



Alice Faye: A Life Beyond the Silver Screen (Hollywood Legends Series)

Jane Lenz Elder

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Alice Faye's sweet demeanor, sultry glances, and velvety voice were her signatures. Her haunting rendition of "You'll Never Know" has never been surpassed by any other singer. Fans adored her in such films as *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, *Rose of Washington Square*, *Tin Pan Alley*, *Week End in Havana*, and *Hello, Frisco, Hello*.

In the 1930s and 1940s she reigned as queen of 20th Century Fox musicals. She co-starred with such legends as Shirley Temple, Tyrone Power, Carmen Miranda, and Don Ameche and was voted the number-one box-office attraction of 1940, placing ahead of Bette Davis and Myrna Loy. To a select cult, she remains a beloved star.

In 1945 at the pinnacle of her career she chose to walk out on her Fox contract. This remarkable episode is unlike any other in the heyday of the big-studio system. Her daring departure from films left Fox mogul Darryl F. Zanuck and the rest of the movie industry flabbergasted. For years she had skirmished with him over her roles, her health, and her private life. His heavy-handed film editing of her fine work in Otto Preminger's drama *Fallen Angel*, a role she had fought for, relegated Faye to the shadows so that Zanuck could showcase the younger Linda Darnell.

After leaving Fox, Faye (1915-1998) devoted herself to her marriage to radio star Phil Harris, to motherhood, and to a second career on radio in the *Phil Harris Alice Faye Show*, broadcast for eight years. She happily gave up films in favor of the independence and self-esteem that she discovered in private life. She willingly freed herself of the "star-treatment" that debilitated so many of her contemporaries. In the 1980s she emerged as a spokeswoman for Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, touring America to encourage senior citizens to make their lives more meaningful and vital.

Before Betty Grable, before Marilyn Monroe--Alice Faye was first in the lineup of 20th Century Fox blondes. This book captures her special essence, her work in film, radio, and popular music, and indeed her graceful survival beyond the silver screen.

Jane Lenz Elder, a librarian at Southern Methodist University, is the author of *Across the Plains to Santa Fe* and *The Literature of Beguilement: Promoting America from Columbus to Today*. She is co-editor of *Trading in Santa Fe: John M. Kingsbury's Correspondence with James Josiah Webb, 1853-1861*.

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