

# May September

By Mark Laing





# Logline

A burned-out British screenwriter falls for a sharp-tongued, whisky-obsessed younger woman, forcing them both to confront ambition, aging, and intimacy in a city that worships none of the above. Based on a true story.



# Executive Summary

**LENGTH** 91 minutes

**SCENES** 98

**LOCATIONS** Marina Del Rey, CA  
Venice, California  
Los Angeles, California  
Santa Monica, CA

**LOCALES** Office, Bar, Beach

**TIME PERIOD** Present Day

**EST. BUDGET** \$\$\$

**CONTENT RATING** R  
Language  
Sexual situations



# What it is

*May September* is a sexy, and soulful romantic dramedy about the unpredictable connection between a burned-out 45-year-old British screenwriter and a brilliant 23-year-old Black woman with a whisky palate and zero patience for bullshit.

Andrew “Spike” Smith has spent two decades trying to sell a screenplay in Hollywood, and he’s nearly out of road — creatively, financially, and emotionally. He’s vegan-fit, self-deprecating, and addicted to distractions. His self-imposed dating rule: no women under 50. Safer that way. Until Kaylee Parsons runs into his lens — literally — on the Santa Monica stairs.

Kaylee is younger, smarter, and offline by choice. A whisky obsessive and aspiring distiller, she’s unimpressed by men chasing clout or creative validation. Spike’s different. And not in the ways he thinks.

Their chemistry is undeniable — until it’s unbearable. One moment they're swapping movie quotes and debating feminist literature; the next, they're screaming across the room or sabotaging

something that might be real. Age, ego, fear, and attraction collide as Spike faces career burnout and Kaylee wrestles with her own painful past.

Set in sun-washed Los Angeles but soaked in Celtic whisky and cinematic references, *May September* is a love story built on contradiction: old vs. new, analog vs. digital, fantasy vs. reality. It’s *Before Sunrise* meets *Sideways* with the emotional depth of *Past Lives* and the comic sting of *Fleabag*.

At its heart, it’s about creative redemption, emotional vulnerability, and the one person who sees past your defenses — and dares you to show up anyway.

It’s romantic. It’s literary. It’s personal. It’s funny. And like the rarest un-chill-filtered whisky, it lingers long after the final pour.





# Pace, Visual Style, Tone

The pace is lyrical and intimate, favoring dialogue-driven scenes with emotional momentum rather than rapid plot turns — though it's punctuated by sharp wit, unexpected reversals, and raw emotional beats. Visually, it's grounded in a romantic naturalism: sun-bleached Los Angeles, golden hour whisky tones, moody interiors lit like old-world paintings.

Think the soft grain of *In the Mood for Love* meets the tactile warmth of *Call Me by Your Name*. The tone walks a tightrope between soul-baring vulnerability and irreverent comedy, blending emotional honesty with caustic banter. It's a film where two mismatched souls hash out life, love, and legacy — one heartbreak, one pour, and one perfectly timed quote at a time.





A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark suit, stands on a wooden staircase. A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark sleeveless dress, stands next to him, leaning against his arm. The background is a warm, golden-brown color with a subtle pattern of light rays and dust particles.

# Synopsis

Andrew “Spike” Smith, a 45-year-old British screenwriter living in Los Angeles, has spent decades chasing a break that never came. Spike finances his failed career by photographing weddings and nursing a whisky obsession, all while clinging to a strict rule: never date anyone under fifty. Enter Kaylee Parsons — silver-haired, 23, fiercely independent, and utterly offline. When Spike follows her toned legs into a flirtatious encounter on the Santa Monica stairs, the unlikely chemistry is immediate. Kaylee teases, taunts, and challenges him at every turn. She’s everything he claims not to want — young, unpredictable, and maddeningly alluring.

But when she invites him to watch her nude performance in an avant-garde stage play, Spike falls — hard. As their banter turns into something more intimate, Spike discovers Kaylee is far from typical. A whisky connoisseur with a mysterious past and a passion for distilling, she stokes his creative fire and inspires a rewrite of his long-gestating script, *The Thief of Dubai*. In it, he recasts the genie character in Kaylee’s image. Their romance, however, is anything but smooth. Age gaps, emotional baggage, and career insecurity rear up fast. Spike’s pitch meetings fall flat. Jealousy brews on both sides, and their connection teeters between fiery attraction and self-sabotage. The final blow comes when Kaylee stumbles upon a compromising photo Spike accidentally took of her. Trust is shattered. She storms out.

