

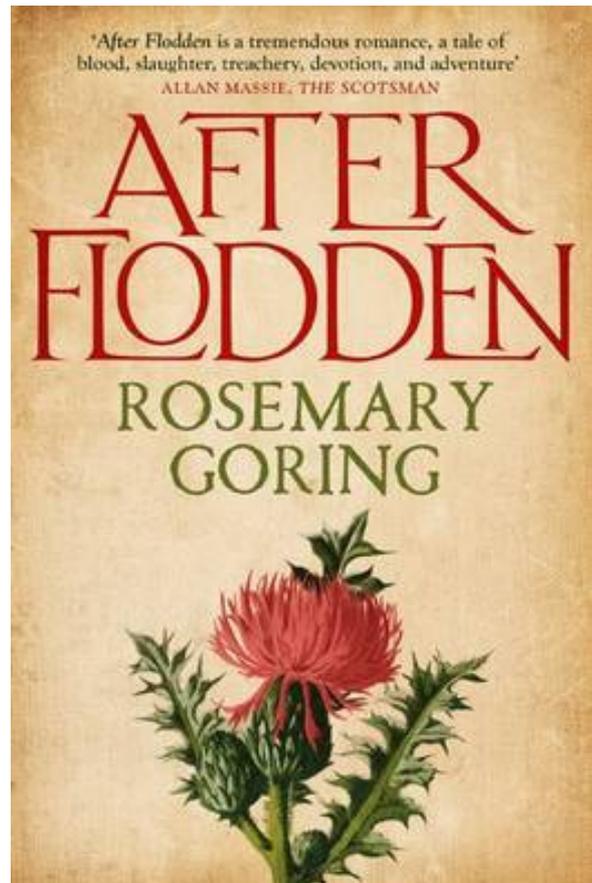
LoveReading Reader reviews of After Flodden by Rosemary Goring

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Lucinda Fountain

A profoundly meaningful and accurately realistic novel that brings the past vibrantly to life...

Amid truth-drawing prose is a thought-provoking tale, capturing the harshness of the times with such candidness and profundity. I was inwardly touched by those individual stories of characters whose lives were impacted by war, thus putting into perspective irrevocable love and great loss. Patrick Paniter is thrust into the heart of the battle of Flodden in 1513, presenting an interesting outlook through the eyes of one who witnesses an emerging war and the beginning of consequential change. Starkly poignant and powerfully dramatic, I was stunned by how keenly felt were those intense emotions of guilt and despair, together with the eagerness to uncover those hidden truths.



Exquisitely told and wonderfully written Rosemary Goring transports you back to the past with such dexterity, as she captures meticulously such intricate detail and vivid ambiance. Swept away by the fast-paced, energetic drama this dynamic story took hold and did not let go throughout. By cleverly combining subtlety with dazzling detail so as to paint a clear picture, the author creates something historically accurate and undeniably convincing.

*I was satisfyingly captivated by a refreshingly original take on such a significant event within history, which merged military musings with a modern insight and current awareness. **This fascinating fictitious romp though Scotland's past is an unputdownable, addictive read and a truly triumphant accomplishment!***

Sue Broom

This year marks the 500th anniversary of the battle of Flodden, the military misadventure that cost the lives of James IV and thousands of his men and cast Scotland into disarray for years afterwards. Rosemary Goring doesn't shy away from portraying the battle and its aftermath in gritty detail but at the same time she celebrates the feisty, fiercely loyal character of the survivors, defending themselves in dangerous times in the Scottish border lands. Her portrayal of Patrick Paniter, the king's adviser, tortured with guilt for his part in his country's defeat, is fascinating. If you are a fan of history, romance and adventure, this story will appeal to you.

She has quite a way with words - memorable descriptions, particularly of the wild countryside and 16th century living conditions. Interesting characters, touching relationships, credible plot, fast-paced action - this book has it all. Heartily recommended.

Marion McCaffery

The story follows the trials of love, hate, jealousy and war of 5 main characters who the story weaves around.

Patrick Paniter - King James of Scotland's secretary and right hand man who is feeling guilty about the battle of Flodden and the end result.

Gabriel, Viscount Torrance - In love with Louise he is a young courtier and advisor to Paniter.

Louise Brenier - A Gutsy young woman who's search for her brother Benoit Brenier who was thought to be killed at Flodden - leads her into adventure, love and heartbreak.

Adam Crozier - Head of a warring clan in the Scottish borders near Selkirk.

Hob - An East Lothian boy orphaned at Flodden.

