

WHAT IF?

Written by

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Based on

"There is a trans girl [17 F] in my [17 M] school that I can't get out of my mind. I have a massive crush on her but I'm also afraid of social suicide if I ask her out."

By azure-skies-123, Reddit.com, 2018.

EXTREME CLOSEUP of a computer screen.

As we slowly ZOOM OUT, the indecipherable pixels gradually form a pair of subtly made up eyes.

KELSA

One of the reasons I like animals
so much is that they're named after
what makes them unique.

We've zoomed out enough to show a girl's face. This is KELSA BROWN (17). She's pretty, casual, just bordering on confident.

Oh! And she's trans.

KELSA (CONT'D)

Here are some of my favorite
examples. And they're gonna come
out somewhere around here, I
believe.

She points at a part of the screen, where a photo of each animal appears as she names them:

KELSA (CONT'D)

The goblin shark, Pink Fairy
Armadillo, scaptia beyonceae, or
the Beyoncé Fly, and the Blobfish.
And usually, what makes them
unique...

We keep zooming out, past the frame of the video, onto its Youtube page. The video's title appears below: "SURVIVING HIGH SCHOOL".

KELSA (CONT'D)

...is also what helps them survive.

INT. RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA

Kelsa and her best friend CHRIS (17, F, black) make their way down the cafeteria line, slopping food onto their trays.

CHRIS

Ugh, I'm so hungry. All I ate last
night was a box Mac n' Cheese. You
know, Kraft is pretty stingy with
its portions.

KELSA

Yeah, well, you gotta keep in mind
it is a meal for children.

CHRIS

It's all Mike knows how to cook. I love that guy, but sometimes he can be so straight.

KELSA

Well, that's what we get for being, you know, straight?

CHRIS

I know but it's like,

She does an impression of her extra straight boyfriend:

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I don't cook, I grill. Shut up! Experiment with gay porn already.

They grab their tray from the end of the line and start walking between the tables.

KELSA

He's your boyfriend.

CHRIS

Speaking of, we gotta find you a man.

KELSA

You know what? I'm good.

Out of nowhere, the contents of a FULL CUP OF CHOCOLATE MILK are chucked at Kelsa. She screams.

Kelsa and Chris turn to see the morbidly ashamed KHALID "KHAL" ZUABI (17, Iranian), holding the now empty cup. Beside him, OTIS (17) laughs obnoxiously.

CHRIS

What the hell is your problem?!

Khal sinks in his seat.

COACH TIM (O.S.)

Hey!

The intimidating COACH TIM (27) Points at them, then makes an inviting *you're in trouble* motion.

INT. MR. WALLACE'S OFFICE - DAY

Khal and Kelsa sit in front of the desk while MR. WALLACE (40) stares out the window. Khal turns to look at Kelsa, but when she looks back, quickly averts his gaze.

Mr. Wallace turns around.

MR. WALLACE
Okay, Khal-ed.
(a butchered
pronunciation)
Do you have anything to add?

KHAL
No.

MR. WALLACE
You take full blame for the
situation?

KHAL
Yeah.

MR. WALLACE
Good enough for me. You're
dismissed. With a warning!

KHAL
Okay. How many warnings do I get?

MR. WALLACE
Before what?

KHAL
I don't know.

Kelsa stealthily suppresses a laugh.

MR. WALLACE
Go to class.

Khal exits. Kelsa starts to get up.

MR. WALLACE (CONT'D)
Hold on, Kelsa.

KELSA
Yeah?

MR. WALLACE
You know I... we. We meaning the
school, support you 100%, and even
take pride in having a...

Kelsa winces. Mr. Wallace is painfully walking on eggshells:

MR WALLACE

... a transgender student at Mission Valley. But you know, we're not always gonna be there to help you out. Eventually you'll have to learn to fight your own battles.

Kelsa fake smiles.

KELSA

Can I go now?

MR. WALLACE

Yeah. Get out of here! Go to class.

Kelsa picks up her bag.

CLOSE ON KELSA - YOUTUBE VIDEO

Kelsa looks to one side, thinking.

KELSA

Surviving High School is simple once you have it figured out. You just have to be good at reading people. Obviously you have your bullies, but like the needy, co-dependent Cockroach Wasp...

(which appears on screen)

KELSA (CONT'D)

...they're harmless unless provoked.

INT. MR. WALLACE'S OFFICE - RESUME

Mr. Wallace picks up a piece of paper from his desk.

KELSA (V.O.)

Most people are just clueless. But those can be the worst.

Kelsa walks to the door--

--opens it--

--to find Khal eavesdropping on the other side.

Khal steps back, desperately looks around, and pretends to be interested in a poster on the wall.

KELSA (V.O.)
And surprisingly enough there are
some people--

Kelsa looks at the poster--GET CHECKED FOR LICE.

Khal goes beet red.

Kelsa holds back a smile and walks on.

On Khal.

KELSA (V.O.)
...that genuinely mean no harm.

CUT TO:

A SERVER SEARCH BAR.

As someone types the first few letters, the server
automatically fills the rest of it in:
"reddit.com/r/relationships"

Enter. The page starts to load.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON KHAL - WEBCAM POV - He sits in front of his
computer.

He scrolls through the many posts asking for advice, and
finally clicks on one:

[ZombieQuiche420](#)

Hey Reddit. My [35M] girlfriend's [34F]...

The TEXT ON SCREEN MORPHS INTO A--

CLOSE-ON: a WEBCAM POV of redditor "ZOMBIEQUICHE420" in his
bedroom. All internet close-ons will be in this format.

ZOMBIEQUICHE420
(speaking to camera)
Hey Reddit. My [35M] girlfriend's
[34F] moving across the country and
I don't know what to do. I could
leave my job and follow her but
it's a great job. What should I do?

RESUME

ON THE SCREEN - the cursor moves into the Reddit comment bar. It prompts: "*What are your thoughts?*". The cursor CLICKS.

Khal cracks his knuckles and starts typing.

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL
Remember, you may love your job,
but your job doesn't love you. Go
with her.

His close-on is INTERCUT with him TYPING, and the words appearing in the comment box.

The cursor moves to the COMMENT button. CLICK!

CLOSE ON CHERSARMPIT, on a public bus, from his PHONE'S POV.

CHERSARMPIT
My [24M] boyfriend [24M] is acting
really secretive. I tracked him
using Find My Friends and he was at
the movies without me. He's an
introvert, so maybe I'm pushing him
away? Or is he cheating on me?
Help!!

RESUME

The last word appears on screen.

Khal thinks on it. Starts typing.

CLOSE ON KHAL - INTERCUT with typing and text:

KHAL
Hi Cher's Armpit, he sounds like a
good guy and I doubt he's cheating
on you. If he's an introvert, he
might just need some time to
himself sometimes, and as his
boyfriend you should respect that.

Another CLICK on the COMMENT button.

CLOSE ON CUPCAKKER, in a coffee shop.

CUPCAKKER
(Australian accent)
My [28F] boyfriend [32M] Keeps
telling me I have to lose weight.
(MORE)

CUPCAKKER (CONT'D)
He doesn't let me order my own food
at--

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL
Stop, I don't even have to read any
further. This guy sounds really
manipulative. Dump him.

Khal moves his finger over his laptop's trackpad. CLICK!

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Khal and Otis sit next to each other. In front of them are
CHANCE (17, M, white) and KEVIN (17, M).

Same clothes, same seats. This is THE MILK INCIDENT FROM
KHAL'S POV:

OTIS
Okay, Paula Kremer, Asian Tiffany,
and Adriana Angelini.

CHANCE
Bruh, kill Paula.

OTIS
Duh.

JASON
Marry Asian Tiffany.

KEVIN
Of course.

CHANCE
And fuck Adriana Angelini, she
fine.

OTIS
I'd let Adriana Angelini eat peanut
butter out of my buttcrack.

KHAL
Ew.

OTIS
Okay, here's one for you Khal...
Mrs. Kitschner...

KEVIN
Oh, that's nasty.

OTIS
Paula Kremer, and...

He looks around and spots Kelsa and Chris in the line.

OTIS (CONT'D)
Kelsa Brown.

Kevin and Jason laugh. Khal looks over at Kelsa.

KHAL
Marry Kelsa, kill Pau--

OTIS
Wait. Marry Kelsa?

KHAL
Yeah. We have Art together. She
seems cool.

Otis leans in close to him.

OTIS
You know she has a dick, right?

Chance and Kevin chuckle.

KHAL
Well, you don't really know--

OTIS
Is there something you want to tell
us, Khal?

KHAL
No.

OTIS
Are you... gay?

CHANCE
Man, miss me with that gay shit.

KHAL
No. I was just kidding.

OTIS
Prove it.

Khal looks to see Kelsa at the end of the line. Otis hands
him the CUP OF CHOCOLATE MILK.

OTIS (CONT'D)
Throw this at her.

Khal grabs the cup. Kelsa and Chris turn around and start walking their way.

Khal laughs awkwardly, and starts to put the cup down.

KHAL
Alright.

Otis pushes it back into his hand.

OTIS
I'm serious. Prove it.

KHAL
No.

KELSA (O.S.)
You know what? I'm good.

Otis slaps the bottom of the cup, the milk goes flying and spills onto Kelsa.

Khal turns beet red, while Otis and the others laugh.

CHRIS
What the hell is your problem?!

COACH TIM (O.S.)
Hey!

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - RECEPTION - DAY

Khal leaves Mr. Wallace's office, and leaves the door open.

A SECRETARY calls after him.

SECRETARY
Can you shut the door, please?

KHAL
Yeah. Sorry.

He starts closing the door and overhears the conversation inside:

MR. WALLACE (O.S.)
But you know, we're not always
gonna be there to help you out.
Eventually you'll have to learn to
deal with the consequences of your
identity.

KELSA (O.S.)
Can I go now?

MR. WALLACE (O.S.)
Yeah. Get out of here! Go to class.

Khal quickly shuts the door.

A second later, Kelsa opens it--

Which sets Khal's flight-or-awkwardness response aflame and he awkwardly pretends to be staring at the lice poster.

He tries his best to commit as Kelsa walks away.

INT. OTIS'S ROOM - DAY

Khal and Otis barge into the messy room. Otis drops his backpack on the floor.

OTIS
Mr. Wallace is such a pussy. I
could probably beat someone up and
he'd just give me a stern warning.

Otis sits on his desk. Khal sits on the bed, and fishes a notebook out of his backpack. He leafs through it, opens it up, and throws it on Otis's desk.

KHAL
Here.

Otis opens up another notebook and starts copying his notes.

Khal looks empathetically at Otis's hand, which makes an awkward clutch on the pen while he writes almost illegibly. He has dysgraphia.

OTIS
Does the SAT still have an essay
section? If it does, I'm screwed.

KHAL
I don't think it does anymore.

OTIS
Screw this, I'll just photocopy
them later.

KHAL
Just do it now, dude, you're never
gonna read them.

OTIS
Yes I will. Wanna play
Battlegrounds?

Khal smiles.

OTIS (CONT'D)
Dibs on the good controller.

He takes off running.

KHAL
No, fuck you!

He takes off after him, laughing.

INT. KELSA'S HOUSE

Kelsa kicks off her shoes and walks into the house.

KELSA
Mom! I'm home.

She gets to the kitchen. There is a perky lady sitting on the kitchen table, which is filled end to end with thick books.

LADY
Hi.

KELSA
Hi.

Kelsa walks up the stairs.

KELSA (CONT'D)
Mom?

SARAH (45) steps out of her room, a basketful of laundry in one hand, her phone on the other, into which she expertly types a one-handed email.

SARAH
Hi, honey.

She looks at her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Did you wear a bra today?

KELSA
Mom! Law of averages!

SARAH

It passes the law! The average mom would be concerned that her average daughter's properly covering her...

She gestures at her chest.

KELSA

Mom, why is there a lady in our kitchen?

SARAH

That's your college advisor.

KELSA

Mom!

SARAH

You should go downstairs. She charges by the hour.

KELSA

I said I didn't want an advisor!

Sarah ignores her and walks downstairs.

INT. KELSA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Kelsa sits across from the lady, RACHEL (35). Thick College Handbooks and SAT guides between them.

RACHEL

So have you given any thought about what you want to write your college essay on?

KELSA

Yeah. I guess a little.

RACHEL

My only advice? Don't write about who your hero is. It's a little *cliché*.

She over-pronounces that last word. Rachel opens one of the books.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

In my opinion, you should do this one.

She flips through the pages and finally sticks her finger in one of them.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Okay, here it is. Two. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure, and responded with bravery. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

KELSA

I was actually thinking--

RACHEL

See, bravery. You have it easy. You can write about your transition! The disenfranchised, the LGBT, admissions boards eat that shit up. Pardon my *franche*.

KELSA

I don't know if I--

RACHEL

Oh! And what happened with your parents!

KELSA

I don't know if that really reflects anything about me.

