

MEET CUTE

Written by

Chris Powers
&
Dan Powers

Grandview
Zac Frognowski
323-297-3449
Adam Klein
323-852-3747

EXT. DOG PARK - DAY

A gorgeous WOMAN walks the world's most perfect Golden Retriever through the park.

TRICIA (V.O.)
It's our favorite part of the love story...

A Black Lab comes barreling down the path, leash flapping behind him. He leaps onto the Retriever, humping away.

The startled woman tries to pull her dog free when an out of breath MAN, also gorgeous, comes running after his Lab.

TRICIA (V.O.)
The first spark of romance...

The man untangles the leashes and makes eye contact with the woman. A sly smile. An embarrassed laugh. They shake hands.

TRICIA (V.O.)
The anecdote you get to tell from this day forth...

INT. GYM - DAY

MAN #2 looks like he's just trying this whole gym thing for the first time. He's got too much weight on the bench press. Arms shaking. He can't get the bar up. This is bad.

TRICIA (V.O.)
Some of them are painful...

WOMAN #2, a fitness guru, comes running over to help. She lifts the weights off his chest with ease and racks them.

TRICIA (V.O.)
Some of them are funny...

Man #2 sits up panting, red in the face. She gives him some water. A thankful nod. A slight giggle. They shake hands.

TRICIA (V.O.)
All of them are special...

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - EVENING

On the patio of the ice cream shop, WOMAN #3, cute and unassuming, walks out the door with her treat. It's two scoops of mint chocolate chip with rainbow sprinkles.

TRICIA (V.O.)
We see them happen in the movies...

MAN #3, handsome in a nerdy way, sits alone at the nearest table. He's eating an ice cream that's the exact same order. She trips and spills her ice cream onto the floor.

TRICIA (V.O.)
But we all want them to happen to
us in real life...

Man #3 grins and shuffles over to woman #3. He offers her some of his. A wink. A chuckle. They shake hands.

TRICIA (V.O.)
It's called the Meet Cute. And now
they can...

INT. TV STUDIO - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

TRICIA LAWSON (30, always 'on') sits on a couch across from KEATON BROWN (28, effortless cool). Bad THANKSGIVING decorations adorn the stage.

TRICIA
I'm Tricia Lawson, and I'm joined
today by Keaton Brown, the creator
of the hottest app in recent
memory. Thanks so much for stopping
by, Keaton.

The studio audience smatters him with applause. He looks perfectly humble.

KEATON
Thanks for having me, Tricia.

TRICIA
(to audience)
For those of you living without a
pulse, Keaton's app is called Meet
Cute, and it's flipped the dating
game on it's head.
(to Keaton, stage whisper)
Among many new positions.

KEATON
Ohh! Flipped on your head. I
haven't tried that one yet.

The crowd eats this up. Tricia puts her hand on his knee.

TRICIA
I'm kidding, I'm kidding!

Hand lingers.

TRICIA (CONT'D)
Now, you have the most downloaded app this year. Did you ever think your little idea would turn out so big?

KEATON
Kind of? Can I say that?

TRICIA
You're the inventor of Meet Cute!
You can say whatever you want.

KEATON
Oh, OK. Umm, avocado toast is wildly overrated and at most should be a one dollar add on to your already free toast.

He shrugs with the agreeable crowd, he can do no wrong.

KEATON (CONT'D)
But no, I certainly didn't think it would get THIS big. It just seemed like there was a gap in the market and I had a way to fill it.

TRICIA
How did you come up with Meet Cute?

KEATON
By whining about something. Which, of course, is where all good ideas come from, right??

TRICIA
Of course. What was bothering you?

KEATON
I blinked, and everyone I knew was using dating sites and dating apps.

TRICIA
That's a bad thing? It's pretty convenient. You can match with someone while eating takeout on your couch.

KEATON

Exactly. And it makes sense! The world is huge. There are 7 billion of us trying to figure it out. Why limit our pool of potential partners to people we see in our day to day lives? Of course we should widen that net. But for me, it came with a stigma.

TRICIA

What do you mean by that?

KEATON

I felt weird saying I met a girl online. I couldn't get past it. So I asked myself why. Then it hit me. I wanted my RomCom moment. And I had a hunch we all do. There's something magical about meeting another person organically and it just...clicks.

He SNAPS his fingers. Tricia jumps, pulled from a trance.

KEATON (CONT'D)

When you arrange your date online you've already seen the pictures, you've already read the bios, it's so robotic.

TRICIA

Explain to us how your app is the first of its kind.

KEATON

You create a private profile. Me and my inspiring team of engineers at Meet Cute HQ pour over all the data provided to us by the user via questionnaire and personality test. When we find a compatible couple in a specified proximity, we suggest places they should go. Individually. They never know when they're going to run into their match, or even who their match is.

TRICIA

But what if they miss each other?

KEATON

Then we keep trying. Sometimes they do meet, and the spark isn't there.
(MORE)

KEATON (CONT'D)

We keep trying then too. We won't stop until they find that special someone.

TRICIA

Everyone gets their "meet cute" while still widening the net.

KEATON

You nailed it. The reason I love it so much, other than the fact that I made it....

(winks at crowd)

Is all these other apps let you create a profile but it's still an instant reaction on people's looks. Swipe left or swipe right. Personality doesn't matter because you never get the chance to know someone first. Meet Cute inverts that. You get put in a social setting first. You're forced to interact. Then you can see if you connect with a person before finding yourself on an awkward first date that's only happening because you both found the other one attractive in a staged profile picture.

TRICIA

(nodding profoundly)

Mmmmmmmmmmm.

KEATON

It brings the most unlikely couples together. Ones that don't work on paper. But really, they're perfect for each other. Like, I don't know, an app designer and a vivacious TV personality...for example.

He can play this game. Tricia fans herself off with her hand.

TRICIA

Genius.

The crowd gives a thunderous applause.

INT. TV STUDIO - LATER

HALEY MOSS (31, self centered but sweet) waits by the greenroom. Tricia runs up and hugs her.

TRICIA
Hails!

HALEY
T, you crushed that.

TRICIA
I was so nervous.

HALEY
Oh really? I couldn't tell when you were trying to molest him on stage.

TRICIA
Stop.

HALEY
What? He's hot in a 'he probably names his dick' kinda way.

TRICIA
I'm engaged.

HALEY
Flirting doesn't count if it's on camera. Where is Marcus?

TRICIA
In New York for work. Still have time for a quick lunch?

EXT. PATIO BEVERLY HILLS RESTAURANT - 1PM

Tricia and Haley have trendy salads in front of them. Probably kale caesar with salmon.

HALEY
Mom's hosting Thanksgiving this year, so I'll be joining them and their crazy neighbors. They asked me to cook.

Tricia can't contain her laughter.

TRICIA
Do they plan on eating or no?

HALEY
Not the whole meal! I'm responsible for the cranberry sauce.

TRICIA

I say this with love Hails, but if you want to be invited back, buy it from the store.

HALEY

I don't even know when I can do that. I'm gonna be reading scripts the entire week.

TRICIA

You're the busiest person I know.

HALEY

By choice.

TRICIA

We need to get you a boyfriend.

HALEY

No thank you. I don't have time.

TRICIA

You're not bringing Zeke to my wedding, just so we're clear. Can that end please? He's a jerk.

HALEY

No he isn't. We're both getting exactly what we want from each other. But sure, I can find another wedding date in 10 months.

TRICIA

You can't use your plus one on a random.

HALEY

I'm not going to your wedding alone.

TRICIA

Do you know how much each seat costs? I'm not spending 200 dollars on some WeHo boy toy who lies all night to get instagram followers.

HALEY

OK you have final cut on any potential plus ones. Deal?

TRICIA

Deal. But today gave me an idea. You should get on Meet Cute!

HALEY

Ew. Are you kidding me?

TRICIA

I'm serious. Did you know that 91% of people who start dating on Meet Cute make it at least 1 year?

HALEY

Did you know that dating apps are designed for failure? You fill out a questionnaire and then this guy is supposed to be your soulmate? Wrong. People lie on those forms.

TRICIA

Not the people who really want to find love.

HALEY

Everyone. They answer like the person they want to be, not who they are. Then the guy does the same. Then you get two people paired up who are a match in what they want, but not what they are, and they both end up resenting the other for not being what they said they were.

TRICIA

But Meet Cute is different!

HALEY

Is it though?

TRICIA

Just fill out a profile.
(off Haley's look)
For me. Please?

HALEY

(ugh)
I'll do it this afternoon.

TRICIA

Hails.

HALEY

I promise.

TRICIA

(so pleased with herself)
Thank you.

INT. NETWORK OFFICE - THAT AFTERNOON

Haley sits at her desk in her corner office. Outlook spits emails at her constantly. She opens her calendar.

HALEY

Is this pitch on time?

Her ASSISTANT scrambles from her cubicle into Haley's office.

ASSISTANT

Running 15 minutes late. Traffic.

Haley exhales. Get a new excuse, ya know?

She pulls out her phone. Opens the texts. Types Zeke. Thinks about it. Something flirty maybe? No, gross.

Instead, she goes to the app store and searches MEET CUTE. Her thumb hovers. Thinks about it. INSTALL.

ASSISTANT (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's now looking like an hour.

INT. THATCHER'S HOUSE - THANKSGIVING

RUSS PHILLIPS (32, caring, a romantic) is racing around the kitchen like a Chopped contestant. THATCHER (30s, as goofy as he is loyal) grabs another beer from the fridge.

THATCHER

So you wont be calling her again?

RUSS

What do you think, Thatch? Did that sound like we made a good couple?

SIMONE (30s, playful and British) joins them with some wine.

THATCHER

Hell if I know. In case you haven't noticed bud, I'm married.

Thatcher not subtly head nods to Simone, who rolls her eyes.

SIMONE

Are you allowed to use Meet Cute?

THATCHER

It's encouraged! Just because we work there doesn't mean he's not allowed.

RUSS

That's how I met this last one. Our tickets got mixed up at the dry cleaners. Almost went home with a cocktail dress, which I think I could've pulled off.

SIMONE

Where did you take her?

RUSS

We went to one of those dinner in the dark places. I could barely see my food, let alone her.

THATCHER

OH MY GOD. I'm updating the list. This is your new, worst idea.

(loudly, to the room)

Alexa....add "Dark Dinner" to "Stupid Russ."

RUSS

(loudly)

Alexa...delete "Stupid Russ."

THATCHER

(screaming)

Alexa NO!!!!!!

Russ pulls a foil tented turkey out of the oven.

SIMONE

Are you absolutely sure you don't need any help in here?

RUSS

I've got it under control, Simone. The bird is out. Just waiting for the brussels to finish up now.

THATCHER

(to Simone)

I don't know what we're going to do when he gets married.

SIMONE

(to Thatcher)

We go to his house, darling. Why do you think we've been hosting all these years?

Simone's three steps ahead of Thatcher, just how he likes it. She kisses her two fingers and touches them to his nose.

Russ takes the foil off the bird and it's a "Grand Canyon sunset" golden brown. Well played, sir.

SIMONE (CONT'D)
Ahhh, it's brilliant. And it can't
be a proper Thanksgiving without
the cranberry sauce.

Simone pulls out a bowl of cranberry sauce from the fridge just as Thatcher opens the oven to steal a brussels sprout.

RUSS
It's really not that hard. You just
have to baste it every 30 minutes
for 6 hours--

As Simone carries the bowl to the counter by the turkey, Thatcher burns his hand on the oven rack.

THATCHER
Balls!

He flings his hand back wildly and smacks the bowl out of Simone's hand. SMASH!

SIMONE
Bollocks!

Red everywhere. It's a crime scene.

THATCHER
Was that the cranberry sauce?

SIMONE
Yes, it WAS. And now Russ's got it
all over him.

RUSS
No, I'm fine. It's fine.

Russ grabs some paper towels and let's Bounty do its thing while the other two gently pick up glass.

THATCHER
No harm...yes fowl. You
know...fowl? Like a turkey?
Nothing?

Sorry, bud. Simone WHACKS Thatcher in the arm.

SIMONE
Apologize you fool!

THATCHER
To Russ? He's fine!

SIMONE
To me! That was a good batch.

RUSS
Why don't I go get some?

SIMONE
(sad)
No, we don't need it.

RUSS
But you said it's not Thanksgiving
without the cranberry sauce, and
who would know better than the
Brit? I'll grab some cans at the
store. It'll take 5 minutes.

THATCHER
You cooked all day, let me get it.

RUSS
You start carving.

Russ waves over his shoulder as he dashes out.

THATCHER
Alright bud, take her easy.
(beat, louder now)
And if she's easy, send her my way!

SIMONE
That joke just cost you sex
tonight. I hope it was worth it.

THATCHER
Oh I'm eating far too much for sex
tonight so no worries.

INT./EXT. - RUSS'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Russ races down the completely empty roads. His phone is
resting in the center console. Without him realizing, a
NOTIFICATION pops up on his screen. It's from Meet Cute.

INT. GROCERY STORE - 5 MIN LATER

Russ moves purposefully through the store and he hears
something ROLLING across the tile floor. He looks down just
as a can of cranberry sauce bumps into his foot.

HALEY (O.S.)

Shit.

Russ looks up and sees Haley. She's at a display with all the Thanksgiving essentials. Can of cranberry sauce in her hand. A few knocked over. Russ scoops up his can and walks to her.

RUSS

Did you just bowl cranberry sauce at me?

HALEY

It's a Moss family tradition. Every year we go to the store and knock over some procrastinating thanks-givers. If you wouldn't mind moving a bit, I'm going for my third strike.

She mimes bowling her can.

RUSS

I'm not procrastinating.

HALEY

Says the guy shopping on Thanksgiving.

RUSS

There's a cranberry emergency at my friend's house. We made some, but we dropped the bowl. So by the can it is.

HALEY

There's a cranberry emergency at my mom's house. I was gonna make some, but I dropped the ball. So by the can it is.

