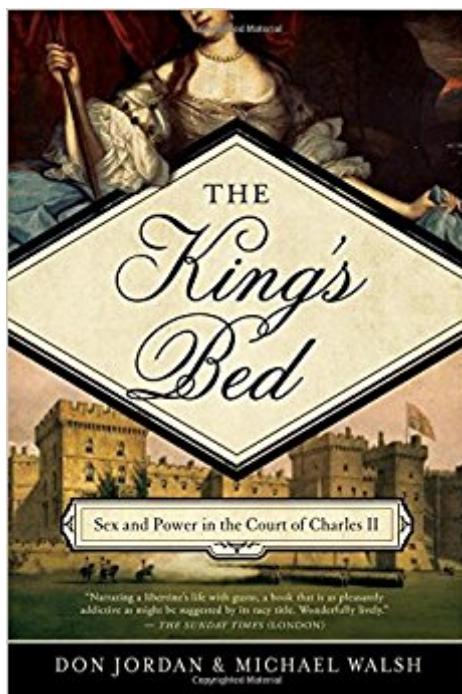


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The King's Bed: Ambition And Intimacy In The Court Of Charles II



Synopsis

An intelligent and spirited history of Charles II's dissolute life and surprising legacy, by two veteran historians. To refer to the private life of Charles II is to abuse the adjective. His personal life was anything but private. His amorous liaisons were largely conducted in royal palaces surrounded by friends, courtiers and literally hundreds of servants and soldiers. Gossip radiated throughout the kingdom. Charles spent most of his wealth and his intellect on gaining and keeping the company of women, from the lowest sections of society such as the actress Nell Gwyn to the aristocratic Louise de KÅ©rouaille. Some of Charles' women played their part in the affairs of state, coloring the way the nation was run. The authors take us inside Charles' palace, where we will meet court favorites, amusing confidants, advisors jockeying for political power, mistresses past and present as well as key figures in his inner circle such as his 'pimpmasters' and his personal pox doctor. The astonishing private life of Charles II reveals much about the man he was and why he lived and ruled as he did. The King's Bed tells the compelling story of a king ruled by his passion. 16 pages of color and B&W illustrations

Book Information

Hardcover: 368 pages

Publisher: Pegasus Books; 1 edition (March 7, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 160598969X

ISBN-13: 978-1605989693

Product Dimensions: 6.3 x 1.3 x 9.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #290,045 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Human Sexuality #503 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Leaders & Notable People > Royalty #638 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Great Britain

Customer Reviews

âœAn entertaining history of the antics of the libidinous King Charles II and his licentious court. Tells you everything you need to know about 17th-century sex.â• - Sebastian Shakespeare, TatlerâœThe authors make excellent use of a great wealth of resources. The authors' easy, readable style makes this a solid biography of Charles II, full of sturdy history and enough salacious

information to keep it interesting. - Kirkus Reviews Well-researched. Those interested in royal history and scandals will delight in the stories and characters contained within these pages. - Library Journal A balanced narrative. Jordan and Walsh excel in describing the king's unusual willingness to claim and promote many of his illegitimate children. Authentic insight on how salacious sex and the pursuit of pleasure ruled a troubled king. - Publishers Weekly

Don Jordan has twice won a Blue Ribbon Award at the New York Film and Television Festival and has written four books with Michael Walsh. He lives in London. Michael Walsh has won a Royal Television Society Award. Together with Don Jordan he has written four books, including White Cargo, acclaimed by Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison as an "extraordinary book." He lives in London

Just began to read it but from the pages I read I am going to like it a lot. I love the Baroque period and love King Charles II and court life. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves social/cultural history this book. Both authors are very well versed on the subject and give inside to King Charles II life was like. A rare find.

A zippy jaunt through the Restoration, emphasis on sex in politics.

