

if it's sad, i don't want to see it

by
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CHARACTERS:

Damien - 40s, white, male corporate yuppie entrepreneur

Savti - 40s, white, female, new-age masseuse

Robert - late 20s, East Asian male, neurotic, sweet

Miriam - late 20s, South Asian / middle eastern female, pushover with a desire to be bigger and better than she is

Aliyah - late 20s, South Asian/middle eastern female, mischevious rebel, manipulator

Jimmy - mid to late 20s, white male, Hollywood type -- a schmoozer

The following roles should be doubled:

Mrs. Pandey (to be played Savti)

Hollywood Man (to be played by Jimmy)

ACT 1, SCENE 1

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The stage is dark. The stage is set in three sections, Inner Office, General office area, and a little scrap of earth called Saudi Arabia. The section designated by Saudi Arabia is very small and either far back behind a scrim which we can see into when lit, and/or above on an upper level. Perhaps it can even get smaller as we progress through the play.

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Small spotlight on a hanging trapeze bar, suspended from air. A South Asian woman, ALIYAH (30s), remains regal in bearing even though she hangs upside down. She is heavily scarred, and heavily concealed. Ideally, a small ledge or upper level is in her reach should she decide to swing to it. She hesitates, staring up, before speaking.

ALIYAH

Dear Miriam. I feel a little stuck.
(Pause.)

(It's a pretty long pause.)

That's it. That's all I will say today.

Lights fade on her. Rise on another part of the stage.

IN THE INNER OFFICE, NEW YORK

A private corner office, looking sparse and newly put together. You can still smell the paint. A business exec, DAMIEN, middle-aged, but fit and full of energy, sits in a large, leather, swivel chair. Above his head is framed his MBA degree. A second man, Robert, sits nervously in a chair that's a bit too small for him. He awkwardly rests a briefcase on his knee, while also wrestling with a portfolio folder. He tries not to make it apparent that he can smell the paint. DAMIEN speaks a little too loudly; Robert, a little too softly.

DAMIEN

Bob. Bobby!

ROBERT

Robert.

DAMIEN

Boobert. Let me tell you something. Do you know, do you really understand the meaning of PC?

ROBERT

Yes. As well as the Mac.

DAMIEN

Ha ha. This is what they call, in the biz, a cute little case of miscommunication. IF this were a romantic comedy, in fifteen minutes, we'd be naked between the sheets. *

ROBERT

Uh-

DAMIEN

Do you have a fortune cookie, Booby?

ROBERT

Uh, no sir, I have a copy of my resume, if you want.

DAMIEN

You see, if we had fortunes from fortune cookies, we could also just coyly murmur the phrase "between the sheets" at the end of each fortune, and also end up naked- IF this was a romantic comedy, which it is not, BUT, me asking YOU for a fortune cookie does illustrate what I mean by PC. *

ROBERT

Ahhh.

DAMIEN

You have no idea.

ROBERT

No. No, I don't.

DAMIEN

Then why are you faking it? People sense weakness. Don't be fake.

ROBERT

I -

DAMIEN

And. Political Correctness! There will be none of that in my office.

ROBERT

PC?

DAMIEN

Yes, now you're getting it Bubbles. You see, me asking you for a fortune cookie was only for a sheer need to illustrate the between the sheets gimmick, not as a commentary on your ethnic background, BUT in a PC world I'd have to censor myself in fear of being misinterpreted. Does that seem fair to you?

ROBERT

Uh. I guess not.

DAMIEN

See, that is very forward minded! You being gook and all.

ROBERT

Excuse me?

DAMIEN

No one ever says that anymore, gook. They use vulgar, nasty PHYSICAL terms. No longer does the socio political slur of the 60s have any context in today's world. Yet in all the movies people use gook this gook that as if it meant something. No one knows what the hell that's supposed to MEAN. I could be wrong though. Maybe gook is making a comeback. You can tell me when I'm wrong.

ROBERT

On an interview?

DAMIEN

ESPECIALLY on an interview.

ROBERT

Really.

DAMIEN

No. But that's also a very common thing to say. Especially this. Especially that.

