



The Real Elizabeth: An Intimate Portrait of Queen Elizabeth II

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A surprising and very personal biography of a woman who may be the world's last great queen, published to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of her reign

Elizabeth II, one of England's longest-reigning monarchs, is an enigma. In public, she confines herself to optimistic pieties and guarded smiles; in private, she is wry, funny, and an excellent mimic. Now, for the first time, one of Britain's leading journalists and historians gets behind the mask and tells us the fascinating story of the real Elizabeth.

Born shortly before the Depression, Elizabeth grew up during World War II and became queen because of the shocking abdication of her uncle and the early death of her father. Only twenty-five when she ascended to the throne, she has been at the apex of the British state for nearly six decades. She has entertained and known numerous world leaders, including every U.S. president since Harry Truman. Brought up to regard family values as sacred, she has seen all but one of her children divorce; her heir, Prince Charles, conduct an adulterous affair before Princess Diana's death; and a steady stream of family secrets poured into the open. Yet she has never failed to carry out her duties, and she has never said a word about any of the troubles she has endured.

Andrew Marr, who enjoys extraordinary access to senior figures at Buckingham Palace, has written a revealing and essential book about a woman who has managed to remain private to the point of mystery throughout her reign.

The Real Elizabeth: An Intimate Portrait of Queen Elizabeth II Details

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Andrew Marr**

From Reader Review The Real Elizabeth: An Intimate Portrait of Queen Elizabeth II for online ebook

Julie Goring says

Fascinating. Easy to read and bang up-to-date. I thoroughly enjoyed it

Julie says

While this is a comprehensive biography of Queen Elizabeth II, it is not an in-depth look at her daily life, which is kept very closely guarded. Rather, it is more about the monarchy as an institution and how her role as Queen has evolved over the years. We are shown the figurehead of England, but not necessarily Elizabeth Windsor as a person. We are given details about events and figures around her (Princess Margaret, Charles and Di), but only speculation about her actual feelings. Yes, it portrays her as modest and astute, the practical head of a country and a family. She has engaged in politically maneuvering to maintain the monarchy despite its irrelevance. She has endured and overcome tragedy and scandal in the public eye while remaining an enigma. This is not a salacious tell-all, but a book that attempts to analyze the Queen's role in modern times.

I did learn a few interesting tidbits, though. I was unaware that Churchill hated Prince Philip. There was a charming anecdote that basically stated that if the queen looks angry in public or during a ceremony, she is probably trying to suppress a laugh. There were some interesting details about the Charles and Diana scandal that did not know, but overall, Di is depicted as unstable, reckless and manipulative. Prime ministers have come and gone, royals have divorced, the press has grown ever more relentless, but Elizabeth II remains a steadfast and enduring symbol of her nation.

I received a complimentary copy of this book via the Amazon Vine program.

Mary Robinson says

This is a superlative history of an incredible woman. Whatever your opinion of the institution of the monarchy, I don't think you can question the intelligence, loyalty and endurance of Queen Elizabeth. I admire this writer as well; he gives such relevant background, makes perceptive connections and has a balanced approach to his analysis.

Martin Belcher says

As part of the celebrations of Her Majesty the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year (sixty years on the throne), Andrew Marr has written a very good in depth, candid story of Elizabeth's journey to the throne and the sometimes bumpy ride that has been the wonderful and glorious sixty year reign of our octogenarian Queen.

The book rather than being set chronologically has been cleverly written in themes and this keeps the reader interested. I'm not ashamed to admit I am a passionate monarchist so you wont find any republican

sentiments in my review; although I have to say that this book proves that the Queen and the Royal Family costs each British tax payer less per year than a president or prime minister and is very good value for money in terms of the prestige, publicity, good will and trade that the Queen herself and other members of the Royal Family generate for Britain at home and around the world.

