

BAD EDUCATION

EPISODE 500

"A Christmas Carol"

Written by

Freddy Syborn & Felix Hagan

SHOOTING SCRIPT

20th July 2023

(Pink Rev. 28/07/23)

0.1 **INT. STEPHEN'S CLASSROOM - DAY**

0.1

Guttering candles. Lilies. A velvet-lined coffin on Stephen's desk, by a huge framed photo of him. STEPHEN is inside the coffin, as if dead. The classroom is decorated for Christmas.

INCHEZ (O.S.)

This song goes out to anyone who's  
ever lost a friend... a hero...

Tinny music. INCHEZ steps into shot, rapping in a corny style. JINX is his Faith Evans, harmonising excessively.

INCHEZ (CONT'D)

There's another diva up in Heaven,  
all dressed up in Prada,  
He was technically our teacher but  
he taught us nada.  
He lived by a motto: more is more!!  
But now he's dead, dead as a door-

JINX

(harmonising)

Nail, nail, nail, nail, naaaiiilll!

BLESSING

Dead as this song.

USMA

Dead as your shoes.

BLESSING & USMA

(harmonising)

Dead as your shoe-shoe-shoe-shoe-  
shoooooooes.

Before an outraged INCHEZ can interrupt them, Stephen sits up in his coffin. Dressed to the nines.

STEPHEN

Silence! Warren, stop them! I need to know what people will say about me after I'm gone... forever.

HARRISON

Sir, who are you meant to be? Widow Twanky or one of the Ugly Sisters?

STEPHEN

Excuse you?!

HARRISON

Well, you swore you'd do panto over your dead body. So is this the pantomime? Wait, what's happening?

STEPHEN

I *swore* I'd never whore myself out  
to some provincial panto. But I am  
gooped to be starring in a seasonal  
extravaganza -

Warren gasps, to tell Class K that they should act surprised.  
But this announcement falls flat. The kids are just confused.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

- a mere stone's throw from  
London's St. Martin's Lane.

WARREN

You just walk to Trafalgar Square  
then it's two buses to Paddington,  
then a direct train to Swindon.

STEPHEN

I'll be sad to leave Abbey Grove  
but I'm sure you'll agree, I can't  
let you hold me back any longer.

A blast of oompah-band Christmas music comes from outside.  
Stephen covers his ears and slams the window shut.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Hoburn's rented the playground to a  
German Christmas market. Urgh, I  
don't need reminding that I'm one  
year older and not a penny richer!

MITCHELL bursts in wearing a horrific Christmas jumper.

MITCHELL

Oi oi, a merry Xmas one and all.

STEPHEN

Not you actually saying "Xmas".  
It's Christmouss! You're glowing  
like a greasy Gregg's sausage roll.

MITCHELL

Mate, that is the nicest thing  
anyone's ever said to me. Ahh Jinx,  
ain't Christmas the tits? Great  
food, great booze, great prezziess!

STEPHEN

No, no, no and you can't afford any  
of them things! This morning, you  
were buying Lego with one of your  
kidneys.

MITCHELL

I was til the seller got me blocked  
- he said Ebay don't accept organs.

HARRISON

Is that like Instagram don't let  
you post nipples?

JINX

Totally different thing.

MITCHELL

Exactly.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

But you know what doesn't cost us a  
penny? The Abbey Grove Christmas  
lunch!

STEPHEN

Not now, not ever. I am not gonna  
sit there while you get drunk and  
go on about how Die Hard is a  
Christmas movie.

MITCHELL

Well it is.

STEPHEN

No it's not.

MITCHELL

It's set at Christmas.

STEPHEN

But could you watch and enjoy it  
any day of the year?

MITCHELL

I could if you didn't keep changing  
your Netflix password.

BLESSING

(whispers to Mitchell)

It's 'Stephen is a star', all the  
S's are dollar signs.

The bell rings. Lesson over. Mitchell's hustling pupils out.

STEPHEN

Warren, I suppose you'll want to go  
to this sad little luncheon?

WARREN

If it's convenient, sir?

STEPHEN

It's not convenient. This classroom  
isn't going to pack itself up! Oh  
go on, you mangle my wigs anyway.

USMA

Sir man, are you really not gonna  
come to lunch? Not that I care, but  
I don't not not not-not care innit.

STEPHEN

I'm sorry, but I'm meeting the rest  
of the cast tonight and I do need a  
disco nap. I want to look good!

INCHEZ

So this is goodbye?

STEPHEN

Maybe it's for the best? You'll be  
in my prayers. TTYN.

He disappears back into the coffin, leaving Class K in shock.

#### **TITLES**

0.2      **INT. STEPHEN'S CLASSROOM - DAY**      0.2

A meditation app is on. More candles are lit. In the coffin, STEPHEN has cucumbers over his eyes. He's asleep.

The candles blow out. The meditation app's whale song warps into a keening drone. STEPHEN lifts one slice of cucumber up.

The room has been plunged into an eerie gloaming. Somewhere, someone is groaning. And the noise is getting closer.

STEPHEN

Mitchell? Did you drink another  
pint of Fraser's egg nog?

