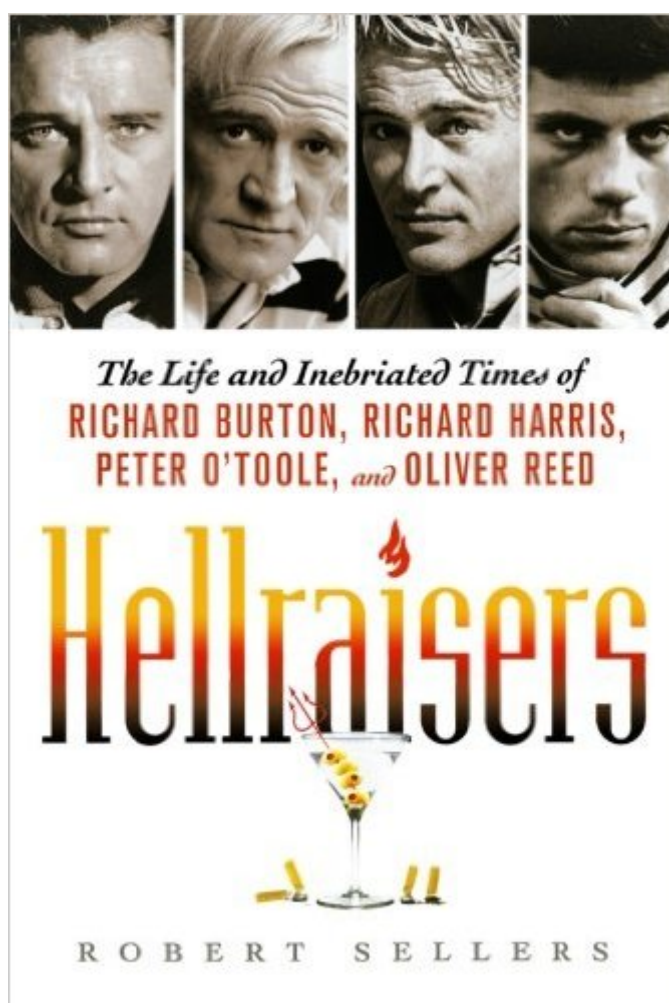


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Hellraisers: The Life And Inebriated Times Of Richard Burton, Richard Harris, Peter O'Toole, And Oliver Reed



Synopsis

ON SCREEN THEY WERE STARS. "A portrait of four profoundly flawed yet awesome leading men, as well as a window into a time when glamour was sacrosanct and when stardom was achieved rather than manufactured." •Playboy"As the colorful anecdotes collected in this book make clear, some stars are born rather than made."•New York Post"Sellers's outrageously entertaining history proves that today's celebrities don't have much on Richard Burton, Peter O'Toole, Richard Harris, and Oliver Reed."•The Daily Beast"Hellraisers takes us back to the glory days of stage and screen actors Peter O'Toole, Richard Burton, Richard Harris, and Oliver Reed."•Connecticut NewsOFF SCREEN THEY WERE LEGENDS!"So wonderfully captures the wanton belligerence of both binging and stardom you almost feel the guys themselves are telling the tales."•GQ"Like the rejuvenating martinis and blurry haze of cigarettes in Mad Men, Robert Sellers's nostalgic Hellraisers . . . amounts to an unapologetic celebration of the plastered and the damned."•The Wall Street Journal"A rowdy collection of greatest hits."•The New York Times"An incredibly entertaining series of anecdotes, interspersed with unpretentious and conversational interviews•all about drinking."•Los Angeles Times"The most outrageous film book of the season, by far."•The Buffalo NewsTHE BOOZY BIOGRAPHY OF THE FOUR GREATEST ACTORS TO EVER WALK•OR STAGGER•INTO A PUB.

Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Griffin (April 26, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312668147

ISBN-13: 978-0312668143

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars• See all reviews• (76 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #394,626 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #164 in• Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Theatre #1087 in• Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Specific Groups > Crime & Criminals #3799 in• Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Actors & Entertainers

Customer Reviews

Over the years, the British acting community has included a number of very talented individuals who

also happened to be hellacious pubcrawlers. At the top of the heap were Richard Burton, Peter O'Toole, Richard Harris and Oliver Reed. Author Robert Sellers traces the life and crimes of those gifted yet flawed men in this warts-and-all biography published in 2008. Burton, Harris, O'Toole and Reed were blood brothers almost from birth. Most had childhoods marked by poverty, less than stellar parents and family histories of alcoholism. Those childhood scars shaped each man, producing a Jekyll-and-Hyde man-child. Throughout the book, reminiscences by family, friends and colleagues describe wonderful, sensitive, gentle, incredibly talented men who turned into blotto drunks noted for wrecking pubs, punching out whomever they chose, treating women like floor mats and so on. The Brits apparently enjoyed such hellraising since none of the four ever did serious jail time for their misdeeds but usually received a slap on the wrist. HELLRAISERS is the kind of book where you don't know whether to laugh or cry. Some of the stunts those gents pulled were silly, stupid, childish and occasionally rather funny. Others would have gotten 'Joe Average' sent away for hard time if he had done the things Oliver Reed, for example, did. Ultimately you end up just shaking your head. Such great potential, such a great waste. And, ironically, what all four men were seemingly aiming for - to create an exciting life filled with memories - was scuttled by their very own actions. Time and again, the comment is made that so-and-so can't remember meeting someone or trashing a particular pub or what he did in the 1970s(!), etc. Some memorable life. In the end, I found HELLRAISERS a fascinating read.

Robert Sellers' "Hellraisers: The Blah-Blah-Blah" is one of the worst pieces of pathography to come down the pike in a while. Normally, one has to go to the check-out aisle in the grocery store to find this brand of tripe. The author couldn't be bothered to include interview notes or book references in this 4 - in - 1 hatchet job. You'd expect, at the least, a list of the television, screen, and stage work performances of each subject. It's not there. Who knows if what he writes is true, false, or somewhere in between? Yes, I know what you're thinking: You read the title of the book, you saw that chapter titles, the clever ones, like "The Plastered Fifties", "The Soused Sixties", and "The Sozzled Seventies" (all clearly the result of a great deal of contemplative effort about his subjects; my god, to come up with chapter titles like that, he must have truly and deeply immersed himself not only in the lives of those he writes about but the times in which they lived -- not), you knew what the book was about. You've no one but yourself to blame. Perhaps. And perhaps I hoped this was a serious biography about four very complex, often troubled people who all rose from the same generation to become legends of stage and screen and were, in large measure, undone by their success. None of them tried in any way to hide or cover up their exploits; in fact, just the opposite,

and Butcher Boy Sellers seems to have simply copied down and regurgitated each and every tall story, any story, as long as he accomplished his goal: to put all four into the worst light possible, to make them look bad. They didn't need Mr. Sellers' help with this, as they left legacies that people will still be talking about for a very long time.

Gossip makes the world go around and confirmed true gossip is the best kind especially when it involves high profile celebrities. The four Irish actors presented here were stage and screen actors extraordinary. Well let's say all but Oliver Reed who never seemed close to breaking through to stardom the way O'Toole, Harris and Burton did. Oliver Reed was also the only one of the group who came from a well to do family. The point of this book is to entertain the reader with story after story of these four actors drinking with many other theatrical talents indulged in what can only be described as inappropriate behavior. Their self-destructive behavior in all but O'Toole's case resulted in their early deaths and the squandering of their talent. O'Toole said it was marvelous to wake up in the morning and not know what country he was in. He is alive today because in his 40s he had to quit drinking or die (so he took up smoking and laid off alcohol). My favorite of the group is Peter O'Toole and my favorite O'Toole story is: "When (Peter) Finch was working in Ireland in the early 60s O'Toole joined him one night for a drink but the pub refused to serve them because it was after closing time. Both stars decided that the only course of action was to buy the pub, so they wrote out a cheque for it on the spot. The following morning after realizing what they'd done the pair rushed back to the scene of the crime. Luckily the landlord hadn't cashed the cheque yet and disaster was averted. O'Toole and Finch remained on friendly terms with the pub owner and when he died his wife invited them to his funeral. Both knelt at the graveside as the coffin was slowly lowered in, sobbing noisily.

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