

HELLO LOVE

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A hot air balloon floats across the clear blue sky.

The balloon affords a bird's-eye view of the countryside - a large patchwork of vivid gold and green fields divided by hedgerows and narrow country roads.

A compact yellow car wends its way through a small village until it comes to a halt outside a semi-detached house.

EXT. STEVE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Out of the yellow car steps STEVE READER (late-twenties to mid-thirties, an unassuming book-worm, no Adonis but not unattractive). He is dressed casually.

Steve takes four full bags of shopping from the car. As he walks up the path to his house the front door is opened by a cheerful woman in her late-sixties.

STEVE

Thanks, Mum.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Steve places the shopping bags on the kitchen worktop. Jill, struggling with arthritis, shuffles in behind him.

JILL

Get everything?

STEVE

Everything on the list.

Steve pulls a well creased shopping list from his pocket and hands it to her. He begins to unpack the bags placing four blueberry muffins onto the kitchen worktop.

JILL

Muffins. Muffins to toast, you fool - English muffins.

STEVE

Now be fair, these are muffins.

JILL

Step away from the shopping - I'll deal with it.

Jill takes a second to steel herself and then turns to Steve.

JILL

I meant to tell you I met a lovely girl called Julie today. She works in the lettings department at the estate agent.

STEVE

I'm sure you'll be very happy together.

JILL

Steven, you need to get serious about relationships.

STEVE

I am serious about relationships.

JILL

No, you're serious about relationship data. Time to move on and I'm going to help you.

STEVE

By introducing me to Julie?

JILL

By giving you a month's notice. You're leaving home.

Steve struggles to process this bombshell. He is speechless for a moment, unable to compute. He tries to talk but starts and stops like a short circuiting robot.

STEVE

You can't kick me out.

JILL

I can.

STEVE

You need me to look after you.

JILL

Don't be ridiculous. I'm holding you back, Steven.

STEVE

Who would do your shopping?

JILL

I'd do it online. And I'd get what I ordered.

STEVE

You couldn't live on your own.

JILL

I asked Julie to find me a lodger.

STEVE

You can't do that.

JILL

I can. You should meet Julie. She said she might take your room herself.

STEVE

I will not be visiting.

Jill can't believe her ears. She is close to tears but is determined not to back down.

JILL

You can't use me or your ex-fiancée as an excuse any longer. I won't have you ending up like me, Steven.

STEVE

Oh, Mum.

JILL

And don't blame your father. He made sure we didn't need for anything. He gave us this house.

STEVE

The chances of finding someone who is right for me is one in two hundred and eighty-five thousand.

JILL

That doesn't sound too bad.

STEVE

That equates to twenty-six women of my age range in the whole of the UK.

JILL

All the more reason to get out there and find one of them before someone else does.

STEVE

After the last time...

JILL  
Melissa wasn't right for you.  
Everyone knew it.

STEVE  
I didn't!

JILL  
You can't hide behind statistics  
and one bad relationship for the  
rest of your life, Steven.

Unable to listen to his mother any longer, Steve storms off upstairs.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jill fiddles with Steve's video camera until she is confident that she can operate it.

She presses a button on the video camera, places it opposite herself and then sits down to record a message.

JILL  
(to camera)  
Steven, this is your mother  
speaking. You owe it to yourself  
to look for happiness. Just say  
hello, love. What have you got  
to lose?

Spotting a spec of dirt, Jill flicks her duster over the camera.

INT. VOXPOP SURVEYS OFFICE - BOARDROOM - DAY

Steve hands out copies of the Relationship Survey around the large boardroom desk to four work colleagues: MALCOLM, two Yes Men and TRISH, the team PA.

MALCOLM is an old school sales manager, struggling to keep up with technology, worried that he may be replaced by a younger version at any moment.

MALCOLM  
Emay Healthcare. Unfortunately,  
Pete went skiing, flew through  
the air and starfished a tree. I  
need someone to cover him until  
he gets back.

STEVE  
I can.

MALCOLM

Who are you?

STEVE

Steve Reader. Market research  
statistician. I know the account  
inside out.

MALCOLM

Okay, tell me about the Sex  
Survey.

Steve fires up his laptop and a projector throws some charts  
onto a screen.

STEVE

It's called The Relationship  
Survey.

Trish has been flicking through her copy of the survey.

TRISH

I'm thinking of moving to  
Hungary.

STEVE

For frequency yes, for  
satisfaction no.

As Steve talks he becomes more animated - he's in his  
element. His enthusiasm is infectious as he interacts with,  
and seemingly manipulates, the colourful charts being  
projected.

STEVE

Thailand and Vietnam are the  
countries most satisfied with  
their sex lives but they're also  
amongst the least frequent  
practitioners.

