

How To Catch An Englishman

By

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Inspired by

The Regal Rules for Girls by Jerramy Fine

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INT. KITTRIDGE TRAILER HOME - 20 YEARS AGO - DAY

Home movie camera's POV: The camera begins recording pointed at a pair of cheap white sneakers. It shakes as the person holding it gets a better grip.

STEPHANIE (V.O.)

When I was a little girl my first dream was to grow up to be a princess.

The camera focuses on STEPHANIE KITTRIDGE (age 3) galloping and WHINNYING around the cramped living room of a cheap trailer home.

STEPHANIE (V.O.)

Okay. So maybe my very first dream was to grow up to be the princess' horse. But that was just a phase.

INT. HOME MOVIE BIRTHDAYS - MONTAGE

Stephanie (8) and her FRIENDS run around the trailer-home, eating KFC. She opens presents. Lit by the glow of birthday candles, she wears a sparkly pink dress and tiara. She waves her wand at the candles and blows them out.

STEPHANIE (V.O.)

Every birthday I wished Prince Charming would come and take me away to his castle where we'd live happily ever after.

EXT. LAND OUTSIDE TRAILER HOME - 15 YEARS AGO - DAY

INSERT TITLE: Lindsay, Texas

Stephanie (8) runs out of the trailer. The screen door SLAMS behind her. She jogs to the top of a dusty ridge.

STEPHANIE (V.O.)

When I was eight Daddy made a fortune in oil.

Her FATHER (mid 30s) hunkers behind a mound of dirt. He holds a box with wires trailing into a deep hole. He pushes the big red button.

BOOM. The explosion knocks Stephanie off her feet. She scrambles up and watches oil gush from the hole.

EXT. OUTSIDE TRAILER HOME - WEEKS LATER

STEPHANIE (V.O.)  
After that I got my castle...

A large tow truck jacks up the trailer home and drives away. Stephanie stands in front of her MOTHER and watches the truck turn onto the road. Her father spreads out blueprints.

INT. KITTRIDGE "ESTATE" - MONTHS LATER

The Kittridge family sits in an ostentatious dining room. A butler serves her KFC from a bucket on a silver platter.

STEPHANIE (V.O.)  
Sort of.

INT./EXT. PRIVILEGED CHILDHOOD - MONTAGE

STEPHANIE (V.O.)  
From then on it was FAO Schwartz  
shopping sprees...

Stephanie (9) runs through the aisles of FAO Schwartz.

STEPHANIE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Disney at Christmas...

Stephanie (11) hugs a Mikey Mouse dressed as Santa.

STEPHANIE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
And the best education money could  
buy.

Stephanie (15) stands in a plaid skirt and matching blazer outside the gates of an imposing prep school.

EXT. YALE - FOUR YEARS AGO

STEPHANIE (V.O.)  
Which got me here...

INSERT TITLE: Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut

STEPHANIE (V.O.) (cont'd)  
...where I studied art history...

Stephanie (18) enters an idyllic castle-like courtyard. She carries a suitcase up a spiral staircase to her dorm room. She shakes hands with LIZ COULTER (18), her roommate.

INT./EXT. BAD DATE MONTAGE

STEPHANIE (V.O.)  
 ...and quickly learned there are no  
 Prince Charmings. At least not in  
 this country.

INSERT TITLE: Freshman Year - The Frat Boy  
 He slops beer all over her at a party.

INSERT TITLE: Sophomore Year - The Nerd  
 She sits next to him while he plays video games.

INSERT TITLE: Junior Year - The Athlete  
 He checks himself out in a reflective surface, flexing his  
 muscles, ignoring her.

INT. STEPHANIE AND LIZ'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

INSERT TITLE: Senior Year

Stephanie opens the door. Liz sits on her bed, looking at a  
 letter, freshly opened, in her hand. She looks up when she  
 hears the door and slides the letter under her pillow.

A PREPPY DATE (23) with a popped collar and gelled hair  
 tries to follow Stephanie inside.

PREPPY DATE  
 Hey baby, how about a kiss good--

Stephanie shuts the door in his face.

LIZ  
 Another dud?

