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Cashback

By Sean Ellis

it takes approximately 500
pounds to crush a human skull.
but the human emotion
is a much more delicate thing.
take suzy,
my first real girlfriend.
my first real breakup,
happening right in front of me.
i never thought it was going
to be similar to car crash.
i've slammed the brakes,
and i'm skidding towards
an emotional impact.
so is this all my fault?
me. ben willis.
it's funny what goes through
your mind at a time like this.
the two-and-a-half years
we spent together.
the promises we made.
the holidays we took
with her parents.
the lamp we bought
at ikea together.
it was my final year
at art college.
and in the weeks that
followed the breakup,
i tried to figure out
what went wrong.
why did we break up?
it's funny, but when i think back now the reason seems so small.
one day she's with me,
and she's saying "i love you, "
and the next week
she's with someone else.
probably saying
the same thing.
so did she
really love me?
what is love anyway?
and is it really
that fleeting?
forget about her. you don't wanna waste your time

thinking about a girl that dumped you for a loser like steve jenkins.
she didn't dump me.
why did she
chuck you anyway?
it ended
'cause suzy thinks the grass is always greener on the other side.
she's always worrying about there being a better party to go to.
or a better boyfriend
to be had.
i just felt i could
never make her happy.
and then steve jenkins
started texting her.
how did steve jenkins
get her number?
it was a good point.
i only imagined the worst.
i don't want
to think about it.
you need to go out with a beautiful girl. a model or something.
why?
well, because if you've got
a beautiful girl on your arm,
then you must
be worth having.
women are in competition
with each other, you see.
suzy sees you with a sexy baby,
she'll think to herself
"if i can get ben back
from that beautiful girl,
then i must be more
beautiful than her. "
sean's success with women
was pretty impressive.
it's true.
ask your mom.
the age-old question.
what is love?
excuse me.
that's good. that's perfect.
ben, mr. adams here
has given his time up for you.
don't you think we should show him a little bit of respect?

excuse me.
i live in student accommodation
not far from the college.
it's basically
a four-story concrete block
housing some 120
hormone-crazed students.
this is the haunting period.
the time when the demons
of regret come for you.
she stood right there
when i said those words:
"i'm sorry.
"i don't think
i can make you happy.
maybe we should break up. "
and that's when
she got angry.
hello?
suzy, it's me, ben.
ben! i was asleep.
what is it?
suzy, um...
i'm sorry.
i'm sorry too.
do you think there's any chance
we'll get back together?
i don't think so, ben.
i think it ran its course.
besides,
i'm with steve now.
have you
slept with him?
yes.
was it good?
i mean, is it better than...
i don't wanna talk
about it with you, ben.
i've gotta go.
sorry, ben.
- suzy?
to think about her now
with someone else,
it felt like all the oxygen

had been sucked from the room.
after my breakup with suzy, i just couldn't fall asleep anymore.
the more i tried to sleep,
the less tired i felt.
i was wide awake.
i tried everything.
i'd just become
immune to sleep.
i suddenly found
i had eight extra hours.
my life had been
extended by a third.
i wanted time to pass quickly, but instead i was forced to witness
the passing of every
second of every hour.
i wanted the hurt i felt
to go away.
but in some cruel trick
of events,
i now had even more time
on my hands.
more time
to think about suzy.
would you mind getting out?
just checking that wheel?
i took the bus
with no real place to go.
i watched the landscape slowly change as it clung to the last hours of
sunlight,
before leaving me to get
another sleepless night.
i started to read all the books
i wished i'd had time to read.
with the extra hours, i even had time to reread my favorite ones.
but she was never far
from my mind.
two pounds 75, please.
ah, how much is it
without these two?
one pound 70.
it was getting obvious that i
needed to trade some of my time.
yeah, yeah, yeah.
yeah, yeah.

yeah. yeah.

mmm, mmm, mmm.

it all looks fantastic, man.

i think you'll fit in

very well here.

it's a great

feeling inside, ben.

it's marvelous. we hope

you've enjoyed reading about

what it's like to be part

of sainsbury's and listening.

i know, i've been

through this with you.

there's so many opportunities, ben. it's a life thing.

i could feel a faint shift

in a faraway place.

a current of unknown

consequences was on its way

moving towards me like

an unstoppable wave of fate.

t- e-a-m-w-o-r-k. work.

teamwork, ben.

welcome aboard.

and so i started working

the night shift at sainsbury's.

during the hours most

normal people are sleeping,

i'm busy trading my time.

i give them my extra eight hours, and they give me money. cash back.

