

<- BEFORWARDS ->

by

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Episode 1

30 minute TV comedy-drama pilot

NB: Scenes marked (NOW) are set in the present.
Those marked (THEN) are set in the past.

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INT. FLAT - HALLWAY - EVENING (NOW)

The front door bursts open. A WOMAN staggers in, draped in a wedding dress, white lace stained by blotches of blood.

She slams the door shut. Turns around. Props her back against the wood. Black lipstick. "Stitches" transfers on both cheeks. Oh, thank God, this is a Halloween costume.

Meet 20-something ALICE, sobbing madly, devastated.

EXT. BUSY PEDESTRIANISED STREET - AFTERNOON (THEN)

A carefree ALICE sails through herds of shoppers in a care assistant's uniform. Her hair is different. Shorter.

CAPTION: "THEN."

Argh, from nowhere, KYLE, a 20-something CHARITY MUGGER, clipboard in hand, leaps in front of her.

KYLE

Helloooooooooo!! Spare me a minute of your time?

ALICE

God, you scared the life out of me. Your intro needs serious work.

KYLE

Yeah, sorry, my bad. First day on the job. Bit clueless... so I'm following the advice my flatmate Cam gave me this morning. "Don't dither. Don't hesitate. Leap straight into action."

ALICE

I... think he meant figuratively.

KYLE

Well, yeah, but people take one look at a charity mugger and leg it in the opposite direction. This way, I'm using the element of surprise... which isn't exactly working either. One woman threatened to have me arrested.

ALICE

I'd hate to think what else this Cam advised you to do.

INT. FLAT - KITCHEN - MORNING (THEN)

Earlier. KYLE in his charity mugger gear, preparing two coffees, listening to advice from CAM, same age, suit and tie, "sharp salesman" written all over him.

CAM

Engage with your lead. Introduce yourself.

EXT. BUSY PEDESTRIANISED STREET - AFTERNOON (THEN)

KYLE

By the way... I'm Kyle.

ALICE

Alice.

INT. FLAT - KITCHEN - MORNING (THEN)

CAM

Get straight in there with your sales pitch.

EXT. BUSY PEDESTRIANISED STREET - AFTERNOON (THEN)

KYLE

Want to sign up? It's for a good cause.

INT. FLAT - KITCHEN - MORNING (THEN)

CAM

You have rehearsed it, right?

It's obvious that KYLE hasn't, but --

KYLE

Yeah, course. Word for word.

EXT. BUSY PEDESTRIANISED STREET - AFTERNOON (THEN)

KYLE

Um... rainforests... palm oil... stuff.

ALICE

Oh, Kyle, you have to be the worst charity mugger ever. Good luck.

KYLE is dismayed to find ALICE losing interest and walking away.

INT. FLAT - KITCHEN - MORNING (THEN)

CAM

If you feel you're losing your lead, step up your campaign.

EXT. BUSY PEDESTRIANISED STREET - AFTERNOON (THEN)

KYLE

No, no, no, don't go. At least give me something.

ALICE

Like what?

INT. FLAT - KITCHEN - MORNING (THEN)

CAM

Be bold. Be brave. Take that risk.

EXT. BUSY PEDESTRIANISED STREET - AFTERNOON (THEN)

KYLE

Your phone number? So we can maybe, you know, arrange to go out for a drink... and talk about rainforests... palm oil... stuff.

ALICE

For all I know, you could be an axe murderer.

KYLE

I promise I'm not. And even if I was, it would be so ungentlemanly of me to bludgeon you to death on the first date.

ALICE

I'm not sure. I've not long got out of a nightmare relationship.

KYLE

How nightmare?

INT. HOUSE - ALICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (THEN)

ALICE lays in bed, tired, irritated, her mobile phone pressed against her ear.

ALICE

It's three o'clock in the morning and you are hopelessly bladdered.

She listens further.

ALICE

I don't care how horny you're feeling. You are not coming over.

And then she sits bolt upright, goggle-eyed.

ALICE

What do you mean you're standing naked in my front garden?

EXT. BUSY PEDESTRIANISED STREET - AFTERNOON (THEN)

KYLE

Woh. On a nutter scale of one to ten, your ex has got to be an eleven.

INT. FLAT - KITCHEN - MORNING (THEN)

CAM

Finally, seal the deal with something profound. Something deep. The kind of big speech you'd find in a movie.

EXT. BUSY PEDESTRIANISED STREET - AFTERNOON (THEN)

In an overly performed profound tone --

KYLE

Alice. I'm not the type of guy who stands naked in your garden at 3AM. Take a chance on me. What's the worst that could happen?

INT. FLAT - HALLWAY - EVENING (NOW)

ALICE. Still in that blood-stained wedding dress. In one hand, a set of keys. In the other, a packed suitcase. She places the keys on a nearby table. She won't be needing them anymore.

CAPTION: "NOW."

Out comes her phone. Floating in the air beside her, an animation of her contacts list shows us what she's doing in real-time. She selects KYLE from the list and hits delete. Delete contact? Are you sure? Yes. Contact deleted.

The girl offers the flat one final farewell glance --

ALICE

Yeah. What's the worst that could happen?

-- and, beginning to choke up again, she leaves.

OPENING CREDITS.

INT. PUB - EVENING (THEN)

KYLE, smart shirt and jeans, watches as CAM, dressed similar but sharper, feeds coinage to an ever-hungry fruit machine.

CAPTION: "THEN."

CAM

I can't believe you asked her out. In broad daylight. Weren't you scared?

KYLE

Terrified. But it seemed... right.

CAM

Oh, mate. Chatting up girls in the real world is so last century. You seriously need to embrace the modern age and download a --

KYLE

A dating app, yeah, so you keep telling me. Personally, I'd rather take my chances old-school.

