

Sample of the script. Seven pages of 12. Contact Michael Percy if you want to see more.

Cyber Romance

By Michael Percy

CHARACTERS:

Louise/Helen Marley- British, early forties. At the start of the play she is known as Louise. At the beginning she is wearing a dress. She also wears a wig of a different colour to her real hair. This should not be obvious. The wig will be removed when she reverts to being Helen.

Kerim Sevim – Middle Eastern in origin, early thirties. English is his second language. He wears a well-worn suit and tie.

Two sinister burly figures dressed in black

Scene one

(The living room/sitting room of a traditional oak beamed country cottage but the only essential part of the set is that a window should be indicated left or right by lighting at least. There should be an occasional table with an ice bucket and champagne plus two glasses. Two chairs.)

(Louise and Kerim enter. Louise has a small wheellie overnight suitcase plus a handbag while Kerim has an outsized bulging suitcase. They dump their suitcases in the centre of the room.)

Louise: Here we are, what do you think?

Kerim: It is charming – In the heart of the English countryside. It is wonderful. I have never before been in a house with wooden beams like this.

Louise: Yes, it's wonderful, low ceiling, tiny rooms, terrible plumbing and not much heating: a typical English country cottage.

Kerim: **(Concerned.)** This is very bad. You said you have rented this place, paid money for it – yes?

Louise: Yes I have, but don't worry about the heating and the rest – I'm sure it will be fine. **(She takes his face in her hands.)** I'm sorry, that was a joke – a witticism, a clever remark. You'll get used to me –but I will be gentle with you until you do. Promise. **(She pulls away.)**

Kerim: Yes, jokes. I will learn to see them. With you, I think it is important. English humour – perhaps you can make a signal when you are doing it. So I know when to laugh.

Louise: There you go - You're catching on already. Giving me a taste of my own medicine...

Kerim: **(looks confused and raises a hand to interrupt.)** Medicine...?

Louise: Forget it! I'll explain later – much later. I'm going to enjoy turning you into an English Gentleman. **(She straightens his tie.)** But don't worry about it now. This is a holiday. Make the most of it, we've got the whole weekend to relax and to start getting to know each other.

(They look at each other, awkward for a moment.)

Louise: **(Releasing his tie.)** Yes, well, let's erm... sort out our stuff shall we?

(Louise takes hold of her suitcase, begins to move away but stops and turns back to Kerim.)

Louise: It is so strange... seeing you in the flesh; wonderful but strange as well. Your face in the room with me and not just on my computer screen. I have thought about this so many times – what this moment would be like.

Kerim: And myself – I have wanted to look on your face. The real Louise.

(Kerim takes Louise's free hand.)

Louise: We only have three days here but I wanted it to be... well, in England we talk about a honeymoon – this will be our honeymoon.

Kerim: I know honeymoon. I understand. This will be very good for us.

(Kerim moves close to Louise. He attempts to put his arms round her but this is hampered by the suitcase. He attempts a kiss but Louise bends to put the suitcase on the ground. There is a clumsy moment and Louise pulls away smiling.)

Louise: It would not be a proper honeymoon without champagne. **(She picks up the bottle.)** You see how well organised I am? I want us to toast each other and the fact that you are now living in a free country and that you will soon be a citizen of a free country and all that that means.

Kerim: But I have nothing for you. No gifts. You have done everything. My flight, my visa – everything. I will live in your house but I can give you nothing. For a man this is... very difficult thing to know.

Louise: **(Replacing the champagne.)** But I know you would if you could. I understand that and you must not feel bad about it. None of it matters Kerim. All that does matter is that you are safe and here with me. No one can touch you, our laws will protect you. A fresh start.

Kerim: But I will make it up to you. I will work and buy things for you – such things. Wonderful things. I know of the shop Harrods – a good shop yes? I will buy you things from Harrods.

Louise: That's lovely of you but I'm more an M&S kind of girl. M&S will suit me fine.

Kerim: That is fixed then. You want Eemeness – you say Eemeness? - you will have Eemeness.

Louise: That's lovely of you but it's M and S. The initials, M&S

Kerim: Eemeness. Yes, I will look out for it.

Louise: **(Laughing.)** But just the initials M and... Oh no, it doesn't matter, Eemeness it is!

Kerim: Eemeness, is good shop. Eemeness here we come!

(Laughing, Kerim and Louise hug.)

Kerim: You say we unpack our things, for the night first. There are bedrooms?

Louise: Of course, three. And a put-you-up in here.

Kerim: Put-you-up?

Louise: A folding bed, it's part of the settee – you pull it out.

Kerim: That is clever.

Louise: But we only need to mess up one of the beds. Unless you prefer the put-you-up?

Kerim: No, no – not a folding bed please.

Louise: Very wise.

Kerim: One bedroom is what you want for us yes?

Louise: I'm happy if you are, start as we mean to go on. Let's celebrate.

(Louise opens the champagne. There is the usual fuss when champagne is popped. She turns momentarily up stage so that we cannot see the pouring of the drink. This must be natural, just enough that she could, unseen by the audience, slip something, a drug, into the glass. BUT at this stage the audience must NOT be led to suspect that Kerim's drink is spiked. This must occur to them later, in retrospect.)

Kerim: *(Picks up the champagne cork.)* I will keep this to remember this day. I have looked at your picture so much and I have desired to see you. Desired so much to see you, the real you. You are beautiful, more beautiful than your photo could ever show me.

(Louise turns and offers one of the glasses of champagne to Kerim. Kerim does not take the glass but instead takes hold of her hand in which the glass is held.)

Kerim: You are a beautiful woman Louise.

Louise: That really is enough about my beauty – I could start believing it myself. Mind, don't spill the champagne Kerim.

(Kerim tries to pull Louise closer to him.)

Louise: Drink Kerim, unwind. You have had a long flight. You must be tired. There is plenty of time.

(Kerim takes the glass and toasts Louise.)

Kerim: To a beautiful woman.

Louise: *(Returning the toast.)* To a brave freedom fighter.

(They drink then sip their drinks while talking.)

Kerim: It is sad, I think you say an irony, that I have to leave my country because I love it. I want it to be a democracy like England, like America. We should drink to that.

Louise: Yes. To democracy.

Kerim: Democracy.

Louise: You didn't choose to leave - the regime has murdered so many people and it is important that people like you are able to keep up the fight. What use is a dead hero? And I can help, I really want to help you.

Kerim: Yes but it is hard, hard to leave a country you love. And to leave all the people you love.

Louise: Don't be sad. Try not to think of these things – at least not here, in this place, on our honeymoon. If only for a few days. I wanted you to enjoy England: we don't always have champagne, we don't always have sunshine but it's a free country. **(She takes his glass for a refill and again we cannot see the pouring.)**

Kerim: Democracy is the first thing, we must begin there. Then we can begin caring for our people. **(He walks to the window and becomes thoughtful.)** This is such a beautiful country. Green is such a refresh... refreshing you say? Refreshing colour. But I miss my country.

(Louise joins him with two glasses, handing one to Kerim. They both sip.)

Louise: I am sure you will go back one day.

Kerim: And you Louise will come with me.

Louise: If you'll have me.

Kerim: These things will happen, I know it. I believe these things. **(He drinks and then sighs.)** But I have to say to you that I nearly did not get on the plane to come to your country.

Louise: Why?

Kerim: It is my sister. She was not well before. We thought it was not serious but it is. My sister did not want me to know. But our mother, she told me at the airport. Almas has a tumour of the brain.

Louise: My God, how awful for you.

Kerim: It was so hard to leave when I knew because I will never see my sister again.

Louise: Can't they operate?

Kerim: It is not possible.

Louise: That is terrible. She's younger than you isn't she?

Kerim: Just twenty-five. A child. And she loves to teach. She loves the children and they love her. It will be so hard for them – to lose a teacher they love so much.

Louise: Poor Kerim. That is terrible. Is there nothing, no operation, no treatment?

Kerim: Nothing we can do.

