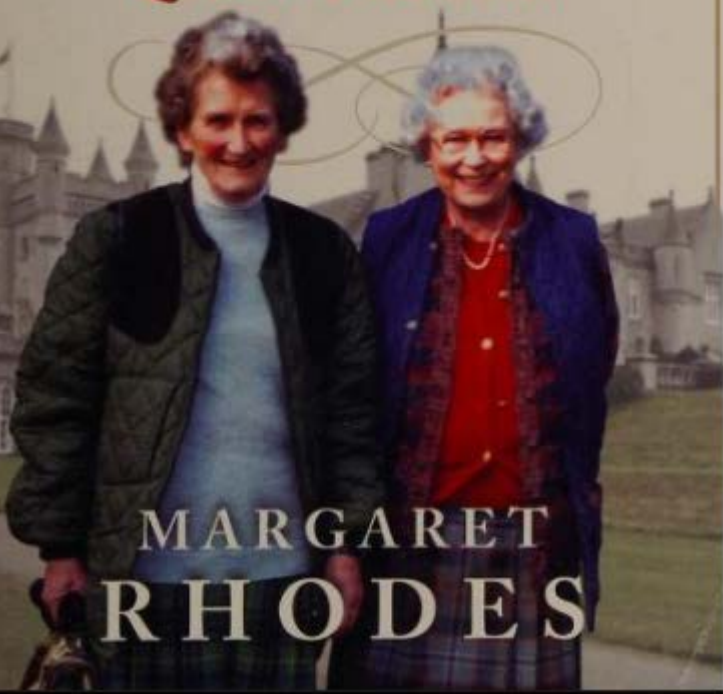


THE NUMBER ONE BESTSELLER

# *The* FINAL CURTSEY

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A ROYAL MEMOIR BY THE  
QUEEN'S COUSIN





Carberry Tower

Animal Liberation Front would have loved him.

He first went to India when he was twenty-five in 1894, and stayed with the Maharajah of Cooch Behar, who had succeeded to his throne at the tender age of ten months. I don't know how he got to know His Royal Highness, but in those days the Indian princes regularly flitted between their states, European capitals and places like the French Riviera. He was a frequent visitor to London and moved around in society and so I suppose they might have met in that way. There were three other big game hunting trips in 1895 and 1896 in the foothills of the Himalayas, Bengal and Assam. I have his game book, in which he precisely recorded for the three visits a bag of thirteen tigers, three leopards, twenty-one rhino, thirty-nine buffalo, ten bison, three

python, and many deer, pig, quail and peacock. In 1898 he crossed the Atlantic to shoot duck in the south of Mexico, followed by fishing off the west coast of Florida. His greatest adventure was in 1901. He took the Trans-Siberian railway, alighting on the banks of the river Ob near the present modern town of Novosibirsk. The road petered out at Birsk so he took to horseback for the next three hundred miles into the mountains. This ride took twenty days and ended at Kosh Agach, close to the Sino-Russian-Kazakhstan border. My father's companions for this trek were two experienced big game hunters, Philip Vanderbyl and Charles Radcliffe, both army captains.

They hunted in the Kosh Agach area for three weeks, and then headed south for the Tian Shan mountains.



My father at the funeral of King George V in 1936. My father's braces snapped and he had to walk four and a half miles holding up his trousers with his elbows