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Abdication Crisis in *The King's Speech*
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Zásady pro vypracování

Studentka se ve své práci zaměří na populární obraz abdikační krize v britské královské rodině tak, jak je popisuje film Králova řeč. Teoretická část práce bude obsahovat kulturně-historickou charakteristiku Británie 30. let se zaměřením na historickou roli George VI a Edwarda VIII a dalších politických osobností. Kromě toho se studentka zaměří i na krátkou charakteristiku populární kultury, kam filmové zpracování historického tématu patří. V praktické části práce pak studentka bude analyzovat film Králova řeč jako svůj primární zdroj a využije i deníky Lionela Logua zpracované dalším autorem. Ve své práci bude využívat jak práci s teoretickými a kritickými zdroji, tak vlastní analýzu zdrojů primárních.

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TITLE

Abdication Crisis in *The King's Speech*

ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis deals with the topic of the abdication crisis in *The King's Speech*. The theoretical part focuses on the 1930s Britain, the three kings who ruled during this period and the King's speech therapist. It also briefly introduces the genre of the film. The themes discussed in the theoretical part are then analysed in the practical part from the point of view of the film and are compared with reality.

KEYWORDS

The abdication crisis, *The King's Speech*, 1930s, Britain, Royal Family, George VI, Edward VIII, George V, Lionel Logue, speech therapy, historical drama

NÁZEV

Abdikační Krize ve Filmu *Králova Řeč*

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem abdikační krize ve filmu *Králova Řeč*. Teoretická část je zaměřena na Británii 30. let 20. století, tři krále, kteří v tomto období vládli, a královského logopeda. Stručně také představí žánr filmu. Témata probíraná v teoretické části jsou následně analyzována v praktické části z pohledu filmu a jsou srovnávána se skutečností.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Abdikační krize, *Králova Řeč*, Británie, 30. Léta 20. Století, Královská Rodina, Jiří VI., Edward VIII, Jiří V, Lionel Logue, logopedie, historické drama

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Introduction

The abdication crisis was a series of events, which happened in 1936 following King Edward VIII's decision to choose a woman he loved over his country. His responsibilities as a ruler fell onto his younger brother, George VI, who had a speech deficit. Therefore, people did not believe in him. However, with the help of his speech therapist, Lionel Logue, he managed to overcome the stammering. With the arrival of the second world war, he proved his worth and became one of Britain's most popular kings. His stiff upper lip attitude and even his speeches became an inspiration for the whole nation.

The King's Speech is an award-winning film, which portrays the life-long struggle of King George VI with speaking and his reluctant journey to the throne of Britain. The aim of this thesis is to analyse the effect of the abdication crisis and the events preceding it on the Royal Family as it is depicted in the film.

The thesis is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part consists of four chapters. The first chapter describes Britain in the 1930s. It focuses on the political sphere as well as on the living conditions of the people. It also mentions King George V. The second chapter deals with the two kings, who were concerned with the abdication crisis, Edward VIII and George VI. It examines their background and includes some of their most famous speeches. The following chapter provides a definition of speech therapy and introduces the King's speech therapist, Lionel Logue. The majority of information about Logue come from his grandson's books, in which he summarised Logue's personal diaries. He was not a famous person, until the release of the film, many people did not even know his name, thus there is not much information about his life available. The last chapter of the theoretical part briefly summarises a historical film as a genre.

The practical part is an analysis of the film *The King's Speech* and the themes, which were introduced in the theoretical part. The chapters, with the exception of the one focused on the film's genre, mirror the first part of the thesis. The themes are analysed from the point of view of the film and are compared to reality.

1. Britain in the 1930s

Britain's economy in the 1930s was hit by the Great depression. Unemployment, which was already high in the 20s, was further rising. In 1929 MacDonald formed a second Labour government, which Kenneth O. Morgan calls 'a disaster'. He attributes it to the American Stock Exchange in October 1929, which caused a downward spiral in trade and employment. However, Morgan also states that the situation was "far beyond the reach of any government."¹ Unemployment slowly decreased, however industrial stagnation and social decay remained. Traditional industries in Britain, such as steel, coal, shipbuilding, and cotton began declining. People organised demonstrations and hunger marches. These events were usually happening in London, similar to the hunger marches in the 20s. People would march from areas with high unemployment to London, where they would protest in front of the parliament. These marches were usually mercilessly oppressed.

The solutions to industrial problems in Britain rose from the traditional mix of British politics. Still, there were multiple other ideas. For example, as Morgan points out, David Lloyd George proposed to copy American New Deal and Sir Oswald Mosley tried to create a British variant of fascism.² MacDonald's government was unable to handle the situation. They were forced to take steps, which divided the cabinet, and that later led to the dissolution of the government. MacDonald decided to stay on as prime minister of the newly formed National Government, but his colleagues were exchanged. However, MacDonald slowly started fading into the background and the new government was mostly affected by the Conservatives. Their politics were based on class and regional division. Bryn O'Callaghan stated that "they were really two Britains in the 1930s."³ An individual gradually emerging from the crowd was Neville Chamberlain. He pursued the way of economic recovery. The government came up with marketing schemes such as cheap housing for areas where new light industries were emerging. The cheap housing led to a housing boom, especially in London. Britain's capital's urban areas grew which resulted in the expansion of suburbs. According to BBC, the houses in the outskirts of London were big and build in either simple modern styles or historical styles such as

¹ Kenneth O. Morgan, *Twentieth-century Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 32.

² Morgan, *Twentieth-century Britain*, 32-33.

³ "Life during depression," BBC, accessed October 17, 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/z86vxfr/revision/8>.

Georgian or Tudor.⁴ Due to urbanization, the countryside was disappearing, and eventually, urban growth had to be restricted. Simon Jenkins explains that it was restricted by law in 1931 and later by a green belt in 1934.⁵ In response to the expansion of suburbs, transportation was improved. People now needed to commute from a distance, which was enabled to them by the development of cars, railways, and trams.

Britain remained inclined towards pacifism, although socialists believed that Britain should form an alliance with the Soviet Union. Conservatives ensured the public, that there would be no war. It was Churchill who first called for a military response when Hitler marched into Rhineland, but his approach was generally opposed. Churchill seemed to have a sixth sense in a way. It was not only the second world war that he predicted. He also predicted the Cold war, the creation of the Israeli state, in a way even the 9/11, and last but not least, the abdication crisis. President Dwight D. Eisenhower described him as a man with “the mind of a historian and courage of a soldier.”⁶ Apart from those things, he was a painter, Nobel-Prize winning writer, but more importantly probably the most famous and iconic prime minister of the United Kingdom. However, he undertook a rocky road to the residency at 10 Downing Street, before becoming the prime minister no one took him seriously. During the time of the abdication crisis, Churchill was not at the forefront of British politics. However, he did play an important role; he was a friend and to some extent a mentor to Edward VIII. Churchill’s character is included in *The King’s Speech*, therefore it was important to include essential information describing his personality.

The attitude towards war in Britain started slowly changing and the government started to pursue national defence. In 1937 Neville Chamberlain became the prime minister. At first, his policy of appeasement was well received by the people. However, when he returned from Munich, the numbers of people protesting in Trafalgar Square were way larger than of those who came to welcome him at Downing Street. After his homecoming, Chamberlain delivered his ‘Peace for our time’ speech:

⁴ “Period style,” Homes, BBC, accessed January 27, 2022, https://www.bbc.co.uk/homes/design/period_1930s.shtml.

⁵ Simon Jenkins, *A Short History of London* (London: Penguin Books, 2019), 426.

⁶ James C. Humes, *Churchill: The Prophetic Statesman* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2012), 9.

My good friends, for the second time in our history, a British Prime Minister has returned from Germany bringing peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Go home and get a nice quiet sleep.⁷

Just as Churchill predicted, Britain did not escape the war by appeasing. Germany did not keep their end of the bargain, invaded Prague and later charged on Poland. Britain declared war on Germany along with France on 1st September 1939. The war brought many difficulties, however, it also solved unemployment and some of the economic issues.

Britain had three different kings during the 30s due to the abdication crisis. Edward VIII's decision to renounce his duties caused many problems. But before the calamity happened, George V was sitting on the British throne. He reigned from May 1910 until his death in January 1936. He was a very popular king, who kept the country stabilised in times of radical changes.

Prince George Frederick Ernest Albert was born on 3rd June 1865, only 18 months after his older brother, the rightful heir to the throne, Prince Albert Victor Christian Edward. The princes were very different in nature. David Cannadine described Albert as "quiet, delicate, lethargic, apathetic and a slow developer."⁸ On the other hand, George was energetic, resourceful, and confident. Despite not being destined to become king, George was much more suitable for the position.

On the 14th of January 1892, Albert succumbed to pneumonia and George became second in line to the throne, after his father. George's life changed overnight. Similarly, to the change his son, Bertie, would have to go through years later, even though, under a little different circumstance. By the time of his death, Albert was already engaged to Princess Victoria Mary of Teck, nicknamed May. During the time of mourning, George and May became very close and a year later they were married.

George had to end his naval career and start fulfilling the duties that came with his new titles. However, he did not enjoy the public affection and his newly acquired responsibilities. He

⁷ "Peace in Our Time," Famous Speeches in History, Emerson Kent, accessed October 18, 2021, http://www.emersonkent.com/speeches/peace_in_our_time.htm.

⁸ David Cannadine, *George V: The Unexpected King* (London: Penguin Books, 2014), 24.

would have rather spent his life shooting animals and collecting stamps. His official biographer, Harold Nicolson expressed: “He may be all right as a young midshipman and a wise old king, but when he was Duke of York ... he did nothing at all but kill [*i.e.* shoot] animals and stick in stamps.”⁹ And he was good at both of those things. He is responsible for enlarging the Royal Philatelic Collection and according to H. N. Brailsford, George “was said to be one of the best shots in England.”¹⁰ Nevertheless, he was not destined to be a hunter or a philatelist. The responsibilities became even greater, when his grandmother, Queen Victoria died in January 1901. His father did not share her way of keeping all the crown management to himself and rather moved part of it to George. He was preparing him for the moment, which came not even ten years later. On 6th May 1910, his father died, and George became King George V.

