

Welcome To Spooktown: Stuart Laws

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: Ha! A real ghost!

[Music stops, wind and monorail sounds]

ED: It's actually called a monorail because it's got one – it rides on one rail.

KATH HUGHES: Oh really?

ED: Mhm.

KATH: That's interesting.

ED: Mono is just another word for one.

KATH: Weird that he's asked us here at midnight.

ED: Really weird. I'm furious we can't go on any of the rides.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Oh, do you want to go to a theme park? Yes. When it's closed? What? No!

KATH: Yeah, obviously not. And yet –

ED: Stuart Laws has asked us to meet him at car – I've written down carpark E.

KATH: Okay.

ED: The most fun place to be in a theme park. Carpark E.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Where it's pumping. Have you had any nightmares this week, Kath?

KATH: Yeah, I've had one where I – I checked my bank account and it had 9 pounds. And I had a council tax bill to pay. It was awful. Couldn't pay it.

ED: That's – that's scarier than like a monster.

KATH: I know. I've put it in the nightmare category. How about you?

ED: It's all – mine's all genuinely a little too real at the moment, so ask me next week.

KATH: Let you process it?

ED: I genuinely can't face it today.

KATH: Too close to your heart at the moment.

ED: Yeah, well it's ongoing.

KATH: Ah.

ED: To the point where this is getting in the way. And I hope Stuart Laws keeps it brief.

KATH: Yeah. I hope he keeps it snappy.

ED: Should we hop off here? Carpark E?

KATH: Yeah, this is carpark E. Yep.

[Beeps, footsteps]

[Engine revs, glass breaks]

ED: Is that a car?

KATH: Yeah, that sounds like a Citroen C4 Cactus. He's struggling with the clutch, though.

ED: Here he is. As I live and breathe, Stuart Laws!

[Spooky music]

ED: Welcome to Spooktown, Stuart.

KATH: Hey Stuart.

STUART LAWS: [whispers] Hello.

ED: Hello.

STUART: Sorry, that was me being spooky.

ED: It was very spooky. I'm very spooked.

STUART: Thank you.

ED: Thanks for inviting us into – what's it called, there on the sand? The Valley of Timber?

STUART: The Valley of Timber.

ED: A theme park.

KATH: Timber?

STUART: Timber.

KATH: Timber. Valley of Timber.

STUART: Yeah. Have you not heard the word timber before?

KATH: I've never heard it in the context of a theme park before and I think that threw me.

ED: I think Kath's thinking of timbre.

STUART: Ah, musical theatre, is it? All of that training.

ED: Yeah yeah yeah. The stage and that. So thank you for getting us here to the Valley of Timber or timbre, depending on how you pronounce it. Can I ask you a few questions?

STUART: Yeah.

ED: Thanks, man.

STUART: Would the podcast end if I said no?

KATH: Pretty much, yeah.

ED: Yeah. Yeah, it's like a choose your own adventure.

STUART: Oh, wow.

ED: How many ghosts have you seen? And what was the scariest ghost that you saw?

STUART: How many ghosts have I seen? Uh, is this a per annum? Do you give a per annum rate?

ED: If you've seen so many that that's how you sort of dissect them.

STUART: Oh no, there's – I've seen 7 ghosts.

ED: Have you really?

STUART: No, I haven't seen any ghosts.

ED: Oh.

STUART: I was trying to get into the spirit of things.

ED: Lovely catchphrase. You've not seen any ghosts?

STUART: But I've also said 7, so which one do you want to go with?

[All laugh]

ED: I think you've seen 7 ghosts. I believe you when you say 7 ghosts per year, per annum. What was the spookiest ghost that you saw? Or, you know, sort of spooky – was that a ghost?

STUART: Ah, okay.

ED: Or was it the waiter?

STUART: 'Was that a ghost?' I remember saying that once. Is there going to be some editing around here?

ED: No, this is live.

STUART: I mean, fundamentally I don't believe in ghosts. I think that if you think you've seen a ghost, it is some sort of emotional trauma playing itself out. But that's not in the spirit of Spooktown.

ED: I think it can be, if that's your belief. You say your belief, man.

STUART: Oh right. I don't believe in ghosts. I don't think they exist. I think it's your brain, uh, just going – shit going on and you're either really scared and you're – it's sort of manifesting things. Or there's some sort of trauma going on deep inside you that you'll keep replaying. And it's sort of... you're externalising it in some way.

KATH: I'd argue that's more frightening than ghosts.

[Ed laughs]

STUART: Yeah, terrifying.

ED: So you think if you've had a traumatic experience, you're more likely to see a ghost?

STUART: Yeah, it's an attempt to rationalise things, isn't it? It's your brain trying to go, 'okay, maybe this is a ghost, this horrendous thing I need to confront.' Also that humans are very good at, uh, it's called pareidolia, where you see faces in things that aren't actually there. So like the fact on the moon – is it on the moon or on –

KATH: Oh yeah, like if you're looking at a bin or something and you see a face in the screws.

STUART: Yeah, if you see a face in the screws.

KATH: Yeah [laughs]

STUART: That comes from Kath, who's currently in prison. She's dehumanised the screws.

[All laugh]

ED: Great, so you don't believe in ghosts. But you have seen a ghost here in the Valley of Timber.

STUART: Well, I've seen the ghost of something.

KATH: Oh.

ED: Woah.

STUART: What does that mean?

ED: Well that's – I'm like, 'woah', because I don't know what it means.

STUART: No, yeah, I know. I don't know what it means either. But it's sort of quite spooky, isn't it, to say that.

ED: It's really spooky.

STUART: Yeah.

ED: It's genuinely really spooky.

STUART: I'm getting chills, actually.

ED: The ghost of... dot dot dot, something.

STUART: Here's something I have been scared of, is the smell of other people's fridges.

KATH: Really?

ED: Why is that? What like – what – because they have –

STUART: I feel like everyone's fridge has got a very specific, unique vibe. And you get used to yours.

KATH: Is that not just the food?

STUART: Yeah, it's like how they – so it's some people, you know, you've probably seen a tub of margarine on top, like, a third of a tomato, and a half an onion. And you've put it on there because you don't want to put it on the actual shelf, because you think that the top of the margarine's cleaner.

KATH: Yeah.

STUART: And then that's letting out its own smell.

KATH: That's absolutely right.

