

SOS – As to the nature of Alex

Back Ground

Alex is the clear beauty of ARC university. He is physically built like a Scottish lumberjack and instead of his size being an obstacle, he is very fast. Opposed to his body, his face is unusually soft, open and kind. His eyes are piecing royal blue. His hair soft straight blonde that varies from cropped short to neck length blonde; due to him only acquiescing to a single hair cut each year. He has the confidence of someone that has always been considered beautiful, however, he is humble if not ashamed of his looks. Alex is one of those rare people that doesn't seem to see the face of the person in front of him, more concerned with their ability to be kind and to stand by their beliefs. Over his life his five brothers have thoroughly instilled the impression that he is not at all special.

Synopsis

Alex is treated as near royalty on the ARC campus. Students separate like the red sea to allow his passage, women stare when he isn't looking, and just as much when he is. One morning after one of his classes Alex is confronted with a young peculiar woman with a seriously misguided idea of fashion. Her hair is stylised yet mangled. Her clothes are strange, yet there is a sense of flow to her choices. She appears to Alex as an offbeat art student, however with extremely established beliefs.

Alex eventually extracts her name from the conversation, getting the impression that she seemed to consider such mundane matters trivial. It turns out that, Tarnia, disagrees with a point Alex made within Ancient history and is intent on alerting him to other concepts.

She announces that since he took the liberty to express his opinions, it is only appropriate that he allow a opportunity to be presented to alternatives. Alex questions why this could not be dealt with in class time, Tarnia who is completely uninterested in arguing, tells him three possible times over the next few days that there would be sufficient time to discuss the topic. Alex accepts one, confused with the conversation he leaves to consult his friends.

Tarnia is a truly beautiful person. Behind her serious lack of fashion sense is a powerful mind, containing some very different ideas. She is earnestly dogged about her beliefs, but doesn't seem to think it necessary to argue or allow them to be appraised. She is airy to the point of flighty, but only because the world is full of trivial procedures, of which, there are much more interesting things. She seems blissfully unaware of how she is regarded, however, it is revealed that she knows exactly. Back at high school she was known as tarnished Tarnia, and had lived an isolated high school existence. Some people would pity her, but she was always content with her own company and the company of her mind. She is wickedly honest, to the point of stating her opinion as fact. It is eventually revealed that her father is a well known, yet scorned, conspiracy writer. Tarnia believes her fathers writings completely. To some it makes her seem ridiculous, but her

exceptional knowledge of the widely accepted “facts of life” give her the ability to debate her beliefs brilliantly, if she feels like it. Tarnia witnessed the death of her mother when she was nine years old, some believe that this would leave her soul wounded and explains her unique attitude. Which is completely untrue. Her mother's death, although causing her exceptional grief, actually made her less “airy” than she had been as a child. The incident of her mother's death made Tarnia begin to pay more attention to the “real world”. Eventually Tarnia became very interested in AFL, because she considered it an accurate representation of the game of life. She never supported a particular team, but she did criticise teams who played unfairly. Her interest was never the score, she would simply declare a winner by the nature in which they played the game and often conflicted with the actual result.

At the end of her breakfast (that ended up lasting well past lunch into the afternoon) with Alex, Tarnia continues with Alex to the Football ground to watch the game. Alex escorts her to where Blair and Noah are watching the game and sits her next to a concerned Blair. Blair is still “injured” and not willing to play after Kimberly's death. Blair becomes fascinated by Tarnia, who is supporting individual players of both teams.

She screams out at random moments when her rules of AFL have been violated, slowly Blair understands her system and by half time is screaming with her. At half time Tarnia announces the winner of the game, Noah checks the score board and cannot understand the decision as the score board states the exact opposite. Slightly confused and needing to escape, Noah offers them food and drinks. Blair and Tarnia are left in silence. Eventually Blair states that he agrees with her opinion of the match so far. Tarnia states back that the game is now over and she is awaiting the next game. Blair returns that this is simply half time and that the game will continue shortly. Tarnia does not seem to have heard what he has said. She looks at him eventually and states that Kimberly must have taken the Blair that was a very bad AFL player with him. That the old Blair would definitely not have understood her rules of the game. Blair (who recently would scorn anyone that would mention Kimberly) eventually overcomes the anger that has appeared on his face and cautiously questions her meaning.

