

HOW AWESOME MET HIS MATCH

by David Sharpe

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First performed as part of ‘*Carnival of the Damned... Funny!*’ at Dante’s Fitzroy on 26 March 2008 with the following cast:

NARRATOR Maria Coviello

PIKE Adrian Snodgrass

AWESOME MAN Michael Alexander

K8 Sarah Oldmeadow

SHIRLEY Erin Oliver

Directed by Charity Shaw

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

NARRATOR – age and gender open.

PIKE – Thomas Pikewell Stone, age open. Unfit and unkempt. Dressed in black.

AWESOME MAN – an archetypal super-hero: tights, cape, mask, exterior underwear. Totally awesome.

K8 – a tall, smart, sophisticated, beautiful woman. Apparent age around 25.

SHIRLEY – As unfit and unkempt as PIKE, also dressed in black, uncontrollable hair, big spectacles. Age open.

Stage left: a desk, chair and laptop. A copy of Men's Health magazine lies on the desk.

NARRATOR Our tale begins in Sydney Town, that busiest of places.
Where traffic thrums and friends are lost among a million faces.
In offices and tower blocks, the frenzied masses lurk
and on an ordinary day our hero sat at work.

PIKE shambles on, sits down at his desk.

His name is Thomas Pikewell Stone, but we shall call him Pike.
If first impressions count you'd think there's not a lot to like.
He ate too much, he drank too much, he had a smoker's wheeze.
Who knows when last he stepped outside to walk among the trees?

He seldom washed, hence had few friends, he rarely combed his hair.
But still our Pike was happy, like a wombat in its lair.
He cared not squat for life outside his tiny social set.
For Tom Pike lived another life, upon the internet.

The World Wide Web was Pike's domain, his work place, his delight.
He wrote the code and built the page for many a web site.
He hyperlinked, he anchored names, cascaded his style sheet.

PIKE "I cannot lie",

NARRATOR *(wryly)* he'd shyly say,

PIKE "I'm pretty hard to beat."

NARRATOR And credit's due, he was adept. His clients cried, "It's finer
Than any work we've ever had from any web designer."
They paid him quids, and Pike was pleased to be good for a loan,
It meant he could devote time to a project of his own...

PIKE has stood and is flicking through Men's Health.

For Pike was sly:

PIKE "I think I've spied a brand new marketplace.
The modern bloke has problems his Dad never had to face.
Is it OK to wax my chest? How should I dye my hair?
I'm meeting my girl's folks tonight, what jacket should I wear?

How do I get ahead at work? How do I get laid?
How can I get rock hard abs? How do I use a spade?
I sense in today's bright young men a freaky new reliance

and I think I know just the chap to offer them some guidance.”

Back to his desk.

NARRATOR Pike fired up his laptop and applying all his skill
set about creating someone who he knew would fit the bill.

PIKE “An online guru – that’s the go – a guy too cool to mention.
So smart and wise, a pro to turn to with a blokey question.

And strong and bold, a hero you would follow into Hades.
A sparkling wit with looks to make him candy for the ladies.
He’s hip pop culture irony with muscles and a tan.”

*In the background, we can see AWESOME emerging, running in slow
motion to his eventual position on stage, front and centre.*

NARRATOR And soon Pike was a father; he’d created:

AWESOME Awesome Man!

*And he strikes a thoroughly awesome pose. When he’s speaking, PIKE is
tapping away on the laptop – the words are PIKE’s, AWESOME is just the
vessel (though we break this rule later when PIKE and AWESOME
interact).*

*Whenever he’s not speaking, AWESOME quietly moves from pose to pose,
flexing muscles, kissing biceps, checking him self out etc.*

AWESOME “I’m Awesome Man,”

NARRATOR said Awesome Man,

AWESOME “From Awesome Man dot com!

I’m here to rescue you from stuff that you need saving from.
It’s tough to be a man today, so if you’re looking for some
Advice on how to make it then here’s your chance to be Awesome!

Too fat? Try my fitness regime, adopt the Awesome Diet!
Too stressed? I’ve got ten Awesome tips for finding peace and quiet!
Too poor? My money hints will help! Too lazy? Learn to jog!
Too lonely? Join our forum with links to my Awesome Blog!

