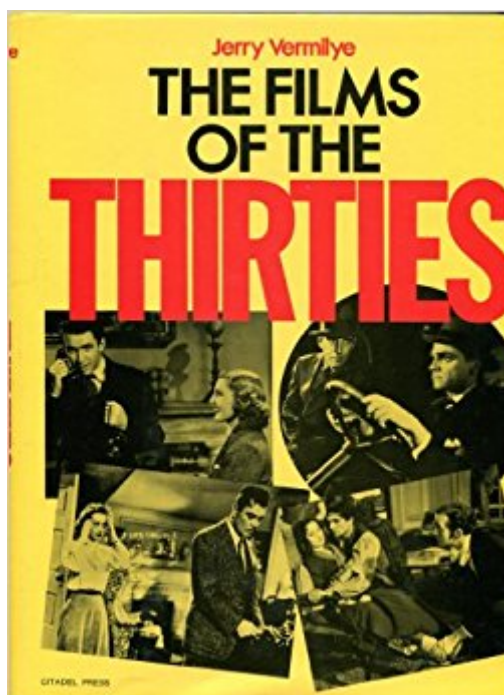


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Films Of The Thirties



Synopsis

Book by Vermilye, Jerry

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Customer Reviews

Book by Vermilye, Jerry

What's best about this book: the photos and the passionate appreciation behind it. What's to know: this is one of two volumes Vermilye put together on 30s films; together, they do pretty good coverage. But I don't think two books were initially planned, so Vermilye had to cover the whole range of 30s film in one book. This necessarily meant sacrificing some obvious highlights to include worthwhile but less-known fare. As a consequence, both volumes are rather incomplete on their own. What's not so great: Vermilye's text doesn't really distinguish between films notable in themselves from ones notable because of something or someone in it. BIRD OF PARADISE is a tedious island drama saved only by its glorious photography and the physical beauty of its principal actors. GRAND HOTEL also has these qualities, but also great dialog and acting [not counting Garbo's over-the-top melodrama]; Vermilye gives equal regard to both. What you'll get out of it: a good list of films you might want to see, including some you haven't heard of before, all with great photos and adequate information. Since this is exactly what Vermilye set out to do, we'll have to give him an A. What you won't get: enough examples, which is why vol 2 had to be made a few years later. Also you won't get much in the way of critical commentary: Vermilye loves these films like a grandmother describing her grandchildren, and he's not going to say that SAFE IN HELL is tedious

or that QUEEN CHRISTINA is very popular with certain women. But that's OK -- there are other books out there :) Final word: get both books, plus the one on the 20s. And for a more comprehensive overview, get Griffith & Mayer's *The Movies* as well (or even first!)

This book, part of a rather lengthy series of books on specific actors and actresses as well as key films from specific decades, is exactly what I called it in my review title, a really good introductory piece to someone who is newly interested in classic American cinema of the "Golden Age". For a more serious student of cinema, the major worth of the book is its collection of black and white photos from the movies contained in the collection - nice promotional pictures and a few screen grabs of some of films most beautiful women and handsome men. Any "film buff" worthy of the name could name a few movies that could have been included but were not. For example, I was very surprised that "It Happened One Night" was not in the book. But at the same time, even a seasoned veteran of Classic Hollywood cinema will be pleasantly surprised, perhaps even pleasantly amused, to see some of the movies that are included, for example one of John Wayne's early B-movies, "Hunted Gold". Again, this is a great way for newer film fans to learn about some of the 1930's best flicks, and a nice addition to a film fans personal collection.

Good quality and service.

While I was very happy to receive this book, I was also disappointed in the fact that it only contained some of the films of the thirties (the title, *The Films of the Thirties*, leads one to believe otherwise.) In fact, while glancing through this book, I was watching a film from 1932, *Crooner*, and noticed it wasn't there. Yes, there are a good many films listed, but by the title, one would guess that ALL the films of the 30's would be included, which is definitely not the case. Many of the films I really like aren't listed. In fact, there are only ten films from each year listed, and I know there were many more than ten made each year. In 1934 alone, there were approximately 130 films produced. Yet the author has only listed *Nana*, *Mandalay*, *Six of a Kind*, *The House of Rothschild*, *Little Miss Marker*, *Of Human Bondage*, *The Thin Man*, *Bolero*, *The Gay Divorcee*, and *Imitation of Life*. What about *Born to be Bad*, *The Case of the Howling Dog*, *Death Takes a Holiday*, *Evelyn Prentice*, *Hide-Out*, *It Happened One Night*, *Manhattan Melodrama*, *Twentieth Century* and *Whirlpool*? These are just as worthy of being written of, and some more than the ones listed. I do realize not every single film made in the 1930's could be included, but not to include *Manhattan Melodrama* or *Twentieth Century*? I feel that perhaps twenty films from each year would have been nicer, not just a snippet of

each year, and I get the feeling that the author only included his favorites. Yes, it would have made for a heftier book, but would have been worth paying for.

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