

# European Queens



## The Horn Book Guide

Fall 2007

### Lotz, Nancy, and Carlene Phillips *Mary Queen of Scots*

160 pp. Morgan LE ISBN 978-1-59935-040-0 \$27.95

**(4)** YA European Queens series. This life and death of the queen, as well as the politics of her time, are presented here in meticulous detail. The dense text can be overwhelming and occasionally dull, and despite the plethora of information provided, readers don't get a strong sense of Mary's personality. Photos, maps, and illustrations provide excellent supplements to the text. Timeline, websites. Bib., glos., ind. AHK



## Booklist

June 1, 2007

**Lotz, Nancy and Phillips, Carlene. *Mary Queen of Scots*.** May 2007. 160 p. Morgan Reynolds, library edition, \$27.95. (1599350408). 941.105092.

The writing style is dull in this biography in the European Queen series. At times it reads like little more than a chronology of events. But the history is so dramatic that many readers will be absorbed by the incredible story of a woman caught up in the elaborate political conspiracies of her time, both a perpetrator and victim of the spying and treachery, even in her own family. Was she involved in the plot to assassinate her husband? At the core is the religious conflict between Catholics and Protestants, and the power struggles in France, Scotland, and England, which climax in her execution, ordered by her cousin, Queen Elizabeth. The design is readable with lots of colored screens, portraits, and period prints, as well as a double-page spread showing a reproduction of Mary's last letter, written

for her brother-in-law, King Henry III of France. Extensive back matter includes detailed chapter notes, a bibliography, time line, glossary, family tree, suggested Web sites, and a list of historical figures.—Hazel Rochman



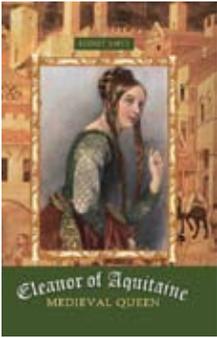
## School Library Journal

September 2007

**LOTZ, Nancy & Carlene Phillips. *Mary, Queen of Scots*.** 160p. (European Queens Series). charts. photos. reprints. bibliog. chron. glossary. index. notes. Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2007. PLB \$27.95. ISBN 978-1-59935-040-0. LC 2006101091.

Gr 8 Up—From unfortunate marriages to naive political decisions, Mary Stuart seemingly lived from one disaster to another. Tensions between Catholics and Protestants as well as political unrest in England exacerbated her problems and eventually led to her execution. Her history is closely tied to that of Scotland, France, and England, with a bit of Spain thrown in, and as such, is a sometimes confusing parade of characters and places even for readers with some knowledge of 16th-century events. This book is serviceable for report writers and those with an interest in the subject. Its format is more traditional, without the sidebars, section headings, and attention grabbers that many nonfiction series

are now using; there is not much that breaks up the text. Color images help, but the dense, high-level reading content may be too much for students who read below grade level. The book is well sourced. Sally Stepanek's *Mary, Queen of Scots* (Chelsea House, 1987) is similar in scope and design, though it lacks color images. John Guy's *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (Houghton, 2004) is a much longer adult book, but readers who are really interested in this figure may enjoy it.—Cheri Dobbs, *Detroit Country Day Middle School, Beverly Hills, MI*



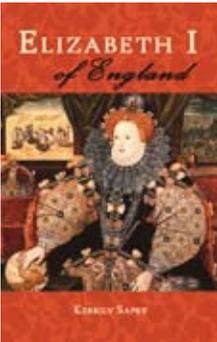
## Booklist

August 2006

Sapet, Kerrily. *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Medieval Queen*. 2006. 192p. illus. index. Morgan Reynolds, \$26.95. (1-931798-90-7). 942.03. Gr. 8-11.

When she died, at the age of 82, Eleanor of Aquitaine had married two kings, helped lead the Second Crusade to Jerusalem, outlived 8 of her 10 children, and skillfully influenced European alliances for well over half a century. Highborn, well educated, strong willed, and politically adept, she influenced many of the dramatic events and social changes that occurred in twelfth-century Europe, from the rise of courtly love to the division of kingdoms. This clearly written biography provides a vivid account of Eleanor's eventful life as well as sets her story within the broader context of her times. The richly colored illustrations include many reproductions of paintings and engravings from a variety of periods as well as photos of historical sites and artifacts connected with the queen.