*The book is a page turner following the story of the five main characters and how they interweave with each other. **Rosemary Goring tells the story magnificently, especially the battle scene.** So well written that you could almost be there yourself. The smell of fear, horses, men and gunpowder almost wafts up your nose as you read it and you are drawn right into the battle. **It is a fast moving tale of violent times. I recommend this book to anyone who loves historical drama.***

Mrs C A Tuckett

*A young Louise Brenier sets out to look for her brother Benoit, who disappeared at the Battle of Flodden. Patrick Paniter King James IV's Secretary and advisor has a problem with his conscience after the defeat and death of his King and friend. The story brings them together briefly with good and bad results. **A very enjoyable read with Scottish history as a background.***

Kathy Howell

***This is a very good read. I was aware of the Battle of Flodden, even though I didn't know too much about the actual event. This book, because of the excellent writing, is very evocative of the time and the area.** It describes very well the effect that such a defeat has on a country, on the individuals who were involved and all who suffer the consequences.*

The book begins when Louise Brenier meets Patrick Paniter, who was at the battle field himself and who is now chased by spectres of what happened and how much he is to blame. The story of the preparations and the battle itself are told so that the reader understands the guilt felt by Paniter. Louise believes her brother, Beniot, is still alive, and goes to search for him, having had no information from Paniter.

The weather and the atmosphere are really well described. Louise does not escape the feuding between the clans in the area, or their suspicion and hatred of the English. On her travels she befriends a boy, who then travels with her, a gentleman, who has been sent to find her, and a Clan Leader. The reader is given enough information to have doubts about two of these people but is still surprised at the truth that Louise discovers when her journey is completed.

This is a very good book and I really enjoyed reading it.

Vanessa Wild

***I will start the review by saying that I loved this book and found it a very engrossing read.** Set in Scotland just after the battle of Flodden in 1513, during a turbulent time in Scottish history, I thought this was a fascinating and intriguing tale of love, war, espionage and adventure with a good plot at its heart. It cleverly combines historical fact with fiction and is so vividly and beautifully written that I almost felt I was there!*

The story centres around five or maybe six main characters who are all suffering from the after effects of the battle, my favourite of whom are Louise Brenier, a young woman searching for her brother who is feared dead, and Hob, an orphaned boy who

she befriends when tragedy strikes. All the characters are well drawn and believable, and I enjoyed travelling on their individual journeys.

*It's a fast paced tale set during a period in history about which I know little, so I was very pleased to have been given the opportunity to read and review this compelling, atmospheric and exciting book by www.lovereadings.co.uk. **A real page turner and one I would recommend to all historical fiction fans.***

Joy Bosworth

***After Flodden is very much concerned with the battle of Flodden and the fall-out from it. I enjoy historical novels set in Tudor times and their sumptuous gowns and grand houses. This is the other side of the war.** It is a very sodden Flodden and the land is inhospitable. Indeed, one wonders why it should be fought over, why would anyone wish to live there.*

This is certainly not the Tourist Board view of the border country. As parties travel between England and Scotland there seems not to be much to encourage one to stay. Although that could be just my view after the graphic description of the soil cart system.

There doesn't seem to be any likable characters in the novel. A Frenchwoman who is depicted as speaking normal English sentences but with a few French words tacked on to the end of each of her sentences, her daughter, who should be a sympathetic personality but is conveyed as being brittle and arrogant and capricious. Only the embattled border men have believable, rounded characters – not necessarily likeable, but believable.

I found the jumping back and forth between 1211 and 1213 and then to different parts of those years quite distracting. One section reminded me of the type of novelette I enjoyed (when very much younger) but it didn't seem to fit with the bloody battles depicted elsewhere.

As the author is a historian I don't doubt this is an accurate portrayal of the time, it's just not one I find very enjoyable.

Margaret Freeman

*This year is the 500th anniversary of the Battle of Flodden between the forces of James IV of Scotland and Henry VIII of England. **After Flodden is the dramatic story of what happened after the battle on 9 September 1513. Well written, well researched this is a compelling and powerful book, bringing the characters and the Edinburgh and Borders of 1513 vividly to life.***

Louise Brenier is determined to find out what happened to her missing brother Benoit, was he killed in action, or was he captured? Interspersed with the story of Louise's search for her brother, are flashbacks to the Battle as the two sides gathered together and engaged in warfare, the political intrigue and danger always present.

Patrick Paniter, James's secretary and right-hand man is full of remorse at the death of his king, and tormented by memories he would rather keep buried. Louise appeals to him for help, and when he tells her that Benoit must either be dead or a prisoner she sets off to search for him. Soon Gabriel Viscount Torrance, a courtier and advisor to Paniter, joins her in her search.

I was swept away with the action, re-living the scenes through Rosemary Goring's vivid descriptions – the court at Edinburgh, the wild Borderlands, the violence of the battle scenes and the interaction between the characters. It's a brilliant book.

Debbie Patrick

Firstly I must admit that this is not the sort of book I usually read, preferring either crime/mystery or fantasy books. However, I do occasionally enjoy reading something a bit different to my usual reading matter.

