

Kafka's Last Love – The Mystery of Dora Diamant by Kathi Diamant.
Secker and Warburg 2003.

This is a fascinating account of a twentieth century life that circumstance could all too easily have expunged forever. That it has been brought to light in such an engaging and readable way is a great credit to the author who, in spite of sharing the same surname as her subject, has as yet discovered no blood relationship with her.

Dora Diamant was a striking, sensuous and powerful woman who broke from the shackles of her ultra-Orthodox family and captured the heart of Franz Kafka and shared his final year; who married and became a mother, dallied with Communism in Moscow, escaped the Nazis only to be interned by the British on the Isle of Man, and subsequently fulfilled a long cherished Zionist dream of visiting the new state of Israel.

This is a personal history that is also a microcosm of the twentieth century Jewish experience; it is about a woman of passion told by a writer with passion for her subject. It sheds fresh light on otherwise well-known events and deserves the acclaim that it has already received. Read and enjoy!

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh