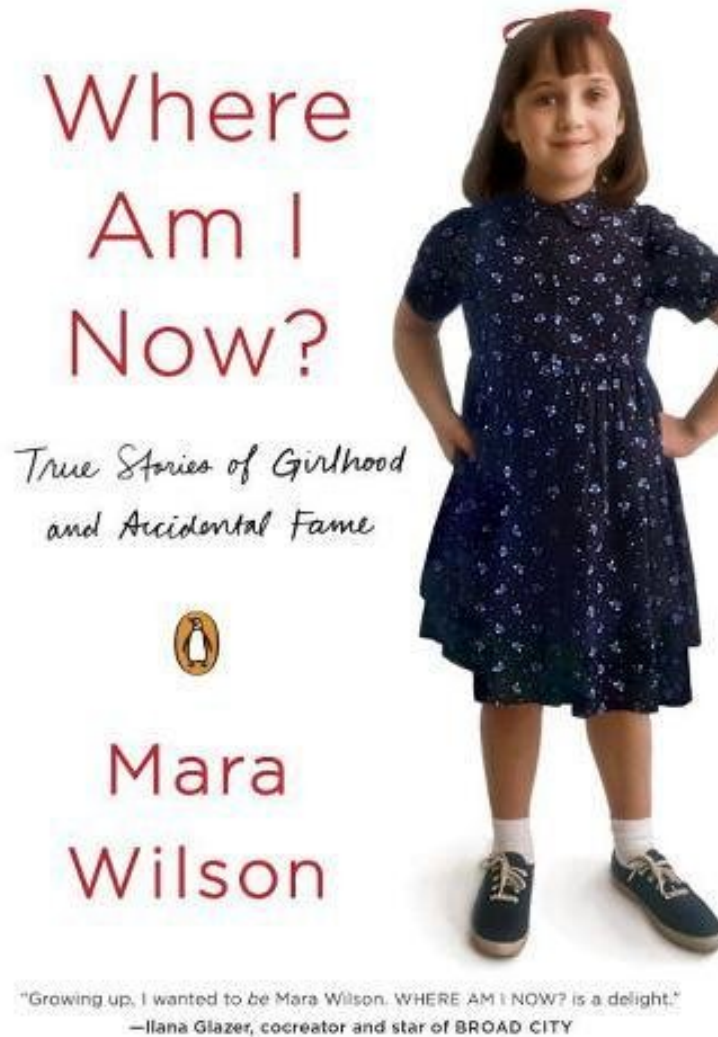


(Read free) Where Am I Now?: True Stories of Girlhood and Accidental Fame

Where Am I Now?: True Stories of Girlhood and Accidental Fame

Mara Wilson

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#125956 in Books Mara Wilson 2016-09-13 2016-09-13 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.97 x .71 x 5.251, .52 #File Name: 0143128221272 pages Where Am I Now True Stories of Girlhood and Accidental Fame | File size: 31.Mb

Mara Wilson : Where Am I Now?: True Stories of Girlhood and Accidental Fame before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Where Am I Now?: True Stories of Girlhood and Accidental Fame:

34 of 35 people found the following review helpful. I love this book. By Sarah The writing in this book is captivating while the stories are relatable. Even though she was raised with more privilege than most, you don't get the feeling she holds it over you. Instead, her middle and high school stories could be anybody's experience. Best of all, unlike how I

