

THE DATING PROJECT

*By
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THE DATING PROJECT

The Dating Project was originally produced at Hyde Park Theatre in Austin, TX by Summer Break Theatre, directed by Yaakov Abrams, featuring the following cast:

Tara Maggie Meador
Lori/Carol Anna Becker
Mark/Monster/Rex/CoolGuy77/BooBoo: ... Brandon Hobratschk
Boss/FreddyFlood/Daniel_T/Hank: David Lampe

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CAST: 2 Women and 2 Men

Tara	40s-ish woman
Lori	40s-ish woman
Carol	40s-ish woman
Mark	30s/40s man
Monster	30s/40s male
Rex	30s/40s man
CoolGuy77	30s/40s man
BooBoo	30s/40s man
Boss	30s/40s man
FreddyFlood	30s/40s man
Daniel_T	30s/40s man
Hank	30s/40s man

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SCENE 1

Inside a business conference room at a market research company. TARA is here presenting in front of a projected slide or whiteboard or flipchart or an imagined image.

There is also a desk and a chair to one side and a small table with two chairs on the other. These will be used in quick-cutting scenes throughout. We will PIVOT quickly to scenes as we go. BOSS is inactive at the desk now. LORI is inactive at the table. They are inactive until their scenes start later. TARA presents to an unseen group.

TARA. So if you look at our revenue over the last fiscal year, you'll notice some seasonal dips. June was a particularly disappointing month when a bunch of orders fell through. There were promises made, and yet... What happened? They were false. There was false representation of intent and interest. Why do people do that? Why do they SAY one thing yet DO another? What is it about human nature that pushes people to... That's a question for the analysts, I guess. Looking more carefully at the year-over-year numbers... *(Next slide.)* You can see that I haven't actually had a date in over nine months. And if you look at the last decade... *(Next slide.)* You can see that I haven't had sex since 2013. And good sex, well, the data doesn't go back that far. So what are we going to do about this? What can we change as individuals? Do we have the influence and power to affect the future? To alter these patterns? To become profitable? Or are we just cogs in a wheel, flotsam on an uncontrollable sea, specs of sand on a beach flecked with scantily-clad, sweaty, eager, writhing bodies? *(Boss turns to watch Tara. She now has his attention.)* I can't answer that right now. I'm only a project manager. I don't even know how I got into this position. I have a degree in psychology. I must have been hired on a whim after a long series of difficult, dreadful conversations about something I didn't

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quite understand. But it pays the bills. Mostly. Though I'm not sure what it does for my soul. Maybe some of you know better than me. We could create a task force or have regular conference calls to talk about the ups and downs and trying to implement a certain level of control over our environment. *(Lori now turns to watch Tara. She has her attention too.)* Oh, we're running out of time? Okay, to summarize, month-over-month we're down, year-over-year we're also down, with so little lined up in the pipeline that collective hope is effectively lost. But... there could always be a miracle, something that comes along and changes everything. I don't know. We've gotta hang our hats on something or we're doomed as a people. I mean as a company. A market research company, which is what we are. *(French accent.)* Bon courage! *(Back to normal.)* Does anyone have any questions? *(Lights shift and PIVOT to new scene.)*

SCENE 2

We're inside BOSS's office. Boss confronts Tara from his desk.

BOSS. Do you know why I called you in here this afternoon?

TARA. I figure it's for one of four distinct reasons. In order of likelihood... 1) to give me a long-overdue raise; 2) to fire me; 3) to nitpick details with my presentation; or 4) to proposition me about having sex with wanton disregard for physical safety on top your oddly-uncluttered desk.

BOSS. It is one of those things.

TARA. Oh!

BOSS. So about your presentation...

TARA. Dammit.

BOSS. You really thought that was the 3rd most likely reason?

TARA. No, I was just trying to influence you.

BOSS. So sex on my desk was the least probable?

TARA. Oh God, did I really say that one out loud? I'm so embarrassed.

BOSS. Let's talk about the presentation. *(Lights shift. PIVOT and now we're with Tara and her friend LORI a bit later. Lori chats with Tara from the table and chairs.)*

LORI. Are you serious? You really said that to your boss?

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TARA. I don't know, Lori. I think so. Or I imagined it. I can't tell anymore. I've been single for too long.

LORI. Five minutes is too long, if you ask me.

TARA. I didn't ask you, but....

LORI. Does he really have an uncluttered desk?

TARA. Yeah, it's kinda weird. Smooth and empty.

