

ONE TOO MANY FISH

Written by

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INT. ROBBY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

ROBBY (28), casual as if his life depended on it, sits at a table in a pretty tight kitchen for a bachelor. Chin resting in his hand, in front of an open laptop.

He sighs heavily.

ROBBY
Out of my league. Really out of my
league.

LAPTOP SCREEN

Undoubtedly a dating site. Head shots galore, puckered lips, Instagram filters working overtime.

ROBBY (V.O.)
Unquestionably out of my league.

BACK TO

Robby glides his hands through his hair, sips coffee. This is pointless, when --

LAPTOP SCREEN

He spots a girl. Unbelievably pretty with a certain twinkle in her sweet eyes.

PROFILE: *KIM STANWYCK, 26, Model, Activist, Aspiring Actress...* "Relationship-minded, I'm seeking a grounded, funny guy to be my partner in crime."

He goes to close the laptop, but he can't take his eyes off this profile. His finger hovers above the keyboard forever. Finally, he taps a box that says "I'm Interested!"

BACK TO

He gets up and goes to pour himself another cup when he hears a *ding!* Stops, turns, and views the screen where a chat bubble has appeared.

LAPTOP SCREEN - CHAT BUBBLE

Kim S. has started a conversation with a simple -- "Hi!"

ROBBY
No freakin' way.

He sits and types, strange little smile on his face.

INT. TRENDY CAFE - DAY

KIM (26) sits across from Robby in this retro/contemporary local haunt, their food all but finished. In person, she delivers on her stunning dating site profile.

ROBBY

You use the site much?

KIM

No. Never. First time, actually. That's why when I saw your profile I was shocked. We're both looking for...

(air quotes)

...“partners in crime.”

ROBBY

Funny way we put it, but yeah. I don't actually commit crimes, you know. I just wanna make that clear.

KIM

(laughs)

I know that.

ROBBY

So what kind of modeling do you do?

KIM

All kinds, really. Bridal gowns, swimsuits. I just came back from a shoot in the Hamptons.

ROBBY

That's pretty cool. Do you like it?

KIM

I love it. I get to see different parts of the country where it's always warm and sunny. What's better than that?

ROBBY

Warm and sunny sounds nice.

She sips from a pink mixed cocktail.

KIM

Favorite band?

ROBBY

The Horseshoe Crabs.

KIM
 (eyes go wide)
 Get outta here! I love the
 Horseshoe Crabs.

ROBBY
 No way.

KIM
 Yes way. I've seen 'em like half a
 dozen times. Their third album's a
 masterpiece. When Rick Toomey
 joined the band he brought such a
 mature sound with him. Really next
 level stuff.

Robby shakes his head, incredulous.

ROBBY
 Wow. I didn't think anyone but me
 had even heard of them.

KIM
 Surprise, surprise.

Awkward silence.

ROBBY
 Good food here, huh?

KIM
 Amazing. Nothing beats farm fresh
 eggs.

They stare each other down. First one to look away loses when
 they both say it at once --

KIM (CONT'D)
 So, can I see you again?

ROBBY
 So, can I see you again?

They laugh together.

ROBBY (CONT'D)
 Yes.

KIM
 No.

ROBBY
 No?

Kim laughs, puts her hand on his arm.

KIM
I'm just messing with you. I'd love
to see you again.

Had him for a minute. He chuckles, watches as she playfully twirls her hair.

MONTAGE:

A) Robby and Kim at a Summer fair, perusing and eating ice cream. She dips her cone on his nose. They laugh.

B) Hiking a trail along a shimmering lake. Kim loses her footing on a tree root, Bobby catches her.

C) A candlelit dinner for two as they interlock their arms and sip wine.

D) At the house, Kim excitedly hands Robby the shell of a horseshoe crab.

EXT. ROBBY'S HOUSE - DAY

Humble starter home. Sunny, birds chirping.

ROBBY (V.O.)
How do I look?

INT. ROBBY'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - SAME

Small but neat. Robby checks himself in the mirror, Kim behind him.

KIM
You look great. Just one thing
missing.

She holds up a tie.

ROBBY
Really? A tie?

KIM
Yeah. I bought a new dress, you get
a tie.

She kisses his cheek, drapes the tie on his shoulder and exits the room.

When he's sure she's gone, he reaches in his pocket, pulls out a small box and opens it. It's an engagement ring.

Gazes at it a moment, tucks it away. Checks himself in the mirror again and heaves a nervous sigh.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Robby paces, checks his watch. He calls into the kitchen --

ROBBY

You sure they're coming? You said six. It's quarter past.

KIM (O.S.)

They'll be here. Relax.

ROBBY

It's hard to relax in this tie.

KIM (O.S.)

