

Introduction

A beautiful slender redhead walks into a theatre accompanied by a dashing and admiring middle age man. They smile and greet the groups who have gathered for the screening. They quickly take their seats as the lights go down and the introductory score fades into the opening scene and eventually into the mellow dismal voice of the narrator who begins... only on two occasions in my entire life can I recall being astounded and resultantly speechless. The first time was as a result of my mother's unexpected death. She was struck with a debilitating disease that took her life in less than a week leaving me dumbstruck and distraught.

My mother was a famous actress, her death was highly publicized and her funeral was a mob scene. It was overcrowded with weeping fans and the news crew who wanted to capture the sense of loss we all felt. At the time of her death, she was in the midst of filming what might have been her greatest role ever. She was playing the pregnant wife of a German Jew. In the film, she and her husband are sent to separate Nazi concentration camps, however both of them survived the ordeal unbeknown to the other. Twenty years later, after both she and her husband had gone through hell and back, their son, who had relentlessly researched and tracked his father's footsteps against all odds, miraculously reunites them. The film was titled, *Till the End*, sadly, it was never released out of respect to my father and because he paid the studio half of our family's fortune not to release it.

My father was devastated when my mother died. She was his first love; he planned to grow old with her. My mother's sister, Hilda, thought what was best for my father was to give him some space to recover. Consequently, I was carted off to my rich and eccentric aunt Hilda's house in the countryside.

At the time, I was a chubby and insecure ten-year old boy who seldom spoke. I was left standing in my Aunt Hilda's driveway wondering if my father would ever return. My Aunt and I prayed daily for my father's speedy recovery and ten years later our prayers were answered. My father reverted to his normal self; it was not without the help of an attractive younger woman whose name escapes me, as she was solely referred to as the "spawn of the devil" by my aunt Hilda.

I've worked diligently to block out the memories of my time spent with my Aunt, her house full of Persian cats and her strict puritan beliefs. However, I will never forget the vacant look on my father's face as he drove off leaving me to fend for myself. That moment haunts me.

I watched as my father cursed the ground at my mother's funeral, swearing he would never love another woman.

Not long thereafter, with tears in his eyes, he amended his vow and said, "I will never love anyone ever again!"

Everybody at the funeral ignored his comment, but the weight of his words fell on me like a ton of bricks. I was stunned speechless.

Now I may be mistaken about what I am going to admit, but I swear my father was looking directly at me as he uttered those

words. My childhood therapist tried to convince me otherwise. He said I “imagined it,” but I distinctly recall my father’s eyes changing. It was as if a light had shut off inside of him. From that day on I’ve been searching for true love.

Which subsequently leads me to the second time that I found myself dumbfounded and speechless. I was standing in front of a banner of the most romantic movie produced in the history of Hollywood when “she” strolled up and stood next to me.

The movie was *Lost in her Eyes*, starring Edie Greene and Jack Waters. It is and always will be my favorite movie. I was invited to a private screening of the re-release of the digitally enhanced film because I am, in fact, a well-known T.V. movie critic. While my television ratings are soaring, my fans are few. Most actors and filmmakers don’t like what I have to say. They find me crude, overbearing and self-righteous. Truth be told... I am that way most of the time, but I haven’t always been. Lately, I’ve been getting back to that time when I was hopeful and full of passion about life, love, and movies.

It all started when I looked over and saw HER. She was Edie Greene. Okay, she wasn’t actually Edie Greene, but she certainly was a version of Edie Greene. My version, which in theory, meant that if she was Edie Greene, I could be Jack Waters. Jack Waters is a hero amongst swine, a man who just gets that four-letter word L-O-V-E right! So I turned to her and said, “Hello, I am Jack Waters and you must be Edie Greene?” She smiled and let out a small laugh of bewilderment. I responded in jest, “Don’t tell me this is your first time seeing this movie?”

She remarked, “Are you kidding? I’ve seen this movie more times than I can count. This is and always will be my favorite movie!”

Now some might find it bizarre that this was the second moment that I was stunned to the point of speechlessness. But you see, from the moment I laid eyes on her I knew she was the woman I’d been waiting for my entire life. I stood there with my mouth agape as this fiery redhead described the best part of the movie to me.

She exclaimed, “My favorite part of *Lost in Her Eyes*, is when Edie realizes that she is madly in love with Jack Waters, whom, as you know, is about to go on a date with her dear friend. When Edie realizes what she’s done, she totally freaks out and attempts to cancel her friend’s date, but her friend is already under Jack’s spell! To add insult to injury, her friend shows up at Jack’s nightclub ready to seduce Jack wearing a hot little number that Edie picked out for her!” At that moment she turned towards me and sighed. “I felt so connected to Edie right at that instant. Can you imagine? What could be worse than that?”

