

Inverted Jenny

by

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Movie Theater, Comedy, Librarian, Book of Stamps.

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A quaint street in a quaint part of town. A marquee advertises *Hearts On Fire - Now showing on 35 mm film -*

JENNY, late 20s, and JIMMY, 30s enter the -

FOYER

Fairy-lights dot ceiling and floor. Coming attraction posters line the walls. Jenny, prim, pretty, and bespectacled gazes wistfully at a poster which reads: *Blockbuster Action/Romance of the Year! Starring heart-throb Broderick Dalton.*

JIMMY, 30s slurping on a Big Gulp and wearing a *Jimmy Dawson for Governor* campaign badge on his pudgy frame, leans over to give Jenny a perfunctory kiss on the cheek.

JIMMY

When's this snooze-fest start then?

JENNY

(indicating his badge)

Do you have to wear that everywhere we go?

JIMMY

Oh, I'm dreamin' all the way to the White House now, honey. Hell, why not. Private jets, fast cars and -

JENNY

More like a slow train.

JIMMY

Oh, come on, darlin'. Get on board.

Jenny glances wistfully over once more at the poster of Broderick Dawson.

JENNY

I have dreams too, Jimmy. Plus, I'm really not sure anyone should build their dreams on someone else's.

JIMMY

Librarians don't have big dreams -

Jenny gives Jimmy a disgusted look, and he shuts up.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LATER

Houselights dimmed, ads and coming attractions playing.

JIMMY

Gonna' need me a First Lady, you know. Marry me, darlin'. You know you'll say yes sooner or later.

JENNY

The picture's about to start.

JIMMY

You know what your problem is, Jenny?

JIMMY

Your head's in the clouds. All your movies and all your books and -

JENNY

What color are my eyes, Jimmy?

The house-lights go down.

JIMMY

I don't know. Dark in here isn't?

Jenny shakes her head in disappointment. Jimmy's jolts from a catnap, bucket popcorn and soda spilling into Jenny's lap. Oblivious, he moves closer to Jenny, nabbing the armrest.

JIMMY

What'd I miss?

JENNY

(wiping off soda)

He got the key, he got the code and just now he cracked the safe.

Jenny, wistful look on her face gazes up at Broderick on the big screen as he clutches a fancy looking gilt edged book.

JIMMY

What's that, then?

JENNY

It's a book of rare stamps. He just wrestled it from the bad guy. One of them's worth over a million -

JIMMY  
(sarcastic)  
Whoo! Exciting.

JENNY  
There's a guy with a gun though -

JIMMY  
Ooh, that's original.

CINEMA GOER #1  
Hey, buddy, shut your trap!

JIMMY  
(whispers)  
What's so special about this actor?

Jenny sighs, captivated by Broderick. He appears to look directly into her eyes as they both hold each other's gaze.

JIMMY  
Ask me, he's a chump.

The image on-screen judders, audio whines, and the picture freezes mid-frame. Jenny turns in her seat to see BRODERICK, early 30s, tall, muscular, broodingly handsome - and in the flesh, sitting bang smack between herself and Jimmy.

Complete darkness in the theater except for a solitary spotlight illuminating Jenny and Broderick. Jenny gulps hard, looks nervously around at Jimmy and the other movie patrons, popcorn and soda frozen mid-air. She's lost for words...

BRODERICK  
Of all the movie theaters in all  
the world you had to walk into  
mine.  
(he winks)  
Sorry, force of habit. Bogie  
impersonations die hard.

Broderick looks deep into Jenny's eyes.

BRODERICK  
Oh, and by the way, your eyes are  
the deepest blue... If you were a  
tear in my eye I would never cry  
for fear I might lose you.

Jenny swoons, thinking she must be dreaming. She closes her eyes tightly, then dares to open them once more.

BRODERICK  
So, who's the schmuck?

Jenny turns to Jimmy, his mouth gaped open mid-sentence.

BRODERICK  
He really doesn't know you at all  
does he? He doesn't know that your  
favorite book of all time is not *To  
Kill A Mockingbird* or that your  
favorite song is *not* actually  
*Imagine*, by John Lennon. He doesn't  
know that you like your bread  
battered right to the corners and  
that you hate dancing in the rain  
but that you love the sound of it  
on the roof on a cold dark night.  
He doesn't know the big and the  
small and all the in-betweens.

Jenny nods sadly.

BRODERICK  
So what is he? Lawyer, Banker?

JENNY  
Politician.

BRODERICK  
Ooh. Worse than I thought.

Jenny hesitates then reaches over and pinches Broderick.

BRODERICK  
Ow!

JENNY  
You felt that?

BRODERICK  
I'm 'Method'. We inhabit our roles.

JENNY  
How did you know that about me?

BRODERICK  
Hey, I'm just an actor. A damned  
good one, but... you dreamt of me  
and here I am.

JENNY  
I did?

BRODERICK

Yeah. You needed a little reminding of what you really want in your life. This guy, he's not for you.

JENNY

So you stepped into my world to save me?

BRODERICK

Nah. You save yourself, doll.

Broderick leans in to kiss Jenny, he removes her spectacles and she shakes her hair loose. She closes her eyes, succumbs to a true Hollywood kiss. Music swells, the ground shakes.

BRODERICK

A kiss is not just a kiss, I assure you. Now you know what it really should feel like.

And with that, Broderick vanishes and Jenny opens her eyes. The credits are rolling on the screen, houselights coming up. Jimmy turns to Jenny, a questioning look on his face.

JENNY

You know what? I think I'm gonna' head home, get into my pajamas and -

JIMMY

Curl up with a good book?

JENNY

Yeah.

Jimmy huffs off as Jenny reaching for her handbag, spots something on the floor. A page from a book, ornate and gilt-edged. Mounted on the page a red and white U.S. Postage Stamp, with an illustration of an inverted biplane.

A blurb below it reads: *The Inverted Jenny. Estimated value: US \$1,593,000.* Beneath that, written in black fountain-pen

*This is your story, Jenny. You write it...*

*- And you decide how it goes.*

Jenny looks around the empty theater, she smiles, folds the piece of paper and puts it in her handbag, as we...

FADE OUT.