

Welcome to Spooktown, James Acaster

ED – ED EASTON

KATH – KATH HUGHES

JAMES – JAMES ACASTER

[Spooky guitar music]

ED: Fucking hell, a real-life ghost! Hey Kath.

KATH: Hey Ed, you okay?

ED: Yeah good, how are you sorry?

KATH: Yeah yeah, fine thank you.

ED: Shall we?

[Nature noises and footsteps]

KATH: Yeah, I reckon. Do you know where we're meeting him?

ED: A house.

KATH: Just a house?

ED: Yeah, I've got the address here on my phone.

KATH: Okay, great.

ED: Just follow the sat nav.

KATH: Yeah, good.

ED: Had any nightmares of late?

KATH: Um, last night's was a bit weird. I was late for a maths test, which I knew I was going to fail. It wasn't ideal. But I also had a massive pineapple necklace and it was weighing me down so I couldn't – I needed to get over a fence to get to the class that I couldn't – it was weird. How about you?

ED: Yeah my dog barked his shit out this morning so I had to clean that up. It's just not a great way to start a day.

KATH: No.

ED: First thing before a coffee. Sort out his lamb.

KATH: That's disgusting.

ED: Sorry.

KATH: Has James said what this story's about? That he's going to tell us?

ED: He keeps on saying, 'it's cerebral!' Just before I go to bed he'll ring me up and say, 'it's cerebral!' I'm like, okay.

KATH: Right, okay.

ED: And then I get a text, 'it's cerebral, remember?' He'll Facetime me and say, 'it's cerebral' and then wink really slowly.

KATH: Right.

ED: And I'll say okay.

KATH: Did he give off sort of believable vibes? Is the story worthy of Spooktown lore?

ED: I don't know, I guess that's what we do, isn't it? We go in and we listen to his cerebral story, and if we believe it - great, we whack it in the archive. If we don't believe it, see you later story.

KATH: So the story might be bullshit then, basically.

ED: I think that's what cerebral means, yeah.

KATH: Yeah, okay.

ED: Oh, there it is.

[Organ music]

[Wind and bird sounds]

ED: James, welcome to Spooktown.

JAMES: Thank you so much, thank you so much. So spooky.

ED: Yeah, welcome to Spooktown, population yikes!

[KATH laughs]

ED: This is a nice house you've brought us to.

JAMES: Or so it seems.

KATH: Okay.

ED: To me from the outside it seems very nice. Quick question: how many ghosts have you seen this week? Or encountered here?

JAMES: This week?

ED: Mhm.

JAMES: Not confirmed, but I think everyone I've seen this week has been a ghost. But never ask. There's a ghost policy: don't ask don't tell.

ED: Fair enough.

JAMES: So I haven't followed any of it up, but everyone seems a bit ghostly these days. I don't know if you've noticed that. All of London seems like a goddamn ghost town. That's a bit of topical for you.

ED: Brilliant. Really is. So that's roughly 100?

JAMES: Uh, one. I haven't left the house. Just my girlfriend. And I actually do know for a fact she's alive, to be fair. So make that zero actually.

KATH: So you lied.

JAMES: Yeah. [laughs]

KATH: Okay.

ED: Reduce that to a gentleman's nod for the liar James. Okay. It's like a fallow week then, ghost-wise?

JAMES: Yeah, just kicking around. No real ghosts to speak of.

ED: What's the spookiest thing that's ever happened?

JAMES: To me?

ED: Yeah, to you.

JAMES: Me personally, I would've been a teenager – I don't know how old. And I heard something downstairs – this is a true story – I heard something downstairs. And middle of the night, everyone was asleep, I was like, 'who's hanging around downstairs?' I got up and I looked down, I went to the top of the stairs and looked down. You could see into this room, it was just a room that had my drum kit and stuff. There were loads of books on the bookshelf - massive bookshelf.

And I looked into that room from the top of the stairs, I could see into it, and there was a torchlight just scanning the bookshelves. And going up and down along the bookshelves, just shelf after shelf. I watched it for a while. I was frozen and really scared, like 'there's a fucking burglar in the house.' And then I ran to my parents' room. I made quite a lot of noise, woke them up, they rushed down. My dad totally in the nude. [Everyone laughs] And they ran downstairs, turned the lights on, no one was there, and I literally had to check the whole house with them.

