

TAMER

**I heard there was an infidel taking
over my digs. Hey cuz.**

Tamer puts his hand out. Basil awkwardly does the same. Tamer slaps the inside of Basil's hand and takes it into his own, doing a kind of secret handshake with it.

Basil motions forward to peck him twice on the cheek, as is the custom. Tamer flinches imperceptibly, but goes through with it. He then knocks his fist to Basil's and pulls away.

TAMER (CONT'D)

Man, sorry to drop in on you so late.

BASIL

Yallah, maalish metiz'aalsh. [It's ok, don't worry about it.]

Tamer puts an unlit cigarette in his lips.

TAMER

**I know it's embarrassing, but my Arabe
sucks. How's your English...or French?**

BASIL

French is so so...English is better.

TAMER

Hey, let's go to my room.

BASIL

Ok.

They go off to Tamer's room.

Tamer's room is completely different from Basil's. There's a shag carpet. A small broken TV sits next to a skull ashtray. A record player rests in the corner next to a stack of vinyl. There are classic punk rock posters on the wall as well as flyers from shows taped up everywhere.

TAMER

**I thought all the kids went to Jesuit
schools in Egypt and learned French.**

BASIL

Some...but I went to an English school.

TAMER

No wonder you sound like a fucking barrister.

(mock British accent)

Oye poppycock, mate. Cripes, where's me lighter.

Basil smiles, slightly embarrassed. Tamer's cigarette dangles from his lips as he digs in his pockets. Basil looks him up and down, his curiosity piqued.

TAMER (CONT'D)

Have a seat.

Basil sits on the bed. Tamer digs underneath the bed and pulls out a box. In the box is a small packet of rolling paper.

TAMER (CONT'D)

Do you smoke?

BASIL

Not really.

Tamer pulls a bag of pot with crushed hash from his back pocket and pinches a bit into some rolling paper.

TAMER

Well...nobody says you should start.

BASIL

I've done it before...once. In *Dahab*...on holiday. It didn't have much of an effect I guess. I didn't feel a thing.

TAMER

That's because over there you guys smoke camel shit.

BASIL

Well...I'm no expert on it.

Tamer licks across the paper, sealing the joint.

TAMER

I am. This is why you won't normally see me smoking these. But my pipe's back at the crash pad.

Basil's eyes scan across the old classic punk posters on the wall: *Exploited, Propagandi, Buzzcocks, Minor Threat, DOA,*

Dead Kennedys, Cockney Rejects, Sham 69, Crass, 7 Seconds, Youth of Today, Sick Of It All, Bad Brains. His eyes rest on a *Sex Pistols* poster.

TAMER (CONT'D)
You like those?

Basil nods amiably.

BASIL
Interesting...that's for sure.

TAMER
They didn't teach you about the *Pistols* in English class?

Basil smiles.

BASIL
 I'm afraid not.

Tamer's eyes grow wide.

TAMER
Man! What *kinda* English do they teach over there!? You gotta check this out.

Tamer fishes out his iPod from his pockets and toggles through its menu. He tries to untangle the ear buds and enthusiastically helps Basil get them into his ears. Tamer gives a wry smirk as he presses play. He watches as Basil's ears are assaulted with British sonic malevolence.

TAMER (CONT'D)
What do you think?

Tamer's eyes glow. He wants his cousin to love it. Basil smiles and tries to construct a tactful response. He pulls the buds out of his ears.

BASIL
 (searching)
 I think it's a bit like spicy food...it takes getting used to...but once you're there...it's like a whole world opens up.

Tamer cracks a slow wide grin.

TAMER
That's right. You nailed it, fuck!

BASIL
Ever been to Egypt?

TAMER
No. Dad never cared to go back or take us. He says everyone's a religious fanatic.

BASIL
That's not entirely true. I mean, like everywhere it has its faults. But it's also beautiful you know?

TAMER
Yeah. *Masr om el donya*. [Egypt is the mother of the world.]

BASIL
Haha. Exactly! I mean...the desert at night, the smell of a city that's alive.

TAMER
I've heard about the smell.

BASIL
People are great...the sense of humor. The food, the Red Sea! You would love it. Cairo is a 24 hour city...the night life is amazing!

TAMER
Nightlife? You want nightlife?

BASIL
Well, I've read about Crescent Street.

TAMER
Fuck that shit...that's for tourists. I'll take you out, don't worry about that.

Tamer burns himself on the lighter...

TAMER (CONT'D)
Tabarnak!..then takes a puff.

Basil smiles imperceptibly. Deep down he finds it amusing that he is related to this rebellious urchin.

TAMER (CONT'D)
Got a girlfriend back home?

BASIL
Yeah.

TAMER
Good bang?

