



Elizabeth I (Routledge Historical Biographies)

Judith M. Richards

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Elizabeth I was Queen of England for almost forty-five years. The daughter of Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn, as an infant she was briefly accepted as her father's heir. After her mother was executed at her father's command she was declared illegitimate and led a sometimes scandalous existence until her accession to the throne at the age of twenty-five. Elizabeth oversaw a vibrant age of exploration and literature and established herself, the "Virgin Queen", a national icon that lives on in the popular imagination. But Elizabeth was England's second female monarch, and was greatly influenced by the experiences and mistakes of the reign of her half-sister, Mary I, before her. During her reign, Elizabeth had to perform a complicated balancing act in religious matters. As religious wars raged in Europe, Elizabeth herself a moderate Protestant, had to manage an inherited Catholic realm and the demands of zealous Protestants. The importance of such familiar features of Elizabeth's reign as the presence in England of Mary Queen of Scots and her enduring efforts to take the throne, the Spanish armada, and the origins of English colonial expansion beyond the British archipelago all receive fresh attention in this engaging book. This new biography sheds light on Elizabeth's early life, influences and on her personal religious beliefs as well as examining her reign, politics and reassesses Elizabeth's reluctance to marry, a matter for which she has been much praised, but which is here judged one of the second queen regnant's more problematic decisions. Judith M. Richards takes an objective and rounded view of Elizabeth's whole life and provides the perfect introduction for students and general readers alike.

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