

**Title:** *Valiant Ladies*  
**Author:** Melissa Grey  
**Genre:** Adventure/Mystery

Reviewer Name and Grade: Allie H., ninth grade

Date Reviewed: June 24, 2023

The novel *Valiant Ladies* by Melissa Grey follows the story of two young women, Eustaquia “Kiki” de Sonza and Ana Lezama de Urinza, who live in Potosí, a city in seventeenth-century Peru, under the Spanish Empire. Kiki has always lived in luxury, being part of a wealthy family of aristocrats, and although she does not relish the frilly dresses and restricting corsets she is forced to wear, she enjoys doing things such as reading, riding her horse, and sword fighting. Ana, on the other hand, was born into a rough life on the streets. However, Kiki’s family took Ana in when she was only a small child, and the girls have been inseparable ever since. Ana may not enjoy books like Kiki does, but she shares in the joys of her other “unladylike” hobbies. Although they may appear to others like proper ladies by day, they go out into the crime-ridden city at night, often drinking, gambling, and fighting. However, not all is well in their rebellious lives. Kiki is betrothed to the viceroy’s son, who, despite his good looks, has a rotten personality. Truthfully, Kiki and Ana are the ones who are really in love. If that is not bad enough, Kiki’s older brother, Alejandro, is murdered, though the killer made it look like a suicide, leaving it up to the girls to find the culprit and make sure justice is served. Alejandro is not their only victim, either. Other citizens of Potosí are being found dead, all with the same mysterious mark on their bodies. Kiki and Ana’s secret investigations lead them to many places, from the perilous streets of the city to balls with Spanish aristocrats, and they get into several situations where swords and daggers are the only solution. All the while, Kiki’s upcoming marriage to the viceroy’s son looms closer and closer in the future—unless the girls can somehow stop it before it comes.

*Did the plot keep you interested?*

Yes, the plot was very interesting. There were several parts of the conflict, so things were happening at all times of the story.

*Was the pace of the book too fast, too slow, or just right?*

The pace of the book was fast, but enjoyably so. If you prefer books that are paced more slowly, however, you may want to choose something else.

*What grade level(s) is this book appropriate for?*

This book is appropriate for eighth or ninth graders. I am going into ninth grade, and found it to be a good book for someone my age.

*What type of reader would you recommend this book to?*

I would recommend this book to a person who likes anything with adventure or romance. It also has elements of feminism and LGBTQ relationships, so anyone who loves a book with either of those might enjoy this one, too.

*What other information do you think would be helpful for teens to know about this book?*

This book contains some swearing, so if you do not wish to read something with foul language, you should avoid reading this.

*4 stars: I enjoyed this book and found it worthwhile reading.*

I give this book a four star rating because while it was a good read for the most part, there were some aspects I did not enjoy as much. The characters seemed to be in love with each other from the very beginning, rather than their romance developing over time, which I felt could have made the book more enjoyable. Still, the plot was interesting, and the characters were well-developed and realistic, making it overall a good book.