

Hallo Panda.
By Chris and Ben Blaine.



Charlie Productions Ltd
Brook House
Bluebridge Road
Brookmans Park
Hertfordshire AL9 7SX
01707 656531/07967 824 802
bingo@charlieproductions.co.uk
www.charlieproductions.co.uk

FADE IN:

INT. DOUBLE DECKER BUS — MORNING.

MARK wakes with a start on the back seat of the upper deck, an empty beer can bent round his fist, twisted in his sleep.

He is an unshaven American with messy hair and a naturally glum expression beneath thick-rimmed glasses and a white lab coat. He stumbles down the stairs and peers around in confusion.

The bus stands empty, one of a hundred bright red monoliths in the pale morning light filtering through the bus garage roof.

EXT. ZOO — DAY.

Baboons HONK lyrically and beady black eyes follow Mark from behind bars as he stomps his way between the animal enclosures.

LEE, a skinny, bald, white man, proffers melon to a gorrilla.

MARK

Hallo Lee.

Lee glances up and waves. The gorilla peers at him disdainfully.

KWAME, a tall, hairy, black man, throws dead fish to penguins.

MARK

Hallo Kwame.

Kwame waves a fish as Mark opens a door marked "STAFF ONLY".

BACK ROOMS.

Yawning, he walks down a long dingy corridor lined with offices, all labelled by species: "LIONS", "FEMURS", "WOBEGONGS" etc.

The doors at the far end swing open. DAVID and SARAH walk towards him, both reading a computer report. David is young and black in stylish glasses, but Mark isn't looking at him.

Sarah moves in slow-motion, her pale skin glowing in the gloom. Scottish with glasses, her messy hair pinned haphazardly in place, she fiddles with the fraying cuffs of her cardigan.

To Mark she is grace incarnate.

MARK

Hallo Sarah.

Sarah grins and gives him a wink as she follows David into the darkness of the "MOTHATORIUM".

The door slams shut in Mark's face.

Regretfully, Mark turns on his heel and walks away.

EXT. PANDA MOUNTAIN – DAY.

Mark trudges down the hill past rocks, trees and no pandas.

Two Chinese tourists in anoraks peer in hopefully for sight of a bear as he opens the barred gate of the sleeping quarters.

INT. PANDA SLEEPING QUARTERS – DAY.

Inside, PANDA is slumped against a wall looking glum.

MARK

Hallo Panda.

PANDA

Hallo Numpty.

MARK

So how did it go last night?

Panda glares at him.

PANDA

Oh you know, I just felt like staying in, watching some TV, that Ricky Gervais thing was a bit shit... No - I did not have sex with Ming Ming!

MARK

Her name is Mau Mau.

PANDA

Whatever.

MARK

Didn't these help at all?

He throws an angry hand out at a wall covered in posters of female pandas in a variety of provocative poses.

Panda glowers back at him.

MARK

Come on - you know how important this is! It's not my fault you're an endangered species!

PANDA

Oh yeah, that's right, relax me, take the pressure off! Either I bang Moo Moo or it's Goodnight Shanghai! How many times - the simple fact is I don't fancy her!

MARK

Where are your animal instincts man? She's black, white, twenty-two stone - what more could you want?

PANDA

It's always appearance with you.

The door CLANKS open and Mark's colleague MAYOVER steps inside, a bundle of bamboo in his arms.

MAYOVER

Look at him. It's not right is it? He's not really even eating his bamboo at the moment.

He pokes some bamboo towards Panda's disdainful face whilst making patronising noises.

MAYOVER

Come on Panda, be a good boy. You've got to eat you know.

He SIGHS and shrugs.

MAYOVER

I dunno. Guess I'll go and sort the other one out.

Mark and Panda watch Mayover trudge away.

PANDA

He's such a twat. I can't believe my sex life is in the hands of two guys who couldn't pull a rope between them.

Mark glares at him.

INT. PUB — EVENING.

