



American Legends: The Life of Elizabeth Taylor

Charles River Editors

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*Includes pictures of Taylor and important people, places, and scenes.

*Includes Taylor's own quotes about her upbringing, films and relationships.

*Includes a Bibliography for further reading.

"I've always admitted that I'm ruled by my passions." – Elizabeth Taylor

A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known.

Hollywood is full of cautionary tales for child actors like Judy Garland, Jackie Coogan, and Macaulay Caulkin, who all soared to fame in their youth only to suffer family feuds, drug addiction, or other ill effects of becoming famous so early in life. Even those child actors for whom stardom was not traumatic, such as Shirley Temple, had great difficulty succeeding in Hollywood as an adult, with their careers effectively over by the time they reached adulthood. Child actors may or may not enjoy the fame bestowed upon them so early in life, but their fame has almost always come at a cost, especially since it has traditionally been difficult for audiences to disassociate them from their early roles.

On the other hand, the life of Elizabeth Taylor bears little in common with the paradigm of the troubled child star. After arriving in the United States at the age of 9, Taylor was indoctrinated into the life of the Hollywood studio system shortly after child stars Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney, but while Garland suffered great trauma at the hands of the studio system, Taylor's early experience in Hollywood represented the flip side of the coin. Groomed for a life in Hollywood by her zealous mother, Taylor enjoyed her life in the motion picture industry and reveled in the privileged lifestyle and opportunities she enjoyed by virtue of her profession. Acting supplied her with a lavish lifestyle and, more importantly for her, constant attention. From an early age, Taylor displayed a vociferous love for living in the public eye.

Another difference separating her from other child stars is that Taylor was able to successfully transition from child star to major adult actress; in fact, her fame only escalated as she grew into adulthood. In many ways, Taylor enjoyed being in the public spotlight and living the lifestyle of the rich and famous, and her personal life very much resembled a performance suitable for Hollywood. Taylor faced great adversity throughout her life, including being married on eight different occasions to seven different spouses and fighting battles with weight and drug addiction. Still, while many actors grow resentful of public attention, even during her moments of personal struggle Taylor thrived on public attention and enjoyed a mutually adoring relationship with the American public. She was a creature of the studio system, yet she maintained a dynamic with the public that deviated sharply from the norms of child actors.

American Legends: The Life of Elizabeth Taylor examines the life and career of Elizabeth Taylor, putting the spotlight on Taylor's child roles and her adult films, and the relationship between the two main stages of her career. Of course, it also documents the notorious elements of her personal life as well. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Elizabeth Taylor like never before, in no time at all.

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