Stephanie nods. She opens the door to her closet. On the  
 back is a "Life Plan." The first half are crossed out:

1. Obtain driver's license
2. Obtain Porsche
3. Be homecoming queen
4. Graduate high school
5. Join sorority

STEPHANIE  
 The plan is going so well...

She jabs her finger at number six ("Meet Prince Charming").

STEPHANIE (cont'd)  
Except for that part.

Stephanie sighs and sits on her bed, across from Liz.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)  
All I want is someone polite...  
well mannered. Someone who opens  
doors, a... a gentleman. Is that  
too much to hope for?

LIZ  
Yes.

Stephanie groans and flops back, pillow over her face.

LIZ (cont'd)  
Is this a Hugh Grant night? Will  
that make you feel better?

STEPHANIE  
(muffled)  
Yes.

INT. DORM ROOM - LATER

Stephanie and Liz lie stretched out on Liz's bed in their  
PJ's, watching *Notting Hill* on a MacBook.

Julia Roberts leans forward and kisses Hugh Grant in the  
garden. He half smiles and says, "Nice garden."

Stephanie points at the screen.

STEPHANIE  
This is the problem! Who could  
possibly compete with that?! He's  
charming. And adorable. And that  
accent! God!

She fans herself. Liz laughs. Stephanie rolls over and her  
hand brushes against the letter hidden under Liz's pillow.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)  
What's this?

LIZ  
Nothing.

Stephanie pulls it out. Liz makes a grab for it but  
Stephanie rolls off the bed and looks at the postmark.

STEPHANIE  
Holy crap! This is from the UK.

LIZ  
Yes.

STEPHANIE  
This is from Oxford!

Liz sits on the edge of the bed. Stephanie paces.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)  
This says you've been accepted to  
their graduate history program.

LIZ  
Yes.

STEPHANIE  
That's-- Liz, that's fantastic!  
Congratulations!

Liz half smiles and raises her shoulders.

LIZ  
I can't afford it. Moving *and*  
tuition *and* room and board...

Stephanie stops pacing.

STEPHANIE  
Oh.

Liz shrugs.

LIZ  
No biggie. Maybe next year.

STEPHANIE  
Right.

She sits down on her bed and hands the letter back to Liz.

LIZ  
Really. It's fine. I'll graduate,  
get a job, save up some money...

Stephanie nods absently. The wheels are turning.

STEPHANIE  
Oxford... they'd have graduate  
programs for art history majors...

Stephanie jumps to her feet and excitedly paces again.

STEPHANIE (cont'd)  
 We'll go together. I'll pay for moving and the room. Oxford is the perfect place to find my Prince Charming.

LIZ  
 Whoa, whoa, whoa! That sounds...

Liz shakes her head and stands grabbing Stephanie's arm to pause her pacing.

LIZ (cont'd)  
 You missed the application deadline.

STEPHANIE  
 By how much?

LIZ  
 Three months.

Stephanie's face falls, then brightens. She digs her cell phone out of her purse and dials. Liz raises an eyebrow.

STEPHANIE  
 Hi Daddy. How would you feel about making a donation to Oxford University?

Yes, Oxford as in England.

Stephanie smiles. She uses a magic marker to draw an arrow on her Life Plan switching "6. Meet Prince Charming" with "7. Graduate," where it precedes:

8. Engagement
9. Marriage
10. Buy house with yard
11. Buy Irish Setter
12. Have children

INT./EXT. MOVING TO ENGLAND - MONTAGE

STEPHANIE (V.O.)  
 My name is Stephanie Kittridge. And this is the story of how I moved halfway around the world... to catch an Englishman.

--Stephanie wears a graduation robe, marches across the stage, collects her diploma, flashbulbs go off.

--Stephanie sits at a computer monitor, researching Visas and immigration. She takes notes.

--Stephanie's passport arrives in the mail.

--Split screen: Stephanie and Liz hold phones to their ears while they fill suitcases.

--Stephanie, surrounded by guidebooks, makes alphabetized lists of things to do and places to go in London.

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM AND LIZ'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Stephanie's bedroom is large and luxurious. It's very nicely decorated but there aren't many personal touches.