I think my dad put on some clothes and then checked the whole house. But you know what, I don't think I have a specific memory

of that because I was so scared, so I can't verify whether he bothered. He might have just gone, 'come on, whatever.'

ED: [laughs] Finally I get to check the house in the nude.

JAMES: Yeah yeah, an excuse [laughs]. But no one was there, no one was in the house. All the doors, like the back door, front door were locked. But I mean, I know what I saw!

KATH: That is spooky though.

ED: Yeah that's genuinely spooky.

JAMES: So I don't know.

ED: Was it... it must've been through the window.

JAMES: Yeah there was a slight indoor patio kind of set up into that room at the far end. So maybe there was someone in the garden having a look around, and then with all the lights on they saw a naked man run out of his bedroom and they were like, 'let's go.'

KATH: They booked it, yeah.

JAMES: Yeah, 'we got what we came for, let's go home.'

ED: Finally [laughs]. That's fucking terrifying.

JAMES: I was scared. I was very very scared.

ED: I think home invasions are just genuinely terrifying.

JAMES: Yeah, I mean they try to make us less scared of it with the Home Alone franchise, but it still is scary.

ED: [laughs] Yeah.

JAMES: When I first saw those Home Alone films, in my little boy mind I did think, 'I can't wait until I get to do stuff like that.' I didn't really take into account that not all – most robbers aren't just bumbling comical idiots. They're actually like, they have no morals and it doesn't matter.

KATH: What's mad about the Home Alone films is that he technically kills them 10 times over, like he smashes like irons into their head and stuff like that. They would be dead –

JAMES: They would be dead.

KATH: And this kid would just be in this mansion with loads of mad mannequins around and just dead robbers. It's really dark.

JAMES: Yeah, even at the time I remember thinking, 'I can't believe I'm allowed to watch this.' Because even at the age I was, I was like, 'that is too violent.' Especially the iron. The red hot iron on the face from a height is psychopathic.

KATH: You'd be dead! You'd be dead.

JAMES: It's proper bad. You would die.

ED: Yeah, yes, a film franchise about a child murderer. Kath, do you want to ask your question?

KATH: Oh yeah okay. Okay so, would you rather be a ghost, a vampire, or every hamburger in the world ever?

JAMES: Very interesting question.

KATH: Thank you.

JAMES: Now I feel like I want to say ghost, but I feel like because we talk about ghosts so much and maybe that's just in my head. I'd hate to be a vampire. I would hate it! [All laugh]

KATH: You have a really strong opinion on that.

JAMES: Yeah, well it just seems horrible. I wouldn't like having to only be up at night, and to bite people's necks and drink their blood to survive, and then you turn them into a vampire as well and then you've got that on your conscience for ages.

KATH: You don't have to. It'd be your choice I think.

JAMES: Well you either kill them or you turn them into a vampire, so either way.

KATH: Well no, there's ways around. You could go to like blood banks and stuff like that, couldn't you?

JAMES: And just drink that?

ED: Yeah.

JAMES: Do you know what? I wouldn't enjoy that either. [All laugh] So I think yeah, if that's the best it can possibly get is that I

go to blood banks... and even then I'd feel bad, because going to blood banks and drinking the blood and that is meant for patients.

KATH: It's really bad, yeah.

JAMES: So I'd feel bad about that.

KATH: You'd be killing people that way actually, wouldn't you? Yeah.

JAMES: So it would be... and also I don't like the thought of living forever. Because you know, living forever in that way... but living forever as a ghost, fine. Because the only thing there is that I'm between worlds, people can only see me if I want them to, and that's quite nice. That's eternity that way.

And I can choose whether to you know... I can help people or if they're not nice I can haunt them and do stuff that's like... because you know, there's loads of horrible people out there.

ED: Yeah.

JAMES: It would be great, I'd love to be invisible. I've always thought that. I would love to be invisible.

ED: [laughs] You love the idea of anonymity. Are you the kind of person that comments on the Guardian articles under a fake name?

JAMES: Not yet. [All laugh] Now you've given me that idea, if that's the only way I can be a ghost, going out on the internet trolling people, I get the appeal now. Anyone who's ever said I

was shit on Mock the Week, I understand. Apologies. Do you know what? My bad for blocking you.

ED: I've noticed you're heavily avoiding the every hamburger ever option.

JAMES: Well, look. There are good elements to the question that KATH asked, and there are not so good elements.

KATH: Okay.

