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THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS
OF HOLLYWOOD

The Seven Deadly Sins of Hollywood

by

THOMAS WISEMAN

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Chapter 1

THE MYTH AND THE PLACE

SIN—that is what most people expect to find in Hollywood, whether their intention is to denounce it or to enjoy it (or to do both simultaneously).

No town lends itself more readily to the searing *exposé*. No collection of people are thought to have such a monopoly of wickedness as the residents of this Californian suburb. Officially they tread on deep pile carpets or marble floors and bathe in champagne, but it is one of the public's most cherished illusions that secretly they all wallow in the mud—the best mud, the 22-carat mud.

There is an impression that Hollywood is a place where orgies start at breakfast and all the nights are Bacchanalian; where people live on benzedrine and phenobarbitone; where pillows and dreams are made of mink; where nymphomania is more common than measles.

How accurate is this conception of Hollywood?

Early in 1956 I spent six weeks there. I met the stars formally and informally, attended their parties and visited their playgrounds at Palm Springs and Las Vegas. I have also met the stars and the moguls, over a period of two and a half years, in the pleasure spots of Europe, at work in film studios and on locations.

I have searched my files, my notebooks and my memory to compile this dossier. The object of my search was to find the Seven Deadly Sins of Hollywood, the real ones: but you must not complain if in the course of my search I also unearth a few virtues.

In this book I describe my Odyssey through the Hollywood constellation; you can follow my investigation scene by scene, sin by sin.

And if you choose to regard me as a sort of journalistic private eye "just after the facts" (and the sins) it may add an element of fun and suspense to this enquiry. I need hardly add that, as in all mystery stories, the solution—the Seven Deadly Sins—will be found in the last chapter. But you must expect a fair number of red-herrings on the way—people who exemplify none of the sins but are merely a part of the background, the local colour.

In the course of my interrogation of the "suspects" I may find myself wandering from the main subject of this investigation. When the person you are cross-examining looks like Marilyn Monroe or Gina Lollobrigida, even Sergeant Friday might be guilty of digression.

My investigation starts on the morning of Friday, February 3rd, 1956.

I was reclining in a chaise-longue by the hotel swimming-pool, soaking up the February sunshine and eating my breakfast, when the loudspeaker informed me I was wanted on the phone. I took the call at one of the tables by the pool.

The caller bade me welcome in that professionally intimate and affable manner which every good publicist must have. Was I comfortable, he wanted to know? Did I have everything I needed? Was there anything he could do for me? And how would I like to print the story of a famous star who was prepared to confess to me that he had been a drug addict? He was now making a film for the company which this publicist represented, and if I mentioned the title of the film I could have the story exclusively in Great Britain.

There could be no doubt about it now: I was in Hollywood. . . .

I resisted the temptation to put down drug-addiction as the first deadly sin, and went out to look at Hollywood. I spent the whole of Saturday looking around. If I picked up any vital clues that day I did not identify them as such, but I did find out a little about the subject of my investigation.

To understand Hollywood you must know a little about Los Angeles, of which it is a suburb. Los Angeles is a teeming international city. At night (and from a distance) Los Angeles presents an unsurpassable spectacle of glittering lights; it is an ocean in which every fish has its neon sign.

At closer quarters it is as tarnished as any Graham Greene character. Here you can find as large as fiction all the fly-blown, seedy joints, the dubious bars, the perfumed Oriental temples, the herb and spice shops, the dope pedlars, the corpse floating in the harbour, which figure in the stories of Raymond Chandler. There are places here which are more Chandleresque than Chandler. To those who accuse Hollywood of being a dream city, cut off from life, the standard reply is that it has everything, including decadence, on tap. Certainly Los Angeles is no dream city, and if it inspires any dreams in anyone he should have them analysed by a good psychiatrist.

You do not notice when you reach Hollywood proper because there is no immediately discernible change in the scenery. Hollywood Boulevard, the main street of the town, is reminiscent of Edgware Road on a Saturday night after a Cup Final. It is full of junk-shops, dingy Hawaiian bars, cheap hamburger joints, magazine stalls crammed with scandal magazines and young toughs in jeans and sweat-shirts. It is all lit up by frantic neon-signs. This is all *Dragnet* territory.

No film stars are ever seen along Hollywood Boulevard, except getting in and out of their Cadillacs. When they

do appear momentarily the locals are just as impressed and stare just as hard as would the residents of Hammer-smith. Proximity and a common citizenship has not made them any less star-struck.

When you get to Sunset Boulevard you have reached the classy part of town where there are no pavements because everyone goes everywhere by car. Here the houses are all elegant and sedate and pseudo-one thing or another (Spanish, Baroque, Oriental, Pioneer American) and the atmosphere is nearly anaesthetic. The February sunshine pours down like rain. Lemon trees grow in back-gardens—and you feel sure that every dog-kennel is air-conditioned.

I was staying at the Beverly Hills Hotel, where the air is so rarefied you would not be surprised to find it on your bill.

After my first reconnaissance through Hollywood I felt in need of a drink. I went into the bar at my hotel, which—like all the bars out here—is sufficiently dark for an alcoholic to look a drink straight in the eye and not recognise it. By instinct rather than sight I found my whisky and soda and gulped it down. The bar was crowded with people, all of whom seemed to be talking shop. It was also crowded with indoor plants—which is probably how the idea got around that Hollywood is a jungle.

I finished my drink and bought some newspapers (a couple of tons, I think) in the hotel drugstore and was surprised to find that they bore the following day's date. I commented on this to the assistant behind the counter. "Well, it's a fast country," he said.

Up in my room I dutifully read Louella Parsons and Hedda Hopper, the gossip-queens who are flattered and fêted by Hollywood with absurd ceremony. The columns were all sweetness and casting news as unscandalous as the births, deaths and marriages announce-

ments in *The Times* and with roughly the same sort of text.

At 11 p.m. I went to bed. I decided this really wouldn't do: I had been a whole day in Hollywood and had not yet been invited to one orgy.

.

I spent the next few days getting acclimatised to the rather peculiar climate of Hollywood.

I was absorbing colour—when I could find it; listening; observing; meeting everybody who was willing to meet me and persuading those who were not that they should be.

Ten a.m. Sunday. I am in the shower. Phone rings. Voice as casual as a pair of loafer shoes says, "My name is Cary Grant. If you don't mind talking to a broken-down old actor, why don't we meet for a drink?" I say I would be delighted as long as he does not mind talking to a broken-down young journalist.

Five p.m. Neither of us is especially broken-down when we meet in the lobby of my hotel that afternoon. Grant has a permanent copper tan, springy walk, easy charm—and a knack of cutting through formalities and being immediately on friendly terms with you.

He is fifty-two, he tells me voluntarily. I am appropriately incredulous. "Yes," he says, "there is a bunch of us who have worn well."

Grace Kelly comes up in the conversation. Inevitably. It is the time just before her wedding, and she comes up in every Hollywood conversation sooner or later. Grant and his wife are among her closest friends. He says, "She is a wonderful girl—and what a fine actress of the natural school. I am sure she and the Prince are very much in love."

I remark on how the wedding has been exploited in the interests of Monaco and MGM (is there a deadly

sin here?), and add that I don't think commercials go very well with marriage vows. He says, "Well, you know how it is. The studio takes charge . . . and the Palace, I suppose. Blame them. Don't blame Grace. She's a sweet, sincere person. A wedding like that can get out of hand. I know how this sort of thing can happen. . . . I was married once to a woman called Barbara Hutton."

I enquire whether he will be going to the wedding. "I don't think so," he says. "I could never get my wife to wear a hat, and I am told hats will be worn."

We discuss the changing acting techniques of Hollywood. Grant belongs to the old school of personable actors who usually play themselves. "You'd be surprised how difficult it is," he says. "I'm a great admirer of Marlon Brando. But you know, frankly, it's the easiest sort of acting when you can make faces all the time and hide behind them. Half these brilliant young actors from Actors' Studio, when they are told to pick up a glass and take a drink—they can't do it. They have to put some significance into it. They have to load it with hidden meanings. When Brando does a role he starts with the skeleton and adds to it detail by detail, filling it in. It's all intellectually worked out. But these boys—they can't just pick up a glass and take a drink so that the ice doesn't clink in the glass and sound like a thunderstorm on the soundtrack and so that the lights don't reflect on the glass. The technicians work like blazes to cover for them. Now Spencer Tracy, when he is told 'Stub out your cigarette and take a drink', he doesn't ask, 'What is the hidden motivation?' He just does it. And he can do it so the ice doesn't clink."

Grant tells me he is off to Spain to make *The Pride and the Passion* with Sophia Loren and Frank Sinatra. He and his wife Betsy Drake, he says, will go on a freighter. They don't care for the large liners. On a

small freighter nobody is trying to pull off a social coup by making the acquaintance of a film celebrity. People behave naturally. Grant is a great believer in people behaving naturally.

He presents a picture of an eminently civilised, relaxed and intelligent person. After thirty years in films he is still a top box-office draw. "I get £60,000 a picture," he says, but adds the inevitable postscript, "I am not a rich man. It all goes on taxes."

In many ways he fails to conform to the Hollywood pattern. He doesn't give parties and doesn't go to them. Says he would rather read a book. "We don't have many friends—we just stay at home and read books. You always meet the same people at parties, and there is nothing new to talk about."

He tells me he has acquired a new interest now: hypnotism. Under hypnosis he was persuaded to give up smoking and drinking, although he had no particular urge to give up either.

"Can't stand the taste of alcohol or cigarettes now. Pity. Used to like it."

Seven p.m. Bel Air Hotel—remote, elegant hotel for privacy-hunters. I find Gregory Peck and new wife Veronique in a bungalow suite off the patio. Peck, the reluctant heart-throb, gives a smile of manly embarrassment. He seems to want to run away. His face is twisted into a look of worried concentration. I have asked: "What is it about you that gets all the women?" Former reporter Mrs. Peck gives him no help. She presumably knows—she came to interview him and stayed to marry him—but is saying nothing.

"It's nothing I do consciously in the way of mannerisms or tricks that might be effective as far as women are concerned," he says unhappily. He drinks his beer and Mrs. Peck smiles enigmatically, says nothing, looks chic, smooth, Parisienne in mink. "Whatever it is, that

I've got," says Peck, "if I've got it, I'd better be thankful and leave it alone."

Mrs. Peck says, "It's because of what he is. . . ." She looks at him tenderly.

Mr. Peck says, "Let's talk about something else."

Eight-thirty p.m. Wherever you drive in Hollywood, wild neon signs tell you what to eat, what to see, what car to buy and where to be buried. There used to be a neon sign saying *Sleep with the Stars at Forest Lawn*. (Forest Lawn is the extremely commercial and successful cemetery out here.) But the sign seems to have been removed. Somebody must have decided that carrying star-worship into the grave was going too far.

Eight-forty-five p.m. Humphrey Bogart has invited me to his house for a drink. It is a beautiful house, with marble floors, the inevitable built-in bar and a most respectable collection of paintings. He says, "The people who are superior about Hollywood are those who were too inferior to make it here. A dull place? You've got everything here. You've got sun, snow, golf, sailing, good conversation, gambling, terrific scenery—all within a couple of hours. Anything you could want."

Lauren Bacall comes in, slinky and sleek in black.

We talk about Bernard Shaw, Shakespeare. "I can't stand this idea," says Bogart, "that all the good actors are in the theeyetar and that movies are for jerks."

I ask Bogart how it is that at the age of fifty-six he is now at the peak of his success as an actor.

"There's no one new coming up," he says.

Nine-thirty p.m. Dinner at Romanoff's with producer Sy Bartlett, actress Valerie French and English writer T. E. B. Clarke. This is the most fashionable (and most expensive) restaurant in Hollywood. The royal motif, a crown above a double R, is to be found on walls, crockery and napkins. A painting of Prince Mike Romanoff is enthroned above the bar. An unfashionable customer



Ava Gardner, the aphrodite of the atom-age, in a party mood—
at a party.

(Keystone)



The incomparable Katharine Hepburn (*above*) drinks mineral water while filming.

Ingrid Bergman (*below*) arriving in New York, after an exile of nearly eight years.

(Associated Press)



Joan Collins (*above*) presents some British competition for American glamour—Jayne Mansfield (*below*).



who asked, "How long will I have to wait for a table?" was once told, "For ever."

Midnight. I meet Joan Collins at a party. She is with Arthur Loew, Jun., son of the boss of MGM. Miss Collins is usually with Arthur Loew, Jun., these days.

I notice that she has given up costume jewellery, has now taken to wearing the genuine stuff. "Just a few trinkets Arthur gave me for Christmas," she explains. "Trinkets" include a dazzling diamond ring and a star-sapphire.

Three a.m. At *Ciro's*, the principal Hollywood nightclub, I hear about a producer who bought a story as a vehicle for Shirley Booth, then changed his mind and decided to make it a vehicle for Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. I also hear a story about the stick-up man who said, "Hated the picture. Give me all their money back."

Eleven-thirty a.m., Monday. Outside Beverly Hills Hotel. I am about to tip the boy in the leather jerkin and jeans who, I think, has called me a taxi, when I recognise him as the millionaire producer Mike Todd. I do not tip him.

Noon. I am sitting by Alan Ladd's swimming pool. I find Ladd almost as silent and expressionless off-screen as he is on. I gather he has no gun for hire, but he will gladly sell me some pots and pans if I come to his hardware store.

Mrs. Ladd, plump, homely, and fortyish, says: "Alan is such a worrier." Dead-pan, tough-guy Ladd, I learn, worries about the children if they are out late, about his career, his fan mail.

Does Mrs. Ladd worry about anything? About her famous husband being exposed to the seductive charms of his leading ladies? "Oh no," says Mrs. Ladd; "it would be different if my husband were the sort of man

who would chase after these girls. But no normal man would do that." Mr. Ladd remains silent, dead-pan, expressionless. Mrs. Ladd says, "I'm not the worrying kind."

Three p.m. In her dressing-room at 20th Century-Fox I meet Hollywood's untempestuous redhead—Deborah Kerr. She is one of the most popular people out here. Everyone adores her. Now at the peak of her success, she has just finished her starring and singing role in the 5,000,000-dollar production *The King and I*. Miss Kerr is frank when I ask if she can sing.

"A little," she says. "As a matter of fact I don't do all the singing in the film. I sing what I can do—and the high notes which I can't reach a professional singer does for me. It's a sort of composite voice. Never been done before, but it has worked out remarkably well."

In her next film Miss Kerr tells me she will play a nun who has a strictly emotional relationship with a marine (Robert Mitchum).

When the film was announced, Catholic organisations objected. So the nun will be an Episcopalian.

"The Episcopalians aren't so well organised," explains a studio executive.

Four-thirty p.m. I observe that Hollywood is a place where men stop to look at the bodies of beautiful cars instead of the bodies of beautiful girls.

Five-thirty p.m. I have an appointment with Mario Lanza. It is cancelled and I am informed he has pneumonia. A little later I am told he has recovered, but when I go along to see him will I please overlook the fact that he has put on 60 lb.? I am about to leave for Lanza's house when there is another phone call. I cannot see him—Mr. Lanza has had a relapse.

Or, maybe, he put on another five pounds at lunch.

Five-forty-five p.m. Walking along Sunset Strip, past

the Mocambo, the Norma Talmadge Building, the Crosby Building, past Rooney Inc., I go into Schwab's Pharmacy, where the starlets are said to congregate for milk-shakes—and the stars sometimes drop in for a hamburger. Not a star in sight. Not even a starlet. This is Hollywood.

Nine p.m. I go to a Hollywood première—of the film *Carousel*—at Grauman's Chinese Theatre.

The theatre is built in the style of a Chinese temple and the usherettes are dressed-up like mandarins. In the forecourt the footprints of the stars have been captured in concrete, but you would have to be a Sherlock Holmes to get very worked up about anybody's footprints—even Miss Monroe's. It is not a very fashionable première. People arrive wearing sports jackets.

Gold dust has been sprinkled along the road leading to the theatre, and caricatures of stars have been painted on the pavements. Searchlights sweep the sky. But I still cannot rid myself of the notion that I am back at the Dominion, Tottenham Court Road.

Eleven p.m. I am dining with brilliant producer-director Otto Preminger. We are approached by a tall diffident man, who says: "Do you remember me . . . we met on the set. . . ."

I conclude it is some bit player looking for work. Preminger says, "Sit down; have a drink", and introduces me to Tom O'Neil. Then he adds to me in a whispered aside, "He's the man who just bought RKO for twenty-five million dollars."

Two a.m. Night-club scene. Randolph Scott, incongruously dressed in dinner suit, is quoting Sir Winston Churchill.

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Money note: You pay for the privilege of being in Hollywood. At my hotel, an orange juice cost 5s. 3d.,

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the cleaning of one shirt cost 7s., a haircut £2, and breakfast usually came to 25s. Food is good, and so plentiful that Asia could live on what America leaves behind on its plate.

This was Hollywood at first sight: a place of many faces—some of them rather over-painted, others badly in need of a face-lift.

You will have gathered that it does not flaunt its vices in the face of the visitor; that many of its residents are charming, courteous, pleasant and eminently respectable people.

You will sympathise with me on the way many of my worst illusions were shattered. I had found that Hollywood was not the gold-plated dustbin it is sometimes made out to be. I felt as if I had set out for cannibal territory only to find that the natives are all vegetarians.

Chapter 2

THE FIRST DEADLY SIN?

I HAD been in Hollywood four days when I met Grace Kelly and discovered what seemed suspiciously like the first of the deadly sins.

Although Miss Kelly was instrumental in my making this discovery, she is not the sin in question nor is she guilty of practising it.

This was the time just after her engagement to Prince Rainier had been announced. Her father, the brick-layer turned millionaire, had made a speech which might have been written by Andy Hardy's own father. Louis B. Mayer would have wept at the expression of such solidly American sentiments. Mr. Kelly said: "We call the Prince Joe, because he is a good Joe. For us the family has always been the centre of our lives; it will go on that way. When I saw the way things were between Grace and Rainier I stepped in. I laid it right on the line to him. I told him that royalty does not mean a thing to us. I told him I certainly hoped he would not run around like some princes do. I told him that if he did, he had lost a mighty fine girl. His answer, and I believe it, was that he is a stay-at-home. Grace won't let him be anything besides a family man. Grace has a stubborn little Irish streak in her and she always gets what she wants."

Said Grace's sister Peggy, "Grace will take it all in her stride. After all, she played a princess in her last film."

Said Grace's brother John, "Rainier seems a pretty

nice guy although a little shy. But he would never make an oarsman, hands too small."

Hollywood was not so unanimous. The question of whether Miss Kelly should marry the Prince was a topic of heated discussion at every barbecue, preview, hypnosis party and psycho-analysis get-together. I tried to find out why people thought it a good thing for Miss Kelly to marry the Prince. There were several reasons:

Hollywood is a locale where the only kind of royalty they can call their own is Prince Mike Romanoff, restaurateur. Even though Monaco is a pretty small kingdom it is bigger than Romanoff's.

In a sense the romance was a vindication of the Hollywood film: Miss Kelly's story was a shooting script come true. At last life had caught up with Hollywood and was arranging matters in the best MGM tradition. Writers with rejected scripts in their drawers could get them out and claim: it really happens.

Hollywood is the city with the soft centre: it weeps at its own corn and believes its own legends. It was touched at the idea of this wealthy Cinderella getting her prince.

Anyone who knew Grace Kelly in Hollywood would now be able to say, "Let's go to Monte Carlo and drop in on the Prince."

I also found out why people were against the marriage. You were against it if you had not been invited to the wedding; if you wanted to marry Miss Kelly yourself; if you thought being a princess was a waste of Miss Kelly's beauty; if you thought your friends knew Miss Kelly slightly better than you did and might get the social edge on you; and if you were just plain bored by the whole business.

I was in Hollywood when the excitement was at its height, and when you were not discussing whether the wedding should take place you were theorising about why Miss Kelly had said "Yes". You had to have a theory. Not to have a theory about Miss Kelly meant that you were not in the know and therefore not worth knowing. It was the quickest way to ensure social ostracism.

Everybody had a theory. They ranged from the simple one (only advanced by the naïve or the very powerful) that it was simply a straightforward love match.

There were also the anthropological-psychological theories which set out to prove that it was all pre-determined; it was the continuation of the pattern; the Irish bricklayer immigrant comes to the New World, makes a fortune—and his daughter becomes the international symbol of the cult of aristocratic lady-like behaviour. Who else in these circumstances could she marry except a prince without seeming to be guilty of retrogression?

The question then arose: why should Miss Kelly want a kingdom not much bigger than the MGM lot? One could attribute it to an inadequate knowledge of geography on her part or to a quirk of the feminine mind. But I heard a better if slightly Freudian explanation. It went like this:

Papa Kelly was once told that he could not race at Henley because he "had worked with his hands" and therefore was "not a gentleman". Kelly angrily entered the Olympics, where he gave the Henley victor a thorough thrashing.

That the daughter of the man who was "not a gentleman" should have become the outstanding "lady" of the cinema was surely no accident. And the only way of becoming even more of a lady than any leading lady can possibly be is to become a princess. The progress from

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being a bricklayer to being the father-in-law of a prince was the perfect American success story.

Miss Kelly was already granting audiences before she became a princess. I was "received" by her shortly after she became engaged.

I found the allegedly icy Miss Kelly radiant and defrosted. She seemed an abnormally normal girl in beige slacks and a shirt, everybody's ideal kid sister. You would have thought that her ambitions would be confined to the tennis courts. She was the kind of delicate, lukewarm blonde who would readily be acknowledged as the belle of the country-club ball. You thought she had probably taken a correspondence course in regality. She appeared to be shy and fragile, and democratically regal.

Though America (and possibly Alaska, Thailand, Japan and Iceland, too) was in a fever of excitement about her wedding, Miss Kelly remained calm. You could not tell whether she enjoyed all the fuss or detested it. You could not tell how she felt about anything really, for her emotions (if nobody else's) were very much under control.

I asked her if she had ever had the childhood ambition of becoming a princess. She giggled.

"No," she said; "I wanted to be an FBI agent. Then, later, I wanted to be an actress."

"And now that you are to be a princess can you face the idea of giving up acting?"

"We haven't decided about that yet. I haven't discussed it yet with the Prince."

"You'd like to continue?"

"I'd like to, but we haven't made any decisions."

"Is there any constitutional reason why a princess of Monaco cannot also be a film star of Hollywood?" I persisted.

“Well, it’s never been done before,” she said.

Miss Kelly was being terribly polite—and so remote you would have needed an extending ladder to reach her.

I said: “Are you as icy as people say?”

Sometimes it is necessary to provoke people you are interviewing into revealing themselves by being considerably blunter than you would be in normal conversation.

She betrayed the first sign of animation. Blood came to her face: the first blob of paint on a bare canvas. She had no automatic answer ready—and, in replying, had to depend on her own personality instead of the publicity-man’s briefing.

“People who know me don’t think that of me,” she said.

“Then how did you acquire the tag Iceberg?”

“I suppose because of the parts I play.”

“Don’t you resent that such a misconception about you should have arisen?”

“No. Not as long as my friends know what I am really like.”

“And you are really warm?”

“That’s for others to judge.”

It was not a line of conversation that could progress much further: for although my questions were not put in a too serious tone of voice (which gave her the opportunity to answer in the same vein and possibly make a joke), Miss Kelly’s answers were serious.

I tried another line. I said I found it surprising that the photographs from which the stamps of her future kingdom would be made had been taken at a special stills session at the MGM studios. I remarked that I thought it somehow inappropriate that the stamps of Monaco should be issued, so to speak, by courtesy of MGM.

“Why?” she said, flaring up and showing a tough

streak. "You don't think that because it is a film studio they can only take cheesecake pictures. The photographs they have taken are very suitable. They know my best angles here." I said I was relieved to hear we would not be getting cheesecake postage stamps from Monaco, and that all her angles were excellent.

I noticed that she had very good, clear, well-cut features, all arranged neatly and tidily—a face that had been designed on a drawing-board. Her life—or should one say her schedule?—had been arranged with equal precision, I had heard.

She said she had not had time to make any plans. She had been too busy working in the studios where she was making a film called *High Society*. She had not even had time to think about getting together her trousseau.

But an MGM official was more knowledgeable. He said her wedding gown was being designed by MGM's top dress designer and that it would be decorated with 125-year-old Brussels lace; that she would be wearing a juliet cap, which is a sort of skull cap; that MGM were not releasing the sketches of the gown until a week before the wedding, because otherwise somebody might copy it before the wedding took place. As far as Miss Kelly's trousseau was concerned, he assured me that MGM would be making a gift to her of the 15,000-dollars'-worth of dresses which she would be wearing in the film *High Society*, and Miss Kelly was reciprocating in part by wearing Prince Rainier's engagement ring for her role in the film.

I admired the ring and asked what sort of stone it was.

"It's a—a—well—a diamond," said Miss Kelly uncertainly.

"It is a white diamond, emerald cut," said the helpful gentleman from MGM with authority. When I asked about the honeymoon arrangements, I was surprised that for once MGM actually knew less than Miss Kelly.

At that time the Prince was staying at a palatial house in Bel Air with fifteen rooms and a private cinema. Miss Kelly had a smaller house twenty-five minutes' drive away on the Pacific Ocean. Miss Kelly had a swimming pool, the Prince did not. He came to her house to swim. She went to his house to see movies.

The Prince, I gathered, was not too keen on all the publicity to which he was being subjected. But he gritted his teeth and bore it, murmuring, one assumes, "I do this for Monaco."

In preparation for her new off-screen role Miss Kelly was taking daily lessons in French and her teacher reported that she was making good progress. She was also having her handkerchiefs monogrammed with the royal double G.

I said to Miss Kelly, "You have taken on quite a job. You will have to do a lot of formal entertaining and run a palace. Are you going to enjoy that?"

"Yes, I think so," she said.

I thought about her taste for practical jokes and her tendency to giggle, and wondered whether there were not going to be some awkward moments in the palace at Monaco. But I felt sure that if Miss Kelly should ever get into any difficulties, MGM, with all its accumulated know-how on such matters, would always be ready to help out its princess.

The likelihood of Miss Kelly getting into any difficulties is, however, remote. She is her father's daughter and a determined girl. She has strong and positive ideas.

When she arrived at her palace after the wedding, she told her husband that she wanted to redecorate the place and get rid of all the "old furniture". Apparently she also wanted to streamline the staff of advisers around Rainier and to introduce American "efficiency" into the rambling palace.

I recalled, when I heard this, that Henry Hathaway, the director who discovered Grace Kelly, had told me: "She was real plain when we found her, but such a determined girl. If she is beautiful now, she must have acquired the beauty through sheer will-power."

It seems that if you put your mind to it and are ambitious enough you can become anything: a beauty and film star. And a princess. Of course it helps if your father is a millionaire.

The thing that interested me about Miss Kelly was the way in which she had managed to bring out Hollywood's latent snobbery. You may say that nobody could have treated the Prince more casually if he had been a soda-jerk, and this should prove a lack of snobbishness. The Press subjected him to a series of cross-examinations that revealed little regard for protocol. Miss Kelly's father called him a "good Joe" and read him a lecture on decent behaviour. MGM helped him out with the stamps for his kingdom.

But was not everyone a bit too casual, somewhat excessively off-hand? American snobbery is of the inverted kind: there they get a kick, not out of genuflecting before royalty, but out of slapping kings on the back and calling princesses "Honey".

Could the First Deadly Sin of Hollywood be snobbery?

Chapter 3

THE FLAMBOYANT SET

I HAVE always had a considerable affection for flamboyant characters. Possibly because as a newspaperman I recognise that other people's flamboyances are my bread and butter. It may be extremely commendable for a person—and especially a star—to be modest, self-effacing and unaffected, but it isn't copy. Some of the nicest people in show business are also some of the dullest. As a columnist who is obliged to find new and colourful people to write about each week, I have a vested interest in flamboyance, which is probably why I was reluctant to regard this trait as one of Hollywood's deadliest sins.

However, people not professionally dependent on the eccentricities and excesses of film stars do not hesitate to condemn some aspects of Hollywood life as vulgar. To them sensationalism is definitely a sin.

Mr. Victor Rothschild, the oil tycoon husband of Vera-Ellen, had no compunction about telling me that he found much of Hollywood life objectionable: he could not tolerate the immodest, undignified and showy way in which certain stars behaved.

Mr. Rothschild is not unique in holding this point of view. So I decided I had better find out exactly how showy Hollywood people were—and whether they carried their loudness to such an extreme that it would qualify as a deadly sin.

I started this particular line of enquiry with Liberace, who is certainly showy. He is a master self-publicist and

was obviously feeling that Grace Kelly had stolen some of his carefully planned thunder. Knowing that royalty, especially British royalty, is always news, he committed a calculated gaffe on TV by saying in an interview with Ed Murrow, "I was reading about Princess Margaret and she is looking for her dream man, too—I'd like to meet her very much because I think we have a lot in common. We have the same tastes in theatre and music. Besides, she is pretty and single."

It was a couple of days after he said this that I met him. He was aware that the British newspapers had thought his statement impertinent and had not treated him very gently.

I had written about him some things that were definitely not complimentary. But despite this he invited me to lunch. (He ignored the *à la carte* and ordered from the 1.80-dollar fixed-price menu, and then proceeded to tell me how he was paid 45,000 dollars a week at Las Vegas.)

We had driven in his Cadillac (one of his few possessions not shaped like a grand piano) to a hotel in Los Angeles to see a performing dog do an imitation of him at a midday cabaret.

"I have lots of imitators," said Liberace. "All imitation is flattering." I cannot say that the performing dog was particularly flattering, but Wladziv Valentino Liberace ("Call me Lee") beamed and clapped enthusiastically and muttered, "Wasn't he cute!" He was almost as embarrassingly cute as Liberace himself. But with one advantage. Dogs cannot smile. Liberace can—and does all the time.

Liberace, the piano player with the sex appeal at his fingertips, wanted my advice. He was coming to London later in the year and he did not know whether to take the Albert Hall or the Festival Hall for his concert. "Which holds the most?" he asked me. "There will be a lot of

people anxious to see me in the flesh. We must get them all in."

I suggested that he should take the Harringay Arena and explained that was where they put on circuses. He thought it might be a good place.

He was wearing his traditional day uniform: shirt decorated with pianos, tie spotted with pianos, piano-shaped cuff-links and a suit that was almost luminous. "People love to see me dress up," he explained. "It gives them a thrill. I do it for my public. They enjoy seeing me wear luxurious clothes. I'll do anything for my public." He added, "My great virtue is that I have no vanity. Sometimes people criticise me, but when they meet me they can't help liking me."

I asked him if he did not think that wearing a beaver-lamb coat was going a bit far in providing his public with vicarious sartorial thrills.

"No," he said. "People only think it is strange because nobody else has done it before. But I am the forerunner of fashions. I started the trend for ruffle shirts and tasselled loafer shoes. Now everybody wears them."

A fan came over and asked for his autograph and inquired after his mother's health. "You see," said Liberace, turning to me, "I belong to my public. So does my mother. And my brother. They are all a part of my personality. I am a great family man. I only haven't got married yet because I couldn't find a girl who would be willing to share me with my public. I can't give myself completely to any girl. The public also has its rights."

I asked why, having given himself to his public in a film called *Sincerely Yours*, his public had been so ungrateful as to stay away from it in large numbers.

"They didn't sell me properly," he said. "You remember the line 'Garbo speaks' when she made her first

talkie? And 'Brando sings' when he made *Guys and Dolls*? Well, they should have sold the film with the line, 'And now Liberace acts!'"

I said Warner Bros. may have thought that wasn't, strictly speaking, true. He ignored the remark and continued to beam his smile all around the room with the doggedness of a radio transmitter.

He said, "You know I got into trouble because of what I said about Princess Margaret. I didn't mean any offence. My object in life is to give happiness to people.

"The fact that I earn 45,000 dollars a week at Las Vegas is incidental. The public like me to earn a lot of money. It gives them a thrill. Now about the Princess. All I meant was I'd like to meet her because I think we have so much in common and we'd enjoy each other. I know people thought it strange of me to say this, because she is royalty and I'm a commoner. The thing is, I don't think of myself as a commoner."

I advised Liberace, when he comes to London, to keep quiet on the subject of why he wants to meet Princess Margaret, and to try hard to think of himself as a commoner.

The career of Liberace defies rational explanation. In 1954, at the age of thirty-three, he earned over a million dollars. His TV series has an audience of 35,000,000.

When you ask Liberace to explain his success, he does not attribute it to his skill as a pianist. He attributes it to his personality and his innate goodness. In turgid prose, he will explain that his mission in life is to bring happiness to people. "I talked to an archbishop the other day," he said, "and he told me, 'You and I, we do the same sort of work'."

His programmes in America now include, as a regular feature, an oration from Liberace in which he "just chats about life".



(Associated Press)

Frank Sinatra—and harem girls. This masquerade was part of the festivities for the re-opening of a gambling palace in Las Vegas.



Gina Lollobrigida is momentarily distracted during discussion with her director, Sir Carol Reed, (*right*). They were making the circus film "Trapeze".

"I think I am such a big success," he says, "because people know I am good. Bad people can have temporary successes, but in the long run the public will only stick by you if they know and feel your goodness."

Drooling on in this way he manages to be for the public a kind of one-man Moral Rearmament campaign. A measure of the public's response is that on St. Valentine's Day he receives about 30,000 cards.

Seeing him in the flesh you notice immediately that he is—well, fleshy. He tells you happily about his gold lamé suits designed by a Paris couturier; about his mirrored bathroom and all his piano-shaped furniture and accessories. He makes a wisecrack about his piano-shaped swimming pool. "I went to a friend the other day and I wanted to take a swim in his pool. But I couldn't. It wasn't tuned." This joke makes him laugh—and his face becomes schoolboyish when he laughs. "I saw a burlesque show," he says coyly; "they had girls, you know, wearing just—well, just a few stars." He adds in wonder, "In Paris they have girls with completely bare bosoms. Nothing at all. Without even stars. Gee! I can never quite get used to that. Must be embarrassing."

I find myself taking a ghoulish interest in his suits. But otherwise I am un-fascinated by the man. For me, his personality is outshone by his tailor's.

Obviously he has failed to heed one of the golden rules on how to be a personality: Don't stand for any competition from your tailor—you can't win.

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Rossano Brazzi does not stand for any undue competition from *his* tailor: he dresses with taste and discretion, and he lives in a normally designed house. *His* flamboyances take a different form.

Within half an hour of meeting him you are given to understand that where women are concerned Casanova

was a mere novice, and Don Juan was just small-time. The maestro—in these matters—is Signor Rossano Brazzi.

If his conversation is somewhat Rabelaisian and his opinions of himself seem conceited, you must excuse him on the grounds that he is an Italian.

According to Brazzi, no woman has ever been able to resist him if he set out to charm her. "If ever that happen," says the maestro, "then I retire and I ask the Italian Government for a pension." He adds that he can see no prospect of a State pension for a long time to come.

Signor Brazzi is an uninhibited, roisterous character who might be described as a male Diana Dors. With his blue eyes and made-to-measure nose, he would be a bit of a pretty boy were he not saved by the grey hair and the lines of maturity on his face.

On the screen he has become the matrons' delight with his performance in the film *Summer Madness*. But off the screen, he intimates, he is the delight of woman-kind at large. He shrugs this off with unconvincing modesty. "Well, I am not a hunchback," he says. "What do women see in me? I have never thought about it."

Hollywood has fallen completely for the Brazzi line. They see in him a Boyer and a Valentino rolled into one. "They pay me £100,000 plus a percentage of the profits to play in *South Pacific*. But I am not interested really in cash. Or I could ask for any amount. I could ask for the MGM studios. They are saying about me that I am the strongest for charm-personality on the screen."

He continues, "There is a new trend in movies now. The public is getting sick of the tough-guy leading men. They are going back to the romantic hero. But this time he must be romantic and masculine. Women, let me tell

you, they do not like to be treated too gently. They want a man to be masculine. No woman has ever slapped my face. She knows I would slap her right back. . . .”

