

The Film Festival Movie

written by

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INT. WHS HALLWAY - DAY

FADE IN:

We see a laid back girl in sweats and a hoodie walking through the halls on her way to her locker. Her backpack is slightly unzipped and papers are spewing out. This is SARAH.

Sarah makes it to her locker where a fellow student is waiting for her. This is AUDREY. Audrey looks a little more put together than Sarah is. Sarah opens her locker.

SARAH

Hey, Audrey.

AUDREY

Hey, Sarah. Woah, your papers are spilling everywhere.

Audrey takes a piece of paper out of Sarah's backpack. It reads "-5".

AUDREY (CONT'D)

How did you get a negative 5?

SARAH

I drew some graphic images of the Titanic on the back... I also didn't answer a single question.

AUDREY

Bruv, you gotta start trying. This is getting bad. Last week you drew The Hindenburg Disaster on the back of your Latin test.

SARAH

Actually, Bakale gave me six extra credit points for that. But yeah, apparently in order to graduate I have to take more extracurriculars, so I have a meeting with my guidance counselor today.

AUDREY

Well, good luck.

SARAH

Thanks.

Sarah begins to walk away. She turns back around suddenly.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh, shoot. I almost forgot this.

Sarah grabs her picture of the Titanic.

SARAH (CONT'D)

This was actually a good one.

INT. GUIDANCE OFFICE - DAY

Sarah sits across from her GUIDANCE COUNSELOR. She looks uneasy, as if she has never been in this room before.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Sarah, this is bad. How did you slide by without taking any extracurriculars?

SARAH

Well, I took gym and health.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Yeah, and it says you just paid some guy to ride on his back all gym class while he ran laps.

SARAH

Hahaha, yeah you'd be amazed at the things high-schoolers will do for ten bucks.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

For extracurriculars you can chose Drawing and Painting, Robotics, or Film.

SARAH

Uhhh okay, I guess I'll join Robotics.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

That's all filled. Sorry!

SARAH

(confused)

Alright.. How about drawing and painting.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Oops! That's full too!

SARAH

What? If all of these are full,  
why even tell me I can chose  
them?

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

They say it's more effective to  
give children options.

SARAH

Fine, then I guess I have to  
chose film.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Film! Great choice! You're going  
to love it.

INT. WHS HALLWAY - SAME DAY

Audrey and Sarah walk in the English wing. Sarah is on her  
way to film, and Audrey has Lang with Cashman.

AUDREY

Film? Bad choice. You're going to  
hate it.

SARAH

Are you kidding? Why?

AUDREY

I heard Alan is kinda psycho.

SARAH

Okay, but aren't all the  
teachers.

AUDREY

Well, yeah. But he's literally  
obsessed with the film program he  
runs.

SARAH

You're exaggerating.

AUDREY

That man has three children:  
Nathan, Phoebe, and Film.

SARAH

(mockingly)

Okay!

The two part ways. Audrey walks into Cashman's room and Sarah walks into Alan's room.

INT. ALAN'S CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sarah steps into the film room. The lights are off, and students sit on desks and chairs while a man stands behind his desk. This is MR. ALAN. Alan chats and laughs with the man who sits next to him. This is MR. ST. MARTIN.

Alan sees the new girl, Sarah, walk into class and turns to face her.

ALAN

Woah, woah, woah. Eeeeverybody relax. Guys, listen up. We have a new student. This is Sarah.

The class thinks they're funny, so they all say hello like they're at an AA meeting.

CLASS

Hi, Sarah.

Sarah continues her walk to her seat near the front.

SARAH

Hahaha, hey, everyone.

Sarah takes her seat while Alan makes his way to the front of the board where a structure diagram is being presented.

ALAN

Okay, so today I just want to continue talking about the film festival structure. We'll be using "Alby" as an example.

GRIFFIN WILKINS

Yes! I love that movie! I've seen it five times!

NICOLE WATERS

I've seen it seven times!

MATT GLYNN

I want to marry Alby!

ALAN

Hahaha, I know, I know! It's a classic!

Sarah is confused and looks around for someone to match her glance. The rest of the class laughs at the previous remarks.

INT. ALAN'S CLASSROOM - ONE HOUR LATER

The clock shows that it has been an hour since the lesson started.

ALAN

And that's why I'm naming my next child Marc Sheehan.

The bell rings.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Alright, tomorrow I'm just going to have you take a short Google Form quiz on the structure of a film festival movie. Be prepared! It shouldn't take long.

The bell rings, and the class leaves.

INT. WHS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sarah meets up with Audrey in the hall.

AUDREY

So how did it go?

SARAH

I don't know, it was fine. The kids in there are weird. They love film just as much as Alan does. It's like a cult. They know TOO MUCH about the festival and the past movies.

