



## **Love and Louis XIV**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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When Dauphin Louis was born in 1638 his parents Louis XIII and Anne of Austria as well as all of France rejoiced. In those days infant mortality rates were high, especially in royalty where inbreeding with relatives was a common practice. As well, males were valued above females so it was important for a country to have a male heir to the throne.

Louis' mother, Queen Anne was of an advanced age when he was born. She had experienced years of miscarriages as well as a difficult relationship with his father so when he was born, she treated him very much like he was a miracle. As he grew, he was always treated as though he was very special.

In the close relationship he shared with his mother he learned about the importance of God in his life. Despite this, Louis struggled with his physical desires for women and, over the years had a series of affairs some of which were short and others which endured for years. He always felt torn between his spiritual and physical stances. The way that he justified them involved thinking that having sex with a married woman was adultery and therefore offensive to God whereas having sex with an unmarried woman was just fornication without spiritual implications.

When Louis was involved in adultery he was not able to take communion at church and this was a way for the people around him to monitor his otherwise private relationships. Sometimes the women who he was involved with became aware of the fact that he had "cheated" on them and this caused jealousy and rivalry within the palace walls.

Further complications arose when Louis' mistresses became pregnant with his children. Some of these died while others lived only a short time. There was always discussion and concern about the royal lineage and who would be recognized as the next king.

Besides problems within the palace, France was involved in a number of struggles with other countries. One of the ways to resolve these was to arrange marriages between royal family members from each of the warring countries. The goals for these arrangements were usually to secure peace and enlarge territorial possessions.

Louis had reigned over France for 72 years, longer than any other monarch. During this time, the culture, history and future of France were altered. He encouraged art and literature in the palace and in society. He had Versailles built to high standards and introduced the idea of freedom of worship. Louis was also "lucky in love". The many women in his life each had an influence on his life and ultimately the welfare of the country. He was not, like Henry VIII, eager to remove them from earth when he was done or upset with them, however. Instead, he often just ignored them or offered them an alternate existence away from him.

Louis wanted the world to know that he was in his prime even as he aged. His personal and public lives therefore involved desire for conquest: military conquest with other countries and sexual conquests in the bedroom. This book describes both in great detail.

When Louis died a few days before his 77th birthday, his five-year old grandson succeeded him.