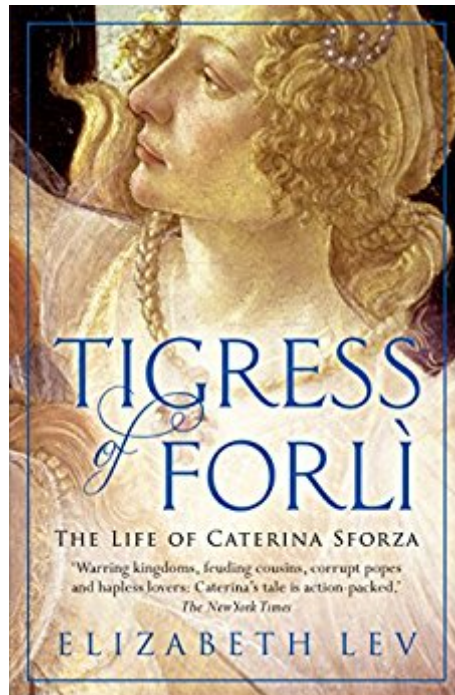


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Tigress Of Forli: The Life Of Caterina Sforza (Great Lives)



Synopsis

If I were to write the story of my life it would shock the world', Caterina Sforza, 1463-1509. As action packed as a Game of Thrones novel, the complete life of one of Italy's most fearless women. Between her birth in 1463 as the illegitimate daughter of the Duke of Milan, and her death in 1509 as a member of the powerful Medici family, the life of Caterina Sforza crossed the firmament of Renaissance Italy like a shooting star. She was painted by Botticelli, feted by Pope Sixtus IV, slandered by Macchiavelli and celebrated as a warrior who led her own troops fearlessly into battle. While defending her fortress city-state of Forli, she was prepared to sacrifice her children rather than surrender – yet she was eventually defeated, imprisoned and raped by a Borgia. Caterina Sforza bore 8 children, buried 3 husbands, and wrote a recipe book that has since been through more than 100 editions. Her youngest child became, like his mother, a brilliant soldier and a national hero. But not even the determined Caterina could have planned that her son's direct descendants would include the kings of France and of England ... Or that she herself would be reborn 600 years later as the kick-ass lead character in the multimillion-selling videogame Assassin's Creed.

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Customer Reviews

How is it possible that most of the world has forgotten such a dynamic, complex, amazing woman?

A woman who, at seventh months pregnant, took control of the papal fort of Castel Sant'Angelo and held it, with some skillfully smuggled-in soldiers, for eleven days in order to defend her family's rights. A woman who went toe to toe, figuratively speaking, with one of the most brilliant wits of the Renaissance, Niccolo Machiavelli, and not only won but made Machiavelli look like an incompetent fool. A woman who, when the walls of her beloved castle Ravaldino were finally breached by the artillery of Cesare Borgia's army, took up a sword and waded into that breach and for two hours was the equal of any man, wielding her sword against the enemy as she fought side by side with her men. And when one of those men betrayed her and sold her out to the enemy; when she's captured by Cesare, held prisoner by him for months as he brutally rapes, torments, and terrorizes her; when she's taken back to Rome and thrown into a deep, dank cell in the same Castel Sant'Angelo she'd so bravely commandeered sixteen years earlier, her spirit could not be broken and she still managed to be defiant, even down to planning a daring escape from the inescapable papal fort. The story of Caterina Riario Sforza Medici, larger-than-life, full of colorful characters and daring exploits, should be as well known to any schoolchild as that of Cleopatra, Queen Elizabeth I of England and Catherine the Great of Russia and fully belongs in the pantheon of fabulous warrior women.

What better match-up could one hope for than author/art historian Elizabeth Lev and the venerable Renaissance countess, Caterina Riario Sforza de Medici? Under Lev's artistic eye, the countess herself and the age in which she lived, late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Italy, pulse with life. Caterina is, without any doubt, one of history's most amazing women. In a time and place where alliance with the ruling party of the moment was a matter not just of prosperity, but of survival, and the pyramid of power held all the stability of an edifice built on quicksand, Caterina thrived. As a woman, her task was much more difficult; time and again she was subjected to the poor decisions of the men in her life. Other times she took the reins in her own hands and rode for the battlements. Literally. Widowed Renaissance women were recycled by their fathers or brothers into further marriage alliances, often marrying several times under these circumstances. Not Caterina-she made one such marriage and then married twice for love, once into a very advantageous joining with the de Medici clan. Born a Sforza, with all the warrior spirit of her father, Caterina was forced to watch in powerless frustration as her children and those given guardianship over them exhibited their spineless Riario tendencies in the face of she who burned to fight. Elizabeth Lev's portrayal of Caterina is very balanced. It is clear that she greatly admires her subject, but she realizes that there were times in her life when Caterina made some serious errors in judgement and when she let her passionate nature, both for love and vengeance, get the better of her. Due to the author's

background, extensive coverage is given to the art, architecture and fashion of the times.

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