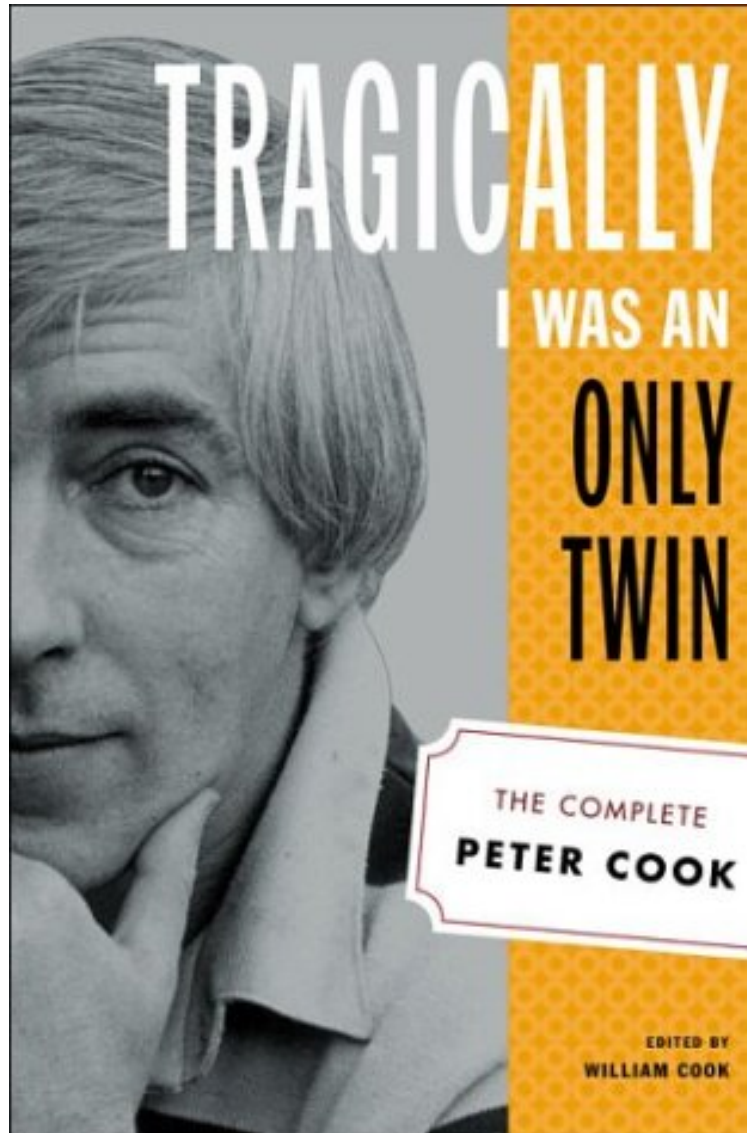


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Tragically I Was an Only Twin: The Complete Peter Cook

Peter Cook, William Cook

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Peter Cook, William Cook : Tragically I Was an Only Twin: The Complete Peter Cook before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tragically I Was an Only Twin: The Complete Peter Cook:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Two Cooks don't spoil this brothBy J.D. GuinnessIt's amazing it took as long as 2002 (more than five years after Peter Cook passed on) to collect this wonderful sampler of the Funniest Man in the World. Like a lot of you Boomers in North America, I became aware of Cook thru his

