



Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch

Sally Bedell Smith

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch

Sally Bedell Smith

Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch Sally Bedell Smith

“An excellent, all-embracing new biography.”—*The New York Times*

From the moment of her ascension to the throne at age twenty-five, Queen Elizabeth II has been the object of unparalleled admiration and scrutiny. But through the fog of glamour and gossip, how well do we really know the world’s most famous monarch? Drawing on numerous interviews and never-before-revealed documents, acclaimed biographer Sally Bedell Smith pulls back the curtain to show in extraordinary detail the public and private lives of one of the world’s most fascinating and enigmatic women. In *Elizabeth the Queen*, we meet the young girl who suddenly becomes “heiress presumptive” when her uncle abdicates the throne. We see the young Queen struggling to balance the demands of her job with her role as the mother of two young children. And we gain insight into the Queen’s daily routines, as well as her personal relationships: with Prince Philip, her husband of sixty-four years and the love of her life, her children and their often-disastrous marriages, her grandchildren and friends.

Scrupulously researched and compulsively readable, *Elizabeth the Queen* is a close-up view of the lively, brilliant, and steadfast woman we’ve known only from a distance, and a captivating window into life at the center of the last great monarchy.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

“[An] imposing, yet nimbly written, biography [that] dwarfs the field . . . a most satisfying and enjoyable read, one to be savored at length.”—*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch Details

Date : Published October 30th 2012 by Random House Trade Paperbacks (first published January 1st 2012)

ISBN : 9780812979794

Author : Sally Bedell Smith

Format : Paperback 720 pages

Genre : Biography, Nonfiction, History, Historical

 [Download Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch Sally Bedell Smith

From Reader Review Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch for online ebook

Caidyn (SEMI-HIATUS; BW Reviews; he/him/his) says

Before I went into reading (well, listening) to this book, I was convinced that Queen Elizabeth's husband had died. I knew that she inherited from her father, that she married some man and had at four kids, and all that. But, I didn't know what happened to him. Was it like she was some queen bee? Did he die after giving her all he needed? Or, was it an arranged marriage and he was hella old so she got off free after all? Apparently he's still living and they're a very happy couple.

That gives you the literal baseline idea of what I went into this knowing. Oh, I knew about Queen Elizabeth and Princess Diana. I knew about the whole Charles/Camilla stuff and how the Queen wasn't too pleased with it. I definitely know about Will and Kate. I even knew about the Queen's uncle, his abdication and the creation of the Duke/Duchess of Windsor, and her father's issue with stuttering. However, here are the things I learned.

The Queen is crazy about horses. I already knew the corgi bit, but I did learn about how that came about. Her thing with horses, though, is fantastic. I can get behind anyone who has a passion and sticks with it.

She is all about duty. Now, stop laughing. Not *that* duty. She's just an amazingly strong woman who has weathered so many things in her years as Queen, not just politically but also in her personal life, and she has remained strong throughout it. Really, she is the essence of the British stiff-upper-lip attitude that came from wartime efforts. Her grandson, William, is definitely the essence of the new British depreciating humor.

The Queen can rebound from anything. While that goes back to her demeanor and weathering through time, it also means the little stories about how common and famous people alike have done weird things that go against custom, and she just rolls with it. All in all, it's pretty cute to see her get excited.

Also, **Queen Elizabeth can make you feel at ease.** If there is one thing that was repeated, word for word, so many times in this book, it was that one right there. She puts you at ease. Prime Ministers said it, Presidents said it, random people who met her said it. She is aware of her status and how it can make people nervous, then she goes and calms them down some by making herself seem approachable.

Basically, Sally Bedell Smith paints Queen Elizabeth II in the best possible light. When it comes to the whole Diana affair, Queen Elizabeth was obviously at no fault and didn't hate her. When she failed to raise a flag at half mast for her dead ex-daughter-in-law, not her thing. Sort of didn't really mention it at all. Smith just brushes over the things that could paint the current Queen in a bad light, which didn't make it good. She also showed the Queen as very pro-American. Now, I'm not saying that she isn't, but it was a very American thing to do. And, Smith is American. While this was a good book, I think it would have been better if written by someone who is British, who wouldn't paint over those little things.

This is basically for an audience who has no idea of the Queen's life and who is coming at this as a foreigner. I'm definitely the target audience for this. And, it's very good. I learned a whole hell of a lot. It just has a very obvious bias.

Sarah says

Books about royalty, British royalty in particular, are my secret passion. Victoria's Daughters, Tina Brown's biography of Diana...I hung on every word. Nothing better than good gossip history. So I picked up the hefty 537 page autobiography of QE II with some excitement. I enjoyed reading it, but was frankly...a little boring.

