

INT. LOUIS'S HOUSE, KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Close-up on laptop screen of someone's Facebook page. Scroll through pictures of laughing couples, cute babies, engagement announcements. To one side is an advert with a picture of Cara Santa Maria; the mouse hovers over it; it starts to play.

Bubbly, smiley and beautiful, CARA SANTA MARIA is the face of online science. She is standing in front of a suggestive exhibit in the sex museum next to her assistant.

CARA SANTA MARIA

Hey, science fans! Ever been on a date with someone and -

Mouse scrolls right, cutting her off. We see adverts for dating services: "Date women in uniform!" "Date Ukrainian women!" "Date vulnerable women!" "Date blatantly Photoshopped women!" Pan up the screen to status update, with broken-heart graphic: "LOUIS NEWMAN IS SINGLE ... AGAIN."

Pull out to LOUIS. LOUIS is 35, liberal, quite intelligent; a New Man, in the sense that he lacks all the skills of Old Men, and a bit strait-laced. Dresses like a history teacher. LOUIS sighs and puts the lid down on his laptop. He pulls out his phone, dials a number, then listens.

VOICE OF O2 (V/O)

You have no messages.

LOUIS sighs again and puts his phone down, then uses a pen to strike through a line on a note. Close-up on note. It is a to-do list, which reads:

~~Take out bins~~
~~Marinade marinade~~
~~Clean skirting boards~~
~~Beat personal best on Candy Crush~~
~~Reply to messages~~
~~Kill self~~

LOUIS folds the paper, puts it in his pocket, and exits.

INT. GARAGE. NIGHT

LOUIS gets into his car. The engine is running. He pulls on his seat belt, adjusts rear mirror, then looks at passenger seat, where there is a meticulous diagram of a car, a person, and a hosepipe. He checks it. A hosepipe is coming through the rear window, pumping fumes into the car. He swigs from a bottle of whisky. He realises he doesn't need his seatbelt and takes it off. He turns on the stereo. Good Feeling, by Flo

Rida, is playing. He changes channel; but they're all cheery tunes - Hoku's Perfect Day, Ken Dodd's Happiness, Hanson's MmmBop - so he switches it off. He takes another swig.

Pan to rear of vehicle. Sign on exhaust reads "CATALYTIC CONVERTER".

INT. HOSPITAL WARD. DAY.

LOUIS is unconscious in a hospital bed. HANNIBAL is sitting reading Top Gear magazine, a brown paper bag in his lap. HANNIBAL is Louis's younger brother, mid-20s, good-looking, scruffy. Bright, but lazy, wilfully uneducated, and a total bastard.

HANNIBAL

(Seemingly caring, extending hand)
Louis? Louis?

LOUIS comes to.

HANNIBAL

(Harsh, retracting hand) You giant twat.

HANNIBAL returns to reading his magazine. LOUIS splutters and coughs, trying to make words, but can't.

LOUIS

(Low, creaky voice) H-H-Hannibal?
W... wh... wha...?

HANNIBAL

Turns out environmentally friendly cars are also quite people-friendly. But the fumes did knacker your throat. The doctor says you should talk as little as possible.
(beat) Oh, all right, that was me.

LOUIS

(Cough, pointing to brown paper bag; voice deep and creaky) Is that ... for me?

HANNIBAL

Oh, yeah.

HANNIBAL hands a brown paper bag to LOUIS. LOUIS pulls out

three bottles of pills.

LOUIS

Sleeping pills. You ... shouldn't have.

LOUIS produces three more bottles containing pills of a different colour.

HANNIBAL

I didn't know which kind you liked, so ...

LOUIS pulls out more items.

LOUIS

Razor blades. And a Radiohead CD. How thoughtful.

HANNIBAL

Hey, my big bro needs help, I'm there./Don't say I never do anything for you.

LOUIS

I'm aware that you and I have never been particularly close, Hannibal, but I thought the traditional procedure in this situation was for you to tell me how I've got so much to live for, or something.

HANNIBAL

I would if it was true. I mean, you're 35. Your best years are behind you, and they weren't up to much. You've been at the lab for 12 years with no promotion, all your friends have got married, had kids and moved away. And as for your love life ... well, life hardly seems the right word. You hardly get beyond the first date for 20 years. Then you finally find someone who'll have you, and just as you move in together, she dumps

you for correcting her all the time.

LOUIS

I did not correct Lizzie all the time. I corrected her 13% of the time.

HANNIBAL pointedly raises an eyebrow.

LOUIS

Roughly. You wouldn't believe the number of things I let go!

HANNIBAL

I'm just surprised this didn't happen sooner.

LOUIS

Have you heard from Lizzie at all? Has she been to see me?

HANNIBAL

No. She was too upset.

LOUIS

(cheering up) Really?

HANNIBAL

You completely ran the car out of fuel. She had to get a cab to the petrol station.

LOUIS

Oh. But ... think of all the other people in this world who love me. Mum and Dad love me ...

HANNIBAL

But apparently not enough to cancel their Caribbean cruise when you try and top yourself.

LOUIS

And I still have years, possibly decades, in which to meet someone.

HANNIBAL

Sure, if you want to be paying university fees out of your pension.

LOUIS

Ah-hah! I know what you're up to! Primitive reverse psychology! By adopting a contrary stance, you're attempting to gull me into thinking of the positives! And you know what? I think it might be working.

