

# The Meeting

By

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# Dedication

For the best Sales Team in the business. I will miss each and every one of you and can't quite believe I'm leaving. Geoff told me I should write something including the Sales Team and this is what evolved. Please don't hate me, it's like all my books – exaggerated!

I want to wish you all every success and happiness in the future and urge you all to follow your dreams. You never know where they will take you.

Btw: This is the first play I have ever written and it's just for you!

*Yardley – Hastings .... The Woodmansterne mansion*

**Mini Mark** Morning Mark.

**Mark** Well, I hope it is. At least you're here.

**Mini Mark** What do you mean?

**Mark** – *sighs irritably*. Well, let's just say we're minus a sales director and a creative director and so will have to soldier on as best we can without them.

**Mini Mark.** Why, where are they?

**Mark.** John Lewis in Croydon has a couple of empty pockets. The crisis call came through late last night so they've been despatched on a damage limitation exercise.

**Mini mark** (*rolls his eyes.*) Can't Keith deal with that?

**Mark** (shakes his head.) No, he had to stay behind in case of another emergency.

**Mini Mark.** Why did Lee have to go?

**Mark.** A sweetener. He's designed a special *out of stock* range to fill the empty pockets. Some say it's his finest work. I wanted it for the independents but was overruled - as usual.

*Mini mark sits down and grabs his Filofax.*

**Mini Mark** So, who have we got?

**Mark.** Well, Chris Duplock is currently engaged in some sort of Iron man contest going on in the garden.

**Mini Mark.** How come?

**Mark.** He was here at 6am as usual and started by doing a few bench presses over by the Rhododendron bushes. Apparently, the gardener caught him and roped him into helping shift some pots to the walled garden. Geoff arrived and saw it as something of a contest and they've been hard at it ever since, each one trying to out lift the other. I doubt we'll see them until one of their hamstrings goes, and the winner is announced.

**Mini Mark** Typical. So competitive.

*Suddenly, Emma strides through the door and frowns.*

**Emma** I'm sorry Marks but this just won't do.

**Mark** What won't do? Morning by the way.

**Emma.** It's ridiculous. I received the new samples yesterday and once again they are not on the iPad. I mean, how are we supposed to operate under those circumstances? I've done a full sync three times and still nothing. I called Vas late last night and as usual he assured me it was done. Then again,

when I called him at 2am. How on earth am I supposed to hit my target and fill in the spreadsheet you send detailing ranges sold when I can't even order them? I have an appointment with Doris first thing tomorrow and unless this is sorted we could lose the account due to the unprofessional nature of this company.

**Mark** *Nods to Mini Mark.* Go and call Adam. He should know about this.

*Mini Mark leaves and Emma sits down fuming as Brendan walks in.*

**Mark.** Morning Brendan.

*Brendan looks agitated.*

**Brendan** I'm sorry Mark but I've got a major problem.

**Mark** *sighs.* Ok, let me have it.

**Brendan** It's an epidemic I tell you. First one shop opened and now another. I'm telling you, Wales is booming and I'm not sure I can cope. I did three orders for Woodmansterne on Monday and I was shattered. My KPIs are going to look out of control and I'm not sure this level of work is what I signed up for. I may need you to split the area if this continues.

**Mark** Um... yes... I can see this is an unusual situation. I may need to readjust your target if this keeps up.

**Brendan** Well, let's not do anything hasty. Maybe it was a one off. I'm sure they'll have closed down next month, anyway.

*He hastily sits next to Emma as Dave heads into the room.*

**Dave** Morning guys.

**All** Morning Dave.

**Mark** Blimey Dave, you could have changed, that Hawaiian shirt is best left in your cruise cabin.

*Shaking his head Dave sits down and looks around smugly.*

**Dave** Yes, it was a particularly enjoyable one this time. I had a cabin with a sea view and I even managed to sell a spinner into the onboard gift shop.

*They all look impressed and Mark gets excited.*

**Mark** Really Dave. That's amazing.

*Mini Mark enters the room.*

**Mark** Listen Mini Mark. Dave has a new account that may lead to a new channel of distribution that is much needed after the farm shop one ended so miserably.