The author interviewed many people with numerous anecdotes, all of which portrayed the Queen as smart, admirably devoted and loving at all times, but there was no analysis and nary a controversial word. Elizabeth has been one of the longest reigning monarchs in British history, during a time of enormous global change. Change, for the most part where England and some Commonwealth countries have been a major players. But this book is chock full of trivial detail and fluffy anecdotes. Did I need to know, for example, that the queen gets her hair washed by leaning forward over the basin, rather than back like most people? There is nothing about Diana and Fergie that you couldn't have read in People magazine, and not more than a few pages about Maggie Thatcher, which should have been great history. It was an enjoyable tome of trivia.

Ashley *Hufflepuff Kitten* says

This was a fantastic portrait of perhaps the most constant, consistent persona of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Especially now, as we follow the Queen into her nineties (and minimal signs of slowing down, as with her eighties), it's mind-boggling to think of all the people she has come in contact with and all the policies she's had a hand in advising.

I'd love to see an updated edition in a year or so to include William and Kate's kids and Harry & Meghan's wedding. Back to rewatching The Crown I go.

Lynda says

I am an unashamed royalist and anglophile. I have read quite a few histories and biographies of twentieth century English history. If I had not done so much reading, I probably would have enjoyed this book more.

This is a superficial handling of the subject. It is a popular biography. It is also biased. I would not recommend this book to anyone seriously interested in anything other than entertainment.

MichelleCH says

Just awful, if an author is going to propose a biography of a well known figure, at least have the courage to acknowledge a bias or predisposition to a certain viewpoint. This so-called biography is laughable. Yes she had access to "never before seen documents", but shouldn't we have heard some of this before? Somehow the author knows what Princess Diana's children and Tony Blair were thinking and their thoughts always paint Diana in the worst light possible. Really! Very National Enquirer-like. Diana is a scheming meany who the Queen tries over and over to engage. I think that listening to the audio version allowed me to pick up much more than I normally would have through reading.

The beginning of the book sped along well with the Queen a picture of perfection and duty. In the middle things got ugly. The ridiculous behavior of Prince Phillip and the other royals is minimized and excuse after

excuse is made; its all about duty darling. Give me a break!

Bettie? says

Description: *From the moment of her ascension to the throne in 1952 at the age of twenty-five, Queen Elizabeth II has been the object of unparalleled scrutiny. But through the fog of glamour and gossip, how well do we really know the world's most famous monarch? Drawing on numerous interviews and never-before-revealed documents, acclaimed biographer Sally Bedell Smith pulls back the curtain to show in intimate detail the public and private lives of Queen Elizabeth II, who has led her country and Commonwealth through the wars and upheavals of the last sixty years with unparalleled composure, intelligence, and grace.*

In Elizabeth the Queen, we meet the young girl who suddenly becomes “heiress presumptive” when her uncle abdicates the throne. We meet the thirteen-year-old Lilibet as she falls in love with a young navy cadet named Philip and becomes determined to marry him, even though her parents prefer wealthier English aristocrats. We see the teenage Lilibet repairing army trucks during World War II and standing with Winston Churchill on the balcony of Buckingham Palace on V-E Day. We see the young Queen struggling to balance the demands of her job with her role as the mother of two young children. Sally Bedell Smith brings us inside the palace doors and into the Queen’s daily routines—the “red boxes” of documents she reviews each day, the weekly meetings she has had with twelve prime ministers, her physically demanding tours abroad, and the constant scrutiny of the press—as well as her personal relationships: with Prince Philip, her husband of sixty-four years and the love of her life; her children and their often-disastrous marriages; her grandchildren and friends.

It seems fitting that this should be the currently-reading book as Elizabeth II becomes the longest reigning monarch in British history.

Positive skewed spin in action, a chocolate box of surface gen, this only deserved the barest of skim reads. Will I seek a more erudite rendition? Nah, you're alright, I've theoretically bobbed to the subject.

Julie says

Elizabeth the Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch by Sally Bedell Smith is a 2012 Random House publication.

Well written, very interesting, and detailed accounting Queen Elizabeth’s life-

I will be completely honest – I’m not really a ‘royal watcher’. Before Diana married Prince Charles and the media circus surrounding the wedding, I couldn’t have cared less about the royal family. I never gave Queen Elizabeth a second thought.

But, like many other American girls my age, Diana captured my teenage imagination and like nearly everyone else, I hauled myself out of bed at an ungodly time of the morning to watch their nuptials, completely enthralled by the fairy tale romance.

