



Four Dead Queens

Astrid Scholte

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Seventeen-year-old Keralie Corrington may seem harmless, but she's, in fact, one of Quadara's most skilled thieves and a liar. Varin, on the other hand, is an honest, upstanding citizen of Quadara's most enlightened region, Eonia. He runs afoul of Keralie when she steals a package from him, putting his life in danger. When Varin attempts to retrieve the package, he and Keralie both find themselves entangled in a conspiracy that leaves all four of Quadara's queens dead.

With no other choices and on the run from Keralie's former employer, the two decide to join forces, endeavoring to discover who has killed the queens and save their own lives in the process. When their reluctant partnership blooms into a tenuous romance, they must overcome their own dark secrets in hopes of a future together that seemed impossible just days before. But first they have to stay alive and untangle the secrets behind the nation's four dead queens.

An enthralling fast-paced murder mystery where competing agendas collide with deadly consequences, *Four Dead Queens* heralds the arrival of an exciting new YA talent.

Four Dead Queens Details

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From Reader Review Four Dead Queens for online ebook

Emily May says

Four Dead Queens was being given away when I attended the Penguin talk at Comic-Con back in July 2018. Before this, I knew nothing about it, but I was immediately drawn in by the promise of a murder mystery in a fantasy setting. I'm a sucker for murder mysteries in general, and adding this to a fantasy world seemed like a recipe for excellence.

It didn't really work for me, though. Part of the problem might be that this book - a standalone, it seems - **tries to do too many things and stretches itself way too thin in the process**. It contains six different perspectives in total; all third person except for Keralee's perspective. It also contains weak fantasy-esque politics, an investigation into a murder, vague sci-fi concepts like genetic alterations and comm chips, and a romance that is thrown in for no reason I can see.

The fantasy part and its worldbuilding felt lacking. Many of the explanations given for the land and political system of Quadara didn't quite make sense to me. When a history is painted in, there's a vague mention of the one king and a war before the founding four queens built walls to split the land into quarters, each one ruling over their own section. I had a hard time picturing how this took place and why this was an adequate solution. Likewise, the rules of the "Queenly Law" seem ill-conceived. I don't understand why the queens are not allowed to visit the land they rule over.

At the time of the novel, the four ruling queens are Iris of Archia, Corra of Eonia, Stessa of Ludia and Marguerite of Toria. As the title reveals, the queens start being murdered one by one, so an investigator is called in to find the killer. Alongside this runs the story of street thief Keralee, who ingests some comm chips and sees visions of the queens' deaths. Accompanied by the beautiful but stoic Varin - ooh, what could happen? - she travels to the palace to reveal what she has seen.

Now, I know some people can read mysteries and just let events unfold without attempting to work it out in their head. I often wish I was this type of reader, but I can't. Just say the word "mystery" and I'm instantly suspicious of everything. And this is not a good book to be suspicious of everything. The author drops a very heavy-handed piece of information about a third of the way through that made me instantly figure out who must be behind the murders.

And yet, despite this, there is still a touch of deus ex machina about it, given that (view spoiler)

Again, I have no idea why the romance was in here. **There's no build-up or chemistry**. You can spot the love interest in chapter one by the way Keralee starts describing his beautiful skin, which is apparently "delicate, but hardy"... whatever that means. This is then followed by Keralee saying or thinking dirty jokes at the most inappropriate of times. Like her comment about Varin wanting to undress her while she is **literally drowning**.

I felt very frustrated with Keralee. I get that she's supposed to be a bit of an antiheroine, but she just came across as petty and childishly mean. We sympathise with antiheroines because they are complicated and, deep down, we can see the messed up reasons behind their actions. That wasn't the case with Keralee. When we first meet her, she slaps away an old man's cane so he falls over. That's not flawed and interesting; that's Peeves the poltergeist.

It was all a little too obvious, and a little too messy. Regular mystery readers will figure it out early, and everyone else probably won't be far behind. I liked that two of the queens were secretly lovers, but it's a shame that these two queer characters were both killed off (their romance all happens off-page because one of them is already dead when we find out). And this is a big spoiler but I'm surprised this is being called a "feminist" fantasy as (view spoiler)

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C.G. Drews says

i won't be reviewing this one in full, but I feel uncomfortable if i don't speak frankly about two harmful things:

- (1) this book buries its queers unapologetically
 - (2) it has a society built on eugenics and this isn't called out or indicated to be a despicable crime (in fact it's warmly stated at the end that, since one of the characters has a genetic disability, that they're "doing their best" to fix "genetic flaws" after birth as well. Maybe it'd be great to have a world with no terminal genetic illnesses, but you're also wiping out things like Autism, ADHD, Downs Syndrome, and other neurodiversities and frankly stating people don't deserve to live if they're atypical. You can't put this in a book as a throwaway comment. It could've been called out, but it wasn't.)
-

Melanie says

I'm the fifth dead queen because this cover and synop has SLAIN ME! GOODBYE!

