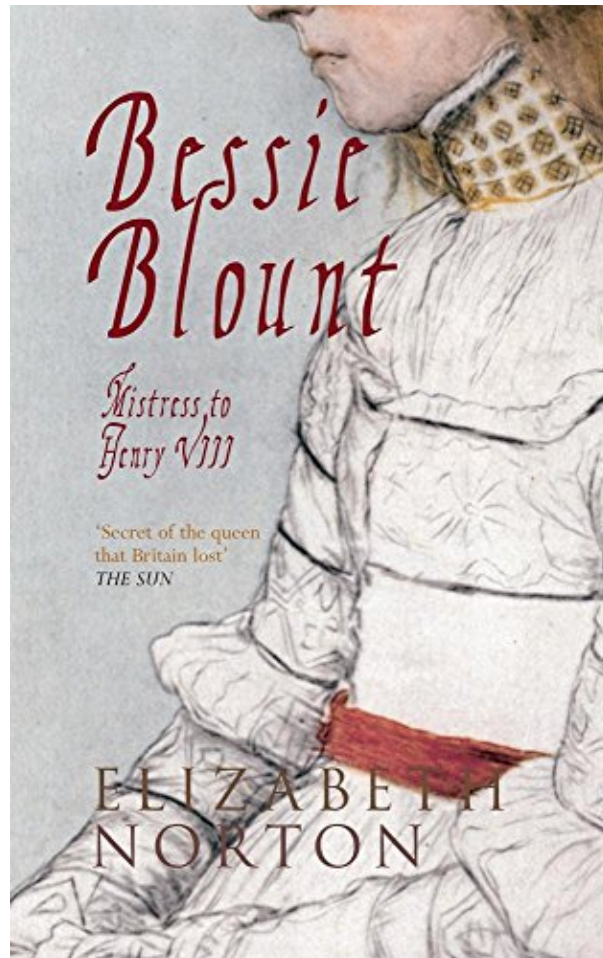
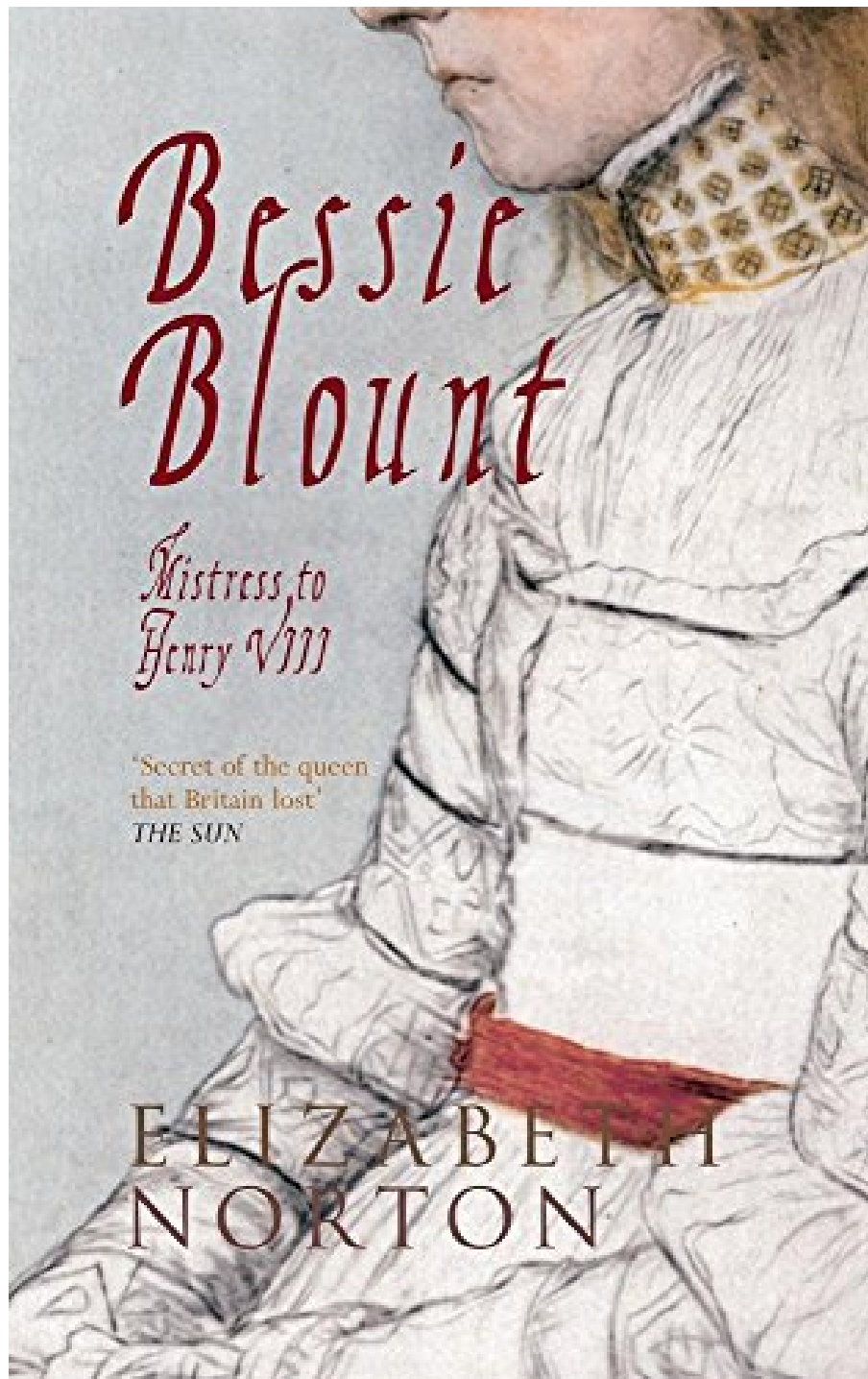


# BESSIE BLOUNT BY ELIZABETH NORTON



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### Review

Praise for the hardback published in 2011: 'Secret of the queen that Britain 'lost" THE SUN; 'A lucid, readable, intelligent account of the life of a woman who might have been queen' THE GOOD BOOK GUIDE.

### About the Author

Elizabeth Norton gained her first degree from the University of Cambridge, and her Masters from the University of Oxford. She has written many books on the Tudors and England's Queens for Amberley. She lives in Kingston Upon Thames.

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- First-ever biography of Henry VIII's most important mistress.
- Huge interest in the wives of Henry VIII, Bessie was Henry's mistress for longer than he was married to many of his wives and she bore him a son.
- Praise for the hardback published in 2011: 'Secret of the queen that Britain 'lost'' THE SUN; 'A lucid, readable, intelligent account of the life of a woman who might have been queen' THE GOOD BOOK GUIDE.

The earliest known and longest lasting mistress of Henry VIII, Bessie Blount was the king's first love. More beautiful than Anne Boleyn or any of Henry's other wives or concubines, Bessie's beauty and other charms ensured that she turned heads, winning a place at court as one of Catherine of Aragon's ladies. The affair lasted five years (longer than most of Henry's marriages) and in 1519, she bore Henry VIII a son, Henry Fitzroy. As a mark of his importance, Cardinal Wolsey was appointed his guardian and godfather. Supplanted soon after by Mary Boleyn, Bessie's importance rests on the vital proof it gave Henry VIII that he could father a healthy son and through Henry Fitzroy, Bessie remained a prominent figure at court.

Sidelined by historians until now, Bessie and the son she had by the king are one of the great 'what ifs' of English history. If Jane Seymour had not produced a male heir and Bessie's son had not died young aged 17, in all likelihood Henry Fitzroy could have followed his father as King Henry IX and Bessie propelled to the status of mother of the king.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Bessie Blount by Elizabeth Norton

By Sylwia S. Zupanec

Elizabeth Blount, known as Bessie, was Henry VIII's mistress and mother of his illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy. She is a subject of Elizabeth Norton's meticulously researched biography *Bessie Blount: The King's Mistress* kindly sent to me by Amberley Publishing.

What do we know about Bessie Blount? There is no surviving portrait of Bessie; the long-haired beauty that decorates the book's cover is Anna Meyer, a young daughter of the former mayor of Basel. No one seems to have noted what Bessie looked like, or if they did no description survives.

As Elizabeth Norton points out on the first page, her book is a reconstruction of a life rather than a full biography because Bessie left so little behind her. There is, however a surprising amount of information on Bessie's whereabouts and her family.

I really enjoyed reading about the early stages of Bessie's relationship with Henry VIII and her later life. Chapters dedicated to Henry VIII's son by Bessie, Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond, are very interesting and full of details. One particular chapter, "Mother of the King's daughter?", is especially interesting. In this chapter Elizabeth Norton argues that Elizabeth Tailboys was not the daughter of Bessie's future husband Gilbert Tailboys as previously thought, but the second illegitimate child of the King. Born between April and June 1520, a year after her brother Henry Fitzroy, who was acknowledged as the King's son, Elizabeth Tailboys's financial interests were secured by Henry VIII in her later life. Norton's meticulous research convinced me.

*Bessie Blount* by Elizabeth Norton is a great book and deserves to be read and appreciated.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

The Real Bessie Blount

By Annette

Source: Free copy from Amberley Publishing for purpose of review.

Summary:

Elizabeth, or as history knows her, Bessie Blount, was born to a "gentry" and "pious" family. There is minimal historical information known about her, to put together an in-depth biography is impossible. There are no paintings of her. The information gleaned is through a historian and biographer named William Childe, family lineage, brief information shared from other historical figures, and Bessie's notations made in a book. Despite having a small amount of information to work with, Elizabeth Norton's aim in writing this book is to "bring out the real woman" of history.

Bessie Blount was born in Kinlet, Shropshire, England. Most evidence shows Bessie was born in 1498. Her parents were "Sir John Blount and Katherine Pershall". A total of "five sons and six daughters" were born to them. Bessie was the eldest. The family moved to Bewdley while Bessie was a young child. Bessie was well-educated, and taught important skills such as dancing and needlework, that would make her a respectable woman and wife. In late 1512 she became a maid for Catherine of Aragon. She would later become mistress to Henry VIII.

Bessie Blount is famous as mistress to Henry VIII, because she bore him the son he desperately desired. Norton's biography of Bessie will show her life after the affair with Henry VIII, her tenacity and perseverance in life, dedication and love for her children, her marriages, end of life, and legacy.

Thoughts:

Reading a non-fiction book is not the same as reading a historical fiction or fiction book. In the later the book is presented in story; whereas in a non-fiction book the facts are arranged and presented in a educational and

hopefully stimulating format.

I wanted to explain the above because I feel readers miss this, sometimes the obvious is missed.

Bessie Blount: Mistress to Henry VIII is the first book I've read by Elizabeth Norton, it will not be my last. I have long anticipated reading one of her books and it is a pleasure to review it.

My reasons for giving this book 4 stars:

Elizabeth Norton knows British history, specifically medieval history. Suffice it to say, I'm impressed. The book begins with the genealogy of Bessie's family. Norton must have read and studied paperwork up to above her eyebrows. Not only do I admire her but I trust the information she's presented. She noted what information she found and where it came from. She was forthright in stating what was not known about Bessie.

I must admit I had prejudged Bessie. Shame on me. She was a woman of her era, not another era. Even if she had wanted to say no to having an affair with the king she would have had to anyway. A female was to be obedient to father and husband. To have another opinion was intolerable and hushed. I now feel I know her a bit more, both as a woman, historical figure, and person who intimately knew Henry VIII.

Bessie could have been an advantageous and cunning and deceptive woman. She was not. She could have utilized her status as mother to the son of the King. She did not. I admire Bessie for not becoming like so many women who are given a gift; she treasured the gift and did not use it for blackmail.

There are two things that led me to give this book 4 stars and not 5.

Print is too small.

The book begins with a heavy weight of information on Bessie's lineage, I muddled through this part until I got to Bessie's life. Other readers may not have the patience.

See all 2 customer reviews...

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