

SIBLINGS

Written by

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INT. PSYCHATRISTS OFFICE - AFTERNOON

A cuckoo clock hangs on the wall. Pendulum swings with a subtle TICK TOCK.

KIRAN (34, white) lies on a leather couch, looking at the ceiling. He's wearing vintage frames, black polo shirt, and jeans. His hair is bushy with a long mane.

DR. MONTAGUE (63) sits in an armchair, playing Candy Crush on his phone.

KIRAN

I'm alone. The streets are dark.
The city empty. No people, no cars.
Streetlights blinking like alien
beacons for no one. And then I see
it move. I know I'm being hunted.

Dr Montague crushes a row of green pixel candies.

DR. MONTAGUE

Hmmm, how big is it?

KIRAN

Gargantuan. It's like a hundred
feet tall, as big as the Empire
States Building.

DR. MONTAGUE

(scratches chin, puzzles
over next move)
And it chases you.

KIRAN

Yes, through the gridwork of
streets at night...

Dr. Montague gets a text: "hey sexy, when do u get out?"

KIRAN (CONT'D)

...every brush in the dark is a
portent of doom...

Dr. Montague types: "ugh soon. this patient is so in denial."

KIRAN (CONT'D)

I run as fast as I can away from
the looming shadow of this giant
white dildo and its little
minions... you know, like a dildo
army or something.

A text: "finance douche?" DR. MONTAGUE types: "worse, a writer. shoot me." Text: "omg, ur too funny."

KIRAN (CONT'D)

It's hopeless. I can never outrun it. And as it bears down upon me, I look up and it has this creepy, stoic face, like, like...

Kiran looks up, revelation.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

...Jonathan Franzen.

DR. MONTAGUE

Who's that?

KIRAN

He's an author. The Corrections? No? It's not important.

DR. MONTAGUE

Sounds like an--

KIRAN

Anxiety dream? I know that.

DR. MONTAGUE

Is there anything in particular that you've been stressed about?

KIRAN

Life, death, who the fuck knows? I wake up anxious. The other day I just stood in the grocery store, staring at boxes of cereal. I wanted to buy Coco Puffs. Am I not worthy of Coco Puffs?

(beat)

I love my job but I can hardly pay rent. I never have enough time for my writing. My friends are all wildly successful and I just feel ashamed.

DR. MONTAGUE

Because of the cock dreams?

KIRAN

They're dildo dreams.

DR. MONTAGUE

Because of your haircut?

KIRAN

What's wrong with my hair?

Kiran fluffs his bushy mane like a Bollywood heartthrob.

DR. MONTAGUE

Nothing. Go on.

KIRAN

My father's been putting a lot of pressure on me lately. Marriage, getting a real job. I mean, who am I really? Just another loser with an unsellable novel. Do you think I'm a loser?

Dr. Montague crushes a row of pixel lemon drops.

DR. MONTAGUE

Yes!

Kiran stares.

DR. MONTAGUE (CONT'D)

There are no winners or losers in life, Kiran. The gamefication of life is a myopic cultural construct...

KIRAN

...that commodifies our existence.
Right, okay, I get it. I just feel like I'm going nowhere.

Text pops up: a sexy picture of a naked body, lace and curves, cropped oddly. Dr. Montague rotates the phone.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

And my sister Jade is coming to visit. Don't ask me why. We don't even like each other.

DR. MONTAGUE

Except you talk about her all the time.

Dr. Montague types something, quickly deletes it.

KIRAN

Because I worry. I worry about her.

Dr. Montague struggles with autocorrect: "I'm going to funicular you so hard... I want to lick your puppy."

KIRAN (CONT'D)

I worry about my parents and how old they're getting... and my sister, she's sweet but she's an emotional cyclone, sucks up all the energy in a room and spits it out--

Dr. Montague, frustrated, puts down his phone.

DR. MONTAGUE

Times up.

Kiran looks at the clock. It's 4:45.

KIRAN

We have another fifteen minutes.

DR. MONTAGUE

I think it would be best for us to end the session here...

KIRAN

...and pick it up next week. Sure, I get it.

DR. MONTAGUE

And never saw each other again. You're not progressing. I think you should see another psychiatrist.

KIRAN

Are you breaking up with me?

DR. MONTAGUE

It's not you, it's me.

KIRAN

That sounds a lot like you breaking up with me.

Kiran grabs a tissues and blows.

