



Mistresses: A History of the Other Woman

By Elizabeth Abbott

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Mistresses: A History of the Other Woman By Elizabeth Abbott

She has been known as the 'kept woman', the 'fancy woman' and the 'other woman'. She exists as both a fictional character and flesh-and-blood human being. But who is she, really? What do Madame de Pompadour, Heloise, Marilyn Monroe, Jane Eyre and Camilla Parker-Bowles have in common? Why do women become mistresses, and what is it like to have a private life that is usually also a secret life? Is a mistress merely a wife-in-waiting, or is she the very definition of the emancipated, independent female? In *Mistresses* Elizabeth Abbott intelligently examines the motives of some of history's most infamous and fascinating women. Drawing intimate portraits of those who have - either by chance, coercion or choice - assumed this complex role, from Chinese concubines and European royal mistresses to mobster molls and trophy dolls, *Mistresses* offers a rich blend of history, personal biography and cultural insight.

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Editorial Review

Review

'a fascinating account of the other woman through history, more sobering than titillating.' Sunday Times 'It is not just mistresses, it seems, who need to wake up to the new millennium; one of the surprises of this engrossing book is how mired in myth and fantasy it reveals our attitude to mistresses as being.' Sunday Telegraph

About the Author

Elizabeth Abbott is Research Associate at the Trinity College, University of Toronto and, from 1991 to 2004, was Dean of Women. She is author of several books, including Sugar: A Bittersweet History and Haiti: A Modern History, also published by Duckworth, and A History of Marriage. She lives in Toronto.

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