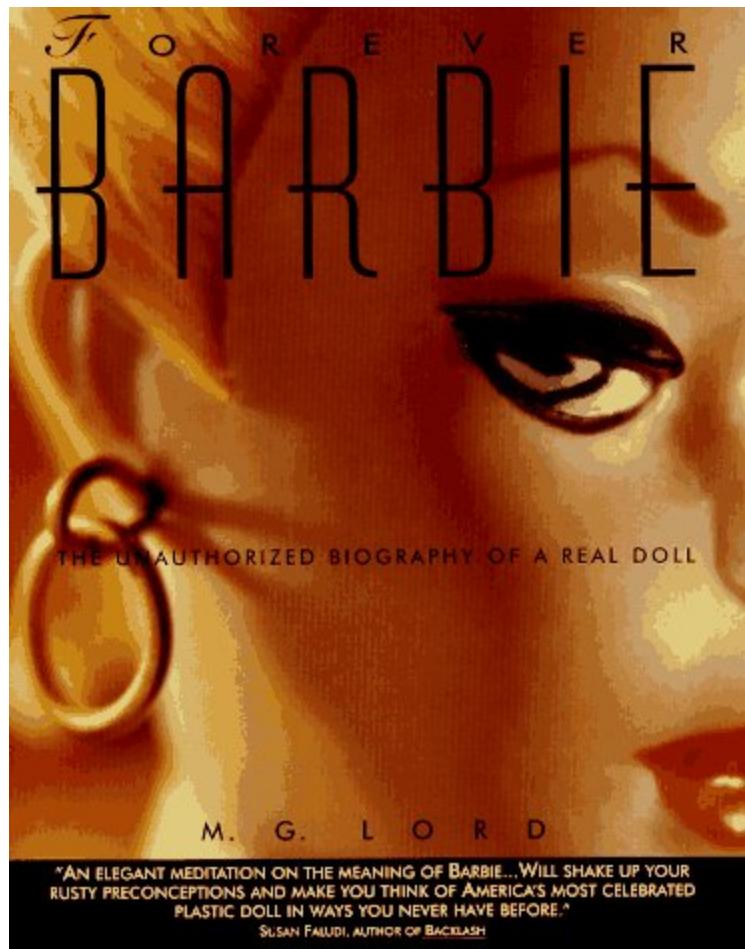


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Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll

M. G. Lord

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M. G. Lord : Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Forever Barbie: The Unauthorized Biography of a Real Doll:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Enlightening Look at America's Favorite BlondeBy Tish G. even though the book is close to 20 yrs old, the info it contains about the genesis of America's favorite fashion doll, her impact on the lives of Baby Boomers, and how she morphed from independent career girl to Something Other Than makes the book well worth reading. I'd always wondered if there really is a link between eating disorders and Barbie, and M.G. Lord certainly makes a clear argument that there's more to girls' weight and beauty obsessions than the dolls they play with. Also, what I found most relate-able is Lord's own relationship with the dolls, because it is so much like mine. These dolls were our best friends, and they presented us with unlimited, empowering life scenarios. A lot of that changes in the 80s, when the doll's makers decide she should be more than just a vehicle for girls' fantasies of social and financial independence. If you are looking for a deeper understanding of the Barbie phenomenon, I'd recommend

reading this insightful book 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. MUST-READ By Suliko Excellent book. Thought-provoking and extremely well-written. Love the author's style of writing and humour. Both the pro and con side of the Barbie debate very well covered. Would consider this essential reading, whether you love or hate Barbie - you will look at her through different eyes in future. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not exactly the story I was expecting. By dancingBeagles Okay for a business commentary. Not what I was expecting. If I knew this was about business it probably would have been okay. I really was looking for a fictionalized version of this icon's life. Probably should revise your sub-title.

In this intelligently written, provocative, and entertaining book, a first-generation Barbie owner traces the doll's history, from her sordid beginnings (she was a model for a sleazy German doll sold as a gag gift for men) to her current incarnation. "Literary and witty."--Susan Faludi (Backlash) Media publicity.