TRISH

So for greater satisfaction I  
should have sex less often?

STEVE

Or have it in Thailand.

MALCOLM

How many people have slept with  
their boss?

STEVE

Three per cent.

MALCOLM

There's a serious lack of  
ambition in the world today.

Trish throws him a mean look.

A mobile phone RINGS. Malcolm's eyes narrow as tries to  
determine the source of the offending ring tone.  
Eventually, all eyes are focused on Steve.

STEVE

Oh, sorry.

MALCOLM

Go ahead.

Steve gets up to leave the room.

MALCOLM

No, here, please.

Steve answers his phone with the whole room watching.

STEVE

(to phone)

Hello?

JILL (V.O.)

Hello, love. I just wanted to  
see if you were free Saturday  
afternoon to meet Julie.

STEVE

Mum!

JILL (V.O.)

You've got to grab these  
opportunities, Steven. Take a  
chance for once in your life.

STEVE

I told you before, I'm not  
talking to you.

Steve hangs up, embarrassed.

MALCOLM

Steve...

Malcolm has difficulty catching Steve's attention.

STEVE

(mustering all his  
confidence)

I can manage this account.

Malcolm nods him approval.

INT. VOXPOP RECEPTION - LATER

The company's two receptionists, DENISE and CAROLE, wear telephone headsets. Steve leaves the building.

DENISE & CAROLE  
(in unison)  
Bye, Steve.

STEVE  
Did you know that thirty-six  
percent of people have fantasized  
about sex with their best  
friend's partner?

Steve takes a couple of paces before turning back.

STEVE  
And ten percent have actually  
slept with them.

Denise and Carole eye each other suspiciously.

INT. AN OPEN PLAN OFFICE - DAY

Houston's downtown skyscrapers can be seen through the glass walls of the tenth floor office.

The vast working area is broken up by a maze of low level cubicles. KATIE (mid-to-late thirties, a driven career woman) wears a smart business suit as she sits at her desk watching the clock on her computer.

When the clock hits 2:25 she grabs a pile of papers and negotiates her way purposefully through the maze of cubicles across to an elevator.

She calls the elevator and waits impatiently, tapping the files against her thigh.

INT. DIRECTOR'S' FLOOR - DAY

The elevator door opens, Katie straightens out her suit and weaves her way through another warren of low level partitioning.

She is heading towards a large, fully partitioned office.

An ADMINISTRATOR, flicking through files as she walks, leaves the office as Katie approaches.



On the door a brass plaque reads 'Dan Leary. Group Marketing Director Vice President Americas'.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Katie enters a small outer office where there is a vacant assistant's desk.

Waiting for a moment, Katie gently knocks on the door of the inner office.

INT. DIRECTOR'S INNER OFFICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Katie cautiously enters the office. No one is there. She makes her way to the desk and picks up a paper pad.

She writes 'You missed our 2:30!!' and draws a heart alongside a sad smiley.

A telephone BEEPS and Katie takes her mobile phone out of a pocket to read a text message.

She is about to return to the outer office when she hears a noise from a room behind her.

As Katie makes her way to a side door, the noise becomes louder.

INT. DIRECTOR'S BATHROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A hot shower is running, steaming up the glass shower panels and the mirrors.

The vague outline of a male body can be seen through the shower sides.

Katie smiles to herself and begins to unbutton her top.

A SOFT MOANING emanates from the shower and Katie stops undressing.

She opens the shower door and sees DAN (a doughy fifty year old) in a naked clinch with a YOUNG WOMAN in her early twenties.

The Young Woman sees Katie first.

YOUNG WOMAN  
(to Dan)  
You expecting company, honey?

Dan turns to see Katie just as she takes a photograph of the couple with her mobile phone.

DAN

Oh, hell.

KATIE

Check yourself out at  
mybastardboyfriend.com.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Steve helps DIGGER (larger than life in both character and physique) prepare a hot air balloon for flight as Digger's three dogs bounce about in the field.

DIGGER

She's kicking you out?

STEVE

And renting out my room.

DIGGER

How much does she want?

STEVE

Digger!

DIGGER

Sorry, just thinking my place is  
always a mess and she's a bloody  
good cook.

STEVE

You are not moving in with my  
Mum.

DIGGER

I wouldn't sleep with her.

STEVE

I should hope not.

DIGGER

Nothing wrong with her, mind, not  
saying that. She's a looker,  
your Mum.

STEVE

Enough.

DIGGER  
 (to dog)  
 Sheba! Sheba, leave it alone,  
 damn it!

One of Digger's dogs is rolling around on the ground.  
 Digger chases her away.

DIGGER  
 That dog loves eating fox shit.  
 You should meet this estate  
 agent.

