

Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir Study Guide

Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir by Cyndi Lauper

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapter 1 - Chapter 9.....	4
Chapter 10 - Afterword.....	8
Characters.....	11
Objects/Places.....	13
Themes.....	15
Style.....	17
Quotes.....	18
Topics for Discussion.....	20

Plot Summary

"Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir" is the autobiography of the life of Cyndi Lauper, written by Cyndi Lauper.

Cyndi Lauper begins her autobiography by detailing her early life, beginning with the fact that she left home at the age of seventeen to avoid her stepfather, a pedophile. A native of Queens, New York, Cyndi goes to live with her sister, Elen, in Stream Valley. It is through her mother and father that Cyndi develops a flair for, and love of music: from her mother's records and beautiful singing voice, to her father's love of Hawaiian music. Initially, Cyndi wants to be a painter, and takes odd jobs to support herself. All the while, she begins singing and making music, and eventually falls in with a few bands, among them, the Flyers. When she decides she wants to make music, she co-founds Blue Angel, which enjoys modest popularity before it breaks up.

From there, Cyndi is brought onto Epic Records through contacts, and produces her first solo album with hits such as "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and "Time After Time". Her popularity takes off, and a slew of records, tours, and performances follow. As her popularity rises, she begins speaking out on women's rights, as well as gay rights, and becomes an outspoken supporter of the LGBT community, as well as pressing for AIDS awareness. She breaks up with her manager and boyfriend, David Wolff, and falls in love with an actor, David Thornton, whom she marries. They have a son, Declyn. Cyndy concludes her books with her most recent projects, the Memphis Blues tour, CD, and DVD, and her visit to earthquake and tsunami-ravaged Japan.



Chapter 1 - Chapter 9

Chapter 1 - Chapter 9 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 1 - Cyndi Lauper leaves home in Ozone Park, Queens, at the age of seventeen, bringing along the book "Grapefruit" by Yoko Ono. She leaves behind her mother, a waitress, and her younger brother. Her other sister, Elen, has already moved out. Lauper leaves home because her stepfather is physically abusive, and a pedophile. This prompts Elen to tell Cyndi to come to her apartment, which she does. Cyndi's real father is a shipping clerk at a watch factory, and is musically inclined. He lives at the Washington Hotel in downtown Manhattan. Cyndi's mother is in love with music and art, and Cyndi learns how to play guitar from a book by Mel Bay. Cyndi grows up listening to the Supremes, the Beatles, Broadway albums, and classical music. Through high school, Cyndi listens to Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, the Family Tops, and others. As he grows, Cyndi also learns that her mother and her aunt had missed opportunities in life, because her grandparents were so traditional: her mother was unable to accept a scholarship in Manhattan, fearing she would become a whore, and her Aunt Grace was unable to model. This later becomes inspiration for the song, "Girls Just Want to Have Fun", which Cyndi dedicates to all the people whose dreams never came true.

Chapter 2 - Cyndi attends the High School of Fashion Industries in Manhattan. Cyndi understands that her education means she will become more well-rounded and cultured, and not a whore the way her grandparents thought Cyndi's mother might become in Manhattan. While there, Cyndi admits to not being good with time management. At school, Cyndi does everything from take sewing class to art class. She find great joy in painting. Unfortunately, Cyndi flunks out, and enters Richmond Hill High School instead. There, many of Cyndi's friends are gay, and Cyndi tries to be gay, but shortly realizes she is straight. Meanwhile, Cyndi continues failing. Meanwhile, a friend named Susan Monteleone, a guitar player, introduces Cyndi to the women's rights movement. Susan and Cyndi form a duet called Spring Harvest, but it doesn't work out. Cyndi realizes she might just be good at music. At Elen's apartment, Cyndi reads the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien, and gets a receptionist job at Simon & Schuster Publishing. At the same time, Cyndi also begins experimenting with fashion. While her employers let her dress the way she wants, they will not concede to letting her drink beer on the job. In the winter of 1970, a small dog follows Cyndi back to the apartment, which they name Sparkle. Cyndi and Elen often play guitar together, and their roommate, Wha, shows them how how to play better.