JAMES: And I would say every hamburger ever is not comparable to the first two, which are, you know, horror kind of figureheads, icons.

KATH: You don't think it's horrific to be every hamburger in the world ever?

ED: I think it's the most horrible one.

KATH: It's horrific, yeah.

JAMES: Well I don't think I've seen it. I mean it's not a horror genre staple, it's not a staple of the horror genre. It's like, hamburgers. Also like, of course I wouldn't want to be every hamburger ever. I would never want to be eaten and then shat out. None of that sounds good. I'd even take a vampire over being every hamburger. You know my feelings about that.

KATH: Yeah, okay.

ED: I've never been that passionate about anything in my life as you are about not being a vampire.

JAMES: I would hate it! And I don't know why anyone would ever... every time you watch like a vampire film, there's always one character who's a human who wants to be a vampire and wants to get bitten and live forever. And I'm like, 'what the fuck is the matter with you?' Like, think it through! It won't be nice.

[Organ music]

[Wind sounds]

ED: Should we hear what you have to say about this house that we're stood outside?

JAMES: Oh, would you like to hear a ghost story?

ED: I'd love to hear a ghost story.

KATH: About what happened right here?

JAMES: Yes, about what happened right here.

ED: Please.

KATH: Okay, yeah.

JAMES: Okay. Let me get up my Google Docs... [all laugh] Now this is a real cerebral one as well. Have you ever seen the film Mother?

ED: I started watching it and I stopped.

JAMES: Yeah, so that's what this is like.

ED: So we'll probably stop it about 20 minutes in.

JAMES: Yeah, so let me know when you want to just pack it in.

[Spooky music]

JAMES: The alarm clock went off, and Elizabeth awoke from a peaceful slumber. [Yawning noises and cheerful music] She said a short prayer, then clambered out of bed and stretched, used the bathroom [toilet flushing] and made her way to the kitchen for breakfast. She looked around the kitchen and smiled. She still couldn't believe she'd found the furniture she wanted. The cute wooden table and matching wooden chairs looked adorable. And the wooden countertops completed the look perfectly.

She was craving eggs, so turned on the gas hob [hob lighting sound] and opened the wooden cupboard to fetch a frying pan – but was instead met only with wooden bowls and wooden spoons. She opened the next wooden cupboard to find the exact same thing. Confused, she turned off the hob and the flame vanished. All was quiet. [Music stops] Suddenly, all four hobs roared into life at once, flames shooting up halfway to the ceiling. Elizabeth turned off all four hobs to zero, but nothing happened! The fire only got fiercer. [Fire crackling] And soon the flames had spread to the wooden countertops.

Elizabeth ran to the wall where the fire extinguisher was mounted, only to find it missing. The flames soon engulfed the cupboards and were reaching out towards the tables and chairs. Elizabeth ran towards the door, but to her horror it had disappeared. The door through which she had come as well as the door to the outside world were both absent. She turned to see

the entire kitchen was now aflame. The fire closed in around her, and all turned to black.

[Crackling stops, alarm clock rings]

The alarm clock went off, and Elizabeth awoke with a start [Elizabeth yells and cheerful music starts]. She was hyperventilating and afraid. Her hands patted down her entire body in a fit of anxiety.

It was just a dream. She wasn't on fire. She was safe in her bed. 'Oh thank you, Lord God,' she blurted out, hands pressed tightly together in prayer. 'Praise be to you, Lord!' She leapt out of bed and ran into the kitchen to check on things. Everything was as it should be. She needed to relax. She poured herself a cool glass of water from the kitchen tap [water pouring] and glugged it down. Then another. Then another. She didn't know why, but no sooner had she drank one glass of water, she'd find herself pouring the next. 7 glasses, 8 glasses, 9, 10! After her 20th glass of water, she felt it. Like a sword to her bladder! She had to pee ASAP.

Elizabeth ran back into her bedroom and into her en-suite. [Jazzy music starts] She lifted the toilet seat, turned around, dropped her PJ bottoms and sat down, only to fall hard on the tiled floor. The toilet had vanished! Elizabeth was in pain. She may have shattered her coccyx. She stood up and began dancing around the room in an attempt to get rid of the pee. This couldn't be happening, surely not. She had to go, and she had to go now. She turned to the shower, but it had vanished also and been replaced by a roaring fireplace, as had the sink and indeed the toilet. And then she pissed herself and the room caught on fire.

