

WORST YEAR OF MY LIFE--AGAIN!!

EPISODE ONE

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY"

Written by

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(FIRST DRAFT)

A calander alarm clock display - the first wheel spins... MONDAY... The second wheel spins... JANUARY... The third wheel spins... 28th... The alarm goes off... In the bed next to it, the covers shoot off and ALEX KING sits bolt upright in bed... A big grin on his face... It's a special day! - He hits a button on the alarm clock, cancelling the alarm and turning on the radio.

DJ (V.O.)

Good morning Melbourne! It's January the twenty eighth and your listening to Dingo and the Girl on EZ-FM...

Alex hops out of the bed and heads towards his wardrobe. Stopping in his tracks when he hears the DJ announce:

DJ (V.O.)

And time for our big birthday shout-out...

Alex turns and looks at the radio excited.

DJ (V.O.)

...Today Going to Penny Tutton - eighteen years old this morning, happy birthday Penny!

Alex shrugs, 'whatever', turns to carry on to his wardrobe and accidentally stands on an upturned plug. He yelps, dances about a moment then shakes it off and flings open his wardrobe doors...

Alex (now in school clothes) makes his way along the landing, passing by the open door to his sisters room. Samantha is sat up in bed yawning. She spots him pass by.

SAMANTHA

Happy birthday... **Jelly Belly!**

ALEX

I lost my puppy-fat aged four. Your stuck with that chin for life.

Samantha touches her chin as a grinning Alex carries on through to the bathroom - his sister isn't denting his special day.

INT. KING HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Inside the bathroom the blinds are drawn. Alex grabs the cord and pulls it - it snaps off, the blind rattles upwards and falls off its runner - Alex jumps back from it, knocks a shelf and a bottle of perfume empties over him...

He straightens the bottle - rubs the spillage into his shirt and heads to the sink. Still refusing to have his day ruined and instead starts cheerfully singing the jingle to Dingo and The Girl as he plucks his toothbrush from the rack and starts tossing it from hand to hand 'cocktail' style.

ALEX

Dingo and The Girl! Do do doo do  
do! Dingo and The--

He misses the third toss and the toothbrush drops into the toilet... Alex looks down at it.

INT. KING HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - DAY

Alex walks in - his MUM, DAD and sister there.

MUM/DAD

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

Alex grins. Samantha comes forward first, shoves a present at him.

SAMANTHA

Don't say I never give you nothing.

He tears it open - a DVD ("Boyz-4-Hire - Live In Concert") looks at it, then up at her.

ALEX

...Isn't this the one Auntie Ethel gave you for Christmas? ...That you hated?

SAMANTHA

(YES)  
No! ...Shut up! ...No!

MUM

And this ones from me and your Dad...

She hands him a large wrapped parcel. Now this is more like it! Alex eagerly rips it open... We see his face drop slightly, but he's polite enough to try and hide it.

ALEX

...Knights & Castles.

It's a console game - special edition - comes in a big box with a t-shirt and stuff included.

MUM

Special edition. That's the one you were always asking for isn't it?

ALEX

Yeah... Yeah... I was always asking for this...

(LOOKS AT BOX)

...When I was younger...

(FORCES SMILE POLITELY)

Thanks Mum. Dad.

A knock on the door.

ALEX (CONT'D)

That'll be Simon. Gotta run.

He hands the game back to his parents and hurries away. Mum calling after him.

MUM

Straight out of school at final bell Alex... We \*might\* have a surprise for you...

We see Alex wince slightly as he goes through the door... As if he knows exactly what that surprise is going to be and isn't keen on it...

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EXT. ALEXS HOUSE - DAY

5

Alex's best mate, SIMON BIRCH, is waiting for him outside. Simon is from England and still has his accent.

SIMON

Happy birthday mate!

ALEX

Thanks. Listen, is it alright if I go round yours after school?

They head off together.

SIMON

If you want. Why?

ALEX

Cos Mum reckons she's got a surprise for me... Be the same as always - a trip to "Palace Burgers" It's embarrassing! I'm fourteen now!

SIMON

But you look twelve... Isn't Palace  
Burgers that naff place where they  
all dress up in olde-worlde  
costumes?

ALEX

Oh, are those costumes? I thought  
they were just what people from  
England wear.

SIMON

That's funny. I should make you go  
for that - they might crown you  
"Birthday Prince"  
(BOWS)

Royal fries and coke your highness?

ALEX

Ahhh Shut up.

Simon laughs some more as they walk off... Then he frowns and sniffs the air.

SIMON

...You wearing perfume?

ALEX

...No.