At the same time, the women's rights movement is in full swing. Cyndi, Elen and Wha move out of their apartment in Valley Stream and move to an apartment in West Hempstead, but it is not a nice place. There are many cockroaches, and the neighbors are drug dealers. Money is scarce, and Cyndi manages to get a job at an IHOP, and later in a shoe store at a mall. There is barely enough money for food. At the same time, Cyndi keeps hoping she'll find a boyfriend, rather than just someone interested in sex. Eventually, Cyndi moves into a place with a guy named Phil, whom she has been



seeing. Cyndi also sings, realizing it makes her feel better. She and Phil are fighting, and she realizes they don't love each other. She begins spending time with her mentor and art teacher, Bob Barrell, who runs an art store. Bob teaches her about history, politics, and life. With Bob's encouragement, Cyndi decides to go to Canada at the age of eighteen with her dog, Sparkle, to do a tree study. She brings along Henry David Thoreau's book, "Walden". But at customs, Cyndi doesn't have enough money to enter the country, but when she cries, the customs agents let her in. Cyndi stays for two weeks, and then hitches a ride on a bus back to New York.

Chapter 3 - Back in New York, Cyndi's mother files for a divorce and moves away from Cyndi's stepfather. Phil offers to get back together, and Cyndi refuses. She panhandles with Sparkle instead. Cyndi next travels to Vermont, where she dreams of Jesus standing in a field, and Sparkle jumping happily around. In Burlington, Cyndi goes on welfare, and seeks employment. She works as a mother's helper on a farm, and during a birthday party, Sparkle is run over by kids driving a tractor. Cyndi, who is Catholic, dreams of the Blessed Mother, and the dog lives. She quits the job and moves into an apartment, and is very lonely. There, Cyndi gets hepatitis from a boyfriend, and has to go to the hospital. She is later released.

At the time, Cyndi dreams of being an artist, and gets a scholarship to Johnson State College in Vermont, through the PROVE program. At college, Cyndi works as a nude model. She also gets a gig deejaying for the school's radio station, in order to play more women. Cyndi also continues playing music. After a little more than a year at college, she flunks out. She returns to New York in 1972, and people throw rocks at her because of her wild clothing. At a party at Bob Barrell's, Cyndi sings and plays guitars, and an art student named Fran Kissinger tells her she has a professional voice, and she should sing professionally. Cyndi auditions for a cover band with Fran as her chaperone. Fran agrees to let her live with her where Cyndi works as a nanny for Fran's two kids. The band even gets a gig opening for Wayne Country. They play gigs out on Long Island as well. Often, Cyndi trips and falls while singing because of the high heels she wears. At a party with the band, the founder of the band, his girlfriend, and his girlfriend's sister, hold Cyndi down while the founder uses a dildo on her. She is fired from the band soon after that. But Cyndi says God took care of her: years later, when she has made it, she runs into the guy again, who appears to be working in a deli.

Chapter 4 - Cyndi ends up falling in love with Richie, Elen's ex-boyfriend. He is a college-educated, talented musician. They talk about love, life, and music. Eventually, Cyndi becomes pregnant by Richie, but also gets sick. Cyndi ends up getting an abortion, which she doesn't want, in order to take medicine to cure her - medicine that otherwise might have deformed the baby. Cyndi is now 23. She gets a job as a go-go dancer in Manhattan. She dances long enough to get some band equipment, but then gives it up. At one point, Cyndi loses her voice, to discover one of her vocal chords has collapsed. Cyndi goes to study with a vocal coach named Katie Agresta, who helps her to sing in soprano. While singing with the band Flyer, Cyndi meets a songwriter named John Turi, Cyndi soon after quits Flyer and forms the band Blue Angel with John. Blue Angel manages to secure a record deal with Polydor in 1980, then a major label. At the same time, Cyndi is working for McCrory's, a five-and-ten store, and meets Doris, a



woman who runs the jewelry concession stand in the front, which personalizes clothing and t-shirts. Cyndi works by day, and records and does gigs by night.

When she moves into the city, Cyndi becomes friends with a guy named Carl, and his boyfriend, Gregory. Carl is an old friend of Elen's, and Elen asks him to keep an eye on Cyndi. Things begin picking up for Blue Angel, and they even go to play in Puerto Rico. But rifts appear. Management wants Cyndi to sing more ballads, but Cyndi just wants to rock out, not liking to stand still for too long. The first album is released in Europe, and is received well. But back in the United States, the band is not received well, for the band is considered too retro.

