



1926-2022

The
Life
and
Death
of
Queen
Elizabeth
II

By MICHELLE TAUBER

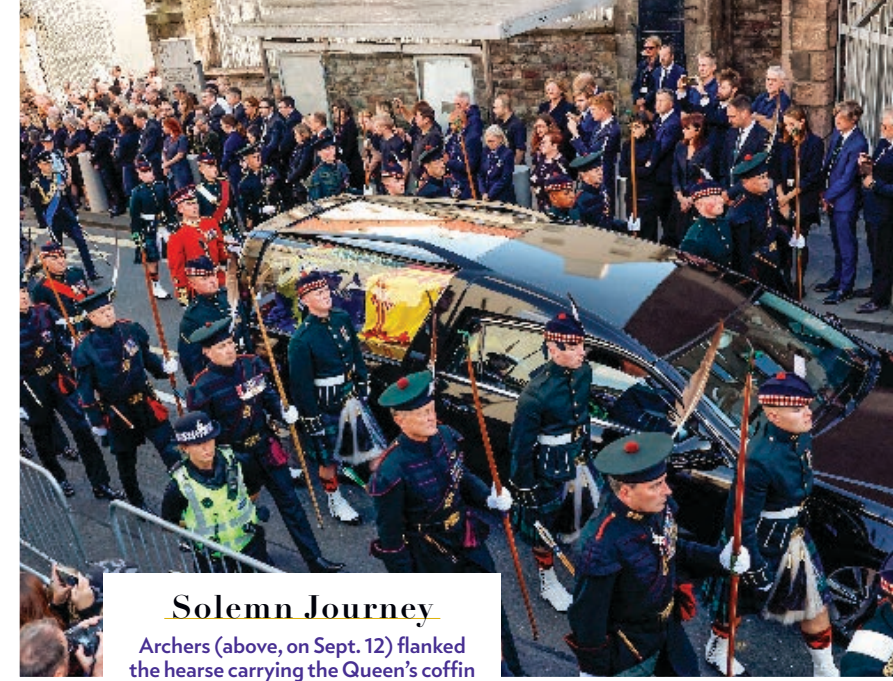
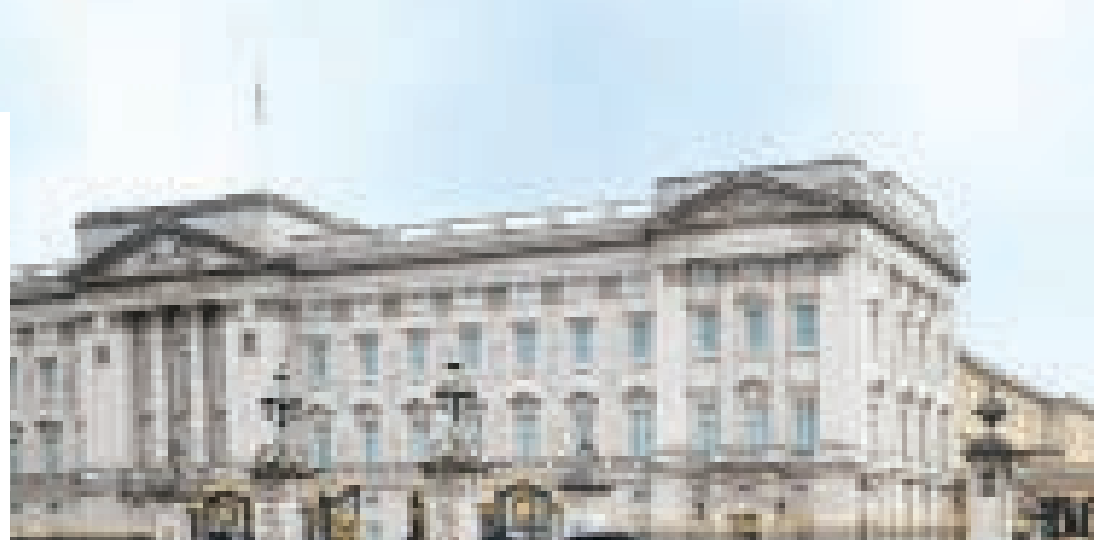




After the Rain

A rainbow—which one Twitter user called “the Queen’s final goodbye to her people”—appeared over Windsor Castle just as the palace announced her death on Sept. 8. Thousands of bouquets and sentimental mementos piled up outside Buckingham Palace (Sept. 10) and at her other royal residences.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: ANNE LEBOWITZ/TRUNK ARCHIVE; THIS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CHRIS JACKSON/GETTY IMAGES; DON CLEGG/EMMA/GETTY IMAGES; PHILIP HARRISON/PHOTO12/GETTY IMAGES; ARIAN SELTY IMAGES; TIM O’NEILL/PA/GETTY IMAGES; SHUTTERSTOCK/STOCKPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES



Solemn Journey

Archers (above, on Sept. 12) flanked the hearse carrying the Queen’s coffin to St. Giles’ Cathedral in Edinburgh as her children—(from left) King Charles III, Princess Anne, Prince Andrew and Prince Edward—followed.



