

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY (2015)

Midwest family restaurant filled with red booths. LISA, early 30s, hair and makeup all done up, sits across from a slouched SURLY MAN, also early 30s, who dons an outfit pulled from the dirty laundry and a five o'clock shadow. A perky young WAITRESS writes down Lisa's order.

LISA

But instead of the fries, could I have mac and cheese? Thank you.

WAITRESS

(to Surly Man)

And for you, sir?

SURLY MAN

I'm good.

The waitress looks at Lisa who looks between the waitress and the Surly Man in mild confusion.

WAITRESS

Okay, I'll put that right in.

The waitress hustles away.

LISA

I'm sorry, I would've eaten earlier. I thought we were meeting for lunch.

SURLY MAN

It's cool.

The Surly Man looks like a high school kid in detention. Lisa fidgets uncomfortably.

LISA

So, graphic design. That must be interesting.

SURLY MAN

I guess.

LISA

Is everything all right? Do you have somewhere you need to be?

SURLY MAN

No.

The Surly Man sighs and sits up straight.

SURLY MAN

Look I'm not really into this blind date sort of thing-

LISA

Me neither. First dates are the worst, right?

SURLY MAN

No, really. I didn't even create my profile.

LISA

Your friends put you up to this?

SURLY MAN

My mom. She's really on me about settling down.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Lisa sits at the oval wooden kitchen table working the crank of an apple corer and peeler. A bowl of apples lays near the end of the table and a tray full of cores and peels lays at her bare feet. Light pours in from the sliding glass doors behind her.

At the kitchen counter a few feet away, tall, lanky, 30-year-old STEPHANIE stands chopping peeled and cored apples. Between Lisa and Stephanie sits RENEE, hair sleekly up and fingernails manicured, keeping her cream linen blazer away from sticky fruit.

Attention is on Lisa as she relays her story.

STEPHANIE

(to Lisa)

No!

LISA

Yes! Looking back, that really puts a different tone to all the times he called me "sweetie" online.

RENEE

What'd you do?

LISA

Listened to him complain about his mother while I ate. I was really hungry.

STEPHANIE

That's a mess.

LISA

Beats the guy who gave me pinkeye.

Lisa slides an apple onto the corer and rotates the handle.

LISA

Besides, I'm getting desperate. I will not be the only single person next weekend. Not again.

STEPHANIE

This is only my second harvest dinner.

LISA

Still!

RENEE

I've got one. One time, I met this guy at this really swanky restaurant downtown and he showed up in a suit and flip flops. Flip flops!

Lisa and Stephanie stop their apple dismemberment to stare at Renee.

LISA

The nerve of that bastard.

STEPHANIE

I'd take pinkeye over that any day.

RENEE

Whatever.

STEPHANIE

How did you get set up with this guy, or I guess his mom?

LISA

Online.

STEPHANIE

People say that, but what does that mean? Is it like Facebook?

RENEE

(to Lisa)

You're forgetting, dear Lisa, that our friend Steph found someone

(MORE)

RENEE (cont'd)  
willing to put up with her early on  
and never had to venture into the  
circle of hell known as online  
dating.

LISA  
Wow, that's right. Count your  
blessings.

STEPHANIE  
I don't know, it sounds kind of  
fun.

LISA  
(to Renee)  
Do I not tell my stories right? I  
must not tell my stories right.

RENEE  
What about that guy who pooped his  
pants at the movie theater?

LISA  
Aw, I felt bad for him. And for  
the ushers.

Lisa removes the apple from the corer and places it in a  
bowl. She drops the core on the tray.

LISA  
I'm about full here.

STEPHANIE  
Put it on the counter, fill up the  
other one.

Lisa places the tray of peels and cores behind Stephanie and  
gets a new tray.

RENEE  
What is that, chicken food or  
something?

STEPHANIE  
No, crazy, that's the best part of  
the apple. It's for the  
cider. Press all the juice out,  
drain it through a cheesecloth and  
presto.

RENEE

Gross.

STEPHANIE

You never complained before.

RENEE

I didn't know you were making me drink the dregs of my garbage disposal.

STEPHANIE

Anyway, so if I wanted to create a profile, is it like a form I fill out or do I just free style?

LISA

Trouble in paradise?

Lisa goes back to her place at the table, setting the tray down and resuming her peeling and coring.

STEPHANIE

No, I'm just curious. I have to live vicariously through you two.

RENEE

You just set up a profile with basic info like age, location, who you're looking for, all that.

