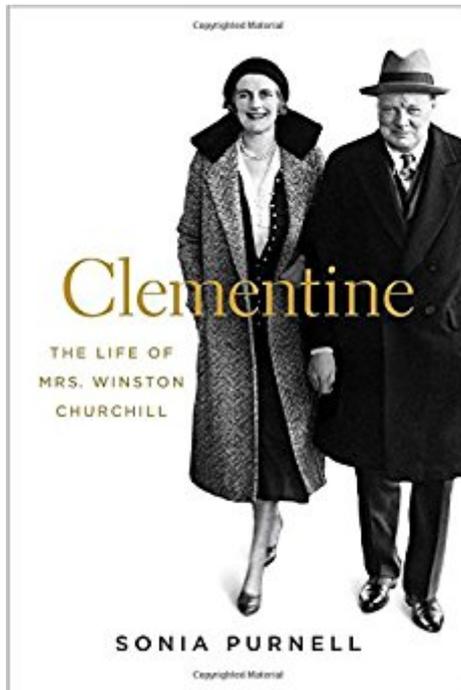


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Clementine: The Life Of Mrs. Winston Churchill



Synopsis

"Sonia Purnell has at long last given Clementine Churchill the biography she deserves. Sensitive yet clear-eyed, Clementine tells the fascinating story of a complex woman struggling to maintain her own identity while serving as the conscience and principal adviser to one of the most important figures in history." — Lynn Olson, bestselling author of *Citizens of London* — Shortlisted for the 2016 Plutarch Award — A long-overdue tribute to the extraordinary woman behind Winston Churchill. By Winston Churchill's own admission, victory in the Second World War would have been impossible without her. Until now, however, the only existing biography of Churchill's wife, Clementine, was written by her daughter. Sonia Purnell finally gives Clementine her due with a deeply researched account that tells her life story, revealing how she was instrumental in softening FDR's initial dislike of her husband and paving the way for Britain's close relationship with America. It also provides a surprising account of her relationship with Eleanor Roosevelt and their differing approaches to the war effort. Born into impecunious aristocracy, the young Clementine was the target of cruel snobbery. Many wondered why Winston married her, but their marriage proved to be an exceptional partnership. Beautiful and intelligent, but driven by her own insecurities, she made his career her mission. Any real consideration of Winston Churchill is incomplete without an understanding of their relationship, and Clementine is both the first real biography of this remarkable woman and a fascinating look inside their private world.

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Customer Reviews

She put Winston before everyone, including children and her own health. This excellent book focuses on Clementine's family, origins, marriage, and her interactions with the political elite between the world wars. Highly recommended biography!

Really enjoyed this book as it was a great history of Britain as well as an intimate look at both Churchills, their family and friends as well as some of the great leaders of their day - Roosevelt, Stalin, Clement Atlee, Averell Harriman -- it certainly knocked these people off their pedestals and gave us a look at all the skeletons in their closets. Rather than pick on details, I tended to look at the broad picture and thoroughly enjoyed this well-written biography which was well written and gripping in many ways. To be that gripped by a book when the ending is already well known says a lot for the writing. I found myself rooting for Clementine and occasionally wishing someone would have given Winston a good boot in the butt for not appreciating all she did for him, risking her health and subverting her own interesting personality to cater to his needs. Most people idolized Churchill and his accomplishments, and indeed, I wonder if any other politician could have saved the world from Hitler. However, this book makes it very clear that without his 'Clemmie' behind him, Winston most likely would never have succeeded. Not terribly maternal with her children, Clementine nevertheless put up with her gigantic child-like, spoiled and demanding husband, catering to his every whim and studying not only the politics but the personalities behind them in order to guide him in making intelligent decisions. Unknown to most, she became the iron hand in the velvet glove and eventually won the admiration and respect of many world leaders. She did not have an easy life, constantly fearing they could not afford his extravagant demands and habits and often living hand-to-mouth on the charity of friends. Although we all know the outcome of the war, few of us might know the great part Winston Churchill's wife Clementine played in it.

Sonia Purnell has written a thoughtful and informative study of Clementine Churchill, whose life and career certainly merit a fresh look. While overshadowed, especially in America, by the better known Eleanor Roosevelt, her contribution to her husband's life and career was long and significant. This book is a worthy successor to Mary Soames' earlier work. (And contrary to an earlier review on this site, the book in no way suggests that Churchill "ordered" the D-Day invasion or that Gen. Eisenhower was not its Commander.)

I found this book fascinating and incredibly informative (there is so much that I didn't know about the behind-the-scenes of this critical period in world history!), full of astute observations and interesting

details about the private lives of the Churchills. Of course as Clementine wasn't a "public figure" in the same way that Eleanor Roosevelt was (who had a newspaper column among other public-facing duties), her contributions to Churchill's political decision-making were not a matter of public record in the same way. However, Ms. Purnell has delved deep into the Churchill archives to create a fascinating historical account that left me, at least, with no doubts as to Clementine's influence, or her charm.

I am always pleased to read a new biography and especially one about the 'woman behind the man'. Clementine Churchill was in her own way as important to England as Eleanor Roosevelt was to America. She just didn't publicize herself as much. (Just my opinion.) I learned a lot from this book about Clementine and Winston, too. It was a most interesting and enlightening book that I thoroughly enjoyed. I came away with a great respect for Mrs. Churchill. I do recommend this book to readers who enjoy good biographies.

I've read numerous books about Winston Churchill, the Roosevelts and the war years. But this book provided fresh insights on these famous historical figures. More important, it provided the rich and inspiring story of Clementine's life. By the end of the biography, you're convinced that Winston might never have been the leader he was without her influence. A very good read that I highly recommend.

Mrs. Winston Churchill - "she is so elusive that views differ on such basic questions as the color of her eyes (gray, blue or hazel-brown?) and hair (ash-blond, brown or red?)". She is often rather disparagingly described as the woman who stood beside Winston Churchill - kept the home fires burning and the drinks fresh, so to speak. After reading this book, I have a more ambivalent view of Clementine Churchill. Yes, she always stood by him. She endured financial hardships of his making - frequent moves because they could not afford the upkeep of the house they rented. Always meticulously turned out, she provided a good foil for him. Winston came first, even before the children - his needs, his desires, his career, his reputation always dictated what happened. Why do we not know more about her efforts during WWII on behalf of suffering Londoners or collection efforts for starving Russians? On the one hand, Clementine was very progressive and helped Winston understand (almost) non-Victorian women; then, she was rigid in her class consciousness; and she was unforgiving. This book looks at material from a variety of sources and incorporates remembrances by family members such as her daughter Mary Saomes or her daughter-in-law

Pamela Harriman. It is a revealing book about a woman who has been in the shadow too long.

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