



Queen Anne: The Politics of Passion

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She ascended the thrones of England, Scotland and Ireland in 1702, at age thirty-seven, Britain's last Stuart monarch, and five years later united two of her realms, England and Scotland, as a sovereign state, creating the Kingdom of Great Britain. She had a history of personal misfortune, overcoming ill health (she suffered from crippling arthritis; by the time she became Queen she was a virtual invalid) and living through seventeen miscarriages, stillbirths, and premature births in seventeen years. By the end of her comparatively short twelve-year reign, Britain had emerged as a great power; the succession of outstanding victories won by her general, John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, had humbled France and laid the foundations for Britain's future naval and colonial supremacy.

While the Queen's military was performing dazzling exploits on the continent, her own attention—indeed her realm—rested on a more intimate conflict: the female friendship on which her happiness had for decades depended and which became for her a source of utter torment.

At the core of Anne Somerset's riveting new biography, published to great acclaim in England (“Definitive”—*London Evening Standard*; “Wonderfully pacy and absorbing”—*Daily Mail*), is a portrait of this deeply emotional, complex bond between two very different women: Queen Anne—reserved, stolid, shrewd; and Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough, wife of the Queen's great general—beautiful, willful, outspoken, whose acerbic wit was equally matched by her fearsome temper.

Against a fraught background—the revolution that deposed Anne's father, James II, and brought her to power . . . religious differences (she was born Protestant—her parents' conversion to Catholicism had grave implications—and she grew up so suspicious of the Roman church that she considered its doctrines “wicked and dangerous”) . . . violently partisan politics (Whigs versus Tories) . . . a war with France that lasted for almost her entire reign . . . the constant threat of foreign invasion and civil war—the much-admired historian, author of *Elizabeth I* (“Exhilarating”—*The Spectator*; “Ample, stylish, eloquent”—*The Washington Post Book World*), tells the extraordinary story of how Sarah goaded and provoked the Queen beyond endurance, and, after the withdrawal of Anne's favor, how her replacement, Sarah's cousin, the feline Abigail Masham, became the ubiquitous royal confidante and, so Sarah whispered to growing scandal, the object of the Queen's sexual infatuation.

To write this remarkably rich and passionate biography, Somerset, winner of the Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography, has made use of royal archives, parliamentary records, personal correspondence and previously unpublished material.

Queen Anne is history on a large scale—a revelation of a centuries-overlooked monarch.

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From Reader Review Queen Anne: The Politics of Passion for online ebook

Christie says

The opening weeks of the year 1665 were particularly cold, and the sub-zero temperatures had discouraged the King of England, Charles II, from writing to his sister Henrietta in France.

Queen Anne is one of the lesser known queens of England. When people think of English Queens Elizabeth I, Victoria, Bloody Mary, and Queen Elizabeth II spring to mind over Queen Anne. But Queen Anne deserves her due, having kept the monarchy in Protestant hands after her father converted to Catholicism, leading the country through a war on the continent, and uniting the countries of England and Scotland. All while suffering through 17 pregnancies with tragic endings and health problems resulting from what is now thought to be lupus. In this biography, Anne Somerset attempts to introduce the reader to this fascinating queen.

I have not read very much about the Stuart monarchs of England and Scotland, since I am usually focusing on the Tudors, so I thought it was time to give them a try and where better to start than with the last of the Stuarts. I knew very little about Queen Anne before reading this book beyond the role she played in deposing her father, which brought about nearly 40 years of Jacobite intrigue and near rebellions. She was quite a fascinating and passionate woman. Alternatively loved and hated by her people, she tried to do what was right for her nation. Somerset does a good job of showing all sides of Anne. Yes, Anne was a very competent monarch for a woman who was never trained to rule, but she also allowed her personal feelings for people to get in the way of governance. As a result, the biography is very balanced. The author does a good job of giving context to Anne's life by showing what was going on around Europe and in England and Scotland at the time.

My big complaint about the book is that especially towards the end it seemed to be less about Anne and more about the men that surrounded her. Yes, the politics of the time were important, but it did seem like the book got bogged down in the details of Parliament. This book is a 600+ page epic for what amounted to a 12 year reign. It was difficult to slog through the last few chapters.

I would recommend this book to those interested in the Stuart monarchy or just the history of British royals. The book is a fascinating look at one of the most turbulent eras in British history.

