



Murder in the Queen's Wardrobe

Kathy Lynn Emerson

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A female spy will face mortal danger to protect her queen and husband . . ."

London, 1582: Mistress Rosamond Jaffrey, a talented and well-educated woman of independent means, is recruited by Queen Elizabeth's spymaster, Sir Francis Walsingham, to be lady-in-waiting to Lady Mary, a cousin of the queen. With her talent in languages and knowledge of ciphers and codes, she will be integral to the spymaster as an intelligence gatherer, being able to get close to Lady Mary just at the time when she is being courted by Russia's Ivan the Terrible. However, there are some nobles at court who will do anything they can to thwart such an alliance and Rosamond soon realises the extent of the danger when a prominent official is murdered and then there is an attempt on Lady Mary's life. In her quest to protect Lady Mary and her own estranged husband Rosamond must put herself in mortal peril.

Kathy Lynn Emerson's *Murder in the Queen's Wardrobe* brings back characters last seen in her *Face Down Mystery Series*. Mistress Rosamond Jaffrey, the illegitimate daughter of Lady Appleton's late, unlamented husband, Sir Robert Appleton, is the sleuth in this new series. She previously appeared as a young girl in *Face Down Beside St. Anne's Well* and the story of her elopement can be found in the short story "Any Means Short of Murder."

Murder in the Queen's Wardrobe Details

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From Reader Review Murder in the Queen's Wardrobe for online ebook

Robin says

Historical Readings & Reviews

Advance review copy from NetGalley, my opinions are my own.

Rosamond Jaffrey reluctantly takes a position as lady-in-waiting to the queen's cousin, who is being courted by Ivan the Terrible, in order to gather intelligence on the matter and help keep her estranged husband safe while he's in Russia. This is a spin-off from the author's previous historical mystery series, the Lady Appleton Mysteries, and there are some mentions of events from that series but it's still readable on its own.

It had a good premise and was reasonably well written but there was too much about this that felt contrived and the character development wasn't great. It wasn't explained why Rosamond's husband would drop his studies and go to Russia. He didn't appear to be working for the Muscovy Company (a trading company) despite spending a lot of time at their headquarters. He didn't seem to be doing anything else there except trying to help an Englishwoman caught up in Ivan the Terrible's vengeance, which wasn't the reason he went to Russia, he just happened upon her while there and she begged for his help. He couldn't have decided to vacation there, since the book makes a point of how few English people were there, as it could be a dangerous place for them. So why was he there in the first place? Because there wouldn't have been a plot otherwise, clearly.

Had it not been for this, spying and mystery of the plot would have been enjoyable but I just kept thinking back to the fact that the only reason Rosamond was involved was because her husband was in Russia and he had no good reason for being there. I just couldn't get past this.

Rosamond wasn't very likable, she came across as self-centered, spiteful, resentful, petty, self-important, and bitter at most everyone and everything. I think this was either a poor attempt at making her seem strong and independent, or perhaps the reason for it had something to do with the original series but if so, the author should have made it more clear. The idea of giving up her finery for the plainer clothes of an upper servant repulses Rosamond and she initially turns down the opportunity to actually do something worthwhile. For someone who wants so desperately to prove she's not a "brainless female", she doesn't exactly jump at the chance to make use of her knowledge and skills. And not because of the danger, but because it would mean making small, petty sacrifices in her lifestyle for a temporary period of time. She has an opportunity to potentially make a difference to political matters, something that would be unthinkable for most women of the times, even if it is in the background by providing intelligence, but she'd rather sit at home alone and attend plays. And then she gets offended when someone calls her frivolous? While she does eventually agree to participate, she gripes about it every step of the way. And she only agrees because she's told it will help keep her husband safe, which might seem selfless but the truth is, she's motivated mostly by guilt, not love. She only married him so she could kick him out and live independently. She used him and his love for her to get what she wanted and then she tossed him aside. Her only redeeming quality is that she acknowledges this and feels remorseful about it.

