



## **The King and the Cowboy: Theodore Roosevelt and Edward the Seventh, Secret Partners**

*David Fromkin*

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**The story of the unlikely friendship between King Edward the Seventh of England and President Theodore Roosevelt, which became the catalyst for an international power shift and the beginning of the American century.**

In *The King and the Cowboy*, renowned historian David Fromkin reveals how two unlikely world leaders—Edward the Seventh of England and Theodore Roosevelt—recast themselves as respected political players and established a friendship that would shape the course of the twentieth century in ways never anticipated.

In 1901, these two colorful public figures inherited the leadership of the English-speaking countries. Following the death of his mother, Queen Victoria, Edward ascended the throne. A lover of fine food, drink, beautiful women, and the pleasure-seeking culture of Paris, Edward had previously been regarded as a bon vivant. The public—even Queen Victoria herself—doubted Edward’s ability to rule the British Empire. Yet Edward would surprise the world with his leadership and his canny understanding of the fragility of the British Empire at the apex of its global power.

Across the Atlantic, Vice President Roosevelt—the aristocrat from Manhattan who fashioned his own legend, going west to become a cowboy—succeeded to the presidency after President McKinley’s 1901 assassination. Rising above criticism, Roosevelt became one of the nation’s most beloved presidents.

*The King and the Cowboy* provides new perspective on both Edward and Roosevelt, revealing how, at the oft-forgotten Algeciras conference of 1906, they worked together to dispel the shadow cast over world affairs by Edward’s ill-tempered, power-hungry nephew, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. At Algeciras, the U.S and major European powers allied with Britain in protest of Germany’s bid for Moroccan independence. In an unlikely turn of events, the conference served to isolate Germany and set the groundwork for the forging of the Allied forces.

*The King and the Cowboy* is an intimate study of two extraordinary statesmen who—in part because of their alliance at Algeciras—would become lauded international figures. Focusing in particular on Edward the Seventh’s and Theodore Roosevelt’s influence on twentieth-century foreign affairs, Fromkin’s character-driven history sheds new light on the early events that determined the course of the century.

## **The King and the Cowboy: Theodore Roosevelt and Edward the Seventh, Secret Partners Details**

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## **From Reader Review The King and the Cowboy: Theodore Roosevelt and Edward the Seventh, Secret Partners for online ebook**

### **Rene Bahrenfuss says**

The writer draws a highly readable portrait of Edward VII but seems to give Teddy Roosevelt short shrift, offering an even shorter description of their partnership.

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### **Susan says**

I've read three others by Fromkin but this one is a really lightweight. Interesting but it's full of places where you expect more detail. For example he notes that in the post-Civil War period the US government was completely corrupt. No examples. No details. Perhaps it's that Fromkin was trying to write a lighter-weight book but didn't do so consistently. The relationship between the Edward VII and Theodore Roosevelt (who never actually met!) does not come off as all that significant.

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### **Jeannie and Louis Rigod says**

The cover art first attracted my attention, then the title, then I stopped and pulled this slim volume out to read the blurb on the fly covers. It was about two men in history that have always caught my attention, King Edward VII, and President Theodore Roosevelt. In this novel we have a profile of each man and then we are shown how their politics and personal beliefs brought them together, when to the average person, it would have seen they were vastly apart.

Mr. Fromkin writes a very readable biography with clear and precise historical events in the background. We are led from each man's infancy to the start of World War One. Finally, we stand by as each man passes away.

Also, several rumors are laid to rest, while other fascinating quirks are revealed to us readers.

This was an outstanding glimpse of history and persons who led to the world we live in today. I will explore more of Mr. Fromkin's novels.

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### **David Bales says**

Pretty good history of the relationships between Albert Edward, Prince of Wales and son of Queen Victoria, (who became King Edward VII) Theodore Roosevelt and the psychologically disturbed nephew of Edward, (and grandson of Victoria, Kaiser Wilhelm II). During the late 19th century and after he became king, Edward tried to put together an alliance between France and Britain, (along with Russia) to block Germany, who as favored by Victoria, (Victoria considered herself and her family Germans, tried to get all her sons

and relatives to marry German princesses, etc.) Edward has mostly been portrayed by history as a wastrel, who spent 60 years as Prince of Wales whoring and eating his way around the world and "pasting stamps in a book." Certainly, his philandering makes Bill Clinton look like Don Knotts, but there was a lot of substance there, too. Guy was a player and used his influence. In a strange set of affairs, several of the reigning monarchs of Europe were grandchildren of Queen Victoria in the late nineteenth century, including Tsar Nicholas II and Wilhelm. None of this helped stop the Great War, however. This book culminates in the Algeciras Conference of 1906 which determined what would become of Morocco. Germany favored independence, France wanted to make it a possession. Britain favored France and the U.S. secretly did too, while appearing to be neutral. After 1906, the participants and their alliances were all set for 1914, and the rest is history. Great biographic details about Victoria, her husband Albert, Edward, Kaiser Wilhelm and the German monarchy and Teddy.

