Episode #1. To Burn the Candle at Both Ends

Joshua:  Emily, this weekend I’m planning a movie marathon! ... Hold on, it’s not what you think! Emily, this is scientific research!

Emily:  Scientific research? Hmm... tell me more.

Joshua:  I’m going to watch every feature film ever made by Stanley Kubrick without stopping. From *Spartacus* to *Eyes Wide Shut*. 13 films in all!

Emily:  That is quite a task! But, what made you want to do this? And how is it “scientific”?

Joshua:  Kubrick was a brilliant American director who had a very unique work style. He was obsessed with every detail of production and spent countless hours on writing, researching, and editing. So, I want to immerse myself the world of his films to better understand his method.

Emily:  Interesting! Yes, Kubrick was notorious for paying meticulous attention to detail. He often demanded twenty, thirty, forty “takes” of the same scene to achieve realism.

Joshua:  OK, good! So you can see why I find this subject so fascinating. I’ve got my coffee, my popcorn, and I’m ready to stay up all night!

Emily:  But, why the marathon? It will take you more than 24 hours to watch all his films. Wouldn’t you enjoy them more spaced out over a few weekends? Joshua, I don’t understand why you need to burn the candle at both ends.

Joshua:  Sure, I could do it over a few weekends... but that’s not how Kubrick would have done it!

Emily:  Oh, really?

Joshua:  Stanley Kubrick, the genius behind *Dr. Strangelove* and *The Shining*, had an extreme work ethic, and he often burned the candle at both ends searching for the perfect image. Did you know that he collected and archived all of the research for his films?

Emily:  I read somewhere that there are hundreds of boxes full of his research.

Joshua:  More like thousands! Among those boxes, hundreds of them are related to *Eyes Wide Shut*. During that production, Kubrick was looking for a doorway to film one scene. Judging by all the photographs, he probably asked his associates to photograph just about every single doorway in London until he found the “perfect” one! Over 35,000 photographs.

Emily:  Wow! It sounds like Kubrick and his team were not afraid to burn the candle at both ends.

Joshua:  His art always came first.

Emily:  But I have to wonder... Was it worth it? Was the doorway eventually picked for *Eyes Wide Shut*, absolutely perfect?

Joshua:  It’s a red door with the number 265 painted on the glass at the top. Just an ordinary door. The kind you see all over Manhattan.

Emily:  That seems unnecessary and excessive to me.

Joshua:  Exactly! I’m trying to understand why he needed to burn the candle at both ends perfecting every detail.

Emily:  So, by sacrificing sleep and maybe even your sanity, you hope to gain a better understanding of Kubrick’s genius.

Joshua:  That’s the idea!
Emily: Ok, since you are doing this for science, let me suggest something else to consider... As Kubrick’s career progressed, he took longer and longer to make each film. After *Full Metal Jacket* in 1987, his final film, *Eyes Wide Shut*, wasn’t completed until 1999. 12 years later!

Joshua: I know!

Emily: So, while you’re watching, ask yourself why Kubrick took so much time to produce his later movies.

Joshua: Hmm...

Emily: Perhaps, he might have made more films if he hadn’t been burning the candle at both ends with all that research and archiving.

Joshua: Well yeah, but then Kubrick’s films wouldn’t be Kubrick’s films.