

WALLIS SIMPSON: A TYPICAL CINDERELLA STORY?

By

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ABSTRACT

Mrs. Wallis Simpson led an entertaining, adventurous, and scandalous life. This girl from Baltimore traveled the world, fell in love over and over again, and climbed to the top of one of the most prestigious social circles possible, into the arms of the Edward VIII, King of England. I will explore how Wallis Simpson was categorized through class and socioeconomic status in her early life, how she broke many preconceived gender roles of the era including reversal in relationship dominance, and other ways that her divorcee marital status affected public perception of her. I will explore these issues through the lens of newspapers from England and the United States, with a focus on how the views in the newspapers differ between the countries.

Story of the Romance that upset an Empire:
An American Girl, Twice Married and Twice Divorced, Is the Cause of An
Unprecedented Conflict.
This is the story of King Edward VIII, of Wallis Warfield Simpson – and of the British
Empire.

-*The New York Times*¹

INTRODUCTION

Most little girls dream of falling in love and marrying Prince Charming, as the heroine in most fairytales do. But, what if it really happened in real life? The circumstances were far from ideal, she was in her second marriage and he was more of a man-child who did not seek the throne, but Wallis Simpson from Baltimore, Maryland, did indeed capture the heart of Edward VIII of England in the early 1930s. As *The Evening Independent* put it in this cheerful way , “Those who dote on Cinderella stories can read to their hearts content of the romance of Mrs. Wallis Warfield Simpson and King Edward VIII.”² On the other hand an article from *The Boston Herald* featured in *The Telegraph* took a harsher, more realistic response when it said, “A middle aged man is hardly a Prince Charming, and a woman of Mrs. Simpson’s age who has two husbands living is not an unsophisticated Cinderella.”³

The period in which Mrs. Simpson and the Prince started and evolved their relationship was a time of exploration, of new ideas and inventions. In the early

¹ “The Story Of The Romance That Upset An Empire,” *The New York Times* (New York, NY), 6 December 1936.

² “Real Cinderella Story is That of Woman Who Brought A Crisis To Powerful British Kingdom,” *The Evening Independent* (St. Petersburg, FL), 10 December 1936.

³ “If It Happened Here,” *The Telegraph (Nasuha)*, 8 December 1936.

1930s the first cartoon with sound was produced, synthetic rubber was made, British scientists at Cambridge split the atom, and Nylon was discovered.⁴ The First World War had already collapsed, but it still lingered in people's thoughts.

Prince Edward had dissociated himself from his native country; his relationship with Mrs. Simpson was the last stand so to say. Prince Edward and Wallis Simpson's scandal led to his being one of the shortest reigning monarchs in English history. He never had the chance to be crowned due to his marriage. The *Spartanburg-Herald* remarked unfavorably towards the prince, "the dignity of that throne not only is the backbone of the British monarchy, in these parlous times when kings are giving way to dictators, but it is the chief bond which holds the great empire together."⁵

Wallis Simpson, who caused such a crisis, led a fascinating life before the two had ever met; and it only continued to grow more intriguing and bizarre after their marriage. The affair took place during a very troubling time in history also; just before World War II. Edward and Wallis had no idea what controversies they would create with their relationship.

The themes I will explore in this essay include: how the couple, and more specifically Wallis Simpson, was portrayed in the newspaper media in England and in the United States. I will explore: how Wallis Simpson was categorized poorly through class and socioeconomic status in her early life, how she broke many preconceived gender roles of the era including a reversal in relationship dominance,

⁴ Adrian Franklin, *Collecting the 20th Century*, (Sydney, Australia: University of New South Wales Press, 2010) 74.

⁵ "Throne Seen Tie Alone That Binds Empire Together," *The Spartanburg Herald* (Spartanburg, SC), 4 December 1936.

and other ways that her divorcee marital status affected public perception of her. I will explore these issues through the lens that major newspapers in England and the United States used to address these topics.

It must be noted that newspapers in the England and the United States are vastly different at this time. The layout of the paper is the biggest difference. Papers in the United States displayed vast headlines on the front page that caught the passerby's interest. Other large text with pictures drew in reader's interest, and human-interest stories were valued and readily displayed. Alternatively, the papers in England, for instance, still provided court circulars, often on the front page of a newspaper. This can be tied back to the strong British ties of tradition.

Additionally, newspapers in England were geared toward certain audiences, mostly right, conservative, and the upper middle classes. But lengthy news articles, the kind that are found in the United States, are hidden deeper within the English editions. The fact that royals are treated as royals at this time, and their private lives are respected and not reported is vastly different from the American perspective of royals treated as celebrity. Their status of royal in the United States made many people believe that this entitles the public to know many facets of their lives, especially when an American is involved with royalty.

I choose to focus mainly on *The New York Times* and *The Times* in London because both newspapers had a large, equivalent readership base and they were well respected in each country. The stories contained in each would reflect the general attitudes of the public.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

There has been resurgence in the interest in the Duke and Duchess of Windsor recently with books, movies, and plays based on the pair. This section will focus on works starting with the first meeting of Wallis Simpson and Edward VIII to present day works.

One of the works that captures the love story is by Michael Bloch. Bloch, an assistant to the Duchess of Windsor's French lawyer Maître Suzanne Blum, wrote five highly documented books about the Windsors, including the compiled letters kept by Wallis's estate into a book, *Wallis and Edward: letters, 1931-1937: The Intimate Correspondence of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor*.⁶ The book contains family pictures, descriptions by Michael Bloch, and letters written by Wallis Simpson, her Aunt Bessie (Mrs. D. Buchanan Merryman), and Edward. This book offers an unparalleled look into the relationship of the couple. The editor clearly was enchanted by the relationship and presented Wallis Simpson in the most positive light possible. Her story is compiled into one of misunderstanding and hardship, with a few rays of happiness. This is most likely due to the fact that Wallis commissioned the book right before her death.⁷ This book is a foundation on which other secondary works are based.

Another author that presented Wallis Simpson in a positive light was Ralph Martin in his 1974 book, *The Woman He Loved*, which offers over-romanticized

⁶ Wallis Warfield Windsor, Edward Windsor, and Michael Bloch. *Wallis and Edward: letters, 1931-1937: The Intimate Correspondence of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor*. (New York: Summit Books, 1986).

