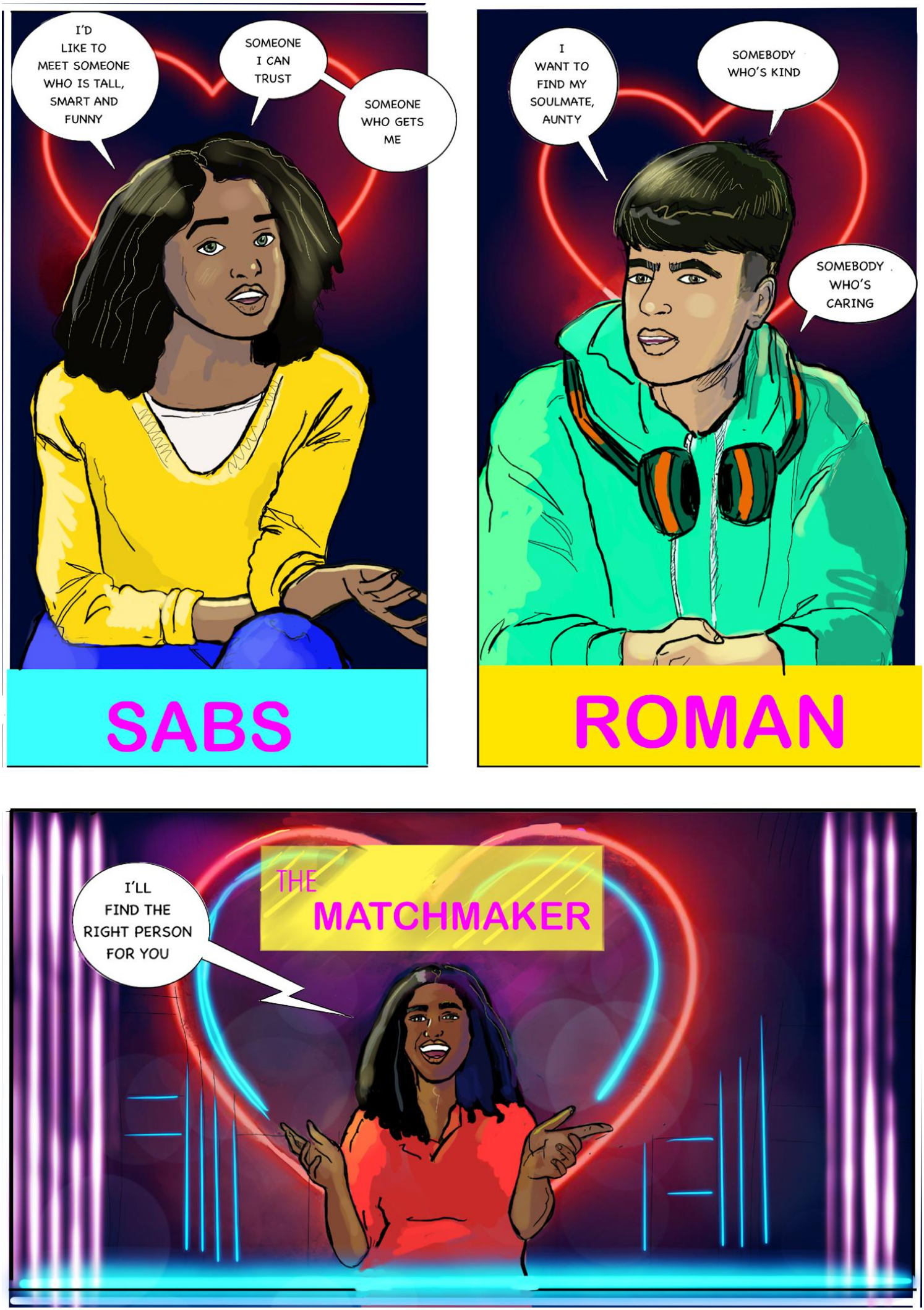
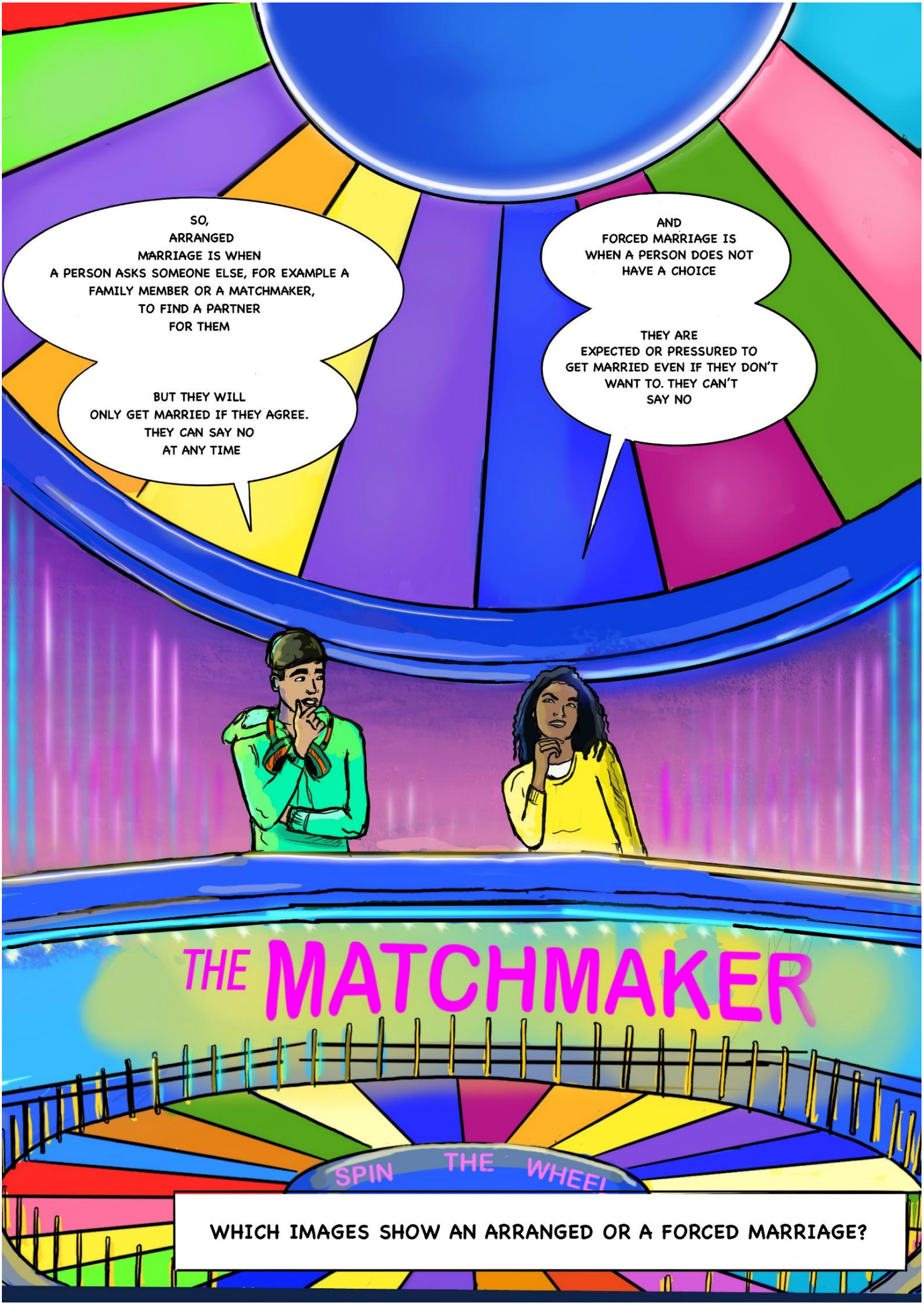

