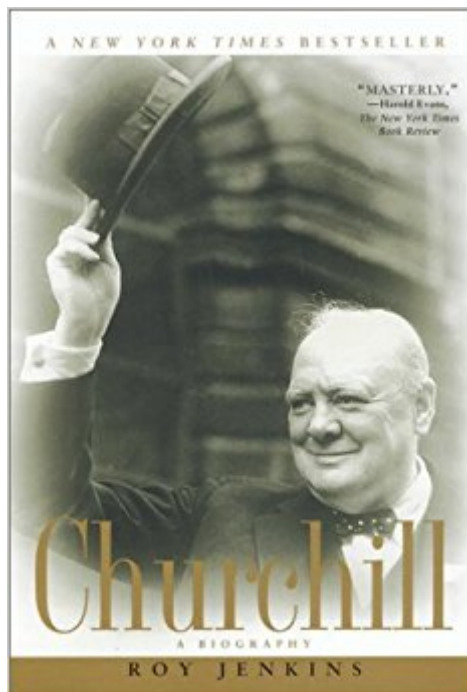


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Churchill: A Biography



Synopsis

“Far and away Churchill’s best one-volume biography.” —Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. “From acclaimed historian Roy Jenkins, a comprehensive portrait of Winston Churchill, an icon of modern history, from his childhood to the critical World War II period and beyond, in this definitive volume. A member of the House of Lords, Jenkins combines unparalleled command of British political history and his own high-level government experience in a narrative account of Churchill’s astounding career that is unmatched in its shrewd insights, its unforgettable anecdotes, the clarity of its overarching themes, and the author’s nuanced appreciation of his extraordinary subject. Exceptional in its breadth of knowledge and distinguished in its stylish wit and penetrating intelligence, Churchill is one of the finest political biographies of our time.” —Wryly astute | shrewd. “The Washington Post” “Jenkins catches Churchill’s studied self-inspection with the sure-shot sharpness of an expert portraitist.” —Simon Schama, “The New York Review of Books” “Churchill stands forth with Shakespearean bravura as the necessary hero for the most testing moment of national (and world) crisis. A satisfying summation of an unsurpassed life.” —The San Diego Union-Tribune

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Customer Reviews

Winston Churchill was querulous, childish, self-indulgent, and difficult, writes English historian Roy Jenkins. But he was also brilliant, tenacious, and capable--in short, "the greatest human being ever to occupy 10 Downing Street." Jenkins's book stands as the best single-volume biography of Churchill in recent years. Marked by the author's wide experience writing on British leaders such as

Balfour and Gladstone and his tenure as a member of Parliament, his book adds much to the vast library of works on Churchill. While acknowledging his subject's prickly nature, Jenkins credits Churchill for, among other things, recognizing far earlier than his peers the dangers of Hitler's regime. He praises Churchill for his leadership during the war years, especially at the outset, when England stood alone and in imminent danger of defeat. He also examines Churchill's struggle to forge political consensus to meet that desperate crisis, and he sheds new light on Churchill's postwar decline. --Gregory McNamee --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Winner of the Whitbread Prize for Gladstone (1997), Jenkins offers a bloated yet idiosyncratic and accessible life of England's greatest modern prime minister. Jenkins's wry wit and judgments of great men, untainted by awe, partly offset the fact that, as he admits, he has few new facts to add to an already exhaustively recorded life. Jenkins has a propensity for unnecessary French and curious adverbs (unfriendlily), adjectives (spistolatory) and nouns (peripherist) and is at his best exploring Churchill's three out-of-office "wilderness" periods and his writing jobs (requiring a staff of loyal, ill-paid researchers and secretaries to take his clangorous dictation), which helped support his expensive lifestyle. ("I lived in fact from mouth to hand," Churchill confessed.) But as the statesman's many decades wind down, the biographer himself seems to tire, resorting to a litany of itineraries. American audiences may be drawn to Jenkins's revisionist views of Churchill's relationships with Roosevelt, with whom he sees "more a partnership of circumstance and convenience than a friendship of individuals," and with Eisenhower, a "political general" who was "always a little cold for Churchill's taste, with the famous smile barely skin-deep." Jenkins is hard on Churchill for being soft on alleged mountebanks like Lord Beaverbrook. He dwells only briefly on Churchill's family affairs, aside from expressing skepticism about his reputedly warm marriage to Clementine; she often advised her husband wisely, but "managed to be absent at nearly all the most important moments of Churchill's life." Jenkins's judgments and the fact that he has boiled this eventful life down to a single volume will attract many readers to this entertaining, though often exasperating study. 32 pages of photos and maps not seen by PW. (Nov.)Forecast: A main selection of both BOMC and the History Book Club, with a respected author, who will tour New York and Washington, D.C., and an iconic subject, the biography is guaranteed media attention and sales.Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Was looking for a book on Churchill that covered just before WWII and WWII itself. This book does cover that period but the writing style does not suit me. I'm all for big words and sounding important.. but there are limits. Definitely NOT a casual read.

Although I found the text a bit plodding at times, I felt compelled to read the entire book, because Churchill was such a commanding figure of the 20th Century. What I found touching was how a great man meets the humbling experience of getting old and retiring from public life. Churchill may have felt somewhat dejected, but biographies like this bring to life his many accomplishments for new generations.

Very small type.

This is a very different biography from several other lives of Churchill I've read. Roy Jenkins is a parliamentarian and a former British government Minister. His biography calls upon the reader for an almost encyclopedic knowledge of British history from the 1860's onward. It would be good to know of the various crises in Gladstone's premiership for example, and about who was on various sides of British parliamentary politics when Joseph Chamberlain was central to British governmental policies. I think this is a rather tough knowledge base for all but the most Anglophile of American readers; it makes it somewhat tough going for even fairly scholarly laypeople. That said, the book is very well written and gives the flavor of Churchill as a British politician struggling through ups and downs, times he was popular, times in the wilderness. It is a very balanced view--this is definitely not the 'Churchill as hero who saved civilization' view. This is the Churchill as an admittedly great man who used every advantage of his Duke grandfather and Chancellor of the Exchequer father and femme fatale mother to get where he wanted to go--the top, quickly. I've enjoyed the book and appreciated the balance but sometimes had to persist through tough going for an American.

Easy to read, very informative. Not entirely without bias, but also seems mired in fact.

long and detailed, full of deep insights on the character of the greatest leader of the 20th century

BRILLIANT AND OUTSTANDING...!!! Having read dozens of Churchill's novels and biographies; I trully beleive that Jenkins Biography is perhaps one of the best and most reliable books about Sir Winston I ever read. I trully remonended...

I've read Manchester's Bio of Churchill (at least the two books he finished before his death) and was a History major in college so I have read and enjoyed many long winded authors that still managed to make the subject interesting. This book is not only long winded and pendantic, it's boring. I managed to slog thru up to 1908 and even the upcoming world wars is not enough to get me excited. At the beginning of the book, the author explains some Parlimentary terms to make it easier for his American readers but then he goes into minutiae that is impossible to understand without more definitions which he does not supply. It should be hard to make Churchill's earlier exploits in the Boer war boring but this author does it! I bought this book used but consider it a waste of my \$4. I am reading it at night (now) and have found it very soporiific, better than late night TV! the first two installments of Manchester's Churchill (The Last Lion ?) are a much better use of your time even if you never get to WWII!

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