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**EXT. STREETS - DAY**

6

Alex and Simon have left the suburbs and are now in town, making their way towards school.

ALEX

Tell you what, now I've hit the big  
"One Four", everything is going to  
change.

They both stop as a cyclist shoots out a side alley, ringing his bell and nearly hitting them. Then they keep walking.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm going to make this year totally  
amazing.

Simon nods, fiddling with his phone, not really listening.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Know what I'm going to do? ...I'm  
going to start my own soccer team.  
Play in the junior leagues.

They pass by a woman coming out of a shop with two heavy bags of shopping...

One splits and she spills stuff all over the road. They dance over it as the shopkeeper comes out to help her.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
And I'm going to join the life-savers club... And put myself down for the school play.

A car on the road angrily beeps it's horn at someone walking out in front of it. The driver hangs out the window and shouts:

DRIVER  
Watch it, fruit-loop!

They keep walking. Alex suddenly stops, next to a ladder, feeling the need to really make a dramatic announcement.

ALEX  
This year. Will be the best year of my life ever!!! Starting... NOW!

And so saying a soapy wet sponge drops on his head. Alex irritatedly pulls it off.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Okay... Starting NOW!

Alex and Simon arrive at the school and are just heading through the gates when a soccer ball rolls to a stop in front of them.

Across the way we see two hard looking lads, PARKER and HOWE - the school bullies.

PARKER  
Oi King! Kick it back!

Simon looks anxiously at Alex.

SIMON  
It's Parker and Howe - you better not do a girlie kick, or you'll be labelled a lame-o-zoid all year... And I can't be seen hanging out with a lame-o-zoid.

ALEX  
Cheers Si. You kick it then, if you're so worried.

SIMON  
(LYING)  
Um... I would, but... Leg cramp...  
(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)

From how I slept. Been walking like  
a sea-sick chimp all morning.

Alex knows this is nonsense, but he doesn't bother calling him on it - he just turns and kicks the ball... And it's a great kick, launching the ball up in the air...

Alex, Simon on one side and Parker and Howe on the other all look up and watch it's trajectory... Following it down in between them... At the exact moment their year head, MR NORRIS, happened to be walking through - nose buried in a load of papers and for some reason carrying a PINK SKATEBOARD under his arm.

The ball crashes right down on top of his papers, knocking them out from his arms and sending them flying around him.

NORRIS

My timetables!!!

Alex is horrified - he turns to say something to Simon, only to find his friend has vanished. Alex looks over at Norris, crouched down trying to gather up the papers - a boy called TOBY rushing over to help... A girl called HANNAH (wearing a distinctive wombat backpack) wandering past reading her phone. Norris looking around for the culprit... Alex decides vanishing isn't such a bad idea after all and he legs it, just as Norris' gaze comes to rest on Parker and Howe.

HOWE

Oi sir! Kick our ball back will  
you?

Parker grimaces and runs a hand down his face.

NORRIS

You two! Detention! This afternoon!

PARKER

It wasn't us! It was King!

And Parker points to where Alex should be... But of course Alex is gone.

NORRIS

And THIS  
(Holding up the ball)  
Is another item for my contraband  
cupboard.

And so saying Norris snatches the papers back that Toby has picked up and marches off... As Parker surveys the school yard, knowing Alex is hiding somewhere.

PARKER

When I find you King...!

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - BEHIND BINS - DAY

We find Alex hiding behind the bins with Simon, listening to the bullies threat. He groans.... Suddenly:

MADDY (O.C.)  
Happy birthday Alex!

They both jump and look to their left... where they see MADDY KENT crouching down with them.

MADDY (CONT'D)  
I got you a card!

She passes the bemused Alex a card.

ALEX  
Why are you hiding too?

MADDY  
I don't know. I assumed it was some sort of game? I don't get it through. What are the rules?

ALEX  
The rules are to try and not get beaten up...

Alex peeks over the bins...

INT. SCHOOL - LOCKER CORRIDOR - DAY

And then we're in the school, following the three friends down the corridor. Alex urgently peeking round every corner as he goes.

MADDY  
Open the card Alex! Open the card!

Alex shushes her.

ALEX  
Don't let anyone know its my birthday.

SIMON  
The "Birthday Prince" doesn't want any fuss.  
(BOWING)  
Do you your majesty?

ALEX  
You know what Parker and Howe are like, they'll use any excuse to humiliate and embarrass me.  
(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I've got to be on my guard all day  
now, keep my eyes peeled, not let  
anything... Argh!