[Blog](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Tumblr](#) | [Youtube](#) | [Twitch](#)

Kerri says

official comments to come!

MischaS_ says

I am very pleasantly surprised here! For a debut? It is pretty damn good!

And also the fabulous buddy-read with Mary helped me to enjoy this book even more!

- This was me while reading all the time! Since we were reading only 5 or 6 chapters per day (okay except for the last but one when we read 12 but WE NEEDED ANSWERS!)

- Mary had to suffer through numerous of my conspiracy theories and since I had so much time to think about those theories. Some of them were crazily correct! I have to say; my theory game was on point with this one!

- When I first found out about this book, it really reminded me about Three Dark Crowns. With the title, with the cover (I know it's blue, now but my screen colour is always so much down that it seemed black). And I even thought that this was the last book in that series.

And now I just hope that people won't mistake it for TDC because this is worth reading!

- You get action from the first page! Somethings happening all the time and you're trying to connect all those dots, and then you find out that you completely overlooked something. (Or you did not think that it was important!)

- I like Kera! She's snarky, rude and resourceful! She's fun, and I really liked her, it was a long time since I liked the main female character that much!

- This book made me laugh at the most inappropriate moments!

"To be safe, she emptied half the bottle."

"So no to breaking into the palace, but yes to stealing more clothes?"

- Varin is cute and everything... but I'm not here for the cute!

"Go, you stupid Eonist!"

- Talking about Eonists, I could not imagine living in Eonia! That Quadrant freaked me out! (view spoiler)

- And Mackiel? That's what I'm here for! I loved his character! Loved to watch his plans!

- The timeline of the story was a killer!

- Romance: (view spoiler)

- And obviously the one thing I did not question (but messed every my theory) came to bite me!

- This book made me slightly paranoid!

- And huge thanks to the author that she made this a stand-alone! Because most would try to make a trilogy out of this, but thankfully this was not the case. Instead, we got actioned packed one book which is totally worth it!

But, you know me, I have to point out some things that I did not like. Four quadrants and the kingdom (or should I say queendom?) is called Quadara? A bit originality, please! (view spoiler) --> This would be minus 0,5 ?.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

March Owlcrate Unboxing. Click on link below the pic to see the Goodies

THE GOODIES

MischaS_ says

Very curious about this one! Cannot wait for it. However, at first glance, I thought it was a book by Kendare Blake from the Three Dark Crowns series. Because of the cover and the title. Hopefully, that will be the only resemblance. But I will surely read this one.

jessica says

some of the best characters are those who blend the line between right and wrong, those whose ambiguous actions lead to even more conflicting intentions, and i am loving how these morally grey characters are finally getting the attention they deserve. keralie is a shining example of this.

i love her character development in this story. its so strong, makes sense, and is done in a very satisfying way. her storyline alternates with glimpses into the lives of each of the queens and i thought this was very effective storytelling. i dont want to give too much away, but the way that all of the information is presented is very clever. there are twists and turns and the way the reader is subtly misdirected is amazing! i could have sworn i knew what some of the big reveals would be but i got everything wrong. this kept me guessing and thats what made this book so fun for me.

this is such an impressive debut novel and i am most definitely a fan. i cant wait to see what astrid scholte comes up with next!

? 4 stars

Anissa (FairyLoot) says

Wow. Read this in pretty much one sitting - I just had to know what would happen next. Quadara is such a rich world and the mystery kept me on the edge of my seat (along with the wonderful characters)!

Nick says

I think I will go broke this year

Astrid Scholte says

The Penguin Teen Pre-order giveaway is live! Check out the amazing Welcome to Quadara pins you can choose from when you pre-order!

Pre-order link

US Residents, 13+. Ends 2/25/19. See terms at <http://bit.ly/FourDeadQueensPreOrder>

Want to be the first to hear about release dates, snippets, swag and ARCS? Then sign up for my newsletter [here!](#)

A divided nation. Four Queens. A ruthless pickpocket. A noble messenger. And the murders that unite them.

