

What it's like to be the 'black sheep' sister of controversial billionaire Sir Philip Green


'I was important for three years, eight months, and then once he came along, it was all over'

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NEWS



 Former Lewis's and Topshop mogul Sir Philip Green (L) pictured with his older sister Elizabeth as a child (R)

Elizabeth Green has lived in the shadow of her billionaire little brother [Sir Philip Green](#) her whole life, up until now.

The 72-year-old would learn about the business mogul's luxurious lifestyle and celebrity soirees by opening up the tabloids the following day.

In the mid-90s when Sir Philip took over Lewis's department store in Manchester, now Primark, Luciano Pavarotti sang at the ballroom there to mark the occasion, but Elizabeth didn't make the guest list.

When she did, she felt out of place, and when it came to introducing herself to Philip's close friends of 25 years, she was faced with the embarrassment that they didn't know who she was.


"We had no idea Philip had a sister," they would respond.

For his 50th birthday bash in 2002, Philip flew 200 guests to a secret location - Cyprus - where George Benson, Tom Jones, and Earth Wind and Fire performed.

During the holiday, when Elizabeth was trying to find her seat with the rest of the family for a presentation on Philip's life, hosted by TV's Michael Aspel, their mother Alma uttered: "You're not in the script," as she directed her away.

Those words stuck with her and became the title of her tell-all autobiography - *Not In The Script: The Black Sheep In The Billionaire's Family* - where she speaks out for the first time on her turbulent relationships with her famous brother and mum, who had a close bond.



 Elizabeth has written a tell-all autobiography (Image: John David West)

“And when it came to my mother, she was so proud of her son... I was at the party still, so what was there to complain about?”

“When you haven’t been included very much and haven’t been treated very nicely, you get used to being treated like that, so it wasn’t ever a surprise.”

The mum-of-three, whose daughter studied at Manchester University, begins her memoir by describing her upbringing as a ‘cold climate’.

The siblings lost their father, who Elizabeth says she was similar to, in a sudden heart attack when she was aged 15, and Philip was 12.

Two years later, Philip was already following in the footsteps of their mother, a successful businesswoman, and started work at the petrol station that she ran, alongside a launderette.

In the book, Elizabeth compares Alma to former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, saying her mum - who died of dementia in 2015 - admired the Iron Lady, hanging a picture of them together in her flat.

Another incident depicted in the book tells of how Elizabeth had bought Philip a signed book by a comedian for Christmas one year.

When opening the gift, she claims he screamed at her in front of their friends and family, saying he wished she’d have bought her a tie from M&S instead.

“That was Philip all over. You just get to a point where you don’t want to be screamed at anymore,” Elizabeth told the Manchester Evening News.

“Sometimes things were a dagger in the heart.

“If I was invited, I felt like an outsider. When I wasn’t invited, then I was the outsider. So it was a bit of a no win.

“But I couldn’t say anything. Whatever you said to Philip, he’d be like ‘too bad, who cares what you think?’



📍 **Elizabeth and her younger brother Philip when they were children**

But her walls were mostly dedicated to Philip by the time of his knighthood in 2006, 'a shrine' as Elizabeth calls it, as she remembers her mother telling her she had to earn her place.

Speaking over Zoom from her New York apartment, where she emigrated 12 years ago and opened a restaurant, she says that growing up in a Jewish family in North London meant that her brother was favoured for being male.

While it's apparent she appreciates how fortunate she was in coming from a wealthy family, she felt ignored and unloved.

"In many cultures, the son is more important. Jewish mothers love their sons", she explained.


"I was important for three years, eight months, and then once he came along, it was all over.

"I always wanted to be a writer, and finally in 2008, I got the chance to write in the Jewish Chronicle and had my work published.

"I framed it to put on the wall. But it ended up above the toilet so it was unreadable."