[Music stops, alarm clock rings]

The alarm clock went off, and Elizabeth woke up screaming [Elizabeth screams, cheerful music starts]. 'Woah woah woah, honey are you okay?' Robert was sitting next to her in his PJs, his hands on her arms in an attempt to reassure her that the nightmare was over. 'I was on fire!' Elizabeth wept, 'and I wet myself!' 'It was only a dream,' said Robert, 'come on, you're awake now. You're with me and you're safe. Let's have some porridge and a cup of tea then get ready for church.' Elizabeth dove into Robert's arms, relieved she was back in the real world once more. He rubbed her back, soothing all the fear away, saying a prayer under his breath asking God to take away his wife's recurring nightmares.

[Jazzy music starts] The couple walked into the kitchen only to be greeted by the sight of 100 gas ovens, 50 fireplaces, and 1000 wooden chairs. They turned back towards the bedroom, but came face to face with a door-less wall. 'Could I admit something to you?' said Robert, 'I can't remember how we met. I don't remember becoming your boyfriend, and I'm pretty sure I've never been in love with you.' Elizabeth watched as the scorching hot flames wrapped themselves around his face and torso. [Fire crackling] His scream was like a high-pitched power tool. And then it was her turn.

[Music stops, alarm clock rings]

The alarm clock went off and Elizabeth awoke. She was alert and ready for the fire to attack. But attack never came, ever, ever again. [Cheerful music] Everyday became more blissful than the last as she praised God for it. Elizabeth would eat marmalade crumpets for breakfast [chewing sounds] and water her plants each morning [watering sounds]. She would exercise in the

afternoon and tend to her garden before curling up in front of her favourite movie in the evening [Elizabeth sighs]. But she knew deep down that the fire had not been a dream. It was real. She had died and now she was in heaven.

One morning she looked out of her window and noticed a white bird soaring gracefully above the trees at the bottom of a vast and luscious garden. It was a dove, but not just any dove [dove coos], but a dove of peace. She knew in her heart that this was God's way of letting her know that there would be no more fires. He had tested her and she had passed. Her faith had been rewarded with the gift of eternal life. The dove flew closer. Elizabeth watched as it made its way up the garden, its eyes fixed on her, a slight smile in its beak. Elizabeth held out a solitary finger and the dove landed on it weightlessly. The two gazed into each other's eyes and all was good.

[Music stops, alarm clock rings]

The alarm clock went off and God awoke in a weird mood [choir singing]. He lay in bed. Something felt off and he didn't like it [ominous music]. He decided to summon his dove, so he opened the window and extended a finger. His dove landed elegantly on his knuckle. 'What can I do for you, my Lord?' 'I want you to tell everybody that they're awesome,' said God, 'that they can achieve whatever they set their minds to and be whoever they want to be, okay?' The dove nodded, 'sounds lovely', it chirped, and hopped off of God's finger and onto the windowsill. 'Will that be all?' 'Yeah, I think so', said God, 'off you go!'

The dove nodded and turned to take flight, when all of a sudden another dove landed on the windowsill [dove coos]. God was surprised. He wasn't expecting any other dove so early in the

morning. The new dove looked up at God and turned its gaze slowly to the other dove and approached it, gradually tipping it onto its side and effortlessly using its beak to tear out its vocal cords. God watched as his dove spluttered and died. The new dove turned its beady eyes and bloody beak towards God and said, 'I know what you did to Elizabeth, you omnipresent fuck!' 'What are you talking about?' God panicked. 'Oh please', said the dove, 'I know everything you've ever done and I've told everyone!' The colour drained from God's face. 'Everyone?' he whimpered, as a distant rumbling from the outside world made itself known and quickly grew louder. It sounded like a thunderstorm, but the sky was clear blue with white clouds. The clouds were moving though, busting and twisting, expanding and drawing nearer.

They were doves! [Bird noises] Swarms and swarms of bloodthirsty doves! They shattered God's window [window breaking] like a runaway train and swirled around the room like an angry tornado. They raised their sharp beaks, ripped and tore at God's flesh little by little until the blood filled his eyes and his bones tasted fresh air. He dropped to the floor in a mushy heap and the doves picked away at him for a week or so until there was nothing left. The alarm clock went off and Elizabeth opened her eyes to see her dove friend perched on her bedside table. 'It's done', croaked the dove, 'he's dead.'

End of the scary story!

