

Three or More

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EXT: PARKING LOT OF RECREATION AREA IN CITY - EVENING.

DEANDRE explodes and shoves AMIR up against the side of his SUV.

DEANDRE

That ain't no fuckin' accident, you
fucking her, you asshole. You ain't
no bro to me no more.

DeAndre lets go and steps back away from Amir, who still has his back up against the SUV.

DEANDRE (CON'T)

No bro do me like that.

INT: ALEESHA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Amir and ALEESHA beginning to make love on sofa, clothes strewn on floor nearby.

AMIR

We always thought this was a bad
idea...

ALEESHA

Don't think. Don't talk. Just be.

EXT: RECREATION AREA PARKING LOT - EVENING (CON'T)

AMIR

Look, I told you 'cause I love you.
I don't want you to hear no shit on
social media. From me, bro, for
real. And it won't happen again.
For real.

Amir looks down at DeAndre's two fists gathering bunches of Amir's shirt, and at DeAndre's face full of pain and anguish and anger and remorse.

AMIR

I'm telling you I went there to console her, as a friend, nothing more. She invited me. It was an accident, kinda. You told me to take care of her. Better me than some rando.

EXT: RECREATION AREA PICNIC AREA - LATE DAY

Amir and DeAndre hanging around picnic table in area before pond. Both are sweaty, both drinking water.

DEANDRE

It's over, man, it's finally over with Aleesha. We just can't do it any more.

AMIR

Knew it had to happen, bro. How many times did you tell me it just wasn't feeling right with her. Really sorry it went that way.

(Amir steps over
and gives DeAndre
a hug. They part.)

How did she take it? I could see her doing anything.

DEANDRE

Yeah, she was hurt, almost crying. But then she acted like it was her decision and it was best and I was just realizing that and finally doing what I was told. Bitch. Then she went back to crying.

AMIR

Well it is typical Aleesha. I mean, you talked about your problems with her.

DEANDRE

Yeah, man, I did everything I could. It's not like you meet a fine woman like that every day. She just had to have control.

AMIR

Knowing her, I can see that. But keep it real, you like to call the shots too.

DEANDRE

Yeah, that's why it couldn't work. It got so we couldn't decide anything. My head still hurts.

AMIR

Fuck your head, man, gotta take care of the heart. Gotta take care of you.

(Amir puts his hand
on his heart.)

DEANDRE

My heart is broken, no question. I thought she was the one.

AMIR

Sounds like hers too.

DEANDRE

Look, bro, I'm never gonna stop loving her, I care too much. You're her friend, you knew her before I did, you gotta take care of her. Whatever it takes.

EXT: RECREATION AREA PARKING LOT - EVENING (CON'T)

DEANDRE

Maybe I did, but I didn't mean like that. I thought you could feel me.

AMIR

What am I supposed to do if you don't know what you mean. And I didn't go see her with the intention of doing it, it just kinda happened. You know how she can be.

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT, NIGHT.

Amir entering.

ALEESHA

I figured we could just watch some House of Dragon, be chill.

AMIR

That's fine. I just wanna hang out a little with you, make sure you're OK. You know DeAndre told me you two ended.

ALEESHA

Please. I'm fine.

She leads the two of them over to the sofa. An assortment of snacks sit on the coffee table.

ALEESHA

You know, it's not like it was a big surprise. It's not like I wasn't choosing. What happened with DeAndre. My life. My way.

AMIR

(grinning)

Like I don't know.

The two of them watch for a while. They banter back and forth about whats going on in the movie, they get out a laptop to see what the real time chatter is about the show, which gets them leaning close over the computer. The show ends.

AMIR

This is where we were before.

ALEESHA

That was then. This is now.

(Aleesha leans in
to kiss Amir.)

EXT: RECREATION AREA PARKING LOT - EVENING (CON'T)

DEANDRE

That ain't right and you know it.
I don't care how hard it gets, you
don't do a bro like that. And you
were the one who introduced her to
me. It was you who said she was
fine.

(DeAndre makes a fist.)

INT: BAR - NIGHT

AMIR

So how did it go down? What
happened? She tag you, bro?

DEANDRE

Fuck, man. I wish she woulda just
tagged me and left.

DeAndre raises his shot; Amir does the same, both drink.

AMIR

That good, So she was totally a
fake.

DEANDRE

Naw, man, it was worse than that.
She looked like she looked in her
profile, maybe even a little
better.

(MORE)

DEANDRE (CON'T)

And she knew what she said she knew, or at least it seemed like it. I mean you can't know how to defeat the wolf pack on level 5 of Spacefarer unless you've been there. But he would not stop talking about every little detail of whatever it was. And then it was like boom, click, she just shut off.

AMIR

What the fuck.

DEANDRE

Yeah, then it was thank you very much gemme outa here gotta go now bye. Cost me 200 bucks.

AMIR

What the fuck.

DEANDRE

I'm not sure I'm gonna stick with that site.

AMIR

Look, I have a friend, I really think you two will like each other. Or at least you will get one interesting evening out of it. This lady is no ordinary lady. I guarantee you she listens, she wants to meet you, the real you, she doesn't hide, she's smart and she's easy to look at.

DEANDRE

Why you offering to hook us up now? Why not before I get hosed on the dating site?"

AMIR

Ah! Because she just came back to uni last week, She's been away studying abroad.

DEANDRE

So you've known her for awhile.

AMIR

Undergrad, and we sorta kept in touch. She does brain imaging too. I'll introduce you.

EXT: RECREATION AREA PARKING LOT - EVENING (CON'T)

AMIR

Don't do that, bro.

The two men stare at each other for a moment.

AMIR

I was trying to do you a solid. I'm sorry it didn't work out.

DEANDRE

Sorry don't cut it. That bitch messed with my life. So did you. I think you knew what she would do.

DeAndre takes a step back and drops his hands.

TITLE OVER:

1 YEAR EARLIER

INT: COFFEE SHOP - DAY

ALEESHA

I think if we do it we don't know what will happen. No question won't be friends any more. But I want to.

AMIR

I agree we definitely don't know what will happen. We might end up with kids.

ALEESHA

Well I can think of worse things.

AMIR

Yes, you can, and that's why we can't do it.

He pauses to let that thought sink in.

AMIR

You think we might destroy each other.

ALEESHA

I think we might destroy each other?! I don't think any such shit like that. That's your imagination, not mine. No sir. You can't destroy me. No sir, ain't happenin.

AMIR

You're passionate, right? You don't do anything half way, right? You love what you love. And can you just turn that off, just dial it down? I don't think so. And then you're a mess. So if we start we can't ever stop.

ALEESHA

No wonder your relationships end. You're always holding back.

AMIR

And you're keeping them in check. So if we go and add sex to this mix we just light the fire.

ALEESHA

And then we don't know what happens.

AMIR

So that's why we don't do it, even if we want to.

ALEESHA

Because I lose a friend, who I value a lot.

AMIR

Who can tell you shit other people can't tell you.

ALEESHA

Yeah, you talk shit alright.

They both laugh.

EXT: RECREATION AREA PARKING LOT - EVENING (CON'T)

AMIR

I knew she would make you go slow, no pump and dump. No way I could know what would really happen, and you know that.

DEANDRE

Yeah, well, as far as I'm concerned, she's all yours now. I don't want nothin with her.

DeAndre takes a step back and half-turns to leave.

DEANDRE (CON'T)

Or you.

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Amir about to leave.

AMIR

That was amazing. You are amazing

ALEESHA

So are you. Now go away, I have to get ready for the day.

AMIR

I hope we didn't just make a mistake.

ALEESHA

What mistake? We chose, and it feels good to me. How is that a mistake.

AMIR

Right now, I agree, it isn't. But if other people...

ALEESHA

Who's gonna know. Unless we tell 'em.

Amir stares at her awhile.

AMIR

We know. And Shana is psychic. But you're right. I think it's fine. Bye.

ALEESHA

Bye.

EXT: RECREATION AREA PARKING LOT - EVENING (CON'T)

AMIR

I don't think that's gonna happen.
You got this all wrong.

DEANDRE

No I don't. Fuck you. Don't call
me.

DeAndre gets on his bike and leaves.

Amir watches him leave. Then he turns and pounds on the
roof of his SUV.

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Aleesha is sitting at her kitchen table. Her phone buzzes
with text notification.

TEXT FROM DEANDRE

Good luck with your new man Amir.
Just watch your back! I guess I
was dreamin we could fix it. Don't
call me I call you

ALEESHA

(speaking out loud)

What the fuck?

Aleesha pokes the phone a few times, making a call. Her
best friend Shana's voice comes from the phone.

