



THE

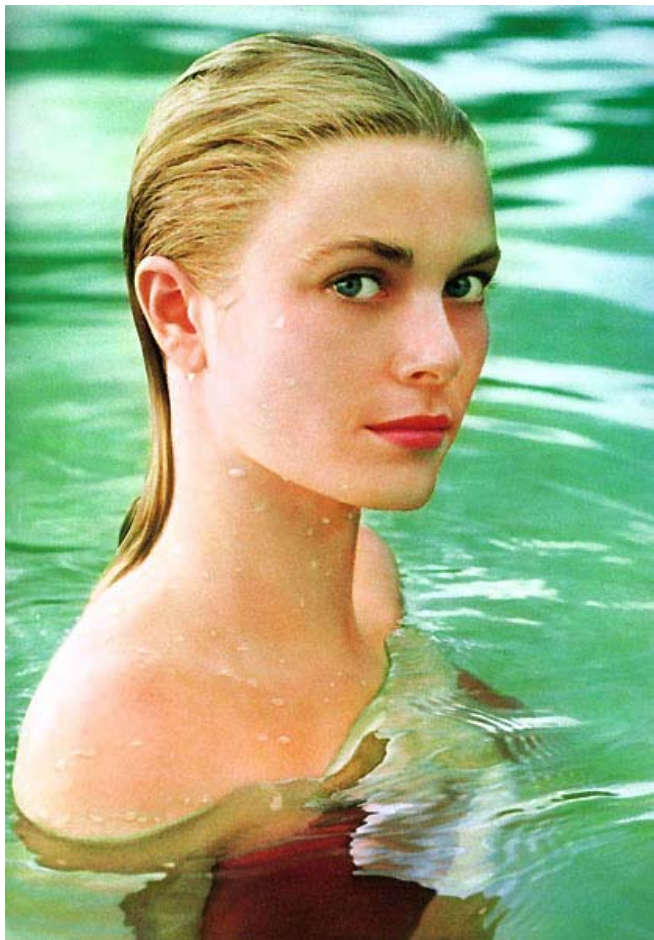
Nick Zegarrac's

Hollywood

ART

Grace Kelly

The Movie's first
PRINCESS



Magic In The Very Name

The Statuesque Princess with a Woman's Heart

by *Nick Zegorac*

"I don't want to be married to someone who feels inferior to my success or because I make more money than he does."

- Grace Kelly

Grace Kelly: a name that immediately conjures to mind flashes of imperishable beauty, stately elegance and hushed reverence for the actress, Princess, legend and woman. Both literally and metaphorically, Grace Kelly was the cinema's fairytale goddess; an impossibly glamorous creature transient from Hollywood's manufactured aristocracy to a position of genuine power. A figure of poised resplendence – often misconstrued by the outside world as posturing in cool aloofness – Grace Kelly was ever more the Princess at heart than by title.

When, as Princess of Monaco she began to receive large quantities of mail requesting her aid and advice, Grace established the Princess Grace Foundation. After she noticed that Monaco's artisans were struggling to earn a living, Grace set up Le Boutique du Rocher – a non-profit venture that proved so popular in launching new talent it has since established other locations in Monte Carlo.

Generous to a fault and with her time and commitment to the needy and downtrodden a personal hallmark, Grace Kelly was a legend in her own time. She has since become an icon for all time.

(Top: an early modeling photo of Grace in a pool. Even with her trademark blonde locks slicked back, Grace's glycerin features sparkle; her large eyes caught in an assertive stare, her head perfectly balanced on a swan-like neck. Middle: Posing with Alec Guinness, her formidable costar in MGM's *The Swan* – a Ruritanian romance made just prior to Grace's retirement from making movies. Bottom: the man whose own success proved a perfect match to her own – Prince Rainier of Monaco and Princess Grace enjoy the races. Grace's early years as royalty were a learning period.)





A LIFE IN PICTURES

"Hollywood amuses me; holier-than-thou for the public and un-holier-than-the-devil in reality."

