

# Yes Man

DANNY WALLACE



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## **ABOUT THE BOOK**

'I, Danny Wallace, being of sound mind and body, do hereby write this manifesto for my life. I swear I will be more open to opportunity. I swear I will live my life taking every available chance. I will say Yes to every favour, request, suggestion and invitation. I WILL SWEAR TO SAY YES WHERE ONCE I WOULD SAY NO.'

Danny Wallace had been staying in. Far too much. Having been dumped by his girlfriend, he really wasn't doing the young, free and single thing very well. Instead he was avoiding people. Texting them instead of calling them. Calling them instead of meeting them. That is until one fateful date when a mystery man on a late-night bus told him to 'say yes more'. These three simple words changed Danny's life forever. Yes Man is the story of what happened when Danny decided to say YES to everything, in order to make his life more interesting. And boy, did it get more interesting.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

DANNY WALLACE is a *Sunday Times* bestselling author who lives in London. His first book, *Join Me*, was described as a 'word-of-mouth phenomenon' by *The Bookseller* and 'one of the funniest stories you will ever read' by the *Daily Mail*. His second book, *Yes Man* - in which he decided to say 'Yes' to everything - became a hugely successful film with Jim Carrey in the lead role. *GQ* magazine has called him: 'One of Britain's great writing talents'.

His column in *ShortList* magazine reaches more than 1.3 million readers weekly and he was the PPA Columnist of the Year 2011.

His acclaimed first novel, *Charlotte Street*, is available now.

[www.dannywallacebooks.co.uk](http://www.dannywallacebooks.co.uk)

# YES MAN

THE AMAZING TALE OF WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DECIDE TO SAY . . . YES

Danny Wallace



*For my mum and dad  
And for Sammy*

*'The wise man can pick up a grain of sand and envision a whole universe.*

*But the stupid man will just lay down on some seaweed and roll around until he's completely draped in it.*

*Then he'll stand up and go, "Hey, I'm Vine Man!"*

*- Jack Handey*

# *Prologue*

*In which we set the scene*

In twenty minutes it would be midnight. I was standing in the rain outside the house of a rich banker in Las Vegas.

I checked my pockets. I had everything I needed. The photos. The keys to the car. The silver pocket watch.

Most importantly, I had the gun.

Because I had been asked to kill a man.

And I had said 'Yes'.

Ahem.

I wasn't really. And I hadn't, really.

I mean, when was the last time *you* were asked to kill a man? It happens to me very rarely. And I'm not sure I could even do it, to be honest. If you asked me today whether I would kill a man for you, I'd most likely refuse flat out, and even if I asked for more details, my decision would still most likely be not to do it.

'No,' I'd say. 'Surely you can resolve your issues with this man another way?'

And you'd see my point, and say Yes, and I'd suggest you beat him at chess instead, and you'd walk away shamefaced yet impressed by my wisdom.

Nope. I can honestly say I have never killed a man. Not on purpose, anyway. And the only reason I forced you to imagine me on the verge of undertaking a messy assassination in Las Vegas was to give you an idea of how my life *could* have gone. How this story *could* have started. Me, standing in the rain, charged with a terrible and sinister mission, gun in hand. I mean, I *hate* rain. And I'd look *rubbish* with a gun. I wouldn't *dare* be out on my own after

midnight in Las Vegas. I rather frown upon murder. And I really don't know *where* a silver pocket watch comes into all this.

So thankfully, the real story doesn't start this way. But the real story did take me to some strange places, meeting some strange people, doing some strange things. And the real story takes place over several months, not so long ago. Several months which changed not just my life, but my entire *way* of life, and my entire *attitude* to life.

I should just say thanks to all those people I've written about in the next few hundred pages. Their names are real, apart from those few cases where I've changed a name or detail to save anyone any obvious embarrassment, or - in one rather central and vital person's case - just because they thought it would be cool and so asked. There is also, I'm afraid, the odd occasion where I've moved an event to a slightly different time or place . . . but this is for your own good. I don't want you falling asleep on me. I've got some very important things to say.

