

# FAKE LOVE

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WRITING SAMPLE

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Pre-lap THE SOUND OF ANALOGUE CLOCKS TICKING.

**Text on black:**

WE ARE ASLEEP UNTIL WE FALL IN LOVE

LEO TOLSTOY, WAR & PEACE

**INT. TINY FLAT - MORNING**

A bunch of analogue alarm clocks go off at 7am. (*Homage to the opening sequence of BACK TO THE FUTURE*).

RAJ (30, an intelligent obsessive-compulsive man-child of Indian descent) wakes up. His morning routine involves single serving everything. Coffee, Egg, Toast-- One fresh squeezed orange-- He clearly lives alone.

Everything in his house is analogue. Piles of books. Records. VHS and cassette tapes. Polaroid cameras-- You'd think he was a hoarder if everything wasn't so perfectly organized.

News plays on a 1980's TV--

REPORTER (O.S.)

There's now absolutely no doubt--  
The human species is on the path to  
a self-imposed extinction--

HUGH SMART, News Anchor (50's) sits behind a desk in a 1980's-style news set.

HUGH

I'm no scientist Sarah-- But if you  
ask me-- It's these damn devices  
we've been keeping next to our junk  
for the past twenty years that's  
(air quotes)  
"Diluting our desire"--  
If you know what I mean?

A female news anchor, SARAH LOVE (40's) looks at him with disdain.

SARAH

Glad to hear you appreciate the  
value of science Hugh but no,  
nobody did ask you--  
(turning to camera)  
In related news--

Sarah segways perfectly into the next story about the UK housing crisis-- Which has been amplified by the majority of people now wanting to live alone--

One corner of RAJ's flat is a very impressive analogue sound studio-- Microphones, Cassette players, Recording devices and a Typewriter.

Above the typewriter is a pennant: *THERE'S NO GREATNESS WHERE THERE'S NO SIMPLICITY, GOODNESS AND TRUTH*-- Raj touches the pennant reverently before sitting down to work.

Below the pennant are framed photos of LEO TOLSTOY and other classic writers of the epic, adventurous and romantic variety (HEMINGWAY, RAND, ORWELL, HUXLEY--).

Below that is a large pile of the books-- Which on closer inspection are actually the same book over and over again. The book is WAR & PEACE by Leo Tolstoy-- Maybe 15 or so, piled on top of one another.

Raj tips a single-serving sugar sachet in his single-serving coffee and takes a sip. He hits play on a 1980's cassette stereo and listens to a pre-recorded interview.

MARY STUART MASTERSON (O.S.)

I know John wasn't happy with the end of PRETTY IN PINK-- In his script Molly Ringwald's character, Andy, winds up with her best friend Duckie, but it didn't test well with audiences. So a new ending was shot where Andy ends up with the attractive, popular, rich kid-- People seemed to like that better.

(beat)

So with our film, John decided to retell the story with the genders switched, where he could get the ending he wanted.

Raj inserts a piece of paper into his typewriter and punches time-coded notes with his two index fingers.

The interview continues-- A quirky, excited female voice asks questions.

BILLIE (O.S.)

Wow, thanks Mary-- And wasn't Molly Ringwald actually cast to play your role-- The role of Watts, the tomboy best-friend, in the film?

Raj fast-forwards to another part of the interview.

BILLIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Can you tell us the story behind  
 the names of the three main  
 characters?

A phone rings-- It's an old sound-- Vintage.

Raj digs through a pile of books and VHS tapes trying to find  
 it as the interview continues.

MARY STUART MASTERSON (O.S.)  
 Oh yeah that's a good one-- It's  
 Keith, Watts and Amanda Jones,  
 which is half inside joke, half  
 tribute to the Rolling Stones,  
 Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and  
 the Stones song 'Miss Amanda Jones'  
 which is actually in the film--

Raj finally pulls out a 1980's analogue phone with a circular  
 dial. He pauses the tape and answers.

RAJ  
 (tired)  
 Hello?

The same quirky female voice from the interview speaks.

BILLIE  
 (excited)  
 Are you sitting down?

RAJ  
 (rubbing his eyes)  
 Yeah-- I'm just going through the  
 Masterson interview--

BILLIE  
 You ready to have your mind  
 SMASHED?

RAJ  
 Hmm-- Sure--  
 (unsure)

BILLIE  
 I made a new jingle for the pod--  
 Wanna hear it?