Of course, when the fairy tale ended in divorce, then the fatal car accident and all the rest, I reverted back to a feeling of apathy towards the Royals.

But even during the peak of royal coverage, Queen Elizabeth was of no interest to me, and I don't think I could have told you one basic thing about her, until I saw the movie- '**The Queen**' starring *Helen Mirren*, which I watched only because I wanted to see Helen's acting performance.

But, I found myself caught up in the story and from that time forward I had a completely different opinion of Elizabeth, and found myself wishing to know more about her.

However, I never got around to reading a biography over life, until now. The new Netflix drama- '*The Crown*'- which I have yet to see, has sparked renewed interest in Queen Elizabeth, which has, of course, renewed interest in books written about her, as well. Random House has taken advantage of all that buzz and has been promoting this book while the topic is hot.

Naturally, with all this chatter, I was reminded of my intent to learn more about the queen, so after looking over several other choices, I decided on this book, as it seemed like a great place to start, and it had mostly favorable reviews, plus it won a Goodreads Choice Award in 2012.

The book is a bit lengthy, and covers Elizabeth's life from birth all the up to the days just prior to the publication of this book.

Now, I must say, it is apparent, to me at least, that Ms. Bedell is in awe of her subject. I can't recall, even when addressing the few times Elizabeth showed some human failings, that the author didn't come to her defense, placing blame on others, or glossing over the queen's mistakes or foibles in such a way it didn't feel like a criticism.

Usually, this type of open, unapologetic hero worship by a biographer is a turn off. I think the author should do everything humanly possible to keep a neutral frame of mind, and should be willing to ask the hard questions from their subjects- even the Queen of England.

However, in this instance, it was an annoyance I was willing to endure, in exchange for the captivating details of Elizabeth's life, not only as the queen, but also as a wife and mother. I found the daily rituals the queen performs, the duties and responsibilities, and the demand on her time absolutely riveting and exhausting! Sometimes it seemed mundane and tedious, and at others it seems like a such an interesting and glamorous life.

Her long life and reign has seen the passage of several prime ministers, some of whom Elizabeth had a warm relationship with, and some - maybe not. She met many US presidents and other world leaders and celebrities, displayed plenty of pomp and circumstance, traveled the world over, and participated in or witnessed so many important changes and world events, it is mind boggling.

The royal family doesn't just sit around living in opulent luxury. The queen's job is far more important than I had ever imagined. I do understand that British citizens have balked over their taxes being used for various restorations and question the purpose or need of a monarchy, and are often understandably resentful, but this book does give those of us who are not British, a chance to absorb a broader and perhaps more realistic picture of the queen, explaining what she has the power to control or change, while outlining her limitations.

If for no other reason, read this book for a look at the way the monarchy works, what the job is really like, what the responsibilities and expectations are of the Queen, and experience the way Elizabeth rose to and met the challenges of being the queen, and at such a young age, too. See the trials she endured, and watch as she handles it all with grace- both the good and the bad.

Queen Elizabeth has led a most extraordinary life and for someone like myself who has never really paid all that much attention to the royal family, I found her to be an incredibly interesting person and this book only

deepened my respect for her.

She occasionally missed queues that damaged her in the eyes of her countrymen, rode out a few politically incorrect utterances from her husband, and while her children were often a source of frustration and embarrassment, for the most part, she's represented the monarchy with grace and dignity.

This is a very in depth look at Queen Elizabeth's life, giving readers a rare glimpse of how fragile the line is between the desire for openness and the need for retaining a certain air of mystery between the citizens and the monarchy. The historical aspects are equally fascinating, and it was nice to see events unfold from a different perspective than I am accustomed.

Despite the author's occasional digs at those who dared to challenge or criticize the queen, blatantly taking sides against any and all enemies, real or perceived, I have to say, the more I learn about her, the more I admire Queen Elizabeth.

Overall, I'm impressed with the author's layout of the book, the accuracy, the research and the smooth presentation of facts, and found it to be very informative, and deeply absorbing.

4 stars

Carol says

The Hook - I rarely write a hook for non-fiction but in the case of [Elizabeth The Queen](#) I felt the urge to tell you how this title made my list.

I've never been a royal watcher or much of a royal fan, until I had my DNA tested. I went through my whole life thinking I was pretty much Italian. Imagine my shock when my test showed I was only 47% Italian with a smattering of other regions including 11% Great Britain. I realize 11% is not a great deal and though I knew there was a chance I had some British ancestry, I was surprised it was that much. So I put aside my pasta maker and decided to learn a bit more about The Queen.

