

BETTER TOGETHER

"Twister Sister"

by

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COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Funky shops and cafes. In their midst, "KIKI'S PSYCHIC CENTER" - splashed, literally, with psychedelic colors.

KIKI (V.O.)
Spirits. Harmonized.

INT. KIKI'S PSYCHIC CENTER - MAIN SHOP

A mystical-magical space with crystals, candles, scented oils, ancient tomes. We notice a door marked "SANCTUARY."

KIKI (V.O.)
Unions. Triumphant.

INT. KIKI'S PSYCHIC CENTER - SANCTUARY

KIKI DEVOL, 32, caftan-clad, adorned with healing bracelets and psychic talismans, sits Buddha-like on a Japanese pillow.

KIKI
Stars. Aligned.

Across from her is a WHITE MALE GEEK, 40, coughing up phlegm.

GEEK
Look. I just want to meet my
soulmate on the astral plane. Isn't
there a more direct route?

KIKI
Sure. For an extra fifty bucks.

Kiki suddenly grabs her head.

KIKI (CONT'D)
Wait. Wait. I'm getting a vision!

GEEK
Of my soulmate?
(hopeful)
Is she Asian?

EXT. FARM WRECKAGE (SOMEWHERE IN ARKANSAS) - KIKI'S VISION

BABETTE DEVOL, 25, sun-kissed and pony-tailed, sobs as she's pulled off the remains of a once splendid red and white barn, by her parents MA and PA DEVOL (50s).

MA DEVOL

You've gotta let go, Babette.

BABETTE

But I gotta tidy this place up;
it's a mess!

PA DEVOL

Babette, you are avoidin' the
inevitable. We gotta get down to
the bus station. You have to live
with Kiki.

BABETTE

Can't I just live with you two in
Grandpa Joe's trailer?

MA DEVOL

Honey, you'd have to sleep in the
bathtub, wouldn't she, Pa?

PA DEVOL

It's a standing shower, Ma. And
that's where we'll be sleepin'.

MA DEVOL

That's right. See, Babette, Kiki's
your best bet!

Babette stares at Ma DeVol.

BABETTE

A peyote-puffin'-pagan pinko, my
"best bet"? She let my pony Coco
run free! I'll never forgive her!

Ma and Pa DeVol give her a hard stare.

BABETTE (CONT'D)

Okay. It was twenty years ago. But,
still!

PA DEVOL

Babette. We can't take care of you
forever. Kiki can give you a fresh
start. She's the only DeVol that's
ever been successful.

MA DEVOL
That's right. Her Christmas cards
are edged in gold!

Babette looks at the ruins of her world. Straightens a few
slats. Dusts them with a kerchief. Pa DeVol stops her.

BABETTE
Fine! I'll stay with her.

MA DEVOL
That's our girl.

BABETTE
And then, when she ain't lookin',
I'll steal every penny she ever
earned and re-build our farm.
That'll teach her for lettin' Coco
run free!

PA DEVOL
(to Ma DeVol)
That's also our girl.

BABETTE
I wasn't looking forward to this,
but now that I got a goal, I'm
gonna attack it with the same gusto
I used to grease the pigs with for
the county fair.

Babette hugs Ma DeVol, then hops on a John Deere tractor.

BABETTE (CONT'D)
Pa. To the bus station.

Pa DeVol climbs onto the tractor and starts the engine.

MA DEVOL
Babette, be nice to Kiki, and make
sure to give her our love.

BABETTE
I'll be glad to. With a pitchfork!

Ma looks at them nervously as they drive off.

END KIKI'S VISION.

INT. PSYCHIC CENTER - SANCTUARY - SAME TIME

Kiki gasps as if she's just seen a ghost. She grabs the Geek.

KIKI
Your astral plane is about to take
off. You must leave immediately!

She pushes him into the...

MAIN SHOP

... past the counter where MERLIN MARTINEZ, 35, Kiki's
business partner, is multi-tasking. He's color-coordinated
from head to toe. He's too fabulous -- even for himself.

KIKI
Merlin! We're closing. Now!

MERLIN
Kiki, what the hell? That's a
paying customer.

The Geek stops, pulls two hideous bowties out of his pocket

GEEK
As a guy, whaddya think? Will my
soulmate dig plaid or stripes?

MERLIN
(to Kiki)
You're right, get rid of him.

Merlin joins Kiki to rush the Geek to the front door.

KIKI
(to Geek)
Don't worry; on the astral plane,
you won't need any clothes.

Merlin pulls a card from his pocket, puts it in Geek's hand.

MERLIN
But you will need a complete
makeover when you return. Call me!

They push him out the door, shut it tight.

MERLIN (CONT'D)
Honey, what is it? Alien invasion?
Asteroid? Armageddon?

Kiki swallows hard.

KIKI
Worse.

EXT./INT. GREYHOUND BUS - TRAVELING - MOMENTS LATER

The San Francisco skyline comes into view. Babette is sitting next to an OLD MAN, who's fast asleep.

BABETTE

... and then, Kiki got it into her head that she could read a person's mind. Which is a joke. Cuz she can't even read the back of a cereal box.

We now see a PRIZE-WINNING HEN in a cage on the old man's lap. This is who Babette is talking to.

BABETTE (CONT'D)

I don't know if you've got an older sister, but if she's anything like mine, best peck her eyes out now -- before she pecks yours out first.

