

Upon getting the news that she'll be playing Princess Margaret in *The Crown*, a successful Netflix drama, Helena Bonham Carter directly visited Anne Glenconner. For more than 30 years, Anne had been the lady-in-waiting to the princess. Throughout the duration of her services, she was a first-eye witness to all the tension and thrill of the princess's life. Anne escorted Princess Margaret in many events such as galas and royal tours, her frustrated love affairs and misfortunes, and when the princess went to the clear beaches of Mustique or had picnics at Kensington Palace.

Anne Glenconner has now revealed the details of how her life was with the princess. She did not hide anything and has told what she recalls about Margaret and about her own life while she was employed as a courtier to the British royal family. Here, you'll learn all the intriguing aspects of working as a lady-in-waiting.

Being a courtier is an esteemed honor and a courtier is usually chosen among a select group of noble British families.

Do you think of a time that made your life completely different forever? Lady Anne Glenconner actually has one.

When she was nineteen-year-old, Lady Anne Glenconner, a debutante at the time, sailed from London to New York in November 1952. In the US, she took part in select social cliques, coming together with film directors, and actors and actresses such as Bette Davis and Bob Hope. However, early in one February morning in 1953, a telegram reached Glenconner, which would alter the path of her life. Queen Elizabeth II was going to be formally crowned in a coronation in a few months. The queen had included Anne's name among her maids of honor, the signification of which is that she was to serve as an attendant to Elizabeth during the coronation.

Traditionally, the royal family members in Britain assign a private staff of courtiers. Among the courtiers are there equerries, who are senior attendants assigned from the armed forces; grooms of the robes, people in charge of ceremonial royal clothing; and ladies-in-waiting, women employed as attendants to female royal family members. Though these can seem like they are servants' duties, they, in fact, are very esteemed roles since these roles are given by the royals to people from noble families whom they deem trustworthy friends, and the next generations oftentimes assume these titles from their predecessors.

Thus, though a gratifyingly astounding duty for her, Glenconner was somewhat anticipating this since her father had served as equerry to King George. Shortly after receiving the news, she went back to the UK to carry out her assignment to the royal family.

The coronation took place on the second of June, 1953, at Westminster Abbey, with the participation of eight thousand viewers. The coronation was the first to be broadcast on TVs, and many people viewed it in their houses.

In the course of the coronation, Glenconner assisted Elizabeth with her huge train, whose length was more than twenty-one feet and whose embellishments included the emblems of every country part of the British commonwealth. Lest the queen felt faint, Anne carried smelling salts inside small containers which were in her gloves,

In Anne's memories, the after-coronation celebrations at Buckingham Palace are joyful events, with one exception though. Elizabeth's younger sibling Princess Margaret looked low-spirited. , Margaret then explained to Anne that she was sad during the celebration day. Her father had passed recently away then and she thought her sister was slipping away as well, which was correct. The queen was shortly overwhelmed with the tasks and liabilities brought by her position as queen.

What Margaret was supposed to do now is to adapt to life under the shadow of her queen sister.

Chapter 1 - Princess Margaret was a person who set trends in fashion and influenced beyond aristocratic circles.

It is not always easy to set free from the shadow of an elder sibling. But, what if the Queen of England was the sibling!

Compared to her diligent older sibling, Margaret became known for being headstrong and disobedient. In the time of the vivacious sixties, both Princess Margaret and Lady Anne Glenconner became part of a clique of luxuriously self-indulgent bohemian nobles and artists among whom there were the photographer Cecil Beaton, the painter Lucian Freud, and the director Harold Pinter

The bohemians living in the belle epoque had the Left Bank of Paris, and the beatniks in the fifties downtown Manhattan. Margaret and her entourage of friends had Mustique.

By the time the £45,000-worth purchase of the Caribbean island by Anne and her husband Colin was realized in 1958, there was neither running water nor electricity. Now, the island has become one of the most elite escape. What is the reason for its popularity? It is pretty easy to see why: Others came after her wherever Margaret went.

First things first, what did make the island this much lovely for her? The princess and the photographer Anthony Armstrong Jones married each other in 1960. They traveled around the world in Britannia, the royal yacht, on their honeymoon and moored the yacht at Mustique.

The island's simplistic beauty enthralled Margaret. Thus Colin, husband of Anne, gave her a plot of land as a wedding present. Anthony despised the island and had left it for good. But, with their marriage getting more problematic, this shortly added up to the island's charm. She retreated to the island on a regular basis but was alone.

On the island, she could freely Margaret swim and collect shells, which was her passion, away from the eyes of the media. The island served as a getaway from the formal etiquette in the royal family for Margaret. Actually, when there was no running water on Mustique, she gladly took shower using a bucket! Notwithstanding the island's easy-going appeal, the sense of royal behavior still persisted in her. She demanded others to bob a curtsy when greeting her and to use the honorific title "Ma'am" everywhere.