- Grace Kelly

She was born **Grace Patricia Kelly** in Philadelphia, PA on November 12, 1929, to a loving mother who had once been a magazine 'cover girl' and doting father on the cusp of becoming a successful industrialist. Although much has been 'made' of the Kelly family fortune, the truth is that Grace's family wealth was only second generation. Grace's grandfather had in fact been an immigrant bricklayer with a keen sense of business savvy. Her uncle, George Kelly, was perhaps the only family member to be considered pop-royalty; the Pulitzer Prize-winning dramatist of *The Show-Off* and *Craig's Wife*.



A precocious child with a penchant for polite mischief, there was no hint of pretense about the young Grace who, as she matured, preferred the relaxed comfort of jeans and sweatshirts to polished designer gowns and high heel shoes. Years later, Grace would fondly reminisce about her initial lack of fashion sense and her reluctance to give it up with ***“We live in a palace now. One is thus a little embarrassed to walk about it wearing blue jeans.”***

Even from her modest beginnings, at the heart of Grace’s upbringing was the ingrained understanding that personal wealth came not only at a price but also with its own set of personal responsibilities. Almost from birth, Grace had wanted to be an actress – though it is highly unlikely that she could have foreseen just how far that choice in career would eventually take her. At the tender age of ten Grace made her debut in a Philadelphia stage production. By her late teens, she had solidified her commitment to that professional pursuit with a move to New York City where she worked as a fashion model while attending the American Academy of Dramatic Arts.

Grace’s good looks were immediately recognized. However, after receiving an offer for a screen test, Grace politely declined it instead to dabble in the then fledgling medium of television and hone in her acting talents on the stage. In 1949, Grace made her Broadway debut in a revival of August Strindberg’s **The Father**. Her modest part garnered her critical praise and helped to build her confidence as a performer. Thus, when Hollywood beckoned once more, Grace accepted a bit part in 20th Century-Fox’s brooding film noir, **Fourteen Hours** (1951).

It was an inauspicious film debut, but it led to Grace being cast as Amy Fowler Kane, the Quaker wife of the town Marshall Will (Gary Cooper) in Fred Zinnemann’s **High Noon** (1952), a role that provided Grace with her first big opportunity to radiate that elusive blend of child-like innocence and womanly purity that would endear her to the public. Despite receiving glowing reviews in **High Noon**, Grace did not benefit from the film’s success. No further filmic offers came and she reluctantly agreed to test for the role of Mary in **Taxi** (1953) but was rejected in favor of Constance Smith. However, luck and timing was on Grace’s side.

(Previous page: Grace takes direction from Alfred Hitchcock on the set of *To Catch a Thief*. This page: behind the scenes at the Oscars with Grace and Audrey Hepburn. Exuberant, after the public announcement of her marriage to Prince Rainier.)





(Three for Hitch' – Top: with James Stewart, speculating the whereabouts of a missing spouse in *Rear Window* (1954). Taking Cary Grant for a ride in *To Catch a Thief* (1955). Most of the driving was performed by a stunt double with process plates and rear projection subbing in for the harrowing race through Monte Carlo's hills. Ironically, Grace was killed near the very location depicted in this film. Bottom: preparing to die after a mysterious phone call goes unanswered in *Dial M for Murder* 1954. The relationship between Hitchcock and Grace is complex. After the director's death, rumors abounded that Hitchcock had been in love with Grace – an erroneous claim. Moreover, Hitchcock admired Grace's blend of vulnerability and sophistication.)

Director John Ford had seen the *Taxi* screen test and had decided to cast Grace in *Mogambo* (1953) – a Technicolor remake of Clark Gable's *Red Dust* (1932) starring Gable and Ava Gardner. Once again, Grace played an innocent; this time a devoted wife, who discovers to her own chagrin that her heart has begun to drift toward the rugged masculinity of a big game hunter while on safari in Africa.