Queen Elizabeth, just two days before her death at the age of 96, did what she had done for 70 years: reported for duty. Conducting her most important constitutional role, she appointed the incoming British prime minister, Liz Truss, on Sept. 6 at Balmoral Castle in Scotland—the Queen’s 15th prime minister in a record-breaking reign. Although she had become “very frail,” says a royal insider, “there was no hint of anything happening,” says another close source. “Guests were still set to arrive in the weeks before the end of the month.” The Rt. Rev. Dr. Iain Greenshields, who also met with her at home in the days before her death—ongoing mobility issues prevented the devout monarch from attending church in person—found her signature sparkle as bright as ever. “She was talking about her horses from the past, naming them from 40 years ago,” he told *The Times* in the U.K. “For someone her age to have the memory she had... she was quite remarkable.”

On Sept. 8 the woman who stood just 5’3” tall but loomed as large as any figure in modern world history died at her Balmoral home—her remarkable reign finally at an end. Even her family appeared to be caught off guard: Her son and heir,

Operation London Bridge

1. Per the code-named plan for Elizabeth’s funeral, drafted in the 1960s, her coffin is lying in state in Westminster Hall, open to the public 24 hours a day before the Sept. 19 funeral. **2.** The funeral will be held at Westminster Abbey. **3.** Her final resting place is Windsor Castle’s St. George’s Chapel, beside her parents, sister and husband.





Together Again

The foursome spent 40 minutes shaking hands and chatting with well-wishers in Windsor on Sept. 10 before leaving together in a car driven by William. Seeing the couples together was “lovely,” said Elaine Gee, 62, who was in the crowd. “Let’s hope it puts an end to the bad doings, and they can move on.”



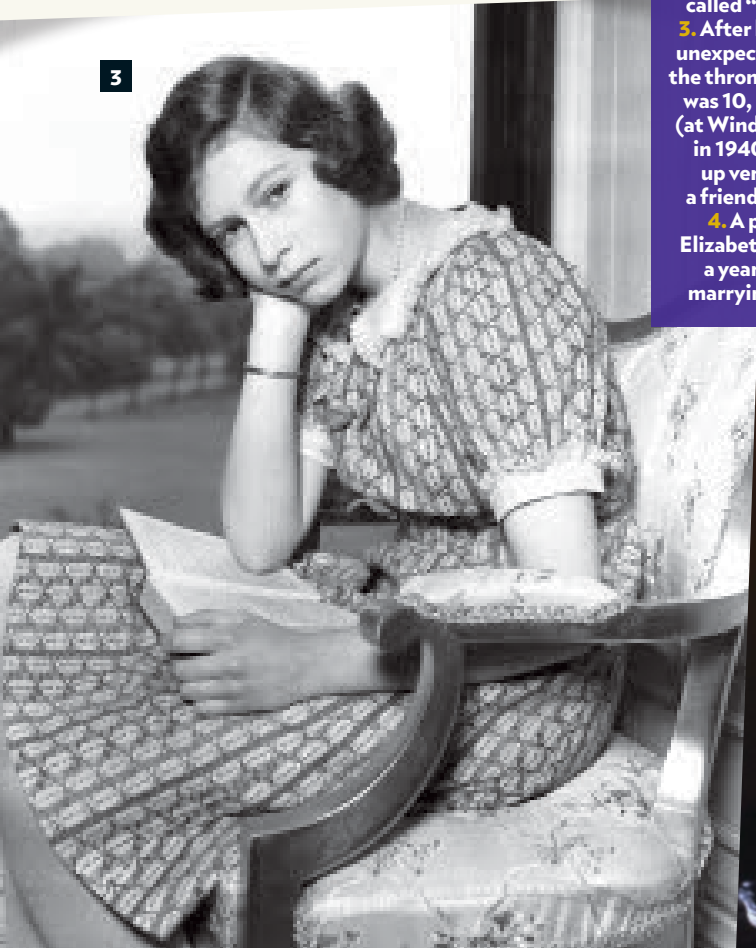
United in Grief

Despite a strained relationship between the brothers amid Harry and Meghan’s move to the U.S., William extended an olive branch to Harry two days after they lost their grandmother, inviting the Duke and Duchess of Sussex to accompany him and Catherine to greet the crowds outside Windsor Castle. William thought it was “an important show of unity at an incredibly difficult time for the family,” says a royal source. Adds an insider: “They did it for harmony because of the Queen.” Observes a family friend: “It was a very genuine invitation and well-acted-upon by Harry. It was a gesture of leadership.”



