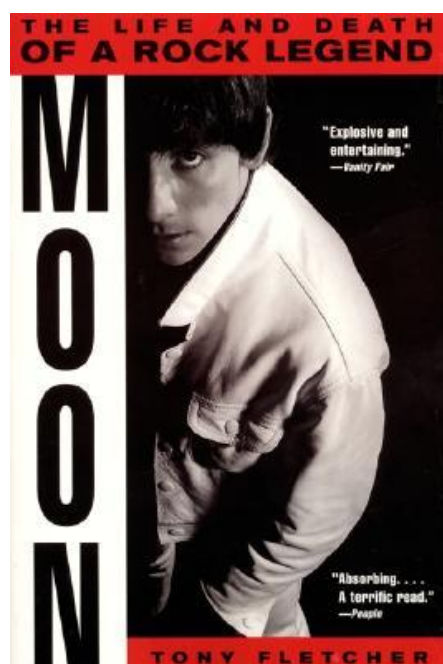




Moon: The Life and Death of a Rock Legend

Tony Fletcher

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Keith Moon was the bad boy of rock & roll, the most manic member of an aggressive and fabulously successful band, a full-throttle hedonist who lived at the center of an unending party. He was also a musical genius who inspired whole generations of artists, a generous friend to nearly everyone who crossed his path, a guileless man of immense personal charm to whom the sweetest sound on earth was surf music. A generation after his death, Moon is still revered as the greatest drummer in rock history and the single wildest personality in an age of pop excess. Here is the truth behind the legend, the result of more than three years of research in which music journalist Tony Fletcher interviewed dozens of Moon's friends, colleagues, and associates. The result is an instant classic that brilliantly illuminates both the tender and self-destructive sides of this singular personality. This is the story of one of the most outrageous rock stars ever born -- and *Moon* is one of the greatest rock biographies ever written.

Moon: The Life and Death of a Rock Legend Details

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From Reader Review Moon: The Life and Death of a Rock Legend for online ebook

Mark R. says

"Moon: The Life and Death of a Rock Legend," by Tony Fletcher, is one of the saddest books I've read. As a fan of the Who, reading this book is exciting, pouring over hundreds of pages about the rise and success of one of the greatest bands in rock n roll history--and then (and not without warnings peppered throughout the first few hundred pages) the lifestyle of our protagonist catches up to him, and it's painful reading a detailed account of his self-destruction.

Keith's is, overall, a sad story about a man whose insecurities were kept hidden from most of the people who knew him, and who could never be content just to enjoy the life he'd made for himself, always living in fear that said life, and lifestyle, could be taken away at any moment; that the Who could break up, and it would be all over. Because Keith had no desire to do anything but play drums with the Who (although there's a strong suggestion that he'd have also been happy with a career as a Beach Boy).

Fletcher's book is filled with amusing, startling, and very repeatable anecdotes, some of which are covered in the magnificent "Before I Get Old," by Dave Marsh. It's unavoidable some stories should be repeated in different biographies of the band, but for a reader interested in learning more specifically about the band's drummer, Fletcher's book is must-have material.

In the beginning of the book, Fletcher points out that it's quite a task assembling a nonfiction history of Keith Moon, since his life was surrounded by so many rumors and bits of hearsay, many concocted by Moon himself, that it isn't easy to separate truth from fiction. I'm sure, while there are many passages Moon probably wouldn't mind kept out of the records, that he'd approve of that.

Sr. Lado Brillante says

Not to be taken away.

La vida de Keith Moon es una historia divertida, trágica, pomposa y triste en igual medida y todo eso esta presente en este libro. Todo. Hay momento muy divertidos, hay momentos muy dolorosos y lamentablemente conforme avanza el libro son más los segundos que los primeros.

El libro tiene un acercamiento más documental que las biografías comunes, llevando paralelamente la historia de Keith y la de The Who (lo cuál no podría ser de otra manera), llegando al grado de desmitificar muchos hechos alrededor de Moon (no, nunca hubo un automóvil en la piscina, nunca fueron baneados del Holiday Inn), lo cual ayuda a dar una imagen más humana del músico, mostrandolo con todas sus fallas, pero también tal y como era, único.

Hay que reconocer el enorme trabajo de investigación que hizo Fletcher, donde hablo con todas las personas cercanas a Moon, con la dolorosa excepción de su madre, Roger Daltrey y Pete Townshend, aunque el último dio apoyo total por medio de su oficina.

Este es un trabajo de amor del autor a la música de la banda, a sus fans y a Keith en particular, lo que lo hace ideal para el fan de toda la vida de The Who.

