

MEDIA KIT

Pretty from the Outside by Margaret Rowe

QUICK FACTS

Title: *Pretty from the Outside* Author: Margaret Rowe (1935-2024) Publisher: Arena Books
Publication Date: July 2025 Format: Paperback & Ebook ISBN (Paperback): 978-1-914390-41-8 ISBN (Ebook): 978-1-914390-42-5 Pages: 300 Dimensions: 129mm x 198mm (5.08" x 7.80")
Price: £16.00 | US\$20.99 Thema Categories: DNBA (Autobiography); DNBF1 (Fashion); DNBH1 (Social History); KNSX (Popular Culture); JBCC3 (Social & Cultural History)

ABOUT THE BOOK

SHORT SYNOPSIS: In this captivating memoir spanning 1935 to the 1950s, Margaret Rowe chronicles her extraordinary journey from wartime evacuation to becoming Miss England 1955. Evacuated during WWII, she lived with foster families in the Cotswolds before reuniting with her mother and pursuing modeling in London. Her story captures post-war Britain in intimate detail—from food rationing to the dawn of consumer culture, from Christian Dior's "New Look" to encounters with Elizabeth Taylor. A testament to resilience, transformation, and the pursuit of glamour during Britain's most dynamic era.

FULL SYNOPSIS: In this deeply personal and captivating memoir, Margaret Rowe takes readers on an extraordinary journey from the bombed streets of wartime London to the glamorous world of 1950s modeling and international beauty pageants.

Born in 1935 into a fractured family, Margaret's early years were marked by abandonment and uncertainty. When her mother left, Margaret was placed in Miss Berryman's Home for Children, and with the outbreak of World War II, she was evacuated to the Cotswolds. These formative years, spent living with various families including the kind Hope family at Longfords Mill and the Hankins family farm, provided both stability and adventure.

Margaret's vivid descriptions of wartime rural England—from helping with the harvest to listening to Churchill's speeches on the wireless—paint a rich picture of a child finding joy and wonder despite difficult circumstances.

The memoir traces Margaret's complex relationship with her father, a painter-decorator who became increasingly religious after converting to Pentecostalism. His erratic behavior cast a shadow over Margaret's adolescence, even as she excelled at school and discovered her love of literature and film.

A pivotal moment comes when Margaret reunites with her mother in 1951. Moving to Berkhamsted, she experiences family life for the first time, working various jobs from chambermaid to waitress while nurturing dreams of something greater. Her mother's warmth and humor provide the emotional foundation Margaret had always craved. The transformation begins when Margaret moves to London, determined to become a model. Working first as a waitress at the prestigious Cumberland Hotel, she gradually breaks into the fashion world, overcoming rejections and learning to navigate an industry that could be both glamorous and exploitative. Her account of modeling work—from high-end fashion shows to artistic photography—provides fascinating insight into 1950s fashion and photography.

The memoir builds to its crescendo with Margaret's unexpected victory in the Miss England 1955 competition. Her journey from nervous contestant to winner destined for Miss Universe in America is both thrilling and poignant. Along the way, she rubs shoulders with

celebrities, travels on luxury yachts in the Mediterranean, and experiences the jet-set lifestyle of the French Riviera.

What makes this memoir particularly compelling is Margaret's honest self-reflection. She doesn't romanticize her journey or present herself simply as a victim of circumstances. Instead, she reveals a young woman of remarkable resilience who refused to be defined by her difficult beginnings. Her love of poetry – particularly Wordsworth – and her appreciation for beauty in all its forms shine through every page.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Margaret Rowe (1935-2024) was crowned Miss England in 1955, seventy years ago, and went on to represent her country at the Miss Universe pageant in California. She continued her successful modeling career until retirement age, working with London's top agencies and photographers.

Margaret lived mostly in Highgate, North London, where she was known for her love of dachshunds, often owning two or three at a time. Her favourite pastime was taking long walks in the countryside, particularly on Hampstead Heath.

After retiring from modeling, Margaret moved to the other side of the camera lens and became an accomplished nature photographer. She won a national photography competition with her images of flowers, earning the prize of having her photographs listed with Getty Images, where they remain to this day.

On retiring, she returned to Gloucestershire, reconnecting with her wartime foster sister Barbara. She later lived in Tring, Hertfordshire, and finally moved to Bury St Edmunds in 2012.