- hi.

- oh, hi.

i'm late again. jenkins is gonna kill me. see you later.

yeah, see ya.

- sharon!

- yes, mr. jenkins?

- late again, sharon.

- i'm sorry, mr. jenkins.

- second time this week.

- i know, mr. jenkins.

i'm sorry,

it won't happen again.

okay.

my first year at art college

was boring to say the least.

but it helped me to appreciate
the fundamentals of still life.
i'd like to remind the customers
that there's a special
two for the price of one
offer on aisle ten.
fresh bread and cakes. that's aisle ten for a special two for the price of
one offer.
well, don't just
stare at it, ben!
clean it up.
you see, i've always
wanted to be a painter.
and like many artists
before me,
the female form has always been
a great source of inspiration.
i've always been in awe of the power they unknowingly possess.
now, are you going
to clean them up or not?
there is an art to dealing with the boredom of an eight-hour shift.
an art to putting your mind somewhere else while the seconds slowly tick
away.
i found that all
the people working here
had perfected
their own individual art.
take sharon pintey.
sharon knows rule number one.
the clock is the enemy.
the basic rule is this:
the more you look at the clock,
the slower the time goes.
it will uncover
the hiding place of your mind
and torture it
with every second.
this is the basic art in dealing with the trade of your time.
any cash back?
this is barry brickman.
you see, barry thinks of himself as a bit of a daredevil stuntman.
for a start,
barry is quite well-known.
when one of barry's

bike tricks went wrong,
the cameraman put it
on the internet.
barry has stuck
to his scooter ever since.
matt stephens is also
a king scooterer.
and what was
the other thing?
and what was
the other thing?
- sausage!
- oh, yeah.
now barry and matt
are good friends.
there you go.
take care.
between them, they have come
up with a very different way
of dealing with
the trade of their time.
look. look.
theirs is an art to finding anything to do that isn't work.
a few days later,
barry and matt were reported
for what they called
"helping the ladies. "
it was these shampoo bottles
that sent them on their quest.
barry and matt knew
what they looked like.
and they knew that the women in the supermarket knew what they looked like.
their theory was that even
though it was a sex toy
masquerading as
a bottle of shampoo,
women would like
to try it as a sex toy
but were embarrassed to buy it because they knew what it looked like.
the decision to buy it would be an easier one if they were already at the
checkout.
if they didn't object,
then barry and matt knew
they'd helped a bottle

find a happy home.
barry had challenged matt
to a scooter race
in which they would sprint
down one aisle and up the next.
they would do all 14 aisles, and then back to the starting line.
they had been waiting for the day the manager called in sick.
the art of doing something else other than the work you're supposed to do,
is addictive.
the excitement of doing something that you shouldn't be doing,
along with the consequences
if you're caught doing it,
are so strong that it often pulls others away from their own art.
on your marks,
get set, go!
we got winded!
i hadn't slept in two weeks.
my breakup with suzy had left me with a sense that time had become
unhinged.
i drifted between
imagination and reality,
between past and present
with increasing ease.
i feel like a real man.
you like men.
you like real men,
don't you?
when i'm out there
in the kit,
on the pitch
with the boys,
i look like a god,
i'm an adonis.
i keep myself
in good shape.
i see the looks.
i ignore them.
i feel the bolts of time slowly
coming away from the breakup.
time manipulation
is not a precise science.
like any art,
it's personal to the individual.
so what is the art in making