SHANA

Hello girl, what's up?

ALEESHA

DeAndre just sent me a bizarre text
about Amir. What are you doing?

SHANA

I think maybe I'm coming over so
you can tell me...

ALEESHA

Wait, Amir is texting me don't hang up.

TEXT FROM AMIR

He found out I told him he's pissed
IDK what to do watch out. Sorry

ALEESHA

(out loud)

Sorry, what the fuck is that.

SHANA

What?

ALEESHA

Oh sorry, not you, I don't mean you. I mean Amir. Amir did something really stupid and now he's trying to apologize.

SHANA

What did he do? Tell me.

Aleesha rolls her head around.

ALEESHA

He told DeAndre we had sex after I broke up with DeAndre. I just can't believe it.

SHANA

Nooooooooooooo. No no nono no. I'll be right there. Don't do anything stupid until I get there. Promise me.

ALEESHA

I won't. I promise. Even though no jury would convict me if I did.

Aleesha ends the call. She goes and gets out wine and crackers.

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Shana is sitting in one of the chairs.

SHANA

First of all, girl, what do you mean you slept with Amir? What the fuck?

ALEESHA

I mean he came over to see how I was doing since I broke up with DeAndre. We hadn't talked in awhile, he didn't know I was fine. I thought maybe he was coming to see if I was really not open to giving DeAndre another shot.

SHANA

So you told him you aren't and he put the moves on you and you're starved for sex so you fuck him.

ALEESHA

No, not like that at all. We were watching the movie together and it was warm and cozy and it felt like the before times and it just kinda happened.

SHANA

And Amir told DeAndre about this.

ALEESHA

That's what he texted. See for yourself.

Aleesha shows Shana the text on her phone.

ALEESHA

I really don't know why he would do that. I really don't.

SHANA

Yeah, that doesn't make any sense, nobody does that. He just loses everything. Did you ask him why?

ALEESHA

No, I called you. Besides I don't know what he could say. I'm not sure I ever want to talk to him again.

And then there's DeAndre. He texted too. Like right before Amir.

SHANA

What, he did? You didn't tell me. What did he say?

ALEESHA

Fuck you Aleesha. That's what he said.

She shows Shana the text.

SHANA

Wait, he still wants you. Or wanted, I don't know now. What are you going to do?

ALEESHA

I'm not sure he'll ever talk to me again.

SHANA

I thought you were done with him. You tried and you know it isn't going to work. If you keep dancing around with him it's just going to hurt more.

ALEESHA

But now he thinks I stabbed him in the back. With his best friend.

SHANA

But it happened. Maybe not intentionally. You wouldn't intentionally hurt him. Although you did break up with him.

ALEESHA

WE broke up because WE both knew it wouldn't work in the long run and so WE knew there was no point. Don't be twisting it around like I dumped him.

SHANA

You told me YOU ended it.

INT: DEANDRE'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Aleesha sprawled back on big bed with feet dangling over edge onto bench at end of bed where DeAndre is sitting, arms and hands up caressing Aleesha's legs. Both are naked; both still damp from recent shower.

DEANDRE

Well that's still goddam amazing.

ALEESHA

I think it always will be.

DEANDRE

So why are we doing this?

ALEESHA

Because this only gets us so far. This doesn't stop the fights. This doesn't decide where we're going to live. This is strong - and so good

- but it's not all there is. I'm done talking about it.

DEANDRE

And if I say I'm not.

He takes his hands back from her legs.

ALEESHA

You'll be talkin to yourself. You got to do what you got to do and there ain't no compromise.

DeAndre drops his head and nods.

DEANDRE

Yeah that's right. I wanna go to Geneva. For my career I gotta go to Geneva. And you gotta stay.

Aleesha slides off the bed onto the bench next to DeAndre.

ALEESHA

And you got to decide about the money. And you got to decide about the condo. And you wanna decide about the vacation. And so do I. And if all this stuff wasn't true, I might consider making the long distance work for a year. But it is.

DEANDRE

And neither one of us is happy about the compromise, every time we try it. I know. I know. I know.

Aleesha stands up and undulates her pussy near DeAndre's face then steps away.

ALEESHA

And that's why I'm taking another shower and then I'm leaving with my stuff.

DEANDRE

It's packed. It's over there.

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT (CON'T)

ALEESHA

Because we had agreed and he was down with it and he couldn't do it when it was time so I did. That's not the point.

SHANA

So what's the point then? I mean, he might be leaving town in like two months. Then you definitely get some time to think about it.

ALEESHA

The point is, I just don't want him to. I mean I want him to know I still love him I guess. Even if we can't be together right now.

SHANA

Ah. Now we get to the real. So you really aren't fine. And Amir was right to check on you. And you wanted some comfort.

Aleesha is almost crying and nods.

ALEESHA

I didn't mean to do that.

I don't think Amir did either.

SHANA

What a fuckin' cluster. I think all you can do is maybe wait a little while. Let it clear. Get some distance. Get some breeze.

ALEESHA

Neither one of them will ever want me again. And maybe that's for the best. Get'em outa my life. Both of them.

SHANA

Yeah, fuck 'em. Well. What are you going to do now?

ALEESHA

I don't know.

SHANA

I really need to get back to what I was doing. You all right, girl? Not doing anything stupid?

ALEESHA

Of course not. Except for falling in love.

Shana leaves, Aleesha updates her profile on her preferred dating site.

INT: AMIR SITTING IN LAB SPACE - DAYTIME.

Amir's phone buzzes with notification. He picks up the phone and looks at the notice. It is an Instagram post.

Dancing to Victory reads the headline. Underneath is a photo of two people holding up a trophy; one of the two is Aleesha.

"Michael Rodriguez and Aleesha Johnson won the Eddie's Lounge dance contest on Saturday night" read the caption.

Amir stares at the photo for a long time. He searches Instagram for the guy. He finds a post with another photo of him and Aleesha, sitting in a booth. They both have big smiles, although his is bigger, more like a got-it grin. He is leaning heavily into her.

He says in his post, "Met the most fantastic woman ever. Can't wait for more."

AMIR

Shit.

PHIL

What, what happened? Did it crystallize?

AMIR

No, nothing like that. The process is still running. It's just Aleesha, trying to make a point.

PHIL

Doesn't she always?

Phil turns back to what he was doing.

Amir doesn't answer.

He forwards the post from this Michael guy to DeAndre, with the subject line "Don't Ignore This! You Want to Know!"

Then he posts on Michael's page. "Congratulations. Didn't know you had those moves."

He searches for Aleesha on all the social media sites and just finds her mostly professional profile, no mention of dance contests.

After a while, his phone buzzes with a new notification. He checks. It is a message from the guy Michael.

"Thanks for the compliment. Do I know you?"

"No not really," writes Amir. "That was meant for your dance partner mostly."

"You should tell her directly, not use my page," replies Michael.

INT: DEANDRE OFFICE AT HOME

DeAndre is standing at his desk.

Phone makes notification noise. DeAndre picks it up, sees that it is Amir, at first pushes button to delete. Then opens it. He follows links to the man Michael's page and sees the post. He stares at it.

DEANDRE

You motherfuckers.

MEETING LEADER

DeAndre, you're talking on mute.

A private chat message appears on screen. "What do you mean you mofo are you ok?"

DeAndre unmutes himself.

DEANDRE

Oh no sorry, I was just distracted for a second. Please continue. Our case for the migrants in Greece is strong, I think.

The meeting leader continues speaking. DeAndre turns back to the photo on his phone. He types a reply to Amir.

"Thanks for that bro." Then he deletes it. He types, "Didn't need that thanks." Then he deletes it. He types "Her business." He hesitates. He pays attention to the meeting. Then he sends the message. He pays attention to the meeting.

DEANDRE

Greece is a signatory to the UN charter on asylum, which is what these people need. We've litigated this at least once before and won. It shouldn't take very long.

MEETING LEADER

And still these people don't get further than that island. DeAndre, you and the team prepare the motions. Let us know when its ready.

DEANDRE

Will do.

The meeting ends. DeAndre starts arranging another meeting with his team. His phone buzzes with another notification.

It is another text from Amir. "Yep but info is public. Know you like to know."

DeAndre does not respond to this message. Instead he turns to work. He sends out a message titled "What the HCR and the Public Knows."

He turns to his phone and composes a message to Aleesha. "Hey what up Hope you're good keepin it light see you been dancin again." He looks at the message, erases the part about dancing and sends it.

He keeps checking for a response. None arrives.

INT: CAFE - DAY

Shana and Aleesha are sitting in cafe.