I understand that she is supposed to highly value her independence because it was so rare for women of the time but instead she just comes across as a selfish, spoiled little brat. I wanted to give this book a chance because maybe the character would grow and mature. Towards the end (about 3/4 into it), she does start to

show signs that she is considering the fact that the attributes she prides herself on may not be seen so favorably by others. But it's too little, too late to totally save the book.

Judy Lesley says

I wish I could say that I had enjoyed reading this high adventure featuring Mistress Rosamond Jaffrey, recruited against her will to spy for Sir Francis Walsingham by presenting herself as a Lady-in-waiting to Lady Mary, a cousin of Queen Elizabeth. The rumor is that a representative of Tsar Ivan of Russia has come to find an English bride for the tsar and Lady Mary is the woman he has settled on. Mistress Rosamond is incensed that she would be almost forced into becoming an intelligencer for Walsingham, but reconsiders when she finds that the husband she has been separated from for two years is even now in Russia and in mortal danger should things not go well in finding an English wife for Ivan.

This novel says all the right words I would expect to find in order to make it an enjoyable historical mystery, but they just don't work very well in the final execution. For me the main problem was that the heroine was all wrong. She was much too impetuous, much too quick to take all matters into her own hands, much too uncaring that she was flaunting conventions which could have forced her into the depths of social disgrace, much too assured that this uncalculated wealth she was supposed to have allowed her to live life exactly as she pleased, in 1582. I don't think so. It was not credible or believable. And all of this at only 18 years of age? Please. In short, she reminded me of a very modern character in a chick lit novel.

There will be other books in this series. I will not be reading them.

I received an ARC of this novel through NetGalley.

Lea Wait says

I love historical novels, especially those set in Tudor/Elizabethan England, and I really enjoyed *Murder in the Queen's Wardrobe*. Kathy Lynn Emerson really knows her period, and includes lots of small details that bring the sixteenth century to life. Yes, her heroine is a bit more feisty than most women at that time were expected to be, but this is fiction - and there are explanations for why Rosamond is more independent than her peers. (Plus - the assumption that she can make most of her own decisions and act on them makes for a great book.) I look forward to reading more in this series in the future!

Jane Irish Nelson says

Rosamond is enjoying her life as a wealthy woman in London, but to achieve it, she has cut herself off from all her old friends and family. When Nick Baldwin, a neighbor of her foster mother's, comes to her with a proposal that she join Lady Mary Hastings' household as a spy, she is reluctant and full of questions. But since her estranged husband is in Russia, and may be in danger, this appears to be Rosamond's best hope, so she agrees. But would she have had she known the danger she would soon be in? And which of Lady Mary's other ladies is conspiring against her mistress? Rosamond finds herself with more questions than answers as she tries to keep Lady Mary safe from an unknown enemy.

Stephanie says

Hands down one of the best Historical Mystery Thrillers I have read this year by far. Where do I begin? This story captured my attention from the first page and that is a rare thing indeed. Emerson's main character, Mistress Rosemond Jaffrey is and extremely educated, independent and strong women of her time. At first I wasn't sure how her role as lady-in-waiting was going to work in this story but it was brilliantly played. All of the central characters in this story was written strong and even the behind the scene characters play an important role. Often times I read stories where there are characters that don't add to the story one bit and this is not the case in this one. I don't often say this because it's a cliché but I was at the edge of my seat reading this story pretty much the whole time and I got annoyed when people would interrupt me from reading....*laughing*

One of the other things I find extremely important in a story is to leave the reader guessing who done it. Most times I guess the murderer right off the bat and that annoys me to no end. It wasn't like that for this book. And the title and premise for this story is excellent!

When I read a book I want strong characters, dialogue, plot, setting, and intelligent writing. I found all this in *Murder in The Queen's Wardrobe*. I am patiently waiting for more stories like this from Emerson and I want to read more adventure with Mistress Rosemond Jaffrey. She is my new favorite female character.

Who am I kidding....I hope that the author comes out with another story and soon! Highly recommend!

