



Do We Not Bleed?

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Called in to solve an inconvenient murder before the whores riot, the lawyer James Enys must find a serial killer hiding among the cutpurses, lawyers, players, fugitive priests, pursuivants and whores of Elizabethan London. If he fails, he'll be charged with the crime himself. The mob just wants a murderer, after all, and he's as likely to have done it as any man.

But James Enys isn't the man they think he is. Aided by a certain bald young playwright (with a sonnet to write) who knows his secret, the lawyer finds that he must follow the trail of evidence into the closed world of Elizabethan women, where no man could venture. Only a woman would be welcome here.

It is fortunate indeed that Mr Enys has a sister. She is as intelligent as he is, and resembles him in both appearance and manner. Except, of course, that she is a woman, which in Elizabethan times, means that her opportunities are restricted. In fact, James Enys's sister is never seen in public at the same time as he is - but only Shakespeare has guessed the truth about the quiet, determined, ambitious young lawyer with a knack of seeing beneath the surface.

Patricia Finney has written more than twenty novels, many of them set in Elizabethan England. This is the first of the James Enys mysteries, and the next will be coming soon from Climbing Tree Books.

Do We Not Bleed? Details

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Author : Patricia Finney

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From Reader Review Do We Not Bleed? for online ebook

Rose Lambert says

Ok

Took too long to get to the meat of the story. A lot of filler, needless info which made the book rather slow reading and long

Karen Brooks says

I kept reading about Patricia Finney and how good her books were, but because the first ones were not available on Kindle, I confess, I was reluctant to read them (I need to explain this. I am an avid bedtime reader and, before Kindle and ebooks with backlights, I would keep my partner awake or be forced to sit up in another room reading – even the little bed-lights you can get were a nuisance as turning pages and shifting it could be noisy and sometimes, the light was more like sleeping next to a lighthouse as the beam would strike your face occasionally. As a consequence, once ebooks came out, I felt liberated and my partner relieved. He always felt guilty about being unable to sleep when I read and as if he was responsible for cutting me off from that particular avenue of pleasure!). Then I found Do We Not Bleed? The first in Finney's James Enys mysteries as an electronic book.

Well...

What a wonderful tale. Set in the 1580s it centres on a young lawyer James Enys, who is not all he seems. After discovering a brutally murdered woman in the back alleys of London, the smart but rather quiet and sad Enys is teamed with the Puritan zealot with the marvellous name, Malverny Catlyn (who, it just so happens, was a real person and member of Sir Francis Walsingham's formidable spy network), in order to track down the murderer. But this is no ordinary one, but a serial killer, preying upon the whores of London and Southwark and dissecting them in a manner that demonstrates both knowledge and a serious perversion. Also aiding Enys in his mission is the playwright, William Shakespeare, ladies' man and currently struggling for work.

The strength of this book lies in the detail – of London streets, life, the richness of the language and the way Finney describes everything from someone puking, menstruating, to the interactions between “upright men” (basically, a pimp) and their whores. Descriptions of interiors and exteriors place you in the moment and whether you like it or not, the various sounds, odours and realities of life in this period linger long after the page is closed. There is also a wonderful weaving of actual historical figures and fictional characters – something I love.

I was not surprised to learn that Finney also writes as PF Chisolm, whose series I am also reading at present and thoroughly enjoying – yes, in ebook form.

Having Shakespeare as a character in Do We Not Bleed? is a bonus and there are little poetic asides where we find Shakespeare waxing lyrical or daydreaming and creating and if you're familiar with his work, you know how that particular moment will manifest in one of his pieces. There is something very “Shakespearian” about the tale (as readers will discover) and one of the lead character's names (not mentioned here) gestures to this. But the novel itself is very poetic and nuanced. It is a treat in every sense and I cannot wait for the next instalment.

I have also ordered and received the first three of Finney's books, starting with Firedrake's Eye as paperbacks and am also loving the style and the way in which you're drawn into the era. Stay tuned for that review soon!

Alison says

An intriguing premise which only just hints at reaching its promise, these books are a good, if forgettable, read. I know they are forgettable, because attempting to write this review some 8 weeks since finishing the book is surprisingly taxing, and sent me back for a quick flip through.

There are many of Finney's strengths on show here - solid plotting; engaging-if-slightly-overdone characterisation and intriguing references to social and political events.

SPOILERS BELOW

The disappointment, I think, comes from the overly soapy take on Enys' situation. Women pretending to be men is a fascinating and constant part of history - whether because it better reflected their gender identity or simply in order to practice a profession; go on a sea voyage or avoid a marriage. But the social implications of Enys' pretence are mostly ignored in favour of the strange personal dilemmas, and the implication that the decision is all about protecting her brother, rather than for reasons of her own. I'm hoping, however, that the world of the gender bending will be expanded as the series progresses.

Cheryl says

Loved this - James/Portia Enys life gets a bit more complicated as lawyering turns to sleuthing. Patricia Finniey aka PF Chisholm writes great historical mysteries with wonderfully interesting (and sometimes comical) characters, fabulous plots within a great historical backdrop.

Nancy McLaughlin says

Spectacular

An excellent writer telling a fascinating story. Complex mystery set in Elizabethan London with a full lot of great (and frequently sad) characters. I couldn't put this book down.

Jane says

I am such a sucker for clever historical novels that weave in the backstory of how a great play or book got written. Here, Finney gives us her delightful version of Shakespeare's inspiration for Portia, not to mention several sonnets. Hope this has a sequel!

