

More Than A Woman ~ Play and Screenplay Synopsis

A tragi-comical drama with cabaret style musical interludes set in 1949 about the feminist actress of American cinema Bette Davis and her revolutionary rise to stardom in an industry dominated by men: where the ultimate price of her success is loneliness.

THE LIFE OF THIS GREAT FILM ACTRESS IS A LONELY LIFE

"Oh, I've made some enemies along the way but *I* am my own worst enemy. I live by *my* rules, but by doing so, I've consigned myself to a life of loneliness. Loneliness... that's the price I pay. Life is a lonely thing Bud, unless one meets the right person to share it with. I still haven't found the right person and I'm not sure that I ever will. But *you* have! Cherish him, Bud. Keep those embers glowing and you'll never be lonely again."

It is 1949. World famous film actress Bette Davis is taking a solitary walk around the deserted Warner Brothers back-lot. She has recently completed the picture *Beyond The Forest*, and her contract with the studio has expired. While wandering, she is distracted by Bud Gabrielli, a lighting technician who has worked on most of Bette's major films. He is more of a listener than a talker but on seeing Bette's drunken, maudlin state, he sets about trying to draw her out and boost her flagging confidence.

As Bette's story unfolds we learn that she was a suffragette of the cinema, campaigning for better roles for film actresses in general as well as for herself. This was usually achieved through acrimonious battles with studio head Jack Warner. Bette is an emotionally complex woman; well respected by those she has worked with because of her dedication to her co-workers as well as her craft. An established and great film actress, Bette has been the 'Queen' of the Warner Bros. studio from 1937 to 1946 but, between 1946 and 1949 her career has been on the decline. She has reached an age where she can no longer convincingly play younger roles and she isn't being offered the best scripts. Bette and Bud smoke and share a couple of bottles of Scotch whiskey. A candid conversation about their personal lives is intersected with scenes from the past. Bette's showdowns on and off set. Her ambition and drive to get to the top and stay there. Her lack of investment in her marriages is juxtaposed with Bud's long-term and enduring gay relationship with Thom, a successful choreographer, in whom Bud invests all. Before the final curtain, will Bud restore Bette's flagging confidence in time for her to leave and face an uncertain future positively and with the conviction that she is still a great actress, and star, who will always be *more than a woman*?

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