



GREG OLSON

## David Lynch: Beautiful Dark

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## **David Lynch: Beautiful Dark** Greg Olson

For nearly 40 years, David Lynch's works have enthralled, mystified, and provoked viewers. Lynch's films delve into the subjective consciousness of his characters to reveal both the depraved darkness and luminous spirituality of human nature. From his experimental shorts of the 1960s to feature films like *Eraserhead*, *The Elephant Man*, *Blue Velvet*, *Mulholland Drive*, and *INLAND EMPIRE*, Lynch has pushed the boundaries of cinematic storytelling. In *David Lynch: Beautiful Dark*, author Greg Olson explores the surreal intricacies of the director's unique visual and visceral style not only in his full-length films but also his early forays into painting and short films, as well as his television landmark, *Twin Peaks*. This in-depth exploration is the first full-length work to analyze the intimate symbiosis between Lynch's life experience and artistic expressions: from the small-town child to the teenage painter to the 60-year-old Internet and digital media experimenter. To fully delineate the director's life and art, Olson received unprecedented participation from Lynch, his parents, siblings, old school friends, romantic partners, children, and decades of professional colleagues, as well as on-set access to the director during the production of *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*. Throughout this study, Olson provides thorough analyses of the filmmaker's works as Lynch conceived, crafted, and completed them. Consequently, *David Lynch: Beautiful Dark* is the definitive study of one of the most influential and idiosyncratic directors of the last four decades.

## **David Lynch: Beautiful Dark Details**

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### Adam says

Required reading for any enthusiast of David Lynch's films and other artwork. A great mix of biographical information and artistic interpretation using Lynch's own statements and factual history. I would not recommend reading this unless you have seen all of his movies as the author is extremely specific and assumes you have a decent understanding of his film and painting career.

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### Raul says

The summary and analysis of each film are tedious, redundant, full of random, tangential references and, overall, a slog to get through in this behemoth of a book. Every chapter seems to waste time summarizing or recapping things that have already been established previously, unnecessarily padding up this weighty volume to 700 pages. It's as if the author himself has lost track of what he has already told you about David Lynch and his work as he writes a new chapter.

Having said that, if you can endure the author's tiresome interpretations and his repetitive, redundant, beat-a-dead-horse writing style, there are nuggets of gold here for the devoted Lynch fan. For that, it's worth the read.

In short, it seems to be the best, most in-depth book on David Lynch out there, but "best" because there isn't much competition to speak of...So until a better book comes along, I would say this is it for the fan who wants to be immersed in Lynchland.

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### Vince Fontaine says

And now I want to watch all of his films over again!

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### Greg says

this book is a BRICK. But also a quality dissertation of a genius filmmaker.

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### Daniel says

There are two big, inseparable problems with this book: He doesn't write terribly well, and he writes WAY too much.

He's so relentlessly repetitive he almost robs the joy out of the aspects of Lynch's movies he seeks to highlight. So when he notes some theme running through Lynch's work, almost every single time, he goes

through a very tiresome list of "in this movie, (example a), while in this other movie (example b)" and march through EVERY SINGLE movie to make his point. He does this over and over.

And even when he's not doing that, he just beats the points to death through repetition: Lynch thinks about heads a lot, there is a theme in his movies of a home as place where things can go wrong, etc.

And then the bulk of most chapters is filled with long and tedious walks through almost all the scenes in each individual. Its the kind of tedious plot summary masking as a review that I would have written in high school, and it just goes ON AND ON.

The book often feels like barely more than a list of commonalities between Lynch's movies. Again, it seems like the kind of stuff you would write in high school as a fan of something and be embarrassed about as an adult.

He also fluffs up the book with pointless descriptions of non-essential things or scenes, and quotes from his interview with Lynch and his associates, as if he felt he had to use every single word they told him.

Also, his prose is workmanlike at best, and often clunky or outright bad.

I had been very reluctant to give those book 2 stars, since the author clearly loves the subject and put a lot of work into the project over many years. But then, when describing the death of the main character on Mulholland Drive as an outcome of her toxic relationship with her lover, and quotes the line "that kind of love is the killing kind," from the Aerosmith song "Cryin'." One, that song is hot garbage, and two, the reference is TOTALLY WRONG AND INAPPROPRIATE for the moment and dynamic he is describing. This book probably could have been much better with some ruthless cutting, and polishing of what remains. Huge disappointment. As a Lynch superfan, I would say even other superfans might find this book sapping any joy they might get from Lynch's images and ideas.

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### **Jordan West says**

3.75; massively informative and full of surprising tidbits about Lynch's personal life (Olson's recountings of his interactions with the man himself are quite entertaining); however, the book suffers from an excess of unnecessary detail, occasionally resembling an overambitious doctoral thesis, and some of the film critiques seem both pretentious and overly simplistic, as when Olson limits his analyses of Lost Highway and Mulholland Drive to the unimaginative "it was all in their heads" interpretation. Still, something well worth seeking out for the Lynch completist, but others won't miss out by sticking with Rodley's Lynch on Lynch and the Kaleta book.

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### **Miyo says**

A great book for die hard Lynch fans, although the last couple of chapters contain a bit too much speculation.

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### **Keith says**

It's highly unlikely that the man will ever write one himself, so this book will remain the Lynch Bible for quite some time.

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### **Andy says**

Holy Moly, so much detail, downright encyclopedic.  
Useful for research but not a book I'd pick up to read or recommend due to its granularity.

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### **Leif says**

Breezy enough to fly by and you'll wonder: whoosh, what happened? I'd prefer something a little more settling, some might say a little more scholarly in the sense that arguments and structures are apparent, but there you go, that's the style of the popular biography. There's enough here for a good meal at any rate. Wandering through it is to feel enriched by a multitude of impressions and rekindled by an admiration of Lynch's work, though Olson goes a bit strong on the *auteur* angle, much obscuring the work of the multitude of other artists who have supported and enabled Lynch's work. And finally, hey, there's glossy pictures.

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### **Dawn says**

Three chapters in, and so far, I'm very impressed. Solid and well-referenced without being so scholarly it makes my head hurt.

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