

Imelda Staunton Says The Crown Doesn't Need Disclaimer: 'Allow the Audience a Bit of Intelligence'

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Replay "The Crown Season 4 | Official Trailer | Netflix"

The Crown [season 4](#) [has reignited conversations](#) about the real-life events behind the Netflix show. The latest installment depicts the [rocky marriage](#) between Prince Charles and Princess Diana, Princess Margaret [dealing with health problems](#) and the truth about [dark family secrets](#), and the queen's [less-than-rosy treatment](#) of Diana following [her fairytale wedding](#). After a season that cast several of the royal family members in an unflattering light, those close to the monarchy began speaking out. Some have voiced their support for disclaimers branding the series fictional before each episode.

On Sunday, December 6, Netflix announced it has no plans to add a disclaimer.

"We have always presented *The Crown* as a drama—and we have every confidence our members understand it's a work of fiction that's broadly based on historical events," the streaming service [said in a statement to *Deadline*](#). "As a result we have no plans—and see no need—to add a disclaimer."

Ahead, read more about what a few major players have said regarding disclaimers on the royal drama.

The U.K. Culture Secretary is reportedly lobbying for Netflix to have a "health warning" before episodes.

One such individual to start the conversation about a disclaimer is U.K. Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden, who [oversees the country's arts and culture sector](#), including broadcasting, museums, and tourism. He told [The Mail on Sunday](#) that each episode of *The Crown* should have a "health warning" before it. "It's a beautifully produced work of fiction, so as with other TV productions, Netflix should be very clear at the beginning it is just that," Dowden told the British publication. "Without this, I fear a generation of viewers who did not live through these events may mistake fiction for fact."

Dowden went so far as to tell the outlet that he planned on writing to Netflix about including a disclaimer for episodes. Netflix declined to comment to [The Hollywood Reporter](#) about Dowden's concerns. However, a spokesperson mentioned to *THR* "that it had already been widely reported that *The Crown* was a drama based on real-life events." According to [The Mail on Sunday](#), a source close to Prince Charles referred to *The Crown*'s fourth season as "highly sophisticated propaganda."

Princess Diana's brother also addressed the controversy.

Princess Diana's brother Earl Spencer also aired his grievances with the show's creative license. He recently told the host of *Love Your Weekend with Alan Titchmarsh* that *The Crown* shouldn't not be taken as entirely accurate. "The worry for me is that people see a program like that and they forget that it is fiction," he reportedly said. "They assume—especially foreigners, I find Americans tell me they have watched *The Crown* as if they have taken a history lesson. Well, they haven't." Spencer added, "It is very hard, there is a lot of conjecture and a lot of invention, isn't there? You can hang it on fact but the bits in between are not fact."

Emma Corrin, who plays Princess Diana, supported Netflix's refusal to add a disclaimer.

Emma Corrin, who played Princess Diana in season 4, has come out in support of Netflix's decision to not add a disclaimer. During an interview on Variety's "The Big Ticket" podcast, she said, "It is very clearly a dramatized version of events. This is fictitious in the same way people don't mistake *Succession* for what actually happened with the Murdochs." Corrin did maintain that the desire for a disclaimer "comes from a place of sensitivity and protectiveness of the royal family and Diana."

This isn't her first time speaking about the disclaimer debate. The day after season 4 premiered, Corrin conceded that she understood why some viewers would be disappointed by her portrayal of the People's Princess. "I think for everyone in *The Crown* we always try and remind everyone that what we are, the series that we're in, is fictionalized to a great extent," she said on the *Tamron Hall Show*. "Obviously it has its roots in reality and in some fact but Peter Morgan's scripts are works of fiction."

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Corrin continued, "I understand why people would be upset, because this is history. And even with Diana, it's still very much fresh, I suppose, everything that happened. So I do really understand if people would be upset."

Josh O'Connor, who plays Prince Charles, called Dowden's disclaimer request "a low blow."

"We were slightly let down by our culture secretary, whose job it is to encourage culture," Josh O'Connor, who played Prince Charles in seasons 3 and 4, said on *The Envelope: The Podcast* (via *The Los Angeles Times*). "In my opinion, it's pretty outrageous that he came out and said what he said. Particularly in this time when he knows that the arts are struggling and they're on their knees, I think it's a bit of a low blow." O'Connor also asserted that "audiences understand," adding, "You have to show them the respect and understand that they're intelligent enough to see it for what it is, which is pure fiction."

Prior to his latest comments, O'Connor admitted to the show's fictionalization of history. "We are creating a work of fiction, albeit based in some reality. But ultimately, there's only so much research you can do," he told *Town & Country*. "After a time, you just got to crack on and create something for yourself."

Emerald Fennell, who plays Camilla Parker Bowles, has also weighed in.

O'Connor and Corrin aren't the only actor defending *The Crown's* right to dramatization. Emerald Fennell, who played Camilla Parker-Bowles in seasons 3 and 4, has addressed the criticism. In an interview with [*The Los Angeles Times*](#), Fennell said voicing an opinion about the disclaimer was “completely above [the cast’s] pay grade.” She also maintained that public opinion about Parker-Bowles or other members of the royal family shouldn't be swayed by the show. “It is a drama, so I don’t know necessarily that it could, in the same way that I’m sure that the early series of *The Crown* wouldn’t necessarily have changed people’s minds about the queen,” she explained. “People probably look to reality more to make their minds up.”

Helena Bonham Carter says there's "a moral responsibility" to call *The Crown* a dramatization.

Bonham Carter, who [plays Princess Margaret in seasons 3 and 4](#), appeared on a recent episode of [*The Crown: The Official Podcast*](#). During her interview, she reiterated that the show is an interpretation of real-life royal events, not a straight-up documentary. “It is dramatized,” she explained, adding, “I do feel very strongly, because I think we have a moral responsibility to say, ‘Hang on, guys, this is not... it’s not a drama-doc, we’re making a drama.’ So they are two different entities.”

Imelda Staunton, who will play Queen Elizabeth in seasons 5 and 6, says audiences don't need a disclaimer.

Staunton, who will play the monarch in [*The Crown's* final two seasons](#), added her voice to the mix in early 2021. “I think that is up to producers and directors,” Staunton said on the [BBC radio show *Woman's Hour*](#), via [Variety](#). “This isn’t verbatim; this isn’t taken from diaries. You’ve got to use your imagination, and I’d like to allow the audience a bit of intelligence. You can’t know that’s what Margaret and Elizabeth were talking about.”

As the season currently stands, there is already a disclaimer before several episodes that depict Princess Diana's behind-the-scenes battle with bulimia.

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