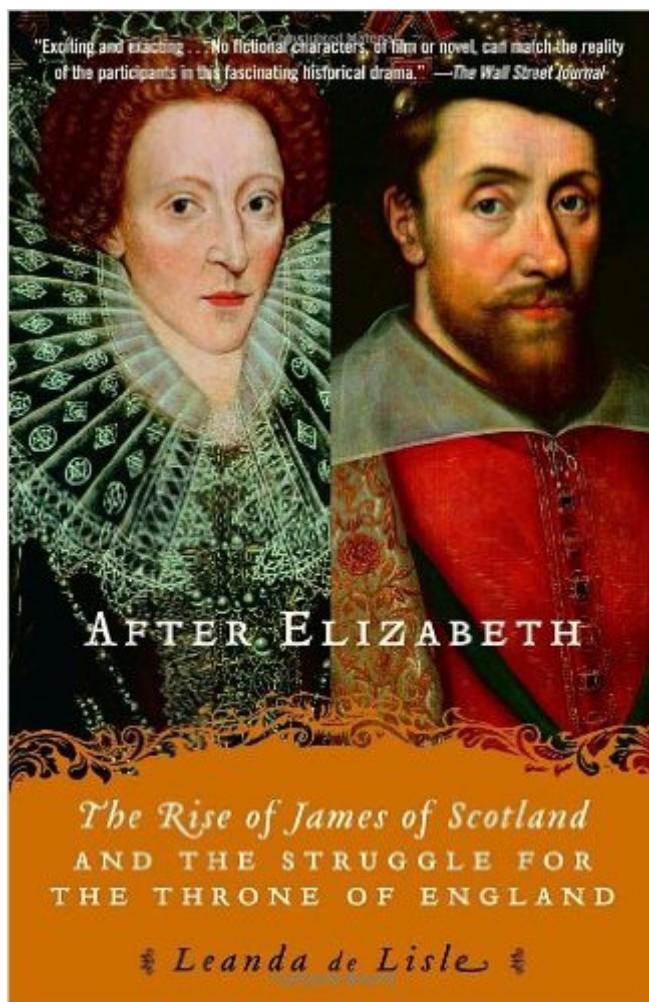


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After Elizabeth: The Rise Of James Of Scotland And The Struggle For The Throne Of England



Synopsis

Many volumes have been written about the long reign of Elizabeth I. Now, for the first time, comes a brilliant new work that focuses on the critical year her reign ended, a time in which England lost its childless queen and a Machiavellian struggle ensued to find her successor. December 1602. After forty-four years on the throne, Queen Elizabeth is in decline. The formidable ruler whose motto is *Semper eadem* (I never change) has become a dithering old woman, missing teeth and wearing makeup half an inch thick. The kingdom has been weakened by the cost of war with Spain and the simmering discontent of both the rich and the poor. The stage has been set, at long last, for succession. But the Queen who famously never married has no heir. Elizabethâ™s senior relative is James VI of Scotland, Protestant son of Elizabethâ™s cousin Mary Queen of Scots. But as a foreigner and a Stuart, he is excluded from the throne under English law. The road to and beyond his coronation will be filled with conspiracy and duplicity, personal betrayals and political upheavals. Bringing history to thrilling life, Leanda de Lisle captures the time, place, and players as never before. As the Queen nears the end, we witness the scheming of her courtiers for the candidates of their choice; blood-soaked infighting among the Catholic clergy as they struggle to survive in the face of persecution; the widespread fear that civil war, invasion, or revolution will follow the monarchâ™s death; and the signs, portents, and ghosts that seem to mark her end. Here, too, are the surprising and, to some, dismaying results of Jamesâ™s ascension: his continuation of Elizabethâ™s persecution of Catholics, his desire to unite his two kingdoms into a new country called Britain, and the painful contrast between the pomp and finery of Elizabethâ™s court and the begrimed quality of his own. Around the old queen and the new king, swirl a cast of unforgettable characters, including Arbella Stuart, Jamesâ™s ambitious and lonely first cousin; his childish, spoiled rival for power, Sir Walter Raleigh, who plotted to overthrow the king; and Sir John Harrington, Elizabethâ™s wily godson, who switched his loyalties to James long before the queenâ™s death. Courtesy of Leanda de Lisleâ™s keenly modern view of this tumultuous time, we are given intimate insights into of political power plays and psychological portraits relevant to our own era. After Elizabeth is a unique look at a pivotal yearâ™ and a dazzling debut for an exciting new historian. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