⁷ Bloch, *Letters*, 8.

twaddle about the relationship between the Duke and Duchess.⁸ Martin does emphasize many times throughout the book that Wallis was as ordinary as ordinary could come in those days, but with her sharp and witty mind she was able to capture the Prince's interest. The author interjects the tale with descriptions by the Duchess herself, and a section of pictures of the Duke and Duchess, giving the story some authenticity.⁹ For the most part, however, the author writes this personal account as if he is the narrator of a dramatic tale of two lovers, of which the world is against. This book is different from the previous one because it is in narrative form, whereas the first book simply shows the correspondence and has brief descriptions of the letters. *The Woman He Loved* also borrows heavily upon newspaper articles from New York and London, namely the *Baltimore News-Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Times* from London; and from the memoirs of the Duke and Duchess themselves, *The Heart has Its Reasons* by the Duchess and *A King's Story* by the Duke.

Many books began to borrow off the memoirs of the Duke and Duchess starting in this period. One of the many books that did is Stephen Birmingham's 1981 book *Duchess: The Story of Wallis Warfield Windsor*.¹⁰ Birmingham was a former professor at the University of Cincinnati, and he took a haughty approach when writing about the Duchess' life. This is an approach that many British writers use. It reflects the common mood of the public at large. Birmingham relied heavily on other secondary sources of the time, with few primary sources.

⁸ Ralph G. Martin, *The Woman He Loved*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974).

⁹ Martin, *The Woman*, 97.

¹⁰ Stephen Birmingham, *Duchess: The Story of Wallis Warfield Windsor*. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1981).

Recently, it was the 75th anniversary of the abdication of the Duke, and authors and historians begin to focus on Wallis Simpson and the media attention she received. Maria Puente, in her article *Wallis Simpson: Material girl or merely Maligned?*¹¹ flip-flops between admiration of Wallis Simpson and harsh criticism. Her article analyses the movie *W.E.* which is produced, written, and directed by Madonna, and compares it to the real couple.¹² Her article is clearly written as a human-interest piece, designed to capture the interest of all using over-the-top descriptions and words. The author is clearly mystified by the story of Wallis Simpson and she capitalizes on the growing interest into this love story of the past.

Another book, which was turned into a movie, was *The King's Speech*.¹³ The book was written by Mark Logue, son of Lionel Logue the speech therapist who helped George VI, and Peter Conradi, an author and editor for *The Sunday Times*. The book was based on the recently discovered diaries of Lionel Logue, who had a first-hand account into the lives of the royals. These authors give an unobstructed look into how the British government handled the mass media surrounding Wallis Simpson and the King, and what lengths the government would go to in order to ensure the "cover-up."¹⁴ The view that the reader gets from this book is not from the outside, which is common. The reader gets to experience the workings of government, but from a different account, the account of a commoner. The authors' view on Wallis Simpson is that she is a cunning woman who distracted the King

¹¹ Maria Puente. *Wallis Simpson: Material girl or merely Maligned?* USA TODAY [Eau Claire] 6 Feb. 2012.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Mark Logue and Peter Conradi. *The King's Speech*. (New York: Sterling, 2010).

¹⁴ Louge, *The King's Speech*, 112.

from all of his stately duties and even “exerted some kind of sexual control over [the King],”¹⁵ which showed her dominant side, a break from the preconceived traditional gender roles of the time. The book is unlike those before it because it is based off a diary, but like many of the books written before it incorporates many different newspapers from all over the world.

Wallis Simpson was unlike most other women. Instead of beauty she used her wit and cleverness to charm men, and it was very successful in letting her climb the social ladder. Her outspokenness broke the traditional gender roles of the time in which women were expected to stand behind their man. Wallis was dominant in many aspects of her relationship with the Duke. Hester Vaizey, a historian, writer, and researcher, focuses on public and family relationships during World War II, and in her article *Empowerment or Endurance? War Wives' Experiences of Independence During and After the Second World War in Germany, 1939-1948*, focused on gender and women's stance in society. There is very little bias in this article, and it is heavily footnoted, documented, and peer reviewed. It is a great academic source for what women's roles in society might have been like during World War II. For instance, “Despite men's admiration for their working wives, husbands don't want to come home to a secretary, a teacher, a politician, a governess or a shopkeeper—they want to come home to nothing other than their wives.’ This was the advice given to women in *Das Blatt der Hausfrau* magazine in July 1949.”¹⁶ Even though the focus is on Germany in this article, I think many of the same aspects can be applied

¹⁵ Louge, *The King's Speech*, 110.

¹⁶ Hester Vaizey, “Empowerment or Endurance? War Wives' Experiences of Independence During and After the Second World War in Germany, 1939-1948.” *German History*. 29, no. 1: 57.

to women in war-torn Britain, and ultimately to how Wallis Simpson broke many gender roles in her relationship with Edward.

Wallis Simpson led an incredible life. It has been written on time and time again with differing views, which range from admiration to despise, American versus British. The works on how she broke traditional gender roles of the era and the divorcee status in her relationship, asserted her dominance in all of her relationships, and the class struggles she face early in her life; received both positive and negative appraisal.

THE GIRL FROM BALTIMORE?

Wallis Warfield was born into a life of meager means, and was a misfit from the start. This time in history, right before the turn into the twentieth century, included many monumental world events. Events include the first automobiles being driven, the Games of the First Olympiad were held in Athens, the first Library of Congress in the United States opened its doors to the public, and The Spanish-American-Cuban War.¹⁷

Wallis' mother, Alice Montague, came from an "Old Line" of Montagues, a family of "good breeding" in Maryland that became poor after the Civil War.¹⁸

Wallis' father, Teackle Wallis Warfield, came from a family of "new money. It was post-Civil War money, made in banking, insurance, railroads, and other forms of trade . . . and they were not popular in Baltimore society."¹⁹

Interestingly, Wallis Warfield's ancestors on her father's side were established in England about 650 years before William the Conqueror, Prince Edward's ancestor, landed there. The House of Warfield, under the name of Pagan de Warfield in 1068, can be found in the Domesday book.^{20 21} For that reason,

¹⁷ "Timeline – 19th century." *eHistory*, Ohio State University. accessed 16 Dec 2012, <http://ehistory.osu.edu/world/TimeLineDisplay.cfm?Era_id=13>.

¹⁸ Stephen Birmingham, *Duchess: The Story of Wallis Warfield Windsor*. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1981). 5. Hereafter Birmingham, *Duchess*.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ "Real Cinderella Story is That of Woman Who Brought A Crisis To Powerful British Kingdom," *The Evening Independent* (St. Petersburg, FL), 10 December 1936.

²¹ The Domesday Book, also known as The Great Survey and The Book of Winchester, was a survey, or census, commissioned by William the Conqueror. It was intended to document the wealth of the people and landowners so the Normans would be able to effectively administer taxes across England.

“Bessie Wallis Warfield was born into the best of Maryland and Virginia social circles in spite of her family’s near-poverty.”²²

Teackle Warfield did not have a prominent job; he was a county auctioneer. He was also known to be sickly, and rumored to be suffering from tuberculosis. Nonetheless, Alice Montague, whom was approaching maidenhood at age 26, was determined to marry Teackle Warfield, and she did.

Bessie Wallis Warfield was born in a health resort in Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania, 1896. Whether or not she was conceived before the wedding between her parents is unclear. Stephen Birmingham, along with Wallis Simpson herself, claim that Alice and Teackle were married one year before the birth of Wallis. However, the British Broadcasting Company, along with other reputable sources, claim that Wallis was born “just seven months after the marriage of her parents, causing some embarrassment to Warfield relatives for whom moral propriety was essential as the elite of Baltimore society.”²³

Teackle Warfield died just five months after the birth of his daughter from the effects of his tuberculosis, and left Alice and Wallis alone in the world. Alice Warfield received irregular handouts of money from family, which was to provide for herself and her daughter. After Teackle’s death, Alice and Wallis Warfield moved in with his mother, Mrs. Henry Mactier Warfield. Mrs. Warfield viewed this move more as an act of charity rather than welcoming her daughter-in-law and grandchild

²² “Real Cinderella Story is That of Woman Who Brought A Crisis To Powerful British Kingdom,” *The Evening Independent* (St. Petersburg, FL), 10 December 1936, 13.

²³ Jones, Chris. "Profile: Wallis Simpson." *BBC News*.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/2699035.stm (accessed September 17, 2012).

into her home.²⁴ While Alice and Wallis Warfield were secure in a large home, they were not pleased with the circumstances.

Alice and Wallis Warfield were kicked out of the Warfield house after Alice had taken a lover, and from there Wallis was forced to consistently move from home to home for much of her upbringing. As *The New York Times* wrote, Wallis Warfield

had a drab life. Her father died virtually penniless, and Mrs. Warfield was forced to take in boarders in the three-story brownstone house she rented in Baltimore. In those rather dismal days of near-poverty, the views of many a child might have become morose and self-conscious. But the girl had possessed from tender age the vivacity and wit which later made her a popular debutante and hostess to many people in many countries.²⁵

The New York Times, along with many other American Newspapers, took pity on the circumstances with which the young Mrs. Simpson was brought up, but almost singled her out as the fighter. She would have been, and was, the child and person that broke away from that style of living using her cunning and wit.

Wallis Warfield was presented at the Cotillon debutante ball²⁶ in December 1914 at the age of eighteen. Little did she know that she would become commemorated at this very event years later once she reached fame for gaining the King's attention. The *New York Times* had written, "For the first time in the history of that traditional annual society event, the Baltimore Bachelors Cotillon, the débutantes of the evening had a world event as well as the immediate occasion on their minds. It was recalled that exactly twenty-two years ago, Wallis Warfield . . .

²⁴ Birmingham, *Duchess*. 9.

²⁵ "MRS. SIMPSON MET EDWARD AS PRINCE: Former Baltimore Girl, Known as . . ." *New York Times* (1923-Current file); Dec 11, 1936; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The *New York Times* (1851-2009) 20.

²⁶ A cotillion ball was designed to present the young, single ladies of the community, to the rest of the community, as women who were from prominent families and had now reached marital age.

made her bow to society.”²⁷ Wallis had made a simple event of 40 girls debuting themselves into society, a world event. This article gained the attention of everyone in the world. It showed that Wallis went through the proper channels of American society to show that she was of good birth and of marital age. Through her mother’s marriage she was able to afford her silk debutante dress that was lined with pearls.

Shortly after her débute, in the spring of 1916, when Wallis Warfield was almost twenty, she decided to visit one of her Montague cousins in Florida, Corinne Mustin. Corinne Mustin was married to a naval officer stationed at the Pensacola naval air station, and loved to have company.²⁸ It was here that Wallis Warfield first met Lt. Earl Winfield Spencer Jr. Corinne invited him, along with two other officers, to lunch on the first day of Wallis’ arrival.²⁹ Earl Spencer had almost immediately captured Wallis Warfield’s interest. He soon was enthralled by her bright, fun, strength of character, and attentiveness.³⁰

The couple married on November 8, 1916. Just a few short months after meeting. An *Associated Press* article, “Real Cinderella Story Is That Of Woman Who Brought a Crisis To Powerful British Kingdom,” reflected on Wallis’ first marriage through the lens of her thriftiness:

Wallis knew the meaning of a dollar. On the occasion of her first wedding, to Lt. E. Winfield Spencer, in 1916, a friend of the family said her gown had a train ‘a mile long.’ Afterward the train disappeared.

‘What have you done with it?’ she was asked.

²⁷ “Baltimore Event Recalls Mrs. Simpson’s Debut,” *The New York Times* (New York, NY), 8 December 1936.

²⁸ Birmingham, *Duchess*, 16.

²⁹ Ralph G. Martin, *The Woman He Loved*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974). 56. Hereafter Martin, *The Woman*.

³⁰ *Ibid*.

‘I cut it off,’ responded Wally with her unfailing good humor, ‘and I still have the dress. The train is an evening wrap now. Very good don’t you think?’³¹

In this case, Wallis Warfield, now Spencer, was resourceful. The train that turned into an evening wrap gave her the guise of being wealthier without the necessity spending additional money. Appearances matter in social society at this time, and Wallis Spencer wanted to appear as well-off as possible to continue climbing the social ladder. This article by the Associated Press may have stirred people into liking Wallis Simpson more by having her appear more relatable to the general public.

The first sign of trouble in the marriage came almost immediately during the honeymoon. There was no liquor to be found at the hotel because the state was dry. It had not occurred to Wallis Spencer that her husband might be a chronic alcoholic until this point. Spencer’s drinking only continued to escalate. At parties he became distraught when his wife would give other men her attention, and sulked in the corner with a bottle.³² Spencer sometimes disappeared, and when he did, he would lock his wife away in a bedroom or the bathroom. Needless to say, the marriage between the Spencer’s was dissipating. When Lt. Earl Spencer was “ordered to new duty in Hong Kong, Wallis announced that she intended to remain in Washington.”³³ However, Spencer wrote to her from China, and she soon joined him again. The situation only lasted a couple of months before she left him again. Wallis Spencer moved out but remained in China for nearly two years, where her whereabouts

³¹ “Real Cinderella Story is That of Woman Who Brought A Crisis To Powerful British Kingdom,” *The Evening Independent* (St. Petersburg, FL), 10 December 1936.