LISA

It depends on the site, too. Most of them have a bunch of questions for you to answer.

RENEE

But you don't have to answer those questions. The less you say the better.

LISA

No, the more you say the better. The point is to get in touch with somebody who shares the same interests or hobbies or political views as you do.

Stephanie pours some already made cider into three glasses.

RENEE

Yeah, then you have a great match on paper and zero attraction. The

(MORE)

RENEE (cont'd)  
 higher the percentage match, the  
 less chemistry. Numbers will get  
 you nowhere.

LISA  
 But I like numbers.

STEPHANIE  
 Don't listen to her, Lis. Darren  
 and I hit it off so quickly because  
 we could talk for hours about  
 movies and books and  
 whatever. That stuff counts.

RENEE  
 Suit yourself.

STEPHANIE  
 (to Renee)  
 What about you and Tyler? Don't  
 you ever just chat?

Stephanie hands Renee and Lisa glasses of cider.

RENEE  
 Actually, we don't do much talking  
 at at all.

Renee chuckles demurely at her comment.

LISA  
 You have to talk some time. How do  
 make plans?

RENEE  
 Body language.

LISA  
 One boob means we're going out, two  
 boobs means we're staying in.

STEPHANIE  
 Ordering at restaurants must be  
 scandalous.

RENEE  
 Don't be jealous.

LISA  
 I'm going to prove you  
 wrong. Details are important. I  
 have three dates lined up this  
 (MORE)

LISA (cont'd)  
 week, all great matches, and I am  
 not showing up to the harvest  
 dinner alone this year!

STEPHANIE  
 Huzzah!

RENEE  
 Huzzah!

The three take a sip of their ciders.

LISA  
 Wow, that's good.

RENEE  
 And from trash, too.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Lisa enters a park where bright orange and red leaves flutter from the trees. Two YOUNG MEN toss a Frisbee on the grass and an OLDER WOMAN walks her tiny dog. Lisa looks around at the mostly empty park. She finds a bench and sits, still looking around.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

DARREN, buff and gruff, early 30s, sits on the couch placidly staring at the TV while sounds of a football game fill the room. Stephanie enters the room and stands behind the couch holding a stack of papers.

STEPHANIE  
 Hey, hon. Watching the game?

DARREN  
 Mm, hmm.

STEPHANIE  
 We winning?

DARREN  
 Mm, hmm.

Stephanie smiles at Darren whose attention never waivers from the TV.

STEPHANIE  
Just out of curiosity, would you  
rather fly or be invisible?

DARREN  
Huh?

STEPHANIE  
Don't think, just answer.

DARREN  
Fly.

Stephanie hastily scribbles down his answer.

EXT. PARK - DAY (SAME)

Lisa sits on the park bench alone. She looks at her watch,  
checks her phone, fidgets. No one comes.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY (SAME)

Stephanie crouches behind the couch so only her head is  
visible. Darren never takes his eyes off the screen.

STEPHANIE  
Would you rather be an octopus or a  
reindeer?

DARREN  
Octopus.

Stephanie grimaces at his answer.

STEPHANIE  
What is the capitol of Greenland?

DARREN  
Finland.

STEPHANIE  
What's scarier than a clown?

DARREN  
Two clowns.



EXT. PARK - DAY (SAME)

Lisa stands and slowly shuffles away from the bench towards her car. Her phone chirps and she sees a text from Renee.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

Renee: How's the date going? Need an out?

Lisa: No, I can find my own way out, thanks.

Renee: One down, two to go!

BACK TO PARK

Lisa puts her phone away.

LISA  
(to herself)  
It only takes one, Renee. Well,  
two, it takes two, baby.

INT. STEPHANIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY (SAME)

Stephanie's eyeballs are a centimeter away from the back of Darren's head. He doesn't notice.

STEPHANIE  
What's a pooka?

DARREN  
Bird.

STEPHANIE  
Which Shakespearean character are  
you most like?

DARREN  
Romeo.

STEPHANIE  
Have you ever participated in a  
three-way?

DARREN  
Yes.

STEPHANIE  
(shocked)  
What?

Darren's gaze on the TV finally breaks.

DARREN

What?

Stephanie stands and stomps out of the room.

STEPHANIE (OS)

I said we're getting pizza for dinner!

DARREN

(to himself)

Cool. Za.

INT. BOOKSHOP CAFE- EVENING

Lisa, chicly dressed in all black, sits at a small round table near a coffee bar in a book shop. She reads Jane Eyre. A bearded HIPSTER gentleman approaches her.