RAJ  
 (un-enthused)  
 Sure--

BILLIE  
Open your window--

Raj slowly rises and moves to the window. He lifts it. It's a beautiful sunny day in a very modern London. *(This should feel like a surprise reveal-- The isn't a 1980's period film, it's set in the near future-- Like five years from now.) Fashions are a little different, technology is slightly more advanced and most parked cars are electric.*

Down below on a cobbled East London street stands BILLIE (26, a fun-loving, arty, devil-may-care tomboy).

She's dressed kind of weird-- She wears a large grey coat over a white t-shirt and baggy trousers. She holds an 80's boom-box over her head.

RAJ  
JOHN CUSACK, SAY ANYTHING, 1989,  
Written and Directed by CAMERON  
CROWE.

BILLIE  
(speaking German)  
Korrigiere mein Freund

Billie smiles and hits play on the boom-box, which she continues to hold over her head.

An 80's inspired hair-metal jingle (Mötley Crüe meets Bon Jovi meets Wayne's World) blasts out of the speakers.

The jingle includes irreverent lyrics about 'Smashing shit up' a few 'Yeah Yeah Yeah's' and ends with an epic scream-- '80's FILM SMASHAAAAAAAAHHHHH'.

Raj listens from the window of his second floor flat. He loves it-- But something's up, his mind is elsewhere.

RAJ  
(downbeat)  
Awesome--

Billie's hurt by Raj's lack of excited.

BILLIE  
What's up with you man?

Raj takes a breath then comes straight out with it.

RAJ  
Do you ever think this 80's film  
schtick is getting a bit old?

Billie yells back from two stories below-- Still holding the Boom-Box overhead.

BILLIE

That's the point silly--  
We're a nostalgia podcast.

RAJ

Yeah I know-- What I mean is--  
Don't you ever wanna do something  
with more-- Substance. You know  
like make the world a better place  
of something?

BILLIE

(laughing)

We are making the world a better  
place dummy! Thousands of people  
listen to our show-- Maybe millions--  
- and our show makes them happy,  
which helps them bring better vibes  
to their workplaces, their homes  
and their lives-- Which spreads to  
their co-workers, their families  
and their cities-- Ipso facto--  
Making the world a better place.

Raj isn't buying it. Billie knows it. She lowers the boom-box to the cobbled street.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Out with it then--

RAJ

Well-- I'm working on a new idea--  
It's still in the very early  
stages, but-- Something about the  
**FAKENESS** of stuff.

Billie rolls her eyes-- 'Here we go again'

BILLIE

Okay--

Raj searches for inspiration on the streets below-- He spots a middle-aged woman tanning. She wears a British Flag bikini and VR goggles--

RAJ

I mean-- Just look at MRS PHILLIPS  
on that fake grass with her fake  
lips and tits immersed in that fake  
fantasy world of hers--

Mrs Phillips takes off her VR goggles and looks up at Raj--  
Offended.

RAJ (CONT'D)

Sorry Mrs. Phillips-- Just trying  
to make a point--

Mrs Phillips looks over at Billie. Billie apologizes on  
behalf of her partner with a bright smile and a wacky  
shoulder shrug as if to say-- 'Some people huh'

Mrs Phillips accepts the apology, adjusts her bikini around  
her massive fake boobs, puts her VR Goggles back on and gets  
back to her virtual reality adventure.

BILLIE

OK buddy, I agree-- The modern  
world is fake as fuck, but first  
things first-- We gotta launch the  
SOME KIND OF WONDERFUL pod tonight  
and I need your Mary Stuart  
Masterson selects-- Pronto.

RAJ

I've got this meeting today with a  
suit from Gimbal Media to pitch the  
new idea-- Can I drop it over a  
little later?

(checks analogue watch)

Shit!

Raj rushes around his flat packing a tote bag. He rips his  
notes from the typewriter and heads out the door.

He exits the flat and runs past Billie on street level  
handing her the notes.

RAJ (CONT'D)

Sorry-- It's pretty much done--  
Just adding some polish.

BILLIE

Okay-- Good luck-- Oh and don't  
forget-- Podcast call time is  
8:30pm-- Tonight-- On the dot.

RAJ

(running away)

I'll be there!

Billie watches Raj run down a busy East London street.  
Everyone he passes is alone. No couples. No children.

**INT. CAFE - DAY**

Raj enters a Cafe. He approaches a DANNY (late 20's, male, tech-bro), who wears a sharp suit and stares at his phone.

RAJ  
(pointing at Danny)  
Gimbal Media?

Danny looks up from his phone, rises from his seat and greets Raj with great respect. They don't shake hands. (*People avoid touching each other at all times in this new world*).

