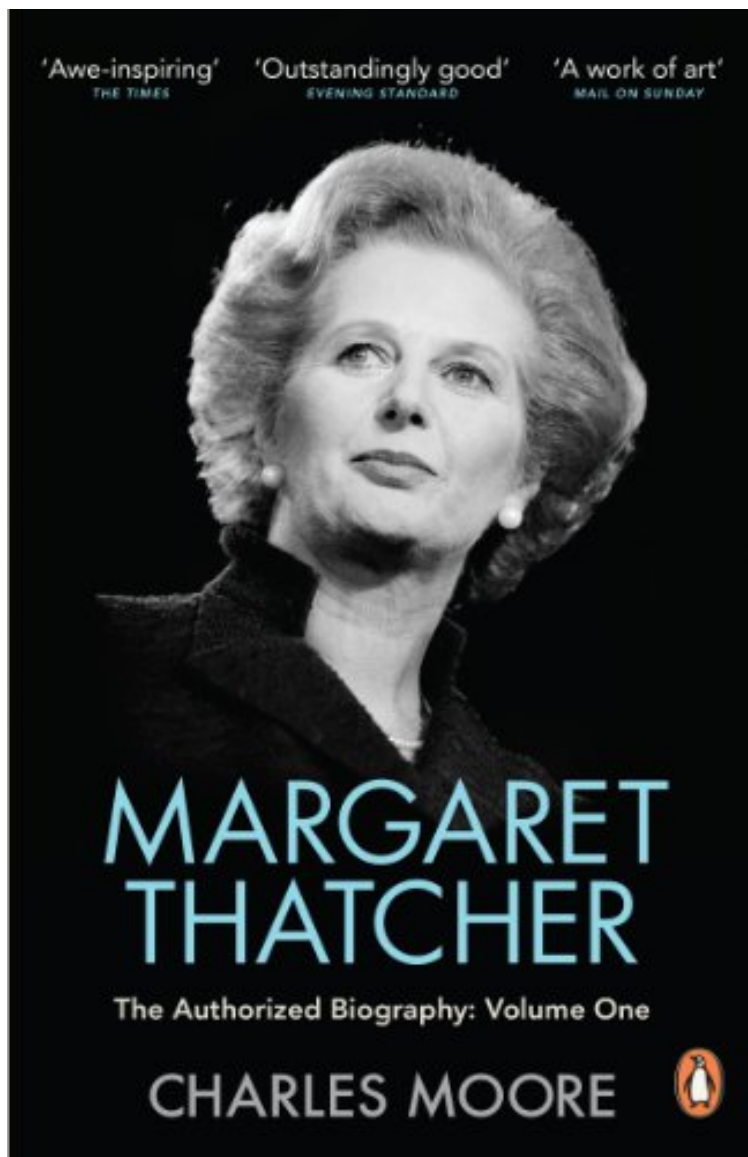


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Margaret Thatcher: The Authorized Biography, Volume One: Not For Turning



Par Charles Moore

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurNot For Turning is the first volume of Charles Moore's authorized biography of Margaret Thatcher, the longest serving Prime Minister of the twentieth century and one of the most influential political figures of the postwar era. Charles Moore's biography of Margaret Thatcher, published after her death on 8 April 2013, immediately supercedes all earlier books written about her. At the moment when she becomes a historical figure, this book also makes her into a three dimensional one for the first time. It gives unparalleled insight into her early life and formation, especially through her extensive

correspondence with her sister, which Moore is the first author to draw on. It recreates brilliantly the atmosphere of British politics as she was making her way, and takes her up to what was arguably the zenith of her power, victory in the Falklands. (This volume ends with the Falklands Dinner in Downing Street in November 1982.) Moore is clearly an admirer of his subject, but he does not shy away from criticising her or identifying weaknesses and mistakes where he feels it is justified. Based on unrestricted access to all Lady Thatcher's papers, unpublished interviews with her and all her major colleagues, this is the indispensable, fully rounded portrait of a towering figure of our times.

