



# **A Life of Barbara Stanwyck: Steel-True 1907-1940**

*Victoria Wilson*

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“860 glittering pages” (Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*): The first volume of the full-scale astonishing life of one of our greatest screen actresses; her work, her world, her Hollywood through an American century.

Frank Capra called her, “The greatest emotional actress the screen has yet known.” Now Victoria Wilson gives us the first volume of the rich, complex life of Barbara Stanwyck, an actress whose career in pictures spanned four decades beginning with the coming of sound (eighty-eight motion pictures) and lasted in television from its infancy in the 1950s through the 1980s. Here is Stanwyck revealed as the quintessential Brooklyn girl whose family was in fact of old New England stock...her years in New York as a dancer and Broadway star...her fraught marriage to Frank Fay, Broadway genius...the adoption of a son, embattled from the outset...her partnership with Zeppo Marx (the “unfunny Marx brother”) who altered the course of Stanwyck’s movie career and with her created one of the finest horse breeding farms in the west...her fairytale romance and marriage to the younger Robert Taylor, America’s most sought-after male star... Here is the shaping of her career through 1940 with many of Hollywood’s most important directors, among them Frank Capra, “Wild Bill” William Wellman, George Stevens, John Ford, King Vidor, Cecil B. DeMille, Preston Sturges, set against the times—the Depression, the New Deal, the rise of the unions, the advent of World War II and a fast-changing, coming-of-age motion picture industry.

And at the heart of the book, Stanwyck herself—her strengths, her fears, her frailties, losses, and desires—how she made use of the darkness in her soul, transforming herself from shunned outsider into one of Hollywood’s most revered screen actresses.

Fifteen years in the making—and written with full access to Stanwyck’s family, friends, colleagues and never-before-seen letters, journals, and photographs. Wilson’s one-of-a-kind biography—“large, thrilling, and sensitive” (Michael Lindsay-Hogg, *Town & Country*)—is an “epic Hollywood narrative” (*USA TODAY*), “so readable, and as direct as its subject” (*The New York Times*). With 274 photographs, many published for the first time.

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