



Striptease: The Untold History of the Girlie Show

Rachel Shteir

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Striptease recreates the combustible mixture of license, independence, and sexual curiosity that allowed strippers to thrive for nearly a century. Rachel Shteir brings to life striptease's Golden Age, the years between the Jazz Age and the Sexual Revolution, when strippers performed around the country, in burlesque theatres, nightclubs, vaudeville houses, carnivals, fairs, and even in glorious palaces on the Great White Way. Taking us behind the scenes, Shteir introduces us to a diverse cast of characters that collided on the burlesque stage, from tight-laced political reformers and flamboyant impresarios, to drag queens, shimmy girls, cootch dancers, tit serenaders, and even girls next door, lured into the profession by big-city aspirations. Throughout the book, readers will find essential profiles of famed performers, including Gypsy Rose Lee, "the Literary Stripper"; Lili St. Cyr, the 1950s mistress of exotic striptease; and Blaze Starr, the "human heat wave," who literally set the stage on fire.

Striptease is an insightful and entertaining portrait of an art form at once reviled and embraced by the American public. Blending careful research and vivid narration, Rachel Shteir captures striptease's combination of sham and seduction while illuminating its surprisingly persistent hold on the American imagination.

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