

Welcome To Spooktown – Helena Garcia

[Spooky music]

[Birds chirping and footsteps]

ED EASTON: It's lovely and peaceful here, isn't it?

KATH HUGHES: It is nice.

ED: I feel like I'm shouting even though I'm – I'm not. Because it's so quiet.

KATH: It is quiet.

ED: You can really hear the leaves crunching under your feet, can't you?

KATH: Mhm. Is that some cake? Yeah, she said she'd leave some cake out, didn't she?

ED: She said she'd leave cake crumbs.

KATH: Over there. That's really nice.

ED: Is it?

KATH: Mhm. Really nice.

ED: What's it taste like?

KATH: Hm... it's like, um, a Black Forest gateau.

ED: Fucking hell. Jesus. I thought it would just be like sponge cake.

KATH: No, that's a full-on cake, that. Can't you see? There's literally – there's piles of cake. It's not – it's full cakes leading the way.

ED: Oh, so she was – she was like – 'crumbs' was a nickname for us. 'I'll leave you out some cake, crumbs.'

KATH: Yeah, no. There's literally – that's a Black Forest gateau, that looks like a – a cheesecake.

ED: Oh god, don't – leaving a cheesecake out in a forest.

KATH: It's cold, it'll be fine. I'm going to have a go on it anyway.

ED: She told us about this about a week ago, so these could've been here for a week.

KATH: Oh, I love – that's – that's lovely.

ED: Is it?

KATH: Hm. Hm. Lovely, that.

ED: Classic New York – New York cheesecake?

KATH: Hm.

ED: Hm.

KATH: Hm. Very nice.

ED: What's that next one? What's that next cake?

KATH: Uh, lemon meringue.

ED: Lemon meringue. Fucking hell, she's incredible.

KATH: Yeah. Hm.

ED: Oh.

KATH: Really tangy. Nice.

ED: That's what you want from a lemon.

KATH: Hm.

ED: Cake.

KATH: And a – and a lemon, yeah.

ED: What's the – what's the next one?

KATH: Um, a –

ED: I believe in you.

KATH: Chocolate ganache.

ED: Oh! Wow.

KATH: Is that just icing? It looks like just icing smeared on –

ED: I think it's just icing and pastry, yeah.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah. It's lovely. There's leaves stuck in it, but it's lovely.

ED: Yeah. Is that – do you think that's part of it?

KATH: I don't know.

ED: I've never watched – I've never watched 'Bake Off.'

KATH: No. I don't know. Nice. Good flavour. Very rich. So this is going to be a long journey to her house.

ED: And so what's the next cake there?

KATH: Um, that looks like an upside-down pineapple cake.

ED: Woah. Woah.

KATH: She's done well to have that keep, you know, its structure.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: In the – in the woods.

ED: Yeah. I think that goes for all of them to be honest.

KATH: Oh, it's lovely. It's a nice one again.

ED: [laughs] That's – that is the first one that is a cake. So chocolate ganache, not a cake. Gateau – gateau – no, gateau's just French for cake. Gateau's French for cake. You're fine. You're fine, Kath. Keep going.

KATH: I'm just describing what I'm seeing and eating it. So if I'm getting the names wrong, shoot me.

ED: Can you not yell at me in a peaceful forest, please?

KATH: I'm – I'm sorry, but I'm – I'm –

ED: Put the crowbar down. Put the crowbar down.

KATH: I – no. No. No. Never tell me to put my crowbar down.

ED: Okay. Okay.

KATH: Oh, we're nearly there. I've – I'm really full of cake.

ED: No one asked you to eat all – the whole cake. You could – you could've left them to be honest. Or you could've just taken a slice.

KATH: I said it – I said they were nice.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Despite not knowing the names of them, I said they were nice.

ED: Bloody hell. Here we are. That – what a building.

KATH: Goodness me. I mean –

ED: That – it's quite painful to look at.

KATH: It's a lot, isn't it?

ED: It's a lot. It's a lot.

KATH: There's a lot going on.

ED: Should we – should we knock the door?

KATH: Yeah, I reckon. If we can find the door.

ED: I think we can. We've just got to follow this trail of cakes to the door.

KATH: Ah, I can't. I can't.

ED: What's that? What's that cake? What is that cake?

KATH: Um, that one?

ED: Yeah yeah yeah.

KATH: Is a...

ED: Look around. Look –

KATH: Uh, a – a showstopper.

ED: [laughs] It certainly is. It certainly is. Oh, it's nice this, isn't it? It's a nice cottage.

KATH: Yeah, lovely.

ED: Do you want to knock on or do you want me to knock on?

KATH: Uh, go on. You knock on. Treat yourself.

ED: Okay. Do an elaborate knock.

KATH: Okay.

[Knocking]

[Door creaking]

HELENA GARCIA: Oh, hello.

ED: Oh.

KATH: Hey.

ED: Hello!

KATH: Hello.

ED: Hello hello hello, Helena.

HELENA: Come on in. How was your journey here?

ED: It wasn't too bad, thank you very much. Yeah.

HELENA: Good.

KATH: It was nice. Nice stroll.

HELENA: Did you enjoy the woods?

ED: Loved the woods.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: We've never been to the woods before, have we, Kath?

KATH: No, no. We haven't.

HELENA: You've never been to the woods before?

ED: We've never been to the woods.

HELENA: It's the most spiritual place.

ED: They really are, yeah. And it's weird. It's one of those things where, you know, we've – we've lived here for god knows how long. Possibly all of our lives? I can't remember.

KATH: Yeah, I can't remember either.

ED: Uh, and it's just – it's that thing where, 'oh, the woods.' We know of them but we've never been.

KATH: Hm.

HELENA: Yeah, well that's what I like about it. That no one actually dares to enter. Um, so I'd rather be in the company of animals.

KATH: Nice.

ED: Nice.

KATH: Yeah, that is nice.

ED: Nice. Yeah.

HELENA: And you know it's like an open shop, the woods. You can just pick up your ingredients, throw them in the cauldron, and, uh, cook for yourself and your creatures every single day.

ED: Absolutely love that.

KATH: That is lovely.

ED: I love that. I got a foraging book for Christmas.

HELENA: Did you really? I have so many.

ED: I genuinely did. Really?

HELENA: I – I am a keen forager since I was a child.