As I stood there with my mouth agape, undoubtedly looking like a complete fool, I thought, this second? She went on for what seemed like an eternity and I said nothing. Before I could regain my composure, a group of her friends surrounded her like a swarm of honeybees and buzzed off. I tried to overcome the trance I was in, but it was too late. She was gone even before I asked her name.

She did however, turn around long enough to wave goodbye and call out, “It was nice to meet you Jack Waters!”

I tried to reciprocate with some sort of witty refrain; I called after her, “Till we meet again, Edie. ‘Till’ we meet again!”

That was three months ago today ...

Chapter 2

(Excerpt)

eraman peered at me with a cold and vacant look, as the director yelled, “A into the camera for an uncomfortable amount of time before flashing a sard he crew gathered around the monitors to view another hideous taping of my Why me?”

Samantha, my wiry blonde personal assistant, whom I imagine deeply nding close by observing the close-up of me on the monitor. I reached fo rn on the television set, a clip from *The Hunt for a New World... Master of the screen. The monitor displayed a weathered captain on the deck of a nto the abyss of the Pacific through a telescope.*

to speak with a concerned, almost fatherly tone of voice using long dramat d evening, my fellow moviegoers, tonight I’m going to try something a lit going to pray. I encourage all of you at home to do the same.”

he corner of my eye, I watched as Samantha stared down at the script in e stares at me when she thinks I’m not looking.

down on both knees. “Dear Lord, with your infinite wisdom and com to how you could let the *Hunt for a New World... Master of the Far Seas* ever be

Why, when women and children are dying of famine and neglect thro gdom would you ever let the director spend one hundred and thirty-five m re cinematic toilet paper trash? Crackers! I should have gotten the clue wh itle. Crackers! And you call yourself God? Well let me tell you something century naval misadventure made me feel like I had been through (I mean look....”

tant Samantha let out a loud yelp as I shot up from the floor and flashed camera. I scowled in her direction and she quickly covered her mouth

led by my ostentatiousness, I observed Samantha cringe as she watched me parade my egotistical condescension. I began to imagine what meaningless nonsense I would add to her logbook and I began to stutter. I grabbed the remote control from the director and yelled, "wa..wa..watch this."

I yelled to the cameraman. "Let's get a close up on this!"

I motioned for the cameraman to zoom in on me as I fast-forwarded the movie. I would see that the captain was still standing in the exact same position as before.

I yelled. "Been on that ship together a bit too long have ya?"

Not to be bothered by my obnoxious assistant I continued with my rant. I threw the remote into the air flailing my hands wildly as I bellowed, "Sure, sure, it's a long time, but come on! The ice caps are melting faster than this movie is supposed to watch. You're stuck on a boat. How many stoic glances can you give me before they throw you overboard?"

Samantha began to giggle as she watched me begin to lose my composure. My ranting annoyed all those who surrounded the monitors. I began to stammer as I continued. "Look, most of the film is spent building all this dramatic tension, and focusing on the fishy beret wearing Frenchies! Crackers!"

I began to shake my fists at the ceiling as though admonishing God. The crewmen around me as I screamed and then lowered myself into my chair like an exhausted father. I began to scold all his energy scolding a child. Staring into the camera with an expression of anger, "Like our hot headed leading man, I have a duty to fulfill and that duty is to be a better director than the less than esteemed director. The next time you're making a movie I'll be there."

Samantha looked over at the crew who now seemed relieved thinking that my tirade was over. It was clear that I was not yet exhausted.

I pointed my finger at the camera unwillingly to compromise my review. "I bet you

into the camera and stuck my two thumbs down and my middle
sly vindicating all the moviegoers who wasted their time and money or

in I looked up and saw a newbie at the studio patting Samantha on the back,
was almost over. I wanted to scream, but instead I addressed the came
“Thank you and until next time, don’t tread on Charlie "The Snake" Evans.
d as Samantha looked over at the director who was yelling, “And we’re out!”
ack in my chair I watched in agitated dismay as my assistant Samantha g
coming to my aid. I was no longer slick and in control. I immediately beg
I tried to move from my chair, but my microphone was tangled. I kicked t
myself in between sneezes.

ia and the newbie stared at me, amused by the fiasco until the director motic
me.

She mumbled.

her clipboard down and rushed to my side to untangle my microphone.

“Samantha, I know jumping at every opportunity to fulfill the minutest n
ou as a human being...”

ia dropped the tangled cord, dumbfounded by my comment. “No, Mr. I

p my finger interrupting her. “Ahh! Ahh! Shh, shh, shh.... please don’t w
r parents once had sex and all of those glorious cells divided to one day creat
ia blinked her eyes in silence. She seemed afraid. She looked around and s
at her as I laughed in her face. “I’m sorry. What I meant to say is get a
eled backwards in horror and ran off the set in tears.

wmembers scattered as I bolted toward my dressing room, red-faced
he way there. “Damn it! Damn it! Damn it!” Entering my dressing room
n to puke, revealing the wall of hate mail from outraged filmmakers and ac

