

THE REALIST  
Kayla Temshiv

## **CHARACTERS**

Nathan: 28. A romantic. Alex's best friend from college. Constantly in search of "the one".

Gwen: 27. "The one". Maybe. An aspiring actress. A person people can't help but love.

Alex: 28. A cynic. The best accountant. A good friend, a great brother. Extremely self-reliant.

Natalie: 26. Alex's sister. Mature and fiercely loyal. A journalist who never leaves home.

Bri: 26. Natalie's best friend and photographer. Great at both. Awkward, but well-intentioned.

## **SETTING**

New York City. And sometimes... England?

## **TIME**

Now/Now-ish

## **NOTES**

The set could be either hyper-realistic, or deeply imaginative. Dealer's choice!  
There is no "good guy" in this play, as there is no "bad" one. These are not good people, they are deeply flawed and should be played as such.

# ACT 1

SCENE 1.

*Sunday. Nathan's living room. Alex and Nathan drink beers.*

**ALEX.** Nope, nothing like that.

**NATHAN.** I'm telling you, this girl is special.

**ALEX.** No girl is *that* special.

**NATHAN.** She is. This one is.

**ALEX.** You're a romantic-

**NATHAN.** And you're a cynic. I'm telling you Alex, this one could be *the* one.

**ALEX.** And you met her where, Starbucks? Or was it some hipster coffee place?

**NATHAN.** "The Underground".

**ALEX.** Okay, so you go to this "hipster" coffee place, and the first girl in skinny jeans and an ironic t-shirt is "the one"?

**NATHAN.** Hey, screw you. *(Beat)* Her shirt said "Save the bees or lose this honey"-

**ALEX.** Oh my god-

**NATHAN.** It's funny!

**ALEX.** It's bullshit, man. Straight up hipster bullshit.

**NATHAN.** Don't let your sister hear you say that. She's all into that activist stuff.

**ALEX.** Hey, it's fine to be an activist. Love activism, but once it's on a t-shirt, I'm out.

**NATHAN.** Whatever. I told her I was very pro-bee.

**ALEX.** "Pro-Bee"?

**NATHAN.** It worked, dude. Got her phone number too. She wrote it on a napkin- *(Reaching into his pocket, he pulls out a crumpled napkin)* check it out.

*Alex takes the napkin and reads the number, he starts laughing.*

**NATHAN.** What? What?! C'mon Alex, please don't ruin this for me.

**ALEX.** Sorry, man. I don't think she likes you.

**NATHAN.** She gave me her number, she likes me!

**ALEX.** It's not her number.

**NATHAN.** What do you mean, 'it's not her number'?

**ALEX.** 481-516-2342. It's the fucking numbers from *Lost*, man: 4, 8, 15, 16, 23, 42.

**NATHAN.** You've got to be shitting me. *(Grabbing the paper, reading)* Why?

**ALEX.** I don't know, I'm starting to like her a lot more though-

**NATHAN.** You've *got* to be shitting me!

**ALEX.** Well check off hipster girls from the list of female subgroups you haven't been rejected by.

**NATHAN.** *(Standing up)* I'm getting another beer.

**ALEX.** Make that two?

**NATHAN.** Two.

**ALEX.** Thus stalls the revolving door that is your love life.

**NATHAN.** Hey, that's harsh.

**ALEX.** And true.

**NATHAN.** Whatever. At least my love life... "revolves" or whatever.

**ALEX.** You've got me there. A true philosopher.

**NATHAN.** What about you?

**ALEX.** What about me?

**NATHAN.** No lucky lady?

**ALEX.** Any lady in my life is far from lucky.

**NATHAN.** *(Passing Alex a beer and sitting back down)* Harsh.

**ALEX.** True.

*They drink.*

**NATHAN.** Want to watch the Giants' game?

**ALEX.** Sure. Who are they playing?

**NATHAN.** Hell if I know, I figured you knew.

**ALEX.** I've barely left the office this last month, who knew downsizing would be the thing to light a fire under my ass?