ED: That is the perfect description of my fridge. It's – this is the scariest thing that's happened on this podcast so far. [laughs]

STUART: Yeah, you open it up and – ugh, when it's – you get used to yours, so you become accustomed – I've become accustomed to its face, become accustomed to its smell. And then you open someone else's, and it's just – it might be very similar to yours, but I don't know, there's some root ginger at a posh person's house. Just – I don't know if you keep that in the

fridge. Just – and that just changes the vibe, and it hits your nostrils and you're like – your nostril's like – 'oh! All of this is new.' Right?

ED: Do you think it's like, um, you know with uh, with farts? You like your own brand and you can tell when it's not yours. It's just the other end of that chain. So that's what like – all of that stuff's there, and then it goes through your body.

STUART: Sorry, what is a fart?

KATH: All the stuff in your food.

ED: Oh, I'm so sorry. That's another northern thing. Um... a fart is where – it's sort of the gas from the food from your fridge.

STUART: Right.

ED: And your body –

STUART: How does it get into your body?

ED: So you eat the stuff in your fridge, um, and then it goes down into your belly.

STUART: Okay.

ED: And then 9 months later, the gas comes out of your, uh, Kath, do you want to finish that?

KATH: Ass.

ED: Yeah.

STUART: Thank you, Kath.

[All laugh]

STUART: Ed and Kath explain farts.

ED: That's the podcast, we're done. Thank you so much.

[Spooky music]

KATH: Quick question then: Halloween –

STUART: Mhm.

KATH: Day of the Dead or Battle of the Boyne?

STUART: Oh, BOB baby.

[All laugh]

KATH: Great.

ED: BOB baby! Yeah. I mean, we're all that excited about the Battle, that's what I call it –

STUART: Oh man.

ED: The Battle in our own hearts, but I've never heard somebody be so vocal about it. Thank you for saying what we're all thinking actually, Stu.

STUART: To be honest, I – it was in the email, can you be honest?

ED: Yeah, just –

KATH: See what happens.

ED: To Stuart Laws: just be honest.

STUART: Are you two like the mayor and the – and the head councillor of Spooktown? What's the set up? What's the bureaucracy of the place?

ED: We live here, mate. We just live here. We're just casual... what are they called?

STUART: Livers of life?

ED: Citizens.

STUART: Ah. What's a denizen? What's the difference between a citizen and a denizen?

KATH: I've never heard that word before. I don't know.

ED: Citizen and denizen. Yeah, I've never heard denizen. I've heard it but I've just sort of skipped over it if I've read it in a book.

KATH: Bragging.

STUART: Might be a southern thing.

KATH: Or an educated thing. I don't know.

STUART: Don't accuse me of being educated.

KATH: [laughs] How dare you?

STUART: How dare you strip that from me!

ED: Let me just google denizen. [typing sounds] Denizen? A person, animal, or plant that lives or is found in a particular place. So I suppose we are denizens more than citizens, yeah.

STUART: What's the difference – does it say what the difference is with that and citizen?

ED: I assume citizen's just a person. I'd love to assume when I'm literally on Google.

STUART: Well can you hurry up? This is a podcast.

[All laugh]

STUART: Do you have Google in Spooktown?

ED: Yeah!

STUART: Okay. I'm just trying to understand this place.

ED: We just have Google but we don't have the internet.

STUART: It's just a guy running around the library really quickly.

ED: Johnny Google. Ah, citizen. A legally recognised subject or national of a state or commonwealth, either native or naturalised.

STUART: Mm. And naturalised means they are not wearing clothes, is that right?

ED: Yes, yeah. Tangle out or flimp out. That's uh, penis or fanny.

STUART: Yeah, whichever one is, uh, appropriate to your body.

ED: Yeah. So we are denizens of Spooktown.

KATH: Denizens, I like that.

ED: Yeah it's great, isn't it? I'll forget that. Can't wait to forget that and then Google it again in a year.

STUART: Set the alert. When Stuart comes back on the pod.

[Spooky music]

[Wind sounds]

ED: So, from one denizen to another. We're at Valley of Timber theme park.

STUART: Yes.

ED: It's dark because it's 12. We've got your one Lumiere iPhone torch to show us around. So thank you for bringing that. You've got a story to tell us about this place, haven't you?

STUART: Yeah, well it happened to me.

ED: Wow.

STUART: At the Valley of Timber. And I don't know how far I'll get through this story, um, it's quite intense. Um...

ED: You sound quite shaken, Stuart.

STUART: Yeah. I mean, speaking now at midnight, it's a very different vibe. Um, not entirely sure how I feel. I feel relieved, I feel quite happy. Um, but as you'll find out from the story, there were times when those emotions were not appropriate.

[Ed laughs]

STUART: Even if I felt them.

KATH: Okay.

STUART: I had to push them back down and say, 'not now!' Scared. Fear. The Valley of Timber.

[Spooky music]

STUART: For the first time in 5 months, I went to a theme park [children playing, sounds of rides] That's the headline, and obviously the world has changed. I wanted to share with the world how different this previously normal experience now is.

So, um. Maximum capacity is now capped at 700 souls. So you've got to book in advance or you take a risk that you'll be one of the 15 Lucky Pluckers who are picked at random from those who walk up on the day. They test for symptoms at the entrance, you know, temperature checks, discreetly monitoring the queue for persistent coughers [coughing]. They do this thing where they give regular free samples of flavourful food. Yeah. And then undercover employees casually start conversations about the taste and smell of that food to see whether or not you've lost your sense of taste and smell [people talking].

You're advised to bring your own water and wear face coverings in queues. And there's sanitation stations everywhere. To avoid anachronisms, none of that applies in the medieval area [horns]. The staff all seem morose. They seem distant. No, I wasn't looking for a friendship. I've got plenty of friends, I don't need to boast about that. What I was looking for was a good time. I

wanted to feel relaxed, like, 'hey, all these people are here to make it good.'

I'll tell you where they did step up: the mascots. The mascots are always an exciting part. There's like a mythology to every theme park. Here we had Moose Joe [growls], Bear-bera [growls], Pinguin [squawks] and Plucktown Patrick [strums guitar, 'hola']. Now, they're not allowed to touch the public unless you pay a photograph fee. And that includes, what I will say, a rather harrowing to watch antiviral shower for the mascot. And that's nice. It's nice to see people being able to sort of touch and everything, but it is horrible to watch them go through the shower [shower sounds].

Opening hours are reduced. So at 4:00 there's like a last orders. Last ride, basically. The bell is rung [bell rings]. All souls are to evacuate within 30 minutes or have their memories wiped. And that's the cloud storage of their ride photos from the entire day.

