

Barbara Stanwyck: The Miracle Woman (Hollywood Legends Series)

Dan Callahan

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Barbara Stanwyck (1907-1990) rose from the ranks of chorus girl to become one of Hollywood's most talented leading women-and America's highest paid woman in the mid-1940s. Shuttled among foster homes as a child, she took a number of low-wage jobs while she determinedly made the connections that landed her in successful Broadway productions. Stanwyck then acted in a stream of high-quality films from the 1930s through the 1950s. Directors such as Cecil B. DeMille, Fritz Lang, and Frank Capra treasured her particular magic. A four-time Academy Award nominee, winner of three Emmys and a Golden Globe, she was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy.

Dan Callahan considers both Stanwyck's life and her art, exploring her seminal collaborations with Capra in such great films as *Ladies of Leisure*, *The Miracle Woman*, and *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*; her Pre-Code movies *Night Nurse* and *Baby Face*; and her classic roles in *Stella Dallas*, *Remember the Night*, *The Lady Eve*, and *Double Indemnity*. After making more than eighty films in Hollywood, she revived her career by turning to television, where her role in the 1960s series *The Big Valley* renewed her immense popularity.

Callahan examines Stanwyck's career in relation to the directors she worked with and the genres she worked in, leading up to her late-career triumphs in two films directed by Douglas Sirk, *All I Desire* and *There's Always Tomorrow*, and two outrageous westerns, *The Furies* and *Forty Guns*. The book positions Stanwyck where she belongs-at the very top of her profession-and offers a close, sympathetic reading of her performances in all their range and complexity.



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