[Upbeat organ music]

[Ed and KATH laugh]

ED: That was a fucking wild ride.

JAMES: Scared?

ED: Yeah, of you. Not of the story.

JAMES: Well, you know. Mission accomplished.

ED: That was um, that was so intense. That was very fast.

JAMES: Yeah.

ED: And I'm not 100% sure what I mean by that, but it was very fast.

JAMES: Yeah, sometimes I spoke quite quickly.

ED: Yeah, you did. I mean, okay.

JAMES: What do you think it's about?

ED: Nothing.

KATH: I didn't know doves could be quite so violent.

JAMES: What?

ED: It's about nothing. Is that – am I wrong?

JAMES: No wonder you gave up on Mother halfway through.

ED: Yeah, to be fair I stopped listening 20 minutes in. I think it's about... God's getting eaten by doves.

JAMES: On the surface.

KATH: And that all happened here in this house?

JAMES: Well, yes. It all happened here in this house. You'll look around this bedroom and maybe you'll notice in the corner there, on that desk, there's a computer.

KATH: Sure.

JAMES: [whispering] That's where it happened guys. That's where it all happened. On that computer.

KATH: On the internet, or on...

JAMES: Some of it, yes.

ED: What? Some of it happened on the internet [laughs]. Was the God stuff on the internet or is it sort of like a flat share?

JAMES: God was on the internet.

ED: Do you have to be James Acaster to really get this story?

JAMES: Well, me or my friend Wayne from school.

ED: [laughs] Wayne, if you're listening, I hope you had a blast.

JAMES: Wayne will get all of that. Are you familiar with the computer game the Sims?

KATH: Yes.

ED: Right, yes.

JAMES: When you were in school, did you play the Sims and for a laugh fill rooms with things that would catch fire and produce fire and then take the door away and watch them burn to death?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: This has blown my mind.

KATH: Yeah, it's all falling into place now. Like build a swimming pool and take away the ladder. It's just... I think the issue for me is it's been 20 years since I've played the Sims.

JAMES: Yeah it's a big old call back isn't it?

KATH: Hell of a call back.

JAMES: Still in your life, isn't it? I'll tell you what, if things being from your childhood is an issue, then go and tell that to Peter Kay if he can hear you through his millions of pounds.

ED: It's not quite the scariest... it's not quite the big light, is it? It's not quite turning the big light on of scary stories.

JAMES: It is, it's like when someone tells you what Mother's about. You're like, 'oh man, such a good film.' Obviously Elizabeth is in the Sims, isn't she? She's a character in the Sims and she keeps on having her place re-built and set on fire. The person playing the game, who is obviously God, is making her piss herself and stuff like that for a laugh. But then everything's fine for her, isn't it? It's okay because the teenager who once played the Sims has grown out of it - like you said KATH, that was a long time ago.

You see you leave the Sims, you just leave it alone and don't play it anymore. So she gets to live a nice life and it's fine. But you move on to other stuff, don't you? What main computer game are we all playing now? Have you heard of a little thing called Twitter? What's the logo for that? A little white bird. A little white dove. And so that's what we're playing now. And so all the people who used to set fire to people on the Sims are all now getting our comeuppance because Twitter knows everything you've ever done, doesn't it? And it will get you. And they'll come on you – not come on you, they'll all come *for* you. [All laugh]

ED: Now I'm on board. So the doves have come, I get it.

JAMES: Everyone attacks that horrible person, that horrible teenager, and they've grown up now and they're playing on Twitter all the time. And now it's their turn to get destroyed. Pretty good.

ED: Pretty good.

KATH: You know what? Really good actually. It's a shame you had to explain it afterwards.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: And it does explain why the house isn't burned to a crisp and we're just standing in a nice house with a computer in a corner. I find it weird that there's a computer in the bedroom.

ED: Yes, unhealthy.

JAMES: Aren't you wondering what happened to that guy who was on Twitter?

ED: I assume it's you.

JAMES: Huh? No, it's uh... some punk. But no one's seen him since that day when he got cancelled on Twitter. No one's seen him.

KATH: Huh.

ED: So it's not actually a spooky story then.

JAMES: Huh? It is pretty spooky.

KATH: It's someone playing the Sims.

ED: It's someone playing the Sims and then 20 years later getting cancelled on Twitter.

JAMES: It's the horrors of modern life.

ED: What did he get cancelled for?

JAMES: Uh, cultural appropriation.