Um, I bought a fast pass, which gives you access to see tunnels that take you from certain areas in the park to the front of the queue of the most popular rides. Triple C Coaster, Beast Hunter, Wilderness Falls, Valley of the Drop, Where Snakes Fear to Slide, you know, all the big ones. The rides range from around 25 to 50% capacity depending on the seating arrangements. Apart from the Teacups, which now has a compulsory 200% of previous capacity and was rebranded as the scariest ride on the continent. And that is horrible actually. Being that close to people for a while.

I walked past the Lucky Pluckers group, that was fun. The 15 souls who are randomly given entry from 2-300 walk-ups. They were posing for their Lucky Pluckers promo photos [camera clicks] with Plucktown wings. And they all appear to be male, Caucasian, tall, and in their 20s or 30s. It's unusual to see that

many people together outside of sort of a comedy show. That sort of person. So the word 'pandemic' is discouraged, and I appreciate that. You aren't told this though on the website or any printed literature. I found out when Moose Joe broke character to chastise me because 'This is paradise! Unaffected by the world outside!' he muttered into my ear just before screaming through an antiviral shower. [screaming].

Uh, the toilets now have ride photos, that's an update. Um, I saw a Plucktown Padre baptising some kids in the boat and lake [splashing]. In the medieval area, there's a new ride called the Pig Drop, but I couldn't find the start of the queue anywhere. But you could see the riders squealing [screaming] as they squeeze them through a hole in the floor. Which is – there's an amazing restaurant next to it, too, which sold Coca Cola Classique [opens bottle], which I don't know – it's this entirely – I don't know where else you can get it. I have not found it – I've found it in one cinema and it's got sort of like a cinnamon aftertaste. Anyway, what I'll say about that is it goes very well with hog roast. So there's an announcement [beeps] that informs that the main lockers near the entrance had all randomly sprung open, and if you'd stored anything there to make your way to return to claim it.

But for me, I was more interested in the Ye Olde experience. So that is that exciting new ride they had. It's done up like an Argos, populated by like really realistic animatronic staff. So you're allowed in like one group at a time, and you're encouraged to live like it's 2019 or even earlier! I took the opportunity to do something I very much miss, which is sneezing in a queue [sneeze]. Uh, it was a lot of fun to do. And then if you leave the Argos, it's sort of auto-sprayed down. And in the ride photo area, you can watch what Ye Olde things the next riders do. One group came in and had a 10 minute argument with the animatronic

manager about reintroducing tariffs on the import and export of corn. That was quite fun to watch.

The animatronics were very good, that's what I will say. I didn't spot many repeated phrases. When I sneezed, [sneeze] one said, 'bless you' [robot noises]. That was nice. And the corn laws argument was swiftly dealt with with an unexpected wealth of 19th century import knowledge.

One caveat: uh, there was a particularly religious couple [choir music] that went into the Ye Olde ride to just be homophobic. And the animatronic manager swiftly replied, 'it was a temporary act for protectionism during the Napoleonic wars and served to enrich landowners.' That actually did shut the homophobes up. Uh, they – the park actually – you can actually see this. I was having a little look on my phone afterwards. They released a viral video entitled, 'Animatronic Puppet Owns Homophobic Visitors with Incredible Argument about Corn Export Laws'. It was amazing to see.

Anyway, I sort of kept sort of – I'd go on a few rides. I went on the Triple C Coaster. I went on the single rider queue and the other person guessed my name. That was weird. Um, and then he bought my ride photo. I don't understand. I kept seeing him do that. He kept buying ride photos of other people. I don't think he went on like a single ride, but he'd just sort of hang out by the kiosks. When someone ordered their ride photo, he'd lean in and say, 'I'll take one of those too, please.'

I saw the Lucky Pluckers again at Wilderness Falls. Very fun bunch. They all – they got deliberately drenched. [Waterfall sounds] There was about 7 or 8 of them now. Um, one tried to escape the splash, bumped into me. And it was weird, it almost felt like deliberate. And then there was like the low hum of the log flume and I couldn't really hear what they said.

Anyway, I went and played 9 holes on the crazy golf course. It was good. Um, I was assigned a caddy. That felt too much. After each crazy golf hole, I'd record my score and the caddy would say I'd written it down wrong. And said I'd forgotten an extra shot I took. Whilst also telling me I needed them and I'm starting to act hysterical and I need to calm down. That rang some alarm bells. I'm sure I played 12 holes too, but I'm really doubting myself now. The caddy gave me their phone number for track and trace. And when I walked away, I got a text from them saying, 'sup?' [beeping] I didn't like it.

Anyway, the path felt nice so I went on the, um, Ramsay's Alimony. Wooden rollercoaster in the valley with drops in quick succession. And it was here that it started to feel weird. The sun was low in the sky, it was about to escape the surrounding hills. And I started to feel like I was missing something. I lifted my wrist to look at the time but it was gone. ['What?'] Replaced by a plastic band with a locker number and a key attached. I don't know when that happened. I got my phone out and the battery died just when I could see the caddy had sent me 12 more messages. [beeps]

Before it died, I'm pretty sure it said the time was 16:27, which is military time for 4:27 pm. I was looking at the clocktower, and it said it was just before 4:00. No one was around. And I heard some braying from O're Yonder and I investigated. [knocking] O're Yonder, the gift shop, was closed. Now I knew something was awry. As the sun journeyed to the land, I remembered something that made me feel as amiss as seeing the word 'awry' written down. The alarm bells that rang when the caddy made me feel like I was going crazy. They were real. The caddy told me I'd imagined them, but they were my half hour warning. And I missed it.

The nostalgia of the sunlight kept the park in a twilight of visibility. Not dark, but my eyes didn't like it. Colour drained from the image. Shadows amorphous and growing. I was at the far end of the park, with a clear view of the valley across the entrance. Taillights drifting away as 699 souls flicked through ride photos, finished eating fast food, and allowed antibac gel into their palms to do what it does. 'I'm sure I can just get back to the entrance and they'll let me out the side door,' I thought, as I descended into a fast pass tunnel. The moving walkway had stopped but I'm proud of 16 things in my life: my walking pace and my ability to over-promise.

