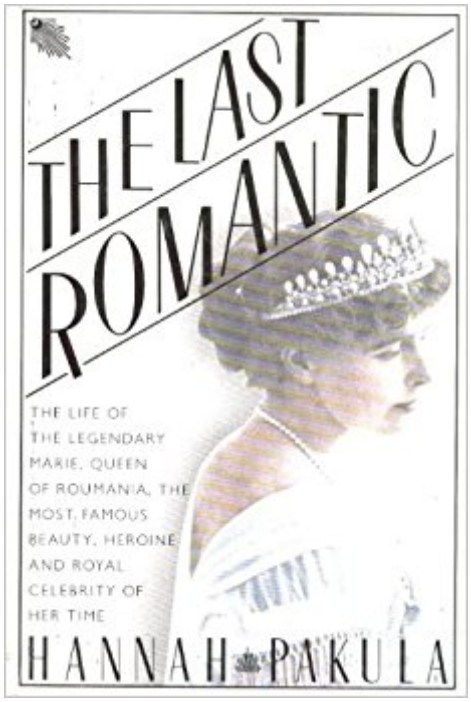
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The Last Romantic: A Biography Of Queen Marie Of Roumania



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Synopsis

Queen Marie of Roumania was one of the most fascinating crowned heads of Europe and one of the most extraordinary and independent women of our century. The granddaughter of Queen Victoria and Tzar Alexander II of Russia, at seventeen Marie left the glittering courts of Western Europe to marry the Crown Prince of Roumania. Drawing upon the young queen s diaries and letters, the author describes her struggle to gain an independent footing in the male- dominated court of Roumania, her early years as one of the most admired beauties of Europe, and the decisive period during World War I when she all but ran the Roumanian Government. With the sweep and panache of a great epic, this compelling story is historical biography at its best. This enthralling book is like a huge spicy plum pudding stuffed with juicy fruits Maureen Cleave, Evening Standard --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Beautifully written, a book that encompasses a great deal of European history, including a corner of East Europe much overlooked. It’s a sensitive biography of Queen Marie, who was much loved by her subjects (she learned Romanian as an adult and the people adored her for this and for all the kindnesses she showed them). She was one of Queen Victoria’s granddaughters (five of Queen Victoria’s granddaughters ended up as queens on European thrones). She was talented, beautiful, had the ability to charm people, and this helped her help her husband in his royal function --he was not a very effectual ruler. The content and the writing had the power to draw me into that world and keep me there until I finished the book. It’s one of my top ten books of all time. I learned so much from it.

The beautiful Queen Marie of Romania was a flamboyant character, egotistical, narcissistic, but in a way down to earth and really quite loveable. Married at age seventeen and packed off to Romania as the wife of the inept, unattractive Crown Prince Ferdinand, Marie had to make the best of things, and she did!Hannah Pakula's beautifully written book will carry you through Marie's turbulent life with gusto, but the saga is complicated- as Queen Victoria's granddaughter, son of the enigmatic Prince Alfred "Affie" and the equally enigmatic Grand duchess Marie, daughter of Tsar Alexander II. Marie was related to everybody and knew everybody.The most fascinating parts of this fine biography for me were Marie's relationships with the famous royal personalities of her era. For instance, Empress Alexandra the wife of Nicholas II and first cousin to Marie was Marie's opposite- cold, scheming, secretive and socially maladjusted. She didn't cut any ice with the self-confident Marie and Marie didn't hesitate in voicing her opinion of the Empress. Oddly, arrangements were made for Marie's oldest son, the Crown Prince Carol and Alexandra's oldest daughter, Olga, to meet in hopes of a future marriage. However, the young people were not attracted to each other.Marie has delicious comments to make about Queen Victoria and Pakula explores the relationship between the Queen and this granddaughter. Although Marie wrote rather purple prose, you really get the feeling for what it must have been like to have been a little girl, even a confident little girl such as Marie, approaching the inner sanctum of the great Queen. The Queen must have been rather like a Buddha, a goddess, of this world but not quite of it. A child would be awed and scared and titillated and Pakula sets the stage for you.Marie had many lovers, and at least one of her children, Prince Mircea, was not Ferdinand's son. With dark brown eyes he could not have been produced by the blue-eyed Marie and the blue-eyed Ferdinand. Mircea was undoubtedly the offspring of the handsome, dashing, married Prince Barbo Stirbey, probably the love of Marie's life. Poor little Mircea died of typhoid before he was four years old.And then there's Waldorf Astor, not Marie's lover, but a huge factor in her life. And George V, who once loved her. And Charlotte, the troublesome sister of Kaiser Wilhelm II. And the future Edward VIII, whom Marie adored as a prince, but later considered a quitter. And Calvin Coolidge, and on and on."The Last Romantic" is a feast about an era that has vanished. About an unusual woman who left her mark upon the world and even brought joy to it. Highly recommended!P.S. A book of photographs called "Queen Victoria's Family" by Charlotte Zeepvat, is suggested, as it contains many excellent images of Marie and her family, including a wonderful one of Marie "Missy" as a little girl.

This biography is incredibly detailed and reads almost like a historical fiction novel. I do not usually

read history or biographies for entertainment, but if there are more books out there like this one I may have to change that. The personal story of Queen Marie was told with compassion but seemingly without an overt agenda, and the historical details about Romania and its neighbors were really interesting and not boring or list-like. I was particularly fascinated by the difficult position of a country with a British/Russian queen and a German king on the brink of (and onward into) World War I. I would read it again, and recommend it highly.

This is a very interesting work on Marie, Queen of Romania. The main focus is on where she fit into the social whirl to inclunde the international diplomatic circuit of the era between the wars. Hannah Pakula wrote this book about 25 years ago so there are some perspectives that might be useful for the current reader (communism no longer exists in Eastern Europe). However in terms of accessible books on famous people in Romanian history, this book is probably in the top ten.The book chronicles Marie's journey from Queen Victoria's granddaughter to international power broker in the Balkans. It is worth noting that Pakula seems to specialize in books about women who are married to famous men who eventually come into their own due to their own qualities (Victoria, mother of Emperor Frederick of Germany and Madame Chaing Kai Sheck).Where the book might have been improved would have been more on some of the political figures who interacted with Marie. The book did send me off to Wikipedia to look up Marthe Bibesco, probably aone of the world's most fascinating women of all time, the two Bratianus, father and son who dominated Romanian politics for sixty years, Prince Stirbey, who was always around when Marie needed him. The book would have been better if it focused on Romanian affairs and Marie's relationship to them rather than the various comings and goings of the romantic frustrations fo the various royal houses between the 1890s-1930s.For all its shortcomings this is an interesting book dealing with a figure who now is apparently coming into her own in Romania and is remembered now for her diplomatic offensive at the Vedrsailles Conference which gained Romania the four provinces that had eluded it for more than three hundred years. It is this accomplishment and not her style and the fullness of her life that will merit books being written about her.

This is so well written and informative, it is an important work of history and intrique of the turn of the century and WW1.I read it in succession with the Memorir of Queen Marie and they complimented each other beautifully. It is insightful, thoughtfully written and never boring. A lot of research went into the development and it paid off handsomely. I highly recomment this book of world history, some of it we are repeating today.

Excellent book

Great book. Thank you!

Very nicely done as a biography of Queen Marie.

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