



Serpents in the Garden

Anna Belfrage

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'Serpents in the Garden' is the fifth book in Anna Belfrage's time slip series featuring time traveller Alexandra Lind and her seventeenth century husband, Matthew Graham.

After years of hard work, Matthew and Alex Graham have created a thriving home in the Colony of Maryland. About time, in Alex's opinion, after far too many adventures she is really looking forward to some well-deserved peace and quiet. A futile hope, as it turns out. Things start to heat up when Jacob, the third Graham son, absconds from his apprenticeship to see the world - especially as Jacob leaves behind a girl whom he has wed in a most irregular fashion. Then there's the infected matter of the fellow time traveller Alex feels obliged to help - no matter the risk. Worst of all, one day Philip Burley and his brothers resurface after years of absence. As determined as ever to make Matthew pay for every perceived wrong - starting with the death of their youngest brother - the Burleys play out a complicated cat and mouse game, and Alex is thrown back into an existence where her heart is constantly in her mouth, convinced as she is that one day the Burleys will achieve their purpose. Will the Burleys succeed? And if they do, will the Graham family survive the exacted price?

Serpents in the Garden Details

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From Reader Review Serpents in the Garden for online ebook

Margaret says

As posted at JustOneMoreChapter.com

This is book 5 in the Graham Saga. Having gotten to know the family in books 3 and 4 sitting down with Serpent in the Garden was like getting together with old friends and catching up on their lives. Even though I began this series with book 3 my enjoyment of this series was not hampered at all (books 1 & 2 are patiently waiting for me).

In the past I have read series that seem to just go on and on with the material stretched and situations getting unbelievable and yea even ridiculous. It's a heavy burden for authors that write series, to keep the story from getting boring and outlandish. Which is totally not the case here. Anna Belfrage has written a book that had me captivated from the start, the story lines were original, fitting the time period and environment accurately. The author has made me full in love with Alex, Matthew and their family, they are real and genuine.

I loved the fact that there were no wasted words or fullers in this book. You know the words that just seem to take up space with no real relevance to the flow of the book and at times you might even skim over. None of that in this book, everything flowed together perfectly and at the right speed, right to the end.

Oh and that very last paragraph, yea I can't wait till Retribution comes in August.

Erin says

Find this and other reviews at: <http://flashlightcommentary.blogspot...>

I've been in love with the Graham saga for a few years now, but contrary to what you might think that doesn't actually work in Anna Belfrage's favor. My admiration for her work means I have higher expectations and that I'm less inclined to make allowances as I know what she's capable of. If anything my favor means the pressure is on.

Serpents in the Garden is book five in the series so it's safe to say the stakes have never been higher and I'm happy to report that once again Belfrage managed to impress. Avoiding familiar patterns and recycled material, she continues the Graham family story with the same originality and spirit that drew me to her books in the first place.

In reading Serpents in the Garden I was struck by Belfrage's ability to maintain tension. After so many installments I was worried I'd get the sense that any particular character was too important to be in real jeopardy, but that didn't happen and I think that sort of vulnerability really makes the book.

The other thing that stands out, the diversity within Belfrage's cast. There are base similarities, but by and large each character feels like an individual, managing their own struggles in their own way. Alex in particular appeals to me, but I like that as a reader I can get into the head of each character - protagonist and antagonist alike - and understand their view of the world.

Another wonderful read, I can't wait to see where Belfrage takes the Grahams next!

Christoph Fischer says

“Serpents in the Garden” by Anna Belfrage is a historical novel with a time slip twist, the fifth in the Graham Saga series about Alex, a modern day woman who is stuck in 17th century Maryland, and her family. Married to Matthew Graham she has by now adapted to her new surroundings and has grown up children who are ready to leave the nest and make their own mark in the world.

It is probably advisable to read the previous books in the saga to fully appreciate the characters and the complex background for each of their story lines. Although Belfrage does a splendid job at introducing each character I often felt I had missed out by not reading the previous novels.

Having said that, the book is a well-crafted family saga with a great setting and it includes some interesting historical facts and aspects which were new and fascinating to me.

The book keeps up suspense by switching between the storylines, always maintaining an air of suspense. As with most epics, this book has plenty of romance and dramas. I most enjoyed the plot concerning the threatening Burley brothers and their impact on the Graham family, and as European, I found the information contained about slaves, Native Indians and colonial society most fascinating.

Perfectly infused with the flavour of the 17th century but with the occasional modern perspective by Alex this should please readers of family epics and 17th century history alike.

I reviewed this for the Historical Novel Society Indie Reviews

Dianne Ascroft says

I recently received a copy of *Serpents in the Garden* by Anna Belfrage in exchange for an honest review. I've read several time slip novels during the past year or so and I'm always fascinated by the idea of time travel and what it would be like to find yourself in another era. This novel is the first one that has transported me to seventeenth century America and I enjoyed the experience. *Serpents in the Garden* is well written and has a plot that keeps the reader's attention. I was intrigued by the storylines of each of the main characters and found myself wanting to continue reading about a particular character whenever the narrative shifted away from his or her story. I knew we would get back to it but I was impatient to find out what happened next. There is a good contrast in settings between the American wilderness and seventeenth century London. The author describes both settings vividly so that they are easy for the reader to imagine. I was especially intrigued by the world of the English apothecary.

Characters are, of course, central to any story. This was my first introduction to Alex and her family but I related easily to the twenty-first century woman who has found herself in a very different world from her own. Alex is a modern woman who has been dropped into the past and I thought she is very credible as such. Her husband, Matthew is also realistically drawn, reacting with a mix of courage and fear in dangerous situations. He isn't a larger than life hero but a man who faces what life throws at him. I like this believable portrayal of a character. I found the main characters engaging and quickly became immersed in their stories. I also particularly liked some of the minor characters such as the feisty Mrs Parson and Alex's wily brother-in-law, Simon Melville.

I did not find it difficult to pick up the threads of the story even though this is the fifth book in a series.

Details from previous books were seamlessly woven into this novel and explained so that the reader isn't confused. It's possible to read *Serpents in the Garden* as a standalone book or as part of the series.

All the strands of the story come together for a satisfying conclusion to the book. But it's not the end of the

story: one key strand is left hanging, making the reader eager to start the next book in the series. It seems I'll have the next novel to add to my TBR pile....

I can honestly recommend this novel to anyone who enjoys historical fiction, fantasy/time-slip or just a good story.

InD'tale Magazine says

For anyone who has read earlier books in this warm and endearing saga, this story is delightfully more of the same.

Read full review in the 2014 May issue of InD'tale Magazine.

Donna S. Masson says

Enjoyed, far better than previous book.

Angela Holland says

I enjoyed this current book in the Graham Saga. One thing I like about this series is the time traveling as well the historical aspect. I think the characters are very strong and interesting. The author did a good job with describing the settings and has a way to make you feel like you are a part of the book. I look forward to the next book in this series.

Linda Root says

Fans of Anna Belfrage's time slip series The Graham Saga may have shared my apprehensions that the younger generation of Grahams would be replacing their parents Alex, who was born in the 1960's, and Matthew, who is very much a 17th century Scotsman. Rest assured that such is not the case. Although the failed marriages, bittersweet love affairs and broken betrothals of the younger Grahams and their contemporaries are important to the plot, this is still very much Alex and Matthew's story. And they still have a difficult time keeping their hands off one another, even when a thumping or a spanking seems more appropriate than a sexual romp. The tenderness is still there, but the physical expression of their love is as passionate and intense as when they met two decades earlier. While the plot line in this installment stays entirely in the Seventeenth Century, Ms. Belgrage introduces startling teasers about Alex's connection to the past which promises surreal happenings in future books that leaves us looking at the calendar and hoping she writes at her usual pace.

Not only are we confronted by a set of utterly despicable villains in Serpent in the Garden in the band of marauding brothers first seen in an earlier installment, but we also glimpse Matthew's heretofore vicious brother Luke from another point of view. In addition, there are hints of yet another malevolent person in the shadows and an Indian hiding in the forest waiting for an opportunity to take what he thinks he is due. And yet, the installment does not leave us hanging from a cliff by bloody fingernails. We are satisfied with where

this segment of the journey has taken us, but eager to move on.

The sheer size of the cast of characters suggests that this is not apt to be an easy read for anyone not intimately familiar with the dynamic of Alex's journey back in time, the reason for the hostile relationship between Matthew and his brother Luke, or even who all the young people are or why the Graham family fled Scotland, but the strength of the relationship between Alex and Matthew will seduce even the first time reader into going back to *The Rip in the Veil* to catch up before the next book is unveiled. All of Ms. Belfrage's books are five star efforts, beautifully written and cleverly plotted by an author whose many-faceted talents include a profound understanding of love, courage, fidelity and principle. I am waiting for the next episode with confidence I shall not be disappointed when it comes.

Robin Levin says

Anna Belfrage's novel, *Serpents in the Garden*, has something for everyone. There is lots of romance and erotica, a fair amount of violence, some history and a lot of period details, and for lovers of fantasy, time travel.

The Grahams, Alex, Matthew and their growing family have fled Scotland due to religious persecution of the Covenanters and have settled in colonial Maryland of the 17th century. Alex was born and raised in the late 20th and early 21st century but she found herself in a time warp at a crossroads during a terrible thunderstorm and ended up in the 17th century. She was found by Matthew Graham. She and Matthew took to each other like Mandarin ducks and they married and have had ten children, nine of whom survive. She seems to have adjusted remarkably well to life in the 17th century.

The Grahams have a farm in Maryland, prosperous at these things go. At the beginning of the book, Jacob, the eldest son is apprenticed to a lawyer in Providence, and a younger son, Daniel, is apprenticed to a minister in Boston. Jacob has a great yearning to go to sea and see the world. After marrying the lawyer's daughter, Betty, in a "hand fast," ceremony, contrary to her father's wishes, he stows away on a ship bound for England. Poor Betty is soundly whipped and packed off to the Grahams.

Graham's Garden, as the farm is called would be a paradise, but, as the title suggests, there are serpents in the garden. There are, of course, Indians, always a concern, and there are also the brothers Phillip, Walter and Steven Burley, scoundrels of the lowest sort. Matthew has killed their youngest brother in self-defense, and the surviving brothers have sworn revenge. Throughout the book the encounters between the Grahams and the Burleys become increasingly violent.

The family is also plagued by domestic strife. Matthew has a son, Ian, by his first marriage who is married to a woman named Jenny and lives on a nearby farm. Jenny's father, Peter, has married a much younger woman named Constance who is as nasty as they come and she and Jenny fight like cats. On top of that, their bond servant, Patrick, seduces Jenny and she becomes pregnant, not knowing whether the father is Patrick or Ian. *Serpents in the Garden* is a very rich and engaging novel which held my interest throughout. I'm not a great fan of the use of time travel or other violations of the laws of physics in historical novels, but, as Diana Gabaldon might attest, there are many readers who are.

cindy hackney says

Can't get enough!

The stories of Matthew and Alex is fantastic. The kids they have and there journey to adult hood. The terrible Beasley brothers it's such a wonderful story. Can't wait to start the next book.

Patty says

This is my fourth Graham Saga book and I'm just as excited with this time travel tale this many books in as I was with the first one that I read. I still haven't found time to read the very first book in the series but salient facts from past books are always seamlessly woven in so a new reader never feels lost. This fifth installment continues the lives of Alex and Matthew as they make their mark in the New World having left Matthew's beloved Scotland in fear of his life because of his religious convictions.