Chapter 5 - Cyndi continues to resist calls for ballads because she wants her first hit to be up tempo. Only in Europe is Blue Angel having any success, and the success is barely there. Money becomes an issue again, and Cyndi takes work as a salesgirl at clothing store Screaming Mimi's. 1981 comes to an end, and at a Christmas party, Cyndi meets Dave Wolff from the band, the Sick F*cks. They begin dating. Cyndi takes on work as a maid, and later at a family-friendly dance place. Cyndi begins performing there. Dave arranges for Cyndi to meet Lennie Petze, head of Portrait Records at Epic. Cyndi signs with Epic in November, 1982. She then meets with Rick Chertoff, and in a collaboration with the Hooters, Cyndi records the song "She's So Unusual" in the spring of 1983.

Chapter 6 - Work on the album "She's So Unusual" occurs in Pennsylvania and New York. Although Cyndi wants to write her own music, she is encourage to work with what is already written and ready to go -and then she will be allowed to write her own music later on. One of the songs that Cyndi makes her own is the song "Girls Just Want to Have Fun". Other songs include "She Bop" and "Money Changes Everything". Cyndi recounts how often, she didn't know how a song would come out until she tried it, because so much of the song is like assembling pieces of a puzzle. Soon, "Time After Time" comes into being. Everything about the album - including the cover - incorporates something from Cyndi's life. Cyndi even designs the cover of the album. The album is released in October 1983.

Chapter 7 - Edd Griles, who has previously done a Blue Angel video, is called in to do a video for "Girls Just Want to Have Fun". Edd is open to Cyndi's ideas and concepts. Cyndi brings her Mom in to be an actress in the video, with the idea that mothers and daughters can be friends. Indeed, Cyndi gets as many family and friends as she can to be in the video. After filming wraps, Cyndi is allowed to help edit. Through working with Captain Lou of the professional wrestling circuit doing cross-promotionals, which is when the record truly breaks. Cyndi then gets on David Letterman. At the same time, "Time After Time" becomes the second single, and music video is prepared for it. Unlike the crazy style of "Girls Just Want to Have Fun", the video for "Time After Time" is sincere and honest. The song goes to the top of the charts in June, 1984.

Chapter 8 - Cyndi graces the cover of Rolling Stone in May, 1984, and is named one of the women of the year in Ms. magazine. Cyndi ends up having four top-five hits in a row from "She's So Unusual". Cyndi is not ready for fame. Her style is replicated



everywhere, especially by fans. Children, their mothers, and their grandmothers would turn up at Cyndi's shows. Cyndi speaks out as a feminist as well, including to say that every woman should have a choice when it comes to having a baby out of wedlock. Cyndi realizes she is a role model for girls. After shows, Cyndi is a homebody with Dave, though she wishes she could go out more often. As time goes on, the audiences keep getting larger and larger. Cyndi also made sure that she was never seen as a sex symbol, but rather as a symbol of expression. Simultaneously, the record companies are pushing the hype that there is a rivalry between Cyndi and Madonna, but Cyndi wants no part of it. Cyndi wins the award for Favorite Pop/Rock Female Artist at the American Music Awards. She is later nominated for seven Grammy awards, and later performs on the very first MTV Video Music Awards, where she wins for Best Female Video.

Meanwhile, AIDS is ravaging New York City. Gregory contracts the disease, and Cyndi commits herself to fighting it, and to speaking out on behalf of the LGBT community.

Chapter 9 - In 1985, Dave Wolff finds out that Steven Spielberg will be doing the movie "The Goonies". Steven Spielberg wants Cyndi to do the soundtrack. She records the song "Good Enough", but the producers insist the song title be changed to "The Goonies R Good Enough", and the song only has an underground following because of it. In the summer of 1985, Cyndi discovers she has endometriosis. The operation goes successfully, but it takes Cyndi a long time to recover. She begins working on her second album in the fall of 1985, and Gregory dies. She records "True Colors" to help her cope with everything going on. The video is about accepting who one is, and loving oneself.



