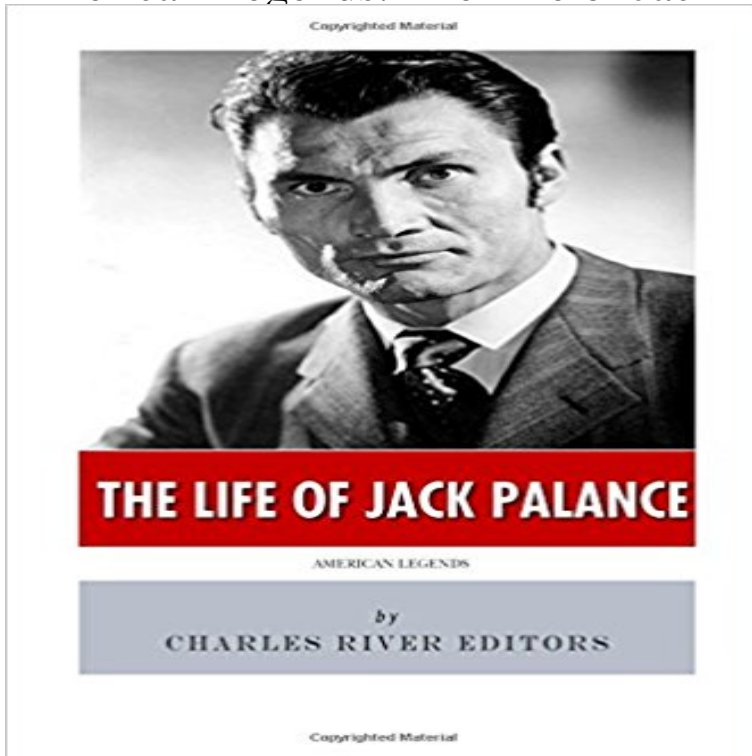


American Legends: The Life of Jack Palance



*Includes pictures *Includes a bibliography for further reading One of the most important reasons for living is to do something - live outside of yourself and put together an idea, an idea that you want to explore and then complete... Awaken your creative sensitivities! Jack Palance A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' American Legends series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of America's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known. It is quite possible that Jack Palance is best-remembered not for any single performance but rather for his display of physical fitness while receiving an Oscar for his performance in *City Slickers* (1989). In an effort to demonstrate that old age had not blunted his athleticism, Palance performed one-armed pushups while grasping his Oscar trophy with his free hand. His fitness was hardly a false representation either, as it demonstrated just how much he had been gifted with a strong physique, which was a crucial part of his image in the industry. Equally important, however, Palance's one-armed pushups demonstrated the way in which he frequently poked fun at himself, proving he did not take himself overly seriously. The life and career of Jack Palance reveals the essence of the man with greater clarity. Palance's childhood played an inestimable role in shaping his values, and he always maintained properties in Pennsylvania where he grew up. Ironically, the connection felt to his roots was countered by the tortuous turns that characterized his career trajectory, which may be one of the most unusual of all time. Improbable enough, Palance experienced almost immediate acclaim, only to become removed from the spotlight for a long

period of time. With the subsequent release of *City Slickers*, Palance resurrected his position as one of films most sought after leading men. Palance's more famous works include *Panic in the Streets* (1950), *Shane* (1954), and *The Wild Bunch* (1968), all of which remain some of the most significant films produced between 1950 and 1970. It is best to view Jack Palance's films with an eye toward the cultural significance of his characters and his movies, and focus on the representation between Palance's upbringing and his character portrayals in his films. By paying critical attention to his work, family background, and filmwork, one can better examine the persona and cultural significance of Jack Palance, a man who led a most circuitous path to success in the film industry. Palance's ability to parody himself grew increasingly pronounced as his career progressed. He was not judgmental, as so many were, regarding the quality of low-budget horror films produced in Hollywood, and he actually starred in a number of them. He accepted numerous acting opportunities his peers scorned, and for better or worse, Palance's penchant for accepting most opportunities that came his way led to an acting portfolio which remains simultaneously impressive in its long list of film accomplishments but saturated with B-movies that made no attempt at being masterpieces. As such, the career of Jack Palance poses a great paradox: he won an Oscar (and was nominated for two others) that resulted in a well earned reputation as a master actor, but he wasn't picky when determining who he was to work with or which roles to accept. Palance's open-mindedness in his career can perhaps be traced to his working-class roots. His parents instilled a strong work ethic in him from an early age, so for him, the practice of acting and creating art was not only a stimulant to the creative process but also a valued profession and endeavor in every sense.

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