More groaning. STEPHEN reaches for his compact.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Just lay down some newspaper before  
you pass out this time. The  
janitor's still traum--ARGGH!

Checking his reflection, STEPHEN sees ALFIE WICKERS' ghostly face staring out at him from the mirror.

STEPHEN snaps the compact shut. He can hear clanking chains. And the groaning is getting closer. STEPHEN jumps out of the coffin and locks the main door.

The silhouette of a man appears in the frosted glass. STEPHEN backs away from it. The shadow grows... and grows...

Then the door *behind* STEPHEN bursts open to reveal ALFIE, looking ghostly and awful with a bandage around his chin. Around his body, he wears a metal chain made of D, E and Us.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Jesus! What are -- Alfie?!

ALFIE

Do not ask me who I am. Ask me who  
I was.

STEPHEN is slightly irritated by this gnomic reply.

STEPHEN

Were you Alfie?

ALFIE

In life, I was your teacher Alfred  
Pruferock Wickers. But no longer...

STEPHEN

So you're... dead? Sorry, it's just  
that you were always very pasty.

ALFIE

You have a chance to escape my  
fate. Tonight you will be haunted  
by three Spirits. They will show  
you that you belong at Abbey Grove.

STEPHEN

Absolutely not. Not interested.

ALFIE lets out a keening wail. STEPHEN covers his ears!

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Oh Alfie, I'm so sorry, you're  
obviously in unbearable agony.

ALFIE

No, I was just starting to sing.

ALFIE and STEPHEN begin to sing. (NB: this song lasts 2:12.)

ALFIE (CONT'D)

These are the chains I forged in  
life,  
Hewn from the grades of my  
students.  
Ds, Es, Us no As in sight,  
It seems at my job I was useless.  
Now I wander the world a spectre,  
Chased by undead Ofsted inspectors,  
So former student, show some  
improvement,  
Or you'll wind up just like me.

Two wraith-like Ofsted inspectors appear and dance.

STEPHEN

And do they also make you wear that  
gilet?

## ALFIE

What?! Silence! Heed what I say!  
In your idleness you have shunned  
the noble tools of the teacher.  
You don't give a hoot for  
curriculums,  
You don't even use Wikipedia.  
Failing the children in your  
charge,  
The bill for your sins has become  
quite large.  
But Stephen wait! It's not too  
late!  
For Christmas is a time to change -

STEPHEN

The Keeeeeeeeyyyyyyyyyy !

STEPHEN belts out a ludicrous key change. The tempo changes.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Those ghostly creatures  
Attack shit teachers.

ALFTE

That's right.

STEPHEN

STEPHEN They've got the right man though.

ALFTE

What?!

## STEPHEN

And yeah that sucks for you,  
But yah boo sucks to you,  
Cos I'm off to do panto!

ALFTE

So listen close  
You mustn't go  
And I'm a ghost  
So I should know.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

I'm gonna be a star!  
I'm gonna shine so bright.  
I'm going to see my name  
In massive bloody lights.

#### ALFTE (CONT'D)

ALICE (CONT'D)  
But tonight!! You will be visited  
by spirits three,  
Each here to teach you a lesson.  
Heed their words or become like me  
A wraith with a case of depression.

STEPHEN

And a boring song. And a bad qilet.

ALFTE

ALFIE  
Stephen please, you must listen to  
the spirits.

(MORE)

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Stay where you belong, remain at  
Abbey Grove.  
You've been here for so long, we'd  
hate for you to go.

STEPHEN

I don't want to be a teacher.

ALFIE

Then prepare to meet your doooooom!

In frustration, ALFIE lets out a ghoulish high note. STEPHEN falls back in a terrified faint...

0.3

**INT. STEPHEN'S CLASSROOM - DAY**

0.3

STEPHEN jolts awake, finding himself back in the coffin, cucumbers askew. How did he get here? What was that?

GHOST FRASER enters (on a double dolly) wearing garish 80s clothing with a magic glowing Walkman around his neck. STEPHEN ducks down into the coffin. Too late.

GHOST FRASER

Busted! You're not the first person  
who's tried playing dead on me.

STEPHEN

What do you want, Fraser?

GHOST FRASER

I come to you on a matter of deadly  
seriousness. They call me the Ghost  
of Christmas Past.

STEPHEN

The kids are just being unkind.

GHOST FRASER

No. Look at what I'm wearing.

GHOST FRASER indicates his clothing. STEPHEN is blank: huh??

GHOST FRASER (CONT'D)

I'd call 999, but I don't know if I  
want an ambulance or the fashion  
police. Stephen, I look like shit!

STEPHEN

Fraser, you look exactly the same  
as normal.

GHOST FRASER

I'm a ghost!! I'm here because I'm  
concerned about your welfare.

STEPHEN

Well, you did just wake me up from  
a very, very important disco nap...

GHOST FRASER

And as the ghost of Christmas past,  
I don't have to notify 'qualified'  
medical practitioners before wading  
into the darkest recesses of your  
psyche on little more than a hunch.  
*It's just like the good old days...*

FRASER's holding out his hand to STEPHEN who doesn't take it.

GHOST FRASER (CONT'D)

You have to take my hand.