73-year-old Charles—who became King upon his mother’s death—and daughter Princess Anne, 72, were the only two close family members to arrive at the Queen’s bedside before she died. Her younger sons Prince Andrew, 62, and Prince Edward, 58, arrived a short while later alongside her grandson Prince William, 40, while grandson Prince Harry, 37, rushed separately from Windsor, where he had been staying with wife Meghan during a previously planned visit away from their California home. At 6:30 p.m. in the U.K., the palace announced that the Queen had “died peacefully,” and in an image that quickly traveled around the world, a rainbow appeared over the Queen’s Windsor Castle home just as the Union Jack flag was lowered to signify the monarch’s death. Her exceedingly loyal personal staff “are devastated,” says the close source. “They are incandescent with grief. However much you are prepared for it, after a lifetime of service, it was still a terrible shock.”

The Queen’s death plunged her family into mourning—and instantly set off an ancient domino effect within the royal-family hierarchy: The newly acceded King Charles III promptly named



Family Destiny

1. Confident even at the age of 9, Elizabeth shook a guard's hand before attending a military event in 1935. **2.** In 1938 with younger sister Princess Margaret and parents King George VI and Queen Elizabeth—a unit her father affectionately called “we four.” **3.** After her father unexpectedly took the throne when she was 10, Elizabeth (at Windsor Castle in 1940) “grew up very fast,” a friend recalled. **4.** A pensive Elizabeth in 1946, a year before marrying Philip.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: RIGHT: MARK CUTHBERT/UK PRESS/GETTY IMAGES; LISA STUDIO LISA/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; STUDIO LISA/GETTY IMAGES; UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; PA/GETTY IMAGES



Wartime Service

his “darling wife,” Camilla, 75, Queen Consort and his heir, William, Prince of Wales—with William’s wife, Kate, 40, becoming the new Princess of Wales, the first to hold the title since the death of William’s mother, Princess Diana, 25 years ago. In his inaugural address as King on Sept. 9, Charles thanked the nation for their condolences and spoke lovingly of both his mother and his father, Prince Philip, who died at age 99 just 17 months before his wife of 73 years. “To my darling mama, as you begin your last great journey to join my dear late papa,” he said in a speech broadcast around the world, “I simply want to say this: Thank you.”

As the first chants of “God Save the King” began to rise across the U.K., admirers flooded the gates of Buckingham Palace to memorialize a woman who for many represented a model of duty. “I’m in awe of her,” says Beckie Ridley, whose grandfather was a groundskeeper for the Queen. “She never forgot anyone’s name—she was famous for that. She always had time for my grandpa.” She was not without her critics, who pointed to the royal family’s colonial past and staggering hereditary privilege, both of which the Queen was reluctant to address. But no one disputes her role as a con-

When Britain declared war on Germany in 1939, the 13-year-old princess knit socks for soldiers and gave pocket money to the Red Cross to aid the country’s effort. Later, at 18, Elizabeth (above, in 1945 at the opening of an Imperial War Museum exhibition) joined the Women’s Auxiliary Territorial Service as a military-truck mechanic and driver, but she wasn’t allowed to stay at the base. Instead she was chauffeured back to Buckingham Palace each night.

stant in an ever-changing world, who, when thrust into service as a young mother at age 25, did not blink. “She will be missed by so many,” Princess Catherine, as she is now formally known, told the crowd in an appearance with William, Harry and Meghan outside Windsor Castle on Sept. 10—a surprise show of unity that reflected the brothers’ shared affection for their grandmother. “It’s lovely to see the outpouring of love from people of all ages here today. It’s hugely touching to see.”

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In the enduring irony of her life, the woman who would rule as Britain’s longest-reigning monarch was never supposed to be Queen. Two twists of fate intervened: In 1936 her uncle Edward VIII abdicated the throne in scandal to marry divorced American socialite Wallis Simpson, making her father King George VI and Elizabeth next in line. Told that her new status required that she relocate from her beloved childhood home in Piccadilly to Buckingham Palace, the then-10-year-old princess cried to her governess, “What? You mean forever?”

