

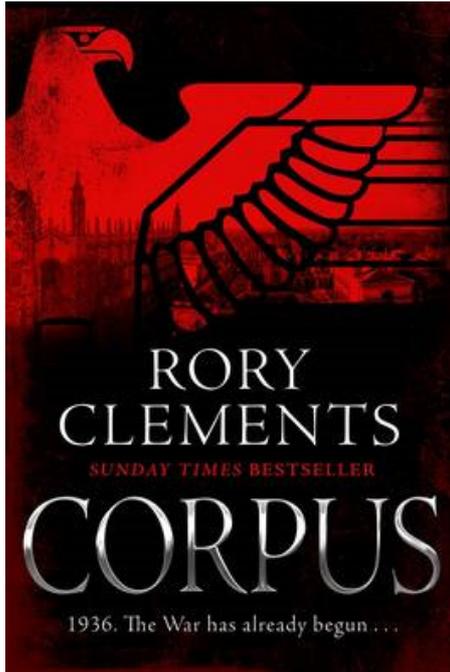


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your next book

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## LoveReading Reader reviews of **Corpus** by Rory Clements

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



**Alan Brown**

*Historical fiction, a crime story and an espionage tale all wrapped into one. A book of grappling intrigue which finishes with an exciting denouement. A fascinating read.*

*Almost all of the intrigues of the late 1930s in pre- Second World War Cambridge Britain are entwined in this story. Added spice is added by inclusions of titbits from Spain, Germany and Russia.*

*This is a book of historical fiction but also a crime mystery as well as being an espionage tale. The author brings his experience and expertise from writing his Elizabethan age*

*spy novels.*

*The book moves on at a pace which is a little slow (this is good as it feeds into a reader's natural impatience) but has a full-on clear direction except for some parts of the intrigue of the spy component.*

*From the start where the author describes the fear of a novice 'agent' undertaking a covert task there is a lot of detail not only of the main characters of the story but also of the different environments they lived in.*

*The only criticism is that the language used is a little biased towards the lead characters and their supporting cast.*

*However this is a minor observation made after reading and not during.*

*I am left hoping that Rory Clements visits this era again to create a series that challenges his previous Elizabethan efforts. If that is the case I will be looking to read it as soon as published.*

## **Ann Peet**

*Great mix of political conspiracy, spies and murder set in the 1930s at the time of the Abdication.*

***This is an excellent novel for anyone who likes thrillers that are well written, intelligent and with an historical setting.*** It is set in 1936 and the story involves Cambridge professors involved in Nazi or Communist plots, the abdication crisis, the Spanish civil war and layer upon layer of political intrigue. The engaging main character is Thomas Wilde, a professor and expert in Elizabethan spy networks, who becomes involved in some strange murders. There is an authentic period feel to the writing and it is a really suspenseful page turner. It seems that this is the first in a new series of historical spy thrillers from Rory Clements which is great news as I can't wait to find out what Thomas Wilde will be involved in next.

## **Elisabeth Thomas**

*An enjoyable read*

*The year is 1936 and once again Europe is on the brink of war. However, opposing political factions are already at war – communism and fascism and Britain is in the midst of the Abdication crisis.*

*This war is already being fought in Berlin, London and the sleepy villages of the home counties. There are suspicious deaths and murders all linked to a conspiracy that will shake the foundations of the British Government. Will Cambridge Professor Thomas Wilde be able to solve the mystery before it is too late.*

*I was a huge fan of the John Shakespeare series and love every single book. **Corpus was an enjoyable read but I did not take to the characters as much as those in his previous books.** Maybe this was because it was the first book in the series and because I had got so use to the John Shakespeare series.*

## **Les Wood**

*A 'grown up Boys Own' type of story akin to Eric Ambler, where innocent, unassuming figures become the equivalent of 'super heroes'. A romp, featuring historical facts, pays back as you delve further. **It's a refreshing change to***

**discover a new novel which pulls you along without any effort and has you guessing the outcome or rather 'whodunit'. On the one hand you guess correctly yet on the other, are incorrect with there being more than one answer.**

*If you have knowledge of very basic history you know that 'the plot' will be foiled but that does not detract from the enjoyment of the story.*

*The settings are authentic and 1936 is described vividly with locations being authentic, these apparently not having changed much over the intervening years. The good guys are loveable, the bad ones just that with the aristocracy featuring heavily due to their cast iron beliefs being shown to be facile and ill informed.*

*It will be interesting to read the promised follow up novel and discover how an American academic can be further involved in English history.*

