Davis, Bette (1908-1989) Encyclopedia Article

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Davis, Bette (1908-1989)

Born Ruth Elizabeth Davis in 1908, Bette Davis was one of the biggest stars of the Hollywood Studio Era. During her illustrious career, which spanned six decades, she appeared in over 100 films and made numerous television appearances. Her talents were recognized with 11 Academy Award nominations and two awards (1935 and 1938); three Emmy nominations and one award (1979); and she won a Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute in 1997. In films such as *Marked Woman* (1937), *Jezebel* (1938), and *All About Eve* (1950) she played women who were intelligent, independent, and defiant, often challenging the social order. It is perhaps for these reasons that she became an icon of urban gay culture, for more often than not, her characters refused to succumb to the strict restraints placed on them by society.

Further Reading:

Davis, Bette. *The Lonely Life: An Autobiography.* New York, Lancer Books, 1963.

Higham, Charles. *The Life of Bette Davis.* New York, MacMillan, 1981.

Ringgold, Gene. *The Complete Films of Bette Davis.* Secaucus, New Jersey, Citadel, 1990.