

Impartial Attraction

Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. COURTHOUSE LOBBY - DAY

SAM, mid 20s, sits in the lobby of the courthouse, awaiting instruction at jury duty. She anxiously scans the questionnaire document. A Twitter notification dings on her phone. A photo of Sam and a man shows with the caption-

"Actress Sam Paris and Artist Cameron Vassar's Dramatic Fallout"

Sam readjusts her fake clear rimmed glasses and black blazer. A woman walks into view.

KIERA

Hey. Sorry to bother you. I couldn't help but spot you. You look so familiar. Have we met?

Sam's focus locks back toward KIERA, early 30s. Sam sits stunned for a moment as she stares at Kiera, fireworks going off in her brain just from a glance.

SAM

(stammering)

Oh yeah... I get that a lot. I'm an actress. I'm on a little courtroom drama called *Trial by Fire*. Yeah! Of course that's me. Aww this is so sweet. It's always nice to meet a fan-

KIERA

I don't think I've seen that one... I'm sure you were great though.

Before Sam can recover, Kiera leaves to sit down a few seats over, paying Sam no further mind. Sam, taken aback, leans over to Kiera.

SAM

Have you ever been to jury duty before?

KIERA

Sure. Lawyers never get chosen though.

SAM

Mhm. Yeah. Same... I guess I just think of it as like research. You know what I mean? Because I play a lawyer,

and I just feel like as a storyteller  
you have to really live the parts you  
play...

Sam rambles on. Kiera nods politely.

MAN (O.S.)  
Number 272 please proceed to courtroom  
3.

SAM  
(nervously quick)  
Hey, I'd love to maybe pick your brain  
about this stuff sometime-

Sam begins to take out her phone, but Kiera grabs her bag and  
promptly proceeds to the courtroom door.

KIERA  
So sorry. I think that's me. Nice  
meeting you.

SAM  
Oh... yeah of course. Good luck, or  
should I say break a leg!

Sam smiles through her cringing at her own joke. After taking  
one last look at Kiera, Sam sinks back down.

MAN (O.S.)  
Numbers 125, 126, and 127 please  
proceed to courtroom 3 as well. Thank  
you.

Sam, hearing her number, perks up and walks over to the  
courtroom door as if given a last minute callback for her  
next big role.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Sam pushes through the crowd to take a seat next to Kiera in  
the courtroom. Kiera's expression briefly lights up but  
quickly hardens again.

JUDGE (O.S.)  
Welcome to jury selection. I will  
introduce the trial and then we will  
get started with the selection  
process. The case today is a criminal

suit. The defendant is Debby Peters who has been accused of murdering her husband as a result of a domestic dispute. We will now begin the selection process.

While the JUDGE makes their speech, Sam leans over to Kiera.

SAM

If I had to use my lawyer instincts, I would take a wild guess and say she definitely did it.

KIERA

Wilder guess-he deserved it.

SAM

Hopefully she takes a plea bargain which of course is when you fess up and then hope they can reduce your sentencing. Otherwise, I'd have to assume she's going to be looking at 35 to life-

KIERA

Ahem.

SAM

You know, we should grab a bite to eat after this. Here I can give you my number and then-

Sam reaches for her phone as an ATTORNEY takes the floor. He stares at Sam like a highschool teacher waiting for the class's attention. Sam puts her phone away and shuts up.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)

Reminder: please do not speak in the courtroom unless spoken to by the authorities.

The attorney glares back at Sam. Sam sinks into the bench.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)

Now, Raise your card if you agree with the statement as it regards to you personally. To start, some background information. Have you studied at a university or college?

Sam and Kiera both raise their cards.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)  
Have you attended graduate school?

Sam lowers her arm but eyes Kiera's still raised card.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)  
If yes, have you earned your  
doctorate?

Kiera's card does not flinch as Sam looks on.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)  
Do you have a full time job?

Sam puts her card back up extra high to make sure it is in  
Kiera's view.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)  
Do you receive a yearly salary?

Sam's card sinks back down.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)  
Have you been involved in a romantic  
relationship?

