

SCENE 1: INTRODUCING DARREN - ATTEMPT TO FIND A PARTNER #1

[Lights up as BROOKE walks in and sets down two plates of food for herself and DARREN.]

DARREN:

This looks SO good. I had no idea you could cook like this.

BROOKE:

Oh, I don't.

DARREN:

Oh.

BROOKE:

Yeah, this is Rizzo's.

DARREN:

Steinway?

BROOKE:

Nah, 31st.

DARREN:

Oh.

BROOKE:

Steinway is up like a ton of blocks away.

[He nods, maybe starts eating, but clearly is waiting for her to say something else. She starts eating, urgently in some way, maybe out of nerves.]

DARREN:

Are you okay?

BROOKE:

No, I'm super nervous.

DARREN:

What's going on?

BROOKE:

There's something I need to ask you.

DARREN:

I had a feeling that was what tonight was about.

BROOKE:

You did?

DARREN:

Well, it just made sense. I mean, I get it, we always got along, we hit it off right away, that first day we met at the beer garden. And then that other night at The Strand, and we talked for so long about *Broad City*..

BROOKE:

Uh huh...

DARREN:

So I totally see how you misread those signals. Actually no, you didn't misread anything. It's my fault. I sent out those signals. I just... when I get attention of any kind, I just want to be liked so bad, and—it's something I'm working on.

BROOKE:

I still don't get how you knew. Like, who told you? Did Emma tell you? [*Calling across the house*] EMMA WHAT THE HELL, WE DON'T TELL GUYS SHIT

EMMA [*from across the house*]:

NOT EVEN BRET?

BROOKE:

WELL... maybe.

DARREN:

Who's Bret?

BROOKE:

That's her boyfriend. Don't get all jealous.

DARREN:

Emma didn't say anything. I just figured it out. I even had a feeling the other night that you were flirting with me. And listen, you're an amazing person, and maybe at a different time, or in a different world of some kind, we would work together. But I just really need to work on myself right now. [*She looks very confused. He kind of wishes he didn't have to keep going, but does, which he considers a great favor.*] It really has nothing to do with you, I just don't think I should be seeing anyone right now. In any capacity. It wouldn't be fair to you. [*He tries to read her. He gets confused by her confusion.*] Do you know where I'm coming from? At all?

BROOKE:

Yeah, I mean, it's a bummer. Are you sure?

DARREN:

I know, I know. Maybe once I go and get myself together, we could find a way to reconnect, you know, touch base—

BROOKE:

Because we don't really need to make a relationship out of it. It's pretty transactional, right?

DARREN:

Oh... like... no. I don't really do that anymore. And you should, I mean, I don't know how to, I just, don't want to slut-shame, I'm really not judging, but you should, you deserve more than that.

BROOKE:

More than that not being in pain anymore?

DARREN:

Well, I find that the more I force myself to keep things casual when I just can't, the more pain it causes me. Have you thought about maybe that being... not good for you too?

[Now she's really confused. She thinks about it, eats her food. He wants to start eating, but his appetite is totally gone.]

BROOKE:

Oh, we're talking about different things.

DARREN:

Oh?

BROOKE:

Yeah. Definitely. Okay, that makes sense. I was wondering how you knew what I was going for. Because I thought I only really told Emma. And it's nothing to be like, be embarrassed about, I've figured out—I mean, obviously, I invited you here tonight to talk about it.

DARREN:

You're not looking for a relationship?

BROOKE:

Well, not, per se.

DARREN:

So a friends-with-benefits thing.

BROOKE:

Well, YES, but not in like, the way you're thinking of.

DARREN:

I'm lost.

BROOKE:

That's very manly of you to admit.

DARREN:

Thank you, you know, I've been giving a lot of thought about masculinity and how to sort go against what that looks like typically, and how to respond to societal expectations—

BROOKE:

Darren, every time I have sex, it hurts really bad. I can fix it by having sex until it stops hurting. Which is a lot of sex. And I'd like to have a lot of sex. With you.

[He pushes his food around.]

BROOKE:

Penny for your thoughts?

