

In Such Good Company PDF

Carol Burnett



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About the book

Book Review: In Such Good Company by Carol Burnett

Carol Burnett, the iconic figure in entertainment, offers an insightful glimpse into her impactful series, "The Carol Burnett Show," in her engaging memoir, *In Such Good Company*. With her endearing style and trademark humor, Burnett takes readers backstage, revealing the vibrant laughter, creativity, and team spirit that fueled the success of this cherished variety show.

In this nostalgic narrative, she reflects on the remarkable talents of her cast and crew, shares comical stories about numerous guest stars, and unveils the enchanting spontaneity that live television brought to millions over the years. Whether you are a devoted fan or just discovering her work, Carol Burnett's memoir is a delightful journey through a cherished chapter in television's rich history.

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About the author

Profile: Carol Burnett

Full Name: Carol Burnett

Date of Birth: April 26, 1933

Place of Birth: San Antonio, Texas

Career Highlights:

- Primary Roles: Comedian, actress, singer
- Most Notable Work: "The Carol Burnett Show" (1967-1978)
 - *Achievements:* Received numerous Emmy Awards and became a beloved staple of American television.
- Skills: Renowned for her impeccable comedic timing, versatility in performance, and infectious charm that has resonated with audiences for decades.

Additional Contributions:

- Beyond television, Burnett has made notable impacts in theater, film, and literature, showcasing her as a truly multi-faceted entertainer.

Published Work:

- *"In Such Good Company"* (Memoir)
 - Offers a candid look at her experiences on her iconic variety show,

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highlighting her humor, storytelling ability, and appreciation for her remarkable career.

Legacy:

Carol Burnett has solidified her status as an enduring and influential figure in American entertainment, captivating the hearts of generations with her talent and charisma.

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In Such Good Company Summary

Written by Listenbrief

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In Such Good Company Summary Chapter List

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1. Chapter 1: Reflecting on the Birth of My Iconic Variety Show and Its Impact

In the world of entertainment, few shows have left a mark quite like "The Carol Burnett Show," which debuted in 1967. As the creator and host of this iconic variety show, I often find myself reflecting on its humble beginnings and the remarkable journey it undertook over the ensuing years. It was a formative period not only for me but for the network and the industry at large, shaping the landscape of television comedy in ways that resonated well beyond our weekly airtime.

The birth of the show was not just an idea materializing on a whim; it took years of hard work, perseverance, and a firm belief in the power of laughter. In an era dominated by traditional sitcoms and variety shows led by men, the prospect of a woman leading her own show was revolutionary. My vision was clear: I wanted to create a space for sketch comedy, musical numbers, and guest appearances that would showcase not just the comedic talents of myself but also of unique and diverse performers who were often overlooked by mainstream media.

From the conceptual stage, I understood that to build a successful show, it was essential to tap into the experiences and backgrounds of all performers involved. This approach brought a fresh perspective to television comedy, allowing for sketches that drew on real-life situations, societal norms, and



the absurdity of everyday life. One of the defining visions was to blend guest stars seamlessly into our fabric, creating memorable moments that would endure beyond the broadcast.

The inaugural season of "The Carol Burnett Show" was met with a mix of anticipation and skepticism. Many doubted whether audiences were ready for a variety show featuring a female lead, but I was undeterred. The premiere episode featured iconic sketches such as "The Family" and parodies of popular films; they weaved humor into emotionally resonant narratives. As viewers tuned in, I saw the delight ignite in their eyes; it was a powerful validation of my work and aspirations.

What made the show truly iconic was not just the sketches but the atmosphere we cultivated behind the scenes. The renowned ensemble cast, including Vicki Lawrence and Tim Conway, contributed massively to our success. Each member brought something unique to the table, creating chemistry that could not be fabricated. For instance, the unpredictable nature of Tim's humor often led to spontaneous moments that would have audiences in stitches, an element that became a hallmark of our variety style. It is these genuine interactions that gave our sketches a level of authenticity and warmth not often found in scripted performances.

The impact of "The Carol Burnett Show" was profound, not only within the

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sphere of comedy but also in the lives of our viewers. We provided a much-needed escape during tumultuous times marked by social upheaval and change. By confronting serious issues like gender equality and civil rights through humor, we engaged audiences in critical conversations. I remember vividly the mail we received from viewers—letters from families who would gather every Saturday night, forming a weekly ritual of laughter and connection.

