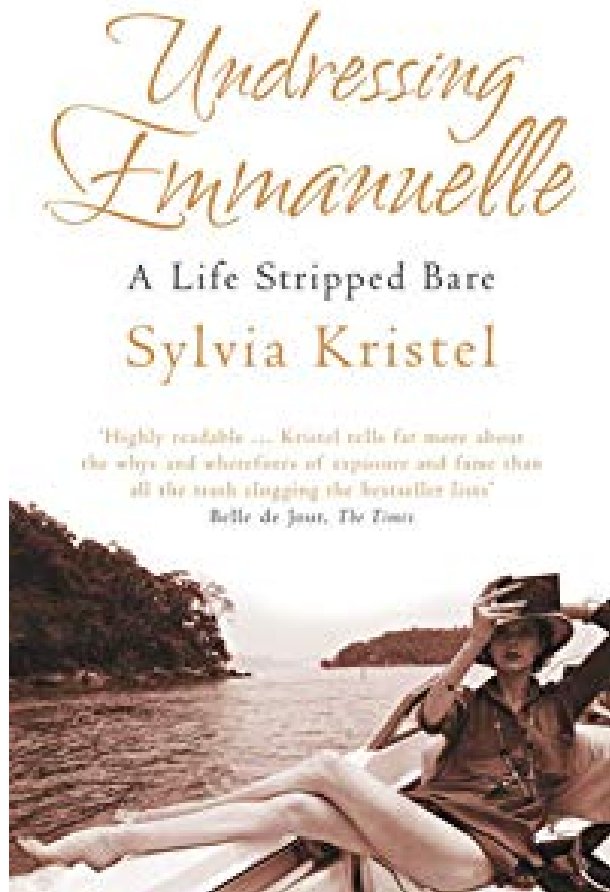


# Undressing Emmanuelle: A Life Stripped Bare



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In 1974, after a year of wrangling with the censors, *Emmanuelle* was a blockbuster sensation on release in France and a box office triumph around the world, from Japan to the U.S. The image that adorned cinemas across the world was of an unknown 20 year-old posing naked, innocent, and vulnerable on a wicker chair. Overnight Sylvia Kristel was propelled into international superstardom and became an icon of sexual liberation. Sylvia Kristel was born of a dysfunctional family and suffered an impossibly strict religious education. But having won the Miss TV Europe competition in 1973 she was driven by her own ambition to be an actress on the world stage, and auditioned for the part of the innocent seductress in *Emmanuelle*. Through the phenomenal success of the three *Emmanuelle* films she starred in she became the darling of Hollywood, as she seduced and was seduced by the rich and the beautiful of the golden age of cinema. She soon found herself typecast as *Emmanuelle* and often played roles that capitalized upon that image, most notably starring in an adaptation of *Lady Chatterly's Lover* and a nudity-filled biopic of *Mata Hari*. The price that she paid for her meteoric rise was an equally rapid descent into an excess of alcohol and drugs as her tempestuous family life threatened to fall apart. Naked, candid, and heartbreakingly honest, this memoir reveals the real personality and struggles behind the famous sexual icon.