This is a well written book, set mainly after the events of Flodden battle but also telling of the events in the characters life's prior to Flodden that lead them to that place & time.

Sometimes with books written like that you can literally lose the plot with the jumping back & forth but in this case the book has been written so well that this does not happen.

However, despite this I found that there was something missing but I can't put my finger on what it was. It is an enjoyable read & I'm glad I read it but not sure if I would actively seek out books by this author in the future.

Janette Skinner

Ms. Goring's background in Literature, publishing and Scottish studies is evident in the excellently written novel. *It is a story covering a short period of time after the battle of Flodden in 1513, five hundred years ago, which has comprehensive history and background information covering the monarchy of Scotland, England and the border country, and the tensions therein. When James IV was on the Scottish throne Henry VIII was King of England, and brother-in-law to James's wife.*

The characters are listed at the beginning of the book and come starkly to life page by page, the narrative goes forward and backward in time flawlessly before and after the battle with perfect continuity and there are a few surprises at the end.

This book is really enjoyable and I learned a lot about history, military strategies and rules of engagement, but the book is much more than this. *It is the story of a young courageous woman searching for her brother who is branded as a spy, and of her finding love in the process. However the most amazing thing that kept me reading this book slowly and carefully to the very end was the use of poetic, authentic language. Being Scottish, but not having lived there for twenty years is was delightful to read words and expressions I had not heard for years, bairns, weans, glaur, biddie, and lots more. The description of Dacre's men attacking Crozier's Keep will put you on the edge of your seat.*

There are some beautiful word pictures i.e. when vixen the dog meets Crozier's hounds 'a growl rolled like dice in the little dog's throat,' and Gabriel's Mother and Aunt, when sewing and decrying King James and his court, 'stitching as if their needles were winking out these gentlemen's eyes.'

On Crozier's wedding night he is described thus; his heart was beating so hard she could feel it through his shirt, as if it were her own', erotic in its simplicity, no need to say anything more, and highlights the writers way with words.

I could go on and on praising this book, and will definitely read it again.

Barbara Goldie

It is 1513 in Scotland. Patrick Paniter is tormented by guilt after the death of James IV; he was in charge of the guns at the disastrous Battle of Flodden, where he was James IV's right hand man. Louise Brenier asks him for help. She wants to find out if her brother Benoit was killed in action. Not satisfied she sets out herself to search for the truth.

After Flodden, is the story of the consequences of Flodden, seen through the eyes of several characters, which works extremely well throughout, keeping the readers interest as the different characters develop.

The book is cleverly written combining fact and fiction. It has a good plot full of intrigue and keeps the reader enthralled. The language is perfect for the era and the vivid descriptions and intricate details make you feel you are in the middle of it all. The pace is excellent a real page turner with well-drawn characters. It has lovely dialogue and nice chapter length. The list of characters in the front of the book is a very useful addition, both as reference tool while reading the book and a good introduction to the novel.

A must read for anyone who loves a racy, historical, political or romantic novel it ticks all these boxes and more to make it a must read for this year.

Barry Griffiths

This is an historical novel which combines political rivalries with rich and poor intertwined, and the grim reality of everyday life at a time in Scotland after a famous battle, and the repercussions of deeds done at the time with all the regrets that ensue.

It's a tale that captures the lives of people from across the political and social spectrum. Highlighting everything from Kings to mistresses, Bishops to shipwrights and everyone else in between: from the premature death of children, struggling to put food on the table and paying rents, bills etc. to the hierarchical issues and political machinations of the day.

Told in an extraordinary poetic language both engaging and thought provoking, that gives you an idea of the everyday life at the time the story is set.

Informative and engaging - personally I could have easily read it just because of the rhythmic language that is used in its portrayal of events. Add to that the great story and you end up with a very pleasurable read indeed.

Lisa Redmond

After Flodden by Rosemary Goring is an outstanding fiction debut from a powerful and talented author. Rosemary Goring has previously written the bestselling *Scotland the Autobiography* and has worked as a non-fiction editor for many years but this book feels like the work of a fiction author at the height of her powers. The captivating story features a handful of characters in the aftermath of the Battle of Flodden in 1513. Patrick Paniter was James IV's advisor and secretary and he is haunted by the horrors of the battlefield and the death of his king. Louise Brenier has asked for Paniter's help in finding her brother who hasn't returned from battle. The indomitable Louise disgruntled with the search for her brother decides to set out to find him herself and finds herself caught up in a feud between two border clans. The action is fast paced and perilous. The characters are believable and their stories compelling. This novel will have huge appeal for fans of Rose Tremain and Hilary Mantel. It introduces a period of history which is less well explored than the rest of the Sixteenth Century and which deserves further exploration. ***I cannot recommend this story highly enough; it is a must for all fans of Historical Fiction.***