

## Welcome To Spooktown – Tom Neenan

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: Ah! Oh, ghost!

[Music stops]

KATH HUGHES: I had the Maltesers.

ED: I didn't like snacks in the cinema. I think it distracts from the film.

KATH: That's why you eat them all when the trailers are on and then feel sick for the rest of the film.

ED: Oh. I've been doing it all – I thought you were meant to pace it.

KATH: No no no. No.

ED: Right. Um, have you had any nightmares this week, Kath?

KATH: Yes, I had one where I went into a building and the only way to get through the building was up the stairs. And all the stairs were, uh, treadmills going too fast.

ED: Ugh.

KATH: You have to really run to get up the flight of stairs.

ED: Oh god yeah, I was thinking you could like –

KATH: I don't even know why I was in the building. I don't know whose building it was, I don't know why I was there, but I was like, 'christ.' For some reason I had to be on the top floor. And a big coat on.

ED: Oh, that's – that's horrible.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: That's horrible knowing that you have to be on the top floor but you don't know who for or why.

KATH: Yeah, not a clue.

ED: And it's – you had your big coat on.

KATH: I had a big coat on.

ED: Couldn't leave that with the concierge? No.

KATH: No.

ED: No. No? Fair. That sounds fucking horrible.

KATH: How about you? Any nightmares?

ED: Yes. Quite the break, actually.

KATH: Go on.

ED: Can't believe I haven't told you about this so far. Uh, had a full-blown legit panic attack.

KATH: A real one?

ED: At about 2am. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. Full. Full. The – the works. Um, yeah. At about 2 – 2am on Thursday morning. Well, Wednesday night, Thursday morning. Um –

KATH: Oh okay, yeah.

ED: And I thought – I thought I had – because I couldn't breathe because of the panic attack, so I was like sticking my head out of a very small gap in the window because I couldn't push the window any further. So I was like going [inhales] through the – like a gap in [inhales] – through the window like that. And I was like, 'oh, I've got Covid and I've given it to everybody and I can't carry on filming because I'll have Covid.' So I was like having a panic attack and that built up the panic even more. And then I had to like sit in – I think it's called the downward dog. You know when you like stretch your arms out, have your head on the floor and put your bum sticking out.

KATH: Oh, head on the floor. Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah.

ED: So I was just – yeah, so I was just lying like that to try and calm myself down. But then because of everything that had gone on, every time I tried to fall asleep after I calmed myself down I, um, uh, I would stop breathing when I fell asleep. And then I would – I'd like wake up.

KATH: Oh, so you'd do that horrible like [inhales] when you wake up?

ED: [inhales]

KATH: [inhales] Yeah.

ED: Yeah. Every time I feel asleep. [inhales] Every time I fell asleep.

KATH: That's horrible.

ED: I think I fell asleep at about four, um, for half an hour, and I woke up drenched in cold sweat, um, and then I had to be out of the house at six. Um, so I got half an hour's sleep that night.

KATH: That is appalling.

ED: Um, and it's because I had forgotten that Diet Coke and Pepsi Max's have, um, caffeine in them.

KATH: Oh, no.

ED: So I had two pints of Diet Coke, then a double espresso, and then on the walk home I had a Pepsi Max.

KATH: Oh, no.

ED: And went to sleep at like – went to sleep at about midnight and then woke up 15 minutes later going [inhales] and like jumping out of my bed. And then I had the – yeah, I had the panic attack.

KATH: That is appalling.

ED: Yeah, it's been years since I've had a – like a full-blown, legit –

KATH: Full-blown, yeah.

ED: Certified, got a stamp on it, panic attack.

KATH: Yeah, like, 'oh, I can't breathe. Oh, no, I'm dying.' Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: That is brutal.

ED: It's pretty amazing.

KATH: That's worse than treadmills for stairs, I think.

ED: Oh, I was also – yeah, I had to get up the – I forgot I had to get that out, yeah.

KATH: I mean at least I was asleep when mine was happening. You didn't even get any sleep.

ED: Yeah, that was the worst part, was not getting any sleep and having like sleep apnea. And google – googling, when I – when I kept on waking up because I was asleep and then I'd go [inhales] because I'd stop breathing, googling that and just finding a page that was like, 'it is sleep apnea and it is incurable.' And being like, 'great, I've – I've given myself sleep apnea for the rest of my life.' Which obviously I haven't. I'm fine now. Rotten.

KATH: Appalling, yeah.

ED: Yeah. And then the next night, I had one Nitol, fell asleep, I woke up with a dead arm half an hour later with drool all over my face. Then had to get dressed with a completely dead arm.

KATH: What a rollercoaster, oh my god.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Neither are great.

ED: Woke up like caked in drool on my mouth. Like – like I dipped my mouth into a bowl of my own drool, woke up like that. Completely dead arm, checked my phone, it was – I was meant to get picked up at six, it was half six, so just like [inhales] like running around.

KATH: Oh, no.

ED: My, uh, flaccid arm slapping against my torso as I tried to get dressed.

KATH: Everything about this is atrocious, Ed. Oh my god.

ED: Yeah, it's pretty bad.

KATH: Ugh.

ED: Speaking of panic attacks, is that Tom Neenan?

KATH: Hey, Tom.

ED: Hi, Tom.

TOM NEENAN: Hello.

[Spooky music]

ED: This is such a nice cinema.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: It's – it's not, I mean, like – I don't know, it's obviously, um, it depends what you're looking for in a cinema. Like I'm – I like a bit of character, which is certainly has.

KATH: Sure.

ED: Yes.

TOM: Um, I don't – you know, I'm not one of those like, 'it has to be a trillion screens' kind of guys.

ED: Yes. Yeah yeah yeah.

TOM: Yeah, yeah. You know what I mean? Make it personal.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: So like – yeah, so like one – one or two screens cinemas, looks like it's falling down, but it looks kind of cool. That sort of vibe.

TOM: Looks kind of cool. Yeah, I mean maybe just one. I think what I'm – I think what I'm erring towards is just saying my – my home. I want to be in my home watching a film. That is –

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Nice. Really nice.

TOM: But we're at the cinema now, so may as well – may as well enjoy it, I guess.

KATH: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah.

ED: I remember our Odeon cinema in Crewe, where I grew up, was, uh, I think it was like two screens and it felt like it was a laserquest place. Like, you know, it had that like horrible, dingy –

TOM: Yeah, yeah yeah.

ED: I remember being – I was genuinely quite scared of it because it was so dark. But I saw 'The Mummy' there.

TOM: How much of a – experiencing the cinema as kids like where we thought like, 'that film is really scary,' is just because we were seeing it somewhere that was like not safe for a child to exist in?

KATH: Yeah, in a terrifying building.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Yeah yeah.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah, I'm trying to remember what – first film – first film that I saw was 'The Lion King' in the cinema. That was the first –

ED: Hello.

TOM: Oh, wow. That's pretty good.

KATH: I remember I put a frock on, you know, because it was a big day out, wasn't it? To the pictures.

TOM: Yes. And your opera glasses.

KATH: You put a frock on, sit on a booster seat in the back because it was all one level, yeah? And the opera glasses on, yeah.

TOM: Yeah. Oh, nice. Did you guys have that – screen appetising where that guy would shove a – a red hot poker in your face? It – am I – is that – is that not chiming with anyone?

ED: Rings a bell.

KATH: Oh yeah, no, that is chiming, yeah.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: What was that?

TOM: It – it was a guy – it was like a star and then he just – jam it in your face.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: It really sets you on edge for the film, doesn't it?

TOM: Hey. It really did, oh my god. It's intimidating.

KATH: Maybe they got rid of it when they started introducing 3D. Because it would've been too frightening.

TOM: Yeah, too much. Way too much for a child. Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

ED: God, I fucking love this – love the cinema. I hate it when there's a load of people there. But I love it. It's – I'm – I'm thinking I'm the same as you.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: If I could have a full cinema in my house.

TOM: We're – we're the spoiled ones. We're the ones who do not – do not have a regular work schedule, so sometimes can sneak off to the cinema at two in the afternoon and see a film with no one else.

ED: Yes. Love that.

KATH: Yes, I watched a film at 11 am the other day. We were – legally, I was allowed back in the cinema.

TOM: Yeah. Very good.

KATH: And it was 11am. And I loved it. Absolutely loved it.

TOM: That's incredible.

ED: I love the idea of –

KATH: Just me and my mate.

TOM: You leave the cinema and you're having lunch. Dream.

KATH: Yeah, absolutely loved it. Came outside, 'oh, it's daylight. Who knew?' Me because it was 11 am when I went in.

