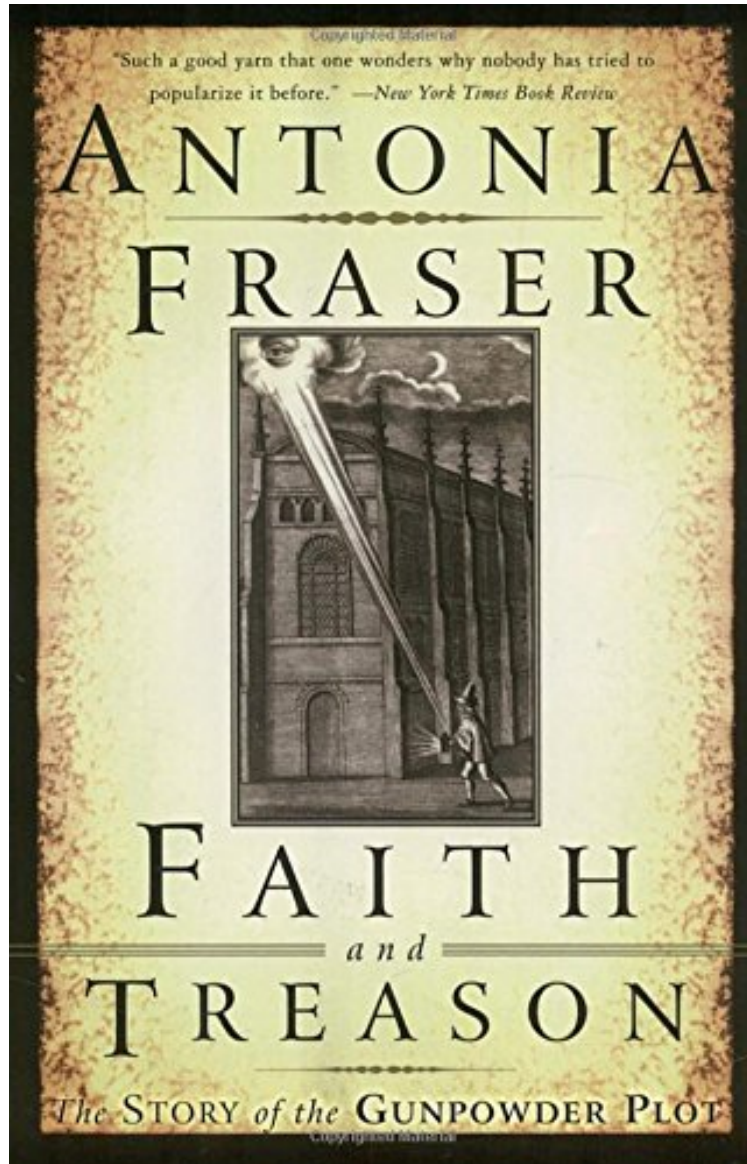


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Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot

Antonia Fraser

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Antonia Fraser : Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Faith and Treason: The Story of the Gunpowder Plot:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Detailed and with a great perspectiveBy A. MaxhamMy review of this book consists of three major elements:First, the story and the history is much more interesting than I had anticipated. I've been sort of "grazing" British history and got this book because it certainly qualified. As Fraser notes,

Bonfire night isn't much in the U.S. having been usurped by Halloween and Thanksgiving, and I'd only vaguely heard of Guy Fawkes. The "true" story isn't as simple and uninteresting as "Disgruntled Guy Fawkes tries to blow up Parliament and gets caught," as per some popular stories. I've read a lot about Henry VIII and this story very much complements his story- Henry separates the English church from the one in Rome, setting off a chain of events that lasted for years (even to this day)- This book is about one of those events. If you are at all interested in following the consequences of actions through history, you'll like this. Which leads to my second point- Fraser does a wonderful job of putting the story in perspective. Not only does she inform you as to the history, culture, sociology (role of women in particular) and the religious environment that led to the plot to blow up James I, his heirs, and Parliament (and likely some innocent pigeons), but she also indicates how the plot still affects current thinking and events (citing such examples as Nelson Mandela). Finally, she does a great job with the story itself. Given the large cast of characters, the fact that I said "Wait, who is that again?" only a few times is very much to her credit. The story is very thorough with numerous citations and explanations of her interpretations of historical actions. This book is about the gunpowder plot and not generally about James I- it is more about the effect that his broken promises had on the plot's development. As a side note- if Mel Gibson ever read this book, he'd make a movie out of it- I just can't figure out who he'd play... Not Guy Fawkes. Maybe Garnet? Maybe Cecil (but only if Gibson made him a complete good guy). Maybe Catesby (but have to make him a good guy, and change the story a bit...) 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Treasure By LINDA A. ROOTI am a novelist who believes that writers in the historical fiction genre should never depend just on Wikipedia for research, because they will miss the subtleties. I had not know that Antonia Fraser had written an entire book about an event that figures in my current writing, but I was delighted when I discovered this one. It is not just a recital of the events that cause the English to remember Guy Fawkes Day. It is a delightful, artful and comprehensive review of what James VI of Scotland was confronting when he became James I of England--and it is not just for historians. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enlightenment of the Gunpowder Plot (Guy Fawkes) By RIslander More of what I have grown to expect from Fraser. A good grounding into the Gunpowder Plot.