I was up to full walking speed. Serene in the upper body, legs paddling hard, and I thought to myself, 'that's good walking, babe.' I was right. It was good walking, but you'll have to take me on my word. A gasp [gasps] interrupted my self-admiration. From a figure up ahead. Just stood there, staring at me, waiting for me. I called out a friendly greeting. It started to move towards me, beak first. I turned around and another figure moving towards me, snout first. Can they see me? I knew it was just Pon-guin, the penguin lost in the woods, and Bear-bera, the motherly bear. But I didn't expect them, and it scared me. I took the escape route out to the front of the Wilderness Falls queue and waited to talk to them above ground. It felt safer for some reason. With mascots you never know who's under the costume. It could be Tom Hanks, but it could also be a person so horrible but also so litigious that I couldn't even name them. Or even Richard Branson. The mascots didn't emerge, and I tentatively made my way to the diner. Helped myself to a Coca Cola Classique [bottle open], obvs. And then heard a scream [scream]. It was a Lucky Plucker alone on the log flume.

I ran to the splash, and all I heard him yell was, 'run!'

‘Run where?’ I thought. Was he talking to me? I turned around to get my drink and came face to face with Plucktown Padre, the chicken wearing a clerical collar and blue gilet [clucks, ‘hola’].

‘Oh, great. Sorry, I lost track of time and didn’t hear the warning bell. What’s the best way out now?’ Plucktown Padre cocked their head to one side, sizing me up.

‘Didn’t hear or just ignored the bell?’ A disembodied voice said in an accent I couldn’t place. It wasn’t the Padre, though. I looked around the diner for a sauce, and there it was, by the sauces. The caddy. Shit!

[Time travelling sounds]

I awoke in a damp room. It must’ve been under Wilderness Falls. A strong light restricted my vision and a broad-shouldered silhouette spoke to me in a deep, difficult to discern voice that wouldn’t have been out of place in a trailer of a Christopher Nolan film.

[deep voice] ‘Why are you still here?’

‘Um, I think I’m tied to the chair.’

‘The park. The park in general.’

‘Oh, uh, I lost track of time. What is this? What’s going on?’

‘There was a blogger once. I don’t want people here after dark, for safety.’

‘Oh, well I’ll go then.’

‘Not so fast.’

There was a palpable pause as we both considered the fact that I wasn't moving fast.

'How do you order Coca Cola Classique, out of interest?' I probably wasn't taking it seriously enough, but I also had to know. The silhouette disappeared through a door, leaving me alone.

[whispers] What did the man on the log flume say to you?'

The voice was not in the room. It felt like it was behind me.

'It just told me to run.' It makes sense now. I should've run.

'684 souls depart. Those that remain shall restart.'

'Cool, man. That rhymed.'

The door groaned open.

'Run!'

I was free to go. They charged my phone, deleted any park photos I'd taken and apologised for the caddy. I tried to make a joke out of it.

'I guess they put the cad into caddy.' They just pointed at a 'no wordplay' sign and I thought, 'fair enough. If you've committed to a sign.' Then they asked if I could just accompany them to do a medical room to do a quick disease check to ensure their employees are safe from me. I was about to agree when I heard that voice again.

'Run!'

I didn't need to be told twice, despite this being the third time. I bolted past the silhouette and into the corridor. [running] A blinding light at one end, a grimy stairwell the other. I went grimy, but was stopped in my tracks by an unearthly moan from the other side of a door. [moaning] I pushed it open and one of the Lucky Pluckers was strapped to a chair. The silhouette burst into the corridor [door slams] before I could take in what I was seeing [liquid bubbling]. The gleaming machine, the white coated staff, the low hum.

'Stop!' I could see the silhouette clearly now. A vertiginous man in thick, plaid shirts and hidden behind a 20 year beard. I ran, climbed the stairs and emerged into an empty park [running], trying to get my bearings but the sun was long gone. I hid in the bushes as my pursuer emerged from underground and stormed off, looking for me. Then I saw something shuffling about.

Bear-bera.

I started following. What was previously a family paradise of rides, food, and entertainment was now a dimly lit horror. What I could see was illuminated by gas powered streetlights struggling to shine a light on what was unseen all along. Bear-bera was heading for the entrance and I discreetly followed. I could see it: the main entrance gates. Locked, but not insurmountable. I reached into my back pocket for my car key. Gone. I'd gotten over-excited and hadn't noticed a ride must've shorn me of access to my escape. What time was it now? How long had I been here? I went to look at my watch and was confronted with absence. As I contemplated the locker key now adorning my wrist, Bear-bera turned and stared right at me.

'You must escape! You must take your soul with you!'

Bang! [shot] Bear-bera crashed to the floor and I joined her, just as my heart was still beating. And setting a new personal best. I scrambled to cover through a door and rolled to the entrance foyer. Foyer? Foyer. Hm. Amusement arcade chiming [video game sounds, music], food kiosk baked and a new row of lockers waiting for me. I opened locker 685, no car key. But... my watch. A bottle of Coca Cola. Coca Cola Classique. A glass vial. All on top of a tattered park map. I was about to pick them up when I noticed something about where the objects were placed. Beside the Wilderness Falls splash zone, my watch. The glass vial on top of the actual ride. By the Pig Drop, CCC baby. Scribbled on the crazy golf course, a symbol. But what was it? What did it mean? I'm trying to figure it out. I hadn't noticed the arcade had fallen silent. [music stops]

I grabbed everything and slipped behind the Moose, joining the gang in a promotional cut-out. I could hear footsteps and a soft clicking echo around the entrance. I started wondering how they pronounce 'foyer' here. Yeah, fo... fo... foy... er. Fo-yay. It's up to the execs.

I stood up to peak around the cut-out, and both of my knees cracked, betraying 36 years of aging and a cacophony of attention. The foyer then fell silent and I noticed the characters in the cut-out all had holes where their eyes should be. I picked Moose Joe to gaze through. Plucktown Padre was frozen by the Pennyfull, standing. Full of compromised knees, I thought, 'I've watched marathons. I could outrun a mascot.' They very rarely finish in the top 10. Then I remembered, 'but neither have I.' And so I'd need a new plan. Glass smashed. [glass breaking] Brown liquid splashed all over the ice cream dispenser and dripped to the kiosk floor. Direct hit. I didn't like wasting Coca Cola Classique, but it worked. Padre immediately headed in that direction, and I could see they were flanked by two Lucky Pluckers. I made my escape. I knew I had to stay away from the

gas lighting on the main pathway to not go back underground. I started going through the buildings and crossed queue zones, heading straight through the Ye Olde experience, but all the animatronics were missing. It suddenly clicked – not my knees, but why the objects were placed where they were in the locker. I had CCC by the Pig Drop. By the Splash Zone, that Lucky Plucker bumped into me for no reason. That’s when my watch was taken. It must’ve been! And the vial? The vile truth is that it must’ve been from that machine. But what did it do? And where was my car key? The symbol! That’s what it is! From the crazy golf. The caddy that kept touching me to correct my stance. They stole my escape and, credit where due, improved my short game.

