

[PDF] The Million Dollar Mermaid: An Autobiography

Esther Williams - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: The Million Dollar Mermaid: A

Author: Esther Williams

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Description:

Her big movies are hard to find these days, and her name doesn't evoke the fan recognition awarded fellow MGM grads Lana Turner and Ava Gardner, yet for more than a decade during Hollywood's *age d'or* Esther Williams was one of the studio's most bankable leading ladies. An American beauty and swimming champ, she was hired at MGM in 1941 at age 18, and from then on starred in two or three thinly plotted "swimming musicals" a year--movies with titles like *Neptune's Daughter*, *Million Dollar Mermaid*, *Easy to Love*, and *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*. Her inevitable role was the pinup you could pin up at home, and it seems to have reflected her offstage personality too. Her long (400 pages) memoir is not always a miracle of narrative, but it includes a wealth of juicy gossip: Louis B. Mayer's rolling-on-the-floor tantrums; Gene Kelly's verbal cruelty on the set of *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*; her three failed marriages, including a long, draining one to Fernando Lamas; Lana

Turner's name for Mayer ("Daddy"); Johnny Weismuller's backstage pursuit of her (naked); her own heat for Victor Mature ("unleashed"); and the LSD she tried in 1959 on Cary Grant's recommendation. Like so many other as-told-to books, the memories often feel self-serving, and there are plywood sentences even Lana Turner would choke on delivering. Disappointingly, Williams rarely shares what went on *behind* her lowered eyes and those buoyant cheekbones. --*Lyall Bush* --
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From Publishers Weekly MGM swim-femme Williams delighted millions in choreographed aqua-movie-musicals during the 1940s and '50s: her unbuttoned autobiography examines both her splashy, sunny public image and the murky waters of her private life. Williams and Diehl (Tales from the Crypt) backstroke through a flood of memories, giving a fluid treatment to "hundreds of hours of conversations that are the basis for this book." Williams opens by describing the LSD trip she took in 1959 (Cary Grant helped her score the acid), then dives into her traumatic early life: a brother died at 16, and a boy the same age raped the young Williams repeatedly. Competing in swim meets at 15, Williams became a national champion in 1939, costarred in Billy Rose's Aquacade with the drunken, exhibitionistic Johnny Weissmuller and signed with MGM in 1944. Williams's movie years constitute the colorful core of the book, displaying life inside a major studio during Hollywood's Golden Age and showing screen legends with their pants downAsometimes literally. Williams had to deal with disastrous marriages, manipulative moguls and life-threatening water stunts. Her sparkling anecdotes alternate the scandalous, the charming and the ridiculous. When, during the rain-drenched filming of Pagan Love Song, Williams cables from Kauai to tell her studio head she's pregnant, the announcement reaches all the ham radio operators in California. Later chapters cover Williams's work for TV, her swimsuit licensing and her years with jet-setting, tyrannical third husband Fernando Lamas. Williams speaks of her own "zest for life"; she and collaborator Diehl demonstrate it many times over in this tremendously entertaining life story. First serial to Vanity Fair. (Sept.)

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