collaborations with the Monty Python team in the Secret Policeman's Ball series of stage shows. I was immediately impressed (and still am, these many years later) at what Terry Jones called the "luminous" aspect of Cook's talent. His range, the wandering speculations of E. L. Wisty and Pete and Dud to the... "punk poetry" of Derek and Clive is unparalleled in comedy for its strong, imaginative quality, not to mention its obvious hilarity. Editor William Cook (no relation) has written much in the comedy-as-art vein, and he is the ideal person to round up the Best-of-Peter-Cook. William bookends each sketch with fascinating biographical information on Peter. William's enthusiastic and well-informed writing reminds me of the best essays-on-comedy of Leonard Maltin, and elevates and propels this book every bit as much as Peter's comedy. It's true that a lot of the material included here has since surfaced on YouTube (and we Peter Cook fans are both richer and eternally grateful for that), but, let this not dissuade you from buying this book. Like Buster Keaton before him, Peter Cook's comedy is so intricate and well-crafted it's best when you can really slow down and savour it, as you can here. This book is, to date, THE essential Peter Cook souvenir. 23 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Funny, I roared with laughter all the way through this book. By Wayne A. Sad to see sort of so-so appraisals of Cook's work. In film he was often a genius too, I think of "The Wrong Box" (where, in fact, it's Peter Sellers that comes off a bit lame) or his brilliant portrayal of the psychotic British PM in "Whoops, Apocalypse!" I remember him explaining to his cabinet--deadpan-- that British industry is suffering because of sabotage by pixies. (Michael Moore should have watched that film before directing Canadian Bacon, he might have learned a few things like political satire sometimes needs to be existential to ring true, it shouldn't always be just witch hunting). Anyway, that role alone should have made Cook's reputation. I can't imagine how anyone could not have found him funny in "Bedazzled" as his was the ultimate portrayal of the banality of evil--Satan being "bad" by scratching up people's record albums. Cook, unfortunately for us, not him, was one of the all-time great practitioners of the art of silliness and the absurd. That sort of stuff requires something special of an audience, a willingness to not try to "find meaning" in humor. We're a literal society these days, we take ourselves a tad too seriously, our humor is a bit self-conscious and often it's just cruelty or mockery--the lowest forms. (A friend once commented on how funny her friends were and I told her no, all they did was ridicule and tear each other down. She thought about that and replied "Wow, you're right") Steve Oedekerker, creator of the wonderfully funny film "Kung Pow" complained how he had to seemingly justify everything he was doing in the film. Much of it was just pure wackiness, you simply can't explain or justify it. If you need the reasons why you can't explain it explained to you then you're lost, you'll never understand. It's a higher level of understanding and you'll need to go study with Buddhists or something. They know all the good jokes anyway. I just watched a great WC Fields flick, "International House." Someone asks Fields where he's going to sleep and he replies "On my left side, with my mouth open...wide open." The day people stop laughing at joyous absurdities like that (Most these days would seek a double-entendre or something equally dumb in that) is the day I pack up and move to Tibet. This is a wonderful book and it's sitting here remaindered for \$5.98 in a few cases. Cook's writing reminds me of Robert Benchley's--he was another gentle absurdist who, fifty years ago, was a household name and a familiar face in the cinema. That's back when non-linear weirdness could be found in Bugs Bunny cartoons and for a while even in the funny papers with Krazy Kat. Many of the best writers of his generation considered him to be the funniest man alive too and he may well have been. All his books are out of print except for a small collection. This is also sad beyond reckoning. Honestly I don't see the shift in humor to be simply a matter of taste or trends. Not "getting" Peter Cook means dropping humor down a fair number of notches to the general level of the Scary Movie series, let's say, and that's mostly unsophisticated toilet stuff you could diagram on a blackboard. When a whole civilization finally dumbs down bigtime nobody ever really notices or cares much. That's actually how it happens, people stop caring. In about 50 years museums will be discarding things like abstract expressionist art because everyone, no exceptions, then will think "my kid could do that." They'll no longer be able to discern the vast gulf that exists between kid scribbles and de Kooning. To primitives high levels of complexity and organization are just "noise." Everyone will find it irrelevant, boring, or laughable, and that's happening all around you with your culture right now. Much art only survives because it has an astronomical assigned dollar value. In the future you won't be able to find a Peter Cook book to save your life. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is a great book, it contains the transcripts of Peter Cook's ... By Patricia A. Donovan This is a great book, it contains the transcripts of Peter Cook's sketches and writings. Writing and especially comic writing at it's very best. This book was a wonderful surprise!

To his many friends as well as his legion of fans, Peter Cook was quite simply the funniest man ever. His unique gifts and the way he led the transformation of British comedy (from music hall to perverse absurdity) and his clear comic influence on Monty Python's Flying Circus and every show since, has been much written about. But never before has there been a collection of Cook's own writings. Tragically, I Was an Only Twin gathers the treasures of Cook's comic career, from school and university via Beyond the Fringe alongside Alan Bennett, Jonathan Miller, and Dudley Moore, to his surreal, satirical journalism for Private Eye. It includes his monologues, the cream of his irreverent essays, and highlights from his much celebrated partnerships with Dudley Moore as Pete Dud and Derek Clive. Illustrated with his own drawings, this is the first, the only, and certainly the definitive collection of the transformative genius of comedy

that was Peter Cook.

From Booklist Though a naturally gifted clown, Cook (1937-95) remains overshadowed by the much more successful Dudley Moore (1935-2002) and the other members of the revolutionary, early-1960s revue, Beyond the Fringe, Alan Bennett and Jonathan Miller, who remain vitally active in theater. This collection of Cook's better sketches and scribblings argues that he deserves better. From the beginning, when he wrote to crack up his classmates, he was brilliant, attesting to the iconoclasm that was the dominant tone of Beyond the Fringe and gave weight to Cook's duo performances with Moore. Even in his declining years, when he was paying the price of a lavish, alcohol-soaked lifestyle, Cook remained an able, gifted comic who tossed off winning punch lines with disarming ease. The anthology samples from all phases of Cook's creative life, and editor Cook, no relation, provides enough biographical material to make one wish he would essay a biography of this comic genius. Jack Helbig Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "Impressive and thorough, if not comprehensive, this collection finally documents the genius of Peter Cook, a founding member of the legendary English comedy revue Beyond the Fringe... This long-overdue compendium is both beautiful and very, very funny. Enthusiastically recommended." - Library Journal (Starred) "Though a naturally gifted clown, Cook (1937-95) remains overshadowed by the much more successful Dudley Moore and the other members of the revolutionary, early-1960s revue, Beyond the Fringe... This collection of Cook's better sketches and scribblings argues that he deserves better... The anthology samples from all phases of Cook's creative life, and editor Cook, no relation, provides enough biographical material to make one wish he would essay a biography of this comic genius." -Booklist