He stumbles over something - it's the school janitor, laid on his back underneath a water fountain, trying to fix a bad pipe with his spanner... a spanner which now slips and causes a jet of water to hit in him in the face.

Alex manages to keep his footing, just. He turns round and stumbles backwards away from the janitor, apologizing profusely.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry - I didn't see--  
Arghh!

This time he bangs his head on the back of an open locker door. Turns round again rubbing it. Simon by now is doubled over in laughter.

SIMON

Way to stay on your guard mate!

Maddy hurries in front of Alex, turns her back to him, opens her jacket like wings and attempts to 'cover' him from view.

MADDY

Now you can open it!

Alex opens her envelope, pulls out the card and looks at the cover, confused.

ALEX

...Congratulations on your  
promotion?

Maddy turns round excitedly (still 'covering' him)

MADDY

I know! It's not a birthday card,  
but I HAD to get you it when I saw  
the little man on the cover. He  
reminded me of you!

Simon leans over and looks at it to - and we reveal the card has a cartoon picture of an old King on a throne being crowned... A bald king with a long grey beard that looks nothing like Alex.

ALEX

...You mean because my name's King?

MADDY

No... I think it was the eyebrows.

Simon look again at the card, then at Alex's eyebrows.

SIMON

Oh yeah...

MADDY

Read the inside! Read the inside!

But Alex has stopped listening, he's spotted something and leans round Maddy to look...

...And there down the corridor walks NICOLA GREY, the most beautiful and popular girl at school. Flanked, as she always is, by her entourage - LOREN and AMY.

ALEX

...Know how I said this was going to be my year? Well I'm going to start it by asking out Nicola Grey.

Maddy looks a little put-out by this. Simon looks completely horrified.

SIMON

You're going to ask to the most popular girl at school? In front of us? You'll be completely humiliated and...

(BEAT)

...No, hang on, that'll be really funny. Yeah, go on, do it.

Alex hides his birthday card behind his back (something that doesn't go unnoticed by Maddy) and watches as Nicola approaches... He offers a smile... A smile completely wasted, since Nicola heads past him without so much as a glance and carries on down the corridor with her entourage.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Pathetic.

ALEX

What was I meant to do Si?

SIMON

Get her attention, shout her or something.

ALEX

Don't be daft. Got to be more subtle than that - no point announcing yourself with a big fanfare, girls hate that. Right Mads?

He looks to Maddy for support, but she's just staring at him cross - and he realises he's still hiding her card behind his back. Apologetically he brings it back round again and opens it... At which point a BIG ROYAL FANFARE blares out from inside it!

Nicola, Loren and Amy stop and look back. Alex flushes red and quickly turns to hide the card up his shirt... As he does so he notices several other kids looking over too... And wading through them - Parker and Howe!

Alex yelps and legs it - his friends hurrying after him...

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INT. SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY

10

Alex, Simon and Maddy are hurrying down a different corridor - Alex urgently pulling on door-handles as he passes but finding them all locked.

MADDY

Maybe you should just get their football back Alex. Oooh! If you find it could you get mine as well? The one with the multicolored bat on it?

SIMON

I keep telling you, it's a butterfly.

MADDY

It is not! Why would a ball have a butterfly on it? That's just stupid!

Alex finally reaches a door that's unlocked. He pushes it open and turns to his friends.

ALEX

Tell them I went that way!

He points off down the corridor and hurries inside, closing the door behind him. Simon and Maddy step away just as the bullies come round the corner.

SIMON

(POINTING)

He went that way.

PARKER

Course he did.

Parker nods to Howe and they start trying the same doors Alex did, working their way down. Simon and Maddy hovering nervously. Behind them we see Toby make his way down the corridor and disappear into the same room Alex just entered... emerging a moment later pushing a wheeled cupboard. Parker spots him.

PARKER (CONT'D)

What you doing?

TOBY

Arggh! Don't hit me! I need to get  
this for Mr Norris!

A wincing Toby, apparently expecting to be punched, pushes the cupboard past the bullies. But they don't touch him, they're more interested in the now open door to the room. They barge past Simon and Maddy and head inside. Simon and Maddy exchange worried looks... But then Parker and Howe come out again, clearly having not found him.

PARKER

Tell him we'll get him later.

The bullies head off again and Simon and Maddy hurry over to the doorway and look inside... Suddenly Simon's phone beeps - he looks at it.

SIMON

(READING TEXT)  
... "Help, I'm in a moving  
cupboard."

He and Maddy look at each other.

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INT. SCHOOL - LOCKER CORRIDOR - DAY

11

Simon and Maddy hurry round a corner and stop - up ahead they hear Norris through the open door to his classroom.

