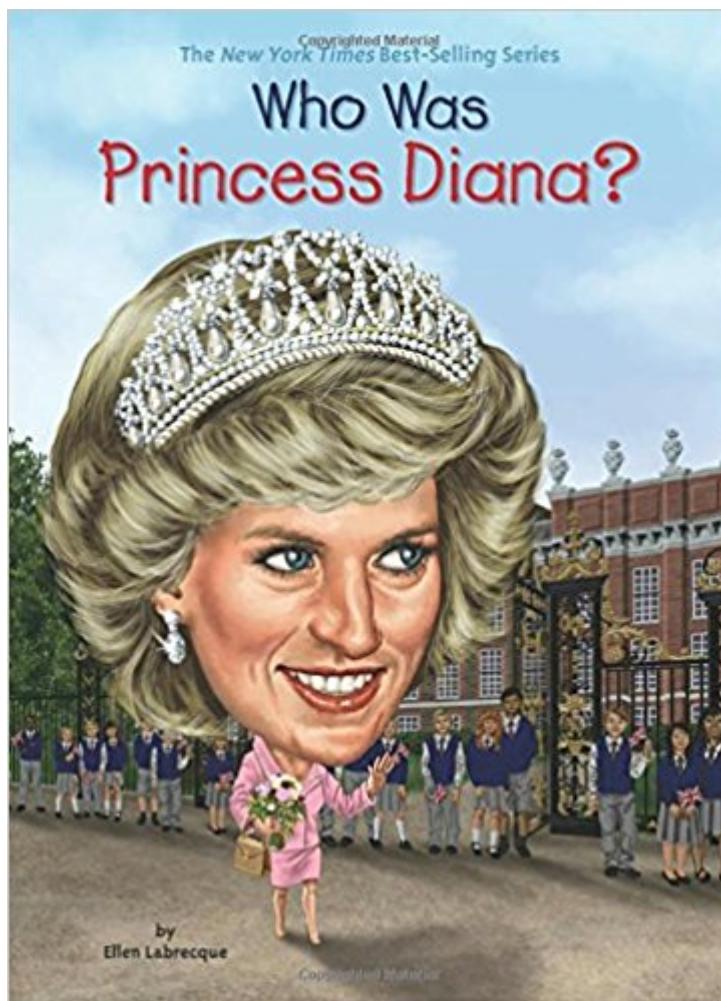


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Who Was Princess Diana?



Synopsis

Learn how Lady Diana Spencer became the People's Princess as she takes her place in the ranks of the Who Was? series. A shy twenty-year-old girl stepped out of a horse-drawn coach and into the world spotlight, capturing the imagination of millions as a real life fairytale princess. Although the storybook marriage didn't have a happy ending, Diana learned to use her fame as a way to champion charitable causes near to her heart. She became the People's Princess by humanizing the image of the royal family and showing care and concern for all people, including the homeless, the sick, and others in need.

Book Information

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Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Ellen Labrecque is a former Senior Editor for Sports Illustrated for Kids and the author of over twenty nonfiction books for young readers, including biographies of Jim Thorpe and Magic Johnson. Jerry Hoare is married with two musician/actor sons and a crazy terrier dog. He has provided pictorial work for many different things in many different styles, but he has a particular fondness for line work--be it loose pen or the strict thicks and thins, to denote tonal change like that of engraving.

Who Was Princess Diana? On July 29, 1981, England celebrated a national holiday. Prince Charles, the thirty-two-year-old heir to the British throne, was about to marry Lady Diana Frances Spencer in the "Wedding of the Century." Thousands of people lined the streets of London. Three-quarters of a billion watched on television. As the crowd cheered, twenty-year-old Diana stepped out of a horse-drawn coach, known as the glass carriage, in front of Saint Paul's Cathedral in London. She was wearing a beautiful white dress and a sparkling gold-and-diamond tiara. Her train—the back of her dress—was twenty-five feet long! The future princess walked into the church on the arm of her proud father, Earl John Spencer. Thirty-five hundred guests stood and watched the real-life Cinderella walk down the long aisle on a red carpet. Charles' mother, Elizabeth II, the Queen of England, and his father, Prince Philip, looked on proudly. Standing at the front of the church was Prince Charles. He wore his dark blue naval commander's uniform and his wavy hair was perfectly combed. The handsome prince could have married anybody, and he had chosen Diana. "I couldn't take my eyes off him," Diana later said. "I just absolutely thought I was the luckiest girl in the world." The royal wedding was ready to begin. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who presided over the ceremony, described the day as "the stuff of which fairy tales are made." Most fairy tales end "happily ever after." But real life—even the real life of a princess—is often more complicated. In the years after her marriage, Diana sometimes felt lonely and sad. Her life was not always as happy as the storybook one she had imagined. But on the day of her wedding—when the whole world was watching—Diana was a happy bride. She couldn't wait to marry her Prince Charming.