DR. MONTAGUE

Please don't cry. It makes me very uncomfortable when people exhibit effusive emotions. Look, I'm going to write you a script for...

A coffee mug full of pens branded with drug names. He selects one--LEXAPRIN. He clicks it and scribbles on a notepad.

DR. MONTAGUE (CONT'D)
 LEXAPRIN. It should help boost your
 antidepressants and alleviate your
 acute ennui.

KIRAN
 Cool, can I get a script for the
 purple pills again?

DR. MONTAGUE
 Klonopin? Sure, it'll cost you an
 extra \$50.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

JADE (27, Indian American) sits in a subway car, backpack on her lap. She turns up the music on her headphones, sinks deeper into her hoodie.

YOUNG GIRL (7) reads Kierkegaard. A CRAZY MAN (50) eats fried rice out of a plastic bag and highlights almost every word in a textbook called "OCD for Dummies". An OLD LADY (80) with hot-pink hair blows bubble-gum bubbles.

Subway doors open. People cram inside. A man rushes for the train with a tinfoil sandwich. He tries to push his way in. Doors close on his wrist, sandwich drops to the floor. Arm retracts, doors seal shut.

Subway starts moving. Jade picks up the sandwich. She unwraps the tinfoil, takes a bite.

EXT. EAST VILLAGE STREETS - LATER

Jade makes a phone call while looking at the street signs. She huffs down 7th street with her backpack.

She passes a homeless man. She doubles back, hands him the half-eaten tinfoil sandwich.

JADE
 Want this? I found it on the train.

HOMELESS MAN
 It's half eaten.

JADE
 Yeah, I think it's tunafish, but I
 can't tell with all the mayo.

HOMELESS MAN takes the sandwich.

HOMELESS MAN
 (disappointed)
 Mayo.

INT. KGB BAR - NIGHT

A dark-wood bar with soviet propaganda posters. It's noisy and crowded with hip young literary types.

Kiran sits with his friends SYDNEY (33, black), MARLENA (31, British), LEE (29, Asian American), and JON (36, Jewish).

Sydney, smart, sarcastic, debonair, holds court.

SYDNEY
 So Paul Auster turns to her and says "I don't believe writing can be taught."

MARLENA
 What did she say?

SYDNEY
 It's Paul motherfucking Auster sitting there on a stool like some Duke of Post-Modern Fiction. The guy is a goddamn legend... So the instructor tries to goad him into saying something positive about the whole MFA bullshit. And he stonewalls her.

Kiran drinks his gin and tonic dry.

MARLENA
 That's embarrassing.

JON
 He believes what he believes. Who's to argue with the guy who wrote City of Glass?

LEE
 Whatever. I'm tired of old white dudes perpetuating some myth of the muse based on their privilege--

Audrey (32, Puerto Rican) arrives at the table, white-rimmed glasses and short brown hair.

LEE (CONT'D)
 Audrey!

AUDREY
Hi, sorry I'm late. I was just
catching up with my agent.

INT. KGB BAR COUNTER - MOMENTS LATER

Kiran signals to the bartender, leans on the counter. He eyes
Audrey from afar. She laughs with his friends.

KIRAN
(to bartender)
Gin and tonic, please.

Kiran discreetly uncaps a bottle of Klonopin, swallows a
couple. Sydney surprises him.

SYDNEY
What are you doing, Kiran?

Kiran pockets the bottle, acts casual.

KIRAN
Just getting a drink.

SYDNEY
Get back over there and talk to
her. You've been acting like a
weirdo all night.

KIRAN
Sydney, I am a weirdo.

Bartender delivers the gin and tonic.

SYDNEY
You know what I'm saying. You've
been acting weird and not the good
kind of weird... Like the kind of
weird that masturbates to cut-up
playboy and national geographic
magazines.

Kiran's hardly listening. He stares at Audrey.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Stop staring at her.

KIRAN
(sips his drink)
I'm not staring.

SYDNEY
Just talk to her. She likes you.

KIRAN
No, I can't handle anymore
rejection today. My psychiatrist
broke up with me.

SYDNEY
How does that even happen?
(beat)
Just get over yourself and go talk
to her. She told Marlena last week
that she thinks you are cute.

KIRAN
Cute? Like a panda?

SYDNEY
Yeah, but fuckable cute. Trust me.
Just be cool, buddha boy. Be you.