Excerpted from the Hardcover Edition
The woman Prime Minister who flew into what The Times called a lavish, colourful ceremony of the kind not seen in the American capital for the past four years had a packed schedule, but was also careful to make the right impression.* Her office set aside forty minutes each day for hairdressing (with rollers), and submitted her personal details in preparation for receiving an honorary degree at Georgetown University: Height 5'4";** Weight 10.5 stone; Coat 14 English; Hat size 7. In the White House, Reagan welcomed her, declaring, we share laws and literature, blood, and moral fibre, and she responded, The message I have brought across the Atlantic is that we, in Britain, stand with you. Americas successes will be our successes. Your problems will be our problems, and when you look for friends we will be there. The private reception was equally warm, which encouraged Mrs Thatcher to be frank. In his diary, Reagan recorded: We had a private meeting in Oval office. she [sic] is as firm as ever re the Soviets and for reduction of govt. Expressed regret that she tried to reduce govt. spending a step at a time was defeated in each attempt. Said she should have done it our way an entire package all or nothing. But not everyone in the Reagan administration was willing to be as supportive as the President. On the same day, Don Regan testified before a Congressional committee. Mrs Thatcher, Regan said, had failed to control the money supply, produced an explosive inflationary surge by her pay increases to public employees and kept taxes too high, which provides little incentive to get the economy started again. She failed, he added, in the effort to control the foreign exchange market and the pound is so high in value that it ruined their export trade. Here was a clear effort to distance the administrations policy from the perceived mistakes associated with Margaret Thatcher. Such perceptions were commonplace in US media reports throughout the visit.*** Regan then left Capitol Hill to hurry over to the British Embassy for lunch with Mrs Thatcher. She did not react unfavourably, but publicly praised President Reagan, giving a sanitized version of what she had told him privately: his attack on expenditure was the one thing which I could have wished that we had been even more successful at. Reagan recorded in his diary that Mrs Thatcher Went up to the hill [Capitol Hill] and was literally an advocate for our ec. program. Some of the Sens. tried to give her a bad time. She put them down firmly with typical British courtesy. As far as issues of substance went, the visit was fairly thin. Mrs Thatcher was a little worried by the administrations obsession with Central America, when she felt more attention should be paid to the East-West relationship. She and Reagan did, however, discuss the Soviet President Leonid Brezhnevs speech of 23 February in which he had called for an international summit and a moratorium on Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) in Europe, and they agreed on a cautious response. More important, for both sides, was the need for clat, for the dramatization of the meeting of minds of which Dick Allen had written. The state dinner for Mrs Thatcher at the White House gave Reagans people the chance to show the difference their President made: The Reaganauts were determined to throw off the grungy, downtrodden look of the Carter Administration . . . Some of the Carter people used to walk about the White House in bare feet. As soon as Reagan came in, out went the memos banning jeans, banning sandals and requiring everyone to wear a suit. Glamour was a word often used, and class too. The Reagan people thus planned the Thatcher dinner as a white tie affair. It was going to be infused with Hollywood glamour and would show the world how classy the Reagan people were. Mrs Thatcher, however, asked the White House if the dinner could be black tie, since some of her people would not have the requisite clothing. She had another concern too: she was the grocers daughter. She didnt want to come over here dressed up like that. It was an impoverished time in Britain after all. Black tie was agreed, but the dinner was still grand enough in all conscience. Then there was the return match. Taking advantage of the Reagan teams inexperience, Nicko Henderson had got Dick Allen to promise that the President would come to the customary reciprocal dinner at the British Embassy the following night. This was in violation of the existing convention that only the Vice-President attended these return dinners, but the Reagan team did not know this. By the time they had realized their mistake and tried to get out of it, Henderson had sent out the invitations. Reagan came with a good grace.**** In her speech that night, Mrs Thatcher added her own passage to Hendersons draft, words about the two oclock in the morning courage which leaders have to have when faced with lonely decisions. This greatly pleased Reagan,

