

## Deleted Scenes from QUAD:

When you buy a DVD of your favorite movie, there's usually a section of deleted scenes. Not wanting my readers to feel slighted, I've included a batch of scenes from earlier drafts of QUAD that were left on the editing room floor. Er ... so to speak.

*This is a scene where we actually get to see Theo & Maggie plot their revenge against the power elite of Muir High. In the final copy, we never really get to know what their plan was.*

"I still can't believe it's you," Theo told Maggie over the phone. "You're the Metro person."

"Impressive, isn't it?" Maggie said sarcastically. She hated drawing attention to herself; that was partly why she'd decided to write an underground paper.

But if Theo heard the sarcasm, he chose to ignore it. "Yes it is," he said. "Extremely impressive."

"I was kidding," she said softly.

"Well, I wasn't. God, I mean . . . you hold so much power in your hands, Maggie. Do you realize that?"

"I guess," she said. "But so do you. I mean, I know you're not finished, but the potential for what you can do with that video is, like, wow."

"Yeah," Theo sighed. "I haven't quite decided what to do with it once it's done."

"I've been thinking about that," Maggie said. She'd been practicing for this moment, making sure that it would come out just right, that it would be an offer Theo couldn't refuse. "What about a website?" she said. "Something like 'the Metro Online,' where people can actually watch some of what they read about in the paper. We coordinate our stories . . . that way, they can see for themselves how lame people are around school."

"Hm," Theo breathed from the other end of the line. Maggie could almost see him thinking about it. Of course he wouldn't just jump into an answer. Everything Theo did was slow and thoughtful.

"Well?" she prodded.

"That's a really interesting idea," he said at last. "Really interesting. Intriguing."

"So what do you say? You want to do it?" Maggie held her breath, waiting for Theo to answer. So much could change around school if she and Theo joined forces. They could take the power away

from people like Stone, and Calvert, and Nicole, and Brittany the self-appointed elite of Muir High. That dog needed to die, and Maggie knew that she and Theo could take care of business. *If* he had the stomach for it.

"Yeah," Theo said at last. "Yeah, let's do it." He chuckled. It came out a dry, bitter sound as he added, "Let's take 'em down."

*This next scene is a Metro article about the Preps and their bizarre attachment to their cell phones. It was supposed to set Nicole up to be really pissed and want to take it out on someone-probably Paisley. But in the end, this scene did not make the grade.*

## PREPS

Monday March 29

the Metro (p.2)

### CELLING POINT

Have you noticed a disturbing trend? I'm talking about the ubiquitous cell-phone. More than just a status symbol, it's the new great divide, the thing that separates the haves from the have-nots. And if you walk down the hallway during any passing period, there's no question about who's who. The only real question is, who could these people possibly be talking to? Everyone they know is right there on campus; in fact, many Muir students have three, four, even five of their classes together (thanks to new state graduation requirements). Walk into class, though, and, bam! It's the same thing. Those who aren't talking on the phone are texting, checking text messages, checking voice messages, or playing one of hundreds of insipid games they download for free along with those annoying ring tones. The cell-phone demographic is pretty consistent: median age, 16; family status: middle-to-upper class; gender,

predominantly female; average area of interest, shopping, giggling. For the less fortunate (ie: those of us who are off the tower), the cell-phone trend has become a spectator sport. We watch in wonder as we ponder the great philosophical questions: will Brittany Smith receive that all-important text from Stone? Will Nicole McClintock hang up long enough to actually do a cheer at half time? Will the cheerleading squad ever speak to each other in real time again? Wake up, Muir High! It's time to hang up the cell phone phenomenon--for good!

"If Dylan's teacher calls us one more time," Brittany whispered to Nicole, "I swear to God, I'll scream."

Mr. Aronson was incapable of doing math and facing the classroom at the same time. Apparently he had no sense of smell either, because he had no idea that Brittany was painting her fingernails while Nicole touched up her eyeliner and mascara. Kaitlyn was playing some stupid game on her cell phone, and Stone was late to class. Again.

"Why doesn't your mom just call him back?" Nicole asked.

"'Cause she's a 'tard. Why did she even have him, anyway? I mean, it's like, you don't have to have a kid with every guy who buys you a drink--*God!*"

"You're, like, his surrogate mother or whatever, anyway."

"Yeah. And the funny thing is, she's all like, *don't get pregnant, Brittany! I'll kill you if you get pregnant.* But what the hell. I mean, I'm already raising *her* mistake."

The dull hum of Mr. Aronson's voice was interrupted by Stone and Calvert's dramatic entrance. Stone was livid; anyone who wasn't in a coma would have noticed. And Calvert, riding shot-gun, was all pumped up and battle-ready. They swung into their desks without so much as a nod of acknowledgement from Mr. Aronson.

Nicole blinked at Stone, and Brittany's hand paused mid brush-stroke.

"Okay . . . what?" Nicole finally asked.

Stone didn't respond, just hunched in his chair.

"You look like the guy from the Incredibles," she said, working up a grande-giggle. "You know, when the guy was getting robbed in the alley and his boss-"

"Shut up!" Stone grunted, chewing off the end of her story.

Nicole looked wounded. "Hey, whatev, Stone. I mean, don't take it out on me if you're not getting any play these days."

"I said, shut up, Nicole. Christ. Not everything's a fucking joke."

Nicole shook her head and shrugged. "Fine, then. Why are you so pissed off?"

