

MATCHBREAKER

Star-crossed nemeses travel cross-country to challenge the omniscient dating app that promised them a perfect match or one million dollars in cash.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS ROMANTIC SCENES OF DIVERSE COUPLES

A serene NARRATOR speaks over footage of couples engaged in increasingly cartoonish dating rituals.

-One couple (mid-20s) holds hands as they walk in a park.

-Another couple (early-50s) reacts to a jump scare, then shares a forced laugh while seated together in a theater.

-A third couple (mid-30s) chats in the bathroom. One gesticulates from the entry while their partner sits on the toilet, nodding and smiling with weird intensity.

-A final couple (mid-70s) grins ear-to-ear as they smush entire ice-cream cones into each others' faces.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

At PairFree, we use our patented
LoveOnline algorithm to connect you
with your perfect match,
guaranteed. How confident are we?
If two users aren't one hundred
percent compatible, we'll give them
one million-

A "Skip" button appears in the bottom right of the scene.

MILES (V.O.)

Jesus, finally.

INT. BUS - DRIVING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

MILES (24), a fit, high-strung yuppie dressed for business casual, struggles to close the ad with repeated jabs of his thumb. The video freezes and remains on the screen.

MILES

For real, dude? Come on.

The screen flashes a red battery symbol, then goes dark.

MILES (CONT'D)

Are you-

Miles rests his head against the window in defeat. He leans forward to shrug off his blazer, before balling it up and jamming it between his neck and the glass. He closes his eyes, shifting in the bus seat to get comfortable.

FEMALE BUS PASSENGER (O.C.)

Stop it-

MALE BUS PASSENGER (O.C.)
No you stop it-

Miles opens his eyes to leer at two BUS PASSENGERS, giggling and poking each other's noses with sickening playfulness.

MALE BUS PASSENGER (CONT'D)
I'm gonna eat your nose! I'm gonna
gobble up them nostrils, nomnomnom-

FEMALE BUS PASSENGER
Stop! Stop it!

The woman squeals, holding her partner at bay while he pretends to nip at her face. Miles's eyes narrow.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Miles slams the door behind him. He tosses his blazer on the dining table, before collapsing onto the couch beside his roommate, DIV (24). Div, a pierced Desi gamer chick, mashes buttons on her controller as she barks into a headset.

DIV
(into headset)
Oh gargle my balls, Brian!

Div snags a controller off the coffee table and flings it beside Miles. She only glances his way for a split-second.

DIV (CONT'D)
Wanna jump in this lobby with me?

MILES
That's ok, I-

DIV
(into headset)
-Then spit out my dick B, your
teeth are chafing my foreskin!

MILES
That's not a kid in the chat,
right?

DIV
(laughing)
Who, Brian? No, no no. My mom's new
boyfriend, turns out he's a gamer.
Anyway, you jumping on?

MILES
I'm good, thanks. I'll just watch.

Div turns to look him over. She frowns, and adjusts her mic.

DIV
(into headset)
Yo Bry Guy, my Wi-Fi's crapping
out. I'll be back in a few.

Div exits the game and yanks off the headset. She pulls her legs up to sit crosslegged and turns to face Miles.

DIV (CONT'D)
Alright. What's up with you?

MILES
Nothing.

DIV
Uh-huh, sure. How'd your date go?
Tonight was the flight attendant,
right?

MILES
At one point I said "you must love
to travel," she said "why" and then
we basically sat in silence until
the check came. Actually that's not
true, she faked a call and said her
pet bird swallowed all her Prozac.
She dipped while I was paying.

Div puts a finger in her mouth and mimes puking.

DIV
Blech, she's a bird girl? Well, you
don't wanna mess with that anyway.

MILES
Why's that?

DIV
Birds are dicks dude. They'll talk
to the speakers in your apartment
and order whippets and shit. Or
they'll memorize the sound of your
orgasm, call 9-1-1 and just scream
it, like over and over.

MILES
I don't think either of those has
ever happened.

DIV
You remember Missy Hoyt, first year
chem TA?

MILES

Think so, yeah.

DIV

She had a blue macaw. It called the FBI, doxxed her apartment. She's dead. Like straight up deceased.

MILES

Jesus Christ...

DIV

I'm telling ya, you dodged a bullet. Who've you got next? Feels like you've been at it kinda nonstop.

MILES

Yeah, well...

Miles flashes her an accusatory smirk. Div's tone hardens.

DIV

Oh, you really wanna rehash that?

She gestures between herself and Miles.

DIV (CONT'D)

Undo all your progress here?

MILES

(sighing)

No...definitely not. I think I'm just gonna take a break this weekend, reset all my apps again.

DIV

Nuh-uh! We have plans, my dude.

Miles stares at her, waiting for a hint.

DIV (CONT'D)

Taylor and Luke?

MILES

(groaning)

Is that this Saturday?

DIVYA

Yep, we have to be there by six, or Tay will flip out.

MILES

Sure, fine. Figure we'll split a car then?

DIV

I have to wait for Nat, she gets off at five-fifteen. You should go on ahead.

Miles clicks his tongue, looks down. He doesn't clock Div already throwing on her headset and re-entering the game.

MILES

Yeah, that makes sense. I'll catch you guys there then-

DIV

(into headset)

Come on, Bry! My Nana's got better aim!

(shifting her tone)

Yeah, I heard about the Parkinson's, that's a bummer.

Miles nods to himself. He swivels on his heel and exits.

INT. ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH - EARLY AFTERNOON

A PRIEST (60s) officiates for TAYLOR and LUKE (mid-20s), standing at the altar. Miles and Div stand beside the bride, wearing tuxes. The other three bridesmaids wear dresses.

MILES

(whispering)

Is it homophobic to ask why you wore a tux?

DIV

(whispering)

Is it kinda gay you're on the bride's side?

MILES

(whispering)

Touché.

Someone shushes them. DIV sneers in their direction.

PRIEST

The bride and groom will now exchange rings, for which they'd like to invite a special guest up to the altar.

Taylor bends down and pats her knees.

TAYLOR
C'mon Fitzzy, come here baby!

The congregation faces the back of the church, where Fitzroy, a haggard, ancient Bassett Hound, gasps his way up the aisle.

MILES
(whispering)
Fitzroy's still alive? Dog's like a
thousand years old.

DIV
(whispering)
Eighteen as of May. That pooch has
two pace-makers.

Fitzroy continues his wheezing trudge toward the altar. Halfway there, he begins to slow down.

DIV (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Dude is not lookin' good.

TAYLOR
Come on sweetie, you can do it!
Come to mommy!

Fitzroy comes to a stop; he sways for a moment.

MILES
(whispering)
Oh shit.

Fitzroy keels over and lays still. The church is silent. Somewhere in the room, a baby starts crying.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION VENUE - BANQUET HALL

CARLO (27) a chic, slender Latino, strides forward clutching four cocktail glasses against his chest. He succeeds in reaching a high-top table where Miles and Div chat with NATASHA (29), a tattooed, tall and shapely brunette. Natasha presses an affectionate shoulder into Div as they converse. Carlo distributes the drinks as he joins the discussion.

DIV
I can't believe he swallowed the
rings.

MILES

Ok but why were they ever in the dog's mouth? Just clip 'em to his collar or something.

CARLO

Taylor said collars choke his blood vessels. Caused two of his strokes, apparently.

MILES

Which ones?

CARLO

Second and fourth.

NATASHA

I mean Tay recovered pretty fast, all things considered?

DIV

Oh she fully tried to drown herself in the bathroom sink, I gave her some molly to cut that shit out.

CARLO

You brought molly?

DIV

No open bar and we drove to Scranton? Goddamn right I did.

(glancing off-screen)

Look, she's living her best life!

Taylor is seen running her forearms up and down a decorative ice-sculpture while Luke pulls at her torso, exasperated.

Miles steps back from the table.

MILES

I'm gonna get some air.

DIV

Be quick, we're doing shots in ten!

CARLO

(glancing off-screen)

Uh guys? Taylor has someone's dog.

Taylor sprints past with a dog in her arms, followed by several wedding guests. She yells back at her pursuers.

TAYLOR

It's fine! It's cool! We're fine-

EXT. WEDDING RECEPTION VENUE - GARDEN - NIGHT

Miles stretches out on a bench, thumbing through social media posts. Muffled music and faint lights from the reception are visible behind him. Another ad interrupts his scrolling.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

PairFree; love made easy. Using
shared data from our partners at
Instagram, Spotify, Autozone,
PornHub and more, we pair users
with their perfect half,
guaranteed! Our-

Miles closes the app and shoves the phone back into his pocket. He takes a deep breath before rising and walking back toward the lights of the reception.

EXT. WEDDING RECEPTION - PARKING VALET AREA - NIGHT

As Miles approaches the entrance, he clocks SAMEERA (27). Her svelte, olive-toned figure is striking in a red slip dress. Barefoot, she grips a pair of heels with one hand while unleashing on a VALET, who dangles a pair of keys in front of him. A decrepit sedan sits idling behind them.

SAMEERA

-yeah, well I don't give a shit!
Who's your boss? I want a name and
his number.

VALET

(groaning)
Just take your keys, miss-

SAMEERA

Miss? So now it's miss-

Miles clears his throat as he moves to intervene.

MILES

Everything ok here, guys? All good?

Sameera turns to address Miles.

SAMEERA

Thank god. You're just in time.

MILES

Oh...uh, good. I am?

SAMEERA

Yeah! You're the guy whose help I didn't ask for, right? You're right on schedule.

Miles rolls his eyes and scoffs. He addresses the valet.

MILES

Everything good man?

VALET

We retrieved this guest's vehicle for her and she's been berating our staff-

SAMEERA

I'm berating this dickhead because-

MILES

Alright, let's- that's harsh, right?. I'm sure whatever happened was just a misunderstanding.

Sameera cocks her head at Miles.

SAMEERA

Who the f-you know what? Whatever. Thanks for your help, man. Truly!

She snatches the keys from the valet and enters the car.

VALET

Miss, a tip would be appreciated?

Her fury dissipates in an instant.

SAMEERA

Shit, sorry, I have something here-

She fumbles in her console for a moment before producing an icy middle finger. She peels out.

Miles gives a wry chuckle in spite of himself. He pulls out his wallet and hands the guy two bills.

MILES

Sorry about her, man. Here-

The Valet takes the cash and thumbs through it.

VALET

This is two bucks?

MILES
And I carpooled. So-

Miles departs, leaving the valet muttering to himself.

INT. WEDDING RECEPTION VENUE - BANQUET HALL

Miles sidles back to the cocktail table. He eyes Div and Natasha caressing one another, forehead to forehead. Natasha walks her hand up Div's arm to a momentary clutch of fingers, before walking off toward the bar. Miles's gaze remains fixed on the spot where their fingers parted.

DIV
Meet any eligible bachelorettes on
your little walkabout?

Miles blinks, wakening from his trance of self-pity.

MILES
Just some absolute psycho in the
parking lot.

DIV
Hey, psychos are sexy. I've always
said-

MILES
That you would bang Ted Bundy, yes,

DIV
Bundy? No, Ted Kacyzns-

MILES
-znski right, because of the-

DIV
-the beard, yeah.

They both trail off into silence. Miles bristles again.

MILES
I feel like I can't go five minutes
without getting jump-scared by one
of those PairFree ads. Does anyone
actually download that trash?

DIV
Why don't you ask the newlyweds?

Miles is floored.

MILES

What? No, they met at improv.

Div slaps a palm to her forehead.

DIV

(laughing)

Oh my God, I totally forgot about that! What was their group call- "The Fart of Suggestion"! I'm so glad we're past that. But yeah, they only started dating post-grad, through the app.

She takes a sip from her drink.

DIV (CONT'D)

Kind of wild, when you think about it.

MILES

But it's not healthy, right? To just...phone it in like that? Like you and Nat! You can't spawn that off some bogus equation-

Div flashes an apologetic smile. Miles groans.

MILES (CONT'D)

Come on, Div! You said you met at a diner!

DIV

And that's technically true! I was supposed to be there studying for the LSAT but just ended up screwing around on my phone. Made a profile 'cause I was bored, I heard a phone ping a few tables away. She was there working the morning shift.

MILES

You're bumming me out, dude.

DIV

Oh would you stop being such a snob! You're telling me you don't wanna cut to the chase by now, with the dating bullshit? Finally just wake up every morning, getting your bussy ate?

MILES

Straight guys don't have bussies.

DIV
All guys have bussies, yours is
just neglected. A sad, stray
bussy.... with byphylis.

INT. SAMEERA'S CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Sameera, still fuming, speeds along with the windows down, music blasting through the car radio. An incoming call jolts her from her road rage. She lowers the volume and fumbles to accept the call, pawing at her cellphone in the cup holder.

SAMEERA
Hey what's up?

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)
What's up? This is how you answer
the mother you never call?

Sameera rolls her eyes, gripping the steering wheel tighter.

SAMEERA
Hi Mom....I'm sorry, things have
been weird lately.

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)
Things are always weird with you,
you are a weird girl.

SAMEERA
Mom!

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)
In a good way! You've always been a
woman of...flux.

SAMEERA
"Woman of flux"? Sounds like slang
for a robot hooker.

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)
Sometimes you are so vulgar,
darling, really.

INT. SAMEERA'S APARTMENT - ENTRYWAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Sameera, phone clenched between her neck and shoulder, bends to gather mail from outside her apartment door. She drops her heels inside the doorway.

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
Are you home? You sound very tense.

INT. SAMEERA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Leaning up against the fridge, she rifles through the mail. The envelopes are stamped with slogans like "Last Offer," "Tuition = Free," and "100% Loan Forgiveness."

SAMEERA

Because I'm exhausted. And I got into it with a parking guy at the reception on my way out-

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)

See, this is why I worry! You get into trouble, out there by yourself-

SAMEERA

Nu-uh, we're not doing this again-

She chucks the mail onto a pile of envelopes on the counter.

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)

You are so far from us Mee Mee! And a second degree is not cheap. You could come home, do classes online-

SAMEERA

I'm not leaving Philly, Mom. I have a good thing here.

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)

Ohhhhhh I see. This good thing, does he have a name?

She opens the fridge. It's empty, save for a couple take-out boxes with utensils jutting out. She pulls a take-out box, gives it a whiff, and grimaces. She puts it in the microwave.

SAMEERA

(distractedly)

I don't-uh-

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)

Or she! Your father and I don't judge. We started watching Orange is the New Black and we are laughing a lot. Those girls are very funny! But prison is sad-

SAMEERA

I'm not seeing anyone, ok?

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)

And why is that?

SAMEERA

Better ways to spend my money. Why spend fifty bucks a night to have some guy lecture me on how Breaking Bad should have ended?

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)

Well whoever he is, he should be paying. You know, Khalid met his wife through a match-making site last year and they are very happy. PairMe? WePair? Or something.

SAMEERA

It's an app, mom, not a website. And I already tried it, to shortcut a plus one for the wedding.

The microwave dings. Sameera retrieves the food.

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)

And?

SAMEERA

And it crashed on me. It's been stuck loading for like a month.

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)

Well I know its touchy, but...your sister knows a lot of young men who-

Sameera closes her eyes and scrunches her face in pain.

