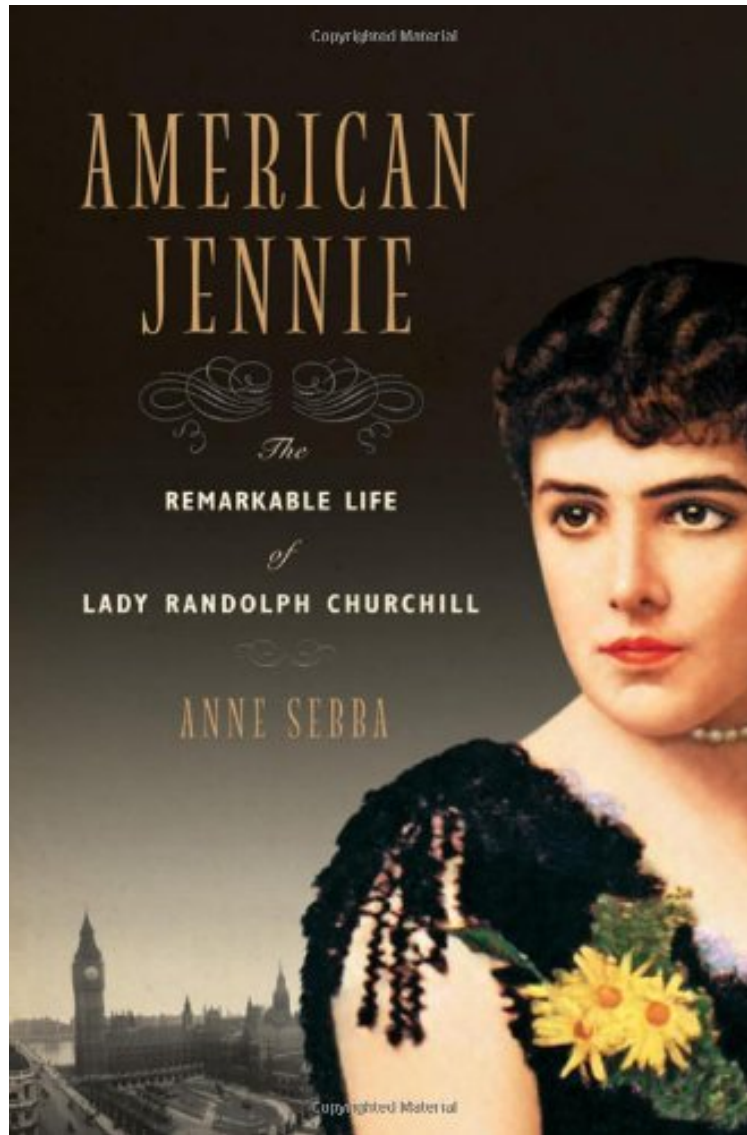


(Free read ebook) American Jennie: The Remarkable Life of Lady Randolph Churchill

American Jennie: The Remarkable Life of Lady Randolph Churchill

Anne Sebba

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Anne Sebba : American Jennie: The Remarkable Life of Lady Randolph Churchill before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Jennie: The Remarkable Life of Lady Randolph Churchill:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. MehBy voracious readerI actually wasn't expecting much of this book, but as I spend a great deal of my time in bed I figured it was worth purchasing a used copy. This can hardly be

