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Vive la Revolution: A Stand-up History of the French Revolution

Mark Steel

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#393914 in Books Haymarket Books 2006-12-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .80 x 6.00l, .94
#File Name: 193185937X293 pages | File size: 73.Mb

Mark Steel : Vive la Revolution: A Stand-up History of the French Revolution before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Vive la Revolution: A Stand-up History of the French Revolution:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Laughing while Learning about the French RevolutionBy Clifford D. ConnerThis is a hilarious account of how the Great French Revolution developed, and although Mark Steel is a stand-up comedian rather than an academic historian, I think he does a brilliant job of getting the historical part right. That is, he not only has his facts straight but (in my professional opinion as a historian of the French Revolution) he

has selected and balanced and presented them in a way that makes perfect historical sense. As an American, I had never heard of Mark Steel before I came upon this book, but I later learned that he is among Great Britain's best-known humorists. I do not find that surprising. 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fleshing out the French Revolution By Pam Gill Mark Steel does a good job of making the French Revolution come to life. He gives us a feel for the huge leap made from awe at the very sight of royalty to disgust at the aristocratic nerve of them. His perspective isn't perfect as the humor occasionally reflects the real story with an adolescent pall. Still, I don't see him as pretending that what he has to say is the encyclopedic version of that revolution, but he does convey how extremely pressing the real life issues were for the French. I enjoyed reading the book and did pick up some information which helped me see the situation with more depth. If occasionally he made a small error in detail, I can see how easy that would be to do. Chroniclers argue about what actually happened yesterday, so having some problems getting it all straight several hundred years later seems inevitable. He conveys his enthusiasm for the subject matter which is what good teachers can do. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant way to introduce history to a curious reader By P. Barzilai The book gives an intelligent reader the real flavor of the events, the feeling of the atmosphere in which the french revolution started and developed. and this is done with humor and love towards all the participants. Mark Steel adores and understands the mob the aristocrats, the king and queen the french language but all of those are delicately smirked at. His knowlege of dates and facts never makes the narrative dull or boring. His thinking creatively takes situations into our update reality and effectively compares them to current events. Vive Mark Steel!

“Thank goodness . . . for Mark Steel. Engagingly lighthearted while clearly thorough, the author has taken the events of the French Revolution and given them a human face, as well as neatly poking fun at the over-pomposity with which our recent historians have dealt with the period.”—The Observer “With *Vive La Revolution* [Steel] examines the raw material of 1789, not so much in search of laughs as in an attempt to reclaim the first popular revolution from the dry historians.”—Scotsman “A cross between a history of the French Revolution and a spirited defense of the ideals that inspired it.”—The Independent “Steel expertly guides the reader through the philosophies, protagonists, failures and serious legacy of the events of 1789.”—Guardian *Vive la Revolution* is an uproariously serious work of history. Brilliantly funny and insightful, it puts individual people back at the center of the story of the French Revolution, telling this remarkable story as it has never been told before. For the Haymarket edition, Steel has added a new preface for North American readers and revised the book to address parallel themes in US history.

About the Author Mark Steel is a London-based comedian and author. He is best known for his "Dedicated Troublemaker" series on Radio 4 and Channel 4 television. He was nominated for a Royal Television Society award for best entertainment presenter in 2004 and a Sony award in 2003.