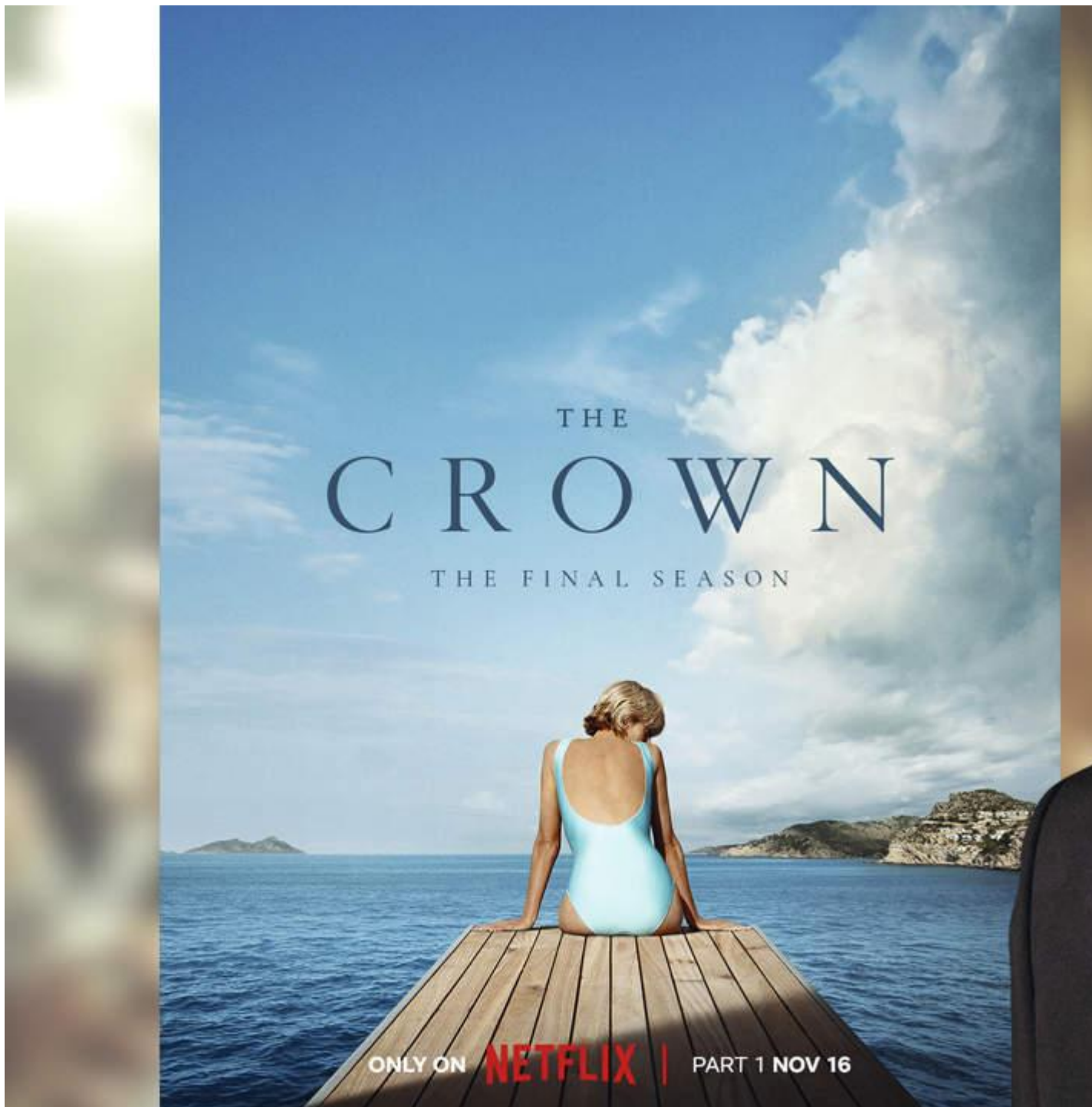


The New York Times: “With Diana’s Death, The Crown Enters Its Most Evocative Era” [C2]

Il successo di Netflix sul regno di Elisabetta II si conclude con una stagione di dieci episodi che ripercorre il periodo più turbolento della monarchia, dalla storia d’amore e l’incidente mortale di Diana e Dodi Al-Fayed, fino al controverso matrimonio del principe Carlo e Camilla.



The images are [joltingly](#) familiar, even after all these years. In one, reproduced with [eerie](#) accuracy in the new season of *The Crown*, Diana, the Princess of Wales sits on a [diving board](#) off the [deck](#) of a yacht, her long legs [dangling](#) above the water. In another, she embraces her new boyfriend, Dodi Fayed. And in a third, taken from a security camera, the couple rides in an elevator at the Ritz Hotel in Paris, en route to their car late one August night. We know too well what happened next. The sixth and final season of *The Crown* begins here, in 1997, [on the cusp of](#) one of the strangest and most [bewildering](#) periods in recent British history. That is when Diana (played here by Elizabeth Debicki) and Dodi (Khalid

