

**INT. GAME SHOW SET 1 - EVENING**

A crowded audience sits in a large black box studio around a game show set. A few technicians run across the floor, fixing last-minute issues and preparing to go live. The STAGE MANAGER, in a headset with a clipboard raises his hand, signaling the countdown.

STAGE MANAGER  
...five, four, three, two-

STAGE MANAGER mouths the last number of the countdown. A neon red light above the stage flicks on and reads "LIVE". Cameras start recording as colorful lights flash around the stage and an intro music recording plays.

The audience erupts in a roar of applause and cheers. An over-excited host steps out onto the stage, next to a few colorful tables and a polka-dotted wall. The spotlight shines on him.

RORY WALKER  
(exaggerated happy)  
Good evening ladies and  
gentlemen!

RORY WALKER waves and smiles at the loud audience. Once they quiet, he continues.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
My name is RORY Walker, and  
welcome to this episode of-

The audience recites the title alongside him, pausing slightly in between syllables.

ALL  
Catfish Speed Dating!

All cheer as a bright sign of the show's name drops down behind RORY WALKER.

RORY WALKER

We're all so glad you could  
make it to this very special  
episode of Catfish Speed Dating.  
We have a treat for you tonight!

RORY WALKER cheekily grabs a microphone and sways it around.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
(feigning sympathy)

But on a serious note, let's  
take a moment to appreciate the  
cowardly souls who hide behind a  
mask for validation.

The audience erupts in sad "awws".

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)

But that's where we come in.  
Two ex-catfishers-as you will soon  
meet tonight-are here for one  
reason, and one reason only...

The audience finishes his sentence.

ALL

To find true love!

RORY WALKER

Exactly! To meet one another  
and fan that spark of romance for  
the first time without a disguise.

Everyone goes silent for a moment.

RORY WALKER

Let's meet our contestants!

The audience roars and quiets.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)

First up, please welcome Jo  
Salmon from New York City...

The audience claps, as a tall woman in high heels with blonde hair, a tight black dress, and red lipstick walks onto stage. She looks like who a catfish would impersonate, rather than a catfisher. She waves as she takes a seat at a small table center stage.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
(reading from his teleprompter)

Jo has been a professional catfisher since 2015, under the fake alias, "Cindy Lee".

RORY points the microphone to JO.

JO:

Yes. I thought if I changed my name, people would take me seriously.

JO flips her hair.

JO (CONT'D):

I want someone who *actually* sees me.

The audience and RORY nod understandingly. He retracts the microphone.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
Thank you, Jo.

The audience claps as RORY smiles. He collects himself again, before taking his place center stage.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
And of course, you can't make a match without two lovers to pair.  
Please welcome..

Before finishing the introduction, the second contestant walks onto stage. The audience begins to clap, but immediately stops after seeing the man, who is an actual catfish, walking upright on his back tail fin. RORY drops the microphone in astonishment.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
(gagged)  
Simon Trout...

Simon smiles and waves sheepishly. He takes his seat at the table in front of a surprised Jo.

SIMON  
(to the audience)  
Hello.

RORY attempts to brush off the situation by faking a smile.

RORY WALKER  
Well folks! Let's give a round of  
applause for Simon.

RORY zones out in the distance while the audience awkwardly claps.

SIMON  
I've wanted to go on Catfish Speed  
Dating for practically my entire  
life. To show who I really am. Not  
just-

RORY WALKER  
Fishy?

SIMON looks confused, but he nods. RORY plasters on another cheesy grin, as the colorful wall behind him spins to reveal a box of questions on a stand.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
Now, to jumpstart this night's  
episode of Catfish Speed Dating,  
let's begin with my favorite part  
of the show, the Ice Breaker  
round.

The audience cheers, while SIMON and JO smile at each other, getting situated. RORY walks to the box of questions and pulls out a paper.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
Now, Simon and Jo, when I read a  
question, you must answer as  
honestly and personally as you  
can. Ready?

Both nod as RORY begins to read the paper.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
Perfect! Where do you see yourself  
in five years?

Both contestants think for a moment. Simon raises his fin first.

SIMON  
Hopefully not on another dating  
show.

JO smiles and laughs at his answer, agreeing.

JO  
I'd say traveling. I've always  
wanted to go to-

SIMON and JO (CONT'D):  
Italy.

JO (CONT'D)  
(smiling)  
Exactly.

RORY and the audience "aww" them. A few moments of quiet passes,  
while JO and SIMON stare at each other, clearly enamored.

RORY WALKER  
(breaking the silence)  
Next question!

Both contestants snap back to reality. RORY grabs a new slip of  
paper and nods contently.

RORY WALKER (CONT'D)  
What is your best piece of  
advice for the audience?

SIMON thinks for a quick second, before blurting out.

SIMON  
Don't hide.

He looks at JO and smiles.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
Someone out there has to  
accept you one way or another.  
Hiding doesn't solve anything.

JO's smile fades slightly at her internal realization.

JO  
(stiff)  
Same. I agree.

SIMON looks puzzled for a moment, but RORY continues.

RORY WALKER  
(sympathetic)  
If that's not what this show  
is about, then why are we even  
here tonight? What a hard-hitting  
statement, Simon.

The audience cheers once more, as the wall spins back around to the original side. RORY is prepared to move onto the second segment of the night, but before he can speak, JO interrupts the production with a loud announcement, her mind still stuck on SIMON's previous statement.

JO  
Wait!

The audience falls quiet at her declaration, no one making a sound. JO walks to the front of the stage and dramatically turns her head back to SIMON.

JO (CONT'D)  
(emotional)

You're right. I shouldn't have  
hid.

She turns out to face the audience.

JO (CONT'D)  
(ashamed)  
I shouldn't have hid from any  
of you.

Without hesitation, JO lifts her hand to the back of her head and grabs a zipper. She pulls the zipper down her body, from her head to her feet. The crowd gasps as she steps out of her human body suit, revealing that she is, too, an actual catfish.

JO (CONT'D)  
This is me.

RORY WALKER looks dizzy and drops his microphone, causing a harsh, high-pitched screeching noise to fill the room. All cover their ears until it fades. JO still remains disappointed in herself.

JO (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry for lying to you  
Simon.

Stunned, the audience watches as a sympathetic SIMON stands up and walks next to her. He grabs her fin and looks into her eyes.

SIMON  
You're a-

SIMON (CONT'D) and JO  
Catfish.

They both laugh and smile at each other, looking into the audience.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
I've never met another one  
before.

A few people in the audience "aww".

JO  
(to the audience)  
Thank you for your time!

SIMON and JO exit the stage, still holding fins. RORY's eyes flutter between being open and closed. He is in shock.

RORY WALKER  
(emotionless)  
That's all for tonight-

The broadcasting cuts out.