

The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation

Diarmaid MacCulloch

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The boy king Edward VI, the only surviving son of Henry VIII and the last of the male Tudors, died while still a teenager, his plans for his country's future soon to be overturned by his Roman Catholic half-sister Mary. Yet his reign has a significance in English history out of all proportion to its brief six-year span. In this lavishly illustrated book, Diarmaid MacCulloch underlines the significance of Edward's turbulent and neglected reign. He takes a fresh look at the life and beliefs of the young king and of the ruthless politicians who jostled for power around him and analyzes the single-minded strategy for bringing in the Protestant revolution. Although the regime collapsed in apparent failure and disgrace on Edward's death in 1553, the story does not end there; a second half-sister, Elizabeth, succeeded Mary and brought Protestantism back to the official Church, though in a subtly different form. The tensions between her vision of the Church and that of the dead boy king continued to haunt English religion. MacCulloch traces the strange afterlife of Edward's reign, its surprising connections with the civil wars which convulsed the British Isles a century later, and the effect it still has on English life.



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