

MEGASTAR!

...to fame
...could have ever hoped for...
...the woman he loved.

R.J. EASTWOOD

MEGASTAR

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Megastar

A Novel by
R.J. Eastwood

The phenomenal rise of singer Addison Stone led to fame and fortune.
It was everything one man could have hoped for in a lifetime...
except for the woman he loved.

“What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from.”

T.E. Lawrence, a British essayist,
playwright, literary, and social critic poet.

The year is wherever your imagination takes you.

Chapter 1

The Dolby Theater, Hollywood, California

There is not an empty seat in the house. The auditorium is packed with the whose-who of the entertainment industry for the annual *Entertainer of the Year Awards*. The stage is bare except for a blue curtain backdrop, a large elevated television screen, and a podium, on which sits a gold statuette of a male figure with its hands outstretched in a welcoming manner.

A man dressed in a tuxedo enters from stage right and approaches the podium. The applause is polite but reserved; few outside the music business know who he is.

“Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Jonathan James.” He speaks with the remnants of a British accent. “Since I have spent much of my adult life with tonight’s honoree, I have the honor of presenting the Outstanding Entertainer Award in the music category. Over the years, there have been endless stories about this gentleman. I caution you not to believe everything you read or hear because much of it remains unconfirmed myth spread by—” James pauses—he’s thinking. “Hmm, come to think of it, every last bit is true.”

The audience roars with laughter.

“Before I get myself into trouble, let us watch the life and times of an extraordinary entertainer revered as one of our time's greatest singers and entertainers.”

The theater goes dark. The elevated television screen comes alive. A handsome young man is making his public singing debut before a packed live audience on the hit TV series *Sing America Sing*, followed by a montage of his phenomenal rise to fame and fortune.

The video ends, the house lights come on, and the audience responds with thunderous applause.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to present the Outstanding Musical Entertainer Award to my dear friend and boss, Addison Jordon Stone.”

The audience is on their feet with applause, hoots, hollers, and whistles as a frail-looking Addison Stone is rolled to the podium in a wheelchair. James helps him to his feet. The two men briefly hug.

Addison places his hands on each side of the podium to steady himself. James hands Addison the gold statuette.

“Boss, you couldn’t have done it without me.”

Addison turns to the audience, “You see what I’ve had to contend with all these years? Pure English arrogance.”

More laughter and applause.

Addison raises the award above his head. “Quite a handsome fellow he is.” He sets the award on the podium, reaches into his jacket pocket, retrieves his notes, and begins his acceptance speech.

Honolulu, Hawaii

Two days later, Addison and JJ, as Addison calls him, were back home at Addison’s Honolulu waterfront estate.

Thirty-seven-year-old Addison, looking older than his years, was guided in his wheelchair by JJ across the living room’s rich Brazilian cherry wood floor. JJ, an Englishman by birth, has been a fixture at Addison’s side for eighteen years. He is fit and trim, six feet tall, with an angular, square-jawed face, light brown hair, and eyes.

Addison’s complexion is a pale gray; dark circles cast shadows below his eyes. His once thick, wavy, dark brown hair has thinned and turned flour-white around his temples.

A full-grown Golden Retriever followed a few steps behind, a present from an anonymous fan when the dog was just a puppy. Addison named the pup *Windy* after the calm Hawaiian Pacific Ocean breezes.

As they passed the floor-to-ceiling stone fireplace, Addison eyed the mantle. He smiled proudly at the *Outstanding Entertainer of the Year Award* statuette prominently displayed in the middle of the mantle and surrounded on either side by other awards he has received over the years.

“Looks good there, JJ.”

“Yes, sir, it certainly does.”

“Thank goodness for makeup,” Addison sighed, “or I would have looked like they brought me back from the grave just for the awards ceremony.”

They exited the French doors to the large patio overlooking Addison’s estate on the North West Coast of Honolulu. It is a cloudless, sun-splashed morning. A gentle westerly breeze sways the fronds of the Palm trees that border either side of the velvety Shamrock-green lawn that rolls past the swimming pool to the white sandy beach of the azure Pacific Ocean.

JJ eased Addison into his rocking chair. Windy settles in his usual spot on the

Koa wood deck to Addison's right.

"Might there be anything I can get you? Coffee, perhaps?"

"No thanks, JJ."

"You're due to take your medication in half an hour."

"Oh, yummy, I can hardly wait. Why do they keep feeding me all those pills when they know I'm bloody well near rocketing off the planet for good?"

"Don't say that, sir. The medications are to provide you more time."

"Mumbo jumbo bullshit, JJ. More time for what?"

JJ grinned. "If you require anything, I'll be inside."

Addison snickered. "Lurking like you always do if I choke while sucking my thumb."

JJ chuckled low. "You're trying to get a rise out of me. I never lurk."

"I've seen you peeking out the shutters over there. That's lurking."

JJ raised an eyebrow. "Will that be all?"

"How long have we been together?"

"Eighteen years, sir."

"It took forever to get you to stop calling me sir or Mr. Stone. Now, we need to work on your wardrobe."

"I beg your pardon?"

"All these years, black suit, tie, shoes, and socks. You look like the Grim Reaper, for God's sake. Get yourself chinos or jeans, colorful shirts, and decent sneakers. If you haven't noticed, it's Hawaii."

"If you say so." JJ smiled, nodded, and began to leave. "I'll be in the study if you need me."

"And no more lurking, JJ."

"I promise, sir."

"May I remind you, *Sir JJ*, that a promise is only good if you keep it?"

"Yes, of course."

"Before you go, would you bring me the award? I want to sit here and hug it."

"Certainly, Mr. Stone."

When JJ was out of sight, Addison reached down and patted Windy. "You watch, Windy; JJ won't change how he dresses. I might as well be talking to myself like I'm doing now."

Windy looked at Addison as if he understood every word.

JJ returned with the Entertainer of the Year Award and placed it on the end table to Addison's left. "Be gentle with it, sir." He smiled and left.

Addison carefully lifted the golden statue, set it in his lap, covered it with his hands, and began to rock back and forth. The months of pernicious radiation, chemotherapy, and medications had taken their toll. He could no longer do the simplest things without JJ's assistance, which disturbed him terribly. But behind the timeworn, weathered face, it was still Addison Stone, the once-charismatic idol of millions. No entertainer was more revered and loved for his extraordinary and unique talent.

"Windy, Windy, how did we get from the floor of Chick's Diner to here?"

Addison's head bobbed back, and he laughed. "How the hell, indeed? It's been a hell of a ride, I'll tell you, bumps and all, and there were plenty of those. When I'm gone, the name Addison Stone will be lost to history, and no one will remember how big a star I was."

Closing his eyes, Addison continued to rock and began humming a tune he knew well—*Your Love*, from the 1968 cult western *Once Upon a Time in the West*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Other novels by Robert J. Emery under the pen name R.J. Eastwood

Midnight Black, a suspense/thriller Novel

The Autopsy of Planet Earth, a science fiction adventure

Mr. Emery has written nine books: three novels and six nonfictions.

Over his four-decade career, Robert J. Emery has written, produced, and directed projects ranging from local and national television commercials to corporate communications films, writing and directing feature motion pictures (eight in all), and numerous network television documentaries.

Mr. Emery's interest in production and entertainment began with the Armed Forces Radio and Television Air Force on Guam, where he was stationed. Upon discharge, he became an on-air personality and news reporter at WCLW Radio in Mansfield, Ohio. Deciding radio was not what he wanted to do, he opened an advertising agency in Canton, Ohio, which led to writing and directing local TV commercials. He created, produced, and directed a daily one-hour morning TV talk show hosted by former Miss USA Diana Batts and TV personality Carl Day. In 1965, he wrote and directed his first feature film, *The Bittersweet Night*, followed by *Willy & Scratch*, *Dare the Devil*, *Scream Bloody Murder*, *Sign of Aquarius*, *Ride in a Pink Car*, *The Florida Connection*, and his last, *Swimming Upstream* for the Lifetime Television Movie Channel. That film was awarded the *Sapphire Halo Award for Best Dramatic Motion Picture* at the Los Angeles Angel City Film Festival.

As writer, producer, and director, Mr. Emery's television productions include the MSNBC primetime documentary "*For God & Country: A Marine Snipers Story*," hosted by NBC's Lester Holt. The program won the *National Headliner*

Award for Best Documentary or Series of Reports and the *Special Jury Award* in the Professional News Division (CINE Golden Eagle Competitions) informational category. He created the Starz/Encore series *The Directors (91-hour episodes)*, which also ran in re-runs on the Reelz Channel and over 75 countries worldwide. *The Directors* won the Silver Plaque Award in the 2002 Chicago International Television Competition and the Award of Excellence 2003 Accolade Awards. The episode featuring George Lucas won First Place at the Florida Motion Picture & Television Association Awards for best television series episode. That was followed by the four-hour PBS mini-series *The Genocide Factor*, hosted by Academy Award© winner Jon Voight. The production won the *Houston International Worldfest Gold Special Jury Award for Best Television & Cable TV Series/Documentary*. He produced and directed *KidHealth*,” a 13-episode PBS series on children’s healthcare in America hosted by Olympic Gold Medalist Peggy Fleming. Produced and directed *Golden Saddles, Silver Spurs - the History of Western Cinema* for the Starz/Encore Western Channel.

Mr. Emery received top honors for nine years at the New York Film Festival for his numerous productions for Shriners Hospital for Children.

In 2006, Mr. Emery retired from active production. He began work on his first novel, *In the Realm of Eden*, published in January 2010. The Next Generation Indie Book Awards Competition selected the novel as one of the top five finalists.

Mr. Emery was born and raised in Bristol, Rhode Island. He currently resides with his wife and family in Florida. When not writing or working on a project around the house, Mr. Emery can be found in the kitchen fixing great Italian meals thanks to the teachings of his Italian mother and to the delight of his wife, children, grandchildren, and friends.