RUSS

Don't tell anyone, but I think it's better like this anyway.

Russ grabs a few more cans and heads to the self checkout.

HALEY

I really hope others share your preference and you're not eating all of that.

RUSS

These are for you. If you're supplying the cranberry sauce for the entire Thanksgiving dinner I can't with good conscience let you walk in with one measly can. This stuff has to get you through gobbler sandwiches for the next three days at least.

HALEY

I am partial to leftover sandwiches. I'll buy it, though.

She tires to reach for the cans he's put on the belt, but instead he grabs the remaining can out of her hands.

RUSS

I insist.

Russ pays and hands her the bag.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Happy Thanksgiving. Good luck getting that third strike.

Russ pockets his one can and heads out of the store, stopping at the automatic doors.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Ohhhhh, three strikes. A turkey.
(beat)
You're clever.

HALEY

I'm Haley, actually.

He laughs. So does she. It's all happening.

RUSS

See you around, Haley.

He holds out his hand. She shakes.

RUSS (CONT'D)

I'm Russ.

INT. MEET CUTE OFFICE - MORNING

A sweet converted warehouse looks cool as hell. Huge windows provide great light with an awesome view. Trendy art on the walls and, oh damn, there's a ping pong table over there!

THATCHER

You didn't even get her last name??

RUSS

I didn't want to force it!

THATCHER

What did she look like?

RUSS

I don't know. She was cute.

THATCHER

Move over.

Thatcher opens up Google on Russ's computer. He types in "Haley + LA + cranberry sauce + cute." A bunch of Haleys making cranberry sauce on Pinterest fill the screen.

RUSS

Did you seriously think that was gonna work?

THATCHER

Don't give me that tone. You're the one who screwed this up.

RUSS

I didn't screw it up. I think I'll see her again.

THATCHER

Right, cause this city is tiny and chance meetings like that happen all the time.

RUSS

There's one thing I haven't told you yet. When I got back in the car, I noticed I had a message from Meet Cute. It could've been her.

THATCHER

What!? Have you checked yet??

RUSS

It doesn't really work like that.

THATCHER

Whatever, you're the coder not me.

The BOSS walks over to break up this party, and holy shit. It's the CEO in the flesh. Keaton. Fucking. Brown.

KEATON

My two superstars! How was the holiday boys?

THATCHER

Excellent Mr. Brown, sir. Any time with the ones I love is time well spent. How was yours, sir? You must put on quite the feast.

KEATON

I've actually spent the last year nursing an injured turkey in my yard back to health. I slaughtered him myself on Wednesday, and I felt every bit of the 16th Native American that I am.

Riiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiight. Keaton turns to Russ.

KEATON (CONT'D)

RP. The new restaurant code. Tell me something good.

RUSS

I heard back from Research. The numbers are inside a standard deviation. If we get to work it could be ready in the new year.

KEATON

Lets do it. This is gonna be big. Draw something up for how you want to implement it.

RUSS

Thanks, Keaton. I'm on it.

Russ puts out his hand. Keaton launches into a flawless five move handshake. He finishes with a mini salute and leaves.

THATCHER

Always a pleasure, sir. You're an inspiration to us all.

No response.

THATCHER (CONT'D)

You guys have a secret handshake?

RUSS

We've literally never done that before. I have no idea what just happened.

THATCHER

A new girl, a new project. You're really knocking em down bud!

Something dawns on Russ.

RUSS

Wait. Bowling! I do know her last name. A Moss family tradition.

Thatcher beats him to the computer. Facebook. Instagram. Everything. Haley Moss. Haley Moss. Haley Moss.

RUSS (CONT'D)

That one!

They've got her. Her Facebook says she's interested in an event tomorrow night. Rooftop Cinema. The Big Lebowski.

THATCHER

Dude. You have to go to this. She's gonna be there.

RUSS

Just go alone?

THATCHER

You go to movies alone all the time!

RUSS

This feels a little stalker-y. I could just message her on this. Maybe invite her to my sister's thing this weekend.

THATCHER

That's a terrible idea. She doesn't want to meet your family on the first date. Rooftop Cinema is a first date. A first date she won't know she's on till it's too late.

RUSS

Again, this feels stalker-y.

THATCHER

It's not stalker-y if she's the one, bud. It's frickin adorable.

Russ thinks. Stares at the link for tickets.

THATCHER (CONT'D)

This is it. She's probably thinking about you right now.

PRE-LAP: Girl MOANING.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Haley's back bangs into the wall. A man enters the shot. What's up ZEKE (31, confident, very fuckable).

He puts one hand on the wall and one hand through her hair as he resumes his make out. Haley pulls his shirt off to reveal exquisite skin that's definitely moisturized, stretched tightly over traps that could crack a walnut. Duh.

He helps her with her shirt as they tip over onto the bed.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Haley fires emails off on her phone in bed. She tries to slide out without waking Zeke but she fails. He squints at her while she gets dressed.

HALEY

Hanging on a week night. That's a slippery slope.

ZEKE

Yea, my bad. The boys and I were out celebrating Dre's 30th.

HALEY

Tell him many happy returns from me, please.

ZEKE

Let me get you an Uber.

HALEY

No, I got it.

She does.

ZEKE

Hey, I was gonna text you, but since you're right here. I've got a friend coming to town this weekend.

She looks at him. So what?

ZEKE (CONT'D)

It's a girl. So, I won't be around.
I just didn't want you to think I
was being weird.

HALEY

Oh Zeke, don't worry. I don't care
about that stuff. We're good. Car's
here. See ya.

EXT. ROOFTOP CINEMA - NIGHT

Haley and Tricia stand by concessions waiting for the movie
to start. A guy approaches them with snacks. Russ! Just
kidding. It's MARCUS (30s, neurotic but funny).

Marcus passes out some candy and holds a bucket of popcorn.

TRICIA

Marcus, this is a small.

MARCUS

You said you weren't that hungry.

TRICIA

There's three of us, babe.

HALEY

I thought you were on a diet?

TRICIA

I am on a diet. That's why we got
no butter. But this is not enough.

MARCUS

OK, I'll get more but can you just
hold this because I have to pee so
badly right now I think my
bladder's going to explode.

TRICIA

Yes, go before it starts please.

Marcus speed walks away pinching his crotch.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

(watching him go)

I'm marrying an 80 year old.

HALEY

I'll get my own popcorn. I
definitely want butter.

TRICIA
That's empty calories.

HALEY
(emphasizing)
Layered. Butter.

They move into a line. At the front of that line...there he is! Russ, placing his order.

HALEY (CONT'D)
Oh god.

TRICIA
What?

HALEY
Cranberry sauce. He's here.

TRICIA
Your Meet Cute?!

HALEY
Potential Meet Cute. There were tons of other guys in the store and the app didn't know I was going to throw cans of produce at him by accident.

TRICIA
Definite Meet Cute! Where?!

HALEY
Paying for popcorn.

TRICIA
This is a sign. Go talk to him.

HALEY
No. And say what?
(doing a voice)
So, you like movies?

TRICIA
Let's beat that, but you're on the right track.

Haley hesitates. Russ starts to walk away. Tricia shoves Haley in the back. She stumbles into Russ's path as he's grabbing some napkins.

RUSS
I'm sorr- Oh...

HALEY

Hi.

RUSS

Haley, right?

Good sell, Russ.

HALEY

Yup. Russ?

RUSS

Yup.

(awkward)

So, umm, you like The Big Lebowski?

HALEY

(shrugs)

I come for the popcorn. This has
butter right?

RUSS

(nods)

Layered.

She takes a handful. Tricia walks up.

HALEY

Russ, this is Tricia. Tricia, this-

TRICIA

Is Russ. Would you like to join us?

A look from Haley, but not a mad one.

HALEY

I'm sure he's with his friends.

RUSS

Nope, just me.

HALEY

You're alone??

RUSS

That's usually what that means.

TRICIA

Hails.

HALEY

What? That's weird.

RUSS
Only the first time. Like--

HALEY
Sex?

RUSS
I was gonna say like eating a fig.
Have you seen the inside of those
things? It's like...nevermind.

TRICIA
Well, this time you're with us.
Lets go find seats before Marcus
sits somewhere near the exit.

Russ gives Haley a shy smile as he falls in step behind her.

EXT. ROOFTOP CINEMA - 1HR AND 59 MIN LATER

The credits roll and the group is shuffling out.

TRICIA
That was so fun!

HALEY
You fell asleep halfway through.

MARCUS
I told her she would. She said we
had to come, because we do things
like this, because we're going to
be a fun married couple. And I told
her she was going to fall asleep.

TRICIA
He did. You know me so well, babe.
That's why I love you.

She gives him a kiss.

HALEY
Ugh, you two are boring. This is
supposed to be the pregame. Lets go
somewhere. I'm hungry.

TRICIA
You ate all Russ's popcorn.

RUSS
I'm down for a nightcap.

Haley looks at Russ. Implores her friends to join.

MARCUS

Not me. I'm putting it to bed.

TRICIA

Then I better go too or he'll watch
all our shows without me.

RUSS

(to Haley)

Come on, I have a spot.

Tricia gives Haley an encouraging nod. Why not?

HALEY

They better have fries.

INT. DINER - LATER

Russ and Haley sit across a booth in an old-timey diner. The place is nearly empty. They sip on something.

RUSS

How do you know Tricia and Marcus?

HALEY

T and I met forever ago, when she first moved. We were in an acting class together. She met Marcus not long after. Now they're engaged, took them a while, but they do seem like a good fit. I worry she's only taking the next step because the world says it's time to get married.

(contemplating)

Sorry, that's not for me to air out.

RUSS

Are you an actress?

HALEY

Ha. I love that's what you took from that. And no.

RUSS

What do you do?

HALEY

I hate that question.

RUSS

I'm sorry.

HALEY

It's an American question. It's all we care about. Where do you work? How much do you make? Do those things really define me, the person? Ask me what I like to do for fun instead. That'll actually tell you something about me.

RUSS

Where were you?

HALEY

What?

RUSS

When you went abroad and got yelled at for being a typical American by asking that question.

So busted.

HALEY

(defeated)

Switzerland.

They share a laugh. The WAITRESS arrives. In front of Haley, the biggest side of fries the world has ever seen. In front of Russ, two, count em, two, pieces of pie.

WAITRESS

Extra fries, one slice of pumpkin, one slice of apple.

RUSS

Thank you so much.

HALEY

Could I trouble you for some mustard?

WAITRESS

Course.

She scurries off. Haley turns back to an APPALLED Russ.

RUSS

Are you putting mustard on fries?

HALEY

Do you not like mustard?

RUSS

I love mustard. But I also love ketchup. And since I'm a functioning member of society I put ketchup on my fries.

HALEY

Says the guy eating two different flavor pies right now. You should be in jail.

RUSS

This is way different. I love them both equally. Before Thanksgiving I go to the farmer's market and get one of each from the Pie Lady.

HALEY

She probably has a name.

RUSS

In another life perhaps, but it's since been forgotten by the fates. My dream is to make a pie that's half pumpkin and half apple. Like a pizza with split toppings.

HALEY

That's disgusting.

Russ stabs some pumpkin pie with his fork. Locks eyes with Haley. Then he stabs some apple...

HALEY (CONT'D)

Don't eat those two pies at the same time.

He slowly, seductively, moves the concoction into his mouth. He moans his delight.

The waitress returns with the mustard. She saw Russ's move.

WAITRESS

That looks good!

HALEY

Don't encourage him.

The waitress leaves. Haley clears a space on her plate. Locks eyes with Russ. He shakes his head, don't you dare. She empties half the mustard bottle. Digs in.

RUSS

OK, Mustard, what do you like to do for fun then?

HALEY

(while chomping fries)
I like staying busy. I do improv with a group of girls. I'm in a book club. I do trivia nights.

RUSS

You were definitely a theater girl.

HALEY

I used to play soccer! I play in a coed league out here. Not so much anymore. But when I can.

RUSS

Dual threat. I'm impressed.

HALEY

(mouthful)
I go to the movies. I watch sports. I go out to dinner. I love to eat.

RUSS

(sarcastically)
You don't say.

Haley opens her mouth and flashes half chewed mustard fries at Russ as some schoolyard payback for that jab.

HALEY

And to be fair, my job is fun too. I make TV shows for a living. But I'm not satisfied, you know? I want to write. I want to create.

RUSS

Do you sleep, or is that not active enough for you?

HALEY

As little as possible. I have this sickness in me that I have so much I want to do and I'm running out of time. Like travel. I've never even been to Italy. What is that? I know I'm young, relatively, but that attitude keeps me going.

RUSS

Despite the fact that I'm exhausted just listening to your calendar, I think it's awesome. Beats the alternative, feeling like you let life pass you by.

HALEY

That's the idea. What about you?

RUSS

I love movies too. I still play video games, but mostly the sports ones. And even then I just simulate, which is weird, I know.

HALEY

You play the important games though, right?

RUSS

Of course. I don't read as much as I'd like to. I really enjoy holidays. All of them.

HALEY

Even Easter?

RUSS

Even Easter. I like to swim, I grew up near the beach. I like to play board games, and...I like to eat baked goods with strangers.

Haley grins despite herself. She takes Russ in for a beat.

HALEY

You're an interesting guy, Russ.

He returns the look.

RUSS

Hey, do you want to come with me to this thing my sister hosts at her house on Saturday? It's at 1 so you'd still have your night.

HALEY

Family on the first date?

RUSS

What's this?

HALEY

Not a date. This was an accident.

Nervous sip from Russ.

RUSS

What's your go-to first date?

HALEY

I don't really go on dates. But IF it happens, I like this little Mexican place by my house.

RUSS

Solely for proximity?

HALEY

I can walk, yes. But they have these nachos on the secret menu that I always order because you can't eat them with a fork. There's something about having your face covered in guac that really eases the tension. And if it's going well, there's a lovely little bar for dancing next door.

