

DONKEY !

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1 EXT. OUTSIDE FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 1. (COLD OPEN) 1

We see a smoking, broken-down food van. A small crowd gathers. A white middle-class couple panics. The man holds a coffee and tries to call 999. We follow a sweet-looking woman wearing a hijab. This is Kenza (40s). She smiles gently, then-

KENZA

Relax your pussies, bruv.

The couple *did not expect that*. Kenza lowers the man's phone.

KENZA (CONT'D)

Hold those almond-milk tears.
Seriously, no, we don't do that
round 'ere... I told Tony to dump
the van outside the posh shops. Not
near my CAFE! I swear down, last
week it was a washing machine-
(leaving voice note)

Tony, what's your game? These two
La-di-da's were calling the fire
brigade. You and your nonsense need
to come down here and sort this out
now!

(back to crowd)

Right you nosey parkers, move
along! I said MOVE! Alan, fucking
move! Denise, same dress two days
in a row!?

(gasps)

You Schlag.

Kenza winks. The middle-class woman smiles. Kenza points at her.

KENZA (CONT'D)

She knows, she knows.

Kenza walks off smiling and flicks her hijab, proud of herself. HIGH BEAT ARABIC MUSIC PLAYS...

2 EXT. OUTSIDE FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - CONTINUOUS, DAY 1. 2

...The camera is locked on Kenza's face. She knows everyone, she waves at people. This is her patch, and she's on top of the world. Kenza walks into the cafe-

DONKEY!

3.

3 INT. FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - CONTINUOUS, DAY 1.

3

UNCLE
You're fired.

Kenza is furious, and you can see it on her face.

FREEZE FRAME - IN BIG TITLES - DONKEY.

4

INT. FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 1.

4

MUSIC stops. Kenza, bewildered, sits opposite UNCLE in a very Moroccan-looking cafe. A traditional Moroccan Taous (Peacock) plate is on a plate stand, and a framed picture of Kenza's Dad is above it on the wall.

KENZA

You're firing your best chef?
Uncle, are you having a fucking
stroke or summink?

UNCLE

(calmly, in Moroccan
dialect)
Kenza, listen.
(back to English)
The stork that goes to kiss the
baby ends up blinding it.

KENZA

Listen Dawud Attenborough, I work
my hijab off for you and for what!?

UNCLE

Kenza, you have the right
intentions
(in Moroccan dialect)
But the problem is: your head is
hot. Look!
(back to English)
You've gone viral!

Uncle pulls out his phone, and there's a TikTok video paused on Kenza's face with the words 'FOUL MOUTHED WAITRESS STRIKES AGAIN'. Uncle presses play, we just hear Kenza shouting.

KENZA

Yeah, so!? One of them said my
tagine was "too spicy". Cunts! The
lot of them!

UNCLE

Kenza, she was 4.

KENZA

Yeah, but she was old enough to run
her gums though, innit!

We hear a tutting sound. There is a sudden FOCUS PULL from Kenza.

HAFIDA (60s, wearing a traditional Moroccan hijab) is sitting at another table. She's been listening the whole time.

HAFIDA
(in Moroccan dialect)
You're the biggest donkey in the world.

Kenza turns back to Uncle, and nods towards Hafida.

KENZA
Too scared to get rid of me by yourself, you needed my Mum for backup? Even though you can't sack me because... I actually quit in my head yesterday before the idea of you sacking me had even entered your
(in Moroccan dialect)
big watermelon head.

HAFIDA
Your Uncle is like second father, don't speak rude! I have date for you later. Omar, nice Muslim boy -

UNCLE
(in Moroccan dialect)
Again?!
(back to English)
A man is not the answer.

HAFIDA
Shh! You not her Father.

KENZA
(in Moroccan dialect)
Enough!!
(back to English)
I'm tired of the dusty men you keep on bringing me - And YOU, Uncle, you are too boring to try anything new. You know my food would be the best thing to ever happen to this place. Watch, you're going to regret firing me.

UNCLE
I never wanted to fire you -

KENZA
Well that's good then innit?! Coz, you didn't fire me, I quit!
(sees photo of her Dad)
(MORE)

KENZA (CONT'D)

If Dad was here, I'd be running
this cafe by now!

Kenza tries to take the tip jar but it's stuck to the counter
- she takes a handful of coins from the tip jar instead.

KENZA (CONT'D)

I'm taking these - I earned them!
I don't need you guys. You can kiss
my Hijab. Salam wa Alaykom.

Kenza storms out. She goes to boot the door open, but it's a
pull, not a push, so she just smashes into the door - coins
flying everywhere. Even more angry, she slams the door behind
her. Uncle sighs. Hafida tuts.

5 EXT. OUTSIDE FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - CONTINUOUS, DAY 1. 5

LIAM (14, middle-class, awkward) eats a veg-filled rghayef by the bonnet of the broken-down food van and spots Kenza leaving the cafe. Just as Kenza sees Liam, TRISTAN (a posh Managing Director of a local marketing agency) in Birkenstocks and socks cycles along the pavement. He is not paying attention as he is on the phone and nearly hits Liam.

TRISTAN

Watch where you're going!

LIAM

Sorry!

KENZA

Liam, don't say sorry to that Birkenstock bastard!

(to Tristan)

You nearly killed this poor kid. He ain't even had sex. He ain't even touched a boob for fucks sake. Ain't no way I'm letting you rob this poor virgin of that.

Liam looks utterly crippled with embarrassment. Tristan ignores her, cycles off. Before Kenza loses it-

LIAM

Shouldn't you be at work?

KENZA

Shouldn't you be at school?

LIAM

Free period. You?

KENZA

Well, that bald hairy bastard tried to sack me, but I quit before he had the chance.

LIAM

Really? He's so nice, why would he do that?

KENZA

Do you not listen to a word I say? He didn't sack me, I quit.

(catches a whiff of Liam's rghayef)

Wow, overkill on the cumin much?

(MORE)

KENZA (CONT'D)

Why you eating this shit? Who made that, a nonce?

LIAM

I don't think you know what that means.

KENZA

I fucking told you bruv, when your Mum's away I'll feed you.

(catches another whiff)

They've fucking added cinnamon, is it a cake or something!?

LIAM

Wow! Your nose is like a sniffer dog.

KENZA

What? Are you calling me a big fat hairy dog? I did my moustache this morning you cheeky prick.

LIAM

Nooo... no... NO!

Kenza laughs - she's only playing. She looks at the Cafe.

KENZA

I am going to show him... but first yeah, I'm going to call Tony, get 5 litres of petrol, and I'm going to burn that mother-fucking cafe to the ground.

Kenza high-fives Liam, who is taken aback at the escalation.

LIAM

Or, you could always sell your food yourself. You've been saying for ages that your uncle's menu is shit and you could do better. So, why don't-

KENZA

(interrupting)

Sorry Liam, I just zoned out. I've just had an amazing idea. I'm going to start my own place, fuck that baldie prick.

LIAM

I love it, you could do all your own recipes and spec-.

KENZA

(interrupting)

Didn't I already just say that, are you even listening to me.

LIAM

Sorry, I'm just trying to keep up with you.

KENZA

Well, you need to try harder.
Yalla! Back to mine. We've got a lot of cooking to do tonight.

6 INT. FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 2.

6

Uncle walks inside. There is a plate of rghayef, each one served on either red or green paper (the colours of the Moroccan flag) on the first table with a note that says "TRY THIS, DICKHEAD". Uncle tries the dish. He's VERY impressed.

UNCLE

(in Moroccan dialect)

Blessed is Allah.

(back to English)

There she is!

Uncle celebrates by doing a little Moroccan shimmy.

7

EXT. OUTSIDE FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 2.

7

Kenza and Liam are setting up the stall. The rghayef is laid out. Liam is setting up, no help from Kenza.

KENZA

Baba, you would be proper proud of how hard I'm working on this.

LIAM

Can you pass me the napkins, please?