Published just before the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, this audio version is a commitment at 17 discs but one well worth it. I'm certain there are many that wouldn't find much new here but for me, I learned a great deal. Rather than go into detail let me just say I came away with a different and better impression of the monarchy and The Queen as a whole. Sally Bedell Smith's book is a blend of history, gossip, humor, family, her official duties and just enough of her private life to keep me entertained. Rosalyn Landor narrates with a proper British accent delivering the pomp and circumstance befitting a queen.

An enjoyable listen, I'll mention a few take-aways. Elizabeth II is a far warmer person than I would have imagined, a woman of stalwart character who has a life long fondness for horses and a love for family and country. I'm proud to have 11% Great Britain Ethnicity.

Diane says

This is a marvelously entertaining biography about Queen Elizabeth II.

Sally Bedell Smith's book covers the queen's life from her childhood up to the wedding of Kate & William in 2011. I especially enjoyed the stories that were similar to scenes from the show "The Crown." After finishing the book I have more admiration for Elizabeth's dignified leadership and a better appreciation of the role that she plays.

Recommended for readers interested in learning more about the royal family.

Personal Note

By coincidence I read this book during a particularly crazy time involving the current U.S. president, Donald J. Trump. (To be specific, this was when DJT was threatening to start a nuclear war with North Korea and he had made supportive comments about neo-Nazis and white supremacists.)

So after finishing this biography about the dignified and gracious queen, I was curious if it's too late for America to rejoin the British Commonwealth. Asking for a friend.

Meaningful Quote

"In her epic life, the Queen has played her part like a great actress — the only person about whom it can truly be said that all the world is a stage. Billions have watched her evolve from a beautiful ingenue to a businesslike working mother to a wise grandmother. When she was twenty-eight years old and had been on the throne for three years, her first private secretary, Sir Alan Lascelles, said, 'People will not realize for years how intelligent she is ... Eventually it will become an accepted national fact.' Yet while her public persona conveys gravitas, she has concealed much of that intelligence, much of her personality and humor. Behind her enigmatic and dignified facade resides a largely unknown woman."

Dianne says

Queen Elizabeth II is someone I've admired all my life. She was crowned in the second year of my life, so she has been my Queen for 60 years. I can't imagine having any other monarch, though I probably will have to get used to a change if I survive another decade. It's a change I don't look forward to.

There have been many, many books and television shows about Queen Elizabeth, including the popular movie, which I loved, "The Queen", with Helen Mirren in 2006. They all have their own slant (there won't be an official biography until after her death) and it can be difficult to sort out what is fact and what is just the bias of the authour, but I thought this one was quite balanced. It acknowledges her strengths, but doesn't hide her flaws or the mistakes she's made. It presents her as a strong and honourable, but not perfect, human being.

I did find it to be somewhat anti-Diana. Whenever it discusses Charles' marriage, the fault for all their problems is clearly laid at her feet. I realize she was not innocent, but they'll never convince me that Charles was just a victim of her emotional instability. In my view, he has things to answer for too.

An aspect of the book I particularly loved was the history review. Beginning with King George VI's unexpected coronation in 1937 and continuing right up to William and Catherine's wedding in 2010, every major world event is looked at. How the Queen and her family were affected, how she responded and how she influenced the thinking and decisions of other world leaders makes for fascinating reading.

There is at least as much political information as personal here, which may not appeal to readers who are only interested in learning about her private life. To give a complete picture, the book has to be political because her life is, even as a non-partisan monarch, extremely political. It is in the face of national and

international crises that her strength and character as a world leader, and as a human being, are revealed. A section of the preface says: "She also has the positive power of influence: 'the right to be consulted, the right to encourage, and the right to warn.' In public she influences through her example, by setting a high standard for service and citizenship, by rewarding achievement, and by diligently carrying out her duties. Tony Blair, the tenth of her twelve Prime Ministers called her 'a symbol of unity in a world of insecurity....simply the best of British'."

There are also lots of glimpses into her personal life: her relationships with her parents, her sister, her husband and children and friends. And it's not all duty and formality; there are a lot of funny moments that show the Queen's sense of humour and provide some comic relief in the midst of stories about war, terrorist attacks and family crises.

A very nice addition to the book are the two sections, 32 pages in all, of photographs. We see her changing a tire as a young woman in 1945, being crowned Queen in 1953, making an unannounced visit to an American supermarket in 1957, entertaining President and Mrs. Kennedy in 1961, on the dance floor in 1972, laughing with her family in 1982 and wiping away a tear at the decommissioning of her "floating home", the royal yacht Britannia, in 1997. I was reminded again of how beautiful she was in her younger years and what a stunning couple she and Prince Philip made.