who replied that she herself had already shown such courage on too many occasions to name. Truly a warm beautiful occasion, Reagan wrote in his diary. The only disappointment for Mrs Thatcher was that the Reagans left without dancing to the band. After they had departed, Henderson invited her on to the floor: Mrs T accepted my offer without complication or inhibition, and, once we were well launched on the floor, confessed to me that that was what she had been wanting to do all evening. She loved dancing, something, so I found out, she did extremely well.¹²⁹ She was most reluctant to go to bed, threatening a different sort of two o'clock courage by going off to see the floodlit Washington monuments, but Denis put his foot down, crying, bed. On her last night in America, after a rapturous reception for a speech in New York, Mrs Thatcher gathered with Denis, Henderson and aides in her suite in the Waldorf before taking the plane home. Mrs T was still in a state of euphoria from the applause she had received which was indeed very loud and genuine and burst out: You know we all ought to go dancing again . . . Denis foot came down heavily. Both sides rejoiced at the visit. It was a great success, Henderson remembered. They saw completely eye to eye. We needed a crowbar to pull them apart, remarked Reagans press secretary, Jim Brady. I believe a real friendship exists between the P.M. her family us, Reagan commented. The essence of this friendship was simple and effective. They believed the same things, and they both wanted to work actively to bring them about. I have full confidence in the President, Mrs Thatcher scribbled at the bottom of a thank-you note to Henderson. I believe he will do things he wants to do and he wont give up. They also had compatible, though utterly different, temperaments he the relaxed, almost lazy generalist who charmed everyone with his easygoing ways, she the hyperactive, zealous, intensely knowledgeable leader, who injected energy into all her doings but also displayed what Reagan considered to be the elegance of a typical, gracious English lady. They shared a moral outlook on the world and also, in their emphasis on formality, dressing smartly and being what Americans call classy, a sort of aesthetic. The personal chemistry was undeniable. He treated her in a very courteous and sort of slightly flirtatious way, to which she responded, recalled Robin Butler. It turned out that they would often disagree about tactics, and that his more optimistic and her less sunny view of the possibilities of a non-nuclear future would lead to problems, but their basic personal trust and sense of common purpose never failed. Yet, for all her enthusiasm and affection for the leader of the free world, Mrs Thatcher was not blind to his limitations. Lord Carrington recalled their meeting on the first day: After the arrival ceremony we went into the Oval Office and I remember Reagan saying: Well of course, the South Africans are whites and they fought for us during the war. The blacks are black and are Communists. I think even Margaret thought this was rather a simplification . . . She came out and she turned to me and, pointing at her head, she said, Peter, theres nothing there. That wasnt exactly true, because there was something there and she no doubt didnt really mean that. Mrs Thatcher came to realize that Reagans strengths and mental abilities were very different from her own, but she never lost her underlying admiration for him. To the typed letter of thanks she sent him, she added, in her own hand: We shall never have a happier visit.¹³⁸ She felt she had a powerful friend. She knew that he would help in the economic and political struggles ahead. Her pleasure and gratitude were genuine. -Notes* Mrs Thatchers nervousness before the ceremony is indicated by the row she began at Blair House, the official guest house where she and her party were staying. She fiercely attacked Lord Carrington for what she called your policy in the Middle East, which she considered dangerous in its attempt at a rapprochement with the Palestine Liberation Organization, adding, Ill lose my seat at Finchley. By his own account, her Foreign Secretary said, And Ill lose my temper, and went out, slamming the door (interview with Lord Carrington). Clive Whitmore hurriedly scribbled a note to Mrs Thatcher which said, This place is bugged. She then drew a circle in the air with her finger to indicate bugging. (Interview with Sir Clive Whitmore.)** Mrs Thatcher sometimes gave her height as 5 foot 4 inches, and sometimes as 5 foot 5 inches.*** A new verb has entered the Washington lexicon, declared the New York Times. It is said to be possible to Thatcherize an economy. The verb is not precisely defined, but many see it as a bad thing to do. Since Thatcherization bears a conservative label, some people fear that our new conservative President will lead us down the same disagreeable path. (New York Times, 1 Mar. 1981.)**** Although Hendersons manoeuvring annoyed the sticklers for protocol, Allen and others realized that the Presidents attendance at this return dinner (and others) could have its advantages. This would be one way, suggested an NSC memo, to underscore the substantive importance Reagan placed on US relations with key allies, and signal a break with the discord in the transatlantic alliance seen in the recent past. (Rentschler to Tyson, Thatcher Visit and Related Thoughts, 26 Jan. 1981, 5. Official Working Visit of Prime Minister Thatcher of United Kingdom 02/26/1981 (1 of 8), Box 4, Charles Tyson Files, Reagan Library.)Revue de presseA masterpiece of clear and intelligent writingMargaret Thatcher: From Grantham to

