

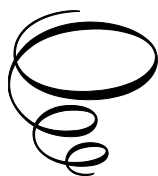
The Films and Career of Eva Green

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By

Luke Strongman

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For The Fearless

And they roared as loud as thunder
and carried lightning
in the strike of their cruelty,
but what are thunder and lightning
to fearless girls who are used
to carrying entire storms
and hurricanes
in their fingertips?

– Nikita Gill

CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	x
Introduction	1
Chapter One.....	8
‘Becoming a Woman!’ – ‘Isabelle’ in ‘The Dreamers’ in 2003	
Chapter Two	15
‘She smiled also and gave me a friendly glance’ – ‘Clarisse de Dreux-Soubise’ in ‘Arsène Lupin’ in 2004	
Chapter Three	20
‘A little evil to do a greater good’ – ‘Sibylla of Jerusalem’ in ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ in 2005	
Chapter Four	26
‘Meaningful Pursuits’ – ‘Vesper Lynd’ in ‘Casino Royale’ in 2006	
Chapter Five	35
‘Fame, frocks, and four-letter words’ – ‘Serafina Pekkala’ in ‘The Golden Compass’ in 2007	
Chapter Six	38
‘A broken doll; a hollow girl; bereft at the laws of her father’ – ‘Emilia and Sally’ in ‘Franklyn’ in 2008	
Chapter Seven.....	42
‘Perhaps all I ever needed was this gift’ – ‘Rebecca’ in ‘Womb/Clone’ in 2009	
Chapter Eight.....	49
‘The Most Important Thing in Life is Desire’ – ‘Miss G’ in ‘Cracks’ in 2009	

Chapter Nine.....	58
‘Love in the time of sensory deprivation’ – ‘Susan’ in ‘Perfect Sense’ in 2011	
Chapter Ten	69
‘The Queen of Air and Darkness’ – ‘Morgan Le Fay Pendragon’ in ‘Camelot’ in 2011	
Chapter Eleven	72
‘Make the night bright as day’ – ‘Angelique Bouchard’ in ‘Dark Shadows’ in 2012	
Chapter Twelve	75
‘Sexy and Serious Suburban Melodrama’ – ‘Eve’ in ‘White Bird in a Blizzard’ in 2014	
Chapter Thirteen.....	79
‘But my heart is Persian’ – ‘Artemisia’ in ‘300: Rise of an Empire’ in 2014	
Chapter Fourteen	84
‘Would you still believe it was . . . love?’ – ‘Ava Lord’ in ‘Frank Miller’s Sin City: A Dame to Kill For’ in 2014	
Chapter Fifteen	90
‘Never start a fight you can’t win’ – ‘Madeline’ in ‘The Salvation’ in 2014	
Chapter Sixteen	95
‘We’re all awkward in love’ – ‘Vanessa Ives’ in ‘Penny Dreadful’ in 2014-2016	
Chapter Seventeen.....	104
‘I have tried to make it as fine a place as I could’ – ‘Miss Alma La Fey Peregrine’ in ‘Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children’ in 2016	
Chapter Eighteen	111
‘I’m nobody, alone, unimportant, full of unfulfilled dreams’ – ‘Emilie’ in ‘Euphoria’ in 2017	

Chapter Nineteen	115
'True creative impulses are preceded by a sort of darkness' – 'L' and 'Elle' in 'Based on a True Story' or 'D'après une histoire vraie' in 2017	
Chapter Twenty	126
'Your children don't need you to be perfect. They just need you to believe in them' – 'Colette Marchant' in 'Dumbo' in 2019	
Chapter Twenty-One	132
'The liberating power of emancipation' – 'Sarah Loreau' in 'Proxima' in 2019	
Chapter Twenty-Two.....	139
'We each of us is a living constellation of habits, desires, notions, and memories' – 'Lydia Wells' in 'The Luminaries' in 2020	
Chapter Twenty-Three.....	146
'Beyond the shaded gate' – 'Christine' in 'Nocebo', 'Alison Rowdy' in 'Liaison' and 'Milady de Winter' in 'The Three Musketeers' in 2021-2023	
Chapter Twenty-Four	161
'Wolf and Woman' – Short Films and Cinematic Advertisements	
Chapter Twenty-Five.....	165
'Built on Sand': 'A Patriot' - A 'Shuttered' Film Production from 2019- 2023	
Conclusion.....	172
'I've always felt that I'm from another planet!'	
Index.....	176

LIST OF FIGURES

Image 1: CRACKS, French poster art, Eva Green, 2009. ©IFC Films/Courtesy Everett Collection

Image 2: Sam Elliott, Eva Green Poster, THE GOLDEN COMPASS, 2007

Image 3: DUMBO, US character poster, Eva Green as Colette Marchant, 2019. © Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures /Courtesy Everett Collection

Image 4: EUPHORIA, US poster, top from left: Eva Green, Alicia Vikander; bottom from left: Charlotte Rampling, Alicia Vikander, Eva Green, Charles Dance, 2017. © Freestyle Digital Releasing /courtesy Everett Collection

Image 5: WOMB, Eva Green on British poster art, 2010, ©Olive Films/courtesy Everett Collection

Image 6: Cannes, France. 27th May, 2017. Eva Green and director Roman Polanski arrive for the premiere of the movie 'Based On A True Story' during the 70th Annual Cannes Film Festival at Palais des Festivals in Cannes, France, on 27 May 2017. Photo: Hubert Boesl/dpa/Alamy Live News

Image 7: Eva Green poses for photos during a press junket for their new film, '300: Rise of an Empire' at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel on February 28, 2014 in Los Angeles, California. Photo by Francis Specker

Image 8: The Salvation Year: 2014 Denmark / UK Director: Kristian Levring Eva Green

Image 9: The Dreamers Eva Green Date: 2003 RGR Collection / Alamy Stock Photo

Image 10: London, UK. 30th Jan, 2023. Actress, Eva Green, Mark Thomas / Alamy Stock Photo

INTRODUCTION

Come closer and see
See into the trees
Find the girl
While you can
Come closer and see
See into the dark
Just follow your eyes
Just follow your eyes.
– The Cure

‘The Films and Career of Eva Green’ is a book about the wonderful Eva Green. While some biographical details of Eva Green’s very interesting life are necessary to provide context for her career, this is not a book that discusses her private life in any detail; rather it is concerned with Eva Green’s fantastic film roles, the movies she has appeared in, and her film acting career.

