



Conversations with Ava Gardner

Lawrence Grobel

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These conversations with the femme fatale of *The Killers*, *Mogambo*, *The Barefoot Contessa*, *Show Boat*, and *Night of the Iguana*, and one of the world's great beauties, are startlingly candid. Two years before she died, Ava Gardner asked Lawrence Grobel to work with her on her memoir. The reclusive actress opened up about her three volatile marriages to Mickey Rooney, Artie Shaw and Frank Sinatra ("I loved them all; I just couldn't live with them. I'm not going to try and whitewash them anymore"). She tells about Howard Hughes' 15-year pursuit of her ("As soon as I got divorced from Mickey, Howard entered my life and I couldn't get rid of him, no matter who I was with or who I married"). She reveals how George C. Scott was so crazily in love with her that he beat her up on three occasions and once stuck a broken bottle in her face ("I was frightened for my life"). She talks about her tomboy childhood as a tobacco farmer's daughter in North Carolina. She goes into detail about how she was "discovered" and became a contract player at MGM ("white slavery"); her friendships with Hemingway, Dering, and Brando; and of working with her favorite director, John Huston. She admits to her struggles with alcohol ("I don't give a damn what time of the day it is, I just drink too much"). And she speaks intimately about the debilitating stroke she suffered toward the end of her life ("I felt this dark cloud that wouldn't go away. I just wanted to lie in bed and drink brandy").

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