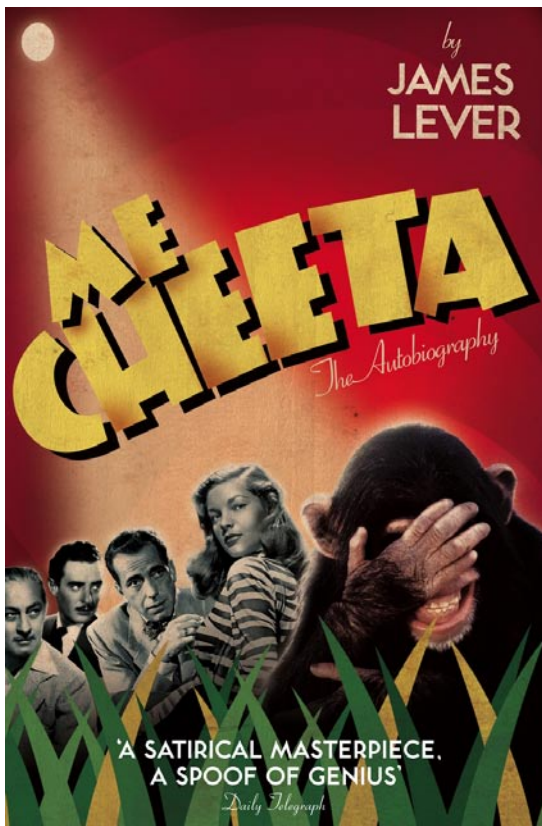


# Reader's Guide



*Me Cheeta* is James Lever's first book

## Me Cheeta James Lever

Fourth Estate  
Price £16.99

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## About the author

James Lever lives in London, where he has worked as a reviewer, editor, and writer. *Me Cheeta* is his first novel.

## Me Cheeta

The incredible, moving and hilarious story of Cheeta the Chimp, simian star of the big screen, on a behind-the-scenes romp through the golden years of Hollywood.

In 1984, Johnny Weissmuller, Hollywood's greatest Tarzan, passed away. His coffin was lowered into the ground to the recorded sounds of his famous jungle call. Maureen O'Sullivan, his Jane, followed him in 1998. But their co-star Cheeta the chimpanzee, the 'World's Funniest Animal', lives on. At seventy-six, he is by some distance the oldest chimp ever recorded.

Now, in his own words, Cheeta finally tells his extraordinary story.

Plucked from millions of hopefuls in the jungles of Liberia, Cheeta became an international screen icon from the moment of his debut in 1934's *Tarzan and His Mate*. He went on to star in a further nine Tarzan pictures, and later in *Doctor Dolittle* with the dreadful Rex Harrison, before his battles with substance abuse forced him into early retirement. He now lives happily in Palm Springs where he has re-invented himself as a globally acclaimed abstract artist.

We are privileged indeed that such a legendary entertainer should grant us intimate access into the lives of the most glittering stars. Well aware that no animal has ever been successfully sued for libel, *Me Cheeta* is packed with fascinating revelations about a lost Hollywood. Funny, moving and searingly honest, this is the greatest celebrity autobiography of our time.

## Discussion points

Do you agree with James Lever who said of his own novel '*I don't believe it will be on the (Man Booker) shortlist.*'

When *Me Cheeta* was first published there was a rumour that James Lever was a pseudonym for another author, if you were to imagine an author that might have written this book who would it be?

Would you agree that *Me Cheeta* is a satirical masterpiece?

How successfully did you feel that the author managed the transition from humour to serious commentary on animal cruelty?

Would you agree with the reviewer who wrote '*It will subtly change forever the way we think not only about Hollywood but also about our own species*' (Lynne Truss, *The Sunday Times*)?

## Themed reading

*Lolita* Vladimir Nabokov  
*Great Apes Will Self*  
*I, An Actor* Christopher Douglas

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