TOM: Full day.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Basically a full day left after going to the cinema. It's ideal.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah. I honestly – it's the way forward.

ED: That's the – you feel like you've got away with something when you come out, don't you? You feel like you've tricked everyone.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Yeah, yeah.

ED: Like, 'how's your day been?' 'Um, not too bad. Already seen a full film.' 'How's your day been? How's your trash day been?' Yeah, huge fan.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Um, I've – I've got to say this really quickly. I remember that because – just because of that Odean, uh, Crewe cinema. That's where I saw, uh, um, 'The Phantom Menace' when it first came out.

TOM: Ooh.

ED: So everyone was very excited. And they, uh, they – there was something wrong with the film so they – it was 20 minutes late.

TOM: Right.

ED: And then when it finally came up on screen, a kid in front of me went, 'ugh, eventually.' I loved it so much. It stuck with me since like the first screening of 'The Phantom Menace' all those years ago.

TOM: That's so charming.

ED: 'Eventually.' It was very charming.

TOM: 'Oh, finally.' Was he talking about the film coming out or was he talking about the, you know, the eventual release of the prequels to the – the franchise he loved so much? 'Thank you, George Lucas. Eventually.'

KATH: Eventually.

ED: A little eight year old. 'Well it's been bloody long enough, hasn't it, George? Eventually. Am I right, everyone?' He's turning around looking at everyone.

TOM: Yeah, yeah. 'Excuse me, you guys.'

ED: So, uh, we've got a couple of questions to ask you before we hear your story. Apparently you've got a – a spooky story about this here, uh, cinema.

TOM: I do indeed.

ED: Um, which we should've got into straight away, but fuck me do we all love the cinema.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Um –

TOM: Yeah, we really do.

ED: 'Cinema, cinema.' Uh, right. So my first question is, uh, um –

TOM: Okay.

ED: Have you eaten yet? You know, since – since you got to Spooktown, not ever.

TOM: No. But no, I haven't eaten yet. But I like that.

ED: Okay.

TOM: I – for me, lunch is the – like I'll go skip breakfast, you know, boring, egg town.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Breakfast, not interested. Straight to – it's eggs, isn't it?  
That's mainly what, you know, what comprises breakfast.

ED: You can have other stuff.

KATH: Cornflakes.

TOM: Huh?

KATH: Cornflakes.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Yeah, you can have cornflakes. It's true. But like if you compare breakfast to what lunch offers, I'm like, 'straight to lunch, please.'

ED: Yeah, that's fair. That's fair.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Especially when you've got to put an egg on your cornflakes and you're –

KATH: Yeah, it just makes a mess.

ED: It is disgusting.

TOM: Yeah, exactly.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah, it's not nice.

TOM: That's why I hate breakfast.

ED: 'Tom always has an egg on –' yeah, I think you're – I've – I've started doing that. I think you're right. You're absolutely right. Go straight to lunch.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah. I don't know. And probably there's a lot of people saying, 'well it's not good, you know?' For a million reasons. But I'm like, 'who cares? Who cares?' Straight to lunch, please.

ED: You've only got one life, mate.

TOM: Yeah, exactly.

ED: Skip breakfast.

TOM: One life, two meals a day.

ED: That would technically mean that at lunch you were breaking your fast, which would mean that lunch was still breakfast.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: That is true.

ED: So you're having like a burger for breakfast.

TOM: Yeah. I love – I love the – the arrogance of saying, 'I am breaking my fast,' when in reality rather than fasting what you've been doing is you've been asleep. That is the – it's like –

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: 'Oh, sorry, I was fasting.'

ED: It's technically a fast.

TOM: Yeah, I'm not eating technically. Apart from all those spiders you eat during your sleep.

KATH: No.

ED: Oh god, I'm – I'm so hungry. I've – all I've had today is a couple of spiders. I'm absolutely starving.

KATH: Eight in one night. A lot for the year.

ED: Couple of spiders, an egg on cornflakes.

TOM: Yeah. Would you rather do that? Would you rather do the eight in one night?

ED: Eight spiders?

TOM: Or have the eight spread over the year as – as supposedly happens.

ED: One – January 1, all eight. Then I just don't have to worry about it.

KATH: Yeah, get it done. Yeah.

TOM: You know? Exactly, get it over with.

ED: Then there's no stress.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: I don't want to be like – what – what is it, December 31<sup>st</sup> and be like, 'fucking tonight's going to be a nightmare.'

KATH: Yeah. Oh, god. Every New Years' Eve you're just having a – having a heart attack about the next day.

TOM: Oh, god. It's going to happen.

KATH: Oh, god.

TOM: They're going to march in there.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Horrible.

ED: We can – we can maybe suggest some places for you to eat, um, after – after this has – this has wrapped up.

TOM: Yes, please. Yeah, and – any recommendations.

KATH: Yeah, it depends how many sweets you have, though, in the cinema. Because like it's – it's a, you know –

ED: Yeah. Yeah.

KATH: Bag of Maltesers, loads of ice cream, popcorn. A big thing of Coke.

TOM: Everything.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Nachos.

TOM: Yeah, way too much.

KATH: Nachos.

ED: Uh, bad hot dogs.

TOM: I used to think that when I sat down in the cinema, like after the trailers ended in the cinema and the film started, I'd like feel this like elation like I'd almost start like crying. I was so happy and I was like, 'I love the cinema so much.' Then I realised what had happened is I'd got there, eaten a load of sweets, my sugar had peaked, and I'd been like, 'oh my god. What an amazing time.'

[All laugh]

ED: Just like a full caffeinated Diet Coke. Like a massive one. Your heart's pumping.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: 'Oh my god, I love – I love the cinema so fucking much.'

KATH: 'Fucking love the cinema. I fucking love it.'

ED: That's so funny. Oh, god. Um, right. Okay, my second question. Very quickly. Is this a – is this a joke if we suggested to you waggle mamas?

KATH: Waghoulmama's?

TOM: Is it a joke?

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Oh, as in like – like Wagamama's?

ED: Yeah.

TOM: I'm on it.

ED: No no no. No no no. Not like – not like Wagamama. It's a – it's a separate thing.

[All laugh]

ED: Tom, what's the – what is the spookiest thing that's ever happened to you? Ever?

TOM: Ooh, okay. Not a lot. I'd love something spooky. I grew up opposite a cemetery.

KATH: Oh.

ED: Fuck.

TOM: Um, yeah. And nothing spooky in the cemetery ever happened. Uh, once I was, uh, I was walking through the cemetery quite late and I got locked in. Um, but the walls were quite low, so just climbed over and – and got myself out. I was – I was like ready. I was like, my arms were open. I was ready for something spooky to kick off. Um, and nothing at all. Nothing at all. Nothing at all happened. Um, no, the only time I, um, the only

sort of thing even resembling spooky is we went to this place called Drogo Castle, which is the newest castle in the UK, and there – there's –

ED: Ooh.

KATH: Ooh, what a brag.

ED: The newest castle in the UK.

TOM: Yes, the newest. It's like the two things that don't marry up, isn't it? Like, 'oh, great. Oh, it's a new – a new castle.' Right. Um, and, um, we had this little quiz you had to fill out, and, uh, and it was like, you know, a little quiz for kids, but we, you know, we were doing it just to like fill the time.

ED: Great.

TOM: And one of them was, 'what is the dining table made of?' And you could ask the – the people at the, um, at the – the sort of, you know, showing you around. What – what the questions and they would answer and you can fill it in. And we asked this guy, uh, it was just us in this huge room with this dining table and there's this like guide, and we said, 'what's the dining table made of? So we can fill out the quiz.'

And it was then – he – because he was standing there. We'd like joined him. He couldn't – he couldn't speak. He was like [mumbling] and we were like – we were trying to – we just were there with our pens poised being like, 'just – what, oak? Just say any – any word.' Nothing. And – and we were like – he couldn't speak, and so we were like, 'oh, thank you so much.' Because like

– but – and then we left. Went back in, he wasn't there. So that was – that's – yeah.

ED: Woah.

KATH: Oh.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: It sounds like you were watching somebody have a fit or a stroke.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: And then halfway through it, you said, 'thank you very much,' and when you came back in, somebody had taken him to the hospital.

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

TOM: Yeah, yeah. That man's version of the story is, 'Oh, I was being a helpful tour guide, this guy came up to me, I said, "can you help me?" And he just walked away like he didn't – didn't care.'

KATH: Yeah. 'He thanked me and left.'

TOM: Yeah.

