

Raquel

Beyond the Cleavage

By
Raquel Welch



EasyRead Super Large



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Image A



Image B

***For Damon and Tahnee
with all my love***



Image C

Preface

Though you may know who I am and what I look like after all these years, it's safe to say that you don't really know much about me. How could you? I'm usually a very private person and allow people to make whatever assumptions they will from my public image in various films and television appearances.

So before I start spouting off, it's only fair to bring you a little closer into my confidence and let you know something about myself. In a sense I'm using the occasion of this book to say a lot of things I've never said before. It's a change for me to air my opinions publicly and to share what kind of person I've become ... now that I've grown older. Indeed, through most of my professional life I've been seen and not heard. So now that the passing years have given me plenty to say and the courage to say it, I hope you can find something in my words that serves you.

This is a book not only about aging, but also about coming of age. For me, getting older has been about coming into my own and finally getting to the point where I'm not afraid to speak my mind. We are, without question, living in a very turbulent and pivotal time in history. I don't recognize my country anymore, or the role of women in this world of vanishing moral values. Our culture seems to be in the throes of change, but who knows what will emerge in its place. I am cheered by the knowledge that we women have broken through the proverbial glass ceiling, rising to the forefront of the political scene, both as vice-presidential and presidential candidates. More and more we are part of contemporary social commentary and can, I hope, provide a steady compass for the future. I am further emboldened throughout the pages of this book to speak candidly about the lost art of being a woman; about aging, lifestyles, love, sex, forgiveness, and ... Well, read on and you'll get to know me better.

RAQUEL

Part I

BEING A WOMAN

ONE

Behind the myth

Contrary to popular Myth, I didn't just hatch out of an eagle's nest, circa *One Million Years B.C.*, clad in a doeskin bikini. In fact, I was more surprised than anyone to find myself on location in such an exotic setting, high atop a volcanic mountain in the Canary Islands! With the release of that famous movie poster, in one fell swoop, everything in my life changed and everything about the real me was swept away. All else would be eclipsed by this bigger-than-life sex symbol.

She came into public consciousness as a physical presence, without a voice. How could I hope to survive such an unpredictable beginning, and learn to carry the baggage that came with it? *One Million Years B.C.* was only my second film for 20th Century Fox. I had no other credentials as an actress outside of

that one laughable line of dialogue: “Me Loana ... You Tumak.” It felt like I’d stumbled into a booby trap—pun intended. I am living proof that a picture speaks a thousand words. It seems like everything that’s happened to me since has flowed from that moment, frozen in time.

The irony of it all is that even though people thought of me as a sex symbol, in reality I was a single mother of two small children! It’s true! However, nobody would have believed it back then, not when they saw me in that skimpy fur bikini. Can you picture the girl in the poster with a baby in one arm and pushing a stroller with the other? Kind of destroys the fantasy, doesn’t it? Ironically, I am duty bound and destined to do just that.

My task of destroying the myth is long overdue. It’s an absolute necessity to pull back the veil, so to speak, in order to make way for the authentic *me*. So let’s flash back

in time to almost seventy years ago and retrace the steps of my real life.

World War II

I was born in 1940 in the Windy City, Chicago. Not ideal for a newborn baby girl with thin Mediterranean blood, courtesy of my Spanish father. For my first outing, I was bundled into a snowsuit to protect me from the very, very cold weather. Luckily for me, my folks moved to California when I was barely two; a good thing, because my baby brain was frozen solid until that point. That's probably why I've had an aversion to anything cold ever since, from icy drinks to frigid people.

Happy in the warm glow of the California sunshine, my baby brain thawed and I became a much more smiley toddler in the Golden State of Boredom. My father worked as an aeronautical engineer in San Diego, designing aircraft at General Dynamics. It

was wartime, so we lived in government housing, called “the projects” in the Mission Bay area. The units were almost like military barracks. Up until I was five, I would save the tinfoil from my gum wrappers for the war effort. Everybody pitched in back then.

My mother was Anglo. Her ancestry dated back to John Quincy Adams and the *Mayflower*. My father was born into a good family in La Paz, Bolivia. I was the first of their three children. My father had been hoping for a firstborn son and got me instead. He didn’t have much regard for the female of the species, unless they were parading around in swimsuits. Do you get the picture? My brother, James Stanford—called Jim—was hatched on exactly the same day as me, two years later, on September 5. My younger sister, Gayle Carole, came along one year later.

Even though Mom, Dad, and two-year-old me ended up in Southern California where