

LEGEND

Life Beyond The 'Brat Pack'

When Tom Cruise was 17 years of age, fate changed his life forever. He was attending a New Jersey high school when a serious knee injury dashed his hopes of making the wrestling team. A friend talked him into trying out for the role of Nathan Detroit in *Guys & Dolls*. The young athlete decided to take the challenge, thinking it would give him something to do with his spare time.

Going from wrestling to acting was actually a natural step for Tom. His mother, a former actress, inspired his appetite for the arts and he studied drama and music at the many schools he attended.

And unfortunately, Tom attended many schools.

His father's work as an electrical engineer kept the family moving continually from city to city in the U.S. and Canada. "We never seemed to stay more than a year and a half in one place except Ottawa where we spent four years."

Naturally it was tough on the family. But it was tougher on Tom being the new boy on the block. He suffered from dyslexia, a learning disability which made him very vulnerable. It was a hardship trying to fit in with the other kids as they thought he might be slightly retarded.

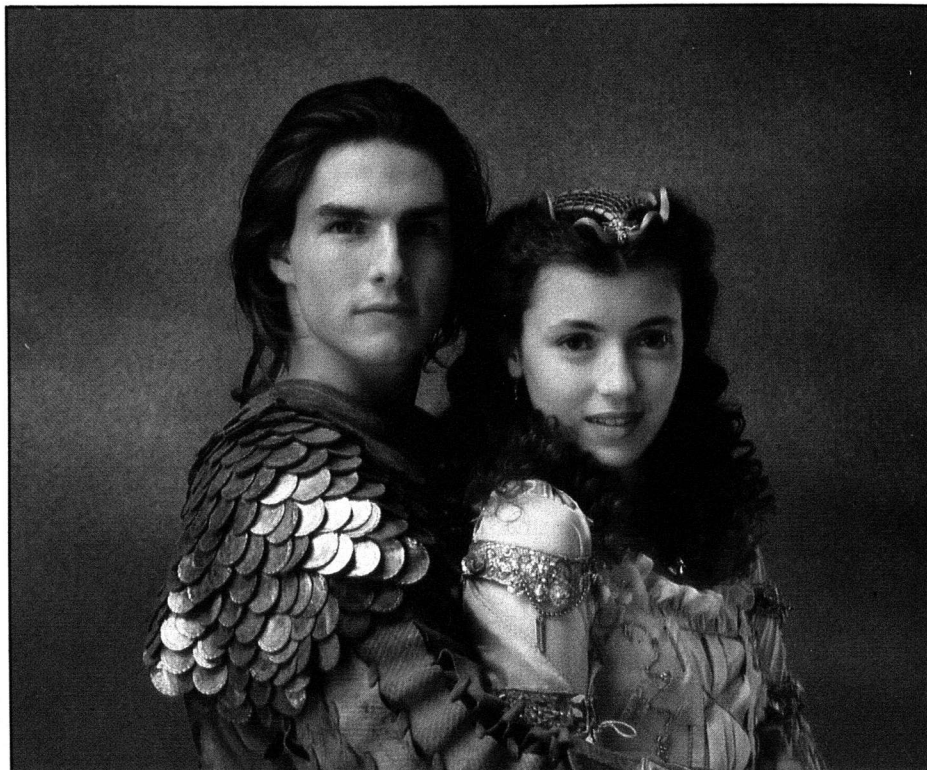
Because of his problem, friendships weren't easy to make and by the time he would find a new friend, it was time to move on again. So he turned his energies to sports and learned to box, swim, play baseball, soccer and hockey.

Tom was 11 when his parents divorced. His mother took Tom and his three sisters to Louisville, Kentucky where they finally settled. Later, his mother re-married and the family moved to New Jersey.

Going into *Guys And Dolls* opened up a new world for him. He felt he had something to say for the first time and that he belonged. Best of all, an agent saw him perform in the musical and was sufficiently impressed to tell him he should seriously consider taking up an acting career.

Those words didn't land on deaf ears. Within a few months time Tom had a manager, an agent and had landed a lead role in a dinner theatre version of *Godspell*. From that time on he knew he wanted to make acting his profession in life.

He moved to New York, rented a small apartment in the Upper West Side and supported himself working as a busboy at a restaurant. He'd just turned



Tom Cruise as Jack O' the Green with Mia Sara.

18, but the glitz of the Big Apple didn't turn his head. Then, as now, he devoted his leisure time keeping himself physically fit, reading and making miniature remote control models of boats.

Fortunately, he didn't have to wait long before getting work as an actor. At his very first audition, he won a small part in *Endless Love* starring Brooke Shields.

After several auditions for TV shows he didn't get, Tom's big break came when he won the role of the psychotic cadet David Shawn in *Taps*. Like everything he's tackled since, he took the part seriously and immediately began marching around, snapping to attention and barking orders.

Then came Francis Coppola's *The Outsiders*, *Risky Business* and *All the Right Moves*. Two of his latest films *Top Gun* and *Legend* are being released shortly.

"I have such a passion for everything I do. When I take on a role I know I won't wake up in a sweat in the middle of the night saying 's...t! I have to play this!,'" said Cruise talking to *Entertainment Tonight*.

His role of Jack O' the Green in *Legend* is completely different from anything he has done before. He plays a mythical character of the forest who leads a care-

free life until fate compels him to undertake a heroic quest to rescue the world from its icy curse.

"The role was very physical with a lot of gymnastics and dance. When I played him, I had to let go of everything and go and look for that little guy inside of me," he says. "But it did give me the chance to portray a bizarre character that I probably won't have the opportunity of playing again for a long time."

"The great thing about success is the freedom and the room you get. I really take my time in choosing the films I'm offered and I like to take two months to research my roles."

Life is good for Tom Cruise Mapother IV born July 3, 1962. He's part of the celebrated Brat Pack and with his handsome looks, great acting ability and likeable character, having women in his life is no problem. He's told friends he's in no hurry to marry.

Tom still works on improving his talents as he's ambitious. He studies singing and would even like to study opera which isn't surprising, since his grandfather sang with the Metropolitan Opera. He would also like to have his own nightclub act and work on the Broadway stage. Why not!



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