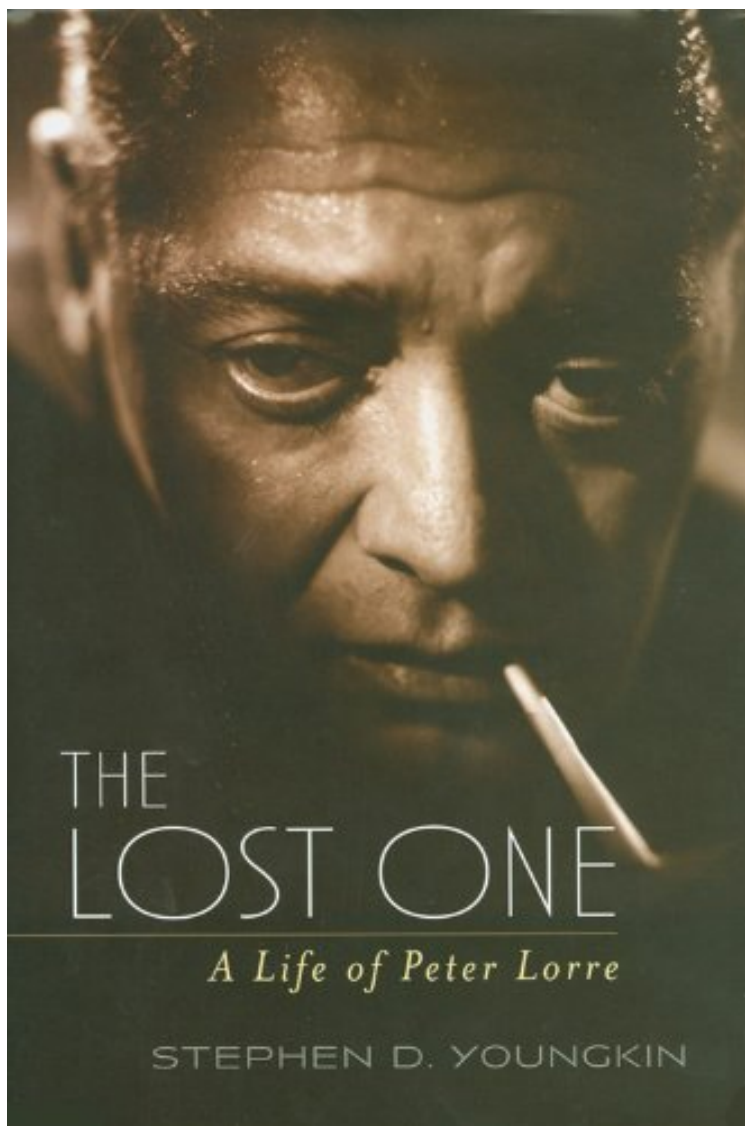


(Download pdf) The Lost One: A Life of Peter Lorre

The Lost One: A Life of Peter Lorre

Stephen D. Youngkin

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Stephen D. Youngkin : The Lost One: A Life of Peter Lorre before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lost One: A Life of Peter Lorre:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Finding the Lost OneBy tomsviewIf you are like me, before you buy a book about film stars or filmmakers, you scan the reviews to see if readers think the author did serious research with first-hand interviews or simply cobbled the whole thing together from other peoples work or online material.Have no fear with The Lost One: A Life of Peter Lorre by Stephen D. Youngkin. This is one of the most meticulously

