





They were “America’s Singing Sweethearts” of the 1930s, starred in 8 films together and put MGM musicals on the map.

In real life, there was an instant attraction before they ever made a film together. One week after their first date, Nelson Eddy proposed marriage to Jeanette MacDonald. She turned him down, thinking he was too impulsive and not serious.

She would later come to regret her decision.

Their first blockbuster was *Naughty Marietta* (1935). It was a surprise hit worldwide and moviegoers immediately demanded another team film.



Their second movie is the one best-remembered, *Rose-Marie*, in which Nelson plays a Canadian Mountie and they sing the duet “Indian Love Call.”

It was filmed on location at Lake Tahoe. Here Nelson proposed again and this time Jeanette said yes. Then Jeanette discovered she was pregnant and tragedy ensued when their studio boss, Louis B. Mayer, refused to let them marry.





At Lake Tahoe under the famous tree in the fall of 1935. They exchanged private marriage vows before learning the studio would not sanction their marriage. For nearly 90 years, locals and fans searched in vain for this landmark without success. In June 2024, a group of fans climbed to 7000 feet elevation in Alpine Meadows and finally found the tree, still bravely standing and marking the location where movie history was captured.



Maytime followed in 1937 and became the highest grossing international film of the year. This followed their 1936 success with *Rose-Marie* and Jeanette helping to produce and star in another 1936 blockbuster, *San Francisco*, in which she chose her co-stars Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy.

Nelson, meanwhile, saw his singing career go viral. This operatic-trained, crossover singer was a virtual rock star of his day. His concert tickets sold out in minutes and he was the world's highest paid singer until Frank Sinatra came along.

Jeanette married someone else in 1937 but here she is sitting on Nelson's lap in an intimate moment while shooting *Maytime*.

The book details the ironies and back stories of their movies versus their personal lives. The author draws from thousands of pages of personal letters, memoirs, diaries, and interviews with friends, family, co-workers and insiders who often wrote one version of events for fan club publications, but very different versions to those in the know.

Their relationship was covered up by the studio, mainstream media, and by their own actions and statements over the years to the press and their fans. The reason for this is detailed in the book.

Dearest Jeanette, - I love you
and will always be devoted
to you. Yours Nelson



Jeanette's older sister, Blossom Rock, was best known for playing "Grandmama" in the original TV series, *The Addams Family*. Blossom (pictured here with Jeanette) was friends with the author and told her: "My generation, we can't talk about this. Your generation doesn't care." Blossom's reason for authorizing a candid biography: "I don't want my sister forgotten."





Despite Jeanette's marriage, Blossom advised the author that in 1938, her sister was pregnant with Nelson Eddy's child during the filming of MGM's first 3-strip Technicolor feature, *Sweethearts*. The pregnancy is visibly noticeable in the movie, as is a fall Jeanette had while filming that the director left in the final cut. Jeanette lost her baby soon after this.



After this, LB Mayer stepped in to break them up; but a physical reunion was inevitable and obvious as they finally reunited professionally for *New Moon* (1940).

VARIETY

“Long before Harvey Weinstein there was Louis B. Mayer, who co-founded Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios in 1924. Mayer, the ground zero of this kind of abuse, had means, motive, opportunity and that critical piece of the puzzle: the whip. If women didn’t comply, he’d threaten to ruin their careers or those of their loved ones. Sound familiar?”

The animosity between Nelson and Mayer never resolved. Nelson finally bought out his MGM contract; both he and Jeanette were dropped and subsequently blacklisted by Mayer as a screen team in Hollywood.





Jeanette and Nelson went on to further careers, including Nelson's WWII work as an Allied spy. They also made a yearly trip to Lake Tahoe to renew their private vows; the 1948 trip is noted in Jeanette's diary.

Mayer was not only a star-maker, he was also a star-breaker. Those who played by the rules rose to fame and glory; those who disobeyed him were systematically destroyed. This is the story of two stars who stood up to this tyrant and the terrible price they paid.