Born on 6th July 1980 in Paris France, Eva Gaelle Green, known as Eva Green (or sometimes Francesca Eva Green) is a French actress, film star and model. She is described as ‘ . . . the smouldering French ingenue who’s broken hearts from Bertolucci to Bond’ (Jenkins, 2007). Eva Green currently lives in London and Paris. The gorgeous superstar is the daughter of the renowned French New Wave actress of the 1960s and 1970s Marlène Jobert, who was directed by Jean-Luc Godard and Louis Malle, and is now a successful writer, and Dr Walter Green, a dental surgeon and occasional film actor. Eva Green’s paternal aunt, Marika Green, was also a leading lady of film, debuting under the direction of Robert Bresson. Eva has a non-identical twin sister, Joy, who is a business graduate, loves horses and is married to an Italian Count from the Antinori family. Eva has two nephews.

Eva grew up with her sister Joy, sharing her mother’s limelight in the popular media, becoming a celebrity at a young age as one of Marlène’s two beautiful daughters. As a teenager, Eva studied English at a school in Kent in England, then took theatre classes and became enthused with the

stage. Eva was apparently inspired to become a film actress when seeing the work of the French actress Isabelle Adjani who starred in 1980s art-house classics such as ‘Possession’ (1981) and ‘Camille Claudel’ (1988). As Bose (2022) stated: ‘Green developed an interest in becoming an actress when she was just a teenager after she saw the performance of Isabelle Adjani in Truffaut’s “The Story of Adele H.” [1975] which left her mesmerised.’ Green also liked Jack Nicholson in ‘The Shining’ (1980). Such films instilled in the young Eva Green a love for acting and cinema and a liking for the ‘dark’ energies of gothic, art nouveau and the ‘demimonde’.

A brilliant but shy student, Eva attended Drama School at the American University in Paris. She took a further acting course at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art in London and studied directing at the Tisch School of Arts at New York University. In 2001 the wonderful but ‘quiet’ Eva Green appeared on stage in ‘Jalousie en trois Fax’ and was subsequently nominated for a Molière Award for this, her first stage role. She appeared in ‘Turcaret’ in 2002.

McLean (2007) argues that ‘Green’s pragmatic, swearsy, pas de merde approach to her job is probably down to her parents.’ In a film described as ‘audaciously brilliant,’ one of Eva Green’s first film acting roles was as the girlfriend of the engineer Walter Klammer, played by Benoît Magimel, in Michael Haneke’s ‘La Pianiste’ (2001), a French language psychological thriller based on the novel by the Nobel Prize winning author, Elfriede Jelinek. The film features sadomasochistic sex scenes between Klammer and his piano teacher. Klammer becomes the piano student of Erika Kohut, played by Isabelle Huppert, a middle-aged piano professor, who lives with a demanding mother, played by Annie Girardot. A Finnish/French production, the film is set against the high-cultural background of classical piano performances. Critically praised, as inspiring ‘nerve jangling disquiet,’ ‘The Piano Teacher’ won the Grand Prix at the Cannes Film Festival in 2001. Eva Green herself can play piano and flute.

The renowned director of ‘Last Tango in Paris’ (1972), Bernardo Bertolucci saw Eva perform on stage and declared her to be ‘indecently beautiful’ casting her as ‘Isabelle’ in ‘The Dreamers’ in 2003 in which despite her parents’ trepidation, she appeared nude. But Eva’s acting engendered almost resounding international applause and acclaim, as the film protested for ‘culture not violence’ and ‘books not guns.’ As Eva explained: ‘I was very, very nervous about the naked scenes. I’m very shy

and reserved. But it was Bertolucci and I have seen “Last Tango.” It’s not pornographic. He’s a master of eroticism. I stopped being self-conscious. You have to forget everything.’ ‘The Dreamers’ seemed to update the classic American films of teenage expression such as Ray’s ‘Rebel Without a Cause’ (1955) but with a Gallic sophistication.

Eva moved to London as she was ambitious to pursue a career of her own making in film acting, outside of her inspiring mother’s acting fame in France. As Eva has said: ‘I’d rather be thought of as an international actress rather than a French one. Because I don’t know what’s coming up for me, my ambition is not to be typecast.’ Avoiding stereotypes of nationality, gender, sexuality, and beliefs is a characteristic of Eva Green’s career. In this way, Eva has broken the assumption, still maintained by Hollywood until very recently, that one type of person could only tell one type of story. She has therefore contributed to distinctive variations, recombinations and evolutions of acting codes. Eva’s film roles are often dark, psychologically engaging, morally ambivalent, passionate and thrilling. Her film roles leave her audience wondering – is she heroine, victim, protagonist or antagonist? From the beginning of her film career, Eva was always challenging the ‘femme fatale’ typecast that would make her internationally famous to become a very talented genre character actress in her own right.

