Lovereading4kids Reader reviews of The Executioner’s Daughter by Jane Hardstaff

Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading4kids members.

Emma Stephenson, age 10

An amazing and clever story like no others I have read. Great historical detail shines through this book. It was a bit spooky but very exciting and I like the ending.

At first I found the story slightly gruesome when Moss was helping at the executions. Then it became a bit spooky but exciting. I liked how Moss met real life characters including Queen Anne Boleyn. My favourite person is Salter. He made me laugh and he has a mischievous character (a bit like me.) I also liked Moss's father and was pleased with the way the story ended. This wonderful book has become the best on my bookshelf.

Ellen Faulkner, age 11

‘The Executioners Daughter’ is a fabulous book. Beware of the gruesome deaths though! Moss is a young girl who is imprisoned at the Tower of London. She dreams of freedom...

‘The Executioners Daughter’ is about a young girl who is imprisoned at the Tower of London. She has to carry a basket to catch the heads of those beheaded, of whom her father beheads. She dreams of freedom. When she gets it, she finds out about the Riverwitch, a spirit of the river who longs for a child to hold. How is Moss connected to her? Does she have to give in to the Riverwitch? Or will she struggle, and die?

Moss is a young girl of eleven. On her twelfth birthday, she is destined to meet with the Riverwitch. She does not know it, but she was saved by the Riverwitch
when she was born. She must embrace the Riverwitch to get past twelve. Or she will struggle and die.

Salter is a street boy who originally met Moss as she is drowning and he saves her life, then he steals her boots. She will need him to survive.

Jane Hardstaff is a compelling author, and I could not put this book down. Anybody between 9 and 12 should read it. An amazing story full of character and a bit of gruesomeness.

Sam Moffat – age 11

I think this is a really good book for girls and boys about 11-14. At the start of the book you cannot tell what path it is going along but further into the book, you begin to understand the story.

The main character is Moss who dreams of escaping her home - the Tower of London - and when she finds a way out she meets the loveable and funny Salter. I enjoyed this book because it was action packed and very mysterious.

Altogether I would highly recommend this book and to some boys the main character may be a girl but it is still a very good book to read. I would class this book as a historical mystery book and it is full of twists and turns. I would give this book four stars.

Grace Reed, age 11

Moss, the basket girl, can not get used to executions. She lives with her father in a dank, dark and dreary stone room in the Tower of London from which she longs to escape. Sick of catching heads in her basket, Moss uses her little Queen Anne silver bird to help her escape down a hidden tunnel to the River Thames. There she saves Salter, a foul-mouthed boy and her adventure begins.

My favourite character is Moss. I admire her determination in completing challenges. The fact that she is independent and stands up for what she believes in is very inspirational. The storyline is very real, which I like, but it also contains some mythical elements such as the river witch adds to the drama of the story. Overall, I think this is a fabulous book and I give it 9/10.

If you like this book you will LOVE: ‘The Bonehill Curse.’
Carla McGuigan, age 13

This is my first time reading a novel by Jane Hardstaff. Eleven year old Moss has just two and a half weeks to go until she turns twelve. Moss has spent the past eleven years living in the tower of London. It is the reign of King Henry VIII and a time of many conspiracies and executions.

Moss’s father is the executioner and Moss is the basket girl. She has the gory task of collecting the heads of the condemned in her basket. She hates having to do this job and she also hates being a prisoner of the tower. She has never seen a wood or open spaces and she longs to be free. She is sick of the tower and wants to go and see the world but Moss’s father has a secret. At Moss’s birth she was promised to the river witch but her father also promised her mother that he would keep her safe, So the question is can Moss’s father protect her or will she have to free herself?

Moss meets a river lad called Salter who comes to her rescue more times than enough.

I really enjoyed this novel and I recommend it to both boys and girls as I think they would enjoy it as well.

The way the book was printed also impressed me. The spacing between the sentences made the book very easy to read.

Jemma Rubens, age 10

This eventful story, which is full of suspense, is such a thrilling read. I was so annoyed when I had to stop reading as I was completely drawn in to Moss’s world!

I would recommend this book to anyone who can get their hands on it, apart from younger children (who may find it scary).