Jessica says

I really don't know how to officially or formally 'review' this book. Technically speaking, it is what every biography should be--VERY well-written and researched (deserving five stars), but the life of Keith Moon is a rather depressing and sometimes repulsive subject to read about. There are some pretty amusing and very interesting parts throughout but it is by no means uplifting. Read this if you are a die-hard fan of The Who and MUST know every miniscule fact about them. Otherwise just stick to the music and go read about someone who's worth admiring.

Matt Hartzell says

I went into Moon by Tony Fletcher with basically no knowledge of Keith Moon or The Who, aside from the common understanding that they were a big classic rock band. As a drummer, I had not paid much attention to Keith Moon in my learning, but had also gleaned enough to know that he was influential in the growth of rock as a music genre. So reading through Moon was a joy, as was getting to know the incredibly complex character of Keith Moon and the band that was so important to modern music.

Keith Moon certainly lived up to his nickname. While many of his shenanigans border on the mythological, Fletcher packs an ABSURD number of completely accurate stories and tales about Moon. The man does not really need the exaggeration: he was completely stinkin' insane! While I cannot at all fathom an understanding of Keith Moon's inner psyche, I did greatly enjoy the many recountings of Keith's hotel room destruction, his class-clown antics on tour, his epic partying, his theatrics and shock-value, and his fondness for cherry bombs and other explosive devices, all wrapped in the shell of the consummate, warm and inviting extrovert. Keith Moon was one of a kind.

And yet, Fletcher also dives honestly and directly into the dark underbelly of Keith's existence. His apparent multiple personalities and perhaps demonic oppression. His boiling rage paired with searing depression, loneliness, anxiety and inadequacy. His abusive tendencies towards those closest to him, both verbal and physical. His astonishingly destructive, persistent, and all-consuming use of every drink, pill, drug, and woman he could get his hands on. I think one of the strongest traits of Fletcher's work is how he is brutally honest about who Keith Moon was. He never veers too far into either ditch, by trying to paint too likable or too detestable. He presents the man as he was, as an incredibly complicated and conflicted person, prone to acts of incredible charity and kindness as well as those of great harm, abuse and destruction.

The fact that Keith Moon lived as long as he did is miraculous to me, even though many would say he was gone too soon. Fletcher makes a compelling case for Keith Moon being perhaps the most hedonistic and destructive rock star of all time. His life, in all honesty, speaks to me as a testimony to the tenacity of the human body. Keith Moon should have been dead long before he actually was. He abused his body in incalculable ways. Pills upon pills. Bottles upon bottles. Lines upon lines. Women by the truckload. Not too mention the multitude of acts in which Keith was faced with direct bodily harm, from explosions or car wrecks. I'm not sure if Keith Moon was genetically gifted in some way to endure such abuse, but it certainly seems possible.

And yet Keith Moon did eventually succumb to his devices, as many rock stars have. His story does end in tragedy. Not tragedy that was unforeseen or surprising, yet tragedy it was. It's tragic that Keith Moon, for all that the world loved him and saw his talent and worth, could not see it in himself. Tragic that he likely was mentally ill but never diagnosed or treated appropriately. Tragic that he was capable of achieving such fame and success and yet never had a chance to learn how to manage them well. Tragic that his life ended just as the briefest sparks of a hopeful turnaround were beginning to appear. Tragic that so much of his life wasted

away in addiction and materialism. Tragic that he often resisted those who loved him most deeply.

And so, because of Keith's demise, we are left with his stories, his legacy, and his works of art. Fletcher does a great job of also capturing much of the history of The Who in his book, reflecting often on the other members of the band, and providing helpful insight into the music they gave to the world. I greatly enjoyed this aspect of the book as well. There is much here about The Who as a rock band, and about Keith Moon as one of the greatest rock drummers of all time. It has spawned in me a much deeper appreciation of The Who. Indeed, as I read through this book, I also began to explore the breadth of The Who's musical catalog. If you are not familiar with The Who, and decide to read this tome, then I would greatly encourage you to take time to listen to the Who albums along with Fletcher's examination of them. Fletcher also does capture some fun notes about many other figures in rock history, as Keith and The Who interacted with just about all of them.

As a final note, be warned: this book is INDEED a tome. It is exceptionally long, even for a biography. And that is why I removed a star in my rating. While the book is excellent, and I am incredibly thankful that I read it, it did feel a bit long in the teeth at some points. I think some of the stories Fletcher included could have been skipped over without diminishing the power of the work. At some point, Keith Moon's antics do become somewhat repetitive. While I'm very glad I stuck around for the long haul, I think the work could have been shortened a bit.

