

Dyan Cannon

“Dear Cary Teaches Us True Forgiveness”

By Michael P. Naughton

When a person's life story book reaches us, we must take into account the false starts and obstacles that book encountered on its author's journey. Award-winning film and television actress, director, screenwriter, editor and producer, Dyan Cannon's book, *Dear Cary*, is an extraordinary journey with a munificent message. Cannon was asked many times to write her autobiography, why now? Simply, the right time had come, and Cannon finally found a way to forgive.

MN: I love your writing, particularly the letter at the conclusion of the book.

DC: Oh my goodness, thank you. I remember the day I wrote that. I had been in a long session of prayer and been struggling with the letter. I worked at it over a three year period honestly... it finally just poured out of me.

MN: Weeks after Cary passed, Swifty Lazar suggests you write a book, you decline; 15 years later Jackie Onassis suggests you write your bio, you decline. “Now is the time,” you said, “because the healing has begun.”

DC: Even though waterfalls of money were discussed back then, it didn't inspire me to write the book because I didn't want a tell-all book for no reason. There has to be a healing connected with it. What inspired me this time is the fact I really believe I am going to help people with this book. Yes, his name was Cary Grant and he was a huge icon; and yes, my name was Dyan Cannon and I have some credits to my name as well, but it's really about two people who had a great love that went south, and how that was healed. It's something just about everyone in the world can identify with. We've all had heartbreak. We've all had great romances that have gone south. How do we heal that? How do we get our lives back? How do we get our world back so we can go on and live a full life, free of guilt, free of misgiving? That is why I wrote it. I really want to help people with it. To just write a book and say I said, he said, she said...doesn't interest me at all. But to write a book that I really feel will help people's lives means everything to me.

MN: You said you finally found a way to forgive.

DC: You are absolutely right. I saw a show that touched me so deeply. It was about a mother whose son was killed and how she forgave the murderer. When he was released from prison, he moved next door and she almost called him her son. That doesn't even sound possible. But forgiveness is a healer. But you have to really, really mean it. It has to come from a very deep place. It's not just words is it, Michael?

MN: Not at all. It takes a long time to learn that concept.

DC: There are countless numbers of stories, but as humans we don't have the grace for it...it has to come from a higher power. True forgiveness has to come from a higher power.

MN: You first met Cary for a picture. Then, you realized he was interested in you. How do you remember such detail?

DC: I had diaries, letters and all kinds of notes. It's not as much every word, but about how we spoke to each other is what I remember. Some things you never forget. I remember where I was standing; where he was sitting. I remember what he was wearing. Extraordinarily painful things are what I had a harder time zeroing in on because you don't want to look at it. He was a great man. He had great injustices done to him as a boy. It affected his entire life, but he rose above it and look what he gave so many of us.

MN: Your daughter Jennifer (Grant) is also an actress.

DC: Yes, but right now she is very busy being pregnant.

MN: After Cary, who do you consider leading men today?

DC: Nobody touches him. He was one of the greatest leading men of all time and what a price he paid for that.

MN: Cary was one of the first actors to go independent and take control of his career.

DC: Instead of an agent he had an attorney, Stanley Fox. Many people were angry at him because he broke from SAG and had problems with the union. He did things his way and it worked. The only thing that didn't work for him was marriage, until his last wife Barbara, who is a friend of mine and a wonderful woman. Sometimes as people get older they relax, and the little thorns that were nudging in their side don't seem to be vitally important anymore.

MN: Some Like it Hot is one of my favorite movies. I laugh out loud every time I hear Tony Curtis do Cary Grant.

DC: I thought it was great. I knew Tony, he was a dear friend and great artist; I have one of his drawings. He was talented



and cute and adorable, and so full of the dickens. And he did a great impression of Cary.

MN: Two of my favorite Dyan Cannon films: The Anderson Tapes and Bob, Carol, Ted & Alice. What was it like working with Sean Connery?

DC: We were great friends; it was an immediate connection. He is a hunk in every way; a hunk of intelligence; a hunk of fun; a hunk of humor. We laughed our way through that film. With Bob, Carol, Ted & Alice, I was amazed Natalie (Wood) didn't want the part (Alice). I thought it was the best part in the movie. I screen tested for that part; it was my first biggie. I was thrilled to do it. Alice got to go through total metamorphosis. Wow, that brings back memories. They recently honored the film in Los Angeles; the movie is timeless.

MN: Your letter at the conclusion mentions you and Cary were both “seekers” who had finally found inner peace.

DC: There has been different stages with that...and this book was one of them. Epiphanies come when you least expect them; you know you're not looking for them. The completion of this book...I didn't expect this. The motive was not for myself but for others, because as I said, I thought the healing was complete. And it was, but the “completeness” thing keeps going. My last line in the book: “I wish I could have loved you then, the way I've learned to love now.” Because I actually love him more now. I just hope that my book helps people's lives. I know that we all have had heartbreak, and we all want to know how to heal heartbreak, and that's what my book is about. ●