About women, Brazzi can talk endlessly and with the enthusiasm of an adolescent. He knows more about them than Dr. Kinsey, and he does not need to take a poll to get his information. Knowledge has made him cynical.

“Women,” he says, “are much harder than men. Only a man can get all twisted up by love. To a woman what matters is who he is, how much he earns, and what position he holds in the world. No woman can love for longer than fifteen days. But I do not complain. They are all delightful creatures.”

I asked Brazzi, since he was such an authority on the subject, what three women he would take with him if he were cast away on a desert island.

“That is very difficult,” he said gravely, “if one is limited to three. But I would take Katharine Hepburn. With her the sex-appeal comes from the mind. Sometimes this is good. I would take Cyd Charisse, because she has the most beautiful legs. And I would take Marilyn Monroe, because she is *molto sympatica*.”

I expressed horror that he should have omitted from his list his compatriot Gina Lollobrigida, and his co-star of a previous film, Ava Gardner.

It was an unforgivable oversight, I said, for a man who claimed to be such a connoisseur of women.

“No,” he said, “it is not an oversight. Ava Gardner—to me she is sexless. Lollobrigida? To me she has the sex-appeal of a waxwork.”

My encounters with Liberace and Brazzi had amused me, but they failed to produce in me any degree of moral indignation.

I felt that if I was to become genuinely outraged I would have to find someone who practised his excesses on a more formidable scale. So I sought out Errol Flynn,

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Hollywood's repatriated playboy. I found him in the best of form at the Coconut Grove, introducing himself to Zsa Zsa Gabor by planting a series of enthusiastic kisses along her outstretched arm.

Then he turned to the microphone and shrugged apologetically. "I've been away," he said by way of explanation.

He shot a roguish sidelong glance at Zsa Zsa and added vehemently, "But I'm back now." The customers at the night-club, which is practically the size of the Taj Mahal and has the same kind of décor, guffawed with delight—except for Mrs. Flynn, actress Patrice Wymore, who, I noticed, arched her eyebrows and refrained from smiling.

Mr. Flynn then said that he had been away so long he had not yet met Marilyn Monroe. Again the old roguish gleam. And then the announcement, "I'll get around to that, too." Again the guffaws.

This time Mrs. Flynn, sitting under an indoor palm tree, was noticeably frowning. After four years of exile in Europe, Flynn had returned to his old hunting ground.

When I went over to his table afterwards I discovered how much it had cost him to come back: the figure was 600,000 dollars. This was part of the amount he owed—and had to pay in order to be able to return.

"Who on earth could you owe that much money to?" I asked him. He shrugged and said, "My wives, bless 'em. It's all gone to them in back alimony, child support, taxes and taxes on the alimony. My dear chap, you have no idea how expensive ex-wives are. They have wrung me dry.

"I'm broke. But at least I'm in the clear now. I've settled with them. At last I can see the light of day. I still have other debts—but in two years I will have paid off another 300,000 dollars and then I'll be all right."

Flynn admitted that he once possessed a fortune of

11,000,000 dollars—and spent it all. “I had a well mispent youth,” he said. Now he could not even afford to buy a car. He had to rent one and live modestly at a hotel called the Garden of Allah.

I said, “I can see it’s pretty expensive to get married in Hollywood.” He said, “Depends on who you marry and what sort of lawyers they’ve got.”

“And was it worth 600,000 dollars?”

“Every cent—considering the high cost of living these days.”

I asked Flynn whether he had changed—or was he still the same playboy?

“Let us say that the playboy tendencies are latent—and that I have become more discreet,” he replied. “I have a very tolerant wife who finds my pranks amusing. Also she is very short-sighted and cannot see a thing when she takes her glasses off. Mind you, there are certain barriers I don’t overstep now. But don’t say I’m reformed. That makes me sound so dull.”

I promised I wouldn’t say he had reformed.

“Just a little tamed,” he said as the tolerant Mrs. Flynn arched her eyebrows again.

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You may disapprove of Liberace, Mr. Brazzi and Mr. Flynn (many people do), but I found they each had at least one virtue. They are all larger than life at a time when stars tend to be facsimiles.

Hollywood today does not have many fabulous characters left. Most of the stars have become businessmen (who get percentages of the takings of their films) and unfortunately are beginning to look and behave like businessmen.

James Mason told me: “Undoubtedly there was a time when movie queens were mad illiterate bums who did crazy things. In those days this business must have had

some glamour. Now we try to convince the world that we are all ordinary, decent folk. Nothing could be more harmful to the Hollywood legend.”

The changes which have taken place in Hollywood were inevitable. As the picture business became more scientific, there was less scope for the irrational, intuitive individualists who made films on hunches. The result is that today Hollywood films are better; but anecdotes about Hollywood are fewer.

There was a period when a girl could become a star on the strength of a smile and two facial expressions. Now a little more is required. Also, it takes longer to become a success today and people are therefore more prepared for fame and less likely when they get it to throw their money around in a wild, reckless and vulgar way.

Seeing ex-movie idols ending their lives in State or charitable institutions must also have an inhibiting effect on the current idols and inspire in them a degree of thrift and caution.

Laudable as most of the changes are, I cannot help feeling that in a way it is a pity the business should have become so respectable. The early days of Hollywood, one feels, were at least amusing.

In his autobiography *A Tree is a Tree* King Vidor, a veteran Hollywood director, has some stories to tell which give the flavour of the place in the days of John Gilbert and Lillian Gish. He makes it sound fun.

Vidor had to direct Loretta Taylor in *Peg o' My Heart*. She was forty-two, looked seventy in a screen test—and was supposed to be eighteen in the story. An age-reducing gadget was devised. A spotlight, with rifle sight attached, was focused on Miss Taylor's face, the operator keeping a bead on her all the time. “This served to burn out some of the lines around the eyes and created a false but perfectly formed jaw and chin shadow,” says Vidor. The result: Miss Taylor looked sixteen.

Lillian Gish thought that a love story in which there was no actual contact between the lovers would be highly effective. She wanted to be kissed by John Gilbert, then the screen's Great Lover, only through a window-pane. The story was shot without any physical embraces between the lovers. Then the MGM executives saw it—and the window-panes were removed. The love scenes were reshot the conventional way.

In order to be convincing in a death scene (says Mr. Vidor) Miss Gish did not drink any liquids for three days and kept cotton pads in her mouth even in her sleep. She grew paler and thinner.

Vidor describes the death scene: "She neither exhaled nor inhaled. I began to fear she had played her part too well." The explanation was that she had trained herself to get along without visible breathing.

Whatever role John Gilbert played on the screen he continued to live off the screen, we are told.

"If his new assignment were a dashing Cossack officer," says Vidor, "John would hire Russian servants in his household, and guests would be entertained with a balalaika orchestra while they were served vodka and caviare. At one time, due no doubt to a new film role, John began to picture himself as the owner and master of a fine sailing schooner." The schooner was christened *The Temptress*, in honour of Greta Garbo, with whom, says Vidor, Gilbert's friendship endured for a long time. But often Garbo would be eccentric. Gilbert invited friends to dinner on his ship on one occasion. At five o'clock, when the guests were due to arrive, the boat sailed away without them.

Vidor comments, "We could only conclude that Greta had been displeased and had given her famous pronouncement: 'I want to be alone—I think I go home.'"

Gilbert, who used to earn £180,000 a year, would sleep

with a large loaded automatic pistol at his side and practise aiming it before he fell asleep.

William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper owner, took a very close interest in the films made by his friend, actress Marion Davies. He objected to a scene in which she was to receive a custard pie in her face. Eventually he compromised by settling for a stream from a siphon bottle. To ensure that the "siphon didn't turn into a stream from a fire-hose" he temporarily set up office on the film set.

Film Tycoon David Selznick once instructed Vidor, "Just give me three wonderful love scenes. I don't care what story you use so long as we call it *Bird of Paradise* and Dolores del Rio jumps into a flaming volcano at the finish." Vidor did as instructed.

Story conferences were held in trains, in bedrooms—and in a car on the way to a funeral. Strangely enough, very good films were sometimes made: some of them by Vidor.

Adolph Zukor, the film tycoon who invented the star system, tells us in his book *The Public is Never Wrong* about the remarkable Mr. John Barrymore. Apparently he was apt to disappear during film production and would have to be traced from one bar to another. "Once in bed," we are told, "he was likely as not to forget all about the film and begin to paint."

Zukor starred Rudolph Valentino in *The Sheik*, starting a world-wide craze and a lasting legend. But he was not as charmed by Valentino as the public—who were never wrong. "All his life," he says, "Valentino was in debt, from one dollar to 100,000, according to his status." It seems he would become dissatisfied with his dressing quarters, wishing to be surrounded in the splendour of a powerful sheik of the desert.

Today, there are no Valentinos or John Gilberts. But there is Mike Todd. Mr. Todd, apart from his achievements

as a film producer (he made *Round the World in Eighty Days*), is likely to be remembered as a Hollywood character. His intake of caviare is phenomenal, and when he gambles he does not do so on any petty scale: he does not merely lose money, he loses the horses which ran in the race and the track on which they raced.

It is said that he used to wear a green suit to attract attention. But he denies this vehemently. "Just a green jacket," he says. By the age of eighteen Todd had made his first million. He used to put on high-class leg shows, saying, "You gotta get a dame naked as artistically as you can."

More recently he sold his rights in *Oklahoma* for "something over 4,000,000 dollars", and said, "I can't remember the exact figure. I can't ever remember anything under a million."

Undoubtedly Mr. Todd is another man of whom people like Mr. Victor Rothschild would disapprove. He is certainly showy and inclined to be immodest. When I asked him why he called his panoramic screen process Todd A-O, he replied, "Because I like the sound of my own name."

I have a feeling that Hollywood today desperately needs people who like the sound of their own names, who will be loud and ostentatious and perhaps a trifle vulgar. Without them it would soon decline into being just a factory.

I came to the conclusion that flamboyance as such, far from being one of Hollywood's deadliest sins, is one of its liveliest virtues.

Chapter 4

HITTING THE HEADLINES

LIKE many another demi-mondaine, Hollywood is anxious to regain her reputation. One is constantly being told that everybody there does not dress like Liberace, misbehave like Errol Flynn or change husbands as frequently as Rita Hayworth.

I was being told all this for the umpteenth time by the suave gentleman representing the Motion Picture Producers Association of America who had invited me to lunch. He was reeling off statistics which were meant to prove that most stars stay happily married for long stretches at a time, never become involved in scandals and live normal, quiet, decent lives.

It was unfortunate, he said, that there were a few black sheep, who would be nameless so far as he was concerned, whose affairs kept getting in the headlines and who gave Hollywood a bad name.

"Life here," he said, "is pretty much the same as in any other small community."

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That evening I watched Susan Hayward as she stood professionally cool and beautiful under the hot arc-lamps being nominated for an Academy Award for her performance in the film *I'll Cry Tomorrow*. Not a tear in Miss Hayward's worldly eyes today. She had done all her crying.

"I'm so happy," she said, referring to her nomination.

And fifty million people well informed about her far-from-happy private life saw the bright public film star

smile on their TV screens as the nomination ritual was bounced across the United States from a studio in Hollywood.

Afterwards there was a party full of stars, the nominated and the unnominated. After all the ballyhoo, the gossip, the congratulations and the polite malice, Miss Hayward and I went to a cool dark bar and sat in a leather-upholstered alcove and she said again, "I am so happy." But she was referring to something else this time: to her divorce from Jess Barker, which was finally settled the previous day. His appeal had been turned down. She would not have to make over to him any of her property. Nor would she have to pay him alimony.

I offered my congratulations on the nomination—and the divorce.

She slipped her coat of wild mink off her shoulders; it looked pretty tame compared to Miss Hayward, whose hair is reddish and temperamental and whose eyes burn luminously in the artificial dusk of the bar.

She said, "I'm starving." We asked the waiter to bring some chicken sandwiches—urgently.

"At last," she said, "I'm free. It's all definitely, finally and absolutely finished. It's like having something on your back all this time and now it's no longer there." She spoke in a voice like black coffee without sugar.

Then she said, "I'm so hungry. I wish the waiter would bring those sandwiches."

I informed the waiter of Miss Hayward's hunger pangs and urged him to hurry.

"Are you likely to marry again?" I asked her.

"First I'm going to enjoy my freedom. I've had ten years of marriage. Marriage should be made more difficult and divorce much easier. There should be a compulsory engagement of one year before anyone can get married."

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I said, "Then nobody might ever get married."

Miss Hayward shrugged as if that might not be too bad an idea either.

You can understand her attitude. The break-up of her marriage was more than merely the failure of a human relationship: it was an incidental of the Hollywood success story. One of the causes, you might say, was financial incompatibility.

Miss Hayward, born Edythe Marrener, the daughter of a Coney Island barker, used to sell newspapers in the streets of Brooklyn as a child. Then she became Susan Hayward and a success. She also became tough.

When she married Jess Barker he was earning 9,850 dollars a year. Her income was more than double his—26,000 dollars. Later the gap widened. His earnings went down. Hers shot up. By 1950 she was making 200,000 dollars a year. Today her weekly pay packet is said to be 5,000 dollars.

I asked why she married Jess Barker, and she said in a voice that had an edge to it like a razor's, "I must have been in love with him. One only sees the qualities one wants to see in someone when one is in love."

I said, "And one only sees the qualities one doesn't want to see when one is out of love."

"Yes," said Miss Hayward, who was out of love and happy, "that is true."

"What are the qualities a husband ought to have?" I enquired academically.

She thought carefully and said, "Reliability, tenderness, strength and an equal income."

"You are going to have a job finding someone with an income equal to yours."

"No, there are lots of successful businessmen," she said.

"Elderly tycoons in soap or something. How dull."

"Not the ones I know," she said.

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On the middle finger of her right hand she wore the most magnificent and blinding diamond I have seen—seven bands of platinum studded with round and oblong stones.

“May I ask if it was a gift?” I said.

“No, I bought it myself. What a terribly sad thing to have to admit, a girl buying her own diamonds.”

It is of course one of the consequences of her success that she can afford to give herself far more magnificent gifts than could most men.

During most of her marriage it seems she was doing all the giving. Her husband earned practically nothing. There were rows. There were separations. All this time, according to Miss Hayward, she was never out of the list of the ten most popular stars at the box-office.

Her ex-husband has described her as having “the soul of a ballet dancer and the appetite of a truck driver”.

In April 1955 detectives discovered Susan Hayward in sky-blue pyjamas and a quilted dressing-gown lying on the floor of her home in Sherman Oaks suffering from an overdose of sleeping tablets.

Four days later, when she left hospital, leaning on the shoulders of a nurse, she had to face a battery of Press and newsreel cameras. I have seen the whole range of pictures taken on that occasion: they revealed that her professionalism had fortunately not deserted her. I could not help admiring her smile, her composure and dignity as she walked into the flashing cameras and piercing arc-lamps.

But Miss Hayward’s turbulent private life—which is about as public as any private life can be—was soon in the headlines again.

In November 1955 she was involved in an incident with a twenty-three-year-old starlet Jill Jarmyn. Miss Hayward was having coffee in the flat of actor Donald

Barry, when Miss Jarmyn turned up, too. Also for coffee.

Miss Jarmyn's story to the police of what happened then was as follows: "Susan flew into a rage. 'Who's this woman?' she asked. 'Get her out of here.' She [Miss Hayward] was like a wild woman and hit me over the head with a wooden hairbrush. She bit my thumb and tore buttons from my blouse. She knocked over a table, sending broken glass all over the room."

Miss Jarmyn asked the deputy city attorney for an "assault and battery" complaint to be made against Miss Hayward.

When Miss Hayward was traced to her attorney's house she said: "This young woman walked into the house without ringing about noon and made insulting remarks. I went for her. I don't recall it, but it is entirely possible that I picked up a hairbrush during the fight. I lost my temper and I'm sorry, but I'm sure she isn't hurt."

In a statement from Miss Hayward's studio the incident was described as "a tempest in a very small teapot". A few days later Miss Jarmyn said she would not seek a prosecution against Miss Hayward. She had changed her mind.

Naturally, I knew all about this (and Miss Hayward knew that I knew) when we met.

I said: "There have been some unfortunate stories about you in the papers lately."

She agreed they had been unfortunate.

"If you are a film star," she said, "the papers pick up everything you do. One day I shall tell the truth about those events. I'm writing a book, an autobiography. It helps me to understand myself. I've got to the age of eleven so far."

"'The Life and Loves of Susan Hayward'? Will you publish it while you are still in pictures?"

“Only if they put it on the front page of the most tabloid tabloid,” she said, her eyes laughing wickedly.

“Have there been many loves in your life?”

“Actually, only two. My children.”

“That is the most diplomatic answer I have ever heard.”

She smiled.

“And this is going to be the uncensored life of Susan Hayward? Can you write?” I asked.

“That remains to be seen. I can express myself. I’m learning to understand myself.”

“Did you ever go in for psychiatry?” I asked.

“We don’t go into that.”

“That means ‘Yes’, presumably?”

“We employed psychological marriage counsellors to try to patch up our marriage. But they gave all the wrong counsel.”

Studying her as we talked, I thought she had the look of a highly polished diamond with many facets, but one that is still sharp enough to cut.

There are girls in Hollywood whose outer hardness conceals only an inner hardness. Miss Hayward, I would say, is not in this class. She has miscalculated too often to be accused of being calculating. She struck me as being intelligent, gifted and blunt—down to earth without being earthy. An acknowledged glamour girl who does not talk with her hips, but in the normal way, and has things to say which are worth hearing. I liked her. But I might have been wrong. So I asked her about herself.

“What sort of person are you?” I asked.

“At the moment hungry.”

“At other times?”

“I quite like myself.”

“And do you also interest yourself?”

“Not to the exclusion of everything else in the world.”

"I suppose you must be pretty rich," I said.

"No. I'm not rich. Not in money. But in other ways I am now."

"In what ways?"

"In gaining wisdom, learning not to make the same mistakes again."

"What sort of mistakes?"

"I won't answer that."

Apart from being rich in unspecified wisdom, a little investigation reveals that Miss Hayward also has nine savings accounts and investments amounting to 250,000 dollars.

When she married Jess Barker a somewhat cold-blooded agreement was drawn up separating her income and property from his. It has stood up in court. Miss Hayward keeps her 47,000-dollar house and all her other possessions. She is a pretty rich girl.

I said: "One hears you are a very temperamental person?"

"Not in my work. But I guess I'm a schizophrenic: I'm temperamental in other ways. But I'm not playing king of the hill any more. I don't fight for parts in films as I used to. I don't have to now. But I fight for people who can't speak up for themselves."

In her own early days Miss Hayward always spoke up for herself. A story is told about the time she was being tested for Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone with the Wind*. She was seventeen and inexperienced. At one stage Director George Cukor interrupted her reading to give her some advice. At which, young Miss Hayward snapped at the famous director: "Listen, who is doing this part, you or me?" Another director of another film who kept changing his mind was once told, "You interrupt me once more and I'll brain you."

There is no doubt that she is a girl with a will of stainless steel. But even steel is subject to metal fatigue.

HITTING THE HEADLINES

There was the incident on April 26th, 1955, when she was found unconscious in her home suffering from an overdose of sleeping pills.

Miss Hayward throws out only one clue. She says, "I'm a woman. Not an adding machine."

But even if Miss Hayward is something of an adding machine, she has the very feminine failing of sometimes not adding up correctly.

I do not know how the gentleman from the Motion Picture Producers Association of America feels about Miss Hayward. Perhaps he thinks she has let Hollywood down by figuring in a highly publicised divorce case. Perhaps he believes that her story will encourage the idea that film stars are *not* all normal, ordinary simple people. In which case, I have another reason for being thoroughly in favour of Miss Hayward.

Because to me one of Hollywood's most irritating sins—though it is not one of the deadly ones—is telling the world that it is "just like any other small town".

Chapter 5

THE EXPATRIATES

I WANTED to see Marlon Brando, but he was in Tokyo. I wanted to see Bette Davis, but she was in Connecticut. I wanted to see Clark Gable, but he was in Mexico. I wanted to see Ava Gardner, but she was in Spain. I wanted to see Bob Hope, but he was in London.

There were at least a dozen other Hollywood stars who could be found anywhere except in Hollywood. Most of them were in Europe.

This was not just an accident. During the past eight years or so there has been a great exodus from Hollywood. The stars have left their Promised Land, with their Cadillacs on their backs, so to speak. They have flowed into Europe in search of culture, spaghetti, tradition, fried octopus and also, in some cases, in search of themselves.

Some, like Richard Basehart and Ingrid Bergman, did not return.

It is not possible to dismiss this wanderlust as part of the normal tourist instinct of the rich American. These stars were not tourists in the normal sense of the word: they were looking for something more than a picture-postcard view or a change of air. Some of them found what they were looking for.

Marilyn Monroe declares that she found herself when she left Hollywood and spent a year in New York—where, in addition to herself, she also found Dostoievsky, Actors' Studio, and Arthur Miller. Ava Gardner went to Spain and discovered flamenco dancing and bull-

fighters. Gregory Peck and Kirk Douglas found themselves French wives. Grace Kelly found happiness with a prince in Monte Carlo. Darryl F. Zanuck found happiness in the Casino at Cannes.

What particularly interested me was not so much what they had all found in Europe, but what, by implication, they had all failed to find in Hollywood. Humphrey Bogart had told me—and he was a man of sensitivity and culture—that in Beverly Hills he was lacking in none of the necessities of civilised life. But from my own observations I felt sure that something *was* lacking there.

It is true that everything you could want is available: there is no shortage of brilliant conversationalists: there is no lack of impressive scenery: there is even, if you want it, an abundance of squalor in the seamier parts of Los Angeles. Yet something is lacking.

The atmosphere is enervating to the visitor, claustrophobic to the resident. As an alien in the place, I found myself living at a much more leisurely pace than in London. Hollywood had the same effect on me as a sedative—the kind of sedative that could become a bad habit. I felt uncharacteristically tranquil.

Living one's whole life in Hollywood must, I suspect, feel rather like being a bee trapped in a honey jar. After such an abundance of honey, the garlic flavour of Europe must have come as a welcome change to many of the stars.

Initially there were other incentives, in addition to the purely spiritual ones, for leaving Hollywood. A law designed to encourage men to work in uncongenial jobs in remote parts of the world had been passed in America. It stipulated that anyone living outside the United States for longer than a given period would be exempt from paying income-tax. The film accountants immediately saw in this law (the law has now been changed and stars

working abroad still have to pay tax in the U.S.) a wonderful opportunity: stars who worked abroad would be eligible for tax-exemption. Quite a number of those who got in early enough made fortunes by taking advantage of this law.

Some of them saw no more in Rome, Paris and London than a means of not paying their income-tax. But there were a few who did manage to see beyond their accountants' noses.

I cannot say categorically what it was the Hollywood stars found in Europe. But I *can* say what is for me the difference between being in Hollywood and London.

In London—and also in Paris and New York—you feel you are involved in life. In Hollywood you only feel that you are involved in the imitation (and sometimes the falsification) of life.

Probably that is how Ingrid Bergman felt about it. Miss Bergman for ten years occupied one of the plushiest Hollywood thrones. But thrones have become sadly devalued articles of furniture: it seems they are not the most comfortable things to sit on. In 1948, without even bothering to abdicate, she kicked the throne from under herself—and went off into exile with Roberto Rossellini.

Eight years after the storm, I met Miss Bergman in London and she was able to talk dispassionately about herself and her decision.

Sitting there next to me at the lunch table, I thought she looked like an excellent example of modern Swedish furniture: good, clean lines; the natural wood-grain left unvarnished; no bulbous frills or unnecessary ornamentation.

She said, "There are responsibilities that go with sitting on a throne. I prefer to be comfortable. I prefer a hard, wooden chair." She was sitting on a comparatively hard wooden chair. She seemed to be comfortable.

Miss Bergman was at Elstree Studios, making *Anastasia* for 20th Century-Fox. It was the first film for a Hollywood company and American release that she had made in eight years. "Could this be an attempt to retrieve the lost throne?" I asked.

"No," said Miss Bergman; "I am happy to let someone else sit on it."

This is in effect what she also says in the film—as *Anastasia*—and for much the same reason. I pointed out to her the parallel. In the film, *Anastasia*, having established her identity as the daughter of the murdered Czar of Russia, rejects her title and the £10,000,000 that go with it. All for love.

Miss Bergman admitted: "Yes, it is a true parallel. *Anastasia* also chooses the man she loves rather than her 'throne'."

In the circumstances, it is difficult for critics to doubt the credibility of *Anastasia's* action. Miss Bergman's choice was substantially the same—and she took the same decision.

But Miss Bergman wanted to emphasise that in her case it was not merely love that had induced her to give up everything that goes with being a No. 1 box-office star. She had tired of her romance with the box-office three years before she met Rossellini. The honeymoon with Hollywood had been over long before.

She said: "It is entirely wrong to think that he was a Svengali influence in my life who moulded me according to his will. This is not true. Three years before I ever met Rossellini I wanted to get out. But then I didn't have anywhere to go."

In the eight years she had been away from Hollywood she had frequently been asked to return, she said. She had been asked to appear on TV and had been offered large sums of money. And she had been asked to make films. "I will admit it," she said, "it was mostly

Independents who asked me to make films—they were more prepared to take the risk. It *was* a risk, of course. Nobody knew how the women's clubs would react towards a film I was in." She said this, now, with a slight, detached sarcasm.

"And now we shall see. Anastasia will go out in America and we shall see what the effect has been on my box-office standing and what the attitude will be of the women's clubs.

"If the reaction is friendly, I would not turn down an offer to make a film in Hollywood. But I would not return to live there. It is not that I feel any resentment towards America for the way I was treated. I have a very short memory. But I have no nostalgia for the place or the fame. . . ."

I said: "And the money—you have no nostalgia for that? Or perhaps you had enough money?"

"No," she said; "what money I had went on . . . well, it went. We started from scratch in Europe. I work to make money. I have no ambition any longer."

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I had asked Tyrone Power why he had left Hollywood after forty-two films and two marriages (both to actresses, both dissolved).

We sat out on the lot at Shepperton Studios, where he was making a film for his own company called *Seven Waves Away*. He undid his bundle of sandwiches and munched some ham sausage. Near by was his recently acquired 1935 Rolls-Royce.

"The fun has gone out of Hollywood," he said.

His handsome matador's face, tailored to Hollywood specifications, was contemplative. "I've made forty-two films," he said, "and I am dissatisfied with 90 per cent of them. If you ask me what films of mine I liked

I can name you about three—and then I have to start thinking.”

First sign of his dissatisfaction with Hollywood came when he broke away to appear in *The Dark is Light Enough* on Broadway. Christopher Fry was quite a change from *The Mark of Zorro*. Then he came to London to appear in Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple*. It was a considerable switch from *The Black Rose*.

“These were plays I wanted to do,” said Power. “You can't go on always being a knight in shining armour. I'm forty-two and there are too many young fellows better equipped for that sort of role coming along. You can kid everybody but the fellow you shave every morning. The day might come when your phone isn't ringing any more and nobody knocks at your door.”

But Power's disenchantment with Hollywood is not due solely to a sudden lack of enthusiasm for shining armour. The whole Hollywood way of life has palled for him.

“There,” he said, “your social activities are restricted to the people you work with. You meet the same people at party after party. The cast is always the same—and the dialogue doesn't change much either. Always shop talk.

“At first,” he said, “you know very few people outside your own studio. If you are working at Fox, it's years before you get to know anybody working at Warner Brothers out in the valley.”

In London Power was not confined in his social contacts to the people working at Shepperton Studios. His circle of friends extended into different fields—and if they still talked shop, at least they all had different shop to talk about.

“My friends in London?” he said. “Well, there's Oliver Messel, and there's a girl called Pauline Vogelpoel

who works at the Tate Gallery, and there is a girl called Mary Roblee who works on a magazine, and there is a stockbroker . . . and people like that."

I asked him whether his marriages to two Hollywood actresses (Annabella and Linda Christian) did not, perhaps, have something to do with his present disillusionment.

"No," he said, "I wouldn't say I had made a mistake in my choice of wives. I would not have missed the experience of knowing the two ladies in question for anything. I think I have emerged from the experience a better, more understanding human being."

Considering that his most recent marriage had cost him a reported 1,000,000 dollars (in alimony) I considered this a remarkably chivalrous way of putting it. Still the gallant, Mr. Power asked, "What's cheap in this world that is worth having? The cheapest thing in the world is money."

None the less, past experience and a present state of mind have given him decided views on the institution of marriage. When I enquired if he was thinking of marrying again he looked at me as if I had asked him whether he felt like taking a walk across the Sahara.

"I should say not," he said with feeling. "Oh, there are a number of girls I go out with, but there isn't one I am considering marrying with anything approaching enthusiasm. And you must admit that if a man is going to get married he should be reasonably enthusiastic about it." I agreed that enthusiasm helped in such circumstances.

I suggested to Mr. Power, whose forty-two films and two marriages have not impaired his looks or his eligibility, that he might discover a preference for European women as well as for the European scenery.

"No," he said. "In this respect there is no difference between Hollywood and Europe. Women are the same

everywhere. And my intention is not to marry any of them.”

Most fascinating of the expatriates is Douglas Fairbanks, Jun., K.B.E., D.S.C., etc. etc.

Mr. Fairbanks (he will not protest if you address him as Sir Douglas) seems to have found an affinity with the English upper-classes which he failed to find with the Hollywood set.

A variety of explanations can and have been found for this. It has been said that as a boy—he was rather fat—he felt inferior to his great, athletic father. This feeling could hardly have been alleviated by his father's attitude: “I have no more paternal feeling than a tiger in the jungle for his cub,” he once said.

Fairbanks, Jun., must have realised that as an actor he would always be overshadowed by his father's fame. The possession of that magical surname was in itself a hindrance to his own development; whilst he followed in his father's footsteps he could never really have an identity of his own. However good he was as an actor people would always nostalgically (and perhaps mistakenly) remember that his father was much better.

Fairbanks, Jun., dealt with this problem (which is peculiar to the sons of the famous) by branching out into Society, diplomacy and business.

Fairbanks, Sen., may have conquered the movie masses, but Fairbanks, Jun., won victories, no less notable, in the drawing-rooms of the select. Father may have received the accolade of the public: but Junior received his accolade in person from the King of England.

If he inherited nothing else from him that was of use, Douglas Fairbanks, Jun., inherited his father's charm, good looks and knack of making friends and influencing people. These qualities have stood him in good stead.

There is no danger any longer that history will remember him only as the son of an early movie idol. Douglas Fairbanks, Jun., has established his own identity. In the library of the *London Evening Standard* there are eleven envelopes containing newspaper cuttings which refer to different aspects of the life and activities of Douglas Fairbanks, Jun. They are marked Biographical (see special for burglaries), Books, Burglaries, Cinema, Diplomatic, Health, Honours and Awards, Litigation, Marriage and Divorce, Speeches, Wife.

There are only two files on Douglas Fairbanks, Sen., marked Actor and Marriage. Douglas Fairbanks, Jun., has given speeches on education, unity in Korea, economic co-operation, Anglo-American co-operation, and appealed for funds for the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency. He has been reported in *The Times* (which did not consider the arrival in England of Marilyn Monroe worth reporting).

He has had the Queen to dinner at his house in The Boltons, Kensington. And his guest-list when he is giving a small informal dinner party will usually include a couple of duchesses, a sprinkling of earls and such members of the acting aristocracy as the Oliviers, Danny Kaye and Noël Coward.

Meeting him one is immediately impressed by the man's charm and modesty. He has climbed the social ladder with far more taste and discretion and good manners than people who indulge in this form of mountaineering normally possess.

That he takes pleasure in wearing his medals and decorations—he had fourteen at the last count—is, I should say, because he likes to dress-up (and outdo his father in sartorial splendour), and not because he has any burning desire to advertise his achievements.

Social coups cannot be brought about without money,

and Fairbanks claims he has very little apart from what he earns.

It has been reported that his father left him close on £1,000,000, but he assured me this was untrue. He was at pains to emphasise, in fact, that he only barely manages to scrape along on his various incomes from TV films, popcorn, and business interests which range from ships to sealing-wax.

"I am not wealthy," he told me. "I did not inherit a fortune from my father. He lost most of it in the depression. But I manage to keep ahead of the bailiffs. Just barely."

I was sceptical about this and mentioned that surely he had a palatial house in California, a house in Kensington that could hardly be described as a bungalow and usually drove to parties in a Cadillac or a Rolls-Royce.

His reply was that he did not have a Rolls or a Cadillac but a Chrysler; that if he did drive to half a dozen parties in a Rolls it was in somebody else's (and probably hired at that) and that he could not recall ever having been in a Cadillac on this side of the Atlantic.

As for the houses, the one in California was a white elephant which he probably couldn't sell if he wanted to. The house in The Boltons was a "company" house of which he had the use. But he did not own it.

I asked him about his social life, and again got a denial.

"I am not a socialite," he said, "though I seem to have got the reputation for being one. I happen to have some very good friends who happen to be in so-called Society. But Society as such is a bore and holds no fascination for me." (I could not help noticing whilst he was saying this that he kept copies of *Debrett's* and *Burke's Peerage* on his desk, and remembering that he had his own coat of arms.)

"I do not go out much," he continued; "perhaps once a month on an average. Often I do not get home

from the studios until nine—and have my dinner brought in on a tray in here whilst I'm working.

“Going into Society is a full-time occupation, and I have neither the time nor the inclination for it. When I accept an invitation from someone it is because the people happen to be friends or have the same interests as myself. I also have friends who are quite undistinguished and far from famous.”

Still allowing my eyes to roam about the room, I saw autographed portraits of the late Queen Mary in a gold frame, the late Duke and the Duchess of Kent in silver frames, the late King in a gold frame, President Eisenhower and the late President Roosevelt in tooled leather. The undistinguished friends were not represented.

When I asked him to give me an example of an undistinguished friend, he could only think of an all-in wrestler from Blackfriars whom he knew twenty years ago. He met him with Lord Grantley.

Some people suggest that Fairbanks' ambition is to be appointed American Ambassador to London. This could be true. His interests lately have swung away from acting (which he might give up completely) and are now concentrated on his semi-official diplomatic activities and his popcorn business. Popcorn provides him with a sizeable proportion of his income.

“Do you find,” I asked him after he had told me of his stay with the President of Turkey, “that heads of state are prepared to take seriously a man renowned for swinging over rooftops with a cutlass in his mouth?”

“Well,” he said, “they didn't always. But they've had quite a time to get accustomed to me now.”

Mr. Fairbanks is clearly very anxious for his semi-official diplomatic activities to be taken with perfect seriousness. I do not think he really cares if he never climbs another rooftop or never draws another sword.

That sort of stuff was for Father.

Chapter 6

HOLLYWOOD IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

I HAVE met Hollywood stars in London, Paris, Venice, Rome, Madrid, Munich, Cannes and Ireland. . . .

This book is about Hollywood, but I have discovered that Hollywood has no location: you can find it in Rome when Rhonda Fleming is there and in Munich when Yvonne de Carlo is there, in the British Museum when Arlene Dahl is there, and in Hindhead, Surrey, when Ava Gardner is there. Certain people carry Hollywood around with them wherever they go.

Studying Hollywood in different environments, you see aspects of it you fail to see in California. Perhaps the European backgrounds show up, by contrast, that which is particularly Hollywood.

I had arranged to pick up the dazzling Miss Arlene Dahl at her London hotel. The plan was that I would show her the town.

I asked her if there was anywhere she particularly wanted to go, giving the impression that I was an authority on all the places a glamorous film star might conceivably want to visit.

"Yes," she said sweetly, "the British Museum."

I treated it as a joke. She did not. I tried to fob her off with *Les Ambassadeurs*, the *Caprice*, the *Prospect of Whitby*. . . . But Miss Dahl was adamant. She could think of nothing more heavenly than to have me show her the Assyrian antiquities. I said I knew a wonderful restaurant in Soho. We went to the British Museum.