HANNIBAL

Is it? Oh. Excellent.

HANNIBAL slyly picks up a piece of paper next to him. We see the words LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT at the top. He stuffs it into his briefcase, unseen by Louis.

LOUIS

So could Kayleigh not make it today?

HANNIBAL

No, she's having her arse liposuctioned. Or is she getting her warts removed? Can't remember. Although personally, I think she should sort out her bat ears first.

KAYLEIGH leaps up from under the covers behind Louis.

KAYLEIGH

You git!

LOUIS is startled. HANNIBAL isn't.

KAYLEIGH

I am *not* not here because I am having liposuction. I am not here because I am having my chakras realigned. And I don't have bat ears. (feeling ears) Do I?

LOUIS

Jesus, Mary and Joseph on the Tour

de France, Kayleigh! What are you doing in there?

KAYLEIGH

I wanted you to think I wasn't coming, then surprise you. To remind you that nice things can still happen in the world!

HANNIBAL

Well, I'm sure when his heart attack's finished he'll be hugely cheered up.

(In this exchange, HANNIBAL and KAYLEIGH move closer, until their faces are almost touching, over Louis's body.)

KAYLEIGH

Well, at least I didn't try to kill him *on purpose*.

HANNIBAL

Some people need tough love.

KAYLEIGH

Some people aren't capable of any other kind.

Hannibal and Kayleigh kiss. Tongues, head-grabbing, moaning. Louis coughs. They ignore him. He coughs louder, but they continue. Louis goes into a coughing fit, and they notice.

KAYLEIGH

Louis! Are you all right?

LOUIS begins to recover.

KAYLEIGH (CONT)

Ooh! I brought some of those word games you like.

KAYLEIGH hands LOUIS a Word Search magazine.

LOUIS

Word searches? No, I like crosswords. Word Searches are for ... (sees Kayleigh's face) Thank you.

KAYLEIGH

(reluctant) Look, Hannibal and I were talking on the way here. We know you can't go back to Lizzie, so we were wondering if you wanted to stay in the annexe for a few days. (beat) But you know it's not exactly palatial.

HANNIBAL

More like a cell than a room.

KAYLEIGH

And it's a bit of a mess.

HANNIBAL

Chernobyl.

KAYLEIGH

And you'd probably get really bored. A city boy in the countryside.

LOUIS

Look, it's a very generous offer, but ... I know Hannibal's only just moved in.

HANNIBAL

And it's not even our place.

KAYLEIGH

It's my nan's.

LOUIS

Oh yes. How is Fleur, by the way? After her ... (touches head) episode?

KAYLEIGH

Oh, fine. The doctors say there don't seem to be any lasting effects. Except ... she still hasn't said anything.

HANNIBAL

Not a single proverb or wartime
reminiscence in over a month.

LOUIS

No, I'd feel as though I was in the
way. You don't want a Job's
comforter like me bringing you
down. I'll just check into a hotel
until I can rent a place.

Kayleigh and Hannibal look at each other.

KAYLEIGH

The thing is, if you don't come and
stay with us, you might get a bit
... sectioned.

LOUIS

Well, perhaps it is about time I
paid a visit.

HANNIBAL and KAYLEIGH turn to each other. LOUIS contemplates
the bottle of pills in his hand.

EXT. THATCHED COTTAGE. DAY.

Exterior shot of Lily Cottage, a pretty thatched cottage on a
rolling country lane. Pan to next door, where a fruit and veg
display and honesty box sit on the steps up to the gate. There
are apples, assorted vegetables such as courgettes, and a
flower in a pot. The chalkboard sign reads: "Fresh home-grown
vegetables. Please insert money to correct value in box."

EXT. COTTAGE DRIVEWAY.

HANNIBAL's car pulls into the driveway. It's a provincial boy
racer car, eg Vauxhall Corsa with go-faster stripes and chrome
hubcaps (one stolen). HANNIBAL climbs out and goes to the
boot.

HANNIBAL

Now, if you were serious about
ending it all, you'd have borrowed
this baby. More emissions than me
after a jalfrezi.

LOUIS climbs out with a small manbag. KAYLEIGH comes out to
meet them, carrying a bowl of laundry, beaming at the sky.

KAYLEIGH

Isn't it beautiful? Doesn't it make you glad to be alive?

HANNIBAL

It almost makes up for all the cowshit, racism and boredom.

KAYLEIGH

I find it really helps sometimes if you just stop and count your blessing-

LOUIS

(interrupting) Finished.

As Louis approaches, KAYLEIGH 'subtly' jogs her bowl so that an item of clothing falls off on to the lawn.

KAYLEIGH

(overacted) Oh, no! Louis, could you pick that up for me please?

LOUIS bends down to do so.

KAYLEIGH

Ooh, look! What's that?

LOUIS

Where?

KAYLEIGH

Next to where I - where the thing fell.

LOUIS still can't see it. KAYLEIGH points out the exact location.

KAYLEIGH

Wow! It's a four-leaf clover!

LOUIS

(picking it up and examining it) A quadrifoliate trifolium. Wow, Kayleigh, your eyesight is *superb*.

HANNIBAL

She can spot a wounded animal from

800 yards.

KAYLEIGH

Animals have just as much right to healthcare as humans do.

HANNIBAL

Not if they don't pay their National Insurance, they don't. Cost me 80 quid to get that toad put down. Couldn't just put it in the microwave, oh, no.

