

SKETCHES - HAZEL REARDON: AGONY AUNT

by

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1. INT. TV STUDIO - SOFA. DAY

DAYTIME THEME MUSIC plays, the LOGO for the TV show *Brand New Morning* appears.

Two presenters, **PAUL (50's)**, a Richard Madeley/Eamonn Holmes clone, and **HEATHER (30's)**, a Holly Willoughby knock-off, sit on one side of a sofa. Sat opposite is **HAZEL (50's)**: a kind, cuddly-looking Agony Aunt. Chatting with the presenters, Hazel smiles sweetly.

A CHRISTMAS TREE stands at the corner of the studio.

MUSIC ENDS; all three of them stop chatting. Paul and Heather face us, giving wide, toothy smiles.

HEATHER

Welcome back. Still to come, how much of a fatty are you? We'll be asking our volunteers just how heavy they think they are, then weigh them live on air to find out if they're a bunch of lying tubsters.

PAUL

Plus we've got an exclusive on the wedding we're all talking about. Stars of reality TV show, *Where to is Newport?*, Bobbi Jo Jenkins and Chase Tyler give us all the details of their Christmas day wedding.

HEATHER

But first, it's time to welcome our brand-new agony aunt, Hazel Reardon. How are you, Hazel?

HAZEL

Oh, I'm great, thank you sweetheart. Just got back off holiday in the New Forest with the grandkids.

PAUL

Grandkids? You're in great shape for a grandma.

Hazel giggles. Heather smiles but is far from impressed.

HEATHER

Enough of that now, Paul; got away with that lawsuit by the skin of your teeth.

Quiet, Paul gives Heather a stuck-up glance.

HEATHER (cont.)

So, bit of relaxation time before the daunting task of being the nation's words of wisdom.

HAZEL

It was lovely. They're little angels, those lads.

PAUL

Right, well, let's unleash you to the masses. Our first caller is Rachel in High Wycombe, who has a problem we're all bracing ourselves for this Christmas: bad dancing. Rachel, are you there?

**RACHEL** (60's) is stuck-up, opinionated.

RACHEL V/O

Yes, I'm here Paul, hello. Hi Heather.

HEATHER

Hi Rachel.

RACHEL V/O

Hi...

Hazel smiles, tries not to sound irritated.

HAZEL

Hazel.

RACHEL V/O

Hazel. Sorry, Hazel.

PAUL

So Rachel, this is your hubby?

RACHEL V/O

That's right.

PAUL

Okay, so what are we talking? The odd fist pump, a bit of the robot thrown in.

Paul does his best Robot dance moves; Heather looks mortified.

RACHEL V/O

Oh no Paul, it's worse. You know how couples have a routine, some nifty footwork? Well, when my husband tries dancing, it's horrible. He only wakes up when the Village People come on.

HAZEL

Might want to have a word with your fella there, Rach. A third of all Baby Boomers in traditional marriages are, in fact, gay. *(beat)* Sorry, you carry on my lovely.

RACHEL V/O

Well, his latest trick is to pretend he's John Travolta; arm pointed, lots of grunting and thrusting. I can't dance with that. And Christmas is coming up! I'm dreading it.

Paul and Heather are sympathetic. Hazel waits for more.

HEATHER

Hazel?

HAZEL

Yep. Waiting to hear what the problem is.

Awkward silence.

HAZEL

Oh, that is the problem. Right you are.

Sitting up straight, Hazel clears her throat. Paul and Heather are thrown.

HAZEL

Rach, do you own a television?

Heather leans across.

HEATHER

*(whispers)*

She's watching us right now.

Hazel gives Heather a hard stare, Heather edging back.

RACHEL V/O

Um, yes. We've got a 4K Ultra HD Smart 65 Inch TV with HDR. It's smart, you know.

HAZEL

Thanks for that unnecessary detail on how minted you are, Rach. Now, what I want you to do, Rach my darling, is to get up off your sofa.

RACHEL V/O

Um...

HAZEL

Go on, up you get.

RACHEL V/O

Alright.

HAZEL

Now, I want you to dance for me. Arms out, wriggle those hips.

Rachel's breathing gets louder, struggling. Paul frowns.

HAZEL

How are we doing, Rach? Are you shaking that bum of yours? Have you got your cleavage on spin cycle?

RACHEL V/O

I'm wearing a moulded sports bra, M&S.

