

Why I'll Miss Carrie Fisher

Carrie Fisher once said her life could be summed up in a single sentence: "If my life weren't funny, it would just be true."

At the heart of this sentence lies the reason I will miss Carrie Fisher: She was honest.

The love of truth is a rare thing. T.S. Eliot and others have observed that humans can suffer very little reality. We rationalize. We lie to ourselves. We bury the pain.

Fisher herself did this for a long time, she admitted, but over time she found more effective ways to approach a reality that was far from the idyllic life many might expect.

The daughter of screen legend Debbie Reynolds and singer Eddie Fisher, the iconic Star Wars actress grew up in the glitz and glamour of Hollywood, [the aristocracy of America](#). They had it all. A mansion. Three swimming pools. Fame. Fortune. Fisher's parents were even Best Man and Matron of Honor to fellow screen star Liz Taylor and husband Mike Todd (for whom Fisher's brother is named).

It sounds beautiful. The Hollywood Dream. But Fisher would tell you the Hollywood reality is more like a nightmare. In fact, she did in a 2010 documentary produced by HBO: [Wishful Drinking](#). In the documentary, Fisher is candid about the dysfunction she was raised in: "Blue-blooded white trash."

After Mike Todd died tragically in a plane crash in 1958, Fisher's father rushed to Liz Taylor's side to be with his widowed friend. "Ultimately he consoled her with his penis," Fisher tells the audience. Eddie Fisher and Liz Taylor were married the following year, the fourth of seven marriages for Taylor and second of five marriages for Eddie Fisher.

Reynolds married Harry Karl in 1959, ex husband of Marie “the Body” McDonald, who was married nine times (twice to Karl) before she got addicted to pain killers and took her own life 1965 at age 42. McDonald’s children were taken in by Fisher’s family. (The “crazy one,” Fisher said, was placed in her room.)

Fisher’s mother again remarried in 1984, this time to Richard Hamlett, whom Fisher calls “a sociopath” who blew all of his own money, then her mother’s. Ms. Reynolds liked him enough, however, to encourage her daughter to procreate with her husband, according to Fisher, saying her mother believed the child would have “the most beautiful eyes.”

“And it was not brought up once or twice like a normal mother would,” Fisher said to laughter.

And that’s the amazing part. Fisher doesn’t sound bitter about the dysfunction she grew up in. She’s simply being honest about it and neutralizing it with comedy.

Fisher’s father might have went bankrupt four times, she said, but he was a very charming man. “There was a reason he was

able to score all that unbelievable pussy,” said Fisher.

Fisher was able to find humor in the dysfunction of her life and the lives that touched her. But one senses a scorn for the falseness and superficiality of Hollywood, and its love of the material world: youth, wealth, beauty. One also senses a well of pain in Fisher, a pervasive sorrow and deep insecurity that lurked beneath the laughs.

At one point she recounts her own birth. Hospital staff are fawning over her anesthetized movie star mother and her famous father, who had just fainted.

“When I arrived I was virtually unattended,” Fisher said. “And I’ve been trying to make up for that ever since.”

No bitterness. Just honesty. Those are rare qualities (and not just in Hollywood). That’s why I’ll miss Carrie Fisher.

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