Seventeen-year-old Keralie Corrington may seem harmless, but she's, in fact, one of Quadara's most skilled thieves and a liar. Varin, on the other hand, is an honest, upstanding citizen of Quadara's most enlightened region, Eonia. He runs afoul of Keralie when she steals a package from him, putting his life in danger. When Varin attempts to retrieve the package, he and Keralie both find themselves entangled in a conspiracy that leaves all four of Quadara's queens dead.

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Emily (Books with Emily Fox) says

Thank you Netgalley for the sneak peak - the first five chapters of this book.

I wasn't sure how I would feel about this book but I couldn't put it down. The world building and characters were interesting and the intrigue is now killing me... I need to know how the rest goes!

Will pick up the book when it comes out at the end of the month!

julianna 🐉 says

I've got to say— for the first 25% of this book, **I was really just not feeling it.** Everything felt dull to me, it

read like one of those classic fantasies, and something just didn't *click* for me the way that I wanted it to. I found Keralie frustrating, the plot unordinary, and the worldbuilding mostly mediocre. I was finding problems with the writing and it was just hard for me to get into.

But damn, y'all, the last 50% of the book deserves ten stars on its own. I mean, the plot took such a turn and it finally really, truly felt like the murder mystery I was told it was going to be. Maybe I'm just still living on the adrenaline of the ending. But like, **that ending was really good.**

The queens were the power. No one else.

Power was a game, and over the years, Iris had perfected it.

Four Dead Queens follows Keralie, a thief (dipper) who's part of a larger black market network. Keralie steals things from people and gives them to Mackiel, her childhood friend and superior, and Mackiel sells them. In turn, Keralie gets some of the profit. However, Keralie sees Mackiel as more than a superior, but Mackiel... doesn't. He's been manipulating her for his own gain.

When Keralie's assigned to steal a comm disk from a messenger, the operation becomes messed up and Keralie ends up watching the comm disks, seeing all of the deaths of the four queens. However, Varin, as a messenger, needs to retrieve those comm disks— otherwise, his death date will be moved up.

This all takes place in Quadara, a nation with four different sections: Eonia, Toria, Ludia, and Archia. Each plays a different role in the nation. Eonia manages medicine and produces technology, Toria manages imports and exports throughout the nation as well as overall discovery, Ludia is the center of arts and fashion, and Archia is the source of crops and fertile land.

All of these quadrants are very separate, and there's hardly any transferring of citizens from one quadrant to another.

In the exposition of the story, I was honestly just not that impressed; **it just seemed like so many other stories that I had read**, and the premise of the four quadrants reminded me deeply of Divergent. I wasn't that entertained or as invested in the story as I wished that I was?

But guys... when we hit around 30-40%, it really started kicking in, the plot started moving, **everyone was dying and I was here for it.** But what I *really* want to talk about out of all of this is that in the end?? *everything* started clicking together. **What previously seemed like a classic fantasy turned out to be so, so much more** and the reveal of the killer?? I was shocked.

I did think that the prose could have been a little bit better, and Keralie kind of frustrated me in the beginning, and Keralie's whole flirting with Varin was too sudden when she was threatening him two minutes ago, but /that ending/.

I probably *would* have rated this five stars, but there were also some very questionable parts in this novel that I was kind of... iffy about.

For example, on page 131 (of the physical arc) it says things like "Love was the most important emotion of all" & non-romantic love exists, but in this context, it really seems like it was talking specifically about

romantic love??? I'm not an aromantic person, so I really can't speak for how someone aromantic might interpret this, but it just seemed kind of concerning to me.

Also, two of the queens were sapphic, who died (along with the other queens) and there was another f/f relationship, but they were very minor side characters and mentioned possibly two times in the entirety of the book. So. That's just a little... :///

Trigger and content warnings for death, murder, poisoning, throat cutting, severe burning, drowning, death by fire, abusive relationship, and imprisonment.

All quotes were taken from a galley & are subject to change.

Mary S. R. says

4.25 STARS! such an impressive and gripping book for a debut. A new author I'm looking forward to read more from :)

"Dream bigger," he'd said. "Want more. Don't ask. Take it."

I won't deny that I was anticipating reading this, but I was *not* expecting it to be so spectacular! A fun buddy read with the girl with crazy theories, aka Mischa :)

"Sometimes we fail because we're not meant to succeed."

"Sometimes failure is the beginning of success."