ED: Oh, nice.

KATH: Amazing.

HELENA: Yeah, yeah. I – specifically mushrooms are my favourite thing to pick. Which they, you know, people are so terrified of because of storybooks.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: And legends and so on. And yes of course there's plenty that can kill you, but you know what? What's life without risk?

KATH: That's true. That's true. Also you don't want them to give you the shits, is the other thing. I think you don't want to –

HELENA: Well, yeah. That's the better option of the two. You want to – you want to die or you just want to be on the toilet for 24 hours.

[All laugh]

KATH: Or have a delicious soup.

ED: The risk reward of – of mushrooms, though, is like either you could die or you could have quite a nice mushroom soup. The risk reward to me doesn't seem –

HELENA: 'Quite a nice?' Oh, an absolutely delicious – I mean there's no comparison between the mushrooms that are cultivated and the ones that you pick in the wild. My husband is actually vegan and hates mushrooms. And to be vegan and to not be able to have the protein from mushrooms, you really are scraping the barrel.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: So I was on a journey to, um, you know, pick Chanterelles and Porcini, all of these which are widely available in these Isles. And, um, eventually I – I converted him. He just hates like button mushrooms that go soggy if you –

ED: Yeah yeah yeah.

HELENA: I can understand that.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, that's fair that. Yeah.

ED: I – I'm a vegan as well and I – I used to hate – when I ate meat I hated mushrooms. Genuinely. It was like my least favourite food.

HELENA: Oh my god.

ED: And now I eat mushrooms every day. It's because if I – if I cook them the way I want them, which is like –

HELENA: Yeah yeah yeah.

ED: Get rid of all of the moisture so it's not that horrible spongy. So kind of like nice and crispen them.

HELENA: Yeah, I know. Yeah, wild mushrooms are a completely different thing.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: I just cannot believe how many vegans I know that hate mushrooms. It's like your – it's essential for your diet.

ED: Yeah, that's wild. That's genuinely wild. Um –

HELENA: Well ironically that is wild.

[All laugh]

KATH: Yes.

ED: I, uh, I picked some, um, just like normal field mushrooms last year.

HELENA: Yes.

ED: And Googled the ever-loving shit out of it to make sure that it wasn't one of the killer ones. And even then I still like –

HELENA: You took the hallucinogenic ones didn't you?

ED: I was so like – I was so worried about them, I'd say a week after this I was like, 'I could die from that.' And they were just normal field mushrooms. So I couldn't even imagine, you know –

HELENA: I mean, no. I mean check for like yellow stains. That's a common, um, mistake. The ones that you – if you scrub the base or the cap and it turns yellow, they're called Yellow Stainers. And they will give you the shits. But they won't kill you.

ED: Oh, is it just the shits?

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: Oh, that's par for the course for me. I'll eat that.

HELENA: Well, yeah. No, I mean there are some field-looking mushrooms that can kill you. So you do have to be very careful.

ED: Oh.

HELENA: I've – just start with the ones that don't have any poisonous look-alikes. Like the Oyster mushroom.

ED: Oh. I didn't know that.

HELENA: So you won't – yeah. You definitely won't get any look-alikes that are poisonous. So that's a good start.

KATH: That's a good tip.

ED: Oyster mushrooms are great as well.

HELENA: Yeah yeah. That's what you need to do: with mushrooms, start with the ones that you 100% know there's nothing that looks like it that could kill you. I mean it might give you a tummy ache, but so what? You've got to start somewhere.

KATH: You're absolutely right.

ED: Already this journey into the woods is paying dividends. So thank you very much for inviting us. Um –

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: You learn as soon as – you learn from the woods as soon as you step in.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

[Spooky music]

ED: So when – when did you move to Spooktown?

HELENA: I moved when I was 21 I think.

KATH: Okay.

HELENA: I came to learn about wild plants and how to use them in potions and how to use them in cooking. And Spooktown has such an – an array of, uh, natural possibilities that I built my own cottage and here I stayed. Away from, um, away from society.

KATH: Wow.

ED: You built this cottage yourself? That's amazing.

HELENA: Yeah, absolutely.

ED: That's so good.

HELENA: Every stone was placed with my bare hands.

ED: Three stories as well. That's – that's quite an architectural feat.

HELENA: Yeah, I know. Isn't it gorgeous? It's got its own chimney. And, um –

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: I cut wood every morning, you know, given by the spirits of the woods. I don't cut it off the tree, they just fall.

ED: Nice.

HELENA: Yeah yeah yeah.

ED: If you cut your own wood, you warm yourself twice.

HELENA: Absolutely.

ED: I learned that when I had to cut my own wood. I don't – I don't like it. I'm not a fan of the phrase.

[All laugh]

HELENA: Nice.

KATH: That's a very – it's a very impressive build. I think it's, uh –

HELENA: Oh thank you.

KATH: And it's – it's in keeping with the woods as well. It's not like a new build in the middle of, um...

HELENA: Absolutely.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: It's built from the materials that these woods have given us.

KATH: Yeah, no you've done very well.

ED: I disagree, Kath. I think it's weird that it's sort of like a Brutalist, Eastern bloc, concrete – concrete structure.

HELENA: How dare you? How dare you?

ED: I think it's very strange. Very not in keeping. Looks like a nuclear power plant.

HELENA: Are you trying to make me turn you into a frog or something?

[All laugh]

ED: No, I do love it. I think it's – I think it's stunning. It should be on one of those TV shows about, um, houses –

HELENA: Weird spaces.

ED: Yeah. Well yeah, yeah.

KATH: 'Weird Spaces', that's the one, yeah.

ED: I love – genuinely one of my favourite shows.

HELENA: Yeah, it's brilliant.

ED: Just two people walking around somebody's house going, 'ugh, that's weird, isn't it?' I love – I love that.

HELENA: Yeah, but look inside.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: My toilet comes down from underneath. Wow.

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

HELENA: Well I've seen no ghosts this week.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: Because it's so freaking cold, they've all decided to move to the underworld and join Hades.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: This is, you know, it's unbearably cold at the moment.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: So they've all disappeared, which is quite boring.

ED: Yeah, yeah.

KATH: Yeah, I suppose it is.

ED: No, I understand what you mean. I – I had a couple of times where you go, 'oh, I've seen loads of ghosts today.' But it's just your own breath in the cold.

