

AT: Welcome to the Infinite Women podcast. I'm your host, Allison Tyra, and today I'm joined by Amy-Jane Humphries, PhD student at the University of Liverpool, to talk about the Hanoverian rise to the English throne and royals Caroline of Ansbach and Augusta of Saxe-Gotha.

AJH: It's great to be chatting about the Hanoverians today, because they don't, despite still in a way, being on the throne, they don't get a lot of airtime. So when we think about the Hanoverians, basically we're looking at 1714 right the way through to more or less 1837 when we've got Victoria in full swing, although it's important to really remember that Victoria was a Hanoverian too. And many of the ways she behaves is very much like her immediate ancestors, so there's a really lovely line that we can draw through. And George I is a direct ancestor of our present king, Charles III, so they are still all technically Hanoverians, allowing for a couple of name changes. The people that I focus on is mainly George I and George II, but specifically the royal women around them, because what's quite interesting about the early Hanoverians is that they don't rule alongside a queen for very long, so Caroline of Ansbach is there for about a decade before she sadly dies, but the rest of the period from 1714 to 1760 taking out that decade, they are alone, these kings. And what you get instead is the princesses of Wales really coming to the fore and fulfilling that role of queen that's going unfulfilled.

So for me it's a really interesting period because it's a bit of an odd situation because they're a new dynasty, they get brought in after the death of Queen Anne, because they are the closest Protestant relatives that the stewards have, everybody else and arguably the better claimants are all Catholic and that's a big no-no for the British at this time. So the Hanoverians, the main thing they've got going for them is that they're really, really Protestant, it's completely unimpeachable, and then they are a big family, so George I, when he first arrives, he brings over the future George II, and then Caroline and their children, her and George II's children follow along. So they're big on numbers and anybody kind of familiar with the later Stuarts will know that they very quickly ran out of heirs unfortunately, so we go from, it's a similar situation actually to Elizabeth I and James I in a way, you get your last regnant queen childless and then an incoming dynasty that's really fecund and is big on numbers. So it's a really pivotal change, but we don't pay them enough attention, so they're fairly understudied and not very well known, unfortunately.

AT: It's interesting that as you're just picturing this giant, massive family tree of basically the entirety of European royalty and they're just crossing off the Catholics and people who may not have worked for other reasons, so how far down the line were the people who ended up coming to the throne?

AJH: Yeah, yeah, I like that image actually, of them literally just sort of rolling it out on a big table of going "okay, who have we actually got here?" So what you had at the end of the Stuart period is you had the direct descendants of James II, which was Mary II and Queen Anne. When they got to Queen Anne that was the end of the line because James II's heir and son, who we more colloquially know as the Old Pretender was a Catholic, that side of the family were Catholics and the Catholicism was why James got booted off the throne rather unceremoniously by William of Orange in the 1680s. But then, what was happening towards the end of Anne's reign is they were very much scrounging around for Protestants and so they went back up the tree and they went back to Charles I because Charles II famously didn't really bother to try very hard to have legitimate children, not for lack of trying on Catherine of Braganza's part, I might add. She really did have a hard time with that, but he left a plethora of illegitimate children and nothing really else. So they couldn't go to Charles II, that was a non-starter. So they went on, they had to go back again to Charles I and look at basically who was left and what came out of that was his sister, who was Elizabeth of Bohemia, so James I's daughter. And she is an extraordinary lady for sure. She marries the elector of Palatine quite early on in her life and they are elected, it doesn't last very long, to the Kingdom of Bohemia, which is why she's always known as the queen of Bohemia or the Winter Queen because they rule, but I think it's just over a year if that. It's sort of one winter and then the Habsburgs catapult them out basically. And they spend more or less the rest of their lives and certainly her life after her husband's death around Europe trying to get the throne back, really unsuccessfully ultimately for

them. Things change later on for the children. But what she has is a really large family, which is fantastic. So Elizabeth of Bohemia is a great option, but the problem is, quite a lot of their children end up converting to Catholicism as well. So you've got a Protestant heiress that you can kind of go, "oh brilliant, we can follow this line down with the pencil and tick off who's available." But really what happens is, by the time you get down to it, some of her children have died or they've not had children themselves, they've just had illegitimate children really unhelpfully and then you get down all the way to Sophia of Hanover, Sophia of the Palatinate as she would have been known that she marries the elector of Hanover, well, who will eventually become the Elector of Hanover, he's not quite when they get married. But that's their ambition ultimately and they do get that, but she is the heiress, she's the one that they pitch on and go "right, Sophia is the one."

And that's really interesting from, just thinking about monarchy generally because, very often we see with the British monarchy, not very many regnant queens. And occasionally I think the preference would probably be to not have a regnant queen as well, which is really frustrating. But certainly in this case they land on Sophia. They decide on Sophia, there's no deviation from that and she's understandably quite thrilled I think, because the Hanoverians are a really ambitious, mobile dynasty. They want to be major players on the European stage, which is why everything that Sophia and her husband were working towards is the electoral cap, which gives them the ability to elect a Holy Roman Emperor and it just gives them that extra level of prestige. So they're really, really involved with what's going on on the continent, they're involved in the wars. It's a really interesting time and then when they sense that actually there's going to be something else on the horizon sort of comes through, it's even more exciting and for Sophia, she herself has got quite a large family behind her, so by the time and getting quite unwell. And it's looking like Sophia's going to take over her son, the future George I, he's an adult, he's got his two children, he's got his grandchildren, it's a big dynasty that they're importing. But unfortunately for Sophia she's walking in the gardens of Herrenhausen one afternoon when there's a rain shower. And she runs for cover and collapses and sadly dies. So she never gets to be Queen which is really really sad. And that's how we end up with the first Georgian King. So it's an interesting one, they definitely have to cross off quite a lot of people but some, there's a dearth of theirs in a sense because I think when you're far removed from the actual main line, you're not really thinking that you're going to get your shot. So you're just living life. So they really just have to comb through a lot of people to get to the Hanoverians. But they really in truth weren't that far away, not as far away as we think and how many people looked at them at the time, they were just cousins.

AT: I'm just reminded of like dating situations where it's like, "you've got to stop being so picky!" (laughter)

AJH: Yeah, very much so and it's a really interesting one because for Britons, it was a complete non-starter. So they could not go back to the Catholic Stuarts because it represented too much danger I think for the established church. There was a real paranoia that James II and his sons, his heirs would ultimately bring the English Anglican church back into Catholicism basically and it was just not going to happen as far as people were concerned. They were not happy and so the Hanoverians, even though they're Lutherans as well, so they're not Anglicans but they are Protestants. But that difference was a little bit of concern for people as well. They thought, "oh, how's this gonna work?" Maybe they're not the right kind of Protestants, there's a real kind of panic about it. But it was all about making sure that the country's church and the way everything had been settled down after the Glorious Revolution which brought William III and Mary II to the throne, it was maintained. So that happened within statute as well, so the Act of Settlement basically disinherited anybody that was Catholic or anybody that dreamed of marrying a Catholic. They could not inherit the throne and so that's how you end up ticking down that family tree and getting to ultimately George I.

AT: I think we do need to just point out how close we were to having a Queen Sophia. (AJH: Yeah.) Now Sophia was 83 years old in 1714. So that's not something that was super common for anyone, getting to their 80s in that time. She was healthy, certainly much healthier than Queen Anne who was in her 40s. And she

went on this walk in the gardens where it suddenly started raining and she collapsed and died in Caroline's arms. That was in June, Queen Anne died in August. Like she was *so close!*

AJH: She really was and it's amazing because if you look just generally across royal houses throughout time really, having a grandmother around or a grandparent of any kind, it's really, really rare. And the fact that Sophia, as you say, she was in her 80s. She was really healthy. It seems like it's a bit of a kind of freak accident more than anything else. There was no signs that she was ill. They were really into their walking, all of them. So the fact that she was there with Caroline - Caroline loved to walk and and once George I came to the throne, George II or Prince George as he would be known, wasn't that keen. But Caroline would often walk with George I and they were really visible that way. But yeah, she was really active. And it's one of those great what-if moments of history because there's so many unanswered questions of what she might have done. And there was no sense that she was going to just be a figurehead. She knew her own mind. She was really, really clever. She could have done the job really, really well and the Hanovers are great because they've got a real sense of their own place in history. So very much like Anne I think she would have been a really conscientious ruler. She knew that that was her her destiny and she go and do it and smash it out the park but she didn't get the opportunity to. But oh yeah, oh very close.

