



Audrey: Her Real Story

Alexander Walker

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Innocent, elegant, ethereal in her beauty, Audrey Hepburn stood alone among the actresses of her time. From her first moment of fame in *Roman Holiday*, through the triumphs of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *My Fair Lady*, her screen presence was unique. Gregory Peck called her "a magical combination of high chic and high spirits." But Hepburn's story is also one of lifelong struggle--to escape the burden of family history, and to conquer the demons of her own life. In this newly expanded edition of his definitive biography, Alexander Walker reveals new details about her parents' Fascist sympathies, about Audrey's own wartime experiences, and about the tragic story of her attempts to make peace with her father before the end of his life. And he offers a moving portrait of a woman whose search for happiness was compromised all her life by insecurity, eating disorders, and an inability to find lasting love. From her troubled childhood through her heartfelt battle against world hunger on behalf of UNICEF, Alexander Walker has painted a candid and affectionate portrait of one of the world's most beloved actresses: This is Audrey's real story.

Audrey: Her Real Story Details

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Author : Alexander Walker

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From Reader Review Audrey: Her Real Story for online ebook

Anne Ayres says

It is hard to tell if this is just a difference of the times or even cultural, but his writing felt condescending towards the subject. He often wrote about what she "needed" when it came to her personal relationships. He also repeatedly referred to the subject as having "bouts" of anorexia. Both of these observations bothered me throughout the book

Rachel says

As a lifelong Audrey Hepburn fan, I've always wanted to read a biography on her, but I could never decide which one, as there are so many. I settled on this one because it had a slightly higher Goodreads average rating than others and also for the shallow reason that I liked the cover design.

This biography is over twenty years old--and it shows. Walker writes in a old-fashioned, dated way that reminds me of the narrators of Golden Age movie trailers. It's not exactly a problem, but it is a little striking when he writes that Audrey's face was slightly "oriental" or when he discusses "gays." Walker seems well-intentioned, but he is a product of his time, I suppose. Walker also passes a fair amount of personal judgment on people in Audrey's life, like ex-husbands Mel Ferrer and Andrea Dotti, which just didn't need to be there; readers can form their own opinions. As a biographer, he spends a bit too much time over-romanticizing Audrey and having his own views about her very private personal life.

Overall, I really enjoyed reading about her life and found myself inspired by such a good person in these times when finding goodness seems a little more difficult.

Tenielle Thompson says

I enjoyed this book for its glamorous perspective of a glamorous woman. However, I felt at times that she was glamorised a bit too much. It's written as if Alexander Walker has some paternal attachment to Audrey (which is ironic considering her estrangement from her real father). He writes with a pervading pride about her achievements both on screen and as part of the UNICEF team and strongly defends her flaws, often trying to validate them by depicting others in Hollywood as villains. Thus, the distinction between fact and fiction becomes something ambiguous. For instance, was Alfred Hitchcock really a closet misogynist or simply blunt and impatient for the sake of his films?

Also, to what extent was the film industry the cause of her recurring eating disorder? Was it really brought on primarily by the stress of a busy schedule, or was it some deep-seeded psychological issues brought on by the hardships she experienced in World War II? If it is the latter, why is this not explored?

I'm also left feeling hungry for more knowledge of her charity, the details of which are briefly skimmed over after an elaborate and in-depth description of her acting career.

Ultimately, the desire for more answers has left me somewhat dissatisfied with the book and, sadly, I still feel a bit distant from Audrey, as if she is simply an idol immortalised by the silver screen instead of a real life person with real flaws and a real potential for being disturbed by the cruelty of life. Although Audrey's

many strengths depicted by Walker are admirable, his inability to thoroughly interpret her psyche, makes her seem inhuman. Perhaps this is all the more reason for Audrey to remain one of my Hollywood heroes, or perhaps it is all the more reason for me to feel disillusioned about fame.

Eric Kinney says

I first read this book when one of my sister's gave it to me on my birthday. Just why would I care to read about the life of someone who died over twenty years ago is probably because of how much I fell in love with this actress ever since I was 10 and I first saw *My Fair Lady*. Sure, I eventually got over the fact that it wasn't really her singing voice, but I never forgot about her talent as an actress or her attributes as a wonderful human being. Though it's a shame the real Audrey never wrote a book about her life due to her humble nature, Alexander Walker gives his readers the next best thing in the form of a sincere but unadulterated biography. Walker provides in immense detail of Audrey's childhood years growing up without a father, struggling to survive in the Nazi occupied Netherlands, and her early youth spent arduously pursuing a career in ballet. FACT: One of the reasons why Audrey was never known to have been aggressive or argumentative is attributed to her unfortunate habit of hiding under a table whenever her disputing parents raised their voices at each other.