STEVE  
 I'm not sure I'm ready for  
 another relationship.

DIGGER  
 You can't just write all women  
 off because Melissa left you.

STEVE  
 At. The. Altar. Taking. Our.  
 Vicar. With. Her.

DIGGER  
 Believe me, she did you a favour.  
 I wish my three wives had left me  
 at the altar.

INT. VOXPOP SURVEYS OFFICE - STEVE'S DESK - DAY

Steve works on a laptop at his desk - loose papers scattered  
 around - as Malcolm bounces up to him.

MALCOLM  
 Got everything you need?

STEVE  
 Yes, thanks. Malcolm, I was  
 thinking, if I'm doing Pete's job  
 in addition to mine, shouldn't my  
 pay reflect that?

MALCOLM  
 Don't push it, sunbeam. If you  
 need anything just ask Trish.

Trish approaches Malcolm.

TRISH  
 Call for you, Malcolm.

Malcolm takes the call at Trish's desk and Steve returns to his paperwork.

Malcolm hangs up the phone. He looks serious as he makes his way over to Steve.

MALCOLM

Steve, it's your mother.

STEVE

Oh for goodness sake. I'm really sorry, I've asked her to stop calling.

MALCOLM

No, no, it's about your mother.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A small group of mourners stand around an open grave, their heads bowed as a coffin lowers in. A VICAR holds a service sheet inscribed 'In Memoriam Jill Reader, beloved mother of Steven'.

Steve stands in front of the open grave holding a rose.

On either side of Steve are his friends of around the same age: Digger, MIKE (slightly older, good-looking, assured) and LAURA, Mike's wife (confident, grounded).

All wear smart dark suits except Digger who wears a shabby jacket with clashing wrinkled trousers.

Steve drops the rose onto the coffin.

INT. COUNTRY PUB - NIGHT

The BARMAN hands Steve a pint of bitter. Steve stands at the bar with Digger, Mike and Laura. They wear their clothes from the funeral.

All drink pints of bitter except Mike who drinks a soft drink.

Steve raises his glass in a toast.

STEVE

Mum.

The friends chink their glasses together.

STEVE

She's up there trying to marry me off.

LAURA

She'll have Marilyn Monroe lined up for you.

MIKE

She wouldn't be good enough for you.

STEVE

(to Laura)

How did Mike win you over when you first met? His charm? His dress sense? His chain of thirteen frozen yoghurt stands?

LAURA

His bum.

DIGGER

Women are so shallow.

MIKE

(to Steve)

That's why you're on your tod, boy. Don't bother working on your biceps down at the gym

DIGGER

Yeah, get your arse into shape.

STEVE

More than one-third of men and one-quarter of women admit having had at least one extramarital sexual experience?

DIGGER

I can't believe nearly sixty per cent of men are faithful.

MIKE

(to Steve)

Your love life's our favourite topic of conversation.

LAURA

There's a university student in Shanghai doing a thesis on it.

MIKE

He's going to have you  
reclassified as a panda.

STEVE

Mum wanted me to move on and I  
will. If there's a genuine spark  
between us.

DIGGER

Anyone here meet your impossibly  
high standards?

His friends' voices fade into the background as Steve looks  
around the pub.

Steve notices JOOLS sitting with DAVID. Both are about the  
same age as Steve. Jools has a pleasant girl-next-door  
quality about her and David dresses rather flamboyantly.

A DRUNK MAN has fallen asleep nearby and David is  
constructing an impromptu art installation around him using  
chairs, trays, beer glasses, bottles and beer mats whilst  
Jools, trying to stop him, laughs in spite of herself.

Steve returns his focus to his friends.

STEVE

She's with somebody.

Steve looks in the direction of Jools and David.

MIKE

Don't know either of them.

LAURA

You know David, he does your  
hair.

MIKE

Does he?

LAURA

(to Steve)  
I'll introduce you.

Before he can stop her, Laura marches over to Jools and  
David.

STEVE

I can't believe her.

MIKE

She knows everyone.

Laura steers Jools and David over to the bar.

LAURA  
This is Jools and David. David  
you know my husband, Mike.

DAVID  
Looking good, naturally.

LAURA  
This is Digger and Steve. Steve's  
single.

Steve reaches out to shake Jools' hand but gets David's hand  
instead.

Jools looks Steve up and down.

JOOLS  
You work out don't you?

Steve puffs out with pride.

STEVE  
You can tell?

JOOLS  
No. I've seen you at the gym.  
You don't wipe the equipment down  
after you've used it.

There is an awkward moment as Steve struggles to think of  
something to say.

DIGGER  
Steve manages a sex survey.  
Work, work work, that's all he  
ever thinks about.

