

Peak Male Excellence (Draft v8)

written by

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Close-up on Rohan (18, fundamentally nice, nerdy, young for his age) looking pained and anxious.

ROHAN (V.O.)
Today, Millie Pinker touched my leg.

Packed classroom: chairs in a circle. Next to Rohan is Millie Finkel (18, curly hair, animated), engaged in conversation with CLASSMATES. She sits hugging her knees to her chest.

Then, as if in slow-motion, Millie unfolds her legs to sit cross-legged on her chair. As she does this, Millie's knee **lands on Rohan's thigh.**

ROHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But ok, technically, she didn't touch it with her hand - she touched it with *her knee.*

Rohan looks totally panicked. Millie's knee lies lightly on top of his leg as she continues talking to others.

ROHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... and it just sat there, on my lower thigh.

Rohan looks at the clock.

ROHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
For *minutes* at a time.

Millie's knee sits on Rohan's thigh - Millie still talking to her classmates, but Rohan is frozen, petrified of her knee.

The clock winds through minutes. The seminar starts.

ROHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I am going insane with this knee situation. I can't focus. I *have* to say something..

Rohan looks down at Millie's knee and tries to get her attention. She is fully engaged in the seminar and listening to the professor. Finally, excruciatingly, Rohan starts:

ROHAN
Umm.. your - uh, excuse me.

Millie tucks her hair behind her ear and turns her attention to him. They whisper so as not to interrupt the class.

MILLIE
Yeah, what's up?

Rohan is starstruck for a half-second, bathing in the sudden sunshine of her attention. The world slows. He looks down.

ROHAN

Uh, your knee. Your knee is on my -
it's just. Kind of resting.

Millie, who thought Rohan was starting a conversation, realises where her knee is. She shifts her position so her knee is no longer resting on Rohan's thigh.

MILLIE

Oh, right, sorry.

ROHAN

No, I'm sorry, I didn't mind it, I mean, it's just that I thought you might mind if you knew your --

Millie interprets Rohan's frustrated demeanour for anger.

MILLIE

Ok, I said I'm sorry. Jesus.

ROHAN

No, I know it's just --

2

INT. ROHAN'S UNI DORM ROOM - LATE NIGHT

2

A lonely dorm room. Torn remnants of posters on the walls. Rohan hasn't unpacked yet: his suitcase still in the corner.

Rohan has windows open googling: "knee on thigh does it mean she likes me?". We see a rabbit-hole of links he's gone down, Reddit forums, TikToks about men/women.

Rohan is illuminated by the cool blue glow of his laptop screen, showing a Discord-like chatroom. He types, hopeful:

ROHAN (V.O.)

So it didn't end well but physical contact. That's good, right?

A deluge of comments, intrusive BUBBLES 'pinging' all around Rohan, voiced by lonely basement dwellers:

INTERNET GUY #1 (V.O.)

100% knew what she was doing. DTF.

INTERNET GUY #2 (V.O.)

This guy is cooked. One for Turbo.

ROHAN (V.O.)

If I can't talk to this girl now
I'm gonna be alone for the rest of uni.

INTERNET GUY #1 (V.O.) INTERNET GUY #3 (V.O.)
 You're at uni? You need to be Is this lad even indigenous?
 getting laid.

INTERNET GUY #2 (V.O.)
 Bro panicking about a *knee*.. @Turbo

INTERNET GUY #4 (V.O.)
 Women *are* biologically programmed
 to respond to physical touch..

INTERNET GUY #3 (V.O.) INTERNET GUY #5 (V.O.)
 Both Caucasian? If not, could Need a photo. Check you've
 be physiognomy mismatch.. maxed out your stats.

Multiple 'dings' as the comments come in and we SMASH CUT TO:

3 INT. TURBO'S KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

3

TURBO (37, muscular, dressed like a 12-year old's idea of a cool guy) is shirtless, making a wheatgrass-protein smoothie when he hears pinging from his laptop. Turbo unlatches the smoothie jug, and approaches his laptop. He sees Rohan's post on the forum, drinking from the jug as he reads.

Turbo puts on his headset and locks in, starting to reply - Rohan and Turbo become the only two people in the universe:

TURBO
 Saw your post. You're in a real
 muddle, aren't you, mate?