*Dave nods excitedly.*

**Dave** Yes, I could check out all the cruise liners -all expenses paid of course. Leave it with me.

**Mark** In your dreams, Dave. No, this one's for management to check out.

*Whispers to Mini Mark*

**Mark** This could be our next boys outing. Make a note in the diary to brief Seth on the business opportunity that's just been presented to us. Get Helen to book the tickets and clear our outlook calendars for, shall we say, a week after the NEC?

*The door opens and Jayne enters.*

**Jayne** Morning everyone.

**All** Morning Jayne.

*She sits next to Emma and whispers.*

**Jayne** I've had the journey from Hell you know. Tracey arrived to pick me up and was towing her horse box. I'll admit it's handy for the samples and everything but quite honestly my nerves are shattered. I'm pretty sure you're not allowed to exceed 70mph in the fast lane towing one of those contraptions. I'm not sure I will ever recover.

*Tracey enters holding a mug of coffee.*

**Tracey** Morning everyone. I must say I need this. I was up at 5am organising my new kitchen. I can't believe how long this has taken but I'm more than happy with the results. Maybe now I can convince my husband to start on the rest of the house. Mind you, it's taken him ten years to agree to this one so I'm not holding my breath.

**Mark** Ok, it looks like we're nearly all here. Um... Where's Caroline?

**Mini Mark** She's helping Paul with the coffee. I think she's been detailed with bringing them in.

**Mark** *says in horror* For God's sake, is he mad? Who in their right mind would entrust a tray of hot beverages to that accident waiting to happen?

*As if on cue Caroline bursts into the room and trips and the tray wobbles precariously. She giggles.*

**Caroline** Oh my God that was close. I was just telling Paul how clumsy I was last night when I fell up the steps with the cocktails. Remember, Mark, you were there right behind me. Well, I suppose I was a little tipsy and all that but really they should have ramps in place rather than stairs. It's no wonder people drop things.

*She sets the tray on the table as the coffee splashes onto the saucers.*

*Mark shakes his head as Julie enters the room.*

**Julie** Sorry I'm late everyone. I must say I'm exhausted. I must have sold at least 20 winter packages last week not to mention 15 humour ones. I signed up 3 W Selects and quite frankly I feel quite ill as a result.

*Mark jumps up.*

**Mark** It's ok, Julie, go and lie down. Your usual room is ready.

**Julie** Oh thanks Mark. Would that be ok, I am feeling rather tired as it happens?

**Mark** You don't have to ask. If everyone was as organised as you, we wouldn't need these meetings. Take as long as you like and I'll have your coffee sent up made just the way you like it.

**Julie** Thanks. Remember to call me when lunch arrives. I don't want to miss the whole meeting – after all, it's why I'm here.

**Mark** You're so professional, Julie. You could teach the others a thing or two. Once again you have topped the spreadsheet with the most packages sold. Unbelievable and you thoroughly deserve the five-star day heading your way to add the others. Don't worry, they've added a new one as you've done most of the others.

*Julie smiles gratefully and heads off for a lie down.*

**Mark** Has anyone seen Tim today?

**Dave** Last I heard he was in Homebase grabbing another free Wallpaper sample. Rachel wanted him to re-decorate the living room so he needed it to make into a canvas for the wall. The trouble is, ever since his company film went viral, he is mobbed wherever he goes. The queue for his autograph, not to mention the selfies requested, may keep him there for most of the day.

**Mark** um.. yes. I had heard he was now quite the celebrity. I'm not sure the billboard poster on the A3 was such a good idea. The national TV campaign was also a little over the top if you ask me.

**Mini Mark** Yes, ever since we employed Kate things have gone a little ridiculous. I'm not sure that Tim's appearance on the One Show was strictly necessary.

**Jayne** Talking of which, I think he's in the line-up for Strictly next year. I really hope he makes it through to Blackpool. We could all go and watch him.

