

MISMATCHED

Original Screenplay

by Marc Serhan

Rough/First Draft

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U.S. Copyright Registration Number: PAu-4-212-780

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

RONALD and MARGARET, late 60s, stroll through the aisles, their contrasting styles immediately apparent. Ronald, relaxed in casual attire—jeans and sneakers—pushes the shopping cart behind Margaret. She is elegantly dressed, as though for a formal event, stoically inspecting the shelves like a General reviewing troops.

CEREAL AISLE

Ronald reaches for a box of colorful, sugary cereal. Margaret takes it from him and replaces it with a healthier option.

COOKIE AISLE

Ronald stops the cart and waits. Margaret, noticing his pause, walks back. She chuckles and gently but firmly nudges the cart forward, pulling Ronald away from temptation.

PRODUCE SECTION

Ronald perks up, pointing excitedly at a display of exotic fruits. Margaret nods her approval. They smile at each other and pick some fruit, unconditionally.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ARCHITECTURAL FIRM - DAY (XMAS WEEK)

The office is modern and sleek. Amidst the focused activity, ZOE HARRISON, late 20s, poised, and sharply dressed, stands out. She is at her desk, surrounded by blueprints and models.

Zoe meticulously examines a complex blueprint, making precise annotations. She occasionally pushes up her glasses, absorbed in her work, her attention to detail is evident.

Her colleague, LISA, about her age, friendly, approaches with a cup of coffee. She glances at the blueprint.

LISA

Wow, Zoe, nitpicking again, are we?

ZOE

It's all in the details, Lisa.

Lisa nods, sipping her coffee.

LISA

Sometimes, though, I think you can be a bit too finicky.

Zoe gives a small, controlled laugh, returning her focus to the blueprint.

ZOE
When you build something, you want
it sturdy. Don't you think?

Lisa shrugs and walks away, amused.

INT. ZOE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The apartment is impeccably tidy, every item in its place. A Xmas tree twinkles in a corner of the living room.

Zoe sits at a dining table, casually set for two. Across from her is her older sister, PENNY, early 30s, good-natured and playfully mischievous. Both are dressed in cozy attire, enjoying a home-cooked meal.

PENNY
(teasingly)
Another Friday night in your
thrilling company, eh?

Zoe offers a half-smile, picking at her food.

ZOE
I like my routine. It's comfortable.

PENNY
Comfortable or safe? – It's a long
weekend, why don't you go out, let a
little chaos in your life. Maybe find
a significant other.

Zoe smiles, looks at her, almost proud.

ZOE
Fear not, I've made it part of my
New Year resolution to find that
someone special precisely.

PENNY
And how are you planning to do
that? Join a dating website? I
think this kind of platform should
be outlawed. It's incitement to
debauchery!

ZOE
Nooo! Not that kind of dating. This
agency, 'Eureka Match', uses a
program called 'Opposites Connect'.

PENNY

'Opposites Connect'? What does that even mean?

ZOE

I'm not sure. I'm going next week, after New Year's. They have an introductory session to the program.

PENNY

Well, as long as it's safe...

Zoe considers this, with a tint of apprehension. Both are startled by the EXPLOSION of a garland falling off the tree.

ZOE

When are we taking that thing down?
— The tree? Xmas's over.

PENNY

After New Year's, always. Epiphany, I think.

ZOE

I love that word! 'Epiphany'.
(a sudden thought)
Oh, where's Mei?

PENNY

China. Back in two weeks.

INT. ZOE'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

QUICK SHOTS

- * Zoe, in minimal clothing, vacuums around the Xmas tree.
- * Zoe meticulously aligns the chairs around the dining table, driven by a sense of perfection.
- * Zoe, in her bathrobe, blow-dries her hair.

INT. ZOE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Zoe relaxes on the couch, a blanket draped over her, sipping tea as she reads. The faint sounds of Saturday Night Live's JINGLE announces the end of the show. Without looking, she reaches for the remote and flicks the TV off.

INT. ZOE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Zoe, in her pajamas, is methodically preparing lunch. The process is precise, almost ritualistic.

PENNY (O.S.)
Zoe, can I borrow your blue scarf?
I like it for my new blouse.

ZOE
Sure!... Will you be back for lunch?

PENNY (O.S.)
I'm not you, Zoe. It's Sunday for
Christ's sake. Get out of the house!