If you're a fan of rock music, a Who fan, a musician, or even just someone who grew up during the British invasion, I highly recommend you give this book a read.

Steven says

This was a really good book, and it is very evident that Tony Fletcher really did his research. Whether you're a fan of the Who, or the legendary drummer that powered them this book provides great insight into the complex mind of Keith Moon and his contributions to rock 'n' roll.

Anyone who knows even the slightest detail about Mr. Moon knows that he was basically insane. He took superhuman amounts of drugs, he played the drums far more wildly than anyone had ever seen before, and he lived a life of wild excess. There are countless "Moon the Loon" stories out there and Fletcher does a great job of digging into these stories, determining which are true, and conveying them in a way that shows Keith's incredible sense of humour and creativity. He also does a fantastic job of showing Keith's (many) other sides, as well, whether it's his softer side, his insecure side, his jealous side (a little bit scary), or his unhinged side (downright terrifying).

Be warned though, especially if you, like me, see Moon as a rock 'n' roll hero: The last half of this book is very heavy. That's not to say that it becomes hard to read or takes a long time to get through, because it actually read faster for me toward the end. No, the hard part is seeing how Moon handled his battles with depression, alcoholism, and addiction while also seeing that all he really wanted to do was drum with the Who again. It really makes you feel bad for a guy who just couldn't get onto the straight and narrow (whether you may feel he had it coming or not).

Moon's story is, in the end, a tragic one. Along the way to his early grave, however, he always found a way to put a smile on other people's faces, and even in death, this book helped him put a smile on mine as well.

Mike Clinton says

This was an indulgence that, much like Keith Moon's own habits, became excessive. My brother gave me this book a couple of Christmases ago, and I had started on, put down, started back on it a few times. After reading the more high-brow novel "The Sea" by John Banville, I thought it a good opportunity to simplify things a bit and finally get through this biography of The Who's drummer, notorious for his reckless living (drinking, drugging, hotel-wrecking) that culminated in his death in 1978. It was fun to read, especially accompanied by Who music and supplemented with visits to YouTube, where you can find tons of clips of Moon's antics and performances (musical and otherwise) that weren't so readily accessible when I was 14. It's impossible, in fact, not to enjoy spending time with Moon and The Who ... for a time. This book is nearly 600 pages in length and by halfway through becomes dominated by almost day-by-day accounts of how drunk and drugged Moon got - and what then followed. What begin as escapades and shenanigans end up as disasters, even tragedies. It frankly became tiresome as the book followed Moon into this monotonous course of self-abuse, depression, and mania, but Fletcher does break to analyze and comment from time to time on just that - how living in Moon's orbit could go from exhilarating to exasperating, eventually breaking many of those around him. Although a fan - and an adulatory one on occasion, at that - Fletcher is honest in confronting the reality behind Moon's "loony", lovable, eccentric public persona and discussing what a terrible person he could be: verbally, emotionally, physically abusive to his wife; negligent towards his daughter; overbearing, inconsiderate, imperious, or worse to those close to him; perhaps suffering from borderline personality disorder. It was good to spend some escape time with Moonie, but I'm glad to be away from him now.

Nannette says

I admit, I did not really give it a chance because this is a very thick book, and much of the beginning goes into painstaking detail about Moon's childhood and what life was like in England during the time that he was growing up. While the author did much research to glean this information, and this is part of a good biography, I was more interested in the years after he joined the Who. I may pick this up again and skip past the beginning chapter, after reading some of the other reviews it sounds like the meat of the book starts later than where I left off.

What I wanted mostly to read about was Keith Moon's life after he joined the Who. I know some background information is necessary to give us the insight into his personality; I just felt that there was too much of it. What I did read backs up the theory that Moon was constantly seeking the spotlight and attention, even if it was negative attention. I'm guessing if Moon were born many years later, in our age of psychology and psychoanalysis and quick fix meds, he would have been diagnosed with some kind of disorder, such as manic depression or ADHD.

He put on the face of a clown, but he was covering up some real pain with his antics and with drugs and alcohol; he definitely had some demons, especially stemming from an accident in which he felt responsible for the death of his friend and driver, Neil Boland. Some who knew him say he never recovered from the guilt and felt that he had no right to keep on living.