Basil is slightly taken aback. He looks down and fiddles with the ear buds laying on the bed.

BASIL
Well... we're friends you know...we hang out, and she's cool...really cool.

TAMER
Having chicks as friends is like hanging out with the dentist between drilling sessions.

BASIL
Haven't heard that one before.

TAMER
Look, aside from the fact that your nuts will fall off in the winter from the cold, you're gonna love it here. What are you doing Sunday night?

BASIL
The usual. Studying.

TAMER
I have a show that night. Come out and see us.

Basil tries to get out of it:

BASIL
I don't know. I can't go too late I have a lab the next day I need to prep for.

TAMER
It's cool man, we go on at ten. We'll play a thirty minute opening set, max. You'll be showered, shaved, shat, and tucked in before midnight.

Basil turns this over in his mind. The prospect is intriguing.

BASIL
Promise?

TAMER

Well...that's up to you.

BASIL

Oh?

TAMER

There's gonna be a lot of short skirt there. So...I make no guarantees.

Tamer grins and takes a puff from the *spliff*. Basil turns it over in his mind. Tamer's eyebrows jump up and down. Basil finds this comical and laughs.

BASIL

Fair enough. Sounds like fun.

Tamer puts his hand on Basil's shoulder and gives it a squeeze.

TAMER

Do you know about Montreal girls?

BASIL

No, what?

TAMER

They'll sleep with you on the first night.

Basil doesn't say anything. His cheeks glow with a slight flush. Tamer relishes in the effect this bluntness has on his cousin.

BASIL

That's impressive.

TAMER

Oh, you don't even know, fuck.

Basil's eyes seem lost as he contemplates Tamer's words.

56.
Tamer is drinking a whiskey on the rocks at the bar in his neighborhood pub when Basil strolls in. Tamer gets up to greet him.

TAMER

Cuz have a seat. What are you having?

BASIL

Whatever you recommend

TAMER

(to the bartender)

He'll have one of these.

Tamer swirls the ice in his glass and lifts it to his lips. He crunches an ice-cube between his teeth.

TAMER (CONT'D)

(casually, into his drink)

You'll love it. It'll put hair on your ass.

Tamer spits the ice cube back into the glass. The BARTENDER begins the pour.

BASIL

This is on me.

TAMER

I'll get the drinks. You get 'em next time when we're somewhere expensive.

BASIL

Fair enough.

Basil looks around the pub as Tamer crosses his arms over the bar and slow sips his whiskey.

TAMER

How's school?

BASIL

It's fine.

TAMER

Up to your neck, eh?

BASIL

More or less.

The Bartender puts Basil's drink on the bar.

TAMER

You're a hero, cuz. You're doing the right thing.

Tamer lifts his drink to toast Basil. Basil haphazardly lifts his glass. Clink.

TAMER (CONT'D)

I certainly couldn't do it.

Tamer buries himself back into his glass.

BASIL

Well it's not for everybody...that's for sure. Tamer have you heard from the girls?

TAMER

The girls? Which ones?

BASIL

Desiree...Deena.

TAMER

Ah, those girls! No not really...we rarely see them except at shows.

BASIL

Hmmm.

TAMER

(disengaged)

Why? You falling in love?

Tamer knocks his glass back. Basil looks slightly annoyed as he answers dryly.

BASIL

No...It's just that...I've sent a few texts to Deena and she hasn't responded.

TAMER

How many is a few?

BASIL

I don't know...nine...ten maybe.

TAMER

You sent nine or ten texts with *no response*?

BASIL

Yeah not one.

(Tamer puts his hand on Basil's shoulder)

TAMER

Cuz...cuz...cuz. You might need to reign your horses in a little bit. Look, those girls...they're totally plugged into the scene. One night they do this, the next night they're doing that. With girls like *that*, every night there's something going on. If you're out of sight, you're out of mind. If one night you're at the hot place to be...you'll run into them again, and it will be like you just saw them yesterday...

(mocking)

Hey! Ho! Kiss kiss, cheri, bebe, so nice to see you!

Basil's face sinks in quiet desperation.

TAMER (CONT'D)

The second chicks like that stop moving and grooving, they wanna slit their wrists, they're like sharks. Look, I'm not saying they're not charming...but don't get hung up on Desiree and Deena. You'll just bring yourself into a world of misery.

Tamer takes a huge gulp of whiskey. Basil simply stares into his, listening. He finally takes a sip.

BASIL

I suppose you're right. I've got better things to think about.

Tamer can see his cousin is having a hard time with it. He pushes Basil's shoulder.

TAMER

Don't ever let me see you cry over a broad. Broads are like trains, you miss one, you catch the next.

