



Love and Louis XIV: The Women in the Life of the Sun King

By Antonia Fraser

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The self-proclaimed Sun King, Louis XIV ruled over the most glorious and extravagant court in seventeenth-century Europe. Now, Antonia Fraser goes behind the well-known tales of Louis's accomplishments and follies, exploring in riveting detail his intimate relationships with women.

The king's mother, Anne of Austria, had been in a childless marriage for twenty-two years before she gave birth to Louis XIV. A devout Catholic, she instilled in her son a strong sense of piety and fought successfully for his right to absolute power. In 1660, Louis married his first cousin, Marie-Thérèse, in a political arrangement. While unfailingly kind to the official "Queen of Versailles," Louis sought others to satisfy his romantic and sexual desires. After a flirtation with his sister-in-law, his first important mistress was Louise de La Vallière, who bore him several children before being replaced by the tempestuous and brilliant Athénaïs, marquise de Montespan. Later, when Athénaïs's reputation was tarnished, the king continued to support her publicly until Athénaïs left court for a life of repentance. Meanwhile her children's governess, the intelligent and seemingly puritanical Françoise de Maintenon, had already won the king's affections; in a relationship in complete contrast to his physical obsession with Athénaïs, Louis XIV lived happily with Madame de Maintenon for the rest of his life, very probably marrying her in secret. When his grandson's child bride, the enchanting Adelaide of Savoy, came to Versailles she lightened the king's last years—until tragedy struck.

With consummate skill, Antonia Fraser weaves insights into the nature of women's religious lives—as well as such practical matters as contraception—into her magnificent, sweeping portrait of the king, his court, and his ladies.

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Download and Read Free Online *Love and Louis XIV: The Women in the Life of the Sun King* By Antonia Fraser

Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Prolific royal biographer Fraser (*Marie Antoinette*) has assiduously researched her measured yet engrossing study, shedding welcome light on the galaxy of influential women who orbited the dazzling Sun King. The most important woman in Louis XIV's life, in Fraser's telling, was probably the first—his mother, Anne of Austria. The voluptuous, pleasure-loving but pious and dignified queen regent inculcated Louis with the notion that he was a godlike miracle who was nevertheless accountable to the deity for his sins. As this narrowly focused history suggests, Louis was constantly trying to reconcile his gargantuan sexual appetite with his duty to his people and his God. Louis gave up his first love, the bold and amusing Marie Mancini, to marry his graceless first cousin, the Spanish princess Maria Teresa. A serious flirtation with his charming sister-in-law Henriette-Anne, sister of England's Charles II, ended when Louis fell for Charles and Henriette's decoy, the timid virgin Louise de La Vallière. In sexual thrall to the intelligent, magnetic Athénaïs, the Marquise de Montespan, the king intriguingly threw her over for Françoise Scarron, the puritanical governess to their bastards. Lastly, Louis gave his heart to his spirited granddaughter-in-law Adélaïde, who died of measles within days of her husband, the Dauphin. (*Oct. 17*)

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Adelaide of Savoy, a favorite companion of Louis XIV during his dotage, remarked, "Under a king, a country is really ruled by women." Fraser's history of the court of the Sun King, seen through the lens of the women closest to him, is a highly readable confection, and unfolds as a sequence of cameos. There is Queen Anne of Austria, Louis's steely mother and regent, who carefully molded the infant King into an Apollo adored by the court; and his wife, Marie-Therese of Spain, who gave him no trouble except by dying. Then comes a trio of mistresses: Louise de La Valliere, who became a nun as recompense for her sins; Athenais, voluptuous and fecund; and Madame de Maintenon, the discreet and redoubtable confidante of his later years. With vivid wit, Fraser demonstrates that within the edifice of the monarchy there were deep crannies of ordinary affection.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Antonia Fraser (*Mary Queen of Scots, Royal Charles, Marie Antoinette*) departs somewhat from her usual scholarly style with this book, though her research is as rigorous as ever. The gusto with which she describes Louis XIV's philandering strikes some reviewers as reminiscent of tabloid papers' obsessions with the love lives of celebrities; others note her distance from the people she describes, with little analysis offered as to their thoughts or motivations as they participate in the king's journey into sin and eventual redemption. Fraser's mastery of the biographer's craft is as evident as ever, however, and the occasional lurid aside mostly serves to make her work more accessible to the average reader.

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This Love and Louis XIV: The Women in the Life of the Sun King book is absolutely not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you have by reading this book is definitely information inside this reserve incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. That Love and Louis XIV: The Women in the Life of the Sun King without we recognize teach the one who looking at it become critical in thinking and analyzing. Don't become worry Love and Louis XIV: The Women in the Life of the Sun King can bring once you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it with your lovely laptop even telephone. This Love and Louis XIV: The Women in the Life of the Sun King having very good arrangement in word in addition to layout, so you will not really feel uninterested in reading.

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