

Georgina Kuna

The HeArt of the Matter – a TV Sitcom

MA Scriptwriting 2012

Biography:

Norwich native. Earliest writing memory is of penning Womble fan-fiction. Went on to art school (Norwich, Gt Yarmouth, Goldsmiths). Dabbled in poetry and songwriting: placed in local poetry competition, published in Rialto. Became a community musician. Discovered scriptwriting via Cont Ed at UEA. Won Best Short Script: End of Pier Film Fest 2010. Script reader for BBC comedy. Graduated MA UEA 2012. Short-listed BBC Writersroom 2013. Currently developing full-length stage play about local literary figure George Borrow.



# **The HeArt of the Matter**

Episode 1

by

Georgina Kuna

**SCENE 1: MONTAGE / JOB INTERVIEWS / OFFICES**

A) JOY WATERS (EARLY 40S, MODESTLY DRESSED AND NEAT), STANDS OUTSIDE A LARGE GLASS FRONTED CORPORATE OFFICE BUILDING. SHE READS A POSTER SAYING 'VACANCIES'.

SHE STEPS INTO A REVOLVING DOOR AS A BEVY OF LEGGY, SEXILY SKIRT-SUITED YOUNG WOMEN CROWD IN AROUND HER. THE REVOLVING DOOR SPINS. THE YOUNG WOMEN RUSH THROUGH AGAIN, AND EXIT THE BUILDING. JOY IS LAST TO BE SPAT OUTSIDE.

THE 'VACANCIES' POSTER IS RIPPED OUT OF THE WINDOW. JOY RACES AFTER THE YOUNG WOMEN WHO DASH 'BENNY HILL' STYLE INTO ANOTHER BUILDING.

B) JOY IS JUST TOO LATE TO SQUEEZE INTO AN ELEVATOR WITH THE CROWD OF LOVELY GIRLS. THE OTHER ELEVATOR ARRIVES, SHE STEPS IN. AS THE DOORS CLOSE, THE FIRST ELEVATOR COMES BACK DOWN AND SPITS OUT THE CROWD OF GIRLS - THERE ARE NOTICEABLY FEWER - THEY RUSH OFF AGAIN. JOY MANAGES TO SQUEEZE OUT OF THE CLOSING DOORS.

C) JOY RACES ALONG THE STREETS FOLLOWING THE GIRLS, WHO DASH IN AND OUT OF BUILDINGS. JOY NEVER EVEN MAKES IT INTO THE BUILDINGS. THE CROWD OF GIRLS SHRINKS EACH TIME THEY EXIT.

D) TWO GIRLS SIT IN A MODERN OFFICE RECEPTION. JOY ARRIVES, BEDRAGGLED, BREATHLESS. A SMUGLY HANDSOME YOUNG MAN EMERGES, THE GIRLS LOCK EYES WITH HIM, CROSSING THEIR LONG LEGS.

HE NODS TO ONE WHO FOLLOWS HIM. JOY AND THE OTHER GIRL SIZE EACH OTHER UP. JOY TURNS AND RUNS.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 2: INT - RECEPTION - ARTS CENTRE**

THE RECEPTION AREA IS TATTY AND DATED. GARISH, BAD AMATEUR COPIES OF FAMOUS PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES COVER THE WALLS AND SURFACES. THE DESK IS CLUTTERED AND UNMANNED.

JOY, SWEATY, RED FACED, AND EXHAUSTED, FALLS IN THROUGH THE DOOR.

BOB PALMER ( MID 50S, CRUMPLED SUIT, EVEN MORE CRUMPLED FACE ) EMERGES FROM HIS OFFICE.

**BOB:**

Ah! Hello, you're from the agency?

JOY NODS (TOO BREATHLESS TO SPEAK), SHE HOLDS UP HER HAND IN A 'WAIT A MINUTE' GESTURE.

SHE UNBUTTONS HER BLOUSE A BIT AND STRIKES A RIDICULOUS 'SEXY' POSE.

BOB SMILES BRIGHTLY, TOTALLY UNFAZED.

**BOB:**

Oh, I see. Brilliant. Very enthusiastic. I think you'll be just the ticket. Come with me.

JOY FOLLOWS HIM. THE OTHER YOUNG GIRL (SAVANNAH 20S) BURSTS THROUGH THE DOORS. JOY CASTS A SMUG LOOK AND A CRUEL WAVE BACK AT HER. SAVANNAH SITS DOWN AND BURSTS INTO TEARS.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 3: INT - LIFE DRAWING STUDIO**

THE STUDIO IS SCATTERED WITH EASELS, LIFE DRAWINGS (NUDES) COVER THE WALLS. THERE IS A DAIS, WITH A SCREEN, DRAPERY, A CHAISE LONGUE.

BOB ENTERS FOLLOWED BY JOY.

**BOB:**

Sorry, should introduce myself. Bob Palmer, centre manager.

**JOY:**

Joy, Joy Waters. Hopeful applicant.

**BOB:**

Oh, I think we can safely say you've got the gig. You seem perfect.

**JOY:**

Is that it? The job's definitely mine?

**BOB:**

Oh yes. If you want it, you seem...keen anyway.

HE LOOKS BOLDLY AT HER UNBUTTONED BLOUSE. SHE PULLS IT TOGETHER, SUDDENLY A BIT EMBARRASSED. HE FROWNS.

**BOB:**

You do want the job don't you?

**JOY:**

Oh yes. Very much.

SHE HALF SIGHS AND SELF CONSCIOUSLY REARRANGES HER BLOUSE AGAIN TO SHOW PLENTY OF CLEAVAGE.