Chapter 1: A Noble Beginning

Princess Diana was born Diana Frances Spencer on July 1, 1961. The Spencers had been a rich and powerful family for centuries. They were part of the British nobility, or the wealthy ruling class. Diana had been born in Park House, a beautiful and large home on the Queen's estate at Sandringham, England. In the 1930s, Diana's grandparents were invited to live in the house by King George VI. Park House was then passed on to Diana's mother, when she had a family of her own. Diana's father, John Spencer, held the title Viscount Althorp (say: VAHY-kount AWL-trupp). He had been an officer in the British Army and had fought for England during World War II. Diana's mother was Frances Spencer, Viscountess (say: VAHY-koun-tis) Althorp. Diana already had two older sisters, Sarah, who was six years old, and Jane, who was four. Because they were such close friends of the royal family, people often said that each of the three Spencer girls might someday marry one of Queen Elizabeth II's three sons: Prince

Charles, Prince Andrew, and Prince Edward! When Diana was born, the Spencers had been hoping for a son to carry on the family's name and inherit their fortune. In fact, the Spencers had not even picked out a girl's name! They decided on Diana a week after their third daughter was born. As a young child, Diana often played alone. Her two older sisters were away at boarding school. "Their growing up was done out of my sight," Diana later said. Diana's parents eventually had the son they always wanted. Charles Spencer was born in 1964, when Diana was almost three years old. Charles became Diana's best friend. The youngest Spencer children had fun exploring all of Park House. The huge ten-bedroom mansion had long staircases with railings the children could slide down. Diana was an athletic child. She enjoyed riding her bike, swimming in their pool, and climbing trees. She also liked playing with stuffed animals and kept many on her bed. She loved her real animals, too. Diana had pet hamsters, guinea pigs, and a cat named Marmalade. Like many wealthy children, Diana and her brother had nannies. Diana, though, longed to be cared for by her mother. She and Charles tried to get a few of the nannies to quit and even threw their clothes out the window. But they quickly learned that a new nanny could always be hired to replace the old one. Aside from those few stunts with her brother, Diana was kind to the nannies. She would help them clean the playroom and do other housework. From an early age, Diana's father taught her to "treat everybody as an individual and never throw your weight around." This meant Diana should treat everyone with kindness and never act more important than another person. Diana followed this rule her whole life.

Grandkids love this series and have requested more.

My ten year old didn't even know who Princess Diana was! Yet she read this book and was delighted.

Great book for 8 to 10 year olds.

Great quick biography read of Princess Di

Our daughter was doing a biography of Princess Diana and this book provided the detailed information needed to do well, she received an A+, thank you!

Princess Diana was about as complex a human being as one could envision. She's also a person who seemed to suddenly leap above and past the difficulties and tragedies of her life to assume a far larger identity; an identity large because of the enormous, positive impact she had by her words and her actions. Those public factors were backed up by the countless personal notes she penned to people in distress, especially children, to let them know of her continuing support. Her astonishing natural beauty and sense of style were in obvious contrast to the pre-Ball Cinderella who we learned had existed inside the Royal Family. After her divorce from Prince Charles, we saw the butterfly emerging from her cocoon, the Princess who didn't need the Prince at the Ball in order to be part of a magnificent story. As William married his Kate and they became parents, the profound changes in how future Royals would be raised - and the public with whom they would be in much closer relationship - grew evident. Consider William's ease among people of all sorts and conditions vs. his father's stiffness, Kate's love of grocery shopping and cooking dinners for friends close since their days at St. Andrew's, if one needs evidence. How could some of the grace, style, growth, maturation, and essence of "The People's Princess" be condensed into a book for young readers, I wondered. How could the example of a life transformed in front of us, in turn transforming others, be written so as to be observed by readers not yet old enough to grasp her importance - far beyond her title and relationships? Safe to say this is a book which young readers will not only enjoy, but will put before them the same kind of challenge in the story told by many of the so-called fairy tales. This challenge will be twofold: first, to enter into the struggle with their own frailties and the move past the ill that happened in their lives; second, to then reach out in service to others to improve their lives. It's a profound challenge, and one which this book ably conveys.

All of the books in this series are fabulous! I am a 5th grade reading teacher and I have about 100 of the books in this series. Kids at this age don't typically like reading biographies. These are perfect! They have all the important information about the person, landmark, event. And, we always love looking at the adorable, sometimes funny cover photos!

Rest in peace the beautiful Lady Diana Spencer whom, though she died tragically, will remain in the hearts of people for the years to come.

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