

Swedish Number

Written by  
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FADE IN:

**INT. SMALL FLAT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

ROSE, 40s, uncomfortable in her skin and her scruffy joggers, talks into her iPhone Red.

ROSE  
... sorry, Knacker?

SAGA (O.S.)  
(Nordic accent)  
N, a, c, k, a...

Rose laughs.

SAGA (O.S.)  
What is that funny?

ROSE  
Erm, that word has another meaning here in Britain.

SAGA (O.S.)  
Oh, what?

ROSE  
Er, it means... well, testicle.

Saga's turn to laugh.

SAGA (O.S.)  
Ha, well, that's not something we have to worry about then.

ROSE  
Ha, no I guess not.

SAGA (O.S.)  
Here it is just a small town, not Knacker-testicles.

Rose laughs again.

In the background, sensual piano music can be heard.

ROSE  
So Saga, from the small town of Nacka - not testicles... how does all this work?

Saga laughs again, high pitched but warm and infectious.

SAGA (O.S.)  
Did you look at the website?

Rose consults her phone.

ROSE  
(quoting)  
The first country in the world with  
its own phone number.  
Get connected to a random Swede and  
talk about anything.

SAGA (O.S.)  
And I am just such a random Swede,  
and very happily at your service.

She laughs.

ROSE  
Just mine?

SAGA (O.S.)  
Sorry, my English is heard from  
watching Ellen show and reading  
Cadbury wrapper.

ROSE  
Cadbury chocolates?

SAGA  
Yes, Caramel is my favourite.

ROSE  
Well, your English is much better  
than my Swedish.

They both laugh.

ROSE  
What's your home like?

Rose wanders to the window of her flat

SAGA (O.S.)  
I have a small cabin by a small lake.

She stares at the sprawl that is London, her face saddens.

ROSE  
I hear Sweden has many lakes.

SAGA (O.S.)  
 Yes, we have nearly ninety-eight  
 thousand lakes.

ROSE  
 Amazing, and sounds blissful.

SAGA (O.S.)  
 Blissful?

ROSE  
 Wonderful, lovely, delightful...

SAGA (O.S.)  
 Yes, very much so, but many times  
 they are icy, not water.

ROSE  
 You could warm them up again.

SAGA (O.S.)  
 I think not whole lake. And you?

ROSE  
 Me what?

SAGA (O.S.)  
 Name of you, you live where?

ROSE  
 Oh, Rose Durnham, from Leeds, now  
 living in London.

SAGA (O.S.)  
 London, no cabins or lakes?

She laughs again.

SAGA (O.S.)  
 Is it wonderful, lovely, delightful?

ROSE  
 No, very much not.

SAGA (O.S.)  
 But so many people --

ROSE  
 This is the longest conversation I've  
 had in two months.

Saga doesn't answer, just the piano music in her background.

ROSE  
What is that playing?

SAGA (O.S.)  
My music.

ROSE  
Your music? You mean a CD?

SAGA (O.S.)  
No, I make it... I compose and --

ROSE  
It's you playing?

SAGA (O.S.)  
Yes, earlier, I'm back-listening.

ROSE  
Beautiful.

SAGA (O.S.)  
Thank you. Perhaps I write something  
for you one --

A KNOCK on the door.

ROSE  
Damn.

SAGA (O.S.)  
Something wrong?

ROSE  
My food is here.

SAGA (O.S.)  
Ah, English away-take.

KNOCK, louder.

ROSE  
But... was so nice to speak to you.

SAGA (O.S.)  
You also, lovely and blissful to  
speak. But, now you must eat.

ROSE  
Hey, why don't you wait till I --

SAGA (O.S.)  
There's no cow on the ice.

ROSE

What?

The line is dead.

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

ROSE

Alright all-fucking-ready!

She throws her iPhone Red down and heads for the door.

**EXT. BUSY STREET - DAY**

Rose walks against the general flow of pedestrians, head bowed and feet shuffling.

Everyone, Rose included, is lost in their own world.

**INT. MUNDANE CALL CENTRE - DAY**

Rose sits at a desk, headphones on, answering calls.

Right and left, behind her and in front, more listless people taking calls from people they don't want to talk to.

Everyone is in their own little bubble, drowning.

Rose idly nibbles on a Cadbury's Caramel bar.

**INT. SMALL FLAT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Melisa fidgets on her sofa.

She holds her phone and taps it lightly with her fingers.

She dials.

ASTRID (O.S.)

Hello?

ROSE

(deflated)

Oh, hi. Who is this?

ASTRID (O.S.)

My name is Astrid and --

Rose puts the phone down.

She re-dials.

ANDERS (O.S.)

Hello.

Phone down. Redials.

