



The Hidden Lives of Tudor Women: A Social History

Elizabeth Norton

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The turbulent Tudor Age never fails to capture the imagination. But what was it truly like to be a woman during this era?

The Tudor period conjures up images of queens and noblewomen in elaborate court dress; of palace intrigue and dramatic politics. But if you were a woman, it was also a time when death during childbirth was rife; when marriage was usually a legal contract, not a matter for love, and the education you could hope to receive was minimal at best.

Yet the Tudor century was also dominated by powerful and dynamic women in a way that no era had been before. Historian Elizabeth Norton explores the life cycle of the Tudor woman, from childhood to old age, through the diverging examples of women such as Elizabeth Tudor, Henry VIII's sister; Cecily Burbage, Elizabeth's wet nurse; Mary Howard, widowed but influential at court; Elizabeth Boleyn, mother of a controversial queen; and Elizabeth Barton, a peasant girl who would be lauded as a prophetess. Their stories are interwoven with studies of topics ranging from Tudor toys to contraception to witchcraft, painting a portrait of the lives of queens and serving maids, nuns and harlots, widows and chaperones. Norton brings this vibrant period to colorful life in an evocative and insightful social history. 8 pages of color illustrations

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