Chapter 10 - Afterword

Chapter 10 - Afterword Summary and Analysis

Chapter 10 - A film called "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" is produced with Sarah Jessica Parker, about girls who enter a dance competition. Cyndi hates it, and then goes to act in a movie called "Vibes". Jeff Goldblum and Peter Falk clash with Cyndi, and she describes the experience as not fun. While filming, Cyndi gets her cat, Nick, and contracts endometriosis again. Cyndi writes a song called "Unconditional Love" for the movie. The film is panned by critics, and many say Cyndi Lauper's career will never recover. The "True Colors" album comes out, and only sells three million copies, which makes the studio executives unhappy. Cyndi goes all over the country to different radio stations to do special events for them. Cyndi continues to clash with the executives at Epic, and the general manager, Don Dempsey, a big supporter of Cyndi, is fired. While the record company is trying to control Cyndi, so too, is Dave. With new management at Epic, everyone is trying to remake Cyndi's image due to the supposed lack of success of "True Colors". Dave and Cyndi talk about marriage, but Dave doesn't want to get married until they are doing better.

Chapter 11 - Cyndi wants a warm family life, with a picket fence and a piano in the living room that everyone will sing around on holidays. Cyndi also wants children- but Dave isn't so keen on it. The inevitable but slow break-up with Dave begins. Management changes up, and Cyndi consents to doing a more commercial album -"A Night to Remember." In the early eighties, Cyndi explains, music was mostly artist-generated, but in the late eighties, everything became corporate-run. Dave Wolff, despite the breakup, continues to be Cyndi's manager, and they go on tour in Russia. On this trip, Cyndi knows she is at the pinnacle of her career, and wonders if she should commit suicide. She decides not to. Back in the States, she moves into the Mayflower Hotel in New York, and continues to be very lonely. She works hard on tour, and only makes one penny an album that is sold in Europe. Although she has a million dollars from those sales, half of it goes to taxes. "A Night to Remember" comes out in 1989, and "I Drove All Night" becomes huge all over the world. Cyndi continues to tour all over the world. In Australia, Cyndi wonders if she should stay in Australia to make her next record. Ultimately, Cyndi decides to return to New York.

Dave and Cyndi almost reconcile around Christmas and make love -but while they are making love, their car, full of Christmas presents, is broken into and robbed. Cyndi goes on to act in the movie "Off and Running", the last film that Orion Pictures makes before filing for bankruptcy in 1991. On the set, Cyndi is introduced to David Thornton.

Chapter 12 - On the set of "Off and Running", Cyndi and David Thornton get along well. She decides to go after David, and has dinner with him, and then goes for a walk on the beach. She realizes he is sensitive and poetic, like her, and he kisses her, and then they make love. They begin dating, and move in together, and get married in 1991. They get married at a Quaker church, the Friends Meetinghouse. For the ceremony, Cyndi goes



with traditional dress and garb. After their marriage, they go to Cape Cod for a month. Cyndi begins work on the album that will become "Hat Full of Stars", which takes aim at social and political issues. The album ultimately flops.

Chapter 13 - Marrying David means that Cyndi gets the home life she's always wanted, but it is frequently interrupted by her music career. On the U.S. leg of the tour for "Hat Full of Stars", Cyndi attempts to make a documentary film about people and their ideas, but the film never gets off the ground. Cyndi soon learns that if she wants to be political, she has to be covert, and couch things in terms of relationships. Cyndi also gets a recurring spot on the sitcom "Mad About You" with Paul Reiser. She helps compile a list of her greatest hits, "Twelve Deadly Cyns... And Then Some." She performs "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" at the Gay Games. Cyndi later returns to her house in Connecticut, where she starts writing again with her neighbor, Jan Pulsford.

They work on the album "Sisters of Avalon" which is recorded at an old mansion in Tuxedo Park, New York. Cyndi has come to hate recording studios, and with modern technology, they aren't necessary anymore. Cyndi begins trying to get pregnant once more, and while in Europe on a promotion, she discovers she is pregnant. It is March, 1997. In November, Cyndi gives birth to her son, Declyn Wallace Lauper Thornton. While pregnant, Cyndi begins to correspond with people by e-mail. Cyndi goes on tour with Tina Turner and Cher, but is wearing herself thin. She becomes physically exhausted, Cyndi at last comes to her final record with Epic, which is a Christmas album. Cyndi enjoys being a mom, and brings along her son on tour and wherever she can.

