

## Document Citation

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GAMBLING LADY (Warner Brothers 1933, rel: 1934) Directed by Archie Mayo; Supervised by Henry Blanke; Screenplay by Ralph Block and Doris Malloy, from an original story by Malloy; Camera, George Barnes; 66 mins.

With Barbara Stanwyck (Lady Lee); Joel McCrea (Garry Madison); Pat O'Brien (Charlie Lang); Claire Dodd (Sheila Aiken); C. Aubrey Smith (Peter Madison); Robert Barrat (Mike Lee); Arthur Vinton (Jim Fallin); Phillip Reed (Steve); Robert Elliott (Graves); Ferdinand Gottschalk (Cornelius); Willard Robertson (District Attorney); Arthur Treacher (Pryor); Huey White (Body-guard); Guy Usher (Detective); Wade Boteler (sergeant); Edward Le Saint (lawyer); John Ince (Assistant D.A.); and Louise Beavers, Howard Hickman, Robert Ellis, Willie Fung, Dale Van Sickle, Larry Steers, Albert Conti, Charles Wilson, Edward Gargan, Milt Kibbee, Thurston Hall. (It has been suggested that Tyrone Power appears as an extra, but this is a confusion created by a long-shot of Phillip Reed looking surprisingly like Power).

The 8th of the 11 starring vehicles that Stanwyck made for Warners between 1931 and 1935, "Gambling Lady" is a film we have been meaning to play for years -- and ironically, when we did play it, it turned up a week earlier at the Thalia! Not that it isn't good for this kind of film to get as much exposure as possible, but it's a pity that there wasn't a wider gap in between. At the Thalia it was doubled with "Baby Face" which we've already run: audiences for that combination must have been either amused or non-plussed at having Robert Barratt turn up as Stanwyck's father in both films, and expiring in both by the end of reel one! "Gambling Lady", like its co-feature and like so many other Warner films, mixes its genres - crime and soap opera are pretty evenly balanced, with some very snappy dialogue from Pat O'Brien, and some ultra-bitchy repartee between Stanwyck and Claire Dodd. Dodd could be gracious and charming on occasion, as well as glamorous, but the script makes sure that this is one of her least gracious outings and that one looks forward to her ultimate comeuppance. Neither notably economic nor especially glossy, it nevertheless loosens the budget-control for some occasional big scenes, and art director Anton Grot gets to indulge in his favorite luxury - a sweeping circular staircase - in a set that is quite breath-taking.

It's a fast-paced film, with some genuine surprises - some of them quite callous, others like C. Aubrey Smith's inexplicable but most welcome appearance at Warners, rather pleasing. A lesser Mayo and a routine Stanwyck perhaps, but that still makes it a treat of a rediscovery in the 90's. Incidentally, Stanwyck's later (and much duller) Universal film "The Lady Gambles" was neither a remake nor even a distant relative. If anything, "Gambling Lady" is closer to "The Lady Eve", with McCrea standing in for Henry Fonda, though even there the relationship is a very casual one.

-- Wm. K. Everson --

Program ends 10.10 approx.  
Discussion/Question session follows

New School Film Series 74 #3

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