LORI. That's so hot. You really have a thing for him?

TARA. No. I mean I don't know. I feel like I have a thing for everyone these days. There's always something, no matter how small, that I find attractive in another person.

LORI. I should introduce you to my brother.

TARA. Is he cute?

LORI. Nope.

TARA. Good job?

LORI. He's in prison.

TARA. I see.

LORI. Gets out in three to five.

TARA. Years?

LORI. *(Thinks.)* Yep. Though it depends on his behavior, which is always a question mark.

TARA. I just need some new prospects.

LORI. I can help with that.

TARA. No prisoners?

LORI. No. That was a joke. Mostly. Let's start with your profile.

TARA. My what?

LORI. Your online dating presence.

TARA. Oh, I don't like that idea.

LORI. I'm sorry, what?

TARA. I like having my privacy, my anonymity.

LORI. There is no privacy, there is no anonymity anymore. You'll be stalked and ogled whether you put yourself online voluntarily or not. Somewhere, some place, some pervert is gonna be whacking off to a photo of you.

TARA. Eew.

LORI. He's probably doing it right now.

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TARA. Oh God, I don't want to think about that.

LORI. Suit yourself. Anyway, the trick is to get ahead of it. You want to be proactive.

TARA. I don't like putting myself out there. It seems unnecessarily aggressive.

LORI. Didn't you just proposition your boss?

TARA. Okay, fine, I can do it if I have to.

LORI. That's the spirit. I love doing this kind of stuff.

TARA. You do?

LORI. I've met some amazing people online. *(Lights shift. MONSTER approaches from the shadows, giant monster head on his human body. Lori stands but tentatively approaches him.)*

MONSTER. RAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRR!!!!!!

LORI. Carl?

MONSTER. RRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRR!!!!

LORI. Your place or mine? *(Monster gestures back to his place and Lori nods. Lights shift back to Lori and Tara.)*

LORI. *(Reminiscing.)* He's a real teddy bear in bed. *(Tara reacts suspiciously.)*

TARA. So.... What are we supposed to do first?

LORI. We need a photo. *(Lights shift. Music pipes in as lights flash. Tara strikes a bunch of poses, lying on the ground, smiling, smoldering, glancing over her shoulder, jumping, crying, etc. She goes through about 20 completely different looks as Lori snaps photos. The music stops. Tara catches her breath as Lori looks through the photos.)*

TARA. Anything good?

LORI. *(As leafing through the shots.)* No, no, no, not bad, cute but not quite right, too many wrinkles.

TARA. Wrinkles?

LORI. Don't worry about it. It's just the lighting. *(More photos.)* Too washed out, sexy but blurry, ooh that's interesting and unexpected.

TARA. What? What? *(Tara comes over to look.)*

LORI. I got my thumb in front of the lens. Been a while since I did that.

TARA. So nothing good? Maybe that sexy but blurry one?

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LORI. Do you have any photos of you from like ten or fifteen or even twenty-five years ago? A high school yearbook photo maybe?

TARA. High school? Are you kidding?

LORI. We just gotta get you in the door, that's all.

TARA. I have a couple of pictures on my desk from that time I went to Bermuda.

LORI. You went to Bermuda?

TARA. With Rex.

LORI. Ohhh. Forgot about that guy. Why don't you get those. We can crop him out. *(Lights shift. Back in the office. Tara walks to find a photo. REX enters wearing Bermuda shorts and a big hat. Tara is startled to see him.)*

REX. Hey baby.

TARA. Oh my God. Please don't call me that.

REX. What's wrong, sweetie? *(He gets close to her.)* The sunburn's clearing up a little. I bet it won't even peel after all. *(He touches her skin and she likes it despite herself.)* You put enough aloe on there?

TARA. Yeah. The whole bottle.

REX. You are committed. I like that about you. So what are you up to?

TARA. I'm looking for a photo.

REX. What kind of photo?

TARA. One of us.

REX. Feeling nostalgic?

TARA. Not really.

REX. What then?

TARA. I need it for something.

REX. Sometimes I look at old photos of us too.

TARA. You do?

REX. Yeah. I miss you. I miss us.

TARA. But then why did you... *(He looks at her vacantly. She tries to snap herself out of it.)* This isn't happening. This isn't happening! This isn't...

REX. Give into it, honey. It's okay.

TARA. You are not real. You are not real!

REX. I'm as real as you want me to be.