ALEESHA

They won't go away.

SHANA

And that's a bad thing? Isn't that what you want?

ALEESHA

No! Yes.

SHANA

How did they find out? About your insane night with that Michael guy or whoever.

ALEESHA

The bar put it on IG, because of the dance contest. And then that asshole Michael bragged about it on his Facebook page.

Shana works on her phone a minute and stops at Michael's page. There's the selfie of him sitting in a booth snug against Aleesha, both smiling, cheap trophy on the table.

Shana shakes her head.

SHANA

Didn't I tell you not to do something stupid? Not like I wouldn't have.

ALEESHA

Well, what am I going to do? They both think I just cheated on them even though I didn't. I didn't fuck that guy. I couldn't. He didn't much like that when I left.

Shana laughs, and Aleesha joins her.

ALEESHA

Shoulda seen the look on his face. I don't imagine he'll call me.

SHANA

I wouldn't be so sure about that. I'm not so sure you don't want him to.

ALEESHA

The one thing I don't need is another man in my life. I dunno what to do with the ones I got. What do I do?

SHANA

If you can have whatever you want, what do you do?

ALEESHA

I keep them both, but under my conditions.

SHANA

Yeah right. And the next best thing?

ALEESHA

I keep them both, but under shaky conditions. No guarantees.

SHANA

You think they can do that? Most men...

ALEESHA

Are possessive fuckheads. But these guys are different.

SHANA

How so?

ALEESHA

Even though they fight, it never breaks their friendship.

SHANA

Yeah but this time it's over a woman they both love. You.

ALEESHA

But they have love too. One plus one equals three. So why can't one plus one plus one equals four? Have you ever seen what happens when two guys love the same thing and they get together?

SHANA

"Yeah, usually madness. Only in this case somebody could get killed. Namely you. They build you this outrageous pedestal, they put you up there, you can't possibly live up to it, you end up naked in the dungeon.

ALEESHA

But with the proper guidance. As long as we all keep it honest. Keep it real. Never lose sight of the greater love. Look at what they each do with their time. Brain research to help kids. Social justice to help the dispossessed. They spend their lives working on love. They can do it.

SHANA

You really think so. I dunno. How are you going to get them to agree with this? 'Hey DeAndre, you OK to share me with Amir?'

ALEESHA

'Hey DeAndre, you love me and you love Amir and you can have both of us if we all share.'

SHANA

So how are you going to do this? Go see each one?

ALEESHA

No, I think maybe I will ask them both to come here.

SHANA

What, so you can have sex? That ain't happenin, un un no way. You hot but you ain't that hot.

ALEESHA

Did I say anything about sex? That would be fine but its not the point. The point is to agree that we all love each other and we can have love not loneliness if we're just grown up about it.

SHANA

Awful lotta growing up. Remember we're talking about men here.

ALEESHA

I'm telling you they can do it. I'm just asking to share, not jump into bed all at the same time. Though that might be fun.

SHANA

You think you can get them both to come here at the same time? Even though they're fighting.

ALEESHA

Yes, I do. They have to. They have to go back to being the friends they were.

SHANA

If you tell'em the other is going to be here, neither will show up.

ALEESHA

Yeah you're probably right. But I don't think I can ambush them. They have to know in advance. If they don't show up, well, that tells me something right there.

INT: LOBBY OF ALEESHA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

DeAndre is standing there, waiting for the elevator. As he waits, the outer door opens and Amir comes in to the small lobby. Both men are visibly upset about this meeting. The two men stand in silence for a moment.

The elevator arrives and they both get in, DeAndre first. The doors close and the car rises.

AMIR

Didn't think you'd be here.

DEANDRE

Thought you would, so I had to come.

The elevator doors open and the two men enter the hall.

Aleesha is standing outside her door. DeAndre arrives first; she hugs him and he goes through the door. She hugs Amir and follows him into her apartment.

She enters her own living room where the two men are standing at opposite ends of the room, near the two side chairs. Aleesha comes around and stands in front of the sofa and gestures for the two to sit down.

ALEESHA

Please. Sit.

Aleesha waves at refreshments on the coffee table. Both men sit down; neither takes any food or drink.

ALEESHA

OK, please listen and let me finish. I love you both, very much. I want you both in my life. I hate the idea of losing you both, which is what's happening now. I want you to be friends like you were. I want us all to love each other, to have more love not none. There is no reason why we all can't have each other. There is no reason we can't be three. Together.

Aleesha pauses, looks intently at each man.

DEANDRE

So what does that mean, exactly. What are we supposed to actually do?

AMIR

Good question.

ALEESHA

We share our lives, just like we were doing. We don't think about it, we just do how we feel.

DEANDRE

How I feel is stabbed in the back.

AMIR

Lied to.

ALEESHA

So that's the first wound we heal with love. That was a misunderstanding all the way around. We just need to forgive being human.

DEANDRE

Look Aleesha, I was thinking about maybe marrying you, and I know you were thinking the same way and that's exactly why we broke off. Because we can't be married, we would kill each other.

ALEESHA

And this way we still keep each other and we have somebody else to keep us chill.

AMIR

Whoa, wait, so I'm just your therapist? Most likely punted by both of you? No thank you.

ALEESHA

No, no, that's not what I meant. I meant the world would be bigger than just the two of us, it would be we three, the dynamic changes.

AMIR

I still don't see what I get out of this.

DEANDRE

Me neither. And I'm definitely not sucking his dick.

AMIR

He's not fucking me either.

ALEESHA

Who said anything about sex? I'm talking about love. And friendship. We have the chance to have more love, the three of us. It's right here, easy reach. I'm asking you to think about that, rather than the problems.

DEANDRE

Look, babe, I think you're asking us to be down with letting you have two lovers.

AMIR

Yeah, you get your cake and eat it too.

DEANDRE

And you're saying this is better than nothing, right? We can have some part or no part is what you're saying, right?

AMIR

All for you and half for us.

ALEESHA

Naaaaghhh, It's not fucking math. OK, yes, I want to, I do love you both at the same time, But DeAndre, we already know we have clash we can't resolve so we have to find a different way, at least for awhile - or there's no way.

And Amir, maybe we shouldn'ta done that but we did, because that's how we've always felt for real. So now it's just honest, be real.

And DeAndre, he didn't disrespect you, that connection between us was always there and you know it but he did nothing to act on it to honor you. So again I say. If we can all change attitude just a little bit, we all get all the love. And that's what I want for all of us. We can do it. Us three.

All three sit in silence for a long beat.

AMIR
I think I can go with it, no
promises.

DEANDRE
I'll try. One shot.

ALEESHA
Both of you, come, here, hug.

Aleesha holds her arms out wide.

The two men sit down on the sofa beside Aleesha and they hug.

INT: ALEESHA APARTMENT - MORNING

Aleesha types on her phone.

Aleesha (text)
THEY BOTH AGREED FOR REAL IT WORKED

SHANA
Surprise, Hands clapping,
celebration emojis

You shittin

ALEESHA
Nope.

SHANA
What next???

ALEESHA
Who the fuck knows never done this
before

EXT: PARKING LOT, RECREATION AREA - DAY

Amir and DeAndre cooling down after run.

DEANDRE

Look, bro, I understand what happened, but it still feels like dis, you feel me?

AMIR

Awright, whaddaya want me to say. But in some ways that great night you had with her last night doesn't happen without what I did.

DEANDRE

True true. Look, so what are we going to do now? Alternate weekends? Right now this bitch is in charge.

AMIR

Yeah, she is, and that's just how she likes it. So why don't we plan as much stuff as we can for three, all of us like we agreed.

DEANDRE

And at the end of the night we - you and me - agree who sleeps with her. She can't really say no.

AMIR

Nope, she can.t That works for me.

DEANDRE

Done. There's this new band, Black Puma, coming to town.

AMIR

Yeah, sounds good.

EXT: SIDEWALK OUTSIDE CONCERT - NIGHT

Amir and DeAndre standing slightly behind Aleesha.

DEANDRE

OK bro, rock paper.

Amir raises his fist, the two men execute rock-paper-scissors. Amir wins. DeAndre is clearly dismayed.

AMIR

Three-way. Com'on. We're feelin it. You know she is.

DEANDRE

Nah I'm not down with it. You go. You won.

The ride hail car arrives. Aleesha opens the door and gestures for the men to get in. Amir gets in. Aleesha looks at DeAndre, who steps back.

ALEESHA

You not comin?

DEANDRE

Nah, I can't, I gotta function early tomorrow. Go have fun!

ALEESHA

Well, OK, if that's how you roll. I love you!

