

Lovereadng Reader reviews of Sisters of Treason by Elizabeth Fremantle

Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereadng members.

Ann Peet

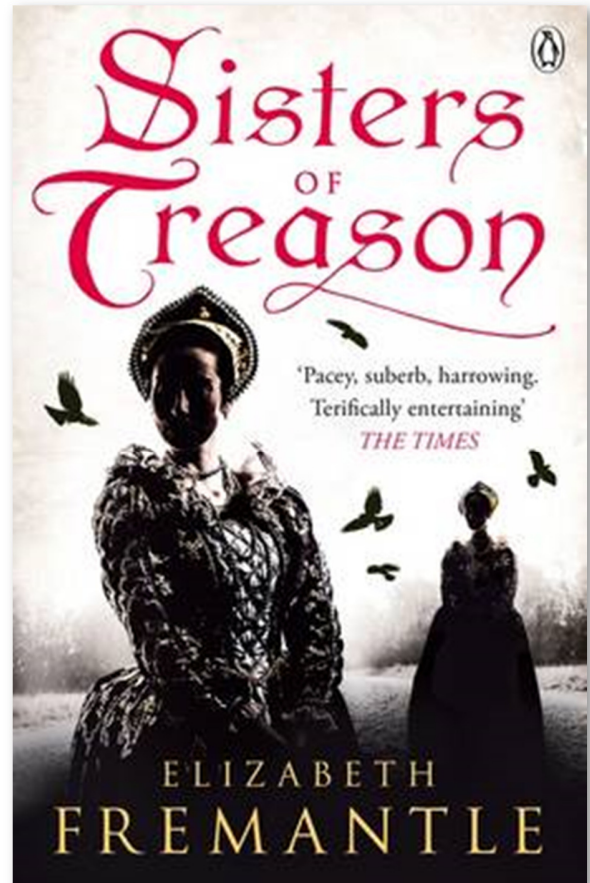
Entertaining and well written historical novel.

Before reading this I didn't know anything about the sisters of Lady Jane Grey so for me, as well as being an excellent historical novel, it also has the element of suspense as we follow their lives after the execution of their sister.

In fact, at times, it feels like reading a thriller.

All the period detail is very well portrayed and it is extremely well researched but it is the characters of the sisters that I enjoyed most. Katherine is flighty and romantic, making what are dangerous liaisons for a girl with royal blood. Mary, intelligent and caring but with a crooked spine, thinks she will never find love. The story unfolds through first person accounts by the sisters and through a third person view of Levina, a family friend, who actually was a portrait painter at the court - just another interesting bit of history I learnt from this novel. It also gives a fascinating portrait of Queen Elizabeth as she plays off one faction against another.

I sometimes find historical novels written in the present tense rather annoying but here it works well as it heightens the tension of the sisters' fears about their futures. It's a very readable and enjoyable novel which brings to light some of the lesser known characters from the Tudor period.



Alan Brown

*A stand alone book even though this is the author's second historical fiction. **A forensic description of the life and intrigue in the Tudor court and an emotional description of the challenges.***

A more descriptive book than the previous 'The Queen's Gambit' with less action and drive after the explosive beginning.

Throughout the story of the Grey sisters the three viewpoints of Mary, Katherine and Veema intertwine holding the historical tale together. As this develops the author also describes the nature and hierarchy of Tudor court with all it's intrigue, threats and challenges so that the reader is given a wider appreciation of Tudor Court life especially from the female viewpoint - the male viewpoint is not neglected.

Unless, I imagine, you have read many books about this family in Tudor history this is an excellent read. A great deal of research has been carried out so that the fiction approximates to the truth in an original way.

A satisfying read with excitement thrown in.

Barbara Goldie

Transport yourself to Tudor times, a great new read from Elizabeth Freemantle!

I really enjoyed 'Sisters of Treason', thought it was a good length to immerse myself in the plot but not too heavy and longwinded, it has a good pace that keeps rolling along and Elizabeth Freemantle has a nice fresh style. *I enjoy the language and the descriptions; they create a great sense of time and place. I enjoyed the story of the Grey sisters, Catherine and Mary alongside the story of Levina, the court painter, a friend of the girl's mother. The characters were well written and well developed that said they were all so different, it was great storytelling. It showed immense research of the historical facts and good imagination for the fiction. A compelling read, I have not read 'The Queens Gambit' the earlier novel but will be searching it out very soon!*

Susan Andrews

The lives of the three Grey sisters.