Stephanie M. Hopkins

Alaina says

Murder in the Queen's Wardrobe was a pretty interesting book. I must admit that I didn't know it existed until I had a challenge that said "read a book with furniture in the title." So thank you wonderful challenge you, because you brought a new series into my life!

This book is about Mistress Rosamund Jaffrey and is set during the Elizabethan Era in England. She is a very independent woman who happens to be married to Rob, against her mother's wishes. He is the son of servants and far beneath her status wise. Rosamund is basically a badass because she severed her connection with her family. I have no idea if I would be able to do that but man, I gotta give her her props!

Rosamund gets asked to become an intelligence gather. So she has to pose as a gentlewoman in Lady Mary's Household. Meanwhile, Rob has traveled to Russia and should the alliance fail then Ivan the Terrible's revenge on foreigners living in Russia will become violent.

The story follows Rosamund's spy mission within the household and how she finds out that someone wants to prevent Lady Mary's betrothal to the Tsar. No matter what the cost.. they do not want this marriage to happen.

Overall, I really enjoyed this book. The historical and mystery aspects kept me engaged. I also liked it enough to continue to the second book. It was a quick and easy read.. but at times I felt like Rosamund wasn't in the right era. It's like her character was more modern than anything.. but then again, that's probably why I liked it.

Stephanie says

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When I read a book I want strong characters, dialogue, plot, setting, and intelligent writing. I found all this in Murder in The Queens Wardrobe. I am patiently waiting for more stories like this from Emerson and I want to read more adventure with Mistress Rosemond Jaffrey. She is my new favorite female character.

Who am I kidding....I hope that the author comes out with another story and soon! Highly recommend!
Stephanie M. Hopkins

Damaskcat says

I approached this book in a spirit of optimism and it started well but unfortunately I rapidly lost interest which is a pity because the concept is good. An intelligent woman recruited as a spy in an age when women were not expected to be educated or to understand anything complex like politics or trade. Rosamond is rather too much of a twenty first century woman I think to fit well into the Elizabethan scene and too impatient of the conventions.

Appointed as Lady in Waiting to Lady Mary, a cousin of the Queen, she is expected to keep her eyes and ears open and report anything suspicious. Lady Mary is being courted by Ivan the Terrible of Russia and there are factions which want to disrupt the union. Trade is at stake through the Muscovy Company as well as politics and Rosamond's own husband is in Russia so she must balance her loyalty to her country against possible harm to her husband.

As I say this is an interesting concept for a book but somehow it just didn't work for me and Rosamond came over as a bit of a two dimensional character who I couldn't quite believe in. I think this author may well write better books than this in the future and others may enjoy this one but it didn't quite gel with me. I received a free copy of this book from NetGalley for review purposes.

Jill says

First in series. This takes place during the time of Queen Elizabeth I. 1582 Mistress Rosamond Jaffrey was well educated in a time when women were not taught much more than needle work! She married a childhood friend when they were only about 16. She is a rebel when it comes to wanting to do things that a gentlewoman should NOT do. It is fun to read about a strong independent woman. Spies, danger, murder and the need to rescue her husband and solve the mystery make for an interesting story.

Christina says

As someone who studied European History in a former life, I am drawn to books written in my favorite historical period. This book touched on all my interests. Elizabethan era, spies, a murder mystery... There were so few ways women could be independent during this time, it was interesting to read about Rosamond and the ways she found to take charge of her own life. Despite herself, she gets pulled into this web of political machinations and finds that she is beginning to care about the people forced into her life.

Her unusual upbringing and exposure to typically male pursuits makes Rosamond the ideal spy. However reluctant she was at first, she seems to relish using her above average intelligence and education. Rosamond guarded her independence so carefully, not wanting to answer to anyone. Not only did she help solve the mystery at the center of this novel, she learned that being her own woman didn't have to mean being cut off from the ones she loves. A very enjoyable historical mystery!

