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**PATRON PREVIEW: "I Love You Man is high key a polyamorous rom-com"**

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Hello and Happy Sunday. I hope you're having a beautiful day. I hope you're having a beautiful weekend and a Happy New Year. I believe this is coming out on New Year's Eve. So however you celebrate or whenever you see this, I hope that the New Year is ringing in with a lot of optimism and hope and reflections for the future. And if not, that's fine too, obviously you're allowed to have a bad day or painful reflections, or just want to get it over with.

So with the new year, I'm also kicking off a new series, which is non monogamy in media. I'll come up with a catchy name later. But essentially since most of my resources are anecdote-driven given examples, I remain limited in what I can offer. I am also working on a podcast – don't tell anyone – which will have real life examples. an anthology of real people telling their own stories, but that should come later on in the spring. but I thought it would also be fun to show videos of what it literally looks like, you know, film and TV. where is there explicit non monogamy on purpose? Where is there non monogamy coded examples? and hopefully you will enjoy it. Hopefully it can be of service to you.

So "I love you man" starring Paul Rudd [ Peter ], Rashida Jones [ Zooey ] and Jason Segel [ Sydney ] came out in 2009. You might be saying, "Morgan, this is not a film about non monogamy". Yes, it is. I'll tell you why.

So one of the first scenes is Peter proposing to Zooey – if you know anything about the rom com genre, that's already a little unconventional, right? That usually comes as the climax of the movie, but I'm open to it. Maybe we're switching things up a little bit. She did say yes, but the film only shows her describing that to her friends.

Zooey: "Yes. It just happened two minutes ago. Haley, can you believe it?"

Haley (phone): "No, I can't. It's amazing."

She's literally saying the "Yes" to her friends. They're already drawing parallels between friendships and romance. And she has a lot of friends and a really full life which is great. Except, he doesn't. and in fact, he overhears her friends kind of talking shit about that.

Zooey: "Peters not a Freakazoid."

Friend: "Zooey, I mean, I think this is kind of serious. A guy without friends can be really clingy."

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He's realizing he really needs to make friends. Cue the date montage. You might think I'm reaching by calling these dates... Put this up against any other rom com that has a date montage baby, the beats are the same. One of these dates goes so well, that one of the men gets confused and he kisses Peter. Let's talk about Zooney's reaction to the kiss though.

Zooney: "Peter. I don't care. I just want you to be happy."

This is when my polyamory bells start to go off. And at first I was like, "well, maybe she's not threatened because she knows that Peter's straight" but she definitely gets jealous of a man later. So I don't think that's what it is. I just think she genuinely didn't feel bothered that one of these hangouts went well enough that someone tried to kiss him. However, this is also the point that we started to see Peter's skills reveal themselves to be lacking.

Peter: "Look, I know that you're stressed out that I don't have any close friends so I've been trying to meet someone."

Zooney: "Right, you've been – okay, so that explains a lot."

He's going on all of these outings with other people, not telling his fiancée. She isn't bothered when she finds out the truth, but it takes a lot of teeth pulling to get it out of him. It's not the end of the world here, but, foreshadowing...

Enter Sydney, played by Jason Segel. Peter gets really cute talking to his brother Andy Samberg [ Robbie ] and says:

Peter: "There's no rules for male friendships."

Robbie: "What are you freaking out about? You went out with those other guys."

Peter: "I'm really nervous about this one."

Robbie: "Because you really like him."

He then takes a call and plans a date in front of his fiancée and her friends.

Peter: "I could be in Venice five. Yeah. I could do that."

Denise (Zooney's friend): "It's a man date! This is a man date!"

Look how happy she is for him. It's so cute. This is the compersion representation we need in the world. Everything about this is so sweet, the way that now finally it is in the open, She's cheering him on. That is how a lot of people's non monogamy works.

After his first date with Sydney – and yes, I'm gonna keep calling them dates. – She's so excited for him.

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Zooey: "Hi baby. Did you have a good time?"

Peter: "Yeah. Sydney's cool guy."

Zooey: "So is he your best man?"

Peter: "Oh, it's way too early to tell. But it's very sweet of you to ask."

By the way, if you're polyamorous watching that, and you don't feel what she feels, that's totally fine. This is almost like an idealized representation of what can be possible, but plenty of people in non monogamy don't feel that, or struggle to feel that, and that is okay too.

So Peter and Sydney are together all the time now. And we really see how the movie keeps reminding us this is a love story. walking on a beach, close on a Vespa, framed in silhouette – I thought they're about to kiss. so we hear you movie, this is a love story. And what do all love stories have? conflict.

If I could boil it all down to one sentence: Peter's a terrible hinge. One of his biggest issues which we can all relate to, is time management. He starts by interrupting their wedding planning.

Zooey (encouraging): "Take it. Go, take it."

She's fine with that. He comes to their date late because he was with Sydney.

Zooey: "So what do you guys do for like seven straight hours?"

