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Price Of Fame: The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce



Synopsis

“I hope I shall have ambition until the day I die,” Clare Boothe Luce told her biographer Sylvia Jukes Morris. *Price of Fame*, the concluding volume of the life of an exceptionally brilliant polymath, chronicles Luce’s progress from her arrival on Capitol Hill through her career as a diplomat, prolific journalist, and magnetic public speaker, as well as a playwright, screenwriter, pioneer scuba diver, early experimenter in psychedelic drugs, and grande dame of the GOP in the Reagan era. Tempestuously married to Henry Luce, the powerful publisher of Time Inc., she endured his infidelities while pursuing her own, and remained a practiced vamp well into her crowded later years, during which she strengthened her friendships with Winston Churchill, Somerset Maugham, John F. Kennedy, Evelyn Waugh, Lyndon Johnson, Salvador Dalí, Richard Nixon, William F. Buckley, Ronald Reagan, and countless other celebrities. Sylvia Jukes Morris is the only writer to have had complete access to Mrs. Luce’s prodigious collection of public and private papers. In addition, she had unique access to her subject, whose death at eighty-four ended a life that for variety of accomplishment qualifies Clare Boothe Luce for the title of “Woman of the Century.”

“Praise for *Price of Fame*”

“The twentieth-century history of this country, seen through the eyes and actions of a remarkable woman . . . one of the most fabulous, intimate biographies I have ever read.”

—Liz Smith, *Chicago Tribune*

“The epic *Price of Fame* is a thrilling account of one of the twentieth century’s most intriguing and ambitious society figures.”

—Amanda Foreman, bestselling author of *Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire*

“Delicious . . . In *Price of Fame* . . . Sylvia Jukes Morris takes up the story she began in *Rage for Fame*. . . Both books are models of the biographer’s art—meticulously researched, sophisticated, fair-minded and compulsively readable.”

—Edward Kosner, *The Wall Street Journal*

“Clare Boothe Luce [was] one of the twentieth century’s most ambitious, unstoppable and undeniably ingenious characters. . . This full, warts-and-all biography hauls her back into the limelight and does her full justice.”

—Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*

“Poignant and profound . . . nothing short of a triumph.”

—Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, *The Washington Times*

“Compelling . . . [a] brilliant biography.”

—Peter Tonguette, *The Christian Science Monitor*

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Customer Reviews

Clare Booth Luce was born in New York City in 1903. Clare's father was a violinist who left his struggling family. Lacking a college education did not hold the ambitious Miss Booth back from achieving many worthwhile life goals. CBL's ascent is covered in Jukes first volume of this two volume biography "A Rage for Fame." In "Price of Fame": Jukes covers Clare Booth Luce's mature years. What a woman this was! Consider some of Clare Booth Luce's many accomplishmentsa. She married Henry Luce who was the editor and owner of Time Magazine. Luce was a philanderer and had several affairs; the most notable one was Lady Jean Campbell the granddaughter of Lord Max Beaverbrook. Campbell later married novelist Norman Mailer. Clare also had countless affairs with men involved in military affairs, finance, composing and psychiatry.b. Clare served as an effective United States Ambassador to Italy during the first Eisenhower administration (1952-56) She refused to serve as the United States Ambassador to Brazil due to a scathing attack on her by United States Senator Wayne Morris D-Oregon. Mrs. Luce helped to resolve the thorny dispute between Tito's Yugoslavia and Italy over the ownership of Trieste.c.Mrs..Luce served as a two term congresswoman representing Connecticut during the 1940s. She was an opponent of the New Deal. She grew bored with life in the House of Representatives. She traveled widely as a reporter to the European Theatre of War where she witnessed the horror of the Nazi extermination camps; visited the wounded; had affairs with generals and was shot at by the enemy.d. Mrs. Luce supported civil rights for African-Americans and women. She and Eleanor Roosevelt were the two most admired women in America.

When dipping back in time and recounting the life of a popular and influential public figure, I often wonder if there is anything left to be said. Just as often, I read a book like this one and realize there is quite often a lot that has not been said.Price of Fame starts out promisingly and hooked me within

the first four pages. Working off the premise that Luce was born into a life of near poverty, living in tenements, and illegitimacy that was part of the author's first book about Luce, I found a definite disconnect as I thought about the woman who conjured up the successful play *The Women* that would hit the silver screen in several incarnations. Inconsistencies existed in the first book that I found very frustrating. In this book, some of the issues were resolved as the story advanced in time and Clare Booth Luce became a better integrated personality to at least this reader. Though I definitely think the author played up the drama in Luce's life which included instability, an unhappy marriage, love affairs with prominent men, chance meetings with people who would go on to prominence themselves, and eccentric family members that had the potential to mar her public image, this book is one juicy read that should not be ignored. Underlying a history which included a long yet somewhat troubled marriage to influential publisher/journalist Henry Luce and a career in public service, CBL's story is one of survival and the price one pays for the trappings of success. Detailed and far deeper than I have assumed at first glance this book parallels an American century where media attains greater prominence and influenced the way people think. This book is factual and cleverly written and just begs to be read.

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