CAM

Get the frog out of here. A dating app is perfect for a shy guy like you. Zero face-to-face awkwardness. Equally zero poorly executed chat-up lines. Instead, win the girl over with perfectly composed text messages.

KYLE

I'm still not interested.

CAM

Kyle. Listen to me. If God meant for us blokes to stick with one girl at a time, why give us two testicles?

KYLE

That... doesn't even make sense.
Besides, I don't need a dating
app. I already have a date
tonight.

CAM

That's if she turns up. Twenty
notes says she blows you out.

KYLE

You're on.

They shake hands.

Then CAM pulls out his phone.

CAM

Check out my latest. So fit.

A floating animation shows us that he's selecting a photo
of a GIRL we will soon know as MEGAN.

He shows KYLE the piccie.

KYLE

What happened to Danielle?

CAM

Deleted.

KYLE

Oh, Cam. She was lovely. That
stupid app has turned you into a
cliché bastard. You never used to
be so cold.

CAM

Mate. Danielle spoke about baby
names. On the second date! If
that's not a warning sign, I don't
know what is. I mean, can you
seriously picture me ever settling
down and having a kid?

INT. HOUSE - CAM AND MEGAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING (NOW)

CAPTION: "NOW."

CAM, fully clothed, asleep on top of a double bed. In his
arms is a YOUNG BABY BOY, gooing and gurgling. A half-
consumed bottle of formula milk lays redundant beside them.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - EVENING (NOW)

CAM'S live-in girlfriend MEGAN arrives home, early 20s, the GIRL in the photo on CAM'S phone in the past timeline, but now with a different hairstyle. She peels off her trenchcoat to reveal a strip-a-gram outfit underneath.

MEGAN

Cam?

No answer. So she begins to climb the stairs.

INT. HOUSE - CAM AND MEGAN'S BEDROOM - EVENING (NOW)

MEGAN enters the bedroom and grins at the discovery of a zonked out father of their child. She can't resist it, she creeps over to him, puts her mouth close to his ear and --

MEGAN

Wakey, wakey!

CAM wakes with a start, realises where he is, who he's supposed to be feeding. He hastily grabs the bottle, the teat shoved into his own mouth, oops, clumsy correction, the BABY'S mouth.

CAM

Wasn't asleep, resting my eyes.

MEGAN gives a "yeah, right" look. Plonks her bum on the bed.

MEGAN

I am so glad to be home.

CAM

Tough gig?

MEGAN

Eightieth birthday party.

CAM

Oh, please tell me you didn't do the full strip.

MEGAN

Paid me double the going rate.

CAM

What if you'd given him a heart attack?

MEGAN

You'll be pleased to know, her
heart is still ticking.

CAM. Stunned. Her? He's just about to comment when the doorbell bing-bongs. He clambers to his feet and passes MEGAN the BABY.

CAM

Oooh, trick-or-treaters. Time to offer them my chocolate-covered sprouts.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - EVENING (NOW)

Platter of "chocolates" in hand, CAM opens the front door to... oh, it's ALICE; wedding dress, suitcase, all cried out.

ALICE

I've left him.

INT. BUSY PUB - EVENING (THEN)

KYLE and ALICE stand at the bar, drinks freshly purchased.

CAPTION: "THEN."

KYLE

I have to admit, Alice, I was worried you'd decided to no-show me.

ALICE

I very nearly did. But then I thought about what you said.

KYLE

Oh. Cool. -- Uh, which part exactly?

ALICE throws him a "like, duh" look as they both head for a vacant table at the far end of the pub.

ALICE

Taking a chance on you.

KYLE

Oh, yeah, yeah, I knew that. I was... just testing you.

ALICE

How's the charity mugging going?

KYLE

I jacked it in. So not me. I only took the job 'cause I thought it would be a giggle. It's cool though, I have enough money to see me through for a while. And I own my flat outright, so zero worries there.

They sit down at the table. ALICE is intrigued.

ALICE

Don't take this the wrong way, Kyle, but you don't look the homeowner type.

KYLE

My parents bought it for me.

ALICE

Wow. Generous.

KYLE

It was their way of saying sorry for giving me up as a baby.

ALICE

Oh, my God. You were adopted?

KYLE

I can't complain, I had a happy childhood. But when I came of age, I decided to track down my real folks. They couldn't be any more apologetic. They've been showering me with gifts ever since.

ALICE

Sounds like you've got it made.

KYLE grimaces, staring into space, thinking about --

INT. FLAT - LOUNGE - MORNING (THEN)

-- a few weeks ago. KYLE on his mobile, looking distressed, holding a large rotary washing line upright by its pole.

KYLE

Dad. What were you thinking, buying me a rotary washing line? This flat has no garden. You know that.

INT. BUSY PUB - EVENING (THEN)

KYLE still wears that grimace.

KYLE
Yeah. Lucky me.

Then he shrugs it off.

KYLE
So. What about yours? Devoted
parents or family from Hell?

ALICE
I don't really want to talk about
them.

KYLE
Spill. I want all the gory
details.

ALICE
No, believe me, you don't.

KYLE
Try me.

She stiffens -- well, he asked for it -- then shoots
through a rapid monologue, rush, rush, rush, not stopping
for breath.

ALICE
Seven years ago, my dad did the
dirty on my mum. Cue the messy
divorce. My younger sister took
Daddy Dearest's side and has lived
with him ever since. We're not
close. They only contact me when
they feel like it. In contrast, my
mother was amazing. Was being the
operative word. She died just
under two years ago. Car accident.
In her Will, she left me her
house. My sister has always
resented that decision. Life's a
bitch, death's a bastard, the end.

Awkward, uncomfortable silence. Until --

KYLE
Do you... fancy a packet of
crisps?