ROBERT

Yes. Okay, so-

DAMIEN

Let me tell you something, I'm American, you're American. Let's not play that little game where I feign lofty interest in you and ask, 'where are you from', and you say, 'Jersey', and I giggle. Fuck that. We know what it takes to survive in this hard land of wheat and honey, and it takes industry. It takes an MBA in Entrepreneurship.

He gestures above his head.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

It takes my brand spank me new office. And! It takes a right hand man. (beat) It takes the right, right hand man. Well, at the rate that we're growing, I'm gonna need a handful of right hand men, but we'll start with you. What do you think? Can you do that for me? Can you?

Pause.

ROBERT

Well. To be honest, I'm left-handed.

Damien laughs.

DAMIEN

So am I, Bobster. So am I.

Damien holds out his hand. Robert shyly takes it in a handshake. Damien squeezes his hand tightly. Robert slides his hand out, trying not to show pain.

ROBERT

Uh. So um, do you mind if I ask what you do here?

DAMIEN

Not at all, bubby. I like to call this lil' ol' place a 'boutique.'

ROBERT

Uh... I thought this was a water... bottled water -

DAMIEN

Well, yeah there's that. But don't you just love the sound of 'boutique'? It's such a happy word. And happiness sells.

ROBERT

Well where's the -

DAMIEN

The product? You think I'm just gonna leave it lying around and have my employees filch from the hand that feeds them? Or quenches them as in this case?

ROBERT

Uhhh...

DAMIEN

Any other questions?

ROBERT

Uhhh... (about to ask another question but deciding not to)
So that's it? Is there any paperwork or anything that I need
to fill out?

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*
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DAMIEN

That's for you to decide, buddy, and for me to find out. Now
get out, you sit out there.

Robert confusedly makes his way out of
the office. Lights up centerstage
where a tiny desk and tiny chair sit.
Robert squeezes himself behind it.

ROBERT

So, you may wonder what would possess me to put myself into
this situation. Well, A) - it's the only place that called
me in for an interview. And, B) - wait, hold on. Let's go
back to A) for a second. It's not that I'm desperate - I'm
not a desperate man. You know, the kind you see leering in
the corner of bars and dark hallways. No that's not me. But
there was something fascinating about this dude. I confess
that I'm an artist at heart. Therefore, the chance of me
being able to hold down a full time job was slim to none. So
B) this proved itself as an opportunity, a temporary
opportunity to document the rise of a company from the
barebones up.

*

And from this, random, freakish dude. Freakish sometimes
means brilliant. And sometimes it just means freakish. So
I'm sitting around, clocking in nine to five, to find out.
What can I say? He had me at gook.

Enter Damien. Lights shift.

DAMIEN

Robbie, baby!

ROBERT

Sir.

DAMIEN

I like your initiative. This employee handbook is crap, but
it's thirty pages! Tell me your secret.

ROBERT

It was nothing, sir.

DAMIEN

No seriously, I'm paying you to tell me your secret.

ROBERT

Margin adjustments, sir.

DAMIEN
Clever. Very clever. (beat) And the font?

ROBERT
Georgia.

DAMIEN
Georgia! The underestimated font. Nice, very nice. Start over please. Keep the margins, keep the font, lose everything else.

ROBERT
Yes, Mr. Walsh, sir. No problem.

DAMIEN
Oh, and Robbie, call me Damien. Lose the sir.

ROBERT
(pleased)
Sure, Damien.

DAMIEN
Oh shit. No, that's not what I wanted to say. Bobby, need to talk to you about this E-mail you sent out... it starts with... "So you may wonder what would possess me to put myself into this situation." And -

*

ROBERT
Excuse me, sir?

DAMIEN
What happened to the Damien bit? I was rather enjoying our camaraderie. And it ends with, "He had me at goo-"

ROBERT
Nope. That's not familiar to me. I didn't write any E-mail like that.

DAMIEN
Well, let's look around here. I didn't write any E-mail. And if you didn't write any E-mail, then is there a fucking ghost in my computer Bobby? Because then I may just have to smash the motherfucking thing over your head to de-possess it
-

ROBERT
Oh- THAT E-mail Sorry, I forgot about that E-mail. So, uh, you monitor all emails? I'll have to make a note of that in my employee handbook.