**BOB:**

Good. I was a bit worried for a minute. Sometimes the agency send us inexperienced people who back out at the last minute. Very frustrating.

**JOY:**

Right. I feel I should admit to being a bit out of practise,

**BOB:**

Oh I'm sure you'll be fine. It's hardly rocket science now is it?

SHE SMILES BROADLY.

**JOY:**

Right... Where's the 'office'?

HE LAUGHS AND GESTURES TOWARD THE  
DAIS.

**BOB:**

Sense of humour too, just the ticket in this line of work. There's a robe  
behind the screen, it can get a tad chilly...

HE DOES A SILLY NIPPLE AND CROTCH  
COVERING GESTURE. JOY'S FACE DROPS.

**BOB:**

Silly maybe, but it's traditional, a nod towards the old modesty! I've been  
standing in for weeks. Not really my thing, but can't let the side down  
and all that.

JOY LOOKS AROUND AND REALISES THE LIFE  
DRAWINGS ARE CLEARLY ALL OF BOB.

**BOB:**

Everyone is sick of the sight of me so you'll be a very welcome relief.  
Right, I'm expecting our new receptionist to arrive any minute so I'll let  
you get on.

HE EXITS.

JOY STANDS STUNNED.

**JOY:**

Life model? No! Wait!

SHE DASHES OUT.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 4: INT - RECEPTION**

SAVANNAH IS ENSCONCED AT THE RECEPTION DESK.

JOY EMERGES AND STOPS DEAD AT THE SIGHT OF HER.

THE GIRL LOOKS UP AND SMILES TRIUMPHANTLY AT JOY. SHE PRESSES AN INTERCOM.

**SAVANNAH:**

Bob, the life model is here.....take a seat please.

JOY FUMES.

BOB EMERGES FROM HIS OFFICE BEHIND RECEPTION.

**BOB:**

Joy. Any problems?

**JOY:**

Um, actually yes, well I just...well, actually I don't think....

**BOB:**

Oh I forgot to say didn't I. Silly me. The rate is £15.00 an hour. That ok?

SAVANNAH'S FACE DROPS.

**SAVANNAH:**

How much?

JOY'S JAW DROPS.

**JOY:**

£15.00 an hour?

GILBERT (LATE 30S, RUGGEDLY AND *IRRESISTIBLY* HANDSOME, DRESSED LIKE A GAME-KEEPER, LUGGING A LARGE HESSIAN SACK) ENTERS. JOY AND SAVANNAH STARE, HYPNOTISED BY HIS MANLY ALLURE.

**BOB:**

Ah, Gilbert. Perfect. Meet Joy, the new life model.

GILBERT DROPS THE SACK WITH A DULL THUMP AND HOLDS OUT A HAND.

**GILBERT:**

Can't tell you how pleased I am to meet you, Joy.

HE GIVES JOY A DEVASTATING, KNEE-WEAKENING SMILE. JOY SIMPERS AND FLUTTERS AT HIM. SAVANNAH'S FACE DROPS EVEN FURTHER.

**JOY:**

Pleasure's all mine...

**GILBERT:**

Come on then Joy. Let's get started shall we?

BEGIN SLOW MOTION:

GILBERT PICKS UP THE SACK WITH MANLY GRACE AND STRIDES OUT.

END SLOW MOTION:

BOB ROLLS HIS EYES AT THE MESMERISED WOMEN. JOY SHAKES OFF HER DREAMY LOOK.

**JOY:**

Just out of curiosity Bob, how much does the receptionist get paid?

**BOB:**

Oh god. Only £7.46. Dreadful really if you think about it. Awful job admin, all that paperwork, having to make everyone fill out endless pointless forms so they all end up hating the sight of you. I wouldn't do it, not for...nope..can't think of a figure big enough to persuade me. Still, now the lovely Savannah is here that's not my problem.

JOY FLOUNCES TRIUMPHANTLY AFTER GILBERT, STICKING HER TONGUE OUT AT A CRESTFALLEN SAVANNAH.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 5: INT - LIFE DRAWING STUDIO**

GILBERT STANDS ON THE DAIS WITH THE SACK AT HIS FEET.

JOY COMES IN. SHE LOOKS A BIT NERVOUS.

**GILBERT:**

Have you been modelling long? Been having terrible trouble finding someone...can't think why, the money's pretty good.

**JOY:**

Yes I suppose it is.

**GILBERT:**

First things first. You'd better get undressed.

**JOY:**

What...completely?

**GILBERT:**

I find that's usually the best approach.

HE STARTS PEELING OFF HIS JACKET. JOY IS SUCKED IN AGAIN BY HIS MASCULINE ALLURE AND STARTS TO UNBUTTON HER BLOUSE.

**JOY:**

Ok, though I want to say that I don't usually...you know, do this kind of...

**GILBERT:**

Don't tell me, it's actually your first time isn't it?

JOY NODS AND BLUSHES.

**GILBERT:**

Thought so. Do you know how I could tell?

JOY SHAKES HER HEAD, EYES WIDE.

**GILBERT:**

...most people go behind the screen.

JOY SMILES COQUETTISHLY.

**JOY:**

Ooops. Silly me!

SHE SLINKS UP ONTO THE DAIS AND STEPS BEHIND THE SCREEN.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 6: INT - BEHIND THE SCREEN**

JOY SCREAMS.

SHE'S FACE TO FACE WITH A SNARLING AND MANGY STUFFED FOX, JUST ONE OF A PILE OF EQUALLY HIDEOUS STUFFED ANIMALS AND BIRDS ALL IN 'RED IN TOOTH AND CLAW' POSES.