Paranormal Scavenger Hunt: Corset

Scavenger hunt: Queen

Renae says

It's only in the past few years that I've really delved into England's Stuart monarchs and their history, but it's still surprising to me that until a few months ago, when I read Susan Holloway Scott's *Duchess*, I had absolutely *no* idea that Queen Anne Stuart was a person. Absolutely none. But as the author of this biography, Anne Somerset explains, Queen Anne's reign has been more or less written off by many historians—and not without reason. All the same, it was during Anne's reign that England became a true European power and gained credibility. Of course, the accolades for this rise in global esteem usually go to

people besides Anne, so.

Queen Anne is definitely a really, really long book—even though about 100 pages of it at the end are footnotes and indexes. Regardless, it's a pretty hefty read and certainly the sort of book that gives your arm muscles a good workout. What this means though, is that Somerset's ability to go into detail is endless. (Perhaps, in my opinion, there was too much of it.) For though Anne's reign was marked by an extreme elevation in England's reputation abroad, at home, political squabbles between Whigs and Tories were frequent and fierce. At times, the lengthy exploration of the back and forth between opposing politicians was tedious for me, simply because 18th century debates in the House of Lords are strictly things I need to have in-depth knowledge about. Though, at the same time, I think it's really commendable that Somerset took the time to provide so complete a picture of Anne's government and rule.

This biography most interested me when it talked about Anne's relationships with friends and family, her frequent illnesses and health issues, her dealings with the line of succession, and how she interacted with rulers outside of England. I don't necessarily think those parts were better written; it was just that I was more into them. And *Queen Anne* does, absolutely, give a very good sense of who this monarch was as a person, as well as her shortcomings and failures. Somerset makes it clear that she's a fan of Anne, but she also admits that Anne wasn't well-educated, wasn't attractive, wasn't a good speaker, and allowed personal tiffs and prejudice to impede her effectiveness as a ruler. I feel like I've come away from this book with a pretty good sense of who Anne was as an *individual*, which is important to me—as well as ideas about other people, such as Anne's husband, Prince George; Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough; and William and Mary of Orange, Anne's brother-in-law and sister.

Absolutely, *Queen Anne* displays that the author spent a lot of time researching before she wrote this biography. Practically every sentence contains a direct, primary quote of some kind—luckily there's a lot of correspondence that's still around to be read and looked at for historians. While at times I almost felt that the book went *too* much into depth, I actually think that might be a good thing. I'd rather have too much information than not enough; it's easier to just skim the parts that don't fascinate you than to try and research the gaps yourself.

All in all, I'm very satisfied with this book. *Queen Anne* provides a tremendous amount of insight into Anne Stuart's character and actions, and I think that Somerset assembled the facts quite well, and in a coherent manner. I'm not going to say this is my favorite book ever, but I feel more knowledgeable for having read *Queen Anne* which was my primary goal.

Louise says

This very well researched bio has two parts, necessitated by the two roles of Anne. First is her childhood and youth with the most important aspect being how Anne and her sister Mary were raised to be dedicated Protestants. This youth and Protestant zeal extends into Anne's participation in her father's abdication which led to her sister's reign and then her own. Once she is Queen Anne, this becomes a very different book.

In the first part you get a feel for Anne. She is highly dependent on and loyal to Sarah Churchill. Sarah is drawn as bright and independent, straining to keep conversation with her dull and not well educated boss, the Princess. Anne's husband, a Prince of Denmark, whom her uncle selected (for a Danish alliance against the Dutch maritime ascendancy), is also dull. They are highly compatible and seem to be the best of friends both enjoying food and drink. He may be gay (and an alcoholic) and she may be lesbian (and seems to be a

compulsive eater). They share not only their lack of curioslity, but more sadly, the pain of Anne's miscarriages and the loss of their very young surviving children.

When Anne becomes queen the text changes. It is no longer interesting and readable. The narrative changes to one that documents large and small episodes. Many are about the Queen's household, the diminished role of Sarah Churchill and the ascendance of Abigail Masham.

Queen Anne's allegiance to Abigail and Tory ideologues makes her a micro manager. She seems to act on whim or a conversation with her favorites. She shows little to no regard for those who have the skills to run the country.

There were accomplishments in Anne's 12 year reign but the author's flood of facts is so reportorial that there is no foundation for the reader to discern Anne's role in them. Her administration seems to be characterized by pettiness. The many documented incidents of firing people on whim, undermining the achievers, ignoring Tory wrong doing and sending mixed messages (some such that some are convinced she supports her brother and not a Protestant succession to the throne).