Currently, with her many starring roles in international and independent films, and having worked with some of the world’s best directors both male and female, including the late Bernardo Bertolucci, Ridley Scott, Martin Campbell, Gerald McMorro, Benedek Fliegauf, Roman Polanski, Lisa Langseth, Sarah Winocour, Claire McCarthy, Stephan Hopkins, Tim Burton, Lorcan Finnegan and Martin Bourboulon the lovely actress Eva Green has transitioned from an extraordinary genre-film actress to auteur (in director’s terms) or ‘muse’. Despite the fact that as Eva has said, ‘[t]here are not many good roles for women’, in fact the range and depth of her female character portrayal in film seemingly blur the ‘leading actress’ role into something more like ‘auteur’ – we actively anticipate Eva’s film roles as being inimitably her own creations which cast an indelible greatness on each film or series she stars in. We watch ‘Eva Green’ films with fascination in her characters, knowing all the while that her films are a fashion spectacle, superb entertainment, high art and a visual delight. Her character portrayals invite us to constantly question whether each character is a heroine, a victim or an antagonist or protagonist. Or all and neither at the same time? Furthermore, there is a whole spectrum of mood and experience that can be conveyed by Eva

Green with a single look, such is the depth and mystery of human potential as seen through her character play.

An ‘auteur’ often refers to a director but sometimes it can also be an actor, who is regarded as an ‘author,’ someone who has subjective control over creative collaborations in a recognisable style. The term originated in French film criticism of the 1940s but found its official usage with the critical essays of Francois Truffaut in the 1950s. It refers to a creator who may explore recurring themes and obsessions in their film work. Although Eva Green possesses all the characteristics of a signature style in her films, her roles vary, and she is very modest about her actual performances, while she continues to captivate and delight audiences of her film and television work. Yet as Eva Green said earlier in her career: ‘I’ve never watched anything I’m in. Not even on set. I won’t go over to the monitor to watch what we’ve just shot. It’s too terrible. I think I’m just very self-conscious.’ Everything Eva Green does is always brilliant, but she is surprisingly shy and reflective also! Renowned for her ‘Kohl-eyed’ elegance and superb fashion sense, any and every film starring the amazing actress Eva Green is a brilliant experience in identity exploration, the experience of women’s lives, and what it means to be human.

As Eva Green has said on her film roles, earlier in her brilliant career: ‘I give everything to my work, and I like complex roles, characters that aren’t obvious. I’ve been lucky so far, and I’m dreaming of working with directors like Jane Campion, Susanne Bier, and the Dardenne. But the gods will decide.’ No matter whom she works with (and she always works with the best!) Eva is one of the greatest, most sensually compelling, fascinating and visually arresting actresses working in film anywhere in contemporary times. A director may supervise filming but it takes a genius actress to bring a scene or film alive for the audience!

Eva Green is the best film actress of her generation not only because she is critically acclaimed and lauded (for example, BAFTA Rising Star; Nominee César and Nominee Lumiere Awards, and many other nominations, including the Golden Globe – although she deserves many more) but also very popular whilst also having both artistic integrity and an unparalleled fashion sense. As Fagerholm (2020) stated ‘Ever since she ignited the screen with her blazing eyes in Bernardo Bertolucci’s ‘The Dreamers’ [Eva] Green has upstaged everyone from James Bond to “Dumbo” with her mere gaze, which is adept at radiating the raw emotions her characters often struggle to suppress’ (para. 3). Eva is such a brilliant actress that she can set a scene, provide a character and inspire an imaginary plot, all on

the foundation of a single facial expression – it's a genius trait that she has!

Although many of her films are cinematic art, films starring Eva Green are much more likely to make money than not. As she said in the character of 'Vesper Lynd' in the film 'Casino Royale' (2006), 'I'm the money'. Of course, we learn that she is and she isn't. Apparently, Eva Green does not always make films 'just for money' but also if she likes the character role and script. As Eva Green has said: 'I feel sick if I have to do something for the money. I can't breathe. I'm not proud of myself.' Does the script and her character take the viewer somewhere where no other film has? Can her character say something about society, art, science, sexuality, women and men, love, children, spirituality, fashion, history, fate, passion, compassion, thought and feeling – emotion, that hasn't been said before? Does her character explore the darker sides of human nature and where innocence or experience might lead? In fact, any of the latter might be more important to her.

Eva Green is also the best film actress of her generation because she takes on the more difficult roles, the roles that other actresses might be too scared to go near, and always carries them off, flawlessly. If we are unsure whether her character is a 'heroine' or 'victim' it might be because she is both, and sometimes Eva Green relishes playing the leading antagonist in the films she stars in, such as her dramatical role as 'Milady' in Bourboulon's adaptation of 'The Three Musketeers' (2023). She is never scared to take on difficult roles and is one of the few actresses who can more than fulfil the challenges that such acting poses. She can act like a dream!

Her film performances always have the look of being both artistically meaningful and humanistically appealing. She is always the focus in any film she makes. As Eva Green has said: 'It's quite hard to find a ballsy or complex character. So the roles I've taken are these. Lots of people put me in the dark category.' It is much more difficult to play a morally ambiguous character than a 'straight' character; a character who is 'outside' the normal bounds of behaviour in some way, a character who stretches the imagination, a character that makes the audience question their ethical beliefs, or a character who pushes past the preconceived stereotypes the audience might bring to the film. Eva does this time after time, movie after movie. Such is Eva's ability to convey the ambiguities of her character's lives that she can leave her audience enthralled and unsettled as to whether her character was a victim or a heroine, protagonist or antagonist.

