

# DREAMS LIKE HOOVERS

By Karen Emslie

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## CHARCATERS

|               |                           |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Stella</b> | Female. Mid 20's          |
| <b>Carol</b>  | Her friend                |
| <b>Selene</b> | Stella's imaginary friend |
| <b>Male</b>   | Barman and Karaoke MC     |

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## **SCENE 1**

*The 'Star Struck' karaoke bar. Actors doing karaoke face a hidden video camera and are shown on a projection screen.*

*The are two tables. One table has three chairs around it. The other has none.*

*Karaoke music can be heard but no one is singing.*

*When the actors watch or gesture towards the karaoke they do so towards the audience. STELLA is at the bar. CAROL is sitting at the table.*

*There are two other characters in the bar, SELENE and MALE. SELENE is exotically dressed. SELENE is sitting at the bar. MALE tends to the bar.*

*A large white box is on the floor in front of the bar. The only character who can see or hear SELENE is STELLA*

*STELLA takes two drinks from the bar and sits down with CAROL.  
'Fly me the Moon ' is playing.*

**Stella**            *(sings)* Fly me to the moon and let me play amongst the stars.  
Let me see what spring is like on Jupiter and Mars. Vodka?

**Carol**            Ta. You going to the karaoke this week?

**Stella**            You can sing. You do it.

**Carol** No way. You've got mascara on your face

*STELLA rubs her eye and gets a smudge on her face*

**Stella** Do you have any fags?

**Carol** No, I stopped. You've made it worse.

*STELLA rubs her eye again and makes the smudge worse*

**Stella** You've stopped again?

**Carol** Yeah I've stopped again. Go on. Do karaoke.

*CAROL leans over and rubs the mascara from STELLA's face.*

**Stella** You want to do it. I don't.

**Carol** No I don't.

**Stella** What do you want?

**Carol** One of those Hoovers without the bags. What's it called?

**Stella** A Dyson.

**Carol** Yeah. A Dyson. Got change?

**Stella** What for?

**Carol** Fag machine

**Stella** Said you'd stopped

**Carol** Have. *(CAROL looks in her purse)* I want a Dyson because you don't have to empty the bags.

**Stella** *(STELLA looks in her purse)* No change.

**Carol** Don't want a fag. It's cold outside. *(CAROL tears at the beer mat)* No bags.

**Stella** Yeah. Cool.

*STELLA checks her phone for messages but there are none. Silence.*

**Carol** Go on. Do the karaoke. You know you want to.

**Stella** You still have to empty the see through bit.

**Carol** Why do they say that they are better than the ones with the bags then?

**Stella** Don't know. I don't want to do karaoke. I want to be a spaceman.

**Carol** Space cadet more like. Maybe it sucks better.

**Stella** What sucks better?

**Carol** Dyson.

*CAROL receives a text message She reads it and ignores STELLA.*

**Stella** The Russians sent a dog into space. Hermetically sealed in a tube. Spinning doggy could see earth from space. I want to do that.

**Carol** Blah. Blah. Blah. Drink?

**Stella** Who text?

**Carol** Bloody Vodaphone.

*Silence.*

**Stella** I want to wear one of those big white puffy suits. I'd have an umbilical cord attached to a spaceship. Float. Pinch earth between my finger and thumb. Whiz and whirl. Imagine that.

**Carol** Don't want much then? Drink?

**Stella** Yeah. Vodka. It's not that cold. Come on out for a fag.

*STELLA offers CAROL a cigarette.*

**Carol** Thought you didn't have any

**Stella** Do.

**Carol** Said I stopped. And it's raining.

**Stella** Raining?

**Carol** Yeah

**Stella** Why do we always come here?

**Carol** Karaoke

**Stella** Doggy round and round. Russian Revolution. Whirling free and flying in the stars. Whoosh. Whoosh. Imagine what she saw. Laika the Moscow mutt. A real Dog Star. I want to fly too.

**Carol** You're not going to space. Need me to keep your feet on the ground. You're so la la.

**Stella** Boring here. I want more than a Dyson

**Carol** You always want more. Never happy. Why are you still here? You should have left after school. Gone to be a spaceman. Always thought you were the going type. Daydreamer. Why didn't you?

**Stella** What about that drink?

**Carol** You stayed here daydreaming instead. Yeah Vodka.

**Stella** You'd of loved that wouldn't you? If I'd left.

**Carol** You can do what you want

**Stella** You can't or you'd be singing.

**Carol** I don't want to sing.

**Stella**        Why do we come to karaoke every week then?

**Carol**        To stop you floating off to La La land. Airy fairy one. Always  
were off in your own world. Stop daydreaming and get a drink  
down you. You love karaoke.