The show also paved the way for future artists in comedy, particularly women. It inspired generations of female comedians who saw that a woman could wield power and creativity in entertainment. Icons like Ellen DeGeneres and Tina Fey often cite my work as influential in their careers. This ripple effect underscored the notion that diversity is a strength that enhances storytelling, which has become a cornerstone in modern entertainment.

Reflecting on the show's legacy, I am filled with gratitude. It was more than just an entertainment vehicle—it was a platform that brought joy, laughter, and community together in a way that truly resonated with our viewers. The mission was always to create a shared experience of laughter, and based on the impact expressed by fans over the decades, we succeeded.

"The Carol Burnett Show" was an experience of a lifetime, and as I look

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back on those formative years, I see a tapestry woven from the threads of talent, creativity, and the unwavering belief that laughter could—and should—be a unifying force. It remains, in essence, a testament to the magic that happens when you dare to dream and share that dream with the world.

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2. Chapter 2: Behind the Scenes: The Creative Minds Shaping Our Success

In the realm of television, particularly during the Golden Age of television variety shows, success often comes down to the collective creativity of a dedicated team. In "In Such Good Company," Carol Burnett takes readers on an illuminating journey behind the scenes of her iconic variety show, offering a heartfelt glimpse into the extraordinary minds that shaped its success. This chapter highlights the integral roles played by writers, directors, and the ensemble cast, all of whom created a unique alchemy that resonated with audiences for years.

Burnett emphasizes humor as a collaborative art form and credits the writing team as the "heart" of the show. This team was comprised of talented individuals like the legendary writers Anne Beatts and Ken Estin, whose creativity and innovative ideas brought the sketches alive. One memorable case she recounts involves a particular sketch titled "The Family," where the bizarre antics of an outlandish family mirrored the sitcom tropes prevalent during the 1970s. It was the writers' ability to blend absurdity with relatable family dynamics that made sketches like this stand out, embodying both humor and authenticity that audiences could connect with.

Another critical figure highlighted in this chapter is director Dave Powers, whose vision helped translate the written word into iconic moments on

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screen. His ability to foster a supportive environment allowed the cast to experiment, push boundaries, and find their comedic voice. A notable example of Powers' impact can be seen in how he directed the famous "I've Got a Secret" segment. He encouraged the ensemble to interact not just as performers but as friends, resulting in spontaneous, genuine laughter that became a signature aspect of the show.

The camaraderie among the cast formed a crucial layer of the show's chemistry. Carol vividly describes her relationship with fellow cast members like Vicki Lawrence and Tim Conway, noting how their improvisational skills often led to unexpected breakthroughs during performances. One such instance involved Conway's infamous comedic timing; during an otherwise scripted sketch, his tendency to go off-script would often leave both Burnett and the audience in stitches. Their willingness to embrace chaos and spontaneity not only highlighted their individual talents but also enhanced the show's overall appeal.

Furthermore, Carol Burnett stresses the importance of adaptability and teamwork in such a collaborative environment. With weekly pressure to produce engaging content, the team faced numerous challenges, yet their collective resolve turned potential setbacks into opportunities for creativity. A particular incident involved the introduction of a last-minute sketch aimed at addressing current events, showcasing how the writers and actors rapidly



pivoted to keep the show timely and relevant, a testament to their cohesive spirit that repeatedly saved the day.

In essence, this chapter of "In Such Good Company" serves as a vivid reminder of the creative minds that work tirelessly behind the scenes. Burnett captures not just the triumphs but also the dynamics of collaboration that led to some of the most memorable moments in television history. Through anecdotes and reflections, she honors the writers, directors, and performers who poured their heart and soul into each episode, creating a legacy that resonated with generations of viewers. Their shared vision and collective dedication to humor not only defined her variety show but also exemplified the profound impact of collaborative creativity in the entertainment industry.

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3. Chapter 3: Memorable Guests and Moments That Left a Lasting Impression

In "In Such Good Company", Carol Burnett vividly recounts her experiences with a plethora of memorable guests and unforgettable moments that truly defined her iconic variety show. Throughout its run, the program attracted an array of celebrities who not only graced the stage but also left indelible marks on Burnett's heart and on the hearts of countless viewers.