Very reluctantly, STEPHEN takes hold of it. He's about to say something when he's yanked forwards into a new scene...

0.4      **INT/EXT. ABBEY GROVE - THE PAST - DAY**

0.4

GHOST FRASER leads STEPHEN through the Abbey Grove of 10 years ago. Complete with signifiers of times gone by...

They sing as pupils and teachers perform dances inspired by the 2010s: Gangnam Style etc. (NB this song lasts 1:59.)

GHOST FRASER

It used to be so lovely  
Back in the good old days  
Life was easier,  
Folks were breezier  
'Bantersaurus' was my catchphrase.  
We used to be such jokers.

STEPHEN

Problematic is the word you want,  
hun.

GHOST FRASER

Whatchoo talkin' bout?  
If things were problematic,  
Call a mechanic,  
Because in the past, we had  
harmless fun.  
You could whack on a chieftain's  
headress  
To raise awareness -

STEPHEN

How?

GHOST FRASER

Now you're getting it.

STEPHEN

What? No!!

GHOST FRASER

Life was easy breezy breezy.

STEPHEN

But it's much better now.

GHOST FRASER

Don't be so holier-than-thou.  
Back then we all could dance to  
Kanye  
With no one saying it's wrong.

STEPHEN

(aside)

Well, it's not wrong, but...

GHOST FRASER

With no mobs on Twitter,  
We could play Gold Digger  
And really sing along!

STEPHEN

Fraser, the past was awful,  
So drop all the tired cliches.

GHOST FRASER

I hear ya! Life was easy breezy  
Breezy geezy  
Back in the good old days.  
You could chat up girls with no  
backlash.  
You could tell your male students  
'No splash, no gash.'

A tap interlude begins. STEPHEN nails it. GHOST FRASER tries to copy him, showing off his shiny patent leather... Crocs?

STEPHEN

Are those Tap Crocs?

GHOST FRASER

Oh yeah!

FRASER stomps about, throwing the music off.

GHOST FRASER (CONT'D)

So once more for the cheap seats  
As all the old stars say,  
That *now then, now then*, we could  
all be proud then,  
Back in the good old  
Bantersaurus, roflcopter -

STEPHEN

God I think he needs a doctor.

GHOST FRASER  
Back in the good!

STEPHEN  
Bad!

GHOST FRASER  
Old!

STEPHEN  
Bad!

STEPHEN & GHOST FRASER  
Days!!

0.5      **INT. LOBBY - THE PAST - DAY**      0.5

GHOST FRASER leads STEPHEN to his old office, past pupils in Christmas jumpers and cracker hats stringing up decorations.

GHOST FRASER  
It's Christmas 2010, Matt Cardle is  
number one and all is right with  
the world. But who's this solitary  
boy... as solitary as an oyster...

STEPHEN reacts to this weird phrase as FRASER pushes open his office door and beckons him in...

0.6      **INT. FRASER'S OFFICE - THE PAST - DAY**      0.6

STEPHEN and GHOST FRASER peek into the office. STEPHEN gasps.

Reveal YOUNG STEPHEN pacing nervously in FRASER's (now HOBURN's) office, looking as it did in the original series.

Young STEPHEN has relaxed his hair, he's wearing blue contact lenses and generally looking very unlike the man he becomes.

Young STEPHEN can't see or hear STEPHEN and GHOST FRASER.

STEPHEN  
Straight hair, Afghan scarf, blue  
contact lenses. Oh no, this is my  
White Christmas!

GHOST FRASER  
Oh God, I hope it's not my Black  
Christmas.

STEPHEN  
(looking at YOUNG STEPHEN)  
Awww, look at me. I honestly think  
I look younger now.

GHOST FRASER

Ditto.

YOUNG FRASER enters with a flourish. Stephen and GHOST FRASER stay back -- they never occupy the same frame as YOUNG FRASER and YOUNG STEPHEN, except fleetingly, using body doubles.

When we're with YOUNG STEPHEN & YOUNG FRASER, we essentially switch to their POV. As they can't see GHOST FRASER and Stephen, nor can we: the office around them looks empty.

YOUNG STEPHEN

Fraser! You've ruined my life!!

YOUNG FRASER

With all due respect, Stephen, I didn't break up the Pussycat Dolls.

YOUNG STEPHEN

Don't disrespect my Dolls! You know I auditioned for drama school. I've been waiting and waiting for an offer. And now I find this!!

Dramatically, he hands YOUNG FRASER a scrap of paper. FRASER puts on a pair of Kanye shutter shades to read the letter.

YOUNG FRASER

Dear Stephen, thank you for your unusual audition. You're the first student who has used the threat of violence to keep our panel seated throughout an entire one-man play about Cheryl Cole's back tattoo...

YOUNG STEPHEN

(singing)

You may call me Cole,  
or you may call me Tweedy.

STEPHEN

(harmonising with himself)

You may call me Cheryl,  
or Mrs Fernandez-Versini...

BOTH STEPHENS

But will you tattoo these roses  
On my ass for meee!

Stephen's nostalgic singing is interrupted by Ghost Fraser yelling at his past self...