NORRIS (O.C.)

Just there... Okay, now clear off -  
I've got one day to sort out a  
years worth of time-tables.

Toby scuttles out the classroom and hurries off. Simon and Maddy make their way over and peer through the door window - inside they see Mr Norris stood at his desk, irritatedly trying to arrange the papers he lost earlier into some sort of order... They look across and see the wheeled cupboard has been pushed against the wall just down from the desk.

Simon and Maddy step away from the window and Simon gets out his phone to text...

SIMON

"Don't... Move... Norris...  
Outside..."

MADDY

Put a smilie face!

They peer through the window again, Norris still shuffling through the papers. Simon's phone beeps and they back away as he opens the text.

SIMON

"What do you mean florist outside?"  
...Oh I must have predictive text  
on.

They both look through the window again and see that Norris has now moved away from the desk and over to a free-standing white-board... He's busy blu-tacking the papers up in order... His back to the cupboard. Simon quickly starts texting:

SIMON (CONT'D)

"He's...Facing away... Come out...  
Now..."

They both watch the cupboard... Waiting for the main doors to open... But to their surprise its actually the little compartment at the bottom that slides aside to reveal Alex squashed up within it.

He slowly slides his feet out, anxiously watching Norris as he does... He takes a step away, starts to straighten up... But gets about as far as a half hunch before pulling a pained expression and getting leg-wobble! He tries moving back and forth but ends up squat-hobbling, his arms locked at the elbows, swinging uselessly.

MADDY

He looks like a sea-sick chimp.

SIMON

That's cramp for you.

Alex makes one desperate effort to shuffle off, wobbles some more and the card drops out from under his shirt. It lands open on the floor and the loud fanfare blares out - causing Norris to drop the paper he was just tacking up and spin round in alarm...

...where upon he is even more startled by the bizarre image of Alex in full on monkey-boy posture, shuffling around flailing his limbs. So alarmed is Norris by this that he gasps and steps backwards, knocking over the whiteboard and losing all the papers he's already pinned up.

ALEX

...I can explain...

Alex, Simon and Maddy are heading towards the main doors.

SIMON

At least you managed to avoid  
Parker all day.

ALEX

Only cos I had to spend every break  
sat with Norris making timetables.

MADDY

Alex... Why did you get in the  
bottom half of the cupboard?

ALEX

Because the top half was full of  
balls and stuff.

MADDY

Ooooh did you see my multi-colored  
bat one?

They've reached the main doors - Alex opens them and freezes -  
across the yard he sees his Mum's car parked up... Mum, Dad  
and Samantha inside waiting for him.

ALEX

Arrrgh! The birthday burger  
surprise!

He slams the door shut and they all peer through the window.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I don't think they saw me... We'll  
have to wait them out. This is  
SERIOUSLY the worst birthday ever!

PARKER (O.C.)

Birthday?!

They all turn to see Parker looming over them... He grabs  
Alex and hoiks him off his feet.

PARKER (CONT'D)

So THATS why you thought you could  
mess with me? Reckon your "King For  
The Day" do yer?

SIMON

"Birthday Prince" actually.

ALEX

(TO SIMON)  
You're not helping!

PARKER

Right then YOUR HIGHNESS!

And Parker drags Alex off round the corner. We stay with  
Simon and Maddy as they listen to the bully shout out:

PARKER (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 Everyone! Come here! It's Kings  
 birthday and he's insisted on a  
 proper royal celebration.

Maddy shoots Simon a worried look and they hurry round the corner, us following them...

...to reveal Alex is being held by his arms and legs by Parker and a few other kids (subserviently obeying the bully) - they start launching him up and down in the air, counting out his 'years' as they do... Maddy leans in towards Simon.

MADDY  
 That's not really how Royals  
 celebrate their birthdays is it?

Simon shrugs... And then it's over - the crowd disperses and Alex is left laying disoriented on the floor. Parker laughs at him then barges past Simon and Maddy and heads off home. The friends quickly hurry over to Alex and help him up.

SIMON  
 You alright? I was just about to  
 step in and save you, wasn't I  
 Maddy? But... um.... The cramp  
 started up again.

Alex groans and leans against the water fountain to catch his breath... He hits the button for a drink and a jet of water shoots out of the still unfixed pipe below...

He yelps and jumps back from it - looking glumly down at his trousers as a big dark stain spreads out exactly where you wouldn't want a big dark stain to spread out. From somewhere he hears a gasp - he looks up and to his horror sees Nicola, Loren and Amy stood down the corridor staring at him, mouths agape. He looks down at himself then urgently up.

