



## A Book

*Desi Arnaz*

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**A Book** Desi Arnaz

Full Title is: A Book By Desi Arnaz: The Outspoken Memoir of "Ricky Ricardo" - The Man Who Loved Lucy.

## A Book Details

Date : Published April 28th 1994 by Buccaneer Books (first published 1976)

ISBN : 9781568492544

Author : Desi Arnaz

Format : Library Binding 322 pages

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# From Reader Review A Book for online ebook

## Deborah Skillman says

I read this after reading Love Lucy, because I thought it would be interesting to experience the points of view of both.

It was an enjoyable and quick read written in a conversational style. Desi and Luci were quite the power couple combining creativity and business acumen backed by a strong work ethic. One realizes that Desi was a great student of experience, admitting that he learned equally from his failures and his successes. He owns his life, warts and all.

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## Jane says

I've been a Desi Arnaz/Lucille Ball/I Love Lucy fan since I was young and I always wanted to read Desi's book. I always saw that it was out of print or unavailable so I finally found it online and eagerly bought it - it did not disappoint. I loved how it was written, in his own style and his own words. It was funny, honest, sad, and educational all at once - very genuine and very honest. My only complaint is that it didn't cover more of his later life. But I guess that's what "Another Book" was going to be about - it's a shame he didn't get the chance to write it, I would have loved to read it, see what he did after Desilu and his marriage ended. "A Book" was a great book, a refreshing autobiography to read - it didn't hide any of the bad things but it also didn't dramatize them and it made sure the good things were discussed too. I highly recommend it for any I Love Lucy fan or even a classic TV fan.

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## Carol says

A very heartfelt bio of Desi Arnaz. Easy to read and entertaining. Lots of Desi's history, going back to his days in Cuba and his night club performances in New York.

Reading this book is like listening to your grandfather tell the story of his life. He does not claim to know how to write, so he does have a ghost-writer, but the result is a success.

If you love Lucy, too, you should read this. He has only the nicest things to say about Lucille Ball. It's very touching, revealing and honest.

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## Ronald Wise says

Desi's story of childhood and youth were very interesting, as my previous knowledge of him was all from his days with *I Love Lucy* and later. I also found interesting the cutting-edge role he played in the development of television recording technology, as well as the number of television series started by Desilu Productions. He doesn't mince words when describing his personal memories, and at times seemed to be wanting to shock his readers. His take on the Cuban situation was refreshingly neutral for a Cuban in exile. This autobiography has been in my personal library since the early 1980s, when it and a bunch of other books were given to me by a friend who was into celebrities and had many of their biographies.

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## Kayla says

This autobiography is awesome. Desi's voice is clear in the narration, you feel as if you're actually listening to him tell his life story. Granted, you probably have to be a fan of his, or of "I Love Lucy" to actually read this book; but I guarantee that this is a very entertaining autobiography (if you're into biographies like I am). I've read this book probably 5 times.

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## Marianne says

This actually turned out to be an extremely entertaining and breezy read and I enjoyed it very much. I read Lucille Ball's memoirs a few years ago, and was intrigued by Lucie Arnaz's occasional footnotes advising readers to "read my father's book for his perspective on this." In fact, Desi's book was much more sympathetic, and he barely said a cross word about Lucille. It was clear that he truly loved and admired her and was heartbroken over the demise of their marriage. THAT, however, covers only a few pages of the book, thankfully. This is mostly about their performances, the early days of live situation comedies, changes in landscape, and luck. Desi made his own luck and remained grateful all his life. Just a nice, refreshing memoir and a glimpse into the human lives of people who have become legends and philanthropists in the entertainment industry.

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## Don says

This is an interesting read that gives Desi's side of the story in the breakup of his marriage with Lucille ("Lucy") Ball, and in the process of doing so he provides a first hand knowledge of the pioneering work done in television in the 50's, of which, it turns out, he was cast as a major player in acting as a intermediary between different key players and achieving notoriety through it. I couldn't stop turning the pages, which were never dull, and marveling at how a nice guy could indeed finish first.

