

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT

by

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## CHARACTERS

TOBI – *a trans woman in her early 20s, she's confident, funny, and not shy about sharing her opinions.*

MARK – *a cis man in his early 20s, he's kind and sincere, but his circumspection can lead to equivocation on his part.*

## SETTING

A restaurant in a mid-size U.S. city.

## TIME

Present day.

## PUNCTUATION NOTES

A stroke (/) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue.

A dash (-) marks the halting of a thought.

TOBI, a trans woman in her 20s, and MARK, a cis man in his 20s, sit at a restaurant.

MARK

I like your hair.

TOBI

Thanks.

MARK

Did it take a long time to dye it?

TOBI

Yeah, but it's worth it.

MARK

Cool.

TOBI

It took even longer to get my "science vagina."

MARK

What?

TOBI

My science vagina, you know?

MARK

You mean, like –

TOBI

My little road to nowhere.

MARK

Oh . . . you're, um, / trans

TOBI

The advanced model. Yes.

MARK

Right, I guess I – that wasn't on your profile, / was it

TOBI

No.

MARK

Okay, I thought I would have remembered.

TOBI

I got a little tired of being asked if I have a dick, so I decided to share the news in person.

MARK

Sure, that makes – um, it . . . might have been nice to know, though. For me, I / mean

TOBI

(subtly challenging)

Why, is there some difference between trans women and cis women? It seemed like we were getting / along

MARK

Yeah, we – um . . .

TOBI

You like my hair, right?

MARK

It's – never mind. Forget I said –

TOBI

Okay. Did you go to school around here?

MARK

Close. My family lives a few hours away. What about you?

TOBI

I came here for college, and decided to stay.

MARK

It's pretty nice, huh? What did you study?

TOBI

Poli Sci, then law –

(playful)

I like talking – well, arguing, really . . . What about you?

MARK

Computer science.

TOBI

Are you a coder? Engineer?

MARK

Kind of, um . . . I wanted to teach – high school.  
but then a friend asked me to help with his  
business

TOBI

Got it.

MARK

Are you a – do you practice law?

TOBI

(nods)

I'm a public defender.

MARK

Oh. Is that cool?

TOBI

“Cool”? . . . No. It's – I'm too much of a do-gooder  
to be . . . I like it, you know?

MARK

Sure.

(pause, hiding discomfort)

Have you dated a lot?

TOBI

Like, in my life, / or

MARK

I meant . . . are guys mostly, like, okay / with

TOBI

“Okay” with what, Mark?

MARK

I just – because you're, you know . . . “trans,” / so

TOBI

Really? . . . You want to know if men I've dated  
have / been “okay” with

MARK

Sorry.

Tobi theatrically searches through her purse.

TOBI

Just a second. I have a letter from a very old, important man giving you permission to be “okay” with / dating me

MARK

It was just a question.

TOBI

Right, and what do want me to say? “Men are magically not transphobic around me. It’s amazing. Just be like them, and / we’ll be fine”

MARK

I didn’t mean to offend you.

(softly, looking down)

I’ve never been on a date with . . . someone like you before, and I –

TOBI

Alright . . . I’m sorry I was sarcastic.

MARK

Do you know how – never mind.

TOBI

What were you going to ask?

MARK

It was dumb. We can talk about something / else

TOBI

Okay. Have “you” dated a lot, Mark?

MARK

Oh, not really. I had a girlfriend in college, and I was with someone last year for a while.

TOBI

You two split up?

MARK

She moved for work.

TOBI

Oh, that's too bad.

MARK

Was your family supportive? . . . About your transition, / I mean

TOBI

Yeah.

MARK

Cool . . . and the people at / your school

TOBI

There were a few jerks, but mostly / yes

MARK

That's good . . . and when you've dated, have the friends of the people you've been / with, um

TOBI

Oh, so you didn't really care about how I was treated, you were just wondering how "you" were / going to

MARK

No - I mean, / well

TOBI

Here's some advice. It comes from my experience:  
If there's someone who doesn't respect you  
because of a prejudice they hold -  
(gathers things to leave)  
You're better off not having them in / your life

MARK

No, Tobi. Wait -

TOBI

What for, Mark?