ROHAN
 Can you help me?

TURBO
 What I want to know is: can you
 help yourself? That's what my
 followers do. Tell me, who are you?

ROHAN
 Rohan.

TURBO
 But who are you as a man?

ROHAN
 Well, I'm a fresher at uni.
 Studying English.

TURBO
 No high earning potential there.
 That's fine. We can drop you out of
 that if we need. How long have you
 wanted to join the Excellence Club?

ROHAN
About ten minutes..

TURBO
And why now?

ROHAN
Well, this girl put her knee on my thigh and I wanted to know--

TURBO
Look, you want to excel in the sexual marketplace, get the female, you need to achieve peak male excellence. But you'll want private tuition from me to get there - what's your funding situation?

ROHAN
I've a bit left from my student loan. But I'm not sure if I can..

TURBO
You can. Think of it as an investment in yourself. Start by telling yourself "I can master the three Ps...

Turbo gives Rohan the lowdown, we get a tour of Turbo's life:

4 INT. TURBO'S GYM - DAY 4

Turbo in his personal fully-stocked gym. Turbo, clad in lycra, screams as he completes a set curling heavy barbells.

TURBO (V.O.)
.. That's **Power**: both physical and mental.

Turbo pulls down the side of his lycra and injects a syringe of steroids into his upper thigh.

5 EXT. TURBO'S HOUSE - DAY 5

Outside a huge mansion in Essex, Turbo pulls a 'For Rent' sign out from the gravel driveway.

TURBO (V.O.)
Property: purchasing premium real estate.. plus crypto.

6 INT. TURBO'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY 6

A framed photo of Turbo with his hand around beautiful smiling wife and son.

TURBO (V.O.)

And **Peers**. You are the product of those you surround yourself with.

But as we move away from the photo, we see in the corner of a massive, desolate and empty living room in Turbo's mansion, Turbo pleads desperately over the phone:

TURBO

I don't want to talk about custody, Alina. Why can't you both just come live with me where you belong?

7

INT. ROHAN'S UNI DOOM ROOM - LATE NIGHT

7

Rohan stares into his monitor, entranced by Turbo.

TURBO

But first you've got a choice. You can crown yourself a king among men. Or - and it's a perfectly respectable option - accept your place as a peasant.

Just then: a knock at the door. Rohan gets up from his desk and goes to the door to get it. He opens it a crack: it's KARA, 18, mousey, androgynous, knows who she is, flanked by two other MALE NERDS. Rohan is distracted.

KARA

Hey, we met at registration. You like Killer Wolf?

She shows him the 'Killer Wolf' logo on the back of her hoodie.

ROHAN

Yeah, it's Kara, right?

KARA

We're thinking ditch the freshers party and just get ice cream? If I hear another Sabrina Carpenter remix I *will* shoot someone.

ROHAN

There's a party?

Rohan looks at the two male nerds, then back to his computer.

ROHAN (CONT'D)

I better not. Sorry. Got um.. work to do.

KARA

But it's the first week.

ROHAN

Yeah, uh -- preparatory reading.

KARA

Well, good luck. Don't just go down internet rabbit holes like I do.

Rohan nods, shuts the door and rushes back to his computer. He types into the chat room: "I'm in".

TURBO

First, I want to see how you handle yourself. Describe the target.

ROHAN

You mean.. Millie?

8 EXT. FOOTPAH - DAY (FLASHBACK)

8

Rohan sits cross-legged on the floor in a scattered group of students. He is sat next to Kara and the male nerds.

ROHAN (V.O.)

I saw her at registration.

Rohan spots Millie from afar at the front of the long queue and marvels at her. She laughs loudly at a joke.

ROHAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She's comfortable in her skin, always laughing. She leans forward when she listens: really *listens*.

KARA

She's cute. You should say "hi".

Rohan shakes his head to say "no, I couldn't". Turbo, now sat with Rohan, clicks his fingers and ...

9 INT. ROHAN'S UNI DOOM ROOM - LATE NIGHT

9

... Back in the dorm room, Turbo has appeared on Rohan's bed, hands behind his head, boots on the duvet.

