

MIXING LOVE

"Pilot"

Written by

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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. TWIST & SHOUT - EVENING

The cocktail bar is stylish and modern, with warm lighting that reflects off rows of sparkling liquor bottles. At the centre of it all is TESSA, late 20s, meticulous, smartly dressed, and radiating anxious energy. She adjusts the garnish trays, perfectly aligning the lime wedges, then steps back to assess her work.

TESSA
(under her breath)
Everything has to be perfect.

She catches her reflection in the mirror behind the bar and smooths her hair. SASHA - mid-20s, colourful and carefree bursts through the door, full of energy, wearing an eye-catching outfit. She spots Tessa, already obsessing over the tiniest details.

SASHA
(relaxed, playful)
Girl, it's a bar opening, not a TED
Talk. Relax!

TESSA
(seriously)
Relax? Influencers are coming
tonight. People who can make or
break this place in one Instagram
story.

NICO late 20s, dry, sarcastic walks by, cleaning glasses at the bar. He chimes in without missing a beat.

NICO
If they're here for the drinks and
not the Wi-Fi, I'll be shocked.

Sasha chuckles and heads towards Tessa, who is now furiously checking her phone. Sasha leans in, noticing her friend's worry.

SASHA
Where's the caterer? Please tell me
they're bringing those fancy
sliders.

TESSA
 (sighs)
 They just cancelled.

SASHA
 (stunned)
 Wait, what?! You're kidding.

TESSA
 (frustrated)
 Their kitchen flooded. No food, no
 backup plan.

Sasha takes a beat, then her face lights up with an idea.

SASHA
 Alright, don't panic. I know a food
 truck—amazing stuff—and they owe me
 a favor. I'll handle it.

TESSA
 You're sure? This has to be good,
 Sasha.

SASHA
 Girl, trust me. I'll make it
 happen.

Sasha hurries out, phone already to her ear. Tessa stands
 still for a moment, inhaling deeply, trying to keep her cool.
 NICO watches her from behind the bar, raising an eyebrow.

NICO
 That good, huh?

TESSA
 (flatly)
 It'll be fine.

END OF TEASER

EXT. TWIST & SHOUT - NIGHT

A sleek black food truck pulls up outside the bar. Steam
 rises from the vents, and OMAR - late 20s, laid-back,
 charming steps out, wearing a casual t-shirt and apron. He
 looks up at the bar, then spots SASHA, who excitedly waves
 him down.

SASHA
 (cheerful)
 Omar! You're a lifesaver.

TESSA exits the bar just as Omar approaches. She freezes mid-step when she sees him. Her expression goes from surprise to tension in a split second.

TESSA
(slowly, to herself)
You have GOT to be kidding me.

SASHA
(blissfully unaware)
Tessa, meet Omar! He's bringing the best tacos in Brooklyn.

OMAR approaches with an easy smile, his hands resting casually at his sides. There's an undeniable spark of history between them.

OMAR
(half-teasing)
Long time no see, Tess.

Tessa straightens up, forcing a professional tone.

TESSA
(flatly)
Omar. You're the food truck.

OMAR
(smiling)
And you're still a control freak, I see.

Sasha laughs awkwardly, sensing the tension but not fully understanding it.

SASHA
(nervous chuckle)
Well, I'm gonna... go inside. Make sure Nico's not serving tap water as cocktails.

She hurries off, leaving Tessa and Omar standing awkwardly. There's a long pause as they size each other up.

TESSA
(coolly)
We'll keep this professional, alright? No drama.

OMAR
(grinning)
Professional? When have we ever been that?

Tessa narrows her eyes, then turns sharply on her heel and walks back inside.

INT. TWIST & SHOUT - CONTINUOUS

Inside the bar, the party is starting to pick up. Guests are beginning to filter in. NICO is behind the bar, pouring drinks for early attendees. He looks up as TESSA strides back in, still fuming from her encounter with Omar.

NICO
(sarcastic)
You okay? You look like you just
saw a ghost. Or worse, an ex.

Tessa grabs a towel and begins wiping down the bar to avoid the conversation.

TESSA
(slightly defensive)
He's just the food truck guy, Nico.
That's all.

NICO
(sceptical)
Uh-huh. Sure.

EXT. TWIST & SHOUT - LATER

The bar is bustling now. OMAR works the crowd at his food truck, handing out tacos with effortless charm. His customers laugh, clearly enjoying his food and vibe. Inside, TESSA is mingling, trying to keep her cool as more and more people arrive. SASHA rushes over, wide-eyed and excited.