AUDREY

Yeah, they love that stuff.

SARAH

Oh, and we have a quiz tomorrow.

AUDREY

Okay, you should actually study for that thing. You do want to graduate right?

SARAH

Yeah, I think I'll give it the ole' "homeroom shuffle" tomorrow.

AUDREY

Or don't listen. That works too.

INT. ALAN'S CLASSROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Sarah walks into class, reading the notes she has written down on her hand. It reads, "Catalyst, Big Event, Mid Point, Crisis, Showdown, and Realization".

ALAN

Morning, Sarah. You ready for this?

Sarah does not look up from the notes on her hand.

SARAH

Ready as I'll ever b-

Before Sarah can finish her sentence, she trips and absolutely eats dirt. Her face mashes against the ground. She passes out.

FADE OUT

INT. ALAN'S CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The blur of Sarah's eyes washes away as she begins to come to. Above her stands Alan, St. Martin, and a couple other concerned students.

Alan now wears a tweed jacket and a beret and holds his signature mug of coffee.

ALAN

Are you okay, Sarah?

Sarah rubs her head.

SARAH

Oof. Yeah, I think so.

ALAN

Far out.

Alan grabs Sarah's hand and helps her up. Mr. St. Martin, who now wears a full-on basketball track suit and whistle, begins to walk out the door angrily.

SARAH

Woah, what's the matter with him?

St. Martin hears this remark and shouts from outside the doorway.

ST. MARTIN

I'm angry 'cause I'm bald!

SARAH

(To herself)

Jeez. Sorry I asked.

ALAN

Sorry doesn't walk the dog.

Sarah looks around to see about six other kids in the classroom.

SARAH

Where did everyone else go?

ALAN

What do you mean? This is our entire class.

SARAH

You're telling me we have a class of seven people?

ALAN

Yeah. That's normal.

The bell rings. The students immediately exit the classroom while Sarah stumbles slowly behind them.

INT. WHS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sarah exits the class and meets up with Audrey. Instead of her previous outfit, Audrey now wears brightly colored, zany clothing. It is also clear that Sarah has changed her outfit as well. She now wears a flannel.

SARAH

Wow, dude. Audrey, what the Hell are you wearing?

Sarah looks down to see that she has changed shirts.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Woah, what am I wearing?

AUDREY

Sarah, what in the name of Eugene Crabs are you talking about?

Audrey pauses for a laugh.

SARAH

Wha- what are you doing?

AUDREY

What ever could you mean, you silly little crumpet.

She pauses again.

SARAH

Are you-? Are you pausing for a laugh?

AUDREY

So how was Film? English was crazy! Cashman is just the silliest. In the span of an hour he somehow managed to create a secret handshake with every student in the class, have an in depth flashback about his younger self, and make an underground snacking system.

A man pops into the hallway in a Kramer-like fashion. He wears four cardigans and leans in the door frame. This is CASHMAN.

CASHMAN

Audrey, what the hell?

Cashman waits for a laugh.

SARAH

Oh God, not you too.

Sarah starts to slowly back away.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Alrighty, I know it's only third period, but I think I'm gonna head home... It's been real.

Sarah speed walks away.

AUDREY

Catch you later, Sarah!

CASHMAN

Sarah, what the Hell?

Audrey gives Cashman a smug little look.

SARAH

Okay, bye.

INT. SARAH'S HOUSE - SECONDS LATER

Sarah stands in the middle of her kitchen. Her PAPA, a burly Italian man, sits at the table with a little white dog on his lap while her brother TJ, an obviously Italian boy, raids the fridge, and her MOM, an extremely Irish looking woman, sits at the table.

Sarah looks disoriented.

SARAH

Woah! How did I get here so quickly? I didn't even get in the car to drive home.

PAPA

Hey, kiddo.

TJ

Whatdup, sis.

MOM

Hi, sweetie.

SARAH

Why is everybody home? It's the middle of the day.

Sarah looks over at the extremely Irish mom.

SARAH (CONT'D)

And who's this woman? That's not Mama.

MOM

Don't be silly, sweetheart.

Sarah pulls TJ over to the mom to compare the two side by side.

SARAH

You're seriously trying to tell me that that-

Sarah points to TJ.

SARAH (CONT'D)

-came from that.

Sarah points to the mom.

TJ

Everyone always tells us that we look identical.

SARAH

I can't take this. I'm going to my room.

INT. SARAH'S ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Sarah sits at her desk, rubbing her head.

SARAH

Ugh, what the Hell. It happened again.

Sarah's computer catches her eye. Up on the screen is the website for the Walpole High School Film Festival. She looks down at her hand. The scribbles of the Film Fest plot structure are still there. Sarah researches deeper into the web page. She scrolls through tons and tons of movies, reads screenplays, and watches trailers. One more look at her hand, and then.. It hits her.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh my God...