But young “Lilibet” soon proved herself a natural leader with a precocious calm that would



Wedding Day

On Nov. 20, 1947, Elizabeth, 21, wed Philip, 26, at Westminster Abbey. “She thought life would never be dull with him,” says historian Robert Lacey. Bridesmaid Lady Pamela Hicks previously said, “I can think of few couples who are as united.”

Being Grannie

“I knew this day would come, but it will be some time before the reality of life without Grannie will truly feel real,” William (with the Queen and Harry in 1987) wrote after her death.



Her Heart & Her Home



Queen Mum

“She was a pioneer,” royal biographer Sally Bedell Smith says of the Queen (with Charles and Anne in 1953, a year after taking the throne). “Nobody among her cohort was a working mother. She was a working mother to the end.”

New Generation

The birth of the Queen’s first biracial grandchild, Archie (meeting his royal great-grandparents in 2019 with his parents and maternal grandmother, Doria Ragland), was “monumental,” said Tessa Ojo of the Diana Award.

Family Life

“She loved being an ordinary mother [at Balmoral],” says Samantha Cohen, the Queen’s former assistant private secretary. “She would muck in and set the table. Everybody would have their family roles as opposed to their formal roles.”



become her hallmark. In 1940 at age 14, she gave her first radio address, speaking to thousands of children who had been separated from their parents during the Blitz—just as she and her sister Princess Margaret, then 10, had been sent away to Windsor while their parents remained in London in a signal of national strength and solidarity. “We know, every one of us,” Elizabeth reassured her listeners, “that in the end, all will be well.”

After falling in love as a teen with Prince Philip of Greece, a dashing Royal Navy cadet who was five years her senior, she set a new path for herself as a young Navy wife when the two wed in 1947. “It was one of her greatest achievements, being allowed to marry the love of her life,” says Suzanne Mackie, executive producer of the Netflix drama *The Crown*, which introduced the Queen to a new generation.

The pair were just settling into newlywed life and had welcomed their first son, Charles, in 1948 and daughter Anne in 1950 when everything changed: On Feb. 6, 1952, while Elizabeth and Philip were on

tour in Kenya, Elizabeth's father, King George VI, died of lung cancer at age 56, making Elizabeth Queen. "It was a terrible moment—she was very close to the King," her lady-in-waiting Pamela Hicks later recalled. Yet when Martin Charteris, her private secretary, came upon Elizabeth in the lodge, he would find her "sitting erect, no tears, color up a little, fully accepting her destiny."



Upon her return to England, Elizabeth found Winston Churchill waiting for her on the tarmac. "There was this sudden realization that this was the end of her private life," Hicks said. When Elizabeth was crowned on June 2, 1953, half a million subjects lined the streets to glimpse their young Queen as she rode through London in a stagecoach. "The coronation was like a phoenix time," her glamorous younger sister Princess Margaret told biographer Ben Pimlott. "There was this gorgeous-looking, lovely young lady and nothing to stop anything getting better and better."

In fact, she faced a daunting job: leading her nation in an era when few women did so, and balancing work and family before the term "working mom" was in the public discourse. "My grandmother becoming Queen at a very young age, in the days when it was a man's world, it was very difficult for her to make a difference," William

said in a 2019 interview. "And she's done it."

Resolutely neutral on political matters—a requisite of the job—and with a knack for connecting with others while giving very little of herself away, "she had a great curiosity about people and was a great judge of character," says Samantha Cohen, her former assistant private secretary. "She was interested in people. That was the great unifying force. With all these prime ministers and leaders, she was able to relate to them as people. Male leadership is often transactional, and female leadership is relational. She built relationships with people like [Nelson] Mandela and [Ronald] Reagan, and those relationships endured."

Although she could project a frosty air—which seemed to markedly warm in her later years—those who knew her best say her reserve was due to shyness, not snobbishness, and behind the royal curtain she was a friendly presence. "She personally presented the Christmas puddings every year," says Cohen. "Even in their eighties, she and [Prince Philip] would hand them out so everybody got to say, 'Yes, I work for the Queen, and yes, I have met the Queen.' She was the least snobbish person I ever met. She loved anyone who was a bit cheeky or a bit funny or a little bit different."

Scott Methven, the Queen's piper, recalls attending a nighttime barbecue with the royal family in the woods of Balmoral, where the highland midges

A Century of Style

Queen Elizabeth's colorful wardrobe was very deliberate. "She needs to stand out for people to be able to say, 'I saw the Queen,'" her daughter-in-law Sophie, Countess of Wessex, said in the 2016 documentary *The Queen at 90*. "Don't forget that when she turns up somewhere, the crowds are 2, 3, 4, 10, 15 deep, and someone wants to be able to say they saw a bit of the Queen's hat as she went past."