GILBERT STICKS HIS HEAD ROUND.

**GILBERT:**

Sorry. Should have warned you. Most people don't like these so I keep them tucked out of sight.

HE PICKS UP THE FOX AND STROKES IT.

**GILBERT:**

He's my favourite. My first in fact.

**JOY:**

You mean you...stuffed...ALL THESE?

**GILBERT:**

Oh yes. It's my real passion. I mean, life drawing's ok, but this...this is where it's at for me. Stuffing. I love to stuff things.

JOY CONSIDERS THIS, WATCHING THE SENSUAL WAY GILBERT STROKES THE FOX. HER FACE MELTS WITH UNBIDDEN DESIRE.

SHE INCHES CLOSER TO GILBERT.

**JOY:**

Fascinating.

GILBERT'S FACE LIGHTS UP LIKE A LITTLE BOY'S.

**GILBERT:**

Do you really think so? Most people think it's really morbid and creepy. Can't get enough myself.

**JOY:**

So you're an expert then? In stuffing?

**GILBERT:**

I suppose I am! But there's not much call for it really.

**JOY:**

Oh, I think I could be persuaded...

**GILBERT:**

Really? Would you like to er...give it a go then?

**JOY:**

I thought you'd never ask!

JOY LEANS IN FOR A KISS, BUT GILBERT  
SHOVES THE FOX AT HER.

**GILBERT:**

Go on then, give him a stroke.

SHE RECOILS. GILBERT SIGHS.

**GILBERT:**

Thought as much. He doesn't bite...

HE BOBS THE FOX UP AND DOWN LIKE A KIND  
OF PUPPET

**GILBERT:**

Not any more anyway!

JOY PUTS OUT A HAND AND RELUCTANTLY  
STROKES THE FOX. HER FACE RELAXES.

**JOY:**

Actually, it's quite nice. Lovely and soft.

**GILBERT:**

See. Told you it'd be alright. Doesn't get stroked enough poor old foxy.

GILBERT BEAMS. JOY GETS MORE  
ENTHUSIASTIC.

**JOY:**

Does he like that, old foxy woxy, does he like it like that?

GILBERT LAUGHS.

**GILBERT:**

Don't be silly. I know he looks really alive, but he's definitely dead. I  
should know, I shot him.

JOY STEPS BACK IN HORROR.

**JOY:**

What on earth am I thinking?

SHE PUSHES PAST GILBERT AND AROUND THE  
SCREEN.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 7: INT - LIFE DRAWING STUDIO**

JOY LIFTS HER FOOT TO STEP OVER THE ABANDONED SACK.

IT BEGINS TO WRITHE WITH LIFE.

SHE SCREAMS.

GILBERT LEAPS OUT AND POUNCES ON THE SACK, WRESTLING IT LIKE A CROCODILE WRANGLER.

**JOY:**

What the hell is in there? Oh dear god..please don't tell me it's your latest...project?

**GILBERT:**

Um...well, errr....

**JOY:**

Don't you usually wait till something is..you know...

SHE GIVES HER THROAT A CUTTING GESTURE AND WINCES.

**GILBERT:**

Well, duh....look, the class will be here any minute. Please don't leave now. Just do it this once?

**JOY:**

No way.

A CROWD OF JOLLY LITTLE OLD LADIES BUSTLE IN, SMILING AND CHATTERING.

**GILBERT:**

Ah ladies! Lovely to see you, and what a treat we've got today. Meet Joy, our new life model!

JOY SCOWLS AT GILBERT.

**LITTLE OLD LADIES::**

Oh, yes, Bob told us on the way in / What a relief! / And isn't she just the loveliest thing? / Thank you so much dear.

**GILBERT:**

Please? Otherwise Bob'll have to do it again, and well...the class will be so disappointed. Again.

HE GESTURES TOWARDS THE DRAWINGS ON  
THE WALLS AS HE DRAGS THE SACK  
TOWARDS THE DOOR.

JOY'S RESOLVE TO SCARPER FAILS HER IN THE  
FACE OF THE LITTLE OLD LADIES FLATTERING  
ENTHUSIASM.

**GILBERT:**

I'll be back just as soon as I've...umm...

HE'S OUT THE DOOR BEFORE JOY CAN OBJECT.

JOY SIGHS AND STEPS BACK BEHIND THE  
SCREEN.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 8: INT - CANTEEN**

THE CANTEEN IS DECKED OUT WITH HIDEOUS AMATEUR ART WORK LIKE THE RECEPTION.

GILBERT ENTERS THE CANTEEN WITH HIS SACK. HE LOOKS AROUND, IT SEEMS EMPTY. HE TRIES TO SNEAK ACROSS THE ROOM.

HAZEL (LATE 50S, FACE LIKE BULLDOG, BUILT LIKE A TANK) EMERGES LIKE AN ICEBERG FROM BEHIND THE CANTEEN SERVING HATCH.

**HAZEL :**

You know the rules.

SHE GRABS GILBERT BY THE SCRUFF OF HIS NECK, HAULS HIM TO A TABLE AND PLONKS HIM IN A CHAIR.

**GILBERT:**

Oh come on Hazel. I've got a class waiting for me.

**HAZEL:**

If you want freezer space you have to earn the privilege.

HAZEL PLONKS AN ELBOW ON THE TABLE.

**HAZEL:**

Best of three.

