

TITLE: THE BIG SICK

FORMAT: Feature | Romantic Comedy

LOGLINE: *A struggling Pakistani American stand up comedian falls in love with white woman but breaks up due to culture clashes. But when he realizes his true feelings just as she goes into a coma, he must overcome parental disapproval, her parents' cold shoulders, and win her back when she regains consciousness.*

COMPS: MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING meets WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING.

WHY THIS STORY NOW: This story is based on Kumail Nanjiani's real life story about how he met and fell in love with his wife, and won her over in spite of their parents and cultural differences. It's a reminder that people from completely disparate worlds can still find their way to one another in this often divisive modern world.

At a Chicago Comedy Club...

When he's not driving for Uber, **KUMAIL NANJIANI** (27) does his self-deprecating stand up routine, about how growing up in Pakistan is like America, except for arranged marriages, playing cricket instead of baseball, and TV shows like "Knight Rider" playing like it was new. He and his comedy buddies meet a recruiter looking for comedians for his upcoming Montreal Showcase.

During Kumail's performances, he gets heckled by a young woman, **EMILY GARDNER** (27). After the show, Kumail politely tells her that it's rude to heckle comedians, but Emily states she only gave him a "woo-hoo!" Kumail takes Emily home and they watch a movie before having sex. Emily regrets having sex on the first date and she calls for an Uber driver... who happens to be Kumail!

Kumail dines with his family, and his mother comically tries to set him up with Pakistani women, though he has no interest. He keeps their pictures in a cigar box knowing he would be disowned if he married a non-Pakistani woman.

Kumail keeps dating Emily in secret as they enjoy each other's company. After a movie night at his place, they hook up again and Emily confesses she wants to go to the coffee shop to "take a shit" and is too shy to do it at his apartment. Kumail waits for her outside before taking her home. She says they shouldn't meet again, but moments later, Kumail calls, and she invites him up.

Emily finds in Kumail's apartment the cigar box with all the women's photos. He reveals the whole arranged marriage deal, and his worry about being disowned. Emily, heartbroken, angrily storms out. After a performance, he learns that Emily is in the hospital. He visits her but she's not happy to see him.

The doctor tells Kumail that Emily needs to be put into a medically-induced coma.

Despite not being her husband, Kumail signs off, then uses Emily's thumb to unlock her phone to call her parents, **BETH** and **TERRY**. They arrive in the morning to see Kumail, Beth is cold towards him, knowing about Kumail from Emily. Terry thanks him for calling them. Kumail attempts to befriend them, but Beth pushes back, telling him he screwed with Emily. The doctors tell them that Emily needs to be in the coma until they remove the infection from her lungs. Terry invites Kumail to have lunch in the hospital cafeteria, leading to a humorous and awkward interaction.

Beth and Terry stay at Emily's apartment for updates on her condition. Kumail heads to a comedy show, and surprisingly, Beth and Terry attend, laughing and enjoying the performance until a

This is a Sample Pitch written by Roy Hsu for Stage 32 and not the official pitch for THE BIG SICK.

heckler tells Kumail to go back to ISIS. Beth nearly fights with him until she is pulled out of the club. Back at the apartment, Beth shares embarrassing high school pictures of Emily with Kumail. At Kumail's family's house, his mother introduces Kumail to a young woman named Khadija. Afterwards, Kumail takes her home, turns her down, and tells her he loves someone else.

Kumail, Beth, and Terry learn from the doctors that they need to keep Emily in the coma longer than expected. The trio are shaken by the news and worry to figure out what to do for Emily. Kumail is heartbroken by this. Beth and Terry get into a fight over this decision.

In the morning, Kumail finds a note from Terry saying he is going to the hospital. When Kumail gets there, he finds Beth and Terry preparing to sign off on moving Emily to another hospital. Despite Kumail pleading and objecting, the two insist they are doing what's best for their daughter.

Kumail's parents show up at his apartment to demand to know why he rejected Khadija and admits he is in love with Emily. His parents are not happy. They disown him and leave.

Kumail has a melt down asking for four slices of cheese on a burger at a fast food restaurant, almost missing his spot for the Montreal Showcase. Kumail performs, but is clearly not ready and breaks down talking about Emily being in a coma. Afterwards, he visits Emily, thinking he lost her.

The next day, Kumail gets a text from Terry telling him to go to the hospital. Kumail finds Emily awake, sitting with Beth and Terry. The doctor tells them that Emily's disease causes her body to think she's sick but isn't. Kumail talks to Emily privately, but she is still mad at him and doesn't want to see him. Kumail leaves, telling Beth it's crazy to go through something together like that and not see each other again. Beth reassures him that maybe it doesn't have to be like that.

The next day, Kumail visits the hospital after a message from Terry. He finds Emily awake with Beth and Terry. The doctor explains her condition made it seem she was sick when she wasn't. Emily is still angry and tells him she wants space. Kumail leaves, telling Beth it's crazy to go through something like that then not see each other. Beth hints that it doesn't have to be the end.

Beth and Terry host a welcome-home party for Emily

Kumail arrives, declaring to Emily he wants her back. But she isn't moved by it because he realized this only when she was sick and she doesn't want something that doesn't feel mutual.

Kumail returns to his comedy buddies who invite him to move to NYC with them. He goes to his parents' house but is given the silent treatment. As Emily recovers, she watches a video of Kumail bombing on stage as he talks about her-she's overcome by his sincerity. Beth tells Emily that Kumail was always there for her, reassuring her. As Kumail gets ready to move with his friends, his parents give him the cold shoulder but still ultimately wish him well.

Kumail performs in an NYC comedy club. Suddenly, he hears a "woo-hoo!" It's Emily. They have the same exchange when they first met about the heckling. When Kumail asks why she's there, Emily says she's there to see someone, and they exchange loving smiles.