She doesn't recall a specific moment that caused the siblings to grow apart, and says that Philip taking the limelight was a slow process, which became clearer once he started his first business at the age of 21, importing jeans from the Far East, with Alma as his bookkeeper.



 **Beyonce Knowles, Sir Philip Green and Cara Delevingne attend the Topshop Topman New York City flagship opening dinner at Grand Central Terminal on November 4, 2014** (Image: Getty Images)

Now at 69-years-old, the retail tycoon, formerly known as the 'King of the High Street,' has seen his reputation diminish, first with the demise of department store BHS which he sold for £1, and most recently with the Arcadia empire collapse amid the pandemic - where around 12,000 employees were laid off after the company went into administration following £750m debts.

Manchester-based fashion brand Boohoo snapped up Dorothy Perkins, Wallis and Burton in a deal worth £25.2 million, while online retailer Asos took on Topshop, Topman, and Miss Selfridge.

Despite being financially cut off since publishing her book in lockdown, Elizabeth, who was never close to her brother, can't help but defend the businessman, who is still based in Monaco.

"I loved Topshop, everybody did," Elizabeth said, whose wardrobe is full of the brand.

"People in America who visited England would say they went to Buckingham Palace, Tower of London, and Oxford Circus Topshop. It wasn't just going shopping, it was a whole outing.

"But remember Woolworths? We thought we'd never live without it. Things go on.

"I think my mother would have possibly wanted him to apologise.



Topshop has been taken over by Asos, but all retail sites have been permanently closed (Image: Adam Gerrard / Daily Mirror)

"But the pandemic has shown up a lot of flaws in businesses.

"There's lots of businesses going down, the people in Debenhams - are they being apologised to?"

She added: "Philip is a large colourful figure, he was the face of the brand. That changed when he became controversial and his actions were not liked.

"Businessmen don't go into business to fail, so I'm sure he feels like he failed."

Unlike Philip, who left private school at 15 with no O-levels, Elizabeth went to university to study sociology and trained to be a teacher, but says that still couldn't satisfy her mother as the school she taught at 'wasn't good enough'.

Describing herself as an 'old hippy', she packed her bags and jumped on a plane to India in the 70s at the age of 29.

"I don't think my mother gave me much self-confidence," she said.

"I didn't think I was anything much and then it got less and less and less."

By the time Philip was making serious money, Elizabeth searched for acceptance at the feet of the 'free love guru' Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, where she meditated three times a day.

While learning how to love herself, she says, she developed the art of manifesting - where you believe something for it to come true.



Elizabeth lived in India for three years

"My whole life has been about learning that lesson because of the way I was brought up," she said.

"The way I didn't get any attention, I ran around with loads of guys, because that was a way of getting close to people.

"These relationships were never going anywhere. And then I had to learn this lesson that I'm lovable, and then I'm worth something and then I mean something.

"I'm a very late bloomer."

Elizabeth divorced her husband after 23 years in 2007, with the moment she realised she couldn't stay married for any longer detailed in her book.

