cover looked cheesy. But, I gave it another chance because I'm a big fan of historical fiction (if you couldn't already tell). However, it's always a gamble on whether or not it'll read like YA or trying to decipher Old English, which I've done and is no picnic. And, even though *The Queen's Exiles* is number six in the Thornleigh series, (which I found out after I requested it), it felt like I was catching up with an old friend.

I try to pick novels from unique perspectives and Barbara Kyle's novel was no exception. I had no idea the Dutch had such a huge influence in helping Queen Elizabeth overthrow the Catholic and Spanish rebels. In my opinion historical fiction can be a little clunky starting off. And, with all the English supporters, Dutch rebels, Spanish and English usurpers, it was a little confusing at the start. With that said, once I got into the groove of the story, it was pretty obvious who was 'good' and 'bad.' Plus, when the story includes sword-fighting, brothels, dungeons, disguises, and swashbuckling sea adventures, how can it not be good?

Well, Fenella Doorn is my new favorite heroine. She not only owns her own ship salvage business on the small Isle of Sark but also completely owns her sexuality. Finally a woman not ashamed or afraid of her desires! Fenella is a spirited beautiful redhead, but her cheek has been marred by a severe scar. We learn Fenella was working as a prostitute in Scotland and one of her patrons attacked her with a beer bottle as she tried to flee the country. Escaping to the Netherlands, she finds a kind, caring husband in Claes Doorn. It isn't long after we're introduced to Fenella do we discover he was murdered by the Spanish invaders, and has been living and running her business with her crippled father-in-law for the past five years.

Adam Thornleigh is a dreamboat. He's a Baron (but down to earth), wealthy and is a pirate leader of sorts to a group of English supporters and the Dutch Sea Beggars. All in league to rid the Netherlands of the Spanish and their contemptuous, merciless and bloody invasion. Thornleigh, too, was unlucky in love. After a short

tryst with Princess turned Queen Elizabeth, he married a proper English noblewoman, Frances. However, Frances being Catholic agrees to a plot to assassinate the Queen. After her plan is foiled, Frances essentially kidnaps their two children (Kate and Robert) and has been a fugitive throughout Europe. She lands on her feet in the Spanish occupied Netherlands, waiting for her chance to bring down her husband.

Not knowing the previous stories, Kyle does an excellent job filling in the background as well as can be expected but without making it seem forced. We learn Fenella and Adam met before as they helped each other escape war-torn Scotland and sail to a safe haven. The two start kindling feelings for one another, but inevitably are forced to go their separate ways. However, when Adam's ship is damaged and barely makes its way to Fenella's shores, we see the kindle turn to bright flames.

I won't go into the plot too much, since it's somewhat difficult to summarize, so I'll leave that to Goodreads. I will say this, there is an unexpected love triangle. But one that is actually believable and understandable. Yes, Adam is technically married, but when one tries to assassinate the Queen and kidnaps your children, I think it's safe to say a divorce (or worse) is around the corner.

There are a host of characters in this novel, and from what I gather have been featured previously. This story primarily focuses on Fenella and Adam. Fenella is a strong character throughout the plot and isn't reluctant to throw herself in harm's way. She's knowledgeable about sailing, fighting and gathering intel. Plus, she isn't afraid to speak her mind. Adam, too, is a surprising character. He's level-headed, benevolent and an honest and fair leader. A true gentleman.

What prevents me from giving this 5 stars is I have nothing to compare this to. It's my first introduction to Kyle, but I won't say it'll be my last. I appreciate that Kyle took the time to set the historical framework in the beginning and also delineate fact from fiction at the end. While I was strongly connected to Fenella, I can't say I'm interested enough in the other characters to go back and reread those stories. Kyle did admit Fenella was a minor character in a previous novel but decided to prominently feature her here. I can only hope there's more Fenella in the future!

Would I read this again: Yes!

Will I read the next in the series: If it involves Fenella in a large way, then heck yes!

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

3.5 stars. "The Queen's Exiles is the sixth book in Kyle's Thornleigh series. The books take place during Elizabethan times. Each book can be read as a standalone story. "The Queen's Exiles" has a really fascinating setting and takes place in Spanish occupied Netherlands. I actually did not realize how thoroughly entrenched Spain was in that area and those details made this book really interesting to me!

The book centers on Fenella Doorn. Born in Scotland originally, she has made a good life for herself salvaging ships on Sark, one of the Channel Islands. I really enjoyed reading about her. Kyle does note that Fenella is a wholly fictional character but you really do get a good sense of how people were living as exiles during that time period. We get to see just how chaotic things were during that time period.

