



The Royal Families of Europe

Geoffrey Hindley

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As fascinating as it is informative, this chronicle of Europe's most enduring system of government—monarchy—explores the many colorful and often controversial facets of an institution that has survived revolution, warfare, regicides, national strife, and the occasional sheer incompetence of the head beneath the crown. While it considers monarchical history as well as the tales, intrigues, scandals, and historical gossip that have attached themselves to both the British and continental monarchies, this always engaging volume also speculates upon the future of European monarchy as a vital and viable form of government after the year 2000. The speculation is not idle, for monarchy continues to command the world's attention and to wield significant influence throughout Europe. Of the fifteen members of the European Union, seven are monarchies—among them Spain, whose king saved the country's democracy from a military coup in the 1980s, and Belgium, where the monarchy has proven to be a crucial factor in the survival of a fractured nation. In England four generations of Windsors survive and thrive, and the Dutch royal house, too, enjoys immense popularity. Meanwhile, former monarchs like Constantine II of Greece, Michael II of Romania, and Simeon of Bulgaria retain their titles and loyal followers who refuse to forfeit the hope of their kings' restoration to power. Surveying the sweep of monarchy in Britain and across the regal face of the European continent, *The Royal Families of Europe* adeptly illuminates an institution that flourishes with possibilities and prospects beyond ceremony, ermine robes, crowns, and scepters.

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