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Josef Von Sternberg

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Josef Von Sternberg : Fun In Chinese Laundry (The Lively arts) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fun In Chinese Laundry (The Lively arts):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of the best written of all filmmaker autobiographies by a man who ...By david gOne of the best written of all filmmaker autobiographies by a man who was probably an arrogant swine but a great filmmaker. sad he didn't get to make more movies.1 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Excellent films, disappointing bookBy Dr Ren CodoniAutobiography (1986)Name changes from Jonas Sternberg (Wien) to Joe Stern (New York) to Josef von Sternberg (Hollywood, 1894-1969) already indicate a pronounced ego and a remarkable career, mostly in tandem with German "vamp" actress Marlene Dietrich: From the silent hit Underworld (1927), he entered sound with The Blue Angel (1930), and produced in rapid succession Morocco (1930), Dishonored (1931), An American Tragedy (1931), Shanghai Express (1932), Blonde Venus (1932), The Scarlet Empress (1934), The Devil is a Woman (1935), and more. While literally all of his films are still seeing musts today, the book is full of nothing: An incoherent collection of whatever, all sorts of defamations and lies on other people, a bloating ego. Forget the book (its title is its only value), see the movies!3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Auteur as Author or Author as Auteur?By RossharmonicsThis book held my attention throughout. Even if you don't like what he says, you'll be engaged.THE book starts with a foreword by Gary Cooper that is taken from an interview and not written expressly for the book. Cooper gives faint praise and some damning comments. You start to wonder why Sternberg opens his memoir like this. He didn't find a sycophant or dear friend to write something innocuous. He doesn't seem to be a person who would have close friends. He is so much of a loner and so lacking in

diplomatic skills that it is not surprising he continually got in trouble with studios, actors, and almost everyone else. Though he often defends himself against attacks in the book, he also publishes the entire attack. In a way, he strips himself bare in this book. On the other hand, he can at times allude to something in a way that I felt I had to guess. From some things that he said, I gather he was in therapy in later life. He gets puffed up but he doesn't hide the fact that he may be wrong. Whether you agree with particular things that he says or disagree, it is fascinating reading. I often did not know what to make of this or that. But the point isn't whether he is right or wrong on this point or that but that he doesn't really cover his tracks. One thing frustrating about reading some memoirs or autobiographies is the author's words are too calculated. Sometimes an author being calculated is revealing as well. That Hitchcock planned every shot meticulously before he began shooting is well known. In the Truffaut- Hitchcock book, Hitchcock seems careful about what he says and how he says it. And that is in line with his personality. Sternberg clearly states that accident is part of film making. This is not to say that he didn't work carefully. Sternberg comes across as someone very thoughtful about his art, who has a clear idea of what he would like to achieve in his art, but someone who welcomes, expects, and incorporates the unexpected. That he is not an actor's director is something he nor those who worked for him would argue. He sees film as what is seen through the lens and he spends much time about how a director tries to create a visual statement. When Sternberg tries to prove a point, he can be outlandish or he can be highly poetic or quite analytic. He is not a simple person easy to pigeon hole. That he has a big ego is obvious. But it is equally clear that he has self-doubts as well. Having had his career virtually end in the early '40s, his defensiveness is understandable. I wouldn't cast stones. And I do admire his best work and interest in his films alone makes the whole thing worth the time and the money. Sternberg zigzags between memoir and discussions about film, film making, and art. He writes very well. He has great humor and I laughed out loud a number of times. I wouldn't believe everything he says but again this is part of his not covering his tracks. I become suspicious when a writer presents things as too good to be true. And Sternberg never seems to do that. He even makes himself the butt of some of his very clever jokes. Lauren Bacall said of Howard Hawks, whose films I admire greatly, that after listening to so many of Hawks' stories about things that took place, she started to doubt that things were as perfect and that Hawks was as right in every situation as he would make out. On the other hand, maybe that's why Hawks kept working and Sternberg didn't. He could bluff. Buddha told a story about lying appropriately, A house was on fire with the children inside. The parents outside yelled to the children, "Come and get your toys". Lying appropriately is often more truthful than telling the truth. From the book, you can gather what made Sternberg a great artist and also what got him into so much trouble. Sternberg, to my mind, is not on trial. The five stars is because it is a must-read for anyone interesting in film history. The book is as singular as his films

The brilliant director's personal summary of his extremely chaotic ride through the Hollywood machine, including vivid and interesting accounts of the making of his more obscure pictures (e.g., *Anathan*), his infamous non-involvement with *Duel in the Sun*,