



The Path to Power

Margaret Thatcher

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In her international bestseller, *The Downing Street Years*, Margaret Thatcher provided an acclaimed account of her years as Prime Minister. This second volume reflects on the early years of her life and how they influenced her political career.

The Path to Power Details

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From Reader Review The Path to Power for online ebook

Felicity says

Usually don't add books I've only read half of but this one is so long that half of it is like one book.

Kumar says

I admire her for the very characteristic that her detractors loathed her: unafraid and unshrinking, quite like the way Lee Kuan Yew, Ronald Reagan and Indira Gandhi were: they were all of the same sorts, with the same tastes and almost similar interests.

I was, therefore, unsurprised when she, in her earlier book, "Statecraft: Strategies for a Changing World", dedicated a number of lengthy paragraphs to Lee Kuan Yew, about whom she waxed lyrical. When I read "The path to Power", I was anticipating to get a glimpse of what made her so formidable, but I was a trifle disappointed when the text did not afford me that privilege. It looked like she wrote the first and the last parts of the books first, and the middle portion had been inserted much later to make the text seem intellectual and objective.

The author assumed that her reader would know the political and social history of Britain in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Thus, people like me who do not know anything about the landmark events and episodes that shaped and made the UK during Thatcher's reign would, naturally, be out of depth when she went into minute details about them.

Still and all, the book was a good read for a number of reasons: she was a smart but humble lady who had politics in her blood right from her adolescence, largely informed by her grocer father. A devout Christian, astute politician, whose sense of purpose to make a difference paved her way to the highest rungs of power in the United Kingdom. If only she had said more about her philosophy, beliefs, private thoughts, and family, "The path to Power" would have been a better read.

Chuck says

I have read other biographies of the "Iron Lady" which I found more interesting. This book would be more interesting to a person from England than to others around the world simply because it delves heavily in to British local politics and although many of the political figures have some recognition the book is overwhelmingly full of local politicians that became tedious to some unfamiliar with British politics. An example would be if an American President did his memoir and filled it with elections about local councilmen, sheriffs, dog catchers and every political hack that helped him win his first election in Brazos County, Texas, then it may be of interest to a Texan, but of little importance to someone from France, Burma or other world locations. The book is detailed and Mrs Thatcher's personality shows through very nicely, however, to me, the book was tedious.

Richard Thomas says

The cynic might say that it took a lot of print to say 'I was right on everything all along' in 2 volumes. Worth reading but ...

Rob Markley says

A politician laid bare for her convictions rather than mere expediency and thirst for power! Thatcher was clearly one of the most clear headed and incisive leaders ever. She deserves far more credit than she has been given but future centuries will see better

Janique says

It's succinct as she is...

It's intelligent as she is ...

It's candid as she is ...

It's profound as she is...

It's impacting as she is ...

Above all and to my surprise it's deeply inspirational.

Paul says

Thatcher's pre-political life was, by and large, rather dull, and certainly not worthy of 600 pages. A better writer could have made the occasional gem sparkle (and indeed Charles Moore appears to have managed this) but a boring subject matter discussed at length in an equally tedious writing style results in a long hard slog that isn't worth the effort unless you are a student of political history.

Mike says

Overall, a great book that provides the type of insight only a world leader can, first-hand, about his or her career. This is actually Baroness Thatcher's second autobiography but it covers the trajectory of her life from childhood to college, her early career as a chemist and then a lawyer and later her role in politics up to her election as Prime Minister. Her other book, written first, *The Downing Street Years* covers her 11 years as a head of state.

I would suggest this book not only to fans of Lady Thatcher but those who do not especially like her: approached with an open mind, this book makes clear how she developed her political views and why she believed that England in 1979 required vast change to survive. Thatcher is an adept writer and this voice, unlike many autobiographies of former leaders, is clearly in her own voice with little help in the wordsmithing. Her goals are normally pragmatic over being simple ideals and even if you don't agree with her, it's useful to see how she thought things through and how her politics evolved. Most world leaders

devote maybe a fifth of their autobiographies to their pre-head of state lives, so it's very refreshing to see Thatcher produce such a lengthy volume and it's just as entertaining and interesting to read as its companion volume on her years as PM.