A hasty close-up examination of Miss Dahl revealed that she had absolutely nothing in common with a

hieroglyphic or an ancient Egyptian mummy. She has red hair and blue eyes and the sort of figure that would have made Mausolus turn in his mausoleum.

In the museum I said devilishly: "What shall we do? The ethnographical gallery? Or shall we be mad and plump for the Graeco-Roman sculptures?" We did the Romans. "Goodness," said Miss Dahl, scrutinising the statues with their chipped-off noses, "they all look like Marlon Brando." She posed against a lioness's head mounted on a high plinth. "Can't you see the resemblance?" she said. "We've got the same features."

I said, looking at the plinth and then at her: "You've got a better figure."

"Yes," she said, "hers is a bit more cubic than mine, isn't it? Lots of lions in this place. Anyone would think it was run by MGM."

"How is it," I asked her, "that you have such high-brow interests? One would never have suspected it from your films."

Miss Dahl explained that she was not only a film star with one of the most photogenic faces in the business; she was also a newspaper columnist, a designer of ladies' lingerie, an amateur philosopher, and a student of psychology and religions. I said she looked remarkably well on it.

We then took a look at the reliefs showing the lion hunts of Asshur-bani-pal. Miss Dahl said that Asshur-bani-pal reminded her of her first husband Lex Barker, former Tarzan of the screen.

"I should never have married him," she confided. "He wasn't the intellectual type. I take an interest in metaphysics. He wasn't a bit interested in metaphysics. I doubt if he knew what the word meant. Yes, people made jokes about me being Tarzan's mate, and asked if we ate our dinner in the tree-tops. But that wasn't the reason I got divorced from him."

Her present husband, Fernando Lamas, is higher up in the intellectual scale. He is a poet as well as an actor, and understands what metaphysics means.

"We keep pads of paper handy," she said, "so that when any ideas about philosophy or religion come to us we can just jot them down."

I enquired whether any ideas that she wanted to jot down urgently had come to her at the British Museum. She said they would keep.

"Intelligence is so important in a man," said Miss Dahl. "A handsome face helps, but what I go for are qualities of the mind."

Miss Dahl admired the head of Antonia, mother of the Emperor Claudius, "noted for beauty and goodness", but decided she could do with a face-lift after all these years. Miss Dahl knows all about such things. She writes a syndicated beauty column (three times a week) in which she passes on to her readers the beauty secrets of the stars.

I wondered if it wasn't sometimes hazardous for one beauty to interview another beauty on the subject of how to be beautiful. That sort of situation might produce a great deal of cattiness, I thought.

"Only," said Miss Dahl, "if someone tells me, 'But, my dear, I have no beauty secrets. I don't do anything to be beautiful, except be myself.'"

Girls who say this, Miss Dahl has found, have usually had their faces lifted a couple of times, their noses remoulded; and they have body massages twice a day, false eyelashes and false busts, and a dermatologist working on their skins.

Although I do not write a beauty column, I asked Miss Dahl to tell me her own beauty secrets. Here they are: Getting eight and a half hours' sleep every night; being able to relax any time; not smoking or drinking to excess; rinsing her hair in champagne.

"But caviare eye-packs are not a good idea," she reports. "It's better to eat the stuff."

I asked Miss Dahl to tell me who, in her opinion, were the most beautiful girls in films.

She said, "Elizabeth Taylor, Ava Gardner, Gina Lollobrigida. Vivien Leigh in her heyday. . . ."

"What about Marilyn Monroe?" I asked.

"She has a beautiful skin," said Miss Dahl.

"And Rhonda Fleming?" I inquired.

"Rhonda?" reflected Miss Dahl. "I suppose some people would consider her lovely."

I noted that all Miss Dahl's top beauties were dark; about girls with similar colouring to her own she was noticeably less ecstatic.

We examined an Egyptian mummy. Miss Dahl thought she looked more alive than some actresses she could think of. Miss Dahl herself has not been notably animated in some of her films. She explained this: "If you get categorised as the lady type, they always put you in those bloodless costume pictures. But things are looking up now. In my last film I played a girl who is a nymphomaniac, a dipsomaniac and a kleptomaniac—which is not terribly lady-like even by Hollywood standards."

As we concluded our tour of the exhibits, quite a few people seemed to regard Miss Dahl as more interesting than the exhibits.

Which is curious. For she is not exactly a museum-piece.

Undismayed by her Teutonic environment and the sonorous notes of *Tristan und Isolde* coming over the studio play-back, Yvonne de Carlo chewed resolutely at her stick of chewing gum.

"Yeah," she said, "I guess I'm at the stage of being married to the famous." She was referring to her film roles.



Arlene Dahl on arriving in London insisted on visiting the British Museum, though she is no museum-piece herself.

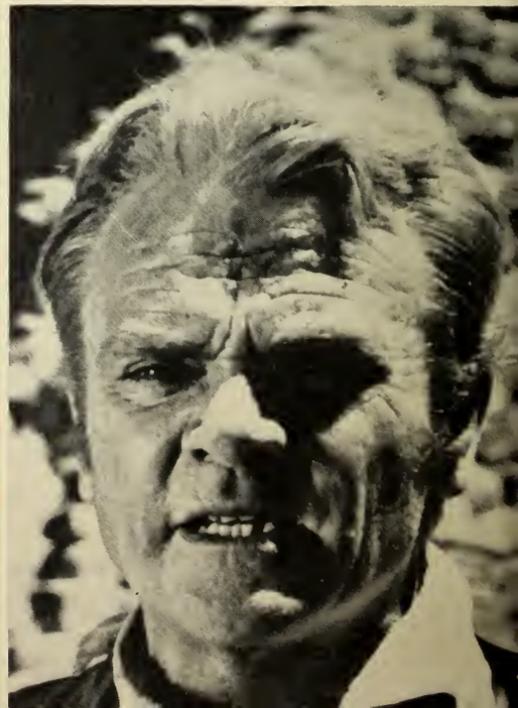


(P.A. Reuter)



(P.A. Reuter)

Four star faces—not exactly pretty...but strong. (Above left) Yul Brynner, (right) Edward G. Robinson. (Below left) the late Humphrey Bogart, (right) James Cagney.



She was playing the first wife of Richard Wagner in Munich in the film *Magic Fire*. Republic Films of Hollywood were spending a million dollars on glorifying the life of the German composer in "gorgeous Trucolor" and in authentic locales with authentic names like Neuschwanstein.

Afterwards, Miss de Carlo went to Egypt to play the wife of Moses in *The Ten Commandments*.

But off-screen, whether in the Bavarian Alps, on Mount Sinai or in Beverly Hills, Miss de Carlo was at the stage of being married to nobody. This inexplicable state of affairs had aroused the keen interest of Munich, a normally unexciting town where there are more double chins, paunches and brief-cases per head of the population than anywhere else I have been.

Miss de Carlo's spinster state had puzzled Munich because she appeared to be admirably qualified for marriage.

She is a hard-headed business girl who always exacts her full living expenses ("I get the same as Gregory Peck") from the most tight-fisted employers, even if it means sending her aunt to collect the cash. She hates extravagance and expensive hotels. When she has to pay a big hotel bill she really suffers; and she won't do it before lunch—it might spoil her appetite.

For the right man she might be willing to give up her film career; she has romantic dreams of opening up a petrol station out West, which she would develop into a restaurant, then into a motel, then into a Yvonne de Carlo town.

And dreams of marriage?

"I might get married just any time," she confided, "but I can't think of anyone I could marry just now." (Since our conversation she thought of someone and married him.) If Miss de Carlo was unable to think of a suitable candidate, Munich was not so reticent.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF HOLLYWOOD

When Aly Khan came there, a town not normally on his itinerary, dined twice with Miss de Carlo and stayed in the same hotel as her, Munich gasped and gossiped. Munich has got its ceramics and its leather goods and its sinister place in history, but as a setting for international romance it had not made much headway until then.

When Aly Khan left after a couple of days Miss de Carlo explained to me, "We're old friends. I met him—before Gene Tierney—at a party in the South of France. Whenever he's passing through Paris or Hollywood and I happen to be there, we have dinner together. That's all there is to it."

The day after Aly Khan had left, Miss de Carlo had another visitor: a French script-writer friend who sat all day on the film set watching Miss de Carlo ageing and weakening as Wagner's neglected wife. Again Munich began to wonder and speculate. But the Frenchman was the script-writer of Miss de Carlo's last film. And that, apparently, was all there was to that.

Playing the role of Liszt in the film was the handsome South American actor and author Carlos Thompson whom Miss de Carlo discovered in Argentina and brought to Hollywood.

At first Thompson was also staying at the same hotel as Miss de Carlo. Then he moved out—into a furnished flat.

Miss de Carlo wanted him to appear with her in another film, a German musical. Thompson told me he had declined the invitation because "I am not a singer".

No sooner had the script-writer left, presumably to continue writing scripts, than Miss de Carlo said she was expecting a third visitor: Baron von Thuena, a former Panzer commander in the German Army.

Miss de Carlo's main rivals in the cast of *Magic Fire* were Valentina Cortese and Rita Gam.

Usually, Miss de Carlo said, she wouldn't have accepted a role in a film "with all those other women in the cast". It wasn't expedient—"especially as I have to age to past sixty in my role".

Naturally, in these circumstances, the competition for the limelight and the camera-lens was fierce. But Miss de Carlo, with the aid of Aly Khan, the French script-writer, the Baron and Carlos Thompson, secured most of the limelight. She also came out top in the fight for best positions before the cameras.

When I first learned that Miss de Carlo was to play the role of Wagner's wife I was surprised. Not as surprised, I discovered, as Miss de Carlo herself.

She told me that she had once been suggested to Dieterle for another role in another film. He had turned her down flat. He hadn't found her believable. Miss de Carlo was irked.

"So when Dieterle asked for me for this picture that really meant something."

I asked her whether she was at all worried because Wagner was usually considered a heavy, typically Germanic and unpopular composer. She, after all, was playing his wife.

Miss de Carlo's reply revealed an unsuspected facet of her nature. "Oh, I'm a great Wagner fan," she said; "I saw *The Ring* and . . . and . . . and stuff like that. Oh, it's great, just great. Of course to sit through it all—well, you get a bit stiff in certain places. And, though I shouldn't say it, I really go more for the pop. stuff. How they'll feel about Wagner in Texas I just don't know. But there's only half an hour of the operas. We get eleven operas in that time. It's the love story that counts."

Said the film's musical director, "The music—that is what counts. I will not let them alter a bar. Wagner not popular? How can you say that? Millions have got married to his 'Wedding March', thinking it is Mendels-

sohn's. In the film Wagner will also get married to the strains of his own 'Wedding March', though, strictly speaking, he hadn't written it at the time of his wedding. Still, we couldn't have married him to Mendelssohn's 'Wedding March', could we?"

Said Dieterle, whose ambition it had been for twenty years to make this film, "What counts is the story of Wagner and the struggle against the forces of his times. . . ."

The lips said to be "like morning dew on poppies" were closed over a stick of chewing gum. Ava Gardner, the Aphrodite of the atom-age, the bullfighters' moment of truth, chewed steadily as she listened to the voice coming over the loudspeaker.

"Casualties and corpses," it said, "when you break for lunch do NOT take off your wounds, blood or bandages, or you'll only have to put them back on again."

A "mangled corpse" propped himself up on one elbow and said, "Lunch? Did I hear someone say lunch?"

A mortally injured stretcher case retorted, "Wait for it. We're doing the panic first."

Miss Gardner said, "Have some gum."

I said, "No, thank you."

Over on our right at the bottom of an embankment five railway coaches were kaleidoscoped together in a most realistic reconstruction of a train crash.

"Took the art department two weeks to do," said an assistant director. "It's a marvellous wreck, isn't it?"

Up on the embankment another train—the Ava Gardner Special—moved "into shot". Two hundred extras, representing the victims of the train crash, lay on the ground.

"This is nothing," said the publicity man. "We had thousands of extras for the riot scenes we did in Pakistan."

A woman with a silver sprayer came over to Miss Gardner and began to spray.

"Eau de Cologne?" I asked.

"No."

"Chanel No. 5?"

"Sweat," said Miss Gardner. "Glycerine. Only stuff that shows up like sweat on the screen. Terrible stuff."

"A little more blood on Miss Gardner, please," called an assistant director.

"Oh dear," said Miss Gardner.

A man with a bottle of "blood", correctly pigmented for Eastmancolor, came over and reverently splashed some over Miss Gardner's already mud-stained white sari.

I said I was not in the film and did not require splashing with blood, correctly pigmented for Eastmancolor.

A loose strand of hair fell over Miss Gardner's face. A very dirty face.

I said, "You look terrible." Everybody seemed enormously pleased.

"Why do you do all this," I asked her, "since you don't like acting and hate fame?"

"For the money, of course," she said. "It's tough, but it is better than being a shorthand-typist. Don't tell me you like *your* job."

I said I was afraid I did rather. You met such interesting people.

"Such as who?"

"Such as the fabulous Miss Gardner," I said gallantly.

"You think I'm interesting? Well! Perhaps we're not so interesting to ourselves."

I said, "Now come, that's just inverted egotism."

"No," she said; "I'm a simple girl. A farmer's daughter. I can't think where I got the bad blood—the bad blood that got me into this business. Anyway, it was just a fluke that got me into pictures. I'm no

actress. I don't enjoy making films. I just enjoy making money."

She certainly makes enough of that for it to be most enjoyable. Her salary is reputed to be £80,000 a picture. This enables her to spend more on excess baggage than a normal family need to live on for a year. It enables her when she goes on location to bring her coloured maid along to look after her puppy.

Stewart Granger, who plays one of Miss Gardner's lovers in the film, joined us and said, "Let's face it, we're both grossly overpaid."

"You may be," said Miss Gardner, "but I'm not."

"I bet you're getting more than I am," said Mr. Granger.

"I bet you I'm not," said Miss Gardner.

"Whisper in my ear," said Mr. Granger; "we don't want Wiseman to know how much we're making." They whispered in each other's ear.

"Heavens," said Miss Gardner, "I *am* getting more. Well, we're both being underpaid."

Through the loudspeakers came the sound of director George Cukor's voice, "When I say action, I want ACTION. Panic. Chaos. Confusion. Everybody screaming, groaning. Remember, this is a horrifying scene."

Miss Gardner said, "I purposely didn't go into London last weekend. I didn't want any temptations, but I'm still tired out."

What sort of temptations are there in London for "the world's most beautiful animal"?

The publicity man said, "I've known her for three years and I can tell you she is a very nice, respectable girl. Perhaps rather inhibited. Perhaps a bit old-fashioned. But she believes that love is for the marital state."

Miss Gardner said, "I want to get married again

more than anything. I know that sounds odd coming from a girl with my record, having made a mess of it three times already, but I do. Then I would give up films, become a housewife and have children."

"What sort of man do you want to marry?" I asked helpfully, thinking I might be able to recommend somebody.

"I'm not going to talk to you about that," said Miss Gardner, "not as a newspaperman, anyway." So I am afraid I cannot tell you anything about Miss Gardner's ideal man.

But I can tell you that Miss Gardner is not short of suitors. Even in her blood-spattered sari, even with her face covered in dirt, she was extraordinarily beautiful. Even, I am surprised to say, whilst chewing gum.

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Rhonda Fleming goes around on the screen dressed in what looks like one of Salome's spare veils.

Whether her beat is Baghdad, Babylon or Bexley-heath, whether she is the slave girl, siren, flame, courtesan, queen, temptress or tootsie of the title, Miss Fleming has only to swing her hips or take a bath to bring emperors running and start empires falling.

But she had no emperors in tow when I met her, and no empires were noticeably crumbling as the result of her arrival. Miss Fleming, in private life, is not quite such a deadly dish. For instance, in the matter of hanging on to a man, she has found out that propinquity is what counts. A girl cannot be very exotic on a long-distance telephone call, or convey much voluptuousness in a cable, even if she is a red-head with a figure that measures 37-24-38.

So she and her surgeon husband, Dr. Lew Morrill, worked out a scheme for staying married. They intended never to be separated for longer than three weeks at a

time. In Hollywood things happen more quickly than elsewhere; the seven-year itch starts after three weeks, apparently.

Miss Fleming says, "After three weeks it gets to be dangerous. Specially if you're abroad. Sure, travel broadens the mind. Trouble is, you can get too broad-minded."

As a protection against broadminded foreigners, Miss Fleming decided to take her husband along with her on her travels. He locked up his surgery in California and joined her in London.

Then he flew with her to Africa, where she was making a film. When Miss Fleming returned to Britain to finish the film in the studios the doctor returned to America to his scalpels and stethoscope.

"Isn't that risky?" I asked.

"Oh no," said Miss Fleming; "the shooting schedule in the studios is for exactly three weeks."

"What if you should overrun the schedule? What would you do in such an emergency?"

"I'd cable Lew . . . to come on back."

Miss Fleming discovered all about the dangers of separations—of more than three weeks—one and a half years ago. At that time she left her home town, Hollywood, and went out into the great big wicked world for the first time—alone.

I met her in Rome. I remember her telling me at that time, "Oh, gee, I think Europe's just cute. It's so old. Gee whizz! They got nothing like it in America."

The men were so charming and cultivated, said Miss Fleming. The talk was so clever. By comparison, Hollywood was parochial and dull.

But later Miss Fleming changed her mind; the Europeans, she said, had taught her to appreciate what a haven of respectability Hollywood is.

On returning to Hollywood, Miss Fleming had

troubles which could be blamed directly or indirectly on Europe. She became separated from her husband. But one night he broke into the bedroom and refused to leave. Miss Fleming had to sleep on the couch.

The story spread that the film Miss Fleming had made in Rome, *Courtesan of Babylon* (previously called *Virgin of Babylon*), contained scenes in which girls appeared half naked. Miss Fleming, who is a Sunday-school teacher, was horrified.

"You can understand how upset I was by that suggestion," said Miss Fleming. "Of course, I've often taken a bath in my films. But there's nothing wrong with that. It's always been very proper. I may have given the impression of nudity, but I always wore something, some flesh-coloured material. None of the girls in the Italian film was naked. They may have given the illusion of being nude, but that's quite different, isn't it?"

I said I supposed it was.

Miss Fleming has so far had only two husbands. The first one she married at the age of fifteen. He was an interior decorator. The second one is a doctor specialising in abdominal operations.

Miss Fleming takes a great interest in her husband's work. She loves watching him operating, and the sight of blood doesn't bother her a bit.

"I guess I'm just a frustrated nurse," she says. "Just look at the stuff I read: *Early Recognition of Acoustic Neuroma, Combined Neuro-Effector and Ganglion Inhibitor*. Fascinating stuff."

Miss Fleming divides her time between actors and doctors. I said it must make a pleasant contrast. But Miss Fleming assured me they were pretty much alike. Actors talked about nothing but their last movie. Doctors talked about nothing but their last operation.

Chapter 7

ON LOCATION, EUROPE

THE most remarkable location in Europe during the past few years was undoubtedly John Huston's "Moby Dick" expedition to Ireland. But then anything which the brilliant and unconventional Mr. Huston does is remarkable.

I met him first in London before his departure for Ireland. My appointment with him was for 4 p.m. at his flat in Chelsea. I found him wearing pyjamas, a scarlet-lined dressing-gown and velvet slippers with foxes' heads embossed in gold over the toes.

He is a tall man who moves deftly with a slight stoop; he has the face of a cowboy and the manners of a débutante, and his face contains as many complex lines as a map of the Balkans; his manner is considerate, charming and, for a big-time Hollywood producer, surprisingly lacking in "flam".

His conversation is controlled; and even when he is talking to you with complete frankness you know that you are only skimming over the surface of his complicated personality.

I had just read a novel called *White Hunter, Black Heart* by Peter Viertel, who was one of the script-writers on Huston's *African Queen*. The book, about a film director named John and a writer named Pete, described a script-writing, big-game hunting, soul-baring safari to Africa. It has been widely accepted that the director in the novel is Huston. The portrait of the director is not a flattering one, and I was curious to know how Huston had reacted to it.

He said, "I think Viertel is a fine writer . . . a good friend of mine too. . . ."

"Still?" I asked.

"Oh yes. I don't mind what people write about me." (This is not absolutely true, because I infuriated him at a later date with something I wrote about him.)

Huston told me that Viertel had sent him a manuscript of the novel with a note saying that he would not publish it if Huston did not want him to.

"I sent him back a signed undertaking," said Huston, "that I would not sue for libel—before I even read the book. I've read it now—and I think it is a good piece of writing. I'm hoping to use Viertel on one of my other films."

"Are you really like the character in the book," I asked Huston, "or was Mr. Viertel allowing himself a lot of artistic licence?" I should explain that the director John in the book has quite a few unpleasant characteristics.

"I don't know," said Huston. "Maybe that was how I struck Viertel. I can't say what I'm like, can I?"

I tried to judge for myself what he is like. It was not easy. Obviously he is a man with so many personalities that they could get together and form a football team. The gentle, courteous, soft-spoken man who sat opposite me seemed to have little in common with the aggressive and cruel-minded character in the book.

I took a count of the Hustons I knew about.

There is the man who rents a thirty-room house in Ireland, with a domestic staff of six so he can live the life of a country squire when he feels inclined. There is the man who goes fox-hunting three days a week and, refurbished by this activity, spends the other four days writing scripts. There is the playboy who commutes between the best bars and restaurants of New York, Paris and London. There is the financier who has invested in a film company and will, as a result, get 25 per

cent of the £2,000,000 which *Moulin Rouge* made. There is the man who gave Marilyn Monroe her first film part. . . .

And there is also the man who sits in his pyjamas at four in the afternoon, his face creasing into courteous smiles, talking laconically and sometimes self-deprecatingly about John Huston:

"I've always knocked around the world since I was sixteen. I've been a boxer, and I was in the Mexican Army. I was married at twenty." (Huston's wives in chronological order: 1st, Dorothy Harvey; 2nd, Leslie Black; 3rd, Evelyn Keyes; 4th, Enrica Soma.) "I've often been flat bust—well, that comes from keeping a string of racehorses and having expensive habits. I've sold the horses now, but I've still got the expensive habits. If I didn't lead this sort of life I wouldn't be any good as a writer or director. It's necessary to my work."

A few days before, in a town near the Pyrenees, he had met Ernest Hemingway to discuss a film of one of his books.

"Papa was keen on the idea," said Huston.

This is not surprising—for Huston is, of course, a child of Hemingway mythology, so charmed by the myth that he has determined to make it real by living it.

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The next time I met Huston was in Ireland, and on this occasion I managed to write something about him that infuriated the man who had assured me he didn't care a damn what people wrote about him. The strange thing about this incident is that I wrote my column in all innocence, never thinking for a moment that it contained anything which would annoy a man apparently so impervious to criticism, satire and gossip as he had made himself out to be.

Huston had taken over the small town of Youghal in

Eire and converted it to look like New Bedford of the last century. Houses had acquired new frontages. The harbour had been dredged. Four sailing vessels had been brought into the anchorage. New structures had been erected above the harbour. Nothing like it had happened since Gabriel Pascal took a pyramid to Egypt (for *Caesar and Cleopatra*). All this had been done to provide a reasonably authentic background for some of the early scenes in *Moby Dick*.

Now Youghal is not the sort of town that caters for film producers earning a basic £1,000 a week. Its hotels are not quite up to the standard of the Waldorf Astoria.

So Huston and the stars of the film—Gregory Peck, Richard Basehart, Leo Genn—stayed sixty miles away, in Cork.

But Cork, too, lacked some of the necessities of life. When Huston arrived there he said he was prepared to put up with the hardship of living in Cork, in a temperance hotel, but he had to have a private bath. The management said that they were very sorry but there weren't any rooms with private baths.

"But I must have one," insisted Huston.

"We're sorry, sir," they said at the hotel, "we just haven't got any private baths."

"Well, in that case," said Huston, "it's time you had. I'll build one."

And Huston had a private bath installed.

Perhaps because of his experiences in Youghal Huston decided not to take any risks at the next stop—Fishguard in South Wales. There he acquired an old hotel with fifty-four rooms, had it completely reconditioned and furnished at a cost of £15,000 (and made sure that he would have his private bath). But as filming in Youghal was behind schedule this hotel was standing empty, its staff of thirty with nothing to do, whilst they waited for the arrival of the film unit.

When I mentioned all this in my column in the *Evening Standard* Huston was furious.

A couple of weeks after my return to London I received an invitation from Huston to come down to Fishguard. I hesitated and said I would let him know my answer. Whilst I was thinking it over, wondering what mischief he had planned for my benefit, the invitation was cancelled—ostensibly because the unit were now running into serious difficulties and there would be no time for the “entertainment” of guests.

Considerably later I found out what had really happened. Huston had wanted to bring me down and then place me on “trial” for having misrepresented what had gone on in Ireland. I never found out what my sentence would have been had I been found guilty.

Perhaps they would have used me to play the role of Moby Dick, instead of the mechanical radio-controlled whale they had constructed and which was later lost at sea.

Or, even worse, he may have made me stay in a room without a private bath.

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I stood high up in the Guadarrama Sierras on a rock (it might have been hewn by Henry Moore) sipping an iced vermouth and soda and watched Alexander the Great charging into battle.

I struck a match on a plaster Grecian god—on Achilles’ heel, to be precise—and, as the swords clanged and the cymbals clashed, lit my Spanish cigarette.

If this should appear unduly blasé of me, let me assure you that I was in no immediate danger. Neither, for that matter, was Alexander the Great.

For in this battle the opposing factions had taken the very sensible precautions of having their swords blunted and their spears fitted with rubber heads—and Alexander the Great had a stunt man to “double” for him. During

intervals in the bloody fray, the generals of both sides adjourned for liquid refreshments to the same improvised bar.

Hollywood producer-director-writer Robert Rossen had come to Spain to make *Alexander the Great*. It cost two million dollars. It had a cast of thousands. And horses, and camels, and elephants—and Richard Burton.

Though the period was 338 B.C., all modern conveniences were at hand: a good cuisine on the battlefield, a fleet of fast cars to take the protagonists from the front to their luxury hotels after the day's fighting was done. And high up in the primordial mountains there were to be found such things as refrigerators.

The Grecian wars were taking place by kind permission of the Spanish Army, who were providing men and horses, and the battles were being reproduced by Prince Peter of Greece, who was said to be "busy arranging the battle of Cheronea", as if it were a case of doing the choreography. I must admit it was a good battle.

Even Claire Bloom, as pale and fragile as a piece of Wedgwood china, turned up although she was not playing one of the generals.

"She mustn't catch the sun," said Rossen. "This is a colour film. I want her looking pale for her role."

What was Miss Bloom's role? For three weeks she had been staying in an £8-a-night suite at Madrid's futuristic Castellana-Hilton hotel, which looks as though it was designed for space travellers, if you know what I mean. She had done one day's work.

Miss Bloom smiled with infinite gentleness, twisted the strands of her hair nervously around her fingers.

"A couple of weeks ago," she said, "I was Barsine. Now I believe I am Roxane. Or it is possible that I am Statira—there was some mention of Statira. Do you know who I am playing?"

I said, "The latest news is that you are Barsine, Roxane and Statira. A composite of all three. But whatever your name, you are the great love of Alexander the Great."

Miss Bloom did not seem too inspired by this news.

"You are the small, still voice of Alexander's conscience," I said.

"Really," said Miss Bloom; "that's the first I've heard of it. What gives you that idea?"

"Your producer."

"Oh well, in that case I'm the small, still voice of Alexander's conscience."

I said, "One thing puzzles me—about you and Alexander the Great. Do you have love scenes together?"

"Yes."

"I had always thought Alexander wasn't interested in girls."

"What makes you think he was? This is a film. Don't tell me you believe everything in a film."

I asked Miss Bloom whether she had any ideas about how she was going to play Alexander's composite love. Miss Bloom said it was a secret.

I said: "I know Robert Rossen is directing Part One of the film during the day and writing Part Two in the mornings. Could it be that you are in Part Two and still unwritten?"

Miss Bloom said: "I'm not saying anything."

Anyway, I sympathised with her on having to cool her heels around Madrid for all this time without being called upon to act. Knowing what a dedicated actress she was, she must simply be bursting to act. But I was wrong.

"Not at all," said Miss Bloom. "I'm having a wonderful time. It's lovely being paid and not having to work. I no longer take myself so seriously. I used to have a miserable time when I was too serious. Now I have much more fun."



(Planet News)

Marilyn Monroe—climbing the cultural ladder. *(Below)* with Marlon Brando at a supper party in Hollywood. *(Above)* with Sir Laurence Olivier at a New York Press conference to announce their appearance together in "The Sleeping Prince".

(Planet News)





(International News Photos)

Darryl F. Zanuck (*above*) the last of the big Hollywood tycoons—the last of the fire-eaters.

Victor Mature (*below*) fools around for the benefit of photographers at London Airport.

(P.A. Reuter)



She had even kicked over the traces to the extent of going to a bull-fight. I expected her to be revolted by something so alien to the old school and the Old Vic. But, no, Miss Bloom was enthralled.

"The matadors," she sighed, "they are so beautiful. It would be terrible if it were done by an ugly man, but they are marvellous, the way they move, like dancers. Of course it is sad about the bulls, but I was so fascinated I didn't think about them."

Robert Rossen, who once made a film called *The Brave Bulls*, was not going to the bull-fights. "I worry too much about the bull-fighters," he said, "now that I know them personally. No, I've never worried about the bulls."

But Rossen had other worries, too.

"Costs run into thousands every day," he said. "It will be a two-hour-twenty-minute film. It would have cost twice as much to make in England. Of course I would have liked to make it in the actual locales in Greece, but they don't have enough technicians there."

He interrupted to issue directions to his players: "Come on, you're suppose to *hit* her. *Hit* her."

"But we're only rehearsing," complained the actress who had to be hit. "Can't we save that for the take?"

It seemed they couldn't.

Rossen is a painstaking worker, a stickler for realism.

He built roads to take his unit to certain locations; he levelled the top of a hill with dynamite so he could build on it; he took Alexander the Great up mountains and down into rivers. And in the wake of Alexander came other Hollywood companies.

Now that Italy has become so expensive, Hollywood has discovered that the sun also shines in Spain.

Chapter 8

THE BRITISH IN HOLLYWOOD

I LIKE to live in the centre of things. I have a flat just off Piccadilly: the Ritz is my local. The raucous sound of the West End traffic is sweet music in my ears. I can make do without nightingales and the smell of heather. I can't tell one flower from another.

When I am writing, I prefer to have to do it to a deadline (otherwise I do not think I would ever get anything written). I think it was Dr. Johnson who said that if you know you are going to be executed tomorrow it concentrates your mind marvellously; knowing you will appear in print tomorrow has the same effect. I like the illusion that life is fast.

I did not find Hollywood particularly fast. Perhaps the newspapers did carry the following day's date, but they also carried the previous week's news. The idea that it is a place full of high-pressure executives is just another myth. Life in Hollywood can be as slow as its worst film. And all the time you feel (and are) 3,000 miles from where anything is happening.

I think the stars who are leaving Hollywood must have begun to feel this, too. If you are functioning as a creative artist (on any level) you need the stimulus of being in touch with something that can pass for life. Although Hollywood sits like a rich aunt on the outskirts of Los Angeles (where there is enough raw life to satisfy anyone) it rarely visits its poor relative. They are barely on speaking terms.

Seeing a place through the window of your car is not the same as living in it. And in Hollywood life tends to

be just something seen periodically through the window of your car. Its sins are not so much those of riotous living but of not living.

If we consider why such different people as Tyrone Power, Ingrid Bergman, Douglas Fairbanks, Jun., have fled from the bee-hive in which they were nurtured we discover a common denominator in their motives: boredom. The deadly sin of boredom.

Hollywood has inspired as many similes and metaphors as Roget's *Thesaurus* (understandably since there are about three hundred foreign correspondents stationed there who must continually make the place sound exciting to retain their jobs).

I would like to apply a simile to the place that I don't think has been used before: it strikes me as being very like a bad Chekhov play in which there is a great deal of talk but nothing ever happens.

All of Hollywood's more publicised sins are, I think, the result of boredom.

Promiscuity is such a popular pastime because once shop talk has been exhausted there really is not much else left to do. Getting drunk is another way of taking the edge off boredom—and so is socking people on the jaw.

I do not know to what extent TV alleviates boredom (or promotes it), but it is watched assiduously: it is at least less predictable than the average conversation. You see, there really is not much to talk about.

In the studios you have a good day if you have managed to put two minutes of screen-time on film; all day you have played the same tiny scene over and over again. And, likely as not, it is a scene you have played in a dozen previous films. In the evening at home the domestic scenes you play are equally repetitive. If you have guests, they are likely to be other actors or directors or writers or agents. You know exactly who you are

going to see tomorrow, next week and next month. The news is always the same: one of your friends is getting divorced, another is getting married again, another has had a flop, a fourth has been nominated for the Academy Award this year.

I will not deny that many of the citizens are happy and contented with their life. They are the people who are self-sufficient, who can get all their "kicks" from their own company, or those who are born suburbanites or those who are exclusively interested in sex, alcohol and money.

You may wonder, if Hollywood is really as dull as I paint it, why so many actors should strive so hard to get there.

The answer is that Hollywood can seem exciting when you first arrive. When your income has risen in a short time from £70 to £700 a week you are apt to find life thrilling in whatever environment you find yourself. It will be two years before you have met everyone. When you first hear it Hollywood small-talk has a novel tang; and first time round, Hollywood society can be amusing.

There are, of course, stars who would strenuously deny everything I have said about Hollywood being dull. To a Diana Dors it is obviously the Promised Land.

It all comes down to this: there are people whose various needs—physical, psychological, financial and social—happen to coincide with what Hollywood has to give. They can be happy there.

My encounters with those who did not want any longer what it had to give revealed a certain amount about the sort of place Hollywood is today.

I think it should be equally enlightening to consider now some of the people who want what it has to give sufficiently to uproot themselves and make their pilgrimage to this Meccano-Mecca. We may find a few more deadly sins in the process.

The reason why so many English stars are finding what they want in Hollywood is because just now they are what Hollywood wants.

"Hollywood is full of people whose profession is being Englishmen," said James Mason in his clipped, dry-martini voice.

His naturally melancholy face became contorted—contorted is the only word for it—into a smile. He said, "You know the sort—leather elbow patches, tweeds, ghastly accents like something out of Gilbert and Sullivan."

Mr. Mason, who is an actor and a producer but not an Englishman by profession, was wearing an American suit, bought-off-the-peg, but his shoes were English. "That's my weakness," he said. "I have to have English shoes. The American ones are all tasselled jobs. Liberace style. Not quite for me."

His accent, without being Americanised ("I flirted with acquiring an American accent, but decided it didn't suit me"), is sufficiently un-ghastly to be understood even in Milwaukee and Minnesota.

"Some of these professional Englishmen," said Mason, "haven't been back for twenty-five years. They don't realise that England has changed meanwhile. If they returned to Britain they'd probably sound like foreigners. But here we don't call ourselves a colony now. We don't have a cricket team any more."

A possible reason for this is that the British Foreign Legion of actors in the United States has become overwhelmingly feminine. Diana Dors, Dana Wynter and Joan Collins have made a big impact in America. And right at the top, among the biggest international box-office draws, are more British girls: Audrey Hepburn, Jean Simmons, Deborah Kerr and Elizabeth Taylor.

They have captivated the American male without wearing leather elbow patches, speaking with a ghastly

accent or forming a cricket team. Though it seems almost improper to say this about English girls, they have done it on sex-appeal—which in most cases the English male had hardly noticed they possessed.

In Hollywood everyone was talking about “those beautiful English girls of yours”. They are the vogue today: as dates, as actresses, as cover-girls, as party-goers. To drive an English Jaguar and have an English girl friend is considered the height of smartness.

America produces bigger, more streamlined and faster cars and girls, but they are not considered quite so fashionable.