KAYLEIGH

Maybe your luck will change now!

LOUIS

I'm not a great believer in ... Hang on, this is a three-leaf clover with a fourth leaf clumsily glued on.

KAYLEIGH

What do you mean, clumsily?

LOUIS

And right next to it is a three-leaf clover with a leaf missing. A laudable effort, Kayleigh, but ...

HANNIBAL

See, you can make your own luck!

INT. THATCHED COTTAGE LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Fleur's cottage is a typical old person's place: mismatched furniture, serving hatch, mildewy books, photos, fireplace, comfy chairs with antimacassars, tasteless ornaments.

FLEUR is Kayleigh's 94-year-old gran. Still mobile, with walking frame, but slow. Sometimes doolally, at other times as sharp as a knife - and blunt as a hammer. She is wearing an oversized T-shirt with words printed in large type - "a", "of", "am", "is", "will", "it", etc.

KAYLEIGH, LOUIS and HANNIBAL enter. HANNIBAL sits and picks up the local paper. Headline: INFERNO DEVASTATES GARDEN FENCE. LOUIS enters.

KAYLEIGH

Hi Nan! This is Louis, Hannibal's
brother. Louis, this is Fleur.

KAYLEIGH starts faffing, clearing, etc.

LOUIS

A pleasure to meet you, ma'am. I
... er ...

Embarrassing silence. Eventually FLEUR rifles through the
record collection in the magazine rack next to her. She pulls
an ABBA album out, holds it up and points to it.

LOUIS

Er ... yes, they're smashing,
aren't they? Exquisitely ...
crafted ... fusion of glam rock and
disco.

KAYLEIGH

No, this is our little system for
when Nan wants to tell us
something. "Abba" ...

FLEUR points at the cup in front of her.

KAYLEIGH

"Cup" ...

FLEUR points to the word OF on her T-shirt.

KAYLEIGH

"Of" ...

HANNIBAL

Oh come on. "Of tea". What else
would she be offering a cup of?

LOUIS

Why, thank you, I'd love one.

LOUIS pours himself, Kayleigh and Hannibal a cup.

KAYLEIGH

(continuing faffing) We're getting
pretty good at it now, aren't we,
Nan?

LOUIS

Er ... I hope my staying for a short period won't be an inconvenience.

After a pause, FLEUR makes a cross with her fingers.

KAYLEIGH

"No".

FLEUR shakes her head.

HANNIBAL

(from behind newspaper) "Don't".

FLEUR holds up an album by The Corrs.

KAYLEIGH

"Corrs".

FLEUR holds up the soundtrack to Annie: the Musical.

KAYLEIGH

"Annie".

FLEUR turns to the calendar on the wall behind her, turns to the month of May and points to MAY.

KAYLEIGH

"May".

FLEUR touches the hem of her skirt.

KAYLEIGH

"Skirt"?

HANNIBAL

"Hem". Don't - cause - any - may - hem.

LOUIS

I'll be on my best behaviour. Oh, I almost forgot. These are for you.

LOUIS fetches a bunch of flowers from behind the door and presents them to Fleur. FLEUR takes them, sniffs them, then chucks them on the floor.

KAYLEIGH

"Thank you! They're beautiful."

FLEUR peers at Louis and points to the word IS on her T-shirt.

KAYLEIGH

"Is" ...

FLEUR points to Louis.

KAYLEIGH

"Louis" ...

FLEUR pulls out a seven-inch record and holds it up.

KAYLEIGH

"Engelbert Humperdinck"?

FLEUR shakes her head.

LOUIS

"Round"? "Flat". "Vinyl".

FLEUR shakes her head, puts the single down, holds up an album, shakes her head, then holds up the single and nods.

LOUIS

"Single"!

KAYLEIGH

Nan, you're such a flirt!
(innocently) Louis's been single
practically his whole life.

HANNIBAL

Maybe she's asking if he's seven
inches.

FLEUR gurns and winks. Only LOUIS notices.

KAYLEIGH

Hannibal! Anyway, so, Han and I are
having a date night tonight, so we
wondered if you'd mind keeping Nan
company.

LOUIS

Date night?

KAYLEIGH

You may noticed we've been having a
few ... ups and downs lately.

HANNIBAL

(sigh) Kayleigh hasn't yet figured out that it's quite hard to have a relationship that consists entirely of ups.

KAYLEIGH

So I've told him to take me for a surprise meal at Chudleigh Manor at 7.30. You two'll be all right together, won't you?

LOUIS

(scared) Well, I suppose that will be ... ah ...

KAYLEIGH

She may be 94 and unable to speak, but Nan's still really entertaining company, aren't you, Nan?

FLEUR has fallen asleep face down in the dictionary.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. FLEUR'S COTTAGE LIVING ROOM, NIGHT

FLEUR is in the same chair, looking at the TV and tucking into some chocolates. LOUIS is in the armchair next to her. A bottle of Archers stands on the table.

Throughout the scene, while Louis talks, FLEUR mugs away, paying no attention, sticking her false teeth out, reading the paper, etc. Louis notices none of this. Louis fidgets while trying to think of something to say.

LOUIS

Well, that weather today was rather ... nondescript, wasn't it? Really ... unremarkable. Probably an occluded front forming around a mature low pressure area.

LOUIS picks up a framed photograph and examines it, then another. FLEUR blows her nose on a tissue.

