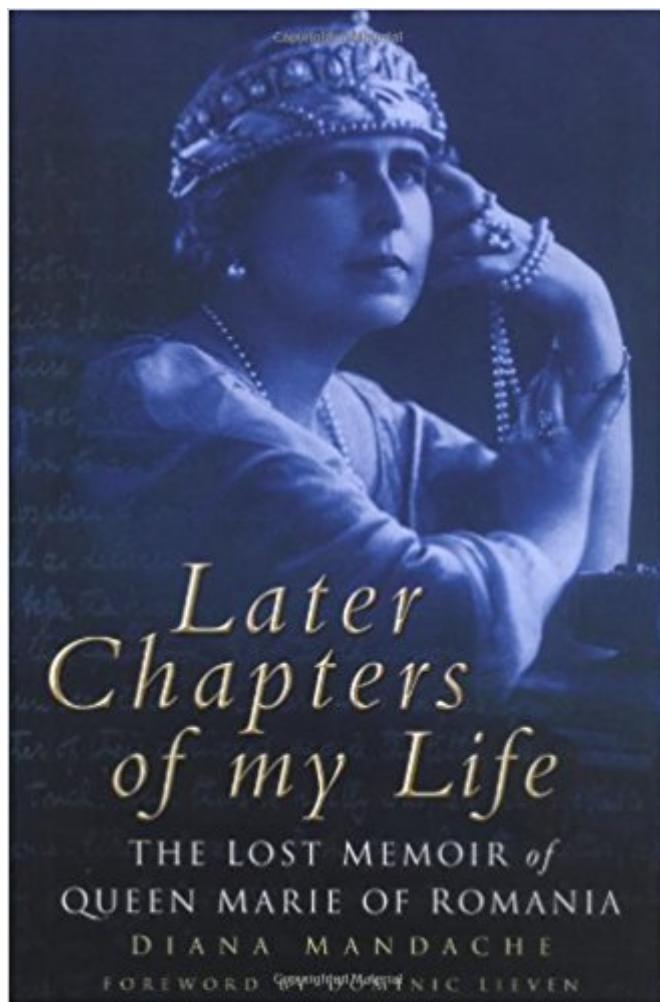


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Later Chapters Of My Life: The Lost Memoir Of Queen Marie Of Romania



Synopsis

Queen Marie of Romania was one of the most brilliant monarchs of the twentieth century. Described by one biographer as 'the most voluptuous queen in Europe' she distinguished herself during the First World War when she publicly opposed the peace agreement between Romania and Germany. She was also a gifted writer, and in the mid-1930s, publication of three volumes of her memoirs, *The Story of My Life*, brought her worldwide renown. Yet, until now, her story has remained incomplete. This recently discovered last memoir of Queen Marie reveals through her own eyes those last chapters of her life. The granddaughter of Queen Victoria and Tsar Alexander II of Russia, Marie was brought up at Eastwell Park in Kent. Glamorous and beautiful, she had men falling at her feet, yet at the age of seventeen she married the shy Crown Prince of Romania. It was a step that was to propel her on to the stage of international politics, and see her venture upon unofficial diplomatic missions, earning her the title of an 'irresistible ambassador'. Her last memoir, written from the period following the First World War until the end of 1922, includes both the trivia and intimate details of her daily life, and also brings us alongside her as she witnesses world-changing events. From the 1919 Peace Conference - at which Queen Marie met Clemenceau, Poincare, Woodrow Wilson and Hoover - to her last meeting with her mother, the Duchess of Saxe-Coburg; and from her informal visits to Paris, London and Transylvania to the first parliament of Greater Romania, the memoir gives insight into the life of this extraordinary queen.

