



The Runaway Bride: Hollywood Romantic Comedy of the 1930s

Elizabeth Kendall

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In the 1934 classic *It Happened One Night*, heiress Claudette Colbert races away from the altar and a conventional marriage and throws herself into a wisecracking rough-and-tumble affair with Clark Gable. The new brand of movies following in the wake of Capra's kooky masterpiece-and the women starring in them-are the focus of Kendall's *The Runaway Bride*, a look at the films that mirrored the climate of the Great Depression while at the same time helping Americans get through it. Kendall details the collaborations between the romantic comedy directors and the female stars, showing how such films as *Alice Adams* (with Katherine Hepburn), *Swing Time* (where Ginger Rogers enjoys "A Fine Romance" with Fred Astaire), *The Awful Truth* (with Irene Dunne), and *The Lady Eve* (wherein Barbara Stanwyck's shapely leg repeatedly trips naïve millionaire Henry Fonda) came to be, and what they said about the 1930s. Written with erudition and enthusiasm, *The Runaway Bride* is a trip through some of Hollywood's most memorable moments, and a key to the national issues of an era as revealed in its films.

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