Back matter features a time line, source notes for quotes, and a list of books and Internet sites. An attractive resource for library collections, this biography is rich in both narrative and visual details.—Carolyn Phelan



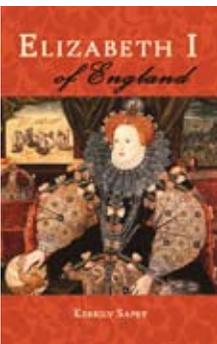
## Tri State Young Adult Book Review Committee

January 2006

*Elizabeth of England*, Kerrily Sapet

The biography of Elizabeth I has a simple design, reinforced in a number of ways both overt and subtle. The theme is the rise of a princess to Queen of England. This automatically entails a contrast between two sisters, Catherine of Arragon's daughter and Anne Bolyn's daughter, and their suitability to queenship. After surviving the bloody reign of her older half sister, who tried and failed to lead England back in the Catholic fold, Elizabeth became queen at age twenty-five. When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, England was nearly broke, religious conflict divided her people, and powerful Spain threatened invasion. She managed to restore the treasury and to keep the country from sinking into religious violence. In 1588, she sent the English navy to crush the Spanish Armada. Elizabeth was a brilliant and riveting ruler who imprinted her personality on

an age of development in art and culture and rapid political and economic change. Elizabeth never married. She was the focus of intrigue from those wanting to seize the throne. Included are bibliographic resources, index, timeline, and chapter notes. The colorful pictures and narration bring this fascinating queen to life. The cover is eye-catching. The language is clear and easy to understand. Recommended for middle school, junior and senior high school students for knowledge of Great Britain history and its queens. —Sister Victoria Crescente



## School Library Journal

November 2005

SAPET, Kerrily. *Elizabeth I of England*. 176p. maps. photos. reprints. bibliog. chron. index. notes. Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds. 2005. PLB \$24.95. ISBN 1-931798-70-2. LC 2005011930.

Gr 8 Up —The complex life of Queen Elizabeth I is given a somewhat uneven treatment in this book. Her reign was full of religious strife, wars, negotiations and alliances, and treasonous plots to overthrow her. While the author does present introductory material, the discussions of background history, alliances, and European rulers are involved, and at times difficult to follow. A few black-and-white reproductions along with many color reproductions of period maps and paintings (including many portraits), appear throughout the volume. —Kristen Oravec, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Strongsville, OH

## VOYA

April 2005

**European Queens** series. Morgan Reynolds, 2005. 160p. PLB \$24.95. Index. Illus. Biblio. Source Notes. Chronology. 4Q \* 4P \* J \* S

This biography series presents detailed information about women whose names are known for famous—and notorious—roles in history. Entertaining and easy to read, the books present comprehensive information about each woman's upbringing, the history of her country and culture, and the trials of unique positions containing equal power and peril. Marie Antoinette's role as a pawn in her mother's efforts to bolster support for Austria, Catherine the Great's mistreatment by Czarina Elizabeth followed by the overthrow of her own husband to take the title, and how the orphan

Catarina became the wife of the Dauphin of France in an effort to save the Medicis all make for enlightening history. These women come vividly to life in the pages. Details including the roles of religion in the foundation of European monarchies and politics, the place that each woman had as a mother of her country's future, court intrigue including palace coups, and how each woman's public persona was carefully shaped by forces beyond her control make these biographies lessons in history and politics as well.

Troubles with conception and childbirth are covered, as both Marie Antoinette and Catherine the Great had unconsummated marriages for a time—but not to titillate or add spice. In each instance where intimate details are included, they enlighten modern readers about the perilous position that these women occupied—including annulment of marriage and dismissal in disgrace if an heir was not produced. Catherine the Great turned to a series of affairs, and the secret staircase at Versailles was built specifically for Marie Antoinette to enter her husband's room without public embarrassment. Violence and bloodshed are included as well, with details on the activities of the French Revolution and the suppression of the Russian peasant revolt. These details are necessary to put the actions of the women in to the context of their times, and the excellent writing draws parallels from the people to the events that shaped history. Religion played a large part in each of their women's lives. The authors face the daunting task of explaining to readers the place of the Medici family and the Italian Papal States, distrust between the Lutheran and Russian Orthodox Church, and the creation of the Catholic League, all done admirably, with religion presented in its political context and not as correct or incorrect doctrines. Read as a group, these books encompass a wide swath of European history. Text is accompanied by both color and black-and-white illustrations, and the books are easy enough to read for reports on the tightest student deadline, and make for more interesting reading than many fiction books on the topic. Older students still enjoying the Royal Diaries series, Carolyn Meyer's Young Royals series, or the adult novels of Margaret George or Jean Plaidy would dive into the books as if they had been presented with another delicious novel. –Hillary Theyer.

## The Horn Book Guide 2004

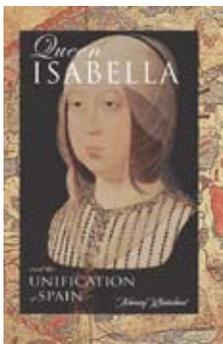
(4) YA **European Queens** series. Whether they came to the throne through their own machinations or because they were next in line, these five women made history-altering contributions—both good and bad—to their respective countries. While the books don't neglect to discuss the intrigues and assignations of these monarchs, the laudatory tone downplays each ruler's flaws. Black-and-white and crisp color reproductions appear throughout. Timeline, websites. Bib., glos., ind. JMC



### Booklist December 2004

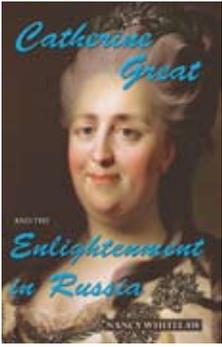
Whitelaw, Nancy. ***Catherine the Great and the Enlightenment in Russia***. 2004. 160p. illus. index. Morgan Reynolds, lib. ed., \$24.95 (1-931798-27-3). 947. Gr. 8–12.