felt about Lena Dunham's memoir, Mara Wilson's essays don't try too hard or seek to lecture and caution the reader; they seek to exist. I will definitely be rereading this book in the future, looking back on chapters again and again seeking wisdom or advice, a good laugh, or a reality check. 20 of 21 people found the following review helpful. Mara Wilson is bae. By Lisa and Of course when I saw that Mara had a book coming out I had to pre-order it. Loved her in Matilda and while I hadn't really followed her career very much after that, I did enjoy the few times she'd cameo in Nostalgia Chick's videos or when Nostalgia Critic would talk about her. Every now and then something she'd put on twitter would end up on my Tumblr dashboard, so of course I loved whatever she said because she'd always hit the hammer right on the nail. I was curious about what Mara did after being a child actor. This book doesn't entirely focus on when she was in Matilda; I assumed as much before even reading it. Her story goes back and forth between when she filmed for Matilda, Miracle on 34th Street, Thomas the Tank, etc. She talked about her inner fears and general anxieties, dating, not fitting in at school, her parents not understanding how to relate to her problems/ not realizing the full extent of what she was going through; how she stepped up and acted as a mother to her younger sister when their mother lost her battle with cancer, being confused about religion/sex, how fans would find it difficult to see that she wasn't a child anymore, and casting directors not finding her cute enough after she grows older, amongst other things. *spoilers* There were a few moments in this book where I did actually shed a tear or just feel very sad for what Mara had to go through... The three scenes that stuck with me the most were when she was asked to audition for a fat girl and she didn't enjoy the part very much and wanted to audition for the friend role instead, only to realize that that role was going to go to a girl that was beyond beautiful and Mara realized that she wasn't it. The second part is the night before her mom passes away and says goodnight, only for Mara's baby sister to say "Okay Mommy. See you in the morning." Then of course, when Mara realizes that the author that wrote the book that helped her realize that she had severe OCD was actually the mother of one of the girls that she worked with on the set of Matilda, and how she reached out to her former cast-mate and retold her story and how it brought them to tears by how much it helped her when she was younger. I'm about 79% finished with this book, cried I think maybe once (shed a tear at certain parts maybe about three times...) and honestly I just want to thank Mara for sharing her story with us; the good times and the bad times. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. I grew to love Mara through Matilda. By Ashley Elliott I have always loved Mara Wilson, but I just didn't know her in that name, I love Matilda. I understand as an adult they aren't the same person but Matilda was my favorite movie as a kid and I would make my dad rent it every single weekend. So when I learned the adult behind that character was writing a book I had to have it. She is smart, and funny, she gets very real with her life as a child star and not so famous adult. She gets real about her mental illness and that resonated with me through her honesty. I loved getting to know the woman behind Matilda and now she tells stories for a living. Also she is a killer on Twitter and I love that. As a person the stories told are very relate-able for anyone who loved her growing up because it was kind of like growing up together.

"Thoughtfully traces [Mara Wilson's] journey from child actress to Hollywood dropout... Who is she now? She's a writer." NPR's "Guide To 2016's Great Reads" Growing up, I wanted to be Mara Wilson. Where Am I Now? is a delight. Ilana Glazer, cocreator and star of Broad City Named a best book of the month by Goodreads and Entertainment Weekly A former child actor best known for her starring roles in Matilda and Mrs. Doubtfire, Mara Wilson has always felt a little young and out of place: as the only kid on a film set full of adults, the first daughter in a house full of boys, a Valley girl in New York and a neurotic in California, and a grown-up the world still remembers as a little girl. Tackling everything from what she learned about sex on the set of Melrose Place, to discovering in adolescence that she was no longer cute enough for Hollywood, these essays chart her journey from accidental fame to relative (but happy) obscurity. They also illuminate universal struggles, like navigating love and loss, and figuring out who you are and where you belong. Candid, insightful, moving, and hilarious, Where Am I Now? introduces Mara Wilson as a brilliant new chronicler of the experience that is growing up female.

Wilson's humorous literary voice tells the story of growing up as a young female in the spotlight (and eventually stepping out of it) and the road of self-acceptance, discovery and everything in between. BuzzFeed "[Wilson] returns as a talented writer with this collection of essays." Entertainment Weekly, "15 Books You Have to Read in September" "Funny [and] insightful." Goodreads, "Best Books of the Month" "Wilson has left the acting (almost) completely behind and moved on to become a talented writer and playwright." Bustle, "12 Memoirs By Badass Women to Add To Your Wishlist in Fall 2016" "Candid... witty and insightful. A-" InTouch "Contains engaging, poignant accounts of the actress-turned-storyteller's struggles to find her identity after losing her mother and Hollywood's adoration... Wilson covers difficult topics but can leaven a painful anecdote with incisive wit... When fans ask for a picture with her, she panics: 'I don't photograph well, and... they're going to put it on the Internet, where not everyone knows I'm funny and charming and generally a decent person.' And that's exactly how she comes across in this memoir." Shelf Awareness "Lyrical and affecting . . . humorous, relatable, and ultimately real. . . [Where Am I Now?] is more than just another Hollywood memoir; it is a truly refreshing coming-of-age story." Library Journal "A heartfelt portrait . . . [Mara Wilson] has experienced a great many highs as well as lows in her young life, and she shares them

