



Audrey Hepburn, An Elegant Spirit

By Sean Hepburn Ferrer

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Audrey Hepburn, An Elegant Spirit By Sean Hepburn Ferrer

Now in paperback, an intimate look at the woman the world adored, by the son who adored her with unique photos, drawings, and other rare Audrey memorabilia.

She dazzled millions as Gigi. Eliza Doolittle. Holly Golightly. But to her most adoring fan, Audrey Hepburn was best known for her role as “Mummy.”

In this heartfelt tribute to his mother, Sean Hepburn Ferrer offers a rare and intimate glimpse into the life of one of Hollywood's brightest stars. *Audrey Hepburn, An Elegant Spirit* is a stunning compilation of nearly 300 photographs, many straight from the family album and never before published; archival documents, personal correspondence, and mementos; even paintings and illustrations from the actress herself.

Sean tells Audrey Hepburn's remarkable story, from her childhood in war-torn Holland to the height of her fame to her autumn years far from the camera and the crush of the paparazzi. Sean introduces us to someone whose grace, charm, and beauty were matched only by her insecurity about her appearance and talent, and who used her hard-won recognition as a means to help children less fortunate than her own. With this unique biography, Sean celebrates his mother's history and humanity—and continues her charitable work by donating proceeds from this book to the Audrey Hepburn Children's Fund.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Hepburn's son (with actor Mel Ferrer) shows his mother as a compassionate, emotional woman who searched for and offered love above all. He traces the roots of his mother's longing in her experiences with her distant father and the destruction of her native Belgium during WWII. Via photos and stories, he notes how Hepburn (1929-1993) aimed to live an everyday family life of home, school and holidays. Rendering her husbands respectfully and without off-color stories, Ferrer doesn't offer lascivious behind-the-scenes dramas or quips about directorial injustices. Instead, he lets designers and composers who worked with Hepburn talk about the actor's inimitable talents. Composer Henry Mancini believes her "quality of wistfulness" inspired the songs he wrote for her, especially Breakfast at Tiffany's "Moon River." Designer Cecil Beaton calls her an "authentic existential Galatea" with a voice containing the "quality of heartbreak." Ferrer also details Hepburn's influential friendship with clothing designer Hubert de Givenchy, including the dressmaker's generosity in Hepburn's final days. Directors William Wyler and Billy Wilder also appear, as do actors Gary Cooper and Fred Astaire (the latter was Hepburn's co-star in her favorite movie, *Funny Face*). Movie-related photos abound, but the most memorable images are of Hepburn's family and the children she met in her work with UNICEF. Her 1989 speech to members of the United Nations staff on the millions of dying children in developing countries concludes the book. What began as a son's remembrance and selective movie survey becomes a call to action. In this way, the work differs greatly from standard self-important star bios. 300 full-color and b&w photos.

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From Library Journal

A family memoir.

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From Booklist

Starred Review When trying to define celluloid grace and spirit, one name shoots to mind--Hepburn. Two new memoirs--one written by Audrey Hepburn's son, the other by a well-known biographer who was like a son to Katharine Hepburn--recall these extraordinary women.

Although certain similarities exist beyond the coincidence of name (both were luminous presences on screen who followed their hearts), the differences were legion. Audrey's son, Sean Ferrer (son of actor Mel Ferrer), explains that acting was a second choice for Audrey after she was told she could not become a prima ballerina due to lack of proper training while growing up during World War II. Though happy to make one successful film after the other, she longed to have children and then retired to raise them. When UNICEF came calling, Audrey, remembering the aid she'd received after the war, became the agency's ambassador, never sparing herself, traveling to war-ravaged regions like Somalia to raise awareness of the plight of children. Katharine Hepburn, on the other hand, called herself a "pig" when it came to her career. Single-minded, she wanted neither husband nor children encumbering her as she devoted herself to her work.

These memoirs, though packaged very differently, both do a remarkable job of bringing readers the essence of each woman. Ferrer's remembrance is rather slight on text, but what is there is rich, evocative, and dotted with fresh anecdotes; certainly the facts concerning Audrey's final illness have never been disclosed in such heartbreak detail. Bolstering the writing are loads of marvelous pictures, many straight from the family album, and Audrey's extraordinary beauty and joy shine from every one of them. Only she could wear a babushka on her wedding day and look fabulous.

Using a proposed article as entree to Katharine's home, Berg never left, staying often at Hepburn's places in New York and Connecticut. This arrangement gave him the opportunity for many conversations, the substance of which, according to Berg, Hepburn knew would be used as the basis of a book. Fans already know much of the outline of Hepburn's life, but this intensely readable account (held for publication until Hepburn's death) fills in amazing details about such pivotal events as the death of her brother by hanging, her relationships with powerful men like Howard Hughes and John Ford, and her slow, sad decline. Surprisingly, there's little new added to what we know of the Hepburn-Tracy love affair; even more surprising is Berg's veiled commentary (put into the mouth of a friend but seemingly confirmed by the author) revealing Hepburn's bisexuality. Berg's writing is so intimate that readers may feel they are hiding behind a curtain as they listen to the stories he elicits from his subject. Kate herself comes across pretty much the way she did on screen: bossy, courageous, and self-involved (though this trait was inverted when it came to caring for Tracy).

In the end, one Hepburn died too soon, and the other perhaps tarried too long, but they will both live on in

their movies, which is very lucky for the rest of us. *Ilene Cooper*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Malcolm Khan:

As people who live in often the modest era should be revise about what going on or information even knowledge to make these individuals keep up with the era which can be always change and advance. Some of you maybe may update themselves by reading books. It is a good choice in your case but the problems coming to you actually is you don't know which one you should start with. This Audrey Hepburn, An Elegant Spirit is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, because book serves what you want and want in this era.

June Whitaker:

People live in this new morning of lifestyle always aim to and must have the time or they will get lots of stress from both everyday life and work. So , once we ask do people have extra time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not really a huge robot. Then we ask again, what kind of activity do you possess when the spare time coming to a person of course your answer can unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading publications. It can be your alternative throughout spending your spare time, often the book you have read will be Audrey Hepburn, An Elegant Spirit.

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