This was different because I think it tried something new! Something that not everyone can pull off and also might not work for every reader either. *Four Dead Queens* is a **murder mystery thrown in a sci-fi/fantasy world, with greed, politics, intrigue, criminals, and heists, yes, but also love, caring, friendship, and family.** A great Young Adult debut; I enjoyed that fresh mix!

"You can't let in the good without the bad,"

The only reason this wasn't a 5-star read was because some small things felt a little *convenient* to me and that I usually like my science-fiction with a little more "science" (it's just me; the sci-fi elements and ideas of *Four Dead Queens* were **one of a kind**, but I'm more of a fan of something like *One Word Kill*, which is head-spinningly mind-blowing!)

"Having something, even if in the past, is better than nothing at all."

"And you believe memories are enough to sustain us?" he asked. "Through the darkness?"

The **playlist** for this book was epic and fitting (with the help of Mischa!) and I suggest listening to the songs while reading. You can find it at the end of the review :)

Storyline

Small breath in, small breath out.

There's a way in, and always a way out.

In a land where a divided yet united, beautiful if complicated nation named Quadara is ruled by four queens from the four different quadrants Archia, Toria, Ludia, and Eonia ... the people live, some hiding and living in peace behind the walls separating them, and some eager and hungry for what lies beyond, out of their reach.

“May the queens forever rule the day. Together, yet apart.”

But the law and the queens are all that keeps this nation which has survived the most terrible war together; the Queenly Law the most sacred of them all. If they shatter Queenly Law, they could shatter Quadara’s stability. If they kill the queens, the nation will fall apart.

But an assassin is on the loose.

How could they stop a shadow without a name?

“I will call an inspector immediately,” Corra said. “We will uncover the truth.”

And outside the palace walls, Keralie **the talented thief** does what she does best—darting between the crowd with searching hands, guided by her best friend and her boss Mackiel, ready to choose her next target. But she might just end up with **a different target and information on an assassination attempt** ... an attempt on Quadara's very foundation.

“I’m beginning to realize that look on your face means nothing good will follow.”

I patted his shoulder. “You’re a quick learner.”

In a tale where bonds are tested and broken, where everyone has a mask and something to hide, where they're all liars with false smiles and an act they will not drop, **you might find the killer at your throat if you look away too long.**

“Friends? Enemies?” I shrugged. “Who can tell the difference?” Apparently not me.

A lie.

Another lie.

The biggest lie of all.

The final act.

The final reveal.

The cards are on the table...

But nothing is as it seems.

On the ending: it might not have ended how I'd have hoped, yet I was in no way displeased with it :) (view spoiler)

Storytelling

I love you more than my boat loves a twelve-knot wind and a warm sea.

I have to say I was pleasantly surprised! The writing in general was sometimes good and sometimes magnificent—definitely more than I'd hoped for :)

In some part the description was so unique, it was like **it wrapped itself around me, sucking me in and stealing my breath away**; and the use of phrases were sometimes so smart, the author discreetly referencing a previous phrase with an exquisite twist to the sentences...

Even at night, the corridors blurred into a deep amber, as though darkness would not dare caress the queens with inky-black fingers.

But more important than that is the mystery (since it's a murder mystery, you know). And I can say Ms. Scholte managed it nicely, making you doubt and question everything you assume, **twisting the story around your head until the world starts spinning!** ?

A figure darted through the crowd without touching anyone, like a fish in a stream, moving between invisible currents, or a shadow between gas lamps, light never touching them.

Another very strong point: **Astrid Scholte knows her thieving lessons well.**

Now, either she has a history with the popular crime, or she's done her research and is a *natural* (who'd do great if she tries her hand at the profession, I'm telling you! ?); the former we're going to assume is not true and look the other way (*whistles giddily while giving you a **conspiratorial look***), so let's go with the latter...

But in all seriousness, it was **one of the best thief-writings** I've read!

Stores didn't have thoughts and feelings, backgrounds and motives. Stores only had locks. And locks were easy to pick.

The conversations and reactions (specially when Varin was involved :)) were so **hilarious!!** I was howling with laughter at some points (even thinking about it has me losing it ?)

"I want to propose something—"

"You can propose to me all you like. I'll never say yes." I flashed him a grin.

And last but not least, the politics were masterfully written; and since it's one of my fave topics to see applied to a fantasy world, I was in *awe*! (more on that in **Worldbuilding** section)

"I like how art captures not only the exterior, but also the feeling and mood of the artist. Like a memory."

