



A Want of Kindness: A Novel of Queen Anne

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Every time I see the King and the Queen, I am reminded of what it is I have done, and then I am afraid, I am beyond all expression afraid.

The wicked, bawdy Restoration court is no place for a child princess. Ten-year-old Anne cuts an odd figure: a sickly child, she is drawn towards improper pursuits. Cards, sweetmeats, scandal and gossip with her Ladies of the Bedchamber figure large in her life. But as King Charles's niece, Anne is also a political pawn, who will be forced to play her part in the troubled Stuart dynasty.

As Anne grows to maturity, she is transformed from overlooked Princess to the heiress of England. Forced to overcome grief for her lost children, the political manoeuvrings of her sister and her closest friends and her own betrayal of her father, she becomes one of the most complex and fascinating figures of English history.

A Want of Kindness: A Novel of Queen Anne Details

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From Reader Review A Want of Kindness: A Novel of Queen Anne for online ebook

Nicole Overmoyer says

If I have a weakness when it comes to books, a fail-safe fallback genre, it is historical fiction. Specifically historical fiction based on queens and kings. Specifically based on queens and kings of England. Show me a queen on a cover or in a blurb and I will read that book.

It is not, therefore, at all surprising that I was excited to read Joanne Limburg's A WANT OF KINDNESS.

To make it even more appealing, her story is centered on Queen Anne of England. Queen Anne, if you don't know, is not like either Queen Elizabeth, Queen Victoria, Queen Mary, or the wives of Henry VIII who were queens who did not rule. Queen for only five years, her reign was neither glamorous nor marked by controversy nor long enough to qualify for Hollywood films. She was the second oldest daughter of King James II and she succeeded the William III, who had ruled jointly with her sister, Mary. She was the last monarch from the House of Stuart, as she died childless. Childless despite at least seventeen pregnancies and only one child, a son, surviving as far as age 11. She was married from 1677 until her husband's death in 1708. So her story is one of tragedy, on the whole, and yet the beauty of a reportedly loving marriage despite so much tragedy.

This, perhaps not surprisingly, does not make the sort of thing Hollywood believes it can make money on. And, to be honest, it probably can't.

It's really too bad.

I first learned about Queen Anne in my college English history class, and even the professor talked about seventeen pregnancies and no children. And then we moved quickly on, because Queen Victoria was coming after some Georges. I have thought about her sometimes since, wanting to know more but never wanting it badly enough to search out a biography. I'm a terrible history buff sometimes!

But this book, this fictionalized account of Queen Anne's life from her childhood to her ascension, is really quite incredible. Possibly because, despite not having the glitz, glamour, intrigue, and longevity of the more famous queens, she lived in an incredible time. She was at the center of religious upheaval. She had seen her father, her uncle, and her grandfather struggle in their reigns. She witnessed wars with France and Spain and the Netherlands.

So Limburg's fictionalized account Anne's life is not what can usually be read about queens and kings. The intrigue is not romantic. She never had affairs, though it could be argued from her letters - actual things Anne wrote that Limburg uses to illustrate the story - that she had something bordering on romantic love for Sarah Churchill. She tried to do good, for herself and her family, for her country, and for all. And she succeeded, most of the time, even if it never really seems like it. And the reason it never really seems like it is because she never gets her happy ending. Never gets the things she wants more than any other.

Queen Anne deserves more recognition as an important part of British history. She truly is one of the most tragic, yet interesting rulers of England I have read about. And Limburg's portrayal makes her all the more fascinating and charismatic.

If you have a weakness for this genre, and don't mind a distinct lack of bursting corsets and illicit rendezvous in shadowy corners, this book is a definite Must Read.

(I received a copy of A WANT OF KINDNESS through NetGalley and Pegasus Books in exchange for an

honest & original review. All thoughts are my own.)

Maxime says

I received this book via RealReaders in exchange for an honest review.

I absolutely loved this book if you are a fan of Historical Fiction from the likes of Phillipa Gregory Hilary Mantel Alison Weir Livy Michaels etc then this book is for you!

Celebrating the 350th anniversary of the birth of Queen Anne this book really delves into the life of Queen Anne from child princess in the glittering restoration court to Queen of England

Warning this book will take up all of your spare time as it is utterly absorbing i personally found it sad & poignant at times as I really felt for this character.

Really well written & gives great insight into the Stuart Period.

