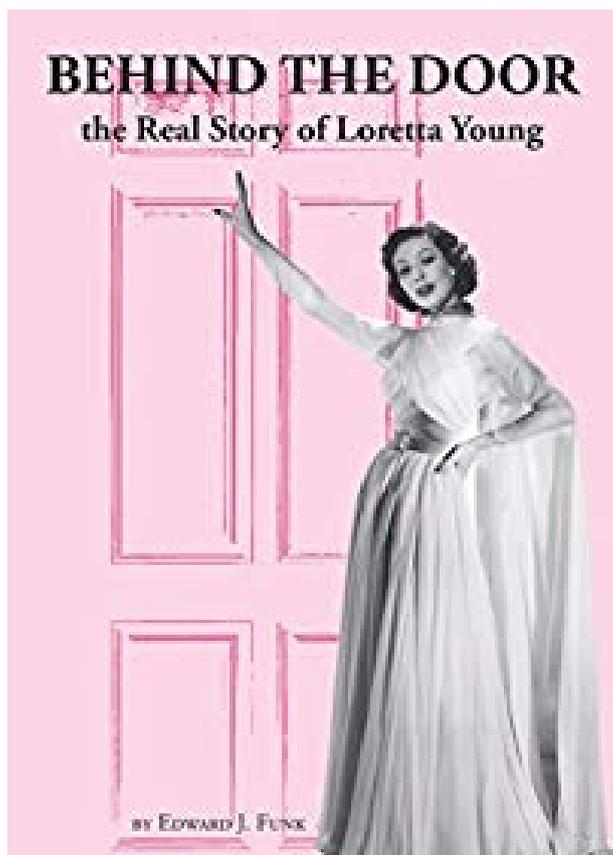


Behind The Door: the Real Story of Loretta Young



Pages:	455
ASIN	B0195Y1JYC
Language	English
Author:	Edward J Funk
Genre:	Biography
Goodreads Rating:	3.81
Published:	December 9th 2015

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This project began in 1990, but my life went into a different direction and was never published. Then, in 2012, Linda Lewis, Loretta Young's daughter-in-law, called, urging me to finally bring this book to full life. I'll be forever grateful to Loretta Young, a guarded woman by nature, who finally decided to tell a very personal story. In doing so, she enlisted the help of her three sisters and life-long friends. These people have all passed on, but their voices remain vividly in the present. Excerpts pertaining to Loretta's relationship with Clark Gable Gable arrived at Loretta's train compartment uninvited. She recalled, "I allowed him in as I would have any member of the crew, thinking he was there for a visit. He had other intentions. Very persistent intentions.

He wasn't rough, but I kept saying no, and he wouldn't take no for an answer." Loretta received a phone call from Ria Gable a few weeks later. Loretta recalled, "I was in Mama's room and I picked up the phone. Mrs. Gable said, 'This is very presumptuous of me, but you may or may not know that there are rumors flying around town about you and my husband.'" In 1998, when Loretta was eighty-five, she was watching television with Edward Funk. There was the mention of date-rape on the news, and she asked him what exactly did that mean. He explained to the best of his ability.

The following day, Loretta called her daughter-in-law, Linda and said. "I know now that there was a word for what happened to me with Clark." Clark Gable arrived on the set of THE CRUSADES. Loretta recalled, "He waited until I was through and then offered to take me home. We went for a drive up in the Hollywood Hills.

He didn't say much, but it was apparent that he was agitated. With the long silences, I felt very uncomfortable and finally felt the pressure to say something.

I blurted out, 'Would it make any difference if I told you that I wasn't pregnant?' He turned and looked at me and then asked, 'Well, are you or aren't you?' I felt like such a fool. I didn't know why I had said that except that I had tried to think of something to say he wanted to hear, my inherent need to please taken to an illogical length. I had to tell him that I was pregnant. His look toward me was one of total exasperation, and very little was said as he drove me home." There would be some phone calls in the interim, but it would be more than a year before Loretta would see Clark Gable again.

Loretta's sister, Sally, "I remember taking an odd route to get there (the house in Westwood where Loretta and the baby were in hiding).

My mother didn't approve that I was going at all because of all the secrecy, but I was dying to see the baby. She was very big by the time I did. I just loved her looks and kept saying, 'Oh Loretta, I hope I have a baby that looks just like this.' In response to my enthusiasm about Judy, Loretta referred to Gable's visit earlier in the week, the first time he had seen his daughter, and said, 'Yes, and do you know after all that has gone on, all that we've gone through, instead of having any interest in his daughter, he tried to knock me down on the bed! Can you imagine, Sally? That bastard! Who the hell does he think he is?' And I thought, 'With all that's happened, she thinks he's a bastard. He didn't understand that Loretta was a human being that had suffered very much.'" Loretta acted like she couldn't have been more flattered that MGM's two biggest male stars (Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy) would come to see her (on the set of *UNGUARDED HOUR*). Under her smile she thought differently. She reflected, "I thought how different these two men were.