



The Last Romantic: A Biography of Queen Marie of Roumania

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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

The Last Romantic: A Biography of Queen Marie of Roumania Details

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Dorothy says

Eh. DISAPPOINTMENT. By the end of the book I didn't care about Queen Marie and just wanted it over. The fault in this book was the reliance on Marie's own autobiography, letters and memoirs to frame the narrative. She was a woman of monumental ego and self-conscious self-awareness that amounted to solipsistic egocentrism. The historically important personages around her were props to her self-aggrandizement. The truly seismic historical events and the autocratic feudalism that was Rumanian cultural and political history was merely a watercolor backdrop to everything Marie.

To me this was an enormous disappointment after reading An Uncommon Woman. Hard to believe it was the same author.

Anna Graham Hunter says

I learned a lot about Queen Victoria's sprawling, dysfunctional brood of grandchildren, the birth of Romania - and why they imported a foreign ruler, a career royal (King Carol I) in 1866 - and WWI. Very engagingly written, and Queen Marie makes an entertaining subject: clueless and self-dramatizing in some respects, yet insightful in others, not to mention prolific (her letters and books are quoted extensively). I loved her description of Woodrow Wilson mansplaining during the Paris talks.

Bogdan Ra? says

Cu toate c? mi-a pl?cut faptul c? a prezentat evenimentele istorice din perioada în cauz?, pentru a înțelege mai bine contextul în care se afla personajul biografiei (?i trecând peste una sau dou? gre?eli minore la inceputul c?r?ii cu privire la d???i ?i existen?a unori „în?elegeri”) - a?adar o mic? lec?ie de istorie - uneori am avut sentimentul c? Maria nu mai este în prim plan ?i se prezint? un interes pu?in cam mare pentru alte personaje. Dar per total o biografie bun?, probabil cea mai bun? a ei, bine documentat?.

„Când vei citi aceste rânduri, poporul meu, eu voi fi trecut pragul t?cerii eterne... ?i totu?i, dat? fiind marea iubire pe care ?i-am jurat-o, vreau s?-?i vorbesc din nou... Am devenit a ta la bucurie ?i la durere. Privind înapoi, îmi este greu s? spun care a fost mai mare, bucuria sau durerea. Cred c? bucuria a fost mai mare, dar prea îndelungat? a fost durerea.”

Jeanet Alessandra says

Estoy completamente enamorada de la forma en que escribe Hanna Pakula. Y necesito que ella escriba las biografías de todas mis figuras históricas favoritas.

Les dejo esta quote tan épica de la reina Marie de Rumania: "I am said to be the most beautiful woman in

Europe. About that, of course, I cannot judge because I cannot know. But about the other queens, I know. I am the most beautiful queen in Europe."

Lindsey Meridith says

Eccentric, dramatic, almost to the point of being theatrical was by mere definition- Regina Maria. A granddaughter of Queen Victoria and granddaughter of Tsar Alexander II, Marie was destined for Queenship.

While Marie held romantic affections for the future George V, due to her mothers disdain for all things English, marriage was out of the question and a groom from a different country was found, Ferdinand of Roumania.

Marie was selflessly shipped off to a foreign land while still being a child herself. Marie was to try and win not only the Royal Family but also Roumania. An eccentric, free spirited young girl sent to a mediocre crown Family.

Hannah Pekula did a great job bringing about the story of a lesser known royal (despite her grandmother being none other than Queen Victoria) to an even lesser known kingdom. Pekula's research was evident however, told like a story. I was sopping up every page looking for more information!

While researched very well, I would've liked to know more about the relationship and closeness she shared with her spineless husband. I also wondered how Carmen Sylva's behaviors continued upon her return from exile... she was clearly annoying in the very least to her husband so how did she get away with so much?

I really liked how Marie's relationships with her parents, siblings, children, other courts, and prominent individuals were included. I also really appreciated how Pekula really showed that Marie stuck to her guns, cared about her people, and was willing to do whatever she could for anyone.

This book read like a well researched novel but was story telling. I recommend this to anyone interested in WW1, politics, royalty, and anyone with interest in learning about lesser know countries. Marie was fantastic and it is a shame she was so easily forgotten.

Cindie Harp says

First 80% of book very good -- kind of real life Zelig. Marie, QUEEN of Romania, was present for most of first 38 years of 20th century events. Hard to stomach her anti-Semitism, and the book drags at the end. Still, interesting look at a celebrity of her time that has disappeared from the current memory. Not mine -- now

Jean Marie says

I'm always looking for new women from history to study and learn about, always looking for that magical one that will be the focus of my future work in history. Queen Marie was originally introduced to me in *Sex with the Queen* by Eleanor Herman. The story of her not being allowed to be knocked out when giving birth

because of the restrictions she was under due to her uncle and current king fascinated me. And it helped that she was one of the granddaughters of Queen Victoria.

This was a very easy biography to read, but that might be mainly because it's the most modern (in terms of the subject) I've read. I really enjoyed the author's unrelenting honesty about Marie. She was flighty and vain but she wasn't arrogant in the snobby sort of way, she was simply very naive. Marie is very endearing as a character and she becomes real through her struggles with her husband and children. She becomes alive with her love for her adoptive Roumania. I've always been fascinated by those crafty Eastern European countries and their people and this was a great look in on them through the eyes of their most beloved queen. A beautifully haunting biography of a beautifully sad woman.

