

# What the Duchess of Windsor Won't Tell In Her Memoirs

*She'd never dare be frank about why her  
ambitious dreams didn't come true*

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**W**hat the Duchess of Windsor will not tell in her memoirs is, I believe, her overall story. For this—take my word for it—is a story of bitter frustrations which began many years ago and still go on.

As I said last week on the nineteenth anniversary of the Duke of Windsor's abdication as King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions Beyond the Seas and Emperor of India, the Duchess hoped to be Queen of England. Then she hoped to be the King'smorganatic wife. Finally, as a consolation prize, you might say, she was ready to settle for royal rank and acceptance in the Royal Family.

But one after another these hopes eluded her. And I'm convinced that she was largely responsible; that it was the same characteristics which brought her—a nice girl from Baltimore—to a King's heart, which shaped her defeats and continue to do so.

When I speak of her occupying the King's heart I am not being sentimental but realistic. The Duke of Windsor's devotion to his Duchess is reminiscent of the love his great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, bore her consort, Prince Albert. His submission to her slightest wish is amazing to see. He has said, many times, "Without her life would not have been worth living."

Today, after 20 years, he continues a male Trilby to her Svengali, and gives every appearance of being completely happy in the role.

What are the characteristics which brought the Duchess so far and then boomeranged? In my mind there's no doubt about the answer to that question—her exceedingly strong (if charm-coated) will, her aggressiveness and her ego. Both before and after the abdication it was these characteristics that alarmed many in England. They feared what she might do, given any opportunity—and saw to it no opportunity was given.

Recently it was these characteristics that caused the Duchess to break with Cleveland Amory, the second ghost-writer to undertake her memoirs only to be fired, or to bow out. Mr. Amory—quite unfairly, it seems to me—has divulged that it is the Duchess' intention to criticize the Royal Family in her memoirs. This has brought about an exceedingly bad press in England, with headlines asking "How Dare She?" and predicting "Romantic White-wash Coming from the Duchess."

As I said in these pages last week, I no longer like the Duchess of Windsor. She has become so completely engrossed in herself and in her pursuit

of pleasure that she neither knows nor cares what others are thinking or feeling. Had she been more conscientious about her position in history she would not have to search so constantly for excitement and amusement. She would have found peace within herself. Also, I suspect, she would not be in the predicament she now is in where her memoirs are concerned.

The Duchess' memoirs, written as honestly as good taste would allow, would have true historic value and also be one of the greatest love stories of all time. There's no doubt they would earn her well in excess of a million dollars. So should these memoirs never be completed—for any one of a number of current reasons—the Duchess would face another frustration. For she loves money and gravitates towards it.

She spends, I venture to say, \$30,000 or more a year on clothes. I'm told, incidentally, that at the end of a season she allows her suits, dresses and other items to be sold. I suspect there will be no mention of this in her memoirs although this is not an unusual procedure with women who are devoted to beautiful clothes and reluctant to be seen in the same costume more than a few times.

There are many women, of course, who are only too happy to appear in a dress that once belonged to the Duchess of Windsor. And these sales, discreetly arranged through a friend, give the Duchess an opportunity to replenish her extraordinary wardrobe.

Generally the Duchess does not go shopping in the usual sense. Couturiers, delighted to number her among their clientele, send their newest things to her. And, when she has ordered what she wishes, they send their fitters to her, too.

All of this, of course, runs true to royal custom. More and more the Duchess seems to favor the ways of royalty. The very routine and protocol against which the Duke rebelled as Prince of Wales and later as King is more and more observed at the parties which the Windsors give and attend. Lately, too, as you may have noticed, the dogs that accompany the Duchess are not the long-favored Cairns. They're pugs. As a friend, presenting the Duchess with a pug, explained, "You and the Duke should have pugs, Wallis. They've always been favorites of royalty, you know."



When the Duke was made Governor of the Bahamas the Duchess referred to her new home as "Elba," Napoleon's island of banishment.

It may be the Duchess in her memoirs will tell of the deep resentment she feels because the Duke never has been appointed to any high office. I wonder? During the war his Governorship of the Bahamas was a great disappointment to both of them. They had hoped he might, at least, be named Governor General of Canada or British Ambassador to the United States.

