



Jennie: The Life of Lady Randolph Churchill, Vol 1: The Romantic Years 1854-95

Ralph G. Martin

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If she had simply been the mother of Winston Churchill, her place in history would have been assured. But the Brooklyn-born Jennie was also the most fascinating and desirable woman of her age, the toast and the scandal of two continents throughout her long life.

Volume I, THE ROMANTIC YEARS, follows Jennie as she leaves her wealthy American home to marry Lord Randolph Churchill. Lord Randolph was a rising politician whom she helped shape into one of the most important men in the British Empire. His career was cut short by his early death in 1895 at the age of 46.

"A captivating biography about a mid-Victorian 'modern' woman who was villified, envied, loved, loathed--but never ignored." (The Cleveland Press)

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Details

Date : Published 1969 by Prentice Hall

ISBN :

Author : Ralph G. Martin

Format : Hardcover

Genre : Biography, History, Nonfiction, European Literature, British Literature

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From Reader Review Jennie: The Life of Lady Randolph Churchill, Vol 1: The Romantic Years 1854-95 for online ebook

James Burns says

I am glad I just happened across this book, and decided to read it , I knew almost nothing about Winston Churchill's Mother, except that she was an American. She was Beautiful, Intelligent, ambitious and was very popular with European Society and European Royalty. she was politically Driven, She campaigned and wrote a majority of her husbands speeches. Her goal was to further her husbands political career, was for him to be Prime Minister of Great Britain. She raised her kids, using a nanny for education and raising, as was popular in the social elite of European Society. She became father and mother Winston and his brother, Jack. She fell in love with Randolph Churchill after meeting him one time and decided to marry him on their second meeting. Randolph was hardly ever home, either campaigning or traveling world wide. Randolph never had time for the boys. She found out after her marriage that her husband was in the later stages of Syphilis which he ultimately died from. in her loneliness, She was tide romantically to many lovers including the Duke of Wales. The book ends at her husbands death. I cant wait to read Volume II.

Patricia says

Jennie Randolph Churchill was reported to have 200 lovers! She was erudite, intriguing, glamorous and courted by princes even while she was married. Unfortunately, this book fails to capitalize on the passion and ambition of this fascinating woman. At least I did learn that she wasn't a completely cold and rejecting mother. She had her motherly moments and like a proper lady, she hired kind nannies for her kids.

H. P. Reed says

Reading this again was a treat. Ralph Martin reports rather than editorializes and his research is impeccable. His writing is casual without being slang ridden. I await American Jennie: The Remarkable Life of Lady Randolph Churchill with impatience - it's been "in transit" to my local library for over a week - but I can't believe that it will surpass this elegant biography.

Shirley Brown says

THIS WAS A MOST ENJOYABLE BOOK. IT WAS HARD TO PUT DOWN. WHAT A LIFE THE UPPER CLASS LED. WHAT A PITY THEY DIDN'T EXPERIENCE REAL LIFE. IT'S A MIXED BAG WHETHER TO FEEL SORRY FOR THEM OR TO THINK THEY MADE THEIR OWN BED, LET THEM LIE IN IT. I'VE GOT TO FIND THE SECOND VOLUME.

Michael Gilbert says

I never expected the biography of a victorian trohpy wife to be so compelling. Jenny Jerome, the american mother of Winston Churchill was one of the strongest women of her time.

Carol says

I read both volumes years ago. I seem to recall preferring the first to the second. Both are definitely worth reading. Interesting people, excellent writer.

Sandra Brown says

Great storytelling,fascinating ambitious woman.

Graceann says

Jennie Jerome Churchill was a fascinating woman, but you'd never know it from reading this sleeping pill of a book. I didn't even bother with its sequel, and I'm looking forward to reading Anne Sebba's new biography of Mrs. Churchill and getting far more out of it.

Angela says

I read about Jennie Churchill while a teenager. She was one of the Heiresses of America who married into a title. mother of Winston Churchill. At the time I thought how could such a beautiful woman birth him. amazing woman in an amazing time of history

Maura says

This book fits in among many other books I've read in the past few years concerning other personalities from this era, from Consuelo Vanderbilt to Lady Almina of Highclere. There isn't a whole lot known about her childhood, and there's as much in it about Randolph Churchill and his political life as there is about Jennie. There are many quotes from his speeches and others concerning the pertinent issues of the day, and then the author mentions almost as an aside that Jennie during this time was being escorted by Lord So-and-so to social functions....While she is linked with many men, we aren't given to know too much about her emotions at this point. Considering that this volume is subtitled "The Romantic Years", there isn't a lot of information given about her romances other than the fact of them existing, and why. But there isn't much insight into Jennie herself. I feel like I know a lot about her life but not about her. Whether that is the fault of the author or a lack of material about her, I don't know. However, I still found the book interesting just because of the world she inhabited and the people she moved among. I'll see what Volume 2 has to say.

