

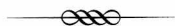
A MEMOIR



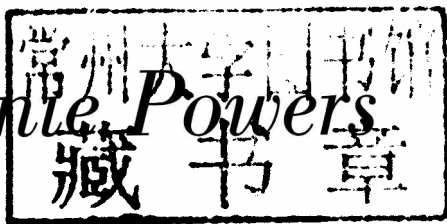
STEFANIE POWERS

One from the Hart

ONE FROM THE HART



Stefanie Powers



G

GALLERY BOOKS

NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY

Gallery Books
A Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc.
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

Copyright © 2010 by Stefanie Powers

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form whatsoever. For information address Gallery Books Subsidiary Rights Department, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020.

First Gallery Books hardcover edition November 2010

GALLERY BOOKS and colophon are trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Designed by Level C, Inc.

Manufactured in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-4391-7210-0

One from the Hart



To Big Julie

One from the Hart



Contents



<i>Prologue: Kenya</i>	1
1 A Hollywood Childhood	5
2 From Dancer to Actress	18
3 A Studio Player	32
4 Acting with Authority	48
5 From <i>U.N.C.L.E.</i> to Peru	65
6 My Silvano	83
7 "Hi, Bill Holden"	90
8 "Luv—Bill"	102
9 The Mawingu	113
10 Travels with Bill: The South Pacific	123
11 Travels with Bill: Africa	137
12 Travels with Bill: China	152
13 Too Soon Old . . . Too Late Smart	176
14 Where Do I Go from Here?	191
15 Travels with Mom	207
16 Life in London	221
17 One Door Closes, Others Open	235
18 <i>Sitzfleisch</i>	251

P R O L O G U E

Kenya



It was 1974 and my first trip to East Africa, and I was in good hands. No, I was in *perfect* hands, the most perfect hands I could have dreamed of, not only for this trip but for my life.

William Holden, tanned and gorgeous at the wheel of his Land Rover, looked more like a movie star at that moment than ever he did on the screen. We were crashing through the bush on and off a dirt track leading far into the northern frontier of Kenya. Bill and his longtime partners Don and Iris Hunt had established a camp for the purpose of capturing Grevy's zebras to be translocated to the south of the country, away from the onslaught of poachers who would render them extinct. I was already in love with the man, so it was easy to love what he loved, because I loved it too.

In spite of the difference in our ages, Bill and I enjoyed a seamlessness in our frames of reference, particularly when it came to our professional lives. Bill had been under contract to Columbia Pictures, I had been under contract to Columbia Pictures. Although quite a few years apart, many of the people Bill knew as apprentices were department heads by the time I got to the studio. The world of the movies was a family affair, where sons and daughters followed fathers and mothers into the studio "shop." While our

times and tenures were different, our inductions into the Hollywood firmament were, if not identical, very much the same.

Bill and I spoke the same language in many other ways as well. We had mutual curiosities, mutual interests, mutual passions, and mutual values. Animals, both domestic and wild, had already played a great part in my life, so I too knew intimately the rewards of the human-animal bond. The only thing we did not share was his addiction, an addiction that we kept at bay for most of the nine years we were together, but which, sadly, won in the end.



I AM ALONE now, driving along yet another dusty and bumpy dirt track leading out onto the plains of Laikipia, a landscape familiar to me now. Never could I have imagined as a young actress how my priorities in life would change after Bill was gone, and how much of his legacy would pass on to me. My twenty-four-year-old Toyota Land Cruiser groans under its own weight as we maneuver into and out of the last in a series of deep trenches, once again victorious over the odds of a breakdown or a punctured tire. As I pull into the tattered grounds of Guara Primary School, the headmistress, Anne Murithi, greets me with a smile and embrace of an old friend, sisters in the fight for education relevant to her students and to the future of her country and my adopted home, Kenya.

This trip to Kenya is different. There will be no more nightly calls to my house in California to speak first with my mother's nurses and then with her, when I was fortunate enough to catch her awake. "Hello, baby," she would say in that voice, so sweet and vulnerable that it was almost childlike, even at ninety-six. Our conversations were brief and usually one-sided, yet I knew she was sustained by every word of my trivial report of the day's activities.

She would laugh and say, "Okay, baby, I love you," and I would say, "I

love you more.” Then she would laugh and we would sign off, my heart temporarily relieved of anxiety.

How could she not be there? The thought is too big to take in all at once. I have to ration my grief or I will crumble under its heaviness, and I must remember my own condition. I have to remain strong, strong enough to function, strong enough to recover from my own lung cancer and the operation to remove it. I must remain positive enough to overcome both events, one after the other within the same month.

I thank God for my family of friends, I thank God for my faith, and I thank God that Tom came into my life.

Surrounded by such love, how could I not carry on?