I wrote this book after keeping a diary. Some of that diary I have written more on than other bits, some I didn't include at all, and some has made it in word for word. I recommend keeping a diary. Diaries are cool.

And lastly: do me a favour. While you read this book - however long it takes you, and wherever you end up doing it - make a note of all the times you could have said Yes to something. And think about where that Yes could have led you. It might come in handy one day.

You look lovely today, by the way.

*Danny Wallace*  
*St Petersburg, June 2005*

### **January 12th**

I have started this diary to record all that is going on in my life. All that one day I will be pleased I had recorded for posterity. If you are a historian from the future, please - save your thanks. Your time will be better spent reading up on my thoughts and philosophies.

So, with pen in hand, I say to you, Life: I am ready! Throw at me what you will!

### **January 19th**

Nothing yet.



# 1

## *In which the Story Begins*

It is quite incredible how a bus – a simple, red, London bus – can change your life.

There were other reasons for why what happened eventually happened, of course. I'm not saying it was all about the bus. But the bus was pretty high on the list. Or, more accurately, the man sitting next to me on the bus. Here he is, right now – flicking through his *Evening Standard*, checking his cheap black watch, mere moments after uttering a sentence that, quite without his knowing, has had the most unexpected effect on me.

It's like one of those moments in a cartoon, when a second of complete and total revelation hits an unenlightened fool . . . a moment in which they're bathed in a golden light from the heavens above; their face a picture of comfort; the only sound the chorus of a thousand angels.

Of course, real life isn't quite like that. I'm on a crowded bus in the East End of London, for a start, and so the only thing I'm bathed in is an unpleasant mist of sweat and coughs.

But it's still an epiphany. And I'm still smiling from what I've heard – smiling from what I've learnt. I start to wonder whether anyone else is feeling the same. So I sneak a chance to glance around. To see if one of my fellow passengers has been struck by the man's simple message; his message of hope, and optimism, and all the things I hadn't realised I'd been losing sight of.

But no one has. Not that I can see anyway. That's okay, though. There's time for them.

Because this man next to me . . . this man has changed *everything*.

'Maybe it was Jesus,' said Ian, putting his pint down on the table. We were in the Yorkshire Grey and Ian was a bit drunk. 'Or maybe it was Buddha! I'd love to meet Buddha. He looks like a right laugh. What did this bloke look like? If he had a beard it was probably Jesus, and if he had a belly it was probably Buddha.'

'He had a beard, but it wasn't a Jesus beard.'

'A belly, then?' he said, with what looked like real hope in his eyes. 'Did he have a Buddha belly?'

'I'm fairly sure he wasn't Buddha, either. This was an Indian bloke. His name was Medhi, or something.'

'"Medhi" sounds a bit like "Jesus".'

'No it doesn't. And it wasn't Jesus. What would Jesus be doing in Bethnal Green?'

'There are some nice discount shops in Bethnal Green.'

'Jesus is the son of God, Ian, he doesn't need discount shops.'

'Cor. Imagine the pocket money you'd get if you were the son of God.'

'Ian . . . I'm trying to tell you about my life-changing moment and you're going on about Jesus in a pound shop.'

'Sorry, go on. So there was this bloke on a bus last week, who wasn't a deity or a son of a God, and then there was also your diary?'

Yes. There was also my diary. High up on the list, right under the bus, was my diary. A diary I had only started because I was afraid I would forget all the wonderful things I was doing. All the dazzling, crazy, hazy times. The important times, the carefree times, the times I'd look back on as the times of my life.

Only when I flicked through it did I realise there was nothing to forget. Or, rather, nothing worth remembering.

Things had been different last year. Last year was a year of adventure. Of fun. Of friends. But I'd slowly begun to realise, six months into a new year, that all my stories were about last year. All my memories, too. I'd been cruising on past glories, dining out on better times. Well, that's not strictly true. Not true at all. I'd been dining *in* on them.

For a number of months I'd been labouring under the impression that everything in my life was fine. I was a single man, in his mid-twenties, living in one of the most exciting cities in the world. Turns out I was a single man, in his pants, sitting in his flat.

