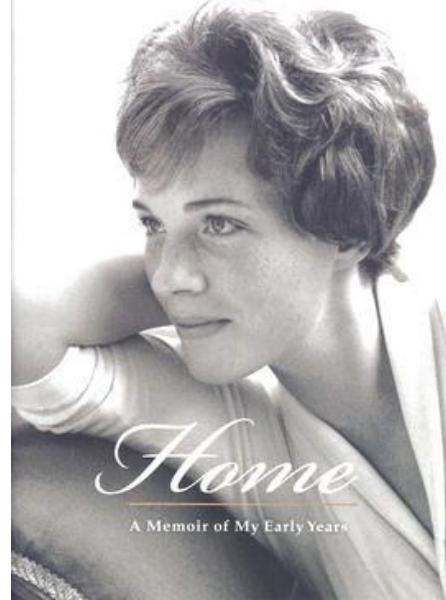


JULIE ANDREWS



Home: A Memoir of My Early Years

Julie Andrews Edwards

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Since her first appearance on screen in *Mary Poppins*, Julie Andrews has played a series of memorable roles that have endeared her to generations. But she has never told the story of her life before fame. Until now. In *Home: A Memoir of My Early Years*, Julie takes her readers on a warm, moving, and often humorous journey from a difficult upbringing in war-torn Britain to the brink of international stardom in America. Her memoir begins in 1935, when Julie was born to an aspiring vaudevillian mother and a teacher father, and takes readers to 1962, when Walt Disney himself saw her on Broadway and cast her as the world's most famous nanny. Along the way, she weathered the London Blitz of World War II; her parents' painful divorce; her mother's turbulent second marriage to Canadian tenor Ted Andrews, and a childhood spent on radio, in music halls, and giving concert performances all over England. Julie's professional career began at the age of twelve, and in 1948 she became the youngest solo performer ever to participate in a Royal Command Performance before the Queen. When only eighteen, she left home for the United States to make her Broadway debut in *The Boy Friend*, and thus began her meteoric rise to stardom. *Home* is filled with numerous anecdotes, including stories of performing in *My Fair Lady* with Rex Harrison on Broadway and in the West End, and in *Camelot* with Richard Burton on Broadway; her first marriage to famed set and costume designer Tony Walton, culminating with the birth of their daughter, Emma; and the call from Hollywood and what lay beyond. Julie Andrews' career has flourished over seven decades. From her legendary Broadway performances, to her roles in such iconic films as *The Sound of Music*, *Mary Poppins*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Hawaii*, *10*, and *The Princess Diaries*, to her award-winning television appearances, multiple album releases, concert tours, international humanitarian work, best-selling children's books, and championship of literacy, Julie's influence spans generations. Today, she lives with her husband of thirty-eight years, the acclaimed writer/director Blake Edwards; they have five children and seven grandchildren. Featuring over fifty personal photos, many never before seen, this is the personal memoir Julie Andrews' audiences have been waiting for.

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Mike (the Paladin) says

In 1967 I was 15 years old and I fell in love with Julie Andrews. However, due to the facts that there was an almost 17 year age difference and Ms. Andrews was unaware of the situation my love remained unrequited. Eventually I did recover from my broken heart and had to admit to myself that I was quite likely not the first 15 year old to fall in love with someone from (what was then called) the "Silver Screen" (though to be honest in the years since I suspect it has become more common for 15 year olds to be "overcome by lust" than to fall in love...just a flash thought).

Time has past and I no longer feel my heart palpitate (much) when I see or hear Ms. Andrews perform, but I have remained a fan of most of her work. I got the audio of this book mainly because it's read by the author herself and I thought the experience of hearing reminisce about her life not only in her own words but in her own voice would be a rewarding experience.

I found it so.

I would say that anyone who would like to read (or hear) about the era in question (Ms. Andrews Edwards was born in Oct. 1935 and begins her story when she was very young) as well as those of us who are simply fans of the author might find this a rewarding book.

The book begins (as noted above) in the writer's youth and carries us through her young adulthood. It ends around 1963 just as she is beginning to work on Mary Poppins having already (just) been on Broadway in 3 hits, one monster hit, My Fair Lady and a second also huge hit Camelot (her first foray on Broadway was The Boy Friend, it was also her American stage debut, and a hit in its own right). While I have always chaffed at the fact that she wasn't asked to play Eliza in the movie version of My Fair Lady, Ms. Andrews Edwards herself here is never anything but gracious about this...or for that matter anything. Giving us a clear portrait of her life both pleasant and unpleasant parts she reminds us (without really trying) that it is possible to be civil and of a generous spirit without being false. I find the conclusion inescapable that society in general has become meaner and more petty.