I climbed the fence and into the golf course. It was busy. [crowd noises] Very busy. I don’t know how to make this clearer. The crazy golf course was very popular after dark, which made it more difficult to understand because visibility was lower than representation on the crew of a TV show. As I watched, I realised vision didn’t matter. No one was adhering to rules. Hitting balls randomly with no order to who played when and, crucially, no one was keeping score. 25 aimless souls.

To blend in, I picked up a putter and started scanning for my car key. I was unnoticed. I nailed a hole in one at the 7th, my new stance paying off handsomely. I paused at the 8th, letting someone play through, but they looked back at me. Well, through me. But I recognised them. He was the manager of the Argos in the Ye Olde experience. I spun around to look at the rest of the golfers. It was all the animatronics! But now autonomous. How? Suddenly, something else struck me. They were all Caucasian male, and my age or younger. I went through the day. Every cashier, every ride tech, every animatronic was the same demographic. Unified by the same distanced, soulless stare. Why didn’t I notice before? Because I looked like them? I accepted

them as normal? I wanted to take a photo but pulled out the vial by mistake. That got attention. [gasps] 49 eyes narrowed in on me. [dramatic music] Vial in one hand, putter in the other. They began to shuffle towards me, never breaking eye contact. The one with the eye patch fell over, but it wasn't the time to laugh. It was funny, though. I lifted the vial towards the night, and they all looked to the heavens. I pulled it back to my chest and they shuffled ever closer. There was a screw top to the vial, so I worked it loose and a gas escaped. [gas hisses] It smelt like half a tomato and half an onion on top of a margarine packet. The shufflers froze, tears breached their eyes and I heard it again: 'run!'

It sounded like the voice escaped from the vial. I looked inside. All that remained was a residue that smelt like cinnamon. The shufflers' moods changed. Mood is the wrong word. Uh, their objective, maybe. They were now looking into my eyes and I felt very seen.

'Who are you?'

'We're proud employees.' The manager spoke for them all.

'What was in the vial?'

'The past!'

Okay, well I did not expect that. It's pretty spooky stuff, actually.

'And you... and you want the past?'

'No, our future is here and we're better off now.'

Hm, that didn't feel genuine. 'Why did you want the vial?'

‘We didn’t. This is home. We have everything we need and we are very happy thanks to Billy Biggles.’

The lumberjack who oversees the valley? That’s just promo material, right? The broad shouldered, deep voiced man who [gasps] appears in silhouette? A new voice entered the scene. They definitely wanted the vial. It was the caddy! They had been watching the whole thing from the ride kiosk. They smiled at me and held up my car key.

‘Sup?’

A shuffler reached me, grabbed my arm. Another scratched my neck, drawing blood. Bong [bell chimes]. The bell rang. The shufflers stopped. The caddy smiled at me.

‘I stopped them. I saved you.’

He pointed to a speaker on the kiosk.

‘Is that – is that true? When you’re responsible in the first place?’

Before the caddy could tell me how much I rely on them, Ponguin smashed through them, crashing into the kiosk. [crashes] Her head fell off in the struggle and as the caddy fell back, unconscious, she turned to me and I knew. It was the Lucky Plucker who kept trying to warn me.

‘Let’s run!’

They rummaged in the caddy’s pocket, threw me my car key and we started running. [running] Let me tell you this – their pace was incredible, even in the costume.

‘Why are you helping me?’

'Well, we'd never escape alone!'

'What's your name?'

'Quinn.'

'Wait. You're a woman?'

'Gender is not the issue right now.'

'Well, all the other Lucky Pluckers are male. Everyone who works here. All the animatronics too. So it is an issue.'

'I know. I noticed as soon as I arrived today.'

Unreturnable from Quinn. Also, she's barely broken a sweat. It's such good running. 'Where are the other Lucky Pluckers?'

'In final prep.'

'We need to save them!' We were already at the entrance foyer. I looked back and there were shufflers everywhere.

'The only way we can save them is to get out and tell the truth of what this place is.'

'What is this place, though?'

The Padre stepped into our path. 'Valley of Timber is paradise. Beyond emotion. A chance to be free.'

Moose Joe stepped in, followed by Biggy Biggles. Quinn wasn't scared. She stared them down and screamed. They backed away. Then grabbed a chair and swung it. [whoosh] I thought that bit

was less scary than the scream. She was nowhere near them when she swung the chair. It – it was overkill. They disagreed, though. They backed further away and we ran past them. Quinn used a keycard that she miraculously had on her. That felt too easy, like it wasn't even foreshadowed. [beeping] Like, at no point did anyone suggest that there was a keycard. Even that the park had such a security system. Still, I was grateful for the exit. We climbed into my car. A Citroen C4 Cactus [revvs]. The only thing spiky about it is my clutch control, am I right?

Now Quinn told me that when they realised she wasn't male, they didn't know what to do with her. They thought the machine wouldn't work, that the execs wouldn't accept it.

'But what is the machine?'

'Come on, seriously. You must've figured it out by now.'

Why does Quinn always got to be 20 steps ahead of me? I shook my head.

'It removes souls.'

'Ahh.' I spent the next 10 seconds just popping together all the pieces from the mystery. Yep, it all made sense. And there were almost no loose ends to worry about. What about the guy who kept buying ride photos of other people? That was just a weird guy. Uh huh. I lost control of the car. The wheels started turning and it slowly pulled off to the left, where a hidden gate opened. [gate opens] We came to a halt and the doors opened. Someone leaned in and unbuckled by belt.

'Make your way to exit, please. Ride photo 685, enjoy the memories.'

[Theme park sounds] I staggered to my feet, gathered my things, and looked around. Quinn was gone. What? Did I imagine her? I walked to the ride photos and accessed my memories portfolio. [beeping] Dozens of photos from my day. And it was a bloody good collection, actually. My lid looked fresh. In all of the last 10 photos, I looked absolutely terrified. But there was Quinn, staring at me like I was an idiot.

‘Who’s the person in my photos?’ I asked the cashier. Cashier?

‘That’s Quinn. She’s one of the stooges for Where Snakes Fear to Slide.’

‘Wow, what a ride. How is that possible? It felt so real.’

‘We put our souls into every performance.’

‘Well, that doesn’t answer the tech side that I was interested in. Thank you.’