Should someone who is capable of 'setting the silver-screen alight' in scene after scene in her acting and film character portrayal be forced to do dangerous stunts? Eva Green has said: 'If I can avoid doing stunts, I will. I don't want to die for a movie. It's not worth it.' It is right that Eva should prioritise her safety! But when an actor or actress says they try to 'avoid doing stunts' it's not quite the same as for just everybody because the acting profession is physical, and filming locations already require bravery and strength as well as passion and thought. Eva has starred in some films with incredible action scenes – such as '300: Rise of an Empire', 'Dark Shadows', the trapeze in 'Dumbo' and the astronaut training in 'Proxima' for example, and these despite her modest claim of not being 'all that physical' in her acting. These scenes require great skill and stamina as well as co-ordination and planning. Another of Eva's strengths is her sensuality and emotional range (for example, as in 'Perfect Sense', 'Womb/Clone', and 'Euphoria') and this style of acting requires incredible control of facial expression, sympathy, and emotional nuance. A very sensitive woman, Eva is so brilliant at her profession!

But more than this Eva is also spectacularly fashionable, her style and look are the most graceful and elegant that it is possible to see in film. Although she is too extraordinary to be seen in a utilitarian light, Eva Green is nevertheless a very subtle actress, whose cinematic art transcends many different genres. All of Eva's cinematic appearances are wonderful occasions. She is the best of Indie, the best of art, the best of noir, the best of romance, the best of horror comedy, the best of western, the best of fantasy, the best of sci-fi, the best of period drama, the best of historical, the best of action and thriller, and the best of classical. Although she has been nominated for many awards for her film roles, it is not what motivates her. As Eva has stated: 'I don't believe in awards. It's very good for the ego, I suppose.' Perhaps this is because awards tend to lead to typecasting, or even to complacency in choosing between roles. Eva doesn't know complacency – she is edgy, funny, and wise and her roles are always challenging.

Eva has an acute ear for language. As everyone who has listened to her 'Calm Stories' knows, she has the most beautiful voice. It is warm, calm, sultry, cosmopolitan and smooth and the listener can hear the cadences of both the English and French tongues when she speaks. McLean (2007) described Eva as having '... mellifluous but clipped English.' She is clear and also speaks charmingly, not just her voice but also her choice of words and expression, and she writes very well. She has the humanist qualities of a very talented actress. Eva Green's amazing 'Sleep Stories' are available

through subscription to the Calm App. These stories awaken the imagination just as they soothe the mind. Eva has many amazing qualities as a person, she is shy but she is also bold and vivacious, a duality which is a part of her star quality. As Eva Green said, 'Don't be ashamed of who you are, embrace who you are.' Her sensitivity and sensuality are a part of what makes her such an emotionally moving actress. She is also a woman of 'paradox' both brave and revealing, not only in the subtle nuance of emotion but also in exposing her body to the camera, yet dichotomously shy, sensitive and sensuous, almost introverted. What Eva might call 'nerdy' others might call intelligent and reflective. Eva Green has many other exceptional qualities; she is an incredible human being and very intelligent.

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CHAPTER ONE

‘BECOMING A WOMAN!’ – ‘ISABELLE’ IN ‘THE DREAMERS’ IN 2003

Today in Paris. What do young women dream about? ...
– Jean-Luc Godard, ‘Masculin Féminin’, 1966

Eva Green rose to cinematic stardom in the director Bernardo Bertolucci’s ‘The Dreamers’ (2003). She plays film enthusiast and student, Isabelle, who is a beautiful young woman from an artistic bourgeoisie family living in Paris. The film is based on the screenplay by Gilbert Adair from his 1988 novel ‘The Holy Innocents’. An international co-production by companies from France, the United Kingdom, and Italy, with superb cinematography by Fabio Cianchetti, ‘The Dreamers’ is a postmodern homage to the French New Wave/La Nouvelle Vague movement.

‘The Dreamers’ prioritised a recognition of ‘culture not violence’, ‘books not guns’. It is filmed in pastiche style, both colour and black and white, at once modernist brutalist and baroque, with a montage effect and inter-cinematic references to other films. ‘The Dreamers’ is set in Spring 1968, and ostensibly concerns the street protest over the removal of Henri Langlois, the famed founder of the Cinematheque Francaise, in a popular revolt which threatened to topple the French government. In the turbulent spirit of the time, some of the streets of Paris were barricaded, with police and crowd clashes, firebombs and a general crisis of confidence over the ‘modern turn’. This was a potent eruption of street spirit and cultural angst. How could history give up its moment in allowing spirited young French people ‘to be’? Amazingly, the film director Jean-Luc Goddard and his oeuvre became a focus of the fracas, with other New Wave directors bolstering the mood of protest, possibly because they showed people how they ‘might be’.

‘The Dreamers’ has a breezy nonchalance in atmosphere. It is 1968, and the streets of Paris are joyful, liberated, angry and questioning in an era of

student protest about capitalism and consumerism and imperialism. Thematically, 'The Dreamers' concerns the friendship and incestuous relationship between the attractive and handsome sister and brother Isabelle and Theo, played by Louis Garrell, who are children of a famous French poet and his British wife. The siblings meet and strike up a friendship with a Californian exchange student who is visiting Paris to learn the French language, named Matthew, who is played by Michael Pitt. The threesome meet at the 'Cinematheque Francaise' over a shared love of film. After inviting the French-learning Matthew, for a meal with their parents, later the intriguing threesome, joke, prance, lounge, and play and fight and love, in their parents' grand apartment while they are away on a vacation. In fact, this on-screen relationship mirrored their offscreen relationship as the three actors struck a poetic accord together with director Bertolucci. As Eva Green explained of the film-making process: 'I was very lucky to rely on the other two male actors; we really supported each other and became best friends on that shoot. It was really a very strong bond. On the weekends, we'd go to Bernardo's house, like his kids. And he'd talk to us about '60s and '70s music and cinema.'

