Welcome To Spooktown – Anna Thomas

[Spooky music]

ED EASTON: [screaming] Oh my god, it’s a ghost, that! It’s a proper, real ghost, that!

[Birds chirping]

KATH HUGHES: You alright, Ed?

ED: Yeah, yeah. Why – why?

KATH: I’m just asking, being a pal. We’re on a walk, you’ve been quiet for ages, I thought I’d see if you were alright.

ED: Am I alright? Am I alright? Yes.

KATH: Good. Sad that you had to think, but good.

ED: Well I don’t want to – I don’t want to lie to you. Are you alright?

KATH: Uh, yeah.

ED: Ooh, okay. I’m not going to dig into that. We’re heading towards Wimbley Wombley Farm.

KATH: Oh okay, that’s why you said, ‘put the wellies on.’ Okay. Okay.

ED: No, next question.

KATH: Mm hm? [laughs] That’s a shame because they’re really hurting and I thought that was why – I thought we were going to a muddy farm, that’s why I put them on.

ED: No. Now you’ve hit the nail on the head as to why I asked you to put wellies on.

KATH: Oh, because they’re really uncomfortable and no one talks about it?

ED: If my feet are going to be in pain – yeah. And now this is what this, um, do we call it a podcast? What is it, like an infocast – uh, um –

KATH: Yeah, I suppose it’s for the council. Is it for – um, uh –

ED: A council infocast, yes.

KATH: A – a council infocast I think is the official title, yeah.

ED: A council infocast about wellies or Wellington boots. Um, yeah, we are heading towards Wimbley Wombley Farm to meet Anna Thomas.

KATH: Great.

ED: Have you watched any good, um, telly recently? Any – listened to any good –

KATH: Oh yeah, I, uh, caught up on ‘Coronation Road’ last night.

ED: Nice! I haven’t watched it in a couple of weeks.

KATH: Have you?

ED: No no no, I’ve been busy. I’ve been busy. The last thing that happened was, um, oh, Russ Kemp. Russ Kemp was like, [grouchy voice] ‘you ain’t, you’re never – you ain’t never going to kill me, boys.’

KATH: Yeah.

ED: [grouchy voice] ‘You ain’t never gonna kill me, boys.’

KATH: Yeah, it was a good act, that.

ED: Yeah. Long and just that, but it was good.

KATH: Yeah it was weird, the like extended two hour episode, wasn’t it? Really strange.

ED: Yeah, two hours of, [grouchy voice] ‘you ain’t never going to get me, boys.’

KATH: Yeah. Yeah, it was like a full monologue from him, from his character, wasn’t it?

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Weird choice but I liked it.

ED: Yeah, I liked the actors who – that – both of the actors who played him, Russ Kemp and –

KATH: Oh yeah, it’s twins, isn’t it?

ED: Neville? Phil Grant – Phil Grant, Grant Mitchell and Phil Mitchell, the third – the – the triplets. One who married off, who play Russ Kemp, yeah.

KATH: Well you need to catch up because then we can talk about it.

ED: Oh, Kath. Here’s a question. Have you had any nightmares this week?

KATH: Oh yeah. Yeah. Uh, I had one where I had to do a maths class, which is a nightmare in itself.

ED: That’s –

KATH: But then I got there and they were like, ‘you’re in the wrong uniform. You’re going to have to do it in your underwear.’ And I was like, ‘oh no.’ So it was a double nightmare of having to do maths and also in my underwear. It was like – you know when you’re little and you do, um, PE in your knickers? It was that but with maths.

ED: I love that even in your nightmares you’re not – you’re not naked. Never fully naked. Never knowingly naked.

KATH: Never knowingly naked.

ED: Is that the, um, what’s it called? What’s it called?

KATH: The John Lewis – yeah yeah yeah.

ED: John Lewis, yeah. Yeah yeah. Katherine’s Never Knowingly Naked.

KATH: Yeah yeah, the brilliant Christmas advert.

ED: Even the – even the – even in your nightmares, like the worst thing you can think of is underpants.

[Both laugh]

KATH: It was really bad and I was doing maths.

ED: It’s awful, yeah.

KATH: Have you had any nightmares?

ED: Um, uh, yes. Yes, I did some filming recently. That’s not the nightmare, that was lovely. But –

KATH: That sounds great, yeah.

ED: The makeup lady – I love a makeup lady, they’re genuinely my favourite part is where you sit down and they brush your face for a bit. I find it very relaxing, like a cat. Um, again, that’s not the nightmare. The nightmare is she did nothing to me because the character needed to look tired and dishevelled.

[Both laugh]

ED: Genuinely didn’t do a thing.

KATH: Oh dear.

ED: So I was sat down in the chair and she was like, ‘yep, that looks great.’

KATH: No, you know what? That’s a compliment in it because, you know, no it’s not. It’s not.

ED: Go on.

KATH: Yeah, it’s not. Yeah.