Being Andrew Marr, the book does at times concentrate heavily on the Queen's relationships with her prime ministers from Winston Churchill through to Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and currently David Cameron. Of course as a constitutional monarch, the Queen is strictly forbidden to engage in party political business but as head of state she is in a unique position of reading all state papers and meets the prime minister each Tuesday to talk about parliament and state affairs. The book goes into depth on this subject and it is quite surprising to find out that Queen has more of an impact and takes an active interest in parliamentary business and her prime ministers than we think she does. We sometimes forget that the Queen of the United Kingdom is also the Queen of Australia, New Zealand and Canada and a few other countries, she is also head of the Commonwealth of Nations (a powerful club of ex empire countries).

Overall a very good and entertaining read and a wonderful insight into the Queen's very busy life and of the person behind the crown, Elizabeth a powerful, graceful old lady, matriarch of the House of Windsor who continues to transform and renew the royal family so that the monarchy is as relevant to 21st century Britain as it was when she took the throne over from her father, King George VI in 1952.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

Rafal Jasinski says

Wbrew temu, co g?osi tytu? i podtytu? publikacji Andrew Marra, niewiele dowiemy si? z niej o samej Królowej. Przez wi?ksz? cz??? ksi??ki, obejmuj?cej okres rozpoczynaj?cy si? od za?o?enia dynastii Windsorów, oraz ca?y czas panowania El?biety II, a? do dnia obecnego, Królowa pozostaje postaci? pos?gow? i wr?cz symboliczn?. Nie spodziewajcie si? wi?c, i? dane Wam b?dzie pozna? nazbyt wiele ze sfery jej ?ycia osobistego. Marr wydaje si? by? zago?ym rojalist?, który najwi?ksze nawet wpadki i skandale, których ca?kiem sporo wydarzy?o si? w omawianym okresie w rodzinie królewskiej, potrafi opisa? z wdzi?kiem i finejz?, w niczym nie uchybiaj?c samej El?biecie II, ceduj?c raczej negatywne pr?dy narastaj?ce wokó? Windsorów na innych cz?onków rodziny królewskiej. Tak wi?c, tym którzy spodziewaj? si? po lekturze ksi??ki Marra pikantniej i naruszania tabu z góry si?ganie po ni? odradzam.

Natomiast ksi??ka ta stanowi bardzo dobrze napisane i przyst?pne studium panowania nie tyle samej El?biety II, co miejsca monarchii w nowoczesnym ?wiecie. Marr znakomicie wyja?nia zale?no?ci polityczne, uk?ady i powi?zania dworu królewskiego z rz?dem Wielkiej Brytanii, oraz wp?ywów i roli, jakie wsp?czesna monarchia odgrywa w ca?ej Brytyjskiej Wsp?lnocie Narodów.

To znakomita lektura dla wszystkich, którzy pragn? - do?? powierzchownie, ale w stopniu wystarczaj?cym, by zacz?? si? lepiej orientowa? - pozna? mechanizmy politycznego funkcjonowania Wielkiej Brytanii, jak równie? dowiedzie? si? wi?cej o rodzie Windsorów, relacjach pomi?dzy jej cz?onkami i tym, jak zmienia?o si? oblicze monarchii brytyjskiej na przestrzeni kilku minionych dekad, oraz jaki wp?yw mia?y na? wielkie wydarzenia historyczne, skandale, oraz zmieniaj?ca si? mentalno?? poddanych i rozwój mediów.

P.S. Osobom bardziej zainteresowanym sam? El?biet? II polecam serial "The Crown", którego ksi??ka

Andrew Marra wydaje się być znakomitym uzupełnieniem.

Rozkminy Hadyny says

Po książce o królowej angielskiej z szumnymi i miaymi określami jak „prawdziwa”, „jakiej nie znamy” w tytule, można się spodziewać, że jednak czytelnik będzie miał okazję zatrzymać się w codziennie królowej, przyjrzać się jej naprawdę z bliska, może nawet przeczytać jakieś rewelacyjne, nigdy nie upubliczniane szczegóły z życia. Tymczasem przygotowana na diamentowy jubileusz królowej biografia – upamiętniająca sześćdziesiąt lat na tronie drugowiecznej monarchini brytyjskiej – to publikacja niesamowicie poprawna, wyważona i grzeczna. Wadnych burzliwych opinii publicznych faktów, wadnych brukowych błędów, wątpliwości o osobistych. Czytajcie się? królowa jest dla autora obiektem podziwu za szkłanego gabinetu, osobą godną czci, której trzeba za wszelkimi cenami bronić i chwalić; jest tytanem pracy, najczulszą matką i mistrzem savoir-vivre'u w każdym momencie. I bardziej niż sam król, biograf bierze na celownik sam monarchę.

