



# Marlene: A Novel

*C. W. Gortner*

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A lush, dramatic biographical novel of one of the most glamorous and alluring legends of Hollywood's golden age, Marlene Dietrich—from the gender-bending cabarets of Weimar Berlin to the lush film studios of Hollywood, a sweeping story of passion, glamour, ambition, art, and war from the author of *Mademoiselle Chanel*.

Raised in genteel poverty after the First World War, Maria Magdalena Dietrich dreams of a life on the stage. When a budding career as a violinist is cut short, the willful teenager vows to become a singer, trading her family's proper, middle-class society for the free-spirited, louche world of Weimar Berlin's cabarets and drag balls. With her sultry beauty, smoky voice, seductive silk cocktail dresses, and androgynous tailored suits, Marlene performs to packed houses and becomes entangled in a series of stormy love affairs that push the boundaries of social convention.

For the beautiful, desirous Marlene, neither fame nor marriage and motherhood can cure her wanderlust. As Hitler and the Nazis rise to power, she sets sail for America. Rivaling the success of another European import, Greta Garbo, Marlene quickly becomes one of Hollywood's leading ladies, starring with legends such as Gary Cooper, John Wayne, and Cary Grant. Desperate for her return, Hitler tries to lure her with dazzling promises. Marlene instead chooses to become an American citizen, and after her new nation is forced into World War II, she tours with the USO, performing for thousands of Allied troops in Europe and Africa.

But one day she returns to Germany. Escorted by General George Patton himself, Marlene is heartbroken by the war's devastation and the evil legacy of the Third Reich that has transformed her homeland and the family she loved.

An enthralling and insightful account of this extraordinary legend, *Marlene* reveals the inner life of a woman of grit, glamour, and ambition who defied convention, seduced the world, and forged her own path on her own terms.

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