ED: I didn’t – I didn’t turn up in character. I turned up as myself. It’s not like, ‘oh, wow, fucking what’s his name from some – “There Will Be Blood.”’ That one actor. The one – the one real actor, what’s his name?

KATH: The one – the one actor that, uh, Daniel Day Lewis.

ED: You were going to say Grant – Phil Grant?

KATH: Grant, yeah.

ED: There’s two actors, Phil Grant and – yeah. Daniel Day Lewis. Anyway, yeah, that’s my – that’s my nightmare, is I – I was already looking like a gambling addict straight out the gate.

KATH: That’s rough.

ED: Is that – is that Anna Thomas?

[Spooky music]

KATH: Hey Anna.

ED: Hi Anna.

ANNA THOMAS: Oh yeah, are you alright?

KATH: Yeah, not bad, thanks.

ED: Really good, thank you. It’s nice to get out in the countryside, isn’t it?

KATH: It is, yeah. A bit muddy. A bit muddy but enjoyable. Got me wellies on.

ANNA: Oh, sorted. Lovely wellies by the way. Lovely.

ED: Aw.

KATH: Thank you, thank you. Someone said it, Ed. Thank you, Anna.

ED: What do you think about my flip flops?

ANNA: Um, they’re lovely. You don’t – you don’t often see fluffy flip flops. Um, but yeah, lovely.

ED: Thank you very much. Yeah, it’s for my, uh, plantar fasciitis, uh, got to wear them all the time.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: But thank you very much.

KATH: Come rain or shine, he’s in those fluffy flip flops.

ED: I love your – I love your bare feet, Anna. I think it, uh –

ANNA: I just – I like it when I can just hold the soil between my toes, you know? And just grip onto the floor. Really know I’m there.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Yeah yeah yeah yeah.

ANNA: Know I’m present.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: It’s nice to have a – yeah. Yeah. It grounds you.

ED: That’s, uh, that’s how Conor McGregor used to fight, isn’t it? He likes – he liked to be grounded, yeah.

ANNA: And I’m always ready to fight.

KATH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ANNA: That’s another reason.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Good to know.

ED: We’ve heard – we’ve heard from you that you’ve got a story about this farm. Wimbley Wombley? Am I pronouncing it right?

ANNA: Yeah, that is right. Wimbley Wombley Farm. Um, it’s a story – it’s been passed through the generations, um, and I just think it’s important you know about it. I’m surprised more people don’t know about it, to be honest.

ED: Which generations was it passed down?

ANNA: At least one. I’m working out the dates in my head.

ED: Right.

ANNA: It might be less than one. 0.5 generations.

ED: First generation. This is the first generation, but –

ANNA: Yeah. Yeah.

[All laugh]

ANNA: Oh no, it’s all coming out now. Yeah, I wrote it.

ED: Well we’ve got some questions before, uh, before we hear your one generation story. 0.5 generation story about Wimbley Wombley Farm. Uh, do you mind – do you mind if we – I’ve never asked this before. Do you mind if we ask you some questions?

ANNA: Um, I – I would prefer if you didn’t.

KATH: Wow.

ANNA: No, no, yeah, go ahead. Yeah, that’s great.

KATH: That’s why you don’t ask it, come on.

ED: That’s why we’ve never asked that before.

KATH: Okay, well this was nice. Uh –

ED: Well my first question. If you change your mind and you do want to answer it, you know, feel free to. But I will – I will still be asking the questions but you don’t – you don’t have to answer. Um, since you came here from Preston this morning, have you – have you done any sightseeing at all?

ANNA: Um, not really. I’ve sort of just been just sort of concentrating on looking down, I’m – so yes, sightseeing the floor, um, but just making sure I don’t walk through any broke glass and bits like that.

ED: Right right right.

KATH: Yes, of course. Yeah yeah yeah.

ED: Yeah.

ANNA: Um, it’s – I’ve been listening and it’s been alright. It’s spook sounds, but yeah.

KATH: Right.

ED: Great. Sound – soundseeing.

ANNA: Yeah, soundseeing, basically, um, and just taking in seagulls, um –

ED: Yeah.

ANNA: Wouldn’t expect that sound in the countryside right now, but yeah, plenty of them.

ED: And they do come from the sea as well. They’re not, you know –

KATH: Yeah, they – they come inland from Spooktown for some reason. Don’t know why. It’s kinda weird but, um, yeah. Yeah.

ED: Appreciate that. Um, my second question is, ‘what is the spookiest thing that’s ever happened to you?’

ANNA: So I was unconscious for it, right? Which I think makes it a bit spookier. But I used to sleepwalk when I was younger.

ED: Okay.

ANNA: And like sometimes it was like fun stuff. So I used to sing like ‘The Neighbours’ theme tune, like, but another time – like genuinely true.

KATH: Shocking.

ANNA: Like used to sing that to myself. But then another time, which terrifies me, apparently once I sleptwalked downstairs into the living room in the pitch black, screamed, and then took myself up back to bed. And isn’t that horrifying? Because why did I scream?

KATH: Oh my god, yeah, what was going on?

