

• MARIA CALLAS •

OPERA SINGER

M

aria was a clumsy and unpopular girl.

She was sure that her mother loved her sister more because her sister was slimmer, prettier, and more popular than her.

One day, Maria's mother discovered that her little daughter had an amazing voice. She encouraged Maria to sing in order to earn money for their family.

Maria's mother tried to enroll her in the National Conservatory in Athens, but Maria was rejected because she had never had any formal training. So her mother sent her to a private teacher.

When her teacher first heard her sing, she was speechless. It was the most amazing voice she had ever heard. Not only did Maria master all the most difficult arias in a matter of a few months, her singing style went straight to the heart.

Maria applied to the National Conservatory again and this time she was accepted.

One night, she made her debut on the stage of the most prestigious opera house in the world: La Scala in Milan. When she sang, the audience hung on to every note and every word as her voice carried them away to a place full of passion, rage, joy, and love. At the end, they jumped to their feet, clapping and shouting, and showered the stage with roses.

Maria came to be known simply as La Divina, the divine one—the most famous soprano ever.

DECEMBER 2, 1923–SEPTEMBER 16, 1977

GREECE

A stylized illustration of Maria Callas. She is depicted from the waist up, wearing a black sleeveless dress with a red shawl draped over her shoulders. She has dark hair, dark eye makeup, and red lipstick. She is wearing a pearl necklace and pearl earrings. Her right hand is raised to her chest, and her left hand is extended forward. The background is a textured, golden-yellow color. The text "ILLUSTRATION BY MARTA SIGNORI" is in the top right corner. A quote by Maria Callas is in the bottom left corner.

ILLUSTRATION BY
MARTA SIGNORI

"I WILL ALWAYS BE
AS DIFFICULT AS
NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE
THE BEST."
—MARIA CALLAS