I'D LIKE TO MEET SOMEONE WHO IS TALL, SMART AND FUNNY
SOMEONE I CAN TRUST
SOMEONE WHO GETS ME
SABS
I WANT TO FIND MY SOULMATE, AUNTY
SOMEBODY WHO'S KIND
SOMEBODY WHO'S CARING
ROMAN
I'LL FIND THE RIGHT PERSON FOR YOU
THE MATCHMAKER


SHE'S THE ONE!
DO NOT BRING SHAME UPON US
YOU MUST MARRY HER
SPIN THE WHEEL
SUCH A FUSSY GIRL
YOU'VE SAID NO THREE TIMES NOW. YOU HAVE TO SAY YES TO SOMEONE
NO, NOT THAT ONE
I WILL DO AS YOU WISH
I GUESS SHE'LL DO
HE IS EVERYTHING I EVER WANTED IN A PARTNER, AND MORE
I'M GETTING BAD VIBES FROM HER, AUNTY
WHAT IS YOUR DECISION?
THE MATCHMAKER
SPIN THE WHEEL


SO,
ARRANGED
MARRIAGE IS WHEN
A PERSON ASKS SOMEONE ELSE, FOR EXAMPLE A
FAMILY MEMBER OR A MATCHMAKER,
TO FIND A PARTNER
FOR THEM
BUT THEY WILL
ONLY GET MARRIED IF THEY AGREE.
THEY CAN SAY NO
AT ANY TIME
AND
FORCED MARRIAGE IS
WHEN A PERSON DOES NOT
HAVE A CHOICE
THEY ARE
EXPECTED OR PRESSURED TO
GET MARRIED EVEN IF THEY DON'T
WANT TO. THEY CAN'T
SAY NO
THE MATCHMAKER
SPIN THE WHEEL
WHICH IMAGES SHOW AN ARRANGED OR A FORCED MARRIAGE?

Let's talk about The Matchmaker: Discussion questions and key points

The Matchmaker presents an opportunity to learn about the difference and sometimes fine line between arranged and forced marriage. The protagonists agree to have their marriage arranged by a matchmaker. The comic shows different, non-linear ways in which their stories can develop. Some demonstrate the protagonists' free and full consent and their ability to disagree with a proposed match, others indicate grey areas of reluctant acquiescence under pressure. Some highlight that both parties or just one person might consent, disagree, or acquiesce.

1. In one sentence and using your own words, what is the difference between a forced and an arranged marriage?

Consent, or the lack thereof, is the key difference. A forced marriage is where people do not get to choose. It is when people are told to get married, or when they are pressured to marry a particular person, even though they do not want to and are not given a choice. If a person does not fully understand what a marriage is, for example because of a disability, then it would still count as a forced marriage. And if one of the people getting married is under the age of 18, then it is also a forced marriage, even if there is no pressure and the parents agree. That is also called child marriage. A forced marriage is different from an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, the people who are getting married agree to have their marriage arranged and they agree who they are going to marry and when. They also have the freedom and choice to end the arrangement at any point. Emphasise that a marriage can be arranged for both spouses and that both spouses can be forced into a marriage. This then provides an opportunity to stress that men and boys can be forced into a marriage as well. It does not only affect women and girls.

2. Which images show an arranged or a forced marriage and why?

Roman saying "She's the one!" and "I'm getting bad vibes from her, Aunty." indicate an arranged marriage. Similarly, Sabs saying "He is everything I ever wanted in a partner, and more." And "No, not that one." indicate an arranged marriage. Here, Roman and Sabs can consent or object to the match. Their positive and negative reactions are reflected in the facial expressions of happiness and strong determination.

In contrast, the speech bubbles of Roman's and Sabs' parents indicate pressure and therefore a forced marriage. They say: "Such a fussy girl." "You've said no three times now. You have to say yes to someone." And "Do not bring shame upon us." "You must marry her." However, the parents' facial expression add an element of ambiguity to the images. For example, when Sabs' mother says "Such a fussy girl." she almost seems to laugh at the folly of her daughter. This is contrasted with the stronger expression of Sabs' father, indicating a tension between the parents. In contrast, Roman's parents look almost pleadingly. This could indicate that they themselves feel pressure to find a match for their son and are genuinely concerned about the impact of his behaviour on their family.

Some images show a mixed picture. Roman saying "I guess she'll do." and Sabs saying "I will do as you wish." indicate reluctant acquiescence more than free and full consent. The same goes for the images where Roman and Sabs stay quiet. Their facial expressions can be interpreted as doubt, frustration, or resignation.

3. Number the scenarios in chronological order. How many stories do they tell?

There are many ways in which one scenario could follow another. There is not The One Way or correct way the story could go. This shows that there is no such thing as a typical arranged or forced marriage. And what starts off as an arranged marriage could become a forced marriage and vice versa, and it can be difficult to draw a line. We can imagine that, initially, Roman and/ or Sabs object to a match and are then pressured by their parents to accept the next one, either quietly acquiescing or expressing consent without actually meaning it. We can also imagine a story where Roman agrees to a match but Sabs does not (or vice versa) and is then pressured into it. And we can imagine a story where one or both of them are pressured into a match but grow to like the person.

4. Why might people use a matchmaker?

Is this more common in some communities than others? People may choose to use a matchmaker for several reasons. Those include the support, expertise and professional guidance a matchmaker can offer, time efficiency, and access to a larger pool of potential matches. Emphasise that, while we might associate matchmakers more with some communities than others, anyone can use a matchmaker. Technically, introducing a friend to someone they might like makes us a matchmaker.