

Golden Gate: The Life and Times of America's Greatest Bridge

Kevin Starr

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The Golden Gate Bridge links the urbanity of San Francisco with the wild headlands of Marin County, as if to suggest the paradox of California and America itself-the place that Fitzgerald saw as the last spot commensurate with the human capacity for wonder. The bridge, completed in 1937, also announced to the world America's engineering prowess and full assumption of its destined continental dominance. The Golden Gate is a counterpart to the Statue of Liberty, pronouncing American achievement in an unmistakable American fashion. The nation's very history is expressed in the bridge's art deco style and stark verticality.

Kevin Starr's *Golden Gate* is a brilliant and passionate telling of the history of the bridge, and the rich and peculiar history of the California experience. The Golden Gate is a grand public work, a symbol and a very real bridge, a magnet for both postcard photographs and suicides. In this compact but comprehensive narrative, Starr unfolds the hidden-in-plain-sight meaning of the Golden Gate, putting it in its place among classic works of art.



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