³² Birmingham, *Duchess*. 19.

³³ *Ibid.*, 20.

were not known. She then traveled extensively across the region, before returning to the U.S.³⁴ Wallis Spencer was finally granted a divorce in December 1927, on the grounds of desertion.³⁵

Ms. Spencer once again began moving about the social circles of New York and Washington during the process of her pending divorce. It was at a dinner party, hosted by an old friend Mary Rafray, with whom she was staying with at the time, that Ms. Spencer was introduced to the Simpsons.³⁶ Mr. Ernest Aldrich Simpson had a wife, Dorothea, and a daughter. Apparently, according to the Wallis Windsor's memoirs, the Simpson's marriage was already disintegrating when Wallis was introduced to them, and within months the Simpson's were divorced, and a romance ensued between Ms. Spencer and Ernest Simpson.³⁷

Ernest Simpson was the son of an English immigrant to the United States, but was primarily raised and educated in England.³⁸ He had graduated from Harvard and joined in his family's prosperous ship-brokerage business, which "maintained close ties with England. During the last year of the war, Simpson had returned to England, enlisted in the Coldstream Guards, and became, in the process, a British subject."³⁹ His business and social lives were divided across the Atlantic. He had connections from his time at Harvard, and through the Coldstream Guards. Ms.

³⁴ Birmingham, *Duchess*, 22.

³⁵ "Story Of A Romance That Upset an Empire," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), 6 December 1936.

³⁶ Martin, *The Woman*. 83.

³⁷ Wallis Warfield Windsor. *The Heart has its Reasons; The Memoirs of the Duchess of Windsor*. London: Michael Joseph, 1956.

³⁸ "The Duchess of Windsor: Royal Romance Which led to Addication," *The Times* (London, England) 25 April 1986: 14. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 15 October 2012.

³⁹ Birmingham, *Duchess*. 27.

Spencer, who liked the security and social life that Simpson provided, agreed to marry Ernest Simpson in a simple civil ceremony in July 1928.

Birmingham and Martin disagree as to what date the couple actually were married. Birmingham concluded that the couple was married, “In a dingy little registry office in Chelsea” in “21 July 1928. She had been single for only a little more than seven months.”⁴⁰ The New York Times also reports that the couple was married on this date. On the other hand, Martin believes that the couple was married one week later, 28 July 1928.

The honeymoon was everything and more than the new Mrs. Simpson expected. The couple took a road trip through France and Spain in a new yellow Lagonda.⁴¹ Life after the honeymoon also started off pleasant. Until Mrs. Alice Raisin, Mrs. Simpson’s mother, died in October 1929. After returning to London after her mother’s funeral, the couple moved into a flat in central London. Mr. Simpson provided his wife with help, in the form of a butler, cook, maid, and chauffeur, and a budget to use however she wished.⁴²

The time at the flat in London was the first time that she felt at home. This was the first home in which she lived at in which she actually paid for and furnished herself, or at least with the help of her husband. Through the help of Maud Simpson, Ernest’s sister, Mrs. Simpson could be coached on how to climb the social ladder, and she did so swiftly. In her circle of friends she included the first secretary of the United States Embassy, Benjamin Thaw. Thaw’s wife was “Consuelo . . . the oldest of

⁴⁰ Birmingham, *Duchess*, 27.

⁴¹ Martin, *The Woman*. 89.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 90.

the famous Morgan sisters. Her younger sisters were twins, Thelma and Gloria . . . Thelma was the Viscountess Furness, internationally known as the woman who had captured the heart of the Prince of Wales.”⁴³ It was through these connections that Mrs. Simpson had met Edward, the Prince of Wales.

The exact story of the first meeting between the two, however, is unclear. Many accounts have a similar story line, which claims that Mrs. Simpson, and her husband, together, attended a party in which they were introduced to the Prince via Lady Furness. The Prince remarked Mrs. Simpson must miss central heating, after noticing that she had a cold. This is where her wit flared. Wallis Windsor recalled this version:

‘A mocking look came into her eyes. ‘I am Sorry, Sir,’ she said, ‘ but you have disappointed me.’

‘In what way?’

‘Every American woman who comes to your country is always asked the same question. I’d hoped for something more original from the Prince of Wales.’⁴⁴

⁴³ Martin, *The Woman*. 91.

⁴⁴ Wallis Warfield Windsor. *The Heart has its Reasons; The Memoirs of the Duchess of Windsor*. London: Michael Joseph, 1956.

A DIVORCEE'S DILEMA

The connection was instantaneous. The prince was forever captured under Mrs. Wallis Simpson's witty humor and cleverness. Mrs. Simpson's indeed talked in a rather saucy way that drew people, especially men, towards her. The prince began to invite the Simpson's to more social occasions and parties, keeping a curious eye on her.

In 1931, Mrs. Simpson was presented in court. The ceremony of being presented at court "was a scene of another age, the gentlemen-at-arms in their white-plumed hats . . . the King and Queen on their thrones . . . and a concealed orchestra playing popular music."⁴⁵ This evidence only further signifies England's strong ties to tradition. Coincidentally, this strong tie to tradition could be viewed as either a hindrance or help. Tradition could be holding England back, losing status as a world power; but, it also demonstrates the cultural strength of the nation.

Mrs. Simpson being presented at court was only achieved after circumventing many established rules. In order to be presented at court, someone who already had been at court, and a British citizen, must present the person in question. Lord Chamberlain's office also screened all of the applicants, looking for any undesirable people to weed out of the list to be presented. One of the top criteria, or reasons, to weed out an undesirable applicant was if they were a divorcée. Most of the British population disapproved of divorce; they regarded the marriage vows as sacred and forever binding before the eyes of God.⁴⁶ A divorcée was not only was unfaithful to their spouse, but also broke a spiritual promise. Lady

⁴⁵ Martin, *The Woman*. 140.

⁴⁶ Martin, *The Woman*. 139.

Furness had to apply pressure and persuade the prince, so that he may use his leverage to enable Wallis to be presented, and hence she was.

