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Thirty years after one of the most shocking and scandalous Hollywood tragedies ever--the 1958 slaying of screen goddess Lana Turner's mobster boyfriend, Johnny Stompanato--Cheryl Crane, Turner's daughter, tells the story of what led her to the stabbing.

Detour: A Hollywood Story Details

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Sally says

I'm sorry, it gets the trashy tag. I was never a huge fan of Lana Turner's anyway, so it was a bit of a stretch that I read this.

Sara says

Mickey Cohen sent her death threats. Frank Sinatra sent her a record player in juvenile hall, and Jonathan Winters saw her through a stint in an asylum. Cheryl Crane won't agree to the Hollywood treatment of her story yet, which is why it only gets a quick nod in L.A. Confidential, but when she does, it's going to be amazing. Johnny Stompanato isn't even the best part.

Bonni Sweet says

It was nice reading about "Old Hollywood" glamour days. When stars still dressed up to go out, when the publicity departments still kept track of what their clients were doing, and when everyone was expected to act like a grown up. I was surprised to read that so much had happened to Cheryl Crane at such a young age. Rape, murder, juvenile hall. I'm surprised the girl turned out as well adjusted as she did. Although I think Lana Turner had very little to do with it. Seems she was more interested in husband # 1,2,3,..... than her own child which is sad, but I thought the book was exceptionally written. She had to open up about a lot of things that would have been hard to go through once, she did it a second time for readers. I believe Cheryl to be a very strong woman and I am happy that she has found happiness of her own.

Jazmine says

You would think being the daughter of one of Hollywood's greats would make life a cake walk, but that's definitely not the case for Cheryl Crane. I learned a lot more than I thought I would from this book. She had a co-writer so it's hard to tell what's actually her words or not but this is a decent read regardless.

Debra Pawlak says

As a classic movie buff, I was well aware of the scandal surrounding the glamorous Lana Turner, her daughter, Cheryl Crane, and Lana's gangster boyfriend, Johnny Stompanato. Ms. Crane's book was excellent as it provided her take on what really happened when she was just 14 years old. Fearing for her mother's safety, she stabbed Stompanato and killed him. After that, Crane's young life spiraled out of control even though the incident was officially closed as a 'justifiable homicide' and she was never charged. Prior to the stabbing, her life was no picnic. Although, she didn't really speak ill of her mother, it seems Turner was always more interested in the next man than she was her daughter. She left much of the child-rearing to her

own mother and various nannies. Living in the lap of luxury was not what it seemed. I am glad Ms. Crane was able to move on with her life, make amends with her parents and find success both personally and professionally. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in what happened the night of Good Friday, 1958.

Irmina says

More than a Hollywood memoir, this is a coming-of-age story, a story of a "poor little rich girl" and her growing up with abuse and neglect. Among other things it explores in an honest way living with trauma, learning to love and forgive, and discovering your sexuality.

Chamie says

I couldn't get through so I have to rate it a one.

Mandy says

I'd actually give this 3.5 stars.

A very much warts'n'all type of Hollywood biography that at times was quite compelling to read, yet at others did bore me a little.

I knew the bare bones of the story of Lana's daughter killing Johnny, but had never learnt any details. Of course it's all in here, and a lot more besides, and most of Cheryl's story is fascinating, but a few times I struggled to read it as there was a little too much detail. I admired Cheryl throughout however, and there wasn't a trace of self-pity anywhere in this book, which really impressed me.

I understand why she included everything, but I'm just not sure that it all needed to be in here.

Still, I certainly have a lot of respect for Cheryl now having read this.

Colleen says

This is a book I revisit several times a year. I guess being a fan of Lana Turner is part of it, but I have admiration for Cheryl Crane, as she is a true survivor. Her life is a fascinating, sometimes difficult read. And, despite all the problems between herself and her mother, you can always feel the love and good intentions, even if it didn't always turn out the way it was intended. I do think that Lana was self-absorbed, but she was not deliberately cruel or abusive. She was so preoccupied with her career and love life that she missed out on her daughter's childhood and was unaware of the horrors that her only child suffered.

