

ABOUT ISABEL STILWELL



Isabel started as a journalist at “Diário de Notícias”, one of Portugal’s most important daily newspapers, when she was 21. Eight years later she moved to the Portuguese edition of “Marie Claire”, and in 1990 created and became editor-in-chief of “Pais & Filhos”, a parenting magazine. In 1994, she went back into mainstream journalism as editor-in-chief of “Notícias Magazine” (the Sunday magazine of two of the main Portuguese daily newspapers), where she worked for 13 years and watched it become the most read publication in the country. Later, she embraced the new challenge of directing a free daily newspaper, “Destak”, until December 2012.

As a writer, Isabel Stilwell published several fiction books, short stories and children’s books, but her great passion for historical novels was revealed with the great success of “Filipa de Lencastre”, about queen Philippa of Lancaster, in 2007, with over 90 thousand copies sold to date. It changed Isabel’s professional life and since then she has written 8 historical novels, all of them best-sellers. Three of them are translated into English: “Philippa of Lancaster – English Princess, Queen of Portugal”; “Catherine of Braganza – The courage of a Portuguese Infanta who became Queen of England”, and “D. Maria II – The extraordinary friendship of Mary and Victoria, two queens in a world of men”.

Isabel Stilwell has become a freelance journalist, in order to dedicate more of her time to investigating and writing historical novels, giving lectures and conferences about her work, and about the impressive lives of women who should not be forgotten.

She now has a weekly column in “Jornal de Negócios”, writes for “Máxima”, a women’s magazine, and her voice has become indispensable company for Antena 1’s audience. After 15 years of co-hosting a daily radio show with Eduardo Sá, a renowned psychologist, she has just premiered her new daily show called “Números Sem Espinhas” with Alexandra Almeida Ferreira, commenting on current affairs.

Introducing Maria II by Isabel Stilwell

The Queen of Portugal’s correspondence with Queen Victoria gives us a fantastic insight into the private life of two powerful women, both married to princes of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, who are struggling to conciliate motherhood with the responsibility (and pleasure) of power. When only seven years old, Maria da Gloria became Queen of Portugal. A country, on the other side of the ocean, where she had never been. She grew up in Brazil, spending the long warm days between the green hillocks and the white sandy beaches, secure in the love of her dearest mother, Leopoldina of Austria. The only shadow cast over this happiness was her father’s mistress, Domitília, the favourite and most famous mistress of D. Pedro, the emperor of Brazil. In 1828 she departed for Vienna to be educated in her grandfather’s court, but when she lost the throne to her uncle Miguel, she ended up in London. She became King George IV’s protégé and he commissioned Lawrence to paint her portrait (on this book’s cover). During her stay in London she met the heir presumptive, Alexandrina Victoria, and they forged a close bond that lasted a lifetime. When she was fourteen, the civil war was coming to an end and D. Maria set foot, for the first time, on her country’s soil. Finally on the throne, she promised herself that she would be a good queen, and a happier one than her dearest mother had been. Her marriage to D. Fernando of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, father of her eleven children, was truly blissful, as she confides in her letters to her “Dear cousin Victoria” – now a queen herself, and married to Fernando’s first cousin, Albert.