HELENA: Oh yeah, I know that – that's easily done.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: That's an easy confusion.

ED: 'Oh!' Every time, 'oh!'

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: And then you – because you go, 'oh!'

HELENA: 'There he is!'

ED: It's another one. 'Oh! Oh!' Like that. And so you just constantly – every time you yell –

HELENA: Yeah, even trying that out, it's just not worked out this way. There's been none but I have heard rumours that they've just gone to hell due to the climate.

ED: Yeah. Yeah. They're too, um –

KATH: I mean it makes sense. It does make sense. It is chilly.

ED: They do migrate. They're a migrating species.

HELENA: Of course, yeah yeah yeah. They migrate with the seasons.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah.

ED: In summertime, ugh, you can't move for ghosts. But in the winter –

HELENA: Yeah, they all – they're all, you know, lying down on the coast.

[All laugh]

HELENA: Straw hats.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Clicking their fingers at waiters.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Trying to get those Estrellas. 'Dos – dos cervezas por favor.'
'Just go – go, leave.' Um, do ghosts hibernate?

HELENA: Ah, they – well obviously they don't quite hibernate as they go away for months – for all the winter months. They just simply bugger off when it's something like the – after, you know, three weeks of not seeing the sun, they're like, 'screw this, I'm off to hell.'

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: Yeah, of course.

KATH: Sort of like a – is it like a holiday share sort of thing? So they just sort of nip down to hell when it's the –

HELENA: You know I don't even know how this works. I think, uh, Hades is just happy to have some spirits for – even if it's for a limited time, you know? Not as many people are selling their soul to the devil anymore. They, uh, they just go to – to heaven for the, uh, for the climate and hell for the company.

[All laugh]

ED: That – wow, I'll get that tattooed.

HELENA: That – that’s not my quote. That’s Mark Twain. I can’t claim it. I can’t claim it.

ED: Okay. I thought it was – I thought it was amazing.

KATH: ‘Woah, that was off the cuff. Amazing.’

HELENA: Yeah yeah.

ED: That’s the – that’s the smartest thing I’ve ever heard in my life.

HELENA: You’ve never heard that quote?

KATH: No.

ED: No.

HELENA: Yeah, it’s Mark Twain. He’s brilliant. He’s got the best quotes.

ED: Yeah.

[Spooky music]

ED: What is the scariest thing that’s ever happened to you?

HELENA: Oh god. Do you know? I remember – do you remember the film ‘The Ring’ when it first came out?

KATH: Mhm.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: That these like young teenagers or whoever it was, watched this film –

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: And then they receive a phone call saying that you're going to die in three days.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: And then the woman goes out of the well through the TV screen. So I watched the – I am a bit of a chicken when it comes to scary movies, um, and I always – I always really want to watch them and then I regret it because I can't even go to the toilet on my own. I have to bring someone with me. And that is genuinely true. And, um, I watched that – so I must've been early 20s. I watched that with my boyfriend at the time. And we watched it, there was nobody else in the house. It stopped and suddenly the phone rang right as it finished.

ED: Ugh.

HELENA: And we answered it and there was nobody there.

KATH: Oh no.

HELENA: I was – I screamed out of the house. I actually walked out of the house. What had happened is that we were watching it on DVD, we finished watching it, we went upstairs, and the film started playing itself again. You know like it does? I mean –

KATH: Yeah. Yeah, oh no.

ED: Oh.

HELENA: Are you old enough to know of DVDs?

KATH: Yeah. Oh yeah, oh yeah.

HELENA: So obviously when we answered the phone it was just like a dial tone. And that – that was absolutely terrifying.

KATH: That's horrific.

ED: That's amazing.

HELENA: It's just every time I watch a bloody scary movie something happens and I crap myself almost literally. Uh –

KATH: And you flee into the street.

HELENA: Yeah, and genuinely opened the door and walked out.

ED: That's so funny.

KATH: Wow.

ED: That's so funny to just flee the house.

HELENA: I was fully expecting that creepy girl to climb out of the TV screen. I genuinely did.

KATH: Oh man. That's so – that's such an unfortunate incident to have if you're nervous of horror films as well.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Like that doesn't happen to everyone who watched 'The Ring.' I promise.

HELENA: Well I think that's – that is how it happens, isn't it? You're terrified and then any little thing that can happen that you would normally logically think is a coincidence –

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: You absolutely lose your logic.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: And just totally crap yourself.

ED: Flee – flee into the street.

HELENA: Flee the house. I walked out. I walked out. 'Fuck this, I'm out. I'm leaving my boyfriend behind with the TV.'

KATH: Yeah, save yourself.

ED: 'He rented it, it's his fault.'

HELENA: Absolutely. Yeah yeah. It was his film, it was.

ED: Okay.

KATH: I like how you thought you'd be safer in the street. Like you – you've just watched the film. You know she travels. She travels through the telly. She can get through the front door. She –

HELENA: Yeah yeah, but through the – I know. I was just going – I was running away from the television. Something I should do more often.

[All laugh]

HELENA: Yeah, watching 'The Exorcist' was quite scary as well. But I was quite young.

ED: Ugh. That sounds formative. Yeah, that sounds like that –

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: You can't watch that when you're a kid.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: Yeah, I know. I mean I was probably – I'm saying quite young, I was probably 19, you know? But still.

ED: Oh.

KATH: See I'm thinking like seven years old, pop 'The Exorcist' on.

HELENA: Yeah, no. Then I would've been traumatised.

ED: Ah, yeah, I don't think – I think 19 is – you can't say that's young to watch –

HELENA: Hey hey hey, age is relative. 19 is very young to me now.

KATH: True. True.

ED: Fair. Fair.

KATH: This is true.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: You know I'm – I'm 112. 19 is – were my good years.

[All laugh]

ED: Yes. I watched – I watched the 'Resident Evil' film at my friend's sister's house with him.

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: And, uh, and at a really scary bit that we were – we were dog sitting. And the two dogs just started barking really loudly. And I was like – it's like you say, as soon as anything different happens, you're like, 'oh god, what's that?' I turned around –

HELENA: You lose it, yeah.

ED: And my friend was advancing towards me with a knife, um –

HELENA: What?

ED: Yeah, and he'd – he'd done it as a joke but I did not – I did not find that funny at all.

HELENA: Oh, no, I don't appreciate that.

KATH: Was that Will?

ED: No, no it wasn't. It was my friend Ben from back home. This is years ago.

HELENA: Pets are the – pets are the –

ED: We were like 14.

HELENA: Yeah, they get – pets stare at space and you're like, 'what are you seeing? What are you seeing? Tell me.'

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, 'what – what's in the corner,' yeah.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: And they just – yeah, they just stare and you're like, 'oh my god, he's seeing something that I can't see.' Um –

ED: Yeah. There's nothing scarier than a dog stopping what it's doing and looking out of a door.

HELENA: Oh yeah. Mine does that all the time. I've got a wolf dog. I've got a – a rescue wolf dog.

KATH: Oh wow.

HELENA: Um, I don't know what he – he normally – I've chucked him out of the room. But he does it all the time. He just stares.

And he actually doesn't really bark because there's quite a lot of, um, he can bark but he doesn't do it often. But there's so much wolf content in him that he's more likely to howl than to bark. Which makes it even more spooky. I love it though.

ED: Yeah. It's – it's good when nothing comes of it.

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: Or when – yeah.

HELENA: Well, well nothing that we know comes of it. Who knows?

ED: Very true.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Very true. In the summer months.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: Chock a block.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: They're everywhere. Everywhere!

ED: Uh, Kath, do you have a question?

KATH: Yes I do. So Pennywise the clown from 'It' –

HELENA: Yes.

KATH: Freddy Kreuger, the janitor from 'Nightmare on Elm Street.'

HELENA: Yeah yeah yeah.

KATH: Or Michael Myers from 'The Love Guru.' The actor. Shag, marry, kill.

HELENA: Uh, shag, marry, kill. Uh, I'll shag the clown. Why not? He might be quite funny.

[All laugh]

HELENA: You know I'm really into makeup. The guy is obviously quite creative.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah.

HELENA: Um –

KATH: Oh so you could sort of share tips and sort of –

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: I've got to say, as – as somebody who works in comedy, hearing, 'I'll shag the clown, why not?' is music to my ears.

[All laugh]

HELENA: Yeah, that doesn't happen often, does it, Ed?

ED: No.

HELENA: Aw, bless you. You know, humour is, uh, the number one quality. Just keep at it.

ED: Okay.

HELENA: I promise it works out in the end. So I will marry the love guru.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: Of course. Of course I'll marry the love guru. And –

KATH: But it is – it is Michael Myers, the actor.

ED: Ah, yeah.

HELENA: Yes, I know. He's cute.

KATH: I don't know if that changes things.

HELENA: I don't have high standards.

KATH: Oh no –

HELENA: Have you seen my husband?

[All laugh]

HELENA: And obviously I'll avoid Freddy Kreuger. I'm sorry, I was a teenager once those – when those films came out. And I could not go to –

ED: Right.

HELENA: Again, following my own advice of, 'don't watch horror movies,' I watched them all and then suffered for weeks on end, not wanting to go to sleep.

ED: Um, and that's – I think that's an absolutely corking shout, is to shag the clown – tick.

HELENA: Yeah.

KATH: For a laugh, yeah.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: Absolutely.

ED: Marry the love guru. Great shout.

KATH: Yeah. It does make sense, yeah.

HELENA: Of course.

ED: Michael – Michael Myers. Because also, another clown, Michael Myers.

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: Funny guy.

HELENA: And he's quite cute.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: I mean he's not the worst I've seen.

KATH: No, no. I think he's – he's a good looking fellow.

ED: 'He's not – he's not the worst I've seen.' Speaking of the worst I've seen, Freddy Kreuger. Kill him.

HELENA: Yeah yeah. Get rid of that one.

KATH: No, that's really – good answer again. Four for four. Four for four.

HELENA: Sure, sure.

ED: Uh, so we believe you have a – a poem to read us? Is that true?

HELENA: I do. I've got a little story.

KATH: Mhm.

ED: Great.

HELENA: Written from the eyes of my lovely two year old.

ED: Oh, lovely.

HELENA: Do you want me to read it now?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I think so. Yes please. Yeah. We'll get comfortable in this – in this nice cottage.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: Yes? Let me –

ED: In this nice Brutalist architecture cottage. Sit on these –

HELENA: Let me get my little spell book and open it on the right page. And there it is. It's called, 'My Mummy is a Witch.'

[Spooky music]

HELENA: My mummy is a witch. [cackling]

She wears stripy socks

With black pointy boots that she keeps in a box. [mysterious sounds]

At night in her bedroom, she rolls up her hair.

She pins it with bat clips that fly through the air.

Her perfume is orange with a pumpkin spice smell.

She keeps all her earrings in a little white shell.

My mummy is a witch.

In a cauldron she cooks. [bubbling] With well found ingredients
That you read in spell books.

She travels by broomstick and flies through the night. [cackling]

Sometimes when I ask her, I can jump on the flight.

When we get back home,
In the bath I must go.

She drops in a pumpkin, [bubbling]
And the bubbles just grow.
She sings to me then, 'a sparkly pumpkin keeps witches clean
So they can play on Halloween.'
She tucks me in bed and reads me a story
Of ghosts, ghouls, and goblins in all of their glory.
'Goodnight, my witchling.' [cackling]

[Spooky music]

HELENA: There you go.

KATH: A two year old wrote this? That's excellent.

ED: That is lovely.

HELENA: Well I – I helped her a little. But in essence, it is her idea.

[All laugh]

ED: The sentiment comes from her heart, the words come from
your hand. Yeah, okay.

HELENA: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. She's got a bit of an obsession
with letting people know that her mum is a bloody witch. So listen
up, I'm going to make it rhyme so you actually pay attention.

ED: It's, uh, I love it.

KATH: Really nice.

HELENA: Aw, good.

KATH: Nice poem.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: It's sweet. Sweet, isn't it?

KATH: Yeah. It is.

ED: And is it called a stanza when it's the four lines? Is that a stanza?

HELENA: Oh my god.

KATH: I don't know.

HELENA: I do not – I cannot remember. You know we were taught that at school? I genuinely can't remember. Is that what it is?

ED: Maybe not.

KATH: No idea.

[Spooky music]

ED: So every – every stanza, I wrote down – I wrote down what I thought – who I thought it was talking about.

HELENA: Okay.

ED: Um, so I'll go – I'll go, uh, 'goth, goth, goth forager, witch goth, witch, good mum.'

HELENA: You guessed so much goth out of it.

ED: I think so, yeah. I think, um –

HELENA: What do you – you know I'm confused about the word goth. What do you think a goth means? What is being a goth?

ED: Uh –

HELENA: Because I think everyone has got their different interpretation of what being a goth is.

ED: I agree.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Uh, I think broad strokes –

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: Listens to, uh, you know, Zeal & Ardor, uh, good sort of heavy metal. Some like banging tunes –

HELENA: Right, so you're going through the music route.

ED: But also stripy socks, black pointy boots. That sounds pretty goth to me.

HELENA: Yeah, I guess. Yeah but I think goths can wear pink and yellow. To me a goth is someone who simply sees beauty where others see darkness. So can see beauty in death.

ED: That's great.

KATH: That is so lovely.

ED: That's – that's got to be Mark Twain.

HELENA: No no, that's definitely me. Fuck off, 'Mark Twain'.

KATH: Was that all you?

HELENA: Don't take all the good ones.

[All laugh]

HELENA: But you know other goths might absolutely disagree and always dress in black and so on. But I consider myself a goth. I don't always dress in black. I love black but I dress in all the colours and just simply like – I see a dead bird and I see something beautiful. Some people would see something really sad.

ED: But sadness can be beautiful.

HELENA: Yes. Sadness is beautiful.

ED: Mark Twain, 2021.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Uh, what's the difference between a witch and a forager?

HELENA: Uh, well you can be a forager and not a witch, or – but if you are a witch, you are definitely a forager.

ED: Okay. So all witches are foragers but not all foragers are witches.

HELENA: Absolutely.

KATH: Got you.

ED: Right.

HELENA: Absolutely.

ED: Okay. Yeah.

HELENA: Yeah.

KATH: Oh, so if I forage am I technically a witch? No, I'm not.

HELENA: No, not necessarily. Not at all. Not at all. But if you are a witch, you must have knowledge of the, uh, plants around you that can be used for potions or simply for food.

KATH: Got you.

ED: Nice.

KATH: Got you.

ED: Nice. Um, is it scrumping? What's the difference between foraging and scrumping?

HELENA: I have no idea what scrumping means. What's scrumping? I have never heard that. Have you just made that up?

ED: I might – I might have done. Scrumping.

HELENA: Which book did you get at Christmas? This book is rubbish.

[All laugh]

ED: It's a book I wrote myself and then gave myself for Christmas.

HELENA: Yeah, well it's becoming increasingly suspicious.

KATH: There's loads of things. 'What's this v. foraging?'

HELENA: Yes.

ED: Yes, scrumping is – scrumping – you scrump for apples.

HELENA: It's stealing fruit?

KATH: Is that what it is?

ED: You scrump for apples. Steal –

HELENA: Specifically stealing?

KATH: Oh.

HELENA: Specifically? So it's specifically for, uh, apples? Or just any fruit?

ED: It's a great question. I don't – I mean until about three seconds ago I thought I'd made it up.

HELENA: Well –

ED: Uh, the word, so.

HELENA: If that is the case, then I can tell you exactly what the difference is. Foragers take fruits from the forest that are available to all, but if you're stealing apples or fruit from – if you're stealing them, then you are taking them from private property. So –

ED: Right.

KATH: So if you like – if an apple was on the ground that's foraging. If you take the apple off the tree is that – is that scrump – scrumping?

HELENA: Well not – not necessarily. It all depends where the apple tree is. If the apple tree is in public land, then that would be foraging. And you can definitely take it off the tree.

KATH: Got you.

HELENA: But if the apple is in private land, then you would be stealing.

KATH: Oh I see.

HELENA: So any – any public land that offers you fruit, fungi, foliage – there's four 'F's. I normally say the fourth one is 'fuck off'

because I can't remember it. What is it? The rules – the rules of foraging are the four 'F's. So you can forage for fruit, fungi, foliage, and what's the fourth one? This happens to me every single time. Fungi, fruit, foliage – fruit. Whatever, I'll – I'll find out. And then let you know.

ED: Fegetables?

HELENA: Fegetables. Let's go with that one. Fegetables that grow wild.

ED: Fegetables with an 'F'.

HELENA: But anyway, you are allowed to pick those from public land.

KATH: Okay. So just as long as you've not robbed it from someone's garden, basically.

HELENA: Exactly.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: Exactly.

KATH: Got you. So –

ED: Flora!

HELENA: Ah, flora! Oh my goodness, it's the name of my daughter. Take away the 'good mum' from your notes.

[All laugh]

KATH: 'Oh, I always forget this one.'

HELENA: Oh my goodness, what is wrong with me? It probably – I probably know it as flowers rather than flora.

KATH: Oh.

HELENA: Because flora is flowers and plants, so – oh my god, I can't get out of this, uh, hole.

ED: That's so funny. 'What's that word?'

HELENA: Yeah, 'what's that word? Oh shit.'

ED: 'I can't – always slips my mind.'

KATH: Oh.

HELENA: It starts with an 'F'.

KATH: Oh, amazing.

HELENA: Moving on. Move on.

[Spooky music]

ED: What's the thing that – because obviously we don't believe in witches. We believe in ghosts because they're real, but we – this is the first time we've come across a witch. So we're – we're very, um –

HELENA: You don't believe in witches? Oh, that's a shame.

ED: No, no. It's going to take – it's going to take a bit of convincing at your end to convince us that – that witches exist. We're open to it.

KATH: Absolutely, yeah.

ED: But –

HELENA: But witches have existed since the beginning of times.

ED: I wouldn't call that proof.

HELENA: Witches are just generally women, but it's a gender-neutral term.

ED: Uh huh.

HELENA: They help with premonitions, they do hallucinogenic plants to connect with other worlds and then report back. I mean how do you think religions were born? They were born out of people tripping out. Um, on, you know, on mushrooms. On Fly Agarics, which is the, you know, the iconic red mushroom with white spots. Um, I've tried plenty of them and taken none. And, uh –

ED: I mean that's the first time I've heard a religion explained in a way that I would want to join it.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: Well that's – surely that's the way it all started. With shamans just like tripping out of their tits and just like entering

other realms, coming back to, um, to the present and then telling everybody what they saw. Which obviously in general would be nonsense. And everybody thought, 'well, this is great. Let's join it.'

KATH: 'Well this is new.'

ED: I bet hymns sound insane when you're high on mushrooms.

KATH: Like that makes sense to me, but we still don't have like – like, 'oh, that means, uh, someone's a witch and that' – so for example, I was thinking about your poem.

HELENA: Mhm.

KATH: Like the bat clips in the hair. Like –

HELENA: Yeah.

KATH: I – does that make someone a witch? Or – or –

HELENA: Well it's kind of like – it kind of gives you the witch aesthetic. They love to roll their long hair into rolls and then they clip them with clips that are – that come to your hair with bat wings. That's just what they – yeah.

KATH: So they are real bats that you clip in – in the hair?

HELENA: Absolutely. They hold – they hold your rolls in place.

KATH: Okay.

HELENA: So – so you roll them up and they – they fly onto your hair and attach to the rollers. So they stay in place. Um –

ED: That changes everything.

KATH: Yeah, it does.

HELENA: Well –

ED: Is that what you've got on now then? They're real bats?

HELENA: Well I've got it – I've taken them out and I've got my hair up now. But I've got –

ED: Oh great. Right, right.

HELENA: Rollers, um, at the bottom. And you have to do it at night, because obviously bats are nocturnal creatures.

KATH: Of course, yeah.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: So they attach to your head while you're sleeping. And then in the morning you take your rollers out and your – and your hair is lovely and wavy.

ED: Nice.

KATH: Oh.

HELENA: Yeah.

KATH: So it's like a sort of mutual agreement thing that you're like, 'oh, we'll do this in the night for you. No problem. It's nice and toasty under your hair.'

HELENA: Oh absolutely. If – if, you know, anybody's injured or has lost their way, I will absolutely take them in, feed them until they're well enough to fly away again. Yeah, it's a mutual – mutual, um, agreement.

KATH: That's lovely.

ED: I love that.

KATH: Yeah. That's really nice.

ED: The bat clip thing is insanely witchy.

HELENA: It's – it's incredibly witchy. The only – bats will only attach to the rollers of witches. If – I mean, I can tell, Ed, that you wear rollers.

ED: Yes.

HELENA: So, you know, your lovely curls. They can't be natural.

ED: No.

HELENA: Um, but um, you know, they – a bat wouldn't come to you. So –

ED: I wish – I wish they would. Imagine my curls if a bat sorted them out for me.

HELENA: I know, I think that's – they are the size of your fingers. So I think you just roll your hair in your fingers. Is that right?

ED: Yes. Yeah, I don't sleep. I just sit at night with my fingers in my hair.

HELENA: I can tell!

ED: Yeah yeah yeah. That's why I – that's why I look so tired. But with lovely hair. Lovely curly hair.

[All laugh]

KATH: So with the – with the broomstick thing –

ED: Kind of a witch.

KATH: She travels by a broomstick and flies through the night.

HELENA: Uh huh.

KATH: So like – you know –

HELENA: But she never ever drinks and flies. Ever. Let me tell you that.

KATH: Okay, that's good.

ED: Okay.

KATH: That's good.

ED: That's very good.

KATH: See I – I want to check the sort of definitions and stuff.

ED: That's good.

KATH: So like, 'travels by broomstick.' You could – you could just be walking along next to a broomstick and that's still travelling by broomstick.

HELENA: Well, by –

ED: I – yeah. 'By' does mean 'next to' as well, doesn't it? Yeah.

HELENA: But the way to make your broomstick travel is to pick up some Fly Agarics, like we spoke about. The red mushrooms with white spots.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Oh yeah.

HELENA: And you make a paste in your – with your, um, pestle and mortar. You make a magical paste that you then rub on the – on the stick of the broomstick. And that's what makes it fly.

KATH: Are you sure you've not just taken the potion and passed out and think you've travelled somewhere?

ED: Kath...

HELENA: That – that is always a possibility.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: So that's something you guys have to figure out.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: That is a possibility.

[All laugh]

KATH: Do you do – are you just constantly waking up in hospital being like, 'god, I guess I travelled by broomstick again'?

HELENA: Well, yeah. In – in the end does it matter? The fact that you believe you've travelled by broomstick is all that matters here.

ED: Yeah. I suppose your – your reality is the most important one to you, isn't it?

HELENA: Yeah yeah.

KATH: Then it gets darker when you remember that your daughter wrote this.

ED: Oh yeah.

HELENA: But that –

KATH: So she's interpreting you waking up in hospital as like, 'oh, Mummy's gone for a fly through the night again.' Like what –

HELENA: Well and sometimes she comes on the flight with me. So what does that mean?

KATH: Oh wow, yeah.

ED: Oh no.

KATH: Okay, you're definitely a witch. So you're definitely a witch. Uh, that's – that's brought it back round for me.

ED: You're – you're either a witch or we need to call Spooktown police.

HELENA: Uh, Spooktown social services.

ED: Yes, yes, sorry. Spooktown social services.

HELENA: Oh dear me. This all makes complete sense to me, to be honest.

KATH: Yeah, I mean –

ED: Mhm.

KATH: Also orange perfume's nice. But does that make someone a witch?

HELENA: Well it's the – it's the chosen scent of a witch.

KATH: Is it?

ED: Alright, okay.

HELENA: Pumpkin spice, yeah. It's, uh, it's the scent of Halloween.

KATH: Okay.

ED: So is, um, is Starbucks run by a witch?

HELENA: Well Starbucks – Starbucks provides Pumpkin Spice Lattes for witches. It's their number one seller in October.

ED: Oh yeah.

HELENA: So they know their market. And they know there's like a huge market of underground witches that come out around Halloween time and buy Pumpkin Spice Lattes.

ED: Yeah. 'Underground Witches', good band name.

HELENA: But that's – that's city witches. I make my own Pumpkin Spice Lattes.

KATH: Oh for sure.

HELENA: I don't need to go to Starbucks.

ED: Really?

HELENA: Of course.

ED: Wow.

HELENA: It's absolutely delicious.

ED: Oh my god.

KATH: Can you forage for pumpkins?

HELENA: Uh, no. Well you grow – they're actually not, uh, a native fruit of Spooktown. So you kind of have to buy the seeds and grow them yourself.

KATH: Mhm.

HELENA: Yeah, you're not –

ED: Ah. So that would be scrumping if you – if you forage pumpkins. Because they'd have to be grown by somebody.

HELENA: They're grown. Yeah, they would be grown privately. So yes, you would be scrumping if you were stealing pumpkins.

KATH: Right.

ED: Right.

HELENA: But it's – you know, it's easy to grow your own. They take forever. I mean they take months to grow, but the result is just so – it's so worth it.

ED: Can you scrump or forage a Pumpkin Spice Latte from Starbucks?

HELENA: No, you –

ED: Or is that just regular theft?

HELENA: The – I think the Pumpkin Spice Latte – it actually genuinely – it actually doesn't have any pumpkin in it. It's just the

spices. It's the spices that go really well with pumpkin pie. So it's cinnamon, clove, and, um –

ED: Nutmeg?

HELENA: Ginger.

ED: Damn it. Ginger.

HELENA: Nutmeg. No, it does have nutmeg. It does. It does. So – well at least I put it in it. I love nutmeg.

ED: Yeah, it's good, isn't it?

KATH: It's nice, yeah.

HELENA: So those are the spices that really complement pumpkin in general. And that's how you make your latte. Very easy.

KATH: Oh, but there's no pumpkin in there? Interesting.

HELENA: There's no actual pumpkin, no. It's just that they – it's called 'pumpkin spice' because the spices are the ones that you use for pumpkin pie.

KATH: That makes loads of sense.

HELENA: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: I mean don't you think pumpkin in a latte sounds – if you actually put the vegetable/ fruit in there – it would be a bit – a bit gross?

KATH: It would be awful.

ED: Horrible.

KATH: Yeah, awful.

HELENA: Yeah, yeah.

KATH: I've never had one.

ED: That's why I haven't had one. It sounded disgusting, yeah.

HELENA: You've never – you guys have never had a Pumpkin Spice?

KATH: No.

HELENA: I'll send you the recipe. I'll send you the recipe.

KATH: Oh. Genuinely yes please.

ED: Genuinely I would love that.

HELENA: No, I genuinely will send it.

KATH: Yes please.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Thank you.

[All laugh]

ED: Witch or not, I'd love – I'd love to try that.

HELENA: Yeah, I'm sending you that immediately.

KATH: Can we just, 'right, I'll say this is in so we can get to the – get to the bit?'

HELENA: Yeah yeah, 'can you send us that email?'

ED: You're a witch. You're a witch, I believe you. So I'm going to try and get to the bottom of this – this witch.

HELENA: Sure.

ED: This witch stuff. Obviously story-wise, in most stories you'll ever hear, witches are evil. You don't seem evil.

HELENA: I – I am so hurt by that. Like this is something I need to change. The, uh, overview. Witches were mainly women that were accused of it for the wrong reasons, you know? Jealousy –

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: You know in the Middle Ages you got jealous of your neighbour because she was really hot. 'Well, she's a fucking witch.'

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: So they would burn her. Um, and it was – the evilness of witches is born out of pure superstition. But actually witches are wonderful, wonderful people that, uh, just try to help. And that's why I try to teach my daughter that, um, witches in fact are very good. They're not the villain of the story. They're actually quite the hero.

ED: That's so wholesome. I love it.

KATH: It's nice.

HELENA: I genuinely believe it.

ED: Okay, so – so you can be a witch because witches aren't actually evil. They're just in tune with nature.

HELENA: Absolutely. Guys, 100% my belief.

ED: Yeah, that is nice. Why is your cottage made out of gingerbread then?

HELENA: Well that was just to attract children. But that – that was just one – one bloody German witch.

ED: That was just – okay.

[All laugh]

HELENA: Yeah. That was just like one. It's like any other person, you know? Most of – most of us are good, but, uh, you always get the slightly naughty one. But you know –

ED: Or German one.

HELENA: Some kids can be a real pain in the ass, so I don't really blame the witch.

KATH: For sure.

ED: Totally, yeah.

KATH: No.

ED: No, totally. I'm –

HELENA: And – and they were eating her freaking house. So –

ED: Yeah.

KATH: That is rude. That's true, yeah.

HELENA: They deserved to get cooked.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah. See how they like getting eaten.

HELENA: Yeah, exactly. They were eating her house, so –

KATH: Imagine that. Someone like coming over and just chomping into the windowsill. It is really rude. Like you're trying to watch telly –

ED: It is really rude, Kath.

KATH: And then it's like, 'who are you?'

HELENA: Yeah. Like I would've done the same. I don't think that makes her evil. It makes them little shits.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: God, yeah. Rude.

ED: You should do, uh, you should do Spooktown tours on witch – witchery. This is very informative.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: Yeah, I know. But I just don't want to bring – I don't want to bring more people into the woods. I – I like the solitude.

ED: Fair, yeah.

KATH: Oh, okay. Fair.

ED: Yeah, you don't want to commercialise it too much, do you?

HELENA: No.

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: I mean if you really want to learn about magical plants, you definitely can do it on your own. See? You just got a book for Christmas.

[All laugh]

ED: That is the most definitive 'can you leave me alone?' I've ever heard.

HELENA: Yeah, don't come to the woods. I love it here!

ED: If you want to learn about it, you can do it on your own. Good day.

HELENA: Yeah, yeah. Put some effort into it, you lazy sods.

ED: Physically pushing us out of your house. Uh –

HELENA: Do not bring the crowds.

ED: Yeah, fair. Fair. That was a stupid idea.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Immediately trying to, um, capitalise.

HELENA: Yeah.

ED: Um, okay. Okay.

KATH: Well I think you've –

ED: Okay. Kath, do you want to – should we – should we have a chat about this?

KATH: Yeah. Yeah, okay. So –

ED: We're just going to go stand by your, um, sort of very large – large enough to fit a child in oven. Over here in the corner. And just chat through –

HELENA: Sure, go for it.

KATH: Yeah, just excuse us one second. Okay.

HELENA: Don't fall in.

ED: I'm just going to – [laughs] Thank you. That – see an evil witch wouldn't have said that.

KATH: Yeah, you're right.

HELENA: Yeah, exactly.

KATH: You're right.