Dana Wynter, who for many years was knocking around London unappreciated and unnoticed, is thought to be one of the big stars of tomorrow. I saw her receiving one of the innumerable awards constantly being handed out in Hollywood. She had poise, elegance and dark beauty that I would have thought almost impossible not to notice—even in England. She made Anita Ekberg, who was also collecting an award at the same time—I am not sure precisely for what—look flashy. To return to the car metaphor, Miss Ekberg looked like a Chevrolet convertible with all accessories. Miss Wynter looked like a Bentley.

Understandably, Hollywood raved about Dana—and it practically ranted about Joan Collins. London had scarcely raised its voice about either of them. It is not surprising, then, that they should prefer the warmer, more enthusiastic climate of California.

I remembered Miss Collins as a sort of coffee-bar Jezebel, in sweater and jeans, who liked to jive and to read about herself in fan magazines. She was married to an actor, Maxwell Reed, and they lived in a pseudo-Spanish top-floor flat in Mayfair above a lot of offices.

The aura she carried around with her in those days was of cellar jazz clubs, not of stardom.

Now look at Miss Collins today after appearing in *The Virgin Queen* with Bette Davis and *The Girl in the Red Velvet Swing* with Ray Milland. Her physique is wrapped in a £5,000 mink coat. Underneath it she wears a body-moulding black jersey dress. On her finger: a topaz ring. On her wrists: an assortment of gold bangles. Her hat looks like a very contemporary lampshade. Her fingernails, grown the length of talons, are painted silver.

Next time I see her she is wearing a topless (and almost frontless) gown, and her hair style has become positively futuristic. Her face is almost a work of art—revealing the lavish use of eye-pencil, eye-shadow, mascara—the lot. Her talk and walk are in bebop language; her figure is pronounced—wherever it should be.

Miss Collins talks about her arrival in Hollywood with an American accent. Like this: “Oh, sure there were wolves around. Some are kinda-fast workers. One wealthy playboy rang me up before he’d even met me—and gave me the spiel. He got to be a real pest. Followed me to New York. I managed to give him the brush-off, though.

“Oh, I went out with boys, sure. I went out with Marlon Brando—but don’t get this wrong; we were always in a group with other girls and fellers. My studio wanted to arrange a publicity romance for me with Robert Wagner. They had a whole schedule of dates fixed. But I wouldn’t play. I didn’t think it was right. For one thing, I’m still married. And for another, I can arrange my own dates.”

She has just been picked to play a nun in a film called *Seawife*. When I express surprise at this remarkable piece of casting, she tells me that I have failed to see the great innocent quality she has in her face.

I look hard. In fact, I stare. What I see is a girl with eyes as full of secret messages as a courier's briefcase. A figure whose message could be deciphered without any code-book.

"I'm sorry," I say. "I can't quite see it."

"You must remember I won't be wearing make-up," she says, "and I won't be wearing this dress.

"I shall be wearing a shift," explains Miss Collins, "and it won't cling. It will be square. You won't see any of my figure. I shall have to act just with my face."

I ask her how she proposes to change her style for the new role.

"I really don't know anything about nuns," she says. "So I'm having to start from scratch. I've been reading lots of books about the saints. And I met some nuns today—so I could study them. I didn't meet any that you could really call pretty. But then you'll agree that a *film* stands a better chance with a pretty nun than with an ugly one.

"Mind you, I shan't play this girl like she was an angel with a halo round her head. You see, I'm shipwrecked on a raft with four men and I'm the only girl, and Richard Burton is one of the men and he starts to chase me. Well, I can't run very far on a raft, can I?"

Miss Collins's present standing as a star—the result of playing some far-from-innocent roles—is high. She has considerable assets of one kind or another. She has a Thunderbird convertible. She possesses a mink coat, a white mink stole and a blue mink stole, and a box full of jewellery. "I don't wear costume jewellery any more," she says; "I keep it stored. Now I only wear the real stuff. Some of it I bought myself; some of it I had given to me. Yes, Arthur gave me some of it."

She is talking about Arthur Loew, Jun., the son of the president of Loews Inc., which controls M.G.M.

"Will you marry him?" I ask.

“We’ve talked about it,” she says, “and yes, you could say I’m in love with him. But we can’t think about marrying until my divorce is final.”

“If you do marry him,” I say, “you will probably be a millionairess, won’t you?”

“I don’t know,” says Miss Collins. “I haven’t asked him how much money he’s got. But he must have a lot. I think we’ll be comfortable.”

Obviously Miss Collins has no cause to be dissatisfied with Hollywood. What she wants happens to be precisely what Hollywood can give her plenty of.

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That Diana Dors should have decided, after being there only a few days, that Hollywood was her *métier* did not surprise me either. She brings to the place something *it* desperately needs—flamboyance—and gets from it something *she* needs almost as much—money.

The stories are that she is going to be paid £53,000 a picture—and that with earnings from TV and radio she can expect to make £1,000,000 over the next five years. Even if these figures are exaggerated, as such figures tend to be, half the quoted amount is still a lot of money.

I have a considerable affection for Diana, but it is necessary to point out in this context that the great romance of her life has been with her bank balance. She lavishes upon it all her tenderness and loving care. She is devoted to it. She adores every tiny digit in it.

You do not need radar, a geiger-counter, second-sight, sixth-sense or stereoscopic spectacles to determine what it is that Diana Dors has got. You just need reasonably normal eyesight. But it would help to have an electronic brain to work out how it is that she gets so much—£53,000 a picture in Hollywood if the reports are true—for what she has got.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF HOLLYWOOD

Let me try to explain, without the help of an electronic brain, what it is, exactly, that this toy-like tycoon has.

She has a tremendous relish for the good things of life and no misgivings worth mentioning. She has an enthusiasm that is infectious. She is a go-getting Cinderella who went to the Prince's ball by Cadillac, cut the Good Fairy in for a percentage and stayed on after midnight. She is still at the ball. Her personality is fluorescent, so there is no danger of anybody not noticing her. Her neckline is always a calculated risk: the calculation is usually superb.

But the thing about her that has really caught the public's imagination (more than her shape and her pin-up pictures) is the naïve and absolutely honest pleasure she takes in everything that is luxurious.

One talks, though it is not very good grammar, about a luxury flat; whether it is grammatical or not I am compelled to describe Miss Dors as a luxury-girl.

I remember Noël Coward squirming with distaste at the suggestion that he might possess a cocktail cabinet. He made it emphatically clear that he would never descend to having such a monstrosity in his house. I am sure he would have considered a bed with a leopard-skin head-rest and a car with gold-plated dashboard equally vulgar. Miss Dors has no such compunctions.

It has never been considered in the best of taste to boast of one's material possessions, especially if they have been recently acquired. Miss Dors has never been unduly bothered by this dictum.

It has always been her practice to flaunt her possessions, those she was born with and those she has bought—her body, her Rolls-Royces, her airplane, her swimming pool, her minks—in defiance of raised eyebrows and the tut-tutting of the good-taste brigade. Miss Dors' achievement has been to implement the daydreams of the

average film-goer. As she was once an average film-goer herself, she knows exactly what those day-dreams are about.

With the exercise of a little imagination every typist who can afford a bottle of peroxide is able to dream herself into Miss Dors' world of leopard-skin upholstery and gold-plated bath-taps and pearl-handled saucepans. There was a time when it was part of the normal function of film stars to live the fantasies of their public. Today Miss Dors is one of the few who still do this. She more or less has the field to herself.

Of course living the rich plushy life is not in itself sufficient to command the allegiance of the public. There are dukes and industrialists and heiresses with more fabulous possessions than Miss Dors. But the high-life they lead is so high as to be inaccessible. The great thing about Miss Dors is that she is accessible; she is tangible, real.

The appeal she radiates is so effective because every man within the area of radiation can feel that he would stand a chance.

That I would say is the essence of her success: she has brought the high-life down to earth, to a level at which the average man and woman can understand it, appreciate it and live it by proxy.

I doubt whether Miss Dors has done any of this by conscious design. She has just been herself, and fortunately being herself is a paying proposition.

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It is sometimes difficult to tell whether Richard Burton is a person who has embraced Hollywood or fled from it. He seems to alternate between hugging the place and kicking it in the teeth.

He has described it as "crazy" and has said the people were "the most nervous" he had met. To me he

explained that those were terms of flattery. He was using bop language—and in that peculiar idiom “crazy” and “nervous” are words of high praise.

On the whole, I think he has good reason to praise Hollywood. Before being starred there in *My Cousin Rachel* and *The Robe*, he was a competent actor who could earn £100 a week. Now he can get £70,000 a picture and afford to indulge in the tantrums that go with that kind of salary.

An executive of 20th Century-Fox, to whom he is under contract, told me, “When we want to contact him we usually get sidetracked to his agent. But at least he is no longer saying in public that Hollywood stinks. That’s something.”

In his relation with the Press he is less diplomatic. On one occasion when I greeted him at the Castellana-Hilton hotel in Madrid he turned his back on me and stalked off. I discovered subsequently that this was because of something I had written about his friend Emlyn Williams. He made it clear, through an intermediary, that he would never talk to me again.

I confess I was not terribly upset about being deprived of his conversation. I must record, however, that Mr. Burton is not consistent even in his rudeness. Some months after this incident I arrived at a supper-party given by the *Evening Standard* on the occasion of the presentation of its Drama Awards. Mr. Burton had won an award for his performance in *Henry V*.

I was with Dorothy Tutin, who is a friend of Burton’s. After they had embraced, according to theatrical custom, Dorothy said, “You know Tom Wiseman. . . .” Instead of repeating his Madrid performance, he extended his hand amiably and said, “Yes, of course. How are you? Nice to see you again.”

For a moment I was tempted to show him the same courtesy he had shown me in Madrid and turn my back

on him. But I overcame the temptation. I shook his hand.

I have always believed that a columnist who is often rude in print cannot be too sensitive about another person's rudeness to him. To be outraged by such behaviour, whether justified or not, would be unrealistic: like a boxer taking offence because his opponent has hit him too hard. It is something you have to expect if you are in the game. Like the boxer, the columnist is well advised not to take it personally when somebody punches him on the jaw.

The actor, too, would be wise not to take offence when he receives a few knocks at the hands of the Press. Of course actors are unjustifiably attacked; but they are also unjustifiably praised. A newspaperman is not a judge: usually he must come to his conclusions after only a brief interview—and he can be wrong.

The actor should realise that it is one of the hazards of his profession that he may be misjudged. He lessens the likelihood of this happening by being courteous and polite when he is being interviewed.

Do not think for one moment that I want every actor to behave in this way (if arrogance, vanity, rudeness, petulance are part of his real character I want him to be arrogant, vain, rude and petulant when I meet him). But from *his* point of view it is expedient to behave well. If he hasn't the sense to conceal his less likeable characteristics, he must not complain if they are reported. Needless to say, he usually does complain bitterly.

All this is by way of being a digression, but it does suggest a possible deadly sin: the actor's obsessive desire to be loved. There are actors in Hollywood who need love of the phony, fabricated kind—in the form of fan mail, flattering paragraphs in columns and the adoration of the public—as other human beings need proteins. They cannot exist without it. I suppose this is

due to feelings of insecurity, from which many of them suffer.

If you are a big star aware of your own inadequacies it must be painful to have someone else point them out to you. The more accurate the assessment, the more likely you are to be hurt and annoyed.

Richard Burton, I do not believe, has any need to feel insecure. His success is based on real ability; and although he may not be quite as good as he thinks he is, he is still good. This makes his occasional display of bad manners all the more unnecessary and puzzling. I think the explanation is that Burton believes in being recalcitrant on principle.

Before we had stopped talking to each other he told me, "Sure I have great rows with Darryl F. Zanuck. I believe it's a good thing to argue with the boss. Then he respects you. We fight about money—and details. About money we usually compromise. But on other things I usually win. Nobody can make an actor do something he doesn't want to do."

Burton is determined not to be compliant. He has shocked Hollywood on several occasions by going off to act at the Old Vic.

"How much are they going to pay you? Whatever it is we'll double it," they said.

When Burton replied, "£45 a week," Hollywood was flabbergasted and reduced to helplessness. What can you do with a man who could earn £2,000 a week and chooses to work for £45? Hollywood is accustomed to being able to buy whatever it wants. It is the only way it knows of getting anything.

Burton is determined never to be in the position of needing money so much that he would lose his freedom of action. "They tell me," he said, "that I owe it to myself to have a Bentley and a swimming pool and a fabulous house. And that I owe it to my wife to give her minks

and jewellery. They like you to spend a lot of money. That way you get dependent on them. Then you can't turn them down. If you are in debt and need the money, you cannot afford the luxury of saying 'No' to Hollywood and going to the Old Vic for £45 a week."

"We worked out that we could live in Hollywood on £35 a week. The two of us," said Mrs. Burton.

I commended them on their truly remarkable achievement (I found it difficult as a single person to manage on £70 a week in Hollywood.)

He said, "The only difference success has made to us is that we now drink dry martinis in a place like this instead of pints of bitter round the corner. And as you are paying for this, let's all have another drink."

It looks as though Richard Todd, who wears a bowler hat and lives the life of a country squire and drives a twenty-year-old Rolls, is all set to fill the vacancy in the swashbuckling department, Hollywood. It is caused by the departure, for less strenuous employment, of Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, Jun., Mr. Errol Flynn and Mr. Ronald Colman. It is a well-paid job, with prospects but no superannuation scheme.

In his new job Mr. Todd has a lot to measure up to—and Mr. Todd measures only 5 feet 6 inches vertically without elevated soles.

Inserting a filter-tip cigarette into his anti-nicotine holder ("for double safety") Mr. Todd agreed that, on the face of it, he was not perhaps the most obvious choice for a devil-may-care screen hero. But this was due to our misconception about the nature and physical proportions of real heroes.

"What do your Fairbanks and your Flynn have in common?" he asks. And answers himself: "Size. And a certain ebullience and extravagance of manner.

“To look at me,” he continues, “what would you take me for? A city clerk?”

But this piece of calculated modesty is merely a feint. It is followed by a parry: “What *do* heroes look like?”

Then a thrust: “Have you ever met Cheshire, V.C.? A diffident, slight, ascetic man—almost saintly. Doesn’t look a bit like Errol Flynn.”

And another lunge: “Then there’s Montgomery. A great general. I knew him well at one period. But in build and manner does anyone look less like the man of action?”

At this stage Mr. Todd prepares for the kill. His chin thrusts forward. His gold cufflinks in the form of the letters R.T. emerge from under his turned-up sleeve; his cutlery hovers above the kidneys and brussels sprouts (“*No sauté potatoes, thank you*”).

With what he clearly thinks is devastating effect he throws away the next line: “As it happens, I was a damned good athlete. I was in the Commandos, and in the paratroopers during the war. I broke both my shoulders. See how deceptive appearances can be.”

I had not been deceived. The regimental tie decorated with tiny parachutes explained itself, and also why Mr. Todd is one of the few stars who can jump over rooftops without breaking his neck or getting short of breath.

But Mr. Todd (“*I believe in keeping fit. No thank you, no dessert for me*”) has another, less gymnastic, side to his nature. He is a cautious capitalist (“*No liqueurs, thank you. Got my accounts to do today*”), whose assets, apart from himself, include a construction company in Australia and real estate.

He is a homely philosopher, with a great fondness for the analogy: “Of course, one doesn’t always want to be a big fish in a small pond. One wants to be a big fish in a

big pond. That's why I go to Hollywood. If you are a boxer, naturally you want to be a world champ."

He is an actor: "I got an Academy Award nomination for *The Hasty Heart*. That helps to establish you in the States. I get annoyed by people who suggest that I am not to be taken seriously as an actor. It takes a lot of acting to play these swashbuckling roles."

He is a diplomat: "Obviously I have plans and hopes for making people take me seriously as an actor. But you don't think I'd make the mistake of telling you about them."

Mr. Todd admitted to some qualms at the thought that he was earning more than a Cabinet Minister. But it was all according to the law of supply and demand. And there was not so much demand for Cabinet Ministers as there was for Mr. Todd.

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It looked like a cross between Hatter's Castle and the House in the Rue Morgue. As it was reverberating to the sound of organ music, I concluded that the master of the house was back. No ghost could have played Mendelssohn that well.

I went to investigate. The organist was, as I suspected, quite tangible—David Farrar in fact, back from his annual romps in Hollywood.

"I've been tipping champagne," said Farrar. "Come in and help me finish off the bottle."

I said I would be glad to be of assistance.

I wanted to talk to Farrar because I had heard that he is a film star who isn't bothered if his ego is showing. One grows tired of meeting self-effacing stars with plenty to be self-effacing about.

There is no danger of Farrar falling into that category. When you enter his twenty-two-room house you are not long in doubt about the identity of its occupant. There

were photographs, portraits or sculptures of the master of the house in all the rooms I saw.

In the study he has enough publicity stills of himself to paper the vacant spaces on the walls of all his twenty-two rooms if he should feel inspired to do so.

"I get so much fan mail," he explained, "that I have to have the pictures. I get letters from Chile, Chicago, the Gold Coast, Finland, Russia. Yes, I penetrate the Iron Curtain."

For a man with so many fans Farrar has made surprisingly few films in recent years that are at all memorable. He has appeared in several Hollywood adventure films, but they were not the kind that would enhance his prestige as an actor. He agrees, but defends his actions on the grounds that:

(1) "You've got to get yourself known in America. Some of the leading British stars don't mean anything at the box-office in the States."

(2) "In Hollywood I get paid nearly £2,000 a week. Here I get only £1,000."

Also, it seems, they are rather slow in England in coming up with suitable vehicles for him. Farrar told me: "I had dinner with J. Arthur Rank and I told Arthur: 'Your people don't seem to be turning up with first-rate parts.' He said: 'Aren't you rather choosy about parts?' So I said: 'Yes, but aren't YOU rather choosy about the flour in your mills?'"

For all his choosiness, Farrar was making a film for Mr. Rank—called *Lost*.

One has the impression that Farrar does not think he is properly appreciated in England.

"I know I'm forty-six," he says, "but my wife says I'm foolish to tell my real age and that I don't look more than thirty-six. I think it got round that I was 'difficult'. Not a bit of it."

I mentioned Montgomery Clift. Farrar indicated that

he had heard of him vaguely. "Many of these people," he said, "spring up overnight and then you never hear of them again. Now I came up the tough way. I've been in this business for twenty-five years and I'm still at the top."

I mentioned Ronald Colman. Farrar indicated that he had heard of Ronald Colman. He said: "I didn't think much of his TV series."

I mentioned Stewart Granger. He had certainly heard of him.

"You know," he said, "when they were casting *King Solomon's Mines* the producers said: 'We must get that wonderful English actor David Farrar for the starring role.' Then they came over and signed up Stewart Granger. By mistake."

As I said, it's refreshing to meet a film star who isn't bothered when his ego is showing.

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When Deborah Kerr first went to America she was categorised as the lady-type and left to a fate that in Hollywood is worse than the one that is worse than death: she was given a succession of films in which her virtue was never questioned let alone threatened. Such treatment can put an end to the most promising career.

Being a nice girl, Miss Kerr accepted these nice roles without making too much fuss. But secretly she yearned to be wicked. Her chance came when she was given a role in *From Here to Eternity* which involved her in an erotic tussle in the sand with Burt Lancaster.

This one scene produced a metamorphosis in Miss Kerr's screen personality. Suddenly the girl whose manner previously had been that of a school prefect—at the very best school—was being presented to us as a very sexy dish. It was a Pygmalion-in-reverse transformation. The duchess had been magically transformed into a tramp.

We were inundated with sexy quotes from Miss Kerr. She was supposed to have demanded that she be allowed to pose for cheesecake pictures. She had attributed to her a line in suggestive small-talk that sounded most unlike our Deborah.

Of course these quotes issued and dreamed up by the publicity department of her studio served a purpose. They created in the public's mind the tantalising image of an aloof, refined girl who had been secretly smouldering all the time under the sugar-icing. If the public had met Miss Kerr it would of course have realised that she was still the same nice girl, but a sufficiently good actress to be able to play a nymphomaniac or a nun as required.

However, the public did not meet Miss Kerr, and since she lost her virtue on the screen her career has progressed rapidly. It just shows you that nothing succeeds like sin. Conversely, it proves that nice girls can also succeed, the cost being no greater than accepting responsibility for a few crude quotes and posing in a swim-suit.

In Hollywood, where gossip is the principal sport and recreation, there is no gossip about Miss Kerr. Everybody likes her.

She said, "All the people who are supposed to be difficult have been perfectly sweet to me. Oh yes, I've had leading men who've called out 'Hiya, Duchess' for the first few days in a not too pleasant way. But the secret is not to get annoyed. I just reply, 'Hiya, Lordship', and they love that and we're friends."

I asked how she imagined she would get on with the moody Mr. Brando. She said, "I've met him. He was . . ." and she made a scowling face, "like that all the time. I shall have to convert him to normalcy, shan't I?"

The Deborah Kerr life in Hollywood is the epitome of normalcy. From the standpoint of a normal, balanced

woman, I asked her to tell me why so many Hollywood stars are abnormal, unbalanced and neurotic.

“Maybe they believe their publicity,” said Miss Kerr, “perhaps they’ve been spoiled; perhaps they had the wrong sort of upbringing. If you’ve been kicked around the sidewalks, well, it’s bound to have an effect. Or if you have a bad background, well, it’s inevitable. . . . I don’t know, really, but, you know, all the most brilliant and successful people seem to be neurotic these days. Perhaps we should stop being sorry for them. And start being sorry for me. For being so confoundedly normal.”

Chapter 9

HITTING THE COUCH

DEBORAH KERR's jocular assertion that all the most brilliant people are neurotic has a surprisingly large element of truth in it. Success depends not so much on having been to the right school as having been to the right psychiatrist. To be a crazy mixed-up kid is to be in the fashion. It is what all the best people are.

"Love?" said Shelley Winters. "It's nothing more than complementary neuroses. Vittorio and me—I guess our neuroses didn't match."

It had been an extremely pleasant dinner until the traumas, the fixations, the Id and the Ego raised their ugly heads. Inevitably the conversation had veered towards psycho-analysis. Next to sex, it is the favourite topic of small-talk. The casting couch is no longer the joke and symbol of the Hollywood way of life: it has been superseded by the psychiatrist's couch. Sooner or later it seems that practically everyone in Hollywood "hits the couch".

To the non-neurotic public it must be puzzling to read that so many rich, successful, famous people should apparently need psycho-analysis. (Of course they don't all *need* it: but in America if you can afford something you need it.) The important thing to realise is that many did not become neurotic because they were actors but became actors because they were neurotic. Acting provides splendid opportunities for the neurotic to indulge in his neuroses and get paid for it.

I heard an interesting theory along this line from a fashionable Hollywood psychiatrist. He suggested that when a star becomes successfully identified with a certain type of role it is often because playing that role enables him to cope with some neurotic need. Thus the man who is perpetually a stooge and constantly being knocked about may have a psychological need to be humiliated—which is why he stooges so brilliantly. The professional he-man may be a person who needs constantly to be assured of his masculinity. This is why he is such a convincing he-man on the screen—for he is not merely anxious to convince the public, he is also determined to convince himself. The lovable clown may be a person who is desperately hungry for love—which is why he is so lovable on the screen. The “heavy” could be a man who, in private life, has repressed his sadistic tendencies and finds an outlet for them in his acting.

All neurotics indulge in fantasies about themselves. The actor is in the unique position of being able to play out his fantasies before a public—and sometimes make a career of them. So for many stars acting is more than a profession: it is a therapy.

Being a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde need not be disastrous, as long as Mr. Hyde confines his activities to the screen.

The neurotic's needs stay the same. And the role he has to play in his fantasies stays the same. Therefore Hollywood is ideal for him. It is the only place where you can be a success playing the same role for twenty-five years.

Is neurosis a deadly sin or even a common or garden sin? The answer, of course, is no. It is an illness, and you cannot blame a person for being ill.

But are psychological disturbances the occupational disease of the film star? And, if so, is Hollywood life to

blame for that? Again, I think, the answer is no. It comes down to the old conundrum: What came first? Invariably the neurotic came first—and the actor much later. As I have indicated, acting can enable someone to cope with his neuroses: I doubt if it is ever responsible for their existence—except, perhaps, in the case of a child star.

But Hollywood *can* be held to blame for making a virtue of its neuroses, for displaying them and for sometimes inventing them.

There is an old joke which has some relevance in this context. It is the one about the woman who went to a psychiatrist and complained, "Doctor, I have a terrible inferiority complex." To which the psychiatrist replied, "Madam, you do not have an inferiority complex. You are just inferior."

There are a lot of inferior people in Hollywood who feel they can make themselves more interesting by acquiring a few complexes. Because Marlon Brando has a psychiatrist, they feel they must have one, too. It is another example of the popular American practice of keeping up with the Joneses.

Once initiated into the mystique of psycho-analysis, they are reluctant to give it up. If you do not really need it, it can be a delightful experience—a kind of mental manicure. All actors love to talk about themselves, and on the psychiatrist's couch they can do this uninterrupted and for hours on end. There are plenty of unscrupulous psychiatrists in Hollywood who are willing to accept a fat fee for listening to some actor's dreary and banal monologues.

There is also another category of people who go to psychiatrists. They are not exactly neurotic, but they are unhappy.

If you have every reason for being happy, but are not, there is probably something wrong with you. But

if you are unhappy because you have good reason to be unhappy you are perfectly normal.

There are Hollywood people who have all the material comforts of life but are nevertheless unhappy. There is nothing necessarily neurotic about that. The possession of minks and diamonds and fame has never been a guarantee of happiness.

These people are not suffering from psychological disturbances but from faulty logic: they have simply been mistaken in assuming they have reasons to be happy.

Their trouble is that they had assumed success would solve all their problems. But it doesn't. On the contrary, it creates new ones. Suddenly you have a lot to lose, which is more worrying than not having anything.

Whilst a person is a failure he can get along assuming that all his worries and frustrations will disappear with success. At least he has a goal, there is a panacea just round the corner.

But what do you do when you are a success and are worried and frustrated, worried because you feel you may lose what success you have won, frustrated because though you have reached the grapes they are none the less sour? Where do you go from there? Usually you assume you need still more success: the glamour girl thinks she needs respect and turns to the classics. The classical actor thinks he needs the recognition of the masses and turns to musicals. Inevitably, they both end up on the psychiatrist's couch.

But for them he cannot really do anything. They feel insecure. They feel frustrated. They worry because they are unhappy and they are unhappy because they worry. They feel the public may tire of them. They feel they are getting old. The psychiatrist can do little. They probably *are* getting old; the public probably will tire of them; they have every reason to feel insecure, because you cannot insure against changing tastes—they have

ample cause to worry. With such people the psychiatrist must function not as a doctor but as an uncle. All he can tell them is that they must accept the conditions of life in Hollywood—which are that success and failure can be the result of flukes, and that it is foolish to get into a state where your personal happiness is dependent on your public success.

Not every star is blessed with an avuncular psychiatrist or even with an uncle. This is probably why some stars develop eccentricities, like the habit of socking people on the jaw, or wanting to hide away, which the rest of society fails to understand.

Chapter 10

CRAZY MIXED-UP KIDS?

WHAT such totally different personalities as Frank Sinatra, Van Johnson, Robert Mitchum, Katharine Hepburn and Montgomery Clift have in common is a tendency to behave in a way that may seem, at times, eccentric.

What is the cause of their eccentricity? And has it anything to do with Hollywood and its sin?

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The sign on the padded studio door was to the point. It said "KEEP OUT" in large red letters. In smaller red letters it amplified this advice: "To save embarrassment to yourself, KEEP OUT, unless on official business."

I went in, risking embarrassment to myself and the wrath of Katharine Hepburn, whose presence had inspired the warning. For over fifteen years Miss Hepburn has been almost as elusive, publicity-shy and un-interviewable as Burgess and Maclean. She is addicted, in equal parts, to silence and the word "No".

I did not hold this against her. On the screen she is almost as eloquent as Garbo, which entitles her to be almost as silent off. But the Silence Barrier can be broken. The sphinx in slacks spoke to me.

This was the scene: At the far end of the set Bob Hope was cracking jokes surrounded by a dozen technicians. I was talking to Robert Helpmann and director Ralph Thomas. Miss Hepburn was sitting alone, eighteen feet away, at her dressing-table. Abruptly she turned round

and said, "If you want to talk to me, you'll have to come over here—I can't hear you from there."

I approached the Great Unapproachable.

Up close, Miss Hepburn gives the impression of being a sculpture by Reg Butler, all twisting wire and energy. Her face is that of a P.T. instructress with the soul of a poet. It is true she is not built on Rubensesque lines, but she is as succinct as a good epigram.

Her nails are unlacquered and unmanicured; her face is devoid of make-up; but as she becomes animated her features glow as if coated with phosphorus, and she seems to be burning herself up.

"I used to get by in films," she said, "on my eyes and my teeth. For this film I thought I would have to manage on my teeth." She was referring to the fact that she had been suffering from styes; but they had cleared up and her eyes, alternately as wily as an agent's and as innocent as a child's, were as mesmeric as ever.

I had been told that she existed in the studio as a self-contained entity: eating alone (not in the restaurant), rejecting the attentions that are normally lavished upon any star, drinking from her own bottle of mineral water, and doing everything for herself.

She put her feet up on the dressing-table and let her hair, which she had been putting up, fall down to her waist. She rammed a cigarette in her mouth.

"I'm not so fascinating," she said. "Everybody thinks I must have such an exciting, glamorous life, so they keep away from me.

"Shall I tell you something? When I was making *Summer Madness* in Venice I had pretty much the same experience as the woman I was playing. Nobody asked me to dinner. They went off and left me alone. I felt rather angry about that. I wandered off by myself through Venice, feeling very lonely and neglected, and I sat down by the canal and looked in the water, and while

I was sitting like that a man came over to me and said, 'May I come and talk to you?' Only it wasn't Rossano Brazzi. It was a French plumber. I was glad to talk to anyone who looked reasonably all right, so we went off together for a walk through Venice. I suppose they all thought I would have madly exciting things to do, and left me to it. It happens everywhere to me. Even here."

I suggested that she rather encouraged people to leave her alone.

"Yes," she said. "It's my own fault, entirely. I have brought it upon myself. I am a rather sharp person. I have a sharp face and a sharp voice. When I speak on the telephone I snap into it. It puts people off, I suppose."

She suddenly leaped up, like a hurdler, and getting down on the floor pulled apart the plugs connecting the heavy cables which supply the electricity for the arc-lamps.

"Too hot," she explained, sitting down again. She would not have thought of asking anyone else to do this for her.

She manœuvred restlessly on the narrow chair, twisting her legs underneath her, hugging her knees, wriggling her feet.

"I'm lucky," she said, "that I have a few very good friends. But I don't care much for acquaintances."

Passing acquaintances—like co-stars—tend to be frightened of her. Bob Hope, I gathered, had not yet worked up enough courage to ask her to dinner.

"Why are people so frightened of you?" I asked.

"Because I'm mean," she said.

"Reporters," I said, "are all nervous of you."

"Oh, I'm real mean to reporters," she said.

"Why?"

"They ask me things they have no business asking—why I wear pants."

“Why do you wear pants?”

“Because I like to.”

She was wearing gaberdine trousers and a jacket over a white vest.

She said, “Being an actor is such a humiliating business.”

“Because people ask you about wearing pants?”

“Because you are selling yourself to the public—your face, your personality—and that is humiliating. As you get older it becomes more humiliating, because you’ve got less to sell.

“It’s really an absurd thing being an actor, isn’t it? A child can do what the best-trained actor can do. Even if only for a moment. But a child can’t, even for one moment, do what Sir Winston Churchill can do.”

At this stage Miss Hepburn was called upon to do what no child could do—and not many actresses, either. She was required to play a scene with Bob Hope in that distinctive style of hers. She set about it like a master strategist.

The film was *The Iron Petticoat*. She played a Russian pilot who attempts to convert Bob Hope to Communism. This was for her a traditional role: the hard, unemotional authoritative woman melted by love.

When she had done her scene I asked her whether she was as unemotional as people thought.

“I’m madly emotional,” she said. “Everybody is madly emotional. And madly lonely.”

“But you cultivate loneliness. Eating alone, for instance.”

“I can’t eat in restaurants. It gives me indigestion. It’s a very unnatural way of eating in a restaurant, sitting upright. You need to get the seat of your pants higher than your head.”

She took a swig at her bottle of mineral water. I had

the impression that she was at any moment going to attempt the three-minute mile.

I recalled the story told about her arrival in Hollywood. Her agent was said to have surveyed her with dismay and exclaimed, "Are we asking them 1,500 dollars a week for this?"

Miss Hepburn ran a strong hand over her strong features and through her hair. "It is the plain women who know about love," she said. "The beautiful ones are all too busy being beautiful."

What she knows about love is her own secret. She has been married once at least—to Ogden Ludlow Smith, Jun., a stockbroker. She kept that marriage secret for three years. They were divorced in 1934. There have been rumours that she also was married before. Nobody seems to be quite sure whether she was or not. She has had a long-standing friendship with Spencer Tracy. "I suppose I have about six friends in the whole world," said Miss Hepburn; "that's a lot. Who else can say that?"

In her relationship with men she expects no privileged treatment because she is a woman, nor does the fact that she is of the weaker sex prevent her from dominating her male associates. Lester Cowan, the producer, once said of a film he was planning with her, "I may be called the producer of this picture—but it will be Miss Hepburn who will do most of the producing. As always."

That she intimidates most producers could be because of her fame. But it is not only producers who are scared of her. Once she interrupted a burglar in his work—he was rifling her jewel-box—and shouted at him, "What the hell are you doing?" He took one look at her, dropped the jewels—and ran.

It seems strange that such power, physical and intellectual, should go hand in hand with such shyness. A

friend of hers assured me that her detestation of publicity is perfectly genuine. He thought this was due to the circumstances of her upbringing. As a child she had never had any privacy. She was one of a very large family. Her mother was a virulent progressive, always urging reforms, always seeking publicity for some pet scheme or other. Her greatest campaign had been on behalf of birth control.

Katharine Hepburn grew up with a loathing for publicity and a determination not to allow her sex to be her limitation. Clearly she believes that men and women are equal, but that some women are more equal than most men. She sees no reason why she shouldn't play the great male roles in Shakespeare.

She is the answer to all those critics who say that Shaw's women are unreal. Katharine Hepburn might have been written by George Bernard Shaw.

But produced and directed by Katharine Hepburn.

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After a certain amount of psychological warfare I got Montgomery Clift to tell his plans.

They were, if you will forgive the sensationalism, to lie in the sun somewhere in the Adriatic. To fulfil his programme Mr. Clift flew to Italy, where he was later absorbing more ultra-violet rays than an embryonic banana.

This was precisely what he had been doing for the past two years.

When I called on him he looked worn out by all this strenuous inactivity. While Mr. Clift was lotus-eating—and from his frail appearance one would think that is all he does eat—the movie moguls were inundating him with offers. While Mr. Clift was contemplating life on the best beaches of the world, the moguls were developing ulcers trying to get him to make a picture.



(Columbia Pictures)



(Associated Press)

Betty Grable (*left*) and Rhonda Fleming (*right*) display what have now become slightly old-fashioned assets in Hollywood—legs.



(P.A. Reuter)

Marlene Dietrich claims that beauty is just an illusion. She has maintained the illusion with great success for nearly thirty years, outwitting time and most of her contemporaries.

But Mr. Clift said "No" so often as to make Mr. Molotov, in his heyday, sound like a yesman by comparison. He even said "No" to the Edinburgh Festival, where he was supposed to appear in a play by Thornton Wilder. Although it was temptingly entitled *A Life in the Sun* (not to be confused with his film *A Place in the Sun*) Mr. Clift withdrew from the cast.

He gave me his reasons: "I had a disagreement with Thornton Wilder about how my part should have been written. I was not prepared to play it the way it was written and he was not prepared to write it the way I could play it."

