



Book Club Kit

BY DENNY S. BRYCE

The Other Princess

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2023



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About Me

Denny S. Bryce is a best-selling, award-winning author of historical fiction. A former dancer and public relations professional, Denny is an adjunct professor in the MFA program at Drexel University, a book critic for NPR, and a freelance writer whose work has appeared in USA Today and Harper's Bazaar. She is also a member of the Historical Novel Society, Women's Fiction Writers Association, and Tall Poppy Writers. Originally from Ohio, she likes to call Chicago her hometown but currently resides in Savannah, Georgia. You can find her online at DennySBryce.com.

About The Book

In a stirring and impeccably researched novel of Jazz-age Chicago in all its vibrant life, two stories intertwine nearly a hundred years apart, as a chorus girl and a film student deal with loss, forgiveness, and love...in all its joy, sadness, and imperfections.

QUESTIONS



How well did the author portray the historical setting and characters? Did you feel you were in the Victorian Era?

Did you feel immersed in West Africa (Freetown, The Lagos Colony, Dahomey kingdom, etc.)? Were there any historical details or events that you found particularly fascinating or surprising?

Discuss the main character, Princess Aina/Sarah Forbes Bonetta, and her journey throughout the book. Does she change? How did she evolve as a character?

Did you find her growth believable? Relatable? Were there moments in her character arc that left an impression on you?

The novel explores the friendship between Sarah and Queen Victoria's daughter, Princess Alice. How did their relationship change over the course of the story, and what role did loyalty play in their friendship? Were there any parallels or differences between their bond and modern friendships?

What comes to mind when you think about any recurring symbols or imagery in the book? Did you notice any symbols that added depth to the story or conveyed deeper meanings?

How did they enhance your understanding of the narrative?

The protagonist grapples with her authentic African heritage and the African she is expected to be in England. How did the novel handle discussions of race, and what insights did it provide into the challenges faced by African people in England during the Victorian era, who were also members of the royal household?

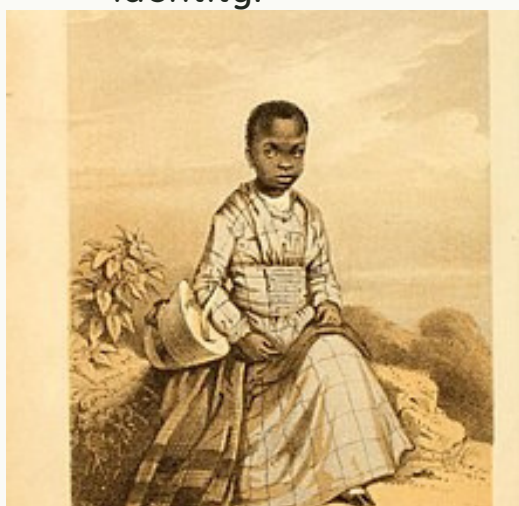
HISTORICAL 'FACTS'

The story of Sarah Bonetta Forbes is one of displacement and reveals how she was fetishized in both Africa and England. Born into a west-African Yoruba dynasty, she was captured as a child during a slave hunt war in which her parents were killed by King Ghezo of Dahomey (1848), the most notorious slave-trading monarch in West Africa during the early nineteenth century. She was discharged by the King to Captain Frederick Forbes, who was sent to west Africa to persuade the king to abandon slavery. He bargained to save the child, convincing the King to send her as a 'gift' to Queen Victoria. On the journey to England, she was baptised 'Sarah' and given the name of Captain Forbes and his ship 'Bonetta'. his stripped her of her original name 'Aina' and symbolically, of her west-African identity.



The Queen, impressed by the young girl's intelligence and dignity became her protector, funding her education and providing for her welfare. Sarah was highly regarded in the royal household, appearing at many social events including Princess Victoria's wedding, the Queen's eldest daughter...

NOTE: This information is an excerpt from the following Internet page: <https://bit.ly/3ZQRLtv>





History takes some surprising paths to reveal itself, even to a history geek like myself. I remember watching (and enjoying) the 2016 PBS Masterpiece program *Victoria*. In episode seven, a character was introduced, an African princess and ward of Queen Victoria, Sarah Forbes Bonetta. I immediately Googled her—one of those fact-or-fiction questions—and discovered she was real. Still, at the time, I was an unagented author working on my first novel (*Wild Women and the Blues*, eventually released in 2021). My research focused on 20th-century history, so I didn't follow up.

What was the most surprising thing you learned about her?

The next time I was reminded of Princess Aina (Sarah's Yoruba name) was in 2019, when Tessa Woodward, executive editor at HarperCollins, tweeted the comment: "Could someone please write a novel about Sarah Forbes Bonetta?" By then, you'd think I would've been all over it, but again, opportunity slipped through my fingers. I was busy finishing my debut novel. But finally, later that same year, I received an inquiry via an author friend and my agent, and the next thing I knew, I wrote a synopsis and a few sample chapters about Sarah Forbes Bonetta. I pitched it to Tessa, and the rest is history! (This is an excerpt from my 2023 *Library Journal* Interview)

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The Other PRINCESS

a novel of **QUEEN VICTORIA'S
GODDAUGHTER**

“This is a must-read for
historical fiction lovers!”

—CHANEL CLEETON,
New York Times and *USA Today*
bestselling author
of *The Cuban Heiress*



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VICTORIAN ERA
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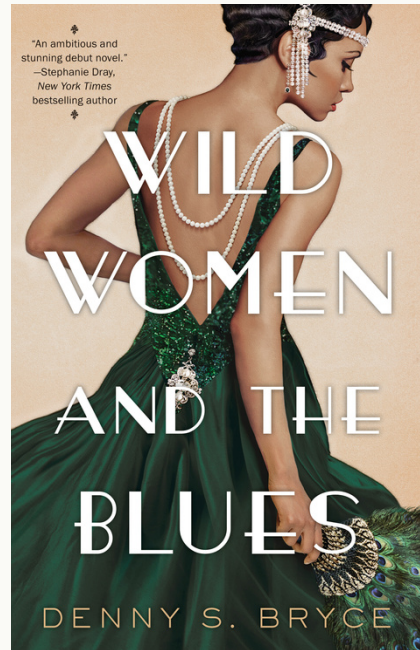
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AVAILABLE FOR
VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON
DISCUSSIONS

I love meeting with book clubs! If your group of ten or more members are interested in a Zoom Chat with Denny S. Bryce, please email me at denny@dennysbryce.com. These 30 to 45-minute conversations are complimentary and scheduled per my availability.

For in-person events, please email me denny@dennysbryce.com to discuss honorariums and travel and hotel accommodations if applicable.

Other novels by Denny S. Bryce



March 5, 2024

July 23, 2024