*Left… Left… Right… Left… Right… Right…*

“OOO wait! Let me stare at him alil’ longer!” Hortchi screeches, grabbing my wrist to indicate her enthusiasm.

We’ve been sitting on this couch for the past 45 minutes, zoning out to the Sublime album pumping from the stereo. I’m browsing Tinder. I think Hortchi came over 2 hours ago? Right about the same time that crazy chick took David for the day. I’m not usually here for that, but it’s my day off. So here we sit, her kids are at school. I think she only shows up when she wants to forget she’s a mom for a couple hours.

I don’t mind the company though and I extend the use of my bong and pot as a branch towards friendship. This has brought us to this moment now, she feels confident enough in her standing as my friend to give me relationship advice. And apparently her recommendation for my next hook up was gym models.

“I’d pay him to date me. You need to get his number for me.” commanding, as she confidently swipes right.

“What about Armando?” I shoot at her as I pull my wrist out of her grip.

“He would have to pull off some kind of miracle to get back with me! I need to get back out there… don’t worry I’m here to get you some too.”

“Bet you make it 3 days before… “I trail off as I lean down and take the bong rip. Coming up, blowing the smoke in her direction “… lets focus on my needs first then, and see if you still feel the same way next week?”

I pass her my phone, ignoring the finger she’s giving me for pointing out her bad habits, and get up as the pizza delivery person pulls in. Maybe she will have more luck than me. I need to switch something up, I can’t just meet the people I work with.

I’m dressed for laying around the house, tank top, sweatpants, and my beanie. Getting up I readjust so everything is covered and grab cash. Walking out the door I hear her mutter to herself different disapprovals about the nudes that were readily sent to me on there. I meet the driver halfway to the door to make the exchange. The pot smoke seems to make some of the people around this city uncomfortable and I don’t need to live with that on my consciousness right now. The boy seems amused as he takes my order out of the bag. We couldn’t make up our minds so we ordered everything that sounded good. I tip him well and proceed to balance the boxes as I shoulder my way back into the apartment.

“Tina you fat lard come get some dinner!” I direct towards Hortchi around a breadstick.

She hits send and digs in. Eventually getting up to raid my fridge. At least she brought me back a coke, considerate thief of caffeine. Eating like it’s our last meal, we put down a large pizza and a couple different specialty breads. I look at the time.

“What time do you have to get your kids from grandmas house?” it was almost 4 and I knew it was coming up.

“O yeah, I have kids, right. I should probably get out of here soon.” She moves to sit up, passing my phone back to me.

“So most of the guys in your messages are stupid. You *did* start a conversation with one of them though.” She smirks like she has a secret. Fuck. What did she do.

I grab my phone and open up the app. I’m directed to a new conversation with some guy named Chris. Great. I look up and give her my best I’ll-skin-you-alive look.

“You did tell me to help you get laid first” She shrugs and smiles big as she slips out the front door. Waving at my front window with the same smile, she gets into her car and pulls away.

I just sit there and watch her go. I’m afraid to really read the conversation and steel my nerves by taking a few hits from the bong. Worst case scenario I just never respond to another message from him. I clean up the pizza and get comfortable on the couch again, pulling over a blanket I open my phone. Looks like he had sent the initial message, that’s a good start.

Chris: Hello there ;) What sorts of things do you enjoy?

Me: Music. Pot. New experiences, you?

I thank everything good in the world that she didn’t just send him my address and a time to be here with the idea that I like surprises. It looks like he had responded to her prompt to open up.

Chris: I also enjoy music and new experiences/ being experimental. I enjoy being active (lifting, yoga, swimming, etc), playing games (a bit addicted to puzzle games), and getting to know new people.

Looking at the two falling apart puzzle books in front of me on the coffee table I feel somewhat inclined to continue the conversation. After 3 days we agree to meet up. After 10 months I agree to move my life down to where he is. We’re in this together now.