**Hey there. Hello**

From the play “Little old Alf” By Alfie James

Hey there. Hello. Those were the first words that you said to me. You saw me sitting outside cold and lost. I can't even remember why I was upset. I never said that to you. I never said how I much I... But those words meant the world to me. Hey there. Hello. Why couldn't I say them back to you when you were lying in that hospital bed?

Hey there. Hello. I've been saying those words to you every morning and every night for the last forty odd years. I should be grateful that you haven't gone away. So many regrets, so many lonely years have come and gone and still your friendship has kept me strong. I should be thankful for that, not sad, not angry. At least you stuck around in my memory. But I cannot help but think what if. What if things had been how they are supposed to be. That life had been more willing to accept and allowed us to be who we wanted to be.

Imagine. Imagine if it had been different hey? Imagine if you'd not have been taken from me. We'd have a home in the city. A small, simple place. But we would like living there. We would have had a family. Four children and their pictures would be on the wall. It would now be years since they'd grown up and gone and made a life of their own. Left us alone. But even though we'd miss them dearly, we'd be proud no matter what. And we'd only have to look over at each other to know that we're not alone. Jimmy would be married with a family of his own. Katie would be hot shot doctor whilst Jonny would be somewhere on the road. We would have lost little Benny to war and I still don't know what for, but it doesn’t matter anymore.

We'd have a little garden. We would sit there looking down at the old tree that we'd planted the day we moved in. It would still have the remains of the tree house we'd built together for Jimmy and we’d laugh when we remembered how I’d dropped the hammer on my foot and you had to take me to the hospital because I’d broken my big toe. We'd look at the tree and wonder how it seems to get stronger as it gets older, but I'd like to think that it was some kind of representation of the love that we shared. We wouldn't talk much anymore. Age and illness might be the cause, but we'd still care. The magic would be there.

Someday I'd go and visit my friend George. He was a good friend that helped me through a difficult time. He'd smile that cheeky smile and say 'Hey there. Hello. What's the news? How's life been treating you. Despite the years, it would be like nothing had changed. The scars of life would just disappear, and we'd be friends again once more. I'd tell him about you and our kids and he'd tell me about his and joke about how things used to be over a cold pint. Then I'd come home to you, see that smile and fall in love with you once more. We'd sit and plan out our dreams and still live life to the full. Imagine. Imagine if.

But life wasn't that kind. Life isn't that kind. Instead I'm left sitting here on my own. I wasn't allowed to say those simple words out loud to you. Hey there. Hello. I wasn't allowed to say I love you. People made sure of that. People didn't see that once stripped back, love is just... love. Instead, they made me afraid. Now I sit here alone and scared. I know that you're not there anymore. I know there is no more Hey there. Hello's. Things should have been different. They say things have changed. We would have been accepted now. We would be normal and not freaks. They say that people are more aware. More caring. But I'm not so sure.

Imagine if you were here right now. You'd know what to do and what to say. You'd know how to say good bye without it hurting so much. You'd tell me what to do about the boy. Everything would be ok. You'd smile, put your arms around me and hold me tight. You'd say no to good bye. Instead let's just say Hey there. Hello.

Hey there. Hello.

*(The lights fad out)*