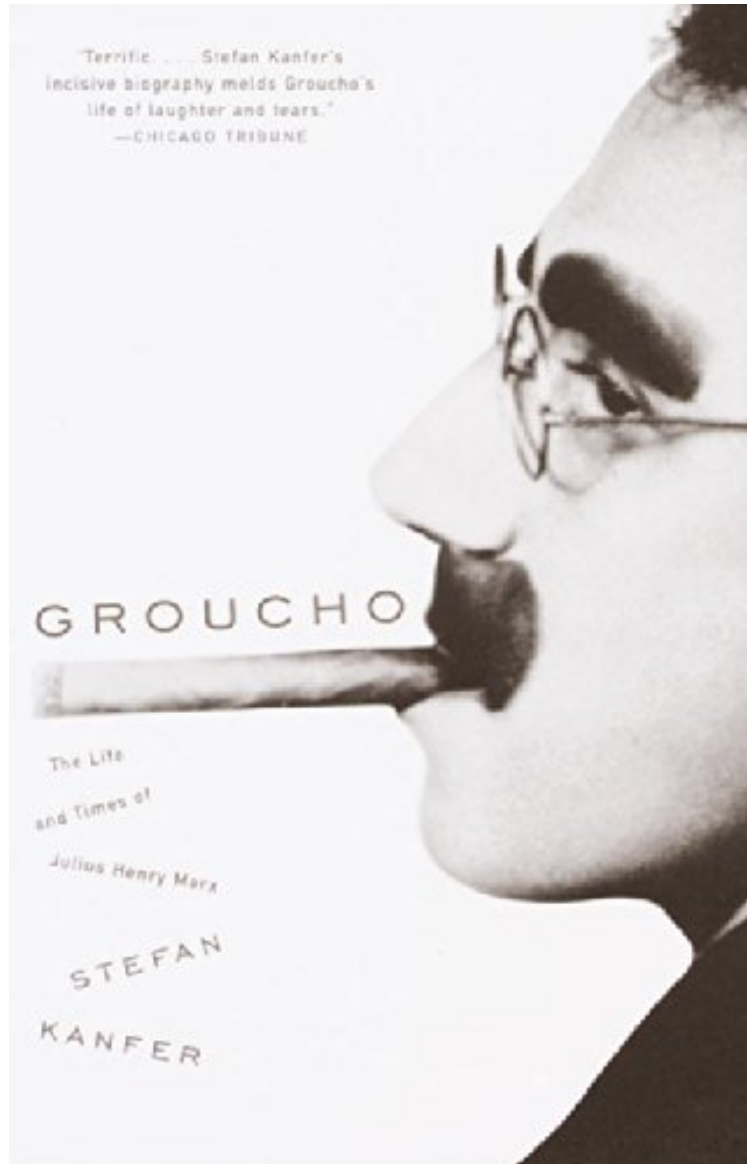


[Mobile book] Groucho: The Life and Times of Julius Henry Marx

Groucho: The Life and Times of Julius Henry Marx

Stefan Kanfer

*audiobook | *ebooks | Download PDF | ePub | DOC*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1292552 in Books Kanfer, Stefan 2001-05-08 2001-05-08Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.00 x 1.20 x 5.30l, .99 #File Name: 0375702075498 pages | File size: 79.Mb

Stefan Kanfer : Groucho: The Life and Times of Julius Henry Marx before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Groucho: The Life and Times of Julius Henry Marx:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Splendid!By Ancient_FossilI learned of Stanley Kanfer biography through Dick Cavett's review in the Wall Street Journal. Mr. Cavett was Mr. Marx's friend during his later years. His familiarity with Mr. Kanfer's subject only adds credibility to his praise. I was not disappointed. Simply stated, Kanfer's biography of Groucho Marx is superb. His book is one of the best biographies I've every read. It's extraordinarily