GILBERT SHOVES THE SACK UNDER THE TABLE AND HAZEL LOCKS HAND AND EYE WITH HIM. SHE GRINS. HE BRACES HIMSELF.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 9: INT. BEHIND THE SCREEN/LIFE DRAWING  
STUDIO**

JOY PICKS UP A TINY SILKY ROBE.

SHE PICTURES BOB IN IT:

CUT TO:

BOB ON THE DAIS IN JUST THE ROBE, IT  
BARELY COVERS HIS 'MODESTY'. HE DROPS  
THE ROBE AND STRIKES A POSE.

BACK TO SCENE:

**JOY:**

Oh god. I'm not actually going to do this am I?

SHE STARTS UNBUTTONING HER BLOUSE. THE  
FOX 'STARES' AT HER.

**JOY:**

And what are you looking at?

SHE THROWS THE ROBE OVER THE FOXES  
HEAD.

THE GOSSIP OF THE OLD LADIES GETS  
LOUDER. JOY COCKS HER HEAD TO LISTEN.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 10: INT. LIFE DRAWING STUDIO**

THE OLD LADIES GOSSIP AS THEY SET UP  
THEIR EASELS.

**OLD LADY 1:**

I'm glad we don't have to draw Bob again. Lovely man, but all that blushing, I've quite run out of red!

**OLD LADY 2:**

Can't imagine why he's so embarrassed, not got much to blush about really has he?

THEY ALL TITTER.

**OLD LADY 1:**

Be kind dear. I mean, with all that blood in his face there's none left for anywhere else is there?

THEY ALL CACKLE.

JOY STEPS OUT FROM BEHIND THE SCREEN, A  
LENGTH OF MUSLIN DRAPED OVER HER ARM.

**JOY:**

Good morning ladies. Lovely to meet you. I've got a bit of a proposal...

CUT TO:

**SCENE 11: INT - CANTEEN**

BOB ENTERS WITH SAVANNAH IN TOW.  
GILBERT AND HAZEL ARE ARM WRESTLING.

**BOB:**

Ah, you've met Gilbert, and this is Hazel. This is Savannah, our new admin stroke receptionist.

GILBERT, VERY RED FACED, GRUNTS A HELLO.  
HAZEL GRINS. SAVANNAH IS SPEECHLESS.

**BOB:**

Suppose I'll have to get the tea myself then Hazel?

**HAZEL:**

Just a sec.

SHE DISPATCHES GILBERT WITH EASE,  
SENDING HIM UNDER THE TABLE GROANING  
IN AGONY.

**HAZEL:**

Tea or coffee love? And I've just finished a lovely coffee walnut sponge? You look like you could do with a bit of feeding up.

HAZEL DISAPPEARS BEHIND THE COUNTER.

**SAVANNAH:**

Oh, that's very nice but I don't really eat cake.

SHE SMOOTHS DOWN HER TIGHTLY FITTING  
JACKET.

**SAVANNAH:**

Watching my figure...

SHE SMILES COQUETTISHLY AT BOB.

**HAZEL(O.O.V):**

This is a beauty, I've really out done myself this time.

LOUD NOISES, BANGING, CRASHING COME  
FROM THE SERVING HATCH.

BOB SMILES ENCOURAGINGLY, AND RUNS  
HIS HANDS NERVOUSLY THROUGH HIS HAIR.

**BOB:**

She's very proud of her baking. It might be the polite thing if you could just have a teensy little bit?

CUT TO:

**SCENE 12. INT. LIFE DRAWING STUDIO**

ONE OF THE OLD LADIES - BERYL - IS DRAPED OVER THE CHAISE LONGUE WRAPPED IN A TOGA-LIKE SWATHE OF FABRIC.

THE REST OF THE CLASS ARE SETTLED AT THEIR EASELS.

**OLD LADY 1:**

Very fetching Beryl. Lovely.

**OLD LADY 2:**

We could take it in turns I suppose, if you get tired Beryl?

BERYL SNORES DELICATELY.

**JOY:**

What a wonderful idea. I just need to ummm...Gilbert will be back any minute.

JOY TIPTOES OUT.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 13: INT. RECEPTION**

DELPHINE, (50ISH, ALL GAUZY FLORALS AND WILD HAIR) IS HANGING PICTURES.

JOY BURSTS IN (SHE'S ABOUT TO MAKE AN ESCAPE). SHE COLLIDES WITH DELPHINE.

**DELPHINE:**

Ooops a daisy. Perfect timing dear. Would you mind? A second opinion is always so helpful...

DELPHINE GESTURES TO THE PICTURE SHE IS HANGING. IT'S A TERRIBLE COPY OF MUNCH'S 'SCREAM' BUT THE FIGURE HAS A LARGE CHEESY GRIN AND CLUTCHES A BUNCH OF DAISIES.

**JOY:**

Good God!

DELPHINE SMILES, CLASPS HER HANDS TOGETHER AT HER BOSOM.

**DELPHINE:**

People say that kind of thing about my work aallll the time. It's really very gratifying.

JOY BACKS AWAY POLITELY.

**JOY:**

I'm sure they do. I've certainly never seen anything quite like it.

SHE REACHES THE EXIT, ONLY TO FIND IT BLOCKED BY A LARGE STACK OF CANVASES.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 14: INT. CANTEEN**

GILBERT DRAGS HIMSELF UP FROM UNDER THE TABLE, RUBS HIS BICEPS, WINCES.

**HAZEL(O.O.V):**

You're going to love this Savannah. Just needs a few finishing touches.

GILBERT LOOKS AT BOB MEANINGFULLY.

**GILBERT:**

You'd better warn her Bob. You know what Hazel can be like about cake refusals.