RUSS

For never doing them, that's a well thought out ideal first date.

HALEY

And yours...is a luncheon with your sister.

RUSS

I wouldn't say it's my ideal. But neither is watching someone eat french fries with mustard.

(shrugs)

No pressure.

Haley bites her lip.

INT. IMPROV THEATER - SATURDAY MORNING

Haley's on a small stage in a tiny theater with three GIRLS (late 20s). There's, like, seven people in the audience. The girls play parts in this make believe.

HALEY

(playing Miranda)

I'm Miranda Priestly!

(MORE)

HALEY (CONT'D)

The editor of Runway magazine. I
decide what is fashion.

Haley takes a sip of her imaginary beverage.

NOEL

(playing Margaret
Thatcher)

As Prime Minister, I decree that
Sophie will decide what is, or is
not, fashion.

JOSIE

(playing Sophie)

Don't make me choose. I can't.

OLIVIA

(playing the Witch)

Into the woods, we all must go, to
discover fashion, yes or no!

The other three women glare at the Witch. Then Haley tosses
fake coffee all over her. The Witch stares aghast at her
ruined clothes.

HALEY

(playing Miranda)

Now THAT is fashion.

The four girls start laughing and gather at the front of the
stage for a bow. The audience is as confused as you are, but
the smattering of applause pales in comparison to the fun
they had.

JOSIE

We're the Streep Sweepers, the
entirely Meryl Streep improv group.
Thank you so much for coming!

BYRON (50s) walks up on stage.

BYRON

Alright everyone, open mic's over,
you gotta clear out. I have a class
at noon. Same time next week, and
if anyone wants to sign up there's
a sheet outside my office.

No one wants to sign up. The crowd shuffles towards the exit.

JOSIE

What'd you think, Byron?

BYRON
I only saw the end.

JOSIE
Liar. I saw you watching.

BYRON
You're getting better, I'll give you that. But your schtick is still completely ridiculous.

JOSIE
It's unique! Let us open for one of your shows. 10 minutes. Tops. You know you want to.

BYRON
You keep practicing and I'll consider it. For now, scram.

He exits. They get their things.

NOEL
Thanks for joining, Haley. It's so fun playing with you.

OLIVIA
If Byron lets us open you have to be there.

HALEY
I'd love to, just say the word.
(checks her phone)
Shit.

JOSIE
You have to get to set, right?

HALEY
My show is shooting today but I'm skipping it. I'm having lunch with this guy I met randomly.

JOSIE
Whoa. Did you join Meet Cute?

HALEY
Uhh, yes, but it's not like that.

JOSIE
Whatever you say.

Haley makes a face at her. Gives them all hugs. Races out.

EXT. PALISADES HOUSE - 1PM

Haley approaches the front door of a beautiful family home. She's in a sleek, ankle length dress. Stylish but not fancy. She RINGS the door bell.

INT. PALISADES HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Russ is dressed very casually, almost sporty. He jogs to the door. Swings it open. Sees Haley.

RUSS
Hey! Right on time.

HALEY
A first.

He gives her a massive hug and drags her inside. When they separate he looks at her again.

RUSS
Wow, you look...wonderful.

HALEY
Am I over dressed? You didn't say...

RUSS
No no no you're fine. It's fine.

Russ's sister GEORGIA walks in. She's older and clearly in charge. She's followed by a group of around 10 GUESTS, all dressed like they're going for a run.

GEORGIA
OK enough chit chat, lets rock this thing. Everyone to the backyard! Russy, I hope your friend's ready to bring it.

They march past a confused Haley and an uncomfortable Russ.

RUSS
Yea...so...this is a kickball game she does every month. I'm so sorry I didn't tell you. I thought it would be like a fun surprise. But it never occurred to me that you would show up in the wrong attire. Because I'm an idiot. But we don't have to play! We can grab a drink and watch. It's pretty funny...Or we don't need to watch...I'm sorry.
(MORE)

RUSS (CONT'D)

You don't have to stay if you don't want. I'll make an excuse.

Haley lets him wear this for one extra long second.

HALEY

What do you take me for?

She collects the bottom of her dress in a fist and ties it off just above her knee. All Range Kicking Motion activated!

HALEY (CONT'D)

You better hope you're on my team.

Haley leads the way to the backyard.

EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

A kickball diamond is set up with huge bases taped off.

GEORGIA

Listen up people. You know the rules. You can't play unless you have a solo cup in hand. You can have more than one player on a base at a time. You don't have to run on a hit, but if you leave first base you have to get to third. No stopping at second. If you get to first, you drink. If you get to third, you drink. If you're thirsty, you drink. If you're tired, suck it up. Remember, we're not here to have fun, we're here to see how power corrupts. Me and the man honored to call himself my husband, Isaac, will pick teams. Because of a deal struck in the bedroom last night which will not be discussed publicly at this time, he gets first pick.

She yields the floor to a couple WOLF WHISTLES.

HALEY

(whispers to Russ)

How did she start that speech with you know the rules??

ISAAC (late 30s) dances his way up and scans the crowd. His eyes land on Haley.

ISAAC

I think I want the new girl who
wore a dress to a kickball game.

RUSS

That was my fault. Poor
instructions. This is Haley by the
way. She normally-

HALEY

Doesn't take it easy on anyone, but
decided to be nice today and wear a
dress to level the playing field.

Ohhhhhhh snap. She kicks off her heels.

GEORGIA

That's what I'm talking about! I
love this girl.

Russ looks at Haley. He shrugs. She winks. Lets play.

EXT. BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Five people on Georgia's team in the field. Russ pitching.
Haley up first.

GEORGIA

No meatballs, Russy. Loyalty
doesn't cross the baseline.

Russ shakes his head. Glares in at Haley. She crinkles her
nose back at him. He rolls. With solo cup in hand and
barefoot, she takes one step and unleashes a BOMB.

It flies over the outfielder's head so fast it might reach
Malibu. Russ gets whiplash trying to follow the ball. Haley's
team is going nuts. Russ turns around.

HALEY

Theater girl my ass.

She takes off around the bases while Russ's team chases her
home run ball in vain.

JUMP CUT AS NECESSARY

Russ rips a hit into right field which scores a few runs.

Someone on Georgia's team drops a pop up in the outfield and
she's rage screaming at them at the top of her lungs.

Haley runs into first base. A few teammates wait for her there. They cheers their solo cups and chug.

Isaac smokes a kick but Georgia makes a ridiculous diving stop, beer in hand, and throws him out. She wags her finger in his face. Really rubbing it in.

Russ on first base. Someone gets a hit and he takes off. He touches second and keeps going. Haley takes the relay throw and PEGS him. His beer explodes in his face.

All the fun. All of it.

INT. PALISADES HOUSE - LATER

Haley paces alone in the living room, talking on her cell.

HALEY

Don't worry. Just let me handle.

Russ appears with a bandage wrap.

RUSS

There you are.

She hangs up. Why doesn't anyone ever say goodbye??

HALEY

I swear I'm good. I don't need it.

He kneels down and we see she has a scrape on her shin.

RUSS

I can't believe you slid during
kickball.

HALEY

I wasn't about to get thrown out at
third.

Russ delicately wraps her leg and gives it a quick squeeze.

RUSS

Sorry we're out of Neosporin. You
were a champ today. Everyone loves
you.

Haley eyes the floor. Looks at her bandage. Then her phone.

HALEY

Russ, I'm not really looking to be
in a relationship.

Russ, taken aback. Where did that come from?

RUSS

Oh, that's fine. I didn't mean to give off the impression...I don't want to rush into anything either.

HALEY

I only bring it up because I think you're my Meet Cute. And I didn't want to lead you on. Are you on that app?

RUSS

Of course. Aren't you?

HALEY

Tricia made me download it. It's a bit ridiculous, right?

RUSS

I actually work there, so....

HALEY

What?

RUSS

You said no job talk.

HALEY

Wow. That's...Do you like it?

RUSS

It's a great gig. My boss has been really loyal to the engineers. It's still the original crew he hired.

HALEY

I meant the app.

RUSS

Oh, right. Yea, I do. It works. And it's fun. I like fun.

Off her look.

RUSS (CONT'D)

But you hate fun?

HALEY

I don't hate fun. I just don't think it works.

Off his look.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Not because of you! You've been a delight actually. But...I don't want...

RUSS

A boyfriend.

HALEY

A boyfriend. I was supposed to be on set today. It was an easy shoot so I came here instead. Now I have an actor refusing to say his lines, which I have to clean up. I don't have time for stuff like...

(gestures to house)

...this.

RUSS

Career first, I understand.

HALEY

Look, I want a family. I know I'm getting older and I know it's tougher on women. But there are still things I want to accomplish while I'm single. There's a version of a great girlfriend that I want to be. I can't be that right now. So I don't want to be anyone's bad girlfriend. Does that make sense?

RUSS

Sure. It's weirdly considerate while also selfish in a way. But not a bad way. You know yourself and you're honest. I think those two qualities alone put you ahead of most of the dating world.

HALEY

The way I see it, we have our whole lives ahead of us. But it's only MY life until I settle down. Then it's a shared life. And that's a beautiful thing that I'm looking forward to. But I only have MY life for a little bit longer. So I want to make sure I make the most of it before it's gone.

(beat, Russ absorbs)

I should probably go.

RUSS
Don't go cause this is weird now.

HALEY
No, it's not weird.

It is.

HALEY (CONT'D)
I just have to, uh...

Do nothing.

HALEY (CONT'D)
Go.

Russ takes her spritzer and puts it down. He gives her a hug and she pulls out of it quickly. And from whence she came...

INT. GYM - DAY

Haley and Tricia walk on the treadmill. Tricia's is aggressively inclined. Haley - winded but composed. Tricia - soaked with sweat, near tears from exhaustion.

TRICIA
I was talking to my show's makeup artist today. You remember Nicole?

HALEY
Sure, the red head.

TRICIA
Get this. Apparently she slept with Keaton Brown when he was on set.

HALEY
The Meet Cute guy??

TRICIA
That's not the half of it. She said he made her hold a mirror in front of her face while they did it! And he kept calling her 'Keaton.'

HALEY
WHAT?! Please tell me you have footage of this.

TRICIA
I don't know why you would ever want to see that, but no. We don't have cameras in the green room.

HALEY

I wonder if he puts "I'm a freak who likes to have sex with himself" on his Meet Cute profile. I told you I didn't want to join this app.

TRICIA

Probably not something he wants to advertise. And his fetishes have nothing to do with Russ.

Steps. Side look from Tricia.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

Are you really not going to text him again? You had fun together.

HALEY

How many times are you going to ask me that? You know my stance.

TRICIA

I know Hails. I've heard it so many times I could probably deliver the whole speech myself.

(parrots back in a voice)

There's a version of a girlfriend I wanna be...

Haley tries to stifle her smirk. Fails.

HALEY

I missed work for him. That can't happen.

TRICIA

You told me yourself it didn't matter. You're just doing that thing where you latch on to a tiny problem when you want an out.

HALEY

I am not. I'm stopping it before Russ has a chance to complain that I don't give up my whole life for him.

TRICIA

Don't put every guy in the same category. It's possible for someone new to show up and make you rethink everything.

Marcus approaches in the lamest workout clothes ever worn, towel over his shoulder.

HALEY

Is that what happened with you?

Tricia smiles at him.

TRICIA

I didn't need to rethink anything.
I was ready.

Tricia stops the treadmill. Haley follows suit.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

Good workout, babe?

MARCUS

This place is so unsanitary. I
brought you a towel. Wipe it down.
Wipe everything down. I think I
tweaked my back.

Tricia takes the towel while Haley looks at the two of them.
She reaches for her phone.

INT. MEET CUTE OFFICE - DAY

Thatcher sits at his desk scrolling through pictures of Emily Blunt. Russ walks up behind him but Thatcher's in a trance.

Russ eyes the screen, watches for a beat.

RUSS

Thatch.

Thatcher has a seizure. He tries to minimize the screen in a panic but misses a few times, then knocks over some pens, then goes with turning off the monitor altogether.

THATCHER

Sup?

RUSS

Was that Emily Blunt?

THATCHER

Yes. She's wonderful and the photos
were safe for work. Can I help you,
or do you intend to rob me of my
entire lunch break?

RUSS
She texted me.

THATCHER
Emily Blunt?!

Thatcher's instantly no longer bothered. Russ squints at him.
Hoping he'll get there. Wait for it....And he got there.

THATCHER (CONT'D)
Oh! What'd she say?

RUSS
Her friend, that Tricia girl, is
having a Christmas party.

THATCHER
And you're invited?

RUSS
No, she felt the need to tell me I
can't come to a Christmas party I
didn't know about.

THATCHER
Right. Sorry, this is just really
big for me. When is it?

RUSS
Friday.

THATCHER
NO!

RUSS
Is that bad?

THATCHER
That's the company party.

RUSS
Oh damnit.

THATCHER
Keaton will expect you there.

RUSS
Maybe I can hit both?

THATCHER
Venice to Los Feliz!?
(pulls phone up to mouth)
Siri...add "Both Parties" to--

INT. TRICIA'S APARTMENT - FRIDAY NIGHT

The mistletoe has been hung. The holly has been decked. The jingle bells are rocking. The egg is nogging.

The crowded party's in full swing and everyone's dressed on theme. Russ, in all his ugly sweater glory, searches.

He spots Haley's head bobbing in a Santa Hat. He catches up to her and playfully pokes her in the stomach. He's a little drunk. Color Haley not amused.

HALEY

Didn't think you were showing up.

RUSS

Sorry, I had a work thing. I wanted to be here, but my boss bought a shaved ice machine and made us have a snowball fight in the office.

HALEY

I hope no one hit him in the face. Wouldn't want to tarnish his reflection.

Boom ROASTED.

HALEY (CONT'D)

And you didn't have to bail on your plans. It's just a party.

Russ engages damage control protocol.

RUSS

Hey. I'm right where I want to be. And I like your hat.

