



# Gloria Swanson: The Ultimate Star

*Stephen Michael Shearer*

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## **Gloria Swanson: The Ultimate Star** Stephen Michael Shearer

Gloria Swanson defined what it meant to be a movie star, but her unforgettable role in *Sunset Boulevard* overshadowed the true story of her life. Now Stephen Michael Shearer sets the record straight in the first in-depth biography of the film legend.

Swanson was Hollywood's first successful glamour queen. Her stardom as an actress in the mid-1920s earned her millions of fans and millions of dollars. Realizing her box office value early in her career, she took control of her life. Soon she was not only producing her own films, she was choosing her scripts, selecting her leading men, casting her projects, creating her own fashions, guiding her publicity, and living an extravagant and sometimes extraordinary celebrity lifestyle.

She also collected a long line of lovers (including Joseph P. Kennedy) and married men of *her* choosing (including a French marquis, thus becoming America's first member of "nobility"). As a devoted and loving mother, she managed a quiet success of raising three children. Perhaps most important, as a keen businesswoman she also was able to extend her career more than sixty years.

Her astounding comeback as Norma Desmond in Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* catapulted her back into the limelight. But it also created her long-misunderstood persona, one that this meticulous biography shows was only part of this independent and unparalleled woman.

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