Sarah looks directly at the camera.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I'm stuck in a film festival movie!

Sarah looks around the room in a panic.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 I gotta get out of here. I gotta  
 tell someone about this. I  
 gotta...

An idea hits her.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 I gotta go to school! Uhhh..

Sarah looks around, hoping the magic will work.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 (mockingly)  
 Phew! It's been a long day, but I  
 think I'm going to head back to  
 school.

INT. WHS HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER

Sarah stands in the middle of the hallway, looking  
 disoriented, per usual. She speed walks down the hall.

SARAH  
 Oh my God! It actually worked!  
 I'm back at school!

ERKER (V.O.)  
 So Sarah made her way down the  
 hallway, trying desperately to  
 find her friend, Audrey.

Sarah hears the voice over and looks around, clearly  
 frustrated and confused. She passes by a man who reads from a  
 large yellow book with the name "Sarah" in purple lettering.  
 This is MR. ERKER.

ERKER  
 Sarah left the hallway  
 frantically.

Sarah continues to walk down the hallway and into the  
 lunchroom.

INT. WHS LUNCHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sarah looks around and finds Audrey sitting down at a lunch  
 table. She runs over to Audrey and sits down. Around them,  
 there are about ten kids eating lunch.

AUDREY

Sarah! You're back! What's crack-a-lackin! Wanna see me put my whole fist in my mouth?

SARAH

Audrey! Stop talking for a second. I need your help! I'm trapped in a film festival movie.

AUDREY

What the devil are you talking about?

SARAH

For starters, no normal person would say "what the devil". And look what you're wearing! You're obviously an archetype of some whacky best friend character.

AUDREY

Hurumph! I still don't understand what you're saying.

SARAH

Look around! We're at lunch right now, and there are about ten kids here. Just enough so that if you do a medium shot it looks like a full lunch room. But look at the wide shot.

Cut to wide shot.

SARAH (CONT'D)

There's nobody here! Isn't that just a little bit weird?

AUDREY

(offended)

No, no it's not.

SARAH

Audrey, NONE OF THEM ARE ACTUALLY TALKING! They're just mouthing peas and carrots!

AUDREY

Speaking of peas and carrots, I once--

SARAH

Audrey! Why aren't you getting this? Are you even listening to me?

AUDREY

(offended)

I'm late for wig club.

Audrey gets up and walks away.

SARAH

(yelling at Audrey)

How are you late for wig club?  
School hasn't even ended yet!

A man, obviously dressed as a woman, approaches Sarah's seat. He has a fake blonde wig, heavy blue eye shadow, and piercing red lipstick. The LUNCH LADY places an apple in front of Sarah. She's holding something behind her back.

LUNCH LADY

Hi, sweetie! Are you ready for some Reddi Whip?

The Lunch Lady puts a dollop of Reddi Whip onto the apple. Sarah rolls her eyes.

SARAH

I gotta get to Alan's class.

INT. ALAN'S CLASSROOM - SECONDS LATER

Once again, Sarah looks disoriented as she first appears in the empty class room. Alan sits at his chair with his feet up on his desk. Sarah rubs her head.

SARAH

Okay, still not used to that.

ALAN

Salutations, if it isn't Sarah Maxx. Maxy! Ruby and Max. MAXamillion. Sssssssarah.

SARAH

Okay, stop with the nicknames. It's getting a little excessive.

ALAN

Woah. I'm just tryin to stay hip with the times.

SARAH

Mr. Alan, I feel like you're the only one that can help me. I'm trapped in one of your weird, comedic film festival movies.

ALAN

Eeeeeverybody relax. What are you talking about, Sarah Jessica Parker?

SARAH

Everyone is being super weird. There are only about ten other people in classes that should have at least thirty, I can teleport wherever I want just as long as I say my intended location, my friend has turned into a meme, Mr. St. Martin is playing the angry bald man, and you've become groovy Alan. Nothing makes sense.

ALAN

Nothing makes sense? Nothing makes sense! I'll tell you what doesn't make sense, compadre. You coming into my safe space and telling me that our film fest comedies are stupid.

SARAH

Woah! Not what I was trying to say. You're being a bit dramatic.

ALAN

Dramatic? Dramatic!

An angry man appears in the doorway. This is Mr. Balkus.

BALKUS

I'll show you dramatic! I'm shipping you off to military school!

SARAH

Okay, I think this is just one big misunderstanding.

ALAN

Get out of class! You fail!

SARAH

This was not the intention.

A man suddenly appears in the doorway wearing a velvet track suit, sweatband, and holding a large spear. This is COACH KAMPPER.

KAMPPER

You know what happens when you fail film class?

SARAH

(terrified)

What?

KAMPPER

You die!

