

THE DATE DEBATE

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1 EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - AFTERNOON

1

We pan across a blue sky with white clouds. A red-brick academic building comes into view, then further along: the red, white and blue flag of the United States. It rustles in the wind.

TITLE: THE DATE DEBATE

Below the flag is a window into a conference room. Through the window we see RACHEL, (21) - a bold, prepared, and well-read student - standing at the front of the room, leading a group of about EIGHT STUDENTS.

2 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

2

She stands at the white board in front of her classmates. Closest to her are BEN, (19) and ABBY, (20).

RACHEL

And to top it all off, we'll ask Hampton to come speak that last week of April!

ABBY

Sounds good to me!

BEN

All that in one semester?

RACHEL

Got to make my last one count!

The door to the room BUSTS OPEN, and in walks ALEX, (20) a quick-witted student with few worries but big ambitions. He's walking backwards, pitching to the people behind him.

ALEX

So the top would say, "Fighting for the people!" Then-

He glances forward, and is surprised to see the room is already occupied. Behind him, a whole GROUP OF DEMOCRATS poke their head in, including CODY, (20) and JANA. (19)

RACHEL

(speaking)

Can I help you, Alex?

CODY

Hey, Rachel... We actually have a College Democrats meeting in here.

BEN  
 Actually, the Republicans of  
 College are meeting here, like  
 we've been since week one.

CODY  
 But do you have a reservation?

Cody holds up a form, with a signature.

RACHEL  
 Yeah! Abby?

Abby winces. She doesn't have a reservation.

JANA  
 Well, that's awkward. Bye!

Rachel looks around her, then steps up to them.

RACHEL  
 (singing)  
*Wait, hold up. You're telling me  
 This happened accidentally?  
 You think we're that naive?*

ABBY  
 (singing)  
*This move was intentional,  
 For Democrats, Conventional.*

BEN  
 (singing)  
*We won't walk out or leave.*

Cody steps forward to protest, but Alex gets in front of him.

ALEX  
 (singing)  
*Typical Republican,  
 It looks like you messed up again  
 And placed the blame on us.*

CODY  
 (singing)  
*You keep creating needlessly  
 These theories of conspiracy*

JANA  
 (singing)  
*And that's why we can't trust...*

Everyone in the room joins in the singing...

DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS
<i>You Redneck</i>	<i>You-</i>
<i>Money-grubbing,</i>	<i>Snowflake,</i>
<i>Bigoted,</i>	<i>Tree-hugging,</i>
	<i>Degenerate</i>

ALL  
*No good, dirty rotten liars!*

Rachel and Alex move towards each other, pointing and arguing.

ALL (CONT'D)  
 (repeating)  
*You're what's ruining America!*  
*Without you we could make a*  
*brighter day.*  
*You're what's ruining America!*  
*So for once get out of our way!*

On accident, Rachel and Alex touch hands. The entire world falls away. They are in...

3 TOTAL BLACKNESS - CONTINUOUS

3

...with just each other.

RACHEL  
*What is this... we're*

ALEX  
*Holding hands...*

Colorful bokeh twinkles in the distance.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
*It's crazy but it's...*

RACHEL  
*...Making sense.*  
*And in your eyes...*

ALEX  
*Lost in your eyes...*

RACHEL  
*I see the ocean...*

ALEX  
*I see stars*  
*That go forever...*

RACHEL  
*Is this forever?*

BOTH  
*Could this really be forever?*

RACHEL  
*Are we actually still holding  
hands?*

They look around them. The world returns back to...

4 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS 4  
They're still holding hands. And everyone is staring.

5 INT. OUT IN THE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 5  
Rachel storms out of the room with her backpack. The other  
Republicans quickly follow

ABBY  
What was that?

RACHEL  
(too quickly)  
Nothing!  
(recovering)  
I mean, they had it signed!

BEN  
No... THAT.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The Democrats have made themselves comfortable in the room,  
and started ganging up on Alex.

CODY  
You were lingering a little long  
there.

ALEX  
No, I wasn't. I was-

HALLWAY

RACHEL  
Trying to assert dominance.

ABBY  
Oh. My. GOSH!

CONFERENCE ROOM

JANA  
You like her!