0.8 **INT. FRASER'S OFFICE - THE PAST - DAY**

0.8

YOUNG FRASER is reading the letter. GHOST FRASER leans into shot and yells at YOUNG FRASER, who can't hear or see him.

GHOST FRASER  
BUY CRYPTO! *CRYPTO!!*  
(to Stephen)  
He can't hear me. *CRYPTO!!!!*

Meanwhile, YOUNG FRASER finishes the scrap of letter.

YOUNG FRASER  
Where's the rest of the letter?

YOUNG STEPHEN  
Don't ask me! You tore it up.

YOUNG FRASER  
It must be around here somewhere.  
Come on, let's -  
(quickly)  
Don't look in there.

Young STEPHEN has started to search a filing cabinet. As he goes to search elsewhere, YOUNG FRASER keeps stopping him.

YOUNG FRASER (CONT'D)  
Or there. Or there. Or -

YOUNG STEPHEN  
Fraser, have you got weird shit in all of these drawers?

YOUNG FRASER  
What's weird about a collection of hair? Wait, that's it!! You know I can't come to pupils' parties any more? Parents, police, Operation Snooze. Well, I was desperate to make Brad Tinkler's sweet 16th. So I decided to make a decoy, a full-sized replica of myself -

YOUNG STEPHEN  
To leave under your duvet while you snuck out of your bedroom at night?

YOUNG FRASER  
Better. I left the decoy at Brad's house. That way I was safely tucked up in bed, but everyone thought I was stood stock-still on the dance floor all night, like a legend.

YOUNG STEPHEN

Fraser, I don't want to overreact here, but the fate of musical theatre depends upon this letter.

YOUNG FRASER

The point is, I made the decoy out of papier-mache. And I'm afraid I used your letter to make this...

YOUNG FRASER produces a papier-mache version of his head, covered in sticky hair. There's sick slopping over the brim.

YOUNG FRASER (CONT'D)

Someone left it on my desk. I thought they were bringing me soup.

STEPHEN

Now I remember! Fraser you bastard!

YOUNG STEPHEN

Urgh! I don't belong in this school - surrounded by knuckle-dragging little norms like Mitchell Harper.

STEPHEN

(aside, to GHOST FRASER)

Fair.

YOUNG FRASER

You've heard of evolution? Humans descended from apes? Well, like all myths, therein lies a grain of truth. You might be surprised by how much you have in common with those knuckle-draggers.

YOUNG STEPHEN

But I don't want to have things in common with anyone! If I'm just like them, what makes me special?

Young Stephen throws a book behind him in fury. Stephen dodges the book as he turns to Ghost Fraser.

STEPHEN

Werk. I'm not going to apologise for being ambitious.

GHOST FRASER

But school's not all about success.

STEPHEN

Yeah? So why do I get told I'm failing my kids all the time?

GHOST FRASER

Take it from me, that is not the  
burn you think it is.

YOUNG FRASER

STEPHEN, relax. You'll have an EGOT  
on your bantle-piece in no time.  
Try to enjoy being young... it'll  
be over in the blink of an eye.

YOUNG STEPHEN

But I'm going to be at Abbey Grove  
until I'm... sixteen!

GHOST FRASER

Poor kid. You're gonna be here a

lot longer than that!

(to STEPHEN)

How old are you again? Twenty-s...?

STEPHEN

Shut up, Fraser.

STEPHEN storms out. GHOST FRASER follows him... after trying  
to spuds Young Fraser in a pick up of our plate shot!

0.9

INT. LOBBY - THE PAST - DAY

0.9

STEPHEN is barging past the students who ignore him - because  
they can't see him - when GHOST FRASER catches up with him.

GHOST FRASER

I'm trying to show you that you can  
be happy at Abbey Grove... If you  
accept that every single one of us  
is a star in our own special way.

STEPHEN

I'd rather die!! Just tell me this:  
did I get offered a place at drama  
school?

GHOST FRASER

Yes. But if it's any consolation,  
when they never heard back from  
you, they gave your place to a  
certain young man who became the  
best actor of your generation.

STEPHEN

I knew it. Tom Holland.

GHOST FRASER

Chesney from Coronation Street.

STEPHEN

Oh my God! Show me no more, Spirit!  
Haunt me no longer!!

The lights on STEPHEN change. The wall behind him falls away to reveal the hero corridor at night.

Stephen's dragged backwards, gliding through the corridor with shadows, silhouettes and flashing kaleidoscopic lights.

FRASER's papier-mache head appears in nightmarish close-up.

FRASER'S HEAD

Chesney... from Coronation Street!

0.10 **INT. CANTEEN - THE PRESENT - DAY**

0.10

STEPHEN awakes with a gasp under a canteen table, surrounded by red festive tablecloths. He can hear the stomp of feet...

And some very tuneless humming. STEPHEN can see the bustle of a massive, multi-coloured dress. He peers out to reveal -

GHOST HOBURN in a giant 'cornucopia' dress, which looks like Florence Pugh's outfit in *Midsommar*. She holds a clipboard. The rest of the canteen is empty, eerily so.

GHOST HOBURN

Mr Carmichael? I assume you're not trying to up-skirt me? Although it's still not a crime in my book. A man needs a hobby.

