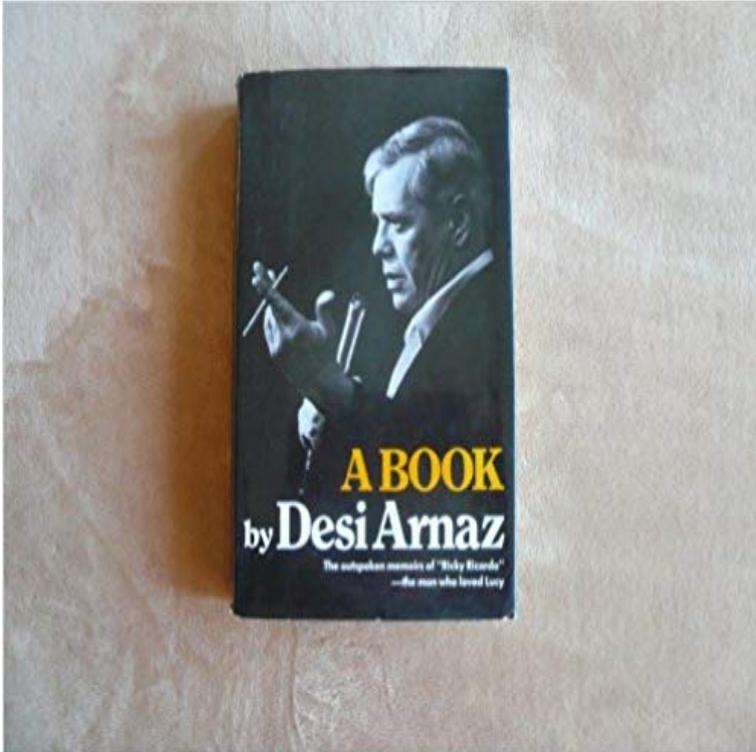


## A Book



Welcome to A Book, in which I try to explain how a kid from Cuba found a way to make a living in the United States. Its all here -- the good, the bad, the beautiful, the ugly, the unbelievably lucky breaks, and the heartbreaking failures. Except for my first experience with sex, a major earthquake, and a revolution in which we managed to lose everything we had, life in Cuba was lovely. Exile in Miami was a time for survival, when I perfected many interesting trades such as mobile canary-cage cleaner and broken-mosaic-tile salesman. Father Barry and Al Capone, Jr., helped me finish high school. There I learned much about America and her people while carrying on my battle with her language. While I was playing guitar and singing at the Roney Plaza in Miami Beach, Xavier Cugat offered me a job with his orchestra. I had to steal from the Waldorf-Astoria kitchen to live on what he paid me. What he taught me was worth a fortune. When I quit and went back to Miami, he sent me a small Latin band. When they arrived, I knew Id been had. In desperation I started beating the hell out of a big Afro-Cuban drum, and the conga was born in the U.S.A. It became a craze and got me all tangled up. Too Many Girls took me to Hollywood and Lucy. After that I decided to forget about too many girls. It was safer. If you think those first two decades were a little crowded, wait until you read about the next two. I am sure you will understand about the milk girls and the Bingo girls, but Lucy didnt and filed to divorce Staff Sergeant Arnaz. You will learn what Lucy and I had to do to convince people we could play husband and wife in I Love Lucy. Shortly afterward Lucie and Desi Jr. were born and our world was paradise. The irony of it all is how our undreamed-of success fame, and fortune turned it into hell. It wasnt easy to write about all of it, but as my son said, Theres only one way to do it, Dad. Tell it like it

was.

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