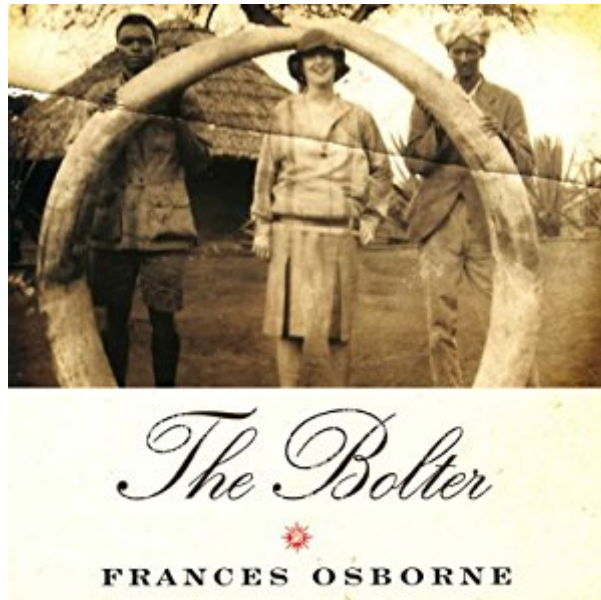


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# The Bolter



## Synopsis

A San Francisco Chronicle Best Book of the Year An O, The Oprah Magazine #1 Terrific Read In an age of bolters - women who broke the rules and fled their marriages - Idina Sackville was the most celebrated of them all. Her relentless affairs, wild sex parties, and brazen flaunting of convention shocked high society and inspired countless writers and artists, from Nancy Mitford to Greta Garbo. But Idina's compelling charm masked the pain of betrayal and heartbreak. Now Frances Osborne explores the life of Idina, her enigmatic great-grandmother, using letters, diaries, and family legend, following her from Edwardian London to the hills of Kenya, where she reigned over the scandalous antics of the "Happy Valley Set." Dazzlingly chic yet warmly intimate, *The Bolter* is a fascinating look at a woman whose energy still burns bright almost a century later.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"You don't want to be known as 'the Bolter's granddaughter'," warned Frances Osborne's mother. Osborne was the Bolter's great-granddaughter, and the mother was worried about how people might have spoken about herself. The thirteen-year-old Osborne had come across a photograph of the ravishing Lady Idina Sackville, and wanted to know more, for the existence of the scandalous Idina was a dark family secret. "My mother was right to be cautious: Idina and her blackened reputation glistened before me. In an age of wicked women she had pushed the boundaries of behavior to extremes." And thus Osborne was set on years of research, looking into family troves of diaries and letters, as well as society newspaper stories, and conducting interviews of those who knew Idina. Now in *The Bolter* (Knopf), she has given a biography of the highly-spirited, sad

woman whom she never knew. It is sort of a family biographical exorcism, but the book stands well on its own, as a portrait of Idina as well as of the heady times which were her heyday. There is mischievous fun here, and great sadness as well, and the charming and flawed Idina could not have gotten a more sympathetic evaluation. In 1913, Idina made what has to be considered a conventional marriage to Euan Wallace, a cavalry officer and a millionaire heir. They were blissfully rich, and at least initially were blissful in other ways. "Idina completed her introduction to sex: an activity for which she discovered she had a talent, but which she clearly found so intensely enjoyable that it rapidly became impossible for her to resist any opportunity for it." She was quickly pregnant, and bore Wallace two sons. The couple were busy with a social life in London, and building a mansion in Ayrshire.

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