



1. Saint or martinet?: Queen Victoria adored her husband and looked upon him as a paragon of virtue, but in light of Prince Albert's controlling influence over her and their children is there another way of looking at him?
2. It is a commonly held belief that theirs was a love match. But was it really? Albert appears, in the first instance, to have married out of duty and only later grown to love his wife. Would you agree that fundamentally she was the passionate one?
3. Would it be true to say that the queen's obsessive love at times became distorted and unhealthy? And was it in any way the result of her repressed childhood, locked away at Kensington Palace?
4. Was Prince Albert's overwhelming obsession with duty and taking on an enormous workload a way of dissipating his thwarted ambitions to be a monarch himself. Would you agree, that little by little he took over control of the running of the monarchy from Victoria and in so doing disempowered her so that she lost confidence in her own abilities?
5. Did Prince Albert drive himself into an early grave with his crippling, self-imposed workload? Does the till now unchallenged acceptance of typhoid fever as the cause of Albert's death actually stack up? Might Crohn's Disease be a far more plausible cause of his failing health?
6. Was Victoria's hysterical response to her mother's death in 1861 a case of unresolved guilt about their previously bad relationship? Was her later reconciliation with her hypocritical?
7. Albert's death provoked in Victoria the most all-consuming, obsessive and fetishistic attachment to the trappings of mourning. To what extent was this a reflection of the Victorian cult of mourning at the time or her own version of it? Might her state of grief be described as unhealthy, or pathological and to what extent was it the result of her extreme self-centeredness?

Discussion Questions



St. Martin's
Griffin

8. In her total obsession with Albert living and Albert dead the Queen seems to have failed to channel the love and support of her children, and often did not appreciate their innate goodness, Bertie being a case in point. Why was this?
9. The Queen blew hot and cold with all her children—might one say she was a bad mother?. She appeared always to like them when they toed the line and did what she wanted, but the minute they contradicted her they were in her bad books. She appears to be have been fickle and inconsistent as a mother. Would you agree?
10. The queen's years of retreat into mourning during the 1860s-1870s came in for a lot of public criticism. Do you think the monarchy would have faced a serious republican challenge had it gone on? Might we have seen the British monarchy fall?
11. Was the widowed Queen's neglect of her royal duties understandable or reprehensible? Might she have recovered sooner had she had the benefit of the kind of care and counselling that a widow in her situation would be offered today?
12. At the end of her reign the queen rose triumphant as a great matriarch and figurehead of empire. Do you believe that she ultimately redeemed herself and regained the love of the nation? What do you see as her finest qualities as queen?