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Persian Squares

Natasha Sabour

Loyola Marymount University

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Natasha Sabour

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FINAL THESIS
TELEVISION PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Student Name: Natasha Sabour

Thesis Logline:

Persian Squares

Title

A teleplay written and produced and presented to the faculty of
the Writing and Producing for Television MFA Program in the
School of Film & Television at Loyola Marymount University of
Los Angeles, California

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

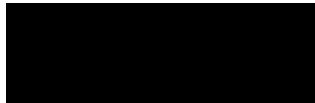
Master of Fine Arts

Writing and Producing for Television

By

Natasha Sabour

Student Name



Student Signature

APPROVAL TO ADVANCE TO CANDIDACY

The following student has met all the criteria to advance to candidacy for an M.F.A. in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Writing and Producing for Television:

Natasha Sabour

Student Name

Apr 29, 2022

Date

SCWR 680 Instructor Signature

SCWR 681 Instructor Signature

Graduate Director Signature

PERSIAN SQUARES

by

Natasha Sabour

A thesis script presented to the

Faculty of the Department of
The School of Film and Television
Loyola Marymount University

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts in Writing and Producing for Television

May 3, 2022

COLD OPEN

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - LOS, ANGELES C.A. - DAY

Typical 5:00pm on the highway: total gridlock. Across the sea of cars, we spot a luxury sedan in dire need of a trade-in.

ROXANA (O.S.)

We haven't moved in the last ten minutes. Just lean your chair back.

A mechanical HUM as a chair reclines.

INT. SAHAR'S CAR - DAY

SAHAR TALEBI (late 20s, Iranian American) slowly tilts back in the drivers seat.

SAHAR

This is stupid.

ROXANA TALEBI (mid 20s, Iranian-American) near-identical in features to her sister loops up thread between her fingers. She leans across the center console.

ROXANA

No, what's stupid are the twin caterpillars leasing the space above your eyes. Breathe in.

Sahar takes a dramatic inhale.

Roxana swipes the thread across Sahar's upper arch. Sahar's entire frame shifts in a full-bodied flinch.

SAHAR

Forget it. This isn't worth it.

Roxana loops up for round two.

ROXANA

Are you kidding? You can't show up to Negin's engagement party with only one eyebrow done. It's like asking where your phone is when it's in your hand. You'd look dumb.

SAHAR

I'm getting a lecture about looking dumb from a woman wearing a sequined red leotard and fishnets to a formal event?

REVEAL of Roxana's ridiculous attire.

Next to Sahar, who wears a pale blue cocktail dress, it's like Taron Egerton and Richard Madden in *Carpool Karaoke*.

ROXANA

You didn't give me time to change, and at least this way you'll be able to spot me in a crowd.

(beat)

Now lie back and stay still.

She brandishes the thread for effect.

SAHAR

Fine. Just give me a second.

Sahar collects herself with a few deep breaths. She nods. Roxana resumes threading.

SAHAR (CONT'D)

Nothing will ever look as bad as the time you convinced me to shave a stripe into each brow the night before prom.

ROXANA

It was merely a suggestion. You took to the clippers yourself.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - LOS, ANGELES C.A. - SAME

There's some movement on the highway. A few of the cars in front of Sahar and Roxana slowly begin to inch forward.

INT./EXT. SAHAR'S CAR - SAME

The red glow of brake lights from the car in front disappears. A gap forms between the two cars.

SAHAR

Okay, stop. I need to keep driving.

ROXANA

I'm on the last little bit.

SAHAR
Roxana, stop.

ROXANA
Sahar, be patient. It's two more
seconds.

The CAR behind them lays on the horn and the loud blare causes Roxana to jump and Sahar to shoot up. She shifts the car out of park and follows traffic.

The car comes to another stop. Sahar turns to face Roxana.

Roxana gasps.

SAHAR
What?

ROXANA
Don't freak out.

SAHAR
Why would I freak out?

Sahar turns to look at the rearview mirror and gasps as well.

A very noticeable BALD SPOT bisects her brow.

ROXANA
You know what? You actually pulled
off that stripe thing at prom
really well.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DAY

Sahar parks near a slew of Benz and BMW coupes outside of a palatial white mansion with Greco-Roman columns.

The girls exit the car and make the slow march up the driveway. Two LION SCULPTURES stand sentinel by the door.

Roxana extends her arm and knocks. They wait.

ROXANA
This leotard is wedgie central.