HIPSTER

Lisa?

Lisa puts down her book and smiles.

LISA

Peter?

PETER

Sorry I'm a little late, traffic.  
(noticing the book)  
I love Jane Eyre.

Peter sits down across from Lisa.

LISA

Me too! I haven't read it for a long time. Did you see the movie a few years back?

PETER

Yeah, I thought it was a decent adaptation.

LISA

Me too!

Lisa phone chirps.

LISA

Sorry, hold on.

Lisa holds her phone under the table so Peter can't see. Peter swipes the little salt and pepper shakers off the table and sticks them in his pocket when Lisa isn't looking.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

Renee: Need me to show up and pull the fire alarm?

Lisa: No, going gr8!

Renee: We'll see.

BACK TO CAFE

LISA

Are you reading anything new right now?

INT. LISA'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lisa and Peter enter Lisa's tight but clean apartment. Wooden furniture and small oil paintings give the place an old-fashioned feel. Lisa sets her keys and purse down on the kitchen counter next to two mason jars of apple butter.

PETER

What are those?

LISA

Apple butter. My friend makes it, along with a bunch of other stuff. She's trying to teach me how to grow and can my own food. She holds this harvest dinner every-

Peter pulls Lisa in and kisses her.

LISA

We can talk about that later.

Peter and Lisa resume kissing and awkwardly stumble towards her bed.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stephanie and Darren lie in their king-sized bed. Darren lies on his side with his eyes closed, Stephanie stares at the ceiling.

STEPHANIE  
Darren. Darren. Darren!

Darren grunts.

STEPHANIE  
What's your favorite cupcake  
flavor?

DARREN  
What?

STEPHANIE  
What's your favorite kind of  
cupcake?

DARREN  
Chocolate.

STEPHANIE  
You mean the cake, or the  
frosting? Or both.

DARREN  
Both I guess. Why?

STEPHANIE  
No reason.

Stephanie sighs in defeat.

INT. LISA'S STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING

Lisa sleeps in her double bed. She opens her eyes looking disheveled, but happy. She yawns and looks to her left to see an empty bed. She sits up, looks around. Her phone chirps.

She walks to the kitchen and pulls her phone out of her purse.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

Stephanie: How did your date go last night?

BACK TO APARTMENT

Lisa looks at her counter. Her empty counter.

LISA  
My apple butter! That bastard.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

Lisa: two down, one to go.

INT. STEPHANIE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Stephanie and Darren both wear business attire and hustle to eat breakfast in the kitchen. Stephanie pours coffee into a travel mug and hands it to Darren.

DARREN  
Thanks, babe.

Darren turns to go, but Stephanie grabs him by the shirt.

STEPHANIE  
Hey.

DARREN  
Yeah?

Stephanie moves in seductively.

STEPHANIE  
Before you go...

DARREN  
Yeah?

Darren smiles and wraps his arms around her.

STEPHANIE  
Do you think the electoral college  
should be dissolved?

Darren drops his arms and whips away.

DARREN  
What is with you lately?

Darren leaves.

STEPHANIE  
(muttering)  
I'll put you down as undecided.

INT. TYLER'S LIVING ROOM-EVENING

Renee and TYLER, a mid-30s man who looks like he fell out of a J. Crew catalog, cuddle on his couch watching TV. He rests his arm around her and they both appear comfortable. Renee looks over at his shelf displaying all his DVDs. She scans the shelf from top to bottom.

RENEE

Do you have any new movies?

TYLER

I haven't bought any for a while.

RENEE

No, I mean, any movies that were made recently. Like in the last couple of decades.

TYLER

Why?

RENEE

I just noticed, all your movies are older, like black and white.

TYLER

Is there something wrong with that?

RENEE

No, but don't you have any newer movies?

TYLER

People stopped making real films after the 50's. Why bother with new stuff when you can have the classics?

RENEE

Oh.

Tyler looks at Renee.

TYLER

You all right?

RENEE

I think I just need some water.

Renee walks to his kitchen and disappears behind a wall.

INT. TYLER'S KITCHEN

Renee gets a bottle of water from his fridge, navigating his cluttered kitchen. As she opens the bottle, she looks around and notices a box of gluten-free noodles on the counter and a half-eaten loaf of gluten-free bread.

INT. TYLER'S LIVING ROOM

Renee returns to Tyler on the couch.

RENEE  
Do you have Celiac disease?

TYLER  
Not that I know of.