AT: And so Caroline was Sophia's granddaughter-in-law. So Sophia's son is George I and Caroline is married to his son George II. But before we get more into Caroline, I'd like to just talk about that middle generation. So definitely want to discuss why King George I did not have a queen on the throne with him. But also if we could talk about Sophia Charlotte a bit. Because Caroline was orphaned quite young and she actually became the ward of Frederick, who was the Duke of Prussia and his wife Sophia Charlotte, who was the only daughter of original Sophia, badass 83-year-old Sophia. So it feels kind of incest-y that Caroline was basically raised by her future husband's aunt.

AJH: Yeah, it's no accident, I think.

AT: I will say it's not the most incest-y thing that we see in royal marriages but it does feel a little creepy.

AJH: It's not as bad as Victoria and Albert but it does have an element of planning, yeah. So Caroline, it's really sad, actually. Her and her brother, they lose their father really early and their mother remarries to a man who isn't the best choice she could have made. But for elite women in this time, if you are in desperate need of a husband, it's never going to be the greatest choice that you could have made. Time often makes it, that pressure to remarry and have all of the safety net of marriage, often means you don't really make the best choice. And he was a bit chaotic, to be fair to him, he was more interested in his mistress and he then dies partly because his mistress has been ill, and things like that. It was all very strange and so Caroline goes from having a very normal family to losing her father to losing her stepfather and then ultimately her mother. And she ends up at the Prussian court, which is really kind of her saving grace actually.

As you say, she becomes the ward of Frederick and and Sophia Charlotte, who are incredibly interesting people. And Sophia the younger, if you like, was a formative influence on Caroline's life because the upheaval of Caroline's early life means that nobody ever got to the business of trying to raise her as a European princess. Everything that she'd picked up up to that point I suppose really had been an accident of her own interest in in things. And Caroline was incredibly inquisitive and clever and she wanted to learn things. She loved having people about her that she could just absorb information from. You see that right the way through her life. But the Prussian court was a wonderful place if you were bright and interested in the arts and music and all of these things that Sophia Charlotte championed and loved. And young Caroline was there ready to absorb everything and she really inherits this kind of European culture, this sense of of being a patron of the arts and music and philosophers as well. So Leibniz, who is somebody that that Caroline converses with

throughout her life and spends a lot of time with, that's where she meets him, Sophia Charlotte presides over this intellectual salon if you like that Caroline is there enjoying. And as she is indeed Sophia of Hanover's daughter there's, I imagine, a lot of back and forth about this girl. There's "I've got my ward here, she's beautiful she's clever. She's just the sort of person that we like in the family." It's that sort of conversation and I think there is an occasion where Sophia of Hanover does meet Caroline, I think when a visit is paid to the court in Berlin. So there's there's an awareness of Caroline and yet the story of her and George II coming together is really romantic. He goes incognito to her brother's court. She's back there visiting. Caroline knows exactly who he is. She knows exactly who he is. She's not fooled. George thinks he's being so clever, he's dressed up, he's pretending to be somebody else just to get a little look at her and see what she's like. And he is quite impulsive, George II at time. When he wants something, he goes and he goes and gets it. And very much he fancies Caroline and Caroline fancies him. It's really nice. So you don't often get love matches like that at all, especially one that's sort of half-contrived. But he's certainly allowed to think that it's all his own romantic endeavors that wins her around. But she knows ultimately that it's a really good match and as much as she brings a lot of dynastic capital to the Hanoverians, they are also very much at that time, even in the early kind of 1700s before it's all looking a little bit more likely because Anne's ill. They know they're on course for the British throne. And so for Caroline, it's an obvious match to go for.

She did have another arguably better offer prior to this, but that was a non-starter as well. (AT: Okay, she could have been the Holy Roman empress consort.) Yes, yeah she could have been and it's one of the things, when they came to Britain she was most famous for, because the Holy Roman Emperor-to-be, he comes to her because she's got this reputation of being an incredibly accomplished princess. She's one of the most desirable princesses of Europe. It's not a strange situation for him to come to her. She's beautiful, she's got all of these things going for her. She's learned she's interested in the arts, music, all of this. She's a real catch. And so for the Holy Roman Emperor to have a wife like that, that's no small thing. And so Charles comes to her and offers his hand. But there's the problem of the confessional difference. So she would have had to have converted to Catholicism in order to marry him. And a priest gets sent over to basically try and convince her this is a good idea but he approaches it in a really odd way and sort of tries to browbeat her into the whole thing, telling her that she's wrong. And Caroline even at that early age is not somebody that you try and browbeat like that. She's a big personality, she knows her own mind, she knows who she is, and she was like, "no way, I'm not having this at all." And she refuses to convert and she becomes even more committed, because one thing that it stays throughout Caroline's life is her faith. And I'll keep saying it, she's a very clever woman, she knows her apples. She understood her own religion and there's there's one very funny anecdote from when they all come over to Britain and there's a conversation where some priests think that they ought to go and explain Anglicanism to Caroline and she gets a little bit shirty. She's like, "I refused an emperor, I think I understand my own religion." And it's fantastic, she just doesn't go for it and for Britons, it's one of the big selling points of Caroline. She's a Protestant heroine, she refused an empire because she loved her faith. That was what was sacred to her and it's one of those funny little things that works really well for the Hanoverians when they come over to Britain. They can say "look, we might be slightly different Protestants, but we are defenders of this faith" and yeah it definitely wins Caroline a lot of affection.

AT: All right so we know that, first off, do not involve a priest in your romantic matters. Second, do not try to mansplain to Caroline of Ansbach. But before we proceed with Caroline, so they they got married in 1705, the Hanoverians come to the English throne in 1714. So she's been in the family for a while at that point but going back to this fact that we've mentioned, that George I didn't have a queen. That doesn't mean he didn't have a wife. So there is another Sophia. So we had Sophia, we had Sophia Charlotte and this is Sophia Dorothea, who is married to the future George I but never joins him on the throne. So can you tell us where she was at the time?

AJH: She, in kind of fairy tale style, was locked up in a castle. So it's something that history has not treated

George I very kindly on, which is fair I think, because it's quite an extreme reaction. But Sophia Dorothea and George I were not a compatible couple by any means. They were cousins and the marriage was devised to shore up land because the Hanoverians had a tendency to split lands between their sons, so it prevented them from building up one strong power base. And they move to male primogeniture, which is the principle that all the land and everything goes to the the eldest son, to basically maintain that area. This obviously causes problems later on for Victoria because she can't be queen of Hanover. But it's all there for them to consolidate their lands. And so the marriage between Sophia Dorothea and George is meant to help do that, help that on the way. It brings both wings of the family together and then their son would inherit everything. That's the plan. But she's a very different person to George I. He's quite serious, he likes quiet life at this time in his life. He's a soldier, he's on the front in the wars of Europe. And he's got a very different outlook to her. She's fun, she's frivolous, she likes a good time. She doesn't fit in in the Hanoverian court at all. She finds everything that Sophia of Hanover does boring. I describe her as a good time girl that never really got to have a good time. I think if she was living now, she'd be having parties, she'd be having a great time. But she she didn't fit in with them at all and although she and George had two children, they had George II and another Sophia who ends up in Prussia as well. So even though Sophia Dorothea and George I ultimately have two children, they tick the box of dynasty, that's where the relationship kind of starts to peter out really. She does go with him at one point to visit him when he's away but they don't gel. They're just not compatible. And so George finds her really tiring. She's got a tendency to have a bit of a temper when things don't go her way, which he's like, "whoa I don't want to deal with this." Because he's ultimately quite a chilled out man with with a lot of stress and he just wants to not have a difficult domestic relationship.