Chapter 14 - "Shine" is intended to be a dance record, but Cyndi realizes the music is too constrictive, and not creative enough. Cyndi Lauper goes on to perform on a float in the Gay Pride parade in 2001 in New York City. She even releases an indie LP through her website, which sells 68,000 copies. Cyndi then goes on to perform in Romania, at Vlad Dracula's castle in Transylvania. As Cyndi tours, she loves meeting people, but it makes her homesick.

For Cyndi's next album, "At Last", she reinterprets older songs, such as "Walk on By" and "La Vie en Rose", rearranging them and singing about all of the women she knew growing up in that album. Cyndi's father is diagnosed with skin cancer, and it spreads to his lymph nodes. Cyndi cannot afford a top-of-the-line hotel for her father, so she puts him up in a hospice. He passes away, and is cremated. As he is cremated, Cyndi plays Hawaiian music, the kind her father loved.

Chapter 15 - Cyndi has always been fearful for the harsh treatment many in the gay community receive. Elen, Cyndi's sister, is gay. Elen proves to be a tremendous inspiration for Cyndi, and an influence on her. Cyndi continues to fight against AIDS, making appearances, performing, and creating t-shirts that encourage safe sex. Cyndi also writes music to appeal for toleration. She works with Cher and other celebrities, and considers a "True Colors" tour, since the song is so popular with the gay community. In 2005, Cyndi Lauper is given the Human Rights Campaign's National



Equality Award. She continues pressing for hate-crime laws, and speaking out against hate. Through her work, Cyndi meets and befriends Rosie O'Donnell.

The True Colors tour is revived in 2008. Madonna also speaks out for the community, as does Lady Gaga. On the tour, Cyndi instructs people how to vote, but not who to vote for. Cyndi Lauper In terms of politics, Cyndi is left of center, and spares no expense to harangue Republicans. In 2010. Cyndi unveils the Give a Damn Campaign, to educate straight people about advancing LGBT equality. Cyndi also helps to build the True Colors Residence in Harlem, for homeless LGBT kids. Cyndi's next goal in the LGBT community is to eliminate the LGBT homeless percentages.

Chapter 16 - Cyndi continues work on her dance album, "Bring Ya to the Brink". In it, she includes songs that let the gay community know she will always be there for them. Many of the songs on the album will be collaborations with people from other countries, such as England and Sweden. In Stockholm, Cyndi and her manager, Lisa, stay in a boutique hotel in the historic district, rather than at the local Sheraton. Cyndi finishes the vocals in a studio over her garage. She later agrees to do *Celebrity Apprentice*, in order to raise money for the True Colors Fund. She manages to raise \$45,000 for it.

Chapter 17 - Cyndi has been wanting to do a blues album for six years. She gets together with producer Scott Bomar, who gathers together original members of the Hi Records rhythm section. Cyndi then travels to Memphis to work on the album, but she is contending with a polyp that has formed in her throat. Working with a speech therapist, Barbara Lowenfels, and Katie Agresta, Cyndi recovers her voice. Cyndi, for the blues album, wants to take the old glamor of blues and make it modern, something timeless. The writing goes incredibly well. The reach out to get artists like B.B. King and Louis Jordan to record for the album as well. Keith Richards participates as well. The album comes out in 2010, and tops the blues charts. It is followed up with a live DVD of *Memphis Blues*, which Cyndi herself helps to edit. She also begins filming a reality television series with Mark Burnett Productions.

Chapter 18 - In March 2011, on the Memphis Blues tour in Japan, an earthquake hits, and Cyndi is very impressed with the way the Japanese people handle themselves. Despite the tragedy, Cyndi decides to stay on and play for the people in the country, to lift them up. She returns one year later for the anniversary of the tsunami.

Afterword - Cyndi talks about life moving in a circle. She is now at Simon and Schuster, writing her life story, when at seventeen, she had a job there as a receptionist. Cyndi encourages the readers to believe in themselves, that they will succeed. If they do succeed, she tells them to share their story.