STEPHEN

No but talking of skirts, Bernie...

GHOST HOBURN

Ah yes, it's meant to signify -  
(checking clipboard)  
Feasting, festivities and Christmas excess. Hmm, I thought the woke brigade had banned us from saying the C Word in a school.

STEPHEN

What?! You try explaining Boris Johnson without it.

GHOST HOBURN

I meant "Christmas", you fool.

STEPHEN

Wait, are you a Ghost too?

GHOST HOBURN

Keep up! I'm The Ghost of Christmas Fommo? Formo? Fo Mo.  
(MORE)

## GHOST HOBURN (CONT'D)

Soon, everyone will sit down for the Abbey Grove Christmas lunch. We've got game, brawn, wreaths of sausages from the German market, a seething bowl of punch, and a mixed grill/pot luck affair from the biology labs.

STEPHEN gags at frogs and mice in aspic as HOBURN ticks off the disgusting 'Christmassy' hors d'oeuvres along the table.

## GHOST HOBURN (CONT'D)

And to think, you'll miss out on all the fun. Are you feeling it? Loneliness? Jealousy? The keening pull of regret?

## STEPHEN

I'm gonna say none of those things?

## GHOST HOBURN

Ah, but you haven't seen how much fun all your friends are having. Chop chop, we don't have all night.

0.11      **INT. MITCHELL'S OFFICE - THE PRESENT - DAY**

0.11

Pan up from a pair of bare feet scrunching on a carpet to -

Mitchell drinking a pint of egg nog, humming Beethoven's Ode to Joy tunelessly. Mitchell wears a white vest and trousers.

## STEPHEN

You think I'm getting FOMO from Mitchell's bare feet? His toes look like they're wearing little wigs!

## GHOST HOBURN

I know he's grotesque, but imagine what he'll look like without you.

## STEPHEN

Believe me, I can't help him. When I tried to get him on the Couch to 5K, he just stole a couch worth 5K.

## GHOST HOBURN

Hush. I believe that Mr. Harper is about to mistake some German market traders for terrorists.

STEPHEN reacts: eh? Cue a roll of snare drum, an action movie *Ode to Joy* with added festive sleigh bells... very *Die Hard*.

A burst of German dialogue comes from the corridor outside.

Mitchell drops his glass, smashing on the ground off-camera.

MITCHELL

Germans! It's happening, it's a  
Christmas miracle. It's Die Hard!!

STEPHEN

Oh God.

MITCHELL

I have been preparing for this  
moment my whole li---AARGGHH!!

Mitchell leaps up - and immediately treads on the broken  
glass. He hops around in agony, bleeding everywhere.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Shit, shit, shit!!

GHOST HOBURN and STEPHEN enjoy watching him hopping around.

STEPHEN

OK fine. I'm glad I was here to see  
this. But I can't spend the rest of  
my life at Abbey Grove, waiting for  
Mitchell to embrarazz himself.

The music crescendos as Mitchell starts singing tunelessly:

MITCHELL

I've gotta get those Germans! I've  
gotta save the day!  
I've gotta bandage my feet up,  
yippee-kay-Christmas!!

Mitchell hobbles out past Stephen who winces.

\*

STEPHEN

(fingers in his ears)  
That voice is not even funny.

0.12 OMITTED

0.12 \*

0.13 **INT. CANTEEN - PRESENT - DAY**

0.13

Ode to Joy continues as Stephen and Hoburn enter the canteen. \*

The canteen's full of pupils eating lunch, pulling crackers etc. FRASER (i.e. the real FRASER, not GHOST FRASER) is manning a drinks stand serving a wine-like drink.

FRASER

Can I interest you in a festive cordial of grapes, blackcurrants and raspberries? There's more than enough for everyone. Ten years ago, a ghostly voice told me to invest in Vimto - and I never looked back!

Reveal behind him a huge number of boxes of the fruit juice.

FRASER (CONT'D)

Vimto, Vimto, get your Vimto!!

An unconscious GERMAN TRADER with long blonde hair is pushed through the canteen, taped to an office chair. Very *Die Hard*. \*

The German comes to stop by Class K's table. INCHEZ reads the handwriting on the German's t-shirt. STEPHEN and GHOST HOBURN watch, unseen by everyone.

INCHEZ

Now I have a German to English phrasebook. Ho ho ho.

\*

BLESSING & WARREN

Mr Harper.

WARREN

We knew this day would come. When Mr Harper's tenuous grip on reality would fail and he would disappear into the oeuvre of Bruce Willis.

INCHEZ

I gotta see this!!

BLESSING

We've gotta stop him before he gets fired. I don't wanna be running the bleep test with a real PE teacher.

\*

\*

WARREN

Maybe we should wait for Mr Carmichael?

The rest of Class K jeer and groan at this idea.

USMA

I'm over it. If Mr Carmichael cared about us, he'd be here. It's his last day ever at Abbey Grove, man.

WARREN

I'm sure he's busy preparing to meet cast of his pantomime tonight.

STEPHEN

(aside, to GHOST HOBURN)

Thank you, Warren.

