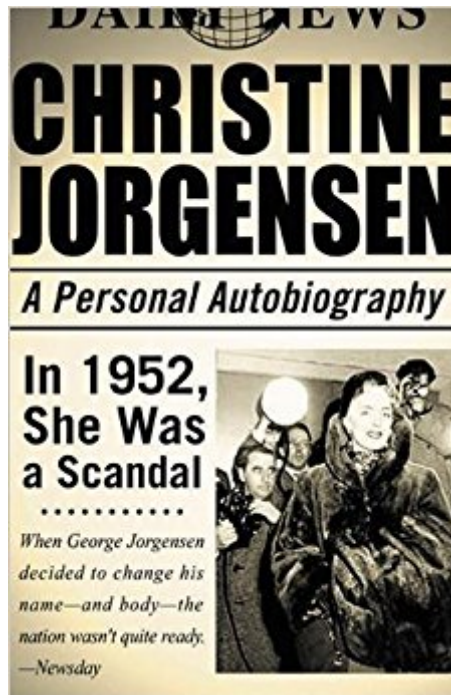




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# Christine Jorgensen: A Personal Autobiography



## Synopsis

In 1951 George Jorgensen, an American man of 26, left for Denmark and returned a year later as the first world-renowned transsexual, Christine Jorgensen. In her own personable style, Jorgensen offers a firsthand account of her ground-breaking life. "Nature made a mistake," she wrote, "which I have corrected."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This handsome reprint of Jorgensen's 1967 memoir makes it abundantly clear how moments of grace can descend on even the most ordinary of lives. When ex-G.I. George Jorgensen went to Copenhagen in the early 1950s to consult experts in sexual deviance, he was afraid they'd simply proclaim him a fairy. A full battery of hormonal and psychological tests revealed that, while he was drawn to men, he was no garden-variety homophile; he was a lady. Keeping the secret from his family, Jorgensen endured a groundbreaking series of operations, finally emerging in November 1952 as a delicately beautiful young woman. "I merely wanted to correct what I considered a misjudgment of Nature," wrote Jorgensen, who died in 1989. No one seeing the photographs included here (many of them new to this edition) can doubt the success of Jorgensen's transformation or wonder too long at the fascination she engendered back home, where a newspaper bought her story for \$20,000 and she was proclaimed New York City's Woman of the Year. A stage and screen career soon followed. As Susan Stryker points out in a new introduction, Jorgensen offers a somewhat flattering and selectively abridged account of herself in the

autobiography, but no more so than any plucky girl smiling her way through what must have been, at times, a harrowing and lonely journey, but one that she conducted with remarkable dignity.

--Regina Marler

Jorgensen made international headlines in the early 1950s as the first person to go public about having a sex-change operation. Following the revelation, s/he became the poster child for transsexualism. Her 1967 autobiography is a straightforward account of growing up as a boy with much inner conflict. It goes on to cover the decision to have the surgery, the procedure itself, and her successful career as a Las Vegas entertainer. This contains a new introduction by gay historian Susan Stryker. (LJ 9/1/67) Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I can't remember where I heard about this book, but it sounded pretty interesting. It started off okay and you can forgive the fact that it's not written by a practiced writer, but it was a bit boring. I didn't find any depth in this autobiography, any struggles experienced were really glossed over, no fears, family and friends were all instantly accepting, no worries surrounding the surgery or anything else. It might have been about getting a tonsilectomy. Most of the issues were about getting an acting career off the ground and too much name dropping in my opinion. It was kind of a waste of reading time and too superficial. I had hoped for more depth.

This is a must read book for those interested in gender identity issues, as well as for those who enjoy memoirs. Ms. Jorgensen was the first American to have a sex change operation and undergo such public scrutiny. Though she never intended to have her transformation become public knowledge, it was leaked to the press, and from then on, her life was never the same. In the cultural milieu of the nineteen fifties, Ms. Jorgensen's sex change was big news. Starting her life out as George Jorgensen, she never quite felt that she fit in and became a loner by inclination. One striking issue in the book, however, is that she came from an extremely loving and supportive family who always unconditionally accepted her as she was, both before and after her metamorphosis. Not every transgendered individual is as lucky as Ms. Jorgensen appears to have been with respect to familial relationships. Perhaps it was because her parents were of Danish descent, and Scandinavian people tend to be more accepting of these issues. Relentlessly upbeat, the book is a flattering and politely idealized memoir, as if anything too dark were exorcised from its pages. The chapters which cover Ms. Jorgensen's time in Denmark, where her change took place, are somewhat superficial and non-clinical. There is no real indication of any personal struggle or

self-doubt with respect to her decision to undergo a life changing transformation. One has to remember, however, that this book was originally published approximately thirty five years ago, when the public's sensibilities on such issues were far more delicate. What does come across in this autobiography is that Ms. Jorgensen had the courage to make a decision that for the time was somewhat unique and cutting edge, as there was virtually no literature available for the general public on transsexualism, and gender identity studies were still in their nascent stage. Ms. Jorgensen essentially paved the way for others by bringing to the public consciousness issues that had not before been the subject of public discussion. In bringing these issues into the public domain, she was subject to a torrent of abuse, as well as discriminatory practices, and seemed to be the endless butt of jokes. She took these problems in stride, however, and always managed to have the last laugh. Laughter, indeed, appears to have been the best medicine. Ms. Jorgensen, an attractive natural blonde, who personified the stereotypic feminine ideal of the time, became an entertainer. Given her notoriety, her career options were limited, as she gathered a crowd whenever her identity became known. Playing the hand that was dealt her, she parlayed her notoriety into a successful club act, digressing into acting. She managed to make a success of herself, living a life that was interesting, but hardly scandalous. While this is an intriguing memoir, it is not an in depth profile of Ms. Jorgensen. The reader comes away knowing about Ms. Jorgensen, rather than knowing her. Still, all in all, it is a worthwhile read.

The story is very touching and interesting. You can't help liking Christine. The reason for only 3 stars is it can be a bit boring at times. Drags on with things not relevant to story. I hoped there would be more medical details about the operations she went through. She was a brave person and a kind, gentle woman.

This is the first book dealing with transgender issues that I ever read back in the 1970s ... wonderful account. Though, having seen clips of Christine over the years, I think she paints a picture of herself that might be just an ever bit too angelic.

It was very informative but a little too much detail about the periphery characters lives that I felt added nothing but length to her story.

After reading this book, I understood my transgender son and am his main support system. Parents, read this and help your kids; they need you more now than ever. This books allows you to feel,

really feel, the agony our kids and loved ones live with daily. Please read this.

I love autobiographies and this one delivers! What an amazing Lady!!! I wish I had known her!!

EXCELLENT BIOGRAPHY, EASY READING, THOUGH INFORMATIVE AND FUNNY AT TIMES. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS BOOK ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE OF US WHO ARE INTERESTED IN PEOPLE. THIS CASE ILLUSTRATES THE IDEA THAT EVEN THOUGH FACED WITH ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES ONE CAN OVERCOME ALL ODDS IF ONE IS HONEST WITH ONE'S SELF AND DETERMINED. THIS STORY IS AMAZING.

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