Aleesha hugs and kisses him. She turns and gets in the car.

DeAndre raises a hand to wave goodbye as the car rolls away. As it gets out of sight, the waving hand becomes a fist that punches at the car.

INT: DEANDRE'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

Large computer screen showing particulars of a local private investigator. DeAndre talks on phone.

DEANDRE

Yes, I'm thinking about entering into a significant business partnership with a particular gentleman. I need to know what outside interests he might be hiding.

Yes I can send you what I know. I'd like to get a report in like two weeks, is that possible.

See that's why I'm hiring you, I don't know what he's got. I don't think he's hiding anything. OK great. Do you have any references?

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Shana sitting in one of chairs with glass of wine in hand.

SHANA

And then you all did it right there on that couch?

Aleesha spreads an arm out over the cushions.

ALEESHA

Yep.

SHANA

And did anybody actually get any orgasms out of that? No wait, we're talking about men.

ALEESHA

It was very sweet. And yes I made sure they both came. But that's not the point.

SHANA

It's not entirely besides the point either. So how's it goin'?

Aleesha's huge grin drops to a sort of smile.

ALEESHA

Good. Good. We've been out a couple of times, I've done some stuff with each of them, we always have fun.

SHANA

There's something wrong.

ALEESHA

No, not wrong exactly. It's working. We have the love. I don't think the boys are the same friends they were, but I suppose that's to be expected. Even though I want them to.

SHANA

Duh. I just can't believe you're pulling this off.

ALEESHA

Love, girl, love. You gotta believe in the power of love. But you know, it's not perfect. I don't always get what I want.

SHANA

How so?

ALEESHA

Well, after the Puma concert, I really wanted both of them to come home with me but only Amir did. I was really in the mood for both Amir's rough and DeAndre's gentle. But for some reason DeAndre tapped out. And Amir didn't seem surprised. But I was. We were having so much fun.

SHANA

Maybe DeAndre doesn't think having sex with Amir is so much fun.

ALEESHA

Didn't seem to bother him the first time. Still, it's the love that matters. And that's going great.

The two women sit in silence for a bit.

SHANA

Come on, Aleesha, how does it really feel? I think I would be confused. Which man is my man? Who am I buyin' these panties for?

ALEESHA

That's just it! They're both my man and neither one is my one man. And I am not any one man's woman.

Shana pumps a fist, understanding the implications of ownership.

SHANA

You go, girl. But what about the One, you know, that one man who just reverberates, who just feels right, the one you just can't stay away from 'cause he feels like he's part of you.

ALEESHA

And how many times does the One turn out to be the one for awhile but not forever. I thought DeAndre was the one. But now?

SHANA

Do you even remember yourself when you met him?

ALEESHA

Ah, fuck, OK, I still feel that with him, but I also already know I can't live with just him.

I know I love Amir too and I always will. So the only way to be true to me - and them - is this way. I wake up every morning and I know I love them each and they each love me and together we live the truth. I buy the panties that make me look hot.

SHANA

Good for you. I don't think I could do it. Where do you get your panties these days?

ALEESHA

It's so much fun, seeing what drives each of them crazy. Or both of them. Amir likes tattered and frayed. DeAndre likes see-thru. I get translucent and cut holes in them. Look, you should come out with us. See for yourself. I'll arrange it.

INT: DEANDRE'S HOME OFFICE - EVENING

DeAndre takes a video call.

DEANDRE

Hey, thanks for getting back to me. Whaddaya got?

MAN ONSCREEN

Your man is a busy boy. I'm sending you the encrypted package now. Check the box.

DeAndre switches to another app, gets a file, enters a password. Images of Amir having what looks like very rough sex with another man appear. Amir is dominating.

DEANDRE

What the fuck. Where was this?

MAN ONSCREEN

Where doesn't matter. It's when.
This was last week.

DEANDRE

Holy fuck. Who is that guy?

MAN ONSCREEN

The other guy is a pro. Known for
B&D. Your boy has met him a couple
of times. I think they met at
Ragbones originally, some time ago.

DEANDRE

Ragbones! Like six months? A year?

MAN ONSCREEN

Hard to say. Definitely more than
three months.

DEANDRE

Muth-a-fuck-a. You got any in
action pics?

MAN ONSCREEN

No. They were cautious.

DEANDRE

Anything else?

MAN ONSCREEN

Other than that, no, not really.
He pretty much is who he says he
is. No financial shenanigans or
previous marriage, shit like that.

(MORE)

MAN ONSCREEN (CON'T)

Great professional rep, he could go far. And he knows he has to be careful about his, uh, extracurriculars. He takes precautions. It wasn't easy. You want me to keep digging?

DEANDRE

No, no. This is enough for my purposes. Great work. I'm transferring the payment now.

INT: ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX. MONTAGE, MURAL AND QUICK CUT SCENES OF ALEESHA, AMIR, DEANDRE AND SHANA BOWLING, LASER TAG, GO KARTING, EATING PIZZA, ARCADE, BILLIARDS. LOTS OF LAUGHING AND JOKING AROUND.

EXT: PARKING LOT, RECREATION AREA - EVENING

Amir and DeAndre cooling down from run.

DEANDRE

Hey, bro, I just wanted to show you something.

DeAndre gets out his phone and beckons Amir to come look. Amir steps over and looks at phone. He instantly steps away.

AMIR

What is this shit

DEANDRE

I dunno, bro, you tell me.

AMIR

You're even more of a fuckin' asshole than I thought possible. I'm outa here.

Amir turns to head toward his car.

DEANDRE

Wouldn't want Aleesha to see that.

Amir stops and whirls around.

AMIR

I should have known this is the real you. You really had me fooled.

DEANDRE

You really had us all fooled.

AMIR

I wasn't fooling anybody. If you hadn't hired a private eye you wouldn't know and everything would be just fine. Now it's not fine at all. I can't believe you had me investigated like this. Cold, very cold.

DEANDRE

It's not fine 'cause you didn't tell us you're into this. Who knows how much of this shit follows you to us. I can't have anything like this anywhere near me, even if it is your business and not mine. It just raises the question. Which I can't afford. And I'm sure Aleesha will have questions.

AMIR

If you don't tell her, she won't know. Ah, wait, that's your play. You were looking for something to cut me out. Well, now you got it. Whatcha gonna do? Tell her no doubt.

DEANDRE

No, you're gonna tell her. You're gonna go come clean. Let her feel the whole you. So she knows who you really are.

AMIR

Why would I do that?

DEANDRE

Because if you don't, I will. She has a right to know.

AMIR

She has a right to know you had me investigated. How do you think she'll take that?. She almost has to figure you had her investigated too. Cold, bro, very cold.

DEANDRE

Given what the investigation found, the investigation looks justified.

AMIR

OK, let's look at what you found. You found one case when I gave in to warped urges and experimented with letting them out. The way we live our lives is an experiment now. Most people would think we're way outside the bounds of normal.

DEANDRE

That's all bullshit. Let's go see Aleesha. Now.

Amir gets his phone and calls Aleesha.

AMIR

You home now? Yeah, DeAndre and I want to come see you. Yeah, now. Twenty minutes.

DEANDRE

See you there.

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

She opens the door to let first DeAndre and then Amir in. Both men are visibly angry.

ALEESHA

What the fuck is this?

DEANDRE

Go ahead, Amir, tell her.

AMIR

He wants you to know I had sex with somebody else.

DEANDRE

Weird S&M sex with another guy.

ALEESHA

What the fuck!

AMIR

Can you believe it? Ask him why he thinks this.

Aleesha looks at DeAndre.

DEANDRE

I had him investigated. Turns out for good reason.

ALEESHA

Wait. What in the holy fuck.

Aleesha takes a few steps away from the two standing men.

AMIR

And he found out that I deal with
the parts of myself that aren't so
pretty. I keep them from
destroying the rest of my life.

Amir turns to DeAndre.

AMIR (CON'T)

You should try it. You might not
have just destroyed the best thing
you got going.

ALEESHA

Wait. This makes no sense.

DEANDRE

Sorry, I know its a lot. But this
had to come out.

ALEESHA

Sorry, you know its a lot? Are you
serious. I think Amir might be
right. You just blew up
everything.

DEANDRE

We gotta keep it real. like it or
not.

AMIR

It was real - you just had to
rearrange real.

ALEESHA

Awright, that's it. The two of you
shut up.

They all fall silent for a moment.

ALEESHA

Amir, what is he talking about.

