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Charles River Editors : American Legends: The Life of Montgomery Clift before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Legends: The Life of Montgomery Clift:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. caring view of a brilliant actor.By BRENDA DESPERA open , caring view of a brilliant actor...a conflicted and troubled soul , I felt he was taken too soon , We never will see another, that could give such an intense raw portraiture of human emotions0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The research is done on the internet, almost nothing ...By CustomerThe research is done on the internet, almost nothing you couldn't find googling (the IMBd bio is cited, Vanity Fair articles), but basically one book. But, for the price, it will get you started.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Although the stories are short, they make for interesting ...By Paul DeneaultAlthough the stories are short, they make for interesting reading . There is enough pertinent information to keep you interested and entertained.

A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, listeners can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known. In the World War II and post-war era, the figure of the male hero who was previously presented as an invulnerable, single-minded, and to a larger degree monolithic and unknowable warrior, began to develop into a more multi-faceted and intriguing character in the most important Hollywood films. This was to signal, and in a sense impel the same change in American society that has always mirrored itself after its cinematic models. Much like the era of Austen and the Bronte sisters, the American hero softened to resemble the older British one, vulnerable and uncertain, but still passionate and determined. In Edward Montgomery Clift, the public not only discovered an unusually gifted actor, but a persistent and stoical anti-authoritarian, an extreme non-conformist in a conformist age and a personal enigma who has remained the target of prying Hollywood reporting since his death. Described as the first "method" actor in Hollywood, he was to co-create and develop this lonely, unwilling, and uncertain American hero, filled with deep personal ambiguities, a conflicting will, vulnerable and sensitive. In his eventual arrival to Hollywood following a lengthy period of resistance, he not only embodied this new male model, but inspired the next generation of fascinating characters who didn't "fit in", such as friends Marlon Brando and James Dean. He added to this screen persona a sexual dualism that, while not apparent on the surface, changed the way leading men were perceived by the late 1940s. A first-rate stage actor, Clift approached Hollywood on his own terms,

and permanently upset the ruling order of the studio-to-star system, in which long-term contracts guaranteed corporate ownership of the artist, and in which casting was often based more on familiarity than suitability or acting skills. Obscuring Clift's evident gifts as a special actor of his generation is the persistent ruminating on his personal tortures, not only as a drug addict and alcoholic, but as a sexually split identity playing the handsome leading man on the screen while unable to find a haven in American society in his private time. The combination of these forces shortened Clift's career and life considerably, despite some of his finest performances being filmed in a state of near delirium and mental collapse. Somehow able to tap into his extraordinary gifts at the lowest moments, he struggled through his final films, evoking success when he should have been undergoing treatment. He even secured a fourth Oscar nomination for a 10-minute scene that was entirely improvised, as he was unable to remember a single line of the script. He was, at the last, a great American leading man who was, at the same time, virtually unemployable. Among the hardest men to know in the Hollywood industry, Clift was nevertheless treated with affection by most of his fellow actors who simply called him Monty, as he had been called his whole life. Born in Omaha, Nebraska, the same city that produced Marlon Brando, Clift would have grown up in a stolid Midwestern society as the son of a no-nonsense banker and a self-styled, aristocratic mother, for whom aristocratic children were a necessary part of the family image.

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