



The Borgias: The Hidden History

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 enthral.

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*

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