

CUPIDS

Written by

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Final Draft 2.4

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

CLAIRE, an attractive woman in her early thirties, enters. She is followed by ARABELLA, a woman in her late thirties dressed in cupid wings and carrying a clipboard.

Claire joins the queue at the counter while Arabella stands in the middle of the shop surveying the room.

All the humans sitting alone have their own cupids, mostly sitting next to them looking bored. Men have male cupids and women have female ones. Couples do not have cupids. The room is exactly as Arabella expected it. She firmly addresses the other cupids.

ARABELLA

I've got a thirty-two year old magazine editor. Her name's Claire and she's recently come out of a relationship. She likes documentaries, reading trashy novels and calling her sister. Have I got any potential matches here?

The humans do not react, but the cupids themselves also barely acknowledge Arabella.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

Oh come on, not one of you?

Arabella strides determinedly to the nearest table. On it sits a MAN reading a newspaper and CUPID 1 looking defeated.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

What about him?

Cupid 1 shakes his head sadly.

CUPID 1

Been in the closet since 2005.

Arabella moves on to the next table. There is ANOTHER MAN talking into his mobile and CUPID 2, next to him, listening to the call. Cupid 2 looks up at Arabella as she approaches.

CUPID 2

He's too attached to his mum at the moment, but if you can wait a month...

Arabella moves on to the third table where an overweight and bearded cupid is sitting reading a magazine about rabbits, this is SARAPHEL. Next to him is PAUL, a man in his early thirties casually dressed and reading a book.

It takes Saraphel a moment to realise that Arabella is standing next to him. Once he does he scrambles for his clipboard.

SARAPHEL

Umm, this is Paul, he's thirty three, works in a medical lab, but probably no chance for a match; he's looking for 'The One'.

ARABELLA

(sighs)  
Oh, no.

SARAPHEL

Exactly.

ARABELLA

We should at least check though.

SARAPHEL

Right you are.

Saraphel takes his clipboard and stands with Arabella, they compare information, turning pages and pointing as they talk.

ARABELLA

Sense of humour Type B, confidence sixty four percent, that's all good.

SARAPHEL

Yeah, and they've got complimentary self-doubts.

They continue to turn pages, both looking more optimistic.

ARABELLA

I'd say we've got seventy percent chance of a match here.

SARAPHEL

Yeah, except for their interests, he's a scientist and she edits a horse magazine.

Arabella keeps turning the pages, concentrating hard.

ARABELLA

Oh, we can work around that. Plus I'm only one couple away from reaching my quota so-

SARAPHEL

(very impressed)  
Really! A hundred couples? You must nearly be due a Favour from "upstairs".

ARABELLA  
 (indicating the world  
 around her)  
 Yep, and I'm using it to get out of  
 this nonsense as soon as I can.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)  
 Are you going to help me? You'd  
 share in my Favour if we succeed.

Saraphel's face turns to speechless excitement.

SARAPHEL  
 Yes, of course I'll rabbit you! I'm  
 one hundred percent behind you!

Arabella looks confused.

SARAPHEL (CONT'D)  
 But first we need to make the pact.

ARABELLA  
 (reluctant)  
 The Pact?

SARAPHEL  
 I insist.

ARABELLA  
 OK then.

They both stand square on and raise their right hands.

SARAPHEL  
 I Saraphel, offer my allegiance in  
 this most humble of quests.

ARABELLA  
 I Arabella, accept your allegiance  
 and swear my own.

Nothing happens for a moment and then special effect balls of  
 light shoot between them, exploding in a long and unnecessary  
 heart shape and arrow display. Saraphel loves it but Arabella  
 is just waiting for it to be over.

SARAPHEL  
 Done.

Both cupids spring into action. Saraphel bends down to Paul's  
 ear and begins whispering into it. Arabella walks into the  
 centre of the room and addresses all of the cupids.

ARABELLA  
 Right everyone, we're going for a  
 couple here between that woman over  
 there and this man here. We need to  
 make sure they sit together.  
 (MORE)

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

Come on everyone, help us make some  
love today.

The cupids all sluggishly begin to whisper in their human's ears. The humans at tables with a free chair absently put their shopping onto it - all unaware that everyone else is doing the same.

