

The Borgias: The Hidden History

By G.J. Meyer

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The startling truth behind one of the most notorious dynasties in history is revealed in a remarkable new account by the acclaimed author of *The Tudors* and *A World Undone*. Sweeping aside the gossip, slander, and distortion that have shrouded the Borgias for centuries, G. J. Meyer offers an unprecedented portrait of the infamous Renaissance family and their storied milieu.

THE BORGIAS

They burst out of obscurity in Spain not only to capture the great prize of the papacy, but to do so twice. Throughout a tumultuous half-century—as popes, statesmen, warriors, lovers, and breathtakingly ambitious political adventurers—they held center stage in the glorious and blood-drenched pageant known to us as the Italian Renaissance, standing at the epicenter of the power games in which Europe's kings and Italy's warlords gambled for life-and-death stakes.

Five centuries after their fall—a fall even more sudden than their rise to the heights of power—they remain immutable symbols of the depths to which humanity can descend: Rodrigo Borgia, who bought the papal crown and prostituted the Roman Church; Cesare Borgia, who became first a teenage cardinal and then the most treacherous cutthroat of a violent time; Lucrezia Borgia, who was as shockingly immoral as she was beautiful. These have long been stock figures in the dark chronicle of European villainy, their name synonymous with unspeakable evil.

But did these Borgias of legend actually exist? Grounding his narrative in exhaustive research and drawing from rarely examined key sources, Meyer brings fascinating new insight to the real people within the age-encrusted myth. Equally illuminating is the light he shines on the brilliant circles in which the Borgias moved and the thrilling era they helped to shape, a time of wars and political convulsions that reverberate to the present day, when Western civilization simultaneously wallowed in appalling brutality and soared to extraordinary heights.

Stunning in scope, rich in telling detail, G. J. Meyer's *The Borgias* is an indelible work sure to become the new standard on a family and a world that continue to enthrall.

Praise for *The Borgias*

“A vivid and at times startling reappraisal of one of the most notorious dynasties in history . . . If you thought you knew the Borgias, this book will surprise you.”**—Tracy Borman, author of *Queen of the Conqueror* and *Elizabeth’s Women***

“The mention of the Borgia family often conjures up images of a ruthless drive for power via assassination, serpentine plots, and sexual debauchery. . . . [G. J. Meyer] convincingly looks past the mythology to present a more nuanced portrait.”***—Booklist***

“Meyer brings his considerable skills to another infamous Renaissance family, the Borgias [and] a fresh look into the machinations of power in Renaissance Italy. . . . [He] makes a convincing case that the Borgias have been given a raw deal.”***—Historical Novels Review***

“Fascinating . . . a gripping history of a tempestuous time and an infamous family.”***—Shelf Awareness***

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From Booklist
The mention of the Borgia family often conjures up images of a ruthless drive for power via assassination, serpentine plots, and sexual debauchery. This is partially owing to propaganda spread by contemporary rivals of the Borgias, nineteenth-century Renaissance historians, and even films and television shows, including the current eponymous series on cable. Meyer doesn't avoid some of the juicy bits about the private and public lives of some of the family, but he convincingly looks past the mythology to present a more nuanced portrait of some members and their achievements. Meyer is particularly focused on the career of Rodrigo Borgia, who reigned as the much-maligned pope Alexander VI. As Meyer acknowledges, Alexander was hardly an exemplary Christian, and he could play tough in the dangerous world of Italian and European power politics. Yet he was a skilled and experienced diplomat, and he showed remarkable courage and coolness under the threat of the French invasion of Italy. Other Borgias are treated with similar evenhandedness in this well-researched and surprising study. --Jay Freeman

Review
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"*The Borgias* is a fascinating look into the lives of the notorious Italian Renaissance family and its reputation for womanizing, murder and corruption. Meyer turns centuries of accepted wisdom about the Borgias on its head, probing deep into contemporary documents and neglected histories to reveal some surprising truths. . . . *The Borgias: The Hidden History* is a gripping history of a tempestuous time and an infamous family."***—Shelf Awareness***

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"Many accounts of the Borgias focus on the most scandalous stories about this powerful Italian Renaissance family. . . . Meyer argues that many of these salacious tales are untrue and the result of slander. Through a logical and thoughtful examination of sources . . . he shows that claims of corruption, poisoning, incest, and murder are untrue or greatly exaggerated."***—Library Journal***

"The lively narrative makes a familiar but still incredibly complicated historical period easier to get a handle on."***—Waterloo Region Record***

About the Author
G. J. Meyer is the author of two popular works of history, *The Tudors* and *A World Undone: The Story of*

the Great War, as well as *Executive Blues* and *The Memphis Murders*. He received an M.A. from the University of Minnesota, where he was a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and later was awarded Harvard University's Nieman Fellowship in Journalism. He has taught at colleges in Des Moines, St. Louis, and New York, and now lives in Wiltshire, England.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bertha Underwood:

Do you have favorite book? When you have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing for us to understand everything in the world. Each e-book has different aim or even goal; it means that reserve has different type. Some people truly feel enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They can be reading whatever they have because their hobby will be reading a book. Consider the person who don't like reading a book? Sometime, particular person feel need book if they found difficult problem as well as exercise. Well, probably you should have this The Borgias: The Hidden History.

Cheryl Fenske:

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