### **Sarah Musk**

*A plausible and gripping plot set in the year of the Abdication. **A must for people who like bloodthirsty, spy thrillers with an interesting mix of characters.** I loved Rory Clements John Shakespeare Tudor spy thrillers so I was eager to read his latest book. This is a fairly conventional spy and chase thriller involving an imagined plot to keep Edward V111 on the throne because he had Nazi sympathies. The characters were also fairly stereotyped - the angst-ridden Cambridge professor, the hard, ruthless British spy, nasty Russians, feisty idealistic young women and a true life drama to hang the plot around.*

*The story certainly keeps you gripped. I had to concentrate hard sometimes because there were so many characters all with mysterious, murky intentions I did occasionally find myself very confused who was connected to who and what their agenda was. There are a lot of nasty summary executions and deaths - the book does not shy away from the dark side of plots and espionage. The story does have the element of plausibility - it could have happened. There were plenty of people who wanted Edward to stay on the throne because of his German sympathies - our lives could have been completely different if this alternative history had occurred.*

*I really enjoyed this book but I prefer Rory Clements Tudor books. I think he has a stronger affinity with those times than with more 'modern' times and this came out in this book - although the plot was entirely plausible and gripping.*

## **Ann Alderton**

***A compelling spy thriller set in the politically charged period of the late 1930s, 'Corpus' is a gripping story with an interesting and engaging Cambridge-based hero. A series with great potential.*** The main storyline of this gripping thriller takes place during a week in November and December 1936. The political backdrop is incendiary, with the English upper classes, the country's leaders and the intelligentsia torn in their loyalties between the extreme right and far left ideologies of the time. The plot covers wide canvas, which includes the potential constitutional crisis arising from the King's imminent abdication, cynical attempts by the ruling classes to manipulate the world view and young idealists getting caught up in the romance of ideology and being groomed to risk their lives in a volatile Europe represented by the rise of Hitler and the Spanish civil war. The novel's protagonist, Thomas Wilde, is a history professor of moderate views, who, through his expertise in Elizabethan spy networks, is able to decipher the complex events surrounding him and save the country from a potentially cataclysmic outcome. As is often the case in a plot-driven story, there are some contrivances that suspend disbelief just a tad too far, such as a lit match illuminating the interior of a passing car just at the right time to enable Wilde to identify its passengers. That said however, the storyline has just the right amount of intrigue and complexity to keep the reader gripped, with plenty of compelling and believable characters to make them want to come back for more. With World War II still a few years away, there is a lot more intrigue for Thomas Wolfe to return to.

## **Glenda Worth**

***'Corpus' by Rory Clements is a book of international espionage with many twists and turns.*** Professor Wilde investigates several murders whilst trying to figure out how this affects the country.

*'Corpus' by Rory Clements is a spy thriller set in 1930's. A conspiracy is being undertaken which will affect the whole of the country and Cambridge history professor Thomas Wilde has the task of uncovering the clues and putting them together.*

*A young girl is found murdered in her room after a recent trip to Berlin, a well to do man and his wife are killed, various others are implicated and how does this all tie into the abdication by Edward VII and his lady friend Wallis*

Simpson?

*Set in university in Cambridge, with Berlin, Whitehall and Spain thrown in the mix, life gets very complicated for Professor Wilde as he investigates the deaths while being embroiled in the political divisions of his college.*

***An exciting read with many twists and turns keeping the reader engrossed right until the end.***

### **Lucy Bunce**

*A gripping thriller that holds the mirror of 1936 up to Europe today. If Corpus had been published a year ago, it would have been an exciting, historic thriller with an array of diverse characters. However, when the blurb starts “1936 and Europe is on the brink of a cataclysm it cannot foresee” – I can’t help but think that this could just as easily read 2016.*

*The murders are grisly, the characters shady and you’re never quite sure whether some are good or bad. Professor Thomas Wilde is our central character, an American history professor at a college in Cambridge. His nationality allows Clements to keep him somewhat out of the politics. Wilde gets caught up in the mystery quickly, and whilst he is central to the plot, his involvement is not always plausible. At times the collection of characters is perhaps too diverse, or their relationship to each other seems contrived. Why, for example, does Lydia, Wilde’s neighbour, have a dubious Yorkshire coal miner staying with her, and perhaps more pertinently, why do none of her friends question this more seriously? Why does the journalist Eaton seek Wilde out so quickly?*

*That said, the setting is perfect. Clements describes Cambridge in November with an accuracy that remains true today. The involvement of the “establishment” in European far right extremism is scary, and it is this that a conspiracy theorist could find echoes of today.*

