



The Good, the Bad, and the Barbie: A Doll's History and Her Impact on Us

By Tanya Lee Stone

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During her unparalleled fifty-year history, Barbie has been the doll that some people love—and some people love to hate. There's no question she's influenced generations, but to what end? Acclaimed nonfiction author Tanya Lee Stone takes an unbiased look at how Barbie became the icon that she is, and at the impact that she's had on our culture (and vice versa). Featuring passionate anecdotes and memories from a range of girls and women, a foreword by Meg Cabot, and original color photographs, this book explores the Barbie phenomenon in a brand-new light.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 6 Up—In the prologue, Meg Cabot describes her desire for a Barbie and her mother's reluctance to purchase one, basically summing up the conflict surrounding the doll since its introduction in 1959. Readers learn about Mattel Toys and the background behind Barbie's concept and development, how it was a solution for girls who wanted to imagine adult roles rather than just play mother, and details about inventor Ruth Handler. But more than that, Stone reveals the pathos behind so many relationships of girls with Barbie: those who cherished her and those who were negatively influenced. Was she a destructive role model or just a toy? Experts disagree. In this balanced overview, both sides of the quandary are addressed. Barbie's different roles, graduating from nurse to surgeon, stewardess to pilot, and always a woman of her own means, reflect societal changes over the past 50 years as well. Numerous black-and-white photos feature the doll in her various incarnations, while eight center pages deliver color versions as well as images of Barbie-inspired art. Inset quotes appear on a Barbie handbag icon. The author maintains her signature research style and accessible informational voice and includes extensive source notes and bibliographical information. *Janet S. Thompson, Chicago Public Library*

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Everyone knows Barbie. And almost everyone has an opinion of her. Stone has done her homework and offers a particularly well-researched read. But she has also gotten many women (and men) to reminisce, comment, and argue about Barbie, and these voices add sparkle. Stone starts things off on a biographical note as she introduces Ruth Handler, Barbie's creator and a shrewd businesswoman who instinctively understood the Barbie concept would be a success even as detractors, mostly male, told her it wouldn't. The focus then moves to Barbie herself, in all her vast and varied incarnations. Much of Barbie's story is one of evolution, and readers will find it particularly fascinating to read that although Barbie was a leader in diversity, cloned into various roles and cultures, some customers still didn't find her ethnic enough, most often lamenting that no matter her color, Barbie usually had "good" hair. Near the end of the book, just when one wonders if Stone will mention what went on under Barbie's clothes, she goes there in a chapter called, "Banning, Bashing, and in the Buff." Closing on a higher plane, the book concludes with "Barbie as Art." Source notes, a bibliography, and lots of images, including an inset of color photos, add to an offering that pleases and intrigues. Grades 7-10. --Ilene Cooper

Review

Winner of the Golden Kite Award

"History writers don't get better than Tanya Lee Stone. *The Good, the Bad, and the Barbie* is balanced, funny, provocative—and most of all, important for anyone wanting to understand girlhood in America."—E. Lockhart, *New York Times* bestselling author of *We Were Liars*

"This is no mere Barbie book. This is a how-to manual about being a girl: a strong, sparky, awesome girl, with Barbie in hand *or* in the nearest dumpster!"—Lauren Myracle, *New York Times* bestselling author

* "Stone has done her homework and offers a particularly well-researched read. But she has also gotten many women (and men) to reminisce, comment, and argue about Barbie, and these voices add

sparkle.”—[Booklist](#), starred review

* “Stone reveals the pathos behind so many relationships of girls with Barbie: those who cherished her and those who were negatively influenced...In this balanced overview, both sides of the quandary are addressed... Accessible...and includes extensive source notes and bibliographical information.”—[School Library Journal](#), starred review

* "Stone tantalizes with her intriguing survey of Barbie, indicating an audience of teens and adults rather than children. The striking cover, open design with numerous photographs and collegial voice will appeal to younger readers.”—[Kirkus Reviews](#), starred review

"Stone calmly covers Barbie's creation by Ruth Handler, the formation of Mattel, and the doll's unpromising launch among sexpot-resistant buyers at a national toy fair. From there on, though, the gloves come off, and Stone allows the voices of women and teens, scholars and collectors, lovers and haters to thrash out whether Barbie has single-handedly set an unattainable standard of female beauty, joined forces with manipulative media to trash adolescent self-esteem, acted as the progressive model for girls to envision gender barrier-crashing careers, or reigned as-duh-just a really cool doll with really pretty clothes...Notes, index, and an extensive bibliography may lure report writers into unconsidered territory, and teen book clubs might want to nominate this as a fiery nonfiction selection.”—[BCCB](#)

“Stone takes an unapologetic look at Barbie's life, documenting the changes in Barbie through the years, her impact on society and the numerous controversies surrounding her existence.”—[Children’s Literature](#)

“Stone's evenhanded, eye-opening cultural history examines [Barbie] quoting a myriad of sources to reveal the devotion and loathing generated by a fifty-plus-year-old hunk of molded plastic.”—[The Horn Book](#)

“Filled with photographs of Barbie dolls past and present as well as quotes about her from nationally known figures and children alike, Stone's fascinating and balanced account reveals a toy of almost unmatched influence.”—[Publishers Weekly](#)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Winston Nakashima:

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Dorothy Trimm:

This *The Good, the Bad, and the Barbie: A Doll's History and Her Impact on Us* is great guide for you

because the content and that is full of information for you who also always deal with world and also have to make decision every minute. That book reveal it details accurately using great arrange word or we can declare no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read that hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only provides you with straight forward sentences but tough core information with wonderful delivering sentences. Having The Good, the Bad, and the Barbie: A Doll's History and Her Impact on Us in your hand like finding the world in your arm, facts in it is not ridiculous just one. We can say that no publication that offer you world inside ten or fifteen tiny right but this book already do that. So , this is good reading book. Heya Mr. and Mrs. busy do you still doubt this?

Rita Heil:

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