From what is presented, it appears that Sarah Churchill's summation of Queen Anne as a dull and pointless leader is accurate. The annexation of Scotland, the victories on the continent and the Protestant (Hanoverian) Succession do not seem to result from anything she did. It seems that Great Britain moves forward in spite of her.

This is 5 star for its research throughout. but I don't know if I'd recommend it. The first 200pp are great for the general reader. What follows is what may be an important story lost in details.

Jennifer says

I usually try to make a point of finishing every book I start and try to give each one a chance. I made it about halfway through this one before concluding that life is too short to be reading long books you don't really care for. Even though Queen Anne is a relatively obscure figure, I had heard of her before because she promulgated one of the first copyright laws ever (the Statute of Queen Anne). So I started out interested and wanting to learn more about her life and times. Unfortunately, this book never really brought her to life for me, and I got especially bogged down in the tedious descriptions of the convoluted politics of the time. Don't get me wrong; I fully understand politics are important, especially when the subject is a queen, but I need to be more invested in the person before I can really dive into lengthy and detailed political accounts. To me the best kind of biography gives insights into who a person was and allows for an exploration of the times in which he or she lived, but I just couldn't get that from this one.

Lolly's Library says

I'll be honest. I have very little interest in the English monarchs of the Stuart period. I'm more interested in those that came before, the Tudors, and those that came after, the Georgians. The most I knew of Queen Anne was that she was the daughter of James II, and so got caught in the middle of the Catholic/Protestant tug-of-war; she was the sister of Queen Mary, whose husband, William of Orange, invaded the country and bloodlessly took the throne from James; she had multiple (and I do mean multiple) pregnancies, with most of

them ending in stillbirths or miscarriages; and she gave her name to a style of furniture and architecture. That's about it. Well, after reading Anne Somerset's biography of Queen Anne, I can say I know more about the woman, but dislike her more and care about her even less than I did before.

According to the book's blurbs, Somerset's work is supposed to have redeemed Anne's name, yet I can't see how. Yes, Somerset definitely presents the most sympathetic view of the woman and, granted, Anne had a difficult life. Caught between a father and political advisers who each wanted to use her to their own ends, not to mention warring religious factions, and Anne's conflicting desires to be a good mother and wife while also being a just and effective queen, hers wasn't the easiest row to hoe. Especially since she lacked any sort of proper education and suffered from multiple health issues her entire life. Yet, to my mind, Anne's biggest handicap was her own personality. She was a possessive, neurotic, jealous, needy, paranoid mess of a woman, with an almost insane desire to control everyone in her life, including her friends, to the point of dictating who they could be friends with. Sadly, those traits dominate and overshadow any of Anne's other accomplishments, even her greatest one of creating a united Britain, making her a thoroughly despicable and unlikeable personage.

This is not a quick or light read, mostly because Somerset also gives in-depth coverage to the political maneuverings of the time, and I do mean in-depth, to the point where it felt like my eyes would cross from all the information flying at me. Lord Something-or-other plotted this, Duke Important-so-and-so objected and introduced such-and-such motion in Parliament, and so on. Don't get me wrong, knowledge of the politics of the time is important, but it just seemed to go on a bit too long. This dryness combined with Anne's petulant and unimaginative personality made for an occasionally dull and lifeless read.

Somerset is an absurdly thorough biographer, making this book probably the most trustworthy and authoritative portrayal of Anne. In the end, however, I also found it to be a rather dull and tedious portrayal as well, never lifting Anne above the historical footnote I always took her for.

Changeling72 says

Queen Anne was the last of the Stuart monarch's, dying childless at the age of 49 despite seventeen pregnancies, and succeeded by the House of Hanover. I think most people have heard of Queen Anne, but I think she is largely a neglected monarch, known largely for the style of architecture and furniture of her reign, rather than herself as an individual! She might not have been the most intellectual of monarchs, but Somerset's detailed biography paints the portrait of a deeply passionate and conscientious monarch who oversaw the Acts of Union to unite England and Scotland under one parliament and whose reign saw Britain largely at war on the continent. She was complicit in the overthrow of her father, James II, fell out with her sister Mary II and largely believed that her half-brother was an imposter. She was a staunch defender of the Church of England and favoured the succession of the House of Hanover. Her relationship with her husband, George of Denmark, was one of love, despite being arranged (princesses had little choice over their spouse), and her relationships with her female favourites were so strong that rumours of lesbianism abounded (which deeply offended her). If Somerset's portrayal of the Duchess of Marlborough is to be believed, the latter was a psycho bitch from hell. How the monarch managed to forbear the Duchess' venom for so long is testament to Anne's fortitude and loyalty. Anne wasn't the greatest monarch, nor the best educated, that Britain, Scotland or England has had, but she took on the role that, as the niece of Charles II, was never expected to fall to her, with a great sense of responsibility to her people. Nevertheless, her reign and her person, I believe, have been underrated by history. I was nearly in tears as I read Somerset's depiction of Anne's death. As her physician, Dr Arbuthnot, observed, her death was a mercy: ' sleep was never more welcome to a

