

# My Date With Jennifer Connelly

*by* Lem Cacho

Hell found me. I was scouring my shelf for books to read last night and nothing seemed to interest me. There were books on anthropology, politics, economics, science, and sociology -- the works. There were also my Hornby's, Gaiman's, Tolkien's, Lovecraft's, Pratchett's, Crichton's, Nabokov's, Duma's, Eco's, and King's. The list goes on. But nothing excited me. Not that night. I rummaged my stuff some more and then got hold of Paul Theroux's "Dark Star Safari." It's a very nice travel book and the author, Theroux, disappeared into the deepest parts of Africa. He went back in time and rediscovered the African continent and captured, through words, its culture and grandeur. I threw the book back where I got it. I realized that's what I wanted to do -- time travel.

Now what period of time would I like to get back to? College was fun for me. All the riots, the rallies and the demonstrations, the street parliamentary, the debates, the discovering-who-you-are, and the-fuck-the-world-the-devil-may-care behavior kinda thing. As you can see, I was never in class. But that would be tiring once again. I want something different.

I want to go back to memory lane and, just like Theroux, capture once again those times when I was told that masturbation can make me blind, that kissing a girl could get her pregnant, and when my pimples had a face. Yes. That time. That time when *Porky's* was my generation's *American Pie* and *Top Gun* invented aviator shades that teenagers wear these days. I love that period when telly programming only had 5 channels and movies don't still have those mind-blowing, mind-numbing special effects. Movies these days are OK thanks to *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Once you've seen it, you've seen it all.

During my growing pains years, movies have nice flairs and their scripts capture the essence of the period. They don't cheat viewers by compensating lousy scripts with special effects. No beautiful leading lady is caught up between a vampire and a werewolf. Also, viewers don't go gaga over good-looking lead stars. I'm not saying actors during my time were butt-face ugly. But the physical aesthetics of actors and actresses came in second and got subsumed in the story which made them even more interesting.

So I went back in time and watched the teenage flicks of my generation. I'm not going to deny that Hollywood co-opted me. During the 80s, there were a handful of great Filipino movies. I've watched them, too. However, I've always fallen in love with Hollywood dramas and comedies of the 80s. In my laptop's hard disk resides hundreds of old movies. I opened a folder titled 80s and voila (!), there they were: *Some Kind of Wonderful*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Big*, *Chances Are*, *Risky Business*, *Wall Street*, *Quicksilver*, *Labyrinth*, *Career Opportunities*, and there were hundreds more. I've watched the first nine movies in that order in one sitting.

For me, *Some Kind of Wonderful* is the best Mary Stuart Masterson movie of all time. Keith Nelson (Eric Stoltz) is a regular-loser-unknown high school student who spent his entire life savings for Amanda Jones (Leah Thompson). His tomboy best friend, Watts (Masterson), warned him of Jones' social climbing persona. All along, Watts has a thing for Keith and all along, Keith is so stupid not to see. The ending? Keith and Watts fall in love. Best friends always fall in love in these movies. I wonder if such would spell out in real life. I hope not. My best friend is a guy. I would just stare for hours looking at Masterson and her blond bob hair and her face that doesn't seem to age. I first fell in love with her in *Catholic boys* but *Some Kind of Wonderful* made my cold and stupid teenage heart warm (OK, you can include *Benny and Joon*, too).

Then there was *The Breakfast Club*. Who would forget Allison Reynolds (Ally Sheedy), that Dharma of a girl who was a social outcast and took the meat out of her salami sandwich, threw it up the ceiling, and poured chips on her buns? After seeing that, my

mum would go crazy and would stop me from throwing away my hotdogs and sprinkle my bread with Chippy. I had loads of junk food during those days and McDonalds wasn't that popular then.

Even before *Cast Away*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *You've Got Mail*, and *Apollo 13*, we got, *Big*. Every kid during my time was dreaming of being in a circus and finding that magical machine with a clown, wishing to make us adult-big, and getting the chance to design toys in a toy production sweatshop. Then, if we get lucky like Josh Baskin (Tom Hanks), we get to score a hot MILF like Susan (Elizabeth Perkins), too. No circus came to Tondo, but we occasionally have **peryas** and my uncles and aunts would miss their college classes as they played bingo all night. That was before they went nuts and suddenly became Canadians.

Now comes *Chances Are*. It was my first experience with reincarnation. Robert Downey Jr. wasn't Tony Stark yet, but he gets to score Corrine Jeffries (Cybil Shepherd), the Mom, and her daughter, Miranda (Mary Stuart Masterson). Apparently, Miranda's father's soul, who died in a car accident 23 years earlier, managed to slip out of heaven and inhabited Alex Finch's (Downey) body, fell in love with his daughter and then, through some kind of divine memory, was reminded of his relationship with Corrine. As a child, being exposed to notions of reincarnation coupled with incest was a sure recipe for exploring other acts of animality. Imagine? You're given a second chance at life and you get to screw mother and daughter! Heaven on earth!