[Wow. Maybe he thinks she's being funny, laughs at first, but when she doesn't, he stops. He clears his throat, but doesn't talk.]

BROOKE:

Can either you or your masculinity respond to what I said?

DARREN:

This is very brave of you.

BROOKE *[defeated]*:

I have very rarely gotten what I wanted after I was complimented on my bravery.

DARREN:

So, I'm sorry, can I ask some questions?

BROOKE:

No, you have to take that at face value. I need a yes or no answer right now.

DARREN:

Oh. Um. I.

BROOKE:

You know what? I'm gonna put sarcasm away for the rest of this conversation. It was a lot of information, and despite what people say, I'm reasonable. So sure, fire away.

DARREN:

Why, exactly, does it hurt every time?

BROOKE:

I have this condition called vaginismus. Every time I have sex, I forget if it's like a muscle or a nerve or a tissue thing, but pretty much every time I get penetrated, my actual vagina is like... YOU SHALL NOT PASS. And the whole thing kind of locks up. Which really hurts. Me, not you. [*Finally realizing the tone of his question.*] It's not like, an STD. But I did learn this at Planned Parenthood.

DARREN:

Oh no, I didn't mean—but not that I'd be judging if you did have one. It's just... listen, I'm sorry, that sounds terrible. So you've never had sex without pain?

BROOKE:

Never, but to be fair, I've only had sex like three times in my life. Penetrative sex, that is. I've done other stuff. And that's always fine. Or, by fine, I just mean, not painful. But the reason I haven't had much sex in my life is because of that, you know. Being in pain makes you not want to do it.

DARREN:

Of course, that makes perfect sense.

BROOKE:

Do you have any more questions or should we finish our food and get busy?

DARREN:

Are you in a rush?

BROOKE:

A rush to enjoy sex? Yeah, kinda. I'm not getting any younger.

DARREN:

I was thinking that—first of all, in a world where I did say yes, I didn't know we were going to start tonight. I thought maybe you would want to talk about this more.

BROOKE:

Darren. I've talked to people about this. My gynecologist at Planned Parenthood is the one who suggested it.

DARREN:

Are there other guys... participating?

BROOKE:

No. Unless you want there to be. Would you want there to be other guys?

DARREN:

First, can I come up with a yes or no for just me? Can I get all the facts on just that?

BROOKE:

Yeah, but hurry up. I need to be up for work at eight tomorrow either way.

DARREN:

Why me?

BROOKE:

Well, I went down the list of guys that I talk to about real stuff, not just when we cross paths in bars. You and I DO meet randomly in bars where our friends are, but I've actually enjoyed talking to you, and not just about work. We've talked about other stuff, right? How the N train is late 90% of the time...

DARREN:

All the symbolic elements of the *This is America* music video...

BROOKE:

Whether or not *Supernatural* holds up... I've figured out that you care about women enough to at least pretend to listen to me, and you're nice enough to come over and have a dinner date even when you weren't sure you were gonna have sex from it, and man enough to hold your own in a conversation that's basically just about my vagina. Also, we used to work for the same merch company, but we don't now, so we have a connection we can pillow-talk about without being worried about human resources or something. I really did the homework on this.

DARREN:

That's kind of the thing. I don't know if I want a relationship like this to be just about homework.

BROOKE:

It's not a relationship. Not in the way people think about relationships when they hear that word.

DARREN:

Even if we're not exclusive, or public about this, it's still a relationship of some kind. It's still intimate.

BROOKE:

It doesn't have to be public. We don't have to tell anyone.
Except like, my gyno lady at P.P.

DARREN:

And Emma, I assume.

BROOKE:

See? You've already accepted her into your private life. That's
half the battle of dating me.

DARREN:

You did just say "dating" you. So you admit that's sort of what
it would be.

BROOKE:

No, I didn't mean... well, shit. It just sort slipped out. But we
wouldn't have to be dating if you don't want to be. I mean it.

DARREN:

The thing is, if we're having sex, frequently, on purpose...
forming that kind of connection over time isn't something I want
if we're not dating.