Other parts Mr. Clift turned down as "unsuitable" include: starring role in *Ben Hur*; starring role in *Joseph and His Brethren*; the Brando role in *Desiree* ("Marlon Brando should have turned that one down too"); the James Dean role in *East of Eden*.

Montgomery Clift was at one time running neck and neck with Marlon Brando in the race for stardom. What made him now so particular that he would rather make no films than one which would not satisfy his fastidious tastes?

The story was that he had a private fortune and did not need to work. Mr. Clift denies this. "I don't have any private money," he said. "My attitude? Well, I, as an individual, would be deeply uninterested in seeing some of the films I have been offered."

I suggested, "But you would be paid to make them. Not to see them."

"I'm just not interested, like Marlon is, in being a businessman and making money. I've got nothing against it; it just doesn't interest me," he insisted.

What, I asked, did he think the Hollywood bosses thought of his high-principled attitude? Was he not, in the politest possible way, telling them all to go to hell?

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF HOLLYWOOD

"I don't know," he said, "I really don't. I don't have much occasion to meet Hollywood tycoons. I don't live there. Living there is like living in a hothouse . . . the breezes are all so gentle and the temperature is so ideal. And I'm not just discussing the climate when I say that. Nothing to stimulate you there."

He paused, considered my question again.

"I suppose," he said, "the tycoons must think I'm either an idiot or a genius."

Mr. Clift, I would say, certainly does not regard himself as an idiot. Nor do I.

Nor, on the other hand, would I say that he was a genius.

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At the age of forty, Van Johnson, that freckled, gangling American co-ed, has the distinction of being the oldest adolescent in the movie business. He wore red socks and red shirt, the trousers of a dinner suit and a pair of velvet slippers with the initials V.J. embossed over the toes.

He flopped around the room miming exhaustion (from lack of sleep), a headache (from a hangover) and ecstasy (because he was in London).

I had never seen him so expressive.

The telephone rang. He lifted it, pretending, for my benefit, that it was a dumb-bell.

"You want me to come in today? For what? For make-up! Listen, I've never worn make-up in sixty-five pictures and I'm not going to start now."

He hung up. He said to me, "I don't dig that creep. Make-up? I guess I was rude to him—huh? Why'd they want me to wear make-up?"

I suggested they might want to conceal his freckles, as he was playing a playwright. Freckles, for some reason, did not seem to suggest literary qualities. Nor, for that matter, did crimson socks particularly. In that case,

said Van, he'd do it. If it would make him look more literary he'd even submit to make-up.

The telephone rang again. "I hate the phone," he said. "Makes me nervous. I like to see the people I'm talking to."

"What you want," I said, "is a TV-telephone."

"Please," he said petulantly, and began to roll up his trousers to his knees. "Do me a favour! TV—that's a dirty word."

At last he picked up the receiver. Still fooling, he growled into it, "What do you want?"

At the end of the call he got up, slouched across the room with buckling knees, moaning: "Oh, what a night that was."

I said, "You might like to know that a former director of yours told me that underneath that freckled exterior you are a troubled man, an introvert."

"Really," said Van. "You know, for the first time I'm beginning to sound interesting. Go on, I like this."

I said, "According to this director, Edward Dmytryk, you are a mixed-up man."

"Enigmatical, aren't I?" said Van.

He pondered, rolled down one trouser-leg.

"Well," he said, "I do think from time to time. But I'm not a thinker. And troubles? Why should I have troubles? I've got my health. I'm happy, sure."

"And are you always so frolicsome?" I asked, expecting him at any moment to start swinging from the chandeliers.

"When the door has closed behind you," he said, "do you know what anyone is like? Now Monty Clift—he's the troubled sort. Me? Now I was always everybody's sweetheart, kid brother or best friend.

"The boy next door," he added sardonically. "And the boy next door is always clean of mind and limb and untroubled. Fortunately I'm now getting out of that.

I'm playing tortured characters now. A convict and a drunk in my last film. Now a blind playwright who has lost faith in himself in *23 Paces to Baker Street*. There is no reason why a tortured man shouldn't have freckles, is there? Or why a freckled man shouldn't be tortured?"

I said, "No reason at all."

I have no idea what Van Johnson was like after I had closed the door behind me. You never know, do you?

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Robert Mitchum has given a good deal of ammunition to people who are determined to think the worst of Hollywood—and of him.

In 1948 he was sent to gaol for smoking cigarettes made of dope. He has, on his own admission, been involved in quite a few fights—which were not strictly in the line of duty or business. Despite all the unsavoury publicity he has had, people who know him well say he is a nice guy. But bent on self-destruction. This could be true.

Certainly he did not give me the impression of being the boorish hooligan which some of his films and a few newspaper headlines might have led you to expect.

As far as I am concerned, he is redeemed by his sense of humour, if by nothing else. At the police station where he was charged with smoking doped cigarettes he was asked his occupation.

Quipped Mitchum in reply, "*Former actor.*"

Asked by reporters at a later date what it was like in gaol, he said, "It's just like Palm Springs without the riff-raff."

I do not know what sort of man I expected him to be. A less articulate John Wayne, possibly. A slow-talking, slow-thinking muscle-man, perhaps. The outdoor type with an indoor (night-club) tan.

But the last thing I was prepared for was a man who used to be a highbrow poet. I was therefore understandably surprised when he told me that Charles Laughton had been trying to persuade him to come to England to appear in the stage productions of *Macbeth* and *Richard III*.

"When I turned down the idea," said Mitchum, "he railed and fumed and called me a lazy so-and-so. But I couldn't afford to do it. I have to work in films to keep abreast of tax-demands. Besides, what would I have got out of it?"

I suggested: "The glory."

"Oh," he said, "it's a little late for that. And Charles is probably right. I am lazy."

Then came shock No. 2, when asking Mitchum about his background. Replied the man who has become the apotheosis of the monosyllabic, semi-illiterate American he-man for whom bullets have always spoken more eloquently than words:

"I was a child-poet. Later I became a very abstract writer and the darling of the ladies' literary teas. My stuff became so abstract I couldn't understand it myself. Everybody had an interpretation of what I was writing—except me."

So Mitchum quit highbrow poetry for lowbrow movies. It was a transition from Horace to Hopalong Cassidy, via jobs in factories and boot shops. His friends today include people like John Steinbeck and . . . truck-drivers. "Steinbeck," he says, digressing into literary criticism, "has become a little chi-chi now. But I still prefer him to Hemingway."

This was unexpected talk coming from Mitchum. Unfairly, one had hardly expected him to be capable of reading.

When he has hit the headlines in the past it has not been on account of some erudite assessment of contem-

porary writers but because he was reported to have kicked somebody, punched somebody or pushed somebody off a pier into the sea.

I said, "You seem to have got yourself into a few fights off screen as well."

"Yes," said Mitchum, "I have followed the pattern."

He went on to explain, "My screen roles have caused a great deal of personal trouble. People assume that if a character is sixteen feet tall on the screen, he will be sixteen feet tall in the street."

I said, "I suppose people come up to you and say, 'Show me how tough you really are?'"

"Yes," he said, "except they don't bother to talk. They just dump a tray on your head."

It was really quite wrong to assume that he was a tough guy by inclination as well as by profession.

"Yes," he admitted, "I was a boxer once when I was about eighteen. But I was not strong or tough. I was thin and nimble. I strongly disapproved of being struck, so I moved quickly. I sadly submit to the punishment I get on the screen. But, oh no, I couldn't face up to that sort of treatment off the screen. Do I keep fit? I take a deep breath. Nothing more arduous."

If he was really such a gentle soul why, I asked, had he got this reputation of being a Hollywood rebel?

"I suppose," he said, "it's because I decline invitations and don't send flowers to the columnists, and don't give Christmas gifts to the producers. In Hollywood it is the norm to pay general obeisance to the structure. I have no reason to do that. I work just as much, and I get paid just as much. For the past seven years I've had no opportunity to choose my pictures. I had to take what was given me. It's been a matter of being able to fill out the jacket they give you by pushing out your

chest. I got to the point when all that was required of me was to arrive at nine o'clock in the morning at the studios and punch the clock at six in the evening. Unfortunately, it was too easy for me. All I had to do was stroll through the pictures. So maybe I gave the impression of being more indifferent than I actually was."

After my conversation with Mitchum I am shock-proof. I am even prepared not to be shocked if I hear that he is going to play Hamlet.

Mr. Mitchum, for his part, has promised that if he should graduate into playing these more demanding roles he will try not to look as if he is actually falling asleep on his feet.

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Frank Sinatra was half-way through his hamburger steak when he leaned across the table and informed me with all the charm at his disposal that he might quite conceivably sock me on the jaw.

I do not know whether it is due to seeing too many bad movies (or maybe appearing in them), but Mr. Sinatra is always expressing the wish to sock someone or other on the jaw. From time to time he actually does it.

None the less, I was mildly surprised to discover that he was still up to this sort of thing. I had been told that he had mellowed and matured with his new-found success and was hardly ever rude to anyone any more.

When a man is paid £4,000 a week, as Mr. Sinatra is, for singing at a night club there is really no reason for him to feel unwanted or persecuted.

But in a way I was glad to find that the rumours about how he had reformed were unfounded. Manners, like hats, do not suit everyone, and I do not think they would suit Mr. Sinatra. He has found a straight left more effective. It goes better with his ties.

However, I had come to Romanoff's, the swank Hollywood restaurant, to have dinner with Mr. Sinatra—not to sock him on the nose. As a guest of producer Otto Preminger I felt it would be somewhat impolite of me to do this. So I finished my Weiner Schnitzel and nobody socked anybody on the nose.

The idea of dining with Sinatra (who says he hates reporters) was that I should have an opportunity of meeting the Golden Boy (with the iron fist) at a time when good food and wine and a congenial atmosphere would have soothed his disposition. The theory was that he would then talk freely and reveal his more agreeable self, which is not always the side of him that is most noticeable.

In practice it did not quite work out that way. Mr. Sinatra is apparently not so easily soothed. Moreover, the interview was limited in scope by another factor: he had brought a girl-friend along who would periodically give him an affectionate hug or a loving squeeze. In those circumstances it was scarcely possible to ask him about Ava Gardner. Or about his fatal attraction for women. Actually one did not have to ask—one merely had to watch.

The dinner soon became more of a party than an interview, with a constant procession of film celebrities like Spencer Tracy, Ronald Colman, Esther Williams, making their pilgrimage to the Sinatra table to exchange pleasantries with the prima-donna of Tin Pan Alley. As far as I was able to ascertain he did not express the wish to punch any of them on the nose. This was Sinatra holding court—a spectacle that is part of the Hollywood scenery these days.

Hollywood is a place where they worship success, the sun and Cecil B. De Mille, and the sort of table you get at Romanoff's is dependent on the box-office returns of your last film. As Preminger is one of the top producer-

directors and Sinatra is said to be the hottest thing in Hollywood, the table we got was practically a royal enclosure. And we immediately became a goal for all the table-hoppers in the room.

One of the minor disadvantages of being the hottest thing in Hollywood is that you have to stand up a dozen times during your meal to be introduced to gushing women whose friends or husbands insist that they simply must meet you. I have to report that Sinatra submitted to their compliments with grace. He is the sort of man who will take any amount of criticism as long as it is flattering.

This is how he looks as he half stands, holding a napkin in one hand, bravely carrying the burden of fame on his narrow shoulders, talking to someone Esther Williams has brought over to be introduced.

He is a small, slight man with sardonic features that seem to have been etched out of pumice-stone. His skin is stretched tautly across the high bones of his face. His hairline is one recession that America must reluctantly acknowledge is here. And he has a bald spot at the back of his head. The grin on his face is that of a man smiling through a perpetual toothache. His sapphire cuff-links match his sapphire ring. His suit is neat and sober this evening, but the personality inside it is as loud as a neon sign on Hollywood Boulevard.

The audience over, he sits down, and Otto Preminger says that he ought to go to the Academy Award nominations because he will be nominated as the best actor of the year for his performance in *The Man with the Golden Arm*. Frankie says he is not going to the nominations. He is going to Palm Springs, the desert oasis, which is the weekend playground of the stars.

Frankie's girl tells me that she is a singer and comes from Texas and that she thinks Frankie is just great. Frankie, I notice, has hardly said a word to her all

evening, but he lights her cigarette every time she puts one in her mouth.

Several more people come over to the table, among them one woman who, I am informed in an aside, is a millionairess. Frankie says that he is going to Spain shortly to make a film and does anybody know any beautiful girls in Spain? Suddenly nobody knows any beautiful girls in Spain, and there is no mention of Ava Gardner, who is a beautiful girl and often in Spain these days.

During a break in the table-hopping I enquire of Mr. Sinatra what he has got against the Press. He says, "There are columnists they say I go with a different dame every night. My private life is my own, and, furthermore, I do not go with a different dame every night. That is what I have got against the Press. I have friends in the Press, too; but you misquote me, kid, and you're dead with me. In fact I'll sock you on the jaw."

I see another table-hopper getting ready to hop and ask quickly whether he is a happy man these days. He snorts derisively and denies any such vulgar state of affairs. His best work as an actor has come out of bitter personal unhappiness, he says.

There is no time to ask what the bitter personal unhappiness was—and whether her name was Ava Gardner—for the next table-hopper has pounced.

The compliments flow like water. Frankie's grin seems less pained. A dreadful thought occurs to me: perhaps he is getting to be happy. It could be his downfall. He might stop threatening to sock people on the jaw. Then columnists may no longer bother to misquote him—or even quote him. People might even say nice things about him. Anything could happen.

The following day I get confirmation that the worst has happened. I get a message from his personal Press agent saying that Mr. Sinatra is as happy as any man can be.

Mr. Sinatra has asked this to be conveyed to me to clear up any misunderstanding. Also that when he said he would sock me on the jaw that was just a figure of speech and all he meant was that he sometimes reads things which make him so mad he would like to sock someone on the jaw. Nothing personal about it.

The next time I met Sinatra was in London. He was passing through on his way to Spain and had been persuaded to call a Press conference (despite his views on the Press) to help put over his film *Johnny Concho*, which had been made by his own company. The conference had not started too well. Before I arrived there had already been some trouble with photographers because Sinatra, apparently, had not wanted to have his picture taken. But it was with my arrival that the real trouble began.

When I got to his suite at the Savoy it was jam-packed with reporters and columnists, and Sinatra was standing, surly and grim-faced, with his back to the mantelpiece. He was not noticeably smiling and he was certainly not giving out with the charm.

But he greeted me amiably enough. I was not planning to write about him again just then and had intended to leave the questioning to those colleagues of mine who had pieces to do for the following day. I went to the back of the room and got myself a drink and listened.

You could sense the tension, straight away. Sinatra was eyeing the assembled Press with distrust. He seemed to think every question was loaded.

In fact, the questions were all extremely polite to begin with.

He was being asked how had he managed to climb back to the top again after his setback of a few years ago. He said he had changed his film studio, his agent and his record company. Had there been any personal reasons for his decline? He evaded that one and said

perhaps he was singing better now than two years ago. What did he think of Sophia Loren with whom he was going to co-star? "I don't know," he said suspiciously. "How should I know? I haven't met her yet."

The parrying went on for another ten minutes or so. Then someone referred to a profile of him which had appeared in a magazine. Sinatra retorted that the whole of that article was untrue. Everything the Press said about him was untrue. Perhaps one day he would sit down with a trustworthy newspaperman and a tape recorder and tell the whole Frank Sinatra story, but so far everybody had got it wrong. How had they all managed to get it wrong? a reporter asked. "Because they don't bother to check their facts," said Sinatra bitterly.

At this stage I felt obliged to say something. I said, "But you are not 'available' when somebody does want to check his facts." I was thinking of how, in Hollywood, I had tried not less than a dozen times to get in touch with him after our dinner together in order to clarify some of the things he had said that night. But not once could he be bothered to come to the telephone to answer the three or four questions I wanted to put to him. "Well, that can also happen. One can't always be available," said Sinatra sheepishly.

Another questioner asked, Why was he always threatening to sock people on the jaw? Sinatra said he had never threatened to sock anyone on the jaw. If he was going to sock anyone he just did it. He did not talk about it.

Sinatra has always had the appearance of a man who has been ill-treated by life. Wealth, fame, adulation and a life as privileged as a sultan's have not deprived him of the starved, hurt, bitter look of an under-privileged citizen who is going to get his own back one day. It is a useful look for someone in his line of business to have.

Even today at so sophisticated an occasion as a Press conference people are still taken in by it.

A psychologist trying to define his appeal to women once said it sprang "from one of the elemental instincts of womankind—the urge to feed the hungry". Whilst Frankie can keep that hungry look he will never be lacking in supporters—and will never need to go hungry. He has never gone hungry as far as I can ascertain, although his defenders often allude darkly to his childhood in the waterfront town of Hoboken, Jersey, and one is clearly meant to assume that he had a rough time.

Frankie did not have a rough time. He was a spoilt child, and even in those days had more of the good things of life than the other kids with whom he roamed the streets looking for trouble. When he went to high school he had fourteen sports-jackets, and before he was twenty had owned five cars.

The profession he chose for himself was one which could bring success more rapidly than any other. His mother was persuaded to give him sixty-five dollars for a public address system—he bought one with a rhinestone studded case—and Frankie became a singer. To begin with he did not make much money, but there is no evidence that he ever denied himself anything he wanted badly enough. Then he was discovered by Harry James, and soon there was no need to deny himself anything at all. In 1943 he is reputed to have made more than 1,500,000 dollars.

He spent his money lavishly and recklessly. It is recorded that he used to give away gold cigarette lighters costing £80 each by the gross, and that he once showered £30,000 worth of gifts on one actress in six months.

Today he has £10,000 worth of cuff-links, a hundred suits, fifty pairs of shoes and at least twenty hats.

He also has his own film company and five music companies, and shares in the Sands Hotel at Las Vegas

and in the Atlantic City Racetrack. Moreover, he still has that hungry look which is probably worth more than all his other assets put together.

Though you may not have got that impression, I like Sinatra—as an actor, as a singer, and even as a person. He has commendable qualities: a detestation for racial prejudice which has involved him in several fights; generosity to his friends; decent political views; and a capacity for working as hard as he plays. I don't suppose he is especially nice, but then really interesting people rarely are.

Chapter 11

GENIUSES AT LARGE

GENIUS is a form of eccentricity that Hollywood finds particularly tiresome. It is just not equipped to cope with it.

Genius is a nuisance because it cannot be controlled, does not operate according to any recognised set of rules and produces a commodity which the moguls are incapable of judging.

The kind of artist Hollywood takes to its bosom is one with a transparent mind whose thought-processes it can keep under surveillance from one moment to the next, whose brain particles will function along broadly predictable lines and who will not embarrass anyone by producing anything new.

Genius tends to function with a callous disregard for the Breen Office, the Hollywood Code, the results of the latest poll of cinema exhibitors, the currently popular gimmick and the average I.Q. of the public.

And then, too, geniuses are awkward fellows to get on with. They are liable to make a fuss if they have asked for Julie Harris and the studio gives them Yvonne de Carlo; they would probably cut up rough if someone told them that Joyce's *Ulysses* needed a clearer plot-line; and they might take it very badly if an executive producer asked them to inject some light relief into Sophocles.

For all these reasons Hollywood is reluctant to employ geniuses.

But just as every major industry puts aside a certain portion of its budget for experimental research, the film

tycoons from time to time find themselves a genius—and let him loose in their studios. They have fairly sound business reasons for doing this. If his film should turn out to be a triumph, they will make money and also be acclaimed as far-sighted, cultured and adventurous people. If his film should be a disaster it can usually be written off against tax and it can also be used for many years afterwards as an argument against deviating from the Hollywood-line and against employing any more geniuses.

Assuming that a studio wants to find a genius (for the reasons I have given), how does it recognise one when it sees him. On the surface this looks like a major problem. It probably takes a genius to recognise a genius, and you do not find him drinking a milk-shake at the corner drugstore where talent scouts are reputed to do most of their scouting.

But Hollywood over the years has evolved a rule-of-thumb method for spotting geniuses, and nowadays every competent talent scout knows what to look for. He will be a man who does not wear a tie, who is rude to his hostess at a cocktail party, who is contemptuous of Hollywood and has at least half a dozen different vocations. Thus the man who has a great gift for playing the piano cannot qualify as a Hollywood genius. Nor can the man who is a superb artist. Nor can the man who is an inspired director. Nor can the man who is a brilliant writer. But if there is a man who can write tolerably well, play the piano competently, direct brilliantly, act with distinction, compose music passably, speak twelve languages, perform on the flying trapeze, do his own interior decorations *and* perform conjuring tricks—in Hollywood *he* is a genius.

I could find no person fitting this description in Hollywood. But out in the Nevada desert, at a gambling oasis called Las Vegas, there was such a man, I was told.



Yvonne de Carlo (*above*) lunching with Wagner (Alan Badel) in a Munich beer cellar. She was playing Wagner's wife in the film "Magic Fire".

(*Below*) Martine Carol—characteristically coquettish.





Kim Novak made a big impact in "The Man With the Golden Arm" and "Picnic". Now, they say, nothing can stop her from going right to the top in Hollywood.

So I got on a plane to Las Vegas. It was a beautiful, warm evening and from the air Los Angeles looked like a lot of rhinestones that had not yet been assembled into a necklace. Presently everything around us and underneath us was dark and we were over the desert.

We were coming down to land when a bizarre mirage loomed up out of the night: a sky-scraping cut-out of Betty Grable in a swim-suit. It was evident we had arrived.

Later that evening I saw an even stranger vision. Having penetrated the cordon of slot-machines in the lobby of the Riviera Hotel (and fortunately still having enough money left for supper) I was able to see Orson Welles doing Shakespeare as a twice-nightly cabaret—declaiming to the accompaniment of clattering cutlery: “Friends, Romans and countrymen, lend me your ears.”

Judging from the number of empty tables the visitors to Las Vegas were more inclined to lend Miss Grable their eyes (at the nearby El Rancho). But I watched and listened intently. It isn't every day that you find a genius.

He was sawing the smoke-filled air with grandiose gestures; his eyes bulged like the bubbles in hot lava; his voice was stereophonic; the sweat poured down his face and neck. . . . He wore a dinner suit that was looking a little crumpled.

When he had finished the speech there was polite applause. It was not exactly an Old Vic audience, but the customers, between mouthfuls of entrecôte steak, had been held. The spectacle of a man reciting Shakespeare at a night-club had a certain curiosity-appeal—like bearded ladies and sword swallows. It was something the customers had not come across before.

Mr. Welles then transformed himself before our eyes into Shylock, donning false nose, applying deft strokes of grease-paint to his face and putting on costume over his dinner suit. The audience thought this absolutely

splendid and clapped, but they were less enthusiastic when they discovered that this did not constitute the entire portrayal, and that Shylock also made speeches.

Shakespeare was only half of Mr. Welles' bill. For the rest of the evening he did a magician's act—making a girl float in mid-air, reading minds and forecasting the next 64,000-dollar question. Now the audience may not have been too knowledgeable about Shakespeare, but they had seen magicians before—and they were not terribly impressed by Mr. Welles. They were prepared to admit, however, that as a Shakespearean he was a pretty good magician. I, on the other hand, felt that as a magician he gave a passable performance of Shakespeare.

I met Welles the following day. If you are to appreciate the full flavour of this meeting, you must know a little more of the background against which it took place. For there is something incongruous about finding a genius in Las Vegas.

It is a town dedicated to the proposition that if the greatest thrill of life is to win at gambling, the second greatest thrill is to lose at gambling. Most of the people who come there have to be content with the second greatest thrill.

Wherever you go, some form of gambling is available. Along The Strip, the long avenue which leads into the town, you find all the big, luxurious hotel-gambling-palaces like the Sands, the Riviera, the Desert Inn, the El Rancho.

Gambling goes on day and night without stop. Sheriffs and deputies, employed by the individual hotels, walk among the gamblers, pistols slung at their hips. They were there, I felt, to provide atmosphere rather than to maintain law and order. At one establishment a million-dollar banknote is on view in a glass case. Nobody has yet tried to steal it, though it is not

guarded. I don't suppose it would be easy to change a million-dollar note.

Down-town Las Vegas is a shabby place which looks like a derelict film set from some old Western. In the saloons the plush upholstery has become worn and the Naughty Nineties décor has faded. Marble-topped bars and gas lanterns and bar-tenders with large mustachios, who look as though they might at any moment burst into the strains of Old Man River, seem about as genuine as the average Negro minstrel (they may be genuine: but they don't look it).

In the cheaper gambling rooms sullen-faced women, with shopping baskets in one hand and a fist full of dimes in the other, stand in front of the slot machines automatically dropping coins into the slots and tugging at the levers. When the machines, from time to time, spit out their small winnings, not a flicker of satisfaction registers on their faces. They look like bored factory-hands working on some assembly-line.

Much ingenuity has been exercised by the proprietors of the smaller establishments in devising new gambling contraptions. Wherever you look coloured balls are skimming over green baize, dice are rolling, cards are being dealt, roulette wheels are spinning, results are being chalked up on blackboards. . . . Being an inveterate non-gambler, I managed to lose only twelve dollars before becoming too bored to go on. Most of my losses were sustained at the slot machines. I was not able to penetrate the mystique of craps. All I was able to deduce was that it involved throwing dice and getting the right combination of numbers. You can lose more money at this, I gathered, than at almost anything else. What Blackjack, 21 and Bingo involve or entail I have not the remotest idea, except that I am sure they entail losing money. The slot machines also known as one-armed bandits are for tyros like myself. They are part

of the furnishings of every public building . . . you find them in bars, in waiting-rooms, in foyers and at the airport. There is an entire gaming house built in the shape of one of these monsters. Most of my twelve dollars are in the intestines of these dime-hungry machines.

Gambling affects every aspect of life. If you wish to make the acquaintance of a chorus-girl, you do not buy her a drink. You buy her a pile of chips and then watch the croupier scoop them away as all the wrong numbers come up. But the chorus-girls are not too lavishly supplied with chips. This is a one-vice town and chorus-girls cannot compete with blackjack.

Against this background, Orson Welles cut a strange and unlikely figure, rather as if Othello had wandered into the pages of Damon Runyon.

What was he doing there? I asked him this as we sat by the swimming pool of the Riviera Hotel under the hot desert sun. The answer to that question was perfectly simple. He was making 25,000 dollars a week. Of which not a nickel had found its way back into the slot machines. "My whole life is a gamble," he said; "I do not need artificial outlets as well."

I found that, in any case, he had plenty of other things to occupy his mind. He was dictating a play into a Dictaphone; typing a novel (it might later become a film script, he said); preparing for his next TV appearance opposite Betty Grable; planning a new film; talking to Paris on the telephone; wheeling his baby round the swimming pool; resculpting his forehead with restless finger-tips—and giving an interview to me. All, more or less, at once.

"I always do several things at the same time," he said, "then if I get bored with one I can get onto something else and that refreshes me."

Was it conceit and the desire to prove that he can do anything that induced him to behave like an artistic

nymphomaniac? I recalled that people used to say about him: "There, but for the grace of God, goes God."

He roared with laughter: it came out of him like a tidal wave smashing through a dam. Then, abruptly, it was arrested in full flow. He said, "I have reached an age when I no longer have the desire to prove anything. At least I think I have." Again he laughed with controlled abandon, his whole body heaving in participation. "You may be right," he said; "subconsciously perhaps . . . I don't examine my own motives. There isn't time."

"And this business of your being a genius," I said.

"That was a lot of nonsense," he said, but he used a more expressive and potent word than "nonsense".

His wife, the beautiful Italian Contessa Paolo Mori, was at present wheeling their baby round the swimming pool.

Welles said: "I expected Las Vegas to be sinister and rather awful. I thought it would be gruesome wheeling the baby through a gambling den every morning. But it is almost as respectable as Hollywood." He ran a finger down his face—the face of a dissipated cherub, I thought—and added, "Anyway, I have learned what it is like to work in a night-club. I had never done that before. Everything is material for something. No experience is without its value. I don't see anything wrong with performing Shakespeare in a night-club. I am a performer. I will perform anywhere, in a tavern or in a circus, wherever people are prepared to listen. The culture-snobs may raise their eyebrows, but the play's the thing—not the environment. Shakespeare would have approved."

And would Shakespeare have approved of the way he had played Othello? I asked, reminding him of how he had bruised and terrified Peter Finch, playing Iago, with his impromptu epileptic fit.

"Sometimes," chuckled Welles, "that is a good thing. There are certain figures like Lear, Othello and Oedipus who should inspire terror."

"In the audience, perhaps," I said, "but surely not in the cast."

"Well," parried Welles, "how on earth can you rehearse an epileptic fit?"

Shakespeare would have approved of the epileptic fit as well as of Las Vegas, Welles intimated.

I said I frankly did not care how Shakespeare would have felt. Perhaps he would have been delighted at the idea of being a floor show at Las Vegas. But had he, Welles, nothing better to do? When he first came to Hollywood he had not bothered to deny the allegations that he was a genius. He made films like *Citizen Kane* and *The Magnificent Ambersons* in defiance of box-office dictums, and they were brilliant, original works—not conjuring tricks like his most recent film *Confidential Report*. What had happened to his plans for making a film about a modern Noah?

"That's off," said Welles. "It was just a modest little film about the end of the world. Very difficult to obtain finance for such a venture." He continued with Alice in Wonderland logic: "So I shall make a very expensive film about Spain in CinemaScope. It is very difficult to raise thousands. Much easier to raise millions." He was working on that matter right now.

I asked him why he assumed the burden of financing his own films. Was it not enough to act in them, write them, direct them, and produce them?

He said, "That is the only way I can get a job as a director. I *act* in films just for the money. I don't like doing it—it bores me. For the actor it is a dead medium. I act in my own films because that is a way of getting a free star.

"I got £7,000 for one day's work on *Moby Dick*. That's

a good reason for doing it. Not because it gives me any pleasure, or because I care about film acting. . . .”

But I can tell you some of the things he cares about. He cares about food. He can consume with ease and relish eighteen oysters, an entire chicken, numerous cream-cakes, two bottles of wine and several brandies at one sitting.

But when necessary he will diet rigorously and eat nothing but steaks.

He cares about music. He will fly a thousand miles to hear a symphony.

He cares about conversation. He will pick up the telephone and ring someone at the other end of the world, and say, “Hello. This is Orson. What gives . . . ?”

He does NOT care about fame and reputation, he claims.

“Fame,” he says, “is a commercial thing. Like money, it is necessary so that you can do what you want to do. I do not suppose I shall be remembered for anything. But I don’t think about my work in those terms. It is just as vulgar to work for the sake of posterity as to work for the sake of money.

“I take pleasure in life, but I am a pessimist. I do not think the situation of the world can make you an optimist. I happen to be fortunate. But I am exceptional.”

When I got back to Hollywood a friend asked me, “Well, did you find the genius?”

I said, “I don’t know. The man I found denied he had ever been anything of the sort.”

I wished that I could have met Welles fifteen years ago. It was odd how prophetic *Citizen Kane* had been. The great newspaper tycoon of this film started so well. But somewhere along the way something happened and after that everything went wrong. We never really found out what it was that had happened to Kane. I wonder

whether we shall ever find out what happened to Welles.

Or will he be able to break the jinx of his own subconscious prophecy. I sincerely hope he does. His was a great talent, and it is not something that should be thrown away at some intellectual gambling table.

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I know geniuses (and ex-geniuses) are difficult people to pin down. I had to fly to Las Vegas to see Orson Welles. But that was nothing. To interview Jose Vincente Ferrer Oteroy Cintron, who says sportingly, "Just call me Joe", I had to go to the bottom of the sea.

I could not have asked for a more exclusive sea bed on which to conduct the conversation.

Our meeting took place at the bottom of the Bay of Cascais, Portugal. The houses along the shore, beyond the ruins of ancient forts and battlements, were occupied by personages whose blood is as blue as the speckless sky above Lisbon: deposed kings and pretenders to half a dozen thrones.

You may be curious to know what Genius Joe and I were doing down there among the octopuses, the sharks and the star-fish (we were not, I assure you, being eaten by them), instead of at a more conventional rendezvous.

We were in a submarine and we were being filmed. Jose Ferrer was starring here with Trevor Howard in a picture called *Cockleshell Heroes*. He was also directing it, and rewriting the script. It was a lot for one man to do, even for one who admits to being a genius.

The bottom of the sea just happened to be the only place where he had time to receive visitors. Besides, it was cooler down there—the temperature above us was in the nineties—and it made a change of scenery from the Caprice.

Joe, born in Puerto Rico, educated in Switzerland, Princeton and Hollywood, was playing a Royal Marine in an American production about a British wartime exploit. This actually took place in Bordeaux. The reason the film was being shot in Lisbon instead of on the Thames, which would have been nearer, was because the company making it, Warwick Films, believe in using authentic locales.

The reason it was not being made in the authentic locale—Bordeaux—was because authenticity cannot always be all that authentic. It would have cost more there. Anyway, I was assured that only a Baedeker could tell the difference between the Gironde river, France, scene of the expedition, and the River Tagus, Portugal, scene of the film.

Moreover, the Portuguese were providing the kind of facilities no film tycoon could afford to sneeze at: a rent-free British submarine, which I was told would have cost £5,000 to hire in England, and the use of many other naval vessels.

Down in the submarine, against a décor of twisting tubes and pipes, and levers and dials, I asked Genius Joe to explain the reason for his frantic versatility. What made him play *Cyrano de Bergerac* (for which he won an Oscar) one day, and cavort around as a song-and-dance man the next?

What made him go from *Othello* to *Cockleshell Heroes*, one of those all-male films whose heaviest demand upon the actor is the ability to paddle a cockleshell (a tiny canoe) and keep a stiff upper lip.

Said Ferrer: "There are actors, like James Cagney and Alan Ladd, whose personality is always the same. Now, I am not saying anything against them. They are fine. But there are also people like Laurence Olivier and Louis Jovet, whose personality changes with the part. I belong to the second category. I am hired

because I can portray different characters. Not for my personality.”

Over the radio telephone from the boat on which the cameras were mounted came the order to surface. Ballast was let out; Genius Joe sighed. It was tough being a genius. It meant days up to his waist in mud and water during this film. In fact, an infinite capacity for sustaining pains was required.

He had not had much time to see anything of Lisbon—a fascinating mixture of baroque and modern architecture, of shawled women balancing baskets on their heads and sleek Cadillacs. But he did make time to meet ex-King Umberto of Italy when he dropped in on the unit.

“I’ve got to conserve my energy. I have to work to a strict time-table. I have to have my sleep,” said Joe.

The submarine surfaced, and he took command again of the operation.

Jose Ferrer was paid £50,000 plus a percentage of the film’s profits for starring in and directing *Cockleshell Heroes*. But one day in London, about two months later, I discovered that the film was being finished without the benefit of Mr. Ferrer’s genius. When I investigated, I learned that he and the executive producer, Irving Allen, had quarrelled.

“When Ferrer finished the film,” Allen told me, “we found that he had made it a tour de force for Joe Ferrer. But he seems to have forgotten about the rest of the cast. So I’ve been rectifying things. I’ve been doing close-ups of Trevor Howard that Joe forgot to do.”

Mr. Ferrer, it seems, also omitted to do a number of action scenes. One scene he omitted to film was the climax to the story: the blowing up of the German ships by the cockleshell heroes in Bordeaux harbour.

The missing scenes were eventually shot (not by Mr. Ferrer)—on the Thames.

Chapter 12

THE TABOOS

THOUGH Hollywood does not possess many geniuses, it is full of talent. It is foolish and inaccurate to say, as some writers have done, that it is a community of mediocrities dedicated to pleasing a world of morons. There is probably more talent per acre in Hollywood than anywhere else in the world. The trouble is that a great deal of it never finds its way onto the screen.

Why should this happen? Because the artist has to submit to the dictatorship of the "front office" (which stipulates what will sell and what will not) and the dictatorship of the Breen Office (which stipulates what is moral and what is not). Between them, the front office and the Breen Office put the artist in a mental strait-jacket. Both offices enforce different sets of taboos.

