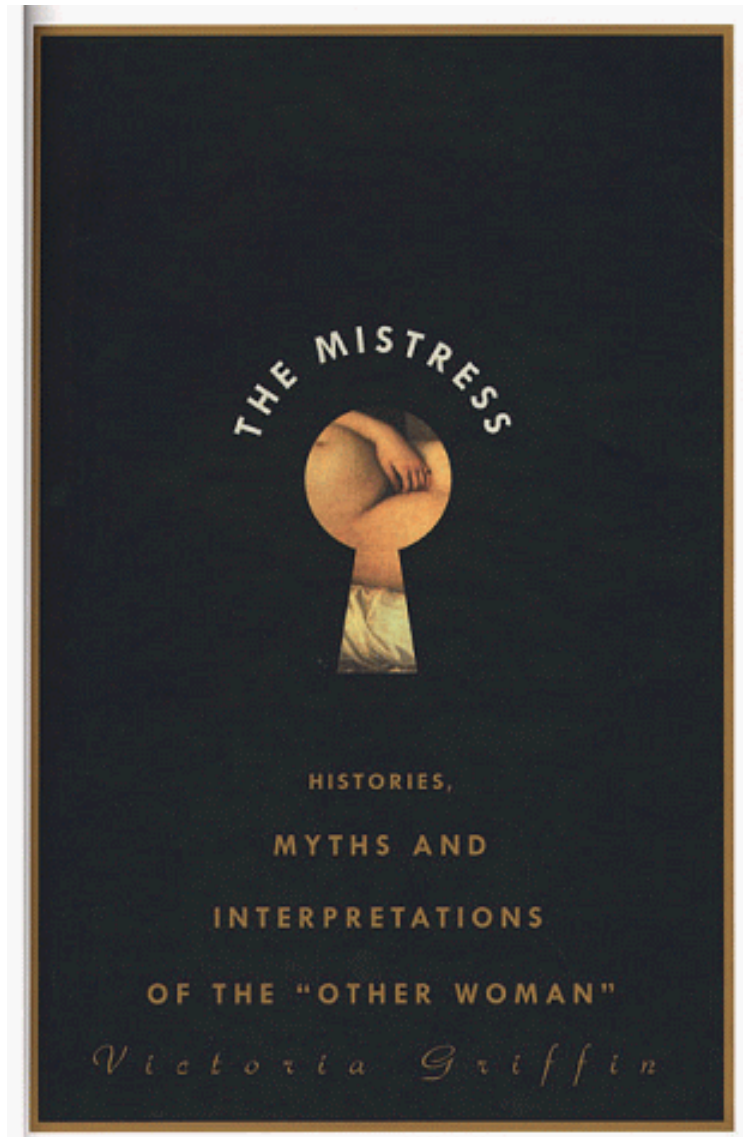


(Download pdf) The Mistress: Histories, Myths and Interpretations of the "Other Woman"

The Mistress: Histories, Myths and Interpretations of the "Other Woman"

Victoria Griffin

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Victoria Griffin : The Mistress: Histories, Myths and Interpretations of the "Other Woman" before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Mistress: Histories, Myths and Interpretations of the "Other Woman":

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Like reading the dictionary By Dnchance Occasionally a fun word,

informative and mostly dull. I'd read other reviews of this and expected something with more individual research - not summaries of other people's. Also - I wanted something...spicy? Well, at least personal. Overall...yawning but awake. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting thoughts. By Customer I really enjoyed this book and the author's insights particularly as to how others (the wife) might view mistresses and their respective roles. I gave it four stars out of five, because I felt it bogged down in a few parts regarding the writer's mistress and became a bit convoluted for my interest to hold. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Slow in the middle but interesting. By A Customer Examining the lives and situations of mistresses from historical times to the present allows the reader to see how things change and at the time see how much they remain the same. I thought this was a very interesting book, but it did slow down quite a bit in the middle. The author did not distribute her subjects evenly, but wound up concentrating a number of examples around the end/beginning of the 19th/20th centuries -- so much so that I started to confuse some of them together, especially when she started discussing multiple generations of affairs in a family. Nevertheless, the book offers insights and understanding to affairs of the heart.

As long as there is marriage, there will also be the Mistress. Why then, does our society still behave as if marital infidelity were some unfathomable aberration? Mythology is rich with mistresses-- both divine and mortal--some who have played their roles cunningly and to perfection, and some who have destroyed themselves and all around them. Famous mistresses have not only graced literature but have written it. Courtesans have been a feature of royal courts throughout history. And, whether or not we admit it, or feign naive ignorance, mistresses are women we know, here and now. Victoria Griffin, herself a mistress, brings her steady yet startling focus on the mistresses in history and culture, past and present: from Camille Claudel to Monica Lewinsky, from Madame de Pompadour to Simone de Beauvoir, from George Eliot to Pamela Harriman. It is a subject as rich and diverse as history itself, alive with memorable characters. The Mistress will provoke and delight in equal measure.

.com "My primary reason for writing this book," explains Victoria Griffin at the beginning of her fascinating study *The Mistress*, "is self-examination." Writing as a "mistress", Griffin is keen to focus on the personal, cultural, and historical dimensions of her role: "As long as there is Marriage," she concludes, "there will also be the Mistress." Conjuring up the quasi-mythical dimensions of an arrangement between men and women that, in one form or another, has existed for centuries, Griffin tracks her subject back through the figures of Hera (the wife) and the followers of Aphrodite (the women claimed by love and passion) in order to reconsider the changing role of the mistress in late-20th-century culture. Drawing on the lives of a number of creative, often unconventional, women--George Eliot, Rebecca West, and Jean Rhys amongst others--Griffin complicates the emotional scripts allotted to those who play out the drama of a ménage--trois. As such, she offers a cogent challenge to the conventional image of the mistress as a wife-in-waiting, a woman hoping to displace her lover's family in the name of her own. Passion--and relationships--are more complex than that. This book explores the act of being a mistress in terms of a different way of living: a refusal, or inability, to conform to social demands, certainly, but also a commitment to a love that resists possession. --Vicky Lebeau, .co.uk From Library Journal Griffin, a writer, poet, translator, and mistress of an important British financier, has crafted a readable but uneven history of the institution of mistresses. Drawing on myth and fact, her examples attempt to explain the characteristics of the "mistress type," the relationship between husband and wife, and society's ideals of propriety and fidelity in marriage. Simultaneously, she uses the narrative as a personal examination of her notions about being a mistress. Consequently, readers are unable to tell what is serious psychohistorical research and what is colored by Griffin's own feelings and individual experiences. Too, Griffin does not include examples from non-Western cultures, such as the geisha. Footnoted sporadically, her narrative depends upon secondary texts and published letters and diaries. This is interesting reading for a general audience, but scholars and students should use the standard women's histories (such as Olwen Hufton's *The Prospect Before Her*, Knopf, 1996) or the numerous books that deal with the mistress in a certain era, place, or by type (e.g., royal, presidential). A Jenny Lynn Presnell, Miami Univ. Libs., Oxford, OH Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. Part storytelling, part interview, part rumination and part analysis, *The Mistress* is a thorough if long-winded exploration of what it means (and meant) to be the other woman. -- The New York Times Book , Courtney Weaver