

Involuntary Etiquette
(Pilot - Sample)

Written by

Andrew Basso

647-677-5548

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

A house party for the ages rages on. Lights are strobing, people are dancing, and a drunken bliss fills the air. There must be at least a hundred people in the house, and every single one of them is having the night of their life. Except for one man, well, more of a boy, ALEX.

ALEX, no older than 22, is wearing his fanciest Star Wars t-shirt and sweatpants combo. It's hard to tell which is more oily, his skin or his hair. He looks like his only life skill is moderating Discord servers.

ALEX

You can do this, man. It's not a big deal. Just go over there and say something cool like "Yo, what's up, homeslice?"

We REVEAL that Alex is facing a wall, talking to himself.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Homeslice?! Are you Juno?!

Alex slaps his forehead multiple times. A few people giggle as they walk by him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Alright, calm down, just remember what WikiHow said; girls like it when you be yourself. So, just go over there and be yourself.

Alex takes a deep inhale and turns around with vigour. He begins strutting across the room towards a girl, AMY.

AMY, 22, has long brown hair that hugs her kind face. Her knitted sweater and crinkly jeans combo suggest she isn't much of a partygoer. In fact, she seems like an almost perfectly gender-swapped version of Alex.

Amy looks up and sees Alex strutting over, his face is red, and a snowstorm of dandruff is falling from his head. Their eyes connect, and when they do, Alex spins around as fast as he can and MOANS out of fear.

ALEX (CONT'D)
(To self)
Do you think she saw that? She probably didn't see that.

Alex looks over his shoulder, and Amy waves at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)
She definitely saw that.

(Scared Moan)
You know what? She probably just
thinks I'm some mysterious loner
who hangs out at the wall. She's
probably like, "OMG, what is that
cool and mysterious guy doing over
at the wall? Does he have a
secret?" And, then I'll be all
like:

(Manly Voice)
Hey baby, wanna see my secret?
(Regular Voice/Shameful)
That sounds like I'm gonna flash
her.
(Deep breathe)
...What would Goku do?

Just then, Alex feels a poke on his back. He turns around and sees Amy. He is, unfortunately, posed like a troll ready to ask his 'riddles three.'

AMY
Hey, what's happening over here?

Alex tries to loosen up and lean on the wall to seem cool. His hand slips, he stumbles, and now his armpit is flush with the wall. Without adjusting his position, he tries to play it off.

ALEX
Oh, you know. Just being cool and
mysterious at the wall.

AMY
Giggles Is that what this is?

As Amy begins to laugh, Alex begins to relax.

ALEX
I-I'm Alex. What's your name?

AMY
Nice to meet you, Alex. I'm Amy.

ALEX
That's a hot name. *Laughs*

AMY
Polite Laugh Thanks.

There is a hefty pause.

ALEX
You look warm.

Amy pulls back.

AMY
What?

ALEX
(Louder so she can hear)
I SAID YOU LOOK WARM

JAKE(O.S.)
(Street tough voice)
Yo, bro, I know you didn't say that
nonsense twice, fam.

INT. GROUP THERAPY OFFICE - MIDDAY - CONTINUOUS

A circle of five people sit in a bland, beige room on uncomfortable metal chairs. There is cheap artwork all over the thin, crackly walls. A few plastic plants make poor attempts to liven up the room's atmosphere, but no amount of plants can make this room feel any less like a cat's fart. The room also smells like a cat's fart.

The owner of the street tough voice, JAKE, sits in the circle of chairs next to Alex.

JAKE, 22, if the spirit of a 2003 Eminem stan possessed a modern white kid, this would be him. Gold chain, tracksuit, corn rows, he shouldn't be wearing any of it, but he's wearing all of it.

JAKE
You are so cooked, my guy.

Just then, a young woman holding a clipboard, VANESSA, chimes in.

VANESSA, a 27-year-old therapist's assistant. From the looks of her, she was president of the Model UN, the young debaters club and did the morning announcements in high school. Her pant suit is as prim and proper as she is.

VANESSA
Jake, please don't interrupt. You
already had your time.

Jake slides further down in his chair and mumbles to himself.

JAKE
(Whispering)
Whatever, we were all thinking it.

Vanessa turns back to Alex.

VANESSA
What happened next, Alex?

ALEX
Well... Um... I asked her if she wanted to see my secret.

Alex hangs his head in shame. Jake bursts into LAUGHTER.

JAKE
Yo, my guy has absolutely zero
game. If that was me? I woulda
locked her right up, you know? I
woulda been like "Yo, shordy tryna
run deep with the top mans in--"

OLIVIA
Shut up, Jake. Your mom's a
dentist.

OLIVIA, a mentally resigned psychologist triple the age of anyone in this group. She has the demeanour of a grizzled baseball coach who hasn't won a game in 20 years. She has on an expensive-looking blazer and dress shirt, but you can tell they haven't been ironed in months.