Tamer takes a quick nip from his whiskey. Basil stares into his glass.

TAMER (CONT'D)

Look, I might hook up with Sammy later tonight to work out some songs at the little jam space we rehearse at. You're more than welcome to come along.

Basil takes another swig of whiskey.

BASIL

I don't think so, I've got an early one tomorrow.

TAMER

No worries, cuz.

Basil pats his cousin on the back.

BASIL

Thanks, man.

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Basil and Tamer are sitting at the bar. The Bartender serves a pint of lager to Basil and a whiskey rock glass to Tamer.

TAMER
Thanks.

Basil brings the pint to his lips.

BASIL
Do anything interesting today?

TAMER
Not really...had the whole day to piss away....just shooting the shit with Sammy about changing our name. What do you think of *Profanasaurus Rex*?

BASIL
Hmmm.

TAMER
Too long you think?

BASIL
I'm probably not the one to ask.

Tamer watches the ice cubes in his drink swirl as he slowly rotates them around the glass.

TAMER
I don't know. It doesn't matter, fuck...it's not like we're doing anything new anyway.

Basil looks at his cousin. Tamer stares into his drink.

TAMER (CONT'D)
Sometimes I feel like I'm wasting my time. I love the old music you know? But music now...it's just shit. I mean the older stuff is like a wild animal, like a tiger in the wild. It's exciting and dangerous, and it's everything you could ever hope to be But you see the tiger in the zoo with the fake landscape, and it's not the same. The stripes and the teeth are there but it's not the same. Sometimes, I feel like we're the zoo tiger...I don't know.

Tamer looks into his glass.

TAMER (CONT'D)
It's better to die from delusions of grandeur than from reality and boredom, I guess.

Tamer takes another drink.

TAMER (CONT'D)

Anyway you didn't come here to listen to me rant. You came here to talk about the girl. So let's hear it.

Basil looks a little embarrassed.

BASIL

Have you heard anything?

TAMER

Only that those greasers would love to put us in a room with a grizzly bear and watch us get mistaken for a jigsaw puzzle.

BASIL

I couldn't help it. It made me sick to see him put his fat...*digits* all over her.

TAMER

Well...let's hope fortune favors the brave....that was a pretty *nutsy* move.

Basil drinks from his beer. Tamer takes a swig of whiskey.

TAMER (CONT'D)

Anyway that guy can go choke on a bag of marbles. And that girl never excited me too much either. She's like a name dropper only without the names.

Basil looks seriously into his beer, and takes a drink.

TAMER (CONT'D)

And that other guy is so full of himself he probably has his name tattooed on his own pecker, fuck.

BASIL

I think I blew it with Desiree. I had no idea...she was...

Basil shakes his head, sighing.

BASIL (CONT'D)

Are we all just fools? I feel sorry for women and what they have to endure with us.

Tamer takes a swig.

TAMER

Yeah, but when the ship's sinkin', its women and children first, fuck.

BASIL

I just feel so bad about everything.

TAMER

Emotions are a liability, cuz. Besides there's nothing you can do about it now. Dwelling on it is like pouring cement into the ocean...*c'est futile*. You should be worrying about becoming a Doctor...not this petty bullshit.

Tamer buries himself in his drink. Basil hears some girls laughing in the corner of the bar.

He cranes his neck to have a look. He Sees a BAR GIRL who looks like Deena from the back. His movements become very nervous. His heart beats into his throat as he squints to get a better look. She turns around. It's not her. Basil's face crinkles.

BASIL

When are you playing again?

TAMER

Next week. But don't show up.

BASIL

Why not?

TAMER

If those cock-knockers make an appearance, you'll pay for it with the skin of your ass.

Basil is thinking about this.

BASIL

You think Deena will be there?

Tamer looks at him with disbelief.

TAMER

Are you mentally exhausted? Do yourself a favor. Put her out of your mind, fuck!

Basil looks back into his beer, staring at it for a long time as the ripples on the surface flow out from the center in rings.

TAMER (CONT'D)

Look, I'll be straight up with you, alright? And you're not gonna like what you hear.

Basil looks up at Tamer. Tamer thinks about the effect of what he's about to say. He hesitates briefly. But then he looks Basil straight in the eye.

TAMER (CONT'D)

I nailed Deena behind that chimpanzee's back more than a few times. We were drunk and it was something to do. And I'll tell you right now...she's the biggest pain in the ass you'll ever meet. Get hung up on a chick like that...she'll make you want to walk into the river with concrete boots.

Tamer watches Basil as his face slowly flushes. Basil gulps the rest of his beer in one go and smiles weakly as he turns this information over in his head. After a long beat, Basil puts enough cash for both of them on the bar.

BASIL

That was expensive enough.

And walks out.