

SWIPE RIGHT

by

Mikki Gillette

mikkigillette@gmail.com
(503) 317-6932
mikkigillette.com

CHARACTERS:

MANDY – a trans woman in her early 20s

DERRICK – a cis man in his early 20s

LOCATION:

A Thai restaurant in a U.S. city.

TIME:

Present day.

MANDY and DERRICK, both in their early 20s, sit at a restaurant table. Mandy appears a little tense and suspicious. Derrick is confident, open, and guileless.

DERRICK

How long have you been on Tinder?

MANDY

Just a few weeks . . . and you?

DERRICK

A while. I only use it off and on, though . . . Have guys been cool to you on there?

MANDY

(defensive)

What does that mean?

DERRICK

(surprised, cautious)

I just meant, like, when you message, or text . . . are they nice, or, like, douche-y, or something . . . you know, like dick pics, that sort of thing.

Mandy stares angrily a moment. Her brow then knits in doubt. She sighs, frowning.

MANDY

Fuck . . . you know, maybe I'm not up for this. You seem . . . average, I guess, but -

DERRICK

(incredulous)

Did you just call me "average"?

MANDY

We've been here, like, a minute, and you've already asked me how "guys treat me," and made a genital reference, and I'm just . . .

DERRICK

Huh? . . . You mean "dick pic"?

MANDY

Yes, I mean "dick pic."

Pause.

DERRICK

I think I'm just making, like, standard first date conversation, Mandy, but if you want to talk about it, or make suggestions, or something, we can do that.

MANDY

(shakes head wearily)

Have you dated a trans woman before, Derrick?

DERRICK

(confused)

Um, no . . . but I think my cousin's trans. I mean, he, or she, or, um, I don't know - they live back east and -

MANDY

You do know I'm trans, right?

(pause)

It was on my profile. Like, prominently.

DERRICK

Um . . . yeah, of course. It's, you know . . .

MANDY

You didn't know I'm trans.

DERRICK

I mean, if you're asking, like, did I know before you just said it, then . . . um, no . . . I didn't know . . . I'm glad you mentioned it, though, and that we're getting to know each other.

As Derrick's talked, Mandy's brought out her phone and searched on it.

MANDY

It's, like, the *second thing*. "24" "trans."

DERRICK

(uncomfortable)

I'm not sure why you're making it such a big thing Mandy. It's not a crime to not read someone's profile . . . some people do that purposely in order to not build up unrealistic expectations about people.

MANDY

(sighs)

Maybe you're right. Should we talk about -

DERRICK

Oh! Dick pic! Now I see! Right, I couldn't figure out why that was bothering you, but . . . sure, yeah, that might have seemed rude.

Mandy stares insulted. An awkward pause follows.

MANDY

(annoyed)

Maybe we should talk about something else.

DERRICK

Sure. How did you choose this restaurant?

MANDY

Oh, someone I knew introduced me to it. They have good Thai food.

DERRICK

(coyly)

Was it a date?

MANDY

No, just a friend. Do you date often?

DERRICK

(stares)

So you were, like, a boy. That's crazy! I would never -

MANDY

What the fuck?! Do I just start scrutinizing you and blurting out shit?

DERRICK

No, it's cool. I was appreciating, like, you know, who you are.

MANDY

God, I wish I was a lesbian. Do you know what it's like to be forcibly socialized male, transition

and realize what a sexist asshole society made you, and then try to date men? It's like a cruel social experiment, or something.

DERRICK

(offended)

That's kind of rude, Mandy. I'm not judging you for who you are. It's mean to say I'm a jerk just because I'm male.

Mandy cries.

MANDY

You asked how guys treat me on Tinder? A lot of them are just really transphobic. Like, "I thought you were cute, but then I read your profile. Sorry, I'm not into dudes," you know. It's probably made me a little jaded.

(sincerely)

Sorry.

DERRICK

Wow. That's shitty, Mandy. I'm sorry.

(frowns)

Yeah, some guys are dicks.

MANDY

Thanks.

DERRICK

I have this one friend, and, like, all he does is post shit to this fat-shaming subreddit, and then brag about it on twitter.

MANDY

(slightly disturbed)

Oh, um -

DERRICK

And he's funny, so sometimes I'll retweet, or whatever, but other times I'll think, "Why are -"

MANDY

What the fuck are you talking about Derrick?!

DERRICK

Huh?

MANDY

You retweet your fat shaming shithead friend's online harassment? That's what you're telling me after I talk about being harassed by transphobic dude-bros on Tinder?

DERRICK

(thinking)

Oh, yeah . . . I mean, the story was about how, you know . . . I don't approve -

MANDY

You just said you retweet him.