LOUIS

Wow, you're something of a globetrotter, I see. Poland,

Sydney, and ... is this Antarctica?
(pause; suddenly tearful) Lizzie
hated travelling. She said it was
just "doing the same shit in
different places".

LOUIS bursts into tears.

LOUIS (CONT)

I'm sorry. The thing is, I thought
it was going so well. We just ...
fitted together, you know? She was
such a good listener. She'd sit
there and listen to me for hours
sometimes.

FLEUR hands Louis the tissue she blew her nose on. He takes it
and dabs his eyes.

LOUIS

Thank you. And she got on so well
with my friends. We'd go to a party
together, and I'd barely see her
the whole night, she was so keen to
make a good impression.

LOUIS stops and looks quizzical.

LOUIS (CONT)

Hm. Sticky tears. Must be
dehydrated. And then ... after a
year, out of the blue, she drops
the bombshell. There's "no
chemistry between us", she says.

LOUIS gazes into the distance, then snaps out of it.

LOUIS (CONT)

Sorry. You've probably got enough
problems of your own. (beat) But
since you can't talk about them
right now, I think where it all
started going wrong for me was at
school ...

EXT. PUB CAR PARK. NIGHT.

KAYLEIGH and HANNIBAL pull up in the Corsa. KAYLEIGH gets out and slams the door. HANNIBAL gets out, and both start walking towards the pub.

HANNIBAL

Do you want to check to see if you shut that properly, Kay?

KAYLEIGH

Only you could start a date night by criticising my driving *all the way here*.

HANNIBAL

Well, if you'd driven well at any point, I would have stopped.

KAYLEIGH

Next time, why don't you drive?

HANNIBAL

Because you obviously need the practice.

KAYLEIGH stops and turns on Hannibal.

KAYLEIGH

I don't know what's got into you lately. Sniping at me, showing off, attention seeking ... It's something to do with your brother, isn't it? I think being around him has turned you back into your bratty eight-year-old self.

HANNIBAL

At least it hasn't turned me into a simpering slut.

KAYLEIGH

WHAT did you call me? Say that again.

HANNIBAL

(nervous) Simpering ... slut?

KAYLEIGH grabs him and kisses him, and they fall into a bush.

INT. COTTAGE LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

FLEUR is in the same posture. LOUIS has slumped. The Archers is empty.

LOUIS (CONT)

... so then she says, "No, no, my heart IS in this relationship. It's just that my vagina isn't."

FLEUR lets out a sigh.

LOUIS

Vagina. I'm sorry. I'm harping on about my problems, and look at you! You're 94, you're a widow, you can hardly walk or talk, and you're still full of lust for life. Puts my worries in perspective, really. I mean, I still have my health. But you know what? I think getting all this off my chest has been somewhat cathartic. Perhaps I just needed to ... "vent", as they say.

LOUIS leans over to kiss Fleur on the cheek. FLEUR grabs him and hangs on too long. Louis extricates himself and stands.

LOUIS

Thank you, Fleur. Thank you for being such an attentive listener.

FLEUR nods and smiles as if understanding. As LOUIS exits, FLEUR slowly rummages in her handbag, finds her hearing aid, and puts it back in.

INT. COTTAGE LIVING ROOM. DAY.

HANNIBAL, sitting next to FLEUR, has his feet up on the kitchen table. He is playing a videogame. Fleur is reading the local paper. Headline: Puddle splash victim vows revenge.

HANNIBAL

Great, now Little Miss Chatterbox and Little Miss Sunshine are here, we can *really* get this party started.

LOUIS

(voice still deep, but less croaky)
And top of the morning to you too.

KAYLEIGH appears carrying a huge pile of washing. For most of the scene she is busy bringing in tea, breakfast, cleaning, giving Fleur her medication, etc. She puts a bowl of cereal in front of him, then plonks a pint of milk next to it and points to it.

KAYLEIGH

Help yourself to milk and things.

KAYLEIGH turns her back. HANNIBAL picks up a bottle of bleach from behind him and puts it on the table, then points to it, mimicking Kayleigh. LOUIS picks it up and puts it back before Kayleigh turns again. KAYLEIGH hands out cups of tea. She puts Hannibal's on the table where it is obscured by Fleur's newspaper.

KAYLEIGH

(gives Fleur some pills) Here's your heart pills, Nan. (each time, after accepting the pills, Fleur disappears behind the paper.)

LOUIS

Kayleigh, can I assist you with anything?

KAYLEIGH

Don't you dare! You're mentally ill. And here's the ones for your angina.

LOUIS

I'm not mentally ill. Just downcast. And I think I'm getting things in a little more perspective now. I was just so hung up on my marital status ... but being single isn't the end of the world, is it? There's so much more to life. Work. Friends. (touches Hannibal's arm) Family.

HANNIBAL shrugs him off.

KAYLEIGH

You're right, Louis. Being in a couple isn't the be-all and end-all.

HANNIBAL

It isn't?

KAYLEIGH

Loads of people in relationships who often wish they were single. And your arthritis.

HANNIBAL

Oh, yeah, there are millions of downsides. The ... lack of space.

KAYLEIGH

The lack of freedom. Osteoporosis.

HANNIBAL

The nagging.

KAYLEIGH

The fact that they never do things the first time you ask them.

HANNIBAL

The psycho stalker exes.

KAYLEIGH

The in-laws. (to Fleur) Iron.

HANNIBAL

Their dietary foibles.

