

Five men,
close to
the world's
most famous blonde,
present a

Mosaic of Marilyn

A child of unwed parents, raised in loveless foster homes, Marilyn Monroe miraculously flowered into our nation's goddess of love. Hers is Hollywood's most magic name, but her personality remains elusive. In her new movie, **The Misfits**, she worked closely with five men who knew her well and saw her differently: from the left, Montgomery Clift, of her generation; Eli Wallach, a "big brother"; playwright Arthur Miller, who married her in 1956; director John Huston, her discoverer; Clark Gable, her leading man. On these pages, each comments on the Monroe character riddle as he alone views it. But fate wrote a bitter postscript. At the end of the filming, Marilyn and Miller separated, and a few days later Gable died of a heart attack.

Photographs by Magnum

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"I first directed Marilyn back in 1949 in **The Asphalt Jungle**, which started her toward stardom. I remember she was nervous, but she knew what she wanted. She insisted on reading for the role sprawled on the floor. She wasn't satisfied. She asked if she could do it again. But she had the part the first time. Marilyn is serious about her work. And she's unique: she has to go all the way down into herself for everything she does, hauling it up from her middle every time. It doesn't come easy, but by God, she draws it out of that wonderful body. Marilyn's ready now to tackle serious, complex roles like this one in **The Misfits**. I don't need to direct her much. She has a keen instinct about a line, a mood, a gesture. Any director who says he would never work with her again is nuts. I like a woman who has life inside her. I've asked Marilyn to play 'Anna O.' in my next picture, **Freud**. And we plan to do **Lysistrata** together one day."

JOHN HUSTON:

"She's serious. unique... but it doesn't come easy"



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ELI WALLACH:

"She's cute,
sexy,
naive,
difficult and
insecure"

"This is no dumb blonde. She's got guts. She saw herself drowning in Hollywood in 1955 and told her studio, 'I'm not going on just wiggling my behind.' She moved to New York to study at the Actors Studio. I met her there. We developed a brother-sister relationship. She often baby-sat with my kids. Marilyn is not any one thing; she's multidimensional — she's cute, sexy, naive, difficult and insecure. On the set she's a fun-loving girl, cutting up and joking with the crew. After all, she's a child of Hollywood — her mother worked as a film cutter at RKO. Once Marilyn acted as my agent, and I lost the part because she was so tough in her demands for me. As an actress, she has lots of imitators—but only Marilyn survives. Why? Because people sense something real and helpless from her on that screen; they want to protect this girl, and she makes them ashamed for having thought any dirty thoughts about her."

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"She listens, wants, cares. Marilyn has amazing intuition—and her perceptions are razor-sharp. Out of those damned responsive eyes of hers flickers thought after thought. She and I talk a lot about New York, which we both love. Like me, she lives there now between pictures. Hollywood is a world of self-strokers, where sanity depends on a sense of humor. Marilyn has it—in spades. No subtlety of humor escapes her. I catch her laughing across a room and I bust up. Every pore of that lovely translucent skin is alive, open every moment—even though this could make her vulnerable to being hurt. I would rather work with her than any other actress. I adore her."



MONTGOMERY CLIFT:

"I catch her
laughing and
I bust up"

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CLARK GABLE:

“Strange
and
exciting...
that
magnificent
torso!”

“Everything Marilyn does is different from any other woman, strange and exciting...from the way she talks to the way she uses that magnificent torso. One thing we have in common is that people look for sexy scenes in my movies, and they certainly expect them from Marilyn. I've always liked blondes. And they're a good combination for me on the screen—some of my most successful pictures were opposite blondes: Jean Harlow, Lana Turner, Grace Kelly. Actually there are remarkable physical similarities between Harlow and Monroe, and both made their mark in comedy. But Harlow was always very relaxed; she made no effort to be funny—and often didn't know she was. This girl is high-strung, and she worries more—about her lines, her appearance, her performance. She's constantly trying to improve as an actress. I'm convinced that in this picture, Marilyn shows a depth that will make people stop thinking of her as just a 'sexpot'.”

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"I based a lot of Roslyn, the girl in my **Misfits** screenplay, on Marilyn. Marilyn identifies powerfully with all living things, but her extraordinary embrace of life is intermingled with great sadness. In the picture, Roslyn dances in the woods, longing for the stability of a tree, sad that she can't be one with Nature's beauty. Marilyn's tremendous empathy for people and animals is reflected in the movie too. The three men who love Roslyn wrangle horses, and the girl suffers when the beasts are mistreated. Frank Taylor, our producer, says 'Marilyn hates cages for birds, leashes for dogs and halters for herself.' He's right. To understand Marilyn best, you have to see her around children. They love her; her whole approach to life has their kind of simplicity and directness. I have not really helped her as an actress; Marilyn has perfected herself. She can imply the world in a look. The thing is, Marilyn has become a sort of fiction for writers; each one sees her through his own set of pleasures and prejudices." 👑



ARTHUR MILLER:

“An embrace
of life,
intermingled
with
sadness”