



Audrey Hepburn

Barry Paris

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The most ambitious and personal account ever written about Hollywood's most gracious star-Audrey Hepburn by Barry Paris is a "moving portrayal" (**The New York Times Book Review**) that truly captures the woman who captured our hearts...

With the insights of family and friends who never before spoke to a Hepburn biographer-and never-before-published photographs-Paris has created an in-depth portrait of the actress, from her childhood in Nazi-occupied Europe, through her legendary career, and into her UN ambassadorship.

Audrey Hepburn Details

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From Reader Review Audrey Hepburn for online ebook

Lucinda says

An enchanting biography of an unforgettable person, who was beautiful both inside and out.

Audrey Hepburn has to be one of the most beautiful people; both physically and with a heart that shone with warmth and love. In an age when icons were stereotypically curvaceous, blond bombshells Audrey broke the trend with her slim figure and stunning features (in particular her face). Her vivacity and energy, her innocence and charm along with her natural and matchless beauty propelled her to the height of Hollywood fame.

Barry Paris's comprehensive biography starts at the very beginning with Audrey's childhood, where she grew up in Nazi-occupied Holland until moving to London, England. Discovered in the West End chorus line she was catapulted into fame with the iconic role of Gigi on Broadway, with this charming and unforgettable French tale about love. What followed was a glittering and magical career, where she played in both Oscar and Tony award winning performances. Breakfast at Tiffany's has to be one of the most prominent films she was a part of, where Audrey Hepburn went straight to the hearts of everyone who watched her; captivated and mesmerized by her outstanding performance. My Fair Lady was another film that was met with such high critical acclaim as to be recorded in the history books, where the character of Eliza Doolittle is brought to life on screen. Later in life Audrey chose to leave the glamour of Hollywood and devoted her later years to UNICEF as an ambassador. Warm, humorous and full of wit as well as moving and emotional, you are taken on a real rollercoaster of a ride exploring the ups and downs including the hard, difficult moments too. Her performance in My Fair Lady with the legendary Rex Harrison is certainly one of those moments in this book that takes your breath away.

This sympathetic biography is a wonderful tribute to an incredible actress and memorable woman, who is just totally unforgettable and a legend that many actresses of today can only aspire to. This book stands out on the shelf as something quite special and which like the person, will not fail to find a special place within its readers hearts. Included are some wonderful photographs of Audrey (some outstanding ones like those taken in the film Roman Holiday or Funny Face), that just take your breath away. Films such as Paris When It Sizzles, Sabrina and the Nun's story are ones that are very close to my heart, and always will be as I have watched them so many times and like a true classic you can never tire of them. She is an individual who has had a most remarkable life that is so fascinating to read about and discover, whether you are an ongoing fan or new admirer of her and her roles in various films. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this memoir about an extraordinary individual whose road to stardom is fascinating, and I highly recommend it.

Kirby says

Loved this book. I definitely feel like an expert on Audrey's life now. I obviously knew that Audrey had passed away the year I was born when I started the book. But I couldn't help but mourn her life all over again at the end of the book when they talk about her funeral. I have always been a huge fan of her and her films but now reading this biography I feel like I have such a stronger connection to her. The book started off pretty difficult for me because it was a lot of history references and movie star references that new 50 years before my time. So I did have to google a lot of the names and references, which did take the book a lot longer for me to finish. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is patient and has an interest in Audrey Hepburn.

Amanda says

I liked learning more about Audrey Hepburn. She was a very special person and inspired me because she was a total introvert but pushed herself to be extroverted. First with acting to support her mother and then with UNICEF to support the children of the world. At the same time, she was a human with faults—not a saint.

Renee says

So you want to read an epic tome of Audrey Hepburn? You've come to the right place!

On the Kindle, I underestimated how long this book was. It is huge. But not for the right reasons. There is an in-depth description of every movie, seemingly 50-75 pages a piece, except for only about a page and a half glossing over *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, as if the author has a secret disdain for the movie and can't stand to acknowledge it. Honestly, it was weird. I also imagine the author getting permission from the family to write the book by promising not to say anything negative about Audrey. Maybe she never did a negative thing, but it does make for a boring book. I feel like I just read the world's longest wikipedia page, in a way. That said, if Audrey Hepburn ever comes up in trivia, I GOT THIS.

(Also, I couldn't find any of the photos on the Kindle version. Maybe I missed it, but I don't think they are there. Bummer.)

