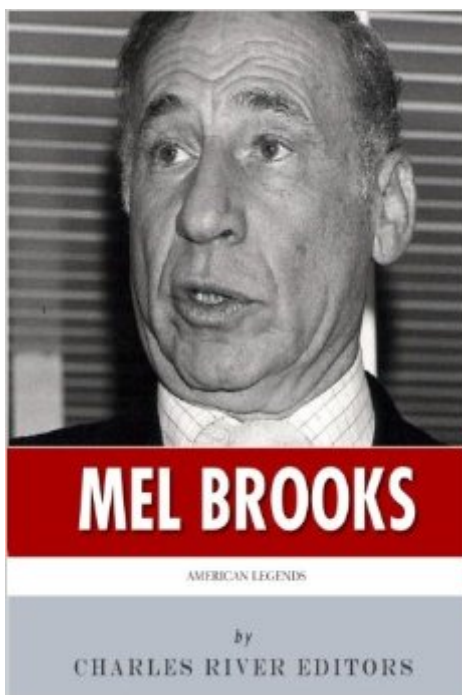


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American Legends: The Life Of Mel Brooks



Synopsis

*Includes pictures *Includes Brooks' quotes about his life and career *Includes a bibliography for further reading

• "If you're quiet, you're not living. You've got to be noisy and colorful and lively."

• "Mel Brooks: 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. One of the more well-known Mel Brooks quips is his statement, in reference to his birth, that "We were so poor, my mother couldn't afford to have me; the lady next door gave birth to me." While obviously fabricated, the story is worthy of note, as it illustrates Brooks' self-deprecatory Jewish humor and his way of transforming a childhood of deep adversity into fodder for comedy. This is, of course, one among many famous Mel Brooks remarks, and over his decades-long career, Brooks has built a veritable treasure chest of them. Although many of his forebears in the Jewish comedy tradition built their success on slapstick comedy (here one thinks of the Marx Brothers and Jerry Lewis in particular), Brooks' humor has always been more verbal than physical, closer to Woody Allen than Jerry Lewis. Indeed, his jokes and famous one-liners rank among those of Woody Allen in the pantheon of great Jewish verbal wit. As much as Brooks invites comparison to other Jewish comedians, there also is no doubt that his comedy is deeply polarizing. Pauline Kael, for example, was a constant biting critic of Brooks, and he was never fully welcomed into the bosom of the American critical establishment. One senses that Brooks is perhaps better appreciated for isolated jokes and one-liners than for his actual films. Most people are able to recognize the comic virtuosity in films like *Young Frankenstein* (1974) and *Blazing Saddles* (1974), but critics' attempts to assess many of his other movies have been met with frustration. In addition, Brooks' forays into other media, most notably television, have challenged critics who privilege one art form above the rest. To be sure, Brooks' career has brought a great deal of entertainment and laughter to the public, but he also is one of the more divisive figures over the last half-decade of the 20th century. *American Legends: The Life of Mel Brooks* looks at the life and career of Mel Brooks, analyzing how his comic style formed and how Brooks has been able to remain such a prolific figure. It is well-known that Brooks was Jewish and that this has informed his comic style, but other, lesser-known factors in his upbringing played an indelible role in constructing his comic persona. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Mel Brooks like never before, in no time at all.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There is no other comedic genius out there, or is out there like Mel Brooks. I have to confess that he is something of an idol for me. I have watched all his movies and documentaries about this remarkable comedian. He is a life force of creativity and invention whose brain and wit are without pareil. This short volume gives one a glimpse of his early and formative years and opens the door slightly to the engine that drives him to this comedic heights. If you are a fan of Mel and the era of great comedy vis-a-vis Sid Caesar, then you need to dip into this. Laugh and cry. You deserve it.

#1) it stated that the Marx brothers were slapstick..I disagree. They were witty.#2) I looked forward to info about his life and tidbits about those funny movies. What I got was pages and pages of critique of those movies. (and pages and pages and pages.....) yawn.

I was hoping for a book about Mel Brooks, what I got instead was reviews of his movies. Not much substance to this at all. I was disappointed that there was no background info about the man. Won't be reading any of books about famous people that come out under this label.

Great synopsis of a multi-talented individual who has brought laughter to people in all walks of life. More proof of the fact that talent such as his does not happen overnight but does come with genuine hard work.

I enjoyed this book. I really like the Charles River Edition biography books. They don't idolize the subjects or look for a way to trash them. I get factual information with an insight into their personalities. For the most part, Brooks' movies are among my favorites. This book helped me combine the humor and style of his movies with his life's background.

I love Mel Brooks and think he is one of the most creative and talented people to have ever lived but this book was a total dis-service to the man and his life accomplishments. The writing is just totally boring and it was a chore just to try and finish the book. I thought I was reading someone's high school creative writing assignment. I'll have to wait and read someone else's attempt at capturing Mel's life in book form...

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