my shift go so fast?
i imagine the opposite.
that time is frozen.
i imagine the remote control
for life has been paused.
within this frozen world, i'm able to walk freely and unnoticed.
nobody would even know
that time had stopped.
and when it started
back up again,
the invisible join would be seamless except for a slight shudder.
not unlike the feeling of somebody walking over your grave.
that moment when you see someone
walking down the street
who is so beautiful
you just can't help but stare...
well, imagine as i do,
that with the world on pause
it becomes very easy to understand the concept of beauty.
to have it frozen
in front of you.
captured.
unaware.
for me, this fascination with beauty started at a very young age.
i was six or seven, and my mom and dad had taken on a foreign student.
she was in her late teens,
and was studying english
at a nearby school.
being swedish, the walk from the shower to her room didn't need to be a
modest one.
it was at that moment that something very profound happened to me.
i was exposed to the female form in a way i had never experienced.
i felt fascination and wonder
at the beauty of her nakedness.
and i wanted to freeze the world so that i could live in that moment for a
week.
i have never had a feeling
of such completeness.
to this day i still think it was one of the most beautiful things i have
ever seen.
you dropped these.
and would it be wrong?
would they hate me
for seeing them?

i mean, really seeing them?
i read once about a woman whose secret fantasy was to have an affair with
an artist.
she thought that he
would really see her.
he would see every curve,
every line,
every indentation,
and love them because they were part of the beauty that made her unique.
and when i'm ready, all i have to do to start time again
is crack my fingers.
you look like shit.
cheers.
- still not sleeping?
- no.
- feeling any better about suzy? - no.
- wanna talk about it?
- no.
no? why?
because every morning
you come by,
and every morning i talk
about the same thing.
and i'm bored of saying the same thing, and i'm bored of feeling shit about
it.
and most of all i'm bored of
being awake 24 hours a day.
eww! look who didn't get out of bed on the wrong side this morning.
very funny.
but seriously, you're gonna feel like shit. it's gonna take time.
for instance, how long ago
did you think about her
before we started having
this conversation?
about ten minutes before
you knocked on the door.
oh, yeah.
and what was the thought?
i thought about the dust.
the dust?
god, you're weird!
anyway, whatever. my point is, every day you think about her
and the things that you associate with her less and less.
before long, you'll go a whole day without thinking about her.

you know what might help

speed up the process?

what?

me and sean had been friends

since we were five.

we lived across the street from one another, and grew up together.

for his 12th birthday,

sean's mom and dad

had bought him

a state-of the-art computer.

oh, mom!

come on, boys, it's a nice day.

why don't you play in the park?

no. we're okay

playing this.

okay, i'm off shopping. you be all right by yourselves?

yes, mom. bye, mom.

bye, mrs. higgins.

i won't be long.

- wanna see something?

- what?

- what are they?

- girls with no clothes on.

sean had found the magazines under his mom and dad's bed.

the swedish student was one thing, but this was something completely different.

the smiles on the girls' faces

and the total lack of shyness

about what they were showing the camera was so confusing for me.

i had never seen the female part

up close and in so much detail.

i guess i imagined

something neater,

like a smooth hole

drilled into a piece of wood.

the sort of hole where

you might place a wooden peg.

but the reality was much more

sexually aggressive.

it was hard to imagine

that my teacher, mrs. booth,

had one under her skirt

that looked just like it.

- mom!

forgot my purse.
hey, what have
you two been up to?
after that, sean's mom
always thought we were gay.
what will help speed up
the process?
you need to distract yourself
with a couple of natalies.
a natalie was a term that sean had coined for any sexual encounter
that happened with a girl you
weren't in a relationship with.
the term had come from a girl called natalie who lived across the street
from sean.
- hello. is natalie in?
- yeah. natalie!
- yeah?
- it's for you.
you see, sean had
worked out the connection
between the smiling faces
of the girls in the magazines
and the fact that
they were naked.
fifty p.
that's it.
natalie became one of the most popular girls on the street.
croissants on special offer.
she had
massive tits.
very funny.
we were only
having a laugh.
who's that?
that's a new kid.
apparently he's
a martial arts expert.
hey, mate!
come here.
what's your name?
brian.
ben says you know
kung fu.
yeah.