HAZEL

Course you are. You can stop now, lovely.

Rachel is heard wheezing down the phone.

HAZEL

What you were doing just then, Rach dearest, was praising the heavens above that this is the biggest problem you have to worry about.

Paul and Heather are bowled over.

HAZEL (cont.)

My hubby, in over twenty years of marriage, has not once cleaned the toilet after having a shit.

The hosts are panicking, looking round the studio, Paul listening to the voice in his earpiece.

HAZEL (cont.)

The times I've lifted that lid; it's like a nuclear test site. Think how lucky you are, Rach, if that's the worst your fella gets up to.

Not a word from Rachel.

HAZEL

*(annoyed)*

Rach? Were you listening?

RACHEL V/O

Um, yes. Yep.

HAZEL

That's good. Maybe give us a ring when he packs up and leaves you, hey? Merry Christmas, sweetheart.

The studio is silent; lots of uneasy looks, except for Hazel, all bubbly and grinning.

2. INT. TV STUDIO - SOFA. DAY

Paul and Heather look ruffled, out of sorts, while Hazel is oblivious, pouring herself a glass of water.

HEATHER

Welcome back. Still to come, we'll be looking at the best way to starve yourself this summer, so you can get that perfect bikini body.

PAUL

Plus, we've got an exclusive interview with Harry Styles' first girlfriend back in nursery. She dumped him after he refused to let her have a bite of his Freddo. All the gossip, coming right up.

HEATHER

But first, we welcome back our agony aunt, Hazel Reardon. How have you been, Hazel?

HAZEL

Oh really well, thanks Heather. Just got back from trekking up Snowdon with the grandkids. Took a couple of flasks of tea with us, some sandwiches. Brilliant time.

HEATHER

Oh, perfect. Well, let's take our first call from Diane in Buxton. She has the nightmare of having the whole family round for dinner.

HAZEL

Head round the pub, job done. Get rat arsed.

The hosts flinch, trying to stay professional.

HEATHER

Trouble is, her granddaughter's a vegan. Hello Diane.

**DIANE** (50's) is posh, bigoted, set in her ways.

DIANE V/O

Hello Heather.

HEATHER

So, we're talking nuts, leaves, and saw dust, is that right?

DIANE V/O

I don't even know what a vegan is, Heather. She's thirteen and lives down in London. She's always been a fussy eater, but this takes the biscuit. It goes against everything our family stands for.

HAZEL

I'm guessing you're classic fishing, shooting types; see fox hunting as donkey rides for posh folk.

Heather mouths the word, "Cut," while Paul gestures at the camera to stop recording.

DIANE V/O

Um, sort of, yes.

HAZEL

Got you, carry on.

DIANE V/O

My question is, should I be putting up with this nonsense, or do I take a stand? There's no point discussing it with my daughter-in-law. She's what I would describe as a "hands off mother;" rarely lifts a finger and happily lets the children run riot.

HAZEL

Sweet Jesus' skid marks, Di, your granddaughter's love of plant food has worked you up into a right frenzy. Here's an idea, get upset about something else? Your daughter-in-law, perhaps? Your thwarted efforts to see more of your grandchildren? No more *Downton Abbey*?

HEATHER

I loved *Downton Abbey*.

PAUL

You would.



HAZEL

Call your granddaughter; tell her silly old granny doesn't know a thing about vegans, so why doesn't she prepare some lovely dishes to pop on the table? Worst case scenario, you have to try a mouthful of mushroom pâté on a bed of boiled hair. The best outcome is your granddaughter is too lazy and joins you all in an orgy of butter and breast.

The hosts are not impressed; Paul giving a short, sharp cough.

HAZEL

Here's a question for you, Di: Do your family watch this show?

DIANE V/O

Oh. *(beat)* Yes. Yes, they do.

HAZEL

Going to be an interesting chat round that dinner table. Have fun.

Paul and Heather are squirming, no one saying a word.

3. INT. TV STUDIO - SOFA. DAY

Paul and Heather awkwardly glance at Hazel; Hazel chirpy and smiling.

PAUL

Our next caller is Kelly from Llandudno who is spending the bank holiday on her own. Thanks for calling, Kelly.

**KELLY** (30's); flagging and worn down.

KELLY V/O

That's alright, Paul.

HEATHER

Why don't you tell us a bit more about what's going on, my darling?

