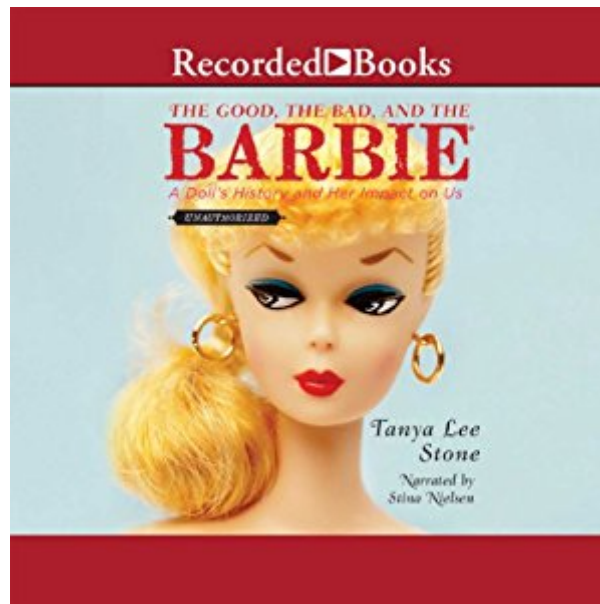


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# The Good, The Bad, And The Barbie: A Doll's History And Her Impact On Us



## Synopsis

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. Listeners 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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I never knew there was so much controversy about Barbie until I read Stone's book. To me, Barbie was my favorite childhood play thing- she never made me question my body or make me think I had to be perfect like her; she was the characters in all of my stories, a fashion model, Ken's girlfriend, or anything else I wanted her to be. However, Stone introduces us to not only Barbie's history, but the controversies that came along with Barbie. This well researched, interesting, and impartial look at Barbie's history and her impact on us touches on all aspects of Barbie and her story which makes it well worth the read.

The Good, The Bad, and The Barbie by Tanya Lee Stone is written for young teens, and it presents not only the creation of the iconic Barbie doll but also the rise and fall of Mattel corporation. To some Barbie is the epitome of a feminist--she can do anything she wants to do. She lives the American Dream. To others, Barbie is the chauvinistic ideal of what men want and Barbie crushes the self-esteem/body image of young girls. Whichever side of that argument you are on, The Good, The Bad, and The Barbie will be interesting. The book presents both points of view, but really focuses on Barbie's creator, Ruth Handler. Ruth and husband Elliot along with friend, Matt, created Mattel Corporation. The discussion of the work environment at Mattel was fascinating (first integrated factory) as was the role Disney's Musketeers show played in Mattel's successful toy advertising campaign. Ruth came up with the idea of the Barbie doll as a way for girls to continue to play with dolls without having the role of homemaker/nurturer forced upon them (which she believed the prevalent baby dolls did). She wanted her daughter Barbara and her friends to have a doll that represented the changing norms of the late 1950s and 1960s. I learned that Barbie and Ken were named after Ruth Handler's children. The discussion of Barbie's influence on artists is interesting as well. From Andy Warhol to Margaux Lange's jewelry made of Barbie body parts, the doll's influence will amaze readers. Most fascinating was creator Ruth Handler. She was a pioneer. A mom who worked outside the home, a tenacious business owner and a breast cancer survivor. One other interesting tidbit was Ruth's involvement in engineering a better post-mastectomy prosthetic bra based on her experience in plastics and design while working with the Barbie doll.

I purchased The Good, The Bad and the Barbie book for my daughter. She loves Barbies. It is a great book that spans the history of Barbies. SHE LOVES IT!!! This is great for the doll collector such as my daughter. I highly recommend!!!! A+++++++

Great read, I found it to be very interesting! Covers the history of Barbie and many peoples different views on her and the impact she has made on society. I liked Barbie and loved Midge. My brother was the one that tried to mutilate my dolls. I even read some of the fictional Barbie books as kid (the ones that were from the 60's). She is a doll and anything you want her to be. She never bothered my self image. She did star in a lot of my made up dramas. I didn't really find it to be appropriate for most younger readers, definitely 13 and up in my opinion.

The Good, The Bad, And The Barbie introduces characters such as Ruth Handler, Isadore Elliott Handler, Harold Matson, and Barbie. The main character of this book is Barbie because she is the

doll that everyone is influenced by and has many different opinions about. Ruth Handler and Isadore Handler, also known as "Elliott" are also very important because they are the main reasons why Barbie became Barbie. If it wasn't for them going out of their way and starting from a simple project "Plexiglass" assigned for schoolwork, Barbie wouldn't be here. Harold Matson also helped the company Mattel become Mattel because Harold chose to work with his old co-workers and start a business that ended up being a company known by many. The main conflict throughout this book is Ruth trying to please everyone's liking. Everyone has their own opinions but some opinions that get out can shut down Mattel. There have been protests and feminist statements towards Barbie about her body size, height, facial features, etc. Some people throughout the world didn't feel that Barbie left a bad influence on them but some of them did. Solving this conflict wasn't very easy especially because it is towards everyone's feelings. During this problem they have made more mistakes by putting a weight scale that said 110 pounds for her size, and voice input saying "I don't know how to do math." which left a negative vibe towards body issues and blonde stereotypes. Two important plot events was when Isadore got assigned to do a art project with Plexiglass and started making doll furniture and Ruth decided to start making dolls after seeing a very well known doll in Europe called the Lilli Doll. The second one would be naming the dolls official names after their daughter and son, Barbara and Kenneth "Ken". I loved *The Good, The Bad, And The Barbie* because it shows how many people in the world have different opinions. This story is a great way to look at a problem in different perspectives because when you are in a situation you really only listen to your side and the other person's story but in this book you get to listen to a lot more people's perspective. One part of the book I loved was when Ruth dated Isadore then broke up with him then got back together then broke up then became married because it shows how much she has been through other than the company. Another part I loved was the naming of the dolls. Naming the dolls after her daughter and son was pretty awesome because even though she was super busy and wasn't really a motherly figure at the time she still named the money-making dolls after her children. The last part I liked about the story was listening to all the negative vibes from people, especially teenagers. They showed that a lot of people are self-conscious about themselves and it is a very negative thing. I would recommend this book to feminist and people who love perspective stories because this story contains a lot of those two things. Feminism is the biggest part of this book so it would be amazing to read if you contribute towards that.

I received this as a gift and I was quite disappointed with it. It's not clear what age it's aimed at--it

doesn't seem right for adults or kids. The author has picked factoids that she likes rather than making a real study. She makes general assertions based on single personal anecdotes. She alternately bashes and praises Barbie, which doesn't come across as balanced, but rather as a way to try to attract both the anti- and pro-Barbie audiences.

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