

THINK TANK

Written by
Tiara Masso

FADE IN:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE (WAITING ROOM) - AFTERNOON

MIRANDA HALLIN - DELL, age 37, a seemingly put together and organized woman, who spends most of her time trying to convince people of that.

She wears a dark blue blazer matched with the same color dress and a thoughtful look on her face. She sits impatiently on an old chair; in front of her is a table decorated with random pamphlets.

Miranda looks at a FISH TANK next to her. A greenish fish swims her way and awkwardly maintains eye contact with her. She looks away weirded out by the fish staring into her soul and picks up her phone.

INSERT: PHONE SCREEN - The time reads 12:44 P.M.

She rolls her eyes, her posture shrinks.

In strolls JAMES DELL, age 38, who with his laid-back attitude embodies the idea of the man-child.

MIRANDA
(immediately sitting up)
What're you doing here?

JAMES
I'm Jamie's emergency contact. What are you doing here?

He sinks into the chair next to hers.

MIRANDA
I'm Jamie's emergency contact.

JAMES
Number one or two?

MIRANDA
Does it matter?

JAMES
It matters if you're not number one. 'Cause if Jamie wrote me down first, it's 'cause he trusts me and overall respects me more as a parent.

MIRANDA

Well even if you were number one, which you aren't 'cause I saw him write down the contact numbers myself. They clearly didn't think you were equipped to handle this by yourself. So in a way I'd still be number one even if I wasn't. Which I am.

JAMES

Wait, but by your logic if you're number one and they called me, that would mean they don't think you're equipped to handle this by yourself.

Miranda pauses for a moment.

MIRANDA

Oh my God, he did something so bad they called you.

JAMES

(mumbles under his breath)
Or he did something so bad they called you.

MIRANDA

(turning her whole body
look his way)
James. What did he do?

JAMES

Don't tell me you're not important enough to know.

MIRANDA

So tell me.

JAMES

I don't know either.

Miranda looks at him worried.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(in a softer tone)
He's fine. He's fine. Jamie's a good kid. He probably... got extremely early acceptance to Dartmouth.

MIRANDA

Or he shot a kid. Or--

JAMES
Jesus, Miranda. You always do this.

MIRANDA
Do what?

JAMES
Dr. Mattis?

MIRANDA
Oh, she doesn't know anything.

JAMES
She said you always expect the worst from everyone.

MIRANDA
The only person I expect the worst from is you. And since you insist on only passing down your worst qualities I have to expect the worst from him.

JAMES
So you admit I have good qualities?

MIRANDA
Just... sit over there. You're starting to piss me off.

She looks down at her phone as she says this...

INSERT: PHONE - 12:50 P.M.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE (WAITING ROOM) - 1:25 P.M.

James and Miranda sit across from each other on opposite sides of the table, as far away as the room will allow. They sit silently, the only thing audible is the light tapping of James' foot. Miranda eyes him. He notices.

She looks back at her phone. He looks at her.

She looks up to make sure he's not looking at her. He is. They both look away. She looks at him. He looks her way.

JAMES
Can you stop staring at me?

MIRANDA
Like you didn't know what you were doing by sitting in my direct eye-line.

JAMES
You're a child.

MIRANDA
You can't seriously not see the
irony of you saying-

JAMES
-I don't see the irony in anything.

MIRANDA
You never do.

The door to the principal's office opens and out comes the
PRINCIPAL, a 40 year old, suited man with a thin white beard
and an annoyed look on his face.

PRINCIPAL
(addressing James and
Miranda respectively)
Hi. Mr. Dell, Ms. Hallin. You're
very loud.

JAMES
That was mostly her.

MIRANDA
(standing up)
Price, what's going on?

PRINCIPAL
We'll be out in a moment.

MIRANDA
Can you be a little more specific?

PRINCIPAL
Thank for your patience.

He turns and walks back into his office. Miranda stands
dumbfounded in the center of the room. James rises a little
from his seat in an attempt to peer in as the door shuts. He
sits back down.

MIRANDA
(to no one)
Patience. He wants patience.

She looks at her phone again:

INSERT: PHONE - 1:20 P.M.

JAMES
You gotta be somewhere?