KAYLEIGH

The extra stone and a half they put on the second you move in together.

HANNIBAL

The ever decreasing frequency of sex.

KAYLEIGH serves Hannibal his breakfast. A knife is protruding from the centre of his grapefruit.

KAYLEIGH

The ever decreasing duration of
sex. Depression.

HANNIBAL

The way you fancy them a little bit
less every day, and fancy everyone
else a little bit more.

KAYLEIGH

The way their little habits start
off cute and endearing, but slowly
lose their charm, and then
suddenly, they're not cute any
more, they're annoying, and then
every day after that they become a
little bit more annoying, until one
day, they become so maddening that
you find yourself wanting to
strangle them until their eyes pop
out and BURST ON THE CEILING! (to
Fleur) And your zinc.

By now Hannibal and Kayleigh are only inches from each other,
both obviously very angry/turned on again.

LOUIS

Well, I'd tolerate all of that and
a hundred times more just to have
someone to hold me at night.

HANNIBAL and Kayleigh snog passionately again.

LOUIS

A demonstration will not be
necessary.

They carry on. Fleur tugs at Hannibal's sleeve.

HANNIBAL

God, I'm starting to think I'd
prefer the proverbs and wartime
reminiscences. What is it?

FLEUR points at her Zimmer frame.

KAYLEIGH

You want your walking frame?

FLEUR shakes her head, points to her mouth, then the Zimmer.

KAYLEIGH

I see. "Zimmer".

FLEUR holds out her hand, thumb down, then makes a downward motion.

KAYLEIGH

"Down". Zimmer ... down ... oh.

Hannibal and Kayleigh part.

LOUIS

You have to break this association between fighting and sex, you know. It's most unhealthy. You can't just fornicate your problems away.

HANNIBAL

Since that advice comes from the world's leading authority on fornicating, I shall act on it immediately.

KAYLEIGH

Look, ah ... The thing is, we've only been pretending to fight.

HANNIBAL

We have?

KAYLEIGH

To make you feel less bad about being single. We just really got into it.

LOUIS

Oh. Thank you. I think.

KAYLEIGH

Anyway, you mustn't give up all hope of meeting someone yet. There are some really good self-help

books out there. I've got some in my room.

LOUIS

(glancing at paper) Sorry, but I'm not going to turn my romantic fortunes around with 120 pages of pseudo-scientific verbiage based on a half-hour conversation in a pub.

HANNIBAL

What about books on picking up women? Like *The Game*?

LOUIS

Those things are immoral. They're just cynical techniques to trick women into bed. What I need is cynical techniques to trick women into long-term relationships.

KAYLEIGH

You just haven't found that elusive chemistry with anyone yet.

LOUIS

Chemistry! Why do people use that metaphor? Chemistry works according to simple, dependable and universal laws. I got an A star in chemistry at GCSE and A-level.

HANNIBAL

If only they taught lessons in love at school, eh?

FLEUR puts the paper down in front of Louis, open at the page she was reading.

LOUIS

Why **don't** they? I mean, certainly, they tell you the basics. We had a five-minute video of a gruff-looking German woman unrolling a balloon over a stick.

But not so much as a syllable on
 how to persuade the German woman to
 touch your stick in the first
 place. (picking up paper) Hang on
 ...

LOUIS looks more closely at the newspaper.

LOUIS

What's this? (reading) "Scientists
 have proved that women prefer men
 with deeper voices. In an
 experiment at Hatfield University,
 Dr Liam Bryce and colleagues played
 recordings of male voice to more
 than 100 subjects. When asked to
 rate the voices for sexual
 attraction, the women universally
 gave higher marks to the men with
 deeper voices."

HANNIBAL

Ooh! Urgent dispatch from the
 Ministry of DUH!

LOUIS

"Dr Bryce has been a researcher
 into human mating strategies for 20
 years ..."

KAYLEIGH

Actually, it is kind of sexy.

LOUIS

'Researcher into human mating
 strategies'? But this means ...
 love - the previously mysterious
 field of human relationships - is a
 science now.

HANNIBAL

Well, I know Louis's First Law: ex
 equals IM over U.

LOUIS

(reading) It's a whole new branch of psychology. That means it can be learned. And, perhaps, mastered. Well, maybe that's what I should do! (gets phone out)

HANNIBAL

Don't you get it? Ex, equals IM, over, U. (double beat) Wankers.

LOUIS

What's the signal like here?

KAYLEIGH

You're in the sticks now, I'm afraid.

LOUIS

But you do have broadband?

HANNIBAL

Course.

LOUIS exits.

KAYLEIGH

Although that can be a bit ... temperamental too ...

HANNIBAL takes a sip of his tea, then spits it out.

HANNIBAL

Ugh! Kay, have you been buying those cheap teabags again? This is like a milk enema!

HANNIBAL exits, making noises of disgust.

KAYLEIGH

Ooh, Nan. Forgot your calcium. There you go!

Kayleigh gives Fleur a pill and exits. Fleur puts it in her mouth. When she's sure Kayleigh has gone, she spits the pill out into Hannibal's mug.

INT. COTTAGE ANNEXE. DAY.

The cottage annexe is small, barely enough for 2 to stand. Single bed, door, window, desk. LOUIS goes to the bed and finds neatly folded towels ...

LOUIS

Ah, that's nice.

A neatly folded bathrobe ... and a neatly coiled noose.