- so you reckon you can have me?
- yeah.
- oh, yeah?
- yeah.
show us your moves then.
grab my arm.
that's not funny.
hi.
hi, ben.
you're not
working tonight?
no, i swapped
two hours this week.
is that a pickle sandwich?
oh, ah, yeah.
could i have a bite?
i'm starving.
mmm. thanks.
- what?
- you got some there.
- mmm.
- there.
let me.
thanks.
i wanted to freeze time.
i wanted to savor
that moment.
to live in that moment
for a week.
but i couldn't stop it.
only slow it.
and before i knew it,
she was gone.
after the door closed, i felt like the last person on earth.
what are you doing?
- jenkins wanted us to go and fill the shelves. - so here we are.
iiiiieeee.
take no notice of him. he's love struck. he asked sharon out today.
you did?
what did she say?
she said "yes. "
he's taking her
to the pictures
tomorrow night.

then it's back to mine. i'll need about half an hour to talk away me face.
and then, she's gonna
get some of this.
crush.
it's funny how the same word
for the feeling of attraction
can be used for the feeling
of disappointment.
the oxford english dictionary states one of the meanings for the word
crushed
as "a strong and unreasoning,
but transitory attachment. "
i had three crushes
when i was young.
the first was an athlete
called zola budd.
she was 18, and looked like a tomboy with a small, slender frame.
but it was the fact that zola budd defiantly ran barefoot
that made her so completely
attractive for me.
it was the los angeles olympics
that would go down in history.
in the 3,000 meter race, zola budd clashed with the american, mary decker.
budd's heart for the race
was left where decker fell.
zola finished seventh.
ben, it's time for bed now.
you've got school tomorrow.
well, well.
what an upset.
can somebody tell me something about the white blood cells? tim?
uh, they help fight off bacteria
and germs in the body.
very well done.
types...
of cells.
the second crush was for
my biology teacher, mrs. booth.
okay, class, who can tell me
something about cells?
she was a confident woman
whose figure-hugging outfits
hinted at the sexiness
that lay hidden beneath.

i imagined mrs. booth asking me
to stay behind after school
and showing me the same
thing under her skirt
as the girls i'd seen
in the magazines with sean.
but the main crush i had was with a girl called tanya green.
when i looked at tanya, i didn't just see her, i felt her.
the white blood cells and
red blood cells work together.
oy!
the next day, tanya caused a
lot of excitement in the class.
tanya had broken her arm
falling from a swing,
and her cast had caused much excitement amongst the other kids at the
school.
settle down now,
please, class.
that's enough.
but i saw it
differently.
it was the way
tanya dealt with it.
the way she
scratched an itch.
the way it restricted
her movements.
the increasing amount of graffiti that appeared on it during its six-week
life span.
would you like
to sign it?
just here.
thanks.
go away!
stop it!
on the day the cast
finally came off,
tanya's arm
was covered in hair.
go on back to the jungle.
the six weeks without light had caused the hair to grow thick and black.
but while the other kids joked
and called her "monkey, "

it only heightened
my fascination for her.
don't cry.
you don't have to
worry about them.
i think you're beautiful
the way you are.
will you be
my girlfriend?
yes.
there was a place that
i often went to by myself.
it was just
behind the school.
it was close enough to still hear the screams and shouts of the kids
playing their games.
but at the same time,
it felt hidden away from them.
i had arranged
to meet tanya there.
whatcha?
you wanna kiss me?
so this was to be
my first kiss.
yeah.
hey! where you going?
i gotta go.
i'll kiss you tomorrow.
- but tomorrow's saturday.
- meet me here at 11:00.
i often came to play around the
school grounds on a saturday.
the familiar building,
so unfamiliar in its quietness.
peaceful, as if time
had frozen still.
it's like the walls
of this room.
it keeps the whole
building standing.
tanya's parents had taken her on a surprise holiday to america.
they set up home there,
and never returned.
it was the first time my heart felt the other meaning of crush.

checkmate.

what's wrong with you? you normally kick my arse at chess.

have you met someone?

well, come on.

give me the juice.

no, it's nothing really. just a girl at work i think is nice.

nice? nice what?

nice rack?

no.

well, yeah,

but nothing like that.

what?

girlfriend material?

she got small hands?

