



The Eternal Party: Understanding My Dad, Larry Hagman, the TV Star America Loved to Hate

By Kristina Hagman, Elizabeth Kaye

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When you have a very famous father, like mine, everyone thinks they know him.

My dad, Larry Hagman, portrayed the storied, ruthless oilman J.R. on the TV series *Dallas*. He was the man everyone loved to hate, but he had a personal reputation for being a nice guy who fully subscribed to his motto: DON'T WORRY! BE HAPPY! FEEL GOOD! Dad had a famous parent, too? Mary Martin, known from many roles on Broadway, most memorably as Peter Pan. Off-stage she was a kind, elegant woman who maintained the down home charm of her Texas roots. Both were performers to the core of their beings, masters at crafting their public images. They were beloved. And their relationship was complex and often fraught.

My father never apologized for anything, even when he was wrong. But in the hours before he died, when I was alone with him in his hospital room, he begged for forgiveness. In his delirium, he could not tell me what troubled him, but somehow I found the words to comfort him. After he died, I was compelled to learn why he felt the need to be forgiven.

As I solved the troubling mystery of why my happy-go-lucky, pot-smoking, LSD-taking Dad had spent his last breaths begging to be forgiven, I also came to know my father and grandmother better than I had known them in life.

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- Rank: #852243 in Books
- Brand: Hagman Kristina
- Published on: 2016-06-07
- Released on: 2016-06-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.62" h x .4" w x 6.34" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 272 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author

KRISTINA HAGMAN is an artist who has been featured in the *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, *People* magazine, *Closer* magazine (UK), and more. She is the daughter of Larry Hagman and granddaughter of Mary Martin and lives in Santa Monica, California.

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