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TARA. I just need a photo. One photo. That's it. Something where I look cute.

REX. You always look cute to me. *(Frustrated, Tara tries to keep it together and inches closer and closer to Rex. She puts her arm around him and he smiles, putting his arm around her too, or maybe he even lifts her up so she's laid out in his arms. She starts to smile and looks happier and happier. Both of them look happy to be there and peer straight out. Lori enters with a camera.)*

TARA. *(To Lori.)* How's this?

LORI. Oh yeah, that's perfect! *(Lori snaps a photo of them. Once done, Tara leaps out of Rex's arms.)*

TARA. *(To Rex.)* All right, we're done.

REX. Whoa, I was just getting used to this.

TARA. Your job here is complete.

REX. My job? I don't even....

TARA. Get out of here, Rex!! Get out my heart! Get out of my head. Just go before I do something I regret!! *(Rex, startled, turns and walks offstage. Lights shift back to Lori and Tara.)*

TARA. *(About photo.)* So, you really think we can use this?

LORI. Oh yeah, just a snip here, a cut there, it'll be great.

TARA. I always liked that photo, haven't looked at it in a while.

LORI. Yeah, great smile, the sunset is a nice touch. This'll be perfect. The guys will be drooling.

TARA. And it won't look weird, like I'm just floating out there on the clouds after you cut him out?

LORI. Trust me. I know what I'm doing. A couple of edits, an update to some of the wording... *(Lori begins typing into a computer. If possible, an image of Tara floating awkwardly in the air with the sunset behind her is projected onstage.)*

TARA. Okay, so what happens now?

LORI. We wait.

TARA. For how long?

LORI. Patience, Tara. It shouldn't take much time at all. These sites always appreciate fresh meat. They can usually smell it within a few minutes. *(Monster emerges from offstage, grumbling, sniffing loudly,*

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walking awkwardly toward them. Tara sees him and steps back defensively.)

TARA. Oh God, is that for me?

LORI. *(Looks up, sees him.)* You wish. That's mine again. *(To Monster.)* Sorry to leave you hanging, Carl, I just got caught up with a few things here. Hold on a second, I'm coming.

MONSTER. Grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr..... *(Lori gets up, walks to him, puts her arm through his, and the two of them walk off. We now see a bunch of hearts or thumbs-up symbols populating the photo of Tara, indicating online attention and lots of positive reactions. Maybe little conversation bubbles too: "What's up?" "Nice view!" "Hey now, Supergirl!" "Your smile is infectious!" Tara is pleased. PIVOT.)*

SCENE 3

Lights shift to Tara up and presenting to the company again with a new set of charts.

TARA. We've got some new numbers in, some raw results, and I'm happy! I mean I'm happy to report that things are looking up. The forecast is bright, we have all kinds of new possibilities and clients who want to work with us. Things haven't looked this rosy since, since, well, I can't remember how long. Now, we can't get complacent. We have a lot of inquiries but a lot of unanswered proposals too. We're going to have to roll up our sleeves and do the hard, but hopefully fun, work of getting to know these clients and finding out if we can trust them, if we're attracted to them. It's one thing to get an offer, but who knows how many other offers are on the table to other organizations. We've gotta stay competitive, hungry and lean.

MONSTER. *(Off.)* Grrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr.....!

TARA. *(Reacts.)* Oh boy. Carl, is that you? *(Lori enters quietly and takes a seat at the desk. Back to presentation.)* Anyway, this is where it counts. It's up to us to build the relationships and watch the profits roll in. We

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want this company to last well into the future, till death do us part, without any kind of interruption of service, and that takes a real cross-the-board commitment. (*PIVOT. Lights shift to Lori and Tara, looking at the computer results of the potential dates who've been in touch with her.*)

TARA. Wow, look at that. I have so many messages.

LORI. Nice, huh? Told you the internet likes fresh blood.

TARA. It feels good to be this wanted.

LORI. Well, remember. It's about quality not quantity.

TARA. I know, but the bigger the numbers we have, the better the chance there's a diamond in the rough, right?

LORI. You'd think so, but not necessarily. I mean, you never know. Let's take a look at some of the prospects. Here's CoolGuy77. (*COOLGUY77 walks out and stands in front of them.*)

COOLGUY77. Hey, I think you look nice. And pretty.

TARA. (*To Lori.*) That's a sweet thing to say.

COOLGUY77. I like that you like to read. I like to read too. It's a dying art. Reading, I mean. But it's cool. Get lost in the pages and whatnot.

