

Stick and Move

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At rise: A nice looking couple eating at a nice restaurant. ANTHONY is 26, rugged looking and dressed in an ill fitting jacket/tie combo. HALEY is 24 and dressed in an impeccable dress.

The couple is quiet as they pick over their nearly eaten entrees.

ANTHONY: I really like this chicken. It's really good.

HALEY: Yeah, so's my pasta.

ANTHONY: It goes good with the wine.

HALEY: I don't know much about wine.

ANTHONY: Me neither. But this is good.

Pause.

ANTHONY: I really like Italian food.

HALEY: Do you cook at all?

ANTHONY: No. But I really like Italian food.

Pause.

HALEY: Do you ever do stuff like rock climbing or anything?

ANTHONY: No. You?

HALEY: A little bit. It's a good time.

ANTHONY: Do you want to try any of my chicken?

HALEY: I'm a vegetarian.

ANTHONY: Oh.

A bell rings three times. ANTHONY abruptly rises from his seat and moves downstage. SULLY, a pudgy 50-ish guy in a sweatshirt jumps onto the stage with a stool in hand, a towel, a spray bottle, and a bucket. SULLY sets down the stool and drapes the towel over ANTHONY's shoulders. SULLY checks on ANTHONY's condition.

SULLY: Anthony! How you feelin', T? She tagged you pretty hard at the end there. How you feelin'?

ANTHONY: I'm good, Sully.

SULLY: Yeah, you're so good you just walked into that last one. You didn't notice she was a vegetarian? She ordered the only vegetarian dish on the menu for God's sake.

ANTHONY: She caught me by surprise. She's wily.

SULLY towels off ANTHONY.

SULLY: Now listen to me, T. You've got to be more active this round. You can't come at her straight. She'll brush that right off, you understand? Stick and move, stick and move. Use the verbal jabs to keep her at bay, but look for an opening. Use an angle that she's not expecting. If you find something that connects, then go in for a combination, but keep your guard up, Open.

ANTHONY opens his mouth. SULLY sprays water in with a water bottle.

SULLY: You have to set the pace for this round. Do not let her dictate the pace, you understand? ANTHONY nods. Now spit.

ANTHONY spits into the bucket that SULLY holds.

SULLY: Now go get 'er.

The bell rings, and ANTHONY hops off the stool. SULLY gathers his things and hops off the stage, watching the scene from below. ANTHONY approaches the table warily, like a boxer in a bout, bouncing on the balls of his feet and bobbing his head. Eventually he sits down at the table. SULLY paces his area, watching the scene, shouting advice, and reacting to things as they come.

ANTHONY: So...

HALEY: So.

ANTHONY: How about dessert? You look like a girl that really likes her desserts.

SULLY: Oh, geez! Anthony!

HALEY: You think so?

ANTHONY: I mean not that you're fat or anything. Just that-

HALEY: Just what?

ANTHONY: Just that you seem like a sweets girl.

HALEY: Right.

ANTHONY: I mean the desserts here are really supposed to be great. I mean, nothing but the best, y'know? You like Tiramisu?

HALEY: Well, if you say it's that good, then I suppose.

SULLY: Be active, Anthony. Be active!

ANTHONY: Hey, Haley. I don't want to read into things too much, on a first date and all. But I know I'm being a little weird and all. It's just that I think you kind of have an effect on me. Y'know?

HALEY: Really?

ANTHONY: Yeah. I just don't want to screw anything up.

HALEY: You're not screwing anything up, Anthony.

The bell rings three times. SULLY sets up a stool for ANTHONY in the background. Meanwhile, DORIS, a 50-ish woman in a sweatsuit brings her own stool for HALEY to flop down on. She too has the bucket, towel, and water bottle. Doris checks on HALEY's condition.

DORIS: Come on girl. You were doing good there for a while. Keep your focus.

HALEY: Sorry, Doris. He surprised me there.

DORIS: Surprise, sur-shmise. The guy hasn't been able to string three syllables together and you walk right into his sensitive guy act. You should have seen that bullshit coming from a mile away. Instead it caught you right under the chin.

HALEY: Is it bad?

DORIS: You're still ahead on points, Haley, but you've got to come on strong this round. This guy has thrown everything he's got at you. He's clutching and grabbing instead of engaging. It's up to you to get under his defenses and hit him where it hurts, got it?

HALEY nods. DORIS wipes off HALEY's head with a towel.

DORIS: He's been on the defensive the entire night, Haley. All he wants to do is survive the night. He's not going to give you anything unless you take it from him, understand?

HALEY nods.

DORIS: Open up.

HALEY opens her mouth. DORIS squirts water into her mouth with a water bottle.

