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Edith Bouvier Beale Of Grey Gardens: A Life In Pictures



Synopsis

Edith Bouvier Beale (1917-2002) is best known for her appearance in the critically acclaimed 1975 film *Grey Gardens*, a documentary by Albert and David Maysles that explored the reclusive lives of Beale and her mother "Big Edie," the first cousin and aunt of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, respectfully. Over the past three decades, the film and its eccentric stars have become cult icons, inspiring fashion tributes by the likes of Phillip Lim and John Galiano, a hit Broadway musical adaptation that swept up three Tony Awards in 2007, and an upcoming HBO movie starring Drew Barrymore and Jessica Lange as the famed odd couple. *Edith Bouvier Beale of Grey Gardens: A Life in Pictures*, the latest installment in a series that includes photo-biographies of John F. Kennedy, Pope John Paul II, Grace Kelly, Marilyn Monroe, and others, presents the most in-depth look at the life of Little Edie since the Maysles' film vaulted her into the public consciousness. Conceived by members of the Beale family, the book traces a line from Edie's childhood through her heady days as a young socialite and her later years at Grey Gardens, the decrepit East Hampton estate where she and her mother lived in near-total isolation for decades. Featuring over 150 newly uncovered photographs and letters, *Edith Bouvier Beale of Grey Gardens* offers unprecedented access to the personal history of this twentieth-century woman of mystery.

Book Information

Hardcover: 192 pages

Publisher: Verlhac Editions; 2nd edition (October 15, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 2916954066

ISBN-13: 978-2916954066

Product Dimensions: 10.2 x 0.9 x 11.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 37 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

"The book is filled with photographs, letters, drawings and sundry scrapbook items (J.F.K. and

Jackie's wedding invitation, a letter from Macy's encouraging her to model) culled from Edie's overstuffed and truly inspiring archives." --The New York Times

As the immediate family of Edith Bouvier Beale, it is with great pleasure and pride that we present this collection of work after almost half a century of collecting dust in family archives. Following her death in 2002 our family began the heartbreaking task of putting my aunt, Little Edie's, remaining possessions in order. Nostalgic and captivated, I carefully sifted through the contents of the boxes, suitcases, and scrapbooks that she had saved over the decades: photographs, journals, writings, poetry, sketches, and letters were packaged in small, labeled bundles (an arrangement that eventually made the publication of this collection possible), that presented an insightful chronology of Little Edie's life. Although Little and Big Edie Beale were thrust into the public's view following the release of the Grey Gardens documentary, the true story of Little Edie's life has essentially remained a mystery since the mid 1950's. In contrast to the documentary, what became strikingly clear was the love, dedication, and seeming normalcy of her privileged youth. Filled with family vacations, costume parties, soirées, fashion shows, fundraising functions, and weekly trips to the cinema, the Beale family lived a remarkably loving life within the Hamptons high society of the early 20th century. I found an astounding number of photographs, letters, and poems from her childhood, presenting quite the contrast to the cats and decrepitude of Grey Gardens during the 1970s. However, as was reflected in various letters, bank statements, and attorney correspondences, as the economic pressures of the Depression years set in, life began to change for little Edie at Grey Gardens, gradually transforming into the familiar scene of the 1970s documentary. Nonetheless, despite the Beale's steady economic decline over the course of almost half a decade, the loving and graceful writings from these years make their continued creativity, dedication to one another, good nature, and attempt to maintain their dignity conspicuously clear. Immediately following my Aunt Edie's death, I began the arduous process of reconstructing her young life in order to compile this collection. As a close family member, I have enjoyed the privilege of having Edie's humor and wisdom in my life, and as a result this anthology was conceived with deep dedication, understanding, and personal connection. We hope this book will help see Edie differently and with a deeper appreciation of how she grew into the familiar character from the Grey Gardens documentary. We hope not to only restore her dignity, but also make known her sensitivity, passion, and genius that we, as her family, remember vividly. It was clear that Little Edie wanted her story to be shared.

This is a beautiful book on Little Edie, containing many lovely photos of her in her childhood and youth. She was a pretty child and an attractive young woman who enjoyed a life of privilege and wealth. Little Edie did have a very nice life prior to returning home to care for her mother. We see her in her prime in this book, as well as what she looked like during the Maysles Brothers' documentary. Why she returned home to care for Big Edie and live in squalor is a mystery, but the two had a strong bond and co-dependent relationship. Probably Little Edie didn't have anybody in her life and liked that she was needed. If you want a peek into the life of Little Edie before and after Grey Gardens, this wonderful book will provide that. It's an amazing coffee table book. I lucked out and bought a used copy in excellent condition from Marketplace.

The book is good, however, I was surprised at it being just pictures and not a full story. I probably did not read all the reviews well enough. Still interesting family history.

If you are a fan of the Maysles Brothers movies from The Criterion Collection, and also the HBO film starring Jessica Lange and Drew Barrymore, this is a must have. This book fills in all of the blanks of both Big Edie, and Little Edie using photographs from Their collection. If you feel as if you knew them before, this treasure trove really cements what their lives were like before The Great Depression hit, and it draws you that much closer to them. A remarkable testament to two lives that were inseparably intertwined. It will make you long to step back in time to those wonderful days gone by.

A must for every grey garden fan, put together beautifully!

I can't get enough of the Beales! Love my Edies

I really enjoyed all the pages, the pictures; the writings of little Edie. The book gives one a sense of what might have been. A synopsis perhaps on many of our lives that are rich with stories but we don't have the famous name or connection for most people to notice. Everyone should really see the documentary of Grey Gardens and the recent film with Drew Barrymore who did a splendid job portraying little Edie. It's a Keeper.

In my opinion, an absolutely outstanding bio in pictures. After seeing the Grey Gardens (documentary) movie, I've become an addict to the Beales'. Great to see her evolution. Truly a

remarkable story. A must for any fan. In my opinion, worth the price. Pictures and notes not available anywhere else. I'm so glad I have this book!

This is a wonderful book detailing the life of "Little Edie" Beale of Grey Gardens fame. Lovely pictures and poetry written by Edie as child, her deb and post-deb years, also give a fascinating portrait of society life in the 30's 40's and 50's. There are also pictures of Phelan Beale, her father, and, of course, "Big Edie", her mother. A charming narrative as well. My only complaint is that it is a bit over-priced. Other than that, if you are a true Grey Gardens fan, you will love this beautiful tribute to a unique, individualistic and "staunch" character.

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