**BOB:**

Shut up will you Gilbert? She's been having anger management training, she'll be fine.

**HAZEL(O.O.V):**

I hope you're hungry!

THE CRASHING CONTINUES, ALONG WITH SOME HAPPY SINGING. BOB AND GILBERT EXCHANGE WORRIED LOOKS.

**BOB:**

You know, Savannah, Hazel's cakes are really wonderful. Couldn't you just have a little bit?

**SAVANNAH:**

Well...I really don't want to but maybe...

**HAZEL (O.O.V):**

And now the coup de grace, the notional cherry on top...some lovely, expensive, flown all the way from Italy on special order with no regard whatsoever of the cost...especially to welcome you Savannah...Walnuts.

SAVANNAH CAN'T HIDE HER RELIEF.

**SAVANNAH:**

Ah, no go I'm afraid. Allergic. Very. Deadly in fact. Can't. Sorreeee!

BOB AND GILBERT STARE AT EACH OTHER.

**GILBERT:**

I'll get Delphine shall I?

HAZEL STARTS SINGING AGAIN. IT'S TERRIFYING.

**BOB:**  
Gogogogogogo...NOW!

CUT TO:

**SCENE 15: INT - RECEPTION**

JOY HOLDS UP A LARGE PAINTING, ARMS TREMBLING. DELPHINE CONTEMPLATES IT.

GILBERT BURSTS IN CLUTCHING A BUNCH OF LAVENDER AND A LARGE HARDBACK BOOK.

**GILBERT:**

There you are! Got a bit of a situation in the canteen....oooooh, new work?

GILBERT STANDS NEXT TO DELPHINE AND THEY CONTEMPLATE THE PAINTING. IT'S EXACTLY LIKE EVERY OTHER PAINTING ON VIEW.

**DELPHINE:**

Yes. Completely new direction for me...what do you think?

**GILBERT:**

Hmmmm, let me see...

JOY FROWNS CROSSLY, AND DROPS THE PAINTING.

**GILBERT:**

Oh hello Joy. Didn't notice you there. I see you've met Delphine, our painting and crafts tutor. Delphine, this is Joy, our new life model.

**DELPHINE:**

How lovely, why didn't you say dear?

**JOY:**

Well, the thing is...

**DELPHINE:**

Gilbert's such a dear, look he's brought me a lovely bunch of lavender, my favourite.

DELPHINE TAKES THE LAVENDER FROM A BEAMING GILBERT AND BURIES HER NOSE IN IT, INHALING DEEPLY.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 16: INT. CANTEEN**

HAZEL PRESENTS AN EXTRAVAGANT CAKE TO SAVANNAH WITH A FLOURISH.

**HAZEL:**

Ta da!

**SAVANNAH:**

Oh, well...it really is fabulous. But, the thing is, I really can't eat it...

HAZEL PUTS THE CAKE DOWN VERY CAREFULLY.

**HAZEL:**

I'm sorry? You can't what?

**SAVANNAH:**

Honestly, it's very sweet of you but...

HAZEL GLOWERS, A REAL HEAD OF STEAM STARTING BUILD UP INSIDE HER.

BOB STEPS NERVOUSLY BETWEEN THEM.

**BOB:**

Come on now Hazel. Remember your...

HAZEL RAISES A SILENCING FINGER. BOB CRINGES. HAZEL TURNS SMARTLY ON HER HEEL AND WALKS AWAY, DISAPPEARING BEHIND THE COUNTER.

BOB OPENS ONE EYE, AND RELAXES.

**BOB:**

Your anger management techniques. Oh! Well, I think she took that rather well.

**SAVANNAH:**

It is only a cake.

HOWLS OF RAGE AND THE CRASHING OF CROCKERY EXPLODE FROM BEHIND THE COUNTER.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 17: INT. RECEPTION**

DELPHINE LIFTS HER NOSE OUT OF THE  
BUNCH OF LAVENDER.

**DELPHINE:**

Sorry dear, you were about to say something?

**JOY:**

Yes. I really need to say that I'm not actually...

**GILBERT:**

Oh God! No time for that! Hazel is about to offer cake to the new receptionist.

**DELPHINE:**

Lovely. What kind?

**GILBERT:**

Coffee and walnut...my favourite actually.

**DELPHINE:**

Oh mine too!

**JOY:**

Really? Mine as well! What a coincidence.

**DELPHINE:**

Time for a break then?

**GILBERT:**

Yes. NO! The new girl is allergic to nuts...

DELPHINE SAILS OUT BRANDISHING THE  
LAVENDER.

**DELPHINE:**

This might calm Hazel down...

**JOY:**

But it's only cake...

**GILBERT:**

Here bring this, we need all the help we can get.

HE SNATCHES UP A LARGE HIDEOUS JUG AND  
SHOVES IT INTO JOYS ARMS.

JOY CRADLES THE JUG AND EYES THE  
BLOCKED EXIT WITH LONGING.

**JOY:**

I suppose a slice of cake and a cup of tea won't go amiss.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 18: INT. LIFE DRAWING STUDIO**

JOY ENTERS CRADLING THE HIDEOUS JUG.

**JOY:**

Hello ladies. I'm back. Apparently there's cake available.

THE OLD LADIES OHHH AND AHH  
APPRECIATIVELY.

**OLD LADY 1:**

Nice jug dear.

ALL THE OTHERS LOOK UP AND TITTER.

**JOY:**

What this?

JOY HOLDS THE JUG UP. HER FACE CRUMPLES  
WITH DISGUST. THE JUG IS HORRIBLY 'EROTIC'  
WITH A LARGE CURVING ERECT PENIS FOR A  
HANDLE.