SAMEERA

So close! Almost made it without sneaking in Ally. Love you! Bye-

SAMEERA'S MOM (ON SPEAKER)

Sameera-

She hangs up the phone and rubs her eyes with her palms.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - ENTRYWAY

Miles, Natasha, and Div plod through the doorway.

MILES

Night Div. Nat, thanks for driving.

NATASHA

No prob, g'night.

DIV
(yawning)
Night, Miles.

The girls enter Div's room. Miles trudges off toward his own.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - MILES'S BEDROOM - LATER

Miles lays on his bed, thumbing through photos from the wedding on Instagram. He scrolls through each couple, all smiles and embraces. He chucks the phone beside him.

He stares at the ceiling, lost in thought. He groans.

MILES
Screw it.

Miles picks up the phone, typing with determination. A chime sounds, and the familiar PairFree Narrator greets him aloud.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Welcome to PairFree! Using data you've shared with our partner platforms, we create a holistic profile to pair you- Miles Vazquez - with your perfect match, compatibility guaranteed! Do you consent to sharing this information with our team for the purpose of finding your perfect match? Note, data sharing is completely voluntary!

MILES
No, thank you.

Miles pokes "no" on the screen. The display flashes red.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Sorry, our platform relies on user data to pair candidates with their perfect match. Please opt-in to data-sharing to continue!

Miles rolls his eyes and mutters to himself.

MILES
Right, of course.

Miles taps again. The screen now features a percentage bar.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Thanks! Now, we'll review data
you've previously shared with our
partners to build your profile, and
find you your perfect match!

New text flashes onto the screen below the percentage bar.

PHONE ALERT (PAIRFREE)
Finding your perfect match: 1%.

Miles watches the bar creep forward, integer by integer.
Bubbles grow and shrink on screen featuring incongruous brand
logos: Facebook, Home Depot, Bubba Gump Shrimp, Six Flags,
etc. He groans and collapses back onto the bed.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - MILES'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Soft light filters through the blinds of the bedroom window.
Another chime sounds, waking Miles. He squints at the screen.

PHONE ALERT (PAIRFREE)
Ready to meet your perfect match?

Miles clicks on the screen, and instantly deflates.

MILES
Oh, come on. Really?

EXT. CITY PARK - PROMENADE - EARLY MORNING

Sameera jogs past dog-walkers and parents with strollers, her
face taut from exertion. She stops at a fountain to refill
her water bottle. Her phone chimes, and she glances at it.

SAMEERA
You've got to be shitting me.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Natasha cooks eggs on the stove while Div sits massaging her
temples, losing her battle with a hangover. Miles paces back
and forth through the dining area.

MILES
I told you that app was bullshit.
This girl sucks.

Div, head cradled in her hands, limply raises her chin.

DIV

And you gathered this from the eleven seconds you spent in the parking lot with her?

MILES

No, I gathered it from her having a stroke at the poor valet guy.

NATASHA

Which one, pit-stains or grab-ass?

MILES

What?

NATASHA

Yeah the stubby one with the chinstrap opened the door for me and tried to cop a feel when I was sliding in.

MILES

What did you do?

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. WEDDING VENUE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The valet holds the driver's side car door open for Natasha. As she passes him to slide in, he puts a hand on her rear. Halfway seated, Natasha turns to the valet.

NATASHA

What's your name, handsome?

VALET

Dom. Like Fast and the Furious. Best franchise of all time.

He bites his lip and raises his eyebrows. Nat smiles.

NATASHA

Ok Mr. Toretto. Lemme get your tip.

Natasha brings a stiletto heel down on the toe of Dom's shoe, eliciting a shriek of pain.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

MILES

Wait where was I for all of this?

Div groans.

DIVYA

You were literally in the back seat, dude.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. DIV'S CAR - BACKSEAT - NIGHT

Miles, shirt askew and hair mussed, swipes on a dating app.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

MILES

Shit.

NATASHA

Anyways Erika said he was ogling her while she waited for an Uber, so is it possible....?

Miles sighs, finishing her thought.

MILES

-that I backed up a complete scumbag? Yep, fantastic.

Natasha serves a plate of eggs to Div, stirring her to life.

DIV

(to Miles)

So go on the date. Apologize.

(to Natasha) Thanks babe.

MILES

Hey Nat where's my eggs?

Miles takes a swig of orange juice. Natasha reaches a hand under the table and delivers a swift thwack to Miles' testicles, causing him to spit take.

NATASHA

Found 'em.

DIV
 (mouthful of food)
 Good one sweetie.

They high-five. Miles still spluttering, nods and delivers a begrudging high-five as well.

INT. SAMEERA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Sameera, still wearing her jogging gear, unlocks her apartment door. Down the hall, she clocks TOMMY (50), a stout, greasy man with thinning hair, ascending the stairs.

SAMEERA
 Hey, Tommy! Tommy!

Tommy returns down the stairs, a cigarette dangling from his mouth. He eyes her with equal parts boredom and exasperation.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
 Hey, I heard you sold the building,
 um, congrats-

TOMMY
 Get on with it, Samantha.

SAMEERA
 It's Sameera. Yeah, so, my lease is
 set to renew on the first, and
 since the new guys are coming in,
 who should I give the paperwork to?

TOMMY
 Nobody.

SAMEERA
 I'm sorry?

TOMMY
 New owner is gutting the place.
 Lettin' the leases expire, most
 folks out by end of the month.
 Turning it into a WeWork or a Jamba
 Juice. Or maybe it was a WeWork for
 Jamba Juice. That sound right?

He waits for her input, eyebrows raised.

SAMEERA
 Oh I don't, I mean-

Tommy assumes they're done. He resumes climbing the stairs.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
Wait, Tommy, hey-

Tommy rolls his eyes and steps back toward her.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
So what, I'm just out? That's it?

TOMMY
I 'spose you could get a job at
said Jamba Juice and you could hang
around during the day but no, they
won't let ya sleep here. Good luck.

SAMEERA
But-

Tommy disappears up the stairs. Sameera puts her hands behind her head and huffs.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - MILES'S BEDROOM

Miles swivels gently back and forth in a desk chair, stalling for time. His phone displays Sameera's photo with an open chat in the PairFree app. The message bar is blank.

INT. SAMEERA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Sameera opens the fridge. She grabs a water jug and pours herself a glass. Her phone buzzes.

PHONE ALERT (CALENDAR)
Fall Tuition 7/29

Sameera sighs, placing the phone on the counter. She picks up a financial aid pamphlet from the stack and thumbs through.

Another chime from her phone. Sameera rolls her eyes.

SAMEERA
I know, Jesus-

She picks up the phone, expecting the same calendar alert.

PHONE ALERT (PAIRFREE)
Your Perfect Match says hi!

Sameera's finger hovers over the phone, before swiping on the alert. It opens up a message chain inside the PairFree app.

PHONE ALERT (PAIRFREE CHAT) (CONT'D)
Check your InstaCash (plz)

Sameera opens a separate app to display several transactions. There's a recent ten dollar payment, titled "douchebag tax."

She scoffs, returning to the PairFree chat to type a reply.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - MILES'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miles watches typing bubbles rise and fall. Then, a message.

PHONE ALERT (PAIRFREE CHAT)
You forgot a couple zeroes.

Miles chuckles, muttering to himself.

MILES
That so?

INT. SAMEERA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The chat refreshes with a new message from Miles.

PHONE ALERT (PAIRFREE CHAT)
Shouldn't have stuck my nose in
your business the other night.
Sorry.

Sameera leans against the kitchen counter, resumes typing.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - MILES'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

PHONE ALERT (PAIRFREE CHAT)
Like I said, missing some zeroes.

The bubbles continue rising and falling. Another message.

PHONE ALERT (PAIRFREE CHAT) (CONT'D)
But dinner could help bring down
your tab.

Miles smiles softly. He starts to type...when an impossibly loud notification blares from both phones. Miles drops his phone in terror.

INT. SAMEERA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sameera recoils from the the screen, holding it at arm's length. The Narrator continues to announce the update at an unbearable volume.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Congratulations! Sounds like you're
ready to go A.F.K. and meet I.R.L!

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - MILES'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miles scrambles on the floor for the phone. He tries to lower the volume on the device. The noise bar is locked at maximum.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
To keep things hashtag consensual,
we'll calculate a venue from our
list of hospitality partners that
combines your user profiles! And
who could think of a more romantic
first date setting than-

SMASHCUT TO:

INT. JUNGLE JIM'S CAFÉ - HOSTESS PODIUM - NIGHT

JUNGLE ERIC (30s), a bemused, half-asleep server, drones a rehearsed spiel with his eyes locked on the ceiling.

JUNGLE ERIC
Welcome to Jungle Jim's. I'm Jungle
Eric and I'll be your ranger guide
this evening. Would you prefer the
Rainforest Room or Alligator Gully?

Miles, dressed to the nines, stands speechless in front of him. Bewildered and mouth ajar, he fumbles for a reply.

MILES
Uhhhhhhhhhh-

INT. JUNGLE JIM'S CAFÉ - RAINFOREST ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Jungle Eric escorts Miles to a table where Sameera, also dressed to impress, is already waiting. Sameera, mouthful of bread, covers her mouth and scrambles to rise from her seat. Jungle Eric places a menu on the table for Miles and departs.

Miles and Sameera both stand for a moment, unsure whether to shake hands or hug. They settle on a polite nod and sit down. They fidget in silence, glancing around at the decor.

SAMEERA
So, do you like-

MILES

I've never been here. Is this a meaningful spot for you, or-

SAMEERA

What? No, not at all. I thought these places all closed in like, twenty ten.

MILES

Wasn't there an ecoli-

SAMEERA

-ecoli thing, yeah.

An uncomfortable silence ensues. Miles clears his throat and leans forward in his chair.

MILES

Well listen, I didn't realize what was going on with that sleazy valet dude. At the wedding, I mean. I shouldn't have- like, I consider myself a feminist-

SAMEERA

I'm just gonna stop you there. Look, you wanted to help, you weren't helpful. I think you just have to own that.

MILES

Well sure, but I would've acted differently if I knew that guy was coming onto you.

SAMEERA

What are you talking about, the valet? He scraped my car on the curb when I told him to let me back it out.

Miles falls back in his chair with utter relief.

MILES

Oh well that's nothing. Like, by comparison.

SAMEERA

It's not nothing, I just got that car and it was a really big expense for me. Not that you'd understand.

MILES

What's that supposed to mean?

SAMEERA

You don't exactly seem cash poor.
Did you go to college?

MILES

Yeah.

SAMEERA

What did you study?

MILES

Business.

SAMEERA

Exactly. People don't take on loans
to study-

She raises her fingers for air quotes.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

-business.

MILES

Wow, now who's being pretentious? I
knew tons of business majors on
scholarship.

SAMEERA

Just not you.

Miles scoffs.

MILES

Oh give me a break! I bet you're
one of those middle class chicks
who says she's paycheck to paycheck
while throwing brunch on her Amex.

Sameera nods her head slowly, realizing this was a mistake.

SAMEERA

You know I was actually hoping this
was gonna go well. I let myself
indulge in a romantic little
fantasy for once and I don't know
why.

She throws her napkin on the table and begins to stand and
gather her purse from the back of the chair.

MILES

Yeah well, we at least had that in common.

Sameera pauses before exiting.

SAMEERA

Good luck with-

She gestures broadly at him with a circular hand gesture.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

-this.

MILES

Likewise, with-

He responds with an childish mime of her gesture.

MILES (CONT'D)

-that.

Sameera rolls her eyes and exits. Jungle Eric returns with two garish drinks served with plastic gators & palm trees.

JUNGLE ERIC

One "Guava Gator Guzzler" and one
"Lions, Tigers, Bears Mangoh My."
Compliments of your company, or
whatever.

MILES

Oh damn. Thanks Eric.

Jungle Eric's entire demeanor shifts, becoming ice-cold.

JUNGLE ERIC

It's...Jungle Eric.

He flips Miles's drink over with just two fingers.

JUNGLE ERIC (CONT'D)

Whoops....

He saunters away. Mile glances around, astonished.

MILES

Why?

EXT. JUNGLE JIM'S CAFÉ - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Sameera climbs into her battered car and turns the key; the engine splutters for several seconds before cutting out.

SAMEERA

Come on, come on. Not now, please!

After several tries, she slumps in defeat. Through the windshield, she watches Miles exit the building. She sighs, and gets out of the car to flag him down.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Hey any chance you can give me a jump?

MILES

Sorry?

SAMEERA

My car won't start, do you have a set of jumper cables I can borrow?

MILES

Uh, sorry, I don't have any. Do you...do you want a ride?

SAMEERA

Shit, yeah. Is that ok? I don't wanna deal with Triple A tonight, I'll figure it out tomorrow.

MILES

Oh I...I took the bus.

Sameera puts a hand to her brow.

SAMEERA

Then why-

MILES

-would I offer a ride? I don't know I just kind of panicked.

They both stand in uncomfortable silence.

SAMEERA

Alright well, thanks I guess. Don't want to keep you from your bus.

MILES

Oh the stop is-

Miles points next to him, to a pole with a bus symbol on it.

MILES (CONT'D)

-it's right, uh, here.

SAMEERA

Right.

Another awkward pause.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

I'm gonna call an Uber-

MILES

-yeah that sounds good.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - MILES'S BEDROOM - LATER

Miles closes out of the PairFree app and chucks his phone across the room. He flops into his desk chair. There's a knock at the door, before Div enters.

DIV

Home already? Figured you two would still be boinkin' somewhere.

She mimics an explosion with her fists.

MILES

Well I was right the first time, she's a total pill. I thought this was supposed to be the app-to-end all-dating-apps?

Div whistles.

DIV

That bad, huh? Hey, maybe you can get that cash-ola.

MILES

There's not, like, a refund or anything. The app's free, remember?

DIV

Sure, but there's a cash prize for people that truly have nothing in common. It's in all of their ads? The ones you were whining about?

MILES

How much?

DIV

Million bucks.

Miles scoffs, spinning himself in the desk chair.

DIV (CONT'D)
I'm serious! One million dollars.
That's their whole schtick.

Miles uses a foot to stop himself, facing Div.

MILES
C'mon. There's no way they'd
actually pay that out. I'm sure
they have fine print with all sorts
of nonsense in it. No company would
ever actually agree to that.

DIV
(raising her hands)
I don't work for them dude! I'm
just saying that's why so many
people signed up when it went live.
These guys were soooo cocky about
their formula that they were
willing to gamble on it, allegedly.

MILES
I don't buy it. Look, it's fine!
I'll just go back to trolling
Tinder like some freelance
Nosferatu.

He lays his head back and resumes swiveling, eyes on the ceiling. Div lingers, watching him with genuine sympathy.

INT. SAMEERA'S HOUSE - SAMEERA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Sameera sits propped up in bed with her hair in a towel, reading glasses perched on her nose. A TV placed on her armoire streams a generic legal drama. On her laptop, she edits a spreadsheet of monthly expenses. She adds a line: "Car Battery - \$160?" She pulls off her glasses and rubs her eyes. An advertisement interrupts the streaming program.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
One app, one million reasons why.
At PairFree, we'll provide your
perfect match, or one million
dollars guaranteed! With our
trademark algo-

Sameera stares transfixed at the TV, her right hand scouring the blankets for the remote. She hits pause. As she stares at the TV, it's clear an idea is rapidly taking shape.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - DOORWAY - MORNING

Miles opens the door to find Sameera, gripping a stack of papers. She's dressed in a sweatshirt and sweatpants, her hair a chaotic mess. She breezes past him into the apartment.