I've said it before and I will say it again, but one of the things that I most love about historical fiction is how you can learn something new from it. This book was very much in that vein for me. I really did not know much of anything about what was happening in the Netherlands during this time period. Kyle included a lot

of good detail. I wish that we would have gotten to see a lot of the action more first hand as it was usually told through recounts and remembrances.

Overall, I enjoyed this story. The detail makes it a treat for my fellow historical fiction fans.

Melissa says

This is a fantastic historical novel set in 16th century Europe. Thanks to NetGalley and Kensington Books for giving me an advanced copy. The greatest strength of this book is the fact that it is a wonderful piece of intricate storytelling. The book depicts the politically charged atmosphere of Europe as powerful monarchs vie for power on land and on sea. In Spain, King Phillip II is the most powerful military force in Europe and he has managed to oust William of Orange from the Netherlands. He installs the Duke of Alba, a horrible and brutal tyrant, to keep order there. Queen Elizabeth of England does not have the navy or the man power to directly challenge King Phillip, but she does help Dutch rebels whenever she can. She supports Lord Adam Thornleigh who, with a British ship and a British crew, roam the English Channel and the North Sea capturing Spanish ships.

The other impressive aspect of this book is the cast of characters that the author weaves together. Thornleigh meets and falls in love with Fenella Doorn who is a great sailor and master of ships in her own right. One of the most fascinating characters is Carlos Valverde. He is has an English wife and lives in England, he is of Spanish descent and is a mercenary soldier working for the Duke of Alba in the Netherlands. His character symbolizes the opposition among all of these European countries and their monarchies. It is interesting to see at every twist and turn in the novel with which country and persons he will side.

The amount of historical research that went into this novel is remarkable. I also liked the fact that although the novel is #6 in the Thornleigh series, it stands on its own and one does not have to read the others first. This is my first novel by Barbara Kyle and I will definitely go back and read some of the other books in the series.

Barbara Kyle says

The Queen's Exiles is the sixth book in my Thornleigh Saga. I wouldn't presume to review my own novel (though I'm grateful for readers who do) but I have taken the liberty of giving it 5 stars for the sake of its brave and courageous heroine, Fenella Doorn, whose difficult decisions about love and loyalty in treacherous Tudor times are at the heart of this story. I hope you'll enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Stevie Carroll says

Previously reviewed on The Good, The Bad, & The Unread:

I was complaining recently about wanting more Tudor-era stories by new-to-me authors, and now another one has come along. This book is the sixth in a series, but stands up very well as a novel in its own right,

neither leaving me puzzled as to who the main characters were nor overwhelming me with a vast array of minor characters dropping in simply to let readers of the whole series know their favourites from previous books are getting along okay. Add to that a heroine who knows exactly what she wants and works to get it, regardless of what the men around her think, and a slice of European history that I could do with knowing more about, and you've got a great set-up for a gripping read.

Fenella is Scottish by birth but was forced to flee her home after a series of unfortunate incidents in her youth. Having settled in the Netherlands, she and her new Dutch husband were successful shipbuilders until the Spanish invaded the country. After Fenella's husband is killed, she flees to the Channel Islands with her wounded father-in-law, where she re-establishes her business and listens anxiously for news of the ongoing fighting against the Spanish by both Dutch and English forces. Then an English privateer limps into port with Spanish prisoners and Fenella is reunited with two men from her past, only one of whom she's glad to see.

Having dealt with the unwelcome visitor – one of the Spanish generals responsible for her husband's death – Fenella joins forces with Adam to return to the occupied lands, where both have family and friends they need to help, as well as treasure to retrieve. The growing attraction between the pair is overshadowed not just by the continuing machinations of Adam's estranged wife, who has stolen his children from him after aiding a group of English rebels in an attempt on the life of Queen Elizabeth, but also by more figures from Fenella's past. Many of the latter are now fighting on the side of the Dutch rebels, although at least one appears to have joined the conflict on the other side.

Fenella and Adam, however, are firmly on the side of the Dutch rebels, and both soon find themselves involved in various sections of the fighting, along with facing multiple brushes with death.

The book moves along at a cracking pace, and while Fenella and Adam spend much of it involved in separate adventures, the bond between them is obvious. There's action and suspense by the bucketload, and at times the fear that one or both might not make it to the end of the book had me torn between wanting to read on and fearing the worst if I did so. My only tiny niggle is that the greatest non-life-threatening obstacle to Fenella and Adam's happiness is overcome a little too conveniently in the book's wrap-up chapter, but all in all this was a smashing novel, and I definitely want to investigate other books in the series.

