

# CAROLE LOMBARD



# 100TH BIRTHDAY

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## CAROLE LOMBARD: MARVELOUS GIRL. CRAZY AS A BEDBUG

The title comes from a quote by the great director Howard Hawks when asked about Carole Lombard. Well known for a foul mouth, playful spirit, and truly generous heart, Lombard earned the nickname "Profane Angel".

October 6<sup>th</sup> 2008 will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Carole Lombard. Decades have passed since her tragic death, yet her legacy has stood the test of time to remain as fresh as ever especially for those longing for the old magic of the now lost (or at least less inspiring) screwball comedy genre.

There is something to be said about first encountering one of Lombard's definitive films, and for my money that would be nearly anything she made from 1934-1946. She was the essential actress of the screwball comedy, and she was without the cynicism or upper-class snobbery most common of the other great actresses of the genre (think Barbara Stanwyck, Jean Arthur, Irene Dunne, Katharine Hepburn, or even the wonderful Kay Francis). Not that Lombard couldn't pull this off (see 1935's *Hands Across the Table*), but it did not fit her perhaps because it was too easy. Lombard had a unique and effortless quality. One that made her incomparable. A combination of beauty, zany humor, pitch perfect comedic timing, witty intelligence and lively spirit, Lombard radiated natural and timeless star quality.

Her career reached new heights when Howard Hawks gave Lombard the freedom to shine her wonderful screwball talents in the classic 1934 comedy *Twentieth Century*. From there she went on to do some of the most memorable comedies of the 1930s, most notably the screwball masterpieces *My Man Godfrey* (1936) and *Nothing Sacred* (1937).

Lombard even convinced the "Master of Suspense" himself (Alfred Hitchcock) to direct *Mr and Mrs Smith*- his first (and only) screwball comedy, which he agreed to only if she would star. Now at the peak of her career, Lombard's next film (*To Be Or Not To Be*- for legendary director Ernst Lubitsch) was sadly her last, as she died in a plane crash shortly after filming completed.

That has and never will be another one quite like her. Both as an actress and as a woman Lombard's lasting memory remains. She was loved and respected by all those that knew her. The quintessential queen off the screwball comedy, Carole Lombard was a genuine persona and truly a genuine star!

*"She brought great joy to all who knew her and to millions who knew her only as a great artist. She gave unselfishly of time and talent to serve her government in peace and war. She loved her country. She is and always will be a star, one we shall never forget, nor cease to be grateful to." - Franklin D. Roosevelt*