

THERE'S SOMETHING ON MY MIND

By

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CHARACTERS:

CINDY – a young woman in her 20s

DOUG – a young man in her 20s

WAITRESS – a young restaurant server

SETTING:

An Italian restaurant in the evening.

TIME:

Present day.

A man, DOUG, and a woman, CINDY, sit down at a restaurant table. They are conventionally attractive, 20-something types. Cindy is full of anxious energy. Doug's manner seems kind.

CINDY

(cheerful)

This is a nice place.

DOUG

I know. I like it, too. So, Pam said you know a lot about wine?

CINDY

She did? I know a little. I'm not a big drinker, or anything, though, haha.

DOUG

Oh, right. I just meant -

CINDY

(in a funny voice)

"Thanks a lot, Pam. Make me look like a lush," haha.

DOUG

No, I think she just meant, you know -

CINDY

(trying to compose herself)

Ah, my . . . I'm probably just a little nervous -

(funny voice)

"Blind date and all," haha. "Don't really know you."

DOUG

Oh, totally. Just look at me, haha. Hands are shaking.

CINDY

"Might get raped, and everything," haha.

DOUG

Wait, what?

CINDY

"1 in 6 women, you know? Could be me, right?"

haha.

(pause. Doug looks confused, stunned)
"Statistically speaking. Real crap shoot and all."

DOUG

(earnest)

Are you saying - I swear to you, I would - you don't think - wait, are you joking Cindy?

CINDY

(laughs)

Of course! I'm just blabbing.

DOUG

Oh, good.

(sighs)

Gosh, for a second - but wait, you said you were afraid, and then you -

CINDY

1 in 6, 1 in 6 - it's a lot of women! Who are all these men, right? Do you know any rapists? Every woman I know has been raped, but I've never met a rapist.

DOUG

Well, no. I mean, a guy I knew once told me he was afraid he'd raped a girl he'd seen, but he wasn't sure.

CINDY

He was afraid he'd raped *her*? That doesn't sound like something to be afraid of! Raping someone sounds like a really preventable fear, if you ask me.

DOUG

(nervously)

Maybe we can talk about something else.

Pause. The two sit uneasily.

CINDY

If 1 out of 6 women are raped, wouldn't that mean that between -

DOUG

Um, you're talking about rape again, Cindy, can't you -

CINDY

No, wait, this is interesting. If there are 25 women on the Bachelor, then just over four of them would be raped in the course of a season, wouldn't they?

DOUG

(uncomfortably)

I don't think 1 in 6 women are continuously raped. I think it means over the course of their lifetimes.

CINDY

It's still a remarkably high percentage, though. 16.6 out of every 100 of us, sexually violated. "Do you want to have sex?" "Not really." "Well, I do."

(makes grunting sounds)

I mean, what the fuck?!

DOUG

I'm not a rapist.

CINDY

Who is? I mean, besides your friend, the frightened one. Unless he's afraid he's raped 1 in 6 women, there's a lot of you who are less than forthcoming.

Pause. Cindy looks lost in thought.

DOUG

(affecting cheer)

Do you like pasta? The linguine here is supposed to be -

CINDY

(snapping back)

Oh, yes, pasta. I do like pasta.

DOUG

Oh, good. Me, too. The garlic bread's also

nice, I've heard, if you like that.

CINDY

Oh good. Keep away the vampires, haha.

(Doug laughs, hopefully)

When you think about it, vampires are just rapists, huh? And people are like, "Oh, it's a metaphor for how Victorian women and Mormons are repressed," but that's just victim blaming, isn't it? Why aren't they talking about Dracula being a predator?

DOUG

(exasperated)

Cindy.

CINDY

(still wound up)

What?!

DOUG

Well . . . this is very unusual, and slightly disturbing, first date conversation!

CINDY

(miffed)

Is it? Well, I suppose I could talk about preferring cats to dogs, or spending a semester in Barcelona, but I guess, being here on a date, I'm thinking a little more about -

(pause, boiling over)

RAPE!

Both look around, nervously, then back at each other.

DOUG

Have I done something to scare you? I've tried to be a gentleman.

CINDY

(bashful)

No. I guess it's just, you know, the two of us are on a date, and if it goes well . . . we might become intimate, and then, well -

(angry)

There might be a rape.

DOUG

(confused)

Have you been raped? If you have -

CINDY

Have you raped, Doug?

DOUG

(offended)

What?!

CINDY

In college? Did you have sex with a girl who had passed out? Or with someone who was drunk, and said "no"?

DOUG

(thinking, frightened)

No, I - um, I never -

CINDY

You just knew people who did, maybe? 1 in 6 of your friends, perhaps, who were nothing like you?

Pause, Cindy appears riled, as Doug stews.

DOUG

(sourly)

Well, I'll have to be sure to tell Pam "thank you" for setting us up.

CINDY

(mocking)

Oh no, the potential rapist doesn't like me! What if he tells Pam? All my chances at victimization might dry up.

DOUG

(trying to calm himself)

Cindy, I came here tonight for a nice meal, conversation -

(ruefully)

Fun - which now seems hopelessly

misguided, but not with any thoughts of taking advantage of anyone.