Kathleen says

A very well written book from the Elizabethan Era from a fine author who writes about the Henry Carey, Baron Hunsdon family. I really enjoyed it and am hoping that in another outing we might see Henry or one of his children. PF Chisholm/Patricia Finney does remarkable period history with vivid and engaging characters.

James Enys and his sister seem to be one person, a lawyer at the Inn of the courts and poet William Shakespeare is one of Portia's compatriots. London whores are being butchered, their "upright men" and their sisterhood rise up in their defense. A crime novel with a lot of twists and turns, you must try James Enys first time out.

Joanne says

Interesting book with Shakespeare as a character. Protagonist is a woman who disguises herself as a man (her brother) and practices law. Great historical detail.

Kay Jarrell says

Wonderful historical details.

A grand flow to the plot. Suspense, some horror, confusion... All this and accurate examples of how women managed in the social strictures of Elizabethan society.

David Farnsworth says

The best of historical mysteries

Me. Finney has mastered combining history and mystery with good writing, including a good smattering of philosophy, religious debate and humor. Also to appreciate in this case is that the characters are the common and less than common people of London, not the over romanticized aristocracy.

Mary Munroe says

There are several interesting twists in this Elizabethan mystery. The plot is clever, and the gender twist, the relation to Shakespeare and the vivisection angle provide interest.

Kathy says

I came to this book late, not being aware that Patricia Finney continued the fun from her Chisholm series under her own name. I loved the book. Great writing, plotting, portrayal of real historical figures and action. She succeeds beautifully in bringing that time to life.

Patricia says

Patricia Finney is one of my favorite writers, and this book set in Elizabethan England does not disappoint. It's wonderful!! With brilliant prose, fine details of place and time, and amazing characters, both real and fictional, this mystery is exciting and well-plotted. Another feather in her cap!

Mary Catherine Pace says

Patricia Finney is an author I enjoyed under a different name for years, with rollicking adventures and intrigue, with lots of fascinating historical detail in the Elizabethan age. She has become a favorite, under whatever name she chooses to write her fast-paced, well-plotted adventures. I admire her historical detail--mixed with a lot of dramatic and comedic effect. James Enys/Portia Morgan has appeared in previous novels--most often, disguised as her twin brother, in order to practice law and participate in Elizabethan society in ways that would have been impossible for a poor widow.

I welcomed a new book with this fascinating character appearing in her own story. An added soupçon of interest includes Will Shakespeare as one of Enys's few companion and confidantes, who had initially helped her to move and speak more convincingly in her male role. His inner confusion about her male/female presentations is quite hilarious at times, and reveals a stubborn male mind struggling with his own perceptions about the nature and men and women. This first book of her own involves investigating brutal murders of women, from elderly "whores" to a very young abused child (who has been turned out as a whore at age 11.) It seems that a serial killer with a rather unique signature (the bodies are disemboweled and "anatomised," an old term for a more precise removal and arrangement of organs for some presumably investigative or exhibition purposes.) The whores and street people of London are convinced it is the work of a "witch"--probably a male or a devil.

Enys and a hypocritical pursuivant (Calvinist religious enforcer/investigator who relied on informants to identify and persecute practicing Catholics, often ending in their torture and death) found the first body together, and were charged with discovering the murderer or find themselves hanged for the murder to satisfy the angry mob. Despite the gruesome murders, the story is full of fascinating detail about the lives of the poor and middling poor of the time, with the usual menacing appearance of notorious pursuivants, chasing Jesuit priests and poor Catholics looking for someone to hear their confessions and offer a mass. There are comedic incidents of hypocrisy and redemptive moments, fun details about poison that will appear in later Shakespeare plays, and a lot of interesting details about childbirth, midwifery, witches, and the competition between the newer practices of physicians and the more commonly trusted (and available) wise women (or witches,) whose healing practices leaned more on knowledge of plants and folk wisdom, as well as familiar superstitions, to heal their patients. Finney describes the difficulties of living in the late 16th Century; I am always amazed that civilization survived (and even thrived!) in such appalling conditions. Although these stories are extremely high interest, they are somewhat predictable; yet, I always look forward

to reading more of her work because I always learn a great deal and her main characters are very compelling.

Cathy Cole says

Patricia Finney knows how to drag readers right into the midst of life in Elizabethan London with all its sights, sounds, and smells. Yes, the murders are vicious (shades of the much later Jack the Ripper), but Finney is a pro-- leavening the action with laugh-out-loud humor in just the right places. From Shakespeare's chicken-raising landlady to people's reactions to James or his sister Portia, we laugh and we can also learn, as when one indignant woman exclaims that no decent woman wears underpants. (How times have changed!) It's also a time in which no decent woman can go out alone without an escort, and this causes James's reclusive sister the occasional problem.

The story moves along at a fine pace, and I was keeping a close eye on two particular suspects. I was half right, and the resolution was a surprise, which is always a plus. I look forward to Finney's next James Enys adventure with a great deal of anticipation. Her deft ways with all the major ingredients of storytelling-- plot, pacing, setting, characters, and humor-- make her books an absolute pleasure to read. A minor quibble with this Kindle edition of *Do We Not Bleed?* was its numerous instances of bad formatting, but I'm sure those will be corrected when next I see Mr. Enys... and Peter the Hedgehog. I have a feeling that that little boy is bound to cause trouble the next time I see him!