This book seems more family focused with relationships beginning and ending, births, deaths and injuries filling the pages from beginning to end. The family is just trying to live in peace but it just doesn't seem to be their lot. Young Jacob leaves to see the world and all is not joy and happiness with everyone at the homestead. To write much more would spoil plot points. The evil Burley brothers are stalking Matthew with the intent of killing him and this particular plot development is one that about drove me crazy. They were everywhere the Grahams were. In the 17th century world they always knew where they would be at the exact time? A little too convenient and it got a little comical where it most certainly wasn't meant to be. I realize a book needs tension but their appearances were getting to be almost rote.

Despite the Burley brothers I really did enjoy the book and I thoroughly enjoy these characters and the world in which they live. It's well developed whether it's taking place in London or the New World. You feel you are in the world with the characters as the writing transports you into their lives. I can't wait for the next installment so I can continue to follow the love story of Alex and Matthew Graham.

Gillian says

I have so enjoyed this series with Alex and Matthew becoming a part of my family with my thoughts often turning to them. With another 3 books to go which have yet to be released the wait for book 6 is going to be unbearable! For anyone who likes Time Slip Historical Novel (and doesn't mind quite a few full on sex scenes!)I total recommend The Graham Saga :)

Erin Al-Mehairi says

Serpents in the Garden is book five in Anna Belfrage's time slip series. It's been an interesting ride in following along with this family and their adventures in history, with Alex coming from modern times and incorporating pretty well in to Matthew's 17th Century world, all things considered. As they've moved on now to the New World, and as the present keeps appearing into the past, we see how both times collide. Then, there are the new characters introduced and assisted in each novel that really make each story unique. Yet, there is also a seamless feel to them as well.

As this is book five, we start to see more of their children as they grow, and in this novel we experience watching Jacob and Daniel find their career paths, Ian and his wife Jenny struggle, people out for revenge due to Matthew's actions, and more. The life of Matthew and Alex is always full of love, but also outside conflicts and the violence with others who believe they've been wronged heat up in this book as much as the sexual scenes. If you love a lot of action and steamy romance, this book will keep you turning the pages!

There's always feisty and independent Alex, and loyal and patient Matthew, and though they do get into tiffs now and again, they have a deep love that transcends all the plots of all the novels. But the romance part isn't what draws me to her books, it's that she's written a well-done novel of time travel that features Alex fitting in and making a life in history. I enjoy her deep character development. It's been exciting, as a modern woman, seeing Alex travel from my period and into all the various tumultuous periods of history. Seeing the struggles of life during these travels through her eyes, is enlightening.

Anna is a wonderful storyteller and her books are always well-written. This series is definitely one you'll want to collect with its sweeping saga of prose and its elegant and gorgeous covers. You could probably start with any of them and enjoy the story, the way they are written, but I definitely thinking buying the whole set is worth it if you like historical romance with a twist.

Kathleen Kelly says

Serpents in the Garden is the 5th book in the series and the third that I have read. I love this series. Why? I love time travel books, it would be so cool I think to be able to go bsack in time. In this 5th book we watch the family grow and evolve from just Matthew, Alex and Ian to their growing family and friends. It is the time where the oldest children are ready to go out on their own to learn a trade or in the case of Jacob, to see the world. Things don't always go as planned. It is a hard life in a young country, with the threat of Indian attacks and old enemies that threaten their very existence. Even though this is a historical series, to me it is more character driven, where the reader gets into the lives and loves of these people rather than into the conflicts of the era. Alex is a strong woman who not only is protective, nurturing but she is fierce when her or her family is in danger. Matthew as patriarch of the family is the protector of all he holds dear and will do all that he can to keep everyone safe from harm. Will he succeed?? Guess I will have to read the next book and I highly recommend this series...

Thanks to the author and Historical Fiction Virtual Book Tours for my copy of the book, I was not compensated for my review.

Terry says

What an amazing storyteller Anna Belfrage is! She keeps me turning the pages wanting to find out what happens next. On to the next book in this series. Read this series but be sure to start with the first book and read them in order.