In England, November 5 is Guy Fawkes Day, when fireworks displays commemorate the shocking moment in 1605 when government authorities uncovered a secret plan to blow up the House of Parliament--and King James I along with it. A group of English Catholics, seeking to unseat the king and reintroduce Catholicism as the state religion, daringly placed thirty-six barrels of gunpowder in a cellar under the Palace of Westminster. Their aim was to ignite the gunpowder at the opening of the Parliamentary session. Though the charismatic Catholic, Robert Catesby, was the group's leader, it was the devout Guy Fawkes who emerged as its most famous member, as he was the one who was captured and who revealed under torture the names of his fellow plotters. In the aftermath of their arrests, conditions grew worse for English Catholics, as legal penalties against them were stiffened and public sentiment became rabidly intolerant. In a narrative that reads like a gripping detective story, Antonia Fraser has untangled the web of religion, politics, and personalities that surrounded that fateful night of November 5. And, in examining the lengths to which individuals will go for their faith, she finds in this long-ago event a reflection of the religion-inspired terrorism that has produced gunpowder plots of our own time.

.com Our term "guy," slang for any man, comes from the name of Guy Fawkes, the alleged ringleader of the bungled plot to blow up King James I and the subject of Bonfire Night, the odd English holiday celebrated on November 5 by burning the execrable Guy in effigy. This and other facts tumble from the pages of this fascinating account of the Gunpowder Plot, written by the distinguished novelist and historian Antonia Fraser. Fraser delves into English religious history to show the harsh persecution of Roman Catholics under Jacobean rule and how James I disappointed those Catholics who hoped for a more liberal reign. From Publishers Weekly Although the "Gunpowder Plot" of 1605 to blow up Parliament as it was being opened by James I was foiled, the holiday it spawned, Guy Fawkes Day, is still marked each November 5. With political-religious terrorism now a hazard of everyday life, Fraser's searching look at the failed conspiracy of Robert Catesby (the actual planner) and Guy Fawkes could not be more timely. The narrative, however, is slowed by analysis as she examines whether the "facts" obtained by torture and show trials were genuine. Despite the graphic picture of anti-Catholic excesses, which the violence was intended to undo, and the agonizing punishment meted out to innocent and guilty alike, the pace is plodding. Biographer Fraser (*Mary Queen of Scots*) is at her best in limning lives: "Little John" Owen, the steadfast lay brother skilled at constructing hiding places for priests; Father Henry Garnet, a martyred divine of extraordinary intellect and courage; his patroness, the faithful, often-imprisoned Anne Vaux; and especially young Sir Everard Digby, a gallant courtier who, though drawn into the conspiracy at the last moment, was the first to mount the scaffold. Traditionally, the executioner cut out the condemned person's heart before the body ceased twitching, to claim, while eager crowds watched: "Here is the heart of a traitor." However anatomically impossible, Digby's "spirited riposte," supposedly, was "Thou Liest." Coming off far less favorably are the king, who retracted his promises of religious toleration; Sir Edward Coke, the country's leading judge, here a juridical monster; and Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, the bigoted power behind the throne occupied only a few years earlier by the great Elizabeth. Illustrations not seen by PW. . Copyright 1996 Reed Business

Information, Inc. From Library Journal On November 5, 1605, Guy Fawkes entered English history as the ultimate villain, the man responsible for trying to blow up Parliament's king and all. What led him to such a desperate act? Was he truly the mastermind behind the plot, or just a player unfortunate enough to go down in infamy for this display of terrorism? In her latest book, Fraser demonstrates that a mix of personalities tossed with the oil-and-water blend of religion and politics is too often deadly. She untangles the events leading to the Gunpowder Plot and guides the reader through the trial, which proved that when pitted against politics, religion usually comes in second. As in her previous books (e.g., *Political Death*, LJ 11/1/95), Fraser delivers her narrative with flare and a wry sense of humor. An excellent choice for most libraries. Tobi Liedes-Bell, Washakie County Lib. System, Wyo. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.