

# UNEXPECTED-BEAUTIFUL

By  
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**DAPHNE** - 20s/30s - Any Ethnicity, stylish, pretty, metropolitan, fun, licking her break-up wounds but made of stronger stuff.

**PHINEAS** - 20s/30s - Any Ethnicity, frenetic, odd, funny, cute/handsome, sees the world differently but realistically.

*It's Christmas Eve. It's late-ish - around midnight. No one is in the train car but DAPHNE. She's angrily gnoshing on some carrot sticks.*

*The train stops and the door opens. The cheery, but robotic, tube lady does her thing. As the doors start to close PHINEAS runs up and gets trapped in the middle of them. He struggles to get in.*

**PHINEAS**

*(head craned talking to operator)*

Hey! Come on man! It's Christmas Eve - lemme on.

*DING. Doors open. PHINEAS stumbles in.*

**PHINEAS**

Thank you! Merry Christmas!

*DING. Doors close.*

*He looks around at the empty car. Catches DAPHNE's eyes.*

**PHINEAS**

Hey hey.

*DAPHNE just courteously smiles and goes back to gnoshing. PHINEAS sits on the parallel seating facing away from DAPHNE. He pulls out a paper bag from his pocket and withdraws a partially beaten up hot dog. Plain. No condiments.*

**PHINEAS**

*(maybe to her - maybe to no one)*

Food of the Gods.

*He starts to eat. He gets distracted by the loud crunch of a carrot. He turns to her.*

**PHINEAS**

Looks like we're sharing our first dinner together.

**DAPHNE**

Excuse me?

**PHINEAS**

As far as first dates go we could do better. But it'll make for a great story for our grandchildren.

*DAPHNE smiles, looks away, and clutches her belongings closer.*

**PHINEAS**

*(laughing)*

Don't worry, I'm not gonna rob you.

*DAPHNE looks at him.*

**PHINEAS**

I guess that's what robbers say before they actually rob someone don't they? Eesh. Sorry.

*She keeps staring. Carrot half in her mouth.*

**PHINEAS**

I'm not crazy or anything. I guess that's what crazy people say, too. No one who is crazy actually knows they're crazy so they wouldn't actually have an opinion about the level of their mental acuity. Although I wonder if there is some part of them that recognizes that something is a little [*crazy person comic noise*] about them. Like sitting around all day talking to brownies is a sane person's bag.

*She's still staring.*

**PHINEAS**

That's brownie as in little fairy creature not food item. Although I guess they could talk to the food, too. I'm talking too much aren't I? I can see you're scared. I'm sorry. Wow. Ok. Um. Huh...

*He just turns and faces out shoving the entire hot dog in his mouth. DAPHNE chuckles at him and resumes chewing and reading. PHINEAS sings "Jingle Bells" mouth still full. DAPHNE starts bobbing her head in time. He catches her doing it and joins her. She chuckles. He tries to. He swallows the remnants in his mouth.*

**PHINEAS**

Any exciting Eve plans?

**DAPHNE**

*(slowly turning - maybe irritated - maybe curious)*

No.

**PHINEAS**

Me either. Just me, myself, and I. *Solomente*. Do you live alone?

**DAPHNE**

Um.

**PHINEAS**

Wow. And now I'm a rapist on the prowl. I live with one roommate. Some hedge fund guy. He's never home. Tools around Europe a lot. Means more naked alone time for me. Not that I'm an exhibitionist or anything.

**DAPHNE**

I live with my cousin.

**PHINEAS**

Oh! That's cool. You get to spend the Christ-Mass Eve with family. Very cool.

**DAPHNE**

She went home to visit her parents.

**PHINEAS**

Naked alone time for you then! Shit.

**DAPHNE**

*(laughing)*

You do that a lot don't you?

**PHINEAS**

Hm?

Put your foot in your mouth. **DAPHNE**

It's a habit. **PHINEAS**

It's endearing. **DAPHNE**

It's been called worse. **PHINEAS**

Name's Daphne. **DAPHNE**

Phineas. **PHINEAS**  
*(standing up and giving her a little bow)*

Really? **DAPHNE**

Yeah. Why? **PHINEAS**  
*(sitting down on the side of the parallel seating facing her)*

Never heard it before. **DAPHNE**

Old-ish kinda name. Was my great-grandfather's. Some crazy coot in the army. My family is fond of old weird names. My sister's Beatrice. Father's Shadderick - which is kinda funny since a shad's a fish. Got a cousin named Bartholomew. Called him Fart-all-on-you growing up. You named after anyone? **PHINEAS**

Scooby Doo cartoon. **DAPHNE**

Ra-row. **PHINEAS**  
*(imitating Scooby)*

Pretty good. **DAPHNE**

**PHINEAS**

It's a skill. Mind if I ask how come you didn't go home with your cousin.

