

Elizabeth Taylor: A Private Life for Public Consumption

Ellis Cashmore

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The first volume to examine the iconic Elizabeth Taylor in this light, Elizabeth Taylor: A Private Life for Public Consumption paints Taylor as the seminal representation of "celebrity." A figure of enormous charisma and cultural sway, she intrigued a global audience with her marriages and extra-marital improprieties, as well as her extravagant jewelry, her never-ending illnesses, her dependency on alcohol, and her perplexing friendship with Michael Jackson. Despite her continued world-renown, however, most people would be hard-pressed to name even three of her films, though she made over seventy.

Ellis Cashmore traces our modern, hyperactive celebrity culture back to a single instant in Taylor's life: the publicizing of her scandalous affair with Richard Burton by photographer Marcelo Geppetti in 1962, which announced the arrival of a new generation of predatory photojournalists and, along with them, a strange conflation between the public and private lives of celebrities. Taylor's life and public reception, Cashmore reveals, epitomizes the modern phenomenon of "celebrity."



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