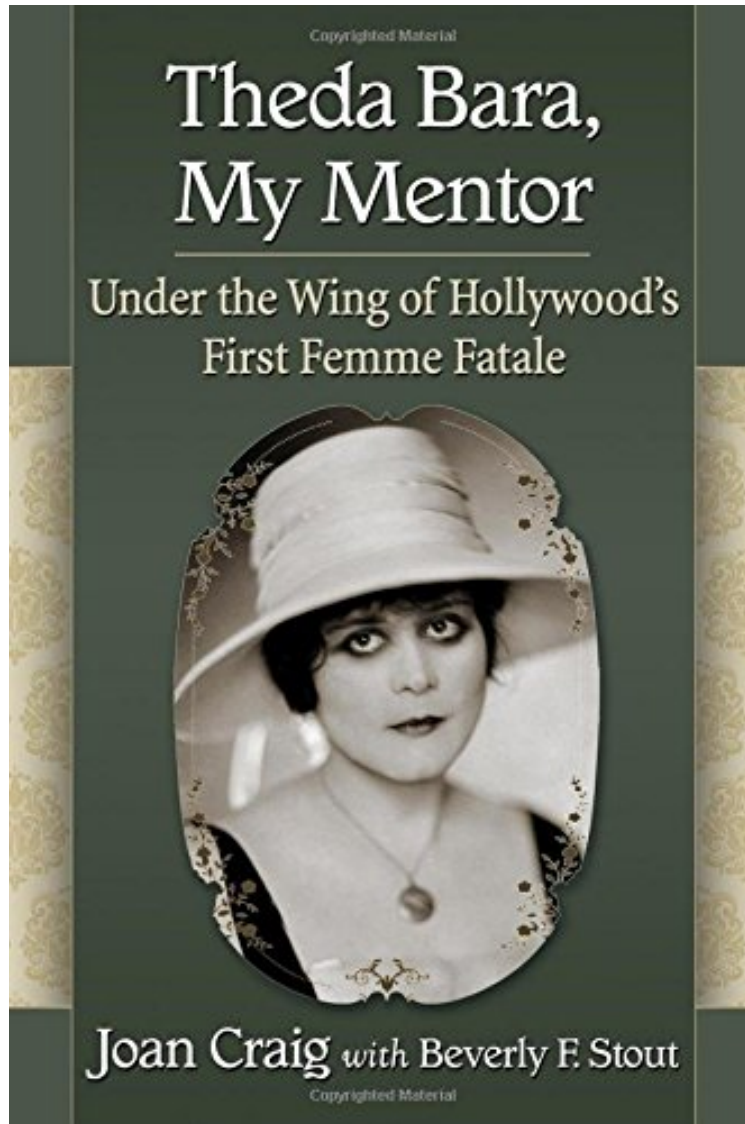


[Ebook free] Theda Bara, My Mentor: Under the Wing of Hollywood's First Femme Fatale

## Theda Bara, My Mentor: Under the Wing of Hollywood's First Femme Fatale

*Joan Craig, Beverly F Stout*  
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**Joan Craig, Beverly F Stout : Theda Bara, My Mentor: Under the Wing of Hollywood's First Femme Fatale** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Theda Bara, My Mentor: Under the Wing of Hollywood's First Femme Fatale:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A peek into Theda Bara's lifeBy Bruce CalvertThis book is not a biography, nor a scholarly review of her films. It is a memoir of Joan Craig, who was befriended by actress Theda

Bara and director Charles Brabin when Joan was a young girl. Joan's parents were busy with their business and their own interests, and the Brabins had a relationship like an aunt and uncle to Ms. Craig. We learn a lot about the Brabin's marital relationship and Theda's personality and beliefs. The Brabins liked to host parties, so Ms. Craig got to meet many Hollywood movie stars and directors. Since only three of Theda's feature films still survive (plus a Hal Roach comedy short and a few cameo appearances and newsreel appearances), this book is a good window into Ms. Bara's life. The book does contain chapters that are biographies of both Theda Bara and Charles Brabin. It also has a few paragraphs on each of her films and some information on the stage plays that starred Theda. It is illustrated from photographs from co-author Beverly Stout's collection. If you are a fan of Theda Bara and wanted to know more about her personality and beliefs, then this is the book for you. The book is a great introduction to Ms. Bara (and her husband Charles Brabin.) However, if you want more information on her career, then you need to read Eve Golden's Theda Bara book too. The book could have used a little more fact-checking on some topics relating to movie history. For example, the serial WHAT HAPPENED TO MARY (1912) was a weekly, not a monthly series. The book also speculates about making movies in sound after she was let go by Fox in 1920. While there were certainly some sound-film experiments that early, it would be several more years before the problems of amplification would be overcome for major studios to attempt sound filmmaking.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting, especially the author's childhood. By Snowlioness

Very interesting, especially the author's childhood. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Skimming the surface of Theda Bara's life and story. By Customer

