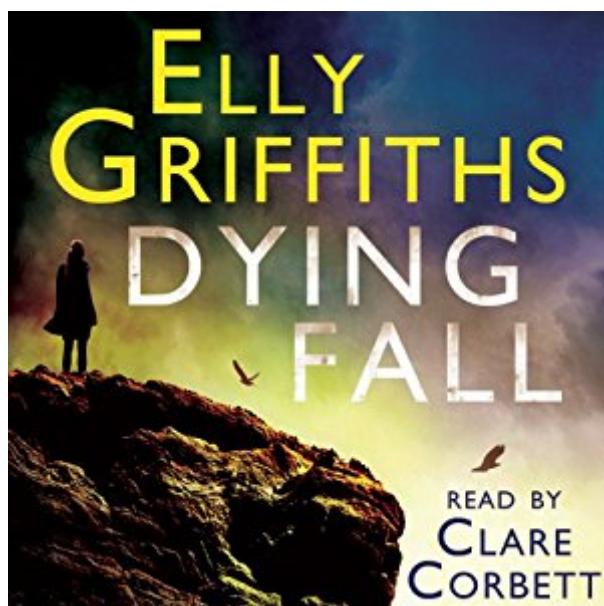


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Dying Fall: A Ruth Galloway Investigation



Synopsis

Ruth Galloway receives a phone call that bears shocking news. A friend of hers from college, Dan Golding, has been killed in a fire at his Lancashire home. Her shock turns to alarm when she gets a letter from Dan. He has made a discovery that will change archaeology forever but he needs Ruth's advice. Even more alarming, he sounds vulnerable and frightened. DCI Harry Nelson is also rediscovering his past. Up north for a holiday, he meets his former colleague Sandy MacLeod, now at Blackpool CID. Sandy tells him there are strange circumstances surrounding Dan Golding's death. Many of those who worked with Dan seem to be afraid. Many have secrets to hide. Ruth is drawn deep into the mystery, and where she goes, so does her toddler daughter, Kate. This time, it's not just Ruth's life at risk.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

... here she comes again: Dr Ruth Galloway, the British anthropo-pathologist. Nothing so "telegenic" like a Tempe Brennan aka "Bones" or the glamour of a "Kay Scarpetta" - she simply is "herself" - without additional. A woman of 42 years and a bit "on the plumper" side - now a hard-working "Single-Mother" and teaching forensic archaeology at Norfolk University. She is raising her daughter, living alone, owning a cat and a battered car, like many of us normal women do... But she is also a thoroughbred scientist. Our Ruth is shocked when she learns that her old university archeologist friend Dan Golding has died tragically when his house burned down. But a letter from the dead, from Dan, written just before he died, is the most unsettling thing she ever received... Dan

tells her of a great archaeological discovery he made, but also says that he is scared for his life. Was Dan's death linked to this find? The only clue is his mention of the Raven King, an ancient name for a very famous historic figure...Then Ruth is invited by Pendle University to examine the skeleton Dan found. Ruth travels to Lancashire near Blackpool - the hometown of DCI Harry Nelson - with her eighteen-month-old daughter Kate and her druid friend Cathbad in tow. What she finds is a campus living in fear of a sinister right-wing group called the White Hand. She also discovers that the bones are revealing a shocking fact about that Raven King - maybe King Arthur ??? - and then they vanish mysteriously. When DCI Nelson - visiting his mother in Blackpool - learns about the case he is soon drawn into the investigation and is also rediscovering his past. His long-time friend Sandy Macleod - now at Blackpool CID - tells him that Dan's death is highly suspicious.

Elly Griffith's fifth installment in her Ruth Galloway/DCI Harry Nelson series takes both of them from their usual stomping grounds on the Norfolk coast to Lancashire in the north of England, although on what first appear to be separate missions. Ruth learns that an old university friend, fellow archaeologist Dan Golding, has died in a house fire in Blackpool not long after making a discovery of what he believes are the bones of the legendary King Arthur at a nearby dig. Dan's department head at the university where he was teaching asks Ruth, who's an expert on analyzing ancient bones, to come to Blackpool and check out the bones herself. At the same time, DCI Nelson has been ordered to take a holiday and decides to visit his mother -- in Lancashire. He visits an old police pal there, and before you know it, he's involved in the investigation of Dan Golding's death and other strange goings-on that seem to be related to it. This forms the bones -- pun intended -- of "A Dying Fall." Ruth and her friend Cathbad -- a Druid who comes along to help Ruth with her toddler, Kate -- are soon drawn into the Golding case when it becomes apparent that it was a murder, not an accidental fire. And Ruth's analysis of information on the bones reveals a very startling fact about the man who may have been King Arthur. Add a secret society on campus that appears to be white supremacist, and you have quite a brew of suspicion. This is a solid addition to the series with interesting information about ancient Britain and the Arthur legend. It advances the difficult situation, and continuing attraction, between Ruth and DCI Nelson, who fathered her baby during a brief affair.

This may be the last of Elly Griffiths' Ruth Galloway series I read. It has nothing to do with Griffiths' writing skills--she's wonderful. Her dialogue is crisp, her settings vibrant and enticing, her plot engaging. I even love most of the characters--who couldn't be enchanted by the Druid Cathbad with

a heart of gold and the easy-going attitude toward life we would all love to emulate. I can easily understand why it's a Mary Higgins Clark award-winner. The problem is Ruth Galloway--the main character. I don't like her. But I'm ahead of myself. This latest book penned by Elly Griffiths, "A Dying Fall" (Houghton Mifflin 2013) dwells on that rich content we armchair anthropologists love--ancient bones with stories to tell. In this case, a colleague of Galloway's (Dan Golding) discovers them, contacts Ruth, but dies in a mysterious house fire before he can discuss his find. As luck would have it, the friend's employer (a struggling college) invites Galloway (a well-known expert in this field) to evaluate what should be a 1500-year old skeleton. She quickly realizes the bones that likely caused her friend's death have been replaced by worthless substitutes. It doesn't take long for Golding's killer to set his/her sights on Ruth and worse, her toddler daughter, Ruth uses her considerable intellect, her enigmatic friend Cathbad, and the father of her daughter DCI Nelson to unravel the mystery even as other lives are claimed in the murderer's effort to stop Ruth from uncovering the truth. Sounds wonderful, doesn't it? And it is, despite being one of those present tense books that always take me a few chapters to get used to. Griffiths, like Elizabeth George, puts you smack amidst the English landscape in her scenes, characterizations, language, customs.

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