The Duke, in the main, was silent about his Bahamas job. But not the Duchess! No reporter left her without hearing what a wicked waste it was for the Duke to govern a coral reef at a time when men of his background and knowledge were needed in the world. Amusingly enough, too, she used to head her letters "Elba"—Napoleon's island of banishment, of course.

At first, no doubt about it, she did a splendid job as the Governor's wife—even if she did spend over three times the \$6,000 which the Board of Works had allowed for the reconstruction and decoration of the Governor's Residence. But this, properly enough, soon became unimportant compared to her activity in behalf of the island's undernourished children and her work with the Red Cross and in the Canteen.

The first evidence that all was not well on the islands came with George Wood's resignation from the Duke's entourage. For years—ever since their flight from France after the Germans took Paris—George Wood, his Austrian wife, Rosa, and the Windsors had been dear, close friends. Suddenly they did not even speak. The reason behind this break is something I'm sure the Duchess never will reveal.

As the Duchess—and perhaps the Duke, too—became bored and restless in the Bahamas there began, on one pretext or another, a series of visits to the United States; to Florida or Washington, to Baltimore or New York. (Continued on page 12)

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These became more frequent and of longer duration until, at last, the Duke resigned his post. Whereupon the Windsors leased an apartment in New York's Waldorf Towers, just above me.

It was at this time that I saw them most often. The Duke I had known and liked before. The Duchess I found to be an amusing and charming creature, a "bonne fille." With time, however, I came to like her less and to admire her less. She thought of no one but herself, had concern for nothing but her pleasure and her ego.

Will she admit in her book, I wonder, how she resented the pro-German tag with which she and the Duke sometimes were labeled? I think not.

The Windsors' pre-war visit to Hitler certainly is easily explained. The Duke hoped to prevent all that happened so soon afterward. He believes, I know, that had he remained King, World War II never would have occurred. He has said so many times.

I invited the Duke and Duchess to several dinner parties at which visiting French generals and their wives also were my guests. Invariably the Duke would lapse into German, the language he always has preferred and speaks best. Peremptorily the Duchess would stop him.

To deny, as she has, that the Duke ever was pro-German is stupid. He never was pro-Nazi. But he couldn't be anything but pro-German with all his German ancestors.

More and more as the years go on, the Duchess seeks to compensate for all she hoped for—and lost—with an almost feverish pursuit of pleasure. It's my considered opinion that many of the things she has done in this search, largely because of the high-handed, selfish way in which she has done them, have contributed to her final frustration—the fact that the Windsors' prestige is not what it used to be and the Windsors' romantic aura is sadly diminished.

When you see the Duchess today it is difficult to picture her as the heroine of one of the greatest love stories of all time. She's so brittle, hard and determined. Her

hands, which always were large, never compliant or feminine, are less attractive than ever, probably because her gestures are more dominant. It is her eyes, the soft blue of violets, that remain her best feature.

One incident which stands out unpleasantly in my memory is the Duchess' reaction to the death of Iles Brody, shortly after he authored his unflattering book, *Gone With the Windsors*.

"See!" she said, snapping her fingers. "See what happens to them when they go against me!"

It was a pity, I think, that the Windsors should have been in Venice last August when the *Achilleus* put out for my cruise of the Grecian islands—and that the Duchess should have felt called upon to make wise cracks about the cruise and later should have refused to allow anyone to make any mention of it in her presence.

All of this should have been far beneath her dignity. Had she made a life for herself and the Duke befitting their position in history my cruise would have been of no matter to her. She would have been otherwise occupied sponsoring and working for some of the many things that need doing in this world.

The Duchess, I'm sure, never will admit her disappointment that she and the Duke are not surrounded by a brilliant court of statesmen, diplomats and other international figures, just such a court as she enjoyed for a little while in London before the abdication. In spite of her beautifully appointed houses and her perfect knowledge of food and wine, important and interesting people seek the Windsors less and less.

I bear no ill will for the Duchess of Windsor or her royal spouse who gave up all he possessed for her love. In fact, I wish them happiness—if they can find it.

Finally, I do not think the Duchess will admit in her memoirs what she may very well never have admitted to herself—that she could have been the most important woman of her time. But she just wasn't up to it.

THE END