As mentioned earlier, George was likeable, seemed responsible, and cared deeply about his people, thus he was very well accepted as their new king. H.N. Brailsford describes him in his article *When George V Was King* as follows:

[...] among the three sovereigns it was not the too individual Victoria, nor the brilliant Edward VII, but the quiet, modest and dutiful, if undistinguished, George V who was by far the best beloved. Nothing in him, not even unusual talents or tastes, divided him from the mass of his subjects. Him no one criticized.¹¹

George started off his reign in a chaotic time. There was a constitutional struggle concerning the power of the House of Lords, which luckily solved itself with the elections that followed. A much bigger disturbance of peaceful reign came a few years later. The First World War commenced in 1914. Just like his son in the Second World War, he maintained a stiff upper lip attitude. As it is stated in the article about George V. on the royal.uk website, he visited troops and wounded servicemen in hospitals.¹² After the war, he was compelled to change the family name from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor in order to disassociate with Germany. He earned respect from his people thanks to his attitude during the war, thus they continued to believe in

⁹ David Sinclair, *Two Georges: The Making Of The Modern Monarchy* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988), 107.

¹⁰ Henry Noel Brailsford, “When George V Was King,” *Current History (1916-1940)* 43, no. 6 (1936): 573–77.

¹¹ Brailsford, “When George V Was King,” 573–77.

¹² “George V (r. 1910-1936),” Royal, accessed January 13, 2022, <https://www.royal.uk/george-v>.

him during the troubles, which met Britain later. Such as the Irish and Indian independence movements, changes in the government, and the rise of socialism.

George and May were considered distant parents, even for royals. The children were brought up by nannies and private tutors. David Cannadine stated: "The prince regarded fatherhood as a task akin to that of a ship's captain: he was a watchful and exacting disciplinarian."¹³ When George did tend to his kids, he was very strict, and the children were terrified of him. According to Randolph Churchill, George once declared: "My father was frightened of his mother, I was frightened of my father, and I am damned well going to see to it that my children are frightened of me."¹⁴ Due to his second son Bertie's speech problems, George was especially harsh to him. He was pushing him harder than his siblings to make up for his shortcomings. However, as the children grew older, George's affections started changing. David, his first-born, became the opposite of his father. He refused to obey orders and seemed to want to spend his life partying. George did not believe his son would make a successful king. He told his Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin: "After I am dead the boy will ruin himself in twelve months."¹⁵ On the other hand, George became fond of Bertie and very much adored his granddaughter, Elizabeth. George himself once said: "I pray to God my eldest son will never marry and have children, and that nothing will come between Bertie and Lilibet and the throne."¹⁶ The nickname 'Lilibet' was given to Elizabeth by George, and she still uses it today.

George's health started declining in the 1920s. Due to his illnesses, David had to take on some of his father's duties. George never fully recovered; his condition only worsened after his sister Victoria's death. On occasions, he had to be administered oxygen. When he laid down with a simple cold in January 1936, nobody expected that he would not be leaving his room ever again. In his final days, he was drifting in and out of consciousness. Prime Minister at the time, Stanley Baldwin, described the King in those days:

Each time he became conscious it was some kind inquiry or kind observation of someone, some words of gratitude for kindness shown. But he did say to his

¹³ Cannadine, *George V: The Unexpected King*, 50.

¹⁴ "George V," Oxford Reference, accessed January 3, 2022, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191826719.001.0001/q-oro-ed4-00004772>.

¹⁵ Keith Middlemas, and John Barnes, *Baldwin: A biography* (London: Macmillan, 1970), 976.

¹⁶ Kenneth Rose, *George V*, (London: Orion, 2000), 392.

secretary when he sent for him: "How is the Empire?" An unusual phrase in that form, and the secretary said: "All is well, sir, with the Empire", and the King gave him a smile and relapsed once more into unconsciousness.¹⁷

King George V died on 20th January 1936. The whole empire mourned their beloved king and tributes were paid to him. He was a surprisingly good ruler, even so as he was not meant to become one. He achieved great things during his reign and would always be remembered. Even more so as his successor brought Britain into chaos.

¹⁷ Stanley Baldwin, *Service of Our Lives: Last Speeches as Prime Minister* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938), 28.

2. The Abdication Crisis

This chapter will be concerned with the lives of the two sons of George V, who were the key characters of the abdication crisis. It begins with the man, without whom the crisis would never happen, and there would have a completely different person sitting on the throne of the United Kingdom today, Edward VIII.

Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David Windsor was born on 23rd June 1894 to King George V and Queen Mary. His last four names come from the patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. He used the name of the patron saint of Wales, David. He was the eldest son; therefore, he was raised to become king his whole life. He had private tutors, which specialised in royal duties. He attended Royal Naval College in Osborne and moved on to the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. However, when his father became the King of England, David was withdrawn before graduation and served as a midshipman aboard the battleship in Hindustan. When he came back, he entered Magdalen College in Oxford, from which he later left without any academic degree. In the First World War David joined the Grenadier Guards. He was only 20, which was the minimum age for active service. Because of him being an heir apparent, he was not allowed to serve at the front lines. After the war, he returned to his duties as the Prince of Wales. He represented the King in many events both in Britain and abroad. Thanks to this, he became a celebrity and even set men's fashion.

Although David excelled at his duties as the Prince of Wales, he behaved recklessly when it came to women. According to Adrian Phillips, during the war, while David was on leave in Paris, he started an affair with married woman Marguerite Alibert. He later broke off the affair, however, the affair came to haunt him a few years later when Marguerite shot her husband and the Royal Household had to go to lengths to ensure David's connection to her would not become public.¹⁸ In the upcoming years, David allegedly had affairs with many married women, until he met an American divorcee, Wallis Simpson. She was married for the second time by the time they met. This affair seemed to last longer than his previous flings. It worried the family, especially David's father and significantly worsened their relationship. As a future king, he was expected to find a woman fit to become queen and start a family.

¹⁸ Adrian Phillips, *The King Who Had to Go: Edward VIII, Mrs Simpson and the Hidden Politics of the Abdication Crisis* (Biteback Publishing Ltd, 2016), 38-39.

King George V died on 20th January 1936; David became King Edward VIII. However, he was never crowned as he was king for less than a year. Since his first day, he was causing unease in the royal household and the government. Deborah Cadbury described his approach to the role of king as “a spoilt child at a party.”¹⁹ He broke traditions, interfered with government policy, and was accompanied everywhere by Wallis Simpson. After her second divorce became publicly known, it opened up the possibility of David marrying her. The status of divorcees was looked at badly, especially when it came to a possible future queen. Sir Horace Wilson, who was an advisor to the prime minister wrote: “Public opinion, neither in the United Kingdom nor in the Dominions would stand for such a marriage, if only for the reason that the wife of a King automatically becomes Queen.”²⁰ Also, the Church of England did not permit the remarriage of divorced people if the former spouse was still alive, thus it was illegal for David to marry Wallis. The situation turned into a scandal and Prime Minister Baldwin was asked to convince the King not to marry her. Nonetheless, there were those who supported David, one of those people was his friend Winston Churchill.

Being unable to marry Simpson, David decided to abdicate. He had to sign documents in the presence of his younger brothers, to validate his decision. As it says in *Modern Law Review*: “The abdication was accomplished in law by giving statutory effect to the Sovereign’s declaration of abdication and by a consequential amendment of the act of settlement designed to exclude King Edward, his issue and descendants (If any) from the succession to which they would be entitled if that act was no amended.”²¹ On 11th December 1936, David explained the abdication in a worldwide radio broadcast:

At long last I am able to say a few words of my own. I have never wanted to withhold anything, but until now it has not been constitutionally possible for me to speak.

A few hours ago I discharged my last duty as King and Emperor, and now that I have been succeeded by my brother, the Duke of York, my first words must be to declare my allegiance to him. This I do with all my heart.

¹⁹ Deborah Cadbury, *Princes at War* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2015), 43.

²⁰ “Abdication discussions,” The National Archives, accessed January 8, 2022, <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/thirties-britain/abdication-discussions/>.

²¹ “Declaration of Abdication Act, 1936”, *The Modern Law Review* 1, no. 1 (June 1937): 64-66.

[...]

But you must believe me when I tell you that I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love. And I want you to know that the decision I have made has been mine and mine alone.

[...]

This decision has been made less difficult to me by the sure knowledge that my brother, with his long training in the public affairs of this country and with his fine qualities, will be able to take my place forthwith without interruption or injury to the life and progress of the empire. And he has one matchless blessing, enjoyed by so many of you, and not bestowed on me -- a happy home with his wife and children.

[...]

I now quit altogether public affairs and I lay down my burden. It may be some time before I return to my native land, but I shall always follow the fortunes of the British race and empire with profound interest, and if at any time in the future I can be found of service to his majesty in a private station, I shall not fail. And now, we all have a new King. I wish him and you, his people, happiness and prosperity with all my heart. God bless you all. God save the King!²²

After the abdication, David's brother Bertie, the new king, made him the duke of Windsor. David and Wallis married in France, where they predominantly lived for the rest of their lives. The Royal Family wanted to disassociate with them as much as possible. Even more when at the dawn of the Second world war, the couple visited Adolf Hitler during one of their honeymoon visits. David and Wallis were called Nazi sympathizers and traitors, however, royal historian Carolyn Harris argues, that the duke's motives were not warring, and he only wanted his new wife to experience a proper state visit.²³ Yet there were conspiracy theories, that the

²² BBC, "Edward VIII Abdication speech," accessed January 17, 2021, video, 7:02, <https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/anniversaries/december/edward-viii-abdication-speech>.

