



Margaret Thatcher: A Portrait of the Iron Lady

John Blundell

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This biography of Lady Thatcher relates in warm detail the life of Margaret Thatcher, her achievements as British Prime Minister, and her life since retirement. Written in a vigorous, no-nonsense style, *Lady Thatcher* provides a succinct portrait of the Iron Lady, illustrating what the terms Thatcherite and Thatcherism really mean. Blundell shows why Thatcher was such an outstanding world leader and such an inspiration for women leaders in particular.

The book begins with contrasting scenes the desolation of Britain in the 1978-9 Winter of Discontent prior to Thatcher's premiership, and the economic buoyancy and national self-confidence that prevailed by the end of her period in office 11½ years later. The body of the text provides a chronological, strongly narrative treatment of Thatcher's life, from childhood through to current times.

When Margaret Thatcher donated \$3m to the Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC, to establish the Thatcher Center, it was John Blundell who proposed the toast to her in front of the 500+ audience assembled to mark the occasion. This book is his personal portrait of Margaret Thatcher, the woman who was the pivotal point of the rescue of a country, a woman who woke up her nation and made it once again a world leader. It is not only the story of her life but also an examination of the ideas, interests, and circumstances surrounding key events.

The author illustrates Thatcher's decisive style in handling potentially explosive issues, her sang-froid, and her charm through numerous vignettes and quotes. He relates the facts of Margaret Thatcher's terms in power and explains how policy reforms and political perspectives that are now taken for granted in Britain had to be fought for.

The transformation she brought to the United Kingdom was stunning on many fronts. Pre-Thatcher, Blundell says, a sclerotic union-dominated economy was typified by surly service, poor products and a "craven" business class. Post-Thatcher even the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), an exemplar of what Americans call the "liberal media," extended its coverage of the private business sector quite considerably, such is the emphasis on the values of capitalism in today's society. Service and product quality have been improved many times over. The choice and level of quality and service that had so impressed the author on his first visits to the U.S. in 1974 was becoming commonplace in the UK by the end of her terms as Prime Minister.

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