NILS (O.C.)

Hi there, Sweden --

The phone goes flying on to the couch.

ROSE

Shit.

Rose kicks the wall.

She wanders to the sofa and retrieves her iPhone Red.

Dials.

FREJA (O.S.)

Hello, this is Freja from Sweden.

ROSE

Hi Freja, I'm Rose.

FREJA (O.S.)

Hi Rose. So, how can --

ROSE

Sorry, but do you know Saga?

FREJA (O.S.)

Saga? No, I am not knowing her.

ROSE

Oh.

Silence.

FREJA (O.S.)

Can I tell you about Sweden?

ROSE

Is Nacka nice?

FREJA (O.S.)

I have never been.

ROSE

Is there someone I can talk to about  
Saga and get her number?

FREJA (O.S.)  
Do you know her?

ROSE  
I'd like to.

FREJA (O.S.)  
Ah, you liked her?

ROSE  
Well, no, I mean I did, but, there was something...

Rose sighs.

FREJA (O.S.)  
Maybe call Visit Sweden's office.

ROSE  
I thought I was when I called you?

FREJA (O.S.)  
No, Visit Sweden made this, er, this marketing.

ROSE  
Oh, they are the tourist board.

FREJA (O.S.)  
I think that, yes.

ROSE  
Thank you, thank you. I will call them. Bye Freja.

She ends the call and taps away on her screen.

Dials a number.

ROSE  
C'mon, c'mon.

VISIT SWEDEN (O.S.)  
Welcome to Sweden. Our offices are currently closed, please call back between 9am and 5pm.

She throws the phone down again and stalks out of the room.

**INT. SMALL BEDROOM - DAY**

Rose snores, hair everywhere, saliva patch on the pillow.

The alarm sounds.

Rose sits bolt upright, Caramel wrapper stuck to her cheek.

She jumps out of bed and steps into the bathroom.

**INT. SMALL FLAT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Rose sits on the sofa, she's on the phone.

ROSE  
(croaky voice)  
Yes, came on overnight, feel  
absolutely horrendous.

BOSS (O.S.)  
That's not good, well wrap up warm  
and get some rest. Oh, and whiskey  
and honey... that'll help.

ROSE  
(coughing now)  
Whiskey and honey, got it. Thanks.

She ends the call and glances at the clock on the wall,  
almost nine o'clock.

The clock hands inch towards the hour.

Rose dials.

VISIT SWEDEN (O.S.)  
Good morning, this is Visit Sweden,  
how may I help you today?

ROSE  
(voice fine again)  
Hi, yes, this might be unusual but I  
need to speak to a Swede.

VISIT SWEDEN (O.S.)  
You have seen our campaign?

ROSE  
Yes, but no I don't mean any old  
Swede. I'd like to speak to one who I  
spoke to last week. Her name is Saga.

VISIT SWEDEN (O.S.)  
Oh, why is that?

Rose pauses.

VISIT SWEDEN (O.S.)  
 I apologise if she said something  
 incorrect, sometimes the language can  
 be difficult --

ROSE  
 No that's not it, she was... lovely.

VISIT SWEDEN (O.S.)  
 Good, yes?

ROSE  
 So you can give me her number?

VISIT SWEDEN (O.S.)  
 Sorry, no. That is against the rules.

Rose's phone beeps.

ROSE  
 Why not?

VISIT SWEDEN (O.S.)  
 The people who talk are anonymous.

Her phone beeps again.

ROSE  
 But I'm sure she'd want to talk to me  
 though, she, we, it was nice.

VISIT SWEDEN (O.S.)  
 Good, but no, we do not do that.

ROSE  
 That's not fair.

The line is already dead.

Her phone beeps again, another call, insistent.

Rose stares at the screen scowling, answers.

ROSE  
 What?

SAGA (O.S.)  
 Oh, sorry maybe it is not you.

Piano music plays in the background.

ROSE  
 Wait!

SAGA (O.S.)  
Is that a Rose Durnham?

ROSE  
Yes, it is, it is, it's me.

SAGA (O.S.)  
And was your away-take delightful?

ROSE  
No. It was awful... but, I've  
discovered Cadbury's Caramel.

Laughter on the phone.

SAGA (O.S.)  
I have spoken to forty-seven Rose  
Durnham's since I spoke to my very  
first Rose.

ROSE  
*Your Rose.*

SAGA (O.S.)  
Yes, and perhaps my Rose would like  
to Visit Sweden.

Rose giggles.

ROSE  
Before Brexit stops me.

SAGA (O.S.)  
Exactly, and that is if you would  
like to see my Nacka?

ROSE  
Well, I have always wondered...

They both burst into excited laughter.

FADE OUT

THE END