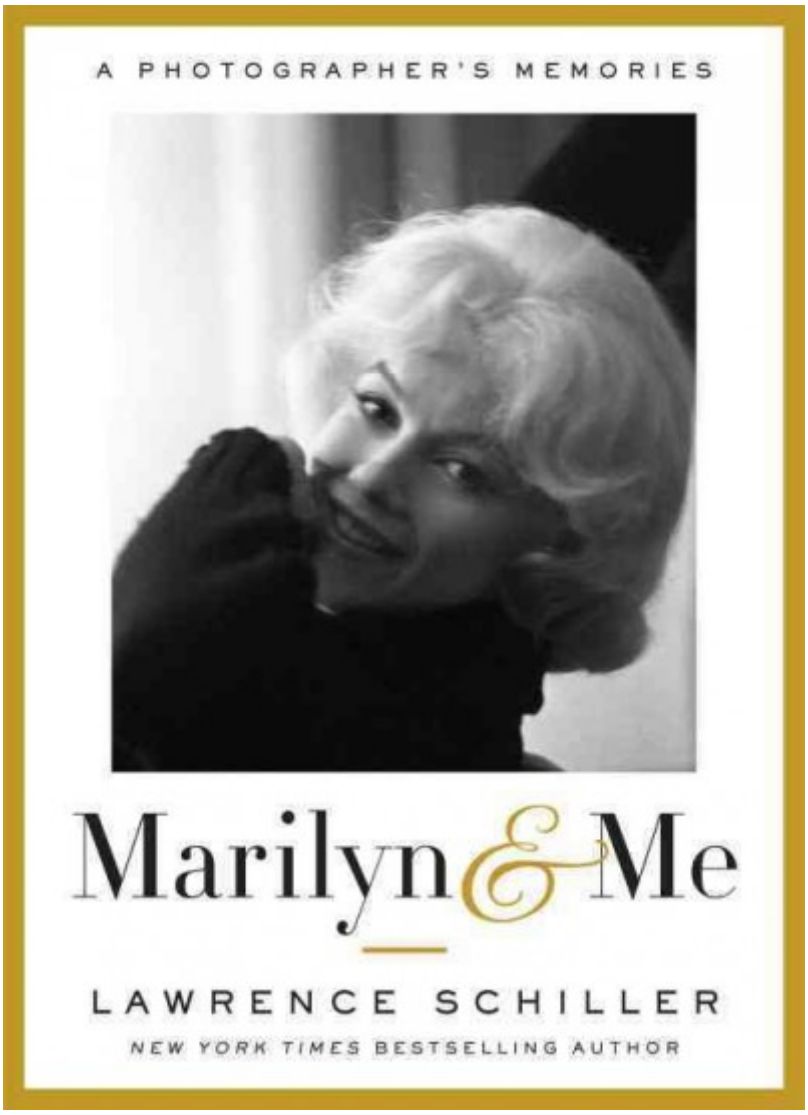
Marilyn & Me: A Photographer's Memories



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This slim memoir about one of the great stars of cinema is a quick and easy read. As you might guess, it provides some really fine images of the star that you might not have seen. Yet because of the book's small format, the photographs are not as big as you might hope.

The photographer, memoirist Lawrence Schiller, was only 23 years old when he first got the opportunity to photograph the actress. What I like especially in this book, is how he humanizes Marilyn, shows how uncertain she was, longing yet afraid to have a child; Schiller started his family over the couple year-span of the memoir and they often talked about his wife and family.

Marilyn & Me [2]shows the actress to be incredibly smart. Also, Schiller reveals her skills at conversation--when she was in the right mood--she could really draw people out. On the day

she met the author, she discovered that he had blindness in one eye caused by a childhood accident. This fact she never forgot.
Schiller talks about how Marilyn often complained to him about being undervalued. She was acutely aware of how much other famous stars of the day, such as Frank Sinatra and Rosalind Russell, were paid. But, speaking of business people, Schiller reveals his own talent for securing lucrative deals for selling photographs especially those of Marilyn's. Also, Marilyn was incredibly gifted at quickly scanning hundreds of contact prints and selecting the best photos of herself. The ones she did not like she Xed off so they were unusable.

One day he chats with Robert Kennedy in Marilyn's backyard, and there's an intriguing description of her swimming toward Kennedy in a white bathing suit, that suggests closer ties with him, but Schiller does not broach any theories.

News of her death reached Schiller while he is on vacation. He returned quickly to LA for some last shots of her house. He strongly believed that her death was not a purposeful suicide. Schiller conceded that she could have accidentally taken more pills by forgetting that she had imbibed some earlier.

This is a gentle memoir that you can read in an hour or two over the holiday season.

For a photo biography of another actress who also came to a tragic end, try the *Grace Kelly Years: Princess of Monaco* [3]published in 2007 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of her death.

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Posted by Dory L. on Dec 13, 2012

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