Mrs. Simpson's presentation at court was only the third time that the prince and her had met face to face, but she had made a deep impression. "When her turn came to curtsy, first to my father then to my mother, I was struck by the grace of her carriage and the natural dignity of her movements."⁴⁷ Are divorcées, commoners, or Americans not suppose to be fluid in their movements? Or does this signify that the prince was attracted physically to Mrs. Simpson, in addition to her cleverness?

There was a considerable amount of speculation at this point as to how well the prince knew Mrs. Simpson. Did he want to establish her in English society early or did the prince simply want to please Lady Furness by helping her friend skirt around the established regulations of the court? A combination of the two thoughts might hold the answer, with particular emphasis on the former. The prince was already drawn to Mrs. Simpson, ever since their first meeting.

However, in the seven months that followed Mrs. Simpson's presentation at court, there was little to no communication between the Simpson's and the Prince. Lady Furness was receiving all of Edward's attention. It wasn't until late January 1932 that the Simpsons received an out of the blue invitation to stay at Fort Belvedere for the weekend. Furthermore, the invitation was issued by Lady Furness, not the prince.⁴⁸ "The visit was a success" considering the Simpsons were barely

⁴⁷ Duke of Windsor, *A King's Story*, New York: Putnam's, 1951, 163. As quoted in Birmingham, *Duchess*. 43.

⁴⁸ Birmingham, *Duchess*. 44.

acquainted with the prince, “and the Simpsons became regular and frequent guests at the fort.”⁴⁹

In just three and a half years after getting married, Ernest and Wallis Simpson had reached the top of the social pyramid in British society. They were thrilled. It was their American dream come true. Their move up the social ladder into the prince’s circle of friends spurred many questions. Other prominent people in British society began to question and analyze them. Who were they? Why does the prince like them, or her? Whom would they replace in his circle of friends?

It was during Mrs. Simpson’s frequent visits to Edward at Fort Belvedere, in the summer of 1932, that Mrs. Simpson’s appearance was beginning to be critically scrutinized, even by her friends. Everyone, as a means to discredit her standing as the prince’s new favorite friend, dissected her appearance both physically and behaviorally.

Some of the comments that were made about her physical appearance were harsh. Many critics and even Lady Furness, her close friend in the prince’s inner circle, said she wasn’t even pretty. They complained of her high, nasal, southern twang. Other comments from *The New York Times* say, “Many have tried to describe her appearance, and none has found her beautiful . . . Her photographs have revealed a face, while in repose, of inscrutability to an extraordinary, almost Oriental degree.”⁵⁰ While *The New York Times* reports this blunt view of Mrs.

⁴⁹ “The Duchess of Windsor: Royal Romance which led to Abdication.” *Times* (London, England) 25 April 1986: 14. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 15 October 2012.

⁵⁰ “MRS. SIMPSON MET EDWARD AS PRINCE: Former Baltimore Girl, Known as . . .” *New York Times* (1923-Current file); Dec 11, 1936; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2009) 20.

Simpson, they amend later in the article, “Mrs. Simpson preserved a calm dignity at all times . . . All have stressed her charm, which – her friends say is irresistible.” Once again *The New York Times*, an American Newspaper, takes sympathy with Mrs. Simpson. The writer felt the need to defend her, at least in some attributes. The writer sought out “an old friend” of Mrs. Simpson and printed the nicest interview of her appearance that has been seen. Mrs. Simpson’s high cheekbones, which many other writers scold, here are described as an artists dream. Her brown hair is apparently not the forgettable brown, but a “rich, medium shade” that had “the softest of waves.”⁵¹

However, while she was critically examined as to every aspect of her appearance, the Simpson’s catapulted into the British limelight. The Simpson’s were on every invitation list that mattered, and people scrambled to be invited to Bryanston Court where the Simpson’s lived. The mass curiosity of Wallis drove the Simpson’s popularity.⁵²

While Londoners, especially those who had social standing, gossiped about the Simpson’s, the majority of the United Kingdom was left in the dark as to who the Simpson’s were and that they had even become apart of the prince’s circle of friends. Wallis Simpson’s name appeared in the court circulars in the papers, but there was rarely any mention of Ernest Simpson, even though he was present at many events alongside his wife.⁵³ *The New York Times* rather explicitly said this

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 47.

⁵³ “Story Of A Romance That Upset an Empire,” *The New York Times* (New York, NY), 6 December 1936.

about the duties of the British press, and how they completely overlooked the situation of the prince's company:

The British press, with the exception of comparatively unimportant magazines, entered into a conspiracy of silence on the whole subject of Mrs. Simpson. The British public thus was kept in the dark and, when the news finally broke, was wholly unprepared for the surprise. In the annals of the press, never has there been, even under a dictatorship, such an interference with the right of the people to be aware of what vitally concerns them.⁵⁴

The New York Times analysis was blunt and powerful. It sent the message that the British presses are not performing to the standard that they should be.

The Times in London, counters that by saying it first "broke its self-imposed silence" the month that Wallis and Ernest Simpson first appeared in the court circulars.⁵⁵ However, *The Times* only broke its silence through the editorials that citizens submitted. "The silent press" was "confident in the hope that his Majesty would, by some act or announcement, put an end to a situation so damaging to his own and to his Empire's prestige, the British Press kept silent."⁵⁶

During 1933 and 1934, the Prince grew dangerously close to Mrs. Simpson. Ernest and Wallis were regular fixtures at "the Fort;" they were seen there almost every weekend.⁵⁷ The Simpson's also received regular invitations to the York House, the prince's official London residence, and often the Simpson's, along with the prince, would comprise a table of three at restaurants during week nights. The prince would even randomly drop in at Bryanston Court and stay well into the night.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ "History of the Crisis: Rumour and Fact," *The Times* (London, England) 11 December 1936: 10. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 15 October 2012.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Fort Belvedere.

Mr. Simpson, soon into his friendship with the prince, realized that the prince was there for his wife, and not the couple's joint company. The constant presence of the Prince in his life soon began to draw on Ernest. His initial enthusiasm over a friendship with such an important figure in society rapidly began to fade, turning unpleasant at points. He would make excuses relating to work to excuse himself from the dinner table and other invitations.

Mrs. Simpson was seen independent and alone with the Prince with growing frequency, her husband faded into the background. She soon was viewed as the hostess at the Fort, and even accompanied the Prince on vacation. *The Times* reported that "by 1934 he was deeply in love with her . . . the sincerity of his devotion to Mrs. Simpson is beyond doubt. There is authority for believing that as early as 1935 he did not discount the possibility of renouncing his right to the Throne in order that he might marry Mrs. Simpson."⁵⁸ *The Times*, and their readership, accepted the depth of the prince's admiration for Mrs. Simpson. This account was straightforward, it did not explicitly interpret the information, but many people may have begun to guess the difficulties that this relationship would bring to the throne after the prince's succession to the throne.