USMA

Bitch please! Sir acts like he's better than us, but even he's finally realised he ain't that girl. Forget the Met Ball. He's doing Mother Goose in Shitsville!

WARREN

Swindon.

STEPHEN

Swindon!

USMA

Whatever, Warren. Of course he's too embarrassed to show his face!

STEPHEN

Hag! Let me at her!

Ghost HOBURN holds STEPHEN back... but USMA can't hear him.

WARREN

He's following his dream. OK it's humiliating but that only makes his courage even more inspirational.

STEPHEN

(bitter, to GHOST HOBURN)

It's all heart with Warren. He hasn't mentioned my looks once.

HARRISON

Yeah. And who's he hurting, really? We're here, having fun. But he's all alone. I feel sorry for him.

STEPHEN

Oh Harrison. Not you in them shoes feeling sorry for me!

Offscreen, Mitchell yells something. A crash. A scream.

JINX

Come on!

Class K run out, excited. STEPHEN watches them go, sadly.

## GHOST HOBURN

Well, you won't miss that rabble. I mean, they're hardly the kind of children you see getting 12 A Stars on the front page of the Telegraph.

## STEPHEN

Er, they're great kids. They're funny and kind and - alright they're probably not gonna get any A Stars - but I miss them already.

HOBURN rolls her eyes and consults her clipboard, frowning.

## GHOST HOBURN

I'm meant to validate your concerns - hurt people hurt people tick tick box box. Nauseating. 'You need to -'

She's interrupted by loud metallic thunking from the ceiling.

## GHOST HOBURN (CONT'D)

Oh God, that'll be Mr Harper in the ventilation shaft.

They wait for another few beats as the noise disappears. Then HOBURN returns to her clipboard and reads woodenly.

## GHOST HOBURN (CONT'D)

"You need to stop dwelling on past injustices and start living in the present." Or at least pretend to, so I can cross you off my list?

Music swells. STEPHEN wavers...

## STEPHEN

Maybe I'm cutting myself off. Like, I'm a star, period. But sometimes it's cute to be in an ensemble... And I mean, it's not like anyone here is going to outshine me!

But then Mitchell bursts in, full of razzmatazz. He's flanked by Class K who sing and dance. (*NB this song lasts 2:52.*)

## MITCHELL

Yippe-kay-yay all you numpties, I killed all the terrorists, They thought that they could outsmart me but it seems I was cleverest.

## BLESSING

That's not true, sir, He's not Hans Gruber.

JINX sniffs Mitchell's egg nog.

JINX

Jesus, this egg nog is 50 proof.

MITCHELL

Bollocks he was proper evil  
So I threw him off the roof!

HARRISON

Mr Mitchell's the greatest,  
The greatest teacher I know.

WARREN

Most PE teachers are sadists,  
But Mr Mitchell is no weirdo.

BLESSING

If you're feeling down, he'll cheer  
you right up.

INCHEZ

He's never worn a frown, he'll take  
you to the pub.

MITCHELL

But strictly as a mate,  
It's definitely not a date.

CLASS K

Mr Mitchell's so great!  
He's our kind of star!

USMA

He says we'll go far  
He may be really quite thick with a  
rubbish car.

BLESSING

But he's still a star  
And better than that,  
If we get too stressed or upset  
then he's got our back.

JINX

He's our kind of star,  
No airs and no graces with him cos  
He's always broke.

CLASS K

Yeah, he's our kind of star!  
He makes us believe

MITCHELL

You can do anything you set out to  
achieve!

CLASS K

He's our kind of star.

WARREN

Mr Mitchell's the best,  
The strongest steel this land can  
forge!

STEPHEN

Bit much.

USMA

He don't dress to impress.  
But who needs Armani  
When you've got George?

STEPHEN

I want to wake up now.

But no one can hear or see STEPHEN. Everyone's looking at  
Mitchell and Class K -- all having a great time.

HARRISON

He shows us all the facts  
About the birds and the bees.

JINX

Plus what you can achieve  
With no GCSEs!

BLESSING

He's our kind of star!  
Our favourite guy!  
If we get arrested,  
He's there with an alibi.

CLASS K

He's our kind of staaaaaa!  
He's our favourite teacher.  
He's our kind of star...

To Stephen's horror, Mitchell starts to dance. He's very,  
very good (... in an easily cheated close-up of his feet!)

STEPHEN

(to GHOST HOBURN)

Bullshit he can dance like that.  
Hasn't he got glass in his feet?!

Everyone is cheering Mitchell on as he sings and dances.

STEPHEN can't bear to watch any more. He barges forward to  
throttle Mitchell - just as everything goes black.

0.14

INT. STEPHEN'S CLASSROOM - THE FUTURE - DAY

0.14

STEPHEN lurches awake, still in the throttling motion. He  
finds himself on the floor again. He turns on his phone's  
torch and shines it around. The room is very smoky.

STEPHEN

Children! For the last time, this  
is not a toy! Try me again and I'll  
make you repeat the module on *Stars  
in their Eyes*.

He wafts the dry ice away from him. Through the mist, he sees  
the mysterious GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE. A cloaked figure  
with a tall pointy black hood totally obscuring their face.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Not another one! Hello?