Arabella walks over to Claire, who is waiting for her coffee, and begins to whisper in her ear. Paul looks up from his book and sees Claire. Claire receives her coffee and looks for a seat. Paul and Claire make eye contact for a split second and then immediately look away again. Claire looks around the shop looking for a free seat, there is only Paul's table. Claire approaches and Paul pretends to concentrate on his book.

CLAIRE

Is anyone sitting here?

PAUL

No. Go ahead.

Claire sits down gracefully. Between them lean Arabella and Saraphel expectantly. Paul continues to read but sneaks a glance at Claire, which she does not notice. Claire looks at her phone but sneaks a glance at Paul, which he does not notice either. The cupids see these glances.

ARABELLA

Oh come on you two!

Still, the humans sit in silence. Arabella nudges Saraphel.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

Get him to say something!

SARAPHEL

Like what?

ARABELLA

Anything!

Saraphel whispers into Paul's ear. Paul glances at Claire and then looks around for something to say.

PAUL

Lovely day, isn't it.

Claire smiles at Paul.

CLAIRE

Yes.

After a second they return to their silence as neither knows how to continue the conversation. Saraphel looks proud of himself.

ARABELLA

Let's check our notes again.

Arabella and Saraphel stand together comparing clipboards and flicking through pages.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

How many couples have you made so far? Six, seven?

Saraphel looks embarrassed.

SARAPHEL

Umm... none.

ARABELLA

None!

SARAPHEL

(defensive)

I've been in the rabbit department most of my life!

Saraphel looks sad for a moment, remembering a lost love.

SARAPHEL (CONT'D)

I was so good with my little bunnies that they promoted me here. Although... my carrot and urine technique rarely seems to work on the humans.

ARABELLA

(comforting)

I know, it's like they don't even want to be in love anymore.

SARAPHEL

Just like the pandas.

Arabella points to the clipboard.

ARABELLA

There, look! They're both interested in coffee.

Saraphel does not look sure about this idea.

SARAPHEL

Is that enough?

ARABELLA

It'll do.

Arabella swoops to Claire's ear and whispers into it. After a moment Claire glances at Paul's face, and then at his coffee.

CLAIRE

What are you drinking? Smells nice.

PAUL

A vanilla latte.

CLAIRE

Oh, I love those.

Claire smiles warmly. The Cupids smile too.

PAUL

So do I. What are you having?

CLAIRE

An espresso, I find the coffee in here far too weak otherwise.

PAUL

Still too strong for me, gives me the shakes.

Paul smiles but the conversation has established a difference between them and quickly fizzles out. They both return to their book and phone. Arabella gets more frustrated.

ARABELLA

No! No! Just keep talking, that's all it takes!

SARAPHEL

My rabbits would be doing it by now.

ARABELLA

Well we are *not* giving up! How much coffee does he have?

SARAPHEL

Not much, he's meeting a friend soon.

ARABELLA

Damn it! Give me your notes.

Saraphel hands over his clipboard. Arabella frantically flicks through both sets of notes.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)

Books! What's he reading?

SARAPHEL

It's called Victims of Desire, probably some thriller.

Paul takes a long sip of his drink and looks at his watch.

ARABELLA

It's worth a shot. You try and loosen him up a bit.

Arabella whispers in Claire's ear while Saraphel whispers into Paul's. Claire looks over at Paul's book.

CLAIRE

Is that good?

Paul shows Claire the cover: an unmade bed.

PAUL

Very good, it's about the rise of venereal disease in Europe.

ARABELLA

(like Oh Jesus)  
Oh Aphrodite.

CLAIRE

(genuine)  
Oh, how interesting.

Arabella and Saraphel are stunned at Claire's reaction. Paul is still not sure Claire's interest is genuine.

PAUL

Yes, it's a fascinating topic, or at least it is to me, but I work in that field so...

CLAIRE

Oh no I agree with you, I think it's an amazing area of medicine.

ARABELLA

(to Claire)  
You do?

Saraphel and Arabella talk over the top of Paul's long speech, but they tune back in for the end.

PAUL

Oh I'm glad you think so. The book's about the theory all major venereal diseases come from a common ancestral bacterium. Over thousands of years this bacterium mutated into a great variety of diseases. But the ones around today are the least potent. The most deadly strains wiped themselves out by killing their hosts before they could spread.



