Bette Davis.... Margo Channing
Anne Baxter.... Eve Harrington
George Sanders....Addison De Witt
Celeste Holm.....Karen Richards
Gary Merrill.....Bill Sampson
Hugh Marlowe....Lloyd Richards
Gregory Ratoff.....Max Fabian
Barbara Bates.....Phoebe
Marilyn Monroe.....Claudia Caswell
Thelma Ritter.....Birdie
Walter Hampden.....Dinner Speaker


BETTE DAVIS (Ruth Elizabeth Davis, 5 April 1908, Lowell, Massachusetts—6 October 1989, Paris, France, breast cancer) won best actress Oscars for Jezebel 1938 and Dangerous 1934. She was also nominated for best actress for What Ever Happened to Baby Jane? 1962, The Star 1952, All About Eve 1950, Mr. Skeffington 1944, Now, Voyager 1942, The Little Foxes 1941, The Letter 1940, Dark Victory 1940, and Of Human Bondage 1934. The American Film Institute gave her a Life Achievement Award in 1977. She was a top star in the 1930s and early 1940s, then the pictures got weaker and weaker until she replaced Claudette Colbert (who had disk problems) in All About Eve, whereupon the roles improved for a while. Her work was so uneven in the 1950s that she eventually had no work at all, so she placed her famous “Job Wanted” ad in the Hollywood trade papers. That led to her comeback role as the demented former child star in Whatever Happened to Baby Jane? Some of her notable films are Death on the Nile 1978, The Nanny 1965, Hush... Hush, Sweet Charlotte 1964, The Virgin Queen 1955, The Man Who Came to Dinner 1942, The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex 1939, and The Petrified Forest 1936. In the 1950s and 1960s, she had roles in many of the major television series: “It Takes a Thief,” “Gunsmoke,” “Perry Mason,” “The Andy Williams Show,” “The Virginian,” “Wagon Train,” “Alfred Hitchcock Presents,” “Ford Theater,” “General Electric Theater,” and even “What’s My Line.” Illness forced her to pull out of the 1982-83 television series “Hotel”—her replacement was Anne Baxter. Who says movies
Ain't real?


**GARY MERRILL** (2 August 1915, Hartford, Connecticut—Falmouth, Maine, lung cancer) was 35 and Bette Davis 42 when they starred *All About Eve* close enough for her line about him in the film to ring true: “Bill's thirty-two. He looks thirty-two. He looked it five years ago, he'll look it twenty years from now. I hate men.” Playing a married couple must have felt pretty good to both of them: after the film was done they divorced their respective spouses and got married. Merrill is perhaps best known as a disembodied voice on scores of radio and television voice-over commercials. Two of his better early films are *Twelve O'clock High* (1949) and *Slattery's Hurricane* (1949).


*All About Eve* received 13 Academy Award nominations and won 6 of them: picture, director, supporting actor, sound, screenplay, costume design. It probably would have won two more if four members of the cast hadn’t been in direct competition with one another: Davis and Baxter for Best Actress and Celeste Holm and Thelma Ritter for Best Supporting Actress. The story is that the studio tried to get Baxter to go for Supporting but she refused because she already had one of those and wanted to move up. Years later, the same story goes, she allowed as maybe she made a bad career move there and Bette David allowed as she was finally right about something.

Some memorable lines from the film......

**Margo Channing:** Funny business, a woman’s career, the things you drop on the way up the ladder so you can move faster. You forget you'll need them again when you get back to being a woman. It's one career all females have in common—being a woman. Sooner or
later we've got to work at it no matter how many other careers we've had or wanted. And in the last analysis nothing is any good unless you can look up just before dinner or turn around in bed and there he is. Without that you're not a woman. You're something with a French provincial office or a book full of clippings but you're not a woman. Slow, curtain, the end.

**Addison DeWitt:** I'm Addison DeWitt. I'm nobody's fool, least of all yours.

**Margo Channing:** Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night!

**Addison DeWitt:** You're maudlin and full of self-pity. You're magnificent!

**Margo Channing:** I'll admit I may have seen better days... but I'm still not to be had for the price of a cocktail, like a salted peanut.

**Bill Sampson:** How about calling it a night?

**Margo Channing:** And you, pose as a playwright? A situation pregnant with possibilities and all you can think of is everybody go to sleep.

**Addison DeWitt:** [voiceover] Margo Channing is a star of the theater. She made her stage debut at the age of four in "Midsummer Night's Dream," playing a fairy. She entered, quite unexpectedly, stark naked. She has been a star ever since.

**Addison DeWitt:** While you wait you can read my column. It'll make minutes fly like hours.

Bette Davis was every bit as intelligent and acerbic as she seems in this film. She and Joan Crawford had one of Hollywood’s most enduring feuds. Crawford was the widow of Pepsi’s CEO, so Davis had a Coke machine installed on the set of *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* In retaliation, Crawford put heavy weights in her pockets for the scenes when Davis had to drag her across the floor. Davis’s two best known lines on Crawford are: "I wouldn't piss on her if she was on fire" and “She has slept with every male star at MGM except Lassie.” (No, Davis did not get her genders bent: at least two of the dogs who played Lassie were males.) Some of her other lines:

- “At 50, I thought proudly, 'Here we are, half century!' Being 60 was fairly frightening. You want to know how I spent my 70th birthday? I put on a completely black face, a fuzzy black afro wig, wore black clothes, and hung a black wreath on my door.”

- “Margo Channing was not a bitch. She was an actress who was getting older and was not too happy about it. And why should she? Anyone who says that life begins at forty is full of it. As people get older their bodies begin to decay. They get sick. They forget things. What's good about that?”

**About Mankiewicz:**

**Godard:** “one of the most brilliant American directors.”

**Truffaut:** “master of théâtre filmé” Mankiewicz had a lifelong fascination with theatre’s “creative community. . .the quirks, the frailties, the needs and talents of the performing personality....This fascination, deeply sentimental behind a cynical facade, informs the quintessential Mankiewicz movie *All About Eve.*”

**Celeste Holm:** “Joe was in love with the concept of the theater as a wolverine’s lair of skullduggery and bitchcraft.”

**David Shipman:** “The highest quotient of (verbal) wit of any film made before or since.”

**Godard:** “…the most intelligent man in all contemporary cinema.... He is too perfect a writer to be a director as well.”

Accused often of an uncinematic priority of words over images. Mankiewicz responded “I don’t believe that the word is of prime importance. I believe that the word is worthy of equal respect,” that film is “a medium for the exchange of ideas and exchange of comment as well as purely visual effects.”

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