He flicks the dangling pom-pom. She rolls her eyes but grins.

HALEY

Is that for me?

Haley points to a fancy bottle of vodka in his hand.

RUSS

Holy ego! No, this isn't for you. What kinda guy gets a girl a Christmas present right after she told him she doesn't want anything serious?

HALEY

Yea, that's a crazy move.

RUSS
I assume Tricia drinks Vodka. Is
there somewhere I can put this?

HALEY
Everyone drinks vodka. Except for
Marcus.

Haley's gaze finds Tricia and Marcus. Tricia's tipping a
bottle of vodka into a huge punch bowl of eggnog. Marcus's
picking up used solo cups and putting them in a trash bag.

Haley grabs the bottle of vodka and leads Russ into...

INT. TRICIA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Russ looks around the room, clocking photos of Tricia and
Marcus together. Haley puts the vodka on Tricia's bed.

HALEY
This way it doesn't get mixed in
with the party booze. Otherwise
it'll be gone by morning.

RUSS
I didn't leave a note.

HALEY
I'll make sure she knows where to
send her thank you card.

Russ jokingly wipes his brow.

HALEY (CONT'D)
Alright, do you wanna get a drink
and meet people?

RUSS
I'd talk to you all night. Is that
an option?

HALEY
I didn't invite you here to talk to
me all night.

RUSS
But you did invite me...

Eyebrow raise. He's trouble. She knows it already.

HALEY
It's a party! Make friends!

INT. TRICIA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Haley scoops herself a generous portion of vodka eggnog and figures she's left Russ on his own long enough. Let's see if he's surviving, shall we?

She finds him in the kitchen, and oh my god. He's the life of the party! Kris Kringle? More like Kris Mingle!Sorry.

A GIRL WITH ELF EARS is sitting in a chair, head leaning back. Russ has PEPPERMINT SCHNAPPS in one hand, WHIPPED CREAM SPRAY in the other. Tricia holds a bottle of CHOCOLATE SYRUP. Marcus watches on in horror.

First, Russ pours some schnapps into the Elf's mouth. Tricia follows up with the chocolate syrup, spilling half of it on the floor. Russ tops her off with the whipped cream.

RUSS

Now shake!

The Elf leans forward and shakes her head left and right, blending the shot together. She swallows and jumps in the air as everyone cheers.

Russ HIGH FIVES Tricia, then grabs a paper towel from the counter. He wipes the chocolate syrup off the floor and WINKS at Marcus.

Tricia catches Haley's gaze. She side nods at Russ and gives Haley the A-OK hand signal. Maybe this could work?

EXT. BALCONY - LATER

The party's dying down and Russ and Haley sit on the floor of the balcony. There are chairs, but this is more comfortable at the moment.

The view of the city looks pretty cool from up here. Christmas lights line the railing.

RUSS

I really appreciate Tricia putting effort into the decorations. It makes or breaks a Christmas party.

HALEY

Don't you? Mr. I-love-all-holidays.

RUSS

I go wild with it. Nutcrackers, lights, stockings, the tree, a REAL tree by the way.

HALEY

Obviously.

RUSS

I start decorating the day after Halloween.

HALEY

Ewww you're one of those? You have to respect Thanksgiving.

RUSS

Thanksgiving is fantastic. They can coexist. One month isn't nearly enough time for Christmas music.

HALEY

I don't know...

Russ takes her Santa Hat off and puts it on his head. He reaches out and puts an arm around her, pulling her up against him in the brisk night.

She hesitates, then lowers her head onto his shoulder.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Be careful.

RUSS

What if I don't wanna be careful?

HALEY

I'm difficult.

RUSS

I don't care.

HALEY

Alright, but you're gonna get hurt. Everyone says they won't get hurt, but they do.

RUSS

Thankfully you've got just the thing for minor cuts and scrapes.

Russ reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small present. It's expertly wrapped and has Haley's name on it.

Haley gasps, theatrically incredulous.

HALEY

What kinda guy does this??

She opens it up and reveals a travel sized tube of Neosporin.

RUSS

A crazy one.

Haley leans in. Russ leans in. And....BANG! A kiss! And we didn't even have to wait til the end!

EXT. FARMERS MARKET - DAY

The closed off street is full of pop-up shops. Russ and Haley are out on the town.

HALEY

I don't get why it doesn't just say
"go to Whole Foods at 2pm."

RUSS

That would defeat the purpose!
Think about it this way. When we
met, what did yours say?

HALEY

I don't remember.

RUSS

Mine said "Looks like you could use
some groceries"...smiley face.

HALEY

Nice touch. And that little yellow
circle made you race to Whole
Foods??

RUSS

No. I actually didn't even see the
notification until after, but
that's my point. Groceries could
have taken me anywhere. The hope is
we run into each other.

HALEY

At the same place at the same time.
Cause that makes sense.

RUSS

Well we only get notifications when
we're in close proximity. That's
why we can use messages like "how
does a coffee sound?" We know
there's a chance the two people
will end up in the same spot.

HALEY

How do you know if they meet?

RUSS

The same way we know when you're in close proximity. The app is tracking your phone, so if the two phones go into the same location at the same time, that's called an HPI, or High Percentage Interaction. We give couples 3 HPis before moving on to another match.

HALEY

HPis. Only tech virgins can making dating sound like an infection.

RUSS

We're not virgins. I've had sex probably 2 to 4 times.

HALEY

So if I didn't go into Whole Foods when you did, that wouldn't have counted as one of our HPis?

RUSS

Exactly right. Normally we send users a bunch of notifications before they actually have an HPI.

HALEY

Yea, I mean I didn't have my first HPI til sophomore year of college.

RUSS

Hm. I woulda guessed high school.

That earns Russ a playful dead arm.

RUSS (CONT'D)

But do you see how that's more fun than being texted an arranged meeting spot? You never know who it's going to be because you don't even know if you're in the right place.

HALEY

Don't you feel like your meddling?

RUSS

I'm not forcing anyone to do anything, I just write the code.

HALEY

You forced me to come here.

RUSS

This is a valid point. But you don't count. You won't even come to Valentines dinner with me so I have to take what I can get.

HALEY

Oh don't let me forget to pick up a card for T!

RUSS

Adding it to the list. How about I drag you to a King's game on Friday? My office has a box and it's my turn for the tickets.

HALEY

Hockey? That's tough trying to get all the way downtown. And I'm sure you'll want to grab dinner. And-

RUSS

We can meet there.

HALEY

We're shooting that night and it might go late. I should be on set.

RUSS

It's all good. I'll take Thatch.

A beat. Small smile creeps onto Haley's face. Then Russ stops their walk. Haley's confused. Then Russ proudly points ahead.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Pie Lady.

PIE LADY (40s) is the perfect sitcom mother come to life. Of course she bakes pies.

HALEY

Wow.

Pie Lady senses Russ and Haley approach.

PIE LADY

Russ!

Russ gives her a hug. Yup. They're on hugging terms.

RUSS

This is a big day. Haley, it is my great pleasure to introduce you to Pie Lady. Pie Lady, this is Haley, lover of food and bowling.

Haley and Pie Lady shake hands.

HALEY

It's truly an honor.

PIE LADY

The honor's mine. I've never known Russ to bring a girlfriend around.

HALEY

I'm not-

RUSS

We're not...she's not...we're...

PIE LADY

Friends.

RUSS

See? Nothing gets past Pie Lady.

HALEY

Please excuse Russ, I know you have a name.

PIE LADY

I do have a name.

Haley makes "told you!" eyes at Russ.

PIE LADY (CONT'D)

But it's a secret. My favorite customers refer to me by my preferred title. Pie Lady.

Russ makes "told you!" eyes at Haley.

HALEY

That doesn't count. I'm right.

RUSS

Pick your favorite. My treat.

HALEY

To think I didn't want to come.
(scans selection)
Ummmm, blueberry please.

Pie Lady grabs a picturesque blueberry from her stock. She trades Russ pie for cash. Russ dips into a sweeping bow.

RUSS
(like "my lady")
Pie Lady.

She curtsseys in return. Haley and Russ keep moving.

INT. NETWORK OFFICES - EVENING

Haley reading a script. FLOWERS rest in a vase on her desk with a card from Russ. Thanks for not being an idiot, Russ. Haley's the only one still here. Minus her assistant of course.

An email PINGS on her laptop. Her eyes wander. It's from JOSIE. The subject reads "WE NEED YOU!"

She opens it. "Byron's letting us perform next weekend!!!!!!" Under it is a MERYL STREEP GIF. These girls are nuts.

Her assistant knocks on her door frame.

ASSISTANT
You should go if you're gonna make
your drinks.

Haley nods her thanks but her eyes drift over to the TV on mute, mounted against the wall. It's the Kings game. Her eyes linger, then she shuts it off and leaves. But we go into...

INT. STAPLES CENTER - MEANWHILE

Thatcher returns to his seat next to Russ with two beers. They're in the company box, prime seats.

THATCHER
Here you go, bud. On me.

RUSS
These are free.

THATCHER
Who are all these people by the
way? This is our box, and I don't
know any of these mooches.

Thatcher pulls three bags of snacks out of his pockets.

RUSS

We give away these tickets to clients all the time. It's how we keep up relationships.

THATCHER

Can someone tell the relationships to save some bean dip for the rest of us?

RUSS

I'll put in a good word with Keaton.

Their heads move left and right with the play.

THATCHER

What's that restaurant code you guys are working on anyway?

RUSS

Shiiiiit! I was supposed to launch that before I left today.

THATCHER

Can you go back after the game?

RUSS

I'm gonna have to.

THATCHER

HIT SOMEBODY!

Russ covers his now exploded ear drum.

THATCHER (CONT'D)

I still don't know what it is.

RUSS

Don't you look at the newsletters?

THATCHER

I'm in ad sales. I don't read.

RUSS

It's simple code. It's more of an idea I had. We're always trying to tweak the compatibility scores on the app by ranking each core value.

THATCHER

Like hobbies, kids, butt stuff?

RUSS

Butt stuff is on there but it's shockingly low. My idea is that the most important qualifiers are what shows they're watching and where they get take out. We already let users link their Netflix but I'm implementing a way to link their Postmates. You'd be shocked how happy couples say they are together when they don't fight over what to order and what to watch.

THATCHER

Simone and I never fight over delivery.

RUSS

Yea, she picks something and you eat it.

THATCHER

What do you and Haley get?

RUSS

Never met a burrito we didn't love.

THATCHER

God, what a woman. Are you bringing her to the Pier?

RUSS

Haven't asked yet.

THATCHER

(stands up)

CHECK YOUR VOICEMAIL REF, YOU MISSED A FEW CALLS!

(sits down)

You gotta invite her, bud. It's your birthday.

RUSS

I don't want to pressure her.

THATCHER

You can invite someone to your birthday. It's weird if you don't invite her then she finds out.

RUSS

You're oddly wise sometimes Thatch. Don't ever change.

THATCHER
CHANGE!!!!

He's on his feet again, upset about ice time. He turns back to the uncomfortable clients in the box.

THATCHER (CONT'D)
Go Kings, right!?

INT. MEET CUTE OFFICES - THAT NIGHT

It's dark in here as Russ arrives at his desk post Kings game. He shakes his computer awake and logs in. A faint PANTING in the distance catches his ear.

Russ creeps toward the sound, nervous. He grabs a paddle off the ping pong table for a weapon. He peers around the corner.

KEATON
RP!

Russ jumps and drops the paddle. Keaton - work clothes on the bottom, shirtless on the top. He's covered in sweat with a headband on. He take a huge pull from a Gatorade.

KEATON (CONT'D)
How was the game?!

RUSS
Jesus, Keaton, you scared me.

KEATON
(super serious)
Fear is the mind killer.

RUSS
(confused)
Is that...from Dune?

Keaton slaps Russ on the shoulder.

KEATON
Yes! Thank you for being well read.

Keaton picks up the paddle and walks back to the ping pong table. It's folded in half so you can play by yourself.

RUSS
What are you doing here so late?

KEATON
I could ask you the same question.

He grabs the ball and starts hammering it back to himself, Forrest Gump style.

KEATON (CONT'D)
Yasmine beat me last week. We can't have that, can we RP?

RUSS
Uh, I suppose not.

KEATON
Did you forget something?

RUSS
I told you I'd send you the restaurant code to review before I left for the game. I forgot.

KEATON
You didn't have to come all the way back just for that.

RUSS
(shrugs)
I'm here now. Wanna check it out?

Keaton snatches the ball out of mid air with his free hand.

KEATON
Hell yes.

INT. MEET CUTE OFFICES - MOMENTS LATER

Russ at his computer. Keaton's over his shoulder, scrolling through lines of code way too fast to possibly read.

KEATON
This is a game changer. And RP.
(grabs Russ's shoulder)
So are you.

RUSS
We good to launch in the morning?

KEATON
Do it right now! The lovers out there need us. We can't let them down. Here:

Keaton logs out Russ and logs in with his ADMIN ACCOUNT.

KEATON (CONT'D)

You do it.

(holds up paddle)

My forehand topspin return isn't
going to murder Yasmine by itself.

Keaton power walks away. Russ opens the master code and uploads his new feature. Closes out. Pauses. Admin access...

ON THE COMPUTER - in the search bar he types @RussellPhillips10. His profile pops up. He clicks NOTIFICATIONS. Scrolls back to NOVEMBER 28TH. It reads "Looks like you could use some groceries" with a smiley face. Awww the memories.

ON RUSS - a quick peek to make sure Keaton's long gone.

ON THE COMPUTER - searches @HaleyMoss87. Clicks on NOTIFICATIONS. Wonder what hers said? Scrolls to NOVEMBER 28TH. "Perfect day for a walk in the park."

Wait. Hold on. That's not sending her to a grocery store?? Noooo no no no no. That could only mean one thing...

ON RUSS - Ohhhhhhhh shit.