A Hollywood Childhood



I was not long into this life when I realized that while I had not been born into its upper echelons, I was indeed and most gratefully a product of the lucky sperm club. It was a matter of luck that my forefathers broke from Poland and joined the hopeful masses emigrating to the United States during the early part of the twentieth century. And it was by even greater luck that Julianna Dimitria Golan, third daughter of Zofja and Frederick Golan, broke from the family farm in New York State to venture, as an eighteen-year-old, with her big sister Helena, to the bright lights of New York City to pursue a life in the theater. She eventually found her way to Hollywood, where she married and produced two children, one of whom was me.

My mother was born on July 21, 1912, near Middletown, New York, at home on the family farm with the help of a midwife. Eventually, more of the family came to Middletown from Poland to seek their fortunes, including one person who was a great influence on her. Uncle Leo taught himself English by reading *National Geographic* magazines, which he passed on to young Julie. Adapting quickly to the New World, Uncle Leo brought with him a sense of adventure and style, resplendent in a photo of him wearing wingtip shoes, posing in front of his newly acquired Model A roadster. Uncle Leo had panache.

The countryside provided an idyllic childhood, but as Julie was growing up, the world around her was changing dramatically. Rural America was being introduced to the telephone, to the moving picture show, and to barnstorming aviators, who toured the country, putting on shows and taking young ladies for rides in their open-cockpit planes. Very exciting for the young Miss Golan. But it was the musical films that caught her attention, and the musical theater's traveling shows that caught her fancy and lured her to the big city.

When the time came for Julie and Helena to spread their wings, they found respectable housing at the home of an Italian lady by the name of Carmella on West 69th Street, one block from Central Park. While studying dance and going to all the auditions she could find, Julie and her sister both worked part-time as hostesses at the exclusive foreign film cinema on 57th Street called The Little Carnegie Theatre. It was an extremely glamorous art house cinema, serving cocktails, tea, and coffee in the foyer lounge, where speakers from the foreign film companies would address their audiences. The Little Carnegie was the only venue in New York City at the time where foreign films were shown, making it avant-garde and an attraction for interesting people, many of whom became lifelong friends, including some of the filmmakers themselves from England, France, and Germany.

Much later in life, while I was filming in England, Mom would introduce me to one of those gentlemen who had been a principal at British Gaumont Films.

In 1934, Mom made the giant step to move to Hollywood, following through on her dream to perform in films. Finding the most glamorous way to travel west, she went to Hollywood by boat, via the Panama Canal. She was quite an attractive package, with lots of shipboard admirers. The captain of the vessel even invited her to travel on to the Far East with him, but she gracefully declined. Instead she stepped off the boat and made her way to Hollywood, installing herself at the Lido Hotel just north of Hol-

lywood Boulevard and very close to another landmark glamour spot called the Monticito.

Hollywood Boulevard in the 1930s was still synonymous with the allure of the industry that inspired its development. Stretching from Sunset Boulevard in the east to just west of Laurel Canyon, it switched its name from Prospect Avenue in 1910 when the town of Hollywood was annexed to the city of Los Angeles, and a couple of decades later it was very much the place to see and be seen. Deco-era moviegoers patronized such ornate and palatial establishments as the El Capitan Theatre, the Pantages Theatre, the Warner Brothers Theatre, and Grauman's Egyptian and Chinese Theatres. Visitors, celebrities, and wannabes rubbed shoulders at the Spanish-style Roosevelt Hotel and the landmark Hollywood Hotel. The town's elite actors, directors, producers, and writers dined, imbibed, did deals, and held court at the already legendary Musso & Frank Grill. Not yet threatened by muggers, pimps, and drug dealers, Hollywood Boulevard was a street where couples could take a leisurely stroll, film stars could venture out in public, and aspiring actors might just get noticed.

Gravitating toward the daily parade of hopefuls was an eclectic assortment of eccentrics, including the "dress extras"—whose exaggerated demeanor and immaculate wardrobe ensured them a desirable place in the hierarchy of the background "performers," giving them a natural sense of superiority—and the self-styled "character extras," each with an attitude commensurate with their adopted persona.

"Nature Boy" wore sandals and white gossamer flowing linen robes, giving the impression of an aesthetic mountain-dwelling mystic who walked the boulevard with staff in hand. There was a lady "Robin Hood" in hunter green shoes, tights, dress, and cape, topped by a chapeau worthy of Sherwood Forest, complete with pheasant plume. She strode the boulevard with defiant purpose, going nowhere. "Goldilocks" was the personification of sweetness, sporting platinum ringlet curls in her hair that were completely

inappropriate for her age and size, as well as a youthful costume with gold Mary Jane pumps and anklet socks with lace trim to match her lace gloves, gold bag, belt, and cream-colored dress. They were still in place, though somewhat older, when Mom began to take my brother and me to the movie palaces on Hollywood Boulevard and introduced us to these benign but colorful free spirits.