So he starts to look elsewhere for companionship and he finds Melusine von der Schulenburg, who becomes his lifelong partner, possible morganetic second wife, it's not really clear whether they do marry. But certainly she's there with him right up until his death. Sophia Dorothea sees this and thinks, "I'm gonna do the same thing," which is again not the best if you're, that's the one of those wonderful double standards, so that the man can run off and do whatever he likes but the woman has to stay and then at least appear to be loyal. But she starts up a an affair with a count, Philip von Königsmarck. And he's this dashing young man who really appeals to her personality, her interests and they write all of these love letters to one another. And that would be bad enough but in some of them she's complaining about George, she's wishing that he was dead so that she could run off with Philip. It's all of these big no-no's and they are really really discreet and she is told by a number of people, "you need to either end it or you need to hide this a lot better because it's not on." And the story goes that they are thinking about running away. And she becomes a big problem for the Hanoverians because there's this fear that they will loop up with the Jacobite interests to try and get away. And she basically becomes a security risk for them. And Philip has to go. So historians have tended to blame George I for this one, but he's not there the night it happens. Philip arrives at the palace, he is seen going up to the rooms that Sophia Dorothea is in so that they can have their rendezvous. But he disappears and no one knows what happened to him and it's generally presumed that he was killed on the orders of George I's father, who's the Duke of Brunswick and the elector at the time, because George himself is away. So that's the end of Philip basically and the end of Sophia Dorothea.

I think if Sophia Dorothea and Philip had carried on quietly and discreetly and nothing had happened, no clandestine pregnancies or anything like that. If it had been quiet, I think it probably would have been allowed to carry on at least a little bit longer than it actually was. But the fact that there had to be an intervention and he had to be physically removed from the situation meant that the marriage was completely untenable. So George and Sophia Dorothea were divorced and she was still technically a problem. They couldn't just let her wander off and there was an element I think from her family's point of view, a bit of an element of shame that this had happened, that she'd be in this indiscreet. And so she was confined basically for the rest of her life in, quite a nice castle to be fair. It's not a dungeon or anything like that. But yeah she did ultimately lose her liberty for failing to play the game, if you like. She didn't adhere to the rules of monarchy, of queenship, of ticking all those boxes of being a good woman and a good wife. Even though she had the heirs, it hadn't given her free license

to do what she wanted and this meant that ultimately George came to the British throne without a wife, without a queen. But he couldn't remarry once he was here. So he reigned up to 1727 without a queen, but he did bring his mistress with him. So Melusine presided over their domestic life. She was quite important for politicians who found him a little bit maybe difficult to gauge. And this interestingly is sort of paralleled with George II and his later mistresses. The Hanoverian mistress is definitely a means through which people can get to quite difficult personalities. I think the Georges could be a little bit tricky and nobody knew how to maybe always phrase things but the mistresses could smooth things over. But this meant that this put Caroline in a really odd position once they came to Britain because there was no queen. But the office of queen cannot be vacant, things still have to tick along for the monarchy to work properly. And so she finds herself starting to act within that boundary. So she becomes the hostess. She's involved with the church. She's the female face of the dynasty and she's got a smooth over a lot of the instability that would have been caused by the lack of Sophia Dorothea or the lack of any queen really, because you need that balance between the male side of monarchy and the female side. And that's a problem that the Hanoverians had in this early period. There was just nobody to fill that void and so the princesses of Wales have to start doing that

AT: Now I think there's a through line here where you talked about how George I was, shall we say, introverted. He was not a super social kind of person, he just wanted to have a quiet life but that was never going to happen. And this I believe ended up causing some tension when Caroline and George number two are princess and prince of Wales, because they were the visible, the "travel around and go see everyone," the social face of the monarchy. And just like his introversion created tension in his marriage, shall we say, it also then created tension between Caroline and George number two and King George.

AJH: Yes, absolutely. The tendency for the Hanoverians to not get on with their children is really, really strong. And they've also got this real tendency to be slight hypocrites about everything because George I, as you said, he's an introvert. He doesn't like any of this. He doesn't like that everyone's looking at him. He doesn't really want to perform the role of monarch. You think about some of the monarchs that love the glitz and the glamour like your Charles II, Henry VIII really as well, big example of somebody who loved the showy bit of monarchy. Whereas George I was a soldier and he had his foibles but he was, I think fairly normal for your monarchs of this period. And so it's not something that he feels equipped to do and I think part of that may have been the lack of queen consort. I think if he'd had that partner to buffet against and for her to be able to smooth over some of the bits of his personality that maybe don't gel with the more visible part of monarchy, then it would have worked better. (AT: But not Sophia Dorothea, because she was a little too social, shall we say?) (laughter) Yes, although ironically it's one of those funny things, if she had been queen, I think it would have worked really well if their partnership had been better, because she was really extroverted and outgoing and fun. There's this saying that by the 18th century, the monarchy becomes a little bit redundant. It's not the center of the world of aristocracy anymore, there are more places for them to go to have fun and be entertained and be seen and all of this. And the late 17th century court becomes quite dour because of the personalities that are there, and there's this sense that Georgians carry that on. If he'd had Sophia Dorothea there, I think it would have been sparkling. It would have been fun, because she was beautiful and enigmatic and all of these things you want a queen to be. If she'd have gotten there, I think it would have been a very interesting scenario and she probably would have bounced quite well with Caroline. They might not have had much intellectually in common but they both had a real sense of fun. Caroline's a fun person to be around, so was Sophia Dorothea. So it would have been an interesting one. It's another kind of "what it?"

But George I probably wouldn't have liked it. He probably wouldn't have appreciated how popular she would have been and that's something that happens with Prince George and Caroline is, George I hands over the social bit of monarchy to them but he doesn't like it. It's so bizarre, he's like "I can't deal with it, can you please do it?" They do it really well. They're really popular and he's like, "I hate that, why are you so popular? You're more popular than me." And it just is so bizarre because as much as it's for their own aggrandizement that they

are being seen, that they're the social heart, that they're emphasizing that they're really English. That's part of their brand if you like for the Hanoverians, because they they can't get away from the fact that they are a foreign dynasty. So they go on this big PR thing where they they try and emphasize that they're English, "we've always been English, we fit right in." And Caroline is really at the forefront of that. George II, when he's Prince of Wales, is very much in line with that. He changes his mind slightly when he becomes king, but they're trying to sell themselves as a British dynasty, as it's not an interruption, this isn't an aberration, it was always meant to go Stuart, Hanoverian, but this is fine. That's what they're trying to get across and and create this sense of continuity so it doesn't seem like they are anathema to British sense of being. And Caroline and George do it really, really well. But yes, this causes a lot of tension because in 1716, when George I goes back to Hanover, he doesn't leave George as regent. And George takes umbridge to this, which is ironic because he will do the same to his own son later on. And him and Caroline, they swan off to Hampton Court and they play king and queen for the summer and it's this wonderful atmosphere, it's a bit of a party atmosphere. They're seen dancing, they're seen talking to people who live around Hampton Court, because it it's it's not a built-up area like we think of it today. It's still quite kind of rural around there. So they're seen talking to normal people and people are struck by how affable they are, particularly Caroline. She's so happy to talk to people, she's a real social butterfly. And they dine in public, they are put on view, and that's also the year that Godfrey Kneller paints their portraits, a double portrait. And that's the image of Caroline that sticks and it is a real magisterial image. They are projecting the monarchy that they are going to ultimately embody, that's their plan. And George I gets back, realizes how well it's gone and he's not a happy bunny. But it's all to his benefit which is really funny. I think ego is a big problem, so even though he's really introverted, he's like "well I'm still king! I should still be the most important man in the room!" And I think that's not necessarily unique to him in any way. I think that's just the monarchy thing.

AT: And so you mentioned early on in the conversation that, for these first many years of the Hanoverian reign they mostly didn't have a queen but Caroline did become queen for a little while there.

AJH: Yeah, so she ascends the throne with George II in 1727 and the way that they market themselves in that way is very much like a continuation of William and Mary. So they put themselves as equals in many ways and that is exactly, they do follow that model. So when when George II goes back to Hanover he leaves Caroline as regent and that's a similar scenario with William and Mary. So when William goes to war, Mary's regent, even though she's a regnant queen. She kind of takes that step back but really comes into her own during those regencies and Caroline is the same in that way. So they're very much a partnership and I think that's occasionally overlooked a little bit because there is a tendency to maybe overstate the extent to which Caroline influenced him. I think we can minimize George II. We can fall into the trap of kind of making out that he's a bit rubbish and she was running the show. He has a tendency to be a bit rubbish, because he's human. We all can, but certainly this was the perception at the time, that Caroline was behind everything, that she was effectively running the show and I think she certainly was highly politically active through George II and certainly through Robert Walpole, the prime minister.

