



Life Is Too Short

Mickey Rooney

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He soared from the wrong side of Brooklyn to the top of the world. And he's still hot six decades later. Now, with crackling wisdom and great humor, Mickey takes us back and tells us about: The early days, the wild parties, and squandered fortunes . . . The dark days on the downside of

fame . . . The fabled friendships, torrid romances, and legendary marriages . . . The blockbuster films and head-busting moguls . . . Inside stories about Ava Gardner, Judy Garland, Clark Gable, Elizabeth Taylor, Charlie Chaplin, Spencer Tracy, and a host of others.

Mickey Rooney opens a wide window into an extraordinary life, one of startling adventure, tremendous excess, flagrant hedonism, heart-wrenching love, and an immense and giving talent that looms larger than life itself.

"LIFE IS TOO SHORT is a little masterpiece . . . Fascinating." --Los Angeles Daily News

From the Paperback edition.

Life Is Too Short Details

Date : Published March 20th 1991 by Villard

ISBN : 9780679401957

Author : Mickey Rooney

Format : Hardcover 374 pages

Genre : Biography, Nonfiction, Biography Memoir, Culture, Film



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From Reader Review Life Is Too Short for online ebook

Bill Turner says

I am old he was older. Nice read about the his life in the movie business and his pals and lovers.

Harish rai says

Amazing life and honestly delivered thoughts. In some instances it might be only his side of the story but it takes courage to come out in public with what has happened to you in personal life. I think this aspect makes biographies so much difficult to be written and requires courage.

Story of Mickey Rooney covers a time period really long and starts from an era so long gone by ,Still it takes you back to the simpler times . We can only imagine how many lives Mickey Rooney has touched/influenced in his life time .

This is an absolutely interesting read and gives you a feeling that Mickey is telling you the story sitting right in front of you .

Caitlin Hicks says

I can't really rate this book as a work of art, but it is a work of a life, and I had a 5 star experience reading it. I met Mickey Rooney on the set of a tv show called Black Stallion that followed up on the film of the same name. He got an academy award nomination for his role in the film, but he doesn't mention the tv show in his book, so it may not have happened by the time the book was finished. Of course Mickey Rooney was so well known all through his life and I knew my dad liked him, so I got a snapshot of the two of us on set and it was displayed on the family fridge for years. At the time, he looked like the guy on the cover of this book. On set with him for hours during our shoot, I didn't like Mickey Rooney at all, was very disappointed in how macho and rude he was, especially his comments about women. So I didn't give him a chance. But with this book, I got to know him. I don't know if the book was ghost-written, but Mickey's voice really came through loud and clear. I appreciated all the photos so I could really get a sense of who he was and how he came across to others during the various stages of his life. I was so curious about how he got married so many times, and I can see it now why it happened that way. The world always revolved around him, he was a very self-centered person, clueless sometimes, but not a bad guy. My own judgement of him as an actor was that he was too eager, and over-the-top but he did have some roles that he nailed and was more subtle, esp later in his life. It was really interesting that he shared what he got paid at every turn and then compared it with what the producers were making on him; in his later years he made more money than he had as a young star, although at that time he was probably one of the most famous people in the world. It was interesting seeing him with other famous people - Ava Gardner (his first wife) Judy Garland just to name two, there are many more. I appreciated what he tried to do with some of his money in his later years - to sue MGM and all the others who took advantage of all the actors by having them sign away their rights to all future screenings of their films; they just got a salary and that was it. His lawsuit was unsuccessful; He tried to bring awareness to this issue and I applaud him for that. It was really satisfying to follow him throughout his ups and downs, and I was certainly rooting for him when he got a really big break with Sugar Babies, in his later years, a

stage show that toured everywhere and made him thousands and thousands of \$. Now I find myself curious to see his films. He was such a hard worker - He made 147 films, unbelievable! I wish he were still here; he's so human!

Jaime Contreras says

This was a funny and engaging biography of the famous and iconic star who began his career at 6. He was a major star of the 1930s and 1940s and then gradually transitioned to more adult roles in the 1950s and beyond. I found some of his romantic memoirs a bit unbelievable and ill-fated but it is his autobiography. It is an enjoyable read for anyone who is a movie fan.

Bookworm Erica says

The story was fast paced and easy to read. Mickey does come off as a happy go lucky guy....Also very bitter about the studio system in the end. *we didn't know*....ignorance does not give you a clear way sadly. He came off even in his own words very selfish and marrying your dead wives best friend weeks after her murder. wife 6 she was for 100 days or less....I mean come on now

Robert Squire says

Interesting story of Hollywood. I would have liked more background on experiences making some of his movies. But since I ended up skimming anyway, I guess the book is about right. By the way, the troopship noted on page that Rooney returned from Europe on, was the General G. O. Squier, not Squire.

