

LOVE SEAT

Written By:
Austin Rodriguez

Tampa, Florida.
Austinrrod@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. SIDE WALK. EARLY MORNING.

The sun shines on beautiful Downtown St. Pete, Florida. Here is where the carefree lifestyle of the struggling artist collides with the stressed white collars of finance.

The camera comes down to just about knee level. TWO PEOPLE walk into frame, place down a LOVE SEAT, and walk out of the opposite ends. We hold here for a beat then...

The sound of a polished men's size eleven shoes clip-clop down the sidewalk.

BENJAMIN, (mid 20s) polished, ambitious, and in way over his head, is running late as he rushes pass the LOVE SEAT. The camera tracks and stays eye level with his feet.

He one-sock-hops down the street with his phone pressed to his cheek.

BENAJMIN (O.S)
Rounding the corner now, sir! I'll
be right there.

He hops into his shoe. Finally, two feet on the ground.

BENJAMIN (O.S.)
Of course I got you your coffee!

ON BENJAMIN

We see his feet rushing down the street. Then...

CUT TO:

A PAIR OF WOMEN'S FEET

They walk in a different rhythm and cadence than Benjamin's. Calmed, relaxed, dancing even.

ON BENJAMIN

He continues to rush down the street when he sees something up ahead. His feet slow down cool and collected.

We see the LEGS of TWO WOMEN sitting at an outdoor cafe. Benjamin's shoes stop in front of them. He bids them good morning, then remembers he's running late. He takes off again.

ON THE WOMEN'S FEET

The woman's feet come up to the front steps of a coffee shop. The doors open and she enters...

INT. COFFEE SHOP. EARLY MORNING.

This coffee shop is quiet. A sanctuary from the outside world for writers and readers. Behind the bar we find the owner of those dainty feet...

VANESSA (mid 20s), an untroubled and carefree child of the art scene pours and crafts a gourmet style coffee. Her wardrobe parallels her artist lifestyle.

Vanessa comes out from behind the bar to serve a table. The calm of this coffee shop is interrupted by the hurricane that is BENJAMIN.

He enters and almost like two magnets he and Vanessa collide. Her coffee crashes to the floor; as does his paperwork. Their hands scramble to pick up the spilt parcels.

BENJAMIN

I'm so sorry. Let me - -

He looks up and finally notices her. Struck by cupid's arrow, he can't get a word out. Vanessa blushes at star struck Benjamin.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Do you uh- Would you?

VANESSA

My shift ends in fifteen. Buy me a coffee?

Benjamin's eyes widen. Of course he wants to.

BENJAMIN

Yes! Wait, I can't. This weekend?

Vanessa smiles.

VANESSA

Sure.

CUT TO:

DATE MONTAGE:

- Vanessa and Benjamin go out for ICE CREAM. They exit the shop and walk down the street; a casual first date.
- They thrift shop around an old market.
- Vanessa pulls back the curtain at a boutique store wearing some new threads. Benjamin applauds her new look.
- Vanessa and Benjamin sit on a park bench, she nuzzles into him.
- Vanessa and Benjamin sit at restaurant and share a laugh; a more intimate setting.

INT. DANCE HALL. NIGHT.

A get together of some sorts. In a crowd of people we can see Vanessa and Ben. Holding each other tightly, they pay no mind to the world around them.

They hold each others gaze. They have fallen in love.

INT. GREENLIGHT CINEMA. NIGHT.

Benjamin and Vanessa sit in a dark theater. The shimmer of the silver screen dances on their faces. The voices of the actors in the film are heard.

WOMAN (O.S)
And you're sure about this?

MAN (O.S.)
I've never been more sure about
anything in my life.

Benjamin stays locked on the screen then whispers to Vanessa.

BENJAMIN
We should move in together.

Vanessa looks up at him shocked. Benjamin waits with bated breath. Vanessa's face turns from shocked to curious. Yes.

CUT TO:

"OUR FIRST PLACE" MONTAGE:

- Benjamin and Vanessa walk down the street. Vanessa pulls him along and Benjamin is just happy to be around her.

VANESSA

I think a place in this
neighborhood would be perfect.

