



Natasha: The Biography of Natalie Wood

Suzanne Finstad

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Natalie Wood was always a star; her mother made sure this was true. A superstitious Russian immigrant who claimed to be royalty, Maria had been told by a gypsy, long before little Natasha Zakharenko's birth, that her second child would be famous throughout the world. When the beautiful child with the hypnotic eyes was first placed in Maria's arms, she knew the prophecy would become true and proceeded to do everything in her power — everything — to make sure of it.

Natasha is the haunting story of a vulnerable and talented actress whom many of us felt we knew. We watched her mature on the movie screen before our eyes — in *Miracle on 34th Street*, *Rebel Without a Cause*, *West Side Story*, *Splendor in the Grass*, and on and on. She has been hailed — along with Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor — as one of the top three female movie stars in the history of film, making her a legend in her own lifetime and beyond. But the story of what Natalie endured, of what her life was like when the doors of the soundstages closed, has long been obscured.

Natasha is based on years of exhaustive research into Natalie's turbulent life and mysterious drowning in the dark water that was her greatest fear. Author Suzanne Finstad, a former lawyer, conducted nearly four hundred interviews with Natalie's family, close friends, legendary costars, lovers, film crews, and virtually everyone connected with the investigation of her strange death. Through these firsthand accounts from many who have never spoken publicly before, Finstad has reconstructed a life of emotional abuse and exploitation, of almost unprecedented fame, great loneliness, poignancy, and loss. She sheds an unwavering light on Natalie's complex relationships with James Dean, Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Raymond Burr, Warren Beatty, and Robert Wagner and reveals the two lost loves of Natalie's life, whom her controlling mother prevented her from marrying. Finstad tells this beauty's heartbreaking story with sensitivity and grace, revealing a complex and conflicting mix of fragility and strength in a woman who was swept along by forces few could have resisted. *Natasha* is impossible to put down — it is the definitive biography of Natalie Wood that we've long been waiting for.

From the Hardcover edition.

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