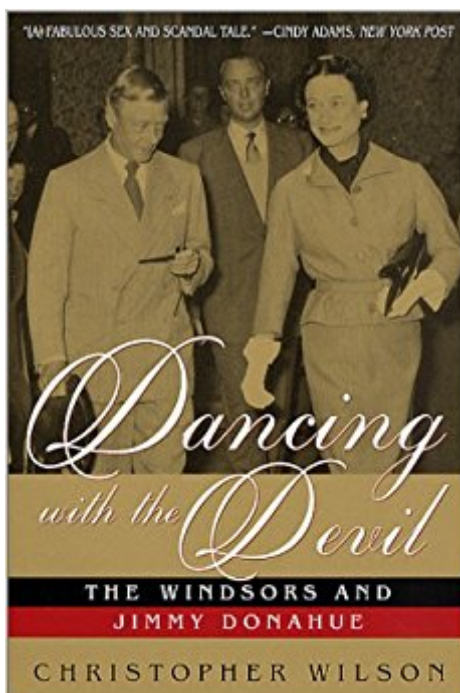


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Dancing With The Devil: The Windsors And Jimmy Donahue



Synopsis

The story of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor is one of the most romantic of all time: Edward VIII abdicated his throne and gave up an empire so that he could marry the woman he loved, American divorcee Wallis Simpson. Very few people suspected, and even fewer actually knew, that the Duchess cuckolded him "and almost gave him up" for a gay playboy twenty years her junior. Blond and slender, Jimmy Donahue was the archetypal post-war playboy. He could fly a plane, speak several languages, play the piano, and tell marvelous jokes. People loved him for his wit, charm and personality. The grandson of millionaire Frank W. Woolworth, Jimmy knew he would never need to work. Instead, he set about carving for himself a career of mischief. Some said evil. Gay at a time when the homosexual act was still illegal, Jimmy was notorious within America's upper class, and loved to shock. Though press agents arranged for him to be seen with female escorts, his pursuits, until he met the Duchess of Windsor, were exclusively homosexual. He was thirty-five when he was befriended by the Duke and Duchess of Windsor in 1950. The Duchess was fifty-four, and despite the difference in age, there was an instant attraction. A burgeoning sexual relationship "a perverse sort of love" was formed between Jimmy and the Duchess. Together with the Duke, they became an inseparable trio, the closest of friends. As Jimmy had planned, the royal couple became obsessed with him. With information from surviving contemporaries, *Dancing with the Devil* is the extraordinary tale of three remarkable people and their unique and twisted relationship.

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Customer Reviews

It shouldn't be a fascinating read, this book--it really shouldn't. It's just higher gossip about how Wallis Simpson took a younger lover after her marriage to Edward, and how she and said lover enjoyed nights of "nonpenetrative and principally oral sex." I mean, who cares? Shouldn't our minds be on higher things? The trouble is, it's all absolutely fascinating. The lover was the mad, bad, and dangerous-to-know Jimmy Donahue: grandson of Woolworth's founder Frank W. Woolworth, heir to millions, and considered to be dashing good-looking. (From the photos in the book, he looks a bit like a baby-faced bore, but maybe having those millions in the bank skewed perceptions of him, somewhat.) Donahue could fly a plane, could speak several languages, was a marvelous raconteur, and, on top of all this, was a promiscuous homosexual. That didn't stop him from forming a passionate friendship with Wallis, however, that soon turned into more than mere friendship. Wilson suggests that this constituted, on Wallis's part, perhaps "the greatest betrayal in history." Edward gave up his throne and kingdom for the woman he loved, only to have her take off with another man. However, it was never quite so simple as this. Edward didn't want a normal sexual relationship with Wallis, really--he got all of the satisfaction he wanted from playing with her feet--while she evidently continued to adore him, even if she found that the need for sexual satisfaction drove her into Donahue's arms. It might even have been that Edward knew, but didn't mind. The whole thing reads like some kind of royal soap opera, and, as such, it's absolutely riveting. --Christopher Hart, .co.uk --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Those interested in the empty but privileged lives of American Wallis Simpson (1896-1986) and her husband, the duke of Windsor (1894-1972), who renounced the British throne for her in 1936, will be absorbed by this gossipy story of a strange love triangle. After the abdication, the royal family refused to accept the duchess, so the Windsors embarked on a life of travel and conspicuous consumption. In 1950, they befriended Jimmy Donahue (1915-1966), a playboy and an heir to the Woolworth fortune. Although Donahue was 19 years younger than the duchess and an active homosexual, the two began an amorous relationship that lasted four years. According to the author, despite the Windsors' epic romance, the duchess was apparently unfulfilled sexually (though she did, according to an unnamed source, indulge her husband's foot fetish and interest in masochism). Donahue's mother, Jessie, controlled his purse strings, because her son had repeatedly demonstrated his recklessness, but she approved of his relationship with the duchess. Jessie and her son paid for the Windsors' extravagances in exchange for using the royal connection for social advancement. Wilson, a London journalist and observer of royal romance (*A Greater Love: Prince Charles's Twenty Year Affair with Camilla Parker Bowles*), writes in a brisk, entertaining style, but

