



The Little Princesses: The Story of the Queen's Childhood by her Nanny, Marion Crawford

By Marion Crawford

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Once upon a time, in 1930s England, there were two little princesses named Elizabeth and Margaret Rose. Their father was the Duke of York, the second son of King George V, and their Uncle David was the future King of England.

We all know how the fairy tale ended: When King George died, “Uncle David” became King Edward VIII---who abdicated less than a year later to marry the scandalous Wallis Simpson. Suddenly the little princesses’ father was King. The family moved to Buckingham Palace, and ten-year-old Princess Elizabeth became the heir to the crown she would ultimately wear for over fifty years.

The Little Princesses shows us how it all began. In the early thirties, the Duke and Duchess of York were looking for someone to educate their daughters, Elizabeth and Margaret, then five- and two-years-old. They already had a nanny---a family retainer who had looked after their mother when she was a child---but it was time to add someone younger and livelier to the household.

Enter Marion Crawford, a twenty-four-year-old from Scotland who was promptly dubbed “Crawfie” by the young Elizabeth and who would stay with the family for sixteen years. Beginning at the quiet family home in Piccadilly and ending with the birth of Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace in 1948, Crawfie tells how she brought the princesses up to be “Royal,” while attempting to show them a bit of the ordinary world of underground trains, Girl Guides, and swimming lessons.

The Little Princesses was first published in 1950 to a furor we cannot imagine today. It has been called the original “nanny diaries” because it was the first account of life with the Royals ever published. Although hers was a touching account of the childhood of the Queen and Princess Margaret, Crawfie was demonized by the press. The Queen Mother, who had been a great friend and who had, Crawfie maintained, given her permission to write the account, never spoke to her again.

Reading *The Little Princesses* now, with a poignant new introduction by BBC royal correspondent Jennie Bond, offers fascinating insights into the changing lives and times of Britain's royal family.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In today's world of celebrity scandals and royal rumor, it's hard to believe that when this memoir was originally published in 1953 it caused such a stir. For 17 years, Crawford—"Crawfie"—was nanny to then-Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, and taken on its own, her account is innocuous in the extreme. But Crawford was shunned by the royal family after the book's publication, as BBC Royal correspondent Bond explains in the foreword: "She was cast adrift as if she had committed treason and neither the Queen nor the two Princesses ever spoke to her again." To the contemporary jaded eye, it's far more interesting to read the book in this context rather than for its own merits. What might seem mundane becomes poignant in light of Crawford's eventual fate, such as when she fusses over her charges, describing 13-year-old Elizabeth ("Lilibet") as "an enchanting child with the loveliest hair and skin and a long, slim figure." Crawford's story is particularly sad given her degree of personal sacrifice—she delayed her marriage for years so as not to, as she saw it, abandon the king and queen. But it is possible to find repressed traces of bitterness on Crawford's part if one is so inclined, such as when she tells the queen that she would finally like to marry, and relates the queen's response: "You must see, Crawfie, that it would not be at all convenient just now." There certainly aren't a lot of juicy tidbits, at least not by modern standards, but the book is interesting as an historical document, if for nothing else than to remind us how innocent scandal used to be. B&w photos not seen by PW.

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About the Author

Marion Crawford, or "Crawfie," as she was known to young Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, was born in the Scottish countryside and studied teaching at the Moray House Training College in Edinburgh. In the early 1930s, she became governess to the daughters of the Duke and Duchess of York, little suspecting that she would devote the next sixteen years to nurturing her future Queen. Her account of life as a royal governess originally appeared in American magazines, but soon became a front-page sensation on both sides of the Atlantic. The first edition of *The Little Princesses* was published in 1950, and although it created a scandal, it was nonetheless a valuable social history and the first inside account of life at Buckingham Palace. Crawford died in 1988, having never been forgiven by the royal family for writing her book.

Jennie Bond has been following the Royal Family as the BBC's Royal correspondent for thirteen years. In that time, she has covered many momentous events---among them, three marriage breakdowns, Camillagate, the Queen's annus horribilis, and the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. Bond has written two other books: *Elizabeth: Fifty Glorious Years* and *Reporting Royalty: Behind the Scenes with the BBC's Royal Correspondent*.

Users Review

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This *The Little Princesses: The Story of the Queen's Childhood* by her Nanny, Marion Crawford book is simply not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you get by reading this book is definitely information inside this publication incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting

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