

[PDF] Anna Of Byzantium

Tracy Barrett - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Anna of Byzantium

Author: Tracy Barrett

Released: 2000-10-10

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Pages: 224

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly This uneven first novel is narrated by Anna, the first-born daughter of the Emperor of Byzantium, poised to inherit the throne. Inspired by the real Anna Comnena (1083-1153) who chronicled her father's reign in *The Alexiad*, the story begins in a convent, where 17-year-old Anna lives in exile. Most of the book flashes back to the princess's upbringing and her attempt on her brother John's life that led to her monastic imprisonment. Although the author successfully evokes an aura of claustrophobia within the castle and convent, she provides few details to distinguish one setting from another. The scenes in the throne room involving visiting dignitaries or soldiers do little to illustrate the pageantry or politics of the age, and the main characters lack definition. With the exception of the Machiavellian grandmother, Anna herself, with her education in history, classics and science, may reverse any preconceived assumptions about the ignorance and lowly position of women in the Middle Ages, but her character as portrayed here is not likable until the book's conclusion. Readers may not stay around long enough to witness her humbling fall from power and transition to scholar. Ages 10-up. (June)

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From School Library Journal Grade 6-10-The 11th-century Byzantine princess Anna Comnena was a remarkable woman. Designated as a child to inherit the throne, she was educated to be a ruler. She learned, from her mother and grandmother, to manipulate the intrigues and factions of the court, and when she was displaced as heir by her brother, she schemed, without success, to assassinate him and regain her position. In this novel, Anna tells her own story, looking back on her former life from the convent to which she has been banished. The first-person device serves well to focus the action on the princess and to build a plausible character study of a brilliant and tempestuous young woman frustrated and embittered by the loss of her expectations of achieving supreme power. However, the book exemplifies the difficulty of writing a historical novel about a real person. Anna's brother is depicted throughout as a spoiled monster who (in contrast to the brilliant Anna) refuses to learn to read. Yet historians characterize John's rule as one of personal virtue and administrative competence and tell that he forgave his sister for her many conspiracies against him. Barrett acknowledges in an afterword that she "changed some of the facts," but, unfortunately, it is the story she spins that will remain with young readers. Still, few books, with the notable exception of Peter Dickinson's *The Dancing Bear* (Little, Brown, 1972; o.p.), have as their backdrop the colorful and historically significant Byzantine Empire.

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