But they were a partnership. They always did things together. She would always defer to him and whenever anything happened, if there was ever a conflict. So in 1717 during the famous falling-out between George I and his son, when the Prince and Princess of Wales are basically expelled from the palaces, George I says to Caroline, "you can stay" because the children were going to remain with him, he says "you can stay here." But she goes with George. She will pick him every time, even when later on and they're having issues with their own son, Prince Frederick. She doesn't side with Frederick at any point, and she's clever enough to see the history repeating itself and she probably knows that George II is being difficult. But she views Frederick as an adversary, her own son, it's really sad. And she sides with her husband even if there's times at which probably in her heart of hearts she knows Frederick's a little bit right, that maybe George II is being a little bit out of order, she's always his partner.

AT: Okay, Frederick does suck though (AJH, laughing: He does!) and we'll get more into that when we talk about his marriage with Augusta. He does suck, all right? Just to be clear, Frederick sucks. I have strong feelings about this.

AJH: He had really good taste in art though. So if we're scraping the barrel of good things about Frederick, had a good collection.

AT: As we're talking about being a lover of the arts we're seeing Sophia Charlotte, so Caroline's foster mom/aunt-in-law, her influence here as well because Caroline was a major patron of the arts, she loved collecting art.

AJH: In terms of Caroline's role as a restorer of the royal collection if you like, she's incredibly important because she creates a visual lineage that links the Hanoverians to effectively the Tudors. She likes to draw the line between them and her own dynasty to again get this sense across that this is about continuity, not about change. They're not an aberration, this is what it was always meant to be. And so Caroline has a real interest in the Tudors. This pops up in her Hermitage and Merlin's Cave projects, where she has created waxwork figures of, I believe it's Elizabeth of York that's meant to be there. So she links all the way back to Henry VII, although it's a little bit unclear. But she has a great affinity with Elizabeth I and she's really, really interested in that period in history, which is kind of cool if you think about it. Like by the 18th century, the Tudors are certainly far enough away for people to be into it you, like history buffs. And she is really lucky in that she finds quite a lot of Holbein sketches that are put away in a drawer at some point in history. And she just comes across them, she opens the drawer one day and there they all are. And I don't know whether it's immediately clear what they are to her. I don't know, she's maybe aware of Holbein, she might have come across some of the paintings that were still extant within the royal collection within the palaces. But she quickly establishes what they are, how important they are and she wants to make sure that they're preserved, because she understands that creating that link is really important.

And she also uses art to celebrate their family story. So in Kensington Palace particularly, there's a picture gallery basically with loads of ancestors of the dynasty at these wonderful little portraits that she gathers and collects. And she is a great curator of what is there really, because a lot of the collection does get put back together. It becomes quite disparate during the Interregnum, but things get put back together with the Restoration. And Caroline is very good at making sense of all of that. And what's brilliant, although incredibly sad is that the way that she organizes the portraits is preserved because George II, after she dies, like so many other monarchs actually, I don't know whether this is a particularly Hanoverian thing, certainly Victoria is another good example. But he doesn't want anything touched. He wants everything to be left as it was and so even 20 years later, the wood that was put in the fireplace in the room on the day she died is still there. All the paintings are there. But it very much reminds me of Victoria and Albert and the fact that the water would be brought to the room and all of that, the routines were maintained even though he had died. And so when picture catalogers came to the palaces, like George Virtue and other people, they were preserving in the 1740s and '50s and '60s, the paintings as they were in Caroline's time, how she arranged them. And that's incredibly interesting, that we have that record.

But in terms of her own image, she was quite interested in how she was projected to the public within portraiture. So I mentioned the Godfrey Kneller portrait earlier. That's really really seminal because it creates a quite interesting parallel almost with Elizabeth I, because we have that mask of youth thing going on by the time we get into her later reign. This happens for Caroline as well interestingly and it's partly because she dies prematurely, so she doesn't age within her portraiture. But the Godfrey Kneller image is so all-encompassing and it permeates all of the images of her that follows, that she never really seems to change. She's always the same, you can always see that continuity of image within the Caroline's portraits. And that's then transferred into print media that were made really widely available for people particularly in the capital, really cheaply as



well for people with disposable income. They were easily acquired and so there was an overriding image of Caroline and of what she looked like, and therefore what a Hanoverian queen was like. So it's through Caroline's image you get a really strong idea of what she was trying to do with her own reign but also with the Hanoverians generally, to create those links, to maintain this sense that they were a British dynasty, that they weren't they weren't an exogenous dynasty, that they'd always been there, they were always meant to be there. So the artistic element with Caroline, it's absolutely a love affair with art for her and it's a trait that she shares with Frederick, which is what makes their bad relationship quite sad, because together they probably would have been formidable in putting together the collection. Frederick's own collection was really fantastic. I think he was probably the most interested member of the royal family since Charles I. Charles I had been really interested in art and Frederick kind of inherited that interest. So yeah it's a wonderful, wonderful thing and Caroline's involvement with the royal collection, in putting it together to make sure that her descendants, that everyone that come after her, consorts, etc had something really wonderful to work with. She was a fantastic patron of the arts.

AT: And she also had a big interest in science. And one of the things that she is somewhat remembered for is that she actually did a lot to promote vaccination in the early days when this was still a radical concept, so can you tell us about her function in influencing both I guess the arts and the sciences when she was in power?

AJH: Absolutely so if we take the science part first, we talk about the inoculations. So Caroline is remembered for championing smallpox inoculations and it seems a bit run-of-the-mill for us now. These days we've all probably at some stage in our lives had a vaccination. It's par for the course but this was absolutely revolutionary. And one thing that I think we've got a really limited appreciation of is how devastating smallpox was. So if you hop on to Wikipedia and you have a little look around the 17th, 18th century, you look at interesting people. And more often than not, you will find that their lives were cut short by smallpox. Mary II is your biggest example of this. She really sadly died of smallpox really young and that changed the way William ruled. And there are so many other people in this period who are struck down by smallpox and it's something that was seen as inevitable that you'd get it. It was like the common cold in terms of frequency. It was infinitely more deadly, but in terms of this sense of, it gets to winter, you're going to get a cold. Eventually you are going to experience smallpox. It was a horrible part of life and people were terrified of it even though it was ubiquitous because it was a terrible killer.

And once it became clear that something could be done to prevent this, it was a real interest for people. And it came out of the Turkish court in Constantinople. The inoculation process for smallpox was being practiced there and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who is a brilliant commentator and poet of this period, her husband was the ambassador out there. And they'd had their children inoculated. They'd seen it done and as well as other scientists that were talking about it, Lady Mary came back to Britain and she was telling everyone, she was like, "this is brilliant! My children are gonna be fine!" And people were really excited, but also terrified because the process was a little bit scary. So you'd have a live bit of smallpox that you'd put in the arm of the person and the idea was that it would give a localized version of the smallpox virus, but it would be hopefully limited enough that it was easy to cope with, you get over it. But the problem was is that occasionally it would go full blown, so you'd end up with smallpox and then it was very much up to fate really.

AT: But also just in case anyone's not aware, like they weren't using sterile needles to do this. Like this involved knives and "biological matter," shall we say. And also I'm not sure where we were at with germ theory at this point but I feel like there was also a good chance that people could have caught infections that were not the smallpox because stuff wasn't necessarily being properly sanitized.