It was during a hiatus from shooting in London in 1952 that *Look Magazine's* west coast editor Rupert Allan met Grace for the first time. Allan penned of a puff piece for the magazine that so impressed both its editor and Grace that an instant life-long friendship was forged between Kelly and Allan over the course

of the next few years and subsequent interviews for Look were readily granted after Grace had become a success.

In the meantime, **Mogambo's** premiere had transformed Grace Kelly into Hollywood's latest celebrity pin-up. The film also earned Grace a seven year contract with MGM and her first Oscar nomination as Best Supporting Actress. However, it also created a mountain of headaches for all concerned.

MGM in the 1950s was not the same studio it had been a decade earlier. Hence, the studio's first line of promotion for its new starlet was not to research film vehicles for their new protégée to star in, but rather, to market Grace on loan outs for other studio projects that they could exploit to their own advantage for a fee. The plan worked very well at first.

Director Alfred Hitchcock tapped Grace as his latest in a long line of blonde heroines; first as fashion plate Margo Mary Wendice in **Dial M for Murder** (1954). Once again, Grace proved a winner – her stately elegance complimentary to that silky veneer of lost innocence. In the film, Margo has been having an off camera affair with writer, Mark Halliday (Robert Cummings), but has begun to regret her hasty decision and instead has decided to work things out with her husband, Tony (Ray Milland). Mark is broken-hearted but remarkably understanding. The problem; Tony knows about Margo's affair and has decided to hire an old school chum to murder her and make it look like an accident. The plan, however, goes awry and Margo kills her assassin instead.

The success of **Dial M for Murder** was matched by Grace's instant and overwhelming respect for Hitchcock – a union that practically ensured actress and director would team up once again; this time in what many consider one of Hitchcock's most brilliant masterworks – **Rear Window** (1954).

(Warbling a few bars of Cole Porter's immortal ballad 'True Love' with Bing Crosby in **High Society** 1956. The record of the song became a hit single, netting Grace millions in royalties she would continue to reap for years. Middle: a pensive moment in **The Country Girl** 1954 with Crosby and William Holden. Bottom: answering reporter's questions backstage with Holden and her Best Actress Oscar for **The Country Girl**.)





(Hitchcock and Kelly: Of their three filmic outings, perhaps the one in which Grace is the most idolized is 1954's *Rear Window*. Hitchcock grants Grace an unprecedented amount of close-ups, effectively allowing his camera to make love to his star. The camera's adoring stare is affectionately reciprocated (top left and middle) particularly during Grace's introduction as Lisa Freemont. Lisa sneaks into her boyfriend, L.B. Jeffries' (James Stewart) apartment and approaches as he sleeps in his wheel chair.

Top right: Lisa's exuberance in this frame is contrasted with Jeffries rather laconic rejection of her (right) in favor of staring out his window at the voluptuous Miss Torso – a dancer in an adjoining apartment who is entertaining three male suitors. "She has the hardest job in the world..." Lisa declare, "Juggling wolves."



Middle: Lisa and Jeffries are joined by his physiotherapist (Thelma Ritter) in their spying session on another apartment owned by Lars Thorwald (Raymond Burr) whom L.B. suspects of having murdered his wife. Lisa seizes upon the opportunity to play amateur detective, partly to disprove her boyfriend's claim that she is not strong enough to weather the toughness of his profession as a hard-hitting magazine photographer.



Middle: after one of the neighbor's dog has its neck broken, Lisa and Jeffries contemplate the reason for the killing. By now, Jeffries need no further convincing that Thorwald is, in fact, a murderer.



Bottom: at the conclusion of *Rear Window* Hitchcock affords Lisa her single concession for having indulged Jeffries' whim of suspicion. She sits quietly by as Jeffries slips off into sleep, replacing his *National Geographic* – that she has only been pretending to read – with her preferred most recent edition of *Harper's Bazaar*.



Cast as Lisa Carol Freemont, the long suffering fashion model whose would-be fiancée, L.B. Jeffries (James Stewart) cannot quite bring himself to marriage, Grace exhibited the hallmarks of a truly great actress; her innate ability to handle comedy and suspense in perfect register and complimentary to Hitchcock. In the years that were to follow, Hitchcock would regard Grace as his ultimate screen heroine even though the two only work together on only one more movie before Grace's premature retirement.