CINDY

(thinking aloud)

Well, of course you weren't *thinking* of raping me. If you were *thinking* of it, you'd be a self-aware sociopath, and you couldn't live with yourself. If all rapists comported themselves like they were intending to rape, it would be easier to avoid them, wouldn't it?

DOUG

Is there nothing I can say -

CINDY

(interrupting)

And the actual "nice guys" - since all men claim to -

DOUG

(exploding)

I'M nice! Me! I'm a nice -

A WAITRESS approaches, terrified, to take their order.

WAITRESS

Um, did you want to start with drinks? Or, um, appetizers, or something?

Doug and Cindy appear sheepish.

BOTH

(quietly)

Garlic bread?

The waitress nods and backs away, still leery. Pause, Cindy stares intently.

CINDY

(wary)

Ok, you *seem* nice. And you're still sitting here, even after I've foregrounded all my arguments against heterosexual dating.

(Doug groans)

Which are all true!
(Doug nods begrudgingly)
It's still . . .
(sad, vulnerable)
Very hard to trust, though.

Cindy chokes up a little, looking down.

DOUG
(sympathetically)
Oh, right. But, we're just sharing now,
and having a meal.

CINDY
(nods)
That's true. We're just talking about
. . . well, mostly about rape, I guess, but,
well, it's on my mind . . .
(sighs)
Why do we have sex? I mean, to make
babies, of course, but we can do that in
labs now, so, really, we - well, it feels
good, I suppose, too, but it's so . . .
perilous, isn't it? I mean, not the act
itself, just being alone with someone,
when you may or may not want to have
sex with them, because, let's face it,
statistically, you guys have trouble
observing red lights, don't you?

DOUG
People can build trust, I think, until being
in the spot you're describing feels ok.

CINDY
(exasperated)
I know! I tell myself, "So many couples
are happy. Unless all those women are
simultaneously blocking out ongoing
sexual assault, safe, healthy relationships
are possible," but then I go out with
someone, and all I can see is Mr. Hyde -
you know? Like Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde?
(Doug nods)
Maybe this one's Dr. Jekyll, I hope, and
not Mr. Hyde, I tell myself, but Dr. Jekyll

is fucking Mr. Hyde! It's the whole point of the fucking story. I'm so fucking freaked out, that even my best case scenario is completely hopeless.

Cindy drops her head and arms onto the table in defeat. With great caution, Doug taps her shoulder in comfort.

DOUG

(nervously)

I actually think it's good that you said all this.

CINDY

(without sitting up, muffled)

Really?

DOUG

(cautiously cheery)

Yeah, you know, "awareness is the first step," and all.

CINDY

(overwhelmed, muffled)

First of how many?

DOUG

Well . . . I don't know . . .

(worried)

But *maybe* you can sit up, like, before the garlic bread comes?

Cindy sighs, and raises herself.

CINDY

(embarrassed)

Sorry. My dating skills suck.

DOUG

No -

CINDY

(interrupting)

I'm like a feral cat. "Here kitty, have some milk," and the cat's like, "No, I'll just pee on your bed, scratch you, and

burrow under the couch, because those
are all things that make sense."

Doug attempts to contradict her, but draws a blank. A sad pause ensues.

DOUG

(measured)

While "rapist" is not a label I enjoy
defending myself against . . . the points
you've points are all understandable.

CINDY

(hopeful)

Really? You don't think I'm severely
paranoid or antisocial?

DOUG

(momentarily stumped)

Um . . . well, not so much that you didn't
come out tonight, right?

Cindy sighs happily, as Doug looks relieved.

CINDY

(thinking aloud)

You're right! I'm here.

(looks around)

And so far things are going pretty well,
I guess, right?

(Doug nods, containing his bafflement)

We're just two . . . *friendly* people. Well-
adjusted non-sex criminals.

Cindy looks hopefully. Doug nods, again stifling confusion.

DOUG

Um, sure.

CINDY

Italian food enthusiasts, optimistically
pursuing an evening void of any
perpetration, or - no, I won't even mention
that, because that, potentially, has a five in
six chance of going without saying, doesn't it?

DOUG

Um, yeah.

CINDY

And we have lots of other things we could talk about, like travel, or books, or the patriarchy, although that would probably double back to rape, so maybe it's not a good one.

DOUG

(carefully)

Cindy ...

CINDY

(worried)

Yes?

(pause, Doug chooses his words)

I know. I'm crazy, right?

DOUG

(concerned)

No.

CINDY

I'm too much? I'm weird?

DOUG

Um -

(thinks)

Well, no, I mean, that's not what I was going to say.

CINDY

I'm -

(chokes up)

Damaged goods.

Doug takes her hand. The two sit silently for a moment, as Cindy gathers herself.

CINDY

I don't really think that. It's just sometimes, I have all these thoughts in my head I don't feel like I can say out loud - well, not tonight, obviously - and they build up, and it feels like no one would understand, and ...

(Cindy sighs. Doug smiles)

Oh, but you were going to say something,
and I started talking. What did you want to
say?

DOUG

Oh, it was nothing. Forget it.

Pause. The two share a deep glance, and Cindy picks up a wine list.

CINDY

Should I choose something? Did you want
a glass?

DOUG

Sure. Do you want a red?

CINDY

(stares a long moment; intently)
Ok.

Pause.

DOUG

(confused)

Did you mean 'ok' about the wine?

Pause. Cindy smiles, then goes back to the wine list.