Welcome To Spooktown – Chloe Petts

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: Oh oh oh oh! Proper ghost there!

[Birds chirping, footsteps]

ED: It’s a big car park, isn’t it?

KATH HUGHES: Really big car park. Should we just have a sort of stroll around it?

ED: Yeah yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Do you think it was ever – well do you think there was ever a game where it was just like no one can park anymore? Yeah.

KATH: I reckon people had to park on the grass. I reckon there’s – there’s been people who parked on the grass because it was so full.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: It’s a big stadium.

ED: Do you think it was an overspill?

KATH: No, no I think that people will just – that’s why the grass is shit.

ED: Oh. Chloe’s just over there by the entrance but I don’t – I don’t want to go over yet. Just sparking up courage.

KATH: Oh yeah. Should we just sort of, um, walk to all four corners of the car park and then head over?

ED: Yes please.

KATH: Okay.

ED: You had any nightmares this week, Kath?

KATH: Yeah, actually, I have. Um, really wild one, actually. So I got kidnapped, um, and, uh, the mad part is, is who did it. It’s because I – I realised I’m in like this sort of warehouse thing.

ED: Me?  
  
KATH: It wasn’t you. It’s weirder. It’s weirder. It wasn’t you.

ED: Okay. You?

KATH: No.

ED: Okay.

KATH: So I’m in this warehouse and I’m literally like arms tied behind my back.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: And then out of nowhere, uh, the person who’s kidnapped me is revealed. It’s Cilla Black. And I kept – I just kept saying – I wasn’t even horrified that I’d been kidnapped. I just kept going, ‘what the – what the fuck are you doing? What the fuck are you doing?’ And she genuinely kept going, ‘surprise, surprise,’ the whole time. I couldn’t believe it. I’ve not thought of Cilla Black since she did that mad, uh, ‘Royal Variety Show’ in, uh, in those – that flashing leotard.

ED: That’s horrible, yeah.

KATH: Uh, was that the ‘Royal Variety’? That’s wild if it was. But yeah, I – I –

ED: It’s – it’s up – it’s right up the queen’s street that though, isn’t it?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Cilla Black’s tits lighting up.

KATH: And I have no – I have no idea why any of that was in my brain and entered my nightmares. And it was a nightmare, Ed. It really was.

ED: How close was she to your face when she said, ‘surprise, surprise’?

KATH: She was walking towards me.

ED: Right. Right.

KATH: She was walking towards me and then just sort of was like nose to nose eventually. Because I kept –

ED: Oh, no.

KATH: I kept saying, ‘what the fuck are you doing?’

ED: Yeah.

KATH: And she just kept saying, ‘surprise surprise,’ you know?

ED: I – I weirdly don’t think it being Cilla Black is that weird.

KATH: Really? Do you think she’s got it in her?

ED: I was – when you said ‘Cilla Black’ I was like, ‘yeah.’ Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah. Yeah. How do you think they got ‘Blind Date’ to go in? I don’t know. I don’t know. It’s horrible and I feel for you, but –

KATH: Thanks.

ED: It’s – that’s pretty bog standard in my eyes. That’s a classic Kath.

KATH: Well, it didn’t feel great.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: How about you, any nightmares this week?

ED: Got a sink plumbed, innit? Uh, in the kitchen.

KATH: Yeah?

ED: Yeah. And the whole day I was like, ‘oh, I just hope that they can plumb it in. I just hope they can plumb it in.’ I don’t know why, but I was – I was really like – I just get the feeling that they can’t plumb it in. He came over and he was like, ‘where’s the stop gap? Uh, stop tap?’ You know, to stop all of the cold water from coming in.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: He was like, ‘where’s that?’ And I was like, ‘oh no. It’s – it’s been plaster boarded behind that wall.’

KATH: Oh no.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: That actually is a nightmare.

ED: So he just had to get a –

KATH: Always – always make a hole.

ED: Yeah, it –

KATH: Make a hole. Make a gap.

ED: Well, exactly. And I was just going – because – because he was like, ‘oh no.’ And I just kept on going, ‘why the fuck have we done that? Why the fuck have we done that?’ Because he’ll have obviously – the guy who’s – who’s plaster boarded it will have gone, ‘here, yeah?’ But then – I don’t know, is it my fault for not going, ‘don’t – don’t plaster board anything that I’ll need to use again, like the microwave, the oven, or the stop tap.’

KATH: No, some – someone, uh, someone should – should go, ‘there’s the stop tap. Let’s not plaster over it.’ That – that thought process should’ve happened, uh, and I don’t –

ED: Yeah, it feels like I shouldn’t have to have my eye on that.

KATH: Yeah, I feel like that’s a thing you – you don’t have to – it’s like – it’s like, ‘oh, don’t plaster over that light switch.’ Like obviously not.

ED: Yeah. Also like don’t – don’t use your shit to skim it.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Isn’t like another thing that I think is on the same level.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: They didn’t do that. I’m not – this isn’t the second part. I’m glad to be rid of the wall. Um, yeah, so they had to cut it out with a – with a multi tool. So there’s just a big hole in our wall where they – where they tried to find it, so it’s going up from the bottom.

KATH: Oh no, so they couldn’t even be like, ‘ah, neat little hole to access that’?

ED: No. No.

KATH: That is a nightmare, Ed.

ED: It’s not great, is it?

KATH: It’s no Cilla Black, though. She didn’t fit the – the – she didn’t plaster it, did she?

ED: Well, who do you think was fitting the sink? In that weird thing where her tits light up as well.

KATH: Oh god.

ED: So when she was like, ‘where’s the stop tap?’ I went, ‘I don’t know,’ and she went, ‘uh oh,’ and on the ‘uh oh,’ one tit lit up and then the other.

KATH: Oh wow.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: God, she’s wearing that as a ghost. What a decision. Hey, Chloe.

ED: Ah, hello hello, Chloe.

CHLOE PETTS: Alright?

ED: Hi.

KATH: Hey.

CHLOE: Hey.

ED: Fancy seeing you here.

CHLOE: What the – what the heck?

KATH: I know, right?

ED: Um, well obviously thank you so much for – for inviting us to this part of – of Spooktown. And thanks for coming all the way.

KATH: Yeah, but it’s still a coincidence that we bumped into each other, you know, we’re still – yeah. Yeah, yeah yeah yeah.

ED: It is, yeah, it’s bizarre that we found you so quickly, I guess.

KATH: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes, yeah.

ED: Thanks.

