

PULL QUOTES  
***Pretty from the Outside***  
by Margaret Rowe

These excerpts showcase Margaret Rowe's distinctive voice and the memoir's key themes. All quotes are direct excerpts from *Pretty from the Outside*.

**ON WARTIME EVACUATION & CHILDHOOD**

"I grew to love the beautiful Cotswolds, with the steep, sloping hills that were tough to climb but crazy to race down. I relished the biting winds of winter when I could barely feel my frozen face but as soon as I was back in the warmth of the house my cheeks became burning fireballs."

"Clutching our Mickey Mouse gas masks, we children piled into a noisy train at Paddington Station, where, huddled together, we hurtled through the English countryside for what seemed like an eternity."

"No matter how good or bad the news, Mr Churchill's thundering tones never failed to restore the fight in every flagging listener, power and conviction emanating from that magnificent voice, ending with 'We will never surrender'."

**ON CHRISTIAN DIOR & 1950S FASHION**

"That coat was designed with me in mind, of that I'm certain. In a light shade of eau-de-nil (the palest shade of green), with a flattering collar in water-marked taffeta, of the same shade of green."

"The great French designer, Christian Dior, had recently launched his latest collection, causing upheaval in the world of fashion. Gone were the short skirts of the war years, the 'new look' had arrived, featuring mid-length voluminous swirling skirts, with the tightest bodices, nipped-in waists with one eye-catching button in the centre, emphasising a lady's tiny waist."

"I wasn't good at balancing my clothes allowance; seven shillings and six pence a week didn't run to much in the world of fashion but my high-heeled shoes proved to be a good buy, adding class to any outfit I wore."

**ON BECOMING MISS ENGLAND 1955**

"I remember checking the number on my wrist, and sure enough, I was Number Fourteen, Miss England 1955."

"An announcement came over the loudspeaker, the most unanimous decision they'd ever had, the winner was Number Fourteen."

"From that moment, with newspaper reporters and newsreel cameras closing in on me, who should appear from the back of the crowd but Gordon, yelling above the din, 'I told you, didn't I?'"

**ON ELIZABETH TAYLOR**

"I had dined with the most famous, most beautiful film star in the world. This lovely young woman, only a few years older than me, had reached out with compassion to a fellow human being who was about to be bullied."

"Elizabeth was petite, breathtakingly beautiful, her face glowing within its own aura, her hair cut extremely short in a style which could only be worn by a perfectly symmetrical head."

"The first thing I noticed about her, apart from her beauty, was her facial expression. It was an open book, there was no hidden side to this lady. Her deep violet eyes with their double-layered silky eyelashes looked unwavering into mine, making me feel completely at ease."

### **ON FINDING INNER STRENGTH**

"With the beauty of Wordsworth's words in my life, I could tackle anything."

"I loved too, the magical skating scene, filling me with joy, causing my whole body to tremble, plunging me back to my years at Longfords Mill, when I was the owner of a thousand woodland nooks and crannies."

"Forlorn and feeling sorry for myself, I wept bitterly that night, but woke refreshed, my fighting spirit renewed."

### **ON REUNITING WITH HER MOTHER**

"Was it possible this smartly dressed, poised lady could be my mother? I'd quite forgotten how petite she was, as I towered over her, she oozing confidence, a picture of high fashion in her up-to-the-minute swing coat."

"My mother broke the ice by requesting the pianist play a certain Ivor Novello melody, 'We'll gather lilacs in the spring again,' so romantic, I could have wept. This led our friendly pianist to break into a string of wartime favourites, reminding us both of the years we'd been apart."

### **ON SETTING OFF FOR A NEW LIFE**

"It was a day in early January 1951 when I took my first step towards independence. Dad's parting gift was a pair of heavy, black wellington boots, which were promptly deposited in the nearest waste bin. How could he burden a young woman dressed in a Christian Dior coat with such a grotesque offering, just as she sets off to seek her fortune?"

"I was devastated to be leaving Miss Miller and Mr Robinson, who between them had kept my feet on solid ground for several years, feeding my hungry mind with countless offerings. Their presence never leaves me."

### **ON THE MODELING WORLD**

"Meeting up with Gordon was comforting. As my greatest fan, nothing would convince him I wouldn't be Miss England, 1955."

"Having a true comrade with mutual interests, with no funny business on the side, provided me with routine, and the support of someone who believed in me."

"Gordon was thrilled to bits, agreeing to take the photograph in the studio, where a few days later I arrived with my immaculate white French costume, matching winkle-pickers with the latest spindly, four-inch stiletto heels, my shoulder-length brown hair glossy and gleaming with health."

### **ON POST-WAR BRITAIN**

"One morning in May 1950, the front page of every newspaper featured the marriage of eighteen-year-old film star Elizabeth Taylor to the young heir to the Hilton Hotels, Conrad

'Nicky' Hilton. The photos of this young beauty glowing with happiness on her wedding day rival any scene from a movie."

"Quite a crowd of mostly girls and women gathered, all of us thrilled to see the young lady who would one day be our Queen. As luck would have it, the Princess came through the door, pausing so close to me, I could have reached out and touched her perfect, English complexion."

### **ON HER FATHER'S FIRST WORDS**

"'I couldn't be the father of that! Someone's mixed the babies up,' were my father's first words upon my entrance into the world, on the morning of 13 November 1935 in a nursing home in West Norwood, South East London."

### **ON HER TRANSFORMATION**

"Overnight, I'd turned into a sun-kissed maiden."

"I was over the moon as I glanced in the mirror at my starched striped dress, worn under a stiff white apron, secured by a safety pin above each breast, all topped off by a dear little starched cap, which, I was pleased to see, suited both my hairstyle and my features."

### **USAGE NOTES:**

These quotes may be used in:

- Book reviews and features
- Social media promotion
- Promotional materials and advertising
- Interviews and podcasts
- Book club discussion guides
- Press releases and media kits

Please attribute all quotes to: Margaret Rowe, *Pretty from the Outside* (Arena Books, 2025)

For review copies, high-resolution images, or further information, please contact:

Isabel Corfe

[info@arenabooks.co.uk](mailto:info@arenabooks.co.uk)

[www.arenabooks.co.uk](http://www.arenabooks.co.uk)