ALEX  
 No! Wait! It's not what you think!

But the girls turn and walk off in disgust - as Alex hangs his head humiliated. Maddy goes over to him and nudges him.

MADDY  
 Cheer up Alex. It's been a bad day.  
 But I still think this could be  
 your year...

And Alex raises his head, optimism suddenly on his face.

ALEX  
 Yeah. Yeah you're right. I mean,  
 after today - things can only get  
 better, right?

**MONTAGE: THE REST OF THE YEAR**

A quick succession of clips from future episodes highlighting the rest of Alex's year - accompanied by falling calander pages in the back ground...

**FEBRUARY** - Alex with an upturned rubbish bin being dumped on his head...

**MARCH** - Alex fighting with a fisherman over a bait box, knocking the fisherman into the sea...

**APRIL** - Alex covered in green paint.

**MAY** - Alex knocking over someone with a mop - then kicking the mop bucket over and sending two other people flying

**JUNE** - Alex crawling on his hands and knees through a dirty vent.

**JULY** - Alex running into a glass door and falling over backwards.

**AUGUST** - Alex landing in a pile of garden waste next to a half buried bike.

**SEPTEMBER** - Alex trapped inside a sleeping bag being carried by Simon and Maddy

**OCTOBER** - Alex dressed as death running into a lamp-post

**NOVEMBER** - Alex wearing a headset, covering his ear as if being deafened, spinning round and smacking headfirst into a fire alarm.

**DECEMBER** - Alex being hit in the eye by a piece of carrot shooting out his sisters mouth!

**EXT. ALEXS HOUSE - DAY**

...The calander page January falls past us... As we see:

Alex, Simon and Maddy walking towards Alex's house. Alex is wearing very short red 'hot-pants' shorts... and a bright pink woman's coat that runs right down to his knees but is too slender for him to button up. These items, coupled with the fact he's dragging a large deflated crocodile behind him, make him look beyond ridiculous!

They stop outside his house. Maddy looks at him sympathetically.

MADDY

Never mind Alex. The big one-five tomorrow! I've got a feeling next year is definitely going to be your year.

SIMON  
Could hardly be any worse, could  
it?

Alex and Maddy both look at him.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
What? I'm just saying!

ALEX  
...See you guys tomorrow.

And a hang-dog Alex turns and heads towards his door...

**As somewhere an alarm clock goes off...**

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**INT. KING HOUSE - ALEXS BEDROOM**

15

A calander alarm clock display - the first wheel spins... MONDAY... The second wheel spins... JANUARY... The third wheel spins... 28th... The fourth wheel spins... AGAIN!!! Alex wakes and looks at it. Turns off the alarm and switches on the radio.

DJ (V.O.)  
Good morning Melbourne! It's  
January the twenty eighth and your  
listening to Dingo and the Girl on  
EZ-FM...

Alex hops out of the bed and heads towards his wardrobe. Stopping in his tracks when he hears the dj announce:

DJ (V.O.)  
And time for our big birthday  
shoutout...

Alex turns and looks at the radio excited.

DJ (V.O.)  
...Today Going to Penny Tutton -  
eighteen years old today, happy  
birthday Penny!

ALEX  
She always gets it!

He turns back towards the wardrobe and steps on a plug.  
OWWWWW!

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**INT. KING HOUSE - LANDING**

16

Alex (now in school clothes) makes his way along the landing, passing by the open door to his sisters room. Samantha is sat up in bed yawning. She spots him pass by.

SAMANTHA  
Happy birthday Jelly Belly.

ALEX  
Get some new material chin face.

Samantha chuck's a pillow at him as he vanishes into the bathroom.

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**INT. KING HOUSE - BATHROOM**

17

Inside the bathroom the blinds are drawn. Alex grabs the cord and pulls it - it snaps off, the blind rattles upwards and falls off its runner - Alex jumps back from it, knocks a shelf and a bottle of perfume empties over him...

...He looks down at himself... An odd sense of deja-vu... Weird. But he shakes it off and goes to brush his teeth, singing a song about his sisters chin to himself as he does... Tossing his toothbrush from hand to hand...

ALEX  
Chin face! Samantha Chin face! Da  
da daa daa--

He misses the third toss and the toothbrush drops into the toilet... Alex looks down at it... Then frowns... deja vu again...

18

**INT. KING HOUSE - FRONT ROOM**

18

Alex is stood with his family, opening his sisters present... "Boyz 4 Hire: Live In Concert." He looks at her sharply.

ALEX  
Seriously Sam? You gave me this  
last year.