KIRAN
That's terrible advice.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Jade waits outside an apartment building. A TENANT comes out.
She grabs the door before it closes, sneaks inside.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Jade hikes up a long stairwell, calling someone on her phone.
No answer. She arrives at the top floor apartment. She checks
the doorknob. Locked. She slumps onto the floor. She spots a
FIRE EXTINGUISHER at the end of the hall.

INT. KGB BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Audrey talks with Kiran's friends at the table.

AUDREY
Thanks. I'm not sure it really
deserves all the attention it's
getting.

Kiran sips his straw like a dork, staring at her. Audrey
catches his eye and smiles.

MARLENA
Whatever. I loved it. Sydney loved
it. He selected it as a staff pick
at the bookstore.

SYDNEY

Yeah... actually I haven't read it yet. But I've heard good things. What's it about?

AUDREY

It's a family drama, basically stories from my life masquerading as thinly guised fiction. I have a big family. 5 brothers, 3 sisters.

LEE

(trying to impress)

Cool. I come from a big family, too. Three older sisters, two half brothers, my dad and my dad's best pal who lived in the basement--

AUDREY

What about you, Kiran?

KIRAN

Oh I have a younger sister. She's coming to visit tomorrow actually.

AUDREY

That's nice.

KIRAN

Yeah, she's different.

AUDREY

How so?

KIRAN

She's free-spirited, impulsive... feral.

INT. KIRAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Fire extinguisher bashes the door. Deadbolt breaks. Door busts open into Kiran's apartment.

Jade falls into the room and rolls onto sofa. She dumps her backpack on the couch. She searches the apartment.

EXT. EAST VILLAGE STREET - NIGHT

Sydney, Jon, Lee, and Marlana walk down the street. Kiran and Audrey lag behind.

KIRAN

It's a meta-novel. You know like
Pale Fire, or If on a Winter's
Night A Traveler.

AUDREY

I love Calvino. You've read
Invisible Cities, right?

KIRAN

It's one of my favorites.

Sydney, Marlana, and Lee stop at the subway entrance and say
their goodbyes. Audrey and Kiran are left alone.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

Which way are you walking?

AUDREY

East. Avenue D.

KIRAN

Me too.

EXT. EAST VILLAGE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

AUDREY

He's so overrated. Don't get me
started.

KIRAN

Are you kidding me? You realize he
wrote Lolita in English? He wrote
one of the most acclaimed American
novels of all time and it wasn't
even in his native language.

AUDREY

Yeah, and glorified pedophilia and
the objectification of women as
merely sexual objects of desire.

Kiran stops in front of his apartment building.

KIRAN

It was a comedy. It was satire.

AUDREY

About an old dude having sex with a
"girl child".

KIRAN

But his lyricism, his cadence, his pitch-perfect sardonic tone--

Audrey stops him with a kiss. They make out.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

You're right. Nabokov's overrated. Do you, um, wanna come up and see my...

She kisses him again.

AUDREY

Yes.

KIRAN

Cool. I can show you my illustrated copy of Cosmoscomics.

INT. KIRAN'S APT STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Kiran and Audrey arrive at the top. Apartment door is broken.

KIRAN

Fuck.

Kiran takes out his keys, slots them between his fingers.

AUDREY

(whispers)

What are you doing?

Kiran holds up a spiked fist.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Badass.

KIRAN

I saw it in a Jackie Chan movie.

Audrey rifles through her purse, pulls out a can of mace.

INT. KIRAN'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Door swings open. Kiran lunges into the living room with his fist out. Audrey follows, ready for action with the mace.

There's no one in the room. Backpack on the couch. A MURMUR of rushing water, faint off-key SINGING.

JADE (O.S.)
Don't stop, make it pop
DJ, blow my speakers up...

INT. KIRAN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Steam in the shower. Jade sings, washes her hair.

JADE
Tonight, I'm-a fight
Till we see the sunlight.
Tick-tock on the clock...

She turns off the shower.

JADE (CONT'D)
...But the party don't stop--

Jade gets out of the shower... Kiran and Audrey are there.

Jade screams. Kiran screams. Audrey screams, sprays the mace.

Kiran steps in the way to protect Jade, gets hit. He rushes out of the bathroom, screaming.

INT. KIRAN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Kiran flushes out his eyes in the sink.

KIRAN
 Jade, damn it, fuck. What are you
 doing here? Man, that burns.

Jade comes out in a towel, brushing her hair.

JADE
 Pussy.

She goes back in the bathroom.

AUDREY
 (to Kiran)
 Are you okay? I'm sorry.

