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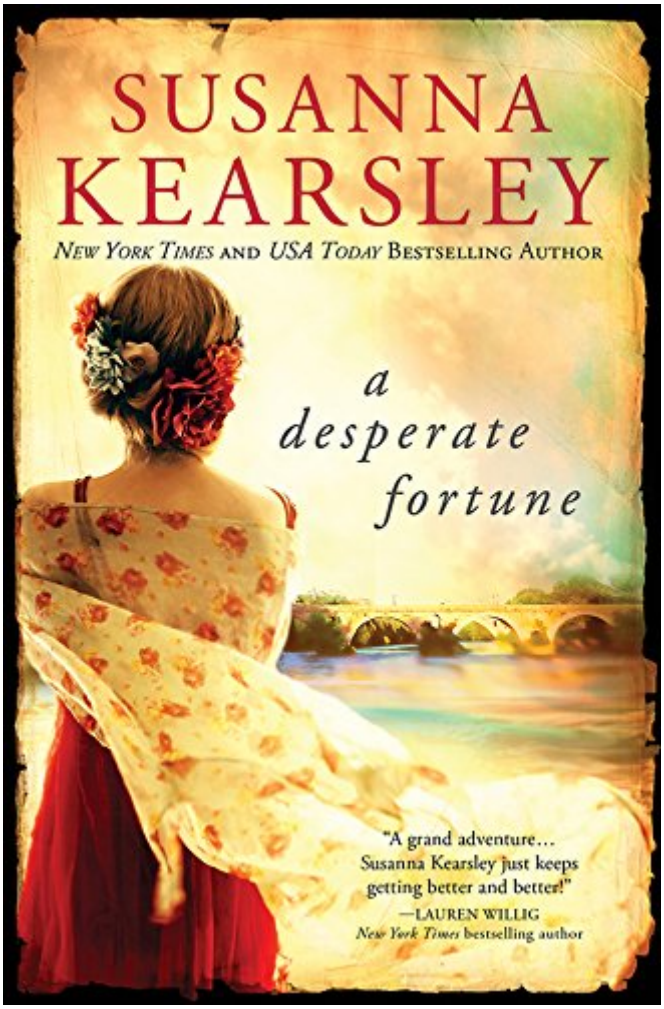
A Desperate Fortune



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Synopsis

"Fascinating and immersive... I love a novel that deals with the many ways in which people keep their secrets."â ”Diana Gabaldon, #1 New York Times bestselling author of OutlanderBeloved New York Times bestselling author Susanna Kearsley delivers a riveting novel that deftly intertwines the tales of two women, divided by centuries and forever changed by a clash of love and fate.For nearly three hundred years, the cryptic journal of Mary Dundas has kept its secrets. Now, amateur codebreaker Sara Thomas travels to Paris to crack the cipher.Jacobite exile Mary Dundas is filled with longing-for freedom, for adventure, for the family she lost. When fate opens the door, Mary dares to set her foot on a path far more surprising and dangerous than she ever could have dreamed.As Mary’s gripping tale of rebellion and betrayal is revealed to her, Sara faces events in her own life that require letting go of everything she thought she knew-about herself, about loyalty, and especially about love. Though divided by centuries, these two women are united in a quest to discover the limits of trust and the unlikely coincidences of fate."A grand adventure...Susanna Kearsley just keeps getting better and better!" â ”LAUREN WILLIG, New York Times bestselling author

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mary Dundas starts out on this 1732, adventurous journey an innocent, sheltered, naive young woman. She is not a stranger to heartbreak having her father and brothers leave her with family when she was young. When she accepts the challenge to help the Jacobite King she does so with a touch of anxiety but feeling also she will be of service. Her brother Nicholas does not really give her a choice. On this assignment she meets Thomson who is on the run from the English Parliament for fraud, MacPherson who is a body guard and Effie who is to be her chaperone. Some characters that Ms. Kearsley explains in an afterward are historically accurate. Adventure and danger are around every corner but MacPherson manages to protect the small group through the journey.Sara Thomas, who is decoding Mary's diary in the present day, has Asperger's Syndrome and is fully aware that she does not have the ability to read others' feelings accurately. So she has difficulty understanding her own feelings toward a new friend. But Sara's budding romance also confounds her since she has become very friendly with "his" ex-wife. Sara cannot understand how they can remain good friends.I could say so much more about the story but truly it is all exquisite! There is no other way to describe this book. Oh, yes, I could say that the narrative is well paced, the romance slow building, the plot riveting, the characterization well developed but that all evolves into "exquisite". This book contains the most romantic declaration of love I've yet to read in any novel. I'll say no more about that so I don't spoil it for you. Because I do expect that you will move mountains if necessary to read this one.

I'm really disappointed in this book. It doesn't flow as well as her others and really can barely hold my interest. It's taken me 6 months to get even 1/4 of the way through it whereas I wouldn't be able to put her other novels down. I heard somewhere that some of her "newer" works are actually novels she wrote before her more famous ones and so she's tapping into her earlier stash before becoming amazaballs.A more succinct explanation for my surprising review:In my favorite novels by Kearsley, she is not only an excellent weaver of story webs but also a proficient history teacher as well. In "A Desperate Fortune", there is so much historical backlog you have to catch up on and understand before you can understand Kearsley's storyline, and she throws it at you all at once...about 25 names, dates, places and events that you are likely reading for the very first time and it's rather overwhelming. My second annoyance with the story is the dialogue...it is unnatural and unbelievable. The present day "heroine" thinks about herself just way too much, and it seems that all of the characters lives revolve around creating a mysterious ambiance for her. Third, the love interest. The fact that he was married to one of the other characters, has a child with her, and that they both all exist together is...uncomfortable. Uncomfortable and hard to believe that the lead

character could be developing a romance with him all in front of his ex wife and child. Just not quite believable. Also, the interactions between these two people is...cheesey and again, not realistic. No man would ever do or say the things he does. It reminds me of a cheap romance novel, which I tend to stay away from. I like my characters with a little more meat.

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