

UNMATCHED

Written by
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ALEX (20's) sits by herself at a table set for two, reading a book. She's an intellectual who enjoys literature, politics, and good conversation - she recently started trying things that force her to get outside her comfort zone.

There is a basket of bread that looks untouched in the middle of the table.

BRADEN (20'S) saunters over to the table and plops into the booth. He's kind of dumb, but he can also be charming... at times - he seems to do pretty well with women... for some unknown reason.

BRADEN

Sup?

Alex looks up from her book.

ALEX

Braden? You... look a bit different than your picture.

BRADEN

Thanks!

Braden tears into the basket of bread.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

(mouthful)

Got here early, huh?

Alex looks at him blankly.

ALEX

...not really? We said seven.

Braden finishes chewing and takes another large bite of bread.

BRADEN

Yeah, I was gaming and lost track of time. What are you reading?

Braden gestures at her book.

ALEX

Animal Farm.

BRADEN

Is that... like... a kids' book? Looks hella thick.

Alex looks at him for a BEAT.

ALEX

Uh... No... it's not.

Braden shrugs.

BRADEN

You seen the menu? What looks good?

Braden opens the menu and examines it.

Alex opens her mouth to speak, but Braden continues talking before she can respond.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

Oh, they have chicken tenders!

*

Alex rolls her eyes, but Braden doesn't notice - he's still nose-deep in the menu.

The WAITER (20's) walks up to the table, and places a glass of water in front of each of them.

WAITER

Can I start you two off with any drinks?

ALEX

No tha-

BRADEN

Totes! we'll get a pitcher of whatever's cheapest.

The waiter looks at Braden for a beat.

WAITER

Coming... right up.

The waiter walks away from the table, as Braden turns back to the menu.

BRADEN

So, what do you think you're going to get? A burger?

ALEX

Is that a joke? You know I'm a vegetarian, right? It's in my bio.

BRADEN

Oh, that thing?

Braden waves his hand dismissively.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
I didn't read all that!

ALEX
Then... why did you match with me?

BRADEN
Uh... hello! All those pics! You
were looking thicker than Old
McDonald's Farm.

Braden gestures at the book, and winks at Alex.

Alex slowly zips up her sweater.

ALEX
Animal Farm.

BRADEN
Right. So what are you going to
eat, then? Just a salad?

ALEX
Probably, I didn't realize there
were so few vegetarian options
here.

BRADEN
Just have a piece of meat, it won't
kill you... will it?

ALEX
Well, since I haven't eaten meat in
almost ten years, it would probably
make me pretty sick.

Braden looks at Alex with a thoughtful expression for a beat,
while she takes a drink of water.

BRADEN
Yeah, that might be a problem...
wouldn't want you to make a mess
back at my place.

Alex nearly chokes on her drink, as the waiter approaches and
sets the pitcher and two glasses down on the table.

WAITER
Are we ready to order?

ALEX
Maybe we could have a few-

BRADEN
Yeah, I'll have the chicken
tendies, and
(points at Alex)
she'll have... the garden salad...
I guess?

The waiter turns to look at Alex.

WAITER
What kind of dressing?

ALEX
Surprise me.

The waiter gives Alex a look of pity, then turns and leaves.

Braden pours a beer and slides it across the table to Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Actually, I don't drink... also...
in my bio.

Braden pours himself a beer and chugs half.

BRADEN
No meat AND no booze? Damn... maybe
I should have read that thing.

Alex surreptitiously grabs her purse and reaches for her
phone.

She texts a friend: "HELP!!!!"

Braden doesn't notice, he is checking out the WOMAN (20's)
sitting at the bar - he isn't even being subtle about it.

She notices him looking at her and gives him a quizzical
look, as Alex's phone RINGS.

ALEX
Oh, sorry, I have to take this.

BRADEN
Don't be too long, no promises I
won't dig into your food if it gets
here before you get back.

Alex takes a beat to compose herself, and steps away from the
table.

DISSOLVE TO:

2

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

2

A half-finished plate of food is in front of Braden - Alex's seat is empty. her salad is untouched.

Braden plays a game on his phone - his face is a mask of concentration.

The waiter approaches the table.

WAITER

Here you are.

He attempts to set the bill down in front of Braden.

BRADEN

Woah, might be a bit soon, my guy.
My date's not even back yet.

The waiter looks at him hesitantly for a BEAT.

WAITER

Uhm... she left.

BRADEN

What? No way, we were totally going
to hook up!

The waiter stifles a LAUGH, then quickly regains his composure.

WAITER

Hmm... right, well, she paid for
her half of the bill.

The waiter sets the bill down in front of Braden and walks over to another table.

Braden looks at the bill then turns to look at where the woman was sitting at the bar, but her seat is empty now.

Braden shrugs, and returns to his phone - he opens Tinder and starts swiping.

OFF Braden.

FADE OUT: