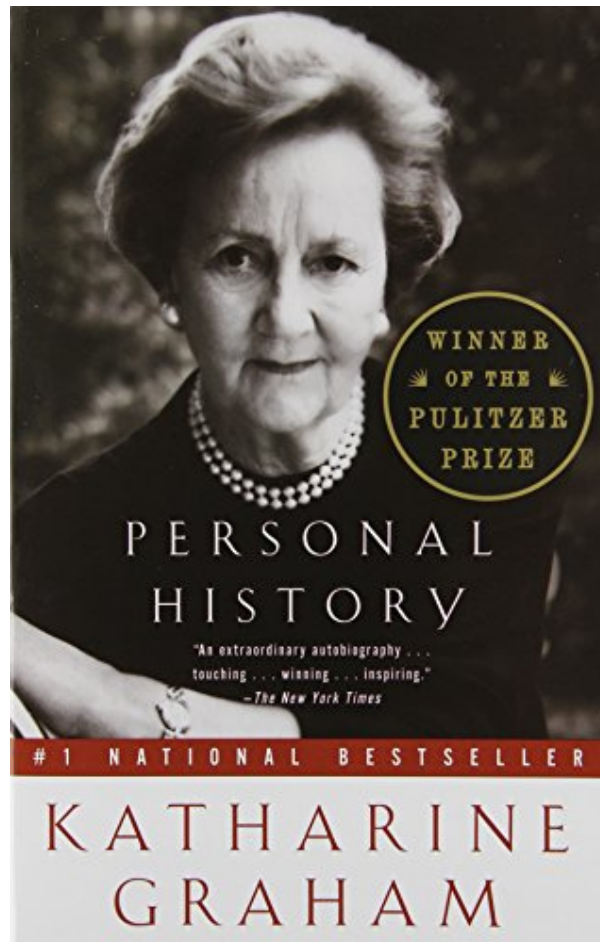
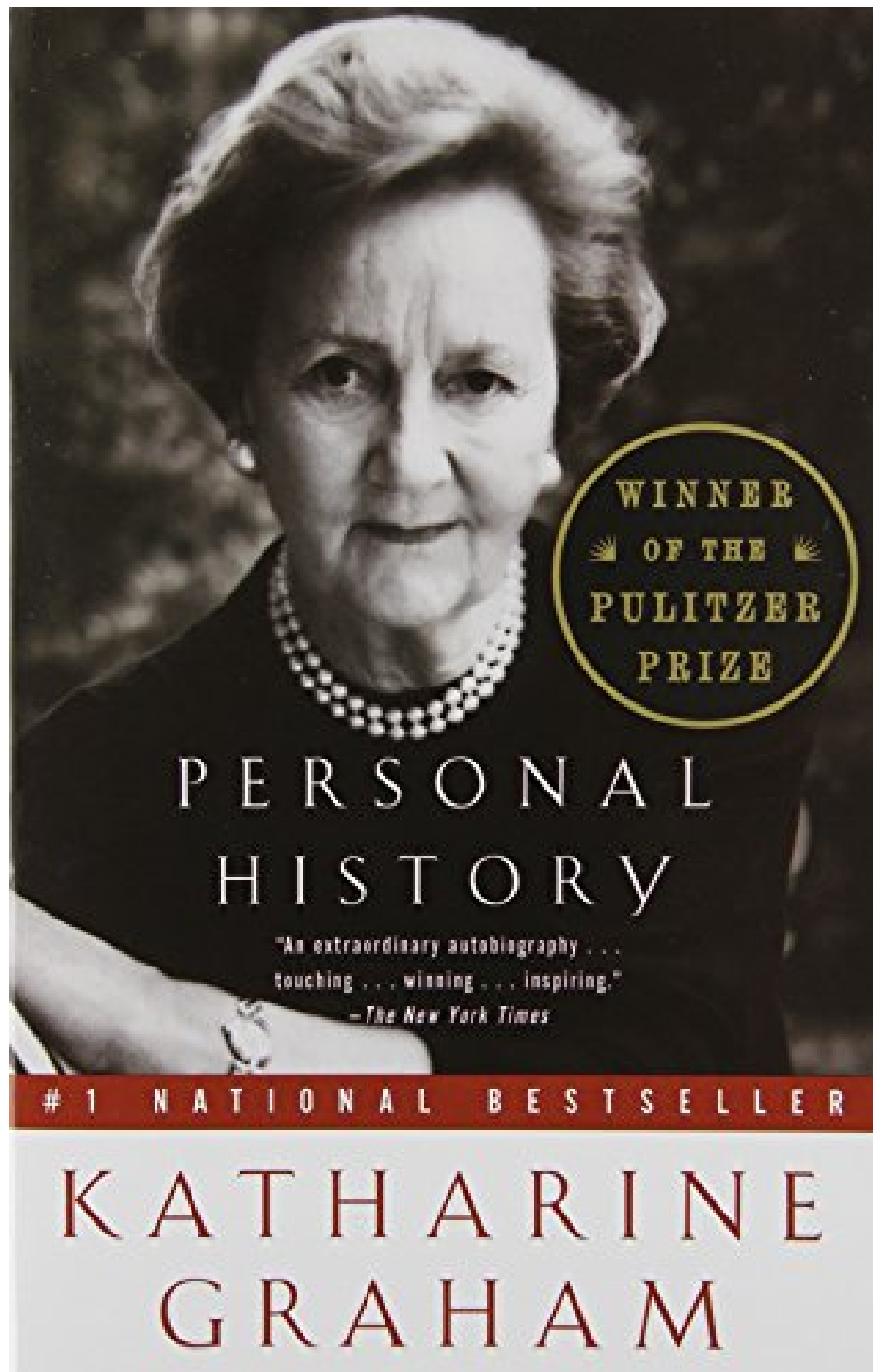