- what's that got to do with anything? - makes your willy look big.

you're such a loser.

so have you asked her out?

- no. someone already beat me to it. - ahh, she got a boyfriend.

no, but one of the guys at work

asked her out. she said "yes. "

they're going

to the pictures tonight.

that doesn't mean

she fancies him.

she might just like him, and want someone to go to pictures with.

how many girls have you taken to the pictures and then snogged?

- oh, yeah!

- what?

quite a few.

there you go.

can i have that?

yeah, yeah,

that's right, rory.

well, of course i played professionally, before the injury.

any day, rory.

you name the date,

me and my boys'll be there.

all right. sunday.

just don't go crying

to your mama.

- ciao.

- whatever.

tosser.

game on.

can't beat it.
there he is!
so, how'd it go
with sharon?
- oh, mate!
- so, did ya?
of course i did.
she loved it.
couldn't get enough of it. she went like the toilet door on a bombay shrimp
trawler.
- rack?
- well, put it this way.
at least you know your kids
will never go hungry.
and?
like an artist's pocket.
okay, champs.
rory brown.
manager of
sainsbury's, islington,
has challenged us to a football match on sunday night.
finished?
good.
the reputation of
this supermarket is at stake.
your reputations, as employees, are at stake.
this is not just
a game of football.
this is what it means to
be a modern-day gladiator!
now, i want you to think of me
as russell crowe.
and you, you're all
the other slaves.
and as slaves,
you will play to the death!
for what happens on sunday night, will echo through eternity.

sunday. 8:

sunny sports center.
you have got to got
to be joking, right?
we're gonna get murdered.
aaah!

- hi.
- all right.
ah, bollocks!
- playing on this right wing. like a train, i am. - hiya.
heads up!
gather round, whitechapel.
whitechapel, gather round.
okay, chaps, this is it!
that is islington sainsbury's
over there.
all i can see are
a lot of pretty uniforms.
take a good look
at one another.
why?
natural-born killers!
every one of you!
so let's get stuck in there
and settle this! huh? huh?
huh?|
hey, barry, i've got
this really great game.
all right, rory.
jenkins.
there's some pretty
uniforms you boys got.
see you've brought
your top team this time.
looks can be deceiving.
- well, that's obvious.
- what?
right. call.
heads.
no, tails.
tails it is.
come along!
we've got one goal.
all right.
get in your spaces.
- ahh!
- look at that!
get it!
come on, take it, come on!
come on, after it.

i'm playing! i'm playing! the safe keys are hanging off, on the top shelf!
get it! get it!
what?
triangles!
triangles!
- foul!
- no foul! play on!
play on, my ass!
i'm all right!
i'm all right!
i'm all right!
what are you doing?
grow up.
forget about the money.
what money?
what are you doing?
what am i doing? i'm talking to an empty phone is what i'm doing.
'cause there's a dead man on the other end of this fucking line!
- i love that film! - pachino. didn't you hear though?
you oughta see the bank job shootout scene on me plasma screen!
come on, whitechapel,
we can still win this.
- come on, lads!
- shoot!
- aye! dipstick!
sorry!
the ball, the ball,
the ball, the ball!
for the love of god!
yeah! finally!
oh, my lord!
get a life, dipstick!
time out, ref.
time out.
well, chaps,
could be worse.
how could it be worse?
it's 26-nil.
it doesn't matter.
what matters is, there's less than a minute to play.
and we are not leaving this pitch until we score a goal!
matt, get the ball to ben.
ben, this is your moment.
i need you.

get your little legs.
run up that right flank
like the devil were after you.
i'll be in the center
waiting for your cross.
use barry if you need to.
matt, stay on my left flank.
i need that cross.
i need that ball
here.
i'll take the shot.
and we, we will
share the glory.
- got it?
- yeah.
now let's score a goal!
come on! come on!
come on! come on!
come on, boys, come on!
no!
i often wonder
what it would be like
to spend the rest of my life
with the world on pause.
to live out the rest of my life between two fractions of a second.
to die of old age,
and then have time continue.
the young me gone,
and a dead old man in my place.
was i spending too much time
in this frozen world?
it felt safe, untouchable.
but how safe
is anyone's world?
hello?
anyone there?
it's funny, but the
last thing i imagined
was that maybe i wasn't the
only one who could stop time.
oh, my god!
you all right?
don't just stand there!
drive me to the hospital!