**NATHAN.** Right, I forgot that was happening. How bad?

**ALEX.** 15%, so-

**NATHAN.** Pretty bad.

**ALEX.** Appears so.

**NATHAN.** Are you worried?

**ALEX.** Nah, they need me. They wouldn't let me go if I asked them to.

**NATHAN.** All-star accountant.

**ALEX.** I am living the American dream.

*Alex turns on the TV and starts skimming channels. He finds the game, and leans back. He drinks. Nathan looks off into space. Alex sighs.*

**ALEX.** Say it.

**NATHAN.** Nah, it's nothing-

**ALEX.** What is it?

**NATHAN.** Why do I suck so much at relationships? Why did Destiny not just give me her real number?

**ALEX.** The hipster's name is Destiny?

**NATHAN.** Yes... what?

**ALEX.** Nothing.

**NATHAN.** She wasn't a stripper or anything-

**ALEX.** Hey, it's okay if she was.

**NATHAN.** I thought it was a sign-

**ALEX.** I believe you.

**NATHAN.** Why did Destiny (*Glaring at Alex*) give me a fake number?

**ALEX.** Well-

**NATHAN.** I'm nice! I'd like to think I'm attractive...

**ALEX.** Not my call.

**NATHAN.** ...I'm a nice guy...

**ALEX.** Sure you are, Nate.

**NATHAN.** She seemed nice enough...

**ALEX.** Obviously not-

**NATHAN.** ...attractive. There is no reason she couldn't have just given me her number! Worst case scenario, we go out and it's bad and we never see each other again. Best case, you know? Things work out. Is that too much to ask? To try? She seemed like she was looking for something serious-

**ALEX.** How could you tell?

**NATHAN.** -I played it cool. I didn't screw it up. I don't *think* I screwed it up.

**ALEX.** Probably a lesbian.

**NATHAN.** Probably.

**ALEX.** Luck of the draw. Plenty of fish.

**NATHAN.** Yeah. Yeah!

*They drink.*

**NATHAN.** That shirt was stupid anyway.

*The lights fade.*

SCENE 2.

*The next day. Evening. Natalie's apartment. Natalie is typing on her computer. Music plays. The kind of music Alex would call "hipster bullshit".*

**NATALIE.** *(Typing)* ...which is essentially unnecessary violence backed by outdated legal precedents... *(backspacing)* which is essentially more complicated than either side currently ... no, fuck it... *(backspacing)* it's the fucking outdated precedents-

*Bri enters from Natalie's kitchen, with two mugs of coffee.*

**NATALIE.** God bless your soul. Black?

**BRI.** Black. *(She passes Natalie a mug)* How's the article looking?

**NATALIE.** Eh. Jamie said I need to be less...

**BRI.** Opinionated?

**NATALIE.** No-

**BRI.** Left?

**NATALIE.** Yes, but no-

**BRI.** Bitchy?

**NATALIE.** Not quite, but good to know what you think of me. She went with "abrasive".

**BRI.** Well, Jamie can shove it up her ass.

**NATALIE.** Eh, it's not a big deal. Do you have the new photos?

**BRI.** *(Passing her an SD card)* Here.

**NATALIE.** Ugh, I love you. *(Sweetly)* Did I ever tell you that you're the best photographer I've ever worked with, and I'm so lucky to have you?

**BRI.** Only a few times.

**NATALIE.** *(Putting the card in her computer)* Screw Jamie. I like being abrasive. Abrasive is real. I could bend to biting with a touch of hope, but that's as far as I'll go... *(Opening the pictures)* Bri, these are amazing! Holy shit.

