

Hollywood's Infamous Feud

By: Kayla Clark

Bette Davis and Joan Crawford were two of Hollywood's biggest stars, with their prime time being from the early 1930s through the late 1960s. Their history is one of robust talent and feuds. The two stars were constantly sparring, and it all started with Joan Crawford's first divorce.

In 1933, Bette Davis starred in her first feature film, "Ex-Lady," which was to be announced as a publicity campaign with Warner Brothers up until Joan Crawford announced that she would be divorcing her first husband (Bazaar). Joan Crawford, already being an established figure within Hollywood since 1925, was given precedence by the public, and the rising-star, Bette Davis, was left out of the limelight. Needless to say, Bette was bitter.

Later in their careers, the two continued to feud, but it was Joan who tried to make amends, perhaps for a reason Bette didn't see coming. In the year 1950, Bette figured out why Joan may have been so keen on becoming friends. She was convinced that Joan was in love with her, and she just may have been correct. Joan was known to have had sexual relationships with both men and women, including Marilyn Monroe, and Joan was even quoted saying, "Franchot [Joan's husband] isn't interested in Bette, but I wouldn't mind giving her a poke if I was in the right mood," (Bazaar).

In 1962, the two later starred together in "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?" where their feud became physical. In a scene where Bette, who played Jane, was supposed to beat Joan, who played Blanche, Joan requested a double out of fear that Bette would really harm her, and when the double wasn't allowed, claims state that Bette hit Joan hard enough to require stitches (Bazaar). Joan also knew that Bette had back problems, so when it was time for Jane to drag Blanche across the floor, Bastien, author for Vulture, writes that Joan put rocks in her pockets to make herself extra heavy. For a live action representation of this feud, I suggest watching "The Feud: Bette and Joan," a TV series starring Susan Sarandon as Bette Davis and Jessica Lange as Joan Crawford.

Bette and Joan never fully resolved their feud. Upon Joan's death in 1977, it is reported that Bette said, "You should never say bad things about the dead, you should only say good...Joan Crawford is dead. Good," (Bazaar).

Sources: Harper's Bazaar and Vulture