Innymi słowy, ta biografia zupełnie nie rozmija się z moimi oczekiwaniami, rozbudzonymi przez intymny i, choć zawsze w granicach dobrego smaku, odważnie mówiący o najbardziej drażliwych elementach z okresu panowania królowej Elżbiety II serialu The Crown.

Pełna recenzja na: <http://rozkminyhadyny.blogspot.com/2018/02/the-crown.html>

Julie says

I am an unashamed royalist. According to the author, "Though we live in a secular and materialistic age, the Queen believes, quite literally, that she has a vocation - that her function is a religious calling she must answer every day of her life." I have always held the Queen in high esteem due to her dedication, work ethic & stoicism. She has dedicated her whole life to serving her country. On her 21st birthday, she made the following pledge:

"I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong." She has kept this pledge unwaveringly. She exemplifies continuity, duty, kindness, and wisdom. She has earned our respect and even our awe.

Kalilah says

After having read 304 pages, and not having read a single page more for countless weeks, I can safely assume that I won't be tempted to complete this book.

It's not like I didn't find it terribly interesting while I was reading it, but it hardly stands a chance of being prioritised in the Continuation Department when I'm surrounded by much more exciting books. And I doubt I'll be pushed deep enough into the murky depths of BIBALOERM (Boredom Induced By A Lack Of Exciting Reading Material), to pick up where I left off any time in the near future. So, it's time to let the Diamond Queen go. Sorry old bean.

Natalie Print says

An engaging, insightful overview of the Queen, her life, and her role. Andrew Marr had a mammoth task with this book, including background to the modern monarchy, the Queen's family life, and sixty year reign, plus consider the future of the monarchy beyond Queen Elizabeth II's reign. Despite the huge remit, Marr has created a wonderfully readable and interesting biography. Well worth reading.

Pearl says

This is not a bad book; but it's not a book about the real Elizabeth. Nor is it an intimate portrait. I'm not sure why I expected it to be. (Maybe the title?) After all, who knows the real Elizabeth, apart from her very small circle of close friends and her family, and they're not talking. Except for Diana, of course, and she's not talking now. And much of what she did say is somewhat suspect.

The book is really about the role of the monarch, particularly the role that Elizabeth has chosen to play (or has had thrust upon her) as monarch. Maybe the point is that there is not much distinction between the two. The role and the person have merged or very nearly. In the final pages of his book, Marr does manage some more personal glimpses. He also includes some interesting information on Prince Phillip's difficult childhood and explains where his Greek ancestry as well as his British and German ancestry came from.

Being Queen today is harder than it was when Victoria was Queen, Marr writes. The Windsors have come to understand that any danger to the future of the monarchy will not come from political upheavals, such as the one that created the Windsor dynasty in 1917, "but from inside the family as it struggles to live in a fast-moving world of ravenous reporters and eavesdroppers." Unsurprisingly, they dislike the press. Perhaps Phillip most of all. Sometimes Marr stretches things too far as when he wants to compare the current Queen to Queen Victoria. "Like Victoria," he writes, "she has produced a large family who has had their share of scrapes. Like Victoria, her heir has had to wait until his own old age for the chance to reign, while establishing an independent role." The latter is certainly true, although Charles is definitely not the dashing personality that Edward VII was. And to compare her family of four to Victoria's nine, as both being large families seems absurd.