AMIR

It's very simple. He hired a private eye to find some kinda dirt on me and he found out that I have some very strong proclivities that I keep in check and keep to myself so they don't destroy all the other parts of my life. Like my friendship with you, for example. You had no idea and you didn't need to have an idea until this fuckhead got involved.

DEANDRE

And now we're talkin' truth.

ALEESHA

Shut the fuck up.

And why did you have him investigated? I mean, who does that?

DEANDRE

I don't know. Call it sixth sense. Those couple times we all had sex together there was just something off about him. I wanted to know if my gut was right. And it was.

ALEESHA

So you went that far, invaded that far.

What about me? Did you have me investigated? After all we were practically living together. I got some ghosts in my closet, shit I don't want you to know.

DEANDRE

No, never, I would never do that to you. Although when I get this promotion, the State Dept might do it.

That's another reason I had to know if there was anything to know about him.

AMIR

Bullshit, and you know it.

ALEESHA

And why did you have to tell me about all this? Why did you bring this into my house?

DEANDRE

Honesty. Reality. It's the only way.

AMIR

Blackmail. But now that you know, I'm glad you know. Everybody's got shit they don't want people to know, and even if they do, people don't wanna know. They just ignore it, unless it becomes a problem. And even then. Grown adults acknowledge this and do what they can to deal with it.

The two men look to Aleesha, who is silent and staring out a window.

ALEESHA

Get outa my house. Both of you. Now. And if you're gonna fight, go do it far away from here. I can't fuckin' believe this just happened. Get out. Now.

Aleesha goes and opens the door. The two men leave.

EXT: JUST OUTSIDE FRONT DOOR OF ALEESHA'S BUILDING

AMIR

Hope you're satisfied. You're gonna get what you created.

DEANDRE

I got nuthin' to say to you. You stay the fuck away from me. And her.

DeAndre points a finger at Amir.

AMIR

Oh I be happy to stay away from you. Anythin else is not your call.

DEANDRE

We'll see about that.

AMIR

Is that a threat? You threaten me? Know that promotion you want? I can take care of that with one email.

DEANDRE

And bury yourself.

INT: NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - NIGHT

MICHAEL

You ever felt like you've met the one, you know, the one who's for you, who you're supposed to be with.

ALEESHA

Yep. He wasn't.

MICHAEL

What? Really? How did you know?
What happened? I mean, the one is
the one.

ALEESHA

The one is the one you think is the
one at the time. And then things
change. Which they always do.
What's the longest relationship
you've had?

MICHAEL

I dunno. Like two-three years.
I've been moving around.

ALEESHA

Well, have you met the one? I bet
not.

MICHAEL

Well, yes. I mean, no.

ALEESHA

Yes, no, which is it?

MICHAEL

No, no, definitely not.

ALEESHA

No, no, couldn't be, 'cause you
keep moving and you wouldn't move
away from the one, right?

MICHAEL

Ya, I've never met anybody who'd
stop me from my path. And if it was
the one, I'd ask her to come with
me.

ALEESHA

And if she can't? Or won't?

MICHAEL

Fortunately that hasn't happened to me. That would suck.

ALEESHA

Yeah, but what if.

MICHAEL

Then that would suck. It would all depend.

ALEESHA

On what?

MICHAEL

Lots of stuff. Hey, what's this about. This a test?

ALEESHA

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean it like that. I just get carried away.

MICHAEL

Musta been some break-up. If he was the one.

ALEESHA

He certainly thought he was. The one and only, but then I suppose I let him feel it for awhile. But there was stuff. The more our lives got tied together, the more stuff came up until there was too much stuff.

MICHAEL

And you couldn't get over it.

ALEESHA

Right. We couldn't get over it.

MICHAEL

Well, that sucks too.

ALEESHA

Yep. So now I don't do exclusives.

MICHAEL

What? I mean wow.

ALEESHA

You good with that?

MICHAEL

Of course. That means I - that means your partner is free to play around too, right?

ALEESHA

I don't think of it as 'play around'. I want my relationships to be meaningful. Even when I have more than one. If they aren't, I get rid of them. I have better things to do with my time. I mostly like to hang out with people who respect their relationships.

MICHAEL

So they can not be exclusive, same as you.

ALEESHA

Yes, of course. Nobody can be everything for another person.

MICHAEL

Not me for you, not you for me.

ALEESHA

Absolutely. I have a friend, he's very close, I have sex with him sometimes, but he's really just a friend, but because of him I can

(MORE)

ALEESHA (CON'T)
feel comfortable getting involved
in a deeply romantic and sexual
relationship at the same time.

MICHAEL
And do you have one of those right
now?

ALEESHA
Nope.

MICHAEL
Do you want one?

ALEESHA
Good question. I think yes. Yes.
It's healthy.

MICHAEL
But even if you have one of those
you're still going to see whoever
that is, your friend with benefits.

ALEESHA
Like I said, yep.

MICHAEL
I dunno how many people will go for
that.

ALEESHA
Me neither. Are you one?

MICHAEL
I dunno. But I'm down to find out.
Dinner and dancing next Friday?

ALEESHA
Maybe. I have to check my
schedule.

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aleesha texting to Shana.

ALEESHA

It won't be him

SHANA

[Sad face emoji] Too bad for him

ALEESHA

Sex is good though

SHANA

He knows you're poly

ALEESHA

He knows [smiley face]

SHANA

How's Amir

ALEESHA

Still depressed not much fun broke
off from his gay lover

SHANA

DeAndre asked me out

ALEESHA

Didn't really expect that don't
know what to think

SHANA

Me neither. I said no

ALEESHA

He really like you. You like him.

SHANA

No way I'm steppin into that river.
That's got falls. Besides you my
home girl no way I do that to you

INT: WINE BAR - EVENING.

DEANDRE

Yes, I'll be chief liason for the State Department to the UNHCR.

A smartly dressed, 30-something woman sits opposite him, sipping white wine. They are intently engaged.

JEAN

Brilliant. The refugee problem is beyond crisis. There aren't enough resources being applied to the problem. I wish our government would do more. But with Brexit...

DEANDRE

You cut off your nose despite your face. Yeah, I know. The US is doing it even without Brexit. First we invade their country, rightly or wrongly, then we destabilize the government, then people can't work and then we tell them we can't help them, breaking our promise. It's not right. But then you know that.

JEAN

It's the broken promise, the taking away the hope I can't stand. People have to have hope, and the helping hand. So what will you do exactly?

DEANDRE

Travel, mostly. Travel to the camps, travel to the countries giving the aid, travel to the places people are leaving, travel to the governments of those countries to help stop the flow. I have to get a lot of shots.

JEAN

Yes, I'm sure. I did Africa two years ago. The shots made me sick for a week. Do you have anybody to take care of you?

DEANDRE

No, not now. But I'll be fine. I have buddies who did tours of Iraq and Afghanistan and they say its not so bad. Naturally everybody's different.

JEAN

Well, I hope you don't think I'm being nosy, but it sounds like you once had somebody who would take care of you.

DEANDRE

Yeah, I did. But it didn't work out. She didn't know what she wanted, and every time I tried to give her what I thought she asked for, it wasn't right. So I'm done with crystal balls.

JEAN

Understandable. You shouldn't have to guess. I had a long term relationship but he cheated on me whenever I went on mission. Well, when are going to travel?

DEANDRE

Two months. The shots start in a couple of weeks. But, if you don't mind my asking, was he always faithful when you were around?

JEAN

What, you think what he did is OK?

DEANDRE

No, no, that's not it, cheating is cheating. I was just curious - don't get me wrong - if you were gone for like months and you like looked the other way, would you still have him? You never slipped in all that time away?

The woman's face blushes. She takes a drink of wine, finishing her glass. DeAndre drains his glass.

DEANDRE

Another flight? Unoaked chardonnay this time?

The woman looks at DeAndre and hesitates a long minute.

JEAN

Sure, that sounds good.

DeAndre waves at the waiter and then turns back to her.

JEAN

If he hadn't been so obvious. I mean, we never talked about not seeing other people. And I turned down several very attractive offers.

DEANDRE

Oh, I'm sure.

The doctors say the shots might feel like the flu. What did yours do?

JEAN

The flu is putting it mildly. But I have some ideas about what I would've wanted on hand, instead of scrambling around. Call me when you

start and I'll bring you a care package if you like.

DEANDRE

I like. Thank you. I like.

INT: SALAD BAR CAFE IN NEAR BIOLAB BUILDING - DAY

Aleesha brings her lunch to an empty table for two. She begins eating and looking at her phone. A few minutes later, a man and woman come sit at the table next to her. They sit and eat for a few minutes, then the woman looks at Aleesha. Aleesha notices and looks back.