LORI. A real literary type.

COOLGUY77. I also think we have a lot in common where politics is concerned. The world is getting so divided, you know? It's getting all brutal and nasty and -- funny story -- one Christmas I told my parents all I wanted was world peace. How prophetic, huh?

LORI. Not really sure that means what you think it does.

TARA. It's fine.

LORI. Plus he misspelled peace.

TARA. I'm willing to let that slide.

COOLGUY77. Also, I really like your (*Makes air quotes.*) "philosophy" on openness in dating. (*Smiles a bit deviously.*) That was a definite point of attention for me.

TARA. Why did he put quotes around "philosophy"?

LORI. I don't know. Guys are weird. (*CoolGuy77 exits.*)

LORI. Let's check out another one. (*Reading.*) DeltaWingAssassin. Nope, skipping him.

TARA. No good?

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LORI. The Come And Take It t-shirt in the shape of a giant penis is a dealbreaker. Trust me. What about this guy, FreddyFlood?

(FREDDYFLOOD is onstage now with a quick, easy costume and vocal change.)

FREDDY. What's up, cutie.

TARA. I don't really like that. It's too much.

LORI. Give it a minute. It's the culture on here.

FREDDY. One of the things I noticed about you first was your intellect.

LORI. Whoa.

TARA. Really.

FREDDY. I like brainy chicks. Ones who can ponder things, talk the talk, think the thoughts. Nothing gets me more turned on than a nerd or a geek or a... *(He freezes.)*

TARA. Or a what?

LORI. I don't know.

TARA. Is it continued somewhere?

LORI. No, it just trails off.

TARA. Maybe he got a phone call or something.

LORI. These things happen. Could be a glitch. A couple more?

TARA. I guess.

LORI. Here's BooBoo.

TARA. Ugh, hate it already.

LORI. He's cute. *(BOOBOO shows up at the side of the stage.)*

BOOBOO. Think back. A long time ago when you were young. Good times, right?

TARA. That's kind of vague.

BOOBOO. The world was your oyster. Anything was possible. The horizon was waaaaay out there.

TARA. It's still way out there.

BOOBOO. I can help you recapture that feeling. You're the baby, I'm the diaper.

TARA. Um, what?

BOOBOO. Let me pamper you.

LORI. I get it. That's kinda clever.

TARA. No it's not.

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BOOBOO. I can wrap my softness around your middle parts and you just let it all go.

LORI. Interesting.

TARA. I'm going to puke.

LORI. Let me just note this for my own records. *(As writing)* Boo. Boo. *(BooBoo exits.)*

TARA. I'm not enjoying this at all.

LORI. You're not supposed to enjoy it.

TARA. You're not?

LORI. This is work, Tara, okay? Nothing in life worth anything is easy. Let's try one more. This one looks promising.

TARA. Not sure I trust your judgement anymore.

LORI. What's that?

TARA. Nothing.

LORI. All right, here's Daniel_T

TARA. Straight-forward.

LORI. Yeah.

TARA. Think that's his real name?

LORI. You have no way of knowing until you meet him. And even then... *(DANIEL_T appears)*

DANIEL_T. Yes, Daniel_T is my real name, in case you were wondering.

TARA. I was.

DANIEL_T. I believe in transparency and openness. I'm not in this for the short term. I'm a long-term guy. In fact, Commitment is my middle name.

TARA. Seriously?

DANIEL_T. Not really.

TARA. Oh, cuz that would be weird.

DANIEL_T. How weird would that be?

TARA. It'd be pretty weird.

DANIEL_T. Pretty weird, right?

TARA. Yeah.

LORI. He's funny. You have banter.

TARA. We do?

DANIEL_T. I feel like we have banter. Chemistry is so important to me.

TARA. What are you, a chemist?

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DANIEL_T. I'm a chemist, actually.

TARA. No way.

DANIEL_T. I like what I know about you so far.

TARA. *(To Lori.)* What does he know about me?

LORI. Just what's on your profile.

DANIEL_T. I love your "philosophy" on openness in dating. *(Smiles.)*

TARA. He used quotes again.

LORI. Yeah.

TARA. Do you know why he's doing that?

LORI. I just realized I might know this guy.

TARA. Really?

LORI. Yeah, we're um... we spent the night together once, I think.

TARA. What? Seriously?

LORI. Yeah.

TARA. When?

LORI. Yesterday.