The Tudor period has been done to death by so many authors, so I picked this one with some trepidation, however, I was pleased to see that it was about the

Grey sisters of which, I for one, know very little.

Obviously, most people will have heard of Lady Jane Grey and her beheading, but little is known of her life and of her two sisters. The story starts with the beheading of Jane and then carries on with the impact this had on her two sisters Katherine and Mary.

Both Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, found them a threat even though the girls themselves had little or no ambition for the throne. But others, powerful men who wanted even more power, tried to use them.

*I found this an easy read and very interesting. It made a change to read about the minor Tudors and **the author did make me feel the sheer terror of living with paranoid queens, where one false statement could have you in the tower or worse.***

Highly recommended.

Joy Bosworth

Fast, exciting and very gripping.

An all enveloping treat of a book. *This just sweeps you into Elizabeth's court and one is present for all her petty posturing and also her deviousness. The lives of those she fears are made miserable because of her determination to cling on to the throne - despite others with better claims. Some of these happen to be pretty and, being cousins can match her in beauty, so are even more of a threat!*

We aren't just part of the court circle, but also people in the real world and women of various ages. The story is carried along by four different storytellers, and each continues the narrative, with a slightly different perspective. So the story isn't retold by each, but events are reacted to by different characters, whilst overall the story races forward.

It was particularly interesting to read the author's notes at the end, detailing what is fiction and what it probably fact. This section was almost better than the novel.

Rebecca Cockeram

An interesting story about the lesser known Grey sisters and they're tragic life.

I found this book very enjoyable.

It tells the tale of Lady Jane Grey's sisters, Katherine and Mary, and their tragic life coping with the murder of their sister and being forced to still live in the world that killed her.

One thing I wasn't so fussed on was the sympathetic way their mother is portrayed. But I think this is probably more to do with my own bias from reading the history of Jane Grey.

Very interesting and an easy read, definitely recommend.

Maureen Gourlay

A really good "Tudor" read. I liked the different narrators within the story and its focus on Lady Jane Grey's sisters, who are not so well known. It brings a new twist to a well documented period.

I really enjoyed this novel of Lady Jane Grey's sisters. There have been so many Tudor novels it is refreshing to have a new perspective. The story is told through the two Sisters who also have a claim to the Tudor throne, as did their unfortunate elder sister, whether they want it or not. A story full of intrigue and perils, it was an exciting read.

It was reminiscent of a Philippa Gregory - which is no bad thing because if you love her books you will love this.

Jenny Heardman

'Sisters of Treason' draws you in and makes you feel like you are living in Tudor times.

'Sisters of Treason' is a historical novel about The Grey Sisters; Jane, Katherine and Mary. I've read a few books about Henry the VIII and his wives but knew little about The Greys so was looking forward learning something new. Elizabeth Fremantle didn't disappoint me.

*This book gives a fascinating account of the time from when Jane was executed by her cousin, Queen Mary. It then follows her sisters' lives as they are under constant threat, firstly from Queen Mary and later Queen Elizabeth. The characters of Katherine and Mary are extremely different. **This makes for a very interesting read and I enjoyed the way this book draws you in and makes you feel like you are living in Tudor times.** I'll definitely be looking for more of Fremantle's books.*

Carol

A fab book!

So well written, easy to follow, and a fab mix of true facts and embellishments.

What a fantastic book!

I've not read any historical novels before and wasn't sure what to expect but this book pulled me in from the beginning. So well written, easy to follow, and a fab mix of true facts and embellishment.

It probably took me longer to read than most books, as I was constantly looking people up to see if they were real and get a bit of background on them, history not being my strongest subject!

So if you're a first time reader of historical novels or just want to get lost in intrigue and suspense then definitely go for this.

I've just ordered the first book so I can go and get intrigued all over again!