CHLOE: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I – I did watch you sort of wandering around for a bit and thought, ‘Oh, I’ll let them come to me.’

KATH: Oh, you saw that? You saw that. Okay.

CHLOE: Yeah, yeah.

ED: That’s kind of you to let us just do our thing. Our meander.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that’s really nice, thanks.

ED: Um –

CHLOE: I thought, ‘they need this,’ you know?

KATH: Yeah. Yeah, you’re not wrong. You’re not wrong. We did. We did need that little wander.

ED: So this is the derelict football stadium we’re stood in front of, yes?

CHLOE: Yeah yeah, big time. The, um, you know, once a sort of theatre of dreams and now just a sort of, uh, a wisp – a will of a wisp, um, of its – of its former self. Yeah.

ED: Oh man.

KATH: Yeah, it’s kind of sad, really, isn’t it?

CHLOE: Yeah.

ED: So once a sort of theatre of dreams and now a regional theatre. A regional races theatre kind of vibe.

CHLOE: And also you could probably do like a nice sort of, um, bit of promenade theatre around the derelict football stadium, don’t you think?

ED: Oh, love it, yeah.

KATH: Oh, yeah.

CHLOE: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, that’s a good shout, actually.

ED: Maybe we’ll get into that after we hear your story. Maybe we’ll – I don’t know. I don’t know.

CHLOE: Oh, yeah. Ooh, I like that, yeah.

ED: I don’t want to plant too many seeds, but –

KATH: See where the day takes us, yeah. Yeah.

ED: Yeah. Am-dram, that’s what I meant.

KATH: Am-dram.

CHLOE: What did you say?

ED: Uh, regional races theatre.

CHLOE: Ah, ah yes. No, I can see –

ED: It’s – it’s just quicker to say am-dram.

CHLOE: I can see why you’ve done the mouth typo there. They’re very – very similar to one another, um –

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

CHLOE: But yeah, glad we got there in the end.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah, sorry about that.

KATH: Yeah, you can see the link. You can see the link, but yeah.

[Spooky music]

ED: Uh, okay, so I’ve got some questions – I’ve got some questions for you, if I may. Um, before we hear your story. Have you done any sightseeing since you got to Spooktown?

CHLOE: Uh, yeah, I went to, um, the Remembrance bit, do you know what I mean?

KATH: Oh yeah, yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.

CHLOE: Because I feel like you can tell a lot about a town by what happens at their, um, World War I memorial.

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

CHLOE: If it’s – if it’s got bunting around it, it’s a classy town.

ED: Mhm. Mhm.

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: If it’s got people sitting on it and drinking K cider, not so much.

KATH: Yeah. Um, yeah.

ED: I’ve never been. Which – which one has Spooktown got?

CHLOE: Uh, it’s sort of – it’s got an interim where it’s got, um, a weird man that, um, has seeds all over him and lets the birds walk all over him. So it is sort of a middle class – kind of middle class kind of town.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah. That stacks up. Yeah.

CHLOE: Yeah.

ED: I’ll have to check that out. Really good answer. Genuinely first time I’ve asked that question, because I got bored of the other question we usually ask. And that – that was a hit for me.

KATH: You smashed it.

CHLOE: Yeah. Thanks so much.

ED: I fucking loved that answer.

CHLOE: And please, for every question you ask me, I would like an appraisal of my answer after.

ED: Oh, you’ll get them.

KATH: Sure, sure, sure. Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah, yeah. No probs. Yeah yeah yeah.

CHLOE: Thank you. Thank you.

ED: You’ll get – you’ll get them big. You’ll get –

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

ED: Strap in. Let’s hope you don’t get a bad one, because they go on for a long time. Um, second question. Good luck with the answer.

CHLOE: Thank you.

ED: What is, Chloe, the spookiest thing that has ever happened to you?

CHLOE: The spookiest thing that’s ever happened to me?

ED: Yeah.

CHLOE: I don’t think that like, um, many spooky things have happened to me directly, so can I – the one that I always tell when someone asks me like, ‘do you believe in ghosts,’ I’m like, ‘I don’t but my mum does.’

ED: Yeah.

CHLOE: Um, and basically she was in, um, church one time because she spent a lot of time – spent a lot of time there, and it was her job to lock it up. And she was just leaving it and out of like where the, um, vicar gets changed, I don’t know what the official name for that is. Should we just say cloisters? That sounds vaguely, um –

ED: It sounds great. That sounds great, yeah.

CHLOE: Churchy.

KATH: Yeah, it does, yeah.

CHLOE: Just out of the altar, she – she – just – no, um, she – she came – basically this door opened from where the vicar gets changed, and my mum was like, ‘hello, can I help you?’ And there was this tiny old lady there and she looked sort of like, you know, a bit sort of ghostly and otherworldly and a little bit ethereal, um, with sort of translucent skin.

KATH: Thin skin. Yeah.

CHLOE: And mum went – that’s it, thin skin. Yeah.

KATH: Thin skin. You said it – you said it nicely. You said ‘translucent skin.’

ED: Can’t – can’t take criticism.

CHLOE: Disgusting thin skin.

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: Just – just absolutely awful. Um, and my mum said, ‘hello, can I help you?’ And the lady just sort of looked at her, pulled the door closed. And my mum thought, ‘oh, that’s strange.’ So she walked outside and kind of thought nothing of it, looked around for this lady. And then a couple of months later, apropos of nothing, someone said to her, ‘oh, do you know that Holy Trinity is ghost – uh, haunted by the ghost of a little old woman?’ And Mum went, ‘oh my goodness. Oh my god, I think I’ve seen her. She’s got awful skin.’

[All laugh]

CHLOE: So anyway nothing spooky’s happened to me, but I remember that being quite like – when my mum told me that story, that being quite affecting as a child and, um, I was a little bit – bit worried about that.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah. One of my favourite ways of framing a ghost story is when people are like, ‘I don’t believe in it myself. I have – I have no reason to believe in it. But this one scary thing did happen.’ I love – that’s my favourite way of framing it.

CHLOE: Do you know what my other favourite way of framing, is the light – you don’t mention it and then someone a couple of months later is like, ‘this thing happens,’ because it makes it feel more legitimate, don’t you think?

ED: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah.

KATH: Yes. Yeah, yeah.

CHLOE: Like if she was asking –

ED: ‘I thought nothing of it at the time.’

CHLOE: Until, duh duh duh.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

CHLOE: Yeah, really good.

ED: Yeah, really good. Um, another great answer.

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: Oh, thank you. You didn’t have to say that.

KATH: Yeah, another tick, yeah.

