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2,042 words.

**R E C R U I T M E N T**

*To speak the same language is one form of kin*

*Yet that which unites is the language within*

Rumi, translated by Farrukh Dhondry

I emerge from the plastic tent, and I already know my spray tan came out perfectly. I smile, feel the skin crisp around my lips. I walk away past all the girls still waiting. Each sister looks me up and down and tells me I look amazing. The chairs of the Preparations Committee, who report directly to Vice President of Recruitment, my former position, move from table to table. I pity the sisters who won’t get to do this again. It’s 6am. I push the tab of my second Red Bull against my pink and white thumbnail with a medium-gloss finish. The manicurist, contracted to be on-site all day by one of my amazing sisters in the Preparations Committee is an aging Asian unnerving lady with dark flecks always between her teeth. After today, we ask her not to come back any more. *Very* professional. She smiled, which of course made it far worse. One of our house boys comes out of their door holding a sterling silver tray with carved walnut handles. This morning, we’re serving hor d'oeuvres of organic mini cinnamon rolls, kale and feta stacks skewered by curly pink toothpicks, and curry and bacon-wrapped fried tofu. We again review the pillars of social excellence with each other—remind each other what it is we want out of today. It’s 8:11 am and today’s first round of Potential New Members are here. I can’t wait to compell their secrets, their baggage, so I can judge them and smile and my spray tan will look perfect as my lips curl and my eyebrows (threaded) curve up to transmit the (holistic) message that I care a lot about everything. My spray tan looks perfect. It’s only going to get darker. I’m only going to get more beautiful. I’m the perfect combination of my mom and dad. My mom was in a sorority, too. This one? No, a different one. A freshman approaches me, she’s wearing tight white shorts that make her thighs look thick, a velcro knee brace, a deep purple shirt that reveals well sculpted arms. I’m so excited to entertain this Potential New Member. House boy walks by with a platter of kale and feta stacks, and she plucks three. I can’t breathe. She eats each one, one by one. I sip from my Red Bull inside a colored water bottle. One of the popular brands, like Nalgene or Camelbak. The decorations are pink satin and white lace wrapped around everything. Dear Angelica. Welcome to our sisterhood. You’re not a part of it yet, you might become one, though… Although, looking at the way your eyes are flittering around nervously *while I’m talking to you* you clearly are aware that you are being judged. Or no, perhaps those are just eyes of fear—a new environment. Outside of your comfort zone. Oh, well. We discuss volleyball, the Olympics, pediatric oncology, Chanel, *Gossip Girl,* the introductory physics class I took before my sisterhood became my everything, Richard Feynman’s famous Caltech lectures, etc. I check through my dating apps. No new matches. Shame. I ask the sister standing closest to me to check hers. No new matches either. Maybe something’s wrong with the system. We agree that must be it. I think about what happens to our food after we eat it. Several of my sisters who joined with me are moving on to work at a big beautiful consulting company. I love saying the names of the companies out loud. The words roll of my poised tongue and I know I’m better. I don’t know why they’d ever want to leave this. Dear Mariah. I can’t imagine myself without my sisters. What’s going to happen to me? The sister in charge of making store runs (one of the co-chairs of the Procurement and Resource-Obtainment Committee) is hustling wobbling shuffling back in forth with clumsy cardboard boxes of granola bars. Raw sustenance, packaged bright and individually but only a few varieties in a nice big box. Some other sisters tsk. Not at all in keeping with the decor, the aesthetic the grand implicit scheme. Very disappointing, sister. I still love you anyway, of course, and I’ll always be there for you. I hope you know that. Sisterhood is forever. I haven’t pooped yet today. Is that normal? It’s noon and I’ve personally met three hundred freshmen already. Some of them are transfers and I can tell the difference between the ones that went to junior college and the ones that studied elsewhere. It took me a lot more time to notice last year, last semester. Samantha from Burbank with the jacket asks if there are any queer sisters. Of course! We’re really focused on diversity. No, I don’t know where she is right now, I’m sure she’s around. I remember she has really nice hair. Our sisters have hair that ranges everywhere from platinum to dirty, and we all look hot. We look perfect. I look perfect. My spray tan looks perfect. My sisterhood is perfect. We’re such a strong sisterhood, we can handle anything. We’re inspiring, truly. We tell each other that. I try to open another Red Bull; my nail almost falls off. One of the house boys stands up on a chair (gilded and upholstered in soft creamy beige) to make an announcement. I stop paying attention. The boy looks nice. I think about bad fraternity parties that I went to last year. My stomach pulls inside me and pinches hard. Some of my sisters tsk and others murmur during the announcement. I regret not paying better attention to him. I was too focused on a pair of flies. I can’t unsee them. They won’t go away. Luckily none of the Potential New Members notice the flies. That would be a nightmare. Even worse than last year, when one of them puked. Do you like to go to music