SAHAR
You couldn't keep a low profile
just this once?

ROXANA

When I have the chance to show off how pleased I am with my laser treatments down there? Not a chance.

(off Sahar's disapproval)

Relax, no one will see me. Persian people always show up late to parties.

The door swings open.

Inside, FIFTY PERSIAN MOTHERS meander in the foyer. They're decked out in BLACK and dripping in fine, GOLD jewelry.

ROXANA (CONT'D)

Well, at least we *both* stick out like sore thumbs.

SAHAR

Do not lump me in with you.

The girls cross the threshold.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DAY

One PERSIAN MATRON (60s) notices the girls first. She scurries to them.

PERSIAN MATRON

(in a heavy accent)

You're early. The performers are supposed to arrive later at night.

Roxana looks down at her clothes. Sahar turns to the side and pinches the bridge of her nose.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sahar sits on a giant four poster bed facing NEGIN (late 20s) the bride-to-be. She applies brow pomade on Sahar's eyebrow.

Roxana emerges from an off screen closet modeling a black midi-dress.

ROXANA
How's this one?

Sahar and Negin look up at her.

NEGIN
Much better.

ROXANA
Really?

SAHAR
Yes. There's no color or sparkle.

NEGIN
Just like my mother-in-law's soul.

ROXANA
I can't believe you're getting married.

NEGIN
(excited)
I know. It'll be you two next!

Sahar lets out a sharp laugh.

SAHAR
I don't think so. Between the pharmacy and carting this one around...
(she points to Roxana)
I won't so much as get a boyfriend before the next decade.

NEGIN
I'm a pediatric brain surgeon, and I found time to get a husband.

ROXANA
You and Parsa met in high school.

NEGIN

That's irrelevant. My point is that I made the time to maintain a serious relationship. And it's worth it! Do you want to spend the rest of your lives asking one another for help getting out of a zipped dress or do you want a hot man to get you out of it instead?

INT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - DINING ROOM - LATER

A large table is jam packed with an array of Persian dishes. All the khoreshts and polos are accounted for.

Roxana scrutinizes each dish before shoveling a heaping serving onto her plate. Sahar follows behind with a thousand yard stare.

SAHAR

I think Negin's right.

ROXANA

(looks down)

You think the other dress accentuated my clavicles better?

SAHAR

No. The getting married thing.

ROXANA

I seriously doubt that. She called Parsa a "hot man." I don't know which is more of a cry for help... four undone shirt buttons or a giant pinky ring.

SAHAR

Maybe it's time I settle down.

ROXANA

But you have to be living it up in order to settle down.

Sahar jabs Roxana in the ribs. She yelps.

SAHAR

I'm being serious.

ROXANA

Me too. Look, you're a badass pharmacist with clear skin and an apartment west of the 405. You don't need a man to complete you.

SAHAR

I guess when you put it that way...

ROXANA

Exactly! And if you ever have a tough time reaching a zipper, do more yoga. Easy.

Roxana goes back to shoveling more food onto her plate and Sahar joins in.

INT. WESTWOOD CVS - DAY

Sahar reaches the pharmacy counter at the back of the drug store. She opens the little gate, walks into the back office.

INT. PHARMACY BREAK ROOM - DAY

She deposits her bag onto a bench facing some lockers. She opens the closest one and fishes out her short WHITE COAT.

Shrugging it on, she shoves her bag into the locker and shuts it. Leaning casually on the other side is WILL TRAVERS (28), a lanky teacher's pet also in a white coat.

SAHAR

God! Don't just slink in here, Will. That's so creepy.

WILL

It's not my fault you couldn't hear me approach. We offer hearing tests for the geriatric customers. Is it time for you to get one?

SAHAR

You know what? I think my hearing is fine, but I am worried about my reflexes.

She bends to give a gentle knock to her knee and kicks Will in the shin. He lets out a grunt of pain.

SAHAR (CONT'D)

Scratch that. I'm healthy as a horse.

LAWRENCE HEELY (60s), a distinguished man with silver hair and thick glasses, enters the break room. He speaks with a lilting British accent.

LAWRENCE

Good morning, team! Good to see my star retailers bright and early in the morning.

SAHAR

Morning, Lawrence.

WILL

Good morning, sir.

Sahar and Will give each other the stink eye.

Lawrence opens his locker and trades his daytime jacket for his Pharmacist's coat.

LAWRENCE

Any fun plans for this weekend?

