

Illiterate Date (Working Title)

by

Nik Aberle

Nik Aberle
605-290-3712
nik.aberle@gmail.com

August 20, 2017

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

We're inside a higher end restaurant, the type with linens and candles on each table, and a wine list that will make the average person blanche.

We see various couples enjoying their meal before settling on an empty table. ZOEY and JOSH enter the frame and have a seat.

Zoey is in her late twenties with a pixie cut hairstyle. She's wearing dark, high waisted jeans with a loose blouse tucked in. Josh is also in his late twenties with a styled undercut. He's wearing light jeans, a tshirt and blazer, and converse shoes.

As they sit down they are approached by their waiter who places two menus in front of them.

WAITER

Good evening, my name is Nikolas and I'll be your server this evening. Can I get you anything to drink besides water?

ZOEY

I'll take a Moscato if you have one.

WAITER

Absolutely, and for you?

JOSH

Uh, Just a beer for me please.

WAITER

Which beer would you like? The beer menu is right there.

JOSH (Glances at the menu)

Uhh, I'll take whatever's on tap.

WAITER

We have ten different beers on tap this evening.

There's a clear awkwardness at the table at this point.

JOSH

Right. I'll just take your darkest beer.

WAITER

Ok...

The waiter looks a little confused before shrugging and walking away. Josh and Zoey pick up the menu's and look through them while they talk.

JOSH (to Zoey)
I'm not a particularly picky
drinker.

ZOEY
Yeah, me neither. As long as it
tastes good it doesn't matter
right?

JOSH
Right. So I was a little surprised
you replied to my message.

ZOEY
Really? Why's that?

JOSH
Well, I... I don't know. I just
was. I've been turned down a lot
lately.

ZOEY
I thought your message was nice.
Your spelling needs a little work,
but you seemed like a great guy to
meet.

Josh looks noticeably uncomfortable at the mention of his spelling. The waiter approaches with the drinks and sets them down.

WAITER
Do you know what you'd like to
order, or do you need a few more
minutes?

JOSH (setting menu down)
I'll take whatever's on special.

WAITER
Well, we have a lovely chicken
parmesan or grilled salmon
tonight.

JOSH
Salmon please.

WAITER
Very good, and for you?

ZOEY

Hmm, I'll take the chicken parm.

The waiter nods, collects the menu's and walks off.

ZOEY

So, you aren't picky with your beer, and you order the special. Is there anything you have a preference on?

Josh laughs a bit at her comment.

JOSH

Food is food. I had an uncle that cooked at a high end restaurant and he always said that 90% of the time, the special is the best thing on the menu.

ZOEY

And the other 10%?

JOSH

Well, the other 10% are the days they're trying to get rid of leftovers.

They both laugh a bit.

JOSH

So, what do you do?

ZOEY

Well, I just finished med school and moved here because I got a job at a clinic.

JOSH

Of course you just finished med school.

ZOEY

What do you mean? Where'd you go to college?

JOSH

I didn't. Well that's not true. I went for a semester and flunked out.

ZOEY

Oh...I'm sorry, I didn't mean to.

JOSH

Oh, no worries. I had a bunch of applications sent out and at the end of my senior year my dad passed away. So I stayed home to help my mom out. Went to the local college and flunked out of my first semester. After that I just figured college wasn't for me.

ZOEY

So what do you do now then?

JOSH

I got a job at a local brewery and worked my way up to brewing assistant.

ZOEY

Wait, you work at a brewery and you don't have a preference on beer?

JOSH (Laughing)

Well I know none of mine is on tap, and once you've tried so many beers you stop caring after a while. The beers I want to try, I've already tried.

ZOEY

So, flunked out of college and works at a brewery. And I responded to your message because...?

JOSH

Very funny. And how much student loan debt do you have?

ZOEY

Touche.

They both take a drink and their food arrives.

WAITER

Salmon for the gentleman, and chicken parmesan for the lady. Anything else I can get you?

JOSH

I think I'm good.

ZOEY
Ya, me too. Thanks.

ZOEY (To Josh)
Looks amazing, good call on the
specials.

JOSH (Confidently)
90%.

They begin eating and we cut to:

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Josh and Zoey are walking down a sidewalk before stopping in front of an apartment building.

ZOEY
This is me.

They lean in and share a quick, gentle kiss.

JOSH
I had fun tonight, can I expect a
call?

ZOEY
I also had fun tonight. You can
definitely expect a call.

JOSH
I work the next few evenings and
have an appointment Thursday
morning, but I'm free after that.

ZOEY
I'll check my schedule and get
back to you.

They share a slightly longer kiss before saying goodbye. Zoey heads inside and Josh walks away.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

A very sterile feel permeates the office, but the table in the center of the room looks like someone dumped a few games of scrabble on it. Small tiles of letters and numbers lay strewn about. A large sign above the waiting chairs says "NO TALKING"

There is a KID sitting by himself in one of the seats. Josh walks in and walks up to the receptionist counter.

JOSH
 Josh Dorn, 8:30 appointment.

