

[Download] Loulou & Yves: The Untold Story of Loulou de La Falaise and the House of Saint Laurent



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No one interested in fashion, style, or the high-flying intrigues of caf society will want to miss the exuberantly entertaining oral biography *Loulou & Yves: The Untold Story of Loulou de La Falaise and the House of Saint Laurent*, by Christopher Petkanas. Dauntless, in the bone style made Loulou de La Falaise one of the great fashion firebrands of the twentieth century. Descending in a direct line from Coco Chanel and Elsa Schiaparelli, she was celebrated at her death in 2011, aged just sixty-four, as the highest of haute bohemia, a feckless adventuress in the art of living?and the one person Yves Saint Laurent could not live without. Yves Saint Laurent (1936-2008) was the most influential designer of his times; possibly also the most neurasthenic. In an exquisitely intimate, sometimes painful personal and professional relationship, Loulou de La Falaise was his creative right hand, muse, alter ego and the virtuoso behind all the devastatingly flamboyant accessories that were a crucial component of the YSL look. For thirty years, until his retirement in 2002, Yves relied on Loulou to inspire him with the tilt of her hat, make him laugh and talk him off the ledge?the enchanted formula that brought him from one historic collection to the next. Her presence at my side is a dream, Yves declares in *Loulou & Yves*. I trust her reactions. Sometimes they are violent but always positive... I

bounce ideas off her and they come back clearer and things begin to happen. Yvess many tributes shape Loulous memory, as if everything there was to know about this fugitive, Giacometti-like figure could be told by her clanking bronze cuffs, towering fur toques, the turquoise boulders on her fingers and her working friendship with the man who put women in pants. But parallel to this storyline runs another, darker one, lifting the veil on Loulou, a classic number two with a contempt for convention, and exposing the underbelly of fashion at its highest level. Behind Yvess encomiums are a pair of aristocrat parents? Loulous shiftless French father and menacingly chic English mother? who abandoned her to a childhood of foster care and sexual abuse straight out of *Les Misérables*; Loulous recurring desperation to leave Yves and go out on her own; and the grandiose myths surrounding her family. Loulou felt that her life had been kidnapped by the operatic workings of the House of Saint Laurent, and in her last years danced with financial ruin. Delving beyond the official version of her life, Loulou & Yves unspools an elusive fashion idol? nymphomaniacal, heedless and up to her bracelets in coke and Boizel champagne? at the core of what used to be called *le beau monde*. On the theory that everyone loves a cocktail party, Loulou & Yves traces her life chronologically through the charming literary device of oral biography, in which the spoken memories of more than two hundred voices? husbands, lovers, extended family, friends, enemies, slightly less bitter detractors, colleagues, groupies, pundits, and hangers-on? are seamlessly interwoven with those of Yves and Loulou themselves. Readers mingle at the party as invited guests, listening in on Andy Warhol and Karl Lagerfeld and collecting clues from Mick Jagger and Tom Ford as the narrative unfolds. Topping the A-list of figures who tell Loulous story in their own words, uncensored, are Cecil Beaton, Diana Vreeland, Thade Klossowski, Robert Mapplethorpe, Helmut Newton, Hubert de Givenchy, Manolo Blahnik, Diane von Furstenberg, Elsa Peretti, Betty Catroux, John Richardson, Alber Elbaz, Christian Louboutin, Grace Coddington, Ben Brantley, Bruce Chatwin, Lady Annabel Goldsmith, Andr Leon Talley, and Pierre Berg. In a fluent round of sparkling conversation, author Christopher Petkanas brings them all together for a party that swirls around one of the most scintillating women the fashion world has ever known. Shes the sounding board, Yves rhapsodizes of his second self in Loulou & Yves, a sweeping, waspish work of fashion and social history. Shes never wrong.

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