Want some wine? Might help settle your nerves.

ROBBY

Could use a shot of moonshine.

Just then an incredibly loud scraping noise is heard from outside. Like a locomotive with bad brakes.

He goes to the window.

Outside is a rusted-out pick-up truck, fender hanging on the road as a huge cloud of smoke billows from the exhaust.

ROBBY (CONT'D)

Hey, Kim, look at this.

KIM (O.S.)

What is it?

ROBBY

I don't know. Some old piece of shit truck just broke down in front of the house.

KIM (O.S.)

What color is it?

ROBBY

I don't know... Rust?

Kim appears behind Robby, big smile.

KIM

They're here!

ROBBY
You're kidding?

She races to the door.

Robby looks to her, then back outside. The truck engine cuts with a painful groan, replaced by the sound of clucking chickens.

Robby's jaw goes slack. Mouths the words: *What the fuck?*

Outside, a MAN and WOMAN emerge from the smoke. They're straight out of American Gothic.

The woman heads to the front door, while the man reaches into the truck bed and forcefully snaps something.

Robby cringes.

The man pulls a limp chicken out and heads up the walk.

ROBBY (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ!

Kim swings the door open.

KIM
Ma! Pa! So glad you could make it.

Robby composes himself and joins Kim.

MA (58), faded yellow house dress and bunched-up panty hose, smiles sweetly.

MA
Sorry we're late, dear. You know
how Pa is on them paved roads.

PA (55), faded overalls, straw hat and chin whiskers down to the middle of his belly.

PA
I don't know how you folks drive on
them things.
(holds up the dead bird)
We brung supper!

KIM
Oh, Pa, that's so sweet, but I
already made dinner. It's warming
in the oven right now.

PA
Oh, uh, okay.

He tosses the chicken into the shrubbery.

Kim lets them in.

KIM

Ma. Pa. I want you to meet my
boyfriend, Robby.

Ma takes Robby's hands.

MA

We've heard so much about you.

Robby has an open-mouthed smile frozen on his face.

ROBBY

Really? I've heard almost nothing
about you.

MA

(guffaws)

Oh, such a kidder. And wearing a
tie! Kimmie Joe, I do believe you
have a keeper.

Kim blushes as Pa let's out a screeching WAIL.

PA

Well now!

(sizing Robby up)

Put er there, partner! Hell yeah.
Whoo! Now that's the kinda grip
that says all male children, if ya
know what I mean.

After shaking, Robby discreetly wipes his hand on his pants.

Kim leads everyone into the

DINING ROOM

where a modest table is lovingly set. Robby whispers covertly
to Kim.

ROBBY

Can, I, uh, speak with you in the
kitchen?

KIM

Sure.

(to her parents)

Excuse us. We'll be right back.

Ma and Pa find their places at the table.

PA
We'll be right here, darlin!

KITCHEN

Robby and Kim step in.

KIM
Pa's such a kidder. What's up,
honey?

Robby opens the cabinet, pulls down a bottle of wine.

ROBBY
What's up? I suppose I could ask
you that question.

She watches as he pours some wine in a glass.

KIM
(points by the sink)
I poured you one already.

Robby takes both glasses and downs them simultaneously.

KIM (CONT'D)
I've never seen you drink like this
before.

ROBBY
I've never met your parents before.

KIM
What's that supposed to mean?

ROBBY
You didn't tell me your parents
were so... backwoods.

KIM
Look, I know they can be a little
folksy sometimes, but--

ROBBY
Kim, right now there's a dead
chicken on my lawn.

Pa suddenly pokes his head in.

PA

Scuse me, young feller. Can you direct me to your outhouse?

ROBBY

Down the hall and to your left.

PA

Ooh! Indoor facilities? I do believe Ma's right, Kimmie Joe. You got yourself a keeper here.

Pa winks at Robby and leaves. Robby points.

ROBBY

Kimmie Joe? See? That's what I'm talking about.

Kim steadies herself.

KIM

You know, my parents may not be the flashiest people, or have a lot of nice things that others have. But every penny they saved was used to send me to a good school so I wouldn't have to struggle like they did. And that chicken on your lawn? That was a gift, Rob. Most people I know appreciate gifts when they get them.

Robby relents, takes a deep breath.

ROBBY

You're right, Kim. I'm sorry. I guess I just wasn't expecting this.

She smiles.

KIM

It's okay. Just relax. Dinner's almost ready. Just go in there and talk to them. You might find you have more in common with them than you think.

ROBBY

Okay. Okay, I'll do that.

She kisses his cheek, sends him off and goes to check on dinner.

A goat BLEETS from outside. Robby rubs his face.

DINING ROOM

Ma's shaving her chin as Robby enters.

