

# The Iron Lady (2011)

105 min - [Biography](#) | [Drama](#) | [History](#) - 5 January 2012 (Spain)

Ratings: **6,3/10** from [44.188 users](#)

Metascore: [54/100](#)

Reviews: [308 user](#) | [308 critic](#) | [41](#) from [Metacritic.com](#)

An elderly Margaret Thatcher talks to the imagined presence of her recently deceased husband as she struggles to come to terms with his death while scenes from her past life, from girlhood to British prime minister, intervene.

**Director:** [Phyllida Lloyd](#)

**Writer:** [Abi Morgan](#) (screenplay)

**Stars:** [Meryl Streep](#), [Jim Broadbent](#), [Susan Brown](#)

## Storyline

Elderly and a virtual prisoner in her own home due to her concerned staff and daughter Carol, Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first woman prime minister, looks back on her life as she clears out her late husband Denis's clothes for the Oxfam shop. Denis is seen as being her rock as she first enters parliament and then runs for the leadership of the Conservative Party, culminating in her eventual premiership. Now his ghost joins her to comment on her successes and failures, sometimes to her annoyance, generally to her comfort until ultimately, as the clothes are sent to the charity shop, Denis departs from Margaret's life forever. *Written by don @ minifie-1*

## Plot Summary

Biopic of Margaret Thatcher, the United Kingdoms first female Prime Minister. Now

elderly and senile, Thatcher spends much of her time in conversation with her husband Denis, who is dead. Interspersed with her everyday life are snippets of her life and political career. The middle class daughter of a grocer, she obtained a good degree and developed an interest in politics. She was first elected in 1959 and quickly developed a reputation for dealing with difficult issues and showing herself more than capable of taking on her male counterparts in the House of Commons. As Prime Minister, she takes on the very powerful unions seeing her popularity plummet until her patriotic response to Argentina's invasion of the Falkland islands leads to her re-election. In the longer term, her rigid approach with her colleagues leads to her downfall and the Conservative party ousts her from the leadership. *Written by garykmcd*



British cinema poster

(Wikipedia)

<http://www.imdb.com/>

# *The Iron Lady* (film)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

***The Iron Lady*** is a 2011 British semi-biographical film based on the life of Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013), the longest-serving Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1979–1990) of the 20th century. The film was directed by Phyllida Lloyd. Thatcher is portrayed primarily by Meryl Streep, but also, in her formative and early political years, by Alexandra Roach. Thatcher's husband, Denis Thatcher, is portrayed by Jim Broadbent, and Thatcher's longest-serving cabinet member and eventual deputy, Geoffrey Howe, is portrayed by Anthony Head.

While the film was met with mixed reviews, Streep's performance was widely acclaimed, and considered to be one of the finest of her career. She received her 17th Academy Award nomination and ultimately the Academy Award for Best Actress for her portrayal of Thatcher across four decades. She also earned her third Golden Globe Award for Best Actress – Motion Picture Drama (eighth overall), and her second BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role.

## Plot

The film begins circa 2008 (opening against the backdrop of news of the Islamabad Marriott Hotel bombing) with an elderly Lady Thatcher buying milk unrecognized by other customers and walking back from the shop alone. Over the course of three days we see her struggle with dementia and with the lack of power that comes with old age, while looking back on defining moments of her personal and professional life, on which she reminisces with her (now-dead) husband, Denis Thatcher. She is shown as having difficulty distinguishing between the past and present. A theme throughout the film is the personal price that Thatcher has paid for power. Denis is portrayed as somewhat ambivalent about his wife's rise to power, her son Mark lives in South Africa and is shown as having little contact with his mother, and it is implied that Thatcher's relationship with her daughter Carol is at times strained.

In flashback we are shown Thatcher's youth, working in the family grocery store in Grantham,

listening to the political speeches of her father, whom she idolised – it is also hinted that she had a poor relationship with her mother, a housewife – and announcing that she has won a place at the University of Oxford. She remembers her struggle, as a young lower-middle class woman, to break into a snobbish male-dominated Tory party and find a seat in the House of Commons, along with businessman Denis Thatcher's marriage proposal to her. Her struggles to fit in as a "Lady Member" of the House, and as Education Secretary in Edward Heath's cabinet are also shown, as are her friendship with Airey Neave (later assassinated by the Irish National Liberation Army), her decision to stand for Leader of the Conservative Party, and her voice coaching and image change.

Further flashbacks examine historical events during her time as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom including the rising unemployment related to her monetarist policies and the tight 1981 budget (over the misgivings of "wet" members of her Cabinet – Ian Gilmour, Francis Pym, Michael Heseltine, and Jim Prior), the 1981 Brixton riot, the 1984–1985 UK miners' strike and the bombing in Brighton of the Grand Hotel during the 1984 Conservative Party Conference, when she and Denis were almost killed. We also see (slightly out of chronological sequence) her decision to retake the Falkland Islands following the islands' invasion by Argentina in 1982, the sinking of the ARA *General Belgrano* and Britain's subsequent victory in the Falklands War, her friendship with U.S. President Ronald Reagan and emergence as a world figure, and the economic boom of the late 1980s.

By 1990, Thatcher is shown as an imperious but aging figure, ranting aggressively at her cabinet, refusing to accept that the Community Charge (the "Poll Tax") is regarded as unjust, and fiercely opposed to European Integration. Her deputy Geoffrey Howe resigns after being humiliated by her in a cabinet meeting, Heseltine challenges her for the party leadership and her loss of support from her cabinet colleagues leaves her little choice but to resign as Prime Minister, about which she is shown as still disheartened about twenty years later.

Eventually, Thatcher is shown packing up her late husband's belongings, and telling him it's time for him to go. Denis's ghost leaves her fully dressed

but without his shoes – in spite of her cries that she is not yet ready to lose him, and she is left alone washing up a teacup.

### Cast

- Meryl Streep as Margaret Thatcher
- Alexandra Roach as young Margaret
- Jim Broadbent as Denis Thatcher
- Harry Lloyd as young Denis
- Iain Glen as Alfred Roberts
- Olivia Colman as Carol Thatcher
- Anthony Head as Geoffrey Howe
- Nicholas Farrell as Airey Neave
- Richard E. Grant as Michael Heseltine
- Martin Wimbush as Mark Carlisle
- Paul Bentley as Douglas Hurd
- Robin Kermode as John Major
- John Sessions as Edward Heath
- Roger Allam as Gordon Reece
- David Westhead as Reg Prentice
- Michael Pennington as Michael Foot
- Angus Wright as John Nott
- Julian Wadham as Francis Pym
- Nick Dunning as Jim Prior
- Pip Torrens as Ian Gilmour
- Ronald Reagan (*archive footage*) as himself
- Reginald Green as Ronald Reagan

### Production

Filming began in the UK on 31 December 2010, and the film was released in late 2011.

In preparation for her role, Streep sat through a session at the House of Commons in January 2011 to observe British MPs in action. Extensive filming took place at the neogothic Manchester Town Hall, which is often used as a location double for films which feature the Houses of Parliament because of its architectural similarity.

Streep has said: "The prospect of exploring the swathe cut through history by this remarkable woman is a daunting and exciting challenge. I am trying to approach the role with as much zeal, fervour and attention to detail as the real Lady Thatcher possesses – I can only hope my stamina will begin to approach her own."

### Historical inaccuracies

It is suggested in the film that Thatcher had said goodbye to her friend Airey Neave only a few moments before his assassination, and had to be held back from the scene by security officers. In fact, she was not in Westminster at the time of his death and was informed of it while carrying out official duties elsewhere.

The film fails to show any other female MPs in parliament, thus exaggerating Thatcher's isolation and brilliance as a lone woman. In fact during Thatcher's time in parliament, total women MPs numbered between 19 and 41.

### Box office

As of 26 April 2012, *The Iron Lady* had grossed \$30,004,924 in the United States and Canada, along with \$84,938,707 in other territories, for a worldwide total of \$114,943,631.

### Reception

On Rotten Tomatoes the film held, as of March 2013, a "rotten" rating of 52% based on 201 reviews, with an average rating of 5.7/10. Metacritic gives the film a score of 54 based on 41 reviews by critics, indicating "mixed or average reviews".

The film's depiction of Thatcher has been criticized by her children, Mark and Carol Thatcher, who are reported to have said, prior to having seen the film, that "it sounds like some left-wing fantasy." Stuart Jeffries of the British newspaper *The Guardian* was cautiously optimistic about a non-British actor playing Thatcher, but expressed politically coloured concern that its "narrative trajectory" could overlook "rage about what Thatcher, economy destroyer and warmonger, was doing to Britain" in favour of an "exclusive focus on Thatcher as a woman triumphing against the odds." Karen Sue Smith of *America Magazine*, however, wrote that "by combining the Baroness's real roles of wife, mother and leader, the film's portrait of her does what many purported "lives of great men" fail to do—namely, show the person in context, in the quotidian."

*The Mail on Sunday* reported in August 2011 that some viewers invited to a test screening of the unfinished film were concerned at the film's depiction of Margaret Thatcher's frail health in

recent years. This view was also shared in the media subsequent to the film's release. The *Daily Telegraph* reported in January 2012 that "it is impossible not to be disturbed by [Streep's] depiction of Lady Thatcher's decline into dementia" as part of an article that was headlined: "*The Iron Lady* reflects society's insensitive attitude towards people with dementia." Roger Ebert gave the film two stars out of four, praising Streep's performance but lamenting that "she's all dressed up with nowhere to go" in a film that cannot decide what it wants to say about Thatcher; "few people were neutral in their feelings about [Thatcher], except the makers of this picture".

Film review blog *Movie Metropolis* praised Streep's performance but criticized the lack of depth given to the rest of the story, which seemed to only focus on the glory days of Thatcher's reign.

Despite mixed reviews, Streep's performance in the title role garnered near universal acclaim. Kevin Maher of *The Times* said: "Streep has found the woman within the caricature." David Gritten at *The Daily Telegraph* commented; "Awards should be coming Streep's way; yet her brilliance rather overshadows the film itself." Xan Brooks of *The Guardian* said Streep's performance "is astonishing and all but flawless". Critic Baz Bamigboye of the *Daily Mail* wrote: "Only an actress of Streep's stature could possibly capture Thatcher's essence and bring it to the screen. It's a performance of towering proportions that sets a new benchmark for acting." Richard Corliss of *Time* named Streep's performance one of the Top 10 Movie Performances of 2011.

Becoming her most lauded performance since *Sophie's Choice*, Streep's portrayal ultimately garnered her the Academy Award for Best Actress (her 17th nomination and third award overall), as well as several other awards, including the BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role, and the Golden Globe Award for Best Actress – Motion Picture Drama. The film also won the Academy Award for Best Makeup.

Thatcher herself did not watch the film, nor did her children.

### Soundtrack

1. "Soldiers of the Queen"
2. "MT"

3. "Grocer's Daughter"
4. "Grand Hotel"
5. "Swing Parliament"
6. "Shall We Dance?"
7. "Denis"
8. "The Great in Great Britain"
9. "Airey Neave"
10. "Discord and Harmony"
11. "The Twins"
12. "Nation of Shopkeepers"
13. "Fiscal Responsibility"
14. "Crisis of Confidence"
15. "Community Charge"
16. "Casta Diva"
17. "The Difficult Decisions"
18. "Exclusion Zone"
19. "Statecraft"
20. "Steady the Buffs"
21. "Prelude No. 1 in C Major, BWV 846" (Johann Sebastian Bach)

The trailer for the film features Madness' ska/pop song "Our House". The teaser trailer features Clint Mansell's theme tune for the science-fiction film *Moon*.

Not included on the soundtrack album or listings although credited among the eight songs at the end of the film is "(I'm In Love With) Margaret Thatcher" by Burnley punk band Notsensibles, which was re-released as a single due to the publicity. The song appears seventy-five minutes into the film, as part of the Falklands War victory celebrations.