

*Millenn-ills*

Dialogue Sample

SCENE 1  
I'll know you when I see you.

FADE IN:

INT. EVAN'S CAR- DAY

Evan is listening to music, looking for parking. Evan turns off the radio, parks his car and grabs his cell phone. He types a text message.

Outgoing text from Evan reads:

Just found parking. Walking over.

Carmen's cellphone rings. Carmen replies.

Message reads:

Great. I'm by the entrance wearing a Frida Kahlo shirt.

Evan flips his sun visor and checks the mirror one last time. He winks at himself. He pops a mint and opens the car door. He walks toward a street festival and spots Carmen.

EVAN

Hey, Carmen? I'm Evan. It's good to finally meet you.

CARMEN

Evan, it's good to meet you.

EVAN

You look really beautiful.

CARMEN

Thanks. That's really sweet of you. So, are you ready for the festival?

EVAN

I am. Let's go.

Both enter the festival.

CARMEN

I hope they have good food. I'm starving.

EVAN

Yeah, me too. Let's find the food tents. Oh, and they better have a taco stand here.

CARMEN

Real words spoken.

EVAN

This is my first blind date by the way. I'm just glad you showed up.

CARMEN

Of course. This is my first blind date, too. I do prefer to know the person before the date or, at least, see a profile of him online.

EVAN

I know. Sorry. I'm not on social media anymore. I'm too lazy. It's a full-time job trying to convince strangers that they should like me. It ends in shameless self-promotion anyway.

CARMEN

Yeah, I understand. I use social media to promote my artwork but it's a thin line. But you weren't a complete stranger, though. We did talk on the phone a few times before today.

EVAN

Yeah, but somehow, no matter how many times you talk to somebody on the phone, they're not real until you see them.

CARMEN

Yeah, until now, you were like a character in a book, a figment of my imagination.

EVAN

Yes. Exactly. So, let me ask, am I what you imagined? Was I what you were expecting to see?

CARMEN

I wasn't expecting anything really. I enjoy a pleasant surprise.

EVAN

Then, are you disappointed? On a scale of one to ten, where am I?

CARMEN

I didn't have an expectation to disappoint. Expectations give me undue stress. (pause) What were you expecting?

EVAN

Uh, I couldn't piece together an expectation based on a few conversations, so I just hoped for the best.

CARMEN

Ok. So, what were you hoping for? What's the best?

EVAN

Uh, let me see. Physically, I don't know, Salma Hayek... Sofia Vergara.

CARMEN

Seriously? So, you were looking for the stereotypical latina bombshell?

EVAN

No...sort of. I mean, what was I supposed to hope for? Someone unattractive? That doesn't make me superficial, does it? Did you come here hoping I was ugly? Wanting an aesthetically pleasing person is built into our genealogy. No one prefers ugly, we accept ugly, and not just physically, either. I mean, we tolerate it but no one wants it. We all have our limits.

CARMEN

I hate to break it to ya, but Salma Hayek is way out of your league.

EVAN

Damn. That hurts. Well, the dream won't die if I can live with the lie.

CARMEN

Sorry, I wasn't trying to be mean. I was just joking.

EVAN

No. You're right, though. Why do I deserve someone beautiful? That's the discriminatory practice of our social hierarchy.

CARMEN

Riiiiight. What does that mean?

EVAN

Wealth and status give men confidence. And I don't have any social status or any social capital- no job, no money, no luxury car or any other symbol of wealth or status- that would make me attractive enough for someone like Salma. It's hard to approach beautiful women without afore mentioned qualities, and much harder to keep one.

CARMEN

Well, what kind of women are you trying to attract? And before you answer that, I don't think that's a fair description of women. It's not antiquated. It's flat out wrong. We're not trophies.

EVAN

Look, I don't think that every girl thinks this way, but I do think it's more common than not. I mean, I've never impressed a date by *not* having a job. What woman would want an unsuccessful man? And, by the way, I don't necessarily blame y'all. I get it. It implies lack of motivation.

