

Welcome to Spooktown – Alex Cubbs

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: Woah! Real ghosts now in Ryanair right now!

[Music stops, wind noises]

KATH HUGHES: Yeah, he's taking his time.

ED: He is taking his time. I resent being made to wait.

KATH: That's fair. I think you're allowed to resent that.

ED: Hm. Have you had any nightmares this week, Kath?

KATH: Yeah, I ordered a pizza but this woman kept sort of chasing me around, calling me fat. So I had to hide it from her, uh, and then she just cut my hair off. And she didn't tell me why.

ED: Is this in your sleep or is this real?

KATH: I was asleep.

ED: Okay, this one sounded real. This one sounded real. I thought you'd been really calm about it.

KATH: How about you, any nightmares?

ED: Uh, yeah I think my next-door neighbour has a pet pig. It's been a lot of horrible noises coming from theirs.

KATH: Oh god, really?

ED: Yeah yeah yeah. I think my main one is um... I had a big bonfire over the weekend and it's just still smoking.

KATH: Oh.

ED: And it was maybe four days ago.

KATH: Oh, I mean you should be dealing with that, not here probably.

ED: No, I think I need this break. Have you seen Chernobyl on HBO?

KATH: Yes.

ED: Yeah, I feel like the guy in that who's like, 'everything's fine!'

KATH: The villain.

ED: Well I think the villain's radiation.

KATH: Ah, fair.

[Horse walking]

ED: Here he comes! A horse and carriage.

KATH: Seems to be.

ED: Oh, clippity clop, where the fuck are you?

[Spooky music]

ED: Hello Alex! Welcome to Spooktown.

ALEX CUBBS: Thank you, I'm excited to be here.

ED: Yeah, thank you for inviting us to Darren's apartment. Good old Darren.

ALEX: Yeah, well don't thank me too much. You have no idea what's about to go down.

ED: Ooh!

KATH: Okay.

ED: Spicy. Real spicy.

ALEX: Maybe too spicy.

[All laugh]

ED: Um, so a couple of cues. In brackets: questions, closed brackets for you before we hear your story. First one, I guess: how was your journey here?

ALEX: It was, um, treacherous. Many a storm, a lot of wet weather, a lot of evils around this whole area.

ED: God, yeah.

ALEX: The entire town is just, uh, just completely encapsulates evil and bad vibes. It's weird, it feels otherworldly.

ED: It does, doesn't it?

ALEX: Also I came in a horse and carriage, which was really weird.

ED: God, yeah that too. That took ages.

ALEX: They don't have Uber here, just horses.

[All laugh]

ED: Yeah, it's really – it's a really bad signal. You have to send a letter to the horse and carriage man.

ALEX: Exactly, it's like pigeons flying everywhere with messages.

ED: I realised we should've planned it, I should've come and picked you up in my car, but –

ALEX: That would've been a lot easier.

ED: Yeah, sorry.

ALEX: We should've done that actually.

KATH: Sorry.

ED: I'm genuinely sorry from both of us.

ALEX: It's alright, it's done now.

ED: Um... but at least you got to ride in a horse and carriage, I guess.

ALEX: That's true. That is true.

KATH: Yeah.

ALEX: Yeah, it was weird. It smelt like old pine.

ED: [laughs] So does my car, though. So my car also smells of pine, so –

ALEX: Oh okay. Well you're just making it worse. Just rubbing it in now.

ED: Uh, second question from your old pal, Ed. That's me.

ALEX: Yes.

ED: Um, how many ghosts have you seen this week?

ALEX: About four, I'd say.

ED: Yes.

ALEX: Which is more than average. Normally it's only about – normally only two, maybe. Yeah, about four. The worst one was probably this Victorian child who was like begging me to save its life. It was drowning.

KATH: Oh god.

ED: Fuck!

ALEX: Yeah, it was transparent so I couldn't pull it out.

KATH: Oh but you did try. You had a go.

ALEX: I nabbed this ruff off of it though.

[All laugh]

ALEX: I was like, 'fuck you but I'll have that.'

ED: Is that like a – a trend of yours? That you steal from ghosts?

ALEX: Steal from – yeah, just ghost minors, normally.

ED: Exactly [laughs].

ALEX: I like taking ruffs from ghosts.

ED: Nice, four, so you've doubled your ghost sightings this week?

ALEX: Yeah.

ED: Maybe because you've come to Spooktown. I don't know, I don't want to put words in your mouth.

ALEX: Yeah, it's because I've spent most of the time in uh, in Darren's apartment.

ED: Oh shit.

ALEX: In Spooktown.

ED: Oh shit, okay.

ALEX: Yeah.

[Spooky music]

ED: Kath, do you have any questions before I ask my final question?

KATH: Oh yeah, go on then. Yeah, alright. So werewolf –

ALEX: Oh, yeah.

KATH: Dracula.

ALEX: Mhm.

KATH: The mummy. Shag, marry, kill.

ALEX: Definitely shagging Dracula, but Dracula from that weird 90s version of Dracula with what's his face, that model in it. Have you seen that?

ED: Is it the Keanu Reeves –

ALEX: Winona Ryder's in it.

ED: Yeah, Keanu Reeves! That's his name, yeah.

KATH: Oh yeah.

ALEX: I want to be with that Dracula, that weirdo. He licks the uh... the razor with blood on it at one point. [Licking sounds] And I love that.

ED: [laughs] Is that Gary Oldman?

ALEX: Maybe, I don't know. He's got that long –

KATH: I think it is! I think it is, yeah.

ALEX: Right, he'd be a nightmare in the bedroom, I'd be into that.

[All laugh]

ALEX: The mummy. Are we talking the mummy from The Mummy? Or just a generic mummy?

