

Eminent Elizabethans: Rupert Murdoch, Prince Charles, Margaret Thatcher & Mick Jagger - Piers Brendon

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Modelled on Lytton Strachey's classic portrayal of eminent Victorians, Piers Brendon's cameo biographies shed dazzling new light on the age of Queen Elizabeth II. All four of his characters have loomed large in the annals of their time. All have aroused controversy in the uttermost corners of the earth, stirring passions as much by personality as by performance. And all have been ambivalent towards the great contemporary process of change, promoting revolt yet championing continuity, flirting with radicalism yet embracing conservatism. Brendon's cast list is as follows: Rupert Murdoch, the billionaire media mogul whose empire, built on an ethical void, has polluted the channels of communication from London to Sydney, from New York to New Guinea; Prince Charles, the royal dilettante whose erratic exploits shook the throne and put his own succession to it at risk; Margaret Thatcher, the first female Prime Minister, who dedicated herself with messianic zeal to breaking the mould of post-war British politics; and Mick Jagger, lead singer of the Rolling Stones, who embodied the sixties counter-culture of sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll yet aspired to be a gentleman and accepted a knighthood at the behest of Tony Blair. A sequel to Brendon's best-selling Eminent Edwardians, which has been in print ever since it was published nearly thirty years ago, Eminent Elizabethans is written in the same witty, ironic and irreverent style. Like its predecessor, it sets its quartet in context, revealing how each one played out a major theme in the new Elizabethan medley. But the dramatis personae are not just treated as symptoms of their history, rather as creatures of flesh and blood. They are vividly and vitally depicted through pungent anecdote, piquant quotation and mordant commentary. In short, these brilliant miniatures are as entertaining as they are illuminating.

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