

DONNIE Q AND THE RIDICULOUSLY UNBELIEVABLE JOURNEY

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY - ESTABLISHING

CHRYON: Somewhere in Vermont

Over a small country school. It's fall. The Vermont foliage hits you in the face. Reds. Yellows. Oranges. Several students, parents, and teachers flow in and out of

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

Tables with totally awesome science projects line the gymnasium.

Students trickle in through a set of double doors. A HEFTY WOMAN in a autumn-patterned sundress greets them with flyers and a Prozac smile.

HEFTY WOMAN

Welcome to the Marble Valley County
Science Fair...welcome to the Marble
Valley County Science Fair...

A WELL-GROOMED MAN walks in, wearing a pressed business suit and fedora. He's somewhere in his forties, graying, and as business as his business suit suggests.

Without skipping a beat...

HEFTY WOMAN

Sir could you please remove your
hat...Thank yooouuuu,
(hands him a flyer)
Welcome to the Marble Valley County
Science Fair.

Before him is the small converted gymnasium filled with teachers, students, and parents.

The Well-Groomed Man walks by tables with dioramas, large posterboard projects, and elaborate experiments.

IN THE FAR CORNER

PENNY MILLER finishes setting up her table and puts a board up entitled "ALTERNATIVE ENERGY."

Penny: smartly dressed, hair in a ponytail, and a pair of fashionable glasses. She adjusts them, smiling at her creation.

The Well-Groomed Man stares at a long table with various fruits and vegetables. Wires protrude from them, connected to voltmeters.

A GANGLY KID wearing a "SCIENCE IS COOL" T-Shirt stares at the Well-Groomed Man, who nods politely.

GANGLY KID

(monotone)

My project will prove that fruits and vegetables produce various amounts of electricity depending on their mass--

A group of kids walk by.

GIRL (O.S.)

Dork!

The Well-Groomed Man closes his notepad.

WELL-GROOMED MAN

Thanks.

The Gangly Kid drops his head and sighs.

The Well-Groomed Man moves to the next table, but it's nothing special. Three judges walk in front of The Well-Groomed Man and talk to an ELEVENTH GRADER.

The Well-Groomed Man tucks away his notepad and heads for the door. He takes out his hat, but just then there's a...

BRILLIANT FLASH of blue light in the corner of the room and everyone gasps, hurrying over to the source, which is now a constant BEAM OF LIGHT shooting skyward.

The judges hurry away from the table.

ELEVENTH GRADER

Hey where you going?!

The Well-Groomed Man smiles and heads toward the light.

IN THE FAR CORNER

The light is coming from Penny's table, but she can't be seen through the crowd of people surrounding the table.

The Well-Groomed Man pushes his way through the throng! He gets to the front and his face is illuminated in blue light.

He hurries away from the crowd, pulling out a cell phone.

WELL-GROOMED MAN

(into the phone)

You're not going to believe this! I found it! That's right, you have to see this for yourself!

He hangs up the phone and turns around to see the beam of light shooting out from the growing crowd.

Penny's smiling face glows from the light.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - AFTER SCHOOL DETENTION - LATER

Penny's smiling face, in pencil. DONNIE Q draws her from memory at his desk.

VICE PRINCIPAL

No talking...I'll be right back.

The VICE PRINCIPAL walks out.

A GAGGLE OF DOUCHEBAGS at the front of the class turn around. One of them throws a wadded piece of paper at Donnie. It bounces off his head. He ignores them.

DOUCHEBAG 1

Whatcha doing back there by yourself?

DOUCHEBAG 2

(snickering)

I think he's playing with himself.

Donnie shoots him a nasty look.

Douchebag 2 starts to get up but Douchebag 1 stops him. Donnie goes back to drawing.

DOUCHEBAG 1

Hey, what's the Q stand for anyway?

DOUCHEBAG 2

Queer?

The Douchebags laugh. Douchebag 2 snorts and Douchebag 1 backhands him in the chest.

Donnie goes back to his drawing.

They get up and go to the back. Douchebag 2 grabs the picture of Penny and crumples it up. Douchebag 1 leans in to Donnie.

DOUCHEBAG 1

Say something smart now.

DONNIE

You dropped your pocket.

The Douchebags look on the ground, then realize...

The Vice Principal walks back in.

VICE PRINCIPAL
Hey, what's going on here? I thought
I told you knuckleheads no talking!

Douchebag 1 claps Donnie on the shoulder.

DOUCHEBAG 1
Donnie here was just helping me find
something.

Douchebag 2 throws the picture at Donnie.

VICE PRINCIPAL
Get outta here. Now!

The Vice Principal sits on the desk next to Donnie.

VICE PRINCIPAL
What are you doing here?

DONNIE
Detention.

VICE PRINCIPAL
Come on, Donnie, that's not what I
mean. You're not like those guys.
You need to make something of your
life. You've got too much potential.
I mean, what do you want in life?

Donnie looks at the crumpled picture.

VICE PRINCIPAL
Well, you think about it, but don't
take too long. The best way to make
your dreams come true is to wake up.

EXT. SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Donnie sprints, backpack slung over his shoulder. He darts
out in front of a moving bus. HONK!!

Donnie waves back cheerfully. He runs--

--Past a row of stores. A FRUSTRATED OWNER sweeping shakes
his broom after Donnie kicks up his pile of dirt.

--Around a corner where a GANG OF DOGS gets loose from their
UPSET HANDLER and chases Donnie down the street.

--Over a fence, losing the dogs, but through a sheet on a
clothesline that he puts over his back like Superman with a
ANGRY WOMAN running out of the house after him.

--And down a long street to a run down, brown and green ramshackle house at the end of a cul-de-sac.

He opens a creaky door and...

INT. DONNIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Searches for his father...