When Edward, the Prince of Wales, was proclaimed King in January 1936, Mrs. Simpson stood by his side. It was soon afterwards, later that summer that the

⁵⁸ "Duke of Windsor: King Who Gave up a Throne to Marry the Woman He Loved," *The Times* (London, England) 29 May 1972: 9. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 15 October 2012.

Simpsons had separated, and henceforth Wallis Simpson was continually seen at the King's side.⁵⁹

1936 was a truculent year in Europe. Germany occupied Rhineland and the Spanish Civil War broke out.⁶⁰ In October of that same year, a small blurb almost escaped the notice of much of the British population. Mrs. Simpson was seeking a divorce from Ernest Simpson. *The New York Times* reported that this was not widely seen in the British Press "owing to a statute passed a few years ago, no newspaper was permitted to print more than the bare result of the divorce case. The brief hearing on Oct. 27 was reported verbatim, however, in the United States."⁶¹ This is another testament to the fact of the differences between newspapers in the United States and in the United Kingdom; the freedom to report on anything in detail versus the freedom to just report on some aspects of everything. Mrs. Wallis Simpson was granted a *decree nisi*.⁶² *The Times* confirms that they never reported anything more than the bare facts of the divorce proceedings, and when on to say, "Such was the nation's confidence in a man who throughout his life had done everything to deserve it – no hint of criticism was made public. On the other side of the Atlantic competitive scandal-mongering had now reached a crescendo; and in this country spreading rumour increased

⁵⁹ "The Duchess of Windsor: Royal Romance which led to Abdication." *The Times* (London, England) 25 April 1936: 14. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 15 October 2012.

⁶⁰ "Timeline – 19th century." *eHistory*, Ohio State University. accessed 16 Dec 2012, <http://ehistory.osu.edu/world/TimeLineDisplay.cfm?Era_id=13>.

⁶¹ "Story Of A Romance That Upset an Empire," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), 6 December 1936.

⁶² In England, this is considered a provisional divorce. The divorce is finalized at the end of six months providing that there is not evidence of misconduct, etc.

apprehension.”⁶³ During this time, respectable newspapers in London, and for the most part throughout the entire United Kingdom, only reported a story when they had undeniable fact; something that they argue that the American press is more careless with.

Only a few short weeks after the divorce case, on November 16, the King told Prime Minister Mr. Baldwin of his intent to marry Mrs. Simpson whenever she was ready, and would leave the throne and abdicate if necessary. That same night he told the Queen, his mother, his decision and within a couple days his brothers, the princes, knew of it also. In an interview on November 25, the King remained adamant on his decision to marry her. The Dominion Governments assured that they would not accept his choice of a queen.⁶⁴

Once the whisper of marriage entered the equation, newspapers around the United States pounced. Headlines each day contained some aspect of the relationship. *The Windsor Daily Star*, out of Canada, made it very clear that “it is not because Mrs. Simpson is an American that England would spurn her as Queen . . . It is merely because the crown – that very sensitive ideal – would lose caste through unity with a woman twice divorced.”⁶⁵ This is a common theme in all newspapers outside of the United States. The public would not oppose Mrs. Simpson if she had never been married previously, but the fact remains that she had. Not only had she been married once before, but she had been married twice before, with both of her

⁶³ “History of the Crisis.” *The Times* (London, England), Friday, 11 Dec. 1936: 10. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 15 October 2012.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ “Warpole fears for the Crown.” *The Windsor Daily Star* (Windsor, Ontario) 3 December 1936.

husbands alive and well. She did not value the marriage bond in the eyes of the public, entering into a new relationship before her previous marriage was annulled.

The Archbishop of Canterbury at the time, William Cosmo Gordon Lang, the principle leader of the Anglican Church and one of the most influential people in all England, took a strong moral stance on the issue of the King's impending marriage. Lang was close to the throne throughout George V's lifetime, however, he was pushed farther away during Edward's rule. The Archbishop "threatened to refuse the King 'communion of the church' if the King announced his intention to marry his friend, Mrs. Simpson."⁶⁶ The King in retaliation pointed out that Lang was accustomed to being in the company of high status people and strived for power and prestige while forgetting the power and pursuit of the soul to happiness. However, the classic, direct, and snappy reply that Edward gave the Archbishop of Canterbury, which was repeated throughout the nation, was, "Please remember that I am the head of your organization."⁶⁷ Here the King re-instilled his status as head of the United Kingdom, which includes the duty as head of the church.

The Church Times, a prominent Anglican newspaper, retorted the next day that the Church could not possibly "regard any man, however exalted his temporal position, as 'Christ's faithful vassal and servant' who enters into a relationship which the Church specifically condemns."⁶⁸ A common opinion, which is widely respected,

⁶⁶ "Warpole fears for the Crown." *The Windsor Daily Star* (Windsor, Ontario), 3 December 1936.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Constitutional Crisis: Newspaper Comment" reprinted from *The Church Times, The Times* (London, England), 4 December 1936.

is that the King should abandon his relationship with Mrs. Simpson as a sacrifice for his status on the throne and for the vast majority of England.

The King was not willing to dissolve his relationship with Mrs. Simpson, but it should be noted that she was willing to do so. She made it known very publically in almost every newspaper worldwide, that she was “wished to avoid any action or proposal which would hurt or damage his Majesty or the Throne. To-day her attitude is unchanged, and she is willing, if such action would solve the problem, to withdraw forthwith from a situation that has been rendered both unhappy and untenable.”⁶⁹ This plea to the people of England promoted mercy to her situation. Many people wrote into the newspapers their feelings of empathy towards her predicament.

⁶⁹ “A Statement By Mrs. Simpson.” *The Times* (London, England), 8 December 1936.

A WOMAN IN CHARGE?

Mrs. Simpson's willingness to abandon her relationship with the King signifies what she was willing to sacrifice. She could move on. In the past Ms. Simpson had always found a way. She was a strong willed woman, much more independent than many other women of the era. Because of this drive she was the one with the controlling hand and the final say in all of her relationships. She transformed and completely overturned the traditional views of a relationship and asserted the gender role reversal in which the woman was in charge and the man complied.

