

Unveiling the Real Red Skelton: A Journey Behind the Mask



Red Skelton: The Mask behind the Mask by S. Brent Plate

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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Red Skelton, the beloved clown prince of comedy, brought laughter to millions with his slapstick routines and heartwarming monologues. But behind the mask of merriments, Skelton harbored a complex and often troubled soul.

Richard Bernard Skelton was born on July 18, 1913, in Vincennes, Indiana. His childhood was marked by poverty and instability. Skelton's father was an alcoholic who often disappeared for days, and his mother struggled to make ends meet. As a result, Skelton developed a deep-seated insecurity and a longing for acceptance.

Skelton's career in entertainment began in the late 1930s when he joined the vaudeville circuit. He quickly gained popularity for his rubber-faced antics and quick wit. In 1941, he made his film debut in "Whistling in the Dark." Over the next three decades, Skelton starred in more than 20 films, including "The Show-Off" (1946), "Excuse My Dust" (1951), and "The Clown" (1953).

On television, Skelton hosted "The Red Skelton Show" from 1951 to 1971. The show was a huge success, drawing millions of viewers each week. Skelton's signature characters, such as Freddie the Freeloader and Clem Kadiddlehopper, became household names. However, despite his professional success, Skelton's personal life was often in turmoil.

Skelton struggled with alcoholism and depression throughout his life. He also had a series of failed marriages. In 1983, he was diagnosed with leukemia. Skelton died on September 17, 1997, at the age of 84.

In the years since his death, Skelton's legacy has been tarnished by allegations of sexual abuse and misconduct. In 2018, several women came forward to accuse Skelton of sexual assault and rape. These allegations have cast a dark shadow over Skelton's once-beloved image.

The true story of Red Skelton is a complex and often contradictory one. He was a brilliant comedian who brought joy to millions, but he was also a deeply flawed human being who struggled with addiction, mental illness, and personal demons.

In the end, the mask that Skelton wore was not just a symbol of his comedy, but also a reflection of the pain and vulnerability that he kept hidden from the world.

To learn more about the real Red Skelton, read the biography "Red Skelton: The Mask Behind the Mask" by Doug Warren.



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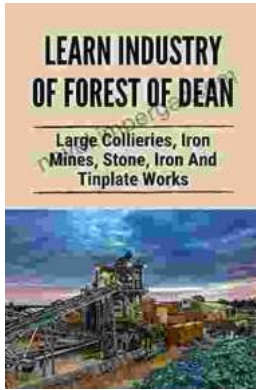
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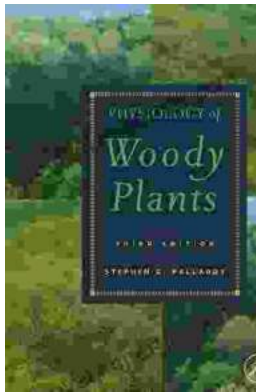
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