Carolyn Huckfield

The story of Lady Jane Grey's younger sisters, who are often brushed off as just a footnote in history. The characters come to life and I wanted a happy ending but it didn't happen.

This is a brilliant retelling of the lives of Lady Jane Grey's sisters after her own execution for treason. The two sisters are very different. The eldest is a fun loving girl who still loves the husband taken away from her because of Jane's failure to take the throne. Mary has a crooked spine and the body of a child which makes her a favourite of Queen Mary. The third girl we hear from is court painter Levina Teerlinc. She helps the sisters negotiate survival at court. When the Queen's sister, Elizabeth becomes queen it becomes even harder to avoid the label of treacherous sisters. Elizabeth proves to be even more focused on any potential rivals for the throne.

This is a very readable story with some elements of an historical thriller. Who will survive the perils of court life now? *There are many historical novels written about this period but this one looks at the lives of the younger Grey sisters, which are often brushed off as just a footnote in history. Levina is an interesting person who adds another level to the story, not being of royal blood and her view of court life is very interesting. The characters come to life and I kept waiting for the happy ending but of course it never happened.*

Nicola Lowes – twitter @NJLowes

I enjoyed this book. The tensions of Tudor court life came across vividly.

I enjoyed this book. It concentrated on some characters that are unknown to us but were well-known to the Tudor queens. The two sisters, Katherine and Mary Grey, came to life on the paper - particularly Mary. The tensions of Tudor court life came across vividly. It's stranglehold on the personal lives of all those in service to the Queen was shown to be deeply traumatic.

I would be interested in reading Elizabeth Fremantle's previous book "The Queen's Gambit" as I like her easy-going style.

Cathy Petersen – twitter @Cerysthepup

Plots, tensions and air of constant suspicion that was the Tudor Court are skilfully brought to life in this story of the ill-fated Grey family.

*Straddling the reigns of Mary Tudor and Elizabeth this weaves three strands together following the lives of Katherine and Mary Grey, and court painter, Levina Teerlinc. It is very well done and each character is convincing and vividly drawn. The author has obviously done her research, and while that comes across clearly it doesn't detract from the very human stories being told. I found Katherine quite a tragic character, Mary by far the most compelling but I was truly fascinated by the real but little known Levina. It was also refreshing to see Frances, Duchess of Suffolk, their mother portrayed in a more positive light. **This was absorbing and well written, the plots, tensions and air of constant suspicion that seemed to permeate the successive Tudor Courts is vividly brought to life** by an author I have not read before but will certainly read again.*

Debbie Wood

A well written history book that drew you into the Tudor times.

Great book which was told by three story tellers. I particularly liked Levina's story which told how she saw the sisters and their different personalities. Katherine's told of her light heartedness of being part of the Queen's court and following her heart over her head. Mary's was quite a sad tale of how she was Queen Mary's plaything and then ended up being part of Elizabeth's court.

Very informative book and easy to read. I had only heard of Jane Grey and didn't know she had 2 sisters. I found myself googling the sisters to see what happened to them whilst reading the book!

Tracey Poulter

The Tudor Court is a dangerous place to have royal blood. 'Sisters of Treason' begins with the execution, on the order of Queen Mary, of 17 year-old Lady Jane Grey – the Nine Days Queen. The book is cleverly written from the point of view of her two lesser-known, younger sisters, Katherine and Mary, and Levina Teerlinc, Court painter. The author brings these three characters to life by intertwining their imagined thoughts and conversations with known facts. We experience their fears and frustrations as well as getting a glimpse into their lifestyles. Elizabeth Fremantle has managed to combine history and education with a riveting story of love, power and fear.

The sisters are allowed to remain in court mainly because firstly Queen Mary and then Queen Elizabeth are worried that, due to their royal blood, they might threaten the throne. Katherine and Mary know that, at any time, their fate could be that of their sister. Levina brings a further perspective to the story showing that non-royals were also affected by the machinations of the Tudor Court.

This is a complex period of history written about with a light touch that includes lovely little details from everyday life which helps to give a flavour of the time.

Carole Donald

This was a very interesting story which kept me turning the pages all the way through and was a thoroughly enjoyable read.