Characters

Cyndi Lauper

Cyndi Lauper is the writer and narrator of her autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir". When the book begins, Cyndi is seventeen, and runs away from home to escape her pedophile stepfather. At an early age, she develops an appreciation for music, from her mother, who is a wonderful singer, and her real father, who is musically inclined. Cyndi is pretty, intelligent, and independent, and wants to become a painter. She travels around, taking art classes, going to Vermont, and later tries to get through college, but drops out after a little more than a year. She later goes on to work a series of odd jobs, as well as working in regular jobs, such as working as a waitress and a receptionist. All the while, she begins singing for different bands, ultimately co-founding the band Blue Angel. Following Blue Angel's demise, she is signed to Epic Records, and produces her first solo album, which includes the songs, "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and "Time After Time".

As Cyndi Lauper grows in fame, she dates her manager, David Wolff, and they later break up, because he isn't ready for a family the way Cyndi is. She later marries actor David Thornton, and has a child with him named Declyn. As Cyndi continues writing music, she begins speaking out more and more on social and political issues, such as women's rights and LGBT rights. She creates the True Colors tour, and the True Colors Fund, to advance gay rights. At the end of the book, Cyndi visits Japan on the one year anniversary of the earthquakes and tsunami of March 2011.

Butch Lauper

Butch Lauper is the younger brother of Cyndi Lauper. He appears in her music videos, including the video, "Girls Just Want to Have Fun".

Elen Lauper

Elen Lauper is the older sister of Cyndi Lauper. She is a lesbian, and part of Cyndi's first band. She is a good friend, and a good sister, offering Cyndi a place to live when Cyndi runs away from home. She advances LGBT advocacy with Cyndi.

John Turi

John Turi is a songwriter whom Cyndi Lauper early on in her career. He is a co-founder of the band Blue Angel.



Dave Wolff

Dave Wolff is the manager and boyfriend of Cyndi Lauper for much of her career. He appears in many of her music videos, and they ultimately break up, though he continues to be her manager for a while.

David Thornton

David Thornton is an actor who appears in the movie "Off and Running", alongside Cyndi Lauper. They fall in love, get married, and have their son, Declyn.

Fred Lauper

Fred Lauper is the father of Cyndi Lauper, Elen Lauper, and Butch Lauper, and the first husband of Catrine. Fred is quiet and distant, elusive, and has a love of music, especially Hawaiian music, which he passes on to his daughter. He is ultimately diagnosed with, and dies of cancer.

Catrine Lauper

Catrine Lauper is the mother of Cyndi, Elen, and Butch Lauper. She is kind, a wonderful singer, and a good mother who encourages her children to succeed. She remarries and later divorces. Catrine appears in several of her daughter's music videos.

Madonna

Madonna is a fellow female singer and performer. She and Cyndi Lauper are given to be in a feud for publicity concocted by their record labels. Madonna later joins Cyndi in speaking out for gay rights.

Katie Agresta

Katie Agresta is a voice trainer who works with Cyndi Lauper throughout her career.



Objects/Places

New York, New York

New York, New York is a city whose boroughs include Queens, and this is where Cyndi Lauper sometimes lives and spends much of her time.

Ozone Park, Queens

Ozone Park, Queens, is part of New York, and is the birthplace of Cyndi Lauper. It is where she is raised and then runs away from when she is seventeen.

Vermont

Vermont is visited several times by Cyndi Lauper with her dog, Sparkles. It is where she attempts to attend college, and later drops out.

Connecticut

Connecticut is where Cyndi Lauper lives following her marriage, and where she raises her family.

Japan

Japan is where Cyndi Lauper conducts numerous tours, and it is a country hit by earthquakes and tsunamis in March, 2011. Cyndi Lauper plays a concert there to lift up the spirits of the Japanese, and returns for the one year anniversary.

High School of Fashion Industries

The High School of Fashion Industries is located in Manhattan, New York. It is where Cyndi Lauper attends high school, and later drops out of.

Memphis, Tennessee

Memphis, Tennessee, is where Cyndi Lauper travels to record her album, "Memphis Blues".



Screaming Mimi's

Screaming Mimi's is a clothing shop located in New York. It is where Cyndi Lauper does most of her shopping, as well as works for a few years.

PA System

A PA system is what Cyndi Lauper takes up go-go-dancing in order to purchase. It is a set of musical equipment she needs for her band.

Vintage Clothing

Vintage clothing is what is worn, mixed, and matched by Cyndi Lauper, giving her a unique style and flair. She purchases most of her clothing from Screaming Mimi's.