BROOKE:

Oh.

DARREN:

I'm sorry.

BROOKE:

That's fine. My feelings aren't hurt or anything. I'm just like.
Surprised. I thought all guys would be pumped for an only-sex-
no-dating set-up.

DARREN:

There was a time when I would have.

BROOKE:

Shit. I should have thought of this three months ago.

DARREN:

Actually, I've sort of been on this thought process since
December, when—

BROOKE:

I was trying to be funny. I don't actually need the timeline.

DARREN:

Got it.

[He laughs, but it's a little forced, and more at himself.]

BROOKE:

You don't have to stay if you feel awkward.

DARREN:

Do you want me to leave?

BROOKE:

No, but I also don't want you to stay. I hope that makes sense even though it doesn't.

DARREN:

It actually does.

BROOKE:

But my proposal doesn't?

DARREN:

Your proposal makes sense. But sometimes feelings don't. And I don't feel like I can be that guy for you.

BROOKE:

You're right. Sorry to try to wedge that proposal thing in one more time. I shouldn't try to force you.

DARREN:

I get it. No need for sorry.

BROOKE:

I'm not trying to convince you more, I just want to say that I didn't think I'd end the night apologizing.

DARREN:

Thank you for sharing that.

[She considers saying something sarcastic, but at the last moment:]

BROOKE:

You're welcome. Do you want to take some food with you?

DARREN:

No, but thank you.

BROOKE:

You hate the food too.

DARREN:

Just... not so hungry right now.

BROOKE:
Can't imagine why. Were we talking about anything weird?

DARREN:
I hope you'll still have a good night.

BROOKE:
With my tight vagina? Not likely.

DARREN:
Well, I hope anyway.

BROOKE:
The eternal optimist.

[She's escorting him out the door.]

DARREN:
Hey.

BROOKE:
God, what else?

DARREN:
Will you text me tonight?

BROOKE:
About what?

DARREN:
I don't know. What do you want to talk about?

BROOKE:
Interview with the Vampire.

DARREN:
I don't know what that is, but sure, anything you want.

[She has never wanted anyone out of her house faster.]

BROOKE:
It's this movie... never mind.

[She shuts the door. He's gone. She looks between the uneaten food in the kitchen and the door.]

In the kitchen, there's a white board. Brooke writes on it:

DARREN

JORDAN

MATT (MOVED TO NYC YET?)

??? ASK BRET FOR CONTACTS

She crosses out Darren's name.

The lights shift as she sits at the kitchen table with her phone and opens up a dating app.]

SCENE 2: TINDER - JORDAN Pt. 1

[The following parts of the conversation are in a text message thread from about six months earlier:]

BROOKE [MESSAGE]:

Just to be clear, I'm messaging you for the dog, not for you.

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:

Wait haha what dog

BROOKE [MESSAGE]:

The dog from the picture. The first picture after your profile picture. It looks like a spaniel or something.

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:

Oh yeah haha that's my roommate's dog

BROOKE [MESSAGE]:

So if I play my cards right, I may still get to meet the dog one day?

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:

Haha what? That's my roommate's dog

BROOKE [MESSAGE, at a loss]:

So what do you do, Jordan?

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:

Like for a job? Haha

BROOKE [MESSAGE]:

Sure, or just in your spare time. However you feel like answering the question.

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:

I do graphic design for an advertising company. Or maybe they're called a firm. Just like this office. I don't really know haha?

BROOKE [MESSAGE]:

You don't really know where you work, "haha"?

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:

Nah, but I'm all about hanging with friends and hitting the gym you know? So like what do you do?

[A day passes by. He messages her again:]

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:
I see in one of your pics you're like at the beach so do you
like go to the beach a lot?

[A few more days pass.]

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:
Did you want to like get dinner sometime

[Even a few more days pass.]

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:
Hey how are you

[Three months pass.]

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:
Hey

[Time passes until it's present day.]

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:
Hey

BROOKE [MESSAGE]:
Hey, Jordan.