[All laugh]

TOM: Psychopath. Absolute psychopath, I bet. I'm his spookiest story.

ED: I think – I think, uh, you, um, ignoring a – somebody who's having potentially like a fit is – is pretty – pretty fucking scary.

TOM: Yeah. Very scary that I have that – I just switch my emotions off. Just no empathy. Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, no, that's – that is the most frightening thing of all.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: What's – what's scarier than a lack of empathy? Nothing. Nothing I can think of.

TOM: Exactly.

ED: Uh, final question. Now we've been contacted by the council about this, uh, podcast.

KATH: Oh, yeah.

ED: Could you believe it? Um, and basically the mandate is if the story doesn't enter Spooktown lore, the storyteller has to be executed.

TOM: Woah.

ED: Um, which we should've probably told you before you, you know, you came. Because you –

TOM: That is – oh, I –

KATH: You're here now. You're here now, so –

TOM: I – I guess. I'm a bit – guys, I'm a bit peeved, I'll be honest.

ED: Sorry.

KATH: But if we'd said it before you wouldn't have come, would you? So –

TOM: That is true. That is true.

KATH: So we are – so we were right to withhold that information from you.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Yeah, I'd say this is you lacking empathy because obviously I could die. And you –

KATH: Well –

ED: Now you know how it feels.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: How does that – how's that bitter medicine, Tom?

TOM: Oh my goodness.

ED: Little taste of Neenan.

TOM: Yeah. Hello, consequences of my own actions. Good to see you again.

ED: This podcast is actually produced by the, uh, guy who worked at, um –

TOM: I hope – I'm glad to see he's thriving.

ED: Uh, so the – the question – the question is –

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Because obviously we want to employ a small amount of empathy.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: How would you like to be executed out of these three?

TOM: Right. Ooh, okay.

ED: Uh, gladiator. Execution by gladiator. So I suppose you've got a fighting chance, although you will get battered.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Um, execution by 'Gladiators', the TV show.

TOM: That was going to be a follow-up question and you already – you're ahead of me. Good.

ED: I'm there.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Um, you just – you just keep doing it until you die.

TOM: Right.

KATH: No – you're not allowed water.

ED: Uh, or Kath's crowbar.

TOM: Oh, uh, Kath, are you – are you wielding it?

KATH: Always got it. always got it. Never without. How am I supposed to get into buildings?

TOM: Um, well I guess that was –

ED: I would say the door, but –

TOM: Just – it's quicker, isn't it? It's quicker.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Um, uh, I'd imagine that'd be the quickest, uh, would be Kath's crowbar. I've seen – no – is it all – yeah, it depends. If you wanted to draw it out, if you did like – if you're like –

ED: Yeah.

TOM: When you're breaking the top of an egg like to have a solid in it or something.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Fucking hell.

TOM: Is that what you do? Just like lots of tiny taps until I'm dead.

KATH: I'm – I sort of mix it up, to be honest.

TOM: Okay.

KATH: It sort of depends which – which angle I – I bring it down at, which, you know, I might just start at the feet and work up.

TOM: Ooh, I don't know. Ooh.

ED: Christ.

TOM: Oh, I could be there for weeks.

KATH: No, I'd – I'd get bored.

TOM: Uh, similarly – yeah.

ED: Okay, okay.

TOM: Um, well then it's going to have to be, um, I don't want to – a gladiator, one gladiator, um, would be – I think that would be too scary. I think – is – is the hydration, which I'm assuming would – is what would get me in the Gladiators scenario, is that so bad to – to die from?

ED: I think you'd either die of dehydration or a heart attack. Um –

KATH: I think – yeah.

TOM: Yeah. It would be one or the other, wouldn't it?

ED: Not saying – I'm not – I'm not like throwing suspicions on you – on your level of fitness, I'm just saying if you're – if you're relentlessly doing it until you die –

TOM: Oh, I think even – even John Fashanu himself would, uh, would probably – he'd probably struggle. And he's – he's familiar with the course as anyone, so it's – so no, I'm not taking that as an offense. No, I think – even so, I think that would probably be – you would have fun. You – it'd start – it'd start fun. It would not get fun afterwards, but it would start fun, so yeah.

ED: Yes. Yeah, true.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I – I love that in your – in your head, um, part of the problem for you would be just not being familiar with the course.

[All laugh]

TOM: You'd soon be familiar, wouldn't you?

ED: Well, I want to be familiar with what I was doing. Yeah, yeah. So we're saying – we're saying 'Gladiators' the TV show is –

TOM: Yes.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Yeah, okay. Yeah. I'll just, um –

TOM: Um, do I get the guy? What's his name? The Scottish guy?  
Um –

ED: Fuck yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

TOM: Oh good. Okay. No, I'm sold. I'm actually – that's quite a nice way to die, in that case.

KATH: Fair, okay.

TOM: Yeah.

[Spooky music]

KATH: Harrison Ford.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Ford – fjord. Ford Fiesta B256. Shag, marry, kill.

TOM: Right.

KATH: Did I pronounce the second one?

TOM: A fjord is –

ED: Yeah.

KATH: A fjord. There we go. Yeah.

TOM: A fjord.

KATH: Yeah, that was the second one.

TOM: Uh, which is sort of a – my – when I imagine a fjord, I might be wrong, it's sort of a – a wintery kind of Nordic, uh, sort of landscape. Is that correct?

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Uh, big – big old lake, yeah.

TOM: Big old lake.

ED: So a big lake that travels on land that's been created by glacier.

TOM: Nice. Very nice.

ED: It's really fit. That's me angling for a shag there.

KATH: It's really hot, yeah. Yeah.

TOM: Yeah, there's – to what extent is that just going for a nutty swim? Would shagging a fjord be like – go for a nice nutty swim?

ED: You've – you've got to at least – we've never – we've never gone down this before.

TOM: Right.

ED: But I would suggest you have – you have to ejaculate and you have to at least – at least attempt to pleasure the fjord.

TOM: Right. Okay. Sort of caress the shore, uh, and –

ED: Yeah. We have to be able to go, ‘he gave – he gave his best there.’

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Okay, okay. Okay, um, and the others are Harrison Ford and a – a Ford Fiesta.

KATH: Yeah, B256, specifically.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Right. I – I’m not good on cars. My mum drove a Ford Fiesta so I want to remove that as much from romance or – or sort of, you know, uh, sexual activity.

ED: Really fair.

KATH: Yeah. Okay.

TOM: So I’m going to kill the car.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Um, also that feels like the most morally correct thing to do, is like kill a car rather than a human.

KATH: What if it has feelings? What if the car has feelings?

TOM: That's just because my personal – well, oh, god.

ED: It has like full emotions.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Oh, no.

KATH: It has emotions. This Ford Fiesta is – is a family friend.

TOM: Right. Oh, no. Oh, no.

ED: Well then I'd – I'd still suggest you can't fuck it, then.

TOM: Yeah, exactly. Well, there you go. Now it's awkward. So I'm going to – also you can like – if I locked the Ford Fiesta – if I left the Ford Fiesta running and locked it in a garage, would it sort of – would it –

KATH: Would it deal with itself?

TOM: Do it – deal with itself?

ED: So put a pipe from – from its exhaust back in.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Into its own – yeah.

ED: Yeah. Into its –

KATH: Yeah, how would you do it?

ED: Fuck, yeah, I guess so. I guess so.

TOM: Okay. That – well that’s – then I – I’ll be okay. I think I could live with that.

KATH: Okay, yeah. Okay.

TOM: And, um, I would – I mean there’s no – there’s – the one thing I don’t need any – any sort of specification on is I know what – I can imagine what it would be like to have sex with Harrison Ford. Um, and if I – I’d probably rather marry him, uh, and then spend –

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Spend the wedding night just asking him about, uh, the filming of, um, of, uh ‘Six Days Seven Nights’ with Anne Heche. I’d just be like –

KATH: Sure, yeah. A honeymoon well spent.

TOM: Yeah. ‘What was that like? Was that fun?’ Yeah. Just graphic detail about it.

ED: Do you – is it an archaic – it’s an archaic thing that you have to consummate a marriage?

TOM: Uh, ooh, good question. Um –

ED: And would – does – would that count as consummating it?

TOM: Yeah. Just a really in-depth discussion about a – a film in the late 90s? I hope so. Um –

ED: I think he's a good shout. I think you should – I think you should marry Harrison Ford.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I – I think there's –

TOM: And also I want to make it clear, I would pleasure the fjord before the wedding. Because I do – I am not – one thing I would not do is cheat on Harrison Ford.

KATH: Yeah, no, you're – you're an honest man.