JOOLS  
Interesting.

STEVE  
It's just statistics. Boring,  
really.

LAURA  
Yes it is.

EXT. COUNTRY PUB - LATER

Steve, Mike, Laura, Digger, Jools and David file out of the  
pub.

DIGGER  
I'm off, work to do.

Digger picks up a wooden L-shaped tool - as tall as he is - from against the pub wall then treks off into a field.

Jools watches Digger with curiosity.

STEVE  
He makes alien crop circles and charges tourists a fortune to see them from his hot air balloon. Can we give you a lift?

JOOLS  
I'm going back with David.

DAVID  
Pop into the shop one day and let me sort your hair out.

Steve shakes David's hand to find that he has been slipped a torn-in-half beer mat with a telephone number written on it.

EXT. MIKE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Mike drives his car along a country lane with Laura and Steve as passengers.

Steve fiddles with the beer mat.

STEVE  
How do you know they're not a couple?

LAURA  
He's gay.

STEVE  
Are you sure?

LAURA  
Uh-huh.

MIKE  
So when he cuts my hair and asks me what I'm doing at the weekend...

LAURA  
Get over yourself.

Steve looks at David's phone number, flustered, he tucks it away in his pocket.



MIKE

Did you get Jools's phone number?

STEVE

There's no subtlety in asking for someone's number.

LAURA

Steve, no excuses. Jools is lovely and she liked you.

STEVE

Do you think so?

LAURA

Just call her and ask her out for a drink.

STEVE

I didn't get her number.

LAURA

I did.

Laura pulls out a pen from her handbag.

LAURA

Give me something to write on.

Steve hands Laura the beer mat from his pocket.

Realising he has given Laura the beer mat with David's telephone number face up, Steve quickly reaches out and turns it over.

STEVE

Other side, thanks.

MIKE

Now call her.

Steve looks out of the car at the night sky.

STEVE

(to himself)

Good night, Mum. I won't let you down.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Steve's bedroom - like the rest of the house now - is messy and disorganised.

Steve packs a sports bag. He takes a pair of clean boxer shorts from his overflowing underwear drawer and selects a shirt from the shirt mountain at the bottom of his wardrobe.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Steve puts the sports bag down.

Standing on a dresser is a picture frame displaying a photograph of Steve with his mother, Jill. Next to an ashtray filled with golf balls another photograph shows Jill playing golf.

Steve picks up the photo of himself with Jill and dusts it down.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Steve grabs a couple of chewy chocolate health bars from a cupboard and stuffs them into his pocket.

Next to a telephone is the beer mat with Jools's telephone number face up.

Steve looks at Jools's number, smiles to himself and then picks up the phone. He is about to dial but chickens out and hangs up.

He steadies himself, takes a couple of deep breaths and twirls the beer mat in his fingers before picking up the telephone again and dialling.

DAVID (V.O.)

Hello?

Steve recognises the voice but can't quite place it.

Steve looks at the beer mat and turns it over to reveal Jools's number. He has dialled David's number in error.

STEVE

(frustrated)

Bugger. Sorry, not you.

Realising that he has inadvertently telephoned David, Steve hangs up the phone.

He picks up his sports bag and is about to leave when the TELEPHONE RINGS.

Steve answers it.

DAVID (V.O.)  
You just phoned me.

Steve immediately disguises his voice.

STEVE  
Sorry, I got the wrong number.

DAVID (V.O.)  
You sure you don't want me?

STEVE  
Yes, thank you.

Steve hangs up the phone.

EXT. SPORTS CENTRE CAR PARK - DAY

Steve carries his sports bag and munches on a chewy chocolate bar. As he nears the gym he is surprised to see Jools, also carrying a sports bag.

JOOLS  
Hiya.

With his mouth full, Steve can't speak properly. He grunts, smiles a chocolatey smile and waves back.

INT. GYM - LATER

Jools notices Steve get off his exercise machine. He steps away before turning on his heels and returning to wipe down the seat and handle. Jools smiles and leaves the room just as Steve looks up for her.

Moving on to the next machine Steve catches his reflection in a full length mirror. He turns sideways on and studies his backside.

Jools peeks back in through the door and catches Steve clenching his buttocks and assessing his rear in the mirror.

INT. SWIMMING POOL - LATER

Steve gets into the swimming pool. As he swims he notices Jools getting out of the pool at the other end. She gives him a wave.

EXT. SHOPPING CENTRE - LATER

Steve leaves the gym and sees Jools entering a supermarket.

INT. SUPERMARKET - LATER

Steve pushes a shopping trolley past the flower display when he spies Jools on the other side of it. As she comes around the display he chickens out and scuttles off the other way to avoid her.