²³ "When the Duke of Windsor met Adolf Hitler," BBC News, last modified March 10, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-35765793>.

Duke and Duchess were collaborating with Hitler on overthrowing the British Royal Family. David's publicly known pro-German views did not help the allegations. When he was the Prince of Wales, he made a speech to the British Legion expressing a desire "to stretch forth the hand of friendship to the German."²⁴ Not even after the war, did the Royal Family's attitude towards David and Wallis improve. David 'was allowed' to visit England only a few times, Wallis was not welcomed. He attended his brother's and mother's funerals, but not his niece's coronation. He died in 1972 and was buried on the grounds of Windsor Castle.

Moving to the other key character of the abdication crisis and the main character of *The King's Speech*, George VI. He was called 'the reluctant king', yet throughout his reign, he proved to be just as determined and dutiful monarch as his father.

His full name was Albert Frederick Arthur George Windsor. He was born on 14th December 1895. His birthday was also the anniversary of the death of his great-grandfather Prince Albert, which was the reason he was named after him. The family was worried, that Queen Victoria would resent the boy because of his day of birth, but that was not the case. She wrote in her journal: "Georgie's first feeling was regret this dear child should be born on such a sad day. I have a feeling it may be a blessing for the dear little boy and may be looked upon as a gift from God!"²⁵ Growing up, Bertie, as he was called in family circles, used to be ill a lot and had a stutter, which became one of his signature signs. His stammering may have come from different causes. One of them could be David and Bertie's nanny, who turned out to be a tormenter. As Mark Logue claims in his book, she would pinch and twist David's arm to make him cry in front of his parents. Bertie, she would ignore and sometimes would not even feed him. This may have caused his chronic stomach problems and possibly rooted his stutter.²⁶ Another theory, according to Denis Judd, is that it was Bertie's tutors' fault. They forced him to write with his right hand, even though he was lefthanded.²⁷ Being bullied certainly did not help and Bertie became very insecure about himself. The insecurities as well as the stuttering stuck with him his whole life. When he became king, due to his speech difficulties and illnesses, people did not believe, he was going to last for a very long time, nor did they believe he was going to make a good king.

²⁴ Cadbury, *Princes at War*, 44.

²⁵ Mark Logue and Peter Conradi, *The King's Speech: How One Man Saved the British Monarchy* (London: Sterling Publishing Co., 2010), 73.

²⁶ Logue and Conradi, *The King's Speech*, 76.

²⁷ Denis Judd, *George VI* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), 14.

Bertie attended the Royal Naval College in Osborne and progressed to the Royal Naval College in Dartmouth. During the First World War, he served in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. Most men in the Royal Family went through army training and proceeded into the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. For example, Prince Phillip served during the Second World War with distinction in the Mediterranean and Pacific Fleets. After the First World War, Bertie went to Trinity College in Cambridge to study history, economics, and civics, but he stayed there only for one year. In 1920 his father made him Duke of York and he started taking on royal duties such as representing his father on tours across factories, mines, and railyards. On account of these tours, the press nicknamed him ‘the Industrial prince’.

Despite royal members being pushed into marriage by the family, Albert had almost complete freedom in choosing his wife. Albert set his eyes on Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon. Elizabeth was born on 4th August 1900. She became Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon after her father inherited Earldom. Her family were descendants of the Royal House of Scotland. The Bowes-Lyon family had been friends with the royals for a long time. Members of the Royal Family would occasionally stay at their castle.²⁸ She met Bertie at a ball, and he fell in love with her. However, Elizabeth declined his first two marriage offers. According to Cherry Gilchrist, Elizabeth did not want to become a member of the Royal Family because of the duties and the lack of private life. But later changed her mind and accepted Bertie’s proposal along with the ‘job’.²⁹ They got married on 26th April 1923 in Westminster Abbey. It was the first time since the thirteenth century that a royal wedding was held there, and it began a tradition for the Royal Family. Together, Bertie and Elizabeth had two daughters. First Elizabeth whom the family called Lilibet, and 4 years later Margaret.

As mentioned, when King George V died, Bertie’s older brother David became king. He was not married, nor did he have any children, which made Bertie the first in line to the throne. Although he was heir presumptive, he did not expect the events of December 1936. That was when the life of Bertie and his family changed overnight. David was unable to marry his ‘one true love’ as king and on account of that, he decided to abdicate. Even before the abdication, Bertie and Elizabeth were not fond of Wallis. Elizabeth would not call her by name, instead, she used ‘that woman’. She thought of her as “the lowest of the low, a thoroughly immoral

²⁸ “Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother,” The Royal Family, accessed January 15, 2022, <https://www.royal.uk/queen-elizabeth-queen-mother>.

²⁹ Cherry Gilchrist, *The Royal Family* (New York: Pearson Longman Publishing, 1999), 9-10.

woman.”³⁰ Because of this, Bertie and Elizabeth did rarely attend David’s gatherings, when they did Elizabeth would not hide her attitude toward Wallis. Neither Bertie nor Elizabeth wished to become the King and Queen of England. Bertie told his brother after hearing of the abdication for the first time: “None of us wants that, least of all I.”³¹ The couple enjoyed their life as minor royals and did not accept their newly acquired duty gladly. As Elizabeth blamed Wallis for the abdication, her repulsion towards Wallis grew. Years later, after Bertie’s death, it became even worse as she blamed her even for his premature passing.

Bertie’s accession to the throne was far from smooth. He was burdened by the fact that for the first time in many years his predecessor was still alive. He decided to use his father’s name as the regnal name and became George VI, to “restore confidence in the monarchy.”³² His coronation was rushed. Usually, it takes at least a year before the new monarch is crowned, but because his brother’s coronation has already been planned, Bertie inherited his date. Bertie was constantly doubting himself. He was not viewed fit to be king by the public, mainly because of his stammering problems. Above that, David did not prioritise his duties as king, thus he left Bertie with many problems.

Nothing in his father’s reign had prepared Albert, Duke of York for such a calamity. Although painfully aware of his own weaknesses as a prospective monarch, he was also familiar with his oldest brother’s failings and felt he must atone for them.³³

In 1939, Britain entered the war. Following his father’s example, Bertie displayed a stiff upper lip attitude. His first wartime speech aroused determination in the Brits.

In this grave hour, perhaps the most fateful in our history, I send to every household of my peoples, both at home and overseas, this message, spoken with the same depth of feeling for each one of you as if I were able to cross your threshold and speak to you myself.

³⁰ Catherine Whitney, *The Women of Windsor* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007), 39.

³¹ Whitney, *The Women of Windsor*, 48.

³² Judd, *George VI*, 141.

³³ Cadbury, *Princes at War*, 43.

For the second time in the lives of most of us we are at war.

Over and over again we have tried to find a peaceful way out of the differences between ourselves and those who are now our enemies. But it has been in vain. We have been forced into a conflict.

[...]

This is the ultimate issue which confronts us. For the sake of all that we ourselves hold dear, and of the world order and peace, it is unthinkable that we should refuse to meet the challenge.

It is to this high purpose that I now call my people at home and my peoples across the seas, who will make our cause their own. I ask them to stand calm and firm and united in this time of trial. The task will be hard. There may be dark days ahead, and war can no longer be confined to the battlefield. But we can only do the right as we see the right, and reverently commit our cause to God.

If one and all we keep resolutely faithful to it, ready for whatever service or sacrifice it may demand, then, with God's help, we shall prevail.

May He bless and keep us all.³⁴

By this time, he was being treated by his friend and speech therapist, Lionel Logue, so he stuttered only once during the radio address and supposedly on purpose, so the people would know it was him. Alongside his family, he stayed in Buckingham Palace during the bombing of London despite being advised to evacuate. Elizabeth supported her husband: “The children won’t go without me, I won’t leave the King. And the King will never leave.”³⁵ Their whole family remained shining examples for their people during the war. The King and Queen visited bombing sites, hospitals and factories throughout the country and the princesses both worked as nurses. The public opinion of Bertie changed and became a widely popular king.

³⁴ BBC, “King George VI addresses the nation,” accessed January 20, 2021, video, 5:05, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/archive/king-george-vi-addresses-the-nation/zky9f4j>.

³⁵ The Royal Family, “Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother.”

Bertie was smoking for the bigger part of his life. The stress from kingship certainly did not aid his health. He developed lung cancer in his 50s besides other illnesses. Lilibet had to take on some of his father's duties, such as going on a tour of Australia and New Zealand. The King's last public appearance was seeing off his daughter at the airport. He died a few days later in his sleep. The funeral was held in the St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, where he was buried afterwards. Churchill complemented his floral tribute with a writing 'for valour', which is engraved on the Victorian cross, the highest award of the British honours system. He wanted to highlight Bertie's merits during the war. And so, Britain lost its third king in such a short time. However, they were compensated with the longest-reigning monarch to this day, Queen Elizabeth II.

3. Speech Therapy

This chapter will focus on Lionel Logue; the King's speech therapist, the treatment itself and their relationship, which started rocky, but eventually grew into a friendship.

Speech therapy is a rather new discipline. It was created about 70 years ago in order to help those suffering from speech disorders such as stuttering, dysarthria or dysphonia.³⁶ As was mentioned in the previous chapter, George VI suffered from stammering from a young age due to uncertain causes. He battled it for most of his life. Many experts tried to cure him with the most absurd treatments such as putting steel balls into his mouth and speaking. On the verge of giving up, he is introduced to a joyful, determined, and feisty Australian. This Aussie, though with no diploma, helps the King find his voice and, in the course, becomes his dear friend.