TURBO

We don't put the female on a pedestal. What's her real data: is she a high-value mate, what's her body count etc.

ROHAN

I only know her name. And that she likes er.. laughing, and --

TURBO

Stop. Where is she *right now*?

ROHAN

Wouldn't that be creepy? To find out where she is?

TURBO

Is the animal kingdom "creepy" to you? The dominant silverback gorilla has access to all females in the tribe. Think he worries about being "creepy"?

ROHAN

There's a party tonight. She could be there?

TURBO

Clock's ticking.

10 INT. STUDENT NIGHTCLUB - LATE NIGHT

10

Rohan enters the nightclub. Deafeningly loud; flashing lights. A group of students bash into him and almost knock his phone out of his hand. Rohan sees Millie among them.

Rohan texts into his phone: "What do you think?" Turbo **appears** next to him.

TURBO

I want you to believe you're a Fortune 500 CEO. That mindset. Big-dick titan of industry.

ROHAN

Ok. I think I've got it.

Rohan ignores him, gathers his strength. The room goes quiet.

Then the song changes and Rohan **bursts into life**: it's the strangest dance ever - part-Michael Jackson, part-Wednesday Adams, a lot of geometric shapes and animal postures.

Millie who is wrapped up in conversation suddenly spots him. Rohan sees her see him but he keeps dancing.

Millie approaches Rohan and mirrors his dance moves. As his moves get increasingly strange, Millie bursts out laughing.

MILLIE

You're actually funny!

The song changes. Millie looks expectantly at Rohan who, with no further instructions, freaks out and leaves abruptly.

11 INT. CLUB BATHROOM - LATER

11

Rohan is elated, enters the bathroom talking to Turbo.

ROHAN

You said "believe in myself" and I did! It was amazing.

TURBO

That's not what I said at all.

ROHAN

We danced together. She said I'm funny!

TURBO

Oh great! A dance? You did a funny dance for her? You are her clown. She was laughing at you, mate!

ROHAN

Really?

TURBO

Tell me you got sex at least?

ROHAN

No. Uh.. I'm sorry.

TURBO

I'm sorry. I wanted to teach you a valuable lesson. It's. A. Female. You cannot let her dominate. You'll be me 10 years ago, having a baby because I "loved" and "respected" her. And now I have an ex-wife, sharing custody of a child who exclusively eats alphabet spaghetti. Is that what you want?

(beat)

You're lucky. I didn't have someone watching out for me. I'm the first in your new circle of peers: hard-hitters not scum-suckers..

Rohan locks his phone, devastated. Turbo is gone now and Rohan is all alone again.

12

INT. DORM COMMON ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

12

Returning to his room, Rohan finds Kara and the male nerds hanging in the corridor, eating their ice cream.

KARA

Woah, Killer Wolf guy! What happened to the study sesh?

Rohan smiles and gives a little goofy wave hello, but then remembers Turbo's "circle of peers" comment.

KARA (CONT'D)

You okay?

Rohan thinks about staying; then changes his mind.

13 INT. ROHAN'S UNI DOOM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

13

Rohan closes the door behind him - right in front of him is Turbo, with his arms crossed.

ROHAN

What do I need to do?

- Turbo presides over Rohan as he does halting press-ups:

TURBO

Power...

- Rohan unpacks his suitcase, cleans the ripped posters off the wall and lines the room with blue LEDs.

TURBO (CONT'D)

Property..

- Turbo leans over Rohan who clicks something on his laptop. The message: "Chat Room Moderator Application Approved"

TURBO (CONT'D)

Peers...

14 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

14

Rohan sits in the same classroom as in the opening scene, but now he is wearing a cheap-looking brown leather jacket, wearing sunglasses in class. Playing the "cool guy". Turbo sits next to him. A few seats further away is Millie.

MILLIE

But ultimately she's critiquing a society obsessed with the surface.

PROFESSOR

Rohan, enlighten us, please. What does the text tell us about beauty.

Rohan takes off his sunglasses, a bit taken aback.

TURBO

You need to own her intellectually.

ROHAN

Anne is right: she's lost her "youth and bloom", her sexual market value. That's how it was then and that's how it is now.

MILLIE

I think we've moved on a bit since Jane Austen's time.

