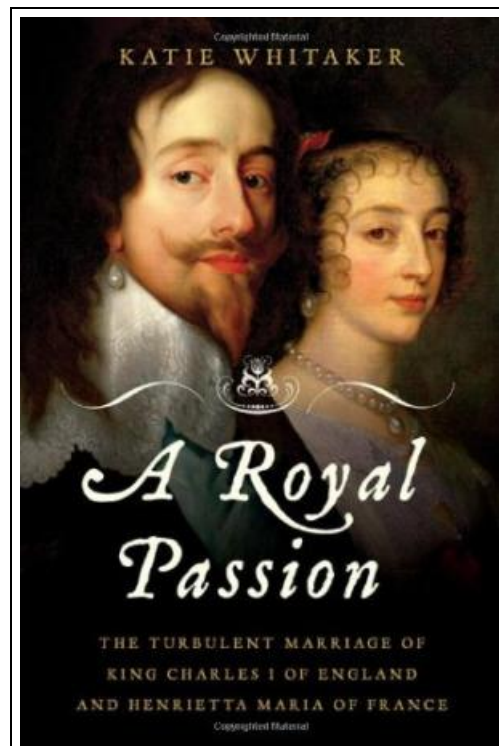


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Norton. 1 Cloth(s), 2010. hard. Book Condition: New. The marriage of Charles I of England was, from the start, a risky arrangement, notes Katie Whitaker, the winner of the Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography for her life of Margaret Cavendish, Mad Madge. Charles was a staunch Protestant, the 15-year-old French princess Henrietta Maria was a devout Catholic, and their political union seemed a mismatch of personalities. But the reserved king and his naively vivacious bride fell passionately in love, and for ten years England enjoyed an era of peace and prosperity. The bloody civil war that followed, however, was kindled by the queen's Catholicism and the king's sympathy toward her, argues Whitaker, and ultimately cost Charles the crown and his life."Stories of royal romance ordinarily involve kings and their acknowledged and shown-off mistresses or queens and their kept-secret male lovers. But occasionally popular historians enjoy bringing to the fore one of those uncommon arranged royal marriages that blossom into true romance. Such is the case with this biographer and her subject: the marriage of the ill-fated Charles I of England (executed in 1649, upon the termination of a civil war between monarch and Parliament) and the wife who brought a much-needed national alliance, Henrietta Maria, a princess of the French royal house. Whitaker pursues a more nuanced understanding of the royal pair as she chronicles a marriage that, granted, got off to a rocky start but definitely evolved into a love affair. She sees Charles less as the cold, arrogant, passive-aggressive person of historical reputation and more as a man who never faltered from his mission to uphold the religious and political principles in which he truly believed. The queen here is not a husband-domineering shrew but a woman of courage and drive."Booklist 374.



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