
Star Wars actress, bestselling author Carrie Fisher dead at 60

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As 'the only girl in an all-boy fantasy,' Fisher's role as the iconic Princess Leia was revolutionary.

Carrie Fisher, the Hollywood actress who portrayed the fearless Princess Leia in the *Star Wars* film franchise and later penned award-winning books that included touching on her battles with addiction, has died at age 60.

Fisher's daughter, Billie Lourd, released a statement through the family spokesman saying that Fisher died Tuesday morning in Los Angeles.

"It is with a very deep sadness that Billie Lourd confirms that her beloved mother Carrie Fisher passed away at 8:55 this morning," reads the statement from publicist Simon Halls. "She was loved by the world and she will be missed profoundly."

Fisher suffered a cardiac episode on Friday during a flight from London to Los Angeles, where she was rushed to a hospital after landing, and had been in critical condition.

 In this 1977 image provided by 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation, from left, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, and Mark Hamill are shown in a scene from *Star Wars*, released by 20th Century-Fox. Fisher, who played Princess Leia in *Star Wars*, has died at age 60, her daughter's publicist says. (Canadian Press/AP/20th Century-Fox Film Corporation)

The bestselling author, sought-after screenwriter and outspoken mental-health advocate was as fearsome and fearless a woman as the iconic character who defined her career.

Born in Beverly Hills, Calif., to actress Debbie Reynolds and singer Eddie Fisher, she made her show-business debut at age 12 in her mother's Las Vegas nightclub act, and her film debut at the age of 17 in 1975's *Shampoo*, starring Warren Beatty, Julie Christie and Goldie Hawn.

- [Legendary loss: Artists and entertainers who died in 2016](#)

Her film credits include 1980's *The Blues Brothers* and 1989's *When Harry Met Sally*. But to her biggest fans, she will always be Leia Organa, the courageous rebel leader who would do anything to save her people from the tyranny of the evil Empire.

'The only girl in an all-boy fantasy'

Fisher first took on the mantle of Leia, a revolutionary role for women in science fiction, in 1977's *Star Wars*. She later reprised it in 1980's *The Empire Strikes Back*, 1983's *Return of the Jedi* and 2015's *The Force Awakens*.

"Those movies are great. I got to be the only girl in an all-boy fantasy, and it's a great role for women. She's a very proactive character and gets the job done. So if you're going to get typecast as something, that might as well be it for me," she said in a 2016 interview with CBC New

"I'm not really one of those actresses like Meryl Streep. Those actresses travel outside themselves and play characters. And I'm more of an archaeologist. I play what I am. I dig what I can. It's a character that's not too far from myself, except I don't have any laser guns."

Writing was her 'first intoxicant'

Still, Fisher was a woman of many talents. In 1987, she published her first novel, the bestselling *Postcards from the Edge*, a semi-autobiographical story about a woman raising a daughter while working in show business.

Writing became a lifelong passion for Fisher. She helped adapt *Postcards* into a film starring Streep in 1990, and made a career of revising Hollywood scripts, including *Sister Act* (1992), *Outbreak* (1995) and *The Wedding Singer* (1998).

[@ADaniels3PO](#) I thought I had got what I wanted under the tree. I didn't. In spite of so many thoughts and prayers from so many. I am very, very sad.

She penned the autobiographical bestselling book *Wishful Drinking* in 2009 and *Shockaholic* in 2012. Most recently, she wrote a regular advice column called "Advice from the Dark Side," and released a third autobiography, *The Princess Diarist*, in 2016.

"I've just always written. It was an outlet for me," she told CBC News. "I loved reading, so I fell in love with words very early on. And I used to rip through books and underline all the words I didn't know and all the sentences I adored. I was just a very big reader. That was my first intoxicant. It was a great escape."

- ['My first intoxicant': Carrie Fisher on writing, acting and the whole Princess Leia thing](#)

Her personal life was filled with enough drama, struggle, romance and perseverance to fill a dozen books.

[@realbdw](#) I'm deeply saddened at the news of Carrie's passing. She was a dear friend, whom I greatly respected and admired. The force is dark today!

She was married to musician Paul Simon for a time, and was briefly engaged to Canadian actor Dan Aykroyd.

Fisher was most recently in the news after revealing in November that she had had an behind-the-scenes affair with on-screen love interest Harrison Ford, who played Han Solo

- [Carrie Fisher reveals past affair with Harrison Ford](#)

In the *Star Wars* trilogy, Fisher was 19 and Ford was 33 and married at the time.

Fisher told People: ["It was Han and Leia during the week, and Carrie and Harrison during the weekend."](#)

'I wanted my version of it out there'

Fisher was outspoken about her struggles with addiction and mental health long before the stigma of those topics began to wane.

She was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at age 29 and has struggled on and off for years with alcoholism and addiction to painkillers and cocaine.

The Huffington Post once dubbed her ["An O.G. Mental Health Hero."](#)

In a [Q&A with WebMD about her mental health](#), Fisher was asked what it's like to be the poster child for bipolar disorder.

"Well, I am hoping to get the centrefold in *Psychology Today*," she joked in reply.

"It's a combination of everything. It was out there, anyway; I wanted my version of it out there. Now, it seems every show I watch there's always someone bipolar in it! It's going through the vernacular like 'May the force be with you' did. But I define it, rather than it defining me."

No holds barred

Like Leia, Fisher has always been tenacious and unafraid to speak her mind, whether it be about mental health or the unrealistic beauty standards placed on women in Hollywood.

She made headlines ahead of the *The Force Awakens* when she took to social media to denounce anyone critical of her physical appearance.

- [Star Wars actor Carrie Fisher slams body-shamers](#)

"Youth and beauty are not accomplishments. They're temporary happy byproducts of time and/or DNA. Don't hold your breath for either," Fisher tweeted.

"My body is my brain bag, it hauls me around to those places and in front of faces where there's something to say or see."

Before *The Force Awakens* was released, the actress said she had been asked to drop more than 35 pounds for the movie.

"They don't want to hire all of me — only about three-quarters," she told *Good Housekeeping* in the magazine's [January cover story](#).

"Nothing changes, it's an appearance-driven thing. I'm in a business where the only thing that matters is weight and appearance. That is so messed up. They might as well say get younger, because that's how easy it is."

She told ABC News that the struggles she has overcome have become a key facet of her identity.

"I outlasted my problems," she said. "I am mentally ill. I can say that. I am not ashamed of that. I survived that, I'm still surviving it, but bring it on."

Lourd was Fisher's only child with her onetime partner, talent agent Bryan Lourd. She is also survived by Reynolds, 84.