Mark takes a gloomy swig of Guinness. He sits on the edge of a group from work, next to Sarah and David, who rabbit on to each other animatedly.

LAUGHING, Sarah nudges Mark and snaps a grin onto his face as if he had been listening.

She turns back to David - with Sarah's back to him, he might as well be alone.

He downs his pint.

INT. SARAH'S FLAT — MORNING.

The wine glass slips from Mark's fingers and SMASHES.

Waking with a start he finds himself slumped on Sarah's sofa wearing his lab coat as a make-shift blanket. He looks around himself confused, wiping saliva from his chin.

Sarah's flat is small and neither man-messy nor girl-clean. She fills a kettle in the kitchen.

SARAH

Do you want a cup of tea?

MARK

Do you have coffee? I haven't tasted real coffee in months.

Sarah leans out from behind her fridge and beams at him.

SARAH

Sorry, it makes me itch.

MARK

I broke a glass.

Her smile doesn't falter.

SARAH

You always break something hun. Of course you'll rot in hell for all eternity but that's your problem.

Mark nods, considering the terrible truth in this statement.

INT. PANDA SLEEPING QUARTERS – DAY.

Glumly Mark cranks the door open and finds Panda sitting with his back to the poster of Chi Chi.

All the other pictures lie in shreds on the floor around him and he glares up at Mark confrontationally.

Mark SIGHS.

MARK

Fine. Whatever. I'm past caring.

Mark crumples uninvited onto the floor next to the bear, who shuffles uncomfortably away from him.

MARK

I stole an egg from her fridge.
Even I think that's weird.

PANDA

You stole an egg?

Mark shows him the egg.

MARK

From her fridge.

PANDA

Freudian. Who's fridge?

MARK

Sarah.

PANDA

Oooh, Mark and Sarah, sitting in a
tree F-U-C-K-I-N-G...

MARK

It's not like that. She thinks of
us as friends, not - - at least I
don't think she does anyway...

Mark rolls the egg in his hand, it is pale and fragile and he holds it carefully – Panda GROANS.

PANDA

Oh ask her out! Hang on - what
Sarah? Not David-and-Sarah Sarah
who works with the moths?

Mark nods disconsolately.

PANDA

Ahh mate, she's a minger.

MARK

Yeah, thanks Panda, I knew you'd help.

INT. BACK ROOMS, CORRIDOR – DAY.

Mark looks into the "PANDA" office and hesitates - Mayover sits hunched over a CCTV screen watching an unmoving Panda.

Mark looks over at the door opposite: "MOTHS". Plucking up his courage he KNOCKS gently on the door. There is no response and everything sounds very quiet inside.

Intrigued, he tries the handle and finds it swings open into almost total darkness.

MARK

Sarah?

He CLICKS on the light.

David SCREAMS.

He is in a dimly lit glass booth wearing something between a bee-keepers outfit and a space suit. He runs desperately at the strong light and BOUNCES into the glass of the booth and back onto the floor. Moths flutter against the glass.

SARAH

Mark! Turn the light off!

Mark kills the light and stands blinking and confused in the darkness as diamonds streak round his eyeballs.

Sarah steps inside the booth and helps David back up. Moths dizzily try to get their bearings again as they fly around them.

MARK

Shit. Sorry. The door was. I –

SARAH

Shh-shh. Don't worry. He's very stupid. He'll forget the trauma almost instantly. I don't know why they put a light in here anyway.

She smiles at Mark through the glass as David gets up, floaty and disorientated. Mark frowns, not sure if she said that.

MARK

David's not that stupid Sarah.

SARAH

He's wearing the moth simulator.
So what brings you here then?

MARK

I – er, I wanted to see you.

Mark watches Sarah smile through fluttering yellow reflections.

SARAH

Not going well with the panda?

Mark sighs and leans against the booth.

MARK

It's like he won't see he's facing
extinction. They're just so
stubborn. With everything. I mean,
like bamboo! Genetically – they're
carnivores, but they insist on
only eating bamboo. Is that music?