‘You are courageous. You’re definitely one of the best people to brave the ride since re-opening.’

That felt good. I thought to myself, ‘I thought I’d done a good job.’

‘It’s a shame you’re leaving. It felt like that was the real you out there.’

‘Yeah, that was the real me. I did that.’

‘Why don’t you meet with the execs? Discuss being here long term. Getting a job here. Surely no one else would have you.’

It hurt, but he was right. It would've been a tough few months, and – well, it had been stressful, but that's what life is, right?

'I'll accept that.'

'You'll be looked after here. You'll be valuable for once.'

'Great point.' I scratched my neck, trying to make up my mind. It was wet. The shufflers. They drew blood. That can't be legal.

'Are you okay? I saw you scratch your neck and draw blood as you got off the ride.'

They saw my doubt.

'I thought, "if they're hurting themselves, then that's a troubled person." You're probably stressed. Blood sugar is low?' They reached beneath the counter and pulled out a cold bottle of Coca Cola Classique. I didn't need to be told once, and drank it immediately. Ah.

'Right, give me my photos and a set of keyrings and tote bags and another bottle of the cola, please. I've got a meeting with the execs to prepare for.' I winked. Finally I felt good. Then a guy leaned over.

'I'll take one of those too, please.'

[laughs] 'Classique stuff.' We all laughed. Yeah. Of course, the new normal is going to take some time to get used to, but it's remarkable how quickly you can settle in after a pandemic. So what I'll say is stay alert, control the disease, and do check out the amazing rides and hospitality at www.valleyoftimber.com.

[Spooky music]

[Wind sounds]

[Clapping]

STUART: That was a while, wasn't it?

KATH: Loved that.

ED: It was lovely. Right, a couple of queues from E. How much did that set you back?

STUART: Um, well, actually it's very reasonably priced, Valley of Timber. So it's 29 pounds for access to the park and then for the – for the memories, access is just 70 pounds. Very straightforward and you get everything that you need there. Coca Cola Classique is just 7 or 8 dollars. You have to buy that in dollars.

ED: Got to be in dollars, yeah. American company.

STUART: Yeah.

ED: 29 quid's – yeah.

STUART: That's alright. A family pass, if you want, is, um, 300.

KATH: How many's in your family?

STUART: That's 2 adults, 2 children. Yeah yeah, well that's a tax, isn't it? On – if you're stupid enough to start a family, then you've got to pay your money, haven't you?

ED: Yeah.

STUART: Yeah, you pay less if you're single and you're sporting a sweet sweet v. V there short for vasectomy.

[All laugh]

ED: Um, I noticed that nothing scary actually happened.

STUART: What are you – what are you talking about? The beak.

KATH: Yeah, that was scary.

ED: The beak.

STUART: The beak was moving towards me, caddy gaslit me –

ED: Part of the ride, though.

STUART: Yeah but I didn't know that at the time. It felt real.

ED: Your story is, 'I went on a ride.'

STUART: Yeah. Scary ride. What is life if not but a ride?

ED: It was a scary ride. Kath, you –

KATH: Kath you, yeah.

ED: Kath you. Is that your name? No ghosts.

STUART: No ghosts. Well, there might've been ghosts. I mean, there were souls in vials. I mean, what else do you need? That's a ghost in a way, isn't it?

ED: A scary ghost, and that was part of the ride. In the ride, the vial full of souls was real.

STUART: Within the ride, yeah. Within the constraints of the ride. I don't think that the whole – the ride – it was a ride, definitely. I work for Valley of Timber now. That is a ride and it's not a real – we're not stealing souls, if that's what you're intending to imply.

ED: Yeah, it was. Um, congratulations on your job during a pandemic.

STUART: Thank you, man.

ED: That's huge news.

STUART: That's big, isn't it?

ED: It's tough to get any kind of work around here, so –

STUART: Yeah.

ED: So well done.

STUART: Thank you. It's not paid a huge amount, but you don't do it for that, do you? When you work at a theme park, you do it for the love.

ED: Big time. And it's nice to know that there's more than one theme park. Because the only one I know of – there's Blobby land.

STUART: Yep.

ED: And now this one.

STUART: That's two. Oh yeah.

ED: Yeah.

STUART: You've been to Oakwood?

ED: Furniture land?

STUART: Yeah.

ED: I've never been. I've seen the adverts, but like, it's a pandemic.

STUART: You can go on like the recliners and things like that. And that feels like a theme park.

ED: Great.

STUART: So if you put two recliners really close to each other –

ED: Yeah yeah yeah.

STUART: And then you press one for a speed recline. But you put your legs in front of it, it might then just smash out and break your shins. Or you might just have your shins just far enough back that it's scary, but it doesn't quite connect.

ED: Yeah.

STUART: It's a fun game, actually. So yeah, I recommend that. And the prices there feel like – it feels like someone's taking you for a ride. Do you know what I mean?

[All laugh]

STUART: 399 for a three-piece suite? What is this? Thrilling! Get a photo of this, I'll buy it.

ED: Also a three-piece suite made exclusively out of oak.
Horrible.

STUART: Yeah, very uncomfortable.

ED: Absolute pain to sit on. Did you used to work there or are you – is this your first theme park job?

STUART: No, no. My dad did so um, you know, I'd spend – spend the weekends in there just dashing about.

ED: My dad used to work at Bools, Tools, and Light Fittings in uh, Nutsford.

STUART: Oh, that's a shame you just had to make up a shop there just to join in.

ED: Uh, google it.

KATH: When you say Google, do you mean the guy running around the library?

STUART: Bools, Tools, and what?

[All laugh]

ED: Balls, Tools, and Buttholes in Nutsford services.

STUART: Bools, Tools, and Buttholes. Who's going there –

ED: Bools. Bools, Tools – Bools, Tools, and Light Fittings. The more I say it, the more I don't believe myself about my own past. Bools, Tools, and Light Fittings in Nutsford.

STUART: It can't be true.

ED: It doesn't sound it, does it? I don't believe me.

STUART: No. the spookiest thing about it it is why you're lying about it. Say it one more time, see if it makes more sense.

ED: Yeah, Bools, Tools, and Lights Fittings.

STUART: Bools, Tools –

ED: I've got a dad.

STUART: What?

ED: That bit's true.

STUART: Why are you boasting now?

ED: It's just the only thing I'm moderately certain on.

STUART: What a weird thing to suddenly boast about, just out of nowhere. You're just having a conversation with someone and then halfway through, 'uh, I've got a dad.'

