



Charlton Heston: Hollywood's Last Icon

Marc Eliot

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This is the definitive biography of one of the most iconic, complex and enduring legends of Hollywood's golden age, whose major presence in American film, radio, television, stage and theater lasted beyond the second half of the 20th Century, and whose classic films are known throughout the world.

Written by *New York Times* bestselling, prize-winning author Marc Eliot - *Cary Grant, Walt Disney, Clint Eastwood, Steve McQueen, Jack Nicholson*, and others - with unprecedented access to the family, friends, and Heston's private papers, diaries, journal, writings and estate, he tells an unforgettable tale of an extraordinary life you may find difficult to put down.

Eliot's biography is rich with facts details and anecdotal material that bring to life the complex story of this most iconic of American popular cultural giants to illuminate Heston's greatest achievements and his personal failures. He examines how a small boy from the backwoods of Michigan rose to become one of Hollywood's most legendary stars, one of the Greatest Generation's true-life war heroes - he saw action in the Pacific Theater during World War Two, before moving with his young wife from Chicago to New York's Hell's Kitchen to begin their struggle to find success in the theater. Eliot traces Heston's pioneering work in live television, his being discovered by Hollywood because of it, and tells the amazing saga of his three films for Cecil B. DeMille and his two for William Wyler, including *The Ten Commandments* and *Ben-Hur*, the latter for which he won a Best-Actor Oscar, with fascinating new details, documents and photographs never before seen. Eliot follows Heston through the genre of Science Fiction, which he helped revive with *Planet of the Apes*, and sheds new light on every one of Heston's iconic films. He also examines Heston's long political involvements, from being one of the organizers of The Arts Contingent of Marchers who joined with Martin Luther King, Jr. for the March on Washington, to his mentoring under Ronald Reagan for eventual presidency of the Screen Actors Guild, to his late-in-life presidency of the National Rifle Association, all the while being asked by both Republican and Democratic Parties to run for the United States Senate.

With unprecedented cooperation with Heston's family, and never-before-seen personal photos, documents and hand-written letters, *Charlton Heston: Hollywood's Last Icon* for the first time tells the real story of Charlton's Heston's amazing life, an incisive, detailed, compelling portrayal, both for longtime fans, Hollywood movie lovers everywhere and a new college and TCM generation discovering Heston's work for the first time.

Charlton Heston: Hollywood's Last Icon Details

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From Reader Review Charlton Heston: Hollywood's Last Icon for online ebook

George Heidemark says

In our divisive times, it is easy to pigeonhole Charlton Heston as the older actor who became President of the NRA and who thrust a rifle and the air and said provocative things but he was so much more. In this first rate biography by veteran Hollywood author Marc Eliot we see Mr. Heston in all his complexity. A lonely child from a broken marriage, a devoted husband and father a dedicated actor and truly one of the last icons of a bygone film era. He learned his craft on Broadway and a wave to Cecil Be Demill put him in his first major film : The Greatest Show on Earth. Epics particularly historical film became his specialty. Off course there was The Ten Commandments, his Academy Award Performance in Ben Hur, El CID and The Agony and the Ecstasy. But he reinvented himself many times. He became a Sci- Fi stalwart in films such as Planet of the Apes, Soylent Green and the Omega Man. He starred in several disaster films such as Earthquake and Airport 1975. He and his wife were also active in live theater. He campaigned for civil rights and eventually he became involved in conservative causes. The Heston family cooperated with the author and he had access to Hestons diaries. This is a well written examination of a major actor and if you enjoy film this is for you. Charlton Heston was a multidimensional personality and this fine book brings him to life.

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Joseph Perera says

I really enjoyed this book about my favorite actor. Interesting read and a very interesting story.

Lane says

A goodreads giveaway

An interesting biography of one of Hollywood's leading actors. I knew about the high points of Heston's public life but learned much about Heston's life and personality. The book is well written and an easy read. My only complaint is many of the footnotes are a distraction and do not add to the understanding of the events.

Cathi says

No matter what you thought of Charlton Heston's politics, you can't help but admit that he made some terrific movies. This was a very entertaining read, full of all sorts of behind-the-scenes details and facts. There was no "dirt" on this guy because he led a very straightforward life, married to the same woman for over sixty years and a loving father, grandfather, and friend. I enjoyed it all and especially enjoyed the details about some of my favorite movies. Reading about how the famous Roman chariot race in BEN HUR was made was absolutely fascinating, and so were other interesting tidbits about some of those great movies from long ago.