# PERSONAL HISTORY BY KATHARINE GRAHAM



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### Amazon.com Review

In lieu of an unrevealing Famous-People-I-Have-Known autobiography, the owner of the Washington Post has chosen to be remarkably candid about the insecurities prompted by remote parents and a difficult marriage to the charismatic, manic-depressive Phil Graham, who ran the newspaper her father acquired. Katharine's account of her years as subservient daughter and wife is so painful that by the time she finally asserts herself at the Post following Phil's suicide in 1963 (more than halfway through the book), readers will want to cheer. After that, Watergate is practically an anticlimax.

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Katharine Meyer Graham was a woman born into a world of wealth and privilege who raised four children, became involved in volunteer work, and ended as the head of a powerful newspaper. Graham's father, a wealthy entrepreneur, bought the struggling Washington Post in 1933. Although Katharine had worked as a journalist, it was her husband, Philip Graham, who was chosen to take over the paper from her father. This is the story of a newspaper's rise to power but also of the destruction of a marriage, as Philip Graham slid into alcohol, depression, and suicide, and of Katharine's rise as a powerful woman in her own right. Throughout this easy-to-read story, Graham writes about her personal life and the lives of others, ranging from presidents to household help, with sympathy and grace. Recommended for public libraries.

-?Rebecca Wondriska, Trinity Coll. Lib., Hartford, Ct.

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### From Booklist

Katharine (with an a) Graham has led a very full life, and her personal history will be, most likely, very well received by the public, for through it, she manages to answer questions of enduring interest: How do the excessively rich live? How do the rich get rich? How do they stay that way? How does a young, rich woman become more than a woman with lots of time on her hands? She indirectly answers those questions by shaping her family's history with a view toward its stewardship of the Washington Post. Graham, born to multimillionaire Eugene Meyer, a Jew, and Agnes Ernst, an arrogant German, lived such a sheltered life that in college she had to be told how to wash a sweater. Like most men of her time, she did not know how to maintain her material possessions but was well schooled in mind and body (a professional tennis player lived with the family for a while). Beyond her upbringing, Graham manages a controlled but seemingly full discussion of the many sensational aspects of her life: the suicide of her husband, Phil Graham; her rise to publisher of The Post; the Pentagon Papers; Watergate; and the dreadful pressmen's strike, a dispute in which

Graham prevailed. In this well-researched memoir, with a cast of fascinating people doing their cameo turns, including several presidents, the photographer Edward Steichen, Thomas Mann, Felix Frankfurter, Warren Buffet, and Ben Bradlee, Graham keeps the sets moving and makes everyone work for her. It is a well-examined life. Bonnie Smothers

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# PERSONAL HISTORY BY KATHARINE GRAHAM PDF

Winner of the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for Biography

An extraordinarily frank, honest, and generous book by one of America's most famous and admired women, *Personal History* is, as its title suggests, a book composed of both personal memoir and history.

It is the story of Graham's parents: the multimillionaire father who left private business and government service to buy and restore the down-and-out Washington Post, and the formidable, self-absorbed mother who was more interested in her political and charity work, and her passionate friendships with men like Thomas Mann and Adlai Stevenson, than in her children.

It is the story of how The Washington Post struggled to succeed -- a fascinating and instructive business history as told from the inside (the paper has been run by Graham herself, her father, her husband, and now her son).

It is the story of Phil Graham -- Kay's brilliant, charismatic husband (he clerked for two Supreme Court justices) -- whose plunge into manic-depression, betrayal, and eventual suicide is movingly and charitably recounted.

Best of all, it is the story of Kay Graham herself. She was brought up in a family of great wealth, yet she learned and understood nothing about money. She is half-Jewish, yet -- incredibly -- remained unaware of it for many years. She describes herself as having been naive and awkward, yet intelligent and energetic. She married a man she worshipped, and he fascinated and educated her, and then, in his illness, turned from her and abused her. This destruction of her confidence and happiness is a drama in itself, followed by the even more intense drama of her new life as the head of a great newspaper and a great company, a famous (and even feared) woman in her own right. Hers is a life that came into its own with a vengeance -- a success story on every level.