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Customer Reviews

This final volume, 'Later Chapters of My Life', a previously unpublished manuscript,

was for a long time believed to have been destroyed by King Carol II after his mother's death. Marie's last private secretary, Christine Galitzi, knew of the new book the Queen was writing as a sequel to *The Story of My Life*. She believed that after the Queen's death Carol ordered the manuscript to be destroyed. The writing of these last memoirs was undertaken on the basis of notes from queen's diary. Short time after the publication of the first volume from *The Story of My Life* the Queen was asked to continue the writing of her captivating recollections. The first mentions about starting of the fourth volume appeared during August 1934 in the correspondence between the Queen and Ray Harris Baker, the founder of Queen Marie's Collection. The completion of this volume of memoirs by the Queen continued with many difficulties stemming from pressures from her son Carol II. He was envying the queen because of her widely recognized prestige. The result was that she decided to hide her private papers. Also from 1931, as a measure of precaution against Carol's intrusions, she arranged to have a part of her correspondence received through King Alexander of Yugoslavia, her son-in-law, in Belgrade and in Bucharest at the Yugoslav Legation. Documents confirm Marie's fears during 1930s and her wish to place the diaries and other personal papers in a safe place at the British Legation in Bucharest. This was a political sensitive action and was possible only for a short time. The intention to keep her papers, material for her memoirs, in a safe place was paralleled by similar situation which occurred between Empress Frederick and her son Kaiser Wilhelm II. The same kind of restrictions and pressure resulted that her memoirs and Kaiser Frederick III's personal papers to be smuggled out of Germany by the British Embassy in Berlin and stored in England.

QUEEN MARIE OF ROMANIA was one of the most brilliant monarchs of the twentieth century. Described by one biographer as 'the most voluptuous queen in Europe' she distinguished herself during the First World War when she publicly opposed the peace agreement between Romania and Germany. She was also a gifted writer, and in the mid-1930s, publication of three volumes of her memoirs, *The Story of My Life*, brought her worldwide renown. Yet, until now, her story has remained incomplete. This recently discovered last memoir of Queen Marie reveals through her own eyes those later chapters of her life. The granddaughter of Queen Victoria and Tsar Alexander II of Russia, Marie was brought up at Eastwell Park in Kent. Glamorous and beautiful, she had men falling at her feet, yet at the age of seventeen she married the shy Crown Prince of Romania. It was a step that was to propel her on to the stage of international politics, and see her venture upon unofficial diplomatic missions, earning her the title of an 'irresistible ambassador'. Her last memoir,

written from the period following the First World War until the end of 1922, includes both the fascinating trivia and intimate details of her daily life, and also brings us alongside her as she witnesses world-changing events. From the 1919 Peace Conference; at which Queen Marie met Clemenceau, Poincare, Woodrow Wilson and Hoover; to her last meeting with her mother, the Duchess of SaxeCoburg; and from her informal visits to Paris, London and Transylvania to the first parliament of Greater Romania, the memoir gives great insight into the life of this extraordinary queen. 'After two years' occupation, Romania had been mercilessly plundered; the enemy had laid hands upon absolutely everything. Food was becoming scarcer and scarcer; we were once more facing famine ' 'Mr Hoover . . . had no desire to charm! Spare of words, dry, reserved, a little frowning, his attitude was not particularly congenial, but . . . we met and talked earnestly as I had heard of his great competence, and I had just cause for which to plead.' 'Mr Lloyd George loved talking, company stimulated him; he was full of fun and wit; thoroughly enjoying his own jokes. I let myself be carried away by his undeniable charm, all the time wondering how much he really understood about Europe.' ' . . . a year-old letter from Ducky [the queen's sister Victoria Melita who married the Tsar's cousin] reached me from Finland where they were still quasi-prisoners and unable to get away. They had lost absolutely everything, nothing today remains to them, not even hope.'

I loved this book of the Memoirs of Queen Marie. Having visited Romania, I fell in love with the people and the beauty of the country. It was so nice to learn more of the struggles of the earlier history through the Queen's experiences. I became more aware of how the breakup of the European Kingdoms, affected the Royals who were cousins and how they feared for their safety. That was a side effect, I had not considered before. Her revelations were so insightful as a part of the political history of her beloved country.

On a scale of 1-10, I'd have to rate this book a 7. I was expecting more historical details from this fascinating person.

Boring read.