I suppose in the more than three hundred pages, Marr did manage to uncover some new tidbits, but most of what he assembles, quite well, is familiar. Elizabeth has put duty above all else. If she had her druthers, she'd probably have spent her life as a horsewoman and with her Corgis than as a Queen with all of its incumbent ceremonies. She is circumspect to a fault. She has seen an awful lot of history in her time. Prime Ministers come and go. She remains constant and has a phenomenal memory. Prime Ministers, under stress, feel they can confide in her. She is the soul of discretion. She seems to have preferred Prime Ministers from the Conservative Party more than most of the Labour PMs; but has had a good relationship with them all, albeit not without some rough spots. When she was a young Queen, her Prime Ministers tried to bully her, Churchill especially; now they are in awe of her. She is frugal and has had to spend more of her private wealth than previously as republican fervor has gained ascendancy. She doesn't complain much, but Phillip has been known to.

She has a terrific smile when she cares to be less formal which she is increasingly learning to be, but don't presume on it. She can quickly put you in your place with an icy glance. Her family has given her considerable grief from time-to-time, most notably Charles and Diana. She takes her role as Head of the

Church of England seriously and at a time when the official word of the Church was against divorce, three of her four children divorced. Her relationship with the future heir to the throne seems to have been more contentious than her relationship with her other children and her grandchildren. She appears to have had a good marriage. Oh, and here is a new tidbit that I did glean from the book: she definitely does have a mothering instinct. The loss of her sister Margaret and her mother within the same year hit her hard. They were two people she could confide in and did so almost every day.

Perhaps the main thread in the book is Elizabeth's affection for the Commonwealth. She has worked hard to keep it together. Marr speculates about whether it will stay together after her reign is over. He's not at all sure that it will. It's clear that Marr admires her but his book is not hagiography. Still, he's glad that she's had a long and good reign. God Save the Queen.

Janice says

The cover says that it is an intimate portrait of Queen Elizabeth II. The product description says that it is "a surprising and very personal biography of a woman...". Who were they trying to kid? It was more a biography of the monarchy.

I didn't enjoy the writing. The author tended to be all over the place. He would move on to another subject and then come back and revisit a current one. For example, Marr kept coming back to his assertion that the Queen's audiences with her premiers were private and that neither party revealed what had been discussed.

I kept waiting for the very personal biography of the woman, Elizabeth. So really, what was her reaction when Pierre Trudeau, former Prime Minister of Canada, slid down the banister at Buckingham Palace? (Note - not a proud moment for Canada. Fuddle duddle anyway.) For that matter, what did she think about anything? Marr only gave little glimpses through the veil of his indepth examination of the monarchy.

Lastly, why were there no pictures? Show us in her wedding dress, on the balcony after the wedding ceremony, at her coronation, riding her horse...

Mary says

Bingo - about royalty. I had no idea what to expect but this was surprisingly engaging, not-so-surprisingly informative (I learned quite a bit about Great Britain's history and politics; I'll likely pay more attention going forward, and that pleases me!) and simply enjoyable. Highly recommend for anyone who's a fan of the royals.

Elsa K says

I find Queen Elizabeth highly interesting. I have been wanting to read a biography on her and picked this one. I think I may have enjoyed another one more. One thing is the book does not go in chronological order,

but by topic. I found that strange for a biography. I also think it was written for someone with a better understanding of British history and government. Major events were mentioned, but not explained at all. I also felt confused as I am unfamiliar with how British government runs and I didn't finish feeling like I understood it better. Maybe this just wasn't what I was looking for. I do appreciate Queen Elizabeth's stability and find her a strong woman I would like to learn more about.

Beth says

An endearing look at the current British monarch and the events and people who have influenced her.

William says

Andrew Marr has written a fascinating look at the institution of the British monarchy under Queen Elizabeth II. Although it does present biographical information, this isn't really a biography, but a journalistic look at the how the institution of the monarchy has evolved and adapted to historical change over the course of her long reign. As an American, I was not familiar with much of what Marr covers. The importance that Elizabeth attaches to her being head of the Commonwealth was a real surprise to me. The book finishes with an apologia for the continuing institution of the monarchy and a short discussion of how Prince Charles (Charles III? George VII?) might further change the institution when/if he ascends to the throne, changes that might be detrimental the the monarchy's continuance.
