



My Years As Prime Minister

Jean Chrétien

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My Years as Prime Minister is Jean Chrétien's own story, told with insight and humour, of his ten years at 24 Sussex Drive as Canada's twentieth prime minister.

By the time he left office, Jean Chrétien had been in politics for forty years – and his experience is evident on every page of his important, engaging memoir. Chrétien loves to tell a good tale – and he does so here in the same honest, plain-spoken style of **Straight from the Heart**, his earlier bestselling account of his years as a Cabinet minister. He gives us a self-portrait of a working prime minister – the passionate Canadian renowned for finishing every speech with *Vive le Canada!*

Chrétien knows how government works, and his political instincts are sharp. Through the decade 1993 to 2003 we watch as he wins three majority elections as leader of the Liberal Party of Canada. Finding the country in a dreadful state, dangerously in debt and bitterly divided, he describes how his government wiped out the deficit in just four years, helped to defeat the separatists in the cliffhanger Quebec referendum, passed the *Clarity Act*, and set out to fulfill the economic and social promises his party made in its famous Red Books. He reveals how and why he kept the country out of the war in Iraq – a defining moment for many Canadians; led Team Canada on whirlwind trade missions around the world; and participated in a host of major international summits.

Along with his astute comments on politics and government, he gives candid portraits of a broad cast of characters. Over a beer, Tony Blair confides his hesitation about taking Britain into the Iraq War; in the corridors of the United Nations, Bill Clinton offers to speak to Quebecers on behalf of Canadian unity; while at home, Chrétien reveals the events leading up to the departure of his finance minister, Paul Martin. He recounts the dramatic night in which his quick-thinking wife, Aline, saved him from an assassination attempt at 24 Sussex Drive; and, with lively humour, he describes how he and Clinton successfully escaped from their own bodyguards – to the consternation of all.

Even in the highest office in the land, Jean Chrétien never lost his connection with ordinary Canadians. He is as warm and funny in his recollections as in person, at once combative and cool-headed, a man full of vitality and charm. Above all, from start to finish, his love for his country and his passion to keep it united run clear and deep.

My Years As Prime Minister Details

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From Reader Review My Years As Prime Minister for online ebook

Jonathan says

As engaging, confident, and casual as the man himself. No surprises. Little new insight.

Tina says

This is a fantastic read. What I really enjoyed about the book was Chrétien's sense of humour. It's rare for books to make me laugh out loud, but this one did numerous times. I've been practicing my "Shawinigan handshake" technique for days! It was a fantastically interesting decade of Canadian politics and this book is a great overview, told by a master storyteller who makes you feel proud to be a Canadian.

Tiarabeth says

It is no secret to anyone that I am a liberal and that I loved the Chretien administration. Jean Chretien is to this day my favorite Canadian Leader. He lead this country with dignity and grace. He loved this county and it showed.

He wrote this book not as a look at what I did for this country but as a taste of what his past was like and his first few years in office. I think all Canadians should read this book so they can get a view at one of our greatest Prime Ministers.

Andrew Ogilvie says

Book was good. This was probably my first time reading the biography of a Canadian Prime Minister.

It kept my interest.

Peter says

Excellent book. It's always good to read the memoir of a leader, because you learn the back-stories.

Derrick White says

Enjoyable, especially if you like the man, as I do.

Cedric Jean-marie says

Fair warning up front, a lot of decisions that Chretien made were in line with what I believed to be fair and just for the greater good. Therefore if you are more on the right when it comes to politics you might find it frustrating to relive some of the decisions that he made during his tenure.

With that out of the way I felt this was an excellent memoir that gives you an earnest view into one of the most interesting jobs to be had in our country. Chretien walks a fine line between promoting himself and exposing himself. I'm sure there is possibly some liberties taken in making himself look better in certain situations but he is honest about this possibility in the books acknowledgements. If you give him the benefit of the doubt you will find a lot of insight into some of this countries greatest challenges during his time as our prime minister.

Like anyone else doing this job he was faced with some extremely tough circumstances and decisions but he goes into detail behind some of the most important decisions or events that have affected our country in the decade he served. He has some great anecdotes but of greater interest are his explanations of why or how he came to make certain decisions. Some of these open my mind to possibilities I never would have even considered and even encouraged me to make some changes in the way I chose to lead.

Overall I found it an easy book to read and was surprised by the amount of warmth hidden within the pages that involve the love he has for his family and especially his wife. The way the book ended confirmed my deep belief that greatness comes from those that surround us. He was lucky to be surrounded by so many incredible individuals and the greatest of all was his wife.

I hope to be as lucky.

Angela says

I liked this behind the scenes look at Canadian politics especially since this was during a time when I was just getting into politics.

It provides good detailed information and shows Jean's sense of humour.

However.... I just couldn't get the nagging feeling out of my head as I read it that this was not Jean's voice. Not the voice of the Jean that I grew to know from the media (i.e. golfballs) Whenever he was explaining a decision that was controversial, he would always go back to how he was doing it for the people, for Canada, for the country he loved. I guess I was expecting more of the feisty guy "i did it because it was right" kind of thing.

Nevertheless, an enjoyable book.

Shane Mackenzie says

If you think you dislike Jean Chretien, you don't. Read this book. He is charming, witty, funny, honest and brilliant. The measures he took during his years as Prime Ministerial were compassionate, necessary and effective. Overall, I have great respect for the man and he aptly deals with his critics. I enjoyed the fact that he did not take stabs at those who would consider him an enemy and gave anecdotes that truly let you delve into the man's innermost self. Fantastic read and a great autobiography.

Doreen Petersen says

I really enjoyed reading this one. I find Canada fascinating.

Laurie says

I wasn't sure what to expect when I started reading this book or even how I felt about Jean Chrétien but I was pleasantly surprised. His humour and sense of fair play are evident in his writing, as is his love of his country.

I am glad I read this book. I now understand more about the politics of this period in our history and that decision making is not just black and white...there are many shades of grey.

An easy, enjoyable read.

Soumya says

Would add an extra half if I could. I couldn't appreciate it as much perhaps because I don't know as much about the Canadian policies or politics. All my Canadian friends rave abt it though...

Adam McPhee says

I should know better, but I have a soft spot for the Shawinigan Strangler. Certainly I would've taken a few more years from him if it meant a few less from Harper. Not much about governance in this, but some funny anecdotes about from his years as prime minister. The ones I recall best: Putin giving a tour of the Kremlin to Chretien's grandson, Chretien spooking the Secret Service when he convinced Clinton to take off at a G8 meeting, that thing with the Newfoundland premier showing down the Spanish fishing fleet.

Corinne says

I stood in line and got the book signed by the Prime Minister and it was well worth the wait. He was the man

who made me want to go into the news business and watch c-pac like it was wrestling. If you love politics and want to know how Canadian cabinet ministers are assigned and what you have to do to balance a budget, Nationally of course this is a great book. Also he's a pretty funny guy in real life.

Noah Doucette says

At first I was kinda turned off by what felt like a boastful tone in the book. After a few chapters though I was won over by Chretien's charm. Jean speaks with warmth and I found that I was rooting for Jean most of the time.

I learned a lot about Canadian and world politics of the 90s and early 00's. I loved hearing about the relationship between Chretien and Clinton.

Although I admit that I don't know that much about the Martin/Chretien feud I can't help but feel that this memoir didn't really tell the story fairly. Martin was written as kind of irrational and snaky. I think it would be interesting to read martin's explanation of the feud.

I would recommend this book to most Canadians and everyone that has an interest in Canadian politics or world politics.