ED: Wouldn't have warned us.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Um, okay. Okay, Kath. I – I believe she's a witch.

KATH: I – I think she's legit.

ED: Yeah, we believe she's a witch.

KATH: Yeah. I think she's a witch, yeah.

ED: Great.

KATH: Should we go tell her?

ED: Let's get back with the good news, yeah.

KATH: Yeah, okay. Let's go let her know.

ED: Hello, Helena.

KATH: Hey.

HELENA: Hi.

ED: We believe you.

KATH: Yeah.

HELENA: Oh, that's fantastic!

KATH: Yeah. You're –

ED: Yeah.

HELENA: Here we go. We're on a mission to teach everybody that witches are in fact good.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah, but they can't come here to learn it because we don't want to crowd your space.

HELENA: Well I'll teach you about mushrooms. Since, uh, since you believed me you deserve a little lesson.

KATH: Thank you.

ED: Great.

HELENA: So I'm happy to do it but don't tell anybody.

KATH: Oh, so we can't pass that on? Okay.

HELENA: No, absolutely not.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Oh, so we can't release –

HELENA: Knowledge for you and you alone.

KATH: Okay.

ED: We can't release this podcast.

[All laugh]

HELENA: No, because they don't know where – they don't know where this – where I'm taking you.

ED: Oh, right. Okay.

HELENA: It's secret places where the mushrooms grow. So –

KATH: This is true. This is true.

ED: Okay, great. Great.

HELENA: A witch never tells where – where the magical plants grow.

ED: Another great quote. Another great quote. Oh, great. Well, wonderful. Well we'll – we'll turn this recording off, then.

KATH: Yeah, so we can go join you in mushroom land.

HELENA: Okay.

ED: So we can come and see.

HELENA: And then you can join me on a little foraging trip. Absolutely.

KATH: Yes please.

ED: Yeah, great.

KATH: Thank you.

HELENA: Let's do it.

KATH: Great.

ED: Well, welcome to Spooktown.

HELENA: Thank you very much.

ED: This is – I mean you've been here since you were 21, but –

KATH: Welcome back again?

HELENA: Thank you very much. Well, thank you.

ED: You're welcome. Thank you. Thank you very much for – for teaching us about witches. I feel like I've learnt a lot.

HELENA: It's been my pleasure.

ED: And thank you for the poem. Well, thank your two year old for the poem.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah.

HELENA: I will do. I'll pass it on to Flora.

ED: Flora.

[All laugh]

[Spooky music]

[Birds chirping, footsteps]

ED: That was nice.

KATH: Really nice.

ED: Double nice, I'd say. Meeting her? Nice.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Foraging? Hello, it's another tick in the 'nice' column.

KATH: Triple nice.

ED: For me and my pen.

KATH: Poem.

ED: I say that's a – that's a cross in the 'no' poem.

KATH: Oh, okay.

ED: 'No' poem. In the 'no' poem. Weirdly, I've got a poem for things I don't like. And poems is in there.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Odd. Really odd.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I guess I'm just a quirky guy.

KATH: Yeah, I guess.

ED: Guess I'm just one of those gals.

KATH: Also your – your pupils are quite blown. So, you know.

ED: My pupils are blown?

KATH: Yeah yeah, they're just quite – quite big.

ED: Coming from princess dilated pupil over here?

KATH: Nothing wrong with my pupils.

ED: How do you possibly know that?

KATH: Uh, because I can see really well.

ED: Because your pupils are dilated. It's incredibly dark in this forest. You shouldn't be able to see anything.

KATH: I can see real well.

ED: I can – I can see more than is here, if you catch my – if you catch my hallucination. I can see exquisitely well.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I can see why people do things.

KATH: Ooh, yeah.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: That's next level seeing, isn't it?

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Oh.

ED: I can see other people's points of view. You with me?

KATH: Oh, I – I'm still full of cake if I'm honest. I'm full of cake and mushrooms. It's a real combo.

ED: Ugh. What a – what a horrible combination. Cake – cake and mushrooms. Do you want to – [laughs] okay. Okay, I see that look.

KATH: I'm – I was –

ED: I can see – I can see through your pupil because it's so dilated. I can see through your pupil into your brain. And it's telling me to start a religion. Cake and – the cake and mushroom religion.

KATH: That is what I was doing. Bloody hell.

ED: Really?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Really?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Really?

KATH: Really.

ED: With like jokes – all jokes aside, really?

KATH: Yeah. Podcast down, really.

ED: Podcast down. Pod down.

KATH: Pod down. Really.

ED: Pod down for a sec, really.

KATH: Yeah, really.

ED: That feels so ill. Oh.

KATH: What?

ED: I just got a text.

KATH: Oh, right. From who?

ED: Uh, I feel day drunk.

KATH: Oh god.

ED: I feel day drunk. And, um, I forgot I've got work later. Mark Wahlberg's texted me.

KATH: Oh god, what does he want?

ED: You know his whole, 'I can burp the alphabet' thing?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Wake up – wake up at four, have an ice bath, burp the alphabet.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah.

ED: He says he can no longer burp the 'G', the 'H', the 'O', the 'S', or the 'T'. So he assumes his burps are haunted now. I'm going to go meet him at – ugh, I'm going to go meet him at a Macklins. That's so hard to say when you've eaten a lot of – Fly Gerick? It sounds like a – a London stand-up. Fly Gerick?

KATH: Fly Gerick.

ED: 'Hey, it's me, Fly Gerick. From – from London, USA.'

[Both laugh]

ED: 'From London, New York.' Uh, yeah. He says he – he wants me to meet him at a Macklins. I haven't got the heart to tell him it's closed.

KATH: That's classic Mark.

ED: Do you want to come?

KATH: I don't want to see him.

ED: After –

KATH: Hm.

ED: Okay.

KATH: Tell him I said 'hi', though.

ED: I'm not opening that can of worms.

KATH: Okay.

ED: See you?

KATH: Yeah. I'm going to follow, um, well there's no more cake left, is there?

ED: You ate it all.

KATH: I'm going to go get lost in the woods for a bit, then.

ED: Nice. What a metaphor for 2020.

KATH: Have fun with Mark. Bye.

ED: Bye. Oh, hang on. [burps] Ah, wait. [burps] Bye. [burps] Bye.

KATH: He could learn a thing from me.

[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.