ROHAN

Yeah, I don't think evolutionary science would agree with you.

Millie looks disgusted. The professor nods, worried. Rohan puts his sunglasses back on. Turbo slaps Rohan's arm encouragingly, as if he's just 'owned' the class.

15 INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

15

Turbo stands over Rohan's shoulder as he looks in the bathroom mirror.

TURBO

Who are you?

ROHAN

I'm Rohan.

TURBO

No. *WHO ARE YOU?*

ROHAN

I'm John Wick in John Wick. I'm Batman in every Batman movie. I'm Ryan Gosling in 'Drive'.

TURBO

Good. Let's go.

16 INT. STUDENT NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

16

Rohan enters the club again, wearing his new attire - sunglasses and leather jacket, but still glued to his phone. Turbo hovers over Rohan, hands on both shoulders.

TURBO

This time: you're the dominant male. Pick anyone you like from the tribe.

(beats chest like gorilla)

Close. The. Deal.

Rohan spots Millie and dances towards her, but not goofily this time, Rohan does his best at 'cool guy' dancing.

Millie is deep in conversation. Rohan taps her on the shoulder. She turns to look at him.

ROHAN

How's your night going?

MILLIE
It's fine, thanks.

Millie turns away and tries to ignore him. He doesn't budge. He keeps dancing in the same spot. Rohan leans in **again**.

ROHAN
You know, we're in one of the same English study groups.

MILLIE
Yeah, I know.

She turns back. Rohan gathers the courage for one last try:

ROHAN
You're wrong about 'Persuasion' by the way. I think Austen is really -

MILLIE
You're not listening, mate. I'm not interested. I don't want to speak to you. You're odd. You're wearing sunglasses indoors, you're wearing a fucking leather jacket. Go. Away.

Rohan completely gutted. He reels back, lost in people, noise and the lights of the nightclub.

17 INT. DORM STAIRCASE - NIGHT

17

Rohan returns from club and heads up the dorm staircase, Turbo following him.

ROHAN
It doesn't feel like anything you say is working. Maybe it's me but--

TURBO
It is you. I've forged so many boys into men and you know what they all say? "Thank you, Turbo. I don't let women walk over me any more. I'm free now. I'm a lone wolf".

ROHAN
I preferred it when she didn't know me. Now she does and she *haates* me.

TURBO
Why do you care what an NPC thinks? Just keep onepointed on the three Ps--

ROHAN
What - Power.. Property and.. I don't know if that's what I want..

TURBO

You want to be *weak*, that's what you want.. You don't *need* this female. You don't need warmth, bedtime cuddles, Mummy's fucking milk. You don't *need* anybody at all but **me**--

Rohan locks the phone and Turbo ***disappears***.

KARA

Do you like coconut?

Kara, sitting on the staircase, points to her ice cream.

KARA (CONT'D)

Why're you crying? Is it your jacket? It is an *awful* jacket.

Rohan smiles weakly. She gives him the ice cream. Rohan sniffs. He has a spoonful.

ROHAN

Thank you. I don't think I like being a fresher. I'm. I don't know.. lonely. I don't understand girls. I don't get what they want in a man. I don't get how to *be* a man: you can't be weak and you can't be a simp but the opposite is way worse.

(beat)

I do *not* understand Jane Austen at all. I feel like I'm fucking everything up.

He looks at Kara, she shrugs helplessly. A beat. Rohan smiles and has another spoonful.

KARA

Woah, woah, woah. One spoonful. You're crying, you're not dying.

ROHAN

Sorry.

KARA

And I'm not coming on to you, by the way. So you understand. Just saw you crying and..

ROHAN

Of course, yeah.

Kara takes the ice cream back and keeps eating. They sit together for a second, in quiet companionship. She finishes the ice cream, puts it down, hugs her knees to her chest.

She finishes the ice cream, puts it to the side. She hugs her knees to her chest.

KARA

I mean, I don't really know you.
But you'll be okay. Probably.

ROHAN

Thanks.

Kara exhales, unfolds her knees. Unmistakably, her knee is touching Rohan's knee. Once again - Rohan looks **panicked**.

Titles: '**Peak Male Excellence**'.