

Story Angles

Pretty from the Outside **by Margaret Rowe**

These suggested story angles are designed to help journalists, bloggers, podcasters, and media outlets craft compelling features about *Pretty from the Outside*. Each angle offers a unique lens through which to explore Margaret Rowe's remarkable memoir.

1. SEVENTY YEARS SINCE THE CROWN: WHERE ARE BEAUTY QUEENS NOW?

ANGLE: 2025 marks the 70th anniversary of Margaret Rowe winning Miss England 1955. This milestone offers an opportunity to explore how beauty pageants have evolved, what happened to their winners, and why Margaret's story stands out.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- The cultural significance of beauty pageants in the 1950s
- How Margaret's win opened doors to international travel and celebrity encounters
- The contrast between 1950s pageant culture and modern beauty competitions
- What Margaret's memoir reveals about the real women behind the tiaras
- Her journey from Miss England to accomplished photographer

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "70 Years After Her Crown: The Untold Story of Miss England 1955" "From Beauty Queen to Nature Photographer: Margaret Rowe's Remarkable Journey" "What Happened After the Tiara? Miss England 1955 Tells All"

2. BEHIND THE TIARA: THE HUMAN STORY OF MISS ENGLAND 1955

ANGLE: Move beyond the glamorous image to explore Margaret's complex journey—from wartime evacuee to beauty queen, revealing the resilience and determination behind the crown.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Margaret's difficult childhood and wartime evacuation
- The impact of family abandonment on her self-worth
- How modeling and pageants became a path to independence
- The unexpected humanity behind the beauty queen image
- Overcoming her father's religious objections to compete
- Gordon Hireson's mentorship and belief in her

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "The Beauty Queen Who Started Life as a War Orphan" "Behind the Crown: Miss England 1955's Journey from Abandonment to Triumph" "More Than Pretty: The Resilience Behind a Beauty Queen"

3. FROM WAR CHILD TO BEAUTY QUEEN: A POST-WAR TRANSFORMATION STORY

ANGLE: Margaret's story as a quintessentially British narrative of post-war transformation – from wartime hardship to 1950s prosperity and glamour.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- First-hand account of wartime evacuation to the Cotswolds
- Life in Miss Berryman's Home for Children
- Foster families: the Hope family at Longfords Mill, Hankins Farm
- Listening to Churchill's speeches on the wireless

- The transition from rationing to consumer culture
- How post-war Britain created opportunities for social mobility

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "From Blitz to Beauty Queen: One Woman's Post-War Journey" "The Evacuee Who Became Miss England: A Post-War Transformation" "Britain's Lost Generation: One Wartime Evacuee's Remarkable Story"

4. FASHION THEN & NOW: 1950s MODELING THROUGH MARGARET'S EYES

ANGLE: A deep dive into the 1950s fashion world, Christian Dior's revolution, and what modeling was really like in the golden age of haute couture.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Christian Dior's "New Look" and its transformative impact on British women
- Margaret's beloved eau-de-nil Dior coat
- Behind-the-scenes at 1950s fashion shows and photo shoots
- Working with photographer Gordon Hireson
- The reality of modeling: from glamorous to exploitative
- Contrast with modern fashion industry
- Stiletto heels, winkle-pickers, and authentic 1950s style

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "When Christian Dior Changed Everything: A Model's Memoir" "Inside 1950s Modeling: Beauty, Fashion, and Reality" "The Coat That Changed Her Life: Margaret Rowe and Christian Dior"

IDEAL FOR: Fashion magazines, vintage style blogs, fashion history features

5. THE CHRISTIAN DIOR EFFECT: HOW FASHION SHAPED IDENTITY IN THE 1950s

ANGLE: Explore how fashion—particularly Dior's "New Look"—became a form of empowerment and self-creation for post-war British women.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Dior's revolution after wartime utility clothing
- How Margaret's Dior coat became her "armor" and identity
- Fashion as a path to confidence and social mobility
- The symbolic power of the "right" outfit
- Balancing a seven-shillings-and-sixpence weekly allowance with fashion dreams
- The relationship between outer beauty and inner transformation

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "How a Christian Dior Coat Gave a War Orphan Her Identity" "Fashion as Freedom: The Christian Dior Revolution in Post-War Britain" "More Than Fabric: How 1950s Fashion Empowered Women"

IDEAL FOR: Fashion history features, women's magazines, cultural commentary

6. EVACUATION STORIES: WWII THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

ANGLE: Margaret's vivid first-hand account of wartime evacuation adds to the vital historical record of children's WWII experiences.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Life at Holcombe House in Gloucestershire
- Living with foster families in the Cotswolds
- Mickey Mouse gas masks and train journeys from Paddington
- Churchill's speeches on the wireless
- Rural life during wartime: harvests, farms, countryside adventures
- The kindness of strangers: "Our Mum," "Our Dad," the Hope family
- Returning to bombed London: "Why are the walls hanging out, Daddy?"