Lori says

This was the first novel I have read by Kyle but it certainly WILL NOT be my last... I loved this!!! I was a little nervous going into it because I knew it was part of a series but it read very well as a stand alone novel!!! Action, adventure and the perfect amount of romance!!! Now, I have to read the others in this series!!! I HIGHLY recommend!!!

Jenny Q says

Giveaway @ Let Them Read Books!

3.5 Stars. The author includes a very helpful historical note at the beginning of this novel that orients the reader in time and place and sets the scene for a dramatic story unfolding against a backdrop that I don't

think I've ever encountered before in historical fiction: that of wealthy English Catholic exiles living in the Spanish-occupied Netherlands. We usually get this time period from the other side of the Channel, in Elizabeth's court as she attempts to keep Protestantism on top and fend off a multitude of foreign threats, but here we get to see what the rest of the world was thinking and doing during her spat with Spain. I really loved the setting of this and the intrigue of a group of nobles in exile, cozying up to the Spanish to bring down Elizabeth. But before we get there, we begin on Sark, a quirky little Channel Island that really illustrates what life must have been like for the people who lived so far from the mainland and so close to the shores of the enemy during this tumultuous time in history. It is there that we meet our hero and heroine, Adam and Fenella.

What follows is an epic tale of patriotism and treason, political upheaval and oppression, familial love and the ties that bind. The book description does a good job of setting up the story, and I don't want to spoil anything, so I'll forego a plot recap. This is a fun, swashbuckling read, but there are two things that keep me from rating it higher: I wasn't a big fan of the tendency throughout the story to lead the reader up to a pivotal moment and then skip over it, bringing the reader up to speed after the fact, presenting scenes in retrospect and flashback rather than letting them unfold as they happened. It sort of muted the impact of some really great plot twists. And I thought things shook out a little too easily at the end; moral dilemmas and pesky legal ties that had been plaguing the characters throughout the story were suddenly and conveniently no longer problems. Like the previous book in this series, *The Queen's Exiles* can stand alone just fine, though at times I felt that if I had read the earlier books, I would have better appreciated some of the supporting characters, particularly Carlos and Isabel, and their history with each other and the main characters in this book.

Still, *The Queen's Exiles* was an entertaining read. Never a dull moment, exciting action, dramatic twists and turns, and a little bit of romance. Brash and colorful characters. And it transported me to a few interesting and vividly depicted historical settings that were new to me. A good pick for historical fiction fans in the mood for something bold and adventuresome.

Gillian Hollett says

If you know me, you know that one of my key frustrations regarding women in history is not only the abusive, chauvinistic treatment of them, but the insanely submissive way that they take, or are portrayed to take, the lack-of-rights, the cheating, the life lived within the constraints dictated by the patriarchs of their family; as if it might be excusable— maybe even expected. The infamous Anne Boleyn and similarly strong-willed women seem to fairly willingly do the bidding or turn a blind eye for their male family members and husbands. Many of them end up paying a huge price either for the way they carried out their orders, or the way in which they subverted them.

In Barbara Kyle's *The Queen's Exiles*, my exasperations are finally vanquished as we meet the independent, confident, ahead-of-her-time 16th century feminist of sorts, Fenella Doorn. I have no idea if this is even plausible in the 1560's, but I love it nonetheless.

Fenella has successfully built a profitable business for herself on an island in the South of England with the help of her elderly father-in-law. When a long lost acquaintance, Lord Adam Thornleigh, sails back into her life, her world is turned upside down. Adam and Fenella embark together on their own individual yet concurrent missions in the Spanish occupied Netherlands, only to realize that the tasks that they have set out for themselves will embroil each of them into a complex series of intertwining events.

Through it all, Fenella exuded strength, even when all she had left was her character. Her will and determination kept the pages turning as I cheered her on throughout the story.

The Queen's Exiles had me engaged from the very first page, and I found the writing style to be very pleasing to my contemporary literary sensibilities. By that I mean, in part: the pace was swift, the amount of description wasn't over the top, and the dialogue was bold and concise.

The afterword gives a much appreciated breakdown of the historical facts used to build the story, as well as clearly outlines the fictional elements conceived within the author's imagination. I deem this feature to be a great bit of added value, as I so often find myself wondering after a novel of historical fiction— what exactly is fact, and what is simply a best guess, or perhaps even complete fantasy.

I believe any historical fiction enthusiast, or anyone looking for a good starter for the genre, will be immensely entertained by this bygone tale of love and life.

This is the sixth book in Barbara Kyle's Thornleigh Saga, though it is the first I have had the opportunity to enjoy. In future, I plan to delve into the series, beginning with book number one: The Queen's Lady.