Abdalla), an unlikely couple thrown together by circumstance, were killed in a [crash](#) in an [underpass](#) as they drove across Paris, followed by a pack of photographers. Diana was just thirty-six, and her death sent Britain into a paroxysm of grief at her loss and rage against the royal family. Over the past five seasons, *The Crown* has been [unspooling](#) decade by decade, producing an epic portrait of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, starting with her marriage to Prince Philip in 1947. The earlier episodes could sometimes feel [quaint](#) and far away, repackaged history from a semi-distant past. But the new season, which begins a year after Diana has divorced Prince Charles (Dominic West) and ends with Charles' wedding to his longtime girlfriend, Camilla Parker Bowles (Olivia Williams) in 2005, eight years later, is a different thing entirely. The first four episodes of the season explore the [lead-up to](#) and [fallout](#) from the 1997 accident. By devoting so much attention to this period, the production risks clashing not just with viewers' own memories, but also with countless earlier depictions of the same events — a seemingly never-ending [stream](#) of books, dramas and documentaries. To name just two, there's *Diana*, the 2013 film about Diana's final two years, starring Naomi Watts, and *Diana and Dodi: The Princess and the Playboy*, a documentary about the couple that was released this year. Peter Morgan, the creator and writer of *The Crown*, is also competing with his own 2006 film, *The Queen*, which covers the same period. It starred Helen Mirren as a bewildered, [wrong-footed](#) Elizabeth [grappling](#) with the [raw](#) emotion and almost [feral](#) anti-royal rage that erupted across Britain after Diana's death. With its intimate scenes of conversations between members of the royal family and public figures like the then-prime minister Tony Blair (Michael Sheen), *The Queen* was a preview of Morgan's approach in *The Crown* — a [blend](#) of history and fiction, a [muddying](#) of the line between the public and the private. The new season of *The Crown* [can't help but](#) revisit the themes of the 2006 movie. It shows Elizabeth (Imelda Staunton, [deftly channeling](#) the sound and cadence of Elizabeth's voice) [fretting](#) about whether to stay in Scotland with her grandsons after Diana's death, as she would prefer, or to travel to London and [address](#) the nation, as the tabloids and the prime minister are urging (and which she ends up doing). But the show gives time, too, to the story of Mohamed al-Fayed (Salim Daw), Dodi's father, a once-impoverished and now wildly rich and ambitious Egyptian businessman whose [holdings](#) included not just the Ritz in Paris but also Harrods department store, a symbol of [upper-crust](#) opulence, in London. In scenes that have already caused some [chat](#) online and in the British tabloids, Dodi's ghost returns to talk to his father after his death, while Diana's ghost briefly appears in conversations with Charles and Elizabeth. How accurate are the non-ghostly scenes in this latest depiction of the Dodi-Diana romance? Annie Sulzberger, the head of research for the show, said that the research team turned to multiple sources to depict the events of 1997, including memoirs, documentaries and the official government [inquest](#) into the couple's deaths in the car along with a third victim, Henri Paul, the driver. One particularly valuable source of information was a [far-reaching](#) police inquiry known as Operation Paget, which investigated claims by

an increasingly [unhinged](#) Mohamed al-Fayed that Diana was pregnant with Dodi's baby and that the couple had been murdered by the British security services [at the behest of](#) Prince Philip, among others. (Diana was not pregnant, the report found, and the deaths were an accident.) The inquiry's final report included testimony from friends and employees of the couple, revealing how Diana described their romance to the vast circle of confidants she spoke to by telephone from France. Lady Annabel Goldsmith, a friend of Diana's, told the inquiry that they had talked on August 29, two days before Diana's death. Goldsmith testified that when she asked Diana whether she was considering marrying Dodi, Diana said: "Annabel, I need marriage like a [rash](#) on my face." There are many ways The Crown could have [portrayed](#) Diana's state of mind in those last weeks, and it chose a particularly gentle interpretation of her relationships with both her former husband and her new lover. More than twenty-five years later, it is hard to say definitively whether Diana had indeed found a measure of emotional peace after so much [turmoil](#). Morgan's is just the latest in a long line of interpretations. But as The Crown [moves past](#) the Diana era, perhaps it's the one that brings the most comfort. Published in The New York Times on 13 November 2023. Reprinted with permission.

Glossary

- **joltingly** = sorprendentemente
- **underpass** = sottopassaggio
- **chatter** = chiacchiericcio
- **moves past** = superare
- **rash** = sfogo cutaneo
- **stream** = flusso
- **grappling** = essere alle prese con
- **muddying** = confondersi
- **deftly** = abilmente
- **holdings** = proprietà
- **far-reaching** = vasta portata
- **unhinged** = instabile
- **diving board** = trampolino
- **deck** = ponte
- **fallout** = conseguenze
- **can't help but** = non potere fare a meno
- **fretting** = agitarsi
- **eerie** = inquietante
- **blend** = miscela
- **bewildering** = sconcertante
- **quaint** = pittoreschi
- **address** = rivolgersi
- **inquest** = inchiesta
- **dangling** = penzolare
- **unspooling** = sviluppare
- **raw** = cruda
- **portrayed** = ritrarre
- **turmoil** = tumulto
- **lead-up to** = periodo precedente a
- **feral** = selvatica
- **channeling** = incanalare
- **upper-crust** = alta società
- **on the cusp of** = sul punto di
- **wrong-footed** = spiazzata (lett. con il passo sbagliato)
- **at the behest of** = per volere di