KELLY V/O

Well, I'm dreading this weekend, as I'm not spending it with my boys.

HEATHER

Oh bless. How old are they?

KELLY V/O

Five and six.

HEATHER

Oh, love you.

HAZEL

Enough of the fake sympathy, Heather. Get your teeth whitened or something, leave this to the professionals.

Paul and Heather are knocked for six.

HAZEL

Sorry lovely, you carry on.

KELLY V/O

My husband and I separated six months ago; this is the first time he's looking after the kids. He's taking them up to Edinburgh to see his mum; they'll be miles away. I tell myself I'm going to enjoy the time off, but I know I'll end up sitting around, waiting for them to come back.

Hazel nods, coming up with something to say.

HAZEL

Kelly, it's time to follow through.

Heather and Paul stare at each other, worried.

HAZEL (cont.)

What you do, what I'm guessing you've always done, is you make a passive choice instead of a positive one. You'll take the road of planning nothing and, guess what?

Hazel looks expectantly at Paul and Heather, who are unsure as to what is going on. Hazel gestures at them to speak up.

HEATHER

Nothing happens?

HAZEL

Gold star for our Heather. So, instead of your usual default setting, it's time to be your own fairy godmother. Make up some ideas. Doesn't matter how daft they are, jot them down. Drive up to Scotland, park outside the ex-mother-in-law's and play Black Sabbath with the volume up and the windows down, like a full-on crazy bitch.

Paul and Heather flinch.

KELLY V/O

I prefer Enya, myself.

HAZEL

Same difference. (*beat*) Find a handsome, sexy, single man and hole up in a hotel with him for forty-eight hours with room service. Point is, pick an idea, commit to it, and do it.

The hosts sit up, listening; Hazel's words make sense.

HAZEL (cont.)

Do a generous thing; let someone look after you for once. Don't just make life meaningful for your children; make it mean something for you too. This weekend, put yourself first. Promise me you'll do that.

KELLY V/O

Oh, I promise. Thank you, thanks so much.

HAZEL

You're welcome, dear. You take care now.

Paul and Heather are smiling, impressed. For a brief moment, nobody says anything.

HAZEL

Aw, don't you just love all that fluffy, cuddly shite?

Paul and Heather are dismayed.

4. INT. TV STUDIO - SOFA. DAY

Paul and Heather are both flustered, Hazel totally oblivious.

PAUL

Let's go to our next caller, Chris from Swansea. Chris had a one-night stand, a few weeks back. Now, he wants a relationship with this woman, only she's not so keen. Chris, why don't you tell us what's going on?

**CHRIS** (20's) is a man child; naïve.

CHRIS V/O

So, a couple of weeks back I got with this girl; I've known her for ages. We ended up back at hers, had a great time, and later on I tell her I've been in love with her for years. She went quiet, changed the subject. Since then, every time I ask her on a date, she dodges the question. I just want her to give me a chance, you know?

Hazel's manner changes, looking fierce, like an army sergeant.

HAZEL

First thing's first, Chris, you need to grow some balls.

Paul and Heather cringe.

CHRIS V/O

Sorry?

HAZEL

Bollocks, kahunas, the dog's doodahs. They may have shrunk all the way up to your stomach, but I promise you, they're there. You need a reality check, Chris. Or a smack in the mouth. Or both.

Paul loosens the top button of his shirt, Heather panicking.

HAZEL (cont.)

If she's never hinted that she wants you as a boyfriend, then jumping Jesus on a space hopper, why waste your time? While you're mooning after her, you're not getting on with life.

CHRIS V/O

What does mooning mean?

HAZEL

Swooning. Daydreaming. Being a twat. I'm sure there's other girls who could make you happy. No, scratch that. You sound like a wet sodding blanket, no girl's that desperate. Promise me, Chris, that you will stop flattering her.

CHRIS V/O

I promise.

HAZEL

Say it like you went through puberty.

CHRIS V/O

Okay, okay, I promise. I promise to stop flattering her.

HAZEL

And you promise to stop being too keen, needy, and a bit of a wanker.

CHRIS V/O

I do, I promise.

Hazel switches back to sweet and cheerful.

HAZEL

That's the spirit, Chris. Great job. You never know, she may start seeing you in a different light.

CHRIS V/O

Really? You think so?

HAZEL

Probably not. You take care now, sweetie. Bye bye.