CARMEN

Is that how you view me?

EVAN

No. I wouldn't have admitted I'm unemployed if that were the case. You're different.

CARMEN

How did you know that?

EVAN

Because you told me you're an artist. So, I assumed your concept of beauty was layered. I assumed it had more depth. Well, that's my hope anyway. Hey, I think I see a taco tent. You in?

CARMEN

Fuck yeah. Sorry. I mean, fuck yeah.

Carmen and Evan walk toward the food tents. They get in line.

CARMEN

So how's the job search going?

EVAN

Not good. I don't have much work experience and that's making things difficult. They drop me as a candidate before I can get an interview.

CARMEN

You'll find something. You just need a little patience.

EVAN

I have patience. I just don't have time.

CARMEN

You look pretty young. Are you dying? It's cancer isn't it? What a shame, it claims another life.

EVAN

I know it sounds dramatic but I'm twenty-eight years old and I haven't started my career, yet. And, I'm not even sure that what I'm supposed to be doing. (Pause) And, shouldn't I know? At this age, shouldn't I know what I'm supposed to be doing with my life?

CARMEN

Why does this worry you?

EVAN

I don't know. Because I don't know what I'm good at and I hate feeling lost. It lets hopelessness seep in.

CARMEN

If it helps, not everybody knows what they're supposed to be doing. I don't think you're the only one that feels that way. And, then, there are others that don't follow their calling even if they knew what it was.

EVAN

Well, I don't want to be one of them.

CARMEN

Which?

EVAN

Either. There's nothing I fear more than working a job that I'm dispassionate about. The mundaneness would be my slow, but certain, death. Being ordinary is the slave master to happiness.

CARMEN

That doesn't have to be unless you let it happen. You still have free will, don't you?

EVAN

You're right. We do have free will up until we surrender it. And, that's exactly what this world does: it beats you into submission. Once you give up on your dream and accept the status quo, you surrender your free will. It turns your future from being something limitless to being something statistical. Predictable. And your will just vanishes without a peep- not even a whimper.

CARMEN

What the hell?

EVAN

Hey, what do you think about the law of averages?

CARMEN

In what sense?

EVAN

Although, it says that every event is possible, it states that the most probable event will occur. So, ultimately, all the possible events will average out. And I think that this law can be applied to people, too. To me, it says that most people, willingly or unwillingly, have to be average. It rests on the notion of fate. Could it be my fate to be average? I mean, someone has to be average. We can't have geniuses if everybody is a genius. We can't have superstars if everybody is a superstar. Am I just fighting my fate? Should I be settling with my lack of purpose?

CARMEN

I guess it depends on your definition of average? I'm sure your family doesn't see you as a "nobody" if that's what you're implying.

EVAN

Look, I understand that I mean something to someone, but what do I mean to those that aren't biased?

CARMEN

What does it matter? Love isn't objective anyway, neither is respect.

EVAN

But, what life am I leading? What great things am I achieving? I don't care for any "personal best" trophies from my grandma.

CARMEN

You want your life to be significant.

EVAN

Yes.

CARMEN

So, you want your actions to be significant.

EVAN

Yes, don't you?

CARMEN

No, I want my relationships to be significant. The connections I make with people are more real to me than anything I could accomplish with any action or career. I don't know the meaning of life, but I know what relationships mean to me- everything. Accolades provide me with nothing more than an ego boost, and I've been working hard at dismantling my ego. Ego is the real slave master to happiness, not mediocrity.

EVAN

Carmen, you're the profound artist I expected, and the Salma I hoped for- beautiful inside and out. But for the record, I don't have to be famous. I just want to do something important.

Evan and Carmen walk up to the taco stand.

ATTENDANT

What'll it be?

CARMEN

Can I have the #2 combo meal?

ATTENDANT

Sure. How about you?

EVAN

Hmmm. I think...I'll go with the #1 combo.

ATTENDANT

No problem. Twelve dollars.

EVAN

My treat.

Evan reaches for his wallet.

CARMEN

Thanks.