I received this book through Net Galley for review purposes.

You can find more reviews and other bookish stuff at www.bookmusings.com.

Andrea Guy says

This is a book that can leave you with only one word on your lips and that word is wow! This novel is set in the 1570s, about 14 years into Queen Elizabeth's reign. It is a time of turmoil throughout Europe.

At first I thought that this book was going to be about Elizabeth I, but it didn't take long to realize that it was so much more than that, and it definitely isn't a full on historical romance. It's really an adventure story that happens to have some romance in it.

Barbara Kyle's writing style is perfect. She allows you to get into each character's head, be it Fenella, Adam, Carlos, Isabella or even Frances. You know what's going on with each of them and you feel their frustrations.

The story is full of ups and downs. It really is an emotional roller coaster from start to finish, as the Fenella makes some discoveries about people in her life and as she gets more and more involved with Adam and his story.

Fenella is not your average heroine. To say she is strong and loyal would be doing her a disservice. She's so much more than that. The best way to describe Fenella is to say, she's the kind of person you want on your side.

What can I say about Adam? He's a man fighting for Queen and country and he's a family man. I wept for him many times during his quest to regain his children.

There isn't a character that you don't feel some emotion for, that's how well developed they are. Barbara Kaye is a fantastic storyteller. She takes you into the time period and sweeps you away.

The ending is perfect and while not exactly what fans of "happily ever after" might approve of, it does suit the story and makes everything feel more real.

Highly recommended reading!

Colleen Turner says

Really 4.5. I reviewed this for www.luxuryreading.com.

Have you ever found a book series that had you devouring each book as they came out, simultaneously saddened when the current book is over and newly excited to see where the next book will take the characters? Well after reading Barbara Kyle's last book in her Thornleigh saga, *Blood Between Queens*, I knew I had found just that. Ms. Kyle's newest book in the series, *The Queen's Exiles*, picks up in 1572, three years after the action in *Blood Between Queens* and, just like its predecessor, takes off running and never slows down.

Venturing away from England into the wild open sea and onto the turbulent and dangerous lands of the Spanish-occupied Netherlands, *The Queen's Exiles* shines a light on Fenella Doorn, a Scottish born woman running her own ship-refitting business on the island of Sark, making her own way in life after her husband was killed by Spanish invaders. When Adam Thornleigh, a man she helped rescue eleven years previously and one she has never been able to forget, sails into Sark's harbor she is instantly drawn into his quest to not only work as Queen Elizabeth's agent on the high seas but to get back his children from his traitorous Catholic wife, Frances, who has been in hiding since her failed attempt to kill the Protestant Queen of England. Their journey is dangerous and filled with endless surprises, people they believed to be dead found alive and some of those they have long had at their side meeting their final end. As they both work to rescue their loved ones from the clutches of the tyrannical Duke of Alba, a man slaughtering the Dutch in the name of his faith and his Spanish King, they will find themselves falling in love in a world that wants nothing more than to keep them apart. Fighting between what they want and what is right, both will make tremendous sacrifices in the name of love.

Intertwined with the story involving Fenella, Adam and Frances is that of Adam's sister, Isabel and her husband Carlos Valverde, a man longing for his home in England but having to work for the Duke of Alba in order to make enough money to be able to return to England and pay off his debts. These characters, like the others mentioned, have all been introduced in previous books in the series and it is fascinating watching them all try to untangle themselves from the various destructive webs they find themselves in, some of which have been twisting around them for a number of books. Mixed in with these established characters are some new and fascinating ones such as those in the groups *The Sea Beggars* and the *Brethren*, men and women all putting their lives on the line to push out the Spanish in the name of William, the Prince of Orange. The action and sacrifice is constant and Ms. Kyle does not shy away from placing the reader at the heart of the violence and adventure. But as in real life the determination and willingness of each character to give everything for what they believe in makes their triumphs that much sweeter and, for those that are not successful, their sacrifices that much more heartbreaking.

Barbara Kyle's Thornleigh Saga is enthralling and each book draws the reader deeper and deeper into the

lives and worlds of her characters, all against the backdrop of the very real and exhilarating history surrounding them. I for one cannot get enough of these books and am once again anxiously waiting to see how Ms. Kyle continues the many dangling threads of storyline in her next book.

Aoife says

The blurb made it sound like a historical novel with some romance in the background but it is very much a straightforward historical romance that includes some of my pet-peeves in the genre: the 'there is no life without you' one and the 'nothing compares to you'-one.