DORIS: Now's the time to make your move. Back this sucker up against the ropes and bombs away, OK? Now, spit.

HALEY spits.

SULLY: This is the time to make your move, kid. You have to bring it.

DORIS: Don't hold back. Give him everything you've got.

DORIS and SULLY take away their stuff and hop to below the stage. HALEY and ANTHONY take their seats again.

ANTHONY: So...

HALEY: So.

Pause.

SULLY: C'mon! Don't just sit there!

DORIS: Use the heavy ammo, Haley!

HALEY: So, Anthony. My friend Kate is getting married next month.

ANTHONY: Yeah? Really?

SULLY: Cover up, T!

HALEY: Yeah. She's doing it on the beach. Isn't that so romantic?

ANTHONY: Yeah. Right. Romantic.

ANTHONY becomes visibly nervous.

HALEY: Anyhow, I was wondering if you'd be interested in going to the wedding with me.

DORIS: Oh! That got 'im good!

ANTHONY: Yeah, well. Wow. That's really-

SULLY: Counterpunch, Anthony! Counterpunch!

ANTHONY: Y'know, I haven't been to a wedding since my ex-girlfriend's wedding last year.

SULLY: That's my boy!

HALEY: You went to your ex-girlfriend's wedding?

DORIS: Careful!

ANTHONY: Yeah, she's still a pal. We talk on the phone now and then. I was actually her best man.

HALEY: Really?

ANTHONY: Yeah. It's kind of a thing. I like to keep in touch with my ex-girlfriends. I hope that's not a problem.

Pause. All eyes are on HALEY, who now seems visibly shaken.

HALEY: I think that it's wonderful that you can be so mature as to be in such close contact with one of your former girlfriends.

The bell rings. HALEY and ANTHONY go to their respective corners. They are both wobbly. DORIS and SULLY are waiting for them.

SULLY: There ya go, T! That's a way to tag her!

DORIS: C'mon Haley. You had him on the ropes.

HALEY: He cut me, Doris! He cut me!

DORIS: Shake it off. You're still in this one! You hear me?

SULLY: Beautiful shot, kid! Way to come back!

DORIS: Listen to me, Haley. It's the final round. Last chance to make an impression.

SULLY: Don't get cocky, T! This is it!

DORIS: You need to go for the throat, kid.

SULLY: Keep your eyes on the prize.

HALEY: I can't do this anymore, Doris! Throw in the towel.

ANTHONY: Sully, I'm punched out. It's rough out there.

DORIS: C'mon, girl. This is what you've been training for all this time. All those hours in the gym. This is what it's been for.

SULLY: This is your moment, T. This is your time.

DORIS: It's now or never!

SULLY: It's put up or shut up!

DORIS and SULLY: It's do or die time! You understand?

HALEY and ANTHONY nod.

DORIS and SULLY: Now spit!

They spit. The bell rings. HALEY and ANTHONY stumble back to their seats. A long pause as they stare at one another wearily.

DORIS: C'mon. Don't leave anything on the table!

HALEY glares at DORIS, then turns back to ANTHONY. Her tone is different, more direct.

HALEY: Listen, Anthony. Let me ask you something. It might sound weird, but do you ever think sometimes that sometimes we just say things because we're supposed to say them?

DORIS: Haley!

HALEY: *(To Doris)* Quiet. *(To Anthony)* I mean, do you ever think about all those rules and cautions and things that keep you from connecting from people?

DORIS: What are you doing, Haley?

HALEY: Do you ever think that there's some voice screaming in your ear about how you're supposed to act? And that's the only thing that's keeping you from saying what you really feel?

Pause.

SULLY: Anthony!

ANTHONY: *(To Sully)* Ssh! *(To Haley)* Sometimes, I think that, like, there's this short, you know, fat guy... smoking a cigar or something. And he yells all this... And it's really weird, if I think about it. I mean, if I think about it too much—

HALEY: I know just what you mean.

ANTHONY: Is... Is your voice named "Sully" by any chance?

Pause. Haley laughs.

ANTHONY: Do you just want to call our date over and then walk and talk for a bit?

HALEY: Only if it coincides with getting ice cream.

ANTHONY: I'll pick up the check.

HALEY: Please. I already took care of it.

ANTHONY: You're my kind of girl, you know that?

The bell rings and HALEY and ANTHONY walk off the stage together. SULLY and DORIS watch them go.

SULLY: Doris.

DORIS: Sully.

SULLY: That was a tough one.

DORIS: They all are.

SULLY: So who won?

DORIS: I don't have a clue, Sully. So what are you doing after this?

THE END