

LIKE AND SUBSCRIBE

by Rachel Causer

Characters

Polly – *female, twenty-eight*

Kas – *female, twenty-nine*

Where possible, the company should reflect a diverse society. All roles can be played by actors of any ethnicity.

Notes on the Text

/ Indicates an interruption

.... Indicates a broken or unfinished thought

- Indicates an abrupt halt

POLLY is sat at a table with two chairs. She is working on her laptop which is connected to two microphones, one facing towards her and one facing away. Occasionally she tests the sound by speaking into the microphone, listening back through some headphones, then adjusting the microphone.

Polly – Test, test... One, two, three... One, two.... Urgh.

She takes a sip from a mug on the table, clears her throat again, frustrated and then begins to warm up her voice.

Polly – Puh, puh, puh, muh muh muh muh, kuh kuh kuh, la la la, ruh ruh ruh, mmmm.
One, two, three. One, two. One, two.

She adjusts the microphone once more then begins to speak with a large false smile and a slightly higher pitched, friendly-sounding voice.

Polly – Welcome back my loyal podsters, did you miss me? I missed you. I know I'm a little late with posting this week, naughty me, but I know you'll all forgive me when you hear the theme of the week. It's a good one if I don't say so myself. This week on Polly's Positivity Pod we are talking about the power of positive memory. Told you! It's a good one. And today I will be nattering away to my oldest and closest fri-

Pause. Her face drops for a moment, she clicks the laptop, resumes her smile and begins again.

Polly – And today, I will be talking to my friend Kassandra about the good old days, growing up together and all the trouble we used to get ourselves into. I really want to explore how friendships can endure, can survive, can thrive on the positivity of these shared experiences. I have the answers podsters, all you need to do... is listen.

Satisfied with this, POLLY resumes working on her laptop until there is a knock at the door. POLLY gets up and answers it. KAS enters.

Polly – Kas! Hi, Hello! It's so /so good to see you.

POLLY's immediately hugs KAS. She hugs her for a bit too long. KAS is taken aback.

Kas – /Wow... Hey Pol, how's it go- how are you?

POLLY continues to hug her, softly exhaling, which KAS finds increasingly awkward.

Kas – Um...

Polly – So so...so good to see you. Thanks so much for agreeing to do this.

POLLY sighs loudly and lets go of KAS.

Polly – God, how long has it been, four, five months? Come on, come and sit down, do you want a drink? Something to eat?

Kas – I think it's been about a year actually, give or take.

Polly – No way, no no no, no it has not!

Beat.

Kas – A drink would be – what are you ha-

Polly – I'm on a bit of a health kick actually, so I'm on the matcha and camomile, I just find it so calming, I really do.

Kas – Oh, yeah, okay that sounds... healthy.

KAS sits down.

Polly – But you can have whatever you like – I also have a blend with Manuka honey?

Kas – No, the first one sounds great honestly, thanks.

Polly – Sure, great. Coming right up.

Long Pause. POLLY exits to make the drink but can still be heard from offstage. KAS looks as if she struggling for something to say.

Kas – So, this place is nice. You must doing well, Pol? Really well.

Polly – (*shouting from offstage*) Ohhhh, you know.

Kas – I don't really, is this all from the podcast stuff?

Polly – It's only really taken off in the last six months to be honest, it's all happened so fast. One minute I'm just recording myself talking about the importance of breathing and now here I am!

KAS smiles slightly.

Kas – I didn't know people needed podcasts on the importance of breathing? I thought that was kind of the one thing that people were pretty secure on the reasoning behind!

Pause. POLLY doesn't laugh from off-stage.

Kas – Uh, I just mean, I didn't think there was much money in that? Being free and all.

Polly – There's actually a lot more to it than just chatting and posting, I get sponsors, investors, advertising – I had a call from L'Oréal literally last week begging me for my mid-show slot.

POLLY re-enters, holding a mug.

They're trying to re-brand after the whole testing shampoo on pigs thing I think – and who I am to stand in their way!

Kas – No, right, yeah...

Pause.

Polly – I'm a bit of a personality really. Positivity is really on trend.