'I can never wear beige, because nobody will know who I am'

—QUEEN ELIZABETH

FROM LEFT: PAPER PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES; REGINALD DAVIS/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; ALIHA PRESS/TIM GHAHAN PHOTO LIBRARY/GETTY IMAGES/201; TIM ROOK/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK; YU/ROK/PA WIRE/ZUMA; CECIL BEATON/CAMERA PRESS/REDOX



Navigating Turbulent Times



Diana's Death

Criticized for days of public silence while her people grieved for Princess Diana, the Queen finally, on Sept. 5, 1997, gave a rare televised speech (above)—speaking, she said, as “your Queen” and “as a grandmother.” It was a tacit acknowledgment that Diana, whom she eulogized as “exceptional and gifted,” had rewritten old royal protocols for stoicism. Before then, says a royal source, the Queen thought keeping quiet was “always best.”

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MARTIN CLEVER/AP; AP; JONATHAN BRADY/GETTY IMAGES; MARTIN GIBSON/SHUTTERSTOCK; THE GRAMMY PHOTO LIBRARY; GETTY IMAGES; PAXA/PHOTO/INDIGO/GETTY IMAGES

(small flying insects) were biting everyone in sight. “The Queen said to me, ‘The midge was fierce tonight, but you didn’t flinch at all. Why?’ I said, ‘Yes, Your Majesty. I have a secret weapon.’ And she said, ‘Really?’ I said, ‘I laced myself internally with gin.’ And she punched me in the arm! With 22 members of the royal family sitting there. They all looked. I grabbed my arm, pretending I was really hurt, going, ‘The Queen just punched me!’ She just started laughing, and then everyone else did too.”

Rising every morning at 7:30 to the sound of the BBC’s *Today* program playing on her Roberts Radio, she would sip Twinings English Breakfast tea and nibble a Marie biscuit left on her calling tray by a footman. An evening watching historical shows while reveling in spotting mistakes in military uniforms or decoration would follow days immersed in horse racing. Until her death, she continued to receive her famous “red box” of official papers each morning, carefully studying them, while also evolving the ways in which the monarchy connected with the public. (Just as she ushered in the television era with her coronation, she later embraced social media, including Instagram and Twitter.) Famously frugal, “she wasn’t interested in material things at

all,” says Cohen. “She wore the same pearl necklace every day. She had the same handbag.”



Although renowned for her stiff upper lip, “Grannie” (as she was known affectionately to her eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren in the last act of her long life) preferred “the countryside rather than the city, small rather than large, private rather than crowded, animals rather than humans,” says Peter Morgan, the creator of *The Crown* and the Oscar-winning 2006 film *The Queen*, both of which explored the monarch’s hidden world. Actress Catherine Oxenberg, who is related to the family via her grandmother Princess Olga of Greece and Denmark, was 10 when she first met the Queen. “I was very nervous,” Oxenberg recalls. “And I remember my mom trying to teach me to curtsy, which I wasn’t very good at. And I said to my mom, ‘What do we talk to her about?’ She said, ‘Just talk to her about dogs and horses.’ And so that’s what I did in my very young way. And then years later, I’m watching *The Crown*, and [the actress playing the Queen] says, ‘Why does everybody only talk to me about dogs and horses?’ And I died laughing, because it’s

Solitary Sorrow

Laying her husband, Prince Philip, to rest in April 2021, when COVID-19 rules were enforced, Elizabeth sat alone in the pew of St. George’s Chapel during the family-only funeral service. It was a poignant coda to her 73-year marriage to the man she called “my strength and stay.”



Royal Divorce

The Queen did not approve of divorce—until sons Andrew and Charles ended their marriages in 1996. Andrew’s wife, Sarah Ferguson (with Elizabeth and Andrew in 1987), later recalled, “When I met with Her Majesty about it, she asked, ‘What do you require?’ and I said, ‘Your friendship, which I think amazed her.’”



Family Disgrace

Royal watchers have long called Prince Andrew the Queen’s favorite son. But in keeping with her country-first ethic, she stripped him of his military titles and patronages in 2022 after he had stepped down as a working royal in 2019. Still, it was Andrew, who denies wrongdoing, escorting his mother to a March memorial for Philip. “She loves and believes her son,” royal commentator Robert Jobson previously said.





