

The Incredible Bonds Between Skater Girls

March 2020. Lockdown had just ensued, suddenly, we were all stripped of the ability to go to work, school, to see anybody outside our house. My parents were especially strict, I wasn't even allowed to go to the store or park, let alone a friend's house. We weren't even going to church, which was especially disturbing, considering that we had never missed mass in my entire life unless someone was on the brink of death. I felt so isolated, lonely. My days began to blend together in a blur of enrichment modules and *Game of Thrones* and books I had read hundreds of times before, as March gave way to May, and then to June. Friends seemed like a distant memory. Sometimes I even dreamed of the social interaction I so craved, only to wake with a start, giving way to the emptiness and disappointment because *it had felt so real*.

It was around this time I decided to work my way through my Letterboxd watchlist, which led me to encounter *The Skate Kitchen* (2018). As I watched from the deep stillness of my pitch dark room, curled under the sheets on my mattress, I was struck by an odd sense of familiarity. Camille, an introverted teenager in the suburbs of New York is thrust into the world of eccentric feminist female skateboarders who spend their days learning tricks, drinking Arizona tea, making skate movies, and talking about the terrifying prospects of maturity, sexuality, and gender identity. In the male-dominated New York City skate scene, Camille, Janay, Kurt, Ruby, Indigo, and suddenly, I, a girl who has never skated in her life, were flying through the streets of the city, lying looking at the New York skyline under sunny, chain-link fences. It was as though after weeks of sleepless, twenty-four hour cycles, my insomniac, overly-medicated brain had just apprehended the correct dosage of melatonin. I was completely

floored. I don't think I had ever seen a film about teenage girls that was so accurate, so refreshing, so relatable. Not from *Ladybird*, not in *The Edge of Seventeen*, not even with *Breakfast Club*. I would give a lot of different things in my life just to watch *The Skate Kitchen* for the first time again.

This group of girls' friendship was so powerful, so strong nothing could break them apart. Just like me and my friends. Representation wasn't something that I, a white, cisgender girl, had ever paid much mind, but suddenly there was this overwhelmingly powerful feeling that I think you can only get when you feel seen by others, without them telling you so. My perception of the "coming of age" film had been shattered, and the shards had been glued back together to create this incredible mosaic of truth and authenticity.