

Double Word Score

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FRONT OF A HOUSE - NIGHT

A tall narrow red brick old house. A light is on in the top window.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - NIGHT

Holly, A YOUNG WOMAN (mid 20s, demure, simply dressed) sits alone on the sofa of her small, pristinely tidy lounge.

She fills in a crossword from a small PUZZLE BOOK, but appears distracted. Her foot taps restlessly.

She places the puzzle book on the arm of the sofa and picks up a small compact mirror from the coffee table in front of her.

She applies lipstick with care and absolute precision. Her foot stops tapping as the sense of routine begins to calm her down.

A MOBILE PHONE BEEPS.

The time displayed is 20:00. Holly's eyes light up as she scans the message.

TEXT ON SCREEN:

Hey Holly, it's Jack, I'm outside your front door. Well, someone's front door, I hope it's yours!

EXT. HOLLY'S FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

JACK, A YOUNG MAN (mid- to- late 20s, casually but well dressed, wearing glasses) stands outside the front door. He stares apprehensively at the door, tightly clutching a bottle of wine. He notices it still has a price label on it.

A LIGHT SNAPS ON FROM THE HALLWAY. Jack takes a step back, shoves his phone into his pocket and frantically attempts to peel the label off the wine bottle.

The front door opens. He covers the half-scratched label with his hand and inhales sharply.

JACK

(Slightly awkward)

Hi Holly,... you alright?

HOLLY

(Formally)

Evening Jack, I see you found me
ok?

JACK
Yep. Good directions, very
... precise.

Holly looks confused, but nods hesitantly and ushers him in.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS COMMUNAL HALLWAY - A MOMENT LATER

Jack steps into the long, narrow hallway. He leans in to kiss Holly's cheek. She moves in to hug him. The hug is badly timed and Holly accidentally clips Jack's glasses, almost knocking them off his face.

THE HALLWAY LIGHT times out and they are momentarily plunged into darkness. Holly flicks the switch urgently and the space is bright again.

Jack straightens his lopsided glasses as the light returns, pretending he hasn't noticed either the bad hug or the temporary blackout.

Holly bites her lip and puts her hands together, nodding her head towards the stairs.

She begins to walk up the staircase Jack follows on, still clutching the wine.

INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING - ENTRANCE TO HOLLY'S FLAT - MOMENTS LATER

Jack and Holly enter the small hall space. It is cramped and they are stand opposite each other, conscious of their close proximity.

Beat.

Holly holds out her hand to take Jack's coat.

He hands it over along with the wine. Holly glances at the wine and smiles, pretending not to have noticed the label.

HOLLY
Thanks that's really, really...
(Desperately searches for
the right word)
sweet of you.

Jack nods and they both look up towards the landing, anxiously and expectantly.

They begin the silent walk upstairs.

JACK
(Muttering faintly;
frustrated)
Sweet? Great.

Jack desperately diverts his attention from Holly's backside as he walks and focuses on the wall instead.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - SECONDS LATER

Holly pushes open the door to reveal the lounge.
Jack shuffles in and takes in the surroundings.

He leans in to take a closer look at a book case that is filled with alphabetised DVDs, separated by letter dividers. He raises an eyebrow.

Holly walks to the open plan kitchen.

HOLLY
Take a seat, I'll be over in a
minute. What are you drinking?

Jack is distracted by a DVD. He doesn't register the questions and let's out an unexpected laugh.

JACK
(Laughs)
Cocktail!

Holly looks up abruptly, surprised and confused.

HOLLY
(Bemused)
Oh... ok then. If that's really
what you want. Sure.

Jack accidentally bumps his head as he turns away from the shelves. Holly puts her hand over her mouth to stifle a nervous giggle. She collects herself and reaches for a cocktail shaker.

HOLLY
(Still bemused, rambling)
So, what kind then? Gin-based?
Vodka? Whiskey? Something fruity? I
mean, do you like a sweet or sour
drink? ... Ice!

Jack puts a hands to his temple and slowly sits on the sofa. He has zoned out slightly.

JACK
(Only half looking up)
Ice? Huh? No I'm ok, it was just...

HOLLY
(Interrupts)
Um, look Jack. What can I get you,
drink-wise? I mean, if you don't
want a cocktail then what do you
want?