LOUIS

Ah, that's Hannibal.

LOUIS opens his laptop and examines it. There's no signal, so he moves it along the desk. Then a bit more. He lifts it up and there's more signal, so he kneels on the bed, then stands, checking the signal strength.

LOUIS

Ugh! They should make some sort of countryside adapter.

Eventually, he is standing on the bed, precariously holding the laptop above the slightly open door.

LOUIS

A-ha!

LOUIS tries to type into the keyboard while keeping the laptop in place. As he begins, the door opens and MONIQUE walks in. LOUIS and the laptop come crashing to the ground.

MONIQUE is glamorous, in her early 30s, and dressed provocatively. She starts the scene shy, but quickly becomes more assertive.

MONIQUE

Are you all right?

LOUIS

Never mind, I've been meaning to get a new laptop ... and shoulder ... Can I help you?

MONIQUE

I'm Monique, I live across the road. I saw you moving in, and thought I'd come and say hi.

LOUIS

That's nice of you, but I'm only here for a few days.

MONIQUE

That's a shame. It's not very often we get a new face round here.

(beat) Especially a handsome face.

MONIQUE begins advancing on LOUIS.

LOUIS

Oh. Er. Sorry, can I offer you a beverage? (moves to cupboard, opens, empty) Nice cup of - er, air?

MONIQUE

Your company is all I need.

LOUIS

So ... where do people go round here for entertainment?

MONIQUE

Nowhere. You have to make your own.

MONIQUE now has Louis pinned up against the wall.

MONIQUE (CONT)

Unless you come to the wild, exotic island ... of Monique.

LOUIS

Something tells me that's nowhere near the Virgin Islands.

MONIQUE

Come fly with me.

LOUIS

I'm not a fan of easyJet.

LOUIS slips out from between Monique and the wall.

LOUIS (CONT)

I know what's going on here. You're

doing this as a favour for
Kayleigh, aren't you?

MONIQUE

(abandoning pretence) Not as a
favour. For money. Mates' rates,
mind.

LOUIS

Ah. (shepherding her out) Well,
much as I hate to look a gift whore
in the mouth, this is something
I've got to sort out by myself. I
don't want your help, or
Kayleigh's, or anyone's.

MONIQUE exits.

LOUIS

Oh, er, (shouts) sorry - I don't
suppose you know anywhere that has
internet?

MONIQUE (V/O)

Well, there's the library.

MONIQUE reappears.

MONIQUE

It's dusty, fusty and boring.
(looking Louis up and down) You'll
fit right in.

INT. LIBRARY. DAY.

A typical small-town library, small, mostly empty. There is an enquiries desk and a small desk with two old computers. LOUIS enters. There is no one in sight apart from a man at the help desk. Louis walks towards it.

MARTIN is the chief librarian. Mid-40s, self-important, bureaucratic, weird and slightly camp. Dressed too smartly. Only eats soup. Stresses occasional words too strongly. Louis goes to sit in the chair opposite Martin.

LOUIS

Good afternoon, I -

MARTIN

(robotic voice; pointing to ticket machine) Take a number, please.

LOUIS

(gesturing) But I'm the only one here.

MARTIN

(bit harsher) Take a number, please.

LOUIS sighs, takes a ticket, and finds a seat. Silence. MARTIN pretends to be engrossed in examining a book. He puts it down, pauses, as if about to call Louis, then examines it again. As he puts the book down, LOUIS snorts. MARTIN looks over, glowers, pointedly moves his hand further away from the buzzer, and picks up the book again. Eventually, the light above Martin's head clicks and shows the number 1.

MARTIN

Number one, please.

LOUIS walks over and takes the seat.

LOUIS

Thank you. I was wondering if I could use your computer.

MARTIN

Oh. You're one of *those*. In that case, you'll need to speak to my colleague, Miss Deering.

MARTIN gestures vaguely behind him. LOUIS heads in that direction.

MARRIE is the assistant librarian, a naturally pretty woman in her late 20s, well-meaning but self-absorbed, die-hard romantic. Slightly swingy moods, trendily dressed. Wears badge that reads 'Marrie'.

MARRIE is taking selfies of herself with her phone. She strikes lots of silly model poses, throwing her hair back, pouting, unbuttoning her shirt, etc. She turns around and leans over a table to take a shot from behind, then sees LOUIS. She looks horrified and hurriedly stands up.

MARRIE

I'm not shallow or self-obsessed.

MARRIE hurriedly puts her hair back up, and her glasses back on, but is in such a fluster that she flicks herself in the eye with her hairband and the glasses are wonky. She notices the phone in her hand, and quickly puts that hand behind her back, but the phone flies out on to the floor.

LOUIS

Don't -

MARRIE

I give to charity. And I subscribe to the London Review of Books.

LOUIS

Look, -

MARRIE

I was just bored. I've done all the jobs I had to do. Well, all the main ones.

LOUIS

Seriously -

MARRIE

Please don't tell Martin. I'm still on my probation period.

LOUIS

I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about. I'm incredibly short-sighted.

LOUIS walks into a table.

LOUIS

See? I should really wear glasses, but they make me look too nerdy.

LOUIS walks into the nearest shelf. MARRIE laughs.

LOUIS

See? Now, can you set me up on a computer?

MARRIE

Oh, of course. Thank you.

MARRIE guides LOUIS to the computer desk.

