



The King's Mistress: A Novel

By Emma Campion

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History has not been kind to Alice Perrers, the notorious mistress of King Edward III. Scholars and contemporaries alike have deemed her a manipulative woman who used her great beauty and sensuality to take advantage of an aging and increasingly senile king. But who was the woman behind the scandal? A cold-hearted opportunist or someone fighting for her very survival?

Like most girls of her era Alice is taught obedience in all things. At the age of fourteen she marries the man her father chooses for her, dutifully accepting the cost of being torn from the family she holds so dear and losing the love of her mother forever. Despite these heartbreaks Alice finds that merchant Janyn Perrers is a good and loving husband and the two settle into a happy life together. Their bliss is short-lived, however, unraveled the dark day a messenger appears at Alice's door and notifies her of Janyn's sudden disappearance.

In the wake of this tragedy, Alice learns that her husband kept many dangerous secrets--secrets that result in a price on her own head and that of her beloved daughter. Her only chance to survive lies in the protection of King Edward and Queen Philippa, but she therefore must live at court as a virtual prisoner. When she is singled out by the king for more than just royal patronage, the stakes are raised. Disobeying Edward is not an option, not when her family is at risk, but the court is full of ambitious men and women, many of whom will stop at nothing to see her fall from grace. The whispers and gossip abound, isolating Alice, who finds unexpected solace in her love for the king.

Emma Campion paints a colorful and thrilling portrait of the court of Edward III--with all of its extravagance, scandalous love affairs, political machinations, and murder--and the devastating results of being singled out by the royal family. At the center of the storm is Alice, surviving by her wits in this dangerous world where the choices are not always of her own making. Emma Campion's dazzling novel shows that there is always another side to the story.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Alice Perrers scholar Campion debuts with a dynamic fictionalization of the life of Alice Salisbury, who, at 14, leaves family and best friend Geoffrey Chaucer behind to marry Janyn Perrers, a prominent merchant who has the patronage of Isabella, the Queen Mother. Alice accustoms herself to the royal lifestyle, grows close to her husband, and bears a daughter. Her happiness is destroyed when royal fortunes shift, Janyn disappears, and Alice is summoned to court by Queen Philippa. To secure her daughter's safety, Alice complies and is quickly drawn into the machinations and extravagance of Edward III's mid-14th-century court, where she captures the king's interest. Campion stays true to the facts of Alice's life as the mistress of Edward III, the mother of his son John, and a successful businesswoman. This is a detailed rendering of Edward III's court, one that provides an empathetic but realistic portrait of a colorful and, if Campion is to be believed, misunderstood woman.

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Review

"A medieval lover's dream novel...the vibrant backdrop and depth of historical details place Campion in the same league as Sharon Kay Penman and Alison Weir."--*Romantic Times*

"A dynamic fictionalization of the life of Alice Salisbury...an empathetic but realistic portrait of a colorful and, if Campion is to be believed, misunderstood woman."-- *Publishers Weekly*

"In *THE KING'S MISTRESS*, Alice Perrers at last comes into her own as a keen observer, not a villain, of English history. The High Middle Ages, the role of women, court intrigue, lust and love, all come alive through Alice's eyes. Yet the panoply of powerful people flaunting their influence and toying with other people's lives sounds amazingly modern. This is a rich novel to enjoy and ponder." --Karen Harper, author of *The First Princess of Wales*

"From her beginnings as a merchant's wife to her life as King Edward III's powerful mistress, Alice Perrers comes alive in Emma Campion's richly imagined novel. Beautifully written and utterly absorbing, this is an epic story you won't want to put down!" --Michelle Moran, author of *Cleopatra's Daughter*

"From the mercantile riches of early medieval London to the halls of intrigue in Westminster, Emma Campion weaves a sweeping, sumptuous account of a tumultuous era and of an irresistibly fallible woman, whose bold rise to power comes at an extraordinary price." --C.W. Gortner, author of *The Last Queen* and *The Confessions of Catherine De Medici*

"A fascinating, extensively researched look at a much maligned woman. Emma Campion does Alice Perrers the same service that Anya Seton did for Katherine Swynford." --Susan Higginbotham, author of *The Stolen Crown*

"*THE KING'S MISTRESS* is an extraordinary novel, exquisitely detailed, epic in proportion, and as lush as the fabrics Emma Campion's Alice Perrers chooses for the queen." --Kate Emerson, author of *Secrets of the Tudor Court: Between Two Queens*

"Arguably the most notorious 'wicked woman' of the fourteenth century, Alice Perrers has been loathed

throughout history as a greedy, manipulative harlot. Emma Campion explores the life of an infamous villainess with skill and understanding, stripping away the layers to reveal the very human, vulnerable woman beneath. Well researched and beautifully written, THE KING'S MISTRESS will give readers much to think about even after they have read the last page." --Ella March Chase, author of *The Virgin Queen's Daughter*

From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author

EMMA CAMPION did her graduate work in medieval and Anglo-Saxon literature and is the world's foremost scholar on Alice Perrers. She lives in Seattle.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Prather:

Information is provisions for anyone to get better life, information currently can get by anyone with everywhere. The information can be a expertise or any news even a problem. What people must be consider when those information which is inside the former life are hard to be find than now could be taking seriously which one would work to believe or which one the actual resource are convinced. If you receive the unstable resource then you get it as your main information it will have huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen inside you if you take The King's Mistress: A Novel as the daily resource information.

Billie Brown:

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