SAMANTHA  
How could I have done? I only got  
it myself at Chri... um... I mean,  
no I didn't. Shut up.

MUM  
And this ones from me and your  
Dad...

She hands him a large wrapped parcel. Alex is briefly unsettled... This whole scene is very familiar to him... He tears it open and looks at it. The Knights & Castles video game.

MUM (CONT'D)  
Special edition. That's the one you  
were always asking for isn't it?

He looks at her - then at his Dad, then at his sister... Is this a wind up? ...But they are all looking back at him calmly, no indication it's a joke... And he doesn't want to hurt his parents feelings...

ALEX  
It was... Yeah... Thanks Mum. Dad.

A knock on the door.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
That'll be Simon.

He hands the game back to his parents and start out. Mum calling after him.

MUM  
Straight out of school at final bell Alex... We \*might\* have a surprise for you...

Alex freezes and looks back at them all... But they've all gone back to sorting their breakfasts etc...

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**EXT. ALEXS HOUSE - DAY**

19

Alex steps outside where Simon is waiting for him.

SIMON  
Happy birthday mate.

ALEX  
Si... You ever heard of deja-vu?

SIMON  
(LYING)  
Yeah, course I have. I'm up on all the bands me.

They head off.

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**EXT. STREETS - DAY**

20

Alex and Simon have left the suburbs and are now in town, making their way towards school.

SIMON  
(BOWING)  
Of course you can come round mine.  
Anything you say your majesty,  
Birthday Prince.

ALEX  
Yeah alright, you made that joke last year and remember what happened?

Simon looks confused.

SIMON  
Last year? What you on about?

They both stop as a cyclist shoots out a side alley, ringing his bell and nearly hitting them. Simon keeps walking, Alex though freezes and watches it race off... Then he hurries to catch up with his friend, who is now busy fiddling with his phone and not really listening.

ALEX  
I'm having a REALLY weird morning.  
(SHAKES IT OFF)  
But you know what? I don't care.  
I'm fifteen today, the big one-  
five. And this year everything is  
going to be completely...

He lets his sentence hang as they pass by a woman coming out of a shop with two heavy bags of shopping... One splits and she spills stuff all over the road. Simon dances over it, Alex stands and stares at her as the shopkeeper comes out to help.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
...different.

He hurries after Simon, who didn't even seem aware his friend had stopped.

SIMON  
One four.

ALEX  
Sorry?

Simon finally puts his phone away and looks at him.

SIMON  
You said the big one five. You mean  
the big one four.

ALEX  
No. I'm fifteen.

SIMON  
Its your fourteenth birthday you  
plank.

ALEX  
I think I know how old I am Simon.

SIMON  
And since we're the same age I  
think I know how old you are too.  
If you were fifteen we'd be in year  
nine you idiot.

ALEX

We ARE in year nine!

SIMON

Chuh! Wish we were. Then we  
wouldn't have Norris as our year  
head.

ALEX

We DONT have Norris as our year  
head!

Alex suddenly freezes as he sees someone step out in front of a car - the driver having to brake, angrily honking his horn and leaning out his window to shout:

DRIVER

Watch out, fruit-loop!

Alex stops and physically drains of colour... This is WAY beyond a coincidence now. Simon had kept walking, he turns back to look at him.

SIMON

What you doing?

ALEX

...Something's very wrong here Si.

Alex looks to his left and spots a ladder leaning against the wall right next to him. He slowly looks up and...

SPLAT! A soapy wet sponge lands on his face! Simon immediately bursts out laughing - but Alex yanks the sponge off, throws it away and grabs his friend by his jacket, shaking him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Simon! Stop messing about! This is a wind up, right? I'm fifteen! I was fourteen last year... It was the worst year of my life! Remember? The life savers? The soccer team? The date with Nicola Grey?

Simon shakes his hands off his jacket.

SIMON

Date with Nicola Grey? As if!  
What's up with you? You fall on  
your head this morning or  
something?

Alex looks at Simon intently... But he can see his friend isn't joking...

ALEX

...Simon... I don't know how but...  
Something really weird has  
happened... I think I've... I think  
I've been transported back in time  
an entire year.

Simon looks at him blankly.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Did you hear what I said?

Simon frowns...

SIMON

...Are you wearing perfume?

21

**EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY**

21

Alex and Simon are heading through the school gates.

SIMON

Alright. If you really have lived  
through all this before then tell  
me what happens next?

ALEX

I don't know. It was a year ago, I  
can't remember every detail...

A soccer ball rolls to a stop in front of him. He looks down  
at it - as across the way Parker and Howe are stood looking  
over.

PARKER

Oi King! Kick it back!

