



Queen Elizabeth II

"She has a rare loveliness. I have felt this way since a few years ago, when I was invited by President Eisenhower to be part of the reception committee for Queen Elizabeth, who was visiting the White House during a tour of the United States. Now I am a Celt, and the instinctive idea of a Celt to a monarch, especially a British monarch, is automatically not the most flattering. But I went anyway, not with any enthusiasm, but out of curiosity, since I had never in my life seen a Queen, and I wanted to see how she behaved. We were all standing on the steps of the White House. It was raining, as I remember, ever so lightly, but it was raining, and the Queen drove up in an open car. The Americans didn't quite know what to do with royalty; there was no applause, just the sound of the light rain, the sound of the moving car—but otherwise utter silence. I really don't know if this upset the Queen, but when she came out of the car, I could detect what I sometimes see on the stage: a muscle, a tiny little muscle, quivering when it shouldn't have been. I was suddenly overwhelmed by this little woman. Despite my Welshness and my rejection of royalty, I suddenly saw all the majesty, all the brilliance of our Western civilization embodied in her. As she mounted the White House steps, I thought her one of the world's most beautiful women. And I am not hoping for a knighthood!"

~Richard Burton~

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