Contrary to what another reviewer stated, there is nothing to suggest that Cheryl's father, Stephen Crane, was gay. If there was any truth to that Cheryl would have no problem admitting it, as she is very open about her own sexuality and makes no excuses for it. She was aware that she was a lesbian from an early age, long before incidents in her life that have been argued to shape it took place. Also, there is no way that a ten-year-old girl should be expected to enjoy being brutally raped repeatedly. I'll never understand people who make insinuations like that.

Cheryl has continued to thrive in the business world and has published three more books: one a gorgeous coffee table book devoted to her mother's life and career and two murder-mystery books featuring real estate agent/sleuth Nikki Harper. I hope there will be more for years to come!

Martin Turnbull says

Having read Maria Riva's autobiography about her life in the shadow of her mother, Marlene Dietrich, I became curious to see how Cheryl Crane documented a similar story. Although perhaps not written with the mastery of Riva's book (which, in my opinion, sets the gold standard in the My Mother Was A Hollywood Movie Star genre), I very much enjoyed Crane's clear-eyed account of her troubled childhood and youth and how she ultimately got her act together. It can't have been easy to relive some of those terribly moments (and there were many) but I felt Crane gave us an interesting insight into what life inside those golden mansions can be like, and the price that is all-too-often exacted.

Denis says

Fascinating account of a true Hollywood nightmare through the eyes of someone who lived it. One of the best books about the dark side of the Dream Factory, where Cheryl Crane talks quite candidly about what it can mean to be the child of a world-famous superstar - in this case the blonde siren Lana Turner. Her descriptions of her sheltered, privileged, yet infinitely lonely life are riveting, and the whole story of the murder that shocked the world in the fifties (Crane killed the abusive lover of her mother) is worth any thriller about Hollywood. The fact that Crane avoids doing what Bette Davis and Joan Crawford's daughters did to their mothers makes for a much more complex and subtler portrayal of movie stardom and its traps.

Sallee says

I found this book fascinating and sad at the same time. The story of Cheryl Crane, Lana Turner's daughter made for page turning reading. In spite of growing up as a Hollywood baby, her life was anything but happy. With the exception of her first nanny who was from Scotland, she had a number of nannies who were unusual to say the least. Her mother did not have much time for her as she was always working. Cheryl had so many stepfathers, one who sexually abused her and plenty of "uncles", it is a wonder that she came out as successful as she is today. Recovering from the stabbing of Johnny Stompanato, she acted out and ended up in a reform school and then in a mental health facility. Somehow, she endured and found a career and a loving partner to share her life. Cheryl Crane is a survivor.

Iza Moreau says

Cheryl Crane was the daughter of iconic Hollywood sweater girl Lana Turner, who had a bad habit of choosing her men unwisely. One of the men with whom Turner had a relationship was a small-time hood named Johnny Stompanato. A jealous and abusive man, Stompanato was eventually stabbed to death by Crane, who was 14 at the time and claimed she was protecting her mother. The court agreed and ruled the killing a justifiable homicide. And there the story ends. Or so I had supposed.

In truth, Cheryl's story is just beginning. After her trial she was made a ward of the state and sent to a girl's boarding school, where she rebelled and eventually escaped. She later had a bout with drugs, was arrested for lewd conduct, and placed in a mental institution, where she attempted suicide. After treatment, she was released and began working in her father's upscale celebrity restaurant as a seater. Her life was finally on the upswing.

What really changed her life, though, was meeting Joyce "Josh" LeRoy at a party at Marlon Brando's one evening. The two quickly became a couple and are still together at this writing, over 35 years later.

Because Crane was assigned a co-writer for *Detour*, it is impossible to know which actual words are hers and which Cliff Jahr's, but it is the story--the history--that is the main lure of the book. It gives us a glimpse into the very interesting life of a woman who became an early gay-rights pioneer and influential AIDS activist. Not something you would have guessed from the scandalous tabloid headlines about her in the 1950s.

It is not a literary classic, but it *is* an important autobiography. For its insights and its revelations, I am rating this book a 3.5 or a little higher--closer to a 4 than a 3.