DANNY  
Raj-- Great to meet you-- Long time  
first time if you know what I mean.

Raj doesn't know what he means.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Love the show-- I listen every week--  
- I feel like I know you guys--  
Where's your side-kick?

They sit together in the cafe window looking out onto the street.

RAJ  
I actually wanted to talk to you  
about a new--

DANNY  
(interrupting)  
So how many subs you up to now bro?

RAJ  
Our Patreon just hit 50,000--

DANNY  
50,000-- Damn-- At six pounds piece--  
- So you guys are bringing in like  
three-hundred-grand every frig'n  
month-- Damn boy!

RAJ  
Yeah, but--

DANNY  
(interrupting)  
--and you've done no proactive  
marketing-- All earned media-- No  
syndication, no brand partnerships,  
all independent?



RAJ  
Yeah, but--

DANNY  
(interrupting)  
And there's just the two of you  
sharing all that cash money?

RAJ  
Yeah, but--

DANNY  
(interrupting)  
Wow, damn man-- That's amazing.  
Unheard of actually-- We'd love you  
guys to join the team--

RAJ  
Great-- Well, that's what I wanted  
to talk to you about--

DANNY  
Killer. Awesome. Love that--

RAJ  
I've actually got this new idea for  
a more serious investigative series  
perfectly suited to the Gimbal  
slate--

DANNY  
(excited)  
Hit me.

Raj takes a breath.

RAJ  
OK. Look at all these people here--

Raj points to the cafe customers inside and outside the cafe--  
They all sit alone, staring at their phones. No couples. No  
children. No one chatting. Total isolation and solitude.

RAJ (CONT'D)  
They're all consumed by  
inconsequential time-consuming  
trivialities intentionally  
constructed to addict us with fake  
friends, fake likes, fake  
happiness, fake knowledge, fake  
highs, fake meaning, fake, fake,  
all fucking fake fakeness--

Raj is talking fast. He's on a roll. But his flow is interrupted when Danny gets a notification on his phone. Danny checks it, then instantly regrets it.

DANNY

Sorry-- I'm listening.

Raj pushes his bubbling anger down and starts again--

RAJ

OK. Look at this plant--

Raj picks up the plant on the cafe counter. Danny admires it. He sees no problem with it.

RAJ (CONT'D)

Fake!

(beat)

Look at those books on the wall--

Raj moves toward the walls, which looks like a large library of classic books. He pulls out a panel revealing it's just a bunch of book-spines stuck onto the wall.

RAJ (CONT'D)

Fake!

(beat)

Look at that guys smile--

Raj sits down again and points to a guy taking a food selfie outside. The guy's smile drops after the photo is snapped.

RAJ (CONT'D)

Fake!

(beat)

And that's basically my pitch-- A new podcast which brings to light the inauthenticity of our modern existence in the hope of raising consciousness and criticism and leading to a more authentic, true, honest state of being-- Working title--

(beat)

FAKE WORLD.

Danny nods-- He takes a moment to let it all sink in.

DANNY

I love it-- Hats off to you bro-- I mean, you've totally tapped into the coveted 18-35 demographic in the past, with no real strategy or media plan whatsoever-- Just great content and great talent-- People just love to listen to you guys--

(beat)

But I can't help but think of all the ways to exploit your existing fanbase with a brand extension that's more closely aligned to your exiting genre-- I mean, just think of the spin off shows-- '90's Film Smasher', 'Song Smasher', 'Book Smasher' the franchise possibilities are endless-- And you wouldn't even have to front these shows, we get some other chumps to do the work-- The research, the talking, the marketing and we just take the cream off the top in the form of ad revenue, syndication fees, advertorials--

Raj sits deflated. A CAFE WAITER (Mid-30's, Male, Hip, Camp, Tattoo'd) interrupts--

WAITER

You guys wanna get a coffee started?

DANNY

I'll take a double shot cap with oat milk-- Raj?

RAJ

Just a pour over for me thanks-- and one of those danishes.

WAITER

We don't sell danishes--

Raj turns to the cafe counter where danishes are on display.

RAJ

OK sure-- Just one of whatever you've got there on the counter--

WAITER

Oh-- (laughs)  
They're for display purposes only--

RAJ  
(confused)  
What?

WAITER  
They're plastic-- We just have them  
there for vibe-- There's no money  
in pastries anymore--

This drives Raj insane--

RAJ  
(to Danny)  
See, this is exactly what I'm  
talking about-- We live in an  
inauthentic, fabricated, phony,  
fictitious, fraudulent, bogus world--  
- And no one's talking about it.