Simon looks anxiously at Alex. But Alex is just staring down  
at the ball...

ALEX

No, wait... I DO remember this. I  
kick the ball back... But it hits  
Norris... And Parker and Howe get  
detention for it.

SIMON

Yeah, I hate to point this out to  
you - Mister Time-Traveler - but  
Norris isn't here.

Alex looks... Norris isn't here, no.

ALEX

You're right. He comes out that  
door in a second with a pink  
skateboard.

SIMON  
A pink skateboard. Sure.

ALEX  
I better kick it back before he gets here.

Simon shakes his head, by now utterly convinced his friends gone mad - as Alex steps back, takes a run up and BOOTS the ball.

Its an amazing kick! It sours right over Parker and Howe - smacks into the back yard wall - rebounds...

...and whacks Norris in the side of the head, just as he was coming out of one of the school buildings - his papers all go flying, he falls on his bum and drops the skateboard he was carrying under his arm.

Toby rushes over to help, stands on the skateboard, it zips out from under him and he falls on his back... Just as Hannah was making her way past in her wombat-back-pack, reading a text on her phone - she trips over Toby and also hits the deck.

The pink skateboard rolls to a stop in front of an astonished Simon who looks down at it open mouthed, then turns to Alex.

SIMON  
You're telling the truth aren't--

Alex grabs him and pulls him off towards the bins...

HOWE  
Oi sir! Kick our ball back!

22

**EXT. SCHOOL YARD - BEHIND BINS - DAY**

22

We find Alex hiding behind the bins with Simon, listening to the exchange going on in the yard.

NORRIS (O.C.)  
And THIS is going in my contraband cupboard.

Heavy footsteps as Norris marches off... Then:

PARKER (O.C.)  
When I find you King!

Alex groans...

ALEX  
This is exactly what happened before... How is this possible? How have I ended up back in time?

MADDY (O.C.)  
Its a temporal loop.

They, and we, both look to their left... where they see Maddy Kent crouching down with them.

ALEX  
A what?

MADDY  
(SHRUGS - NO BIGGIE)  
A temporal loop. I've read about them. You fall through a crack in time to an earlier point in your life and have to live through it again. Probably happens all the time.  
(HANDS HIM A CARD)  
Oh! And happy birthday!

23

INT. SCHOOL - LOCKER CORRIDOR

23

And then we're in the school, following the three friends down the corridor.

SIMON  
This is brilliant! It's like having a super power or something! You know everything that's going to happen, before it happens!

ALEX  
Yeah, I do... And it's all awful!  
Last year was the single worst year of my entire life!

MADDY  
Why? What happened?

Alex turns to answer her and in doing so trips over the janitor again... this time he does it just as the janitor was taking hold of the pipe underneath - it pulls away completely and water starts pouring out across the floor. Alex stumbles and turns round.

ALEX  
I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

He starts walking backwards away from him, looking over at his friend as he does.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Things like that.  
(BANGS HIS HEAD ON THE  
LOCKER DOOR AGAIN)  
Ow! And that!

SIMON

Yeah, yeah - whatever. Get to the stuff we really want to know... Namely what happens to me!

MADDY

And open your card!

Alex shushes her.

ALEX

Don't let anyone know it's my birthday... Last time I opened your card I--

He stops as he remembers the sequence of events - he shoots a look down the corridor where he sees Nicola, Loren and Amy coming... Then down the opposite end, where he sees Parker and Howe.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Quick! Maddy! Cover me!

MADDY

Okay Alex.

Alex ducks down and Maddy spreads her jacket like bat-wings. Simon just stands there looking faintly embarrassed...

...As the girls head by in one direction and the bullies in the other. Once they're gone Alex stands up again.

ALEX

This is so unfair. They'll get me later, I know they will... Just like they did before... Then Parker will get everyone to throw me up and down in the air until I'm sick.

SIMON

Will he?

(LAUGHING)

That's hilarious! When does this happen exactly?

NORRIS (O.C.)

Toby!

They all look over in time to see Norris stepping out of a classroom and stopping Toby in the corridor.

NORRIS (CONT'D)

I've moved classrooms - go to the old one and fetch my contraband cupboard.

TOBY

But sir... My back... I really hurt  
it when I fell over... I think I  
need to see the nurse.

NORRIS

Well clear off then.  
(LOOKING ROUND)  
King! You do it.

Alex sighs.

24

INT. SCHOOL - CORRIDOR - DAY

24

Alex emerges from the classroom pushing the same cupboard he'd hid inside last time round.

Suddenly Parker and Howe come around the corner behind him.

