

Reels Within Reels

A screenplay by

Casey Dahlin

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EXT. A PARK BENCH - DAY

It is a season. The leaves are glowing under the sun or covered in snow or just starting to bud or turn color. In any case, the park is particularly beautiful this time of year.

Ella, a girl of about 17 sits to one side of the bench, looking wistful. She is notably stunning.

A boy of the same age sits next to her, and commences to look just as wistful. His name is Quentin.

QUENTIN

Hey.

Long pause.

ELLA

You didn't have to come here.

QUENTIN

I didn't want to leave you
alone . . . I can't stand
seeing you like this.

He pushes back her hair.

QUENTIN

You're so beautiful.

Ella opens her mouth to say something, then stops. Suddenly she seems disoriented.

ELLA

I'm sorry, I- cut.

The wistfulness disappears from the scene. Quentin plucks up a baseball cap from under the bench and dons it.

QUENTIN

What happened?

ELLA

Sorry, I blanked.

QUENTIN

You need a script?

ELLA

No, that "beautiful" line just
threw me for a second.

QUENTIN
Yeah, I shouldn't ad-lib. It
didn't feel right anyway.
(To O.S.)
Trevor, how's this shot
looking?

TREVOR
Uh, it looks good.

QUENTIN
Let me see it.

He walks over to the camera.

QUENTIN
That's about what I wanted it
to look like. Alright, lets do
it again.

He returns to his place on the bench, and pulls out a
script from the same place where kept the baseball cap.

QUENTIN
You sure you don't want this.

ELLA
No, I've got it, thanks.

QUENTIN
Ok.

He removes the cap, and places it back under the bench
with the script.

QUENTIN
Action.

INT. A SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

As Ella walks down the empty hall it seems to fill up
behind her. Quentin watches her move toward him from one
end.

His best friend Jade stands next to him. She is
attractive, but unconventional, mostly by her own design.

JADE
You're pathetic, you know that?

QUENTIN
Hmm? . . . Oh, uh . . . Yes,
actually, yes I do.

JADE

You've been staring at her for three weeks, don't you think you've earned a conversation.

QUENTIN

Oh that would be lovely. "Hi, aren't you in my calculus class? By the way I love you."

JADE

Well at least the "hi" part.

QUENTIN

And then what?

JADE

Maybe she'll say something. At least if you say "hi" she'll know you have some self confidence, girls like that.

QUENTIN

That's why they date jerks.

JADE

Right, but don't try that.

QUENTIN

Well, there's no way I'm going to come off as self-confident.

JADE

Then I'll talk to her for you.

She grabs him by the hand and starts to pull him. He stops her.

QUENTIN

Whoa! No.

JADE

Come on!

QUENTIN

I'll talk to her, alright? I've got a plan.

JADE

A plan?

QUENTIN

Yes, a plan.

INT. A SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Quentin approaches Ella, holding a screenplay entitled "A Plan."

QUENTIN

Uh, hey.

She turns around.

ELLA

Hey.

QUENTIN

You're in my calculus class
right?

ELLA

Yeah, I think so.

QUENTIN

Right.

Century of awkwardness.

QUENTIN

You're in drama, right?

ELLA

Yeah.

QUENTIN

Well, I'm looking for people to
be in a movie I'm making.

ELLA

Oh wow! You're making a movie?

QUENTIN

Yeah. Uh, here's the script,
tell me if you want to do it.

ELLA

Wow, thank you!

QUENTIN

You're welcome.

The century becomes a bicentennial.

QUENTIN

I'm gonna go.

ELLA

Ok.

She giggles.

QUENTIN

Bye.

ELLA

Bye.

INT. A COUCH - DAY

A couch in an unknown room in the school, a lounge area of sorts. Quentin sits on it between Trevor and Jade. Across from them is a reporter from the school newspaper "The Eye."

REPORTER

So what kind of film is it.

QUENTIN

It's a love story.

REPORTER

And have you ever directed a film before?

QUENTIN

Yes, but never anything like this.

REPORTER

So is this your biggest film?

QUENTIN

. . . No, not really, but I think its my most important.

REPORTER

Ok. Trevor, you're going to be filming this with Quentin, and Jade you'll be filling a small role in the film, what do the two of you think of Quentin as a film maker.

TREVOR

Well, we have some stylistic differences, but I think he knows what he's doing.

REPORTER

Jade?

JADE

. . . I think he's a complete
scuzz-ball.

MONTAGE

- 1) Trevor and Quentin work around a camera on a tripod, then Trevor snaps a chalkboard snapper in front of the camera.
- 2) The four cross the street Beatles-style, Quentin with a script, Jade with a tripod, Trevor with a camera bag, and Ella with a purse.
- 3) Ella and Quentin eat ice cream and exchange coy looks as Trevor films.
- 4) Ella playfully pushes Quentin into the pool, again as Trevor films.
- 5) The two eat sushi at a restaurant.
- 6) Ella cries in Quentin's arms in the middle of the school hall.
- 7) Ella and Quentin kiss in a rainstorm.

EXT. A PARK BENCH - DAY

The same bench as at the beginning, but this time, Jade and Ella stand behind it.

JADE

If you think you're going to
take him from me, you're dead
wrong!