Ironically, Moon died during a period when he was trying to become sober. According to Wikipedia: Moon then took 32 tablets of Clomethiazole (Heminevrin).[7] The medication was a sedative he had been prescribed to alleviate his alcohol withdrawal symptoms as he tried to dry out on his own at home; he was desperate to get clean, but was terrified of another stay in the psychiatric hospital for in-patient detoxification. However, Clomethiazole is specifically contraindicated for unsupervised home detox because of its addictiveness, tendency to rapidly induce drug tolerance and dangerously high risk of death when

mixed with alcohol.[39] The pills were also prescribed by a new doctor, Dr. Geoffrey Dymond, who was unaware of Moon's recklessly impulsive nature and long history of prescription sedative abuse. He had given Moon a full bottle of 100 pills, and instructed him to take one whenever he felt a craving for alcohol (but not more than 3 per day). The police determined there were 32 pills in his system, with the digestion of 6 being sufficient to cause his death, and the other 26 of which were still undissolved when he died.[7]

Graham says

This may be the saddest book I've ever read.

"You know, we just shot a lot of film for the interview, and talking about all that, I was wondering if you'd tell us the truth and stop lying."

"Well, no. I mean, the truth is, you want to hear it? I can't do that. You couldn't afford me."

Bob Primosch says

Fletcher's style is a little wordy but overall the book is a solid piece of work.

Paul says

The author is an obvious fan; the length (580 pages or so) and detail reflect that, but that does not cloud his storytelling. The epilogue makes the point nicely. This is a complete biography, from birth to death and all the weirdness in between. If you are looking for a history of the Who, you may be disappointed, this is Keith's story. Pete, Roger and John are not the focal point. Personally, I have never been a big fan of the Who, but this was an interesting read. It helps paint a picture of time and place in rock music; Keith Richards bio fits nicely here too.

East Bay J says

I read Geoffrey Giuliano's Townshend biography, *Behind Blue Eyes*, which left me wanting so much more information than I got. Such is definitely not the case with Tony Fletcher's excellent, almost six hundred page Keith Moon bio, *Moon*. This is an interesting, often arresting and intensively informative look into the life of the wild, well known and much beloved drummer of The Who. For all of Giuliano's in depth, personal investigation of Townshend's life, it is Fletcher's book that is truly an insider's view into the life and times of a Who.

Fletcher's writing has hooks like a pop song. It pulls you in and really holds your attention. Not that a Keith Moon bio could ever really be boring. Hell, a chronological list of events in Moon's life would be high

entertainment. It's just that Fletcher does an outstanding job of telling a fascinating story in a fascinating way.

What really sets *Moon* apart is Fletcher's unflinching honesty and adherence to the truth. He reports facts that, for better or for worse, assassinate the concept of Moon as nothing more than a loveable clown who met an untimely end. Fletcher shamelessly exposes those journos and biographers who reported less than the truth; he did his homework and a fair amount of everyone else's. He is the kind of biographer who, in my humble opinion, earns the right to write biographies.

There isn't much more to say. *Moon* is awesome, just like the man himself. I will read a Who bio and soon but Fletcher's telling of the Keith Moon tale takes the cake. Essential for Who fans, drummers and loons alike.

Paul Smith says

Brilliant but also terribly sad, Keith Moon managed to waste his life but also not waste his life at the same time. Tony Fletcher's biography captures this perfectly, and portrays a warm, funny, uniquely talented and well loved man essentially committing suicide for the merriment of others over a fourteen year spell following the initial success of the Who.

Moon is so complex that trying to dissect his personality is a formidable task, and Fletcher wisely plays the part of the informed narrator rather than offer too many conclusions of his own. Moon's legendary caperings are genuinely hilarious, and he was almost as gifted a comic as he was a drummer. Indeed, the mid-70s years that he spent in America while the rest of the Who developed side projects to while away the time between stadium tours were his undoing: had he channeled his abundance of talents into acting or comedy instead of blotting everything out with drugs and brandy, he may well have found the happiness and confidence that, while reading, you can't help but notice all but eluded him throughout his life.

Interestingly, Fletcher punctures many of the most celebrated Moon legends: the Rolls Royces driven into swimming pools and hotel foyers being the most well known. He also examines why these fictitious events are still routinely quoted as factual - essentially, that everyone wanted to believe in Moon the Loon as much as Keith Moon himself did.

Obviously, this is a pretty bulletproof biography of the Who during their best years, too. There's the tantrums, wife beatings, and spite that form the flip side to Moon's up, up and away public persona. The violent death of his personal assistant Neil Boland - which affected Moon for the rest of life - is covered in depth, as is the harrowing experience of Kim, his first wife, whose leaving he never really came to terms with.

This is the second time I've read this book in the last few years. I've been listening to the Who a lot recently and wanted to know where Moon picked up his drumming from, how he developed and so forth. No one seems to know, least of all Moon himself, bashing away tunelessly one minute and producing the most exciting sound in pop the next. There are few people who you'd consider had a claim to have been touched by God, as there is no other explanation for their talents: Keith Moon is one of them.