SAHAR

I'm going on a tour of all the restaurants featured on *Selling Sunset*. I'm planning to order an appetizer from each place. By the time I'm done I'll have had a ten course meal.

(whispering to Will)

Top that.

WILL

I'm cooking for my girlfriend. We're making our way through Stanley Tucci's cookbook.

SAHAR

(snorts)

Good thing you're a pharmacist. When she gets food poisoning you'll at least know what meds to give her.

LAWRENCE

I think cooking for your partner is a lovely thing to do, Will. You and your girlfriend should come round to dinner some time. My wife loves Italian food.

Lawrence leaves the staff room. Will smirks at Sahar.

WILL

Have tons of fun eating appetizers all by yourself, Sahar. I'm sure that'll be amazing.

Will leaves. Sahar gives a half-hearted kick to the lockers.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Roxana waits in front of the elevator doors. She carries two OVERSTUFFED canvas bags in each hand and a fifth slung across her shoulder.

The door from the garage opens. In struts half-Persian, full smoke show, DAVID MOHAJER (29). Light hair, hazel eyes, and a slight gold chain peeking from his t-shirt collar.

As Roxana stares, the song "Shahzadeye Royaye Man" (the Prince of My Dreams) plays. She hears the song in Persian:

"One night I had a dream that a prince with a golden belt..."

From her perspective, he strides over in slow motion.

"Rode a white horse at dawn from the mountains to me..."

He reaches her and flashes a devastatingly beautiful smile.

"He set my heart ablaze with his eyes as he went."

DAVID
How's it going?

ROXANA
Beautiful.

David gives her a puzzled look.

ROXANA (CONT'D)
It's been a beautiful day. You?

DAVID
Yeah, it's been nice.

ROXANA
I'm Roxana.

DAVID
David.

ROXANA
Are you visiting a friend here?

DAVID
No, I'm moving in actually. I came to check on the space before I lug all my stuff over.

ROXANA

No way! My sister and I have been dying to meet the new tenants. With such a small building and all we like to make sure we get to know everyone really well.

DAVID

I'm Unit 212. Do you know who's across the hall?

Roxana is a deer caught in the headlights. She pauses as if trying to remember.

ROXANA

Oh, them! Yes! They're... a real quiet bunch. I wouldn't bother with them. Anyway, it's nice to have a new neigh-

The bag from her shoulder slips.

DAVID

Here, let me help you with those.

He grabs both sets of bags from each of her hands. His forearms and biceps ripple gloriously.

ROXANA

Thanks.

The elevator signals its arrival with a tinny DING.

INT. APARTMENT ELEVATOR - SAME

The elevator makes its slow climb up. They face forward.

DAVID

This is quite a grocery haul. What are you making?

ROXANA

An elaborate Persian dessert. If I don't take something to my aunt's house for dinner I may as well just spit in her face.

DAVID

Oh cool, so you're Persian?

ROXANA

(surprised)
Yeah. Are you?

DAVID

My Dad is. He met my mom while
doing business in London.

He turns to look at Roxana. She studies his face for a beat
too long. She looks away.

ROXANA

Well, then I guess I'll save you
some dessert.

DAVID

Please do.

The elevator comes to a halt. The doors open. They step out.

EXT. HOUSE - SANTA MONICA - NIGHT

Roxana and Sahar walk up a neat path lined with hedgerows on
either side. Roxana carries the dessert covered in foil.

They knock on the door. It swings open to reveal AMEH ROYA,
every bit of 68 years old but doesn't look a day over 55.

AMEH

Bah bah! Welcome, girls.

She ushers them inside.

INT. AMEH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The girls and Ameh sit around the kitchen table together.
Dinner is laid out.

SAHAR

(chewing)

Wow, Ameh, this ghormeh sabzi...
excellent.

AMEH

Nooshe-jan, azizam. Roxana, what's
for dessert?

ROXANA

Cake Yazdi.

Ameh retrieves the plate and removes the foil. It's a golden,
saffron bundt with a slice missing. Ameh raises her brows.

AMEH

Did you get hungry while you waited
for it to cool?

ROXANA

I saved a slice for our neighbor.

SAHAR

Which of our neighbors likes the taste of cardamom and rosewater?

ROXANA

A half-Persian one. His name is David. He's so beautiful I swear he could be in a superhero movie.

SAHAR

If his name isn't Chris I seriously doubt that.

AMEH

Sahar, be supportive of your sister's new crush.