ED: Yeah. I mean it, I mean it, I mean it.

KATH: No, but – yeah.

ED: If I think it’s a bad answer, I’ll say it’s a bad – I’ll tell you. I’ll tell you to your face.

CHLOE: ‘Now that is a bad answer,’ you’ll say.

ED: ‘That stunk. I could smell that answer from here.’

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

CHLOE: ‘That’s one of the worst things I’ve ever heard in my life, actually.’

ED: ‘That’s worse than that woman’s skin. That’s – that’s turned me sick, that answer. Ugh.’

[Spooky music]

KATH: Bigfoot, ‘Big Brother’, ‘Big Mama’s House 2’. Shag, marry, kill.

CHLOE: Oh, what a lovely question. Do you know – do you know what? You’ve been complimenting me on my answers, I’m going to compliment you on your question. That is lovely.

ED: That fucking stings.

KATH: Thanks.

CHLOE: That’s really nice. Can you – I – can you say it again? I’d like to really properly give – give this the time to injest it.

KATH: Totally. Yeah. Do you want to – okay, okay.

CHLOE: I’m ready.

KATH: Bigfoot.

CHLOE: Yep.

KATH: ‘Big Brother’. ‘Big Mama’s House 2’. Shag, marry, kill.

CHLOE: Right, I’ve got it.

ED: Can I just really quickly, I’m so sorry Chloe, what was wrong with my questions that meant that you didn’t compliment them?

CHLOE: Look. They were really nice questions, um.

ED: Right, that’s all you needed to say. That’s fine.

CHLOE: They – no, they were lovely questions. I just – I feel like what – what happened is your questions did a lot of the legwork to prime me for the big showstopper at the end, you know?

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

CHLOE: So that compliment – that compliment of Kath’s question was also a compliment to you, okay?

ED: I loosened the jar.

CHLOE: You loosened the jar, yeah.

ED: I loosened the question jar.

KATH: Yeah. Big, strong boy, loosened the jar.

ED: Thank you.

CHLOE: And, uh, consequently shag big strong boy.

[All laugh]

CHLOE: Um, no. Um, right, I think ‘Big Brother’ is easy. I don’t like the concept of it, I’m going to kill.

KATH: Okay.

CHLOE: And I – and I think – no, I think that that’s what – what everyone’s been waiting for, haven’t they?

KATH: That’s fair, you know? Straight in there.

CHLOE: Someone to say it. ‘I’m going to kill the concept of “Big Brother”’.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah. Finally.

CHLOE: Um –

ED: I don’t think anyone’s ever gone in for kill. I think everyone does like shag, then marry and then it’s like, ‘I guess I’ll have to kill.’ You’re like, get killing straight off the bat. Fucking die, ‘Big Brother’.

CHLOE: Well I’ve got – look, I’ve got – I’ve got a big night of passion and my wedding day coming up. I want to get – I want to get all the murder out the way first.

KATH: Yeah yeah.

ED: Fair.

CHLOE: Um, so look, come on. I don’t think anyone would be saying any different answers to me either. I’m going to shag the Bigfoot. Obviously I am.

KATH: Okay.

CHLOE: Because he’s got like – obviously I’m – I’m a gay person, I’m largely interested in, um, not cis men, um, but there is a part of me that will be walking down the street and I’ll see like a really large guy with a big black beard and I’ll think, ‘oh, he’s virile.’ Do you know what I mean?

KATH: Okay, yeah.

CHLOE: Yeah?

KATH: I mean Bigfoot, that’s the ultimate beard, right? Like there’s full – just completely – completely beard.

CHLOE: Exactly.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: Bigfoot is like an East London hipster, which is sort of my type, because –

KATH: Great.

CHLOE: You know, although I am a lesbian, I also sort of have the biological urge to procreate, and I want – I’d – if I was going to do that it would be with a big man because I’d love a lovely large child.

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: A lovely large hairy child.

KATH: A hairy child, yeah. Yeah. You’d get that from Bigfoot. You would, yeah. Lovely.

CHLOE: Thank you, exactly. So I’m going to shag Bigfoot and I’m going to marry ‘Big Mama’s House 2’ because I think it’s got enough in there for it to be sustaining, entertaining, um, nourishing.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

CHLOE: And I think that’s what a marriage needs.

KATH: Yeah, but you would have a – still have a child with Bigfoot. So you’d have a child with Bigfoot, and then marry –

CHLOE: And Big – ‘Big Mama’s House 2’ would be happy to raise it with me, I know that.

KATH: Okay, okay. Oh, do you think Bigfoot would just sort of run off back into the wild and not be a present father, yeah?

CHLOE: Of course he would. He’s not hanging around for anything.

KATH: No. No. You’re right. You know what? I think you’ve chosen really well, there.

CHLOE: Thank you.

ED: Fucking hell.

KATH: That’s really good. Yeah.

ED: I would love to find anyone who could argue any of those points. Impossible.

CHLOE: Thank you. Listen, write into the mayor of Spooktown, um, ‘I’m willing to fight you at the Remembrance, um, statue. Meet me there.’

ED: I know for a fact that we haven’t sent you that question beforehand, but you answered it like you spent a week on it. It was really good. It was watertight. Fucking hell.

CHLOE: Thank you.

[Spooky music]

ED: Now how – now, before we hear your story, we – if we don’t believe that your story is true, you gots to go. Off the mortal coil. If this doesn’t go into Spooktown, how would you like to die? Would you like to die by being fired into the sun, newspaper, or killed by Kath’s crowbar?

CHLOE: Oh, those are two good options. Lovely question, Ed.

ED: Thank you finally, Chloe.

CHLOE: Well done. Well my first – my first choice would’ve been to be, um, the kill in someone’s shag, marry, kill.

KATH: Oh.

CHLOE: But I would actually like to be killed by Kath’s crowbar, thank you. And that’s – and that’s my final answer, that is, then.

KATH: Oh, okay, no probs.

ED: Wow.

KATH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ED: Wow, you stood up.

KATH: Really.

CHLOE: I’m giving – yeah, I gave myself a standing ovation.

[All laugh]

CHLOE: I’m actually – I’m absolutely smashing this podcast. I’m going to have to acknowledge this with my feet, um –

KATH: You really are. Run round the derelict stadium. They’re back. Let’s carry on. Here we go.

ED: That was exquisite. Kath’s crowbar, final answer, quick bow, let’s hear the story.

