

Baby Face (1933) (NYTimes Review)

A Woman's Wiles.

M.H.

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"Baby Face," the picture which recently aroused the ire of Will Hays and also was responsible for the resignation of Darryl Zanuck as assistant to Jack Warner at the Warner Brothers' studios, is now on exhibition at the Strand. It is an unsavory subject, with incidents set forth in an inexpert fashion.

Barbara Stanwyck acts Lily Powers, who becomes known as Baby Face. She is presumed to have good intentions, but they are discouraged by her father, who keeps a disreputable speakeasy. A cobbler named Cragg, presumed to be an omnivorous reader, tells Lily of her beauty and the power she might have over men. This inspires Lily to leave for New York, where through a flirtation she succeeds in finding employment.

Hoping for promotion from her position, she uses her wiles on a department manager and subsequently attracts the attention of the cashier, a young man named Stevens, who is engaged to marry Ann Carter, daughter of the first vice president. Evidently there is not a decent man in this bank—not one who scorns to have an affair with this tarnished Lily. Carter himself becomes infatuated with her and one day he is shot and killed by Stevens, who ends his own life.

It is a pretty state of affairs when the directors of the bank are faced with the scandal, but later they have more anxious moments, for Trenholm, who is made president of the institution, encounters Lily in Paris, where she has been sent to work in the bank's branch after her threat to sell her story to a newspaper. Trenholm becomes so smitten with Lily's beauty that he marries her.

In the course of the closing episodes, Lily, who has a fortune in jewelry and \$500,000 in cash, at first decides to leave for Paris again, although she knows that her husband needs the money to save himself from imprisonment. Once aboard the steamship, however, she suffers a change of heart and is supposed to do her one good deed of the story.