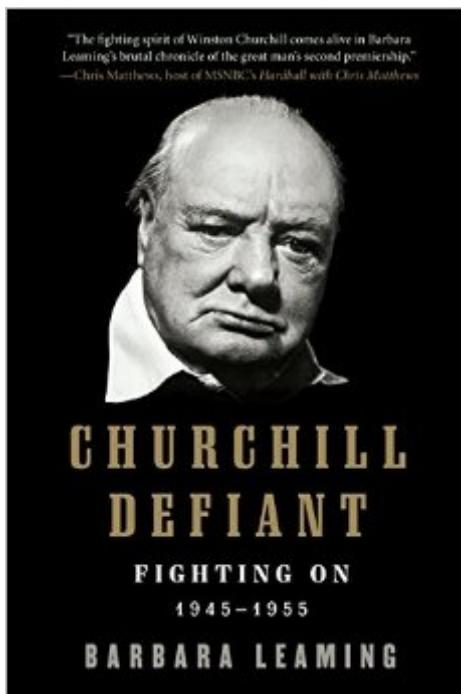


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Churchill Defiant: Fighting On: 1945-1955



Synopsis

New York Times bestselling biographer Barbara Leaming has written a riveting political drama of the last ten years of Winston Churchill's public life. In Churchill Defiant, Leaming tells the tumultuous behind-the-scenes story of Churchill's refusal to retire after his 1945 electoral defeat, and the bare-knuckled political and personal battles that ensued. Her ground-breaking biography Jack Kennedy: The Education of a Statesman, was the first to detail Churchill's extraordinary influence on Kennedy's thinking. Now in Churchill Defiant, Leaming gives us a vivid and compelling narrative that sheds fresh light on both the human dimension of Winston Churchill and on the struggles and achievements of his final years. At last, in Leaming's eloquent account, we understand the tangled web of personal relationships and rivalries, the intricate interplay of past and present, the looming sense of history that makes the story of these years as fascinating as anything in the extraordinary century-long saga of Winston Churchill's life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Barbara Leaming is no threat to Martin Gilbert and other well-established Churchill biographers. Her sketchy, erratic biography of Churchill's final decade of political power is ponderous and slow. Part of this is due to the subject matter. Churchill was old (71) when this story begins, suffered increasingly significant health problems in the form of several strokes and, with the war over, was no longer the center of the world's attention. Still much was going on in the world that Leaming simply omits. India and empire, for example, simply aren't mentioned though the loss of both plagued

Britain throughout the period discussed here. Instead Leaming focuses on Churchill's belief that he could convince the Soviet Union to play nice with the rest of the world. This belief was not shared by Presidents Truman and Eisenhower. The difference of opinion cast something of a pall over Churchill's relationship with the two men, but the reality was that with the end of World War II, Churchill had become something of a fifth wheel on the international scene. Britain was essentially bankrupt, its military might shriveled, its economy vastly reduced in scale and its great Empire a fading memory. Though I am a great admirer of Churchill, I am also cognizant of the fact that some people simply never want to leave the stage and Churchill was one of them. So Leaming doesn't have as much to work with as compared to Churchill, the war time leader. But she doesn't work well with what she has. The book is over laden with the struggle of Anthony Eden and his supporters to gain power and the other petty politics of the era. It doesn't make for very interesting reading and the slow pace of Leaming's narrative doesn't help.

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