

MATCHMAKER

2025 Writers' Tournament
Round 2

FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL RANCH STYLE HOUSE - DAY.

A line of white wood fencing separates the house from a dusty rural road. A small barn sits adjacent to the house. SOPHIE (10) brushes a GOLDEN PALOMINO PONY. The pony, noting something in the distance takes off from the barn at a trot.

At a distance, puffs of dust rise from a jogger, NATE EVANS (30s) his DOG, close at his heels. The pony continues on his mission to the fenceline. Nate spots the pony, his neck now stretched over the fence touching noses with the dog.

NATE

Looks like you've found a friend,
Tuck.

The dog looks back to Nate as Sophie approaches, puffing.

SOPHIE

Mattie! You are so naughty running
off like that.

Then to Nate as she notes Tuck the dog.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I think he likes your dog.

NATE

Looks like a match made in heaven.

SOPHIE

That's actually his name. It's
Matchmaker, but I call him Mattie.

Nate pats the pony's nose.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

He was a champion show pony.

She's playing Mattie up.

NATE

Impressive. So how did he end up
here with you?

SOPHIE

I guess he got tired of show
business.

She smiles slyly. Nate laughs.

NATE

Good one. And by the way, I'm Nate and this is Tuck. We just moved in down the road.

SOPHIE

I'm Sophie. My mom and I live here...just the two of us.

The wheels are turning in Mattie's mind. Nate nods, smiling.

NATE

It's nice to meet you and Mattie. Hope to see you again.

Sophie nods, snaps a lead on the pony and waves as Nate and Tuck jog off.

SOPHIE

What do you think, Mattie? He's kinda cute.

Mattie nickers softly, still looking after the dog.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I meant the guy, not to the dog.

Sophie has a glint in her eye.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I have an idea.

INT. BARN - DAY

Sophie stands in the barn, Mattie at her side.

SOPHIE

Okay, so here's the plan.

She leans in and whispers into the pony's ear.

INT. NATE'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

Tuck is barking repeatedly and scratching at the door. Nate looks out the window to see Mattie, lead rope dangling, contentedly munching in his flower bed.

NATE

What in the world?

He's out the door and sprints to the still munching pony.

NATE (CONT'D)
Hey you, those are my flowers!

He takes the rope and leads Mattie out of the garden, just as a puffing Sophie approaches.

SOPHIE
Mattie! You bad boy!
Sorry, he got away from me. He's
never done that before.

NATE
No problem. Glad you found him. Do
you need help walking him back
home?

SOPHIE
No, I'll be fine. Come on Mattie,
let's go.

She leans in and whispers to Mattie out of earshot of Nate.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Whoa! Don't you move.

She pulls the lead but obedient Mattie plants his feet and refuses. Sophie sighs.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Well, if you don't mind, maybe I
could use the help. He can be
stubborn.

NATE
Oh yeah? Maybe he just has a case
of "pony disease".

SOPHIE
Pony disease?

NATE
Yeah, he's a little "hoarse".

Sophie looks puzzled. Nate clears his throat.

NATE (CONT'D)
That's... a Dad joke.

SOPHIE
Are you a Dad?

NATE
No, just practicing.

Nate, winks at Sophie and takes the lead in hand.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

Nate, Tuck, Sophie and Mattie approach from the drive. Sophie's MOM, ABBY (30s) rushes out the door.

ABBY
Sophie! Where have you been?

SOPHIE
Sorry Mom, Mattie ran away.

She motions back to Nate.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
This is our new neighbor. He came to the rescue.

ABBY
(to Nate)
Thank you so much, I hope they weren't too much trouble.

NATE
No, not at all. Happy to help.

Sophie has that glint in her eye again.

SOPHIE
Mom? Didn't you just bake a pie?

ABBY
Well of course, where are my manners? Please, come in, Mr...

NATE
Nate.

ABBY
Nate.

They enter the house leaving Sophie, Mattie and Tuck looking on. Sophie kisses the pony and then the dog.

SOPHIE
"Operation Matchmaker" is a success!

FADE OUT.