MILES

Hi- what are you-

SAMEERA

Got your address from the newlyweds. Strictly here on business.

MILES

Business?

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sameera slams the papers down on Miles's dining table, spreading them into several misshapen piles.

SAMEERA

The app has a guarantee. If you're not a match, it's a million dollars. You've seen the ads, right?

MILES

Jesus, you too? It's a bluff, there's always legal bullshit you waive when you sign up. It renders stuff like that pointless.

SAMEERA

(tapping the papers)

Except I read through the terms of agreement. All of it. It's actually that simple. This company is so confident in their fancy algorithm that they'll fork over one million dollars to any two people that can prove their code fully choked.

MILES

Prove? You can't-it's entirely subjective. What's to stop two people from just lying?

Sameera puts on her reading glasses and scans the table. She selects a sheet and points to a clause, holding up the page.

SAMEERA

Well yeah, that's potentially the catch, right?

(reading from page)

It says "final determination of user incompatibility is subject to in-person evaluation by a PairFree analyst." So they'd test to see if we really don't fit in person.

MILES

If we- no I'm not schlepping out to some L.A. strip mall just to get scammed out of money I already knew I wasn't gonna get.

SAMEERA

Think about it for a second. The wedding, the dinner. Even right now! Not a single impulse between us lines up. What if we stumbled into the glitch in their system?

MILES

Yeah, and what if we drop a shit ton of money to trek out there just for them to shove a million loopholes in our faces. It was a bad date, I've been on a lot of them. I'm not looking to reap some reward from it.

SAMEERA

This is maybe the easiest money you'll ever make. And you're just gonna let it go?

MILES

(clapping for emphasis)

This money isn't real!

SAMEERA

Unbelievable. You know why we didn't fit? I've got more balls than you.

MILES

See, this-

Miles gestures between the two of them.

MILES (CONT'D)

Wouldn't be fun in-flight banter.

He walks to the door and heaves it open, waving a hand.

MILES (CONT'D)

Thanks for stopping by.

Sameera holds her ground, arms folded. After a moment, she scoops up the sprawl of papers and walks out.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Miles closes the door, she places her foot in the gap.

SAMEERA

Wait, just- why'd you download it to begin with? There are so many dating apps and they're basically all the same. Why this one?

Miles looks around, debating if he wants to give any more information to this near-complete stranger.

MILES

Who cares? It was late, I was drunk. I don't know, I was just...

Miles sighs. He can feel the next part bubbling up, if only to have someone other than himself to hear it.

MILES (CONT'D)

-tired, ok? Of talking about the same TV shows. And where'd you go to school? And any siblings? And then after a week...nothing, silence. For once I wanted things to feel like they had a chance of going somewhere. I wanted them to have, I don't know...

Miles trails off, searching for the word.

SAMEERA

Momentum?

MILES

(nodding)

Sure. Like, actual stakes attached. Because the last time they did - or I thought they did - I was wildly off. And I feel like I wasted a lot of time figuring that out.

Miles falls silent. Sameera lowers her stack of papers, the weight of his unexpected sincerity throwing her off. She stares off for a moment, tapping her foot while she thinks.

SAMEERA

What if they can fix it? The glitch? What if they could re-match our accounts or profiles, whatever?

MILES

I mean if we were a fluke, that kind of makes their whole model unreliable, right?

SAMEERA

Maybe, sure. Maybe not. Every other couple we know seems disgustingly happy, right? You and I are the only example I know of a match that went wrong. If we go - and can prove it - who's to say they can't give us our real, actual matches?

For the first time, Miles seems to be actually considering her proposal. Sameera looks to close the deal.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

I don't know about you, but it would drive me crazy not knowing - for certain - if there was a perfect person out there for me, just waiting...

She spins on her heel and starts to walk down the hall.

Miles mulls this over, his eyes scanning her words as if they still hung in the air. He raises his head.

MILES

Sameera! Wait.

INT. AIRPORT - DEPARTURE GATE - MORNING

Miles and Sameera drop their bags on a pair of vacant seats and survey the airport terminal.

SAMEERA

There's gotta be a Starbucks or something here, right?

MILES

Come on, isn't that a little basic?

SAMEERA

Are you seriously gate-keeping
airport coffee?

MILES

Craving Starbucks is like... having
a hankering for gas station sushi.

SAMEERA

Can you just let people enjoy
things? Jesus-

MILES

Well, I need something to eat.
Figure one of us should should stay
with the stuff, then we swap. Deal?

He's eyeing a restaurant somewhere out of view. Sameera,
likewise disengaged, answers without making eye contact.

SAMEERA

Found the Starbucks. And yeah,
sure, sounds good.

MILES

Great.

The pair walk off in opposite directions, their luggage left
unattended on the seats.

EXT. AIRPORT - DEPARTURES SIDEWALK - MORNING

Miles and Sameera are roughly escorted through the exit doors
by a TSA agent. A second agent in a bomb squad suit follows,
dumping their bags on the sidewalk before returning inside.

MILES

Well flying's off the table
indefinitely. So thanks for that.

SAMEERA

Are you for real? Why couldn't you
just stay with the bags?

MILES

Me? I literally said one of us
should- you know what, I can't.

Miles shields his eyes from the sun and glances around.

MILES (CONT'D)

Where's your car?

SAMEERA
Still in the shop. Here-

Without finishing her thought, she grabs her bags and sets off. Miles snatches his own luggage and scurries after her.

INT. AUTOLAND CAR RENTAL - RESERVATIONS DESK

An AUTOLAND EMPLOYEE (30) types away at their computer while Miles and Sameera wait on the other side of the counter.

AUTOLAND EMPLOYEE
And, who will be the driver?

The employee glances at Miles and Sameera, dangling the keys between them.

SAMEERA
I'll dri-

MILES
-me.

Miles snags the keys from their hand. Sameera rolls her eyes.

AUTOLAND EMPLOYEE
I'll just need a driver's license.

Miles pulls out his wallet and slides his license over the counter, smirking at Sameera. The employee frowns.

AUTOLAND EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
Are you both under twenty-five?
That'll add to the insurance, it's
pricey.

MILES
Shit.

Miles snags his license from the employee's hand and skulks away from the counter. Sameera raises her eyebrows, scoffs.

SAMEERA
For real? How old are you?

MILES
I'm twenty-four, ok!

SAMEERA
When we were booking flights you
said you saw Weezer, live?

MILES

Yeah in like 2018! I only went to
hear Island in the Sun, I left
early.

Sameera pulls at her cheeks with both hands, mortified.

SAMEERA

(to herself)

I went on a date with a toddler.

(to the Autoland Employee)

Just one driver, no extra
insurance.

She hands the employee her license.

AUTOLAND EMPLOYEE

Now there's a convention in town so
I'm just looking for any vehicles
that might have been turned in this
morning. I'm not seeing anything
available until tomorrow-

SAMEERA

We really--

The Autoland Employee taps a key, then leans into the screen.

AUTOLAND EMPLOYEE

Oh, actually, says we have one car.
Hasn't left the lot in some time.
It's a stick shift, is that ok?

MILES

No-

SAMEERA

-yeah, that's fine.

Miles cocks his head at her, radiating skepticism.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

(mocking)

You don't know how to drive stick?

MILES

I'm from New York, I only have a
license in case of another 9/11.

SAMEERA

You'd need a pilot's license.

MILES

That's messed up, actually. That's
like racist against New York-

The Autoland Employee intervenes.

AUTOLAND EMPLOYEE

Do you guys want this car or nah?
Shrooms just kicked in and I'm the
only one stopping this keyboard
from melting.

They raise the keyboard for emphasis, glancing between them.

INT. CAR - STATIONARY - MORNING

An iPhone propped in the center console plays a Youtube video titled "Stick Shift in Two Easy Steps". Everything on screen shouts 1970s, from the square, grainy footage to the YOUTUBE HOST (26) in an ascot, jean jacket and flared trousers.

YOUTUBE HOST (V.O.)

Now, press down on the clutch-

Miles chafes with impatience as Sameera leans toward the video, giving it her undivided attention.

MILES

So when you said you knew stick-

Sameera fires back without looking away from the video.

SAMEERA

I do. My dad taught me, it's
just....been awhile, and I needed
to confirm what I remembered.

MILES

And?

She turns to smirk at him, placing a hand on the gear shift.

SAMEERA

Like riding a bike.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

A tranquil, residential street. The distant sound of scraping metal crescendoes until Miles and Sameera's car screeches by.

INT. RENTAL CAR - MOVING - AFTERNOON

Miles and Sameera sit in silence while Sameera drives along the highway. Miles flicks the directional switch for his air vent non-stop, back-and-forth, until Sameera finally snaps.

SAMEERA

Having fun?

MILES

Yeah actually this is amazing you should try it.

SAMEERA

I think you're just pouting.
Because you're getting dwiven
around like a wittle baby.

Sameera turns to pout at him. Miles makes a face back at her.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Why would you lie about your age
anyway?

MILES

First off, never lied. And I didn't
want you to think I was dumb.

SAMEERA

I don't think you're dumb just
because you're younger than me.

MILES

You literally called me a toddler!

SAMEERA

Yeah because you're young as shit.
Hell, I could've been your
babysitter.

MILES

No chance, my babysitters were
chill.

Sameera cocks her head, raising an eyebrow.

SAMEERA

A grown ass man, bragging about his
babysitters...

EXT. GAS STATION - GAS PUMPS - AFTERNOON

Miles slams the car door behind him. He stretches and cracks his neck. He examines the fuel pump, marked with a sticker that reads "pay inside." Sameera exits the car, stretches.

MILES

Says pay inside. You get this one,
I'll get the next?

SAMEERA

Fine, I'll be right back.

She heads toward the gas station store.

MILES

(shouting after her)
I'd give that video another watch
while you're at it!

Sameera flips him the bird.

INT. GAS STATION STORE - SNACK AISLES - CONTINUOUS

Sameera enters the gas station store, staffed by a pimply 15-year-old clerk. THREE TWEENAGERS (13-15) whisper beside the beer fridges; they freeze and fall silent as Sameera passes. She ignores them, and approaches an ATM against the wall.

EXT. GAS STATION - GAS PUMPS - CONTINUOUS

Miles's phone rings with a call from Div; he answers, leaning up against the passenger door.

MILES

What's up?

DIV

Not much, how's it going with your
nightmare chick?

MILES

Dude, she's impossible.

INT. GAS STATION STORE - ATM - CONTINUOUS

Sameera punches in her PIN at the ATM. The screen lists off withdrawal options; she hits the option for \$50. The ATM beeps twice and displays an error.

ATM (TEXT)
INSUFFICIENT FUNDS

SAMEERA
Goddamn it.

Sameera looks over at the pre-teens. They whisper amongst themselves, eyeing her nervously. Making eye contact, they straighten up, cough, and shove the closest group member, TWEENAGER #1, toward Sameera.

The Tweenager stares daggers at his posse before facing Sameera. He produces a switchblade comb, pushes his hair back, and licks his lips as he strides up to her.

TWEENAGER #1
'Sup chica. If you can believe it,
my boys and I left our driver's
licenses and our passports at the
construction site this evening.
Late shifts at the factory, as you
can imagine.

SAMEERA
Is it a construction site or a
factory?

The teenager falters.

TWEENAGER #1
Uh-

TWEENAGER #2 coughs into his arm, aiming for a save.

TWEENAGER #2
(between fake coughs)
Ask....about....the beer.

Tweenager #1 holds out a hand to shush him.

TEENAGER #1
Sorry, he has cancer. From the war.

SAMEERA
(rolling her eyes)
Jesus Christ-

TEENAGER #1
Anywayyyyyyyyyssssss...since we left
our *eedenteeefeecassione* back at
work, was hoping you could maybe do
us a solid with the old man.

The boy nods toward the register, where the open-mouthed, unthreatening cashier sits watching a video on his phone titled "How to Shake Hands: Tips and Tricks."

Sameera looks to the ATM, then back at the tweenagers.

SAMEERA

How much cash you got?

Tweenager #1 drops the facade and gestures frantically to the other middle schoolers.

TEENAGER #1

(whispering)

Cash, she wants cash.

The other tweens dig through their pockets, pulling out crumpled bills and passing them between each other.

EXT. GAS STATION - GAS PUMPS - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Sameera waves a receipt as she walks to the car. Miles hastens to end the phone call.

MILES

(into the phone)

I'll call you later. Uh-huh. Bye.

(to Sameera) What took you
so long?

Sameera pulls out the gas pump nozzle.

SAMEERA

They were all out of Nunya.

MILES

What's Nunya?

Sameera sticks the nozzle in the car.

SAMEERA

Nunya business.

She cackles to herself. Miles rolls his eyes.

MILES

Oh my god, grow up.

He climbs back into the passenger seat.

EXT. GAS STATION - GAS STATION STORE - MINUTES LATER

The car peels back out onto the highway. The tweenagers sit on the curb outside the station. They all seem very drunk.

TWEENAGER #1
I'm drunk as balls bro!

TWEENAGER #3
I'm hella drunk dude!

TWEENAGER #2
Guys...I'm gay. I don't think I could have told you that before.

TWEENAGER #1
Awww we love you dude.

TWEENAGER #3
Yeah we love you bro!

They share an emotional group hug. At their feet, the empty six pack label is visible: McGhann's Non-Alcoholic Beer.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BEDROOM - EVENING

Miles plops down on one of two double beds. Sameera lounges upright, her back against the pillow, scrolling on her phone.

MILES
Explain to me again why we can't get a second room?

SAMEERA
Because the terms said any overnight travel requires shared accommodations. Here-

She chucks her phone over to Miles, who squints at the text pulled up on the screen. He scrolls, mumbling as he reads.

MILES
(reading from phone)
Same point of origin...approved hotel partners...no stick shifts.

Sameera jolts upright.

SAMEERA
What?

MILES
(laughing)
Relax, I'm messing with you.

He chucks the phone back to her.

SAMEERA
You're hilarious.

MILES
What do you wanna do about food?

SAMEERA
I'm not that hungry, snacked a
bunch in the car. I saw a vending
machine in the hall, if I need
something later.

She pulls the decorative pillows off the bed and lays a pair
of pajamas on the sheets.

MILES
It's like seven o'clock? You're
just gonna go to bed?

SAMEERA
Yeah why not? we need to be up
early anyway.

She goes to hit the lights.

MILES
Well hold on, I was actually gonna
do some work.

He bends over and pulls a laptop from his backpack. Sameera
folds her arms.

SAMEERA
Can't you do that in the reception
area, or something?

MILES
I'm pretty sure we caught the check-
in guy jerking it. Think I'll stay
up here.

SAMEERA
Fine, whatever.

Sameera rummages through her backpack for her wallet.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
What do you do for work anyway?

MILES

Web Design.

Her face betrays a mix of doubt and amusement.

MILES (CONT'D)

What?

SAMEERA

Nothing! I just wouldn't have taken you for a creative type.

MILES

Meh, websites are more math than you'd think, don't always need someone creative. Just need to know where to plug-in the numbers until things feel right. What about you?

SAMEERA

Going back to school. Public Policy.

MILES

Cool.