KATH: I think generic mummy. Uh –

ALEX: Generic mummy I'd just avoid. Boring, isn't it?

KATH: But your options are kill or marry now.

ALEX: Oh right, I'd kill the mummy. Probably the easiest. And then I'd marry the werewolf because who the fuck wouldn't, you know?

ED: Yeah.

ALEX: Hairy, get involved in that every night. Also, great protection. Like a really serious guard dog.

ED: Yeah, true. But only on a full moon.

ALEX: Yeah, well full moon you've got to just lock him away. He'll be fine. Give him some Xanax or something, he'll be alright.

ED: [laughs] And I guess the rest of the month you're married to a normal – just a normal person.

ALEX: Exactly, yeah. But then every full moon I just like watch Corrie and he's downstairs freaking out.

ED: Sounds like a pretty normal relationship, yeah.

ALEX: Exactly.

ED: Really good – really good choices. Really good choices.

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

ED: What's the uh... what's the scariest thing that's ever happened to you?

ALEX: Ah, well apparently I used to see ghosts a lot as a child [laughs]. Apparently.

KATH: [laughs] What?

ALEX: Yeah. Yeah, like really weird shit. Like the dog died, um, and then I came home from school and um, I was walking around the garden with my dad and I was like, 'oh, can we go play with Charlie?' Like pointing over there, pointing over there to his grave and I didn't know. So I might've possibly been seeing this dead dog.

ED: Oh!

ALEX: Weird. Um... other stories... I went to my uh, dad's dad's house. And his wife, so my dad's mum, had died. And I was like,

'oh, who's that lady in the window? Who's that lady in the window?' And then I saw a picture of her and I was like, 'that's the lady!'

ED: Oh!

ALEX: Bit of a freak.

KATH: That is creepy!

ALEX: I guess I am married to a werewolf, so you know.

[All laugh]

ALEX: Weirdness is all over the place.

ED: That's uh... that's genuinely creepy.

ALEX: Yeah it's weird. You didn't expect that, did you? [laughs]

ED: No.

KATH: No.

ED: No, I loved it. Were you like, 'I don't really believe that happened but that's what my parents tell me'? Or are you like –

ALEX: I fully believe in ghosts, 100%.

ED: Nice.

ALEX: It really freaks me out. That's the only thing I really believe in. Ghosts and aliens. I watched this series on Netflix, now I fully

believe in aliens. 100%. This man said he saw one and I believe him.

[All laugh]

ALEX: It was very convincing.

KATH: You should watch 'Ancient Aliens'. I think you'd love it.

ALEX: Oh I've seen that advertised and I've been meaning to.

ED: It's – it's amazing because they're not legally allowed to say it happened. So everything is posed as a question.

ALEX: Right.

ED: But you 100% know what they're saying. Like, 'was it something normal or was it aliens?'

ALEX: 'Was there a massive alien here?'

ED: Yes, literally.

ALEX: Maybe.

ED: 30 minutes of that, and then another 30 minutes of that.

ALEX: 'Is this him?'

[All laugh]

ED: 'We don't know! But we do know.' My one like creepy from childhood thing is that, uh, we used to go to Little Moreton Hall, which is a National Trust property.

ALEX: Right, they're always freaky.

ED: Yeah, pretty scary straight away. I used to run around there and like know where I was going. And then there was a window that was too short for me to look out of, but I was like, 'oh, we used to watch the horses come over the drawbridge through that window.'

KATH: Fuck's sake, Ed. That's really weird.

ED: And my parents looked out and that's where the drawbridge was. And I was like, 'oh, we used to hide around here.' And I ran around the corner and there was a little hole that you could hide in.

ALEX: Oh! Fucking hell, that's worse than mine.

KATH: That's so weird.

ALEX: You could explain mine away. That's so weird!

ED: Does your story have a title?

ALEX: It's got pig vibes in it.

ED: Oh nice, okay.

ALEX: Yeah, lots of like pig imagery. So maybe like call it 'Pig Flesh Sunday' or something like that.

ED: Fucking yes. 'Pig Flesh Sunday'.

KATH: 'Pig Flesh Sunday.' Love that.

ED: Pig. Flesh. Sunday. I'm going to get that tattooed.

ALEX: Yes, across your back.

ED: [laughs] 'Pig Flesh Sunday.'

ALEX: [laughs] Fucking hell.

ED: Alex.

ALEX: Yes?

ED: Alex, could you please tell us Pig Flesh Sunday?

ALEX: [chanting] Pig flesh, pig flesh, pig flesh.

[Spooky music]

ALEX: Darren always hated his appearance. He thought he looked like a swan if swans had poor bone structure and a huge Adam's apple. 'Swans are ugly when they're young, though', Darren thought. 'And maybe one day I'll grow up to be beautiful.' [Whistling] But Darren grew up and he was still hideous [screams] [sighs]. His face became less and less conventionally perfect, and more and more like Miranda from that old annoying TV show, 'Miranda'. Everyday he would stare at his reflection and attempt to smile, before applying some kind of bullshit beauty cream, which probably just made his skin even more like a vintage leather

clutch bag. Time passed and Darren grew even more insecure [clock ticking].

On June the 6th around 6 am, he watched his grandma die [alarm rings] [gasping]. After refusing to give up smoking, the tar eventually clogged up her windpipe and filled her lungs with a frothy red cloud. An angry cloud, like one filled with cancer as opposed to rain.

As he sat there, the sun rising, um, and the world carrying on as if it couldn't give less of a shit. He stared at his dead grandma's face and thought about how ugly she was ['yuck']. Full of wrinkles and sadness. A map of lines on her skin spelling out just how pointless her life was, being ugly and insignificant, just like Darren.

