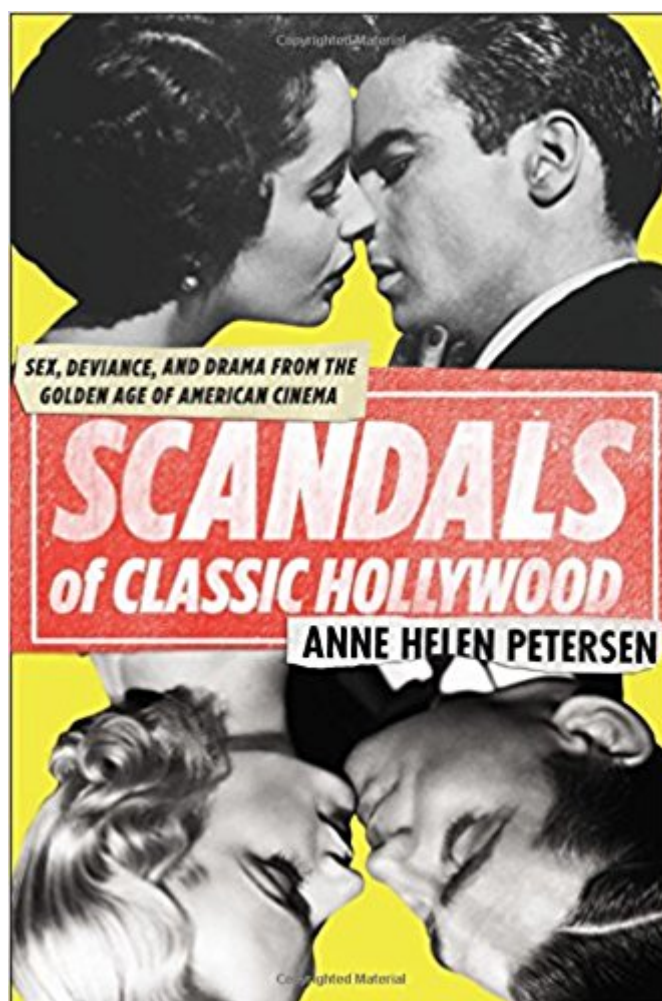


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Scandals Of Classic Hollywood: Sex, Deviance, And Drama From The Golden Age Of American Cinema



Synopsis

Gossip meets history—a compulsively readable collection of Hollywood's most notorious clashes and controversies in the spirit of Hollywood Babylon. Believe it or not, America's fascination with celebrity culture was thriving well before the days of TMZ, Perez Hilton, Charlie Sheen's breakdown and allegations against Woody Allen. And the stars of yesteryear? They weren't always the saints that we make them out to be. BuzzFeed columnist Anne Helen Petersen is here to set the record straight with *Scandals of Classic Hollywood*. Pulling little-known gems from the archives of film history, Petersen reveals eyebrow-raising information, including: The smear campaign against the original It Girl, Clara Bow, started by her best friend. The heartbreaking story of Montgomery Clift's rapid rise to fame, the car accident that destroyed his face, and the lifelong suicide that followed. Fatty Arbuckle's descent from Hollywood royalty, fueled by allegations of a boozy orgy turned violent assault. Why Mae West was arrested and jailed for "indecent exposure charges." And much more. Part biography, part cultural history, these stories cover the stuff that films are made of: love, sex, drugs, illegitimate children, illicit affairs, and botched cover-ups. But it's not all just tawdry gossip in the pages of this book. The stories are all contextualized within the boundaries of film, cultural, political, and gender history, making for a read that will inform as it entertains. Based on Petersen's popular column on the Hairpin, but featuring 100% new content, *Scandals of Classic Hollywood* is sensationalism made smart.

Book Information

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Criticism #1748 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > General

Customer Reviews

The scandals that appear in this book:- Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks have an affair-

Roscoe "fatty" Arbuckle is accused of a rape that killed a woman- Wallace Reid did drugs- Rudolph Valentino had an unusual personal life- Clara Bow was too flapper like in her real life- Jean Harlow was the original blonde bombshell with a husband who died under mysterious circumstances- Mae West wasn't quite as scandalous as her characters- Clark Gable and Carole Lombard's affair- Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall's romance- Judy Garland the girl who no one thought looked like a star but who did sing like one- Dorothy Dandridge a black actress / singer struggling to break through stereotypes- Montgomery Clift with his apparently non-existent love life and life altering accident- Marlon Brando with his ego, bad relationships, and dislike of the Hollywood machine- James Dean died before he'd even truly become a star

The book does a good job of explaining the moral issues that existed in Hollywood, especially during the reign of Will Hays as the head of the MPPDA (now MPAA). It also does a good job of explaining the relationships between the studios, actors, and the gossip columnists -- they were definitely working toward the TMZ era but there was also some sense of privacy and protectionism. What it does less well is go into details about each actor / scandal it is revisiting.

I'm a Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle fan and a James Dean mega fan (as in I have been to his hometown during the annual festival celebrating him) so maybe I went into this at a disadvantage as I already knew their stories way better than they could be told in a chapter.

Since this is mostly going to be about what went wrong for me with this book, let me start by saying: It's good! Buy it! I'm glad I did. Having said that...I've been waiting for this book for six months--thus, like any Hollywood movie, it was bound to struggle to live up to the anticipation. Don't get me wrong; for any lover of classic hollywood, this is a good read, and I'd probably have loved it if I hadn't been devouring Anne Helen Peterson's online articles--whether through Hairpin, Buzzfeed, her blog, or other media--for a couple years now. But I have and therein, I think, lies the slight disappointment with the book. While the promos promise the chapters are not repeats of the Hairpin articles, that is a bit disingenuous. The articles aren't transplanted verbatim, but many of the stories (Fatty Arbuckle, Clara Bow Dorothy Dandridge, Montgomery Clift, and others) are repeats and cover familiar territory. Still, a good story is always worth rehearing. What I miss most in the book is the lively, irreverent, voice Peterson uses in her online pieces, which often read like a personal email to you, the reader. SHE IS FUNNY. Her side remarks on Hollywood hypocrisy and comments on the plethora of images that populate her online text are vastly entertaining and sadly missing in this text

Read this comment on a still of Lana Turner in a turban from the Postman Always Rings Twice: "I mean, THIS IS IT, right? Like there's no need for another seduction scene ever? And the

high-waisted white shorts and the knotted crop top ... does Urban Outfitters carry those in my size?
Can someone teach me how to make my towel topknot look like that?

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