

Who is Nissi?

NISSI

Age: 21 | Baltimore, Maryland

The Dreamer. The Partner. The Woman Who Knows Rod Better Than He Thinks.

UNDERSTANDING NISSI

Nissi is much more than **Rod's girlfriend**.

That's the first thing the actress needs to understand.

She has her own dream, her own ambition, her own personality and her own instincts. She's building a future right alongside Rod.

Her dream is simple but deeply important to her:

She wants her own salon.

When we first meet Nissi, she's already doing hair out of Rod's house. She's working. She's building clientele. She's looking at salon designs and imagining where the stations will go and where the shampoo area will be.

This isn't some fantasy she casually talks about.

SHE'S ALREADY DOING THE WORK.

Rod is trying to help her take the next step.

WHO SHE IS

Nissi is **beautiful, focused, ambitious, loving, funny, confident, observant, independent and protective.**

She loves Rod.

Deeply.

But loving Rod doesn't mean blindly agreeing with him.

She knows him well enough to recognize when something is wrong—even when he hasn't said a word.

Early in the story, Rod tries to tell her something and then changes direction.

Nissi doesn't force it.

But after he leaves—

she watches him longer than usual.

Something in his face bothered her.

That's Nissi.

She pays attention.

NISSI & ROD

Their relationship needs to feel **lived in**.

Not like two actors who met that morning and were told they're boyfriend and girlfriend.

These two have history.

They tease each other.

They irritate each other.

They're affectionate.

They know each other's habits.

They know when the other person is hiding something.

They can go from a serious conversation to joking with each other without it feeling strange.

When Rod says:

"Love you."

Nissi answers:

"Love you too, the real kind."

Later Rod actually checks:

"The real kind?"

And Nissi answers:

"You know it."

That little exchange tells the actress a lot.

THEY HAVE THEIR OWN LANGUAGE.

Find that intimacy.

DON'T PLAY "THE GIRLFRIEND"

This is probably the most important performance note.

DO NOT BUILD NISSI'S ENTIRE CHARACTER AROUND ROD.

She loves him.

But she has a life.

She's working while he's gone.

She's handling clients.

She's dealing with Pumpkin.

She's planning a business.

She's thinking about her future.

The salon isn't merely something Rod wants to give his girlfriend.

It's something Nissi has been working toward.

Rod is helping her get through the door.

She intends to do the rest.

THE SALON

When Nissi shows Rod the salon pictures on her phone, let us see her imagination working.

She's not simply showing him pretty rooms.

She's seeing herself inside them.

Where the stations go.

Where clients sit.

How it feels.

What she would change.

What kind of businesswoman she could become.

When she tells Rod:

"It's literally a dream come true."

believe it.

But don't play the dream as desperation.

Nissi believes she deserves an opportunity.

Rod tells her:

"You deserve it."

Nissi answers:

"Yes I do."

That's a wonderful clue to her personality.

She isn't waiting for someone else to tell her she's worthy.

She already knows.

HER CONFIDENCE

Nissi should have confidence without arrogance.

She's attractive and knows who she is.

She's good at what she does.

She's comfortable teasing Rod.

She's comfortable checking Rod.

She's comfortable telling Pumpkin:

Wait.

And when Pumpkin doesn't listen—

Nissi gives her that look.

There should be humor in Nissi.

Warmth.

Life.

She isn't walking around carrying the weight of the entire series.

Not yet.

That contrast becomes important when danger begins reaching her world.

NISSI & MARCUS

Nissi does **not** trust Marcus's presence around Rod.

And importantly, it isn't because she's jealous or controlling.

She sees a pattern.

When Rod tells her Marcus is with him, her immediate reaction is:

"Marcus?"

Then:

"No. He needs to go. Last thing we need is for Tavon to hear he's with us."

And she tells Rod:

"Every time he comes around, something happens."

That's not irrational.

Nissi understands enough about their world to recognize danger.

DON'T TURN MARCUS INTO A RELATIONSHIP ARGUMENT

This matters for the actress.

Nissi isn't saying:

"I don't like your friend."

She's saying:

"YOUR FRIEND'S PROBLEMS KEEP BECOMING OUR PROBLEMS."

There's a huge difference.

When she tells Rod:

"That's what you always say before it becomes my problem too,"

there's history underneath that sentence.

She's heard:

"I got it."

before.

She loves that Rod wants to solve everybody's problems.

But she also knows what happens when Rod believes his intelligence can solve everything.

Sometimes the consequences walk through their front door.

NISSI'S INSTINCTS

Nissi is perceptive.

Rod thinks quickly.

Nissi **feels when something is wrong.**

That's different.

When Rod almost tells her the truth and pivots, she knows there's more to it.

When Marcus reappears, she immediately understands that his presence can bring Tavon.

When Rod starts explaining the salon situation and says they have a "little hiccup," she catches it:

"What were you about to say?"

Rod avoids the conversation.

Nissi allows him to.

Allowing something to pass does not mean she didn't notice it.