ALEX LIFE MONTAGE

EXT. ARC university – Multiple locations – Day

MONTAGE of ALEX moving around the university. People watch and stare at ALEX. He is Stared at by women. Exulted by men. People move from tables so he can sit down.

ALEX is completely unaware people are paying him any attention at all.

ALEX makes a statement in an ancient history class.

TARNIA is awoken from a dream like state and looks startlingly at ALEX.

END OF MONTAGE

FADE TO:

OPENING SEQUENCE.

EXT. ARC university – History Block Foyer - Morning

ALEX is walking out of the lecture theatre. People are staring at him, still he walks unaware.

TARNIA approaches from out of the lecture theatre.

TARNIA (shout to ALEX)
26!

ALEX doesn't realise he is being called and continues walking.

TARNIA
NUMBER 26!

ALEX continues to walk.

TARNIA reaches him and taps his shoulder.

TARNIA
Number 26.

ALEX turns.

ALEX
Hu??

TARNIA
You're number 26 of the AFL team.

ALEX
Yeah I...
I'm Alex more often though.

ALEX's name seems a trivial matter.

TARNIA
We need to discuss Da Vinci.

ALEX
Sorry?

TARNIA
The Mona Lisa was not a woman. It was Da Vinci in drag.

ALEX (smiling)
Excuse me?

TARNIA
Exactly. I think we should debate it.

ALEX
Alright. Bring it up next class.

TARNIA
I don't have any classes at lunch then in the afternoon or before the game begins tomorrow?

ALEX
Wouldn't it be better...

TARNIA (to no-one)
Perhaps you weren't sure of what you said today.

ALEX
No, what?
I spose, tomorrow morning?

TARNIA
The coffee shack puts gradige in there milk, but otherwise the food is fine.
Their breakfast looks tasty.

TARNIA moves to exit.

ALEX
What time then?

TARNIA ignores as if it is completely trivial.

TARNIA
Breakfast.
Come when you are hungry I suppose.

ALEX
Well, I don't want you to have to wait.

TARNIA
I wont wait. I'll be there all breakfast time. Then you won't be able to miss our meeting if
you come there to eat.

ALEX
Wouldn't it be easier to decide a time?

TARNIA (back in a haze)
No.

TARNIA walks away in no real direction.

ALEX looks confused. Women are still staring at him.

A WOMAN comes up to him.

WOMAN
Don't worry, that's just tarnished Tarnia. I used to go to high school with her, shes a little
bit retarded I think, hasn't changed at all.

ALEX
I doubt that.
I have a feeling you haven't changed at all since high school.
That's a horrible thing to call someone.

ALEX walks away.

WOMEN looks slightly depressed.

FADE TO.

INT. JONES MANOR – POOL – AFTERNOON

NOAH is swimming in the lap pool. BLAIR is studying at the bar. CODA is talking on her phone.

ALEX enters.

ALEX walks to the lap pool and squats down as NOAH is approaching.

NOAH rolls into a tumble turn and pushes off the wall. Doing so he notices ALEX. NOAH pulls up after pushing off and looks quizzically at ALEX.

NOAH
What?

ALEX
Do you know a girl called Tarnia?

NOAH
I don't know, what's she look like?

ALEX
I don't know, um, bout 5'6. Mousy blonde hair.
Kinda looks like she got dressed in the dark.

NOAH
How old?

ALEX
Bit younger than me I guess.

BLAIR looks up.

BLAIR
Does she act like she's sleep walking?

ALEX
Yeah, a bit.

BLAIR(to NOAH)
Sits two rows behind us in Philosophy.

NOAH
Oh, ok, Tarnia Glover.
Yeah now I'm with ya.

ALEX
Strangest thing happened today.
She came up to me after class and wanted to debate my ideas on Da Vinci.

NOAH laughs.

NOAH
So?

ALEX
It was utterly bizarre. She, we're going to breakfast tomorrow morning.

NOAH
There's a shocker.

ALEX
She kept calling me 26, couldn't care less about my name.

NOAH
Your jersey number is 26.

CODA hangs up the phone.

ALEX
She wouldn't give me a time for breakfast. She just said that she would be there all breakfast, and I should come when I'm hungry.

NOAH
Then you'll be there all breakfast too.

ALEX
Noah! Don't be an idiot, this is weird.

NOAH
Weird?
A girl asked you out.
It must happen three times a day.

ALEX
This isn't a date. This is a meeting for a debate about class work. At some time tomorrow morning, at the coffee shop where I've been told not to drink the milk.

NOAH
The coffee shack?
(beat)
There is something odd about their milk. Coffee always tastes strange.

ALEX

Gradige.

NOAH
What?

ALEX
Don't worry.
(beat)
Want to come with me?

NOAH
No.

CODA Walks over.

CODA
What's this Willaims?
You scared of a date.

ALEX
It isn't a date.

CODA
Tainted Tarnia, scares big man 26.

ALEX
That's disgusting. Don't call her that.

NOAH
He's right, that's not like you.

CODA
What? She's an oddball, I can hardly figure out what she's talking about.

ALEX
Doesn't mean you can be a bitch.
Stop eavesdropping, go away please.

CODA
Your touchy!

ALEX
I'm talking to Noah. Go away.

CODA leaves.

NOAH
Bit protective there.

ALEX
How would you like people saying things like that about you?

NOAH
They do.

ALEX
Oh.

NOAH
They say there is only one thing worse then being talked about.
Not being talked about.

ALEX
I spose.
Still doesn't mean it's right to be like that about someone.

NOAH
You're right.

ALEX
So will you come with me.

NOAH
No.

ALEX
Why not?

NOAH
It's your date.

ALEX
No it isn't.
Do it as a favour.

NOAH
No.
You set this up, even if it isn't a date. If you show up with someone and it is a date; that's
a cowards way of getting out of it.

ALEX

So.

NOAH

First, your not a coward. Second, that's as cruel a thing to do as being nasty behind someone's back.

ALEX

No it's not.

NOAH

Yes it is. If she is expecting a date, she wont be able to discus it because I'll be there. It means you have cornered her and are being a coward about it. Two on one is unfair.

ALEX

That's true.

NOAH

Ill walk you there if you want.

ALEX

Nah, I think your right.

NOAH

Good luck then.

ALEX

Wait a second.

NOAH

Yeah?

ALEX

Should I offer to pay then?

NOAH

Don't be stupid.

Stop trying to plan what will happen.

Go there. Tell her the truth: that you think it is just for a chat. And just have breakfast.

ALEX

How come you understand the world so much better then I do?

NOAH

I don't.

NOAH pushes off the wall and swims away.

ALEX stands up and walks over to BLAIR.

ALEX
What you studying?

BLAIR
Freud.

ALEX
So sex then?

BLAIR laughs

BLAIR
Get your mind out of the gutter.

FADE TO:

INT. ARC university – Coffee shack – Morning

TARNIA is sitting at a table with a news paper in front of her. She is holding a red pen and as she reads she crosses out words and writes new ones.

ALEX enters. He scans the restaurant and finds TARNIA.

ALEX stands for a moment to watch TARNIA. He looks interested and walks over.

ALEX
Good morning.
What are you doing?

TARNIA
Hello.
Correcting the newspaper.

ALEX
Spelling mistakes?

TARNIA
No, the stories are wrong.

ALEX
Wrong? But it's a newspaper.

TARNIA
Yes, and it is wrong.

ALEX
How do you know?

TARNIA
It's just wrong.

ALEX
How?

TARNIA
It makes assumptions and states them as fact.

ALEX
Why correct it? If only you read it, there isn't a point.