The general thought of the time was that "husbands don't want to come home to a secretary, a teacher, a politician, a governess or a shopkeeper—they want to come home to nothing other than their wives."⁷⁰ Traditionally, a wife's first priority is the home and the husbands needs. Wallis Windsor capitalized on her husband's status, and through her influence she was able to get most of what she wanted out of the relationship.

The press had one view of the prince, the completely reliant and seemingly defenseless side. In England he was viewed through the press as "democratic" for mixing with people from different levels of society, "deeply compassionate" when visiting a war hospital, and "generous" even though he never tipped the waiters or

⁷⁰ Hester Vaizey, "Empowerment or Endurance? War Wives' Experiences of Independence During and After the Second World War in Germany, 1939-1948." *German History*. 29, no. 1: 57.

maids.⁷¹ The public held an unwaveringly positive view of the prince until his decision to marry Wallis Simpson.

It was a particularly unique circumstance that allowed this specific relationship to happen and work. The personalities of both the prince and Mrs. Simpson together formed this strange obsession-based relationship. They both grew up in drastically different home environments.

EDWARD'S PERSONALITY

Edward always had a sense of vulnerability around him. Some of the photographs from his early years show a small, gloomy face that rarely showed happiness. Even at the age of four years old, Edward was still wearing ruffled dresses, such as those found for baptism, and his hair hung as round, golden ringlets, yet to be cut.⁷² People often mistook him for a girl at that age. Because the prince seemed so delicate and small for his age, he had an ability that led women to bring out their strongest motherly instincts, an ability that he perfected later in life. He struggled for affection throughout his entire life.⁷³

As a child of royalty, Edward was not raised by his parents, but rather by a string of nannies. He made irregular and scheduled visits with his parents, that rarely involved any positive connotations. Edward's first nanny was so emotionally unstable, that she insisted on having Edward in her arms for the first three months of his life. Over the three consecutive years after Edward's birth, the nanny completely ignored the needs of Albert (later George VI) Edward's younger brother,

⁷¹ Birmingham, *Duchess*. 77.

⁷² Birmingham, *Duchess*. 68.

⁷³ Martin, *The Woman*. 46.

and almost entirely focused on Edward. This obsession with affection that Edward received during the biggest developmental stage of his life only set an unconscious precedence that would alter his emotional discourse for the rest of his life. That sad, melancholy look that he was known for in childhood, may be a result of this. That is, maybe Edward never fully obtained that level of affection he unconsciously sought at any real degree until he had met Wallis.

There was not a permanent adult fixture in his life to which he could turn to. Edward became dependant upon the affection shown to him by virtual strangers. The Duke and Duchess of York, Edward's parents, insisted on discipline as a substitute for love. "How came it that a man who was by temperament so utterly domestic, who was so considerate to his dependents and the members of his household, who was so unalarming to small children and humble people, should have inspired his sons with feelings of awe, amounting at times to nervous trepidation?"⁷⁴ To George the V, his children should be seen, not heard, and only occupy small "niches" in his life.⁷⁵ Edward's mother, the Duchess of York, was not much better than her husband, she viewed her children as successors to the throne and not as children. She said that Edward had "been a tough one to handle since childhood," not that she knew him that well.⁷⁶

Edward had no friends until way past his days at Oxford. He mostly only associated with his siblings before that, with which whom he was always around. He had developed nervous tendencies, including twisting and untwisting his necktie,

⁷⁴ Harold Nicolson. *King George the Fifth; His Life and Reign*. London: Constable, 1952: 147.

⁷⁵ Martin, *The Woman*. 46.

⁷⁶ "Baltimore Hears King's Affection to Wither Early." *The Spartanburg Herald* (Spartanburg, SC), 4 December 1936.

constantly clutching his right wrist with his left hand (a possible alternative for not being allowed to put his hands in his pockets), and cowering when grouped with those his own age. Edward, with such a small stature, still looked as though he were twelve or thirteen when he was sixteen years old.⁷⁷

Edward rebelled against many things that his parents valued. During his school holidays in 1913 he traveled to Germany and stayed with relatives. There his love for the German culture and language grew. He was already fluent in German due to it being his mother's first language. His parents hated to travel, and this allowed him the opportunity to escape them. He even developed a fascination toward German fascism and even personally favored an alliance with Germany. (Later he, and Wallis, were shown to have strong Nazi tendencies and even visited with Hitler in Berlin in 1933.)

The First World War broke the prince's shyness, but he was continuously viewed as having a feminine quality about him. He learned during this time how to deal with photographers, and knew when to flash his smile. That smile won over much of the British public and press. It was around this time, that he began to be a subject of his own publicity, and believed that he could do no wrong. As the prince told an interviewer in 1941, "What's the good of my being the Prince of Wales if I can't do as I like?"⁷⁸

Sir Alan 'Tommy' Lascelles, Private Secretary to King George VI who also served Edward as the Prince of Wales before he became King, wrote in his diaries that were published by *The Daily Mail*:

⁷⁷ Birmingham, *Duchess*. 72.

⁷⁸ Anthony Gibbs, *The New Yorker*, 3 October 1941, as quoted in Martin, *The Woman*. 49.

I felt in such despair about him that I told Stanley Baldwin (then Prime Minister, and one of our party in Canada) that the Heir Apparent, in his unbridled pursuit of wine and women, and of whatever selfish whim occupied him at the moment, was going rapidly to the devil and would soon become no fit wearer of the British Crown.

I expected to get my head bitten off, but he agreed with every word. I went on: 'You know, sometimes when I am waiting to get the result of some point-to-point in which he is riding, I can't help thinking that the best thing that could happen to him, and to the country, would be for him to break his neck.'⁷⁹

Surprisingly, the prince agreed. He argued that he was the wrong sort of person for the title as Prince of Wales. Not daring to speak to any of his British acquaintances, the prince had confided with friend's of Wallis's that he never planned on being King. He had already made up his mind that he would renounce his claim to the throne and marry Mrs. Simpson.⁸⁰ With that, however, came the unexpected death of King George V only months later. Edward was left no money, like all of his brothers, out of his father's will. He was left no way out. Edward had to be King in order to have money, a factor that Wallis would not live without.

Sir Alan Lascelles was clear in his opinion of Mrs. Simpson; he verged on hating her. "It soon became apparent that the leopard [Edward], so far from having changed his spots, was daily acquiring more sinister ones from the leopardess, in the person of Mrs. Simpson . . . money, and the things that money buys, were the principle desiderata in Mrs. Simpson's philosophy."⁸¹ He truly believed that she was merely another lover of the prince's and was only after the status and money.