Louise: Could she come here to see a specialist? Sometimes there are new treatments and if she could be seen in time it may be possible to do something.

Kerim: **(Angry.)** You don't understand, you must leave this alone, say no more please.

(A pause. Louise is hurt by Kerim's anger.)

Louise: Kerim my love, please forgive me. I'm sure everything has been done by your family. Everything that can be done. I didn't mean to suggest...

Kerim: You don't understand, our doctors know what to do. They know well this operation.

Louise: Is it political? Is she refused because you are an activist?

Kerim: **(A bitter laugh.)** Not politics, not this time.

Louise: Then what, why can't they save her?

Kerim: I am ashamed.

Louise: (Holds Kerim's shoulders and pleads with him.) Why Kerim, tell me please.

Kerim: (He turns away from Louise.) Money. An operation is possible but in my country we must pay – for surgeons, medicine. She could be saved but my family is poor. They must only watch her die.

Louise: How much?

Kerim: And it is because of me. My job, I lose it because I make trouble for the regime. Even my sister must stay on the bottom pay, the most basic for a teacher. It is my fault.

Louise: How much Kerim?

Kerim: I am here in this beautiful country with a beautiful woman. This cottage, such luxury... champagne I have never drunk before. This is wrong while...

Louise: (Insistent now.) How much will it cost Kerim?

Kerim: Too much. With everything, maybe sixty thousand.

Louise: My goodness, sixty thousand pounds.

Kerim: No, I think in Lira – it is, maybe eighteen thousand pounds.

Louise: Poor Kerim. (Pause, she takes him in her arms.) Will you let me help you? I am not a rich woman but there are ways. I am sure I can borrow money against my flat. You must let me help.

Kerim: No, it cannot be. You have done so much for me. You have given me a new life, a new home - everything. But you must understand why it is hard for me to enjoy all this when my sister...

Louise: (Reaching a decision.) We will help your sister together. We will save her I promise.

(Kerim shakes his head looking away from Louise.)

Louise: (She grabs the bottle and tops up Kerim's glass.) Let's make another toast – to helping your sister.

Kerim: My head, I should drink no more. My head is spinning.

(Kerim staggers slightly towards a chair. Louise helps him into the chair.)

Louise: It is the flight and all the excitement. You need to rest that's all.

Kerim: (Trying to rise from the chair.) It is more, this is not champagne. I feel... (He slumps back into the chair.) What have you done? (He shakes his head trying to clear it.) Why?

(Kerim is fighting sleep but slumps unconscious in the chair.)

Louise: (She has watched this dispassionately.) No Kerim, it's not just the champagne. You're right there, lover.

(Louise takes rope or duct tape from her suitcase and securely ties Kerim to the chair. She stands in front of him for a moment and then removes the wig she has been wearing, throwing it in Kerim's lap. She shakes out her own hair. She bends down with her face close to his.)

Louise: You smell. You've no idea how much you stink!

(Louise begins to unzip her dress in preparation for changing before taking her suitcase and moving towards the bedrooms.)

Louise: Don't run off honey, we've got so much to talk about.

(Exit Louise.)

(Hold the stage with Kerim in the chair. Gently bring lighting down to indicate the failing light at the end of a day. Make lighting gloomy and backlit. Hold lighting effect.)

(Pause.)

(Kerim stirs. Just a little. He tries to raise his head. He shakes his head as if to clear his confusion. He slumps down again.)

(Pause.)

(Enter Louise – continue gloomy backlighting. She is wearing jeans and a top. Louise must look noticeably different. Louise opens Kerim's case and begins to search, throwing items around. She takes a Stanley knife from her handbag and begins slashing Kerim's clothes.)

(Kerim stirs, groans, notices Louise.)

Kerim: (Groggy.) What... what are you doing. Louise! **(He struggles against his restraints.)**

(Louise switches on the room light. Go to full lighting. Louise, still holding the Stanley knife, stands over Kerim.)

Louise: There you are, now you can see what I'm up to. I'm cutting up all your clothes. Everything.

Kerim: But why Louise. Please...What is happening? Your hair...

End of sample – page 7 of 12