all with honesty, humor, and humility." Publishers Weekly "A coming-of-age story that is not only entertaining, but also wise. . . . A readably candid, sharp memoir." Kirkus "Uplifting...charming and accessible." Booklist "Refreshingly earnest...If Where Am I Now? and its biting wit and charming self-awareness is anything to go by, [Wilson is] very easily running in the same league as the Lena Dunhams, Rachel Blooms and Ilana Glazers of the world." National Post (Canada) Growing up, I wanted to be Mara Wilson. I always loved that she portrayed strong characters, especially as a female, even as a young child. Where Am I Now? is a delight. Ilana Glazer, co-creator and star of Broad City Genuine and authentic, funny and heartbreaking, Where Am I Now? is a book that reminds you that no matter how unique your life is, some things bind us all together. Jenny Lawson, author of Furiously Happy and Lets Pretend this Never Happened Former child star Mara Wilson has grown up to be a moving, funny, and thoughtful storyteller. Well, not up. As I understand it, she's still approximately the same height. Megan Amram, author of Science for Her! You don't have to be a fellow neurotic Jew who grew up in Southern California to adore this book. Though Mara Wilson's childhood was unique, the themes of Where Am I Now? are universal. Rachel Bloom, creator and star of Crazy Ex-Girlfriend About the Author Mara Wilson is a writer, playwright, actor, and storyteller perhaps best known as the little girl from Mrs. Doubtfire, Miracle on 34th Street, and Matilda. A graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, she regularly appears at live storytelling and comedy shows, including her own, What Are You Afraid Of?. Her writing can be found on Jezebel, The Toast, McSweeney's, the Daily Beast, and Cracked.com, and on her blog, MaraWilsonWritesStuff.com. A voice actor on the podcast Welcome to Night Vale, she will guest star on upcoming episodes of Broad City and BoJack Horseman. She lives in New York City. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. The Junior Anti-Sex League My mother could not have picked a worse time to teach me about sex. One night, when I was five years old, she turned on the TV to a special about sex education. Kids my brother Danny's age were holding bags of flour, calling them their babies, and scrambling to find babysitters for them. "Why are they doing that?" I said. "They're learning about babies, how to take care of them, and how they're made," she said. "Oh." I knew the last part: they were made in their mothers' bellies. I had seen my mother pregnant with my sister. But now the kids on the screen were in a classroom, and a teacher was talking to them about cells and body parts. "What's she talking about?" I said. "She's explaining sex to them." I had heard that word before. I knew it was a loaded term, something grown-ups only said in whispers. "What is that?" "It's how you make a baby," she said, and went on to describe the most absurd, unappealing process I could imagine. She had always believed in telling children the truth, at least to the extent that they were capable of understanding. She was open about private parts and calling them by their real names. Her instincts about openness and honesty were right on, but still, I was horrified. "You did that?" I blurted out. She nodded, and with a sickening feeling I counted up myself, my brothers and sister, and realized she must have done it at least five times. "Any other questions?" I had only one more. "When you did it, did you say 'Whoa'?" My mother had the best of intentions. She made it clear this was not something to be discussed in polite company, that it needed to be kept a secret. But I had a tendency to blurt out secrets. I have always been compulsively honest, and usually at the wrong times. Five months earlier I had ruined my father's birthday surprise party by asking, "You don't know about our cakes, right?" Objectively speaking, sex seemed shockingly gross and ridiculous. But as the shock wore off, the world felt different. I could tell that sex was a Big Deal. It was something new and exciting, a secret grown-ups kept to themselves. Just knowing about it made me feel powerful. I had to tell someone. And I had a big scene on the set of Mrs. Doubtfire the next day. It was not my mother who had gotten me into acting. Not really. She was not a stage mother. But she was an actress: she had studied theater in college and never missed an opportunity to perform. My brothers and I went to Theodore Roosevelt Elementary School, and every year on Teddy Roosevelt's birthday, Teddy himself would come by, in person. ". . . And I said, 'Don't you dare shoot that bear!' They made a little stuffed bear and named it after me, and that's why we call them teddy bears today!" "Teddy" was only about five foot two, with D-cup breasts and a hat I had seen in my mother's closet, but her performance was convincing enough to make some of the kids ask, "Is that really him? I thought he was dead." My mother disappeared into the role, morphing from a tiny woman into one of the most macho men who ever lived. We lived in Burbank, in Southern California's San Fernando Valley, twenty minutes away from Hollywood. My mother always said of our hometown, "It's as if someone picked up a small city in the Midwest and plopped it down in the middle of Los Angeles." Burbank tried its hardest to stay quaint, but it was also home to Warner Brothers, NBC, and Disney Studios. The tentacles of the entertainment industry reached into everyone's lives. My father worked as an electronics engineer at CBS, NBC, and the local channel KTLA. Classmates came to school in cars with license plate frames reading part of the magic: Walt Disney company, and my brothers would borrow movie screeners from friends with well-connected parents when we didn't want to wait for video. Given the omnipresence of the entertainment industry, getting into acting wasn't an unusual thing for a Burbank kid to do. Children all over the world do ridiculous, borderline dangerous things, and no one around them questions it, because it's ingrained in their culture. So it was with child acting in Southern California. When I was a toddler, the oldest and most outgoing of my siblings, Danny, started trying out for commercials. He was cute and a quick study, booking a few TV ads, and even some small parts in movies. Watching my mother and Danny rehearse, I had an epiphany. What they did was like when I performed my stories at home, only better, because people wanted to see you perform! Shortly after my fifth birthday, I went right up to my mother and told her, "Mommy, I