MARRIE

(whispers) You probably noticed that Martin isn't really a people person. (beat) In fact, we're still awaiting confirmation that he's actually a person.

MARRIE seats Louis in front of the terminal.

LOUIS

(gaining confidence) So, your name's Marrie. Do you, er, have two sisters called Snog and Avoid?

MARRIE

(sarcastic) Congratulations, you have won a prize! You're the 1,000th person to crack that joke!

LOUIS

Oh. Oh, I'm -

MARRIE

(wicked smile) But your delivery was the best yet.

LOUIS

(relieved) Oh. Oh, well, of course
...

MARRIE leans over Louis, brushing against him, as she types something into the PC.

MARRIE

There, now will that be all right for you?

The font size on the screen is huge.

MARRIE

Kidding!

MARRIE goes back to the keyboard. LOUIS smiles, clearly smitten.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. LIBRARY. DAY

LOUIS is seated at the computer. He clicks on a link. The page is an academic article, long-winded, full of figures, graphs and tables.

LOUIS
 (reading) "Blah blah blah, long
 word, semicolon, footnote."
 Bollocks to this!

He closes the file and goes back to the search site. (Link should say "Evolutionary psychology made simple".)

LOUIS
 This is more like it.

LOUIS clicks and a video starts to play. Zoom in on video.

INT. MUSEUM OF SEX, NEW YORK. DAY. (VIDEO)

Snazzy, MTV-style graphics, perhaps text along the lines of "Buffering ... Skip ad"; followed by banner: "CARA SANTA MARIA ... science babe!"

CARA is standing in front of a suggestive exhibit in the sex museum next to a man - her assistant/stooge. (If budget prohibits, we can dispense with stooge.)

CARA SANTA MARIA
 Hey, science fans! Ever been on a
 date with someone, didn't think
 they were anything special ...

CARA SANTA MARIA gives the stooge a disapproving look.

CARA SANTA MARIA (CONT)
 ... but kinda felt drawn to them
 anyway?

CARA SANTA MARIA hugs the stooge. He is chuffed to bits.

CARA SANTA MARIA (CONT)
 Well, newsflash - looks ain't
 everything! One set of experiments
 proved, for example, that when it
 comes to dating, for some people,
 smell is actually more important
 than their visual sense.

CARA SANTA MARIA sniffs the stooge and holds her nose.

CARA SANTA MARIA (CONT)

And I don't just mean whether they washed recently. But it turns out that sound, in the shape of the human voice, can be a big turn-on too ...

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE COTTAGE. DAY.

Shot of cottage. Pan to honesty box/fruit & veg stall on steps next door. The word "vegetables" has been crossed out and the word "minerals" scrawled above. The vegetables have been replaced with rocks (of appropriate sizes/colours).

INT. COTTAGE LIVING ROOM. DAY.

FLEUR, KAYLEIGH and HANNIBAL are sitting in silence with sandwiches in front of them. Kay and Hannibal are eating.

KAYLEIGH

Nan, you haven't touched your sandwiches.

FLEUR points to the I on her T-shirt.

KAYLEIGH

"I" ...

FLEUR shakes her head.

KAYLEIGH

"not" ...

FLEUR pats her stomach.

KAYLEIGH

"Hungry" ... but you left your breakfast as well. (beat) Have you lost your falsies again?

FLEUR looks embarrassed. KAYLEIGH starts hunting.

HANNIBAL

Tenner says the washing machine again.

LOUIS enters, grinning from ear to ear.

LOUIS

(singing, to tune of Michael Jackson's Librarian Girl) Librarian Girl ... More precious than any pearl ...

KAYLEIGH

Well, someone's perked up!

LOUIS

Things may be looking up. I found an excellent website, and ordered some books. But more importantly, I think I might have found romance.

HANNIBAL

It's right next to horror, isn't it?

LOUIS

The librarian. I sensed a real ... electricity between us.

HANNIBAL

It's called a Taser.

LOUIS

She gave off some very positive signals. And you know what? I think that research on voices might actually be right. These psychologists might be on to something. So I've come to a decision. I know I said I'd leave tomorrow, but I'd like to stay for a while, if that's all right with you.

Hannibal and Kayleigh exchange a glance.

KAYLEIGH

Well ...

LOUIS

The thing is, I really think this

might be a perfect environment for my fresh start. It's peaceful, I have the library for research, and I've got people who care about me. I'll pay rent, obviously.

KAYLEIGH

We've love to, Louis, but ...

HANNIBAL

We have only just moved in together, and we haven't really ... bedded in yet, you know?

KAYLEIGH

And then there's Nan. She doesn't like change.

LOUIS

Oh. Of course. I understand. I'll ... go and start packing then.

Hannibal grimaces, then opens his arms in a 'hug me' gesture. Louis looks baffled, then hugs him.

HANNIBAL

I'm sorry I wanted you dead. It's just ... I've spent my whole life living in your shadow. Mum and Dad, the teachers at school, they were all constantly comparing me with you. So all this time, I guess, I've been trying to compete with you. But I had it all wrong.

They separate.

HANNIBAL

Now I've been living with you for a while, I've realised, you're no competition at all.

Louis makes to leave. Fleur raises her hand.

KAYLEIGH

Don't forget Nan.

Louis returns and hugs Fleur. Fleur hugs him back too hard, for too long. He tries to pull away, but she hangs on. After a few seconds, she sticks her tongue in his ear and waggles it around inside. LOUIS pulls away.

