



The Face of Britain: A History of the Nation Through Its Portraits

Simon Schama

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From acclaimed best-selling historian Simon Schama (*The Story of the Jews; Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution; A History of Britain*) comes the story of Britain as told through its portraits. This unique way of telling history consists of a remarkable range of visually revealing moments: Churchill and his painter, locked in a struggle of stares and glares; a nude John Lennon five hours before his death; a black Othello in the nineteenth century; a surgeon-artist making studies of soldiers with face-wounds from the Battle of the Somme. Linking these tales together is Schama's exploration of how meaning emerges from a series of relationships-between sitter and painter, of course, but also between them both and the present-day viewer.

From its best-know portraits, Britain's past and present comes into brilliant focus. Written to accompany a five-part BBC series and a major exhibition at London's National Portrait Gallery, Schama's compelling analysis and story-telling genius bring a whole nation to life, building a collective picture that at once reflects and transforms Britain's image. *The Face of Britain* is an exemplary and passionate explanation of how individual narratives can be shaped into a cohesive whole.

Lavishly illustrated, and indelibly written, *The Face of Britain* will change how we view this country, seeing something familiar as if for the first time.



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