want to do what Danny does." "No, you don't," she said. They were already starting to feel burned out. She was relieved that Danny had never become recognizably famous, and that he didn't want to be an actor when he grew up. He had been a confident, resilient kid, but the cycle of auditioning was getting to him. It would be worse with her anxious, oversensitive daughter. "How about this," she said when I kept asking to audition. "Your brothers and I are going to pretend to be the people at a commercial, okay? We'll tell you what to do and then tell you if you got the part." As always, I took playing pretend very seriously. I "acted" the lines about cereal or Barbies as well as I could, but every time my mother would say, "You were great, but you didn't get the part." And every time I would shrug. "That's okay," I'd say. "I can just go on another one." For the first time in her life, my mother had no idea what to say. I would follow Danny's example: get a few small roles, have fun with it, save some money for college, then give it up after a few years. I would never be famous. But after getting a few commercials, I was called in for a movie. "So what would you think if your dad dressed up like a woman?" a man asked me, along with a few other girls who were auditioning. The other girls looked at the ground, murmuring, "I guess it would be funny." I burst out laughing and said, "I would be on the floor!" I got called back. And then got called back again, and again. We were called to do a screen test in San Francisco, and before I knew it, I had the part. I was going to be in a movie. But just because I'd gotten the part didn't mean I knew what I was doing. There was definitely a learning curve. For example, how was I supposed to know what to do if I had to go to the bathroom during the pool scene? (My mother and I eventually came up with a code so I wouldn't end up peeing on the lovely and handsome Pierce Brosnan.) How was I supposed to know that asking some of the crew members to "clap for me" was inappropriate? Everyone clapped for me when I sang in the kindergarten holiday concert. Why couldn't they do it here, too? My mother was, predictably, furious, pulling me aside and saying, "'Clap for me' is not acceptable!" She and my father were determined not to let being in a movie go to my head. I always knew they loved me and they were proud, but they had to keep me grounded. If I said something like "I'm the greatest!" my mother would be right there to bring me back down to Earth. "You're not the greatest," she said. "You're just an actor. You're just a kid." The day after the sex talk, we were shooting a scene where we helped Sally Field choose a dress to wear to her birthday party. Her ex-husband, Robin Williams, has been denied custody of their kids, and to spend more time with them, he answers her ad for a housekeeper and nanny. Robin, dressed in full drag as an eccentric Scottish nanny named Mrs. Doubtfire, was supposed to come in, ask about the party, and realize he had a major conflict. Lisa Jakub would say her line, then I would say mine. But I wasn't focusing on the scene. I was bubbling with excitement, because I knew this thing, this big open secret, and I could not keep it in any longer. My mother had stressed that sex was something that happened only when you were married, so when Virginia, one of the hairdressers, came over to touch up my bangs, I impulsively asked her, "Are you married?" "Yes," she said. "Oh," I said. "So you've done it, right?" She looked surprised, then laughed, embarrassed. She didn't answer, and I felt unsatisfied. As soon as she walked away I announced in a singsong voice, "I KNOW ABOUT SE-EX! I KNOW ABOUT SE-EX!" The whole crew was laughing, and I was giddy. They knew that I knew what they knew! I was triumphant, full of pure childish glee-until I saw my mother standing off to the side of the set. She was enraged. When my mother was angry, she was terrifying. She looked like Margaret Hamilton as the witch in *The Wizard of Oz*, or Emma Goldman's mug shot. How many times had she lectured me about behaving properly on the set? How many times in our conversation had she stressed that this was not something to talk about in public? How had I forgotten both of these things? I immediately stopped singing, and with a sinking feeling I knew I had done something bad, and that I was going to be in deep trouble. Instantly, I felt humiliated, and worst of all, I knew I had brought it all on myself. I thought I might start crying. I wanted to apologize, tell my mother I would never do it again, anything to get that scary look off her face and rescue what was left of my pride. I watched as Robin, in full Doubtfire drag, walked up to Chris, the director. "Did you hear that Mara was asking Virginia about sex?" Robin said, and they both burst out laughing. They both had kids. They had both worked with kids. They knew what kids were like. "You know, Mara," Chris said, turning to me, "if you want, you can tell Sally her dress is sexy." I didn't dare. But I looked to my mother, and her face had softened a little. I was still going to get a lecture, but because they had been able to laugh it off, I had probably managed to avoid a spanking. I stayed awake that night, thinking of how badly I'd embarrassed myself. It was the first of many nights like that in my life. Did anyone else remember? What did they think of me? I had learned my lesson, and too well. Sex was powerful, something I needed to respect. But if it was so secret and special, though, why did it suddenly seem to be everywhere? There's a saying that if a child doesn't learn about sex from her parents, she'll learn about it on the street. I learned a good amount about it on one particular street: Melrose Place. "You have an audition for a soap opera," my mother told me shortly after my sixth birthday, handing over my "sides," the script excerpt for the audition. "Your character's mother came from Russia, and her time here in America is almost up. She wants to stay here, though, so she gets married to a man named Matt, but he is actually gay." "What does that mean?" I said. "It means a man loves other men, not women. Or when women love women. It's just the way some people are." "Oh, okay," I said. It seemed a little unusual, but not gross or disturbing. I thought of the girl at my preschool who had once told me she loved me and wanted to marry me. I had said, "Sure," so as not to hurt her feelings. "Two men can't do it like men and women do it, could they?" I asked my mother a while later, as an afterthought. "Not like men and women, no," she said carefully, after a moment. "It wouldn't work." Lucky them, I thought, not having to do any of

