



The King's Speech

By now I assume that most of my readers have already seen the Oscar-winning movie of 2011, *The King's Speech*, the dramatic story of King George VI and his debilitating speech impediment and how it was cured by an eccentric Australian speech therapist.



But that's only part of the story. It is also about England in the 1930s, leading up to World War II, and so it is also a great lesson in history. It is also the story of the British royal family dealing with the strained relationship between the two brothers, David the older, Prince of Wales, heir to the throne, and George the stammerer. When their father dies and David becomes King Edward VIII. But he is very unhappy because he is not permitted to marry his twice-divorced lover, the American Wallis Simpson. He abdicates the throne in order to be able to marry the woman he loves. This became one of great love affairs of the 20th century, in which a King gave up his throne for a woman. The former king and his wife become the famous Duke and Duchess of Windsor.

George is terrified at the prospect of being King with his horrible stammer. But he develops a strong bond with his speech therapist who is able to explore the childhood causes of George's stammer. The story of their uncommon friendship is one of the obscure stories of English history.

The British movie industry must be congratulated for creating a movie that gives millions of moviegoers an intimate view of the British royal family, its intense personal problems, in the context of the approach of World War II. To those of us who actually lived through that period, we are entertained by a story that evokes nostalgia and surprise.

The film won 12 Oscar nominations. George VI was superbly played by Colin Firth who won an Oscar as Best Actor of 2011. The speech therapist, Lionel Logue, was wonderfully played by veteran Australian actor, Geoffrey Rush. The performances of these two great actors created a sense of realism, emotional tension, and hilarity rarely seen at this level of artistry in motion pictures. It proves that you don't need police chases, car crashes, raucous violence, exploding buildings and unsavory characters to keep an audience entertained.

The film's director, Tom Hooper, won the Best Director Oscar. He is obviously a man of great taste, a master of detail, with the ability to create visual scenes that enrapt the viewer. We are happy that such brilliant talent still exists in politically exhausted England. Except for the one scene in which George is



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on June 30, 2011

encouraged by the therapist to articulate as forcefully as possible the worst four-letter obscenities he can think of, the movie is quite family friendly. George VI himself was a devoted family man.

The movie making power of England and Hollywood represent the greatest cultural force in the world today. And the social media reinforce what is seen on the screen by millions across the world. Which means that Anglo-Saxon culture still dominates the globe. And it all started with Shakespeare who is still the greatest dramatist that ever lived.

The King's Speech is the kind of movie that enhances our culture, not only with a great story, but the technological genius invented by the West. Advances in computer technology have played an important part in the improved technology of film making. But content is still a matter of intelligence, taste, and a cultural heritage of enduring spiritual power. But today it takes courage to use that power in film making.

Joel Morgenstern, in his Wall Street Journal review of the film, writes:

No screen portrait of a king has ever been more stirring — heartbreaking at first, then stirring. That's partly due to the screenplay, which contains two of the best-written roles in recent memory, and to Mr. Hooper's superb direction. . . . But what Mr. Firth makes of his role is sheer magic. Fear, forlorn hopelessness, self-irony, self-loathing, towering anger, unyielding courage, he plays it all with Shakespearean fullness and Chekhovian tact, and all by way of revealing the memorable presence of a good man.

We hope that more films of this great quality will emerge from the studios of England and Hollywood. The talent is obviously there. And a world in turmoil needs as much of it as it can get.



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