STEVE  
(to himself)  
Come on, Steve.

Realising that he is standing in front of the flower display Steve picks out an impressive bouquet and follows Jools.

On his way he sees a spaghetti bolognese ready meal for one and puts it in his shopping trolley.

Jools has detergent and cleaning items in her trolley.

JOOLS  
I may have to get a restraining  
order against you.

STEVE  
I'm not following you.

JOOLS  
Why not?

STEVE  
I could follow you if you'd like.

JOOLS  
You may prefer to follow my  
friend David.

STEVE  
David's not my type.

JOOLS  
He says you called him.  
Actually, he says you called him  
a bugger.

STEVE  
I thought I was calling you and I  
got flustered when David  
answered.

Steve gives Jools the flowers.

JOOLS  
Thanks, Steve, they're gorgeous.  
That's made my day.



DAN

Are you ill? You're shaking.

KATIE

I'm trying to restrain myself from beating the living crap out of you.

DAN

Great. I have some good news for you.

KATIE

Better than finding out what a two-timing jerk you were before I wasted any more precious time on you? Dumbshit.

DAN

The board has decided to reward your excellent work by giving you a promotion.

KATIE

Asshole.

DAN

This is my way of apologizing and thanking you for being so understanding.

KATIE

Bastard.

DAN

Great. You're being promoted to National Marketing Manager.

Katie softens visibly.

KATIE

For real? Dipshit.

DAN

For real.

KATIE

What about Crystal?

DAN

Crystal will continue to look after the U.S..

KATIE

So I'll be...?

DAN  
You'll be in Europe.

KATIE  
(enthusiastically)  
Paris? With Marie-Claude?

DAN  
You will be awarded a generous  
increase in your compensation as  
well as a significant relocation  
package.

KATIE  
Tell me I'm going to Paris to  
work with Marie-Claude.

DAN  
You're the new UK Marketing  
Manager.

KATIE  
London?

DAN  
Margate. It's the English  
riviera, you'll love it.  
Congratulations.

KATIE  
(unsure)  
Thanks.

DAN  
About that video...

KATIE  
No need to worry. As long as  
Margate works out. Cocknugget.

INT. FRENCH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is rather austere and imposing.

Steve and Jools browse the menu. The environment and first  
date factor make them both a bit nervous.

JOOLS  
After I've ordered you'll need to  
increase your credit card limit.  
I bought myself a very lovely but  
terribly expensive bouquet of  
flowers today.

STEVE  
 Sorry about that. I got caught  
 up in the moment.

JOOLS  
 It made a pleasant change from  
 tenants complaining about their  
 landlords.

Steve's friendly demeanour evaporates.

A po-faced FRENCH WAITER slides up and prepares to take  
 their order.

WAITER  
 To drink, Monsieur?

STEVE  
 (to Waiter)  
 Can you give us a couple of  
 minutes please? Thanks.

The waiter sidles off.

STEVE  
 (only just making  
 the connection)  
 I've just realised. You're Julie  
 - Julie the letting agent.

Jools, reading the menu, nods at this statement of the  
 obvious.

STEVE  
 My mother said you were lovely.

JOOLS  
 She was right.

STEVE  
 Was it you that suggested she  
 kicked me out of my home?

A smile flashes briefly across Jools's face before she  
 realises that Steve is fuming.

JOOLS  
 Oh my goodness, you're Jill  
 Reader's son. No, Steve, she'd  
 decided to rent out your room  
 before I met her.

STEVE  
 (struggling to  
 contain himself)  
 (MORE)



STEVE (CONT'D)

Mum wasn't going to be able to look after herself.

JILL

She said the same about you.

STEVE

Bloody hell, I can't do this.

Steve stands up and calls the waiter over.

JOOLS

Steve, come on, calm down. We were having such a lovely evening.

Jools reaches out to Steve who backs away from her.

STEVE

(barely able to speak)

I'm leaving. You stay if you like.

The waiter arrives, preparing to take their order.

WAITER

What can I get you, sir?

STEVE

My coat.

EXT. STEVE'S CAR - LATER

Steve and Jools are parked outside Jools's house. Steve has calmed down since the restaurant.

STEVE

I'll see you to the door.

JOOLS

No need.

Jools gets out of the car.

STEVE

No, I will, of course I will.

Steve, reluctantly being a 'gentleman', throws his car door open with such force that it springs back and smacks him square on the head. He drops to the ground unconscious.

INT. JOOLS'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Jools' living room is clean, tidy and minimalist.

Steve lays unconscious on the sofa, Jools stroking his hair.

JOOLS (V.O.)  
He's got lovely eyes.

Steve 'comes to', taking a second to work out where he is.

JOOLS (V.O.)  
I'll get David to give him a  
decent haircut.