Michael Thomas Angelo says

I still own my original copy of this book which my mother gave to me as a gift in 1988 after inscribing it with best wishes for the year. I was an 8th grader already in love with the dames of the silver screen from Hollywood's golden years. I had read Lana Turner's biography the year before and knew all about her lucky day at Schwab's Drugstore. Thus, it was with renewed interest that I picked up this hot copy of *Detour*, her daughter's story. The book was written by Turners' daughter Cheryl, from her marriage to gay restaurant proprietor Stephen Crane (that's one tendency she had in common with pal Judy Garland). Cheryl played the neglected dress-up doll left to the mercy of her mother's whims and publicity purposes. She was given everything under the sun, including a room full of Madame Alexandra dolls that she wasn't allowed to play with. (Sounds like Tori Spelling's story)

Her mother was wont to fly out of the country on the arm of her current boyfriend leaving Cheryl to fend for herself under the nanny's care. The book maps the trajectory traveled by an aging sex goddess under the context of ways in which she relates to her daughter as rival. Cheryl's advancing age implied more about Lana's transition from Sweater Girl to knitting sweaters. Her marriage to Tarzan's Lex Barker ended bitterly after Cheryl's claims that he had repeatedly raped her under Lana's oblivious denial. The sexual abuse is largely a source of trauma for the damaged dyke to be but I can attest to the hotness factor achieved as I read about Tarzan's groping grip. I was 14 when I read about it and was intrigued by Turner's graphic descriptions of Barker's milky ropes that melted into the sauna floor. By the time LT hooked up with the Guido goon Johnny Stompanato, she was pushing 40 which was more like 80 in 1950s Hollywood. She had reached beyond her nubile years and was hurting for roles. She earned accolades for *Peyton Place* and for her role in *Imitation of Life*, which Cheryl points out is a replica of their own life as mother and daughter. Similarities as striking as the color of the daughter's (played by Sandra Dee) bedroom to the school campus were identical. In one scene where Lana playing Lora scolds her daughter Suzi, the daughter recognizes the speech from one of her mother's movies. "Oh Mother, she wails, stop acting. Stop moving people around as if they were pawns on a stage!." Cheryl claims she could have said the lines herself and probably did. She claims to have felt inferior to Sandra Dee's portrayal of the daughter. "Pert, pretty and blond," she was everything that Cheryl felt she couldn't live up to. After an evening spent as her mother's escort to the 1958 Academy

Awards where *Imitation of Life* was lauded, they retired to their home on Bedford Drive in Beverly Hills only to be interrupted by Johnny's unwelcome invasion. Cheryl witnessed the familiar abuse her mother suffered at the giant hands of Johnny's lethal hooks. Rushing to her aid, she grabbed a kitchen knife and allegedly caused the gangster to fall into the knife, killing him instantly. The event was like the OJ trial of its day and played out in the media one step ahead of the courtroom. Cheryl was sentenced to reform school which she repeatedly ran away from out of rebellion. She was barely 16 at the time of the manslaughter. The scandal serves as crux for the book and the rest of the tale is fleshed out as Cheryl grows up and struggles to claim her own identity. At the time the book was written, Cheryl had come into her own as a modern lesbian who shared a home with her longtime partner, a woman named Josh. She speaks of reaching a comfortable place in the on again/off-again love hate relationship shared with her star mother.

In 2002, I bought tickets to Cheryl Crane's appearance at San Francisco's Geary Theater. Billed as Cool Hollywood Blonds in reference to honor Alfred Hitchcock's choice to cast such actresses, Cheryl's night played out as testament to her mother's career. It was a real life version of the tale she spun in her book. One wonders how much Ms. Crane is netting from such appearances.

Dianne says

In 1958 Lana Turner's boyfriend was stabbed to death in her home. It was established that her teenaged daughter committed the murder to defend her mother. I found this book to be far more interesting than a regular detective mystery. The story has it all; one of the most beautiful and adored movie stars of all time, a lovely daughter, Tarzan, abuse and rape, money, the mob, the glamour days of Hollywood, sex and a murder. I read this book when it first came out and it seemed that Cheryl may have been taking the fall for her mother. Who knows what cover ups occur in Hollywood example: did Marilyn Monroe commit suicide or was she murdered? I gave away my copy of the book so have not been able to reread the part of the book which details the trial.