But Spike, facing rejection and the wreckage of his life, finally rewrites his script with honesty and vulnerability — and it sells. Success arrives, but feels hollow without her. In a twist of fate, Spike learns Kaylee’s true name — Céilidh, a Gaelic word for dance — and tracks her to a whisky distillery she’s opened in her own name. At a packed event, Spike appears with a whisky bottle labeled “Céilidh.” He offers her a part in the film — not as a romantic favor, but because the role is hers. Then he proposes, and this time, she says yes — on one condition: he correctly identifies the classic movie quote she once threw at him in the heat of their breakup. He does.

*May September* is a deeply romantic dramedy about art, aging, identity, and finding the person who sees you — even when you don’t see yourself. It’s about a man who believes he’s past his prime and a woman who’s tired of being underestimated — and how love, like whisky, gets better when it’s unfiltered.



# Themes

May September explores themes of reinvention, vulnerability, and the collision between fantasy and reality. At its heart, it's a story about what we sacrifice to protect ourselves — and what we gain when we stop. The film unpacks the fear of aging, creative failure, and emotional intimacy through the lens of an unlikely romance. It also grapples with the power dynamics of age-gap relationships, the tension between artistic ambition and human connection, and how our past traumas shape the love we think we deserve. Beneath the humor and whisky, it's about finding the courage to be seen — fully, and without defense — by someone who sees past the mask and falls for the real you.