AJH: No, absolutely. So you can have a whole host of issues to come out of it, never mind smallpox, although that was the big one that they were worried about. But ironically Caroline was really into regular bathing, so

she understood hygiene really, really well and all the royal children actually were really regularly bathed. So the Hanoverians were a little bit ahead on that very low bar of hygiene. But that was the way the period was. And so even though it's not a vaccine as we would know it, it's actually still a really dangerous procedure. And Caroline had seen what happened with their eldest daughter, so Princess Anne in about 1720 caught smallpox. She did recover, but it was horrendous and Caroline, when her children are ill, the amount that she loves them comes out really, really strongly and I think it would have really distressed her to see Anne ill like that. And she has this resolution where she's like, "well if there's something that I can do about it, then I'm going to." But she's aware the inoculations, as we say for a whole host of reasons, may be not the safest thing. So she decides that what needs to happen is effectively clinical trials, but it's not the sort of clinical trial that we think of today. They instead pick quite a number of prisoners from Newgate, one of the infamous prisons, to try the inoculation on and then that goes interestingly. And then they have a second sort of clinical trial on some foundlings from the foundling hospital. So these are orphaned children which, yeah, it's not at all ethical, or it certainly wouldn't be allowed today, not even 50 years ago I don't think. It's horrendous, but once those trials are done, Caroline's chuffed. It's all worked out quite well. So then the royal children, the eldest ones, so Caroline and Amelia, are inoculated and then the later children born to Caroline are inoculated too, further down the line. So yeah, she certainly champions it and she is well remembered for it and there's medical treatises that are dedicated to her about inoculation. And very much, I think it's one of those elements where you see monarchy leading by example on things and it happens even today really, where things will happen when monarchy are leading the way. And it's slightly, interesting, out-there ideas that we might not consider the norm, but 10 years later will be. And certainly as we get further along, smallpox now we don't have to deal with. And that all sort of started at that point, which is great

AT: Yeah but I feel like they often leave out the experimenting on orphans part.

AJH: They do, yes. It doesn't really fit in with our ideas of Caroline being kind of saintly and ahead of her time but no, it's definitely not what we do today. And possibly not even something that maybe everybody would have been comfortable with at the time. But then it shows you how life was viewed I suppose and how certain lives were cheaper than others, which is certainly a problem in this period, the fact that they thought they could is really really sad.

AT: I mean to be fair I think you definitely see that perception as well, that poor people's lives are not worth as much as richer people's lives. We see that in any number of different socioeconomic situations around the world. (AJH: Absolutely.) So that has not gone away, though I would hope that experimenting on orphans is not being done anywhere at the moment. (AJH: I hop that's gone away, good grief!) Can't say for sure but we hope. Now going back to my thesis statement that Frederick sucks. So Frederick is Caroline and George's son obviously and he is married to Augusta. So how did Augusta end up in this family?

AJH, laughing: I love how you phrase that. How did she end up being subjected to this?

AT: You like to assume that at some point, she looked around and was like, "how how did I end up here? how did this happen?"

AJH: Yeah I think probably the day she got married and walked in and saw the tension and everyone arguing over chairs. I think she was probably like, "oh god why is this happening to me?"

AT: Wait, were they actually arguing over chairs at the wedding?

AJH: Yes, yes they were! So at the wedding dinner, there was an argument because what chair you sat in

denotes your status and if you had a chair with arms it was sort of the ideal but if you were on a stool, it wasn't as prestigious. I can't remember quite which way round it was, but Frederick wanted his sisters to sit on a specific type of chair and they thought that was outrageous. And so yeah they were arguing about how they were going to sit to eat this dinner. It's one of those little anecdotes that really kind of emphasizes at times that the Hanoverians are sort of farcical because they can never have a serious ceremonial event, like a wedding, like a coronation. They're always a little bit mayhem. They're particularly bad at funerals. They can't have something happen without it having this element of farce and this follows right the way through.

AT: I love that you use the word "farcical" because I was thinking "petty bitches" (laughter) and it's like, "this is why we can't have nice things like weddings and funerals."

AJH: It's true yeah, they are petty and they love it.

AT: The Desperate Housewives of the Hanoverians. (laughter) Anyway. All right, so she probably had a sense pretty early on, on what her future was going to look like but as you mentioned George II, like his father before him, had drama with his son and coming back to the whole, I believe it was the same basic issue where the king George, this time number two, felt that the prince and princess of Wales were getting too much positive attention and taking away from him somehow because (exaggerated) he's the king!

AJH: Absolutely so I think it's equal parts sad and complicated with Frederick and his parents because he is the one that gets left behind in Hanover when they all decamp to Britain in 1714. He is just a little boy and he is left behind with I think it's his great-uncle basically to be the face of the Hanoverian dynasty in Hanover, so that there is this sense that they've not forgotten about Hanover with, you know, "we're coming back, we still care." But he gets left behind and they it's really, really difficult and I don't like saying it because it seems really heartless, but they basically forget about him, particularly when they have Prince William the Duke of Cumberland, they're over Frederick. He's away, he's out of their minds and he grows up with, the one member of the immediate family that he sees most often is George I when George comes back every summer to come and see him. And George I is a major figure in young Frederick's life.

And he grows up independently of them and he tries his own way to influence influence things on the continent, cultivate a marriage for himself and it doesn't work out. And it very much gets to a point where very early in in George II's reign, where he has to bring Frederick over because Frederick is viewed as a problem in Hanover, which is extraordinary considering he was forgotten. And he gets brought over to Britain and nobody's particularly that pleased to see him in a way. That's certainly the sense you get from what happens later. I think he tries to integrate quite well with the family but despite being very similar to them, they don't gel. He's very like Caroline. He's interested in the arts, he's interested in music, he loves all of the things that she loves, but they don't necessarily bond that well, partly because he's immediately very, very popular. And the prince of Wales, regardless of which generation it is, the dissident politicians who aren't getting along with the incumbent government coalesce around the prince of Wales because he is this figure for the future. And they think, "well if there is a regime change very shortly, we need to cozy up to the prince of Wales so that we can get in power." But that becomes a problem because it basically pits the prince of Wales against the king because they're both heads of very different political outlooks, even though mostly these are still Whigs that are coalescing around the prince of Wales. So you've got the Whig government under Robert Walpole that follows most of the way through this period that we're talking about currently. And then you've got politicians that aren't getting along and revolving around the prince of Wales, making him a kind of a rival.

And what happens with sort of George and Frederick, George II gets a bit of a bee in his bonnet about Hanover and Germany generally and German culture. And I think it's Lord Harvey who comments that basically nothing English can satisfy George II for a while. He doesn't want to eat English food, he only wants German food. He doesn't want any kind of English culture around him. He sort of does a complete 360 to where he's at

when he's prince of Wales. And then you've got Frederick who is everybody's best friend. He loves going to the theatre, he loves spending time with aristocrats but he also puts himself in positions where the normal people can actually interact with him. So there's a great portrait painting of Frederick in one of the parks in London and he is in amongst this tumult of London life. It's an amazing, amazing painting and it gives you an idea of how available he made himself. And so even before Augusta comes on the scene he is a really popular figure, and George II hates this, which shows an alarming lack of self-awareness on his part because he's not really doing anything to cultivate any affection from people. Caroline and George bizarrely seem to retire a little bit. They do what they have to do. They do their drawing rooms. They have the balls. They do all of this that and the other, but they don't really want popularity. She famously says to Lord Harvey that popularity makes her feel sick, she hates it. And it's like, "well this is what you were doing when you were prince and princess of Wales! Whoa, what is going on here?" But they find Frederick really difficult ultimately. They don't gel with him.

And then Augusta comes in and she is an immediate benefit to Frederick and it's important to think about in the sense that he's being positioned as a rival to his father and so he's being positioned as an alternative monarch ultimately. And that's how he's marketing himself. And if he's got a wife, then she's an alternate queen and so Augusta feathers the nest of Frederick's grand plan for popularity. And she basically becomes his right-hand woman if you like, in terms of actually acting out this plan for him to really show them to be a better version of the monarchy being projected by his parents. And she basically comes on to the scene, again another sort of semi-contrived possibly marriage situation where when George II is in Hanover in 1735, she just happens to be there and she is wonderful and she's affable and she shows a remarkable deference towards him. She's really really respectful and so she's just kind of massaging that ego he has and he loves her. And he thinks, "yes this is the bride that I'm going to bring back."

AT: All right you're really undercutting my Frederick sucks argument but I know I will be vindicated because we have not yet gotten to the birth story, so could you please regale us with that mess.