The last couple of chapters are hard for a fan to read. They portray a man so beset with insecurities and addictions that he simply does not know who he is anymore. At 32, he looks 50. Worse than that, he looks 50 and heartbroken, because that is what he is at this point, knowing that his talents are being rapidly eroded by a lifestyle that he simply cannot give up.

I have always been a fan of Keith Moon, but by the end of this book I loved him. Poor old brilliant Keith. Some people are just so extraordinarily talented that the weight of their brilliance kills them - such was the case with pop's most mischievous son.

Carol Storm says

Classic rock biography of the Who's original drummer. Keith Moon was the one and only!

One of the sad things about getting older is that you outgrow your heroes. When I was a teenager the Who were my favorite band, hands down. Not because their music was the best, but because I could relate to the anger and confusion and power of their greatest songs. I especially loved the songs on Quadrophenia, like "I'm One" and "Dr. Jimmy." My hero in those days was Pete Townshend, the songwriter who took life seriously, not Keith Moon, the drummer who made everybody laugh. But still I admired Keith and I understood why it was so important to have someone fun like him in a band that was so dark and angry.

This book is a classic, and yet in a way I wish I hadn't read it. Because Tony Fletcher really exposes you to the dark side of the Moon. This is an author who does his homework and is unbelievably thorough. It's obvious that he loves Keith Moon, and that he interviewed every single person he was ever close to during his days of fame and madness. (Though I did feel that Keith's parents were curiously absent from the interviews and that the difficulties of his early childhood were quickly skimmed over instead of being explored in full.)

Tony Fletcher tells you everything. The only problem is, you find out too much.

I knew Keith Moon loved to run around and do crazy things, but I didn't know he got drunk enough to break his wife's nose, twice, "by mistake." I had no idea he was obsessively jealous, to the point of being a stalker. I had no idea how much rage was underneath all the constant clowning and carrying on and having fun. I didn't know that, and I really didn't want to know it. Reading this book was fun at first, but as things got darker and darker I really wished I could go back to being a teenager and not knowing all the things I didn't want to know.

So it turns out that in his own way, Keith Moon was just as self-destructive and angry as Jim Morrison of the Doors. But being a working class Britisher instead of an affluent American, he felt the need to camouflage this with a lot of clowning around. It's no fun for me to say this, but I think I'm a little too old to be messing around with heroes like this. But I still love the music of the Who and I think this is the best book ever written about them. And about Keith Moon!

Jordan says

This is definitely the quintessential chronicle of rock stardom, all rock fans and wonderful people should read it!

The Who's 2 surviving members didn't contribute, mostly citing that it would encourage people to replicate Keith's fatal mistakes (the late John Entwistle and their manager Bill Curbishley volunteered their recollections though). Although dictated by circumstance, I found this to make it a far better read, insofar that Fletcher could be more critical/realistic about The Who's myriad of apocryphal tales and juvenile fibs, he didn't have to include their reports of events. [Although it was quite gutting to learn that Wikipedia's

version of those reckless nights was not that credible!]

Fletcher's love of his subject is evident throughout, it really embellishes the content. From the start even, he discusses Keith's parents and his being a complete mutation from their humble ways, saying his parents were "teetotal (yes!)" almost vibrantly coming to life as if in conversation. Beautiful. In my humble opinion, it blew Philip Norman's flat tone, which invoked thoughts of Yoko, in "John Lennon: The Life" right out of the water.

I loved the emphasis on a fraternity of icons; mentions of people like Ringo Starr and Harry Nilsson and Alice Cooper painted the picture of the good times so well. Equally, the chronicle of Keith's formative years, including his time as drummer of The Beachcombers, was amusing and well-written.

Despite all of this fond appreciation, Keith's cautionary tale was not ignored by any means. The man's excesses and demons (literal as well as figurative) were laid bare. This roller coaster ride was epic, it was exhausting to finish over 500 pages of it. Yet I wanted more.

My final note is advice to parents and friends: DO NOT buy this as a gift, because your loved one will endlessly relay Keith Moon's life to you at all vaguely relevant opportunities!

Andy says

Young, wide-eyed rock boy makes millions and turns into a decadent lout, pillaging everything in his path. Sounds like the Steve Marriott bio, doesn't it? Well, it's also the Keith Moon book written by Tony Fletcher, a 500+ pages of endless legends and verified rumors of rock's most exciting drummer. It's a great book about an unforgettable figure in the history of music.