ELLA

Now you're being ridiculous.

Jade slaps Ella, hard, harder than intended.

ELLA

Ow! Ooh jeez.

JADE

Oh gosh, I'm sorry.

QUENTIN

Cut.

Trevor moves toward him with a first-aid kit. Quentin rushes in to comfort her.

EXT. THE PARK - DAY

Jade and Quentin walk among the trees as Trevor takes down the tripod.

QUENTIN
You really nailed her.

JADE
Yeah, not too bright.

QUENTIN
Eh, she seems ok.

There is a silence.

JADE
What's wrong?

QUENTIN
She's not falling for me, is she?

JADE
Do you ever listen to yourself?

QUENTIN
Oh come on. Be supportive.

JADE
What are you talking about?
"Fall for you?" Hell, I'll just go slap her around a few more times, maybe then she'll learn to fall in love when she's supposed to.

They take a seat. Quentin pages through the script in his lap.

QUENTIN
Its not like that. I just figured, after awhile, she would. . .

JADE
Its exactly like that.

They both sit in silence, looking wounded.

JADE
She doesn't really know you that well.

QUENTIN

I know.

JADE

That's why Emily turned you down.

QUENTIN

I know.

JADE

And Anna.

He looks at her.

QUENTIN

Jade. . .I know.

JADE

. . . Didn't we meet at that place?

QUENTIN

Where?

JADE

There.

She points across the way

JADE

At Marco's party.

QUENTIN

Oh yeah, with the clown that wet himself.

JADE

Yep.

QUENTIN

Wow. That was, what? Ten years ago?

JADE

Yeah, Marco's birthday is next month.

QUENTIN

Really? He didn't tell me.

JADE

Yeah . . . I guess we know each other pretty well by now.

QUENTIN
You think I'd take your crap
from just anyone?

Jade laughs.

JADE
. . .You know, the majority of
good relationships are based on
friendship.

Now Quentin laughs.

JADE
What?

QUENTIN
What do you read Cosmo all of a
sudden?

JADE
. . .Yes. . .As a matter of
fact I do.

QUENTIN
Well, I'm looking for something
a little better than a friend,
you get me?

Jade is quiet for a long time, looking at Quentin. Quentin
is quiet too, paging through his script.

JADE
Yeah. I get it.

EXT. GRASS - DAY

Ella and Quentin lay on the grass.

QUENTIN
That one looks like an ant.

ELLA
Where?

QUENTIN
Right there.

ELLA
Oh, yeah it does!

They laugh.

QUENTIN
I'm going to miss you.

ELLA
I'm going to miss you too.

Ella starts to tear up. They kiss.

QUENTIN
I love you . . . I love you.

ELLA
I love you too.

TREVOR
And cut.

A car speeds by, there is actually a busy road near this patch of grass.

QUENTIN
So that's it.

TREVOR
Yep. I'll get you the stuff for editing tomorrow.

QUENTIN
Good.

Trevor tosses him his hat, which he puts on.

ELLA
Hey, this was fun, thank you.

QUENTIN
Oh, uh, yeah, no problem.

She lays back on the grass and relaxes. He reaches up to touch her hair, then stops.

ELLA
Well I've got to go.

She gets up.

INT. A HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

The only light is from the screen of the computer where Quentin now sits editing the film.

He begins listening to the scene that was being filmed in the very beginning.

He begins the scene looking nostalgic for times gone by, but as the tape progresses, he seems less pleased.

The film moves past the mark where Ella broke before.

ELLA

(O.S)

Please go. I'm sorry, but I
don't feel like I know you
anymore.

Quentin mouths "I don't feel like I know you," then stops the clip.

INT. JADE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jade pulls herself from beneath a blanket and grabs the phone.

JADE

Hello?

QUENTIN

(O.S)

Hello? Jade?

JADE

Quentin? It's 2am.

QUENTIN

I need to ask you something.

JADE

I need to sleep.

QUENTIN

Sorry, it can't wait.

JADE

Mmmh, fine. What?

QUENTIN

Jade . . . I was just looking
at the film, and . . . do you
think I'm an ass?

Jade smiles

JADE

Yes . . . yes I do.

INT. A SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Quentin approaches Ella, wearing his cap, and holding a DVD box.

QUENTIN
Hey, Ella.

ELLA
Oh, hey!

QUENTIN
I got this for you.

ELLA
Oh, thanks. How is it?

QUENTIN
Better than you know.

ELLA
Awesome!

QUENTIN
So that's that then.

ELLA
It was fun.

QUENTIN
It was . . . It's been a
privilege working with you.

ELLA
Thank you! . . . there's a hole
in your hat.

QUENTIN
Hmm?

He takes it off.

QUENTIN
So there is.

ELLA
Aww, that was your directors
hat.

He looks to the end of the hall. Jade is standing where they were at the very beginning.

QUENTIN
Oh well. I have to go.

ELLA

See ya.

QUENTIN

Bye.

He takes a few steps, then pauses in front of a trash can. He examines his hat one last time, then tosses it.

As Quentin walks down the empty hall it seems to fill up behind him. Jade watches him move toward her from one end.

He stops in front of her, and looks her in the eye,

QUENTIN

Hi.