Themes

Family

Family is a major theme in Cyndi Lauper's autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir". Family - which includes togetherness, support, and unconditional love between people of various ages who may or may not be related by blood - has a strong impact on Cyndi's life, in both positive and negative ways.

Negatively, Cyndi is raised by her mother and a stepfather who is a physically abusive man and pedophile. Because of this, she doesn't feel safe in her own house, and therefore leaves home at seventeen to live with her sister, Elen. Cyndi's real father is quiet and elusive, and isn't around very much, which also hurts Cyndi, who dreams of a better and closer relationship with him.

Positively, family affects Cyndi's life in meaningful ways. When Cyndi leaves home, it is her sister, Elen, who invites Cyndi to come and live with her while she gets on her feet. And it is Cyndi's mother and real father who help introduce her to music. Cyndi's father is musically gifted, and loves Hawaiian music. Cyndi's mother is a wonderful singer, who listens to classic and contemporary records with Cyndi. It is also Cyndi's mother who determines that her children will not have ordinary lives, that they can succeed if they try. Cyndi takes this lesson to heart. When Cyndi does make it big, she includes her family in her music videos, and in her career wherever she can.

Independence

Independence is a major and overarching theme in Cyndi Lauper's autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir". Independence involves Cyndi's ability to get by on her own, and her ability to stand up for herself, even in the face of overwhelming pressure.

In terms of Cyndi's ability to get by on her own, Cyndi leaves home at age seventeen - a very brave, and very independent thing to do. She works her way along, taking numerous jobs and odd jobs, such as a waitress at IHOP and a receptionist at Simon and Schuster Publishing. She takes trips to Vermont and Canada to discover who she is, and when she has a dream, she pursues it. At first, this dream consists of art, and later, of music. She goes through many trials and tribulations, including band break-ups and bad publicity, but she perseveres to become successful in music.

Cyndi's ability to stand up for herself is especially important in the music industry. From the start, she has a unique fashion style and wants to be involved in writing and producing her own music, something which some producers and executives have a problem with, though they ultimately relent. She also defends her musical decisions in terms of production, the genre, and a lot of promotional things. Sometimes she wins these battles, and sometimes she loses -but she usually sticks to her guns and



succeeds. In a male-dominated industry, this is a very courageous and groundbreaking thing to do.

Civil Rights

Civil rights is a major and dominant theme in Cyndi Lauper's autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir". Civil rights includes the rights and the advancement of freedoms of people within a state or country. Cyndi Lauper focuses on advancing the rights of women and the LGBT community.

Growing up in the 1960s and 1970s, Cyndi Lauper's heroes include her mother, grandmother, and Aunt Gracie. They are all wonderful women, but their lives have been changed by male dominance and cultural misconceptions. Cyndi's mother is refused the ability to go to school in Manhattan on a scholarship on the assumption that Manhattan is a racy area, and she will become a slut. Aunt Gracie, who has the ability to become a model, is denied the chance as well. The freedom to make choices has been taken away by their very traditional parents. As such, as she becomes famous, Cyndi Lauper proclaims herself to be a feminist, and speaks out on behalf of women's rights. She also stands up for herself in the male-dominated music industry, pressing to do things her way rather than the way of others.

Growing up with a gay sister, and among gay friends, Cyndi is very sensitive to the AIDS crisis and the gay community. As with her speaking out on women's issues, Cyndi also begins speaking out on behalf of the LGBT community, raising AIDS awareness, and pressing for marriage rights for gays. Indeed, Cyndi is so moved by gay advocacy that she begins the True Colors Tour and the True Colors Fund in order to support and advocate for the LGBT community.

Style

Perspective

Cyndi Lauper writes her autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir", in the first-person omniscient perspective. This is done for at least three primary reasons. First is the fact that her book is an autobiography, and there is no one better to tell the story of her life than herself. Second is the fact that, in telling the story of her life, the first person-omniscient allows a story to be related to another in an informal, relaxed manner, and the omniscience of hindsight allows events to be contextualized for the reader. The third reason is that the events of the book are deeply moving, and the first-person perspective allows both author and reader to connect on a very personal and intimate level, making the events of the book that much more emotionally-compelling.