When he finally reached his car, escaping the smell of stale smoke and death [engine turns on], he thought [*bing*], 'a few days ago, Hailey from work told me about this filter you get with the new update. Said it took her from fat, boring Hailey to Kylie Jenner – after the lip fillers, obviously.' And she wasn't wrong. This filter made Darren look hot as fuck, like Kylie Jenner after the facial fillers and nose reconstruction [sawing sound], obviously. And that's when Darren decided. He reckoned the only way he would defeat his pig ugly face was surgery to bring that filter to life.

So 6 months later, 6 grand later, cheek implants and lip filler requested, appointment booked, contract signed [pen writing sound], arrived at the clinic, Darren's under [*beep*]. Darren feels a thick breeze hitting his face. He's numb, but in a good kind of way. Everything around him is pink, like a fever dream, and he feels strong. Suddenly, a squeak [pig squeals]. Startled, Darren jolts his head to the ground beside him, discovering a piglet covered in

plasma. Thick, fluorescent yellow, like a highlighter snot. He bends down to get a closer look, but as he does, a soft hand grasps his.

[American accent] 'Oh my god, I love pigs!' A voice says. Darren looks up and realises it's Kylie Jenner admiring the sticky piglet that he had just found. 'It's so cute, oh my god!' She adds. Darren just smiled. 'I'm going to touch it.' The woman's hand goes to the pig, quickly colliding with the surface of its skin. 'It's so soft and cute, I just want to squish it.' She pauses, thinks, and calmly plunges her entire hand deep into the pig's flesh [squish] [pig squeals]. Squealing and howling echoes through the void. It's unbearable.

Darren blocks his ears and begins to scream, begging the woman to stop, but she doesn't. Instead, she twists her hand deeper into the pig's body, blood violently oozing from every orifice. Its eyes bulging from its skull and still blood-curling screams reverberating from its throat. Emotionless, she concentrates, determined. Whilst Darren pathetically pleads. Finally she tears her hand away from the now spasming carcass. Thick, dark blood clinging to her hands as she retreats. And then all of a sudden a violent light carves a slit through her face. [Alien sound] [screaming] Quickly, everything turns into a blur of mint green and grey. Darren's in hospital. Unable to move all that much, but able to see. The anaesthetic now wearing off.

'He's coming round,' a voice mutters. His face is numb, and not in the good kind of way. 'Welcome back, Sleeping Ugly!' Another voice says. Darren looks to his right. It's Hailey from work. 'Bet you can't wait to see your new face. If I got cheek implants, I'd look like a hamster. But I wouldn't mind those lips.' [kissing sound]

Later that night, a suffocating darkness hugs the night sky as Darren lies restlessly in bed. Exhausted, but wide awake. A glimmer of moonlight stains the floor by the window enough to see silhouettes in the room. He thinks about his surgery and his new life. The process of feeling sexy isn't quite what he'd imagined. He's bruised and his face aches and stings and itches and [pig squeals] a muffled but high-pitched noise bleeds from somewhere in the room.

Darren sits up, looks around. He sees nothing, but hears it again [pig squeals]. This time feeling its vibrations, its screams, its screeches, like it's right there but trapped. It sounds like it's behind him, but it's not. Like it's above him, but it's not. Quickly, Darren moves to the bathroom, switching on all the lights but the noise laments. 'I'm fucking mental,' he says, before a tingle erupts inside his cheek, accompanied with a violent ache under the skin [gasps]. Sharp clusters of pain spread over his pores, a sensation like spiderlings scuttling, attempting to break free from his stained wound dressing [screams].

Darren deludes himself into a desperate self-comfort. Powerless and stunned. He was always good at delusion, after all. His face, however, starts to move. It pulsates and throbs [throbbing]. His eyes widen and fill with black. His mouth gapes as he confronts his reflection, his features suffocating with gauze. And on the right cheek, a squirming distortion writhing like a wasp got caught under his skin.

The man frantically rips his bandages over his face [ripping] only to reveal the contorting parasite bulging from his rearranged cartilage [throbbing]. Darren screams and cries as his face begins to tear [screaming], the stitches stretching as his wounds peel open and is viciously penetrated from inside his skull [cracking]. In

a state of hysteria, Darren prods his thick finger into the bloody opening, the smell of flesh and butcher shop filling up his nostrils in a warm, muggy fog. He searches inside his face before a deafening shriek rings from his flesh. And with it, a myriad of serrated teeth clamp down on his fingertip [roaring] [screaming] so hard that Darren immediately pulls away, tugging at his skin, which now secretes a congealed black plasma.

He runs from the room, wailing in a raged frenzy [screaming], cackling and drooling from shock [laughing], determined to go to the kitchen. Rummaging through a drawer before pulling out a kitchen knife [searching through drawer].

Fuelled by demented panic, his knuckles whiten as he tightly grips the knife, willing himself to walk back to the mirror [breathes heavily]. As he stares into his ghostly reflection, he raises the tip of the knife to his open wound. [thunder] And with that, a demented foetus lunges forward, squealing and howling in a disturbed agony [pig squeals]. Darren's eyes bulge from his skull as a deep, crazed chuckle leaves his chest [laughs] and he feels the cold metal of the knife ram his exposed skin in and out, in and out. The squeal rattles through his brain, and all he can see in the mirror is red [hitting knife]. His hand takes control and repeats the motion, hacking away until bloody flaps hang off his skull.

6 weeks later [time travelling music]. Darren hasn't been to work for 6 weeks, funnily enough. He never went to his grandma's funeral and he hasn't answered any of his messages. His flat is silent. Suddenly the stillness is broken as a heavy thud [door breaks], as a man in a grey t-shirt and neck tattoos breaks through the door.

