

EXTRACT

THE LOOK

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FADE UP ROXETTE'S "THE LOOK".

THE PRESENTATION AREA, OR STAGE, OF A CONFERENCE ROOM. THERE IS A TABLE, CAREFULLY ARRANGED WITH A DISPLAY OF COSMETIC PRODUCTS, A WHITEBOARD, A LARGE MIRROR AND A LECTERN.

POSTERS ADORN THE WALLS AND HANG FROM THE CEILING - PHOTOGRAPHS OF WOMEN IN THE STYLISED MANNER OF COSMETIC ADVERTISEMENTS. THE NAME "ESTELLE" IS PROMINENT ON THEM ALL. ON THE BACK WALL, QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE POSTERS, IS THE PORTRAIT OF AN ELDERLY WOMAN.

MARILYN ENTERS. SHE IS A WELL DRESSED, STYLISH WOMAN IN HER LATE THIRTIES, SMARTLY AND PROFESSIONALLY MADE UP. THE TYPICAL CRISP, EFFICIENT BUSINESS WOMAN.

SHE CARRIES A SLIM BRIEFCASE WHICH SHE PROPS ON THE LECTERN AND TAKES OUT SOME PAPERS. SHE ORGANISES HER NOTES, POURS HERSELF A GLASS OF WATER AND DRAINS IT, THEN ATTACHES A PERSONAL MICROPHONE TO HER JACKET.

THEN, FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHE LOOKS UP AT HER AUDIENCE, DELIVERING A DAZZLING, IF SOMEWHAT ARTIFICIAL SMILE - A SMILE JUST LIKE THAT WHICH BEAMS OUT FROM EVERY ONE OF THE ADVERTISING POSTERS. MARILYN CARRIES HER GAZE AROUND THE ROOM, BESTOWING HER SMILE ON EVERYONE AS SHE GOES, UNTIL SHE BEGINS TO LOOK QUITE RIDICULOUS.

Welcome, ladies, welcome all of you to the wonderful world of Estelle cosmetics. Estelle, for the many women you are.

SHE PAUSES TO LET THE SLOGAN TAKE AFFECT.

How lovely to see so many young faces smiling up at me. I'm sure each and every one of you is going to be a very successful Estelle girl, because as we all know, Estelle girls are famous for their smiles.

MARILYN DELIVERS HERS AGAIN. SHE TAPS HER MICROPHONE TO SEE IF IT IS WORKING. IT APPEARS IT ISN'T.

Can you all hear me? Hands up if you can't.... Good. Yes, Estelle celebrates the beauty of women; it celebrates the mystery and the joys of our femininity by helping to create it, enhance it. At Estelle, we aren't ashamed of what being a woman means! We exalt in it! We rejoice in beauty and all the promises it brings!

My name is Marilyn Miles - some of you may know me as Marilyn Hammond.

That's my real name, but I changed to Miles when I started modelling. And now I really think more people know me as Marilyn Miles than they do as Marilyn Hammond. So for those of you who know me as Marilyn Hammond, I'm really Marilyn Miles, and for those of you who don't know me, that's who I am. Marilyn Hammond. I mean, Miles. Anyway, I'll be taking you for these lectures.

Now, this morning is just going to be an introduction to the company, our range of products and some basic information.

I always like to use the first day as a chance for us to get to know each other, because when you're talking about beauty, it's nice to know you're doing it with someone you can trust, isn't it? Who knows? We might all be sharing our own little beauty secrets by the end of the week. Let's hope so.

MARILYN FLASHES HER SMILE ONCE MORE, GLANCES AT HER NOTES AND THEN IT'S ON WITH THE BUSINESS AT HAND.

There's a few basic points about Estelle cosmetics I'd like you to keep uppermost in your minds during the course of your training - your whole career as an Estelle girl, in fact!

Firstly, Estelle offers a sensible alternative for the busy, modern woman. Our founder, Madame Estelle Dupont -

SHE GESTURES TO THE PORTRAIT OF THE ELDERLY WOMAN BEHIND HER.

- was a very busy career woman and mother, and recognised the need for a skincare range that was simple and easy to use - and of course, effective as well.

A REFLECTIVE PAUSE.

You know, I've always thought it's strange the way men are the ones in charge of cosmetic companies. Did you know that? Every major cosmetic company was founded by a woman, then taken over by a man... you'd think they'd prefer to do something else, wouldn't you?

SHE COLLECTS HERSELF.

And may I just say at this point, ladies - (A LITTLE GIGGLE) girls - that we are very honoured to have visiting Australia at the moment, Monsieur Jacques Dupont, the son of our founder, Madame Estelle Dupont. I'm hoping he'll pop his head in sometime this morning. He's always very eager to meet the gorgeous faces which represent Estelle worldwide.

SHE PEERS UP THE BACK SUDDENLY, SOUNDING QUITE DESPERATE.

Jacques?...Monsieur Dupont? I guess it wasn't him.

A BEAT. SHE TURNS BACK TO HER GIRLS.

Since the recent loss of his mother, Monsieur Dupont has taken complete charge of the company - see what I mean? - and is currently travelling the world, reviewing sales, promotions... (A HINT OF BITTERNESS) staff.

He takes his work very seriously - he is devoted to the company. After all, why shouldn't he be? It's his life. It's my life too.

He is so devoted he has never married. You could say he is married to his lipsticks and his powder, in a way. Or married to what they create. I never married either.

MARILYN BRINGS HERSELF BACK TO THE LECTURE.