ED: [laughs] Oh shit. So it wasn't even an appropriate cancelling.

JAMES: Actually no, I changed my answer. They got cancelled for all the stuff they used to do on the Sims, I guess if you go over the story, so that's what they get cancelled for. It's because they used to... even if they won't do it in real life people aren't buying that shit. They're like, 'no, I wouldn't set fire to women in real life,' and they're like, 'well you did it on the Sims enough times, this guy's sick!' And then Twitter just –

KATH: So he's been cancelled because of how he used to play on the Sims.

JAMES: He's got a sick mind, yeah. Everyone's like, 'uh, we heard you used to routinely set women on fire on the Sims.' And he's like 'I'd never do that in real life.' 'Yeah as if, your mind came up with that, you sicko.' Everyone's like, 'yeah yeah, because he's grown up to be a fireman.'

[Organ music]

ED: Did Elizabeth orchestrate this?

JAMES: Yeah.

ED: Great, now back-

JAMES: Well...

ED: Oh wait, what?

JAMES: Yes, because all the characters in the Sims are real, and when she sees the dove and it flies over the garden, that's her looking across the computer. And she can see this Twitter icon and it's able to reach out to the Twittersphere and make her story —

ED: It's like Mother meets Wreck-it Ralph.

JAMES: Yes! Wreck-it Mother. That's exactly what it is [all laugh]. And here's the thing: really, the story is about how teenagers love computer games but they have to be able to destroy people on it. Like we see the little teenager, he was killing all the Sims. And

now the teenagers of today, they play Twitter and they destroy real human beings. So who's the real monster?

ED: Elizabeth...

JAMES: Yeah I guess she's the computer game character who's come to life.

ED: Yeah, that's the scary bit.

JAMES: And the doves.

ED: I did loads of shit on the Sims. Making them have sex and then moving the bed.

JAMES: Yeah, I don't want to write that story.

ED: I love that it was set in this computer here – this 20-year-old computer.

JAMES: Yeah.

ED: That's a lovely little twist.

JAMES: Anyone who plays on that computer dies.

KATH: Oh.

ED: That's what I expected. Another great twist.

KATH: Yeah.

JAMES: Some kid in Spooktown was burning Sims people alive and got their comeuppance and now they're dead.

ED: Could've been any one of us.

JAMES: And there's other people who've used that computer who've died over the years as well.

KATH: Oh really?

JAMES: The police have investigated the death, saw the computer was open, and said to the constable who was with him, 'hey, what was that... who played Laurie in original Little Women... he's Batman now.' And he was like, 'I can't remember, I'll Google it. So he Googled Laurie in Little Women and it came and he was like 'yeah yeah, it was Christian Bale, I knew it was.' And then he stepped outside the house and he was hit by a lorry.

ED: Wow. So the machine is the ghost? The machine is haunted by a ghost.

JAMES: Whatever you do on the computer, it will make it real and it will kill you.

KATH: So the ghost- is Elizabeth a ghost? Or is Elizabeth just a created character that is able to emerge from the Sims into Twitter?

JAMES: Yes, the second one.

KATH: Or is... [laughs]

JAMES: The computer's got the evil in it. It makes whatever's in the computer evil, and it made her come to life and be able to go to Twitter and set the doves on the guy.

ED: So was it Laurie or Christian Bale who was driving the lorry that killed the policeman?

JAMES: It was just a lorry driven by... uh, twist... the boy who died's dad. Coming home from work.

ED: So it's not that whatever happens on a computer kills you in real life.

JAMES: Well it is because he put Laurie in and then a lorry killed him.

ED: Oh! Didn't get that, yeah.

JAMES: He Googled who played Laurie in Little Women –

KATH: And then a lorry killed him.

JAMES: And then he got hit by a lorry.

KATH: It's strange that a lorry came down this street. It's a quite sort of residential area.

JAMES: Yeah.

ED: I guess that's part of the spook.

JAMES: People get run over every day by it.

ED: Oh Christ [laughs].

JAMES: But on one occasion one of them had Googled Laurie before hand. People think that's coincidence but –

ED: I suppose when you say anyone who uses this computer dies, that in and of itself isn't actually that scary because of course anyone who uses or does anything dies.

JAMES: Yeah, but not under mysterious circumstances like this. It's always connected.

ED: But then if that lorry's constantly running people over, which is awful, that's also not that suspicious.

