

= Sue Ellen Ewing =

Sue Ellen Ewing (maiden name Shepard) is a fictional character and one of the female leads in the CBS primetime soap opera Dallas and its continuation series . Sue Ellen is portrayed by actress Linda Gray , and has appeared on the show since its pilot episode , first broadcast on April 2 , 1978 . Dallas follows the trials of the wealthy Ewing family in the city of Dallas , Texas , into which Sue Ellen married when she wed the notoriously evil J. R. Ewing . Gray played Sue Ellen until the twelfth season of Dallas , when her character finally leaves Texas after beating J.R. at his own game , seen in the episode " Reel Life " . However , Gray later returned for the series finale " Conundrum Part II " , the subsequent Dallas telemovies (" J.R. Returns " and " War of the Ewings ") , and the reunion special entitled Dallas Reunion : The Return to Southfork , which aired in 2004 , and reunited her with former castmates .

Sue Ellen 's storylines in the first season focus on the character 's bout with alcohol and her slowly deteriorating relationship with her husband . The final episode of the season focused on the birth of her son with J.R. , John Ross Ewing III . While her relationship with J.R. is not always harmonious , it 's a significant aspect of her overall character . As the series progressed , Sue Ellen came into her own as an individual character . The actress has said of her character 's personality : " I never wanted her to be boring . She was never boring before ? she started out kind of boring , but I think that 's the kiss of death because people will expect her to be interesting . " Gray later described Sue Ellen as being , " one of the most interesting characters on TV in the 1980s . She was the original Desperate Housewife . She led the way for all those girls . "

For her work as Sue Ellen , Gray was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award in the category " Best Actress in a Drama Series " in 1981 (Barbara Bel Geddes who played Miss Ellie Ewing was also nominated in that category for Dallas that year) . Gray was also nominated for a Golden Globe Award in both 1980 and 1981 in the category of " Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series ? Drama " respectively . In 2010 , TNT (sister company to Warner Bros. Television , the current copyright owners of the series) announced they were producing a new , updated Dallas series . It is a continuation of the original series and will primarily center around Sue Ellen and J.R. ' s son John Ross Ewing III , and Bobby and Pamela 's son Christopher Ewing , though various stars of the original series will be reprising their roles . Gray agreed to return to the new series and once again assumed the role of Sue Ellen .

= = Character portrayal and development = =

= = = Casting and creation = = =

When Gray originally tested for Dallas , the role of Sue Ellen was merely that of a background character . The actress recounts that the part was a " mere walk @-@ on " and there hadn 't been any need for a formal audition . In fact , Gray had to do an impromptu audition over the telephone because the role was not considered important enough to bring in another actor to test for the part , though the actress later stated that Newhart innkeeper Mary Frann was also considered to play the character while the producers were casting the show . In an interview with TV Guide , Gray confirmed : " She [Frann] had the part . Victoria Principal was a brunette , and so was I , and Mary was a blonde , and [the producers] wanted that [visual] contrast . But the casting director [who had only recently tapped me to play a transsexual on All That Glitters] kept bugging them until they finally said , ' OK , we 'll read her . ' " Once the show was picked up for a full season , Gray and fellow actor Steve Kanaly (Ray Krebs) were both upgraded to starring roles .

After staying with the show for eight seasons , Gray ran into trouble when she requested the producers of the show to adjust her contract to allow her to direct , as did the contracts of male co @-@ stars Duffy and Hagman . The request initially led to producers ' firing the actress from the serial , though the decision was later reversed when Dallas star Larry Hagman threatened to quit the show unless Gray were rehired . Gray stated in an interview with TV Guide , " The producers said , '

But you 're doing so well . ' I thought , ' Oh , look out ! I 'm on the warpath now . ' It was a struggle , though , because it was a man 's show . And they fired me . When I finally told Larry , he went with me into the office and said , ' If she doesn 't come back , I don 't come back . I can 't be playing J.R. Ewing without Sue Ellen . ' He was very loyal and , honestly , a very smart businessman . He knew that truly , it was a huge relationship to the show . " We 'll drink to that ! "

The actress also recounted the story to Alan Mercer of Dazzling Diva.com , saying : " I told them I don 't want any more money . I just want to direct one episode in the next two year cycle . I didn 't think that was so horrible . I didn 't want to direct six episodes . They still said no . Basically , I was fired at the end of year eight . So , I said good @-@ bye , and Larry said ' see you next season . ' I told him I won 't be coming back . He said , " What ! ? ! " I told him , " They fired me because I want to direct one episode , and if that 's their stance , I 'm out of here . " He was stunned and he said if you go I go . He denies that to this day . He really went to bat for me . " Gray remained a member of the principal cast until she left the show in its twelfth season . Her departure came as a surprise , but her publicist said that after eleven years on the show , she wished to pursue other things .