the Falklands is already one of the great classic political biographies. John O'Sullivan, *The Weekly Standard* It's an incredible level of access. Margaret Thatcher: From Grantham to the Falklands is the first of two volumes, and it presents a remarkable and richly detailed portrait. Craig Fehrman, *Boston Globe* Thatcher was a remarkable politician and Moore does justice to her distinctive qualities. David Runciman, *London of Books* Moore presents us with enough new material to offer a fresh, even vulnerable person behind the mythology. Moore's writing is often elegant and vivid, particularly when he escapes the burden of authorized biographer by turning to commentary on Thatcher's behavior and decisions. Jane Merrick, *The Independent* Charles Moore gives a unique insight into his iconic subject. Startling. Richard Preston, *The Telegraph* A notable landmark, meticulously researched and gracefully expounded. It is not the only biography to appear so opportunely, but Moore writes with greater freedom, insight, and objectivity. Both ideologically and personally, we now have a better understanding of the remarkable figure who became Britain's first woman prime minister. Peter Clark, *Financial Times* Highly readable. Joe Murphy, *London Evening Standard* [Moore] is not afraid to address the contradictions and tease out the inconsistencies of his subject. Nor to be critical, sometimes deeply so. The result is to paint a much more multidimensional portrait of Thatcher than the caricature heroine adored by the right or the devil incarnate loathed by the left. The prose is intricate, elegant and laced with dry humor. Immensely adds to our knowledge and understanding of the longest-reigning prime minister of the democratic age. Andrew Rawnsley, *The Observer* Moore has produced a biography so masterly, so packed with fascinating detail, with such a strong narrative drive, propelled by a central character who is at the same time both very bizarre and very conventional that it comes as close as biography can come to being a work of art. Friends and foes of Thatcher, and agnostics and sceptics too, will all find plenty on which to feast. On virtually every page there is a revelation that, had it been known at the time, would have blasted all the rest of the news off the front pages. This book is a triumph of diligence. Moore interviewed 315 people, and was clearly blessed with the knack of getting them to open up. Ribald insults, gossip, political secrets, private grievances and funny stories many of them very, very funny fly off every page. But it is also a triumph of narrative art and human understanding, at its centre a peculiar force of nature, never to be repeated. One of the greatest political biographies ever written. *The Daily Mail* [Moore] has discharged the first part of his commission superbly. He has marshalled a huge range of sources, many of them new, without letting himself be swamped. He has spoken to practically everyone who ever had anything to do with her, and interweaves their recollections skilfully to bring out wider themes. If the second volume, charting her mounting hubris and eventual nemesis, maintains this quality it will be a tremendous achievement. John Campbell, *The Independent* The authorized, remarkably evenhanded biography of the grimly divisive, late Iron Lady of Britain. Well balanced. We look forward to the planned sequel. Moore's pace, his fascination, and his command of detail never slacken. This is a masterly piece of work. Matthew Parris, *The Times* Charles Moore is the perfect biographer: thorough, empathetic, enquiring, and eloquent. This is the portrayal of a life well-lived, explored in a book well-written. *Sunday Express* A life's work of research and interviewing. Independent on Sunday An immensely readable account of the greatest political life of the second half of the 20th century. Patrick O'Flynn, *Daily Express* It's hard to imagine anyone, even the most anti-Thatcherite, finding this dull. It sparkles with insight, drama, and wit. *Daily Mail* There are, of course, plenty of good books about Mrs. Thatcher. But Moore's is comfortably the best: indeed, with its elegant prose, dry wit, prodigious research and careful judgments, it is one of the best political biographies I have ever read. Dominic Sandbrook, *Sunday Times* Now comes the first volume of an authorized biography that may well turn out to be one of the great lives of modern times. It is not often that you can say of a 900-page book that it leaves you wanting to read more. But in this case it is true. *The Economist* Good biographies, and this is an exceptionally good one, tell us things we did not know about the life of their subject. *New Statesman* This is not just a good book; it's a great one. What gives this work the edge is not just Moore's deep knowledge of and affection for his subject; it is the sheer amount of work he has done. The number of interviews he has conducted is simply staggering. Yet although huge, it quite dances along and because of his very pronounced sense of the absurd, often makes us laugh out loud. A.N. Wilson, *London Evening Standard*