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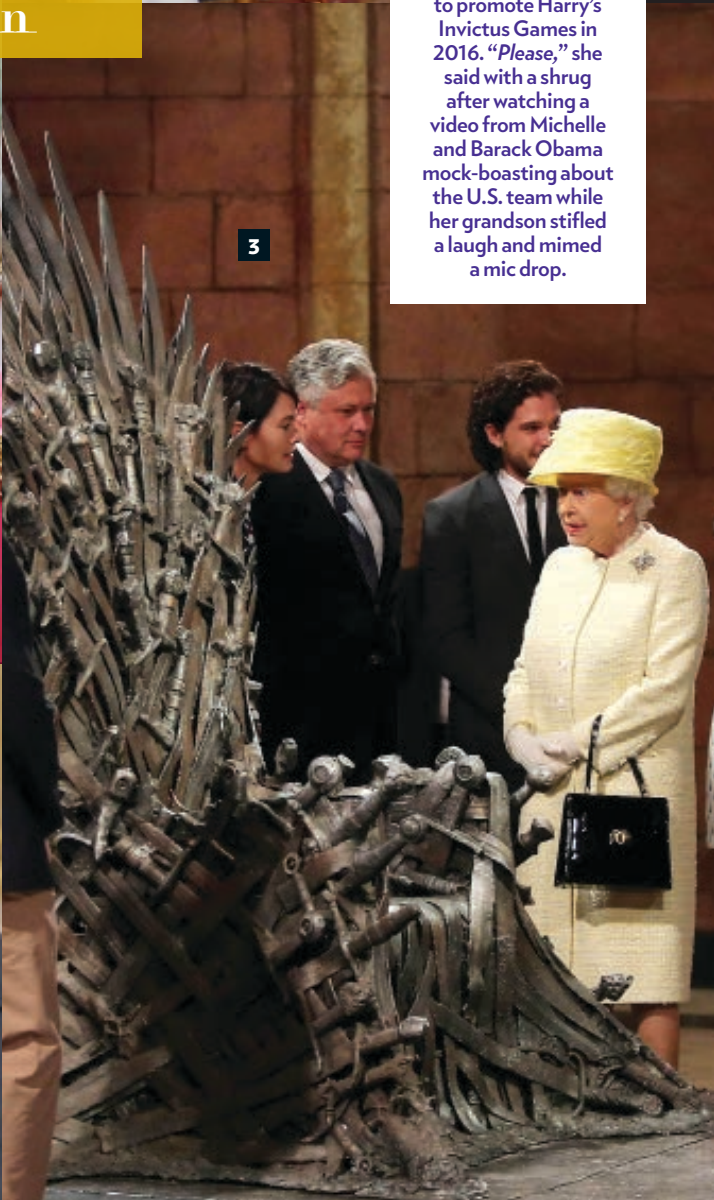
Pop-Cultured Queen



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1. The Queen filmed a Paddington Bear sketch for her Platinum Jubilee in June, showing a willingness to “take a chance and surprise us,” a royal insider said. 2. She delighted the crowd at the 2012 Olympics by appearing in a James Bond-themed skit with Daniel Craig, ending with her likeness parachuting from a helicopter into London’s Olympic Stadium. 3. In 2014 the monarch visited the set of HBO’s *Game of Thrones* but declined to test the show’s sword-covered seat of power, the Iron Throne. 4. The Queen played along to promote Harry’s Invictus Games in 2016. “Please,” she said with a shrug after watching a video from Michelle and Barack Obama mock-boasting about the U.S. team while her grandson stifled a laugh and mimed a mic drop.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BUCKINGHAM PALACE/STUDIO CANAL/BBG/STUDIO; HISTORIA/SHUTTERSTOCK; STUDIO LISA/CAMERA PRESS/REDOX; HEATHCLIFF O'MALLEY/GETTY IMAGES; BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES; JONATHAN POIRIER/GETTY IMAGES



All the Queen's Animals

At age 4, Elizabeth was given a Shetland pony. Then, when she was 7, her father, King George VI, brought home a corgi and named him Dookie. Over the years, she owned dozens of corgis—and hundreds of horses, which she rode well into her 90s.

like, well, that’s what my mom told me to do.”

The Queen’s beloved corgis, which are now being cared for by her son Andrew and his ex-wife Sarah Ferguson, were a refuge during times of personal crisis. In 1992 she weathered her “annus horribilis,” marked by a fire at Windsor Castle and scandal surrounding the marriages of Charles and Andrew. When Charles’s ex-wife Diana, whose popularity had captivated the world, was killed in a Paris car crash in 1997, the Queen was criticized for being slow to acknowledge the public’s grief. Privately, however, she was an essential support to her devastated grandsons William and Harry. “She was by my side at my happiest moments,”

William said in a statement on Sept. 10. “And she was by my side during the saddest days of my life.”