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "The Last Evacuees: Preserving WWII Childhood Memories" "From London to the Cotswolds: One Child's War" "Mickey Mouse Gas Masks and Churchill's Voice: A Child's WWII"

IDEAL FOR: History magazines, WWII commemorations, heritage features

7. A FINAL GIFT: AUTHOR'S POSTHUMOUS MEMOIR HONORS AN ERA

ANGLE: Margaret completed this memoir as her final testament before passing in September 2024, making this both a personal legacy and historical preservation.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Margaret's commitment to completing her story
- What drove her to document her life at this stage
- The memoir as a gift to future generations
- Preserving the voices of a vanishing generation
- The poignancy of a posthumous publication
- How the memoir serves as both personal and historical record

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "A Final Testament: Margaret Rowe's Parting Gift to Readers" "The Memoir She Had to Write: Preserving a Vanished Era" "Her Last Words: Miss England 1955's Posthumous Memoir"

IDEAL FOR: Obituary features, literary coverage, heritage journalism

8. THE REAL WOMEN BEHIND THE PAGEANTS

ANGLE: Use Margaret's story to explore the complex reality behind beauty pageant culture—ambition, exploitation, opportunity, and genuine female friendships.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- What beauty pageants meant for working-class women in the 1950s
- The supportive camaraderie among contestants
- Gordon Hireson's mentorship without exploitation
- Her father's religious objections and societal judgment
- Navigating an industry that could be both empowering and objectifying
- How pageants provided travel, education, and career opportunities
- The judges: Eve Arden (Max Factor) and Eddy Franklyn (model agent)

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "Beyond the Swimsuit: What Beauty Pageants Really Meant to 1950s Women" "The Sisterhood Behind the Tiaras: Female Friendships in Beauty Pageants" "Opportunity or Exploitation? Inside 1950s Beauty Pageants"

IDEAL FOR: Women's interest features, feminist commentary, cultural analysis

9. DINING WITH ELIZABETH TAYLOR: HOLLYWOOD GLAMOUR MEETS BRITISH MODESTY

ANGLE: Margaret's unforgettable evening with Elizabeth Taylor at Claridge's reveals both Hollywood glamour and unexpected kindness.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- The most beautiful woman in the world reaching out to protect Margaret from bullying
- Anita Ekberg's intimidation and Elizabeth's compassion
- Michael Wilding, George Sanders, and 1950s celebrity culture
- Margaret's "wrong dress" and social anxiety
- Elizabeth Taylor's genuine kindness and "open book" face
- The poignancy of seeing Elizabeth in her final years

- What this encounter reveals about both women

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "The Night Elizabeth Taylor Saved Me from a Bully" "Margaret Rowe's Unforgettable Evening with Elizabeth Taylor" "When Miss England Met Hollywood Royalty at Claridge's"

IDEAL FOR: Celebrity features, classic Hollywood retrospectives, human interest

10. LITERATURE AS LIFELINE: WORDSWORTH, FILM, AND SURVIVAL

ANGLE: How literature, poetry, and cinema became Margaret's emotional anchors and sources of resilience.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Wordsworth's "The Prelude" as constant companion
- "With the beauty of Wordsworth's words in my life, I could tackle anything"
- Teachers Miss Miller and Mr Robinson who fed her "hungry mind"
- Film magazines hidden in the sewing room
- Cinema as escape and inspiration
- Elizabeth Taylor, Diana Dors, and Hollywood dreams
- How high culture and popular culture both sustained her

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "How Wordsworth Helped a Beauty Queen Survive" "From Poetry to Pageants: The Literary Life of Miss England" "The Evacuee Who Found Strength in Wordsworth"

IDEAL FOR: Literary features, education features, book clubs

11. MONACO, MONTE CARLO, AND THE CÔTE D'AZUR: 1950s JET-SET LIFE

ANGLE: Margaret's adventures on luxury yachts and Mediterranean glamour spots offer a window into vanished 1950s high society.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Eating oysters on boats in the Côte d'Azur
- The doorman at Hotel de Paris protecting her from rain
- Monte Carlo photo shoots
- Encounters with the international jet set
- The contrast between her humble beginnings and this glamorous world
- Her father's eventual acceptance and pride (Monte Carlo photo together)
- Getty Images photographs from this era

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "From Wartime Evacuee to the French Riviera: A Cinderella Story" "When Miss England Conquered the Côte d'Azur" "1950s Glamour: Inside the Mediterranean Jet Set"

