



KISS and Make-up

Gene Simmons

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You wanted the truth, you got the truth—the hottest book in the world!

Fueled by an explosive mix of makeup, costumes, and attitude, KISS burst onto the music scene thirty years ago and has become a rock institution. The band has sold more than eighty million records, has broken every concert attendance record set by Elvis Presley and the Beatles, stands behind the Beatles alone in number of gold records from any group in history, and has spawned more than 2,500 licenses.

There would have been no KISS without Gene Simmons, the outrageous star whose superlong tongue, legendary sexual exploits, and demonic makeup have made him a rock icon. **KISS and Make-Up** is the wild, shocking, unbelievable story, from the man himself, about how an immigrant boy from Israel studied to be a rabbi, was saved by rock and roll, and became one of the most notorious rock stars the world has ever seen.

Before Gene Simmons there was Chaim Witz, a boy from Haifa, Israel, who had no inkling of the life that lay ahead of him. In vivid detail Gene recounts his childhood growing up in Haifa under the watchful eye of his beloved, strong-willed mother, a concentration camp survivor; his adolescent years attending a Jewish theological center for rabbinical studies in Brooklyn; his love of all things American, including comic books, superheroes, and cowboys; and his early fascination with girls and sex, which prompted him to start a rock band in school after he saw the Beatles on The Ed Sullivan Show.

KISS and Make-Up is not just the classic story of achieving the American dream through the eyes of an immigrant boy making good, but a juicy, rollicking rock and roll read that takes you along for the ride of your life with KISS, from the 1970s, when they were the biggest band in the world, through the '80s, when they took off their world-famous war paint, and into the '90s, when they came back bigger and badder than ever to become the number one touring band in the world.

In his own irreverent, unapologetic voice, Gene talks about the girls (4,600 of them and counting); his tight bond with KISS cofounder Paul Stanley; the struggles he and Paul had with Ace Frehley and Peter Criss and their departures from the group; the new band members and Eric Carr's untimely death; the enormous love and affection he has for the people who put him there in the first place—the KISS Army and the ever-loyal KISS fans around the world; his love life, including stories about his relationships with Cher and Diana Ross and with Shannon Tweed, Playmate of the Year, mother of his son and daughter, and his companion of eighteen years; and much more.

Full of dozens of photographs, many never-before-seen pictures from Gene's private collection, **KISS and Make-Up** is a surprising, intimate look at the man behind the mask. For the first time Gene reveals all the facets of his complex personality—son, rock star, actor, record producer, businessman, ladies' man, devoted father, and now author.

From the Hardcover edition.

KISS and Make-up Details

Date : Published December 11th 2001 by Crown (first published 2001)

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Author : Gene Simmons

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From Reader Review KISS and Make-up for online ebook

John Lyman says

I've been a Kiss fan for a long time and regret never having seen them live. I have a new respect for Gene Simmons, he is truly one of a kind. Great read, although watching him and Paul tolerate Ace and Peter's shenanigans over and over was hard to handle after a while.

Andy says

This is a review of the audio recording of "Kiss and Make-Up" read by Gene Simmons, the author. You haven't really experienced the absurdity of his autobiography until you've heard The Man himself reading his own thoughts, read with a drop-dead seriousness that would make Yul Brynner's ghost jealous. I once listened to all 6 CD's in my car on an endless trip to Las Vegas. My ears screamed in pain. I liked the rock gossip but whoever thought his childhood was fascinating (I was a teenage lifeguard in the Catskills) must be crazy. How anyone can make their first sexual experience sound dull is beyond me!

Final advice: If you buy the CD set start with disc 4. Toss out the first three discs.

Stephen says

Throughout the blood-stained, pyro-singed tomes of KISStory, the one unspoken rule has always been this: Gene Simmons is an asshole. Long villainized by former KISS members Peter Criss and Ace Frehley, Gene has been portrayed as everything from a money-grubbing, ego-driven madman to a clueless self-promoter to everything in between. And indeed, after reading Ace and Peter's autobios first, I was predetermined to hate everything Gene had to say. I was ready to simply roll my eyes at, what I assumed would be, pretentious drabble and simply think "Yeah, well, you're a jerk, Gene!" and call it a day. And yet, as I read the Words of the Demon, I slowly began to understand this man. I may not have always agreed with him, but I now feel I have a better understanding of the man born Chaim Witz.

We often hear stories of the American Dream, yet no one seems to be able to pinpoint on what exactly that is. To some, it's a quiet country church tucked away on a dirt road somewhere where the air is thick with mulberry and wildflower and the sweet chirps of birds sing for anyone who is listening. To others, it's sitting down at the dinner table and enjoying a hearty, home-cooked meal with the folks you love the most. And yet to others, it's none of the above. But to me, Gene Simmons IS the American Dream and I'm not afraid to back up that statement.

