

ALONE TOGETHER

Written by

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TEASER

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

BENJI, pathetic but confident, drives up to the curb of an apartment building. ESTHER, cute but gross, exits the building and gets into his car. Her window is down.

BENJI
Saved you from a walk of shame.

ESTHER
The walk of shame is an anti-feminist construct. By having you drive me home, I'm making a political statement.

BENJI
You're not a feminist. I think you just don't like walks.

ESTHER
If you walk home after sex, is it shameful? No, just extremely rare.

BENJI
Can you talk toward the window, please? Your breath is terrible.

ESTHER
Didn't stop me from having sex last night with a guy who's basically Ryan Gosling.

A troll-like BRO-GUY leans out of a window holding a bag.

BRO-GUY
Esther! You forgot your leftovers!

ESTHER
It's just a side salad. Not worth it. Text me!

BENJI
Ryan Gosling really let himself go.

ESTHER
He's my Ryan Gosling. Chubby, hairy guys make me feel like Rachel McAdams.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENJI

(driving away)

You gotta fix your breath. Like if an old lady died, and then a possum moved into that dead lady's mouth, that's what your breath is like.

ESTHER

Fine, I want to try that alfalfa-mint cleanse at the place on Third.

BENJI

I know a way you can cleanse your body. Try brushing your teeth and not putting pesto on everything.

ESTHER

Unless you have a practical solution, leave me alone.

INT. JUICE STORE - LATER

Benji and Esther are in line with LA types: man buns, yoga pants, etc. Basically, Runyon Canyon is in line with them.

ESTHER

See anyone from high school who doesn't remember you?

BENJI

You mean like the guy behind us? He mooned my Shakespeare festival troupe every day like clockwork.

As Esther approaches the counter, she sees the gorgeous woman in front of her buy a bag of spirulina crisps from a display next to the register. Esther turns to a hot BARISTA.

ESTHER

I'll try the alfalfa-mint detox, please. Also, what are those chips?

BARISTA

They're spirulina crisps.

ESTHER

Is that what hot girls eat? Will I glow?

BARISTA

Anyone can eat whatever they want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESTHER
(leaning into Benji)
Hot girls have secrets they don't
tell anyone.
(then, to barista)
I'll take these, too.

Esther grabs six bags of crisps and hands the barista cash.
The barista directs a BARBACK to grab Esther's juice.

BENJI
Can I borrow twenty dollars?

ESTHER
What? Your family is so rich. How
are you so poor?

BENJI
My parents think if you give your
kids too much money they'll just
spend it on cocaine and psychics.
I'll get you back.

ESTHER
How are you gonna get me back? You
get paid in gift cards to manage
your parents' apartments.

BENJI
I've been skimming quarters from
the vending machines. The cash is
yours after I Coinstar, homey.

Esther rolls her eyes and hands him a twenty. The barback
gives Esther her juice as Benji steps up to the barista.

BENJI (CONT'D)
One vitality shot, please.

BARISTA
Twelve dollars.

BENJI
(handing over the twenty)
Keep it. I like your nose ring.
Most noses can't make them work.

ESTHER
(to Benji, sotto)
Stop. You know you can't talk to an
LA nine without embarrassing
yourself and ruining everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENJI

(ignoring)

But you're making it work. And I
have a nose for noses that can
handle nose rings. You got one.

Benji smiles weakly. Esther reacts, sad for him.

BARISTA

Just in case this is leading up to
you asking me out, I'm a lesbian.

BENJI

I date lesbians. I went to a
liberal arts college.

BARBACK

(to the barista)

You're a lesbian?

BARISTA

I am to guys under five-ten.

BENJI

Sooo funny. I hope you get E-coli
from your lettuce juice.

Benji heads for the exit. Esther is not having it.

ESTHER

You know, shaming a guy because
he's short is like shaming a woman
because she's overweight.

BARISTA

Yeah. We do that here, too.

ESTHER

Well, it's wrong!

Esther sees Benji exit. She turns to the barista, hopeful.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

Any chance you guys are hiring?

The barista's icy glare means "no." Esther gets strident
again as she exits.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

It's just wrong!