She also remained tightly bonded with Prince Harry even after he and wife Meghan made the decision to step back from royal life in 2020—an arrangement that the Queen herself helped negotiate during the infamous “Sandringham Summit” alongside William and Charles. The following year, after Meghan and Harry told Oprah Winfrey that a member of the royal family had commented on their son Archie’s possible skin color, the Queen issued a rare personal statement, saying, “The issues, particularly that of race, are concerning. While some recollections may vary, they are taken

The
New Royal
Line of
Succession



King Charles III



Prince William
Prince of Wales



Prince George
of Wales



Princess Charlotte
of Wales



Prince Louis
of Wales



Prince Harry
Duke of Sussex



Master Archie
Mountbatten-
Windsor



Miss Lilibet
Mountbatten-
Windsor

Her Lasting Legacy

The Queen was determined that her heirs be prepared to take the reins. In her final years she, Charles and William would “operate together,” says royal historian Robert Lacey, thereby guiding the future of the monarchy.



Camilla

Charles is now able to call his wife of 17 years Queen Consort. She’s likely to follow in Philip’s footsteps: “Her primary role will be to be there for him,” says a source close to the royal household. “He feels more confident with her by his side.”

Charles

His first important act as monarch “will be to lead the family, and the nation, in mourning the Queen,” says Charles’s former communications secretary Paddy Harverson. “He has a natural facility for empathy in moments of loss.”

‘You can see the monarchy’s future stretching out into the next century’

—ROBERT LACEY,
ROYAL HISTORIAN

Louis

When he was 4, his meme-worthy moods stole the spotlight at the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebration in June (and made his great-grannie laugh!). As the youngest, Prince Louis is given freedom to be a “cheeky monkey,” a family acquaintance says.

Catherine

With her poise and focus on issues like early childhood, the future Queen Consort won her grandmother-in-law’s approval, says a royal insider. “Hearing from the Queen that you’re doing a good job ... you grow in confidence.”

Charlotte

Two years before her birth, the Succession to the Crown Act did away with male preference for the throne, placing Charlotte, 7, in line after George. In August she joined her parents on her first solo royal outing.

George

Born to be King himself someday, William and Kate’s oldest is “a jolly person and inquisitive,” says a family friend. George, 9, recently participated in a cake sale raising money for animal conservation and is learning guitar.

William

Taking the title his father held for 73 years, William is counted on to modernize the monarchy—in a way consistent with the “compassion and continuity” Charles and Elizabeth modeled, says former private secretary Jamie Lowther-Pinkerton.



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Charming the Powerful

With an understated warmth, faultless diplomacy—and a well-placed quip—Elizabeth forged bonds with dozens of world leaders, including 13 sitting U.S. Presidents. Winston Churchill, upon her 1953 coronation, called her “a lady whom we respect because she is our Queen and whom we love because she is herself.”

1. Serving together through WWII left Winston Churchill (in 1950) and the Queen unlikely—but enduring—friends.

2. After the Queen hosted President John F. and First Lady Jackie Kennedy at Buckingham Palace in 1961, the President wrote to Elizabeth, “We shall always cherish the memory of that delightful evening.”

3. On a wet 1983 visit to California, the Queen’s wry quip about Britain exporting weather to America won a belly laugh from President Reagan.

4. Nelson Mandela (at Buckingham Palace in 2000) gave the Queen the affectionate moniker *Motlalepula*, which means “to come with rain.” 5. George W. Bush (in 2007) treated Elizabeth to a white-tie state dinner at the White House. “She was a woman of great intellect, charm and wit,” he said.

6. Barack Obama (in 2011) swooned after his fourth meeting with the Queen, in 2016 at Windsor Castle: “She is a real jewel to the world.”

very seriously and will be addressed by the family privately. Harry, Meghan and Archie will always be much-loved family members.” (Harry and Meghan subsequently clarified that the comment had not been made by the Queen or Prince Philip.) In a Sept. 12 statement, Harry made it clear how much he adored his grandmother. “Granny, while this final parting brings us great sadness, I am forever grateful for all of our first meetings—from my earliest childhood memories with you, to meeting you for the first time as my commander in chief, to the first moment you met my darling wife and hugged your beloved great-grandchildren,” he said, referring to 3-year-old Archie and 1-year-old daughter Lilibet, who was named after the Queen. “I cherish these times shared with you, and the many other special moments in between.”



Although she never hinted at retirement—“She’ll want to hand over knowing she’s done everything she possibly could to help, and that she’s got no regrets and no unfinished business,” William said in 2011—she did begin to slow down in recent years, particularly after the death of Prince Philip. With her mobility in decline and amid ongoing COVID isolation, her engagements were cut back. (She herself had COVID in February but recovered; her official cause of death has not been released.)