Silence in the studio. Paul and Heather are frozen in their seats, staring at Hazel, who smiles, pleased.

5. INT. TV STUDIO - SOFA. DAY

Paul and Heather shuffle in their seats, anxious. Motivated, geared up, Hazel is ready for the next call.

HEATHER

Our next caller is Jane from Hereford.  
Jane recently discovered that her man, who she has been with for four years, is on a meet for sex website. Jane, are you there?

**JANE** (30's) is hurt, dismayed.

JANE V/O

I am, Heather.

HEATHER

Hello, my darling. This is so horrible.

JANE V/O

I'm just disgusted; I thought we had a future together. A mate of mine, she joins one of these sites, and she finds my boyfriend on there. He's got a profile, where he reckons he's rich, successful, and great in bed.

HAZEL

Sounds like a grade A tosser.

Paul and Heather look like they are about to be sick. Hazel glimpses round the studio, no clue what the problem is.

HAZEL

Sorry love, you carry on.

JANE V/O

Well, he's got a photo on there that's at least five years old of him with his mate's sports car. I don't know if he's met anyone yet, but it's got to be a matter of time.

HAZEL

Depends. Is he good looking?

JANE V/O

Not bad.

Hazel makes a worried face.

JANE V/O (cont.)

The other night we made love --

HAZEL (*interrupts*)

-- Hang on, you still let him fire his  
beans up you?

Heather puts her head in her hands; Paul is mortified. Hazel  
sighs; loud, irritated.

HAZEL

What else happened?

JANE V/O

Afterwards he says he wants to spend the  
rest of his life with me and have kids.  
He's lying to me and those women online. I  
know I should tell him, but I'm  
embarrassed; I'm scared. He's in the  
wrong, but I'm the one who's terrified.

HAZEL

Sweetheart, your fella's doing what a lot  
of men do: they think they have a massive  
penis, when really it's the size of a  
diddy baby's finger, and reckon they can  
satisfy dozens of women with said diddy  
baby's finger. It's adorable, in a naïve,  
pathetic sort of way.

Self-conscious, Paul crosses his legs.

HAZEL (cont.)

It only took your friend a few clicks to  
find him. Your fella's clearly thinking  
with his knob, not his brain. You need to  
get this out in the open, tell him you  
know everything. You've seen the profile,  
the lies, the women he's been chatting to.

PAUL

Oh, you can't see who someone's been  
chatting to on those sites.

Hazel and Heather say nothing, just stare at Paul.

PAUL

So I've heard.

The two women glance at each other. Hazel carries on.



HAZEL

If he has a spine, he'll beg - down on his knees, full on begging - and it's you who decides where you go from here, not him. If he doesn't, then maybe you have to accept that, like a Rolf Harris tribute act, your days are numbered.

Paul shakes his head, tutting at what is going on. Heather sits bolt upright, horror-struck.

HAZEL (cont.)

If he thinks that gift wrapping his cock, tying it up in a shiny bow, is an acceptable and respectful way to carry on, then you and him are very much at odds. Stop having sex with him and get yourself checked. He's probably riddled with all sorts; a cocktail of STI's.

HEATHER

It's true; people on those sites are dirty.

Paul nods over and over, a little too much.

HAZEL

Just remember, you can live your life any way you choose, with or without him. Does that help, lovely?

A second or two of silence, Jane not sure what to say.

JANE V/O

Um, yep. Think so.

HAZEL

Good. Pop quiz for you, Jane. Do you know the best place to twat a fella?

Paul and Heather's faces drop.

6. INT. TV STUDIO - SOFA. DAY

Paul listens to someone in his earpiece.

PAUL

Okay, we've got time for one more. Our last call is Craig from Tamworth. Craig has been married for eight years, has two children, but thinks of having a romp with a work colleague. Craig, thanks for calling.

**CRAIG** (20's); laddish, full of himself.

CRAIG V/O

Cheers Paul. Well, I mean we flirt all the time, and we snogged each other at the works do --

HAZEL (*interrupts*)

-- You what? Seriously, what? Here's my advice to you, dick for brains: get someone to chuck a bucket of cold water over the pair of you. If there's any justice, you'll get knob rot, you weaselly little cun --

We cut to a title screen for *Brand New Morning*, with the words, "We'll be right back". Muzak plays.

THE END.