The only thing that I would consider changing is that you find out Moss’s secret way out very early and it would be nicer if there were just several little clues. Otherwise, I appreciated everything about it, from the beginning to the end. Thank you so much to Jane Hardstaff; for writing it and Lovereading4kids for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I think this is one of the best books I have ever read!
Hannah Pendell, age 9

*When I read ‘The Executioner's Daughter’ I was hooked. This book has facts about the Tudor time as well as fantasy. I loved the detail of what the main character, Moss, was doing.*

‘The Executioner's Daughter’ is a fantastic book. With facts of the Tudor times (such as the little ice age) pushed together with fantasy, the book is a pleasure to read. Jane Hardstaff put so much detail into her book that Moss (the main character) feels like she’s standing right next to you. The book is quite scary so it’s not one to read at night! The book really starts to grab you in the seventh chapter where she finds a tunnel out to her freedom. Until around half way through the book Moss thinks she’s a prisoner at the tower because of a story her father told her.

Sam Harper, age 10

Moss has a pretty gruesome life for a young girl. She is a basket-girl working in the Tower of London, catching the heads of executed prisoners in her basket as they roll from her fathers axe. Moss has spent her whole life within the Tower walls and she longs to escape and experience real life, walking through forests and losing herself in the London streets. But the city is a dangerous place and old Nell tells her tales of the Riverwitch who lures children to an icy death. Is Moss’ father right to protect her so much from the outside world and why does he fear Moss’ 12th birthday? *There are Kings, Queens, witches, a cheeky young river-rat called Salter who steals Moss’ boots and a dangerous mystery to solve. This book has it all!*

I loved The Executioner's Daughter. It was really easy to imagine Moss’ life in Tudor London and the characters were brilliant. Salter was very funny and the Riverwitch was really quite scary! A fantastically exciting mystery.

Traviss Chaytors, age 10

*Brilliant, different and an amazing read...*

The Executioner’s Daughter is a brilliant book. Moss has a strange job which is to collect heads that her father, the executioner of The Tower of London, chops off. Moss is responsible for collecting these heads in a basket and she hates it and wants to leave. She finds a passage out of the town but then finds a secret that will change her life.
I loved this book so much and even though it sounds a bit gruesome I think anybody who loves books about history will love this as much as I did. From King Henry VIII to River Witches the story is amazing. **I now have a line of people queuing up to read my copy, starting with my Mum!**

**Lucy B, age 12**

*(Weatherhead High School)*

“The Executioner's Daughter’ is a rather thrilling novel that I loved. It was full of action, and made me feel sorry for Moss, Salter and Moss's father. It also made me feel sorry for the River Witch because of her background.

**All in all, I loved the entire book, and I hope that another book comes out to continue Moss and Salter's story!**

**Cody, age 10**

‘The Executioner’s Daughter’ is **mysterious and spooky.**

This is for people who enjoy ghostly stories as well as emotional stories. I think that Jane Hardstaff has really shown the character’s emotions and their feelings.

**I really enjoyed this book because it was exciting and it had a lot of description particularly about the River witch and the settings.**

**Leah Roe, age 10**

The Executioner’s Daughter is a wandering girl who is a basket girl. Being a basket girl is horrible for her and watching her father chop off heads, sitting beside him. Soon an old lady called Nell, tells Moss a story about a millers daughter, who kills her self and becomes the river witch who take's children into the river. Moss wants to go and see the river and discover what is really in there. This leads to a terrifying event!

This book is very interesting and is full of mysterious things, like missing children and missing people. This book has brought me into the story and I hope that will happen to you too. If I could read more of her books then I would buy them all.

**I think Jane Hardstaff is an amazing writer and I hope she will write more amazing books like this one.**
Alice D'Angelo, age 15

Moss dreams of joining the crowd and disappearing; following the river until she finds somewhere she can live with her Pa, somewhere where blood doesn’t stain the ground and scent the air. Pa tells her that they have no choice but to stay in the Tower of London, that they are imprisoned there to carry out the executions; week in and week out.

Nevertheless, Moss is sure that she could survive on the streets of Tudor London, to escape the title of the Basket Girl and the grim fate that she helps bring to the ones befalling a public death. But if she found life hard in a place where there was enough food to live comfortably and a warm fire that kept away chills, how is she going to stay alive with no resources, and a ground covered in ice?

As Moss strays further away from all that she knows, she finds the only person she can trust is a thief, who she cannot trust at all. With a touch of mystery and danger, and a glimmer of royalty, Hardstaff keeps a fast pace to the story, so that you cannot help but turn the page.

Nicky Davey
(Great Torrington School)

I really enjoyed reading ‘The Executioner’s Daughter’ and would recommend this book as an excellent read. I read it in two days as I couldn’t put the book down – I wanted to know what was happening next! I now have on my list of places to visit – The Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace.

Tricia
(Great Torrington School)

A story following young Moss and her life in Tudor times as she looks for answers. Jane Hardstaff takes you to the times of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn with her descriptions making sure you feel as if you are there with Moss following her journey. The sights, sounds and smells of Tudor London bought to life in a really great story really well told.