Jodi says

As a person interested in female historical figures (with books written by female historians) this title fit the bill. Queen Marie truly was a royal celebrity of her era. Born a granddaughter of Queen Victoria and Tsar Alexander II, she was a beautiful, talented and intelligent woman. Obviously her duty was to marry for dynastic reasons which she did to Crown Prince Ferdinand of Romania. The marriage was successful by royal standards although Maria would continually struggle to care a meaningful role for herself --and succeed overall. Surprisingly, it was her son, Carol II who proved the biggest obstacle for her despite her international reputation of a politically astute representative of Romania (she was at Versailles after World War I to ensure her country's position).

Pakula's text is impressive, thorough and accessible to all readers.

Joan Stewart says

I kept asking myself, "Why don't I LIKE Queen Marie?" as I read this well-researched, informative book.

My guess is writer Hannah Pakula (also a human rights activist, husband of late filmmaker Alan Pakula) started out fascinated with her biographical subject but changed her mind a bit midstream. In contrast, I sensed Pakula really admired Vicky, Queen Victoria's eldest child who became Empress of Germany, in her previous book, "An Uncommon Woman."

Queen Marie of Romania had enormous enthusiasm, courage, charisma, beauty and fame, but she was also vain, anti-semitic, totally convinced of the divine right of monarchs, and self-righteous. She had no problems with her soldiers shamefully looting Budapest at the end of the Hungarian-Romanian war of 1919. Although Romania itself suffered horribly from the punitive WW I reparations of the Central Powers, Romania, in turn, seemed to take the same approach toward an enemy.

Despite the title, "The Last Romantic," this is not chick lit. You'll learn a lot. The book focuses on the politics of the day and characters on the world stage. Stay with it, as the plot turns toward the end when someone unexpectedly turns into a monster, and we can't help but feel for her. Those unfamiliar with the crowned heads of Europe would benefit from a genealogy chart, showing her lineage from grandparents Queen Victoria and Tsar Alexander II.

An ad spokesperson for Ponds (through ad agency JPL) in the 20s/30s, Queen Marie is lovely to look at. Her luminous beauty also seduced me. Although there were plenty of photographs, I kept wishing for more!

Ileana says

Good history lesson for us Romanians.
Knowing the places is a plus in enjoying the book.

Colleen says

I've always been fascinated by Queen Marie of Romania ever since reading Julia P. Gerald's Born to Rule (highly recommend it and her other two books if you like royalty). Since reading that book I have wanted to learn more about her and have been looking for ages for a biography of her. Hannah Pakula does a wonderful job in this well-written, comprehensive and interesting biography. I highly recommend this to people who are interested in royalty, especially in the late 19-20th century.

Sole says

Wonderful book and really, really, really, hard to find. Took me years to track a copy. Finally got it from some new&used library in Australia, but it was worth it.
Hanna Pakula does an excellent job in detailing the life and struggles of Queen Mary of Roumania. really well researched and entertaining at the same time, which is not exactly easy to do.

Jessica Susser says

This is one of the most engaging and well-written biographies that I have ever read. This book investigates the life of Queen Marie, royal society of the time, and the socio-political events that took place leading up and following World War I. It allows the reader to glimpse woes, triumphs, and ambitions of small nation-states during the early-mid 1900s, a topic that is not often addressed in US history textbooks. Queen Marie herself is an interesting, intelligent, and colorful character and Hannah Pakula does an excellent job exploring different aspects of Marie's personality. Though some of the text is a bit dated (think cold-war era 1980s), the story itself is timeless and charming. I highly recommend this book.

Dorina Danila says

O excelent? biografie a unei personalit??i fascinante. Mai multe pe blog
<https://dorinadanila.com/2017/10/22/u...>

Ana Dumitrache says

O biografie foarte bine realizată a Reginei Maria, pe care eu o consider o binecuvântare pentru România din toate punctele de vedere. Aceasta nu e ficțiune, nu e o poveste plină de suspans care să te prindă, nu e un roman de relaxare. Nu e deloc ușor de citit. Sunt extrem de multe informații istorice, multe detalii și descrieri, stilul autoarei e obiectiv, iar toate persoanele menționate sunt atestate istoric. Este o operă ce include cam toate familiile regale ale Europei, de o mare amploare. Cu siguranță merită citit? cel puțin o dată?. E o lecție de istorie pe care orice român trebuie să o știe pentru a putea înțelege trecutul și felul în care plătăm în prezent pentru el. Recunosc că mi-au plăcut mai mult jurnalele Mariei, pentru că regina a fost o scriitoare talentată și sensibilă. Însă opera de față prezintă evenimentele așa cum s-au întâmplat, fără nuanțări și interpretări. Jurnalele sunt subiective și întâmplările relatate influențate de sentimentele Mariei din acele momente. Maria a fost o regină despre care e o plăcere să citești, pentru că ai multe lecții de învățat de la ea. O femeie simplă, care vrea să fie iubită și înțeleasă, care se trezește într-o țară nouă, fără familie și care trebuie să își găsească menirea, lucru pe care îl face. A fost o regină devotată și și-a pus rolul mai presus decât condiția ei de femeie îndrăgostită sau de mamă.

Cred că autoarea a făcut o treabă foarte bună cu această biografie și merită apreciată pentru munca depusă: căutarea surselor istorice, investigația, prezentarea obiectivă a evenimentelor, căutarea perspectivelor diferite asupra evenimentelor și adunarea lor într-o carte de colecție. ?