Awkward silence ensues. Sameera gestures to the door.

SAMEERA

Well, I guess I'll check out that vending machine. You want anything?

MILES

Nah, I'm good, thanks.

Sameera swings open the door and heads out. The door swings back but doesn't shut; it remains just slightly ajar.

EXT. MOTEL - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - VENDING MACHINE - NIGHT

Sameera scans the vending machine; she bites her lip while examining the snacks and eyeing her remaining stack of bills.

INT. MOTEL - BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

The door pushes ever so slightly forward, the "entrant" unseen. Miles doesn't look up from his computer.

EXT. MOTEL - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - VENDING MACHINE - NIGHT

Sameera groans as the vending machine spits out her dollar. She tries again.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Miles hits send on an email with a flourished keystroke, then rests his head back against the wall. His eyes narrow. He leans over the bed, squinting at something. He screams.

EXT. MOTEL - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - VENDING MACHINE - CONTINUOUS

Sameera hears the scream. She freezes, attempting to clock where it came from. Her eyes widen as she sprints back.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER

Sameera, flustered, enters the room and finds it empty.

SAMEERA

Miles?

MILES (O.C.)

In here!

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sameera appears in the doorway. Behind Miles, a baby porcupine quakes with fear in the bathtub.

SAMEERA

I heard you scream.

MILES

Well yeah this little guy scared the shit out me. I looked over and he was six inches from my bed.

Sameera enters the room to get a closer look.

MILES (CONT'D)

How 'bout maybe closing the door, next time?

SAMEERA

I did, but nice of you to assume this is somehow my fault-

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The front door, left ajar once more, opens again. This time, muuuuuuuuch wider.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

MILES

What do we do, call the front desk?

SAMEERA

I don't know, I guess? Looks like a baby, wonder where it came from-

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sameera exits the bathroom and locks eyes with an unseen monster in the bedroom. The beast lets out a piercing roar.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sameera backpedals into the bathroom. She slams the door, and rushes to flick the lock.

MILES

What the hell was that?

The door quakes as something massive thuds against it.

SAMEERA

(breathing heavily)

A goddamn kaiju. I think it's the mom.

MILES

Sounds huge! It's probably the dad!

SAMEERA

By all means, go check its taint!

Another colossal thud against the door, another roar, then silence. After a moment, Sameera pipes up.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Do you think its gone?

Miles crawls along the floor, places an ear up against the door. He nods, releasing a deep breath of relief.

MILES

I don't hear anything, I think-

A foot-long, inch-thick quill pierces the door inches from Miles's nose. Then another, above his head. He scuttles backwards on his hands until he's pressed against the tub with Sameera. Three more quills pierce the door.

SAMEERA

Alright we need a plan, there's gotta be some other way out of here.

MILES

There's no windows, there's not even like a vent or something.

SAMEERA

Ok, well, can we distract it? What if we call the room phone, or something?

MILES

Do you know the number?

SAMEERA

I don't know! I'm trying to help!

MILES

What if we just open the door and shove him out-

Miles looks to the baby porcupine in the bathtub. The animal lowers its head and growls at him in reply.

SAMEERA

I'm not opening that door. Absolutely not.

MILES

See, you're not helping me solve this. And actually, if you hadn't gone for food and left the door open, we wouldn't even be in this situation!

SAMEERA

Wait- that's it.

She pulls out her phone, swiping through several apps before finding what she was looking for. She types in several commands, then rests the phone on the sink counter.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
And now...we wait.

MILES
For what?

EXT. MOTEL - OUTSIDE HALLWAY - HALF HOUR LATER

A DELIVERY LADY swaggers up the hallway, headphones blasting a pop song, swinging a brown bag. She adds little kicks and spins, lost in her tunes. She stops outside a door and inspects the number. She looks down the hall, and approaches a door further down. This one's cracked open.

DELIVERY LADY
Ok guys, ordering a single soy
sauce is kinda crackhead behavior,
so this tip better be-

She places a palm on the door, opening it wide into the room. The unseen Monster Porcupine roars. The delivery woman shrieks and drops everything, sprinting away in terror.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #1 - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Miles and Sameera listen to the retreating roar of the porcupine. They nudge the bathroom door open. The carpet is littered with giant quills.

They both yelp in surprise as the baby porcupine, having escaped the bathtub, runs between their feet and through the door in pursuit of its mother, grunting with joy.

MILES
Holy shit-

SAMEERA
Yeah-

They both dissolve into hysterical fits of laughter.

MILES
(laughing)
That was-

SAMEERA
(laughing)
-insane, yeah. That was nuts. Are
you ok?

MILES

Me? Oh yeah I'm fine. That delivery idea was...that was genius.

Sameera mimes a hat tip of appreciation.

MILES (CONT'D)

Also sorry are you ok? You good?

SAMEERA

Yeah just...wow. I'm honestly just shocked I didn't get stung or bit, or, whatever.

She looks around herself, checking for any quills.

MILES

Oh same, like, holy shit. You know, I think- I think our luck is finally starting to change.

He puts up a hand for a high five. Sameera smiles and high-fives him. He turns to walk toward his bed and we see dozens of thin, baby quills protruding from his upper back. Sameera grimaces, tip toes after him between the quills on the floor.

SAMEERA

Hey I wouldn't lie down for a sec-

INT. CAR - STATIONARY - THE NEXT MORNING

Sameera and Miles close their respective doors and share an exhausted sigh. Miles scratches his head, and rubs his eyes. Sameera checks the time on her phone, then starts the car.

Neither seems to notice TERRY (40), the perky, beaming, well-dressed Australian man in the back seat.

TERRY

Good morning!

Miles and Sameera cry out in surprise. Miles yanks at the door handle and leaps from the car. Sameera tears through her bag, produces a spray can and douses Terry with a continuous burst. Terry squeezes his eyes shut and lets loose a guttural howl. He falls quiet, cocking his head and smacking his lips.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Is that...deoderant?

Sameera, breathing heavily, turns the can over in her hands. It is, in fact, spray deodorant.

SAMEERA

Shit!

She rummages through her purse again. Terry raises his hands.

TERRY

Well hold on there, just a moment!
I'm here on behalf of our mutual
corporate friend. PairFree
Initiatives, yeah?

Miles, looking fragile, stands in front of the car several feet away. He shouts to Sameera, who's focused on Terry.

MILES

(to Sameera)

What does he want?

SAMEERA

(to Terry)

What, like, you're the
compatibility tester? I thought we
do that in L.A.?

TERRY

Yes, you will have to submit for a
compatibility test in Los Angeles.
And I'm here to accompany you on
your journey and just put another
pair of peepers on you two, get a
human feel for things in real time.
Can't always rely on the playback
shown at HQ.

SAMEERA

What playback-

Miles shouts his inquiry again, stepping closer to the car.

MILES

Sameera! What does he want?

SAMEERA

(to Miles)

He says the app sent him.

(to Terry)

How did you find us?

TERRY

Well I was actually meant to escort
you aboard the plane in
Philadelphia.

(MORE)

TERRY (CONT'D)

Once we received word of your
little TSA snafu, it took some time
to identify your new itinerary.
But, voila!

Miles, climbs back into the passenger seat to join the
conversation, having caught the last bit of Terry's debrief.

MILES

And how'd you figure that out,
exactly?

TERRY

Oh well the PairFree algorithm-

SAMEERA

-has our blood type, horoscope,
birth certificates, blah blah blah.

TERRY

Well I certainly hope not! That
would be quite invasive, I think.

He chuckles.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Our location services track your
mobiles, so we just-
(pretending to type)
-boop boop boop, followed the
bouncing balls. Cross-referenced
with toll booth security cams and a
debit card swipe off mile marker
thirty-five, of course.

He ends with a dumb smile, indifferent to the alarming
dystopian surveillance network he's just outlined.

MILES

So you're supposed to be, what, our
chaperone?

TERRY

Think of me as an impartial
observer to your budding animosity!
I may ask questions, take some
notes, just to shore up your final
review.

SAMEERA

And if we refuse to let a total
stranger hitchhike with us?

TERRY
You won't be eligible for the cash
guarantee I'm afraid.

Terry flashes an apologetic smile. Miles shakes his head.

MILES
This is insane.

TERRY
I know these are unusual
circumstances. But hey, you won't
even know I'm here!

INT. CAR - DRIVING - MORNING - 20 MINUTES LATER

Terry sleeps in the backseat, his snores loud enough to derail a train. His bare feet rest on the center console between Sameera and Miles. His left foot rolls toward Sameera's elbow, which she jabs away.

MILES
I thought you read all of the fine
print, you're telling me it never
mentioned some sort of escort?

SAMEERA
I don't know, maybe? I was more
looking for "gotcha"-type stuff
about eligibility. Age, date, etc.
Look, I could have missed it.

MILES
Well, not to be shitty, but how do
we know we're following all the
rules if you didn't clock this one?

SAMEERA
Excuse me, you didn't bother to
read any of it!

MILES
Because you swore you'd done your
homework!

SAMEERA
Well, I'm sorry!

Sameera sighs, bringing her tone down a notch.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
It was late and I was poring
through like a hundred pages of
legal jargon. I'm sorry, I...
should have caught it.

Miles softens too.

MILES
No, you're right, I could have
caught it too, even at the motel.

He flashes a half-smile at Sameera.

MILES (CONT'D)
I guess what's one more weird ass
part of this trip, right?

SAMEERA
(laughing)
Right, exactly.

Miles looks to Terry in the backseat.

MILES
There's no way he snores like that.

SAMEERA
Of course not, he's faking so he
can eavesdrop. Perv.

Terry, mid-snore, opens a single eye and surveys both of
them, before resuming his fake sleep. Sameera thinks for a
moment. She jabs Terry's foot to rouse him.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
Hey, Terry, question for you.

Terry makes a grand show of pretending to wake up; he
stretches his arms wide, rubs his eyes.

TERRY
(yawning)
Sorry guys, didn't even know I'd
conked out back here-

SAMEERA
Sure, yeah. Question: what if
someone matches on the app and the
other person hasn't downloaded it?

MILES

Wait, yeah. There's gotta be a ton of people who haven't signed up yet, how's that even fair?

TERRY

Excellent question! You see, we've found that our marketing strategies have resulted in very effective enrollment for potential users who've matched with current ones.

MILES

But how do you match someone who hasn't even made a profile yet?

TERRY

Well through data shared with our generous brand partners-

SAMEERA

Oh, Jesus-

TERRY

-we're able to draft profiles for future users, who we then incentivize to download the app through an...enthusiastic campaign of targeted advertisements.

MILES

Define enthusiastic?

TERRY

Well PairFree pays a competitive fee for visibility. Billboards, websites, those cheeky little banners on the backs of planes! I actually pitched partnering with funeral homes to advertise on the insides of the coffins.

SAMEERA

How does that make any sense-

MILES

-who would that even be for?

TERRY

It's a completely untapped market. If I wasn't actually dead, woke up, and that's the first thing I saw, I'd be curious about that product, one hundred percent.

(MORE)

TERRY (CONT'D)

After, of course, I'd managed to escape and determined whether I was a zombie.

Terry, oblivious to the insanity he's just spewed, beams at Miles and Sameera, glancing back and forth at them.

TERRY (CONT'D)

The point is we become pretty hard to ignore once we've built a profile for one user's other half.

MILES

What if you live somewhere totally different? Couldn't an Australian match with someone in like, Mexico?

TERRY

It happens, but due to lifestyles; two workaholics maybe, who operate internationally. Like, spies, or drug lords. Or Zuckerberg and one of his clones!

Miles and Sameera share an alarmed glance.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Soulmates are far more common in the same area code than across an ocean.

(points at both of them)

Yourselves, being a prime example!

SAMEERA

We weren't a match, that's the whole point of this cursed trip.

TERRY

Right, yes! Of course.

He winks, mouth open. Sameera's eyes narrow.

SAMEERA

Stop winking. This is not- we're not into each other.

TERRY

No, sure, absolutely.

He looks over at Miles, repeats the open-mouthed wink.

MILES

Why are you- don't wink at me, dude. We're not a thing.

Terry puts his hands up in mock submission.

TERRY

I hear ya, won't stop ya.

He settles back into his middle seat, turns and winks out the window, as if breaking the fourth wall to nobody.

SAMEERA

Stop winking-

MILES

-stop winking, dude!

EXT. BUSHWHACKER BUNK 'N' BREAKFAST - SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Miles, Sameera, and Terry approach a doorway flanked by a security camera and buzzer. Sameera thumbs the button, and the muted sound of a doorbell echoes inside.

A gravelly, Slavic voice speaks from the buzzer setup.

SERGEJ (INTERCOM)

Reservation.

SAMEERA

No, sorry we're walk-ins. The app-
uh, PairFree, said you guys have a
special with them, or something?

A loud buzz sounds, indicating the door is open.

INT. BUSHWHACKER BUNK 'N' BREAKFAST - LOBBY

Miles, Sameera, and Terry weave through a "Saw"-esque reception area of dilapidated tables and flickering lights.

A man watching old-timey cartoons on a box TV cranes his neck to watch them approach the reception desk. Behind the desk sits SERGEJ (mid-60s), a grisly Slavic pirate of a man. He smokes a cigarette in the shadows, his eyes glinting.

MILES

Hi, uh-

Miles looks down at the desk where a name plate reads "Sergej." It's partly colored by a dried blood stain.

MILES (CONT'D)

-Sergej.

Sergej's left eye twitches. He remains silent.

MILES (CONT'D)

We don't have a room booked, but-

SERGEJ

We have room.

MILES

Oh, uh, great! We'll take it! Do
you need-

(voice faltering)

-is, uh, that my credit card?

Sergej swipes a credit card through a card reader. He places it back in a wallet, and hands the wallet back to Miles, never once looking up from his computer. Miles twists around himself, searching for whatever accomplice pickpocketed him.

MILES (CONT'D)

How did you-

Sergej reaches under the desk and produces two sets of linens and pillows. He thrusts one set into Miles's chest, and does the same to Sameera. Sameera brushes off several ashes that have fallen from Sergej's cigarette during the handoff.

SAMEERA

(to Miles)

Uhhh we should probably ask about a
room for Terry, right? Where did he-

She searches for Terry, who's disappeared. She spots him seated at a table with an ancient looking bearded man, who performs a knife dance between his fingers on the table. The man makes intense eye contact with Terry, a captive audience.

The man finishes his parlor trick. Terry, locked in, pulls out his own knife, and begins the same trick much faster.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

(to Miles)

Has he always had that knife?

Sergej lumbers out from behind the desk and walks to an open door several feet away. He gestures inside with a stiff arm.

Miles and Sameera follow him and peer inside to see a long atrium filled with endless bunk beds. He points to two bunks.

SERGEJ

Her, Two Four One. You, Two Four
Two.

SAMEERA

No, no no no. We can't sleep here.
We need two private rooms. The app
said bed and breakfast.

SERGEJ

Not bed and breakfast. Bunk and
breakfast. This is hostel.

Sergej exits, leaving Miles and Sameera to survey their
startling accommodations. Miles turns to Sameera.

MILES

We can't stay here.

SAMEERA

I know, shit...all the app's other
partners were sold out. It's like
another three hour drive to
anything eligible.

MILES

I hear you, sure, but seriously- we
can't stay here. I just got mugged.

SAMEERA

You were not mugged!