- They stand in front of an apartment building. *Nope.*
- They stand in front of another. *Nope.*
- They stand in front of a third.
- Vanessa peaks her head into the window. *This is the ONE.*
- A grumbly LANDLORD hands them the keys to the new place.
- They burst through the front door of they're new apartment with moving boxes. They notice an empty space as they begin nesting.

"MOVING IN" - MONTAGE:

- Vanessa carries in art supplies, Benjamin follows behind carrying a heavier load
- Vanessa and Benjamin awkwardly carrying a mattress inside. They follow on to the mattress and she pulls him down on to it, they kiss.

EXT. SIDE WALK. DAY.

Vanessa and Benjamin walk down the street; fingers intertwined. We can't see what they are looking at but as they approach their destination, their hands separate.

Through the opening of their hands we see it; the love seat.

TIME CUT:

EXT. SIDE WALK - CONTINUOUS

Vanessa and Benjamin carry the love seat down the street. They struggle with it. It's cute. They sit the chair in the seat because it's so heavy, they sit in the street and laugh.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY.

Vanessa and Benjamin walk the love seat in and place it perfectly in that empty spot. They sit down on their newly found love seat and quite literally just sit in this moment.

It's all coming together.

She looks at him and tackles him off the seat and onto the ground.

TIME CUT:

INT. APARTMENT. DAY.

Benjamin works on his laptop in various vignettes on the couch.

TIME CUT:

Vanessa enters the living room as she eats a DOUGHNUT. She sits down next to Benjamin who works away on his laptop. Vanessa offers him the other half of her doughnut; a cute gesture.

Benjamin refuses the doughnut and proceeds to work.

--BRRRP--BRRRPP--

His PHONE vibrates. He picks up the phone, kisses Vanessa's cheek, and rises from the love seat.

Vanessa sits in this moment.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Vanessa paints on her easel. She looks over her shoulder and notices Benjamin on the love seat. He gnaws at his PENCIL and stares blankly at his keyboard.

Even though he is a mere five-to-six feet away, to Vanessa, he is detached.

INT. BENJAMIN'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

Benjamin clacks away at his keyboard. He looks outside the window and then checks the time. **10:30 PM.**

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Vanessa sits on the love seat. Reading. Alone.

She checks the time and then retires to her room.

INT. APARTMENT - LOVE SEAT. NIGHT.

Vanessa and Benjamin sit watching TV. The glow from the screen illuminating their lackluster evening. The episode ends and Benjamin rises.

BENJAMIN

Ready for bed?

VANESSA

I'm gonna do one more episode. I'll catch up.

BENJAMIN

Oh. Okay.

Benjamin exits to the bedroom. He shuts the door behind him. Vanessa looks over her shoulder at the door.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM. MORNING.

Benjamin walks out of the bedroom to find Vanessa curled up and asleep on the love seat. She never came to bed. Benjamin leaves for work.

Vanessa's eyes open. There is an expression of guilt.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

Benjamin sits at his desk. His boss faces him with his back to the camera. Benjamin is spiritually and emotionally deflated.

We can't hear what his boss is saying. We just know that it's not good.

TIME CUT:

INT. APARTMENT - LOVE SEAT. NIGHT.

A lovely romantic meal by candlelight, curated for Benjamin, sits at the foot of the love seat. Benjamin enters the apartment and sees Vanessa sitting on the love seat.

She turns to him and smiles. He takes in the room and the entire atmosphere. She approaches him with a glass of wine, hands it to him, and as cool as a cucumber says:

VANESSA
You hungry?

Benjamin eyes the setting and then looks at Vanessa. She smiles at him. He forces a smile back and they sit down.

Vanessa waits for Benjamin to eat first. Finally, he does and the meal proceeds.

CUT TO:

THE MEAL IS OVER.

There is still an air of discomfort in the room. Vanessa tries to clear it.

VANESSA
Room for dessert?

BENJAMIN
I'm good. This was delicious
though, thank you.

VANESSA
Of course! How about I open us up
another bottle and we watch a
movie?

His mouth opens to speak but Vanessa is already up and out of her seat. She goes to the counter and uncorks another bottle of wine.

Her back is turned as she pours. Benjamin looks over to her from her seat.