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER PACIFIC PARK - DAY

The Pier in all her glory. Because if you can put an amusement park, an arcade, and over priced food ON the ocean, you do it.

PAN DOWN over the Ferris Wheel onto the boardwalk to find Thatcher and Russ. Thatcher's inhaling a cup of Dippin Dots, licking it clean. Yes, they still sell Dippin Dots here, despite the fact it's been the "ice cream of the future" for the last 30 years. Russ's brain is in a pretzel.

RUSS

Thatch, I gotta tell you something.

Thatcher stops, lowers the cup for the first time.

THATCHER

What's up, bud?

RUSS

When I went back to the office last night, Keaton was there.

THATCHER

Was he practicing ping pong? He lost the other day. What a leader.

RUSS

Yea, but that's not what I wanted to tell you. After I uploaded my code I decided to poke around. I wanted to see what notification Haley got the day we met.

THATCHER

You guys should get your two messages framed so you can hang it in the guest room of your future house which I will often frequent.

RUSS

That's the thing. Mine sent me to the grocery store. Hers tells her to go to the park. We met by accident. We're not a match.

THATCHER

What do you mean??

Before he can elaborate they're interrupted by an approaching Simone and...Haley. Duh.

THATCHER (CONT'D)

(attempted whisper)

Are you gonna tell her??

Russ with the universal subtle head shake. Shut upppppp.

HALEY

Tell me what?

THATCHER

That we want to do the sea dragon ride again.

SIMONE

Will you please stop licking that.

THATCHER

Never heard her say that before, ya know what I mean?

He elbows Russ in the ribs. Haley laughs.

THATCHER (CONT'D)

Haley gets me.

He offers her a high five. It's not returned. He drops the empty plastic cup on a table. Simone WHACKS him in the arm.

SIMONE

Pick that up this instant.

Thatcher accepts his punishment. Simone practically drags him by the ear to find a trash can like the spoiled child he is.

Haley checks her phone.

RUSS

You having fun?

HALEY

Yea, of course.

Russ looks behind him into the arcade section of Pacific Park. He head nods for her to come with him.

They approach the Ring Toss. A CARNEY (18) sits behind the booth. He's literally the highest person you've ever seen.

RUSS

Hey man, you think I can snag one of these rings? I don't want to play. I mean can I just keep one?

The Carney isn't even sure if Russ spoke. He mouth breathes in Russ's general direction.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Cool, gonna take that as a yes.

Russ pockets a tiny RED RING from the bucket and leads Haley back to the boardwalk.

HALEY

You a collector?

RUSS

I like to keep trinkets from life's big moments.

HALEY

This is a big moment? Didn't realize 32 was a special birthday.

RUSS

Not that. It's your first time to the Pier.

HALEY

And you've been 32 times.

RUSS

Ten! We started coming on my birthday after college. Thatch pretends it's a big tradition we can't break, but I know it's more for him than me.

HALEY

So accommodating on your birthday. I'm a diva on mine.

Again with the phone.

RUSS

You sure you're good?

HALEY

Absolutely. The girls are opening that improv show tonight, I was wishing them luck.

RUSS

Wait, what? That's tonight? Why aren't you there??

HALEY

I told them I couldn't make it.

RUSS

Who's gonna be the devil in Prada?

HALEY

That's not my only character!

RUSS

But none of those hacks pull it off like you do. Let's go! You can still get there in plenty of time.

HALEY

I'm not bailing on you.

RUSS

Who cares? It's just a birthday.

He starts to walk out but she grabs his arm.

HALEY

Hey. I'm right where I want to be.

She's goes up on her tip toes and gives him a kiss.

HALEY (CONT'D)

Plus, they're only up for like 10 minutes and the crowd sucks.

RUSS

There she is.

He playfully pokes her in the stomach. She flinches and grabs his finger.

HALEY

Stop it! I hate when you do that.

Lie. That smile gives her away.

RUSS

No you don't.

Russ agrees with the smile.

HALEY

I'll eat it.

She opens her mouth wide and slowly raises his extended finger as he fake struggles.

RUSS

No! Please no!

Simone walks up.

SIMONE

Are you cannibals ready?

Russ and Haley relent and follow Simone after Thatcher who's halfway to the sea dragon already. Before they get too far...

VOICE (O.S.)

Haley!

Haley stops. Looks around. Enter...Zeke. Dun Dun Dunnnnnn.

HALEY

Zeke. Hey. Hi.

She shoulder checks awkwardly, then gives him a 5 out of 10 hug at best. Not pretty.

ZEKE

How are you? It's been a while.

Damn, has he been working out more? Is that a new haircut?? And that jawline could cut glass!

HALEY

Yea, it has. I'm good.

ZEKE

You look great.

HALEY

Thank you.

ZEKE

I see you're doing your best
tourist impression.

HALEY

(shrugs)

Kind of.

She gestures over her shoulder at Russ. He's waiting with
Thatcher and Simone by the ride entrance.

HALEY (CONT'D)

It's a birthday tradition. I
couldn't pass it up.

Zeke looks over her shoulder at his competition.

ZEKE

Are you here with somebody?

She looks at Zeke again. OK, that's definitely a new haircut.
But no, stop, she looks back at Russ. Sets herself.

HALEY

Yes. That's Russ. I'm here with
him.

ZEKE

That's awesome, Haley. I'm happy
for you. He's a lucky guy.

HALEY

Are you just going on rides by
yourself?

GIRL VOICE (O.S.)

Zeke? Zeke?

He motions to Haley to wait one second and turns around.
Haley's embarrassed.

ZEKE

I'm right here!

HALEY

Oh, I didn't realize you were with a girl.

ZEKE

Nah, it's just my mum.

ZEKE'S MOM (late 50s) and a BOY (10) run up beside him.

ZEKE'S MOM

Bathroom line was longer than anticipated.

ZEKE

Mum, this is my friend Haley.

HALEY

Hi.

She offers her hand but Zeke's mom brings her in for a hug. It's a 4 out of 10 from Haley. We're regressing here.

ZEKE'S MOM

It's nice to meet you, Haley.

ZEKE

And this is my nephew, Max.

Zeke ruffles Max's hair. Max smiles through his powdered sugar mustache.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

He's got a slight drug problem, but we love him. You ready to ride, pal?

Max nods and runs off. Zeke's mom chases after him.

ZEKE (CONT'D)

Great to see you Haley.
(yells past her to Russ)
Happy birthday!

And then he takes off after his family. Haley turns on her heels and ambles back to Russ.

RUSS

Who was that?

HALEY

That was Zeke. I, uh...well, we used to...ummmm, I...

Bail her out here, Russ. Please.

RUSS
Had lots and lots of sex with him.

A beat. The truth? Why not?

HALEY
Yea. Sorry.

RUSS
Don't apologize. I wanna sleep with
that guy! Did you see his haircut?

Haley laughs. Genuinely happy. She falls face first into
Russ's chest.

RUSS (CONT'D)
Let's go ride a lizard.

INT. TRICIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tricia's all dolled up. She grabs her purse and runs for the
door. Haley's at the kitchen counter. Marcus does dishes.

TRICIA
Thanks-for-the-help-love-you-bye!

She blows Haley a kiss on her way out.

HALEY
Good luck!

MARCUS
Bye hon-
(door BANGS closed)
She's gone.

Marcus is in need of a dryer. Haley volunteers for tribute.

HALEY
Let me give you a hand.

MARCUS
Please, it's no trouble. Sit.

Haley insists. She grabs a dish towel and puts it to work.

HALEY
We made the mess, not you.

Marcus knows he won't win this fight, so he might as well get
on board. He hands her each item as he finishes cleaning.

MARCUS

The wedding prep's coming along.

HALEY

It helps when you've had everything planned out since you were eight.

MARCUS

I really appreciate you helping her out with the process. She doesn't show it, but she's stressing.

HALEY

We differ on cocktail hour hor d'oeuvre preferences, but otherwise she's crushing it.

MARCUS

It should be fun.

HALEY

I think I'm gonna bring Russ.

MARCUS

That's wonderful! Tricia approving of your plus one is not a scenario I saw coming to fruition.

Haley whips her dish towel at him playfully.

HALEY

What's that supposed to mean? Come on, what does she say about me when I'm not here? Spill it.

MARCUS

No, nothing. She just wants you to have the best life. Her version of the best life. Which means you need to find a nice guy, settle down, and have a minivan's worth of kids.

HALEY

Ugh. I'd rather be hit by a minivan full of kids.

MARCUS

The gentlemen you usually bring around, they don't...and I'm being delicate here...fit the fantasy she has for you. But Russ...

HALEY

You're a fan?

MARCUS

It doesn't matter what I think.
What do you think?

Haley winces. Can't fathom she's saying this.

HALEY

I really like him. Listen, I'm
nowhere near marriage. That hasn't
changed. But he's been such a
pleasant...surprise.

MARCUS

How so?

HALEY

You know me. I've been saying
forever that these apps and dating
sites don't work. But then I tried
it, and we're so compatible.

MARCUS

You like the same things.

HALEY

It's not even that. We have a lot
in common, sure, but it's our
attitude about the things we don't.
I run into problems with guys
because I'm never around. That's
always where it ends. They want to
see more of me, or they don't want
to do something casual at our age,
or they need me to give up things I
love. Russ is different. He likes
it when I'm independent. He wants
me to chase my passions.

MARCUS

That must be a nice change.

HALEY

It's refreshing. I'm not operating
under this ticking clock. Neither
is he. At every turn I think "this
is going to be when he breaks" but
each time I underestimate him.
Tricia kept telling me I'd find
someone I want to miss things for.
She was right.

MARCUS

You should do an ad for Meet Cute.

HALEY

I'm a believer! I didn't want to need a dating app to find something like what you and Tricia have, but it's a good thing I gave it a shot.

MARCUS

Yea, we got really lucky.

Haley's cell phone RINGS. She checks the screen.

HALEY

Do you mind?

Of course he doesn't. Haley ducks into...

INT. TRICIA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The approximately one million outfits that Tricia tried on before she left lie discarded and forgotten on the bed.

She answers her phone on SPEAKER while folding clothes. See? She's a good friend too.

HALEY

Josie cat! How are you?

Josie's voice ECHOES out of the phone speakers.

JOSIE (O.S.)

Guess. What. No, don't. I'll tell you.

Haley waits...

HALEY

Are you still there?

JOSIE (O.S.)

Yes, I was letting it build.

HALEY

I'm ready. It's fully built.

JOSIE (O.S.)

I was trying to wait to tell you in person but you're never free and it's exploding out of me. You know the show we did the other night?

HALEY

Yes of course, I should have called you. How'd it go?

JOSIE (O.S.)

We were pretty good. Noel's Julia Child impression is horrible, which is nearly impossible, but that's neither here nor there.

HALEY

What are we doing here?

JOSIE (O.S.)

I'm texting you a picture. Look what happened!!

Haley's phone BUZZES. She puts down a blouse and opens the text. It's a picture message of her three friends. On stage. Smiling. With MERYL STREEP.

Like Meryl Streep, Meryl Streep. THE Meryl Streep.

I'm sorry, I'm not sure you're following. I mean literally Meryl Streep showed up and took a picture with them.

Haley's voice catches. She zooms in. This can't be real.

HALEY

Oh...my god...that's..

JOSIE (O.S.)

Isn't that everything!?

HALEY

How?

JOSIE (O.S.)

Byron put us up on the website and apparently someone in her circle saw it and sent her the info. I don't know what inspired her to actually show up, but Haley, she was there! I touched Meryl! With my hands!

HALEY

I can't believe this.

JOSIE (O.S.)

I had to tell you. I knew you'd freak. I'm sweating just talking about it. It's gross. I'm so sorry you weren't there, Haley. When I saw her my first thought was I'm dead and in heaven but my second thought was I wish you were here too. I hope you're not upset.

HALEY
Not at all!

She is.

HALEY (CONT'D)
I think this is awesome!

She doesn't.

HALEY (CONT'D)
I knew that would be a great night.

She didn't.

HALEY (CONT'D)
I'm so happy for you, Josie.

Eh, sure, we'll give her this one.

INT. HALEY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Haley has a glass of white wine and a book in her lap. A POUNDING on the door distracts her.

She saunters to her front door and opens it. Tricia barges past Haley into the house, BAWLING CRYING. Haley grabs a box of tissues as Tricia flops on the couch.

HALEY
T, what is it??

Haley waits patiently as Tricia whimpers herself quiet. Tricia gropes blindly for a tissue. She's looked better.

TRICIA
It's Marcus.

HALEY
Is he OK?

TRICIA
He could be in a ditch somewhere
for all I care.

HALEY
OK, OK, talk to me. What happened?

Tricia reaches for Haley's full glass of wine on the table. She downs the entire thing.

HALEY (CONT'D)
Easy...easy...well...sure.

Tricia catches her breath.

TRICIA
He called off the wedding.

Bomb. Dropped.

HALEY
Oh my god.

TRICIA
And now my life is over.

HALEY
No it's not. Everything is going to
be alright. This, this, isn't
happening. What did he say?

TRICIA
What do you mean? He said I don't
want to marry you and now your life
is over.

HALEY
Did he say why?

TRICIA
He said....he said...

And we're sobbing again. Haley rubs Tricia's back until she's
ready to talk.

TRICIA (CONT'D)
He said it's because of you.

Wait. I thought the bomb already dropped. There's a second
bomb?!

HALEY
What?! That doesn't make any sense.

TRICIA
You said something to him the other
night, when I left for my shoot.

HALEY
I didn't say anything! I mean, we
spoke. But I didn't saying anything
about you guys. We didn't even
discuss...we talked about Russ!

TRICIA
I know. It was the way you talked
about him.

HALEY

What?

TRICIA

(quoting)

He lets you be you, and you're constantly surprising each other. You love what you have in common but you love what you don't have in common even more.

HALEY

I'm not sure I put it that way, exactly.

TRICIA

It doesn't matter! Marcus thinks we don't have what you and Russ have.