Lionel Logue was born on 26th February in 1880. He grew up in Adelaide, Australia. His family was originally from Dublin, but his grandfather moved to Adelaide in 1850 and set up Logue's Brewery. Logue had a happy childhood, he himself said: "I had a wonderfully happy home, as we were a very united family."³⁷ From a very young age, he had been interested in voices. He was a great speaker, even won many elocution competitions. He went on to study elocution at Prince Alfred College. Later he became an assistant teacher while studying at the Elder Conservatorium of Music.³⁸ During this time he started giving recitals and engaged in amateur dramatics. Upon completion of his studies, Logue started his own practice in Adelaide as an elocution teacher, on top of that, he also set up the Lionel Logue Dramatic and Comedy Company and was still giving recitals regularly. He met his future wife, Myrtle Gruenert, through a shared passion for amateur dramatics. They married in 1907 and only a year later had their first child. They decided to leave Adelaide and were moving around a bit. Eventually, Logue set up an elocution school and a public speaking club in Perth. In the following years, they took the moving around to the next level. They decided to go on a round-the-world tour. Logue wanted to enlarge his professional experience, even though he was already quite the celebrity in Perth and worked with many eminent people. During their world tour, they both fell in love with England. Myrtle wrote to her mother that it was "a wonderland, picturesque to

³⁶ Enderby, Pam, and Joyce Emerson. "Speech And Language Therapy: Does It Work?" *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 312, no. 7047 (1996): 1655–58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29732116>.

³⁷ Logue and Conradi, *The King's Speech*, 33.

³⁸ "Logue, Lionel George," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed January 8, 2022, <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/logue-lionel-george-10852>.

an extreme.”³⁹ Although they both liked England, it took years before they decided to move there. Possibly due to the global conflict emerging.

When the First World War broke out, Logue wanted to enlist, however, was rejected due to his injured knee. So instead of fighting on the front lines, he was organizing events for charities and started helping soldiers, who, as a consequence of shocks or gas attacks, had issues with speech. In Logue’s own words, the treatment was “patient tuition in voice production combined with fostering the patient’s confidence in the result.”⁴⁰ Logue was already famous for his achievements in speech problems treatment, nevertheless, his achievements in curing the soldiers launched his speech therapy career.

Years later, Lionel and Myrtle decided there was nothing left for them in Australia, thus they moved their family to England. They settled in west London and Logue set up a practice there. Thanks to their move, Logue was present to one of the key moments of Bertie’s life, even though they did not know each other at the time. He was in the crowd at Webley in 1925, when Bertie was giving the opening speech at the Empire Exhibition. Logue commented on the future king’s performance: “He’s too old for me to manage a complete cure. But I could very nearly do it. I am sure of that.”⁴¹ By this time, he surely could not have known that he would, in only a few months, get a chance to prove his words.

In 1926 Bertie first set foot into Lionel Logue’s consulting room. Despite declining Logue’s help at first, he eventually returned, and they began the learning process. Logue was very different from other speech therapists Bertie has met through the years. He made him sing, swear, recite tongue twisters, and practise posture. Bertie’s speech started improving. He became confident and did not stammer as much during public speeches. Bertie kept on doing speech exercises even during the Australian tour he took with his wife. He wrote to Logue:

My dear Logue, I must send you a line to tell you how grateful I am to you for all that you have done in helping me with my speech defect. I really do think you have given me a real good start in the way of getting over it & I am sure if I carry

³⁹ Logue and Conradi, *The King’s Speech*, 45.

⁴⁰ Logue and Conradi, *The King’s Speech*, 54.

⁴¹ Logue and Conradi, *The King’s Speech*, 92.

on your exercises and instructions that I shall not go back. I am full of confidence for this trip now anyhow. Again so many thanks.⁴²

It was not only Logue's credit, but Elizabeth also had a big influence on her husband, she supplied him with unconditional support and was able to calm him if needed. Sometimes when Bertie struggled to speak, she would hold his hand and give him the encouragement he needed.

Logue was becoming famous as the public learned he stood behind Bertie's speech improvement. Along with many new patients came more money and Logue's family was able to afford to move to a bigger home. Mark Logue stated: "It was a measure of how well Lionel's career had been going that he and Myrtle had moved in 1932 from their flat in Bolton Gardens to this imposing mid-Victorian villa on the edge of Dulwich Woods."⁴³ Notwithstanding his rising success, Logue lost his most famous patient; the Duke. Bertie seemed to almost not need Logue anymore. Although they exchanged letters, he stopped going to their sessions. Slowly even the correspondence stopped. Bertie became busy with his responsibilities as the Duke of York. With his father, George V, dying, Bertie became the heir presumptive. He had to take on more royal activities and his brother's careless approach to his newly gained position only made it only more difficult. The abdication crisis was on the verge and Bertie had to prepare to become the most important man in the United Kingdom. He ascended the throne on 11th December 1936 and Logue was amongst the first to congratulate him:

May I be permitted to offer my very humble but most heartfelt good wishes on your accession to the throne. It is another of my dreams come true and a very pleasant one. Seeing a chance of reactivating their old ties. May I be permitted to write to your Majesty in the New Year and offer my services.⁴⁴

A few months after the abdication, Logue's offer was accepted, and he was asked to visit the new king. Despite not being told the reason for the visit, it was obvious; the coronation was approaching. Bertie was concerned with speaking during the ceremony and the live broadcast he would have to make after. Logue practised with Bertie every day, doing speech exercises,

⁴² Logue and Conradi, *The King's Speech*, 115-116.

⁴³ Mark Logue and Peter Conradi, *The King's War: The Friendship of George VI and Lionel Logue During World War II* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2019), 31.

⁴⁴ Logue and Conradi, *The King's Speech*, 188-189

breathwork and practising the speeches. The coronation took place at the Westminster Abbey on 12th May 1937. It was the first coronation to be broadcasted on the radio. During the ceremony, awards are usually given out and the newly crowned king took this opportunity to award Logue with the Royal Victorian Order. As it says on the honours system of the United Kingdom website, the Royal Victorian Order is “used to recognise a wide variety of service to the Sovereign and the Royal Family.”⁴⁵ After the coronation, Logue ascended to Bertie’s consultant. He was present to all of the King’s speeches and rehearsed with him beforehand. This resulted in a very close relationship between Logue and Bertie and even between Logue and Elizabeth.

Britain declared war on Germany at 11:15 on 3rd September 1939. That evening, Bertie had to make his first wartime speech. Logue practised the speech with him beforehand. He stayed with the King during the broadcast and silently guided him through. As mentioned before, Bertie stuttered only once and supposedly on purpose.

Logue stayed Bertie’s speech therapist and friend until the King’s death in 1952. He remained in contact with, by that time, the Queen Mother. She wrote to him: “I think that I know perhaps better than anyone just how much you helped the King not only with his speech, but through that his whole life and outlook on life. I shall always be deeply grateful to you for all you did for him.”⁴⁶ Logue died in April 1953. As a show of gratitude towards the late King’s friend, both Queen Elizabeth II and Queen Mother send their representatives to attend his funeral.

⁴⁵ “Orders and Medals,” The Honours System of the United Kingdom, accessed February 2, 2022, <https://honours.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/about/orders-and-medals/>.

⁴⁶ Logue and Conradi, *The King’s Speech*, 344.

4. Historical Film

In general, a historical film is a fiction film showing events that happened in the past. It is an extensive genre, it includes dramas, romances, and adventure films. Although sometimes it is misjudged as a ‘true story’, these movies are only inspired by real-life events. The narratives are fictionalised to be more interesting for the viewers. For the same reason, the characters are mostly romanticised, and events simplified. Robert Brent Toplin, in his book *Reel History: In Defence of Hollywood*, defined statements that apply to most historical films. Jonathan Stubbs summarised them into the following list:

1. Cinematic history simplifies historical evidence and excludes many details.
2. Cinematic history appears in three acts featuring exposition, complication and resolution.
3. Cinematic history offers partisan views of the past, clearly identifying heroes and villains.
4. Cinematic history portrays morally uplifting stories about struggles between Davids and Goliaths.
5. Cinematic history simplifies plots by featuring only a few representative characters.
6. Cinematic history speaks to the present.
7. Cinematic history frequently injects romance into its stories, even when amorous affairs are not central to these historical events.
8. Cinematic history communicates a feeling for the past through attention to details of an earlier age.
9. Cinematic history often communicates as powerfully in images and sounds as in words.⁴⁷

Although historical films are about the past, they sometimes reveal more about the time they were filmed. James Chapman argues: “It is universally acknowledged that a historical feature film will often have as much to say about the present in which it was made as about the past in which it was set.”⁴⁸ And John Trafton supports this by saying, that historical films suggest “new ways of understanding the past, and, as a consequence, they also present new ways of

⁴⁷ Jonathan Stubbs, *Historical Film: A Critical Introduction*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2012) 14.

⁴⁸ James Chapman, *Past and Present: National Identity and the British Historical Film*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 1.

understanding the present.”⁴⁹ Historical films have been and continue to be used to relate themes to the current time.

Historical films started evolving in the 1910s mainly in Italy, SSSR and the US as it says in *A Dictionary of Film Studies*.⁵⁰ David Ward Griffith’s movie *The Birth of a Nation* is considered to be one of the first historical films. Woodrow Wilson, the US president at the time, commented on the film: “It’s like writing history with lightning. My only regret is that it is all so terribly true.”⁵¹ Although it is historically accurate in some events, the film incorrectly and racialistically depicts African Americans. Richard Brody stated that *The Birth of a Nation* “proved horrifically effective at sparking violence against black in many cities.”⁵² It is a perfect example of the misleading qualities of historical films, which make the viewers regard them as ‘true stories’. In Britain, the genre became popular 20 years later, in the 1930s. One of the most prominent directors was Alexander Corda. He had experience with historical film from Hollywood and after he returned to England, he founded London Film Productions. *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, *Catherine the Great* or *Rembrandt* are just some of his notable movies.⁵³ With the development of CGI in the 1990s, film creators were enabled to recreate the past more accurately and affordably. This led to a rise in the history film production. Since then, the historical film became a very popular genre. As Robert Niemi notes: “From 1981 to 2005 thirteen Oscar winners for Best Picture have been movies based in history.”⁵⁴ Some of the highest-ranking movies today are classified as historical films, such as *12 Years a Slave*, *Schindler’s List* or *Braveheart*. With the growing interest in tv series, there are also many high ranking historical tv shows, for example, *The Crown*, *Vikings* or *Chernobyl*.