The hen starts clucking wildly, feathers start a-flyin'.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

EXT. PSYCHIC CENTER - SHOP WINDOW - SAME DAY - LATER

A hastily made hand-painted sign hangs in the window:
"Temporarily closed while we adjust our auras."

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRWELL

Kiki races up flights of stairs; Merlin follows breathlessly.

MERLIN

Wait! Wait! You grew up on an
Arkansas hog farm? Which a tornado
just wiped out? And now your
country bumpkin sister is coming to
destroy our lives?

Kiki nods, Merlin struggles to keep up.

MERLIN (CONT'D)

And if we throw our stuff in bags
and run for the hills, she'll give
up after two weeks and leave?

Kiki nods, keeps charging forward.

MERLIN (CONT'D)

And your "psychic powers" told you
all this?

Kiki nods. He grabs her, stops. Gasps for breath.

MERLIN (CONT'D)

Did they also tell you we have to
run up five flights of stairs to
get to our apartment when we have
an elevator?

Kiki points to the elevator on the floor they've stopped on.
A big "OUT OF ORDER" sign is hung in front of it.

MERLIN (CONT'D)

(realizing)
Oh. Right.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

They arrive at their floor, run to their door. Open it.

INT. KIKI & MERLIN'S APARTMENT

A disaster -- that's normal. What isn't normal is Babette, in the midst of it, tidying the place up.

KIKI
(fake friendly)
Babette! How... nice to see you.
Uh... how did you get in here?

BABETTE
Through your bedroom window. Just like your farmhand boy toys used to after midnight.

She starts to spit polish the coffee table. Merlin gasps.

KIKI
Babette. This is Merlin. My business partner. And roommate.

Merlin offers a hesitant wave. Babette waves back.

BABETTE
How-do! Now, Kiki where do you keep your good dust rags?

MERLIN
(to Kiki)
This place really does need a good wiping down.

Kiki throws him a look.

BABETTE
(to Kiki)
And that's why I'm here. To keep your home as clean as a new kitten. So that you can do what you do best. Makes tons of money.

Merlin and Kiki share a look. "What money?"

She notices a smudge on the corner.

BABETTE (CONT'D)
Oops. Missed a spot!

Babette hocks up a loogie, cleans the smudge. Smiles.

MERLIN
Do you... do toilets?

KIKI

Merlin!

(to Babette)

Sis. I had a vision that the farm
went up in a twister.

BABETTE

It did.

KIKI

And that you'd be... staying here.

BABETTE

That's right.

KIKI

And...

(making it up)

The strongest part of my vision was
that... you'd be leaving here by
tomorrow morning... and... moving
into the YWCA.

BABETTE

Their showers are filthy!

MERLIN

You haven't seen ours.

BABETTE

Kiki. I ain't goin' nowhere. Ma and
Pa said we need to make amends. And
after great soul-searching, I'm
ready to try.

She spies the curtains.

BABETTE (CONT'D)

Right after I give these a good
wash.

She yanks them off the wall and starts folding them.

KIKI

Merlin, my sister has a problem.

MERLIN

This is the best thing that ever
happened to us. A live-in maid!

Babette drags her foot across the wood floor. Shakes her
head.

BABETTE

Good thing I am here. Y'all mighta drowned in your own dirt! Now, where's your straw broom and your hose?

INT. KIKI & MERLIN'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

The place is SPARKLING CLEAN. Kiki, still in her caftan, a sleep mask on her face, sits in a swirl of blankets on the sofa, puffing on a joint. It's been a rough night.

KIKI

(in between puffs)
Breathe. Re-center. Breathe.

Merlin, in rainbow jammies, races in, whips off Kiki's mask.

MERLIN

That won't help you now!

Kiki rubs her eyes and sees Babette, in ruffled top, daisy dukes, and shit-kicker boots. Babette grabs Kiki's joint, stubs it out in her hand.

BABETTE

Kiki, I almost lost the circulation in my legs cuz you didn't tuck the sheets in right! Didn't Mama ever learn ya how to make a bed? Now, when do I get to see your shop?

Merlin steps forward, smiling brightly.

MERLIN

First things first. A cup of my special cocoa.

BABETTE

(tearfully)
Coco?

MERLIN

With a whisper of Tahitian vanilla, a pinch of orange zest, topped with a sprinkling of Belgian --

Babette sits on the sofa and bursts into tears.

MERLIN (CONT'D)

Okay. We'll... cut the zest.

KIKI

Merlin. She's thinking about her pet pony, "Coco." Coco was in a freak accident when we were kids.

BABETTE

It weren't no accident. You left the latch open on her stall. On purpose!

KIKI

Here we go again. Merlin, kitchen now!

Kiki rushes him into kitchen.

INT. KIKI & MERLIN'S APT. - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Merlin looks through the refrigerator. Kiki hovers.

MERLIN

Okay, no cocoa. How about...
rhubarb ginger cooler or coconut
lavender lemonade?

Kiki slams the refrigerator shut.

KIKI

Merlin. Forget your fruit fantasies! Mrs. Waxwell is coming for her session today!

Merlin pulls back his shirt to reveal a T-shirt boasting a photo of MRS. WAXWELL, 70s, stretched, stitched and botoxed.

MERLIN

Our beloved cash cow, without whom we'd be living on the streets?

KIKI

Exactly! She's about to introduce her "cash cow" friends, and we'll finally be in the black! If Babette alienates her with her country gal "charms," we're doomed.

Babette marches in.

BABETTE

What's takin' y'all so long? Plain old tap water is all I need.