



# The Queen Must Die

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~~Not a Choice~~

off

BfK Rating:

4

The device used to travel through time is something which many writers find difficult to do. In this, the first of a planned trilogy **The Chronicles of Tempus**, the author uses the letters of Queen Victoria to transport Katie Berger-Jones-Burg from present day New York to Buckingham Palace in Queen Victoria's reign. Katie is a rather sad figure, seemingly abandoned by her feckless erstwhile popstar mother, Mimi, for yet another no-hoper, and finding her solace in reading, keeping her books in the rather dusty space under the bed. In this book Princess Alice is a feisty character wanting to do more than Victorian young ladies are allowed to, quite happy to believe that Katie is from the future, and interested to try and get her back to that time. The two girls along with the doctor's son become involved in what they think is a plot to kill Queen Victoria with suspicion resting on Prince Albert's secretary, Bernard DuQuelle. But Mr. DuQuelle has another secret; he too is from another civilization, not another time, from a people who wanted to improve things for everyone, latterly beginning to shed their bodies and with this losing the ability to communicate. DuQuelle works out how to get Katie back to New York, but leaves the story open for the next book.

After a slightly uncertain beginning in New York, the story gathers strength and momentum when it travels to Buckingham Palace. The particularly strong characterisation of Princess Alice and the doctor's son, James, make the story much more credible, and the mixing of real historical figures and fictional people, who all have obviously made-up names, are blended well together. This allows the fantasy element of the story to seem a natural extension. There are good cameo portraits of the Queen and Prince Albert, and the signs that Princess Alice would become more than a figurehead in her time. To young people in our time the medical treatment given to haemophiliac Prince Leopold will seem nothing short of torture!

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