

## The Queen's Not Dead, Long Live the Queen!

BY PHILIP BENDER

It's summer time and so many of us are looking for something a little "different" to add to our summer reading list – something light, yet satirizing. Something slightly decadent, yet improving. Well, I have recently come across a potential candidate to pack next to your sunscreen.

*The Movie Queen Quiz Book: A Trivia Test Dedicated to Fabulous Female Film Stars*, by Ed Karvoski, Jr., is a compilation of silver screen queen facts, trivia and arcane tidbits that will challenge even the most ardent movie aficionado. But don't let that scare you off if you're not one of us crazed movie fanatics who can recite such useless trivia as every screen appearance of Eve Arden (Real name: Eunice Quedens. First film appearance: *The Song of Love*, 1929. Last film appearance: *Pandemonium*, 1982.)! There's lots of entertaining and surprising factoids in here for you to experience as well.

From a section that challenges you match the movie queens with their sometimes unfortunate birth names to one dedicated to the female leads from Elvis Presley films, this book contains 600 trivia questions that will ultimately help you feel far superior to every other person on the planet – if you score well. For the rest of you, it's a source of fascinating tidbits with which to amaze your friends and lovers.

And of course, there are numerous opportunities to match up those memorable scenes and often delightfully bitchy classic lines from movies like *All About Eve*, *Steel Magnolias*, *Mildred Pierce* and others. Anyone who has sat through a dinner party with a bunch of pickled queens giggling and spouting classic diva-speak like "Princess Fire and Music!" and "Jungle Red!" knows first hand just how amusing and all-engrossing this pastime can be.

When first asked to review this book, I smiled and reflected on my undisputed reign of trivia terror over friends and family as I gently

### REVIEW:

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by Ed Karvoski Jr.  
Writer's Club Press

fondled my cracked and dusty case of Trivial Pursuit Silver Screen Edition cards. I fully expected to breeze through the book on a recent two-hour plane ride to Cleveland, answer all of the questions correctly and still have time left to do the crossword puzzle in that banal little in-flight magazine they insist on stuffing in your seat pocket. And draw obscene additions on the flight safety card ("Pull handle only if flight attendant touches you HERE!").

To my surprise (and initial indignation – pissy bitch that I can be), I found that I didn't know it all. And no, I am not telling you how many of the 600 I got right. Only the flight attendant knew that and he went missing over Ontario.

Not only has Karvoski stretched the art of movie queen trivia beyond the silver screen personas of Marlene, Joan, Bette and Greta to include more modern day divas and their screen appearances, he has branched out into the truly esoteric. He offers us the opportunity to discover where Cameron Diaz was born (San Diego), what year Zsa Zsa was crowned Miss Hungary (1936), and Meg Ryan's major at New York University (journalism). He has also included sections devoted to TV appearances, Mae West, Bette Midler, and movie goddess autobiographies. Even for the hardened fanatic there is truly much to be learned about your favorite screen queen.

And as an added bonus – with its pink, black, and orange polka-dot cover that says "Movie Queen" in big letters, it's a fun book to read on crowded commuter flights. The double-takes are fabulous.

Other than my score, I had

only one major quibble with the book: I was left wondering what makes an actress, singer, or personality (thank you, Madonna, for expanding our choices) a bona fide "movie queen?" Most of the usual candidates were featured heavily – Bette Davis, Judy Garland, Joan Crawford – but others were conspicuous by their minor mention or total absence. Could it possibly be the, ahem, "bitch" factor on and/or off-screen? Or is it just that the missing divine divas had better control over their publicists? Personally, I have a video collection that includes darn near every film appearance ever made by Barbara Stanwyck, Gene Tierney, and the brilliant Jean Harlow – yet none of them rates a prominent place in this book.

Karvoski has been in print since 1997, following a career as an actor in Boston and New York, notably on soap operas – oh, excuse me, "daytime dramas." In LA, he did guest spots on such classic television shows as *Facts of Life* and *Fantasy Island*. He has also written comedy material for Jay Leno and radio djs.

The Village Voice has dubbed Ed Karvoski "an insatiable vacuum cleaner in the show-biz closet," and no wonder! In addition to *The Movie Queen Quiz Book*, he is the author of *A Funny Time to Be Gay*, *What's Your Gay & Lesbian Entertainment I.Q.?*, *All-Male: The Hottest Erotic Video Stars Tell All*, and the recently released *Award-Winning Men*. If you want to try to dig up the dirt on him, try pointing your browser to [www.EdKarvoskiJr.com](http://www.EdKarvoskiJr.com).

I encourage you to check out *The Movie Queen Quiz Book* as a possible addition to your summer reading list. You might just find it's the missing ingredient to go perfectly with your poolside cabana chair, parasol drink and floppy sun hat.

And, of course – those Jungle Red nails. ▼

*Philip Bender catches those old movies on satellite (no cable in the boonies) in Franklin County.*

## Djuna

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underbrush!" Or take these lines: "Love falling buttered side down, fate falling arse up! Why doesn't anyone know when everything is over, except me?" From now on, I'll always picture love gone wrong buttered side down.

If *Nightwood* is an intense, contradictory, thorny, sometimes beautiful, sometimes wicked, sometimes witty, sometimes unfathomable, always uncompromising work, so too was its author.

After leaving home, where she was raised and educated by an eccentric father and a feminist grandmother, Djuna Barnes studied art in New York, then began a career as a writer and illustrator, establishing herself as a journalist for publi-

cations such as *Vanity Fair*. Her first book, a collection of poetry and drawings, was brashly titled *The Book of Repulsive Women*. In 1920, Barnes left for Paris to continue her journalistic career, and there she became a fixture in the modernist scene, hanging out with such notable (and lesbian leaning) women as Gertrude Stein, Natalie Barney, and the artist Thelma Wood, who was Barnes's lover and the model for Robin Vote. A lampoon of the expatriate lesbian community in Paris, *Ladies Almanack*, was published privately in 1928; her first novel, *Ryder* – a satire based on her family – became a bestseller that same year.

After achieving literary fame with *Nightwood* and a reputation as the life of the party among the wealthy and influential, Barnes left Europe and returned to New York. She lived the last forty years of her life quietly and reclusively in

a small Greenwich Village apartment, ignoring the fans who came calling, publishing only one other major work before her death.

As Dorothy Allison notes, though Barnes hardly kept secret her love of women, she didn't call herself a lesbian. Her queerness – like the queerness of *Nightwood* – was defined by its undefinability, by an unwillingness to be anything other than herself. ▼

*Vermont* Ernie McLeod is attempting to earn a reputation as the life of the party in Montreal. You can reach him at [mcleod@middlebury.edu](mailto:mcleod@middlebury.edu)



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