

LIGHTSTRUCK (UNA VITA DA SOGNO-L'ABBAGLIO)

DO DREAMS HAVE AN EXPIRY DATE?

Written and directed by: ALESSANDRA CARDONE

Cast: ANDREA SIMONETTI, DENISE TANTUCCI, CHRISTOPHER BACKUS

Year: 2023

Length: 90'

Shooting/Screening Format: Full HD 422 - 1080x1920 16/9

Genre: Dramedy

Language: Italian - Subtitles: English

Nicola, a restaurateur from Puglia, becomes friends with Johnny Light, a famous American actor, who falls in love with his restaurant and its cuisine.

Before leaving Puglia, Johnny invites Nicola and his daughter to move to Los Angeles to manage his restaurant in Hollywood and become partners.

Nicola is totally seduced by the star and begins to plan his future in America. However, things don't always go as planned. (INSPIRED BY A TRUE STORY)

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COSTUMES:

FLORIANA CARBONE, ALESSANDRA POLIMENO

SYNOPSIS

Nicola is 45, he runs La Rosa Nera, a restaurant in a small town of Salento, Apulia, in the South of Italy. He lives with his 17 years old daughter, Aqua, after the loss of his wife, 9 years before. He is a wonderful cook and transmitted his passion to Aqua, who is also becoming very good.

A special happening shakes the town: it is the arrival of an American film crew for the shooting of an advertising campaign, with the movie star Johnny Light.

The shooting lasts for about two weeks, and the uber star stays in the best hotel in town, run by Giovanni, a black smart guy, very good friend of Nicola.

Giovanni books a table for the crew at Nicola's restaurant and Aqua helps her father and the staff to make the dinner unforgettable.

The actor is so enthusiastic about the restaurant and its pleasant family atmosphere, that starts to go there almost every day. Considered that Nicola speaks a poor English and Light speaks a bit of Italian, the two of them understand each other quite well and become friends. More than once, Johnny expresses his admiration for Nicola, so nice and true, saying it is not easy to find people to trust in. Nicola feels awesome and is totally seduced by the star.

It happens that also Johnny Light owns a restaurant in Hollywood; therefore, before leaving Apulia, he invites Nicola to go to LA to run his restaurant.

Nicola feels a blessed man, chosen by the "celebrity" to be his friend; he is in heaven and shares his dream with his daughter Aqua, who also wants to experience in a big international restaurant. Everyone in town flatters Nicola, who starts being "almost famous": he is invited to local tv shows, interviewed by journalists, and considered as an influencer.

While Nicola prepares his next life in LA, watching the houses on Internet, taking English lessons, looking for buyers for La Rosa Nera, his daughter feels in charge with the restaurant, because he is often away.

While he seems to have lost the plot, Aqua is forced to grow fast.

Months go by, but there is no sign from Johnny Light.

Nicola tries to contact him many times but with no success.

Aqua no longer believes in this dream, but nevertheless, he doesn't give up.

LIGHTSTRUCK is inspired by a true story already told by Alessandra Cardone in the documentary *My Friend Johnny*, presented at *Venice Days (Venezia 2012)*.

The actor Johnny Depp, in Venice during the filming of a film, becomes friends with a restaurateur, who will never recover from that fateful meeting.

In 2018 Alessandra Cardone was selected by Torino Film Lab with the subject of the film *L'Abbaglio*; in 2021 she won the Apulia Development Film Fund and subsequently, in 2022, she obtained the Production Film Fund of the Apulia Film Commission.

LIGHTSTRUCK has been presented at the CINEMAITALIA Film Festival in Cascais (Lisbon, Portugal) on 9th of June 2024.

FESTIVAL:

Cinemaitalia Film Festival Cascais (PT) 2024

Otranto Film Festival 2024 – *Public Award

Asti International Film Festival 2024- *Best Leading Actor -Andrea Simonetti

ALESSANDRA CARDONE – WRITER, DIRECTOR

Alessandra was born in Milan. She graduated in Philosophy, she was copywriter for big advertising agencies, such as *TBWA* and *Euro RSCG (Havas Group)*. Her love for movies made her study screenwriting with the dramaturg Gaetano Sansone; *Waiting for Hollywood (Aspettando Hollywood)* was her first short film, selected by many festivals. She won a *Special Mention* at *Nastri d'Argento* for *Boxing Paradise's* screenplay. She went on shooting commercials, directed and often written by her, short films and documentaries screened by various festivals, including *My Friend Johnny*, selected by *Venice Days (Venezia Film Festival)* and *In Love With Shakespeare (Filmmaker Film Festival)* screened at the London Italian Institute for Shakespeare's Century celebration in 2016, and purchased by SkyHD.

She was in pre-production of *Damaged Profiles (Profili Imperfetti)*, her first feature film, for which she obtained the Development Fund by Mibact/CNC and by Liguria Film Comm, but has been suspended because of Covid-19.

She conceived the series *The Wine Stories*, of which she wrote and shot *The Madeleine and the Stranger (La Madeleine e lo Straniero, 2018)*, awarded in many festivals all over the world and purchased by RAI Cinema. *Gameology (L'Azzardo, 2019)* has been also awarded worldwide. She created a new tv entertainment format, *Winery Masters- Maestri di Cantina*, first season on Mediaset Infinity.

In 2018 she was selected by Torino Film Lab with the subject of the film *L'Abbaglio*; in 2021 she won the Apulia Development Film Fund and later the Production Film Fund.

Lightstruck is her first feature film.