PETRI, who is on the couch. Asleep.

Donnie watches him for a moment. Petri is shivering, having a quasi-nightmare. Donnie leaves and returns with a blanket that he puts over his father, who, still asleep, takes a blind wild swing at Donnie.

IN DONNIE'S ROOM

Donnie clears off a messy desk and sits. Above the desk is an X-Files poster that reads: "I WANT TO BELIEVE"

From his pocket, Donnie takes the crumpled sheet of paper. He opens it and does his best to straighten it. He then tacks it next to the poster and takes out a clean sheet of paper and a pen and begins to write.

DONNIE (V.O.)

My dearest Penny, I just wanted to say--

He crumples it up and tosses it into the trash.

DONNIE (V.O.)

Penny, my love, I have been thinking--

He crumples that one up too and tosses it into the trash.

DONNIE (V.O.)

Penny, you are my inspiration--

Trash. A new sheet of paper.

Trash.

Trash.

Trash.

CRASH!!

Donnie looks toward the window where the sound came from.

He looks out the window and sees a car, sitting on the lawn, smashed against a giant oak tree, steam pouring from the radiator.

DONNIE

Grandpa!

DONNIE'S FRONT YARD

Donnie rushes to the driver's side and looks in.

DONNIE

Grandpa!

FELIX, frail and balding, rests his head on the steering wheel. He looks over at Donnie, who sees a long bleeding gash on Felix's forehead.

Donnie helps Felix out of the car.

INSIDE THE HOUSE

With surprising strength, Donnie carries his grandfather into the house, past his still sleeping father, and up the stairs to his bedroom.

He lays Felix out on the bed.

Donnie leaves and brings back a wet cloth. He places it on Felix's forehead.

FELIX

Thank you...Donald.

DONNIE

Grandpa, what are you doing here?

FELIX

I...I...don't know. I think I lost my way...just...just...give me a second.

Felix closes his eyes, concentrating.

DONNIE

I thought you were in France.

Felix's eyes flash open. That's it!!

FELIX

Paris, my boy! Paris!

DONNIE

But you were not supposed to come back. Dad said you weren't coming back.

FELIX

Well, I'm here aren't I?

DONNIE
I guess you are.

They share a chuckle.

FELIX
(whispering)
You want to know why I came back?

Felix beckon's Donnie closer.

FELIX
She rejected me. Sent me away.
Fifty years I chased her.

DONNIE
Fifty years?

FELIX
Fifty years. And I only made one
mistake.

DONNIE
What was that?

Felix looks a little lost.

FELIX
What was what?

DONNIE
Your mistake...the one mistake you
made...

FELIX
Ah yes...my mistake...

Felix grabs Donnie's arm.

FELIX
I gave up too early. She broke my
heart. I spent most of my life
chasing this girl around the world.

DONNIE
Grandpa? Were you in love?

FELIX
Of course I was in love. What else
do you think would make a man do
something as foolish as I did.

DONNIE
I'm in love with a girl.

FELIX

Really? Let me feel your heart.

Felix puts his hand over Donnie's heart.

FELIX

Well, I'll be. You are in love.
What's her name?

DONNIE

Penny.

FELIX

That sounds...sweet.

DONNIE

She is. And she is the most beautiful
girl in the world.

FELIX

Then you'll take my advice and follow
her to the ends of the earth.

DONNIE

Then why did you come home, Grandpa?

FELIX

Home, where? What?

DONNIE

Why did you leave Paris to come home?
Why did you give up?

FELIX

To die...of a broken heart.

DONNIE

You are not going to die Grandpa.
You only have a head wound.

FELIX

I already have...but you know what?

Felix swallows.

DONNIE

What?

FELIX

What?

DONNIE

You said, you know what?

FELIX

Ah, yes...love, for all its pain and heartache and grief...is worth the journey.

Felix closes his eyes and doesn't open them again.

A boom of thunder echoes softly.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A dark and dreary day. Rain patters on black umbrellas. Donnie stands respectfully as the MINISTER begins.

MINISTER

Death is but a part of life, and as we gather here to mourn the loss of a great man...Felix Snodgrass...we must remember that he is in a far better place.

A boom of thunder echoes softly. Off Donnie's expression.

INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Donnie sits across from a scowling GUIDANCE COUNSELOR. Her hair is perfect, her suit pressed.

He straightens the name placard that reads: "MS. CRASS, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR"

MS. CRASS

Don't do that.

DONNIE

But it was crooked.

MS. CRASS

I know. That's the way I like it. Now, Donald, as you know, next week is graduation. And it's my responsibility to make sure that each and every student at this school is prepared for life after secondary education.

DONNIE

But this is the first time we've ever spoken.

MS. CRASS

Stay focused Donald. Now you have to keep a positive attitude, especially with the GPA you have.

She opens a folder, looks at his GPA, and closes it quickly.

MS. CRASS

One point seven. So. What are your plans?

DONNIE

Plans?

MS. CRASS

Just as I figured. Donald, you're 349th in your class.

DONNIE

Okay?

MS. CRASS

There's 350 students and Mr. Jones hasn't been here since last year. What I'm trying to say is you've got to stay focused and positive if you want to make it in this world.

DONNIE

I know.

MS. CRASS

I don't think you do, Donald. This world will eat you up and spit you out and then eat you up and spit you back out again. Do you want that?

DONNIE

No.

MS. CRASS

Then you've got to come up with a game plan. A blueprint. A scheme. Life's a journey and you've got to start somewhere.

She stands up and proffers her hand. Donnie stands and shakes it.

MS. CRASS

Good luck, Donald. I truly wish you the best. Can you send Ms. Johnson in please.

Donnie nods and leaves.

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Two girls sit facing Donnie. JENNIFER JOHNSON gets up and goes in leaving a seat next to Penny.