Devotion. We have his devotion to the company. You too will find that you become devoted to Estelle cosmetics. So devoted, that it is a part of you and you a part of it. And you can't get away from it - of course, I'm not suggesting you don't marry. That's up to you entirely.

SHE CROSSES TO THE WHITEBOARD AND WRITES THE WORD "HONESTY" ON IT.

I know what that word means. Do you? At Estelle, we pride ourselves on our complete honesty. We don't promise miracles, just the truth. And that is, that every woman, with a little help from Estelle, can be beautiful. In some way.

Toxin burning, cell rejuvenating, elasticity restoring - Estelle can do it all. Isn't that reassuring? Unfortunately I'm not at liberty to tell you exactly how it's all done, since I'm sure you're aware, the cosmetics industry is a very competitive one and we can't afford to reveal our secrets to just anyone.

But I promise you they do work. I've been using Estelle for years and look at me.

MARILYN CAN'T RESIST THE URGE TO LOOK IN THE MIRROR. SHE PRIMPS HER HAIR A LITTLE, THEN REMEMBERS WHAT SHE SHOULD BE DOING.

Yes, Estelle never lies. And that is very important because a lot of women perceive the cosmetic industry as being full of lies and deceptions. I suppose it's because we do create certain illusions, because we cover up what nature forgot. Or overdid.

Can you be trusted to tell the truth with a lipstick and powder brush? Ask

yourself that. A client must know she can trust you with whatever she's told you... and with whatever you've sold her.

Please note I prefer you to call them clients, not customers. It adds a personal touch and takes away the emphasis on the... financial element of the relationship.

Communication.

SHE WRITES THE WORD ON THE BOARD.

Estelle prides itself on the way it maintains regular communication with clients - through you, the Estelle girls. Because Estelle is not out to make money. Absolutely not. Our prices reflect our commitment to answering women's beauty needs and no more. We are not a business making a profit, but an organisation creating funds to finance the vital areas of beauty research and cosmetic development...

MARILYN TAPS HER MICROPHONE AGAIN TO SEE IF IT IS WORKING.

...This isn't working, is it?

SHE TRIES TO ADJUST IT, BUT ENDS UP DROPPING IT DOWN HER BLOUSE INSTEAD. SHE TRIES TO RETRIEVE IT AS DISCREETLY AS POSSIBLE BUT CANNOT AND FLASHES APOLOGETIC SMILES TO HER AUDIENCE.

I'm sorry, I won't be a moment. I don't want the people up the back to miss out on any of this...

SHE TRIES SHAKING HER SKIRT TO MAKE THE MICROPHONE FALL THROUGH, BUT THIS ALSO FAILS. SHE TURNS HER BACK TO THE AUDIENCE AND PUTS HER HAND UP HER SKIRT TO FIND THE MICROPHONE. SHE RETRIEVES IT, RETURNS TO THE LECTURE.

When we sell cosmetics, we don't think of it as an expense. We think of it as offering an investment for the future. After all, we only get one face. We're not like snakes, shedding our skins at will... pity really. And snakes are such ugly animals too, don't you think? Which sort of brings me to appearance.

SHE WRITES THE WORD ON THE BOARD.

Why should a customer listen to you when you look like a dog's breakfast? You are the face of Estelle that the customer sees first - and the face of Estelle is the face of beauty that is more than skin deep.

PAUSE TO LET THE SLOGAN TAKE EFFECT.

Not the face that raged all night, slept in and threw on a bit of blusher on the bus...too much concealer under the eyes is just as much of a giveaway as too little, girls.

SHE LOOKS DOWN HER NOSE AT A FEW OF HER AUDIENCE, OBVIOUSLY ACCUSING THEM OF DOING JUST THAT. SUDDENLY SHE GLANCES UP THE BACK AGAIN.

Jacques! Monsieur Dupont - just a minute...

HER FACE FALLS. HE'S GONE.

I'm sorry, I'm just so anxious for you all to meet Monsieur Dupont. He's on a very tight schedule. He had to squeeze in a very important meeting with me over breakfast this morning. But I don't think people really listen properly when they're eating...

SHE TRIES TO COLLECT HERSELF, SMOOTHS DOWN HER CLOTHES, GINGERLY POKES AT A CORNER OF HER EYE WITH A FINGER - AND UNWITTINGLY DISLODGES ONE OF HER FALSE EYELASHES. SHE PEELS IT OFF, AND IN HER DILEMMA ABOUT WHAT TO DO WITH IT, FORGETS TO TAKE THE OTHER ONE OFF.

Stress can affect your appearance. Remember that, girls.

SHE CHECKS THROUGH THE COSMETIC ITEMS AS SHE TALKS, TRYING TO FIND SOMEWHERE TO PUT THE FALSIE.

I know false eyelashes probably look hideously dated to you, but I've got no choice. The doctor said it was due to chronic sustained abuse of mascara, but Estelle products are thoroughly tested so I don't see how it could've been. But my lashes just kept dropping out...

SHE FINALLY FINDS AN EMPTY JAR AND DROPS THE EYELASH INTO IT.

...I got told the medical profession considered eye make-up unnecessary and unhygienic. Of course, I still left his surgery with several options for paying the bill.

A REFLECTIVE PAUSE.

Actually, this company was founded on false eyelashes.

The very first range Monsieur Dupont ever created, the look that set the Estelle empire rolling, featured false eyelashes. It changed the face of the industry. Overnight, Estelle was the product every one wanted to buy.

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