The RECEPTIONIST glances up at him, types a few things and hands him a form.

RECEPTIONIST
 Please fill out the top line with your name, then date of birth, and sign at the bottom.

Josh does so and hands it back to her.

RECEPTIONIST
 Please have a seat, the doctor will be with you shortly.

Josh kind of nods and goes to sit down, leaving a few seats in between himself and the Kid.

A few silent, awkward moments pass. The Kid leans forward and begins to spell out something on the table. The following conversation takes place via scrabble letters.

KID
 Helo, mi nayme is GREG.

Josh looks at it, squints a little bit before a light bulb clicks.

JOSH
 Hi Greg, my name is Josh. How ar
 yu?

GREG
 Im gud. Ken yu reed?

JOSH
 A littel. That is why Im hear.

GREG
 Mee to.

RECEPTIONIST (Audibly)
 Mr. Dorn, your doctor is on her
 way out now.

JOSH (In Letters)
 Bye

The Kid just waves back to him as he stands up and walks towards the door. We see "Adult Literacy Specialist" on the glass door as Josh approaches. He reaches it right as the door opens and Zoey looks up from a clipboard to see Josh standing in front of her.

Josh freezes like a deer in the headlights and it takes a minute for Zoey to register it's the same Josh.

JOSH
Uhhh...shit.

Josh quickly turns and walks straight out of the office. Zoey looks perplexed.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Josh lounges on his couch in pajamas flipping through channels. His phone vibrates. He glances at it and sees Zoey's face. He pauses for a second before answering it. Awkwardness pervades this conversation.

JOSH
Hello?

ZOEY
Hey, how's it going?

JOSH
Good, and you?

ZOEY
Good, just got off work.

JOSH
At the Literacy Clinic.

ZOEY
Yep, that would be the one.

JOSH
Where you teach people how to read.

ZOEY
Generally that's what a literacy clinic does, yes.

JOSH
Where you even teach adults to read.

ZOEY
Josh, that's enough. I understand why you didn't tell me. But I also respect that you're trying to learn.

JOSH
So it doesn't bother you?

ZOEY
Well it did a little at first.
But, I mean you have a job, you're
well spoken, and kinda cute.

JOSH
Only kinda?

ZOEY
Ya, only kinda. So, you still want
to go on a date today? I already
have it planned.

Josh looks down at himself disgusted.

JOSH
Uh...Ya, give me 30 minutes to get
cleaned up. Where should I meet
you.

ZOEY
I'll pick you up, it's a bit of a
drive away. What's your address?

JOSH
I'll text it to you. See you in
30.

Josh hangs up the phone, looks happy and rushes off to the
bathroom.

EXT. CITY - DAY

Josh hops into Zoey's car and we see them pull away.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Their car pulls up to a parking spot and they are in the middle
of a gorgeous, massive park system. Zoey pulls a large duffel
bag out of the trunk and tosses it to Josh. He catches it with
a little "umph".

JOSH
What the hell's in here? Did you
bring me out here to murder me?

ZOEY
Perhaps, guess you'll just have to
find out. And no peeking.

Zoey grabs a picnic basket out of the trunk and she starts leading him down a hiking trail.

Cut to a few minutes later. Josh has a pretty good sweat going.

JOSH

I don't know if this is going to work out. You seem to really be enjoying this and I've realized that after years of not hiking, I'm still not a fan.

ZOEY

Just a little further. Trust me, it'll be worth it.

JOSH

Just remember, you don't have to twist the knife to be responsible for my death.

Cut to a few minutes later, they are going up a particularly steep part of the hike.

JOSH

Christ, who the hell would hike up here in the first place? Who saw an unnaturally steep incline and thought it would make a good walkway?

ZOEY

Hah, it's just over that ridge.

They walk another 20 meters or so and come up over a ridge to a breathtaking view of the Black Hills of South Dakota. Off to the right is a little alcove with a green set of tables and chairs.

Papers and notebooks are jammed in every crack on the wall and there is even writing on the wall.

JOSH

Wow. What is this place?

ZOEY

This... is Poet's Table. Bunch of hippies in the 70's brought the furniture up piece by piece.

Zoey grabs the duffel bag from him and starts pulling out random objects and setting them on a table. Josh walks over and looks out over the Hills.

ZOEY (Cont'd)

Over the years people have come up here to marvel at the beauty in front of them while working on their poetry, novels, screenplays, etc. And I, thought it would be a great place for your first lesson.

Josh turns around to 26 different food items set-up like a large picnic. Each item corresponds to a different letter of the alphabet. There is a piece of paper in front of each of them.

ZoeY picks up an apple.

ZOEY

What is this?

JOSH

Pear!

ZOEY

Very funny smartass. But if you plan on eating anything for lunch, I recommend you try again.

JOSH

That would be an apple.

ZOEY

Very good, now spell it and there might be a kiss in it for you.

She hands him a pen and signals towards the piece of paper. Josh takes a deep breath and leans over. As he begins writing the camera pans back and turns to the Black Hills again before fading to black.

THE END.