Ms. Edwards relates so much of her own life and her inner thoughts here that those who are her fans will probably enjoy the book simply for that. She met so many people who are now (and actually were then in some cases) legends, Moss Hart, Alan Jay Lerner, Frederick Loewe, Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein, Walt Disney and that's only a few. She also met and became fast friends with Carol Burnett, the two of them performing together over the years the relationship based in that friendship.

So, interested in the person or the period, you might like this one.

I enjoyed this book and give it a correspondingly high rating. One of the abiding disappointments in my life is that I never got to see Ms. Andrews as Guinevere in Camelot. I have always had trouble sympathizing with the character and the way Vanessa Redgrave played her in the movie only made it harder. I know that in the stage play the character's struggle is more apparent. But, as is the case with so many (read most) of the great stage plays of the past...it's gone, no record remains. Thus the insight here to this period of time, that play and all the others is wonderful and I'm glad it's here that the story not be lost. I truly hope Ms. Andrews Edwards decides to go on with her memoir and look forward to it if she chooses to do so.

Karol says

I'm not sure what I expected from this memoir. Ok, actually, I do. I expected to hear about how Miss Andrews emerged from a well-to-do family well-mannered and with expensive training to become the success that she has been. Why did I think this? Because when I was young, Julie Andrews was one of the two people who epitomized "class" in my mind. And I suppose quite naturally, I thought that came from a very good upbringing and high social status.

I've been proven wrong. I was surprised to find out that this was far from the case. As a matter of fact, Julie Andrews Edwards had to overcome a very challenging home situation and many obstacles along the way.

I found her memoir to be of historical significance as she discussed what it was like to live through the German bombing of England in WWII. And I found her insights on broadway and the "art" of theatre most eye-opening. Most of what was written in this memoir of her early years occurred before I knew who Julie Andrews was. That awareness came when, as very young girl, my parents took me to see the movie "Mary Poppins". The memoir ends at the point when work on this film is just beginning.

While Julie Andrews Edwards writes about the good and bad aspects of her early life, she treats most everyone with a large dose of grace. She describes her feelings and how the actions of others made an impact on her, whether for good or otherwise. Yet she stops short of becoming accusatory and ill-tempered in her descriptions of those who harmed her.

I am hoping that another volume of memoirs will be forthcoming because I would so love to read about her life during the times I can remember. But it surely was wonderful to read about the years that shaped this outstanding actress and singer including her training and early stage performances.

And by the way - the other person who epitomized "class" in my younger years was Sidney Poitier. I was surprised when I read his book "The Measure of a Man" that he did not come from privileged circumstances either. Very far from it! "Class" is a wonderful quality that I now understand has nothing to do with social status. It is perhaps grown best by strong, consistent, deeply hopeful people who never give up - and conquer all obstacles without giving in to bitterness and despair.

Lori says

I would give this book a 4.5. I have always been a fan of Julie Andrews. This memoir is from her birth to mid twenties. She covers her sometimes difficult childhood and her career as a singer on radio and stage from age 12. Her work on stage starring in plays. I especially liked it when she talked about being in My Fair Lady. She ends the book with her on a plane off to film the movie Mary Poppins. I liked that I got to learn more about this talented lady. I just wish she could have added some more years of her life especially if she wrote about working on Mary Poppins and The Sound of Music. It has been ten years since she wrote this book. I really hope she decides to write about some more years of her life and career.

Heidi says

An avid admirer of the best voice on Broadway (and in movie musicals), I couldn't wait to crack open this book after being on the wait list for weeks. However, after reading this pleasant memoir, I closed the book with many more questions about what makes Julie Andrews tick than I had before I finished the first chapter. The strength in this easy read are the few times that Andrews delivers wonderful "Broadway in the making" tales of working opposite such greats as Rex Harrison and Richard Burton.

A wonderfully down-to-earth Andrews doesn't seem to realize that she was a great at all... there are plenty of stories of stage fright, embarrassment and gaffes. She seems blissfully unaware of her own stage presence (which leapt off the screen and hit me hard as a child watching *The Sound of Music* for the first time in 1970). Maybe that's why this book never goes too deep into what was her driving force, other than the weight of keeping her somewhat unstable family afloat.

