



Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin is a division of Filmmuseum Berlin - Deutsche Kinemathek

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Dear friends and fans,

This interview in SCREEN BOOK comes with the attitude of being serious. It has that wonderful sentence "Don't accept these stories you read „All about Marlene Dietrich for ten cents“.

If you look at the cover you instantly recognize that this also is one of those 10 c magazines.

On page eight of this edition of SCREEN BOOK within the department "The Hollywood Lowdown" there is a picture of Marlene and Rudi at a party looking bored. Just like the one we show you here. And we also print the commentary which accompanies the picture in the magazine.

So just decide for yourself what in the interview you credit to Marlene or what you take as 10 c gossip.



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Are Marlene and her husband happy? The picture tells the story and silences divorce rumors

### **Marlene Dietrich answers her critics By Jack Grant**

Screen Book, December 1934

"But I don't mind being misunderstood," Marlene Dietrich told me. "In fact, if offered a choice, I am sure I should prefer to be misunderstood."

"More than a year ago, I stopped giving interviews, I felt I had nothing new to say. I also felt there was much too much being written about me. Writers were thoroughly familiar with my life story and they no longer asked me about it. Instead, they told me about themselves, very intimate things, preparatory to questioning me about matters equally intimate. This I did not like.

"My private life as it affects my public life cannot be kept secret. That it has become public property does not annoy me. But what I do when I am alone, what I think about and how I conduct myself - these things are strictly my own affair.

"Imagine changing places with me. How would you enjoy picking up a magazine - practically any magazine - to read 'All About Marlene Dietrich' for ten cents?

"You would not like it? No, of course, you would not. Nor do I.

### **Preferred Silence**

"I do not like to talk about myself at any time and I particularly dislike to talk of intimate matters for publication. Once you have told your fans everything, they say, 'Well, we know all about her now. Let's find somebody else, somebody

new.' Too often when this happens, actors blame the public, charge their fans with fickleness. It is no fickle to lose interest when no mystery remains. I do not care if I am misunderstood as you say I am. I do not care how many stories are written about me giving wrong ideas – that is, if they are interesting ideas. But I do not want to be so well-known as to be uninteresting." Marlene Dietrich treated me to another of her fascinating smiles. It was her smile that had started all of this in the first place. Seeing the impish grin that seems to be constantly lurking in the corners of her mouth, I realized the Dietrich I had believed to be a rather humorless person was really the possessor of a rare sense of humor. This discovery startled me into the statement that she was grossly misunderstood. Her answer, as recorded, was however, even more astounding. In all the years I have been interviewing in Hollywood, I have written countless thousands of words in which stars have pleaded to be understood by their public. Marlene Dietrich is the first one I have encountered who does not worry about misunderstanding. And her reasons are certainly excellent. The only faulty part of her reasoning is that she could ever be "too well-known to be interesting." The man who pretends to "know" the many faceted Dietrich personality is a fool.



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Marlene in 1934 photographed by William Walling

### **A Strange Personality**

She meets you with great charm and poise. From the moment of meeting, her attention is all yours. She appears to exclude everything and everybody to devote herself entirely to you. Whether you are a man or a woman, you are pleased and flattered by her attention. You

had no idea she was such a friendly person. Her command of the English language and the ease with which she uses it also surprise you. Then suddenly her mood changes. To say that she becomes a different individual is as true as the expression is hackneyed. You still have her attention but she has eluded you, is now remote.



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Marlene in 1934 photographed by William Walling

You start to rearrange your impressions. But before you are through, there is another chameleon-like change. During the hour I spent talking to her in her Paramount bungalow - in the first interview she has granted in more than a year - I met a whole room full of Marlene Dietrichs. And the only similarities I saw in their characters were a friendliness and a constantly-present sense of humor.

Oh no, my friends, don't accept these stories you read „All about Marlene Dietrich for ten cents“ entirely upon their face value. If the writers „reveal“ her personality, they give you only one Dietrich. There are many Dietrichs.

### **Trousers Not A "Gag"**

I found another one when I spoke of her humor and charged her with perpetrating a joke upon the American public by donning her famous male attire.

"That is not fair," she replied, "to think I dress in trousers to get Publicity. I have never done anything to start Publicity about myself. I would be afraid to do so because who can control Publicity once it is started?"

"I wore trousers long before I came to America. In fact, I used to dress up in boy's clothes when I was a little girl. I have always liked the freedom of men's garments.

"It is a career in itself for any woman to be well-dressed. Do you know how much time it takes?"

Shopping, fittings, advanced styles and unduplicated models to worry you night and day. Why even the accessories—gloves and bags and other things—are too much for me. "I like old things better. This coat I am wearing is seven years old. "I have not a single dress for morning or afternoon wear in my personal wardrobe. Only evening gowns. I like them to dance—when I dance." Another quick smile and another quick change of mood.



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Marlene in 1934 photographed by William Walling

### **Dietrich Is Lonely**

Hollywood is the loneliest place I have ever lived in. Never in my life have I been so lonely nor stayed home so much. When I first came, I did not think I could stand it - I would not have stood it if I had not had my work. "Hollywood is more like a country town than a city. It has magnificent distances and no metropolitan life. That electric something that is in the air in big cities is not here. In Paris I can get intoxicated on just the air and the excitement of being in Paris. "Here I go home quietly. I am leisurely in everything I do. The home I rent is protected and no noise disturbs me. I have peace, I have security. I have grown not to miss the excitement."

### **Von Sternberg Explained**

But," I interposed, "the general opinion is that you hate America." "That is something else that is not true. At least, not now. I did not like it at first. The language, the people, the customs were strange to me. "I came to Hollywood for one reason – to work with von Sternberg. You were about to say

something? Something perhaps about Trilby and Svengali? Maybe I should confess.



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Marlene in 1934 photographed by William Walling

"I started this talk about my being a Trilby to von Sternberg's Svengali – started it by many frankness about why I had come to Hollywood. It amused me when people thought they were annoying me with the report I had begun, so I did nothing ever to destroy that story.

"I work with von Sternberg because he is touched with genius. He dares to be different. Not always does a picture turn out as he wanted it to but he keeps trying something new.

"They say von Sternberg is ruining me. I say let him ruin me. I would rather have a small part in one of his good pictures than a big part in a bad one made by anyone else. After all, I have the final say in the selection of my story and director. If I prefer to work for von Sternberg that is my business.

"Maybe in saying this for publication, I will give greater conviction to the Trilby-Svengali fantasy. Maybe I will be further misunderstood as to my motive. But don't forget I don't mind being misunderstood."

I can practically guarantee Marlene Dietrich that she will be. Hollywood can't understand a relationship between a man and a woman based upon mutual respect. Hollywood must get a love interest in it somewhere. And nothing anyone can say will change matters. It seems surprising that this Trilby-Svengali hoax gained any credence whatsoever. If you recall, Trilby was *not* a strong-minded girl. But there I go trying to solve the riddle that is Marlene Dietrich. Not that I ever will, for she has no ambition to rectify false impressions nor to explain herself.

End of Part Two