**JOY:**

That is truly...

**OLD LADY 2:**

Mind boggling! Delphine has a rather unique artistic vision. Here you  
are dear..

SHE HANDS JOY A VERY SIMILAR JUG.

**OLD LADY 1:**

Now you've got a matching pair!

ALL THE OLD LADIES CACKLE RAUCOUSLY.  
JOY ROLLS HER EYES AND STOMPS OUT.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 19: INT. CANTEEN**

BOB AND SAVANNAH ARE LASHED TO A TABLE. HAZEL HOVERS OVER THEM BRANDISHING A LARGE SLICE OF CAKE IN ONE HAND AND 'VOODOO' DOLL MADE OF HAM AND OLIVES IN THE OTHER.

GILBERT AND DELPHINE CIRCLE HER WARILY - DELPHINE WAFTS THE LAVENDER, GILBERT HEFTS THE LARGE HARDBACK BOOK.

HAZEL TAKES A LARGE BITE OF CAKE AND THEN TEARS THE HEAD OFF THE 'VOODOO' DOLL WITH HER TEETH.

DELPHINE AND GILBERT FREEZE.

**GILBERT:**

Oh no. Sweet and savoury together, she's really lost it. We can't wait much longer.

**DELPHINE:**

Quick a recipe, any recipe. Quick!

GILBERT FLIPS THE BOOK OPEN.

**GILBERT:**

Listen to me Hazel...Strawberry trifle with tapenade custard and..

HAZEL FREEZES.

**GILBERT:**

Anchovies...bleurgh....What's tapenade when it's at home?

BOB LIFTS HIS HEAD WITH DIFFICULTY.

**BOB:**

It's made with olives you idiot. Who is that book by?

**GILBERT:**

Oh, errrrmm....ah. Heston Blumenthal. Sorry.

HAZEL EXPLODES AND LAUNCHES HERSELF AT GILBERT. HE DODGES AND CLOUTS HER ROUND THE HEAD WITH THE BOOK.

THE SLICE OF CAKE FLIES UP AND STICKS TO THE CEILING.

HAZEL FALLS BACK UNCONSCIOUS ON TOP OF BOB AND SAVANNAH.

**BOB:**

OOOFFF. For crying out loud. Even Worrall Thompson would have been better.

JOY COMES IN, GASPS AT THE SCENE AND RUSHES OVER.

**JOY:**

Oh my god...are they? Is she..?

**SAVANNAH:**

Please help me, please I can hardly breathe.

JOY'S EYES NARROW, SHE CONSIDERS SAVANNAH'S POSITION.

**JOY:**

We could do a deal maybe...like some sort of job swap perhaps?

**SAVANNAH:**

Not a chance. What the hell are you holding?

**DELPHINE:**

Please be careful dear. Those are unique, I don't think I could ever replicate them if I tried.

**JOY:**

They're art actually.

**DELPHINE:**

Thank you dear, you have quite an eye.

**SAVANNAH:**

They're hideous. And how are they supposed help anyway?

DELPHINE SCOWLS.

**DELPHINE:**

That's not very nice, after we've gone to such lengths to help you. Perhaps we should have left Hazel to it.

**BOB:**

I'd rather you didn't.

HAZEL STIRS.

**HAZEL:**

Why is there cake on the ceiling?

EVERYONE FREEZES AND LOOKS UP.  
SAVANNAH SQUEALS.

BEGIN SLOW MOTION:

THE CAKE PEELS OFF THE CEILING AND FALLS TOWARDS SAVANNAH'S HORRIFIED FACE.

JOY LOOKS FROM CAKE TO SAVANNAH TO CAKE.

JOY DROPS THE JUGS AND HOLDS OUT HER HANDS, CATCHING THE CAKE WITH A SATISFYING SQUISH.

DELPHINE DIVES FOR THE FALLING JUGS. SHE CATCHES THEM BY THE HANDLES BUT THEY SMASH TOGETHER.

END SLOW MOTION:

**HAZEL:**

And where is that girl that won't eat my cake?

HAZEL HEAVES LIKE AN OVERTURNED TURTLE, BUT CAN'T GET HERSELF UP.

SAVANNAH WRIGGLES FURIOUSLY AND FREES HERSELF. SHE SNATCHES THE COOKERY BOOK FROM GILBERT AND CLOUTS HAZEL, WHO FALLS BACK ON TOP OF BOB.

**BOB:**

Wow. That was brilliant. You're going to be a real asset. I'm sure we'll be able to win Hazel over somehow...now if you could just give me a hand..

SAVANNAH SNEERS AND STALKS OUT PAST DELPHINE WHO CROUCHES MOANING OVER THE BROKEN JUGS.

THE OLD LADIES SHUFFLE IN.

**OLD LADY 1:**

Where's this cake then? What flavour has Hazel done today?

**EVERYONE BUT THE OLD LADIES (IN UNISON):**

Coffee and walnut.

**OLD LADY 2:**

Ohh, my favourite.

JOY TAKES A TASTE FROM HER CAKE COVERED HANDS.

**JOY:**

Gosh, this is reeeaaalllly good cake.

DELPHINE STANDS UP, CLUTCHING THE  
MIRACULOUSLY UNBROKEN PHALLIC JUG  
HANDLES.

**DELPHINE:**

How can you eat cake at time like this?

THE OLD LADIES ALL FALL ABOUT LAUGHING  
UPROARIOUSLY. DELPHINE DASHES OUT IN  
TEARS.