Margaret unquestionably relished the good life, and she shortly had notable designer Oliver Messel construct a deluxe villa on Mustique. Her peers shortly followed her everywhere. Nobles and rock royalty, too, hired Messel to construct villas for them, among whom there were Mick Jagger, David Bowie, and nobles like Viscountess Royston.

As a new decade was about to start, the rural island the Glenconners purchased in 1958 turned into an authentic popular place for bohemians. Now, people such as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the Obamas visit the island regularly which happens thanks to Princess Margaret's miraculous touch.

Chapter 2 - Life as a royal member isn't constantly as thrilling as you anticipate.

Lady Anne Glenconner was enchanted to be maid-of-honor for Queen Elizabeth during the coronation. Then, Princess Margaret asked her to meet an even more estimable royal duty.

By the time she received the invitation, Anne already had three sons and twin daughters. At the baptism of her daughters in 1971, Princess Margaret asked Anne if she would have more babies. Anne responded no. Thus, Margarets offered her to be her lady-in-waiting?

Anne was delighted to fulfill this duty. She took part in a group of Margaret's ladies-in-waiting, who constituted her intimate friends and confidantes. The ladies-in-waiting worked on a roster system, in which they fulfilled their official responsibilities in turn. However, Anne later learned that notwithstanding the alluring title of lady-in-waiting, a great many responsibilities she was to fulfill were dull.

Then what was Anne going to do as lady-in-waiting? Her principal task was to escort Princess Margaret on official visits and to ensure there wasn't any problem and the princess's needs were satisfied in the most pleasant way.

The occasions consisted usually of sparkling galas, Anne's responsibilities required only material provision for Margaret's needs. Once she came to an occasion, for instance, Anne

always looked for the location of the toilets and waited at the toilets' door if the princess was using the toilets in order to thwart any uncomfortable incidents.

Next comes Margaret's drink arrangement. The princess was meticulous when it came to her drink; thus, Anne had to ensure the princess was given the appropriate drink at the right moment: whiskey and water served at lunch; gin and tonic served in the evening, which was the precise order of her drink.

If the event was bigger, then Anne's responsibilities got more difficult. Many people could attend majestic royal events and Princess Margaret, who was just over five feet long, was rather short. On and off, Anne wasn't able to spot her among many people! She recalls she looked around wildly for Margaret many times, however, Anne never displayed her worry. Similar to the princess herself, her ladies-in-waiting were anticipated to show noble calm anytime on the outside.

Escorting Margaret on official events wasn't the only job of Anne. She served as her princess's confidante as well. They had lots of calm days together at the princess's own residence at Kensington Palace. Margaret strictly adhered to her habits when home, especially her habits of eating. Three courses were served to her table each lunchtime and never started without a prawn cocktail. At five sharp, she drank a cup of Earl Grey tea and ate a Leibniz cookie.

This habit wasn't humdrum for her. Oppositely, it was very indispensable to Margaret. Her habit must have acted like a welcome break from her tiring series of royal tasks. Though the princess was famous for being a spirited person dressing up according to the vogue, Anne usually sensed her friend would rather have the quiet of home.

Chapter 3 - During the princess's lifetime, austere royal order impeded her romantic relationships.

Relationships are difficult. Think of how difficult they can be when they take place while the British royal family watches over them.

Actually, Margaret didn't have a happy marriage with Anthony Armstrong Jones. From some perspectives, it was already going to fail when it first began; Anthony wasn't even close to being Margaret's first preference of husband.

There was another man whom Margaret loved most deeply before marrying Anthony in 1960. In 1947, Margaret had traveled South Africa on the Royal Train, a luxurious train exclusive to the royal family, together with her parents and Elizabeth. On the train, there were horses which were cared for by King George's equerry, Peter Townsend. Each day, Margaret rode a horse, escorted by Peter. With the romantic African scenery in which they found themselves, Peter and Margaret were in love with each other.

However, Townsend was a divorcé and according to royal protocol then, a marriage with someone divorced was prohibited.

The princess's circle of friends thinks she could never forget her first and forbidden love. Maybe this factor, among others, played a role in their unsettled marriage. Anthony was known to be rude and to irascible. He surely cheated on Margaret with many women. In 1978, he impregnated his mistress Lucy Lindsay Hogg.

Then Margaret made a very unusual step. She filed for divorce. Many viewed her divorce as sensational and her divorce covered the front pages in the media. However, through these hard times, she found solace in Roddy Llewellyn, her companion for a very long time. An athlete, Roddy was seventeen years younger than Margaret's, which was also sensational

They met in 1973 during a weekend party at Anna and Colin's property in Scotland and they were already getting along very well by the time they were at Anna's, meeting each other by chance on the train to the highlands in Scotland. Margaret's personal secretary says they talked continuously during the whole journey. Upon arriving at their destination, the impudent princess kept the driver waiting and went shopping with Roddy to buy a rather tight pair of swimming trunks!

Their instantaneous affinity didn't stop there. Their relationship continued as cautious lovers, which lasted ten years, waiting for the agony of Margaret's divorce to pass away and the following media sensation.

Who can tell how happier Margaret would have been if she could have sooner separated from Anthony – or if she could have married Peter from the onset? However, the royal protocol would have let it happen by no means.

Chapter 4 - As for royal tours, what can happen is less likely to happen than what is expected not to happen!

Picture in your mind Imelda Marcos demonstrating her shoe collection to you or participating in the eightieth birthday of King of Swaziland – which you would do as your job! For Lady Anne Glenconner, one of the best advantages of serving as lady-in-waiting was the chance to escort Princess Margaret on a series of international royal tours.

However, during these royal tours, Anne faced unwonted professional difficulties.

One instance is Princess Margaret's 1975 Australia tour. During this tour, the local people were beguiled with her easy-going, friendly demeanor. The media, however, was attacking her. Her marriage with Anthony was troubled and this was in the front pages of every news, which mitigated after a cocktail party thrown by Margaret for the media on the Royal Train. This was her method of making friends with journalists and shortly thereafter there were far more pleasing headlines about her!

Then, there was her Asia-Pacific tour in 1978 in which Margaret got sick. Thus, she requested Anne to complete the tour instead of her. Anne recalls that Imelda Marcos, wife of the Filipino president, Ferdinand Marcos, was offended that Margaret herself didn't visit her. Fortunately, she brightened up after showing Anne her vast collection including more than a thousand shoes.

During a tour of the United States in the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan made a grave faux pas when he confused the princess with Anne, and welcomed Anne as the princess. When they learned about the Alzheimer's diagnosis of Reagan after the incident, they were curious whether the illness had been in its early stages that day.

Anne usually handled fashion issues on tour, too. When Margaret's shoes were soaked with water at the Melbourne races because of rain, Anne had to promptly dry them using a microwave. For the celebration of the eightieth birthday of King Sobuzha II, Margaret was going to put a medal on the chest of the king on a 1981 tour of Swaziland. When Margaret and Anne arrived, they found out shirts were by no means part of the formal dress in Swaziland. Anne needed to immediately deliver a message saying the king should carry a dress across his chest so that Margaret could give him his medal.

These all are part of your job if you're touring the world with a royal!

Chapter 5 - When they aren't in the eyes of the press, Margaret and her family relished unwinding together in an informal way.

What should you take with you if you're going for an easy-going picnic in summer? Princess Margaret would always take a thermos of tea, a range of cold cuts in sensible Tupperware containers, and a steward, of course! When she wasn't working, she was no different than any of us – not fully, of course.

On duty as a senior royal, Margaret was busy with a schedule full of official meetings. However, on her vacation, the whole royal family had fun together. However, since every member of the royal family was escorted by their staff, holidays at their preferred private residence, the Royal Lodge in Windsor, were usually rather populous!

The favorite activities of the family included walking and swimming during the summer months; crowded groups of guests invited to join in traditional pheasant hunts during the winter months.

No matter what the season is, in the evenings, the party would gather in the apartment of the Queen Mother. In private, Margaret and Elizabeth would yield their mother just like everyone else. Each night, for instance, the Queen Mother had a dry martini and watched her popular TV program, Dad's Army, on feet. What's the issue here? According to Royal protocol, no

one can sit if the Queen Mother is on her feet. Thus, following a long tiring day of walking or shooting, people in the Lodge couldn't sit and unwind!

During dinner, the Queen Mother would make toasts to the people she knew out of habit – but she had a quirk! Did she like the person? Then she would say aloud their name and lift her glass above the table. If it is vice versa, then she would say aloud their name and lower her glass below the table. Presumably, these toasts could last for really long hours!

Going on holiday with Princess Margaret wasn't always dull. Anne Glenconner remembers that Margaret would usually arrange lavish parties spontaneously. At one time, Margaret and a small group of staff went to the Isle of Wight and there they relished an extravagant lunch at Osborne House, where Queen Victoria used to spend her summers. At another time, she held a dinner for a group of people in the Tower of London and had the crown jewels put on display.

No matter what she did, be it walking in the estate of Windsor or having dinner among the crown jewels, the princess enjoyed a great much of her time off!

Chapter 6 - Both in private and public, the royal family of Britain has engaged in the elimination of stigma on AIDS.

