

PICADOR

Reading Group Gold

Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool

Peter Turner

ABOUT THE BOOK

SOON TO BE A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE

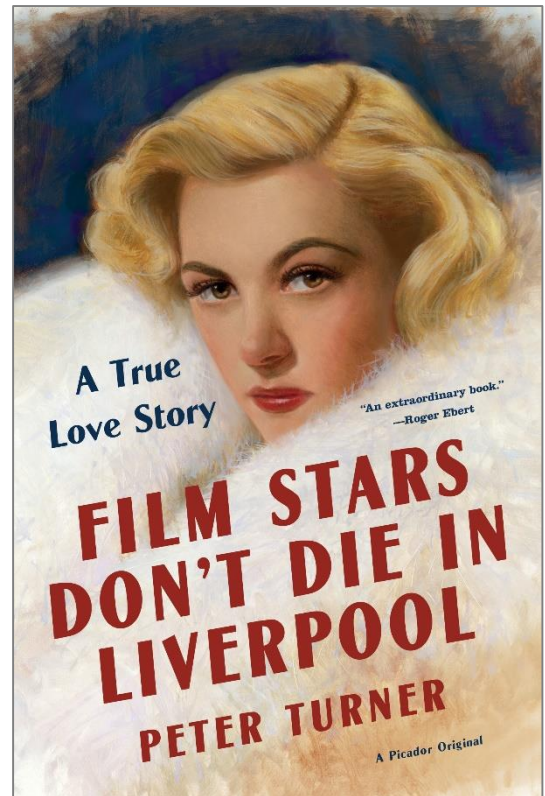
The Golden Age of Hollywood, a young British actor, a love affair, and a tragedy, *Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool* is the touching story of the last days of a Hollywood icon.

On September 29, 1981, Peter Turner received a phone call that would change his life. His former lover, Hollywood actress Gloria Grahame, had collapsed in a Lancaster hotel and was refusing medical attention. He took her into his chaotic and often eccentric family's home in Liverpool to see her through her last days. Though their affair had ended years before, it was to him that she turned in her final hour of need.

Taking place over the course of three weeks in Turner's larger-than-life working-class family home, *Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool* is an affectionate, moving, and wryly humorous memoir of friendship, love, and stardom.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Just several pages into the book, Peter receives an urgent call to come see Gloria in Lancaster. Shortly after this scene, Peter tells of a previous incident in which Gloria claimed she could not walk but really only suffered from a splinter. What does this tell us about Gloria?
2. Why does Gloria insist that Peter take her to Liverpool?
3. What do you make of Gloria's complicated and unconventional relationships, one of which included a marriage to her former stepson?
4. What does Gloria mean when she says that being an actress "means something" in England? How does this compare to being a Hollywood actress?



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5. Throughout the memoir, Peter inserts humorous scenes, such as the incident at the health food store. What purpose do these scenes have in the memoir? Were there other moments that you found particularly funny?
6. How would characterize Gloria and Peter's relationship?
7. While Peter is by Gloria's side one night, she suddenly brings up the time when she took an entire tube of vitamin C tablets because Peter had kissed her when he had a cold. Gloria claims it ruined her stomach. Peter, of course, takes this to heart and begins to blame himself for Gloria's cancer. Why would Gloria say something like this to Peter? Do you think this was unfair of her?
8. The memoir is full of interesting characters. Who was your favorite?
9. One point of conflict in the memoir is the fact that Peter is wary of troubling Gloria's family when his own, in the words of Jessie, are "all going demented." As you were reading, where did your sympathy lie? Do you think Jessie is being too hard on Peter?
10. Gloria asks for her makeup bag when she is very ill. What do you think makeup represents for Gloria and why is it so important to her?
11. Despite their differences, Gloria and Peter's mum were very fond of one another and had a good relationship. Why do you think they got along so well?
12. Once Gloria's family finally arrives in Liverpool, they insist on taking her back to America. Do you think this is the right decision? Do you think Gloria truly wanted to leave?
13. In one of Gloria's letters to Peter she writes, "Both Sartre and Camus wrote, that in this life, when we die, it's only love that is important." What insight into Gloria's character does this quote give us and what does this tell us about Peter and Gloria's relationship?

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