Steve sees Jools smiling down at him and smiles back.

JILL (V.O.)  
Told you you would like her.

Steve is taken aback at hearing his mother's voice.

STEVE  
Mum?

Jools pulls away slightly and gives Steve a curious look.  
He tries to sit up but Jools gently pushes him back down.

JOOLS  
Stay there a bit longer. Sounds  
like you have concussion.

STEVE  
My head hurts.

Jools bends down and tenderly kisses Steve's head. He  
indicates his lips and Jools kisses him there too.

STEVE  
Seventy three per cent of first  
dates don't lead to a second.

JOOLS  
I'm not surprised.

STEVE  
Would you like to try a second?  
I promise I won't be a complete  
arse.

JOOLS  
A half-arse, then? I'll get back  
to you.

EXT. TAXI. MARGATE SIDE STREETS - DAY

Katie is being driven through the outskirts of Margate in a taxi.

She scowls out of the window, astonished at the number of rundown, boarded-up buildings and general neglect.

KATIE

You guys been hit by a hurricane?

DRIVER

Looks better at night. Not much better mind.

KATIE

(to herself)

You're a shit weasel, Dan Leary.

EXT. STEVE'S CAR - DAY

Steve, slight bump on head, listens to an uplifting indie rock song as he pulls in to the car park signed for use by Emay Healthcare visitors. He nods in time to the music.

Katie's car pulls up. She gets out and strides purposefully across to the main entrance.

INT. EMAY HEALTHCARE RECEPTION - LATER

The building is large, spacious and set in a modern business park.

An enormous sign reads 'Emay Healthcare UK Headquarters'. Large plasma screens are hung on the walls throughout the building playing advertisements for Emay Healthcare products.

Steve, carrying his laptop case and briefcase, is shown to a waiting area by a RECEPTIONIST.

LEN, a research scientist, comes out to meet Steve.

LEN

Are you heading things up now?

STEVE

Just until Pete returns.

Len escorts Steve over to a lift.

LEN  
I'm sure you'll do a marvellous  
job.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Piped MUZAK plays in the lift as Steve and Len get in.

LEN  
The marketing team will be  
looking after the survey going  
forward.

STEVE  
I'm sorry to hear that. It's  
been good working with you, Len.

LEN  
I'll take you through to our new  
UK Marketing Manager.

INT. SECOND RECEPTION AREA - LATER

The small reception area has a desk but no one attending it.

The walls boast yet more plasma screens all playing  
commercials for Emay Healthcare product.

Len offers Steve a chair.

LEN  
She only just moved here from the  
states. Still settling in.

STEVE  
Thanks for the heads up.

LEN  
Hope she's in a good mood for  
you.

Len leaves Steve with some science-themed magazines which he  
rapidly skims through.

TWO WORKMEN lay a new carpet - the static makes their hair  
stand on end.

Katie storms past wearing a smart business suit and  
bluetooth earpiece.

KATIE

(to Phone)

How long am I going to be here, Dan? I'm living dog years here you son of a bitch. And by the way, Margate is most definitely not the English riviera. It's more Zombie-bloody-Apocalypse. Douchebag.

Katie removes her bluetooth earpiece allowing BEV, her efficient Office Administrator, to catch up.

BEV

Your three o'clock is here.

KATIE

(through gritted teeth)

Bastard!

Bev turns to Steve, smiles apologetically and mouths 'not you' to Steve.

INT. KATIE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Katie, clearly emotional, struggles to keep it all under control.

Bev pours her a glass of water.

KATIE

Why couldn't he send me to Paris to work with Marie-Claude?

BEV

Is that rhetorical or do you want an answer?

KATIE

I want an answer.

BEV

He didn't send you to Paris to work with Marie-Claude because his previous girlfriend is there.

KATIE

Gutter crawling pempslider.

BEV

Katie, the guy from VoxPop Surveys is waiting to see you.

Katie checks her hair and make up in a mirror.

KATIE

Good. Give me a second and send him in.

Katie shuts her eyes and breathes deeply, her arms stretched out in meditation.

INT. SECOND RECEPTION AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Steve shuffles his feet as Bev approaches him.

BEV

Katherine will see you now.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Bev shows Steve to a door marked 'Katherine Tanner UK Marketing Manager'. She knocks on the door.

INT. KATIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bev opens the door and then leaves Steve watching Katie finish her meditation.

Katie opens her eyes and seems surprised to find Steve standing in front of her.

STEVE

Steve Reader. Vox Pop Surveys.

KATIE

Katherine Tanner.

As they shake hands a charge of static electricity crackles between them and strands of their hair briefly stand on end. Katie pulls back with the shock.

