



The Grand Surprise: The Journals of Leo Lerman

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A remarkable life and a remarkable voice emerge from the journals, letters, and memoirs of Leo Lerman: writer, critic, editor at Condé Nast, and man about town at the center of New York's artistic and social circles from the 1940s until his death in 1994.

Lerman's contributions to the world of the arts were large and varied: he wrote on theater, dance, music, art, books, and movies for publications as diverse as *Mademoiselle* and *The New York Times*. He was features editor at *Vogue* and editor in chief of *Vanity Fair*. He launched careers and trends, exposing the American public to new talents, fashions, and ideas.

He was a legendary party host as well, counting Marlene Dietrich, Maria Callas, and Truman Capote among his intimates, and celebrities like Cary Grant, Jackie Onassis, Isak Dinesen, and Margot Fonteyn as part of his larger circle. But his personal accounts and correspondence reveal him also as having an unusually rich and complex private life, mourning the cultivated émigré world of 1930s and 1940s New York City, reflecting on being Jewish and an openly homosexual man, and intimately evoking his two most important lifelong relationships.

From a man whose literary icon was Marcel Proust comes an unparalleled social and emotional history. With eloquence, insight, and wit, he filled his journals and letters with acute assessments, gossip, and priceless anecdotes while inimitably recording both our larger cultural history and his own moving private story.

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