- can you make sure sharon gets home all right? - yeah.
cheers, mate.
right, i'll see
you both tomorrow.
- see ya.
- bye.
- thanks.
- thank you.
i felt that game was
never going to end.
- matt's face when the ball hit jenkins. - oh, i know.
do you think
he'll be okay?
it was ego more than
anything, i'd say.
it's probably none
of my business, but,
are you and matt
seeing each other?
no. we went to the cinema the other night, but just as friends.
hmm.
why? what
has matt said?
he said he slept with you.
- so you didn't? - no, of course not! what do you take me for?
sorry.
did he say
if i was any good?
i think it was the best sex
he's never had.
so you don't have a boyfriend?
no. we split
about six months ago.
he went off to university
in the states and
it became impossible
to see each other.
and you?
do you have a girlfriend?
we broke up
a few weeks ago.
i'm sorry.
how are you doing?
better.

so how long have you been
at the supermarket?

'bout two years.

- did you get to college? - i was doing p. t. therapy, but i dropped out.
why?

it wasn't me. and besides, i needed to start earning money.

what are you saving for?

putting myself

through evening classes.

yeah? studying...

spanish.

spanish?

yeah. what's wrong

with that?

n- n-nothing. i just wasn't expecting it. so what can you say?

mmm...

tu equipo de futbol

es una puta mierda.

which means?

it means your

football team is shit.

so why spanish?

i've lived here all my life.

i've worked at the supermarket

for two years and,

even though

it's happening slow,

i just feel that my life's ticking away a second at a time.

i thought that spanish would be one way that i'd be able to find a job that
would involve travel.

like being an air hostess or teaching english at spanish-speaking schools.

i've always dreamt of traveling to far-off places... like south america.

to places where the sun

kisses every morning.

but more than that,

i wanna be able

to talk to people about their lives and about their dreams.

silly, really.

no, it's not.

that's your dream.

knowing what you want

is half the battle.

most people go through their whole lives not knowing what they want.

it's easy to find if you know

what you're looking for.
so what is it that
you're looking for?
i've always wanted
to be a painter.
maybe have my work hung
in a gallery one day.
i've always wanted
to meet a painter.
why?
don't know.
i think it might be something to do with their ability to see beauty in
everything.
to then capture it, and hang it on a wall for all to see.
i find it romantic.
well, this is me.
number 34.
thirty-four.
it's on the top floor.
nice.
adios.
hasta luego.
night, ben.
that first kiss.
i've always made
such a mess of it.
come!
hiya. i just wanted to know
whether you were all right.
oh, yes, yes.
i'm fine.
'cause it looked
really painful last night.
oh, no.
i've worse than this.
and the hospital said
you'd be okay?
ah, you know.
they said i'd live.
are you sure
you're all right?
oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.
do you know?
i've almost forgot it happened.

i really can't feel a thing!
i'm thinking of having
a party on saturday.
you know,
cheer everybody up.
sure you'll all be there.
won't you, sharon?
um, yeah.
great.
- hiya.
- whatcha?
thanks for walking me
home last night.
that's all right. thanks for sharing your dream with me.
so have you heard
the party rumor?
no.
jenkins' birthday on saturday.
he's throwing a party.
we've all got to
be there apparently.
oh.
will you be my date?
sharon?
it's my lunch break.
can you relieve me?
so, will you
be my date?
yeah.
great.
shelf stacker to
aisle ten, please.
can we have a shelf stacker
to aisle ten?
steven, if you're in the shop,
can you report to aisle ten?
- it's your lunch break.
- no, it's not.
- it is. it's your lunch break.
- i don't want one.
hama-vama!
come.
you wanted to see us?
take a chair.

