



# Lillian Hellman: A Life with Foxes and Scoundrels

*Deborah Martinson*

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## **Lillian Hellman: A Life with Foxes and Scoundrels** Deborah Martinson

The first biography of Lillian Hellman-the notorious literary star of Broadway and Hollywood-written with the full cooperation of her executors and her most intimate circle

Few literary celebrities have lived with more abandon and under a brighter spotlight than Lillian Hellman. Yet even fewer have been doubted as absolutely as Hellman, famously denounced by rival Mary McCarthy as a writer for whom "every word was a lie, including 'and' and 'the.'" The details of Hellman's life have been hotly contested for decades. She was the author of such Broadway hits as *The Children's Hour* and *The Little Foxes*; a Hollywood screenplay writer until she was blacklisted; a writer of best-selling memoirs such as *An Unfinished Woman* and *Pentimento*; and the volatile companion of writer Dashiell Hammett, foreign service officer John Melby, and a myriad of other high-profile men. Hellman refused to cooperate with biographers-most notably William Wright-and, up until her death, ordered those close to her to do the same.

Now, in this compelling biography Deborah Martinson moves beyond the myths that drift around Hellman and finds the sassy, outrageous woman committed to writing, to politics, and to having her say. Martinson's exhaustive research-through interviews, archives, and recently declassified CIA files-and her unprecedented access to Hellman's confidantes paints the most complete and surprisingly admiring portrait of Hellman that we've ever had.

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