‘She was fully embodied in her queenship’

—CATHERINE OXENBERG



73 Years in the Making

Born to take over for the mother (top, in 2009) with whom he had a sometimes-strained relationship, Charles used his first address as monarch (inset, on Sept. 9) to assure the public he would serve them as she did—“with unswerving devotion... respect and love.”



Grieving Son & King

Just hours after his private bedside farewell to his “beloved mother,” King Charles III pivoted straight into the balancing act that is now his for the rest of his life: tending his family while leading a kingdom. “It’s the moment I’ve been dreading,” the new King, speaking of his mother’s death, said to new prime minister Liz Truss. “But we’ll try and keep everything going.” With that, the longest-serving—and not always popular—heir apparent in British history was off to a promising start in the eyes of close observers. “He’s had time to prepare, and he’s used it exceptionally well,” says a source close to the royal household. Among mourners in Windsor, Dr. Simon Bays said this transition period has shown a warmth and “unerring solidity” in Charles: “Maybe he will be Charles the Gentle. I’m very impressed.”

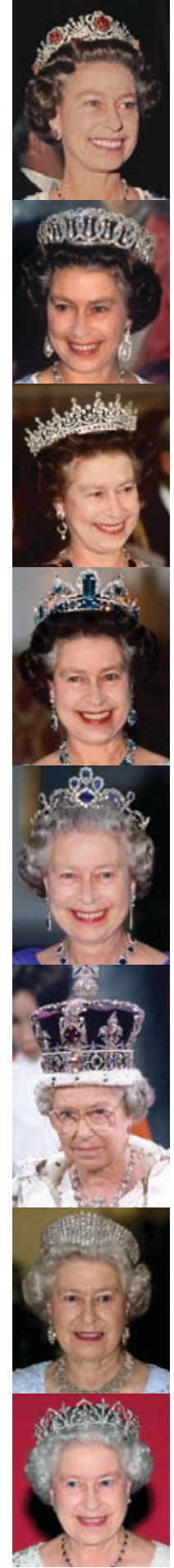


‘There are some disadvantages to crowns, but otherwise they are quite important things’
 —QUEEN ELIZABETH

OPPOSITE PAGE: MAX MUMBY/INDIGO/GETTY IMAGES; THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: JANE BARLOW/AP/GETTY IMAGES; TIM ROOKE/SHUTTERSTOCK; TIM GRAHAM PHOTO LIBRARY/GETTY IMAGES; ALAMI; HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

The Head That Wore the Crown

So heavy was the jewel-encrusted crown the Queen wore at her coronation, she later revealed, she hadn't been able to lower her head to read her speech. "If you did, your neck would break," she told the BBC in 2018. As for the woman beneath the sparkling adornment (cleaned with gin and water!), "the Queen is entirely disinterested in jewelry as a person," trusted aide Major General Alastair Bruce said in 2018. "Jewelry is one of the elements that helped her deliver the fact that she is Queen to the people she comes in contact with. These symbols are seen by her as part of the job."



1977
 1982
 1985
 1986
 1992
 1995
 2002
 2005



Her Final Duty

As she awaited Prime Minister Truss at Balmoral Castle on Sept. 6, the Queen was "very smiley ... in good spirits," says photographer Jane Barlow.

Seeing the fissures in the relationship between William and Harry would have pained her. "She had seen everything and probably thought of what happened to her own uncle," says a close royal source. "She knew that conflicts were a part of life, and she didn't hold grudges. Most of all, she wanted to see her family happy and her children happy."

Her family, now united in grief, enjoyed a final celebration with the Queen they shared with the world in June, when she marked her Platinum Jubilee, signifying 70 years on the throne. Bruno Peek was tasked with organizing the extraordinary beacon lightings across the U.K. for the event, as he had previously done for her Golden and Diamond Jubilees. "In 30-odd years as I did that job, I've seen how much affection people had for her," he says. "She had that aura and could make you feel comfortable. My lasting memory of her was when we lit the principal beacon at Windsor Castle on the Jubilee night, and she turned to me and gave me one of her wonderful smiles. I thought, 'The boy's done good!'" After the Queen's death, "my wife asked me, 'Why are you crying?'" recalls Peek. "I said, 'I don't know.' A light of the world has gone out."

With SIMON PERRY, PHIL BOUCHER, EILEEN FINAN, MONIQUE JESSEN, ELIZABETH McNEIL and SANDRA SOBIERAJ WESTFALL

'At least Grannie is
with Great-Grandpa now'
—PRINCE LOUIS, AGE 4