It had happened to me once before, this strange sense of mid-twenties crisis, but it had happened when I'd lacked direction. These days I *had* direction. Plenty of it. But the direction was down.

In my mind, I was one of London's young, thrusting urbanites. In my mind, I was always on the go, always had somewhere to be, always in the thick of things. I thought I was like something out of an advert. I probably even thought I had a moped.

I couldn't have been more wrong. About the moped, especially.

And this is what I would finally realise for sure after I got home from talking to the man on the bus.

I'd ended up talking to the man on the bus quite by chance.

It was, until that moment, just another day working in the West End, followed by just another dash to the tube station, in what was just another hopeless attempt to beat the rush hour and get home without spending an hour on a crowded train with my cheeks pressed up against a stranger's nipples, receiving severe paper cuts every time they turned a page of their book.

We'd been standing, me and this man, waiting for the Central Line train to take us from Holborn to the East End when the announcement had spluttered and stuttered its way over the tannoy. It was a security alert. We were being asked to leave. Our journeys home had just gained an hour. We'd be shunted and squeezed on to buses outside and driven home, very slowly, during rush hour, on a rainy, rainy London night.

The man and I had raised our eyebrows at each other and smiled in a what's-the-world-coming-to way, but other than that we didn't say a word to one another. We'd simply started to walk up the stairs and out of the station, like the good, old-fashioned, obedient British citizens we were.

'Nice weather for this!' said the man, as we jogged through a slanting rain and flashed our travelcards at the bus driver. I ha-ha'd, probably a little too ha-hard, and we joined the seething masses on board the bus.

After ten minutes and three stops, we found seats for ourselves, and after another ten, we had begun to chat.

'Where are you headed?' I'd asked.

'Aldgate,' he'd replied.

The man, as it turned out, was a teacher.

And he was about to teach me.

'So what did he teach you?' said Ian.

'I'll tell you in a minute.'

'Tell me now. I want to know what kind of wisdom he imparted on you that's caused you to summon me here.'

'I didn't "summon" you here.'

'You sent me an e-mail saying your entire life had changed and that you wanted to meet up more.'

'That's hardly summoning. I was more saying "do you fancy a pint?"'

'Great. I do. Thanks.'

I sighed, stood up, and went to get a round in.

Now that I think about it, my downward spiral had probably started after I'd been dumped by my girlfriend in the late autumn. It was a shock to the system; a body blow that had really changed things.

But don't go thinking I'm all hung up on an ex-girlfriend. This isn't one of those stories of obsession, and regret, and of trying-to-get-back-together. I've never been someone who would have made an effective stalker, for one thing, lacking as I do both the necessary energies, and a decent pair of binoculars.

It's just that being dumped suddenly puts time into perspective. I'm not saying my three years with Hanne were wasted, because they weren't; they were great and warm and loving. I'm just saying that at the end of any relationship you take a long hard look at the years that have gone and say 'what now?'

So I did three years of growing up in two weeks. I returned to the world of freelance employment as a radio producer at the BBC. I got a mortgage. And a pension. I started to shop at Habitat and IKEA. I experimented with new and exciting pastas. I bought a colander, and some air freshener, and a fountain pen. I learnt how to iron. I even bought a plant.

Most of these were small changes. But soon, quite without my knowing, I developed a certain satisfaction for staying in. For pottering about, and tinkering with things. For slouching, and napping, and channel-hopping. Soon, that was all I wanted to do. And so I became the man who could wriggle out of any prior engagement. Who could spot an invitation coming a mile off and head it off at the pass. The man who'd gladly swap a night down the pub for just one whiff of an episode of *EastEnders*. The man who'd send an e-mail instead of attend a birthday. Who'd text instead of call, and call instead of visit. I became the man who'd white-lie. The man who always had an excuse. The man who always said no.

And I was perfectly happy. Perfectly happy to be me, myself, and ironing. Perfectly happy until that night, on that bus, next to that man.

‘Okay. So there was a man,’ said Ian. ‘And you sat next to him. So far this isn’t really what you’d call a classic anecdote.’

‘But it’s what he told me that was important, Ian.’