HALEY

Russ and I don't have anything! T, I'll talk to him. This is crazy. You and Marcus have been together how long? It's just jitters. This happens. I'll fix this.

Haley gets up.

TRICIA

Hails, no.

She's pacing.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

Hails, sit down.

We've entered pacing for pacing's sake mode.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

HALEY.

She stops. Sits back down.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

He's right.

HALEY

I'm sorry?

TRICIA

He's right. I've felt it for a long time but I didn't want to admit it.

HALEY
That's ridiculous!

TRICIA
It's not. You don't understand it like I do. Marcus and I, we...grew apart. We're different people now than when we met. We've been trying to keep it together but we lost that magic.

HALEY
People change. That's normal. You love each other!

TRICIA
Of course we do. We always will. We're just not perfect for each other. We don't want the same things out of life any more. We don't want a life together.

HALEY
T, I don't know what to say. I'm so sorry.

TRICIA
Don't be sorry. It's good we were honest about it. I'm completely miserable, but right now, I need my best friend.

Haley throws her arm around Tricia. Tricia takes the blanket off the back of the couch and covers them with it.

INT. RUSS'S APARTMENT - DAY

Russ's playing FIFA on Play Station in gym shorts and his all-time favorite t-shirt. AKA living the dream.

His phone RINGS. The game's paused.

RUSS
Hey, you here?
(beat)
I'll buzz you in.

He does, from his phone. Unpause. The button mashing continues until Haley enters.

She drops her purse down on the couch and stands in front of the TV. Looming. Hardcore looming.

Russ tries to look past her at the screen, this is an important game after all. Then he gets the message. Pause.

RUSS (CONT'D)
What's up?

HALEY
Tricia and Marcus split up.

RUSS
Holy-

HALEY
I know. Apparently, Marcus came to this decision after seeing us together.

Slash hearing her drool over Russ, but that can be our little secret for now.

RUSS
That's...interesting.

HALEY
He wants to find someone who can give him what we have.

RUSS
Tricia must be a wreck.

HALEY
She is. But she thinks he's right.

RUSS
She's gonna need your help.

HALEY
We had a girls night last night.
I'm now out of tissues and wine.
But she survived.

Haley takes a seat on the couch.

HALEY (CONT'D)
Do you think we're good together?

RUSS
This feels like a trap. You don't like talking about anything serious.

HALEY

I promise the ban on discussing serious subjects has been temporarily lifted. You may fire when ready.

Russ, hesitant. That sounds like something a trap would say.

RUSS

Ummmm, yea, Haley, I do. Don't you?

HALEY

Of course. But like, so good that we broke up Tricia and Marcus good?

RUSS

That puts unnecessary pressure on it, but I do feel like I'm on the same wavelength with you more than with other people in the past.

HALEY

I'm probably in my own head here, but after we met, despite my attempts to complicate things, it's been so effortless. It almost seems too easy. Does that make sense?

RUSS

Sure. Love...

(off her look)

not that I'm labeling anything...is never easy. It's compromise. It's acceptance. It's a job. Expect you don't get the weekends off. You work at it every day. Attraction can be easy, especially when you're lucky enough to find someone who's humming the same tune.

HALEY

And you think we got lucky?

RUSS

Absolutely. We're lucky to even be alive at the same time, let alone find each other.

HALEY

Can you find out what the app saw in us to put us together?

Should probably tell her here, dude.

RUSS
It doesn't really work like that,
you don't find out-

HALEY
Then we could ask Keaton. He can
tell us.

RUSS
I'm not comfortable doing that.

HALEY
Wouldn't it be good to know?

RUSS
To know what? Which part of our
profiles made us a match?

HALEY
Yes!

RUSS
We work, Haley. Can't that be
enough?

She takes his hand. Trying to be compassionate.

HALEY
Russ, I didn't believe in programs
telling me who my match was. Now,
because of you, I do. And I know
I'm spiraling about Tricia. I get
it. But I need the confirmation.
Will you ask him? Please.

Russ would give this girl his entire heart.

RUSS
I can't. I'm sorry.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

ON Tricia, waiting in her makeup room.

TRICIA
You sound insane.

REVERSE ON Haley, standing opposite her, affronted.

HALEY
I'd do it for you.

TRICIA

First of all, would you? Second of all, I could get in trouble.

HALEY

How??

TRICIA

I can't harass the guests. Plus, he weirds me out now.

HALEY

You're not harassing anyone. You're reaching out to a contact. It's called networking. Maybe don't FaceTime him, though.

TRICIA

What do you want me to say? Hey Keaton, it's Tricia Lawson. Remember me? I wanted to introduce you to my friend who has some invasive questions for you about the inner workings of your program that are coming from a totally healthy mental state.

HALEY

Maybe a little less wordy, but it's a good first draft.

TRICIA

Hails, I've got enough problems right now.

HALEY

You're right. I'm so insensitive. I almost didn't ask.

TRICIA

Did you and Russ have a fight or something? Does he know you're doing this?

HALEY

No, we're good, and no, he doesn't, but I...it would mean a lot to me if you would try.

Tricia sighs at her best friend. She been there.

TRICIA

I'll do it this afternoon.

HALEY

T, I love you.

TRICIA

You mean you owe me. That's better than love.

HALEY

I gotta run. Text me.

Haley moves in to kiss Tricia on the cheek.

TRICIA

Not the face! Not the face! They just touched me up.

Haley laughs, and blows her a kiss instead.

INT. MEET CUTE OFFICE - DAY

Thatcher's walking around, holding a stack of papers, whistling to himself. Having a nice little Wednesday.

He looks up just in time to see HALEY entering Keaton's office. He freezes. Drops the papers. They go EVERYWHERE. Sprints off.

INT. KEATON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Keaton has the coolest desk chair of all time. It's like perfect posture meets euphoric comfort. On his desk he's got a productivity toy for every day of the week.

When Haley walks in, Keaton pops out of his chair. No one has ever been happier to see anyone.

KEATON

Welcome, welcome!

He shakes her hand with both of his. Then leads her to a sitting area where they sit on opposite couches. Haley sees a full length mirror next to his desk. Frowns to herself.

HALEY

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet me, Mr. Brown. I know you're extremely busy.

KEATON

Please, a friend of Tricia's is a friend of mine. And it's Keaton.
(MORE)

KEATON (CONT'D)

How is Tricia by the way? What a little firecracker she is.

HALEY

She's great. Still in a very solid relationship.

What do I keep telling you? Good friend.

KEATON

Ah, well, not a surprise. It's a pleasure to meet you, Haley.

HALEY

I love your offices.

KEATON

It's not too shabby, is it? I designed it myself. I was going for chic hotel lobby vibe while also promoting good work flow. Can I get you anything? Water? Food? Our smoothies are delicious.

HALEY

I'm fine, thanks.

KEATON

Let's get to it, then. Tricia tells me you have some questions about the app?

HALEY

I do. Mostly, how it works.

INT. MEET CUTE OFFICES - MEANWHILE

Russ's wired in at his work station. Thatcher skids to a stop next to him and rips the headphones out of the jack.

RUSS

Thatch. Come on. Can I swing by later? I'm super busy.

THATCHER

Dude. Listen to me. Code Purple. Code. Purple.

RUSS

What's that one again? I don't have my chart.

THATCHER
Haley's in Keaton's office.

Russ's face drops. Sprints off. These guys should run track.

INT. KEATON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

KEATON
To put it simply, it matches people up and attempts to put them in situations where they could run into each other. The hope being they hit it off organically, and wind up together.

HALEY
Could you be more specific about the functions? I know the general premise, I was trying to find out the nitty gritty.

KEATON
Certainly. You make profiles, answer the questions, take the tests, and then our algorithm ranks your responses. It's a 100 point scale. Some are scored as strong responses, some are less so. We try to match up core values, while also flagging issues that might be a deal breaker. It's not without flaws, nothing is, but we're very satisfied with the results.

HALEY
Could I see my results?

KEATON
Our user base doesn't get to see other user responses. It's an invasion of privacy. I assume you met someone on the app?

HALEY
Yea, he actually-

The office door BURSTS open. Russ enters as calmly as one can while they're experiencing complete and utter panic.

HALEY (CONT'D)
-is right there.

KEATON

RP!??

(Eyes her up and down)
Nicely done big guy.

OK, keep your pants on.

RUSS

What are you doing here?

KEATON

Is this a surprise?

All time smirk from Keaton. Rubs his hands together. He loves a little drama.

HALEY

(to Russ)
Tricia set this up.
(to Keaton)
And It's my match. We're both here.
I agree it's OK to show us.

RUSS

But I don't. You can't go behind my back like this. I'm sorry, Keaton.
I tried to explain to her-

KEATON

No apology necessary. Unfortunately my dear, your request is a legal matter. You understand. NDAs would have to be signed-

HALEY

I'll sign whatever you want.

Keaton's getting a little uncomfortable.

KEATON

Our user base is growing exponentially every day, and the matchup analysis is running hundreds of combinations a second around the world. It would be a process trying to find your specific result.

HALEY

I can wait.

RUSS

He said no, Haley.

It's hard to say who looks more on edge, Keaton or Russ. Keaton glances at his office door.

KEATON

What are you doing here, Haley?
Really?

HALEY

I need to know what the app saw in us. It's important.

KEATON

I'm afraid I can't--

HALEY

Listen. You had sex with Tricia's makeup artist and made her hold up a mirror so you could look yourself in the face while you got off.

Cat's got Keaton's tongue. You're in big trouble, buddy. Russ eases away from him. Notices the full length mirror. Frowns.

HALEY (CONT'D)

There are cameras in the greenroom. Either you help me out or I blast that video on Twitter for the whole world to see.

KEATON

I don't...There aren't cameras in there.

HALEY

One way to find out.

Keaton stares at them both. Can't risk it. Then, for the first time, he drops the act.

KEATON

OK, OK. If you're actually willing to sign something...I can show you the truth.

INT. BACK ROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON a signature line. A pen drags Haley's signature across it.

WIDEN to reveal a dark, cramped office. A messy desk. A laptop with several displays. Uncomfortable and bad habit forming chairs.

KEATON

What I'm about to tell you can't get out. No one would believe you anyway, but now that you've signed this I'll also sue you for everything you own.

Haley waits for more, but Keaton grills her.

HALEY

I wont say anything.

RUSS

What about me?

KEATON

You're already under a noncompete contract. That ship has sailed, RP.

Keaton shakes his head. Can't believe he's doing this.

KEATON (CONT'D)

You two aren't a match. Because no one is. Meet Cute is.....made up.

HALEY

What are you talking about? You match people at random??

KEATON

No. It doesn't exist. There is no Meet Cute.

RUSS

Keaton, enough jokes.

KEATON

Does it look like I'm joking?

It does not. But, what???

HALEY

Start making sense please.

KEATON

Everything I've ever said about the invention of Meet Cute is true. I wanted a RomCom moment. I tried to make a dating app that could create that. But it didn't work. I was crushed. I thought I could make the world a happier place. Then I realized...I could. All I had to do was say it worked.

RUSS
I don't follow.

KEATON
It's simple. I create Meet Cute. I tell people to do the profiles and the blah blah blah. Then...I do nothing. All the app actually does is ping your phone at random intervals, suggesting you get out of the house. The entire premise of Meet Cute is that your soulmate could be anyone, anywhere. Guess what? That was already true!! But I had to remind us. I'm opening the eyes of the world. All people needed to find their soulmate was to think an app had set it up for them. Be outgoing, be friendly, SPEAK to people instead of burying your head in your phone, and look at the connections you can make.

Russ and Haley are stunned.

HALEY
I'm gonna throw up.

KEATON
Don't look at me like that. Consider the results. More people are in lasting relationship from Meet Cute than any other app or dating site ever made. They're finding love on their own! Who cares if I gave them a placebo?

HALEY
You're a fraud! You're intentionally deceiving people and they're making real life decisions based on your lies!

KEATON
I'm not! I did lie, yes, but I was only trying to help. And you keep ignoring the fact that it works.

HALEY
It doesn't work. There isn't anything to work.

KEATON

Yes there is. WE work. People work.
But only when we're willing to open
ourselves up.

RUSS

You don't even have a real
compatibility algorithm?

KEATON

Of course I do. I had to show the
investors something to get funding.

Haley was just tossed a life vest, and she'll cling to it.

HALEY

Can we use it?

KEATON

What?

HALEY

Me and Russ. You have all our info
in your system. All the blah blah
blah. Can you plug us into your
algorithm?

KEATON

I can. But I won't.

HALEY

Why?

KEATON

Because I've never actually used it
other than on simulated users. It's
not real.

HALEY

(fuming)

Meet Cute isn't real and you don't
have a problem using that!

Haley steps at him like she might hit him. Keaton flinches.

KEATON

Jesus, alright!

He sits down at the computer and logs in. His fingers fly
across the keys. Easily 120 words per minute. He pulls up the
program. While he works, Russ addresses Haley.

RUSS

Haley, we shouldn't do this. I don't need Keaton's broken code to tell me something I already know.

HALEY

Why not? You believe in us. I believe in us too. This will prove it without a doubt.

Keaton's ready. He faces them one more time.

KEATON

RP's right, Haley. It's a bad idea. Are you sure you want this?

HALEY

Hit the button.

Keaton and Russ exhale their mutual disappointment. Keaton's finger hovers, then he punches the return key.

The programs is calculating...calculating...calculating...

BING!

A number appears. That number is red. That number is 24.

Shit.

HALEY (CONT'D)

24? What's 24?

KEATON

Well. It's not good.

Keaton tries to mend bridges.

KEATON (CONT'D)

I haven't run it in a long time, it could probably use some updates.

Haley, stone faced, stalks out.

INT. RUSS'S APARTMENT - LATER

Haley blows through the place into Russ's bedroom. Door SLAMS. Russ trails close behind her. KNOCKS.

RUSS

Haley?