KIRAN
 It's not your fault. Well,
 technically it's your fault, but
 not really your fault.

AUDREY
 You jumped in the way to protect
 her.

KIRAN
No, I didn't. I--

Jade comes out in a t-shirt, towel wrapped around her head.

JADE
This is the way you greet me after
ignoring my calls all day?

KIRAN
What are you talking about? I
thought you were coming tomorrow.

JADE
I told you I was coming on Friday.

KIRAN
It's Thursday.

JADE
No, it's not.

KIRAN
Yes, it is.

AUDREY
There's a calendar right here.

Audrey takes a Literary Cats calendar off the fridge, hands
it to him.

KIRAN
(blindly waving the calendar)
See? It's Thursday.

JADE
Whatever. You should have answered
your phone.

Jade opens the fridge.

JADE (CONT'D)
(holds up a milk carton)
Is this expired?

Kiran shrugs. Jade pours milk on dish cloth.

JADE (CONT'D)
Here. For your eyes.

Kiran squints at her incredulously.

JADE (CONT'D)
Trust me.

Kiran dabs the cloth on his eyes.

KIRAN
Audrey, this is my sister Jade.

JADE
Hi. Sorry my brother is a dumbass.

She grabs the can of mace off the kitchen counter.

JADE (CONT'D)
Screecher. Powerful stuff. You
gotta be careful with this.

Jade disappears into the bathroom again.

INT. KIRAN'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Audrey and Kiran sit on the couch. Kiran holds the dripping milk cloth to his eyes.

AUDREY
That's your sister.

KIRAN
Yeah.

AUDREY
(skeptical)
You guys don't really look alike.

KIRAN
Well, I was adopted.

Kiran points to a framed picture on the wall.

It's a family portrait: his Indian foster parents with 16-year-old Kiran in a traditional white kurta and 11-year-old Jade in a Nirvana t-shirt, sticking out her tongue.

He takes the picture off the wall and hands it to Audrey.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
My biological parents died in a
plane crash when I was two. Mr.
Sharma and my dad were in the army
together. They were very close
friends. The Sharmas raised me as
their son... I'm really lucky.
They're the kindest people I know.

Audrey looks at the photo and smiles.

Jade walks in. She grabs a beer from the fridge, slams it against the counter. Cap flies off. Kiran picks it up from the floor, puts it in the trash, sits down.

JADE
You want one?

KIRAN
Yeah, whatever.

Jade slams another beer against the counter. Cap flies off. Kiran gets up, puts it in the trash, sits back down.

JADE
What about you, Hepburn?

AUDREY
Um, sure.

Jade slams another beer against the counter. Neck breaks, spraying foam. She dumps the beer in a glass.

She brings over the beers, plops down on the couch between Kiran and Audrey.

JADE
Did you know we were going to get married? Did mom tell you that?

KIRAN
No... you and Noah broke up again?

JADE
Do not invoke the name of the devil. I fucking hate that man.
(to Audrey)
Men are the worst, right? I mean, not Kevin. Kevin's okay.

AUDREY
Kevin?

KIRAN
It's Kiran.

JADE
Uh huh, whatever, Kevin.
(to Audrey)
You know what I'm saying, though. Men cannot be trusted. Do you want to see a picture of him?

Jade whips out her phone, shows her a picture of Noah. He's a short mousy guy with nerdy spectacles.

AUDREY

How long were you together?

JADE

Five years. You want to believe that people can change.

Jade drinks her beer.

JADE (CONT'D)

People are selfish dumb animals. Relationships are doomed to fail.

Kiran and Audrey drink half their beers in a single gulp.

JADE (CONT'D)

People just make each other miserable. Love is a disease.

Kiran and Audrey drink the rest of their beers.

JADE (CONT'D)

I don't need anyone dragging me down. I'm great. I'm fucking fantastic. I'm the goddamn empress of awesome...

Jade starts crying. Kiran removes the cloth from his eyes. He tries to put his arm around her, fails.

JADE (CONT'D)

I hate him. I miss him. I'm broken.

Jade cries, slides down on the couch on top of Audrey.

JADE (CONT'D)

Fucking asshole. He's such a jerk. Why won't he return my calls?

Kiran goes to his bedroom. Audrey strokes Jade's hair.

JADE (CONT'D)

I'm going rock this city. I'm going drink, fuck, and party till dawn.

Kiran returns with a pillow and blanket. He puts a pillow under Jade's head as Audrey slips out from underneath. She snores. Kiran and Audrey spread the blanket over her.

