



## Royal Blood

*Rhys Bowen*

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Penniless and thirty-fourth in line to the throne, Lady Georgiana Rannoch finds herself in a truly draining state of affairs. To escape her hateful brother, Georgie accepts an invitation from the Queen to represent the royals at a wedding in Transylvania. But at the macabre-looking castle, Georgie finds the bride with blood running down her chin, and a wedding guest is poisoned. Now it's up to Georgie to save the nuptial festivities before the couple's vows become "to love and to cherish, till 'undead' do them part..."

## Royal Blood Details

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Author : Rhys Bowen

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## From Reader Review Royal Blood for online ebook

### Jonathan says

Okay, I admit it, I caved and pushed on through to read this one, even though I try to make it a personal rule not to read more than two books from the same series in a row. I keep that rule, because I find that I get burnt out on characters in a series, especially if it's a long series, if I read more than two in a row. But I am absolutely NOT burnt out on this series or the characters yet!

Georgie is once again extremely charming and hilarious in her sleuthing. Darcy and Belinda, also, come to Transylvania, though in a more roundabout way in Belinda's case, so the main crew is on center stage for the majority of this book. You see a lot more of Darcy and more scenes with he and Georgie, also in this book, which is a very good thing, though I still wish Ms. Bowen would reveal more about Darcy and what he does for a living, but he's still a good, solid character.

A new character joins the cast for this installment, Queenie, a hilarious maid who is employed by Georgiana and is helpless when it comes to doing her job. I really liked Queenie, he didn't know quite how to be a proper maid, but she tried and was extremely earnest in her trials.

The plot was simply amazing, you couldn't go wrong with it. A spooky Transylvanian castle, legends of vampires, a few murders, and a royal wedding. It was wonderful. However, the mystery was quite lacking. Before in her books Ms. Bowen has done a wonderful job of plotting the mystery, however in this book it fell quite flat. The murderer was quite obvious, but he was quite detached from what was going on. I like a huge "wow" moment when I read a mystery when the murderer completely blows me away because I never expected them. However, that wasn't the cast here.

Overall an amazing book with a stellar cast of characters, however a weak mystery plot makes me take off one star, giving *Royal Blood* 4/5 stars. But I would still recommend this book highly to anyone. Can't wait for the next one!

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### Jess the Audiobookworm says

4.5 ★ Audiobook

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### ?Susan? says

As always, I enjoyed another great Georgiana adventure. In this edition she is to represent the Royal family by attending a wedding of the Prince of Transylvania, at a family castle in Transylvania. Hilarity ensues when she is, at the last minute, indentured with a maid who is anything but cultured or proficient. Upon her arrival, after a long journey fraught with strange events, she is to find out that her presence there may not be by chance or simple representation. A fun romp with some of the reoccurring characters, in a spooky old castle, cut off from civilization. Imaginations are heightened and running rampant, after the death of one of the guests, that may or may not have been murder. Katherine Kellgren does a fantastic job as Georgiana and takes all the characters on an exciting ride.

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### **Kathy says**

In Royal Blood, Georgie is off to a castle in Transylvania at the request of Queen Mary to represent the royal family at a wedding and to be a bridesmaid for the bride, Princess Maria. The wedding will join the royal families of Romania and Bulgaria, and Princess Maria has insisted that the ceremony take place in Castle Bran, former home to Vlad the Impaler. Georgie is happy to escape Rannoch House in London, as her brother and his disagreeable have arrived to spend the winter there. Georgie goes from dreary to gothic in her change of scenery, and Vlad's castle is everything a mythical vampire's castle promises to be. From a mysterious man climbing up the outside wall of the castle to a strange man showing up in Georgie's bedroom at night and peering in at her while she tries to sleep, it's clear something unsettling is afoot. When a Bulgarian police chief is murdered, the few, including Georgie, in the know must try to keep his death quiet to avert a political crisis. Not only concealing a murder until it can be figured out has Georgie busy. She must also deal with a new maid she hired in London named Queenie, who is a red hot mess and possibly the worst maid ever. The brother of the bride, known to Georgie as Prince Fishlips has been trying to convince her that they would make a good marriage for their royal families. And, of course Darcy shows up, making any other man pale in comparison. In the middle of it all the wedding party becomes snowed in at the castle, and Queenie goes missing. It would seem Georgie's longing for adventure is fulfilled and then some.

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### **Sally says**

I have been enjoying Rhys Bowen's stories about Lady Georgiana, cousin to King George, and think this 4th and most recent book in the series is the best so far. Lady Georgiana goes to Transylvania to be a member of a wedding party, and the topic of vampires is central. I am not generally attracted to vampire stories, but I read this one because of the continuing tale of Lady Georgiana. The story incorporates the traditional idea of vampires (dress, behavior, aversion to garlic, crosses, wooden stakes, etc.) but instead of dwelling on the presence of a vampire, it plays on the influence of Bram Stoker's novel, and the implied history of Vlad the Impaler. There is a murder mystery to be solved and I think the plot was well crafted. I have been captured by Lady Georgiana's romantic interest in the handsome Irishman, Darcy O'Mara (there must be some influence here from Mr. Darcy of *Pride and Prejudice*). He is still mysterious and I certainly hope that Rhys Bowen gives us more of him. I don't generally read romance novels, either, but this is very romantic without being a bodice-ripper.

I think this novel would stand on its own, but I recommend reading the first three in the series first, for the background events that are only hinted at in this book.

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### **Matthew Hunter says**

I'm a glutton for frustration, I think. The 4th installment in the *Royal Spyness* series fits perfectly with the first three - all lightning-fast reads with hardly a likable character to be found. Georgie simply must lose her virginity immediately. I don't want to hear another word about it. Maybe Bowen could have Georgie and Darcy sleep together between books? And don't get me started on Belinda. Best friend my foot! She spends all of her time either shagging, crashing events, or criticising Georgie. I find myself preferring Georgie's

horrible mother over Belinda. At least you always know where you stand with Mommy Dearest. One other frustration is Georgie's willingness to keep thinking vampires might be responsible for the mayhem in the castle. Matty a blood sucker? Of course not! I find it incredible and highly unlikely that Georgie would attribute, even for a moment, the murders to fanged foes. She may have periodic lapses in common sense - remember her astonishing naivete in advertising herself as an escort? - but she's not a dolt.

To *Royal Blood*'s defense, there's some fun to be had here. The plot moves faster and takes more sudden turns than in the first three novels. But my ongoing complaints about the poop-like cast of characters and the continued focus on Georgie's sexless life have become greater obstacles to my enjoyment as the series progresses. Maybe I would feel differently if I put more distance between installments. Doubtful, but possible.

Why do I persist in reading these *Royal Spyness* mysteries? For whatever reason, I'm interested in learning more about characters like Darcy and Belinda. They have secrets that, once revealed, may redeem them slightly in my mind. Besides, I have hunches about them that I'd like to see de-hunched.

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### **Kirsten says**

I absolutely love this series! The audiobooks are also excellently done by Katherine Kellgren. She does a great job on all the accents.

The characters are fun and the historical context is engaging. The period between the Wars is one of my favorites. But she also refers to all sorts of things: the rise of Hitler, the Bolsheviks, the Abdication Crisis, the Depression.

The romance is nice too. You want one of them to find some hidden inheritance so they can marry, but I think the tension is great too! Love it!!

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### **Zyra says**

i love how cozy the books in this series are.  
i have come to like the characters so much.  
i absolutely loved the addition of queenie in this book & its also going to be continued. i m going to get to read more antics of her. i am so looking forward to it.

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### **Barbara says**

I can't seem to help myself with this series.

I have no sympathy for Georgiana, an impoverished royal, 34th (soon to be 35th) inline to the throne. I have no pity, no patience for her silly attempts to try to earn money, get "acceptable" work as royal. There is still too much of the fact that she is "royal"; she shouldn't have to be making her way in the world; she wasn't prepared for this. The queen and her family should realize her depressed circumstances and help her. Too bad life is hard for you, Georgie – life is hard for most of us.

However, when not dwelling on her depressed circumstances, Georgie is charming and very likable. I'm truly entrance and embroiled with her budding romance with the mysterious and rakish Darcy O'Mara, an also impoverished Irish lord. He apparently, though is not as rakish and as much of a cad as he appears on first blush. He may be a secret agent in the employee of the Queen – but that's not really clear.

As much as I hate to say it, since there are too many things about the basic premise of this series that annoy me – I really enjoy this and must continue.

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### **Kathy Davie says**

Fourth in the Her Royal Spyness suspense series based in London and revolving around the Lady Georgiana Rannoch, 34th in line to the throne and too poor to afford more than beans and toast.

#### **My Take**

This was pathetic. I may not have been particularly impressed with Georgie's detective abilities but I can't believe she is so stupid as to believe that vampires really exist. She has no evidence other than having read Stoker's *Dracula* and listening to that idiot Deer-Harte.

Oh, please! *Count* Dragomir is a servant in the castle? Between Georgie's vampires and a count acting as a butler, I am thoroughly disgusted with this one. Then there's that slide-through on Vlad and Matty's disenchantment. A little too simplistic.