Zoe shrugs and resumes chopping her veggies more feverishly.

INT. ZOE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Zoe is curled up on the couch, wrapped in a blanket, watching a movie on TV, captivated by the action on the screen.

ON THE TV: the male and female characters, hand in hand, dash through the jungle, chased by hostiles. They burst out onto the edge of a cliff, pause to gaze down at the turbulent river far below. They look at each other, quickly embrace and leap off the cliff, just as the hostiles arrive to see them vanish into the river's swirls below.

EXT. JUNGLE RIVER - DAY

The dense jungle looms on either side of a narrow, meandering river. Calls of exotic BIRDS and the distant rustle of WILDLIFE echo through the air.

A small, tired Zodiac cuts through the water, its motor humming low beneath the jungle's restless chorus. MAX SULLIVAN, early 30s, rugged and focused, stands at the bow with his camera, scanning the surroundings.

Beside him, a local GUIDE points out various spots of the dense foliage pierced by scattered beams of sun, while the PILOT navigates the boat.

Max's camera clicks and whirs as he takes shot after shot. Suddenly, he lowers his camera, his eyes widen.

He turns to the guide who chuckles.

Nearby, a massive ANACONDA, its scales glistening, is lazily coiling its way through the water.

GUIDE

Don't worry, she's not interested.
You can tell she's just eaten.

MAX

How can you tell it's a 'she'?

GUIDE

The length. Males are much smaller.
Don't worry, she won't bother with
us.

Max relaxes, aims his camera at the magnificent creature as it slips away into the depths of the river.

EXT. MANAUS OPEN MARKET - DAY

An animated open market, colorful and loud. Stalls brimming with exotic fruits, handcrafted goods and fresh fish, line the crowded walkways.

Max, camera in hand, weaves through the crowd. His face lit up with excitement. He pauses to photograph a vendor. The vendor hands him a sample of exotic fruit.

MAX

(to his camera, vlogging)

This right here is what I live for.
The people, the kindness, the
stories. It's raw, it's real...

He takes a bite of the fruit.

MAX (CONT'D)

Wow! Pure bliss. Happiness through
and through.

Max continues to explore, snapping pictures, stopping to chat with locals. His charm and enthusiasm are infectious.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. MARKET'S EATERY - DAY

THROUGH THE LENS: Max turns his CAMERA on. He is standing in front of an open eatery, talking to his camera.

MAX (THRU CAMERA)

After our trip on the Amazon and a tour of Manaus must see spots, I will now go have lunch in that restaurant back there which was highly recommended. Their Tacacá is to die for, or so I'm told. I'll tell you more after lunch if I survive it. Bon Appétit to me.

He turns his camera off and heads to the open restaurant.

INT./EXT. OPEN-AIR EATERY - CONTINUOUS

It's a charming place with a thatched roof and no walls, offering a panoramic view of the market. The hum of CHATTER and the rhythmic beats of MUSIC fill the air.

Max brings his Tacacá, served on a hollowed-out gourd (cuia), to a large communal table. He sits next to two YOUNG FEMALE TOURISTS in deep conversation.

TOURIST 1

Sounds risky. What if you meet someone totally not your type?

TOURIST 2

That's the point, duh! It's about stepping out of your comfort zone. Finding someone who challenges you. It's called 'Opposites Connect.' It's like a dating program but not quite. It's supposed to be different.

Max slurps his soup straight from the cuia.

MAX

Whoa!

The girls turn to him. Max reacts.

MAX (CONT'D)

(pointing to his soup)

This... this is out of this world it's so good.

TOURIST 1

(recognizing him)

You're Max Sullivan, right? My little brother watches your videos like all-the-time.

MAX

Wow, I'm flattered. Looking at you
how old can he be?

TOURIST 1

Fifteen. Duh... Dumbass. How old do
you think I am?

MAX

Now that you spoke? Twelve? Seriously,
you two are beautiful girls, obviously
smart. Why would you join a dating
site? Sorry, I wasn't eavesdropping or
anything, I just... overheard.

TOURIST 2

It's not like that, dummy. See? They
connect you with someone who's your
total opposite. And it's up to you to
find things you may have in common.
Some common ground, mutual this
mutual that. It's really smart.
Forces you out of your shell.

MAX

(impressed)

Okay, you're not twelve!

They all laugh.