From Publishers Weekly This history of a controversial and inanimate American icon offers a wide range of opinion and anecdote on the role Barbie has played in defining gender in American life. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist If you think Barbie is just a child's plaything, you'll think again after reading this fascinating, funny, and far-reaching biography of the pointy-breasted, slim-waisted, high-arched gal who changed the way we think about dolls and ourselves. Lord, who writes for Newsday, approaches the story like an investigative reporter. She unearths Barbie's low origins as Lili, a slutty doll sold to German men as a gag gift, and goes on to cover the Barbie story on numerous fronts: creative, commercial, and sociological. She interviews Barbie's designers, critics, collectors, even a woman who has undergone more than 50 cosmetic surgeries so she can look like a Barbie doll. Feminist thinkers including Camille Paglia, Betty Friedan, and Susan Faludi also weigh in with opinions. No doubt about it: Barbie is a gal who engenders intense feelings. As Lord puts it, "For every mother that embraces Barbie . . . there is another mother who tries to banish Barbie from the house." Cheerleaders, career women, bulimics, and mythmakers can all hang their hats--with justification--on Barbie's well-coiffed head. Lord, for example, makes a convincing case that Barbie is a pagan symbol, a queen surrounding herself with such drones as the penis-less Ken. We can buy that easily enough, but when Lord describes Barbie as "an incarnation of the One Goddess with a thousand names . . . an archetype of something ancient, matriarchal, and profound," she might be going just a wee bit over the top. For less high-minded readers, who just like Barbie as a doll, Lord lists almost every Barbie ever marketed, from Day-to-Night Barbie to Barbie Loves McDonalds to Gymnast Barbie, who's flexible body was capable of all sorts of workouts. The photographs are terrific, too, especially, the close-up of the original Barbie with her sly eyes and arched brows. Forever Barbie is better than most biographies of real people. What a doll! Ilene Cooper From Kirkus s With wide-ranging research and her bull's-eye wit, New York Newsday columnist Lord celebrates as she satirizes the myth and magic, the life and times of Mattel's immortal girl toy. Barbie was born in 1959, the product of a confluence of factors: postwar America's booming marketplace for boomer children, conflicting ideas about women, and the revolution in plastics. Lord's account covers two aspects of Barbie's nature: "doll-as-physical-object" and "doll-as-invented-personality." The story of Barbie as physical object is a coming-of-age story involving the rise (thanks to entrepreneurial chutzpah) and fall (resulting from SEC violations) of Barbie's inventor, Mattel co-founder Ruth Handler. It touches on international trade (Barbie's first dress designer, Seventh Avenue denizen Charlotte Johnson, spent a year in Tokyo overseeing the creation of the doll's original 22 outfits), unprecedented industry expansion as evidenced by Mattel's growth, and innovations in advertising, merchandising, and promotion, such as motivational researcher Ernest Dichter's early study of Barbie's appeal to girls and their mothers (Barbie "could be a cute decoration for a man's bar," said one unenthusiastic mother). The story of Barbie as invented personality--the promotional brainstorm that created Barbie's persona as a living female--is a coming-of-a-new-age story. It involves the increasingly dissonant notions about woman's power and place, as well as growing racial and ethnic awareness. Barbie's voluptuous body, says Lord, along with her various incarnations, including fashion model and photographer, made her a "brave, new, vaguely selfish and decidedly subversive heroine" in the mold of Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl*. Barbie never had a husband; she earned her own keep and always wore a smile (and a fabulous outfit). True, Mattel introduced a boyfriend for her in 1961, but Ken "was a mere accessory," Lord cracks, "a drip with seriously abridged genitalia who wasn't very important in her life." Lord's intelligence and good humor bring a new attitude to feminist visions of popular culture and the women who love it. (65 photos, 15 in color, not seen) -- Copyright ©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.