It's so good.....they are giving you so many informations about the Romania history.....that kind of history that not even romanians knows:)

The autobiography of Marie, Queen of Romania, is well written, but somewhat florid and self congratulatory in its attempts to describe her feelings about events, particularly her appointment as the "face of Romania" at the Paris talks that brought the end of world war one in 1919. Her style is best when she is most lacking in self consciousness. Her estimates of the various players at the peace conference are penetrating and probably correct. Certainly her description of the war torn countryside of Europe through which she passed are graphic and emotionally moving visions. The book is probably most charming in its depiction of the family relationships within her own immediate household and in her extended family. The characterizations, especially of Edward and Queen Mary of England, provide a much more intimate picture of the royal family than most biographical and historical works are able to do. That this is significant to an understanding of the period is very evident when one realizes how thoroughly interrelated were all of the royal families of Europe. For them, the world war was not just a political issue, it was a family feud. Most of the contenders, with the exception of the United States, were countries lead by various descendants of Queen Victoria. In short, almost everyone on both sides of the conflict were cousins, aunts, uncles, even parents. That the conflict lead to emotional agony for many is certain, as the account of Maries' last meeting with her mother Alexandra shows. The authoress herself realizes that the world has changed, that her mother has little place in it, and at the end of her own life, that she herself has little place in it. What she doesn't seem to realize is that the war was actually the death knell of the monarchical form of government and lifestyle as it had been practiced. Hereditary rule was being replaced by other ways of selecting governors. Marie's amusement over the American volunteers and their curiosity about a "real" queen reveals this blinkered point of view. Her use of the terms "peasants" in respect to the rural population of her country and her patronizing attitude toward them reveals the pitfalls into which this ancient form of government was headed and into which the Russian branch of "the Family" had already fallen. That Queen Marie was still functioning in the ancient mode of monarchy herself is apparent by the pride with which she recounts the connections she arranged for her children with other royal houses, arrangements which would hardly last much past her own life. The photo of the "Three Queens and the Infante of Spain"--Marie, two of her daughters and her younger sister Beatrice--is a little sad. The emotionally drained, almost tragic face of Beatrice, already facing issues in Spain, is virtually a prophecy for the three smiling queens in the future. Knowing as one does the end of the story, one can hardly be unmoved by the tender family scene the photo portrays: the last happy days. One has the sense that the lady was enough aware of world affairs and of the ways of the world to know already at the end of her life that Europe was again headed for a major war. Though she probably penned these last memoirs to preserve them from her

son Carol II's interference, she probably also wrote them as a coda for the war through which she herself had lived and in which she had taken an active part. She certainly seems to have been abundantly aware of the failings of the 1919 peace accords even as they were being pounded out and signed. Most who study the two world wars as history congratulate themselves over seeing that the seeds of the second were sown in the first; but then, hindsight is 20-20. For the Queen, however, this knowledge was foresight. It was as if she alone could see, at the very beginning, that Europe had set itself up for a second great war by its own unwillingness to forgive. This is perhaps the very point at which the change in the political intellect changed. The cardinal point at which Monarchy died and Democracy/Socialism begins. The family feud was settled by outsiders, so-to-speak, making punishment and reparation the rules of the day. Family cannot afford to do this. Family must remember that it depends on all of its members, that it has interests in common, that hurt feelings have to be addressed. Democracy/Socialism knows no "feelings." Rule by the Demos-Athens aside-is a relatively new phenomenon, and it still has to struggle to learn what thousands of years of monarchy had learned the hard way. Marie is painfully aware that the terms of the peace agreement would not work, that it would cause anger and hate, and ultimately war. The years of peace were only going to be a period of catching political breath before the fight began again in earnest and with more ferocity. The so-called Great War would just be round one. My only complaint is that the authoress did not describe more events and more people. Much of the book is a repetitious self congratulation, an awareness of her place in history. This leads to saying the same thing in a dozen different ways which I found frustrating. The prose style moves along more smoothly when the author is focusing on others and events. Admittedly the book is an autobiography and the author a queen not a journalist, but it could have used more focus. She doesn't really hit her stride until about a third of the way through the book, but by the final chapter one is wanting to hear more.

I only knew Queen Marie to be a Grand daughter of Queen Victoria and whatever I read in the wikipedia. But this book made me realise what an extraordinary person she is.

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