**DAPHNE**

Had to work. Have a boyfriend.

**PHINEAS**

Oh...

**DAPHNE**

Well - 'had'. Was supposed to spend tonight with him.

**PHINEAS**

Past tense mysteries.

**DAPHNE**

Found him making out with a Norwegian model in a dark corner of a bar.

**PHINEAS**

Ah. That sucks.

**DAPHNE**

It happens.

**PHINEAS**

If you give me his name I could beat him up for you.

**DAPHNE**

He's 6'3" and a personal trainer.

**PHINEAS**

A angry word with a scowl then. I shall avenge thy injur-ed reputation milady!

**DAPHNE**

Quite alright, milord. But thank you. How about you?

**PHINEAS**

Single.

**DAPHNE**

No, I meant, how come you're not home with family.

**PHINEAS**

Oh - I tried to kill myself.

*A moment. Waiting for the punchline.*

**PHINEAS**

Mind if I borrow a carrot? Well, not borrow per se since I can't give it back. Although technically I COULD but that's verging on scatological humor and that's just not right for the holidays.

**DAPHNE**

Um. Sure.

*She reaches her hand out with a carrot stick in it.  
PHINEAS slides next to her.*

**PHINEAS**

Thanks.

**DAPHNE**

No prob.

**PHINEAS**

Is it ok if I sit here?

**DAPHNE**

Yeah yeah. Fine.

**PHINEAS**

Go ahead.

**DAPHNE**

What?

**PHINEAS**

Ask me.

**DAPHNE**

Um?

**PHINEAS**

I can see it in your face and hear it in your voice. Did you really try to kill yourself? Why did you want to kill yourself

**DAPHNE**

So?

**PHINEAS**

You ever stand on the edge of the subway platform before a train comes in? You feel a train coming before you even hear or see it. Just a slight breeze that smells like rust and mildew wafting down the tracks.

When you feel your hair start to shift when you feel the rumble and then like 2 seconds after that you hear it - that low grumble in the distance. You usually don't feel the lights on your face until the train is almost at you. But there's this moment as it passes where your body is just sucked into this kind of vacuum. And just before you completely tip over another gust pushes you away and you kind of teeter for a moment. If you stand at the far end of the platform where the train enters the force is so strong that you actually feel weightless. Floating. Free. You forget that gravity exists. *(He sits there, eyes closed, feeling the sway of the train)* And then the little ding of the doors brings you right back into focus.

*He looks at her. Genuinely smiles.*

**PHINEAS**

Can I have another?

**DAPHNE**

Sure.

*She hands him another carrot.*

**DAPHNE**

*(with zero trepidation)*

So why didn't you?

**PHINEAS**

*(shrugging his shoulders)*

Realized I never got to see the LOST series finale.

*He smiles at her. She smiles back.*

**DAPHNE**

It was crap.

**PHINEAS**

No! Don't tell me that. It can't have ended badly.

**DAPHNE**

Trust me. You'll be angry.

**PHINEAS**

Oh, I dunno. It'll be nice to have some closure with Jack and Kate and Sawyer and Hurley. Gotta make sure the family is taken care of. Even the creepy guy with the glasses.

**DAPHNE**

Benajmin Linus.

**PHINEAS**

That's him! *[shudders]* Reminds me of my college chem teacher. He smelled like boiled cabbage and had a hump. Used to terrorize us by threatening to douse us with Hydrochloric acid.

**DAPHNE**

Charming.

**PHINEAS**

*(feigning elitism)*

Wasn't he just so.

**DAPHNE**

*(following suit)*

Oh but he is SUCH a card.

**PHINEAS**

So Scooby Daphne - what are YOU gonna do in the aftermath of your disaster? No judgment intended in word choice.

**DAPHNE**

None taken. Go home. Cut the crotches out of his pants and boxers. Throw the tree out the window. And drown myself in rum.

**PHINEAS**

No need to commit arborcide over a man.

**DAPHNE**

Fiance.

**PHINEAS**

Awkward.

**DAPHNE**

Suppose I saw it coming anyway.