'Thanks, Dave,' a voice says. It's Hailey. She enters the apartment, reaching the sofa before the smell hit ['ew']. The smell of butcher shop, of dead pig flesh. She searches the flat, discovering the bathroom and discovering Darren [gasps].

As she stood there in the doorway, the sun rising and the world carrying on as if it couldn't give less of a shit, she stared at her dead friend's face, all hacked at and decaying, and thought about how ugly he was. Full of insecurity and sadness. A coagulated minced heap of face meat, like a lump of modern art symbolising just how pointless his life was. Being ugly and insignificant. Just being Darren. The end!

[Spooky music]

[Wind sounds]

ALEX: So that happened, yeah.

KATH: That happened here?

ALEX: That happened here, and this is his bedroom. Uh, yeah, this is some – some black cardboard he'd put up for some reason.

KATH: Oh god.

ALEX: Yeah.

ED: It's – is that why it like stinks of old blood in here as well?

ALEX: Exactly, that is completely why it smells of old pig and butcher shop, which no one likes.

ED: No.

ALEX: Disgusting. Muggy. Rank.

KATH: Hm.

ED: That was, um, so intense.

[All laugh]

ED: That was like so intense.

ALEX: [sings] Welcome to my world! I think there's a deeper message to it, though. In that when people get facial fillers and implants, a lot of that matter is made up from animals. And they're like bones and they're like – it's like makeup as well. In the makeup industry, they'll just boil down animals to make into this thing –

ED: Yeah.

ALEX: So Darren had a haunted implant from a pig that had been murdered.

ED: I was going to ask you that: was his face haunted by a pig?

ALEX: It was. It was haunted by a pig foetus.

ED: Brilliant. Genuinely, fucking love that.

ALEX: Thank you so much! Yeah so the clinic is in town. It's in Spooktown. It's called Spooktown Clinic.

KATH: Right.

ALEX: Weirdly.

ED: I sort of... I'm starting off 100% believing this, obviously.

ALEX: Ooh, it did happen so that'll be why.

ED: Yeah. Uh, a couple of questions about it. So his face is haunted by a pig foetus because that's – that's sort of what goes on in that industry, is –

ALEX: The implant was made out of, yeah.

ED: The implant was made out of it. So does that – is this a unique thing to Darren? Is he the first person whose face is haunted by a pig foetus? Or is it –

ALEX: Well legend tells us that there are a few others, um, but they weren't found like Darren was found.

ED: Right.

ALEX: Apparently some people turned into pigs. I don't know. I'm not making it up, I've just heard about it.

ED: No yeah, of course. Of course.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Of course, you're just telling –

ALEX: Around the town, you know. There are a lot of weirdos here.

ED: That's why there are a lot of pigs as well.

KATH: Yeah, a lot of pigs knocking about.

ALEX: Running around, yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Because when you were telling it, I was like, 'I'm not sensing any ghosts here.' But then I was like, 'unless his face is haunted by a pig's foetus.'

ALEX: I think that is exactly what happened. That was the report of his death: 'haunted by a pig foetus.'

[Ed laughs]

ALEX: It said that on the form. It's all different here in Spooktown. Yeah.

ED: Okay um... I also – I noticed – worked out your um... not puzzle. Was it a puzzle? His grandma, who died of cancer –

ALEX: Yeah.

ED: Died during the 6th at 6 am, is that right?

KATH: At 6.

ED: Yes. Ooh, correct me if I'm wrong, but that's 666.

ALEX: It is indeed. It's a lot of 6s going on. Again, just how it happened.

KATH: 6s and pigs.

ED: 666 is three pigs' tails.

ALEX: Exactly. Oh my god, yes.

[All laugh]

ALEX: Yes. Exactly what I meant. Sign of the devil.

[Spooky organ music]

[Time travelling music]

[Wind sounds]

KATH: When he got the pig implant -

ALEX: Mhm.

KATH: I've got to ask: why – what was Kylie Jenner doing there?

ALEX: So he was, um, under anaesthetic. He was – it was – he was completely gone, like having his face operated on and that's what he was seeing in his, um, dreamlike state.

KATH: So Kylie Jenner didn't put the pig implant in?

ALEX: She didn't, but she was definitely on his mind. She may have been the uh... the encouragement to get the pig implant.

KATH: Gotcha.

ALEX: The pigplant. The pigplant.

[Ed laughs]

KATH: Yes. Yeah, okay. Okay. Yeah, I just had to clarify that.

ALEX: He was looking at pictures of her online and like wants to look like her.

KATH: Right. Right, yeah. Because she's part of the industry of, 'everyone should look a certain way.'

ALEX: Exactly.

KATH: And Darren doesn't feel like he looks like that.

ED: It's weird that she wasn't there because she – she comes to Spooktown a lot. She's sort of always in Spooktown.

ALEX: Oh shit.

ED: Which I guess maybe... yeah yeah yeah –

ALEX: She just hangs around.

KATH: Yeah.

ALEX: One of the devil women.

ED: Mainly around the clinic, um.

ALEX: Right

ED: So maybe that's – maybe that's got something to do with why he –

ALEX: Yeah, maybe she had been to that clinic. I don't know, you'd have to check the records.

[All laugh]

KATH: I'm not sure Spooktown's keeping good records to be honest.

ALEX: No, probably not.

ED: Was Darren ugly?

ALEX: I mean personally I don't think he was that unattractive. He didn't look great when his face was just all like minced on the floor.

ED: Sure.