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - LATER

Benji and Esther enter a gorgeous Hollywood Hills house.

ESTHER
Is your brother home?

BENJI
I never have any idea where he is.

ESTHER
Your family is so weird.

BENJI
You wear your dad's old boxers.

ESTHER
They're vintage, who cares. All the
greats have daddy issues. Mine is
that I'm a constant disappointment
because I'm a grown adult and don't
have a real job.

BENJI
Well, I don't have a real job. And
I'm a guy so it's worse. Women can
sniff out that I'm not a provider.
You're fine.

ESTHER
I'm not fine. Unlike you, my life
has consequences. If my car breaks
down I can't just borrow one from
my dad's collection.

BENJI
Like he'd ever trust me with one of
his vintage convertibles. Besides,
they're all stick shift.

ESTHER
(sarcastic)
Ohhh, so you do see where I'm
coming from. If I don't have a job
to pay down my student loans by the
end of the year, my dad says I have
to move back to Illinois and work
at my uncle's cork board factory.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENJI

Yeah, I can't relate to that at all. But I DVR'd a "Daria" marathon.

ESTHER

Cool, what season?

Benji grabs the remote, but the TV won't work.

BENJI

Is this broken?

DEAN, Benji's rich, handsome older brother, enters with his gorgeous model girlfriend, TARA.

DEAN

I put the parental lock on so all my stuff wouldn't get deleted by your dumb cartoons.

TARA

(to Dean)

This is your brother?

DEAN

Yeah, and his squatter friend.

ESTHER

I just crash here sometimes.

DEAN

Then explain the jelly bean clog in my bathtub.

ESTHER

That was an accident. I'm sorry. I know for a fact they'll dissolve.

TARA

(sad, to Esther)

Are you homeless?

ESTHER

No, I Airbnb my place for side cash.

BENJI

There's an oxycontin addict renting out her living room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESTHER

You don't know that. He's sleepy.

TARA

Oh my god, you guys are so cute!
How long have you been dating?

ESTHER

Just because we're both small and
undesirable doesn't mean we should
date.

BENJI

Everyone just assumes it since we
always sit on the same side of the
booth at restaurants.

ESTHER

It's easier to share food that way.

DEAN

I'll give you each five hundred
dollars to go have sex right now.

ESTHER

I'd rather let an entire Greyhound
bus spit in my mouth than have sex
with Benji.

BENJI

Yeah, not everything is about sex.
You're gonna get the Zika virus
with that attitude.

DEAN

(to Benji)

Well then you need to get a real
girlfriend, instead of whatever
Esther is. You should come to
Alia's pool party later. You both
look like feta.

ESTHER

(perking up)

I usually avoid the sun. I want
good skin when I'm old. But yeah,
I'll be there.

TARA

You're like twelve. Why are you
worried about aging?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN
Actually, they're both pushing
thirty.

BENJI
I look young because I spend most
of my time alone and don't have to
make a lot of facial expressions.

No one gets this.

DEAN
Oh, and they're comedians.

TARA
Oh yeah, comedians dress weird.

ESTHER
Thank you.

There's a noise of a truck outside the house.

DEAN
My racing fuel is here! I've been
driving around with 91 octane like
a freakin' normy.

Dean and Tara exit. Esther turns to Benji, excited.

ESTHER
This is perfect. I heard Alia's
hiring a new assistant. I'm gonna
get a job at the coolest fashion
company in LA. And the best part is
I earned it, by being at the right
party.

BENJI
Every girl wants to work for my
sister. What makes you think you're
qualified?

ESTHER
It's a fashion assistant job. All
you need is a charged laptop and a
fake personality.
(fake personality)
And I can, like, totally already
pull that off from, like, my level
four improv classes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENJI
Terrifying.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - POOL AREA - LATER

The party is in full swing. Hot people are everywhere. Benji hangs off to the side. Esther approaches him in a long coat.

BENJI
A Syrian refugee could dress more appropriately for a pool party.

ESTHER
It's the most fashionable thing I own. You're one to talk. You're wearing basketball shorts.