The perfect attention to art put aside (which I loved), I'll say that Ms. Scholte impressed me, and having read about her now, I see how her book reflected her own character. I'm looking forward to more books :)

Characterization

Keralie: a talented thief, a cunning liar, a selfish ruthless girl ... she is a thousand things and more. But she is also strong, resilient, unwavering, snarky and hilarious. I *loved* her as the main character! And **her development was remarkable** :)

"What did you want to be when you were younger?" he asked, looking at his hands.

"A thief."

He let out a breath through his teeth. "Why do you always lie?"

"I'm not lying." And I wasn't. "I've tried to be other things. I failed." Spectacularly.

Varin: he might be innocent and loyal and adorable like a puppy (and my boy who I just wanna protect) but he's also sneaky, smart, strong and wise. I mean even thinking about him and his life hurts ... how much unwavering strength he must've had to bear all that and still stand? **That's the type of beauty I admire.**
(view spoiler)

“I am, and only will ever be, a messenger.”

Mackiel: a boy who takes your weaknesses and twists them for his gain with an admirably scheming mind, I loved everything about his addition to the story. Sure, I wanted to punch him on occasion (specially at the end) but that removes nothing of the intriguing character he was! (view spoiler)

“My business,” he said, “is anything and *everything* lucrative. You know our world, darlin’.
You know only the most cunning survive. And in these times, we have to be more ruthless than ever.”

Iris, Queen of Archia, was a whirlwind of a woman and someone I really like with her hard working ways; **Corra, Queen of Eonia,** was probably my favourite of the four queens with her battles. (view spoiler)

To grieve was not Eonist. It implied feelings beyond general associations. Eonists were a unified people, but distant. It provided an environment where logic and knowledge reigned.

Stessa, Queen of Ludia, was a sweet young gem that promised to be a strong woman who treasured her people; and **Marguerite, Queen of Toria,** a curious and admirable ruler whose kind heart and seeking of the knowledge of distant lands captured me :) (view spoiler)

Let love guide your heart, and everything else will fall into place.

Arabella, another obsession of mine whose whole characterization had me bowing to the author! (view spoiler); and **Inspector Gavin,** what an interesting man that I won't talk a lot about *slow grin* but damn is he *smart*! (view spoiler)

Relationships

“Loving someone means risking your heart being broken,” Corra said. “But those moments you are together triumph over any hardship.”

The friendships and enmities, the bonds of the sister queens, the complicated relationship between Kera and her best friend and her family were all things I found fully developed, real, and three-dimensional. And trust me—it's hard to do that in a standalone with this big a plot, but somehow the author did it!

I winked at him.

He ignored me, or perhaps he thought I had a facial twitch.

On criticisms: yes, while the romance might not have been necessary, it did *not* feel out of place to me, and nor was it sudden and without beautifully written development for both characters! So I'd have to respectfully disagree with the people saying they lacked chemistry.

See, it wasn't all about the “romance” when it came to these two. **What I appreciated was that they were each fighting their own battles with their own inner demons (sometimes literary) and it was about each helping the other become a better individual rather than a better *partner*** (which is usually the case with romance, the trope being “two as one” and “whole together” and all that stupidity implying we're less than whole without a romantic partner!)

Scholte remembered to focus on individuality and friendship and family more than the romance. Thank you for that!

Worldbuilding

Quadara's divided nation was an ecosystem, each quadrant playing its part. Archia provided crops and natural resources; Eonia developed medicine and technology; Ludia provided art, fashion and entertainment; and Toria arranged imports and exports between the quadrants. And Queenly Law upheld the system.

Starting this part with that is the best choice, I think; because oh was I **impressed with this world building!** I'll tell you why, shall we? (don't worry, no important spoilers. These are things introduced before the book starts, I'm just analysing them)

Archia:

Trust only in what can be wielded by hand and heart.

The hardworking of the four quadrants, Archians have a **no-nonsense attitude** that I appreciate and look up to. They are strong-willed and humble, lovers of nature and the old ways. They see technology as something destructive and rarely would they view it as helpful.

(While that's not completely a true or good view point, here they *do* have a point as all the other quadrants became barren and only theirs was where plants grew and flowers bloomed.)

Astrid Scholte showed the importance of natural resources well with how the other quadrants' reacted to Archia. The politics was simply on point!

Eonia:

A turbulent mind produces turbulent times. A peaceful mind heralds peace.

This was the one that fascinated me the most. They live in the coldest and most barren part of the nation: **the north**. First, that is enough to say that northerners with their harsh environments and their ways of life have always been a fave of mine in real life or fantasy, but Scholte's northerners do not, in fact, pillage or plunder. They are the most disciplined of the quadrants!