Many simply see the lives of the royal family and their aristocratic courtiers as enchanting. However, no matter how rich or privileged one is, it is always difficult to pull the strings of one's own life, which is also within the knowledge of Lady Anne Glenconner.

Anne served as the confidante of the gregarious Princess Margaret when they were in public. But there were many unfortunate events in her private life, such as the death of Charlie, her heroin addict child in 1996 when he was forty-year-old. There was also her son Henry, whose diagnosis showed AIDS in 1986.

When Henry was diagnosed with it, AIDS wasn't sufficiently known by the public and thus was stigmatized. Numerous people declined to get in touch with AIDS-patients, thinking AIDS could spread to them. Therefore, most people carrying AIDS at earlier times were compelled to remain apart from society and victims of terrible solitude. However, the royal family supported both Anne and his son and found comfort and gave them comfort.

Princess Diana has been renownedly known as part of the earliest public personages to remove the stigma on AIDS. She visited the London Lighthouse in Notting Hill, which was the earliest care center and hospice for AIDS patients in the UK, in 1989. On the tour, the photographs of the princess and AIDS patients embracing each other were taken. In this way, she dissipated the false prejudgment regarding the transmission of AIDS via skin contact.

Actually, other members of the royal family were aside from Diane also trailblazers in terms of AIDS. Margaret was the person responsible for the foundation of the London Lighthouse

in 1988 which Diana visited in 1989. Margaret frequented the Lighthouse, and she became a patron of the Terrence Higgins Trust, which is a charity for sexual health. All of these were done at a time when AIDS and other diseases spread via sexual intercourse weren't addressed in "polite circles." However, Margaret and Diane were influential in sexual health discussion in the public conversation.

However, when it is about Diane and Margaret, Anne vividly recalls the affection they gave to Henry in private. Both of the princesses themselves visited Henry before his death. Unfortunately, the Glenconners' social cliques weren't as broad-minded as them. Upon learning that Henry was diagnosed with AIDS, most of their friends became estranged to the Glenconners.

For Anne, both of the princesses were more than merely being public figures helping AIDS patients. Diane and Margaret shared their sympathy with her after learning the diagnosis of Henry.

Chapter 7 - Hardships Margaret went through depreciated neither her legacy nor her sense of humor in her late life.

Seeing a friend is getting worse day by day isn't easy. It wasn't always easy for Glenconner late in the life of Princess Margaret. Margaret's health was diminishing and was hit by a series of strokes which ended up making her weaker. But the princess always kept her unique personality.

Clean-living is definitely not a word to describe the princess. She smoked cigarettes throughout her life, and, despite having comparatively small household servants, two chambermaids had to be there for her, always. What was their task? Clearing her ashes accumulated in her ashtrays.

From 1985 onward, her chest started to hurt and consequently had a portion of her lung surgically removed. When she suffered her earliest stroke, it was 1994. The stroke hit when she was having a dinner party in Mustique together with the Glenconners and then she all of a sudden fell over the table. Soon thereafter, she was hit by another stroke while preparing the bath to take a shower. After this incident that caused terrible burns on her feet, she was unable to move for a while.

In the aftermath of these strokes, she got too sick to return to Great Britain. Though the palace announced her morale was quite high, this wasn't even close to reality. She was depressed and ordered the curtains at her Mustique villa not to be opened.

Finally, she flew back to England, where she resumed her recuperation at Balmoral Castle. Amid this, Prime Minister Tony Blair was staying at Balmoral with her wife Cherie, too. Watching the Blair couple running around the grounds every morning in shiny lycra sports clothes was very amusing to the princess. She saw the couple jogging every morning and soon regained her usual high spirits.

Unfortunately, her health never fully recuperated. The last stroke hit on the eighth of February, 2002, which resulted in the death of the princess the next day, when she was seventy-one-year-old.

In the aftermath of her death, the British society remembered her as Elizabeth's gregarious, occasionally inclined to cause sensations, but always a lovely younger sibling. For Anne Glenconner, apart from the qualities already mentioned, she was also a faithful friend with a good sense of humor

Lady in Waiting: My Extraordinary Life in the Shadow of the Crown by Anne Glenconner Book Review

Royal life is not always a bed of roses. Princess Margaret was a fashionable high-society person living a wealthy lifestyle, traveling between bohemian London and deluxe Mustique quite easily. Yet, though she was famous as a modern princess, royal protocol encroached her life. She influenced fashion and was a fashionista, and also an eccentric royal: it's not a surprise Margaret's life is still captivating.

Arrange the interior of your house like a princess.

Princess Margaret was known as an interior stylist doing stylish decorations. What was preeminent in her style was her famous high-low mix. In her villa in Mustique, Margaret made her luxe furnishings more prominent using her simple shell collection. Don't be hesitant to blend different things just as Princess Margaret did!

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