Sarah nods, padding around the booth bare-footed she points at a
moth high up on a branch by the roof.

SARAH

Look, that's what you need.

Non-plussed, Mark smiles and walks to the door of the booth.

MARK

You're pointing out a single star
in a constellation. I've no idea
which one you mean.

Mark steps into the booth and Sarah's eyes widen in warning.

SARAH

Take your shoes off.

Mark tugs off his shoes and steps inside to find doo-wop music
playing softly through speakers on the floor.

Close to Sarah in the dark, he breathes in her scent.

SARAH

There she is. The pink one sitting
on that branch. The Vestal Moth.
Which is ironic.

The Vestal Moth sits deadly still as other moths fly crazily round her, almost dogfighting with each other to get closest.

Swallowing his nerves, Mark opens his mouth to speak to her.

SARAH

She's a dirty slut. See all the males zig-zagging round her? She's letting off a really powerful pheromone to attract a mate. It's someone's lucky night tonight.

Tiny yellow wings beat all around them, moving very gently to the softly syncopated rhythm of the music.

MARK

Listen, Sarah -

She turns to find him close to her. They smile at each other.

In the soft light she is beautiful.

SARAH

You coming down the pub?

She motions up to the clock as it clicks on to five thirty.

MARK

Yeah. Meet you there.

INT. PANDA SLEEPING QUARTERS - DAY

Mark pokes his head round the corner with a grin.

MARK

I've got something for you.

Panda looks up.

PANDA

A spoon so I can dig my way out?

Mark shakes his head and produces a DVD and a combo TV/DVD player. Panda slumps back.

PANDA

Panda porn? Aww come on.

Mark plugs it all up and pandas flick up on the screen, moaning, mounting, contorted, copulating.

MARK

No you come on. I'm off down the
pub with Sarah.

Panda looks at him queryingly.

MARK

Look, this worked for Shi Shi back
in San Diego. I'm not asking you
to date her, I've not booked you a
table at the Ivy! It's not love,
it's just sex. Just – you know –
be a man for me – just –

PANDA

Lie back and think of China?

Mark locks the gate behind him.

MARK

That's the spirit. Do one for
Darwin.

PANDA

Listen, Mark...

Mark looks back.

PANDA

Good luck with Sarah, yeah?

INT. PUB – EVENING.

Mark watches Sarah take a long draw on her pint of bitter.

They sit amidst a crowd of zoologists grazing and watering,
braying at jokes and calling across the bar for more drinks.

SARAH

So what happens if you can't get
the pandas to mate?

MARK

I guess we'll have to try
artificial insemination.

SARAH

Get the panda to wank into a
bottle?

Mark looks down as he polishes his glasses on his shirt.

MARK

Something like that, yeah.

Sarah waves across the room to David who is sitting on his own staring at a table lamp – catching her eye he shakes himself. Mark puts his glasses on and leans closer to her.

MARK

Listen, shall we go somewhere different?

SARAH

Sure.

She downs her pint and THUMPS it down on the table with a grin.

INT. BAR – NIGHT.

Mark frowns – he and Sarah are squashed against the bar, all the other zoologists around them, SHOUTING into one another's ears.

SARAH

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

MARK

SHALL WE GO SOMEWHERE QUIETER?

EXT. RIVER THAMES – NIGHT

Mark and Sarah sit together on an ornate iron bench overlooking the dark tongue of the river, a bag of beers between them.

SARAH

It's a hell of a long way to come...

MARK

...to make a Panda cum, yeah, I know. But bears are a secondary issue. I'm here for the beer.

Sarah LAUGHS.

MARK

No seriously. In America not only is the beer weak as piss, but if you say "Hey guys, work's over – let's have a drink" then pretty soon people start giving you leaflets about self-help groups. Over here even AA meet in the bar.

She LAUGHS and nudges him.