SARAPHEL

Is she really interested or is she just being nice?

ARABELLA

I don't know, she watched a documentary about Canesten Cream last week, but... I thought she was just drying her nails.

Saraphel and Arabella stop talking to hear Claire's question.

CLAIRE

And is it true that there are more than ten different forms of Thrush?

Again Paul talks and the cupids talk over him.

PAUL

There's probably more than that. It only takes a tiny difference in the genetic makeup of a bacterium to make a different form of a disease. The types of Thrush we know about are just the most common ones.

SARAPHEL

He'll be loving this, his ex never let him talk about his work, although she went on about her's all the time.

ARABELLA

What did she do?

SARAPHEL

Sewage maintenance.

Just as Paul finishes his speech and Claire is about to say something, Paul's phone rings. He puts his book on the table and answers it.

PAUL

Hey... What! Already?... I thought it started at two... Oh sorry... I'll be there in one minute...

Paul places his phone on his chair, stands and hurriedly puts his coat on.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I have to go. Nice talking to you.

Claire acts very casual, barely looking up from her phone but smiling at Paul.

CLAIRE

You too.

Paul takes his book from the table and leaves the coffee shop. Claire watches him sadly. Arabella is seething with frustration while Saraphel is still looking at the door in shock.

Arabella throws her clipboard on the floor in anger.

ARABELLA

You see! All we try and do for them  
and they don't even appreciate it.  
They've got less romance than  
tapeworms! I'll be happy if I never  
see any of them again...

Arabella keeps ranting while Saraphel points towards the door.

Claire is back to looking at her phone, yet with a hint of sadness on her face. She then notices someone coming through the door.

PAUL

I umm... I, left my phone.

On hearing Paul Arabella stops ranting.

Paul takes his phone from the chair. Claire smiles at Paul and he lingers anxiously. Arabella hits Saraphel's arm.

ARABELLA

Quick! Get him to ask for her  
number!

Paul looks at his phone and then at Claire.

PAUL

I don't suppose, I could get your  
number.

Claire smiles.

CLAIRE

Of course.

Paul is delighted. Claire reaches into her bag for a business card. Arabella and Saraphel stare at Claire in surprise.

SARAPHEL

How did you do that!

Claire hands her card to Paul who is trying to act casual. The cupids watch their conversation like a tennis match.

PAUL  
Thanks, I'll give you a call some  
time.

Both cupids look back at Claire together.

CLAIRE  
Do that.

And back to Paul, who stands awkwardly but grinning.

PAUL  
I will... Umm... Bye then.

CLAIRE  
Bye.

Paul walks away. Arabella watches him going out, super  
focused while Saraphel... is dancing.

ARABELLA  
OK. You make sure he calls tonight,  
do it around eight and I'll get her  
to think about him just before.

SARAPHEL  
Yeah, got it. I've got a good  
feeling about them.

ARABELLA  
So do I.

Saraphel chases after Paul and leaves the shop.

Arabella sits in Paul's seat. Claire is smiling behind her  
coffee cup and gazing towards the door.

ARABELLA (CONT'D)  
Well done.  
(beat)  
But if you don't give him a proper  
chance then I'll make sure the only  
thing that ever wants to flirt with  
you has four legs.

After a moment Claire looks towards Paul's seat and then up  
at the ceiling. She whispers.

CLAIRE  
Thank you.

Arabella looks at Claire. She smiles, laughs slightly and  
shrugs modestly.

ARABELLA  
It's my job.

Claire sips her coffee, none the wiser.

FADE TO BLACK

TITLE CARDS APPEAR:

TITLE CARD 1

Paul and Claire met again one week later in the same coffee shop. They argued about battery chickens.

TITLE CARD 2

But Saraphel moved the conversation onto Gonorrhoea. Six months later they were married.

TITLE CARD 3

Saraphel used his favour to return to his beloved rabbits. Arabella devoted herself to getting humans talking again, and was responsible for the sudden loss of human stigma attached to Internet Dating.

TITLE CARD 4

Paul and Claire would often say how it must have been fate which brought them together. Cupids, they never get any credit.

THE END