Miles gapes at her with utter disbelief. Her resolve falters.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

He just...got ahead of you paying?
Which we were gonna do anyway?

MILES

Uh-huh. Sure. I'm getting a refund.

Miles turns to walk toward the reception desk, where he spots
Sergej playing Russian Roulette against himself.

Sergej spins the barrel, points it to his head and pulls the
trigger. It clicks, empty. He purses his lips and nods in
approval, before making a tally mark on the desk. He adds a
bullet, spins the chamber, and repeats the process.

Terry walks in and peers over their shoulders.

TERRY

Something wrong, guys?

MILES

Yeah, we're gonna die here.

TERRY

Oh relax mate. Stayed at loads of hostels back in my scungy days, nothing but good memories.

SAMEERA

Places like this?

TERRY

No, no! In Europe, Asia. They're practically hotels at this point. I honestly thought American hostels were just debtors' prisons.

(laughing)

You do have a lot of prisons here.

MILES

Yeah well, laugh it up. You're sleeping here too.

Terry sucks between his teeth, offers an apologetic smile.

TERRY

Actually, I have alternative accommodations. Just won an apartment down the road from Cyrus.

SAMEERA

Who the hell is Cyrus?

TERRY

(pointing)

That lovely gentleman over there!

Terry gestures toward the man with whom he'd been gambling. He lies limp on the table, a knife protruding from his hand.

TERRY (CONT'D)

See you two bright and early!

Terry strides away, humming to himself.

SAMEERA

Ok, let's just think, right? What if we sleep in the car?

MILES

How is that better?

SAMEERA

Well for starters we wouldn't be sleeping next to forty other people. And at least we could lock the doors.

MILES

I feel like people here know how to pick a lock. That- look that guy is literally practicing right now-

He points to a man with lock-picking tools splayed out at the same table as the comatose Cyrus, training on a combo lock.

SAMEERA

Ok, fine. I'll take the car, you take the bunk.

MILES

Whatever. Not like I'm gonna be able to sleep, anyway.

Cyrus slides off the table and collapses on the floor.

INT. BUSHWHACKER'S BUNK 'N' BREAKFAST - BUNKROOM - LATER

Miles, asleep, is stirred by someone's hands rummaging beneath his pillow. His eyes bolt open.

MILES

Yo, what the hell-

It's Sergej, who ducks his head beneath the upper bunk to stare daggers at Miles.

SERGEJ

Did you steal? Did you steal gun?

MILES

What- what are you talking about?

SERGEJ

My gun is missing! Did you take?

MILES

No, dude, absolutely not!

Sergej softens. He smiles politely, becoming almost parental.

SERGEJ

Oh. Žao mi je, I'm sorry. Have good sleep, good sleep my friend.

He leans forward and kisses Miles on the forehead.

INT. CAR - STATIONARY - NIGHT

Miles throws open the passenger side car door and flops inside. Between his arms he carries his balled up sheets.

Sameera, cozied up in her own makeshift bed across the backseat, clutches at her chest in surprise.

SAMEERA

Holy f- I swore I locked it!

MILES

Uh-huh, sensing a pattern.

SAMEERA

What happened?

MILES

Sergej- reception guy - asked me if I'd seen his gun.

SAMEERA

Cool, cool cool. He, uh, doesn't know where it is?

MILES

MmmHmmm. That did it for me. Is it ok if I crash here too?

SAMEERA

Sure, yeah. You have enough room? Can put the seat back, if you need.

MILES

Cool, thanks.

Miles reclines the seat. He disentangles his blankets and pillow and crafts his own makeshift cocoon. He stares at the ceiling while Sameera pulls her phone from the driver seat pocket and scrolls for awhile. She snorts at something.

MILES (CONT'D)

What?

SAMEERA

No, it's nothing. Some total bitch I went to high school with was just bragging about her perfect wedding this weekend.

MILES

And what, she sucks for being happy?

Sameera lowers the phone to glare at him.

SAMEERA
This girl's been married three
times. Cheated every time.

MILES
Shit.

SAMEERA
Right?! This poor dude.

She steals a look at Miles from the corner of her eye.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
Do you ever think about stuff like
that? Like, long term.

MILES
What do you mean?

SAMEERA
Like, getting married? Eventually,
I mean.

MILES
Sure, yeah.

Sameera puts her phone down, now invested.

SAMEERA
Just generally? Or...someone
specific?

MILES
Both, I guess.

He falls silent. Sameera, curiosity fully piqued, gives him
the space to collect his thoughts. She can't contain it long.

SAMEERA
So you gonna elaborate or-

MILES
I remember there was this study
that said single people only see
people in relationships. Like, our
brains focus on all the people
around us who are already dating,
or engaged or married, whatever.

SAMEERA

I think I actually remember that.
It was in The Atlantic or
something, right?

MILES

Yeah, the New Yorker or whatever.

SAMEERA

Didn't it also say that
relationship people do the same
thing, just flipped? Like, they're
just as miserable because they
fixate on everyone who's single?

MILES

Sure, but do you believe that?

SAMEERA

No. They just wrote that to make us
feel better.

They both chuckle.

MILES

But yeah, I thought I saw myself
with someone - one of my best
friends, in college.

SAMEERA

And?

MILES

And...she's gay.

SAMEERA

Oof, that sucks dude. I mean
sometimes people don't know how to
come out even to people they're
close to-

MILES

So, she'd kind of been out for
awhile, actually....

SAMEERA

Oh Jesus, Miles. Really?

MILES

I was hoping she was bi, maybe?

SAMEERA

Dude! That's not-

MILES

-not how it works, I know, look it was bad, and it was shitty of me, ok? I obviously get that now. But....I built the whole thing up in my head for so long that I couldn't see anything else, couldn't imagine, like, any other outcome. I convinced myself that the only thing holding us back was me having the guts to just tell her.

Sameera shifts her weight, propping herself up on an elbow. She tries to catch his eye.

SAMEERA

You guys still talk?

Miles snorts.

MILES

We're roommates, actually.

SAMEERA

You have to let her go dude-

MILES

She asked me! We were graduating and I'd spent the last year begging her to forgive me and neither of us knew anyone else headed to Philly. And things are good now, I think.

Miles turns toward her, propping himself up on an elbow.

MILES (CONT'D)

She's my best friend. And I truly just want her to be happy. With, or in spite of me.

SAMEERA

That's very sweet.

Sameera turns onto her back and looks up at the roof.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

You ever jerk off to her?

MILES

Gross. What is wrong with you?

Miles falls back flat onto his seat again.

SAMEERA

Who am I gonna tell? I don't know this girl! You can be honest.

MILES

I am being honest. That's- you're being gross. No.

SAMEERA

Sure, whatever. Just giving you a chance to get things off your chest.

They sit in silence. Miles sighs.

MILES

Once. It was freshman year, and she popped into my head just as I was finish-

Sameera whips her pillow at his head, nailing him. Miles puts his hands up in defense, only after getting walloped.

SAMEERA

You're a pig.

MILES

(spluttering)

Wha - you insist- alright, goodnight.

A hush falls over the car. Sameera clears her throat.

SAMEERA

Can you, uh, throw my pillow back. I need it.

MILES

No.

After a moment, he sighs. He chuckes the pillow back to her.

INT. CAR - DRIVING - THE NEXT DAY

Sameera and Miles are already back on the road, seated in their usual spots. Terry, having evidently regrouped with them, sits in the back.

Sameera's phone chimes, prompting Miles to glance down at it.

MILES

Who's PB?

SAMEERA

Can you maybe not look through my phone, please?

MILES

You literally told me to nav, you want me to close my eyes every time you get a text?

Sameera sighs.

SAMEERA

It's my sister, Ally.

MILES

What's PB stand for?

SAMEERA

Pea-brain. It's what I called her, growing up.

MILES

She likes that?

SAMEERA

No, I was being a bitch, we fought all the time. Five years is a big age gap.

MILES

Younger or older?

SAMEERA

Younger. She was super immature and my parents just kind of let her do whatever she wanted, sometimes felt like I was her mom. And she hated that, obviously. At one point we stopped speaking altogether.

MILES

Shit, I'm sorry.

SAMEERA

(shrugging)

It's fine. We've talked more since she started college, on and off. Still a lot unsaid, though.

Sameera looks over at Miles, eager to shift the focus.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

You have any siblings?

MILES

Just me. My dad wanted another kid,
but my mom wasn't really able to.
She kept having-

He trails off, looking out the window. Sameera frowns.

SAMEERA

Oh god, I'm sorry. Did she go see a
specialist, or-

Miles jumps in to set the story straight for her.

MILES

-affairs. Sorry...she had like an
insane number of affairs. Like I
don't even know when she was going
into work.

SAMEERA

Oh.

They sit in silence for a moment.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Well, siblings are overrated.

MILES

So's being an only child.

More silence, both stare at the road. Terry breaks the quiet.

TERRY

Doctors said I ate my twin. In the
womb.

He smacks his lips together, staring into the infinite
distance. Miles and Sameera look back, alarmed.

Sameera's phone chimes again.

SAMEERA

Is it her again?

MILES

Am I allowed to look?

SAMEERA

Yes, yeah, just-

Miles looks at the phone.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
 Can you read it. Or like both
 texts, the one from before.

Miles squints at the text on the display.

MILES
 (reading from phone)
 'Sup cunt.
 (to Sameera)
 Strong start.
 (reading from phone)
 Throwing a party Saturday and Mom
 said you'd be in the neighborhood
 around then-

He lowers the phone to glare at her.

MILES (CONT'D)
 Did you tell your parents about
 this whole trip?

SAMEERA
 That I'd be driving cross-country
 with a potential serial killer in
 hopes of casually splitting a
 million dollars? Yeah, I shared my
 location with some folks.

Miles starts to protest, then realizes that's rational.

MILES
 Fair.

Sameera gestures with a hand for him to continue reading.

MILES (CONT'D)
 (reading from phone)
 Ten-thirty at Kappa Kappa, you best
 be there.
 (to Sameera)
 And then there's a shit ton of
 tongue and poop emojis...?

He shows her the phone screen.

SAMEERA
 (nodding)
 Yep, that's my sister.

MILES
 What, like it's gonna be-

He sticks his tongue out and makes a "rock-and-roll" gesture.

MILES (CONT'D)

-crazy?

SAMEERA

No, it means eat shit.

MILES

And this is you guys on good speaking terms?

SAMEERA

Doesn't matter, we're not gonna get to Boulder until like midnight.

MILES

So?

SAMEERA

So, we're gonna be exhausted, and that party will be basically over.

MILES

No chance! What parties do you remember ending before 2am when we were in school?

Sameera scoffs.

SAMEERA

I didn't dick around at Barnard, I was on stipend. I took twenty credits a semester to finish early.

MILES

So what you're saying is for four years you never went out, not once?

SAMEERA

Um, excuse me, yes I did. I went out and got very drunk for my twenty-first.

MILES

At a fraternity or a bar?

Sameera lowers her head and talks into her shirt.

SAMEERA

(mumbling)

Cheesecake Factory.

MILES

Nope, no, we have to go!

SAMEERA

You realize we have to be up at eight to get to L.A. on schedule?

MILES

We'll go for an hour, two tops.
I'll even take first shift driving.

Sameera tilts her head, narrows her eyes at him.

MILES (CONT'D)

Right, well, I'll buy your coffee.
And this is a great way to keep patching things up with Amy!

SAMEERA

Ally.

MILES

Whatever!

Sameera chews her lip, thinking on it.

SAMEERA

I'll think about it, ok? It's a maybe. If we get there early, maybe we stop en route to the motel.

MILES

I'll take it.
(to Terry)
You hear that Ter-Bear? We're going to a party.

Miles turns and offers up a fist bump to Terry. Terry, still staring off into the distance, speaks as if in a trance.

TERRY

They were gonna name him Terry. I was supposed to be Ross.

Miles, nodding, pulls back his fist back and faces forward.

MILES

Cool.

EXT. SORORITY HOUSE - SIDEWALK - EVENING

Throbbing bass pulses from a large Greek mansion with the letters "KK" above its doors. Windows flash from party lights inside. Sorority girls and frat guys loiter around outside.

Terry, Sameera, and Miles huddle up on the sidewalk.

SAMEERA

Now remember, an hour, ninety minutes max. Deal?

TERRY

My first American university party!
I've only seen these in the movies.
Dazed & Confused, Superbad.

MILES

Those are high school movies, dude.

TERRY

Ha ha, nice try. I'm supposed to believe Jonah Hill played a teenager?

FRAT BRO (O.C.)

Bring that pledge over here!

TERRY

(looking offscreen)

This is so exciting! I get to see this pledging I've heard so much about. Will you two be ok if I explore for a bit?

SAMEERA

Of course-

MILES

-we literally never asked you here.

Terry raises two ecstatic fists, and lopes away.

SAMEERA

Shit, you know what? We should have shared locations or something.

MILES

It'll be fine. Here, if it'll make you feel better, I can share mine.

He opens an app on his phone and drops his location to her.

MILES (CONT'D)

Now can we have some fun?

Sameera nods, and follows Miles as he walks toward the porch.

EXT. SORORITY HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - EVENING - CONTINUOUS

Miles and Sameera approach the front porch, dodging a stumbling girl on the way. Sameera reaches for the door, before a LEASHED MAN (20) lunges at them, barking.

MILES

What the shit?!

The Leashed Man snarls and crouches down on all fours in front of a towering, yoked FRAT BOUNCER (21), who holds the leash with one hand and a clipboard with the other.

FRAT BOUNCER

You guys on the list?

MILES

Yeah, we're friends with Ally.

The Frat Bouncer raises an eyebrow.

SAMEERA

I'm her sister?

The Frat Bouncer scans his list. Sameera eyes the leashed man as he sniffs the air, fully in his canine element.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Are you guys like their co-fraternity, or something?

FRAT BOUNCER

(nodding)

Sigma Tau Delta, baby.

He puffs out his chest to emphasize the letters "STD" embroidered on his chest.

MILES

And is this one of your pledges?

Miles nods to the Leashed Man. The Frat Bouncer is insulted.

FRAT BOUNCER

That's my chapter president. You kink-shaming bro?

MILES

What? No-

FRAT BOUNCER

You know what, gonna need to see some ID.

SAMEERA
Seriously?

The Leashed Man chimes in with a nasal, haughty diss.

LEASHED MAN
Maybe your AARP cards?

Miles bares his teeth and hisses at him like a feral cat.

SAMEERA
(to Miles)
What are you doing-

MILES
(pointing at the man)
He's being shitty-

ALLY (22) slides through the front door, gigantic drinking bong in hand. She's clad head-to-toe in neon fish nets, with matching eye-liner. She locks eyes with Sameera and shrieks.

ALLY
Clammy Sammy! What took ya so long?

She totters over in a pair of colossal high heels to give her sister a loose hug. Sameera forces a tepid smile.

SAMEERA
Hey sis. Good to see you.

ALLY
About time you reached up and
unscrewed that tight little asshole
of yours. Who's the butt candy?

She nods to Miles, who doesn't realize she meant him.

MILES
The butt ca- I'm Miles, I'm not-

Ally holds up a hand to stop him.

ALLY
Don't actually care.
(to Sameera)
Bitch, I can't believe you actually
came! Let's get you a drink!