ALEX: Before that, he uh... no, he was fine. Bit skinny, had a bit of a wonky nose, dark eyes. But I think it made him him. But he didn't seem to like it.

KATH: There's nothing wrong with that, is there?

ALEX: No, but he spent too much time on social media and hanging out with idiots like Hailey.

ED: Oh god yeah, Hailey. What a fucking cunt! Sorry.

ALEX: Yeah. [laughs] Yeah, she's uh... Gemma Collins-esque.

ED: I really got the vibe when she broke down – very sad that she's the only person that noticed that he was missing.

KATH: Well Dave broke down the door.

ALEX: Dave did break down the door, but I think he's just one of Hailey's mates that she may have shagged a few times.

KATH: Oh, okay.

ED: Yeah, I got that vibe. I got that vibe real hard. And also like the idea that – I don't think she's breaking in to see whether she's okay, she's breaking in to be like, 'I'll be the first one to see.'

ALEX: Exactly.

ED: Yeah, I thought so.

ALEX: And she'd go online and be like, 'oh, my mate Darren died today. Awful, tragic death.'

ED: Yeah. Yeah.

ALEX: 'DM me if you want to know about it.'

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah.

ED: 'DM me if you want to know about it.'

[All laugh]

ALEX: 'DM for pictures.' That kind of vibe. The shit that goes down in Spooktown, honestly.

ED: Yeah, really hate – really hate Hailey. Where did they work again?

ALEX: Spooktown, uh, Spooktown NatWest.

ED: [laughs] Yeah, she gives off banker vibes for sure.

KATH: Yeah.

ALEX: Yeah.

KATH: Has the bathroom been cleaned up? Can we go into the bathroom to have a – have a quick look and see?

ALEX: I mean you can definitely go to the bathroom. Nothing gets cleared up in Spooktown, you should know that.

[All laugh]

ED: Come on, Kath. Yeah, let's go, um –

ALEX: Have a waltz into the bathroom. It's not – yeah, it's in the bathroom. He's in the bathroom, yeah.

ED: He's in the bathroom, yeah.

ALEX: He was in the kitchen at one point, but –

KATH: Oh right, yeah.

ED: He's been everywhere.

KATH: God.

ALEX: Yeah, he's been everywhere, running around.

KATH: It's his house, isn't it?

ALEX: With his flappy face.

ED: [laughs] Oh, so he cut his face up and then he popped into the kitchen? And then he popped back into the bathroom?

KATH: What about – there were 6 weeks in between, remember?

ALEX: Exactly, who knows what that – that pig may have completely embodied him. Exorcist kind of vibe.

KATH: I don't know what he was doing in that time.

ED: Oh, so he tried to cut – he tried to cut the pig's foetus out of his face?

ALEX: Exactly.

ED: And then the pig's foetus took over his body.

ALEX: Possibly. I don't know, I wasn't there.

ED: No of course, of course.

KATH: Right, yeah. Because the pig bit his finger, and I'm wondering whether it sort of pulled him in –

ALEX: Could've done.

KATH: And what if he just became his own head, which then merged into a pig?

ALEX: Exactly, like a really freaky pig man.

KATH: Yeah, the pig inside his face. Talking his – basically ate himself.

ALEX: Yeah.

KATH: And became the pig.

ALEX: Exactly, like a sort of Spiderman got bitten and then got powers kind of thing.

KATH: Christ, imagine if that had happened to Peter Parker.

ALEX: Would've been great that, wouldn't it? I might've actually watched it then.

ED: If the pig's mouth ate the finger, and the ate the rest of him –

KATH: Yeah.

ED: It would just end up with him inside out.

ALEX: Yeah.

KATH: Basically, yeah. So is there a pig with Darren's face? No, Darren's dead.

ALEX: Just walking around in Spooktown.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Darren's dead. Darren's dead.

ALEX: Could just be a – a pig with Darren's thoughts, I don't know. Or just a normal pig, and you're like, 'oh, a pig!' And then it's like, 'fuck you!' and gets you.

KATH: I didn't get angry vibes from Darren. Just got sad vibes.

ED: Very sad vibes.

ALEX: Yeah, bit of a loner. Saddo.

KATH: [laughs] Saddo. Saddo.

ALEX: Spent a lot of time in his – in his apartment alone.

KATH: Hm. So why are you staying in his apartment?

ALEX: Because I'm a freak, you know? I get off on it.

ED: Oh, okay.

ALEX: I'm the Spooktown weirdo. Just go around into different stores and be like, 'has there been a murder here?' And then I don't leave the house.

[All laugh]

ED: 'Can I stay in their flat? Ah, thank you so much.'

ALEX: Yeah. I've been living in a Waterstones down the road, Spooktown Waterstones, because like three kids got killed there. And they were Victorian so I was all over it.

[All laugh]

ALEX: But yeah, now I'm residing here until I get bored of the idea that he's just had his face minced up.

ED: Can I ask why it's called 'Pig Flesh Sunday'?

KATH: Mhm. I wanted to get into that.

ALEX: Um, it all took place on a Sunday. Uh, I think his grandma died on a Sunday.

ED: Sure.

ALEX: Sundays are, as we all know, the root of evil. No one likes Sundays, they're weird. The sun is always at that weird like half-masty, and it's very pressing. Um, makes me think of fields and like women in long dresses, like in Victorian times. Awful. Um, and —

KATH: 'Fields, ugh.'

ALEX: Yeah, exactly. Of like corn and barley, and you think like god, ugh, not good times. Stained glass, that kind of – that's a Sunday for me.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: That's a typical Sunday for –

ALEX: Exactly. It is. And people eat uh, obviously they've got roasts on a Sunday. Like pig, they eat pig flesh on a Sunday. Maybe they're going to be haunted. Um... and obviously pig flesh because Darren was pig ugly, as we say.

