



The Great Silence: Britain from the Shadow of the First World War to the Dawn of the Jazz Age

Juliet Nicolson

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Juliet Nicolson pieces together colorful personalities, historic moments, and intimate details to create a social history of the two years following the Great War in Britain. Not since Nicolson's *The Perfect Summer* have we seen an account that so vividly captures a nation's psyche at a particular moment in history.

The euphoria of Armistice Day 1918 vaporizes to reveal the carnage that war has left in its wake. But from Britain's despair emerges new life. For veterans with faces demolished in the trenches, surgeon Harold Gillies brings hope with his miraculous skin-grafting procedure. Women win the vote, skirt hems leap, and Brits forget their troubles at packed dance halls. The remains of a nameless soldier are laid to rest in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Westminster Abbey. "The Great Silence," observed in memory of the countless dead, halts citizens in silent reverence.

Nicolson crafts her narrative using a lively cast of characters: from an aging butler to a pair of newlyweds, from the Prince of Wales to T.E. Lawrence, the real-life Lawrence of Arabia. *The Great Silence* depicts a nation fighting the forces that threaten to tear it apart and discovering the common bonds that hold it together.

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