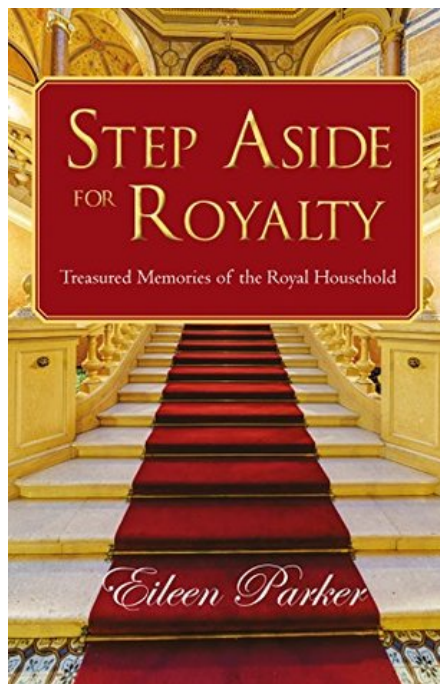




Step Aside for Royalty: Treasured Memories of the Royal Household

Eileen Parker

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Only Eileen Parker could write a book like Step Aside for Royalty with its intimate portrait of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip in the early years of their enduring partnership. Eileen was inside Buckingham Palace for all the grand state occasions as well as the private moments of crisis and joy.

Eileen knew Prince Philip before his marriage. Later, her husband Mike Parker became the Prince's first private secretary and the 'Parkers of the Palace' became part of the furniture at Court. Prince Philip even gave them his car.

The events that tested Mike and Eileen's marriage to breaking point have been seen in fiction in the Netflix television series, The Crown. Here's the real story in Eileen's own words.

Step Aside for Royalty: Treasured Memories of the Royal Household Details

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From Reader Review Step Aside for Royalty: Treasured Memories of the Royal Household for online ebook

Linda F Poole says

Interesting Easy. Read

If you want to glimpse into the behind the scenes work of the monarchy and what it takes to serve them, this is a good start.

Joy Williams says

Well written and Overlooked.

An interesting look at being a wife of an employee of the Duke of Edinburgh .Exciting for Mike Parker, while his wife and family were neglected. This book is more interesting now as the mini-series The Crown features the friendship between Parker and the Duke.

Susan Riggs says

Great

Book. Well written. Really gives an inside look at the royals as real people. I found it fascinating. Read this

jacqueline serena says

Good read,if you are looking for something about the royal that is New this is.it!

I think it's interesting because the information is new. It's about other people who are connected to the family but are interesting on their own. Prince Phillip has more about him than I had read before.

Bryan Higgs says

I'd been viewing "The Crown", which is an excellent series about the British Royal family, starting roughly from just before the death of King George VI. As one who is basically an anti-royalist, and one who abhors the class system in the UK, the pinnacle of which is the immediate Royal family, I usually can't stand to watch programs like "Downton Abbey". For some reason, I react more strongly against the evils of class division in the UK than anyone else I know, including my British friends. Initially, I resisted watching "The Crown" when my wife suggested that we watch it, but I relented to watch it with her. I was surprised that I have enjoyed it. I think the reasons are that:

1) It treats the Royal family and their deep layers of courtiers and the like with the disdain that I think they often deserve. The Queen comes off very well (and I agree that she has done a remarkable job through difficult times) -- Claire Foy does an amazingly great job at portraying Queen Elizabeth, with a perfect accent and expressiveness and royal restraint. Prince Philip does not come across as well; Edward VIII gets treated properly, more because of his abhorrent Nazi sympathies and related actions than for his abdication; Princess Margaret gets a sympathetic treatment because of her relationship with Peter Townsend and how badly they were treated by the Royal family and Parliament because of completely outdated ideas of divorce and "morganatic" -- a word I came across while reading about this situation -- marriage. It is ironic that, despite the fact that divorce factored into Edward VIII's abdication, and also in the lousy way Princess Margaret and Peter Townsend were treated, three of the Queen's children have been divorced. My, how times have changed!

2) Most of the period that "The Crown" covers was one that I lived through, although I probably didn't pay as much attention to it at the time as I might have. I remembered bits and pieces, and "The Crown" supplied a number of details that I had missed, or forgotten. In addition, there were some really good choices for background music that were both very appropriate for that particular episode, and brought back good memories of my childhood musical hits. Indeed, I think that the best part of "The Crown" is that it covers important historical events in the context of the Royal family's involvements. I think these were very well done.

One result of this was that, during the watching of a particular episode of "The Crown", I would fetch out my trusty laptop to learn more about what they were portraying. During one of these "Googling" activities, I was looking up Mike Parker on Wikipedia. Mike Parker was Prince Philip's equerry and then his private secretary. One episode spent quite a bit of time on Parker's divorce from his wife, Eileen Parker, and I found it interesting for some reason. On Mike Parker's Wikipedia page, was a reference to a book written by his wife some time after their divorce. This is that book. It was originally published in 1982 (they were divorced in 1958), and then a second "revised and abridged" edition was published in 2017, no doubt because of the popularity "The Crown", and the fact that their divorce featured so prominently in it.

The book is reasonably well written, in a chatty, perhaps gossipy style. Eileen's roots were in Scotland, where she was clearly raised in a very well-to-do family. She briefly describes her childhood, and then how she was in the WRNS ("Wrens" -- Women's Royal Naval Service) during WW2, and met Mike Parker and Prince Philip, both of whom were lieutenants in the Royal Navy, and were best friends. She married Mike Parker, who ended up becoming Prince Philip's equerry and then private secretary.

She writes about a large number of very privileged activities without any mention of her being aware that life for normal people, especially immediately after WW2, was very different. This grated on me, given my feelings about privilege and class structure. I found the descriptions of privilege, pomposity, ridiculous formality and pomp to simply reinforce my feelings that the British monarchy is out of place in a modern, democratic world. Other countries have monarchs, too, but the British monarchy takes things to such extremes and they live in a totally different world from the rest of us. That isn't their fault; they were just born into a system that has been in place for a very long time, and doesn't seem to be changing much to match today's realities.

Eileen's account of their divorce doesn't quite match that of "The Crown". It seems that she remained (remains; apparently, she is still alive, living in a care home, at 95, as of a few weeks ago) a believer in the monarchy, despite suffering from their effects on her family, and being treated less than fairly by them.

In short, I found the book to be interesting, extremely frustrating, but worth the read.

Susan says

This is a short, factual book that gives a more clear and positive understanding of the royal couple and their surrounding friends, family and wait staff. Yes, they were very much in love. And they were fun to be with, as well as intelligent and very accomplished in their own rights. The author is the wife of Mike Parker, Prince Philip's best friend and right hand man. If you liked The Crown series, you will want to read this book. Interesting facts in the book but not in the show: Prince Charles had a crush on the Parker's daughter Julie; and Prince Philip was incredibly close to his mother. In fact, his mother started an orphanage, lived in London, saw her son daily and was a frequent evening guest at Eileen's house where she smoked very strong cigarettes. The show paints Prince Philip's mother as crazy. Eileen paints her as strong, unpretentious and compassionate. The three star is because it is a solid book but basically boring.
