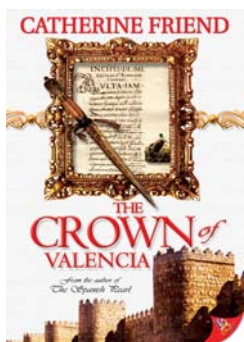


Book Review: February 2008

by RLYnne (reviewer at JAW)



The Crown of Valencia

Catherine Friend

ISBN: 978-1-933110-96-7

Trade paper, 296, \$15.95

November 2007

Lesbian Romantic Adventure

Bold Strokes Books, Inc.

www.boldstrokesbooks.com

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Nann Dunne

Editor-in-Chief

& Publisher

The Crown of Valencia is the sequel of Friend's *The Spanish Pearl*. While this book stands alone, for those who read the first novel, it answers the famous question, "Do they live happily ever after?" It also further develops the primary (and some secondary) characters as they age and mature. As the book begins, Kate has returned to our century to raise Arturo, the orphan to whom she and Anna had promised a family. Eight years pass, with Arturo becoming a typical American young boy, and Kate studying ancient languages and Spanish history. While she's mellowed, Kate has not lost her sharp wit or tongue, nor has she forgotten Elena.

It is during her studies that Kate sees history magically changing in the books she's reading. She realizes that trouble is afoot. And, the only person with enough prior knowledge to make the changes has to be Anna, her former lover. Kate knows that if she doesn't journey back in time to undo Anna's mischief, the strands of time will be forever altered. Arturo, now fourteen, is determined to accompany Kate in her travel to eleventh century Spain.

Once again, Friend has done her homework. Her descriptions of people, places, culture and customs are impeccable. She does a wonderful job in fitting a young American male into these ancient times, and showing how the completely different culture affects him. In addition, she shows the changes eight years have made in both Kate and Elena. Is it possible to return to a place, and a woman, after leaving them for eight years? And, the Kate who returns is now a mother. What changes will that make in both her perspective and in the eyes of Elena?

The Crown of Valencia is a great read. Catherine Friend has filled her novel with intrigue, adventure, humor and romance. Her characters are real, and linger long in the mind after the last page is read.

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Book Review: March 2008

by Anna Furtado, author of *The Heart's Desire* & reviewer at (reviewer at JAW)



The Crown of Valencia

Catherine Friend

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Trade paper, 296 pp, \$15.95

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In this second book of love and intrigue in the time of the Moors, Kate Vincent becomes a reluctant time traveler, once again. When she discovers that the content of books about the time period are changing almost before her eyes, she realizes that the historical timeline has been breached, and history is twisting and turning into something that never was. At first, she has trouble convincing anyone that something terrible is happening, but then she is called upon to restore history to its original place. She hesitates because, not only does she not want to leave her comfortable life and her family, but she is also concerned about what will happen if she finds Luis Navarro again.

When it becomes apparent that she is the best woman for the job, she packs her bags and visits the cave at Mirabueno, finding herself back in Spain fourteen years after she left, fighting hidden enemies, making alliances, and trying to fix the broken timeline and return it to its rightful past.

The story is woven with new enemies and old friends, and Kate soon discovers that not everyone who professes to be an ally is one. As she moves toward Valencia, to restore El Cid as the conqueror she knows he must become, she finds a mere shell of a man and she must figure out how this has happened in order to correct the injustice. When Kate takes on the despicable Paloma de Palma, she comes close to losing her life several times. In addition, Kate discovers that things have changed in the life of the dashing Luis Navarro in ways she never could have imagined.

Once again, Friend gives us brilliant descriptions of people, time, and place. Her storytelling talent is superb and her plot twists continually keep the reader in suspense, turning page after page until the end of the story. Read in tandem with Friend's first book in this series, *The Spanish Pearl*, both books will provide hours of entertainment for history, lesbian romance, and adventure buffs alike.

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