Provocatively, as Egbert (2004) points out, Isabelle, Theo and Matthew are 'children of the cinema':

'I entered this world on the Champs Elysees in 1959, and my very first words were, "New York Herald Tribune!"' Bertolucci cuts to the opening scene in Godard's 'Breathless' (1959), one of the founding moments of the New Wave, as Jean Seberg shouts out those words on the boulevard. In other words, the New Wave, not her parents, gave birth to Isabelle.

Other scenes are re-enacted by the young students as they quiz each other about the movies. In one scene Isabelle floats around a room of her parents' apartment, lightly touching its furniture surfaces as if Greta Garbo in 'Queen Christina' (1933). Theo and Matthew argue about whether Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton is superior. Being the sexually liberated swinging sixties, the friendship soon becomes an erotic triangle. Matthew and Isabelle become lovers as Isabelle loses her virginity to him in a raw and sensual 'kitchen' scene. They go on a date together but an attempt to pursue a relationship outside of the 'triangle' fails when Theo becomes upset, inviting a companion back with him in retaliation. The threesome fight and reunite. When her parents come home finding the re-united threesome in bed, they just leave a cheque, and Isabelle becomes angry, guilty and depressed. She attempts suicide by gas from the oven. But a brick thrown through a window from rioting in the streets distracts the threesome and suddenly feeling less introspective and bolder, they take to

the streets to join the melee. Theo falls in with a militant group making Molotov cocktails, and when Matthew walks away, Isabelle and Theo enter into an entreaty to oppose him by kissing, but then he is shunned by the siblings. Matthew walks away in the crowd. Hence the relationship unravels, leaving just the brother and sister, and in ambiguous aggression, counter to the film's pacifistic restraint, Theo lobbs a Molotov cocktail in front of the police at a demonstration at the film's close.

Eva became instantly famous for her role in Bertolucci's 'The Dreamers'. It is the film in which her gorgeous face and physique inspired the audience to dream about her. As Egbert (2004) states 'The Dreamers' is 'filled with sex and nudity and digressive bathtub rants about Mao.' Sometimes provocative, sometimes coy, Eva is a breathtaking sight as the three re-enact a famous scene from 'Bande à part' (1964) in which they run at full speed through the Louvre. Bertolucci's (2003) film became a film-art classic in the most glamorous pop-cultural sense. Overnight, Eva was a phenomenon! As Handler (2020) observes:

Green is incandescent as Isabelle, equal parts glittering and cruel, confident and deeply vulnerable. In several scenes, she's called upon to imitate Old Hollywood legends like Jean Seberg and

Greta Garbo, and she does so endearingly well but not flawlessly, grounding the otherwise elusive Isabelle. It's a refreshing and incredibly youthful performance, capturing the overflowing spirit of a confused, love-addled, cinema-obsessed young woman on the verge of growing up and figuring herself out.

In fact, Eva is 'the Dreamer' of the film's title, acting the dream for her character 'Isabelle' to inhabit or exhibit. Eva Green's 'Isabelle' is a complex character, a teenager on the cusp of becoming an adult, a child who looks like a movie queen, cerebral but spontaneous, sophisticated but naive. As Eva Green reflected on her character: 'For me, all interesting characters are torn, conflicted. And she was definitely torn. She was in love with her brother, and there's this new guy coming in and disturbing her world. There was conflict, which was interesting. That was the main thing to portray, while bringing her as much humanity as possible. But also, on a light level, acting all of those scenes from other movies – there was something very playful about it. Something dark, too.' It is not stretching the thematic elements of the film too far to postulate that it might be a form of 'expulsion from the garden of Eden' story.

Through its sophisticated postmodern montage, it brought a sharpness to the appreciation of trans-Atlantic bohemian fashion which existed as a sub-stratum of the bourgeoisie and protested against aspects of the French post-colonial state internationalism of the time. In 2004, the lovely Eva was nominated for the 'European Film Awards Jameson People's Choice Award' for Best Actress for her role of Isabelle in Bernardo Bertolucci's 'The Dreamers'.

Hence, Bernardo Bertolucci's 'The Dreamers' cast Eva as 'Isabelle', a sensual, sensitive and spontaneous student of film in a bourgeoisie family who engages in a tryst with an American student of French, Matthew played by Michael Pitt and her brother, Theo, played by Louis Garrell. That Bertolucci's inspired film was a homage to the French New Wave is all the more poignant as Eva Green's mother, Marlène Jobert was a famous acting exponent of that movement. As Eva Green related, 'My mother did movies from the New Wave, but I was quite shocked I didn't know much about that period – Bernardo showed us film of the demonstrations of the time.'

Marlène Jobert was born in Algiers, and moved to Metropolitan France aged just eight. The famous actress debuted on stage in 1963 and her first film role was in Louis Malle's 'The Thief of Paris' (1967) after which she became famous in French New Wave cinema. For Marlène's daughter, Eva Green, Bertolucci's 'The Dreamers' responded to the critic and theorist Andre Bazin's claim that the essence of film was in its ability to 'mechanically reproduce reality.' Bertolucci's difference is not that film is 'different from reality' but that he introduces a poetic element into the story-frame narrative which also mirrors the organicity of the human mind, so the 'reality' we see as Eva, and Michael and Louis enact the film's epic narrative, is one inspired by consciousness, memory, thought, desire, feeling, emotion and youthful spontaneity, even synchronicity. These are concepts of the way in which people inhabit the world in a sensual, multi-dimensional way, rather than simply mechanically.

