

# MARLENE DIETRICH

b. December 27, 1901

d. May 6, 1992

## ACTOR

**Her breakout role was as sultry cabaret singer Lola Lola in the German film "The Blue Angel."**

*"Glamour is what I sell, it's my stock in trade."*

Marlene Dietrich was a movie star and cabaret singer who appeared in dozens of films during Hollywood's Golden Age. She was one of the highest paid actresses of her time.

Born Marie Magdalene Dietrich in Berlin, Germany, she was the younger of two daughters in a well-to-do family. In her mid-teens, Dietrich studied acting. In the early 1920's, she began her career in cinema and met her future husband Rudolf Sieber. Dietrich remained married to Sieber for more than 50 years. During the marriage she had a series of affairs with famous men and women.

Her breakout role was as sultry cabaret singer Lola Lola in the German film "The Blue Angel" (1930), directed by Josef von Sternberg. Dietrich and von Sternberg moved to Hollywood, where he directed her in six films. For their first collaboration, "Morocco" (1930), Dietrich earned an Oscar nomination. She played a singer dressed in a man's tuxedo and top hat who kisses a female audience member on the lips.

Among Dietrich's most memorable films are "Desire" (1936), co-starring Gary Cooper; "Destry Rides Again" (1939), which showcased her comedic talent; "Witness for the Prosecution" (1957), her top box office hit; and "Judgment at Nuremberg" (1961), her final motion picture.

Dietrich became an American citizen in 1937 and performed for Allied troops during World War II. In 1947, she was awarded the U.S. Medal of Freedom, which she called her proudest accomplishment. As her film career waned, she found success for nearly 20 years as a cabaret singer. Collaborating with musical arranger Burt Bacharach, Dietrich turned her nightclub act into a theatrical one-woman show. Dietrich and Bacharach recorded four albums and several singles.

In 1967, she performed her show on Broadway and received a Special Tony Award. In 1975, after a series of on-stage falls and injuries, Dietrich retired from show business. She spent the final decade of her life in Paris, secluded and bedridden.

In 2002, Dietrich was posthumously proclaimed an honorary citizen of Berlin with a plaque describing her as "one of the few German actresses that attained international significance."



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