In the lobby of the Lido Hotel, a piano player accompanied tea service that folded into the cocktail hour. Accordingly it was a gathering place for most of the residents, including a young, aspiring photographer. Their relationship began in the romantic atmosphere of those intimate evenings, and slowly my mother became seduced by the lensman whose portraits of her reflected the affection he felt. He became her first husband, and their union resulted in what she considered her greatest joy, my brother, Jeff, and me.



IN SPITE OF the fact that marriage and motherhood inexorably altered the direction of her life and aborted the realization of her artistic dreams, I never, ever heard Mom express any feelings of frustration or incompleteness. While there are always people who have more, there are a hell of a lot of people who have less, was the thought with which she raised me. To her mind, the inevitable price for a happy state of affairs was to earn each privilege through work. The work ethic imbued in the children of immigrants and survivors of the Great Depression was the criteria for all praise or reward; and at the end of the day, no matter how much we complained at the time, I can now say that it did, in fact, make me a better person and undoubtedly more able to bear the weight of responsibilities to come.

My mother was the source of all stability and fun. One of my favorite childhood memories was when she would be going out of an evening wearing a particular black silk taffeta dress that rustled when she walked. As she would lean down to kiss me goodnight, I'd feel the softness of her silver fox

stole on my cheek and smell the intoxicating, fragrances of Shalimar perfume on her neck and a gardenia on her purse, thus establishing my sensual criteria for glamour and excitement. I really don't remember many unpleasant times, with the exception of the tension and unhappiness created by my father's presence. Nevertheless, there are two things I can thank my father for: the role he played in my conception and the sister I gained as a result of his marriage to his second—but not his last—wife.

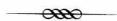
Mom always lifted our spirits and made a game of adversity. That's how she got herself through the rough patches, and as best she could, she did the same for my brother and me. Perhaps that is why I always felt I wanted to do things for her: extravagant, adventurous, glamorous things to make her feel better about herself and about her life.

Both of my parents' relatives were in the East, so aside from occasional visits for weddings I did not grow up in the bosom of aunts, uncles, cousins, or grandparents. Our closest relative was Mom's sister Cioci (the Polish word for "aunt," pronounced "cho-chi") Helena, who followed my mother to California in the late thirties. After the war, Cioci Helena married Uncle Howard, whom I adored. A former vaudevillian song-and-dance man, tall and lithe, who did a mean soft-shoe and played straight man for various comedians, my uncle Howard was handsome and joyful. Following vaudeville, he made a successful career transition, first becoming a casting director at Ziv TV Studios and eventually an executive at Technicolor. However, my favorite memory of my uncle was when he taught me a soft-shoe dance to the song "On the Sunny Side of the Street." I loved him dearly, and I still remember every step.

Throughout those early years, Mom created an environment for us that reflected her active and rich fantasy life, keeping my brother and me constantly amused with stories about the nightly escapades of our teddy bears, Kitty and Tiger. . . . "Did you hear all that racket last night?" Mom would ask at the breakfast table. Wide-eyed, we would respond, "No," and

she would embark on the most elaborate tale of how Kitty and Tiger had opened all the cupboards in the kitchen, taken out all the pots and pans, and somehow raced up and down the kitchen floor in vehicles fashioned out of cooking utensils. No matter how preposterous the stories were, we loved them, even when Kitty and Tiger, beaten and battered beyond repair, disappeared overnight and miraculously reappeared the following day in completely new fur, apparently having gone away to some exotic Teddy Bear Spa.

Then there were the nightly dinner table discussions, some of which included visits to other parts of the world. Out would come dictionaries in the appropriate languages while dinner would represent the country of choice. We never went as far as hats and costumes, but we would make up conversations, brutalizing each language and laughing ourselves silly at words like *platz* and *ausfahrt*.



IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD where we lived, not far from the house my parents built before getting divorced, there were three outstanding residents, plus our iconic television family—the Nelsons, Ozzie, Harriet, Ricky, and David. Dr. Famularo a respected physician and a pillar of the community; Miss Woods, a patrician woman of a certain age who had traveled extensively as a foreign correspondent in the Far and Middle East; and the Reverend Norman, who was always referred to in those terms: the Reverend Norman. The Reverend Norman's credentials were greatly enhanced by his long and celebrated missionary service in China, during which time it was assumed—from the impression he gave to all—that he had gathered considerable knowledge of the Chinese people, their customs, and language. In fact, Miss Woods and the Reverend Norman had China in common, although they had engaged in completely disparate pursuits. These three people, to varying degrees, impacted my young life.

It was not uncommon in neighborhoods like ours to have all sorts of

此为试读, 需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com