(beat)

O...K. And no offence but I assume  
that you're a Ghost? The Ghost of  
Christmas... when?

A bell tolls very loudly. STEPHEN shrieks.

The Ghost raises a pale hand and points at the classroom  
door. Above it, a banner saying "CLASS K 20 YEAR REUNION!"

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Ah hard pass but you go, my love.  
I've really learnt a lot about  
myself but I have a soiree tonight -

The doors are thrown open to reveal CLASS K in 20 YEARS' TIME  
(aged up in make-up), dressed in drab 'future-y' clothes.

OLD USMA is a politician wearing a nightmarish suit, like a  
Tory *Stop Making Sense*-era David Byrne.

OLD INCHEZ is a drab vicar, covered in biscuit crumbs. OLD  
BLESSING wears stripped-down traffic warden gear, i.e. a  
black jumper with epaulettes. OLD JINX is a corporate lawyer.

OLD HARRISON has gone bald. He wears his scruffy old school  
uniform for the occasion. He keeps his hands in his pockets.

OLD USMA

It's splendid to see all of you.  
Inchez, I always admired your  
loyalty to Imperial measurements.

OLD INCHEZ

(timid, mousey)  
Goodness, I'd forgotten about that  
old nickname. I'm afraid my "road  
youth" days are behind me.

OLD USMA

Well, I'm sure you know all about  
my career.

OLD INCHEZ

I don't think I -

OLD USMA

(talking over him)

As a politician, it's important to be reminded of my humble beginnings innit. Why, I haven't set foot in a classroom since I was minister for education. I was the one who banned drag readings in school.

OLD BLESSING

Harrison, I heard you were working for a pharmaceutical company?

OLD USMA

Ooooh, Big Pharma? J'adore!

OLD HARRISON

Yeah, loads of different companies. All these scientists are trying to turn me into a guinea pig.

OLD BLESSING

Do you mean... they're using you as a guinea pig?

OLD USMA

And Jinx... I'm guessing lawyer?

STEPHEN

(aside, to the Ghost)

We saw that one coming. Boring.

OLD INCHEZ

That must be fulfilling work, Jemima. I imagine you work with a lot of human rights organisations?

OLD JINX

Yes, I do work with human rights lawyers. I mean, they're usually on the opposite side of the courtroom.

OLD HARRISON

Yeah, Jinx represented one of the big farmers who experimented on me.

OLD JINX

I can't name names... but a certain cosmetics company were trialling a new, lead-based nail polish.

OLD HARRISON

And I didn't get any compensation! Not a penny! Good on ya, Jinx!

HARRISON gives her two misshapen, mutant thumbs up.

OLD HARRISON (CONT'D)

The only problem is, I dunno how  
I'm gonna pay for this parking  
ticket you gave me, Blessing.

OLD INCHEZ

Oh my days in heaven, Blessing,  
you're a federal agent?

OLD BLESSING

Yes I am. You violate the Traffic  
Management Act, you violate *me*.

OLD JINX

Funny isn't it? After all this  
time, I can't believe he isn't  
here.

STEPHEN

I know, children. I know...

OLD HARRISON

He was a one-off. I never met  
anyone that talented.

OLD INCHEZ

And funny.

OLD USMA

And sweet.

STEPHEN

You guys!

OLD BLESSING

I'm glad we're all here... to  
remember him.

She turns to something behind STEPHEN and the Ghost. STEPHEN turns to see a large framed photograph, shrouded in a sheet.

STEPHEN

Remember me... Wait... whose photo  
is in that frame, spirit?

Rather than answer, the Ghost merely points at it.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

You can't just tell me?

(beat)

Fine! I'll see for myself...

STEPHEN edges up to the frame, but he's scared. His hand is shaking as it takes the sheet and whips it off to reveal -

A huge photo of OLD WARREN!

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Warren?!

OLD INCHEZ

Poor Warren. He was never the same  
after they stopped teaching drama  
at Abbey Grove.

STEPHEN

Spirit, if Warren was never the  
same after I quit teaching? Does  
that mean that if I quit tonight...  
Warren will...?

The Ghost nods his head sombrely. Another toll of bells.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Well... that makes this awkward  
because I think I'm still gonna  
take the panto.

The Ghost of Christmas Future draws back his hood to reveal...  
it's an outraged OLD WARREN. He can't believe STEPHEN!

OLD WARREN

Sir??!

STEPHEN

Warren! I thought you were dead!

OLD WARREN

I am! I'm a ghost.

STEPHEN

Oh... yeah. But don't overreact. I  
mean, how long did you live for?

OLD WARREN

Not long enough! I die at 40.

STEPHEN

See? That's not so bad! You lived  
til 40 and then died in your sleep.

OLD WARREN

I died in a boating accident.

STEPHEN

Well, I heard that drowning was  
like falling asleep.

Old WARREN pulls his hood off his head to reveal a boat  
propeller stuck in the top of his head.

OLD WARREN

I didn't drown. Look at the rest of  
the class. Blessing's a traffic  
warden! Usma's a fascist.

(MORE)

OLD WARREN (CONT'D)

Harrison lives a hardscrabble life,  
showing off his thumbs to men in  
car parks. They don't even remember  
your name.