Amanda says

I had high hopes for this novel because Queen Anne is a monarch that is often overlooked and I was excited about diving into the details of her life and the time period. Ultimately, I finished the book feeling disappointed. What I did enjoy was the excerpts from real letters she wrote (though the font used was rather hard on the eyes) and the details of her personal life such as her difficulties in childbirth and the over reliance on food as comfort. What did not work for me were the choppy chapters that would jump months and even years without a clear indication of the amount of time that had passed. I also lost track of the time because book was mostly a repetitious cycle of miscarriages, ill health, family disputes and money trouble. This was an important time in history with religious controversies, the Glorious Revolution, debates over the role of the monarch and crises over the succession. All of those were at least briefly touched upon, but I feel like the author missed an opportunity to fully explore these changing times and how they would have affected Anne. A final gripe was the book ended abruptly two years before she became queen and I would have loved to read about how she made the transition to monarch and her successes and failures in that new role. Despite the potential, this was missing the richness, drama and flow of a Philippa Gregory or an Alison Weir novel.

Sue Packer says

Joanne Limburg's A Want of Kindness is an intriguing mix of fact and fiction combining to create the very poignant story of the life of Queen Anne, last of the Stuart monarchs. We learn of her close friendships and reliance on those who serve her, particularly Sarah Jennings/Churchill, who use their position to further the advancement of family and friends (often for a price!).

The intrigues of the court and the eventual overthrow of Anne's father, King James 11 because of his Catholic faith, mean that Anne's sister Mary became joint monarch along with her husband William and move Anne one step nearer to the throne. Mary appears to be barren so it is up to Anne to produce the next Stuart heir and the saddest element of the story is to read of constant stillbirths, miscarriages, babies living for a short time and just one sickly son (who eventually dies aged 11) to show for 18 or 19 pregnancies. One can only imagine the devastating sadness at losing so many children despite, or maybe because of, the different 'cures' she tried over the years. And perhaps even sadder is her thought that it was God's punishment for her condoning her father's overthrow.

Throughout the book Anne comes across as a rather needy, but kind and generous women, who would have been much better suited to being a middle class matron with a nursery full of healthy children. However she also shows extraordinary courage and resolution when coping with illness, loss of many children, the replacement of her father by her sister and brother-in-law and the unkindness of others. Her over-reliance on others such as Sarah Churchill is perhaps understandable given that she was often ignored or sometimes even persecuted by the King and Queen so friends were hard to find.

The book contains many genuine letters both to and from Anne which interweave nicely with small vignettes of daily life building an interesting and very believable story of a sad and rather pathetic Queen in waiting. I'm sure it will appeal to fans of historic fiction (life myself!) and is an informative and enjoyable read.

Orsolya says

Stuart England during the reign of Charles II was rife with keynote figures and was entertaining, to say the least. One of these figures, his brother James (the Duke and next in line for the throne); had his own drama to deal with, made complete by his offspring Mary and Anne. Joanne Limburg focuses on Princess Anne in, "A Want of Kindness".

High expectations surround "A Want of Kindness" as the book jacket summary raves with depth and the subject of Princess Anne is not often explored. Sadly, Limburg's work is a gigantic let-down. Labeled as an adult-market novel, "A Want of Kindness" is best described as a historical fiction novel for middle school students with more flaws than can be noted. Limburg's novel follows the life of Princess Anne starting as a child but it is lacking depth and nuances both in terms of the character and the story plot. Anne doesn't stand out, there is an absence of a character arc or growth, and her voice is passive. This prevents the reader from getting to know Anne fictionally or historically which results in a very bland reading. As aforementioned, this period in history is quite entertaining and appealing but "A Want of Kindness" manages to fall flat.

Limburg's writing is also heavy with disconnected chopiness. Each chapter in "A Want of Kindness" is titled and basically serves as a vignette: short in text and storytelling. There is no smooth progression and neither is there a connection. The narrative therefore fails to truly have a point and there is no buildup. Although this could still 'work' if Limburg decided on a character study-driven piece; "A Want of Kindness" is not that either.

Adding to the middle school feel and disjointed nature are the alternating chapters with fictionally-produced letters 'written' by Anne (these are even presented in a different font). This is possibly an attempt by Limburg to drive the story and allow the reader into Anne's head but quite frankly, it takes away from the already-lacking story. It feels like a narrator setting the stage but then with nothing truly happening.

