



Lady Jane Grey: A Tudor Mystery

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Lady Jane Grey is one of the most elusive and tragic characters in English history. In July 1553, the death of the childless Edward VI threw the Tudor dynasty into crisis. On Edward's instructions, his cousin Jane Grey was proclaimed queen, only to be ousted 13 days later by his half-sister Mary, and later beheaded. In this radical reassessment, Eric Ives rejects traditional portraits of Jane both as hapless victim of political intrigue or Protestant martyr. Instead, he presents her as an accomplished young woman with a fierce personal integrity. The result is a compelling dissection by a master historian and storyteller of one of history's most shocking injustices.

Lady Jane Grey: A Tudor Mystery Details

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Author : Eric Ives

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From Reader Review Lady Jane Grey: A Tudor Mystery for online ebook

Sarah - All The Book Blog Names Are Taken says

I'm confused as to how some reviewers don't understand that Jane was the rightful heir according to Edward. According to Henry, Mary was next, this is true. However, given that upon their mothers losing their crowns, both girls were declared illegitimate, it makes sense. Henry included Frances' children in the succession after his daughters, Edward excluded his half-sisters, it seems pretty straight-forward to me.

That aside, I was a bit disappointed in this book. Jane is intriguing, perhaps more so because of how little we know about her. She's also intriguing because of how unimportant she is in the grand scheme of the history of the English monarchy, yet hundreds of years later we still are fascinated by her short life and unnecessary death. But unfortunately the text itself was sluggish in places and that made it hard to continue. Easily could have been finished in a day or two, but just wasn't the quality I'd expect from Ives. Sadly, the book really isn't even about Jane, but the key figures surrounding her. Again, we just don't have a lot of information about her, but the title is quite misleading then in the regard.

Mariana says

Very disappointed it was NOT about Jane's life, but about the events and people surrounding Jane's ascend to queenship. I understand they are important too but I wanted a Jane Grey bio, not this.

Sarah Kennedy says

This is an essential book for anyone interested in Tudor history--and mystery! I'm using it to fill in blanks in my Tudor mystery series: <http://sarahkennedybooks.wordpress.com>

Toni says

I love the Tudor period and have read extensively about the era. Jane Grey is often overlooked as most people are interested in Henry and his 6 wives! I was disappointed with this book. I was expecting a biography of Jane Grey and it wasn't. Its well written but read like a dull history lesson :-(

Julie says

Horribly disappointing. Much too technical for my tastes. Some of the pages were one paragraph containing conflicting arguments put forth in tons of various accounts of unimportant points. Ugh. Love the subject, hate the book...

Orsolya says

Given the choice of being a queen but for only about 2 weeks and finding your death by beheading or not being a queen at all; which would you choose? Unfortunately, Jane Grey didn't have a decision to make and was thrown into her fate earning her the nickname, "The Nine Days Queen". Eric Ives explores this incident in Tudor history in, "Lady Jane Grey: A Tudor Mystery".

Before even proceeding; a stylistic detail regarding the format of "Lady Jane Grey" must be made. Several reader reviews have complained that the text of "Lady Jane Grey" is not written as a portrait or biography and therefore fell short of satisfaction. Well, people need to read **THOROUGHLY**, as Ives clearly states in his introduction that he penned "Lady Jane Grey" in a mystery/court case format looking at figures involved, motives/intent, situation, and conclusion. Ives never claimed to be writing a biography. Learn to read, people! With that being said, Ives has both successes and failures in this work.

"Lady Jane Grey" is definitely not recommended for those not versed on the subject as Ives packs the pages with information. This compounded with his writing style can easily overwhelm some readers. Ives focuses on debunking myths and immersing in research by presenting full quotes, cross-referencing on dates, and exploring various theories which is perfect for Tudor lovers who seek this in-depth breakdown.

The issue with this is that Ives seemingly strays off the topic by large margins. Meaning, a figure is mentioned and then an entire background is given even if it is irrelevant to the topic at hand and thus; losing the stream and slowing the pace of "Lady Jane Grey". However, this truly reveals the macro environment related to the accession of Jane Grey to the throne.

Ives cunningly brings forth many theories previously unexplored. Although some of these aren't mainstream agreeable (such as John Dudley being an innocent party); Ives logically explains and backs up his thinking causing the reader to respect the views even if they are not agreed with.

