Marilyn Monroe Biography

Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962) Model, actress, singer and arguably one of the most famous women of the twentieth century.

“I am good, but not an angel. I do sin, but I am not the devil. I am just a small girl in a big world trying to find someone to love.”

- Marilyn Monroe

Monroe was born, Norma Jeane Mortenson, in June 1926. Her father was unknown and she was baptised as Norma Jeane Baker; she spent many years in foster homes because of her family situation.

Monroe married Jimmy Dougherty, in 1942. When he left to the South Pacific to fight in the Second world War, she joined a local munitions factory in Burbank, California. It was here that Marilyn got her first big break. Photographer David Conover, was covering the munitions factory to show women at work. He was struck by the beauty and photogenic nature of Norma, and he used her in many of her shots. This enabled her to start a career as a model and she was soon featured on the front of many magazine covers.

1946 was a pivotal year for Marilyn, she divorced her young husband and changed her name from the boring Norma Baker to the more glamorous Marilyn Monroe (after her grandma). She took drama lessons and got her first movie contract with Twentieth Century Fox. Her first few films were low key, but, it gained her more prominent roles in films such as All About Eve, Niagara and later Gentleman Prefer Blondes and How To Marry A Millionaire.

By now these film roles had thrust her into the global limelight. She was an iconic figure of Hollywood glamour and fashion. She was an epitome of sensuality, beauty and effervescence and was naturally photogenic. She often found the trappings of fame difficult to deal with.

When you’re famous you kind of run into human nature in a raw kind of way. It stirs up envy, fame does. People you run into feel that, well, who does she think she is, Marilyn Monroe? They feel fame gives them some kind of privilege to walk up to you and say anything to you, of any kind of nature — and it won’t hurt your feelings — like it’s happening to your clothes not you.

– Marilyn Monroe (A Life of the Actress, 1993)

In 1954, she married baseball star Joe DiMaggio, a friend of over two years. They were later to divorce, but they remained close friends.
In her later career, she tried to move beyond the ‘blonde bombshell’ typecasting and set up her own movie production. She was awarded a golden globe award for her role in ‘Some Like It Hot’

Tragically, she died early from an overdose of barbiturates in 1962 aged just 36.

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