



Love and Madness: My Private Years with George C. Scott

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Film and theater audiences were attracted to George C. Scott's powerful stage presence, as was Karen Truesdell Riehl. After meeting him on stage at Stephens College, a long-term love relationship developed. Karen and George moved together to New York City, where George's problems with booze and joblessness sent him into frequent rages. Her liaison with George spanned 30 years as his mistress and mother to his child. Pregnant and in a hopeless situation, Karen's honesty and willingness to expose her own blindness to his Jeckle and Hyde persona creates a compelling page-turner. Photos from author's private collection.

Love and Madness: My Private Years with George C. Scott Details

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From Reader Review Love and Madness: My Private Years with George C. Scott for online ebook

Susan says

While much of this book was interesting, I found the lack of corroboration made it much less compelling than it might have been. Except for the fact that Scott is undoubtedly the father of her oldest child, the rest almost reads like fiction. It would have been much more convincing if we could have heard from some of the people who supposedly knew them both in the early days, and if all of the most interesting scenarios didn't always, without exception, take place when nobody else was around, conveniently so.

wendy elizabeth jackson says

Tastless.

Sad book, but not for the reasons other readers have quoted. Written after Mr Scott's death, and mostly hearsay. Claiming 30 years in a relationship with Mr Scott, when the authors actual physical time spent in his company can only amount to 2_3 years is misleading. Mr Scott, one of the world's greatest actors but also an alcoholic, depressive and sometimes violent man, possibly suffering from bi polar disorder, has been let down by the duplicitous and shoddy behaviour of this woman, who claims to have loved him. She has written a nasty little "tell all" story, which cannot be truly verified, and says more about the author, than Mr. Scott. Her use of their daughter to obtain money from him to finance a failed business venture and her willingness to become involved with him even though he was married, twice are just two examples written down in this sordid tale. Even the picture on the front cover of the book is less than flattering, perhaps done to degrade Mr Scott that little bit more? The author has no scruples, cashing in on a dead actors life story like this is nasty, shameful, and, as a so called friend of Mr Scott, dishonourable. Both she and their daughter should both hang their heads in shame. Rage and Fury is a far better biography on Mr Scott, written by someone with more integrity than this author.

Dawn says

Yes, I liked it and read it fast. The writing was engaging.

Of course, it was sort of like watching a car crash that you just can't seem to stop looking at. Both George C. Scott and the author are portrayed as co-dependent personalities. And reading about the author repeatedly throw away good opportunities in order to be with Mr. Scott made me literally ill. I also question the motive of writing this book at all, as in the first few pages the author says she wants to let her daughter know that she was always loved, and as the book progresses we are shown more and more that her daughter is tearing them apart, up to the point where a friend calls and tells the author, "if she will get rid of the daughter then she and George could be happy together" (paraphrasing). To me, this book sounds like the author is blaming their daughter for breaking up the co-dependent relationship she shared with Mr. Scott. Whether she is doing this consciously or subconsciously I don't know, but it's there.

I finished the book just short of really loathing George C. Scott, but of course he's not alive to write his side

of the story either.

I debated about whether this was a 3 or 4 star read, but in the end I think it's fair to give it a full 4 stars, it was well written and completely captured my interest.

lindsay says

I get the feeling that the author is looking for attention and sympathy for the life she put herself in and the way she was treated by George C. Scott. The book has a very "Look at me! Please, please, look at me! No really, over here, pay attention to me!" quality to it. But it's really hard to be sympathetic to a woman who stayed with an abusive boyfriend who tried to kill her, and then 25+ years went back to him as if he might have had a personality lobotomy and become a kinder person and might treat her properly this time around. More than anything, I just felt mad that she let herself (and her children) be treated that way.

