



The Executioner's Daughter

Jane Hardstaff

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Thrilling adventure set in the underbelly of the Tower of London and on the Thames in Tudor times

Moss hates her life. As the daughter of the Executioner in the Tower of London, it's her job to catch the heads in her basket after her father has chopped them off. She dreams of leaving, but they are prisoners with no way out.

Then Moss discovers a hidden tunnel that takes her to freedom, where she learns that her life isn't what she believes it to be and she doesn't know who to trust.

Her search for the truth takes her on a journey along the great River Thames. Could the answers lie deep in its murky depths?

The Executioner's Daughter Details

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Author : Jane Hardstaff

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✕Tabby✕ says

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THE REVIEW

Actual rating 2.5 stars

Why this book?

When I saw this took place during the Tudor period I had to read it

What I thought

The Executioner's Daughter is a historical fiction with magical elements set in the Tudor period which appealed to me. Moss was a frustrating character; I couldn't stand her to tell you the truth. Her father tells her he's trying to protect her and what does she do? She runs away, little idiot! I love Salter though his parts were a joy to read. Anne Boleyn's future is a significant part of the background which I found fascinating. There's also a paranormal aspect which adds a little something. Overall an ok read.

Kirsti says

Somewhere between three and four stars. I enjoyed it, but I didn't love it. The story was enjoyable but predictable. The characters were a little flat but I did enjoy Moss' growth by the end of the book.

Moss is the executioner's daughter. She catches heads after they've been removed from their bodies, but longs for freedom. The story takes a paranormal twist that I did not expect, with the introduction of a 'witch' and a curse. Not surprisingly, I enjoyed the deviation from the usual historical fare. There are mentions of Anne Boleyn, and one really nice scene featuring her as well. I'm a little hazy on my history but it seemed accurate enough to pass muster for an almost YA book.

A little different, but highly readable. Fast paced too, but might be a little gruesome for younger readers. The age and thoughts of Moss aren't YA though either. At 25, I can appreciate it from all angles and I like what I saw!

Bridgette Griffith says

Two and a half stars. Not horrible but not exactly GOOD either. The bit with Moss and Anne Boleyn is frankly embarrassing. Even in middle grade fiction the way the author has Anne speaking is ridiculous. Also for a supposedly bad winter it seems odd that the main character is running around with no cloak, shawl, or any outerwear of any kind it shoes at one section and is also often set from the river and somehow isn't sick or frostbitten. People literally froze to death or died suddenly after catching pneumonia or the flu.

Marathon County Public Library says

Moss is the executioner's daughter. That's right; she lives in the Tower of London in England with her father who serves King Henry VIII, and lately they are way too busy with executions. Her job is to catch the severed heads in a basket after her father chops them off, a job she detests. She longs to escape and see more of the world beyond the castle confines and cannot understand why her father forbids it. Even the scary stories about the Riverwitich who lives in the River Thames and who is rumored to steal children cannot keep her away. But when she discovers the mystery surrounding her mother's death and the Riverwitch's curse on her family, will it be too late for destiny to prevail? This unusual historical novel intermingles history and fantasy, creating an interesting and engaging story for tweens and readers of all ages.

Sharyn H. / Marathon County Public Library
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Veggieclogger says

This has to be one of the greatest books of all time!!!!

It starts out with a basket girl named Moss during King Henry the 8th's reign, the daughter of the king's executioner, knowing only that she is to stay inside the walls of the castle because she and her father are prisoners.

Over the course of the book, she runs away, meets Anne Boleyn, and makes a bond with a thief, all while fleeing from the river witch to go back to the place she was born. But in the end, is the witch really chasing her to kill her?

This book was sort of violent, so kids under age 8 shouldn't read it, but when you're older than that, it's a great book!

K Gover says

Moss is an easy to relate to, fierce character. Her role as the basket girl in catching the heads the executioner/Pa chops off is morbidly interesting. There are several passages that are so well written that you can't help but want to share them. Passages of suspense and "hooks" that intrigue the reader are prevalent throughout the story.

