



The Golden Girls of MGM: Greta Garbo, Joan Crawford, Lana Turner, Judy Garland, Ava Gardner, Grace Kelly and Others

Jane Ellen Wayne

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Garbo and Crawford. Ava, Hedy, Judy, Liz. They epitomized Hollywood's golden era. With a trembling lip or sultry eye, with a tear or song or husky whisper, they held moviegoers across America in their sway from the hard times of the 1930s through the booming postwar years. They were royalty, they were box office. They led pampered public lives—furs, jewels, limos, designer gowns, handsome escorts—that captured the national imagination. They also signed seven-year contracts with a morals clause, and the more they slipped, the more the secret abortions, efficient cover-ups, legal legerdemain, and dropped charges bound them to the wizard in their Oz, Louis B. Mayer. The slips are here, and the successes, the personal triumphs as well as the private tragedies. Here are the Blonde Bombshell Jean Harlow, who made movie history (at nineteen) with the line "Do you mind if I slip into something more comfortable?"; Sweater Girl Lana Turner, whose career spanned four decades even if "she couldn't act her way out of a paper bag"; and bad girl Ava Gardner, whose screen test prompted Mayer to say, "She can't act. She can't talk. She's terrific." From Jeanette MacDonald and Norma Shearer to Princess Grace, Dame Elizabeth Taylor, and Million Dollar Mermaid Esther Williams, the sixteen portraits in this lively volume, each accompanied by the star's filmography, tell the tales that lay hidden behind the gossip and the glories of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's glamorous golden girls. 16 pages of photographs enhance these intimate insider biographies of the most radiant stars in movie mogul Louis B. Mayer's galaxy.

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