Esther sees ALIA holding court with her SQUAD: CLARA, SCARLETT and VIVIAN.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
There she is. Complimenting her swimsuit is my icebreaker. Then, I move onto social media talking points.

BENJI
Esther, when I was little there was a kid who wore a jacket at pool parties. We all made fun of that kid.

Esther nods and takes off her coat. She has gray cotton undergarments and dad boxers on under it. She walks over and looks for a place to wedge herself into Alia's posse.

CLARA
Something smells like cheese and onions.

Esther pushes her way in. Benji lags behind, intimidated by the ladies.

ALIA
Hi Sarah!

ESTHER
(fake personality)
Hey everyone! This party is like everything. I can't.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESTHER (CONT'D)
(to Alia, normal)
By the way, it's Esther.

ALIA
Is that a sports bra?

ESTHER
(fake personality)
To some. I am living for your
bikini right now. That pattern is
so OG.

ALIA
Thanks. Why do you guys look like
Russian exchange students?

Benji looks at Vivian and tries to be "charming."

BENJI
(bad Russian accent)
Halo. I need to borrow graphing
calculator.

VIVIAN
(to Esther)
You're adorable. I love your hair.

ESTHER
Oh my god thanks! I, like, don't
wash it 'cause of an article I read
on Instagram.

BENJI
Esther's way of being cute is
making it look like she doesn't
care.
(to Esther)
You're lazy chic.

ESTHER
(can't help herself)
No, you're lazy. You gave back your
rescue dog Schnitzel because you
didn't want to walk it.

BENJI
I'm sorry you don't get to french
kiss him anymore.

ESTHER
A dog's mouth is cleaner than a
person's!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALIA

Ew, gross.

ESTHER

Don't listen to him. He lives off
Visa gift cards from your parents.

Benji sees the hot girl scoffing. Searching, he blurts out:

BENJI

Esther has a permanent fat wrinkle
on her stomach. We call it her
equator.

Esther shoots him a look, "shut up!" Clara holds up her
phone.

CLARA

No way. Look who ripped us off.

The ladies all look at the phone, squeezing out Esther.
Pissed, she drags Benji aside out of Alia's earshot.

ESTHER

What the hell are you doing?

BENJI

I don't know. I was just trying to
be funny. You know what LA nines do
to me.

ESTHER

God, you're like Chris Farley with
a little coat. I've gotta do this
solo. C'mon, I'm gonna do what I
should've done a long time ago.

BENJI

Exfoliate your upper lip?

Esther self-consciously covers her upper lip.

ESTHER

No. Use my hot girl game to help
you. Let's go, my little runt.

Esther scans the women. She sees CHARLOTTE, a pretty redhead
with a fancy handbag and a vape pen, talking to another
GUEST. Esther smiles and drags Benji over. As they go:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESTHER (CONT'D)

She's pretty, but trashy enough to
put up with a guy in basketball
shorts.

CHARLOTTE

(to guest)

...Miss Chanel is way better than
going through a middle man --

ESTHER

(to Charlotte)

Hi! Sorry to interrupt. I'm Esther,
and he's Benji. This is his house.

CHARLOTTE

Really? That's so cool. I'm
Charlotte.

BENJI

Hey.

ESTHER

That's a great bag.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks, it was a work gift.

ESTHER

Whoa. What do you do?

CHARLOTTE

I'm a nanny.

ESTHER

Lucky. When I nannied all I got
from the parents were maternity
clothes. They fit me great.

CHARLOTTE

You live here alone, Benji?

BENJI

(looking at Esther)

Kinda. I sometimes open the place
up to the poor and pathetic.

CHARLOTTE

Aw, that's really kind of you.

ESTHER

Take her on a tour, stupid!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLOTTE
Yeah, stupid!

Charlotte leads Benji inside. Esther turns back toward Alia. She grabs a some fried shrimp skewers from a caterer and heads back. The circle is closed, but Esther listens in.

CLARA
No offense, Alia, but I can't eat any of the food here.

VIVIAN
So unhealthy.

Esther quickly ditches the shrimp in the pool skimmer.