Susan says

This is the first book in a proposed series featuring Mistress Rosamund Jaffrey and set in Elizabethan England. It is November 1582 and Mistress Jaffrey lives in London with her devoted maidservant Melka. Rosamund Jaffrey is very much an independent woman – married to her estranged husband Rob against her mother's wishes, as he is the son of servants and far beneath her in status, she has an inheritance which has made her financially independent and has severed connection with her family.

Rosamund acts against convention many times in this novel. When we meet her she is returning from watching a play and has a tendency to use disguises to give her social freedoms. Educated, intelligent, independent and fluent in several languages, she is approached by Master Nicholas Baldwin, an old family friend who works for the Muscovy Company, on a delicate matter. An emissary from Tsar Ivan the Terrible has arrived in England to broach the subject of a marriage alliance between the Tsar and Lady Mary Hastings. Rosamund is asked to become an intelligence gatherer – posing as a gentlewoman in Lady Mary's household. Unbeknownst to her, Rob has travelled to Russia and, should the alliance fail, Ivan the Terrible's revenge on foreigners living in Russia might be swift and violent.

This novel follows Rosamund's mission as a spy in Lady Mary's household, as well as Rob's time in Russia. Rob becomes embroiled in the case of an Englishwoman whose husband has been killed by the Tsar and who, reduced to penury, is desperate to flee the country. Meanwhile, Rosamund finds that there is someone who wants to prevent Lady Mary's betrothal to the Tsar and who may stop at nothing – including murder – to achieve their aims.

I really enjoy historical mysteries and this has an interesting setting – the Russian side of the story being unusual – plus some good cameo appearances by characters such as Sir Francis Walsingham and the Earl of Leicester. However, I found the book lacked credibility and accuracy. Mistress Rosamund reads far more like a modern heroine than an Elizabethan one. Her ability to throw off every social constraint seemed very unlikely in those times. She had not lost her faith as such, but seemed to have none, in a time when society was very much ruled by religion. It was not, of course, impossible for a wealthy woman in those times to live alone – Bess of Hardwick was an independent and wealthy woman – but to achieve such independence at Rosamund's age seemed very unlikely. She read far more like a modern heroine and, as such, the book simply didn't work for me. Still, a pleasant and undemanding read which may develop into a good series if you are not too concerned about historical accuracy. Lastly, I received a copy of this book from the publisher, via NetGalley, for review.

Clare O'Beara says

I thoroughly enjoyed this historical mystery. A comfortably-off merchant's wife is persuaded to turn spy, acting as a lady in waiting to a titled young woman. Czar Ivan the Terrible is sending an emissary to woo her on his behalf. The Queen of England would need to give permission for such a marriage, but she is afraid to offend Ivan.

The fun part for me is seeing historical London, all today's districts and boroughs just outlying villages beyond the City and Tower. Life is really well described, with scents and sounds to make it vivid for the reader. The work of being a lady in waiting seems quite a boring one, but there is plenty of intrigue and danger for our intrepid heroine. Indeed, the first peril is encountered in the place where the royal gowns and robes are created and stored.

Meanwhile her husband the merchant is off in frozen Moscow, trying to do deals, survive the snow and help an Englishwoman fallen on hard times. We don't often see outside Britain in these mysteries so the several changes of location are welcome.

If you like Elizabethan thrillers you'll enjoy this one, with a heroine to identify with and cheer.

Kaitlyn Dunnett says

This historical mystery is set in the sixteenth century, a period the author, who also maintains the online "A Who's Who of Tudor Women," has been studying for over forty-five years. Kathy Lynn Emerson makes every effort to assure that the characters' actions are in keeping with the times they lived in. There were many real women whose lives were atypical. Their stories have come down to us only in bits and pieces

because the histories of the period were, until relatively recently, written by men who ignored the distaff side.