there is little here to justify his description of Donahue as a self-indulgent substance abuser as charming. Indeed, Donahue took pleasure in scandalizing those in his social circle; for instance, he would strip or display his genitals to waiters and party guests, and he enjoyed cuckolding Edward Windsor. The duke, who not only endured his wife's affair in silence but accepted gifts from her lover, did, however, eventually call a halt to the relationship. Photos not seen by PW. (Jan.)
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I came away from this book feeling very sorry for the obscenely rich. Their lives were spent looking for the next amusement, attending the next dinner party, sailing to the next continent. Jimmy Donahue is the star of this tale, rather than the Duke and Duchess who were merely his playthings. Jimmy was an attention seeker to the nth degree, often acting out in bizarre ways that delighted him, if not others. I enjoyed the book and recommend it to anyone who likes to have the inside story about famous people. My only complaint is that sometimes there was an abundance of detail that added little to the story and, in fact, slowed it down.

I purchased this book as a "guilty pleasure" to read on a flight. It was a documentation of the lives of the idle rich, and while I was reviled by the subjects of the book and the truly useless and parasitic lives they led, some spawning generations of well-heeled, indulged and frustrated offspring, I did find it a fascinating cautionary tale of the rich and useless.. The Windsors, who neither toiled nor did they spin, lived off the awe of royalty and the wealthy people who sought validation through their association with them. It was a story of poor little rich people who gained no wisdom or satisfaction from the values they held. It is a book that can make you ever so glad to be one of the "little people".

Insightful about the super rich of the 1920s - early 1940s. The Windsors were dependent on their super rich friends to maintain their lifestyle and were not bothered in least to do so. Per this book's portrayal the Duchess was an unethical, very immoral person and the Duke was not much better.

Aside from the author's annoying tendency to break into French or Latin phrases when English will do and numerous awkward sentences, it reads okay. The first half of this is spent on the endless boring details of the deprived Mr. Donahue's pitiful upbringing. Who cares? His dalliance with the disloyal duchess

Whenever a film or tv miniseries is produced about the Windsors, they stop where this book begins. Jim Parsons should buy up the rights and play Jimmy. Trashy truth, but sometimes life and the truth lean towards trashy. Jimmy Donahue lived as an openly gay man before anybody ever used the term gay. Just think how many loyal British subjects that hated the Duchess would have liked to be the person giving her a good kick under the table.

Like watching a car accident, you just cannot look away!!! Weird rich people. No boundaries. No morals. Evil. Selfish. Cruel. Sick. It is hard to believe that these people existed. Fascinating book. The Duke and Duchess were leeches and without morals. Jimmy was a mess and his mother kept him that way with the help from his rich cousin. This is like reading a trashy magazine, but like I said you cannot stop reading. A+++++

Completely fascinating, well written account of the life and times of the strange Jimmy Donahue - scion of the Woolworth's Five and Dime dynasty - who despite being an avowed and colorful homosexual, for four years apparently carried on a torrid affair with the enigmatic Wallis Simpson, Dutchess of Windsor, with the Duke himself looking on. Lots about Mr. Donahue's famous cousin - Barbara Hutton and her life and (many) loves. Great read - and an interesting account of society ways in 30s, 40s and early 50s.

Very interesting. It provides a different perspective of the private life of the Duke and Duchess, although some details are not always convincing. It portrays the Duchess, not only as a pleasure seeking woman, but one who, primarily seeks to retain her societal position as Duchess. She is a master of deception and manipulation. The Duke however, is seen as having been rejected by the Royals, and in a way, by the Duchess, who he idolises. He becomes a sad, lonely, former King.

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