RACHEL

Of course it does. You went through all that at an early age. You know what that shows? Bravery.

Kelsa winces.

KELSA

Actually, I was thinking I wanna write about how I rescued Chairman Meow.

She looks at the corner. A shaggy, paranoid looking cat anxiously looks up from his food bowl.

Rachel takes a deep breath.

RACHEL

How do I put this?... Nobody cares about Chairman Meow.

Chairman Meow (you guessed it) meows.

INT. ART CLASSROOM - DAY

All the tables have been pushed to the edges to make room for stools and easels in the center. Khal sits at one of the tables while MR. KIDD gives a powerpoint presentation.

MR. KIDD

Today, we're gonna paint portraits. A portrait is a painting who's main purpose is to represent the likeness, personality and even mood of a person. There are many notable examples of portraiture...

He quickly skips through the majority of the presentation showing notable portraits by ancient greeks, da Vinci, Rubens and Warhol, to get to--

MR. KIDD (CONT'D)

...but the most masterful portrait artist of our time is in fact...

--a picture of the "Queen as Ziggy Stardust" graffiti by Banksy.

MR. KIDD (CONT'D)

Banksy!

The students groan. Clearly Mr. Kidd has a thing for the infamous street artist.

MR. KIDD (CONT'D)

Banksy mixes traditional portraiture with shocking and boldly out of place elements to provide a gritty commentary on our turbulent time.

He skips forward to Banksy's "Girl With the Pierced Eardrum."

MR. KIDD (CONT'D)

This is another Banksy original.

KHAL

(to himself)

That's just a ripoff of Vermeer.

MR. KIDD

Okay, now everyone has a slit of paper on their desk with an artist. You will have a partner with the same artist, and you will draw a portrait of each other in the artist's style.

Khal turns over his slit of paper. He smiles when he reads:
"Johannes Vermeer".

STUDENT (O.S.)
Does anyone wanna change? I got
Banksy.

Khal stands up and looks around. Everyone is getting paired
up except...

Kelsa. She stands around awkwardly, movement all around her.

Khal walks up to her.

They fake-smile at each other. Eventually--

KHAL
Vermeer?

KELSA
Yeah. You wanna sit here?

She gestures at a couple of set ups.

KHAL
Yeah.

INT. ART CLASSROOM - LATER

Khal and Kelsa sit across from each other, working on their
portraits in anxious silence.

Khal looks at Kelsa. When she looks back, he turns back
towards his painting.

KELSA
Hey.

KHAL
Yeah?

KELSA
Your name's Cal, right?

KHAL
Yeah, but not like Calendar. More
like Khal Drogo.

KELSA
Okay, Khal, can I borrow some of
that millennial pink?

She gestures at his palette.

KHAL

Yeah. But that's not millennial pink. That's flamingo pink.

KELSA

Okay, that one, then.

She gestures at another shade.

KHAL

No, that's ballet slipper pink.

KELSA

Okay, that one.

KHAL

That's just pink.

KELSA

I didn't know you were a color purist.

KHAL

I don't like to simplify things. It makes everything boring.

Kelsa smiles. Mr. Kidd walks over.

MR. KIDD

Ah, Vermeer. Reminds me of a quote, "If graffiti changed anything, it would be illegal". Put some more cleft on the chin.

He walks away.

KELSA

What's going on with my chin?

KHAL

I'm kind of struggling, you have kind of a--

KELSA

A butt chin?

KHAL

Yeah.

KELSA

Just make sure to get a turd squeezing out of it.

KHAL

Well, see, that would be too accurate. I like to commit to abstract art.

He puts his paintbrush up to the painting. Hesitates. Looks at Kelsa.

KELSA

If you're worried about offending me, lots of girls have butt chins.

KHAL

Really?

KELSA

Yeah. Adele. Sandra Bullock.

KHAL

Okay, done.

Kelsa walks over to see the painting: a pretty solid Vermeer-style portrait of her.

KELSA

No way. That's so good.

KHAL

You can have it.

KELSA

Really?

Khal second guesses his forwardness, but stands his ground:

KHAL

Yeah. Let's see yours.

They walk over.

KHAL (CONT'D)

Oh, it's good.

On the painting: Kelsa took some creative liberties with it.

KHAL (CONT'D)

Why do I have a big gauge earring?

KELSA

I didn't get the shape of your ear right.

Khal laughs.

KHAL
It'll look great in my living room.

KELSA
You want it?

KHAL
Yeah. Unless you do.

KELSA
No, it's all yours. It'll be worth millions one day.

Khal sits back down.

KHAL
Hey, I'm sorry about lunch yesterday.

KELSA
Why are you taking the blame? I know you didn't do it.

KHAL
How do you know?

KELSA
Last class, Robby Suarez made a ceramic soccer ball and put it in the kiln.

INT. ART CLASSROOM - FLASHBACK

Khal grabs a mediocre soccer ball sculpture out of the kiln and makes a puncture with a steel tool.

KELSA (V.O.)
After he left, you grabbed it and poked a hole in it so it wouldn't explode with the heat.

He looks around and puts it back in.

END FLASHBACK.

KHAL
How do you know I wasn't protecting my Egyptian faience pot from the detritus?

KELSA

Because you were already glazing it. Robby was the only one still sculpting.

KHAL

Robby's my friend.

KELSA

No he's not. You're perpetually nice and that's how I know you didn't do it. You were covering for that boy Otis.

Khal is quiet, then makes an ugly face. Kelsa laughs.

INT. KHAL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Khal's family sits around the table eating Tabbouleh: his dad, SASAN, mom, SELDA, and little brother, ARWIN.

SELDA

Khalid, have you started on your college essay?

KHAL

It's not due for like 5 months.

SELDA

Yes, but if you do it the day before you're gonna end up in one of the trash schools like, I don't know, Georgetown.

KHAL

Georgetown's actually a really good school, mom. I'm never getting into Georgetown.

SELDA

Just start it today.

KHAL

I don't even have anything to write about. Nothing interesting's ever happened to me.

SELDA

Write about when we went to Syria.

KHAL
I mean, we didn't do much other
than watch grandma slowly
decompose.

Sasan laughs.

SELDA
Khalid!

KHAL
Sorry.

SASAN
Write about fencing.

KHAL
Dad, I only took one class.

SASAN
You beat the teacher.

KHAL
It was a drill, I was supposed to
touch him with the sword.

SASAN
How about when you saved someone
from drowning?

KHAL
That was Arwin.

He points at his little brother, who smirks proudly.

ARWIN
They put a framed picture of me at
the police station.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Khal flops on his bed and opens his computer. He opens Word.

SELDA (O.S.)
Work on your essay!

KHAL
No!

Khal writes at the top of the document: "COLLEGE ESSAY"

He taps on his computer, thinking.

He looks around. His gaze lands on KELSA'S PAINTING leaning against the wall.

He goes to the web browser, and clicks on the search bar. He types: "transgender".

Khal scrolls through the wikipedia article. He clicks the search bar again, and types: "Kelsa Brown". The only thing that comes up are images for brown boots.

Khal takes his hands off the keyboard, cracks his knuckles, and goes to the search bar again: "Trans teenager kelsa in Pittsburgh river valley high".

The thumbnail for a Youtube video comes up. He clicks on it.

It's Kelsa's Youtube channel, a video called "2 MONTHS ON HORMONE BLOCKERS".

On the screen:

KELSA

I really haven't felt any changes in my mood or personality, like I'm not any more emotional or calmer, because I've just had two injections. I'm thinking of switching to the Spironolactone pills, which my doctor says are less smooth sailing but then again, needles...

She makes a disgusted shriek, amplified by a rough replay edit.

Meanwhile, Khal scrolls through the related videos on the side. He clicks on one of Kelsa's videos named "DATING WHILE TRANS"

KELSA (CONT'D)

I've been thinking a lot about dating, wether I want to date because like, what if I don't want to disclose that I'm
(distorted)
trans?

The *oh so scary* word is followed by SCREAMING and GLASS BREAKING sound effects. Khal laughs.

KELSA (CONT'D)

Like that's a--

The computer screen MORPHS into a--

CLOSE ON KELSA

--not really a personal thing but
not something that I would
naturally bring up. And girls get
murdered just because of that. I
don't know, I'm not really dying to
date anyone either.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Movie night! Kelsa sits on the floor, Chris and her boyfriend
MIKE LIEBOWITZ on the couch.

KELSA (V.O.)
My friend Chris is in a
relationship and I gotta be
honest...

Kelsa tries to concentrate on the movie but--

MIKE
Here it comes.

He holds up a hand full of popcorn to Chris's mouth. Chris
pecks the popcorn out of it.

CHRIS
(baby voice)
Mmm, thank you. I'm like your baby
bird.

MIKE
And I'm your mama bird?

CHRIS
Mhm.

He pops a handfull of popcorn in his mouth, then starts
spitting them into Chris's mouth.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Mmmm.

Kelsa makes a grossed out face.

KELSA (V.O.)
...it doesn't seem too appealing.

CLOSE ON KELSA - YOUTUBE VIDEO

KELSA

Then again, I always wanted to be
that quirky, like not psycho but a
little bit psycho--

A picture of Jason Voorhees pops up with a creepy sound effect.

--girl that finds a sweet shy boy
and helps him break out of his
shell through a series of
adventures, obviously set to the
tune of inspiring indie pop songs.

A CHEESY INDIE POP SONG plays.

KELSA (CONT'D)

But, I don't see myself dating any
time soon... Well, I'm not
completely alone. At least I have
my girlfriends.

INT. EM'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The video's indie pop song BECOMES THE SOUNDTRACK as we
FOLLOW THE POV OF A BOTTLE spinning around the inside of a
circle of four girls: Kelsa, Chris, the annoyingly pretty EM
(17) and MEGAN (17).

The bottle stops, pointing at Chris.

KELSA

Truth or dare?

MEGAN

Dare.

KELSA

Kiss Em.

MEGAN

Oh. Okay.

Megan shrugs. They kiss quickly.

CHRIS

This is middle school stuff,
ladies. Let's step it up.

She spins the bottle. It lands on Em.

MEGAN

Truth or dare?

CHRIS
If it's dare, please don't kiss
Kelsa. Leave the risqué girl on
girl action action in 2004.

EM
Well, would it really be...

Kelsa stiffens up. Chris glares at Em.

EM (CONT'D)
You know what? Fine. Truth.

CHRIS
Okay... help me out, girls.

MEGAN
Who's your crush?

Em makes a face. "Not that one."

CHRIS
Seriously?

EM
Dare.

KELSA
No, you can't switch it.

EM
Okay...

Suddenly her demeanor changes. She looks at the girls like
she's about to change their lives.

EM (CONT'D)
Khal Zuabi.

Kelsa looks at her, upset, but trying not to show it.

CHRIS
Okay, moving on.

KELSA
Khal, really?

EM
I know, but he's so sweet. I feel
like I could help him break out of
his shell through a series of
adventures, have like indie pop
music play in the background or
something.

MEGAN
You should ask him out.

EM
Really?

MEGAN
Yeah. Why not?

On Kelsa, looking hurt.

CHRIS
Alright, let's get to the kinks
already.

She spins the bottle.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

CLOSE ON a piece of paper. With a colored gel pen, Em writes in girly letters: "YOU'RE CUTE". Kelsa, Chris and Megan watch her.

EM
Okay, operation Khal Me Maybe is a
go.

She tries to hand Kelsa the note.

EM (CONT'D)
Give it to him.

KELSA
Why me?

EM
You're friends with him, right?

KELSA
We just have art class together.

EM
Then give him the note.

KELSA
You give it to him.

Em shoots her a final, controlling look. Kelsa sighs and snatches the note from her hand.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Khal sits with Otis and the boys.

OTIS
So this one guy was like, come
upstairs I'm in bed with your
mom...

Khal notices Kelsa walking towards him.

OTIS (CONT'D)
...so I blasted him so hard--

Otis goes quiet as Kelsa passes Khal the note, and walks away.

Khal opens the note and goes red.

OTIS (CONT'D)
What's it say?

KHAL
Nothing.

Otis snatches the card from his hands. He makes a disgusted face.

OTIS
Ugh. Is it from Kelsa?

Just then, Em passes next to them.

EM
(coyly)
Hi, Khal.

OTIS
Are you hitting that?

Otis gets embarrassed. Otis teases him.

OTIS (CONT'D)
You hitting that?

KHAL
No!

OTIS
Nice, dude.

He holds out his fist. Confused, Khal softly completes the fist bump.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Khal and Kelsa are working on a mural covering a group of lockers.

KELSA

So are you gonna go to art school?

KHAL

What?

KELSA

Art school. You're like, really good.

She gestures at his part of the mural.

KHAL

I don't know, I don't think I'm interesting enough to be an actual artist.

KELSA

You're right.

KHAL

Oh.

KELSA

Artists are douchebags. You're nice.