As a sidelight, this account is an astounding example of destiny, and how it shapes both the author's life and those he comes into contact with. I shed a few tears while reading about his efforts to get decent chairs for disabled vets to watch movies through bending government rules. His hot, Cuban temper gets him in trouble at times, but his anger is usually justified, except for the time he blew up with a phone operator who was trying to inform him of a bus accident where his entire band was involved, and most of them in the hospital. The Arnaz luck factor was in effect again, as his place on the bus was taken by someone who suffered the loss of an eye and other injuries. Whatever personal flaws he exhibits in the telling, his goodness shines

through and through. Lucy and he seemed to have been made for each other, but had many problems due to their professional and private schedules, apparently not giving enough time to each other to have a successful marriage in meeting deadlines and commitments stretching out far into the future. I love this period of history with all the anecdotes of the many stars that can be found here, as well as of Presidents and gangsters. Desi likes being around all kinds of people and you'll find a lot of Hollywood and Big Band history here as well. He was under contract with MGM for one picture before going into the war effort. Bataan is perhaps his greatest screen role portrayal for which he was rewarded with an award, mostly for the death scene where he turned in a memorable performance and which he had some directorial input on before filming. A man of many talents, add book writing to them, as he succeeds in a tour de force description of those funny years when he and Lucy were on top of the world, literally, far above all others in terms of fame and popularity! Sadly, a price had to be paid for all that notice being given.

Notable excerpts from the book include the birth of Desi Jr. simultaneously on the same day as an episode that had been pre-planned of the same event in the Ricardo's life, oddly a boy also, aired on national TV to great viewing numbers (ground breaking revolution at the time when censors frowned upon even allowing the word pregnant to occur on the set), and the drama of unpolitical Lucy being accused of being a Communist party member during MacCarthyism. In short, this book delivers the goods on TV's most celebrated married comedic duo and the how on what made them tick.

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### **Donna says**

I normally do not like the early part of anyone's life. Not so with Desi! His life was fascinating. His charm, luck, wit, brains accomplished so much. The deals he made, how he took advantage of any situation and always came out on top! He seemed to be polite and courteous and always respectful to top brass and always honest. The respect was returned.

He was honest about the philandering...which as he said was accepted in Cuba. He did not go into other relationships in this book. Nor was it needed, there was so much else to talk about. I wish he was able to write the second book.

No ghostwriters, he wanted this to be in his words in his own way, "with my own not too good knowledge of the English language".

He ended the book with a beautiful heartfelt sentence, I choose to believe was true.

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### **Brianna says**

I loved this book almost as much as I loved Lucy's novel! It was so great to learn so much about his life before being famous. It was awesome learning about the evolution of I Love Lucy and hearing about all the other shows he directed and his relationship with Lucy. The last line really got me, "I Love Lucy was never just a title."

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### **Jazlyn says**

Men and Women of the Jury I find that "A Book" by Desi Arnaz is a detailed biography of the hard life of a

rising star about Desiderio Alberto Arnaz y de Acha and “Ricky Ricardo” this bio was meant for young adults or just anybody who really love Mr. Arnaz he speaks in his own voice and sometimes his native language about the life he led as a young boy in Havana Cuba to the revolution that broke out that sent him and his father to the United states to become broken tile salesman, taxi cab driver, bird cage cleaner, a graduate and to become one of the best bandleaders and actor of all time. Although this book presents some profanity it is sometimes hard to view the people and the places as he did although his words are excellent at describing them it sets back to dates and people and places that is no longer around.

This book portrays excellent emotion and voice of Mr. Arnaz’s emotions during his life from the time he left Cuba and to becoming Mr. Ricky Ricardo on one of the most beloved television shows “I love Lucy.” The Book starts off with Desi talking about how he went to riches to rags during 30’s it continues on through how he became “known” in the bandleader business which led him to his first play called “Too many girls.” Its copyrights were then bought and he was the new hotshot Latin in Hollywood.

Mr. Arnaz wanted to belong in America he was a great bandleader and actor, but with his heavy accent he was limited roles and so he took his small band and toured the country. Lucille Ball and Desi both wanted to work together as a team. So they put an act together and toured the country so to prove they were worthy of them both being able to be a husband and wife team. To show the people that a Cuban can be married to a red headed American girl and it works. So Desi and his wife created “I love Lucy.” Little did they know it was going to be the biggest leap in all of history.

During the process of gathering all the laws, film, crew, cast and the making of new lighting and one of the biggest advantage in moving making Desi created the three camera technique that film makers and TV producers use to this day and all of this Desi was just going with the feeling in his gut and making it all up as he went along during this long and thoughtful process Mrs. Arnaz or mostly commonly called Lucille ball “Queen of the B’s” gave birth to their first baby Lucie Arnaz. Shortly after the birth of their child Lucy and Desi, Vivian Vance, Bill Frawley began the Greatest, funniest TV series that was to last for nine years. Another event to happen was the first “pregnancy” to ever be shown on television Desi and Lucille gave birth to a boy named Desi Arnaz. Jr. that same day Mrs. Lucy Ricardo gave birth to her baby Ricky Ricardo jr.

Mr. Arnaz led a fulfilled life he died on December 2nd at midnight from Lung Cancer. I find this book to be filled with memories of the past. "Everything that happens in life is natural and has a good reason."  
“Freckles”

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### **maggieandteddy says**

I read this years ago. I bought my paperback copy at a bookstore with my mom and sisters. (Way before ebooks!)

