Marilyn Monroe: The Way Of Life

“Imperfection is beauty, madness is genius and it's better to be absolutely ridiculous than absolutely boring” (Monroe) Monroe's life was anything but absolutely boring. She was beautiful, and she was considered one of the prettiest of her time. Between her hollywood high life, and her movies that grossed over two-hundred million dollars she was certainly an American idol. But many aspects of her life were not nearly as glamorous as her movie star appearance. Between her failed marriages and her hard childhood, life was not what it was portrayed to be. Marilyn Monroe was an American icon because of her rough early life, tumultuous marriages, and her lasting legacy.

Monroe had a rough childhood, she was in no way the blonde bombshell she was known as later in her life. Monroe was born at the Los Angeles General Hospital on June 1st, 1926. Monroe's birth name was Norma Jean Mortenson. Her mother was named Gladys Mortensen. Her mother was both financially and mentally unable to take care of her. No one knows who Monroe's father is. A popular theory was that Charles Stanley Gifford. “ When she was a teenager, she tried to speak with him by telephone. She identified herself as 'Norma Jeane, Gladys's daughter,' but the party on the other end of the line simply hung up.’’(Doll)

Just a little bit after the birth on Monroe her mother changed her surname to Baker to match the last name of her first husband. Monroe had two step-siblings, Bernice and Hermitt. They came from Gladys first marriage. Her first husband left a note that said, “I have taken the children, and you will never see them again” (Doll). This left Gladys with depression and mental issues.

Mental issues were not rare in Monroe's family, both her grandparents ended their lives in mental institution. Monroe's grandmother was named Della, she was important to Monroe's life. She took Monroe to church and even got her baptised. “When Norma Jeane was two years old, Della suffered a complete nervous breakdown, which led to her commitment to the Metropolitan State Hospital at Norwalk in Los Angeles County. A month later, Della died of a heart attack during a seizure”(Doll). Gladys brother, Marion Monroe, was a paranoid schizophrenic.

Monroe was then given to foster parents. Her foster parents were named Ida and Wayne Bolender. They we devoted Christians and it was important to them that monroe lived that way too. They were not the very well off. Wayne was a postal carrier, he was very lucky because he did not lose his job during the depression. She stayed with them until she was seven.

In 1933, Baker tried to get her life together by buying a house and taking Monroe from her foster family to live with her. Monroe's life was much more relaxed their, one of her favorite things to do was to attend movies. Gladys bought a white bungalow. But their reunion was far to short. Not to long after they moved in Gladys had a mental crisis. On the morning in January of 1935 Gladys lost it and called an ambulance. Gladys even went to the point to chasing her close friend Grace around with a kitchen knife. Needless to say Gladys was taken to a mental institution. Marilyn became a ward of the state.

Monroe was given to Grace the best friend of Gladys. But about two years after she had begun staying with Grace she moved and left Monroe. Monroe went into an orphanage. While she was

their her mother came to visit her almost every week. She remembered her mother as the lady with “red hair” but not as her mother. Multiple people were interested in adopting Monroe, but Gladys refused to sign the papers because she did not want to give Monroe up.

Monroe claimed that she had to wash 300 cups, plates, forks, spoons, and knifes. Monroe was accused of often exaggerating how bad her time was in the orphanage. The foster homes were no better. Many people during the depression would foster a child, just so they could have the income from the state. Due to this fact many of the foster parents were not suit to be parents. Because of this fact many children landed in house’s with parents who did not really want them, Marilyn was one of these children.

While she was in foster care she claimed to be raped. This could be false due to the fact her story changed many times. “ In recounting the story in later interviews, Marilyn variously gave her age at the time of the incident as 6, 8, 9, or at some time in adolescence. According to Marilyn, a family friend or boarder in the foster home in which she lived at the time molested -- or raped -- her in his room” (Doll). Even though Monroe was often accused of exaggerating, we all can agree that her life was far from the Hollywood high life.

Marilyn Monroe was married and all three times ended with divorce, pain, anxiety, and depression. Her first marriage was to James Dougherty. They got married in 1942. She married him at the young age of 16, he was 21 when they married. James was a marine merchant by trade. “Dougherty was sent on an overseas assignment in 1944 and returned to Los Angeles two years later to find a bright-eyed Monroe embarking on a modelling career with hopes of becoming an actress”(Bitette). Monroe was focused on herself and her future. She divorced James in 1946, because he was not apart of her future.

Monroe’s second and most public marriage was to Joe DiMaggio. Their marriage, in the beginning, looked like the ultimate marriage. He was a tall, athletic, and handsome baseball hero and she was a glamorous, beautiful movie star. It looked like a hollywood marriage meant to be. They meet on in 1952. They were set up on a blind date together. When they met Monroe was not as big of a star as she was later in her life. She a supporting role in movies such as “Money Business” and a lead role in the movie “Don't Bother To Knock”. They immediately fell for each other and the press was all over them for. They really wanted to keep things undercover and not make it public. Of course, the American public was all over the relationship. They prefer to stay at home or spend time in DiMaggio’s restaurant. On January 14 1954, they were married in San Francisco City Hall.