**BRI.** *(Blushing, but trying to play it off)* I try my best.

**NATALIE.** You are fantastic...

*Alex enters the apartment with take-out.*

**NATALIE.** Alex, check this out! Bri is a genius.

**BRI.** I wouldn't-

**NATALIE.** Seriously! These angles, the lighting, you sure you didn't stage this?

**BRI.** *(Blushing)* Pretty sure.

**ALEX.** *(Looking over Natalie's shoulder)* Bri, these are really great.

**BRI.** Thanks.

**ALEX.** They're really, really great. You two will be working for The Times soon.

**NATALIE.** No, thank you. None of that commercialized bullshit.

**ALEX.** You blog for a living and you hate your boss.

**NATALIE.** Everyone hates their boss! And, it's not a blog, it's an online news site.

**ALEX.** *(Sarcastically)* Mom would be so proud if you started writing for a hot shot newspaper-

**NATALIE.** And I'd rather cut off my hands than have people tell me what I can and can't write, and then sell it to WASP America.

**BRI.** We're the voice of the underdogs!

**NATALIE.** Hell yeah.

**BRI.** Hell yeah!

**ALEX.** Okay, *(starting to open up the take-out boxes and set up)* you can be the voice of the little people. You can even take down WASP America, but you might want to get out there and see it sometime, Nat.

**NATALIE.** I told you, I'm perfectly fine inside! And I have no reason to leave until-

**BRI/NATALIE.** Something out there changes, and it gives me a reason.

**BRI/ALEX.** We know.

**NATALIE.** And I'm sticking to it. Now if you'll excuse me- *(standing up and crossing towards the kitchen).*

**ALEX.** Where are you going?

**NATALIE.** More coffee. *(She exits to the kitchen)*

**ALEX.** You drink too much-

**NATALIE.** *(Offstage)* Fuck off!

*Alex and Bri are left alone. Alex continues setting up the take-out.*

**BRI.** Here, I can help.

**ALEX.** I've got it. Thanks.

**BRI.** No problem.

*Alex finishes setting up. A pause. They look around.*

**ALEX.** *(Making conversation)* Those really are great pictures.

**BRI.** Thanks.

**ALEX.** How's the application going?

**BRI.** *(Whispered, with a thumbs up)* Good! Really good.

**ALEX.** *(Whispered)* I take it you still haven't told Nat?

**BRI.** I'll tell her if I make it in.

**ALEX.** When you make it in.

**BRI.** If. Plus, I don't even know if I'll go. It's far.

**ALEX.** It's England.

**BRI.** England is far!

**ALEX.** With cell phones, and video messaging-

**BRI.** I don't know. It would be a lot. I'll think about it if, *if* I make it in.

**ALEX.** You will-

**BRI.** *(Loudly)* So, how's work?

**ALEX.** Corporate bullshit, what else is new?

**BRI.** Working for the man?

**ALEX.** *(Laughing)* You could say that. Crunching his numbers at least.

**BRI.** I hear you're indispensable.

**ALEX.** I'd sure like to think so.

**BRI.** *(Mockingly)* I can actually see your head getting bigger!

**ALEX.** Quick, photograph it! Maybe I'll end up on Natalie's blog! *(Posing)* I can see the headlines now. "Miracle Accountant in Over His Head, Or is He?" With a glowing picture of-

**BRI.** *(Snapping a picture)* You blinked and it looks stupid.

**ALEX.** C'mon Bri, I thought you were the best!

**BRI.** Well, we can't all be perfect.

*Natalie reenters with coffee.*

**NATALIE.** You two losers talking about me?

**ALEX.** Only bad things.

**NATALIE.** I expect nothing less.

*They sit to eat. One place is still unoccupied.*

**BRI.** Hey Alex, did you watch the game last night?

**ALEX.** Some, yeah. Did you two?

*Bri and Natalie laugh. Nathan walks in.*

**NATALIE.** Sup Nate.

**NATHAN.** Hey Nat. *(He clicks his tongue and points at her)* Hey guys. Alex, you won't believe this-

**NATALIE.** What about me? You think I *will*?

**BRI.** Did you meet a girl?

**NATHAN.** No- My life isn't all about girls. *(He puts his jacket on a chair, and sits down in front of the last take-out container. He begins eating)* Okay, so I'm walking to work, right? *(He pauses, expectantly)*

**ALEX.** Right?



**NATHAN.** And I'm running a little bit late, so I'm already a little on edge. Then I turn a corner, the one on 15th and 5th?