#### **The Story**

Princess Maria Theresa of Romania has requested Lady Georgiana as an attendant at her wedding at Vlad's castle in Romania and Queen Mary sends her with Lady Middlesex as a companion for the trip across Europe (Lady M has brought her own companion, Miss Deer-Harte, a woman who starts at everything and sees assassins behind every pillar! Well, okay, so she was sorta right). All Georgie has to do is come up with a maid. And god forbid that Fig should allow any funds to go towards that essential. Especially since *she* doesn't get to go!

Then the field marshal gets poisoned at dinner. A major political disaster that must be averted. Georgie is convinced it's vampires—and that the princess is one of them—while Patrascue can't decide if it was Georgie or Darcy who murdered Pirin. Additional incidents up the toll and even Lady Georgiana may be at risk.

#### **The Characters**

**Lady Georgiana** has run from the castle in Scotland to avoid the nasty remarks from her sister-in-law, the duchess, **Fig** only to find that Fig and **Binky**, her brother, are coming to London. Binky needs to consult a doctor about the wound he incurred in *Royal Flush* while Fig is in an interesting condition. **Queenie** is Georgie's temporary maid for this trip; an utter disaster. **Darcy O'Mara** rescues Georgie from spot after spot even turning up unexpectedly at Nicki's party—schoolfriends, old chap. He also gets half of his dream come true when he gets Georgie into bed. Well, it is only half. **Georgie's mother** and her lover, **Max von Strohheim**, are also there.

**Belinda Warburton Stoke** contrives an invitation to the wedding and takes up with Nicholas' brother, **Prince Anton**, who seems to be a bit of a perv and right up Belinda's alley. Georgie figures Belinda is more of her mother's daughter than she is...sigh. **Lady Middlesex** is already scheduled to join her husband, the British attache in Baghdad, and gladly does her duty in escorting Lady Georgie. Of course, she's also rigidly English when it comes to murder. Mustn't forget her enemies-behind-every-bush companion, **Miss Deer-Harte**.

**Princess Maria Theresa of Romania** ("Mattie" and one of Georgie's schoolfriends) is to marry **Prince Nicholas of Bulgaria**, the crown prince. There's just this one problem. **Prince Siegfried** is the princess' brother and even she doesn't think he's much of a catch although Georgie's suspicions are confirmed.

**Count Dragomir**'s ancestors used to rule this part of Romania. Now he is a servant in his family's castle. **Field Marshal Pirin** is most unloved and most necessary. Even in death. **Patrascue** is the head of the Romanian secret police and an idiot and an asshole.

#### The Cover

I do like the picot-edged ribbon that runs horizontally across all the covers and carries the title. In this case, it's a beige ribbon with burgundy trim with the blonde Lady Georgiana descending a curved staircase wearing cream—opera-length gloves and a strapless, fitted dress carrying a matching clutch and a flute of champagne with a long, long double-strand of pearls and her tiara. Behind her, faceless, is a gentleman in a tux adjusting his cuffs. Both are descending to join a crowd mingling on the floor below them.

The title is a reference to the hazards and duties required of *Royal Blood*.

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#### Ren says

I swore I was done with this series after the third book, but I couldn't help myself. Mostly because I really liked the first book and I was hoping it'd pick up again. Spoiler: it didn't. All the characters are getting on my nerves. Georgie is a total pushover, she never makes any decision for herself and is bullied by all the other characters. Siegfried announces his engagement to Georgie without asking her. Darcy breaks off said engagement without asking her. Her maid is a bumbling idiot who ruins Georgie's dresses, sleeps in her bed and forgets to bring her breakfast, but for unfathomable reason Georgie is fond of her. And instead of, you know, investigating the murder, which is what amateur sleuths are supposed to do, Georgie spends most of the book convinced that there's a vampire in the castle and being upset that her friends don't believe her. Urgh. I would have rather read about the adventures of Binky and Fig.

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#### Ingela says

*Review written January 8, 2017*

**3 1/2 Stars - Another fun and cozy 1930s mystery adventure with Lady Georgie**

#### Book #4

Her Royal Spyness is one of my favorite cozy mystery audiobooks series. Always jolly fun to meet the British Queen's amateur spy in the 1930s. — Time for the fourth installment.

*Year 1934...*

Our heroine **Lady Georgie**, aka Lady Victoria Georgiana Charlotte Eugenie Rannoch, is a cousin of King George V of England and when the Queen ask it's hard to say a simple "NO". Our poor penniless heroine is consequently leaving *London* for far away east Europe to represent the royalties at a foreign relatives a *Romanian* princess' wedding.

