

YOU'VE GOT MAIL



by Miles Mathis

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This is a review and an opinion, as usual.

This will be a bit lighter paper, but it plays into my critique of Hollywood, so it isn't beside the point. I got outvoted again and found myself watching the film above. It came out in 1998, but I never saw it. I believe it is because I saw *Sleepless in Seattle*, from five years earlier, also with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan, and didn't think much of it.

I sort of liked Hanks in the early years, in *Big* and *Splash*, where he was admittedly charming. He still looked pretty good in 1993 in *Seattle*, but by the time of *Mail* his looks had already hit the wall. He was 41 while filming, I believe, so he shouldn't have been over the hill. Mainly he had been eating too many cheeseburgers or something, so he had a double chin and lined neck and a blobby torso. But it was more than that, because he really didn't look well. I notice everything, as you know, and I saw his fingernails in many scenes. They were red under and around the nails. I don't know what that means. Let me know if you do. Maybe he had been wearing red fingernail polish at home and just didn't completely remove it? Otherwise, he just seemed kind of lethargic and listless. His eyes looked sad.

The creepiest scene for me is where Hanks is visiting a sick Ryan, and he tucks her in bed and then puts his hands on her face. His hands look really weird with those red nailbases, and both he and Ryan seem really uncomfortable with the scene. They have zero chemistry in the whole movie, but in that scene it crosses over some line.

As for Meg Ryan, I first saw her in *When Harry met Sally*. Billy Crystal always gave me the heebies, but Meg Ryan's cuteness almost saved the film. She had a very sweet smile and great teeth. But she

didn't age very well, either. Within a few years her hidden gayness became quite evident, at least to me. As the years passed, she looked more and more like a slightly more attractive Ellen Degeneres. In *Mail* she is way over that line, in my opinion. She has the lesbian messy-bob hairdo and the lesbian clothes and the lesbian walk, and I am thinking to myself, "we are supposed to be buying her as straight?" Plus, I admit I was back-judging her from *Kate and Leopold*, of three years later, where I found her almost loathsome. That film fails just as badly, and it is because I couldn't buy the proposal that Leopold would be interested in her. He was a duke or something, having just popped in from a ball in 1876 where he was surrounded by gorgeous women in ballgowns, and we are supposed to believe he would be attracted to this bitchy corporate woman? A woman whose hair looks like it was cut by a buzzsaw? A woman dressed like a skinny gay man? Plus, due to surgery or injections I suppose, her mouth had gone from beautiful to skewed plastic. She was no longer cute, just annoying.

We'll get back to that, but before we do, I want to point out the obvious: this movie is just one long promotion of AOL, Starbucks, and Barnes&Noble. They don't even bother to change the names of the first two. It is way beyond product placement, because we can tell the whole script was just written around and over a long commercial. Nora Ephron pasted a flimsy romance over an extended commercial and called it a movie. And to make it even worse, she inserted a subplot about a big chain bookstore destroying a local treasure, but by the end you don't care. The guy from the big chain marries the girl from the treasure, so everyone is taken care of. The message: don't fight progress, because it really is progress. Sickening.

Another message of the film is that you should meet people online instead of on the street. Notice the tag in the poster above: "someone you pass on the street may already be the love of your life". The open scenes of the film depict that. But don't *talk* to them on the street, face to face. No, that is too scary. Do it online, where you can be surrounded with ads and other propaganda, having to pay a monthly fee for the privilege.

This is corporate filmmaking at its worst. You have to question the intention of any actors that would agree to be a part of it. Which is why I don't feel bad picking Hanks and Ryan apart. All facets of this should be up for analysis, including their weird aging—which I would argue is not a separate issue. I have suggested before that the New World Order imprints itself on the human body in strange ways, and this is just another example of it. The soul imprints on the body, and as people age you can read the soul by reading the body.

Another stomach-turning scene is where Ryan tears into Hanks in a coffeeshop, telling him the truth, which is that he is just a suit. Knowing it is true, he starts to well up and has to leave. So we are supposed to feel sorry for him. Ryan's opinion start to change at that moment, because she feels bad about hurting his poor widdle feelings. But our emotions are just being yanked by Hanks and Ephron again. They are trying to make us actually sympathize with these corporate beasts, who we are supposed to believe are actually sweethearts outside the office. But nothing after that is believable, *because it isn't true*. These corporate people aren't sweethearts anywhere, ever. They are scumbags who **never** get the innocent bookstore girl, because the bookstore girl rightly loathes them. Or, if they do fool her, it is only for a moment, while she is chewed and soon spit out. For the most part, these corporate guys have to hang with other women of their own tribe, and they soon chew eachother up (see Parker Posey's character, who is actually far too tame).

Finally, at the end, Hanks and Ryan have to kiss, and though the music was telling us to sigh at the lovers finally coming together, I myself was cringing. The actors could barely force themselves to kiss. I am pretty sure they are both gay, which brings up the question again: why can't Hollywood hire any

straight actors? How is that impossible? Are we supposed to believe that straight people just don't go into theater? Ever? Pretty hard to believe. I don't have a big problem with gays. If 75% of actors were gay, I would have no problem with that. The theater does draw gays, I guess, so that is just the way it is. And some of them are quite talented. But when you have a film about a straight romance, you need straight actors. Otherwise you are just going to get cringe-inducing scenes like the ones in *Mail*. And it isn't just *Mail*, or recent movies. It is all of Hollywood, back to the beginning. We have been watching gay men and lesbian women pretending to like each other for over a century, and it's just icky.

Not only that, but it skews the heterosexual relationship for the entire population. These stars are role models for a lot of young people, who take their cues from Hollywood. This is why—even among straights—you see men acting gay and women acting lesbian. They get it right from Hollywood. I have said before that is probably not an accident. They want us de-gendered and mis-gendered, since sexual confusion sells products. They are trying to destroy the heterosexual relationship from the ground up, and this is one way they do it.

You really have to resist this. You have to first see it for what it is, and then avoid it. The only way to avoid it is to quit going to new movies, and be very selective about old movies. I would say none of Nora Ephron's films make the cut. They progressively got worse, but had all the same faults from the beginning. Those faults had to do with where she came from, and what she was selling (and who she was selling it for).