***It’s an exciting book, a proper page-turner that keeps up the suspense until the end.***

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### **Phyllippa Smithson**

*1936 Britain – murder, espionage, feminism, the ruling elite based on inherited wealth, political intrigue. This is a remarkable story delivering every facet of*

*what a wholly absorbing read should.*

*When Lydia learns of the death of her friend and high society lady, Nancy, she is not convinced by the general, including the police, view that it was an accidental drug overdose. Yes Nancy had taken to drugs but the last phone call she had had with her, left Lydia of the view that her death was] mysterious – murder? When the police ignore her she turns to her neighbour and Cambridge University Historian Master, Tom Wilde, to share her concerns.*

*Whilst initially Wilde determines simply to put Lydia's mind at rest, the more he digs, the more he grows to believe her. And as further high profile deaths are reported, all of which had some link to Nancy, he becomes more and more embroiled in seeking out the truth.*

*And the truth leads him to conspiracies involving the British elite, Russians, Germans, all set against the turmoil of the times. From the Spanish Civil War, the abdication of the then King, the building of the Nazi empire, the nervousness of a potential second war. And amongst all this, the American Wilde sees a Britain which now seems in many ways to be its worst time – sexism, the wealthy elite ruling the rank and file, lack of social care for those maimed mentally and physically by the Great War.*

***I truly could not put 'Corpus' down and I must once again thank the great guys at Lovereading.com for introducing me to a thriller that I predict will command #1 on the international best seller list for much time to come.***

### **Jocelyn F Garvey**

*1936. This is Europe in transition. Still reeling from the World War, strong leaders are vying for supremacy. Stalin in Russia, Hitler in Germany and Franco in Spain.*

*This is the background to the first of a series of spy novels from Rory Clements. Set amongst the colleges of Cambridge and the countryside of East Anglia, this is what you would expect from a master of historical details, which takes you into an almost forgotten world.*

*In Britain there is the beginning of a constitutional crisis. Edward V111 as yet uncrowned, wishes to marry Wallis Simpson, an American divorcee.*

*A woman is found dead of an overdose of heroin in Cambridge. She had attended the Olympic Games in Berlin in the summer and whilst there secretly delivered documents to help the escape of a Jewish scientist.*

*A friend of hers does not believe that this is suicide but murder and pleads for help from a friend Thomas Wilde. Wilde is an American who is a history professor in Cambridge. His area of expertise is Thomas Walsingham, Queen Elizabeth's spymaster considered to be the founder of sophisticated spy networks.*

*Wolfe gets drawn into the investigation and uncovers plots between groups who wish to unsettle England in these turbulent times.*

*A local right wing landowner and his family are horrifically murdered. Do these events have a bearing on each other? Why are there so many spies in Cambridge? Who are they watching and why?*

*What has this to do with the King?*

*This is then **a mixture of murder investigations and historical political thriller.***

*Murder, intrigue, communist plots, car chases across the country.*

### **Angela Rhodes**

*Europe 1936 and we are at war, and somewhere in Berlin, a young English woman, is there to deliver a message to a Jewish Scientist. A message so important that she is willing to risk her life and ends up dead weeks later with a silver syringe in her hand. But this is not the only death, a renowned member of a country set and his wife are both found dead, murdered.*

*Enter Thomas Wilder, an expert in Elizabethan spy networks, who starts to dig into the background of these three people, Are they connected, and if so, what did they know, that would get all three murdered?*

*As the mystery unwinds so does a conspiracy, one that could start a massacre and Thomas needs to stop this from happening.*

***For anyone who likes a good spy thriller, this is on par with John Le Carre.***

***A great story that will keep you turning the pages late into the night... and Thomas Wilder is just wonderful!***

### **Alfred Nobile**

*This was an entertaining book. Part thriller, part alternative history, part mystery. Of what if's, could be's or maybes.*

*Set in 1936, a time of the abdication of Edward VIII, Spanish civil war and the manoeuvring of the dictatorships in Moscow and Berlin and Rome. A clique in the British establishment and government are behind Edward staying on as king. Is this because of their belief in the monarchy or Edward's pro fascist ideals?*

*Every action by the pro fascists has a counter action by their communist counterparts and the dictatorships in Italy, Germany and Russia.*

*Caught up in this is Professor Thomas Wilde, an American teaching history at Cambridge. He is set on a roller coaster adventure where ideals, alliances and enmities are constantly in flux.*

***A great book that keeps you turning the pages, saying to yourself this could never happen. But when you suspend your disbelief, it could or has it?***