There *are* slow moments in "Lady Jane Grey" but when it is great: it is great. Therefore, the text can feel somewhat jumpy and disjointed. Plus, Ives has the habit of trying to make modern-day or humorous comparisons which has no place in an academic text and "throws things off".

The major issue is the absence of Jane's view in "Lady Jane Grey". Everyone seems to be discussed but her (obviously making her the 'victim' in the 'case'). Her side is simply not thoroughly explored. This relates to the fact that Ives's thesis is somewhat lost presenting the situation as a 'mystery'. His intent appears to be to explore *why* and *how* Jane Grey gained the throne but the idea and conclusion are somewhat lost. Simply: the presentation/format of the text is not for everyone.

The highlight of "Lady Jane Grey" occurs at Part III when Ives describes the rise and fall of Jane Grey in great detail from Mary's perspective to the military tactics of Dudley. Ives's version is one of the better-researched and well-written accounts on the matter and even those readers familiar with events will learn some new facts.

The final chapters of "Lady Jane Grey" focus on the impact of events on Jane and her supporters. The conclusion is notably strong with a look at depictions of Jane in art and media. "Lady Jane Grey" also features annotated notes (well presented) and a section of back-and-white plates.

Even taking complaints into consideration and the stylistic format of “Lady Jane Grey” which may not appeal to all readers; Ives offers a strong and meticulously- researched look at the events of Jane Grey’s ‘reign’. Again, the text is NOT a biography so readers won’t necessarily gain a glimpse into Jane’s psyche but will come away with some new knowledge. “Lady Jane Grey” is recommended for Tudor lovers with some background on the time period.

Donna says

The author believes that Jane was the true heir to Edward VI and Mary Tudor was the rebel who stole her crown. He attempts to make a case that it was legally impossible for either Mary or Elizabeth to inherit the crown because they were both bastards. How he can legally or logically come to this conclusion defies logic and ruins any and all proof he puts forward to substantiate this claim.

He moves one by one through the main characters of the day, trying to justify their actions and how they were acting with only the best interests of crown and country when they pushed an ill, fifteen year old to write a will naming Jane as his heir. The differences in religion between Edward and Mary was truly an important issue to be sure, but the circuitous route that leads Edward to choose Jane defies logic. There were other Protestant family members that were older and better able to rule, rather than a sixteen year old, sheltered girl, ruled by her parents and forced into marriage with one of the most powerful families of the time. An entire branch of the family, the Stuarts, is dismissed out of hand as unable to inherit as well as Jane's mother, who was Henry VIII's niece.

It is an earnest attempt to show a different perspective on a topic that is usually glossed over in history. Jane was certainly a remarkable young woman if Ives is to be believed and England may have been a different place if she had ruled. His initial hypothesis based on the illegitimacy of Mary and Elizabeth is just too much to get past. They BOTH cannot have been illegitimate, despite the conflicting pronouncements of the day stating otherwise and were listed by their father as his heirs if Edward died childless. A valiant effort, but it falls short with this historian.

Gretchen says

If you are looking for a biography of Jane Grey, keep looking. This is not the book you are looking for.

If you are looking for an in-depth analysis of the brief reign of Jane Grey and the events leading up to it, stop. This is the book you are looking for.

This book was an excellent look at the politics and the people who were responsible for putting Jane Grey on the throne for a brief nine-day reign. It should challenge most of what the reader learned in history class and hopefully encourage the reader to take a different view of events.

Lesley says

A revisionist look at one of the least understood, often overlooked episodes in the tumultuous Tudor dynasty:

the succession crisis of 1553 pitting Mary Tudor, Henry VIII's eldest daughter, against her 16 year old cousin Jane Grey. At Henry's death, he had reinstated his daughters Mary and Elizabeth into the succession, yet did not revoke their illegitimate status. The hope was that their younger half brother Edward, the only one of Henry's offspring whose legitimacy was never challenged, would produce enough heirs to solve the problem. Alas, when Edward contracted a fatal illness at age 16, crisis was inevitable. Edward's deathbed reworking of the succession to omit his bastard half-sisters in favor of his cousin Jane has long been viewed as a vile coup instigated by Jane's powerful father-in-law, the Duke of Northumberland. Yet while Ives acknowledges Northumberland's role, he points out that law and custom were on his side. Inheritance rights were a serious matter, and to authorize the transfer of the crown to an acknowledged bastard would have set a dangerous precedent. Ives carefully outlines the reasoning behind Edward and Northumberland's actions, concluding that it was Mary, not Jane who was the true rebel, and that Jane's execution was nothing but a cynical judicial murder.