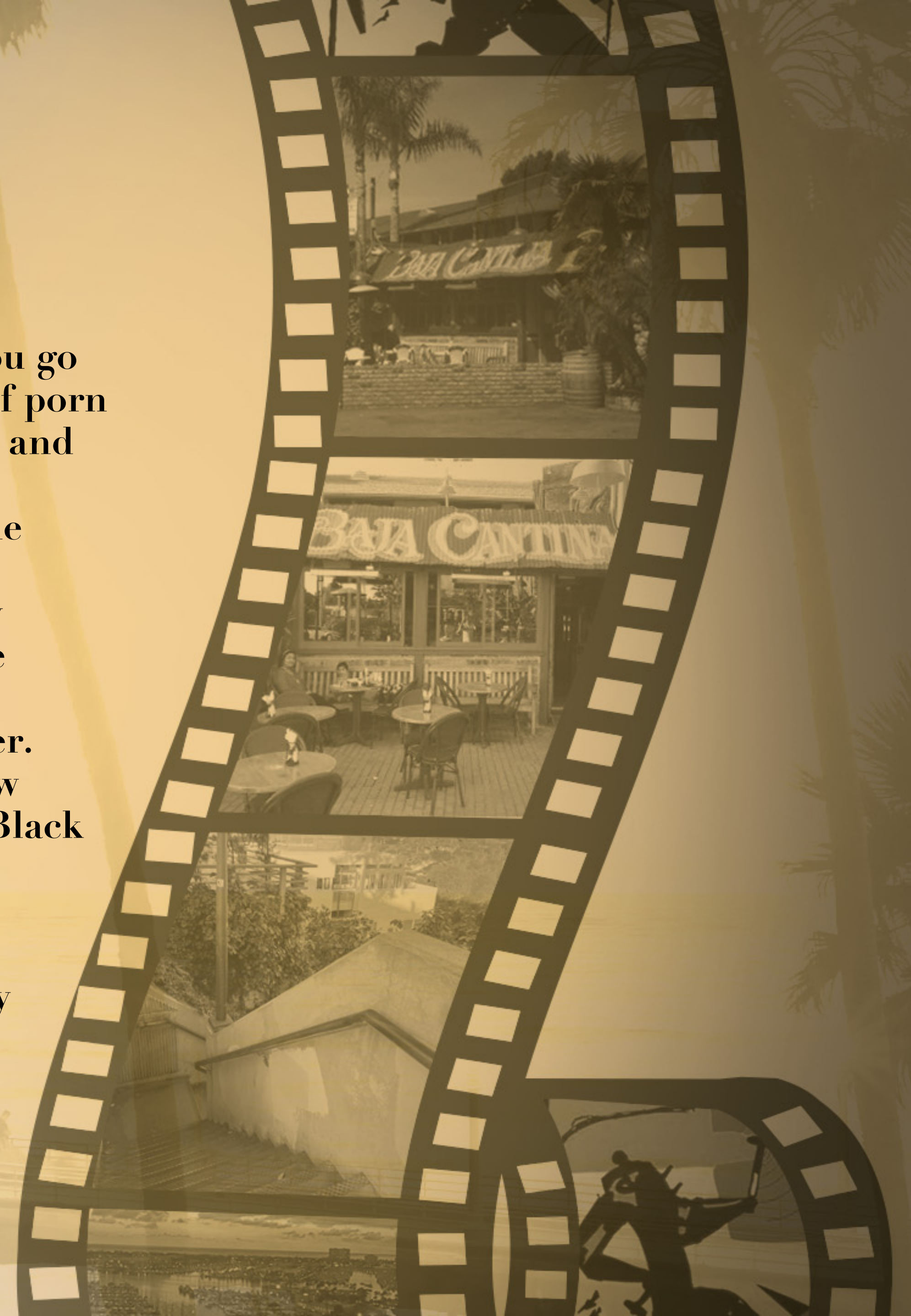




# The World

Marina Del Rey — the peninsula south of Washington Blvd. It's where you go to live when you get divorced. So big it's visible from outer space; home of porn stars, barflies who inhabit the Baja Cantina, and screenwriters who write and lounge upstairs at the Cow's End coffee shop while parking their beach cruisers outside. Mercedes Grill for the best Mojitos and plantains. A little further north on the corner of Rose Avenue is Casablanca, that bizarre, wonderful chintzy Mexican movie-themed restaurant with the Humphrey Bogart feel and production memorabilia. These are the locales that Spike and Kaylee inhabit. It's never too hot, cool in the evenings and mornings and there's always someone going by on roller skates or an electric scooter. South Bay types with 'Vettes propping up the bar at the Baja Cantina now alongside younger folks who don't even own a car but Uber everywhere. Black folks from Inglewood hit the Cheesecake Factory for its fabled menu, large portions, and fantastic milkshake cocktails.

We also take in Windward Avenue in Venice, home of the once-legendary Venice Cantina and their lethal "Industry Night" Margaritas - drink two and drive home VERY slowly. This is the location for a scene from Orson Welles' movie *Touch of Evil* and where Spike finally gets his redemption at the end of our movie when he figures out the line Kaylee gave him during their fight: "This could be bad for us."





# Story Hook

*May September* is a love story that dares to ask: what if your creative breakthrough and your greatest heartbreak arrived in the same person? It's not about the age gap — it's about the soul gap, and what happens when someone sees through your bullshit and loves you anyway.

• The Thief of Dubai  
by  
Mark Laing



# Case

*May September* is a story for anyone who's ever feared they missed their moment — and for everyone who's dared to believe that love, purpose, and personal reinvention don't come with an expiration date. It's a film that speaks to the creative soul: those who write, paint, dream, and stumble, chasing meaning in a world that commodifies youth and devalues depth. This isn't a rom-com fantasy. It's messier, funnier, sexier, and sadder — because it's real. It makes the case that vulnerability is a superpower, that chemistry can surprise you, and that sometimes your muse arrives wearing gym shorts and quoting Kubrick. For audiences craving grown-up stories about passion, art, failure, and second chances — hopefully told with wit, emotional intelligence, and visual elegance — *May September* offers a rare, intoxicating blend. It's love in the time of doubt. And it lingers like a great whisky: smoky, soulful, and unforgettable.

# Financials

*May September* offers strong commercial upside on a modest budget. With a contained, dialogue-driven narrative and limited locations — cafes, gyms, apartments, a distillery — production costs can be kept lean without sacrificing visual appeal. Its core appeal lies in its cast: two dynamic leads with emotional range, comic timing, and romantic chemistry. With the right talent, the film becomes instantly packageable and festival-friendly, drawing attention from both prestige buyers and streaming platforms hungry for elevated adult content. Think *Past Lives*, *Good Luck to You, Leo Grande*, or *Before Sunrise* — modest-budget, high-return films that thrive on performance and word of mouth. Additionally, the whisky subplot opens cross-promotional opportunities with premium spirits brands and whisky festivals, tapping into a loyal niche audience. This is a story built for critical acclaim, smart distribution, and a long tail of audience engagement across platforms. A grown-up love story with a strong emotional finish — and global potential.







# Characters

**male - age 46 - caucasian - british**

Andrew was born in Westminster, London in 1977. He's posh but not upper crust, likes kids but not that much, likes cats but not pit bulls. He thinks people have gone kinda crazy over their animals in general, treating them far too much like humans. He's a lover of old movies, especially 80s movies, and loves quoting from them. His first young wife Delerner knew them as well as him and they'd play with each other tussling back and forth figuring out who knew what line and from what film. They used to go to Cinespia all the time but his next two older wives thought it was too cold.