ALIA
I know. I wanted to get fun pool party food and didn't even think about how I wouldn't eat any of it.

Light bulb going off, Esther exits on a mission.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - BENJI'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Benji shows Charlotte his sad, sparse room. He points to a framed baseball card -- the only thing hanging on the wall.

BENJI
That's my Nolan Ryan rookie card. You like baseball?

CHARLOTTE
I like Laker floor seats.
(then, losing interest)
So who were those ladies I saw you hanging with before we met?

BENJI
Oh, that was my sister. She started a fashion company called Vindication and --

CHARLOTTE
Your sister is Vindication?! Tell me more about your family.

BENJI
Okay.

Benji opens a door revealing a closet full of toilet paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENJI (CONT'D)

I go to Costco once a week with my
grandma.

CHARLOTTE

(suggestive)

So when do I get to see your room?

BENJI

My room. Right. I just keep all my
clothes and stuff here. This way.

Benji leads Charlotte out of his room.

CHARLOTTE

And on the way, introduce me to
your sister. She's like my Nolan
Ryan.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - POOL AREA - LATER

Esther bee-lines for Alia and her posse carrying all of her
spirulina crisp bags, which cover up her midsection.

ESTHER

(fake personality)

Crazy question, do you guys like
spirulina chips?

ALIA

Edna, you're a life saver!

ESTHER

(fake personality)

Straight up, I never leave my house
without them. P.S. love your
bikini. That pattern? Hate you
forever!

(normal)

And my name is Esther.

ALIA

You know, you're the second person
here to compliment my bikini.

(looking around)

It was someone... not sure who.

ESTHER

(fake personality)

Oh my god, weird. I bet she was
just so chill she's forgettable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alia laughs. Esther beams.

ESTHER (CONT'D)
(fake personality)
Wait, so like I heard you were
hiring --

BENJI (O.S.)
Alia!

The group turns to see Benji and Charlotte approaching.

BENJI (CONT'D)
Meet my friend, Charlotte. She
wants an autograph.

CHARLOTTE
You're embarrassing.
(to Alia)
It's so cool to meet you. Love.
Your. Top.

ALIA
Thanks! I'm dying to talk bikinis
with someone. Yours is just.

CHARLOTTE
You know who else loved it? Don
Karan, that's Donna Karan's son. I
was just on their yacht.

Charlotte moves in between Esther and Alia to continue
talking. Esther turns to Benji.

ESTHER
You had to bring her back here?

BENJI
What am I going to do? Deny a fan?

Esther rolls her eyes and turns back to Alia, but finds that
she's now mid-conversation with Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE
I'm nannying now, but I've been
looking to get into fashion.

ALIA
Really? You must come work for me.
I need a new assistant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLOTTE
Okay! Awesome!

Esther looks on helplessly. Clara turns to her.

CLARA
You're the chip girl, right?

Clara reaches into an open bag and takes a few out.

CLARA (CONT'D)
That's plenty for today.

Scarlett hands Esther her drink glass.

VIVIAN
Can we have some more cups?

Esther, looking like a caterer, shoots daggers at Benji.

ESTHER
I can't believe this is happening.

BENJI
I know. This could be my first
girlfriend since sixth grade.

Esther stews as Benji basks, on cloud nine.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. COMEDY STORE BAR - THE NEXT DAY

Esther signs a clipboard on a table: "OPEN MIC SIGN UP." She then crosses to the bar and sits next to Benji. Their hefty, lovable loser friend JEFF sits a few seats down.

ESTHER
(to Benji)
Aren't you going up tonight?

BENJI
Nah, I'm taking Charlotte to Mastro's. I'm wearing my prom shirt.

ESTHER
I want to go to Mastro's.

BENJI
Then save up and go.

ESTHER
You don't even pay! They have your grandma's credit card number. Someday I want to try filet medallions!
(then)
Ugh, Charlotte. First my dream job, then my dream entree.

BENJI
You're still mad about the job? Why don't you try to find something more in your wheelhouse? Have you thought about being a notary?

ESTHER
Something doesn't add up about that girl. All her clothes are designer but she vapes. That's unheard of.

BENJI
Not in Orlando.