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### **Deb says**

Interesting theory, but I would be wary of declaring that he really proved it (that Ed VII and TR were secret partners with a shared view that the US and GB must have a 'special relationship' in order to save the world from Ed VII's crazy nevvy kaiser bill.... The footnotes got fewer and farther between as the book ended.

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### **Courtney Umlauf says**

It seems like this book suffers from mislabeling. It works really well as a short primer to World War I, but the relationship between TR and King Edward is such a minimal part of the book, I can't see why they titled it the way they did. Unless it was just to spark interest. Fromkin spends a good bit of time, roughly the first half of the text talking about Queen Victoria, King Edward and Kaiser Wilhelm. Then there's a brief sketch of Roosevelt, and then a bit about the Edward and Teddy "working together". But I don't think you ever even see them together. Yes, they ended up being on the same side of a political issue, but it wasn't fully explained how that was due to a secret alliance, instead it seemed to be entirely based on other external reasons. So while I found this to be informative and easy to read, it never really lived up to the expectations I had based on the title.

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### **Jordan says**

This is about the 20th book I've read about Theodore Roosevelt. While the book is not a bad book, the general idea of the book is not well proved by the end. Essentially it tries to show that there was some sort of secret collusion between the court of Edward VII and the 26th president's cabinet. There clearly was, but really it just seemed like the typical sort of thing Roosevelt would do. Despite recent exhortations of warmongering in books such as "The War Lovers".. Roosevelt spent an inordinate amount of time trying to follow his own words. Walk softly and carry a big stick.

I think TR would be somewhat mortified to find out that this book is basically laying half the blame of World War 1 on his shoulders by maneuvering Germany into a corner. Surely had he been able to he likely would have tried to do what he did in the Russo-Japanese war which preceded it, negotiate some sort of peace accord between the Entente and Central Powers. I seriously doubt he would have gotten the US involved in the war in the way that Woodrow Wilson did.

All in all the book wasn't so much disappointing as it just didn't really offer any new insights. I'm already familiar enough with the details of this precipitous time period through reading Biographies of Winston Churchill, Theodore Roosevelt, and books such as Dreadnaught that this book just didn't really have anything new in it for me.

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### **Sarah says**

I, like many of the other reviews here, think this book was poorly titled, but I don't think it deserves the overall lower rating : the writing is fluid, easy to read and follow, the stories engaging, and everything was weaved together by the end. I would like to read more history books written by him, I think he did an excellent job.

The book starts off with Victoria and Albert deciding how to raise their heir, then deciding that they didn't want him to be the heir, thwarting him along the way. The first three sections of this book focuses on a biography of the three main men, Bertie, Kaiser Wilhelm, and Teddy Roosevelt, then the final sections cover the things proposed in the title (primarily covering the Cordiale Entente and the Algeciras Affair and TR and Edward VII's involvement). I think Wilhelm should have been mentioned in the title, and definitely in the description.

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### **Nick says**

This book was less about the secret friendship between TR and Edward VII than it was about the events, relationships, and political entanglements that led up to the first world war. Fromkin starts with queen Victoria, then moves on to Bertie, then spends a fair bit of time on Willy a.k.a. William II before getting around to a fairly light sketch of Theodore Roosevelt. As a matter fact, he spent more time on these people as individuals than he did in demonstrating how they worked together. I still learned a lot about the period, Edward VII, Kaiser William II, and TR.

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### **John says**

Excellent book, filled with the reasons and portents of WWI. Interesting similarities and styles of TR and Edward VII that I had not known about. Short, quick book, well written.

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### **Lisa says**

I read Fromkin's book about the 'creation' of the modern Middle East, A Peace to End All Peace, and was thoroughly impressed, so I had high hopes for this small book. I was very disappointed. The style was stilted, almost like he started and stopped and started again, and apparently his editors did the same when reading it! I forced myself to finish it because it was short, and I was hoping to find some insight by the end.

