

Lamentation: A Shardlake Novel

By C. J. Sansom

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The eagerly anticipated new Shardlake novel from the UK #1 bestselling author.

Summer, 1546.

King Henry VIII is slowly, painfully dying. His Protestant and Catholic councillors are engaged in a final and decisive power struggle; whoever wins will control the government of Henry's successor, 8-year-old Prince Edward. As heretics are hunted across London, and the radical Protestant Anne Askew is burned at the stake, the Catholic party focus their attack on Henry's 6th wife, Matthew Shardlake's old mentor, Queen Catherine Parr.

Shardlake, still haunted by events aboard the warship *Mary Rose* the year before, is working on the Cotterstoke Will case, a savage dispute between rival siblings. Then, unexpectedly, he is summoned to Whitehall Palace and asked for help by his old patron, the now beleaguered and desperate Queen.

For Catherine Parr has a secret. She has written a confessional book, *Lamentation of a Sinner*, so radically Protestant that if it came to the King's attention it could bring both her and her sympathizers crashing down. But, although the book was kept secret and hidden inside a locked chest in the Queen's private chamber, it has--inexplicably--vanished. Only one page has been found, clutched in the hand of a murdered London printer.

Shardlake's investigations take him on a trail that begins among the backstreet printshops of London but leads him and Jack Barak into the dark and labyrinthine world of the politics of the royal court; a world he had sworn never to enter again. Loyalty to the Queen will drive him into a swirl of intrigue inside Whitehall Palace, where Catholic enemies and Protestant friends can be equally dangerous, and the political opportunists, who will follow the wind wherever it blows, more dangerous than either.

The theft of Queen Catherine's book proves to be connected to the terrible death of Anne Askew, while his involvement with the Cotterstoke litigants threatens to bring Shardlake himself to the stake.

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Editorial Review

Review
FINALIST 2015 – CWA Endeavour Historical Dagger Award

“C.J. Sansom has created a convincingly realistic Tudor detective in Matthew Shardlake. He lives and breathes in an utterly convincing world, drawing the reader into the darker corners of history.” —**Philippa Gregory**, *The Guardian*

“Fine things are here abundantly, and the evocation of Tudor London is utterly convincing . . . This sequence of novels is a fine example of the intelligent imagination playing on history.” —*The Wall Street Journal*

“I read this in one weekend, stopping only to sleep. Not to be missed.” —Margaret Cannon, *The Globe and Mail*

“There are now six Shardlake novels, all of which are good. . . . The latest, *Lamentation*, is in my opinion, the best so far. . . . What Sansom does so well—based on impeccable research—is recreate the atmosphere of Tudor England. London becomes a stinking rose under his pen.” —*Ottawa Citizen*

“[B]rilliantly sketched sixteenth-century London. . . . [A]mid all the stink and muck of Tudor London, Sansom offers a master class in royal intrigue.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“Sansom’s PhD in history reveals itself in his attention to accuracy, both in the daily life of the common people and in the intrigues surrounding England’s governing class. But the depth and color of his history would mean little if he weren’t also a superb writer who spins a compelling, fascinating story filled with memorable characters. The more you know about England in this period, the more you’ll respect Sansom’s achievement. But even if you don’t care about history or England or Henry VIII, you will still enjoy these excellent mysteries, filled with puzzles and moral choices. . . . [S]uperb.” —**Orson Scott Card**, *RhinoTimes.com*

“C.J. Sansom’s Henrician crime series, featuring his hunchbacked lawyer-turned-detective Matthew Shardlake, has been quietly gaining critical acclaim and a loyal readership worldwide, such that sales now stand at some three million copies. It’s a remarkable achievement for a series that has yet to enjoy the benefit of any big-name screen adaptation, and a testament to Sansom’s gift for matching a satisfying mystery plot with an enduringly sympathetic hero, backed up by a historian’s extensive and confident understanding of the period that confers authority on every passing description, whether of a privy council interrogation or an argument between women at a market stall. . . . Shardlake’s sixth adventure, *Lamentation*, set during the final turbulent year of Henry VIII’s reign, is already receiving enthusiastic reviews. He is an unlikely hero for a corrupt age, when those who desire advancement quickly learn to bend their principles and their beliefs to suit the prevailing wind, but it is precisely his solid decency and sense of honour that make him stand out in a world of flattery and hypocrisy. . . . Like all the best fictional detectives, Shardlake is a solitary figure. . . . There’s an affectionate nod to Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*, but Sansom’s murder mystery is a very English affair, perfectly capturing the religious and political tensions fracturing families and communities as Henry broke with Rome.” —Stephanie Merritt, *The Observer*

“The sixth novel in C.J. Sansom’s Tudor crime series featuring his credible and likeable hero, the lawyer Matthew Shardlake. . . . So engrossing is the tale that I didn’t pause long enough to take a note. Even when

judged by the high standards of the earlier Shardlake novels, this one stands out—not least because it successfully maintains suspense for over 600 pages. . . . The consequences of being on the wrong side are made horribly clear when Shardlake is forced to watch the burning of three radicals. Sansom's description of this real-life scene, based on eyewitness accounts, is vivid without being gross. . . . It is a mark of authorial self-discipline that Sansom wears his considerable historical research lightly, subordinating it to character and action. As in the earlier volumes, historical figures such as Richard Rich and the young William Cecil are successfully evoked without typecasting or self-indulgence disguised as empathy. There are also some memorable minor characters, such as the tragic and vexatious litigant, Isabel Slanning, who contribute to the sinuously-unfolding story in often unexpected ways. The orchestration of plot over 600 pages, and the final twist, is literary craft of a high order. Historical fiction—especially historical crime fiction—has often been regarded as a literary branchline, interesting and picturesque but not quite the real thing. This now is changing, and rightly, since the qualities required to evoke imagined historical worlds are precisely those involved in rendering the present. With the Shardlake series, and with this volume in particular, Sansom has surely established himself as one of the best novelists around." —Alan Judd, *The Spectator* (UK)

"Of the making of books about Henry VIII there is no end—and C.J. Sansom's fans must hope this will be true for the adventures of his hunchback Tudor lawyer, Matthew Shardlake, who was a protégé of Thomas Cromwell in the early books and, though a fictional character, maintains as much of a following in the murder mystery field as Hilary Mantel's flawed hero in her acclaimed series. . . . Sansom brilliantly conveys the uncertainty of the time when a frail young prince would ascend the throne with different factions fighting for regency. . . . Sansom has the gift of plunging us into the different worlds of the period: the premises of a struggling young printer whose only asset is his press, a dangerous possession when this newfangled invention could implicate the printer in treason and heresy. . . . There is a sadness about this novel which suggests that Shardlake's own world is breaking up . . . but it ends on a hopeful note for the many followers of this splendid series, which combines the imaginative insights of fiction with scholarly research." —Jane Jakeman, *The Independent*

"[A] jewel, the crowning glory of an exquisite series." —John M. Formy-Duval, *About.com*

About the Author
C. J. SANSOM was educated at Birmingham University, where he took a BA and then a PhD in history. After working in a variety of jobs, he retrained as a solicitor and practised in Sussex, until becoming a full-time writer. Sansom is the bestselling author of the critically acclaimed Shardlake series, as well as *Winter in Madrid* and *Dominion*. He lives in Sussex.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mack Washburn:

As people who live in typically the modest era should be upgrade about what going on or data even knowledge to make these people keep up with the era and that is always change and make progress. Some of you maybe will probably update themselves by examining books. It is a good choice for you personally but the problems coming to you is you don't know what kind you should start with. This Lamentation: A Shardlake Novel is our recommendation to help you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and need in this era.

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