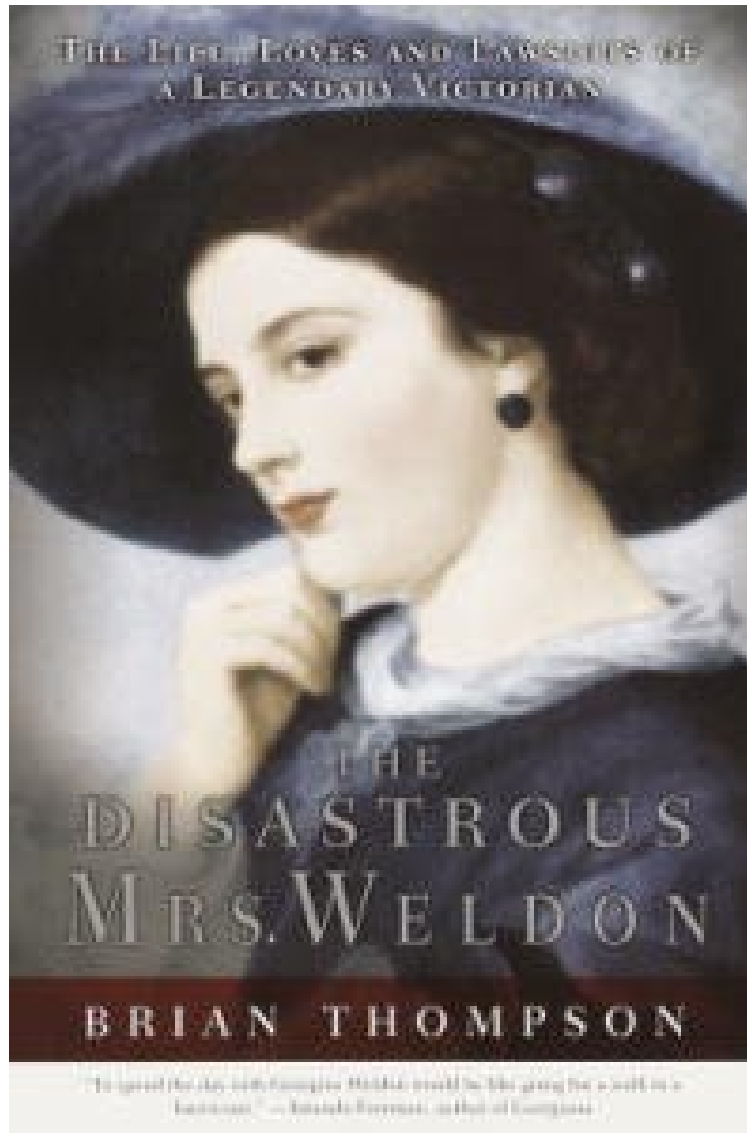


[Free] The Disastrous Mrs. Weldon: The Life, Loves and Lawsuits of a Legendary Victorian

The Disastrous Mrs. Weldon: The Life, Loves and Lawsuits of a Legendary Victorian

Von Brian Thompson

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Von Brian Thompson : The Disastrous Mrs. Weldon: The Life, Loves and Lawsuits of a Legendary Victorian
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Disastrous Mrs.
Weldon: The Life, Loves and Lawsuits of a Legendary Victorian:

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Notorious Victorian Flirt and Modern Portia Von Donald Mitchell This book provides plenty of evidence that the Victorians did occasionally have fun while putting on a moral face for the world at large. The author uncovered an enormously long memoir by Mrs. Weldon in 1996, and decided to write a biography about her. He certainly seems to have discovered one of the most colorful Victorians I have ever read about. When she was not luring older men to fall in love with her, not singing in public, not running her orphanage unsuccessfully, not failing as an impresario, not making a mess of her marriage, and not suing everyone in sight (and serving as her own barrister), she was making up fanciful stories about all and sundry and being cheated by anyone who could get near her. Other than that, she had a pretty normal life. Mr. Thompson does a fine job of using her memoirs, adding context from the writings of contemporaries, and providing historical references to put her escapades in perspective. Mrs. Weldon in her day was more outrageous than most people see Madonna today. Mrs. Weldon (and her father) had problems separating fantasy from reality. He ended up in an insane asylum. She almost did, as her husband was trying to bring her under control. Her manic energy drew men like moths to the light, and some she clearly captivated. One of the most interesting parts of the book covers the three years when Charles Gounod, the French composer, lived with the Weldons a house once owned by Charles Dickens in London. These were remarkably productive years for Gounod, although he escaped from her with difficulty and with complications Her ministrations would have put a lesser man into the hospital. Mr. Thompson also recounts her many brushes with notoriety that led Queen Victoria to refuse to attend a concert if she were to sing, and to lose her a rich husband when her potential mother-in-law caught her alone with a much older man where neither one should have been. As she got older, her mental problems got worse. She began to neglect details more and more. A French couple got together to steal from her, and a lot of the book recounts this period. I found this section overdone. Towards the end of her 40s, she discovered that a new act of Parliament would allow her to make legal actions in her own name. With the help of a friend to learn how to write writs, she began suing everyone in sight, and often represented herself. She didn't always win, and went to prison for six months at one time as a result of losing an action. But she became a popular heroine, Parliament changed the laws about committing spouses to insane asylums, and she was in demand for singing performances again. At 50, she lost her energy, and retired to a hospice in France where she worked on her memoirs for 12 years. When she self-published these, she managed to offend almost everyone whom she knew, and the book was mostly ignored. The memoirs end up compromising her reputation far beyond what would have happened if she hadn't written it. That was pretty typical of her. Although I liked the book, this level of scandal can be found in modern life. Those who are interested in the Victorian period will probably find it more titillating and intriguing than I did. I thought that the book repeated her most consistent foibles far too much. Clearly, the woman was a hazard. A number of children in her orphanage certainly suffered from her neglect. But, as a reader, I only need a few examples. This one buried me in them, and I graded it down one star for that. If you are ever tempted to "stretch the truth a little" to impress someone, think of Mrs. Weldon and where that led her. I think you'll be more careful of what you say. In conversing, less is more. If you can't say something good about someone, don't do what Mrs. Weldon did and make up fantastic, negative stories about them. Seriously, the woman accomplished a lot considering what she had to work with. Without her mental problems and character flaws, she could have been a heroine who would have been remembered for a long time. Focus on service, rather than ego.

Kurzbeschreibung Born to fanatically snobbish Victorian parents, Georgina Weldon grew up to wreak havoc on almost everyone she met. She was supposed to marry well and restore the family fortune, but soon proved to have other ideas. Her scandalous affair with a married man and her defiant marriage to the less-than-prosperous young hussar officer Harry Weldon were just the first signs that she was no ordinary girl. In a plot that could have been constructed by Dickens himself, Georgina acquired a string of lovers, was stung by con artists, betrayed by her parents, and narrowly escaped being committed to a mental institution. She rose to the challenge and became one of the first Victorian women to represent herself in court and later helped to overturn England's infamous Lunacy Laws. Like the best Victorian novels, *The Disastrous Mrs. Weldon* marries the adventures of an intrepid protagonist with delightfully revealing glimpses of Victorian society. A tale of sex and scandal, bravado and bravery, Mrs. Weldon's life is wild, wicked, and totally irresistible. From the Trade Paperback edition. *Disastrous* is precisely the right adjective to apply to Georgina Weldon (1837-1914), who caused trouble for everyone her path crossed, but most especially for herself. Yet the catalog of calamities that constitutes this eccentric Englishwoman's life is vastly entertaining to read, thanks to Brian Thompson's smooth prose and keen sense of the absurd. You can't help but laugh at poor Georgina, so sublimely self-absorbed and so pathetically inept at getting what she wants. There's something magnificent about the whirlwind way she pursues crackpot ventures, from establishing a "singing academy" (no one came to the concerts) to running a chaotic orphanage whose charges ran wild in her London home. Her behavior was so outrageous that she narrowly escaped being committed to an asylum by her infuriated husband. Indeed, Weldon's one claim to historical fame comes from her pioneering use of the 1882 Married Women's Property Act to sue the doctors who tried to put her away; the resulting court cases made public the arbitrary, often vindictive nature of England's lunacy laws. But

Thompson, a novelist and scriptwriter who turned to biography after reading Weldon's over-the-top memoirs, is less interested in her lawsuits than in her turbulent affair with French composer Charles Gounod, her tangled relations with a pair of French con artists, and her overall inability to lead anything resembling a normal life. No need to feel guilty about enjoying her tale of woe, since Georgina seems never to have doubted herself and always to have blamed other people. It's all great fun, and it really ought to be made into an opera. --Wendy Smith
Pressestimmen [Mrs. Weldon's] story is so fantastically melodramatic that it might have been penned by one of the sensationalist novelists so popular among her Victorian contemporaries. Publishers Weekly
Elegant in style, at once sensational and substantial in content, this book is a surprise and a delight. Lucy Hughes-Hallet, London Sunday Times
If it would take a heart of stone not to laugh at Mrs. Weldon's disastrous career, it is impossible not to admire the splendor of her ambitions and the sheer hubris of a woman who could bring twenty-five cases to court in a single year and represent herself in twenty-two of them. Miranda Seymour, London Times Literary Supplement