AJH: Yeah, so I think the best way to talk about the birth of Frederick and Augusta's first child is to look just briefly at the wedding situation. Because one thing that happens when Augusta first arrives, is nobody actually bothers to pay much attention at all. There's some newspaper articles that suggest that the duke of Cumberland and the princesses go down to Greenwich to meet her but she is basically left on her own. Frederick goes and sees her a couple of times, but there's this real kind of frothy reception and that is reasonably sort of smoothed over at the wedding. George and Caroline are very nice to her, they help her out. But George then immediately after the wedding wants to go to Hanover and he basically tells Frederick and Augusta that they're not to leave the palace that Caroline is in. They're not to do anything. Frederick's not left as regent and they're trapped basically. George II effectively snips their wings in terms of their ability to be agents of their own destiny, to cultivate that popularity. He knows they're going to be a really popular couple. So even on the wedding day, he makes Augusta take a particular route to St James's Palace so that not too many people will see her. I'm sure the streets were still packed but it wasn't the kind of procession that you'd have expected. And that's because he knows she's going to be really popular. There were thousands of people in Greenwich Park the night she arrives, just wanting to get a glimpse of her. It was really really exciting. And so Frederick and Augusta basically start on this campaign where they try and extricate themselves from George and Caroline and try and forge an independent identity. And this partly I think is what's driving their decision to withhold information about the pregnancy that happens in 1737. Augusta is pregnant and they managed to keep it quite quiet, which is extraordinary considering how watched royalty are. And somehow George II and Queen Caroline don't know, which, it's just brilliant. I don't know, I don't understand how they pull it off. You sometimes see people talk about, "did Elizabeth I maybe have a secret love child," something like that and people go, "no they were seen all the time, how could this even happen?" But Frederick and Augusta managed to conceal this pregnancy really well. No one really knows, although Lord Harvey later writes that there were loads of insinuations that she was pregnant. But Caroline was basically convinced, because she

despises Frederick at this point, she's convinced he can't have children. And very strangely, I think it's like a wishful thinking sort of thing because if he doesn't have any children and he conveniently dies then the duke of Cumberland can be king and I think that's what she wants. But yeah, so the idea that Augusta's pregnant, I think they probably, even if they did notice, they were probably so convinced it wasn't happening that they just didn't see it. But anyway, they managed to conceal it until the point where it becomes impossible for them to do so. Frederick tells George II quite late and this is a bone of contention as well. So she's basically due and there's a couple of times where, because they're at Hampton Court for the summer, that Frederick and Augusta go back into London half-expecting her to go into labor. Although this is something that Augusta herself will later say, "this doesn't make sense, why would we have done that?" I think there was definitely a design that they wanted to have the baby outside of the royal residence at that time, that they didn't want Caroline and George to be there. Caroline was determined that she was going to be at the labor because she was convinced, she wanted to make sure that it was actually Augusta's baby. She didn't think that it was real. They thought they were going to have like a rerun of Mary of Modena and the warming pan baby because she just didn't think that he could have children. It's very bizarre.

AT: Okay, that is really weird that she's just completely fixated on this idea that her son couldn't possibly have a child when they hadn't been married that long. It's not like it had been years or anything. But you have to explain the warming pan baby, because that is not a reference most people are going to get.

AJH: Absolutely. So the warming pan baby rumor stems back to Mary of Modena, who was the the wife and queen of James II so we're back with the Catholic Stuarts. And famously Mary of Modena and indeed Anne Hyde, who was James's first wife and the mother of Queen Mary and Queen Anne, they'd had real problems having children. And the Stuarts, as we know quite well indeed, after Charles I onwards they have real problems with having children and indeed when they do have children, they tend to die quite early, sometimes smallpox which we've already talked about. It's a massive, massive killer but then they're just sort of poorly babies and it's really, really sad. Mary of Modena is no exception to this. She really, despite being a very young woman indeed, she struggles quite early and this might be something to do with James or, it's really difficult to say what's going on. But then when she gives birth to the heir, James Francis Edward Stuart, who's the Old Pretender, the son of James II, the brother of Queen Anne, who should have been king after her if not for his Catholicism. He's a healthy baby boy and nobody can quite believe that this is her child because all of the other children that for the last 20, 30 years have been born have been really sickly. And so there's a horrible rumor put forward that a baby was smuggled into the birthing chamber in a warming pan and the baby that was born of Mary of Modena was replaced. Now if you look at portraits of James II and his son, unless the artists were having a fantastic creative license, there is no way that this is not James's son. He's the spitting image of him and Mary of Modena goes on and has a daughter as well, so later on after they they've left Britain. But it's an extraordinary moment and it's a birth that completely changes the face of British history because that is what then engineers the Glorious Revolution and ultimately leads to the Hanoverians taking over because this is the baby that would create a Catholic dynasty and that cannot be allowed to happen.

And for some deeply unknown reason Caroline, and I think it is partly because she just didn't want Frederick to be their heir. She would have much rather had the duke of Cumberland as their heir. She was convinced that this was what was going to happen and so she had to be there to make sure. And Frederick and Augusta were quite understandably probably are a bit put off by this and probably thought, "no, you're not going to be there just to be really strange." I don't think they wanted that level of animosity there, so I think they were very much planning to remove Augusta from the tense situation at Hampton Court. And the night that she actually goes into labor they are at Hampton Court and it all seems to happen really, really quickly. Now Augusta had been a bit poorly during the day and perhaps they should have acted maybe a bit sooner, but it's a really ridiculous scene to start all of the ridiculousness that follows. But while Augusta is being carried down the back stairs by I think it's one of her ladies and then the dancing master that's been teaching Frederick different things,

they've got her by both arms. They're carrying her down the stairs to try and get her out of the palace. And upstairs while this is all going on, the queen and the princesses are all paying cards and they've got no idea that this bizarre situation is unfolding. And basically the decision is made to take Augusta to St James's Palace and this is actually, if you put it into Google Maps, it doesn't look that far, but that's because there are extra bridges that weren't there in the 1730s and better roads. It's quite quick to get there now, but back then it would have not been a small journey and it would have been on really uncomfortable roads. And this poor young woman, she's 17-18 years old. She's in labor, she really needs to actually go and lay down and be somewhere quiet. But she is thrust into this carriage and it thunders across London towards St James's Palace and they get there. And it's basically a miracle that she survives. The baby Augusta, named for her mother, is born 15 minutes, half an hour after they arrive. They get to St James's palace, the servants are kind of like, "whoa, why are you here, what on earth is going on?" Because they packed up, the royal family has left, they like going to Hampton Court for the summer. Nobody is expecting them to be there. Nobody sends ahead and says, "hey they're going to come down, it's going to be a bit of a rush."

So they they managed to bundle Augusta inside and Lord Harvey gives us this wonderful but terrible image where she gives birth between two tablecloths because there was no bedding to put on the bed. There was nothing ready, no one knew they were there. They managed to get a midwife but basically any kind of formal witnesses, they turn up a little bit late. And so by some sort of miracle, both mother and child survive and they managed to have the baby outside of the royal view. And Caroline is woken up later on that night by one of her servants saying, "the princess of Wales is in labor, come quick" and she goes, "all right I'll put my coat on and go downstairs." And the lady's like, "oh no, ma'am she's not here. She's at St James's Palace." When George II hears about this, he hits the roof, possibly literally actually. He is furious, I don't think he can speak he's so angry. And Caroline wakes up Lord Harvey who gets to go along and he's a great chronicler of this whole event even though he's incredibly anti-Frederick, which I'm sure you'll like (laughter). So it's not in his business to treat Frederick with any compassion here at all. So he really emphasizes that Frederick has behaved badly. But they go to St James's Palace and Caroline sees Augusta and the baby Augusta and she sort of says, "oh well, yes that that might be his child, because she's tiny" and I think "a little rat of a girl" is the phrase used "and so therefore that is Frederick's baby." So she's fine with it. I think if it had been a bouncing baby boy, it would have been very much perhaps a rerun of the warming pan scandal. But yeah, it's nothing short of a miracle that Augusta is fine, nothing short of a miracle that the baby is fine and Augusta and Frederick go on to have a number of other children as well. So it's an extraordinary, extraordinary event and it's not one that the relationship between Frederick and his parents ever recovers from because quite understandably George and Caroline furious. They're angry not only because it's a snub to them and their authority but also because he put Augusta in danger. He really, really did. She could have died so easily. There have been royal births that have gone wrong in the plushist and calmest of circumstances and this was the furthest from it and yet all seem to go well. But yes, that was sort of the end of the working relationship between those two generations of the royal family, because then what followed ultimately was Frederick and Augusta were expelled from the palaces and alienated from George II basically, and for the rest of the reign more or less.