**Stella**        I love space.

**Carol**        Shut up you nutter. Go and get us those drinks then you can go  
up and sing.

*STELLA goes to the bar. CAROL takes a cigarette from STELLA'S pack and  
plays with it throughout the next of the scene*

## SCENE 2

**Male** Good evening Ladies and Gentleman and welcome to the Starstruck Karaoke Bar. Want to be a star? Tonight you can be.

What a song list we have for you. Fly me to the Moon, Rocketman, Space Cowboy. Take your pick. Get your name on the list. The stage is yours ladies and gentlemen.

First up tonight we have Frank Sinatra with *My Way*. Over to you Frank (*shouts to MALE*)

*The karaoke machine starts. MALE puts on a Frank Sinatra mask. He goes to the Karaoke machine. The music starts and then fades to a low level. MALE mimes the song to the camera and can be seen on the screen. STELLA returns.*

**Stella** Vodka and coke.

**Carol** Ta. Why do men always do *My Way*?

**Stella** Why does Carol never sing? Put your name down

**Carol** I don't want to

**Stella** You're boring me now. I want a fag

**Carol** You'll get wet. It's raining

**Stella** Still?

**Carol** Probably

*Silence*

**Carol** Easyjet's doing new flights?

**Stella** Where to?

**Carol** Moon.

**Stella** You're taking the piss

**Carol** Easygalaxy.com. The no-frills space shuttle. One-way tickets only. I'll get you one.

**Stella** Bigger dreams than Hoovers without a bag.

**Carol** There's nothing in space

**Stella** And a Hoover's stuffed with dust

**Carol** And space is stuffed with black

**Stella** And a billion lights and planets. I want to fly to Venus. Be a space probe lured by blueness and sucked through her veil. But bang. She's a rancid celestial body you see. A preying mantis oozing poison and putrid sulphuric farts.

**Carol** Minging. Who'd want to go there? You're like that man.

**Stella** What man?

**Carol** The space man. The one that went up in the space shuttle that blew up. Composed a song to sing in space.

**Stella** Compose a Jovian score. Europa, Ganymede and Callisto rattling and pinging. Celestial chimes. I want to hear space. Be deafened by black noise.

**Carol** I want ear plugs. The spaceman blew up. Bang.

**Stella** Algebra squealing and orbiting magma and mantle. Isotopes smashing. Bang. Nebula twisting. Space grinding. Bang. Bang.

Bang. Me consumed by ebullient echoes and stratosphere.

That's what I want.

Is my mascara still down my face?

**Carol** Yeah.

**Stella** Can you sort it for me? Why am I like that man?

**Carol** Composed for the stars. He exploded. It's not really smudged.

**Stella** Why did you say it was?

**Carol** Because you're annoying.

**Stella** You don't suit that lipstick

*CAROL takes a mirror out of her handbag and looks*

**Carol** Your whole outfit's dodgy.

**Stella** You've made me paranoid now. I'm going for a pee

*STELLA goes to the toilet.*

### SCENE 3

**Male** A big round of applause please ladies and gentleman for Frank Sinatra. Remember get your name down. Be a star. Next up tonight is the marvellous, the incredible Mr. Stevie Wonder.

*Very Superstitious can be heard. MALE puts on a Stevie Wonder mask and can be seen singing on the screen. CAROL continues to play with her cigarette until STELLA returns. SELENE comes to the table. CAROL does not to see her. All dialogue is addressed to STELLA.*

**Selene** Do you have a light Stella?

**Carol** Do you have a light Stella?

*STELLA gives CAROL the lighter.*

**Selene** Why didn't you give me the lighter?

**Stella** *(to Selene)* You don't need one

**Carol** I know I don't need one but I want one

**Stella** *(to Selene)* You can smoke air

**Carol** Air? Like one of those stupid inhalers?

**Selene** Tonight I'm going to smoke Capstan Full Strength.

*SELENE lights an imaginary cigarette with an imaginary lighter*

**Stella** *(to Selene)* Does it taste good?

**Carol** Nup. Like an ashtray

**Selene** Divine

**Stella** *(to Selene)* And miles better for you than a real one

**Carol** But it's not real. No kick in the throat. Pretending is second best

**Selene** Second best? The cheek. Why are you friends with her? Is she going to go and smoke that or stand there twittering on about the joys of reality all night?

**Carol** I'm going out to smoke this. *(to the karaoke)* Who does he think he is? What a twat.

*CAROL goes out for a cigarette*

**Selene** I wish she would shut up and stop criticizing the singers. She's desperate to do karaoke and she can't. It's pathetic.

