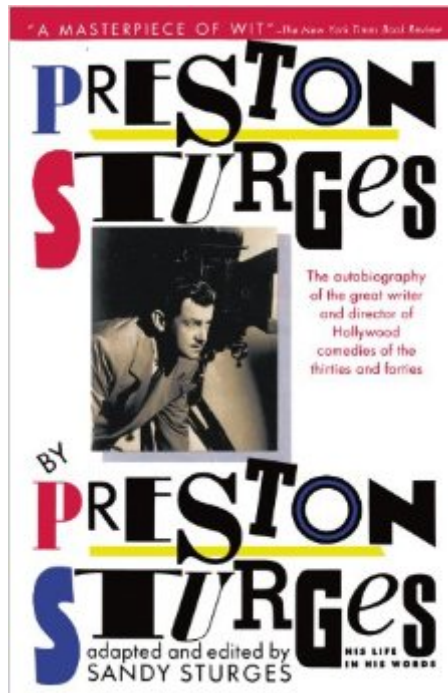


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Preston Sturges By Preston Sturges: His Life In His Words



Synopsis

Preston Sturges was the great writer and director of Hollywood screwball comedies of the thirties and forties. Sullivan's Travels, The Miracle of Morgan's Creek, and The Great McGinty have become film classics, demonstrating brilliant, inventive writing and directing. At the height of his career, Sturges had not only won an Academy Award but was also one of the most highly paid executives in the country. The only account of his life in his own words, Preston Sturges by Preston Sturges unveils the source of his extraordinary creativity: a life that was every bit as antic and unconventional as his movies. From growing up in Europe with a mother whose best friend was Isadora Duncan to making his way among the beau monde of New York -- including a marriage to Barbara Hutton's cousin Eleanor -- Sturges drew on a wealth of madcap experiences to create films of unprecedented comic originality. Working with her husband's wonderfully descriptive journals, Sandy Sturges has woven a captivating narrative that reveals a man of remarkable intellect, energy, and warmth.

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Customer Reviews

The strange title and author attribution of this (auto)biography of movie writer/director Sturges is revealed in the last paragraph, and I won't give it away here. Trust me to say that this is a fascinating look into Preston Sturges' life as it is revealed by the man himself. Revealing? For example, the time spent by Sturges working on his six Hollywood classics (starting with "The Great McGinty" and ending with "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek") are briefly covered in approximately 50

pages. Instead of concentrating his life into the three years that made him famous, Sturges spreads his story out equally to all years of his life, spending an equal amount of time on his toddlership. Fortunately, Sturges' life is interesting and by the time you arrive with him in Hollywood, you may agree with him that it's not necessarily as high a pinnacle as it may seem. What you discover here is that Sturges, while a gifted writer and director, was something of a strange chap. His early life, while providing him many of the anecdotes that he would later incorporate into his movies, weren't necessarily guiding him to the silver screen. By tricks of simple fate, Sturges avoided a career as a perfumer, a broker, and an inventor. And, before Hollywood, there was a chance that he would have stayed a playwright on Broadway. For a man with the drive for success and money, though, no place but Hollywood in those years had quite the means to deliver the goods. There's a few pictures to round out the book and a nice bibliography. As a starting point to discovering more about Sturges' work, this is a great book. About that work, though, one must look elsewhere.

The best biography (to date) of Preston Sturges is "Between Flops" by James Curtis, but this well-edited edition of Preston's own unfinished autobiography makes a wonderful companion volume to that vivid bio.

A great autobiography that anyone who is a Sturges fan will love. He writes extremely well, and the life he tells about is a fascinating one. Why this book is not more widely known and discussed is a mystery. Had Sturges never made a movie (and he devotes little space to that aspect of his life), or if anyone reading the book would happen to not know who Sturges is, the book would hold up just as well. His wife Sandy did an excellent job of editing Sturges' journals and writings to come up with what will one day become known as literary classic that will stand alongside his film masterpieces.

I am forced to give this book a 3 rating because does not allow half stars, but I would rather give it a 3 and a half. Worth the investment but don't expect an easy read. The style of the narrative is almost as if we are intruding in on Preston's mumbling about his life. I have to wonder how much of this is his widow's fault (close to 30 years his junior and fourth to hold that honor), the one who allegedly edited it many years after his untimely death. The first half of the book is more about his mother than himself and maybe she did have the more interesting life being a world traveler and close friend of Isadora Duncan. By Preston's own admission, he did not have the dedication to being a true Hollywood player and was probably overpaid for his talent. Hey, every excellent writer has at least 5 or 6 good stories in him. The trouble was he tried to keep pushing the lousy ones as well. He will be

remembered for a handful of great movies with strong performances by mostly A-minus list performers (other than Barbara Stanwyck).

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