The King’s Speech is classified as a historical drama, which means it has all of the qualities of a historical film alongside the elements of drama. Throughout the film, it builds dramatic tension. It is serious in general, although it may include some humorous parts. But most importantly, there is a conflict, which is resulted in the end. There are plenty of types of film

⁴⁹ “Historical film,” Oxford Bibliographies, last modified October 30, 2019,

<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791286/obo-9780199791286-0239.xml>.

⁵⁰ Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell, *A Dictionary of Film Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 903.

⁵¹ Benbow, Mark E. “Birth of a Quotation: Woodrow Wilson and ‘Like Writing History with Lightning.’” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 9, no. 4 (2010): 509–33. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20799409>.

⁵² “The worst thing about “Birth of a Nation” is how good it is,” *The New Yorker*, last modified February 1, 2013, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/the-worst-thing-about-birth-of-a-nation-is-how-good-it-is>.

⁵³ Dalrymple, Ian. “Alexander Korda.” *The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television* 11, no. 3 (1957): 294–309.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/1209748>.

⁵⁴ Robert Niemi, *History in the Media* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 21.

dramas apart from a historical drama. For example, a docudrama, a psychological drama, a fantasy drama, a romantic drama, or a biographical drama. If the film did not have the elements of a drama, it could be classified as a biographical film. Biographical movies show the life or a part of the life of a historically important person. Apart from historical drama, it is not fiction. According to Dr Stephanie Starling, *The King's Speech* is 74,4% accurate,⁵⁵ which would fit the classification of a biographical film rather than a historical drama.

⁵⁵ "Based on a true story," Information is beautiful, last modified March 2019, <https://www.informationisbeautiful.net/visualizations/based-on-a-true-true-story/>.

5. 30s Britain in *The King's Speech*

The King's Speech is set in the 1930s. It does show some of the important events from this period, nevertheless, it is mainly focused on the Royal Family. The film is generally not concerned with politics apart from the abdication crisis. Furthermore, it omits some very important moments and completely changes the attitude of certain characters. It does not mention the unemployment issues, which were created mainly by the Great depression. Nor do the film shows the urbanization, which resulted from the government's politics based on class and regional division. Despite that, the film creates an authentic atmosphere of 30s Britain by the movie setting and accurately showing the viewers how people dressed and in what conditions they lived.

Politics is not the main topic of the film, still, several important politicians appear throughout the 120 minutes. The uppermost of these characters is Winston Churchill. Churchill is considered to be one of the greatest men. He has been portrayed in many movies and tv shows, however, not always successfully. Alex von Tunzelmann, a writer for the Guardian, argues that *The King's Speech* did not do Churchill justice. He said his character was "Pouting, scowling and waddling around like a penguin."⁵⁶ It is true, that the film changes Churchill's character. However, his nature is portrayed correctly; he is still depicted as a witty but grumpy politician, who always smokes a cigar. The film even included Churchill's predictions about the second world war: "Prime minister Baldwin may deny this, but Hitler's intent is crystal clear. War with Germany will come, and we will need a king whom we can all stand behind united."⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the film omits Churchill's support for David and replaces it with affection towards Bertie. According to David Freeman, Churchill and David were friends since the 1910s. He advised David and even assisted him with important speeches, one of those being the famous abdication broadcast. Churchill, as well as the rest of the parliament, was opposed to Wallis Simpson becoming the Queen. However, he was not opposed to the marriage itself. He suggested a morganatic marriage, which would make Wallis a duchess instead of queen.⁵⁸ *The King's Speech* may have completely ignored all this because of the public view of Churchill as

⁵⁶ "The King's Speech: True blood or right royal dud?" The Guardian, last modified January 13, 2011, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2011/jan/13/reel-history-kings-speech-colin-firth>.

⁵⁷ *The King's Speech*, directed by Tom Hopper (The Weinstein Company, 2010), 01:08:27 to 01:08:39.

⁵⁸ "The Uncrowned King: Edward VIII," Winston Churchill, last modified July 24, 2019, <https://winstonchurchill.org/publications/finest-hour/finest-hour-184/the-uncrowned-king-edward-viii/>.

Britain's hero and the best prime minister. David is boxed as the 'bad guy' and due to that the film probably did not want to show Churchill's association with him.

The film fabricated several scenes, where Churchill is opposing David and sides with Bertie. For example, during the party at Balmoral Castle, Elizabeth has a conversation with Churchill regarding Wallis. They discuss her hold over David and as Churchill was David's friend, it is unlikely he would support Elizabeth's opinion of her. Another scene, completely fictional, is when Churchill visits Bertie at his home to discuss the possibility of David's abdication and even though David is still the King, Churchill suggests king names for Bertie: "Have you thought what you will call yourself? Hm? Certainly not Albert, Sir. Too Germanic. What about George? After your father? George the sixth, has a rather nice continuity to it, don't you think?"⁵⁹ Bertie did not like Churchill, supposedly because of Churchill's failure in the Gallipoli campaign during the First World War and also on account of Churchill's loyalty to David. Their relationship changed during the Second World War. They were forced to work together and eventually became friends.

Notwithstanding Churchill's opinions, *The King's Speech* managed to accurately portray the period in which it is set, as mentioned before. During the 30s, London was going through a housing boom. London's suburbs expanded as people were moving there because of cheap housing. There are several houses featured in the film, which can be considered as examples of this period. They are Lionel Logue's flat in South Kensington and his speech-defect practice in central London. Apart from these, the film takes the viewers inside some of the Royal Family manors; 145 Piccadilly House, Balmoral Castle, Sandringham Estate and of course Buckingham Palace. However, the royal houses cannot be considered a representation of a typical house during the 30s. Living conditions in London were more expensive than in the outskirts. Logue's practice was situated in central London, where the prices were probably one of the highest. Therefore, Logue was possibly not able to afford to cover the bills. The film suggests that by several hints. All the characters remain in their coats and jackets when they are at the practice, which implies that Logue was unable to provide for the heating. Correspondingly, there are very few lights, and they sometimes use oil lamps instead of electric ones. The whole place is very plainly equipped. The wallpaper is old and damaged, the floors are screeching and there is little to no furniture. Logue's home in Kensington is shown in the

⁵⁹ *The King's Speech*, 01:08:50 to 01:09:21.

film when the King and Queen visit Logue after their accession. Even though the house is depicted according to reality, by the time Bertie became king, Logue was earning more money and moved to a 25-room mid-Victorian villa in Sydenham.

During the first half of the 30s, George V was the King of England. Thus, his appearance in *The King's Speech* is important in terms of being the monarch, but also in terms of being the father of the main character. He plays a rather minor but crucial role in the film. He is included in only two scenes, nevertheless, both have a great significance for the story. Firstly, the viewers see George giving his Christmas speech, which is broadcasted live on the radio. Bertie is present and he watches his father with admiration and possibly sadness as he thinks he will never be able to speak like that. "Easy when you know how."⁶⁰ Says George after he finishes implying that Bertie only needs to try harder and completely ignoring any possibility of his stammering being a deep psychological issue. Bertie sits in his father's place and George tries to lecture him on how to give a speech like that and what it is like to be king. He does this with Bertie even though the heir is his oldest son, David. Which is a representation of the relationship George had with his sons by this time. Bertie was George's favourite son. He was a family man and was taking his duties seriously. On the other hand, David was reckless and was not interested in starting a family. George is also angered with David because of his affair with Wallis Simpson. The movie includes George's famous quote he allegedly said to Prime minister Stanley Baldwin, but slightly altered: "When I'm dead that boy will ruin himself, this family and this nation within 12 months. Who will pick up the pieces?"⁶¹ He goes on to talk about the danger Hitler and Stalin represent, which is not important to the story itself but is probably included because it shows George's character. He was a very responsible ruler and cared about the empire. George was always harsh to Bertie because of his speech deficit and so he is in the film. As Bertie tries to read his father's speech out loud, he shouts at him "Get it out boy!"⁶² *The King's Speech* was able to transmit George and Bertie's relationship very well. The scene represents George's frustration over his son's inability to speak properly as he was putting all his hopes in him.

The other scene, in which George V is included, is almost at the end of his life. In accordance with reality, he is not in his right mind and drifts in and out of consciousness. His whole family

⁶⁰ *The King's Speech*, 00:29:57 to 00:29:58.

⁶¹ *The King's Speech*, 00:31:37 to 00:31:42.

⁶² *The King's Speech*, 00:32:21.

is present and so are the members of the Privy Council and the King's nurse. The private secretary is reading the Order for the Council, which the King needs to sign. George is confused, he does not understand what he is saying to him, he is clearly unable to exert his duties as king. He cannot even sign documents on his own. The family is saddened to see him like that. David, however, is feeling sadder for himself than his father as he knows that his father's death means him becoming king.

6. The Abdication Crisis in *The King's Speech*

The King's Speech deals with the critical moments of George VI's life, the biggest of those being his brother's abdication. As Bertie is the protagonist of the story, David becomes the antagonist, the 'bad guy'. David is depicted very closely to his real self. He was reckless and did not care about his royal duties. However, he was very charming, and people loved him. David appears quite late in the film and is included in very few scenes. The first scene where the viewers get to meet him is set at the Sandringham estate. David is flying in a small plane, which is the film's way of revealing something about him to the viewers. He, in fact, was the first monarch to have a pilot's licence. The scene represents their characteristics, David is the reckless one; flying in a plane, whereas Bertie is the responsible; safe on the ground. Also, this scene may have an allegorical meaning. David is flying, being free, being able to do whatever he wants. While Bertie is stuck on the ground. This can be interpreted as foreshadowing the future, where David abdicates and becomes free, while Bertie has to take on his brother's responsibilities and gets stuck as king.

