

[Free pdf] The Downing Street Years

The Downing Street Years

Margaret Thatcher

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Margaret Thatcher : The Downing Street Years before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Downing Street Years:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. No rust on the Iron LadyBy FrKurt MessickThis book is one of the most interesting political autobiographies I have read (and I've read many of them). I must confess that interest was intensified due to the fact that I worked in the House of Commons during her tenure in office, and indeed worked during the 1987 General Election for two Conservative Members of Parliament (David Amess of Basildon and David Evennett of Erith Crayford--yes, I know, you've never heard of either of them).This is actually the first volume of Margaret Thatcher's books to be published; the prequel is 'The Path to Power' and there is a follow-up, 'The Collected Speeches', but for those interested, 'The Downing Street Years' is the book to have.It begins with the 1979 General Election, and carries forward to her resignation as Prime Minister a decade later. In this volume are her perspectives on all the various Cabinet intrigues, shuffles and reshuffles; her attempts to find civil servants and other helpers who were not of the old guard but of a new mentality, often asking, 'Is he one of us?' by which she meant, not is he a Conservative, but rather, will he get something accomplished, is he a do-er?Thatcher's perspectives on the various scandals and inter-Cabinet fighting makes for interesting reading -- she is candid in her likes and dislikes among her Cabinet colleagues. Her final row with Geoffrey Howe, who delivered a scathing speech in the HoC that mostly prompted the leadership crisis, is enlightening. (I've not seen his version, if one exists--it would be good to compare the two sides.) She was very disappointed at the end when she thought she had the continued support of the party, but each of her ministers and 'friends' told her in turn that while he supported her, others would not. She saw the writing

on the wall, and after having won the first ballot for party leadership but not by a sufficient majority to avoid a second ballot, she resigned in favour of John Major (whose autobiography, recently issued, is also well worth reading, particularly for his comments about how Thatcher tried to maintain a controlling influence over him from behind the office). You might be tempted, if you're not really into politics and not reading this for scholarly purposes, to skim over various minor issues that are gone into great detail. Historians are appreciative, but I seriously ask myself how many non-political scientists and historians will read through all the detail of what are now minor bits of history? In all, a brilliant career, the first woman head of government in a major Western democracy, and well worth reading on the whole. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I learned a lot about the 1980s. By TC109I learned more about the 1980's from this book than I did living through them. Granted I was young and not paying too much attention at the time, but MT's perspective on some of the pivotal events of that period is fascinating. Particularly enjoyed the discussion on Northern Ireland, the Falklands War and dealings with Russia. Maybe i'm wrong here ... but it also seems like the PM of the UK is forced to work a lot harder than any US congressman or President. She was in the weeds, and seemed to rely on a small team. Does the Parliamentary structure demand that kind of factual grasp, unlike the US system? Smaller support staff budget? Hmm. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Beyond her Formative Years By Dean Marden Being an autobiography dealing with a limited subset of the subject's years, the usual biographical information regarding early life, influences and inspirations are regrettably missing, though still covered in other works for those justifiably hungry for such ('Path to Power', by Thatcher', and John Campbell's biographies of the lady). Personality issues within the government and international arena are given generous page-time, and do actually provide useful context and justification for actions and decisions taken by Thatcher throughout her premiership, as well as providing insights into the character and personalities of various world leaders. One particular insight of note for myself was the efforts enacted by US Secretary of State Alexander Haig in trying to forge a diplomatic solution to the Falklands invasion: I'd always considered Haig as something of a dyed-in-the-wool reactionary, but his actions and earnest efforts in this instance spoke far louder than words. Discussions of economic minutiae, raining with acronyms specific to the British political and economic environments (including a very creative instance of public service-speak for budget deficits), aren't very effective at holding a reader's interest, but readers are encouraged to press on nonetheless, as disparate economic matters are blessedly interspersed with chapters on social, international, domestic and European issues of sufficient consciousness-boosting contrast. Social matters are given adequate page-time, though I would have liked some additional context for several of such, especially comments regarding Thatcher's belief in removing provisions for no-fault divorce. Her almost-throwaway justification for such a view seemed to be vested in the belief that a woman (as if only a woman would want a divorce) should choose to depend more on her more-accountable husband than on less-accountable state welfare, seeming to follow on from the lady's views on moving dependence to more accountable service providers, susceptible to market forces, rather than governments. The two views seem more aligned in ideology than practicality, with no case evidence given to justify the lady's view on fault-based divorce. On the Kindle edition, despite aid in photograph selection being applauded within the book's acknowledgments, no photo pages have been included

The first volume of memoirs by Margaret Thatcher frankly recalls the former British prime minister's dealings with U.S. presidents, the Falkland War, and her election victories in 1983 and 1987. 150,000 first printing. \$150,000 ad/promo. Tour.

From Library Journal Fans of Britain's first woman prime minister may have already purchased this fact-filled but ultimately self-serving memoir. Key events of Thatcher's 11-year reign--the alliance with Reagan, the Falklands/Malvinas War, the 1984-1985 miners' strike, conflict within the European Community, and so on--are described in exhaustive detail. There is little attempt to provide a balanced or subtle portrait of a controversial administration. Although, for the most part, the book's prose style is rather pedantic, Thatcher's unique personality nevertheless shines through. The gist of her approach is conveyed in the chapter titles--"The World Turned Right Side Up," "Disarming the Left," "No Time To Go Wobbly." Yet even Thatcher's harshest critics will find this book informative and revealing. The book contains over 50 photographs, some in color. A second volume, devoted to her life prior to the 1979 election that brought her to No. 10 Downing Street, is promised. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 6/15/93.- Kent Worcester, Social Science Research Council, New York Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The Iron Lady tells all. Well, not exactly all; her memoirs reveal little of her personal life and, chronologically, cover only those years during which she was prime minister. Her book has already caused a stir in the U.K. and will be read with great enthusiasm on this side of the Atlantic not only by people involved in government, but also by general readers keen on foreign affairs. The first woman prime minister of Britain was never known for sugarcoating, and her remembrance of her 11-year tenure at No. 10 Downing Street is defined not only by its wealth of details about her activities as head of the government, but also by her unequivocal opinions about world-important events she participated in and history-changing individuals she encountered. Would we expect anything else but outspokenness from Thatcher as she reviews, analyzes, explains, and defends her policies and procedures, domestic

and foreign, during her controversial presiding over Britain's disestablishment of socialism and resurgence as a world power? Highlights of her recollections include her comments on the Falklands War ("The significance . . . was enormous, both for Britain's self-confidence and for [its] standing in the world") and the reunification of Germany ("Germany is . . . by its very nature a destabilizing rather than a stabilizing force in Europe"). One has to admire her for her honesty, integrity, and stick-to-her-guns attitude. Brad Hooper

About the Author
Born in 1925, Margaret Thatcher rose to become the first woman to lead a major Western democracy. She won three successive general elections and served as prime minister for more than eleven years, from 1979 to 1990, a record unmatched in the twentieth century.

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