AT: All right so they're already in a somewhat precarious situation where there's all of this tension, but Frederick is the heir apparent and there's nothing they can do about it, no matter how much Caroline might want to. And they've secured that particularly with the birth of other children. But Augusta never becomes queen because Frederick dies first, so can you tell us about that and what happened with Augusta in her widowhood?

AJH: Absolutely. So Augusta, I think the reason why people don't know really very much about her although that might have changed now with with *Bridgerton's Queen Charlotte* series where Augusta actually does feature as a character so maybe there's a little bit more perception of her generally, which is great. It's really good but she's forgotten generally by history because she doesn't become queen because Frederick

unfortunately does die in 1751 and that's her life changed forever with one stroke. Unfortunately it's not very clear what he died from. There's a sense that something, like an abscess might have burst in his lungs, which was possibly caused by a blow from a cricket ball a few years previously. Frederick was really, really into cricket. He's sort of the founding father of cricket, if you like, he was certainly one of, a great champion of the game. And so it's possible that that might have caused it. But he falls ill and then he gets a little bit better. He goes to Parliament, he gets rained on. Rain is a theme with the Hanoverians. And he doesn't change out of his clothes, he remains in wet clothes and that's probably what causes him to relapse again and they think he's going to get better but then all of a sudden he just passes away. And Augusta's there at the foot of the bed, watching as her entire life changes if you like. And she has her cry as you would, because this is a man she's been with for 14, 15 years. She's grown up with him, they had many children together. It's a good relationship that they've had. And she does weep but then she dries her tears and she gets her game face on. And she says to the servants and to the earl of Egmont that she needs his letters. And she has all of Frederick's letters brought to her in several different chests and she goes through them and she burns them and she prunes. It's so sad for historians, but she prunes historical record and removes anything potentially incriminating that would threaten her position, that would threaten the position of her children. Because at that point, and that's what makes it so tragic in a way and you can see it in the portraiture leading up to that death, that Frederick and Augusta felt really close to the throne. George II was getting quite elderly, he was getting quite ill and there was a sense as you get into the 1750s, late '40s and '50s that actually the crown's coming their way soon. And it does show in the portraiture. They're confident, they know exactly what sort of monarchy that they're going to project and that is just snatched away in an instant.

And then all of a sudden Augusta have to pivot from being a future queen to now having to raise the king, and this is the young George III. He's just a little boy and he suddenly has to be prepared for his future, which again seems really, really close. I don't think there is a sense that George II is expected to last much longer. He does until 1760 but there is a feeling that it could happen at any moment. And so for Augusta this really just shatters her world. As tough as she is, and I think you have to be really, really strong to be able to have that emotional reaction but then put that all away and have the political survival instinct kick in. She's an incredibly strong woman and she knew what she needed to do to maintain her custody of the children, because she was very worried that George II would take them away from her, which was well within his rights to do. He could have and it's exactly what George I had done with his children and he was well within his right to take the future George III under his wing, help him prepare but Augusta manages to manage the situation in such a way that George II is quite moved by her. He doesn't seem to actually care that Frederick dies. I think somebody tells him at court and he's completely unreactive about it. It shows how little Frederick meant to him at that point, but he's quite moved by Augusta. I think George II always liked Augusta even when the couple were at their most removed from him. He always liked her, her personality and so she leans on him and she makes him feel for her and basically convinces him to leave the children with her. And so she secures the future for her family in that way. And it's also important to remember that she was pregnant at this time as well. So she has her last child after Frederick's death. It's a really traumatic thing to happen to her, to happen to anyone actually, but to be pregnant as well. It's enormous what actually takes place and she manages to create a situation in which she comes out on top. But then she's left really to pick up the pieces and and try and and raise a king in the way that she and Frederick viewed monarchy.

And Augusta I think was aware that this was a challenge, because as well it's quite sad in a way and it continues, whereas Frederick was at odds with his parents, George II at odds with his father. Frederick and Augusta, George III was not their favorite by any means. It was his younger brother who was the favorite and they were sort of underwhelmed by George. And again it's interesting, isn't it, because Caroline didn't want Frederick. She'd have rather had the duke of Cumberland as her heir and possibly also Frederick and Augusta might have passed over George. But George was what they had, George was what she had to work with and so she picks the earl of Bute to basically be his confidante, his tutor, his mentor. And Bute's a really interesting character because prior to Frederick's death, he's a friend, he's somebody who's been around the prince and

princess of Wales's court, that's why he's known to Augusta. But he's not really a major player in Frederick's political world that he's creating. But Bute becomes a really positive influence on George as far as Augusta is concerned and he is a real emotional crutch for the future George III and that's partly why Bute comes to the fore when George becomes king, because it's somebody that he can trust. And the problem which is repeated actually generationally is that George III has a really limited exposure to the rest of the aristocracy. Augusta doesn't want him to be friends with boys his age because they're dissolute and they drink too much, they're whoring and gambling and there's all this terrible, terrible kind of activity that will ruin him and make him a bad king. But actually it alienates him from his own peer group and the same sort of thing happens later on. You get it with Victoria, you even get it kind of with George V really really later on. There's a tendency to keep the royal children away from these bad influences, but it makes them sort of alien from the people around them. And then that's how you end up with George III relying really strongly on Bute. But for the people who are observing this who can't get in, because Augusta creates a bubble around them that people can watch them but not really see them. And there's this sense that they're a little bit unknowable. And people start to suspect that something's going on with her and Bute because she's very nice to him, they spend a lot of time together. There's a belief that he is courting her even though he's a married man and there's generally a suspicion that they are sleeping together. Never mind the fact that this is the most important appointment that she can make for her son, to make sure that he is ready for kingship. Bute is so much more important than just a lover, but that is how the gossip-loving 18th century Brits view it. And as we get into George III's reign, Augusta is very much viewed as a malignant influence on the government and upon the young king as well. And you get that expression through graphic satire, which is not something that Caroline ever had to experience. So Caroline certainly has her critics but the volume of prints and cartoons that show Augusta and Bute, often in sometimes racy, pornographic-esque, for the time certainly, depictions. There's one where Augusta is leading the king around by a rope, often Bute is depicted as a boot, so boot/Bute and she's depicted as a petticoat and there's this sense that that they are running the the show and that the king is at risk. It's playing upon all of these old ideas that it's the evil advisor and that the advisors need to be removed and all. And Augusta very much suffers with this and her entire life up to that point and very much as Princess of Wales, she, from the moment she got married had to display that she was the perfect queen-in-waiting. Frederick puts her up as a parallel to Caroline. Augusta has to show that she's the ideal queen, everything that Caroline is not and that's her whole persona. That's her whole public persona, but it just gets destroyed by this sense that she's overtly political and a malignant influence on her son and on the government. And that's everything that she'd been trying not to be, or appear to be. So she actually had a posthumous reputation, I suppose, it's been really damaged by that.

AT: Didn't Frederick explicitly want her not to be political because he had this obsession with Augusta not being anything that Caroline was? He wanted her to be the exact opposite, and so seeing that Caroline was involved in political decisions and everything, he adamantly did not want that for his wife, not for her own good but because he's a petty bitch.

AJH: Yeah, yeah 100 percent. Yeah, he saw the relationship between George II and Caroline and thought, "well I don't want my wife running me like my mother runs my father." And I think he again maybe fell into that trap with thinking that she was doing everything and that George II was a little bit rubbish. I think he had a really negative view of his father understandably and he didn't want that to happen to him. He viewed it as a terrible thing, even though George and Caroline are a great royal partnership. They're a really good example of how royals worked together. They don't always have a great relationship, he could be horrible to her at times particularly towards the end of her life. Once he'd fallen in love with his later mistress, Caroline could do nothing right. But there was still a lot of love there. He was devastated when she died. And they're a great example of how king and queen works together. So for some unknown reason, Frederick didn't want that for himself and he wanted Augusta shut out from that kind of political avenue. And this is partly because Caroline,



at this time there were a number of things kind of going wrong with the government and because Caroline was closely associated with Robert Walpole, she was seen as a source of this and she was blamed alongside him for all the things that were going wrong. So it's coming also from that sense that Caroline being political is wrong and Frederick wanted to make Augusta apolitical because it helped show her in a better light. And so the way that they developed Augusta's public image in this early period was to put her in contrast to Caroline. And basically if Caroline was political and too clever and too extraverted then Augusta was the opposite of that. And she within this was ticking all of the boxes that you'd have to tick to be considered a really model queen in order to project this idea of what their monarchy would be like when they became king and queen. But it doesn't, I don't think, work for Frederick at all because the very fact that Augusta knew exactly what letters to go and burn when he died indicates that she wasn't excluded from his political world. And the Earl of Shelburne, much later he writes on this period and he says that, as she does with George II interestingly, she massages his ego and makes him think that she's not pulling strings when she is. And he he thinks she's just his little wife and so she she can play what game she pleases. That's what says and he says she's a real actor, she can put on any performance that needs to be done. So whether it is as a console in contrast to Caroline or even within her own marriage, she can really kind of put on her performance to woo the people the audience in front of her and make them see what she wants them to see.