ALEX  
No, that's totally-

HALLWAY

RACHEL  
Irrational. It just couldn't work  
out. He's-

CONFERENCE ROOM

ALEX  
-A Republican.

HALLWAY

RACHEL  
-An idiot.

CONFERENCE ROOM

CODY  
Well, if that's all it is, you  
could change that.

HALLWAY

RACHEL  
What?

ABBY  
I bet you could do it in three  
dates.

CONFERENCE ROOM

ALEX  
Three dates?

JANA  
Give you 20 Bucks.

HALLWAY

BEN  
I'll listen to your speech again.

CONFERENCE ROOM

ALEX  
You know what? Fine.

HALLWAY

RACHEL  
Fine.

SPLIT SCREEN

ALEX Deal. RACHEL (CONT'D) Deal.

7 INT. TOTAL BLACKNESS - EVENING

7

A spotlight illuminates only a tiny little scene. Rachel sits upright at a small coffee table, holding a stack of notecards. Alex saunters into view. White text in a large font appears above the scene.

SUPER: DATE 1

Alex takes a seat.

RACHEL  
Thank you for joining me today. I'd like to start with my seventeen point argument in favor of the GOP.

ALEX  
Wait, aren't we getting coffee?

Rachel pushes a cup of coffee on the table towards him. The duel is on.

RACHEL  
Point one.  
(singing)  
*On freedom our country  
has built its foundation  
So we need a market  
without regulation  
Supply and demand  
will prosper our land  
Success is the product of work  
in this glorious nation.*

ALEX  
Ok, but-

RACHEL  
 (speaking)  
 Point two!

ALEX  
 No!  
 (singing)  
*Hold up right there:  
 Laissez-Faire isn't fair!  
 The richer get richer  
 The poorer despair.  
 While you play monopoly,  
 we want equality.  
 Where is our justice  
 if freedom's not something  
 we share?*

BOTH  
*If you could just open your eyes!  
 Open your eyes!*

We pan out of the conversation, through the blackness, from one spotlight to another.

Under this spotlight, the two are at a dinner table, with meals half-finished. White text floats above them.

SUPER: DATE 2

ALEX  
 (singing)  
*These people need welfare  
 to keep them alive!  
 We can't deprive-*

RACHEL  
*But that's why I tithe!  
 The church is great-*

ALEX  
*When it's separate from state!*

RACHEL  
*'Cause everything's better  
 that's run by the federal  
 government.*

ALEX  
 (laughing, speaking)  
 Wow! Sassy, and wrong!

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 (singing)  
*Lives would be saved  
 (MORE)*

ALEX (CONT'D)  
*if our health care were free,  
 and if you're so pro-life  
 then you'd better agree.*

RACHEL  
*Take this.*

ALEX  
 (speaking)  
 What?

RACHEL  
*Your straw man is thinning.*

ALEX  
 (singing)  
*Sure, but your grinning, so I think  
 I'm winning!*

RACHEL  
 No!

BOTH  
 (singing)  
*If you could just open your eyes!  
 Open your eyes!*

We whip-pan out through the blackness again toward a new spotlight.

Under this one, several couples are slow dancing. Rachel and Alex dance in front of other pairs Abby and Ben, and Cody and Jana. The white text floats above the scene:

SUPER: DATE 3

They dance slowly, close together.

RACHEL  
 (speaking)  
 So... did you see the debate last night?

ALEX  
 (speaking)  
 Yeah. I thought they both had some good points.

RACHEL  
 Yeah. Who knew?

The conversation stalls. They loosen up, becoming more comfortable.

ALEX  
You're beautiful.

RACHEL  
You look good in blue.

The MUSIC SWELLS as they continue their dance.

They begin dancing with more spirit, twirling around. They dance right out of the spotlight. He twirls her through the blackness...

...toward another spotlight, where they plop down on a couch with a bowl of popcorn. Text floats above the scene:

SUPER: DATE 4

They snuggle and share the popcorn. But we don't linger on this, we move further, beyond the spotlight...

...toward another.

SUPER: DATE 5

They debate furiously, sharing a milkshake with two straws. But beyond that...