One of the standout guests mentioned is, of course, the legendary Lucille Ball. Burnett reflects on the emotional weight of having her idol appear on the show. The opportunity to share the stage with Ball was monumental not just professionally but also personally, as Burnett grew up watching "I Love Lucy" and idolizing the comedic timing and charisma of Lucy. During their segment together, the two comedians showcased a beautiful synergy, filled with laughter and quick wit that paid homage to their shared craft. Burnett recalls how Ball's effortless charm and humor could light up any scene, and her ability to make everyone feel at ease was evident. The episode, which included a playful skit involving a mistaken identity, was not just a triumph of comedy but a poignant moment for Burnett, who had often cited Ball as a significant influence on her career.

Another guest who left a lasting impression was the talented singer and actress, Bernadette Peters. Burnett and Peters shared not only a stage but



also a genuine connection that resonated deeply with the audience. Their comedic chemistry was palpable, especially during their sketch titled "The Old Folks" where they portrayed two aging women reflecting on their lives while misguidedly still thinking they were in their prime. The hilarity of the situation, paired with the human experience of growing older, brought laughter and nodded recognition to the audience, making the moment not only memorable but lovingly relatable. Peters was known for her remarkable vocal ability, and together with Burnett, they produced a sublime performance that combined humor with incredible musical talent—highlighting the essence of variety that the show was built upon.

Not all memorable moments, however, stemmed from guest stars. Some of the most impactful experiences came from improvised skits that turned into classic television history. One particular episode featured an unscripted moment between Burnett and Tim Conway, where Conway, in the role of a dentist, attempted to administer gas to Burnett's character—a routine sketch, until Conway's improvisation led to a side-splitting detour involving a massive, comically large anesthesia bag. The result was a celebration of live television, where spontaneity took center stage and left both the cast and viewers in stitches. This moment epitomized the spirit of the show: it was not merely about the script; it was about the laughter, the collaboration, and the unexpected magic that unfolded when talented performers came together.



Moreover, Burnett celebrated her dear friend and comedian, Harvey Korman, with whom she shared countless hilarious moments. Their chemistry was unmatched, and Burnett fondly recalls the various characters they created together. One of the most beloved skits was their recurring sketch of "The Family", which humorously depicted the dysfunctional yet endearing dynamics of a typical family. Fans cherished the humor derived not only from the outrageous situations but also from Korman's impeccable delivery and comedic timing. Burnett reflects on the magic of their partnership, describing how Korman could take any line and elevate it, turning it into an unforgettable moment.

Burnett's ability to interlace poignant personal anecdotes with her experiences on the show provides readers with a rich, immersive insight into what made her program so special. Each guest and comedic talent brought their unique flavor, yet they all shared a commitment to creating joy and laughter, contributing to the fabric of what would become one of television's most cherished programs. She embraces every warm memory, illustrating how laughter has the power to foster connections that can transcend time—whether through the charm of a seasoned star or the delightful unpredictability of live performance.

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4. Chapter 4: Personal Struggles and Triumphs: Balancing Fame with Family Life

In her memoir "In Such Good Company," Carol Burnett opens up about the intricate dance between her burgeoning fame and her commitment to family life, a balancing act that many in the entertainment industry can relate to and learn from. As Burnett navigated through the heights of her career, she faced profound personal struggles that tested her resolve and priorities.

The chapter delves into the reality of being thrust into the limelight as the star of one of television's first variety shows. Burnett's career took off in the 1960s, a time when Hollywood was not as accommodating to women, particularly those who had families. Balancing work demands alongside her responsibilities as a mother was a constant source of stress and self-reflection. Burnett candidly shares her feelings of guilt whenever professional obligations overshadowed family events, such as her daughter's school plays or special occasions. She writes about often needing to choose between late-night rehearsals and tucking her children into bed, revealing the emotional toll that comes with fame.

The pressures of being in the public eye intensified when Burnett was faced with personal tragedies, including the divorce from her first husband, Don Saroyan. This separation not only changed her personal life but echoed throughout her professional career as well. It filled her with anxiety about



how her public persona was perceived and how the dissolution of her marriage might impact her children. Burnett had to wrestle with the idea of maintaining her image while ensuring her children felt stable and secure.

Through these struggles, Burnett also emphasizes the small victories that kept her grounded. She recounts how finding moments of joy—whether it was through family game nights or simple evenings spent watching movies together—provided a semblance of normalcy amidst her chaotic work schedule. These personal triumphs reminded her of the importance of family and how love and support could help mitigate the pressures of her career.

