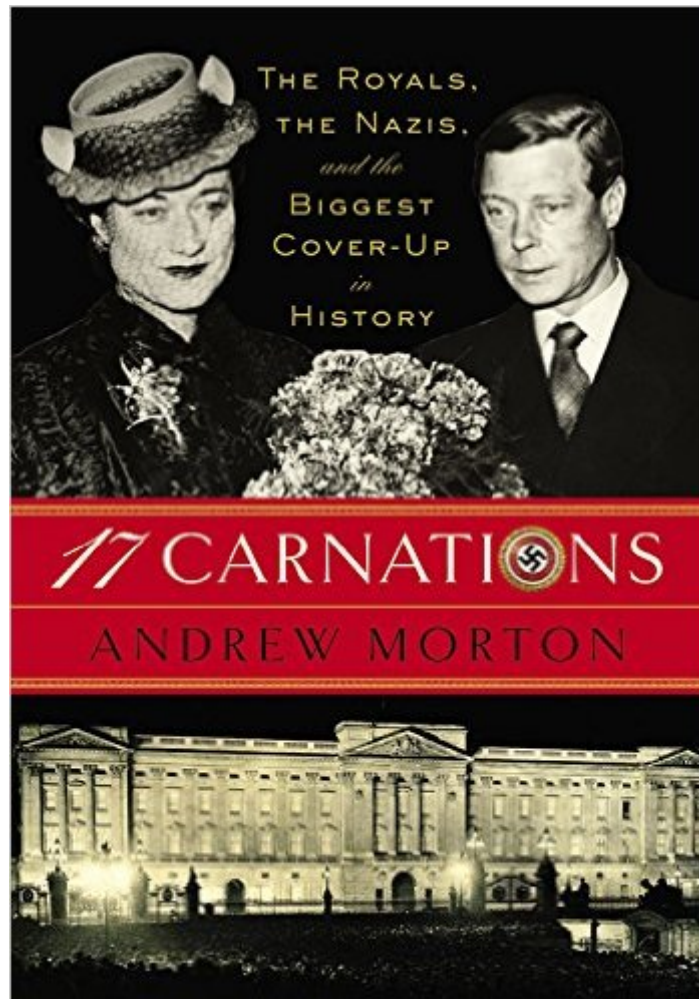


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17 Carnations: The Royals, The Nazis, And The Biggest Cover-Up In History



Synopsis

[Read by James Langton]A meticulously researched historical tour de force in the style of the bestselling *In the Garden of Beasts*. Historian Andrew Morton's *17 Carnations* combines his considerable research background with his proven talent for addictive and readable narrative, giving us a true story steeped in intrigue, suspense, and historical drama. *17 Carnations* tells the story of the feckless Edward VIII, Duke of Windsor, and his wife Wallis Simpson, whose affair with Joachim von Ribbentrop embroiled the duke in a German plot to use him as a puppet king during their takeover of the British Empire. Although we know that the war ended with Hitler's defeat, Edward's story was far from over. The duke's collaboration with Hitler had resulted in piles of correspondence between them. This damning correspondence, now hidden in a German castle that had fallen to American soldiers, could forever tarnish the reputation of the royal family. *17 Carnations* reveals, for the first time in history, the story of the cover-up of those letters, starting with a daring heist - by order of Churchill and the king themselves - to bring the letters back safely to England and out of American hands. Morton's unique experience and training make him the perfect person to tell this story as it's never been told before, fusing history and entertainment to create a vivid, atmospheric chronicle of the Windsors' darkest secrets. The shadowy connection between the House of Windsor, the German aristocracy, and Hitler has hovered on the edge of public consciousness for decades, but no royal biography or historical chronicle has been able to tell the full story - until now. Drawing on FBI documents, material from the German and British Royal Archives, and the personal correspondence of Churchill, Truman, Eisenhower, and the Windsors themselves, *17 Carnations* is a dazzling historical drama full of adventure, intrigue, and startling revelations by a master of the genre.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Andrew Morton is a British celebrity journalist best known as the author of an eyebrow-raising biography of the late Princess of Wales, who apparently was his unacknowledged collaborator if not co-author. That book was the beginning of a career during which Morton has produced a number of "unauthorized biographies." His latest production bears all his typical hallmarks: hyperbolic claims and hints of scandalous secrets which eventually boil down to nothing, or at least nothing much, until nearly the very end. This book can be roughly divided into three parts. The first 8 or 9 chapters are a recapitulation of the career of the Prince of Wales during the 1920s and 1930s: a lonely and emotionally damaged man who found love or at least release in a series of affairs with married women. Eventually he fell deeply in love with an American woman living in London with her second husband, Mrs. Wallis Simpson. Mrs. Simpson appeared to be exactly the sort of woman the Prince needed (Morton drops some hints about these needs), and by the time he became King Edward VIII in 1936 he could no longer imagine life without her. For her part Mrs. Simpson appears to have balanced the King and her husband along with several other possible lovers (including the German Ambassador von Ribbentrop, whose habit of sending her bouquets of 17 roses or carnations in memory of the number of their rendezvous is the source for Morton's title.) When it was made clear to Edward VIII that he could not remain King if he married a twice-divorced American, he abdicated in December 1936 and became the Duke of Windsor.

I generally find books by Andrew Morton to be more gossip than fact, but overall, *17 Carnations: The Royals, the Nazis and the Biggest Cover-up in History* was better than I expected. Still, having read quite a bit about King Edward VIII, who became the Duke of Windsor, I thought that there was a lot of information in *17 Carnations* that is common knowledge. In this regard, the second half of the book was more informative to me. The lives of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor (the former Wallis Warfield Simpson) have been covered very extensively. In the first half of *17 Carnations*, Morton briefly recounts their childhoods, their families, Edward's becoming Prince of Wales and then King. He also covers Edward's romances and Wallis's two marriages, as well as their own romance "which will cause Edward to give up his throne. The first half also includes much about Operation Willi, the Nazi plot to kidnap the Windsors and restore Edward to power once Hitler defeated Great Britain. A lot of information has been written about all of the above and Morton

quotes liberally from books that cover these areas is greater detail including Operation Willi: the Nazi Plot of Kidnap the Duke of Windsor by Michael Bloch, and King Edward VIII by Philip Ziegler. It was in the second half of 17 Carnations that I actually learned some new facts. As World War II was coming to an end, the Allies were doing all they could to recover German documents. The British were obsessed with any document that might damage the monarchy, and their main targets were any papers that mentioned the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and their possible collusion with the Nazi government. Even when the "Windsor File" was discovered, great efforts were made to destroy it.

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