ANNA: Right? I remember none of that.

ED: That is very scary.

ANNA: Isn’t it?

KATH: Was someone just sort of stood there going, ‘morning,’ and then you just yelled and then went back upstairs? Like how do you know that you did that? Like did someone tell you?

ANNA: Yeah. Yeah, it was when I was a child, my mum and that told me, um, but I got – I think they were upset, it would’ve been horrifying for them if they were downstairs and I came down.

ED: Yeah. Yeah. Couple of friends round, a bottle of wine. Their daughter comes down.

KATH: ‘Ah!’ ‘Goodnight. Sorry, it’s just our thing.’

ED: Back to bed. ‘You haven’t met Anna, have you? That’s, um, yeah, that’s our daughter. She’s – she’s okay. She’s okay.’

ANNA: And I scuttle back up on the ceiling.

KATH: Sleepwalking is terrifying because you’re completely – it’s not in your control. And that is terrifying. Well it is in your control but it’s in your subconscious, which is like – subconscious is a mess.

ED: I think the scary thing about it for me is that you’re the spooky thing in that.

ANNA: Exactly. Like –

KATH: Yeah, you’re the frightening thing. Yeah, you’re right.

ED: You’re the – yeah.

ANNA: And I can’t escape that. I’m always around me, so like –

KATH: Yeah. Oh god, yeah, yeah, you’re someone else’s spooky story in that case.

ED: It’s like – yeah.

ANNA: Oh god.

KATH: You’re – someone else is going to go, ‘I was – I was sat somewhere, someone walked downstairs and screamed and then scuffled up the stair.’ You’re someone else’s horror story.

ED: Yeah. Yeah.

ANNA: Yeah. I’m the hero and the villain in my life.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ANNA: That’s – oh, crikey. I’m – I’m never going to sleep again. I don’t want to do that to people.

ED: Um, Kath, do you want to ask your – your question?

KATH: Oh yeah. Yeah, okay. Right, so, Spongebob Squarepants, Billy Bob Thornton, Thornton’s [chocolate]. Shag, marry, kill.

ANNA: Based off that, I’m going to –

KATH: Yeah?  
  
ANNA: Shag Billy Bob Thornton.

KATH: Aha. Okay.

ED: Okay. Okay.

[All laugh]

ANNA: Down a couple of pints of blood. Right up my street. All that iron. Be a shame not to.

ED: I love that it’s – I love that it’s shag him but it’s not marry him because you’re like, ‘well, if Angelina didn’t like him, I’m not going to get on with him, am I?’

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ANNA: Exactly.

ED: If Angelina didn’t –

ANNA: And I’ve only got – well, exactly, and if I’ve only got so much blood, I – I couldn’t keep that man satisfied for that long.

KATH: Yeah, yeah.

ANNA: I’d run out.

ED: Fair.

KATH: I hope it is him that did that, otherwise what a wild – what a wild take on Billy Bob Thornton. Oh, god.

ANNA: If it’s not him I’m starting the rumour. Going to tell everyone I see today, alright?

ED: Always – always interesting which ones people go in for first, whether they go in for like – because a lot of people – and it’s actually quite scary, they’ll go like, ‘well I’ll kill such and such.’ And you’re like – it’s so scary how quickly people go to kill. So I – I respect you for going to shag first.

ANNA: Well I am going to kill Spongebob though, so, um, that –

KATH: Okay.

ANNA: Irrelevant to this game.

[All laugh]

ANNA: It’d be weird to say it. It just so happens.

KATH: It’s just like finally. Finally you can get it off your chest and say it in the context that you needed.

ED: I don’t think we usually, uh, I don’t think we usually ask this, but how would you go about, uh, killing Spongebob?

ANNA: I was just thinking that. Because you – I guess you – if you put a sponge in the wash –

ED: Yeah.

ANNA: No, they would just make it cleaner. Um, I guess I’d put it in the washing machine.

ED: ‘I’m going to clean that boy.’

KATH: Pair of scissors? Snip – snip him into little bits? Give you ideas.

ANNA: Good little tiny bits. But then would that just be making more Spongebobs? Like gremlins?

KATH: I don’t know. Yeah, would each – would each bit be sort of – what’s the word, sentient?

ED: Oh.

KATH: Was that the correct word? Conscious?

ED: Yeah. Yeah.

ANNA: Oh god, yes.

KATH: Yeah. Or would it just be like, ‘oh, there’s a bit of his leg, there’s a bit of his – hm.’ I quite actually like that.

ANNA: I guess once I’ve murdered him I’ll let you guys know what I –

KATH: Okay, thank you.

ED: Okay, yeah yeah yeah.

KATH: Do keep us posted.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Okay.

ED: So I guess that just leaves marry the old, um, chocolatier?

ANNA: Oh yeah, I –

KATH: Or you know, it – it could be interpreted, you know, it could be marry the chocolate, uh, specifically, or the chocolatier. You could, you know, interpret that in either way. Whatever way you – you feel – whatever way you felt you wanted to marry.

