

Marilyn Monroe

Probably the most celebrated of all actresses, Marilyn Monroe was born Norma Jean Mortenson on June 1, 1926 in Los Angeles General Hospital.

Marilyn grew up not knowing for sure who her father really was. Her mother, Gladys who was extremely attractive and worked for RKO Studios as film cutter, suffered from mental illness and was in and out of mental institutions for the rest of her life and because of that, Marilyn spent time in foster homes.

In 1942, at the age of 16, Marilyn married 21-year-old aircraft plant worker. The marriage only lasted 4 years. By this time, Marilyn began to model swimsuits and bleached her hair blonde.

Her first film was in 1947 with a bit part in The Shocking Miss Pilgrim. She played in two more movies, but 20th Century Fox declined to renew her contract, so she went back to modeling and acting school. Columbia Pictures then picked her up to play in a movie and after that they dropped her too.

In 1951, Marilyn got a fairly sizable role in Love Nest. The public was now getting to know her and liked what it saw. She had an intoxicating quality of volcanic sexuality wrapped in an aura of almost childlike innocence.

Marilyn appeared in Monkey Business 1952, where she was seen for the first time as a platinum blond, a look that became her trademark. In 1955 she appeared in The Seven Year Itch, which showcased her considerable comedic talent and contained what is arguably one of the most memorable moments in cinema history: Marilyn standing above a subway grating and the wind from a passing subway blowing her white dress up.

Her work was slowing down, due to her habit of being continually late to the set, her illnesses (whether real or imagined) and generally being unwilling to cooperate with her producers, directors and fellow actors.

In June 1962 she was fired from the production. It looked as though her career was finished.

On August 5, 1962, her housekeeper found her dead body, nude and lying face down on her bed, apparently the victim of an overdose of sedatives. She was only 36.

Marilyn made only 30 films in her lifetime, but her legendary status and mysticism will remain with film history forever.

Glossary

bleach-to make sth white or pale by a chemical process or by the effect of sunlight

grating-unpleasant and harsh to listen to

aura-a feeling or particular quality that is very noticeable and seems to surround a person or place

sedative-a drug that makes sb go to sleep or makes them feel calm and relaxed