



The King in Love: Edward VII's Mistresses

Theo Aronson

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Here, for the first time, is an all-embracing account of the loves of that celebrated royal womaniser, Edward VII, as Prince of Wales and King.

It is also a study of the three women with whom the King was most deeply in love — his 'official' mistresses, Lillie Langtry, Daisy Warwick and Alice Keppel. In their different ways, all three were exceptional personalities. Lillie Langtry, the socially ambitious girl from the vicarage, became a famous actress. Daisy Warwick, an immensely wealthy heiress and social butterfly, was converted to socialism. Alice Keppel, probably the King's greatest love, developed into an astute and fascinating figure in her own right.

Spanning three decades and packed with incident, scandal and high romance, the story is set in the extravagant and hypocritical world of late Victorian and Edwardian society. It is full of colourful characters: Edward's beautiful and betrayed wife Alexandra; the three cuckolded husbands — Edward Langtry, the Earl of Warwick and the Hon. George Keppel; the flamboyant Oscar Wilde; the sensuous Sarah Bernhardt; the dissipated Prince Albert Victor; the sexually complex W.E. Gladstone.

Royal biographer Theo Aronson draws on much new and unfamiliar material in this vivid book and reassesses many aspects of his subjects' lives. He challenges long-established myths and reveals much that was hitherto unknown: not least the extraordinary scene that took place at the deathbed of King Edward VII. The result is a brilliant evocation of a world, and a way of life that has gone forever.

The King in Love: Edward VII's Mistresses Details

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From Reader Review The King in Love: Edward VII's Mistresses for online ebook

William Taylor says

Reading “The King in Love:Edward VII's Mistresses” by Theo Aronson makes it easier to understand the plaintive but self-centered lament of Prince Charles when he complained to Diana, “I refuse to be the only Prince of Wales who never had a mistress.” Charles was only following the time-honored wallowings of many previous Prince of Wales whiling away while awaiting the throne. Assuming the ground-breaking actions of Prince of Wales Albert Edward, the oldest son of Queen Victoria, (who eventually became King Edward VII) are accurately portrayed in this detailed, authoritative, and quite compelling book, the Prince and virtually the entire complement of English aristocracy of the times continually romped from assignation to assignation without a hint of scruples, morality or hesitation. It was a delightful new “game” introduced by the Prince whose fellow aristocrats had formerly cavorted with whores and harlots to let off steam. Fooling around with each other’s wives turned out to be a much safer game to be enjoyed in comfort, familiar surroundings, and luxury.

As detailed in the book, this out of control spinning of moral compasses was brought on by the Prince’s revolutionary idea of cavorting with the married spouses of other aristocrats rather than engaging in the chancier, less savory encounters with local harlots and ladies of the evening.

The practice apparently became well-known, accepted, and even admired among a good part of the entire populace, leading to the wide-spread popularity of “players” such as Lillie Langtry, who was one of the Prince’s favorites. No doubt “lesser” Brits, not wanting to be left on the sidelines, joined in games of their own, enthusiastically emulating their lords and masters.

Apparently, the Church of England turned not only a blind eye but also an equally non-functioning nose and throat toward these shady shenanigans.

Author Theo Aronson, an acknowledged past master at chronicling the foibles and picadilloes of British aristocrats, also delivers in this book a detailed and authoritative insight into the fashions and historical goings-ons of the period in addition to the other stuff.

Review by William R. Taylor, author of “A Shooting Star Meets the Well of Death, Why and How Richard Halliburton Conquered the World.”

Supreya says

Could not capture my attention.

Simone says

I enjoyed this book much more than I thought I would.

I was a little hesitant about it at first because I feared ‘the biography of 3 nobodies’ might be a bit dry, but it wasn’t boring at all! I’m glad I took the chance - I found it really interesting and I actually learned a thing or two!

If you want to read more about Edward VII, I can easily recommend “Bertie: A Life of Edward VII” by Jane Ridley.

Ghost of the Library says

My fascination for Queen Victoria, her life, her reign and her family has long been a companion of many an hour of good reading over the years.

With regards to her numerous, and lively offspring, i confess to have always had a preference for Princess Louisa and a particular fascination for the Prince of Wales to go down in history as King Edward VIII.

Strange preference for a girl you say? perhaps...but then again i have always liked people that defy all odds and expectations - no matter where they may come from.

The Kings eventful life as long been discussed, there are numerous books and documentaries on him - of which i have a few - but an important part was always somehow relegated to a secondary role, that of side note, should more sensitive minds be embarrassed by the Kings shenanigans over the years.

The women in his life are, at least as far as i am concerned, key to understanding the man and his relationship with the world around him. What the author does here, and rather well if i may say so, is bring to life the loves of his life - the passionate ones that is - the rather unforgettable ladies known to history as Lilly Langtry, Daisy Warwick and Alice Keppel.

I wont give a description, its worth the time and trouble of dipping your nose into it believe me!

Suffice to say, its a fascinating portrait of a time long gone and some of its most unforgettable characters.

Claire says

Chock full of interesting information, but unorganized and repetitive at times.