That Bertolucci was inspired by free-flowing invention and form, is apparent in the spontaneity caught within the director's neo-classical cinematic focus. As Eva Green explained of his directing influence, 'It was strange. We were very young. I can be a bit cerebral, like, let's talk, Bernardo. Please, how do I do this? And I could tell he wanted me to shut up, trust myself, trust the moment. He likes stolen moments, spontaneous stuff, not something too overdone'. In a scene in which the trio sit and briefly converse at a grand dinner table, Bertolucci offered poetic inspiration

as ‘real-life’ interaction beyond the script. With Matthew at her left and Theo at her right (as the viewer sees), Isabelle enters the dining room and places a traditional brass candlestick holder with a burning flame onto the dinner table. She sits down, and turns to converse to each in turn with affection, suggesting wine before bed, and as she does so, leaning over the table, Isabelle’s sculpted hair brushes the candle-light and briefly sparkles with flame. Matthew, played by Michael Pitt, catches the flame in his hand as the two continue to talk with surprise, amusement and excitement, at once very natural and also very professional as actors responding to an unplanned event. As Eva Green related:

I remember we had that scene the next day at the table, in the kitchen, and I brought a candle to the table and my hair caught on fire. I remembered Bernardo saying ‘Never say stop!’, so my hair got caught on fire and Michael kind of stopped the fire with his hands and it’s on-camera, if you really watch. You see Michael stopping the fire in my hair. It’s kind of a weird scene – it’s at the beginning. That was a bit like, I would die for Bernardo! It was a stolen moment. (2020, Para. 13).

Bertolucci believed in the ‘art of the spontaneous’ and in free-flowing acting form, and this moment was kept in the original film, as if it had been a part of the original script. ‘The Dreamers’ also involved nudity and sex scenes between Eva’s ‘Isabelle’ and Michael’s ‘Matthew’; the first sex scene in the kitchen is intimate and intense, Isabelle loses her virginity to Matthew on the kitchen floor, and bleeds in an incredibly raw and emotionally impactful scene. Eva related in an interview that she was nervous about the sex scenes: ‘I was very, very nervous about the naked scenes. I’m very shy and reserved. But it was Bertolucci and I have seen “Last Tango”. It’s not pornographic. He’s a master of eroticism. I stopped being self-conscious. You have to forget everything.’

Although she has made movies with some incredible sex scenes, such as those with Johnny Depp as she as Angelique and Depp as Barnabas flail around the walls in a lustful vampiric frenzy in ‘Dark Shadows’ or as ‘Ava Lord’ in ‘Frank Miller’s Sin City: A Dame To Kill For’ (2014). Eva now probably prefers fewer than in her youth. But Eva has been very revealing about the disturbing nature of acting in sex scenes, and the mental toughness needed for it, akin to a form of ‘metaphysical gymnastics.’ As Eva has explained in an interview with Handler:

I don’t know if I’d be capable to do this again [laughs]. It’s very strange. I think when you’re so scared of something – of such a key scene – and also it’s very exposed, you forget everything around you. It’s like you’re on a

special drug or something. I've sort of deleted this in my memory, you see? It was so scary and surreal. I'm somebody who doesn't even dare to – I'm not very confident in my body. I don't like hanging out in a swimsuit around people without a towel around me, even at that age. So it's like, Here you go! I'll show my body! I don't understand myself. I don't get it. (2020, Para. 23)

This kind of 'out-of-body' experience which is an acting technique of mental dissociation strikes a chord with the director's intentions to narrate a dream-like reality in the film. As Bertolucci claimed of Eva Green: 'In my fantasies she was a Dark Lady, like from American gangster movies, a lady who can walk with grace on the corpses of the men she loves. And she has a sudden maturity at some moments, and then she can be a little girl – maybe a dangerous little girl' (Jenkins, 2008). Isabelle, Matthew and Theo are only dreamers because they are teenagers wanting to find out about life, yet their dreams become real as many teenagers' dreams do (if only fleetingly) as they become adults and try out different roles in life. They are dreamers because they know as actors that what they do exists in a kind of 'suspended animation' in film with the ongoing narratives of real life; and they make dreamers of the audience who are entertained, disturbed and enthralled by their relationships and behaviours. Bertolucci also makes a kind of gesture towards Jean-Louis Baudry's theory of 'the apparatus', in which he compares the movie-goer to a person in a dream, and hence the similarity of being in a darkened room (as the audience might be), and an actor whose director controls their actions; highlighting the inactivity and passivity of the spectator as a contrast to the intensity of the on-screen characters. They live a dream but the audience experiences a 'dream of their dream.'

So 'The Dreamers' is an edgy film which enacts a 'ménage à trois' between the three young students – the wide-eyed American Matthew and the possibly incestuous French twins Theo and Isabelle but it is also about politics, emerging sexuality, film and French popular culture, as the intrigue takes place on the cusp of the Paris 1968 student uprisings. In a post-modern montage, the threesome quiz one another about classic movie scenes, play manipulative sex games, and 'trash' their parents' Parisian apartment. Uneven, lively, and a little bit unhinged, arguably it is the atmosphere of 'The Dreamers' which is provocative and evocative, electric yet raw, and sensual and real, catching the 'spirit of the times' or cultural *zeitgeist* in a 'knowing' way. Perhaps this atmosphere is so palpably alive on screen because the actors have friendships in reality too (Eva Green, Michael Pitt, and Louis Garrell), and spent some 'free time'

together, as if they might in scenes of the movie. As Eva Green has described, the trio were:

Hanging out on the streets of Paris, listening to Michael singing a lot. We drank a lot as well, like we do in the movie. We laughed a lot, which was really lovely. Even between takes, we used to hang out together and stay in this big building, and we had rooms, not trailers. So we'd all hang out in the same room between takes. I've never had something like this on other projects. Maybe because I was very naïve; it was my first film, which was very exciting. I would be exhausted to hang out all the time with other actors now [laughs]. But we were like little children. Pranks and laughing and ridiculousness.