Because that's the thing, she is complicit in a lot of Frederick's early schemes. But into 1737 Caroline and George think she's lovely, that she's just a victim of him. And she, to a certain extent, is and I think that the power dynamic between them is really imbalanced and there's the age element as well - she's a really, really young woman at this time and Frederick is managing their relationship. But she isn't a doormat by any means. there's a example of a confessional issue with them where because she's Lutheran, she doesn't want to take the Anglican communion. She feels really strongly that that's wrong, she can't do that, she'd much rather go to the Lutheran chapel and worship there. And Frederick tries to make her go to the regular Anglican church and she won't. It's very emotional, the whole argument between them is is really intense and it's only when she's basically threatened with being sent home that she actually acquiesces and starts to go to the the Anglican chapel. But she can advocate for herself. She's not a doormat. He can't run rough roughshod over her. So she buys into all of his schemes and she, I think, is certainly maybe not an equal partner in the same way that Caroline is, but that is possibly just because she's less visible to us. She probably absolutely was but it's a paucity of sources and our ability to view Augusta. And the thing is as well with her, she doesn't want to be seen. She operates very quietly and I think that's partly why we don't know her very well from a public history point of view. She's not a character that's immediately available to us. Caroline, even though she's equally not very well known, she's such a big personality and that comes out in what's left behind. Whereas Augusta I think was very good at pruning her letters and she doesn't leave that much of herself available to us, although there's still quite a lot of her collections and the evidence from her gardens and the things that she put together. There's those elements of her personality and that's certainly something that she can indulge more in once she's a widow. But she is a little bit lost to us, partly because of Frederick being again a big personality and sort of hiding her a little bit but also partly by her own design.

AT: I think something that we're touching on here is, we view the word "manipulation" as inherently negative but for a lot of women throughout history, manipulation is the only way that they had any form of power and I also don't think manipulation is inherently bad. People manipulate each other all the time in positive, neutral and negative ways. Like being professional at work is a form of manipulation because if I told my boss what I really think, I would not have a job - no, that's not true, I I love my boss. Love you, Caity! - she doesn't listen to my podcast, it's fine (laughter). But point being, we all act certain ways to get what we want and that's not inherently bad thing. That is how society functions. That is how people function in social interactions of any kind, whether it's professional, whether it's personal, whether it's royal. And so I think Augusta from everything you've said she's a survivor.

AJH: Yeah, 100 percent, yeah. And that's what makes her such a compelling character I think, because she's a survivor from the word go, because she's transplanted from her home in Gotha. She is fairly secluded there, although when the marriage is first announced and there are people sort of sent over to go and retrieve her. She's dining in public, she's put on display. It's not the same as being plonked into the British court where there's people sniping, everybody's watching you, somebody's looking for something to go wrong. It's a really charged atmosphere and it's very different from anything that she would have experienced. And she couldn't speak a word of English as well, which is really important to remember. She was a teenager, she couldn't speak the language. Her French was sort of passable. I think Lord Harvey's to blame for this one - it's said that she couldn't speak French, and she couldn't speak English, she could own speak German. She could speak French, it just wasn't brilliant because Lady Irwin is sent over to be one of her companions and in her letters that she writes back to her father, she says, "well my French isn't very good and and the princess's French isn't great, but we're getting there with talking to one another." And then it's basically her mother's fault because Augusta's mother thinks that, "well the Hanoverians have been on the throne for basically 20-odd years, so surely everyone in Britain speaks German. I don't need to teach her English, that's ridiculous." it's a very bizarre assumption that she makes.

So she sends Augusta barely ill equipped and she has to adapt really quickly. She has to learn English very quickly. And she can, by 1738 when they're in Bath, there's reports, she speaks very prettily to all the ladies there and she's really impressive, but she has to pivot so quickly in that early period. And she probably turns up thinking that she's going to go into a really nourishing atmosphere, where she's going to get to learn from Caroline, who's a really accomplished queen. She's going to be able to sit in on Caroline's intellectual salon and they shared similar interests, they were both interested in pottery, they were both interested in gardens, they liked collecting things, Augusta was really interested in, she had a lovely coin collection, which was an interest she got from her dad, which was really sweet. They had a lot in common and yet they didn't get to have that relationship. Caroline could have set Augusta up to be kind of a queen in her image, there could have been a lot of continuity there, but it didn't happen.

And so Augusta has to pivot from being herself, her own genuine personality to being what Frederick wants her to be. And then when they get expelled from the palaces, they then have to reformulate who they are again. Then when Frederick dies she has to do the same thing. When George III becomes a king she has to do the same thing. She's so adaptable and she just takes it on the chin as well, you never get a sense that she's angry about the situation. There's one anecdote in Doddington's diary, he was a close friend with the family and he's the chap behind the patriot kingship ideas that Frederick was really supportive of, that formed the basis of his kingship and ultimately influenced the way George III was king. But in his diary, he notes that he goes on a walk because Augusta and she is furious with George II because they're left in quite a lot of money trouble after Frederick dies because George takes quite a lot of their funds away. He just reabsorbs it into his own finances and he leaves him in quite a bit of trouble. And so she she goes from being really kind of nice towards George II if you like to his face, to behind closed doors being absolutely furious with him. And that's the only part that I've come across where you get this sense that she's losing her cool, because other than that, she's just rock solid. She does what she needs to do for herself and for her family ultimately because she's also successful. I know she doesn't get to be queen, but she gets her son ready, whether it's right whether it's wrong the way she does it depends on your point of view at the time. But she gets George III onto the throne, he's ready more or less to do the job and until his descendants, he was one of the longest reigning monarchs that we've had. It was an incredibly long reign that he went on to have and she ensured that he was ready to go and do that. There's a lot of mistakes along the way, as we know. Wasn't perfect, but she got him there and yeah, I think definitely she's a survivor.

AT: I feel like throughout this conversation we've had so many interesting what-ifs, so what if Sophia had come to the throne? What if George I, what if his wife had not been indiscreet, shall we say, because I get the sense like you said, she probably could have gotten away with affairs if she'd just been a little discreet about it. And I

feel like Augusta is another one of those what-if queens that, it's such a fascinating thing to contemplate, what if these three separate women had become the queens of England. And obviously we can never say for sure but it is a lot of fun to ponder.

AJH: Absolutely and I think Caroline's another one really because she dies so abruptly with only 10 years on the throne. All of these women, Caroline gets there, she gets over the line. A lot of what she's trying to institute doesn't ultimately take off because she does die and then George II can't cope for quite a long time. He's really upset about things and so winds up quite a lot of her initiatives. But yeah, absolutely, and it sort of shows how chanceable everything was and how lucky the Hanoverians were in a way that everything fell in such a way that enabled them to not only get the throne, but keep it, because it's often said that Caroline - and I agree wholeheartedly - was a fantastic stabilizing figure for the monarchy generally and I heard, I can't remember which historian it was that said it, but it's no accident if you like but the most serious Jacobite challenge the Hanoverians came after she died in '45, '46. They are fascinating figures and I don't think we spend enough time looking at them really. And I think that does come out of the fact that they never got them to be queen, Sophia, Sophia Dorothea and Augusta. But they had such an important impact on everything that followed. And, yeah it would have been incredibly interesting to see what they would have done.

AT: Join us next time on the Infinite Women podcast and remember, well-behaved women rarely make history.