Without realizing it, Raj's voice had grown to shout.

The Waiter looks at Raj like a crazy person and departs with the coffee order.

Raj scans the cafe-- All the single serving customers are looking right at him too. He scans the crowd-- He feels a mixture of pity and disgust for all these ignorant fools.

Then he spots an outlier-- FLORENCE (25, Fragile, Blonde, Bookish) sitting outside reading a book-- A real book.

Raj's rage instantly morphs into something very different-- A feeling he's never felt before.

He pulls out an old 1980's dictaphone from his tote bag and starts documenting the moment using a NPR / BBC podcaster voice (*Raj's podcasting voice is more affected than his natural speaking voice. More polished and serious, almost like a nature documentary voice-over*).

RAJ (CONT'D)  
(into the dictaphone)  
She sits alone-- As everyone else  
sits alone-- But there's something  
different about her-- Her posture--  
Her intention-- Her energy--

Danny gives Raj a strange look-- 'Is this dude for real?'

RAJ (CONT'D)

She has blonde hair worn in a simple, natural style-- She wears minimal or no make up and her clothing appears purely functional, rather than following some fast fashion trend or a display of class affiliation--

Danny tries to interrupt Raj but can't get a word in. Raj is in the zone. Danny takes the opportunity to scroll his phone.

RAJ (CONT'D)

There's something strange happening to me-- Within my chest-- my throat-- my head-- I've never felt this way before-- It's almost-- Overwhelming--

Danny laughs nervously-- It's pretty awkward to hear someone speak about their feelings like this-- People just don't say shit like this anymore. Cringe!

RAJ (CONT'D)

It's a feeling of losing control-- But it's also a hopeful feeling-- A feeling of possibility-- A better future-- I want to know this girl-- I want to know her name-- I want to know what she's reading-- I want-- I want--

(he can't find the words)

Danny uses the pause to interject.

DANNY

I love this-- Seeing the master at work in real time-- You just pick up that recording device thingy and have at it-- You don't give a fuck bro-- Love that!

Raj ignores Danny and continues looking at Florence and documenting his inner most feelings.

RAJ

I want her-- I don't really know what that means-- But I want her--

Florence turns a page of her book, revealing the cover and title for the first time-- WAR & PEACE by Leo Tolstoy.

Raj eyes widen, his chest heaves. The girl of his dreams is not just reading-- She's reading his favorite book and not only that-- She's crying.

DANNY (O.S.)

Alright mate-- I don't wanna interrupt your flow-- It was really great to meet ya-- If you're ever interested in bringing '80'S FILM SMASHER' in-house, then we'd be delighted to have ya-- Just give me a call-- Anytime.

Raj pauses his dictaphone and turns to Danny.

RAJ

What about 'Fake World'?

Awkward pause.

DANNY

To be honest mate-- I don't think it's a good fit--

Raj can't understand-- He wants more detail--

DANNY (CONT'D)

I just don't think a mainstream audience wants hear their lives are fake-- I don't think most people are interested in reality at all to be honest--

Danny extends his hand. Raj shakes it. Danny departs.

Raj turns his attention right back to the Florence. She continues reading. A tear rolls down her cheek.

Raj admires her in silence as she wipes the tear from her eye, takes out a pencil and underlines a passage in the book.

Raj smiles to himself and shakes his head. He can't believe it. This is it. This is HER.

RAJ

(into the dictaphone)

It's as if the 29 years I've been on this planet have all been building to this moment-- The mere knowledge of her existence, in my city, in my lifetime fills me with joy, fills me with-- with-- desire-- Physical-- Sexual-- Desire.

The guy sitting to the left of Raj stares at him with shock-- The woman on the right gets up and leaves-- disgusted by Raj's graphic emotional openness. Raj continues unfazed.

RAJ (CONT'D)  
 (into the dictaphone)  
 I want to speak to her-- but I can't just walk up and interrupt her reading-- What if she's not into me-- I don't wanna be a pest-- I don't wanna get cancelled-- It's all very complicated and confusing--

Raj continues to speak into the dictaphone as Florence checks the time on her analogue watch. She pulls out a large bookmark-type-thing and studies it in great detail.

RAJ (CONT'D)  
 What even are my intentions? Is it lust? Is it romantic? I've never felt any of these things-- How is anyone to know?

Raj watches Florence dog ear her page. She places the book in her tote bag and turns to look over her shoulder at the street corner. She checks her watch again.

