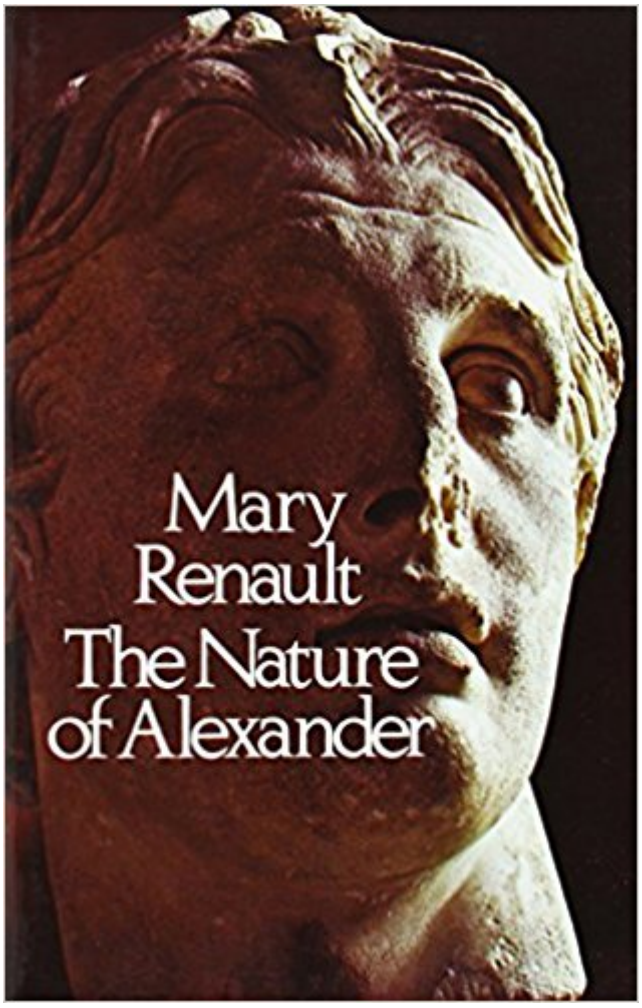
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The Nature Of Alexander



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Synopsis

The acclaimed biography of Alexander the Great.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The acclaimed biography of Alexander the Great.

MARY RENAULTÃ Â has written over a dozen novels, has had her work adapted for radio, stage, and screeen, and has been the subject of documentaries and biographies. She is as widely known for her forthright treatment of gay relationships as she isÃ Â her historical restructions of ancient Greece. She was born in London and educated at Oxford. She then trained as a nurse, where she met her lifelong partner Julie Mullard.Ã Â After during World War II, she and Mullard settled in South Africa and traveled considerably in Africa and Greece. It was at this time that she began writing her historical novels, includingÃ Â The King Must Die, The Last of the Wine,Ã Â andÃ Â The Persian Boy. The biographyÃ Â The Nature of AlexanderÃ Â is one of her only non-fiction books. She died in Cape Town in 1983.

In The Nature of Alexander, Renault writes more of a hagiography than a biography, though it remains highly informative. She has a very clear idea of what his nature was, so she makes judgments about our various historical sources, indicating that some are reporting what he was really like, while others had axes to grind. This is a valid service to provide for her readers. It still gives at times an impression that she’s defending a loved one. She also uses a somewhat elevated

style - not quite scriptural or poetic, but at times stilted. Granted, at other times her style is lovely. The studied grandeur of her prose adds to the sense that this is a Life of the Saint rather than a history. I must acknowledge that she makes no bones about having a point of view - it's not like she's trying to pull a fast one on us. I enjoyed the book quite a lot. No question that Alexander was magnificent almost to the point of being a freak of nature.

Mary Renault is a master writer, able to compress thought and description into images and phrases so that three pages contain what a chapter of another writer's book might feature. Though dense in meaning, the simple lyrical sentences read easily and fast. In this book, the concepts about about Alexander expressed in her novels, The Persian Boy and Fire From Heaven, are combined with studies based on contemporary archaeological finds. It provides factual background of the young Macedonian king's incredible life. Some historians have criticized it for romanticizing Alexander. I'm a reader not a critic or even an English major but I've loved reading Renault's novels about Greece from The King Must Die through Funeral Games. And I very much enjoyed this non-fiction book.

ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The Nature of AlexanderÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• by Mary Renault is another superb chronicle of the life of Alexander The Great. She has written many books about the greatest general of all time (most in the historical fiction category). While there is not very much ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“newÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• in this book, it is nonetheless an excellent read, due to RenaultÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s ability to stick with her theme (his nature) throughout, her take down of stuffy ancient historians, and explain how to interpret his successes and failures through the prism of her take on the varied aspects of AlexanderÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s character or ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“natureÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•.She handles the lack of direct evidence of AlexanderÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s bi-sexuality (or more correctly, his homosexuality) with tact and respect for the missing information. And yet, as the the story advances, Renault becomes increasingly brave in what many believe is merely stating the ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“obviousÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â•. Alexander was gay. She literally asserts this ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“unprovenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• aspect of Alexander by about half way through the text. Good for her. And even better for Alexander and his legacy. It is not just wishful thinking that the vast majority of modern day people view Alexander through the looking glass of his homosexuality.Hephaestion fills many of the pages, as he should, as AlexanderÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s companion, greatest friend, and lover for nearly 20 years. ItÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s really too bad that more is not known about Hephaestion, for he was (or seems to have been) as complex, intelligent

and driven as Alexander (and likely even more handsome). His untimely early death caused Alexander the greatest pain, distress and grief of his life. He built a massive and stunning 200-foot high pyre on which to cremate him. Many believe that AlexanderÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s own untimely death a few months later was at least in part due to a broken heart, never to mend from his unfathomable loss of Hephaestion.What stands out to me in this text, as a reader of many books on Alexander, is his generosity and his need to be loved. Much of what he did with and for his troops (paying them generously, for instance) is born from those 2 aspects of his personality. And besides, he knew exactly how to handle his warriors, many of the Macedonians, like Alexander, had been away from home for 8 years ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ while conquering the known world of Western Asia.This book is a testament to the enduring legacy of Alexander, the likes of whom the world has never known again ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ and likely never will.Loved it.A solid 5.

An absolutely absorbing account of the short and gloried life of Alexander. Renault's strength is her ability to carefully sift through the historical sources from many different angles in an attempt to discern the strengths and weaknesses of each. It is an approach that works wonderfully, as the reader is left with an intimate, rich and grounded portrait of one of the worlds most famous men.

only Mary Renault book I didnt love. It was very repetitive and dull.

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