

The Queen's Obsession: The Forbidden Affair

Marge Rieder

CreateSpace (Jun 9, 2012)

Softcover \$19.99 (256pp)

978-1-4637-8837-7

If judged solely as a work of history, Marge Rieder's biography of the seventeenth-century Swedish Queen Christina easily merits four stars. However, the author's use of past-life regression hypnosis upon a thirty-two-year-old California woman (whom she believes may be the repository for the late queen's "unconscious mind") may cause many readers to question the authenticity of the book. On the other hand, for those who believe in or at least remain open-minded about past-life regression, this process may actually bolster their faith in both Rieder and the controversial story she has chosen to tell.

The forbidden affair to which Rieder's subtitle refers is the scandalous and secret tryst between the queen and an Italian cardinal, and the love child she allegedly hid away. By that point in her life, Christina was no longer queen, having abjured the Lutheran faith, converted to Catholicism, abdicated the Swedish throne, and moved to "warmer climates" in Rome and Paris.

Rieder writes with great historical and emotional detail about Christina's sad and lonely life in Sweden and charges the story of her days in exile abroad with a great deal of intrigue and energy. The tale of a rich, spoiled, not very attractive, slightly deformed tomboy who plots with kings and cardinals and popes to gain another throne in sunny Naples is compelling and exciting. There is blood, sex, murder, and conspiracy galore here, all written with panache and conviction. As a brief one-volume biography of arguably the most fascinating and controversial woman of her time, the book is a success.

That said, the portions of the text about past-life regression do intrude into the pure history. Luckily, Rieder is clever enough to keep such intrusions to a minimum. She takes bits and pieces from the past-life memory of her subject, Marcia Nelson, to add color to or infuse emotion into a scene, but she does so without relying on Nelson as the primary source for the event described.

The Queen's Obsession is a piece of solid historical biography that is potentially enhanced by what the author has drawn from her subject's hypnosis experience. The research and writing are solid and lively, and even those who are skeptical of past-life regression will find a great deal to like in this book.

MARK MCLAUGHLIN (August 2, 2012)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book and paid a small fee to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. Foreword Reviews and Clarion Reviews make no guarantee that the publisher will receive a positive review. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.