BRENDA

Pardon me, I don't mean to stare, but I really like that jacket you're wearing. Where did you get it?

ALEESHA

Oh, thank you. I got this online at BlahBeGone.

BRENDA

Yeah, I know that site. Very nice stuff. But I always find the clothes don't quite look the same in real life as they do online so I try to shop the stores.

ALEESHA

Oh, the UPS guy hates me cause I send so many boxes back.

BRENDA

True, if they didn't take the returns, they wouldn't sell anything. At least I know I wouldn't buy much clothes online.

ALEESHA

I hear you.

The woman waits to see if Aleesha has more to say.

BRENDA

Well, thanks. It looks really good on you.

Aleesha smiles and nods, then turns back to her lunch and her phone.

The woman turns to her companion, sitting at the table.

BRENDA

So he says this woman won't be exclusive with him. I mean she straight up tells him. And he can't even believe it.

JACK

Yeah, I'll bet. But wasn't this like the first date? Nobody can be thinkin' exclusive on the first date. That's nuts. Was he?

BRENDA

He didn't wanna really say, 'cause he knew how it would sound, but he did sound awfully hot on her. But he asks her, what if you find your soulmate, you know, the one, will you be exclusive then, and she says no, you can't put it all on one person to meet all your needs over time.

JACK

How did he take that?

BRENDA

Not well. I kinda got the feeling he thought she was his one.

JACK

I hope he didn't fall in love with her. Once people think they fall in love the game is over. The blinders go on.

BRENDA

Ain't that the truth. Even despite what she said, he asked her out again, something romantic he says.

JACK

Hoping she'll see the light. Dinner, music, dancing. He's the one for her.

ALEESHA

I'm sorry, I can't help but overhearing. Are you talking about Michael?

Both the woman and the man smile.

BRENDA

Yes.

ALEESHA

You aren't just sitting here by chance, are you.

BRENDA

Well, no.

We wanted to meet you. I hope you don't mind.

JACK

We couldn't just ask Mike to introduce us to you because that would seem weird and he wouldn't understand.

ALEESHA

Understand what. Who are you people?

JACK

My name is Jack.

BRENDA

Brenda. We thought you might like to meet a committed couple who are also non-exclusive.

JACK

There aren't many of us out here, but there are some and its growing. We apologize if we've overstepped or upset you.

ALEESHA

What the fuck?! So you just wanted to meet me.

BRENDA

Yes, and let you know you aren't alone in feeling love does not have to be restricted to just one other person.

JACK

If this is too strange we'll leave you be.

He pulls out a card and puts it on Aleesha's table.

JACK

We have been married for five years and we have two lovers.

BRENDA

One we share and one is just mine. Julie.

JACK

Nobody possesses anybody and there is no jealousy.

BRENDA

Perhaps we could hang out sometime soon. You know, dinner, or drinks, or another lunch.

JACK

There are a number of interesting and accomplished people like yourself we can introduce you to. What do you say?

ALEESHA

I say...I don't know. I dunno. I've never been hit on by a couple before.

BRENDA

We started out going for monogamy just like everybody else. I really didn't think I could love more than one person. Not like that.

JACK

You know, the whole sex soulmate thing, like in the movies. I bought it. But then we met Rondo.

BRENDA

First he became friends with Jack, then with both of us. Then I started kinda wanting him, and he is such a great person so I started inviting him out with Jack and I more and Jack didn't mind 'cause they get along great and then the day came Rondo essentially hit on me, probably 'cause Jack was outa town and I asked him to join me for

(MORE)

BRENDA (CON'T)

dinner so I was sorta inviting him. But he was so sweet, he said, and I quote, 'if you weren't with Jack I'd be jumping your bones now.'

JACK

I'm not sure what he woulda done if she had said 'go ahead'. It's a funny thing, that code of loyalty and honor.

BRENDA

Knowing him he wouldn'ta done anything. But I sure wanted to. So I called Jack and asked if I could make love with Rondo.

JACK

Imagine getting a call like that. 'Hey can I have sex with your friend?'

Aleesha shakes her head.

JACK

So I said yes, and reserved the right to do the same someday. That opened the door.

BRENDA

I had to give the phone to Rondo so he could ask Jack himself. And we found out pretty quickly that we all had enough love for all three of us. It has never been a problem.

JACK

Rondo is the lover we share. You should meet him.

BRENDA

So will you come meet us some time.

Aleesha hesitates a long while.

BRENDA

This is an invitation to meet like-minded people, nothing more.

ALEESHA

Well, OK. Yes. Can I bring a friend?

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT.

Aleesha makes phone call.

ALEESHA

Hello, Amir?

Amir's voice comes out of speaker on phone.

AMIR

Hey beautiful. What's up?

ALEESHA

You're coming out with me Friday night.

AMIR

Is that so. Where are we going?

ALEESHA

Bond House. We're having a date with a couple I met today.

AMIR

What? Whaddaya mean, a date. With a couple. What?

ALEESHA

Just what I said. A date, to see if we like these people. You know, if we wanna hang out with them.

AMIR

A couple, like a guy and a girl. Or whatever. Friday night. At that billiards place.

ALEESHA

Yes.

AMIR

O-kaay, sounds like fun. I just have a couple questions.

ALEESHA

OK. But first tell me you're coming.

AMIR

Oh I wouldn't miss it.

ALEESHA

Great! We need to be there at eight.

AMIR

OK. But who am I? Your date? Your partner? Did you tell them anything about me?

ALEESHA

Significant other. And no I didn't tell them anything about you.

AMIR

And you met these people how? Must have been recently. Must be some hot people.

ALEESHA

Not hot like that, you asshole.
Though they are good looking. I
told you, I met them at lunch.
They sorta struck up a conversation
with me and invited me to come
spend some time with them. I have
no idea what will happen.

AMIR

If you're agreeing to meet them at
Bond's, you already think it might
be good. Come on, tell me, what's
up? They don't have any
expectations, do they? If you know
what I mean. It's not that kinda
date.

ALEESHA

No, no, not at all. If it was I'd
tell you. Sheesh. I mean, what
the fuck. Anyway, I just think
that they and us feel the same way
about stuff and it could be good to
get to know them.

AMIR

What stuff? Heads up is always
nice.

ALEESHA

Monogamy, exclusivity, sharing
love.

AMIR

Well, well. Light stuff. OK I'm
there.

INT: ALEESHA'S APT - NIGHT

Text exchange Aleesha and Shana late Friday night

ALEESHA

I met polyamorous couple today

SHANA

What? How?

ALEESHA

They introduced themselves at lunch
place. Meeting them Fri nite drinks

SHANA

Still don't get it why they pick
you

ALEESHA

Long story. Whole new world of
people to meet.

SHANA

You sure about this sounds like
stalkers

ALEESHA

Bringing Amir. Have to check it
out. Could open big door.

SHANA

You have to tell me about it

ALEESHA

Of course, sister, of course!

INT: RESTAURANT, SLEEK DÉCOR. - NIGHT

Aleesha raises a hand to greet Jack and Brenda as they
arrive at the front podium and the hostess directs them in
her direction. Brenda raises a hand to wave back.

Aleesha and Amir both stand up as first Jack and then Brenda
arrive at the table. Jack holds his hand out to Aleesha as
Brenda does the same to Amir.

JACK

(To Aleesha, with a genuine bright smile)

Hello

BRENDA

(to Amir, similarly engaging)

Hello

ALEESHA

(to Jack, smiling with anticipation, and taking his offered handshake)

Hello

AMIR

(shaking Brenda's hand)

Hello, how are you

BRENDA

Oh, I'm good, thank you. How are you?"

Amir maintains the handshake with Brenda while Jack and Aleesha drop theirs. Amir takes Brenda's hand with both of his.

AMIR

Very happy to be here

Amir gives Brenda's hand a quick shake, then lets go completely.

BRENDA

(chuckling)

Likewise

All four people sit down.

JACK

This place is pretty good.

BRENDA
Especially for the price.

ALEESHA
Yes, I've been here before. I was
happy when you suggested it. I
really like the ratatouille. You
never know exactly what will be in
it but its always good.

JACK
Just like new friends.

The other three make slightly laughing approving noises.

ALEESHA
Speaking of friends, how do you
know Michael?

BRENDA
He comes to my gym. Healthing. I
work there as a personal trainer.

ALEESHA
And he told you I said I don't do
exclusives any more. He must know
you pretty well if he told you
that.

BRENDA
Well, you know, people just talk
about their lives with trainers.
Kinda like with hairdressers. When
he described you, we knew we wanted
to meet you.