SASHA
Guess who just walked in? The food
blogger from Brooklyn Eats!

Tessa freezes.

TESSA
(alarmed)
What? He's here?

SASHA
(grinning)
Yup! This is your chance, Tess. Get
over there!

Tessa takes a deep breath and approaches the bar, where the FOOD BLOGGER 30s, hipster with a camera slung around his neck is talking to NICO. She smiles confidently and extends her hand.

TESSA
Hi, I'm Tessa. Welcome to Twist & Shout.

Before she can finish, one of OMAR'S TACOS slips from a nearby guest's hand, spilling salsa and taco fillings all over the bar in front of the food blogger.

TESSA (CONT'D)
(mortified)
Oh no...

OMAR swoops in, grabbing napkins and handling the situation with calm, collected ease.

OMAR
(laughing lightly)
Don't worry, I've got it. Let me get you another one. On the house.

He flashes a charming smile at the food blogger, who chuckles and seems unbothered by the mishap. Tessa watches, silently fuming as Omar saves the day.

INT. TWIST & SHOUT - LATER

The night is winding down. The guests are leaving, and the bar is starting to empty. TESSA wipes down the bar, clearly exhausted. OMAR stays behind, helping pack up. They work in silence for a moment before Omar finally breaks it.

OMAR
(quietly)
You still mad at me?

Tessa pauses, not looking at him.

TESSA
(stiff)
No. I'm just tired.

OMAR
You don't have to pretend. I know I messed up, Tess.

Tessa finally turns to face him, her guard dropping slightly.

TESSA

(softly)

It's not just that, Omar. It's everything. We're too different. We always were.

OMAR

(earnest)

Different doesn't mean bad. It just means we balance each other out.

Tessa doesn't respond, the weight of their past hanging between them.

OMAR (CONT'D)

(continued)

Look, tonight was a success because of both of us. Maybe we could do more of this. Together.

Tessa hesitates, unsure of whether he means professionally or personally. She looks at him, her eyes softening.

TESSA

I'll think about it.

INT. TWIST & SHOUT - MORNING

The next day, Tessa is back at the bar, prepping for the evening. SASHA strolls in, coffee in hand, still buzzing from the success of the night before.

SASHA

So, about last night... What are you thinking?

TESSA

(not looking up)

About the business, you mean?

SASHA

(smirking)

Sure, the business.

Tessa pauses, lost in thought. The events of the night clearly weighing on her.

TESSA

(quietly)

I'm still thinking.

INT. TWIST & SHOUT - MORNING

The bar is quiet, sunlight streaming through the windows. SASHA leans against the counter, sipping her coffee, still giving Tessa that playful look.

SASHA
(smirking)
Come on, Tess. You've been up in your head all night. What's the real deal with you and Omar?

TESSA finally looks up from her work, meeting Sasha's gaze. She sets down a stack of menus, clearly torn.

TESSA
(exhaling)
It's complicated, okay? We... we had something. But it was messy. He's unpredictable, I'm... well, you know me. I like things a certain way.

SASHA
(chuckling)
Control freak. Got it.

TESSA
(defensive)
No, it's not like that. I just—he drives me crazy! One minute, he's all charming and sweet, and the next, he's pulling some ridiculous stunt that leaves me cleaning up the mess.

SASHA
(sincerely)
But you still have feelings for him.

Tessa stops, visibly caught off guard by Sasha's directness. She looks away, her fingers idly toying with a cocktail stirrer.

TESSA
(softly)
I don't know. Maybe. I'm not even sure if it's real or just unfinished business.

SASHA

(teasing)

Girl, 'unfinished business' is just code for 'still into him.' You know that, right?

TESSA

(half-smiling)

It's more complicated than that. We weren't... good for each other. And this bar—this is my chance to get it right. No distractions, no drama.

Sasha sets her coffee down and steps closer, her tone softening.

SASHA

But maybe he's not a distraction. Maybe he's part of what's missing.

Tessa shoots Sasha a look, half-sceptical, half-touched. Before she can respond, NICO walks in, a sarcastic grin on his face.

NICO

(amused)

Well, aren't we getting deep before noon. What's missing? Love? Common sense? Or did I miss the part where we're therapists now?

SASHA

(mocking)

Don't you have glasses to polish or something?

NICO

Already polished, sweetheart. I'm just here for the show.

Tessa smirks but lets out a small sigh of relief at Nico's interruption. She grabs a fresh notebook and flips it open.

TESSA

Okay, enough about that. We've got a business to run. Let's focus.

SASHA

(grinning)

Alright, alright. But you know you're not getting off that easy.