Next was Tom Cruise sliding the floor of his parent's house only with socks, pink sleeves, brief, and Ray Ban shades the size of a wall clock in *Risky Business*. Now what high school teenager, with parents away, wouldn't want to be rich and drunk and dance to the tune of "Old Time Rock and Roll?" Again, the diligent student in me would walk around half naked in our asphalted neighborhood with only those three accoutrements on at 10 pm. **Barangay Tanods** would run after me and once I get caught they'd ask, "Since when did you start doing drugs?" They'd bring me to my police general of

a cousin who's drinking with my dad 24/7 and would try to knock sense out of me.

My education with wealth came in handy thanks to *Wall Street*. I didn't go to New York City to learn to trade, but I've learned insider trading thanks to Gordon Gecko (Michael Douglas) and Bud Fox (Charlie Sheen). Even before Shia LaBouf starred in that miserable attempt of a remake, I've already learned at a tender age that for every great wealth, there is theft (now this part is unoriginal. I got in from the first page of "The Godfather"). It was great especially if it's the first time you see a mobile phone the size of a tree trunk. Although my thirst for wealth was short-lived, *Wall Street* gave me an indecent picture of how you can rig people off of their hard-earned money.

*Quicksilver*, well the same as Wall Street save this was starred by Kevin Bacon on a bicycle working as a messenger. He used to be a floor trader in Wall Street, but because of some bad decision, lost all his money and got depressed. Ergo, he goes around the New York City area on a bike as a messenger. Hmmm... I've told this before.

The last two: *Labyrinth* and *Career Opportunities*. The first was memorable while the second, well, the usual goo-inducing-forget-about-the-script-just-stare-at-those-jugs type. What made these close to my heart is pretty much the same as saying it's closer to my groin. Why? I fell in love with its star Jennifer Connelly. You've seen her as the martyr wife of Russell Crowe in *A Beautiful Mind* and the wife of (her real-life husband) Paul Bettany in the movie *Creation* (the story of Charles Darwin and the birth of the Origin of the Specie). Yeah, I know. She looks old in these movies, but not in *Labyrinth* and *Career Opportunities*.

In *Labyrinth*, I was exposed to my first rock musical. Apart from Jim Henson's masterly creation, who would miss Jareth's (David Bowie) enchanting tirades of rock songs as Sarah Williams (Jennifer Connelly), fresh as cherries worth popping, tries to save her little brother from this Goblin King in an enormous otherworldly maze? It was the first time I got distracted from the flow of a story and I would punch my cousins on the nose if they say something dirty

against Connelly. Yeah. It was my version of puberty affection. I fell in love with those thick and dark eyebrows when eyebrows weren't shaved and replaced with tattoos. I fell in love with that long black hair that covered her innocent face. In fact, and not until I've watched it recently, I can't remember how the story ended. I was just enamored by the thought of Jennifer Connelly. She walked in my dreams a thousand times and woke me up back to reality all soaking wet in my shorts. Like Nabokov, she's my Lolita even if she's years six years older.

After five years, and when Jennifer Connelly finally developed boobs, came *Career Opportunities*. Just the same, I couldn't remember the story except when I watched it the second time. Josie McClellan (Connelly), got stuck with the town's liar, Jim Dodge (Frank Whaley) in a mall while two hardened criminals had them as hostages. It's relatively funny but not worth noting except that Jennifer Connelly was wearing a white sleeve-less top and black leggings and all her feminine glory was contoured. She was roller skating the entire night with her annoying leading man inside of what you might classify as Wall Mart these days. She was so alluring that any teenager during my time discovered what boobs are really made of. In the movie, *High Fidelity*, John Cusack said that boobs are originally men's possession and we are out there to get them back (but I still recommend that you read the book first. It's funnier because Nick Hornby is God. In case you don't know Hornby, he also wrote *About A Boy*). So there I was looking at Connelly's boobs.

My old teenage desires came crashing back. I used to imagine bumping into Jennifer Connelly many times as a teenager or into someone who looks exactly like her. She doesn't need to talk. I could just look at her all night. Also, we didn't need to have sex, but if we have one then that would be a bonus. I remember losing sleep for days and would trip on my toes during daytime as I daydreamed of Jennifer Connelly. Many times my mum caught me with arms extended in front and fingers spread, eyes closed, and lips protruded. Then she'd shout at me and say, "What the hell are you

doing?" and I'd suddenly clench my fists and start shadow-boxing. My response was always **Kata** because I did Karate when I was a kid.

Ahhh... Those days. Come to think of it, I won't mind dating Jennifer Connelly now even if she's married. I would just like to tell her how she helped in my formation, how she made a romantic out of me, and the many times she gave me wood.