ROXANA

What's with you? You've been crabby ever since you got back from work.

SAHAR

Everyone is either in love or falling in love, and I'm pretty sure I'm going to die alone.

Sahar grabs a slice of cake and takes a big bite.

ROXANA

Not this again.

SAHAR

It's true. I spend all my time at work, and it's not like it's brimming with potential suitors.

AMEH

You get so many customers! Somebody must've caught your eye once.

SAHAR

Yeah, once. And then I went to pick up his genital herpes ointment from the back.

ROXANA

You need to get on dating apps.

SAHAR

Serious suggestions only.

ROXANA

I am being serious. There's nothing wrong with them.

SAHAR

I know there's nothing wrong with them...it's just...I want to meet someone while gazing at the same painting in a museum or something.

ROXANA

No wonder you're still single! Hate to break it to you, Nancy Meyers, but that's not how life works.

AMEH

It's true, azizam. Be real with yourself. Get on the apps.

SAHAR

You're supporting this?
(pointing at Roxana)
Then what about you?

ROXANA

What about me?

SAHAR

If I have to accept reality, then so do you. If this David guy is so stunning there's no way he's single.

ROXANA

Only one way to find out. I'll ask him on date.

SAHAR

Good! You ask him out and I'll get on a dating app.

ROXANA

Done.

The girls shake over the cake.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Roxana stands outside of David's apartment. She holds her hand up to knock. Hesitates. Repeats the process.

Suddenly, the door swings open to reveal a shirtless David. They both jump back a foot.

DAVID

Roxana! What a surprise.

ROXANA

Hi. Sorry, am I interrupting something?

David looks at her funny.

DAVID

Yeah, my run around the block.

ROXANA

You're not with someone right now?

He steps out of his apartment and shuts the door.

DAVID

I'm with you.

He locks it.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Did you want something?

Roxana wrings her hands.

ROXANA

I just wanted to ask... if you prefer cardio to strength training. Got my answer. Enjoy your run.

Roxana heads down the hall in the opposite direction and mouths "WHAT WAS THAT?" to herself.

INT. TALEBI APARTMENT - DAY

Roxana opens the door to her apartment and finds herself in the midst of a serious tactical operation.

A MAP of Los Angeles is dotted with red pins. Taped to the wall is a giant SPREADSHEET with names, birthdates, and physical appearance descriptors.

At the center of it all sits Sahar, thumb swiping across her phone screen every ten seconds.

ROXANA
What is all this?

SAHAR
My dating strategy.

ROXANA
You need a strategy to go on a date?

SAHAR
How'd asking David go?

ROXANA
I see your point. But this seems...excessive.

SAHAR
I graduated top of my class from the most competitive pharmacy school in the country. Excessive is my middle name.

ROXANA
But what about spark and romance?

Sahar finally looks up from her phone.

SAHAR
First you tell me I'm living in a fantasy and now I'm too methodical? Whiplash much?

ROXANA
I just think you're being too tactical about it.

SAHAR
Everybody knows being on these apps is a numbers game. I'm just maximizing my productivity. I've got twelve dates lined up for the next week alone.

A little BELL sound comes from her phone.

SAHAR (CONT'D)
Scratch that, thirteen.

Roxana opens the front door and goes back the way she came.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - DAY

Roxana fidgets with her keys. She cranes her neck to look through the glass door of her apartment building. She paces.

She looks again. From a distance, David jogs to the entrance.

Roxana zips back to the mailboxes and scrambles to open hers.

David enters the building.

DAVID
Hey!

ROXANA
(cool and measured)
Oh, hey! Wow, didn't realize you'd still be on your run. Weird.

David stands next to her and checks his own mail.

Roxana almost faints at being so close to him while he's glistening with sweat. She clears her throat.

ROXANA (CONT'D)
So, I was thinking, would you like to have dinner sometime? You know, as a welcome to the building thing?

DAVID
Sure, that sounds nice.

ROXANA
My place tomorrow night?

DAVID
I'm down. I need to check with work, but it should be okay.

David closes his mailbox and calls the elevator.

ROXANA
What do you do?

DAVID
I'm in charge of recruitment at a marketing firm. Sometimes they have me work late. What do you do?

ROXANA

A little bit of this, a little bit of that. Avoiding law school, mostly.

DAVID

Don't want to take the LSAT?

ROXANA

No, I took the LSAT. Got a really good score, too. Just not sure it's the right move for me.