DAMIEN

I don't monitor, I notice things. And since you're my only employee-- well, I gotta tell you. It's not the greatest E-mail.

ROBERT

Excuse me?

DAMIEN

You sound... a little... freaky.

ROBERT

I sound freaky.

DAMIEN

Yes.

ROBERT

What about you?

DAMIEN

I didn't write the E-mail, Bob.

ROBERT

Yeah, but -

DAMIEN

And this... lava thing. That's a dating service, yeah?

ROBERT

Um...

DAMIEN

So chocolatelover101 is your e-flirt girl, eh?

ROBERT

Uh-

DAMIEN

You know her last name?

ROBERT

Uh... not yet.

DAMIEN

She know you're Asian?

ROBERT

No. I don't think so -

DAMIEN

It's not gonna work.

ROBERT

Huh? How, how, - uh, -

DAMIEN

Yeah, sorry buddy. "Better luck tomorrow". Hah. That was a movie about your peoples, in case you don't get the reference.

ROBERT

You know, Mr. Walsh, I've been meaning to talk to you about your -

DAMIEN

Kidding! I'm kidding! I'm trying to build up your confidence. So what if you're Asian, you're still a fine catch. But you gotta believe that first, because no one else is.

ROBERT

Mr. Walsh -

DAMIEN

Damien-

ROBERT

Mr. Walsh -

DAMIEN

Damien -

ROBERT

Damien! Some might find what you say rude!

DAMIEN

But it's true.

ROBERT

It's not -

DAMIEN

Don't tell me you haven't had people tell you you're not their type, or that you're good looking for an Asian dude. Don't shoot the messenger, buddy. I'm just trying to tell you to fuck it. You are who you are, and that's a human being. A human being that is deserving of her love, no matter that she's into black guys.

ROBERT

What?

DAMIEN

Chocolate lover? Oh Booby, don't tell me you thought she was fiending for the Twix Bars. It's more like a metaphorical Twix Bar, you know what I'm saying, you know, you know?

ROBERT

I know! Or, I don't wanna know! Whatever it is...! I'll uh. I'll work on this handbook here, Mr. ... Damien... Thanks for, uh, stopping by.

DAMIEN

You go get her Tiger. Maybe you could convert her from chocolate to -

ROBERT

No! No, I don't need to hear any more. Thank you though.

DAMIEN

Well, just thought I'd try to help. (beat) Is there anything else you need Robert?

ROBERT

No, not really. You've done more than I could have ever imagined.

Damien somehow weasels his way into Robert's chair by sitting on the armrest until Robert is forced to vacate.

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DAMIEN

How about a massage?

ROBERT

Uh-I'm good.

DAMIEN

Not now! Not from me. G-d. Male on male rubbing action. Ach! Now that's awkward at a workplace, don't you think? Put that in the employee handbook please. Ech. No, no. There's a place I went to once. One of those massage-y no frills things. I haven't been able to find it again. But she was really quite, quite good. About yeh high, sandy, ish, hair.

*

Damien waits for Robert to respond.

ROBERT

Oh. Uh. I don't know ...her.

DAMIEN

Damn. She was really quite good.

The computer dings.

DAMIEN

Oh hey, lil' buddy. Looks like you got yourself a date with chocolotalady. She's free tonight after all, she says, smileyface. You want me to write back?

ROBERT

What, wait.

DAMIEN

All right, all right, just trying to help you out. I'll just tell you one thing buddy boy, whatever you do, try not to be a total loser tonight and spill all your baggage on her.

ROBERT

I wouldn't -

DAMIEN

Oh. You would. I've been monitoring all your emails, remember? And you just love to EMOTE electronically. Luckily for you, chocolover101 changed her mind, and is doing a pity first date right now after all. "Oh I'm suddenly free?" You have to hit her over the head with something that's not so pathetic and then maybe you can keep her around. None of your little morose thing you got going on, your "whole secret baggage that I like to carry around not so secretly" thing. I think we need to put that in the employee handbook too while we're at it. You got that?

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ROBERT

Not really...

DAMIEN

Eh, fuckit. Just go. Have fun. And don't grab her boobies on the first date.

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