



A Treasury of Royal Scandals: The Shocking True Stories History's Wickedest Weirdest Most Wanton Kings Queens: The Shocking True Stories History's Wickedest Weirdest Most Wanton Kings Queens

Michael Farquhar

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From Nero's nagging mother (whom he found especially annoying after taking her as his lover) to Catherine's stable of studs (not of the equine variety), here is a wickedly delightful look at the most scandalous royal doings you never learned about in history class.

Gleeful, naughty, sometimes perverted-like so many of the crowned heads themselves-**A Treasury of Royal Scandals** presents the best (the worst?) of royal misbehavior through the ages. From ancient Rome to Edwardian England, from the lavish rooms of Versailles to the darkest corners of the Bastille, the great royals of Europe have excelled at savage parenting, deadly rivalry, pathological lust, and meeting death with the utmost indignity-or just very bad luck.

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VBergen says

the first three quarters of the book, gossips about treachery, envy, out of control sex, and treasons. Ah, and some History of european kings, queens, dukes, etc. The last quarter, hard to read, is about the bloody roman emperors and christian popes, that is too much violence, guys greedy for power, and more violence, plus some pages with the violence of the french revolution and the russians killing the Romanovs.

This is a very disorganized book, mixing facts of one period and jumping to another, then going back to the other century. Anyway, the book is good to try to have a global view of the History of the european royalty though it is not its main purpose.

Kelly says

Man, I loved this book when I found it. I was like.. 14 or so. And of course, most of these scandals are about sex, gays and drinking. I thought they were the most scandalous things I'd ever heard. I brought these stories to my history teachers to impress them. Some of them let me tell stories from it to enliven a boring class about whatever historical figure we happened to be talking about that day... a significantly edited story that took out most of the good stuff, but nonetheless.

Anyway, this is good, relaxing, pick it up and put it down, on the toilet, in the hammock, wind down before bed reading.

Enjoy!

Michael says

I read this one years ago, in just about the perfect setting for reading anything: while riding trains in Scotland. Well, I guess some of it was on planes, and probably some in hotels and hostels. Anyway, I can't separate the book completely with the fact that it was one of the two books I read while in Scotland. (The other one was a Wheel of Time book.)

This was the most entertaining book of history I've ever read, full of bizarre and fascinating stories about royalty that really go to show why incest should remain taboo.

Robin says

I read similar books by Leslie Carroll: "Royal Affairs" and "Notorious Royal Marriages" so I'll compare them. Carroll seems to dedicate a bit more time to each individual so there is more of a "get to know you" feel. Farquhar tends to split up certain information about the same royal (for example, George IV's obesity was discussed in a completely different chapter to that of his marriage). As a result, it can be difficult to get the full picture of the individual if you're not good with names. Even the supply of family trees in the front only shows the relationships between people, not a reminder that person (x) is the same person who did (y) in the last chapter. Likewise with the appendixes in the back which only lists some vital data and chronological list. Carroll lists the individuals vital data at the start of each chapter instead.

But there's a wealth of facts and individuals in "Royal Scandals" not found in Carroll's work so it was still well worth the read. Very entertaining.

Sadie says

While there are some really interesting bits in this book, one particular section leaves me with a bad taste in my mouth: The Roman emperors. Sure it's titillating to read about how Tiberius kept young boys stocked by his pool for unusual purposes, or how Nero liked to dress up as an animal to 'attack' his lovers, but it's not accurate. Farquhar's source for these is Suetonius, who I must liken to the Daily Mail or National Enquirer of the ancient world. He wrote and sold scandal, hundreds of years after any of these things happened. No, these emperors were not popular, and they certainly weren't decent people or rulers, but it's not nearly like what is written in this book.

This really does shed the rest of the stories in this book with a bad light. Good for trashy gossip, but I read with a grain of salt.

Amy says

I enjoyed thumbing through this. My undergraduate degree (the first one, before I back to school to go into health care) was in history. I was bitten by the history bug thanks to authors like Eleanor Alice Burford Hibbert (who you may also know as Jean Plaidy, Victoria Holt and Phillipa Carr) and a marvelous history teacher named Martha Morgan my junior year of high school. She used to lean back against her desk, close her eyes, and tell us stories (some of which appear in this book) about historical figures that you might not find in the history books. (Though it was my career as a urology nurse that taught me about Prince Albert piercings....google at your own risk.)

Anyhow, it was fun to breeze through this book, though the organization and lack of index kind of bothered me. I'll be sending it on to the next reader with deep thanks for helping me out on my quest for a book for a newbie BookCrosser.

