

Fans

by Steve Burton

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FADE IN

INT. SMALL MOVIE THEATRE LOBBY - AFTERNOON

KATHY with a newspaper walks by Lobby Cards that read: "GRETA GARBO" Retrospective "Two Faced Woman" and "As You Desire Me".

FLASH scene from the film "Camille" of GRETA GARBO as she walks through a theater lobby.

INT. THEATRE - FOLLOWING

JOHN sits alone in an empty theatre towards the front.

INT. THEATRE ENTRANCE - FOLLOWING

Kathy enters, looks around at the emptiness with John.

INT. THEATRE - FOLLOWING

Kathy tentatively sits in a back row seat.

She gets up.

INT. AISLE - FOLLOWING

Kathy walks, pauses at the row with John, and then slides into it.

She slides closer to John, when he becomes aware of her.

She carefully sits in the seat next to him.

KATHY

Excuse me, but do mind if I sit here?

JOHN (Looks forward.)

No.

KATHY

How was "Two Faced Woman"?

FLASH scene from the film "Two Faced Woman".

JOHN

Not bad.

KATHY

Her last, but not her best. I think you'll like the next one, "As You Desire Me", better.

JOHN

Maybe.

John gets up.

Kathy looks at the newspaper.

INT. AISLE - FOLLOWING

John walks towards the exit.

INT. CLOSEUP ON SCRIPT DIALOGUE

JOHN (OS)

Excuse me.

INT. CONCESSION COUNTER - FOLLOWING

John stands to be waited on.

BRAD, a handsome young man from behind the counter looks up from a script.

BRAD

Yes, may I help you?

JOHN

A large popcorn and coke please.

BRAD

No problem.

Brad prepares the refreshments.

JOHN

Not very crowded here today.

Brad brings him the refreshments.

BRAD

Tuesday afternoons are usually like this for the classics. A private screening.

JOHN

Are you bored?

BRAD

No, it's a nice change from when it's hectic. And, I keep busy anyway.

JOHN

Yes, I noticed the script, but I won't tell.

BRAD

Not a problem. It's for an audition.

JOHN

Good luck or break a leg.

BRAD

Thanks.

INT. AISLE - FOLLOWING

John walks slowly with refreshments as if to look for another seat.

INT. THEATRE - FOLLOWING

John sits behind Kathy further away but within speaking distance.

Kathy looks up from the newspaper.

KATHY (Looks at him.)

I'm sorry if I sat too close. I just like this seat. It's a weird habit.

JOHN

No problem. I'm not that particular, but it seemed too close.

KATHY

Well, I did ask you first.

JOHN

Yes, and I appreciate that.

The lights fade.

Flash on the opening scene of "As You Desire Me" and then cuts off.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - FOLLOWING

JANE, the projectionist, with frustration looks towards the equipment.

JANE

What the hell!

She moves away towards a wall telephone.

INT. THEATER - FOLLOWING

The lights come up with an announcement over the P.A. system.

JANE (OS)

We are having difficulty with the reel of "As You Desire Me." If we are unable to show it, another film will be substituted. We apologize for the inconvenience, and hope you are enjoying the Greta Garbo retrospective.

KATHY

Damn!

JOHN

I hope they get it fixed. It's one of my favorites.

KATHY

I've never seen it.

JOHN

It's the only one in which Greta is a Platinum blond.

KATHY

Is the story good?

JOHN

No, but that doesn't matter as much in a Garbo film. They are mostly about atmosphere, sets, and costumes.

KATHY

But, a good film has to have an engaging story to drive it. Otherwise, there's nothing.

JOHN

A film is not a car that has to be driven.

KATHY

Nice line. I'll have to remember that. Are you an expert?

JOHN

No, just an opinion.

KATHY

Well then, what is your opinion on whether Garbo was bi-sexual?

JOHN

There are rumors, but why does it matter?

KATHY

Just fun gossip!

JOHN

It's not that fun!

KATHY

Oh, another opinion?

JOHN

No, I...

KATHY

Ok, sorry I brought it up. I had no idea sexual preference was a sensitive an issue.

JOHN

It's not, but you seem a little pushy!

FLASH on the Jane as she slams the wall phone down in frustration.

KATHY

What makes you think that?

JOHN

You sat right next to me, when all these other seats were available!

KATHY

I told you before it's a favorite seat, and I'm friendly with no apologies. There are far worst things to be!

FLASH on Jane as she opens a door.

JOHN

Ok, maybe I over reacted, so let's just watch the film.

With quiet tension in the air, Kathy and John look ahead towards the screen.

A distant "Excuse me" interrupts.

They both turn around.