AMIR
Pretty bold move, the way you did
it.

JACK
It was, but as we explained, its
hard to meet new people.

ALEESHA

Well, we're here now. Only because of what you said at lunch about your relationships. Your open marriage, I guess you could call it.

JACK

There are more and more people opening up to non-monogamous relationships that are still serious and committed, but still not that many. We hope you're one.

AMIR

So you two are non-monogamous. What do they call it? Polyamorous.

JACK

Yes.

BRENDA

Yes. As we told Aleesha, there are more people in our relationship.

ALEESHA

And it ain't easy.

The other three laugh.

BRENDA

Yes and no. In some ways it's easier, in some ways harder.

AMIR

Easier how. Instead of staying tuned to just one person, you have to do two - or more.

BRENDA

You do, but you do that all the time. Maybe you just don't think of it as romantic.

JACK

How hard is it to get all your needs met by just one other person. Really, it's pretty damn hard. If you think about it, you don't actually live that way. Or at least most people don't.

AMIR

OK. But not more than one lover. At least for way the majority of people.

BRENDA

Oh really. How many people cheat, do you think?

ALEESHA

Many. Especially men.

JACK

But you admit women do too. Although usually as a last resort.

ALEESHA

Yeah, it happens.

BRENDA

And so why not just admit this fact. Why not live with the reality that sometimes people need to explore other relationships to meet a present need. That doesn't mean a relationship is over.

ALEESHA

If you need somebody else, you don't need me, in which case we're done.

AMIR

Major dis. Or so it feels.

BRENDA

It's exactly that logic - which isn't logical - that breaks people up. Maybe it isn't replace you, maybe it's as well as you. Maybe you can't or don't want to meet a need or desire that has developed but that's no reason to throw away an otherwise good relationship.

ALEESHA

That all makes perfect sense, but that's not how most people feel and feel is all that matters.

AMIR

Right. And at this point you're preachin to the choir. I mean, we get it, which is really why we're even here.

JACK

The really big takeaway is no relationship works without honest communication, lots of it.

BRENDA

Our relationships just don't work without it.

JACK

And with it we grow and thrive. Just like all relationships, poly or not.

BRENDA

Which is why we asked you to come have dinner with us, so that we could communicate to you you're not alone. There are other people, like us, who live happy, healthy lives loving more than one partner.

JACK

More people, bigger world, more possibility.

ALEESHA

Well, I do appreciate that. Most of the men I've met want to own me. Even if they don't know it.

JACK

It's very hard to break out of that mindset. Most culture reinforces it. Culture does go a long way to determining how you feel.

AMIR

That might be true, but its also true that people feel rejected when their partners wanna go somewhere else. Especially when it's the first time. Even if they know about the culture thing.

ALEESHA

Or after its been a few years. Oh now you want permission to go cheat on me? And you want me to think of it as sharing the love? You can go, just don't come back. That's what most people are gonna feel, even if they don't say it.

AMIR

So, Brenda, what happened the first time Jack said he wants to go off with somebody new. How did you feel?

Brenda smiles. Jack chuckles.

BRENDA

We had an understanding from the very start. I always knew this was going to happen.

ALEESHA

I might know it but that doesn't mean I feel it.

JACK

I said to Brenda 'I met this person who resonates with me in a new way. I want to explore it.'

BRENDA

And that is really a gift to me, more Jack, new Jack, and certainly no threat to me. I had - and have absolutely no doubt he is coming back to me. And who knows, maybe I get a new friend or lover out of it too.

JACK

That uncertainty, that unknown keeps renewing our relationship.

AMIR

Yeah well what about that third person, that person Jack went to see, that Jack started something with. Did you tell'em what the deal was? That you were already in a relationship and weren't leaving?

ALEESHA

Good question. Aren't you just using people, otherwise? As juice for your own fire?

BRENDA

Good question. Of course we tell people who we are, as soon as it makes sense. Just like you told Michael, Aleesha.

ALEESHA

Yeah, and he backed off after the third time I told him.

JACK

Maybe he knows he can't handle it, in which case its better for you if you go no further.

BRENDA

That happens a lot. Which is why we're here. Because we don't think you're going to be freaked out by our relationships.

JACK

An opportunity for growth and enrichment.

BRENDA

And adventure.

JACK

All the way around, for each of us.

The four of them sit in silence for a long few moments, looking at each other.

Then Aleesha picks up her wine glass and olds it aloft.

ALEESHA

To new friends!

ALL

To new friends!

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

FACETIME ALEESHA AND SHANA

SHANA

So no sex after all that.

ALEESHA

No. No orgies. Shame on you.

SHANA

Had to check, girl. What did he say expand our experience.

ALEESHA

Yeah, well it did that, for sure. Gotta look at stuff again.

SHANA

Like what?

ALEESHA

Dating for sure. I told Michael I didn't do exclusive - three times - to see what would happen. Plus it is true, I think.

SHANA

You already know most guys are never gonna get serious. It's just fuck or just gone. Or both.

ALEESHA

But now I have a way to meet people who are open to multiple relationships, which is just the reality.

SHANA

Maybe so, but that's not many people who can roll like that. It's pretty limiting, don't you think?

ALEESHA

Like I said, I gotta look at it again. See what's in my heart.

SHANA

More I look more I think its not worth it. Most men suck. Like if you can't really get to see me, then go away, I don't have time for that shit.

ALEESHA

How do you meet guys like that? Like you say, its pretty limited. We need to meet and have a drink sometime soon.

SHANA

We're doin' it, girl, we're doin' it.

INT: ALEESHA'S APARTMENT, EVENING.

Aleesha folding laundry. Phone rings.

Aleesha picks up the ringing phone, sees it is Michael.

ALEESHA

Hello, how are you?

MICHAEL

Hey, how are you? Thanks for taking my call. Didn't think you would.

ALEESHA

Oh I'm sorry, I've just been so busy.

MICHAEL

That you can't text back and say so?

ALEESHA

OK yeah I guess you're right, that was rude. But I haven't had any time lately.

MICHAEL

OK, I get that. Are you blowing me off, for real? Cause if you are...

ALEESHA

No, I mean, I don't know. I really don't know what I'm doing with you.

MICHAEL

You don't know. Let me help you know. 'Cause I know.

Aleesha doesn't want to hear the next thing out of Michael's mouth.

ALEESHA

Ahhh...

MICHAEL

We belong together, I know you can feel it. We have it goin on.

Exactly what Aleesha doesn't want to hear.

ALEESHA

Ahhh, not like that.

MICHAEL

Whaddaya mean, not like that.

Aleesha takes in a breath.

ALEESHA

I don't think we're destined or anything like that, if you know what I mean.

Michael is silent.

ALEESHA

Don't get me wrong, I really like you, I really like you a lot, you're a great guy.

She can hear him rumbling under his breath.

ALEESHA (CON'T)

And you're great in bed. You know how to do it. But I can't be with just you, not anymore. And I don't think you can deal with that.

Michael is silent for a beat.

MICHAEL

But you do want to keep seeing me. You just don't know how much. Time, that is. Or feeling.

ALEESHA

Well, I think I do want to keep seeing you.

MICHAEL

And I can take it or leave it, whatever I get.

Aleesha doesn't say anything.

Michael gives her a minute, listens to the silence

MICHAEL

Yeah, you don't know. Well, OK, how about next Saturday night, I'll come pick you up at 7, we'll have dinner and then go to a comedy show. We'll just have fun.

Aleesha thinks about this. She bites the bullet.

ALEESHA

You know, I'm so very sorry. Truly I am. I don't want to hurt you. I just didn't know until now. I can't see you any more. For your sake. And mine. So no, I'm not going out with you. This is over.

MICHAEL

Over. You're making a huge mistake. When you wake up. Maybe I'll take your call. Probably not.

Michael hangs up.

Aleesha stands there, looking at the silent phone.

A moment later she receives a text from Michael. It is a dick pic with the caption "None for you."

TITLE OVER:

SIX MONTHS LATER

INT: WINE BAR - NIGHT.

Jack, Brenda, Aleesha and Amir sit around table.

JACK

We just wanted to see how you two were doing. It's been a little while.

AMIR

So so at best. There is nothing happening.

BRENDA

Is that good? Sounds like not.

ALEESHA

No action is not good for him. That's when he misbehaves.

AMIR

I do not think that is true. It is true I solve problems by making things happen, yes, but not bad things.

JACK

If you're bored, I have a friend who can help, I think.

Amir looks at Brenda.

AMIR

Well, actually, I was hoping to get Brenda to come home with me tonight.