precise, entertaining, readable and educational. His insights into Marx's personality are splendidly lucid and forthright. He holds no punches, much as he greatly admires Mr. Marx. I found his analyses of the entertainer's personality quick, frank and admirably honest. There are few faults this reader can report. It's clearly obvious that Mr. Kanfer leaned heavily on previous sources, but their precise origins remain unidentified. I wish the author had included more photographs, but I'm grateful for those chosen. There are, without doubt, other ways to see them. Marx's early life receives rather less attention than his late years, but I believe that's a consequence of the available information. Still, this reader remains unsure that Marx's mother Minnie can be blamed almost entirely for his phobias, neuroses and family antagonisms. Mr. Kanfer shares his understanding of the entertainment industry willingly with his readers without vanity or hubris. His remarkably deep knowledge base, obvious background friendships and Hollywood contacts no doubt assisted his writing. The reader gravitates to these points rather than being dragged or battered by them. In fact, I only questioned how the author included so many intimate details of Marx's life without being physically present, yet I never questioned if they were imagined. The book's last section on the battle over Mr. Marx's fortune is reviewed in great detail. Fifty-five pages are devoted to Erin Fleming's influence and legal squabbles. They read rather like the script of a soap opera and are somewhat less satisfying than the prior 383 pages. That being stated, these incidents were still greatly important in Mr. Marx's life, death and legacy. His survivors and Ms. Fleming were left devoid of parts of their sanity and significant financial resources following this protracted battle. This reader was left saddened by the section, yet Mr. Kanfer never shirks from this sordid part of Marx's history. In summary, there is much to praise and little to criticize. Julius (Groucho) Marx receives splendidly honest treatment and analysis as one of America's great comedians. His wit, intelligence, timing, work and devotion to his craft made him incomparable. And thanks to Mr. Kanfer, now I know where to find his star in the galaxy. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great comic, not a nice man. By 39-0-13 No doubt that Groucho left behind a legacy of being a great comedian, but reading his bio by Kanfer you can't help but think he was not a likeable man. No doubt his troubles as the neglected third son, maybe the most sensitive son, in Minny's brood had a lot to do with it; and his travails as a teen age vaudeville performer taken advantage of many times by all and sundry, including a gal who gave him a bout of VD, more than soured a personality otherwise attuned to more academic pursuits. His later treatment of the women who came into his life would give Dr. Oz many hours of counseling if Groucho were willing to accept it. Still, his sharp wit (the sharpest of all his brothers) kept him bobbling on the top waters of success from vaudeville days to his last appearances on TV talk shows and many a retro perspective. He could talk, and so glibly that his brother Chico reverted to dialect for his career and his brother Harpo kept his mouth shut till the very end, while Zeppo and Gummo left the field altogether. Anyway, Kanfer's bio covers the field, warts and all, and he is able to bring together some of the insights provided in the bios and memos written by others -- like Harpo's in his "Harpo Speaks." I recommend this book for those interested in knowing the man behind the comic mask. I think most readers will agree that Groucho was a great entertainer, a lively dinner companion, but a lousy lover and husband in his private life, a poor to middling father who left behind at least two children with some very conflicted opinions about him. Kanfer writes a very good biography, providing more details than reading other sources might provide; but his subject matter does not leave the reader feeling very edified. There are bios that you come away with feeling respect for the subject. That's not the case with this one. Groucho emerges as a much lesser man (as a man) than his image. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good gift By Customer This was a gift and it was a perfect choice.

This definitive biography of one of the worlds greatest comedians unflinchingly yet affectionately uncovers the man behind the cigar. Here is the amazing career of the man the world recognized as Groucho: the improbable disasters of the vaudeville years; the Marx Brothers, an act so funny W.C. Fields refused to follow it; the unprecedented Broadway success of *The Cocoanuts* and *Animal Crackers*; the cinematic triumphs of *Duck Soup* and *A Night at the Opera*; and the marvelous come-back career as king of the game show hosts with *You Bet Your Life*. Here, too, is the man himself: a lonely middle child who aspired to be a doctor; a man who sabotaged three marriages; a father alternately indulgent and cruel. Intelligent and thorough, hilarious and sad, Groucho is a spectacular biography of the century's most influential comedian.