weary traveller than death was to her.'

Anastasia Fitzgerald-Beaumont says

There are some lines from *Rob Roy*, an historical drama directed by Michael Caton-Jones, which are forever preserved in my mind. Set in Scotland during the reign of Queen Anne, the duke of Argyll laments to the duke of Montrose "would she had seen a child live to comfort the kingdom". To this Montrose responds "One might have hoped that a field so often ploughed might have yielded one good crop. In truth, I have seen healthier graveyards than that woman's womb."

Poor Queen Anne, that's her own observation, not mine, pregnant at one moment, in mourning at the next. Altogether she had been expecting seventeen times in as many years, suffering numerous miscarriages; and when she did not miscarry her babies were stillborn. Two little girls did survive, only to be carried off by smallpox. William, duke of Gloucester, the only one to survive infancy, died at the age of eleven. She also suffered acutely from ill-health and was so fat that, at the time of her death in 1714 at the age of forty-nine, it took fourteen men to carry her coffin. As it passed her doctor observed "Sleep was never more welcome to a weary traveller than death was to her."

There is a tendency to see this tragic Queen as a mere parenthesis between the age of William of Orange and the incoming Hanoverians. I've long thought it a mistake, a mistake that's been splendidly corrected by Anne Somerset in *Queen Anne: the Politics of Passion*.

We tend to forget that Anne was not just the last of the Stuarts but in some ways the most successful. Her reign brought about the union of England and Scotland, thus avoiding a disputed succession. It was a matter in which the Queen herself took a close personal interest, seeing it as one of the great achievements of her reign, an enthusiasm not shared at the time in either England or Scotland. Her time also saw England emerge from long years of isolation and self-absorption as a European power, with the Duke of Marlborough winning a series of stunning victories against the French in the War of the Spanish Succession.

Anne, the younger daughter of James, duke of York and his first wife, Anne Hyde, was never expected to be Queen in the first place, which may account for the woeful neglect of her education. Lack of education was compounded by the fact that she wasn't the brightest jewel in the royal crown, though she had sufficient reserves of native wit, which was to see her through the turbulent politics of the time.

Brought up as a Protestant on the insistence of Charles II, her uncle, her devotion to the Church of England explains why she was such an undutiful daughter, playing a key part in the overthrow of her Catholic father in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Her place in the succession was then fixed by the Convention Parliament of 1689, coming after her older sister, Mary, and her husband William, if they should die heirless.

Somerset is scrupulously fair to her subject, writing with considerable insight and panache, but it is difficult to like, or indeed feel any kind of sympathy, for the morbidly self-pitying Anne. She could be narrow-minded and spiteful in the extreme, taking umbrage at the least of slights. She was particularly vengeful towards Mary Beatrice, her Catholic step-mother. Dropping one vendetta, she quickly picked up another, quarrelling with both Mary and William, whom she referred to as 'the Dutch abortive.'

The one great friendship of her life was with the appalling Sarah Churchill, the wife of Marlborough, who took her up as a protégé and then misused her personal power ferociously. Now here I do feel a certain

sympathy for Anne, subject to the whims and tantrums of the ambitious Sarah, which did not stop short of outright blackmail. Not only did she accuse Prince George of Denmark, Anne's dullard husband to whom she was devoted, of having a homosexual liaison, a pure fabrication on her part, but, as the relationship soured, she even hinted that the Queen herself was a lesbian (a word that did not then exist), saying that she 'indulged in some dark deeds at night' with Abigail Masham, the lady-in-waiting who had supplanted her in the Queen's affections.