TARA. Oh my God.

LORI. I think he's still at my place, actually.

TARA. What?

LORI. Hang on. *(Dials phone.)*

DANIEL_T. *(His phone rings and he picks up.)* Hello?

LORI. Curtis?

DANIEL_T. Yeah?

TARA. I thought his name was Daniel_T.

LORI. This is Penelope.

TARA. What the hell is going on? Who are you? What's happening?

LORI. *(To Tara.)* Never trust anyone for the first three months. *(To Daniel_T.)* Are you still in my bed?

DANIEL_T. Well, I'm near your bed.

LORI. Do you not have a job or...?

DANIEL_T. I have a job. I'm a chemist, remember. I've got flexible hours.

LORI. And are you online right now?

DANIEL_T. What do you mean by "online"?

LORI. Are you on a dating app?

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DANIEL_T. I resent the implication.

LORI. My friend is chatting with you.

DANIEL_T. What? Which one's your friend?

LORI. How many people are you talking to right now?

DANIEL_T. I'm all yours, baby.

LORI. How long are you going to stay there, at my place?

DANIEL_T. What time are you coming home?

LORI. I don't know. Around 7.

DANIEL_T. I'll be gone by 6:45.

LORI. Can you at least make my bed?

DANIEL_T. Do you have any tortillas? I thought you said you had food.

LORI. There's cereal.

DANIEL_T. Corn flakes. So bland.

LORI. You're demanding.

DANIEL_T. You're needy.

LORI. You're a leech.

DANIEL_T. You're a prima donna.

LORI. I hate you.

DANIEL_T. Ditto.

LORI. Get outta my house, you freak.

DANIEL_T. You don't have to ask me twice.

LORI. I'm telling you. And I'm giving your profile one star.

DANIEL_T. Wait wait wait, no, don't do that!

LORI. Then get out.

DANIEL_T. Whatever you need, Penelope. I'm making the bed, okay? I'm cleaning the toilet, I'm spraying Febreze all over, I'll restock your coffee if you want.

LORI. That'd be great.

DANIEL_T. Don't mess with my rating, okay? Please?

LORI. I'll decide when I'm back.

DANIEL_T. Can I maybe take you out to dinner?

LORI. Sushi?

DANIEL_T. If you insist.

LORI. Pick me up at 8?

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DANIEL_T. Sure. I mean I'm already here. I can hide in the closet till 8, then pop out and we'll get going?

LORI. That seems reasonable.

DANIEL_T. Sweet. Hey, one more thing.

LORI. I'm listening.

DANIEL_T. That friend of yours I'm chatting with, is she hot? I mean in person? The picture's sorta odd. She's just floating up there like a ghost or a cloud or something. *(Lori hangs up.)*

LORI. I don't think he's your type.

TARA. Ugh.

LORI. But listen, you've got a good crop of potential mates lining up in your queue. I think you just gotta go out on a limb now and meet them.

TARA. You mean like in person?

LORI. Yep.

TARA. Okay, okay. *(Deep breath.)* I can do this.

LORI. You can do it. You must do it. For the survival of our species. Now, what am I gonna wear tonight. *(Lori exits. FreddyFlood enters quickly as if recovering from a frozen internet.)*

FREDDY. Project manager!

TARA. What?

FREDDY. Oh, you still there? I had a hiccup in my access.

TARA. Freddy?

FREDDY. Who? Oh yeah, that's me. I like project managers. I admire what you do so much, Tara.

TARA. You do?

FREDDY. Yeah, organizing things into tables and charts, chunking them up into bite-sized pieces, turning what seems a large task into manageable bits you can confront one at a time.

TARA. What are you doing tomorrow?

FREDDY. Me? Uh.... *(Smiles. PIVOT.)*

SCENE 4

Lights shift back to the meeting room. Tara is presenting to the company again.

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TARA. In an effort to be as efficient as possible, I've decided to go into super project management mode to handle the work ahead. This means I will NOT be available for random requests during regular business hours. This means I will NOT be available for small talk at the water cooler. This means I will NOT be available to give advice on your pet problems, recipe requests or spouse or in-law dysfunction. You're on your own for the foreseeable future. Why? Because I need to solve this thing. With so many clients and so many possible options, the only way to stabilize and move forward is to carve out specific slices of time to evaluate each on a level playing field. Also, there is an element of emotional distance I'm trying to create by viewing each person, each project, each proposal, as a data point. Perhaps John will rate a 7.5, perhaps Freddy will be a 6.1, perhaps Ronaldo will be an 8.6. Wouldn't that be nice. An 8.6. I should be so lucky. *(She shares a graph of these numbers.)* I will of course report back at our next meeting with a status update and, perhaps, if things go my way, with an announcement about my future. With the company, I mean. *(PIVOT. Lights shift. Tara has a calendar with many marks on it. Lori enters.)*

TARA. Here's what I've done to try and minimize the effort and get through this dating clearing house as quickly as possible.

LORI. Very romantic.

TARA. At first I alphabetized the sample.

LORI. Sample?

TARA. Sorry, subject. Err, dates. But then I ran into trouble with availability.

LORI. Conflicts are so difficult, especially when you get to be our age, with kids, jobs, obligations.

TARA. Anyway, I asked each prospective client to give their top three times in rank order. I then weighted these based on my own preferences.

LORI. Preconceived notions.

TARA. Well, educational guesstimates.

LORI. Fine.

TARA. And I came up with the following plan. Monday: Tom and I are getting coffee at 5:30pm. Also Monday: Keith and I are getting a drink--

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alcohol optional--at 8pm. Which gives me an excuse to ditch Tom and kill two birds with one stone. So to speak. Tuesday: William and I are having appetizers at Chez Nous.

LORI. Fancy.

TARA. His idea. I evaluated the risks and decided to just go for it.

Wednesday: I'm seeing a movie.

LORI. With who?

TARA. Myself. I'm going to need a break. Early bedtime too.

LORI. Smart.

TARA. Thursday is Freddy. (*Spotlight on Freddy.*)

LORI. Freddy Flood!

FREDDY. Hi Tara.

TARA. Hi Freddy.

LORI. He likes you.

TARA. I know.

LORI. You gave him your real name?

TARA. I didn't know any better.

LORI. Risky.

TARA. I haven't given him my address or any details about me.

FREDDY. How's your project management job at that mid-sized company in an office park on the south side of town going?

TARA. (*To Lori.*) Okay, fine, only a few details.

LORI. Careful.

TARA. Don't worry. We're getting cocktails at 7:30.

LORI. PM.

TARA. Of course.

LORI. High hopes for him. (*Spotlight down on Freddy.*)

TARA. A little, yeah. Friday's another break.

LORI. You never know, you and Freddy might be an item by then.

TARA. Not counting on it.

LORI. Stay real.

TARA. Also, I'm avoiding Friday and Saturday get-togethers which I figure are big "date nights" and expectations are probably higher across the board.

LORI. I never thought about it that way.

THE DATING PROJECT

TARA. You're not in project management! (*Spotlight on Freddy.*)

FREDDY. I like project managers!

TARA. I remember!

LORI. He's so into you. And apparently into project management too.

TARA. Maybe.

FREDDY. Definitely! (*Lori eyes him skeptically. Spotlight down on him.*)

TARA. Which brings us to Sunday

LORI. The Lord's day.

TARA. Whatever. Banging out three more prospects then.

LORI. Aggressive.

TARA. I'll be well-rested. Post-brunch tea with Pete at 2pm, pre-dinner snack with Randy at 5pm, lowkey beverages with Devin at 7:30.

LORI. Fantastic.

TARA. By Monday I should be able to pare down the list to two or three remainders, maybe bring a few more into the loop. By the end of the month I'll have a boyfriend. (*Spotlight up on Freddy.*)

FREDDY. I hope it's me!

TARA. Did you hear that? (*Spotlight down on Freddy.*)

LORI. Hear what? Anyway, girl, you may be the most singularly-prepared online dater in the history of online dating.

TARA. That's flattering, thank you.

LORI. Not that the history goes back too far.

TARA. True.

LORI. And if none of this works out, there's always my brother.

TARA. In 3 to 5 years.

LORI. Dependent on behavior and the prison-release laws at the time.

TARA. (*About her week ahead.*) Okay, I'm ready.

LORI. You'll keep me abreast of your progress? (*Spotlight up on Freddy.*)

FREDDY. She said breast! (*Tara shakes her head at him. Spotlight down on Freddy.*)

TARA. Yeah, biweekly updates.

LORI. Maybe a spreadsheet or a PowerPoint presentation?

TARA. Definitely.

LORI. I was kidding.

TARA. I wasn't.

THE DATING PROJECT

LORI. Well, good luck. (*Lights shift. PIVOT back to the meeting room.*)

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