ANNA: I thought it meant the chocolate.

KATH: Yeah yeah, I think if you want to legit marry some chocolate, you – someone’s tried to marry the Eiffel Tower. It – you can marry chocolate, I think.

ED: Yeah. Berlin Wall.

KATH: Yeah.

ANNA: Berlin Wall?

KATH: Yeah, someone tried to marry that. Did they actually marry it?

ANNA: So – but did – didn’t someone marry a car or something? I swear it’s been put through.

KATH: Yeah, someone might’ve tried to marry a car.

ED: Some lad’s definitely banged a car. I don’t know whether marry. They’ve definitely given it a go, though.

ANNA: Oh.

KATH: Oh god.

ED: This sounds like it’s me.

KATH: ‘Some lads, no relation, uh –’

ED: I’ve definitely – deffo given it a good old go, mate. Don’t you worry about that.

[All laugh]

ANNA: Where would you put the ring?

ED: Over the, uh, you know it’s either the exhaust that the – or the gear stick, isn’t it?

KATH: Are those the options?

ED: Now with the Thornton’s chocolate, Anna, I don’t – I don’t mean to pry into your – your married life, but would it be every single – one of every chocolate, every single chocolate, or one specific chocolate?

ANNA: I think the concept of Thornton’s chocolate. Oh –

ED: Okay. Okay.

ANNA: I think that makes sense.

ED: Um, I have one final question and it’s, uh, it’s a tricky – tricky old beast. So apologies. But, um, obviously as you know, the council, uh, have sort of said that –

KATH: Oh, alright.

ED: We are being too lenient with people who tell these stories, so, uh, we’re going to have to threaten you. So if you – if we don’t believe your story is true, which obviously I’m sure – I’m sure it is, but if your story isn’t true we’re going to have to kill you.

ANNA: Yeah, that’s alright. I – I –

ED: Oh, great.

KATH: Great. That’s – oh, that is such a relief. Because when you said about like you don’t want to answer the questions at the beginning it was like, ‘well, how is she going to respond to the killing thing?’

ED: Is she just going to be a stickler with the – yeah, the killing thing. Yeah.

KATH: Oh, what a relief.

ANNA: You’ve got to do what you’ve got to do. And yeah, that’s fine. Yeah. If – If I’m lying, which you will soon find out I am not. It’s a very, very true story that has been passed down through generation.

ED: Wow. Wow. One generation. Oh, god.

ANNA: And I swear on my life it’s true.

ED: I think you’re the first person to be like, ‘not a problem.’ My question is – well, is it a question? Would you like to die from – do you know the bit – do you know – have you seen ‘Aliens’?

KATH: The film ‘Alien’.

ANNA: ‘Aliens’? No.

KATH: Not in general.

ANNA: Wait, I’ve – in general? Wait.

ED: ‘Alien’. Sorry, ‘Alien’. The film. The film, not in general.

[All laugh]

ANNA: How would you like to –

ED: Um, another question really quickly. Have you ever seen any aliens? Have you ever seen any aliens at all, Anna? We – we have here, um, a lovely farm. Wimbley Wombley. Still hope I’m pronouncing that correctly. Wimbley Wombley Farm. Uh, which we’ve – I’ve never been to. I don’t know about you, Kath, but I’ve never been to Wimbley Wombley Farm. Uh, never been to this side of town, uh, Spooktown, really. Um, but it’s nice to know that it’s got some – agricultural sector. Um, but we hear, Anna, that you have a hopefully true spooky story about this very location and that’s why you’ve invited us out here. Um, first question, does – does your story have a name?

ANNA: It does. ‘The Tale of Wimbley Wombley Farm’.

KATH: Yeah. Name’s on the can. That’s the perfect phrase.

ED: Love it. Solid. You know what you’re getting.

[Spooky music]

[Machine whirring]

ANNA: In a town far, far away around three to four years ago, there lived a youngish woman who went by the name of Bronwen Jones. Now, Brownen worked her days away at the Spooktown soap factory, wherein she was the chief sticker-putter-onner, i.e. she was the person who put on those little stickers you see on bars of soap that have the soap company logo and all that on.

Now Bronwen was well known in the soap business for how well she put stickers on soap. She had the slight of hand of a spider, the speed of a flea, and the assertiveness of a hippo. She was going to put those stickers on those soaps and there was nothing going to stop her. Not today.

[Birds chirping]

However, the day this story takes place, Bronwen actually did have a day off, as it was a Thursday and she had always worked 9 to 5 on Monday to Wednesday. Always. Except sometimes when she worked Fridays. Usually on Thursdays Bronwen would spend her time catching up on cleaning and whatnot, but today she had a favour to do.

Now Bronwen’s grandparents were no longer with her. They hadn’t died or anything, it was just they had retired and moved over to Magaluf in 2007, and Bronwen refused, by principle, to get on a plane to visit, as she didn’t believe in flying. Because how did planes even work? Makes no sense. Like she believed birds could fly because she’s seen them at it. In none of the videos she’d seen of planes had she ever seen a plane’s wings flap. So how were they even capable of staying in the air?

