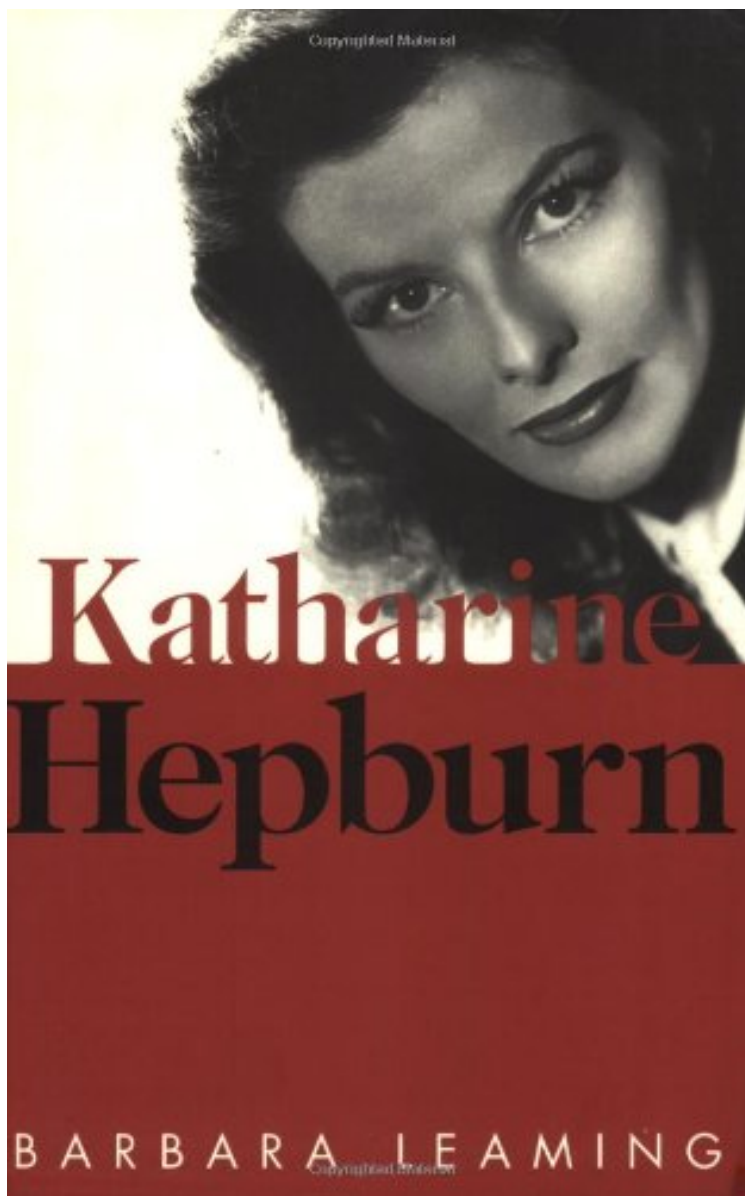


(Download free pdf) Katharine Hepburn

Katharine Hepburn

Barbara Leaming

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Barbara Leaming : Katharine Hepburn before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Katharine Hepburn:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Anne B. excellent 9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A great actress a great biographer! By Lara Carter Barbara Leaming has written on the lives of some of

the most luminous Hollywood personalities there are, including Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth. Her biography of Katharine Hepburn once again shows her ability to reveal the motivations and drives behind her subject while remaining a sympathetic observer. She treats Hepburn's childhood, her adult years and her involvements with famous, powerful men (John Ford and Spencer Tracy, to name two of the better-known lovers), that independent spirit, and her quixotic but huge theatrical and film talent and the very unordinary family life she enjoyed while growing up fairly and with great detail. Leaming gives us a portrait of a complex and brilliant artist of stage and screen who is larger than life, yet down to it as well, a glamorous Yankee with sensibility, common sense and charm to match. Very readable and very entertaining, Leaming's biography of Ms. Hepburn ranks against that of writer Anne Edwards - all fans of Ms. K. would do well to turn its pages. 9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Insightful and Well-Written By A. Eby I found Barbara Leaming's biography of Katharine Hepburn to be unique in that it does not begin immediately with Hepburn's birth. Instead, it starts with her mother and grandmother, and her father and uncles. In doing so, Leaming allows the reader, throughout the course of the book, to come to a better understanding of Hepburn psychologically, as opposed to just presenting facts related to career and private life. The bulk of the biography is devoted to Hepburn's relationships, including those with Howard Hughes, John Ford, Leland Hayward, and, of course, Spencer Tracy. For one more interested in details of Hepburn's historic career, this is not the most insightful book. But for those wanting a peek into the mystique that is the Great Kate, Leaming's biography is tantalizing and absorbing.