**Stella** She wants a Hoover with a see-through bit

**Selene** No she doesn't. She wants to sing and you want to go to space. But you're both just sitting quaffing vodka and waffling about cigarettes.

**Stella** She wants a Dyson

**Selene** She's stuck in the Starstuck Karaoke Bar watching singers and being twisty and envious. And you hold her hand.

**Stella** She keeps me on the ground

**Selene** My point exactly

*Enter CAROL*

**Carol** That was a good fag. I love stopping. They taste so much better when you do. He's crap. *(shouts towards audience)* Off Off Off!

*SELELE puts the song list on the table. CAROL takes the list and looks through it. SELENE goes back to the Karaoke machine*

#### SCENE 4

**Male** A big round of applause please ladies and gentleman for Mr. Stevie Wonder. Get your names on the list. Tonight you're the stars. Now for your delectation we have the one, the one and only Barry White.

**Carol** *(shouts towards audience)* Barry Shite. Barry Shite! He's not Barry White, he's Barry Shite

**Stella** Stop having a go at everyone else and have a go yourself.

**Carol** Barry White, Barry White, can't sing, He's Barry Shite.

**Stella** He's having a good time.

**Carol** He's a twat. I could do better.

*CAROL checks her make-up in her mirror*

**Stella** Put your name down then. You're really starting to bore me.

**Carol** Why should I make a fool of myself like they do?

**Stella** He's got the balls to go up. You don't

**Carol** Dreams like Hoovers. Suck you up and whirl you round then spit you out with toenails and dust. I'm bored. What we going to do now?

**Stella** Karaoke

**Carol** Don't want to do that.

**Stella** You're doing my head in and I can see right through you. You want to be a star. Sing. Close your eyes and pretend.

**Carol** Don't want to pretend

**Stella** Make it up.

**Carol** Like when Pam found Bobby in the shower and he wasn't dead after all. Very handy.

**Stella** That was a dream.

**Carol** Dreaming asleep. Dreaming awake. Doesn't count

**Stella** For what?

**Carol**            Anything. Made up. It isn't real.

**Stella**            Look at him (*she points to MALE*) He's Stevie Wonder. He's  
happy.

**Carol**            He's second best. He's not Stevie Wonder. Stevie Wonder is  
Stevie Wonder.

**Stella**            No. Stevie Wonder is Steveland Morris.

**Carol**            What? that's his real name?

**Stella**            Now you're getting it

*SELENE returns*

## SCENE 5

**Selene** Is she going to stop obsessing about reality and sing?

**Stella** *(to Carol)* Go on Carol sing. You're a good singer.

**Carol** I'll do karaoke when you fly

**Stella** I do fly

**Carol** Maybe you should lay of the vodka

**Selene** How do you fly?

**Stella** In sleep I'm sucked against gravity into a tangled orbit. My limbs bound over crest and tide. I'm free to roam and dance. Bang dangled. Rocks are spun into a sphere by forces defined and ones without names. Yet. Scrambled strings of radius, circumference and Pi.

*(to Carol)* Did you check the lottery numbers?

*CAROL pulls a lottery ticket out of her pocket*

**Carol** Nup. And you are starting to lose the plot. You sound like a loony.

**Selene** *(to Stella)* She's Starstruck and stuck. Caged in a pernickety head cocoon. *(to Carol)* Wake up. Wake up. Come on out of there moth.

*(to Selene)* What's Pi's number name?

**Stella** 3 point 1 4 1 5 9 and on and on

**Carol** Got two. No, that can't be right. Where did you get the numbers? There can't be two ones. Can't all be wee numbers.

**Stella** 2 3 8 9 0 0.

**Carol** Is that all that numerology shite?

**Stella** No that's how many miles it is to the moon

**Carol** You can't use that to pick them. You don't get nothings in the lottery. It's one to forty-four.

**Stella** 3 8 4 3 8 5

**Selene** Fly. Take off with boosters and hydrazine

**Carol** Too many 3's and 8's. Do you add them up?

**Stella** That's how far it is In kilometres.

**Selene** Listen to her. Twittering lottery la la. Come and fly Stella. Like you did before. Before you knew things you think you can't un-know. The Real World. A stage name. Like Stevie Wonder or Elton John. The Real World. Up in lights. Sparkly and seductive. The longest running hit. Audiences of millions.