KATH: Yeah, no probs. Uh, it’ll be an honour. Um, you know, if – if your story doesn’t meet, uh, Spooktown lore expectations then yeah, it’ll be an absolute honour.

CHLOE: Fantastic. Thank you.

ED: Great answers. Lovely to see you here. Uh, apparently, word on the street is you have a story. A spooky story about this derelict football stadium we’re stood in front of. Would you care to tell us the story?

CHLOE: Yeah, it’s – it’s honestly spooky so brace yourselves. Um –

KATH: Great.

ED: Does it have a title, the story? Does it have a title?

CHLOE: This is called ‘Matthew Heighten’s Magic’.

[Spooky music]

[Ominous sounds]

CHLOE: The year was 1981, and like all good years, it contained days in which things happened. And things were really happening at Spooktown Park, home to Spooktown United Football Club. And as a consequence, also home to the hopes and dreams of its many supporters.

[Crowd cheering]

Matthew Heighten was Spooktown’s star striker. Like most footballers of his era, he wore tiny shorts that left little to the imagination, and an unruly mullet that you wish you’d imagined. Rising through the ranks of the Spooktown Academy, Heighten was a local boy, so he held a special place in the hearts of the fans who would proudly sing his anthem, which would echo round the terraces and warm Heighten’s heart in the depths of the winter season.

[singing] Oh, Matty Heighten’s magic, he wears a magic hat. And when he sees the match ball, he says, ‘I’m having that.’ He scores them with his left foot, he scores them with his right. And when he plays at Wanderers, he scores all through the night – brackets, the referee’s a wanker, close brackets.

In the opening months of that season, Matty Heighten could do no wrong. Every kick, header, and volley seemed to end up in the back of the net and he was fast approaching club legend status, shooting United to the top of the league. Just behind them were the Spooktown Wanderers, United’s fiercest rivals and their next opponents in the league. Matty knew that a win here would give them an early edge in the title race, as well as local bragging rights. This game wasn’t a matter of life and death, it was more.

Game day came and Matthew was ready. He waltzed out of the tunnel to the roar of the home crowd, just behind his best mate, Alan Johnson, who captained the club. Johnson’s shorts were shorter and his mullet mulleter. He was no nonsense and was prepared to kick a man, woman, or child in the name of his team. Off the field, he was kind and gentle. The pair had an almost telepathic connection. Johnson didn’t even have to look and his pass would pick out Heighten, who’d bury the ball in the back of the net.

Today was no different. Johnson and Heighten dominated the field, a kinesthesis existing between the pair that threw off the onlooking. Despite this, Wanderers took an early lead, which they defended like bastards, kicking Matty and his teammates high into the air. The initial celebratory atmosphere turned hostile, [loud crowd noises] the home and away fans taunting, spitting, and trying to get the other annoyed.

At a pause in the game, Matty looked at Alan and said, ‘we can’t get a foothold in the game.’

‘Don’t worry, Matt. Stand at the front post on the next corner and I’ll pick you out.’ And boy did he. With five minutes to go, the corner came, Matty took up his space and sure enough the cross was perfect and he glanced it into the goal masterfully.

[Cheering] The roar from the crowd was all-encompassing, and filled Matty’s chest with pride that he thought might make it burst. As they ran back to the centre circle to restart the game, Johnson said to Matty, ‘we can win this.’

And he was right. In the final minute of the game with the clock ticking down, Heighten was fouled just outside of the area. He stepped up for the subsequent free kick, and it was like his mind slowed down time. He struck the ball so sweetly, and it curled over the Wanderers’ wall and into the back of the net. The crowd erupted. [cheering]

He ran to his corner flag to celebrate and was mobbed by his teammates and young rushing fans who had stormed the pitch. He was beneath a pile of bodies, his heart set to burst. He felt a warm rush around his body, the greatest euphoria he or possibly anyone had ever felt. And the game was over. United were victorious.

In the week following it was like his mind didn’t exist outside thoughts of the previous game. It was all he could think about and he floated on a cloud of pure elation. Nothing could’ve upset him. Not even a referee who was also a wanker.

[Crowd cheering]

The next game came and once more he strode out behind Alan. The crowd was singing his name urgently, passionately, more melodic than he’d ever heard them sing before, like a choir praising their lord. Which was why it was so surprising that he had the worst game of his career. He drifted in and out of the game like he wasn’t even there. When he ghosted into the back post, instead of heading Alan’s cross into the back of the net as he usually would, he missed it entirely as though the ball had passed through him. He fell to the ground and panted dejectedly.

When he raised his head, his eye was drawn to a member of the crowd. Amongst the reams of shouting men who looked like they were a collage of assorted meats was a woman, deathly white with two black craters beneath her eyes. She wore a tattered white dress. ‘Surely not a wedding dress,’ Matty thought. She stared at him and him alone, an ethereal white aura around her, like she didn’t belong in the world of the corporeal. Matty stared back. The game had continued without him and when the crowd surged slightly forward in expectant excitement, she was obscured. When things settled once more, she was gone.

In the week following he could think of nothing but his horrendous performance. Matthew Heighten did not miss. It was like he was held in suspended animation, his own special form of purgatory, as he replayed and replayed the air kicks and missed headers. And always at the end of the sequence, there would be the ghostly girl with her sickly pallor, standing impassive and staring right through him.

[crowd noises] The next game took the same pattern, and there she was again, staring, watching his gradual decline from superstardom. He painted a better picture of her in his mind this time, zooming in on her long, pointed yellow fingernails that she tapped gently on her side, her long, lank black hair flat but not greasy. The gentle movement of her grey lips and she seemed to chant under her breath. Not a chant like those of the men around her. More like a quiet incantation. After the game when he and Alan were alone, he asked him about her.

‘Did you see that woman?’

‘Who?’

‘Sat behind the goal? She was wearing a dirty old wedding dress and was really pale.’

‘Have you gone mad? A wedding dress to the football?’

[ominous music intensifies] Over the coming weeks, as the goal drought continued and the woman persisted to attend each and every game, Matty dared not bring her up again with Alan or the rest of his teammates. Perhaps he feared ridicule, or perhaps he feared the reality, that it was only he that could see her. Johnson asked about her once or twice more, jokingly referring to her as Matt’s fiancé, but Matty shook it off. It was like he was cursed. As good as he had been at the start of the season, he was now bad. His teammates had stop passing to him, knowing if they did it would end in him giving the ball away or misfiring into the crowd. Alan was the only player that would still pass to him, but even that was met with jeers and boos of the fans that used to revere him. And still the woman sat there, quietly staring, scratching those thick, yellow nails against the cotton of her wedding weaves.