TOM: Yeah, that's a deal breaker.

KATH: I think Harrison would appreciate that.

ED: I think so.

KATH: The Ford Fiesta, though, I mean, ooh.

TOM: Uh, so trying not to –

ED: Murder that one then?

TOM: Well I'd do that first. That's the horrible bit. And then I'd – I'd pleasure the fjord, get married –

ED: To congratulate yourself.

TOM: I'd start with the worst bit. Exactly.

ED: Little treat.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: On a job well done.

TOM: Exactly.

ED: Fuck the fjord. Yeah, great.

KATH: Really the – the correct answer, I think. I think that was the right answer.

ED: Yeah, yeah.

TOM: Thank you. I don't – I often think these – yeah, they could be interpreted many ways. I think that's the only – the only way round that that – that should work.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: Murder Harrison Ford straight off the bat. Um –

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Fuck the car, marry the lake. Done.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Mad, absolutely mad. Um, great. Well that's – that's all of our questions that we – that we need the answer to. Um –

TOM: Great.

KATH: And we do – we did need the answers to them, so, um –

ED: We do need the answers, that's the thing.

TOM: It is crucial.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, it really is.

ED: Um, just for the council. Thank you so much for answering those. Now then, I fucking – I'm so excited about the cinema, as you can tell by the beginning of the chat, we all –

TOM: Yes.

ED: Absolutely love a cinema visit.

TOM: We love it.

ED: So would you care to tell the ghost story you have about this here cinema now?

TOM: Yes, of course. Yeah.

ED: And – and very quickly, does it – does the story have a title?

TOM: It doesn't. Uh, let's call it The Phoenix.

[Spooky music]

[Slow orchestral music]

Ruby was a cineaste. She'd learned that word about two years ago and immediately decided that's what she was. It was a fitting descriptor and one which replaced in her mind the previous word she used to describe herself, cinephile. Which while also accurate, was a moniker more prone to misunderstanding as she had discovered one night, on a blind date in a loud bar.

There her and a young man called Craig had started discussing their interests. 'I'm a cinephile,' said Ruby. Craig had taken a furtive look around, leaned in close and confided, 'so am I'. Needless to say a misunderstanding ensued and it comes as no relief to Ruby that Craig is now serving at her majesty's pleasure, for at least twelve years, after which he will have to alert all his neighbours of his presence when he moves to a new area.

Anyway, this is a roundabout way of saying that Ruby loved movies. And this had been true for every single one of her 25 years on this planet. She had adored them. Pretty much all movies, if it was over 80 minutes long Ruby would enjoy watching it. Action, romance, western, she devoured all of them with the insatiable appetite, scoring each one and ranking her favourites in meticulously compiled lists. She had even made a list of her favourite movie lists. Number one was her top 10 Time loop movies. She loved a bit of narrative recursion.

[Music gets louder]

So imagine her delight when word came to her in the local paper that the Spooktown cinema was to reopen its doors after nearly a decade. The Phoenix was to boast four screens, a café, a cocktail bar, while also maintaining the original building's lush art deco architecture. The article also boasted that while showing brand

new releases, one screen would be dedicated exclusively to, classic movies. This, Ruby decided, would be her home from home.

As soon as it was possible, she purchased a season ticket and vowed to attend as many screenings as humanly possible. But announcing this decision to her mother, Rose, aroused concern. 'Oh for heaven's sake go out and meet some people, Ruby. You'll never make friends sat silently in the dark.' But Ruby had friends. She may not be able to talk to them or go out for a drink with them, and sometimes they were separated by decades, and the textured grain of processed celluloid, but every single person on that screen was a friend of hers. A fact which brought Ruby huge comfort. 'You'd be attractive if you made an effort,' chided Ruby's mum. 'You've got lovely big eyes, and that nose of yours is cute as a button.' But Ruby didn't care.

The day of the relaunch came. As promised the cinema looked immaculate, all trace of the fire damaged erased and replaced with clean lines and plush carpets. Ruby had a front row seat to the Phoenix's first classic movie screening, an obscure 1940's detective movie with the tantalisingly lurid title *She Wore Death Like A Dress*. Ruby sat down and waited. No other patrons joined her, it was just her and the movie, and she was perfectly happy with this arrangement. The projector clicked [clicking] into life and started displaying images in rapid enough succession to conjure the illusion of movement.

About halfway through the film, Ruby found herself distracted. It was a bar scene. The main detective was interviewing the bar owner about a death which occurred in the alleyway outside the premises. But none of that bothered Ruby, for her eye was drawn to a supporting artist, sometimes referred to as an extra or meat

puppet, smoking a cigarette in the far right of the frame. Almost cropped completely out of shot, he nevertheless radiated an air of enigmatic magnetism. His hair was blonde, parted on the side and looping in front of his right eye. His cheekbones were chiselled and his eyes dark. And he held a cigarette the way only men in the 40's could. Like it was an extension of his hand. Ruby was besotted.

[Music intensifies]

After the film, Ruby took herself to the library. She found a huge book on 40's cinema and leafed through it, hoping to find more details about this brooding thespian. Unsurprisingly, she found nothing. This was a man lost to the thick fog of historical obscurity. And yet Ruby couldn't stop thinking about him.

A new week rolled around and Ruby was delighted to discover a new classic showing at the Phoenix. [Old-timey music] She sat in her seat. Waited, but no other patrons joined. Once again the projector fired up [clicking] and she was transported to the 50's Hollywood in a musical extravaganza, Ain't Got A Dime For A Dame. [old-timey music] The plot was straightforward enough. A young woman arrived in Hollywood from out of town determined to become a star. A lot of singing and dancing ensued and at one point everyone was in a swimming pool for some reason. Towards the end of the picture, the main character is dancing on top of a streetcar.

But it wasn't the tight choreography which took Ruby's breath away. It was one of the men in the street car. Blonde hair, parted to the side and looping in front of his right eye. Chiselled cheekbones and dark eyes. It was the same man. [Ominous music] He smoked with the same nonchalance and, well, it was almost

like he was staring out of the screen at her. The same actor, a decade later. It was like he hadn't aged a day.

Again Ruby researched and again, no information emerged as to who this man was. Next week, a 60's classic, [old-timey music] London A-Go-Go, a swinging sexy film all about being young and carefree. A crowd scene on Carnaby Street, and to Ruby's astonishment, again that blonde man, chiselled cheekbones and dark eyes. [ominous music]

Rose was becoming concerned. Ruby wasn't just going to every new classic the Phoenix displayed. She was going to every screening. Three times a day seven days a week, Ruby was there. Anything to catch a glimpse of this captivating and mysterious man, somehow a mainstay of classic cinema yet without the notoriety to make it into the credits or any literature about the time.

Ruby attended every screening of the 70's classic The Busboy. In a shoot out in an Italian restaurant, there he was. Blonde hair, chiselled cheekbones, dark eyes. The 80's action movie Skyscraper Cop, in the crowd scene at the end. Same man. Blonde hair, chiselled cheekbones, dark eyes. And it was as if each film he came closer and closer to the screen. Like he was advancing on her at a glacial pace across decades of movie history.

Ruby wasn't sleeping now. She was just waiting until she'd go to the cinema again. And she'd bought all the films on DVD, but often the aspect ration was wrong and the picture not sharp enough and she couldn't make out the man she yearned for. It had to be the cinema, it had to be the front row, and it had to be every single screening.

90's week rolled around and it brought with it amiable rom-com I Married You While You Were In A Coma. [guitar music] Ruby watched the whole thing with her eyes flitting across the frame hoping to catch a glimpse. But nothing. Had she missed him? She stayed in her seat and waited for the next showing to roll around. This time she was joined by one more audience member. She watched it all the way through. And still nothing. Ruby got up to leave, and only then made eye contact with her fellow patron. [ominous music] Blonde hair, chiselled cheekbones, dark eyes.

'It's – it's you,' she gasped, before her brain could stop her. The man just put his finger to his lips. He stood up and kissed her. He took a cigarette out of his top pocket and lit it. [match lighting] He took a puff and handed it to Ruby. It's the last thing she ever remembers doing before the sirens. [sirens]

Rose wasn't surprised her daughter's funeral was poorly attended. She didn't have any friends. Just the cinema. The cinema which had taken Ruby away from her when its flames engulfed her. Rose sighed, maybe she should be happy. Her daughter died doing what she loved. How many of us can say that?

[Ominous music]

Robert loved movies. His Youtube channel 'CineSucks' had over twelve million subscribers and his bedroom was full to the ceiling with Blu Rays and collectors edition steel books. So imagine how happy he was when he heard the Phoenix cinema was to reopen after a decade.