SARAH

That's the culture. My dad was a drinker, I'm a drinker. It's just – you know – normal. And I mean I'm quite a shy person and sometimes I think I think too much and it helps that way, but yeah, really I think I just like beer. And I mean that alone is weird with some guys – I order a pint and it's, I don't know, it's not lady-like or something, like pissing in the sink. I'm so bored of men. No offence.

MARK

None taken. I'm not man I'm beer, I'm forty percent proof.

SARAH

But I mean if we can't cope with each other then evolution's got it all shitted up. I mean, like love, love just makes a simple spread of the genes so... complex. Have you ever really been in love Mark?

Mark stares at her, wondering where to begin, wobbling slightly with drink – she looks at him quizzically.

He reaches forwards and gently takes off her glasses.

MARK

Sarah, I –

SARAH

No, don't do that I can't see.

She is deadly serious and it slightly kills the mood.

Sheepishly he gives the glasses back.

MARK

Sorry.

SARAH

It's fine. Sorry. Shall we go?

Mark nods and reluctantly gets to his feet.

They cross the road and Sarah knocks into him, friendly, trying to lighten the mood.

He puts his arm round her and she returns the favour. A warm genuine smile emerges on his face.

Mark leads her off down the road through a swaying musical number.

BLACK.

Sarah laughs as Mark helps her from a bush she had fallen into.

BLACK.

Mark steadies himself against a Belisha Beacon.

Sarah falls into him, smiling and pointing up at a moth fluttering round the flashing orange sphere above them.

Mark looks happily into the sky. The lights of planes and helicopters blip through the orange sky.

BLACK.

Mark leans in and kisses Sarah.

For a brief moment she pauses before returning the kiss.

Mark flushes with happiness and suddenly the lights behind them begin to move, dancing in circles like they are part of an Oskar Fischinger abstract animation.

Moths flutter round the orange circle of the Belisha Beacon which swoops round the couple.

Diamonds and circles zig zag happily around one another into the sky and back again.

Suddenly Sarah breaks away from the kiss.

Startled, the lights stop in bizarre positions, making it seem as if they are to topple away into the depths of infinite space.

She turns and runs away, quickly disappearing into the darkness.

Lights streak up to form the few stars seen in London at night.

EXT. STREET — DAWN.

Mark finds himself lying, arms outstretched, in a bed of flowers.

Groggily he hauls himself up - he is alone and damp with dew.

INT. PANDA SLEEPING QUARTERS — DAY.

He finds Panda asleep against the back wall, under the poster.

MARK

Hallo Panda.

Panda opens a tired eye.

PANDA

Hallo Mark. You look rough.

MARK

I feel great. How was it for you?

Panda SIGHS and looks away.

Something CRACKS under Mark's foot - the DVD player sticks open, the DVD shattered in pieces on the floor beneath it.

PANDA

Mark I'm really sorry man. I tried. I really tried and the DVD was useful and instructive and everything but then in she comes and I mean, she ain't no Chi Chi man and Pandas we like privacy and all those cameras around - it's just not conducive to thoughts of a sexual nature..

Mark runs a hand through his hair, shrugs and then reluctantly produces a large plastic sample pot.

MARK

You'll have to fill this then.

Panda shakes his head.

PANDA

Oh fuck off mate. I hardly have the tools do I?

He holds up his big paws uselessly.

MARK

Panda we need semen, Mau Mau's in season. It's up to you, you've got 'til mid-day for a spot of DIY or I'll have to let Mayover do it with a rubber glove.

Mark shrugs. There is a KNOCK on the caged door.

Mark turns round to see Sarah through the bars.

MARK

Hey! Hi. Morning.

SARAH

Hallo Mark. Can we talk?

EXT. THE AVIARY – MORNING.

Mark and Sarah sit side by side on a bench, staring at the fluttering and squawking. Sarah looks tired and fraught.

MARK

Are you OK?

Mark gently strokes her shoulder.

SARAH

Look, Mark, about, about what we said last night?

MARK

Yeah it was, I had fun.

SARAH

And you're cool with what we said?

MARK

Yeah.