However, despite the sexual frisson of the 'ménage à trois,' Isabelle retains her integrity as a woman and a human being. 'The Dreamers' is, after all, a coming-of-age story, an emotion-wracked but joyous 'moment' in Isabelle's life between being a 'child and being an adult.' As Eva Green related 'confidentially': 'I was never – I was a very good girl, kind of boring. Not boring on 'The Dreamers'. [Stage-whispers dramatically] I became a woman on 'The Dreamers.'

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CHAPTER TWO

‘SHE SMILED ALSO AND GAVE ME
A FRIENDLY GLANCE’ –
‘CLARISSE DE DREUX-SOUBISE’
IN ‘ARSÈNE LUPIN’ IN 2004

In starlit nights, I saw you
So cruelly, you kissed me
Your lips, a magic world
Your sky, all hung with jewels
The killing moon
Will come too soon.
– Echo and the Bunnymen

Filmed on set in Paris, France, Eva Green plays an enchanting romantic role as Clarisse de Dreux-Soubise in her second and only French language drama thriller, ‘Arsène Lupin’ (2004). Eva Green stars alongside Romain Duris who plays Arsène Lupin and with Kristen Scott Thomas, who plays Josephine Bulsamo, Comtesse de Cagliostro. The film is based on the popular crime books created by Maurice Leblanc and directed by Jean-Paul Salome, and is a co-production between France, Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom. Arsène is a debonair thief, the cousin and childhood sweetheart of Clarisse, from whom he steals a necklace which once belonged to Marie Antoinette.

The role of Clarisse is the start of Eva Green’s multi-genre oeuvre, as being simultaneously a high society period drama, thriller, crime story, action and adventure story, and family intrigue. The film was praised for its production values, and great action and special effects. The costume designer Pierre-Jean Larroque created about five hundred different costumes for the characters of the film. ‘Arsène Lupin’ is described as an ‘entertaining period romp bursting with intrigue.’ Eva is exquisite in the film, both ‘pure and mysterious’ (Salome, 2020).

There is a gorgeously seductive and romantic kissing scene involving Eva Green's Clarisse and Romain Duris' Lupin, which involves some sleight of hand with a necklace, but throughout, the audience remains enthralled because of Eva Green's sense of allure and charm and the frisson of the kiss between the two characters. The 'necklace, kissing' scene is unmissable and almost a meme on the internet! Eva Green as Clarisse is pure poetry. The film was nominated for a César award in 2005 for best costume design, and nominated for best film at the Catalan International Film Festival in 2004.

Arsène Lupin is the adult comic book hero of eighteen Maurice Leblanc novels and an icon of the Gallic screen. The director Jean Paul Salome's film furthers the tradition of depicting Lupin's disturbed childhood, his egalitarian villainy, his dastardly schemes and shifting alliances, and the subtle distinctions between the 'criminal and detective' that comprise his character traits. Romain Duris is charismatic in the title role with Kristin Scott Thomas as the seductive Josephine, Comtesse de Cagliostro, alongside Pascal Greggory's Beaumagnan who is a royalist. Eva Green plays Lupin's amazing one true 'from childhood' love, Clarisse. The film is illuminated by swashbuckling action from computer-generated images with multi-layered characters and plot intrigue. Green is an exquisite sight as Clarisse in her pink and white and teal coloured costumes.

Arsène Lupin is set in a variety of places in France, for example, Normandy in 1894, the Caux countryside, and the murky streets of Paris. Arsène is depicted as a dashing jewel thief, ostensibly liberating high society women of their 'sparklers', yet more than this the film (and Arsène's moral orbit) is a tale of French morality since the French revolution and the relationship of the clandestine to authority, good to evil. It examines and explores the ambiguity of law and order, among others.

Ostensibly, Arsène Lupin has a 'jolly' time until he rescues the 'femme fatale', Josephine, played by the Francophile Kristin Scott Thomas, from certain death. A sinister royalist plot is uncovered to find hidden treasure and restore the French monarchy in an 'uneven but gutsy' adventure. Josephine weaves feminine magic across Arsène, binding him to her cause, and the plot becomes a race against time to uncover the three crucifixes that reveal the location of the hidden Royal jewels.

The screenplay is written by Jean-Paul Salome and Laurent Vachaud and based on the novel, 'La Comtesse de Cagliostro' ('The Memoirs of Arsène Lupin') by Maurice Leblanc. The debonair French gentleman thief detective

stories appeared in feuilletons or newspaper serials that dominated French popular fiction as if updating the tradition of Alexandre Dumas. The Lupin stories debuted in the magazine 'Le Sais Tout' in 1905, and the stories were collected in the 1907 publication, 'Arsène Lupin Gentleman Burglar'. They are reminiscent of Ponson du Terrail's picaresque 'Rocambole', and are now regarded as a premier example of the French detective story and not as 'pulp fiction' or the disposable newspaper serial, despite Leblanc's erstwhile occupation as a journalist.

With a keen sense of justice and panache, Lupin is one of the most fully imagined characters of films, comic books, and animated cartoons in French, American, Japanese and Philippine languages and editions. He is a Master Thief, with an army of identities, including that of the private detective Jim Barnett. Hence, throughout the Leblanc stories, Arsène enjoyed changes in career as he grew with experience, becoming less like a thief and more like a detective – for example, like Sherlock Holmes – the righter of wrongs and defender of the weak, as with Leslie Charteris' 'The Saint.'