It was Sarah, more than any other individual, who was to do so much to colour Anne's posthumous reputation as the plaything of others. The one thing that she could never forgive her for was developing a personality of her own. It's a wonder that the friendship endured so long, the Queen putting up with hectoring and lectures at regular intervals. Still, Anne could not afford to lose the services of Marlborough, as treacherous a political schemer as his wife, at the height of the war with France. That point came when he was winning England into potential bankruptcy.

Although political parties had still to coalesce, this was the age of faction, with the Whigs on the one side deeply suspicious of the Tories on the other. The author is particularly good on the eddies and flows of contemporary politics, waters full of the most treacherous reefs and rocks! Anne stayed above faction by and large, though her sympathies were for the Tories, which further infuriated Sarah, a relentless partisan for the Whigs.

So far as treachery is concerned, I knew about Marlborough's correspondence with James Stuart, Anne's Catholic half-brother and pretender to the throne, but Somerset's revelation that he was even encouraging George, the Elector of Hanover, to mount a William of Orange style invasion of England to forestall a similar bid by the Jacobites was a complete surprise, a hard nugget of historical information that has been well buried.

The book contains some interesting and plausible conjectures. For example, Somerset suggests rhesus blood incompatibility as an explanation for Anne and George's tragic reproductive history. It may very well be. It's touching to note that as miscarriage followed hard upon miscarriage (there was one year she was pregnant three times) "sometimes they wept, sometimes they mourned...then sat silent hand in hand." When George died in October 1708, bringing to an end a quarter century of marriage, Anne was seen "kissing him at the very moment the breath went out of his body."

As a biography *Queen Anne; The Politics of Passion* is a wholly commendable piece of work, which is bound to put this much neglected monarch in proper place, showing her to be dutiful and shrewd, notwithstanding her character defects. Where it falls down slightly is in a history of the times. There is a superabundance of quotes from Anne's personal letters, while what is happening at large beyond a narrow court circle is notable by its absence. This was a time of great energy, of changing ideas and changing patterns of behaviour. Anne is certainly there but I would like to have known more about Anne's England. Still, this is a good and enjoyable book from an author now well-versed in royal biography.

Caidyn (SEMI-HIATUS; BW Reviews; he/him/his) says

This review can also be found on my blog!

3.5/5

CW: miscarriages, stillbirths, and death of children

While I've owned this book for a while, I never read it. I never quite felt motivated to for some odd reason. The Stuarts aren't my dynasty. They interest me, but I was never dying to read about them.

Then, I watched *The Favourite*.

I really enjoyed that movie. It was fun to watch and so absurd, but disturbing and very very gay. Of course, it was also hard to understand since everyone talked quietly and very fast with louder music, so I missed a lot of what was going on.

Still, when I got home, I found my copy of this book and cracked it open to read it.

So, how did it compare? What did I think?

I think that *The Favourite*, while a very good queer movie about complex female relationships, was highly inaccurate and confusing with the timeline. Most of what happened in the movie was around the time that Anne's husband, Prince George, was still alive. And, during some of it, she probably would have had her youngest son.

The movie also portrayed Queen Anne as very stupid, but she was not stupid in the least. My favorite part of the book was reading how she played everyone before her sister, Mary II, and brother-in-law, William III, became joint rulers of England. Together, they deposed their father, James II, and the rest of the family. She was very smart and played every single side perfectly.

The book definitely dropped off in my interest. A lot of events blended together and, at times, it focused far too much on other people and the subject of the book fell to the wayside. It was about Anne, yet it also wasn't.

The book was also suffocatingly sad at some points. If you want to, click [here](#) to be taken to the Wikipedia section about her pregnancies. 17 children total. Out of that, 5 stillbirths, 7 miscarriages, 2 died soon after birth, 2 lived a little over one year, and 1 lived to the age of twelve. In one year, she lost three children. If that's not the saddest thing you've ever read, I don't know what is. When the book was covering all of that chronologically, it was some of the saddest pages I read. I cannot imagine loss on that scale. And you have to imagine how much that affected her as a person, which *The Favourite* captures beautifully.

Either way, I would recommend this book to someone who really wants to know everything about Queen Anne's life and reign. It goes into so much detail about her family and the government officials around her. For me, it got a bit boring, but it's a great book to reference if you want to know anything about this period.

Beth says

Did not finish. Just too much without context and was repetitive and boring.