However, the Cinderella story of her rise to fame was only a fraction of her history, as Audrey was after all only human and was subjected to several rumored affairs with her co-stars and two bitter divorces throughout her adulthood. In this book, Walker gives us her flaws and strengths as a woman unscathed by the limelight and as a devoted mother of two boys who gave up her film career for more than eight years just so she could play an active role in their upbringing. Her tireless campaigning as a goodwill ambassador of UNICEF is also beautifully told and remembered as if Walker was with her every step of the way. Throughout the book, Walker even provides a collection of photos, from her family album to UNICEF and her work as a model before becoming an actress. Overall, I couldn't have asked for anything more candid or affectionate without the candy-coated idolizing that Hollywood loves to portray of all it's celebrities.

Northern Light says

This book purports to tell the story of Audrey Hepburn from wartorn Europe to University ambassador via her films.

As such it does a good job and I enjoyed the telling. At times she does come across as someone who got her own way and could be difficult to work with but this was often glossed over and I feel could have been gone into in more depth. I would have liked more about her early life rather than what felt at times like an endless cycle of who she was filming with.

A great book for any fan

Laura says

Audrey Hepburn had a name and a face that everyone recognized, but very few know the woman behind the icon. Over the course of her life, going from movie-star to devoted charity worker, Alexander Walker deconstructs each period of Audrey's life. Juxtaposing her always-shifting public image with her behind-the-scenes struggles, the author does a terrific job of sort of "grounding" the fairy-tale-like story of Audrey Hepburn. One aspect of the book I enjoyed was the author's analysis of the effects on both the stars of the films, as well as on the entire international movie industry. I definitely would recommend this book to anybody interested in the culture surrounding American films, as it is interesting to contrast today's industry from that of the '50's or the '60's.

Mano says

If you are a fan of Audrey, then this is a must read. Her story is most intriguing. A truly AMAZING person both on screen & off screen.

Sarah Steward says

For my biography, I read about Audrey Hepburn. I was really interested in finding out more about her, but this book was really disappointing. When I was choosing which one to read, I chose this one because the prologue was very interesting. But I could barely bring myself to read the rest of the book because it was so boring. I think that Alexander Walker could have done a much better job of making Audrey's life as fascinating as it actually was. It was interesting to read about all the things Audrey went through in her life, but it was very poorly written. This is definitely not the book to read if you want to learn more about Audrey.

Suzanne says

She is beautiful. Yes, she is!

She was beautiful in her looks, she was much more beautiful in her social work.

Beautiful!!! best word.

The world is missing such persons. The world needs such persons.

She was not only an actress, she was a person with a good mind. She loved and she feared, she had problems we all (may) have and worked on solving.

She was REAL, not an image.

Reading this book was fantastic. I loved to see her in some movies: Sabrina, How to steal a Million and others.

And I remember "War and Peace", she together with her husband, the extraordinary Mel Ferrer.

The book by Walker gives the impression who she was: Audrey. Much information is given, and the book

has a good structure that makes reading interesting. I will read it again and I can really recommend it to you!

Melanie says

This book, for me, was a journey. It took me a long time to read. There were things I really liked about it. There were things I really disliked. I really felt that I came to know the "Fair Lady" more intimately through this book than I have any other biographies about her.

Although perhaps unintentional, Walker shares a lot of his opinions about Audrey and those who knew her. Sometimes I felt his opinions were inconsequential and unnecessary. And he seemed to have quite a fascination to know more about the quiet life of Audrey's father. I felt this was unimportant and at times distracting from the real subject matter of the book.

I loved learning more about the co-stars Audrey worked with. As I've had the privilege of viewing most of her films, I enjoyed reading about the relationships she had with directors, co-stars and staff. Many of these friendships lasted through the end of her life.

If you know me well, you know I deeply admire Audrey Hepburn. I love the way she was recognized in the celebrity world as a unique, kind, and honest person. Though she is an icon, I gravitate away from that "Breakfast at Tiffany's" black dress, cat-across-the-shoulders image and I embrace the optimistic, simple, and humble woman that she was. She truly made this world a more beautiful place.

Tedsandi2000 Kinghorn says

I was never an Audrey Hepburn fan, but I saw her on a special about the Oscars so I checked this book out at the library. She had an interesting childhood and successful career. The author does not dig very deep, but I do not regret reading it. She does not come across as very "bright," but maybe she was just too trusting?

C.S. Burrough says

Another great job by Alexander Walker, this story covers the life an intriguing, beautiful and talented woman.

Not the easiest of subjects for anyone to document, Ms Hepburn had something almost indescribable - I disagree that she broke through on acting ability alone, but then few of her calibre have. She was breathtakingly beautiful and had a rare persona of innocence, naivety and sincerity that moviegoers found jawdroppingly enigmatic.