Robert was there first day. 'A ticket for Fast 12 please,' he asked the box office. But Fast 12 was sold out. Classic. The ticket seller

suggested Robert go to the classic movie screen instead, so Robert bought a ticket for that instead. Reluctantly.

The movie was the 50's classic No Time Left. [old-timey music] And he wasn't enjoying it. At least not until an actress caught his eye. She had big eyes and the cutest nose he'd ever seen. And she smoked a cigarette with the effortless cool of no woman he'd ever met before. And when Robert got home, he found he couldn't stop thinking about her.

The end.

[Spooky music]

KATH: Okay, I'm just going to come out and say it straight away.

TOM: Okay.

KATH: How do we definitely not know that Ruby wasn't –

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: She spent that long in the cinema.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: She's not sleeping.

TOM: Loved it. No.

KATH: How do we – how do we not know that she's just full-on hallucinating all of this and then accidentally set a fire.

TOM: Right.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Good question. Good – very good question. I'd say she – she wasn't a smoker. You can't smoke in cinemas and she was –

KATH: Oh, I believe it then, now. That's fine.

TOM: Yeah. The chair's all creaky. That is a – that – adding more ambiance. Um, I, uh –

ED: That is – it is weird that you're sat down outside the cinema.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah. Really weird.

ED: You brought your own chair with you.

KATH: You brought your own chair.

TOM: I, um, exactly. Well it's one of those like, uh, yeah, it's one of those walking sticks that turns into a chair for old people playing golf.

ED: Oh, nice. Yeah yeah yeah.

TOM: Um, I –

ED: They look so dangerously uncomfortable.

TOM: Not – no one has had a good sit down in one of those ever.

KATH: No.

ED: No. Ahem, I'm just going to precariously balance myself on a pike. Give the old pins a rest.

TOM: Exactly. Um, no, she didn't smoke so how could she have started a – how could she have started a fire without the aid of some kind of spook or ghoul?

ED: Um –

KATH: Um –

ED: I think there's many ways you can do it. Uh, um.

TOM: Are you suggesting celluloid is flammable?

KATH: Putting it out there.

ED: I never said. I never said that. I never said that.

[Spooky music]

ED: Did the – did Rose know about the – the man in the – in the – in the films? Did – did Ruby's mother know about the – the man in the films as well?

TOM: She – Ruby had mentioned him. She'd mentioned just – actually I think it was more just like she – she looked on Ruby's Google history and that's how she – she discovered what was – what was happening.

ED: And that's how this story's been worked out. Okay, yeah.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: It's been sort of back engineered.

ED: Okay.

KATH: Okay.

TOM: Um, that way. Yeah.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Okay, okay. Um, can I ask some quick fire questions?

TOM: Please. Pun – pun intended, by the way.

ED: Uh, retrospectively yes.

TOM: Fair enough.

ED: Uh, She Wore Death Like A Dress.

TOM: Yes.

ED: Starring?

TOM: Starring – Marilyn Hayworth.

ED: Marilyn Hayworth. Okay. Yeah.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: One of my favourite actresses, Marilyn Hayworth. Um, Ain't Got Dime for a Dame.

TOM: Yes.

ED: Directed by, again?

TOM: Oh, um – uh – Powell and – Powell and Press, uh, um, Powell – Powell and Pressburger.

KATH: Ah, yeah.

ED: Powell and Pressburger.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Powell and Pressburger.

TOM: Powell. That's Powell, Press – Press and Burger are two different people.

KATH: Got it.

TOM: There's three directors. Very rare.

KATH: Very rare, yeah.

ED: Powell comma Press.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: And Burger.

TOM: Yeah, yeah.

ED: Okay, great. Why am I thinking Burger had something to do with the Beethoven movies?

TOM: Mm. Mm. Yeah, yeah.

ED: Yeah. London – London –

KATH: Didn't one of them do Flipper as well? Flipper?

TOM: Yeah. Press. Press did Flipper.

ED: Yes.

KATH: Press did Flipper, that was it.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: It was so weird that after – after Ain't Got A Dime For A Dame –

TOM: Yeah.

ED: They all split – split off and did, um, animal capers. It was so weird.

TOM: Yeah, one of them did Dunston Checks In as well. It was, uh, yeah.

ED: So, so weird. Um, London A Go Go.

TOM: Yes.

ED: Uh, who was that – who starred in that again? Who's the – the actor?

TOM: Oh, um –

ED: Who – who was A Go Go?

TOM: Who Was A Go? It was, um, uh, Malcolm Caine. Malcolm Caine was in that film.

ED: Malcolm Caine.

KATH: Oh.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Yes, his one film.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Never acted again.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Never.

ED: Um –

KATH: Got cancelled, didn't he? Something like that.

ED: He did.

TOM: He – if you watch London A Go Go now, it is very problematic, yeah.

ED: Um, alright. I won't do the rest. I think – I think I've enjoyed – I think I've – I think I've enjoyed that idea enough for now.

TOM: Yeah, yeah. And – and are you – is it because you know I'll just – I'll just combine two – I – that – certainly something that sounds like I've combined two names together.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Um, that is not what's happened.

ED: Yeah, yeah.

TOM: It's just weird that all the films in there, you know, sound like that.

ED: Yeah. Uh, I also think I went, 'who acted in that?' Great. 'Who directed in that?' Great. 'Who acted in it again?' It's like, 'oh, that's my last thing.'

KATH: Who did the sound?

ED: Last thing.

TOM: There's no escalation. Yeah, yeah.

ED: Although Skyscraper – Skyscraper Cop is in the top 10 of my favourite films of all time.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: I love – I love Skyscraper Cop.

TOM: Is it an Easter film? That's the big question. People are like, 'does it count as an Easter film or not?'

KATH: Uh, I think so.

TOM: Every year – yeah. I think so.

KATH: Yeah, the argument always comes up, doesn't it? Yeah.

TOM: It's the same – same debate. Yeah, yeah.

KATH: But no, you can't argue with the – the rabbit scene. You can't argue with it, you know?

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Yeah, exactly. It's all there. Come on, people.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: It's – it's set at Easter, but some people say, 'well no one ever eats an egg, so what's the kind of – where's the line drawn?'

TOM: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: Is it an Easter film? Fucking hell.

[Spooky music]

ED: Now I haven't, uh, much to my detriment, I haven't been to the cinema in quite a long time. Is this – is this now open or is – has this burnt down recently? I – I've kept my head out of the news just because it sort of stresses me out. Um –

TOM: Fair enough. Um, no, so – so it's, uh, it used the time – it used lockdown and some of the old Rishi – Rishi Sunak money to, um, to do that. I don't know if Spooktown – I don't know how clued up the people of Spooktown are about like, um, grants for – grants for small businesses.

ED: Yeah, no idea.

KATH: Yeah, not a clue.

ED: I remember the, um, I remember the – Rishi Sunak's, um, 'watch out to help out' about cinemas. I – I remember that but I don't really remember anything else.

TOM: It was – yeah, he publicised it by just sitting silently and watching Tenet while people went and took photos of him. It's really weird. Um, but yeah. So he – they got a little small business grant from, uh, from – from Mrs. Sunak and used that to, um, and used that to renovate.

ED: Okay. Okay, yeah.

KATH: Okay.

ED: And so is it now – so it's open now? So I could go and watch a film? Or is it – has it recently burnt down?

TOM: Well it's – I would say –

KATH: I was going to say, it is hard to tell.

ED: I – I would turn around and look but I just can't be assed, so it's good to talk to you than just turn around and look.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah. There's a pattern that roughly every ten years it's open for a week. Or it's open for about four weeks and then burns down again.

KATH: Right.

ED: Okay. Okay.

TOM: It's a recurring thing. It just – yeah. They've got into a pattern now.

ED: And where – where are we in that pattern?

TOM: Uh, it's open.

ED: Right.

TOM: It's been open for three weeks, so get your tickets now.

ED: Fuck. Okay, okay. Right.

KATH: For next – next week is the week that it's – so we've got – we've got one more week to watch films in Spooktown.

ED: Got one more week.

KATH: Okay.

TOM: To watch films, yeah.

KATH: I love how everyone's just sort of accepted that as an idea. Like, 'oh yeah, we only get four weeks every decade in the cinema.'

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Because it will burn down.

TOM: Definitely. There are people in Spooktown who think Jumanji's a new release. They're like, 'the last time I was in the cinema.'

ED: It's sort of a leap year of – of cinemas. Um –

KATH: I – I'm assuming, correct me if I'm wrong, I'm assuming –

TOM: Okay.

KATH: That the kiss is the way to transfer the curse? Whatever this curse may be?

TOM: Uh, yes. I would say it's a – it's all – oh, no. Well it's all very orally fixated because it's to do with smoking, it's to do with kissing.

KATH: Yeah, of course. Yeah.

TOM: It's all very kind of mouth, you know, I – which, you know, when we all think of – think about cinemas and what organs we use when we're interacting with the cinema, I think we all think mouth.

ED: Mouth, yeah.

KATH: Mouth. That is – yeah. Yeah.

ED: Yeah, the, uh, the 3D tongue that you get for 3D movies, um, uh, what else?

TOM: Yeah, yeah. Strap that on. A taste a long movie.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Taste a long movie. Sing a long works there, that's fine.

TOM: Yeah, oh that's true. Yea.

ED: Sing a long's okay. Um, okay. So he – the – it's passed through the kiss. My – my worry now is, so we don't really know where this information has come from, apart from possibly Ruby – Ruby's mother, Rose.

TOM: Yes.

ED: Um, um, so how would you – how would you know that it's passed along through the kiss unless either a, you've made it up and you're going to get killed by the TV show 'Gladiators.'

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Right.

ED: B, uh, you are the most recent – you're Robert.

TOM: Oh, I'm so glad you said that I was Robert and that I haven't – I haven't kissed a teenage Youtuber. That would – because that's, uh, that's a whole other thing. Uh, I, um –

ED: Well actually hang on though, you are right. You would've – yeah, thank you – you – yes.

TOM: Um, CCTV, isn't it? You get the, you know, the – in the cinema they've all got CCTV.

KATH: Ah, yes.

TOM: Which has sort of –

ED: Famously CCTV.

TOM: Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah.

ED: No recording apart from us. We get to record you.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Um, that's – that's a good point.

TOM: Yeah, I hadn't thought about that. That's an imbalance of power right there, isn't it?

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

ED: Yeah, again. Um, yeah, that's a – that's a good point. So you just – you just saw the CCTV footage, saw them kiss, and went, 'ah.'

TOM: Aha, clocked it.

ED: There – there it is right there.

TOM: There it is. Been waiting for that.

KATH: What happened? Uh, what happened? What happened when – when the – did you see him on the camera?

TOM: I saw, um, he came in and, uh, and he was sat behind her. And then when they got up it – she noticed it was him, they had a good old smooch in the cinema.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Then he gave her a cigarette and then she smoked the cigarette, and then all –

ED: Yeah.

TOM: From the footage it was just – suddenly it was just smoke everywhere. Suddenly it was just like billowing smoke and then yeah, it's terrifying.

KATH: Gosh.

ED: Wow. That's a grim image.

TOM: That works in – does that work in horror stories? If you just describe something and then if it sounds quite normal you go, ‘it was terrifying’? ‘By the way, it was terrifying.’

KATH: Just tack that on the end, yeah.

TOM: Yeah yeah yeah. It’s a real –

KATH: Oh, FYI, real – really terrifying, so –

TOM: Really terrifying. It’s the stand-up equivalent of, um, you know, you say something and the guests don’t laugh, and you go, ‘unbelievable.’ Like it’s this –

KATH: How – how did the – how – what are the origins of this? Like how does the person get trapped as the – the meat puppet for – for a few decades anyway, you know? Who started this?

TOM: Right. Rumour has it – rumour has it it started – do you remember that, um, the first piece of footage at a cinema ever when, um, people – when it was a train pulling into a station.

KATH: A train, yes.

ED: Yes.

KATH: And everyone freaked out because they were like, ‘it’s a train.’ Yeah.

TOM: And everyone shat themselves, yeah. Yeah yeah yeah yeah. So, um, so one person, the rumour is that one person didn’t shit themselves and run out the cinema because they knew it was a – they knew it was a film. They understood it. They understood the

science and knew that that wasn't a train going to hit them. Um, and that they, um, somehow they – but they stepped into the train. Imagine that. That's –

ED: Imagine that. But it was terrifying.

TOM: Unbelievable.

ED: I love – I love that you pre-empted all of that with, uh, the – the defence of, 'rumour has it.'

TOM: Yeah, yeah.

ED: Yeah. Can't – can't pull you off on any of that.

TOM: Those magic three words that'll save me from execution.

ED: Okay so – so when people shot themselves and fled the cinema because of –

TOM: Yes.

ED: Because they were worried that the – the train was going to hit them –

TOM: Yeah.

ED: They were right.

KATH: Yeah, it was – yeah.

ED: And he – he was like, 'I'm not scared of this bullshit.' And then he –

TOM: He was the one – yeah.

ED: He went in and he got trapped in there.

TOM: And he was at fault. Yeah.

ED: And then – and then burnt the cinema down.

KATH: So how – how did he get out know to kiss someone? Like there's a lot of – there's a lot of unanswered things here.

TOM: Yes. Um, so he just – there's like an innate knowledge. He boarded the train and then –

ED: Rumour has it.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Rumour has it, um, like that there – what happened was, you know because obviously films are only like 90 minutes.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Um, so – so this guy found himself in a film. He found himself in a film with Humphrey Bogart or someone.

ED: Wow. Wow.

TOM: Right. He's an extra. Um, and – and at the end of the film, it all ends and Humphrey Bogart's like, 'I – I don't know, uh, I guess that's the end of the movie.' You know, he literally says at the end of films. And then the – you know, the end. And everything else.

And then, because obviously we stop seeing the film, but the film carries on, and at that point Humphrey Bogart turns to that guy and went, uh, 'to – to escape you need to kiss someone.' Really quickly. He's like, uh, 'it's a curse and to escape it you need to kiss someone who's watching the film.' Like that. He just sort of – under his breath.

ED: Wow.

KATH: Ah, so it's real – real quick, yeah.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Gave him the answer and he had to get – wow.

TOM: Gave him the answer.

KATH: Okay.

ED: And then they get back into their positions for the beginning of the film.

TOM: Exactly. They may all have to reshuffle and – yeah.

ED: And it starts again.

KATH: God, so is every single actor trapped in a film?

TOM: Yes.

KATH: Is that what's going on?

ED: Yeah, have you never done a film, Kath?

KATH: No. You know what? No.

TOM: Yeah. It's why they pay so well.

KATH: This is your life now.

TOM: Yeah, yeah.

ED: Yeah. Mad.

TOM: When you send in a self-tape, that is like a little down payment on you being in the film forever.

KATH: Right.

TOM: That's like – a little bit of you is always in that self-tape.

ED: Fucking hell.

TOM: Um, that's why when you've done a self-tape it feels like a little bit of you has died. It's like a little –

KATH: Yeah, that stacks up.

ED: Oh, god.

KATH: That stacks up.

TOM: Yeah yeah.

ED: Fucking hell. They're hellish, aren't they?

TOM: Yeah, yeah. The absolute worst.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: I did – I did one where I was just – had to pretend to be having sex with – with my laptop. As in like that was the camera in that position and I just had to like bang my laptop with my partner on the other side of the laptop. Head in hands reading – reading out the lines.

TOM: Oh, god.

ED: And you're just like, 'do you need – do you need to see this? Do you really need to see this?'

KATH: Why did you pick this scene?

TOM: Yeah yeah yeah. You're reading through it going, 'the – the rest of the movie isn't like this.' Its, uh –

ED: Yeah. To be fair it was the only scene that character had. Just to see if you can do it.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: It's just like, 'ugh, come on.'

KATH: Yeah, brutal. Brutal.

TOM: Never fun. Never fun. See what I'm doing now is subconsciously I'm trying to make you empathise with me like by finding commonalities that we all have. Like just so that – I'm letting you in – letting light in on – on the secret here, so that

you'll be like, 'it must be true because we agreed on the self-tape.'

ED: It's working so well.

KATH: Oh, oh my god, it's working.

TOM: Excellent. Excellent.

KATH: Yeah yeah.

TOM: Great, okay.

KATH: You're safe. You're safe at the moment. In – in my eyes you're safe.

ED: Should we pop into the cinema?

KATH: Yeah, can do.

TOM: Do you want to pop in? Am I joining you?

ED: No, no, sorry, I was talking to Kath. Um, do you want to go see a film?

TOM: Oh.

ED: No, of course. Yeah, come in. Um –

TOM: I'll come in as well. This is –

KATH: You're going to have to pack up your chair.

TOM: Yeah. I'll fold it up now.

KATH: Yeah, okay.

TOM: There we go. Carry on.