He hasn't quite got ADHD but definitely has trouble concentrating on one thing at a time. He once spent an entire day on TikTok watching mindless videos until his phone shut down. He also has a thing for older black women. Where did this come from? He dated then married Delerner but she broke his heart. Hence he decides to only date older women. The older the better and mostly Black. Delerner was having an affair with a fireman from Santa Barbara whom she met while at UCSB.

*Spike*  
Tom Hiddleston



# Characters

**female - age 23 - black - american**

Kaylee Parsons is 23 and exactly half Spike's age. Kaylee was born in Atlanta, GA where her dad, Ronald Parsons is a pastor. He got sucked into a Nigerian email scam a few years back and dragged down the whole congregation. She started a GoFundMe to help pay back the parishioners' money.

Kaylee was so distraught over her father getting caught in the scam that she vowed to never use the Internet again. This lasted for a year and even now she only uses it sparingly and only via a secure VPN. Her parents took her on cultural tours to the UK where her maternal grandfather owned a whiskey distillery. She became fascinated with all things Scottish, British, and whisky-ish. She listens to Led Zeppelin and a lot of old '60s and '70s music on a Walkman believe it or not and often dresses right out of Dexys Midnight Runners with a red bandanna and overalls.

*Kaylee*

Alexandra Shipp



# Characters



*Jonella*

China Anne McClain

**female - age 23 - black - american**

Jonella is the cute, hot, more available sidekick friend to Kaylee. Where Kaylee says "Let's see," Jonella says "Let's. See?" Kaylee brings Jonella to meet Spike at the Baja Cantina who has no compunction hitting on him and his friends. While at LMU Jonella and Kaylee both ran the 200m but Jonella was faster. Faster in all ways.

Kaylee's best friend, Jonella is like the Yin to Kaylee's Yang. They're each other's bestie and have been stealing each other's boyfriends since they attended LMU, Loyola Marymount University near LAX, a private school with a great Olympic-size swimming pool. Jonella was captain of the College track team and usually beat Kaylee at the 200m sprint. She also did the long jump which Kaylee could never figure out.

**male - 50s - caucasian - american - jewish**

Jon "Metro" Metrin is like Hymie the Cop. One of the few Jewish detectives on the LAPD and is one of Spike's best friends. His reflection. Squat in shape, he doesn't help himself by always loading up on the free tortilla chips.

He met Spike when his captain asked him to look into the annoying Marina-type dude (Spike) who kept pestering the local precinct with complaints about noisy dogs barking. He lives near Spike and they hang out at the Baja Cantina a lot. He's kind-hearted to his WASPy friend and often lends him money without asking for it back. His tall, blonde young wife recently left him for a lawyer with a Bentley who is working for the LA Lakers where he hooked up with Jon's wife who was working as a physiotherapist.



*Jon*

Paul Giamatti



# Characters

**male - 30s - black -  
american**

Justin is gay, flamboyant, and fabulous. He adores hanging out with Spike and may have a secret or not-so-secret crush on his handsome English friend. He's fond of planting big wet full kisses on Spike to get a reaction. Will he get to bed his paramour? Not if Kaylee's around for sure.

Justin's had a crush on Spike ever since he met him at the hair salon in West Hollywood four years ago. Justin is from Colorado; came to LA to live in West Hollywood and escape a domineering father who, like many in the African-American community, disapproved of Justin's "flamboyant" lifestyle. He does have an older partner, white, 60s, but he won't shake loose his dream of getting Spike to turn.

**female - 40s - latin/  
hispanic - nicaraguan**

Maria came from Nicaragua right about when the Sandinistas started making life there interesting for the inhabitants. She flew across the border and fell right into the arms of Andrew "Spike" Smith and has been keeping house for him for several years now. She doesn't touch booze but loves coffee, especially Costa Rican coffee. She's nominally married to Jose, has an older son she adores, and can't keep her eyes off Spike's pal Jon Metrin with whom she eventually starts dating and ends up marrying. The stuff that Spike throws her way would give an HR department a fit but she gives as good as she gets and thinks Spike should find a young Latina wife instead of the African-American grandmotherly types he keeps dating -- and marrying.



*Justin*  
Blake Young-Fountain



*Maria*  
Patricia Manterola