ESTHER
That Miss Chanel she nannies for must be crazy rich if they give her Celine purses.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESTHER (CONT'D)

I've been nannying for two years
and my purse is a Trader Joe's tote
bag.

Jeff perks up and heads over as Benji gets up from his seat.

BENJI

Hey Jeff, what's up?

JEFF

Everything's great!

BENJI

Really?

JEFF

Well, my dad is sleeping with his
dog groomer, so my mom calls me
everyday crying.

(to Benji)

Where you headed?

ESTHER

Benji has a date with a girl who
only likes him 'cause he lives in a
cool house.

BENJI

I only like me because I live in a
cool house. Why would I judge her?

Benji leaves and Jeff takes a seat next to Esther.

JEFF

Did I hear you talking about Miss
Chanel?

ESTHER

Yeah, the girl who stole my perfect
life works for her.

JEFF

Miss Chanel isn't a person. It's an
escort website.

ESTHER

(eyes going wide)

What?! I knew she was trash! I come
from trash, and I can sniff it out.

Esther pulls up the Miss Chanel site on her phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESTHER (CONT'D)

Oh no, Benji thinks she likes him.
And it's my fault for introducing
them. I need proof. How do I find
her profile?

JEFF

Only subscribers can see them.

ESTHER

I don't have that kind of money. I
just spent it all on crisps.

JEFF

Well, if you make yourself a
profile, you can connect with the
other ladies and see them that way.

ESTHER

You can?

JEFF

Yeah, it's a safety precaution, so
the women can get info on clients
and make sure they won't end up
stuffed into a mattress.

ESTHER

Smart. I love the sharing economy.

Esther begins typing away on her phone.

JEFF

So you're making a profile?

ESTHER

What choice do I have? If I don't,
I put Benji and my favorite
clothing company in danger. It's up
to me to save our friend from a
criminal.

JEFF

You're just trying to get that girl
fired to get your dream job back.

ESTHER

The whole point of doing good
things is that good things come
back to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

But what if dudes start messaging
you?

ESTHER

Oh I know how to keep the pervs
away. I'll just mention how much I
love bread bowls.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - LATER

Benji enters. Esther is waiting for him, holding a laptop.

ESTHER

She's an escort.

BENJI

What?

Esther spins the laptop toward Benji. REVEAL: a profile pic
of a redhead with her face blurred out holding a fancy bag.

ESTHER

Charlotte's not a nanny, she's an
escort!

BENJI

(off laptop)

The face is blurred out. That could
be anybody.

ESTHER

Really? Same hair, same height,
same fancy handbag.

BENJI

Oh no, same Ohio State tattoo.

ESTHER

Now I know you're, without
competition, the most desperate guy
in LA, but you have to end it.

As Benji stares at the photo, Esther's phone buzzes with a
message. She looks at it. There's a text from MISS CHANEL:

"I saw your profile. I like Midwestern girls. Can I take you
to dinner for \$250? -W"

ANGLE ON her phone as she hits send:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

"New phone. Who dis?"

BENJI

I'm not ending it. She smells like tangerines.

ESTHER

It's apricot. Benji, this is dangerous. You're just not the type of person who can roll with shady people. What if a pimp shows up here and wants money?

BENJI

That's crazy.

ESTHER

Is it? Do you even know what a shank is? It's street talk for knife.

BENJI

I'll be honest. Now that I know she's dangerous, I'm into her even more. It's like dating Catwoman.

ESTHER

I can't support this decision. It's unsafe and irresponsible.

Esther sees a new text:

"Mastro's at 6? You can wear sweats. -W"

As she talks, she types.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

And I don't want an escort around here. She'll use the laundry machine, our underwear will touch, and I'll get HPV.

BENJI

Everyone has HPV.

ESTHER

I don't! I'm the last person without it. It's a selling point, and you know I don't have many of those.

She hits send on a response:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

"Listening..."

BENJI

I'm not breaking up with Charlotte.
She's hot, she smells good, and
rumors are spreading in my family
that I'm not gay.

(pointing to the door)

If you have a problem with that,
you can go back to your Airbnb
crack house.