Moreover, Burnett highlights the critical role her mother played in her life as a guiding influence. Her mother's steadfast support helped shape Burnett's character and resilience. In times of doubt or difficulty, she often found herself reflecting on her mother's wisdom and unconditional love, which offered her clarity in balancing her ambitious career with her role as a parent. This relationship demonstrates the significance of familial bonds—how they can offer strength and guidance through the tumultuous waves of life.

The chapter also reflects on the decisions she made to prioritize her family over her career at key moments, such as during her children's formative years. Burnett shares her experience of stepping back from her show

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temporarily to be more present at home, underscoring the fact that her family's well-being was paramount. She illustrates how these choices weren't always easy or well-received in the industry, yet they ultimately led her to a deeper contentment and commitment to her loved ones.

Burnett's narrative serves as a powerful reminder that fame does not shield one from life's challenges; rather, it can sometimes complicate them. Her candid reflections are a testament to the resilience required to find balance in an often demanding limelight while nurturing the love within the family unit. This chapter resonates on many levels, offering a glimpse into the life of a beloved entertainer, portraying not just her struggles but also her triumphs in the never-ending quest for equilibrium between career aspirations and family devotion.

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5. Chapter 5: Lessons Learned and My Gratitude for the Entertainment Journey

In reflecting upon my journey through the world of entertainment, I have gained invaluable lessons that extend far beyond the stage and screen. Each moment, whether brilliant or difficult, has contributed significantly to my growth as a performer and as a person. Through laughter and tears, I have learned the vital importance of resilience, the art of collaboration, and the power of gratitude.

One of the most prominent lessons I've learned is about resilience in the face of challenges. The entertainment industry is notoriously demanding; it pushes you to your limits, tests your resolve, and often imposes setbacks that can feel insurmountable. I remember the early days of my career when I auditioned for roles repeatedly, facing rejection after rejection. It was disheartening, but I soon understood that every 'no' brought me closer to a 'yes.' For instance, there was a time when the CBS executives were hesitant to give the green light for 'The Carol Burnett Show,' questioning its ability to attract a loyal audience. Instead of succumbing to the doubt, I poured my energy into the show's development and worked tirelessly alongside my team to craft a program that would resonate with viewers. Ultimately, that resilience paid off. Our efforts were rewarded when the show became a cultural landmark that brought joy to millions.



Collaboration is another crucial lesson I carry from my experience in the industry. From early on, I realized that creating something special required a team of creative minds coming together. The successes of 'The Carol Burnett Show' weren't solely mine; they were a product of the talents of writers, actors, and crew who all shared a vision. The rich tapestry of characters we portrayed and the unforgettable sketches we produced were the results of collective brainstorming sessions fueled by respect and camaraderie. I think particularly of the legendary Tim Conway, whose improvisational genius could elevate even the simplest skit into pure comedy gold. This experience taught me that embracing others' ideas and talents can lead to outcomes that far surpass our individual efforts.

Gratitude has woven itself into the fabric of my career as well. I am eternally thankful for the opportunities I've been given and the incredible individuals I've met along my journey. I often take a moment to appreciate the audiences that have supported me through the years; their laughter and applause are what have driven me to continue performing. This sentiment was especially clear during a tribute show I hosted to celebrate the legacy of my work.

Standing in front of an audience that had grown up with me, I could feel the love that connected us – a mutual appreciation that transcended generations.

Moreover, I've come to understand the significance of mentorship and giving back. Early in my career, I was fortunate to receive guidance from

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established artists who offered invaluable wisdom. Their generosity inspired me to support emerging talent by sharing my experiences and providing a helping hand to those just starting. For instance, I have always made it a point to encourage young comedians and actors who come to me seeking advice or support. Whether through writing letters of recommendation or simply lending an ear, I strive to foster a supportive community, reflective of the kindness I received earlier.

In conclusion, my entertainment journey has been a profound teacher. The lessons of resilience, collaboration, and gratitude have shaped my character and my work. Each experience, from the euphoric highs of television success to the quieter moments of reflection, has contributed to an endless well of appreciation for the art of performance and for the people who share this passion. I step onto the stage not just as an artist but as a vessel for connection and joy, knowing that every laugh shared is a celebration of all that I have learned and am forever grateful for.

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