

The Scandal Surrounding *Die Sünderin* [*The Sinner*] (1951)

Abstract

The Sinner (director: Willi Forst) caused a great scandal in the Federal Republic in the early 1950s. In the film, Hildegard Knef plays the prostitute Marina, who is "reformed" by her love for the incurably ill painter, Alexander (played by Gustav Fröhlich). After a brief period of happiness, Alexander is faced with impending blindness. At his request, Marina assists him in his suicide, and then takes her own life. The Church took exception to the suicide scene, to the "transfigured representation of unsanctioned union," and to Marina's prostitution. There were calls for boycott, demonstrations, and death threats against Hildegard Knef. Despite, or because of all this, the film was seen by two million Germans in the first three weeks. After the protests subsided, interest faded as well, and in the long run, the film was not a financial success. It premiered on February 18, 1951, in Frankfurt am Main. Below is a film still with Hildegard Knef and Gustav Fröhlich.

Source



Source: Film still from *Die Sünderin*, 1951.

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Recommended Citation: The Scandal Surrounding Die Sünderin [The Sinner] (1951), published in:
German History in Documents and Images,
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:image-993>> [May 03, 2024].