Nothing.

RUSS (CONT'D)
Haley. Can I come in?

HALEY (O.S.)
No.

RUSS
OK, I'm coming in. It's my room.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Haley paces. She fiddles with the RED RING from the pier.
Wont look at Russ, who stands in the doorway.

RUSS
That was-

HALEY
I refuse to believe this. The whole
thing is fake?? We're not even a
match...

RUSS
According to Keaton. Who cares? It
never bothered me before.

HALEY
You're probably right. I-

Cease pacing. Replaces the RED RING on his dresser.

HALEY (CONT'D)
What do you mean, before? Like
before 10 minutes ago?

Fuck. Scramble.

RUSS
....Yea. I mean our score, or
whatever, never mattered to me
before.

HALEY
Did you know? This whole time?

RUSS
Did I know what?

HALEY
That we weren't a match. Did. You.
KNOW?

For the love of god, Russ, deny til you die. You're in too deep. Please. Pleeese.

RUSS
(gigantic pause)
Not the whole time.

Such an idiot.

HALEY
You're unbelievable.

She tries to storm out but he stops her.

RUSS
Hold on a minute. It's complicated. I didn't know the entire thing was fake, but I did know we weren't a match. I found out when I was adding my new code. We were already seeing each other. I didn't want to screw that up.

HALEY
We're not even supposed to be together! We broke up Tricia and Marcus because they wanted what we have. We're a 24. You put your Christmas lights up too early!

RUSS
We didn't break up Tricia and Marcus. Tricia and Marcus broke up Tricia and Marcus. If it took us for them to get there, then they should thank us.

HALEY
That's nice. I'll be sure to tell T where she can send her thank you card.

RUSS
I'm sorry. I'm not trying to be mean. But their relationship has nothing to do with us.

HALEY
Maybe we need to take a break. I don't know if I can do this.

RUSS
Do you mean that?

HALEY

The girls met Meryl Streep.

RUSS

What?

HALEY

Josie and the girls. That night they opened. Meryl Streep showed up at the theater. She took a picture with them. Without me. Because I wasn't there. I was at your birthday.

RUSS

I told you we should go! You didn't want to.

HALEY

That's not the point. I don't care about meeting Meryl Streep. The point is I'm missing stuff for you.

RUSS

Great, here we go. Lecture me about your commitment issues. First it's work, now it's this. Can't wait to hear what it'll be next month.

HALEY

I'm spending all this time with you and I'm neglecting all the things I want.

RUSS

Are you listening to yourself? You just said that wasn't important.

HALEY

I said I didn't have time for this.

RUSS

You act like your time is more valuable than everyone else's. You've got so much to do you couldn't possibly fit in a boyfriend. But you can't imagine a world where I have anything to do except date you.

HALEY

I never said that. I said I want to be the version of a girlfriend that I envision. And you lied to me!

RUSS
I didn't lie.

HALEY
You withheld the truth. Because you were being selfish. Even when you knew it was messing up my life. Messing up my friend's lives.

RUSS
Do you want me to admit I was afraid this would happen if I told you? Of course I was! You finally gave this a chance and we were happy. I knew you'd overreact. I was just trying to protect you.

HALEY
I didn't ask you to do that!
I didn't ask for any of this!

RUSS
Too bad. You got it. It's here now. You don't want to talk about the serious stuff?
(shrug, sorry...)
I like you. I like you a lot. I might love you if you'd ever let me. We all get to choose who we spend our time with. And I know you have all these things you want to accomplish, but eventually you figure out that success isn't that fun unless there's someone to share it with. I want to share it with you.

Time to pull out of this tailspin, right? Pull up! Pull up!

HALEY
I can't.

Damn.

HALEY (CONT'D)
I see where I want to take my life and I don't see you there. It was a nice fling, but that's it.

Genuinely hurt, the wind is knocked out of his fight sails.

RUSS
Wow. Whatever makes you feel better.

HALEY

Don't get mad at me. I warned you.
I told you not to get hurt.

RUSS

That's what you don't get, Haley.
You hurt me more while we're
together than you do when we're
apart.

HALEY

Then let me do you a favor.

And just like that, poof, she's gone.

CUE SONG: *After You* written by Meg Myers

BEGIN THE DEPRESSING BREAKUP MONTAGE

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Simone and Thatcher sit across from each other in a booth. Russ next to Thatcher, third wheeling. Thatcher, laughing overly hard at one of his jokes, puts essentially half the spinach dip on one chip. Simone WHACKS his arm. Russ sulks.

INT. HALEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Haley and Tricia. Baggy sweatpants. Baggy sweatshirts. Black and white movie on the tv. Tricia holds a box of tissues. Haley holds a book, reading on the side.

EXT. LA - DAY

Time passing. Summer fun all around the city. At least someone's enjoying the weather. The entire season zooms by.

INT. MEET CUTE OFFICE - NIGHT

The whole office is dark. Russ tries hitting to himself at the folded up ping pong table but his heart's not in it.

EXT./INT. HALEY'S CAR - MORNING

Haley's stopped at a red light. She reaches for her coffee. Her eyes wander out the passenger window to a bench on the corner. A huge AD for PACIFIC PARK at the SANTA MONICA PIER stares back at her. She holds on it, then snaps her eyes forward. The light changes. She gases it.

EXT. PALISADES HOUSE - DAY

Mid kickball game. Russ's at the plate. Trying to have fun. He crushes a home run. Georgia is FIRED UP. He smiles at his sister. Looks to the sideline. There's no one there.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A high top table. Haley with a group of GUYS and GIRLS. HALLOWEEN DECORATIONS fill the bar. An EMCEE on a stool with a microphone asks a trivia question. The whole table puts their heads together, whispering. Haley, apathetic.

INT. RUSS'S BEDROOM - DAY

Russ notices the RED RING on his dresser. He slams it into the top drawer. He digs through a closet. Pulls down a box and drops it on the floor. In marker, the side reads CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS. He looks at it. He SIGHS.

END MONTAGE - FADE OUT SONG

INT. TRICIA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Haley and Tricia are surrounded by Chinese take out. They could build a fort with these boxes.

TRICIA

Do you think we're ordering in too much? I mean, look at my hair.

She pulls it in front of her so Haley can really see it.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

Didn't my hair used to be shinier?

HALEY

I don't think so?

TRICIA

It did. It's all this junk food. I know it. Now my hair is so...bleh.

HALEY

Your hair isn't bleh, T, you look great. If it's bothering you that much, eat some blueberries.

TRICIA

Does that add shine??

HALEY

I read they're high in
antioxidants. They "combat free
radicals" or something.

They munch a few more bites, but Tricia's over it.

TRICIA

We probably should get out more
though, don't you think? Like out,
out. Dance. Talk to boys. Make them
buy us drinks.

HALEY

That feels like so much work. Maybe
I'm getting old.

TRICIA

Or maybe you're not as over Russ as
you thin-

HALEY

I'm over Russ.

Don't get stabbed by Tricia's PIERCING look.

TRICIA

That was a little rash, babe. And
you never actually told me what
went down with Keaton.

HALEY

It doesn't matter. I had to think
about my priorities. I was missing
out on too much.

TRICIA

Oh my god, the girls met Meryl
Streep. So what?

HALEY

Excuse me?

TRICIA

Don't get me wrong, I would do
despicable things to have her
career. But it's a stupid picture.
It's not a big deal.

HALEY

It's what the picture represents.

TRICIA

What does that even mean? You have to stop doing this.

HALEY

Doing what?

TRICIA

The constant self sabotage. Finding anything you can to destroy relationships. Making mountains out of mole hills.

HALEY

So I'm supposed to let this guy dictate my life?

TRICIA

You're supposed to stop being so scared. This defense mechanism kicks in as soon as you start to feel vulnerable. Let yourself be happy. For once.

HALEY

I wasn't happy. And we weren't gonna work out anyway.

Careful where you wave that look around, Tricia!

TRICIA

I know you pretty well, Hails.

HALEY

Then you know you should drop this.

TRICIA

Fine, you're over him, but I'm still having a tough time. I'm not asking you to do a juice cleanse with me, I'm asking you to put on some heels and wear something that makes your boobs pop. I think it would be good for both of us to get back on our feet. And then theoretically off them.

INT. MEET CUTE OFFICE - DAY

KITCHEN. Thatcher mulling over his options in their super fancy cafe. It's snack city up in here.

RUSS

How do you not know what you want
before you walk in here?

THATCHER

Sometimes I'm in the mood for
chips. Sometimes I want a candy
bar. Who cares?

RUSS

I understand that. I'm saying the
offerings haven't changed for the
duration of our employment. Don't
you think "today I want a candy
bar," then go get it?

THATCHER

I'm a shoot from the hip kinda guy,
bud. I live in the moment.

RUSS

Tell the moment to hurry up, would
ya? I have work to do.

THATCHER

Salt and Vinegar. Last bag. Nice.

Thatcher reaches into the rack and grabs the sole survivor.

Keaton ENTERS.

THATCHER (CONT'D)

Ah, Mr. Brown!

KEATON

My two superstars!

THATCHER

(mock tone)

Come here often?

It doesn't land.

THATCHER (CONT'D)

Would you like a chip, sir

He proffers the Lays bag. Keaton takes the ENTIRE thing.

KEATON

Tremendous choice.

Thatcher is heart broken but can't help himself.

THATCHER

I'm glad I could assist you with a mid-day snack. My job here is done. That is to say not my real job, of course, sir.

(beat)

I'll show myself out.

He wastes no time doing just that. Keaton snacks on chips.

KEATON

RP.

RUSS

Keaton.

KEATON

You ever getting back together with that little minx you were dating?

RUSS

People don't like being lied to.

KEATON

You mustn't blame me for this. It sounds like you're the one who wasn't as up front as you should've been. Honesty is everything, RP. In life and in love.

RUSS

I feel terrible and this was just a small lie. Can't imagine how you feel.

KEATON

I feel like the world's falling in love, and they have us to thank.

(grabs Russ's shoulder)

Make sure you let me know if I have the green light with what's her name.

This fucking guy.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

ON HALEY. Trendy spot for cocktails? Check. Heels? Check. Boobs popping? Check.

Someone approaching gets her attention.

Tricia?? Nope. Zeke. UGH.

She gets up as he greets her with a kiss on the cheek. Does this guy get a fresh haircut every day?!?!

HALEY

Thanks for meeting me.

ZEKE

For sure. I was surprised to hear from you.

HALEY

I'm full of 'em. Surprises I mean.

Not her best.

HALEY (CONT'D)

How's your mom?

OK, that was worse.

ZEKE

You wanna talk about my mum?

HALEY

No. I don't. Why is this weird? This shouldn't be weird.

ZEKE

Are you still seeing that guy?

HALEY

No.

ZEKE

We're not really relationship types, are we?

HALEY

(hesitates)

I guess not.

ZEKE

Do you wanna get a drink?

HALEY

Desperately.

JUMP CUT

Haley and Zeke, crying laughing, much looser now. A fruity cocktail in front of her. Whiskey neat for Zeke. Swoon.

ZEKE

They were just trying to sing
karaoke as a family!

HALEY

We thought the seats were open! The
waiter delivered food to the table.
What was I gonna do? Not eat it?

ZEKE

Yes! It was their dinner!

HALEY

Once I realized what happened I had
to pretend we did nothing wrong.

ZEKE

You're the worst.

HALEY

I am. I'm also drunk.

Haley takes a big gulp. Zeke polishes off his whiskey.
Doesn't even make a face. His hand lands on Haley's knee.

ZEKE

One more at my place?

Haley thinks for one full heartbeat. This guy's not the
answer, right??

HALEY

Yea.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - AFTERNOON

Russ carries a LARGE POPCORN, layered butter, and a soda
through the lobby. He stops at the popcorn SEASONING.

He grabs the WHITE CHEDDAR just before another hand. Russ
looks to the source. The fellow MOVIE GOER is cute as a
button. She gives him a bashful smile.

MOVIE GOER

Didn't see you there.

RUSS

I'm easy to miss.

He hands her the seasoning. She tries to push it back.

MOVIE GOER

Go ahead, you were here first.

He return volleys.

RUSS
No, I stole it from you.

Guys, this is adorable and all, but there's plenty.

RUSS (CONT'D)
Besides I'm pretty early, I like to see the previews.

MOVIE GOER
Me too. I feel like I'm seeing extra movies. I pay for the previews, there just happens to be a really long one at the end.

Russ gets a kick out of this.

RUSS
Well said. What are you seeing?

MOVIE GOER
The super hero one. I know, I know. There are no stakes, but I love a good butt kicking.

RUSS
Preaching to the choir. I'm here by myself because no one would come with me.

MOVIE GOER
I'm alone too! I thought nobody did this but me. How fun! It's only weird the first time.

RUSS
Yes!

She grabs the SEASONING and pours it on her popcorn. The cap comes off and the entire jar empties into her bucket. Ruined.

RUSS (CONT'D) MOVIE GOER
Oh no! Shoot!

Russ tries to pull the cap out and offer some napkins but it's a lost cause.

RUSS
She might be a goner. Let me get you a new one.

MOVIE GOER

You're sweet, but it's OK. I'm just embarrassed.

(beat, a spark, a grin)

Hey, I have to ask. Are you my Meet Cute?

The smile fades from Russ's face.

RUSS

No...I don't think so.

He hands her his brand new POPCORN. She takes it, a bit sad and very confused, as he leaves the theater.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Tricia looks like she just got out of a killer yoga class. Haley's dressed for work.

Haley sits with a coffee in hand. Tricia gets in the back of the line. Haley gets up to join her.

TRICIA

Sorry I'm late, class ran long.

HALEY

It's OK, I'll wait in line with you but then I gotta get back.

TRICIA

Did you have sex with Zeke?

HALEY

Can you use your library voice please? My coworkers come here.

She scans the customers. A HANDSOME GUY in a LEATHER JACKET gets in line behind them.