KHAL

I hate when people call me nice.

KELSA

I know.

Khal notices she was teasing him, smiles.

KELSA (CONT'D)

You know what I hate?

KHAL

What?

KELSA

When people say I'm brave.

KHAL

Really?

KELSA

"You're transitioning so young. Do you get bullied? I just wanted to tell you how brave you are."

KHAL

I mean, it's not really brave if it's just being who you are.

KELSA

Exactly! And it's so self-congratulatory.

KHAL

We need more earth tones.

They sit down on the newspaper-covered ground and start mixing colors.

KHAL (CONT'D)

So what about you?

KELSA

What?

KHAL

What do you wanna study?

KELSA

Zoology.

KHAL

That's cool. Like animals?

KELSA

Yeah. I wanna be a nature cinematographer.

Khal drops his paintbrush in excitement.

KHAL

No way! Like Planet Earth.

KELSA

Yeah.

Khal masterfully imitates David Attenborough:

KHAL

Antarctica.

Kelsa laughs.

KELSA
 (Attenborough voice)
 The high school.

Khal gestures at a boy and a girl painting across the hall from them. The boy is flirting, trying to guide the girl's hand, but the girl seems like she's not interested.

KHAL
 (Attenborough voice)
 The human male attempts to woo the female.

The girl takes out her phone.

KHAL (CONT'D)
 With a ruthlessness only found in nature, the female pretends to text, ignoring the male's sexual advances.

CLOSE ON the girl's phone: She is writing in the Notes app:
 "PRETENDING 2 TEXT SO I DON'T HAVE TO TALK 2 U LOL"

Kelsa is laughing.

KHAL (CONT'D)
 Why do you like animals so much?

KELSA
 Because they're named after what makes them unique.

KHAL
 Hm...

As Kelsa says each animal's name, STOCK FOOTAGE appears of the animal in the wild:

KELSA
 Yeah. Like the screaming hairy armadillo, the wunderpus photogenicus, the satanic leaf tailed gecko.

RESUME

KHAL
 Ever heard of the Penis Snake?

Khal pulls out his phone.

KELSA
 Uh oh.

Khal shows her a picture of the Atretochoana, a snake that resembles a penis.

KELSA (CONT'D)

Wow.

They both laugh.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Khal is in bed on his computer. He lingers on the search bar.

KELSA (V.O.)

They're named after what makes them unique.

Khal types: "KELSA NAME MEANING".

CLOSE ON the recommended Google result: "The name Kelsa is an English baby name. In English the meaning of the name Kelsa is: **Brave.**"

Khal smiles, and takes his hands off the computer, thinking... deciding. He goes back to the search bar and goes to reddit.com/r/relationships. He clicks, "ASK A RELATIONSHIP QUESTION".

Khal starts typing.

CLOSE ON Khal, with the same Webcam POV as before.

KHAL

Ladies and Gentlemen of Reddit, I find myself in a little bit of a bind.

INT. ART CLASSROOM - DAY

Khal and Kelsa sit together.

MR. KIDD

Coming through!

Mr. Kidd passes next to them with a huge recreation of Banksy's "Balloon Girl". Kelsa has to stand up and squeeze against the table.

In the process, her hand brushes up ever so slightly against Khal's arm.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: Khal's arm hairs prickle up at her touch.

Khal freezes up, looking desperately at the point of contact.

KHAL (V.O.)
I [17M] am developing a huge crush
on this girl [17F].

The age-gender reddit typography is superimposed on screen.

CLOSE ON Khal.

KHAL
The problem is, she's trans. And
I'm afraid of the drama I could
cause if I ask her out. I'll
probably lose my friends, and I
doubt my parents would understand.
But I like her a lot, and I think
she likes me back.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - NIGHT

PHONE POV - Khal lies on his back, holding his phone above his face.

KHAL (V.O.)
We've been texting non-stop.

Their text conversation appears on screen:

KELSA
Do you like Amy Winehouse?

KHAL
Yeah.

KELSA
I don't understand
Why do I stress a man
When there's so many bigger things
at hand.

KHAL
You're not stressing me out :).

KELSA
It's a song lyric lol.

Khal goes numb in embarrassment.

KHAL
Stupid. Stupid!

He accidentally lets go of his phone and it drops on his face.

CLOSE ON Khal.

KHAL (CONT'D)
But I don't want to commit if I'm
gonna be afraid to be known as her
boyfriend.

CLOSE ON an executive-looking CORPORATE WOMAN at her desk.

CORPORATE WOMAN
(to an O.S. Assistant)
Tell him I'm out of the office.

She turns to her computer...

RESUME - KHAL'S ROOM

Khal perks up at a NOTIFICATION SOUND. On the edge of the reddit page, the envelope icon is lit up ORANGE, notifying (1) new comment.

Khal clicks on it. NEW COMMENT FROM ANIMEGIRL76

CLOSE ON CORPORATE WOMAN

ANIMEGIRL76 (CORPORATE WOMAN)
(to webcam)
Just explain your feelings to your
friends. Maybe they can understand.

CLOSE ON Khal

He thinks about this.

INT. OTIS'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Otis and Khal play video games.

OTIS
What would you do if you were gay?

KHAL
I don't know, move to Miami.

OTIS
I'd kill myself.

Khal frowns.

END FLASHBACK.

RESUME - KHAL'S ROOM

Khal types.

CLOSE ON Khal.

KHAL
Not an option.

He perks up at another NOTIFICATION SOUND. Clicks on the envelope, which now notifies (10) new comments.

CLOSE ON SASSY_TOMATO, an Indian man in a call center in Mumbai.

SASSY_TOMATO
Just make sure you like her for who she is, and that she's not just an adventure or a challenge for you.

CLOSE ON Khal.

KHAL
She would be an adventure, but not because she's trans. Because her brain works in weird and beautiful ways. She'd be a challenge because she's smarter than I'll ever be. Her being gorgeous is really just the sprinkles on top.

CLOSE ON MINTYFRESH, a british lady in a fancy flat, drinking tea from a gold-detailed cup.

MINTYFRESH
You sound like a great guy. High school friendships don't last forever anyway. You should do it.

CLOSE ON two Brazilian children in their home.

BRAZILIAN CHILD 1
I say you go for it.

BRAZILIAN CHILD 2
You only live once!

CLOSE ON a BASIC GIRL sitting in a jury seat. She speaks to her phone:

BASIC GIRL

This is everything. We need to
protect kids like you at all costs.

JUDGE (O.S.)

Order!

RESUME - KHAL'S ROOM

Khal moves the cursor to the envelope icon: (243) comments!

He clicks. We INTERCUT Khal's surprised and reflexive face
with an amalgamation of words on screen:

GUY'S VOICE (V.O.)

You have to ask her out.

GIRL'S VOICE (V.O.)

No regrets.

TWEEN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Go for it, OP!!!

FRENCH ACCENT (V.O.)

You must love with no mercy.

ANOTHER GIRL'S VOICE (V.O.)

This is so pure.

VALLEY ACCENT (V.O.)

Can I just die right now of
cuteness?

SURFER GUY'S VOICE

Make the move, dude.

The voices stop. Khal is focused on one comment.
BATSHITDAISY's, told in a girl's voice:

BATSHITDAISY (V.O.)

This is how I'd see it... are you
going to live your own life right
now, or do what people expect of
you and spend the rest of your life
wondering, what if?

These last two words glare at Khal on the computer screen.

On Khal. Out of internet mode, back in reality.

ARWIN (O.S.)

I think you should give her
flowers.

Khal looks up at Arwin standing in his doorway.

KHAL

What?

ARWIN

Girls like flowers, right?

KHAL

You little hacker, how did you know my username?

ARWIN

Not too hard to crack,
narutofan2003.

Khal grabs a book from his bedside table and raises it as if to throw it at Arwin.

KHAL

What else did you see?

ARWIN

Nothing!

Khal puts the book down.

ARWIN (CONT'D)

I know it's kinda cheesy, and something a middle schooler would do. But think about it. Probably no one's given this girl flowers.

Khal thinks about it.

KHAL

That's actually not a bad idea.

ARWIN

Trader Joe's has a good variety.

KHAL

Stay off my reddit.

ARWIN

Yeah, I will.

Arwin turns to leave, but before he does, he peeks his head into the room.

ARWIN (CONT'D)

You still worried you'll have erectile dysfunction from watching too much porn?

Khal grabs the book and tosses it. Arwin ducks out of the room and the book hits the open door with a BANG.

SELDA (O.S.)

Hey!

INT. TRADER JOE'S - DAY

Khal approaches the flower stand. He reaches for some roses.

CLOSE ON a SOFTWARE DEVELOPER, sitting in the middle of a circle of code-running computers.

SOFTWARE DEVELOPER

Roses are too generic, my dude. Get her something that fits her personality.

RESUME

Khal keeps browsing, and notices some varied WILDFLOWERS. He grabs them.

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASSROOM - DAY

MR. KUZNETSOV, a villainous looking man much too frightening to be teaching high schoolers, delivers a lecture.

Khal bursts into the classroom.

MR. KUZNETSOV

That's a tardy, Mr. Zuabi.

KHAL

(clearly scared of him)

Sorry, Mr. Kuznetsov.

He quickly sits down at a table next to Otis.

As he opens his backpack to take out a notebook, Otis notices the wildflowers peeking out.

OTIS

Who are the flowers for?

KHAL

Nobody.

OTIS

Dude, just tell me.

Khal glances nervously at Mr. Kuznetsov.

MR. KUZNETSOV
Stoichiometry.

STUDENT
What?

Mr. Kuznetsov looks at the student right in the soul.

MR. KUZNETSOV
STOICHIOMETRY!!!

Back on Khal:

OTIS
Hello? Are you retarded?

KHAL
Shut up.

Mr. Kuznetsov stops writing on the board and looks back, ever so subtly.

MR. KUZNETSOV
Whoever's talking better not speak
another word or it will be their
last.

He continues writing.

Otis snatches Khal's notebook and holds it out of reach.

KHAL
(whispering)
Dude!

OTIS
Who are they for?

Mr. Kuznetsov stops writing and pricks his ear up.

KHAL
Em! They're for Em.

Otis smirks and hands him back his notebook. Khal turns around to see Megan in the next table, listening in. He goes white.

Megan lights up at this game-changing piece of gossip. She picks up her phone and opens the texting app. She opens a group chat and starts texting...

INT. PHILOSOPHY CLASSROOM - DAY

Kelsa reads from a course reader. On the desk beside her, her phone lights up with activity.

KELSA

Men would say of him that up he
went and down he came without his
eyes; and that it was better not
even to think of ascending; and if
any one tried to loose another and
lead him up to the light, let
them only catch the offender, and
they would put him to death.

Another student reads the next part of the reader, slowly and struggling with the words. Kelsa looks at her phone, picks it up.

STUDENT 2 (O.S.)

I--I agree, he said, as far as I am
a--able to un--der--stand you.

A look of sadness weighs Kelsa's face down.

PHILOSOPHY TEACHER (O.S.)

Socrates.

Kelsa keeps looking at her phone.

PHILOSOPHY TEACHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Socrates!

Kelsa snaps back to reality, puts her phone down, and reads shakily.

KELSA

This entire allegory, I said, you
may now append, dear Glaucon...

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Khal transfers books from his backpack to his locker. He shuts the locker door, and Em appears behind it.

EM

Hi.

KHAL

Um... hi Em, how's it hanging?

EM

Actually, I've been feeling kind of SAD. You know, S.A.D. Seasonal Affective Disorder.

KHAL

Really? It's only October. And it's pretty warm out.

EM

I don't know, I could use a little whiff of spring.

She smiles.

EM (CONT'D)

See ya.

She strolls away confidently. Khal laughs nervously.

Otis walks up to him and slaps him on the shoulder.

OTIS

Hey, you coming to lunch?

KHAL

Yeah, I'll see you there.

He takes off in the opposite direction.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Khal bursts into a stall, locks the door, puts the toilet seat down, and sits.

He takes out his phone and makes a Facetime call to Arwin.

Arwin answers. He's in a classroom, in the middle of a lecture.

ARWIN

Go for Arwin.

KHAL

I can call you later.

ARWIN

Nah, it's chill.

KHAL

I messed it up big time.

ARWIN

She didn't like the flowers?

KHAL

I don't know, word got around that they're for Em Strayer, one of her best friends.

ARWIN

So?

KHAL

So, both of them probably know by now, and if I give Kelsa the flowers, all girly hell's gonna break loose.

He sighs. Resigned:

KHAL (CONT'D)

Maybe I should just give them to Em.

ARWIN

Jeez. Can you believe this guy?

He talks to some O.S. MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS sitting around him.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRL 1 (O.S.)

I know.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRL 2 (O.S.)

Yeah. What a loser.

ARWIN

This is classic Khalid. You're so desperate to please everyone that you forget to look out for number one.

KHAL

I don't want to hurt anyone.