SARAH

After we, after we kissed. About being friends yeah?

Mark blinks – desperately reordering his memories.

MARK

Friends. Yeah.

SARAH

I mean, we work together.

Mark's face starts to fall.

MARK

Right.

Sarah shifts uncomfortably as Mark looks away, out at the birds singing love songs to one another.

SARAH

And I mean work relations never work do they? It's bad timing..

Mark looks back at her, a twinkling of hope in his eye.

SARAH

I mean I really like you as a person. And who knows, another time, another place, in a parallel universe, one where I actually fancy you, then, yeah, it could.. But, you know?

Mark nods at her and tries to clear his throat.

MARK

So there's a chance?

SARAH

Friends, yeah?

MARK

I don't think I can be friends with you.

Sarah's face falls onto sadness – this is not what she wanted – she opens her mouth to explain further, he shakes his head.

MARK

Sorry. Don't, don't say anything. It's ok.

This is obviously a lie.

SARAH

Sorry mate.

She smiles sadly, squeezes his arm and then turns and walks away, leaving him alone with birds laughing all around him.

INT. PANDA OFFICE – DAY.

Mark slumps into Mayover's empty chair. On the CCTV screen, Panda stares at the pot like a glum Buddha.

Mark rubs the dark bags under his eyes with weary fingers. A red light blinks on the answerphone next to him. He thumps PLAY.

ANSWERPHONE

You have. One. New Message.

MAYOVER (answerphone)

Errr... Yes. Hallo Mark... Errr...

Mark rubs his eyes - the life draining from him.

MAYOVER

Now you haven't forgotten that I'm not coming in today, have you?

Mark looks up at the calendar on the wall. Indeed it says 'MAYOVER NOT COMING IN TODAY' - Mark pales.

MAYOVER (answerphone)

The panda food's in the fridge and the - oh, you know where it all is. Good luck, see you tomorrow...

With dread, Mark looks back at the CCTV screen and at Panda looking at the pot in front of him.

The line clicks dead and fills the room with a deep BURRRRR.

INT. PANDA SLEEPING QUARTERS – DAY.

Mark stands opposite Panda. They are both stock still.

The pot sits between them, empty.

MARK

Do you want me to wank you off?

Panda looks at the floor.

PANDA

No of course not.

MARK

You're leaving me with no choice.

PANDA

Mark it's not that easy.

MARK

Yes it is! Trust me! It's easy. If I had the choice between wanking myself and you getting your paws between my legs – no trouble – you could show me pictures of Barbara Bush and I'd be stiff as a board.

PANDA

Well that's you isn't it. I've got standards.

Mark angrily locks the barred gate, leaving the key in the hole.

Panda stares back at him with sad black eyes.

Mark goes to his bag and pulls out a pair of latex gloves.

PANDA

Ah Mark - I'm sorry.

Mark blows into the gloves and pulls them onto his hands – they squeak and creak as the latex takes the shape of his fingers.

Panda looks up at him sheepishly.

PANDA

Though I'm glad it's not Mayover.

Mark blinks, shudders, takes a deep breath, kneels down and puts his hand between Panda's legs.

Panda rolls his eyes at the indignity of it all and looks at the ceiling of his cell.

Mark keeps his eyes fixed firmly on the scratching log in the other corner of the cage. He hits a rhythm.

He glances up at Panda – who still stares blankly up at the ceiling – it's a huge mistake and he instantly whips his gaze back on the scratching log.

Mark is pale and starting to sweat.

Panda GRUNTS uncontrollably and Mark shudders. Unable to stop himself, Mark glances down.

His rhythm is starting to work.

He looks up again, not sure whether to be happy or horrified.

Panda WHIMPERS.

Mark slows his rhythm to a halt.

He glances at Panda – he is still staring at the ceiling.

Mark stands up and takes the gloves off.

MARK

Look, Panda, I --

Panda looks at him, sad and embarrassed.

PANDA

Don't. Don't say anything Mark.
It's ok.