‘Yes, it sounds it. But *what* did he say? What was it that he actually said that changed things? Because right now, all I know is that a man said something to you.’

‘Have patience.’

‘He said “have patience”?’

‘No, that’s what I said, just then. What *he* said was more important.’

‘But what *was* it?’

It was my friends who’d noticed it first. They’d noticed I’d changed, or that I just wasn’t around as much as I used to be, or that I was just saying ‘no’ a lot more.

There were the odd nights down the pub, of course, and I always agreed that we should do it more often, but it just never seemed to be the right night. I was too tired, or there was something I wanted to watch, or I just felt like being alone. I couldn’t put my finger on it. But it didn’t make me sad – that was the weird thing. Not while it was happening, anyway. It only made me sad when I finally realised the effect it was having on my friendships; on the friends I was letting down, or annoying, or disappointing, or even losing.

But at the time, I just didn’t notice it. The sad fact is, saying no had become a habit.

‘Aha! I knew it!’ said Ian, pointing his finger slightly too close to my face. ‘I *knew* you were always making excuses!’

‘I know. And I’m sorry.’

'That night when you said you couldn't come out because you'd won a competition to meet Lionel Richie, was that an excuse?'

'Yes.'

'How about that time you couldn't come out because you said you'd accidentally reversed all your leg joints?'

'That was quite obviously a lie. And I'm sorry. But there will be no more excuses. Honestly, Ian, I'm a changed man.'

'Jesus, Dan . . . that night I sent Hanne round your house you acted all offended when she even *suggested* you were making up excuses!'

Ian had become concerned that I wasn't going out enough any more. And so he'd decided to take matters into his own hands. Every couple of days there'd be another idea, or invitation, or suggestion for a night out. He'd send me e-mails, and text me, and leave grumpy messages on my answerphone.

'Danny,' they'd say. 'I know you're there. How do I know you're there? Because you're *always* there. You're not picking up because you're scared I'll invite you out, which I'm going to do anyway. We'll be at the pub from eight. I look forward to receiving your standard text message saying you can't make it and you're sorry and we should have fun. Bye.'

And then I'd get all hoity-toity and text him, and say I'M NOT IN ACTUALLY. I'M OUT. BUT I CAN'T MAKE IT SO I'M SORRY AND HAVE FUN. And then I'd realise that he'd left the message on my home phone, and that to have heard it I would have to have been in. And then I'd blush and he'd text back and call me a wanker.

But then one evening Ian had bumped into Hanne, and shared his concerns. That Friday night, she'd turned up at nine or ten o'clock, unannounced, and carrying a bottle of wine.

'So what's going on?' she said, using her hand to brush some stale rice off the sofa and taking a seat.

'How do you mean?'

'You. What's happened to you?'

Hanne filled some glasses while I considered her question. I didn't know what she meant. I checked myself in the mirror to see what could possibly have happened to me. Maybe someone had painted a tiger on my face, or tied balloons to my ears.

'Nothing's happened to me, Hanne.'

'Well, I suppose that's true.'

'Eh?'

'What I mean, Dan, is that *nothing's* happened to you. Nothing does, any more, apparently. Your friends are worried. Where have you been for the past six months?'

'Here,' I said, confused. 'I've been right here!'

'Precisely. You've been here. Where were you on Steve's birthday?'

'I was . . . busy!' I lied, trying desperately to remember what excuse I'd used that time. 'I went to a Women and War exhibition.'

I never said they were good excuses.

'Okay. And where were you when everyone else was at Tom's stag night?'

'Again - busy. I'm very busy, Hanne. Look at me.'

I don't know why I asked Hanne to look at me. It's not as if I looked particularly busy. I was just a man standing up.

'You're no more busy than your friends. We've all got jobs, Dan, but we all find time to do other things, too. You've cut yourself off, and we're concerned. You don't have fun any more.'

'I do! I have loads of fun! And I have loads of fun new hobbies!'

'Like what?'

I struggled to find an answer. Of course I had fun! Surely I did! I just couldn't think of any examples right now. Hanne

had put me on the spot, that was all. But there must be *something* I enjoy doing.

'I . . . enjoy toast.' I said.