ARWIN

Uh, news flash, dude. In this life, you're gonna hurt people. And if you try to please everyone, you'll end up hurting the ones that matter most. Do you like Em?

KHAL

No.

ARWIN
Do you like Kelsa?

KHAL
Yeah.

ARWIN
Then don't be a perpetually passive
pussy and give her the flowers!

The middle school girls peek into the frame.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRL 1
Yeah, Khalid.

MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRL 2
Don't be a pussy, Khalid.

We hear the voice of a male MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER:

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER (O.S.)
Hey! Arwin, give me your phone.

Arwin looks up at the teacher.

ARWIN
I'm using my calculator.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER (O.S.)
This is Language Arts.

ARWIN
Why is your generation so resistant
to technology?

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER (O.S.)
I'm 25, Arwin.

Khal hangs up the call. He looks forward, deep in thought,
and finally frowns and puts on a look of newfound resolution.

KHAL
I'm gonna put myself first.

We hear a loud PLOP from the next stall over.

STUDENT IN THE BATHROOM (O.S.)
Argh, the splashback!

Khal grimaces.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Kelsa, Em, Chris and Megan sit at their usual table.

EM

I think dinner and a movie is
always a good bet.

Between them, in the background, we see Khal entering the cafeteria, holding the flowers. He looks around, spots them, and starts walking towards them.

MEGAN

You should go to Mike Liebowitz's
party.

EM

Yeah. We can hang out for like, an
hour before, that way, if we run
out of things to talk about we have
a time limit.

MEGAN

And if you don't, you can go
together.

EM

Exactly. You gotta plan ahe--

Khal reaches the table. He looks only at Kelsa.

KHAL

Hey, Kelsa. I got these for you.

Kelsa did not see this coming at all. Em looks like she's
going into anaphylactic shock.

CHRIS

Oh!

Khal walks away, FOLLOWING THE CAMERA, a collage of fear,
embarrassment and adrenaline on his face. In the background
Em angrily takes off from the table. Megan runs after her.

INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - DAY

On Khal, staring stiffly ahead, traumatized by his own bold
move.

ENGLISH TEACHER (O.S.)

Can anyone tell me the difference
between specially and
especially?... Kal-eed?

Khal is somewhere else entirely.

ENGLISH TEACHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Kal-eed!

He jumps in fright.

KHAL

Oh!

The class laughs.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

At his locker, Khal stuffs some books into his backpack. He overhears some girl STUDENTS gossiping.

STUDENT 1

Someone's crying in the girl's bathroom.

STUDENT 2

Oh my god, who?

STUDENT 1

Em Strayer.

Khal notices Kelsa walking his way.

Kelsa looks up and sees him. She immediately does a 180 and starts walking the other way.

Khal closes his locker. He notices Otis approaching. He rushes to put a jacket on, but can't find one of the armholes. He spins around desperately.

OTIS

Dude, you gave the flowers to Kelsa? You know she's a boy, right?

KHAL

Yes. I mean, no.

He finally sticks his arm in.

KHAL (CONT'D)

I don't know, okay?

He picks up his backpack.

KHAL (CONT'D)

I have to go.

He walks away, leaving a confused Otis behind.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Khal sits in the window seat, looking at his phone. It's a conversation with Kelsa, ending in an unrequited "HEY" sent by Khal. He swipes on the message, showing the send time of 8:05PM. The time on the phone is 7:15AM.

The driver makes an announcement.

BUS DRIVER

Listen up! One of the buses broke down so we're taking in some more goblin--I mean, children. Please make room.

The bus stops, and a line of high schoolers pours in. Among them is Kelsa. She makes eye contact with Khal, then keeps walking and sits in the back of the bus.

Khal looks back stealthily. He takes a deep breath. Fuck it. He stands up, walks to the back of the bus, and sits next to Kelsa.

KHAL

Hi.

KELSA

Hi.

A beat.

KHAL

So, did you like the flowers?

KELSA

No, I didn't like the flowers. What the hell, Khal?

KHAL

What? I like you.

KELSA

Em likes you. You really did that in front of her? If you're trying to prove you're not a nice person, congratulations. It's working.

KHAL

I wanted to do it for you.

KELSA

It didn't occur to you that I didn't want to be made a scene of in front of my friends? In front of the whole school?

KHAL

Sorry. I thought you'd like them. They're wildflowers.

KELSA

I didn't.

KHAL

Okay. If you don't like me, just tell me right now, okay? I still want to be your friend. If you don't want to be friends, I'll leave you alone forever, I guess.

KELSA

I like you.

Khal's eyes light up.

KHAL

You do?

KELSA

But you've really made a mess of things.

Khal thinks.

KHAL

Then let's just walk in there. Together. It's too late anyway, you're gonna lose a friend, I'm for sure gonna lose my friends. But what do you wanna remember from High School when we're old? We could live our own life, right now, or do what people expect of us and spend the rest of our life wondering, what if?

Kelsa locks eyes with him. She cracks a smile. Khal mirrors it.

EXT. RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Khal and Kelsa stand outside the door to the school. Kelsa wraps her hand in his.

KELSA
(Attenborough voice)
In a daring move, the human mates
publicly display their affection.

KHAL
(Attenborough voice)
Will their colony accept them?

KELSA
(Attenborough voice)
Or will there be carnage?

Khal opens the door.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Hand in hand, Khal and Kelsa walk through the hallway. The students on either side of them turn to look, point, and talk among themselves.

They pass Em. She and Kelsa share a quick glance. She looks devastated.

Khal avoids looking at Otis, who can't really grasp the situation.

KELSA
This is me.

They stop outside a classroom. Their hands separate.

KHAL
Bye.

They lean into each other, then jerk away. Khal ends up giving Kelsa an awkward kiss on the cheek.

Kelsa goes into the classroom and Khal keeps walking, every set of eyes in the student body on him.

He reaches his classroom, but Otis blocks his way.

OTIS
Dude, what's happening?

Khal shrugs.

OTIS (CONT'D)
Are you gay?

KHAL
No.

OTIS
You can tell me if you're gay.

KHAL
I would.

OTIS
Sorry, I'd accept you, but I can't
if you're in denial.

KHAL
Whatever, Otis.

OTIS
What?

Khal forcefully pushes past him.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Khal reaches the end of the lunch line and turns around. He starts walking aimlessly, unsure of what to do.

He spots Kelsa and Chris, not at their usual table. Kelsa smiles at him. He sits.

KHAL
Hey.

CHRIS
Hello.

They start eating in silence.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
So you've officially dropped a bomb
on the school.

Khal looks around.

KHAL
Don't say that so loud.

Silence again.

CHRIS
I'm gonna go get more cookies.

She stands up and walks away.

KELSA
So, how's it going?

EXT. PITTSBURGH NATIONAL AVIARY - DAY

Khal and Kelsa walk across a lawn to the huge glass building, still carrying their school backpacks.

INT. NATIONAL AVIARY - CONDOR COURT - DAY

An enormous condor spreads its wings menacingly. Outside of the cage, Kelsa and Khal look delighted.

KELSA

You know, there's more to me than liking animals.

KHAL

Yeah. That's why I asked you on a calculated date, so I can learn more about you, and take you on more calculated dates.

KELSA

Or you could just relax.

INT. NATIONAL AVIARY - PENGUIN POINT - DAY

An African Penguin waddles across a rock. Beside it, on the inside of a glass dome, Kelsa peeks her head out.

In the crawl space below the penguin tank, Kelsa sits down next to Khal. Light from the peeking dome softly washes over them.

KHAL

So how are things with Em?

KELSA

Not good.

Khal grimaces in embarrassment.

KELSA (CONT'D)

She was kinda transphobic anyways.

KHAL

Really?

KELSA

Yeah, she kind of treated me like a mental patient.

(imitating Em)

Like he said, I'm sorry, like SHE said.

(MORE)

KELSA (CONT'D)

(back to normal)

I know that doesn't sound so bad,
but I know she misgenders me when
I'm not around.

KHAL

Yeah, totally.

A couple of children run across the crawl space.

KELSA

How are things with Otis?

KHAL

Not good.

KELSA

Damn.

KHAL

Maybe it's for the best too. We
were always "Khal and Oates".
That's not even my name, you know?

KELSA

Really? What's your full name?

KHAL

Khalid.

KELSA

Why did you shorten it?

KHAL

Because people can't pronounce the
Kh. They pronounce it like DJ
Khaled. Eventually you get sick of
the "another one"s and
"congratulations you played
yourself".

KELSA

Sounds like a hard life.

KHAL

It is! Meanwhile my brother Arwin
gets the anglo name.

KELSA

That's like, a serial killer name.

KHAL

Yeah, I wouldn't be surprised.

KELSA

Well, I'm gonna call you Khalid.
Did I say that right?

KHAL

Yeah.

KELSA

Names are what make us unique,
remember?

KHAL

I thought only animals.

KELSA

No, people too.

INT. NATIONAL AVIARY - TROPICAL RAINFOREST OPEN EXHIBIT - DAY

Khal and Kelsa slowly walk through a densely foliated room,
small birds waddling around on the floor around them.

KHAL

I know what your name means, by the
way.

KELSA

Ugh. How?

KHAL

There's this cool new website where
you can look up the answer to any
question. It's called... Goggle?

KELSA

I gotta check that out.

KHAL

Yeah.

KELSA

Did you find anything else?

Khal hesitates.

KHAL

Yeah. Your videos. Did you not want
them to be seen?

KELSA

I kind of do. I publish them for a
reason, it makes me feel like I
don't have to hide who I am.

(MORE)

KELSA (CONT'D)

And like, if one person looks at my channel and comes to understand themselves better, that would make me happy.

KHAL

Why aren't you like that in school?

KELSA

(defensive)

It's different. I don't want to be known for being trans, I have other things to offer, you know? I don't have to be some activist.

KHAL

Hey, it's fine. You're amazing just like you are.

Kelsa blushes.

INT. NATIONAL AVIARY - TROPICAL RAINFOREST HALL - DAY

Khal and Kelsa stop in front of the Rhinoceros Hornbill exhibit.

KELSA

It's crazy how evolution works. We think we're genetically superior to, like, sea cucumbers but we're not. We just evolved to successfully procreate in different environments.

KHAL

Well, humans are superior. Because we're genetically modified by reptilian aliens.

KELSA

Oh my god, I love conspiracy theories.

KHAL

Me too!

They keep walking.

KELSA

Did you know the government made selfies popular to build a facial recognition software?

KHAL

Oh yeah. Once I was convinced my parents were spies from the New World Order. So I put glass in their soup.

KELSA

Jesus.

KHAL

If they were lizards, they would have eaten it no problem.

KELSA

Sounds like a lose-lose.

KHAL

Yeah.

KELSA

Chapstick has little shards of glass in it so you keep buying it.

KHAL

Oh, you're preaching to the choir. Wanna do the bird feeding thing?

KELSA

Yeah.

INT. NATIONAL AVIARY - BIRD FEEDING EXHIBIT - DAY

A sweet looking lady ORNITHOLOGIST hands a little tub of nectar to Khal.

ORNITHOLOGIST

Now, just hold it up.

Khal slowly holds up the nectar. All at once, three birds fly into his hand and start pecking it.

KHAL

Aaaaah!

He drops the tub, and the birds fly away.

MOMENTS LATER

The ornithologist hands Khal another tub. Khal looks terrified.

KELSA

Here.

She faces him and holds his hand, slowly raising his arm with him. The birds fly and land on Khal's hand. He winces, but then looks up and laughs.

KHAL
Oh, my god!

He looks at Kelsa, only inches from his face.

WIDE SHOT: Khal and Kelsa are alone in the room. The Ornithologist is busy filling up the tubs. It's the perfect opportunity for a kiss...

KHAL (CONT'D)
Oh, look, its empty already.

He lowers the tub and he and Kelsa separate.

INT. PUBLIC BUS - DAY

Khal and Kelsa sit together on the bus.

Kelsa puts her head on Khal's shoulder. Khal stiffens up, but smiles.

KELSA
Ugh, I don't wanna go home. I have to work on my college essay.

KHAL
Same. I haven't done anything. What question are you gonna do?

KELSA
My counselor says I should do 2.

KHAL
Yeah, I was also thinking 2.

KELSA
She wants me to do it about my parent's divorce... no, more like, how I pretty much caused it because I'm trans.

KHAL
Wow. I didn't know...

Kelsa takes her head off his shoulder. She isn't here for anyone's pity. But then--

KHAL (CONT'D)
Thats so brave of you.

He's only kidding! Kelsa smirks.

KELSA
Shut up.

KHAL
If it makes you feel better, I
don't even have anything to write
about.

KELSA
I'm pretty sure you do.

Khal smiles.

EXT. KELSA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Khal and Kelsa stop in front of the driveway.

KELSA
Ok, um... bye.

KHAL
Bye.

They give each other a SUPER AWKWARD HUG.