I have to say this was a genuinely interesting book. At 537 pages, it still wasn't long enough. I know I'll read it again, and I sincerely hope there will be another book one day about the next ten years of Elizabeth II's reign. God save the Queen!

MousieSshi says

I really, REALLY enjoyed this book! I was lucky enough to get an advanced reader copy. I found myself unable to put it down. It was a very easy read and you come away with a real sense of who the Queen is. Not an easy feat, I'm sure. You see both her public and hints of her private persona, along with her strengths and weaknesses. There is a lot to admire about her.

Smith also does a great job writing for an American audience, who might not be as knowledgeable about some of the inner workings of the British system.

I can't wait to read it again!

Wanda says

A very detailed biography that gives one the feeling that the author cobbled together multiple People magazine articles. The treatment of the queen is sycophantic and the historical contextualization is superficial. Prince Charles comes off as a misguided but lovable dweeb; while Diana is villified. Even Camilla comes off as wonderful. I am not saying that Diana did not have problems and was not a manipulative person, but everyone comes off as well meaning in this book but her. The author's treatment of the U.S. is also ridiculously glowing. Surely the queen has a more nuanced view of a country that has been the aggressor in most of the wars since she became queen. To hear this author tell it, Elizabeth is uncritically enamoured of the U.S. Altogether a one sided and uncritical treatment of Elizabeth that is written in wooden prose. If you want a vibrant biography that will keep you reading try Massie's Catherine the Great. Now that guy can do an engaging biography!

Lesa Parnham says

Parts were fascinating, parts were boring (one Prime Minister after another), I have read enough about the royal family to have doubts about how much of this is true. Quite possibly the author didn't want to make the queen angry. What happened to the c/c bracelet that Charles had for Camilla right before he was married to Diana? It is a proven fact that Charles carried on a relationship with Camilla throughout the marriage, Smith skipped over the part where while being interviewed on tv said he never loved Diana? I think Diana got a really bad rap in this book albeit she was not a completely innocent party.

As for Prince Phillip, his philandering has also been well documented.

As this book is written, the Queen is fascinating although a lot of the pomp and circumstance is ridiculous and should have been done away with a long time ago.

In the books favor, it was interesting to glimpse a private view of the Queen, the Queen Mum, Winston Churchill.

BTW all US presidents were mentioned with the exception of Jimmy Carter, whats that about???

Leslie says

This is a book that is unapologetically PRO-Queen, or royalist, monarchist or as Dame Helen Mirren said "Queenist". This is also a fairly long book that is best read in small bits. The author does a great job of juxtaposing what is going on in England, the UK and the world with the details of Elizabeth II's reign.

We get to meet her Prime Ministers, her advisors, her friends. We learn about her hobbies; horses and horse racing, and horse breeding. Her family, her family dysfunction and more. If you are looking for gossip or slander look elsewhere.

There are a TON of photos that are from private collections and are wonderful.

It is hard to believe that while there have been 10 Presidents, 6 James Bonds and 3 spidermen there has only been one Queen of England in my entire life.

E says

Elizabeth The Queen: The Life of a Modern Monarch

by Sally Bedell Smith is an in depth look at the life of, perhaps, the most well-known woman in the world. This is a biography of both a woman and a Queen who has reigned for sixty years. From the first page it becomes obvious that this a well-researched work filled with anecdotes that provide an opportunity to understand how she has managed to be a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother and grandmother as well as a monarch.

The abdication of King Edward VIII eventually led to a child called Lilibet to become Queen Elizabeth II at age twenty-five. At an early age she fell in love with the man she would marry and who still stands at her

side today. Their marriage is worth examining in light of their extraordinary life. The author also provides insight into who Prince Philip is- both as an individual and the role he plays in this long lasting relationship. The relationships with their children and grandchildren are candidly presented. It is clear that they are a family. The Queen is shown to be a non-interfering and tactful parent. Considering the fact that their lives are public, these attributes alone are amazing.

The author provides a chronological timeline of the Queen's personal life and her role as the monarch. She opens the door to life within the monarchy and how it functions. The one constant that is repeated throughout the book is that Queen Elizabeth II has reigned with grace and integrity for sixty years. Her commitment to service is absolute.

She is known to possess both wit and wisdom as well as the ability to change when the times require it.

This is a beautifully written book. In my opinion, if one decides to read only one book about the Queen then this is that book.

I received this book at no charge from Goodreads First Reads.