**Caroline** Oh my God, we could throw in a trip to the pleasure beach as well. I would love that.

*Paul comes in with another tray of coffee.*

**Paul** Morning everyone. Help yourself to a coffee but please remember to use the coasters provided. I have your usual box of apples and garden overstocks ready in the hall. Now I'm sorry but I'll have to leave you all in the Mark's capable hands because my Segway has just arrived and I'm keen to try it out before my Pilates class this afternoon. Keep up the good work everyone.

**All** Thanks, Paul.

*Paul leaves the room as Tony enters.*

**Mark** Ah, here he is, our newest recruit.

**Tony** Morning everyone, I'm Tony from Great British Card company.

*Everyone looks impressed as he takes a seat next to Brendan.*

*Mark looks very pleased with himself and beams at the newest member to the team*

**Mark** Welcome Tony. I must say it's been a long time coming. She was nice and all but Sharon clung onto this job like a limpet. I mean, what was Keith thinking when he employed her in the first place? No card experience at all and absolutely zero customers to bring with her. Thank goodness that Phillip Hesketh trick worked and got her mind onto something else. It took her a while but thankfully the exorbitant fee paid off and she finally handed in the towel.

*Whispers to Mini Mark* I think we're nearly there, Mark. Ling, UKG, Nigel Quiney, Wishing Well - my goodness the list is endless. Soon we will have had access to every customer on our competitors lists and total domination is in our sights. I must say, this plan is working out nicely.

**Tony** *whispers to Brendan* Who's that little man next to Mark?

**Brendan** Oh, that's Mini Mark. He manages the Northern team.

**Tony** *looks impressed.* He's doing well then.

**Brendan** *nods.* Yes, he always wanted a role in management. He used to be called Kevin you know but changed his name by deed poll when Mark told him only people named Mark would ever progress while he was in charge.

*Jeanette enters in a rush looking flustered.*

**Jeanette** I'm sorry I'm late. The flight was delayed due to some sort of confusion over Brexit. Apparently, we may need passports when we travel from now on because we're not sure if Scotland will be exempt from border controls.

*Everyone murmurs and shakes their heads in disgust.*

**Caroline** *puts her arm around her.* Don't worry, we'll ask Mark to have a word with Theresa. He'll sort it, it's what he does you know.

**Mark** Yes, leave it with me. You know, now may be a good time to explain to Tony how great I am. Maybe we should go around the room and everyone can tell him how great they think I am. Let's start with you Emma.

*Emma rolls her eyes as Matthew enters.*

**Matthew** Sorry I'm late everyone. I had a call from Pete when I was on the M25. He wanted me to detour and pick him up because he didn't think he'd make it in time.

*Pete comes in red faced and panting wearing his walking boots and backpack.*

**Pete** Sorry, I thought Somerset to Yardley would be a walk in the park. I never realised how much of a challenge it would prove to be. Maybe I'll conquer it next year when I've got that trip up Ben Nevis under my belt.

**Mark** Ok, I think we should get started. All of these interruptions have set us back at least an hour and we haven't even got to the most important part when everyone shares impressive character, morale building stories on how I've enriched their lives.

*Turns to Mini Mark*

**Mark** Go and round up the Athletes in the garden and we'll make a start. We need to welcome Tony Woodmansterne style which will involve grilling him for every bit of information he knows about our competitors, while maintaining an indifferent attitude perfected after years of thinking we are better than everyone else. Make sure the recorder's set as we don't want to miss any bit of info that may be vital to us stealing customers and hitting our year end.

*Chris and Geoff enter panting and looking red-faced*

**Geoff** For a minute there I thought I was going to lose. Luckily, Chris got distracted by a call from a customer and I seized my chance.

**Chris** *looking annoyed* I wouldn't mind but it was only one of my giftshops wanting to send back Spring. I mean, surely, they could sell out 24 cards. They need me to arrange an uplift and go in and merchandise the racks with the everyday cards that were put underneath.

**Mark** Make sure you get a decent order from them and make sure they have a spinner of Proper Mail while you're at it.

**Chris** *-rolls his eyes* I'll be lucky. They ordered carriage paid six months ago.

**Mark** *Sighs* Anyway. Let's get back to the important matters of the day. On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being great and 10 being idol status, what would each of you rate me as a manager?

### **The End**

For one of them anyway!

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