TARNIA
Other people will read this paper, then they can read the real story.

ALEX
Your story.

TARNIA
No. My father always told me to read the facts of a story, not the opinions.

ALEX
That makes sense.

TARNIA
Do you want to read it?

ALEX
No, thankyou.

TARNIA
You think I am odd.

ALEX
I think you are different.

TARNIA
Oh

ALEX

Interesting different. But, that isn't why I don't want to read the paper.

TARNIA

Oh. Do you think papers are messy?

ALEX

No. I just don't read.

TARNIA

That's a good idea.

ALEX

People don't usually respond like that.

TARNIA

That's because you're gay. People think gay people are all the same.

ALEX is startled

ALEX

I'm not gay.

TARNIA

But you're in love with Noah Jones.

ALEX

No I'm not.

TARNIA

But he is an attractive boy. And he likes you very much. Why not?

ALEX

Because I am not gay.

TARNIA Just goes on.

TARNIA

I think that is why you don't see that Da Vinci is the Mona Lisa.

ALEX

What is?

TARNIA

You are very clever, and have a very nice game. I would think you would have noticed that Da Vinci's self portrait and the Mona Lisa have the same face, just without a beard.

ALEX

But why would he paint a picture of himself in drag?

TARNIA

To tell people he was gay, without being murdered by the church.

ALEX

But he lived in France.

TARNIA

True, but he was employed by the church a lot.

ALEX

Really, I thought it was mostly kings. Michelangelo was employed by the church.

TARNIA

Do you realise you imitate Noah Jones?

ALEX

What, no I don't.

TARNIA

When you were in class on the first day of class, you tied your shoes, as did number sixteen and Benjamin. Noah walks on his shoelaces. Now so do you. Sixteen and Benjamin still tie theirs.

ALEX

What does that prove?

TARNIA

You also are happiest when you are wearing one of his shirts.

ALEX

This is utterly bizarre.

TARNIA

How are you feeling about the game today?

ALEX

Fine I guess?

How do you know I wear Noah's shirts?

TARNIA

Nobody will talk to me. People think I am strange. So, I notice more than most people.

ALEX
Why do you say that?

TARNIA
Noah's mum Irons his t-shirts the same way. She has since high school.

ALEX
He gets his clothes dry cleaned. Always has.

TARNIA
Oh.
He never said that.

ALEX
How do you know Noah?

TARNIA
I went to the all girls high school that does things with Noah's school.

ALEX
Really. He didn't tell me.

TARNIA (seems taken aback)
Oh. He talks to me sometimes. Always did.

ALEX
Don't worry tho. Noah will never talk about anyone when they aren't they're tho. He doesn't believe in it.

TARNIA (back to normal)
That is a cleverness. But it would make it difficult to discuss your day though.

ALEX
Not really. He just keeps things precise and vague.

TARNIA
We should return the favour.

ALEX
What do you think of Noah?

TARNIA
I sometimes think of him. Not often though, unless I see him, not as much as you would I guess. I guess I just think normal things.

ALEX
No. Do you like him or not.

TARNIA
Oh yes. I like him quite a lot. He writes well, quite unassuming.

ALEX
Oh, really?

TARNIA
Are you going to ask him on a date?

ALEX studies her.

TARNIA
I don't think you shouldn't. He is waiting for you too though.

ALEX
Really?

TARNIA
I have only ever heard Noah talk about one person.

ALEX
I haven't.

TARNIA
He talks about you.

ALEX
Really?

TARNIA
Did you think Da Vinci's later paintings had anything to do with an eating disorder? My dad thinks it is more likely that it was social pressure to finish work quickly. He clearly disliked people wearing hats.

ALEX (day dreaming)
Maybe he just couldn't paint hats.

FADE TO

Int. ARC university – Coffee shack – Midday

The table is being cleared of several cups and many plates. ALEX is talking animatedly. TARNIA looks quite interested.

ALEX

Well he tripped him over and took the ball. I don't think anyone was happy about it.