called a confident bio, as the author first debunks Randolph's syphilis, then gives current medical opinion that he probably had it, then yes, then no...similarly with Jennie's purported lovers. I don't believe the author ever reconciled Jennie's undeniable mesmerizing charm with her blatant weaknesses...all too many authors and "reviewers" these days seem to have lost the ability to view a historical subject in the time and milieu in which the subject lived. The whole point of the Victorian era was the huge double standard of life in the highest upper class with that tolerated (or usually NOT tolerated) in the lower classes. (I'm perpetually amazed by reviews I see here in which the subject under discussion is judged based on "today's" standards...the joy of immersing oneself in history is sinking into another, alien time, trying to understand the thinking, the standards of living, the politics. It's ridiculous to read history for any other reason!) By all measures, Jennie was *sui generis*, and the ONE good point made by this author is that she could not possibly give the massive amount of attention and support to Randolph and her children at the same time. He would not have tolerated it, because he was jealous of his own children, and their ambitions as a couple to make their fortune via politics could never have been realized. Jennie also had to spend an enormous amount of energy, ingenuity, and time keeping Randolph's early and very evident psychological deterioration quiet for as long as she possibly could, which was in itself a terrifying tight-rope walk, for which she did not get the credit she deserved from him or his family. Ralph G. Martin was able, 30 years ago, to give a very balanced account with fewer resources, of a woman who was heroic, infinitely charming, beyond gorgeous, musically endowed with great gifts, an incredible horsewoman, gifted with the ability to make and keep friendships with both men and women that lasted for decades, unselfish towards others, and yet be very frank about her self-centered nature (but really, with HER gifts, who wouldn't be?!), her grasping attempts to make money, her appalling inability to figure out how to live within her means, and ALL of her negative qualities, and yet give the reader an understanding of how the mix combined to make such an unforgettable person. I was not able to figure out what exactly Ms. Sebba thought about Jennie, so fragmented was her presentation of her. If you've done a substantial amount of reading concerning the major players in the Victorian era, this book won't be of much use to you. If you haven't, this book won't be of much use to you, either. It's lacking in coherence, and Martin's two-volume book is the best I've read thus far. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Winston Churchill's mother was definitely not boring. By Colleen Rooney I find this period in history very interesting. The fact that many American women married into British aristocracy during this time to save their family name and homes isn't known to many. I also find this particular book interesting as Jennie was Winston Churchill's mother. I've read several books about him but didn't know much about his immediate family until now. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Jennie, We Hardly Knew You and We Were Better Off By Rosemary F. Petzold Lady Randolph Churchill, Winston's mother, was quite a woman. A product of her time, education, social standing, and wealth, Jennie's storied beauty enabled her to lead a life that was as surprising as it was incomprehensible by today's standards. She engaged in numerous liaisons and affairs, ostensibly to help, first her husband, and later her elder son, achieve their own goals in life. Somewhat scandalous even for British society of the day, Jennie moved in the best circles, hosted the finest parties, knew all of the right people, and wore the most fashionable clothes. Despite all of these advantages, Jennie was an incredibly self-involved woman who appeared shallow. Her shortcomings as a mother underscored this view. However, the obvious illness of her first husband, and the poor choices she subsequently made in marrying men her son's age, as well as her own health challenges, made her situation poignant. This author could have used a judicious editor, as the writing sometimes detracted from the story. It is amazing that one of the so-called greatest statesmen in history is the son of this woman. Winston adored his mother, which tells a great deal about her as well as him. .

A frank account of the tempestuous life of the American mother of Britain's most important twentieth-century politician. Brooklyn-born Jennie Jerome married into the British aristocracy in 1874, after a three-day romance. She became Lady Randolph Churchill, wife of a maverick politician and mother of the most famous British statesman of the century. Jennie Churchill was not merely the most talked about and controversial American woman in London society, she was a dynamic behind-the-scenes political force and a woman of sexual fearlessness at a time when women were not supposed to be sexually liberated. A concert pianist, magazine founder and editor, and playwright, she was also, above all, a devoted mother to Winston. In *American Jennie*, Anne Sebba draws on newly discovered personal correspondences and archives to examine the unusually powerful mutual infatuation between Jennie and her son and to relate the passionate and ultimately tragic career of the woman whom Winston described as having the wine of life in her veins.

From Publishers Weekly As Winston Churchill's mother and close adviser, Brooklyn-born Jennie Jerome (1854-1921) may have rated a chapter in the history books. But steeped in scandal, the passionate, ambitious and beautiful Gilded Age heiress has been fodder for several biographies of her own, including Ralph Martin's two-volume bestseller (1969/1971). The daughter of a maverick stock speculator, Jennie was probably pregnant with Winston when she married the duke of Marlborough's second son, Randolph. She was a tireless supporter of her husband's rising political career, and endured his sexual dalliances, mental unraveling (probably from syphilis) and eventual death. She earned a

reputation as a journalist, dazzling socialite, shameless booster of Winston's political aspirations, and as a financially imprudent woman who indulged in a string of sexually charged affairs. Indeed, Jennie's younger son, Jack, may have been fathered by a handsome colonel and viscount, and her purported lovers may have included the prince of Wales. After Randolph's death, she remarried twice to men 20 years her junior, and died at 67 after a bad fall caused by her high heels. Sebba's (Mother Teresa) admiring biography is absorbing, authoritative and makes good use of family letters. 16 pages of photos. (Nov.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist The mother of the greatest Englishman of them all, Winston Churchill, was actually an American, born Jennie Jerome into a wealthy New York family. In joining the second son of the Duke of Marlborough in matrimony, she was part of a swarm of American heiresses who, in the late nineteenth century, married into the European aristocracy. But Jennie Churchill was not just another anything. As brought to brilliant light in this responsible, respectful biography, she was her own person, an original who injected into the distinguished Churchill family a great deal of new energy. It would have been easy for her to live through her husband and son, but Jennie created a life for herself and achieved almost legendary status in British society, even becoming a good friend (and perhaps lover) of the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII. She ultimately had three husbands and even tried her hand at magazine editing, but no matter what she set out to do, she chose her own path. The person and her times will prove fascinating to a wide readership. Hooper, Brad "What a woman, what a life, what a book." Sue Arnold, The Guardian (audiobook review)"