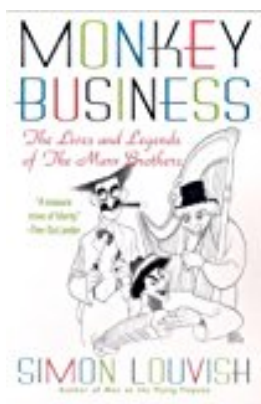


# [PDF] Monkey Business: The Lives And Legends Of The Marx Brothers

Simon Louvish - pdf download free book

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**Books Details:**

Title: Monkey Business: The Lives an  
Author: Simon Louvish  
Released: 2000-06-08  
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## **Description:**

A serious book hiding behind a goofy title, *Monkey Business* captures a tremendous amount of detail in its pages, enough to satisfy the most hard-core Marx Brothers aficionado. Author Simon Louvish has a talent for showcasing contrasts, and it's these contrasts--along with a few surprises--that make the brothers such fascinating characters. Among all the scripts, photos, and quotes are some unexpected discoveries, especially the real story of Margaret Dumont. While lamenting the tall tales

that have circulated around this actress's life so far, Louvish applauds her image as the ultimate "straight" lady when she was really pulling a lifelong practical joke. And while the one-liners are as entertaining as always, it's refreshing to see glimpses of Groucho's serious side. One chapter begins with an earnest letter to his daughter's boyfriend about the young man's struggles with anti-Semitism, advising him to "comport yourself in such a manner that you will ultimately gain their respect." Of course, he immediately follows up with "Tomorrow we're having tea at the White House. I hope they have pumpernickel": this is Groucho we're talking about, after all. Louvish takes the same one-two narrative punch with the other brothers, interspersing real-life slapstick with tales of gambling debts, relationship difficulties, and professional disappointments and triumphs. Complete with a chronological list of life events and films, a complete reference list, and a thorough index, *Monkey Business* is the biography serious Marx Brothers fans have been waiting for. -*Jill Lightner*

**From Publishers Weekly** Told with tremendous style and sparkle, Louvish's composite portrait of the Marx Brothers offers an indispensable overview of the actors' saga. Decked out with photographs and sprinkled with excerpts from reviews, interviews, memoirs, film dialogue and hitherto unpublished skits and scripts, this biography captures the sheer exuberance of the foursome as they conquered vaudeville, Broadway and Hollywood. Louvish gives equal billing to all the brothers Julius (Groucho), Leonard (Chico), Arthur (Harpo), Herbert (Zeppo), plus Milton (Gummo), who left the act to become a Hollywood agent and vibrantly re-creates a supporting cast of characters that includes George Kaufman, Irving Berlin, Irving Thalberg, S.J. Perelman and Margaret Dumont. Yet the biographer of W.C. Fields (*The Man on the Flying Trapeze*) maintains critical detachment in assessing the brothers' onstage/onscreen antics and their often messy private lives. Groucho, for one, comes off as a lot more likable than in Stefan Kanfer's *Groucho* (Forecasts, Mar. 20). While Louvish fully acknowledges the abusive behavior that drove Groucho's first wife to alcoholism, Julius Marx seems more forgivably human here, and Louvish depicts Groucho's relationship with daughter Miriam as loving and solicitous. His fresh research clears up all manner of myths, embellishments and omissions in previous biographies and in the brothers' autobiographies. In this invigorating reappraisal, the Marx Brothers, more than "Minnie and Sam's boys who never grew up," are timeless satirists of pretension, folly, privilege and snobbery, in the tradition of Cervantes, Rabelais and Mark Twain. The "Four Horsemen of the Apoplexy," they embody an authentic acceptance of life's absurdity as well as a desperate need to leave one's mark. (June)

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