There is also an issue with Limburg trying too hard to come off as literary and flowery but her metaphors and language are juvenile and come across like a student writing a creative story for a professor.

One positive note, some of the events mentioned by Limburg as happening in Anne's world (although not usually to her); are historically accurate and not fluffed up. Sadly, though, Limburg doesn't expand on these and brushes them off.

It is evident that the main inhibitor of a strong story within "A Want of Kindness" is a lack of surmounting history resources regarding Anne. However, a truly potent HF author can take few facts and elaborately create a novel world from them which Limburg did not. Basically, there is no story here.

Only one—literally just one – emotionally upright moment occurs in “A Want of Kindness at approximately 200 pages in (Anne’s children become ill with small pox and perish). This is the only time Limburg’s writing is evocative and worth reading. If the entire novel was as strong as this spot; than it would have been another novel, entirely.

Much of the latter chapters of “A Want of Kindness” are very repetitive and merely traverse Anne’s many pregnancies and miscarriages. It is the same over-and-over and even this topic which could induce reader empathy is thin and one-layered reducing the plot even more.

The finality of “A Want of Kindness” is much of the same both regarding the story and lack of impact. The ending is not momentous and overall none of the book is memorable. Plus, Limburg doesn’t include an ‘Author’s Note’ to discuss the historical liberties taken or sources used.

“A Want of Kindness” struggles in composition leaving a disjointed mess in writing style and a story lacking any pizzazz. The novel is written on a juvenile level and best targeting juveniles. Aside from being a teen read, there are genuinely no points of merit with “A Want of Kindness” and I would not read from this author again. If you are seeking a look at Princess/Queen Anne; you won’t find it here. Skip!

Andrea says

I really, really wanted to like this one but it was just painfully boring. I gave up at 60% read because I realized I actually enjoyed my side jaunt into reading the Wikipedia pages for most of the main characters more than the actual book AND I feel like I learned more. For historical fiction, this book does not provide very much information at all about what’s going on in the larger world and perhaps that was a deliberate choice to keep it from Anne’s POV. Of course, since Anne is a child and off in some far-flung palace for the first 30% of the book, this didn’t help the book be any more interesting. Maybe I have the wrong idea and this period of history – after England beheaded a monarch, the crazy train of Cromwell, invasion by William of Orange and his wife – was just sort of boring. But yeah, read that list again. I’m pretty sure the problem here is the book, MAYBE the main character selected (of course, Anne lives through many of those events and becomes Queen herself so...) but I’m sorry to say the problem is the book and it’s baffling ability to make this period of English history more boring than watching paint dry. Oh, and the “Anne’s diary/letters asides” between every chapter made me want to stab my eyes out. I don’t know if they are real or supposed to be stylized or accurate to the period OR if there were horrible errors in the Kindle version I was reading, but they were so riddled with non-standard spelling and the use of wrong words that I found them nearly impossible to read, let alone enjoy. Sorry, Queen Anne. I promise to find a decent book about you after I clear the stink of this one out of my brain and Kindle.

Margaret Sankey says

Why do we read historical novels centered on real people? If the answer is to get insight into their interior lives via the license of a novelist to attempt to reconstruct it, this book is not a good choice. Queen Anne was deeply shortchanged in life--her father, James the turd deliberately educated her as a country squire's wife rather than a potential heir to the throne, her bad eyesight made self education difficult, and her status usually meant that she was acted upon rather than a decision maker, even up to her elevation to the throne. Someone who could show us what this was like would have a terrific book, but Limberg has chosen a style in which she can't manage to both give the background of complex Restoration events like the Titus Oates affair AND

Anne's limited view of them, and she lacks a sense of her subject past dull, over emotional fat girl. Still waiting for a good novel about Anne.

H says

Who knows anything about Queen Anne? I didn't. Meticulously researched and fascinating history of Queen Anne - the last Stuart Queen.

An extensively researched, beautifully written historical journey of the life of short-sighted shy ten year old Anne - grand-daughter of Charles II, daughter of the Catholic King James II, who eventually came to the throne after succeeding William and Mary and whose reign brought to an end the Stuart dynasty. The book contains many of Anne's actual letters to her friends, her family - and most importantly to God giving us an insight into her thoughts and hidden feelings.

My only gripe is that the publishers have chosen an italicised script font for all of the letters and diary entries which is incredibly difficult to read.