POLLY hands the mug to KAS, who tries to stifle a laugh then looks at POLLY, who isn't laughing.

Polly – I know what you're thinking but you know, I've actually had letters from people saying that I've really helped them, that when they had nothing, I was - my podcast was there for them.

Kas – That's great.

Polly – How about you – are you still at... you still work for? You know – where you were before...

Beat.

Kas – Yep still there. I like the people and the whole routine and after everything happened, you know, I just kind /of needed

Polly – /Totally. Definitely.

Pause.

Polly – God, has it really been a year?

Kas – It has, yeah.

Polly – Where does the time go, ey?

Pause.

Polly – So shall we get down to it then, recording? I can't wait to have a proper chat with you.

Kas – Right now? Don't you need to um –

KAS gestures to the laptop.

Polly – Nope, all done.

Kas – Okay, cool, is there anything special I need to do, like with the microphone and how I'm speaking... and the...um...

Polly – Just be yourself okay, just be natural. Don't even think about my listeners... even if there are four-hundred thousand of them.

Kas – Fuck off!

Polly – Oh and no swearing please – not really the vibe of the show okay?

Kas – Yep, got it. Sorry.

POLLY sits down at the table opposite KAS. She clicks for a while on the laptop.

Kas – Four-hundred thousand people though...

Polly – I know I know. Okay, are you ready?

Kas – Yeah, I mean, I think so, just talk into here?

KAS gestures to the microphone facing her.

Polly – That's the one.

Kas – Okay yes, I'm ready.

POLLY clicks the laptop and begins talking in the higher-pitched podcast voice that she used previously. KAS looks slightly alarmed and amused by this.

Polly – Hello my podsters I am back and I am joined by the one, the /only

Kas – /Is that, um, sorry, sorry.

POLLY clicks the laptop again to stop recording, a bit harder this time. Her voice returns to normal.

Polly – Kas, I have to do a little intro okay, it's just the format – they don't know who you are.

Kas – No I get it I'm sorry, sorry. It's just uh-

Polly – What is it? Just what?

Kas – It's just you're doing this thing, like a weird voice thing...

Polly – No I'm not, that's how I speak.

Kas – Well, no, this is how you speak... You /just sounded a bit...

Polly – /For god's sake Kas.

Kas - No look, I'm sorry, go for it again, I won't interrupt, you're right.

Polly – Okay?

Kas – Yes, okay.

POLLY clicks the laptop and begins talking in the voice again but seems slightly more aware of it.

Polly – Hello podsters, I am here, back in your lives and I am joined here by my old pal, Cassandra Jones. Hello Kas, how are you today?

Kas – I’m, um, I’m great thanks, thanks so much for having me this is –

Polly – God, such a massive pleasure, honestly, we were just chatting about how long it’s been, weren’t we?

Kas – Yes we-

Polly – So long... and we used to get up to some proper mischief back in the day, didn’t we? We were little terrors!!

Kas – We were, we were.

Polly – Do you remember that one time in Newquay when we went to that beach at like two in the morning and we went skinny dipping?

Kas – Yeah, yes that was-

Polly – What were we like ey?!

Kas – You were great fun that trip, although I seem to remember there was a lot of holding your hair back while you sicked up about four bottles of Apple Sourz thoug-

POLLY clicks the laptop and stops recording.

Polly – Actually, it might be better if you didn’t mention things like that... it’s not really my image these days. Don’t want anyone writing in saying I’ve influenced their daughter into binge-drinking or something you know? Sorry.

Kas – But it’s what happened?

Polly – I’m aware.

Kas – You were sick like thirty times that trip, it was impressive.

Polly – Kas. I know. Just... less of the vom-talk okay? Let’s go again.

POLLY clicks the laptop and the recording begins again.

Polly – Do you remember that one time in Newquay when we went to that beach at like two in the morning and we went skinny dipping?

Beat. KAS looks at POLLY, who nods at her encouragingly.

Kas – Yep, I do.

Pause. POLLY makes a gesture that implies KAS should say more.

Kas – Those were... good times.

Polly – So good. You know, I often say on this podcast that the memories we have from our childhoods really shape us as people, you know? Like I don't think I'd be the person I am now without you.