... the blackness is filled with tons of spotlights. And under each one Rachel and Alex are enjoying a verbal sparring match, a laugh, or a cuddle. Each of them labeled with floating white text: DATE 6, DATE 7, DATE 10, DATE 15, etc.

Finally, we slow down to see one more:

SUPER: DATE 23.

They're on a couch, just lounging. He's on his phone, she's on her laptop. Her eyes widen.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
Oh my gosh! They responded!

Alex looks up and leans toward her.

RACHEL (CONT'D)  
(reading)  
Dear Rachel Sims, your internship application has been reviewed, and we are pleased to- OH MY GOSH! I'M GOING TO DC!

ALEX  
(genuine)  
Wow!

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)  
(with realization)  
All the way to D.C.?

RACHEL  
What?

ALEX  
Nothing!

RACHEL  
Why aren't you happy?

ALEX  
Well, how long will you be there?

RACHEL  
Ten weeks. But, if things go well,  
this could be the start of my whole  
career.

ALEX  
As a Republican.

RACHEL  
Yes, as a Republican. Is that a  
problem?

ALEX  
No! I just thought that you would-

RACHEL  
What? I would what?

ALEX  
I just think... that if you start  
as a Republican now, you'll regret  
it later.

RACHEL  
Oh my gosh! Can't you just give it  
up for once?

ALEX  
No!  
(beat)  
Can you?

RACHEL  
No.

They stare at each other for a moment in silence.

ALEX  
Well, I guess that's it then.

RACHEL

Yeah.

They keep sitting, but there's nothing else to say. Without so much as a sigh, Alex gets up off the couch, gives her a look, and walks away.

Rachel remains on the couch alone. Thinking to herself.

9

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

9

Rachel stands at the front of the room just like she did at the beginning, leading a group of Republicans.

RACHEL

Finally, thank you all for making  
this year the best one yet. Before  
I go-

Alex barges into the room. A group of Democrats slips in behind him.

ALEX

Rachel!  
(singing)  
*Would you give this  
One more chance  
I'm sure we'll make it  
Work again.  
And through your eyes...*

RACHEL

(singing)  
*Deep in your eyes...*

ALEX

*I see it your way.*

RACHEL

*So do I...*

ALEX

*We'd talk forever...*

RACHEL

*...Fight forever*

BOTH

*I'd love to be with you forever.*

ALEX

*Let me win you over just this once!*

RACHEL

(speaking)

I'm sorry. But there are some things we'll just never agree on. And I love fighting with you, but we can't fight forever.

ALEX

(speaking)

I know. Well...

(signing)

*Go ahead Republican  
Go out to where you've never been  
And do what you can do.  
But when you change the world for good  
Remember that I knew you would,  
And that I'm proud to know you.*

ALEX (CONT'D)

*You're honest*

*Hard working,*

*Patriotic,*

RACHEL

*You're brilliant!*

*Nation serving,*

*Compassionate*

Rachel and Alex's friends step closer to them.

BOTH AND FRIENDS

*And somehow totally misguided!*

Then everybody in the room gets involved.

ALL

*We all make this America  
For better or for worse  
We're made of red and blue.  
We all make this America  
This land was made  
For me and you!*

For a moment, Rachel and Alex look at each other. It's as if they're alone.

They each extend a hand, and give each other a firm professional handshake. It lingers a little, but they both pull away. Then they turn away from each other, and rejoin their own groups.

Alex walks by Cody, who stops him and gives him a quick hug.

CODY

It'll be ok, man.

A few pats on the back later, Cody pulls away and speaks up.

CODY (CONT'D)

Alright Democrats, let's get this started! Next semester won't plan itself!

BEN

Hold on, this is our meeting!

JANA

No, your turn was last week!

BEN

Only because we traded you a Thursday.

JANA

Because you were gone. That doesn't count.

ABBY

How hard would it be for you to find somewhere else?!

CODY

But all our stuff is set up here!

ABBY

What stuff? This one sticky note?

As the room explodes into furious debate, we pan out toward the window.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

Through the window we see them arguing, and we see Rachel exiting the building. She looks up. We pan with her gaze to see the red, white and blue flag of the United States rustling in the wind.

FADE OUT