Especially in the first half Adam and Fenella barely could stop thinking about each other, Even if they were separated they thought about the awesome hotness of the other every couple of pages. Don't worry...I did not forget that you were in love.

The other thing was that they really had to hammer it in, that the other one was special and nobody else ever gave them the same feeeels. Even Fenella, who at the beginning talks about how much she loved her dead husband suddenly changes her tune to 'he was the best husband a woman could wish for but he never made her feel like Adam did'.

Yeah...I get it. Twu luv forever and ever.

However: unlike in many romances the designated couple's happiness is not the only thing at stake. The book is set in the Netherlands during the Spanish occupation and both Adam and Fenella have a price on their heads.

They are in danger. Constantly.

As are people close to them. Also pretty much constantly.

They are also pretty stupid. So they get in more danger. Constantly.

The book is pretty much a long succession of either of them (or their friends) getting shot at, (almost) captured, tortured, shot at again, attacked by assassins, (almost) captured again...rinse and repeat.

It was just too much. About halfway through I just didn't care anymore. In the course of two chapters somebody is getting tortured, another person gets his ear cut off and a child gets his throat slit?

Yeah. Whatever.

If there is constant violence, gore and bloodshed in your novels your readers won't be constantly on the edge, biting their nails, they'll just get bored.

It's a shame because there is potential. The story is set in a place and time-period I didn't know much about (OK...I didn't know anything about) and - as far as I'm aware - isn't a setting that is terribly popular with writers of historical fiction. Sadly, as mentioned, that setting is mainly used for the blood and shock-value. Fenella has also the potential to be a great character. Even though the book can't avoid some other tropes it does spare us the pure virgin heroine. Fenella wasn't only married before she met Adam she also earned money with prostitution before that marriage and it's treated as non-issue. She had no other choice and she feels no shame about it. (Though when she goes undercover in a brothel for plot-reason she desperately tries to avoid to have sex with anybody there which suggests to me that she did not think that plan through). But apart from that she stays somewhat colourless. As do all other characters. They're all either good or evil with

little shades inbetween and you can smell the 'sacrificial lambs' that are going to die so that Fenella can angst about it from miles away.

Tony Riches says

Canadian historical fiction author Barbara Kyle's experience really shines through in the sixth of her Thornleigh Saga series, *The Queen's Exiles*. Set in the Spanish occupied Netherlands, we follow the adventures of our hero and heroine as they attempt an audaciously daring rescue of Lord Thornleigh's children. We are drawn into a meticulously researched world of Dutch underground fighters, known as the 'Brethren' who fight on against seemingly impossible odds.

Barbara has a talent for 'cliffhanger' chapter endings that keep you reading. In turns exciting, poignant, horrific and romantic, I particularly liked the way the true life and mysterious 'Sea Beggars' – seafaring rebels and buccaneers - are woven into the fictional narrative. I knew little of the Dutch revolt against Spanish rule but it makes a great backdrop for a good old fashioned adventure story.

Ruth says

Sometimes I pick up a book and wonder how on earth I haven't read anything by the author before. How did I manage to miss books by someone who writes exactly what I want to read? How is that physically possible?!

Well, that is precisely what I'm asking myself after having read this one, provided by the publisher through netgalley. I love history, love romance, love historical fiction, but also love detail, accuracy and good writing, as well as a plot which *moves*. And after having picked this one up set in mid-16th century Netherlands/Belgium (funnily enough, and entirely coincidentally, as I was actually in the Netherlands), I now learn that there is an entire series of Tudor historical fiction written by Barbara Kyle, and I want to get my grubby little paws on every one!!

This is a great story, set in a much-ignored period of real political and social upheaval. Queen Elizabeth's hold on power in England was stronger than tentative but couldn't be described as secure, and with limited funds, her international power was limited. Spain, meanwhile, had an enormous empire, and great wealth, but was entering the start of its decline. And the Dutch, entrepreneurial, hard-working and with an independent streak a mile wide, pushed beyond the brink by the cruelty of their oppressor, began their long struggle to independence. What a fabulous setting for some action, romance and a great, great story.

I read this one non-stop, cover-to-cover on a trans-Atlantic flight from Amsterdam to the US, and absolutely loved every minute of it. In fact, the only criticism I could come up with was that hummingbirds are not native to Europe (only to the Americas), although there are moths which are sometimes mistaken for them.

5 stars. It was amazing.

Janie says

Do not start reading *The Queen's Exiles* before bedtime if you want your 8 hours of sleep. The storytelling makes the book impossible to put down with a strong plot and interesting history. At the same time, the reader never feels short-changed on character development or emotional conflict. This is Barbara Kyle's best Thornleigh novel yet!
