

[PDF] Marilyn Monroe

Barbara Leaming - pdf download free book

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Author: Barbara Leaming
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Description:

This extraordinarily thoughtful book by Barbara Leaming, a literary star among movie-star biographers, offers the last thing you'd expect in a book on Marilyn Monroe: new information from verifiable sources. Sure, lots of the tragedy is familiar: an abused, confused girl from an orphanage with a mother in a madhouse rises from sexual party favor for homely showbiz men to the movie superstar who pushes them around, until she crashes, a victim of self-loathing and drug addiction.

The thing about a tragedy is that its heroine isn't a victim--she's responsible for her fate. Leaming does scholarly spadework, digging up hard facts from sources like UCLA's 20th Century Fox collection and the diary-like first drafts of Arthur Miller's semiautobiographical work, and she makes sense of Monroe's motives. She even apparently solves Monroe's suicide with clues from the star's psychiatrist's letters in the Anna Freud collection. Her last overdose may have happened just because her shrink went to dinner with his wife and she felt abandoned.

But until pills killed her, Monroe wasn't a candle in the wind. She burned with ambition and knew how to craft a persona and play power games--with moguls and with the commie-busters hounding her husband Miller. Leaming plausibly analyzes the Miller-Monroe-Elia Kazan love/hate triangle, sizes up the Kennedy connection, busts her acting coach Lee Strasberg as "chillingly mercenary," and deftly shows just how her life entangled her art, film by film.

This book has a woman's touch: it's a work of sharp intellect and emotional insight unclouded by lust or star worship. --*Tim Appelo* --This text refers to the edition.

From Publishers Weekly Thirty-six years after Marilyn Monroe's death (at the age of 36), Leaming, prolific celebrity biographer, picks through the bones and neuroses of the ultimate Hollywood icon. More than 200 books have been written on the subject; only a few biographies (namely, Donald Spoto's revisionist *Marilyn Monroe: The Biography*) have managed to humanize the fragile actress, who has long since been subsumed by her own mystique. Leaming's relentlessly morose and stand-offish portrait, by contrast, places Monroe on a downward spiral from birth. Beginning in 1951, the book backtracks briefly, skimming over her childhood, early marriage, status on the party-girl circuit and early screen debut. Relying on letters, memos, other biographies and a paper trail from Twentieth Century-Fox, Leaming relays the precise dates when Monroe signed contracts, called in sick, filmed for half a day, etc. It's an approach that does little to explain Monroe's dynamic screen presence, her warmth and charm. The absence of new interviews here is most noticeable in passages detailing Monroe's marriages to Joe DiMaggio and Arthur Miller. Both husbands remain enigmas on the page. However, secondary characters (such as Lee and Paula Strasberg and longtime agent Charles Feldman) are often vividly etched. If Monroe enjoyed any good friendships or happy experiences making films, they're not presented here. Leaming's real contribution is the coverage of the HUAC blacklisting trials and its effects on the men in Monroe's life. As interesting as these details may be, however, they overwhelm the book and, even worse, shove Marilyn from the spotlight. 32 pages of photos not seen by PW.

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