KELSA
Why are we so awkward?

Khal shrugs. After a silent beat, Khal turns around to leave.

KELSA (CONT'D)
Wait.

Khal spins back around.

KELSA (CONT'D)
Do you wanna make out?

KHAL
Yeah.

Kelsa walks up to him. They start KISSING deeply.

They stumble to the edge of the driveway and fall down on a patch of grass, now having a FULL ON MAKE OUT SESH.

They finally separate and laugh.

KELSA
Okay. I really have to go now.

They stand up, and give each other one final kiss. Kelsa walks inside.

Khal starts walking down the street. He looks down, then back up with a look of embarrassment. He looks around nervously, then puts his backpack on one shoulder and to the side, strategically covering his crotch area.

INT. KHAL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The Zuabi family eats silently.

KHAL
I think I have a girlfriend.

SELDA
Oh, mama, that's very sweet.

ARWIN
(suspiciously)
What's her name?

KHAL
Kelsa.

SASAN
Hm.

ARWIN
Good.

SELDA
You know her, Arwin? What's she like?

Khal shoots him a look.

ARWIN
She's... a very special girl.

SELDA
That's nice.

KHAL
And while we're at it... I'm thinking of applying to art school.

SASAN
What? I thought Georgetown?

KHAL
No. I'm not-- can we forget about Georgetown? That's so random.

The family eats.

KHAL (CONT'D)
So, what do you think?

SASAN
We support you.

Khal sighs in relief.

SASAN (CONT'D)
And when you're selling pasta
necklaces in the New York subway
I'll toss you a quarter.

Selda swats him.

SELDA
You know who was a great artist?
Your great uncle.

KHAL
Which one?

SELDA
Your great uncle Khalid. It's in
the name, I guess.

Khal's eyes brighten up.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Khal walks down the hallway, radiating happiness.

He notices Chris walking his way.

KHAL
Hey.

Chris grabs him and pulls him into the girl's bathroom.

INT. GIRL'S BATHROOM - DAY

Khal tries to get out, but Chris blocks the exit.

CHRIS
How was the date, huh?

KHAL
Chris, this is the girl's bathroom.

CHRIS
Did you try anything funny?

KHAL
Yeah, I try to make her laugh when
I can.

CHRIS
Oh, you got jokes, huh?

KHAL
That's what I said.

Chris grabs Khal by the shirt and pins him against a slimy wall.

KHAL (CONT'D)
Ew.

CHRIS
Listen here, guy, you might think
you're a very special boy, but
you're not. There are a lot of men
who are attracted to trans women,
and when it gets down to it...

She glances down at his crotch.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
...they're not down to get to it.

KHAL
It's not like that at all. I don't
care about that. She could have a
full human hand down there doing a
Vulcan salute and I'd still like
her.

Chris does a Vulcan salute to herself.

CHRIS
Okay, I didn't peg you for the
type, but prove me wrong, and I'll
skin your face and wear it like a
mask.

She mimes putting a mask on her face, then mumbles and acts
awkward, imitating Khal.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Do you think I'm scary?

KHAL
 Absolutely, but everything you say
 makes a lot of sense.

CHRIS
 Good.

She releases him.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Khal reaches his locker. A few lockers away is Otis. The two transfer books in and out without a word. Otis closes his locker and walks away.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - NIGHT

A SERVER SEARCH BAR autofills a now familiar url:

"reddit.com/r/relationships"

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL
 Hey reddit. I noticed you've been
 asking for an update, so here it
 is. I ended up getting her
 wildflowers, and giving them to her
 in the middle of lunch. Not the
 best of advice, but everything
 worked out in the end. We're going
 out! I don't think I've ever been
 happier.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Khal lies on his bed, looking at his phone.

KHAL (V.O.)
 I can't fall asleep at night
 because I'm waiting for her to
 respond to my texts.

INTERCUT - TEXT CONVERSATION

We see Khal and Kelsa through the POV of their respective phones. We INTERCUT with the text conversation on their phone screen:

KHAL
 Would you have sex with your clone?

KELSA

Probably not. We'd have so little to say to each other, it would just be awkward.

KHAL

I would. But it would have to be immediately after he materialized. The more time that passes, the more of an independent being it is, and the less similar it is to masturbation.

INT. KELSA'S ROOM - DAY

Kelsa leads Khal into her room. He looks around in awe.

KHAL (V.O.)

I finally saw her room. It's less girly than I imagined. It's really just mostly filled with SAT prep books. She does have good taste in art.

Khal's portrait of Kelsa hangs on the wall.

INT. KELSA'S ROOM - LATER

Khal and Kelsa are in her bed looking at Kelsa's laptop. The screen shows a black and white video of a team of military doctors wearing contamination suits performing an autopsy on an alien.

NARRATOR

Is this indeed a top secret autopsy performed on an alien in 1947?

KHAL

How is that not real?

KELSA

There's no way it can be real, but how could they have done that? There's blood oozing out every time they cut it.

She starts typing on her phone.

KHAL

It would be common knowledge by now, wouldn't it?

KELSA
(reading the truth on her
phone)
Oh, yeah, it's obviously not real.

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL
Although she rarely likes to talk
about it, I try to read up on trans
stuff, and be there for her
whenever I can.

CLOSE ON KELSA - YOUTUBE VIDEO

KELSA
So I'm finally starting estrogen,
so I expect some bigger changes in
the coming months. Oh! And my
facial hair finally isn't growing
back anymore. I was so excited I
let my boyfriend come to my laser
appointment.

INT. LASER HAIR REMOVAL - DAY - IPHONE VIDEO

Kelsa films from her POV on the reclining chair in the middle
of the room. Khal sits on a chair nearby while the TECHNICIAN
puts the laser on Kelsa's face.

KHAL
Does it hurt?

KELSA
No. It, like, hurts good, you know?

KHAL
Can I try it?

KELSA
Can he?

TECHNICIAN
Yeah. Really quick.

Khal puts out his arm. The technician puts the machine up to
it and turns it on briefly.

KHAL
Oh, fucknuggets!

He jerks away and shakes his arm in pain. Kelsa bursts out
laughing and points the phone at the ceiling.

CLOSE ON KELSA - YOUTUBE VIDEO

KELSA

And, about that... having a boyfriend. I thought being with a boy would help me feel more like a girl. But, I don't think it's that different for me. And that's the thing about being trans. If you poke under the whole, *it's 2020, oh, the times we live in* stuff, there isn't really much, there?

We zoom out to reveal the title of the video: "HAVING A BOYFRIEND WHILE TRANS"

KELSA (CONT'D)

The truth is, having a boyfriend... I don't feel more like a girl... I just feel more like myself.

She BEAMS.

KELSA (CONT'D)

I'm glad I have this to talk about it. Between you and me, my best friend's going through some major boy issues.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Chris drives, with Kelsa in the passenger seat. They stop in front of a suburban home.

CHRIS

Thanks for coming with me.

KELSA

Ok. So, what are you here for?

CHRIS

Talk calmly. Finalize the breakup. Close the cycle.

KELSA

Close the cycle.

Chris reaches into the backseat.

CHRIS

Close the cycle.

She comes back with a PAINTBALL MASK ON.

KELSA

Chris, what are you doing?

Chris has a PAINTBALL GUN in her hand. She leans it on the open window--

KELSA (CONT'D)

Chris, no!

--and OPENS FIRE on the house.

SPLATS of paint color the front door.

CHRIS

You wanna break this heart? This heart breaks back, bitch!

The house lights turn on. Kelsa shrinks into the seat. Chris throws the gun in the backseat and drives away.

CLOSE ON KELSA - YOUTUBE VIDEO

KELSA

Chris acts all strong and impenetrable, but that's what I'm getting at. Trans, cis or whatever--
(theatrical)
None of us are safe from love. Is that hideously cheesy?

The screen is littered with stock photos of CHEESE. Kelsa shrugs.

KELSA (CONT'D)

I don't care.

She laughs.

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL

There's just one thing that's been on my mind. I'm pretty sure she--

SPLIT SCREEN - KHAL'S REDDIT POST/KELSA'S YOUTUBE VIDEO

KHAL (CONT'D)

--wants to have sex.

KELSA

I want to have sex.

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL

It's not like I don't want to.

CLOSE ON KELSA - YOUTUBE VIDEO

KELSA
It's not like we haven't done
things.

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL
I just don't want to cross any
boundaries or make her feel
uncomfortable.

CLOSE ON KELSA - YOUTUBE VIDEO

KELSA
I'm scared that when it comes to
that, he won't want to.

INT. GIRL'S LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Girls in gym clothes start getting changed.

Among them is Kelsa, who walks to her locker, grabs her clothes, and walks through the crowd of girls into a nearby bathroom stall. She starts to undress.

Right outside, Em and Megan approach and start changing on a bench.

EM
Honestly, Mike can do so much
better.

MEGAN
I think he wants to get back
together.

EM
Not since Chris went all psycho and
vandalized his house.

Kelsa frowns.

EM (CONT'D)
Duh. You know why they broke up,
right?

MEGAN
No, why?

EM
She was poking holes in their
condoms.

Kelsa walks out of the stall. Em and Megan stare at her.

EM (CONT'D)
Can you stop stalking us?

Kelsa stands her ground.

KELSA
Can you stop spreading rumors about
Chris?

EM
Is it really a rumor if it's true?

KELSA
It's not.

EM
Well, you should know, you're her
friend. Oh, I forgot.

She gets close to Kelsa menacingly.

EM (CONT'D)
You don't give a shit about your
friends.

KELSA
Get off me.

She pushes Em gently. Em retaliates by GRASPING Kelsa's arm.

The light skirmish results in Em taking a step back and
TRIPPING over the bench. She spins and tries to catch her
fall.

Em's ring finger hits directly against the floor, bending
where it shouldn't.

EM
Owww!!!!

MEGAN
What's your problem?

KELSA
I didn't mean to. Em, are you okay?

She approaches Em to check.

KELSA (CONT'D)

Em--

EM

GET AWAY FROM ME!

Kelsa nervously backs away and walks out of the locker room.

EM (CONT'D)

Ow!!!!

INT. GYM - DAY

Em steps out of the locker room, pretty much in Megan's arms.

Kelsa comes out behind them.

KELSA

Em, I'm sorry.

EM

Shut up, you broke my finger!

In the bleachers nearby, OTIS turns a curious head.

INT. NURSE - DAY

Silicone tape is WRAPPED around a splint on Em's finger.

EM

Ow!

The NURSE finishes the procedure.

EM (CONT'D)

Do you have any painkillers? They gotta be strong. Something that'll really zonk me out.

NURSE

This is a High School, so we have chamomile tea.

EM

Ugh. Fine.

The nurse walks away.

Otis walks in and smoothly approaches her.

Em's injured hand is resting on a table, the splinted middle finger sticking upwards.

OTIS
Hey, quit flipping me off.

Em makes a face at him and actually flips him off with her other hand.

Otis laughs.

OTIS (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

EM
I'm fine. It's Kelsa Brown who's got mental problems.

OTIS
Yeah, I heard she stole your man.

EM
She didn't steal my anything. He wasn't my man. She's just a conniving bitch.

OTIS
Hey, I get it. She stole my best friend.

Em gives him an understanding look.

OTIS (CONT'D)
You wanna get back at her?

Em's ears prick up.

OTIS (CONT'D)
Listen, I'm pretty liberal and everything. But it sounds to me like you were just assaulted... in a space meant for women only.

Em looks at him, understanding...

INT. MR. WALLACE'S OFFICE - DAY

Em sits across from Mr. Wallace, wearing a conspicuous FINGER SPLINT.

EM
It's our space. A women's space. And she brought her... socialized male energy into it. I'm fine with her lifestyle, I really am.
(MORE)

EM (CONT'D)
But it stops being okay when she
enters our spaces to... assault us.

Mr. Wallace gives her a concerned look.

CLOSE ON KELSA - YOUTUBE VIDEO

Kelsa hesitates, thinking about what to say. She looks miserable.

KELSA
Surviving High School.

INT. RIVER VALLEY HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY

Kelsa walks among a herd of students. Mr. Wallace grabs her arm. He gestures at her to come with him.

KELSA (V.O.)
Here's another useful tip:

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Coach Tim blows his whistle. Girls in P.E. uniforms start to sprint off the field.

But Kelsa strays from the pack. She grabs a BACKPACK from the sidelines and makes her way to a barely kept structure.

INT. SOCCER FIELD BATHROOM - DAY

The bathroom is GROSS. A small pack of teenagers smoke out of VAPE PENS. Kelsa squeezes through them.

She goes into a stall. Looks around. She lowers the seat and places her backpack on the toilet. She unzips it.

KELSA (V.O.)
Don't be trans.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD BATHROOM - DAY

We zoom out of the door. A grimy, decaying ALL GENDER SIGN hangs from it.

