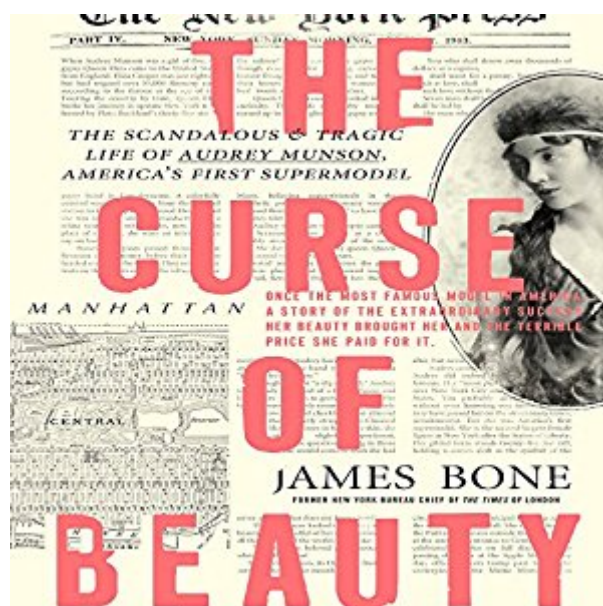


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# The Curse Of Beauty: The Scandalous & Tragic Life Of Audrey Munson, America's First Supermodel



## Synopsis

The tumultuous and heartbreaking life of a world-famous model whose riveting story of beauty, fame, passion, murder, and madness in the Gilded Age captivated a nation. As America was stepping into the modern era, one great beauty became the artist's model of choice. Her perfect form became the emblem of the Gilded Age and appears on the greatest monuments of New York and the nation. Supermodel, actress, icon - her beauty paved the way for a life of glamour, passion, and ultimately tragedy. She dated the millionaires of the fashionable Newport colony and became the first American movie star ever to appear naked in a film, but her promising film career collapsed; her doctor fell in love with her and killed his own wife; and on her fortieth birthday her mother committed her to an insane asylum. She remained there until her death in 1996 at the age of 104 and is now buried in an unmarked grave. Her name is Audrey Munson. Many listeners will recognize Audrey Munson and have walked by her in the street without even knowing her name. She stands atop New York's Municipal Building. She sits as Miss Manhattan and Miss Brooklyn outside the Brooklyn Museum and is immortalized on the Manhattan Bridge, the Frick Mansion, the New York Public Library, and the Pulitzer Fountain outside the Plaza Hotel. In gold, bronze, and stone, she still graces bridges, skyscrapers, fountains, churches, monuments, and public buildings across the nation, from Jacksonville to San Francisco, from Atlanta to the Wisconsin state capitol. From James Bone, the former New York bureau chief of The Times of London, this brilliantly reported investigative biography reveals for the first time the riveting truth of the forgotten life of an iconic beauty.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Curse of Beauty" is, perhaps, the best written and best researched biography I have ever read. It's so amazing that Audrey Munson has not been much better remembered. Mr. Bone's book makes Ms Munson a person that comes to life in the pages of this book. You'll never find a better example of a memory living through literature. How compelling is this book ? I found it compelling enough to actually seek out, and visit her final resting place. I found it exactly as it is depicted in the book. She was a most amazing celebrity of her era. Through a brief conversation with a local historian, I learned that a better ( and corrected ) grave marker and road-side historical marker are due to be dedicated on June 8, 2016. That would mark the anniversary her 125th birthday. Personally, I will return on that date to pay respects. This book is truly a powerful testimony to a celebrated but tortured soul

An unknown story of one of America's first supermodels. The book had me craving more about this woman who was immortalized in stone, granite, etc. in cities such as New York and Cleveland. It is a short read (took me about a week) but I am ready to read it again. It was one of those books you can't put down because you want more. Sad story about rags to riches to rags. What is amazing that even now her own family doesn't want to acknowledge her. If you enjoy anything about the 1920's (i.e. William Desmond Taylor, Fatty Arbuckle, Norma Desmond) then this is the book for you!

I was drawn to this book by an article in the New Yorker magazine. History, early 20th century history fascinates me, so I bought it. Glad I did. It was a bit of a slow start, but once into Audrey Munson's story, I could not stop reading! Well researched and well written, I recommend it highly.

This book was very well researched and generally well written. It gave the fascinating and most-forgotten life story of Audrey Munson, America's first "super model." My criticism of the book is that Bone would frequently get lost in his own research. He would give the exhaustive background of several of the tertiary characters and then seemingly forget how they were connected to Audrey. For example, he gives the background of Hermann Oelrichs and the Newport set, but then he never actually mentions what relationship Audrey had with Oelrichs and how that relationship "ended badly." After pages of background, we never actually received the information as it related to Audrey. There were similar deer trails in the story concerning other artists and filmmakers that made

the read sometimes frustrating. However, what remained as it related to Audrey was interesting and made a very good read.

I just finished reading this meticulously researched book. The author painstakingly sought all the available information on this once world-famous artist's model and contacted all surviving family. He takes us on his research journey, which was not an easy ride, and does not whitewash the evidence he uncovers. One of the wonderful surprises is that the dust jacket unfolds to reveal a well-documented map of existing statues for which Audrey Munson posed in the New York area. The bibliography is also very instructive. In fact the author wants his book to be a starting point for further research on Munson and thus provides the reader with information on all the primary sources available. I found the writing engaging and the topic fascinating.

Excellent glimpse into the life of America's first supermodel. If we could only go back to these exciting years when American was about optimism, open to arts and architecture, and the initial flickering of silent cinema: Audrey was the first and a true trailblazer. Monsieur Bone relates her story with lively details of a bygone time, riveting characters brought to life with Mr. Bone's wit, brio, and insight. Superb and I could not put the book down. Gorgeous and unforgettable.

I was very excited to see a biography devoted to someone who was so famous in her lifetime and yet has practically vanished into obscurity today. Unfortunately, the subject herself was a disappointment. I'm not sure if the author unintentionally did her a disservice in the way she's presented, or if it's because many of the details of her personal life are simply not known, but I didn't leave this book feeling that there was much about Audrey Munson to command a biography; she comes across as vapid, shallow and frankly just not that interesting. There were so many opportunities here to explore in terms of the way she was treated socially by mainstream society in this era; the ways in which she was potentially exploited; or even her own views on taking off her clothes for money. Perhaps her views and voice no longer exist. We're left with a skin-deep portrait of someone who clearly saw herself as neoclassical perfection, and took her clothes off not for art or to make a statement, but to collect a paycheck -- to tragic results when the only thing she seems to have had going for her, a face and a body, goes away. There are so many other fascinating American women who did amazing things and forged ahead in their own moments in history on merits other than self-obsession. I felt sad and sorry for her, but felt no real empathy. It doesn't lessen the aesthetic legacy of the beautiful face that can still be seen in so many works of art, but it

doesn't say much for the lady herself. There could be a reason why she has faded into obscurity, no matter how sad that is.

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