This proves to be a highly informative book that tells the transformation from Elizabeth's Tudor England to James' Stuart England. While most history books lead us to believe that James' succession was a matter of facts, Leanda De Lisle tells us that in fact, there were other contenders and James's claims to the throne wasn't as secured as we were often led to believe. The book tells us the main events of the last two years of Elizabeth and the intrigues that followed as she lay dying without truly naming a heir. The thought of another civil war like the War of the Roses wasn't that far off in most Englishmen's mind during this period. However, James did have the support of Elizabeth's Privy Council and support of most of the important English nobles of the realm. In some ways, James' coming was something close to a country bumpkin family coming into an inheritance of a rich and worldly aunt. But at least initially, James did all the right things to put the English at ease. It helped that James was well educated which initially hid his many flaws as a person and King. The book proves to be educational in informing us some of James' initial actions as King of England, how some of his Scottish followers gained while some of Elizabeth's suffered. Overall, I found this book to be well written, easy to read and its a story that should be told. While in hindsight, it may seem like James' succession was a sure thing, it was pretty dicey situation for a while for James. On the down side, I thought there should be a bit more illustrations and toward the end of the book, the author appears to be centering too much on the fate of Sir Walter Raleigh for some reason. Overall, the book comes highly recommended for anyone interested in this subject matter.

I was always under the impression that, upon the death of Elizabeth and the succession of James VII/I in 1603, Robert Cecil had engineered a relatively quiet and peaceful passage of the Crown. This book is fantastic, it describes how Cecil remained in court favor, how the Catholic faction viewed the new King (with hopes of tolerance not matched by James), Arbella Stuart's attempts at the Crown

and the downfall of Sir Walter Raleigh in connection with the "Bye" and the "Main" plots. The passage of the Crown was not, afterall, a quiet affair. This book is, in my opinion, well written and easy to read. I suggest that anyone interested in Stuart history read this book to understand just how a Scottish monarch attained the throne of England.

De Lisle's research debunks a common notion that a hapless yet expectant James entered London to claim what was his. It was not so simple. The author gives us the reasons why and describes the plots to derail the enthronement of the only descendant of Mary Queen of Scots. Interestingly, Elizabeth's trusted advisor Cecil had been staging this prior to Elizabeth's death in a time when it was illegal to even mention the succession. With a cooperative and more cunning than given credit for James, Cecil prevails and profits. The Elizabethan court gawks at James' entourage, appalled by their clothing and uncouth speech... almost like Jed Clampett moving to Beverly Hills. The descriptions of this, and the reaction to James' selling knightships and appointing Scots to high places are priceless. De Lisle has piqued my interest in James, he's obviously more complex than I had thought and his marriage even more interesting. His wife becomes a Catholic, not in her native Denmark, but in Scotland where as James warns, it could be hazardous to their rule. Was her separation from young Henry as simple as stated? How about her friendships with those who plot against James? With James' well documented interest in young men, Anna's cutting of Elizabeth's gown to show her leg and foot in a play is even more provocative than it is as merely an act of a fun loving queen. James writes to her lovingly and seems to speak to her with respect, but the other facts don't square with a happy marriage. As curious as I am about this, I like that the author sticks to her thesis. With the exception of text devoted to the Raleigh trial, she doesn't give in to the many tempting side stories. I hope to find something equally well done on James & Anna and their rule. Maybe De Lisle will write it. This is apparently her first book, and it is so well done, I await the next.

Having a great interest in Elizabeth and her reign, I found myself very curious about this work, which claims to analyze the period between the death of Elizabeth and the rise of the first Stuart king, James. While de Lisle delivers on everything that she promises, some parts of the book seemed to drag on as she sidewinded off into some explanation or another regarding some minuscule point that never really pans out to much of anything. Believe me, there are enough key players involved in this work to keep straight. While it does handle the "rising and setting sun," I think de Lisle does not spend enough time really fleshing out a very interesting point she makes when she compares the overall historical reflection regarding these two reigns. She spends about the last two pages talking

about this, but could have spent a chapter going over this (it was really fascinating but very brief).A worthwhile read.

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