'You enjoy toast,' said Hanne, who, because she is Norwegian, likes to be matter-of-fact about things.

'Yes, but not just toast,' I said, defensively. 'Other things, too.'

'Like what?'

My mind raced. What else was fun?

'Theme parks.'

'Right,' said Hanne. 'So you've been eating toast and going to theme parks, have you?'

'Yes.'

'For six months.'

'On and off.'

'You hate theme parks,' she said. 'So which theme parks?'

'What?'

'Which theme parks have you been going to?'

I think she may have been on to me. I looked around the room, desperate for inspiration.

'Shelf . . . Adventure.'

'Sorry?'

I cleared my throat.

'Shelf Adventure.'

'*Shelf Adventure?*'

'Yup.'

Hanne took a sip of her wine. So did I. Of *my* wine, I mean, not hers. Taking a sip of *her* wine would have spoilt the atmosphere.

'Any others?' she said, finally. I could tell she thought she was going to enjoy catching me out. 'Or was it just Shelf Adventure?'

'So you were making Shelf Adventure up too! I *knew* it!' said Ian.

'Of *course* I was making Shelf Adventure up! How many adventures can you have with a shelf?'

'I couldn't find a *thing* about it on the Internet. Hanne knew you were lying too, you know.'

'I guessed that she probably had,' I said.

'And then what happened?'

'Is this about us, Dan?' said Hanne, getting her stuff together in the hallway. 'Because we split up?'

I didn't know what to say. So I didn't say anything at all.

'It just seems like you're doing all the things that I would once have loved you to do . . . the job, the mortgage, the staying in more . . . you're not doing this . . . for *me*, are you?'

I smiled, gently.

'No, Hanne. Don't worry.'

'Because you know that now we've split up you can do all the things that used to annoy me? You can come home drunk whenever you like, and you can do as many stupid boy-projects as you want.'

'It's not about us, Hanne . . .'

'Because you know that just because you've changed doesn't mean we're going to get back together, don't you?'

'I know.'

'Even if you *did* buy handwash for the bathroom.'

'I know,' I said.

'And you can't mend a relationship with a garlic crusher.'

'Is that a Norwegian proverb?'

'No. I'm referring to the new garlic crusher in your kitchen.'

'I didn't even know it was a garlic crusher. And no, I know you can't mend a relationship with a garlic crusher. To be honest, I don't even know how you crush a garlic with one.'

'Okay, then,' said Hanne, opening the door to leave. 'But listen. You should make more of an effort. It's time you got

back out there. It's time you stopped making excuses, and saying no to everyone. Because you're not just saying no to your friends - you're saying no to yourself.'

I paused for a second to place the quote.

'*Dawson's Creek?*'

'Yep,' said Hanne.

'Bye.'

'Bye.'

'Look, Dan,' said Ian. 'Will you just tell me what this fucking bloke on the bus said to you, or should I make another appointment?'

'Okay, I'll tell you.'

I put my pint down on the table and looked Ian in the eye.

'He said: "Say Yes more".'

I picked my pint up again and took a sip. I raised my eyebrows to show Ian he should be impressed, but for some reason he still appeared to be waiting for more. That's the problem with the MTV generation. Never satisfied.

'Is that it?' he said. '"Say Yes more"?'

'Yep,' I said, smiling. 'That's it.'

The sentence had tripped off the man on the bus's tongue like he'd been saying it all his life.

'Say Yes more,' he'd said.

'Say Yes more,' I'd repeated. Three little words of such power.

'The people without passion are the ones who always say no,' he'd said, moments before, and I'd turned, stunned, to listen.

'But the happiest people are the ones who understand that good things occur when one *allows* them to.'

And that was that.

That was all it took to turn my life on its head. A few choice sentences from a complete and utter stranger. A

stranger on a bus. And a bearded stranger, at that. This went against everything I held as true. If there was one lesson that had been drummed into me as a kid, it was never listen to a bearded stranger.

I'll be honest; it was a fairly odd moment for me. I felt like the Karate Kid sitting next to Mr Miyage. One minute we'd been idly chatting about this, about that, and about what we'd done with our weeks, and the next, this thin and bearded man had dropped a philosophical bombshell.