LOUIS

Eww! She just -

Louis grabs a tea towel and starts wiping his ear. Fleur licks her lips.

FLEUR

Mm, he can stay.

KAYLEIGH

What was that? Nan? Did - did you say something?

FLEUR

Ooh, if I were 80 again ...

KAYLEIGH

Nan! You can speak! It ... it's a miracle! (to LOUIS) It's you being here that's done it, I know it is! Oh, I knew it was a good idea to have you here. That's decided, then. You have to stay.

LOUIS

Great!

HANNIBAL

Great.

FLEUR points to her mouth, then leans down and touches the fireplace grate.

KAYLEIGH

"Grate"!

INT. COTTAGE LIVING ROOM. DAY.

CAPTION: THREE DAYS LATER

HANNIBAL is sitting on the sofa, reading comics in his underpants. LOUIS enters.

LOUIS

(voice normal again) Wanking hell,
Hannibal!

HANNIBAL

Fleur's at the hospital, so, it's
pyjama day. Only I don't own any
pyjamas, because I'm not a poof.

LOUIS

I'm going to the library to do some
more research. The thing is, I took
a rather circumlocutory route last
time.

HANNIBAL

Right out of the house, left at the
top of the hill, cut through the
culvert, then it's just past the
bridge ... (emphasis) with the 100-
foot drop and no safety barrier.

LOUIS

Thank you.

HANNIBAL

You're just setting yourself up for
disappointment, you know.

LOUIS

Disappointment, you say? There
might be disappointment? Well, you
know what? After 20 years of
disaster, humiliation and soul-
crushing despair, mere
disappointment is my holy grail. If
I come back from this and the worst
I have to show for it is
disappointment, I will be OVER THE
FUCKING MOON.

HANNIBAL

Oh, would you stop by the Londis
and get some cat food?

LOUIS

Since when did you have a cat? I didn't notice a catflap.

HANNIBAL

Aslan's agoraphobic. He doesn't like going out.

LOUIS

But I haven't seen a cat either.

HANNIBAL

He's also afraid of humans. Stellar pick by Kayleigh from the rescue home. (beat) Fleur's had more strokes than that sodding cat.

LOUIS starts to exit.

HANNIBAL

Hang on. You've lost your superpowers. Your voice is back to normal. You're not so much Louis Armstrong as ... Huey, Dewey and Louie.

LOUIS

Every superhero has a backup plan.

EXT. BRIDGE. DAY.

LOUIS is standing on the bridge near the high street, gazing down to the river 100 feet below. He takes a deep breath, then walks on. On the street near the library, he ducks into a newsagent and emerges a few seconds later with a pack of cheap cigarettes. He lights one, and starts smoking it furiously.

FADE OUT, IN

Louis lights another one, and starts smoking it furiously.

FADE OUT, IN

LOUIS lights another one, and starts smoking it furiously.

FADE OUT, IN

LOUIS, looking rather grey and coughing, puts out the last cigarette and throws the pack in a bin. Then he takes some chewing gum from his pocket and puts it in his mouth.

LOUIS

(testing voice) Good day. I was wondering if I could "borrow" you for a minute?

LOUIS smiles and walks on.

INT. LIBRARY. DAY.

(Most of scene plays out in silence, with just Cara's voiceover and some music.)

CARA SANTA MARIA (V/O)

There are many components to attraction. As we saw earlier, looks can be important, as can smell, and the human voice.

LOUIS is sitting in the library holding his ticket.

CARA (V/O) (CONT)

But people find a wide range of qualities attractive. Some are turned on by height; some by money; some by style.

MARTIN presses his buzzer and summons Louis. Louis approaches the enquiries desk.

CARA (V/O) (CONT)

Other factors that have been shown to be important are intelligence, confidence, and sense of humour.

Martin goes through the same series of facial expressions as last time, but more exaggerated, then scowls and points.

CARA (V/O) (CONT)

Psychologists are still divided on which ones are the most important, and in weeks to come, we'll consider the chief contenders.

Marrie looks delighted, waves hello. Louis approaches and tries to talk. Marrie backs away with a slight grimace when he nears her (smoky breath).

CARA (V/O) (CONT)

But for now, remember this: don't

get too hung up if you don't have
all these qualities. Nobody does.

Louis struggles to get words out, then breaks into a coughing
fit.

CARA (V/O) (CONT)

Concentrate on what you have got.
Play the cards you're dealt.

Louis's fit gets worse. He doubles over, and MARRIE supports
him. His body starts convulsing.

CARA (V/O) (CONT)

And if you play them right ... And
you'll be exchanging bodily fluids
in no time!

The sound comes up. Louis gives one last, huge cough, then
looks up, and is horrified. Cut to Marrie, who sees the look
on his face and looks puzzled. There is a large blob of brown
phlegm in the middle of her forehead.

MARRIE

What? Have I ... got something on
my face?

Louis looks mortified.

END CREDITS

INT. COTTAGE ANNEXE. DAY.

LOUIS is asleep. A cock crows, and he stirs. It crows again,
and he wakes up, and checks his alarm clock. It reads 4.22am.

LOUIS

For shit's sake, what time are you
on, Eastern Pacific?

He is about to try to go back to sleep when he pauses, a
puzzled look on his face. He feels around under the
bedclothes, obviously in the crotch area, then produces
Fleur's false teeth.