Our Gergie is this time traveling with a quite hopeless (actually hilarious..) newly found chambermaid (*Queenie*) and two older very proper 'English' ladies as chaperones. They all arrives in a very cold, white and snowy *Transylvania* and already the second evening is there a murder case to solve. They are all running around in this big castle in the middle of royalties (... and of course are there blood-drinking vampires and scary howling wolves in the corners). Luckily is gorgeous sexy, as always shamelessly flirting, **Darcy O'Mara** (will it ever be?) appearing as well. Hmmm!!!

**I was listening with a (loving dorky oldish style UK stuff) big happy smile** — This fourth installment *Royal Blood* isn't in any way stunning fab or very exclusive newish but I got 9:25 good audiobook hours. As always excellent narrated by Katherine Kellgren.

A non-romance series I will stay with.

#### **I LIKE - to know what to expect**

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#### **Lynn says**

I really want to like these books, and I like Georgie and Dacry, but I am getting frustrated. The constant harping about how poor she is and how ill-equipped she is for anything is getting old. And now, rather than spend what little money she has on training to get a real job, she hires a maid! I just don't understand. Also the relationship with her sister-in-law Fig went from nice and genial in the last book, to frosty and hostile in this one. I wish it were more consistent. The mystery was interesting, though I had the ultimate whys and hows figured out fairly early on.

On the whole, a fun but forgettable read. Take on a long flight and leave.

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#### **Hannah says**

*Royal Flush* was so good that I had wondered whether Rhys Bowen would manage to produce something equal to that yet again, but *Royal Blood* fulfilled every one of my expectations and more. I still preferred the setting of Georgie's ancestral home in Scotland over remote Romania, but there were so many fun new aspects here that I didn't mind in the slightest – I particularly enjoyed Ms. Bowen's obviously tongue-in-

cheek references to vampire mythology. Above all else, there was just as much Darcy in this book as there was in the previous, and that can only be a good thing!

For Georgie's latest adventure, she's off to Bran Castle in a remote part of Romania to act as bridesmaid to Princess Maria Theresa (a supposed school chum whom she barely remembers), who's about to be married to Prince Nicholas to cement a political alliance between Germany and Romania. It sounds like a heaven-sent to Georgie considering her deplorable financial state, but as usual for Georgie, everything derails quite hilariously right from the start. Firstly she's saddled with a female bull of a chaperon, Lady Middlesex, and her nervous companion, Miss Deer-Harte (snort), and then she has a frightening late-night visit from a fair-haired young man who appeared to be a vampire. To top this off, an odious political figure, Pirin, is offed during dinner and her only back-up appears to be Queenie, her disaster of a Cockney maid.

Watching Georgie moving around in her social circles never gets tiring, and the addition of plenty of Darcy is a huge bonus. I really enjoyed seeing Georgie's relationship with Darcy grow – finally, he actually takes her on a proper date to dinner! – and, despite his continued refusal to commit, it's obvious he cares so much about her that he'd eventually come around. He's of the frustrating variety that says one thing while he means something else; for example, telling Georgie that she should find a prince to settle down with, but reacting with clear dismay when she *does* become accidentally betrothed to Prince Siegfried (i.e. Fishface). You just can't hate him, though, and he tops my list of favourite lead male characters. Not that I don't hope he'll put Georgie's doubts to rest soon!

There's never a quiet moment in *Royal Blood*, and I enjoyed it all immensely. As for the mystery front, Ms. Bowen does a great job of keeping us interested in it even with so many different things going on, and the revealing of clues is well-paced so that it doesn't feel crammed in at the end. Like the previous three books, though, it's more of a roaring good adventure with a spice of murder mystery than a traditional whodunit. This is by no means a detriment; the whole package – historical setting, fun characters, amusing situations and mysteries to be solved – is what makes these books so good. And *Royal Blood* is definitely one of the strongest installments in the *Royal Spyness* series so far. Highly recommended!

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### **Melissa McShane says**

I'm increasingly dissatisfied with this series, probably because it suffers so much in comparison to the other series I'm reading. The problem with this one is that Georgie comes off as kind of stupid, particularly in supposing that real vampires could be responsible for the mayhem surrounding her school friend's nuptials. I also didn't like her temporary maid Queenie, who is also extremely stupid but is meant to be endearing, and the fact that Queenie is going to be a recurring character or at least appear in the next book makes me less interested in reading it. And I'm getting tired of Georgie and Darcy dancing around the issue of whether they have a relationship or not. I didn't realize how much I liked Georgie's grandfather until he wasn't in the book, and it turns out he's one of my favorite parts of the series, so that might have contributed to my dissatisfaction. I may or may not continue; the series has been a good way to occupy my brain during my short break, when I don't want to get into something I care more about.

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