The descriptions of the variety of settings is extensive and provides many opportunities to visualize. In addition, the historic elements of the Tudor lifestyle and King Henry are sprinkled in enough to let the reader

know there is another society existing within the community of Moss and her story. Finally, the concepts of the Riverwitch and her fantasy contribution to this fiction genre add a unique yet mysterious twist to a seemingly obvious plot. Zero inappropriate language and the violence isn't any worse than the title implies. It isn't graphic, but describes the mood surrounding the be-headings.

Rachel McMillan says

What an interesting, interesting fable-like patch of folklore this is. Woven with magic and set against the tumultuous life of London's ominous tower, Moss and her blacksmith father (not to mention Salter, the sly river rat) pepper an unforgettable children's tale. Lush, sparse and so vivid, this reminded me why I love Children's Literature as much as I do. title provided by Netgalley

Elizabeth ?Smart Girls Love Trashy Books? says

-POTENTIAL SPOILERS-

I was surprised when I saw all the hate for this book! While it's not the greatest book I've read, I don't think it deserved all the negative reviews. Most also categorized this as a YA novel, and I even found this in my library's YA section, but I don't think it belongs there, it's very obviously a children's book, and while there's nothing wrong with that, I don't know why people keep categorizing it wrong.

I'm also disappointed the sequel isn't available in America! While I thought the story wrapped up nicely and didn't need a sequel, I love to finish what I start and therefore that's a bummer.

I liked the plot, honestly! I was surprised nobody compared this to Rapunzel, since in my eyes this is definitely a Rapunzel retelling. Girl with strange name is born under bad circumstances and a witch offers to help the mother only if she can have her daughter, and the daughter is thus locked away for several years to prevent the witch from getting her and therefore longs to see the world outside....the minute I read the plot summary I thought: "This is a Rapunzel retelling!" Whether that's true or not there's way too many similarities, hence my tags up there.

Honestly not too much happens in the way of the water witch, which disappointed me since that's why I read it, and I like how at the end she is defeated by love, the one thing she wanted that she was never able to get, but for the most part, she doesn't make an appearance and is instead mentioned by other characters.

As for the historical fiction part of the novel, apparently there's some inaccuracies there but as usual I don't really care about this time period so the smaller details others noticed just slipped right by me.

Overall, the novel wasn't good, but it wasn't awful either. It was a quick, decent read, and I'm glad I read it, although honestly I'll probably forget about it in the coming weeks as more interesting books take its place in my recent memory.

Annie says

I read this book a while ago ~ but im new to this app i decided to write this now. I recently just finished reading Jane Hardstaff's second book 'River Daughter' for the second time, - both books in the series never get boring. I was sitting in class reading my book when i suddenly finished it right before my teacher asked me to read to her - i jumped to the book shelf and didnt look at the title or anything and just started reading it to my teacher - from then on i was hooked, i couldn't even put the book down it was amazing!! So exciting and interesting ~ even with the historical side of it - defintey recommend both books in the series, i loved them!

Eliza says

Honestly, this was not the best book. Although the end was heartwarming, the majority of the book was boring and hard to get through. I read this in bookclub, and no one really liked it. Everyone said the end changed it. But I can't get past the beginning of the book. I feel as though there was maybe to much detail, and maybe not enough action. Also this book had a different cover when I read it. Not a fan of this cover. If you read it, prepare to cry. Also don't quit, it is all worth it in the end.

tinabel says

This was an exciting and action-packed read, with ages 9 to 12 in mind. It is historical fiction with magical elements, taking place during the Tudor period. At the centre of it all, is our young heroine, Moss, who is plucky, stubborn, and courageous. As daughter of the Tower of London's Executioner, Moss is tasked with removing the heads of those beheaded, earning her the moniker of "basket girl." Wanting to escape a life shrouded in death, Moss finds a way beyond the Tower walls, and goes in search of the waterwheel on the Thames, the place where she was born and her mother died. However, this journey is more dangerous than it seems — there is something frightening and otherworldly lurking in the depths of the river, seeking her out.