Gina says

Known in history as Lady Randolph Churchill, Jennie Spencer Churchill was born in Brooklyn, NY to a wealthy family in 1854.

Renowned for her beauty, as well as for being a socialite, Jennie was also a talented musician and was quite adept at playing the piano. She worked as a magazine editor.

While enjoying a sailing regatta on the Isle of Wight in 1873, Jennie met Lord Randolph Churchill, having been introduced to him by the future King Edward VII. They immediately fell in love, and a scant 3 days later knew they wanted to marry and became engaged. The wedding, however, would not happen for some time, as the families of the two quarreled over settlements.

In 1874, Jennie gave birth to her first son, Winston, who would, of course, later become Prime Minister. Rumors abounded that she was pregnant at the time of marriage since Winston was born only 8 months later and was too large to be premature. The story was given that she gave birth following a fall, but it was never proven.

Lady Churchill was known to have some dalliances outside her marriage, and her sister steadfastly believed that her second son, John, was fathered by another man, most likely Evelyn Boscawen, 7th Viscount Fairmouth.

Although, as common for the wealthy at that time, her sons were mostly raised by nannies, Winston was known to worship his mother.

Randolph Churchill died in 1895, the end of the period covered in this book.

Janet says

Jennie Jerome was an American heiress who married Lord Randolph Churchill and was the mother of Winston Churchill. It is said that Edith Wharton's novel, *The Buccaneers*, is drawn in part from Jennie's life. This book is about 40 years old, and is very sympathetically written. I wonder if another author or more recent research may have produced an entirely different book. What is interesting is her sphere of influence, both in England and Europe, and a look at life among the rich and famous in this time period.

Kelley says

I read this book many years ago and look forward to reading it again. A wonderful historical novel that lends a better understanding of the political and social nuances in the Golden Age (Vol 1) and the formative years of Winston Churchill, Jennie's son (Vol.2.)

Rachel says

I don't often read non-fiction because the level of detail can be overwhelming and the writing poor. But this book, about Winston Churchill's scandalous and ambitious American mother, was very interesting and easy to read. Despite covering many long-forgotten political figures and fights, the account of late-Victorian times and Jennie's life in particular stood on their own. She was a fascinating person, then and now. I also appreciated peeks into the stormy, syphilitic temperament of Winston's father, Lord Randolph, as well as Winston himself, who was surprisingly under-achieving during his youth.

Kathryn Yaste says

I was only 15 or so when I read it, but I seem to remember enjoying it. However, I had forgotten about reading it until yesterday, when something on TV reminded me of it. So I guess you couldn't say that it affected me very deeply.

Jen says

This book was obviously incredibly well researched and thought out. I felt like it relied a bit too heavily on family histories prior to Jennie herself but, all in all, it was very informative and easy to read for such an academic biography.

April says

While I definitely found this book fascinating, I would have liked more personal detail about Lady Randolph Churchill and less about her husband. The fact that he was slowly dying of syphilis was the main thing I came away with.

I am inspired to read more about Winston Churchill.

Judy says

As much as I was repulsed by the extravagant indulgences described, I couldn't help but be drawn into this bit of history. It made me want to learn more about the history of the monarchy within Great Britain.

Susan O says

Volume 1 of 2, this book covers the life of Jennie Randolph during the years 1854 - 1895, from her birth through the death of her husband. Prior to reading this, I knew nothing about her life except that she was beautiful, had many affairs, was an American who married into the British aristocracy, and was the mother of Winston Churchill. She was so much more than that. As with her future daughter-in-law, Clementine, she

contributed greatly to her husband's political career breaking new ground for women in the process. Volume 2 is on its way.

JZ says

This is the biography that started me on a lifetime love of snooping around in dead (mostly) people's lives. The year before I read this, willingly and without its' being assigned reading, I found a remaindered book of Victorian photographs that fascinated me. Of course, only the "best" people were in it, and I was intrigued to see that Winston Churchill had a mother at all, and that she was a beauty. How could this be?

When I found this book, I was thrilled to read of her exploits, her disappointments, and her eventual rise to influence. It gave me a new window on the status of women in that time when females were chattel and many rich girls and women were not even "allowed" to read newspapers, let alone have an opinion. Of course, the constant theme of parties, romance, sex and money intrigued my teenage self, too.
