

THE MATING DANCE

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FADE IN:

INT. AIRPORT HILTON - HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Stranded GUESTS linger in this grand area. A few stand by the doors and watch the wind and torrential rainstorm outside.

At the reservation desk, a female CLERK (30) assists JAKE ROSEN (45), almost handsome in thick glasses and frumpy suit. She slides Jake his credit card.

CLERK

Hope you enjoyed your stay Mr.
Rosen. We'll call you when our
airport shuttle resumes service.

Behind Jake, several GUESTS wait inside the roped maze.

Next in line, nose in a newspaper and garment bag over her shoulder is MARLA DURAN (42), no makeup, hair pulled back, dressed in no nonsense business attire.

She peeks over her paper, sees Jake sling his garment bag over his shoulder then steps forward as Jake turns to leave.

Their bags somehow snag together. Embarrassed, they attempt to untangle them. They tug, pull, turn, repeat.

People watch the strange dance accompanied by awkward nervous laughter.

The bags finally separate, Jake clumsily stumbles a few feet back. Flustered, he smiles then walks away.

Marla hands the Clerk her credit card. Her eyes drift toward Jake's direction. He circles a small SUNDRIES CART.

Jake scans magazines, crosswords and books trying hard not to look over at Marla. A book catches his eye, "THE MATING DANCE - FOR MEN by Dr. Ramesh Kumar".

He looks around, no one is watching. He grabs the book and a TIME MAGAZINE then pays the female CASHIER (20). She watches as he hides the book in his magazine and quickly walks away.

A few moments later, Marla approaches the Sundries Cart. She circles, grabs a pack of gum then spots a book, "THE MATING DANCE - FOR WOMEN by Dr. Padima Sanghi-Kumar".

She sees Jake enter the hotel bar, grabs the book, pays then hides it inside her newspaper. The Cashier shakes her head.

INT. HOTEL BAR - MOMENTS LATER

She sits at the only empty table, right next to Jake's.

Now directly across from each other, they try to avoid eye contact. Simultaneously they open their books. Jake's hidden behind his magazine, Marla's behind her newspaper.

Jake's eyes scan the first line of the opening statement.

DR. RAMESH KUMAR (V.O.)
(male with Indian accent)
There is no such thing as fate.

Marla scans the second line of the same opening statement.

DR. PADIMA SANGHI-KUMAR (V.O.)
(female with Indian accent)
You must make things happen.

Jake reads the first bit of advice.

DR. RAMESH KUMAR (V.O.)
Eye contact is very important.

Marla's has the same advice. They both glance over their books, make eye contact then nervously look back down. She reads the second part of the advice.

DR. PADIMA SANGHI-KUMAR (V.O.)
But don't forget to smile.

Marla looks up, Jake is already looking at her with an odd smile. She hesitantly smiles, they both look back down. Jake's eyes widen as he reads the next line.

DR. RAMESH KUMAR (V.O.)
Introduce yourself. Compliment her appearance.

Nervously he looks up, clears his throat, gets her attention.

JAKE
Hi. I'm Jake Rosen. I very much like your appearance.

MARLA
I ahh. . .I'm Marla Duran and. . .

Marla reads. The advice in her book now differs from Jake's.

DR. PADIMA SANGHI-KUMAR (V.O.)
If he compliments your appearance, acknowledge his kind words.

Marla looks up to find Jake staring at her in anticipation.

MARLA
Those are kind words you have.

Confused, Jake looks back at his book.

DR. RAMESH KUMAR (V.O.)
Offer to buy her a drink. Coffee
or maybe a tropical cocktail.

JAKE
Can I buy you a cup of coffee or
maybe a tropical cocktail?

He points to the house special board: "Cumquat Cosmo". She
raises her eyebrows like, "yum" then quickly checks her book.

DR. PADIMA SANGHI-KUMAR (V.O.)
If he offers to buy you a cocktail
he may just be looking for a one
night stand.

She looks up at him, a spark of distrust in her eyes.

MARLA
I'd love a coffee. Thank you.

As Jake heads to the bar, taking book in magazine with him,
Marla quickly rifles through her book and reads.

DR. PADIMA SANGHI-KUMAR (V.O.)
Be careful not to reveal too much
personal information at the first
meeting. He may be a stalker.

Alarmed, Marla stares at Jake suspiciously. At the bar he
eats peanuts and reads the next line in his book.

DR. RAMESH KUMAR (V.O.)
Try to find out some personal
information. If she refuses to
answer she could be closed off.

With a scrutinizing look he glances toward Marla, her eyes
glued to her newspaper (book) as she reads.

DR. PADIMA SANGHI-KUMAR (V.O.)
Think of a way to find out if he's
married or in a relationship. If
he avoids the question he may be
hiding something.

(next page)
Ask him to dance. If he moves like
a corpse he may have issues in the
bedroom.

She bites her nails nervously. At the bar Jake flips to the
next page, reads.

DR. RAMESH KUMAR (V.O.)
Any information you offer on past
relationships will be evaluated.
(next page)

DR. RAMESH KUMAR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Absolutely do not dance at the
 first meeting. Women will analyze
 your every move.

The BARTENDER (30's) brings Jake his coffee. He pays, tucks
 the magazine under his arm and walks to the tables.

Marla quickly closes her newspaper. He sets a cup down in
 front of her then returns to his table.

MARLA
 Thank you. Your wife is a lucky
 woman. Would you like to dance?

JAKE
 I'm not. . .I'm ahh. . .
 Is there even music in here?

They pause to listen. Background, music plays very softly.

JAKE (CONT'D)
 So, where do you live, how old are
 you, what kind of work do you do?

MARLA
 That's a lot of questions. Are you
 sure you don't want to dance?

JAKE
 Yes. Absolutely. No dancing. Not
 today. Do personal questions make
 you uncomfortable?

MARLA
 No I just. . .Maybe we could ask
 them to turn up the music.

Jake opens his mouth to say something, thinks better of it.
 Simultaneously their phones chime. They check their texts.

MARLA (CONT'D)
 My shuttle is ready.

JAKE
 Mine too.

Defeated and a little suspicious of each other they gather
 their belongings and head to the lobby.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

They walk a distance from each other and avoid eye contact.

As they approach the door, Jake graciously allows Marla to go
 ahead. Still unsure she half smiles.

INT. SHUTTLE - CONTINUOUS

Two seats remain, they're forced to sit next to each other. Jake notices the address on Marla's luggage tag.

JAKE (CONT'D)
You're from Bridgewater?

MARLA
How did you know that? Oh God.
You are a stalker.

He points to the tag. She feels silly.

JAKE
I am too. What year did you
graduate?

MARLA
Nineteen eighty seven.

JAKE
I was eighty four. My ex wife
graduated in eighty seven. Ann
Grayson?

MARLA
No way. I couldn't stand her!

JAKE
Me neither.

They laugh. The tension loosens up.

MARLA
I live on Wilson Avenue.

EXT. SHUTTLE - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle drives away from the Hotel.

JAKE (O.S.)
I'm on Dumont. Pretty close.

MARLA (O.S.)
Ever go dancing at Club Mars?

JAKE (O.S.)
Yeah. Maybe we could go sometime.

MARLA (O.S.)
I'd like that.

FADE OUT.