"Not often is a book about a film star more gripping than anything the star has played on the screen, but Barbara Leaming's biography has that distinction...Katharine Hepburn is Ms. Leaming's penetrating look beyond Ms. Hepburn's acting career and into the forces that shaped such an emblematic figure...Prodigious research has yielded a family history that is both revealing on its own terms and a necessary backdrop to any consideration of Ms. Hepburn's career." -Janet Maslin, The New York Times Book Review

From Publishers Weekly Leaming's subjects are screen giants: Orson Welles, Rita Hayworth, Bette Davis and, now, Katharine Hepburn, the only Hollywood star to win four Oscars for best actress. Her biography is a full, insightful portrait, not only of the actress herself but also of her family and its heritage. The competition here is tough: Hepburn herself has written two idiosyncratic memoirs (*The Making of the African Queen* and *Me: Stories of Myself*) and has been the subject of endless articles and at least one other full-length biography (Anne Edwards's *A Remarkable Woman*, 1986). But Leaming has dug deeply and reconstructed a fascinating era from primary sources. The Hepburn family story resembles a modern Greek tragedy, full of complex characters who were inspired yet doomed. The often harrowing relationships between the actress's grandparents and parents reverberated through her own childhood as well as the devastating effects of five hushed-up suicides within the family. Katharine as a child discovered her brother Tom's body hanging in the attic. Hepburn men were fierce and domineering, the women intellectual and courageous. Katharine's mother was a nationally known birth control crusader when the very idea was considered dangerously radical. Katharine's acting career and her eccentric love life are gently but perceptively dissected here. The honor roll is platinum: the movies include *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), *Woman of the Year* (1942), *Adam's Rib* (1949), *The African Queen* (1951), *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), *The Lion in Winter* (1968) and *On Golden Pond* (1982); the men: John Ford, Leland Hayward, John Huston, Howard Hughes and, of course, Spencer Tracy. Hepburn's mythic 26-year affair with Tracy, seen under Leaming's undaunted lens, is more sorrowful than romantic. His endless drinking, indecision and attempts to belittle his devoted companion?she received second billing in all their nine films together?make unappetizing fare even though they failed to alienate Hepburn. She "seemed oblivious to anyone or anything besides Spencer" as he preempted her career for a time and isolated her from friends and family. Significantly, only one of her Academy Awards was for a film made with Tracy, awarded after his death, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. Leaming has sensitively and selectively captured her subject in good times and bad. Her superb biography measures up to the stature of its inimitable heroine. Photos not seen by PW. Author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal One might rightly wonder what there is left to say about actress Hepburn, since she has already been extensively written about and interviewed and has written her autobiography, *Me: Stories of My Life* (Knopf, 1991). But biographer Leaming (*If This Is Happiness*, LJ 9/1/89) has managed to add a whole new perspective to what is already known. Leaming starts this biography not with Hepburn's birth and early life but with her mother Kathy (known later as Kate). Kathy's mother, Carrie, was forced to take charge of her three girls after the suicide of her husband, Fred. Carrie's courage, strength, and fervid desire for her daughters to be educated led Kathy to become a leader in the early women's movement. These role models together helped shape the woman we know as Katharine Hepburn. Leaming hypothesizes, however, that Hepburn was also driven by the shadow of suicide, which took her brother Tom as well. This is less a gossipy, glitzy celebrity bio and more an exploration of the New England social mores that shaped this living legend. Highly recommended. Rosellen Brewer, Monterey Bay Area Cooperative Lib. Sys., Cal. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist TITLR H Leaming, Barbara. Best known for her definitive biography of Orson Welles, Leaming (on a suggestion from Welles) now takes on an equally formidable subject, Katharine Hepburn. The second child of a successful Connecticut physician and his

suffragette wife, Hepburn led a remarkably unrestricted life. However, the defining experience of her youth was the death of her older, revered brother, presumably a suicide. Without resorting to psychobabble, Leaming crafts a careful, psychologically probing portrait of the entire Hepburn clan, stressing the effect of the suicides that ran through Kate's maternal and paternal families. This is, in fact, a family biography, with at least half the book devoted to Hepburn's grandmother and mother, remarkable women both. In many respects, it is also a sharp portrait of an era, one in which women fought valiantly to shape their own destinies, a battle in which Mrs. Hepburn and her sister, Edith, were in the forefront.