

# STARSTRUCK

Written by Elizabeth Dwyer

**Format / Genre / Status:** Feature Film / Teen Romcom / Script Stage

**Logline:** When Kendrick Matthews (consummate Black nerd and high school senior) posts a song and dance YouTube video asking Cassidy Jordan (international supermodel) to prom, the invitation goes viral. Still, Kendrick never dreams Cassidy will say yes... or how much it will change both of their lives when she does.

**Synopsis:** Nerdy - but cute! because romcom - high school senior, Kendrick Matthews (think Baratunde Thurston meets Kadeem Hardison as Dwayne Wayne), makes an acapella video with his outsider friends, asking supermodel Cassidy Jordan to prom. Thanks to the perfect storm of too much hard seltzer and older sister peer pressure, the video seems like a really good idea at the time.

NYC. Backstage at Tom Ford, Cassidy (born Chandni Singh) recalls a younger Jameela Jamil. Her family's first and only scandal, Cassidy dropped out of high school and anglicized her name to pursue modeling. At 19, she's one of fashion's most famous faces. Cue a surprise bestie visit from pop superstar Avery Bright, here to help Cassidy weather a storm. Endlessly versatile, Avery can strum a ukulele in a glitter catsuit and somehow it makes sense.

Central California. High school. Only Kendrick's best friend Beatrice "Bea" Brunelli has any real sense. The rest of them - Rajit, Jeremy, and Gerbil - love the now viral video because *girls are suddenly actually speaking to them*. Meanwhile, Bea shuts down small-minded ashat Tank's attempts to harass Kendrick. Back in NYC, when a leaked video implies that Cassidy snorted heroin at Avery's charity event (spoiler, she didn't) Cassidy's charming and obnoxious ex-boyfriend/manager, Jimmy Wilder suggests accepting Kendrick's viral prom invitation. It's PR Gold: Restore her image! Save her career! Cassidy concedes. Later, Cassidy and Avery decompress on the rooftop patio. The comfort of Avery's friendship is definitely maybe totally platonic, because the last thing Cassidy needs is to be secretly in love with her best friend.

When West coast meets East, the unlikely crew tackles arranged meet-cutes, tenuous familial reconciliation, Internet gossip, dodging paparazzi, cosplay, racist bullies, more secret feels, and an epic prom night full of public declarations of love, trending hashtags, and their longest running D&D game crashed by a surprise Level 22 Rogue Necromancer. Apparently mega-nerds come in all shapes and sizes - even international supermodel.

**Writer's Note:** During my formative years, great romantic comedies were not hard to come by, and their stories made me fall in love with love. It was the era of WHEN HARRY MET SALLY, SAY ANYTHING, MOONSTRUCK, ROXANNE, DIRTY DANCING, and COMING TO AMERICA. Narratives that loosely fit a blueprint of boy-meets-girl / hijinks ensue / boy-gets-girl, they are also clever, captivating, and timeless.

As a teen/young adult, I discovered BETTER THAN CHOCOLATE and THE INCREDIBLY TRUE ADVENTURE OF TWO GIRLS IN LOVE, and felt my growing, gay heart burst with revelation. No matter how much I adored them, none of the romcoms I watched growing up reflected (i.e., normalized) queer love. STARSTRUCK is a modern-day fairytale where a girl is the prince and no one gets rescued. It's a movie I want my daughter and her friends to see, illuminating all the awesome, terrifying, and magical parts of teenage romance. It's a movie for my nephew, so he sees himself represented beyond the limited, cliché, and harmful stereotypes of what it means to be a black boy in this world. STARSTRUCK is a story I could've used when I was young. A story that tells teenagers from all walks of life that they are vibrant, beautiful, and worthy of love.

**Contests:** *Semifinalist (Top 8), ColorCreative and Powderkeg Media Teen Movie Contest*

**Comps:** TO ALL THE BOYS I'VE LOVED BEFORE | LOVE, SIMON | BOOKSMART

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