Although Ives spends a little too much time describing minute details of each piece of relevant correspondence, his analysis of Jane, Edward, Mary and Northumberland's characters and motivations is fascinating and convincing. Tudor-philes have long been convinced of the injustice of Jane's fate; Ives makes a good case for the injustice of Northumberland's as well.

An excellent companion to Leanda de Lisle's *The Sisters who would be Queen - the Tragedy of Mary, Katherine and Lady Jane Grey*. De Lisle's Jane is no innocent pawn, but a determined reformer keenly conscious of her role as a humanist icon to European Protestants.

Manda says

Professor Ives makes a case against Mary Tudor for effecting a military coup against her cousin Jane, the rightful queen by decree of Edward VI shortly before his death. Part of the tragedy of Jane's story is that she was almost universally acknowledged by some of the most renowned scholars in Europe as a young girl of exceptional intelligence; one wonders what her intellect could have accomplished as queen. Instead, England got five years of the Marian Persecutions and embroiled in an expensive war in the Netherlands it wanted no part of. (Yet had Jane retained her crown, England would also have never had its Elizabethan Golden Age.) Ives concludes that the execution of Lady Jane was nothing short of an act of judicial murder, likely Mary acting out of panic after Wyatt's Rebellion, in which the object had not even been to restore Jane but to put Elizabeth on the throne.

Louise says

Ives is passionate, exceedingly knowledgeable, and thoroughly argues Lady Jane's case in this book. She had a legal right to the throne, succeeded lawfully, and was usurped by Mary Tudor. Also, Lady Jane's accession was not orchestrated by the Duke of Northumberland like is so popularly believed.

I gave it four stars and not five because it's written more like a publication for an academic journal rather than a book intended for the general public. Being just an average person with an interest in the Succession Crisis of 1553, much of it was way beyond my grasp.

It's also clearly written for a British audience and not an American one. He assumes a basic knowledge of

many related subjects (for instance, he didn't explain at all why Margaret Tudor, Queen of Scotland's line, was never considered in the succession question), mentions holidays I've never even heard of (like the Feast of the Fools and Whitsuntide) and uses expressions that left me scratching my head ("at loggerheads", "took up the cudgels", "a canard needing to be shot", etc.). Nothing that couldn't be figured out with close attention to context, Wikipedia and a good dictionary, but this combined with the fact that one individual--let's take John Dudley, for instance--could be called 1) Dudley; 2) the Earl of Warwick; 3) Viscount Lisle; or 4) the Duke of Northumberland or just Northumberland, depending on the time period Ives is writing about, kept me either scrambling to keep up or just plain confused the entire read.

However, I must say I learned a TON about English history by reading this book. It really stretched my intellect and broadened my understanding of the time period and how so many things came together to create an unfortunate and volatile situation for those involved.

The thing I loved most about it--and wanted most from this read--was to better understand the person of Lady Jane, and Ives did this brilliantly. I have so much respect for who Lady Jane was, what she achieved intellectually and theologically, and the courage and faith with which she met her death.

Leslie says

Great

Anna Allen says

I think a "cast of characters" list and an author's chronology would have helped. I used the end notes consistently, as well as the bibliography [which should have been annotated], but I kept getting lost in the details of the chronology of what the author was arguing vs what others had written. A "closing" argument summing up the author's idea [Jane as legitimate successor, Mary as usurper] would've helped, too, while the section on everything afterwards [publications/plays/movies/etc] would have worked better as an appendix.

Brooklyn Tayla says

A superbly crafted account of the life of one of the most tragic Queens; nine day Queen, Jane Grey. I really enjoyed this throughout, it was never dull and Eric Ives writes really well, separating the fact from fiction. He also writes in length about Guildford Dudley, and Mary I, among others that were connected to Jane.

Kendra says

What an enormous mess this book is. The case Ives makes is plausible, but the writing is scattered and the book is poorly organized.

