



A Rose for Mrs. Miniver: The Life of Greer Garson

By Michael Troyan



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In this first-ever biography of Greer Garson, Michael Troyan sweeps away the many myths that even today veil her life. The true origins of her birth, her fairy-tale discovery in Hollywood, and her career struggles at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer are revealed for the first time. Garson combined an everywoman quality with grace, charm, and refinement. She won the Academy Award in 1941 for her role in *Mrs. Miniver*, and for the next decade she reigned as the queen of MGM. Co-star Christopher Plummer remembered, "Here was a siren who had depth, strength, dignity, and humor who could inspire great trust, suggest deep intellect and whose misty languorous eyes melted your heart away!" Garson earned a total of seven Academy Award nominations for Best Actress, and fourteen of her films premiered at Radio City Music Hall, playing for a total of eighty-four weeks—a record never equaled by any other actress. She was a central figure in the golden age of the studios, working with legendary performers Clark Gable, Marlon Brando, Elizabeth Taylor, Errol Flynn, Joan Crawford, Robert Mitchum, Debbie Reynolds, and Walter Pidgeon. Garson's experiences offer a fascinating glimpse at the studio system in the years when stars were closely linked to a particular studio and moguls such as L.B. Mayer broke or made careers. With the benefit of exclusive access to studio production files, personal letters and diaries, and the cooperation of her family, Troyan explores the triumphs and tragedies of her personal life, a story more colorful than any role she played on screen.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In a definitive biography, Troyan takes readers from Eileen Evelyn Greer Garson's birth in London in 1904 to her death in Dallas in 1996 as she held the hand of her good friend, the pianist Van Cliburn. Troyan's work is thorough and features many personal interviews with her family, friends and colleagues. Garson briefly worked in provincial companies and in London theater until a minor role in the film *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* led her to Hollywood in 1937. It was there, in 1942, that she played her defining role: Mrs. Miniver, an indomitable British wife and mother during WWII. The part won her an Academy Award, but, as Troyan explains, it also circumscribed her career, as studio officials cast her in carbon-copy roles. Even a move from MGM to Warner Bros. couldn't free her from typecasting. On the personal side, Troyan reveals that although Garson's first two marriages were dismal flops, her third, to Texas oil millionaire, rancher and philanthropist E.E. Fogelson, was supremely happy. Ending her film career in 1967, Garson did some television and stage work, but gradually confined her life to the Southwest, spending her last four years in a hospital. She expressed only one regret: "I wish I had been an actress rather than a movie star." Included in this strong biography are 48 b&w photos. Agent, Carol Schild.

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From Kirkus Reviews

A sweet, contained view of Louis B. Mayer's favorite actress and Hollywood's icon of WWII fortitude. Garson had no children ("no life has everything," she commented, characteristically). Thus she eliminated the chance for nasty child tell-alls and left the mantle of remembrance to respectful outsiders. Troyan, a photo coordinator for Warner Bros. International Television Distribution, fits the bill, granting the warmth and distance due a subject who held afternoon teas on the set but also read the classics between takes. There's little ancient family history unearthed, except for observations on her seafaring ancestors, her erudite father (who died young), and her sickly early youth. After a triumph on the London stage, Eileen Evelyn Greer Garson was brought to Hollywood in 1937 by Louis B. Mayer as another of his foreign discoveries. For months she languished, until her tiny role as wife in *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (1939) made her a star. Soon thereafter followed Mrs. Miniver (1942). If this book does nothing else, it re-creates the sadly exquisite timing and great power of Miniver to galvanize US prowar sympathies and provide Garson with a lifelong symbol, the rose. By the time her film career ended in 1967, she had won seven Oscar nominations (and one win, for Miniver); had begun her extensive philanthropic efforts; and was deep in a happy third marriage to businessman Buddy Fogelson. Until her death in 1996, she retained her persona among fans as Queen of MGM, the fine lady with the orange hair. Public opinion changed little even after her 1940s divorce from Miniver co-star Richard Ney (who had played her son!). Expect no new revelations on film history or shocking discoveries about Garson's personal life; instead, veneration for a seemly star. (48 b&w photos, not seen) -- *Copyright ©1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Review

"(Troyan) successfully evokes the enormous drive, self-awareness and capacity for kindness of an actress who, inevitably, was more complex than her screen image indicated." *Dallas Morning News*

"The author has done his homework in researching and writing this critical biography of legendary superstar Greer Garson. He presents Garson as a strong-willed, stubborn individual when with the studio moguls?she was not quite the elegant that she often played in pictures." *Gene Phillips*

"MGM's great lady was a bit of an Irish cut-up, radiant, funny, brave, and smart. Michael Troyan knows that, and has written a most entertaining book about my friend, Greer."?Gregory Peck

"A sweet, contained view of Louis B. Mayer's favorite actress and Hollywood's icon of WWII fortitude."?Kirkus Reviews

"Amid the glowing tributes that Troyan offers in his diligent account of this most elegant of stars, one poignant headline that ran in many newspapers after her death read simply: Goodbye, Mrs. Miniver."?Movie Maker

"The biography is brilliant and author Troyan dares to delve in to aspects of her life that Garson might otherwise have wished to remain dormant. But in every case, Michael presents his findings in a fair and well-balanced manner, allowing readers to determine for themselves the true nature of a nurturing, nourishing, loving woman."?Palo Alto Daily News

"In a definitive biography, Troyan takes readers from Eileen Evelyn Greer Garson's birth in London in 1904 to her death in Dallas in 1996 as she held the hand of her good friend, the pianist Van Cliburn."?Publishers Weekly

"The rich, well-written and heavily researched book is a touching memoir revealing much about the actress who was 'Queen of MGM' and a top box office draw for most of the 1940s."?The Albuquerque Tribune

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Amber Orlowski:

Have you spare time to get a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent their spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or maybe read a book allowed A Rose for Mrs. Miniver: The Life of Greer Garson? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with it is opinion or you have additional opinion?

Francis Mason:

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