Audrey had many lingering demons to live with and held them off admirably and modestly throughout her great career.

Born in Brussels, she grew up in Belgium, England, the Netherlands, including German-occupied Arnhem, in WWII. She studied ballet in Amsterdam, moving to London in 1948 to continue her ballet training and

appeared in the chorus of West End musical theatre shows. Here she paid her dues, learned the ropes and worked her way into the industry, in a typically honest, hardworking, decent Audrey Hepburn-like way. So came her well deserved, if lucky, break.

We remember her most for her enchanting performances in 'Gigi', 'Roman Holiday', 'Sabrina', 'The Nun's Story', 'Breakfast at Tiffany's', 'Charade', 'My Fair Lady' and 'Wait Until Dark'. She deservedly won Academy, Emmy, Grammy, and Tony and BAFTA awards for her fine and unforgettable work.

After gently, gracefully backing away from her glittering film career she became a notable philanthropist and humanitarian, doing many greater and what she considered more important things than movies, resulting in her Presidential Medal of Freedom for her work as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

Like other great celluloid goddesses, she died not terribly old, ending her days in Switzerland.

This is a good biography about an unusual woman who we end up liking and respecting for far more than her movie work.

Hayley says

I am a huge fan of Audrey Hepburn's. She is, in my opinion, the greatest actress to grace the screen. She personified beauty, elegance, and style. Her humanitarian efforts should be a guiding post for all of us to strive to attain. She was, in a word, perfection.

Why, then, did I give this book such a cold rating? Well, I have some issues with the author. His subtle racism was disturbing to say the least. I was disgusted with the way he would say about almost all of Audrey Hepburn's acquaintance something to the effect of "because of his _____ heritage, this man behaved this way, ect." Another thing was his less than subtle (indeed I'd go so far as to say blatant) homophobia when describing the first meeting between Audrey and Albert Finney before shooting their movie "Two for the Road." That was disgusting and had me recalling a brief description of an earlier actor (whose name I have completely forgotten) whom Audrey liked, saying she must not have known (or perhaps it was that she didn't care) about said actor's bisexuality. When first reading that I thought he was saying she was unlike most people of her time. But now I'm thinking that was a slightly more subtle hint at the author's prejudices. I also did not care to have his opinions of Audrey's movies thrust upon me. Seriously, I can make up my own mind as to whether or not the movie is good. It's all well and good to cite critic's statements, but to go on to say he didn't enjoy the film is just not something I care about.

But, while I am disgusted by all of that, I cannot bring myself to give the book less than three stars. What can I say? I love Audrey Hepburn.

Alondra Maldonado says

Audrey Kathleen Ruston Hepburn: dancer, actress, model, fashion icon, humanitarian, friend, mother, the list goes on. One of the most recognized faces to be hit the silver screen of the Hollywood Golden Age. She brought beauty, grace, and charm. She is adored around the world to this day and has remained one of the world's most iconic actresses and fashion icon. I myself have only been a fan for a short amount of time, but

can say that this being the first biography I read of her, I had known most of the information already. Its a great read to know the young girl who grew up during the Second World War to become one of Hollywood's greatest actresses, to a humanitarian who once said, "As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others." Also I have seen quite a handful of her movies and even a film biography of her.

In the book Audrey Hepburn: Her Real Story, Alexander Walker examines each period of Hepburn's life giving full credit to the ones he feels "wrote the book": people he interviewed who were related, close, had worked with or associated with Hepburn. He himself had spent some time with Hepburn as well. Her life was not phenomenal and peachy all the time- as he described; it was a lifelong struggle to escape the burden of her family history, and to overpower the demons of her life. He offers a spitting image of the woman behind the icon whose search for happiness was composed by her insecurity, eating disorder, and the inability to find lasting love. These were only a few of the factors to what made her the extraordinary person she was. Her life struggles that led to success that led to being a compassionate and giving person are what made the legend she is today.

As being an Audrey Hepburn fan, it was no challenge for myself to be immediately captivated by this biography book. Alexander Walker did an exceptional job in the information portion of this book with well accuracy, but I would have to agree with the many reviews I've looked over, that it could have been a bit more well-written. Overall, it was an easy read, entertaining book. Fan or not, I would recommend this book to anyone interested in knowing more about this 5'7", 118 lb., 34"-20"-36", brown-eyed, brunette, legendary beauty.

Nicci says

I am in love with this remarkable woman. What an incredible life she led.

"It isn't age or even death that one fears as much as loneliness and lack of affection...I think I'd never worry about age if I knew I could go on being loved or having the possibility of love." - Audrey Hepburn

*3 Stars: Biographer could have done a better job. The writing was not the strongest, but still a fascinating read.