Anyway, when they moved to Magaluf in 2007, Bronwen’s grandparents, Steve and Mabel, left behind them a farm, which they had previously nurtured for a good 30 years or so. Farm Wimbley Wombley was their pride and joy. It was an arable farm where they grew crops such as potatoes, strawberries, and chickpeas. They also had animals on the farm, but they didn’t eat them or anything. They just had the animals around because it’s nice to have animals around, innit?

Bronwen’s grandparents, Steve and Mabel, were like proper vegans. So like not even honey passed her lips, because bees make honey, not humans. Steve’s motto was, ‘well, I’d be well annoyed if I made a sandwich and a cow stole it from me, so why would I steal a cow’s milk? Proper sly, that.’

Anyway, Mabel, Steve, and all the animals had a lovely time at Wimbley Wombley farm, where they all walked towards old age together, hand in hoof. They would spend their days trotting about the farm together, and then at night Mabel, Steve, and all the animals would snuggle up, gathering around the TV to watch their favourite soap operas, such as ‘Westenders’ and ‘Coronation Road’.

Slowly but surely the flock of animals at Wimbley Wombley Farm depleted, as they all, one by one, passed away in their sleep due to old age, leaving behind just Mabel and Steve. The couple couldn’t even watch soap operas anymore, because it hurt too much. They missed hearing the cows moo-gasp whenever anything dramatic happened.

So they moved onto watching reality TV, which is how they came across a programme called Sun, Sea and Suspicious Parents, a programme which showed young adults going on holiday to places like Magaluf, where they went and had a laugh, innit? Mabel and Steve watched with glowing eyes, and they thought, ‘that’s a bit of me, there.’ So within a month they packed all their stuff up and scuttled over to Magaluf, where they had a lovely time. [plane noises]

[Birds chirping]

Since then, different members of the Jones family took turns once a month to nip to Wimbley Wombley Farm to check that the house still looked alright and that, and that it hadn’t just been eaten up completely by moths. This month was Bronwen’s turn to do the check-up. In the past, Bronwen had gotten away with not being put on the farm check-up duty because whenever someone would ask her if she would do it, she would distract them by pretending she needed to sneeze [sneezing sound], and she wouldn’t stop until the person asking had walked away.

However, her uncle Dave cottoned onto this and tricked her by writing the word ‘yes’ on a sheet of paper and asking Bronwen to read it out loud. And just before she went to read out the ‘yes’, uncle Dave quickly slid in with, ‘will you check in on the farm this Thursday?’ And of course Bronwen then accidentally read out the ‘yes’. So that was that.

So there Bronwen was at Wimbley Wombley Farm. She looked around and, to be fair, it hadn’t changed much in this time. There were still windows and doors and all the stuff in between, like walls. Bronwen let herself into the house, and as she did, instead of creaking, the door made a quacking noise. [ominous music] ‘Strange, that,’ Bronwen said to herself. Although, with every step she took, the floorboards would make a mysterious oinking noise. [oinking echoes] Each step was an ‘oink oink oink’. [oinking]

Bronwen went to herself, ‘that’s weird, that.’ But to be fair, she lived in a house that exclusively had carpets, so she wasn’t dead sure if it was normal or not for floorboards to make oinking noises, so she carried on as she was.

By now, Bronwen was utterly parched, so she trotted into the kitchen to make herself a cup of tea. Because on the way to the farm she had nipped to the shop to get some tea bags and milk and that, alright? So she filled the kettle with water, then put it on the stove, because they had one of them old kettles. [kettle hissing]

As she waited for the water to heat up, Bronwen walked into the living room and flicked on the TV. There was one of them antique auctioning programmes on. But what was strange was that however loud Bronwen turned the TV up, it sounded like the people on the TV were bah-ing at each other, like sheep. Like imagine an auctioneer, right, but instead of the normal, ‘going once, going twice, sold,’ it was [bah-ing].

‘That’s not normal, that,’ Bronwen said to herself. But she put it down to the fact that the TV was old and the speakers were probably full of dust and moths. [ominous music intensifies]

Then, out of nowhere, there was massive booing noise that sounded like it was coming from the kitchen. Bronwen now was terrified. Had someone broken into her grandparents’ house? And if so, why were they booing at her? What had she done to displease them? So she tiptoed into the kitchen, each floorboard going ‘oink oink oink’. She opened the kitchen door, which quacked at her, [quacking] and poked her head round to see. But no one was there. In fact, what she was hearing was not an audience booing her, but was in fact a mooing noise, like a cow mooing. [mooing] And it was coming from the kettle?

‘Nah, that’s a bit out of the ordinary,’ Bronwen said to herself. But she had an electric kettle at home, so she wasn’t sure if it was normal for one of those stovetop kettles to moo. So she chilled out a bit then.