I really enjoyed this book. I have been wanting to read it for a while now. With the second book "The King's revenge" coming out I decided it was time to read it. I learned that the authors were researching for the King's revenge had decided to write this book because they were interested in the women that came in out of the life of Charles II. I would not classify this bio of King Charles II, though it does talk a lot about him. This book goes into detail about his many mistresses, and goes into his marriage to Catherine of Braganza. For people who are knowledgeable in Charles II reign I don't think that your going to learn anything new. But I do think that for people starting out this book is a great source. Though I am familiar with the Stuart dynasty I have done gone into a in-depth study on him. I thought Henry VIII was bad, but he made him look like a choir boy. Charles is reputed as being the "Merry Monarch" but he could be as ruthless and just as cruel as his ancestor Henry VIII. Forcing his wife to be under the same roof as his pregnant mistress as her lady-in-waiting. He also kidnapped his first son and kept him from his mother. So Charles definitely had his dark moments. The story is written in chronological order starting with Charles earliest mistresses all the way to his death. The book just doesn't focus on his mistress though they play a huge part in this story. The authors talk extensively about his wife Catherine of Braganza. I couldn't

help but feel sorry for her. I just think that Charles wanted a certain kind of woman and she didn't fit that mold. Though in the story you can see that she tried hard to catch her husband attention but efforts panned out. I guess one redeeming about Charles that he stuck by his wife even when his advisers were urging him to get a divorce. The only real problem I had with this book is that I thought that grammar was off. I usually fuss about that but the mistakes were to obvious to ignore. Other then that I thought this book was great and looking forward to reading "The King's revenge"

While the title may attract gothic novel readers this is a serious and overdue work. The authors who had previously researched Charles II's ruthless pursuit of participants in his father's downfall in this book show how he was vulnerable to his mistresses who siphoned off the wealth of England and undermined its position in the known world. While there may be a reluctance to incorporate the personal when studying history's big events, the authors show that with Charles, there is no other way. That Charles was controlled by his passions was used by France to the loss of the British people who paid his bills. This is the clearest narrative I've read on Charles and his reign. While it's a short book, it is clear. It is specific on his role in the civil war, how his romancing started early, his flight from England, his life as a teenager in and out of the French court, his mother's matchmaking attempts, his relationship with the Scots, how he tried to return and how he actually returned as king. The authors are clear on the role of Barbara Palmer and better yet how Louise de Kerouaille came to England; how Barbara, Louise and other mistresses bled the treasury and influenced appointments. Charles's priorities are not at all about governing, but he does hold the crown something neither his father nor brother could do. Through this well footnoted narrative, you can derive that if Charles II has any interest in improving England internally or its role in the world, it is subordinate to his sexual addiction. His mistresses cost him money and he negotiates assistance from France and accepts its strings. This means that England is not defended against the Dutch and the Protestant-Catholic hostilities will continue, but Charles doesn't seem to care. The conclusion has contemporary commentary on how Charles died (natural? poison?) and his psychology. The Postscript listing Charles's progeny is fascinating. While I knew it subliminally, it was striking to see it in black and white: it is Prince William who is the descendant from Charles II (through his mother who has both Barbara Palmer and Louise de Kerouaille in her family tree) and not his father, who, if he ever ascends to the throne, will be Charles III. Recommended for anyone with interest in the Restoration and/or the Stuarts.

I had read Royal Charles, a biography of Charles II, many years ago, and it was a more complete analysis of his reign. This bio focuses mostly on Charles' pursuit of women and how most used him to further their own ambitions. While it was entertaining, I also found it a little depressing. Here was a man whose father was beheaded and who had to live a pretty tenuous existence in French exile before being brought back to take the English throne in 1660. Charles hadn't had an easy life, but it seems that he was hell-bent on making up for that by carousing and skirt-chasing. Even with the calamities his reign endured -- the great plague, the fire of London and a devastating loss to the Dutch in a war -- Charles still "swived on" with women of high and low status, fathering a host of children by anyone but his wife, who could not carry a child to term. Some of today's English nobility are descended from Charles' illegitimate children. In all, this book describes what seems like a wasted life. Charles ruled over a court of supreme licentiousness, and that, over any other of his deeds, is what he's remembered for. This is an interesting book, but it's more about power and manipulation than lusty romps between the sheets.

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