Between games it was like Matty didn’t exist. All he could think about was his appalling form and his ghostly companion. One day at the end of another game, in which he’d been so bad he may as well have been absent, spurred by an anger so intense it consumed him, he walked over to this girl and confronted her. Coming nearer, he noticed a smell, sort of metallic, sort of like rotting meat.

‘Who are you?’ he screamed.

She just stared.

‘You’d better answer me now. Ever since you turn up I can’t score for love nor money.’

Still she stared.

He climbed into the crowd. ‘Get out of here! Go on, get away with you!’

Suddenly she bore her teeth, as yellow and pointy as her nails. She hissed at him, ready to bite. Matty recoiled in horror. Surprisingly, neither fan nor players noticed him leave the pitch until Alan came on over and confronted him. ‘What are you doing? Get back on the pitch!’

‘She’s here! She’s staring at me. She’s stopping me from scoring. Can’t you see her?’

‘Mate, I can’t see a thing. Get back on the pitch.’

The other players noticed the altercation now, as did the crowd. The teammates ran over and asked what was the matter.

‘Nothing. Nothing’s the matter.’

‘You’re acting weird, Matty. Get your head in the game,’ Alan said and ran back onto the pitch. Heighten had no choice but to join him.

The months passed, the games continued. He did not score. Sterile, she continued to state. Alan was the only teammate that would talk to him now. It was like the others thought his bad form was infectious. The next game came. Matt’s body felt heavy. He knew he wouldn’t score again, the feeling of a curse palpably hanging over him like his once magic feet had been replaced with blocks of stone.

After one spectacular miss, in which the goal was wide open – it was harder not to score, Matty Heighten saw red. Not the red of the referee – brackets who was also a wanker, close brackets – but the blood red veil of anger that consumes one at the end of their tether. On pure impulse he picked up one of the metal pegs used to fasten down the net of the goal, jumped into the crowd and brandished it in the direction of his otherworldly foe. He struck deep into her heart and she let out a deathly wail, turning black as she did so. [screaming] But still he didn’t smite her. She screamed in his face and bit his neck, causing him to cry out in pain. [blood gushing, Matt screams] He recoiled, holding the area of his wound. There was no blood, but instead the skin came away like he was rotting. She disappeared into the crowd.

The game finished. Still Matthew Heighten had not scored. Alan called him into a private changing room. ‘What happened today?’

‘She was there. She was there. She’s stopping me scoring. I’m cursed.’

‘There’s no one there.’

A loud bang on the door. The Spooktown United goalkeeper, a large man with shorts, mullet and added moustache entered. ‘Alan, who are you talking to?’

‘What do you mean?’

‘I heard you talking.’

‘To Matty. I’m talking to Matty.’

‘To Matty?’

‘Alan, Matty’s gone.’

It was just over a year after Matthew Heighten’s last goal. [crowd cheering] Alan Johnson stood around the centre circle next to his ten teammates, opposite the players of Spooktown Wanderers, whose heads were bowed in respectful silence. Over the tannoy, a voice. ‘We will now take a minute’s silence to remember Matthew Heighten, who tragically died in this fixture last year after suffering cardiac arrest following scoring a brilliant winner. Matty was a club legend, scoring over 100 goals in 200 appearances. He will be remembered and missed forever.’

The match started and Alan had the game of his life. About three quarters of the way through, Alan won a penalty and stood up to take it. His friend appeared beside him. ‘Should we take it together, Matty?’ as though one, they stepped back and walloped the ball into the back of the net, teaming up one last time. The goal drought was over.

As he returned to the centre spot, Alan looked up into the crowd and saw his friend one last time. He was holding the hand of a beautiful woman who wore a brilliant white wedding dress and had long nails delicately and beautifully manicured. They smiled and disappeared into the crowd, almost like they’d evaporated.

[cheering] The referee’s whistle blew, the crowd roared. The end.

[Spooky music]

ED: Right, so that – that happened – that happened here. I guess my first question about it is, how did you hear about this?

CHLOE: Um, well my dad is a massive football fan, um, and he was, um, sort of big – big Crystal Palace fan who were in the same town as, um, Spooktown United and Spooktown Wanderers for a long time.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah. Of course, I remember that now.

CHLOE: And, um, I sort of heard whisperings of the story and, uh, he – he told me that he remembered it really well and it was – it was sort of a real, um, scandal and it was basically Alan Johnson that came out maybe 15 years after and put it all in his autobiography and then my dad relayed the story to me.

KATH: Ah, so it’s – it’s – so the – the sort of truth of the story has come from Alan’s, uh, autobiography.

CHLOE: Yeah, yeah.

KATH: It’s that sort of – yeah. Yeah.

CHLOE: Alan said, you know, ‘I was basically having visions of, um, of me old mate. Me old ghostly mate.’

ED: Oh, so it’s – okay, yeah, yeah.

KATH: Right. It’s – it’s fascinating to me that no one sort of at the time pulled him aside and was like, ‘Alan, are you okay?’ Because like he must have been talking to Matty for yonks. It must have been –

CHLOE: Yeah. A full year, actually. Um –

KATH: Yeah, like no one – I feel the issue here is that no one reached out to Alan.

CHLOE: And I feel the issue here is toxic masculinity, you know?

ED: Toxic masculinity, yeah. Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: Men in the – in the 80s, 90s, noughties and now, in fact throughout the whole of history are very bad at talking to each other about their feelings.

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: So they just thought, you know, ‘oh look, Alan’s having a chat to the corner again. We’ll just leave it.’

KATH: ‘Let him do it, he’ll be alright. Oh, go on. Oh, Alan’s having one of his turns again.’ God.

ED: So the real ghost here is – yeah, is – is man’s inability to speak to man.

CHLOE: The patriarchy, yeah.

ED: The patriarchy, yeah yeah.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah. It – yeah.

ED: It always is, every episode it’s the patriarchy that did it. It’s like an episode of ‘Scooby Doo’ but when they take it off it’s the – the mask, it’s the patriarchy from the beginning of this episode.

KATH: Always patriarchy, yeah.

CHLOE: Mm, lovely, yeah.

ED: Um, I – I don’t – hm, I don’t like football mainly because of the fans. I don’t – I’m not a big fan of football at all, but listening to that story, I have written down, ‘I hate football, and now I like football.’ And I put that near the top.

CHLOE: That’s lovely. Um, it’s not – just a warning, it’s not always like that.

ED: Okay. Okay.

CHLOE: There’s not always a woman – a corpse woman in a wedding dress sat amongst them.

ED: That’s – right.

CHLOE: Just to warn you.

KATH: Oh.

ED: That’s the bit where I was like, ‘this sounds – I’ve been mis-sold football.’

CHLOE: I could get into that.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, that was the, um, that’s the draw, isn’t it? The, uh, the – yeah.

ED: That’s the draw, yeah, for sure.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah, that’s a shame that that’s not consistent with football.

ED: ‘Ghostly girl a witch?’ Uh, oh, I wrote down, ‘murder!’ and ‘skin came off!’ Um –

CHLOE: Bad, isn’t it?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I’m – bad stuff.

KATH: Yeah, I’ve – in relation to that, I’ve written, ‘hole in neck. No one questioned.’ I wrote that for a bit. Until we found out that he was a ghost.

ED: It’s because, uh, – yeah.

CHLOE: Yeah, only Alan could see the hole in the neck.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, weird that Alan didn’t pick it up, though. Alan wasn’t like, ‘holy shit, there’s a hole in your neck,’ like –

CHLOE: Again, toxic masculinity, you know?

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

CHLOE: ‘Maybe he doesn’t know there’s a hole in his neck. I don’t want to upset him.’

KATH: Yeah, yeah. Like, ‘oh, I don’t want to tell someone they’ve got snot on their nose’ or whatever, yeah yeah yeah.

CHLOE: Yeah, exactly that. Yeah.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, that stacks up. Yeah, I believe that now.

[Spooky music]

ED: I think a – a worrying part of it for me personally, um, is the sort of Stockholm Syndrome relationship at the end where this woman who has been really mean to – to Matty, no two ways about it, bit his neck for example.

CHLOE: But after he stabbed her through the heart.

KATH: But – I was just going to say that, yeah. Like prior to that, she was just – he’s basically gone, ‘ugh, I don’t like what she looks like. Why – what – who’s – what is she muttering about?’ Assumed it’s about him when it might not be. Like you know when people will speak in different languages and people are like, ‘well what if they’re talking about me?’ It’s like, ‘no no, she’s just saying something.’

ED: So Matty’s a racist, yeah.

CHLOE: Yeah.

KATH: Matty’s a racist, that’s what I’m getting at. Yeah.

ED: Yeah. Yeah, ‘the horror’. Um –

CHLOE: The way I sort of interpreted it once after my dad told me the story was that, um, like exactly that. It was kind of what Matty was beholding and, um, I personally because of the ending I feel like she knew that he was an unrestful spirit, that there was unresolved things, and he was sort of stuck in this purgatory. And she was there just waiting until he was ready to sort of pass through into the other world. And when he was ready she was sort of revealed to be this beautiful bride that – that was going to carry him through to the other side.

ED: I – I suppose I just – I don’t think – whichever way it is, and I do agree that it’s probably his fault, um, and he was the – he was the aggressor, um, I don’t think they should be in a relationship.

CHLOE: And maybe they’re not, you know? Maybe they just like banged quickly and then went their separate ways in heaven.

KATH: Perhaps, yeah.

CHLOE: Do you know what I mean?

ED: Banged in a wedding dress and then just – that’s it.

CHLOE: Yeah. Had sex against the pearly gates, in they went.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah, maybe. Maybe.

KATH: Yeah, they might have just been sat near each other. They may have just been sat near each other. And they’ve had a chat and gone, ‘I’m sorry about your neck,’ and he’s gone, ‘I’m sorry about the – the goalpost peg,’ and then that was it.

CHLOE: Water under the bridge.

ED: You know pegging’s something else?

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: Hey!

KATH: Hey.

ED: ‘Sorry that I let you peg me with a goalpost.’ Um, yeah. Yeah, okay. It’s the only issue I can find, to be honest.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah, I mean it’s – it’s pretty – it’s watertight, isn’t it? Um, what else have I written down? I’ve written down ‘cancel culture’ when the crowd turned on Matty. Let’s not riot, the lad’s just having a tough match, so come on, don’t turn that quickly.

CHLOE: But what you’ll notice is that because Matthew wasn’t actually there, the only time they ever booed was when Alan tried to pass to him, because he wasn’t actually there.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, god that must’ve looked wild to everyone. Yeah.

CHLOE: Weird, yeah.

KATH: Again – oh yeah, why did no one pull him aside and go, ‘look, just take a moment. Sit on the bench for a bit, we’ll – we’ll put someone else on’?

ED: It was really bad in the 80s. It was particularly bad in the 80s.

KATH: Right. Yeah.

CHLOE: Imagine if like, um, Alan just had like – he just had a bad run of form and he made up seeing a vision of his dead mate as an excuse.

[All laugh]

CHLOE: ‘Yeah yeah, it was – my mate is dead and he just kept haunting me. I was passing to him!’

KATH: Well he did make a lot of money from his autobiography, so, you know, it – it would stack up if he did make it up.

ED: Yeah you’ve – you’ve really shot yourself in the foot there, Chloe, I think you might be right. I think this might be absolute bullshit.

KATH: I think Alan might be bullshitting for money here. But that doesn’t mean that it can’t enter Spooktown lore, because the story you have told is accurate.

ED: I think maybe – maybe one of my issues is we did invite you here to tell one of your best stories, and you’ve told us – you’ve told us a story that your dad told you that he read in an autobiography.

KATH: Yeah, that’s – I know, but – you know, the dad was there, right? Oh sorry, I just don’t want to whack you with a crowbar.

ED: Let Chloe defend herself.

CHLOE: Like you asked me where I heard a story from and I had to have heard it from somewhere.

ED: Agreed.

KATH: That’s a fact, yeah.

CHLOE: Well Alan Johnson was my dad the whole time.

[All laugh]

ED: Yes, and he read it in his own autobiography when he was proofreading.

CHLOE: By autobiography I mean the bedtime stories that he used to tell me.

KATH: Sure, yeah yeah yeah.

ED: Okay, okay. Weirdly going to let that slide. Yeah. I believe you. I believe you, man.

CHLOE: Look, we’ve just – we’ve just got weird words for things in the Johnson family.

ED: ‘Shall I tell you a bedtime autobiography?’

CHLOE: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: ‘Oh daddy, please tell me another.’

CHLOE: ‘Well here’s the one where my dead friend stabbed a ghost woman through the heart.’

ED: ‘Sleep tight.’ [kisses] ‘Don’t let your best friend die and get –

[Spooky music]

ED: I did maybe want to – I did maybe want to go and see a football match live. I really did maybe want to do that. Do you like football yourself?

