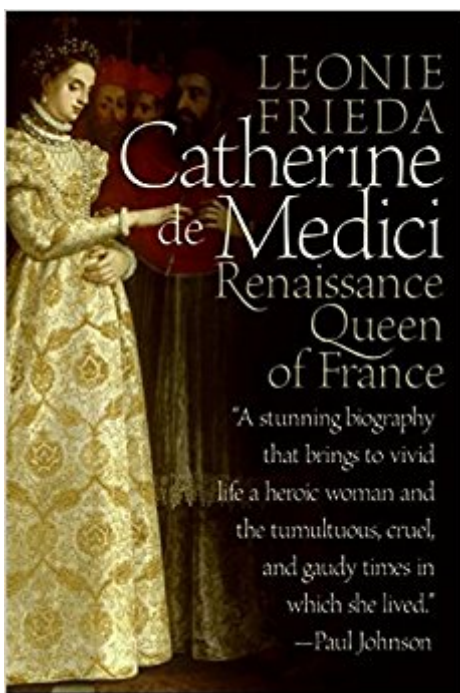


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Catherine De Medici: Renaissance Queen Of France



Synopsis

Poisoner, despot, necromancer -- the dark legend of Catherine de Medici is centuries old. In this critically hailed biography, Leonie Frieda reclaims the story of this unjustly maligned queen to reveal a skilled ruler battling extraordinary political and personal odds -- from a troubled childhood in Florence to her marriage to Henry, son of King Francis I of France; from her transformation of French culture to her fight to protect her throne and her sons' birthright. Based on thousands of private letters, it is a remarkable account of one of the most influential women ever to wear a crown.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In 1533, 14-year-old Catherine de Medici arrived in France to marry the future king Henri II; over the next 16 years, she endured the dominance of Henri's mistress, Diane de Poitiers, and the disdain of courtiers for her family's merchant background. The sudden death of Henri launched Catherine into three decades as regent and chief adviser to three sons who ruled in succession. Frieda navigates the twists and turns of the French royal court and family with particular attention to the formation of Catherine's political skills. From her lonely childhood as a tool in the diplomacy of her powerful uncles to her carefully cultivated relationship with her father-in-law and maneuvering through shifting family alliances, the queen learned self-possession, deception and strategy. While Catherine has been maligned for her role in France's wars of religion and in particular the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Frieda argues that Catherine attempted to reach compromise in the religious strife of her adopted country. While trying to flesh out Catherine, Frieda occasionally paints others with a too-broad brush. At times, her descriptions of Catherine's actions as emotionally or politically

motivated seem arbitrary. But Frieda's portrait of Catherine is multifaceted, and her presentation of the complicated narrative of five tumultuous reigns is compelling. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The sixteenth century was an exceptionally dramatic period in European history. A series of colorful kings and queens performed as power players, rendering those decades not only a bloody battleground but also an exciting pageant of dynastic intrigue. One of the most (in)famous royal players of the time was Queen Catherine de Medici of France, the Italian-born consort of the exciting and effective Henry II and the power behind the throne for her three weak king sons. The author of this revealing biography achieves remarkable balance as she freshly interprets Catherine, whose hands have usually seemed to historians to be forever stained by the religious wars that sent France into frenzies during her watch. Frieda, resisting the easy picture of Catherine--one of despicable complicity in those horrors--puts Catherine's involvement in the episodes into context; what emerges is a woman of "intelligence, courage and indefatigable spirit who did her best for her beloved if adopted country." Not a whitewash but a carefully nuanced portrait. Brad Hooper Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I absolutely loved this biography. It is probably one of the best I have read. Not only did I learn a lot about an incredible woman, but the this was well written and engrossing. Personal letters written by Catherine and her contemporaries help to make the story more than a dry history lesson. Instead, one begins to understand the hopes, and fears of a formidable woman that overcame adversity throughout her life. It is interesting to know that regardless of their political or religious divides, her adversaries respected her. My one criticism of this book is that it is not available on Kindle and the font size used on the paperback is tiny and nearly impossible for these 49 year old eyes. This would have been a true "page turner" of a read if the the font was not so small that I could only read a few pages at a time in bright daylight.

I've read many books about Catherine de Medici and this is my favorite thus far. Great story, great writing...I've really enjoyed reading this book.

It reads like a biography so there are a ton of facts. I was expecting more of a story based on

reviews I had read on the Internet but overall a good read.

Wonderful book and very interesting. This was the main book that I used for my college research paper on Catherine. Lots of information and Leonie breaks it down and presents it in a way that is engaging and easy to understand. It doesn't feel like you are reading a biography, it feels like you are reading a fiction book.

Great book and shipped quickly.

Gave the book as a gift and it was greatly appreciated.

This is a great story of a remarkable person, along with broad insights into the culture and complexity of 16th century France and Europe. I thoroughly enjoyed every page of this book, as history and as biography. Perhaps most of all, I enjoyed it as the story of Catherine, whose own life was so intertwined with her times. If somebody made this stuff up, you wouldn't believe it! The book is extremely well written. But it is Leonie Freida's ability to convey the flow of events that makes this book a "story" more than a recitation of facts, as so many history books are. My only regret is that she doesn't have any more books that I can read! She is writing one about other influential women in history. When that book comes out, I will read it for sure!

Way overly detailed. As much information about other characters as about Catherine. Very difficult to keep up with minute details of political wrangling. Couldn't finish it.

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