

1

INT. SHAREHOUSE - NIGHT

1

Close-up on a mobile phone screen. Tinder is open on it. We see a smiling, normal-looking dude.

Something swipes left.

Now on the screen is a muscly gym-junkie with tattoos.

Something swipes left.

Now it's a brooding kid who looks about 12 (it says he's 25).

A mantis hand plows through the screen. The phone is destroyed. Smoke rises from it.

ANITA (O.S.)

Oh Sally.

ANITA is hanging in the doorway: short black hair, t-shirt and a cigarette, dressed somewhere between androgynous and sultry. She's awesomely cynical - and looks like she's just had a vigorous round of love-making.

ANITA (CONT'D)

A few too many creeps on that thing. But you learn to filter 'em.

She takes a drag of her cigarette.

Opposite her, SALLY, a human-sized praying mantis, hovers over the destroyed phone.

ANITA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Either that or you start to like 'em.

Sally turns toward Anita and makes a weird tittering noise, her head rotating slowly.

As Anita speaks, an anonymous half-naked dude shambles past her and moves into the kitchen to get some water. Sally moves carefully over the furniture. The dude fills up a water glass. Sally peers at him.

ANITA (CONT'D)

I hear ya. You've been out of the game so long you don't know what it's like. Welcome to your late twenties ... No one has house parties anymore, no one goes to gigs, and all our friends are pregnant.

The dude raises her eyebrows to Sally suggestively. Anita sees and throws one of her shoes at the dude. He's hit on the side of his head, chastened.

ANITA (CONT'D)
Hey! One at a time!

Anita takes the water glass as the dude scurries past her back into her room.

ANITA (CONT'D)
Seriously Sally, you gotta loosen up. When was the last time you actually ...

Sally scuttles around the room rapidly and makes a shrieking noise.

ANITA (CONT'D)
(with cigarette)
Oh honey we gotta get you laid.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. COFFEE CART - DAY

2

A BARISTA works over the coffee machine. He serves one customer, and another.

He then sees someone come up in the line, off-screen. His eyes light up. He quickly prepares a cappuccino. He carefully puts a chocolate love heart in the cream.

The customer is Sally. She looms into the foreground. Ominous music.

The barista sighs, smitten. Romance music.

CUT TO:

3 INT. BAR - NIGHT

3

A hipster band called The Fucks is playing. They're very generic. Their current song is called 'There's Something About You Girl'. The musicians all have tight black jeans. One has a big square bushranger beard. They're all sort of paunchy except for the lead singer, who's really thin and looks close to death by OD.

Anita and Sally have just arrived. They survey the room, left to right. The bar is on the right. It's real hip.

ANITA
Here's the plan. We sit at the bar, we order shots, and just lean into it.

They head for the bar. Guys around them subtly check them out, then sit up straighter/fix their hair etc.

Anita sits at the bar. Sally doesn't 'sit down' on the bar stool, but hovers over it precariously.

The dude who was with Anita the previous night comes up, timidly.

ANITA (CONT'D)
(to Barman)
Two tequilas.

DUDE
Uh, hey Anita --

ANITA
Buzz off.

The drinks arrive. Anita downs one.

DUDE
(to Sally)
Your friend's a real downer ... but
you seem cool ... We should hang
out.

Sally reacts with hostility, flailing her little arms.

DUDE (CONT'D)
Well the offer's there.

The dude leaves. Offscreen, the band has finished.

Cut to Anita, who is already talking to a huge gym junkie (in fact one of the guys from Tinder at the start).

ANITA
Sally, this is ... [*she doesn't
remember his name*] ... eih.
(whispering)
That percussionist is checking you
out.

The percussionist (JACK) is a hipster guy with 5-o'clock shadow and a flannel shirt who was just in the band. He's at the other end of the bar. He looks smoulderingly at Sally.

Sally begins to crawl around the bar, exploring her immediate environment. Jack comes over, emboldened.

JACK
Hey girl, you new around here?

Sally titters horribly.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Uh huh -- coupla chicks hitting the town? I'm the guy you wanna know. What are you into?

Sally clicks and squawks.

Jack talks mostly with his eyes closed.

JACK (CONT'D)
 No waaay. One of my exes was all about mixed media? Which is cool for a while but like, get over it, y'know? Pretty loose parties, though uhuhuhuh.

Sally rears up over the bar, and launches herself to the drink shelf, smashing a few bottles.

JACK (CONT'D)
 If you like that whole scene I gotta show you a YouTube channel.

Pan to Anita.

ANITA
 (whispering)
 Go for it.

Jack raises his eyebrows.

Sally is now on the ceiling.

[In the background of this scene we catch the first glimpse of THE WOMAN WHO KNOWS SHE'S A MANTIS. She's a 35-year-old businesswoman at the back of the bar, staring at Sally in stunned silence, braced as if she is about to flee. She looks to others to see if they're horrified. They aren't.]

CUT TO:

4 INT. SHAREHOUSE - NIGHT

4

The living room. Sally is perched on the sofa as Jack shows her a video on his phone, which he talks over. Anita and her new guy are seated nearby, not paying attention. Lights are soft.

JACK
 Yeah this stuff is really in at the moment. It's like pretty edgy but the scene's so conservative, we kinda need it? ...

C.U. on Anita and Sally - then on Jack, still talking.

ANITA
 (whispering)
 God he's an idiot. Look, do it
 anyway. It'll be good for you. And
 it'll at least shut him up.

CUT TO:

5 INT. SALLY'S ROOM - NIGHT

5

Sally and Jack in Sally's room. There are nondescript posters on the wall, and a dresser, and a small bookcase. Sally slowly advances on Jack.

JACK
 -- so I was with this Tremayne guy
 who works entirely with hemp, and
 he's started doing this commercial
 DJ stuff that's really aweso --

Sally swipes at Jack with one of her arms. He's knocked onto the bed violently.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Ah whoa! I gotta warn you, I get
 pretty kinky ...

Jack fumbles with his pants zipper to take his pants off. Sally makes an ominous clicking sound.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Okay, full disclosure, I have a
 girlfriend. But we've got a really
 open relationship -- a-and she's
 outta town. Get above me.

Sally rotates her head slowly.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Now --

He manages to get his pants off.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (serious, slow)
 Show me what you got.

A pause.

Then Sally stands completely upright - and reveals her wings. It's GHASTLY.

The light dims. They're in silhouette. They copulate, with Jack vocalising considerably.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Yeah - aw yeah - oh girl - yeah ...
 yeah who's your daddy ... yeah ...
 mmm ... ya like that don't ya ...
 yeah you do ... yeah ... yeah ...
 further ... now put your --- oh my
 God ... hurgh--aaaaah!

He reaches climax. She titters and writhes - then plucks his head off with her talons. She then tears into his body and begins to devour it. This is horrific.

CUT TO:

6 INT. SHAREHOUSE - NIGHT

6

Darkness.

ANITA (O.S.)
 Sally?

Anita flicks the lightswitch on. She's there in pajamas.

ANITA (CONT'D)
 (whispered)
 Is he still here?

Sally stands outside her bedroom, preening. Her head and arms are drenched in blood.

Anita laughs.

ANITA (CONT'D)
 Oh you *slut*!

TITLE: ROMANTIS

CUT TO BLACK