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I Would Die 4 U: Why Prince Became An Icon



Synopsis

Celebrated journalist, TV personality, and award-winning author Touré investigates one of the most enigmatic and fascinating figures in contemporary American culture: Prince. Drawing on new research and enlivened by Touré's unique pop-cultural fluency, *I Would Die 4 U* relies on surprising and in-depth interviews with Prince's band members, former girlfriends, musicologists, and even Bible scholars to deconstruct the artist's life and work. Prince's baby boomer status allowed him to play a wise older brother to the latchkey kids of generation X. Defying traditional categories of race, gender, and sexuality, he nonetheless presents a very traditional conception of religion and God in his music. He was an MTV megastar and a religious evangelist, using images of sex and profanity to invite us into a musical conversation about the healing power of God. By demystifying the man and his music, *I Would Die 4 U* shows us how Prince defined a generation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am a Prince fan from wayyyy back in the day - I saw him on Midnight Special in his thigh-high boots and long coat and was just mesmerized. Have seen him three times in concert and love his music. I love learning about the man behind the music precisely because he IS so enigmatic. I read a snippet of this book in an online magazine and was intrigued and so I bought it. Pretty much wish I hadn't because it was just a jumble of words and it felt like the author was working extra hard to make all the connections he wanted to prove out. Thing is, I agree with this premise - Prince IS an

icon, no question. But this book felt like he was pulling way too many disparate pieces together and it really didn't add up. The writing was, in a word, abominable. Just atrocious. Big words thrown in for the sake of having big words in there, whole pages that meandered way the hell off topic (even though I could see what he was trying to do, the execution of same failed big time) - I'm not an English teacher but this whole thing made me want to whip out the red pen and start editing. I found the poor writing took away from what focus Toure intended to bring. What did I learn about Prince that I didn't know before? Not a lot, sadly. And perhaps that's because there's so few he allows in that what does show is all there is he will ALLOW to show. The part about his former lovers spilling the beans? Eww. (Does this make me old? Could be but it just made me feel all oogy. Like, I didn't want to really know that.) Some of it was gossip (albeit sourced gossip) and some was really pointless.

WARNING: SPOILER This book wasn't horrible, but it wasn't all that good either. With a title like "Why Prince Became an Icon", I was expecting to read in-depth discussion about Prince's music and what made it rise to iconic levels. There is a little bit of that present, but not enough. Instead, the book spends way too much time analyzing "Gen X" (which is, Toure's generation, and supposedly the generation Prince has the most significance for). Overall, the book reads as a bunch of "he say/she say" and Toure's attempt to play psychologist and make academic discussion over rumors. Furthermore, it constantly quotes other works written about Prince, and even mythical stories that can be found on Prince throughout corners of the Internet. Some sections of the book are poorly written; the writing style comes across as amateur at parts. Plus, some of the writing, particularly parts that attempt to go in-depth with Prince's use of sexuality in his music and early performances, as well as unnecessary details from various lovers (hence the he say/she say aspects), are cringe-worthy in its awkwardness. Of course, a book about Prince is bound to address issues of sexuality, yet, I feel that Toure's handling of the subject is too tactless and uncomfortable to read. Another issue I have is that Toure fails to mention key trademarks Prince utilizes. Analysis of Prince's symbol is nowhere to be found even though the symbol's meaning is far more significant than just being his name replacement for a period of time. Also, Toure fails to mention Prince's signature intentional misuse of words (e.g. using 'eye' instead of 'I'). Hence, Toure misses out on a chance to really look into Prince's iconic work "Purple Rain" through the varying lenses it can be viewed from.

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