If there's one phrase I hear in political discussion that always makes me cringe, it's the term "boot straps." Usually spoken with smug satisfaction from egotistically bloated WASP-y talking heads on 24/7 cable news networks, I've felt a Pavlovian reflex to silently gag when the word is spoken. And yet, you'll find no better definition of "boot straps" than Gene Simmons. Here is a man who came from the tiniest of beginnings, living in abject poverty in a small village in newly formed Israel, to selling out Madison Square Garden in a blood-soaked orgy of sex and rock and roll. The whole thing seems like a story Paul Harvey would tell, before segwaying into an on-air promo for an electronic air purifier. ("And that boy....grew up to be....Gene Simmons.")

For most people, being the only child of a single Mom (Gene's Dad ditched him when was a young child), a Mom who was a Holocaust survivor and had the horror of watching her mother (Gene's grandmother) shipped off to the gas chambers, would be a Very Special Story that would wind up as a tear-jerking episode of Oprah or an episode of Dr. Oz that touts the health weight-loss benefits of cranberry-kale smoothie enemas. But Gene had other ideas and when he and his mother moved in with some relatives in pre-irony Williamsburg, he started a new life in a country in which he had only heard of via cowboy movies. He couldn't speak a word of English and from 7 am to 9:30 PM, he was enrolled in the Yeshiva Torah Vodaas (a Jewish educational school) in Brooklyn and had to learn to adapt to a completely different lifestyle.

Chaim decided to change his name to Gene and soon discovered comic books (Marvel's Black Bolt was the original inspiration for his Demon's alter-ego costume) and when he saw the Beatles play on TV, he knew he wanted to be in a rock band. Why? Not for the fame or the glory, but for the girls. 40+ years later, not much has changed.

Love or hate him, the man is honest about why he's in this. Not for fame or glory ("fame is fleeting", he says), but for the power. Hell, he quotes Machiavelli in the book's prologue! And I think that's why the man rubs people the wrong way. Most people start a rock band because they want the fame, the glory, the adulation of the fans. And whereas Gene doesn't take the KISS Army for granted, he makes it clear his goal has always been power. And with a resume that includes comic books, video games, television, movie, 100 Million albums sold and a devoted fan base, (I consider myself a General in the KISS Army, thank you very much), I'd say he's damn well accomplished that.

I also believe that's why Ace and Peter have had their problems with him, even to this day. To Ace and Peter, a band should be a partnership, an "all for one, one for all" type of deal. But Gene seems to view the band as "survival of the fittest" and when Ace and Peter struggled with drugs and booze during the 70's and 80's, that lowered their potential value in his eyes. It's a business to him and like any business, when the employees don't live up to company standards, they're free to find work elsewhere.

Now that's not to say I agree with Gene entirely, because Ace and Peter are founding members of KISS and the legacy of this band wouldn't be the same without these two. You can't write KISSStory without songs like 'Beth' or 'Hard Luck Woman' or 'Shock Me' or anything of that nature. But at the same time, there are no hidden strings with Gene. What you see is what you get. Simply give 100% and Gene is satisfied and with a long history of drugs and alcohol abuse (Ace even admits in his autobio that he has trouble remembering entire decades due to his history of rampant chemical misuse), I can see why Peter and Ace are no longer in the band.

I really expected to walk away with this book with a sense of loathing and contempt for Gene, but in the end, I find myself with a respect for the Demon. He IS the American Dream. Love him or hate him, the man has worked his ass off to get where he is, and, yeah, we may snicker at some of his failed business opportunities (KISS Meets the Phantom of the Park, anyone?), but at least he tried. He's not content to rest on his laurels, but is always constantly striving to push through boundaries and redefine himself and the band. And you can't get much more American than a constant sense of innovation and invention.

FINAL RATING: Four of Five GOD OF THUNDERS.

M says

My review will take the form of the FB posts I made while listening to the audiobook. FULL

DISCLOSURE: I am a big KISS fan.

You may hate Gene Simmons. It doesn't matter. He was my teenage hero and KISS has been one of my favorite bands since I was 12. I am listening to the audio version of the book read by Gene Simmons himself. It is nothing short of amazing to me. I am not telling you to admire him. I am not telling you to like him or even care. It's just a great story of a famous American immigrant. And his voice, as always, is incredibly soothing.