INT. AISLE - FOLLOWING

MARY, an elegant older woman, stands. She looks similar to what an older Greta Garbo may have looked like.

Kathy and John find this funny with a struggle to contain themselves as their shared humor takes control.

FLASH on scene from the film "Ninotchka" as Greta Garbo laughs.

MARY

This is my theatre with apologies about the delay. We've had a difficult day. A perfect storm. All these years this has never happened. First, the reel broke, now the projector is in trouble, and the P.A. system is out, so that's why I'm here. The projectionist is working to get it fixed. Now, in the meantime, the snack bar is working. Also, two free passes each - one for each inconvenience will be waiting for you at the door when you leave. In other words, a total of four split between the two of you. Enjoy the show or whatever!

She exits.

Kathy and John continue to silently share the humor.

JOHN

I hope it shows for your sake, but I think one show was enough for me this day. Take care.

KATHY

You too.

John moves away.

INT. AISLE - FOLLOWING

John walks slowly towards the exit and then turns around.

After a moment of decision, he walks back into the theatre.

He slowly approaches Kathy's row, and then slides towards her until up close.

JOHN

Do you mind if I sit here?

KATHY

No.

He sits in the chair next to her.

JOHN
My name is John.

KATHY
Kathy.

JOHN
So you like Garbo?

KATHY
You might say that. It's sort of an
obsession.

JOHN
Me too. I wonder why?

KATHY
There's no explaining it. It's just a
feeling, I guess.

JOHN
We're simply fans.

KATHY
Yes. (Pause.) I have a confession to
make.

JOHN
Do I look like a priest?

KATHY
I sat next to you because you looked
interesting.

JOHN
Thank you and I came back here because
of your interestingness.

KATHY
Good. That's nice. What do you do?

JOHN

I'm a freelance photographer for fashion layouts mostly. You've probably seen some of my work in magazines.

KATHY

Damn, it's a small word. I'm on the design staff of George Gillen. I'm surprised we haven't met before.

JOHN

Yes, we probably know some of the same people.

KATHY

Could be. I'm also a performer.

JOHN

Very interesting. What kind?

KATHY

This will show you.

She pulls out a postcard for John to look at.

KATHY

I hope you can make it.

JOHN

Thanks.

KATHY

This is quite a switch.

JOHN

What do you mean?

KATHY

Things started out a little tense between us. Now it seems to be going in the other direction. Were there other reasons you came back to sit next to me?

JOHN

I wanted to exorcise your loneliness by keeping you company.

KATHY

Now that's bull....!

JOHN

Just kidding.

KATHY

Thank God. Otherwise, I would move to another seat.

JOHN

Well, I didn't want to miss an opportunity.

KATHY

Opportunity?

JOHN

To miss out on something new.

KATHY

Ok, that sounds good.

JOHN

I have been isolating myself because of a sudden recent loss. The love of my life, now gone.

KATHY

Oh, sorry to hear that.

From a distance, John continues to speak with Kathy.

INT. THEATRE AISLE - FOLLOWING

Mary enters with a shoulder bag and a soda in a covered container.

MARY

I'm sorry, but Ms. Greta Garbo will not appear today, except in your dreams.

It's not possible. So, here are your free passes.

She gestures the passes towards Kathy and John.

MARY

Thank you so much!

INT. THEATRE - FOLLOWING

Kathy and John look at each other with mutual resolution, and then get ready to leave.

INT. THEATRE LOBBY - FOLLOWING

Jane is comforted by Brad.

BRAD

Don't worry. It's just one of those days. Besides, congratulations for your film getting in the festival!

JANE

Thanks. That is something to look forward to.

He embraces her.

INT. THEATRE - FOLLOWING

While together, Kathy and John exit as they take the passes from Mary.

INT. THEATRE LOBBY - FOLLOWING

Kathy and John in conversation walk closely towards the front door.

Jane and Brad are in a passionate kiss, and then switch to hug as Kathy and John pass them.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - FOLLOWING

Mary sits in a back row seat and then proceeds to relax in the empty theater.

She opens her bag to pull out a silver flask.

She opens the soda and then pours from the flask into it.

With a distant look, she sips with enjoyment.

FLASH on the final scene from the film "Queen Christina" as Greta Garbo looks out from the ship's bow.

EXT. SIDEWALK - FOLLOWING

Kathy and John walk together away from the theatre.

INT. NIGHT CLUB STAGE

Kathy sings into a mike with a small band behind.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - FOLLOWING

It is full with an enthusiastic audience which includes John.

INT. NIGHT CLUB STAGE - FOLLOWING

Kathy continues the performance.

FADE OUT