The front-office set is inspired by purely commercial considerations and specifies all the things a film must not be if it is to make money.

It must not be depressing (though it can be sad if it also contains an element of "uplift"); it must not be high-brow; it must not be too profound for the average person to understand; it must not be concerned with intellectual dilemmas; it must not be about unglamorous people (butchers, cobblers, window-cleaners, bricklayers are not considered suitable film heroes); it must not be set in unattractive locales; it must not depict love between physically unattractive people; it must not take a pessimistic view of life.

Of course all these taboos are occasionally broken—the film *Marty* is a recent example—but by and large they are observed.

The set of taboos enforced by the Breen Office is known as the Hollywood Code. This is a somewhat extraordinary document which I think it is worth quoting in detail. It tells us a good deal about Hollywood. And it is so piously worded as to be often very funny.

General Principles

(1) No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standard of those who see it. Hence the sympathy of the audience shall never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil or sin.

(2) Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.

(3) Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

Crimes Against the Law

These shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the crime as against law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation.

(1) Murder.

(a) The technique of murder must be presented in a way that will not inspire imitation.

(b) Brutal killings are not to be presented in detail.

(c) Revenge in modern time shall not be justified.

(2) Methods of crime should not be explicitly presented.

(a) Theft, robbery, safe-cracking, and dynamiting of trains, mines, buildings, etc., should not be detailed in method.

(b) Arson must be subject to the same safeguards.

(c) The use of firearms should be restricted to essentials.

(d) Methods of smuggling should not be presented.

(3) Neither the illegal drug traffic nor drug addiction must ever be presented.

(4) The use of liquor in American life, when not required by the plot or for proper characterisation, will not be shown.

Sex

The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing.

(1) Adultery and illicit sex, sometimes necessary plot material, must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively.

(2) Scenes of passion.

(a) These should not be introduced except where they are definitely essential to the plot.

(b) Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embraces, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown.

(c) In general, passion should be treated in such manner as not to stimulate the lower and baser emotions.

(3) Seduction or rape.

(a) These should never be more than suggested, and then only when essential for the plot. They must never be shown by explicit method.

(b) They are never the proper subject of comedy.

(4) Sex perversion or any inference of it is forbidden.

(5) White slavery shall not be treated.

Vulgarity

The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil subjects, should be guided always by the dictates of good taste and a proper regard for the sensibilities of the audience.

Profanity

Pointed profanity or every other profane or vulgar expression, however used, is forbidden.

No approval by the Production Code Administration shall be given to the use of words and phrases in motion pictures including, but not limited to, the following:

“Bronx Cheer”	Whore
(the sound)	Madam (relating to prostitution)
God, Lord, Jesus, Christ	Nuts (except when meaning crazy)
(unless used reverently)	Razzberry (the sound)
Cripes	Son-of-a
Fairy (in a vulgar sense)	Toilet gags
Gawd	Travelling-salesman and farmer’s-daughter jokes.
Goose (in a vulgar sense)	
“Hold your hat”, or “hats”	
Hot (applied to a woman)	
“In your hat”	

Damn, Hell (excepting when the use of said last two words shall be essential and required for portrayal, in proper historical context, of any scene or dialogue based upon historical fact or folklore, or for the presentation in proper literary context of a Biblical, or other religious quotation, or a quotation from a literary work, provided that no such use shall be permitted which is intrinsically objectionable or offends good taste).

Costume

(1) Complete nudity is never permitted. This includes nudity in fact or in silhouette, or any licentious notice thereof by other characters in the picture.

(2) Undressing scenes should be avoided and never used save where essential to the plot.

(3) Indecent or undue exposure is forbidden.

(4) Dancing costumes intended to permit undue exposure or indecent movements in the dance are forbidden.

Dances

(1) Dances suggesting or representing sexual actions or indecent passion are forbidden.

(2) Dances which emphasise indecent movements are to be regarded as obscene.

Religion

Ministers of religion in their character as ministers of religion should not be used as comic characters or as villains.

Locations

The treatment of bedrooms must be governed by good taste and delicacy.

Repellent Subjects

The following subjects must be treated within the careful limits of good taste.

(1) Actual hangings or electrocutions as legal punishments for crime.

(2) Third-degree methods.

(3) Brutality and possible gruesomeness.

(4) Branding of people or animals.

(5) Apparent cruelty to children or animals.

(6) The sale of women or a woman selling her virtue.

(7) Surgical operations.

Special Resolution on Costumes

Resolved that the provisions of the Production Code, in their application to costumes, nudity, indecent or undue exposure, and dancing costumes, shall not be interpreted to exclude authentically photographed scenes photographed in a foreign land of natives of such

foreign land showing native life if such scenes are a necessary and integral part of a motion picture depicting exclusively such land and native life, provided that no such scenes shall be intrinsically objectionable nor made a part of any motion picture produced in any studio, and provided further that no emphasis shall be made in any scenes of the customs or garb of such natives or in the exploitation thereof.

Liquor

The use of liquor should never be excessively presented. In scenes from American life, the necessities of plot and proper characterisation alone justify its use. And in this case it should be shown with moderation.

Sex

Out of regard for the sanctity of marriage and the home, the triangle—that is, the love of a third party for one already married—needs careful handling. The treatment should not throw sympathy against marriage as an institution.

Scenes of passion must be treated with an honest acknowledgment of human nature and its normal reactions. Many scenes cannot be presented without arousing dangerous emotions on the part of the immature, the young or the criminal classes.

Even within the limits of pure love certain facts have been universally regarded by lawmakers as outside the limits of safe presentation.

In the case of impure love, the love which society has always regarded as wrong and which has been banned by divine law, the following are important:

(1) Impure love must not be presented as attractive and beautiful.

(2) It must not be the subject of comedy or farce or treated as material for laughter.

- (3) It must not be presented in such a way as to arouse passion or morbid curiosity on the part of the audience.
- (4) It must not be made to seem right and permissible.
- (5) In general, it must not be detailed in method and manner.

Costume

(1) The effect of nudity or semi-nudity upon the normal man or woman, and much more upon the young and upon immature persons, has been honestly recognised by all lawmakers and moralists.

(2) Hence the fact that the nude or semi-nude body may be beautiful does not make its use in the films moral. For, in addition to its beauty, the effect of the nude or semi-nude body on the normal individual must be taken into consideration.

(3) Nudity or semi-nudity used simply to put a "punch" into a picture comes under the head of immoral actions. It is immoral in its effect on the average audience.

(4) Nudity can never be permitted as being necessary for the plot. Semi-nudity must not result in undue or indecent exposures.

(5) Transparent or translucent materials and silhouette are frequently more suggestive than actual exposure.

Dances

Dancing in general is recognised as an art and as a beautiful form of expressing human emotions.

But dances which suggest or represent sexual actions, whether performed solo or with two or more, dances intended to excite the emotional reaction of an audience, dances with movement of the breasts, excessive body movements while the feet are stationary, violate decency and are wrong.

Chapter 13

YOU CAN'T CENSOR A LOOK

I FOUND that many of Hollywood's most progressive producers were in open rebellion against the Code. They felt that it was impossible to tell an adult story and observe all the 101 Unholy Commandments of the Breen Office.

Otto Preminger, one of the most successful independent producers, made two films in defiance of the Code: *The Man with the Golden Arm* and *The Moon is Blue*. Both these films were extremely moral. The first gave a horrifying picture of the effect of drug-addiction on a human being. The second showed a girl of blatant innocence successfully resisting all attempts on her virtue.

But the Breen Office said that drug-addiction must never be presented on the screen and that a girl's virginity was not a proper subject for comedy, so they refused to give their approval to either film.

Preminger chose to go ahead without their approval—and both films were big successes. But not every producer is prepared to take the risk of making a film that will not get a clearance certificate from the Breen Office (without which it is liable to be banned by individual states). The majority of producers will usually meet any objections of the Breen Office, even if it means making radical and harmful changes in their scripts.

However, there are artful ways of getting round the Code. I will give you an example of how this can be done. It was generally thought impossible to film the successful Broadway play *Tea and Sympathy*. This is the

story of a college boy wrongly suspected of having a homosexual relationship with one of the masters. Mocked and persecuted for his lack of manliness, branded by rumour and gossip, the boy himself begins to believe that he may be abnormal. Entirely out of motives of sympathy, the master's wife proves, conclusively to him—in the only way possible—that he is normal.

This story offends against the Code in two basic respects. It deals with homosexuality (the Code says that "sex perversion or any inference of it is forbidden") and it condones, by implication, the wife's adultery with the boy (the Code says: "Adultery must never be justified or presented attractively").

How did MGM get round these difficulties. First, all references, actual or implied, to homosexuality were taken out of the story. The boy in the film became a sensitive, non-athletic chap who was being persecuted for being "a cissy". To make a man of him the master's wife still made the same sacrifice as in the play. But a sequence was added showing her many years later still suffering for her transgression. As Deborah Kerr, who played the role, put it, "You cannot show a woman committing adultery and being happy about it."

In the course of time the Hollywood Code is instrumental in conveying some strangely unreal ideas to the public: that no criminal ever gets away: that no woman ever enjoys "illicit sex" without regretting it afterwards; that strong, tough men never use strong language; that passion is something only vicious people indulge in.

But in its efforts to prevent the arousal of what they call "undesirable emotions" the Breen Office has been notably unsuccessful. Hollywood has been able to recruit plenty of young women who manage to do this without apparently offending against any of the written regulations. Stimulating these emotions is their

vocation, and they have ways of doing it which even the most imaginative censor could not have foreseen and forestalled.

The result is that sex in American films is embodied in a person rather than explicit in a scene. The Breen Office would clamp down on any girl on the screen who invited a man to indulge in "illicit sex". But you cannot censor the invitation in Jane Russell's eyes or in Miss Monroe's walk.

Because sex is something that may not be talked about, Hollywood has had to find a series of sex-queens who can get their message across without words and with only the minimum of permissible action. As they must not indulge in "excessive and lustful kissing" (which the Code condemns), nor in "undue exposure" (which the Code condemns also), they have to convey what they have to convey with a glance and a "fade out".

Naturally, a girl who can effortlessly suggest voluptuousness has to be rather special. It is not enough for her to exhibit passion, at the requisite moments, on the screen. Any competent actress can do that much: to graduate into the exclusive hierarchy of sex-royalty she must, to a large extent, become identified with her roles. Just as the comic is expected to be funny twenty-four hours of the day, the sex-queen is expected to be sexy twenty-four hours of the day. She must never be seen doing anything out of character, except when she is already so famous that the idea of her (let us say) reading philosophical tomes can be relied upon to arouse disbelieving sniggers.

To maintain the illusion, she must learn whenever a photographer approaches to switch on her most provocative look and let her lips open moistly: she must always be an innuendo in evening dress and an incitement in a sweater. If for "dramatic" purposes she is obliged to wear "falsies" on the screen she must never, through

negligence, disenchant those members of the public who may be privileged to see her in the flesh.

At her disposal will be an elaborate publicity machine which will ensure that the public is kept informed on such vital matters as what she wears in bed, what her bust measurements are and how much her legs are insured for. When giving interviews, she must have ready a supply of mischievous "quotes" on sex, men, women, jewellery, décolletage, Professor Kinsey, her last husband, her current romance, her figure and her chief rival's figure.

When being interviewed by a man she must be terribly feminine and give him the impression that he is dominating the conversation: if he is important enough—that is to say, if the circulation of his newspaper is large enough—she must also vamp him a little, clutch his hand to emphasise a point, perhaps straighten his tie or brush away the cigarette ash which he, in his confusion, has spilled down his jacket. She must give him the impression that she could not care less about the interview but is fascinated by the interviewer: that he, by dint of charm and masculine persuasiveness, has got out of her all the intimate details of her life which she would not dream of telling anyone else. Of course she must not overplay her part, otherwise he is liable to be so affected by the situation that he will forget all her carefully prepared impromptu confessions (he has put away his notebook long ago) and nothing will appear in print which would defeat the whole object of the exercise.

If she is being interviewed by a woman, she must be modest about her beauty and physical allure and exchange cosmetic chit-chat as between equals ("How *do* you keep your skin so lovely?"); she must be humble about her effect on men but none the less make it quite clear that, through no fault of her own, her effect is devastating. ("Well, *you* must have had the same experience. Men are such fools.")

Naturally, once she is established and her name has become synonymous with sex, she can relax; she can then afford to be bored by male reporters and catty to women reporters; she can give her hips, exhausted from perpetual swinging, a rest, put her feet up and let her hair down. She can even say that she is through with men (no one will believe her), answer all enquiries about her current romances with the phrase "No comment" (readers know what that means), and insist that she buys all her own jewellery.

You will have gathered that many sex-queens are mere pretenders to thrones to which they have never had any legitimate right. Some of them are lonely; and they are also often "mixed-up", which is understandable. When they have to be women instead of symbols they can be amazingly unsatisfactory.

In the collective libido of their public, they exist as fortuitously as an adolescent's day-dream: more vivid, more tantalising, more erotic than anything of flesh and blood can ever be, but as untouchable as a mirage. In their normal lives they have to cope with the inevitable disappointments which arise when an illusion is translated into reality.

When people talk about the sins of Hollywood, they are usually thinking of the off-screen activities of the sex-queens. But, as I have indicated, many of them are only pretenders and their "off-screen activities" are an integral part of the pretence.

It seems to me that what could more validly be described as a Hollywood sin is that so many of the sex-queens are, in point of fact, lacking in sex.

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The interest of the public shifts. It used to be focused on Betty Grable's legs. Today the obsession is with the bosom. It has reached the proportions of a mass fetish.

We are inundated with statistics telling us that Miss X has a vital half inch more than Miss Y; and girls built on a less ample scale tend to regard themselves as being practically deformed.

This bosom-fixation is now so pronounced that a girl can make a career out of mammary over-development even though all her other talents are notably under-developed.

I think the craze originated in America, and psychologists have found an explanation for it, as they find an explanation for everything. They say that the American man has not yet severed the umbilical cord that ties him to his mother: that when he regards Miss Monroe in a body-hugging sweater with such delirious awe he is subconsciously hungering for mother-love—the love he perhaps failed to get at his mother's breast.

In other words, it means that he has failed to mature, that he has not outgrown the mother-phase of development and that his sex-fantasies are still those of adolescence.

I do not know how valid this Freudian theory is, but I am inclined to go along with the psychologists when they conclude that there is something essentially immature about the worship of the bosom.

I do not wish to suggest for one moment that I am prejudiced against this part of the female anatomy or that I am unappreciative of those girls who have made it their stock-in-trade. I have as high a regard for a pleasing shape as anyone. But I feel that you cannot measure allure with a tape-measure; that a couple of inches one way or another cannot make all that much difference. If, in these matters, our tastes are to be governed solely by size, where, I dread to think, will it all end?

If we are to apportion blame (or credit, dependent upon your point of view) for the present preoccupation

with the purely dimensional aspects of the female, a large measure of it must go to Hollywood. For it was there that the bust really came into its own—and acquired the status of a gimmick.

After years of over-emphasising legs, the master-minds of Hollywood decided they had to give the public something new. After a thorough, but necessarily limited search, they discovered the bust. They then proceeded to evolve various different ways of presenting their find to the public. They experimented. They tried tighter-fitting sweaters, water-soaked shirts, lace blouses, brassières, bikinis, plunging necklines, dresses that split down the middle, V-lines, O-lines, Y-lines. They used chiffons and nylons and silks and gauze, flesh-coloured materials and diaphanous materials. They raised their cameras and shot downwards; they made historical dramas and, in the sacred cause of authenticity, gave the public a glimpse of cleavage; they made the permissible most of stays and décolletage. When occasion demanded, even a nun's habit was designed to cling; and I seem to recall that Ingrid Bergman played Joan of Arc in armour that somehow failed to conceal that she was a woman.

The Italians, quick to exploit a trend that might bring them dollars, gave to the world such buxom ladies as Gina Lollobrigida, Sophia Loren, Silvana Mangano, who, so to speak, undercut their American competitors by giving a few centimetres more value for money. France, a little puzzled that so much fuss should be caused by the partial exposure of something which had always been totally exposed in most of their nightclubs, gave us its own brand of physiological warfare. Under the firm and dedicated direction of her husband, Christian Jaque, Miss Martine Carol burst upon the world in a state of almost complete déshabillé. Naturally, the world was not allowed to see more than the regulation amount of Miss Carol but the fact that there had been

more to see (before the censors set to work) was a sufficiently titillating inducement to the public to make them want to find out what the censors had left of her.

On the Continent it became necessary to shoot several versions of those climactic moments of revelation, since different countries had different ideas about what constituted "undue exposure not legitimately necessary for plot-development".

When France made a film called *The Folies Bergère*, three separate versions had to be shot. There was the authentic version designed for France, Japan and Scandinavia, where they have strong nerves and can take this sort of authenticity. There was a fully dressed version designed for squeamish countries like Spain, which was known as "the Vatican version". And there was an in-between version for those countries where the censorship is prepared to accept realism provided it is camouflaged in a few places.

The variations in the censorship codes of different countries forced the producers to become somewhat ingenious. In one particular scene the Folies girls wore black velvet dresses with long sleeves and two strategically placed windows. For the British and American version of the film these windows were supplied with blinds—which were very properly drawn.

Miss Carol, I think, expressed the typically French attitude to the whole subject. We were discussing why she took so many baths in her films that she had won the title of "The Cleanest Girl in the World".

She said, "I do not always wish to take a bath before the cameras, but my husband—he is the director—he insists. I do not like to do it. I cry. But he is very severe with me. He says I must not be selfish and I must think of my public. So I do it. He is the director. If that is what the public is interested in, we must give it to them, no?"

Miss Carol must be credited for the honesty of her approach and for the way in which she has taken the public's interest to heart. But I think, as far as America and Britain are concerned, she made a mistake in tactics. I believe she has shown too much of herself; the essence of the bosom-cult is to tantalise but never to satisfy.

The Hollywood approach to sex is to show just enough to set the imagination working: then the audience completes in its mind the picture which the censor would not allow on the screen. The more that is shown, the less does the imagination need to function.

And, of course, that which is imagined always has a greater piquancy than that which is actually seen.

Chapter 14

THE SEX-QUEENS

RITA HAYWORTH is the mum of the sex-queens; the veteran of such uninhibited exercises in the voluptuous as Gilda, Salome and Miss Sadie Thompson, she is trained in the use of every weapon in the armoury of sex warfare—from the G-string to the grass-skirt. Every time she swings her hips the effect is probably recorded on a seismograph in Tokyo; when she wiggles her midriff it is like a storm warning.

Her four marriages—to an oil millionaire, Edward C. Judson, to Orson Welles, Aly Khan and Dick Haymes—all ended in divorce. Her salary is £4,430 a week, and her name is rarely out of the headlines. Her contract with Columbia stipulates that her films will always be in colour and not cost less than £250,000, that she will always have the lead role and that it will never be unsympathetic. She is one of the six women in the United States who owns a chinchilla coat (cost £10,000).

Naturally, when I met her I expected someone who was a combination of Delilah, Cleopatra and Lady Docker. To my surprise, she seemed to have a closer affinity to Little Red Riding Hood.

The formerly fiery Miss Hayworth presented a picture of demureness and defencelessness that would have made Shirley Temple look tough.

A party was being given to celebrate Miss Hayworth's return to film-making after an absence from the screen of two and a half years.

The title of her come-back film was *Fire Down Below*.

But there was no fire that you could notice in Miss Hayworth when I talked to her. She was wearing a severe black two-piece suit. Her face was devoid of make-up—nothing but a touch of lipstick between her and the cameras. Around her neck: a pearl necklace.

Her fingernails were unvarnished, and she was nervously squeezing a handkerchief in the palms of her hands.

Her hair was a neutral shade of auburn—not remotely reminiscent of the flaming red tresses that swirled her to fame. I commented on the apparent transformation.

She blinked nervously, attempted a small smile. “You are confusing me with some of the roles I’ve played,” she said.

“Are you then so unlike the characters you play?”

She showed consternation. “Oh, I should hope so, considering some of the characters I have played.”

She added somewhat unnecessarily. “I’m an actress, I play a role.”

“And how about your real-life role? Are you marrying anyone these days?”

“No, I’m not.”

“What about Raymond Hakim?”

“I’m not going to marry him. Yes, that’s definite.”

“You’re still married to Aly Khan, aren’t you?”

“Only in France. It’s a technicality. I’m going to have to straighten out that technicality. No, there’s no truth in the suggestion that I’m going to marry him again.”

She refused a drink that was offered her; refused a cigarette; continued to press the small feminine handkerchief into her palms.

“Are you going to marry anyone, Miss Hayworth?”

“Not at the moment.”

That seemed to establish Miss Hayworth’s current matrimonial and romantic status.

“How do you feel about the announcement that Kim Novak would take over the roles you were supposed to play for Columbia?”

Miss Hayworth registered perplexity. “Is she going to?” she asked. “Well, that’s nice for her. I mean it’s a good start for her—playing my roles.”

“Do you think the public has forgotten you, as you’ve been out of films for over two and a half years?” someone asked.

Miss Hayworth registered modesty. “Well, I hope not—I hardly think so.” The general consensus of opinion was that during those two and a half years Miss Hayworth had managed not to get herself forgotten.

“Is acting important to you—or is it just the life that goes with it, the luxury and glamour that matter to you?”

“Oh, acting,” she said. “I like to live nicely, but it’s the acting that counts.”

“You’re just a girl who lives for her work,” I said.

“Well, not exactly.”

“And are you happy—after all those turbulent romances?”

“Oh yes, I’m happy. I’ve got my work and two lovely children. I’m so happy to be back at work.”

All we needed in the Park suite of the Dorchester Hotel was someone reading nursery-rhymes to complete the picture of cosy gentility.

The famous screen *femme fatale* seemed about as fatal to me as a baby’s rattle.

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The Brando acting technique—sometimes referred to as The Method, and taught at New York’s Actors’ Studio—obsesses Broadway. Practitioners of The Method are sometimes required to act the parts of cash registers or lawn-mowers as disciplinary exercises.

The idea is that any actor should be able to think himself into any part, animate or inanimate. As a result, there are some startling portrayals of typewriters being given.

But the most remarkable imitation of all that I saw on Broadway was of a far from inanimate object—of Miss Marilyn Monroe, in fact. And the imitator, a peroxide blonde called Jayne Mansfield, has not been to Actors' Studio, and, as far as I can judge, the method she practised was exclusively and singularly her own.

Miss Mansfield's version of Miss Monroe was to be seen in a Broadway hit comedy called *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*

Miss Mansfield played a blonde film star by the name of Rita Marlowe who was recognisably a caricature of Miss Monroe. The similarity between the two was not entirely due to Miss Mansfield's skill as an actress. Miss Mansfield, like so many young hopefuls, is herself recognisably a caricature of Miss Monroe. Consequently, she had merely to be herself in order to be a convincing, if exaggerated, imitation of Miss Monroe.

As the original is herself something of an exaggeration, you can imagine that Miss Mansfield was practically a fantasy. She projects sex about as subtly as Dr. Kinsey. Meeting her is rather like becoming involved in one of those old silent movies entitled *The Vamp*.

When I suggested to Miss Mansfield that there was a certain superficial resemblance between herself and Miss Monroe, she felt hurt. "How can you say that?" she asked. "I'm forty—Marilyn is only thirty-seven." This was not an allusion to age, but to bust measurements. Miss Mansfield's attitude, posture and expression as she spoke were derivative but none the less effective. To be precise, Miss Mansfield was sprawled out on a settee, lips pouting babyishly whilst her eyes semaphored extremely adult messages.

She wore a blouse and matador pants which were so tight that the seams had split in one or two places.

Spread out over the settee were cheesecake photographs of herself which dated back to her days as a starlet but of which she is not ashamed and which she has no wish to suppress.

"In this business your figure is a pretty important asset. Having a 40—21—35½ figure is what made me 'hot'. But that's not what is going to keep me 'hot'. So I don't feel ashamed of these cheesecake pictures, but on the other hand I don't intend to make a career out of them."

So far, however, Miss Mansfield's career and fame is based on 40—21—35½ rather than on any more esoteric qualities.

That, in a matter of a few months, she should have established herself as a Broadway figure is further proof of America's obsessional interest in the bosom.

It would be wrong to dismiss Miss Mansfield as a fluke success of no importance. America needs its comic sex-symbols like Miss Mansfield so that it can occasionally laugh at what it normally takes so seriously and solemnly.

In the sometimes macabre sex fantasies of the American nation the Jayne Mansfields provide the light relief. As such they have an important respectable and, one might almost say, medicinal function.

That this is so seems to be fairly generally accepted. For example, Miss Mansfield is invited to all sorts of formal functions which are also attended by the wives of governors and senators.

A couple of days before I met her Miss Mansfield attended a tea-party given by Adlai Stevenson as part of the Presidential election campaign. It is considered perfectly normal for a man like Stevenson to meet a girl like Miss Mansfield in the interests of mutual publicity.

Actually, Miss Mansfield regretted the meeting.

She was afraid that as a result of the wide publicity given to this meeting she would be considered a Democrat and, therefore, would not be invited to the Republican parties.

"That would be a pity, because Eisenhower gives such good parties," she said.

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It is all most embarrassing. I am lunching in the open air at Fouquets in the Champs-Élysées when a beautiful, dark-haired girl sits down two tables away from me.

She has the sort of face and figure that completely takes my mind off my lunch. I keep looking at her and thinking that girl ought to be in pictures. *She* keeps looking at her magazine.

Suddenly, she glances up at me—gives me a dazzling smile and beckons me to join her.

Obviously she knows me. Presumably I should know her.

I get up, go over to her table.

Who is she? I am thinking desperately.

Then as I approach her table I see the vital identifying clue. Her magazine is open at a double-page spread of pictures of Gina Lollobrigida (I can read the name).

In a flash I know. No girl, except La Lollo herself, would spend a whole lunch looking at pictures of Lollobrigida.

It may seem inexcusable not to recognise Lollobrigida, the most publicised aspect of Italian life since Nero stopped throwing Christians to the lions and a more remarkable sight than the leaning tower of Pisa. But I *have* an excuse.

There seemed to be so *many* Lollobrigidas around.

When I first met her at the Cirque d'Hiver, the Paris



(Howell Conant)

Grace Kelly. Hollywood's own Princess, in a characteristically regal pose.



(Columbia Pictures)

Author meets star: Graham Greene talking to Deborah Kerr, who starred in his film "The End of the Affair".

circus, I thought I must have wandered into the hall of mirrors. There were six of her—all identically dressed and all curved in the same places to the same degree.

Could it be that the Italian government was mass-manufacturing Lollo to boost the export drive? Or had I had too many Pernods?

Neither proved to be the case.

Hollywood had signed up Lollobrigida to make a circus film in Paris called *Trapeze*, and as she is a down-to-earth girl, in every sense, five doubles were needed to do the stunts on her behalf.

This relay-team of Lollobrigidas—including one man made up and padded in the appropriate places—would, I was assured, be indistinguishable from *the* Lollo who performs exclusively (and expensively) on terra firma.

I believed this. Whenever, during our conversation, Lollobrigida had to go off somewhere I required the services of a guide to find her again. To make matters worse, most of the fifty show-girls who were supplying the interior decorations had modelled their hair-styles and deportment on my elusive interviewee.

And they did not respond at all well to mis-addressed questions like: "Tell me, what do you really think about sex?"

While Lollo No. 3 was spinning at the end of a rope—doing a trick known as the Spanish Web—the original Lollobrigida was engaged on the serious business of censoring pictures of herself.

You see, the legend must not be diminished by the publication of unflattering (or unrecognisable) photographs. On this occasion La Lollo was showing an aptitude for the job that would have done credit to the Lord Chamberlain.

Picture after picture was rejected. "Too sexy", or "not nice" or "not Lollo" were the verdicts. The photographer was becoming furious.

An assistant director came over and spoke to a member of the Lollobrigida entourage—she normally has a dialogue coach, two costume designers, a hair-dresser and a husband in attendance.

“Please,” he said, “can you see that Gina does not see pictures of herself while she is working. She gets too interested in them—and it holds up the whole production.”

Lollobrigida said to me, “I must control what pictures appear of me. After all, I *work* with my face and figure. . . .”

At this stage she was called upon to work—with her face and figure.

In a sequined costume and fishnet stockings, she was required by the script to revolve in mid-air, hanging from a rope. In point of fact she did not have to do anything of the sort. A revolving platform had been built for her. All she had to do was to stand on it, hold the rope and revolve. Even so, they were all afternoon on the scene. Even the ever-patient, ever-gentlemanly, director, Sir Carol Reed, began to show signs of exasperation.

“Gina, darling,” he kept saying, “it is so simple. Just watch the girl do it—and copy her.”

But darling Gina was finding it all very difficult.

“You must get somebody else to do it,” she said.

“I am not an acrobat.”

The prospect of obtaining a seventh Lollobrigida did not amuse anyone. The comments all around were very lively:

“She can’t do it, she has no muscles.”

“You want she should have muscles, too?”

“But it is such a simple rope trick.”

“I wish she would do the Indian rope trick.”

But in the end Lollobrigida performed the rope trick to everybody’s satisfaction. Everybody was happy.

Even the baby chimp, who went slightly berserk and ran around the auditorium taking periodic swigs at a bottle of Coca-Cola, with Sir Carol Reed and half the film unit in hot pursuit.

Even Burt Lancaster was smiling happily up at Lollo—and as it was his company that was making the picture (at a cost of £1,000,000), he should have been wearing a much more worried expression. You expect film moguls to look worried.

But there was one person not looking happy: Mexican actress Katy Jurado—a highly talented girl and, like Lollo, fiery.

She said to me later when we were dining together, “That Lollobrigida!” and nearly choked on her caviare with fury.

She gulped down a glass of champagne to help compose herself.

“You know,” she said, “I tell Carol Reed: ‘Mr. Reed, please I want to leave the picture. I give you back the money you pay me. I am not happy. That Lollobrigida—she think only she is somebody. Everybody else is nobody. Always, Mr. Reed, you put her in front of camera and me you put in background. . . .’”

La Lollo herself remained diplomatically non-committal on the subject of personal vendettas—except in the case of the income-tax people. They, she said, have a vendetta against her.

She swallowed a headache pill and said, “I do not have vendettas with other actresses. That is all invented. If an actress is better than me, I admire her. If she is not as good as me, I do not need to bother to have vendettas with her. Why I am successful? I have great will to be success. Also, perhaps, a little talent.”

But this modest Lollo is not the whole Lollobrigida. When she becomes angry even producers quail in their boots. “One producer,” she told me, “he send me

expensive jewels to make it up with me. I send them straight back."

The following week, I was told, they would be filming a scene showing a lion escaping from his cage and breaking loose. Elaborate precautions were to be taken to protect La Lollo and La Jurado from the lion.

But nobody thought of protecting the lion from La Lollo and La Jurado.

Dorothy Dandridge had a problem: what does Carmen Jones wear for luncheon? It would have to reflect both sides of her personality—the animalistic and the intellectual. She studied the 500-lb. excess baggage she had brought and pouted indecisively. As I was the person with whom she was having lunch, she sought my advice.

"What about that *négligé*?" she said, holding up a wisp of material about as substantial as Salome's eighth veil.

I pointed out that whatever else it might reveal, it would not be her intellectual side, but that it was fine by me. However, might it not look somewhat startling in the restaurant? Miss Dandridge said perhaps it might so we had better have lunch in her suite. But the problem remained what to wear? I could not see anything wrong with what she was wearing at that moment: a white silk *faille* hostess gown over white silk *faille* hostess pyjamas.

But having paid for it, Miss Dandridge was understandably determined to wear some of her 500-lb. excess baggage. We went into conference, and decided on black toreador pants and a black chiffon overskirt.

"In the winter," she said, "I always wear black or white. But in the summer I also wear pink."

As far as I was concerned she would have looked just as stunning in terra-cotta, khaki or sack-grey.

Miss Dandridge is usually described in meteorological terms—as a heat-wave or a typhoon or forked lightning. She is said to sizzle, to smoulder, to scorch and sometimes to ignite. I think everyone has underestimated her temperature. I would put it even higher and describe her as a conflagration in toreador pyjamas. Inextinguishable, I should think.

Miss Dandridge walked bare-foot across the pile carpet and, although it was 1 p.m. and there was no eclipse, proceeded to light candles.

“Draw the curtains,” she told me. “I know that it’s still bright day, but we can pretend it’s night and that your lunch, which is my breakfast, is really dinner.”

The curtains were drawn, the candelabra placed on the table and all the electric lights turned off. “So much cosier dining by candlelight,” she said. In the muted light she was almost incandescent; eyes like flame-throwers, lips that are not merely a trap but practically an ambush.

“I can understand that gal Carmen,” said Miss Dandridge; “if there wasn’t a part of me just like her I couldn’t have played the role so convincingly. Every woman secretly wants to be like Carmen: take a man because she fancies him and for no other reason. But society doesn’t allow that sort of thing. Women have got to be ladies—haven’t they? Anyway, I guess we’re stuck with them.

“Carmen is more honest. Me? I’m not altogether like Carmen. Just a little. I can be abandoned, sure, but it’s a controlled abandon.”

I asked if we might get away from the theoretical and the hypothetical, and was there any man in her life at the moment? She said, phrasing it somewhat quaintly: “Pertaining to heart-interests, yes, you might say there was ‘someone’. But nothing irrevocable.” She paused for breath and continued. “There’s no one in England.

Until I meet someone nice, I'll just go out with my manager and my Press agent.

"Of course I have lots of admirers. You should see some of the letters I get, or hear some of the phone calls. But the type of man who rings up a girl after he has seen her in cabaret is not the type that interests me—so I say 'No' automatically. He's the sort that does that at every cabaret, and that's not for me. I want my man to have depth. I had no parental control and no discipline in my upbringing, and in a way I'm rather animalistic. But I'm not that animalistic."

Miss Dandridge amplified this by explaining that she also had her intellectual side. She read philosophies and liked serious talks with serious men. She liked pink velvet cushions, and pink velvet ottomans, and marble-topped tables, and driving a white convertible. But she also liked Freud.

Like most Hollywood citizens (but unlike Carmen or even Carmen Jones), she has had her psycho-therapy sessions. In her case the causes of emotional maladjustment were not trivial but tragic.

All at the same time her marriage to Harold Nicholas broke up, ending in divorce. And her daughter was suffering from a brain injury.

Today Miss Dandridge has no need for psycho-therapy. She finds that for getting rid of inhibitions a floor show is better than a couch. This also has the advantage that she is the one who gets paid (to the tune of about £1,500 a week) instead of being the one who does the paying.

Marlene Dietrich's legs may be the most fabulous in the world, but I will pay her the compliment—and it is a compliment—of saying that when you first meet her you would hardly realise that she had legs—there

is so much else about her that commands your immediate interest. To take in the whole of Dietrich at one encounter is like trying to do Europe on a fourteen-day itinerary; you only have time for the public monuments, the beauty spots and the tourist attractions. Though you may occasionally catch a glimpse of an interesting side street, you have no time to explore it in case it should turn out to be a cul-de-sac.

I had been told that I might have ten minutes with Miss Dietrich. In fact, I spent two hours with her, but the more we talked the more I realised that you could know this remarkable woman for ten years and still be only on nodding terms with her real self.

She came into the room with the self-satirising walk of a retired *femme fatale*—one who has acquired a sense of humour. She was wearing a long loose white robe with buttons down the front. As we were introduced she regarded me from behind a settee through a foliage of eyelashes the way John Wayne regards a horde of attacking Comanches, knowing it is all just a game but that you've got to pretend it is in earnest.

She went over to what seemed to be a book-lined wall but turned out to be the disguised front of a bar. "What will you have to drink?" she said, making that prosaic phrase sound strangely exotic, like "Come with Me to the Casbah" or "Come Up and See Me Sometime".

