

MR KIPLING

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SCENE 1.

INT. OLD PEOPLE'S HOME. DAY.

We open with various shots in an old people's home, showing the residents going about their daily business: reading the newspaper / knitting / drinking a cup of tea / etc.

Narrator: (V.O.) Welcome to Golden Years Manor, where the days are long and the memories... Well, they're a bit fuzzy. But that doesn't stop the residents here from having a jolly good time!

We cut to a shot of an old man dozing off in his chair.

Narrator: (V.O.) Here, life moves at its own pace. But today, something exciting is happening. We've got a camera crew here to document an intriguing romance that has been rumoured amongst these elderly folk.

CUT TO:

SCENE 2.

INT. OLD PEOPLE'S HOME. A BIT LATER.

Beryl (our main character) sits being interviewed by the crew. Around her are several other old people:

- **Enid (the sarcastic friend)**
- **Linda (the deaf lady)**
- **Bill (the confused man)**
- **Margaret (the kind, biscuit loving lady)**

Beryl: Well it all began when I was still a young gel...

Enid: Forty. She was Forty.

Bill suddenly awakens from sleep as if from a nightmare.

Bill: WE'RE AT WAR! We must prevent enemy fire!

Linda: *(mis-hearing him)* Semi-retired? I'm not semi-retired, I'm fully retired!

Margaret: It's okay Bill, we're not in the war anymore! And Linda, of course you're retired. Here guys, have a biscuit.

Beryl: As I was saying, it all began when I was managing my dear old Dad's cafe. I've always been a fan of cake.

Enid: You don't say.

Beryl: *(another icy look)* And one day my father brought home a box full of cakes from a supplier we hadn't used before. They were called 'French Fancies' and they were made by a marvellous baker called Mr Kipling. One taste and I was hooked. Only a man of taste and refinement could make such exceedingly good confections and I decided then and there I had to meet him. I wrote him a letter. And that is where our love story began.

Beryl starts humming 'Close to You'. Enid rolls her eyes and snorts.

CUT TO:

SCENE 3.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

We cut to a new scene, to see Barry from Marketing. Barry has the look of a broken man. He speaks to the camera.

Barry: Well it all began on my first day in the Marketing Department. I was the apprentice but I had plans. Plans for a big bright future back then. A wife, kids, climbing the corporate ladder, a little cottage in the country. Gone. It's all gone. My life is gone.... I can't even... Just, roll the clip Phil *(puts his head in his hands)*

CUT TO:

SCENE 4.

Projector whirring. It is 1980, showing a clip of a Young Barry, and Young Mr Murgatoyd.

Young Mr Murgatroyd: Ey up lads! Who's the new apprentice then?

Young Barry: That's me Mr Murgatroyd Sir. I'm Barry. Barry Watkins.

Young Mr Murgatroyd: HR tell me you've got a degree in Creative Writing, is that right?

Young Barry: Yes Mr Murgatroyd, Sir.

Young Mr Murgatroyd: Well young Barry, I have a little job for you. Come with me. We've had a letter from a woman who's either a very dedicated prankster with a lot of time on her hands or, how to say this politely, completely unhinged.

Young Barry: I see Mr Murgatroyd Sir.

Young Mr Murgatroyd: (*sighs*) Anyway... She's raving on about how much she loves our new range of French Fancies and she seems to have got it into her head that Mr Kipling is a real person who bakes all our cakes by hand himself.

Young Barry: Oh dear, Mr Murgatroyd Sir. She does sound a little confused.

Young Mr Murgatroyd: Indeed. What's more she appears to have herself a bit of a crush. And wants to enter into correspondence right away with Mr Kipling.

Young Barry: And where do I come into all of this Mr Murgatroyd Sir?

Young Mr Murgatroyd: I want you to use your talent for creative writing to reply to (*turns the paper*) Miss Beryl Dudley as Mr Kipling, offering her a 5% discount on all purchases in the next month. She might be unhinged but that doesn't mean we can't make some profits.

Young Barry: Good Lord Mr Murgatroyd Sir.

Young Mr Murgatroyd: Give it your best shot lad, well done, off you go.

CUT TO:

SCENE 5.