She pulls her sister by the arm and drags her toward the door, which the Frat Bouncer hauls open. Miles follows.

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - MAIN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Miles and Sameera follow Ally down a dark, booming hallway. Sameera flinches as drunk partygoers careen into her.

Miles peers in an open door, and shouts over to Sameera.

MILES

Gonna take a leak, I'll meet you
guys in there!

He hops inside. Ally guides Sameera further into the party.

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - DANCE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Ally and Sameera enter a spacious room with a DJ booth and dozens of dancing students. Ally shouts over the music.

ALLY

I'll be right back, got a surprise
for you! I'll grab you when it's
ready, kay?! Here, take my drink-

Ally hands Sameera her drinking bong.

SAMEERA

Oh, okay-

Ally vanishes into the crowd. Sameera paces around the dance floor, arms crossed. She takes a sip of the drink, raises her eyebrows and nods in approval. She takes a longer pull.

The song changes, and the crowd erupts in approval. Sameera flinches, then relaxes when she recognizes the song from her jog. She smiles, sipping her drink as she grooves along.

Miles arrives at the entrance to the dance floor; he surveys the room, his eyes settling on Sameera. She's completely freed up from her usual self; she sways and bobs with a sincere joy. He's never seen this side of her.

Sameera looks up and sees Miles at the doorway, watching her and smiling. She laughs and bites her lip, now self-conscious. She nods for him to come join her.

Miles wades through the crowd to join her and begins to imitate her moves. They swirl around each other, getting a little closer moment by moment, the previous tension dissolving into something more tender...and kind of hot.

The song ends. Miles and Sameera's chests heave as they eye each other up. A new song garners cheers from the crowd, snapping them back. Sameera coughs as Miles glances around.

MILES

I'll, uh, get us some drinks? You want a beer?

SAMEERA

Uh sure, that'd be great. Keep an eye out for Terry!

(glancing around)

Where the hell is he, anyway?

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Terry stands in his underwear, his tie knotted around his head. He raises his arm, and in his hand is Sergej's missing pistol. He has a powdery white mustache and his eyes are bloodshot. He's surrounded by whooping fraternity brothers.

TERRY

Sic semper tyrannis!

He fires several times into the air before leaping onto a folding table. The fraternity brothers cheer in unison.

FRAT BRO CROWD

T-Rex! T-Rex! T-Rex! T-Rex!

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Miles yanks open a large fridge and grabs two beers. He closes the door, only to be ambushed by TRICIA and GRACE (mid-20s), a couple of textbook sorority mean girls.

TRICIA

Well, well, well, if it isn't Ally's Brother-In-Law.

GRACE

He could be my brother-in-law.

She traces a finger down his arm, and aggressively circles the outside of her mouth with her tongue, for several seconds too long. Miles cringes and shrugs her hand off his arm.

MILES

Actually Sameera and I aren't, together. Or dating, even.

GRACE

Awww, sweetie-

TRICIA

-yeah, that's for the best.

Miles opens a beer and takes a sip.

MILES
Why's that?

The girls glance at each other and laugh.

GRACE
Ally's sister's kind of the worst.

TRICIA
She's acts like she's Ally's
grandma or something.

GRACE
Like, she told their parents not to
buy Ally an iPhone even though she
like really wanted one. And totally
ratted her out for getting her
Chester Cheeto tattoo.

MILES
I mean yeah, Sameera can be a bit
of a hardass sometimes, so what?

He goes to take another sip.

TRICIA
Plus, she fucked Ally's boyfriend.

Miles splutters and chokes on his drink.

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - DANCE FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Sameera, dancing, is approached by two sorority girls who whisper something in her ear. Sameera mouths something in reply, then scours the crowd for Miles. One girl laughs and pulls her arm, guiding her away. Sameera searches one last time for Miles before following them.

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Miles recovers from his coughing fit.

MILES
What? When?

GRACE
Ally's junior year, it was so
messed up.

MILES

There's no way, that guy would have been, what, fifteen?

TRICIA

Who, Allen? No, he was-

The girls' phones chime. They both glance at the text.

GRACE

Oh shiiiiiiiiiiiit!

TRICIA

Now it's a party!

MILES

What's going on?

TRICIA

You'll see.

Tricia grabs Miles's hand and escorts him out of the room.

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - GAME ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Miles follows Tricia and Grace into a room packed with spectators. Sameera, Ally, and eight other partygoers surround a table with a plastic tub. Ally silences the crowd.

ALLY

Listen up! The game is Submarine!
For any newbies- the rules are simple. When it's your turn, pour as much - or as little - of your beer into the shot glass as you want. You sink the shot? You drink it all.

The crowd cheers.

ALLY (CONT'D)

Sisters! Fill her up!

The crowd surges forward to contribute their drinks. Everclear, Sriracha, contact lens fluid and Red Dye 40 can be seen pouring forth into the brown, soupy mixture.

Miles stands on his toes to try and see over the crowd.

MILES

(to himself)

Is that girl adding mercury?

A nerdy girl with dental headgear pours a broken glass thermometer into the mix, her eyes darting back and forth.

Just as quickly as they surged forward, the crowd steps back.

ALLY

We have a Kappa VIP tonight, my
sister, Sameera!

The crowd cheers and raises their glasses.

ALLY (CONT'D)

Sammy, please step forward.

She gestures toward the tub. Sameera looks around for a beer.

SAMEERA

Uh, I think I need a-

Miles hands his beer over the shoulder of several guests, coaxing them to pass it toward Sameera. He points to it.

MILES

Sameera!

Sameera looks back. She follows his finger toward the beer.

SAMEERA

Oh, thanks.

She trades her drinking bong for the can, and approaches the table. Holding out a stiff arm, she tilts the can sideways.

It's a big pour; half the shot glass fills by the time Sameera jolts the can upright. Several gasps issue forth.

HECKLER (O.C.)

This bitch is crazy!

Sameera starts to panic. She looks around for assurance.

SAMEERA

Is that bad?

She looks to Miles, who gestures at her with a very slight tilt of his wrist. He mouths the word "lighter."

A football player, clad in helmet and uniform, approaches the table. He reaches down and removes his jock strap with a single yank. He dips it in his solo cup, then uses four delicate fingers to squeeze a singular drop into the glass.

The crowd murmurs and offers golf claps in awed approval.

MILES
(to himself)
Well don't...do that. But it's
actually not a bad strategy.

The shot glass slowly fills as the game continues. One girl pokes a hole in a condom filled with beer. Another girl fills her mouth with beer, slides a knife between her lips, and lets a single drop fall off the blade's tip.

The volume in the shot glass continues to surge in increments until its full, but just barely afloat.

Sameera steps forward to take another turn. Miles weaves through the crowd to stand behind her.

MILES (CONT'D)
Just need one drop, that's it. Here-

Miles grabs the beer from her and tilts it sideways, intentionally spilling beer on the ground.

SAMEERA
Dude, watch it!

MILES
No, look-

Miles points to a drop collected on the bottom of the can. He holds the can aloft and flicks it, causing the drop to fall.

MILES (CONT'D)
See? That's all you gotta do.

Sameera nods, gaining confidence.

SAMEERA
Ok, yeah. I got you.

Sameera approaches the table. Raising the can, she takes a deep breath. She tilts the can to isolate a single drop.

Just before she can flick the can, Ally whispers something to Tricia. Tricia wades through the crowd toward Sameera. As she passes, she bumps her hip, causing several drops from the can to rain down into the tub. The shot sinks. The crowd erupts into frenetic hoots and cheers.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
What the hell!

She gestures toward Tricia, who has already vanished.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)
That's not my fault, she shoved me!

The crowd ignores her. Ally struts over with a vicious grin.

ALLY
Sorry sis, you heard the rules.

Miles pushes through the crowd to reach them.

MILES
Look, fine, she lost. At least let
someone help her finish it.

The nearest partygoers jeer at Miles's offer to intervene.

HECKLER (O.C.)
Someone kill that guy!

ALLY
(shaking her head)
Can't allow it. My sister's Kappa
by blood, and we Kappas-

She gestures with both hands to the crowd, who finish her sentence with a long and clumsy refrain.

CROWD (IN UNISON)
-ALWAYS! FINISH! DRINKING! WHAT!
WE'RE! DRINKING!

MILES
That's dumb. You hear how dumb that
is right?

Sameera folds her arms and mutters under her breath.

SAMEERA
It's fine, I'll do it, whatever.

MILES
What? No, that's suicide. Look-

Miles pulls Sameera aside, away from Ally.

MILES (CONT'D)
Your sister clearly isn't over
whatever beef you guys had, she's
doing this to humiliate you. I
don't know what happened between
you and Allen-

Sameera stiffens. She takes a step back from him, eyes wide.

SAMEERA

Whoa, that is so none of your business. Were you talking to Ally about me?

MILES

No! One of her little minions-

SAMEERA

You know what- doesn't matter. And you actually have no idea what you're talking about.

Sameera turns back to Ally.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

I'm ready, give it to me.

Ally snorts. She heaves the giant tub over to Sameera with both hands. Miles rolls his eyes.

MILES

You don't have to do this.

Sameera takes a breath, then begins to chug. A hush falls over the crowd. In what feels like no time at all, Sameera inverts the empty jug over her head in victory. The crowd erupts. Sameera staggers, turning to face Ally. She wears a dopey smile, her head lolling to and fro.

SAMEERA

Im-(hiccup)-pressed?

Ally sneers back at her.

ALLY

Shocked, actually. So much comes out of that mouth I'm surprised anything else made it in.

Sameera leans in, ready to really get into it.

SAMEERA

Oh, you know what, sis-

Ally leans her head in, just as eager to have it out.

ALLY

Wha-

Before she can finish, Sameera lets loose an absolute torrent of projectile vomit, drenching her sister in puke.

The crowd scatters in an attempt to dodge the splash zone, shouting and running in all directions. One frat bro, crying, crosses himself repeatedly. The Leashed Man, crouched beside the Frat Bouncer, looks at the vomit pooling by his shoes; he stands and unclasps his collar in a single fluid motion.

LEASHED MAN

I don't wanna play dog anymore.

FRAT BOUNCER

You do you, Garrett.

INT. SORORITY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Miles sits on a couch with Sameera stretched out beside him, her head on his lap. He bends over to pick up a solo cup, which he raises to her lips. She's still pretty drunk.

MILES

Here, drink some more water.

She takes several long, slow sips from the cup.

SAMEERA

Thanks.

She hands it back to him. They sit in silence for a moment.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Where'd my sister go?

MILES

She's right there.

Miles points with the solo cup toward the other side of the room. Ally, still covered in vomit, happily dances with several other girls, not a care in the world.

MILES (CONT'D)

Apparently getting puked on is trending on TikTok, she's basically God now. Everyone's calling her Squeam Queen.

SAMEERA

Squeam Queen...are we old?

MILES

Maybe you are. I'm a toddler, remember? Your words.

Sameera half hiccups, half-laughs.

SAMEERA

Alright, I officially dub thee, old-

She lazily raises her arm, swishing the air in mock ceremony.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

-just so I'm not the only senior citizen here.

MILES

Thank you, I accept. Hey...can I ask you something?

SAMEERA

No.

After a moment, she sighs.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

MILES

Did you, you know, actually sleep with Ally's boyfriend, or whoever he was? Her friends ambushed me earlier, I wasn't, like, snooping or anything.

SAMEERA

Oh god-

MILES

Forget it, forget I asked.

Sameera reaches over the couch. Miles fetches the water cup and guides it to her hand. She takes several gulps, then hands it back to him to place on the floor.

SAMEERA

Ally was hooking up with some guy she met at this department store, she was working one of the perfume counters after school. This guy - Allen - starts buying her jewelry and concert tickets, taking her to dinner and movies and all kinds of shit. She's a junior in high school, and this guy must've been thirty-nine, forty?

MILES

What did your parents think?

SAMEERA

My parents weren't the most...
attentive people. At least not back
then, when it mattered.

MILES

Yikes. So, what happened?

SAMEERA

Ally let slip to me that Allen was
married. So, I waited outside his
office one day. When he came out,
told him I'd rat him out to his
wife if he kept seeing my sister.
And Allen said that was fine, he
loved her and he was gonna leave
his wife anyway.

MILES

So what did you do?

SAMEERA

Plan B. I told him she was actually
16, and she was young for her grade
and that she'd lied to him because
she didn't want to get in trouble.
He cried bullshit of course, but it
scared him enough. She never heard
from him again.

MILES

So why does she think you slept
together?

SAMEERA

Because that's what I told her.
Otherwise she would never have let
him go. I needed something that
couldn't be undone for her.

MILES

Damn.

SAMEERA

Yeah, damn. Said it happened in her
bed, too.

Miles lets out a long huff, floored by the audacity.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

I know, I know, that part was too
far. We didn't speak for two years.

MILES

And you never told her the truth?

SAMEERA

Part of me thinks if she knew she'd hate me even more. For playing parent again.

MILES

For what it's worth, I think you did the right thing.

SAMEERA

I know I did the right thing.

She shifts her head to look at him from his lap.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

But...thank you.

Miles leans over to inspect the solo cup.

MILES

I'm gonna get us some more water.

She lifts her head to allow Miles to get up. As he departs she looks over to a DRUNK PARTY GIRL sitting across from her, who's been observing the entire conversation.

DRUNK PARTY GIRL

(slurring)

Your boyfriend takes really good care of you.

SAMEERA

He's not my boyfriend.

DRUNK PARTY GIRL

(slurring)

Could've fooled me.

(pointing)

That's my boyfriend.

She points to a guy and girl inhaling each other's faces on the opposite arm of the couch.

SAMEERA

I'm sorry.

DRUNK PARTY GIRL

(sipping her drink)

It's fine.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Keys jingle outside the door, before Miles stumbles in supporting Sameera on his shoulder. He turns on the lights, and groans at the sight of a single queen bed.

MILES

Shit, I know I said two beds. Here-

Miles helps Sameera over to the bed, untangling himself.

MILES (CONT'D)

Gonna use the bathroom and then
I'll run back to reception.

Miles enters the bathroom. He returns moments later to find Sameera splayed out like a starfish on the bed, snoring.

Miles sighs. He opens the closet, uses some extra linens stored inside to craft a bed on the floor. He wraps the queen bed's covers up and around Sameera, then hits the lights.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING - THE NEXT DAY

Sameera stirs. She opens her eyes and freezes. Her eyes dart around the room for Miles, before spotting him asleep on the floor. Her phone chimes: it's her sister. She hears her voice as she reads the message on the display.

ALLY (V.O.)

Sorry about last night, I was
messssssyyyyy hahaha. Forgive a
bitch? Also that guy was HOT! Hope
you smasheddddddd.

Miles groans from down on the floor. She looks over at him.

MILES

What time is it?

SAMEERA

(checking her phone)

Uh.....nine forty-six. Was I
kicking in my sleep?

MILES

(yawning)

No? At least, I don't think so?

SAMEERA

Why'd you sleep on the floor?

MILES

Well you kind of claimed the whole bed.

SAMEERA

Just push me over. We're adults.

MILES

Well I sleep naked.

SAMEERA

No, you don't.

MILES

I do!

SAMEERA

(scoffing)

You're full of shit!

MILES

How would you know?

SAMEERA

The first night you wore boxers!

MILES

Yeah and then I slipped them off under the covers.