In the meantime, Grace had suddenly become a 'movie star' – one of the most sought after and easily recognizable faces on the big screen; a popularity and prestige that led to her being considered by director George Seaton as runner up for the lead in Clifford Odets's **The Country Girl** (1954) after Jennifer Jones unexpectedly became pregnant and had to bow out of the project. Initially, Paramount executives refused Seaton's request to cast Grace, presumably blinded by her stunning physical beauty that seemed at odds with the otherwise dowdy and downtrodden character she would be playing.

Grace, however, refused to relinquish the part of Georgia Elgen. Agreeing to audition for the role, Grace secured the respect of both her cast and crew – transforming herself into the very embodiment of her character. In the final analysis, the Academy of Motion Picture



Arts and Sciences (AMPAS) concurred, awarding Grace her one and only Best Actress Oscar.

MGM, the studio that had sat by while Grace's star had steadily risen was now in an enviable position. They had signed Kelly for a meager \$750 a week and with only a few films to her credit she had skyrocketed to international stardom. Girls everywhere copied her style of dress and mannerisms. Every producer on the lot wanted her for his next picture and MGM was in the position to pick and choose her filmic destiny to suit their own means. Unfortunately, MGM chose their next project unwisely.

Grace was at the pinnacle of her powers as an actress. But a misfire was on the horizon. In **Green Fire**, Grace was hopelessly miscast as the courtly Catherine Knowland; wife of a South American plantation owner whose heart is stirred to passion by emerald smuggler, Rian X. Mitchell (Stewart Granger). Enduring the relentless and often harsh backlash by critics, MGM decided to loan Grace out again. She appeared opposite William Holden in Paramount's tragic war romance, **The Bridge to Toko-Ri** (1954), a popular film, though one beneath her talents.



Grace rebounded in Hitchcock's most slick and stylish thriller of the 50s; **To Catch a Thief** (1955), opposite Cary Grant: the last time Hitchcock and Grace would work together. Partly shot on location in the south of France, Grace reportedly asked the film's screenwriter John Michael Hayes if he was able to identify the owner of a lush rose garden they passed while driving the Grande Corniche. Hayes replied, "**The Prince Grimaldi's.**"



It was the first time Grace had heard that name. Fortuitously, it would not be the last. While filming on the French Riviera, Grace was introduced to Prince Rainier III in a polite and cordial first glance set up largely for the film's publicity. Instantly, the Hollywood meets royalty angle led to rumors and wild speculations of a whirlwind romance between the Prince and Grace, though Grace had ostensibly become engaged to designer Oleg Cassini at that time.

MGM recalled Grace to America, announcing to the press in advance that her next project would be opposite Robert Taylor in **The Adventures of Quentin Durward** (1955).

(Top: A top attraction at Paramount in his own right, actor/comedian Danny Kaye was a frequent visitor on the set of *Rear Window*. Here he mugs for the cameras as he attempts to share an intimate cup of tea with Grace in between takes. Middle: Kelly is a tortured soul in *Mocambo* 1953, torn between duty to her husband and a growing sexual attraction to Clark Gable, here more interested in Honey (Ava Gardner). Bottom: as the Quaker wife of Gary Cooper's true blue Marshall Will Kane in Fred Zinnemann's *High Noon* 1952.)

Unfortunately for all concerned, the script was a shambles of sword-play and adventure that left Grace with precious little to do except swoon and be rescued. Upon reading a copy of the script, Grace emphatically refused to partake in the assignment. MGM played hardball – suspending her from all future projects. Their iron clad contract made it virtually impossible for Grace to accept filmic work at other studios.

It did not, however, preclude her from dabbling in artistic projects outside of film making. At the behest of festival organizers, Grace's old friend, Rupert Allen suggested that she might attend the Cannes Film Festival as a minor diversion.