**JOY:**

Oh dear. It's my fault she's upset. I suppose I should go.

**BOB:**

Oh no. Not you as well. That puts us back at square one. Don't suppose you want the admin job as well do you?

**JOY:**

Well, actually, I kept trying to say. I'm not a life model. And I'd love the admin job, if you'll have me.

**BOB:**

At least that's settled. Do you think you could help me?

BOB GRUNTS TRYING TO SHIFT HAZEL'S  
BULK.

**GILBERT:**

Hang on. What about the life class?

**JOY:**

Well. The pay is so much better, I'm half tempted..

**BOB:**

Don't do that! I'll give you a raise, same as the life model pay, how does that sound? And you can model as well if you want.

**JOY:**

I'll take the raise and leave the modelling if that's ok.

**GILBERT:**

Sorry ladies. I'm afraid we'll be back to Bob as model for a while.

ALL THE OLD LADIES GROAN WITH  
HEARTFELT DISAPPOINTMENT.

**BOB:**

What's wrong with me modelling?

EVERYONE SHUFFLES ABOUT PRETENDING  
THEY HAVEN'T HEARD HIM.

**JOY:**

Oh. Where's Beryl? Come with me Gilbert, I think the life modelling  
problem is solved.

GILBERT FOLLOWS JOY OUT.

**BOB:**

Seriously. What's wrong with me modelling? WHAT?

THE OLD LADIES MILL ABOUT GETTING CAKE  
AND IGNORING BOB.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 20: INT. LIFE DRAWING STUDIO**

BERYL IS DRAPED OVER THE CHAISE LONGUE AS BEFORE.

JOY AND GILBERT GAZE DOWN AT HER.

**GILBERT:**

Oh that'll work nicely. Great idea. She looks very peaceful doesn't she?

**JOY:**

Yes she does. Ahhh.

**GILBERT:**

Lovely and still too.

JOY LEANS IN CLOSER

**JOY:**

She is very still...really really still...oh my, god...I think she might be...

JOY STEPS BACK IN HORROR AND CLINGS TO GILBERT.

HE SHRUGS HER OFF AND TAKES A CLOSER LOOK. HE PULLS A 'MAYBE' FACE. JOY GASPS.

**GILBERT:**

Well, if anyone knows a dead thing when they see it it's going to be me.

**JOY:**

What are we going to do?

GILBERT LEANS OVER BERYL AGAIN.

**GILBERT:**

BERYL....FANCY A NICE BIT OF CAKE?

BERYL STIRS AND PUTS IN A HEARING AID.

**BERYL:**

What did you say? Bit of cake? I prefer a nice plain biscuit these days. Help me up will you?

CUT TO:

**SCENE 21: INT. RECEPTION**

JOY ENTERS SHEEPISHLY. DELPHINE IS BUSY HANGING SOMETHING ON THE WALL BEHIND THE RECEPTION DESK.

**JOY:**

I'm so sorry about what happened to your....lovely, um, jugs. Not a great start.

**DELPHINE:**

Not to worry dear. Less a disaster than an opportunity to stretch my creative legs in a new direction. Besides we really need a clock in here.

SHE STEPS BACK TO REVEAL A GRUESOME MOSAIC CLOCK, USING THE PHALLIC JUG HANDLES AS THE HANDS.

**DELPHINE:**

What do you think?

JOY STARES, OPEN MOUTHED.

**DELPHINE:**

Don't you like it?

DELPHINE'S LIP TREMBLES.

**JOY:**

Oh no, nonono..I'm just a bit... speechless.

**DELPHINE:**

Ah. People often are when they see my work.

SHE ENFOLDS JOY IN A SUFFOCATING EMBRACE. JOY EYES ALL THE ART WORK ON THE WALLS - IT IS CLEARLY ALL DELPHINE'S.

**JOY:**

I think it's perfect.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 22: INT. CANTEEN**

BOB IS STILL PINNED BENEATH AN UNCONCIOUS HAZEL.

THE OLD LADIES AND GILBERT ARE SEATED IN A SEMI CIRCLE AROUND THEM, HAPPILY SKETCHING.

**BOB:**

This is NOT FUNNY.

HAZEL STIRS. GILBERT JUMPS UP AND HEFTS THE COOKERY BOOK READY TO STRIKE. THE OLD LADIES FREEZE, PENCILS MID AIR.

BOB WRIGGLES FURIOUSLY AND SQUEEZES OUT FROM UNDER HAZEL. HE ADJUSTS HIS CLOTHES HUFFILY AND LEAVES.

HAZEL SHUFFLES AND SNORTS AND SETTLES DOWN AGAIN, STARTS TO SNORE.

GILBERT LOWERS THE BOOK

**GILBERT:**

Right then. Anyone need an eraser?

THE OLD LADIES TUT AND SIGH AND START RUBBING OUT THEIR SKETCHES.

CUT TO:

**SCENE 23: INT. CANTEEN - NIGHT**

HAZEL SNORES IN THE DARKNESS, STILL  
SPLAYED ACROSS THE TABLE.

UNDERNEATH THE TABLE, GILBERT'S SACK  
BEGINS TO WRITHE.

A COUPLE OF CHICKENS HOP OUT AND START  
CLUCKING AND SHAKING OUT THEIR  
FEATHERS.

ONE OF THEM FINDS THE REMAINS OF THE  
'VOODOO' DOLL AND PECKS AT IT.

THE OTHER FLUTTERS UP AND HUNKERS  
DOWN ON HAZEL'S BOSOM. IT SQUAWKS AND  
THEN MOVES AWAY.