Bob says

i think i may have been too generous in giving this book one star. i got this book because i thought it may give some insight into mr. scott. some philosophy or wisdom, perhaps. but noooooooo. instead we're introduced to him as a horny, alcoholic philanderer who speaks like a character in a really bad romance novel. i don't know if any or all of this book is true. if it is, i wonder what the author thinks the virtue of writing it is. to brag about her bad judgment in having a decades long affair with the man? i think i showed some bad judgment in picking up this book, but at least i had enough sense to give up on it before the end.

Karen says

The reason I enjoy memoirs are to see how other people make choices for their lives, even when they aren't the same decisions I'd make. Or rather, ESPECIALLY when they are not. That's why I get annoyed by reviews that give this memoir 1 or 2 stars because they don't agree with the author's decisions concerning a man who she was obsessed with the moment she saw him. This was well before he was famous, and they had a whirlwind love affair. I found it an extremely fascinating memoir, well-written, and seriously hard to put down. I read it straight through.

Elaine says

I think this is a sad, pathetic tale of a woman who put up with incredible abuse. As I read, I kept asking myself why someone would have such a sad obsession. There was no way it could end well.

Beverly says

I found it hard to sympathetic to the author who embark on a years long relationship with George C Scott.

As a young girl, about 18 or so, she set out to become a part of Scott's life. She had met Scott at her college where he was one of the staff actor. At the end of the term, they headed off together for New York City even though Scott was married and had a child.

Once in NYC, the author work to support Scott while "looked for acting jobs" and got into fights and drank a lot. When he was drunk he was a different person, who according to the author tried to kill her in desperation on at least two occasions. During the holiday of 1953 she discovered she was pregnant and the book quickly covers the next mistake filled 25 years.

It is disappointing to see an actor of Mr. Scott reduced to a drunken bully and it is even more puzzling to understand how a woman could continue to "love" a man like that. After the first attempt on my life. that would have been enough for me to have found the closest door.

The author does appear to muddle her facts at times. At one point she mentions they went to see Doris Day in the movie Annie Oakley and kissed when Ms Day sang Secret Love. Ms Day wasn't in the movie Annie Oakley (Betty Hutton played Annie Oakley three years earlier in 1950), but Ms Day was in the movie Calamity Jane where she did sing the song Secret Love. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FL87sH...>) One has to wonder what else is muddled in the authors books.

Mindy says

I knew nothing about the personal life of George C. Scott before reading Love and Madness. I only knew that he was a brilliant actor. In this book he is portrayed as a bipolar alcoholic. Honestly, if everything Truesdell wrote about really happened, she was as sick as G.C.S. to have put up with him all of those years. I get it that she was undeniably in love with him and that she had a child by him, but come on! I just wanted to reach inside the book and shake her! But, then again, back in the 50's and early 60's not much was known about such illnesses and support systems were not in place. It was a man's world and many women put up with men such as this, not seeing any way out. So, what was Karen Truesdell's excuse? She had supportive parents, good friends, and career opportunities, but she gave them all up to be with this emotionally abusive man who took her for granted and never married her. As for the writing style, I didn't care for the nonchalant tone Truesdell took while writing about these serious events in her life, and I found several proofing errors. All in all, the book was just okay, so I gave it a 3 rating. I'm not sorry I downloaded it my Kindle, but I am not inspired to read another book by Truesdell.

Denise says

I am so glad I did not spend money to buy this book as I got it as a free download on my Kindle from BookBub.com. The writing was mediocre at best and I found it hard to believe that George C. Scott talked as was portrayed. He came across as an extremely selfish man and a brute with no redeeming qualities. I felt mildly sorry for Karen a few times but only because she was in an abusive relationship and just couldn't find a way to get out of it for most of her life. Don't waste your time on this one.