researched biographies I've read with interviews with just about anyone still living who knew Lorre. I could say we almost get too much information, but that would be unfair. This is a thoroughly edited work with none of those gob-smacking errors of spelling and grammar that detract from many movie star biographies (Charles Tranberg's Robert Taylor anyone?) The author traces Lorre's early life and his impressive career on the pre-WW2 German stage. Almost his first film was Fritz Lang's *M*, a role that defined his career in the same way Anthony Perkins was defined by *Psycho*. Lorre, who was born a Jew, underwent a great change when he left Nazi persecution in Germany to go to America and Hollywood. I was surprised to learn that although he became well known, he had a patchy career in film in Hollywood, and never felt the sense of artistic achievement he enjoyed in Germany. He was a small man, but was athletic in his younger days and surprisingly strong. *The Lost One* lets us know Lorre from the inside out. He had a drug habit, and brought his addiction with him to Hollywood. He married three beautiful women, and broke up with each one, but remained friends a fascinating man. Lorre's mentors in Germany, Fritz Lang and Berthold Brecht, also fled to the US. Brecht in particular seemed to have a moral hold over Lorre. This is dealt with at some length in the book, but Brecht leaves an impression of an embittered man who accepted the sanctuary of America and Hollywood, but never stopped complaining about what he thought were the lowbrow standards of the culture. He felt that Lorre had sold out. Lorre seemed to be the opposite, although he decried his typecasting, he nonetheless embraced America. I bought this book because of a fondness for Lorre's films with Sydney Greenstreet, however other works are discussed at greater length, especially *The Lost One* (*Der Verlorene*), his one and only directorial effort in post-war Germany. Although Youngkin's scholarship is beyond reproach, one needs to be prepared for detailed analysis of Lorre's work in Germany and lots of Berthold Brecht. Lorre's dissatisfaction with his career (making faces) is covered in what could only be described as exhausting detail. As far as a portrait of the actor is concerned, this is no loose sketch; it's more the equivalent of a large-scale work of photorealism. If you ever wondered what made Peter Lorre such an intriguing screen presence, this is the book that answers the question.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Biography of great actor
By Metaphor
This is a remarkably good book, researched over a period of more than 20 years including interviews with dozens of people who knew and worked with Lorre. I have some disagreement with the way the author chooses to organize Lorre's life, separating concurrent strains into different sections: for example, recounting Lorre's interaction with Hollywood, and then separately, his relationship with Bertolt Brecht and the German LA emigre community, although the events cover the same chronological span. He had his reasons, and the choice succeeds in certain ways. It demands the reader work harder to try and reintegrate these separate strains back into a single, complex man. But the work, as it is, is certainly excellent, and the portrait of Lorre compelling for anyone interested in theater and film of the middle half of the 20th century.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. AN AMAZING BOOK!
By Ken Greenwald
When I became aware that Steven Youngkin wrote a biography on Peter Lorre I knew I had to purchase it. I'd already read his book on *The Films of Peter Lorre*. I was not disappointed in *The Lost One: A Life of Peter Lorre*. Youngkin must have spent years researching Lorre's life and it shows with an understanding of this talented actor's life. Detail by detail, Youngkin builds up an intriguing story of the struggles this famous actor went through, from early years to his final years. Youngkin interviewed so many people who knew Lorre that one gets an astonishingly complete picture of what this man was like; his great talent; his total life. It is hard to beat a book like this that builds and builds, detail by detail, the complete life of one of the most famous actors who, all these years after his death, is still remembered vividly. A tip of my hat to Steve Youngkin for delivering a delicious and intriguing book on the life of Peter Lorre.

Often typecast as a menacing figure, Peter Lorre achieved Hollywood fame first as a featured player and later as a character actor, trademarking his screen performances with a delicately strung balance between good and evil. His portrayal of the child murderer in Fritz Lang's masterpiece *M* (1931) catapulted him to international fame. Lang said of Lorre: "He gave one of the best performances in film history and certainly the best in his life." Today, the Hungarian-born actor is also recognized for his riveting performances in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934), *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), and *Casablanca* (1942). Lorre arrived in America in 1934 expecting to shed his screen image as a villain. He even tried to lose his signature accent, but Hollywood repeatedly cast him as an outsider who hinted at things better left unknown. Seeking greater control over his career, Lorre established his own production company. His unofficial "graylisting" by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, however, left him with little work. He returned to Germany, where he co-authored, directed, and starred in the film *Der Verlorene* (*The Lost One*) in 1951. German audiences rejected Lorre's dark vision of their recent past, and the actor returned to America, wearily accepting roles that parodied his sinister movie personality. The first biography of this major actor, *The Lost One: A Life of Peter Lorre* draws upon more than three hundred interviews, including conversations with directors Fritz Lang, Alfred Hitchcock, Billy Wilder, John Huston, Frank Capra, and Rouben Mamoulian, who speak candidly about Lorre, both the man and the actor. Author Stephen D. Youngkin examines for the first time Lorre's pivotal relationship with German dramatist Bertolt Brecht, his experience as an emigrant from Hitler's Germany, his battle with drug addiction, and his struggle with the choice between celebrity and intellectual respectability. Separating the enigmatic person from the persona long associated with one of classic Hollywood's most recognizable faces, *The Lost One* is the definitive