I’ve help on sex and clothes and books and wine and food and style,
And if you’re smart you’ll sign up to my thirty-day free trial.
Ask me any question re: your modern day dismay.

Embark upon your valiant quest to Awesomeness today!”

NARRATOR Now you and I might wonder if such bluster would appeal.
But Pike was right: soon scores of folks were gripped by Awesome’s zeal.
Around the globe the geeks, the jocks, the yuppies all logged on.
His web hits soared. Awesome became an e-phenomenon.

He doled out sage advice as if ‘twas going out of fashion.
Such as to this young man who e-mailed: “Awesome Man the passion
has gone from my relationship. Her sex drive has been sapped, oh
how can I re-ignite the flame? Signed Desperate Lad from Dapto.”

AWESOME “Dear Desperate Lad,”

NARRATOR said Awesome Man,

AWESOME “of course I have the answer!
Ask not what she can do for you, but what you can for her, sir!
Massage her feet! Buy her a gift! Ask her about her day!
The chicks all fall for shit like that! You’ll soon be on your way!”

NARRATOR Or this one: “Awesome, my job sucks. I long for something thrilling.”

AWESOME “Life’s too short – follow your dreams! Do what you find fulfilling!”

NARRATOR “Awesome Man, I’m grey and creased, I’m growing old and slack”

AWESOME “Sleep well, eat well and moisturize, for grey is the new black!”

NARRATOR So on it went for Pike and his new Awesome alter ego.

AWESOME moves to PIKE, and interacts with his real life persona.

PIKE “There’s no snag we can’t figure out for any sad amigo
on cooking, grooming, travelling, screwing, maintaining your health.
Which car to buy, which beer to try...”

AWESOME “Man, this stuff writes itself!”

*Shaking hands, patting backs, congratulating themselves on their
cleverness.*

NARRATOR Pike and son were on a roll, they made an Awesome team.
They kept it real, fought the good fight, they loved living the dream.
Then one day, at the peak of their success, a twist of fate:
A new voice spoke upon their blog: the login was ‘K-eight’.

*K8 enters and stands formidably. PIKE reading from the laptop.
AWESOME & PIKE briefly break from the rhyme.*

AWESOME K-eight?

PIKE Kate, I think.

AWESOME Awesome!

K8 “Mister Awesome, I’m amazed as one of your rare female users.
The confidence with which you mentor these pathetic losers!
You seem to give advice with no thought for ramifications.
So may I ask, where did you gain your learn-ed qualifications?”

*PIKE & AWESOME are surprised. AWESOME looks to him for
something to say, but PIKE has nothing.*

NARRATOR Used to acclaim, Pike was surprised to hear the voice of censure.
He looked up Kate’s profile ‘ere drafting a reply to venture.

PIKE “Six foot, brunette, professional. Degreed, travelled the world.
Judo and chess in her spare time...sounds quite the uber-girl.”

He starts typing. AWESOME and K8 face off.

AWESOME “It’s Awesome Man, K-eight, that is, in fact, my nomenclature
and all the info I give out is of a general nature.
I speak from my experience, but if you want a fight
I’m sure you’ll find my Awesome Man disclaimer water tight.”

K8 “Oh Awesome, don’t be stern with me, I might burst into tears!
I’m LOL! Your posturing has not allayed my fears.
Your quick-fix brand of help is just a way to make a buck.
Style galore, but substance-lite – an ego run amok!”

AWESOME “IMHO your argument’s so weak I find it funny.
I had no idea that there’s a law ‘gainst making money.
Besides I’ve forty thousand friends – you’re saying that they’re wrong?
I just provide the confidence they’ve all craved for so long.”

K8 “OMG you just don’t get it. You’re not meeting a demand.
You’re creating it. You’re feeding it. Why can’t you understand?
You’re preying on your ‘friends’ and on their hard-earned Oxford scholars.
That’s quite a demographic for your advertisers’ dollars.”

PIKE winks at AWESOME, maybe even whispers in his ear; a change of

tack.

AWESOME “So...
my content’s crap, I have no cred, my motives are all crass.
And yet I see that you’re still here, my dear self-righteous lass.
If you despise all that I do then why the keen attention?
Could it be you have an Awesome crush? Oh, feel the sexu’l tension!”