BRENDA

Oh, my. I'm flattered. But I'm also not in a place where I can accept that invitation, I'm sorry to say.

Brenda reaches out a hand to Amir.

BRENDA

Open does not mean always available. I can't handle a bigger relationship with anyone else right now. I'm sure it would be fun.

JACK

More than one person at a time doesn't mean everybody in. The heart doesn't go away. Not by any means.

ALEESHA

Well yeah, the heart is what made me want to make a relationship with three of us. Because that's what love wanted. You can't always get what you want.

BRENDA

Not only that, sometimes when you do get what you want, then the relationship changes, or you change. It's living.

JACK

Wait, why didn't you get what you wanted? I mean, it sounded like you did get the love community you wanted, at least for a little while, based on what you've said.

ALEESHA

We thought we did, but it wasn't true.

AMIR

DeAndre never really bought it. At first it looked like he did but he didn't. He made that pretty clear.

JACK

So have either of you met anybody recently. I mean other than us?

ALEESHA

No, just the opposite. The one guy I was sorta seeing decided he couldn't deal with my not wanting to be exclusive with him so it ended. Just as well.

AMIR

That's not exactly what you told me. More like you decided he couldn't deal with not owning you so you ended it.

ALEESHA

OK, I confess.

BRENDA

And now you feel like you're never gonna find a partner, yes?

ALEESHA

Yes. I mean, it's hard no matter what.

AMIR

If you wanna go back to DeAndre, find a way somehow, you should. He might be missing you too.

JACK

Do you have a way to find out? Like ask him?

ALEEWSHA

No! Besides, I'm not sure he'll answer me.

BRENDA

Can you really go back?

ALEESHA

I don't know. The way it ended was not pretty.

BRENDA

But you still love him.

ALEESHA

I always will. Nuthin' I can do, I always will.

JACK

(to Brenda)

Well, I think its gathering time, don't you?

BRENDA

Cookout. See if we can bring the smoker.

AMIR

What? Smoker sounds good but what?

JACK

Every once in a while we hold gatherings of everybody we know - mostly poly but not all, just to see who we are. It's basically just a party. We haven't done one in a while. Now would be a good time.

AMIR

I like parties with great food.

ALEESHA

Depends. But I'd go.

EXT: PARKING LOT, RECREATION AREA - EVENING

Amir stretching and warming up. He sees DeAndre approaching on the running path. He watches as DeAndre runs right up to him.

DEANDRE

Hello.

AMIR

Hey. What up. How you doin'?

DEANDRE

Good, good. Just got back from Zurich.

AMIR

Oh yeah, that's right, you did get that posting. How was it, or is it?

DEANDRE

How do you know? It's great.

ALEESHA

Aleesha. She told me.

DEANDRE

Well, I gotta go.

DeAndre turns and walks toward his car.

AMIR

You should know Aleesha wants to talk. She misses you.

DeAndre stops, turns.

DEANDRE

That so? Why doesn't she tell me herself?

AMIR

Because she's stubborn, like you. I'm risking death by telling you this.

DEANDRE

Then why did you.

AMIR

For the sake of love and the happiness of my two best friends.

DeAndre laughs.

DEANDRE

I'm perfectly happy without her.

AMIR

I'm sure you are. You undoubtedly have another babe, knowing you.

DEANDRE

And what a babe she is, too. Actually I'm missing her, to tell the truth.

AMIR

Any chance you got a picture.

DeAndre hesitates, looks away from Amir.

DEANDRE

Yeah, I don't think so.

AMIR

We can be friends again, you know,
but I have to beat the shit outa
you first.

DeAndre expels a big laugh.

DEANDRE

Yeah, right.

AMIR

Yeah right. Then you can tell me
about this superfine woman you got
now.

DEANDRE

Seems to me I still owe you for you
fucking my woman.

AMIR

Yep, I did, I made that mistake of
not being able to override human
nature, and I immediately owned it.
What did you do?

DEANDRE

Put the truth out there. You are a
lying cheating sack of shit.

AMIR

Just as bad as the undermining
faker you are. So maybe that makes
us about equal.

DEANDRE

And a good reason to just walk
away, like I'm doin now.

DeAndre moves to walk away.

AMIR

Yeah, that's your way, just walk
away, don't face the real. Aleesha
and I are both still here for you,
if you can just accept our love.

DEANDRE

Fuck this shit. I got a life I
like.

He gets in his car and drives away.

INT: JEAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

They are both picking up and putting on clothes from the
floor and elsewhere that have been tossed off in haste.

JEAN

Well, what was that about. Not that
I mind.

DEANDRE

Hey babe, been a long time, you
been away, I missing you.

JEAN

Yep, a whole 24 hours while I was
in D.C. I think maybe I'll go away
more often. Absence makes the man
grow wilder.

DEANDRE

Me Tarzan, you Jean.

Jean picks up her blouse, looks at it, then tosses it on the
disheveled bed.

JEAN

We're going out to dinner now?

DEANDRE

Yes, Italian. Although right now I'm thinking maybe switch to Jamaican.

JEAN

Oh well, then, hand me the shiny shirt in that basket there.

DEANDRE

Sure.

He turns and picks up the T-shirt with glittery designs on the front.

DEANDRE

What else you got?

He picks up one more shirt with ruffled sleeves and then sees a pair of men's boxer shorts in the pile. He puts down both shirts, holds up the boxers.

DEANDRE

Hey what's this? These would look great on you.

DeAndre demonstrates the shorts are obviously too big for Jean.

JEAN

Oh shit. Oh shit. I forgot. I can't believe.

DEANDRE

Yeah, neither can I.

He throws the boxers back in the basket, picks up the glittery T-shirt and tosses it to Jean.

DEANDRE

I can't believe this is happening again.

JEAN

What are you going to do.

DEANDRE

Take you to dinner. Enjoy my evening with a superfine woman like you, since it could be the last time.

JEAN

Is it?

DEANDRE

I dunno. That depends on you. Are you cheating on him right now, whoever he is?

JEAN

He is Tom, and no.

She goes over to the dresser and picks a necklace out of the box.

JEAN

He knows about you.

She puts on the necklace. The necklace compliments the shirt.

DEANDRE

How 'bout if I say you gotta choose?

JEAN

I can't. Not right now this instant.

DeAndre stands up. He holds a hand out toward the door.

DEANDRE

OK, let's go.

JEAN

Where?

DEANDRE

To dinner. Jamaican, of course.
Jerk chicken. Cafe Negril.

JEAN

If this is goodbye, then say it
now.

DEANDRE

Oh, it definitely isn't. I want to
keep seeing you. Not many women
like you in the world. Come on,
let's go.

DeAndre waited to see what decision she made.

Jean smiles at him and walks toward the door.

JEAN

I like spicy.

INT: SALAD BAR RESTAURANT, MIDDAY, JUST BEFORE LUNCH RUSH.

Aleesha comes in door, looks around, sees DeAndre, who sees
and acknowledges her. Aleesha walks up to table.

DeAndre stands up and moves to deal with chair but she waves
him off. They both sit down.

DEANDRE

Thank you, thank you so much for
coming. It's so good to see you.

ALEESHA

I dunno why I'm, here. Shana told me not to come, hell, I told me not to come. But things change. How are you?

DEANDRE

I'm doin' good. Real good. I went to Zurich for 6 months, that was fun. And you? You're lookin' very well.

ALEESHA

Well thank you. Our recent trials have been successful, I'm really happy about that.

DEANDRE

Wait, wasn't that reversing neurodegeneration, like, cool stuff.

ALEESHA

So you did get the post to Zurich, good on you. Why aren't you there now?

DEANDRE

Oh, I'll be going back. Probably back and forth and around to other places. We seem to be getting some traction. Finally.

ALEESHA

OK, DeAndre. Why am I here?

DEANDRE

To see if we can start again. Like you said, things change.

ALEESHA

How's it gonna be different?

DEANDRE

We know a buncha stuff about what not to do, and stuff we must do instead. Plus I'm going to be gone a lot, and the general equation has changed.

ALEESHA

Like how.

DEANDRE

Like you want to feel free to see other people, to feel what you feel for other people. But then so do I. We don't know how this goes, but we know it doesn't go back to the same place.

The two people look at each other for a long few minutes.

ALEESHA

What's her name.

DEANDRE

Jean. But she'll never be mine, she'll probably go away. But not now. And you?

ALEESHA

Nobody. I mean, I'm still really close with Amir, but not really like that. But you're right, I want the door to be open. And I want you at the same time.

The two people look at each other for a long few minutes.

DEANDRE

You up for some lunch?

ALEESHA

Yes. Yes I am.