During the drive to visit their father, David makes a comment about George's passing:

DAVID: Old bugger's doing this on purpose.

BERTIE: Dying?

DAVID: Departing prematurely to complicate matters with Wallis.

BERTIE: For heaven's sake David. You know how long he's been ill.

DAVID: Wallis explained. She's terribly clever about these things.⁶³

Here is shown, that the most important thing in his life is his relationship with Wallis and also, how much influence she has over him. He cares about her more than about his family or Britain for that matter. And so he did in reality, after all, he gave up the throne for her.

After they visit the King, they are supposed to have dinner with their mother and the Privy council. However, David is on the phone with Wallis and Bertie has to go get him. Once again, the film hints at their characteristics. The dinner is interrupted with the message of the King's passing, and they all go say their goodbyes to him. David breaks down crying, but he is not

⁶³ *The King's Speech*, 00:39:51 to 00:40:08.

mourning his father, he is mourning his own life. When he runs out of the room and Bertie follows him, he tells him: “Now I’m trapped.”⁶⁴ And so is Bertie.

The next time David is shown in the film is during his party at Balmoral Castle. Music is playing loud, people are drinking and chatting and in the centre of it all are David and Wallis. Bertie and Elizabeth have been invited and because David is now the King, they decide to show up. Wallis holds a lot of power over David. While he is talking to Bertie, she shouts at him across the room and taps her empty glass. David’s response is: “Just be a sec, darling.”⁶⁵ Even though he is king, he does exactly as she pleases, even bringing champagne, which should be done by their servants. Bertie follows him to the cellar and tries to continue their conversation.

DAVID: I’ve been terribly busy.

BERTIE: Doing what?

DAVID: Kinging.

BERTIE: Really? Kinging is precarious business! Where’s the Tsar of Russia? Where’s Cousin Wilhelm?

DAVID: You’re being dreary.

BERTIE: Is kinging laying off eighty staff at Sandringham and buying yet more pearls for Wallis while there are people marching across Europe singing “The Red Flag?”

DAVID: Stop worrying. Herr Hitler will sort that lot out.

BERTIE: And who will sort of Herr Hitler?⁶⁶

This scene does not only once again show the distinctive natures of the brothers and David’s lack of interest in royal duties, but it also suggests David’s inclination towards Hitler. In reality, David supported Hitler and even visited him in Germany after the abdication. The conversation continues and David for the first time expresses his interest in marrying Wallis.

BERTIE: David, the Church does not recognise divorce and you are the head of the Church.

DAVID: Haven’t I any rights?

⁶⁴ *The King’s Speech*, 00:45:22.

⁶⁵ *The King’s Speech*, 00:58:27 to 00:58:28.

⁶⁶ *The King’s Speech*, 00:58:43 to 00:59:10.

BERTIE: Many privileges...

DAVID: Not the same thing. Your beloved common man may marry for the love, why not me?⁶⁷

If the scene would not continue with David accusing Bertie of trying to depose him, it would render David as a poor man who is unable to marry the woman he loves, maybe even make the viewers feel sad for him. However, David turns the whole conversation around and twists Bertie's effort to awaken a sense of duty in David into a coup attempt.

When Bertie sees David for the next time, it is just before the abdication.

DAVID: Bertie, the decision's been made. I'm going.

BERTIE: I can't accept that. You are in no condition...

DAVID: I'm afraid there's no other way. I must marry her. My mind's made up. I'm sorry.⁶⁸

The film fasts forward to the signing of the abdication documents and David's radio speech plays in the background. The film uses the exact transcription of the speech and some of the parts are even the actual recording of Edward VIII speaking. David does not appear for the rest of the film. He is only included in cutaways during Bertie's wartime speech as he and Wallis are listening to the broadcast in France.

As mentioned before King George VI, otherwise known as Bertie, is the main character of *The King's Speech*. He is portrayed as a good, responsible family man, who, however, has anger issues and a lack of self-confidence due to stammering. Many times, the movie shows us Bertie's pain, humiliation, and anger. The first time the viewers see him struggle is during the speech at Wembley, which is the opening scene of the movie. It is also the reason for seeking out Logue, just as it was in reality.

The film does not say a lot about Bertie's life before the speech at Wembley. The viewers learn only fragments from his childhood during speech therapy sessions. Especially in the one right

⁶⁷ *The King's Speech*, 00:59:45 to 00:59:56.

⁶⁸ *The King's Speech*, 01:09:35 to 01:09:54.

after George V's funeral, where Bertie confides in Logue. The most important information about Bertie's life is included in this scene. He talks about being forced to write with his right hand even though he is left-handed, how his legs were straightened with metal splints, and he also mentions his abusive nanny, who caused him stomach problems.

BERTIE: She loved David, hated me. When we were presented to my parents for the daily viewing. She would...she pinched me, so I'd cry and be handed back to her immediately. Then she would...

LIONEL: Sing it.

BERTIE (singing): Then she wouldn't feed me, far far away.⁶⁹

He also opens up about his family, his father's cold approach towards him and his brothers. Here, once again, the film uses one of George V's famous quotes. Bertie mimics his father and says: "I was afraid of my father and my children are damn well going to be afraid of me."⁷⁰ The most important part of the conversation is about David. Bertie talks about being bullied and constantly overshadowed by him his whole life. But he also mentions how relieved he is, that David is king and not him. David's bullying is depicted in a scene at Balmoral Castle.

BERTIE: I'm trying t-to...

DAVID: Yearning for larger audience are we, B-b-b-bertie?⁷¹

Bertie tended to stutter more when he was in the presence of his brother, possibly because of the psychological damage David's tormenting left on him. In the scene, after David picks on his stammering, Bertie is shown completely unable to speak. The speech deficit was Bertie's greatest flaw and the film highlights that. On the other hand, his virtue was his love for people, especially for his family.

The film emphasises Bertie being a family man, thus his family is included; his wife Elizabeth and his two daughters, Elizabeth and Margaret. The children are not very important to the story, on the other hand, Elizabeth, the Duchess of York and later the Queen, is an integral part of the film. She is the most important person in Bertie's life and the film did her justice. Her

⁶⁹ *The King's Speech*, 0:53:32 to 0:54:10.

⁷⁰ *The King's Speech*, 0:52:37 to 0:52:44.

⁷¹ *The King's Speech*, 01:00:13 to 1:00:21.

personality shines through in the film. She is confident, funny, nurturing and is not afraid to speak her mind (as long as it is appropriate). Elizabeth pushed Bertie to become a great man and was always there for him, comforting and calming him down, which is portrayed in the film many times. The Duke and Duchess are depicted to be perfect for each other, nevertheless, they almost were not married. Elizabeth declined Bertie's offers because she did not want the responsibilities which come with being a member of the Royal Family. She makes a comment on that in the film:

You know, I refused your first two marriage proposals, not because I didn't love you, but because I couldn't bear the idea of a royal life. Couldn't bear the idea of a life of tours and public duty, a life that no longer was really to be my own. Then I thought, he stammers so beautifully, they'll leave us alone.⁷²

Neither Elizabeth nor Bertie wanted more royal responsibilities than which they had as the Duke and Duchess. And it was Wallis who was blamed for the burden they had to take on and which eventually, in Elizabeth's mind, killed Bertie. But even before the abdication, they never accepted Wallis into the family, most likely because of her personality in general, her nationality and being a divorcee. As mentioned before, Elizabeth despised Wallis and would call her 'that woman'. And vice versa, Wallis was not fond of Elizabeth. But unlike Wallis, who called Elizabeth nicknames behind her back, Elizabeth did not hide her disrelish towards Wallis. This is depicted in the scene at the Balmoral estate, Elizabeth completely disregards Wallis as a host, even though Wallis tries to be polite and welcome them.

WALLIS: How lovely to see you both. Welcome to our little country shack.

ELIZABETH: I came at the invitation of the King.⁷³

Bertie's antipathy towards Wallis was not as visible as Elizabeth's, the film portrays that. Bertie even tries to persuade Elizabeth to behave kindly to her: "Nonetheless, we must try to be pleasant towards Mrs Simpson."⁷⁴ However, his reluctance to become king was much bigger than Elizabeth's to become queen. *The King's Speech* emphasises that. After David announces to him the abdication. He replies with: "That's a terrible thing to hear. Nobody wants that, I

⁷² *The King's Speech*, 01:16:05 to 01:16:31.

⁷³ *The King's Speech*, 00:57:04 to 00:57:15.

⁷⁴ *The King's Speech*, 00:56:33 to 00:56:36.

least of all.”⁷⁵ It is also what the film uses as a pretence for an argument between Bertie and Logue. They are walking outside, talking about David and Wallis and then Logue implies that Bertie should be king.

LIONEL: If you had to you could outshine David...

BERTIE: Don't take liberties! That's bordering on treason.

LIONEL: I'm just saying you could be king. You could do it!

BERTIE: That is treason!⁷⁶

It escalates to the point where Bertie shouts at Logue:

BERTIE: Don't attempt to instruct me on my duties! I'm the son of a king...the brother of a king. You're the disappointing son of a brewer! A jumped-up jackeroo from the outback! You're nobody. These sessions are over!⁷⁷

The scene is an illustration of how much Bertie rejected the idea of him being king. He did not want it, but more importantly, he did not believe he could do it. However, the argument was solely fabricated by the film to add drama. Although it was known that Bertie had serious anger issues, because of his status as a member of the Royal Family, he would not shout at someone like this in the street.

Despite not wanting to become the King, Bertie eventually became a great monarch. *The King's Speech* suggests that even by the fact, that he is the 'hero' of the film. But there are also scenes where the film is foreshadowing his nature as the King.