Here's the difference between the Italian Mother and the Jewish Mother. The Italian Mother says, "if you don't do what I tell you, I am going to kill you." The Jewish Mother says, "If you don't do what I tell you, I am going to kill myself." ~ Gene Simmons.

So far my takeaways on the Gene Simmons book (yeah, I know this is kind of a big deal because I never read) are the following:

- 1) Don't disappoint your mother.
- 2) See opportunity.
- 3) Work hard.
- 4) Don't promise what you can't deliver.
- 5) When your dad doesn't do his job, super heroes can be a sufficient stand in.
- 6) Maintain childlike optimism.
- 7) DIY until you can afford not to and then still DIY.

Further takeaways from the Gene Simmons autobio audiobook:

- 1) sexual assault is going to make being emotionally intimate difficult or impossible
- 2) paternal abandonment makes commitment hard or impossible
- 3) Cake is superior to fancy food.
- 4) Small talk about other people is boring
- 5) It's possible to be really successful and still only pay \$200/month in rent and not spend a bunch of cash on things. SAVE.

Final takeaway from the Gene Simmons book. I try to run my life/business/endeavors like Gene Simmons. That's my intention---to be professional, successful and respected. But at my heart I am Ace Frehley --self indulgent, paranoid, prone to extreme laziness, never quite living up to my potential. Cursed! ACK!

The book gets a little sentimental and preachy about not doing drugs at the end but hey, Gene can say whatever. People are still going to love it or hate it (and him).

Tyrus Wong says

Granted, whatever Gene says has his classic slant but it's absolutely true that he is a true pioneer and has seen and set some precedents in the music industry that will likely never be bested.

Second only to the Beatles in certified GOLD records, KISS is the Hottest Band in the World because both Gene and Paul Stanley preserved and protected it from going under and/or fading away like practically every other band of their era and they remain, something very special with today's amazing amount of crap out there in music land!

Luckily for us we now have Ace Frehley's account of some of the KISStoric events but even Ace admits, he was plastered during many of these times so his recollection isn't solid. I wish Paul and Peter would write

their stories...hint, hint! :)

Anything KISS....I love it...LOUD!?!?!

Angela(Angie) says

Great! I enjoyed this as an audiobook on a long plane ride. Gene Simmons had a very interesting childhood.

Michael says

I waited quite awhile to read this book and when I found it online for a dollar I figured what the hell. Maybe Gene had written an awesome tale drenched in blood and fire. This is the demon after all right?

The problem is that the book is quite boring. Gene isn't a great story teller and the book just feels like a bunch of stuff thrown together without any excitement. Hell, this guy had more ass than a toilet seat yet he just randomly throws liasons into various stories but it's all matter of fact.

There's nothing new here so if you're a fan of the band there's really nothing here we as Kiss fans haven't already heard a million times. Gene is a very boring man and as I continued to read I kept asking myself why. It wasn't entertaining at all. If he had made an effort to add something new or at least made an attempt to be less matter of fact the book would've been better.

The only spark of life we get from Gene is when he talks about his kids and that's near the end of the book. We get nothing about his relationship with Paul Stanley or anything new about the band. As I finished it I was dissapointed. It was like listening to The Elder. You have to check it out because it is a piece of Kisstory but after it's over you throw it on a shelf and forget about it.

Rod says

A somewhat sick blasphemous human being: but I kinda like him - he's brutally honest and is never a victim.

I've read the other 3 Kiss autobiographies. So much complaining and finger pointing. Oh well! Not with Gene, he's just busy getting things done and thinking about what's next. (secretly, he's always been my least favorite Kiss member... until now. Although Paul Stanley seems to be the musical talent).

We learn all about Gene and his ladies. Which also speaks of his longtime lady friend and daughter. sure, he's a perv - but he's more than honest about it, and he seems to get love and respect from his wife (?). Maybe it's all an act. Who knows? Who cares. Hopefully he's not a moral influence on anyone. But he is an interesting character.

Ilene says

This book surprised me. I was a KISS fan as a teen and have recently started watching his reality show, Gene

Simmons Family Jewels. On a whim I picked this up and have to say that it was a quick and enjoyable read. Fine literature, no but it was fun.

Told in a very stream of consciousness manner the book takes you from Gene's childhood as Chaim Witz from Haifa, Israel to the mega success of one of the most innovative rock bands ever. He spills the dirt on every aspect of his life whether it be his early days in Brooklyn attending a Hebrew Day school or the details of his many, many "conquests" on the road as a member of KISS. You are privy to a behind the scenes look at the workings both musical and business of a band. Not being of a music background it was interesting to see the development of the band and the problems that they faced along the way.