Paul Pessolano says

"A Treasury of Royal Scandals, The Shocking True Stories of History's Wickedest, Weirdest, Most Wanton

Kings, Queens, Tsars', Popes, and Emperors" by Michael Farquhar, published by Penguin Books.

Category – History/Scandals Publication Date – May 01, 2001

If one is looking for some history that is part comedy, part tragedy, and part stupid this book will fit any and all of those categories. Most of these stories you definitely did not study in high school and probably not in college. These true stories range from the Roman era to Edwardian, England.

Although most of these stories are of the tragic variety, they are filled with stupidity to the umpteenth degree. It is very difficult to believe that the populace could be so taken in as to let these Kings, Queens, etc, get away with (literally) murder while they lived in abject poverty. One must remember though that they were uneducated and brought up to believe in the absolute power of the ruler.

There was the unbelievable extravagance of these monarchs that included land, jewels, clothing, and food. There was infighting among the royal families that led to imprisonment and beheadings. It was not unusual for all members of the royal families to be involved in extramarital affairs, and most times these affairs were known and tolerated. The Catholic Church was far from innocent as many of the Popes of the Church fathered illegitimate children. It was not unusual for one to gain the highest honor of the Church through monetary gifts, collusion, or even murder.

The stories are varied and interesting. The book can be picked up and put down without worrying about losing the trend of the story. It gives the reader a different slant on history, and at the same time provides a touch of comedy that proves entertaining and informative reading.

Maia B. says

This book, which is shelved in the "History" section of my library, would be better off in "Historical Fiction." Michael Farquhar writes things about Elizabeth I which I KNOW to be false, and he does it in a nasty "I'm-better-than-you" way which really jarred with me. He tries to tone some things down to a "readable" level - he repeatedly says that people are "dating" - in the fifteenth century! I'm all for making history more accessible and easier to read about, but this is ridiculous. People did not "date" six hundred years ago. This attempt to soften the word "adultery" or even "extramarital affair" when the book is chock-full of revolting sex fetishes, some of which actually made me blush just to read about them, is laughable.

Not only is the book written with all the research of a tabloid, it even reads like a tabloid - the writer is snide without seeming funny, annoying without seeming endearing, and leaps from person to person (for example, Catherine the Great to Mary, Queen of Scots, to George III) without seeming to have any logical order. These meaningless transitions gave me the feeling I was reading a book with ADHD. There are vignettes of about fifteen lines about a Hungarian countess, then suddenly I'm reading about an English king. The Hungarian countess killed young girls to bathe in their blood, the English king was obese and ran around foaming at the mouth. Do you see the connection here? Because I don't.

I'm afraid I could not even bring myself to finish this one - in fact, I don't think I even got past page 60. Michael Farquhar got more and more obnoxious and my head hurt more and more until I just couldn't stand it. Other people may be interested in the disgusting habits of monarchs; I for one would rather read about something that isn't repulsive, appalling, graphic, or, in the case of this book, all three.

Lori Berrios says

Loved this book! Great history with reigns and dates.

Jen Warren says

If History class had been this entertaining, I wouldn't have avoided the subject throughout my academic career.

A Treasury of Royal Scandals reads like an historical tabloid magazine. Which queen had six fingers on one hand? Which Emperor castrated a young boy in order to marry him? Which Pope ordered the annihilation of an entire city?

Broken into sections with several small, individual tales, it was at first tempting to read this as I would a reference book: by skimming the table of contents, and flipping to what interested me most. Thankfully, I enjoyed the first (and second, and third) stories enough to continue in order, from cover to cover, until I'd finally consumed them all.

I've seen criticism about this book as to the accuracy of the information. This didn't bother me. Taken as fact or taken as fiction, A Treasury of Royal Scandals is, at times, shocking (if not appalling) but infinitely readable. I'll be looking into this author's other works.

LynnDee (The Library Lush) says

I just really love Farquhar's writing style. It's very chatty and informal, which I think makes learning history so much easier. A lot of the stories I have heard and/or read about before, but it never hurts to have a history refresher because history is fucking bonkers.

Kimberly says

What an intriguing read this turned out to be. Sometime last year while I was going to college I skipped a day (one of many days when I skipped) and I went to Goodwill on a Friday for their weekly 50% off sale to see if I could score any good reads and I found this one on the top shelf.