Holly Kemper says

Admittedly, I knew the name "Mickey Rooney", but was not really familiar with who he was prior to reading this book. The book was given to me in a box of books from a friend, and I ended up reading it because I ran out of anything new to read. I am so glad I did! The book takes the reader back to the golden age of movies, making the stars of the day more realistic and adding nostalgia for lost talent.

Rooney tells all the grit and dirt he witnessed, but also defends his fellow actors and actresses, adding more layers to their personas than most of us ever knew. Granted, I wasn't familiar with everyone he included, but the story held me just the same. His portrayal of Judy Garland is particularly bittersweet. A smattering of old pictures bring parts of his story to life.

It was a great read, and I am very glad I took the opportunity to read it!

Samantha Glasser says

Mickey Rooney is a force to be reckoned with. He began his career on the stage; both of his parents were performers. As a toddler, he looked more like a midget than a baby, so he was cast in various roles as such. Hal Roach's Our Gang series' popularity gave reason for Rooney to star in his own series as a kid as Mickey McGuire. Later, he moved his way into the "in" crowd, rubbing elbows with some of the most famous names in classic Hollywood. A B-picture that took America by storm, however, cemented his fame as the mischievous son of a judge with a heart of gold. Mickey Rooney became Andy Hardy in the hearts and minds of millions and also began his long companionship with Judy Garland. When WWII came, Rooney joined up to entertain the troops. Afterward, he juggled his way through eight wives and a downward spiral that left him struggling to revive his career.

This book have certain elements of a tell-all biography, but it is also a great source for information. Rooney's vibrant personality shines through the entire book and helps it to flow. The chapters are short and easy to read.

It is obvious that Rooney is a conflicted person, but also that he truly loves performing and the people he associated with in his life. His love for Garland shines brightly and makes one wonder if she was the love of his life, only he didn't notice until it was too late. Rooney is not bitter about his many wives; he never says anything to tarnish their names and he accepts blame for the failure of the relationships.

Laura says

This was super interesting to view Hollywood through an insiders eyes...and what they went through for the opportunity to entertain us and become famous hopefully.

Debra Pawlak says

This book was a quick read and had it's good points. Rooney is always funny and I learned a lot about his early years. However, if you are looking for facts about the golden years of Hollywood, Rooney's version is questionable. I don't fault him, but I found a couple of errors in his recollections. For example, he talked about his Oscar nomination for 'Young Thomas Edison' (1940). He was not nominated for an Oscar for this film. Privately, he certainly had his ups and downs, but I also wondered what his wives would have had to say (he had 8 of them)--especially Ava Gardner. His descriptive passages about their sex life was more than I cared to know. I also wondered what his good pal Judy Garland might have said about him. They were friends for many years and he seemed to feel that he didn't do enough for her. The book was written in 1991 and Rooney lived a long time after that so I am sure there is more to his story. I will have to find a good book written by a good biographer and get to reading.

KOMET says

MICKEY ROONEY was "to the stage born" in Brooklyn, the son of a vaudevillian (who dropped out of his life when he was 5, not to return for many years) and a chorus dancer. He attributes his first big break into acting at the age of 17 months to a sneeze "that revealed my hiding place underneath the shoeshine stand - a piece of scenery on the stage of the Haymarket Theatre in Chicago - where, ... I was watching the show.

"Even then, I was fascinated with the stage. I'd stand and gaze at the footlights. I'd marvel at the make-believe scenery, the bright costumes, the clownlike makeup my dad wore, the long legs of the lovely girls. "The theatre was an unusual nursery. Instead of blocks, I'd play with props, and my favorite toy was a mouth organ, which my mom tied around my neck, with a stout cord, so I'd never be without it. And now here I was, under the shoeshine stand in the middle of the show, giving away my position by sneezing."

Little Mickey was pulled out of his hiding place (in plain view of his parents, who were backstage, each indicating to him by silent gestures that he had been naughty and a punishment was forthcoming), and made a part of the ongoing act. Mickey put the mouth organ to his lips and blew. The audience responded with roaring laughter. For his performance, Mickey's parents were offered \$3.00 and Mickey became a part of the show.

In the years to come, Mickey proved himself a quick study in vaudeville. Later, after his father had left, and Mickey and his mother had relocated to Kansas City (where he lived among family), both Mickey and his mother made their way to Hollywood. There the both of them struggled and lived hand-to-mouth for sometime. Mickey got into movies in 1927 (appearing in a silent film as a midget, complete with hat, moustache, and an eye for the ladies) and had some success in a series of "Mickey McGuire" films as a wily, mischievous character not unlike the child stars of the successful "Our Gang" comedies.