Along the way, Moss befriends a clever, cunning, and crude young thief, Salter, who is not only the source of much entertainment, but also provides the reader with a look at how a living could be made on the river during this time period. With guest appearances from the Duke of Norfolk, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, and Henry VIII, this is a great novel for young readers who show an interest in historical fiction, as well as those who enjoy tales with a fantastical twist.

Liviana says

This middle grade novel starts like a historical novel. Moss lives with her father in the Tower of London. Anne Boleyn is still alive, but rumors hint that it won't be for long. Moss is frustrated by her life, circumscribed by the bounds of the tower. Even worse, she has to catch the heads (in a basket) of the people her father executes.

Then THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER takes a turn for the supernatural. The folkloric nature of that which lies in wait for Moss makes this seem like a natural transition. It might jar those who expected an actual historical novel, but it doesn't change the tone of the novel.

There's a good balance between Moss's legitimate grievances against her father and her inability to see the

sacrifices he's made to give her a good life. Running into and banding together with a thief teaches Moss a lot about what it means to be hungry and desperate. That empathy serves her in good stead as the danger grows.

I liked that the historical aspects aren't dropped completely. Anne Boleyn's oncoming fate continues to be a significant part of the background, and the two children face realistic threats as often as they face supernatural ones. It's hard out there for a street urchin.

The sequel, THE RIVER'S DAUGHTER, is not available in the US. I just might order it from The Book Depository, however. THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER is a complete adventure; I don't know what the sequel might be about. It's a very good adventure, though, so I'd like to find out.

Tiffani says

I liked the book overall. It was very inventive and the mystery/adventure featured in it kept me hooked. It's hard for me to find a book and not want to put it down, especially if it's not one I chose. I chose this book when I was browsing the library and had to find a book, any book, that I'd enjoy reading and want to write annotations for. At first, I wasn't so sure about this book, but after reading it, it's safe to say I enjoyed it thoroughly.

Can't wait to read the second book!

(Also, I gave an estimate about when I started the book and ended the book. Just putting it out there.)

Erin says

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

If I learned anything from Jane Hardstaff's *The Executioner's Daughter*, it's that Egmont and I define 'thrilling adventure' very differently. I mean no offense, but I struggled with this piece, more so than I care to admit considering it is young adult lit. I'd considered abandoning it early on over its juvenile prose alone, but when push comes to shove I'm a bit of a stubborn mule and surrender doesn't come easy.

I suppose the biggest difficulty I faced, was a lack of empathy for Moss. Hardstaff tried, but the character didn't interest me in the least and I was incredibly disappointed with how she was presented. She's supposed to be eleven, but there is nothing childlike in her makeup and that fact didn't sit well with me, not when her age is so important to the story at hand.

The plot posed another problem in that it was all over the place. Moss' eavesdropping seems preposterously implausible, as did her sojourn to Hampton Court. Anne and Henry's appearance makes absolutely no sense within the context of the narrative and don't get me started on the ridiculousness of the ragged man or the Riverwitch. Elizabeth C. Bunce made this idea work in *A Curse Dark as Gold*. Hardstaff not so much.

The Executioner's Daughter was obviously a miss in my book, but I will confess to a moment of genuine delight. "Gather round, gather round an' watch," said Salter. "Watch carefully, ladies and gents." He bent down and whisked off the cloth from the box. The smell of the taffetys wafted into the night air. 'Fresh taffetys, lovely as you like!' It's a short scene, hardly worth mentioning really, but the gutter snipe's little stunt put a grin on my face. I was singing Tobias Ragg by the time I finished it, but I was in a good mood

and that's more than I can say for the rest of book.

Bottom line, Hardstaff's debut wasn't something I enjoyed and is so disjointed and unpolished that I can't see myself recommending it on in future.

Kris - My Novelesque Life says

DNF - I did not finish the novel as I could not get into the story or the characters. It may be due to the fact it is written for children and not one that is for all ages. Based on other reviews I stopped reading as I don't think I will enjoy it. Thank you so much for the opportunity to read this book.