ED: Yeah.

ALEX: But also he had a pig caught inside of his cheek.

ED: That's fucking brutal.

KATH: God. I really enjoyed the bit of the story where you said pig flesh, because I got that thing of like, 'he's said a bit of the title!'

ALEX: Yeah, oh yeah.

ED: 'He said the title in the show, oh my god!'

ALEX: Oh yeah exactly, yeah yeah yeah. Exactly. [laughs]

ED: I get the vibes that you're a vegan.

ALEX: Yeah.

[All laugh]

ALEX: Yeah, and you should all be too! Yeah, no, there was definitely no politically charged message behind my story. Uh, definitely nothing like that. Yeah.

ED: I also – I have a plant-based diet.

ALEX: Right.

ED: And I don't – I never intended to have fillers. But –

ALEX: Yes.

ED: But when I get to let's say 60, and I start to lose my smooth skin, I'm not even going to fucking look at it after that.

ALEX: Yeah, no there's no point. Not now.

ED: I immediately got transported back here and I was like, 'do I want a pig's foetus in my head?'

ALEX: Exactly. Or it could be like chicken foetus. Who knows?

ED: Any foetus.

ALEX: What happens when I start like shitting chickens? It'd be awful.

ED: I'll tell you right now, I don't have a single foetus in my head.

KATH: No.

ED: I mean you could take that to the bank. The NatWest bank in Spooktown.

ALEX: That should be the name of this episode.

ED: 'I don't want a foetus in my head?'

ALEX: Yeah.

[All laugh]

ED: That's the name of my band. 'I don't want a foetus in my head.'

ALEX: I like that, it's catchy.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: It is, isn't it? It rolls off the – it rolls off the tongue.

ALEX: Radio fodder.

[Spooky music]

KATH: The state of the apartment would – and the smell of it – would imply it did happen.

ALEX: Exactly.

ED: Well all of it – the bathroom here.

ALEX: And Darren, I mean, he's lying there. Don't ignore that.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I'll say it. I'll say it: if I was his friend, I'd have buried him by now.

ALEX: No yeah, but Hailey's not really a friend, is she?

KATH: Hailey, god.

ALEX: Hm, yeah.

KATH: She could've got Dave to help. He sounds like a strong man.

ALEX: I think he just – he just fucked off after he broke down the door. That's Dave's kind of – that's his vibe, you know?

ED: 'See you on Monday!'

ALEX: Yeah, exactly. 'I'll smash in a garage', yeah.

ED: So the – the surgeon that puts the uh, pig foetuses into people's faces.

ALEX: Yeah.

ED: Or, I assume, any sort of – I don't really know much about plastic surgery or cosmetic surgery – um, pig surgery.

KATH: Pig surgery.

ED: I think that's the Latin for it, it's pig surgery.

ALEX: Yeah. [laughs] Something like that.

ED: I don't know much about it, but is the surgeon – is it intentional? Is the surgeon –

ALEX: I mean it could be. The surgeon's called Dr. Watson.

[All laugh]

ALEX: He hates it. He hates it when you refer to Sherlock. He's like, 'it's not funny, it happens all the time.' But yeah, Dr. Watson... I've never actually spoken to him myself. I've only seen his Instagram. We sent a couple messages like, 'oh, do you want free lip fillers?' Because you know I've got a bit of a rep around Spooktown. He's like, 'maybe you could advertise them online.' I'm like, 'look mate, I know what happened to Darren, it's not happening to me.'

ED: Oh fuck.

ALEX: He's never said whether he does it deliberately or not.

ED: So you called him out?

ALEX: I did. No reply, just left me on read. So you know, you've got to wonder.

ED: Right, right.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: We've got the measure of the man.

ALEX: The local Spooky Press are uh, they're all over it. But there's no actual hard proof.

KATH: No proof.

ALEX: Yeah. That happens in the dead of night, you see? It's hard to track down pig foetuses, they're a nightmare.

ED: [laughs] I genuinely – I wouldn't know where to start.

ALEX: Exactly. Where'd you go?

ED: Well a pig's womb, but I wouldn't know how to get there from here.

ALEX: Maybe... yeah. And then in an implant, and then in Darren's face. Yeah, it's very difficult.

ED: You'd change your name.

KATH: Yeah, you would.

ALEX: Yeah, I know you would.

ED: You'd change it.

ALEX: And your face. Why Darren?

[All laugh]

ALEX: Oh, are you talking about Dr. Watson? Sorry, it's just the name Darren – I don't know. Awful. It really represents the situation.

ED: And on top of everything he's a Darren, ugh.

ALEX: Yeah. Of course it couldn't have been cool like Xavier or something like that. Lutrid, I don't know. Yeah, you would change your name. But I guess it's hard to change surnames, especially in Spooktown. Their admin's all over the place.

ED: Yeah, yeah. Yeah I guess. But if you haven't got a sense of humour about it, just fucking – just change it. Of course everyone's going to be like, 'oh!'

ALEX: Exactly, he's so rigid.

ED: Yeah, what a prick. God, he's such a heathen, isn't he?

ALEX: I'm like, 'solved any mysteries today?' He's like, 'fuck off, honestly.' He doesn't find it funny. He doesn't find it funny.

ED: That leads me to believe – that makes me think more that he's doing this on purpose.

ALEX: Maybe.

KATH: Because he's a square?

ALEX: Yeah, he's just weird.

ED: He's a fucking nerd, yeah.

ALEX: Weird in all kinds of ways.

KATH: Are you pals with Darren?

ED: Oh yeah!