EXT. TWIST & SHOUT - LATER THAT DAY

The bustling sounds of the city surround the bar. TESSA stands outside, holding a clipboard, checking inventory deliveries. She's fully in business mode, but her mind keeps wandering back to last night. Her phone buzzes—OMAR's name flashes on the screen. She stares at it for a moment, hesitating, then swipes to answer.

TESSA
(coolly)
Hey.

OMAR
(on phone, casual)
Hey. Just checking if everything went okay with the truck. Food seemed like a hit last night.

TESSA
(keeping it professional)
Yeah, everything was fine. Thanks for stepping in.

There's a brief pause on the line, the tension between them palpable even through the phone.

OMAR
(teasing)
Fine, huh? That's the best compliment I get after saving your big night?

Tessa rolls her eyes, but there's a small smile tugging at her lips.

TESSA
You know what I mean. We got through it, that's all that matters.

OMAR
(serious now)
Tess... can we talk? You know, actually talk. About us.

TESSA
(firmly)
There is no "us," Omar. Not anymore.

Omar's silence lingers for a moment. Tessa leans back against the brick wall, exhaling slowly.

OMAR

(softly)

I'm not so sure about that. You've been avoiding it, but we never really ended things. We just... paused.

Tessa feels her pulse quicken but stays composed.

TESSA

(sighs)

I don't have time for this right now. I've got a bar to run.

OMAR

(quietly)

And I'm not asking you to stop. Just... maybe let me in a little. We're good together, Tess. We always were.

Tessa feels a flicker of doubt but shakes her head, regaining her focus.

TESSA

We'll see. I've gotta go.

She hangs up before Omar can say more, staring at her phone for a beat longer than she should.

INT. TWIST & SHOUT - EVENING

The bar is packed. It's the first Friday night since the grand opening, and the energy is electric. NICO works behind the bar, expertly juggling drink orders while chatting with regulars. SASHA is flitting between tables, making sure everyone's having a good time. TESSA oversees it all, clipboard in hand, but she's distracted.

SASHA catches her standing by the bar, her eyes occasionally drifting to the door.

SASHA

(teasing)

Still thinking?

Tessa snaps out of her daze, quickly refocusing on the crowd.

TESSA

(distracted)

No. I'm just... making sure everything's running smoothly.

SASHA
 (grinning)
 Uh-huh. Sure. And if Omar just
 happened to walk in tonight?

TESSA
 (shaking her head)
 He won't.

Sasha shrugs, not convinced.

SASHA
 If you say so.

EXT. TWIST & SHOUT - SAME NIGHT

OMAR leans against the side of his food truck, parked down the street, watching the lively scene at the bar. He takes a deep breath, debating whether to walk inside. His phone buzzes—it's a message from SASHA: "You should come by tonight. She's thinking about you."

Omar smiles to himself, slipping the phone back into his pocket. He watches for a moment longer, then makes a decision.

INT. TWIST & SHOUT - LATER

NICO is wiping down the bar when OMAR walks in. They exchange a knowing look.

NICO
 (smirking)
 Oh boy. Here we go.

Omar flashes a smile but doesn't respond. His eyes scan the room until they land on TESSA, who is laughing with a group of guests near the entrance. The moment she spots him, her smile falters, just for a second. SASHA notices immediately.

SASHA
 (whispering to Tessa)
 Guess who.

TESSA
 (quietly)
 What's he doing here?

SASHA
 (grinning)
 Making a move, finally. Go talk to
 him.

Tessa hesitates, her heart pounding. She glances at Omar, who's making his way over, looking both confident and a little uncertain.

OMAR
(softly, to Tessa)
Hey.

Tessa crosses her arms, trying to maintain her cool.

TESSA
What do you want, Omar?

Omar looks at her, his expression more serious than before.

OMAR
(earnest)
Just a chance to talk. Really talk.
No distractions this time.

Tessa stands there for a moment, the noise of the bar fading around them. She takes a deep breath, then nods toward the door.

TESSA
(sighs)
Alright. Let's talk.

EXT. TWIST & SHOUT - NIGHT

The two step outside, the cool night air offering a stark contrast to the warmth and chaos inside. Tessa leans against the wall, arms still crossed, while Omar stands a few feet away, hands in his pockets.

OMAR
(softly)
I've missed you, Tess. More than
I've let on.

Tessa looks away, fighting the emotions rising in her chest.

TESSA
Omar, we ended this for a reason.
We're too different.

OMAR
(persistent)
Maybe that's what makes it work.
You balance me out. I push you out
of your comfort zone.

To be continue...