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# 'Everytime' Review: An Intriguingly Understated Grief Drama Delivers Its Best Moments a Bit Too Late

The third feature from Austrian writer-director Sandra Wollner ('The Trouble With Being Born') chronicles a family in the wake of a major tragedy.

BY **JORDAN MINTZER** MAY 19, 2026 4:22PM





'Everytime' CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

Austrian auteur Sandra Wollner's haunting second feature, *The Trouble With Being Born*, was an impressive genre-bending thriller that played like an episode of *Westworld* directed by Michael Haneke. Quietly mesmerizing and altogether demented, it told the story of a child robot who finds herself in the care of a man with major — and I mean MAJOR — issues.

It's not worth spoiling that movie, which is currently available on Mubi and definitely deserves a look. Wollner's follow-up, *Everytime*, isn't worth spoiling either, although one of the problems with this mildly intriguing family saga is that the spoilers arrive too far behind schedule. So subtle that it's hard, at times, to discern much of a plot, this delicately made tale of grieving and recovery doesn't resonate until it ultimately does so in a big way. But when that happens, it can feel like too much, too late.

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*Delicately crafted and dramatically diffuse.*

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**Venue:** Cannes Film Festival (Un Certain Regard)

**Cast:** Birgit Minichmayr, Lotte Keiling, Tristan López, Carla Hüttermann

**Director, screenwriter:** Sandra Wollner

2 hours 1 minute

That's unfortunate, because the film showcases Wollner's talent for injecting genuine unease into ordinary events, whether it's an eerie stroll through the streets of Berlin, a text message sent to a deceased person or a trip to the Canary Islands that grows increasingly surreal. But at two hours long and without much of a sustained narrative, *Everytime* never quite gives us enough to latch onto, even if its giant twist of an ending leaves us with something to contemplate.

Helmed with the rigorous aesthetic of a Berliner Schule feature (the work of [Angela Schanelec](#) especially comes to mind), the movie follows a family of three women who, at least for the first 20 minutes, seem to have nothing really special about their lives. The divorced mother, Ella (Birgit Minichmayr), looks after her two daughters, the teenager Jessica (Carla Hütterman) and the younger Melli (Lotte Keiling), who fight a lot because they have to share the same bedroom. Whenever she can, Jessica steals away to hang out with her boyfriend, Lux (Tristan López), a quiet type who likes to party too much.

Just when they're about to leave on summer holiday, tragedy strikes when Jessica suddenly dies. As with much of what we see in *Everytime*, it's not exactly clear *why* she dies: Did she kill herself? Get into a freak accident? Take too many drugs and make a fatal error? Wollner is less interested in finding a reason for what happened than in portraying how Jessica's death ripples through the lives of her loved ones in the months that follow, using ellipses to jump ahead and focus on how each of them react.

As a portrait of human behavior in the wake of a terrible loss, the film feels both studied and compassionate, revealing how everyone tries their best to move on but can never quite get Jessica out of their minds. Ella continues to care for Melli, who misses her dearly but is also still a kid figuring life out for herself. Lux goes away to Texas, then comes back and appears to have a new girlfriend, though he can't stop



What takes place is not altogether uninteresting, and it's both well-acted and skillfully crafted — the widescreen cinematography of Gregory Oke (*Aftersun*) is rich in detail and warmth — but is it enough to fill an entire movie? Hitchcock famously said that “some films are slices of life, mine are slices of cake.” *Everytime* could have probably used more cake, and perhaps some icing and sprinkles, so much does it tease at the kind of conflicts it never delivers.

The film nonetheless takes a truly unexpected turn during a third act set at the same seaside resort in Tenerife that the family had visited on previous vacations. After they arrive, some of the things we've been witnessing — bizarre resonances between past and present, everyday reality and virtual reality (in the form of a *Minecraft*-style game), home movies and contemporary events — begin to make, well, not complete sense, but at least to serve a purpose.

What that purpose is shouldn't be spoiled for those who want to give *Everytime* a chance. Suffice it to say that Wollner's understated drama offers a solution that feels too good to be true, as if the death faced by Ella, Melli and Lux was so hard for them to accept, they decide to ditch logic altogether. The closing scenes are staged with disquieting aplomb, lending meaning and mystery to this chronicle of a family that cannot get over a devastating loss, to the point that they prefer to believe the unbelievable.

## Full credits

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Venue: Cannes Film Festival (Un Certain Regard)

Cast: Birgit Minichmayr, Lotte Keiling, Tristan López, Carla Hüttermann

Production companies: Panama Films, The Barricades

Director, screenwriter: Sandra Wollner

Producers: Lixi Frank, Viktoria Stolpe, David Bohun

Cinematographer: Gregory Oke

Production designers: Julia Libiseller, Gerald Freimuth

Editor: Hannes Bruun

Composer: David Schweighart



2 hours 1 minute

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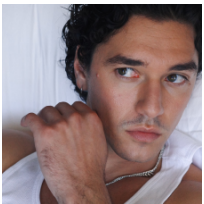
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