Pietro says

Memorie di ferro

Non una passeggiata, queste memorie della Baronessa Thatcher, ma non per questo meno belle o meno avvincenti. Pubblicato a pochi anni di distanza da quel giorno del 1990 in cui il suo stesso partito le fece le scarpe, dopo ben 15 anni di leadership conservatrice e 11 di governo in qualità di Primo Ministro. Come le sue memorie ci mostrano bene, il percorso che la portò ai vertici del partito tory non fu privo di difficoltà. Figlia di commercianti, abituata al duro lavoro sin dall'infanzia, Margaret Thatcher è riuscita ad imporsi una ferrea autodisciplina e un senso del dovere fuori dal comune. Caratteristiche che sarebbero poi diventate leggenda una volta arrivata a Downing Street. A 26 anni, con due lauree, un matrimonio e due gemelli, inizia la vera e propria avventura parlamentare: prima tra i backbencher conservatori, poi come sottosegretaria in vari ministeri e rapidamente come ministro dell'Istruzione. Chi in quel periodo la conosce, rimane impressionato dalla sua vasta preparazione, frutto di una dura gavetta ed estensivi studi. Comincia a maturare anche la sua dottrina economica, fortemente anti statalista e liberista, ispirata in larga parte dall'economista austriaco Friedrich von Hayek. Nel 1976 tenta la sorte, sfruttando la crescente impopolarità dell'allora leader tory Ted Heath, presentando la propria candidatura come leader del partito. La forza delle sue idee, la profonda fede conservatrice e l'intenzione per nulla celata di riportare la Gran Bretagna all'antico splendore con nuove e profonde riforme economiche, le fecero guadagnare terreno seppure con non poche perplessità. *Come sono arrivata a Downing Street* si ferma al 1979, con *l'Inverno dello Scontento*, l'incredibile serie di scioperi che misero in ginocchio sia la nazione che il già debole e poco credibile governo laburista di Callaghan. Fu proprio quell'incredibile dimostrazione della forza politica delle Trade Unions a far cadere il governo e portare al comando la Thatcher. Il 1979 rappresenta simbolicamente l'anno in cui non solo la Gran Bretagna ha cominciato il suo cammino verso un radicale cambiamento; è anche l'anno in cui tutte le nazioni sviluppate del mondo hanno iniziato a seguire l'esempio inglese (e americano) allineandosi alle politiche liberiste e di libero mercato. Le politiche thatcheriane sono da molti ritenute ancora controverse se non del tutto sbagliate. I fatti però parlano chiaro, quali che siano le proprie convinzioni politiche. Al momento di andar via da Downing Street nel novembre 1990, la Thatcher lasciava al successivo governo una nazione non più dilaniata dall'inflazione (nel 1980 al 18%, già nel 1983 il tasso si abbassò al 4,60% per poi assestarsi attorno al 3% sino alla fine degli anni ottanta), industrialmente all'avanguardia, competitiva nei mercati internazionali e con una ritrovata credibilità in politica estera. Nota per essere una viscerale anticomunista, venne definita dal Ministero della Difesa Sovietico *"la lady di ferro del mondo occidentale"*. Infatti notevole fu il suo contributo al definitivo collasso dell'Unione Sovietica.

E' certo che in 11 anni di governo gli errori ci siano stati eccome, ma come sarebbe possibile altrimenti? Pochissime personalità politiche possono vantarsi di aver segnato un'epoca: Margaret Thatcher non ha semplicemente attraversato gli anni ottanta, li ha modellati e plasmati secondo il modello economico e culturale con cui oggi identifichiamo quel particolare decennio. Un periodo storico che porta impresso indelebilmente il profilo duro e virtuoso di una donna che verrà ricordata a lungo e, ne sono convinto, non solo per gli errori che ha commesso.

Jim Bowen says

So far as I'm aware, Margaret Thatcher (the English Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990) wrote her biography in 2 parts. One focused on the 11 years she spent in power. This book focuses (mainly) on her rise to power.

This book feels dated, but perhaps I shouldn't be surprised by that. Here she's looking at her life from the 1930s to the 1970s (when she's about to win the election). There isn't too much discussion of the 1930s though, because she was very young for a lot of that period. She attended university in the early 1940s.

In a way this book is interesting. I remember Thatcher as Prime Minister, so it was interesting to learn about her early life. It is her youth that shaped her, and given that she shaped the country in many ways, I think that it was useful to understand her background.

This having been said, I would say that there are a couple of major flaws with the book. First, when describing her youth, she, like many autobiographers I think, has a tendency to use "rose tinted spectacles." So far as I can tell, all the men are intelligent, women strong and children "above average" in Grantham, and I have real difficulty believing that.

Secondly a good chunk of the end of the book looks at her vision for the future. Given that that vision was written in 1995, it does feel a little dated now. Maybe it's accurate, maybe it isn't, but when she talks about GATT and the beneficial impact of globalisation, you have to look back at the last 4 or 5 years and think really?

Kieran says

First my I add that YES, I do disagree with some of Thatcher's political motives. However, my interest in British Pop Culture has helped this book to catch my eye.

This memoir takes you through the early years of Thatcher, up until her first day at Downing Street. I particularly enjoyed reading about her time at Oxford University, and also on her thoughts of Britain entry in the EU. One major dislike during reading, was the countless names of people (mainly politicians who unfortunately have never heard of) throughout the book.

All in all it was a good read, I learnt a lot not only about Thatcher herself, but also about Britain's turbulent economic times during the 60's and 70's.

Melissa says

I hesitate to publicly reveal that I've read Margaret Thatcher's autobiography, lest anyone accuse me of sympathizing with her political philosophy. The woman has fascinated me for as long as I can remember.

Arnold says

Autobiography in the true sense tracing her life before she became Prime Minister. Interesting read for fans of the Iron Lady and/or the British Conservative Party

Erica says

I was not able to finish this book, which is an extremely rare event for me. The dullness of Thatcher's writing style is quite unbearable.

Natalie Weber says

I rarely abandon books, but after getting about half way through this autobiography I finally accepted that the details were just too mundane to keep my interest. Brief snippets about Thatcher's upbringing were the most enjoyable aspects of the book for me. Myriad details about the inner workings of parliament and various issues she was involved with left me bored and waiting for something more interesting to come along in the story. Perhaps someone more familiar with or interested in the intricate details of England's political history would be better able to finish this large volume.