In 2010 , TNT (sister company to Warner Bros. Television , the current copyright owners of the series) announced they were producing a continuation Dallas . The new series will primarily center around Sue Ellen and J.R. ' s son John Ross Ewing III , and Bobby Ewing 's adopted son Christopher Ewing , though various stars of the original series will be reprising their roles . Gray has agreed to return to the new series , once again to play Sue Ellen .

= = = Characterization = = =

In 1979 , Gray spoke with TV Guide (Canada) and recounted : " At first , they had no idea what to do with the part . Sue Ellen 's lines ran to ' More coffee , darling ? ' and ' I have a headache . ' Victoria Principal and Patrick Duffy were the goody @-@ goodies . Jim Davis and Barbara Bel Geddes were parental . Hagman was the villain . And I was the redhead on the couch . " However , Gray was upgraded to a starring role once Dallas was picked up for a full season following the five episode arc miniseries . The actress later stated that on @-@ screen husband Larry Hagman had criticized one of her performances early on during the start of the series , and called it " terrible " , though he denied it . She joked , " I 'm sorry . He said it to me loud and clear , and made me feel terrible , and it started one of our first fights on the way back [to the motel where everyone was staying] . I swear to you ? he devastated me . Then , years later , he said , ' Oh , I didn 't mean that . ' I could have killed him ! "

Throughout the serial , Sue Ellen often suffered emotional abuse from her husband J.R. , who was the primary antagonist of the show . Linda Gray described Sue Ellen as being , " one of the most interesting characters on TV in the 1980s . She was the original Desperate Housewife . She led the way for all those girls . " She also added , " The more successful we became , the more glamorous and fashionable the clothes became . We set fashion trends in the 80s . Those shoulder pads did get a bit wild . They had to make doors bigger in the end . " In an interview with The Telegraph , she said : " It was kind of exciting . I played this neurotic , psychotic , alcoholic weirdo . But I still say she was the most interesting female on television in the eighties . " The character of Sue Ellen has gone through an addiction to alcohol , which she returned to every time something went extremely wrong with her life . Gray was particularly fond of doing these scenes . She commented ,

I loved my drunk scenes . I know that may sound very strange to people ! I got to just let go and just do a down and dirty version of Sue Ellen . It was like , ' Just let me at it and roll those cameras ' . I remember being in makeup for 20 minutes , which normally took two hours . They put some kind of gel in my hair and some very light makeup and I loved it . I said , " Just let me go , please don 't edit me , just let me go . ' " She added , " It was just one of those charming , charming , charming times where I just got to blow it out . I just wanted Sue Ellen to be raw unlike any other time in her life , where she was the victim and she was this and she was that ; J.R. Ewing would do something and she would react , he would do something and she would have an affair or drink or whatever . This was just like , ' Let me go . Let Sue Ellen out of that box '

In an interview with Digital Spy , Gray said of her character 's persona :

I never wanted her to be boring . She was never boring before ? she started out kind of boring , but I think that 's the kiss of death because people will expect her to be interesting . By interesting , that doesn 't mean she 's drunk . I had to do a lot of thinking about what we would do with her . Where would she be now ? I did a lot of homework finding out where she would be and what Texas women are like now . What has she gone through in her life ? What has she come to grips with ? What does she like about herself ? What doesn 't she like about herself ? What kind of impact is she going to make on her life , on John Ross 's life , on her future ? Who is she ?