INT. MR MURGATYROYD'S OFFICE. DAY.

We cut back to present day Mr Murgatroyd, soon to retire Director of Sales. His assistant, Miriam, sits nearby.

Mr Murgatoyd: Well it all began in 1980.

Miriam: 1980 is correct.

Mr Murgatoyd: When I asked young Barry Watkins to reply to Miss Dudley's letter pretending to be Mr Kipling, just a bit of fun you understand.

Miriam: Just a bit of fun.

Mr Murgatoyd: We thought it wouldn't hurt to offer her a 5% discount, especially as she liked the new range.

Miriam: She loved the new range!

Mr Murgatoyd: I had absolutely no idea what we'd started.

Miriam: A nightmare.

Mr Murgatoyd: But a profitable one. It was a few weeks later when I received my monthly sales figures. I've kept them. Look. LOOK. See that? That line right there? That increase was entirely down to Miss Beryl Dudley. What could I do in the circumstances but insist Barry continued writing to her. Even still, I had no idea how long this would go on.....

CUT TO:

SCENE 6.

INT. OLD PEOPLE'S HOME. DAY.

We cut back to Beryl and the others.

Beryl: And that's how it went on for the next twenty five years. He was so attentive, so sweet, so charming, so generous - every letter, without fail, would come with a discount voucher for my next purchase.

Linda: (*Mis-hearing her*) My next purpose? I don't want a next purpose! I want to relax!

Margaret: You can relax Linda. Just eat your biscuits.

Bill suddenly awakens from sleep again.

Bill: THE WAR! We must consider the war effort!

Margaret: We're not in the war anymore Bill. You're okay! Have a biscuit.

Beryl: I got many letters. We had plans. Plans for a big bright future. Of course I was very discreet about my gentleman friend.

Enid: Everyone. She told everyone.

Beryl: It was all going so well but then I had to close the cafe when it got too much for me. I moved into a delightful retirement community.

Enid: It's an old folks home Beryl.

Beryl: (*Shushes Enid*) Of course I wrote to tell Mr K about my change in circumstances and gave him my new address but all of a sudden... he stopped writing! Just like that!!

Enid: Funny that.

Beryl: I had to do something, something big, a grand gesture to prove that my love had not changed. So I got chatting to Mrs Mullen, the Manager. Once I told her about my connections and the discounts I could secure, she soon saw it made sense to make my Mr K our sole supplier for desserts and tea-time treats.

Enid: You formed a granny gang and ambushed Mrs Mullen in her own office.

CUT TO:

SCENE 7.

INT. HALLWAY. FLASHBACK.

We cut to show shots of Beryl and the old people in sunglasses and backwards caps walking down the hallway slowly to Mrs Mullen's office.

CUT BACK TO:

SCENE 8.

INT. OLD PEOPLE'S HOME. DAY.

We cut back to Enid.

Enid: She developed a twitch. She's had to go and live with her sister!

CUT TO:

SCENE 9.

INT. HOME. FLASHBACK.

We cut to Mrs Mullen sitting on the floor rocking back and forth, with her sister Claire.

Mrs Mullen: No cake. No cake. No cake today.

Claire: Mary?

Mrs Mullen: *(Panicked)* CAKE! CAKE!! CAKE!!!

CUT BACK TO:

SCENE 10.

INT. OLD PEOPLES HOME. DAY.

Beryl: And in a matter of weeks, my love returned to me.

Enid snorts and rolls her eyes

Beryl: It was like nothing had changed...

Linda: Nothing in Spain? There's LOTS of things in Spain actually!

Bill: THE WAR! I must report to the sergeant in charge!

Margaret: *(Handing him the biscuit packet)* Just take the packet.

CUT TO:

SCENE 11.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

We cut back to Barry.

Barry: And that's how it went on for the next twenty five years. Shut away in an office, writing letter after letter after letter. TWENTY FIVE YEARS! Until that day in June...

CUT TO:

SCENE 12.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

We cut to June, 2005. Barry excitedly reads a letter, then throws it on his desk and runs to Mr Murgatroyd's office.

Barry: Mr Murgatroyd Sir! It's over. It's finally over. She's closed her cafe and moved to an old folks home. I'M FREE!!!!