festivals? Of course. Lots of our sisterhood loves them. We love music festivals. Oh, well, I hate them. Why’s that? There’s too many people. Oh, that’s too bad. I look through my Tinder matches. In the last two weeks, I’ve matched with two short Asian boys, three tall Asian boys (two skinny one average), seven blonde boys (four skinny two average one dad bod), and twelve brunette boys (five skinny, seven dad bod), etc. When I’m bored during recruitment, I go on Tinder. That’s a popular activity in our sisterhood. Welcome to our sisterhood, dear Caroline from Seattle majoring in business (intended). Do you use Tinder? Are you queer? Have I told you about how our sisterhood is working really hard on diversity? It’s time for lunch and the seniors have decided we’ve earned a special lunch to ourselves at a restaurant. The other sisters agree, we’ve really earned it. I push open the tab of a fresh Red Bull open. The icy metallic surface sweats, and I worry it might ruin my spray tan. I pour it into my stylish opaque water bottle with a stainless steel ring and cool blue accents, and drink it down quickly. The bubbles burn my throat. I think about the order of the fraternities that we’re doing exchanges with. One of the less established fraternities asked to do an event with us. My sister in charge of planning social events (Co-Vice President of Social Activities) said we’ll think about it. Maybe an event later in the social calendar… At a less crucial time. That’s what we tell them. Winston, an acquaintance of mine from class, I haven’t seen him for over a year, calls me. I don’t want to answer it. He’s in that fraternity. The rings creep up my neck until I can’t bear it anymore. It hurts so bad. My toes ache. Another deluge of Potential New Members arrive. I’m so excited to meet them. Time again for the four pillars of social excellence. Let’s review. *A state of perpetual generosity, curiosity, positivity, and openness to limitless possibility. A desire to intentionally connect with others. The ability to engage in deep, meaningful conversation. Acting in a responsible and respectable manner, with high expectations of others. Being authentic and living everyday with integrity as the best version of yourself. Being confident and vulnerable. Being fun and compassionate. Being open, kind and bold. The deepest level of societal participation and contribution.* The whole point is to get them to open up to me so I can judge them for their deeper secrets and decide if their secrets would line up with my sisters secrets so that we can all exist as a perfect sisterhood. I think about my spray tan. Does it still look perfect? My sister assures me that it does. It looks marvelous. I’m so glad. These Potential New Members are majoring in undergraduate business administration (“ug-bah”), economics, explaining why you needed to buy the 3-Day Ultra Unlimited Pass to Coachella to your parents, psychology, political science (wow a lot of political science this year!), psychology, applied math, severe disappointment, computer science, cognitive science, molecular and cell biology, and linguistics. They’re all going to get such great jobs. Sisters hire sisters. We support each other. Everyone knows that. Even my parents know that. I think about calling my dad. Is he worried about me? When was the last time I talked to him? Hello and welcome to our sisterhood Genna with a G from Orange County. I’m so glad to meet you. Do you like to read? No? Oh, well. Do you like to write? No? I cycle through and find a better approach. There’s always a better approach. The sisterhood covers problem-solving in recruitment training, which I did two years ago. One time we heard there was a Potential New Member that didn’t have the same kind of body we all had. My sisters and me, and girls in the other houses too, searched and searched on Facebook to find proof with posted photos of them with short hair and boy shorts and lapels with tight collars. Us and all the other houses too dropped them on the first day. There are companies that will show you what your values are. Our sisterhood doesn’t want them always but our nationals wants us to have them. It’s a gift because they love us. Sisterhood is about love, don’t you know that? Do you know what it’s like to love inside that cold dead heart of yours? The Potential New Members live in singles, doubles, triples, and some live in dingles and tringles and one girl is couch surfing. That night, when the sisterhood gathers up to discuss our preferences into the night, I love it, we make sure not to invite the couch surfing girl back. Our sisterhood needs that kind of image like we do a transgender or a hole in the head. Some sisters giggle politely. The meeting continues. I push open a Red Bull with my nail. I’m worried that my thumbnail is ready to split apart. I go to sleep dreaming of manicures and pedicures and perfect curls in my hair and curves on my legs. Perfect everywhere. I wake up and I know today’s going to be amazing. The house boys bring us breakfast in bed today. Just for the seniors. What a treat! We’re so excited. It makes us feel giddy to meet the Potential New Members again today and listen as they talk to us. They’ll share with us. It’s time. The sisterhood knows it. We’re so ready for it. The meal never really tastes as good as you hope it’s going to. I was a kid once, I was. And I dreamt about eating the crispiest tastiest leg of meat that ever was. The thing was perfectly dark on the outside and I didn’t really know what it would feel like as my teeth plunged into the meaty fibers, but I knew that it would be the best thing I ever ate. Of course no leg exists like that. Believe me, I’ve looked.