THEN, Desi Arnaz, autographed my book! Yes, I'm bragging! Right there in that bookstore. His beautiful black hair was all silver, he looked a little older, but he was SO nice! I froze up and barely said 2-3 words. (fangirl). He's my favorite famous person that I've ever met. AND I love "I Love Lucy". I've watched every episode many times over.

This book was written like a memoir, many years after Lucy and Desi divorced. I was expecting a gossipy tell all ex- POV..... NO- not at all. The writing is very easy and the narrative is just like it was transcribed from oral interviews. It goes through Desi's earlier life in Cuba and then into his life in the U.S. It was

fascinating to read about how Desi and Lucy met, married and then started their awesome TV series. I've read other books about them, which gives others' POV, but I really love Desi's POV. Desi speaks (writes) very fondly of Lucy. He gives her ALL the credit for her comedic talent and the success of the show. Desi was very much into the business end of their career/show. They very smartly ended up owning the studio/production company, Desilu.

I've been hearing that they're going to make a movie -that is sanctioned by her son and daughter. I've heard that Cate Blanchett is considered to portray Lucy (great choice, IMO).

This was one of my reasons for looking for this book on GR and on Amazon. Amazon's price for the paperback goes from \$55 - \$128 (no kindle of now). I need to find out where I put my copy!!

I hope that Lucie Arnaz & Desi Jr allow this book to be reprinted AND on ebook ---PLEASE :)

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## **Msgold says**

This book will be enjoyed by any fan of the I Love Lucy Show. The autobiography tells the fascinating story of American television's first Cuban-American star, Desi Arnaz. He offers his ideas and observations on the events he experienced in his life.

Desi talks about leaving Santiago de Cuba, moving to Miami, graduating high school there, doing different jobs, gaining success as a Cuban band leader, an actor in movies and television, his marriage to Lucille Ball, and life after the TV show.

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## **Megan Pegasus says**

Back-Story: I read it for the same reason everyone reads an autobiography. I was curious. I've always been a fan of "I Love Lucy" and I've always been more curious about who Desi Arnaz was. I decided I wanted to read both of his and Lucille Ball's biographies and decided to read his first because he's always interested me more.

I personally was able to rent this through Open Library but you do need Adobe Digital Editions in order to read it if you choose that method. The Open Library book was a scan of the paperback version from cover to cover. It is discolored but is easily legible.

Review:

Looks- I like both versions of it. I mean, it's Desi Arnaz. What other thing are you going to put on a cover of his book but him?

Content- I was unclear whether this was actually written by a ghost writer or not but towards the end I believe he says that it is. That he recorded everything in his own words and then someone actually wrote it for him.

Regardless, this book is an easy, interesting read. He starts right from his birth and spends quite a bit of time speaking of his home back in Cuba. I learnt a lot of interesting facts about his early life such as that his

family was of wealth there in Cuba and finally had to flee for their lives. I like that the book details exactly what he had to go through and how he managed to climb to the fame of "I Love Lucy." Not only does he talk about what happened in his life but he also talked about the behind the scenes of his business running in Desilu and all the obstacles that he overcame in the filming of "I Love Lucy" from the complications of actually filming to the editing and so much more. Not much of the book is actually focused on his time during "I Love Lucy" which I personally didn't mind because I can see it right there on my television screen. I definitely think that Arnaz was honest throughout the book and didn't try to sugarcoat anything. If anything, this book confirmed for me that his and Ball's relationship was something unique and is tragic that it ended the way it did. I'm a true romantic and when two people love each other and can't be together, it kills me. I feel like the last sentence of the book says it all.

Likes: Easy, interesting read. No useless rambling. Details from life to when Lucy and him parted ways. Pictures included.

Dislikes: Language.

Overall:

Recommend? Yes to anyone who really wants to see the man who was perhaps one of the best business minds we will ever see and the man who loved the redhead that we all love.

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## **02Jazlyn S. says**

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## **David says**

Want to know what is the main problem with autobiographies? Most people who write autobiographies were famous for doing something other than writing. As a result, they can make some of the most interesting or amusing stories seem as dry as dust. (A noteworthy exception to this is Ed McMahon's memoir of The Tonight Show. You must read it!) Desi Arnaz had many talents and he was teamed with one of the most gifted comediennes of all time, Lucille Ball. But he was no writer and he fails to do justice to the stories he has to tell in this book. As a former smoker, I can say that Arnaz should have written about what smoking did to him. If you don't already know, lung cancer was what killed Desi Arnaz. Even though this book was written about 10 years before he died, Arnaz could have shared some keen insights with his audience.

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