KENZA

Excuse me, I'm busy!

Kenza sees Hafida pushing OMAR (40s) over to the stall.

KENZA (CONT'D)

What is this? Deliver-boo, Deliver hbibi, Male order? What the hell, Mum!

HAFIDA

You speaking to Omar or I take you to Morocco and leave you there, take your passport, your i-phone. Just you, sheep and chicken. Baaaa!

KENZA

Wow, sunsets, and sexy men? Sounds horrible.

(in Moroccan dialect)

No no no no.

(back to English)

For real though, why you getting involved!?

(to Omar)

Sorry nothing against you, geez.

OMAR

No offence taken. I have to say you're as beautiful as your Mum said. Hopefully, I can impress you too... I am a keen hiker with a thirst for knowledge. I read around 1000 books a year AND I have a degree in Viking and Norse Mythology -

KENZA

Read the fucking stall, Omar!
(to Hafida)
Mum, I'm starting my own business!

HAFIDA

See Omar, very successful lady.
Hbibbi, please can you close your
ears, we need girl talk.

Omar puts his hands over his ears.

HAFIDA (CONT'D)

(in Moroccan dialect)
I swear to God you are a Donkey!
(back to English)
Stop it with these fantasies! I
find you nice Moroccan boy with
degree, and this is how act?

Omar now terrified, slowly pulls one hand away from his ear.

OMAR

I'm actually Tunisian.

HAFIDA

Audoubillah! You are... How do you
say Kenza?

KENZA

Out of your mind?

HAFIDA

Yes! You are out of your mind!
(to Kenza, but glaring at
Omar)
Next time I bring MOROCCAN boy.

Hafida shoos Omar away, walking off in the opposite direction
to him. Kenza rolls her eyes. She looks around and realises
they haven't got any customers yet. She snaps into action.

KENZA

(Strong Moroccan accent)
Hbibbi, come in, come eat real food,
fresh new Moroccan recipes, Yallah
Yallah!

Liam is confused by the accent, but it works; a customer
approaches the stall.

KENZA (CONT'D)

(Strong Moroccan accent)

Eat delicious vegetable Halal
rghayef, made by my North African
hand, served by white boy.

8 INT. FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 2.

8

Uncle wonders why the cafe is quiet, he sees someone sitting outside the cafe eating a rghayef. It has the same coloured paper as the ones Kenza left for him earlier...

9

EXT. OUTSIDE FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 2.

9

MONTAGE: We see the food decreasing. Cash growing in the tin.
Kenza & Liam are really happy, they're doing well.

10 EXT. OUTSIDE FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 2.

10

Kenza shoves money into her hijab, she comes across a biscuit in there and eats it. Liam is serving customers, and Tristan skips the queue.

LIAM

Sorry, there's a queue.

TRISTAN

Yeah, I know there's a queue. I'm in a rush to get to work.

Kenza turns around and sees the Birkenstocks from earlier. It's him.

KENZA

Well well well, the virgin murderer.

Tristan completely ignores her and speaks to Liam.

TRISTAN

Can I just order some food?

KENZA

Listen idiot! I would rather eat pig, wash it down with a Guinness and use the crackling as a hijab, before letting you jump the queue in front of these good people.

Customers are on Kenza's side - Tristan is a prick.

KENZA (CONT'D)

Did you honestly think I would abandon my British belief in queueing for a... fucking... Nonce!

Kenza looks proudly at Liam, thinking she got it right this time. Liam shakes his head.

TRISTAN

What!? How dare you. What a ghastly thing to say. Outrageous, crazy woman.

Tristan cycles off.

KENZA
(screams after Tristan)
Crazy? CRAZY!? YOU'RE LUCKY I CAN'T
RUN, PUSSYHOLE!!!

Kenza doesn't realise the council inspector is behind her. He lifts his ID that clearly states COUNCIL INSPECTOR.

COUNCIL INSPECTOR
Can I see your food permit? Or,
specifically, the F198-A.

KENZA
Do I look like someone that has a
form for anything?