Fraser Heston says

Marc Eliot's extraordinary new biography, *Charlton Heston, Hollywood's Last Icon*, is clearly the definitive work on my father's remarkable life and times. With unprecedented access to the Charlton Heston Archives, his personal papers, journals and correspondence, extensive interviews with family, friends and colleagues, and my mother's huge collection of her own photos—many of them never-before-seen—Eliot has crafted a meticulously researched, eminently readable and compelling portrait. My father's was a rich, rewarding and complex life, dedicated to his art, his family and to public service, in which he achieved not only the pinnacle of his profession but a significant role on the nation's political stage. There are a lot of great stories in this book even I had not heard before. If you think you knew my father, think again, and read this book!

Eliot also happens to be a damn good writer—this book reads more like a novel than a biography—and like me, you won't be able to put it down.

-Fraser C. Heston

Howard says

A well researched book. Charlton Heston accomplished a lot during his time. If I divided the book into thirds. Then I enjoyed the first third and the last third the most. The story unfolded and moved very quickly in those sections. The middle of the book was a bit slower. It dealt with each movie Chuck was in. Who directed the movie, who the co-stars were, where did the story come from and where did the money come from to make the movie. But overall, a great book. The movie "Moses, and the Ten Commandments," is still, one of my favorite movies to this day.

Karen Suglia says

Yawn. I thought his life more interesting before he became a star. I know his son gave access to personal artifacts but the only insight I gained is Heston was a product of his time and basically thought actresses were background. And after seeing *Planet of the Apes* recently, his acting was very mediocre. So is this book

Mike Shoop says

Good bio of one of my favorite old-time movie stars.

Kevin says

Although Charlton Heston wrote several excellent autobiographies (including "The Actor's Life: Journals 1956-1976" and "In the Arena"), Marc Eliot's hefty, compelling and intimate biography stands as the

definitive portrait of the complicated and controversial Oscar-winning actor and political activist.

Prolific biographer Eliot ("Cary Grant") creates a captivating portrait with the help of Heston's son and daughter (who had no editorial control) and new interviews with dozens of Heston's friends and foes. Eliot also uses the actor's files and unpublished journals. Surprisingly blunt about Heston's acting style, Eliot writes, "He played his characters literally, on their and his surface, at least in part because he was never asked to do more." And after "Touch of Evil"'s box office failure in 1958, "he would henceforth seek out the conventional, the mainstream, and the commercial, and resist films that were personal artistic statements."

CHARLTON HESTON offers plenty of juicy, behind-the-scenes tales of the making of some of his classic films, including "Planet of the Apes," "Ben-Hur" and "The Ten Commandments" (where Yul Brynner and director Cecil B. DeMille kept their exhausting pace thanks to amphetamine injections and pills). Even more fascinating is Heston's political evolution: from a liberal Kennedy supporter, marching with Martin Luther King in 1963, to a disillusioned independent who eventually--right around the time his film career sputtered out in the 1980s--became a Republican gun rights advocate and NRA spokesperson. Eliot's CHARLTON HESTON: HOLLYWOOD'S LAST ICON is an absorbing, haunting and richly detailed portrait of the iconic actor.

Fascinating and intimate, CHARLTON HESTON follows the enormously popular film star's evolution and offers a complex study in contradictions.

Karyn says

Great biography about a great actor.

Nora says

Great read!!

As a fan of Mr. Heston's film and television work, I was completely surprised by this book and how much I didn't know about the man and the star. I'm an even bigger fan now!! Highly recommend this book!

Paige says

This was a fantastic book! I loved everything about it! I would recommend this book for any adult looking for a great book!

Dianne Miller says

Marc Eliot presents a thorough description of a good man who loved his job...but never let his "job" get in the way of his convictions. He describes, sometimes in less-than-flattering-terms, Charlton Heston as an actor, a husband, a father, an advocate, and a controversial figure who wasn't afraid of a fight. I was always a

side-line Charlton Heston fan (I liked his work, but never "followed" him), but this book makes me appreciate what he achieved in his lifetime. A good read for anyone who wants to know what made Mr. Heston "tick".

James says

Pleasant bio of an actor that reveals more about his private family life and devotion to his family than to any in-depth look at his work, except for a few exceptions. Heston, as a man, was a mystery of sorts to this reader and always seemed that solid heroic presence of a mostly 'wooden' stature in emoting in his acting, but is revealed to be a true study of his parts and quite devoted to Shakespeare and his appreciation and friendship with actors and directors with whom he disagreed with politically. He was a Democrat and quite liberal early in his career and, sadly, the work he did in that cause is forgotten due to his quite feverish NRA activity at his end.

Tehila says

A well-researched, balanced biography. I learned a lot about Mr Heston - not all of it favorable. Definitely a man who stood by what he believed, and a good man for all that I disagree with some of what he stood for.

Looking forward to reading more of Mr Eliot's work.

As usual, I wish the editing had been better - a few run-on sentences, fragments, typos, etc but minor in the scope of the work.

I received a free copy of this book for review purposes.