K8 “Don’t flatter yourself, Awesome Jerk, you’re not my type at all!
I’m fine with men in tights, but draw the line at fictional.

A thought; suddenly flirty.

But who’s the twisted genius who created you, I ask?
Yes, he might be worth meeting, the artiste behind the mask...”

AWESOME in rigid surprise. K8 starts looking him over. AWESOME’s bashfulness soon evaporates and he starts posing again – this time for K8. K8’s attention should be on the mask – she wants to know who he really is.

This goes on in the background, while PIKE stands and he and the NARRATOR take focus.

NARRATOR Pike was stunned. What happened there? His mind was filled with doubt.
The fight had turned to flirt so fast. Did Kate just ask him out?
She perplexed him, she was different from his other friends, by crikey...
She didn’t care for Awesome - she was interested in Pikey!

PIKE looks at AWESOME.

That worried him a little, looking at his home-made hero.
He was fit and good at everything at which Pike rated zero.
Was Awesome just a mirror of his insecurities?
In fact, was he no different to their band of devotees?

PIKE back to his desk to type

He thought some more, then wrote:

AWESOME opens his mouth to speak, but he cannot form the words. PIKE is speaking himself now. AWESOME looks mildly put out.

PIKE “Dear Kate, you’re right that Awesome Man’s
a façade, but I don’t think he’s trash or exploiting his fans.
The truth lies in between, and we can argue or atone
not online, but over dinner? Kindly, Thomas Pikewell Stone.”

K8 forgets about AWESOME and goes to sit, victorious and flirty, on PIKE's desk.

K8 "How nice to have revealed at last your true identity!
I'd like to say..."

NARRATOR But Pike said:

PIKE speaks (not types) from here onwards.

PIKE "Stop. There's one inequity
left to correct. I've ditched my mask, and if my guess is shrewd,
it's your turn now, for Kate is just as fake as Awesome Dude."

*The game is up, and K8 realises it. She turns to AWESOME for help, but
he cannot. She goes to stand meekly near AWESOME.*

*The lights go up somewhere on stage, and for the first time, we see
SHIRLEY at a similar desk to PIKE's, laptop in front. She stands and
moves to interact with the others.*

NARRATOR She was silent while she mused on this, and when at last she spoke,
It was with another's voice.

SHIRLEY "It's only fair to treat to a bloke
with honesty and now that you've have dropped your cyber-proxy
I'll drop mine, but wonder will we find each other foxy?"

"Cause to be frank, I'm really not much like my counterpart.
My name is Shirley Block and I'm not classy for a start.
I smoke too much, I drink too much, I'm tall as I am wide.
I deplore sport and exercise, I'd rather be inside.

She turns to K8 and breaks from rhyme to say:

Bugger off now!

K8 hangs her head, and exits.

"I'm not well-travelled or well paid, or have the latest look.
And I'm still cross about your site, don't think you're off the hook!
But if you're looking for Kate's clone, I'm not the girl for you."

NARRATOR Well, Pike just smiled and e-mailed back,

PIKE "I think we'll muddle through."

NARRATOR In fact, they got on like a song, these anti-socialites.
And soon they were inseparable. The source of their first fights,
the Awesome site, was left behind, they were too busy tending
to each other, Pike and Shirley. Don't you love a happy ending?

PIKE and SHIRLEY leave, holding hands, looking happy and dorky.

*AWESOME moves to stand near the narrator. Distressed, because try as
he might, he cannot speak.*

But what, you say, of Awesome Man? His fate remains unspoken.
Well, without Pike to give him voice, his puppet strings were broken.
His users were confused, where was their Awesome dose today?
They e-mailed him to ask, but Awesome Man had naught to say.

His e-friends were a fickle lot, they didn't hang for long.
Once they sussed he'd lost his voice they left him by the throng.
Few of them cared that he was gone, and fewer of them cried.
Without his constant visitors, he withered and he died.

The energy saps from AWESOME and he exits morosely.

So our tale ends in Sydney Town, that craziest of places.
Where business hums and friends are found among a million faces.
And now you know the tale of how our friend Pike caught his catch
and how two people's lives were changed when Awesome met his match.

Lights fade.

END