**ALEX.** I know the one.

**NATHAN.** I hear this sound, right? Like glass shattering. And then I hear some screaming. So I run toward it, and I'm thinking "Someone might be getting robbed,"-

**NATALIE.** *That's your first thought?*

**NATHAN.** And then I start to think about it, and I realize my CVS is two streets down, and I think "They might be trying to rob *me!*", and Mark would fire me if we got robbed cause I wasn't there, so I start running faster. I get there, right? In record time. And no windows are broken. So I'm thinking-

**NATALIE.** You're doing a *lot* of thinking.

**NATHAN.** -"Well, what was it?", so I double back to check, just to make sure everything's okay, and it turns out Ms. Hanneley down the street dropped her flowerpot off the windowsill again, and the old homeless man who lives on 12th-

**BRI.** Lewis or the guy who thought Alex's hat was a bird that one time-

**NATHAN.** Bird-guy! Lewis lives on 6th. He was screaming at it, thinking it was his ex-wife or something. So I head back, and guess what happened then?

**BRI.** I have no idea.

**NATHAN.** *(Pulling a crumpled twenty-dollar bill out of his pocket)* I found a twenty on the sidewalk! How crazy is that?

*A pause. Alex, Natalie and Bri all look at each other.*

**ALEX.** Crazy.

**BRI.** You had quite the morning.

**NATALIE.** That was so anticlimactic.

**NATHAN.** Screw you guys. I'm adding it to the start-up fund.

**ALEX.** How much is that now?

**NATHAN.** Twenty dollars.

**NATALIE.** Nice.

**NATHAN.** Laugh now. In a year or two, I'll be the hottest up-and-coming entrepreneur in New York City.

**ALEX.** Remind me again what you're starting-up?

**NATHAN.** A business.

**ALEX.** That does what exactly?

**NATHAN.** I don't know yet, but whatever it does, it'll be revolutionary.

**BRI.** *(Raising her coffee mug)* I'll drink to that.

**NATALIE.** *(After taking a drink)* And I'm out. *(Standing up)* Anyone else want coffee? Or a fork?

**ALEX.** Are you seriously getting more coffee?

**NATHAN.** *(To Natalie)* I'll take that fork, I can't use chopsticks for shit.

**ALEX.** *(Calling)* You're an addict!

*Natalie flips him off and exits to the kitchen.*

**NATHAN.** Maybe I'll start up a business that makes gourmet coffee makers for home use-

**BRI.** Keurig.

**NATHAN.** Damn it!

**ALEX.** You'll get there.

**NATHAN.** *(Mumbling, poking at his food with a chopstick)* Yeah, yeah.

**BRI.** *(Eating, speaking in between bites)* It took my dad until his late thirties to figure out what he wanted to do. He went to Hofstra *(gesturing to Nathan)* majored in Business Analytics, got out of college, had no idea what to do with his life. He worked everywhere, met my mom when they both worked for Old Navy. Romantic, I know. He worked at an art studio for a while, did some marketing stuff, designed some ads, that didn't really stick.

**NATHAN.** What does he do now?

**BRI.** Oh, he's a stay at home dad. Drives my little brother back and forth to Monroe Community.

*Natalie reenters with coffee and a fork. She passes the fork to Nathan.*

**NATHAN.** Thanks.

**NATALIE.** What did I miss?

**ALEX.** Just an Old Navy love story, and Nathan forgetting about Keurig for a second.

**NATALIE.** Seems about right.

*Lights fade.*