As a child, Joan Craig lived down the street from Theda Bara and her husband, Charles Brabin. Not having children of their own, Theda and Charles treated Craig as their own child (Joan called him Uncle Charles.) She spent a lot of time with them after school, during the summer, and attended many dinner parties at their home. She got to mingle with the elite in the entertainment field as well as learn a great deal from them. THEDA BARA, MY MENTOR is her story of growing up in such a special atmosphere. They taught her about things as varied as what to read, the importance of details in photos, how to remember people's names, and how to throw a party. She also knew them as close friends and advisors, not as celebrities. The first part of the book is about Theda and her parents before she became the famous actor who influenced and upset a generation of women and men. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, to the Goodman family, she was named after Aaron Burr's daughter, Theodosia. He recognized the rights of women, wanted women to be superior to men. His daughter was to be a woman of the future. Theda's parents had the same goals for their daughter. Her mother spoke only Francoprovincial. Theda was her translator, gave instructions to the housekeeper, often changing them. In 1906, Theda entered acting school in Chicago. In order to afford school and find housing, she made a deal with the owner of the Schlitz Hotel in Milwaukee. In those days, single men and women couldn't talk to each other until introduced. In exchange for a room, she hosted mixers for singles and made sure they were all introduced to each other. While Bara's movie and stage career didn't last very long, she made an immediate impression that lasted well beyond her lifetime. In 1908, two versions of the play *The Devil* opened on Broadway on the same day. One was a comedy, the other a tragedy. She was offered the same role in each of them. The same thing happened with the movies *Carmen* and *Romeo and Juliet*, each of which had two productions opening and running at the same time. Her first movie was in the 1914 movie *The Stain*. She was an extra but her scenes were cut because it was obvious that she was a better actor than the star. She starred in ten movies in 1915. She became known as a vamp and played the role to the hilt. She received a lot of hate mail because of the characters she played. In *THEDA BARA, MY MENTOR*, Craig includes a wonderful letter written by Bara explaining the moral lesson her roles played for the viewers. But she was not that character in real life. In the early 1920s, she read about Herbert Birch Kingston, a candy company employee from Cleveland, Ohio who wanted to bring happiness to orphans, shut-ins and other neglected people. She contacted him and ordered 10,000 boxes of candy to be delivered to people in Cleveland hospitals. She continued the practice on the third Saturday of October every year. The date is now known as Sweetest Day. The book lists all the plays and movies in which she appeared. It includes a short synopsis as well as names some of the other people involved in the production. The final chapter is about Brabin and presents twelve pages for his filmography. Theda's movies and records have been lost due to fire and decomposition. The book includes a lot of photographs, primarily shots of her showing her costumes in various movies. I found the book dry and severely lacking in information. It read like the diary of a child and teenager, telling the places she went, who was there, and what was served. Most of it was name dropping and information that could be gleaned from looking at a book skimming the basic information about a film or play. It needed more information about Theda as a person. (It had some, but not nearly enough.) It also didn't include sufficient information about how the relationship affected the author's future life. There are some points that seem inaccurate. The book says that Theda became a Bat Mitzvah in 1898. It was supposed to take place the previous year but the Rabbi cancelled it because of her costume. It was rescheduled following year. While Cincinnati was the home for Reform Judaism, the first recognized bat mitzvah was in 1922 through a Reconstructionist Synagogue. There are some grammatical errors. Among them the book refers to Winchester Abby, correcting to Abbey later on in the same sentence and to ballet bars instead of barres. There is a lot of repetition. Freddie Brisson and Rosalind Russell were married to each other; Marc McDermott and Charles Brabin were each six feet 6' tall. Theda created cosmetics and she and her mother created wigs and wardrobes. In one movie, the ships sank and some cast members didn't know how to

swim. One mention of each of these details would have been sufficient. Some information should have been explained more thoroughly. At one Purim party, Craig said they served dumplings in soup, braided bread, and folded cookies with apple, prune, and strawberry. It wouldnt have been too difficult to learn they served matzo balls or kreplach, challah, and Hamentashen, each of which had a special relationship to Judaism and Purim. She mentions her mothers first mother-in-law but doesnt say anything else about that first marriage. She writes Perle Mesta was widowed after nearly five years of marriage but omits the dates and the cause of his death. McDermott. He died after making *The Whip* but she doesnt say why. Nor does she give the cause of Theda Baras death. I received a copy of this book from LibraryThing Early Reviewers.

As movie patrons sat in darkened theaters in January 1914, they were mesmerized by an alluring temptress with long sable hair and kohl-rimmed eyes. Theda Bara--"the vamp," as she would come to be known--would soon be one of the highest paid film stars of the 1910s, earning an unheard of \$4,000 per week, before retiring from the screen in 1926. In 1946, at age five, the author met Bara--then 61--at her Beverly Hills home and the actress became her mentor. This memoir is the story of their friendship.

About the AuthorJoan Craig lives in Burbank, California.Beverly F. Stout lives in Greenwood, Mississippi.