Glynn says

I read this biography of Audrey Hepburn for a book bingo thing going on at my library. There was a category for "biography" and one for "book cover" and I was at the library and this book was on the shelf and I picked it up so it might serve both purposes.

The life of Audrey Hepburn is a fascinating one and this author delves into deep detail about her early years in Holland during WWII and then as a film star and finally as a wife and mother and international representative for UNICEF. She started out in ballet and seemed unlikely to become a movie star. She was kind of unique at the time, with most movie studios going for female stars with a different look (more busty and fuller figures.) Audrey was more fashion oriented and started a whole craze for the slim, stylish look.

The writing is pretty easy to read and the many anecdotes and stories of Audrey Hepburn's life kept me reading. There are some parts of the book which seemed to me kind of disjointed but other than that it was a good read. I hadn't paid much attention to Audrey Hepburn in the movies but now I have seen at least 2 of her films. One thing I didn't know about her and is only covered at the very end of the book is her deep voice. I had always pictured a high voice in my mind when looking at her image.

All in all this was an interesting read and I recommend it to anyone interested in the pioneer movies and movie stars from the early years of film.

Ledaromero says

<3

Leslie Goddard says

A very neatly done biography, probably the one I'll recommend most. Paris is notable for the number of interviews done -- much of the book consists of interviews done with Hepburn's family members, co-workers and close friends. Paris is to be applauded for the effort and painstaking work this took.

I hesitate to call this however a completely satisfying biography, for me. With so many voices coming at you (and with Paris clearly in debt to people like Audrey's sons and her partner for the last 15 years of her life), he seems to hold back. His own insights and analysis are for the most part, pretty sparse. Sometimes his interviewees have conflicting insights into some aspect of Audrey Hepburn's life or personality, and Paris rarely steps in to provide a useful summary. When he does delve into his own insightful explorations of her life, he hesitates to say anything negative or critical about Audrey.

Unquestionably, she was a deeply kind and generous person, with true humility, and he captures that aspect of her beautifully. But as a reader, I had questions he never attempted to really explore or answer. This is one of the great challenges of writing biography -- how to serve your reader as well as your interviewees -- which is why great biographies are difficult to find.

Still, this is a really well-done biography with lots of details about Hepburn's life and I will be recommending it to many.

April says

After reading Ernest Borgnine's autobiography, the beginning of *Audrey Hepburn* seemed a little dry at first, not as personal, especially in the listing of family names going into her genealogical background.

But as I continued reading, it seemed less dry and impersonal and more educational. The biography is very comprehensive, extremely well researched, almost academic, and the amount of information gave a surprising insight into Audrey's psyche. The author had great access to a lot of the people in Audrey's life and put in a lot of firsthand accounts from friends and family and a lot of contemporary quotes from the media. I have to say, if you want to read just one book about Audrey Hepburn and learn everything you ever need to know about her, then this is the book. It takes you through her entire life from birth to death and even covers what went on before and after — you get a really great sense of who she and her family were, and that's about as much as you could wish for in a biography.

Gift from Minnie. Finished reading March 28, 2011.

Breana says

I love this woman. I love her films. I love her philanthropy. I love her viewpoints and way of life. To have read a good chunk of this while in one of Audrey's favorite cities, Paris, is just the icing on the dang cake.

Jana Kaplan says

This was a long read, but I thoroughly enjoyed learning about Audrey Hepburn's life and career. This is a character study on an actress who never really wanted to be an actress but a ballerina....she survived the Nazis, being abandoned by her father at the beginning of WWII, two dastardly husbands and more than a few miscarriages. But she adapted, stood strong, remained positive and weathered through with class and grace. The writing style of the book is chronological, of course, but I found some time frames being referred to repeatedly throughout the entire book. She was a beautiful woman inside and out, but I was left with a feeling of puzzlement, I think because she really did NOT want to be an actress....but she was....and then she sort of threw it all away...for her husband, then her son, then her next husband, and then her other son. I don't fault her for wanting to be a good wife and mother, I simply question the writing of this piece of the book. I was given the impression that her career, besides delivering her enough wealth to buy nice clothes and real estate, was something she did not take very seriously. In some segments, the author paints her to be an extreme bore...."asleep by 9" or "she threw dinner parties...they were very boring." I don't know - I guess my idea of her in her private life was a bit more glamorous than what she was. But what broke my heart was the work she did for UNICEF. As a child, my first memory of seeing Audrey Hepburn on TV was when she was in Ethiopia on a UNICEF trip - and I remember thinking how beautiful she was, just from that picture on tv, at the age of 62, carrying a starving, nearly dead child to bring him food and water. The trip descriptions and end of the book left me in tears. She was such a wonderful person - I believe that by visiting Somalia in 1992 and reporting back to DC about it, she singlehandedly got the United States military involved. I would recommend this book to anyone who knows small amounts of information about Ms. Hepburn - it is choc-a-block full of EVERYTHING you would need to know, and more.

