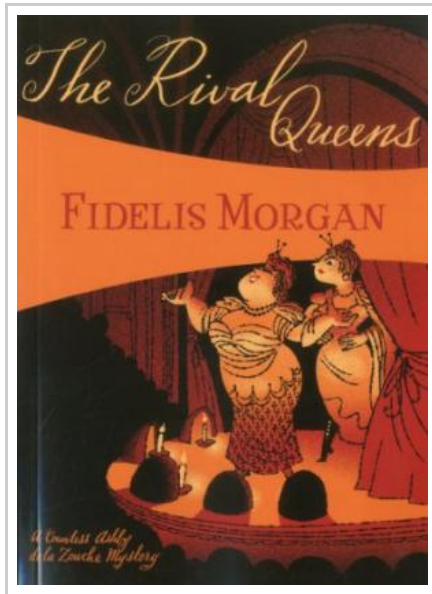



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The Rival Queens: A Countess Ashby de la Zouche Mystery

By Morgan, Fidelis.

Felony & Mayhem. 1 Paperback(s), 2011. soft. Book Condition: New. The 17th century is limping slowly to a close, but in her second outing (following *Unnatural Fire*), Countess Ashby de la Zouche and her maid, the faithful Alpiew, are dashing about, plying their trade as scandalmongers to only the finest London papers. Happily, scandals are falling into their laps like ripe plums. The best, of late, concern the ladies and gentlemen of the theatrical profession, who are thrilled whenever their names appear in print, and damn the context. But our heroines' harmless window-peeping takes on a new gravitas when the Countess is hired to solve the murder of a popular leading lady, and turns even more serious when the two stumble into a mess of corruption reaching to the highest echelons of Society. Inspired by the life of 17th-century playwright and pamphleteer Delarivier Manley, whom she biographed, English actor, director, and writer Fidelis Morgan gives us the irresistibly bawdy Countess Ashby de la Zouche, whose scandal-seeking excursions sometimes turn up more than she anticipates. "A perfect historical menu of crime and mystery, with the bonus of laughs aplenty." *Guardian* (London) "A hugely enjoyable read. Miss it at your peril." *Publishers Weekly* 351.



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