“There's no crime in Eonia, no uprisings, no hate. Everyone has their role in society, and we're paid well enough. Eonia has eradicated envy, jealousy, violence, cruelty.”

To overcome the stunning harshness and the lacking of their home, they focused on **technology and an in-control mind**. They lacked natural resources, and instead of stealing, they pursued perfection in every other sense: their physique, their control, their equipment.

All that, however, lead to a society with people disconnected from emotions (the main cause of errors), floating on the surface of life, never connecting to anything or anyone. **No dreams, no appreciation for beauty and art, no understanding of sympathy and no caring. No family. No friendships. No love.**

While their methods of population control (a topic I've read a lot about), their way of raising their young, and their control of their occupations is undoubtedly horrifying, it's also **indefinitely ingenious!** The philosophy, psychology, and sociology the author undertook with this complicated society was mesmerising, and I found the Eonist characters were usually the ones I felt for the most...

Toria:

Know everything, and you shall know all.

What I valued the most about the people of this quadrant was their **curiosity and desire for learning and experiencing new thing**. Torians look to the horizon, they are seekers and voyagers ... but they can also be greedy and demanding. And that can lead to selfishness and dark places.

Ludia:

Life is for the revelers with open eyes and open hearts.

Probably the opposite of Eonists, they embrace feelings with all their faults and revel in the beauty of it. A society of **artists** and passionate people, I love these precious creatures :)

Ludists knew the world was often cruel, that sadness often outweighed happiness and darkness could be a mere step away. But instead of wallowing in this knowledge, Ludists embraced all that was beautiful, light and pleasurable in the world.

However, Ludists are perhaps more prone to **naivety** than the other quadrants. So their young (and sometimes adults) might be the most unprepared to face the harshness of life. But when they do, if they remain strong and do not let it break them, they can become inspiring wise people who **see the beauty even in the ugliest places!**

On criticisms about the Queenly Law: as some reviewers have pointed out, some of these fifteen rules felt senseless. But that was kind of the point! (view spoiler)

Realizes she's been talking too much, grins widely and sheepishly whatever, the summary is that “read, and enjoy, and don't forget to pay attention to the *on criticisms* parts before pointing fingers (something we love doing)”

Companions

Book playlist:

[Spotify LINK to book playlist]

- “Empires” by Ruelle (main song, emotional moments, epic reveals, deaths)
- “Bad Behaviour” by Iolite (any scene in general, finish first chapter and last chapter both with this)
- “Trouble” by CRMNL (bad-ass scenes, start book with this song)
- “Metamorphosis” by Peter Gundry [Instrumental] (mysterious scenes, sneaking around the palace)
- “Carmina Burana: O Fortuna” by Carl Orff (epic/chaotic reveals, for most of Keralie's fourth part chapters)
- “Secrets and Lies” by Ruelle (sneaky moments)

MischaS_ says

****I received an advance review copy (sneak peek in this case) for free in exchange for an honest review, and I am leaving this honest review voluntarily.

I completely missed that this is only a sneak peek! I reached a WTF moment and wanted to know what next

and there is nothing! I really, really need the rest of this book.

I wanted to read this book since when I found about this book in September. However, I already voiced my concerns that this book with its title and maybe even cover may confuse some people into believing that it's an instalment in the Three Dark Crowns series by Kendare Blake. It was my first reaction when I saw it before noticing a different author name. And I think it would be a shame if people missed this because of the confusion.

So, what can I say after reading this 66 pages long sneak peek? I'm excited about this book. We get the action right away! Something is happening from page one; we are already in action and, so far it does not feel like an information dump. I'll admit that I have a hard time remembering which Queen is a Queen over which quadrant and what they do there. But we are only five chapters in, so, nothing terrible.

I like how the Queens are different, but thankfully it does not seem like they will try to kill each other. And I'm really excited about Queen Stessa; she seems like a headstrong young lady.

I'm looking forward to seeing where Keralie's story is going. However, I can already say that I will be obsessed with Mackiel. He already seems like my kind of character. Though I have to wonder about the whole "thief" part of the story, it seems to be getting a tad bit overused.

The only thing that's getting a bit on my nerves is the whole "Four quadrants of the Quadara." A bit more originality here it would go a long way, at least for me.

Anyway, all I want to say that I feel more confident about this book than I did before reading this sneak peek. And now, can I get the whole book, pretty please? ?