Anne knows her place in the World, she is a princess, a protestant one at that ... at a time when whether you were Catholic or Protestant was of great importance in Britain and the rest of Europe. Her Cousin Louis XVI is on the throne of France and is doing all he can to return Catholicism to Britain - and there is violence on both sides. Anne lives in constant fear that the line of succession to the English throne will be broken. Anne knows that she is second in line to the throne after her sister Mary and she will do whatever it takes to fulfil her destiny, including rejecting her Catholic father. Amid the political and religious intrigue, she marries and quickly becomes pregnant ... the first of seventeen pregnancies - yet not one of her children survive her. Most are stillborn or die in infancy - one manages to tenuously cling onto life until the age of 11. Poor Anne - her religious fervour increases with each loss ... Is God punishing her for her sins?

One of the most interesting aspects of the book for me was actually researching (thanks to Wikipedia) the lives of the courtiers, some of her friends and ladies in waiting - many of whom have a direct links to families that are familiar to us today, the Spencers, The Churchills.

A regency romp this is most definitely not ... it is however a fascinating insight into history, bringing a comparatively little known figure to life in an intelligent and beautifully structured novel. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in a serious historical novel.

Vee says

It started well but ultimately became incredibly repetitious (gossip, illness, miscarriage, unkindness, God) before ending rather tragically and without much warning.

I'm sure Limburg had good reason for focusing on Anne's life prior to her reign, but honestly I couldn't figure out why the story finished before she became queen. It felt unfinished. Even her relationship with Sarah Churchill, and her female friendships were a heavy and interesting focus of the novel, is not explored in its entirety.

I found Anne rather unlikeable, and more unforgivably, rather boring. The only characters that had any real

color were Sarah Churchill and Anne's short-lived son William (whose chapters were charming if somewhat bemusing).

I enjoyed the read, it was quick and interesting, but it suffered from a sudden end and a general lack of personality.

Louise says

A wonderfully readable and well researched historical novel, cleverly interspersed with letters etc written by Anne, so you really get an insight into her personality and into life at the royal court. For me and I'm sure for a lot of people she seems to have been completely overlooked by history and I know that before reading this book the only thing I could have told you about her was that she gave her name to a style of furniture.

I now know that she lived through incredibly turbulent times in British history. Niece to Charles II, daughter of James II and sister of Queen Mary whose husband was William III, she learnt how to walk a veritable tightrope of family and religious loyalties. She suffered many personal tragedies and as she grew older suffered ill health as a result, it is no wonder she died at a relatively young age.

I found this book to be very engaging as we follow Anne from a young Princess in the court of Charles II up until the point where she is on the brink of becoming Queen. The court intrigue, religious tensions between Protestants and Catholics and Anne's family relationships are brought wonderfully to life. The only thing that has stopped me from giving this book a five star review is the abrupt ending. I would have liked to have seen the story continue into Anne's reign as Queen instead of stopping before she was crowned. That aside, I really did enjoy this book and would recommend it to anyone who enjoys reading Philippa Gregory and Hilary Mantel and also to anyone who just enjoys a really good story.

Jodie "Bookish" Cook says

Book Review

Title: A Want of Kindness

Author: Joanne Limburg

Genre: Historical/Romance

Rating: **

Review: In 1702 Queen Anne ascended to the throne, the last of the Stuart monarchs, an unfortunate and unlucky royal dynasty in so many ways. Before inheriting the throne, Anne occupied a unique position. As niece to Charles II, daughter of James II and sister-in-law and sister of William and Mary, Anne was a witness to forty years of Stuart history. While she may have been regarded as largely insignificant at first, the relentless stillbirths, miscarriages and dead children of these tragic Stuart Queens made Anne's role as heir increasingly likely. But before that could happen, Anne had years of intrigue, scandal and religious turmoil to observe, the excessive courtliness and bawdiness of Charles II's immoral court, the rebellion of his

illegitimate sons and the desperate state of affairs to which her own father's reign was reduced. These are fascinating times, a pageant of glorious, larger-than-life individuals, and Joanne Limburg places us in the heart of it.

A Want of Kindness is presented as 'A novel of Queen Anne' but it actually draws to a close when Anne succeeds to the throne. Its focus instead is on Anne's years in waiting, years in which Anne and her ladies finally came to believe that this rather ordinary woman would become Queen.

