

Online Dates Are Hard To Handle

By

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The sitting area of a bar. A table and two chairs. CRAIG and MARK enter, beers in hand. MARK in work attire, minus the suit jacket, CRAIG in casual clothes. They are deep in conversation.

MARK

So then it hits me. This is my *shot*! I mean...I've been wanting to propose a deal since I *started* there!

CRAIG

Yeah, man. That's been like...your *goal*.

MARK

Exactly! So...I gather myself up a bit...and I pull my boss aside, and he's all like,

(Grumpy voice)

"Now's not the time, Mark." And I don't know what to do...so, I just *hand* him my proposal.

CRAIG cringes, slightly.

CRAIG

And, uh...what'd he do?

MARK

(Smiles)

He just stared at it, ya know? He doesn't even know what to say! And *then*...he looks it over! Right then and there! And after a minute or two...he looks up at me and says..."This is good work, Mark."

CRAIG

Holy/crap!

MARK

I know!

CRAIG

That's just...wow,/man!

MARK

Yeah! And that's not even the best part! He gave it to the client...and they *loved* it! They're going with it!

CRAIG

...You beautiful over achiever.

MARK laughs.

CRAIG

God...*look* at you. Kicking ass and moving up the corporate ladder like that! That's awesome!

MARK

(Smiles)

Thanks, man.

(Beat)

And I gotta be honest...just *handing* my boss a proposal like that? Just like, *boom!* Right in his hands! That felt *great!*

CRAIG nods slowly, forcing a smile.

CRAIG

Yeah, man. That's...yeah...that's awesome...

CRAIG takes a sip of beer. MARK notices CRAIG's shift, but decides not to say anything. Silence. MARK remembers something mid-sip.

MARK

(Drinking beer)

Mmm!

(Puts beer down)

How did last night go?

CRAIG

...What uh...whaddya mean?

MARK

(Rolls eyes)

Oh, *come* on!

CRAIG

Oh...yeah...

MARK

...Jesus. Was it that bad?

CRAIG

Wha? No. No, it was/actually--

MARK

Cause you seemed to really like her. From her profile, anyway.

CRAIG

Yeah, no, I did...

MARK

"Did"?

CRAIG

No, I just...I don't know...I don't think online dating's for me.

MARK

What makes you say that?

CRAIG

I don't know...I just think that I'd rather meet someone first and *then* get to know them. Like at a bar or something.

MARK

...Why?

CRAIG

Cause...cause with online dating, people can put whatever they want on there or...*not* put whatever they want and be something completely different when you meet up with them!

MARK

Was she a bitch?

CRAIG

No, not at/all!

MARK

Cause from what you showed me, she had that look like she coulda been one of those *quiet* bitchy-types. Like rolling her eyes or mumbling grammar corrections under her breath or something/like that.

CRAIG

No, she wasn't a bitch. She was actually *really* nice.

MARK

Oooohhhh...*too* nice...

CRAIG

No. Not *too* nice. It was the perfect amount. She had an amazing personality.

MARK

Was sheeeeeeee *ugly*?

CRAIG

No! She was *gorgeous*! I showed you her profile!

MARK

Well, then, I don't understand the problem here! You said you didn't think online dating was for *you*, but you seemed to have an incredible time on your *online date*.

CRAIG searches for the right words.

...Yeeeeaaahhh, but...
CRAIG

MARK puts his hands to his temples.

MARK
Okay, Craig...you're driving me nuts here. If she was
gorgeous and *great*, then what the hell/is the--

CRAIG
Okay-okay-okay!

CRAIG takes a breath. He looks
around in the air for a moment.

CRAIG
(Avoiding eye contact)
She...
(Beat)
She didn't...um...
(Beat)
She didn't...have...
(Beat)
A hand...

Silence. CRAIG glances at MARK, who
stares at CRAIG with his face
propped in his hand. MARK makes no
movement. Zero response from him.
CRAIG shifts in his seat.

CRAIG
Uh...a *hand*...
(Beat)
Like...

He goes to lift his arm but stops
himself before raising it too high.
He looks around, uncomfortable. No
response from MARK.

CRAIG
...Her arm...it kinda just...ended in a kind of--oh, *come*
on, Mark! I know you know what I'm saying!

MARK stares at CRAIG.

MARK
I just...
(Beat)
I have so many different feelings about what you just said--

CRAIG

Come on, /man.

MARK

--That my *body* has *literally* stop working properly.

CRAIG

Can you *please* not make jokes right/now?

MARK

I don't want to say my *body* has been *crippled*, I think/that'd be *wrong* here.

CRAIG

What the *hell*, Mark?! That's fucked up!

MARK

I'm sorry! I'm not *trying* to be fucked up! That's just...

MARK stares in shock, his mouth open as if he's about to speak. He scoffs a few times.

CRAIG

And now you're laughing at me...

MARK

I'm not laughing at you! I'm just *shocked*, is all!

CRAIG

You're shocked?

CRAIG scoffs. Shakes his head.

MARK

So...wait. I don't...how did this...

(Beat)

What the fuck? How did...can you just...tell me? Tell me how, just, tell me. *Tell me*.

CRAIG takes a breath.

CRAIG

Okay...uh...

(Beat)

So...we meet up outside the restaurant--

MARK

And you didn't see that she was missing/a--

CRAIG

No-I-didn't-see-Mark! Let me speak!

MARK raises his hands, leaning back in the chair.

CRAIG

She's wearing this...*really* cute peacoat, cause it was kinda windy last night...and she's got her arms tucked into her jacket--

MARK

Oh, God--

CRAIG

Will you just!

(Beat)

We go sit down at our table, she takes off her jacket, and we start talking...no big deal. It's actually...it's actually *really* great! We're laughing and chatting and...it's *great*! Her hands are in her lap, but I don't think anything of it...

MARK

(Rubbing forehead)

Jesus Christ...

CRAIG

...We're having an amazing time. Twenty minutes go by like *nothin'*. After about the *third* time we turn the waiter away, we decide to choose some appetizers.

(Uncomfortably)

But...the menu's, like...that tricky...*thick* foldable kind? And so...I see her trying to keep it open with one hand...and I'm kinda giggling cause I think it's cute...like..."why doesn't she just use her other hand?"...so I say--

MARK

(Weakly)

Nooooo...

CRAIG

"Why don't you just use your other hand?"

MARK puts his face in his hands.

CRAIG

And she just...*slowly* raises her arm...revealing what was...*goin' on*...and she just starts...kinda...*batting* at the page with her *not* hand.

MARK moans into his hands and puts his head on the table. Silence. MARK keeps his head in his hands and on the table. CRAIG stares straight ahead.

CRAIG

...This is fucked up, right? *I'm* fucked up? For this to bother me this much?

MARK

(Lifting his head)

I mean--

CRAIG

Cause she's *great!* More than great! She's like...she's fucking *perfect*, really. Absolutely *perfect*.

Silence.

MARK

...She just doesn't have/a hand.

CRAIG

She doesn't have a hand...

Small silence.

MARK

Can I just...can I ask...

(Beat)

Was it like...an *accident* or...

CRAIG

No...it was like, uh...a birth...*thing*...

MARK

Did you *ask*?

CRAIG

No! *Fuck*, no! That'd be...no. You could just *tell*...cause it wasn't just...like...

He pantomimes a sawing motion over his left wrist.

CRAIG

Ya know? Like...it didn't just *end*. There was like...little *nubs* there, where her fingers were kinda--I'm going to hell, man, I can feel/it.

MARK

Nooo/...

CRAIG

Like, I can *actually* feel my soul being anchored to a place in hell right now.

MARK

Don't say *that*--

CRAIG

I'm a terrible person! I'm a terrible person.

MARK

Wait...wait, okay...

(Beat)

So...she never *mentioned* this, right? Like...*before* you guys met up?

CRAIG

No! Not once! Not in all of our online messages or text messages!

MARK

And did any of her pictures show that she/didn't--

CRAIG

Not *one*! I went back and looked, and they all have her with her hand *just* out of frame or tucked behind her back or something...

Silence.

MARK

...Well, that's kinda fucked up--

CRAIG

(Leaning in)

Right?! But what am I supposed to do? Be pissed that she didn't tell me she was missing a *hand*?

MARK

Aren't you?

CRAIG

I mean, *kinda*! That's like, uh...that's like...like a *deception* or something. A freakin' *lie*!

MARK

False advertising.

CRAIG

(Points)

False advertising! I mean...what if I showed up to a date and-and-and...I didn't have a *face*...or--

MARK

Well...that's a little different.

CRAIG
How the fuck is that different?!

MARK
A *face*?! Didn't have a *face*...

CRAIG
Yeah!

MARK
A *hand* you can live without...get mechanical ones or...*claws* or something...but a *face* is a bit--

CRAIG
Okay-okay, fine...*face* isn't a good example...

Small silence.

MARK
Okay...so...*then* what? She's doing the whole *menu* thing and you see that she's...*missing* a piece...

CRAIG
Duuuuude...

MARK
Okay, fine! She's-missing-a-fucking-hand! *There!*
(Beat)
Then whaddya do?

CRAIG
What else *could* I do? I try not to stare at the damned thing and I try to get past it! Not let it bug me, ya know?

MARK
Yeah, sure...

CRAIG
And I just...I tell her to pick out an appetizer for us to split, right? Whatever *she* wants, cause I can't exactly *focus* at that moment in time...

MARK
Okay...

CRAIG
So the waiter comes back...and...she...

CRAIG shifts, uncomfortably. He looks around. MARK stares, waiting.

CRAIG

She...orders...

*(Beat)**Chicken fingers...*

MARK stares at CRAIG.

MARK

...Now you're fuckin' lying--

CRAIG

I'm *not*--

MARK

You are making shit up now--

CRAIG

I freakin' swear! I was in the middle of eating that complimentary bread they give you and I almost choked on it!

MARK

Either this girl gives literally zero fucks or she's a complete imbecile.

CRAIG

That's the thing! I think she doesn't give a shit!

MARK

Jesus Christ. Okay, so...*then* what? I mean...

MARK shrugs and lifts his hands. He drops them together.

CRAIG

That's the problem...

*(Beat)*I ended up having a *great* time!

This catches MARK off guard.

CRAIG

There wasn't *any* awkward silences or weird moments or *anything*. We kept talking and laughing and...just having the best time.*(Beat)*

It was the best date I've ever been on...

MARK is taken aback. CRAIG notices.

CRAIG

I mean, *sure*...my mind kept drifting back to the issue at ha--fuck.

MARK closes his eyes and motions
for CRAIG to continue.

MARK

Just...

CRAIG

But after a while...I kinda stopped thinking about it.

(Beat)

We had dinner and dessert, talked for almost an *hour* after
we finished, and then I walked her to her car.

MARK

Wait...she *drove*?

CRAIG

(Dismissing)

Yeah, I know, I thought the same thing...

(Beat)

And...I kissed her goodnight. Like...for a *while*.

Small silence.

MARK

Damn, man.

CRAIG

(Defeated)

Yeah. I know.

Silence.

MARK

Soooo...

(Beat)

What's the problem?

CRAIG

...Have...have you not been listening to this whole
fucking--

MARK

Oh, you mean the story where you had an amazing fucking time
on your *online date*?

CRAIG gives him a look.

MARK

I mean...okay...she wasn't *completely* honest with you
about...something kinda big. That would've thrown *anybody* a
little bit. But so what? You said so yourself, she's
gorgeous and great! *And* that it was the best date you've
ever had! She sounds like a great catch!

CRAIG
(Sighs heavily)

Yeah...

(Beat)

I don't know, man. I guess I gotta see if this is something that will always bother me or if it's something I can overlook. And if it *does* bother me...then maybe that's something I need to work on for myself. Try to really unearth *why* this is such a problem for me...see if I can overcome the hurdles that may stop me from being with someone who could potentially be a long lasting relationship...or quite possibly...someone I could spend the rest of my life with...

MARK nods, slowly. CRAIG's words impacting him.

MARK

Yeah, man...

They stare off into their own sea of deep thought. Silence.

CRAIG
Congrats on the work thing, though.

MARK

Oh, yeah man, yeah. That's...yeah...thanks...

They go back to their thoughts.
They casually drink their beers.

END OF PLAY