= = Character Arc = =

= = = Original Series = = =

When the 20 @-@ year @-@ old Sue Ellen Shepard wins the title of Miss Texas in 1967 , she meets her future husband , J.R. Ewing , who is a judge for the pageant . After a courtship , they marry on February 15 , 1970 , but after several years , their marriage deteriorates , due in large part to J.R. ' s numerous extramarital affairs and his disinterest in her . In 1978 , a lonely Sue Ellen begins an affair with J.R. ' s nemesis , Cliff Barnes . Shortly thereafter , Sue Ellen finds herself pregnant and believes that Cliff is the father because she and J.R. had been married for years without conceiving , and by this point , they barely had marital relations . Sue Ellen believes she loves Cliff , but is unable to leave J.R. To console herself , she starts drinking heavily during her pregnancy . Worried about the safety of her unborn child , J.R. has Sue Ellen committed to a sanitarium in 1979 , to gain sobriety . However , Sue Ellen manages to continue drinking , and escapes from the sanitarium drunk and crashes a car . While in the hospital , she gives birth to a son , John Ross Ewing III . After her son 's birth , Sue Ellen becomes severely depressed and shows no interest in the child .

She then begins an affair with rodeo cowboy Dusty Farlow , and enters into psychiatric treatment . Eventually , she gains the strength to connect with her child . After Cliff sues for paternity of the baby , tests reveal that J.R. is in fact the biological father . Sue Ellen , meanwhile , makes plans to leave J.R. for Dusty ; however , Dusty is reportedly killed in a plane crash , and this news sends Sue Ellen back to the bottle . In 1981 , Sue Ellen learns that Dusty is in fact alive , but has been horribly crippled as a result of the plane crash . Nonetheless , Sue Ellen remains dedicated to her love for him , and leaves J.R. , taking their son with her to live at the Southern Cross Ranch , the home of Dusty 's father , Clayton Farlow . Sue Ellen divorces J.R. and gains custody of John Ross , but her relationship with Dusty ends when he regains the use of his legs and decides to resume his life 's passion as a rodeo cowboy .

Sue Ellen then moves back to Dallas with her son and enters into another short @-@ lived romance with J.R. ' s enemy , Cliff Barnes . When J.R. gets wind of this , he becomes jealous and courts Sue Ellen himself in an effort to win back custody of his son , and , in the process , obtain his voting shares in Ewing Oil , the family oil company . In 1982 , J.R. and Sue Ellen remarry , but their happiness is short @-@ lived as J.R. quickly returns to his philandering ways and Sue Ellen catches him in bed with oil tycoon Holly Harwood . However , Sue Ellen decides to remain married to J.R. , in name only , but moves out of his bedroom . In 1983 , Sue Ellen enters into an affair with college student , Peter Richards , who had been her son 's camp counselor . In 1984 , Sue Ellen miscarries a child , but doesn 't know whether J.R. or Peter is the father . When J.R. learns of Sue Ellen 's affair , he arranges for Peter to be arrested on trumped @-@ up drug charges and blackmails him to leave Dallas for good .

In 1986 , Sue Ellen goes into business by buying a partnership interest in a lingerie company . She successfully lures J.R. ' s latest mistress , Mandy Winger , away from J.R. by offering her a promising career as model and then as an actress . Sue Ellen and J.R. enjoy a brief reconciliation , however , J.R. ' s desire to regain Ewing Oil by having an affair with Kimberly Cryder destroys what is left of their marriage . Sue Ellen decides to leave J.R. for good , but he manages to take John Ross away and put him into hiding in a boarding school . Sue Ellen and her new lover , Nicholas

Pearce , confront J.R. at his penthouse and demand he tell them where he hid John Ross . A scuffle breaks out between J.R. and Nicholas , which results in Nicholas ' being thrown over the balcony and killed . In response , Sue Ellen shoots J.R. three times ; however , he lives and neither she nor J.R. is indicted for any crimes .

In 1988 , Sue Ellen divorces J.R. for a second time . Deciding to get revenge on him , she decides to make a feature film exposé on her life with J.R. , with the help of screenwriter Don Lockwood . She and Don soon become romantically involved and , in 1989 , Sue Ellen moves to London with Lockwood , but not before blackmailing J.R. by threatening to release the film , which would destroy his reputation . In 1991 , J.R. learns that Sue Ellen and Don Lockwood have married . John Ross , her son by J.R. , later joins her and Don in London . Sue Ellen appears in the final episode of the series during J.R. ' s dream in which she is a successful actress married to her previous love , Nicholas Pearce . In 1996 , when her marriage to Don is in trouble , Sue Ellen returns to Dallas with her son , after J.R. was reportedly killed in a car accident . When J.R. is discovered alive , Sue Ellen reconciles with him . However , upon learning that J.R. faked his death to manipulate his family , Sue Ellen becomes partners with Bobby in the family company , Ewing Oil , to spite J.R. In the 1998 Sue Ellen becomes ceo of Ewing Oil