**Carol** No magic formula. You're too superstitious. I just use my birthday and mums.

**Stella** *(to Selene)* No rules?

**Carol** Course there aren't any rules. It's luck. I got four numbers once

**Selene** Do you want to see Venus?

**Stella** Need my feet the ground. I'm hanging on.

**Selene/ Carol** What for?

*SELENE goes to the bar*

**Stella**        You to sing

**Carol**        I'm not here to sing.

**Stella**        Why don't you sing?

**Carol**        Why don't you go to space? Stop moaning and fly.

**Stella**        Why do we come here?

**Carol**        To laugh. We're here to laugh. At them. You know Ha. Ha. Ha.  
And there's no where else to go.

**Stella**        I want to go somewhere else

**Carol**        Where? Space. Spinning around in the stars babbling gobble de  
gook

**Stella**        Sounds good to me

**Carol**        Aren't you a bit short to be a spaceman? Give me that list.

**Stella**        I'll wear heels. Drink up (*STELLA passes CAROL a drink*)

**Carol**        You're more likely to end up in padded cell than a padded spacesuit.

**Stella**        Only thing that's going to make me go crazy is coming here week after week so you can tip toe round your fantasies

*STELLA passes CAROL the list*

**Carol**        Want what you can't have. You'll explode. Bang.

*The Karaoke machine makes a bang*

## SCENE 6

**Male** Ladies and gentleman. We seem to have a slight technical hitch.  
Do bear with us while we try and rectify the situation.

**Carol** What's wrong with the machine?

**Stella** Broken

**Carol** Can't be

**Stella** Went bang

**Carol** No karaoke?

**Stella** No karaoke. Thought you didn't want to sing.

**Carol** What the hell's wrong with it?

*CAROL goes to the karaoke machine.*

**Carol** *(to MALE)* What the hell's wrong with it?

**Male** Don't know love. It was making funny noises when I was introducing Stevie Wonder then it went bang.

*SELENE joins STELLA at the table. CAROL prods and kicks the Karaoke machine*

## SCENE 7

**Selene** Do you want to see Jupiter?

**Stella** She keeps me on the ground.

**Selene** Do you like it?

**Stella** Not really.

**Selene** You wanted to fly.

**Stella** Still do

**Selene** You chatter on but never do. I flew.

**Stella** You did. In the trees

**Selene** Higher. You wanted to but you went to play with them instead.

**Stella** Where did you go?

**Selene** Space. But you played with them. You didn't come with me.

**Stella** Want to fly but need my feet on the ground

**Selene** Concrete boots. You prattle on and on. Star talk but don't jump.  
Mouse in Carol's cage. A pragmatist's pet with a head stuffed  
with stars.

**Stella** But if I let go I might

**Selene** Go bang?

**Stella** Or worse. Fizzle. No bang. Why do I have to come with you?  
Why can't you stay here with me? You came back. Don't go  
again.

**Selene** You went away. Not me.

**Stella** Up. No. I have to keep my feet on the ground. See earth  
whirling. Spinning tops wobbling on axis. Shudder magma  
shatters and spews. I want to see it and hear it.

**Selene** All puffed up and brave with vodka soaked tales of planets but  
no take off.

**Stella** Stella suspended. Earth suspended. Two fried eggs back to  
back. That's our galaxy. I cling onto longitude squashed  
between bang and no bang.

**Selene** Shine and shatter.

**Stella** Maybe I'm inert. No spark in me. A dirty bullet dud. Maybe nothing inside me to go bang.

**Selene** Everyone is rocket fuel.

**Stella** Radon barrel. Maybe I'm unloaded with a click not bang. Noble but inert. Maybe I fizzle. No whoosh.

**Selene** Everyone is jam packed and explosive but won't pull their pins out. No bang. You lost your bang.

**Stella** I do have bang.

**Selene** Show me

**Stella** Bang. She arc welds the heavens.

*CAROL returns*

## SCENE 8

**Carol** Machine's broken. Hold this while I go for a pee.

*CAROL hands STELLA a drink*

**Stella** I'm going

**Carol** No way. Hang on for a bit.

**Stella** Why?

**Carol** Hang on.

**Stella** I want to go now

**Carol** You always do this

**Stella** What?

**Carol** Go

**Stella** I want a fag

**Carol** You always go. Skin out.

**Stella** I'm not going to tell you next time. Just go. You don't care if I'm here or not. You just want someone to go to the karaoke with

**Carol** Might as well go out on my own

**Stella** No one else to go with.

**Carol** You're fine for the first few drinks then you just go off into your own little world. La La land.

**Stella** You only phone me when you're not seeing anyone

**Carol** You've always been like that. Secretive

**Stella** You can't be on your own. Need someone to hold your hand.  
Hanging round. Don't even know what you're waiting for.  
Wanting for.