MA

Oops. Caught me shaving my chin whiskers.

A collection of stubble has gathered on her empty plate.

ROBBY

(sitting)

Oh, that's... that's okay. Did you have a good drive in?

MA

Oh, wasn't a thing. Gettin down that mountain takes a little doing but we made it in style.

ROBBY

You can say that again.

Pa slides in the room and sits.

PA

Hoo whee! That's a helluva outhouse ya got there.

ROBBY

Thanks.

PA

(sniffs his fingers)

Ya got some fine smellin soap in there. Though not enough to get Charlie's smell offa me.

ROBBY

Charlie?

MA

Charlie's our bull.

ROBBY

Of course he is. Were you grooming him?

PA

Hell no. I castrated him.

ROBBY

You... you castrated a bull?

PA

Just this morning. That ol Charlie rogered nearly every one of our cows. Reckon they don't wanna be milked much after they been fucked by ol Charlie.

Ma rolls her eyes.

MA

Pa, really. Do you hafta speak of this before dinner?

PA

Would you reckon I talk about it before dessert?

(to Robby)

Anyway, old Charlie's got a dick the size of Florida. So, I'm standin there with his delicates in my hands wonderin what in tarnation to do with em. Musta weighed about five pounds each.

MA

What did you do with em?

PA

Well, we had to leave so I just threw em in the sink.

MA

You threw them in the sink?

PA

Well, where'd you want me to put em?

MA

Anywhere but the sink.

Pa nudges Robby.

PA

Women, huh?

ROBBY

Actually, I can kind of see her point.

PA

(narrows his eyes)

You ain't gettin all womanish on me now, are ya?

KIM (O.S.)
Oh nuts!

KITCHEN

Kim pulls a smoking roast from the oven as everyone enters.

KIM
(almost in tears)
I burnt the roast.

MA
Oh, dear. That's not good.

PA
Looks fine to me.

Robby grabs the nearby bottle of wine.

ROBBY
Anyone want a drink?

Kim glares at him.

KIM
I suppose we can order takeout.

PA
Well, shit. I got a better idea.

Pa leaves the room. Robby takes a hit straight from the bottle, wipes his mouth with his sleeve.

Kim glares some more. Ma huffs

Pa reenters holding four dead chickens and a machete.

PA (CONT'D)
I got us covered, darlin.

KIM
Oh, Pa, that's a great idea. Just like when I was a child.

ROBBY
What are you doing?

KIM
When I was young, we'd slaughter our very own chickens for special occasions.

PA
 And this is a special occasion,
 young feller.

Pa slides the chicken onto the counter and raises the machete. It hits the overhead light and see-saws eerily across his face.

ROBBY
 No, wait! You don't have to do
 this. Really.

PA
 Ain't nothin, really. I'll show ya
 how to pluck em and skin em. Kimmie
 Joe, you got a pot er somethin?
 These thing er gonna bleed out.

Kim grabs a pot and hands it to Pa.

KIM
 Ain't you ever had fresh chicken,
 honey?

ROBBY
 Not this fresh!

MA
 It's all right, dear. When you come
 visit us we'll show you how to
 slaughter a pig, too.

ROBBY
 Whoa. I'm not slaughtering a pig.

KIM
 Why not? You love bacon.

ROBBY
 Jesus Christ, Kim. You can't be
 serious here. This is like the
 Manson family.

Pa shifts his gaze to Robby, winks.

PA
 Who do ya think Charlie the bull is
 named after?

ROBBY
 Holy shit.

Ma puts her hand on Robby's shoulder.

MA
Relax, dear. It's all right. You're
one of us now.

ROBBY
One of us?!

PA
Dinner is served!

Kim and Ma lock hands and embrace.

MA	KIM
One of us. One of us. One of us...	One of us. One of us. One of us...

Bug-eyed, Robby scans the room -- Pa ready to swing the
machete -- Kim and Ma chanting -- all that wine kicking in
and--

ROBBY
Stop it! Just stop!

PA
What's the matter, young feller?

ROBBY
What in the actual fuck is wrong
with you people?!

The room freezes. Awkward silence all around as Kim takes a
step forward.

KIM
What do you mean "you people?"

ROBBY
I...

KIM
You what?

Robby gestures to Pa, Chicken in one hand, machete raised in
the other. *Like, do I need to explain here?*

KIM (CONT'D)
That's what I thought. I think
we're done here.

With that, Pa peels off his fake beard. Ma removes her wig.

ROBBY
What the--

Pa steps forward, his voice now a distinguished English accent.

HAROLD
Harold Stanwyck. This is my wife,
Hope.

HOPE
(same English accent)
Pleasure.

All at once, it hits Robby.

