



Shadowed Cocktails: The Plays of Philip Barry from Paris Bound to The Philadelphia Story (Theater in the Americas)

Donald R. Anderson

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An important and prolific playwright, Philip Barry wrote hit plays such as *The Philadelphia Story* and *Holiday*. However, he has been largely forgotten and no book-length analysis of his work has appeared in more than forty years. With this book, Donald R. Anderson rescues the playwright from obscurity.

Although Barry's successes were with comedies of manners, he also wrote dramatic and experimental works. Anderson analyzes all of Barry's plays (twenty-one in total) and questions the traditional characterization of the American playwright's work. He begins with Barry's early plays concerning intergenerational tensions and lessons learned from the Great War. Subsequent chapters explore Barry's preoccupation with fidelity and infidelity, his struggles with his Catholic beliefs, and his investigations into sources of evil and despair. Anderson also looks at the plays of the late 1930s and the 1940s, including the posthumously produced *Second Threshold*. One chapter is devoted to Barry's synergistic relationship with Katharine Hepburn: her role in lifting the playwright out of a mid-1930s slump and his role in rescuing her from the label of "box-office poison" with both *The Philadelphia Story* and the World War II drama *Without Love*.

Anderson places Barry within the context of his times but also shows him drawing on past influences and anticipating theatrical developments of the latter part of the twentieth century. Part cultural history, part literary analysis, *Shadowed Cocktails* is sure to revitalize interest in this remarkable American author.

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