MARK

I wasn't trying to upset you. I'm enjoying our date.

TOBI

Really? Because it feels like you're just trying to

work out how much status you would lose if we  
were a / couple

MARK

That's not true. I'm sorry it seemed / that way

TOBI

If it wasn't true, then why did you / ask me

MARK

I guess . . . because I was scared.

TOBI

Scared of what your friends – I hate that men are  
so fragile about shit like this.

MARK

I was trying to be honest . . . How is that “fragile”?

TOBI

Seriously? You're afraid if we dated and you told  
your friends I'm trans, they'd say, “That's nearly the  
same as dating a man,” and / then you'd

MARK

Can we just forget I / said

TOBI

When we sat down did you think / I was trans

MARK

Maybe we can . . . just look at our / menus

TOBI

The answer is “no,” because you were surprised  
when I disclosed / to you

MARK

Tobi –

TOBI

But you find out I “am” trans, and you think your  
friends will abandon you. How do you think I felt  
when I / transitioned

MARK

That was different, wasn't / it

TOBI

I thought people would reject me, and some people did. Do you know which ones? . . . The type of guys you're afraid of.

Pause.

MARK

(detached)

I'm sorry that happened / to you

TOBI

I am, too. But I already told you what I learned from it, didn't I?

MARK

Do you think I'm prejudiced?

TOBI

I don't really know.

MARK

I'm not . . . I don't think, um, differently about you because / you're transgender

TOBI

If that was true, I don't think we'd be having the conversation we're / having

MARK

What I meant – I just . . . I guess my friends' opinions shouldn't influence me / so much

TOBI

This is why trans women of color get killed, you know? The people who date them, or are attracted to / them

MARK

I wouldn't / ever

TOBI

I wasn't saying you – I just meant, this stigma is really toxic, and it upsets me.

MARK

I understand.

TOBI

If your friends would be jerks about this, then they probably suck, you know? And if they're cool about it, then we're just arguing for no reason.

MARK  
(hesitant)

I guess that's / true

TOBI

I'm starting to lose patience, Mark.

MARK

I wish you wouldn't. This is just . . . unexpected. Maybe we can talk about something / else

TOBI

Okay . . . what are your hobbies?

MARK

I like to go on hikes / and

TOBI

"Hikes"? I don't believe it.

MARK

What? Why don't you / believe

TOBI

Every dating profile says, "I like hiking." If it was true, there'd be no single people in the city. You'd all be / on trails somewhere

MARK

I do, though . . . honestly.

TOBI

Fine. I'll take your word.

MARK

What about you? What are your hobbies?

TOBI

I volunteer at the queer youth center.

MARK

That's nice.

TOBI  
(pointed)

Thanks. I try to convince them things will get better, despite ample evidence to the contrary.

MARK

Right –

(vulnerable)

I know I've been . . . kind of rude, or . . . maybe inadvertently offensive tonight, and I'm sorry about that . . . I am enjoying spending time with you.

TOBI  
(guarded)

You are?

MARK

Yeah . . . You're smart, and funny, and extremely persuasive.

TOBI  
(sheepish)

I said I enjoy arguing –

(vulnerable)

I'm . . . enjoying our talk, too. You're a good listener, and you're honest. I mean, maybe not about the hiking, but in general.

MARK  
(laughs)

I'm glad.

TOBI

Well, we didn't finish our talk about your "worries," did we?

MARK

Oh. I guess we / didn't

TOBI

Are they going to keep us from spending time together in the / future

MARK

I don't think so.

TOBI

Really?

MARK

No . . . like you said, people who didn't respect a person I care about wouldn't be worth prioritizing in my life. And besides, there would be other people I could meet who would, right?

TOBI

Sure . . . Just so you know, though, they're mostly furries who use neopronouns.

MARK

(concerned)

What? . . . I'm not sure I / understand

TOBI

Sorry, it was just a joke.

MARK

(relieved)

Oh, okay.

TOBI

I'm glad we had this talk.

MARK

So am I.

Both smile and pick up menus.