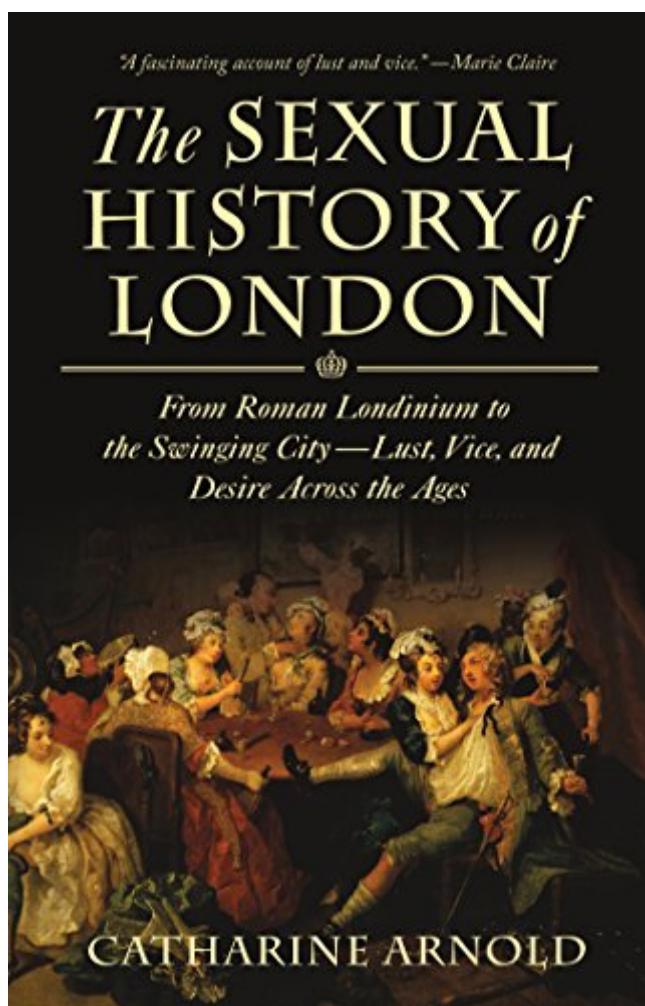


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The Sexual History Of London: From Roman Londinium To The Swinging City---Lust, Vice, And Desire Across The Ages



Synopsis

If Paris is the city of love, then London is the city of lust. From the bath houses of Roman Londinium to the sexual underground of the twentieth century and beyond, this is an entertaining, vibrant chronicle of London and sex through the ages. For more than a thousand years, England's capital has been associated with desire, avarice, and the sins of the flesh. Richard of Devises, a monk writing in 1180, warned that "every quarter abounds in great obscenities." As early as the second century AD, London was notorious for its raucous festivities and disorderly houses, and throughout the centuries the bawdy side of life has taken easy root and flourished. In *The Sexual History of London*, award-winning popular historian Catharine Arnold turns her gaze to London's relationship with vice through the ages. London has always traded in the currency of sex. Whether pornographic publishers on Fleet Street, or courtesans parading in Haymarket, its streets have long been witness to colorful sexual behavior. In an accessible, entertaining style, Arnold takes us on a journey through the fleshpots of London from earliest times to present day. Here are buxom strumpets, louche aristocrats, popinjay politicians, and Victorian flagellants— all vying for their place in London's league of licentiousness. From sexual exuberance to moral panic, the city has seen the pendulum swing from Puritanism to hedonism and back again. With latter chapters looking at Victorian London and the sexual underground of the twentieth century and beyond, this is a fascinating and vibrant chronicle of London at its most raw and ribald.

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Customer Reviews

This is a pretty good book but there are some GLARING historical errors that almost made me stop reading. The author describes Edward IV as Henry VI's son, this is HORRIBLY inaccurate! Henry VI had a son named Edward but that son NEVER became king. Edward IV was a nobleman from the House of York which was a rival to Henry VI's House of Lancaster who deposed and had ordered the murder of Henry VI. The other error was saying that Henry VIII had syphilis, there is NO hard evidence that Henry VIII had syphilis, no description of him being treated for it (and the treatment was pretty horrific). It is true that Henry VIII had an ulcer on his thigh, he never had the pox that are a symptom of syphilis. A much more likely theory put forth in a documentary 'The Body of Henry VIII' is that Henry suffered from Type II Diabetes and poor medical treatment for the injuries and illness he suffered throughout his life and reign. I realize that this book is about sex and that my nitpicking is probably of little interest, but considering that this woman is a historian, it seems silly to me for her to allow such glaring errors into an otherwise very interesting book.

AMAZING!

The topic of the book itself is interesting and what draws you to start reading. The author's writing style, anecdotal, informative but not academic, is what keeps you turning the pages.

I heard about this book through a recommendation from an author I respect. Then I hit the horrible historical inaccuracy of a huge, well-known fact: the author describing Edward IV as Henry VI's son. Henry VI did have a son named Edward but he didn't become king. He was killed in battle with Edward IV. Edward IV was a nobleman from the House of York while Henry VI was House of Lancaster. A historian would know this and not get an obvious fact about the War of the Roses wrong. If something this simple is wrong, I can't trust anything else in the book to be accurate. Turned me off the book and the author completely. I would return this if I could.

The title is the best part. Believe it or not, fairly dry with a paucity of naughty detail. Rather

disappointing.

Well written and the story matter is rather shocking! It is one of those books that I read a bit of then put down and pick it up at a later date. It is compelling information.

This is quite an accomplishment. As an amateur historian, especially of all things London, I found this book to be illuminating and engrossing (and not just because of its subject matter!). Catherine Arnold's credentials (read English at Cambridge; further degree in psychology) are clearly on show here as she paints a vivid picture of this crucial side of human behavior and how it shaped history and urban development. There can't be too many books on this subject, so this is a welcome piece of scholarly research. It is essentially a history of prostitution (male and female) rather than general sexual behavior through the ages, but Arnold still uses excellent source material and a colorful narrative to take the reader on a journey through time. It is neither titillating nor crass, but instead deals with the topic with great insight and intelligence. And despite its somewhat narrow brief, it manages to avoid becoming repetitive. Highly recommended.

Not a quick read, but a thorough and well researched book by an author with a passion for history. Every chapter fascinated me, the women, mostly prostitutes through the ages, are survivors. Arnold has a gift for making the grimmest, ugliest parts of London's brothels and street trade sizzle with details. But it's not entirely about the sex trade either. Her passages detailing Oscar Wilde's exploits are interesting. Though a few passages come off a touch pedantic, TSHoL is a must read for romance authors penning historical fiction set in London. Eye opening.

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