"Haven't you seen it?" he asked.

"Seen what?"

"This!" he spat, yanking a copy of the Metro away from the nerdy little freshman who was reading it. He opened it up and handed it to her.

"'Drunk and Disorderly,'" she read. "So what?"

"Not that one. The other-" Stone heaved a huge sigh. "Never mind," he growled, snatching the Metro out of Nicole's hands. He handed it back to the kid he got it from.

"No," she said, "come on. Seriously. I want to see it." She grabbed it back. Her mouth moved as she read. "Omigod, does this mean *me*?" She looked up. "Is this about *me*?"

"Yeah, Nicole," Stone muttered. "Everything's about you."

"Who wrote this?" She began flipping through the pages, looking for names.

"It's the Metro, Nicole. It's an underground paper."

"So?"

"So no one knows who . . . look, just forget it okay?"

Nicole reluctantly gave the freshman kid his Metro back as Stone sat shaking his head.

"Jesus," he said. "If you used your brain once in a while, you might actually be dangerous."

He turned his head as the classroom door opened and a tall, slender girl came in. She handed a sheet of paper to Mr. Aronson. *I love her shoes!* Nicole thought, wondering where she got them. If her dad would come up for air from his new girlfriend long enough, maybe Nicole could ask him for some shopping money. Or have a one-minute conversation with him. Yeah. Like *that* would ever happen.

Mr. Aronson stopped writing on the board and took the paper from Cute-Shoe-Girl. He pushed his glasses down on his nose.

"This is a memo from administration," he said. "It says, 'Please inform students that we are imposing a ban on the use of cell phones, MP3 players, and other electronic devices, effective immediately. There have been numerous complaints about these devices becoming a hindrance to the learning process and a nuisance on campus in general. There will be an open discussion at next month's board meeting regarding student use of cell phones and other technology. However, in the mean time, these items will be confiscated if found.'"

Mr. Aronson put the paper on his desk and returned to the chalkboard.

Nicole's eyes nearly popped out of her head. She tried to get Brittany's attention, but Brittany actually looked like she was paying attention to Aronson for once. She reached into her bag and, without even needing to look at her cell phone, texted a message to Brittany.

*Can u believe it? That's sooo unfair!* She kept her eyes on the screen, waiting for Brittany's response.

But as she sat there staring into her bag, the only thing she saw was a hand, reaching inside and grabbing at her cell phone. Nicole put a death grip on the phone and squeaked, "Omigod! What are you doing?!" She looked up.

It was Mr. Aronson. "I just read the memo about cell phones," he said calmly. "Yours now belongs to me."

Nicole's faced turned pink. "But my dad bought it for me."

"Well maybe your dad lets you do whatever you want at home, Nicole. Maybe the rules in your house apply to everyone except you. But here, the rules apply to everyone."

Nicole's entire body went limp in utter disbelief, and Mr. Aronson easily twisted the cell phone out of her loose grip.

"Thank you, Ms. McClintock. Your daddy can come pick up the phone himself--it will be in the administrative offices."

Nicole could feel herself doing a slow burn. The same slow burn she felt whenever she came home to find her mom passed out on the couch and some lame talk show blaring away on the TV. For the first time, she felt like the same Nicole at school that she was at home. And that was something she swore she'd never let happen.

*Here, Rufus & Ranger get to demonstrate their mad skills, plus we get a little deeper sense of who these guys really are. But alas ... this scene, too, had to go.*

They decided to head over to the city municipal building an ideal place to skate. The city offices had about fifty steps leading up to the top, where a bank of glass doors were locked up tight for the weekend. They knew the doors were kept locked because, one time, Rufus and Ranger decided to see if they could get inside, and after yanking on the doors for a few minutes, a security car pulled up, and some dude got out with this mondo flashlight, nearly blinding them both. Then he threatened to "take them in" and they totally bought it until they realized he had no handcuffs and no real authority to do anything beyond scare the crap out of them. Which he kind of did.

The long stairway was flanked by smooth round banisters--perfect for grinding. Ranger was much better at it than Rufus, who preferred using his skateboard more as a means of transportation so he wouldn't have to walk everywhere. Pushing off with one foot required much less effort than taking steps with both feet. Rufus was all about economy of motion.

He looked over at Ranger. Now, *that* guy knew all the tricks and was good enough to not get hurt that often. Sure, he had broken his wrist once, but that was Xiong Moua's fault for not observing the unspoken skater's code that says *Thou shalt not grind in exactly the same place where thy neighbor is grinding*. Or something like that. Anyway, Xiong carved right in front of him, losing control as Ranger was grinding down this handicapped ramp at the movie theater one night, and they ended up a tangle of body parts, some of them broken.

But most of the time, Rufus just watched as Ranger practiced his craft at the skate park south of town. Or, for that matter, anywhere else Ranger could go where he didn't have to watch his dad every day, sitting in near darkness, the omnipresent beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other, and a newspaper, opened to the Classifieds, on the table in front of him. The sight of that poor bastard even made Rufus want to run away from home.

Around midnight, after watching Ranger do every skating trick in his repertoire, Rufus turned and said, "Yo, dude, I could go for a hot dog."

"Yeah," Ranger panted, "you really worked up an appetite there."

Rufus managed a smirk.

"I could definitely use a Mountain Dew right about now," Ranger added, grabbing his board and nosing down the sidewalk.