INT. KELSA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kelsa presses "publish" on a video entitled "BATHROOM DRAMA"

She gets up off her desk and plops on the bed. Her phone CHIMES.

It's a Facetime call from Khal. His picture of his phone is one of a funny sloth.

Kelsa smiles. She answers.

KHAL

Question for you: in 100 years when your granddaughter is engaged to a robot, will you be pro-robot-human marriage or are you gonna be an annoying conservative who's against their beautiful union?

KELSA

Hm... pro robot marriage. At least they don't smell like boys do.

KHAL

Aha. Okay. I see how it is.

Kelsa is immediately cheered up.

KHAL (CONT'D)

Hey, Mike Liebowitz is having a cabin thing for new years. Everyone's going, but is it gonna be awkward for Chris if we go?

KELSA

Chris is fine. She wants to do Mike Liebowitz exposure therapy to get over him.

KHAL

Why did they break up?

Kelsa lies:

KELSA

I don't know. Some drama.

KHAL

Okay well, it's gonna be cold. Pack your long johns.

KELSA

(laughs)

What even are long johns?

KHAL

Like underwear pants.

KELSA
Who's john?

KHAL
John Long John, the inventor of the
long john.

Kelsa laughs.

INT. KHAL'S PARENT'S ROOM - NIGHT

BIRD'S EYE VIEW: Selda and Sasan are tucked in bed, reading.
We hear a KNOCK. Selda looks up.

SELDA
Oh, look who it is!

SASAN
Come on, get up here.

Khal climbs in the middle.

SELDA
How long has it been since you were
on our bed?

KHAL
Mom, Dad, can I go to a party on
New Year's?

SELDA
But we always go to Basha Cafe,
then watch the ball drop on TV.

KHAL
I know, but it's my last year of
High School, and all the seniors
are going to Mike Liebowitz's
cabin. It's tradition.

SELDA
Yes, but we have our own tradition.

SASAN
Will Kelsa be there?

KHAL
Yeah.

SASAN
You should go.

KHAL

Mom?

SELDA

Fine. But we're going to Basha Cafe
for your birthday.

KHAL

Deal.

He lies between them silently, cherishing the soon to be rare
family moment.

KHAL (CONT'D)

Do you guys care that I'm dating a
white girl?

Sasan laughs.

SELDA

No, mama. We want you to be happy.
There are worse things in the world
than dating a white girl.

Khal tenses up.

KHAL

Like what?

SELDA

I don't know. Just don't tell your
Jadda.

SASAN

She'll finish decomposing.

SELDA

Sasan!

He chuckles to himself.

INT/EXT. MIKE LIEBOWITZ'S CABIN - NIGHT

10 seconds before the new year. Khal's schoolmates are
dressed in party hats and New Year apparel. Khal and Kelsa,
holding hands, rush through the crowd, evading the other kids
as the countdown begins.

EVERYONE

10, 9, 8, 7...

KELSA

Hurry, we're gonna miss it!

They go out the door and onto the deck. There are still people there, so they quickly descend the stairs into the edge of the woods.

EVERYONE

6, 5, 4, 3...

Finally alone, they turn towards each other...

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

2, 1...

... and KISS passionately, smiling in between each others' lips.

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

Happy New Year!!!

KELSA

It's freezing.

KHAL

Let's go inside.

INT. MIKE LIEBOWITZ'S CABIN - NIGHT

Khal leads Kelsa through the party by the hand. He passes by Otis and Kevin, making brief eye contact.

When they pass by, Otis dramatically shivers in mock disgust.

They find Chris on a couch, talking to Chance.

CHRIS

Yeah, but you talk in African American Vernacular English, and you're white. What's so hard to understand?

CHANCE

I know what AAVE is. And I don't speak it.

A PARTIER passes next to them.

PARTIER

Yo, Chance, what's good?

Chance fist bumps him.

CHANCE

Stayin' black, stayin' alive.

Chris rolls her eyes.

Kelsa leads Khal down a hallway and into an empty bedroom.

INT. MIKE LIEBOWITZ'S CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Khal sits on the bed while Kelsa locks the door. She walks over, sits next to Khal. They start kissing. Soon, their shirts are off.

We hear a SCREAM from outside.

KHAL
What's that?

KELSA
Don't worry about it.

They keep kissing. Khal keeps his eyes open.

We hear another, slightly shorter SCREAM.

Kelsa slightly opens her eyes.

KELSA'S POV - A blurry view of Khal's open eye.

Kelsa retreats.

KELSA (CONT'D)
Do you have your eyes open?

KHAL
Yeah.

KELSA
It's kinda freaky.

KHAL
Sorry.

KELSA
It's okay.

She kisses him. Another SCREAM.

KHAL
I kinda wanna know what they're
screaming about.

Kelsa scoots away.

KELSA
Do you not wanna do this?

KHAL

I'm sorry. It's really not you. I don't want you to think that... I'm not attracted to you, and to every part of you. Because I am.

KELSA

Khalid. I know. If you're not ready, we don't have to.

KHAL

Are you sure?

KELSA

Yeah.

She picks up her shirt.

KHAL

Hey.

Kelsa turns towards him.

KHAL (CONT'D)

You're beautiful.

He kisses her tenderly.

INT. MIKE LIEBOWITZ'S CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Khal and Kelsa come out into a scene of chaos. Girls hide behind couches and tables. Boys cower, protecting their face with their hands.

Only the brave Mike Liebowitz himself takes action, waving a broom around to steer a zigzagging BAT out of the house, with little luck.

KELSA

Stop! Mike, do you have a torch?

MIKE

Like a tiki torch?

KELSA

No, like a big flashlight.

MIKE

Yeah, hang on.

He grabs a torch from one of the living room drawers, and hands it to Kelsa.

Kelsa turns it on and points it near the bat.

KELSA
They're like little vampires.

The bat avoids the light, and Kelsa steers it out of the open door. Everyone CHEERS. Mike closes the door.

MIKE
Okay, back to the game.
(to Kelsa)
You wanna play?

KELSA
What are you playing?

MIKE
Hot seat.

Kelsa thinks about it.

KELSA
Sure.

Everyone forms a circle, including the amused Khal, and Kelsa sits in the middle.

MIKE
You know the rules right? For a minute, anybody can ask you any question, and you have to answer.

KELSA
Okay, but two things are out of bounds.

MIKE
Sure.

KELSA
You can't ask me about my genitals.

The group nods in agreement.

KELSA (CONT'D)
And you can't ask me what my deadname is.

MIKE
Okay. Everybody got it?

The group murmurs in agreement.

MIKE (CONT'D)

And...

He starts a timer on his phone.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Start.

The partier from earlier speaks up.

PARTIER

What's a deadname?

Everyone laughs.

INT. MIKE LIEBOWITZ'S CABIN - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kelsa mingles with the crowd. People are interested in talking to her, and she's having a good time.

From across the kitchen, Em eyes her jealously.

INT. MIKE LIEBOWITZ'S CABIN - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Kelsa waits in line for the bathroom. Em comes out.

EM

Hang on.

She looks at the bathroom.

EM (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah. It's gender neutral.

KELSA

What else do you want from me? You win, okay? I know I was never supposed to like anyone.

EM

You were allowed to like whoever you wanted, you chose to like the guy I told you I liked.

KELSA

You don't get to choose who you like. I definitely don't get to choose who likes me back.

EM

You should have chosen me.

KELSA

Yeah, well, I guess I payed the price, right? Now I can't even use the girl's bathroom.

Almost in tears, she enters the bathroom and SLAMS the door.

Otis is giggling. Khal glares at him.

Chris knocks on the bathroom door. She's about to go in--

KHAL

Hey, can I go?

CHRIS

Sure.

Chris turns to look at a smirking Otis. His smirk disappears when Chris approaches him--

And THRUSTS her body at him in a fake attack. Otis flinches embarrassingly.

INT. MIKE LIEBOWITZ'S CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Khal carefully opens the door.

Kelsa sits on the toilet, wiping her tears with toilet paper.

KHAL

Are you okay?

KELSA

I'm fine.

Khal squats in front of her.

KHAL

What's this about the girl's bathroom?

KELSA

Nothing, Khal.

KHAL

What can I do?

KELSA

Nothing!

KHAL

Well, I want to help.

KELSA
Forget about it, it's trans stuff.

KHAL
I can handle the trans stuff.

KELSA
Why do you care?

KHAL
Because I'm your boyfriend and
you're trans.

KELSA
What does me being trans have to do
with being my boyfriend?

KHAL
Nothing! But--

KELSA
I don't need you to save me, okay?

Khal looks at her deeply. Kelsa avoids his gaze.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - NIGHT

Khal sits in the dark. An eerie internet light from his
laptop illuminates his face.

On the screen: Kelsa's BATHROOM DRAMA video.

KELSA
So, apparently I'm not allowed to
use the girl's locker room or
bathroom. It... doesn't feel great.
Um, I had a whole rant about how I
have rights and Mr. Wallace's a
clueless fascist and I'm above it
and I know my worth and I know I'm
a girl but I... I don't really feel
like it anymore.

The video ends.

Khal contemplates.

He slowly moves the cursor to the SHARE button. CLICKS, then
moves the cursor up...

...to the FACEBOOK ICON...

CLICK.

INT. GYM - NIGHT

Mike Liebowitz runs on the treadmill

He slows the treadmill down as the video starts.

KELSA (O.S.)
So apparently I'm not allowed to
use the girls' locker room or
bathroom...

INT. OTIS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Otis and Kevin furiously tap on their controllers. Chance looks at an iPad.

CHANCE
Yo, check this out.

He puts the tablet in front of his friends.

INT. MR. KUZNETSOV'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mr. Kuznetsov sits in front of his computer, its screen the only light in a dark, sinister room. He raises an eyebrow as he takes out a huge cigar and lights it.

INT. LINGERIE STORE - NIGHT

Rachel looks at her phone, a proud look on her face.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

In a dark movie theater, Chris looks at her phone.

CHRIS
Oh, no he didn't.

An ANGRY WOMAN behind her speaks up.

ANGRY WOMAN
Please, your screen is irritating
my eyes!

Chris ignores her, and turns the brightness way up.

INT. MR. WALLACE'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Wallace looks at his computer, a fist against his mouth in frustration.

On his screen:

KELSA

...I'm above it and I know my worth
and I know I'm a girl but I... I
don't really feel like it anymore.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - DAY

Morning. Khal is fast asleep.

ARWIN (O.S.)

Hey Khal. Khalid. Khalid. Khal.
Khalid. Brother. Bro. Brethren.
Fratello.

Khal opens his eyes. Arwin is standing next to his bed.

KHAL

What are you doing?

ARWIN

I wanted to congratulate you. You
went viral, dude.

KHAL

What?

Arwin holds out his phone. It's Khals post sharing Kelsa's
video: 12,000 shares.

Khal jerks up.

KHAL (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

INT. KELSA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Kelsa lazily brushes her teeth.

SARAH (O.S.)

KELSA!!!

Kelsa jumps.

INT. KELSA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kelsa sits on her bed, her computer in front of her. It shows her Youtube video, but subtitled with fun and digestible animated text: "GET THIS: THIS TRANS GIRL IS STICKING IT TO THE HATERS". It's been reposted on Facebook by a viral news site.

Sarah stands next to the bed with her arms crossed.

KELSA

Mom, I didn't do this.

SARAH

You didn't film this video?

KELSA

I did, but it was supposed to be personal.

SARAH

Take it down, now.

KELSA

I can't. Even if I do, Get This has already used it. It went viral, it has 50 thousand views.

Sarah moans as if the views were actually 50 thousand pins through her heart.

SARAH

How long have you been making those videos?

KELSA

Mom. Law of averages.

SARAH

No. Answer my question.

KELSA

Since I started hormone blockers.

SARAH

How many followers do you have?

KELSA

You mean subscribers?

SARAH

How many people tune in to watch your personal life?

KELSA
I don't know, like 200.

SARAH
Take the channel down. I don't want
you to make one more video.

KELSA
What? You can't do that.

SARAH
Yes I can. This is your body, what
you do with it is nobody's
business.

KELSA
It's my business, and I can share
my story with whoever I like.

SARAH
Delete the channel.

KELSA
No!

SARAH
Then I'm taking your computer.

She takes the computer and walks out into the hall.

KELSA
Mom!

Kelsa follows her.

INT. KELSA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

KELSA
How am I going to write my college
essay?

SARAH
We have an old desktop somewhere.

KELSA
It makes me feel good, why can't
you understand that?

The chase continues into...

INT. SARAH'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

SARAH

How? How can it possibly make you
feel good?

Sarah holds the computer on one side of her bed, with Kelsa on the other side.

KELSA

It helps with my self esteem.

SARAH

By having whatever weirdo out there
look at you?

KELSA

Oh my god, they're not weirdos.

SARAH

No. They are weirdos. You
think the world is on your
side because I've provided an
accepting environment. You
live in a bubble! There are
people out there that will
hurt you. They want to hurt
my baby, and I don't know how
else to protect my baby!