*A great book which should be a best seller when released in 2017.*

*Thanks for the opportunity to read this ARC*

### **Catherine Bryce**

#### ***A brilliant, exciting, can't put down book!***

*Rory Clements has really written a classic book here with Corpus. Set in 1936 during the Second World War, the story is full of murder, suicides, politics, abdication, academia, espionage, spying, intrigue..... the list goes on and would cover a multitude of genres giving enjoyment to a wide range of readers.*

*Corpus follows the character of University Professor Thomas Wilde, who through the course of the book moves from the safe environment of university life in Cambridge to becoming a detective assisting the police in what they say is a murder but other people think otherwise due to the political associations and political beliefs held by the murdered female. This is at a time also of the King's Abdication, the rise of fascism, Nazism and communism and the hold that these various organisation had in Britain at that time and the author brings everything together into an exciting story.*

*This is a slight change of direction for the author as his writing forte is the Elizabethan era but total dedication to 'Corpus' has resulted in a great novel.*

*A definite page turner and a novel not to be missed.*

## **Alan Gee**

***If you look up “Rollicking Good Yarn” in the dictionary, the definition is almost certainly “Corpus” by Rory Clements, though I still haven’t grasped the significance of the title!***

*On page 111, a character says to the hero “I think you’ve been reading too much John Buchan”. And at times I felt that this could quite easily be a John Buchan tale, but brought up to date, with a lot more blood and violence and swearing – a whole lot of swearing!*

*It’s clever to make the hero, Thomas Wilde, an expert in Tudor intrigue, thereby harking back to the author’s previous series of novels. Most of the characters in the book, with the exception of the hero, appear to be either fascists or communists – at times I found it slightly difficult to remember which were which. This did not, however, spoil my enjoyment of this “Rollicking Good Yarn”.*

## **Siobhan McDowell**

*This book has to feature in my top 10 books of the year!*

*From the first page I was plunged into a very realistic world of intrigue and suspicious characters.*

***Each chapter was an example of how to write a page-turner.....RIVETING is the only word that comes close to describing how I felt about it.***

*The author handles words with confidence and his plotting of the various streams of action was blistering!*

*As the plot unfolded the murders came thick and fast! These were horrific but I felt necessary as they conveyed just how ruthless the Nazi regime was in carrying out its monstrous war crimes.*

*I was gasping as I turned the pages and found myself spellbound by the storyline....totally believable plot and it could have happened- this is what is so scary.*

*An immensely enjoyable read and one I will heartily recommend to my friends.*

## **Anne Rhodes**

*A book which will hold you from the first page! The sort of story which could be*

*true/could be based on truth!*

*Although set 18 years after the end of the First World War, those who were involved or affected by it are brilliantly described – their feelings and how they react to the events in December 1936 are perfectly understandable (even if you don't agree with them!)*

*Tom Wilde, the hero, is a History Professor at Cambridge a gentle quiet man who thinks very logically through the mysteries of all the different groups against authority or country that almost litter his path as much as the sudden deaths which keep happening to people he knows.*

*Action, excitement and problems on almost every page –and then of course there is also Lydia, whom he likes and is worried about because she is closely involved in all that is happening.*

*Each time you think you have worked it all out, the plot takes another twist. No-one is quite whom they appear to be.....*

***Sudden violent deaths, Societies for or against different parts of Russia, Germany, Britain – excitement on every page. What more could you ask?***

## **Gill Williams**

***Rory Clements has written a spy thriller with as many twists and turns as the Cambridgeshire roads he describes. It is set mainly in Cambridge in 1936 (there is a lovely description of Cambridge on p33 and it seems nothing has changed!) and surrounding villages with forays into London, Spain and Munich. The university was a hotbed of political intrigue, as is well documented and Clemens takes a dive into the middle of it and weaves a tale as intriguing as any conceived.***

*His protagonist Thomas Wilde an American history professor is caught up, via his appealing next door neighbour Lydia, into the suspicious death of her friend and horrific murders of the parents of another friend. In London Baldwin is determined to force abdication on Edward VIII and the Nazis are equally determined to keep him for his pro-Nazi sympathies.*

*Clemens description of the pre-war establishment is quite frightening and convincing, one wonders how much of it was true.*

*Include an MI6 man, a high ranking Nazi assassin and a Russian hitman and there are the ingredients for a well written, very readable book. There are one*

*or two minor irritations which don't really detract from the story.*

*If you like this you'll like 'John Shakespeare', if you like 'John Shakespeare' you'll like this. Enjoy.*