Graham's book is populated with a cast of fascinating characters, from fifty years of presidents (and their wives), to Steichen, Brancusi, Felix Frankfurter, Warren Buffett (her great advisor and protector), Robert McNamara, George Schultz (her regular tennis partner), and, of course, the great names from the Post: Woodward, Bernstein, and Graham's editorpartner, Ben Bradlee. She writes of them, and of the most dramatic moments of her stewardship of the Post (including the Pentagon Papers, Watergate, and the pressmen's strike), with acuity, humor, and good judgment. Her book is about learning by doing, about growing and growing up, about Washington, and about a woman liberated by both circumstance and her own great strengths.

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- Brand: Vintage
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- Released on: 1998-02-24

- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.02" h x 1.40" w x 5.19" l, 1.39 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 642 pages

#### Features

- Great product!

#### Amazon.com Review

In lieu of an unrevealing Famous-People-I-Have-Known autobiography, the owner of the Washington Post has chosen to be remarkably candid about the insecurities prompted by remote parents and a difficult marriage to the charismatic, manic-depressive Phil Graham, who ran the newspaper her father acquired. Katharine's account of her years as subservient daughter and wife is so painful that by the time she finally asserts herself at the Post following Phil's suicide in 1963 (more than halfway through the book), readers will want to cheer. After that, Watergate is practically an anticlimax.

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

84 of 89 people found the following review helpful.

What a wonderful combination of substance and opportunity!

By JC Reader

Since I grew up in a house where the "Washington Post" was devoured daily, I was always aware of Katherine Graham. I read this book shortly after she passed away, and I was knocked off my feet.

She was blessed by the accident of her birth into a family of extreme wealth and ultimate social position. Her family's advantages - sadly compounded by her husband's untimely death - gave her innumerable opportunities. At the same time, she was brilliant, capable, focused, and a gifted communicator. This combination of traits and circumstances allowed her to live a most enthralling, significant life.

Throughout, I marveled at her "realness." Her family had more money and servants and things than anyone I am ever likely to meet, but she describes her challenges, insecurities, and fears in a way that allow me to appreciate how she faced and succeeded in life.

This is a compelling read despite its length and detailed content. It is well documented and beautifully written - without the aid of a ghostwriter. It does not suffer from spurious melodrama, myopia, or vanity to which so many autobiographers fall victim.

I highly recommend both the form and substance of this book.

43 of 46 people found the following review helpful.

Uplifting & life affirming

By At Leaterbarrow

Anyone wanting any more insights into Watergate or the Pentagon Papers will probably be disappointed by this book (if you want that read Ben Bradlee's autobiography). This book is very aptly titled - it is indeed a personal history and what comes out in the end is the story of a woman who via her upbringing and marriage was afflicted by a crushing lack of confidence, deeply insecure, troubled by some of her closest relationships (in particular her own mother) and in her own words little more than a housewife. This same person upon the death of her husband was thrust into a world which she was totally unsuited for and against all odds flourished as the first CEO of a Fortune 500 company.

What comes out in the end is that people in general and women in particular are capable of taking grievous blows and overcoming far greater challenges than they ever realise.

A friend of mine lost her partner in similar circumstances to Katharine Graham many years ago and I wish I could have bought her this book then. Without wanting to sound patronising, this is a good book for men but a great book women. I don't know whether she is a feminist icon but she certainly should be !!

34 of 36 people found the following review helpful.

I hope I have a story like this I can tell at age 80

By A Customer

I read this book's first chapter on the internet, and knew I had to buy it. I was captivated by the analysis and detail in the early chapters, specifically targeted at her parents, their relationship, and the impact they had on her and her siblings. Details are gradually drawn away from family and, after Phil Graham's death, is focused almost entirely on her career at the Post. But the new focus her life takes is nothing short of inspirational, and her recollection (and application) of detail provides us with an absorbing panorama of faces and places. Having known little about the newspaper industry prior to this book, I am eager to know more, and put Ms. Graham's tremendous accomplishments in a more informed perspective. Despite her insecurities, fears and worries (which were difficult to read--even to believe--at times) they are obviously a part of her personality, and by revealing them she made her story more compelling. I felt that, if her point was to write a manual for success, she could have done so. But how much she would have deprived us of! The only serious deficiency I found was that I thought, with the great deal of commentary at the beginning of the book concerning how she and her siblings were raised--with particular emphasis on her mother's influence--that she would have

included more on what the effects of her own role as a mother were. But, this omission seems to have been a conscious one on her part. This was my nightly reading for quite some time, and I feel a little sad that I no longer have it to look forward to! Though I was certainly glad when the interminably long segment on the pressmen's strike was over, as important as the incident was...

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