STEPHEN

Pfft. Now you're just being silly.

But we tune back into their conversation to hear:

OLD BLESSING

What was his name? Simon? Stuart?

OLD JINX

His name is Stephen Carmichael.

STEPHEN

See? They're not all monsters. I've  
always loved Jinx.

OLD JINX

I only remembered because he's  
named in a new legal case of ours.

STEPHEN

Oooh, I've become notorious!!  
Perhaps I'm cited in someone's  
divorce? Or a stalker! Cute!

OLD USMA

So is 'Stephen' still in showbiz?

OLD JINX

Yes.

STEPHEN

Durrr.

OLD JINX

Well, radio.

STEPHEN

... OK. Retro.

OLD JINX

He does the shipping forecast.

STEPHEN

Eh?

WARREN clicks his fingers. Cut to --

0.15      **INT. SHIPPING FORECAST BROADCAST - DAY**

0.15

OLD STEPHEN fully commits to the shipping forecast.

OLD STEPHEN

Viking. Southeast 6 to gale 8. Fog.  
Moderate becoming rough. North  
Utshire. Southeasterly 4 to 6. Very  
rough. Cromarty. Northeastly 3 to  
5. Foggy patches! Dogger! Thundery  
showers! Very rough! Abandon ship!!

0.16    **INT. STEPHEN'S CLASSROOM - THE FUTURE - MOMENTS LATER**    0.16

Far from ashamed, STEPHEN is impressed by his performance.

OLD JINX

He's responsible for an oil tanker  
running aground off the coast of  
Australia, poisoning the world's  
last remaining coral reef... and...

OLD HARRISON

Killing Warren!! Warren was diving  
the reef on holiday.

OLD WARREN

So you see, sir, if you leave Abbey  
Grove, not only will you rob us of  
creativity and joy in our lives;  
but you will become a poster boy  
for wanton destruction--

STEPHEN

Shhhh. You had me at "poster boy".

OLD WARREN

Sir, you're going on trial!

STEPHEN

Trial schmial. I'm so sorry Warren,  
but press is press. Maybe tell your  
past self not go scuba diving?

OLD WARREN

This doesn't work like that!

But STEPHEN is already heading for the exit. He waves goodbye  
like a ghost himself, trying to pretend he can't hear WARREN.

STEPHEN

I've tried to warnnn yoooouuuu!

OLD WARREN

You don't get to do that to me!  
Come back here! Look at my head!

0.17 **INT. CANTEEN - DAY**

0.17

The canteen. We're back in real time, i.e. it's an hour or so after the first classroom scene at the start of the episode.

FRASER is serving up Vimto to happy students. There's revolting food aplenty on the long canteen tables. But -

Class K are sitting miserably at their tables. Mitchell's dressed up in his Father Christmas outfit, looking glum.

MITCHELL

I can't believe he didn't show. He always said he hated it here, but I thought it was all part of the act.

USMA

I guess he really didn't give a shit about us?

HARRISON

He didn't even say goodbye.

WARREN

This'll cheer you up. I'm planning a diving holiday. Who wants to look at some pictures of the coral reef?

Then the door is pushed open. STEPHEN strides in as if from a long and dramatic journey. Mitchell and Class K stand up.

STEPHEN

I'm back.

Class K cheer. The rest of the school join in. WARREN smiles at STEPHEN. STEPHEN smiles at WARREN.

MITCHELL

Oh mate, this is great. What made you change your mind?

STEPHEN

I listened to you. Maybe I'm not exactly where I dreamt I'd be when I was fifteen. But that doesn't mean I need to throw away everything I've got, for everything I'm not. I finally know what make me special. It's you. The look on your faces when I walked back in here. You're all stars. Also, that panto was not right for me on an artistic level.

MITCHELL

(smells a rat)

Right... and out of interest, what part did they give you?

STEPHEN

Fine. I didn't know they'd cast me  
as the pantomime horse.

MITCHELL

Which end?

STEPHEN

*The wrong end.* And the front of the  
horse is being played by... Chesney  
from Coronation Street.

MITCHELL

Wow, acting royalty! What a legend.

STEPHEN

I'll have you know, he stole my  
place at drama school.

MITCHELL

Well, I'm glad you didn't go there.  
Otherwise we wouldn't be mates.

STEPHEN

Hmm, perhaps you're right.

STEPHEN looks over to a corner. There are the Ghosts: ALFIE,  
FRASER, HOBURN and WARREN, waving like dead Jedis in Star  
Wars. GHOST FRASER is annoying GHOST ALFIE. Stephen smiles.

\*  
\*  
\*

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

\*

Now...

(calling to WARREN)

You there boy, what time is it?

WARREN

It's showtime.

STEPHEN

And I haven't had my solo number!!

\*  
\*

A trill of music. Stephen opens his mouth to sing -

\*

When a German oompah band enter playing a Christmas carol.

\*

MITCHELL

Germans! Oh my God, Harrison, it's  
happening! It's a Christmas  
miracle. Yippee-kay-yay motherfu--

Stephen is barged out of the way by Mitchell, who's about to  
wreak some real havoc.

\*