"Old age" began in the fifties in those days and youth was consequently of shorter duration than it is today. Young men often went adventuring in foreign lands simply to broaden their experience when they were twenty or younger. Women took charge of their households as soon as they were married, no matter at what age that might be. The female sleuth in this mystery series, Rosamond Jaffrey (nee Appleton), eloped at sixteen. That story can be found at the author's webpage, KathyLynnEmerson.com, along with other historical information and a bibliography, in a short story previously published in Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine. As *Murder in the Queen's Wardrobe* begins, she has reached her early twenties.

And now, yes, a disclaimer. Kaitlyn Dunnett is a pseudonym for Kathy Lynn Emerson (as is Kate Emerson) and that makes my opinions just a tad biased. Then again, every review is just one person's opinion. Whatever name I'm writing under, my personal preference is for characters who have room to grow and change, not just in one novel but in the course of a mystery series. Rosamond has flaws, but some of them also have a positive side and contribute to her ability to solve crimes . . . kind of a necessity in a mystery series.

Murder in the Mercery is next in the series, due out a year after the publication of this first book in the series. Incidentally, although *Murder in the Queen's Wardrobe* came out in November 2014 in the U.K., it is not yet available elsewhere. The U. S. publication date is March 2015.

Viviane Crystal says

Mistress Rosamond Jaffrey is married but separated from her husband and living independently. She is wealthy, educated and intelligent as well. While she has no problem filling her days, she is now drawn into the service of Queen Elizabeth's cousin, Lady Mary, in London in the year 1582. However, she's not there to be a semi-servant to Lady Mary but to be a spy for the Queen's chief spymaster, Sir Francis Walsingham, a man who knows everyone's business and shares his knowledge sparingly if at all. Now Rosamond is to be his ears and listen to the gossip of Lady Mary and her ladies in waiting, Rosamond is not sure what she is to hear, but it doesn't take long to realize that it seems someone is trying to arrange the marriage of Lady Mary to the Tsar of Russia, Ivan the Terrible, a tyrant whom all fear and few trust.

The mystery deepens when several murderous attempts fall on first Lady Mary and then on Rosamond herself. Lady Mary is believed to have succumbed to a dreaded disease when in fact she is the victim of poison. On it goes with events conspiring against Rosamond that look like accidents but occur too frequently to be coincidence.

In the meantime, Rosamond's husband, who is living in Russia supposedly doing busy with a Muscovy merchant company, has been distracted by the widow of an Englishman who was executed as a traitor. The Tsar will not let this woman return to England and so she lives in dire poverty and miserable conditions. Soon Rosamond's husband is feeling more than pity for this young, attractive woman and he will bear some very harsh consequences for his attendance upon this woman and his plan to free her to return to England. Rosamond at first has to mentally explore who could be responsible for attempting to harm Lady Mary and why they are trying to make sure a marriage and alliance with the Tsar never comes to pass. As in any well-thought out mystery, each character has some flaw, weakness or political connection that could provide a motive for a plot to harm the Queen's cousin. Rosamond herself is betrayed a few times and has to come up

with some very rapid reasons for explaining her presence as a lady-in-waiting to Lady Mary. All in all, Rosamond is a clever, ingenious sleuth who keeps the reader guessing on every page and flipping the pages to relish each engaging misunderstanding, attack, clue-ridden occasional dialogue, and violent scenes occurring to Rosamond and her husband Rob. A splendid read that is highly recommended for all lovers of well-crafted mystery fiction.

Amy Bradley says

Set during the reign of Elizabeth I, and straddling both England and Moscow, *Murder in the Queen's Wardrobe* is a tale of intrigue and suspense. Rosamund is a young bastard noblewoman, recruited through a family friend by Walshingham to pose as a serving gentlewoman in the household of Lady Mary, whom the Tsar has expressed interest in marrying. Her task is to observe and report back on any conversations in Russian, but after her controller is murdered during a visit by the group to the Queen's Wardrobe, her curiosity and sense of right and wrong get the better of her when the man's death is dismissed as choking on food (rather than the poisoning she knows it to be from seeing him right before death). An estranged husband in Moscow, and more incidents in the household make for a well paced but of intrigue, especially as Rosamund chafes against the conventional woman's role she is forced to mimic.