From Publishers Weekly According to this engrossing, exhaustively researched biography, Groucho Marx (1890-1977) was a grouch who merged his raffish public persona with his dour, peevish private self. Former Time cinema critic Kanfer presents Julius Henry Marx as a browbeating spouse who drove his three wives to alcoholism or heavy drinking, and to divorce. Though he could be an endearing parent, his aloofness and fault-finding alienated his son and two daughters, in Kanfer's verdict. Groucho remained a perpetually insecure "infantile grownup," Kanfer avers, because of his troubled relationship with his aggressive stage mother, Minnie, who took eldest son Chico (Leonard) as her pet, and thought Groucho unattractive and let him know it. This is not a debunking biography; on the contrary, Kanfer calls Groucho the father of modern comedy, whose influence extends from M*A*S*H to Jerry Seinfeld to Woody Allen to daily conversation. Although Kanfer tries to warm up to his subject on a personal level, Groucho comes off as a thoroughly dislikable misogynist who nursed lifelong grudges against his children, wives, managers

and compatriots. Long stretches of this bio make for painful, even depressing reading, despite a truckload of gemlike anecdotes, incisive mini-biographies of all the Marx Brothers and invaluable film and stage criticism. Still, the book's first half, which follows the brothers' comic quartet from struggling vaudeville act to stardom, is exhilarating. Photos. Agent, Kathy Robbins. (May) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

Groucho Marx mastered the worlds of vaudeville, theater, movies, radio, and television, yet he remained a moody, morose, unfulfilled man. Plagued by nagging financial insecurities, partly realized literary ambitions, and difficult, unsatisfying relations with his wives, lovers, and daughters, Groucho was a "depressive clown," notes Kanfer (*The Eighth Sin*). This is the show business saga of "Minnie's boys," Groucho, Harpo, Chico, and, sometimes, Gummo and Zeppo. Groucho never really had a childhood, as mother Minnie drove the boys relentlessly as they perfected their trademark antic, ad-lib style. Many books on the Marx Brothers pay homage to their innovative wisecracks, word play, and nonstop non sequiturs, but Kanfer shows the show biz realities behind the madness. The book also details Groucho's ambivalent relations with his son, Arthur; his brothers; New Deal liberals; intellectuals and collaborators like S.J. Perelman; and his custodian, Erin Fleming. Although Chico and Harpo remain shadowy figures in this portrayal, this is the first comprehensive portrait of Groucho in years. Recommended for large public and academic libraries. [Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 2/1/00.] Pubbing in the same month as Kanfer's book, this work may signal the beginning of a Marx Brothers revival. The brothers' nonstop barrage of verbal and visual gags delighted average moviegoers and intellectuals alike. Kanfer focuses on Groucho, where Louvish, the author of *The Man on the Flying Trapeze*, a biography of W.C. Fields, expands the canvas to appraise the contributions of the other brothers, plus Margaret Dumont, a regular target of the brothers' mayhem. Chico was a compulsive gambler and risktaker. Harpo, whose comedy career was limited by his silent act, found fulfillment in family life. Dumont, Louvish shows, was more than a dimwitted comic stooge. (In fact, the Marx Brothers often failed to attract a female audience, an interesting topic covered more fully by Kanfer.) The Marx Brothers' story is now encrusted with numerous myths and dubious anecdotes, and Louvish does a solid job of separating fact from fiction and includes a family tree and a discussion of the FBI's file on the group. Like Kanfer's book, *Monkey Business* includes generous excerpts of classic Marx Brothers film dialog. Recommended for public library film collections. -Stephen Rees, Levittown Regional Lib., PA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. Thoroughly absorbing.... Groucho has finally gotten a biographer worthy of him. *The Wall Street Journal*