That was until the fridge door flung open by itself, making a quacking noise as it did, because a fridge door was still a door at the end of the day. [quacking] And out of the fridge flew a pot of jam, which opened itself. And as it opens itself, the lid makes like a quacking noise, because lids are like doors, aren’t they? [ominous music]

Then the cutlery drawer flung open, also making a quacking noise, because in a way, drawers are doors too. Like they open and shut and all that, so if a drawer is not a door they are at least very closely related, alright? Anyway, out of the cutlery drawer flew a butter knife. This knife didn’t make any noise, because knives tend to be quite quiet, don’t they? But what it did do was dip itself into the pot of jam and then took itself over to the kitchen wall where it started writing a message.

‘What’s all this, then?’ Bronwen said to herself. The butter knife had lovely handwriting, but because the message was written in jam, Bronwen hadn’t a foggiest what was written. In fact, Bronwen said that to the butter knife. She went, ‘you’ve got lovely handwriting, mind, but because you’ve written it in jam, I haven’t the foggiest what you’ve written.’

The butter knife sighed and then floated into the fridge before floating back out alongside a bottle of ketchup. The bottle of ketchup went up to the wall and went over the writing. And in fact, in one bit corrected the butter knife’s spelling. However, instead of making a squelching noise as it squeezed the ketchup and wrote on the wall, the ketchup bottle made a neighing noise, like a horse.

‘How peculiar,’ Bronwen went to herself. But to be fair, right, she had always preferred her food dry and horrible, so wasn’t dead familiar with what ketchup bottles sounded like. ‘So who knows, maybe ketchup bottles do neigh like horses,’ she thought.

Anyways, so the ketchup bottle finished writing what had to be written and stepped back. As much as a possessed ketchup bottle that is floating in the air can step back. Bronwen read the message out loud and it said, in very lovely handwriting, ‘please can you go away?’ So Bronwen packed her stuff up and away she went. The end.

[Spooky music]

ED: Quick ending.

KATH: Yeah, Bronwen needed – knew what she needed to do.

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Yeah, yeah.

KATH: You know, to be fair, Ed, if – if a ketchup bottle’s telling you you need to get out, you get out, don’t you?

ED: That’s what I’ve always stood by, Kath. Yeah.

ANNA: Exactly. If it was mayonnaise I might have considered staying, but ketchup, you don’t –

KATH: Ketchup, you don’t mess around with, do you? Yeah.

ED: Yeah. Ketchup’s the police officer, mayonnaise is the, um, community support officer, alright?

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: I want to flag, right, that – that Bronwen is happy to excuse all this mad shit that’s going on in – in this farm here, but does not believe in airplanes. Is just like absolutely not for airplanes but like, ‘oh, maybe ketchups neigh. Who knows. Airplanes? How is that up there? I don’t believe in the science.’

ED: I weirdly, with this – with this story, so obviously I thoroughly enjoyed it. I love a good spook. I – head – headline is of course I don’t believe it.

ANNA: But it’s all true.

ED: But I couldn’t – I couldn’t pick a single part of it that I didn’t actually believe.

KATH: Really nice, Ed. Really nice.

ED: Should we – should we, Kath, should we go and have a look in and see if any noises are made or if there’s anything –

KATH: I think so, yeah.

ED: Any ketchup bottles or a little bit –

KATH: I think so. I think we should just – yeah, so if you want to just hang out here, Anna, just keep – keep your toes grounded –

ED: Well I think – I think Anna – I think Anna, you come in with us.

KATH: Oh, do you reckon?

ED: And every – if there’s – if there’s no noises happening, we can look at you and sort of be like, ‘well, there’s no noises happening.’ Do you know what I mean? I’d rather be able to look back at Anna and be like, ‘there’s nothing happening.’

KATH: Okay, fair.

ED: Or be like, ‘oh my god, it’s happening.’ Do you know what I mean? Yeah.

KATH: Okay. Okay.

ED: Um, so should we – should we walk through?

KATH: Okay.

ED: Do you want to lead the way, Anna?

ANNA: Yeah, so – so here’s a door. Um, I’m just going to use my hand to open it.

ED: Uh huh.

ANNA: And it might make a noise.

KATH: Mhm.

ED: Thank you.

ANNA: Quack. [laughs] What was that?

[Ominous music]

ED: I’m going to – I’m going to stop you there, Anna. I’m going to ask – I’m going to ask this once. Did you just say ‘quack’?

ANNA: Um, no, I don’t – I don’t think I did. I feel like I’ve – may – no.

ED: Okay. Fine.

ANNA: Was that me? No. No. No, I’ve – I’ve never quacked in my life.

ED: No, it’s fine. I believe you. I’m just like – I’m just checking.

KATH: Yeah, if you don’t – if you don’t think you did then yeah, we – we believe you. We believe you.

ANNA: That’s sorted. That’s alright then.

KATH: It’s – it’s weird that your mouth moved when – I was watching your mouth, I’ll be honest. I’ve been watching your mouth and it – yeah.

ED: I didn’t see any of that. I didn’t see any of that.

KATH: Okay. Okay.