**PHINEAS**

All the cliched movie things?

**DAPHNE**

Oh yeah: Long hours at work, petty fights, silent dinners. All we were missing was a Damien Rice track playing in the background.

**PHINEAS**

Ouch - indie music bad.



**DAPHNE**

When you start trying to remember the lyrics to “Gin and Juice” while your boyfriend is inside you, you pretty much know things are coming to a grand finale.

**PHINEAS**

How long were you guys together?

**DAPHNE**

Just 6 months.

**PHINEAS**

Fastracker.

**DAPHNE**

Essentially. He moved in after the first month. Bought a couch together. Adopted a dog, but he kept peeing all over the couch.

**PHINEAS**

Smart dog.

**DAPHNE**

Psychic dog.

**PHINEAS**

Where’d you meet?

**DAPHNE**

Oh, you know how that old tale goes. Boy meets girl in club and proceeds to charm her out of her Spanx until she’s too dumb to know what’s good for her and just becomes a doormat.

**PHINEAS**

I find that hard to believe. You don’t need Spanx.

**DAPHNE**

Trust me - I’m all trussed up underneath here.

**PHINEAS**

I call you a liar, madame.

**DAPHNE**

You haven’t seen me with my clothes off.

*A moment.*

**DAPHNE**

I thought all this talk about relationships being hard in the city was nuts. I mean, how can it be that difficult to find someone to love in a city of 8 million people, right? There's an option around every corner. Someone's gotta be able to honestly love me back. I wanted the whole big city experience when I moved here 2 years ago. I wanted the option to have options. So I guess I got what I asked for. So many possibilities and doors to kick down and I sometimes can't wrap my head around how incredibly difficult it is to be here. How hard you have to fight for every little moment. How you slowly turn into the city - internalizing all the little negative things that just snowball into all this anxiety and contempt. Or you kinda become dead - just walking through the city lost in an iPod and before you know it's been an hour and you have no idea where you were going or what you were supposed to be doing. I guess I could just go back home. It's easier there. But an easy life is not a worthwhile or meaningful one. I don't want to get lost. Or worse, become invisible. I want to be someone instead of just anyone.

*PHINEAS smiles at her.*

*DING. Doors open. DING. Doors close. No one new has come in. The train moves.*

**PHINEAS**

Next stop is mine. Just a few more minutes left and we haven't even talked zodiac signs.

**DAPHNE**

Let's just go right to final jeopardy. One last question to ask and we both have to answer no matter what.

**PHINEAS**

I like your style.

**DAPHNE**

What have we got to lose?

**PHINEAS**

Our dignities! Ladies choice?

**DAPHNE**

What's your favorite part of living?

*She's caught him off guard. He knows it.*

**PHINEAS**

Finding the unexpected beautiful. [ALTERNATELY: the unexpected-beautiful]

**DAPHNE**

What does that mean?

**PHINEAS**

ENH! Just one question. Your turn.

**DAPHNE**

*(thinking- then:)*

Eating Nutella right out of the jar with my fingers.

**PHINEAS**

Oh now that's a good one.

**DAPHNE**

Right?

**PHINEAS**

Guess we should start saying our goodbyes. Train slowing down and all. Thank you for an intriguing first date, madame.

**DAPHNE**

It was a joy to spend the company with such an erudite Renaissance man.

**PHINEAS**

Creepy quirks and all?

**DAPHNE**

And all.

**PHINEAS**

Yes!

*The train comes to a halt. DING. Doors open.*

**PHINEAS**

Well. Good night. Get home safe.

**DAPHNE**

You too, Phineas. Thanks for making me smile.

**PHINEAS**

Sure.

*PHINEAS stops in between the doors.*

Daphne? **PHINEAS**

Yeah? **DAPHNE**

Merry Christmas. **PHINEAS**

Ditto. Stay off the edge. **DAPHNE**

*DING. The doors start to close on PHINEAS - he's trapped.*

**PHINEAS**  
Yeah yeah yeah I get it man! Chill! No respect, Daphne. None.

*She laughs at him.*

Hey Daphne - Pisces. **PHINEAS**

Virgo. **DAPHNE**

Damn. I was betting on Sag. **PHINEAS**

*DING. Doors close.*

*He smiles through the door and makes a face. She laughs. He walks off.*

*DAPHNE starts to eat and read. Then stops. Stands up. Closes her eyes. Breathes. And just feels the sway of the train.*

**BLACKOUT.**