



The Edwardian Era: A Very Short History

Tristan Clark

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Edward VII was easily dismissed in his younger years as a philanderer and pleasure-seeker. However, the Prince of Wales surprised everyone when he became king, developing into an intelligent and pragmatic ruler, who dragged the monarchy into the twentieth century following years of cloistered secrecy at the end of his mother's reign.

It was meant to be over by Christmas, a local scrap between European powers. Yet it became a human tragedy on a global scale. By war's end, after four terrible years, 93% of the world's population had been dragged in to what became known as the Great War the war to end all wars. 65 million men had marched headlong into the conflict. Between eight and nine million of them never returned home. In total, some 21 million people were killed as a result of the Great War. For the first time in war, well over half of them – some 13 million – were civilians.

When The Titanic sank on its maiden voyage, the loss of the so-called unsinkable ship caused shock and outrage on both sides of the Atlantic. The ship was supposed to symbolize the progress of the age, a triumph of man over nature, and a way to cross the Atlantic in luxury and comfort, and faster than any other vessel in existence. Instead, it sank only a few days into its maiden voyage, with the number of casualties inflated by avoidable mistakes - the number of life boats on the vessel were woefully inadequate for the number of people on board, while numerous mistakes were made by the wireless operators.

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