Moss Hart described her great English strength of character in a great quote that probably sums Andrews up best... Despite her childhood angst, teen awkwardness and the lack of a stable home environment, Andrews just kept looking forward. However, I would have loved a little less "stiff upper lip" and a little more depth of emotion-- but there's no bitterness or anger here-- just wisps of sadness and the occasional moment of regret and then more marching onward.

Andrews collected an amazing array of friends along the way. Here's one life that made me wish I could have been a fly on the wall and filled in some of the emotional blanks.

Kathryn says

Four stars: because I'm a life-long fan of Julie Andrews I "really liked" reading through the details of her early life.

Andrews' tawdry upbringing (or rather, her being raised by an oft-tawdry couple, her "Mum" and step-dad Ted Andrews) is given just enough description to paint a picture but it stops short of drowning the reader in goo. And one cannot help but think that perhaps Andrews developed that slightly reserved, wholesome, and modest persona -- clearly manifest here -- because of this background.

Those who are not die-hard Andrews fans may not be as engrossed with the book as I was since it sometimes boils down to a series of chronological anecdotes regarding famous names, personal friends, and relatives of Andrews as she morphed into a star. However, the following readers will most likely enjoy it very much:

1) Dedicated Julie Andrews fans, naturally.

2) Entertainment history aficionados.

Numerous chapters detail Andrews' experience with British vaudeville in the 1940's-1950's and later, her involvement with the late '50's-early '60's mega-Broadway hits, *My Fair Lady* and *Camelot*.

3) WWII history buffs.

Alright, three chapters only, but they relate little Julie's reaction to the Blitz and I found them fascinating.

4) Vocalists.

Yes, Andrews was gifted but she also worked very hard on developing then keeping her instrument in shape during her strenuous Broadway schedules; her dedication and discipline to her craft is inspiring.

I saw the great Andrews in person once and here are my impressions:

<http://www.yourhitparade.blogspot.com...>

Detailed notes from the Q&A: <http://www.yourhitparade.blogspot.com...>

Vanessa says

A spoonful of Julie helps the medicine go down! An entertaining and interesting read.

Tracy says

I got this book from the library because I thought it would be fun to learn more about Julie Andrews. I wondered how she got started, etc. And her persona is so graceful, calm and assured - I wanted to see behind it a bit.

The problem is...you don't really. There was just no emotion in it and I just don't feel like I got a lot of insight into her. She did share quite a bit about her difficult childhood. But she shared it with exactly the same tone and pacing and matter-of-factness that she used when relaying an amusing anecdote from her showbiz past (most of which weren't that amusing and also felt flat.) It was like she was in a courtroom, asked to account for everything that happened between two particular time periods and so she did, to the best of her recollection. There was no insight, no connections made, beyond the very obvious. Perhaps that is too much to be expected.

The book ended rather abruptly, after the birth of her first daughter. I assume that further books will be written to carry on the story. She makes several allusions throughout the book about getting ahead of herself, and what comes later, and she never gets to those events in this book. I'm not sure I'm really intrigued enough to read further.

Robin says

I absolutely loved this book, I believe more so because I listened to Julie Andrews reading it herself. Such a fascinating background from a wonderful actress/singer!

Callie Rose Tyler says

This book covers a relatively short period of Julie Andrews' life, basically her childhood through her late/mid twenties with a pretty lengthily look at her ancestry (I think she starts with her maternal great-grandmother!) That means no dancing on the rooftops of London...

No frolicking through the hills of Austria...

There was a nice bit towards the end where she talks about meeting Walt Disney and him offering her the part of Mary Poppins. She talks about spending the day at the races with Walt and touring Disneyland with him which was very interesting but felt like a tease. I really hope that she writes another book that covers her film career.

As much as I love Julie Andrews and think that she is just amazing, and as much as I did enjoy this book...it felt like it would never freakin end! There was just way too many details! First there are all the names that she is constantly dropping none of which have any meaning to the average reader. We don't need to know the entire cast of the pantomime you did when you were 12. Then there are the most mundane details that are interesting to literally no one. I don't need to know the order in which you do dishes...cutlery and saucepan last. I don't need to know how your housekeeper cleaned the floor...swept out a foot from the walls, dusted, and then vacuumed. Fascinating!

The majority of this book focused on stage/theater life which was interesting but felt very repetitive. That being said Julie Andrews has a type of charm that is irresistible, a voice that you never tire of listening to, and she provided several interesting anecdotes. I especially enjoyed hearing about her growing up during WWII and the London Blitz, the live airing of Cinderella, her friendship with Carol Burnett, and co-starring with Richard Burton in Camelot.