The elevator arrives. David considers her words carefully.

INT. TALEBI APARTMENT - NIGHT

Roxana shuts the door behind her and leans against it, dazed.

SAHAR (O.S.)

And what makes you the right candidate for this opportunity?

Roxana's attention snaps to Sahar mid-interview with a MAN on her laptop.

SAHAR (CONT'D)

Mm-hmm, I see.

ROXANA

Who are you talking to?

She mutes herself on the laptop.

SAHAR

I'm interviewing a match.

Roxana runs to Sahar and shuts the laptop closed.

SAHAR (CONT'D)

Hey!

ROXANA

You can't be serious.

SAHAR

I'm trying to go about this practically. Better to interview the right candidate to see if there's a viable future.

ROXANA

That's called a date!

SAHAR

I'm not going to put on makeup and drive an hour East in rush-hour for just anybody.

ROXANA

Do you hear yourself right now? This isn't a medical study or a job interview. This is love.

SAHAR

And since you're such an expert, did you finally ask David out?

ROXANA

As a matter of fact I asked him over for dinner.

Sahar looks at her sister for too long.

SAHAR

You forget that I helped you study for the LSAT. I know when you're being choosy with words.

ROXANA

Okay, so I didn't phrase it as a date per se, but he's coming over in the evening and food will be served. It's got all the ingredients for a date.

SAHAR

Unbelievable. Here you are giving me such a hard time for my dating strategy when you're just as bad. Can I get a little credit for trying here?

ROXANA

You're right. I'm sorry. I'm proud of you for really going for it. Want me to help alphabetize potential restaurant options?

With a smile, Sahar opens up her laptop again.

INT. WESTWOOD CVS - DAY

Sahar waltzes into the staff room carrying her lunch.

Lawrence and Will sit at a small table. They look up from their food.

LAWRENCE
You look well, Sahar.

SAHAR
I feel well, Lawrence.

WILL
Did someone not pay with insurance?

Sahar grabs a chair and digs in.

SAHAR
No, I'm happy because I've got a couple of dates lined up this week.

LAWRENCE
Good for you Sahar. Getting out there isn't easy.

SAHAR
That's what I've heard but my experience has been wildly different. Men just flock to me.

WILL
Do they know you're a pharmacist? Because they may only be interested in the scripts. Trust me, I know.

SAHAR
You've also had multiple men interested in you? Interesting, I'll have to let your girlfriend know about that one...

WILL
Wow, multiple men?

SAHAR
I'm pretty sure the perfect man is somewhere in my lineup, yes.

WILL
In that case, you should bring him to dinner later this week.

LAWRENCE
Yes! I'm hosting a couples night. If you've got someone by then you're welcome to join.

Sahar thickly swallows a bite of her food.

SAHAR

You can count on me being there.

WILL

Great, it's settled. See you and your new boyfriend soon.

Will and Lawrence finish lunch and leave. Sahar grabs her phone. She dials.

SAHAR

(into phone)

Roxana?

INT. TALEBI APARTMENT - SAME

Roxana stands in front of the stove cooking and balances her phone on her shoulder.

ROXANA

What's up?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

SAHAR

Stop what you're doing. I have an emergency.

ROXANA

What happened?

SAHAR

Can you help me reschedule all of my dates for tonight?

ROXANA

Slow down. What's wrong?

SAHAR

I need to curry favor with my boss and my idiot coworker is boxing my out. I need a boyfriend for this party thing he's throwing.

ROXANA

Okay, gotcha. So, speed dating. You can do this. I just need to call David and see if he can reschedule.

SAHAR

No need, take him out after you're done helping me.

ROXANA
Won't that feel like a-

SAHAR
A date? Yeah, exactly.

Roxana turns off the heat and chews on a fingernail.

ROXANA
I don't know. Would he go for that?

SAHAR
Come on, dude, where's your confidence? You'll never know if you never try. There's no harm in asking.

ROXANA
You're right! I'm going to ask him out to a restaurant. And you're going to speed date fifteen guys in one night! No biggie.

SAHAR
Easy peasy!

They both hang up and smile.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. PIZZANA - BRENTWOOD - DAY

A HOSTESS leads Sahar and Roxana, both tastefully dolled up, to a table near a window that overlooks the front entrance.

They take their seats.

HOSTESS

Will anyone else be joining you?

ROXANA

Oh, you have no idea.

The hostess stares back, puzzled. Sahar kicks Roxana under the table.

SAHAR

We're all good here, thank you.

HOSTESS

Your waiter will be with you shortly.

The hostess leaves the table.

SAHAR

Are we set on the plan?

ROXANA

Yes. I'll stand by the door and keep an eye out for each date. I'll keep 'em busy until you're ready.

SAHAR

Is this crazy?

ROXANA

Hell yeah, but in a cool way. Knock 'em dead.

Roxana leaves. Sahar takes a calming breath.

INT./EXT. PIZZANA - SAME

BEGIN MONTAGE

Sahar and TALL DATE (30s) enjoy drinks at the table. Discreetly hidden in her lap is a LITTLE NOTEBOOK. While her date is distracted, Sahar violently scratches out his name.

She looks to the window. Roxana, holding a clipboard, tries to get SPIFFY DATE (30s) to sign a petition.

Tall Date exits the restaurant and Roxana stops badgering Spiffy Date.

Sahar and Spiffy Date laugh over salads. He gets up from the table. Sahar makes eye contact with Roxana through the window. She signals a no-go.

TALKATIVE DATE and Sahar laugh over dinner. As SILVER FOX DATE (40s) exits his Uber, Roxana rushes him with a photo of a LOST DOG.

Silver Fox Date and Sahar laugh over coffee. He takes his last sip and the two of them get up, hug, and then he exits.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. PIZZANA - NIGHT

Roxana joins Sahar at the table.

ROXANA

How'd it go?

SAHAR

One no-show. The rest were duds. And based on the number of guys that filtered through here the wait staff probably thinks I'm a high priced call-girl.

ROXANA

At least they think you're high priced.

SAHAR

This whole thing was a silly idea. I should get comfortable with the fact that I'll always be on my own.

HANDSOME MAN (O.C.)

Sorry, I'm late. Are you Sahar?

Sahar and Roxana look up to see tall, dark, and handsome TEB MANSOUR (30s, fully Iranian).

Sahar's mouth drops open. Roxana waits for her to reply.

ROXANA

Yes, she is. And I am just leaving. I've got my own date to run to!

Roxana winks at Sahar and leaves. Teb takes her seat.

TEB

Sorry, I'm late. I have a rotation at the VA and my shifts run long.

SAHAR

Are you a physician?

TEB

Thoracic surgery resident.

He smiles and his teeth sparkle.

TEB (CONT'D)

Should we order?

INT. LAUREL HARDWARE - WEST HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

Across town, Roxana walks into a crowded, trendy spot. The hostess leads her to a table where David is already seated.

ROXANA

Hey! Cool place! Thanks for being so flexible with the last minute location change.

He stands and they both hug.

DAVID

No problem. It actually worked for the best.

She takes her seat and notices there's another place set next to David. A purse and coat are slung over the chair.

ROXANA

Is...someone else joining us?

DAVID

I was thinking a lot about what you said yesterday about work and life.

ROXANA

Okay...

DAVID

And there's somebody I'd like you to meet.

AGNES TULLEDGE (50s) returns to the table. David stands and pulls out her chair. Roxana stands and shakes her hand. They all sit.

ROXANA

Nice to meet you.

AGNES

David's told me a lot about you.

ROXANA

What about exactly?

AGNES

About your flexibility in the career market. I don't know if he's told you, but I oversee recruitment in his department. I was hoping we could spend dinner getting to know one another.

It finally clicks in Roxana's head...this is an interview.

DAVID

After what you said about law school, I thought you might be interested in something else. And Agnes was walking out with me right when you called. So here we are.

ROXANA

Here we are!

Roxana smiles tightly and unravels her napkin with a flourish that almost sends the silverware flying.

INT. PIZZANA - NIGHT - LATER

Teb and Sahar both lean over the table towards one another. They're in their own little, happy bubble.

SAHAR

So let me get this straight you have a job, you have your own place, and that's still all of your own hair?

TEB

And don't forget, I also have incredible taste in women.

SAHAR

And mediocre skill in banter. But we can work on that.

They laugh.

SAHAR (CONT'D)

I have one more question for you.

TEB

Shoot.

SAHAR

Why is a guy like you still single?

Teb shrugs his shoulders and laughs softly.

TEB

Lots of reasons. I'm a doctor, so my schedule is rough. My Persian family operates on a whole different playing field, as you can understand, and I don't know...I guess I just expected I'd find someone in a coffee shop one day reading my favorite book and we'd hit it off like that. Lame, right?

SAHAR

No! Not at all. I understand that completely.

TEB

How does your family feel about you being single? Because at this point my mom is looking into how she can adopt grandchildren.

SAHAR

My parents are pretty cool. But I get it. I've got cousins somewhere out in Texas who graduated from college with a degree and a proposal. I still don't know if it's because they went to A&M or if it's from being Iranian.

TEB

No way, I've got family in Texas. Which part?

SAHAR

DFW.

TEB

Wow, same. I bet they know each other.

SAHAR

I'm sure. But how about you and I
get to know each other a little
better?

She raises her eyebrow suggestively.

TEB

(signaling a waiter)
Check!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Teb and Sahar walk side by side and stop at a black Tesla.

SAHAR

Wow! Ten points to you for
switching it up. I got nervous when
we passed a couple BMWs. I thought,
surely, this man is leading me to
my death.

TEB

Listen, it's still black. I didn't
sell out completely.

Sahar fiddles with the door handle, unsure how it opens.

SAHAR

Wait, how do you open this thing?

TEB

Here.

Sahar steps to the side. Teb opens her door, but before she
gets in, he leans in for a kiss. It's chaste until it's not.

They break apart for air. They smile sheepishly.

SAHAR

I know it wasn't a coffee shop or
an art museum, but I need to give
these dating apps more credit.

TEB

Totally. One of my Texas cousins
actually met her husband on an app.

SAHAR

Wait, so did one of mine.

Their smiles fade. Their embrace loosens.

SAHAR (CONT'D)

You don't also happen to have a cousin named Mona who lives in Dallas.

Teb takes a full step back.

TEB

Who married a white guy named Chris?

Sahar gasps and covers her mouth.

SAHAR

New verdict. Dating apps officially suck. It was nice not knowing you, Teb. See you around at a family wedding or something.

TEB

Come on, we're probably third cousins twice removed or something distant. Our parents' generation married their cousins all the time. What's the big deal if we-

SAHAR

I'm gonna stop you right there. I may be desperate, but I'll never be *that* desperate. I'm a badass pharmacist with good skin and a subscription to all the major streaming services. I'll be fine on my own. See you never.

Sahar leaves Teb on the curb and walks down the street with a blinding aura of confidence.

INT. SAFFRON AND ROSE ICE CREAM - NIGHT

Roxana and Sahar wait in line together.

ROXANA

And he still wanted to keep dating?

SAHAR

Yeah.

ROXANA

Wow. That's commitment. Sorry your date was related to you.

SAHAR

It's okay. Sorry your date turned out to be a job interview.

ROXANA

A crappy one, no less.

SAHAR

That's not to say future opportunities can't arise from it. Maybe she'll refer you to other companies or-

ROXANA

Oh no, she offered me the job. That was the worst part of the night. I stood there waiting with David as he tried to convince her I wasn't crazy for turning it down.

They reach the display case of ice cream.

SAHAR

Well, at least you'll have me to keep you company during your busy hours where you won't be at work.

ROXANA

Yeah. And, if it helps, you can always take me to your work dinner.

Sahar contemplates this genuinely.

SAHAR

That'd be nice.

She gives her sister an affectionate shoulder bump.

SAHAR (CONT'D)

Thanks, Roxana.

ROXANA

Anytime, Sahar.

EXT. WESTWOOD BOULEVARD - NIGHT

The sisters walk down the street, ice creams in hand, and pass by a sign mounted on a lamp post that reads: PERSIAN SQUARE SITE OF THE BEGINNING OF THE PERSIAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN LOS ANGELES.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. LAWRENCE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lawrence, his wife GLORIA (50s), and Sahar meander together in the kitchen. Will's girlfriend, ANNE (30s), is at the stove.

In the adjoining living room, Roxana loops thread around her fingers.

ROXANA

Take a deep breath.

WILL (O.C.)

I don't think this is necessary.

Will is as stiff as a board lying down on the couch.

ROXANA

Honestly, Will, with your unibrow
I'm amazed people don't think
you're Persian. This will only take
a second. I'm going to clean up the
edges too.

A few swipes later and Roxana is done.

ROXANA (CONT'D)

What do you think?

Will sits up from the couch and faces everybody else. TWO stripes cut the center of each eyebrow.

Lawrence, Gloria, and Ann look appalled. Sahar chokes on her drink with laughter.

END OF PILOT