[All laugh]

[Spooky music]

[Wind sounds]

STUART: I'll tell you what. What's the saddest you've ever felt in a job?

KATH: Someone genuinely in Argos, after Christmas, post-Christmas, bringing in a Christmas tree. Just in a big bag. Saying that they bought it from – from us like this and wanting a refund. And me having to argue back that we didn't sell it in a bin bag. I promise we didn't sell it in a bin bag. And then them demanding the manager and the manager going, 'yeah, we didn't sell that in a bin bag. The only way you'll get a refund is if it's broken'. And then they were like, 'well, it broke then.' That was a really sad day.

[All laugh]

STUART: Sometimes you don't – it's not in the handbook, is it? Like at some point you might have to say the phrase, 'we didn't sell it in a bin bag.' You don't know how to prepare for that.

KATH: No, I had no idea. I was like, 'hey man, we did not sell you this in a bin bag.'

STUART: Yeah, I think you did great. You did like – for improv that's really great. Straight off the bat.

KATH: Yeah, thank you.

STUART: You knew how to respond to that.

ED: Because you didn't know. Maybe they were sold in a bin bag. Imagine being that person who's like, 'you did.'

STUART: Yeah.

ED: 'I thought it was weird at the time.'

STUART: And then they get the manager over and you look like an idiot.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: 'That's our bin bag Christmas tree. Yeah, they're all broken this year.'

KATH: 'Yeah, full refund.'

ED: 'Here's a full refund, I'm so sorry. You're fired, Kath.'

STUART: Like a broken biscuit sort of thing. You buy like –

ED: Yeah. [laughs]

STUART: It's just in a bin bag, it's broken. Do what you like with it.

ED: I think, uh, the saddest thing that happened to me at a job was I worked in Waterstones for a Christmas. And um, they just kept on making me re sort of stack and arrange the erotic literature section.

STUART: They kept? They kept making you?

ED: They kept making me.

STUART: Under what –

KATH: Why did you keep doing it wrong?

STUART: Yeah.

ED: Erotic literature people. Very messy.

STUART: How do you mean, messy? What sort of – what are we talking about? What sort of –

ED: Books on the floor, books on top of other books. Not in alphabetical order. Putting books back in the wrong place because they had a little scan of it –

STUART: Weird goo.

ED: Nip home for a wank. Say that again?

STUART: Weird goo appearing randomly.

[All laugh]

ED: Spooky – that sounds spooky. Ectoplasm.

KATH: Do you reckon it's because people have discreetly tried to read something and then panicked and put it back because they think someone has seen them?

ED: Yes.

KATH: Is it sort of – obviously just trying to slyly read the books.

ED: It's a mixture of that, mixture of, um, people getting so aroused by the literature that they just have to rush home to bash one, and the spunk. It's a mixture of those three things.

KATH: Oh god.

STUART: Do you think anyone who was like reading it had developed a situation where there was a protruberance from a different area? And then they spotted someone else walk in and they turned quickly and that – that extra protruberance knocked

over sort of like a comical – a pyramid of books? They're scrambling around trying to fix it and in the end they just scurry out an exit. Just too embarrassed. God, I love erotica.

[All laugh]

KATH: What a sad scene in a Waterstones.

STUART: I think for me, I worked in a cinema. And um... I served someone and I just got a really sad vibe from them. You know when you see someone and you're like, 'oh no, there's something – there's something there.' Some people would be like, 'oh, that's because there's a ghost haunting them.' I was like, 'no, I feel like they're sad and lonely.'

ED: Yeah.

STUART: And I had to serve them. Everything felt sad and morose. And I had to then follow them into the cinema to see whether or not they were there with other people.

KATH: Oh god, my heart.

STUART: Or they were just by themselves.

ED: Oh, when you say 'had to', you don't mean like your supervisor was like, 'Stuart, can you go in and make sure that they're with other people?'

STUART: No, I go to the cinema by myself all the time, so that wouldn't even be a good indicator of whether they were sad. But they had a family. And in a way, maybe that's sadder.

ED: If they're sad with their family, yeah.

STUART: Yeah. Ugh, I don't even know. I thought I'd put that to bed. Solved that case years ago.

ED: No way. Imagine seeing somebody that sad and they go in and they're surrounded – it's for their birthday.

KATH: They're surrounded by people.

ED: The whole cinema's filled with their friends. It would be way worse.

STUART: Okay, can we do a shout out to that person?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah of course, yeah. We'll do it at the end where we've got all the shout outs.

STUART: Yep, cool. Thank you. Yeah yeah.

[Spooky music]

ED: So obviously, there seems to be some sort of pandemic going on, with all of the distancing in your story.

STUART: Yes.

ED: Is there some sort of pandemic vibe?

STUART: Yes, um... there was a disease that was going around Spooktown, I don't know if you remember that.

ED: I'm a bit of a night owl. I don't really bump into people. Um –

STUART: Oh okay, yeah. In daylight hours there was a bit of a disease going around, which um –

ED: Shucks.

STUART: Disappeared when the night arrived.

ED: Which is why – that was going to lead onto my question of – a lot of – I think you call it social distancing. A lot of sort of hand sanitising, a lot of... you were coughing and that seemed like a luxury to you at the time. But then, after a bit everyone just seemed to be fine getting close and touching you and playing mini golf very close. Why is that? Is it the night-time thing?

STUART: Well, partly the night-time thing. Partly they were animatronics. They had no souls and so they couldn't pass disease – I don't know if you know much about disease vectors and all of that, but the disease will latch, uh – will bind with the soul and that's how you get sick.

ED: With the soul, yeah. I did double science at GCSEs, I understand.

STUART: Yeah yeah yeah.

ED: I understand biology.

STUART: Well, it's weird then that you asked me that question. Because I don't want to be the aggravator, but it sounded like you didn't understand how disease spreads.

ED: I wanted to make sure you knew how disease spreads.

STUART: Oh, right. So I didn't realise this podcast was a test.

ED: Well, now you do.

STUART: Thank you very much for letting me know.

ED: You're passing with flying colours, mate.

STUART: Oh, thank you very much.

ED: Thank you very much.

KATH: Talking about these rides. Why don't – the snakes ride. Why don't the snakes go like that?

STUART: Sorry, what was the question?

KATH: I'm not sure.

STUART: Where – why do the snakes fear to slide is what you're saying?

KATH: Yeah.