I couldn't work out whether it was just coincidence. Whether his words were really intended for me, whether they truly reflected on our conversation, or whether they were just the throwaway ramblings of some bloke on a bus. If I'd been in another mood, I might just have laughed them off, or buried my head in my newspaper, or politely ignored them. But with my friends' concerns, and everything that had happened - or, in a way, everything that *hadn't* happened - the words took on a strange and important resonance.

*Say Yes more.*

And that was when I had my revelatory moment.

'That is the stupidest bloody thing I have ever bloody heard,' said Ian, ever the diplomat. 'Some drunk bloke on a bus mutters something oblique and you claim it's changed your life? Bollocks. How come you never listen to me when I'm drunk?'

'Because when you're drunk you usually talk about us buying a caravan and moving to Dorset.'

'Oh, we should, though, just think of the . . .'

'And anyway, he wasn't drunk. We'd been talking about what we'd been up to in the week. He seemed very interested.'

'And what did you tell him?'

'I told him I'd been staying in a lot. Not doing much. Having early nights.'

'And that was all?'

'Pretty much.'

And it was. The simple fact of the matter was that this man would probably have had no idea of the impact of his words. I was surely just someone who wanted to make a decision; who deep down *wanted* to make a change. His words were just the catalyst that kickstarted me into action. I wish I could claim that he was a shaman, or some kind of spiritual figure sent into my life at that time to push me over the edge. And as much as I'd like to believe that, the fact is, he was probably just a bloke on a bus. Just like the next bloke *you'll* sit next to on a bus. But chatty. And wise.

'He doesn't sound much like Jesus to me,' said Ian. 'Apart from the beard.'

'I never said he was Jesus!'

'Or Buddha, for that matter. Buddha would've probably just smiled a lot. Or taken you to a nice restaurant. That's the thing about Buddha, he knows how to have a good time.'

'Ian, listen. It wasn't Jesus. Or Buddha. It was just some bloke on a bus.'

'So why are you taking him so seriously?'

'Because he was right. And *you* were right. And Hanne was right. But the thing is, none of you knows *how* right you were!'

'So what are you saying? Just that you're going to start saying Yes more? That's hardly an announcement.'

'I'm going to say Yes to *everything*.'

'Everything? What do you mean, everything?'

'I mean, I'm going to say Yes to everything from now on.'

Ian looked shocked.

'When do you start?'

'That's just the thing,' I said, finishing my pint and looking him dead in the eye. 'I already have.'



## 2

### *In which Daniel becomes Increasingly Excited*

This was it.

This was bloody *it*.

I didn't know what 'it' was yet but by God it was this and that was enough for me.

It had been just ten minutes since the man on the bus had uttered his words of wisdom, and I was excited. And inspired. And slightly out of breath, because sometimes when I'm excited and inspired I tend to try and leap up staircases, when really I should realise that I live on the fourth floor and such exertions do not become me.

But my red face and now dampened forehead didn't matter, because the thing is, what the man on the bus had said to me had struck a chord. No, more than that. It made complete and utter sense. I know it sounds odd, and I know it might seem meaningless to you, but to me those three words had . . . *done* something. *Triggered* something. *Meant* something. It was like the man had known about me, in a way I hadn't even known about myself. Which is quite a disquieting idea, unless it turns out that the thing you didn't know about yourself was quite glamorous, like you were a matador, or you once freed some slaves, in which case you'd be quite grateful to whoever pointed it out.

But what he'd shown me about myself wasn't glamorous. It was worrying. It was something I had to change. And luckily, he'd shown me the way. He'd provided me with a moment of pure and happy clarity.

I was smiling, now. Grinning, as I walked through the door of my flat, and flicked the kettle on, and reached for a mug. Had I been a more feminine man I dare say I'd have probably skipped about a bit as well, although as I suspect I'd make quite a *sensible* feminine man, I would not have done this around boiling water, and I would certainly have put the mug down first.

I paced the kitchen, thinking and rethinking the night's events, and then, just before the click of the kettle, I realised something.