Eva Green is brilliant as Clarisse, Arsène Lupin's childhood sweetheart and one true love, and the interchanges between them are romantic, seductive and tinged with crime. Eva's Clarisse in her apparently naive allure is the perfect foil for Lupin's rascally but debonair flair and the frisson of sexuality between the characters provides one of the main dramatic emotional undercurrents of the film. Like Holmes though, Lupin is given to extremes in mood. He has highs and lows, as if with manic depression, and even toys with suicide when the cause seems lost. Like 'Raffles' and 'The Saint', Lupin is a very Gallic hero; he has dramatic flair and boasts. During his amazing career he acquires wealth, has numerous wives and lovers, and his own submarine, received from service to a Moroccan Prince, that takes him to the ends of the earth – Antarctica, Saigon, Tibet, and New York.

Although, the film is based on Leblanc's 1924 novel, 'Le Comtesse de Cagliostro – The Memoirs of Arsène Lupin', which explains his origins and describes his first adventure, 'Arsène Lupin' contains material from the plot narratives of 'The Hollow Needle', 'The Crystal Stopper', '813' and 'The Secret of Sarek'. These are stories from Leblanc which reveal aspects of Lupin's childhood, as the son of a young woman indentured to her well-married half-sister who is a teacher of martial arts. In this sense, Leblanc's narratives are evocative of the novels of Alexandre Dumas.

Arsène develops into a young man who is deeply enamoured of his beautiful cousin, Clarisse (played enchantingly by Green), yet somewhat unaware of tensions in the house of his upbringing, and because of this lack of emotional consideration, the audience is more inclined to view him as a villain. These tensions involve his father being the thief of a fabulous necklace owned by his uncle, that was once infamous jewellery owned by Marie Antoinette, which in turn partly inspired the drama of the French revolution, being one of the 'lost jewels' of the King of France.

In the dramatic course of events the police arrive, Lupin's father escapes, yet quickly returns to enlist Lupin's help to steal the necklace, but he is apparently killed in a struggle with an accomplice, within sight of the 'Needle' which is the name for an anthropomorphised rock off of the French Normandy coast. Arsène and his mother are exiled from home, and in his bitterness the young Lupin swears revenge on society. Then, as a youthful adult, Arsène is on board a gala yacht at a costume ball though he is in effect little more than a pickpocket despite his grand manner and appearance in a monocle, white tie and tails. Here he meets the beautiful Comtesse Cagliostro, Josephine Balsamo (played by Scott Thomas) who claims to be the granddaughter of Joseph Balsamo, the notorious Comte Cagliostro, charlatan, conman, and alchemist wizard.

The Comtesse takes young Arsène under her wing as a lover and student and transforms him from pickpocket into master criminal. The film narrative reveals various sinister undercurrents such as the mysterious cabal of wealthy men sworn to protect the secrets of the 'lost jewels' of French kings. There is also a swathe of dangerous men enlisted to provide protection from the arch-enemy of Josephine who is the rumoured grand-daughter of Cagliostro, but may be an 'immortal daughter' over a century old. Lupin eventually leaves the Comtesse but in his compulsion to uncover the secrets of the lost treasure of the kings of France, the narrative leads him back to the cousin he loved, so fleetingly but passionately, as a youth, played by Eva Green.

Thus begins a duel of wits between Lupin and the Comtesse and the cabal that protects the lost treasure. The plot features cross and double-cross, gallant gestures, disguises, subterfuge, sleight-of-hand and the elegance of another age which is poignantly symbolic of the classical qualities of French civilisation but doesn't take itself too seriously.

Duris is charming as Lupin, and his character progresses from being a talented ruffian in gentleman's clothing to a master criminal and suave

adventurer. Lupin has a gamin quality about him, there is a rougher edge to a suave exterior which gives the character depth. Kristin Thomas as Josephine has fun playing her wickedness and treachery, and Eva Green as Lupin’s true love is simultaneously astonishingly attractive, touching and pure. *Arsène Lupin* features beautiful cinematography which seems to have a ‘slightly golden glow of photographs of a gilded age.’ Perhaps, many of the different film genres of Eva Green’s subsequent career might have been encapsulated in this, her first full-length role in a feature film

CHAPTER THREE

‘A LITTLE EVIL TO DO A GREATER GOOD’ – ‘SIBYLLA OF JERUSALEM’ IN ‘KINGDOM OF HEAVEN’ IN 2005

How harsh is separation, how harsh death
And merciless death strikes without distinction
Villainous death crouches at a bend in the path, lying in wait for us
May God preserve us from it.
– Oumou Sangaré

Eva Green stars as Princess Sibylla of Jerusalem in the director Ridley Scott's 2005 epic historical drama 'Kingdom of Heaven'. Released a year before Campbell's 'Casino Royale' (2006), the shy Eva literally glittered in Scott's 'Kingdom of Heaven', as she played the emotional and diplomatic intrigue of the public and private faces of the Princess amid the contest of faiths in Jerusalem in the twelfth century, leading to the Battle of Hattin. Of her character Sibylla, Eva Green wittily but cryptically stated: 'She is a heroine, not a vase'; by which she might have meant that her role was not just ornamental. 'Kingdom of Heaven' also featured the Knights Templar who were the original guardians of the 'Da Vinci Code'.

Rather than being an allegory, the film is a historically-based adventure story which explores 'the essence of human beings caught in the midst of centuries-long-strife over religious differences, all making difficult claims.' From the moment that we see Eva's Sibylla on horseback, we are captivated by her presence in the film, and she appears in it like a shining wraith throughout. As Hadadi (2005) claims of the longer 'Director's cut' version of 'Kingdom of Heaven': 'Most engrossingly, a much more prominent role in the narrative is bestowed upon Green as Sibylla, the mother of a sick child and the beleaguered wife of a barbarian. In a film with so much brutality performed in the name of God, Sibylla's personal sacrifices hit hardest.'