

Margaret of Great Britain

by Richard Kaplan



Margaret's refusal to stop seeing Peter Townsend (below, left) angers her sister, Queen Elizabeth (right). Rift would be complete had Princess married flier.

THE BLIGHTED ROMANCE of beautiful Princess Margaret and Captain Peter Townsend still vexes Britain's royal family. Townsend, 44, is a divorced man whose wife is living. This makes him unacceptable to the Church of England as 28-year-old Margaret's suitor. And since Queen Elizabeth is titular head of the Church, the Princess would alienate her own sister by marrying the handsome air ace. In 1955, Margaret sadly and publicly renounced Townsend, who was packed off to Brussels.

But last spring, the Princess (with her mother's backing) asked him to tea without notifying the Queen—whose press aide called this action “sheer perversity.” And when Margaret toured Canada recently, Townsend reportedly telephoned her from Belgium. With Elizabeth and Prince Philip firmly against Townsend, Margaret's cause seems hopeless. But court observers insist that the headstrong Princess may yet emulate her uncle, Edward VIII, who gave up his throne in 1936 to wed “the woman I love.”

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