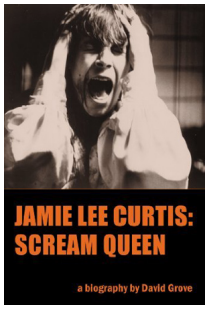
Author David Grove (MAKING FRIDAY THE 13TH, FANTASTIC 4: THE MAKING OF THE MOVIE) is head-over-Oxfords in love with Jamie Lee Curtis, and his new biography JAMIE LEE CURTIS: SCREAM QUEEN is littered with evidence of this crush. Of course, many of us who grew up watching Curtis in slasher classics like HALLOWEEN, TERROR TRAIN and PROM NIGHT feel the same way.

Since we’re speaking intimately here, what I love most about Grove’s book (from BearManor Media) is his extreme and detailed devotion to Curtis, and more broadly to the horror genre. JAMIE LEE CURTIS: SCREAM QUEEN reads like a series of love letters praising every inch of Curtis’ being, from her unconventional beauty to her initial insecurities as a working actress. It’s a specific discussion of Curtis’ work as *the* scream queen, and also serves as a behind-the-scenes look her genre films, also including THE FOG and HALLOWEEN II.



Curtis is special, and this theme runs cohesively throughout Grove’s biography. She wasn’t the first scream queen (lovely ladies have been running away from monsters on screen since the early 1900s), but she is the most successful, and Grove attributes this to her work ethic, how she conducted herself on set(s), her indescribable tomboyish beauty, her impact on camera and her vulnerability. Grove’s writing style is easy to read, but his approach to his subject is perhaps too predictable. The book only scrapes the surface of Curtis’ offscreen life; Grove discusses Curtis’ relationship with director John Carpenter and producer Debra Hill in great detail, but the actress’ private life and the essential aspects of her personhood are kept to a minimum. For example, Grove only touches upon Curtis’ drug problem, and her bizarre relationship with her father, Tony Curtis. But, this biography is not only *about* Curtis—it’s also *for* Curtis, and we all know that love is blind.

Although JAMIE LEE CURTIS: SCREAM QUEEN is blatantly biased, Grove does a great job of stressing the fact that she struggled in her career to find roles outside of the horror genre. He points out that ironically, Curtis’ more mainstream roles required nudity, while her horror films never made such demands: In LOVE LETTERS, Curtis performed sex scenes that left little to the imagination, and she portrayed *Playboy* playmate Dorothy Stratten in the made-for-television flick DEATH OF A CENTERFOLD only one year after Stratten was brutally murdered.

JAMIE LEE CURTIS: SCREAM QUEEN is definitely worth a read, whether you’re a diehard Curtis devotee or are interested in reading about how HALLOWEEN came together. The biography is complete with insight from Carpenter, and Grove has included enough detail and perspective to make you feel as though you were part of the action. Horror fans will feel right at home; Grove has no qualms about trash-talking remakes, Rob Zombie’s HALLOWEEN included. Perhaps Groves’ book could also serve as a manual for future scream queens, as Curtis’ characters were something special: They fought back, they were refined, everyone could identify with her girl-next-door appearance and she demanded to be taken seriously. It’s easy to understand why Grove is lovesick over Curtis, and after reading JAMIE LEE CURTIS: SCREAM QUEEN, you will be, too.

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