⁷⁹ "Prince Charmless: A Damning Portrait of Edward VIII." *Mail Online*. Web. 1 Nov. 2012. <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-417388/Prince-Charmless-A-damning-portrait-Edward-VIII.html>>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

MRS. SIMPSON'S PERSONALITY

It has been said that Mrs. Simpson would have made a handsome looking boy. Her appearance has been critically scrutinized ever since she was a young girl. In Baltimore society, she learned early on that if a young woman was not physically beautiful or pretty, they had to develop other desirable qualities to make the young men believe they were attractive.

Hence the sultry, witty, and clever Wallis Warfield was born. She was the outgoing one that was always sought out for a good time. Unlike the prince, she had an unwavering ambition. Her mother's poverty was a driving and motivating factor throughout her life. She always strove for more. Her climb up the social ladder did not end until she had met Edward. It was then that she had achieved the material and societal comfort that she had strived for.

Mrs. Simpson had made it publically known that she would withdraw from her relationship with Edward, but no one is sure that she would follow through given the devotion the King had towards her. After the statement that Mrs. Simpson made in Cannes on 7 December 1936, on her willingness to withdraw from the relationship, there was an enormous outpouring of opinion.⁸² *The New York Times* reprinted an editorial that first appeared in *The Daily Mail*, which said:

Her proffered abandonment of 'any action or proposal that would hurt or damage His Majesty or the throne' changes the whole situation. It opens the hope of a speedy end to this grave and disquieting crisis. Mrs. Simpson renders it possible for the King to continue upon the throne and thus relieve the country and the Empire of the heart-breaking loss which his abdication would involve.⁸³

⁸² "A Statement By Mrs. Simpson." *The Times* (London, England), 8 December 1936.

⁸³ "No Solution Seen in Simpson Offer," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), 9 December 1936.

While Wallis Simpson did love the King, the abdication crisis provided an opportunity for her to leave him and end the media and public crisis quickly.

It was recently uncovered that Mrs. Simpson during this time had written secret letters to Ernest, her second husband who she was trying to divorce. In those letters she described all her fears the crisis had created. For the first time in a long time she felt “small and licked by it all.”⁸⁴ She repeatedly wrote that there wasn’t a day that she didn’t think of him.

In Wallis Simpson’s case, it seems that her public persona and private, inner thoughts could at times be vastly different. Once she was caught up in the abdication crisis she had no idea whom to turn to. In this regard, Mrs. Simpson and the prince were very similar. Both had very few, if any, true friends who were always there for them.

AS A COUPLE

The superiority of Mrs. Simpson over Edward was established early in their friendship. She had already set herself apart from most women the prince had met in their very first meeting by making a witty remark. Her dominance was really established when she and Ernest were still visiting at Fort Belvedere. Lady Furness remembered an instance where Mrs. Simpson had playfully slapped the prince on his hand for picking up a piece of salad with his fingers. She was completely

⁸⁴ Anne Sebba. "Wallis Simpson's Secret Letters to her Ex-Husband." *Telegraph*, 21 Aug. 2011. Web. 1 Nov. 2012.
<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/theroyalfamily/8713438/Wallis-Simpsons-secret-letters-to-her-ex-husband.html>>.

astonished that the Prince had allowed it; he had never before allowed anyone to casually touch him, no matter how close the friend.⁸⁵

Mrs. Simpson had the prince under her spell shortly after her first few visits to the Fort. She had offered the prince the affection and direction that a mother would provide to her child. Mrs. Simpson had cared to ask about the duties of his job, the first woman to do so. “He told all this to me and I listened and I sympathized, and I understood; and I guess he needed that.”⁸⁶

At Bryanson Court, Mrs. Simpson’s home with Ernest Simpson, the prince had felt that he was in a completely relaxed and comfortable setting, a setting that he would not be able to achieve even at the Fort. Speculation is, Mrs. Simpson provided everything the prince needed emotionally as a man that rarely received affection as a child and who had a struggle with making true friends.

For the Prince of Wales, the fact that Mrs. Simpson had the ability to make him laugh was almost as much of a release as drinking liquor. His life was filled with rigidity. He had protocol that he was required to keep as royalty. Very few people he had ever met had the ability to get more than a chuckle out of him, and here was the prince anxiously leaning forward at the dinner table just waiting for Wallis to make a remark so that he might roar with laughter.⁸⁷

A rather odd thing the prince enjoyed that Mrs. Simpson did was the simple act of bossing him around. He had not really known his mother, he had seen her at the daily hour presentation and other official events, but little besides that, so the

⁸⁵ Martin, *The Woman*. 147.

⁸⁶ Windsor, *The Heart Has Its Reasons*, as quoted in Martin, *The Woman*. 145.

⁸⁷ Martin, *The Woman*. 150.

directions that he received from her were straightforward commands. But Mrs. Simpson more so managed Edward. She switched around his food choices so that he might be healthier, cut down his smoking, and would actually take his drink away from him once she believed that he had too much. Instead of addressing the prince as “Sir” in public like all of his other lovers had, Mrs. Simpson would call him “David,” the name solely reserved to his close family and very few friends.⁸⁸ These simple acts of defying, or perhaps through ignorance, traditional mannerisms toward royalty allowed Mrs. Simpson to create the biggest social scandal seen in the United Kingdom in quite some time.

⁸⁸ Interview by Martin, as referenced in Martin, *The Woman*. p. 150.

CONCLUSION

Wallis Simpson was a steadfast, strong woman, a rarity during this time in history. Her mother's poverty when she was young acted as a driving and motivating factor throughout Wallis's life. She always strove for more. She moved up in social ranking through her relations and marriages until she had reached almost the highest social circle there was. Mrs. Simpson's cunning and wit that she developed at a young age served her well.

She had not faced the pressures of the ever-present press until 1936. There were no major news stories or headlines until December of that year about Wallis Simpson and her relationship with the king. These newspapers examined her at every angle, every factoid of information that they could gleam off of her. Newspapers from all over the world printed stories about her childhood of meager means, her relationships, her Nazi favoritism, her attitude, but most of all they printed stories about her relationship to the King and how this girl from Baltimore had forever captured the King's interest. She had created a media crisis, in both the United States and England. *The New York Times* viewed her plight as a human interest fairytale piece, with which her tales were always troubling. *The Times* sympathized with her situation, but remained firm with the public and government opinion that she could never marry the King and gain such a prestigious title as Queen consort. Her status as a divorcee, with two living husbands, made her unfit to be at the King's side on the throne, causing the most famous abdication in modern history.

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