RAJ (CONT'D)  
 (into the dictaphone)  
 She looks to be about two thirds of the way through-- My guess is she's at the battle of Borodino and those tears are for Prince Andrei, wounded in battle and suspected dead by his family and Natasha.

Just then a PLAIN YOUNG WOMAN walks around the street corner. The same corner that Florence has been looking at.

Florence checks her bookmark-type-thing again, rises and walks toward the Plain Young Woman.

RAJ (CONT'D)  
 (into the dictaphone)  
 She rises from her seat. She walks with grace toward what looks to be a friend coming around the corner--

Raj watches as Florence lightly taps a NERVOUS YOUNG MAN on the shoulder as she passes. The man snaps out of the momentary trance caused by staring at his phone screen.

Raj stops speaking into the dictaphone-- He watches the strange scene play out in silence.

Florence reaches the Plain Young Woman and follows closely behind her for a few steps without interacting.

Then, when the Plain Young Woman reaches the curb on the other side of the road Florence approaches, taps her on the shoulder. She stops and turns.

Raj picks up his dictaphone again.

RAJ (CONT'D)

(into the dictaphone)

I can't quite make out what's happening-- It appears the two women are not friends at all-- It looks like the girl, the book reader, the special one, is asking for directions and the other girl, the one who just walked around the corner looks confused-- It looks like she's unable to help-- Maybe this is my opportunity-- Maybe I can help--

Raj stands to exit the cafe. At that very moment A LOUD SCOOTER races down the street. Its rider wears a balaclava over his face. He rides straight toward the two women at a dangerously high speed. He snatches the handbag off the Plain Young Woman's shoulder and speeds away. The Plain Young Woman screams.

The Nervous Looking Man (the one Florence tapped on the shoulder earlier) jumps up from his seat and heroically sets off after the scooter rider, yelling for the thief to stop. He sprints around the corner.

Then from around the corner comes THE SOUND OF TIRES SCREECHING AND A LOUD SMASH.

All the cafe patrons including Raj are standing on their feet awaiting the outcome of this grand spectacle. All eyes are on the street corner. Beat.

The Nervous Looking Man walks around the corner holding the handbag. The whole cafe including Raj applaud. The man now looks like the epitome of heroism.

Cafe customers slap him on the back and shake his hand as he passes, but he moves with purpose toward his mark.

He reaches the Plain Young Woman and delivers a cool-as-fuck line while placing the handbag back on her shoulder.



## NERVOUS YOUNG MAN

I didn't think it was his color  
anyway.

The cafe patrons continue to applaud-- Damn. What a show!

Florence takes the opportunity slip around the corner and out of sight. Raj doesn't see her leave because, just like everyone else, he's been watching this amazing scene play out.

## RAJ

(into the dictaphone)

I can only describe what I just saw as the most amazing and heroic spectacle i've ever witnessed. The hero-- The man who chased the handbag thieving scooter rider has just returned the bag to it's rightful owner and now the two are engaged in what could only be described as the epilogue of love, the opening act of romantic fidelity.

(beat)

I think-- If I'm honest-- That maybe I want this for myself-- I want to feel what these two are feeling right now-- I long for another-- To be connected to someone else-- Someone outside of myself-- Someone like--

Raj looks for Florence but she's gone. He runs outside-- She's nowhere to be seen.

He looks at the table where she sat. It's empty. But he sees something-- He moves toward the table while narrating into his dictaphone.

## RAJ (CONT'D)

(into the dictaphone)

The girl-- The book reader is gone. She's no where to be seen. But she appears to have left something behind at the table where she sat reading War and Peace with tears rolling down her angelic face-- I'm walking toward it now.

Raj reaches the table and picks up the bookmark-type-thing. He turns it over to reveal a photo of the Plain Young Woman-- The girl who had her bag stolen.

Raj looks up at the Plain Young Woman who is now walking away from the cafe and around the corner with her knight in shining armor--

Raj looks back down at the card--

RAJ (CONT'D)

(into dictaphone)

I will now read the text on the card beside the picture of the young woman who had her bag stolen--

(reading)

July 11, 2028, Berwick Street, Soho. The mark (pictured) will arrive at approx. 11:20am, most likely from a northerly direction. Approach and detain mark on the corner of Berwick and Broadwick with her back toward the street. At approx. 11:21am the RR will be initiated. Once successful make swift exit.

Raj stands looking at the card in shock. He looks up. Single serving life in Soho is carrying on just as before.

Raj looks down at the card again and notices a small design on the base of the card. TWO RED CHERRIES.