She has questions.

Zooey (annoyed): "So when am I going to meet this guy stolen away from me?"

Then he literally invites Sydney onto his date night with Zooey. The optics of him taking time from one person to give it to the other. Now he's pitting them against each other. now he's telling Zooey, this relationship is gonna threaten what we have.

Zooey: "We were supposed to have a date night, and you took me to this concert, which is cool. But we get there. And it's like, I don't even exist. I just, I feel like I'm losing you a little bit."

I think this whole series of events is a solid case study for how she's not bothered that he's seeing someone else. She's bothered by how he's treating her in the process. And this can be a point where a lot of people say polyamory is the problem. But I don't see that with Zooey. She was happy that this was happening until she started getting mistreated by her partner.

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So he was fumbling time management in a big way. That's number one. Number two, he was misguidedly trying to make these two relationships match, in a sense. A great example of this is when he's playing guitar with Sydney all day. And then he comes home to Zooley and tries to recreate that exact specific magic with her.

Peter: "Are you ready to get your mind blown?"

Zooley: "Do it!"

Sharing the music, trying to have a moment with her, and she's not really feeling it. It's not her thing. And that is okay. It is not a commentary on a relationship that if we don't do this thing together, therefore, it's less good. That can be, I think, a vestige of monogamous thinking. If dating two people, it can be easy to compare. And we want to try and let that go when we notice it because we can't compare the incomparable. These are two very different people. They're two very different relationships. And both are great.

So that was time management and comparisons. Let's talk about oversharing.

Peter: "I guess maybe sometimes I wish that she enjoyed..."

Sydney: "Getting in the tush?"

Peter: "No, oh, no, no."

Sydney: "That's my bad."

Peter: "Oral sex."

Can he ask her first? Right? He started sharing intimate details, even painting a mental picture of Peter and Zooley in bed, to Sydney. If she didn't mind Sydney knowing that, it's chill. But Peter didn't even ask her, right?

Zooley: "What the hell did you tell Sydney about me?"

Peter: "I might have mentioned, in passing or something, that you don't like doing oral sex."

Zooley: "Ew! Peter, that stuff is private!"

Peter: "Oh is it really? And telling Haley and Denise about the hot tub in Mexico isn't?"

And to be fair, she did it first, actually. And it can be tempting. If somebody has done something to us that we felt uncomfortable about, then we do the same thing to them, either out of spite or trying to get back at them, or they just think like, "oh, I guess this is okay." Not having clear lines defined of who we tell what. It's not just a polyamory thing, I think that this is an everybody thing. Everybody, can everybody ask what is and is not cool to share, who will and will not be affected by this?

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And so now we are firmly in a place where there is tension. And Peter doesn't know what to do.

Sydney: "I really don't understand what's going on right now."

Peter: "I think we should spend some time apart."

It's a common knee jerk response like "Well, clearly this entire relationship is the problem. Let me end it and break it off," when maybe he just needs to work on his calendar and be a bit more thoughtful. We can break our own hearts by being binary, all or nothing, black and white thinking, and just say "let's throw the whole thing out" when really just needed to like, tweak some of the variables for this to go better. She didn't even ask him to do that. She even double checks that she wasn't the cause.

Peter: "By the way, I ended things with Sydney."

Zooley: "Peter, really? I hope that's not because of me."

And she sees him heartbroken at this breakup, at not being able to spend time with someone he was starting to love, and she encourages reconciliation.

Zooley: "Why don't you just call him?"

I think it's a really beautiful show of how we can feel hurt and scared, and, want the other relationship to succeed too. Right? She is staying at a friend's house because she feels so upset by how Peter is treating her. And, she doesn't want Peter and Sydney to break up.

So we are firmly in the third act breakup of a romantic comedy formula. Right on cue, is a dramatic chase scene. [Sydney's] rushing to go interrupt Peter's wedding with Zooley. Most romcoms, at this point, with monogamy being the goal, the person in the middle has to choose just one. But, plot twist:

Zooley: "I couldn't let you get married without your best man."

She called him. this is not an ultimatum, this is a reunion. Both relationships are being celebrated at the altar.

Peter (to Zooley): "I love you so much."

Zooley (whispering): "I love you, too."

Sydney: "Zooley, thanks so much for inviting me."

Peter (to Sydney): "I can't even imagine getting married without you. I love you, man."

Sydney: "I love you too, bud."

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This is the representation we need! and I'm pretty sure they did it on accident. Turning a buddy movie into a rom com, on purpose, I'm pretty sure that was supposed to be the joke. of like, "oh, Wouldn't it be funny if two friends were this close?" But then they made it be something that I see myself on screen, right? they made a pretty realistic representation of polyamory, the highs and Lows.

So I would love to know your thoughts, if you're polyamorous or not, if your take is different than mine, I would be interested to hear it. and otherwise, I hope you have a beautiful week and I will see you next time. bye!

xxx