KELSA (CONT'D)

They're people like me. I'm
helping them, and if just one
person looks at my videos and
comes to understand--oh,
okay, mom, accepting? Listen
to what you're saying! You're
controlling me because Dad
left and you felt like you
needed to protect me--

Sarah starts crying. Kelsa walks back towards her room.

KELSA (CONT'D)

I still have a phone with a camera.

This time, Sarah follows her, stern mom face back on.

INT. KELSA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

SARAH

Ok, how about I follow you, since I
am an anonymous member of the
public, and if you don't take it
down, you won't be going to a
college more than 10 miles from
this household!

KELSA

Ugh!

She SLAMS the door to her room right in Sarah's face.

INT. RIVER VALLEY HIGH - GIRL'S BATHROOM - DAY

Chris looks at herself in the mirror, stretching out the skin on her face to check the severity of her breakouts.

The door to the bathroom opens. We hear the voice of two BOYS.

BOY IN BATHROOM 1 (O.S.)
All I'm saying is, there's really
no reason to separate sports into
guys and girls. Why don't they do
it according to weight, or simply
skill level?

The boys appear behind Chris, and go into adjoining stalls.

BOY IN BATHROOM 2
It's pure misogyny, bro. Guys don't
want to even have the option of
losing to women.

Confused, Chris walks out of the bathroom.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

She looks at the door and, sure enough, the girls' symbol is there. She walks a few steps down the hall and enters the boy's bathroom.

INT. BOY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Two girls stand in front of the urinals. They turn towards each other.

GIRL IN BATHROOM 1
Should we try it?

GIRL IN BATHROOM 2
(really excited)
Yeah.

They unzip their pants. Chris is completely confused. She looks around.

CHRIS
Is my blood sugar low? What is
going on?

Another girl comes out of the stall washes her hands.

GIRL IN BATHROOM 3
Aren't you on Facebook?

CHRIS
Bitch, I'm on LinkedIn only.

GIRL IN BATHROOM 3
After Khal Zuabi bravely shared his
girlfriend's story, Mike Liebowitz
(Chris frowns at the name)
organized a protest. Until the
school respects Kelsa Brown's human
rights, we're pulling a She's The
Man on the bathrooms.

CHRIS
Oh, she's not gonna like this.

We FOLLOW HER as she exits the bathroom.

She walks down the hallway. Mike stands on a chair:

MIKE
Do not use the bathroom that aligns
with your gender identity! We stand
with Kelsa!

STUDENTS
We stand with Kelsa!

Chris bumps into Kelsa, who covers her face with her hoodie.

CHRIS
Kelsa!

KELSA
Not now, Chris.

We FOLLOW Kelsa as she keeps walking, leaving Chris behind.
She makes her way among the crowd.

Khal comes at her from the other direction.

KHAL
Kelsa!

Kelsa shakes her head. She's furious at him. She turns around
and walks the other way.

KHAL (CONT'D)
Kelsa wait!

Kelsa walks into the library.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - DAY

Kelsa sits in an empty lab, completely overwhelmed. Khal enters.

KHAL
Hey, is everything alright?

KELSA
Is everything alright? How could you do this to me? You were the only one who knew about those videos.

Khal goes white. Busted.

KHAL
Everyone's helping you.

KELSA
I don't want that! I never did. I can take care of myself, I don't need anyone to save me, especially not you.

KHAL
You said you wanted to make a difference with those videos. You said, if one person--

KELSA
That is not your call, Khalid.

KHAL
Well, you don't talk to me! I just wanted to help you! That's all I've wanted this whole time. I lost all my friends for you.

KELSA
Whoa, whoa, whoa. I never asked you to do any of that. What, do you want me to thank you?

KHAL
I...

He can't say it, but yes.

KELSA
You know, you think you're so special helping everyone but really you just wanna show off how morally superior you think you are.

Khal doesn't know how to defend himself.

KELSA (CONT'D)
Go back to Otis. You deserve each other.

She exits. Khal follows her into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

KHAL
Kelsa, what's happening?

KELSA
We're done! Get that through your skull.

She walks away. Khal notices Otis within earshot and sighs.

OTIS
What's going on, Khal? You didn't want to suck his cock?

Khal walks up to him, threateningly.

KHAL
What did you say?

Otis makes himself larger, refusing to give up his power over Khal.

OTIS
I called you a cocksucker.

KHAL
I don't care what you called me. What did you call her?

OTIS
Him. Remember? It's a him. He's just crazy.

KHAL
It's Her, and no, she's not.

OTIS
He has a mental disorder.

KHAL
No, she doesn't.

OTIS

Maybe you do too. You'd have to be pretty messed up to wanna have sex with someone like that. I think you have a mental disorder.

KHAL

No, you do, you illiterate fuck!

He hits a nerve. Otis pushes Khal. He regains his balance, and pushes him back. The two of them square up. This is happening.

Passing by students stop and gather around the upcoming fight.

Khal and Otis step lightly, anticipating each other's moves. Finally, they lunge towards each other... and grab each other by the hair.

KHAL (CONT'D)

Ow!

They pull each other's hair, both keeping their heads down as low as possible to ease the pain.

OTIS

Let go!

KHAL

You let go!

They're stuck in a really lame Mexican standoff.

GIRL WATCHING

This sucks!

Finally Khal lets go. He uses Otis's downward force to knock his hand from his scalp, then lands a solid punch.

MR. KIDD (O.S.)

Hey!

Alarmed, Khal and Otis take off separately.

INT. KHAL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Khal walks into the house. His parents are sitting around the empty dining room table. Sasan looks extremely concerned. Selda is crying.

KHAL

What's going on?

Neither Sasan nor Selda wants to answer.

SASAN

We got a call from Otis's mom
saying you fought. He came home
with a black eye.

Selda finally holds back her tears.

SELDA

I knew there has been something off
with you. So we went through your
internet history.

KHAL

You guys went through my history?

SELDA

We found searches for hormones,
laser hair removal... sex change
surgeries.

She bursts into tears again.

KHAL

Oh, god.

SELDA

Are you transgendered?

KHAL

No!

SELDA

You're going to live such an
unhappy life.

KHAL

Okay, first of all, that's not
true. I could live a happy and
fruitful life. Second of all, I'm
not trans.

Sasan takes a breath of relief.

KHAL (CONT'D)

My girlfriend is.

SASAN

I told you. He's just gay.

KHAL

Ugh!

He storms off.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - DAY

Khal lies on his bed, browsing reddit.

We hear a KNOCK. Khal says nothing. Selda slowly comes into the room. Khal stares hard at his computer screen.

Selda sits at the foot of his bed and slowly closes the computer screen, making Khal look directly at her.

SELDA

Khalid...

KHAL

What?! I'm sick of people calling me gay or crazy when they're the ones who are so wrong about her...

He's tearing up.

SELDA

Stop. You don't have to explain anything to me. I understand. You have always been so kind.

Khal makes a deep, guttural sound of utter frustration.

SELDA (CONT'D)

I know you don't like to hear it, but you are kind. That's always been who you are.

She touches his hair.

SELDA (CONT'D)

And that's why you see that girl for who she really is.

Khal lets her run her fingers through his hair for a moment, then jerks his head away.

KHAL

It doesn't matter. She broke up with me.

SELDA

Then she has bigger problems, because she's an idiot.

Khal can't help but smile.

INT. MR. WALLACE'S OFFICE

Kelsa and Sarah, Em and her mom KAREN sit opposite Mr. Wallace.

Karen's annoyingly soft voice finishes a rant:

KAREN

Our little girls should be able to go into a restroom and feel safe. Because of one of the members of our community...

She gestures at Kelsa, who has her arms crossed, sinked back in her seat. Defeated.

KAREN (CONT'D)

...they no longer have this assurance. Kelsa brown is a bully. I don't know why we're rallying for the bully, why we're protecting the bully, when she shouldn't be using the girl's bathroom in the first place.

SARAH

Watch it, Karen.

Karen turns towards her.

KAREN

You know, transgenderism is not found in nature.

SARAH

Hyenas, lions, species of fish, all display similar behaviors. Even if they didn't. Look around you. People are trans, Karen. You'd know this if you'd finished college.

KAREN (CONT'D)

We are not fish!

It doesn't sound right to me.

KAREN (CONT'D)

I finished college.

SARAH

Okay, then you should have taken biology or feminist studies instead of how to marry rich and impotent.

KAREN

You're very rude.

SARAH
You're a dumbass.

Kelsa puts a hand to her mouth. She can't help but be delighted by the mom fight.

MR. WALLACE
Okay look, the bottom line is,
Kelsa assaulted and injured Em in
the bathroom. I know optically it's
not ideal, but I can't have them
together in an unsupervised space.

SARAH
You can't ban my daughter from the
bathroom. It's illegal.

MR. WALLACE
Not when there was actually an
assault.

Sarah is stumped. On Em, something boiling inside her...

KAREN
Are we done here?

Kelsa and Sarah look defeated. It looks like they are done here when--

EM
She didn't assault me, okay?

Everyone turns to look at her.

EM (CONT'D)
I made it up because we were
fighting. I broke my finger by
accident.

KAREN
Emberlee, honey, you don't have to
defend her.

EM
I'm not. She didn't assault me,
that's stupid.

She looks at Kelsa. With all the strength she can muster:

EM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

Kelsa smiles.

INT. RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Kelsa and Em walk out of the office.

KELSA
(teasing)
Your full name's Emberlee?

EM
Shut up.

She storms off.

KHAL (O.S.)
Hey.

Kelsa's smile disappears. She turns around to see Khal.

KHAL (CONT'D)
How'd it go?

KELSA
(dry)
Fine.

Sarah steps out of the office.

KELSA (CONT'D)
Mom, this is Khalid.

KHAL
Nice to meet you, Ms. Brown.

SARAH
Nice to meet you too.

KHAL
I just wanted to make sure
everything turned out okay.

He looks at Kelsa, who avoids his gaze.

SARAH
It did. Thank you, Khalid.

A loaded thank you. Khal smiles.

Kelsa starts stepping away from the conversation. Sarah gets the cue, and they start walking away.

Khal looks after her mournfully.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - DAY

Sarah and Kelsa drive in tense silence. Kelsa finally speaks:

KELSA
Thanks for helping me, mom. You
didn't have to.

SARAH
I know I didn't have to.

KELSA
I know, but I don't want you to
feel like you need to protect me
because dad refused to.

They reach a stoplight.

SARAH
Honey, the thing with me and your
dad, do you think it had something
to do with you? With you being...?

KELSA
I mean, yeah. I was such a burden
to you guys that your marriage just
couldn't take it.

SARAH
I mean, sure, it put some strain on
the situation but honey, the wound
was there.

KELSA
It's okay, mom. My relationship
couldn't take it either.

Sarah takes her hands off the wheel and looks deeply at
Kelsa.

SARAH
Kelsa, look at me.

She doesn't.

KELSA
I don't wanna talk about this.

The light turns green.

SARAH
Kelsa...

She gestures at the light.

KELSA

Go.

SARAH

Kelsa, just because you're trans--

KELSA

Law of averages!

SARAH

No! No. You are not average. In no shape or form. You are incredible. You're my incredible, inconceivably above average little girl and you know what? Being different does not make you a burden. You have never been a burden to me, do you understand? Not to me or to anyone. You are a lightness and a blessing--

Kelsa TOSSES herself at Sarah and hugs her tightly. They both WEEP.

SARAH (CONT'D)

--and the only burden's gonna be not having you around.

The cars behind them honk, but they keep holding on to each other, both of them refusing, for this once, to move forward.

They separate. Sarah accelerates. She wipes tears from her eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)

About the videos.

KELSA

I'll take my channel down,

SARAH

Just don't make anymore while you're at home. In a few months I won't be able to tell you what to do anymore.

More tears fight to get out. She doesn't let them.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Deal?

KELSA

Deal.

They drive in satisfied silence.

EXT. RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - BEHIND THE POOL HOUSE - DAY

A GROUP OF SKATER BOYS smoke cigarettes among the forgotten pool paraphernalia. Khal approaches one of them.

KHAL

Hey, can I... scrounge a coffin nail?

SKATER BOY

What?

KHAL

Can I... you know... mooch a... fag?

Khal gestures at the cigarettes.

SKATER BOY

Oh, bum a stoge? Sure, dude.

Khal puts the cigarette in his mouth. The burnout lights it. Khal's face contorts in disgust, but he tries to play it cool.

KHAL

Thanks.

He steps aside. Tries to smoke the cigarette, but can only inhale so much without choking.

CHRIS (O.S.)

What's up,

Chris walks up to him. Khal looks at her.

KHAL

Yeah, I'm going for the "lost everything, don't know what to live for now" look.

CHRIS

It doesn't suit you.

KHAL

You're right, I don't think voluntary smoke inhalation's really my thing.