Mr Murgatoyd: Oh what a shame. Well it was good while it lasted lad. And it lasted quite some time didn't it Watkins.

Barry: *(Shivers)* Yes Mr Murgatroyd Sir.

Mr Murgatoyd: Well I won't go back on my promise. You've done us proud Watkins. You'll have that promotion by Monday, I'll get straight on to HR.

CUT TO:

SCENE 13.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

We cut back to Barry, in the present day.

Barry: Suddenly I had everything to live for. I was 45, still enough time to make a life. I got my promotion. I had a little team working for me. One of them was Deirdre, she'd never noticed me before, but now she'd stop by my desk for a little natter at lunch. She smelled of cream puffs. Oh, Deirdre, Deirdre, Deirdre.

CUT TO:

SCENE 14.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

We cut to a shot of Mr Murgatroyd.

Mr Murgatoyd: Of course I was disappointed when she closed the cafe but we'd had a good run.

Miriam: A very good run.

Mr Murgatoyd: And then something incredible happened.

Miriam: Absolutely incredible.

Mr Murgatoyd: I got my monthly sales figures in and there was another sudden spike.

Miriam: She was back.

CUT TO:

SCENE 15.

INT. OFFICE. 2005.

We cut back to the 2005 office.

Mr Murgatoyd: *(Bursts dramatically through the door)* Watkins! Watkins!!

Barry: Yes, Mr Murgatroyd, Sir?

Mr Murgatoyd: Where was Miss Dudley's retirement home again?

Barry: Erm... the next town over as I recall Mr Murgatroyd Sir.

Mr Murgatoyd: (*Waves his sales report around*) Beryl Dudley! You little beauty!! She's BACK!!!!

Barry: (*Horried*) What do you mean back?

Mr Murgatoyd: Look at these figures. LOOK. It's her, its got to be. Right, come on Watkins, back to the cubby with you.

Barry: But but but... What about my promotion? I've got a team! And and ... Deirdre!

Mr Murgatoyd: Don't you worry about any of that lad, Deirdre can take over, congratulations lass, you're in charge.

Deirdre: (*Confused*) Erm Thank you Mr Murgatroyd, Sir. *mouths Sorry to Barry and shrugs.*

Mr Murgatoyd: Come on Watkins, back to it, you've letters to write, lots and lots of letters...

Barry shuffles away after Mr Murgatroyd, looking longingly back at Deirdre and bumps into the door, mutters 'I'm fine' and continues trudging away.

Narrator: (V.O.) Today, Beryl is taking matters into her own hands to finally meet her sweetheart of 45 years in person. Supported by the other old people in her care home, she is on her way to meet Mr Kipling himself.... Dressed as a french fancy.

CUT TO:

SCENE 16.

INT. OLD PEOPLES HOME. DAY.

Enid beckons the cameraman.

Enid: Psst.What do you make of this then? You know more than you're letting on Phil. Do you think he's real? Her Mr K?

Phil: I don't think I'm allowed to comment.

Enid: You're no fun.

Phil: What do you think Enid?

Enid: Well... *(smiles wickedly)* I have had a few small wagers with some of the residents here, nothing much, just a bit of fun. Do you want in Phil?

Phil: I don't think I'm allowed to comment. Nobody wants to hear from Phil. But what do YOU think Enid?

Enid: I think...nobody in their right mind would be in love for 45 years with somebody who doesn't exist.

Phil: Fair point.

Enid: And I think I would not miss today for the world *(smiles knowingly)*

CUT TO:

SCENE 17.

INT. OFFICE. DAY.

We cut to see Mr Murgatoyd giving a speech to several employees.

Narrator: Mr Murgatoyd is wrapping up his final shareholders address before he retires with a more than generous package.

Mr Murgatoyd: ... So in conclusion ladies and gentlemen...

We hear Beryl's voice shouting from the next room, interrupting.

Beryl: What do you mean not here? You find him right now. He might be a very busy man but he's always got time for his French Fancy.

Mr Murgatoyd: *(Confused, whispers to the side of the stage)* What's going on??

Security Guard in suit appears from behind the curtain and whispers to Mr Murgatoyd, who reacts reacts with horror.