= = = Dallas (2012 TV series) = = =

Sue Ellen has become a powerful woman in Dallas , leading successful fundraising campaigns and making connections with influential Texans . Her success has led her to run for Governor of Texas , with campaign backers already lining up to support her . But despite this success , Sue Ellen harbors deep regret for her mistakes as a mother raising John Ross and will do anything to make things right for him . Upon seeing J.R. for the first time in years , there is a brief moment of romantic tension and nostalgia . However , Sue Ellen becomes wary of J.R. ' s claims of having changed when Cliff Barnes returns to town . Then when a colleague and occasional lover of John Ross 's , Veronica Martinez , is pushed off a balcony and killed , Sue Ellen bribes the medical examiner into ruling the death a suicide and finds herself looking for support from Harris Ryland , Ann 's ex @-@ husband . Harris later plans to use Sue Ellen 's sure win to his advantage and desiring to run a clean office , Sue Ellen seeks Ann 's help who later gets a recording of Harris admitting to his crimes and placing him into a spot of submission .

In the second season , Harris again gains the upper hand when he offers Ann information about their kidnapped daughter in exchange for the tape , Sue Ellen tells Ann to go ahead . However , her secret bribery comes out on the eve of the election and she loses the election and twelve donors towards her foundation . Facing the possibility of jail and the overall humiliation and disgrace , she pours herself a glass of wine (in the original series , her favorite tippie was Vodka) . Yet , before she can drink it J.R. and John Ross arrive , with J.R. vowing to make things right by her and reminding her that she is a strong woman . After they leave she dumps out the wine and instead seeks comfort in Ann . J.R. through means of blackmail is able to get the charges dropped and after thanking him , Sue Ellen invites him in for tea , a spark of their past romance being seemingly reignited . Later she comes to the aid of John Ross and helps him in securing control of the newly established Ewing Energies , by pushing his ex @-@ girlfriend Elena Ramos out of the company . Despite pleas from Bobby , Ann , and Christopher she does so .

Then when J.R. is murdered , Sue Ellen becomes heart broken and relapses after his memorial service . She reads a letter he wrote to her and spends the night alone in his room . At his funeral , she reads the letter aloud in which J.R. declares his undying love to Sue Ellen and asks her for another chance . Heartbroken , Sue Ellen reveals her own unresolved feelings for J.R. and declares that had he not been murdered she would have happily reunited with him . She then collapses at his casket and says he was the love of her life .

Soon after , Sue Ellen 's alcoholism returns , and her struggles with it become a recurring theme in the third season , putting a strain on her relationship with her son . Eventually she learns the truth about the circumstances surrounding J.R 's death , and is angered at both Bobby and Bum that she had been kept in the dark about his illness and his final plan , although she makes amends .

= = Reception = =

For her work as Sue Ellen , Gray was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award in the category " Best Actress in a Drama Series " in 1981 (Barbara Bel Geddes who played Miss Ellie Ewing was also nominated in that category for Dallas that year) . Gray was also nominated for a Golden Globe Award in both 1980 and 1981 in the category of " Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series - Drama " respectively . The character of Sue Ellen was well received by television critics . The Biography Channel said , " Who could ever forget Dallas with the gin @-@ swilling Sue Ellen Ewing , replete with shoulder pads long before Dynasty , staggering around Southfork Ranch with a permanently tearful expression as she suffered the brunt of J.R. Ewing 's evil ways ? " The Boulevard Magazine said ,

It may be 2009 and seventeen years since the primetime drama Dallas went off the air , but memories of the Ewing family still linger . Corruption and betrayal , lies , greed , affairs and scandal ? all were just part of another day at the Southfork Ranch . At the center of it all was one of our favorite Ewings , the person we couldn 't help but root for each week as she drank and slept her way through one ordeal after another . This , of course , was the tortured and (sometimes) villainous Sue Ellen Shepard Ewing , former Texas beauty queen and trophy wife of the womanizing rogue J.R. Ewing , played to perfection by actress Linda Gray .