Brian Bianco says

I liked it. I don't think I should comment though, on how one chooses to lead their life other than to say it appears to me (analogy) that their relationship was in one way kind of like Lucy and Charlie Brown from Peanuts only in reverse, with Charlie Brown (in this case, George C. Scott) holding the football and Lucy (Karen) attempting to kick it only to have the football pulled away. As far as George C. Scott, as great an actor he was, he is also one individual who should never have taken up drinking. He turned into a true Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Judy says

I picked up this free book from Barnes & Noble a while back because I enjoy books on actors. The author Karen Truesdell Riehl became involved with George C. Scott in the early 1950s before Scott was famous. He was acting in plays held at colleges in New England when he met Truesdell. She was much younger than Scott who was married with a baby at the time. Scott wanted to be a Broadway actor and he was on his way to fame because of his acting skills. Truesdell fell hard for Scott and they moved to NYC together. He did not divorce his first wife any time soon! Scott was also a raging alcoholic and his fits while drunk were severe. Truesdell became pregnant in the mid-fifties and moved into a home for unwed mothers in New England and for some of the time with a friend, Tammy Grimes' family. The story is very interesting because Scott was a scoundrel with women, had a harsh relationship with his daughter when she was older and yet women flocked to him! He was married several times but never to the author. A good read if you are into actors, Hollywood, Broadway or even New York in the '50s.

Gail says

I'm not an avid movie watcher and barely know the Hollywood names, but at least I'm familiar with the older stars. This book was one of the many free downloads I get for my Nook or I wouldn't have chosen it, but was pleasantly surprised at how much I enjoyed the read. It's an autobiography of Karen Truesdell. She starts her story in her first year of college as she sees George C. Scott act for the first time. He's a few years older than her and working as an actor at the college. She falls madly in love with him on first site and does everything to be near him on stage as she's majoring in theater. George is also attracted to her, but is married and has a baby, but in the end it doesn't stop them. Karen throws away an acting opportunity of her lifetime to run off with George to NYC. The story continues for nearly 30 years and through several marriages for both of them. It's very interesting to get an inside look at the lifestyle of the Hollywood elite. The drama isn't saved for on state or in front of the cameras.

Sara says

or the majority of this book, I alternated between dismay, disgust, and occasional pity. Mostly I was dismayed and disgusted at how idiotic the author was throughout this entire book.

A secret affair as a college student? Okay. A lovesick young woman? Okay. But still pining after this useless jerk of a monster 25 years later? REALLY?

Karen lied to and betrayed her parents, whom she herself described as the best parents in the world. Some thanks they got in return. Shacking up with a man who, I'm sorry, never cared a whit about her. She was nothing but a pastime and a plaything for him. It's disgusting how many times she endlessly repeats how in love they were, how much she trusted him, how she was always "positive" or "sure" of everything about him. He didn't love her and if she truly loved him, then she has no idea what love is all about. If the author still carries this twisted idea of love, I sincerely hope she has sought professional help in the years since.

I did find myself feeling sorry for her blind optimism and hopefulness when it came to this ogre of a man. Mostly, though, I was disgusted. Disgusted at how she chased him like a forlorn puppy. Disgusted at how hopeful she was every time he threw her a bone. Disgusted at how much faith she put in a man who deserved none. Most of all, I was disgusted that she would allow anyone to treat her children the way she allowed George to treat hers.

In the conclusion of the book, Karen speaks of how she mourned his death. Mourned him? Really? She should have been celebrating.

Never does she express regret at throwing herself at someone who didn't love her. No regret at the years she wasted pining for him. No regret at the way she allowed her children to be mistreated. Nothing.

Chris says

I agree with the other reviews that this was compelling like watching a train wreck. I too found it strange that the author remembered specific conversations which happened 25 years ago. At some points I wondered if this was historic fiction, some "facts" were not at all true, like the name of her daughter which in the book is Tracie but by all other accounts is Michele. The author surely didn't change the names to protect the innocent, they are readily available.

I can understand a 19 year old being completely infatuated and in love, but I think it demonstrates a certain lack of maturity when a 45 year old can't function because she hears her "beloved's" voice after 20 years, and then forgives his constant abuse directed to her and her children.

He sold her a bill of goods and she bought it.

A very sad story. I hope she's in an adult relationship now.