COUNCIL INSPECTOR
As per the Hackney Council Act of
1972, regulations clearly state you
need to have the F198-A permit to
sell food in this location, and
failure to produce said permit will
result in a hefty fine.

Stay on Kenza's face. She is speechless - she doesn't care about permits, who's dobbed her in?

LIAM (O.S.)
What is the name of the permit we
need again?

11 INT. FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 2.

11

Hafida and Uncle are speaking. Kenza storms into the cafe.

KENZA

Are you mad bruv? You can't take a bit of competition, so you report me like a little bitch?

UNCLE

(in Moroccan dialect)
Shame on you Kenza!
(back to English)
Today has been a beautiful day. I KNEW the stork would learn how to kiss without blinding.

KENZA

Again with the bird, what the hell man?

UNCLE

Also, I would never report you
(in Moroccan dialect)
We are family.

HAFIDA

Ha! I report you! Too much like Babak. Always dreaming. I want to see my beautiful daughter happy, but look you, making problems with your mouth and hanging out with white boy.
(in Moroccan dialect)
Donkey!

KENZA

(in Moroccan dialect)
Enough!
(back to English)
I'm done.

Kenza looks at the photo of her Dad, then the plate.

KENZA (CONT'D)

And I'm taking this with me, it's the last thing I have of Baba!

Kenza grabs the plate. Hafida grabs it from her. Mum and daughter start a tug of war, dramatically tussling with it.

HAFIDA
It's my husband's!

KENZA
It's my Dad's!

UNCLE
My brother lives in our hearts and
minds, not a plate.

KENZA & HAFIDA
Shut up!

And then the plate flies out of their hands and across the
room. It breaks, which feels ridiculously symbolic.

HAFIDA
(in Moroccan dialect)
Donkey!

12 EXT. OUTSIDE FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 2.

12

Kenza and Liam sit looking at the broken-down food van. Kenza holds one-half of the broken plate in her hands, dejected.

KENZA

Maybe they're right, maybe I am a donkey.

LIAM

Don't say that! When people ask me why I hang out with an old woman -

KENZA

Excuse me boy!

LIAM

Their words not mine. Personally, I don't think you look any different to when you used to babysit me.

KENZA

Well, this is how good you can look if you pray 5 times a day, homie.

LIAM

I just mean people think it's really weird I still hang out with you.

KENZA

(To self)
True that.

LIAM

But you're the only one who's ever really had my back.

KENZA

Cor blimey, you love going round the houses, innit. Spit it out.

LIAM

Ok ok. I've applied for a permit, so we just need to wait, and then we can...

Kenza zones out while Liam is talking because she sees some graffiti on the van of a little peacock. It looks the same as the peacock on the broken plate. We see her imaginations drawn out on the van. A big smile crosses Kenza's face.

KENZA
(Interrupts)
Fuck waiting! Fuck uncles and
stalls and council inspectors and
permits!

Liam excitedly starts to finger slap but fails.

KENZA (CONT'D)
I am not waiting for anybody - this
stork will blind any fucking baby
she wants to kiss -

LIAM
Not literally though, right...?
RIGHT?

Kenza looks at the van, then at Liam, waggles her eyebrows.

LIAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
We'll still need permits for a va-

13 EXT. OUTSIDE FAMILY CAFE, HACKNEY - DAY 2.

13

Kenza is in the driving seat of the broken-down food van, she's ready to go. She sticks her hand in the air like a gun.

KENZA

BRaaaaaappppp

She hits the horn. TOOT TOOTS. A HIGHBEAT ARABIC SONG PLAYS... Kenza is looking cool, giving it all that. We pan out to see Liam trying to push the van - nothing is happening. Then, Kenza sees Hafida bringing another guy for her to date, he's wearing a suit and holding flowers. Kenza gives them her middle finger. Hafida, outraged, starts to remove her shoe, but Kenza isn't fazed - she has a food van and is about to change the world... or Hackney. Kenza smiles smugly, and then a slipper flies through the open window and smacks her on the head.

THE END.