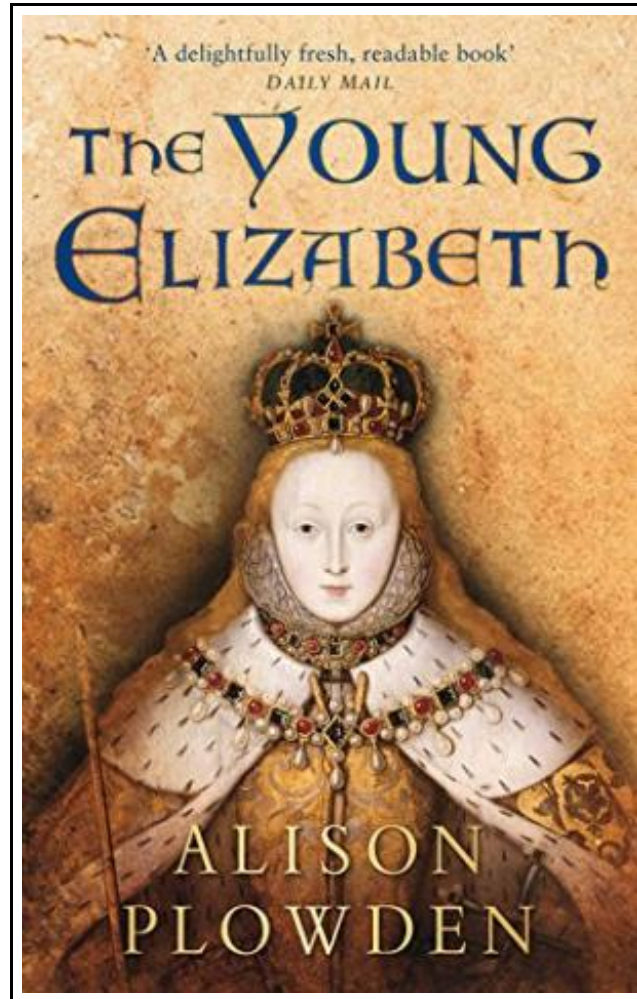


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History Press. 1 Paperback(s), 2011. soft. Book Condition: New. "A lucid, well-researched, but unpedantic narrative of 16th-century English royal life and death at a brutal time when a successful noble was one who kept his or her head while others were losing theirs during perennial struggles for power and position. Biographer [Alison] Plowden ([author of] *The Young Victoria*) relates the oft-told story of Henry VIII and his search for a male heir. His union with Catherine of Aragon produced only Mary. The frustrated Henry had his first marriage declared 'null and void' and married Anne Boleyn, who gave birth to Elizabeth. After the troublesome Anne was beheaded, he married Jane Seymour, who did have a short-lived male heir, Edward VI. To continue his matrimonial marathon after Seymour's natural death, Henry married and divorced Anne of Cleves, followed by Catherine Howard, whom he beheaded, and then married Catherine Parr, all without a living male heir. Henry broke with the Roman Church, thereby forging a divided England. After his death, his devout Catholic daughter, Mary, became queen and an enemy of Protestants. Plowden portrays the teenage Elizabeth as a threat to Mary, who kept the former a prisoner in the Tower of London but was unable to find hard evidence of treason before the Privy Council Court. Elizabeth became a heroine of the Protestants and a popular figure. Plowden's assessment of the 25-year-old Elizabeth, who became queen after Mary's death: sharp tongued and a hard bargainer with acting ability but also with hysterical tendencies perhaps inherited from her mother. From her father she inherited physical energy, family pride, vanity, personal magnetism, political instincts, and earthy peasant cunning, thanks to her Tudor Welsh ancestors. She was an apt scholar who learned discretion, self-discipline, and self-reliance, and the author suggests she used her femininity...



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