Gene doesn't hold back at all, he lets it all hang out. Fights with band members, hard decisions the band had to make and then later, his complete turnaround on the subject of commitment and fatherhood.

Again, not great literature but a fun look into a man who doesn't take himself or the world around him too seriously.

Beem Weeks says

This isn't your typical rock and roll memoir. Gene Simmons, born Chaim Witz in Haifa, Israel, tells all about sex and rock-n-roll, but leaves out any mention of drugs. That's because the Demon from KISS never engaged in the substance abuses that ruined the careers of fellow KISS members Ace Frehley and Peter Criss. Simmons had a vision, goals, ideas he meant to see through. It is, at times, the ramblings of an egomaniac. But there are lighter moments as well, like reading first hand what fatherhood has meant to this man who scarcely knew his own father. The fact that Simmons was at one time a school teacher should shock more than a few. If nothing else, this is an interesting look at a man about whom many have preconceived notions. If you're a fan of KISS, this one is for you. If you're a fan of rock-n-roll in general, there's a few other books in front of this one that should be read first. Not a bad read--not a great one, either.

Dave Schwensen says

Opinionated and to the point, Simmons doesn't pull punches in telling the story of his life and career as co-founder of the rock band KISS and the various members. For any diehard, KISS Army fans this book would be mandatory reading comparable to the old "Behind The Music" television series that focused on one band or artist. But for the less dedicated who are simply rock music fans, this is an inside look at someone who could be deemed "least likely to become a rock star" and eventually ended up in The Rock Hall.

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Keeping that scenario in mind, anyone that has achieved mega-success from scratch will have an interesting life story. Simmons certainly fits that category.

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Obviously this was written before The Rock Hall induction when rock stars were still larger than life characters even without KISS makeup and superhero costumes. It's a story that relives Simmons' youth and the days of glam, disco and big hair. In the politically correct era four plus decades removed from when KISS combined comic books and the circus with heavy guitars drums and volume, it reads as being a memoir from the distant past. He brags about being alcohol and drug free, but when it comes to sex... Well, times have changed and an addiction is still an addiction. But Simmons has no problem bringing it all back with a writing style that sometimes lacks a rags to riches "charm" (for lack of better term) found in many autobiographies and has replaced it with opinion, attitude and bravado.

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Of course those are almost mandatory rock star traits and Simmons makes it clear he has them. But I'll admit feeling more judgmental than when reading about other artists. I won't say it was all good or all bad and will leave that to the individual readers. Then again, I have a feeling that's what Simmons would expect – an opinion – which is what he has carried into his personal and professional life so far.

Justin says

I was a huge Kiss fan in high school, as I wrote at the start of Paul Stanley's book and again, it's awfully interesting for me to hear about the band and their bumpy road. Here's a different perspective than Paul's but surprisingly not all that different. I was glad to see that they were so similar, but here Gene is refreshingly self deprecating and quite open about his missteps and star-trip.

I loved this. It really helps me to listen to a master egoist talk about how he rose to fame and the fortune he always felt he deserved because I so need some of that. I was born without this organ called ego or self confidence, or at least it's quite numb. Gene helps awaken and swell my self-confidence, just by listening to him tell me all about life. I need this, I'm so easily beaten down, probably by myself. This turned out to be a motivational speaking session as well as a history of Kiss, I wasn't expecting that.

I'm pretty sure that I'll be listening to this again in the near future, it actually made me feel feel good. yeah, I'm surprised too.

Ensiform says

I guess I'm on some kind of Gene Simmons kick. In this autobiography, Gene tells of his youth in Israel, his interest in comics, music and girls, his band's rise to superstardom, the dissolution of the original line-up (according to the author, due to Ace and Peter's drug abuse and unprofessionalism), the come-back, and last but not least, of finding the love of his life Shannon Tweed and the birth of their two kids.

Simmons is far less self-aggrandizing, and more realistic, in this earlier book than the one I just read (Sex Money Kiss) — which is to say, he still comes off as a posturing egomaniac, but at least he knows it. I don't know exactly what I was looking for in reading this — there is, at its heart, the classic American Dream story: clueless immigrant comes to the land of opportunity, makes it big, which is worth something — but I am disappointed at how much Simmons glosses over regarding the rise, decline and rise of KISS. Motley Crue's *The Dirt: Confessions Of The World's Most Notorious Rock Band* this ain't: where are the sordid tales of life in the studio and on the road? Few and far between, unfortunately.