ANNA: Oh, I was yawning, sorry, at the same time. Um.

KATH: Oh, sorry. Okay, yeah yeah.

ED: Didn’t realise we were keeping you, Anna. Um, let’s – let’s proceed through to the kitchen. [footsteps]

ANNA: Oink.

KATH: Gosh, the animals sound, um, really similar to each other. It’s really unusual.

ED: I think – the weirdest thing for me, Kath, is that the animals are saying the words –

KATH: Instead of making the noise.

ED: Like not – they’re not making the noises, they’re saying ‘quack’ and ‘oink.’

KATH: Yeah. Yeah.

ED: That’s – to me is outstanding. What a farm.

KATH: What a farm.

ANNA: Strange, innit?

ED: It’s really strange, Anna. It’s really strange.

KATH: Anyone see any ketchup and jam stains, or?

ED: Oh yeah, there.

KATH: Oh yeah?

ED: Look. Yeah, in – in jam and then ketchup. It does – what was it? I can’t quite remember. I can’t quite make it out, Anna. Can you make it out?

ANNA: Um, ‘please can you go away?’

KATH: ‘Please can you go away.’

ED: Very polite.

KATH: Yes, it does say that. You’re right.

ED: You did say that this happened four years – four years ago. And that’s fresh – that’s like I’ve – I’ve put a lot of ketchup on a lot of walls in my time and I know for a fact that that’s – that’s fresh ketchup. That’s today ketchup. And we – we did turn up here and you were waiting outside. So it’s just a bit – I’m just not necessarily connecting any dots, I’m just saying it’s a bit weird that it’s – it seems so fresh.

KATH: Yeah, that is unusual, that.

ANNA: Well I – I don’t know what you’re insinuating, but I would never. Never in my days have I written on a wall with ketchup. Mayonnaise, many a day.

ED: Interesting. Because I wasn’t insinuating anything, but now that you’ve defended yourself against – you know, nothing, you’ve just suddenly defended yourself, then that’s weird.

KATH: Well with – with what Ed is, uh, potentially insinuating here, I mean admittedly –

ED: I didn’t insinuate shit. I didn’t insinuate shit.

KATH: I’m just – I’m going to say, so in your defense, Anna, you know, ketchup keeps, uh, so, you know, is it fresh? Is it – you know, it does stay in that bottle for a long time. Why are there ketchup footprints in the kitchen, then? Why has that happened? Talk me through it.

ANNA: Merely a coincidence. I – they’re nowhere near my size feet. Look, they’re tiny for prints. Tiny. Almost like hooves.

ED: Sherlock fucking Hughes, oh my god.

KATH: We don’t know what’s going on under your feet. You – like you said, you walked from Preston. They might have sort of formed weird shapes down there, we don’t know.

ANNA: To be fair –

ED: Yeah. Yeah, that’s a callous. Kath, that was, uh, that was a really good point but I’m going to have to go back to the ketchup just for a second. It keeps in the bottle, but have you ever used a glass bottle of ketchup?

KATH: Uh, I don’t think I have, actually. I think I’ve only had the plastic ones.

ED: Right, well there’s like fucking horrible like maroon and black and crusty around the top where it’s not protected by the environment of the bottle.

KATH: Oh.

ED: It doesn’t keep. It doesn’t keep well outside the bottle at all.

KATH: Okay. Okay fair, so that is –

ED: Just want everyone to know that.

KATH: Okay. So you’ve made your point. So that is – that is fresh ketchup on the wall.

ANNA: Just really passionate about ketchup.

KATH: Okay, well Ed, have we, um, witnessed enough here to go and have a little chat about whether we believe this is going into Spooktown lore?

ED: Yes, I just want to hear Anna’s thoughts on ketchup.

ANNA: So I am a big fan. I’ve been known to put ketchup in all of the meals. Um, it started when I was younger. I used to get like Sunday dinners and then mix it all up together and then put ketchup on it and it would be this pink blob. And I haven’t really looked back since. But in the last five years I have added mayonnaise to the roster.

ED: That mixing – mixing up your Sunday roast into a pink paste with – putting ketchup in it is the worst thing you’ve said today.

ANNA: And I said a lot of things.

KATH: And you said a lot of things. Yeah. Yeah.

ED: You’ve said a lot of stuff.

[All laugh]

ED: I – I don’t care for that and I wish I hadn’t asked you about ketchup.

ANNA: It was lovely.

ED: But thank you for answering. Okay, Kath, should we go and, um, should we go and have a – a conflab?

KATH: Yeah, should we have a chat? Okay, you – you just wait here then, Anna. And we’re just going to go have a little chat.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: Little – little chat.

[Birds chirping]

KATH: Well, it’s – I believe that – that everyone in this story exists, um, but I think Anna was making those noises when we walked in. And I think that Anna did the ketchup and that’s what’s on her feet.

ED: I think genuinely your – your Sherlocking of the ketchup on the feet is – and I’ve known you for 15 years?

KATH: Yeah, maybe.