KATIE

Serves me right for keeping you waiting. What are you here for?

STEVE

The Relationship Survey.

KATIE

Great, give me a summary.

Steve sets up his laptop and projector.

STEVE

I thought I was going to present to the committee.

KATIE

I need to ensure we have something really special before presenting it to the board.

STEVE

Right.

KATIE

In your own time.

Steve takes Katie through the presentation on his laptop.

Once again he is brimming with infectious enthusiasm as he interacts with, and seemingly manipulates, the colourful charts being projected.

STEVE

This year we surveyed over two hundred thousand people from forty countries which makes it the largest survey of its kind ever...

On the verge of tears, Katie struggles to retain her composure.

STEVE

Are you alright?

KATIE

Carry on.

STEVE

Highlights include the fact that almost three quarters of us are happy with our sex lives...

Katie sniffs as she struggles to keep her composure.

STEVE

... unexpected findings include the fact that twenty five per cent of us have made love in a shower, eight per cent of them with a work colleague.

KATIE

That'll be my ex-boyfriend skewing the figures.

Katie sheds a tear. Steve offers Katie his handkerchief but she finds a tissue and gestures for him to continue.

Steve looks helplessly to the door, willing Bev to return.

STEVE

The survey found that three per cent of us have slept with our boss.

Katie breaks down again.

KATIE

Whatever you do Steven, don't sleep with your boss.

STEVE

Wouldn't dream of it.

KATIE

I had a glittering career in Houston until I found the bastard with an administrator. So I get promoted here. This is a promotion?

STEVE

Let me get your assistant.

KATIE

Are all men bastards? Did you ask that question?

STEVE

My own private survey shows that ninety-nine percent of all men are bastards. Until you think you've found the right one and then there's just a seventy percent chance that he's a bastard. Luckily, though, there's only a thirty percent chance that you'll ever find out.

Katie gives a weak laugh.

KATIE

Sounds about right.

Katie dabs her eyes with a tissue.

STEVE

Look, let's call it a day and finish this off tomorrow morning.



Katie nods her agreement.

Steve turns off his laptop. Katie composes herself and touches up her make up.

STEVE

When Pete and I come up we take  
Len out. You look like you could  
do with a night out. I'm paying.

KATIE

(holding back the  
tears)  
You're a very persuasive man,  
Steve. How do I look?

STEVE

Nice.

KATIE

I need an ego massage, not an  
assisted suicide. Do I look  
absolutely bloody fantastic or  
what?

STEVE

You look absolutely bloody  
fantastic.

KATIE

Of course I do.

Steve looks at her afresh.

STEVE

Yes, you do.

INT. A CHESS CLUB - NIGHT

The club is in a drab and sparsely furnished Royal British Legion club.

Katie, dressed more for a night at the opera, and Steve, dressed smart / casual, sit opposite each other playing chess.

They talk quietly so as not to disturb the OTHER PLAYERS.

KATIE

I thought you might be taking me  
to a lap dancing club. I was  
hoping to get some ideas for my  
pole dancing routine.

STEVE

I'd like to see that. I mean...

Steve stops talking and considers his next chess move.  
Katie studies him.

KATIE

I'm sorry about earlier. I don't normally cry during presentations.

STEVE

It's nice to get a response.

KATIE

I've rescheduled you for tomorrow morning first thing.

STEVE

Do you really need to know that sex standing up is the world's least favourite sexual position?

KATIE

Your surveys provide information essential to our healthcare product development and marketing.

STEVE

Or that sixty-five percent of people have fantasised about sex with a celebrity.

Katie looks at him quizzically.

STEVE

I have a soft spot for Jennifer Lawrence. And you?

KATIE

Jessica Alba.

STEVE

Thirty-five percent of women have thought about sex with another woman.

KATIE

Actually, Bradley Cooper makes me weak at the knees.

STEVE

I feel sorry for celebrities.  
Who do they have to fantasise  
about?

KATIE

I have it on good authority that  
Jennifer Lawrence dreams about a  
statistician.

STEVE

And Bradley Cooper is crazy for a  
pole dancing healthcare marketing  
manager. Lucky for me he can't  
make it tonight.

Steve considers their chess game.

STEVE

I'm trying to figure out your  
next move.

Katie downs her drink in one.

KATIE

Out of here. Come on, drink up.

EXT. TOWN CENTRE STREET - LATER

Katie puts her arm through Steve's as they leave a bar.  
Scores of loud, unruly pub-goers litter the Margate street.

STEVE

What would you be doing if you  
were back in Houston now?

KATIE

I'd be doing time for murdering  
my ex-boyfriend.

Steve and Katie see a couple engaged in an aggressive  
display of drunken kissing.

KATIE

Is that normal around here?