Sara says

Anne Somerset wrote a very indepth biography on Queen Anne, but her subject was a difficult character. I found the time period interesting, but when the story focused on Anne, it seemed to always have her complaining. She never seemed grateful for what was done for her: Parliament increased her allowance, but she thought she deserved more; she was granted additional suites in palaces, but was unhappy that she could not have the ones that others occupied; peerages were granted to her backstabbing friend, Sarah Marlborough, and husband, but she was angry when more were not granted. In fact, Sarah was the reason this book was irritating at times. She's the monster in the background of a horror movie and the audience is screaming "look out!" This woman created so much trouble and wasn't even a good friend to Anne. There were many times she was asked to back off or she would make the problem worse. She didn't and the problem was made worse. Many references in the book actually come from Sarah, even when they are stated to be unfounded. There were many paragraphs that started in some vein of "Sarah said...even though she wasn't there." She also asked Anne to burn all of her correspondence, but saved everything. Overall, the era is interesting, but I would avoid if you cannot handle multiple petty moments.

Jaylia3 says

This long but fascinating biography is a very thorough account of the life and times of Great Britain's Queen Anne. I somehow knew almost nothing about this era, the late 1600's and early 1700's, but Queen Anne: The Politics of Passion convincingly presents it as pivotal. As the last Stuart monarch Anne's birth was just after the overthrow of the Cromwells and the restoration of the monarchy. The Stuart line held the throne between the Tudors and the Hanover Georges that preceded Victoria, and it was during Anne's reign that Great Britain came into being and The War of Spanish Succession changed the balance of power in Europe and its colonies. Though these actions had long lasting consequences other scholars have dismissed Anne's role in them as unimportant. This book redeems her, detail by detail building the case that Anne's influence played a major role in the direction of events.

I have close to zero interest in celebrity gossip and keeping up with contemporary royals has just about that amount of appeal for me, but I definitely got a gossipy--and then she did whaaaa!--type thrill reading this scholarly biography. Maybe that's because histories can include the long view and that's more fascinating than day to day trifles, or maybe it's because back in the day royals had political power so their personal feuds, passionate obsessions, and religious beliefs had actual impact. The subtitle, The Politics of Passion, is apt. Though it deals mainly with royals and titled aristocrats the book tells a gripping human story of love, conviction, dilemma, and compromise.

Shelley says

Fabulous, amazing, thorough, engaging biography of a woman I didn't really know much about. Until I read a review of QUEEN ANNE in the London Review of Books, I never would have thought of purchasing this (I had to hunt down a UK seller, because it's not available in the US), and investing the (many) hours it took to finish it.

Very glad I did, though. Anne Somerset takes us from James II's near-disastrous marriage to Anne Hyde (a

commoner), the mother of Queen Mary and Queen Anne, to the Glorious Revolution, through the strained relationship between Mary and Anne, and then to Anne's own ascension to the throne.

There's so much detail that it is a little overwhelming (did I mention that it took me forever to finish?), but if you want to understand Whig/Tory politics, the crazy relationship Anne had with the Duchess of Marlborough, and the nuts and bolts of the British involvement in the War of Spanish Succession, this is the book.

I can't recommend the text of the book enough. My only complaint is the notes are extremely disappointing (this would be a 4.5 star review, if I could). I love good, gossipy, annotated endnotes in a history, to lead me on to new and interesting books. Here, there are citations, sure, but they're all abbreviations and they look like they're in code.

Katie says

Very, very detailed - almost too detailed - I gave up at page 200ish.

Despite this a huge disappointment! The people don't come alive. They still seem very 2 dimensional. I don't feel I know Anne at all, as for Sarah Churchill, she makes her come across as a complete bitch, but she cannot have been, Sarah must have been hugely charismatic, given her passionate love from Anne - but I got absolutely no idea why/sense of it.

Only giving it 2 stars as it wasn't as awful as some of the books I have read and given 1 star too.

Won't be reading any other books by this author.

Ting says

Very long, very historical, very political, and very enlightening. A comprehensive biography of one of Great Britain's least known ruling Queens. This book is a slow moving read and not an easy one; it takes serious dedication. The author has done extensive research to shed new light on a largely misunderstood monarch. She was, indeed, a "so good and so wise a Queen."

Margaret says

This book is very much like the curate's egg - good in parts.

The book alternates from being extremely interesting to deeply boring. Mostly because the balance between the life of Queen Anne and the politics of her reign swings more towards the politics than her life, and that's not what I was expecting from a book that is billed as a "biography".

A 3.5 star read that is rounded up to four stars on the basis that I did actually learn something new from the book.