that gross sex stuff. I got the part. My mother laughed when she saw the call sheet: next to my name it said (K), for kid: I was going to be the only one on set. At first, we would tape my episodes and watch them later, my parents fast-forwarding through the racier scenes. But eventually my mother relented and just let me watch the episodes in their entirety. She had a strange barometer for what was appropriate: she was upset when I watched Hocus Pocus at a friend's house, but took me to see Four Weddings and a Funeral in the theater. To be fair, she must have figured I wouldn't understand what was happening on Melrose-after all, I had thought the couple having sex in Four Weddings was just bouncing on a trampoline I couldn't see. Melrose Place was the most terrifying show I had ever seen. People I knew and loved were playing characters who hurt one another in spectacularly detailed ways. Michael was driving drunk and doing it with three different women. Sydney was using drugs and doing it with three different men. Even Billy and Alison, the nice characters, were doing it, sometimes with each other, sometimes with other people. (Matt, my gay stepfather, didn't do anything bad, but that was because they weren't allowed to show two men kissing on TV.) I had always wondered what grown-ups got up to when they weren't with their kids, and now I knew. To me, Melrose Place was an expos on the secret lives of grown-ups. A little exaggerated at times, maybe-probably in real life there were fewer fights ending in pools-but at its core, I believed it told the truth, and I was scandalized. "I thought you were only allowed to do it if you were married!" I told my mother. "I said you should only do it if you're married," she said. But they did it anyway. "Should" meant nothing to them. There was only one conclusion I could draw: children were clearly morally superior. Kids could be cruel, but it was simple and reflexive: you're in my way, so I'll push you; you said something I didn't like, so I'll call you stupid. But grown-up cruelty was premeditated, calculated, and clever. Kids, I believed, were virtuous because we didn't have that thing, that invisible, corrupting force that held all grown-ups in its sway: sex.