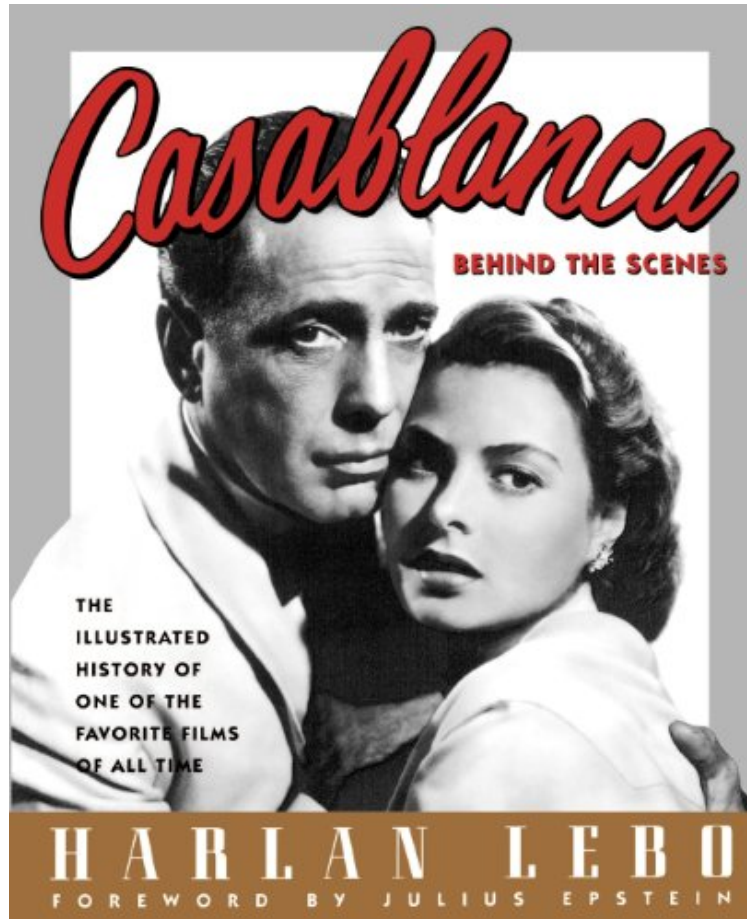


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Casablanca: Behind the Scenes

Harlan Lebo

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Harlan Lebo : Casablanca: Behind the Scenes before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Casablanca: Behind the Scenes:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Pat Davidson Reef Outstanding tmless theme universal emotions
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4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Lights, Camera, And A Little Luck By Bill Slocum A solid, amiable account of the making of one of Hollywood's most beloved films, "Casablanca: Behind The Scenes" presents at its core a fascinating notion: That a film filled with talent, drive, and imagination may well have benefited as well from a giant helping of luck. How did the idea of turning popular film baddie Humphrey Bogart into a romantic lead pay off so handsomely? How could a script reader know that a play that never made it on Broadway could be such a hit on the silver screen? Who could have thought the films title city would play so prominently in the headlines in the year of its

premiere, first as the site of the first American assault against Nazi Germany, then as the first meeting place for the Allied troika of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin? Harlan Lebo's 1992 account of the making of "Casablanca" is almost as fun as re-watching the movie. Lebo presents a detailed yet breezy examination of how the 1943 Academy Award winner came to be, from its origins as a script that found its way to a Warner Bros. story analyst the Monday after Pearl Harbor (the same month in which the movie itself would be later set) to the famously hectic last days of shooting, when Bogart and director Michael Curtiz were locked in an hours-long argument regarding whether Bogart's character should or shouldn't shoot a Nazi villain in the back. "I felt like a weary traveler who had arrived at a destination but with only the foggiest notion where or how he had got there," Lebo quotes one of the film's writers remembering. Lebo offers a pretty good idea, with the help of some then-surviving production hands as well as interoffice memos from Warner studio honcho Hal Wallis, who oversaw "Casablanca" from its first treatment. He works hard to separate fact from legend; for example, while Ronald Reagan was initially mentioned as the film's prospective lead, he was never seriously considered for the role of Rick. Also, while the final lines of the film were practically written on the spot, there was never any doubt from the start of production how the film would end, with Rick and Ilsa taking a sad but necessary leave of one another. Actually, one of the most famous lines in the film was written weeks after production wrapped. As Rick and Captain Renault (Claude Rains) walk away in the final shot, several alternative pieces of dialogue were looped in during editing, until Wallis himself suggested they try something he called wild: This could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship. The luck of Casablanca was not only in what made it in but what didn't. An early script included this howler of a come-on, from Ilsa to Rick: Hitler or no Hitler kiss me. Lebo does drift from the central topic a bit too much at times, especially at the beginning when he spends a lot of time on the rise of Warner Bros. There are some brief anecdotes about Peter Lorre, not nearly as much as I would have liked though it was amusing to read how anxious the studio was about whether his character Ugarte was Italian or Spanish. For people who love Casablanca, and can replay scenes from memory, Lebo's book is enjoyable company, very much something one can tuck into and put down, yet still offering a focused narrative for those wanting the full story on one of Hollywood's finest moments.

A behind-the-scenes look at the making of the classic movie that continues to enchant viewers 50 years after its release. Published to coincide with MGM's rerelease of the video in November, this stunning photographic retrospective captures all the glamour and excitement of a true film classic. 46 black-and-white photos; illustrations throughout.