Because the ref missed it.

But every player broke formation and ran at him. He had no idea what was about to happen. It became like a rugby union game. He was running with the ball and two of us tackled him at the same time and he must have landed on the ball with such force.

Because we heard such a loud pop, then when we got up the ball was completely deflated.

TARNIA looks at him and urges him to go on.

A wall clock catches ALEX's eye. He looks at it twice.

ALEX

Oh god. I have to be at warm up.

TARNIA

Oh of course. You have your two games today.

ALEX

No just the one.

TARNIA doesn't respond

ALEX

Are you coming to the game?

TARNIA

Yes. I always see at least one of them.

ALEX looks confused.

They both get up to leave.

EXT. ARC UNIVERSITY – Footpath to stadium - Afternoon

ALEX walks on the foot path and TARNIA walks on the grass.

TARNIA

They only have concrete footpaths so they can sell more shoes. If you walk on the grass they last much longer.

ALEX smiles.

ALEX

I'll take you in and you can sit with Noah and Blair, number 16, if you want. Then you won't have to pay.

TARNIA

No. I would prefer to pay anyway. The more money they make the longer break they should be able to give you between games. Then they won't have to book the ground as much.

ALEX

We only play one game a week we don't need any longer.

TARNIA looks confused.

TARNIA

I didn't bring my earplugs.

ALEX

What for?

TARNIA

I don't like the commentator. His rules for watching the game aren't the same as mine.

ALEX(Laughing)

He is a little full of himself.

(beat)

I don't want to ask you to lie, but would you mind not saying anything to Noah or Blair about me.

TARNIA (sad)

Oh, you didn't tell them we were having breakfast?

ALEX

Of course. I just don't want them knowing my business at the moment.

TARNIA(visibly happier)

Don't worry. Neither of them would believe you were gay any more than you do.

ALEX

Thanks.

INT. ARC football stadium – Grand stand – afternoon

NOAH and BLAIR are already sitting in the grand stands. BLAIR is playing a PSP and NOAH is holding a script marking it with a carpenter's pencil.

ALEX and TARNIA are walking down the steps to the front row.

ALEX stands in front of BLAIR and waits for him to look up.

Eventually BLAIR looks up at ALEX.

BLAIR
What?

ALEX
Guys, this is Tarnia, do you mind if she sits here for the game?

BLAIR
Sure.

ALEX
Noah?

NOAH(still marking script)
I don't mind. I know Tarnia well.

TARNIA
We established that at the coffee shack

NOAH (to script)
I figured it.

ALEX
I have to go to the change rooms.

NOAH(to script)
Don't miss me too much.

ALEX Blushes

BLAIR
You wish Jones.
He'll be too busy scoping the other guys.

TARNIA

I think if someone farted you would all start giggling aswell.

BLAIR tries to stop a giggle, but can't.

ALEX chuckles slightly.

NOAH (to script)

Well said.

Sit down.

Alex leave.

ALEX Smiles and walks back up the stand.

NOAH is emersed in his script.

BLAIR looks to TARNIA

BLAIR(to TARNIA)

Good breakfast?

TARNIA

Eggs really are a hard food to spoil and the lunch was nice.

BLAIR

Settle your points on Da Vinci?

TARNIA

You are a very bad AFL player.

It has been nicer to watch the games over the past few weeks, without you on the field.

BLAIR sits quietly, taken aback.

FADE TO:

LATER

INT. ARC football stadium – Grand stand – afternoon

The game is in full swing. NOAH and BLAIR are watching intently. But TARNIA is much more Animated about her support.

EXT. ARC football stadium – FIELD – afternoon

An ARC football player steps over anothers back to catch the ball.

INT. ARC football stadium – Grand stand – afternoon

THE CROWD screams.

TARNIA

TERRIBLE. TAKE HIM OFF THE FIELD.

BLAIR looks at her in disbelief.

NOAH smiles still watching the game.

EXT. ARC football stadium – FIELD – afternoon

An opposition player dives recklessly to catch the ball and makes the mark.