She looks at Jack expectantly. He has come round and realised the misunderstanding.

JACK
(Mumbling)
Oh right, No... I mean, it was the
DVD, you know? Sorry. Just a beer
is fine, if you've got one.

Holly nods then beds down to open the fridge, revealing a shelf full of neatly arranged EUROPEAN LAGERS. She runs her fingers over the bottles and studies the labels.

HOLLY
I'm sure I can find one.

Holly's back is turned away from Jack as she prepares the drinks silently and methodically.

Jack tries to find a comfortable position on the large sofa which is covered in scatter cushions. He tries to cover his embarrassment by affecting a casual, half-slouch.

He taps the arm of the sofa restlessly.

Holly walks over with the drinks and hovers by the sofa. She smiles as she hands Jack his beer. Jack sits up sharply as he reaches for it. Holly's smile falls, she has noticed he is sitting on the puzzle book.

JACK
(Oblivious)
Cheers. I mean, thanks.

HOLLY
Um.

Holly puts her hands over her mouth and gestures downwards.

HOLLY
(Almost apologetic)
Can you just? Erm, you're kind of
crushing my... words.

She winces as she sees the creased corner. She tries to bend it back then places it on the coffee table. They both stare at it.

HOLLY
(Upbeat, changing the
subject)
Well, I hope you're ready for a
challenge?

JACK
(Confused)
Challenge?

HOLLY
Oh, don't look so worried. We both
know you're a player.

Jack's eyes widen as tries to work out where this is going.

HOLLY
(Giggles nervously)
I mean, you like playing games.
(Beat)
Remember,... Tom's party?

Jack's eyes widen further.

Beat.

Holly fidgets with her necklace, looks up at the ceiling
then back at Jack.

HOLLY
You know? You told me you didn't
really like cards.
(Beat)
And you'd much rather play
Scrabble.

Jack leans towards her. His eyes light up, encouraged by her
recollection.

JACK
(Relieved)
Scrabble! Yeah! Of course... you
remembered.

Holly picks up a dictionary from a side table then gestures
to across the room. A table by the window has been set up
with a scrabble board in the centre.

A SMALL NOTE PAD and PENS sit neatly on opposite sites. A
couple of small snack bowls sit are also placed on the
table.

Jack stands up and they face each other. He smiles and tries
to make eye contact.

Holly takes a side step away from Jack towards the other
side of the room.

HOLLY

Shall we?

Jack follows on sheepishly as Holly walks towards where the Scrabble is set up. He takes a seat and rests his hands on the table.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - A MOMENT LATER

Holly picks up a small remote control and points it at a retro-looking stereo. JANGLY INDIE MUSIC plays softly in the background.

Holly sits opposite Jack and takes a dainty sip of wine. Jack takes a clumsy glug of beer and wipes his face hastily.

HOLLY

Let's play.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - MOMENTS LATER

Holly takes the first go. She places BEGUILE across the centre of the board.

Jack takes a quick look at the tiles on his rack. He places SMILE. They both laugh.

Holly and Jack both reach for the tile bag. Their hands accidentally touch. Jack tries to meet Holly's eyes.

She withdraws her hand too quickly and doesn't return the look. Jack looks at the floor despondently.

Holly picks up more tiles and Jack studies his own. He tries to steal another look, a sideways glance this time. Holly still doesn't look back.

He pulls a sulking face, reaches into the snack bowl and takes another glug of beer.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - LATER IN THE EVENING

Holly's notepad is open but not visible to Jack. His notepad is also open, it is full of words in a barely legible scrawl. They include: EARNEST, ERUDITE and COHORT.

Holly's notepad has been carefully divided into two neat columns. One side is a list marked 'top words' and the other is her scores. Her words include: EMANCIPATE, REMINISCENCE, MAGNETISM, VEXATION, CLANDESTINE and INTUITION.

Holly holds up her only 'Z' tile and places BRAZEN. She notes her score, and looks pleased with herself.

Jack steals another furtive glance at her as she writes.

The game is in full flow: Jack plays DEMURE as Holly prepares her next move. She slowly spells out APPEAL. Jack sips his beer and draws a smiley face in his notebook.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - LATER IN THE SCRABBLE GAME

Jack looks at his tiles: they spell FROMAGE. He is amused but can't see where to play it. He frowns and reluctantly plays FORGE instead.

