



Edward II: The Unconventional King

Kathryn Warner

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He is one of the most reviled English kings in history. He drove his kingdom to the brink of civil war a dozen times in less than twenty years. He allowed his male lovers to rule the kingdom. He led a great army to the most ignominious military defeat in English history. His wife took a lover and invaded his kingdom, and he ended his reign wandering around Wales with a handful of followers, pursued by an army. He was the first king of England forced to abdicate his throne. Popular legend has it that he died screaming impaled on a red-hot poker, but in fact the time and place of his death are shrouded in mystery. His life reads like an Elizabethan tragedy, full of passionate doomed love, bloody revenge, jealousy, hatred, vindictiveness and obsession. He was Edward II, and this book tells his story. The focus here is on his relationships with his male 'favourites' and his disaffected wife, on his unorthodox lifestyle and hobbies, and on the mystery surrounding his death. Using almost exclusively fourteenth-century sources and Edward's own letters and speeches wherever possible, Kathryn Warner strips away the myths which have been created about him over the centuries, and provides a far more accurate and vivid picture of him than has previously been seen.

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