He tosses the cigarette aside.

CHRIS

Walk with me.

EXT. RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL - POOL - DAY

Khal and Chris sit on the pool bleachers. Above the pool, the DIVING TEAM gathers on a platform.

One of them steps forward. Gets ready. DIVES.

On the bleachers:

CHRIS

You know, you didn't have to save her. Loving her was enough.

KHAL

I'm perpetually nice, what can I do?

CHRIS

I don't think you're nice.

KHAL

Thanks.

CHRIS

I think you're one better. You're brave, Khalid.

KHAL

I'm not brave for loving a trans girl.

CHRIS

Oh, hell no. Did I say that? Did I say that.

KHAL

No.

Another team member dives. BELLY FLOP. The rest of the team "ooooh"s. Khal winces.

CHRIS

Do you know why I broke up with Mike?

KHAL

I heard rumors. You disagreed on which McDonald's dipping sauce to get?

CHRIS

I got pregnant.

KHAL

Oh. Wow, I didn't know.

CHRIS

Yeah. Obviously I got an abortion.
And don't get me wrong, I was
stoked to suck that clump of cells
out of my body.

KHAL

Of course, yeah.

Another diver walks up to the edge of the platform. She
hesitates. Clearly afraid of belly flopping herself.

CHRIS (O.S.)

But when I decided I was gonna do
it, I texted Mike... nothing. The
day of my appointment came...
nothing.

Khal nods solemnly.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Through thick and thin, we said,
but when it got thick, he wussed
out.

The diving team EGGS the diver on.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Look, Khal. Any douchebag can fall
in love with a trans girl. But
really loving someone. With
confidence. With kindness. Saying
fuck what people think, this is my
person. Whoever it is. That's about
the bravest thing anyone can do.

The diver LAUNCHES herself off the platform... a perfect
dive.

Khal nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Now text her! Unless you're still
"afraid of the drama".

Khal perks up.

KHAL

Are you-- did you comment on my
post?

CHRIS
You're not the only one on the
internet, narutofan2003.

Khal BLUSHES profusely.

Chris walks off the bleachers.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(yells)
By the way, you can't get erectile
dysfunction from watching too much
porn!

The entire diving team looks over at Khal, who comes close to
death-by-embarrassment.

INT. KHAL'S ROOM - DAY

Phone in his hand, Khal paces back and forth.

ON HIS PHONE: an open conversation with KELSA.

Khal keeps pacing. Above his head, we see the EMPTY TEXT
ENTRY BOX, with a BLINKING BLUE BAR on its left side.

As Khal types, the text shows up in the box:

"HEYOOOO!!"

Khal frowns. DELETE.

He keeps thinking. But then--

A TEXT pops up from Kelsa!

"Hey, meet me somewhere?"

Khal's eyes go wide in surprise!

EXT. PITTSBURGH NATIONAL AVIARY - DAY

Khal walks among the tall trees in the park outside the
Aviary.

In his hands-- WILDFLOWERS.

He looks around. Spots KELSA next to a tree, facing away from
him.

He nervously turns around...

Takes a deep breath...

Turns BACK around and starts walking towards Kelsa.

When he's mere steps away--

--Kelsa turns around, revealing she's also holding a BOUQUET OF WILDFLOWERS.

Khal stops in his tracks.

Their smiles feed off each others'.

KELSA

Um...

She laughs.

KELSA (CONT'D)

Here.

She holds the flowers out.

Khal takes them. Holds his own out.

KHAL

Here.

Kelsa takes them. They look at each other. Sweet, sweet awkwardness.

KHAL (CONT'D)

Wow. No one's ever given me flowers before.

KELSA

Someone has for me. It was weird and too much, but also kind of the best feeling I've ever had.

KHAL

Listen, I'm sorr--

KELSA (CONT'D)

So, look--

They laugh.

KHAL

I had a speech, but now I'm nervous--

KELSA (CONT'D)

--it's okay, you don't have to--

They stop.

KELSA (CONT'D)

Why are we so awkward!

A beat.

KHAL
(Attenborough voice)
The male approaches the female
using a courting ritual, hoping to
get back together as mates.

Kelsa laughs.

KHAL (CONT'D)
(Attenborough voice)
With new Planet Earth technology we
can finally witness this rare
phenom of the natural worl--

Kelsa throws herself at him and KISSES HIM to shut him up.

AT THEIR FEET

Two sets of wildflowers PLOP onto the ground...

A SERVER SEARCH BAR.

Once again, as a certain someone types the first few letters,
the server automatically fills the rest of it in:
"reddit.com/r/relationships"

Enter. The page starts to load.

CLOSE ON THROWAWAY209479238, talking to his computer on the
bathroom counter. He's brushing his hair, getting ready to go
out.

THROWAWAY209479238
I [28M] am crazy about my
girlfriend [26F]. But today, she
put on heels...

His SUPER TALL GIRLFRIEND comes up and hugs him from behind.

THROWAWAY209479238 (CONT'D)
...and now she's way taller than
me! And I'm feeling insecure.
Should I tell her to put some flats
on instead?

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL

So let me get this straight... you gave a gorgeous, statuesque pillar of a girlfriend? I don't really see the problem here.

CLOSE ON GUCCI4EVA, a basic girl making her way through a coffee shop, talking to her phone:

GUCCI4EVA

Oh my god, guys, so, I [22F] was in bed with my boyfriend [23M], and... something horrible happened... I farted. I just ripped ass, and now I feel gross, and-- tell me the truth, is he gonna break up with me?

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL

(frowns, then)

People fart, OP. It's okay.

CLOSE ON FLANNELGIRL2003, a teenage girl in her bedroom.

FLANNELGIRL2003

I [16F] am the most clichéd lesbian ever. I have a hopeless crush on my best friend [16F]. I feel like she flirts with me sometimes, but it might be in like a girl-friend way and not a girlfriend way. I don't even know if she's gay. I want to tell her but maybe I'd rather not lose her.

CLOSE ON KHAL

KHAL

I think when it comes to love, we should always tell the truth about how we feel. Even if she doesn't feel the same way, you'll be happy you did. I recently confessed my feelings for someone. It was messy, and stupid, and dramatic. But if I hadn't, I'd probably have spent the rest of my life wondering...

INT. KELSA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Kelsa and Khal sit on Kelsa's bed, staring at her computer.

KHAL (V.O.)
...what if?

KHAL
Hit refresh again.

KELSA
I just did.

KHAL
I feel like this is the one.

KELSA
You said that about the last seven schools.

KHAL
Just putting the energy out there.

KELSA
Shit, it updated.

She presses her face against Khal's neck.

KELSA (CONT'D)
I can't look. You check.

Khal reads the computer screen.

KHAL
Oh, dang, that sucks...

KELSA
What?

KHAL
Your mom's gonna be so bummed
you're going all the way to UCLA.

KELSA
What?!

She looks at the screen, and SCREAMS with joy.

KELSA (CONT'D)
You asshole!

She hugs Khal. They start kissing, laughing, undressing...

Khal accidentally kicks the laptop off the bed. He gets up to fix it, but Kelsa pulls him back towards her.

INT. KHAL'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Khal takes his shoes off right in front of the door. He starts to walk in the house, but turns back and moves his shoes to the side.

INT. KHAL'S HOUSE - DAY

Khal looks around for his family.

He hears something coming from his parents' bedroom.

INT. KHAL'S PARENT'S ROOM - DAY

Khal finds Sasan, Selda and Arwin sitting on his parents' bed. They are all crying.

KHAL

Who died?

Selda holds out a letter.

Khal takes the letter. The letterhead reads: "SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO". Khal looks at his family. Smiles widely.

They all join together for a group hug.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - DAY

Graduation. A line of students wearing gowns and embarrassed smirks walk down the center isle, parents on either side climbing over each other to get a good picture.

When Kelsa walks by, looking gorgeous in her graduation day makeup, Sarah steps in front of her, blocking the procession to snap a picture.

KELSA

Mom!

She walks by her, followed by Khal, who Sarah also photographs, not before he pops a painfully awkward smile.

Sarah steps back into the crowd, next to Selda and Sasan.

SELDA

Can you send that?

SARAH

Yeah.

INT. KELSA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah holds an iPhone up for a photo as Kelsa and Khal and Chris (proudly going stag) pose on the stairs, all dressed up for prom.

Chris fixes her own corsage. Kelsa looks at her warmly.

INT. MULTI PURPOSE ROOM - NIGHT

Khal and Kelsa dance. They clumsily spin each other around and get close to each other.

As Khal finishes a spin, he spots Otis sitting at a table, eyeing him.

They share a brief look.

Then, Khal's attention magnetizes back to Kelsa.

INT. GIRL'S BATHROOM - LATER

Kelsa holds Em's hair back as she throws up into the sink. Chris and Megan stand behind them, looking equally concerned and disgusted. Khal comes in with a bottle of water.

KHAL

I brought some water.

He passes it to Kelsa.

KELSA

Em, drink this. You'll thank me tomorrow.

Em wipes the vomit from her face and starts sipping from the water bottle.

EM

Thanks, Kelsa. I miss you guys.

She hugs her three friends. Kelsa and Chris look at each other behind her back and smile.

EM (CONT'D)

Promise me we'll keep in touch.

KELSA

Yeah.

EM

Promise me we'll keep in touch!

Promise! KELSEA

CHRIS
Promise!

Khal looks at the group of friends from a distance.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Get in here, Khalid.

Khal slowly inches towards them. Chris pulls him into the hug.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Like it or not, you're one of us
now.

She rubs a friendly hand through his hair. Khal smiles.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A receptionist hands Khal and Kelsa a set of keys.

KELSA
Thank you.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Khal struggles to get the door open. He and Kelsa spill into the room. Kelsa looks around and nods in approval. Khal grabs her face and kisses her deeply.

They lean against the door, and, as is now their signature, smile in between each other's lips.

In case you haven't noticed, a CHEESY INDIE POP SONG is playing.

INT. NATIONAL AVIARY - PENGUIN POINT - DAY

Two penguins waddle across the exhibit.

In the crawl space beneath, Khal and Kelsa sit in the familiar spot under the peeking dome. They play with each other's fingers, discovering all the different ways their hands can fit together.

KELSA
So, what's gonna happen, with us?

KHAL

Well, do you wanna do long distance?

Kelsa thinks about it.

KELSA

No. We'll end up getting sick of each other.

KHAL

No we won't.

Kelsa smiles.

KELSA

Okay. But still, we're going to college, We have to experience things, meet other people, or else we'll never grow.

KHAL

So that's it, then?

KELSA

I mean, I'll see you during Thanksgiving. And New Year's. Summer. Until one of us meets someone else and breaks the other's heart.

KHAL

Sounds complicated.

KELSA

Yeah.

KHAL

Okay, um, so...

KELSA

So...

KHAL

...broken up, then, I guess?

KELSA

Broken up.

KHAL

Okay.

KELSA

I think I'm just gonna head home
alone, if that's okay?

KHAL

Yeah. I'll stick around for a
while.

KELSA

Have a good trip tomorrow.

She gives him a small kiss on the cheek, and hesitates. Khal
turns his head towards her--

They KISS FOR THE LAST TIME, then hug strongly.

Kelsa breaks away.

KHAL

I love you.

KELSA (CONT'D)

I love you.

They laugh at their awkwardness. They look at each other one
final time, and Kelsa starts crawling towards the exit.

KHAL

Wait.

KELSA

What?

KHAL

If we're gonna break up, I don't
want to feel like I missed
anything.

KELSA

Okay.

KHAL

I'm trying to think if there's
still anything I don't know about
you... Oh! I know.

KELSA

What?

KHAL

What's your favorite animal?

Kelsa smiles.

KELSA

Let's save that one.

Khal smiles back.

EXT. CORAL REEF - DAY

In Planet Earth style, we follow a RIBBON EEL swimming around a reef and engaging in the behavior that Kelsa explains in voiceover:

KELSA (V.O.)

The ribbon eel is a species of Moray Eel native to the Indo-Pacific Ocean. They're named after their mesmerizing style of swimming, which looks a lot like a rhythmic gymnast waving a ribbon around.

STOCK FOOTAGE: A 1940s rhythmic gymnast waves a ribbon around.

Back in the reef:

KELSA (V.O.)

The juvenile males are jet black with a yellow dorsal fin. In adults, the yellow is replaced by blue. However, if enough females are removed from the ecosystem, the male will undergo a metamorphosis, and change sex, its colors also changing to make it almost entirely yellow. Now, it's absurd to draw a parallel between this change and transgender humans, since being trans for us depends on more complicated social and biological factors, and of course reflects the specific culture around it. So, I like to say my favorite animal is the ribbon eel because of its unique and magnificent showmanship. But to myself, I can say:

The eel swims away into the blue, waving its colors proudly.

KELSA (V.O.)

Look at that beautiful, talented trans girl.

THE END.