



Adventures of a Hollywood Secretary: Her Private Letters from Inside the Studios of the 1920s

Valeria Belletti

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Adventures of a Hollywood Secretary is an insider's view of the film studios of the 1920s—and the first from a secretary's perspective. Rich in gossip, it is also an eyewitness report of Hollywood in transition. In the summer of 1924, Valeria Belletti and her friend Irma visited California, but instead of returning home to New York, the twenty-six-year-old Valeria decided to stay in Los Angeles. She moved into the YWCA, landed a job as Samuel Goldwyn's personal and social secretary and proceeded to trip over history in the making. As she recounts in her dozens of letters to Irma, Valeria Belletti encountered every type of Hollywood player in the course of her working day: moguls, directors, stars, writers, and hopeful extras. She shares news about Valentino's affairs, Sam Goldwyn's bootlegger, the development of the "talkies," her own role in helping to cast Gary Cooper in his first major part and much more—often in hilarious detail. She writes of her living and working conditions, her active social life, and her hopes for the future—all the everyday concerns of a young working woman during the jazz age. Alternating sophistication with naiveté, Valeria's letters intimately document a personal journey while giving us a unique portrait of a fascinating era.

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