

(Production Notes)

SYNOPSIS

THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST is a modern-day farce in the vein of TOOTSIE and A FISH CALLED WANDA.

Set in the world of New York City's elite private kindergartens, THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST centers on a fresh-faced young couple from Delaware, Jeff (Neil Patrick Harris) and Samantha (Bonnie Somerville), who have only recently moved into town. The comedy centers on the extreme lengths they must go to in order to get their five-year-old daughter into school.

When the obstacles in this high-stakes world become apparent, Jeff tells Sam that he'd rather just throw in the towel and move back home. But Sam harbors a strong ambitious streak. Deep down she yearns for something more than her small-town provincial life. She wants to take one last shot at her dream of a life among the best and brightest. Like Dustin Hoffman's character in TOOTSIE, Sam's stubborn determination is the engine of the movie.

Every private school in the city informs Sam that she's simply too late to apply for a kindergarten spot this fall. But Sam will not be denied. She begs Jeff to hire a "consultant" to find a crack in the system.

The oddball consultant Sue Lemon (Amy Sedaris) does precisely that, and Sam and Jeff are granted a rare interview at the posh Coventry Day School.

But the interview comes at a cost. The only way Sue is able to arrange it is by telling the headmistress (Jenna Stern) a critical lie: that Jeff is a renowned poet, instead of the humdrum computer programmer he is in real life. Jeff wants no part of this fabrication, but yet again Sam talks him into going along with it.

Keeping this ridiculous lie aloft is the main action of the movie, as Sam and Jeff are forced to prove their poetic bona fides not only to the school's headmistress but to the entire school board (played by Christopher McDonald, Kate Mulgrew, and John Hodgman). Soon Sam and Jeff are thrust upon the most elite stages of Upper East Side society, not on the strength of their character but on the back of an absurd charade.

By the end of the movie, Sam is forced to choose between living the life she has dreamed of – but lying in order to do so – or going back to Delaware as herself. This decision leads to an explosive and hilarious climax in front of an audience of New York City's best and brightest.

Q & A WITH DIRECTOR AND CO-WRITER JOSH SHELOV

Q: Tell us about your background.

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Q&A WITH A MASTER MATHS COACH

Q I gave the question for 10, 15, 20 and you answered 1000. How do you do that?

A The question says 'each number is multiplied by the next number in the sequence'. So 10 is multiplied by 15, 15 by 20, 20 by 25, 25 by 30, 30 by 35, 35 by 40, 40 by 45, 45 by 50, 50 by 55, 55 by 60, 60 by 65, 65 by 70, 70 by 75, 75 by 80, 80 by 85, 85 by 90, 90 by 95, 95 by 100. The answer is 1000.

Q I want the answer to the question for 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 95, 100. How do you do that?

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