TRICIA

They think you're a virgin?

HALEY

No. But you don't have to broadcast it.

TRICIA

I don't like him.

HALEY

I'm aware. You're the one who told me to get back in the saddle.

TRICIA

I didn't mean that horse. But it's done. I'm not mad. I, myself, am back in the game as well.

HALEY

You slept with someone!?

Way too loud. Genuinely shocked.

TRICIA

Library voice. No. God. I'm not ready. But I decided I'm going to join Meet Cute!

Haley starts to say something. Catches herself. Looking at Tricia, she's so hopeful for the future. Who's Haley to take that away? But she doesn't need it. Tell her, Haley.

HALEY

That's...great, T. But you don't need it.

TRICIA

That's sweet, Hails, but I do. I don't remember how this works.

HALEY

Tricia, you're a confident and beautiful woman. Be willing to put yourself out there and you'll see how easy it is. People will want to get to know you. Just pick your head up and start talking. For me.

Tricia's no match for a good compliment.

TRICIA

OK, I'll try.

HALEY

T.

TRICIA

I promise.

She points through her chest to someone behind her.

TRICIA (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll start with handsome leather jacket guy.

They arrive at the register. The BARISTA greets them.

BARISTA
Hi, what can I get for you today?

TRICIA
Can I do large chai latte. It's for Tricia. And can I do it with whole milk, but can you write skim milk on the cup, please?

The barista pauses, sharpie in the air.

TRICIA (CONT'D)
Don't ask questions. Thank you!

She swipes her card and goes to wait. Haley follows as HANDSOME LEATHER JACKET GUY orders.

HALEY
I gotta go, honey. Love you.

Kisses, kisses. Tricia checks her phone and sits. Haley doubles back to the register. She pulls out a TEN DOLLAR BILL and catches the barista's eye.

HALEY (CONT'D)
Ten bucks if you can mix up Tricia's order with that guy's order when you call them out.

Points to HANDSOME LEATHER JACKET GUY. The barista gets it, and pockets the 10 spot. Haley sneaks away, proud of herself.

INT. MEET CUTE OFFICE - DAY

Russ stands by the printer while warm sheets slide out of the machine. Thatcher walks by, bouncing a ping pong ball on a paddle. He finds Russ and enters.

THATCHER
Hey bud, want a game?
(notices the print job)
Wait, what is that?

RUSS
Nothing.

They stare at each other for too long. Then Thatcher lunges for the print job. Russ boxes him out.

RUSS (CONT'D)
Alright! Alright! It's the Thanksgiving recipes.

THATCHER

I knew it! Why do you refuse to consult me first?

RUSS

If I'm the one doing the cooking then I choose the sides dishes.

THATCHER

I have valuable opinions. I eat the most.

RUSS

Please direct all submissions to my inbox for future consideration. What are you guys gonna do when I get married?

THATCHER

Go to your place, obviously.

RUSS

I knew there was a catch to you hosting all these years.

Russ starts to walk out and points at Thatcher's paddle.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Best of 151?

THATCHER

Let me pull up the scorecard.

As he pulls out his phone...

THATCHER (CONT'D)

Oh yea, I wanted to show you something. I don't know if you'll even care...but I was on one of our competing dating apps last night and this came up.

He turns his phone to Russ. We see HALEY. She's looking hot in her staged profile picture. Russ rips it out of his hands.

He SCROLLS the profile. We don't see it.

RUSS

"Loves the beach." Yea, sure, like you went once all summer. "Never see the movie before reading the book." Please, you didn't even know How to Train Your Dragon was a book.

THATCHER
 Alright, bud, calm down.

He takes his phone back.

THATCHER (CONT'D)
 This was a bad idea, maybe. But I
 thought you should know.

Here we go, Russ. Breathe out the bad. Breathe in the good.

RUSS
 Thanks. I appreciate it. I don't
 know what I expected, it's not like
 she was gonna lock herself inside
 from now on.

THATCHER
 Lucky I saw her, really.

Russ, just dawning on him.

RUSS
 Wait, why are you on a dating app??

Thatcher, instantly uncomfortable.

THATCHER
 I bet Simone sexual favors that I
 could get more matches than her.
 (stares off into space)
 I'm not excited about the ball gag.

EXT. APARTMENT - EVENING

CLOSE ON a hand. KNOCKING. And KNOCKING. Eventually, the
 door's swung open to REVEAL...

INT. TRICIA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Tricia. Bathrobe on for the night.

TRICIA
 Wasn't expecting you.

REVERSE ON

RUSS
 Can I come in?

Tricia steps aside to let him pass. They walk to the couch.

RUSS (CONT'D)

I know this is weird, showing up like this.

TRICIA

It's fine, I'm a single woman. I can have men to my apartment at any hour of the night I choose.

RUSS

Uh, yea, of course. So, Haley hasn't been responding to any of my texts. I gave her space, but it's been long enough that we should be able to talk to each other, right? I guess I was wondering if you had any insight.

TRICIA

I gotta be honest, Russ, I don't feel comfortable telling you anything about what Hails is thinking if she doesn't feel comfortable telling you.

RUSS

I understand. I shouldn't have come.

Starts to Charlie Brown walk himself out of there.

TRICIA

But...

Light at the end of the tunnel?? Or is that a train coming...

TRICIA (CONT'D)

I can tell you that she's a fickle beast. She gets these ideas in her head and it's like she forgets she ever felt differently at any point in her life. She's the worst kind of stubborn, because she doesn't think she's stubborn, when really she's the most stubborn person I know. You think it's hard being her boyfriend?? Try being her friend.

RUSS

I know you take the brunt of it.

TRICIA

It doesn't matter because I take the brunt of the rest of her too.

(MORE)

TRICIA (CONT'D)

She's also the most loyal and thoughtful person in my life. Every year on Valentine's Day she sends a secret admirer card to my house so Marcus would get jealous. The day after I auditioned for my job, Haley barged in on the head of the network and told him if he didn't hire me their show would be off the air in a year. And when my mom was sick, Haley would read to her in the hospital on the nights I couldn't be there. After she died, Haley slept at my house for a month. She's got her quirks, I'm not arguing that, but she'll do anything for you if you earn it.

Russ soaks that in. Give him a sec, please.

RUSS

I guess that's where I came up short.

TRICIA

That's the thing, Russ. You didn't.

It was light at the end of the tunnel after all!

TRICIA (CONT'D)

You started to change her mind. That hasn't happened in a long time. It scared her.

RUSS

Why doesn't she tell me these things? It's not like I had it all figured out. We were in this together. I can't read her mind.

TRICIA

You're such a guy. You have to ask yourself what you want. Do you want her back?

RUSS

Yes. Or...I want her to be happy. But I think she could be happy with me. I just want to have to a conversation.

TRICIA

Then talk to her.

RUSS
She wont answer me!

TRICIA
Well, this whole barge in
unannounced move was pretty
effective.

RUSS
Good point.

Russ heads for the door, he's amped. Tricia can tell.

TRICIA
Not right now though.

He stops.

RUSS
Why?

TRICIA
Don't get mad...she's with a guy.
It's nothing, a first date. And
don't even ask me, because I don't
know where.

Russ just smiles.

RUSS
Thanks Tricia. Your hair looks
great by the way.

Tricia waves him off like that didn't just make her week.

TRICIA
It's the blueberries.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Haley's perfecting the 'looking cute without trying that
hard' outfit. She sits opposite a RANDOM GUY whose blazer is
wildly out of place at this restaurant.

He attempts to stab a nacho with a fork unsuccessfully.

HALEY
Mom hosted last year, so this year
it's at mine.

RANDOM GUY
Does that mean you're doing all the
cooking?

HALEY

No, no, no. Mom will cook. But it's important to her to mix up the venue, so I'm happy to give her full disposal of my kitchen.

RANDOM GUY

Does anyone else join you?

HALEY

Oh god.

RANDOM GUY

I didn't take you for a religious type.

HALEY

Russ.

RANDOM GUY

I don't know who that is.

RUSS

It's me.

Russ! Welcome to the party!

HALEY

What are you doing here?

RUSS

Looking for you.

HALEY

I'm a little busy at the moment.

RUSS

You're a little busy all the time.

RANDOM GUY

Should I...

HALEY

No, stay. Russ's leaving.

RUSS

I'm not, actually. You don't have to go, but if you're getting up I'd love a water.

HALEY

Do not get him a water. Russ, what do you want?

RUSS
I want to talk.

HALEY
Fine. I'll call you later.

RUSS
Right now.

The whole restaurant is officially staring. Haley's one part livid, one part embarrassed, shaken, and poured over ice.

HALEY
How did you even know where I was??

RUSS
They have nachos on the secret menu. Guac on the face eases the tension.

Wow. Nice. Haley softens. Barely...

HALEY
Make it quick.

RUSS
I don't know what I'm doing.

A beat. Duh.

HALEY
Great, thanks for comin--

RUSS
I don't know where my life's going. I don't know where yours is. And that's scary. And stressful. But I do know that I like not knowing when I'm with you. And if you could be OK with not knowing, I think you'd like it too.

HALEY
Russ, you're a great guy. You really are. And you're going to find someone who's right for you. But it's not me. It's not a 24.

RUSS
This is so backwards! You didn't even believe in these stupid formulas that say you should match with...this guy.
(MORE)

RUSS (CONT'D)
(at Random Guy)
No offense.

Random Guy puts up his hands.

RANDOM GUY
None taken.

At least he's getting a story out of this.

RUSS
You only changed your mind because
you met me and we were great
together. Then we get a bad score,
but you still trust the apps?

HALEY
Yes! Because it could be even
better if I find someone I'm
actually compatible with.

That stung a bit. Russ flinches. Then...

RUSS
Just because a computer says we're
not perfect for each other, doesn't
mean we're not perfect for each
other.

HALEY
How can you be so sure?

RUSS
Because sometimes you just know
right away.

Russ takes out his wallet. He reaches inside and pulls out a
small piece of paper. He tosses it at her plate. It flutters
down in front of her as he walks out.

Haley doesn't stop him. She grabs the slip. Turns it over.

It's the RECEIPT from their jars of cranberry sauce on the
day they met. Life's big moments indeed.

EXT. FARMERS MARKET - DAY

Pie Lady's busy this time of year. Russ waits in line. She
finishes payment with the customer in front of him, then Russ
steps up. She smiles when she sees him.

PIE LADY

I knew I'd be seeing you soon. How are you, Russ?

RUSS

I've been better, Pie Lady. I've been much better.

PIE LADY

You're in luck. I've got something extra special to cheer you up.

RUSS

I don't think I can handle extra special right now.

PIE LADY

You're gonna want this. It's one of a kind.

She reaches into her cooler and pulls out a pie. She hands it over the table to Russ. He takes it, gently. Looks down.

Half apple pie.....half pumpkin.

He's speechless. He might even be crying, we can't be sure. Then slowly, a smile spreads across his face.

PIE LADY (CONT'D)

What do you think?

RUSS

It's...the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

PIE LADY

I had some help.

Haley timidly pokes her head out from behind Pie Lady's booth. Russ considers her for a beat.

RUSS

How long were you hiding there?

HALEY

I brought my book.

She waves it around.

HALEY (CONT'D)

And I texted Thatcher to find out when you were coming.

RUSS
What a snitch.

PIE LADY
Feels like you two have a lot to
hash out.

She leaves. Nothing gets past Pie Lady. Russ holds up the
half and half pie.

RUSS
I thought you said this was
disgusting.

HALEY
Turns out I said a lot of things
I'd like to take back.

RUSS
Feel free to be specific.

HALEY
You weren't a fling.

RUSS
You just wanted to shout that at me
to make yourself feel better.

HALEY
I know I'm not the center of the
universe even though I act like it
sometimes.

RUSS
It doesn't feel good when it seems
like you only want to be with me
when it's convenient for you.

HALEY
I'm sorry. I never wanted to hurt
your feelings.

RUSS
And I'm sorry I lied.

HALEY
I thought I was being mature,
telling you to be careful, but
really I was too afraid to take a
chance.

RUSS
Is that what you want to do now?

HALEY

I want to...just...be. In the present. If something comes into my life that feels real then I want to stop fighting it so hard.

RUSS

That doesn't fit your plans.

HALEY

I've kept my life locked away for so long. It's time to open up.

Haley rocks on her heels. You can do it babe.

HALEY (CONT'D)

And...I want to share it with you.

RUSS

But we're not a match.

HALEY

We're a match if we say we're a match. Perfect scores are overrated.

RUSS

Did you have a certain number in mind?

HALEY

I was thinking something like a 24.

RUSS

I might know a guy.

HALEY

How do you feel? I'm ready to be that girlfriend I envision.

RUSS

I'm not sure.

Really? After the whole restaurant speech and everything?

RUSS (CONT'D)

I'll have to check my schedule.

She deserved that. A sly smile. A slight giggle. Russ leans in. Haley leans in. And...BANG! Still got one at the end!

INT. TRICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The mistletoe has been hung. The holly has been decked. The jingle bells are rocking. The egg is nogging.

We've seen this before. The party decorations are even better than last year. Tricia fills two cups with boozy eggnog.

TRICIA

Will you bring these to them,
please?

GUYS VOICE (O.S.)

You got it babe. But make one for
me while I'm gone.

She sticks her tongue out at someone.

HANDSOME LEATHER JACKET GUY bends down and grabs the two cups. Lets go, T!

We follow him through the party until he arrives at Haley and Russ. He reaches over the crowd so Russ can take the beverages off his hands. Russ nods his thanks.

Russ hands one cup to Haley and puts his arm around her. He looks at the COUPLE standing in front of them.

RUSS

Didn't mean to interrupt you, what
were you saying?

PARTY GOER GUY

No, that was it, that's our story.

PARTY GOER GIRL

So, how did you two meet?

Haley opens her mouth to talk. Closes it. Turns to Russ. They lock eyes. Smile.

We...

SMASH TO BLACK