ED: Is the best thing you’ve ever done. It was amazing. And you’ve done a lot of great stuff.

KATH: Thanks, Ed. That’s – that’s kind.

ED: So – yeah yeah yeah. Um…

KATH: I – yeah, it’s that – it’s that –

ED: Just off the basis of that –

KATH: We can’t – we can’t put it in a – in a – we can’t put a plaque by ‘someone saw this on Facebook, uh, if you go in the house it might not oink today, uh, weirdly it’s only if Anna’s there and she might yawn near you and that’s when the door might quack.’ We – we can’t, like –

ED: Yeah.

KATH: I loved the story.

ED: It’d be a funny plaque, but it wouldn’t be a right plaque.

KATH: It’d be a really funny plaque, yeah. But it wouldn’t be a factual – yeah.

ED: I just think that – it’s a shame because that – as a person – as a person, she’s great.

KATH: Oh, I –

ED: But as a liar, she’s – she’s real.

KATH: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I loved the story. I really enjoyed it and I loved hanging out with Anna. Loved all that.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: But I do think we’re going to have to, um, oh, I’ve forgotten what the – the death was. Oh yeah, burst out of –

ED: She’s going to burst out of my chest.

KATH: Your chest, yeah. Okay, so we’re just going to have to arrange that.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: But she seemed – you know what? She seemed really happy about it. So I think she’ll really enjoy that.

ED: So I think, um, I don’t believe her. I think best case scenario, um, she’s been tricked by a bot online. Like a lot of American voters. Uh, worst case scenario, she’s just out and out lying to us there. Um –

KATH: I’d like to think it’s the bot.

ED: So let’s go – let’s go tell her – let’s go tell her the good news.

KATH: Okay. Okay.

ED: It’s definitely – it’s definitely your turn this turn.

KATH: Okay, okay. Hey, Anna.

ANNA: Heya, are you alright? [clears throat] Sorry.

ED: Hi, Anna.

ANNA: Hey, yeah, not bad. Not bad. Oh my god, what happened while we were gone?

ED: Been drinking a gallon of milk, have you?

[All laugh]

ED: Just finishing off your Yop, Anna?

KATH: Necked your Yop, have you?

ANNA: It’s thirsty work, alright? I’ves walked all the way from Preston.

KATH: Well we – we had a – we had a little chat, um –

ED: A lovely chat, yeah.

KATH: We had a lovely chat. And we just wanted to sort of – straight off the bat, absolutely loved hanging out. Loved – loved your company, loved the story.

ED: Yeah.

KATH: However, uh, we do believe that you have bullshitted us. And I use the –

ED: You’re a Billy Bob Bullshitter, mate.

KATH: You’re a Billy Bob Bullshitter, yeah. Um, and I say ‘bullshit’ because that feels relevant to the story, um, although there weren’t any bulls involved but yeah, it feels relevant. And I feel like you’re going to have to climb on inside Ed, uh, and burst out of his chest to death. I do feel that’s – that’s the way this is going to go today. But it’s been lovely. And I hope you’ve had a nice time.

ED: It’s been lovely.

ANNA: Oh, well thank you for having me. And you know what? If – if I’ve got to burst out of a chest today, there’s worse things to happen.

KATH: You’re so welcome.

ANNA: You know what I mean?

KATH: I love your attitude. I love your positivity.

ANNA: Got to deal with the lemons you’re given.

ED: Okay, well, uh, see – see you sooner rather than later, Anna, thank you.

ANNA: See you later. Bye.

KATH: Yeah, thanks, Anna. Thank you. I’ll call the medics, Ed, so you’ll be safe. Ta ra!

ED: See you later.

[Spooky music]

[Birds chirping]

ED: That was nice.

KATH: That was really nice.

ED: Kath, can I stop you there? That was nice, though. That was nice, yeah.

KATH: That was nice.

ED: Ah, phew.

KATH: Hm, yeah. Yeah. Where are we going now?

ED: We are – oh, I’m – I’m, um, popping off to see Martin Clunes, uh, do you know the vape shop?

KATH: Oh, yeah.

ED: Yeah, we’re going to the vape shop because he said that the men were never actually behaving badly and it was all a fault of ghosts. Yeah.

KATH: What?

ED: Yeah. So we’re going to re-watch it together.

KATH: Really?

ED: I think he’s just lonely to be honest. But loneliness is the scariest ghost of all. So either way –

KATH: Oh, mate. Just – speaking of loneliness, can I come with?

ED: It is ‘Men Behaving Badly’, is the only issue.

KATH: Okay, okay. That’s fine. That’s fine.

ED: If it was women behaving badly, Kath, you’d still have to watch it on your own, sorry. If it was women behaving badly, Kath, you would also still have to watch it on your own, which is a shame. People behaving badly?

KATH: Yeah.

ED: Now that’s a show I could get behind. Anyway, I’m off to see Martin Clunes. Have a lovely night in.

KATH: Thanks Ed, have a nice time.

ED: Thank you.

[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.