INT. ARC football stadium – Grand stand – afternoon

The CROWD boo.

TARNIA

YES!!! That's what we want to see, struggle and success!

BLAIR Laughs.

EXT. ARC football stadium – FIELD – afternoon

An ARC player marks a football and five opposition players jump on him.

INT. ARC football stadium – Grand stand – afternoon

The CROWD cheer and heckle.

EXT. ARC football stadium – FIELD – afternoon

The Opponent players wont get off The ARC player.

INT. ARC football stadium – Grand stand – afternoon

The CROWD are quiet.

TARNIA

GET OFF HIM YOU MONSTERS! Learn to accept you're losing horribly!

BLAIR Smiles and checks the score board.

ARC is actually losing by quite a lot. BLAIR Shakes his head in disbelief.

EXT. ARC football stadium – FIELD – afternoon

An ARC player runs along and kicks a goal.

The half time siren sounds.

INT. ARC football stadium – Grand stand – afternoon

TARNIA

YES EXCELLENT PLAY TO THE LAST SECOND!

BLAIR smiles and looks at NOAH who is chuckling freely.

TARNIA (to no-one)

Well ARC clearly won that game. Definitely a decisive victory.

BLAIR checks the score board.

The score board shows half time and ARC significantly behind.

BLAIR looks Confused.

TARNIA(to BLAIR)

I think Alex is still a little upset because he was wrong this morning.

NOAH

What, he's playing fine?

TARNIA

No. He is upset, not playing like normal at all.

BLAIR

What makes you say that?

TARNIA

A football hit him square in the side of the head. He isn't inside the game.

BLAIR

Yeah. That was pretty funny.

TARNIA

At least they won the game.

BLAIR

They havn't won anything. It is half tim...

NOAH (INTERUPTING)

Just drop it, let it go!

BLAIR (ignoring NOAH)

They still have to play the second half.

NOAH looks down and shakes his head.
NOAH picks up his script and starts working again.

TARNIA
Second half? You've been listening to that commentator havn't you?

BLAIR
Well it helps to know what's happening.

TARNIA
You pay attention to other peoples rules to often. That is why you're a bad player.

BLAIR
I spose that is a matter of opinion.

TARNIA
Half time is an interesting idea, but it doesn't really work. Once they leave the field, they can't come back to the same game. So it's a new game.

BLAIR
What?

TARNIA (seeming like she is not going to answer)
My mother was killed when I was eleven. After a while I was new person too.

BLAIR
?

TARNIA
The idea of half time is nice, but it doesn't work. The two games may be being played on the same day, but they are definitely two separate games.

BLAIR
Are you talking about the game or your mum?

TARNIA looks quizzically.

(beat)

BLAIR
Who played what?

TARNIA (beaming)
You're trying Blair. That's good.

You should go and play the next game.

BLAIR waits, expressionless.

TARNIA (seemingly out of nowhere)
Can you hear the traffic noise outside the grounds?

BLAIR (slightly annoyed)
Of course.

TARNIA
Me too.
(beat)
The traffic is always there, these people don't hear it.

TARNIA stands.

BLAIR
??

TARNIA
I am not watching this team again. I don't think they can get past how they played the last game.

BLAIR(confused)
I thought you were here to support Alex?

TARNIA
What makes you think I'll stop supporting him when I am not here?

BLAIR stares off as Tarnia often seems too.

TARNIA
See you in the traffic Blair.

BLAIR
Yeah.

TARNIA walks away, passing NOAH on his return.

NOAH smiles and waves, TARNIA looks confused then smiles back.

NOAH walks and sits with BLAIR

BLAIR stands.

NOAH
Where are you going?

BLAIR
I might go to the locker rooms.
Do you think they'll let me play?

NOAH
What, at half time?

BLAIR
Yeah I spose.

BLAIR walks towards the grounds.

BLAIR
See you after the game.

NOAH (confused)
Whatever.

FADE TO BLACK.

END CREDITS.