Sarah springs up and darts out the classroom.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Kammer and Balkus chase Sarah down the hallway. Kampper yields an extremely large stick.

BALKUS

Come back here, you worthless scum!

Sarah speeds down the hall with Kampper and Balkus close behind.

SARAH

What is going on?!

Sarah spots Audrey walking down the hall holding a wig.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Audrey! Thank God. You have to help me.

Audrey sees Sarah in trouble and continues to brush her wig. She gives Sarah the cold shoulder.

Sarah is able to dart out of the way by ducking into a stairwell. She sits down, out of breath, at the bottom of a stairwell.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(out of breath)

What is happening? I literally just got chased down the hall by two of the scariest men I've ever seen. What am going to do? I got kicked out of film, I'm trapped in this crazy movie, and Audrey won't even look at me. All is lost.

Sarah has a light-bulb moment.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh my God. All is lost.

She looks down at her hand where the structure of a film festival movie is still scribbled. This time, she pays particular attention to the section that says "crisis".

SARAH (CONT'D)

This is it. This is the crisis of the movie! This is where I lose everything that's important to me. It's the crisis! IT'S THE CRISIS!

Sarah gets a couple confused looks from the top of the stairwell.

SARAH (CONT'D)

In order for the movie to be resolved, I need to make amends and admit my shortcomings. And if film festival magic is correct, Audrey should be here in three, two-

Sarah looks to her side, and wouldn't you know it!, Audrey is also at the bottom of the stairwell. Audrey turns a corner. Trying to avoid Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Audrey! Wait!

AUDREY

Grrr.

The two begin to walk up the steps.

SARAH

Easy, tiger. Listen, Audrey, I want to apologize for earlier in the cafeteria. It was unfair of me to expect you to understand everything I was saying about being trapped in a movie. I don't even understand it. But that's not important. You're my best friend, even if you are wearing three ponytails right now.

AUDREY

Awe! Thanks, me old cream cracker.

SARAH

But the stuff I said, about this whole world being one giant film festival movie, I'm not sorry about that. That was all true. The only difference is, now I know how to get out.

AUDREY

Of course! Time for a dance competition!

SARAH

What? No.

AUDREY

Math competition?

SARAH

No.

AUDREY

Epic ping-pong battle to the song "Take on Me"?

SARAH

No, no, no! Listen, this is a film festival movie, right? If I've learned anything about this world is that it USUALLY follows a specific structure. There are a few exceptions though. But I just had my crisis. My "all is lost moment." Do you know what that means?

Audrey shakes her head.

SARAH (CONT'D)

If this structure is correct, that means that next up, I'm going to have my showdown.

The two have reached the top of the steps. Waiting for them is Mr. Alan.

ALAN

Well, well, well. If it isn't Sarah Maxx Detweiler.

SARAH

Look, it was just a big misunderstanding.

ALAN

Nevertheless, we shall tango, Sarah. We shall waltz. We shall do, the dance of death.

A large swarm of about six extras appear out of nowhere. Each one is wearing a pair of sunglasses and a tweed jacket. The snap in a West Side Story-type fashion.

ALAN (CONT'D)

Attack!

The extras start to fight with Sarah. Sarah fights back.

SARAH

No! No! No!

Sarah punches an extra. And dodges a kick.

SARAH (CONT'D)

That is not the type of showdown I want!

Sarah knocks an extra and dodges a punch.

SARAH (CONT'D)

This one's gonna be a symbolic  
showdown.

The extras stop fighting and leave.

CROWD

Awwww.

SARAH

Alan, I'm sorry about our  
miscommunication. The film  
festival isn't stupid. And I'm  
sorry about the this too.

Sarah shows him her hand covered in scribbles.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I was gonna cheat on the quiz  
today. But the structure of a  
film festival movie is really  
kind of easy, if you think about  
it. And my realization-

Sarah points to her hand.

SARAH (CONT'D)

-is that THIS is the realization.  
In order to get out of the movie,  
I actually have to understand the  
plot points of the movie.

AUDREY

Yeah!

Audrey turns to Alan.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

(whisper)

What?

ALAN

Wow, Sarah, I have no idea what  
you just said, but that was  
beautiful.

Mr. Alan goes in for the group hug, and so does Audrey. Out of nowhere, Kampper and Balkus appear and join the hug as well. The same thing happens with Cashman, the Lunch Lady, the Italian Papa, the Irish Mom, and the Italian brother. The extras and all the other people in this crazy movie come into frame and complete the beautiful hug. Before they know it, the whole gang is involved in one giant group hug. Mr. St. Martin appears out of nowhere and crosses the screen.

ST. MARTIN

I'm still bald and angry!

The group hug laughs.

SARAH

Wait, so if all my problems are solved and the balance is restored, that must mean that 'this is-

CUT TO BLACK

THE END