MIRANDA
Yes. Yes, I do.

JAMES
That's odd. As the model mother I'd assume this would be your top priority.

MIRANDA
And as a deadbeat dad I'd assume you wouldn't be here.

JAMES
WHOSE NAME DID HE WRITE DOWN FIRST?

MIRANDA
DON'T RAISE YOUR VOICE AT ME HE JUST SAID WE WERE BEING LOUD!

JAMES
HE SAID YOU WERE BEING LOU-

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE (WAITING ROOM) - 1:50PM

James is alone standing on his tip-toes peering into the small circular window of the principal's office.

INSERT: CLOCK ON WALL - 1:50 P.M.

Miranda walks in from the bathroom drying her hands with a paper towel. She flings the paper towel in the garbage, misses and walks over to pick it up. She places it in the trash this time and walks over to stand behind James.

MIRANDA
What do you see?

JAMES
Jamie's talking with the principal there's... there's a third guy in there I don't recognize him.

MIRANDA
Let me see.

James moves out of the way and Miranda replaces him at the window. She stands on her tip-toes too and peers in.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
(re: what she saw)
That's the school counselor.

She steps away from the door and looks at him. They both share the same concerned look as reality sets in.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
I'm going in there.

JAMES
Wait.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE (WAITING ROOM) - 2:00 P.M.

A little closer now; Miranda sits on the set of the chairs where James was, closes to the principal's door. James sits diagonal to her skimming through a pamphlet titled "It's Okay Not To Be Okay."

MIRANDA
I'm missing a date.

JAMES
Oh.

MIRANDA
Umm... you remember David from HR?

JAMES
He's been trying to get with you since 2009.

Miranda rolls her eyes.

JAMES (CONT'D)
No. No, I mean. I'm sorry you missed it.

MIRANDA
I didn't think I was really ready anyway.

JAMES
Yeah, I know what you mean.

MIRANDA
(playfully)
No you don't.

JAMES
(returning her tone)
What're you talking about? Yes I do.

MIRANDA
You haven't dated anyone since we
split. You.

James puts the pamphlet down on his lap and gives her a
scouts honor sign. Miranda smiles at this.

JAMES
You don't believe me.

MIRANDA
No, I believe you. I believe you.
Just surprised.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE (WAITING ROOM) - 2:20 P.M.

The pair stand in front of the table now decorated with the
ripped pages of pamphlets.

JAMES
Oh, you're way too close; back up.

MIRANDA
It's the same distance you were at.

JAMES
(gesturing behind him)
No. I was back here.

MIRANDA
Please.

JAMES
Fine. Go ahead. Shoot.

Miranda positions herself. She squints her eyes, gestures a
shooting motion toward the trash can.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Take your time.

MIRANDA
Shut up.

Miranda shoots!

JAMES
Don't choke.

She misses.

MIRANDA
Wow. Playing dirty. Okay, game on.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE (WAITING ROOM) - 3:00PM

James and Miranda sit next to each other in the same seats where Miranda was first seated. They look at the green fish together as it looks back at them.

JAMES

You remember Jamie's old fish.

MIRANDA

Regis.

JAMES

Classic fish name.

MIRANDA

He used to be obsessed with that thing. He'd wake up really early to feed it. Go to school, rush home to feed...

JAMES

He'd read to...

MIRANDA

(fondly)

He'd read to it... I loved it. When it was that...

JAMES

Simple.

They share a brief moment of silence.

MIRANDA

(trying to convince herself)

He's gonna be okay.

JAMES

He is.

MIRANDA

I know.

JAMES

(almost asking)

We're gonna be okay.

MIRANDA

(hesitantly)

Yeah.

She doesn't look at him; she says this to the open air. James looks at her for half a second.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
(looking at him)
What you don't think so?

James opens his mouth to speak nothing comes out.

The door to the principal's office interrupts him. Out comes their son JAMIE, age 16. The principal and the SCHOOL COUNSELOR follow him out.

PRINCIPAL
Sorry we went a little longer than
expected.

James and Miranda ignore this. They rush over to Jamie and together wrap him in a hug. The confused look on Jamie's face shifts to cautious delight.

FADE OUT.

THE END