This historical novel deals with the early life of Queen Anne, possibly a contender for Britain's most neglected monarch. She reigned for 12 years during which time England and Scotland united as a single nation however what is generally remembered is that she was fat, endured a succession of failed pregnancies and squabbled with her favourites. Joanne Limburg's work will go a way to counter this underestimation and to interest readers in a royal dynasty other than the Tudors.

The novel presents us with two worlds – the exotic, glamorous and mannered world of the court and Anne's own personal life, as herself and as a daughter, sister and wife. The court is extraordinary, glittering, and the author paints it with the help of original letters and sources. The reigns of Charles II and his brother James II might have been decorous but there is a depression that hangs over them due to the Civil War, the execution of their father Charles I and the continued hatred of Catholicism. Oliver Cromwell's head impaled on a pole at Whitehall is a constant reminder. The glamour and artifice of the age – its poetry and drama, its extreme fashions and loose morality, its mannered language and whimsical fake love affairs among the ladies of the court – contrasts vividly with the political unrest, the real danger of revolution and the personal misery of Anne who has inherited the Stuart woman's lot – an endless line of children who don't live.

This is a beautifully written book that captures perfectly the language and rituals of the age. It makes good use of original sources but it also recreates so well the wit and extravagance of the times. The chapter headings are wonderful and much of the language is amusing and often satirical. It is addictive to read, becoming more and more so as we become fully immersed in Anne's world. Anne is a really rather unusual heroine. She is increasingly fat, stricken with gout, obsessed by food but it becomes clear that much of this is an escape mechanism because she is surrounded by a chaos that the elaborate rituals of the court cannot hide. Her family is enormously dysfunctional, Anne's relationship with her parents is unconventional to say the least and William and Mary are hardly 'normal'.

Anne is surrounded by the bright sparks of the day, notably Sarah Churchill, and Anne's infatuations play a significant part of the novel. But it is all extremely tragic. Anne's own marriage exists in the shadows, eclipsed by her pregnancies. It is a marvellous psychological portrait, subtly done and immensely sad. At times the courtly curtain slips and we see Anne as others see her and there is great unkindness. The title of this novel is perfectly chosen.

Extracts from Anne's actual letters are linked by a third person narrative. The letters are presented in a gothic-style type which does make them a little difficult to read but persevere as here is where you get closest to the real voice of Anne. The clue to the novel's focus is in the title. It is to get under the skin of Anne the woman and to explain her character as much as to retell the events of an albeit interesting and turbulent period of British history.

The novel opens with Anne as a girl of 10, a lonely outsider suffering from a want of kindness, less pretty than her sister Mary, protected to an extent from the excesses of the bawdy Restoration court, being brought up a Protestant (but with a Catholic father) and destined for a life as a political pawn in the European royal marriage game. Her emotional neediness manifests itself in a series of intense passionate friendships culminating in that with Sarah Churchill (they become Mrs Freeman and Mrs Morley) which lasts throughout the novel. The political and religious rifts within her family scar Anne and leave her with an

abiding sense of guilt.

This is a fascinating story which ends with the death of Anne's beloved son and before her ascension to the throne. I would like to think this offers scope for a second volume as Joanne Limburg has created an intriguing portrait of a fallible and needy woman of great compassion and personal loyalty and I would love to learn more about her assumption of power and the rift with her beloved Mrs Freeman.

I knew very little about Queen Anne beyond her pitiful childbirth history and her obsession with Sarah Churchill. Joanne Limburg here fills in the gaps and also makes good use of Anne as a witness, albeit sometimes a confused and misled witness, to the tumultuous events of the late 17th century. These were extraordinary times and Anne, in many ways a very ordinary woman with ordinary needs, was right in the heart of it. I felt extremely warmly towards Anne and I became increasingly cross towards the people around her. My overall feeling for this novel, though, was one of intense enjoyment. A Want of Kindness is a thoroughly immersive and sensitive read, witty and insightful, marrying historical fact and interpretation perfectly. A novel of the year for me, without doubt.

What I loved about this book was the insight we gain into the strange normality of royal life in this era; a life in which you are either exalted or under mortal threat, where excess is the everyday and so the least deprivation hits hard, where no one is to be trusted and where ordinary upsets over things like a dish of peas become the ridiculous yet inevitable grounds for painful estrangement. I loved how real and petty and poignant the characters were, and how far our minds must leap to understand the terrific swings of fortune the monarchy was subject to in the 17th century.

This is a beautifully and brilliantly written novel, with each sentence a pleasure. I'm not at all a sequel person, but in this case I am secretly hoping one might appear.