Mary says

3.5/5 - interesting and enjoyable, I realised I didn't know a lot about Lillie Langtry. Thankfully this book did just focus on their lives rather than too much on his, which complemented other books I've read.

Jennifer says

As the title suggests, this book is a synopsis of Edward VII's mistresses; focusing on the three long-term mistresses he had; Lillie Langtry, The Duchess of Warwick and Mrs. George Keppel. Because Edward VII was not known for his ability to remain sexually faithful to any one woman, we also learn about several other women who shared the king's bed.

This book was interesting for a number of reasons; first of which being the difference in how the press covers royalty now versus in the Edwardian era. Today a royal affair would be front page news; in Edward's time the press had a degree of respect for the king's privacy.

Also interesting was the author's take on Queen Alexandra. Everything I've read of her paints her as a virtual saint; allowing her husband his freedom to conduct affairs as he pleased and being kind and warm to his mistresses. This book suggests that one (of the many) reasons that Edward may have strayed from his wife is that she was sexually repressed; tolerating sex as her "wifely duty" but not enjoying it. For a man with Edward's temperament, a sexually frigid wife could not lead to a healthy marriage. Perhaps she tolerated his affairs to the degree she did because it kept her husband from her bed?

A very interesting read; I highly suggest it to those who are looking for a new perspective on the many loves of Edward VII.

Kathleen says

I enjoyed the book although it was a lot more in depth than it could have been, 3.5 stars rounded up to 4. It was an interesting time to understand as society changed, and then changed again in just a few years when Edward VII's grandson had to abdicate the throne.

Queen Victoria's long reign led to a time of freedom for those in society that did not extend to lower classes in that same society. There was acceptance of Edward VII's and his social group's extramarital escapades that did not last very far into the future.

An enjoyable read.

Pat Davis says

A Lot of Edwardian History

This seems a well researched book dealing with the prolific love life of George VII. Quite fascinating but the story loses interest as the stream of the king's mistresses continues.

Maureen S says

If this is your area of interest...

then you have bought the right book. I found it to be interesting, well-researched and highly readable. The backgrounds of each woman add a dimension to their relationships with the king that many of these type books do not provide. They are treated as individuals with their own lives that go on even without the king. I also like that, as Edward moves on to Alice Keppel for instance, we are kept up to date on the lives of the two women who preceded her. I hope you all enjoy it as much as I did

Deborah says

An ok book

I'm not sure why I kept reading but it may have been a hope that it would get better. The book has plentiful references but I did not get to know the characters. It seemed like a surface recitation of lots of people's opinions but no character development. There was a heavy emphasis on appearances rather than reality of behavior. Bad, immoral, cruel and scandalous behavior was easily excused and glorified, and the parties never held to account by the author.

Kilian Metcalf says

All the time I was reading this book, I kept asking myself 'Why am I reading this book?' It is well written enough, but these scandals of over 100 years ago have little relevance or interest today. I am gradually losing my taste for reading about the royals, whether yesterday or today.

So Edward (Bertie to family and friends) was a libertine in his youth and a serial adulterer in his maturity. The women he found fascinating were somewhat interesting, but not enough to warrant my giving up several hours of my life reading about them.

I'm swearing off the royal family, past and present.

My blog:

The Interstitial Reader
<https://theinterstitialreader.wordpress.com>

Leonie says

Well written but a lot older than I thought - I only realised when the author stated that HM The Queen has been on the throne for over 35 years. Over 60 now! I'm not sure if the author is still alive to do an update but there is a neat symmetry to the fact that Alice Keppel's great-granddaughter is Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall and is married to Edward VII's great-grandson Charles, Prince of Wales!

Simon Binning says

This is a fairly straightforward account of the three women who were Edward VII's longer lasting mistresses. He had innumerable affairs throughout his life, but the women documented here - Lillie Langtry, Daisy Warwick and Alice Keppel - were the three who had the longest relationships with him. Their backgrounds varied, but they all shared traits which attracted Edward - beauty, intelligence and vivacity - along with compliant husbands!

The book is not a biography of either Edward, or the three women. It gives some background for all four, but concentrates on the most intense period of each relationship, as well as what happened to them in later life. Edward comes across as the worst of the lot; a decent enough man, but shallow, rather stupid, and very aware of his own status. Although each relationship lasted some time, there doesn't seem to be any real love involved on either side, and it is sometimes difficult to see what either side got out of it, apart from the obvious. There was perhaps room for a bit more analysis in this direction.

All in all, a very readable book, in a slightly old-fashioned way.

James Rye says

It wasn't a topic that I thought would keep me hooked, but the writer exceeded my expectations.

I learned a lot about Victorian hypocrisy, and the libertarianism of the Edwardian aristocracy. Two things in particular impressed me. First, the writer is careful to acknowledge and evaluate when supposed "facts" are presented in different ways from different sources. Secondly, there is plenty of material and discussion to enable the reader to see the complexity of the characters and their situations. All three mistresses and the King himself are presented as three dimensional making simplistic judgements about their actions impossible.

It was an interesting and satisfying read.
