



THE IDES OF MARCH

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The movie *The Ides of March* is a gripping story of political drama, loyalty, betrayal, and is also for me, a movie that demonstrates fear in distinct aspects.

In the movie, George Clooney is Democratic presidential candidate Pennsylvania governor Mike Morris. Ryan Gosling is Stephen Meyers, Morris' Junior campaign manager. Events unfold that have Stephen questioning his decision to support Mike Morris, because he has personally found out about a political scandal that could bring down Morris' campaign and topple his reputation. After suffering from one setback to another, Stephen mans up and faces his uncertainties by playing his cards right, a skill which he has learned from being in politics in one way or another.

The film taught me a lot about how the American electoral system works, but it has also taught me so much about facing life squarely especially when one is left just clutching at straws to survive. Young as he was, Stephen Meyers had already been exposed to the cynicism of the arena he has worked in, but had initially refused to play dirty and continued doing his job as best as he could instead. When confronted with the bitter reality of his candidate's indiscretion (read: sexual liaison with an intern), Stephen starts searching inwardly for answers to some of his questions. His predicament wasn't any easier because he had formed a strong bond with the intern herself, who relied on him for answers to her own nagging uncertainties.

In the end, the protagonist learns that beating people at their own game will ultimately bring him the results he needs. But his painful moments of realization can leave the viewer feeling similarly helpless. What is one to do when someone they admire and support turns out to not be what they think he is?

In life, we are all faced with uncertainties. We constantly fear such uncertainties, often wishing for them to go away on their own. But there are just challenges in life which we can not simply brush off dismissively with a flick of the wrist. They will hound us, those uncertainties and challenges will, and without let up. It is therefore upon us to work hard all the way up and out, not letting go of our principles in whatever way possible. When we lose our life's ideals and the values which we live by, we also lose the most vital weapons we have for facing our future fears. We open ourselves to outright attacks, to vicious personal attacks that will eventually hurt us in more ways than one.

When we face life, let us not forget that our fears are part of living. Accepting this fact is in itself the beginning of victory in all that we do.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What would you do if you were confronted with a similar situation to what Stephen Meyers had?
2. Why should we never let go of our values and ideals when facing our fears?
3. Is it ever easy to face one's fears? Why or why not?
4. Talk about a specific instance in your own life when you successfully faced your fear.
5. Why do people fear what they do not know? And why do they fear the consequences of knowing?