Kate says

This marvellous novel presents the story of Anne, daughter of James II and sister of Mary (of William and Mary), until shortly before she became Queen herself in 1702. I knew next to nothing about Anne, or this particularly peculiar period of royal history, but Joanne Limburg does a superb job of bringing these days to life as well as Anne's own really rather pitiful story. Riveting.

Krista says

"A Want of Kindness" is a historical fiction of Queen Anne's life. While it is mostly on firm historical footing, the book relies on the reader's ability to follow a large gathering of characters and rapid-fire changes in events. In addition, the book has a relentless tone of melancholy, thanks to the real-life Anne's horrific history of pregnancy and loss, which makes the text even more difficult to read. For a work of historical fiction, I want to be fascinated by, and root for, the hero; in this case, I just wanted to hug her and send her to grief counseling.

(This unbiased review is in exchange for an ARC I received from Netgalley.)

Susan Johnson says

Thanks to Net Galley for this book in exchange for a fair review.

There are times when I read reviews and wonder if we read the same book. This is one of those books. I never really got into it, found the historical research to be rudimentary and the writing bland. Queen Anne was just not that interesting as written by this author.

I know little about this time period and, frankly, still know little about it. I did find out that Queen Anne had trouble with her eyes, ate without limitation, gambled excessively and suffered uncountable still births and miscarriages. Her marriage lacked very little depth and she seemed to have no interest in her subjects although she did like her ladies in waiting.

I've read good historical fiction from CJ Sansom, Phillipa Gregory and Diana Gabaldon and this is nowhere in their league. I would pass on this.

CuteBadger says

A historical novel looking at the life of Queen Anne, before she became the British monarch most of us probably know the least about. Born in 1665 as niece to King Charles II she grew up at Court and had to learn to serve whichever King was in power, whether she agreed with their political and religious views or not. As she grew older she moved closer to the top of the line of succession while having to deal with illnesses, pregnancies and the intrigues of her Ladies in Waiting and of those who would take power.

I enjoy some historical novels, having particularly liked some by Alison Weir and Elizabeth Freemantle's book about Katherine Parr, so I was very happy to receive Joanne Limburg's book from the Real Readers programme. It's a thick book, covering a long period of time, so there's lots to get your teeth into. I have to admit to not knowing much about Anne prior to reading the book, other than her having no children to inherit the throne and the fact that her weight necessitated a higher than usual number of bearers to carry her coffin. Having read this novel I now feel that I know much more about her, and about the fight for the British throne between Protestant and Catholic rivals.

The majority of the book is written in the third person, in the present tense, and in a series of individual scenes which don't "join up" in the way a traditional novel narrative does. The rest of it is in the form of letters from Anne to various other characters – much of the content of these is taken verbatim from Anne's real letters. There are benefits and disadvantages to all of these elements. The non-letter parts of the book felt quite "bitty" to me so I was left feeling I was seeing only scenes from a life, rather than a life entire. I also found it quite distancing and that it only served to keep me away from Anne as a person (though perhaps it is fitting that I, as a mere commoner, cannot get too close to the Queen). It's undoubtedly a very cinematic style. I also found the present tense narration irritating at times. This kind of narration seems to be fashionable at the moment, following the success of *Wolf Hall*, but I find it a bad fit with a historical novel. I think the author's intention in using it is probably to sweep away the conventions of the historical novel and make what she is describing more immediate, but to me it felt in places like it was just a gimmick used with one eye on the book's film rights.

The letters from Anne were interesting, but I hated the font used for them (in the uncorrected proof I read) and found it hard on the eyes. Again I think the intention was to make them as handwriting-like as possible and therefore to increase their immediacy, but I quickly got cross with the font and ended up just skim-reading the letters, which is a shame.

Despite all this I enjoyed the portrayal of Anne and was interested in how the author suggested that the Queen's size (and gout) was as a result of her reliance on food as a comfort and an entertainment, an eating disorder which began in her childhood and carried on throughout her life. The history of Anne's pregnancies and child-bearing is also interesting and tragic on a personal level to her, regardless of its implications for the country. The novel stops before Anne takes the throne, and I was disappointed by this as I would have liked to see her as Queen.

Despite all my reservations, I did enjoy the book, but never felt I could lose myself in it due to its style and structure. I would still recommend it as readers of Alison Weir, Elizabeth Freemantle, and Philippa Gregory should enjoy it.
