

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Crimson Ribbon by Katherine Clements

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Gavin Dimmock

<http://themoustachioedReader.wordpress.com>

A young girl is thrust into the very heart of the battle for the nation as the English Civil War rages around her.

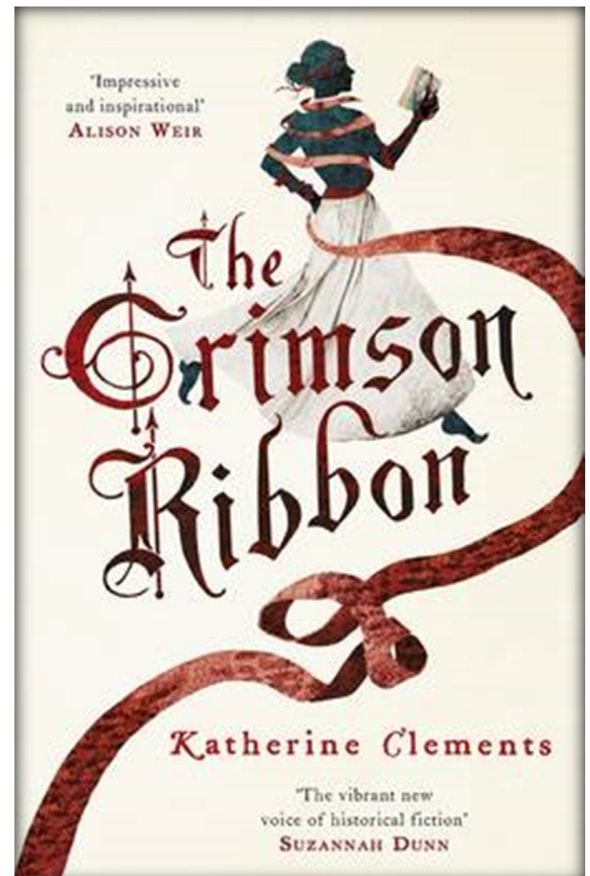
This is the tale of a young servant girl in the household of Oliver Cromwell. Ruth Flowers, after seeing her mother hanged as a witch by a hysterical mob of her townsfolk, is sent, for hers and the Cromwell's safety, to live with the Poole family in London. There she meets Lizzie Poole and, enraptured by the older woman, embarks on a dangerous life. As Civil War rages through the land, and as it becomes an increasingly dangerous time, Lizzie and Ruth are propelled violently into the very heart of the battle for the England of 1646.

This is the debut novel by Katherine Clements and her passion for, and background in,

History is evident from the detail and atmosphere she includes. I found this to be a rather enjoyable read about a period of English history that I am a little unclear on and it was enjoyable to learn more as the story progressed.

The first chapter launches you into the story in great style and the pace is kept up throughout most of the book. For me, there seemed to be a lull in the central section before the tale continues to its riveting end. Clements writes the female characters particularly well but I felt that the male ones, such as Joseph, were a little less well defined.

All in all I enjoyed this book and will be intrigued to read more from this exciting new novelist.



Joy Bosworth

Different and quite a fast read.

I expected a view of the domestic side of Cromwell's life so was a little disappointed at how little that side features in the book.

The story generally has quite a depressing feel because, one gathers, they were not exactly fun times. If the non-drains didn't get you the pox would!

Ruth is a strong, determined character who blindly turns from genuine affection and gets entangled with a very dubious character, and life is fraught with the threat of charges of witchcraft running throughout the book.

Although, I doubt I'd read further fiction, of this period, by the same author - I found the bonus material absolutely gripping. Instead of trying to find what was fact and what wasn't when I have read a historical novel Katherine Clements gave a concise, interesting run down or exactly which was which. This showed the most extreme, fictitious character, or so I had assumed, was actually one of the factual ones. I'd love to read more real history by this author. I like her style and her clarity.

Edel Waugh

This story is set in England in 1646 and is set amid the war and witch hunting of that time. The main character of the story is a young girl called Ruth Flowers. Ruth's mother is a healer and at this time in history this was a risky profession to practise as it was often confused with being a witch. As Ruth often helped her mother she learned a lot and became gifted at healing herself. The story begins with a horrific event in Ruth's life that will take her away from her home and all those she knew best. Finding a new life in London leads her to meet new people that help her in life and a very special woman with whom she forms a close special bond. But Ruth's past is trying to catch up with her all the time and she lives in fear for herself and those around her, making this a very exciting read.

*I really enjoyed this story, the historical aspects and the illicit relationship between Ruth and her friend Lizzie, it was fascinating reading about how women were treated back then. When I started this I did not put it down until I had it finished, **it is one of those books that just don't let you stop reading! This is a must read for all fans of historical fiction.***

Elisabeth Thomas

'The Crimson Ribbon' is a story of friendship, betrayal and loyalty set in England during a time of Civil War with King Charles facing trial for treason and the country is awash with hysteria and witch hunts are rife.

The year is 1646 and a young woman, Ruth Flowers, a servant in the household of Olive Cromwell, has to flee the city of Ely for London. Given refuge in the house of Lizzie Poole, the friendship between the two women grows. Ruth tries to forget her past, but a chance encounter in London's busy street could destroy everything that Ruth has grown to love. Amongst the political and social upheaval of the English Civil, this is a tale of two women struggling to cope with the country that they thought they knew but things have changed so much that they do not know who to trust and who to support.

*I enjoyed this book – which is surprising as I normally don't enjoy books written in the present tense but the present tense seemed to suit this book very much. It was a quick read – given the fact that the chapters were very short. The story was quite simple – not many twists and turns but **well researched and the author really made the period come alive. This was a good first novel.***

Kath Martin

*I always look forward to reading debut novels, and Katherine Clements' 'The Crimson Ribbon' didn't disappoint. You would think that with so many historical fiction on offer there would be nothing new to say – wrong! **This is quite original, weaving the story of Ruth Flowers amongst real characters in a truly gripping fashion. I enjoyed it.** However, I found I had a problem where fact met fiction – the fate of the real Elizabeth Poole remains unknown. Also, I found the references to the crimson ribbon almost a distraction, rather than 'tying' up the loose ends of the story.*