ESTHER

I'll tell your mom you steal change
out of their vending machines.

BENJI

(cornered)

I hate you!

ESTHER

(satisfied)

Don't play manipulation games with
a female only child. You'll lose.
Every. Time.

Benji and Esther stand firm, neither budging. Then:

ESTHER (CONT'D)

And I'm telling Alia. I don't want
my favorite brand getting ruined.

BENJI

No, you can't tell Alia. Charlotte
will definitely get fired and break
up with me.

(off Esther's smug look)

Just give me one more day with her.
You get to make out with guys all
the time. I haven't done under the
pants stuff with a girl since my
ska band broke up.

ESTHER

Okay. I saw on Alia's Insta that
she's at Joaquin Phoenix's house
tonight, and I don't want to ruin
that for her 'cause I'm a good
person!

BENJI

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESTHER
But I think what you're doing is
disgusting!

BENJI
Yeah, that's fine.

Benji exits to his room. Esther sees a new text on her phone:

"Dessert's included! -W"

Excited, Esther types into her phone:

"See U tmrw @Mastro's! Yelp says we might see Larry King!"

INT. MASTRO'S - THE NEXT NIGHT

Esther, dressed in sweats, sits across from WARREN, an odd, earnest older man. A WAITER gives Warren a bowl of soup and Esther a plate of filet medallions and a plate of sides: mac and cheese and truffle fries.

ESTHER
Is this too much food? I think I
over-ordered.

WARREN
No no, you're a growing girl. Eat.

ESTHER
Thanks. I've just been frustrated
lately. My friend won't listen to
me and it's costing me a shot at a
real job, so a free dinner is nice.

WARREN
You do stand-up. That's a real job.

ESTHER
Not to my dad. He says I'm failing
'cause by my age Amy Winehouse was
already famous and dead.

WARREN
Nonsense. You're surviving in LA.
Most people like you end up back in
the Midwest within a few months.

ESTHER
I'm really not doing well. I'm a
loser. I own one towel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WARREN

Well, we could go to Bed Bath & Beyond after this. Unless you think that'd be weird.

ESTHER

Are you kidding? If I was back in Illinois that's exactly what me and my dad would be doing. So no, none of this is weird at all.

WARREN

Good, have some of my soup.

ESTHER

Yes please.

Warren reaches across to give Esther some soup.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - LATER

Benji and Charlotte wait for an Uber in his driveway.

BENJI

I'm glad the job is working out.

CHARLOTTE

I love it. I'm getting tons of free clothes. Although, I'm pretty used to getting free clothes.

BENJI

Yeah, I have older siblings, too.

Warren drives up and Esther jumps out, holding a doggie bag and a Bed Bath & Beyond.

WARREN

Thanks for a great evening, Esther.
I'll PayPal you.

Warren drives off. BACK ON Esther, caught and embarrassed.

ESTHER

Hi guys!
(re: bag)
Sorry, melting gelato. Gotta run!

Esther abruptly heads in the house. Benji turns to Charlotte.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENJI

That was weird. Who was that guy?

CHARLOTTE

Some creep. He used to go out with
one of my work friends.

Benji is struck with a realization. The Uber pulls up and
Charlotte gets in and Benji bolts back inside to find Esther.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Benji enters and finds Esther on the couch, eating dinner
rolls out of her doggie bag. He grabs one from her.

BENJI

"Melting gelato." When do you not
finish your dessert? You're such a
hypocrite!

ESTHER

What are you talking about?

BENJI

You were acting all worried about
me for dating Charlotte, but what's
more dangerous than you being an
actual escort?

ESTHER

I'm not. We ate mac and cheese. He
got me a shower caddy. That's it.

BENJI

You should be ashamed! Ruining your
family name for free bathroom
essentials.

ESTHER

Don't you dare judge me! I only got
into this to protect you. But you
wouldn't listen to me, so now why
should I listen to you?

BENJI

I hope you figure that out when
that guy kidnaps you and locks you
in a basement forever.

ESTHER

Whatever. Free rent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENJI

You could literally get your head cut off!