SAMEERA

You're telling me your dick is out right now? Just free-balling it?

MILES

Yes!

SAMEERA

Prove it.

Miles is thrown, pulls the covers tighter around himself.

MILES

No!

SAMEERA

Guys literally love showing girls their dicks. What's the big deal?

MILES

I'm not showing you my penis.

SAMEERA

Why not? Is it super small? Or all twisted, like the Elephant Guy?

MILES

It's aggressively average.

SAMEERA

Then show me!

Miles abruptly whips open the sheet, revealing his boxers. Sameera shrieks and shields her eyes out of pure instinct.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Oh my God!! I cannot believe you just did that.

MILES

I had boxers on! And you were just demanding-

SAMEERA

I was clearly joking-

They both dissolve into laughter.

MILES

Can I get dressed now, please?

SAMEERA

Yes, God, please-

Miles grabs some clothes and heads to the bathroom. Sameera looks at the covers, plays with the sheets, lost in thought.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Thank you, by the way. For taking care of me last night.

MILES (O.C.)

Wasn't a big deal. Don't worry about it.

SAMEERA

Did you hit it off with anyone last night?

Miles pokes his head out of the bathroom, eyebrows raised.

MILES

Did I hook up with any teens at your sister's slumber party? No, not a great look.

He disappears back into the bathroom.

SAMEERA

Oh come on, you could have gone to high school with some of those girls.

MILES

Yeah, or I could have babysat them.

SAMEERA

Again, with the babysitting fetish!

MILES

It was a joke, I thought you'd appreciate it.

SAMEERA

No I think it's an actual fetish thing for you, I think this is just damage control.

MILES

(laughing)

Oh, is that right?

INT. CAR - DRIVING - MORNING

Miles and Sameera vibe in the front seat to music from the radio. They take turns glancing out the window, dancing, smiling at one another. Slowly, their feel-good energy dissipates as they make the same catastrophic realization.

SAMEERA

TERRY!

MILES

(covering his face)

God DAMN it!

INT. DINER - BOOTH - MIDDAY

Miles and Sameera sit at a booth with plates of food in front of each of them. They've barely touched their meals.

MILES

We don't even have his number. We don't know his last name!

SAMEERA

This can't be our fault though, right? He's a grown ass man.

(MORE)

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

It was his job to follow us, not the other way around.

MILES

Sure, but I doubt the company gives a shit about that. It said we needed an escort, and we're about to walk in there without him.

Miles slumps his head back against the booth.

MILES (CONT'D)

This is exactly the type of loophole stuff I was talking about.

SAMEERA

Yeah, I know, I know. Look, until we get in front of someone at PairFree there's nothing we can do, right? Just gonna have to plead our case, same as before.

MILES

It's gonna really really suck if this is what sinks us.

SAMEERA

I know. God, especially when I'm sure he's probably fine!

CUT TO:

EXT. SORORITY HOUSE - ROOFTOPS - SIMULTANEOUS

Terry, face-down, lies butt-naked on the roof of the sorority house. His tie is still wrapped around his head.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. DINER - BOOTH - MIDDAY

SAMEERA

We should just get on the road, use the drive to get our story straight. I'm gonna get a box for this and then let's head out?

MILES

(deflated)

Yeah, sure. Sounds good.

Sameera slips out of the booth, leaving her wallet on the table. Miles, on his phone, is approached by a WAITRESS (60), who places a clipboard with a check on the table.

WAITRESS

Sorry about that hon, meant to get you folks your check sooner.

MILES

Shit, I totally thought we'd paid.

WAITRESS

No worries. Split down the middle?

MILES

Oh it's-

He looks around for Sameera, but doesn't spot her.

MILES (CONT'D)

Actually, that'd be great, thanks.

He reaches into his wallet and pulls out a card. Chewing his lip, he looks around again for Sameera. He reaches over and unfolds her wallet. He pulls out a card and places both cards on the clipboard with the check. He hands it to the waitress.

MILES (CONT'D)

Thank you.

The waitress nods and whisks the clipboard away. Sameera slides back into the booth.

SAMEERA

Everything ok?

MILES

Yeah we almost left without paying.

SAMEERA

Oh, nice catch. Well, I'll get you back at dinner.

MILES

Don't worry about it, I just told her to split it down the middle.

SAMEERA

How would she do that?

Sameera looks to her wallet, now noticing it's unfolded.

MILES

I just gave her both of our cards.

Sameera grits her teeth, closes her eyes.

SAMEERA

You just pulled a card from
someone's wallet - my wallet,
actually - without a second
thought?

MILES

I tried looking for you! I didn't
see where you went. It's not a big
deal, we've been splitting things
this entire time. How is this
different?

SAMEERA

That was so invasive, dude. That's
not ok.

MILES

Ok, fine, I'm sorry! I figured it
would make things easier-

The waitress approaches the table again, smiling nervously.

WAITRESS

Hey I'm so sorry folks, one of the
cards got kicked back.

MILES

Can you just try running it again?
Sometimes mine's tricky.

WAITRESS

It's your friend's, and I'm afraid
I did. Could be the machine, or
maybe a balance issue?

Sameera snatches the card back from her. She reaches into her
wallet and pulls out a stack of mixed bills, gives them a
riffle and tosses them on the table. She storms out.

EXT. DINER - PARKING LOT - MIDDAY - CONTINUOUS

Miles jogs after Sameera, already strides ahead of him.

MILES

Sameera, wait up! Why are you
making such a big deal out of this-

Sameera whirls on him.

SAMEERA

News flash, asshole! Thanks to your generous overstepping my account is now overdrawn.

MILES

Jesus, Sameera, how was I supposed to know that!

SAMEERA

I get that you haven't exactly had to sweat your finances like, ever, but some of us actually need this money to, I don't know, pay rent, buy groceries, do laundry!

MILES

I feel like you're really blowing this out of proportion-

SAMEERA

And I know this app was like, the paper thin wall between you and incel Reddit but I've suffered through this hellish odyssey because I am one foot in default and one in a homeless shelter. So just do me a favor and let's limp this shit over the finish line and you can blow your half of the money on whatever sex robot best resembles your little roommate.

MILES

Wow that...that sucks.

Sniffing, he puts his head down and trudges past her to get into the car without another word. Everything about him radiates total defeat.

Sameera can see she took it too far. At first, she seems to lose her nerve. Then, she tightens her fists and half-groans, half-shrieks with exasperation as she follows him to the car.

EXT. PAIRFREE HEADQUARTERS - PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Miles and Sameera exit the car and pause to gaze at a fountain filled with swans, swimming in synchronized pairs.

SAMEERA

(sardonic)

A little on the nose, isn't it?

She looks over to Miles, who doesn't respond.

An ANGRY MAN (40s) and ANGRY WOMAN (30s) exit the PairFree HQ engaged in a blowout argument. They march toward the parking lot and pause outside a parked car, still ranting and raving.

ANGRY MAN
See again, you're making it seem
like I didn't even try to bring-

MILES
Hey guys, excuse us?

The couple wheels around to stare daggers at him.

ANGRY WOMAN
What?!

MILES
Were you guys here for the reward?

ANGRY WOMAN
Yes. Why?

SAMEERA
Did you get it?

ANGRY MAN
No-

ANGRY WOMAN
-No! Because both of us would have
actually needed to try and make-

ANGRY MAN
Oh, try? I did all the goddamn
talking!

ANGRY WOMAN
You weren't talking, you were
whining-

ANGRY MAN
Oh my God-

They get in the car and peel out from the lot. Sameera and Miles eye each other. Miles gestures toward the building.

INT. PAIRFREE HEADQUARTERS - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

Sameera and Miles enter a nondescript, dated office space, complete with a water cooler, stereotypical motivational posters, and faux wood paneling. A RECEPTIONIST greets them.

RECEPTIONIST

Miles, Sameera, welcome! Can I get you anything before you begin?

Miles bends his head toward Sameera, lowering his voice.

MILES

Did you call ahead?

SAMEERA

No, you?

RECEPTIONIST

No worries-

The receptionist taps several keys with a flourish before swiveling a monitor on her desk to face the duo. The screen shows two blinking radar icons, marked with their initials.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

The app's location services let us know you were on your way. Your analyst is waiting for you.

She produces two drawstring bags with the PairFree logo on them and places them in front of her.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)

Here are your complimentary swag bags, for making the trip!

(pointing)

And when you're ready, head down that hall, third door on the right.

Miles and Sameera collect their swag bags.

SAMEERA

Uh, thanks. Thank you.

INT. PAIRFREE HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Miles and Sameera walk down the hallway and arrive at a closed door. Miles knocks, and a muffled voice answers.

DEBBIE (O.C.)

Is that Miles and Sameera? Why don't you kooky kids get in here!

INT. PAIRFREE HEADQUARTERS - DEBBIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Miles opens the door to reveal DEBBIE (49) wearing a cardigan sweater and glasses on a bedazzled chain. She clacks away at her keyboard.

Miles and Sameera enter and hover just inside the room. Debbie waves an impatient hand at them.

DEBBIE
Please, sit, sit!

The two take seats in chairs across from her. She continues typing away; it's as if she's already forgotten they exist.

Sameera clears her throat.

SAMEERA
Listen, whatever you're gonna throw at us, I just need to say that we are one hundred percent sure you guys made a mistake. If you want to interview us separately, or hook us up to a lie detector, whatever, that's fine. We've done our research and if you guys are serious about the guarantee-

Debbie glances up at her, then smacks a hand to her forehead. She finally gives them her full attention.

DEBBIE
Oh, doy! Sometimes I am such a dope, really, I'd lose my head if it weren't attached. I thought I put the envelopes on your chairs.

She reaches into a desk drawer, and pulls out two simple white letter envelopes. She hands one to each of them.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
There you go.

She smiles at each of them individually, and proceeds to ignore them once again. Sameera stares at the envelope.

SAMEERA
What's this?

Debbie replies without even glancing at her.

DEBBIE

Your money, dear. Checks are made out to cash, figured that would be easiest on the both of you. Oh, and we had a talk with the TSA about your little kerfuffle, and you two troublemakers are on the 10pm flight to Philly. So no more funny business, ya little terrorists!

She laughs to herself for awhile, before resuming typing.

MILES

That's-that's it? You don't want to like, grill us? Put the screws to us, see if we're telling the truth?

Debbie's attention piques back up. She shimmies playfully.

DEBBIE

Oh you're a little kinkster aren't ya, naughty boy! But no, nothing like that, we got all we needed.

SAMEERA

What about the couple here like ten minutes ago? Those two basically wanted to kill each other.

Debbie throws her hands up and tilts her head at Sameera.

DEBBIE

Rach and Don? Oh don't those two love to bicker!

She rolls her eyes and giggles to herself, thriving on the little gossip. She goes right back to typing.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

But no, they were definitely a match. Look, here's them now-

Debbie pulls out a tablet and passes it to Sameera, who holds it up for herself and Miles to view. On screen, reverse dashcam footage shows the couple making out aggressively over the center console of their vehicle as it swerves through traffic. They're both insane, but clearly into one another.

MILES

I don't get it. What about Terry? He's not even here!

Sameera kicks Miles, who yelps and rubs his leg.

DEBBIE

You know, we are a bit concerned about Terrence, we haven't heard from him since Friday.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

A mortician checks a box on his clipboard with a flourish. He slumps into his wheeled chair beside Terry's naked body and unwraps a BLT sandwich.

Suddenly, Terry gasps and sits upright on the embalming table. The mortician collapses out of his chair in shock.

INT. PAIRFREE HEADQUARTERS - DEBBIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DEBBIE

But we received his first few reports and his observations matched the data.

SAMEERA

So you're just taking our word for it? That we're not into each other?

DEBBIE

Well you would definitely jump each other's bones, if that's what you're getting at missy!

She flicks a finger at her. She opens a drawer in her desk and produces several sheets of stats and graphs.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

All the Fitness apps confirm it. Heart rate, pupil dilation, voice tone. No doubt about it, you two are a tickin' time bomb of creamy steamy.

She purses her lips and shimmies her shoulders. Both Miles and Sameera cringe in their chairs.

SAMEERA

Gross-

MILES

-creamy steamy?

DEBBIE

Yep! But not in love, not a match,
no no no. Just look at the tapes!

She hits a few keystrokes on her desktop. A recording plays aloud from Miles's phone call with Div at the gas station.

MILES (V.O.)

She's a nightmare, dude. Total
headcase. If we actually dated I'd
take a bath with our toaster.

Deb gestures for Sameera to pass back the tablet, who hands it over. Deb manipulates some files on screen, then hands it back to the couple. On screen, CCTV footage shows Sameera mid-bargain with the Tweenagers inside the gas station.

TEENAGER #1

(pointing to the window)
Is that guy your boyfriend?

Sameera looks out the window.

SAMEERA

No, that's what happens if you guys
stop reading after high school.

Debbie ends the playback and smiles sadly at them. They avoid eye contact with one another as they shrink in their seats.

DEBBIE

Oh, before I forget-

She reaches into a desk drawer and produces two new envelopes, larger and thicker than the previous ones.

She jostles the envelopes in the air with each hand until Miles and Sameera get the hint and take them.

MILES

What are these?

DEBBIE

Your actual matches. We fixed the
hiccup, yay! So I'm afraid you two
can't be a match because, well,
those folks are in those envelopes.

Miles and Sameera share another look. There's apprehension but also perhaps a glimmer of disappointment.

DEBBIE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Deb you ditz, you did it again!

She snatches both packets out of their hands, startling them from their tender moment.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Got ahead of myself again. You
can't take both. The money and your
match, that is. Should have led
with that! Sorry!

She gives a squeal of embarrassment. Sameera tilts her head.

SAMEERA
But...we weren't a match? So we
earned the money.

Debbie tilts her head back and forth, eyes planted on the ceiling as she recites her corporate spiel.

DEBBIE
And per the user agreement,
PairFree Technologies guarantees a
cash prize to any individual the
algorithm fails to pair with their
perfect match. But! If we were to
pair you with your perfect match,
the company will have fulfilled its
initial promise. It's a bit more
legalese than that but, you get it.

Miles lets out a long sigh.

MILES
Shit. Ok.
(turning toward Sameera)
Well, look, I don't know what
you're feeling but-

Debbie squeals, throwing her hands up in the air. Miles and Sameera recoil at the sound.

DEBBIE
AAAHKK!

MILES
Debbie!

SAMEERA
What is happening??

DEBBIE
Dumb Deb, stupid, dipshit Debbie!
Forgot the most important part.

She points to each of them with both hands.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

You have to pick the same thing.
You either both take the money, or
you both get your matches. We can't
have folks pulling a noble one,
splitting half the cash just so one
of them gets their match. No
Hallmark baloney!

Miles and Sameera wait expectantly for Debbie to say anything else before deliberating. She waves both hands at them.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Oh that's it, promise. Discuss!
Pretend I'm not here.

She spins around in her chair, humming to herself, fingers in her ears. Sameera angles herself toward Miles.

SAMEERA

I feel like-

Miles doesn't meet her eye. He leans forward in his seat.

MILES

(raising his voice)
Hey Deb? Hey, we'll take the money.

Sameera eyes him with disbelief. Debbie swivels back around.

DEBBIE

Well that was fast!

SAMEERA

(to Deb)
Wait, no, hold on a second.
(to Miles)
What are you doing?

