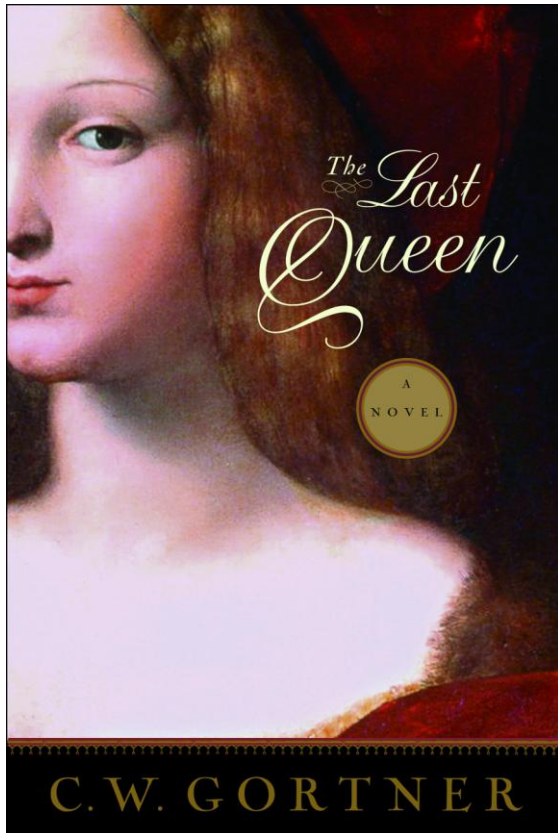


Contact: Lisa Barnes
212/572-2014 or lbarnes@randomhouse.com

THE LAST QUEEN

by

C.W. GORTNER



Praise for THE LAST QUEEN and C.W. Gortner

“Sparkling ... Disturbing royal secrets and court manipulations wickedly twist this enthralling story, brilliantly told.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“This moving tale of Juana of Castile, known as Juana la Loca, vividly recreates the passions, politics, and betrayals that drove a smart and spirited queen to the brink of insanity ... or perhaps, as C.W. Gortner suggests, to the pretense of insanity—a pretense that baffled Juana’s enemies and led to triumph for her children and her country. An absorbing account of one of history’s most fascinating women, from her never-before-told point of view.”

—**Donna Woolfolk Cross, author of *Pope Joan***

Juana of Castile, the last queen of Spanish blood to inherit her country’s throne, has been for centuries an enigmatic figure shrouded in lurid myth.

Was she the bereft widow of legend who was driven mad by her loss, or has history misjudged a woman who was ahead of her time? In his stunning new novel **THE LAST QUEEN** (A Ballantine Books Hardcover; On Sale: July 29, 2008), C. W. Gortner challenges the myths about

(over)

Queen Juana, unraveling the mystery surrounding her to reveal a brave, determined woman we can only now begin to fully understand.

The third child of Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand of Spain, Juana is born amid her parents' ruthless struggle to unify their kingdom, bearing witness to the fall of Granada and Columbus's discoveries. At the age of sixteen, she is sent to wed Philip, the archduke of Flanders, as part of her parents' strategy to strengthen Spain, just as her youngest sister, Catherine of Aragon, is sent to England to become the first wife of Henry VIII.

Juana finds unexpected love and passion with her handsome young husband, the sole heir to the Habsburg Empire. At first she is content with her children and her life in Flanders. But when tragedy strikes and she inherits the Spanish throne, Juana finds herself plunged into a battle for power against her husband that grows to involve the major monarchs of Europe. Besieged by foes on all sides, her intelligence and pride used as weapons against her, Juana vows to secure her crown and save Spain from ruin, even if it could cost her everything.

With brilliant, lyrical prose, novelist and historian C. W. Gortner conjures Juana through her own words, taking the reader from the somber majesty of Spain to the glittering and lethal courts of Flanders, France, and Tudor England. **THE LAST QUEEN** brings to life all the grandeur and drama of an incomparable era, and the singular humanity of this courageous, passionate princess whose fight to claim her birthright captivated the world.



About the Author

C. W. GORTNER, half-Spanish by birth, holds an M.F.A. in writing, with an emphasis on historical studies, from the New College of California and has taught university courses on women of power in the Renaissance. He was raised in Málaga, Spain, and now lives in California. Visit him at www.cwgortner.com.

THE LAST QUEEN

C.W. Gortner ■ A Ballantine Books Hardcover
ISBN: 978-0-345-50184-4 ■ \$25.00 ■ On Sale: July 29, 2008