

Jacinda Ardern

Michelle Duff

Allen & Unwin (Apr 1, 2021)

Softcover \$22.95 (288pp)

978-1-988547-57-2

Michelle Duff's *Jacinda Ardern* follows the political trajectory of the world's youngest woman leader, whose commitment to "relentless positivity" has changed the course of New Zealand's politics.

Ardern's 2017 election introduced New Zealand's hyper-macho culture to a more consensus-seeking leadership style. Her platform, based on kindness, inclusivity, social justice, and gender equality, and her commitment to tackle issues like housing and homelessness, child poverty, education, health, domestic violence, the increasing gap between rich and poor, and climate change, were a welcome breath of fresh air to a nation weary of trudging the same old path, year after year, and seeing little change. "It felt, for a short breathless moment, as though it wasn't just Ardern who had won the election. It felt as though it was all of us," writes Duff.

When shots rang out at two Christchurch mosques on March 15, 2019, leaving fifty-one dead and about fifty wounded, Prime Minister Ardern's response was decisive, immediate, and empathetic. Donning a hijab, she personally consoled survivors, called on New Zealanders to unite against evil and not against its victims, then had gun law reform passed within days.

The book highlights Ardern's strong, dignified response to the stereotypes that still color perceptions of women in power. That she won an election, negotiated a coalition, established a new government, attended to national emergencies, represented her country on the world stage, gave birth, continues to fulfill her role as a mother, and manages it all with wisdom and grace goes a long way toward refuting patriarchal gender stereotypes.

While it remains to be seen what Ardern's long-term legacy will be, Duff's engaging book shows her leading New Zealand to discover and live its "better self," and changing the whole game of politics for the better.

KRISTINE MORRIS (March / April 2021)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.