Kas – Really?

Polly – Totally, you and your family. I was so negative before, so bogged down with silly fears and self-doubt. You guys saved me, really.

Kas – Oh, I – well, yeah, that's, I didn't know but that's amazing. Thank you.

Polly – No... thank you...

Kas – Um, you're welcome...

Beat.

Polly – I always loved it over at yours. Your mum to call us Thelma and Louise, didn't she?

Pause. KAS looks uncomfortable.

Kas – She um, yeah, she did.

Polly – You know, she was an amazing woman, Kas, she really was. I remember she always used to help me with my homework after school when I was struggling and who could forget her cooking? What was that thing she used to make – that chicken dish with the mushrooms and the bacon – uh god, it was sooo good. What was that? It tasted like home.

Kas – Um, it was – uh... Look, sorry can we –

Polly – Can we what?

Kas – Can we stop the thing - can we stop for a sec?

POLLY sighs and clicks the laptop again.

Kas – Sorry, it's just um, I wasn't actually expecting to talk about that today – you know about mum and everything.

Pause.

Polly – Oh right, well yes, sorry – I thought um, well we have so many great memories of her and well, I thought you might have guessed with this being a positivity podcast, and you've been so brave through everything and I just thought you'd have some insight into positivity in the face of the ultimate... negative... force.

Kas – Are you trying to say the word death?

Polly – Well, I didn't want to actually say it.

Kas – Polly, it happened, she died. It's fine. / It's just

Polly – / Well if it's fine then I don't see why you can't talk about it with me!

Long Pause.

Polly – I'm sorry, I didn't mean to ambush you.

Pause

Polly – We don't have to do this at all if you don't want to. But I do think it would help people. And maybe it would help you. It's been a while now and I feel like you maybe, like, isolated yourself a little and I don't know. I just...

KAS looks at POLLY for a moment.

Kas – Fine, we can do it.

Polly – Seriously?

Kas – But I'm not sugar-coating it for you.

Polly – Fine, that's fine.

Kas – Good.

Pause.

Kas – Press the thing then.

Polly – Oh yeah right. Ready? We can go from the bit where I mentioned the chicken?

Kas – Sure.

POLLY clicks the laptop and begins recording, this time the change in her voice is less noticeable.

Polly – So, um, your mum, she used to do this amazing chicken dish, with like mushrooms and bacon and-

Kas – Hunters' chicken.

Polly – That's it! Delicious.

Kas – It was my favourite too.

Beat.

Polly – How has your dad been handling it?

Kas – He’s better than he was, he acted like he was okay for a long time, pretended, which was... odd. I’m not sure why he did that.

Polly – Sometimes pretending feels easier.

Kas – Easier for the person pretending you mean.

Polly – I feel like if you pretend for long enough sometimes you can kind of trick yourself. Trick yourself into thinking a different way, a positive way – maybe he was doing that?

Kas – Maybe.

Pause.

Polly – How about you?

Kas – Me what?

Polly – Well how did you – how have you been doing?

Kas – Alright, I guess, considering.

Polly – Right, right.

Beat.

Kas – It was awful for a while. Really bad. I found it hard to get out of bed in the morning.

Polly – I’m sorry.

Kas – Thanks.

Polly – No, really.

Kas – It’s not your fault.

Polly – No but...

Kas – But what?

Pause.

Kas – But what, Pol?

Polly – Well, I guess I could have reached out more.

Beat.

Kas – You guess?

Polly – I should have. I know that.

Kas – But you didn't.

Long Pause.

Polly – Well I um...

Kas – Yes?

Beat.

Polly – I found it difficult.

Kas – *You* found it difficult?

Polly – I did, yeah.

Kas – That's rich.

Polly – What?

Kas – Difficult? Seriously? How's that?

Polly – I-

Kas – How was my mum dying difficult for you, Polly? How? Tell me how that impacted you and your life at all?

Polly – We-

Kas – You found it *difficult*, did you? Surely all your different tea blends and yoga retreats were enough to get you through such a difficult horrible ti-

Polly – It's because you stopped talking to me! You! You just cut me out! How could you do that!?! When I missed her too.

