



Prince Philip: The Turbulent Early Life of the Man Who Married Queen Elizabeth II

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"Rich in drama and tragedy" (*The Guardian*), here is a mesmerizing account of the extraordinary formative years of the man married to the most famous woman in the world

Before he met the young girl who became Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip had a tumultuous upbringing in Greece, France, Nazi Germany, and Britain. His mother, Princess Alice of Battenberg, was born deaf; she was committed to a psychiatric clinic when Philip was eight. His father, Prince Andrew of Greece, already traumatized by his exile from his home country, promptly shut up the family home and went off to live with his mistress, effectively leaving his young son an orphan.

Remarkably, Philip emerged from his difficult childhood a character of singular vitality and dash—self-confident, opinionated, and devastatingly handsome. Girls fell at his feet, and the princess who would become his wife was smitten from the age of thirteen. Yet alongside his considerable charm and intelligence, the young prince was also prone to volcanic outbursts, which would have profound consequences for his family and the future of the monarchy.

In this authoritative and wonderfully compelling book, acclaimed biographer Philip Eade brings to vivid life the storm-tossed early years of one of the most fascinating and mysterious members of the royal family.

Prince Philip: The Turbulent Early Life of the Man Who Married Queen Elizabeth II Details

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Julie says

Interesting background on Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh before Elizabeth becomes Queen. Background on his parents and grandparents, answering the questions I always had about why was he known as Philip of Greece! Here you'll find out. His childhood was one of being shuffled around from family member to family member, not seeing much of his mother at all who had a nervous breakdown and he'd go for 5 years at a time without seeing her. His father, not much either. Yes, despite all of this, he became self reliant and well adjusted. Smart in school, a natural leader, entering the Royal Navy and distinguishing himself there during WWII. Since his sisters were married to Nazi's, it must have been strange for him. I felt like there's a lot more there about him that we don't know, but this is a good start on his psyche and the man he became and is today. Gives me a new way to regard him than I did before.

3.5/5

Diana says

A good read about a fascinating man. I became addicted to the series "The Crown" and interested in learning more about Prince Phillip. He had a heckish type of a childhood yet became a man's man who has been a dedicated prince consort. A recommended read. The author very smoothly handled the complicated royal blood lines and the tumultuous times of the 1930's and 1940's.

Baniza says

He married for more than sixty years to the most enduringly famous woman in the world.
Rich in drama ...

Staci Zirkle says

This is the first official book that has ever existed to tell the story of Prince Philip's childhood and how he grew up. Most books about him are showcasing him from his marriage to Queen Elizabeth II and on. I had always wondered about who he was as a person and what made him decide to give up such a promising career with the Royal Navy to become the Prince Consort. He can be very blunt with who he is, but I liked this book because even though he is who he is, he wasn't afraid to be who he was. A lot of critics criticized him (and still do) about him not using proper "royal" etiquette and what not. I have to say I sympathize with him b/c I would be pissed off if someone was coming to me EVERYDAY and telling me how I should be or not be. He basically told people to "f*** off" and just deal with who I am. He gave everything up to be with Elizabeth who comes off as being brash and rude and according to this book, the Queen was even brash and rude towards her own children. He really loves the Queen and she loves him too and I recommend reading this book because it's a lesson to be learned that just because you're royalty doesn't mean you should act a certain way just for the public's interest.

Hermien says

Paints a sympathetic picture of Prince Phillip. The family connections were particularly interesting.

Dana says

I like reading about royalty. I know that sounds bad. Why would anyone care about the British royal family? Especially an American. Didn't we fight a war to get rid of them?

Well, I still find the family interesting. Especially the older generation. So when I stumbled across a book about Prince Philip, I thought I would give it a go. My own image of him is as a crusty old man, a crank who seem to love to tweek the press and say whatever is on his mind, no matter how racist or dated.

But, after reading this book, I must say I have a lot more respect for the old fellow. The story from his birth to his marriage to Princess (later Queen) Elizabeth is pretty unusual. Born on a kitchen table to a granddaughter of Victoria, his father was a minor Greek prince. You read Greek and think, Philip was Greek? No, his father was descended from a minor noble German house who were plucked from obscurity to establish the royal house of Greece. Soon, the Greeks over threw the royal house and basically set the family adrift. Philip never seemed to have a home. His mother was institutionalized and his father wandered the globe, finally coming to rest in Monaco. No one seems to have given much thought to Philip, who was shuttled from one family member to another. He attended English schools and joined the royal Navy. His uncle, Lord Mountbatten, then came upon the idea of uniting him and Elizabeth, in turn creating the new House of Mountbatten, rulers of Great Britain. Of course, the name remained Windsor but Philip played an important role in helping Elizabeth establish herself after the death of her father.

What was so fascinating? Philip travelled all over the world, never resting in one place long. While serving the Navy, during a stopover in Australia, he left the ship for a short period and worked on a ranch in the Outback. During a trip to India, he spent a month travelling around to various temples and shrines. While courting Elizabeth, his valet noticed that Philip travelled with just an extra pair of shoes and underwear, his only clothes being his navel uniforms. This upbringing must have certainly helped him cope with the demands of royalty. It also explains his relationship with his children. He doesn't seem to have had much patience with the sensitive Prince Charles and it is easy to see why.

The book is exceptionally well written and fleshes out all the family relationships, giving mini-biographies of his parents, sisters, aunts and uncles. I found it fascinating. Is Philip an important historical person? No, but his life has been exceptionally interesting and run the gamut from penury to luxury. Well done.