Unfortunately I'm still trying to figure out why it took me over a year to read it, I mean I love the cover, the title and the summary both hold promises of a delightful read but no. I picked it up many times with the intentions to start it but it wasn't until last month that I actually got around to reading it.

What I liked most about the book apart from it offering up some very interesting and some very perverted

details about the royal families was that the book didn't just center on the royal families of England and France it encompassed all the European royal families and let me tell you they're a rather colourful bunch of families and talk about inbreeding!

Since this is my first time reading anything by the author I was pleasantly surprised by how much I ended up liking the way he used historical facts while making the book entertaining for the reading to make it easy to read. I think the reason that a lot of people stay away from non-fiction titles about the aristocracy and history in general because the books tend to be written in such a dry, heavy manner that doesn't allow for the casual reader to enjoy the words on the pages.

Luckily, this one is full of puns and some very inappropriate comments about the kings and queens of old. Honestly they weren't the type of people whom you would want to call a friend let alone family in those days since there were assassinations, be headings and forced marriages to deal with at every twist and turn. Truly some of the kings and queens were completely off their rockers.

Fortunately the inbreeding, assassinations, be-headings and all the other ugly stuff are no longer a facet of modern royalty (for the most part) because, if we had to deal with some of the royals from the past we'd be screwed worse than we are now.

While I read the book I learned a lot and I had fun doing it too. Then again I'm a history buff so I find this stuff entertaining all the time but for those unfamiliar with this type of book, and the book can be picked up and put down easily and it made me feel like I would be lost if I had to set it down because of how it was written and I had a lot of laugh out loud moments while I read it.

Overall, I highly recommend this to those with a penchant for history and those with a sense of humour as well as those just wanting to read about the royal scandals. Kim Kardashian, Lindsay Lohan and Britney Spears have nothing on the scandals in this book. I'm looking forward to reading the other books that the author has written that follow this same topic as this one.

Jennifer says

To sum up this book quickly: it's good potty reading. In the forward Farquhar explains that he avoids the entire 20th century (with the exception of a few stories about Wallis Simpson). He basically points out that the "scandals" of the 20th century are nothing compared to let's say ordering a small cache of boys to swim naked with you, so they can nip at the treat between your legs. Marrying a divorcee just seems milquetoast in comparison.

Anyhow, it was an enjoyable read. Sad at times, sometimes even disturbing, but for the most part is written with a witty dark humor that will make you laugh at even the most sickeningly, depraved noble. While

Farquhar sticks to European royalty for the book, he does include an entire section on Roman Caesars, and early Popes, all of which easily out-deprave the nobles the rest of the book is about.

Each story is short, a sort of Cliff's Notes. This is especially true if you are familiar with some of the stories. For the stories I already knew, his facts were accurate, if a bit summary. This is good, because each tale is bite-sized, making the book good for niblet reading here and there.

The tales Farquhar chooses to tell are sometimes hits, and sometimes misses. I particularly did not see how the detailed accounting of the murder of the Romanov's really fit with some of the other stories, for example.

If you like a good scandal, need some quick reads for here and there, or have a fascination with the excesses that unbridled power brings, this is a book worth checking out at the library.

Catherine Wetzel says

Great reading of sorted past of royals throughout history, along with popes. On started I could not put it down

Fergie says

If you're a fan or student of history with any former knowledge of the subject as it pertains to the world's royal ruling classes, this book will not teach you much beyond what you already know. Farquhar's book provides snippets of information and nothing more (some chapters are literally a few paragraphs in length). At times, Farquhar writing style has him sounding like a court gossip, even when he's accurate about the facts he's portraying. At other times, sections come across as overly dramatized based on his choice of words. As I read, I couldn't help but think that the online source of Wikipedia goes into further depth than Farquhar did on his chosen subjects.

A TREASURY OF ROYAL SCANDALS is an easy read and certainly not the worst book ever written, but not one that provided any significant increase in my knowledge base on the subject. One detail that seemed somewhat unnecessary was Farquhar's choice to not write from a chronological standpoint; instead, he chose to jump around with no real, clear purpose. Farquhar even saves the ancient Roman world for later in the book, then jumps to Papal leaders (the one group I knew very little about, but for whom, I discovered I had little interest). Perhaps this book might ignite someone's interest on the subject of royal rulers. For me, I'd rather devote my time reading more in depth, serious studies on some of this book's subjects. To me, this book disappointed. In fact, more often than not, I felt I was reading a tabloid rendition of royal history; a book that, in my mind, tended to unfairly diminish and caricaturize many of the subjects in which it portrayed.