ESTHER

Warren's not cutting anyone's head off! Not with his rheumatoid arthritis.

BENJI

This is really bad and you know it!

ESTHER

Every pretty girl in LA gets free dinners and owns a loofah. Why not me?!

BENJI

They don't all do it as escorts!

ESTHER

Stop calling me that! There's no sex involved.

BENJI

I've seen you eat mac and cheese. It's very sexual.

ESTHER

You don't understand. I'm getting exactly what I need in life, a job to pay my loans and emotional support from a male baby boomer.

BENJI

Fine, if that's all you need, then why are you here?

ESTHER

I don't know. I'm leaving!

BENJI

And you better not saying anything to Alia.

ESTHER

Too late. I already sent an anonymous tip. Have a nice life!

Esther storms off as Benji goes to his room.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Esther orders an Uber, she hears a coyote howl as it goes through trash cans nearby. Terrified, she bolts back inside.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Esther opens the door to a guest bedroom. It's trashed from the party. Frustrated, she backs out.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - BENJI'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Esther enters and sees Benji in his sleepwear in bed.

BENJI
What are you doing here?

ESTHER
Look, I hate you but there are coyotes outside.

BENJI
Sleep in the guest room.

ESTHER
It's all gross. People from the party did drug and sex stuff on the bed.

Esther forms a barrier of pillows down the middle of the bed and flops down on the other side.

BENJI
You smell like a child's P.E. shirt got left in a Slim Jim factory.

ESTHER
And yet, I'm still the classiest woman who's ever been in this bed.

Still pissed at each other, they close their eyes.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

As Benji watches cartoons, Charlotte storms in, upset.

CHARLOTTE
Your sister fired me.

BENJI
(faking ignorance)
Really? Oh no. She can be mean. She used to lock me in dark closets as a kid and tell me my dead uncle was gonna hug me.

CHARLOTTE
I'm so upset. Console me.

BENJI
(opening his arms)
Come lay with me.

CHARLOTTE
Lay with you? "Console me" means buy me a present.

BENJI
Well, can you wait? I'm seeing my parents in a couple days and I'll get a fresh round of gift cards.

CHARLOTTE
Oh. Maybe I should go home then.

BENJI
No! Stay!
(searching for it)
There's so much leftover booze from the party. We can make fun mixed drinks or something.

Benji heads for the kitchen.

CHARLOTTE
Okay. Thanks for being so sweet. Who likes you for you?

BENJI
You do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLOTTE

Duh.

BENJI

(psyched)

I knew it! What are you drinking?
Besides the Benji Kool-Aid.

CHARLOTTE

I'll have a vodka red bull, and you
have a vodka vodka.

BENJI

Vodka vodka vodka! That's a Fozzie
Bear joke.

(then)

I'll just make our drinks.

EXT. BEACH - SAME TIME

Esther walks along the beach with Warren.

ESTHER

I feel like everyone in LA is so
much prettier than me. It's
intimidating. I have to drive to
Van Nuys just to take a spin class.

Warren puts a fatherly hand on her shoulder.

WARREN

Come on, Esther. I will not let you
talk about yourself that way. You
are a beautiful young woman.

ESTHER

Really? And my cheekbones? You can
see them?

WARREN

Ray Charles can see your
cheekbones.

ESTHER

I don't know him, but he sounds
nice. Thanks for making me feel
supported. I've missed that.

WARREN

I want you to never doubt yourself.
You promise?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ESTHER

I guess.

WARREN

Not good enough. I need you to
pinky swear.

Warren holds out his pinky for Esther.

ESTHER

Okay.

Esther puts her pinky around his. As she does, Warren leans
in close for a kiss. Esther pushes away.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

Oh my god, what are you doing?!

WARREN

What? Aren't you feeling what I'm
feeling?

ESTHER

No! Gross!

Skeeved out, Esther runs away. As she goes,

WARREN

At least those towels were on sale.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HOUSE - BENJI'S ROOM - LATER
Esther rushes in and finds Benji lying on his bed.

ESTHER

Benji, wake up.

Esther notices that Benji hasn't moved. She shakes him.

ESTHER (CONT'D)

Wake up!