ED: What are the, uh, what are they showing today in the classics screen?

TOM: Yeah.

ED: What's – what's that there? What does that say? God, my eyesight's terrible.

KATH: Yeah, same.

TOM: Oh, it's, um, uh, Taxi Cab For Margaret.

ED: Taxi Cab For Margaret. I've always wanted to see Taxi Cab For Margaret.

TOM: Yes.

KATH: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

ED: Famously starring, um, oh, gosh –

TOM: Oh, um, uh, Caroline, uh, Dukesbury.

ED: Caroline Dukesbury.

KATH: Yes.

TOM: Caroline Dukesbury.

ED: Caroline Dukesbury.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, she's excellent, yeah.

ED: In what was it again? I should've written this down.

KATH: Taxi, uh, Taxi For Margaret.

ED: Taxi For Margaret?

TOM: Was it a Taxi Cab For Margaret?

KATH: Yeah, for Margaret.

ED: Taxi Cab. Taxi Cab For Margaret.

TOM: Taxi Cab For Margaret. Set in, uh, set in New York in the – in the 60s.

ED: Of course.

TOM: Um, the first utterance of the f-word in cinema. Little factoid about that film.

ED: No fucking way.

TOM: There you go.

ED: That's great. That's great.

KATH: Wow. Wow.

ED: There you go. Really weird as well because like it's not, um, it just starts and it goes, 'welcome to Taxi Cab For Margaret, you fuckers.' And then the film starts.

KATH: And then we're just in. God.

TOM: Yeah, yeah.

KATH: No wonder it was ground-breaking. God.

TOM: Yeah, really was.

ED: Welcome to – fucking hell. Oh, god. Um, well should we – I'll go – I'll get – I'll get these. Um, I'll get them with the company card.

TOM: Are you sure?

ED: Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

KATH: Yeah, let him. Let him. Let him.

TOM: Thank you very much. Okay. Tax deductible?

ED: Uh, hi, there. Yeah yeah yeah, big time.

TOM: Yeah, because it's a podcast, right? Yeah yeah yeah.

ED: Yeah. Because it's a podcast. Um, hi, can I get, uh, three tickets to Taxi Cab For Margaret? Thanks. Thank you.

[All laugh]

ED: There you go. There you go. God, that felt like a self-tape.

TOM: Yeah. Oh – oh, sorry, is now too late, um, I'm technically a mature student. Did you get – is there like a discount or something you can get? Um –

ED: Um, it costs more if you're a – a mature student.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Oh, fair enough.

ED: They – they don't like it. They don't like it at all.

KATH: Yeah, they hate it. They really hate it.

TOM: That makes sense.

ED: They don't think you should learn anything past the age of 18.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: The sign's up. That's why the signs are all there saying that.

ED: Um – oh.

TOM: Oh, yes.

ED: It's a sassy cinema. I can't fucking wait for it to burn down.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: Just going to screen – it's the classic screen screen?

TOM: Yeah, smallest one, obviously.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Open – just open the – this door for you. There you go. After you two.

TOM: Thank you very much.

ED: You're welcome. Nothing from Kath?

TOM: Um, letting – hang on. Let it go. Oh, it's one of those soft close ones. Can't even hear it close, can you? It's really nice.

KATH: Oh, nice.

ED: Lovely.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Really nice.

ED: That like [blows] –

KATH: Yeah.

ED: [blows] Oh god. I always think of those doors, because they are fucking lovely. Why aren't all my doors in my house like that?

TOM: Yeah. Yeah.

KATH: Because they're so thick, I bet they're really expensive.

TOM: Oh, that's true.

KATH: They're really thick doors, aren't they?

ED: Good point, yeah.

KATH: Like –

ED: You're saying thick like you mean stupid.

[All laugh]

KATH: Proper thick doors.

TOM: Jesus, yeah.

ED: Fucking thick doors. Can't even close loudly.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: God, they're idiots.

ED: Okay, let's – let's sit in and see if we can see, uh –

TOM: Take our seats.

ED: This is – this is quite stupid. The film doesn't start for another two hours. Um –

TOM: They're set very far apart.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Ed, why did they sell them to you? That's weird.

ED: Well you can buy tickets before – you can buy tickets before the film.

KATH: No, it should be – it should be 30 seconds before the trailers start or not at all.

TOM: Yeah yeah.

[Spooky music]

ED: Uh, Kath, should we con – should we conflag about this? I don't –

KATH: Yeah, we probably should.

ED: Here's my – here's my overarching, uh, problem. And I'll – I'll say this in front of you, Tom.

TOM: Sure.

ED: I don't like the guy.

[All laugh]

ED: No, um, um, it's – it – the story feels like it has been cobbled together through, um, Google searches on Ruby's page.

TOM: Yes.

ED: A distraught mother's recollection, and CCTV footage of two people kissing.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: You know what, Ed? When you put it like that.

TOM: And yeah. He's saying there's a lot of inference being drawn there. Um –

ED: Yes, yeah.

TOM: Hard to argue. Hard to argue. Um, but once it's all together, I think it's – like film itself, it's – it's more than the sum of its parts.

ED: I – yeah, but that's my issue. I – I'm interested in the sum of its parts.

TOM: The parts, or what – yeah.

ED: The parts are what hold up in court.

TOM: Yeah, yeah. Well that is – well that puts me at a conundrum. Um, I would say look around you at the cinema. What do you see? Loads of no smoking signs. Maybe that is a message. Maybe that's a warning.

ED: I believe that a little prick would've smoked a cigarette where he's not meant to.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: And then given it to a girl he's making out with and she would smoke it.

TOM: Definitely.

ED: And I believe that that would –

KATH: You are –

TOM: He would've sucked it into his cheeks, wouldn't he? And then [popping] just puckered it back out – probably, yeah.

ED: Blow – yeah.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: Yeah. Or catch it in his mouth. Yeah. No, yeah.

KATH: Yeah. You are right about how weird the smoking signs are actually as well, because obviously in Spooktown everyone can smoke anywhere. So it is really odd that you can't smoke inside the cinema.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: The nicotine stain. The whole place is just that – that nicotine sort of Trump hair nicotine colour that, uh –

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah. It is that colour, isn't it? Wow. My goodness. Um –

KATH: Oh god. God, what a paint colour. Nicotine Trump hair colour.

ED: So bearing in mind that if this doesn't go in you're going to die.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Is there – is there any – any last sort of attempt at – at proving that it did actually happen?

TOM: Um.

ED: Um, bearing in mind that my – my issue with it is that if there was any proof that the – the sort of ghostly figure in the – in the film was real –

TOM: Yes.

ED: I would – I would then believe it. But it – it feels like that – there's no proof of that. Of the actually ghostly element.

TOM: Right. Right. All I'd say is look where we are. We're sat in the cinema right now. Very far apart.

ED: If you mention the smoking signs again I'm going to scream. And you know how I feel about talking in a cinema. So that's –

TOM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, we need to wait – like unfortunately I think what you've done is you've put a time limit on when you would need to decide about this. Whereas the film starts in, what is it now, it's now, uh, an hour and, uh, uh, 48 minutes. And, um, and so – so you – what you have to do is decide whether you, uh, you believe me enough that you're going to stay and watch the film and possibly become emotionally and romantically obsessed with someone in the film, which is a risk to you. Or whether we're all going to leave because you don't want to get embroiled in the – in the cycle of – the cycle of obsession.

KATH: Hm.

ED: Touché.

TOM: I don't think that was an answer. I think that was just, uh, maybe that's just –

ED: Touché, Tom, touché. Throwing the ball squarely back in my court.

KATH: Yeah, we don't believe it and we watch the film.

TOM: Yeah.

KATH: Or we believe it and leave because we're frightened of the film.

TOM: Yeah. Yes.

KATH: So that puts us in a very tricky position.

TOM: What are we going to do? Is the – basically what I’m asking is, is this podcast going to be sort of a – a good length, you know, sort of an hour, hour and ten. Or is it going to be three hours and involve long periods of silence when you’re watching a film?

ED: Oh god, the thought of this not being edited sends shivers down my spine. Yeah. Hm.

KATH: Huh.

ED: Hm. Kath.

KATH: Ed, what are you thinking?

ED: I just can’t wait for the film. Oh, about Tom’s story?

KATH: Yeah, about Tom’s story, obviously.

ED: Um, uh, I think he’s got us by the fucking balls here, mate.

KATH: I think he has as well. I don’t want to – we can’t prove that it’s true by watching the film and –

ED: Yeah.

KATH: And potentially, um, you know, put ourselves in a very dangerous position.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: That’s the only way to prove it, but we can’t do that.