STEVE

Seems to be.

Katie draws Steve towards her and kisses him. They kiss  
until Steve pulls away.

STEVE  
Katherine, I've only just met  
you.

KATIE  
Call me Katie.

STEVE  
Plus, you're a customer.

KATIE  
The customer is always right.

Now Katie pulls away.

KATIE  
Are you a bastard?

STEVE  
Yes.

KATIE  
Ha! A real bastard would deny  
it. Married?

STEVE  
No.

KATIE  
Girlfriend?

Steve laughs.

STEVE  
No.

Katie leaves Steve and runs directly towards a lamppost. She throws herself onto it and slides elegantly down before performing a sensual pole dancing routine. Steve is entranced - as are the passing locals who whoop and holler.

EXT. DISUSED CRAZY GOLF COURSE - LATER

In the darkness Steve and Katie - now wearing a 'Kiss Me Quick' hat - giggle as they break into the fenced-off crazy golf course.

Having no golf balls or clubs they find some rounded stones and throw them petanque-style at each hole.

INT. STEVE'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Steve and Katie kiss and begin to remove each other's clothes.

KATIE

We commissioned you to do a Sex Survey.

STEVE

Actually, it's a relationship survey.

KATIE

Survey me. I wanna be a statistic.

They kiss, becoming lost in their moment of passion. As they are about to make love Steve pulls back from Katie.

STEVE

I don't want to take advantage of you when you're emotional.

KATIE

I quite understand. You lie down and I'll take advantage of you.

STEVE

But we have to work together.

KATIE

Exactly, now shut up and kiss me.

Katie kisses Steve again. After a while he pulls away.

As he removes his clothes he switches off the light throwing the room into almost total darkness.

Steve climbs into bed and kisses Katie.

STEVE

Now, before we go any further I want to be absolutely sure that you know what you're doing.

Steve gasps.

STEVE

Oh, sweet Jesus, you do, don't you.

Katie moans her agreement.

INT. STEVE'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Steve wakes up and sees that Katie is no longer in his arms. He looks around the room but she is not there. He cringes.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Having thrown on a dressing gown Steve pops his head into the bathroom and sees Katie having a bath. He backs out and closes the door slightly to save Katie's - and his own - embarrassment.

STEVE (O.S.)  
Katherine, I want to apologise  
for last night.

KATIE  
Nonsense.

STEVE (O.S.)  
No, I should have known better.

KATIE  
Don't be silly.

STEVE (O.S.)  
I'll dress and leave you to it.

KATIE  
Relax. Stay with me. Please.

Steve pops his head around the door. Katie gestures for him to join her in the bath but Steve hesitates.

KATIE  
I woke up thinking last night was  
a mistake. But I learn from my  
mistakes so it can't have been.  
How do I look?

STEVE  
Absolutely bloody fantastic.

Steve takes off his dressing gown and gets into the bath.

KATIE  
You've got a meeting with me in  
ten minutes. We could start  
early and get straight down to  
business.

They kiss.

INT. STEVE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Steve brings in his overnight bag and laptop case.

Noticing that the photo of himself with his mother is out of place he repositions it. He runs a finger across the dresser surface and is surprised there is no dust on it.

INT. STEVE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Steve unpacks his overnight bag. He opens a drawer and is alarmed to find that it now contains perfectly folded ladies' lingerie.

Opening his wardrobe he is taken aback to see that his suits and shirts have been hung up neatly on one side with a selection of dresses and ladies' tops on the other.

JOOLS

They're mine.

Steve turns to find Jools standing in the doorway. She wears rubber gloves and carries a dust cloth.

JOOLS

(smiling)

I'm moving in.

Steve smiles hesitantly. Having been caught unawares he is on edge, shaking slightly. He sits on the bed to calm himself down.

JOOLS

Are you alright?

Jools puts her arm around him.

JOOLS

Deep breaths.

Steve bends down and breaths deeply.

STEVE

How'd you get in?

Jools pulls a set of Steve's house keys from her pocket.

JOOLS

Technically, and as far as my parents are aware, I'm renting this room as agreed with your mother. Mike and Laura thought it was a great idea.

Steve looks concerned.

JOOLS

You can move into the other room  
if you like. Or you could share  
this one with me. Of course,  
you'll have to pay your fair  
share of the rent.

Steve laughs.

STEVE

Mum said I would like you.

JOOLS

Good, because I've got a tenant  
for my old place now.

Jools hugs Steve, who selfconsciously hugs her back.

Steve looks worried. His concerns are temporarily overcome  
as she plants gentle kisses all over his face.

TO READ THE COMPLETE SCRIPT PLEASE EMAIL [james@jamestapp.com](mailto:james@jamestapp.com)