IDEAL FOR: Travel features, luxury lifestyle, vintage glamour retrospectives

12. THE VOICES WE'RE LOSING: PRESERVING WARTIME NARRATIVES

ANGLE: Margaret's memoir as part of the urgent project to preserve first-hand WWII accounts before this generation is lost.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- The dwindling number of wartime evacuees still alive
- The unique perspective of children who lived through WWII
- The importance of first-person narratives vs. historical accounts
- What we learn from Margaret's authentic 1940s-50s voice
- How memoirs like this fill gaps in official histories
- The value of "ordinary" people's extraordinary stories

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "Racing Against Time: Preserving the Last WWII Evacuee Voices" "Why We Need Memoirs Like Margaret Rowe's" "The Last Generation: One Evacuee's Essential Story"

IDEAL FOR: Heritage journalism, historical preservation features, education media

13.FROM MODELING TO NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY: A CREATIVE LIFE

ANGLE: After retiring from modeling, Margaret became an accomplished nature photographer, revealing a different kind of beauty.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Transitioning from being photographed to being behind the camera
- Winning a national photography competition
- Getty Images listing her flower photographs
- The connection between fashion photography and nature photography
- Both driven by appreciation of beauty
- Her talent for seeing and capturing loveliness

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "From Fashion Model to Nature Photographer: Margaret Rowe's Creative Evolution" "Behind the Lens: When Miss England Became a Photographer" "Two Sides of Beauty: Model Turned Nature Photographer"

IDEAL FOR: Photography magazines, creative arts features, nature publications

14.MOTHER & DAUGHTER REUNITED: A COMPLICATED LOVE STORY

ANGLE: Margaret's relationship with her mother—from abandonment to joyful reunion—forms the memoir's emotional core.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- Mother's departure when Margaret was very young
- "Your Mummy doesn't love you any more, so she's gone away"
- The "enigmatic" meeting in Gloucester during wartime
- Waiting under the clock at Charing Cross Station
- "Was it possible this smartly dressed, poised lady could be my mother?"
- Ivor Novello's "We'll gather lilacs in the spring again"
- Their laughter in cinemas, getting "close to being thrown out"
- How her mother's warmth finally provided emotional foundation

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "The Mother Who Left and the Daughter Who Forgave"

"Gathering Lilacs: A Mother-Daughter Reconciliation" "From Abandonment to Acceptance: Margaret Rowe's Mother"

IDEAL FOR: Human interest, family features, women's magazines

15.THE COLLOQUIAL VOICE: AUTHENTIC 1940S-50S LANGUAGE IN MEMOIR

ANGLE: Margaret writes in the authentic colloquial style of the 1940s-50s, creating a time capsule of language and expression.

KEY ELEMENTS:

- "Chuffed to bits," "Fredikinz and Ednakinz," "hunky-dory"
- Period-specific expressions and slang
- How language reveals attitudes and culture
- The value of authentic voice in historical memoir
- Avoiding modern retrospective perspective
- Writing as she would have spoken then
- The memoir as linguistic as well as social history

POTENTIAL HEADLINES: "Time Travel Through Language: The Voice of 1950s Britain" "How Margaret Rowe's Authentic Voice Brings an Era to Life" "More Than Memory: Language as Historical Document"

IDEAL FOR: Literary features, linguistic interest, social history

REGIONAL ANGLES

LONDON: Focus on Margaret's London journey—from West Norwood to Soho coffee bars, Cumberland Hotel to Claridge's, Hampstead Heath walks

GLOUCESTERSHIRE: The Cotswolds evacuation experience, Holcombe House, Nailsworth, returning decades later

HERTFORDSHIRE: Berkhamsted reunion with mother, Tring in retirement

ESSEX: Weekends with Gordon and Miriam at Burnham on Crouch

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: Final years in Bury St Edmunds care home

SEASONAL ANGLES

JULY: Publication anniversary, summer reading, holiday memoirs

NOVEMBER: Margaret's birthday (November 13, 1935)

MAY-JUNE: Miss England anniversary (contest typically held late May/early June)

SEPTEMBER: Remembering Margaret (passed September 2024)

VE/VJ DAY: Wartime evacuation stories, WWII commemorations

MULTIMEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

PODCAST EPISODES:

- "The Beauty Queen Who Started as an Evacuee"
- "Elizabeth Taylor's Act of Kindness"
- "Christian Dior Changed My Life"
- "Reading Wordsworth in a Rooming House"

PHOTO FEATURES:

- Vintage photographs from Margaret's collection
- Then and now: 1950s fashion vs. today
- Cotswolds locations from her evacuation
- Getty Images photographs from the Côte d'Azur

VIDEO FEATURES:

- Virtual tour of wartime evacuation locations
- Fashion history: Recreating Dior's "New Look"
- Miss England 1955 newsreel footage (if available)

Media Contact:

For review copies, high-resolution images, or any other further information, please contact:
Isabel Corfe

info@arenabooks.co.uk