Carmen and Evan sit at a table and eat.

EVAN

How's your food?

CARMEN

It's pretty good. They added onions, though. I'm not a fan.

EVAN

Do you want me to order one without onions?

CARMEN

No, it's ok. I can take them out. No big deal, but thanks.

EVAN

Do taste buds change as you get older?

CARMEN

I don't know. Maybe.

EVAN

I used to hate onions, too, as a kid, but, now, I kind of like them.

CARMEN

I still don't. You know what I do like?

EVAN

What?

CARMEN

People watching, that's why I picked this street festival for our date.

EVAN

Yeah, people watching is fun and mesmerizing.

CARMEN

It's always interesting to see how people decide to be seen- how they present themselves to the world. From clothes to facial expressions, it all tells their story. I think self-expression is a careful and purposeful process.

EVAN

I agree. I had a similar decision to make before meeting you here. For example, what I chose to wear today was gonna say a lot about me. It is my first impression after all, and I only get but the one. So, I had to put some thought into it.

CARMEN

What were your thoughts?

EVAN

Well, I didn't want to dress too nice because you might have thought that I was some "pretty boy" conscious about his looks, that might imply I'm too self-involved to be in a relationship. But, if I dress too casually, then you might have thought that I wasn't interested in meeting you today. I had to strike a balance. And (Evan gestures his outfit with his hands) this is what I decided.

CARMEN

Couldn't you just be yourself?

EVAN

Of course not! Nobody is themselves the first time you meet them. You have to make a smooth transition from being the person you wish you were to the person you really are.

CARMEN

Why?

EVAN

Because I want you to like me!

CARMEN

It takes more than clothing to fool me. I'm a good judge of character.

EVAN

I am too, but I still wanted to look nice for you. I felt you deserved that much thought and effort. It's an event to be meeting you. I was gonna meet a new person today.

CARMEN

Thanks...

EVAN

It's funny, though, as big as this city is, I feel like I see the same people all the time. It makes me feel like I've done and seen it all.

CARMEN

I know. I feel like I've given this city and its people all I have without any reciprocation.

EVAN

I feel like I've given this city everything, too, and none of it was appreciated. My existence has left no impression and has established for itself no importance.

CARMEN

This city has also taken me for granted by its people especially, that's why I've been thinking about moving. I've been thinking about California, just to be somewhere totally different. Cali seems like a fun place, and I just want to have some fun.

EVAN

Cali is definitely on my list. We should go visit- do some research.

CARMEN

(laughs)

What?

EVAN

Let's take a trip to Cali- you and I.

CARMEN

And you're serious?

EVAN

Yeah. Why not?

CARMEN

Because.

EVAN

Because what?

CARMEN

Because we barely know each other.

EVAN

I thought you were a good judge of character?

CARMEN

Yeah, but...

EVAN

Relax. I'm not a creep if that's what you're worried about. Bring a knife if that'll make you feel safe.

CARMEN

Evan, people don't just get up and leave randomly.

EVAN

Of course, they do. This is what people do in their twenties. Everything we do is spontaneous and adventurous, Hollywood says so.

CARMEN

We've had three conversations on the phone and one date. I barely know you.

EVAN

Well, what do you want to know?

CARMEN

How about your last name for starters?

EVAN

Rivera. What else? Middle name?

CARMEN

Evan, it's not that easy.

EVAN

But it is. Look, I'm not working, but I can afford a few days in Cali. And, you said you still have vacation days at work, right?

CARMEN

Yeah.

EVAN

So?

Carmen sighs pensively.

EVAN

Look, just sleep on it and let me know what you decide, ok? No pressure.

CARMEN

Ok. I will.

EVAN

You know, when I think about moving, I really hope I'm not trying to run away from my problems. Won't they just follow me there anyway?

They finish their food and scrap the wrappers.

CARMEN

That's why they call it baggage because it travels well. C'mon, we still have a lot of festival to explore.

They stand up and camera pans out to a picture of the street festival. They merge into the crowd.