Chip'sBookBinge says

I purposely avoided this book for years. I really didn't have any desire to read this given that I already knew more about KISS than Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley combined. But out of sheer boredom and nothing else to read, I decided to give this one a shot at long last. My first impression when picking the book up and holding it in my hands was how small the book looked. For a band like KISS and it's author Gene Simmons, I would expect nothing less than 500 pages. But this looked like a book that I would finish in just a few days (3 days to be exact).

Upon reading the book, I quickly realized that I wasn't going to get anything new from the man himself.

Everything that you have ever heard about KISS and its humble beginnings, and you KISS fans know exactly what I'm talking about, you have seen and heard the stories told a million times over from Gene himself either in on-camera interviews or print from magazines and other books over the years.

I was hoping to get a more detailed account of most of the pivotal moments of the band's history. But that was not the case here. Most of the back history from his days as a child all the way to the Farewell Tour is pretty much glossed over, recounting stuff that most KISS fan's already know. And when the band isn't being talked about in the book, Gene is bragging about his sexual exploits. But the way he paints the picture of each woman he banged, it comes off as a bad cliché of a porn plot. After awhile it just becomes laughable every time he talks about yet another conquest. I'm not saying that none of this happened or that it didn't happen the way he describes. It's just left me laughing more than admiring his ability to get any woman he wants.

The only thing that I found fascinating within the pages of KISS And Make-up was the dirt he dishes on Ace Frehley and Peter Criss. These are the only things that came off as "new" to me that I had never heard about. Sure I have heard both Gene and Paul slam both Ace and Peter for years and years. But getting first hand accounts of what Ace and Peter did to incur the wrath of Gene was somewhat eye opening here. But after awhile, it just seemed a bit harsh and started to feel more and more like character assassination on them for the sake of just getting back at them. I'm not saying that none of what Gene described didn't happen. But there are two sides to every story and it's why I anxiously await the release of Ace's book to hear what he has to say on the matter.

All in all, I would recommend this book only to those that know nothing about KISS and need a quick crash course on the band. For everyone else, I would just get it from the library, which is what I did here.

Julie Barrett says

I picked this up at the library on a whim - great cover! Before this book, I could have only named two KISS songs. I don't own any of their albums; although I do own an awesome KISS lunchbox. Never saw Gene's reality show either. So I came to this book with hardly any preconceived notions about Gene Simmons or the band.

The book turned out to be a really interesting read. I had no idea he was Israeli or that his mom had been in the camps during the war & had most of her family killed by the Nazis. He & his mom immigrated to NYC when he was 9. And then he went to a yeshiva in Brooklyn! He was a good boy who did well in school. Gene explained that his decision to never drink or do drugs or smoke stemmed from not wanting to hurt his mother. She had been through so much and lost so much, who was he to break her heart by turning to drugs or drink?

I'm glad he never used, because it made his clear headed account of KISS much more interesting. I've read rock memoirs where the musician was such a complete & utter fuck up that it is hard to follow the story of the band. Looking at you, Keith Richards! And Ron Wood. And Vince Neil. And Belinda Carlisle. A memoir where the musician is so flummoxed by how the music industry works that they can't give any explanation or insight as to what was going on. It becomes a story about how "the suits" fucked him over and how he is a musician, man, not a square. And did I tell you about this celebrity I hung out with? Or the wacky high times I had destroying hotel rooms and blowing through money like water? Those memoirs are like reading a memoir written by a 12 year old with an IQ of 90.

Gene is nobody's fool. He got a BA in education before starting a band so he'd have something to fall back

on if music didn't work out for him. A back up plan! Wow. He taught 6th grade for a while & worked in various offices(including Vogue) while attempting to build a successful band.He actually read contracts before signing them. He looked at bills before he paid them. He spent his money on practical things like houses for his family rather than gold toilets and marble statues of himself. He got to know people in the industry who could teach him things & give him opportunities. In terms of the band, I found it fascinating to read about why things were done the way they were. About the costumes & stage design & tours and the marketing & merchandise.

I think the one aspect he did not fully deal with was his incredible promiscuity. At the beginning of the book he writes that he has had sex with 4,600 women. I immediately wondered how he came up with that number - he must be rounding to the nearest even number, right? And estimating? Later in the book he talks about how he would take a photo of a woman after he had sex with her. Sort of like keeping baseballs cards but with pics of naked women instead. So I am guessing that he counted the photos. He does mention that several people told him he needed to be in therapy to deal with his intimacy issues. And he does admit that since he did not get drunk or high, his chosen vice was one night stands. I started thinking he might be slightly Asperger-ish. He doesn't understand small talk, he didn't really have close friends, he never got close with women, he is smart etc.

I think this memoir is worth reading even if you aren't a KISS fan. Anyone interested in the music industry would find his book engrossing.
