The Lonely Heart

by
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(A short)

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INT - HEARTS SAKE - DAY

A disgruntled looking James, 26 sits in the office of 'Love Agent' Larry Lowes, 35

James waits for Larry to finish shuffling through his paperwork.

JAMES
Larry.

LARRY
James! I was just thinking about you!

JAMES
Really?

LARRY
Yeah.

JAMES
Why?

LARRY
I'm not sure. How are you?

JAMES
Well, you should be able to tell me that. Have I had any responses?

LARRY
We've had thousands.

JAMES
Thousands?
LARRY
Well, not thousands. That was a bit of an exaggeration.

JAMES
Hundreds?

LARRY
Not hundreds, per say. A bit less.

JAMES
Fifty.

LARRY
Five. We've had five.

JAMES
I suppose five is better than nothing.

LARRY
Exactly! (Slaps table) That's exactly the kind of optimism you need!

JAMES
In regards to the applicants?

LARRY
No, just in life.

JAMES
Let me ask you something, Larry.

LARRY
Okay.
JAMES
You have to give me an honest answer.

LARRY
Right.

JAMES
Do you promise?

LARRY
Yeah.

JAMES
So your word is bond?

LARRY
Yes.

JAMES
You don't sound very enthusiastic. (Beat) They're all freaks, aren't they?

LARRY
I wouldn't say freaks exactly.

JAMES
But they're not pretty?

LARRY
It depends what you mean by pretty, James. I mean, beauty can be defined by different eyes.

JAMES
Let me see the files.

LARRY
It's part of my job to read them out.
JAMES
This isn't the news, Larry. Just give me the files.

LARRY
Okay.

JAMES
Applicant number one.

LARRY
From Huddersfield.

JAMES
She's a dog, Larry.

LARRY
That's a bit harsh.

JAMES
No, Larry, she's an actual dog. A German shepherd if I'm not mistaken.

LARRY
Nice breed.

JAMES
But not really someone I'd want a relationship with.

LARRY
Are you sure?

JAMES
Of course I'm bloody sure! I can't stress this enough, Larry, I want HUMAN INTERACTION. No animals.

LARRY
What about a sexy looking chimp?
JAMES
There is no such thing.

LARRY
Helena Bonham Carter in 'Planet of the Apes'.

JAMES
She was an actress in make-up!

LARRY
I know but still, you would-

JAMES
I wouldn't.

LARRY
I thought she looked better as a monkey.

JAMES
Right. Okay. Let's move onto number two shall we?

LARRY
So number one is a no-no?

JAMES
Yes.

LARRY
Number two. Lisa from Chelsea.

JAMES
Right.

LARRY
You like?

JAMES
Where's her photo?
LARRY
She didn't supply one.

JAMES
Why not?

LARRY
She doesn't believe in capturing images.

JAMES
Why not?

LARRY
She could just be shy and old fashioned.

JAMES
Be that as it may, her interests are; Cleaning, eating cereal and photographing children. She sounds like the epitome of sanity.

LARRY
Oh! Shall I put her on the 'Yes' pile then?

JAMES
I was being sarcastic, Larry.

LARRY
You know I can't tell when you're being sarcastic. Could you knock on the table when you are so I know?

JAMES
Knock on the table?

LARRY
Yes.
JAMES
Everytime I'm sarcastic?

LARRY
It would help.

JAMES
You're an intelligent man who is
good at his job.

James raps on the desk three times.

LARRY
That hurts. I try my best.

JAMES
Now you're being sarcastic!

LARRY
It's not easy, you know? People
are picky these days

JAMES
So what are you saying?

LARRY
Just, uh, you know, uh, you're a
little - what's the word I'm
looking for? - Beige.

JAMES
Beige?

LARRY
Yep.

JAMES
That's a colour.

LARRY
That's how I'd describe you.
JAMES
Beige?

LARRY
Perhaps a mustard yellow.

JAMES
Let's pass on number two.

LARRY
No on two.

JAMES
Let's see what horrors number three yields.

LARRY
I have a good feeling about number two.

JAMES
Larry.

LARRY
Yeah?

JAMES
It's a blank page.

LARRY
What do you think?

JAMES
I think you're an idiot to be brutal.

LARRY
Sometimes blank paper gets mixed up. It's not my fault. It's just me here now. I have to do everything because I fired Gemma.
JAMES
I wouldn't why I could smell cheap perfume when I came in. Why did you fire her?

LARRY
You promise not to tell anyone?

JAMES
Of course I'm not going to tell anyone. How will that sound; "Hey, lads! Did you know that they fired the perky receptionist from the lonely hearts agency I go to in an desperate attempt to find a compainion."

LARRY
She was stealing.

JAMES
Money?

LARRY
Clients. Men---and a couple of women.

JAMES
Do you mean she was-

LARRY
She was setting herself up.

JAMES
Oh.

LARRY
That's one rule you never break in this business.
JAMES
I wonder why she never 'stole' me.

LARRY
She thought you had the features of a ruck sack, or was it a satchel? It was some kind of shoulder hold-all anyway.

JAMES
She said I looked like a bag?

LARRY
I said you looked like a confused child.

JAMES

LARRY
She's gone now.

JAMES
Good riddance.

LARRY
It's left me with heaps of work to do.

JAMES
Let's get back to the task in hand. So applicant number three doesn't exist?

LARRY
No. Sorry. It was an oversight.

JAMES
Nevermind. Number four.
There is a long pause as James looks at the file.

JAMES (CONT'D)
She's dead.

LARRY
Dead?

JAMES
Yup.

LARRY
Since when?

JAMES
Since nineteen ninety-two.

LARRY
She never said.

JAMES
I suppose it must have slipped her mind.

LARRY
She should have said.

JAMES
Yup. Some people, eh?

LARRY
I'll take her off the list.

JAMES
That would be a genius idea.

James gets up out of his seat and heads towards the door.

LARRY
Where are you going?

JAMES
I quit.
He exits.

LARRY
Wait! I didn't hear you knock! I
don't know if you're being
sarcastic! James? James?

FADE TO BLACK.

CREDITS