MILES

Look I obviously didn't realize
this trip had actual stakes for
you. This money could change your
life, right? I only came 'cause you
broke down my door and dragged me
into it-

Sameera scoffs, about to retort. Miles holds up a hand.

MILES (CONT'D)

But I also came along because I
kinda hoped that, maybe...things
were right all along.

(MORE)

MILES (CONT'D)

Maybe we were just two selfish
assholes too stubborn to see how
this-

(gesturing between them)

-could work. And I was half-right.
We are two selfish assholes.

Miles turns to Debbie.

MILES (CONT'D)

And no offense Deb, but we already
broke the app once. I seriously
doubt whatever's in there is the
real deal. We'll keep the checks.

Miles holds out his hand. Sameera shakes her head.

SAMEERA

No. I don't buy that.

Miles sighs, exasperated.

MILES

Don't buy what?

SAMEERA

I don't buy that you don't care
what's in that envelope. You've
spent half the drive nose-deep in
Hinge, Bumble, eHarmony - I could
see your phone in the windshield,
dude! So much time spent hosting
your single boy pity party, and
you're telling me the
mathematically calculated answer to
your prayers isn't worth the
goddamn paper it's printed on?

MILES

Go to hell, Sameera-

SAMEERA

No, hey! Doing the selfless thing
here - deciding for us, that we're
taking the money - is an excuse.
It's using me as an excuse so years
from now you can say whatever's in
that envelope was bullshit and that
you were doomed to never find the
real thing anyway.

(MORE)

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

If you want to know, once and for all, the person who will finally pull your head out of your ass and appreciate the kind of guy you are, I'm not gonna be your excuse. I'm not gonna be what supposedly got in your way.

Sameera turns to Debbie.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

I don't want the money, Deb. And Miles would have to be a real asshole to insist on taking both our checks, so...envelopes, please.

Miles rolls his eyes and throws his head back on the chair.

MILES

(to Sameera)

You need the money-

SAMEERA

You're goddamn right I do. But I'm not taking your fucking handout. You wanted your Barbie dream girl? Well, let's ring her up.

Miles looks to Sameera. His eyes search her up and down for any sign of a bluff. He seems just as reluctant to accept the offer as he is to give up securing the cash for her.

MILES

You're sure?

SAMEERA

Yes. I'm sure.

She lowers her eyes, tapping her shoes together in quiet reflection as her voice grows softer.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

For what its worth, I knew what you meant outside your apartment. About wanting something with stakes.

She looks up to meet his eyes.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

It just wasn't a luxury I thought I could afford. And I think I'm starting to see why it's worth it.

She gives him a soft smile.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Okay?

MILES

Okay.

He reaches out his hand for her to clasp, and she takes it. They turn to face forward. Deb, grinning ear-to-ear, glances back and forth before realizing they're waiting on her.

DEBBIE

Sorry dears, I have no idea what you settled on, was it the money or-

SAMEERA

The matches, Deb, we'll take the matches-

MILES

-yeah, the folders, please.

DEBBIE

Oh, great!

Miles reaches for Sameera's check and hands both checks to Deb. Deb trades him the two match envelopes for the checks.

INT. PAIRFREE HEADQUARTERS - ENTRYWAY - MINUTES LATER

Miles and Sameera walk past the Receptionist toward the exit doors of the office. As they walk, Miles shoves both envelopes in his swag bag. Miles suddenly hangs back.

MILES

They must have a bathroom here, right?

The Receptionist overhears him.

RECEPTIONIST

First door back the way you came, on the left.

MILES

(to the Receptionist)

Thank you.

(to Sameera)

You need to go?

SAMEERA

I think I'm good. Meet at the car?

MILES
Sounds good.

Sameera heads toward the exit. Miles jogs back down the hall.

INT. CAR - STATIONARY - SUNSET

Miles climbs into the passenger seat, Sameera's behind the wheel. He pulls her envelope from the bag and holds it aloft.

MILES
You want to open yours?

SAMEERA
Honestly, I think I need to get home and sleep for a week, first. What about you?

MILES
Oh, uh, probably open it on the plane.

SAMEERA
You excited?

Miles seems distracted. He's avoiding eye contact.

MILES
Uh, yeah. A little nervous maybe.

SAMEERA
I'm sure they're great.

MILES
Yeah, me too.

He doesn't sound convinced. Sameera tries to catch his eye, but can't seem to engage him further. She fidgets in her seat before putting the car in reverse and backing out.

INT. AIRPORT - BOARDING GATE - NIGHT

Miles and Sameera wait in line outside the gate. Miles stares ahead, despondent and distracted, while Sameera fidgets behind him. She angles herself forward to try and engage him.

SAMEERA
Wanna see if we can sit together?
Long flight, we could watch a movie?

MILES

I'm pretty beat, I think I'm gonna sleep for most of it.

SAMEERA

Oh, uh, sure.

Sameera's face falls. She retreats back behind him in line.

EXT. AIRPORT - RIDESHARE PICKUP AREA - NIGHT

Miles and Sameera wait curbside for their rides. An Uber pulls up, and Miles checks the license plate.

MILES

This is me.

SAMEERA

Oh damn, didn't you just call it?

MILES

Yeah I have like a really high rating or whatever.

SAMEERA

(teasing)

Sound like the rich guy I met at Jungle Jim's.

She laughs and scratches the back of her neck. Miles shrugs.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Sorry that was...look, I don't know what I was expecting to come of this whole thing but I really am glad that we matched. Or didn't I guess. I mean I'm still glad we met. And even though we drove each other crazy, I feel like-

The UBER DRIVER, idling beside them, lowers the window.

UBER DRIVER

Hey man I've got a ton of ice cream in the back and I thought this was gonna be a quick fare so could you not do a whole speech thing?

SAMEERA

Can you give me one-

MILES

-just give us a sec, man.

UBER DRIVER

Like, you can text this whole thing. It's not the forties-

SAMEERA

Do you not have somewhere else to be right now?

UBER DRIVER

I literally just told you about the ice cream. My mom will flip if there's just, like, a pool of mint chip marinating her golf clubs back there. Like, you called me, right?

MILES

I think you gotta go.

SAMEERA

Yeah, looks like it.

Sameera extends a handshake at the same time that Miles goes in for a hug. They swap to the opposite gestures, missing each others' cues once again.

On the third try, they both somehow settle on an awkward salute. The oddly specific sync-up leads them both to laugh and share an earnest, sad final smile.

MILES

I'll see you around.

SAMEERA

No you won't. But I hope so?

They look into each others eyes for another long moment.

UBER DRIVER

I could've done like three pick-ups by now guys.

MILES

(to Uber Driver)

I thought you were worried about your ice cream!

UBER DRIVER

I am!!

Miles chucks his bags in the backseat and climbs into the car. Sameera waves to Miles through the window, watching the car until it's out of sight.

INT. MILES'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Div sits on the couch in the dark, quiet sobbing muffled in a pillow. Miles's keys jangle in the door as it opens and shuts. He enters the room and freezes at the sound.

MILES

Div?

DIV

Why didn't answer your phone,
asshole?

MILES

I didn't- I- thought you were
calling about the trip, figured I'd
fill you in later. What's going on?

DIV

Nat and I broke up.

Miles drops his bag and hustles over to the couch. He sits.

MILES

Hey, hey. What happened?

DIV

Nothing! Literally nothing
happened! But she-she had
this...expensive olive oil, or some
shit, that she brought back from a
conference and I misread the label
and thought it was expired, so I
threw it out. And we started
fighting, and it just got bigger
and bigger until just-

She breaks off, her lip quivering.

MILES

Jesus, Div, I'm so sorry. I
should've checked in.

DIV

(looking down)
It's fine. I'm fine.

She looks back up at him through tears.

DIV (CONT'D)

I'm not. I'm not.

Miles hugs Div, pulling her into his chest. After a moment,
she wipes her eyes and pulls back, sniffing.

DIV (CONT'D)

Because it's like, if I can't make it work with Nat- someone made for me, how am I...Am I not worth it?

MILES

Nuh-uh, screw that, no, hey. You are a hot-blooded, hardcore, badass bitch. You're the coolest chick I know and you're my favorite person in the entire goddamn world. No, fuck Nat. She doesn't deserve you, alright?

He waits for her to respond.

MILES (CONT'D)

Alright?

He pulls her in closer for a hug, as she continues sniffing. She leans against his shoulder, glancing up to meet his eyes.

He angles himself to better meet her gaze, and they stare at one another for an intense, weighted moment.

INT. SAMEERA'S APARTMENT - ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Sameera slams the door to her apartment. She turns on the lights and wheels her luggage into the bedroom.

INT. SAMEERA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Her suitcase and handbag on the bed, she removes her clothes, toiletries and other items. She spies the PairFree envelope peaking from her handbag. She pulls it out, and holds it close to her chest, drumming her fingers on the back.

INT. SAMEERA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Sameera tosses the envelope on the kitchen counter. It slides across, landing amongst her other pile of envelopes and pamphlets. It teeters just off the counter edge.

INT. SAMEERA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - TIMELAPSE

Sameera comes and goes for what looks to be several weeks; she makes coffee, leaves for jogs, and sorts through mail. Over time, the furniture and items in her apartment disappear, replaced with stacks of moving boxes.

INT. SAMEERA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT - WEEKS LATER

Sameera, in a t-shirt and pajama pants, tapes up a moving box while clutching her phone against her shoulder. Setting the tape down, she takes her phone in hand and wipes her brow.

SAMEERA

Yes, yeah, they're grabbing
everything Friday...no, no I
handled it...I'll call you when I
land...Thanks Mom. See you soon.

She hangs up. She places one final strip of tape on the box in front of her, then tosses the tape on the counter. The blow sends a pile of mail cascading over the edge.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

Shit.

Sameera walks around the counter and stoops to clean up the mess. She pushes aside several letters to reveal the thick PairFree envelope. She picks it up, standing upright.

Opening the clasp, she reaches inside and pulls out the dense packet to reveal a completely blank ream of paper.

Puzzled, she peers back inside the envelope, and pulls out two, smaller letter envelopes: it's the checks. Both of them.

She looks up, scoffing in disbelief at the truly audacious gesture Miles pulled off. Biting her lip and fiddling with the checks in hand, her eyes shine and she begins to smile.

She grabs her keys and coat, and runs out the door.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - AN HOUR LATER

Miles sips wine across the table from an unseen woman, who resembles Div from behind and has a similar voice. Miles smiles as she talks, but it seems he's just being polite.

UNSEEN WOMAN (O.C.)

I haven't. But I thought about
trekking out there our junior year.

MILES

Really?

UNSEEN WOMAN (O.C.)

Yeah, but things got busy.

MILES

Right, yeah, with the new job-

Sameera enters the restaurant, her nose in her phone. She's tracking Miles' location, still shared from the sorority party. She looks up and glances around the room.

After a moment, she clocks Miles, and strides across the room to his table. The other woman notices her before Miles does.

UNSEEN WOMAN (O.C.)

Uh, do you know this person-

Miles twists to follow her gaze as Sameera reaches them.

SAMEERA

(to Unseen Woman) Hi, I'm
so sorry-
(to Miles) Miles-

She does a double take as she inspects GITA (26), now seen from the front. Her physique and hair resemble Div, but she has a more chipper, bubbly air to herself.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

(to Miles)
Do you have a thing with brown
girls?

MILES

What? No, this is Divya-my
roommate's- cousin, Gita.

SAMEERA

(teasing)
So, you do have a thing.

Miles isn't in the mood.

MILES

Did you have something you needed
to say?

She clears her throat, takes the cue to get serious.

SAMEERA

Sorry, yeah. Listen...I didn't know
you took the checks back from Deb.
I threw my packet somewhere when we
got back, didn't even open it until
like an hour ago.

MILES

Well, that explains some. I was
like damn, I thought I did a really
nice thing for her, and then-

SAMEERA

Alright, well, you shouldn't have expected anything if you were supposedly being noble-

MILES

You're right. If I was paying for someone behind me at Target. Not, I don't know, forfeiting a million dollars-

SAMEERA

Uh, half, you wouldn't have gotten both our shares-

GITA

I don't understand what's happening, is this your ex?

Sameera and Miles whirl on her in unison.

SAMEERA

No!

MILES

No!

They both fall quiet, surprised at the shared intensity.

SAMEERA

What I am trying to say is...you and I are nothing alike. We have basically nothing in common, we drive each other batshit crazy, and it's possible that with enough time spent together we'd co-sign a murder-suicide.

Gita grabs a passing waiter by the arm.

GITA

(to waiter)

Can I get another merlot please, just put the whole bottle in a glass.

SAMEERA

(to Miles)

You're spoiled, and pouty and have a terrible sense of humor. But-

Her tone shifts to something more nostalgic, and tender.

SAMEERA (CONT'D)

-I'm also tired of boring ass people, and the same 2-D wet toast conversations, and neither of us giving a shit if we even sleep together! I want something else, and clearly so do you. So maybe... maybe that could be a place for us to start?

Miles sighs. He puts his napkin on the table.

MILES

What do you want me to say?

Sameera screws her mouth up, holding back a knot of emotions. She looks at the now rapt on-lookers observing them. She lowers her head and retreats to the exit and into the street.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Sameera keeps her head down, arms crossed against the cold air as she half-walks, half-jogs away from the restaurant. Miles bursts out the same door, searching for her.

MILES

Hey!

Sameera stops and turns upon hearing his voice. He strides up to her, stopping a few paces away.

MILES (CONT'D)

You didn't answer my question.

SAMEERA

What?

MILES

I asked you "what do you want me to say?" Because I think you already had a whole goddamn script for me in your head. Probably even before you had what you wanted to say worked out.

Sameera rolls her eyes up, trying not to cry.

SAMEERA

I'm sorry I interrupted your date-

MILES

No, no, I'll do it, I'll play along, I'll read my part.

Miles clears his throat, as if preparing to recite something.

MILES (CONT'D)

Sameera, you are wildly self-defensive, aggressively single-minded, and unreasonably competitive, to the point where even being in the room with you would drive someone ballistic. You're snarky, and you're crass, and sometimes you don't know when what you're saying turns from cutesy banter to being straight up mean.

Sameera is one word away from crying. Miles exhales, and bites his lip. He takes a softer tone, taking a step forward.

MILES (CONT'D)

That's what you'd want me to say, because you're mean to yourself, too. Way more than you deserve, and sometimes maybe more than you can even take-

He keeps closing the distance between them.

MILES (CONT'D)

And you're clever, and intense-

Another step closer; they're six inches apart now.

MILES (CONT'D)

-and thorough. And though I've never said it, you're very, very pretty. And I've wanted to kiss you for quite a while.

Sameera laughs, wiping a rogue tear from her eye. Closing the gap between them, she tilts her head coyly.

SAMEERA

You're just buttering me up to get my money.

MILES

Uh-uh, yep that's it.

The two lean in and finally: they kiss. They pull into each other, lips pressed in an embrace several chaotic weeks in the making.

After a few moments, Miles pulls back. He eyes her warily.

MILES (CONT'D)

But like to be clear we're not
like, a thing now, right? Like this
is us saying "yeah let's try this
again, maybe go to a movie"-

SAMEERA

Would you shut up, please-

MILES

Sorry- yeah- we can- later-

They fall back into the kiss.

THE END.