Mark nods and walks away, taking the sample pot with him.

INT. PUB – EVENING.

David saunters into the pub and Sarah pounces – poking him in the ribs, LAUGHING together they struggle, each trying to strike the killer tickle..

Mark tears his eyes away from this scene and drains his pint, BANGING it down on the bar.

MARK

Another pint of Panda please -
Guinness. Guinness --- fuck it.

Drunk and humiliated he staggers from the bar.

EXT. PANDA MOUNTAIN – NIGHT.

Mark RATTLES the bars with a half-drunk bottle of scotch.

MARK

Come on Panda wake up!

Panda ambles out of his sleeping quarters and stares at him.

MARK

I fucked up Panda. Is that mud on
your paws?

PANDA

Are you drunk?

MARK

Is the Pope Catholic?

PANDA

I dunno, I ain't shit in the woods
for so long I wouldn't be
surprised if he was a Buddhist.
It's late man – go home.

Mark slumps down against the bars.

MARK

She don't love me man. She wants
to be "*friends*". What can I do?

PANDA

You're asking me for advice on women?

MARK

Well it's you or Mayover and I may
be desperate but I'm not stupid.

Panda pads around in a circle trying to think of what to say.

PANDA

Ah Mark man I dunno, maybe it's
the drinking or your eyesight but
– you only ever see what you want
to see. I can't help you, I'm just
a panda, doing what pandas do.

MARK

Don't talk about you – talk about
Sarah! Talk about Sarah Panda!

Panda sits down beside Mark on the other side of the bars.

PANDA

What, David-and-Sarah Sarah? Man,
you're so locked in on your
infatuation you can't see it. I
ain't attracted to Mau Mau and
Sarah, she ain't attracted to you.
You can't fight nature.

Mark GROANS.

MARK

God, I need to get out of here.
This damn zoo is doing my head in.

Panda blinks at him from behind the bars.

PANDA

Dude, at least you're a free man!
Fish! Sea! Work it out! You're an
attractive young man with a lot to
offer.

MARK

Yeah?

PANDA

Yeah, well, you're a man at least.

Mark rubs his eyes.

MARK

Thanks Panda. What you doing tonight?

PANDA

Well, you know the joke.

Mark shakes his head.

PANDA

The joke.

Mark shrugs.

PANDA

Ah fuck it I'll buy you the book.
Have a good night.

INT. BAR – NIGHT.

In his lab coat, Mark looks out of place amongst the throng of men staring at the women in the light of the dancefloor. They dance slowly, smiling at each other as men dance around them, watching them, zig-zagging in time to the music.

BLACK.

Mark dances in the middle of the dancefloor. Women are smiling, watching Mark – he feels like a star, he moves with drama – and people stand back to give him room.

BLACK.

The room for movement has turned into space. Mark dances alone and pathetic, swaying gently to his own alcoholic rhythm.

BLACK.

INT. STRIP CLUB – NIGHT.

Mark sits alone at a table with a full pint in front of him.

A CHINESE DANCER in a black thong grinds on the table above the pint glass. She chews gum and looks quite bored.

Mark stares at her from the distance of fifty units of alcohol, deep black rings under his eyes punctuating his white face.

BLACK.

Mark pushes his pint away. The dancer leans down to him, close.

DANCER

Would you like some hand relief?

He blinks, considering this.

Shaking his head he gets up to leave.

INT. MARK'S FLAT – MORNING.

Mark wakes up on top of his bed fully dressed clutching a bottle of Sanatogen fortified wine.

He shakes himself blearily and picks up the phone and hears an answerphone bleep at him.

MARK

Hi. It's me. I'm, I'm not very well. I er, I won't be in.

There is a click on the line as the other handset is lifted.

MAYOVER

Errrrrrr Mark – Hi – It's me –
errrrrrr – errrrrrrr – errrrrrr – I
really think you should come in.

MARK

Why?

MAYOVER

Errrrrrrr –

MARK

Fuck it.