BENJAMIN (O.S.)
Hey... I can't do this anymore.

Vanessa's eyes widen. She looks up.

VANESSA
(genuine inquiry)
What?

BENJAMIN
This.

VANESSA

(calmly)

No, I heard you. I just kind of can't believe it. Why? Is this because the other day?

BENJAMIN

That and there's other things.

VANESSA

What other things? Are you seeing someone because if that's the case.

BENJAMINA

Vanessa come on, I'm not seeing someone.

VANESSA

Okay than what is it? Why does it always have to be like pulling fucking teeth with you?

BENJAMIN

See, right there, I don't always do anything. Nobody always does one anything. If anything, you always do that to me. Also, don't throw a fuck at me, I'm just trying to have a conversation.

VANESSA

I do not! Why are we even fighting? I don't understand. Ben, I love you.

Pause.

BENJAMIN

I... don't think I love you anymore.

Vanessa is struck. She composes herself then exits the kitchen.

A beat.

Vanessa re-enters prepared to fight:

VANESSA

You know what? No. You don't get to make me feel like I'm the bad guy here. Like I did something wrong.

BENJAMIN

I'm not trying to make you feel like you did something wrong, I'm just telling you how I feel.

VANESSA

Okay so then let's try to fix this.

BENJAMIN

That's the thing, I don't want to, Vanessa.

VANESSA

So you're just throwing your hands up and walking away? You know you didn't make things easy either, okay?

BENJAMIN

Me?

VANESSA

Yes! You're never here, you're at the office all day and all night, doing God knows what!

BENJAMIN

That's ridiculous, and insulting. Seriously, what do you think I do all fucking day? You think we just live here for free?

VANESSA

You're never here and when you are here you're not really here. You barely look at me, you never touch me. You know if you put any effort into this relationship like you do at work, we wouldn't even be having this conversation.

BENJAMIN

Yeah? Maybe if you had a real fucking job, you could pay some of the bills around here and I wouldn't have to be at that office all god damn night!

As the fight plays out FLASHES of their relationship in the beginning and middle stages appear on the screen intercut with the argument.

VANESSA

Hey, I have a real fucking job!

They spew venom from their mouths. They are reaching a point of no return.

BENJAMIN

Which one? The one where you pour coffee every three days? Or the one where you turn this whole living room into a fucking Jackson Pollock painting?

VANESSA

Fuck you! That's my process!

BENJAMIN

Well your process is sprinkling paint all over our hardwood floor. It's like I'm dating a fucking nine year old. Also, to say I never touch you is an exaggeration. You'd rather sleep on that tiny couch than lay next to me the other night. Did you ever think how that makes me feel? I'm at the office all day. I'm trying to sustain a career, pay for this place, and be a good boyfriend while you're playing arts and crafts all day!

VANESSA

You made that choice! Nobody forced you into your shitty job, and fuck you, okay! At least I have the balls to be something that I want to be! All I ever hear is you bitch and moan about a job you hate! With people hate being around! You say your trying to sustain a career? That's bullshit and you know it! You're trying to hold on to some sense of security so you fall in line like everyone else because you're a fucking coward! You're afraid that you're going to be dumped on your ass if you don't do what they say, admit it!

BENJAMIN

The only person who is getting dumped on their ass is you! Tomorrow I want you to pack all your shit and get out!

A beat.

VANESSA
I hate you.

BENJAMIN
Good!

Vanessa exits then stops... she looks at Benjamin.

VANESSA
No, I hate us.

INT. APARTMENT. MORNING.

The apartment has become barren. HIS and HERS boxes are stacked on respective sides of the room. We come back to the LOVE SEAT. It sits in the sunlight.

Benjamin and Vanessa pick up the love seat and carry out their final act as lovers and cohabitants.

EXT. SIDE WALK. CONTINUOUS.

Vanessa and Benjamin walk the seat outside and set it down on the side walk. They have a sign on it that reads:

"NO LONGER NEEDED"

We hold on the LOVE SEAT. It stands alone on the sidewalk when...

An older couple (30s) walks up and sets eyes on the love seat. They shoot each other a glance, pick up the love seat, and carry it off with them.

The cycle begins again.

FADE TO BLACK.