



This photograph of Bertie (the future George VI, in front) and David (the future Edward VIII, in back), dressed in sailor uniforms, was taken by their grandmother, Queen Alexandra. The boys are with their father (George V, on the left) and grandfather (Edward VII, on the right).

Although Alexandra wouldn't have known it at the time, she took a picture of four successive British kings.

David and Bertie, who often wore such clothes, had a difficult home life - but they adored their paternal grandparents (Edward VII and Alexandra). Whenever they could, the children wanted to be with them.

We learn more about the young lives of the royal siblings from Miranda Carter in *George, Nicholas and Wilhelm: Three Royal Cousins and the Road to World War I*:

May [as Queen Mary, the boys' mother, was known to her family and close friends] also found it difficult to connect with her children, at least when they were small. After David was born, she seemed disinclined to hold him and left for St. Moritz not long after, while George went to Cowes.

It might have been her natural reserve, or post-natal depression, or her insistence that George [her husband, the King] always come first, or the aristocratic habits of the time, whereby children were bundled off to nursemaids and nannies and barely ever encountered on their own, but she found it hard to get close to her children and hated being pregnant.

..."The tragedy was that neither had any understanding of a child's mind," May's friend Mabell, Countess of Airlie, admitted. "They had not succeeded in making their children happy."

It was no wonder that for the children, trips to their grandparents, Edward and Alexandra - who seemed "bathed in perpetual sunlight," and spoilt and indulged them in the big house - were like "being given an open-sesame to a totally different world." (George, Nicholas and Wilhelm: Three Royal Cousins and the Road to World War I, by Miranda Carter, page 199.)

Click on the image for a much closer view.

Credits:

Photograph by Queen Alexandra, included in a book entitled *Queen Alexandra's Christmas Gift Book: Photographs from my Camera*. (Scroll further up, on the link, to see the hardcover and a picture of the Queen.)

The book, "to be sold for charity," was published by "The Daily Telegraph," in 1908. It is freely available online, courtesy Google Books.

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Bertie and David Dressed as Sailors - Hard to be a Royal

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