ALEX: So I've known Darren a bit. I worked with him a few times. I sold him a rusty bike once.

[All laugh]

ALEX: Um, I – we're not – I wouldn't say we're mates. Like Facebook friends maybe. I know of Hailey, went to school with her. She's a freak. Um, but yeah. I just kind of know Darren. But like I said, I'm more of the Spooktown weirdo.

ED: Yeah.

ALEX: You know, I go around living in people's places, enjoying the fact that people died there. Stealing ruffs from children as we've already spoken about.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I feel really bad that we haven't said sorry for your loss then. I didn't realise you were friends. Or you know, close.

ALEX: It's fine. Frankly I don't care. Name like Darren? I'm not interested. I'm glad there's one less in the world, you know?

ED: Sorry Alex, can you get your foot off his corpse?

ALEX: Oh shit, sorry.

ED: It just feels mean to be saying that stuff when you're standing on him.

ALEX: I'm honestly vlogging this whole thing. They're going to –

[Ed laughs]

ALEX: It's so funny. I've got Darren all inbetween my toes, you know.

ED: They'll go crazy for that stuff on TikTok.

ALEX: Exactly. I guess I do have a part to play. I can't avoid that.

KATH: I'd – I – yeah, I think you definitely do. For everything you just said.

ALEX: Yeah, I know.

ED: Sorry if this sounds a bit mean, considering, but you're sounding like the villain of the piece.

KATH: Hm.

ALEX: I would put it more on Hailey.

KATH: You would though.

ALEX: Yeah, I would. But you know, I just enjoy the idea of it. I don't normally take too much of a part into it. He put a pig implant in there. He did it to himself, slash Dr. Watson did it. I don't know, I don't make the rules. But –

ED: I would argue that you did do it to him. [laughs]

ALEX: Do you think? Maybe a little bit, but honestly there's hundreds of us online. We're all doing it.

[All laugh]

KATH: Oh okay, my mistake, that makes it okay.

ALEX: Yeah yeah, don't worry about it. It's happening now, you know, it's um – it's cool. So we lose a few Darrens along the way, but whatever.

ED: It's all for the greater good.

ALEX: Exactly.

KATH: Is the main thing here that you just hate anyone called Darren? Is that –

ALEX: That definitely, again, has a part to play. But it's just Darren's vibes, you know? The Rubik's cube, the glasses, the sweater. Shut up mate, honestly. And he's like, 'aw, I'm so ugly!' For god's sake, you know? But yeah, the Spooktown youth are not a friendly bunch. I'm just going to let you know now. The future is bleak, we're all arseholes.

ED: Yes, it's fucking horrible. You cyber-bullied a pig into someone's head.

ALEX: Yeah, you know. The shit that goes on, you couldn't make it up, honestly.

ED: Yeah, this is um... this started off as quite a sad story, and now it's um...

ALEX: Yeah, you thought I was all innocent. Just nabbing ruffs from Victorians. And now, pig implants in people's faces.

ED: Yeah. I'm a bit scared, I hope you don't cyber-bully a chicken into my whatever, biceps?

ALEX: I'm up for all sorts, mate, honestly. Don't turn your back on me. That's all I'm saying.

ED: Sorry, sorry. I'll turn around. I was just having a look at this bathroom.

ALEX: Yeah, it's pretty grim in here, isn't it?

KATH: Yeah.

ALEX: Why'd he choose those tiles? I mean red, honestly?

ED: There's part of me that I'm sort of like, I don't understand why you bullied this boy into putting a pig into his face. But another part of me just looking at the way he's decorated his home, I'm like, 'I sort of get it.'

ALEX: Yeah, you see that – that evil comes out in you, doesn't it?

ED: Yeah.

ALEX: I think you just accept it. Because it's like, there's one Darren, there's millions of us.

ED: He does sort of deserve it with these tiles.

ALEX: Exactly. Oh god, you know?

ED: Get a nice teal, get a nice –

ALEX: A blue, anything.

KATH: A blue, yeah. Red doesn't belong in a bathroom, does it?

ED: It doesn't. You'd think he's fucking washing himself in a Ferrari. I hate red.

ALEX: I know, exactly.

ED: H&M red as well. Horrible.

ALEX: Not even a mauve or a burgundy or a crimson.

KATH: No.

ALEX: He could've at least done a crimson.

ED: Yes. Now you're talking my language.

ALEX: Yeah, there you go.

ED: Fucking cherry red, ugh.

ALEX: Nah, it's not for anyone.

ED: I'm glad he's – I'm glad he's dead.

ALEX: Thank you, I'm glad we're on the same page of this.

ED: I'm glad he's dead.

ALEX: Good.

ED: I'm not happy with the way it happened.

ALEX: No, it could've been done better.

ED: Not happy that he cut a pig out of his head.

KATH: I'm –

ED: Sorry Kath.

KATH: Devil's advocate: I don't think he deserved to die for the tiles –

ALEX: Why've you always got to ruin it?

KATH: In the bathroom!

ALEX: It was more than the tiles.

ED: Yeah, I think the tiles are the –

ALEX: It was the whole thing.

ED: The tiles are the straw that broke the pig's back.

KATH: The tiles and his lack of self-esteem got him – made him –

ALEX: Yeah, came across as sappy. Can't have that attitude in Spooktown.

[Spooky music]

ED: Um, I think we're going to have a quick discussion about whether or not we believe this and whether or not it will go into Spooktown lore. So could you just bear with us for –

ALEX: Cool.

ED: It won't take long.

ALEX: Oh my god, absolutely. That's so fine.

ED: Um, Kath, do you want to come and stand by the corpse's feet with me?

KATH: Yeah, I'll shuffle around.

