



Royal Babylon: The Alarming History of European Royalty

Karl Shaw

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An uproarious, eye-opening history of Europe's notorious royal houses that leaves no throne unturned and will make you glad you live in a democracy.

Do you want to know which queen has the unique distinction of being the only known royal kleptomaniac? Or which empress kept her dirty underwear under lock and key? Or which czar, upon discovering his wife's infidelity, had her lover decapitated and the head, pickled in a jar, placed at her bedside?

Royally dishing on hundreds of years of dubious behavior, *Royal Babylon* chronicles the manifold appalling antics of Europe's famous families, behavior that rivals the characters in an Aaron Spelling television series. Here, then, are the insane kings of Spain, one of whom liked to wear sixteen pairs of gloves at one time; the psychopathic Prussian sovereigns who included Frederick William and his 102-inch waist; sex-fixated French rulers such as Philip Duke D'Oreleans cavorting with more than a hundred mistresses; and, of course, the delightfully drunken and debauched Russian czars - Czar Paul, for example, who to make his soldiers goose-step without bending their legs had steel plates strapped to their knees. But whether Romanov or Windsor, Habsburg or Hanover, these extravagant lifestyles, financed as they were by the royals' badgered subjects, bred the most wonderfully offbeat and disturbingly unbelievable tales - and Karl Shaw has collected them all in this hysterically funny and compulsively readable book.

Royal Babylon is history, but not as they teach it in school, and it underlines in side-splitting fashion Queen Victoria's famous warning that it is unwise to look too deeply into the royal houses of Europe.

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