ROBBY
Harold and Hope Stanwyck? The
Oregon Trail? Love Dies Slowly? The
Manchurian Tiger.

HOPE
The very same, dear boy.

Harold and Hope head off.

HAROLD
(to Kim)
The car's waiting. We'll see you
outside, dear.

Robby turns to Kim.

ROBBY
Your parents are actors?
(she nods)
I don't get it. This was all a
ruse?

KIM
It was a test.

ROBBY
A test?

KIM
One which you failed miserably.

ROBBY
You're shitting me?

KIM
No, Rob. I am not shitting you. You
know, I've dated a lot of guys,
okay?

(MORE)

KIM (CONT'D)

Either they want me to make them look better, or they know who my parents are and think that, somehow, they'll be set up for life or something. Money-wise. Who knows. Point being, none of it was ever about me, Rob. Not really. That's why I do this.

Rob shakes his head.

ROBBY

You've dont this before?

KIM

Yes.

ROBBY

That's not fair, Kim. That's not fair, and you know it.

KIM

Guess what? Life isn't fair. Goodbye, Robby.

As she heads out, something hits the floor. She turns to see Robby scooping up the engagement ring box.

KIM (CONT'D)

What is that?

He stuffs it in his pocket.

ROBBY

Nothing. Kim, seriously? You can't just leave like this.

KIM

It's over, Robby. Okay? It's over. Just don't... follow me, okay?

She leaves.

LIVING ROOM

Before she heads out, she notices her horseshoe crab shell on the mantle next to a picture of the two of them. A place of reverence.

She settles on it a moment, the first seeds of doubt appearing on her face before leaving.

KITCHEN

Robby just stands there, holding onto the counter as though he'd fall if he let go.

He stands upright, takes the ring out and places it next to the chicken on the counter. He exits the room.

After a beat, he reappears and hesitantly pokes the chicken.

That's fake, too.

INT. LIMOUSINE (DRIVING) - NIGHT

Kim sits silently between her parents.

HAROLD

It's for the best, Kim. Besides,
he's clearly out of your league.

HOPE

He's just like all the rest, I'm
afraid.

She purses her lips and nods slowly, clearly conflicted.

INT. ROBBY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Same old kitchen. Robby in front of the same old laptop sipping coffee.

SUPER: 2 Weeks Later

He slowly shuts the laptop. What's the use?

The doorbell rings.

ROBBY

(mutters)
Must be that mail order bride.

FOYER

Kim stands nervously behind the screen door with the sunlight in her hair.

Robby's speechless.

KIM

Hi.

ROBBY

Hi. You come back for your
horseshoe crab shell?

KIM

Um, no. Actually, I was hoping we
could talk if that's okay.

ROBBY

Yeah. Sure.

He lets her in.

LIVING ROOM

She sits on the sofa as Robby pulls up a chair. Silence.

ROBBY

What would you like to talk about?
Oh wait, let me guess. You forgot
to chastise me for leaving the
toilet seat up in the outhouse?

She chuckles.

KIM

No. Actually, I kind of wanted to
apologize for all that.

ROBBY

I gotta admit, it was elaborate.

KIM

I think I might have taken it a bit
too far.

ROBBY

Oh, do you think so?

KIM

I give you credit, though. You
lasted a lot longer than the
others. Most of my exes saw that
rust bucket pull up and were out
right there.

ROBBY

And what does that tell you?

KIM

That maybe I should tone it down a
little.

ROBBY
Maybe you should tone it down a
lot? What do you think?>

She nods silently.

KIM
Yeah.

Robby gets up and sits beside her.

ROBBY
Look, I think I understand why you
did this. You know? I get it. I
mean, I don't get it, but I get it.
If that makes any sense.

KIM
It kinda does.

ROBBY
I think love is more a series of
tests, but not the kind you plan
out. It's just something you go
through. Getting hurt is part of
the game. You know what they say?
Love would hold no charm if it
wasn't for the pain.

KIM
Who said that?

ROBBY
It's a Horseshoe Crab lyric.

KIM
(smiles)
Of course it is. So...

ROBBY
So?

KIM
So do you think that maybe we could
try this again?

ROBBY
Just you and me this time?

KIM
Just you and me.

He slides his arm around her, pulls her in.

ROBBY
I'd like that.

KIM
Me too.

She leans her head on his shoulder, closes her eyes. Silence.
This is what vulnerability feels like.

ROBBY
Did you wanna do anything today?

She shakes her head, snuggles in closer.

KIM
Nope. Just sitting here is fine.

ROBBY
Okay. You know, there is one thing
we haven't done.

KIM
What would that be?

ROBBY
Well, you still haven't met my
parents yet.

Her eyes snap open.

THE END