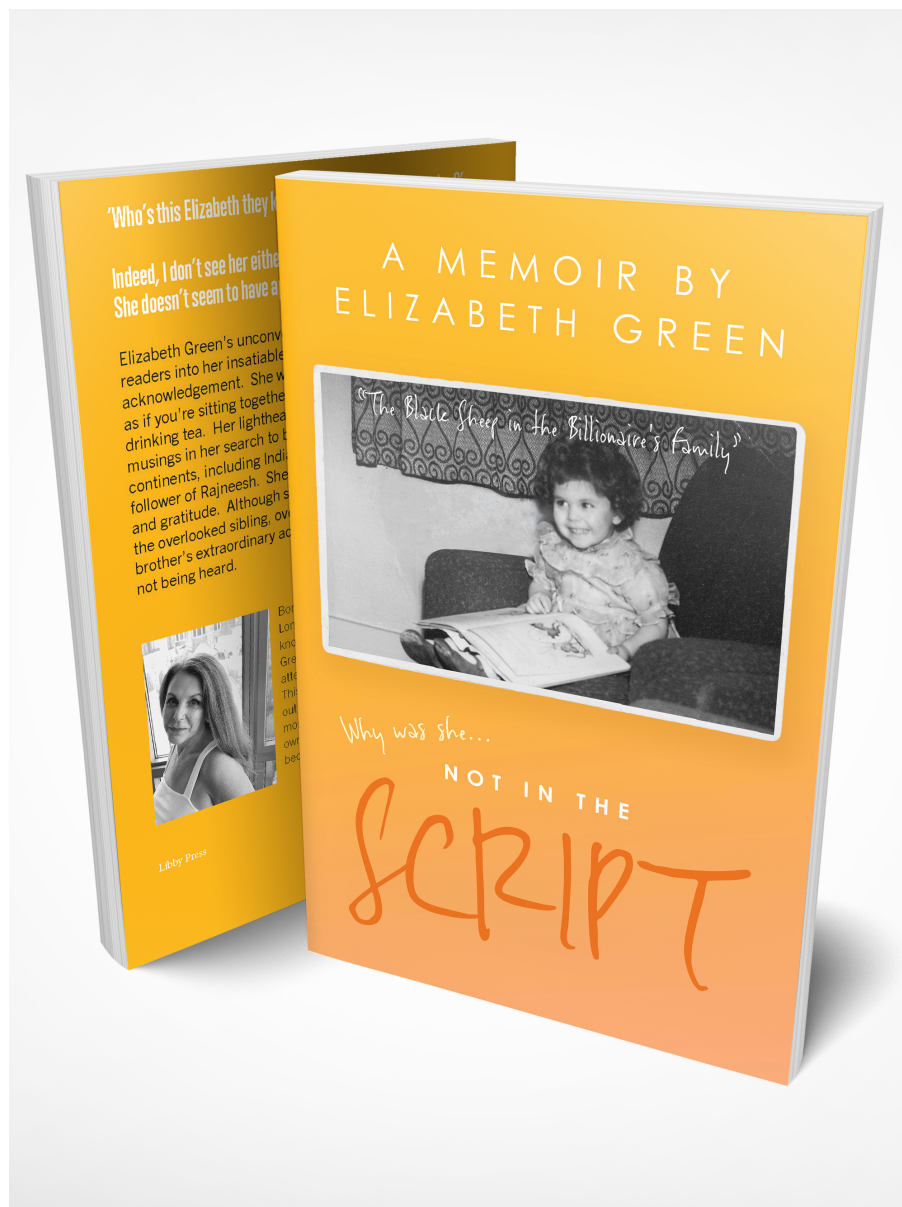
When she asked how they would celebrate their wedding anniversary, he reportedly responded: "Why would I want to celebrate with you?"

Despite being a pensioner, she's still finding romantic relationships on dating apps, often with younger men, advising women her age to put themselves out there.

She hopes to inspire older women who think their time may be up when it comes finding love a second time around.

"I never think of myself as an older woman. You've got to bring something to the party and put yourself out there," Elizabeth argues.

Hailing her move across the pond as the best decision she's made, she feels it's given her a new sense of freedom to forge her own story.



📖 Not In The Script: The Black Sheep In The Billionaire's Family

"I needed to be my own person and the only way I could do that was to leave England," Elizabeth continued.

"People don't recognise me here [in New York] and don't know of Philip as much, and it's less ageist here, I have friends of all ages.

"I wrote the book because I always wanted to be a writer and this also gave me a voice.

"I know that if he wasn't my brother, then I'd just be some other person who wrote a memoir.

"I don't know how he feels about it. They were generous with me and did look after me, so I imagine they think I've been a bit of a traitor."

The estranged sister added: "I hope he's fine, but I don't know."

Not In The Script: The Black Sheep In The Billionaire's Family by Elizabeth Green is available to order now.