STUART: Um, well, okay. So when you're at the theme park, you're having – you're going on rides. But the entrance to the park is the entrance to a larger ride where snakes fear to slide. And you don't know that – at the time that you're getting on that ride. And the reason why it's called Where Snakes Fear to Slide is because at the entrance is just, um, like a very thin coating of marmalade.

KATH: Oh.

ED: Oh. That's cleared that up.

STUART: And snakes hate that.

ED: Yeah yeah yeah. We all did double science, mate.

STUART: Did I not mention the marmalade at the time?

ED: No no no.

KATH: I don't think so.

STUART: Oh.

KATH: But that's what that's for, okay.

ED: Okay, well that should sort of –

STUART: So the bits with shredded – like the bits with orange in it.

ED: Yeah, marmalade.

STUART: They don't like it because they think they're mini babies.

KATH: Why are they frightened of babies?

STUART: Well no, they're frightened because they've had a vasectomy and they're like, 'well how's this happened?'

KATH: Oh god, okay. So then they're like, 'Christ, avoid that slide.'

ED: That's what happens to me. Whenever I see a baby, I immediately think, 'I haven't had sex in ages, how's this happened?'

STUART: Yeah yeah yeah. That's what's happening with the snakes as well.

ED: How's this happened? And then they're like, 'can you stop looking at my baby?' 'Oh, it's your baby! Oh god, thank god. A relief'.

STUART: 'Hang on. Who's the other parent.'

[All laugh]

STUART: 'Okay. That's not my name'. And then you walk off.

KATH: Every time you see a baby.

ED: 'Oh god! Oh god, no! Oh it's yours! Oh, thank god! Yeah, no, what a relief. Wait, wait. Oh, you're the husband. That's fine. Thank you so much.'

[Spooky music]

ED: I'd love a massive conflag because I'm – I'm twisted on this. Here's my issue with it. I believe it. I believe you, Stuart.

STUART: Yeah.

ED: But I don't – there's nothing spooky. Nothing spooky happened. There's no ghosts.

STUART: Why are you so obsessed with ghosts?

ED: I like ghosts.

STUART: You like ghosts?

ED: Yeah.

STUART: Well then, fair enough. I should've put a ghost. I'm sorry.

ED: It's not your fault, I didn't tell you.

STUART: Huh. If I could give a note –

ED: Mhm.

KATH: Sure.

STUART: Just let me know.

ED: Yeah.

STUART: When I'm back on for episode 2.

ED: Yeah.

STUART: Um, episode 2 of my – I assume I'm on every episode.

ED: I genuinely hope so.

KATH: Yeah.

STUART: I'll pop a ghost in.

ED: Great.

STUART: I'm not above it. Just because I don't believe in them doesn't mean I can't put it in, right? There's lions in some stories I write.

ED: You don't believe in lions?

STUART: Why are you asking it like that?

ED: You answer my question and I'll answer yours.

STUART: Have you – what, a giant cat that's got a big ruff of hair around its head? Yeah, uh, yeah, sure I believe in it. A cat drawn by a child is real.

[All laugh]

ED: Okay, should we have a conflag?

KATH: Yeah.

STUART: Over by the Coca Cola Classique machine.

KATH: Yeah, yeah okay. Excuse us a minute.

[Birds cawing, coins rattling]

KATH: What are you thinking?

ED: It's just a ride.

KATH: Good one, but yeah.

ED: A good ride. maybe if like – imagine if somebody's like, 'I've got a ghost story. I went to the cinema and I saw the film Poltergeist.' 'Right, what happens?' 'Oh, it was scary.' That's not – that's somebody else's ghost story.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: It's not real.

KATH: He's literally just described the ride, hasn't he? Yeah. So is that plagiarism?

ED: Yeah, for me it's – it's a begrudging but solid, 'are you out of your fucking mind?'

KATH: Yeah. I think that's really fair and really kind of you. I think just – it's a ride. it's a good ride, and he's just described it. He's stood in a carpark and described it to us. No, yeah this can't go into Spooktown lore. Should we go tell him?

ED: Yeah. [footsteps] Stuart, your story's fucking shit. Get out of my sight.

STUART: Ah.

ED: I'm not even the manager. You're fired. No, of course I'm joking. But there was nothing unbelievable about it. You just told us you went on a ride.

STUART: I got a knife, so... am I in Spooktown or not?

ED: It's a nice knife. Is that a real knife?

STUART: Yeah, it's the one from 'Scream'.

KATH: It is a good knife, that.

ED: Why is this – why are you only bringing it out now?

STUART: Uh, I'd forgotten that I'd put it in here. And now I realise I need to threaten you in order to get into Spooktown.

ED: Uh, you can't. You can't threaten us. I mean, you can. You can and you are, but I'm unthreatened. Your story wasn't real. Do you understand what –

STUART: It was real! It was 100% real. It's real and I work at Valley of Timber, so let me – let me go.

ED: I believe – I believe that you work at the Valley of Timber. But you just told us a story of going on a ride. It's not a ghost story. So if I – if I was like, 'oh, you won't believe this. I went to this – mister – I went to Blobby land and I went on the ride and Blobby was there. And I got off the ride and it wasn't Blobby, it was a man in a blue suit.' Which is what Blobby is, I've just remembered.

[All laugh]

KATH: You've just unravelled Blobby land.

STUART: You've already – you've already let me in.

ED: I have already let you in, but I'm letting you out.

KATH: We've let you in to have a – have a chat about what's happened here. But um, we can get rid. We can get you out. We are the, um –

STUART: Have a little nose around.

KATH: Den –

ED: Denizen, yeah.

KATH: Denizen, yeah. Denimon.

STUART: Yeah, you're the denimon.

KATH: Denimon, yes.

STUART: And this is a denouement.

ED: Denouement. You're out.

STUART: Alright. I didn't want to be in it anyway. Go fuck yourselves. See you later, everyone.

ED: I'm genuinely hurt about how unbothered you seemed there. Alright. 'You're out, Stuart.' 'Okay.'

STUART: Okay, see you later.

ED: See you at Bools, Tools, and Lightings.

[All laugh]

[Spooky music]

KATH: That was lovely, that.

ED: That was really nice. Nice to get out of the house as well.

KATH: Yeah, no, it's always nice. So what's next?

ED: Oh, uh, Dwayne the Rock Johnson says one of his weights is haunted and it makes it heavier so we have to go meet him at the Wetherspoons in town so he can tell us about it.

KATH: Oh great, okay.

ED: Could be something, could be nothing.

KATH: Safe to check, isn't it?

ED: Knowing Dwayne, it's probably nothing.

[Spooky music]

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