ED: Great, what do you think?

KATH: Um, I believe it. But –

ED: Well, we're stood on the corpse.

KATH: I believe, yeah. I mean there's – there's, yeah. The proof's here. Um...

ED: I wonder if it happened the way he – Alex has, you know, killed this guy. And then been like, 'ooh!'

KATH: That's what I'm wondering.

ED: You know, 'his tiles were shit, he deserved to die!'

KATH: I wouldn't have thought that until we started to really get into it and I realised that Alex was actually – yeah, as you say, the villain of the piece.

ED: Yeah, yeah.

KATH: Yeah, there was Hailey, but of course he's going to paint Hailey like that.

ED: And I'll be honest with you: it didn't take a lot for us to get that out of him.

KATH: No.

ED: In fact it feels like he wanted to be caught.

KATH: Yeah. So I wonder whether there was no ghost element, no pig foetus element.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: It's just that Alex has come in here and gone, 'right, let's just – let's have a slash about in the bathroom.'

ED: Cut up the lad's face, yeah.

KATH: Leave him –

ED: Should I just ask him?

KATH: Yeah, okay.

ED: Okay. Hello Alex.

ALEX: Yeah. Were you talking about me in the other room? I'm really getting those vibes from you.

ED: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ALEX: Oh, okay.

ED: Quick – quick question. [laughs]

ALEX: No, tell me. It's not funny. It's not funny.

ED: I'm nervous, that's why I'm laughing.

ALEX: That's alright.

ED: Um... did you – did you do this?

ALEX: No.

ED: Oh, okay.

ALEX: Why would I lie, you know? Yeah.

ED: Yeah yeah. Yeah, totally. Right, just give me another 20 seconds.

ALEX: No worries.

ED: Hey Kath.

KATH: Hey.

ED: He said he didn't do it.

KATH: He didn't do it, okay. And you believed him?

ED: Well yeah, why would he lie?

KATH: I don't know, why does anyone lie?

ED: Wow. That's sorted then, I believe him. Why would anyone lie? It's in, right?

KATH: [sighs] I think so, I – I don't – I can't –

ED: Oh, see in my head I'm like 100%. So what's your – oh yeah, of course, because he might have done it, yeah.

KATH: He might've done it and that removes the ghost element.

ED: He said that he didn't.

KATH: Yeah, okay. I guess we can only go on words. And the dead man between us.

ED: Yeah, if he says that he stole a ghost child's ruff, why would he then be shy about murder?

KATH: Yeah, that's true. We did – he implied he tried to help. The ghost was screaming for help but he was like, 'oh, I tried to help.' But I just don't think he did. I think he just got the ruff. I think there was no element of help, now that we've really dug in.

ED: That does sound more like him.

[Both laugh]

ED: This is actually more difficult than I thought. Fuck it, I think it's in.

KATH: Yeah. [laughs]

ED: It's in or not, great.

KATH: Great, done. Uh... okay, I think it's in because it – something's happened.

ED: Nice. Nice. That's alright, yeah. Should we go back and tell him?

KATH: Yeah, okay.

ED: Hello Alex.

ALEX: Hi. You were in there ages.

ED: Yeah it was fucking yonks, sorry about that. That was my fault.

ALEX: Were you sniffing the body, being a weirdo?

ED: We had a little peek, but –

ALEX: We've all done it.

ED: Um... we tentatively believe you.

ALEX: Wow, thank you.

ED: Yeah. Welcome to Spooktown, your story.

ALEX: Oh thank you so much. I feel like I'm finally a proper resident here.

ED: Yeah.

ALEX: Not just running around and slapping people, which I normally do. Now I'm a little bit involved.

ED: You can keep doing it.

ALEX: Yeah I – well I will. But yeah, now I'll be like, 'I'm part of the political system in Spooktown.'

ED: Yeah, you can run around and slap, and you can vote in your regional elections.

ALEX: Yeah, gives you a community as well.

KATH: Yeah, great.

ALEX: Thank you, I appreciate that.

ED: No, thank you. Thank you so much for uh, inviting us to Darren's house.

KATH: Yeah.

ALEX: You're welcome.

ED: Um, you're – you're more than welcome to leave the house now. I think Kath and I are probably going to bury the body.

ALEX: You do that.

KATH: Yeah I think that's fair, yeah.

ALEX: That's fine. I'll move on, find some other weird situation.

ED: Okay great.

KATH: Well you mentioned the Waterstones, so maybe –

ALEX: I'll go back there, see what they've got going on. I heard some weird shit happened in the Pizza Hut, so I might –

KATH: Well, thank you for showing us around and uh, telling us what happened here.

ALEX: Thank you, you're welcome.

[Spooky music]

ED: That was nice.

KATH: Yeah. I mean awful, but nice.

ED: Ugh, horrific. It was nice, it was definitely nice.

KATH: Yeah, yeah. Always nice.

ED: Yeah. You up to anything nice now?

KATH: Uh, no no. I'm going to go think about what I've just heard, I think.

ED: Mm, yeah, have a sit down.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Come out and lie on a hard floor.

KATH: How about you?

ED: Um, go home, lie on a hard floor, and then I've just got a WhatsApp from Cherie Blair saying her husband's hands are haunted and I need to go over and vlog it, so... get my running shoes on.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: 5k there, vlog, 5k back.

KATH: Oh good. Impressive.

ED: Thank you, thanks.

KATH: Well good luck with that.

ED: Do you want to come with?

KATH: Um, I'm not much of a runner, but thank you.

ED: That's alright.

[Spooky music]

This has been a Little Wander production. Music from Rhodri Viney. Local artwork from Suze Hughes. Voiced 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.