AUDREY

I should probably head out.

KIRAN

Yeah.

Kiran walks Audrey to the door.

KIRAN (CONT'D)
See you again sometime?

AUDREY
Sure.

Audrey leaves. Kiran tries to shut the door, but the latch and dead bolt are broken. Door yawns open.

INT. KIRAN'S LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY - MORNING

Sunlight through the window. Jade awakes on the couch.

Living room is stylishly decorated in an Old World style: teak bookshelves, antique maps, hanging plants.

Jade pokes around the kitchen, searching the cabinets: crackers, rice and beans, Indian spices, puja figurines.

Jade gives up, sits down on the couch. She pulls a Fraggie Rock journal from her backpack and starts writing.

INT. KIRAN'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING - LATER

Kiran comes out his room. Jade secrets away her notebook.

KIRAN
Hey.

JADE
Hey. Do you have any coffee?

KIRAN
I have tea.
(opens cabinet)
Darjeeling or Assam?

JADE
Isn't that the twiggy crap that mom and dad drink? You seriously don't you have any coffee? I thought you were a writer.

KIRAN
Cool. Darjeeling then.

Kiran starts a kettle on the stove.

JADE
This is a banging apartment.

KIRAN

It's a sublet. My old professor owns the place. He's letting me stay here for cheap while he's on sabbatical in Europe. He's a novelist.

Kiran points at the bookshelf where there's a series of novels by Charles Bender: *Love Unmoored*, *Everything Lost & Found*, *The Smell of Rain*.

JADE

How long has he been on sabbatical?

KIRAN

Um, two years? He comes back occasionally for a week or two. He's half-blind so I help him read the mail, get groceries, that kinda thing.

JADE

That's a sweet deal.

(beat)

Sorry I was a mess last night.

KIRAN

Don't worry about it. I'm sorry to hear about you and...

Jade gives him the middle finger and shakes her head.

KIRAN (CONT'D)

Alright, what should we call him? Mr. N? We need a codename.

JADE

Super douchetwat.

KIRAN

Ok, I'm sorry to hear about you and super douchetwat.

JADE

Audrey seemed cool. Is she your girlfriend?

KIRAN

No, we're just hanging out.

JADE

Uh huh. Yeah right, Kevin.

KIRAN

Don't call me Kevin. You know I hate that name.

(beat)

You broke my door, by the way.

JADE

I called like eight times.

KIRAN

No, you didn't.

JADE

Yes, I did.

KIRAN

What number?

JADE

(looking at her phone)

555-283-71... oh fuck, that's another Kevin. This biker dude from St. Louis.

KIRAN

See? That's why I hate the name Kevin. Only bikers and computer programmers are named Kevin.

KEVIN takes out a traditional Indian tea set from the cupboard. He pours a cup of tea and brings it over to Jade.

JADE

What's with all this Indian stuff?

KIRAN

I like it. Reminds me of home.

JADE

It's depressing.

She picks up a book on the coffee table: *The Diamond Sutra*.

Please tell me you're not in a cult.

KIRAN

No, but I have been slowly discovering Buddhism.

JADE

Oh god. If you start chanting and try to give me sacred beads, I'm running the fuck of here.

(MORE)

JADE (CONT'D)

(beat)
Seriously though. Screw India.

KIRAN

Hey now, that's our heritage.

JADE

No, Kevin. That's my heritage and I don't give a fuck. I'm not Indian and neither are you... We are American. Raised on junk food, punk rock, and bad action movies.

Kiran checks his watch, grabs his keys from the table.

KIRAN

I gotta go to work.

JADE

Call out sick. What am I supposed to do?

KIRAN

It's New York. Go explore the city, spit off the Brooklyn Bridge, eat fancy cupcakes. Maybe you can fix the door while I gone?

JADE

Alright, can I borrow some money?

Kiran stops, looks at her.

JADE (CONT'D)

I'm broke. I'll pay you back.

Kiran opens his wallet, hands her a twenty. She raises her eyebrow.

JADE (CONT'D)

It's New York.

Kiran fishes out another twenty.

KIRAN

Call you later.

INT. INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE - DAY

Kiran stocks books. Lee is at the cash register.

END OF OPENING PAGES FOR "SIBLINGS" - FULL TV PILOT AND PITCH
DECK UPON REQUEST

CONTACT: DWARDERN@GMAIL.COM