



Backstairs Billy: The Life of William Tallon, the Queen Mother's Most Devoted Servant

Tom Quinn

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One of the nation's best kept secrets, life behind the gates of Buckingham Palace is subject to worldwide speculation. In this book Tom Quinn traces the fascinating relationship between the Queen Mother and her most devoted servant.

William Tallon, who died in 2007, was a shopkeeper's son from the Midlands who rose through the ranks to work for the Queen Mother for more than fifty years. Known as "Backstairs Billy," he was charming, amusing, occasionally bitchy—and extremely promiscuous.

Billy adored her and she adored Billy; perhaps because of his high-camp style and outrageous remarks about the well-born equerries, royal press people and advisers, but mostly because he made her gin and tonics just the way she liked them—nine-tenths gin and one-tenth tonic.

Outrageously funny, scandalous, sometimes shocking, but always fascinating, this is the royal family through the eyes of one of its most extroverted servants.

Tom Quinn is the author of many titles including *London's Strangest Tales*, *Cocoa at Midnight: The Real Life Story of My Time as a Housekeeper*, and *The Cook's Tale: Life Below Stairs as it Really Was*. He also writes occasional obituaries for the *Times* and edits *Country Business* magazine.

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