Tone

Cyndi Lauper writes her autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir", in a tone that is straightforward and honest. She employs simple language that is poetic in nature, giving the book a relaxed, comfortable feel, and taken together with the first-person omniscient perspective, the book gains an informal and candid nature. As is true of her independent nature, the writing is no-holds barred, giving the informal and relaxed feel a sort of edge that dissociates it from melodramatic autobiographies. Because it is her life, her tone is unfailingly partisan to herself, though she does acknowledge her own mistakes and shortcomings.

Structure

Cyndi Lauper structures her autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir", in nineteen consecutive chapters, with the nineteenth chapter being an afterword. Two sections of photographs depicting Cyndi's life accompany the text, in the middle of the book, and at the end of the book. The chapters are arranged in linear, chronological format, allowing the reader to progress through Cyndi's life, from the time she leaves home at seventeen to her visit to Japan in March, 2012. The straightforward chapter structure allows the reader to effortlessly move between the chapters of her life.

Quotes

I watched birds fly over it when autumn came. I never tired of it. There was something I found profoundly beautiful about that industrial landscape.

-Chapter 1, p. 4

Whenever I sang, it always felt like the division between the outside world and the inside world teetered on a very fine line. I was aware of what it felt like to look at life from the inside out and the outside in.

-Chapter 2, p. 37

My life is so funny sometimes. Everyone has these moments, but if you're not aware, you miss them. And we were so tired then nursing the babies and trying to go back to work. I always tell my son to pay attention, or he'll miss something spectacular.

-Chapter 6, p. 113

But fame is nothing like I could have imagined. It seemed to turn everything backward from what I remembered my life to be. I always lived on the outside, and it was so bizarre when I became famous because all of a sudden I was on the inside.

-Chapter 8, p. 140

God loves all the flowers, even the wild ones that grow on the side of the highway.

-Chapter 8, p. 157

I don't want to meet anybody anymore. I don't want to know what people are like beyond their art. When you meet somebody and they're wonderful, it's such a genuine surprise and it's so nice. But I don't want to be disappointed.

-Chapter 9, pp. 172-173

When you start out and you have nothing, and you make it to that pinnacle of your life, you think that your fame and your success are a redemption for everything that ever happened to you. Because at the end of the movie, the credits toll -but in your life, that doesn't happen.

-Chapter 11, p. 197

I always felt that the paths that people took were worn into how they walked, how they lived, and I know it's romanticizing things, but the important thing for me is portray the richness of their stories in sounds and words.

-Chapter 12, pp. 220-221

The weird thing about in-stores is that it's hard to sign fast enough. You want to shake everyone's hand, to take a picture, make a connection, and be a human being, but the store managers want you in and out of there in an hour or two. But that's impossible. If there are five hundred people, you're going to be there for three hours.

-Chapter 14, p. 255



Music is so subjective. The great thing now is that you can go into your garage and make a wonderful record. The bad thing is that nobody is weeding out bad song anymore. It's like not having an editor.

-Chapter 16, p. 303

It's not what others think about you that will allow you to succeed. It's what you think about you that allows you to succeed.

-Afterword, p. 338

Topics for Discussion

Discuss the theme of family in Cyndi Lauper's autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir". What is family? Where does it appear in the book? Are Cyndi's experiences with family positive or negative, or a mixture of both? Explain. How does Cyndi involve her family in her life as time goes on?

Describe Cyndi Lauper's experiences with religion. How does religion affect and impact her life? Does she enjoy a positive or a negative religious experience in life, or both? Why is this?

Discuss the theme of independence in Cyndi Lauper's autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir". What is independence as it pertains to Cyndi Lauper? How is she independent? How does her independence affect her relationship with her music company, producers, and writers? How does her independence affect her style, music, and politics? Is her independence a good or a bad thing, or something else? Explain.

Why do LGBT issues matter so much to Cyndi Lauper? What actions does she take in support of, and in defense of the LGBT community? Is she successful in her efforts? How do LGBT issues affect her music?

Discuss the theme of civil rights in Cyndi Lauper's autobiography, "Cyndi Lauper: A Memoir". What are civil rights? Whose civil rights is Cyndi Lauper concerned with? What does Cyndi Lauper do to advance civil rights? Is she successful?