She returned from the far end of the room, put my drink down on a low table, seated herself on a settee and took a cigarette out of the cigarette-box. I stood up to light it for her; as she inhaled she looked up at me, her eyelashes lifting like stage curtains.

I made some commonplace remark to start the conversation. She seemed rather formidable wrapped up in her legend as if it were a chinchilla coat. I felt as if I were interviewing the Venus de Milo.

We talked about her cabaret act, her songs, her films, her fame—and her friends. We talked about beauty, hers and other people's. As she spoke it dawned on me that she was doing a mental strip-tease, dropping one by one the garments that made up her legendary ensemble. And suddenly she was curled upon the settee hugging her knees which were pressed against her chin in a most unlegendary attitude.

She was writing a book about beauty, she was saying. "I have done a lot of research," she said, "and I haven't found any evidence to contradict my belief that beauty is an illusion." I did not feel qualified to argue with her: Miss Dietrich is both an inspired illusionist and a consummate beauty. It would be difficult to say how much the one owes to the other.

The idea that she was the personification of glamour appeared to amuse her. "Look at my hands," she said; "here—feel them. They're rough like a workman's. I've never bothered with creams—for my hands or my face. All I've ever had on my face is water and soap. If you don't believe me come and have a look in the bathroom. You want to see? You won't find a single jar of cream there. I wash my hair under the shower. I never go to beauty salons, and I eat whatever I like. If I were to get fat, I would get fat. What does it matter?" Her voice was Germanic and caressing at the same time, if that is not a contradiction in terms. She has somehow managed to make the guttural melodious.

I said surely it mattered for an actress and a legend to be beautiful and slim. She whispered to me with mock secrecy in that low confidential voice of hers, "I will let you into a secret", and she pulled her mouth down in a negative grimace. "I have no ambition. I did not want to be a 'legend' or even an actress. Wherever I have got, I have got there because somebody has

pushed me into it. I'll let you into another secret" She gave me an infinitesimal wink. "I'm not even an actress. . . . I am . . ." She spread her fingers in puzzlement. "I guess I'm a personality."

I realised now the significance of that half-mocking look that is all the time in her eyes. She is not, as you might at first have supposed, mocking you: she is mocking herself. One part of her is sitting there chuckling that people should make so much fuss about that other part of her which she makes a living from exhibiting in various exotic poses. Dietrich the spectator cannot help being amused by Dietrich the performer and celebrity.

"Singing," she said, "is not hard work; but having those dresses made which I wear at Las Vegas and the Café de Paris—that is. I spent February and March being sewn into one dress. There is no other way to make a dress like that. I had to stand ten hours a day sometimes to have that dress made on me. And you know what it cost—6,000 dollars. Would you like to see it?"

She brought it out to me and held it up for my inspection.

"What is it made of?" I asked.

"I don't know," she said; "looks like cobwebs to me."

I said I had never heard of anyone paying so much for so little. Thinking of those two painful months she had spent being sewn into the dress, I asked her if she did not find it tiresome at times having to keep up the legend of her glamorousness.

"No," she said. "You see, I do not keep it up. If it exists, it is not of my doing. I'm not such a well-dressed woman at all. I haven't this obsessive interest in clothes some women have. When it is part of the job, I dress up and make the most of myself. But that is for a performance. It is just like wearing costume in

a period film: you must do it to be in character. Otherwise, I go about in old jeans and a shirt, and I am very happy in the kitchen over a hot stove.

"Anyway," she went on, "glamour has nothing to do with what you wear. It is inside you. It's a self-confidence; the illusion you create that you would be at ease in any situation that might arise—this is what makes you glamorous to other people."

The phone rang. It was Danny Kaye. Miss Dietrich spoke to him soothingly for five minutes. Then she said to me, "Oh, he is so tense and nervous I shall have to make him go and see my osteopath; he's a wonderful man, he will help him to relax. Of course, I know Danny—he would never go if I don't drag him there. I will have to arrange it all, otherwise he will never go.

"You see," she went on, "I like to do things for people. That is more important than being an actress or a legend. These great stars—oh dear, they are all 'I' and 'me' and 'my part' and 'my public'." She dropped her voice: "Egomaniacs. I'm having dinner with one tonight. There is always a flaw that goes along with great talent. Still, his wife is charming."

"You don't seem to suffer from egomania?"

"Me?" she chuckled. "No, I couldn't take myself that seriously. You have to take yourself very seriously to be an egomaniac. I like applause, but I don't *need* it. When you *need* it, then it's bad. Not to act is no hardship for me, and I can get along without applause."

The phone rang again and soon somebody else was telling Miss Dietrich his troubles. This time it was her osteopath. His wife was away. Dietrich said: "And your lovely children, who'll look after them? I know. I'll come and baby-sit for you." The mothering instinct is an essential part of the Dietrich personality, whether she is mothering somebody else's children or somebody else's Prime Minister.

Chapter 15

HOW TO MARRY A MILLIONAIRE

THE reign of the sex-queens is necessarily short. In their worship of these creatures the public are all armchair philanderers: they like to change the object of their worship as frequently as possible.

Furthermore, the public itself is changing all the time. The youngsters who flocked to see Alice Faye grew up, got married, had children and started watching television. Miss Faye was replaced by Betty Grable. And Miss Grable, in turn, was superseded by Marilyn Monroe.

Even if the public does not tire of them, other factors are liable to terminate the careers of these plenipotentiaries of sex: they may take up serious acting—or they may long for privacy and retire—or they may get married.

Some of them marry millionaires; and if we consider their case-histories we discover that, in certain instances at any rate, being actresses was merely a stop-gap measure, and that all the time their real vocation was being millionairesses.

I am sure that just as there are girls who are born actresses, there are those who are born to marry millionaires.

It would be nice if I could pass on to those female readers of mine who may be interested some instructive tips on How to Marry a Millionaire; but I fear this is not something that can be taught—it is a knack rather than a science. You've either got it or you haven't.

A woman who has the knack to a quite remarkable degree is Hedy Lamarr. She has been married five times—three times to millionaires. Her first husband was Fritz Mandl, the Austrian munitions maker; her fourth husband was Ernest Stauffer, a hotel owner; her fifth (and current) husband is Lee Howard, who is an oil tycoon. (Her other non-millionaire husbands were actor John Loder and writer Gene Markey.)

Miss Lamarr and her fifth husband were in Venice last year. I was there, too, for the film festival, which is always held at that time of year (the beginning of September).

Miss Lamarr was doing a Garbo. She had chosen the right time and place for it. The Venice Film Festival is one of the few occasions when a star can safely say, "I want to be left alone", knowing there is not the faintest danger of anyone heeding her request.

Not heeding her request, I rang through to Miss Lamarr's suite and was informed, "Yes"—it was Miss Lamarr speaking in person but unfortunately she was incognito. I said I was sorry to hear it and could I do anything to help?

Being incognito seemed a sad thing to be in Venice when everybody else was in Cadillacs or mink bikinis or gondolas. But Miss Lamarr said what she wanted was privacy and anonymity. She seemed to be under the impression that this was a festival of cinematographic art (as it said on the headed notepaper), whereas, of course, that is just incidental, the excuse for a festival of anatomical art.

Miss Lamarr was once quite an example of anatomical art herself (in her early film *Extase* she wore even less than the Italian starlets), but she was not competing this time either at the Palazzo del Cinema or on the beaches.

The Lido Venice during the Film Festival is not everybody's idea of a cosy retreat, so I suggested to Miss Lamarr that if she wanted privacy this was an unusual place to come to find it.

Miss Lamarr straightened me out on that at once. It seemed that those Italians had been most inconsiderate, putting on a Film Festival just at the time when she chose to visit Venice. She found it all quite appalling. It was shocking the brazen way in which movie stars exposed themselves to and for publicity. *Really!* Had they no sense of dignity? Anyone would think this was Coney Island.

I told Miss Lamarr that I appreciated she didn't want publicity and that this was not Coney Island, but I considered her the most beautiful woman at the Festival and I particularly wanted to meet her.

Miss Lamarr giggled and said, "Come to my beach hut in twenty minutes—No. 118—but you must promise to protect me from those awful photographers."

I assured her that John Wayne could not give her better protection. So a little later I found myself sitting in a deck-chair next to Miss Lamarr outside hut No. 118.

The fifth Mr. Lamarr, oil millionaire, Lee Howard, from Houston, Texas, sat a little way apart from us reading the financial page of the *Herald Tribune*.

A photographer came over and began focusing his camera. Miss Lamarr pulled a towel over her head.

"I do not pose for photographers," she said. "Garbo didn't. It is disgraceful the way they persecute me. I know it is a plot. They have been sent by the people who made my last film. Just to plague me."

I said, "They are being most flattering, showing so much interest in you."

"I can do without that flattery," said Miss Lamarr. She waited with her head under the towel until I

gave the all-clear signal that it was safe for her to surface.

Then she re-emerged.

I said, "People tell me you are sometimes difficult to get on with."

She said, "Nonsense. What is difficult about me? I am most easy to get on with. Of course, if I am given stupid directors who do not know their jobs, I have to tell them what they are doing wrong."

The oil millionaire husband from Houston, Texas, was scrutinizing the Stock Exchange prices, a happy smile of contentment on his tanned face.

"I have decided," said Miss Lamarr, "that I will only make films now with directors like Elia Kazan, Carol Reed or Cecil B. de Mille. Otherwise I do not make films."

The frustrated photographer had now found reinforcements. He and about twenty of his colleagues descended upon us, brandishing cameras.

Miss Lamarr said, "I leave."

"What's that you say, baby?" asked Mr. Lamarr, without taking his eyes off the financial news.

Miss Lamarr beat a tactical retreat behind her beach hut. She shouted to me, "You promised to keep them away."

A formidable battery of photographic equipment was aimed at Miss Lamarr, who stood peeping from behind a flap of canvas which she held across her face like a yashmak.

"Disgraceful," said Miss Lamarr.

"Disgraceful," I agreed.

"What's that you say, baby?" said Mr. Lamarr.

In due course the photographers accepted defeat and dispersed.

Miss Lamarr came out into the open again. Mr. Lamarr from Houston, Texas, did not even look up.

"In my latest film I play Helen of Troy," said Miss Lamarr, "but those Italian producers! Now they say they have mislaid the soundtrack."

In the distance I could see another photographer approaching. He was wearing jeans, an old shirt and moccasin shoes. He carried a newsreel camera.

Trouble, I thought.

He approached, bowed, kissed Miss Lamarr's hand and surveyed her with open admiration.

"You permit me?" he asked, aiming the camera.

I held my breath. Miss Lamarr purred. She permitted.

Perhaps because the cameraman was so charming. Perhaps because it was Prince Vittorio Massimo.

I decided to risk a slump on the Stock Exchange by interrupting Mr. Lamarr's financial reading.

"How do you feel about your wife's career?" I asked him. He replied in a soft southern accent, "I just want her to do what gives her pleasure. Don't want her to do anything she doesn't. If she likes a subject, I guess I would set it up for her financially. Money is no bother. Anything to make her happy."

I enquired, "And does your wife take any interest in oil?"

"Yes," he said, "I guess she does. I guess she is interested in oil."

That could be.

Clearly Miss Lamarr's a girl whose interests are multifarious, who finds oil, munitions, banks, films and hotels equally fascinating—especially if they are her husband's oil, munitions, banks, films and hotels.

Miss Lamarr seems to have been born with a predisposition for rich living. In an article published a few years ago she told us breathlessly: "I was fourteen

when I fell in love for the first time. It was with Hans, a man of twenty-five, the son of a wealthy family." She was sixteen when, to use her own words again, "Fritz Mandl, the munitions manufacturer and perhaps the most powerful man in Europe, saw me and began to woo me. He surrounded me with luxury I never knew existed. And almost before I realised it we were married." A little later, she records, "There were scenes with Mandl—some of them involved Archduke Maximilian, brother of King Karl of Austria. He heaped attentions on me and gave me gifts."

Miss Lamarr adds that having beauty—and because of it wealth, fame and a career—does not make for happiness. "To me," she says rather unconvincingly, "beauty has been a curse."

For many years she lived not knowing that she had this thing which has been such a curse in her life—it was a psychiatrist who told her eventually. "I only discovered I was beautiful a year ago," said Miss Lamarr in 1951.

After she had discovered she was beautiful, but before she married for the fourth time, Miss Lamarr decided to get rid of all her personal possessions. Presumably some of her belongings had associations with the past. When she went off on her fourth honeymoon an auction was held in Hollywood of all her personal effects. The items up for sale included her bed (that fetched £80), her jewellery, 450 dresses, seventy-five pairs of shoes, half a dozen minks—and four wedding-rings (they fetched £640).

Hollywood was puzzled that she should have *four* wedding rings to dispose of. She had only been divorced three times so far. Could it be that she had had another husband of whose existence the world had been kept in ignorance? When people asked her about this she replied with classic vagueness, "I can't keep a check on everything."



(International News Photos)

Kirk Douglas (*above*) with his wife, former publicity girl Anne Buydens.

Ginger Rogers (*below*) congratulates Susan Hayward on winning the Best Actress Award at Cannes.

(Associated Press)





(P.A. Reuter)

Gregory Peck and Paris journalist Veronique Passani attend a boxing tournament in Las Palmas. At this stage they were "just good friends". Now she is Mrs. Peck.

A little further down the scale—she only married one millionaire—comes Vera Ralston. My first reaction on meeting her was to think that I would not care to have my face slapped by Miss Ralston. On her fingers she wears diamonds large enough to pass for knuckle-dusters. On her wrist she is sporting something which, at first sight, looks like a portable rainbow, and, on closer examination, proves to be a watch deeply embedded in sapphires, pearls, diamonds, amethysts and sundry other odds and ends.

Spreading the cost, she must be paying a small fortune every time she wants to find out what time it is. The display does not end there. I estimated that she had approximately £20,000 hanging around her neck alone. Tucked away she has other jewellery, equally exotic including eight other watches. But they must have been fast or something, because she kept asking me the time. Just to prove to me that she wears something else besides watches, Miss Ralston informed me that she had a leopard-skin coat and three minks.

Miss Ralston of Prague (born Vera Hrubá), now thirty-four, is a paprika blonde who can teach Zsa Zsa and company a few lessons on How to Marry a Millionaire. And what is more important, How to Stay Married to Him.

Perhaps she is not the most devastating girl ever to have come from Middle Europe to initiate a little *putsch* of her own in Hollywood. There have been slinkier ones, sultrier ones, sexier ones, cleverer ones, more calculating ones. . . .

But I am sure that—on the domestic front—Miss Ralston is the most *economical* show-girl ever to marry a millionaire.

Says Miss Ralston: "I don't believe in throwing money around. I buy half a cow and put it in the deep freeze. That way I save 20 cents (about 1s. 6d.) on a

pound of beef. I buy a whole lamb and that way I save 12 cents (about 11*d.*) a pound. . . . My home in Hollywood is entirely floored in marble. This way I save on carpets, don't need them. Carpets are very expensive, you know. The cost of things is terrible. Water is terribly dear. It's a disgrace what they charge for water in California. Keeping the pool filled—that's a sizeable overhead."

Miss Ralston's husband is Herbert J. Yates, the seventy-four-year-old President of Republic Films, who looks rather like Mr. Magoo, the principal cartoon character of Columbia Films. He is also her employer—all her twenty or so films have been for Republic. When she married her boss four years ago she became the step-grandmother to twelve children. She also became Mrs. Republic.

I asked her if she had discovered the secret of marrying a millionaire. "Yes," she said; "let him stay a millionaire. Don't spend all his money. And don't interfere with his business. If he could become a millionaire without your help, he can remain one without your help. It's the first year that is dangerous. You have to know when to step on the gas and when to step on the brakes."

I enquired whether Miss Ralston's trip to Europe with her husband—they and their entourage had six rooms at the Savoy—was work or pleasure for her.

"Fifty-fifty," she said.

"Tell me about the 50 per cent work," I said.

"Well," she said, "I get up in the morning, put make-up on, have my hair done, get dressed, go down to eat—that's hard work."

I didn't dare ask her what in her programme constituted pleasure.

Greer Garson is also a millionairess by marriage—but she is a very different type from Miss Lamarr or Miss Ralston.

When she told me during tea—served by a butler named Joseph—that she had been asked to stand for Congress I then realised the awful truth about Hollywood, which none of the *exposés* has yet revealed. The place is becoming respectable. It can no longer live up to its bad name.

The Chairman of the Republican Party of New Mexico had written to Miss Garson saying that he and his committee had not the slightest idea whether she was a Republican or a Democrat, and could not care less, but they wanted to see Greer Garson sitting in Congress.

If Miss Garson ever becomes a Congress-woman she would bring to the job many outstanding qualities—charm, wit and sparkle. But she would be the only Congress-woman, I feel sure, who grows orchids at the bottom of her bath. The orchids, I should say, are not essential to the business of taking a bath in Hollywood. They are merely a part of the decorative scheme. The decorative scheme of the Garson household is worth describing.

Her house in Bel Air is the nearest thing to the popular conception of a movie-star's home. It comes closer to being opulent than any other I have seen. It has off-white carpets and settees and poodles to match; marble floors, walls of Italian mosaics, pure silk wallpapers, artificial waterfalls, curtains operated by remote control, statues of ancient Siamese gentlemen acting as standing lamps. And, of course, the usual swimming pool.

A mirrored wall folds back to reveal a bar where Miss Garson serves a speciality called Zubrovna. The Shah of Persia and the Empress were visitors to this house during their stay in Hollywood.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF HOLLYWOOD

Farouk's mother is a regular caller. Senators and governors are in and out all the time.

Miss Garson can afford all this (plus a house in Dallas, a ranch called Forked Lightning in New Mexico, and an apartment in New York) because she is married to "Buddy" Fogelson, who is in oil.

Now, she told me, she would like a houseboat on the Nile—for week-ends.

Chapter 16

THE LAST TYCOONS

FILM tycoons are a breed of millionaires who occasionally marry film stars, but more often manage not to.

As they are the men who create the stars, build them and sell them, they possibly feel that it would be overdoing things to marry them, too. It might mean at some stage having to pay to the same artist a salary and alimony.

Anyway, from the star's point of view film tycoons are not very good bets as husbands. For one thing, there are not many of them left: and then they are rapidly losing their power. At one time they were all mighty little Pharaohs; today some of them are just little Farouks.

The decline in the power of the film tycoon is one of the most remarkable developments of Hollywood life: what has happened amounts to a quiet revolution. Less than ten years ago the boss of a big studio would have a score or so important stars under long-term contract to him. Their destinies were in his hands.

Warner Brothers, for example, used to have Alan Ladd, Errol Flynn, Gary Cooper, Joan Crawford, Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney, George Raft, Jane Wyman, Doris Day, Paul Muni among others. Today all these stars are free-lances. Warners is left with Randolph Scott, Virginia Mayo and one or two more. The same situation exists at all the studios. At one time stars were automatically associated with certain companies: Bob Hope with Paramount: Betty

Grable with 20th Century-Fox: Jane Russell with RKO: Esther Williams with MGM. Each studio had its own style. If you came into a cinema in the middle of the performance you could usually tell a Paramount film from a Warner Brothers film. I doubt if you could today.

What has happened is that the stars one by one broke away from the studios for which they had been working, in some cases for as long as twenty years. They formed their own companies and became their own bosses.

James Stewart was one of the first to make the break: he started something new in Hollywood by going to Universal-International and offering to work without salary, taking instead 30 per cent of the picture's profits—if there were any. In other words, he set up in business using himself as capital. Other stars were quick to see the attractiveness of this arrangement. If they appeared in a film on this basis and it was a tremendous hit, they stood to make millions. Furthermore, their earnings would be spread over several years instead of coming in one lump sum, and that meant a much lower rate of taxation.

They also discovered that they could raise money quite easily to set up and make their own films. If they invested their names, other people were prepared to invest the money.

Stars like Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas, Tyrone Power, Marilyn Monroe, Jane Russell, Frank Sinatra, Gregory Peck, Alan Ladd, all now have their own production companies.

The effect of this has been to make the studio boss a far less important or frightening figure. He cannot order now; he must negotiate. The major studios which used to operate like tiny totalitarian states have to submit, if not to the will of the people, then at least to the will of the stars.

That this has come about is largely due to television, which has deprived Hollywood of its market for the routine entertainment. The film that served merely to kill an odd hour or two is no longer needed: watching TV is a cheaper way of killing time. To cope with the new situation, studios cut down on their production programmes and now make fewer but bigger pictures.

With vast production schedules in operation it used to be necessary for every studio to have a dozen important stars always on tap. Parts were written so that they could be played by Gable or Cooper or Tracy, according to which one happened to be available. It was the conveyer-belt system of film production, and some actors were no more than spare parts. If a musical was designed for June Haver and Miss Haver happened to be unavailable, it would simply be revamped into a water-spectacle for Esther Williams.

Today Hollywood realises that every film must be special and hand-made if it is to wrest people from their TV sets. The customers are no longer saying, "Let's go to the pictures": they are saying, "We must see such and such a film."

With far fewer films being made, there is no advantage in studios having long lists of contract players who can be used indiscriminately in whatever films chance to come up. It is more practicable and profitable to hire the star they want rather than use one they happen to have.

The outcome of all this, I think, will be that Hollywood as we know it now will have ceased to exist within a matter of five years.

Hollywood came into existence because the studios were situated there—and the stars, directors, writers, producers who worked for those studios liked to live near to their place of employment. Today, as freelances and independents, they no longer have any fixed

place of employment; they may be working anywhere in the world. So there is no need to live within commuting distance of Hollywood.

Inevitably the business must become even more decentralised. I believe that the major companies will eventually function merely as distributors. United Artists has already shown that this policy can be extremely successful. This company has no studio and no list of contract artists—and therefore the minimum of overheads. What it does is to finance carefully selected independent productions, but the business of making the films it leaves entirely to the producers concerned. Having backed the horse, it does not tell the jockey how to run the race.

It becomes apparent that being the boss of a big studio is a job of diminishing importance. Regarded in this light, it is not so puzzling that Darryl F. Zanuck should have resigned his post as head of productions at 20th Century-Fox.

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I first met Zanuck in Hollywood the day after his resignation had been announced. I had been invited to lunch with him in the executive dining-room at the Fox studios. I had expected it to be a private affair, but when I got there I discovered a dozen producers ranged around the one enormous table (which was overlooked and overshadowed by a huge TV set). Buddy Adler (Zanuck's successor), Charles Brackett, Sam Engel, Nunnally Johnson, James Mason were some of those who were there.

Zanuck had not yet arrived and everybody started to eat. During the course of the meal other producers came in—and started to eat, too. I had got to the dessert when Zanuck came in. He was the last to arrive. I had planned to ask him about the reasons for his

resignation, but with his successor sitting next to him and his employees all around (the resignation had then not yet taken effect) it proved impossible to do so. I contented myself with observing the scene. Zanuck's entrance had had an immediate effect. He looked rather like a humanised ferret in a Disney film.

The place where he sat down at once became the focal point of the room. I think he ordered an omelette—anyway, it was something minute. Though there was a good deal of generally disrespectful banter going on about producers and stars, any remark addressed to Zanuck contained an undertone of deference and respect. (He may have resigned his job, but he was still the principal stockholder of 20th Century-Fox.)

When he spoke everyone hung upon his words—with the exception of James Mason, who took no part in the general conversation but merely continued placidly to eat his lunch, addressing a few words from time to time to the person sitting next to him.

The table-talk was all shop talk: I do not think one sentence was spoken that did not have to do with films. The jokes were all Hollywood jokes, and the stories were about actors, producers, film editors, writers and a cinema projectionist. Zanuck told the story about the projectionist, who had been running a film through for him the other night. At about 1 a.m. Zanuck and the people with him went up to his office for a drink. When they returned, the projectionist had gone.

“The bum just up and left,” cried Zanuck in a voice high-pitched with incredulity. “Now how d’you like that? He just up and left. There we all were—waiting for the film to start again, and the guy was gone. This bum he says to himself, ‘If these guys want to watch movies at 1 a.m. in the morning, they can damned well project them themselves.’ And he just up and goes home.”

"Did he open a vein next morning, Darryl?" enquired one of the producers.

"He just up and left—and left us all sitting there like fools," said Zanuck again with astonishment.

Everybody—except melancholy Mr. Mason—roared at this story. At the time I missed the point of it, but it became apparent to me afterwards. The idea of the mighty Zanuck sitting in a dark private theatre at 1 a.m. in the morning waiting for the film to start and then finding that he could not see it because the projectionist had gone home to bed was thought too incredible for words. To appreciate the story, you must realise that Zanuck (who was head of Warner Brothers and at twenty-four was responsible for making stars like James Cagney and Edward G. Robinson) has enjoyed a Tzar-like power in Hollywood (in fact he has been called the "Tzar of All the Rushes"). He would take it for granted that if he expressed the wish to see a film in the Turkish bath someone would have a screen fixed up and the film would be running before he had even begun to sweat.

A man like Zanuck has lived with power so long that he would expect other people to implement his wishes as automatically as if they were all a part of his own reflex mechanism.

I have talked to many of the people who have worked for Zanuck—to his daughter Susan, to his son-in-law Andre Hakim. The overwhelming impression I got was of an outstanding man of Hollywood: a man who had the guts to take decisions. Perhaps he is not all that well-read but he has a flair and instinct and personality and fire in his belly. He is a man who will take big risks. He took risks when he made films like *Gentleman's Agreement* and *Pinky* (about racial prejudice). And he took a fantastic risk when he decided that all 20th Century-Fox productions would in future be

in CinemaScope. It meant closing down the studios, spending a fortune on new equipment. He gambled that cinemas all over the world would go to the expense (which was high) of installing CinemaScope screens so that they could play his films. It is a tribute to the soundness of his instinct that his gamble came off.

I think Zanuck enjoyed taking the risk: for he is by nature a gambler.

Appropriately, it was at the Casino in Cannes that I saw him next. Every night you could see him there, an example of deadpan acting at its best, staking a million francs (£1,000) on the draw of a card.

Next to him, his constant companion, actress Bella Darvi, diamonds sparkling on her fingers, a mink stole draped over bare shoulders, was also getting a few kicks as she placed her £500 counters as if distributing table mats.

Some nights Mr. Zanuck was £10,000 up; other nights he was down. But always he came back to his same place at the baccarat table, cigar in mouth, his face as bored as Bogart's—as his thousand-pound counters were scooped away or alternatively doubled.

You could hear a diamond pin drop as he looked at his cards: but only the spectators were guilty of such bad form as a show of emotion. Next to him actress Bella Darvi played her aces as regally as if she were playing a queen. . . .

To see someone losing several thousand pounds in a couple of seconds without blinking an eyelid is to come to the conclusion that money is a much overrated commodity. Shove-ha'penny, I remember, was never played with such unconcern.

The following day, having lost 600 francs at roulette without managing to squeeze a single thrill out of it, I rang the man who finds it so entertaining to lose

£10,000. He was staying at Cap d'Antibes; we arranged to meet in Cannes for cocktails. He arrived wearing beach shorts and a blue casual shirt, his bare feet sinking into the pile carpets.

This was Zanuck, the last of the Hollywood moguls, the man who made stars as other men make shadows on walls. You notice immediately about this man that he is very small without shoes—five feet five, I would say; that he is preoccupied; and that he is in a hurry—even when he is on holiday.

He had no sooner sat down and asked for a dry martini than he thought of something and asked the waiter to get him Los Angeles on the telephone. His eyes are like secret dossiers: full of coded messages.

Why had he come to Europe and resigned as production chief of 20th Century-Fox?

"I wanted to make pictures. I had become a business administrator. Then there was the tax matter." (A salaried man pays three times as much tax as a producer taking a percentage.)

"Won't you miss the power?"

"Power? I guess I don't know what it feels like. I've always had it as far as I can remember." He added, "As principal stockholder of Fox I think I shall still have enough of that, too."

"Didn't it give you some satisfaction—being a man who could make stars?"

"Nobody can make stars. You can only make pictures. Sometimes, if you're lucky and the pictures are good, *they* can make stars."

His interest in movies is obsessive and he is interested in stories with themes. It would be true to say of him that to make a film that makes money is only more thrilling than to make one that loses money. The film he was planning then—to be made in Europe—was of Ernest Hemingway's first novel, *Fiesta*.

A subject of this kind is almost as much of a gamble as baccarat, and one feels that it holds for Zanuck the same sort of fascination. *Fiesta* is the story of a man made impotent by a war wound.

There would be many easier books to film. Zanuck decided to make *Fiesta*. And the basic situation would not be altered. "The Breen Office have become more liberal. I think they will pass it; I think we will even get it by the Legion of Decency."

It was eight o'clock. While the bar was filling up with smartly dressed women in evening gowns and men in dinner suits, Zanuck was still in bare feet and beach shorts.

Later that night he was to be found at the baccarat table. Wearing shoes by now. He won ten million francs (£10,000) before breakfast.

Dore Schary, the former head of productions at MGM, is tall, with a large owl-like face on which he wears large thick-rimmed spectacles as if he were born with them.

He sat very still behind his L-shaped desk up in his office at the MGM studios, like an elderly schoolboy who has been brought up not to fidget and to keep his back straight. He talked without making any movements or gestures; his voice came steadily out of his unanimated face—it might have originated from a ventriloquist in the top drawer of his desk.

It was a voice that had the controlled inflexions of an experienced lecturer. He was neatly dressed in a double-breasted, dark suit which showed no sign of having acquired a single new crease in the course of his morning's work. One had the impression that work was something that went on exclusively in that large head, a kind of self-contained annexe to the rest of his body.

He regarded me dispassionately with electronic eyes, as if I were something that had to be filed for reference.

He is a formal man and it was a formal interview.

I said, "Since you became head of production at MGM you have made some very good uncharacteristic films like *The Blackboard Jungle*. But you've also made some dreadful films like *Diane*. . . . It seems difficult to understand that the same man was responsible for both."

He said without resentment, "Nobody sets out to make bad films. Something just went wrong with *Diane*. I don't know why. We had a good writer on it, Christopher Isherwood. But these things happen."

I said, "You have been accused of abandoning the old MGM policy of making family pictures, what they call films with 'heart', in order to make 'problem pictures'. How do you feel about this charge?"

He said, "There is no such thing as a 'problem picture'. A film becomes a 'problem picture' if it is a failure. When a film makes money nobody describes it as a 'problem picture'. We shall make a fortune out of *The Blackboard Jungle*—so it's not a problem picture."

His hands rested on the glass-top of his desk: not a finger moved by as much as a centimetre: he was as motionless as a Yogi.

I asked, "What special quality do you think you bring to your job which perhaps other people in a comparable position do not have?"

"I like to think of myself as being first and foremost a writer," he said. "That has been my training. I wrote many films before I became a producer. I still like to keep my hand in as a writer—I do the occasional article or a commentary for a film. I think I understand the writer's problem; I hope I am sympathetic to what he is trying to do in the film medium."

The question-and-answer interview continued. Nothing disturbed his equanimity. He seemed an unlikely man to be in charge of MGM productions: cultured, well read, almost scholarly, eminently reasonable in the face of criticism.

After I left I talked to a producer who had worked for both Schary and Zanuck. I asked him how he felt about the two men.

He said, "On the surface, Schary is the more civilized—the scholarly film tycoon. But he is not a strong man, like Zanuck. When there is trouble he develops a back-ache. He cannot stand trouble. He is nervous of taking risks. Yes, he has read a lot of books, he has read Proust and Dostoevsky, and Zanuck has only read synopses. But Zanuck at his peak was a fire-eater. Schary? He's an Alka-Seltzer eater."

This point of view could, of course, have been prejudiced: but there seemed to me to be at the least a germ of truth in it.

The significant fact is that both Zanuck and Schary are no longer in command at their respective studios.

In their different ways both men are individualists and possess striking personal qualities.

But the place Hollywood has become today no longer requires such men. They were the last tycoons, the last of the men who impressed their own (sometimes idiosyncratic) personalities upon the making of films.

The new bosses of Hollywood are the efficiency-experts, the accountants and the super-administrators.

Chapter 17

THE WRITER AND HOLLYWOOD

THE tall man in the drain-pipe trousers with the haggard face and the glass of whisky clutched in his hand—as if he were a schoolboy having his first illicit drink—was, as I had suspected, Mr. Graham Greene. I had not been absolutely sure when he first arrived at the cocktail party; he is not easy to recognise because he rarely submits to being photographed, and he does not have the immediately identifying air of a celebrated author. He did not seem to know anybody at the party and was wondering about making an elaborate pretence—as one does in such circumstances—of studying a view through the windows and examining the interior décor.

Knowing of his great affection for peeling-wallpaper and his penchant—on the printed page, at least—for luxuriating in the sleazier establishments off Wardour Street, I felt he must have found the penthouse suite at the Dorchester in a depressingly good state of repair. Perhaps it was for this reason that he looked ill at ease.

Though I have never had any great liking for what Mr. Greene has to say in his books I have always been enchanted by the way he says it. However, knowing that he was not very sympathetically disposed towards journalists (understandably, perhaps, since he had been one himself), I felt hesitant about forcing my company upon him. But it seemed likely that he would welcome talking to somebody, even a journalist, and so I went over to him and introduced myself.

I suppose I had expected him to talk as he writes,



Orson Welles (*above*)—"I'm no genius," he says.

(*Below left*) Rita Hayworth, looking coy rather than fatal, (*right*)
Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.—in civilian clothes.

(*Associated Press*)

(*Baron*)





The kind of publicity picture that brought fame to Anita Ekberg. There is nothing significant about the wheel—it is merely part of the background designed to show off the foreground.

bitterly, derisively, spitting out words as if they were contaminated. To my surprise, he was charming, shy and a trifle awkward; he was much more likeable than any character in his books. Famous authors who write in the omniscient third person sometimes tend to retain their omniscience outside the privileged territory of the printed page, and though they may be delightful to read are insufferable when you have to talk to them. But there was nothing pontifical or dogmatic about Mr. Greene: he was completely lacking in those twin vices of success—glibness and smoothness.

He had been persuaded to come to the party by Otto Preminger, for whom he was writing the screen-play of Shaw's *St. Joan*.

"It is one of the few plays of Shaw's that I like," said Greene. "I'm in sympathy with what he says. I shan't change any of his ideas. I don't like his other plays very much, except *Heartbreak House*. I've never been able to get through *Man and Superman*. *Candida*? That's a bore, isn't it?"

"Do you like writing for films?" I asked.

"It's a livelihood," he said.

"But aren't your books that?"

"No," he said, "I don't make much out of the books. Now I sell quite well, but until 1941 I couldn't count on selling more than 5,000 copies of each book. You know what *Brighton Rock* sold when it first came out? 8,000 copies. I haven't been able to make money the way Somerset Maugham has because I never sold much in the days of low taxation. Now that I am selling, everything I make goes in tax."

It occurred to me that Greene, the nonconformist Catholic, and Shaw, the unfrocked atheist, had at least one thing in common in addition to a veneration for St. Joan: delusions of poverty and a sense of paranoia in their relation with the Inland Revenue Dept.

But Greene always has his film rights to fall back on. Unlike Shaw, he is not too fussy about what happens to his books when they become films, though from time to time he does make an effort—usually a futile one—to get one of his stories onto the screen intact. Practically every book he has ever written has been filmed; *The Man Within*, *This Gun for Hire*, *Confidential Agent*, *The Heart of the Matter*, *The Power and the Glory*, *The End of the Affair*, *Brighton Rock*, *The Fallen Idol*, are some of them.

“The only one I really liked,” said Greene without any bitterness, “was one very few other people seemed to have liked, *The Confidential Agent* with Charles Boyer.”

“Why,” I asked him, “is it that your stories are invariably ruined when they are filmed? After all, you are an extremely filmic writer.”

“Oh,” said Greene, “it’s probably that when people read my stories they *think* they would make good films, and then when they come to do them they realise they won’t, and so they are obliged to change them.” I thought this an extremely generous attitude for an author to take, and not really fair to himself.