Mr Murgatoyd: Ladies and Gentleman, there will be a brief interlude while I deal with an urgent matter. Please help yourselves to tea and cake, I will be back presently.

He rushes off stage clutching his sales charts.

CUT TO:

SCENE 18.

INT. RECEPTION. A MOMENT LATER.

Mr Murgatoyd: *(Approaches Beryl)* Miss Dudley? Honour to finally meet you. Eugene Murgatroyd, Director of Sales. *(Shakes her hand)*.

Beryl: Finally someone who can get things done *(glares at receptionist)*. I just want to finally meet my love. We've been corresponding for 45 years, you know.

Mr Murgatoyd: I'm well aware Miss Dudley. Let me see what I can do... Somebody get Watkins down here right now.

Brenda: Um, yes Mr Murgatroyd.

Mr Murgatoyd: Just make yourself comfortable here Miss Dudley. Can we get you any refreshment?

Beryl: I could murder a Country Slice and a cuppa.

Mr Murgatoyd: Of course, right away.

CUT TO:

SCENE 19.

INT. BARRY'S OFFICE. DAY.

Barry: *(Shouting at security guard)* No I won't, you can't make me. He's gone too far this time. Wasting my life writing to that daft old bat for 45 years is one thing, but making me meet her person is too much. You just tell him Mr K is on strike.

Narrator: It's been two hours. Barry is refusing to come down to reception. HR has been called.

Deirdre: Come on now Barry, come out and let's talk about this.

Barry: Deirdre? Oh Deirdre. Do you ever think about what might have been? I do, all the time.

Deirdre: Of course I do Barry, we had something didn't we. Just come out of the cupboard love and we'll have a nice catch up, eh?

Barry: I know a trap when I smell one Deirdre. A catch-up would be lovely but not today dammit. He can't make me come out and I won't.

Deirdre: Oh dear.

Mr Murgatoyd enters.

Mr Murgatoyd: Now come on Watkins, see sense, no need to make a scene in front of my shareholders.

Barry: I'm not coming out, you can't make me.

Mr Murgatoyd: *(whispers to Deirdre)* Can we?

Deirdre: *(whispers back)* NO!

Mr Murgatoyd: I think you'll find we can indeed Watkins! It makes sound business sense. Out you come. There's a camera crew downstairs!!!

CUT TO:

SCENE 20.

INT. RECEPTION. DAY.

Narrator: Meanwhile in reception, Beryl is becoming impatient and a second country slice is not going to cut it.

Enid: Never mind Beryl. Let's go.

Linda: It's snow? Is it snowing?

Margaret: No it's not snowing Linda. Have a biscuit.

Linda: Thank you.

Bill: The WAR!

Margaret: No Bill.

Beryl: He's coming. He would never let me down.

Enid: Of course not (*winks at Phil the cameraman*)

Suddenly the lift door opens and Barry emerges with the security guard. He spots Beryl and her costume.

Barry: Do you still not get it you crazy old bat? Mr Kipling isn't a real person. I'm Barry from Marketing. I've wasted my whole career writing to you. We've both been duped. But it's over, its finally over. Miss Beryl Dudley I will never correspond with you again. Goodbye!

Narrator: And with that, Beryl fell to her arthritic knees, and wailed.

Camera pans to Enid cackling

Beryl: I've wasted my life...

Phil: Shall we just give you a minute Beryl?

Enid: You keep filming lad (*threatens with her handbag*)t. I've listened to her go on about Mr K for 45 years, I deserve this!

Beryl: Oooooohhhhhh

Enid: Never mind dear. Here, have a French Fancy (*cackles again*)

Beryl wails again...

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

SCENE 21.

A final montage sequence (we can shoot all on greenscreen), showing what happened to each character, as the Narrator explains.

Narrator: Mr Murgatoyd retired in comfort to the south of France with his framed sales reports. And Deirdre, who ended up falling in love with him. Enid bet her retirement savings on Mr Kipling not being a real person at odds of 100 to 1. She is now a millionaire and lives comfortably in a mansion. Beryl accepted Enid's kind offer to live with her. Their relationship looks a little different these days. Barry was given early retirement on medical grounds and spends his life telling anyone he can about his tragic story.

THE END.