JAMES: But he... you know –

KATH: It is in a residential area.

ED: Not if it's doing it every day.

JAMES: These are the people who have used the computer. The young lad who was burning people on the Sims and using Twitter died of bird flu, because obviously the story's a metaphor. But in real life died of bird flu after being cancelled. So he got cancelled and then caught bird flu the same day and then died.

KATH: That's a rough weekend.

JAMES: Yeah. And then the person who Googled who played Laurie in Little Women got hit by a lorry afterwards.

ED: And that's it?

JAMES: Whatever you do, don't touch that computer guys.

ED: I'm just going to Google that, see if I'm allowed to. Give me two seconds James.

JAMES: No! Don't do that.

ED: [typing] Can I use this computer?

JAMES: You'll be in a lot of trouble.

ED: Just gone to the WikiHow of how to use a computer. How do you even get to that if you didn't know? Just bash the keys until you get to the WikiHow of how to use it, 'oh, thank God!'

JAMES: Yeah, it should be that if you put in absolute gibberish that comes up. Not if you coherently Google how to use this computer.

[Organ music]

ED: So Kath and I are going to have a conflag real quick. You can just stick around.

JAMES: Just hang out over here? Take your time.

ED: Thank you James.

[Footsteps]

ED: Kath, hated the story, um, thought it was very confusing, didn't get it. Loved the explanation, loved that it's – it's not

actually anything to do with the house, it's the computer that's haunted. I believe it.

KATH: Yeah, loved all that. Hated that it had to be explained.

ED: I don't believe that it happened in this house, but he obviously explained that it didn't happen in this house, that makes sense. I do believe that the computer's haunted, because when I searched for it – whether I should use the computer or not – it was very slow.

KATH: Okay yeah, that's quite a good reason.

ED: Thanks. What are your thoughts?

KATH: Okay, no I do believe the computer is haunted. I do believe that. I think the computer is allowed to stay in Spooktown.

ED: Yeah, the haunted computer- the ghost within- it wasn't really clear how it was... whether the computer's a ghost or there's something in the machine that's a ghost.

JAMES: Am I meant to be hearing all of this?

ED: I believe there's something in the machine that's a ghost so I'm going to let it stay. Should we go and let James know?

KATH: Yeah I guess, you do it.

ED: Okay.

[Footsteps]

ED: Hi James.

JAMES: Hello.

ED: Hello, um.

JAMES: Have you reached a verdict?

ED: Welcome to Spooktown, your haunted computer.

JAMES: Huh?

KATH: [laughs] You worded that so strangely! [All laugh]

ED: The computer stays! The computer is part of Spooktown lore.

JAMES: Okay, that sounds good. I'm happy about that.

ED: I'm very happy about that. Genuinely, I'm very happy about that. Because I don't think anyone else will ever attempt to write a ghost story about a computer. I think it'll be very unique.

JAMES: Yeah, I agree. Also, you know, I don't know how many people you've had on this podcast so far, but I guarantee I put in not only more effort than them, but I put in so much effort that I'm embarrassed by it. [Ed and KATH laugh] So the computer stays, do I stay?

KATH: You can hang out for a bit.

ED: Yeah, you can stay at ours if you want.

JAMES: I get to kick around?

ED: Yeah, you get to kick around for a bit but obviously you've got stuff to do, so you leave whenever you want.

KATH: Thanks so much for coming to Spooktown.

ED: Yeah, thank you so much.

JAMES: Thank you so much, it means a lot. I like Spooktown and I think the computer will be very happy here. I mean make sure when you do show the computer to people you explain it properly.

KATH: Oh yeah, it'll have to have a plaque next to it for sure. [Ed and James laugh]

ED: Good.

JAMES: Thank you! I respect you both.

[Organ music]

ED: That was nice.

KATH: Yeah, I enjoyed that.

ED: Mhm.

KATH: What's next?

ED: Next is – I've just got a text off Britney Spears saying her legs are haunted, so we have to watch her tell us about it through dance outside CEX.

KATH: Hmm, that doesn't really work for a podcast.

ED: I think it's more for her.

[Organ music]

This has been a Little Wander production. Music from Rhodri Viney. Local artwork from Suze Hughes. With special thanks to Beth Forrest, Steve Pickup, Sam Roberts, Henry Widdicombe, and Jo Williams. Other podcasts from Little Wander include I Wish I Was An Only Child. Subscribe now on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.