



A Touch of Stardust: A Novel

Kate Alcott

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From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Dressmaker* comes a blockbuster novel that takes you behind the scenes of the filming of *Gone with the Wind*, while turning the spotlight on the passionate romance between its dashing leading man, Clark Gable, and the blithe, free-spirited actress Carole Lombard.

When Julie Crawford leaves Fort Wayne, Indiana, for Hollywood, she never imagines she'll cross paths with Carole Lombard, the dazzling actress from Julie's provincial Midwestern hometown. The young woman has dreams of becoming a screenwriter, but the only job Julie's able to find is one in the studio publicity office of the notoriously demanding producer David O. Selznick, who is busy burning through directors, writers, and money as he films *Gone with the Wind*.

Although tensions run high on the set, Julie finds she can step onto the back lot, take in the smell of smoky gunpowder and the soft rustle of hoop skirts, and feel the magical world of *Gone with the Wind* come to life. Julie's access to real-life magic comes when Carole Lombard hires her as an assistant and invites her into the glamorous world Carole shares with Clark Gable, who is about to move into movie history as the dashing Rhett Butler.

Carole Lombard, happily profane and uninhibited, makes no secret of her relationship with Gable, which poses something of a problem for the studio because Gable is technically still married—and the last thing the film needs is more negative publicity. Julie is there to fend off the overly curious reporters, hoping to prevent details about the affair from slipping out. But she can barely keep up with her blond employer, let alone control what comes out of Carole's mouth, and—as their friendship grows—Julie soon finds she doesn't want to. Carole, both wise and funny, becomes Julie's model for breaking free of the past.

In the ever-widening scope of this story, Julie is given a front-row seat to not one but two of the greatest love affairs of all time: the undeniable on-screen chemistry between Scarlett and Rhett, and offscreen, the deepening love between Carole and Clark. Yet beneath the shiny façade, things in Hollywood are never quite what they seem, and Julie must learn to balance her career aspirations and her own budding romance with the outsized personalities and overheated drama on set. Vivid, romantic, and filled with Old Hollywood details, *A Touch of Stardust* will entrance, surprise, and delight.

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