BERTIE: You know, Lionel, you're the first ordinary Englishman...

LIONEL: Australian.

BERTIE: ...I've ever really spoken to. Sometimes, when I ride through the streets and see, you know, the common man staring at me, I'm struck by how little I know of his life, and how little he knows of mine.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ *The King's Speech*, 01:09:58 to 1:10:06.

⁷⁶ *The King's Speech*, 01:03:40 to 01:03:49.

⁷⁷ *The King's Speech*, 01:04:01 to 01:04:22.

⁷⁸ *The King's Speech*, 0:55:25 to 0:56:00.

Here, the film hints at Bertie's interest in the people, which is what made him such a good king. He does not seem to like the fact; he knows so little about 'a common man'. When he became king, he was very invested in his peoples' lives. For example, during the second world war, he stayed in London and visited hospitals and even bombing sites. His stiff upper lip attitude he showed during the war, was what made the public admire him and praise him. But he also started believing in himself and behind his newfound self-confidence stood Lionel Logue.

7. Speech Therapy in *The King's Speech*

The King's Speech is a film about a very important part of George VI's life. Apart from focusing on the biggest change in his life, it shows his life-long struggle with speaking and most importantly, it introduces the man who helped him overcome it.

Lionel Logue appears for the first time a few minutes into the movie, when the Duchess of York, Elizabeth, goes to meet with him. The film does not show us anything from Logue's life before the meeting. However, throughout the 120 minutes, the film divulges some information about him through dialogues. Most details are revealed almost at the end when Bertie finds out Logue is not an actual doctor. Logue explains to him how he became a speech therapist:

It's true, I'm not a doctor, and yes I acted a bit. I recited in pubs, I taught elocution in schools. When the Great War came, all our soldiers were returning to Australia from the front, shell-shocked and unable to speak. Somebody said, "Lionel, you're very good at all this speech stuff. Do you think you could possibly help these poor buggers". I did muscle therapy, exercises, relaxation, but I knew I had to go deeper. Those poor young blokes had cried out in fear, and no one was listening to them. My job was to give them faith in their own voice and let them know that a friend was listening. That must ring a few bells with you, Bertie.⁷⁹

Even though it is a shortened version of Logue's beginning as a speech therapist, it is accurate. As it was mentioned, he was unable to enlist and therefore wanted to help in any way he could during the war. That is why he started treating the returning soldiers.

Bertie and Logue could have met earlier, Logue attended the Empire Exhibition where Bertie had a speech. In the movie, the speech is included, but Logue is not shown. He only comments on it later in the movie: "Bertie, I heard you at Webley, I was there. My son Laurie said, 'Dad, you think you could help that poor man?'"⁸⁰ Just like it happened, so it is shown in the movie, the speech at Webley is so embarrassing for Bertie he seeks new speech specialists, who can really help him and that is when Logue comes into the picture. According to Mark Logue, there

⁷⁹ *The King's Speech*, 01:25:13 to 01:26:01.

⁸⁰ *The King's Speech*, 01:25:05 to 01:25:11.

are two versions of Bertie and Logue's 'origin story'. In the first version, an unknown Australian plays the main role. He assumably recommended Logue to the royal equerry. Consequently, the equerry went to meet Logue and arranged a meeting for the future king. In the second one, a musical singer, Evelyn Boo Laye, is the key character. She was a good friend of the royal couple and was voice coached by Logue. She supposedly discussed Bertie's issues with Elizabeth and suggested Logue's help.⁸¹ Both versions meet at the point where Bertie did not want to meet Logue, it was his wife who persuaded him to see one more speech specialist. The film probably wanted to emphasise Elizabeth's role and came up with a third version of how Logue became Bertie's speech therapist. It is Elizabeth herself who visits Logue and makes an appointment for her husband. She does so undercover as Mrs Johnson. She reveals who she is after Logue refuses to come and see her husband in private. Nevertheless, not even the fact she is a royal highness changes Logue's mind. "I can cure your husband. But for my method to work, there must be trust and total equality in the safety of my consultation room. No exceptions."⁸² Which is the same as in reality. Logue insisted to treat Bertie as any other patient, he even refused to call him by his title.

The film continues to unfold in accordance with reality. Bertie visits Logue at Harley Street and they have their first session. Bertie is uncomfortable as he does not believe anyone can actually help him. They talk about Bertie's childhood and the causes of the stammering. Logue wants Bertie to understand, that his stammering is not a physiological issue, but rather psychological. He asks: "When you talk to yourself, do you stammer?"⁸³ Bertie finds this question ridiculous: "Of course not!"⁸⁴ Naturally, Bertie does not stammer while talking to himself or thinking, thus he has issues with speaking to other people. Logue proves this to Bertie by making him read while listening to music. He does not stammer when he does not hear himself talk.

They begin the learning process. As the movie is about 2 hours long, it omits a lot from Bertie's journey. It does not mention The Yorks' trip to Australia at all. Also, the speech therapy sessions are trimmed. Nevertheless, many of Logue's methods are shown, which are inspired by reality, for example, singing, reciting tongue twisters, practising posture, and using swear

⁸¹ Logue and Conradi, *The King's Speech*, 92-93.

⁸² *The King's Speech*, 0:11:52 to 0:12:00.

⁸³ *The King's Speech*, 0:24:40 to 0:24:42.

⁸⁴ *The King's Speech*, 0:24:44.

words. However, there is no mention of Elizabeth attending the session with her husband as is shown in the film. But I think it is likely she was there as she was her husband's most loyal supporter. Even though the film skips through most of the process, it does show some sessions in more detail. Apart from the very first one, it documents a session after Bertie's father, George V, passing. It is more of a friendly visit rather than a speech therapy session. Bertie talks more about his childhood, his father, and his brother, David. This is a conversation, which was very likely to happen between these two in real life as they did become very close friends in the end. The next time Bertie goes to visit Logue is at the peak of the abdication crisis. However, in reality, Bertie was not going to sessions anymore by this time. He did not need as much help with his speaking, and he was overwhelmed by royal duties and the chaos his brother was causing. He and Logue simply grew apart, which would probably not be very interesting for the viewers, so the film added a dramatic breakup scene between Bertie and Logue, which was already discussed in the previous chapter.

Bertie returns to Logue after his speech at the accession council chamber, which was, similarly to the speech at Webley, a humiliating experience for him due to frequent stammering. Bertie, alongside Elizabeth, go to meet Logue at his home. This is once again something created solely by the film. In fact, Logue was asked to visit the King at Buckingham Palace a few days before the coronation, which is where the film jumps forward to. Logue accompanies Bertie to the preparations in the Westminster Abbey in order to practise the coronation speech there. Here the film includes a dialogue between Bertie and archbishop Cosmo Lang. Bertie requests that Logue is seated in the King's Box.

COSMO LANG: But members of your family will be seated there, Sir.

BERTIE: That is why it is suitable.⁸⁵

The scene illustrates how deep the relationship between Bertie and Logue really was. Bertie considered Logue a member of his family. This is supported by Mark Logue as he noted: "Logue became increasingly close to the King and Queen until he had almost become a member of the Royal Family."⁸⁶ Even after Bertie's death, Elizabeth kept in touch with Logue.

⁸⁵ *The King's Speech*, 01:22:57 to 01:23:01.

⁸⁶ Logue and Conradi, *The King's War*, 26.

The film spices up the reality yet another time. The archbishop reveals to the King, that Logue is not an actual doctor and endangers Bertie and Logue's relationship. Nevertheless, Bertie probably knew all along Logue was not a real doctor and he did not care as he was actually helping him. Logue managed to give Bertie the confidence he needed and therefore made him realise he would make a great king. However, he did it during their therapy sessions, not, as the film suggests, by provoking Bertie by sitting down on the chair of Edward the Confessor.

BERTIE: What're you doing? Get up! You can't sit there! Get up!

LOGUE: Why not? It's a chair.

[...]

BERTIE: Listen to me!

LOGUE: Listen to you?! By what right?

BERTIE: Divine right if you must! I'm your King!

LOGUE: No, you're not. Told me so yourself. Said you didn't want it. So why should I waste my time listening to you?

BERTIE: Because I have a right to be heard!

LOGUE: Heard as what?

BERTIE: A man! I have a voice!!!

LOGUE: Yes, you do. You have such perseverance, Bertie, you're the bravest man I know. You'll make a bloody good king.⁸⁷

As the movie approaches its ending, it jumps ahead in time to September 1939. Even though the film does not show it, it implies Logue and Bertie started their lessons again as they did in reality. When it became apparent that Britain would be entering the war, Logue started preparing Bertie for the wartime speech. On 3rd September 1939, Logue arrives at Buckingham Palace. This whole part happens exactly in accordance with real life. He is dropped off by his

⁸⁷ *The King's Speech*, 01:27:29 to 01:28:26.

son, goes straight to the King and they practise together. Bertie does not make the speech sitting at a table as his father used to do. He is only photographed there afterwards. The speaking happens in a specially modified room, where only he and Logue are present. The film adds dramatic music to demonstrate the importance of this speech and makes cutaways to Bertie's family, Churchill, soldiers, common people and even David as they are listening to the speech. After the broadcast, Logue makes a comment on Bertie's performance:

LIONEL: You still stammered on the 'w'.

BERTIE: Had to throw in a few, so they knew it was me.⁸⁸

In reality, Bertie did stammer a few times during the speech, and he allegedly did it on purpose, just as the film suggests. However, the speech overall was a great success and only a foreshadow of what Bertie's reign was going to be like. The movie ends as Bertie waves to his people from the balcony and Logue watches him. This scene represents how proud Logue is of him patient for his speech improvement, but also for becoming a great king.