DERRICK

Um, well -

MANDY

There's, like, literally no more direct way you could approve of what you're saying you disapprove of.

DERRICK

You're being a little hostile, Mandy. Like, I'm open to talking about this.

MANDY

(warily)

Okay.

DERRICK

I don't think people should go to those sites. And then some people find those women's social media accounts and harass them there. That's totally fucked up.

MANDY

I agree.

DERRICK

See? I read BuzzFeed and stuff.

MANDY

Someone put my friend's info on a trans shaming

forum like that, too.

DERRICK

Oh, that's awful.

MANDY

The dickheads who went to that site emailed her and contacted her work. They called her mentally ill -

(pause, chokes up)

They told her family she was a porn actress -

DERRICK

I'm sorry -

MANDY

They tried to get her fired. She didn't kill herself, but . . . she talked about it.

DERRICK

That's so fucked up. Trolls like that are -

MANDY

And why?! You know? She's fucking transgender. That's it. She's not transgender Hitler or something. Why are people--people who are all white guys--so hateful?

DERRICK

I don't know.

(pause, cautious and annoyed)

You know, not *all* white guys are like that. I mean, I've never tried to get someone fired for being trans, or fat, or something.

MANDY

(annoyed, distant)

I guess . . .

DERRICK

It's true.

MANDY

You said two minutes ago you retweet your friend's crap, Derrick.

DERRICK

Yeah . . . but I don't think I'd do that now,
after, like, hearing what you said.

MANDY

(warily)

Okay . . . but how did you feel when I said I
was trans?

DERRICK

(nervous)

What do you mean?

MANDY

After scrupulously avoiding my profile, in
order to not build up expectations, and then
learning I'm trans and not cis, did it change
how you feel about me?

DERRICK

(pause, thinks hard)

Well . . . I know I still thought you were cute
. . . I had a thousand questions, and I didn't
blurt them out, because I know that's rude -
See? I told you I read shit about this stuff!

MANDY

(laughs, then serious)

But did you think other stuff? Like you didn't
want to date me, or thought I was -

(looks down)

Gross, or something.

DERRICK

No, I mean . . . you're the first trans person
I've met, but I definitely didn't think you
were . . . you know . . .

Pause.

MANDY

(frowns)

Maybe I should go.

Mandy stands. Derrick does as well.

DERRICK

God, you're really hard to just talk to. Please sit. We haven't even ordered yet.

MANDY

(rolls eyes)

What should we talk about at dinner, Derrick?
How you're unable to say I'm not gross?

DERRICK

(exasperated)

I'm sorry. No one's ever asked me that five minutes into a first date before, so I froze a little. I swear, I don't think you're gross.

Mandy, slightly embarrassed, sits. Derrick sits, as well.

MANDY

I'm sorry. I'm probably really defensive and annoying. I see things that people say, and I guess I assume, you know, everyone thinks that way.

DERRICK

It's OK. People are crazy online.

(laughs)

For a minute there, I thought you might be one of those . . . what are they called? . . . You know like misogynists, only men?

Mandy stares in disbelief.

MANDY

Are you calling me a man?

DERRICK

(laughs)

No! Like when women hate men. There's a word, like misogynist. What's the word?

Mandy starts crying.

DERRICK

(confused, worried)

Wait. What happened? . . . Mandy? Why are

you -

MANDY

I don't think I can . . . function. All I do is pick fights, and then freak out when people can't remember the word "misandrist," because I think they're misgendering me.

(upset)

And, by the way, being upset about transphobia, and the people who perpetrate it, doesn't make someone a -

She stops, annoyed at having become upset again.

DERRICK

(to self)

"Misandrist" . . . that was it.

Mandy laughs softly.

DERRICK

I don't think you're a person who hates men. It was a dumb joke . . .

(gentle, flirty)

But maybe, just as an experiment, you could try assuming I'm not implying mean, transphobic things when I talk to, or about, you.

Mandy thinks, her look slightly skeptical.

MANDY

I could maybe, if you concede that neither you nor anyone else, should make jokes about trans women, since, for the last 2,000 years or so, those jokes have all been uniformly shitty.

Derrick thinks a moment, nodding to himself. The two nod cautiously, picking up their menus.

DERRICK

This date reminds me of Model U.N. in high school, where you'd create rules about how everyone addressed each other. "Argentina recognizes Uruguay and salutes its autonomy . . ."

(worried)

I mean, like, in a good way.

Mandy laughs.

MANDY

I get it . . . "And if relations remain warm
between our states . . . maybe your ambassador
can pay our land a visit."

DERRICK

(surprised, happy, to self)
Fuck yeah.