Still pretty wasted, Benji slowly rouses and sits up.

BENJI

He-ey. Sorry, I've been drinking.

ESTHER

Well I'm really freaked out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BENJI

Why?

ESTHER

The old guy I met online who paid me to eat macaroni and wear pajama pants turned out to be a total creep.

BENJI

(sarcastically)

Really?

ESTHER

Ugh, god, we shared soup! I should've listened to you.

BENJI

I accept your apology.

ESTHER

Um, when did I apologize?

BENJI

Look, you have to accept it. You're not a fashionista, you're not an escort, you're an Esther.

Esther nods, resigned. Benji looks around.

BENJI (CONT'D)

Wait, where's Charlotte? We're supposed to go to a farmer's market like all the tall couples do.

ESTHER

The house was empty when I got here.

Benji notices something else missing.

BENJI

Oh no. My baseball card is missing.

ESTHER

(smug)

Oh, did Charlotte rob you?

BENJI

(sarcastic)

No couldn't be. Of course she robbed me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON the wall. The spot where the card had been hanging is now bare.

ESTHER
So I was right. You're lucky all she took was a baseball card.

BENJI
And you're lucky you're not tied up in someone's trunk.

ESTHER
Right. That's true. Okay, we need to make a deal. No more escort stuff for either of us.

BENJI
Pinky swear?

ESTHER
(shuddering)
Ew. Just... you have my word.

INT. AFFORDABLE RESTAURANT - THE NEXT NIGHT

CHYRON: THE NEXT NIGHT

Benji sits alone in a booth Facetiming with Jeff.

BENJI
Thanks for telling me about the site. I found someone who was cool with being paid in gift cards.

JEFF (IN PHONE)
No prob. Don't feel too guilty about it. You're on the rebound.

ANGLE ON the restaurant entrance, where Esther enters and walks up to the MAITRE'D.

ESTHER
Hi, I'm Rose. I'm here to meet Nolan.

The Maitre'd points Benji out to her just as Benji looks over at her. They lock eyes, both caught and ashamed.

INT. AFFORDABLE RESTAURANT - LATER

Our pair now sit next to each other in the booth.

BENJI

When you suggested Applebee's, I was like, finally an escort Esther would approve of.

ESTHER

I still want those gift cards.

BENJI

That was Nolan's agreement with Rose.

ESTHER

I can be Rose.

BENJI

Well, I can be Nolan and Nolan's upset that Rose lied on her profile and said she had an athletic frame.

ESTHER

My options were "skinny," "athletic," or "BBW." Tell me I made the wrong choice.

BENJI

Are you done? Let's go.

ESTHER

And abandon this sampler?

BENJI

You have abandonment issues, but they only apply to not finishing foods.

ESTHER

(re: self)
Midwest, thanks.

A long beat. Then:

BENJI

Well, if we're going to be here a while, I found this shady European website that has all the episodes of "Daria."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They slide closer together as Benji holds up his phone for both of them to watch.

ESTHER
Are we going to die alone?

BENJI
Yeah, but I've accepted it.

ESTHER
Small talk with dying people is uncomfortable anyways.

BENJI
When my grandfather was dying, out of habit I said, "How's life?" It was really awkward.

As they continue bantering, the camera PULLS OUT...

INT. FASHION OFFICE - LATER

Clara talks with Alia by an assistant's desk.

CLARA
I need someone to bring the samples to the show room. Where's that new assistant you just hired?

ALIA
The hooker? I had to fire her.
(re: computer)
Check it out. There was an escort website in her browser history.

Clara pokes around on the website.

CLARA
No way. How did you know?

ALIA
I got a really weird anonymous note written on the back of a to-go menu.

CLARA
Well are you going to replace her?

ALIA
My brother has been bugging me to help out his sad friend Ethel.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALIA (CONT'D)

I think I'm gonna give her a chance. We need a size medium for diversity purposes.

CLARA

(laughing, re: site)

Wow. Some of these profiles are hilarious. Look at this one.

Alia leans over to look.

ALIA

(off computer)

Oh my god. I'd know that equator anywhere.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE