



Elizabeth's Spymaster: Francis Walsingham and the Secret War That Saved England

Robert Hutchinson



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England in the time of Elizabeth was on the brink of disaster. On the continent, Catholic Spain sought to forcefully reimpose the Catholic Church on its Protestant neighbors. At home, a network of powerful Catholic families posed a real and serious threat to the Protestant queen. In this world, information was power: those closest to the Queen were there because they had the best network to gather it.

Elizabeth's Spymaster is the story of the greatest spy of the time: Sir Francis Walsingham. Walsingham was the first 'spymaster' in the modern sense. His methods anticipated those of MI5 and MI6 and even those of the KGB. He maintained a network of spies across Europe, including double agents at the highest level in Rome and Spain---the sworn enemies of Queen Elizabeth and her protestant regime. His entrapment of Mary, Queen of Scots is a classic intelligence operation that resulted in her execution.

As Robert Hutchinson reveals, his cypher experts' ability to intercept other peoples' secret messages and his brilliant forged letters made him a fearsome champion of the young Elizabeth. Yet even this Machiavellian schemer eventually fell foul of Elizabeth as her confidence grew (and judgment faded). The rise and fall of Sir Francis Walsingham is a Tudor epic, vividly narrated by a historian with unique access to the surviving documentary evidence.



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