not there! here!
now, we were a bit unlucky
last night, chaps.
but to lighten the mood
and to celebrate my birthday,
i'm throwing a party at my house on saturday night,
and you're all invited!
good!
now, no birthday party would be complete without a surprise stripper.
and i want one of you
to organize it. ben.
me?
yes. here's 200 quid.
that should be plenty for some
top-shelf entertainment.
i'll put the details on the staff board this afternoon.
well, get going then.
so, where are you
gonna find a stripper?
i don't know.
but i know a man who will.
so, your boss has given you 200 quid to get a surprise stripper for his own
birthday.
i like him! yeah, i'll help on one condition.
- what's that?
- i can come to the party.
- shouldn't be a problem. - cool. right, let's find you a stripper, eh?
two halves, please.
what was the other one?
two halves.
oh, yeah.
i just found the world's
stupidest barman.
- sean, i'm not sure about this.
- no, it's gonna be fine.
that's
three quid, mate.
yeah!
- how much?
- a quid.
each.
i was, uh, wondering
if you could help us.
um, it's his boss's

birthday on saturday,
and we were looking for someone who could come and do a surprise, uh,
strip.
i'm busy on saturday.
oh, um, well, do you know anyone
else who might be available?
i know one.
but she's very expensive.
that's cool.
is she here?
no. she only does
private venues.
she's gorgeous.
top of the line, you see.
hiya, ben.
will you be my date?
- ben!
- huh?
- 200.
- what?
oh.
don't worry, love,
she's class.
- okay.
- great.
two tickets
to pittsburgh!
it was now my fourth
straight week without sleep.
i had slowly stopped thinking about suzy and had dragged myself into the
present.
the extra eight hours of my life had done nothing to slow the effect of
time.
the minutes flew into hours,
the hours into days.
and the days joined
the fast rushing river of time.
the bad news
is that time flies.
the good news
is that you're the pilot.
most of my shifts were now spent
thinking about sharon.
i drew her endlessly.

over and over.
her pale, milky skin.
her delicate frame.
in her eyes,
i could see the world.
i thought about sharon escaping the life-sapping neons of the
supermarket...
traveling to south america,
pursuing her dreams.
i thought about her
asking me to go with her.
both sharing in our dreams.
her love of people,
and my love of painting them.
- you off home?
- yeah.
you still wanna be my date for
the party tomorrow night then?
yeah, of course.
will you come by
and pick me up?
yeah.

- **yeah, 8:**

- okay. see you tomorrow.
sharon had broken the spell.
for the first time
in weeks, i slept.
i slept right through
to the following afternoon.
mmm. yeah?
there's a call for you, ben.
- hello? - hello, is this ben willis?
yeah.
my name is alex prout,
from the prout gallery.
i saw some examples of your work at the university yesterday.
y- you did?
yes. and i'd be very interested in putting on a show of your latest works.
hello?
um, ah, yeah, yeah.
i would love to.
great. why don't you bring some
more examples of your work

down to my gallery
next monday? say 10:00?
okay. thank you.
no. thank you, ben!
bugger off.
you're the talent.
better get ready
for the party.
- hello?
- hey, it's ben.
hi, ben,
i'll be right down.
hiya.
you look lovely.
thanks. you too.
are you okay?
i had some
great news today.
what?
there's a gallery interested
in showing my work.
ben, that's fantastic!
look at you.
you're beaming inside out.
wow. you're on your way.
well, come on.
let's go and celebrate.
we can leave
if you want.
welcome!
hello, mate.
oy.
- ben, this is, ah...
- katrine.
- katrink.
- katrine!
katrine. ben.
this is sharon. sean.
i've heard a lot
about you.
- nice to meet you.
- very sweet.
hi.
oh, no.

hi, ben.

- hi.

- how are you?

- uh, good, good. and you?

- thanks.

suzy, this is sharon.

- nice to meet you.

- and you.

- what are you doing here? - it's steve's brother's birthday.

what, jenkins?

yeah. he's steve's older brother. do you know him?

yeah. he's our boss.

- you're working at sainsbury's?

- yeah, i work the night shift.

that's great.

well, i'd better get back.

- it was good to see you.

- you too.

- nice to meet you.