Tyler laughs at this.

RENEE  
I just noticed all the gluten-free stuff in your kitchen.

TYLER  
(nonchalant)  
Gluten makes you fat.

RENEE  
Oh.

Renee curls up the way she was before.

RENEE  
(quietly)  
Dammit, Lisa.

INT. GROCERY STORE - EVENING

Lisa slowly strolls down an aisle in the large, bright grocery store, leaning her weight on a cart. She reaches the end of the aisle and sees a MIDDLE AGED COUPLE by the open meat fridge. The MAN, wearing a red checkered button-up and khakis, holds a package of deli ham out to the WOMAN who wears a matching outfit.

MAN  
What's wrong with ham? We always get ham.

WOMAN

There's nothing wrong with ham. That's just the wrong kind of ham.

MAN

This is what we always get.

WOMAN

No, we get the low sodium ham.

MAN

Are you sure?

WOMAN

Of course I'm sure. We always get it.

MAN

You said you were sure about the kind of oil the car needs-

WOMAN

This again. One time, I bought the wrong kind. But I know that's the wrong ham.

MAN

This isn't low sodium.

WOMAN

That's what I'm saying!

Lisa looks down at the man's feet. He wears flip-flops.

LISA

Dammit, Renee.

EXT. STEPHANIE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

The harvest dinner has arrived. Guests sit around a large table in the suburban backyard, set with centerpieces of small pumpkins and purple mums, twinkly lights hanging from tree branches. Darren talks to a YOUNG COUPLE while pouring apple cider for himself. Stephanie grabs a pitcher of cider and a glass and slips away from the crowd.

At the edge of the yard by a campfire, Lisa and Renee sit in Adirondack chairs sipping cider and talking. Stephanie pulls up a camp chair and joins them.



RENEE  
 (to Lisa)  
 What about guy number three?

LISA  
 I canceled. After the week I've had, clearly I don't know what I'm doing. You were right.

RENEE  
 No. I don't think so.

LISA  
 No, really.

Renee pauses, considers, then erupts with a confession.

RENEE  
 I lied! Tyler's not sick, we broke up.

LISA  
 What happened?

RENEE  
 You happened. We were two happy strangers, but then we got to know each other. Did you know he hasn't been to a movie theater in ten years? Ten years.

STEPHANIE  
 I think I hate Darren.

RENEE  
 (to Stephanie)  
 What happened to you?

STEPHANIE  
 I just asked a few harmless questions, and you know what I got? Twenty percent. We're only a twenty percent match! I mean, who wants to be an octopus?

LISA  
 Who indeed.

RENEE  
 Who writes those things?

STEPHANIE  
Divorce lawyers.

Stephanie pours herself a glass of cider.

STEPHANIE  
Did I put enough rum in this?

RENEE  
No such thing.

LISA  
(to Stephanie)  
Those questions are just stabs in  
the dark to get two people  
talking. Don't read too much into  
it.

STEPHANIE  
Too late, the truth it out now.

LISA  
You and Darren are one of the only  
happy, solid couples I know. You  
can't get caught up in this. You  
love Darren, right?

STEPHANIE  
I don't know. Who's Darren?

LISA  
(forcefully)  
You love him, right?

Stephanie considers the question, then sinks into her chair  
like a human puddle.

STEPHANIE  
I do, I really do, that  
cupcake-loving, orgy-having  
octopus.

LISA  
There you go. Who cares what some  
random test says?

RENEE  
I do. Now.

Stephanie slaps her hands down in a Eureka moment.

STEPHANIE

Lisa is right, the internet is the devil!

LISA

I didn't say that.

STEPHANIE

You both need to get offline.

RENEE

And go where? Back to the sleazy bars?

LISA

The Sadie Hawkins dance has come and gone.

STEPHANIE

Stop trying so hard. When it's meant to happen, it'll happen.

Both Lisa and Renee groan.

RENEE

That's the meanest thing you've ever said to me.

Lisa looks at the bright horizon fading into the faint star-speckled night sky.

LISA

Someday, they'll have this down to a true science. Our grandchildren will marvel at the lengths we used to go to meet people. Finding someone to love will be as simple as renewing your driver's license.

STEPHANIE

Here, here!

RENEE

Or nuclear war will happen and the survivors will all be fish people, forced to procreate fish babies.

LISA

Or that. Wait. Orgy loving octopus? Can we go back to that?

Renee and Lisa look at Stephanie who simply stares straight ahead.

Or not. LISA

FADE OUT.