Holly taps her feet impatiently as Jack deliberates. She absentmindedly goes over the word VEXATION with her pen.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Holly runs her fingers over her new tiles and places MAYBE on the board. She notes down her score.

Jack checks his tiles. Holly watches him over the top of her glass and smiles affectionately.

INT. MONTAGE - HOLLY'S LOUNGE - THE GAME PROGRESSES

- HOLLY and JACK POV: Hands reach for tiles.

- HOLLY POV: Holly gesture to Jack, offering him another drink. He nods.

- JACK scribbles word combinations in his pad and scratches his head.

- Half empty wine bottle and empty beer bottles sit side by side on the kitchen counter top.

- Re-filled drinks on table.

- JACK POV: Appearing more relaxed, he takes his drink and launches into an anecdote.

- HOLLY POV: She sits back and listens to Jack's story, attentively.

- JACK AND HOLLY POV: They both seem to have temporarily forgotten the Scrabble and are focussed on properly talking to each other and laughing.

- The half-empty beer and wine bottles sit side-by-side on the kitchen worktop.

- A WALL CLOCK displays the time at 21:30.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - LATER

Holly concentrates intently: biting her lip and twirling her hair as she looks at her tiles.

HOLLY

(Pondering)

I just don't know where to go next.

JACK

(Deadpan, slightly
mischeivious)

Hey, come on. I bet you've got a
great rack over there.

Holly looks up with start and raises her eyebrows. Jack looks mortified and deflated and stares at the floor.

Holly registers his forlorn look and softens hers but Jack doesn't look up. She is poised to say something but can't. She plays the word AWAIT through the middle of BRAZEN instead.

She takes a large sip of wine and stands up, purposefully.

HOLLY

(With meaning)

I'll be back in a minute. It's your
move.

Holly leaves the lounge but looks back quickly and longingly across the room at Jack. His back is turned away from her.

Jack sighs heavily and places HELP on the board. He reclines back and swigs his beer in resignation.

He puts the beer down, looks at the board and smiles as he spots the chance to play CONNECT at the far edge.

He leans forward but in doing so, he elbows his beer bottle.

The bottle slides towards Holly's wine glass. He only just rescues the glass... his relief is short-lived. The bottle topples over, spilling beer all over the board and sending tiles flying in all directions.

The game is ruined. Spilt beer drips from the side of the table.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - A MOMENT LATER

Jack is frantically tidying and mopping up with beer with his sleeve.

The lounge door bangs shut. Jack looks up to see an exasperated looking Holly standing in front of it with her arms crossed.

The full extent of the chaos hits her. She lifts her hands to her face in shock.

Jack looks back timidly, limply attempting to shake his soaked sleeve dry. He slumps back in his seat.

JACK
(Apologetic, humble)
I'm so sorry. Can we start again?

[ALTERNATIVELY - TRY BOTH:]

JACK
(Apologetic, humble)
I'm sorry, I was trying to... and
now there's just a big mess... and,
well... can we start again?

Holly walks over to the table and sits down. She looks Jack directly in the eye for the first time and bites her lip, poised to speak.

The PUZZLE BOOK with the bent corner sits on the coffee table.

INT. HOLLY'S LOUNGE - THE NEXT MORNING

Holly sits alone at the table in her Pyjamas with one hand twirling through her bed hair. She is doing a crossword, looking pensive.

The lounge has been half tidied. The Scrabble set has been pushed to one side. The notebooks and pens have been thrown haphazardly on top.

Holly hovers her pen over the last clue which reads "to bond or bring together" She sips her tea.

A second hand appears and fills in the box to reveal the word CONNECTION.

Holly grins and offers Jack the last piece of toast from her plate. Jack takes it and looks pleased with himself.

Holly goes to place her tea on the coffee table. Jack waggles a finger at her in playful reprimand and hands her one of her own coasters.

The coaster is shaped like a Scrabble tile. Jack has picked an 'X' and hands it to her, smiling.

Holly takes it from him, returning his smile.

The Scrabble board is open on the table with THE END spelled across it.

FADE OUT.

THE END.