Liz's childhood bedroom is smaller and cramped, but homey. Many generations of interests are displayed. Posters for kid movies and teenage pop bands fight for wall space.

The girls talk on the phone. Stephanie reads an itinerary.

STEPHANIE

We're on Virgin Atlantic, flight  
2718.

LIZ

Mmhmm.

Liz writes the flight information down on a pad.

STEPHANIE

The flight arrives at 6:30am so  
we'll have all of Thursday and  
we're spending six nights in  
London, then heading to Oxford.

LIZ

Mmhmm.

STEPHANIE

We can exchange money when we  
arrive. And--

Liz sets her pencil down.

LIZ

Stephanie?

Stephanie looks up from her list.

STEPHANIE

Yeah?

Liz grins.

LIZ

We're going to Europe!

She shrieks and starts bouncing on her bed.

INT./EXT. GETTING TO THE AIRPORT MONTAGE

--Liz and her family arrive at the airport in a beat up sedan. Liz's DAD hauls a large suitcase out of the trunk, and hands her a carry-on. They hug goodbye. Liz goes inside.

--Stephanie and her family arrive in a limo.

--She hugs her parents goodbye, tips the SKYCAP \$50, and enters the airport, pausing once to wave.

--Inside she links arms with Liz and they head to their gate, boarding passes in hand, smiling.

--Mid flight, Stephanie and Liz sit next to each other in cushy first class seats sipping champagne. Stephanie raises her glass.

STEPHANIE

To England.

LIZ

To Oxford.

STEPHANIE

To eligible British bachelors.

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT

NICK ANDERSON (24), blond hair falling in front of blue eyes, and his friend, TOM (22), brown hair, pasty skin, very intoxicated, walk down the street, leaving a lively pub.

TOM

Cor, Rosa's a pretty one. Rosa,  
Rosa, Rosa, how do I love thee? Let  
me count the ways... That's right  
poetic that is. Did I write that?

NICK  
 (American accent)  
 Afraid not.

TOM  
 Do you think she fancies me? I  
 think she fancies me. I think--

Tom stumbles. Nick grabs his arm and steadies him.

NICK  
 I think that's the extra pint  
 talking, my friend.

Tom belches.

TOM  
 You might be right, mate.

Nick laughs.

NICK  
 Come on.

Nick and Tom turn down a poorly lit cobblestone street. They pass under a bridge and two looming THUGS approach. One has a crooked nose, the other cracks his knuckles.

CROOK-NOSED THUG  
 Evenin' gents.

The knuckle-cracker shoves Tom's chest and Tom tries to push his hands away. The thug grabs his jacket collar.

TOM  
 Watch yourself! I'll--

Tom tries to make and swing a fist, but unbalances himself. Nick puts a restraining hand on his arm.

NICK  
 Gentlemen, let me save you some  
 time.  
 (to Tom)  
 Your wallet, please.

Tom fishes his wallet out of his back pocket and hands it to Nick. Nick opens the wallet, turns it upside down and shakes. Lint falls out. Empty. Nick gives the wallet back.

Nick repeats the process with his own empty wallet.

NICK (cont'd)  
 I have one tube ticket. Zone 1  
 only. Expires at...  
 (glances at his cheap watch)  
 twenty minutes ago. And... a bus  
 schedule.

The thugs frown.

NICK (cont'd)  
 You're welcome to pat us down, but  
 I warn you my friend--

Tom burps, leans forward, and vomits on the  
 knuckle-cracker's shoes, who lets go of Tom and backs away.

KNUCKLE-CRACKING THUG  
 Shite!

NICK  
 Ah... yes, too late then.

Nick puts an arm around Tom and steers him past the thugs.

NICK (cont'd)  
 Now, if you'll just excuse us.

Grumbling, the thugs let them pass.

NICK (cont'd)  
 Thanks very much.  
 (quietly, to Tom)  
 Nice timing.

TOM  
 (hiccup)  
 Don't mention it.

EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORT - MORNING

Stephanie and Liz step out of the sliding doors into morning  
 drizzle. Stephanie beams and throws her arms out.

INSERT TITLE: Heathrow Airport, London

STEPHANIE  
 We're here!