“There is also the question of censorship,” he said. “Most of my stories wouldn’t get by the censor in their original form. *The Fallen Idol* was a good film, I thought. But of course it was a completely different story to *The Basement Room*, on which it was based. In the film you couldn’t have an innocent man being hanged. But the change in this case was made with my full approval.

“If anyone is to blame, it’s me. *The Quiet American* is going to be done by Joseph L. Mankiewicz—I don’t know how they’ll do that. I don’t suppose they can film it the way it is written. They’ll probably make it so that it looks as if the American was being bamboozled all the time by the Communists or something. . . .”

An American who had joined the conversation began

to argue with him, saying that he had really been rather unfair to America in this book.

"Oh, I don't know," said Greene; "some of those bombs that went off in Vietnam, it was generally thought that the Americans were behind that."

He gave a slow, sly smile. "It's very dangerous writing a book in the first person. Everybody thinks I am Fowler—well, I share some of his views about the Americans. But I'm not as bitter about them as he is. I didn't have my girl stolen by an American."

This statement has, I think, wider significance. Greene himself, it seems, is not as bitter about anything as his characters. Or perhaps he works off all his accumulated bitterness in his writing and has little left over for casual conversation.

"Do you find writing gets more difficult," someone wanted to know, "or is your head full of plots and ideas?"

"More difficult," he said. "Definitely."

"Why should that be?"

"Getting old," he said wryly. "I'm over fifty, you know."

I said: "For an author, that's practically adolescence. Shaw was seventy when he wrote *St. Joan*."

Greene gave a little chuckle: he looked bashful. "I don't think," he said, "that Shaw lived quite as hectically as I do." And as someone dragged him off to be photographed with Otto Preminger, he threw out a plea that I felt came from the heart, "Could I have another whisky, please."

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To follow the story of the birth of a Graham Greene film, I thought, might help me in my quest for the Seven Deadly Sins of Hollywood. After all, Mr. Greene is an acknowledged authority on sin—it is his field, so to speak—and he must also have some knowledge of Hollywood, after having had so many of his books filmed there.

The story starts with Mr. Greene meeting producer John Stafford and director Ken Annakin for dinner. Mr. Greene, tall, well-dressed, nervous, tells them a plot he has in mind for a film. It is about an accountant, a mathematical genius, who discovers a system for winning a fortune at roulette. It is a comedy.

Director Ken Annakin is so surprised by this uncharacteristic story that he secretly believes Mr. Greene will never get around to writing it. But a tentative deal is set up. As author and associate producer of the film Mr. Greene will collect about £15,000.

He insists on being associate producer to ensure his story is not tampered with. "I'm damned," he says, "if I'm going to have any more of my stories mucked up by high-paid morons."

Director Annakin reflects that for a man so preoccupied on paper with the bad things of life Mr. Greene is extraordinarily appreciative of the good things of life which money can buy. In fact, he drives a very hard bargain.

Then no more is heard of Mr. Greene's lapse into gaiety. Everybody thinks he has repented and is having the devil of a time in some private hell of the imagination. But Mr. Greene is grimly determined to make his soufflé. *Loser Takes All* is published as a novel. It reads like (and is in fact) a film treatment. Now work begins. The setting is Mr. Greene's flat in the Albany. The pictures on the walls are dark. Picassoish and tortured. But the gentleman sitting on the sofa next to a recording machine drinking vodka is hardly suffering at all.

Director Annakin suggests a new line of dialogue. Author Greene says, "No, people don't talk like that."

He retires to his bedroom (he cannot write in front of people) and re-emerges half an hour later with dialogue that does represent the way people talk. They are both disgracefully happy and have another glass of vodka.

I had always pictured Mr. Greene as a man who enjoys suffering too much to enjoy anything else. But it seems he can make do without damnation. He has forsaken the private torture chamber in which he writes so many of his novels and is determined to make his film a light comedy, a soufflé with absolutely no social, religious or metaphysical significance. (When the distinguished French director, Rene Clement, had wanted to make his story into a bitter tract on the theme that money corrupts, Mr. Greene and he parted company. Mr. Greene did not feel a bit bitter about money. Nor did he really feel it was so corrupting.)

Mr. Greene does not like writing at home—he finds hotel rooms more inspiring. So director and author fly to Monte Carlo, where they take a suite at the most expensive hotel (10 guineas a night each) and continue their work. Mr. Greene is on intimate terms with all the head waiters and reveals an utterly guiltless appetite for caviare.

In the afternoon director and author lie on the beach eyeing the passing girls and talking about Indo-China, Robert Louis Stevenson and Marilyn Monroe. And that girl in the sea who fascinates Mr. Greene because she looks like a barmaid. In the evenings they visit the Casino, and Mr. Greene, who is no mathematical genius and has no system, loses £10. His experiences at the roulette tables remind him of how he used to play Russian roulette on Wimbledon Common. For any of you who have not played it, this sport consists of loading one chamber of a six-chamber revolver, spinning the chambers, pointing the muzzle at your head and pulling the trigger. Mr. Greene says that after the sixth time he had indulged in this pastime—and nothing happened—he became bored with it and gave it up. So the director and the author do not play Russian roulette at Monte Carlo.

Sir Alexander and Lady Korda are in town and Greene and Annakin join them for dinner. Annakin detects an extraordinary resemblance between a character in his film to be played by Robert Morley and Sir Alex. But as Green has assured him that he never puts a close friend in any of his stories, Annakin attributes the similarity to coincidence.

The script completed, the director and the author return to London. Annakin reflects sadly that they have not visited one dive that could honestly be described as dingy or occupied a single room with peeling wallpaper.

It is all most disappointing. You might just as well be writing a film script with Noel Coward.

I reflect sadly that I have not picked up from Mr. Greene one original sin that I could honestly describe as deadly and attribute to Hollywood. He is a glutton where sin is concerned and insists on hogging all the blame himself.

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Few authors (as distinct from script-writers) are so tolerant of Hollywood as Graham Greene. Clifford Odets made a violent attack on the place in his play *The Big Knife*, in which he had a movie tycoon prepared to resort to murder in order to protect one of his "properties"—a big box-office star. Despite this attack, Mr. Odets was working in Hollywood as a script-writer when I was there. Budd Schulberg, who wrote that very fine film *On the Waterfront*, has given us some biting, very funny and certainly unflattering portraits of Hollywood people in *What Makes Sammy Run* and *The Disenchanted*. Richard Brooks, a highly talented director—he made *The Blackboard Jungle*—has written a very bitter novel about Hollywood, *The Producer*.

Why is it, you may wonder, that writers more than any other group of people should be so derisive about

Hollywood. Well, first of all, the writer is usually by nature a derisive person. Secondly, he is bound to feel slighted in Hollywood. If he is working on a film, it is very likely that the stars will not know his name; the producer will refer to him as "my writer" or, even worse, "one of my writers"—and anyone and everyone connected with the film will feel at liberty to alter what he has written. Hollywood will appear to be callously insensitive to his sensitive prose; actors will only be interested in getting lines that give them an opportunity of displaying their own talents; and he, the writer, will be treated as the most expendable person on the whole production. People will think him mad if he points out peevishly that without him there would be no film.

The reason the writer gets this sort of treatment is because he has no assessable box-office pull—it is impossible to judge how many customers he brought into the cinema. And Hollywood is a place where the amount of respect shown you depends on the amount of money you bring into the box-office.

It is scarcely surprising, then, that writers should hit back at Hollywood.

Chapter 18

MALE GLAMOUR

THE latest thing in male glamour to come from Hollywood is the bald-headed Mr. Yul Brynner, who (unlike Samson) has managed very nicely without hair. Mr. Brynner's baldness is not natural but cultivated: every morning he shaves his skull with an electric razor. He claims that it saves a lot of time not having to bother with shampoos and hair tonics and brilliantine and combing. I asked him if he thought baldness improved a man's looks. His reply was that if a man had to think of his looks he was beyond improving.

I am sure that Mr. Brynner is not quite as disinterested in his own appearance as this remark would suggest: I am sure he is well aware that his shaven skull is, for him, an extremely effective hair style, giving him a powerful and pagan appearance. Indeed, I am sure Mr. Brynner thinks a great deal about his looks.

What he *has* managed to prove in a rather spectacular way is that although for a man looks are important it is not necessary for him to be *good-looking*. We knew already that many male stars had achieved outstanding success and won large female followings though their faces were anything but decorative. Men like Bogart, Sinatra, Cagney, Cooper, Astaire, Tracy, Robinson have made do without profiles. But at least they have all subscribed to the idea that a good head of hair was the minimum requirement for any man liable to have to kiss a girl in a film.

Mr. Brynner has shown that even hair is expendable

—that for a man masculinity is more important than his chest expansion, the shape of his nose, the colour of his eyes or the number of hairs on his head.

In fact, certain characteristics of middle-age such as the wrinkled forehead, the greying hair, the receding hair-line, the expanding waist-line, the creases which have established themselves on the face, are today regarded as being extremely attractive to women. There is no doubt that a partial explanation of this is that many women are subconsciously searching for father-substitutes. The worship of the elderly man by the young woman is almost as widespread as the worship of the bosom by the young man.

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The lift zoomed up to the seventeenth storey, and before I had time to retrieve my stomach (which had stayed at the second or third floor) I found myself facing Edward G. Robinson.

I noted: eyes like spy-holes . . . a snarl of a mouth . . . a nose like the sawn-off barrel of a shot-gun. Large strong fingers took mine in a handcuff handshake. Then he smiled . . . and the scrambled features unscrambled . . . a new face was sculpted out of plasticine. Little Caesar became the Little Man.

A small dog jumped into his arms and began to lick his face. Edward G. Robinson submitted happily to this treatment and hugged the animal to him with all the tenderness of Shirley Temple making the acquaintance of Lassie.

Politely, he led me into the oak-panelled penthouse. Coffee and home-made biscuits were served.

“Old age is a wonderful thing,” said Robinson as the dog continued to lick his face as if it were solid candy.

“Yes,” I said. “What a pity you have to be old to enjoy it.”

"There you are," he said kindly, "that's what I mean. The young are so cynical."

The dog leaped out of his arms, ran towards me. After a brief investigation he decided against licking *my* face, obviously agreeing with his master's estimation of me as a cynical young man—not the sort of guest who responds kindly to having his face licked.

Robinson's statement about the bliss of being old was apt. At sixty-three he had just scored the biggest triumph of the Broadway season in a play by Paddy Chayefsky, *Middle of the Night*. After twenty-five years' absence from Broadway and successful skulduggery in movies, he had returned to the stage in a play which the middle-aged American male took straight to his tired, fatty old heart. He had converted the sugar-daddy from a figure of fun into a man of stature and pathos. He was nightly illustrating that the American maxim "enjoy it now and pay later" is applicable also to the business of love.

The story in which Robinson was playing was about an elderly garment manufacturer who loves (and is loved by) a girl of twenty-five. Despite the neurotic opposition of both their families, they decide to marry. The implication of the play is that old age is merely another burden which a little American know-how and optimism can easily lighten.

Author Chayefsky, aged thirty-three, has written a brilliant manifesto proclaiming the grandfathers' right to self-determination—and love.

As the story of a particular man in a particular situation, *Middle of the Night* is a superb piece of reportage. But it was much more than that to the audiences who packed the theatre every night. To many tired old gentlemen it was a rejuvenating treatment. The young, says Chayefsky, do not possess the exclusive rights to love; and the middle-aged and old gladly concurred with that view.

Edward G. Robinson, who is ten years older than the character he portrayed, went even further than this.

“Old men,” he assured me, “are much better lovers than young men. Women have always found that to be true. An older man is so much less selfish. He is kinder, more considerate, more knowledgeable—he has the infinite capacity for loving someone else whereas many young men have only an infinite capacity for loving themselves.”

Mr. Robinson, who married at the age of thirty-three and was now being sued for divorce, thought that the young were inclined to rush into marriage. An older man gave the matter more thought. If marriage was a calculated risk, the man in his sixties was usually capable of making more accurate calculations.

I wondered whether even the most brilliant arithmetic ability could help much in such an incalculable relationship as between a husband in his sixties and a wife in her twenties.

“What’s that you say?” muttered Robinson, who is a little deaf. I repeated what I had said.

“You would not understand,” he said; “you are young . . . wait till you are my age. . . . The other night Marlene Dietrich came to see the play. . . .”

“Yes,” I said, “I was there that night.”

The entire audience had stood up to stare at the fabulous grandmother who looks young enough to be her own daughter.

“There you are,” said Robinson triumphantly. “How old is she? Fifty-six? Age is a problem that can be overcome. Some people live and die and they have never lived. The challenge of life is to live. . . . I’m a much happier man now than I was at twenty. You can’t imagine what fun it is.”

I said I simply couldn’t wait to be sixty-three.

As I dropped in the lift back to earth I came to the conclusion that America—which practically invented youth—has decided along with Bernard Shaw that youth is far too precious to waste on the young.

If Mr. Robinson is right we can eliminate youth from the qualities essential to male sex-appeal. If we examine the personality of James Stewart we discover that positiveness, fluency and aggressiveness are also non-essentials.

James Stewart crossed his legs for the twenty-fifth time, absently fondled the snout of a stuffed hippopotamus, and said apologetically, "I guess I am a millionaire."

For 120 seconds he outstared a glass-eyed crocodile as defiantly as if it were representing the Inland Revenue Department.

For his peace of mind, I can assure him it wasn't.

The scene of Mr. Stewart's confession was a taxidermist's show-room. If this should seem a somewhat bizarre setting, you must blame Mr. Alfred Hitchcock, who has a taste for somewhat bizarre settings. He had picked this one for a scene in his film *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.

Mr. Stewart, who is only slightly more loquacious than the zoological specimens on display around us, had now collected his thoughts sufficiently to amplify his first statement.

"I'm in oil," he said, "and I own from 15 to 30 per cent of each picture I make."

The advertisements, which assure you that nothing stands between you and success except your diffidence, awkwardness and lack of purpose ("all of which can be cured by hypnotism"), are wasted on Mr. Stewart. He has stammered and fidgeted his way to the top—and into a fortune. Among the crowded galaxy of exhibitionistic stars, he is conspicuous in his self-effacement.

"Yes," he says, "I'm on the quiet side. I back away from personal appearances. I don't have anything to say. It's different for a Danny Kaye—he can do something. I don't think you could describe me as the life and soul of a party."

His eyes are blue and, even after fifty Hollywood films, guileless and naïve. His movements are slow, indecisive. His conversation consists of long pauses interspersed with sporadic utterances.

"I'm a dreamer," he tells you; "yes, I'm very guilty of day-dreaming. Just can't seem to keep my mind on one idea. . . . That's why I don't read much. Just film scripts. My wife won't let me take the children in the car when I'm driving. I'm a terrible driver. . . . I'm such a long skinny drink of water that no matter how I walk I have a certain awkwardness."

In fact, the real James Stewart is very like the ineffectual Mr. Smith who went to Washington. But like the Mr. Smith of that famous film, Mr. Stewart, for all his slowness of movement and thought, repeatedly triumphs over the smart-alecs. There is method in his mumbling. There is genius in his ingenuousness.

It becomes obvious at this stage that although his film stock-in-trade is the faux pas, he does not commit many gaffes where his career is concerned.

"What do critics mean," he asks, "when they say James Stewart is always the same, always James Stewart? Who else should I be?"

What critics mean is that they are surprised to see this awkward, apparently ineffectual, figure who seems incapable of fixing a fuse, remaining so firmly established as one of the top stars of Hollywood. But to James Stewart there is nothing paradoxical in this.

After all, he *was* a colonel in the air force during the war, and sufficiently positive to win a D.F.C. and a Croix de Guerre.

He has also been sufficiently positive to become a millionaire.

"No," said Mr. Stewart, removing his hat from the antlers of a stuffed deer, "I may be a bit slow. But I know what I'm doing."

So now we know that the male star does not have to be young and he does not have to be forthright. Does he need to be tough and athletic?

Looking rather like a totem pole with toothache, Victor Mature, the original beefcake boy—also known as The Hunk of Man and The Body Beautiful—sat opposite me in his hotel suite worrying about going on safari to Africa.

The buttons of his brown shirt were undone and he was exposing a couple of acres of chest.

"I may have to go to Africa on a safari to make a picture," said Mr. Mature. "Oh, brother, it's going to be rough—out there," he added nervously.

He looked at me critically.

"Have you ever been on a safari to Africa?" he asked.

"No," I said.

"Oh, brother," said Mr. Mature, "it's rugged, real rugged."

I said: "You've been before, of course?"

"No," said Mr. Mature, "but I've seen it on pictures. Wheew!"

I assured him that on safaris into the jungle these days all modern conveniences were provided—such as portable baths and electric razors. It wasn't as bad as it seemed in pictures.

This cheered him considerably.

"Oh, that's swell," he said. "I was a bit worried." He shifted his 208 lb. in his chair, ran his fingers over his 45-inch chest.

"You gotta realise," he said, "that I'm a pretty average guy. Six feet one—one and a half. Call it six

feet two if you like. There are lots of bigger, brawnier fellows than me in Hollywood, you know.

"That title I got—the Hunk of Man—well, it was just an accident. That was a line of dialogue describing the character I portrayed in a play by Moss Hart. It just stuck with me. But anyone who played that part would have got that label. Danny Kaye was in the play with me. I warned him if he as much as flickered an eyelash at me I'd murder him. It just needed one smirk from him and they would have laughed The Hunk of Man off the stage."

He poured himself a Scotch, though milk is his more usual beverage.

"I'm a pretty average guy," he said again. "Nothing special in build."

"Yes," I said, "but you did play Samson."

"Yup," said Mr. Mature, "but that Cecil B. DeMille is a smart director. Gave me a tiny mother. Built all the sets with low ceilings. Gave me costumes twice as wide as my shoulders. That way he made me look enormous."

"And do you do anything to keep fit, to develop your muscles, for these strenuous roles?" I asked.

"Oh, I play a game of golf," he said, "and a little handball. Now that's a very strenuous sport. No, I've never been a boxer or an acrobat or a strong man. Before I worked in movies I was in the refrigeration business."

"In that case," I asked, "do you never find yourself short of breath when going up a steep hill?"

The Hunk of Man looked hurt. He said cunningly, "Haven't you seen my pictures? Didn't you see me push down those pillars with my own two hands in *Samson and Delilah*? Didn't you see me fight the tigers with my bare hands in *Demetrius and the Gladiators*?"

"Yes," I said, "but I could probably have pushed down

those pillars myself. Under the direction of Cecil B. DeMille.”

Mr. Mature grinned. “I guess maybe you could have,” he said.

Victor Mature is a man of whom it could be said that he was saved by the Bible. Biblical epics like *Samson and Delilah* have kept him in the top category of Hollywood stars.

“Now when I’m in a picture that loses money,” he said, “they say it couldn’t be because Vic’s in it. They have to find someone else to blame it on. That’s a nice position for an actor to be in.”

He now has his own company—“I am its principal and only asset”—and though it has not yet made any films, Mr. Mature is busy reading scripts.

“The one I like best,” he said, “is King Solomon and Sheba. I suppose I’ll end up playing Solomon.”

But the man who helped make the Bible box-office, who slew the Philistines and fought the lions, has other irons in the fire.

In addition to being The Hunk of Man he is also the president of Victor Mature Television and Appliances Stores.

“We sell everything from TV sets to gas-stoves and kitchen sinks and washing machines,” he said.

A girl put her head in at the door.

“Any girls here we could borrow to pose for a picture with Tarzan?” she asked.

“No,” said Mr. Mature, “but tell him he can borrow the tree outside my window.”

She left, without borrowing Mr. Mature’s tree.

“Nobody ever asked me to play Tarzan,” said Mr. Mature.

I think we can come to the consoling conclusion from all this that whether a man is tall or short, old or young, square or oblong, absent-minded or dynamic, tough or weak, bald or hairy, women don’t really mind . . . so long as he is a man.



Dorothy Dandridge, night-club entertainer and star of "Carmen Jones", slips into something loose and filmy before submitting to interviews.



(International News Photos)

Hedy Lamarr, with three millionaire husbands to her credit, meets actress Dawn Addams (Princess by marriage) at the Lido, Venice. It should have been an interesting conversation.

MALE GLAMOUR

And in so far as Hollywood has promoted the idea that men are a splendid sex, irrespective of their individual idiosyncrasies of appearance and behaviour, it has my whole-hearted approval. In this respect I cannot find anything sinful about Hollywood.

Chapter 19

MARILYN MONROE

I NEVER believed that Marilyn Monroe actually existed. It was all done by mirrors or mass hypnosis or something, I felt sure. She was surely just another American pipe dream.

But sitting next to her (at No. 595 North Beverly Glen, Beverly Hills) on the chintz-covered settee, with her eyelashes brushing my cheeks, I had to admit that Miss Monroe is more than an optical illusion. She was real—every curve of her. I will explain how her eyelashes came to be brushing my cheeks—just to clear up any possible misunderstanding.

First, she has rather long eyelashes. Secondly, when Miss Monroe is making a point, she does it with all the persuasive powers at her command; to be more precise, she clutches your hand, sidles up close and uses her eyelids as provocatively as a fan dancer uses her fan.

The particular point Miss Monroe was trying to make at that moment was that she liked men. I was prepared to let her convince me. . . . “Don’t you like girls?” she said and her eyelashes did a dance of the seven veils.

I said there was a lot to be said for them. She was wearing a red lace dress that plunged deeper than a deep-sea diver and concealed just enough to emphasise how much it failed to conceal. She must have used radar to get into it. Placed strategically in the deep V of her neckline was a white rose.

“As a matter of fact,” said Miss Monroe, “I like men

more than men like me," and as she spoke removed the white rose and tossed it aside. "If I keep it there much longer it is liable to wilt," she explained with mock innocence.

The effect of this was to make the décolletage even more décolleté.

Wilting a little myself, I edged a couple of inches away, trying hard to remember the questions I had intended to ask her. But before I could ask anything she had moved up even closer and was brushing cigarette ash from my shirt and was saying, "I don't like to make any man give up hope. Because . . . who knows? I'm free, unattached . . . and I'm looking."

I asked what sort of man she was looking for.

She said, "He must be a poet, though that doesn't mean he has to write poetry. He should be sensitive. Sensitivity is as important as masculinity."

"And physical qualities . . .?"

"He should have those too."

Talking to Miss Monroe, her celebrated body is like an open secret between you. You may not actually talk about it, but you both know it is there.

She ran her hand down her neck and bare shoulders in a kind of ecstatic appreciation of herself and said, "If I had a long couch I could sprawl on it and make like I'm Cleopatra or something."

Then: "Something is wrong. I feel like I ought to be drinking champagne. I know what's wrong—we need music. We need mood music to get the right atmosphere for this interview."

As she went over to switch on the radio I took a quick look round the room. Somehow it was not the kind of room that complemented Miss Monroe's personality.

There were high-backed wooden chairs, brass lamps, a china cabinet full of china, a glass jar full of boiled sweets, pewter mugs in a wall shelf, a grandfather clock,

and outside by the circular swimming pool there was a child's rocking-horse.

Miss Monroe said, "I know it's not me. It's a house I've rented. I'm going to have my own house. Shall I tell about the bedroom I'm going to have? I'm going to have a wide, wide bed. As wide as a meadow and all satins and furs and luxurious things . . . the rest of the house would be more classical. But I do like luxury in the bedroom."

She proceeded to sing "The best things in life are expensive".

On the radio a voice was now singing, "If we've got to make a break let's make it clean".

Miss Monroe sprawled out on the floor and made a pillow out of a white mink stole. "That's better," she said. "I feel more like Cleopatra already."

She nuzzled her face against the white fur. "Gee," she said, "mink pillows—I never thought of that before." She kicked up her legs for no reason except sheer exuberance and said, "Look, Can-Can. That would make a good photograph, wouldn't it? Sell a lot of papers."

I noticed that she was as full of admiration for her legs (sheathed in black stockings) as the rest of the world.

I suppose part of the reason why men like looking at her so much is because she likes being looked at. "What I like about men," said Miss Monroe, "is their vulnerability. It's so touching. No woman should ever trample on a man. They are such helpless creatures."

I asked if she had done any trampling in her time.

"Oh no," she said. "I told you I like men. I've got nothing against women, but I prefer men."

In that case, I wanted to know, why was it that there was no romance in her life? We had been sitting talking for nearly three hours, and on her third day back in

Hollywood there had been not a single telephone call of a romantic nature.

She said, "Nobody knows my phone number." But it did not seem a very convincing answer.

Could it be that the Marilyn Monroe myth had become such big business that men were rather intimidated by it? Or had they merely been put off by the news that she read Dostoevski? Everyone was ringing Marilyn Monroe Inc. and nobody was ringing Marilyn. "I don't really have any friends in Hollywood," she added more frankly.

Abruptly the mood music changed and so did the mood. Miss Monroe stopped doing high kicks on the living-room floor, ceased to parody herself and came and sat quietly on the settee.

"There's another side to me," she said. "What you've just seen is the girl from the orphanage who has become a success and likes rich silky things and the rich, silky life. But I'm a schizophrenic. Split about four ways. There's more to me than what you just saw—I don't even know myself exactly what.

"I've been away from Hollywood a year and I've learned something, I hope. I want to develop. I just want to grow. And I don't mean where some people may think I mean. I want to grow in stature, be a real actress. In New York I learned to make friends. Before, I never had any friends, only conquests. I didn't have the time to find real friends. I was always being looked at, had no chance to look. I am perfectly serious about wanting to act seriously.

"This is no stunt, believe me. It doesn't mean I want to do away with the Marilyn Monroe personality. That's also me. But not the whole of me. There's a part of me that wants to be a wife and mother. I could be such a marvellous wife. And there's the part of me that likes to—that likes men."

"That's the Marilyn we like," I told her. "Don't change a thing."

But Miss Monroe said, "Everyone has to change . . . grow up."

"Speaking of changing," I said, "when you come to England what will you wear in bed? Is it still Chanel number five?"

"No. For England I'll change to Yardley's lavender water."

"Won't you be cold? Think of the English climate."

"I can keep warm anywhere."

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This is a more or less dispassionate account of my first encounter with Miss Monroe in March 1956 in Hollywood. Since then a great deal has happened to her: she has married Arthur Miller; she has made the film *Bus Stop* under the direction of a distinguished man of the theatre, Joshua Logan; she has come to England to appear with Sir Laurence Olivier in Terence Rattigan's comedy *The Sleeping Prince*. And the public has been compelled to recognise that her hunger for culture and extra-curricular education is genuine. Miss Monroe has indeed grown, even if she is not yet grown-up. In the light of these developments, it is possible to make a new assessment of this orphan of our times.

The lives of actresses are often spectacularly irrelevant to everyone except the compiler of a theatrical *Who's Who*; the only things that ever happen to them happen on the stage or the screen. Their lives have no plot, no development and no theme. Their climactic moments are a première, a first night, an Oscar nomination or a divorce action.

The reason why Miss Monroe's story is so fascinating is because—like her—it has shape: it is developing and it has a clear plot-line.

One of the things about Miss Monroe that must have appealed enormously to Mr. Miller is that she could not have been a more intricate and socially significant character if he had written her himself. And if we look upon Miss Monroe as one character in search of an author, which is what she appears to be, we can understand why Mr. Miller is for her such an ideal husband.

Examining her life through the eyes of an author, we can see that it contains all the elements of a psychological novel.

The mythical Miss Monroe was born, not by parthenogenesis, but in the normal way at Los Angeles General Hospital on June 1st, 1926. Her name was Norma Jeane Baker. She was an illegitimate child.

Both her grandparents had died in mental institutions, and her mother is now, after a series of nervous breakdowns, in a private sanatorium.

A few days after she was born Norma Jeane was billeted with a family on the outskirts of Los Angeles who acquainted her in infancy with the conception of hell and the consequences of drinking, smoking and swearing. To escape from her daily doses of brimstone and hell-fire she went to the woodshed and created for herself a world of fantasy.

It is reported that one night she had a precocious and curiously prophetic dream. "I dreamed that I was standing up in church," she says, "without any clothes on, and all the people there were lying at my feet on the floor of the church and I walked naked, with a sense of freedom, over their prostrate forms, being careful not to step on anyone."

A change of billet brought her into a startlingly new environment. Her new foster-parents smoked, drank and swore and taught her to do a hula dance. Then her mother suffered a nervous breakdown and was put

in a state hospital, and as she could no longer pay for her keep Norma Jeane was sent to an orphanage.

The subsequent history of her childhood was a succession of moves from one family to another; and all this time she became increasingly unsure of herself, began to stutter and suffer from vague feelings of guilt.

The first time anyone seemed to want her was when, at the age of fourteen, she put on a tight sweater; the boys in her class immediately took notice. After that she was not lacking in friends. She continued to wear sweaters.

The rest of her life up to the time she left Hollywood in 1955 was merely an expansion of the sweater incident. She discovered that when she wiggled her hips and insinuated herself into tight-fitting dresses she made friends and influenced people. By exploiting her natural accoutrements she was able to give up her job as a factory paint sprayer and become first a model, then a small-part film actress, and eventually a star.

That she did the hip-wagging and the seductive poses with such accomplishment is a measure of how much she needed to be wanted.

The sequence of events which led to her present fabulous success are now a part of movie lore: how she posed for a calendar picture "with nothing on but the radio"; how she appeared with such devastating effect in *The Asphalt Jungle* looking like an erotic angel; how she married and divorced Joe di Maggio, the baseball-player ("We had nothing to say to each other"); how she captured the public's imagination in a number of films which were not particularly outstanding but grossed 50,000,000 dollars.

There is no doubt that Marilyn embraced success and what it brought with hedonistic relish; everything—minks, cars, fan-mail, newspaper articles, jewellery, money—was for her a direct or indirect manifestation

of love. She was wanted—and on such a scale and on so many levels as no girl had ever been wanted before. At first she behaved exactly as would any orphan child who had been allowed the free run of a toy store. But though it was pleasant to be well-off and sought after, she still found something lacking: she was still uncertain of herself, still suffered from psychosomatic illnesses, and was habitually late for appointments. Psychoanalysis did not help: she was invariably late for that, too.

At about this stage Marilyn must have done some serious self-examining, the outcome of which was very brave action: walking out on 20th Century-Fox and going to New York.

There is every indication that her year in New York profoundly affected her life. For one thing she was seeing a lot of Arthur Miller, and he must have helped her to understand herself—and what had happened to her. In New York she made real friends for the first time. People there were prepared to respect her as a person, instead of merely lusting after her as symbol.

Since the age of fourteen she had been using her sex-appeal as a sort of defence. It was the one aspect of herself in which she had confidence; whilst she was swinging her hips she knew she had no cause to feel inferior. But in every respect other than the purely physical she felt inadequate; and she faced the fact that she did not want to go through life dealing with every situation by swinging her hips.

As a result Marilyn began to thirst for knowledge—she read, she talked and she listened. This desire to improve herself reached the proportions of a compulsive need.

Today her whole personality is in the process of being reorientated. For most of her life her real self has been hiding inside that fabulous figure, too frightened to come out: now it is beginning to emerge. She is learning to get about without using her body as a crutch.

Chapter 20

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

IN ITS treatment of Marilyn Monroe Hollywood revealed its deadliest sin: snobbery.

Glamour girls are the peasantry of Hollywood, and however far they get they are always treated with thinly veiled contempt by those who have made the grade in a more socially acceptable way (by shooting Injuns or by progressing through a succession of electric chairs). Of all the people I talked to in Hollywood about Marilyn Monroe, only two or three showed any sincere admiration for what she had achieved. The rest expressed views of her that were derisive, superior, sneering or slanderous. It is not surprising that Miss Monroe should say she has no close friends in Hollywood.

Snobbery extends in other directions, too. Money-snobbery is very pronounced.

If you should fail to order caviare one evening, or if you cut your staff of gardeners from five to four, it is a certain sign that you are on the skids, that your contract is not going to be renewed, that your last film is a flop, and that your fifth wife is suing for alimony in the fall. Consequently nobody can afford to economise.

A person's worth is judged by how much he earns, and that is judged by how much he spends.

There is no such thing as something money cannot buy.

People in a high income bracket do not care to be seen around with people in a lower income bracket.

If a £2,000-a-week star is habitually seen with £500 feature players the studio chiefs may one day decide that maybe he is worth only £500 a week.

Snobbery, then, is the First Deadly Sin of Hollywood.

The Second Deadly Sin is gossip.

It is a town full of frustrated story-tellers. Understandably, those who fail to get their stories on to the screen need to find an alternative outlet for their over-worked imaginations.

You can start a rumour here in the morning and have it retold to you as an absolute fact in the afternoon. Though none of them state it in their potted biographies, the standard recreation of the Hollywood citizen is gossip. He is invariably contemptuous of any gossip about himself and unhesitatingly believes all the gossip about everybody else.

You would boggle at the number of contradictory stories told with absolute authority (by eye-witnesses) about the activities of any major star. One comes to the conclusion that Hollywood is either full of schizophrenics or liars.

Anybody so gauche as not to have the inside story of the private life of Marilyn Monroe is doomed to social ostracism. To gossip is a condition of survival in Hollywood.

The Third Deadly Sin of Hollywood is sycophancy.

There are many people here of vague, undefined talents who occupy positions of power. You will hear all sorts of explanations of how they have achieved their positions—that they knew somebody's wife or somebody's daughter or where some skeleton is buried.

The truth is simpler. Usually they owe their positions

to their innate talent for flattery. This is a real and necessary talent here.

Every person entrusted with the task of making decisions has to have someone to tell him that his decision was the right one. Self-confidence has to be bought—invariably it comes from anybody except yourself. Trust in your own judgment comes only from the knowledge that a dozen other people trust it too.

The Fourth Deadly Sin of Hollywood is shop-talk.

Whenever people switch off their TV sets and indulge in the luxury of conversation they talk about films. There is no other topic of conversation. The outside world might not exist.

When people mention the President they are usually referring to the chief executive of MGM, not of the United States.

Art, literature, music are only discussed as commodities which can be bought and adapted into film scripts. One thing Hollywood has in common with the rest of the world is an obsessional interest in Hollywood.

The Fifth Deadly Sin is egomania.

Hollywood is a democracy, which means that everyone, however humble, has the right to be an egomaniac.

Since this is a place where you can go from dish-washing to stardom on the strength of an attractive dimple, everyone is entitled to an ego.

If you cannot convince yourself that you are the greatest thing that has happened to the town since talkies, you won't convince anyone else.

To be good is not good enough: you've got to be great.

Every 75-dollar-a-week-contract artist thinks she has the makings of a Garbo. It is assumed that anybody who

betrays undue modesty must have plenty to be modest about.

The Sixth Deadly Sin is salesmanship.

In Hollywood everybody has something to sell—a smile, a look, a startling shape, a voice. And they go about displaying these wares as impersonally as if they were items in a range. Sex-appeal is sold by the bucket, charm by the pint, masculinity by the foot, femininity by the square inch, cuteness by the ounce.

Inevitably when you make a living by selling these attributes, you often do not have much sex-appeal, charm, masculinity or cuteness left to give in the natural way.

This is why some sex-queens are undersexed and why many of the sweetest little things on the screens are little toughies at home.

The Seventh Deadly Sin is parochialism, with which I ally (because the one is the natural consequence of the other) boredom and all the various manifestations of it.

The business of making films involves an enormous wastage of time. A star who makes two films a year is working hard, and yet he would be left with about six months' free time. Of course the time is not completely free: he probably has to confer with agents, wrangle over contracts, spend the specified number of weeks in Reno (if he wants a divorce), attend to his personal publicity, read scripts, cope with income-tax demands. But whilst he is doing all this he has no real work to do and will spend most of his time entertaining or being entertained. He will do the round of Hollywood parties, becoming progressively more and more bored; he will make the same wisecracks in a dozen different sitting-rooms. He will cultivate the people he feels should be cultivated. He will listen avidly to all the stories about

other stars and repeat them after adding suitable embellishments.

And though he will try hard to persuade himself that he is having a wonderful time, he will be a very bored film star.