- you too.

you all right?

no, that's disgusting.

no, sorry.

isn't it great,

your brother's face!

come on, jenkins,

you rotten git!

kon-a-nichi-wa!

yeah!

oh, no!

- natalie!

- sean?

who's natalie?

it's a long story.

well, your act's grown leaps and bounds since the garage.

- god, how long ago was that?

- uh...

will you, ah...

will you stay for a drink?

yeah, i'd love to.

is this the queue

for the loo?

sharon!

thanks.

happy birthday.
thanks.
so, you wanna
come up to my bedroom?
eat some popcorn?
shag?
no.
why? what's the matter?
don't you like popcorn?
barry's gonna do a stunt!
barry's gonna do a stunt! barry's gonna do a stunt! everyone!
no, but seriously
though, sharon.
i always thought that one day
you and me might...
are you wearing
eyeliner?
hey, ben.
hey.
we really made a mess
of things, didn't we?
wasn't that bad.
i just wanted to say that
i'm sorry about everything.
i know i never really gave you
a chance to make me happy.
you can't rely on other people
to make you happy, suzy.
i know!
is that you?
yeah. jungle survival
course, mexico.
but enough about me.
you.
you!
you look
gorgeous tonight, sharon.
i still think about you
all the time, ben.
why are you
telling me this?
have you seen ben?
five! four!
three! two!

one! go!
no.
you can speed it up,
you can slow it down.
you can even
freeze a moment.
but you can't
be rewind time.
you can't undo
what is done.
i thought about
what she'd seen.
i thought about
what she hadn't seen.
i thought about
how i could explain.
but the more i thought about it, the more i knew
nothing i could say
would make her anger go away.
how long could
i just wait there
delaying
the inevitable?
i had sat there with the world
on pause for two days
and still
no solution had come.
i thought about the night
at the sports center
when i'd seen a person move
when time was frozen.
if other people could move
within the frozen world,
then maybe it was something
i could bring sharon in on.
it was the best
i could come up with.
sharon?
i'm definitely winded.
i had forgotten how fast
everything was moving.
hello?
sharon, it's me.
hello?

this felt familiar.
i tried to explain
that suzy was an ex.
and she had attacked me
when my guard was down.
sharon had seen the wrong second
of a two-second story.
but she wasn't listening.
member of cleaning staff
to aisle three, please.
cleaning staff
to aisle three quickly.
- what language is that?
- russian.
- do you speak russian?
- no.
can i get it back
on to english?
yep? can i help you?
i've got an appointment
with alex prout.
yeah, that's me.
hi. ben willis.
you called me
about my work.
there must be some mistake.
i've never heard of you.
you didn't call me?
bastards.
ah, sorry.
someone's played a joke on me.
well, since you're here,
let me take a look.
- these are yours?
- yeah.
you got any more?
yeah, i've got hundreds.
can you bring them by?
sure.
why don't you make
an appointment with lucy.
proper one this time.
and we'll take it from there.
yeah.

ben.

ben.

all right, ben.

well done.

wonderful show.

thanks.

- i'm anna. anna shapiro.

- ben willis. nice to meet you.

i've got a gallery

in new york.

i'd be interested to talk

to you about your next show.

my next show?

yes. any ideas of what

you might like to do?

um...

i'd like to go and paint

in south america.

well, that sounds

wonderfully romantic.

here. take my card.

call me.

well done.

hey.

hey.

congratulations.

this is...

so great.

thanks.

- how have you been?

- good.

i haven't seen you

at work.

no, i've got a job

at a travel agent's.

so you're one step closer

to your dream.

listen, i'm sorry about

what happened at the party.

whether you saw the second after or not, it doesn't matter.

i've learned it's what you do with every single second that counts.

shh. it's okay.

this tells me so much more

than you could ever say.

it's snowing outside.
do you trust me?
why?
i need to know.
what happened?
i need to show
you something.
once upon a time,
i wanted to know what love was.
love is there
if you want it to be.
you just have to see
that it's wrapped in beauty
and hidden away between
the seconds of your life.
if you don't stop
for a minute,
you might miss it.
barry! barry! barry! barry!
barry! ooh! oh!