Margaret completed *Pretty from the Outside* as her debut memoir and final testament. She passed away in September 2024, leaving behind this remarkable account of her life and times.

KEY THEMES & TOPICS

- Wartime Evacuation: First-hand account of WWII childhood in the Cotswolds
- Post-War Britain: Social transformation, rationing, emerging consumer culture
- 1950s Fashion: Christian Dior's "New Look," high fashion modeling, beauty standards
- Beauty Pageants: Behind-the-scenes at Miss England 1955 and Miss Universe
- Resilience & Transformation: From abandoned child to international beauty queen
- Women's Ambitions: Pursuing independence in a changing social landscape
- Celebrity Encounters: Elizabeth Taylor, Sean Connery, Shirley Bassey
- Class & Identity: Navigating social mobility in mid-century Britain
- Literature & Poetry: The influence of Wordsworth and classic literature
- Photography & Fashion: 1950s modeling world, artistic photography

TARGET AUDIENCES

Primary Readers:

- Fans of 1940s and 1950s history
- Fashion history enthusiasts, particularly Christian Dior and post-war style
- Readers interested in WWII evacuation narratives
- Beauty pageant history enthusiasts
- Memoir and autobiography readers
- Social history and women's history readers

Secondary Readers:

- Vintage fashion collectors and enthusiasts
- Photography history readers
- Classic Hollywood and British film fans
- Literary readers (Wordsworth enthusiasts)
- Readers interested in post-war British culture

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: WHY THIS MEMOIR MATTERS NOW

2025 marks the 70th anniversary of Margaret Rowe's crowning as Miss England 1955—a perfect moment to celebrate her remarkable story and the era it captures.

This memoir serves as a vital historical document:

- **Authentic Voice:** Written in the authentic colloquial style of the 1940s-50s, Margaret's prose captures the era's language and attitudes
- **Vanishing Generation:** One of the last first-hand accounts from wartime evacuees
- **Fashion History:** Documents the transformative impact of Dior's "New Look" on British women
- **Social Transformation:** Chronicles the shift from wartime austerity to 1950s glamour
- **Women's Stories:** Preserves the experiences of women navigating post-war opportunities
- **Cultural Memory:** Captures a pivotal moment in British social history

In today's image-obsessed world, Margaret's reflections on beauty, identity, and self-worth remain profoundly relevant. Her story reminds us that meaningful connections—from kindly landladies to loyal friends—ultimately bring the deepest fulfillment and shape who we become.

UNIQUE SELLING POINTS

* 70th Anniversary of Miss England 1955 crown (2025) * Authentic wartime evacuation narrative from child's perspective * Rare behind-the-scenes account of 1950s modeling industry * Personal encounters with Elizabeth Taylor, Sean Connery, Shirley Bassey * Detailed Christian Dior and 1950s fashion history * Written in authentic 1940s-50s colloquial style * Includes vintage photographs from the author's collection * Author's posthumous memoir – her final testament * Elegant, honest prose with literary sensibility * Appeals across generations: history, fashion, and memoir readers

COMPARISON TITLES

Readers who enjoyed these books will love *Pretty from the Outside*:

- *A Life in Secrets* by Sarah Helm (WWII women's stories)
- *Call the Midwife* by Jennifer Worth (post-war Britain memoir)
- *The Mitford Girls* by Mary S. Lovell (1930s-50s British society)
- *Testament of Youth* by Vera Brittain (wartime memoir)
- *Models: A Woman's War* by Joanna Bourke (women's wartime experiences)
- *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (fashion and identity themes)
- *Austerity Britain* by David Kynaston (post-war social history)

A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR'S PASSING

Margaret Rowe completed *Pretty from the Outside* as her memoir and final gift to readers who cherish authentic voices from Britain's post-war era. She passed away peacefully in September 2024, shortly after finishing this remarkable testament to her life.

Her death adds profound poignancy to the memoir's publication. This book represents not just Margaret's personal story, but her enduring voice—ensuring that her experiences, observations, and the vanished world she inhabited will continue to inspire and inform future generations.

In Margaret's own words from the memoir: "With the beauty of Wordsworth's words in my life, I could tackle anything." Her memoir stands as proof of this spirit – a beautifully crafted legacy that preserves an extraordinary life and an entire era.

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SOCIAL MEDIA HASHTAGS

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#ChristianDior #VintageMemoir #BritishHistory #1940sStyle #BeautyPageantHistory
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