TOURIST 1

Do you have a girlfriend, Max?
Someone who travels with you?

MAX

(chuckles, then sighs)

No, not really. Haven't found the
one who'd take me as I am, with all
my wanderlust.

TOURIST 2

(factual)

You're an adventurer, what d'you
expect!

MAX

Yeah, maybe it's time for a change.
I'd like to settle down, but...

TOURIST 1

(suddenly excited)

Why don't you try 'Opposites Connect'?
It could be fun.

MAX
Nah, dating sites and such are not
exactly my cup of tea.

We pull away and watch them engage in a lively conversation like old friends.

INT. COZY CAFÉ - DAY

Zoe sits at a small table with her friend, AMANDA, late 20s, vivacious, surrounded by the murmur of other patrons.

AMANDA
Okay, you have a great job and an
almost too-perfect apartment. But
when was the last time you did
something on the spur of the moment?

Zoe shifts uncomfortably, stirring her coffee.

ZOE
I don't do 'spur of the moments',
Amanda. You know that. But... I'm
going to heed your advice and check
out that 'Eureka Match' agency.

AMANDA
That's great, Zoe.

Amanda pulls out her phone, browses for the 'Opposites Connect' ad and brings it up on her screen.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
What have you got to lose, right?

Zoe stares at the ad, worried yet somehow curious.

INT. DENTIST'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

The waiting room is sterile and bland. Max sits, quickly flipping through a magazine, nonchalant.

He passes a page, pauses, flips back to the page: it's the Eureka Match ad for 'Opposites Connect.' The bold design stands out amidst the mundane articles: "FIND YOUR OPPOSITE AND DISCOVER A NEW WORLD OF CONNECTIONS"

MAX
(muttering to himself)
Huh!

A friendly ASSISTANT enters the room.

ASSISTANT

Mr. Sullivan? – You can come in now.

MAX

Thanks. I'll be just a second.

She goes back in. Max waits for it, tears the page and pockets it, ignoring the look of disapproval from some of the patients. He strides toward the dentist's room.

INT. EUREKA MATCH / MEETING ROOM - EVENING

The room is modern and inviting, with a group of PEOPLE gathered for the introductory session.

Zoe walks in, looking around cautiously, a tad stiff. She finds a seat at the end of a row.

A couple guys look at her, smiling, fishing for a response.

Max enters shortly after, scanning the room, relaxed.

His gaze stops on Zoe for a second. He finds a seat a couple of rows before her.

Zoe's gaze drifts timidly to Max's back.

DR. EVELYN HARTLEY, 50s, charismatic and confident, steps to the front, commanding attention.

DR. HARTLEY

Welcome to Eureka Match and our 'Opposites Connect' program. Here, we believe in the power of contrasts. This program isn't about finding perfection. It's about finding possibility. Once you're signed in, you fill out a questionnaire and based on your responses, we find you an opposite match. Think of this as an exciting adventure. An expedition to find the pros in a forest of cons.

SERIES OF DISSOLVES - MOS:

- * Participants listening intently
- * Dr. Hartley speaking
- * Participants raising hands to ask questions
- * Max, intrigued

* Zoe, thoughtful

* Dr. Hartley, concluding

DR. HARTLEY (CONT'D)
Once matched, you'll need to
download our app, designed to
monitor your progress and help us
assist you, should any unexpected
issue arise. It also helps us
tailor your experience. This being
a launch, we apologize in advance
for any glitches or mishaps that
might occur along the way. However,
rest assured that we will address
any issues promptly.

Zoe catches the look of a male participant glaring at her.

Max, however, seems more amused than concerned.

DR. HARTLEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So?... Ready to meet your opposite?

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

The introductory session is winding down. Participants begin to leave, chatting amongst themselves.

Zoe gathers her things and starts toward the exit.

Max stretches casually and walks toward the exit.

As they both reach the door, their paths converge and they suddenly find themselves face to face. A brief moment of eye contact with a flicker of interest.

ZOE
Oh, sorry...

MAX
No problem. After you. Please.

He gestures for her to pass. She walks by, but not without another quick glance back at him, a small smile on her lips. Max waits for a moment, absorbed in a thought, then leaves.

INT. ZOE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING (EPIPHANY)

The tree is gone. Zoe carefully puts away Christmas decorations. Penny helps, with a more carefree attitude.