Trevor says

Prince Philip is a much more complex historical figure than you realize. This book covers his early life up to his marriage to Queen Elizabeth. A very good read for those who are royally inclined.

Hal says

An enjoyable easy read biography of an interesting man. Eade seems to take a neutral view on his life with a

fairly balanced account. I cannot imagine any of the royals are thrilled to be written about but being in the public domain as they are all is fair.

Focused primarily his early life up to the early married life to the Queen, Eade shows how this man of royal birth weathered a very turbulent upbringing being passed off from one relative to the other in the absence of his recovering mother and his unattached father. Through it all he seems to hold up quite well primarily through the close guidance of his devoted uncle, Dickie Mountbatten.

The sometimes awkward melding into the Royal Family of England took some maneuvering as there was certainly opposition from many quarters. It is clear though Queen Elizabeth had her sights set on him from an early age.

Despite some of his shortcomings such as his noted prickliness and resentment of forgoing his Naval career manages to perform well enough in his duties to the Crown. His much rumored dalliances outside of the marriage are glossed over leaving it up to deduction that in the day and age of this society it is fairly common. Ultimately is suggested that the Queen benefited most from having this man at her side and he brought quite a bit out of the shell to take on the many demands of her position. Sadly we in the news we here increasingly of his failing health, but in his early 90's now he can look back to having measured up quite well.

Jennifer says

Like many, I've been fact-checking The Crown while binge-watching on Netflix. (While a republican, I enjoy watching and reading about the royal family.) The episode on the Profumo Affair brought me to this book. What an interesting life, Philip had! And how inbred are the royal family!!!! Cousins, great-uncles, great-great-grandparents. The family relationships and ties are many generations deep, sharing family members from paternal and maternal sides of both Elizabeth and Philip. It took my hours to work out the two family trees helpfully provided at the front of the book, and I kept referring to it throughout the book.

Really how can you say he is Greek or German; the royal families' intermarriage and breeding crosses borders of countries and kingdoms (except not outside Europe - oh no! Standards, don't you know!)

This is a really interesting and well-written and well-referenced read.

Blakely says

I was inspired to read this book after watching the first season of The Crown on Netflix. The TV series had prompted me to look up information on Prince Philip on Wikipedia and this brief introduction to the Prince was intriguing enough to make me want to read more.

This book traces Prince Philip's life from his Great Grandfather's history to Queen Elizabeth's coronation. Probably the most interesting part of the book is the quick overview of Philip's ancestors, from his Great Grandfather suddenly being appointed the King of Denmark after a long lost relative dies, to his Grandfather being asked to become the King of Greece, to his Father's experiences in the Greek military. The author does a great job of summarizing the lives of many important and influential people in a short period of time while managing to tell just the right anecdote to give the reader a feeling for all of the characters involved.

But really all of Philip's life was interesting. He was smuggled out of Greece as an infant after a revolution and a war put his family's lives at risk; a few years later his Mother had a mental breakdown and was institutionalized and his Father basically gave Philip to his Grandmother, essentially leaving him an orphan. He was passed around between family members for his childhood, but basically growing up British. Meanwhile his three older sisters all married Germans and at least two of his three brother-in-laws were Nazis. But Philip, himself, served in the British Navy in WWII, distinguishing himself.

The book does occasionally become tedious. At points it's quite boring to read about which relatives Philip was shuffled off to during which vacations. But overall an interesting book about an interesting person and period in history.

Susanne says

Fascinating life. A good book.

Jemidar says

Enjoyable, highly readable and informative bio of Prince Philip's life up until his wife's coronation. Must admit, I didn't know much about Philip's background (other than he vaguely belonged to the royal family of Greece and that he & Elizabeth were distant cousins) and I found it much more interesting than I expected to. Interesting insight into the man who has been our Prince Consort for the last sixty years.

Helen says

I had no idea that Prince Philip had endured such a traumatic childhood. I feel I understand him a little better now. This was a fascinating biography which I really enjoyed.

My only complaint is that the audiobook I listened to seemed to have a fault. A new chapter would begin, and it would be the previous chapter repeated. I had to keep switching between two devices to get the next chapter to load. I don't think I missed anything, but the worry that I would spoiled the experience for me somewhat.

Elizabeth Mary says

A fascinating account of the early years in the life of Prince Philip from the the history of his Greek royal family till just after Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953. It includes the instability of Greece in the early 1900s, his birth on 10th June, 1921, the break up of his family due to the problems in Greece leading to his being shunted not only from country to country, but also from one member of the family to another. After spending time at a German boarding school just before the war, he is sent to Gordonstoun, where he absolutely thrived (Prince Charles was not so lucky). From there he joined the British Navy where he excelled in the war. It was while he was here that he met the Princess Elizabeth. She was smitten right from the start.

The book portrays a very resilient and strong personality.

What is also interesting is the close connection of his family to Germany during the war. His sisters were married to Germans.some of whom had Nazi connections. However he gave his all to Britain.

Gerry says

After watching The Crown, I wanted to know more about Prince Philip, and this biography, focused on his early life and ending shortly after Elizabeth's coronation, was just what I needed. The author obviously thinks quite highly of Philip, but presented what seems to be a balanced portrait of his strengths and his weaknesses, highlighting the many contradictions in his personality. Fascinating, too, to read about the connections among so many European royals, who all seem to be cousins and in-laws of some sort. Elizabeth and Philip were actually cousins, in addition to husband and wife: third cousins through Queen Victoria, and second cousins once removed through King Christian IX of Denmark.
