

# Ferocious Ambition

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## Synopsis

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Joan Crawford's remarkable forty-five-year motion picture career is one of the industry's longest. Signing her first contract in 1925, she was crowned an MGM star four years later and by the mid-1930s was the most popular actress in America. In the early 1940s, Crawford's risky decision to move to Warner Bros. was rewarded with an Oscar for *Mildred Pierce*. This triumph launched a series of film noir classics. She teamed with rival Bette Davis in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*, proving that Crawford, whose career had begun by defining big-screen glamour, had matured into a superb dramatic actress.

Her last film was released in 1970, and two years later she made a final television appearance, forty-seven years after walking through the MGM gate for the first time. Crawford made a successful transition into business during her later years, notably in her association with Pepsi-Cola.

Overlooked in previous biographies has been Crawford's fierce resolve in creating and then maintaining her star persona. She let neither her age nor the passing of time block her unrivaled ambition, and she continually reimagined herself, noting once that, for the right part, she would play Wally Beery's grandmother. But she was always the consummate star, and at the time of her death in 1977, she was a motion picture legend and a twentieth-century icon.

## Reader's comments

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