Merja Pohjola says

Well you gotta believe it... she was as close to an angel who ever walked the earth as anyone was... ;) Anyways, compared to Spoto they disagree on lots of things, mainly about her acting skills. I agree with Spoto that one only needs to look into her eyes at the end of "Children's hour" to know that she was an actress with a big A. I haven't seen all of her movies, and by no means does Barry Paris say she couldn't act, only that she couldn't have risen above the type of roles she played. I disagree. Just IMHO. Though she would have needed to be real passionate about acting, cause no great things can be achieved if one is not that, and towards the end of her life she was more passionate about UNICEF. Here's another difference. Paris spends a lot of time talking about her childhood and how difficult it was, yet how brave she was during Nazi occupation. A plus for Paris. (I mean he went into further detail about it...) Paris also spends a lot more time discussing her work for the UNICEF and you get the idea about just HOW passionate she was. Yet another plus for Paris. Spoto spends more time in her film career. That gives a plus to Paris. Then, Paris spends just too much time with her death and how people reacted and how good she was... and that is a minus to Paris. Never liked tearjerkers, and even when you say how brave she was... to me it is a tearjerker plus! So both books have their good and bad points but both agree she was a wonderful human being. Now that I can believe. Now recommend a third book for me, it is interesting to compare them...

Elizabeth says

First, a disclaimer: I read a stack of biographies of Audrey Hepburn in college because I wrote a gigantic paper (more of a thesis really) about her, and I feel that I'm able to rate this biography against other

biographies.

At any rate, I would say that this bio, the first I've read in many years, is so-so in comparison to the others. For one, I thought that the information was presented in a dry way, and is mostly composed of excerpts from previous interviews with her. The author uses very little first source material in this book and you really feel that distance. I also questioned the meticulousness with which the author tried to find examples of her being "mean." I suppose that this was under the euphemism of journalistic integrity, but at the same time, the examples that he did come up with were so petty that I questioned whether or not they were necessary for this book to be balanced. Instead, it made the agenda of the author seem a bit sensationalistic. I would have preferred to eliminate a few of those anecdotes.

These characteristics do not ruin the book, but for me, it's not a stellar example of a great biography about Hepburn. If you are looking for the definitive on this actress, I would suggest looking elsewhere.

That being said, there is nothing unpleasant whatsoever about the subject being profiled. Audrey, as usual, is a marvel. I love that when she was asked for one word to describe her, she said "lucky."

Debi Emerson says

This is an excellent telling of the life of an amazing & admirable woman!

Tara says

I'm not really a big fan of Audrey Hepburn, but as she has remained so popular, I was curious to know more about her life. This was quite a good read though I don't know how it compares to other biographies of her. It was interesting to learn about her childhood experience of war, her movies, her humanitarian work, and how she found love later in life. I can see why so many people admire her, and also why it's so hard to really know her.

Jeff says

I will say this: I found myself incapable of reading a lot before I had to close the book and gaze romantically at the cover, wondering how strange people would think me to be if I up and kissed it.

I know I can't hold Paris too responsible for the book being so dry (thus, the three out of two); he is, after all, a biographer and not a novelist. Still, the book reads like a lecture, and a bad one at that. Every so often there is a nice little glimpse of coyness by Paris, but it is quickly overshadowed by long sections of exposition that seem only marginally necessary for us to know about Hepburn's life.

I do think I learned a bit about her, which I dare say is the reason for anyone to read a bio, but I feel like many years of her life went by in a few flips of the page, which resulted in my not really getting to know her. That's silly and romantic, like anyone enraptured by Audrey's entire being, and I know she was elusive in life, a normal person outside of the lime; but, I missed the tenderness of good writing that would have made this book really good.

However, the passage of her death did almost make me cry; but that might just be because she died. Still, I'm a guy so I would never publically admit that. Hmm.

Ultimately, good info and good photos, but poor writing. I'm sure there's a better Hepburn book out there, I just don't think I have the energy.