Pause.

Kas – Yeah well you started talking to four-hundred thousand other people, it's not like you were lonely, was it?

POLLY is visibly upset.

Polly – You really think that it didn't impact my life? You just... I remember calling you and you spoke to me like a – like a stranger. I knew you were sad but you said it wasn't a good time so many times that I felt so completely... so...

Long Pause. KAS looks at POLLY, who is now looking at the floor.

Kas – We can stop recording if you want?

Polly – Was I really that bad?

Kas – No, look -

Polly – Was I?

Kas – No it wa-

Polly – I should just have kept trying right?

Kas – I just didn't have the energy to be fine or happy for you back then. I wasn't. I couldn't think about her.

Beat. POLLY puts her head in hands.

Polly – Fuck.

Kas – You swore...

POLLY looks up again and speaks pointedly into the microphone.

Polly – Well, fuck it! Fuck fuck fuck. I fucking fucked it up, didn't I? I made you feel like... fuck!

KAS laughs.

Kas – It's okay, really.

Polly – It's not, Kas.

Kas – Well alright it's not, it wasn't fine, but this is helping. Seeing you today is helping a lot, I knew it would. Even if you were putting on a stupid voice.

Polly – Really?

Kas – Yeah, it's a really stupid voice, just objectively you'd be better off-

Polly – No, I mean really, this is helping?

Kas – Yeah. Must be all those 'positive vibes' flying my way...

Polly – You know there is actually science and studies to back up the power of positi-

Kas – Alright, don't push it...

Polly – Okay, okay.

Pause.

Kas – I did stop talking to you. I did. I stopped talking to everyone for a while.

Polly – I just didn't want to keep bothering you. Reminding you of-

Kas – I know that.

Polly – I'm sorry.

Kas – Me too.

POLLY smiles. KAS smiles back.

Kas – Can I talk about the time you pissed yourself after downing Cherry Lambrini at Samantha Richards' house /now?

POLLY quickly stops the recording. KAS laughs.

Polly – /No... no no. No.

Kas – Thought not.

Pause.

Polly – I didn't want to ask you along to just do the podcast you know. I was just afraid you wouldn't want to come if you knew it would just be me you would be talking to.

Long Pause.

Kas – It's the anniversary next week, of Mum... Do you want to do something?

Polly – Oh, yeah! I mean, if you'd want to spend it with me, then yes, yes of course!

Kas – Great.

Polly – I know this great Pilates place, it has such a soothing energy, really-

Kas – No offence but could we not do that... just like, literally anything else.

Polly – Yeah, no, of course.

Pause.

Kas – You can't really upload that chat we just had, can you?

Polly – I don't know, it's a quite short...like maybe forty minutes too short... and I did say fuck all those times.

Kas – Why don't I come back next week then? Try it again. I'll think of some stories about mum or something.

KAS gets up to leave. POLLY stands up too.

Polly – You don't have to leave you know!

Kas – It's fine, I'll come back.

Polly – Really?

Kas – Sure.

KAS gets to the door, there is a moment where they look at each other.

Polly – Same time next week then?

Kas – Yeah, great.

Polly – Great.

KAS exits. POLLY stands for a while then returns back to the table. She sits for a moment then begins to click on the laptop. After a while, she clicks and begins recording again. There is a hint of the former podcast voice.

Polly – Heyyyyy podsters, Polly here –

POLLY stops recording, rolls her eyes, clears her throat and begins again. This time her voice is normal pitched and more relaxed.

Polly – Heyyyyy podsters, Polly here, I'm afraid I won't be uploading this week and I am so sorry to disa-

POLLY stops recording. There is a pause. Then she begins again.

Polly – Heyyyyy podsters, Polly here, I won't be uploading this week because I'm just going to have a bit of a break.

Pause.

But you are all in for a treat next week because I will be being joined by my friend, Kassandra who will be here talking all about her mum, grief and the times when positivity just isn't enough. Because sometimes it isn't. Sometimes you need other things too.

Pause.

But, never fear. As I will be back on your phones, your laptops, back in your ears next week – so as ever, this is Polly signing off and wishing you all an amazing week.

End.