

Why They Cried: Ted

by Jim Hanas

Cause: Unexpectedly moved by costume drama

Ted did not understand turn-of-the-century costume dramas, and because he didn't understand them, he often referred to them as "chick flicks" or "English crap." Even when the principals were not British. Even when the principals were Winona Ryder.

While watching such films, Ted often silently compared them unfavorably to gangster movies. Not just because the latter featured vicious slow-motion beat downs where the former had none, and not only because the latter included great pop music from the sixties and seventies while the former did not. Rather it was because when the wise guy turned his back on the mob and found himself in the ticklish position of not being able to go to the cops but also not being able to go to the mob, Ted understood. He felt the fear and claustrophobia. He knew there was nothing the wise guy could do.

On the other hand, when the bourgeois comer found herself compromised—because of talking and whispering and happening to be in the same room at the same time as husbands of various established socialites—and ultimately had to decide between honor and the disdain of these same socialites, Ted didn't get it. These socialites were not so tough. They weren't going to beat anyone to death or apply car battery terminals to anyone's testicles.

So it was indeed unexpected, when, as one particular turn-of-the-century costume drama neared its climax, Ted felt a small lump growing in his throat. Ted had not picked this movie. His girlfriend, Betsy, had decided it would be good, having read several reviews declaring it "masterful." Ted had issued protests and grumblings. The words "chick flick" and "British" had been deployed. But, as the bourgeois comer descended into ether addiction, even though she had the means to free herself from her ruined reputation if she would simply use these means to cast a scandal on another socialite, Ted's eyes became dewy. He suddenly understood the honor that kept her from this course, realizing that, yes, there were subtle,

turn-of-the-century ways of administering slow motion beat downs and applying psychic car batteries to emotional testicles. He felt the comer's fear and claustrophobia as he sat there in the dark next to his girlfriend, to whom he had so earnestly grumbled about the whole idea. And as his eyes gushed and the credits ran over a still photograph of the comer—perished on her deathbed, cradled by the bachelor gentleman who understood—he was disturbed to look over at Betsy and discover that she was laughing at him very hard.

Tomorrow: "Why They Cried: Deano"