CHLOE: Oh yeah.

ED: Yeah.

CHLOE: It’s one of my main character traits, actually.

KATH: Is it? Does it define your – your personality? It’s really football –

CHLOE: Yeah, it really does. Yeah. You – you say that sort of jestingly but, um, I won’t bloody stop. Um –

KATH: Who do you support?

CHLOE: Crystal Palace.

KATH: Ah.

CHLOE: Yeah, um –

ED: That stacks up.

KATH: That stacks up, yeah.

CHLOE: Hey.

KATH: I’m so shit with football, I have no idea.

CHLOE: No? Do – do you have like, um, do your family have allegiances to clubs?

KATH: Yeah, so my uncle is like – despite being very, very Welsh, is hardcore, uh, Manchester United fan. Like hardcore.

CHLOE: Yeah. Mhm.

ED: I was, um, my dad liked Newcastle United because he’s from Newcastle, so I supported Newcastle United when I was a kid and I sent Peter Beardsley a Christmas card, um, and he never wrote back. So – sorry, just getting choked up. You know – you know the – he never wrote it back and I got really sad. I was like, ‘fine. Fuck you’s.’ And then I found it in a drawer years later.

CHLOE: You never sent it?

ED: My parents had never even – my parents never sent it.

CHLOE: See that story, to pull back around on that story, is almost as impactful as Matt Heighten being dead the whole time.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: The card was dead the whole time.

CHLOE: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah. Yeah, I was absolutely gutted. I wished him a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Nothing.

KATH: That’s wild that – oh god, you covered all bases.

CHLOE: But it – I mean you’re a polite – you’re a polite young lad. You wouldn’t do one without the other. I know that about you. And, um –

ED: That’s true.

CHLOE: But it’s good because I think what you did then without realising is that you pre-empted that in 2021 Newcastle would be taken over by Saudi Arabians who have, um, terrible, uh, human rights atrocities in their, um, closet.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: And you were just sort of protesting out of that.

ED: I’d say they’ve laid them all out on their bed, to be honest. I wouldn’t say they’re in their closet anymore, but –

CHLOE: Yeah, that’s –

KATH: That’s right, yeah, they’ve laid them out quite neatly actually, haven’t they?

ED: Just spread them all out.

CHLOE: Pretty – pretty true, actually, yeah.

ED: Uh, but yeah, it was –

CHLOE: I’ll accept that.

ED: I was playing the long game on that one. You’re – you’re right. Just played the – ‘I like you, Peter, but I’m – I’m afraid I’m going to have to stop supporting your club because in two decades’ –

CHLOE: ‘Look, I like you, Peter, but I love human rights.’

KATH: Yeah, yeah. So I’ve got to –

ED: I sent a lot more Christmas cards to, uh, Amnesty International than I have to Peter Beardsley, let’s just – let’s put it that way. Yeah, I think I’d like to – I’d love to have the passion of somebody who – I don’t like anything as much as people who like football like football, and I think that’s really sad to not have that amount of passion in my life.

CHLOE: Mate, go – look, we’ll go to the football together, it’ll give you the highest high you’ve ever had in your whole entire life, and then you’ll realise that despite that that void is still there.

ED: Okay. I’d love that. I’d – I’d really love that, Chloe, thank you.

[All laugh]

KATH: You’ve really sold that. You’ve really sold it.

ED: Yeah, I think I’d really enjoy that, actually. Pop back to my void afterwards. Um –

KATH: Oh. Oh, god. Yeah.

ED: Well, so I think we’re going to go and have a little chat. Possibly inside the stadium, if that’s – if we may.

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

CHLOE: You’re going to love that. I’ll show you where, um, I’ll show you where she sat.

ED: Should we – should we jump over –

KATH: Oh yeah, go on then. Yeah, okay.

ED: I’d love that.

KATH: Should we shuffle in?

ED: Yeah, let’s walk on through.

KATH: Okay.

ED: God, it – it’s nicer than, uh, Spooktown Wanderer’s place, isn’t it?

KATH: Yeah, it is, actually.

CHLOE: Mhm.

ED: Proper stadium, this.

CHLOE: Correct. So if you’ll just, um, you see the old derelict goalposts over there?

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: That was obviously where, um, Matty went to pick up the peg to stab the ghost woman.

KATH: Yeah. Obviously.

CHLOE: And then if you look – you see – you see there where the steps are to get out of the stadium?

KATH: Oh, just to the side? Yeah yeah yeah yeah. Yeah.

CHLOE: Yeah, she was just to the left of that, there.

KATH: Okay.

ED: And how do you know that? If – if Matty was a ghost, how do you know what Matty could see if Matty was a ghost that your dad could see?

KATH: Oh, Ed. Oh, Ed.

CHLOE: I was Matty the whole time. Um –

[All laugh]

CHLOE: Uh, uh, it’s just people have – there’s lots of sort of Reddits and it’s – it’s not official but it’s assumed, you know? Um, so –

KATH: Okay.

CHLOE: If you read all the Reddits they’ll be like, ‘this is where we think she would’ve been,’ based on like watching highlights of where Alan put the ball and then obviously remember the game where he ran over and was like, ‘Matt, get back on the pitch?’   
  
KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: There’s footage of him just like talking to the air, and it was roughly around there.

KATH: Wow, so presumably it was an empty seat. It was like the one empty seat in the, uh, in the stadium. And no one else could see her, right?

CHLOE: But it – well I – sorry, I’ve been saying sitting but, um, like it was obviously like safe standing then, so she – well, not safe standing. Very unsafe standing.

KATH: Oh.

CHLOE: So she would, um, sort of just drift in and out.

ED: Don’t try and confuse us with your football terminology. ‘Safe standing,’ whatever that means. Okay. Okay, yeah. Good answer. Good answer.

CHLOE: Thank you.

KATH: Okay. Yeah, I mean I could – I mean it is a – it is a football stadium, that’s – that’s accurate. And, you know, there is a space there where someone could’ve, uh, been a ghost and –

CHLOE: Thank you.

ED: I believe you because there’s a space here where somebody could’ve been a ghost.

CHLOE: Yeah.

[All laugh]

ED: That’s how easy it is to get in Spooktown lore.

CHLOE: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: There’s space – there’s space here for a ghost, yeah. An intangible, ethereal, ghost – object. Anyway, uh, should we have a little chinwag, Kath?

KATH: Yeah, so Chloe, we’re just going to sort of – should we head over to the goal and tend to sort of stand there a bit and have a little chat?

