



Henry VIII: The Mask of Royalty

Lacey Baldwin Smith

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This enthralling study of the man behind the mask gives also a unique picture of the 16th-century mind and milieu.

Henry VIII: The Mask of Royalty Details

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Philip says

Well written. It's difficult to believe that people could get away with what kings used to get away with-- namely, anything they wanted. This book gives a history of Henry the VIII reign, and through the filter of Henry's experience, that of the French, German, Italian (austro-hungarian) and Danish monarchies.

Savina King says

Really like Lacey Baldwin Smiths books as they are so well written and leave me with a more in depth understanding. Always something in his books that makes the character come to life without making a parody of them. Great comparison was made between Henry the eighth towards the end of his life and Stalin.

Simon says

A brilliant read. It's really Henry VIII unmasked. This book helps you understand the man and his motives.

Victoria Johnston says

A good study of Henry VIII's character. It is not so much a study of his reign as of the last ten years of his life and his personality changes. It focuses more on how his personality affected the Court and the people in it and his shift into being an "old fox".

Probably not one for people who don't know much about Henry's reign as I think you need some background knowledge before reading it. Overall I enjoyed it very much and it reinforced some of my ideas about Henry and his reign.

Karen says

Definitely for the Henry VIII scholar, this book starts with Henry's death and organizes the material around the major themes of this life rather than chronology. It includes some good material not found elsewhere, but can be hard to follow.

Susan Abernethy says

Link to my review of this book:

<http://flhwnotesandreviews.com/2016/0...>

Luv_trinity says

While I like that the writer take an deeper look in to Henry VIII's Personality. ,and try to get a better understanding of him. Smith also examine the possible reason behind why Henry VIII had Cranmer & Katherine Parr arrested,and than release, and ask the question if it was to show his own power, or his religious choice. I found the book to be an interesting and delight read. However, it is not a easy read.

Lara Eakins says

It's hard to figure out how to describe this book. On one hand, it was full of interesting information and analysis. On the other, it was arranged in a way that often made it hard to follow and wandered from one topic to another in the middle of long chapters.

Victoria says

I found the content really interesting, but the writing was a bit tedious. The timeline was all over the place, and the author used so many quotations from other sources that it didn't always fit together well which made the dialogue choppy and hard to follow. The book was still full of good info and was a fascinating look into the character and motives of King Henry VIII.

Scott Shepard says

I picked this up at a used bookstore around the corner when I was looking for a quick biography on that most famous of English monarchs, Henry VIII. This book is not that and for anyone wishing to read a chronological into to His Royal Majesty the King of England, Ireland and France, look elsewhere. However if you are interested in getting a good portrait of the mind and man behind the history set in the context of the political and cultural landscape, this book is for you. It does require some prior knowledge about the king.

The author Lacy Smith eschews neat chronological chapters for more themed ones. As a result I really have no idea what happened when, in which order the wives came or when he was allied or against France, Scotland or the Holy Roman Empire. I do have a good sense of why he divorced Catherine and murdered Anne Boleyn. I know now that he was good at manipulating the politics of his own court by playing his advisors off each other, but a pretty wretched diplomat and never more than a second tier player on the continent. I know that he thought himself a wise and studious man of letters, was proud of his energy and physique, embarrassed when he got fat and sick, and made terribly lacking plans for after his death.

I read a lot of biographies. I read them because it is my favorite way to learn about history, through the lense of a person of influence. Here I don't know if I learned any history, but I learned a lot about Henry. I'd say this is more an extended character sketch than a biography. It's worth reading to someone who wants to add to their knowledge on the time period (1520s - 1540s) but definitely not an intro to the life or times of King Henry VIII.

Charlene Vickers says

Nice to see a biography of Henry VIII that is actually about the man himself.

Eric says

So much good information is wasted with this uneven book that's more gossipy than enlightening, but still it's clear Elizabeth got her talents from her mother because Henry VIII was more of a royal stumbler than a king and an intellectual light weight compared to his daughter. Smith glosses over major events while rambling on about useless gray fluff.

Juliew. says

This was not really a biography but more of a study of Henry VIII. A study that mostly succeeds in showing who Henry was behind all the glamour and majesty that was kingship in the Tudor era. Henry was a king, some say a monster but ultimately he was just a man caught up in the power and drama that became his life and reign. Baldwin Smith explores the workings of the King's mind through his actions and reactions based on documented evidence. This is packed full of detail and vividly recreates Henry's world as he might have seen it. Everything from clothing to his views on death is discussed. Interesting and informed work for anyone wanting to know more than a bio can tell.

Simon says

Come for the history, stay for the expertise and above all, the literary style. By the time he died, Henry VIII had degenerated into a paranoid killing machine (he reminds me of Stalin, and the Tudor Court of the 1540s bears a passing resemblance to the fawning sycophants who surrounded Uncle Joe). The various factions hack at each other through religion, various queens and the right to help govern the realm during the Prince of Wales' almost given minority. When you cut through the fake glamor that has been draped across this reign by bad novels and even worse cinema (::cough:: *The Tudors*), to say nothing of what one might call the David Starkeyish crowd, you will admire the cool eye that Lacey Baldwin Smith casts upon the twilight period of Henry Tudor's life.