**Carol** Even when we were little. Didn't play with the rest of us

**Stella** Make up mirrors. Hairspray reflected. You look at you but you don't see you.

**Carol** Playing on your own all the time. La la la.

**Stella** Round and round you go. Filling in time until. Treading time.  
Vodka. Karaoke.

**Carol** Not good enough for you. Snobby cow. Think you've got better  
dreams. Who gives a shit if you fly or I get a Hoover? Or even  
sing?

**Stella** Hamster on a wheel round and round. Horrid little claws. Scratch  
scratch on the plastic wheel. Hoovers. Fags. Snappy tiny teeth.

**Carol** Didn't play with us. Always on your own.

**Stella** Hoovers. Snap. Snap. Snap

**Carol** Dreams. La. La. La.

**Stella** Bump to earth when I played with you.

**Carol** Just hang on for a bit

**Stella** No. I'm going. Now.

**Carol** Where?

**Stella**        Somewhere else. And I wasn't on my own.

**Carol**        There isn't anywhere else to go. Just wait for a bit while I pee.  
Please.

*CAROL goes to the toilet. SELENE returns.*

## SCENE 9

**Selene** Fished in the burn.

**Stella** With sticks and string.

**Selene** Leaves for fish.

**Stella** Burn was river

**Selene** Leap dyke anemone landing. Sitka blackness.

**Stella** Muddy feet.

**Selene** Stick guns. Bang

**Stella** Up peeped down through holes between twigs

**Selene** Firs orange carpet tickling rough feet

**Stella** Blackness dense packed between *firebreaks*

**Selene** Come on Stella. Play.

**Stella** Be home before it's dark Stella. Always playing with Selene.

**Selene**      The dogs came too. Tongues thick with cracked pink velvet.  
Drooling happy slavers into wood wind.

**Stella**      Follow crow's cackle on bark.

**Selene**      Whirling up. Branches scratch cheeks.

**Stella**      Resin stings. The dogs could see you too.

**Selene**      Into the glooming. Back for tea.

**Stella**      Mince again.

**Selene**      Play after tea. Follow me Stella. Up.

**Stella**      Why are you playing on your own Stella? Do you want to play  
with us?

**Selene**      Snap branches. Whoosh

**Stella**      Don't play on your own. Come and play with us. You be the wolf.  
What's the time Mr. Wolf?

**Selene**      Higher than the trees. Up. Come on Stella.

**Stella** I'll be the Wolf.

**Selene** Fly with me.

**Stella** Two o'clock. What time is it Mr. Wolf? Seven o'clock. What time is it Mr. Wolf?

**Selene** Stella? Stella?

**Stella** Nine o'clock. What time is it Mr. Wolf? (*STELLA roars*)  
Dinnertime.

**Selene** You went to play with them

*CAROL returns. SELENE goes to the Karaoke machine. They pass but do not acknowledge each other. SELENE twists knobs on the machine.*

## SCENE 10

**Carol**        You waited.

**Stella**        Course I waited.

**Carol**        Said you were going

**Stella**        I am but not yet.

**Carol**        Just stay for one more. Please. I'll do karaoke if you do.

**Stella**        Will you do Karaoke?

**Carol**        Give me some of that (*CAROL takes a drink*)

**Stella**        Said you didn't want to

**Carol**        But you waited for me

**Stella**        I wouldn't go without saying bye

**Carol**        Said you would

**Stella**        I was angry

**Carol**        You waited

**Stella**        It works now.

**Carol**        The machine?

**Stella**        Here's the list

**Carol**        Just one more drink?

**Stella**        No. Sing. They've got your favourite. Bohemian Rhapsody

**Carol**        Do they?

*CAROL shows STELLA the list*

**Stella**        Course

**Carol**        Will you watch me?

**Stella**        Course. Sort your face out before you go on. Here. (*STELLA puts lipstick on CAROL'S lips*)

**Carol**        Can we have a fag first?

**Stella**      Has it stopped raining?

*CAROL and STELLA exit.*

## **SCENE 11**

*SELENE and MALE pull the bar into the centre of the stage and turn it around to reveal a stage. CAROL and STELLA enter.*

**Male**           *(to audience)* That's it for tonight ladies and gentleman. Thanks for coming along. You're all stars. We'll see you again next week. Same time. Same place. The Starstruck Karaoke Bar. Where all your dreams come true.

*CAROL and MALE sing Bohemian Rhapsody by QUENN. STELLA and SELENE watch them for a bit then exit. After a few lines the music suddenly stops and Starman by DAVID BOWIE starts to play loudly. MALE and CAROL freeze.*

*STELLA and SELENE enter wearing red sequined spacesuits and sing. Images of space can be seen on the projection screen*

*After some time there is the sound of a spaceship taking-off then a huge bang.*

*Black out.*