I could see.

Not just what was around me.

But what I'd been doing wrong.

And how I could turn it around.

I could see exactly how my life should be.

I was on the verge of something. But sometimes, to look forward, you have to look back. So I went and got my diary. And, even though I suspected it would be the case, I was nevertheless shocked at what I saw.

I saw nothing.

Well, virtually nothing.

Nothing, apart from missed opportunities. And blank spaces. And things I'd scribbled out, or hadn't gone to, or said I couldn't make. Acres of white. Acres of white lies.

I'd missed birthdays. I'd missed barbecues. I'd missed various and assorted parties. I'd missed dinner with friends, I'd missed nights down the pub, I'd missed Tom's stag do. God, Tom's stag do. I bet that had been *legendary*. I bet they'd all got together and painted his privates blue and handcuffed him to the buffet car of a train. Suddenly, I wanted to do that. I wanted to paint men's privates blue and handcuff them to buffet cars!

But not just that . . . I wanted to do *all* the things I'd missed out on. I wanted to turn the clock back and shout Yes to all the things I'd mumbled no to. Not just the big nights, or the main events, or the frantic celebrations . . . but to the

little things. The normal things. The things that sometimes matter the most.

I scanned and rescanned my diary. Hanne had been right. Ian had been right. Everyone had been right except me. As I flicked my way through the months that had flown by, I realised with horror that probably the most excitement I'd had was on 18 April, when I'd gone to PC World to buy a new printer cartridge. Suddenly, that didn't seem like enough. I mean, yeah, at a push I could probably scrape a short anecdote out of it, but still . . . it was hardly one to save for the grandchildren, was it?

And hang about - *what* grandchildren? I was already 26, and there wasn't even a *hint* of a grandchild in the pipeline! Who was I going to tell all my stories to when I was old? Who was I going to impress with my tales of short uneventful walks to PC World and me worrying that there wasn't going to be the right kind of printer cartridge in stock, but it being all right because in the end there actually was?

And who was going to *give* me grandchildren? Well, my kid, obviously - but who was going to give me one of *those*? Maybe I'd already missed out on the woman of my dreams! Maybe she'd been out there, waiting for me all this time, but she'd got bored, and moved on. Maybe she'd been working in the buffet car the night they painted Tom's privates blue! She certainly hadn't been in PC World!

My inspiration had turned to panic. Who knew what I had already missed out on in life? Now I would never know what *might* have happened, who I *might* have met, what I *might* have done, where I *might* have ended up, how different life *could* have been. And my friends . . . how many connections had I lost? How many people would simply have got used to me not being there and given up on me?

I was angry at myself. I had wasted half my year. Half a year *gone*. Thrown away. Swapped for toast, and evenings in front of the telly. It was all here - or, rather, it *wasn't* - in

black and white, and blue and red. Every dull non-entry was a sharp slap in the face.

I had to get back out there. I had to start living life, rather than just living.

And it was obvious how.

*Say Yes more.*

I would say Yes more. Saying Yes more would get me out of this rut. It would rekindle my love for life. It would bring back the old me. The me that had died a little the day I'd been dumped. I just needed a little kickstart. A little fun. A chance to live in a completely different way. I could treat it like an experiment. A study in my own behaviour. A study in positivity, and opportunity, and chance.

This was serious. This went beyond what Hanne would have called a 'Stupid Boy Project', because now . . . now I was dealing with a whole new *Way of Life*.

My mind was racing. This could work. But how should I approach it? How would I say Yes more?

I decided I needed to tackle the problem quickly and efficiently. If I could spend just a day on this, surely that would be all I'd need? I'd go out to whatever was happening, hang out with whoever wanted to, and let life just lead the way. I'd surrender myself for twenty-four hours, answer everything with a Yes, and let opportunity and chance boot me out of this mid-twenties crisis.

I started to get ready for bed.

A day. Yes. A day. A day of relentless positivity. What harm could that do? A day of saying Yes. Yes to anything. Anything and everything.

A day of being a Yes Man.

Yes.

'Hello, can I speak to Mr Wallace, please?'

'Yes!'