Grace originally declined Allan's invitation, but changed her mind after Paramount suggested she go to promote the European release of **The Country Girl**. Almost immediately, Allan set about preparing a photo-op with Paris Match magazine between Grace and Prince Rainier. But Grace refused to partake, citing a prearranged commitment to appear at an official reception for the festival instead.

Allan, an old hand at match-making, quietly acquiesced, but more steadily refused to give in. Instead, he moved the Paris Match photo-op to a tour of the royal palace. Grace reluctantly agreed to be photographed in several rooms, posing along side some of the lush furnishings.

At 4 o'clock that afternoon, Rainier suddenly appeared – perhaps even more nervous than Grace. Ever the gentleman, Rainier's charm and cordial restraint easily won Grace over and the two settled into a more relaxed second meeting.

By the end of their conversation, Rainier had become smitten with the actress and Grace had been left with an indelible first impression that her Prince was indeed charming.

(Top: ravishing in gold lame for the finale of *To Catch a Thief* 1954, Grace takes direction from Hitchcock as screenwriter John Michael Hayes looks on intently. Of their three outings, *To Catch A Thief* is the most playful and romanticized. The paper thin plot involves an American heiress', played by Grace, growing infatuation with John Robie (Cary Grant); a man she suspects of being a cat burglar on the French Riviera.

Middle: looking luminous in the sweltering heat at Cannes and enduring the crowds.

Bottom: flanked by Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra for *High Society* 1956, one of the more adroit remakes of the decade. Shortly after the film's release Grace moved on to 'higher' society and a new adopted country.)





MINOR CELEBRITY / MAJOR ATTRACTION

"I want to thank you for showing the Prince what an American Catholic girl can be and for the very deep impression this has left on him."

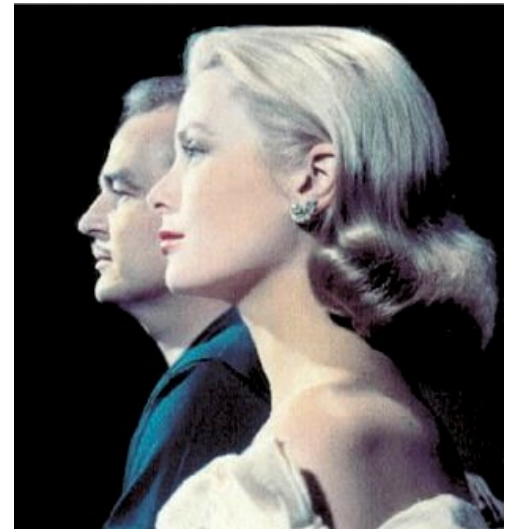
– Father Francis Tucker

The official story of how Grace and Rainier met is a matter of public record published in Look Magazine. However, between that meeting and Father Tucker's note to Grace there had been a privately written correspondence between Grace and the Prince in which she humbly thanked him for the afternoon they had spent together. The Prince reciprocated with a cordial reply. In the months leading up to their second arranged meeting, Grace and Rainier had become pen pals.

In truth, Tucker's note to Grace was predicated on several factors – first; that like Grace, Tucker was a Philadelphian; second; that he currently was a priest in Monaco, and third; that he was a close personal friend of the Grimaldi family. During the interim between the festival and Christmas of 1955, Father Tucker did his best to keep mutual interests and rumors of a burgeoning romance between Grace and Rainier alive on both continents.

Father Tucker orchestrated a minor coup that began with the planting of a story of the prince's serious intentions to ask Grace to be his bride. As a result, the Kellys hosted royalty for the first time when Rainier arrived in Delaware for the Christmas holidays. By all accounts the Kellys liked Rainier at first glance, though off the record Grace's father was frank enough to admit to the Prince that **"royalty doesn't mean anything to us."** It was during this same visit that Grace accepted the prince's proposal of marriage; a swift and decisive move that sent immediate shockwaves through most of Hollywood and even startled Rupert Allen.