ED: Yeah. So do we just let – let it in?

KATH: I think we're going to have to. I think he's sort of proved it's true because I'm a little frightened to watch Taxi Cab For Margaret.

ED: Are you?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Because it says 'fuck'?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: It's really upsetting, and especially if it's the first thing they say.

ED: Yeah. Yeah. It really sets out their stall. That's fair. Um –

KATH: I don't think anyone should say that onscreen. Say it on podcasts, say it on radio. I don't – say it in real life. Say it in the park. Don't say it on screen. That was my thoughts and feelings on the word 'fuck.'

ED: News and fucking travel. Um, okay, yeah. Well if you're scared of seeing the film, I think that's – yeah.

KATH: I'm scared of seeing the film.

ED: Okay.

KATH: Yeah?

ED: Yeah, let's let him in.

KATH: Okay, okay.

ED: He's got us – yeah, he's got us. He's fucking check mated us.

KATH: Yeah. Okay. Okay, fair.

ED: I can't believe it.

KATH: Should we call him down?

ED: Tom.

TOM: Oh oh.

KATH: Hey, Tom. You can come back now.

ED: 'Oh oh. Oh oh.'

TOM: Woo, that is, uh, yeah. That goes back far.

ED: So quick.

KATH: That was really quick, yeah. Bloody hell, you would've done alright in 'Gladiator', actually.

ED: We – we've – we've –

TOM: Ooh. Ooh. Little tip of the hat in making your decision there.

ED: Word that – yeah. Yeah. Um, okay. Actually I’ve – I’ve changed my mind. Tom, yeah, but only – only a little bit.

TOM: Okay.

ED: Your – we – your story’s going to go into Spooktown.

TOM: Hooray.

ED: Really good for you. But because I’m sort of still on the fence about it –

TOM: Yeah.

ED: You’ve – you’ve got to do a couple of goes of ‘Gladiator.’

TOM: I’ll be honest, that is – that’s win win.

ED: It’s actually – yeah, it’s his dream that, isn’t it?

KATH: It’s his dream – dream scenario.

ED: Yeah. That’s perfect.

TOM: What you’ve – what you’ve described is like a really good stag do. That is a –

ED: Yeah, I forgot – I forgot the actual conversation about ‘Gladiators’ where you were like, ‘I’d love to do it for the most part until I die.’ Yeah. Well enjoy that.

[All laugh]

TOM: Have I got to do it with a gladiator, though? With – not like a gladiator like wolf, but like a gladiator like Roman.

ED: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

TOM: Right.

ED: You've got to do it with a legit gladiator.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: Yeah, great.

TOM: That wouldn't be as fun, but that isn't fun. So I think that's a – okay, yeah, that's more of a compromise.

ED: Okay, yeah.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Okay, great. Well congratulations.

KATH: Yeah, well done.

TOM: Thank you so much.

ED: On your story going in. Uh, it's been a genuine pleasure.

TOM: I was having so much fun. What an absolute joy. Yeah.

ED: I fucking loved it.

KATH: It's been a delight.

ED: Um, I think that's – I think that's us done. Um –

KATH: I guess you go and enjoy your time at –

ED: Enjoy Waghoulmama's.

KATH: At Waghoulmama's and Gladiator.

TOM: I think I'm going to go to Waghoulmama's. Um, I like it.

ED: Yeah.

TOM: I, um, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to go all sides. I'm not going to go for a main. I'm going to get four or five sides.

KATH: Nice. Tapas that shit, yes.

ED: Nice. Really good.

TOM: Yes.

KATH: Yeah.

TOM: Exactly. Probably comes out more expensive, but hey. You're only in Spooktown, you know, once. Not you guys.

KATH: Well, forever for us. Yeah. Yeah. But you're on your holidays. It's alright.

ED: Absolutely. You're on holidays, mate.

TOM: Yeah. Yeah.

KATH: Um, Ed, I think there's a thing of – of –

ED: God, I fucking love doing that – do you know what I do?

KATH: Oh yeah, go on.

ED: I get all – all the sides and a main. I'm a pigglet. I'm a fucking little pig.

KATH: I do that as well.

ED: Yeah. It's so good.

KATH: I'm out of the house. If I'm out the house I'm fucking into –

ED: Yeah.

TOM: Fair enough.

KATH: Sorry I swore.

ED: So good.

KATH: Yeah. food.

TOM: It's alright. It's not a film. We're okay.

KATH: Yeah, you're right. You're right.

TOM: Yeah. Oh, well thanks, guys. What an absolute treat. I'll, um, I'll – I'll take a little pic of my – of my meal and send it to you guys.

KATH: Oh great. Yeah, thank you.

ED: Oh, lovely. Yeah, great.

TOM: Yeah.

ED: That's great.

KATH: Uh, I think Skyscraper Cop is in, uh, another screening. I noticed it on the board before so maybe we could go watch that, Ed. Your fave.

ED: Oh tight, yeah. Yeah, I'd love that. Of course, mate.

KATH: Yeah. I don't think they swear in that either, which is really up my street, so –

ED: I'll swear, I'll swear, I'll swear. That's fine.

KATH: That's fine because that's in person.

ED: Yeah, I'll do the swearing.

KATH: That's not a problem. Uh, we'll go do that. You go and enjoy your Waghoulmama's and your, um –

ED: Can we watch it? Because it's – it's not Easter. Can you really watch it?

KATH: I don't – yes. Why would they be screening it?

ED: Okay, yeah. Yeah, you're right.

TOM: Yeah, fair.

ED: Fair, alright.

KATH: Yeah, I think we'll be alright.

ED: Well thanks, Tom.

KATH: Yeah, thank you, Tom.

TOM: Thanks so much.

ED: Have a safe journey back.

TOM: Thanks so much for having me. What an absolute treat.

ED: Yeah. Uh, bye.

KATH: Bye, Tom. Don't forget your chair.

TOM: Bye. Oh. Thank you.

KATH: You're welcome.

ED: Spiking that into your cinema seat.

[Spooky music]

ED: That was nice.

KATH: That was nice.

ED: I've got to say it. That was – I – that was nice.

KATH: Yeah, really nice. You were right to say that.

ED: Thank you. I liked it when you said – you went, 'nah' and you did a 'nice.'

KATH: 'Nice,' yeah.

ED: Yeah. You were right to say that.

KATH: Thank you.

ED: Dare I say sing it?

KATH: [singing] Nice. Yeah, it quite song – tuneful, isn't it?

ED: Yeah, quite sing – quite lyrical. Um –

KATH: Lyrical, that's it. Um, what are you up to now?

ED: I'd fucking love to watch – well I'd love to watch Skyscraper Cop, obviously. Um –

KATH: Well we can do that after, yeah.

ED: Because it's hot. It's hot boy. Um, but I've got to go and meet Lee Ryan. I think it's at his house to help him build a jungle gym.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Because he says that when it's constructed it becomes haunted, but when it's in its individual parts it's not haunted.

KATH: Interesting.

ED: Um, but I don't know whether he just sort of wants to hang out at his house.

KATH: Or he could just be putting it up wrong.

ED: Yeah, maybe he's like, 'oh, it's haunted. Can you come and help me?' He could just say, 'come and help me.' I don't mind. I like him.

KATH: Yeah. Or maybe he genuinely thinks it's haunted because it looks wrong but he's not understanding that he's just assembled it wrong.

ED: Oh.

KATH: So he's like, 'oh my god, it's haunted.' It's like, 'no, you've just put the – that on backwards.'

ED: Maybe. Either – either way I get to spend – spend the evening with, uh –

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Lee Ryan from Blue.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, I know. I know.

ED: Yeah, okay.

KATH: I had a poster of him on my wall.

ED: Did you?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I had a picture of, uh, Brody Dalle from, uh, The Distillers. She was topless but it was classy. She was facing away from the camera.

[Both laugh]

KATH: Saying that, I think Lee Ryan was topless in the one I had as well.

ED: Oh, really? Really? Nice. Just a couple of fucking horn dogs. Just a couple of horn dogs with their posters. Anyway, I – I'll catch you later, Kath.

KATH: Alright then. Enjoy your – is it – well say hello to Lee and then enjoy his company, I suppose. Say hello for us.

ED: I will do. I will. I will enjoy his company and at the end be like, 'well, hello. That was – that was lovely. Hello there.'

KATH: Yeah, but I know you – I know – I know you've had previous, so –

ED: Well we'll fucking unpack that later.

KATH: Enjoy your day.

ED: Hello. Just a bit of fun.

[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.