

Queen Elizabeth – The Symbol Of England

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Queen Elizabeth was called the Queen Mother not by chance – for more than 80 eighty years she was a true symbol of England not only for the British people, but also for people in other countries.

Natural political talent and aristocratic charisma gained her world popularity and admiration.

She was born in the end of Queen Victoria's reign. Her life wasn't as simple, as it may seem, for she had to face two world wars, followed by abdication, and finally, the last days of the whole British Empire.

Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon was born in London on a hot summer day. She was the ninth of Lady and Lord Glamis' ten children. The parents dearly loved and constantly indulged their baby child, and at the same time brought her up strictly enough. Lady Glamis always told her daughter, that wealth comes with responsibility. Her mother used to say, that duty is the rent you pay for life.

The childhood of the future queen suddenly ended in 1914, when the world war I started. Four of her brothers joined the army, whereas Elizabeth stayed at home to help the wounded soldiers. Needless to say, that Glamis became a military hospital, sheltering around 1,500 men. Even when her mother was grief-stricken by the news, that Fergus, her elder brother had been killed, the young girl managed not to loose her heart. In fact, she was in charge of the hospital.

With the end of the war, Elizabeth came back to London. Being very good-looking, the young lady was always surrounded by numerous admirers. That is why her decision to marry Duke of York, stammering and bad-tempered Bertie, was considered to be rather unexpected. However, she did finally accept his proposal after two previous refusals.

Their family life can definitely be called happy – Elizabeth proved to be a devoted and caring wife. She managed to improve the family relations between Albert and his parents, helped him to ease his hard stammer, and what's the most important, she created a loving home environment for her husband, which made a striking difference from what he saw in his childhood.

With the arrival of two wonderful daughters the happiness of their quiet family life became almost

boundless. Having taken a few public duties, the Dutchess and Duke went on a seven-month royal tour in 1927, which turned out to be real triumph.

Soon enough, in 1936, Albert's brother, Edward VIII abdicated the throne, being totally involved into his love affair. Elizabeth was furious, for she was absolutely sure, that such broad publicity would turn their life into misery. But, despite all her fears, the King and Queen soon learnt to cope with “intolerable honor”, which was considered to be burden for both of them. Needless to say, that she never forgave her brother-in-law (Rhodes, 2012).

Britain declared war in 1939. That was a favorable chance for Elizabeth to demonstrate her inborn talent as a politician and a compassionate monarch – she supported the women of France by conveying the message in French, she remained calm and optimistic, even when the Buckingham Palace had been bombed, and refused to leave England at such a sad hour by saying: “The princesses would never leave without me, I couldn't possibly leave without the King – and the King will never leave” (Queen Elizabeth, 1939). The fact, that the royal family was facing such full insecurity together with ordinary people, inspired the British nation and contributed to the immortal portrait of the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

### References

Smith, Sally Bedell (2012). *Elizabeth The Queen. The Life Of A Modern Monarch.* Random House Trade Paperbacks

Rhodes, Margaret (2012). *The Final Curtsey: A Royal Memoir by the Queen's Cousin.* Birlinn