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Sophia Loren: A BIOGRAPHY

By Warren G. Harris

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Born out of wedlock in fascist Italy, Sofia Scicolone seemed destined for a life of shame, poverty, and suffering. That she survived the bombings, food shortages, and epidemics of World War II was a miracle in itself. But she went on to astound the world as Sophia Loren, one of the most beautiful and talented superstars of this century. She costarred with Cary Grant and Frank Sinatra in her very first international film, and went on to work opposite many of their peers, including Clark Gable, John Wayne, Alan Ladd, William Holden, Marlon Brando, Gregory Peck, Charlton Heston, Paul Newman, David Niven, Peter O'Toole, Anthony Quinn, Peter Finch, Omar Sharif, and Richard Burton. Sophia Loren reveals the truth behind the legend who was once described as Italy's most perfect - and enigmatic - work of art since the Mona Lisa. The story of her rise from homely and skinny toothpick to awesome love goddess begins with Sophia's frustrated mother, a Greta Garbo lookalike who transferred her own dreams of stardom to her daughter. Following a chance meeting with producer Carlo Ponti, Sophia became his "protegee," acting in some of his films and becoming the married Ponti's mistress. Sophia and Ponti have been together ever since. For nearly two decades they were treated like criminals in Italy, where, until 1970, citizens were denied the right to divorce without approval from the Vatican. Facing criminal prosecution, Sophia and Ponti became exiles. The story of how they were eventually able to return to Italy, only to be later prosecuted for alleged tax evasion, is just part of author Warren G. Harris's intimate portrait of one of the celebrity world's most remarkable - and secretive - marriages. Also covered in depth are Sophia's remarkable personal relationships with Cary Grant, Peter Sellers, Richard Burton, and others who fell under her spell. The Pontis are one of the wealthiest couples in Europe. Their magnificent villa near Rome once contained a collection of paintin

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Screen legend Sophia Loren has led a colorful life, and Harris's (Audrey Hepburn, LJ 4/15/94) presentation of it makes for entertaining reading. She was born Sofia Scicolone, an illegitimate child in Fascist Italy, and eventually overcame poverty and malnourishment and developed into a beautiful teenager. Sophia's mother, a frustrated actress, began to push Sophia into the spotlight, and eventually Sophia caught the attention of producer Carlo Ponti, who recognized her potential. Sophia's beauty and physical attributes brought her immediate success in films but she proved that she could act as well and eventually won an Academy Award^R. On the personal side, her marriage to Ponti in 1957 was not recognized by Italian law because of Ponti's previous Mexican divorce, and shady financial dealings resulted in Sophia herself spending 30 days in jail. Harris covers all of this with considerable ease, for the most part avoiding gossip. An assessment of her appeal and talents would have made this a better biography, but it is one that will be enjoyed by fans and is recommended for public libraries. ?Phillip Oliver, Univ. of North Alabama Lib., Florence
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From Kirkus Reviews

Harris's account of the life of the star of such semi-memorable movies as *Two Women* and *El Cid* is a few shades more perceptive and readable than the average show-biz bio. The star cycle of female sex symbols is all too short. For 10 years, 15 if they're lucky, they reign as pinnacles of beauty and desirability. Then, they are gone. If they're lucky, they might reappear when they have reached the age to play grannies. Loren's career is an almost archetypal illustration of this sad, inevitable trajectory. Raised in utter poverty in Naples, she came of star-age at 19, in the heady days when tax breaks and tax restrictions created the multinational film and the multinational star. It was a time when foreign meant racy, and under the guise of the "art film" European movies thrilled American audiences with the kind of titillation they would never have countenanced in an American film. With her bold, fleshy beauty (and willingness to show cleavage), Loren quickly attracted general attention, as well as the attentions of producer Carlo Ponti. With his guidance and support, her career took off. Italy forbade divorce, but the married Ponti and Loren were soon living together. Through any number of infidelities and purported infidelities--all round--they have stayed together, eventually marrying as laws were liberalized. Harris (Audrey Hepburn, 1994, etc.) capably chronicles all these colorful goings-on without neglecting the movies themselves, of which some were great successes, while many more sank. Ultimately, these bad movie choices, conjoined with age, reduced Loren to semi-retirement. However, as Harris documents, she has enjoyed a second career as pitchwoman for her own brands of perfume and eyeglasses. And now the grandmother roles are just around the corner. For those still fascinated by the Academy Awardwinning Italian actress, here are all the essentials and a little bit more. (40 b&w photos, not seen) -- *Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

From [AudioFile](#)

This absorbing account of the fascinating Loren keeps one spellbound. From poverty and illegitimacy in Fascist Italy to the glamour and money of California moviedom, this is the life of a remarkable woman. Nadia May never skips a beat, never stumbles, and never loses (the listener's or her own) interest, despite the length of this reading. She has perfect voices for the international players in this biography, especially for the Italian accent of Loren herself, as well as a masculine twist for her infamous producer-husband, Carlo Ponti. Movie buffs will appreciate the complete story lines of all of Loren's movies. J.E.G. (c)AudioFile, Portland, Maine

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Gregory Goolsby:

Reading a guide tends to be new life style within this era globalization. With looking at you can get a lot of information that could give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world can certainly share their idea. Textbooks can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire their reader with their story or even their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the textbooks. But also they write about the information about something that you need example. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your kids, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors these days always try to improve their expertise in writing, they also doing some analysis before they write on their book. One of them is this Sophia Loren: A BIOGRAPHY.

Olivia Clinard:

Why? Because this Sophia Loren: A BIOGRAPHY is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap it but latter it will shock you with the secret this inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who all write the book in such wonderful way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book get such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to delay having that book? If I were you I will go to the guide store hurriedly.

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