Despite sound unpleasant happenings and the fact that her mother was a total and complete bitch, Julie Andrews never complains or speaks ill of anyone.

Unlike many of the other memoirs and biographies that I have read Julie Andrews turned out to be exactly who I always thought she was, a true lady in every sense of the word.

Overall, this was enjoyable, but long and very detailed. I would recommend it for theater fans and Broadway buffs over those who are casual fans of her films. Listening to the audio book is a must as it is narrated by the woman herself peppered with extremely brief (hardly worth mentioning) musical soundbites.

Maria says

She may not be able to write but she's endearing. I found this in a bargain bin and feel it was worth it, and it's especially interesting if you happen to be familiar with the musicals -- this early-years memoir focuses on her

lonely, difficult childhood, an eye-opener for me, and the two plays *My Fair Lady* and *Camelot*, which I could still star in right now if I'd (ahem) had the talent and we were to knock off 30-40 yrs. For those who care as I do, the memoir's valuable because she discusses the two plays in great depth.

Jeanette says

I really knew nothing about Julie Andrews before reading this book. I'd seen her musicals and a few of her movies and that was about it.

In this memoir Andrews tells the story of her early life going from a young vaudeville star in England to a Broadway celebrity.

For the most part, I thought it was an interesting book. While the book was written with the grace and dignity that Andrews has come to be known for I found it interesting to learn that she might not be as squeaky clean as the image she puts out there would have you believe. This was not your typical tawdry celebrity memoir filled with garish and explicit details but Andrews did not necessarily have the life I would have expected. Her growing up years were not easy and frankly I thought her mother was pretty horrendous. I was impressed by how complimentary and kind Andrews was in her descriptions of her mother. After all that happened she could have easily put her mother through the wringer but she didn't take that road.

I would recommend this book to fans of Julie Andrews or fans of the theater in general. There was a lot of history and lots of name dropping of people in the theater that I am completely unfamiliar with. She really lost my interest at times because of this.

The book also ended very abruptly. There were so many unfinished stories that I have to assume she is writing a second memoir. This one ends just after the birth of her daughter and as Andrews is leaving for California to start filming *Mary Poppins*. I was left wondering what happened to her family and what happened to her first husband? Throughout the book she talks about and refers to her second husband but when this book ended she was still happily married to her first husband so what happened? I can only hope my assumption about another memoir is true so that some of my questions can be answered.

Ashley Daviau says

I had high hopes for this book going into it but sadly it didn't live up to my expectations. From start to finish it completely failed to capture my interest and quite honestly, it's a bloody miracle that I managed to finish it. I found it extremely dry and dull and I was battling the urge to call it quits the whole way through!

Wendy says

Lovely, so very interesting! I had no idea she had such a rough life--she's so calm and classy that you'd never guess she ever went through anything tough, or at least never went through it with anything but aplomb. It was kind of shocking to realize she was once a little girl who cried over boys and agonized over her appearance and how her peers thought of her. I mean, intellectually I know that everyone was a child once, but it didn't really sink in until I was actually reading it. I only had some vague awareness of the fact.

It was worse, though, when she talked about sex! I mean she's *Julie Andrews*! I grew up with her as the nanny, the matron, in *Mary Poppins* and *The Sound of Music* and, much later as it didn't come out until I was in high school, *The Princess Diaries*. She's not supposed to have sex! It's like hearing your mom or your

grandmother talk about sex--totally mind-boggling and more than a little icky!

But, my 'oh my gosh, this person I look up to is actually a human being' issues aside, I really, really enjoyed this book. My only real qualm is that it ended too soon! She needs to come out with another memoir!

Linda Klager says

This was a very well written book. I cannot imagine being a child and being exposed to World War II in England. It must have been very difficult to have heard the bombs exploding and having to rush to safety - Oh, My!

Julie loved her Dad. I loved the relationship that she had with him. Julie loved "home". What a good title for this book because she was always looking forward to going home when she was away from her roots.

Julie met so many people in her lifetime. This book is only about her early years. I would like to read her next book about the later years of her life. I am so thankful that Julie's daughter helped her write her book. Thank you, ladies!

Natalie says

3.5 stars

(*** not sure what percentage we stopped listening at because the audio book version on GoodReads only shows it has 13 pages.)

This was a great book. It was so nice to hear about Julie Andrews' childhood from her own lips instead of it being written by someone else who did a lot of the research. It was enlightening to hear her take on what she remembers of her experiences with World War II because she was still pretty young at the time.