Olivia is collapsed in her chair next to Vanessa. As if she's hungover.

JAKE
Yo, bump off, Olivia. No hairline
having ass. That's why yo girl left
you. Hairline got you looking like
an old M&M. I'm hungry just looking
at you.

OLIVIA
You watch your goddamn mouth, you
spoiled little asshole.

JAKE

VANESSA
Okay, I think our temper is getting away from us here, so why don't we--

JAKE

The only thing getting away here is
Olivia's wife.

Olivia stands up, out of her chair, and storms over to Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Try it, gyal. I watch MMA every
Sunday.

As Olivia cocks her fist back, Jake throws his hands up in
fear; his true nature peeks out.

VANESSA

OLIVIA!

Olivia lowers her fist while looking Jake up and down.

OLIVIA

Thought so.

Jake tries his best to maintain his persona. He rubs his
hands on his chest and looks around.

JAKE

Pft. Art of war, bitch. *Clears
throat nervously*

As Olivia sits back down and things begin to settle, Vanessa
tries to refocus the conversation.

VANESSA

Now, Alex, why do you think the
conversation didn't go the way you
wanted it to?

As Alex opens his mouth to answer, he is cut off by the final
member of the group: AMANDA.

AMANDA, 21, is not like other girls; she's dirty and
dishevelled. She must only shower once every Olympics...
winter Olympics. She's the type of person to start a
pregnancy rumour about a classmate because they refused to
lend her a pencil once.

AMANDA

Maybe because women physically
can't care about a man if he has
nothing to offer her?

JAKE

Truuuuuuue. That's why these bitches
love me--

Vanessa puts her hand up to silence Jake.

VANESSA
Amanda... You're a woman.

AMANDA
Only in terms of gender.

VANESSA
Exasperated sigh

AMANDA
Modern women have strayed too far
from traditional values, Vanessa.

Olivia takes a swig from a bottle of Pepto-Bismol.

OLIVIA
(Mumbling)
I know that's right.

AMANDA
It's why society is devolving. It's
also why a low-value man like Alex
will never get a girlfriend.

Alex's head droops even further down onto his own lap.

ALEX
UUUUUUUUUUUGH.

JAKE
These bitches are straight hoes,
for real.

VANESSA
Jake! Can we stop with the bitches
and the hoes, please?

JAKE
Said no one ever! Aha!

Jake goes for a high-five. Vanessa ignores him and turns to Amanda.

VANESSA
Amanda, there's no such thing as
low-value or high-value people.
We're all just that: people.

Amanda turns to Alex and softens her demeanour.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 And even if there were, Alex, you
 would not be low-value. Okay?

JAKE
 Fake cough Whore. *Fake Cough*

Without letting her anger take over, Vanessa stands up and shoots a look at Jake that would make Miss Trunchbull quiver.

VANESSA
 One more outburst out of you, and I
 will tell your mother you're out of
 the group!

Jake quiets down and looks at the floor, mumbling to himself.

AMANDA
 Ooooooooooo! You're in trouble!

Vanessa spins her head viciously to face Amanda.

VANESSA
 That goes for you, too, missy!

Amanda angrily crosses her arms and quiets down.

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 I know that you three think of me
 as just one of the guys.

Jake, Amanda and Alex all look at each other, confused by what they've just heard. Olivia shrugs and shakes her head as if to say, 'I don't know.'

VANESSA (CONT'D)
 Just one of the boys.
 (Imitating a cool guy)
 Yo, what's up, bro? You see,
 they're making a Mrs. Doubtfire
 musical?
 (Turns to respond to
 herself)
 Ya, I hear Steven Sondheim's doing
 the music.
 (Regular voice)
 And maybe it's my fault for being
 too fun. But your mothers didn't
 hire us to be your friends.

Vanessa looks back at Olivia, who is scratching at a stain on her shirt.

OLIVIA

Oh, uh, ya! They hired us because
you freaks can't get any nookie.

VANESSA

Olivia!

OLIVIA

What? It's true.

Vanessa shakes her head and turns back to the group.

VANESSA

You three have had some... social
issues, and it's our job to help
you get past that. So, when you
interrupt to say, make a dirty joke
or disparage women, it makes it so
I have to put on my job-pants and
not my friend-pants. And, I want to
wear my friend-pants with you guys.
You might have your issues, but
after getting to know you over the
past few months, I know that there
are some real kind, interesting and
lovely people in you. And, I just
want to help them come to the
surface. Does that make sense?

Everyone looks around for a moment.

OLIVIA

What are job pants?

ALEX

Ya, I didn't follow that either.

VANESSA

I believe she means her menstrual
pad.

JAKE

I get the nookie!

The four of them begin talking over one another, clearly
missing Vanessa's point.

Vanessa lets out a deep sigh, picks up her stuff and walks
out of the room. No one notices until the door SLAMS shut,
and when it does, a silence fills the room.

After a moment, Olivia slaps her thighs and stands up.