ED: Oh, love it. I love it love it love it love it love it love it.

KATH: Okay, okay.

CHLOE: If you, um, sort of walk just a little bit sort of to the left of the goal, then you can stand on the spot where Matt Heighten died.

KATH: Oh. Okay, great.

ED: Great.

CHLOE: Of cardiac arrest.

KATH: Great, okay. Okay, should we, uh, go over there a bit?

ED: Let’s go stand – let’s go stand on, yeah. Stand on the spot.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Ugh, chills.

KATH: Ooh, a bit chilly over here. That’s the whole – we’re outside, it’s all chilly.

ED: Yeah. This feels like a spot where a ghost could potentially be.

KATH: And I – yeah, I believe it. I believe it.

ED: I believe it. Uh, so what are your – what are yuor thoughts? What are your thoughts?

KATH: Do – do I believe that her dad is trying to push out sales of his book?

ED: Right.

KATH: Yes, I believe that that could be the root. Is the story any true? I don’t know.

ED: He’s just seen his friend die. He’s just seen his friend die, of course he’s – he shouldn’t – he shouldn’t be playing football.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Especially on the pitch where his friend died. But it was the 80s. I get it. But maybe that’s what this manifested as.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: But that – that is even spookier than a ghost, is the fragility of man.

KATH: Mental health. Yeah.

ED: And the lack of responsibility from anybody in the team or – or off the team to look after a – a man whose – whose best friend had died in front of him on the pitch that he then continually – continually played on for a year.

KATH: Yeah yeah. For a year.

ED: For a year.

KATH: For a year. And no one went, ‘you alright, Al?’ No one went – no one said that.

ED: Yeah. So I think as a story, as a scary story, if it’s a ghost it’s scary, if it’s somebody having a really tough time it’s very scary as well.

KATH: Yeah. You know what? You’re right. And I – I think it should go into lore, actually, as a sort of, um, a moral of being like a – like a – let’s not have this happen again.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Let’s look out for each other, let’s have empathy for each other, let’s look after each other.

ED: And let’s enjoy football.

KATH: And let’s enjoy football.

ED: And let’s enjoy some goddamn footy-b.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Should we go let Chloe know that the story made it into Spooktown lore?

KATH: Yeah, and no one’s getting their head caved in with a crowbar today.

ED: Just do it – maybe just do it down – from down here. [yelling] Chloe?

CHLOE: Oh, oh yeah?

KATH: Hey.

ED: You’re in.

CHLOE: Oh, sick. Sorry, Kath, I – I thought that was, um, a crowbar in your pocket but you were just pleased to see me.

[All laugh]

CHLOE: Thank goodness.

KATH: I’m – I’m just thrilled that the story made it. I’m really thrilled.

CHLOE: See, that was touch and go there.

ED: It was but, um –

KATH: It – it genuinely was.

ED: I don’t think there was ever any real doubt.

KATH: Yeah.

CHLOE: Yeah, you –

ED: It was going in because we’re cowards, but we maybe feel like it.

KATH: Yeah, the – the – we never stopped being cowards throughout.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: I think that’s the real issue.

ED: That’s the real horror story.

KATH: The real horror.

CHLOE: Yeah, and to – to be honest with you, you listened to the most compelling evidence of it – of all, which is it did actually happen. So well done.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Well done. Oh, it comes back round to us being stupid, doesn’t it?

CHLOE: Um, so does anyone want to come drink some K Cider on a war memorial with me?

KATH: Yes please.

ED: Oh my god, I’d love nothing more.

CHLOE: Sick.

ED: That would be sick.

KATH: Let’s do it.

ED: Let’s do it.

KATH: Let’s do it. Yeah, boy.

[Spooky music]

ED: God, I’m absolutely shit faced.

KATH: Yeah, same.

ED: Are you alright to get her back to the hotel room?

KATH: [whispers] Nah.

ED: Well this has been an absolute delight. Yeah.

KATH: It really has. Absolutely – I love it. What a way to spend an evening, hanging out with two great people, drinking and remembering.

ED: So is that Chloe and the lad covered in nuts and seeds? Yeah.

KATH: Yeah, yeah. You’re just always there, Ed.

ED: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

KATH: You’re just always there. You don’t – you count but you don’t count, do you know what I mean? You’re just sort of part of the – the furniture. But in a nice way.

ED: May I just say, ow. That hurts. Um, speaking of hurts, I’ve got to pop off and see Peter Beardsley.

KATH: Oh.

ED: Because, yeah, my, um, I was going to say friend, I’ll say colleague Sam – my friend and colleague Sam messaged me to –

KATH: He works for the Spooktown Council, right? Is that –

ED: Yes. Yeah.

KATH: That’s Sam, right? Yeah yeah yeah.

ED: Uh, he let me know that Peter Beardsley was fired from football for being a racist.

KATH: Oh no.

ED: And that’s got to be some fucking high level racism if you get fired from football.

KATH: Yeah, because it’s rife anyway, isn’t it?

ED: Yeah. So if the – if the footballers think you’re racist, you’re fucking racist.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: So I’m going to go meet up with him. Sort of like – you know when, um, you know when Prince Andrew met up with, uh, Epstein to say that the friendship’s over?

KATH: Yeah. Yeah, just to let – let him know in person. Yeah.

ED: And stayed at his house for a couple of days.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: I’m going to go to Peter Beardsley’s and let – let him know that I don’t wish him a happy Christmas and I actually hope he has a terrible New Year.

KATH: Good for you, Ed.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Good for you.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Well I – I’d better –

ED: So I suppose that’s – the ghost there is the ghost of my well wishes.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah. That’s a good way to spend an evening. Really get closure on that, I think.

ED: A great way to spend a New Years’ evening is cutting off a friendship with a racist footballer.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah. Sounds great.

ED: Yeah. Not that I could every – every evening, Kath, but – I mean there’s enough racist footballers to go around, to fill my – to fill my evenings, but not – not enough of them are friends.

KATH: Well, I’m going to go, uh, get Chloe, uh, back to the hotel room.

ED: Great. And I’m going to go to – what are those cookie stalls called in, um –

KATH: Millie’s Cookies.

ED: I’m going to go to the Millie’s Cookies in the Arndale, meet up with Pete.

KATH: Great, okay. I’ll be honest, me and Chloe are just going to carry on getting shit faced. It’s going to be great.

ED: Great. This is Peter now actually, I’m just going to take this phone call.

KATH: Okay.

ED: Hello? Speaking.

[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.