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:
Hey how have you been! Damn it's been like six months since we
talked that's so crazy how time passes. Anyway how are you

BROOKE [MESSAGE]:
I have a question for you.

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:
Yeah what's up?

BROOKE [MESSAGE]:
Just wondering about like your birth chart

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:
My what?

BROOKE [MESSAGE]:
Yeah, like your rising sign.

JORDAN [MESSAGE]:
my what's?

*[She tosses her phone aside, goes to the
kitchen, and crosses out Jordan's name.]*

SCENE 3: EMMA AND BROOKE Pt. 1

[Lights up on EMMA and BROOKE in the kitchen. Emma eats Darren's leftovers as she looks at the white board.]

EMMA:

Is this... your grocery list?

BROOKE:

No, it's this list for like—you remember how I told you about that condition I got diagnosed with at Planned Parenthood?

EMMA:

Wasn't that like... a year ago?

BROOKE:

Yeah, but I'm getting up off my ass to do something about it now. Just like you told me to do from that tarot reading you gave me on New Year's.

EMMA:

Yes! I'm so proud of you! I've been telling you to take charge of your sex life for ages. It'll probably help the rest of your anxiety too and... anyway, that's great, but I still don't get why there are men's names on the fridge.

BROOKE:

I'm looking for guys who might be able to help. Remember what I told you my gyno said?

EMMA:

That there were at least three different ways to tackle this?

BROOKE:

The other solutions are scary.

EMMA:

I live in a world where a list of horny men I barely know is scary.

BROOKE:

And I live in a world where corrective surgery on my vajayjay is equally scary.

[Emma goes back to the list.]

EMMA:

Darren I know... please let this Matt not be THE Matt from college.

BROOKE:

It's the Matt, but don't worry, because he probably won't respond.

EMMA:

Of course not. He's spineless.

BROOKE:

I just think he might like to know why sex was so ugly and weird for us back then.

EMMA:

When you're nineteen, most sex is still ugly and weird. Who is Jordan?

BROOKE:

Jordan from Tinder.

EMMA:

Jordan? The REALLY fucking dumb Jordan?

BROOKE:

Yeah, he has all those conspiracy theories on his Facebook. All about FBI agents in the webcam and shit. He sounds like he would be easily convinced to participate in this.

EMMA:

You don't want to have to convince a guy to do this. That's totally not consensual in any way.

BROOKE:

I'm not saying I'm gonna coerce him. Right? That's not what I'm doing, right? I'm just presenting information about having sex with me in... a certain way... that appeals to them. Wait. Is that coercion?

EMMA:

I still don't understand why you're even trying to get men involved when you could just take control of this yourself.

BROOKE:

In a way, that's what I'm doing. I'm reclaiming my sexual experiences and all that.

EMMA:

Well, that's kind of MY point. Why do you want to have sex with men if it's literally caused you nothing but pain yet?

BROOKE:

And my point is: no pain, no gain. First we have to have a lot of pain to have a little more pleasure down the road.

EMMA:

Are you SURE that's what your gynecologist said?

BROOKE:

She said that if I wanted it to get better with a sexual partner, I'd basically be having to do it every day for like a month at least.

EMMA:

And you really think this was the best option.

BROOKE:

It's the option I have most control over.

[Emma considers this. Brooke pats the seat in front of her. Emma walks over and sits. Brooke starts braiding her hair. This is clearly a routine.]

EMMA:

I think the problem is you're not making these guys really think that their dick will be the thing that will let you see the light. If they think they'll be the one to bring you to some sort of revelation, then they'll be banging the door down to be the first guy to stretch out your vaginal canal and get the First Place Stretch Master trophy.

BROOKE:

Number one: even though I can tell you still think this is stupid, thank you for choosing to roll with it.

EMMA:

My hair is in your hands, after all.

BROOKE:

Number two: It's not a revelation I'm looking for. I'm not looking for mind-blowing sex. I'm looking for a guy who will give me the tools to seek that.

EMMA:

See, you're selling it short for them. Just go ahead and skip the middle man and say you ARE looking to have your mind blown for the first time. It's a lie, of course, because there's not a