



Dark Angels: A Novel (Tamworth Saga)

By Karleen Koen

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Dark Angels: A Novel (Tamworth Saga) By Karleen Koen

The long-awaited prequel to Koen's beloved *Through a Glass Darkly*, *Dark Angels* is a feast of a novel that sparkles with all the passion, extravagance, danger, and scandal of seventeenth-century England.

Alice Verney is a young woman intent on achieving her dreams. Returning to England after a messy scandal forced her to flee to Louis XIV's France, Alice is anxious to re-establish herself by regaining her former position as a maid of honor to Charles II's queen and marrying the most celebrated duke of the Restoration.

But all is not as it seems in the rowdy, merry court of Charles II. Since the Restoration, old political alliances have frayed, and there are whispers that the king is moving to divorce his barren queen, who some wouldn't mind seeing dead. Alice, loyal only to a select few, is devoted to the queen, and so sets out to discover who might be making sinister plans—and if her own father is one of them.

When a member of the royal family dies unexpectedly, the stakes are raised. As Alice steps up her efforts to find out who is—and isn't—true to the queen, she learns of shocking betrayals throughout court, and meets a man who she may fall in love with—and who could spoil all of her plans. With the suspected arrival of a known poison-maker, the atmosphere in the court electrifies, and suddenly the safety of the king himself seems uncertain. Secret plots are at play, and war is on the horizon—but will it be with the Dutch or the French? And has King Charles himself betrayed his country for greed?

Unforgettable in its dramatic force, here is a novel of love and politics, of romance and betrayal, of power and succession—and of a resourceful young woman who risks everything for pride and status in an era in which women were afforded little of either.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this sprightly prequel to her bestselling *Through a Glass Darkly*, Koen transports readers to the Restoration court of England's King Charles II. As England recovers from civil war, the court is awash in intrigue, treachery and debauchery. Koen's protagonist, Alice Verney, "a born courtier, wily, patient, steadfast," and maid-of-honor to Queen Catherine, moves seamlessly through this glittering world. When King Charles's sister is poisoned, Alice suspects the mysterious Henry Angel is responsible and has Queen Catherine as his next target. Alice allies with the duke of Balmoral, a statesman and one of the king's advisors whom she hopes to wed, and the young handsome Richard Saylor, the commander of the Queen's Guard, to foil Angel's plot and expose the conspirators within the English government. As she races to save the queen, Alice is increasingly torn between the wealthy, powerful duke of Balmoral and the lowly but dashing Saylor. Koen knows her material and painstakingly recreates the Restoration period. Her large cast—both historical and fictional—are sharply rendered, and the larger-than-life Alice makes a memorable heroine—imperious, even vindictive, but always unwavering in conviction. Koen blends history, mystery and romance to craft a historical romance that will delight fans of the genre. (Sept.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Karleen Koen has been largely absent from the literary scene for 20 years, and critics who enjoyed *Through a Glass Darkly* herald her return. Reviewers agree that Koen's deep knowledge of world politics and daily life during the Restoration contributes to the strength of her writing, which appears undiminished by her time off. Her handling of romance is delicate, with passion confined to a few kisses and clearly peripheral to the plot. The real focus is scandalous intrigue, much of it based on historical fact. The novel's length bothered some, but all agreed that *Dark Angels* is a richly imagined historical romance.

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From [Booklist](#)

The reputation for merriment ascribed to Charles II of England, a mood arising from his gratitude for being brought safely to the throne after the execution of his father, Charles I, and the dismal interregnum of the Puritan and puritanical Oliver Cromwell, overlays a diplomatic, political, and religious tension threading through the fun-loving court of the cosmopolitan, intelligent Charles Stuart. These conditions easily spawn a romantic story line by the author of the best-selling *Through a Glass Darkly* (1986) in this prequel to that work. The central character is Alice Verney, former lady-in-waiting to Charles II's consort, Queen Catherine, then to the king's sister, Henrietta, married to the brother of France's Louis XIV. Upon Henrietta's mysterious death, Alice returns to England and begins her adventures, making certain not only to remain afloat but also to triumph in the commotion and excitement of the English royal court. Alice is compellingly drawn, and Koen creates a detail-rich setting for her to express her vibrant personality. *Brad Hooper*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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