Both Sam and Kiera raise their cards. Sam smirks at Kiera.

SAM  
(whispering)  
Ugh isn't dating in L.A. such a drag  
though? It's like I'm open to  
anything, but I still manage to end up  
with some trash guy every damn time-

ATTORNEY (O.S.)  
(to Sam)  
Miss. I'm going to have to ask you to  
move. There seems to be plenty of  
space on the other side of the  
courtroom if you wouldn't mind  
separating.

Sam reluctantly moves to the other side of the courtroom.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)  
Moving on... Have you ever been  
involved in a marriage?

Kiera holds her card up again without batting an eye. Sam's  
eyes widen. Sam attempts to catch Kiera's gaze.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)

If yes, are you currently still  
involved in that marriage?

Kiera lowers her card. Sam releases a sigh of relief. Kiera looks over. Sam raises her eyebrows curiously. Kiera chuckles to herself and then looks forward again.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)

How many of you feel that given the  
situation of this domestic dispute may  
have a bias on the basis of your  
gender identity?

Kiera and Sam raise their cards in sync. Giving each other a  
"duh" look. The corner of Kiera mouth creases upward coyly.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)

Do you have any experience working as  
an attorney?

Kiera raises her card. Sam attempts to put her card up. Kiera raises an eyebrow, and Sam lowers her arm. Kiera quietly chuckles to herself. Sam blushes.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)

Do you feel as though that experience  
may impede your ability to be  
objective on this jury?

Just before Sam can see Kiera's answer, the two people in  
front of her on the bench scoot over, blocking her view  
completely.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)

Numbers 272, 292, 244, 220, and 201  
please approach the podium.

Kiera gets up and goes to the front of the room. Kiera is  
then excused. As she grabs her bag and exits, Kiera glances  
back over her shoulder at Sam with her first hint of warmth,  
and it feels as though the courtroom is frozen in time.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)

As we let that set of jurors dismiss  
themselves, let's take a moment to  
spread back out across the room and  
move onto the second set of questions.

As everyone gets up to shift around, Sam promptly follows  
Kiera toward the door, pulling out her phone. As she

approaches, the bailiff steps in front, causing her to stop dead in her tracks.

SAM

Sorry I just need to step out to use the restroom. It'll just take a sec-

ATTORNEY (O.S.)

If you can all take your seats again we can begin the second round of questions.

Sam, defeated, walks back over to where Kiera was once sitting.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)

Are there any aspects of your career which indirectly relate to this legal process which you feel may affect your ability to be impartial on the jury?

As Sam snaps back to reality, she quickly but confidently presents her card, eyeing the question as if it were her golden ticket out of the chocolate factory. Sam is then called to the front of the courtroom.

ATTORNEY (O.S.) (CONT.)

What is your experience with the legal process?

SAM

I'm not a lawyer exactly, but I do play one on TV. Mondays at 7:30pm.

ATTORNEY (O.S.)

Do you feel that that would impede on your ability to fairly examine this case?

SAM

Absolutely. After 3 seasons of research, I'm basically a practicing attorney.

About to be denied dismissal, Sam takes a deep breath.

SAM (CONT.)

(in her "BFA in acting" tone)  
I fear that my involvement in my role may be enough to force your hand to unfortunately excuse me from my civic

duty. I do feel as though the only way to play the part is to be the part. Therefore, I find it reckless to consider myself an unbiased citizen. I understand if my dismissal may be the consequence of my extensive prior legal knowledge and first hand experience.

The lawyers are about to speak.

SAM (CONT.)

Fine! I don't really know what the hell I'm talking about, but I've had a little heartbreak myself recently, and it's still a little fresh I guess.

After a substantial pause, the attorneys send Sam back to her seat. Sam looks over at the courtroom door. Longing, Sam glances down to Kiera's seat at the bench. On the seat, card 272 remains where Kiera sat. Sam grabs it and flips it over. A phone number is scribbled on the back accompanied by a simple message:

Break a leg,

Kiera <3.

FADE TO BLACK