I found the premise - that these two world leaders were close allies - was not proved. There were no letters or any correspondence included, if there was any to publish. The implication that Edward was in any way

calling the shots was not borne out, either. There was no published evidence in the book. Clearly, there was some agreement between the two governments on a few issues leading up to WWI, but was there anything secret about it?

The first part of the book focused, I thought, gratuitously, on the sexual perversities of the Prince, for far too long, without a real purpose. The second part was a thin biographical outline of Roosevelt, leaning toward the negative. I suppose the author was trying to indicate that neither man was impressive in any respect, until they came to power. If so, the comparison fell flat for me, and very shallow. The last section, leading up to WW1, when the two men finally encounter each other on the world stage, held more interest, but was ultimately unsatisfying. The NYT Book Review said "thrilling and unexpected" - Bull! (to paraphrase our former President). It was unexpectedly disappointing.

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### **Keith says**

Conflict and intrigue within the British royal families has a long and sordid history often so complex that only the most dedicated Anglophile or students of British history seem capable of grasping it. However, friction within the family of one monarch: Queen Victoria, of the House of Hanover, had an impact on world history that lasts until today. At the end of the nineteenth century most of the royalty of Europe was so closely related that the origins of World War I seem to have been based on a family squabble. This captivating view of world diplomacy and monarchy at the turn of the twentieth century is centered on the Prince of Wales who became King Edward VII upon the death of his mother. Raised in an atmosphere of high expectations by his father, he seemingly failed to meet his potential. As Victoria reigned for sixty four years and refused to include her son in any of the machinations of government, Albert was sixty before he ascended to the throne as Edward and had lived a high life of fine wine, fine food and fine women. He was considered a dissolute playboy by many and was hated by his nephew, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, who was raised as a military martinet. As a young man, Edward had developed a love of France and the French which did not sit well with Wilhelm and his plans of conquest. Teddy Roosevelt—the Cowboy---becomes involved in the story as an American president who foresees the necessity of the United States becoming involved in world affairs and shedding its propensity for isolationism. Of course, this all ultimately plays out in the disaster of World War I which established a diplomatic trajectory for Europe, the United States and the world that continues to this day. This compact little volume attempts to straighten out some of the convoluted and knotted elements of the period in a very readable and entertaining fashion and does it well.

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### **Teri says**

This is an interesting read, but one that falls terribly short of its subtitle. "The King and the Cowboy, Theodore Roosevelt and Edward the Seventh, Secret Partners". Of course if you mean by partners, they worked in the same general direction, and benefited from each others actions, I guess it did live up to the subtitle. Other than this it lacks any telling of sordid parties attended by both TR and Bertie, or of hunting expeditions shared by the two, or any contact whatsoever. There is a great deal of contrasting their early lives. And a little bit of how they may have colluded in setting the stage for World War 1. Personally, I was looking for two bad boys to get together for some real trouble!

That gripe out of the way, what I enjoyed most about the book:

The lurid descriptions of the familial squabbles among the house of Hanover. I have to say that in World

history class, who was related to whom and how, put me to sleep! But when you place it in the context of the end of the 19th century, and couple it with the tale of which naughty prince will prevail and how, it captured my attention.

I suspect that true history buffs will look down upon this book. It was rather light in evidence at times. Most notably the key purpose of the book as noted in the subtitle was not substantiated in the least. That being said, I think I would now be better prepared to read a more reliable telling of the history of this period and actually recall who's related to whom, how and why that is important. So in the end, education prevails.

Cheers,  
Teri

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### **Tom Rowe says**

Book consists of:

A short bio of King Edward VII

A short bio of Kaiser Wilhelm (who is called William which I hate.)

A short bio of President Roosevelt

A weak ending that ties these three together but falls short of the book's promise of a some grand collusion between the King and the Cowboy.

If you have not read anything about any of these guys, this book would certainly whet your appetite. It did not do much for me.

I don't recommend.

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### **Daniel Kukwa says**

The prose flows smoothly, and when it concentrates on Edward -- and the transition from Victorian era to Edwardian era -- this book is a first rate piece of work. But the title is a bit misleading, as (1) the Roosevelt portions of the book pale in comparison to the evident joy in examining Edward, (2) there isn't much evidence of even a "secret" partnership, and (3) it just ends up being a book about the calamitous transition into the 20th century. Entertaining, but not exactly what I was hoping to read.

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