(Top left: Grace entertains Rainier at her parents' home in Delaware. Top right: at the absurdly lavish wedding reception. Although accustomed to crowds, Grace later admitted that all of the pomp and press coverage gave her a slight case of nerves. Right: Grace's first formal portrait as 'Her Royal Highness.' Bottom: during the wedding ceremony, looking chaste and regal.)





Princess Grace of Monaco

Grace de Monaco



However, MGM had had a change of heart too – or perhaps, a change of strategy is more like it. They offered Grace the lead in a filmic romance that seemed to mirror her real life circumstances. Reluctantly, Grace began work on **The Swan** (1956) a Ruritanian romance between a Prince and Princess that, in hindsight, was greatly influenced by the Paris Match article which speculated an intercontinental romance brewing between Grace and Rainier. Grace's contractual commitments to MGM were rounded out with 1956's remake of **The Philadelphia Story** re-purposed as the musical **High Society**.



By all accounts, the transition from screen Princess to real life royalty was problematic and exacerbated by the usual publicity machinery that transformed Grace's pending nuptials into a three ring circus destined for the world news reel cameras. ***"The freedom of the press works in such a way that there is not much freedom from it,"*** Grace would later muse.

Despite becoming pregnant with Caroline almost from the moment she said 'I do', Princess Grace made it her immediate purpose to become a very public figure in Monaco. She embraced her new found title with all the vigor, prestige and dedication that had made her one of the world's most adored cinema personalities and, in her transition from movie icon to popular personage, she became more comfortable with finding her own niche within palace life.



"I had so many problems when I first came here," the Princess would later reflect, ***"...there was the language. I still spoke very poor French...I think my biggest single problem was becoming a normal person again, after having been an actress for so long...It was a very hard job that I had to take step by step. Luckily, I had the Prince, who was very helpful and very patient with me."***

Fiercely loyal to her new duties, the Princess eventually came to be regarded by her citizens as the most immaculate, yet accessible and universally

(Top: Grace and bridesmaids. Middle: arriving with Rainier. Under constant scrutiny from both her adopted country and the press, the first year of marriage was hardly idyllic. Bottom: the young Grimaldi family, Rainier, Grace, Albert, Stephanie and Caroline).



respected monarch of her generation. Many of Grace's closest friends during this time have since reflected that there was a certain intangible quality the Princess gave back to her constituents. She was ever more a hands on woman of the world than Princess-as-figurehead; so much more the fireside matriarch than the fashion plate and quite capable of winning the hearts and minds of all who came to know her.

The one minor glitch between Grace and the people of Monaco occurred in 1963 when the press leaked word that the Princess was seriously considering a brief return to films, to star in Alfred Hitchcock's **Marnie**. Hitchcock had long wanted to reunited with his favorite cool blonde. However, neither Hitch' nor the Princess were quite prepared for the backlash of public scrutiny that followed the announcement.

"She and I talked about it," Rainier reflected years later, ***"We also talked to Hitchcock about it. I didn't see anything wrong with it so I suggested we combine her work on the film with a family vacation."***

Sadly, Monaco did not share Rainier's laissez faire attitude toward Hollywood. Their Princess *could not* also be a movie star. The former was an inherent responsibility Grace had accepted from God and country, the latter – a mere profession. A litany of public discouragements followed. The question of *'billing'* incited a near public riot. Would Grace be billed as Grace Kelly or Princess Grace? MGM, still owning the option on Kelly's contract, informed the Princess that they would boycott her from doing any project for any studio but their own. Finally, a letter from Pop John XXIII arrived at the palace, personally asking Grace not to do **Marnie**.

Reluctantly, Grace bowed out of the project. Hitchcock was first infuriated, then disappointed. He had already publicized the film in America as *'the return of Grace Kelly.'* Though bitterly disappointed and vowing to never again appear in films, the Princess had a change of heart two years later when she and Rainier both appeared in a charity documentary for UNICEF. However, as the years wore on, Grace was more realistic about her duties. ***"To me,"*** she once commented, ***"marriage has always been more important than my career."***

(Top: Settling in to her royal duties and looking every bit the part, Princess Grace quickly became a respected part of Monaco – bridging the gap between the social elite and the commoner with humility and kindness. Bottom: leaving Sunday mass with the Prince.)