The King's Speech is a film about George VI's speech impediment as much as it is about the abdication crisis. Speech therapy is an important part of the movie. However, just as it includes historical inaccuracies, which were previously discussed, *The King's Speech* does have a few irregularities concerning speech therapy in general.

The film shows many techniques and stuttering theories, some of which are no longer valid. Ludo Max, a professor of speech and hearing sciences at the University of Washington discussed some of these. According to him, being left-handed does not affect stuttering as the movie suggests. He also refutes that stammer would be caused by anxiety or childhood trauma. He says: "The essence of the problem lies in the brain's motor areas that produce speech, and these areas are affected by stress. Psychological factors don't cause stuttering; they're a result."⁸⁹ Nevertheless, he agrees with the speech therapy methods used in the movie and says they are in fact effective. He also agrees with the 'unhappy' ending to Bertie's stammering as it is unlikely for adults to overcome stutter completely.

⁸⁸ *The King's Speech*, 01:48:07 to 01:48:15.

⁸⁹ Mclroymw, "Expert on stuttering describes motor deficits with stuttering," posted January 11, 2011, YouTube video, 3:04, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wR1Z3iajYd8>.

Conclusion

This bachelor thesis was aimed at the analysis of the film *The King's Speech*. The focus of the thesis was the abdication crisis and its effect on the Royal Family. In order to be able to analyse the film in the practical part, the background had to be provided in the theoretical part.

Firstly, 1930s Britain is described. The political issues of this period, King George V and also the general living conditions in Britain in the 30s are mentioned. The second chapter consists of a description of Edward VIII and George VI as they were the key characters of the abdication crisis. It covers their lives from childhood until death with the main focus on the time of the abdication crisis. The next chapter provides insight into what speech therapy is as a practice. Furthermore, it introduces Lionel Logue, who was George VI's speech therapist and had a great influence on his life. The theoretical part is enclosed with the definition of the term historical film in general as *The King's Speech* belongs to that genre.

The practical part analyses the previously discussed themes as they are portrayed in the film and compares them with reality. In an effort to demonstrate the depiction of the topics, excerpts of dialogues from the film are included.

The outcome of the thesis is that the film *The King's Speech* provides a slightly altered portrayal of history. The events, with which the film is concerned, happen in accordance with reality and the characters are mostly correctly depicted, however, some scenes were fabricated solely by the film in order to add drama.

In conclusion, despite having some inaccuracies, *The King's Speech* does shine a light on a stuttering problem and might help those who suffer from it. Showing a well-known and publicly liked character such as King George VI tackle this struggle can make people with the same issues feel less isolated.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vyobrazením abdikáční krize ve filmu *Králova Řeč*. Cílem této práce je analyzovat vliv krize a událostí, které jí předcházely, na členy královské rodiny, jak je zachycen ve filmu. Práce je rozdělena na dvě části.

První část, teoretická, se dále dělí na 4 kapitoly. První kapitola představuje Británii v 30. letech 20. století. Zmiňuje problémy způsobené Velkou hospodářskou krizí jako byla nezaměstnanost, industriální stagnace a úpadek společnosti. V důsledku byla Británie rozdělena na dvě části. V místech, kde zůstal tradiční těžký průmysl byl úpadek vyšší, zatímco části s novým lehkým průmyslem začaly prosperovat. Řešení problémů vzešlo z nové vlády, ve které se pomalu dostával do popředí Neville Chamberlain. Vláda zavedla marketingová schémata jako například levné bydlení. To vyústilo v rozrůstání předměstí Londýna. V návaznosti na to jsou v kapitole popsány typické domy pro tuto dobu. Winston Churchill, který byl důležitým prvkem britské politické scény je také zmíněn. Nejen, že se stal významným premiérem, ale byl i blízkým přítelem krále Eduarda VIII. V neposlední řadě je v první kapitole uveden Jiří V, který byl panovníkem Británie do roku 1936. Důraz je kladen především na vztah s jeho syny.

Druhá kapitola teoretické části se zabývá právě syny Jiřího V, kterými jsou David a Bertie neboli Eduard VIII a Jiří VI. Oba jsou klíčovými postavami abdikáční krize. Abdikáční krize byla série událostí, které byly zapříčiněny Davidovým rozhodnutím oženit se s Američankou Wallis Simpsonovou. David se stal Králem po smrti svého otce v lednu 1936, avšak nikdy nebyl korunován, protože se rozhodl abdikovat ještě před jeho korunovací. David nikdy nechtěl být králem a ani se na to svým stylem života nehodil. Byl nezodpovědný a chtěl si užívat svobodného života. Jeho odpor k funkci umocnil vztah s Wallis Simpsonovou. Jelikož byla dvakrát rozvedená, nemohl se s ní David, jako hlava církve, oženit. A proto se vzdal titulu krále a přenechal povinnosti svému mladšímu bratrovi. Bertie byl opakem Davida. Byl velmi svědomitý po svém otci, ale jeho vadou bylo koktání. Z neznámých psychologických důvodů trpěl vadou řeči, se kterou bojoval celý svůj život. I když v něj národ zprve nevěřil, za Druhé světové války se prokázal jako dobrý král a stal se inspirací pro celé impérium. Důležitou roli v jeho životě, hrála jeho manželka Alžběta Bowes-Lyon. Byla jeho oporou v nejtěžších chvílích a pomohla mu se stát skvělým králem. Avšak další důležitou osobou s nemenšími zásluhy, byl Lionel Logue.

Lionelu Logueovi je věnována třetí kapitola. Mimo jeho života a cesty k postu královského logopeda, je také v kapitole popsáno, co logopedie je. Logue pocházel původně z Austrálie, kde se za První světové války začal věnovat logopedii. Léčil vojáky s posttraumatickým stresem z války, kvůli kterému mnoha z nich nebyla schopná plynule mluvit. Ve 20. letech se i s rodinou přestěhoval do Británie, což umožnilo, aby se Bertie, v té době Vévoda z Yorku, stal jeho pacientem. V kapitole jsou popsána jejich sezení, tak jak je zaznamenával Logue do svých deníků.

V poslední kapitole teoretické části je představen žánr filmu *Králova Řeč*, kterým je historické drama. Obecně historický film je fikce, založena na skutečných událostech. Nikdy se nejedná o zcela pravdivý příběh, i když se tak na první pohled může jevit. Historický film má počátky v 10. letech 20. století. Mezi jedny z prvních historických filmů se řadí *Zrození Národa* od Davida Griffitha. Jelikož je *Králova Řeč* historické drama, má kromě prvků historického filmu i prvky dramatu, které jsou uvedeny na konci kapitoly.

V praktické části jsou analyzována témata zmíněná v teoretické části z pohledu filmu *Králova Řeč* a jsou porovnávána se skutečností. Část je rozdělena do tří kapitol, které zrcadlí první tři kapitoly teoretické části.

První kapitola je věnována filmovému zobrazení Británie ve 30. letech 20. století. Filmu se podařilo dobu přesně vystihnou. *Králova Řeč* vytváří autentickou atmosféru 30. let díky výstižnému zobrazení podmínek, ve kterých lidé žili a také například oblečením které nosili. Film je věnován především Bertiemu a jeho bojem s koktáním, a proto opomíná většinu důležitých politických událostí. Několik politických osobností se ve filmu ale objeví, například Winston Churchill. Jeho vystoupení ve filmu je ale velmi kontroverzní. Jeho povaha je vystihnuta pravdivě, ale film zaměnil některé z jeho názorů. Churchill choval náklonost k Davidovi, jelikož byl jeho dlouholetým přítelem. Ve filmu je jejich vztah opomenut a je nahrazen sympatiemi k Bertiemu. Jako v teoretické části, je poslední část kapitoly věnována Jiřímu V. Jeho role ve filmu není nijak veliká, avšak je velmi důležitá. Filmu se povedlo pravdivě vykreslit jeho vztah k oběma synům. Pro větší důvěryhodnost jsou ve filmu použity Jiřího slavné výroky ohledně jeho synů.

Navazující kapitola popisuje ztvárnění Eduarda VIII a Jiřího VI. Bertie je protagonistou filmu, a proto je David takzvaným padouchem. Filmu se povedlo ztvárnit jeho postavu podle reality;

okouzující, ale lehkomyšlný člověk, který nikdy nechtěl být králem a upřednostnil lásku nad vším ostatním. Zatímco Bertie je odpovědný a rozvážný, ale velmi ostýchavý a nevěří sám v sebe. Ve filmu jsou zahrnuty i scény, ve kterých je vidět, jak šikanoval svého bratra. Nicméně, film zahrnuje jen hrstku informací o jejich dětství. Nejvíce se diváci mohou dozvědět z Bertieho logopedických sezení. Mimo oba bratry, i jejich manželky jsou ve filmu vyobrazeny podle skutečnosti a film podotýká i na ne příliš dobrý vztah mezi nimi.

Třetí a poslední kapitola praktické části rozebírá ztvárnění Lionela Logua a jeho vztahu s Bertiem, ale také jak pravdivé jsou ve filmu logopedické praktiky. Kvůli sledovanosti film změnil hodně věcí, co se týče vztahu mezi Loguem a Bertiem. Například důvod, proč přestal Bertie docházet na sezení je zdramatizován. V realitě už Bertie nepotřeboval tolik pomoci s mluvením a kvůli jeho povinnostem neměl čas. Ve filmu je zinscenovaná hádka na ulici, která by se reálně nikdy neodehrála.

Výsledkem analýzy je, že film *Králova Řeč* poskytuje lehce zkreslený pohled na dobu abdikace královny Viktorie. Historické události se odehrávají podle skutečnosti a většina postav odpovídá jejich reálným předlohám. Ovšem některé scény jsou zdramatizovány z důvodu sledovanosti. I přesto, že film není zcela věrný realitě, poukazuje na vady řeči, které jsou problémem spousta lidí. Film ukazuje, že i králové mohou mít stejné problémy jako „obyčejní lidé“.

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