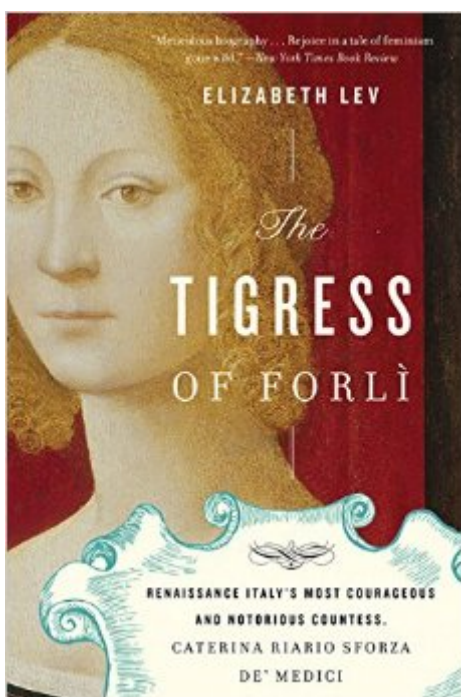


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The Tigress Of Forli: Renaissance Italy's Most Courageous And Notorious Countess, Caterina Riario Sforza De' Medici



Synopsis

In this insightful, fascinating portrayal, Elizabeth Lev brings Caterina Sforza and her times very much to life. "Kathleen Turner, actress and author of *Send Yourself Roses* A strategist to match Machiavelli; a warrior who stood toe to toe with the Borgias; a wife whose three marriages would end in bloodshed and heartbreak; and a mother determined to maintain her family's honor, Caterina Riario Sforza de' Medici was a true Renaissance celebrity, beloved and vilified in equal measure. In this dazzling biography, Elizabeth Lev illuminates her extraordinary life and accomplishments. Raised in the court of Milan and wed at age ten to the pope's corrupt nephew, Caterina was ensnared in Italy's political intrigues early in life. After turbulent years in Rome's papal court, she moved to the Romagna province of Forlì. Following her husband's assassination, she ruled Italy's crossroads with iron will, martial strength, political savvy, and an icon's fashion sense. In finally losing her lands to the Borgia family, she put up a resistance that inspired all of Europe and set the stage for her progeny—including Cosimo de' Medici—to follow her example to greatness. A rich evocation of Renaissance life, *The Tigress of Forlì* reveals Caterina Riario Sforza as a brilliant and fearless ruler, and a tragic but unbowed figure. A rich, nuanced portrait of a highly controversial beauty and military leader, and her violent, albeit glittering, Italian Renaissance milieu. "Publishers Weekly" Well-written and meticulously researched, *The Tigress of Forlì* recreates the world of Renaissance Italy in all its grandeur and violence. At the center stands a remarkable woman, Caterina Riario Sforza. Mother, warrior, and icon, Caterina is unforgettable, and so is the exciting story that Elizabeth Lev tells here. "Barry Strauss, author of *Masters of Command: Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, and the Genius of Leadership*

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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, Niccolò 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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