Catherine the Great's extraordinarily dramatic life is the stuff of both Shakespeare and soap operas, and Whitelaw does her subject justice in this detailed, highly readable entry in the European Queens series. Whitelaw follows Catherine from her youth as a struggling German princess to Russia, where at 16 she wed the profoundly unimpressive Grand Duke Peter, whom she embraced as a means to the throne: "She was marrying Russia, not this obnoxious teenager." In language both straightforward and compelling, Whitelaw describes the formidable queen's reign, her love affairs, her vast cultural influence, and the political treachery that surrounded her court. Only the well-chosen, direct quotes (including some from Catherine's own memoirs) are included in the source notes, but this fascinating overview is still a captivating resource for reports, and intriguing reading for students interested in royal histories. A mix of portraits, engravings, and other archival imagery brings the players and their times to life. A bibliography and suggested Web sites conclude. --Gillian Engberg



### Children's Bookwatch December 2004

Five new additions to this publisher's set on historic female figures are highly recommended picks. Four are by Nancy Whitelaw (\$24.95 each): ***Queen Victoria And The British Empire*** (193179829X), ***Catherine The Great*** (1931798273), ***Catherine De Medici And The Protestant Reformation*** (1931798265) and ***Queen Isabella And The Unification Of Spain*** (1931798257) each provide over 150 pages of key biographical facts with plenty of informed background history to understand how each historic figure came to be notable. Nancy Lotz and Carlene Phillips' ***Marie Antoinette And The Decline Of The French Monarchy*** (1031798281, \$24.95) uses a similar format in exploring Marie Antoinette's monarchy, rise and fall. Each of these reads almost like fiction with a lively, fast tone packed with facts but which incorporates the social and political climate and feelings of the times. Each provides a memorable story line and history to involve kids and help them recall beyond the pages they read. All are recommended picks.



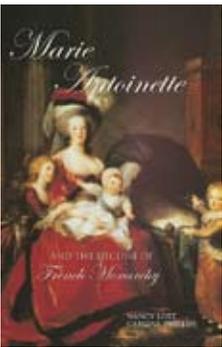
### Book Notes

December 2004

Whitelaw, Nancy. *Catherine the Great and the Enlightenment in Russia*. 2004. 160p. illus. index. Morgan Reynolds, lib. ed., \$24.95 (1-931798-27-3).

While Clara Barton tended to wounded soldiers, **Catherine the Great** led soldiers to war in a constant effort to expand Russia's borders and rule the world. Catherine the Great by Nancy Whitelaw (Morgan Reynolds) follows the life of Sophia Augusta Frederica from Germany to Russia, where she became the Czarina Catherine II of Russia. This fascinating book contains rich, historical value and beautiful photographs. Sophia Augusta Frederica was born into a royal, but impoverished family. Frederick the Great, matchmaker of Europe, sought out Sophia to marry the heir to the throne of Russia to strengthen the ties between Prussia and Russia. At age 16, Sophia was baptized in the Russian Orthodox Church. Her name was changed to Catherine Alexeyevna. The next day, Catherine, dressed in silver robes, married her cousin Peter, the son of Czarina Elizabeth I of Russia.

Although Catherine wasn't fond of her husband, she worked hard to please Czarina Elizabeth I in hopes of one day taking the throne of Russia. Catherine studied hard, displayed wit and intelligence, and soon gained the favor of the Russian court. When Elizabeth died, Catherine usurped the throne from her husband and ruled Russia for 34 years. As a ruler, Catherine was highly influenced by the teachings of Voltaire on Enlightenment. Catherine brought art and literature to Russia and allowed Russian culture to bloom. She opened schools, orphanages and the first public hospital and developed a commission on commerce to expand trade. Although Catherine was a philanthropic leader, she was also domineering; she battled many of the countries that surrounded Russia in order to expand her empire.



### Booklist

October 15 2004

*Marie Antoinette and the Decline of French Monarchy*. Nancy Lotz and Carlene Phillips.

Gr. 9-12. YAs who associate Marie Antoinette with frivolous excess may be surprised by the positive portrayal in this biography. Divided at age 14 from her Austrian homeland and forced to marry the "awkward, lumbering" heir to the French throne, the young dauphine faced indisputably tough circumstances. Unfortunately, the authors present the queen as the innocent target of a restive public's ire without consistently offering supporting evidence. Though the more sympathetic view is widely accepted by modern historians (many of whose own analyses are listed in the concluding bibliography), neglecting to support one's conclusions and acknowledge surmise where it occurs does a disservice to young readers. Despite imperfections, though, this provides an engaging point of entry into the history of the French Revolution.

Moreover, for YA appeal, it's hard to beat a historical figure whose story features a controversial diamond necklace, public speculation about the royals' troubled sex life, and, of course, a tragic, bloody conclusion.

--Jennifer Mattson