In 1976, Grace did four poetry readings at St. Cecilia's Hall in Edinburgh for the American bicentennial. The program and reviews in the press were so widely acclaimed that in February 1978 the Princess received an invitation to repeat her performance in Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Washington. Instead, together with her close friend and organizer of the original event, John Carroll, Grace performed an entirely new monologue called *'Birds, Beasts and Flowers'* to thunderous ovations. It was a minor artistic coup for the woman who had once been universally adored simply as a movie queen.

Between 1979 and September of 1982, Grace tirelessly performed at these benefit venues. She seemed to derive strength from her public appearances, confiding to long time friend Mary Wells, ***"I'm so looking forward to this year. I'm coming into a whole new period in my life. The children are grown. Monte Carlo is great. Everything is terrific. My responsibilities have changed and I can finally do so many of the things I really want to do. I'm excited about the future. Now is my time."***

Tragically, on September 14th 1982, Grace's brief moment of personal contentment came to an end.

Only the day before, the Princess had optimistically planned to do another poetry reading. In her green Rover, accompanied by daughter Stephanie and a pile of dresses packed for the occasion, Grace drove down the tight, steep and winding road leading into town. What occurred between the palace and her destination remains open for discussion. What is known is that Grace missed her turn. Her car struck and drove through a retaining wall. The Rover somersaulted 120 feet through dense foliage and careened off the side of a steep slope.

In the intervening personal and public chaos that immediately followed the accident, Grace quietly slipped into a coma. It was determined by a French neurosurgeon in Nice that the Princess had suffered two severe brain lesions – one immediately prior to her accident, the second during her fateful crash. No surgical intervention was possible. Grace was placed on life support with the grim prognosis that if she survived, in all likelihood half her body would be permanently paralyzed. The next day, Princess Grace died. She was just 52 years old.



LEGACY REVISITED

How does one remember a legend? Well, if only by the body of film work left behind, Grace Kelly was a woman of the world destined for the historical annals. Her legacy on film is brief, but it shimmers to glorious effect as few of her contemporaries work has. In reconsidering Grace's life beyond film one is struck by how much more there is to the woman both in front of the camera and behind the royal title.

As an actress Grace Kelly conveyed a refreshing frankness about both the art of motion pictures and her place in the cinema firmament; ***"I don't want to dress up a picture with just my face,"*** Grace once said, adding, ***"When they start using me just for scenery, I'll return to New York."***

As a doting wife and mother, Grace often found time to reflect, perhaps in a moment of sadness on the state of being a woman; ***"Emancipation of women has made them lose their mystery."***

In the final analysis, Grace Kelly, Princess of Monaco is ever more than mere legend. She was genuine – a woman first; wife and mother second. Acting and her title – these were for show; the necessary accoutrements to fulfill both the dream and the expectation that her legions of adoring fans and subjects sought to project onto her.

Ultimately, Grace was just a girl with simple tastes who thought little of prestige or power – as her character in *To Catch a Thief* adroitly summates for Cary Grant; ***"Palaces are for royalty. We're just common people with a bank account."***

While Grace's time has come and gone, the iconography that stems from her life and passing continues to inspire. Hence, she is not a Princess of her time, but rather a reigning personality for the ages; a radiant star for all time.

(Top: an early photo submitted as part of Grace's modeling portfolio. Middle left: as Hollywood's reigning star of statuesque beauty and poise. Middle right: resting between takes on the set of *The Swan*.)

Bottom left: Director Alfred Hitchcock looks on adoringly at his most glamorous leading lady during the premiere of *To Catch a Thief*.

Bottom right: Time Magazine's luminous cover of Grace at the height of her movie stardom and at the cusp of marriage to Prince Rainier. The caption at lower left reads: 'Gentlemen Prefer Ladies.'

