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# The Pirate Queen: Queen Elizabeth I, Her Pirate Adventurers, And The Dawn Of Empire



## Synopsis

Dubbed the "pirate queen" by the Vatican and Spain's Philip II, Elizabeth I was feared and admired by her enemies. Extravagant, whimsical, and hot-tempered, Elizabeth was the epitome of power. Her visionary accomplishments were made possible by her daring merchants, gifted rascalion adventurers, astronomer philosophers, and her stalwart Privy Council, including Sir William Cecil, Sir Francis Walsingham, and Sir Nicholas Bacon. All these men contributed their vast genius, power, greed, and expertise to the advancement of England. In *The Pirate Queen*, historian Susan Ronald offers a fresh look at Elizabeth I, focusing on her uncanny instinct for financial survival and the superior intellect that propelled and sustained her rise. The foundation of Elizabeth's empire was built on a carefully choreographed strategy whereby piracy transformed England from an impoverished state on the fringes of Europe into the first building block of an empire that covered two-fifths of the world. Based on a wealth of historical sources and thousands of personal letters between Elizabeth and her merchant adventurers, advisers, and royal "cousins," *The Pirate Queen* tells the thrilling story of Elizabeth and the swashbuckling mariners who terrorized the seas, planted the seedlings of an empire, and amassed great wealth for themselves and the Crown.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When Elizabeth Tudor became queen in 1558, her religiously fractured kingdom was in financial chaos and under constant threat from superpower Spain. How the iron-willed, financially astute monarch utilized piracy and plunder as a vital tool in guaranteeing English independence from foreign domination and in transforming a backwater nation into a nascent empire is the tantalizing

focus of Ronald's (The Sancy Blood Diamond) latest effort. To wreak vengeance on the Spanish perpetrators of the Inquisition, Elizabeth granted swashbuckling John Hawkins permission for his first slaving voyage to Guinea in 1562. On a 1577 mission to raid Spanish shipping in the Pacific, Francis Drake became the first European commander to sail around the southernmost tip of South America from the Atlantic into the Pacific, and in 1588, he destroyed the invading Spanish Armada. Charismatic, massively ambitious Walter Raleigh founded Virginia, popularized smoking tobacco and spent the 1590s in a futile search for the fabled El Dorado. Authoritative, assiduously researched and with a knack for making the intricacies of sea skirmishes accessible and absorbing, this is a surprisingly fresh perspective on one of the most popular subjects of royal biography. 16 pages of b&w illus.; maps. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bailey's reading does justice to Ronald's meticulously researched biography of the great Tudor queen, Elizabeth I. The queen held bold command of the British navy, which developed from a group of ragtag vessels and mariners into an envied and fearsome sea power. Bailey's technical proficiency is greatly evident when she reads the queen's expenses expressed in modern equivalents in U.S. dollars and British pounds. These parenthetical facts are relayed with a subtle shift in her clipped British accent that clearly indicates a parenthesis without breaking the flow of the sentence. She also brings a straightforward solidity to head-spinning intricacies of international lineage and intermarriage threatening Elizabeth's claim to the throne. Despite her stellar presentation, some listeners may yearn for visual clarification of maps, sea charts, and family trees. --Whitney Scott

This is as interesting and well written a book on England's 16th Century emergence, from third world nation status to global superpower stature, as you are likely to find. I especially appreciate the consistency with which author Susan Roland puts the economics of Queen Elizabeth's decisions into today's terms. This goes a long way toward making Elizabeth's decisions understandable. Piracy was an amazingly big business. With single voyages generating over \$1.0 billion in today's equivalent, utilizing current values enables readers to readily understand how large an economic driver piracy was to England's evolution as a superpower. Plunder became England's primary growth industry, the financial bedrock upon which England's global dominance over the next 400 years was built. Since most of this wealth was taken from Spain, plunder also planted the seeds

which would ultimately destroy Spain's preeminent position in world affairs. After Philip of Spain stifles England's ability to export wool, its primary cash crop, early in Elizabeth's reign, England subsequently suffers from an inability to either fund its defense or protect its interests on the European stage. Beset by powerful enemies both secular and religious, England struggles with Spain and the Catholic Church externally and Scotland internally. Moreover, England's allies were in disarray. France was often religiously bipolar, while Holland, Belgium (then referred to as the Low Countries) and Portugal were economically dependant. Revolution was rife and Elizabeth's monarchy was tenuous to say the least. With this as the backdrop to relations in the neighborhood, Elizabeth made common cause with what history refers to as her adventurers. Piracy had been practiced along most European and Mediterranean coasts for centuries. But under Elizabeth, English piracy became a global, state sanctioned art form, an economic necessity for survival that harvested the seas for the Queen's Treasury. Elizabeth begins to organize with John Hawkins' voyages to the Caribbean where he razed whole towns and ravaged Spanish shipping. Next was Francis Drake's Caribbean activities and his subsequent circumnavigation of the Earth which plucked the best value from Spain's global empire. By the time of the Spanish Inquisition, the Catholic-Protestant debates were in full tilt and undeclared war existed between England, Spain and the Catholic Church with numerous Spanish and Catholic assassination attempts on Elizabeth's life. England's piracy was no longer small, single voyage ventures but numbered over 200 ships, with individual fleets varying from 15 to 30 vessels and employing between 500 - 1,000 men. Under the guidance of veteran sea dogs Hawkins and Drake, piracy had grown into England's de facto Navy, becoming sufficiently powerful to stave off Spain's Armada when Philip's anger bubbled over and he unleashed that 500 ship weapon in 1588. This is an amazing story, well told, which builds with a power and a mastery of detail that is quite appealing. I came away from this work understanding that both England, and subsequently her American Colonies, were built on the bedrock of piracy. Moreover, the great explorations and colonization efforts of Martin Frobisher, Walter Raleigh and others, were, generally speaking, voyages where pillage and plunder, especially at Spain's expense, were an encouraged and necessary business practice. Wonderfully detailed and excellently crafted, Roland's work spares no effort in describing the intrigue and confrontation involved in England's rise and Spain's downfall as Europe's dominant global power. This is as good a description of this fascinating portion of history as I have found and a read that is really second to none in explaining the intricacy of the time period covered. The Pirate Queen is a remarkably worthwhile book.

Bravo, Elizabeth! Piracy not necessarily being a kosher topic in all circles, this was a wonderful, revealing read! Artful manipulation and exploitation by Elizabeth's 'Gentlemen' brought England to the forefront of history against the oppressive duo of Pope and Spain. Again, the author leaves me feeling as though these characters are here, now, and anxious to hear the outcomes of all their exploits. "Water...have you seen Virginia, as it is today? Could you have ever imagined where your discoveries and adventures would lead?" I hope you know, Sir Walter Raleigh, somehow I hope you know..."Oh, and by the way...we have still not found the fabled 'El Dorado'...I think the Spaniards got it all...drast!"

A very detailed explanation of the economic underpinings of her empire.

Fantastic book! Ronald talks less about the scandals of Elizabeth's court and more about her merchant endeavors. A recommended read for anyone.

The book arrived in excellent condition. It was the best protective packaging I have ever seen. Very pleased with the quality and content of the book.

Just reading it and love history.

I liked the book. I thought the information was slow coming with so many names! This made it hard to understand as it jumped arou

This book is an excellent read. Hard to put down. Why didn't I learn about all this in High school?

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