By the time Mickey was 14, he was already a veteran of film and the stage. Notwithstanding that, a career in Hollywood was not a sure thing. Indeed, when Mickey was first brought to the attention of Louis B. Mayer, the head of MGM Studios (one of the most successful movie franchises in the world), he wasn't interested. He regarded Mickey as a "has been." But Mickey had a powerful and influential supporter in film producer David O. Selznick (who later figured prominently in the making of "Gone with the Wind"), who convinced Mayer that Mickey Rooney had talent and star potential. So began a film career with MGM that lasted for 2 decades. During that time, Rooney starred in such film classics as "Captains Courageous", "Boys Town", "Young Tom Edison" (which I watched on TV when I was a pre-teen), "Babes on Broadway", and "National Velvet." He became, not only a bankable star (earning millions for MGM, of which he received a pittance, such was the power and control the studio system held over the motion picture industry and the lives of its stars), but also Hollywood's top star, ranked by movie fans between 1939 and 1941 above the likes of Clark Gable, Gary Cooper, and Spencer Tracy.

Rooney goes on to talk about in great detail his many relationships with women (he had flings with Lana Turner and Norma Shearer, who, for me was one of the most talented and BEAUTIFUL actresses of that era), his 8 marriages (beginning with Wife No. 1, Ava Gardner, whom he married in 1941; it proved to be a short marriage because - aside from their sexual chemistry - they had very little in common), his Army service in Europe during the Second World War, the postwar slump in his film career, his relationship with Judy Garland (they were like brother and sister), and his various ups and downs.

This is a wonderful book, which has increased my respect and admiration for Mickey Rooney even more. He's a gutsy guy. Besides, his "Andy Hardy" movies (which were a massive success for MGM) will always be among my special favorites. I first watched them on Sunday mornings as a teenager. They always made me smile. Thanks for the memories, Mickey Rooney.

Bronwyn says

mickey rooneys life and career, and his bittersweet friendship with judy garland have been a sometimes tragic rollercoaster, this is about his life and career as he tells it in his own words

John P says

A fascinating read about a talented entertainer. The book is written in a conversational style - very easy to read. I could imagine the author's voice throughout. The pictures are a welcome inclusion.

There are a very few unnecessary lapses into profanity as well as a few passages that cross over into TMI. I don't understand the motivation on the part of the author to include them unless he perceived them as a way to increase sales or, possibly, the latter are a symptom of a Napoleon complex. Also, being a member of the stage and screen elite, there is a lot of name dropping - too much to my taste. Again, why? Perhaps this is another attempt at boosting sales.

I don't want, however, to suggest that these faults outweigh the positive aspects of the book. What Mickey may lack as a writer he more than makes up for as an entertainer. His story is captivating.

Angela says

Mickey is a great storyteller! The pace was high during the whole tale; even the sad parts were neither boring nor dwelled upon.

I love how Mickey always looked upwards, at what could be and not at what was happening around him. This (at times) painful optimism kept the man working right up until his death. I can't believe how many films he made, just up until publication of this autobiography!

I finished this book today, just two days after his death. The world really has lost a film legend.

Sull says

This was readable, partly because I remember Andy Rooney well, though the Andy Hardy movie series in which he first gained fame was from my parents' time, not mine. He was almost always the good-hearted, joke-cracking little Irish over-achiever, embodying that all-American cheerful can-do spirit. By my time he was something of a joke, a bit too manically unfunny, an old guy with old jokes trying too hard. But in the 30s-40s, as a teenager (!) & young man he was the number-1 money maker for the old-style movie studios.

So two people wrote this memoir--the starry-eyed poor boy who grew up in Vaudeville when it was dying and never imagined he'd reach the heights he did. This guy writes with bated breath about Ava Gardner, his first (and major) love, L. B. Mayer his studio head boss, and many, many other film stars of my growing-up years. This is the fun but slightly shallow Mickey.

The other one is the later, bitter Mickey who never saw more than pocket change doled out by his employer MGM studio, his parents, and a series of agents who cheated him. By the time he was in his 30s and had been booted out of MGM, he had to scramble for parts and money, and the bad decades of booze and pills take over the story. This darker version of Mickey holds many grudges. But all this is interesting reading too, of course, as is how he finally kicked his substance-abuse problems and came clean later in life.

At the very least, this is a generally honest, heartfelt, more or less intelligent look back by an ordinary guy who led an extraordinary life. And that's more than you can say for many of these celeb autobiogs....