That's an important acting distinction.

FOR THE ACTRESS

LISTEN TO ROD.

Really listen.

Nissi knows this man.

So when his rhythm changes, you should notice.

When he hesitates—

notice.

When he answers too quickly—

notice.

When his smile doesn't match what's happening—

notice.

You don't always have to confront him.

Sometimes the strongest Nissi reaction will simply be:

I KNOW YOU'RE NOT TELLING ME EVERYTHING.

And then letting it go—for now.

HER LOVE FOR ROD

Don't make their relationship overly sentimental.

They should be able to laugh.

Flirt.

Get annoyed.

Argue.

Work.

Talk about money.

Talk about dreams.

Interrupt each other.

That's what makes the love believable.

When Rod walks into the kitchen early in the story, Nissi's expression immediately lights up. She takes his hand and leads him away from everyone else before passionately kissing him.

She genuinely loves seeing him.

Rod is home to Nissi.

And Nissi is one of the places Rod can briefly stop carrying everything.

That makes what happens later much more dangerous emotionally.

PUMPKIN

Pumpkin helps us see another side of Nissi.

There's friendship.

Comfort.

Playfulness.

Nissi can be working on Pumpkin's hair one second and ready to playfully charge at her the next.

That relationship should feel natural.

These women know each other.

Nissi has a community.

That's important because it keeps her from existing solely inside Rod's storyline.

THE DANGER

Nissi doesn't understand the full scale of what Rod is walking into.

She doesn't know everything about the land.

Morelli.

The inheritance.

The people hunting for it.

That's important.

DON'T PLAY KNOWLEDGE NISSI DOESN'T HAVE.

She knows something is wrong.

That's enough.

The tragedy is that Rod believes keeping information away from Nissi may protect her.

But the story is beginning to show us something else:

Not knowing doesn't necessarily make her safe.

That gives Nissi's scenes increasing tension as the story progresses.

DON'T PLAY A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

Even when danger eventually reaches Nissi, don't suddenly turn her into a completely different woman.

Fear is allowed.

Panic is allowed.

Vulnerability is allowed.

But remember who she was before the danger entered the room.

She's observant.

She's intelligent.

She's assertive.

She thinks.

NISSI CAN BE AFRAID AND STILL BE NISSI.

HER DREAM VS. ROD'S REALITY

There's something underneath the salon storyline that I want the actress to understand.

Nissi is dreaming about:

chairs.

mirrors.

clients.

colors.

shampoo stations.

ownership.

Meanwhile Rod is quietly entering increasingly dangerous worlds trying to make that dream possible.

Nissi doesn't know the price being attached to those keys.

That creates dramatic irony.

So when she's excited about the salon, don't play guilt.

She doesn't know.

Let her joy be real.

That's what makes Rod's burden heavier.

EMOTIONAL RANGE

Nissi gives the actress room for:

love, humor, flirtation, ambition, confidence, suspicion, frustration, concern, excitement, protectiveness, fear and eventually courage.

But don't try to show all of those things in every scene.

Nissi's emotional life should feel effortless.

WHAT NOT TO DO

Don't play "the girlfriend."

Don't make her needy.

Don't make her jealous of every woman around Rod.

Don't make every disagreement with Rod an argument.

Don't make her salon dream superficial.

Don't play her as unaware or unintelligent.

Don't make her suspicious every second.

Don't force attitude into every line.

Don't turn confidence into arrogance.

Don't play danger before Nissi knows danger is present.

And don't make her relationship with Rod melodramatic.

WE NEED TO BELIEVE THESE TWO ACTUALLY LOVE EACH OTHER.

Because the deeper Rod goes, the more that love becomes something other people can use against him.

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

We're looking for an actress with **natural warmth, confidence, humor, emotional intelligence and presence.**

Someone who can be beautiful without making beauty the performance.

Someone who feels like she has ambitions beyond the man she's dating.

Someone who can tease Rod one moment and recognize something serious behind his eyes the next.

Someone with enough chemistry that when Rod and Nissi say:

"The real kind."

we believe there's a whole relationship behind those three words.

And we need someone who can eventually handle the transition from the warmth of Rod's home—

to the darkness that is moving toward it.

THE HEART OF NISSI

Nissi thinks she and Rod are building a life.

And they are.

She's building her salon.

Rod is trying to build his future.

They're talking about tomorrow.

They're joking.

They're loving each other.

They're dreaming.

Nissi doesn't know that Rod's past has just reached into their future.

She sees pieces of it.

She senses something changing.

But she doesn't yet understand how deep it goes.

And that's what makes Nissi important.

She's not simply someone Rod needs to protect.

SHE'S PART OF THE LIFE ROD IS FIGHTING TO HAVE.

The salon.

The laughter.

The arguments.

The teasing.

The future.

The love.

When the dangerous world begins closing around Rod, Nissi represents something incredibly important:

WHAT ALL OF THIS COULD COST HIM.

That's Nissi.

Now show us your version of her.