account of a life triumphant and yet tragically riddled with many failed possibilities.

From Publishers Weekly Born Laszlo Loewenstein, Hungarian Lorre (1904-1964) transformed himself from minor stage presence to Hollywood character actor through pivotal professional relationships and one breakthrough role. Portraying a child murderer in 1931's *M*, Lorre conveyed his unique blend of pathos and complexity so acutely that his career blossomed with hits like 1935's *Crime and Punishment*; 1941's *The Maltese Falcon*; and 1942's *Casablanca* even as his personal life unraveled with drug addiction, romantic turmoil and personal insecurity. Youngkin, coauthor of two previous books on Lorre, examines his subject with striking rigor. Through interviews with hundreds of Lorre's friends and associates including Fritz Lang, Alfred Hitchcock and Billy Wilder and frequent dips into film and media archives, Youngkin peels back the layers of Lorre's life to reveal a fascinating, nuanced individual who struggled with intellectual issues in the midst of glamour and fame. As a parallel to Lorre's struggles with typecasting, Youngkin details the rise and fall of the studio star system, giving a strong backdrop to the actor's professional as well as personal dramas. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Winner of the 2005 Rondo Hatton Award" "Winner of the Best Book of 2005 in the Rondo Hatton Classic Horror Awards" "Finalist for the 2005 Theater Library Association Award." "Youngkin gets behind the image to incise a definitive portrait, and Lorre becomes a likeness we can like in-depth." "Choice" "Youngkin's massively researched opus, drawing on over 300 interviews he conducted, lives up to the task of conveying Lorre's personal tragedy. . . . Readably written, spiced up with occasionally very amusing anecdotes, acerbic asides and insightful conclusions." "Cineaste" "The colossal assemblage of research has been whipped into a compelling biographical narrative." "Filmmonthly" "Youngkin makes a strong case for Lorre as one of cinema's most underrated actors, exploring in detail his early stage work in Europe, his largely forgotten performances in radio and television, and of course his role as the child murderer in Fritz Lang's classic crime film *M*, which would forever define Lorre as a celluloid bogeyman." "Florida Newspaper" "Youngkin peels back the layers of Lorre's life to reveal a fascinating, nuanced individual who struggled with intellectual issues in the midst of glamour and fame." "Library Journal (starred review)" "As the very first biography of Lorre, *The Lost One* does not disappoint. . . . A welcome revelation indeed." "MovieMaker" "Youngkin's life of Lorre is a monumental piece of research and sheds new light on a career that has too long been ignored and undervalued." "San Diego Union-Tribune" "You couldn't ask for a better book about Lorre. It will become the single most important book about Lorre's life and career, without question." "Washington Post Book World" "[The book] is one of the finest biographies of an actor ever written, on a par with Patricia Bosworth's *Montgomery Clift* and Charles Winecoff's *Split Image: The Life of Andy Perkins*." Herbert Shadrack, www.cinemaretro.com About the Author Stephen D. Youngkin is coauthor of *The Films of Peter Lorre* and *Peter Lorre: Portrait des Schauspielers auf der Flucht*. He appeared as an expert biographer on the German television documentary *Das Doppelte Gesicht* (*The Double Face*) and AE's Biography tribute to Peter Lorre.