THERE, NESTLED BETWEEN HAZEL'S HEAVING  
BOOBS IS AN EGG.

**THE END**

# The HeArt of the Matter

TV sit-com by Georgina Kuna

## SERIES OVER-VIEW:

Joy Waters, desperate for a job, finally lands one, at The HeArt of the Matter, a small community arts centre run by a staff of eccentric creatives. Joy is a born administrator, a 'tidy freak', and the chaos of the centre both irks her and fulfils her need to have something to organise. She needs to be needed, and they need her. Badly.

The trouble is, the centre is under threat of closure, mainly due to galloping incompetence all round. The manager, Bob, has given up the ghost, burying his head in the sand on a daily basis. He hasn't told the staff that the centre must 'pass' an upcoming inspection, or funds will be cut, which will mean curtains for all of them.

When Joy discovers this, she realises the staff must learn to work together as a team if they are to stand any chance of saving the centre, and their jobs. As she gets to know them, the likelihood of this happening seems less than slim.

Painter/potter Delphine is convinced that positive affirmations and 'asking the universe' to fulfill her needs and desires will do the trick, while canteen lady Hazel is liable to use intimidation, brute force, or some kind of cake-based tactic to solve the problem, and devastatingly attractive but romantically disinterested life drawing tutor Gilbert's passion for taxidermy could easily get them closed down on health and safety issues. As for Bob, well, he's simply in full-scale denial, and just glad to have Joy around as a buffer between him and the inevitable.

Despite her misgivings, and the apparently insurmountable scale of the task, Joy decides to help the staff present a united and confidence-inspiring front to save the day. She makes them go on a team-building course. But they are inherently averse to behaving 'normally', and their idea of teamwork is something that has to be seen, to be believed. Even so, the experience brings them together.

On top of that, when the Inspector does arrive, it is Bob's archenemy from way back when. This man has a personal agenda, he wants revenge, and is ready to use his professional clout to get it. Worst of all, they have to film the whole inspection to document and evidence the process. There's nowhere to hide.

After a disastrous day, with all the staff working to their 'strengths' rather than 'the plan', the Inspector ends up battered, bruised and psychologically traumatised. At least he's got them over a barrel, he could close them down immediately, but instead he decides to enjoy humiliating them when they make their presentation to the board. Joy, exasperated, declares that she's leaving them to their fate.

However, when they make their presentation at the end of year exhibition to the funding board, the footage shows the inspector deliberately sabotaging their efforts and setting them up to fail. Bob has finally pulled his head out of the sand, manned up, and with Joy's help, edited the film to frame the inspector, and save his friends.

The centre and staff are hailed as being on the absolute cutting edge of creative initiative, and are flooded with funds, donations, sponsorship, and more new students than they can manage.

## **EPISODES**

### **1.**

JOY LANDS A JOB AT THE ARTS CENTRE, BUT NOT THE ONE SHE WANTS. (see script)

NB: I see the chickens escaping becoming taxidermy projects for Gilbert as a potential running gag through the whole series.

### **2.**

Joy discovers just how much trouble the centre is in, but Bob insists she keep this secret from the others until he's forged a plan (he won't). Gilbert falls unexpectedly in love with Joy, but the minute he does his allure disappears, and Joy is repulsed. His attempts to woo her are clumsy and downright odd. Come Valentine's Day he makes one last big effort to win her affection, but realises he's just not cut out for romance, unless he can find someone who wants to share/understand his passion for taxidermy.

### **3.**

Delphine has a 'crisis of faith'. She abandons all her optimism, and holistic and alternative therapies, in favour of a black nihilism. Even Hazel is shocked. And it had to happen now, just when Angela, Hazel's elective mute niece, has come to do her work experience at the centre. (cont'd)

Somehow, despite her strange demeanor, Angela manages to steer Delphine back from the brink, and return her to her normal state of happy misapprehension and dizzy optimism.

### **4.**

In an attempt to extend the centre's services and drum up more funds, Joy persuades Hazel to delivery cake making classes. Hazel finds the whole business incredibly unsettling and has a mini nervous breakdown, losing her ability to bake. Delphine helps her overcome it and she bounces back, more 'Hazel' than ever, but also, incredibly, she is now brilliant at savoury baking too.

### **5.**

Joy insists that everyone go on a competitive team-building course, in an attempt to pull them together in order to meet the requirements of the inspection. While all of their performances and their methods are really 'out there', they also actually start to 'win'.

But, Bob's inability to pitch in and support them properly, when they look to him for leadership, results in them 'failing' the course. Joy finally decides to break the news about the inspection to the rest of the staff, despite Bob's reluctance – after all he was the reason they didn't 'succeed'. But, they insist he's part of the 'family',

forgive him for being useless, and pledge to do their utmost to pass the inspection.

## **6.**

The day of the inspection finally arrives. The inspector arrives, and it is Bob's arch-enemy who has a long standing personal grudge against him. The centre seems doomed. Everyone does their best to pass the inspection, but can't quite follow Joy's plan without adding their own embellishments and methods. It can only mean disaster, and it's all on film. Joy is at the end of her tether, she announces she's going to leave, and that they deserve all they get for being such whackos.

But when Joy finds Bob finally manning up and attempting to edit the film in order to save the centre by making it seem as if the inspector sabotaged them, she can't leave. Besides, she's grown attached to everyone. She helps Bob edit the footage. They all put on a show of generosity toward the inspector, the funding board loves them, and they are set to forge a new era, with a huge pot of money and a reputation for inspired creative innovation.