He SLAMS the phone down. It instantly starts to RING. Mark snatches it back off the hook.

MARK

What?

EXT. ZOO – MORNING.

Mark runs across the empty park towards the Zoo, his white coat flapping behind him.

INT. ZOO – MORNING.

Baboons HOWL mournfully as Mark runs toward Panda Mountain.

EXT. PANDA MOUNTAIN – MORNING.

Mark makes his way down towards the sleeping quarters and through a crowd of people: zoologists and zoofficials, including Lee, Kwame, David and Sarah and a few journalists who have managed to wangle their way through.

Seeing Mark, Sarah goes over, placing a hand on his arm.

SARAH

Mark I'm so sorry.

Mark says nothing and walks through the open gate.

INT. PANDA SLEEPING QUARTERS – MORNING.

He finds Mayover uselessly searching the private empty room.

MAYOVER

He's disappeared Mark. Into thin air.

Mark stares in disbelief around the small dingy cell, as if willing a panda to appear.

He runs a hand through his messy hair and tries to shake some sobriety into his brain.

Muddy pieces of the Panda Porn DVD lie all over the floor.

Angrily he pulls the poster of Chi Chi off the wall – behind it is a large hole.

Mark is completely wrong-footed – he stares at it in shock.

Mayover looks at him, wide-eyed like a bush baby.

MAYOVER

Oh my God. Mark. It's a tunnel.
The panda dug a bloody tunnel.

Mark blinks.

Mayover leans forward and calls into the hole.

MAYOVER

PANDA?

His voice echoes, but gets no response from the fugitive bear.

Mayover bustles from the room.

Mark lets the remains of the poster drop to the floor.

He stares at the hole, stunned, thoughtful.

Behind him there is a kerfuffle as Mayover brings more people: Lee, Kwame, David, Sarah and many others all crowd round. There are startled voices, panic, surprise. Some people instantly go to peer into the tunnel.

Mark stands stock still.

Slowly the crowd dissipates. Mark is left with Mayover, David and Sarah. The world gets darker as grey clouds close in, rain beginning to bucket down.

SARAH

Mark?

She looks at him, worried, hanging onto David for comfort.

MAYOVER

He can't have gotten very far.

Mark does not respond.

MAYOVER

Mark?

Mark could be in a parallel universe. A smile begins to grow on his face as he stumbles outside onto Panda Mountain.

EXT. RIVER THAMES — DAY.

Panda emerges from a sewer outlet onto the banks of the river.

He wades into the comparatively clean water, rain thumping down, splashing in the river and refreshing Panda.

He slowly raises his paws into the air.

Panda lets out a ROOAAARRR of freedom, a smile across his face.

EXT. PANDA MOUNTAIN — DAY.

The rain starts to drench Mark.

Sarah and David cower under an umbrella while Mayover fumbles into a pac-a-mac.

The harder it rains, the more Mark's smile grows. He tugs off his tie and turns around.

Sarah and David huddle together - she smiles at Mark sheepishly.

SARAH

D'you wanna go for a pint?

Mark takes his wet and cloudy glasses off to look at her one last time.

MARK

Nah. I'm good thanks.

She blinks at him, rain pouring down her face.

He steps past them and makes his way back up Panda Mountain.

Mayover watches him go and grumpily flips the hood of his pac-a-mac up.

MAYOVER

Well, I guess I'll have to go and inseminate Mau Mau myself.

Getting no response from either Sarah or David he trudges away.

EXT. RIVER THAMES — DAY.

A small Chinese boat makes its way to the east past the landmarks looming over the river.

Underneath a tarpaulin, Panda pokes his head up to look through a gap at the rain dancing across the water and the disappearing cityscape behind him.

EXT. ZOO – DAY.

Mark walks away from the Zoo and out into the park, taking his lab coat off and throwing it into a litter bin,

Smiling, he looks up into the sky as he walks. Rain batters his face, washing away his numbness.

He grins and makes his way into the distance, out of the park.

FADE OUT.