PARKER

King!

Alex yelps and starts running, pushing the cupboard as he goes...

25

INT. SCHOOL - LOCKER CORRIDOR - DAY

25

Alex comes shooting down the corridor pushing the cupboard - every now and again taking his feet off the floor to let the wheeled momentum pull him along... It seems to work too, he's a good stretch ahead of the pursuing bullies - various other pupils having to jump out of his way as he careers along...

...and he might even have made it safely to Norris' classroom... If it wasn't for the fact a deadly puddle of water from the drink fountain was awaiting him...

The janitor is busy placing yellow cones down in front of the puddle - he looks up, sees the cupboard coming towards him - yells and dives out the way... Alex races through it, slips on the water and falls flat on his face - pushing the cupboard as he tumbles, which continues off under its own momentum...

...towards the open door to Norris' classroom... Where Simon and Maddy are hanging around outside. They step aside as the cupboard whizzes towards them and it disappears inside, followed a nano-second later by a CRASH and a furious YELL!

Parker and Howe skid to a halt, turn and casually walk away - as Alex picks himself up and hurries over to his friends, who are either side of the classroom door now, peering in. They look at him as he approaches.

SIMON

So this the kind of thing that kept happening to you last time is it?

Alex nods glumly, they step aside and he makes his way in...

26

**INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY**

26

...where he finds papers all over the floor, the desk collapsed, the whiteboard on top of it and a furious Norris picking himself up off the floor, where he'd obviously dived out the way of the cupboard. He stares at Alex.

ALEX

Um.. I can explain...?

At which point the cupboard doors burst open and a myriad of confiscated balls and items fall out - several of which bounce off Norris' head.

27

**INT. SCHOOL - LOCKER CORRIDOR - DAY**

27

...Outside the classroom a small pink butterfly ball rolls out.

MADDY

Yay! My multi-colored bat ball!

She happily retrieves it.

28

**INT. SCHOOL - ENTRANCE - DAY**

28

Alex, Simon and Maddy are heading towards the exit.

SIMON

You seriously telling me you don't remember a single lottery number? What's the point of time travelling if you can't even help your best mate become rich?

ALEX

Suppose I should have written them all down should I? You know? Just in case?

(BEAT)

What have I done to deserve this?

Maddy touches his arm sympathetically.

MADDY

Perhaps you've looped for a reason? Maybe the universe felt sorry for everything that happened to you last time?

ALEX  
(GLOOMY)  
Or the universe found it funny and  
want's to watch it all again?

MADDY  
I don't think the universe has a  
sense of humour Alex.

ALEX  
(RESIGNED)  
Whatever... Now it's home time,  
which means Parker's gonna grab me  
and...

His sentence trails off as he suddenly spots Nicola, Loren and Amy heading along the corridor. He freezes - Simon and Maddy look at him curiously as he watches the girls approach. He looks nervous, because in his mind he's just had an entire (and VERY embarrassing) twelve month history with her...

But of course she just shimmies past without even looking at him. And as he watches her dissapear down the corridor, a smile suddenly starts to form...

MADDY  
Alex? What is it? Did something  
happen with Nicola last time?

ALEX  
(EXCITED)  
Yes! Loads of things! Really,  
really, really awful things!

Simon and Maddy exchange glances - an odd thing to be excited about! But Alex is beaming from ear to ear.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
But now... Nothing! All the times I  
humiliated myself in front of her!  
The halloween party! The school  
play! Our date! None of it ever  
happened!

MADDY  
You... Went on a date? With her?

SIMON  
Yeah, see I actually find that more  
unbelievable than all this time  
loop stuff.

ALEX  
You're right Maddy. It's like the  
universe has given me a second  
chance! I can stop all the bad  
stuff happening!

And so saying he sees Parker rounding the corner...

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Like this!

And he grabs his friends and escapes through the main doors.

29

**EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY**

29

And as they arrive outside, the door closing behind them - Alex breathes the air like a free man!

ALEX  
See? Humiliation avoided!  
(BEAT - THINKS)  
...Actually I'm not sure why I  
didn't just do that last time...

Suddenly a car horn beeps. They look over and see Mum, Dad and Samantha parked outside the school gate - Mum winding down the window...

MUM  
SURPRISE!!!

Alex's face drops.

30

**EXT. PALACE BURGERS - DAY**

30

Alex is walking with his friends towards 'Palace Burges' - his Mum, Dad and sister alongside them. All optimism has left him again.

ALEX  
(TO MADDY)  
Universe doesn't have a sense of  
humour huh?

Alex glances across the street and sees Nicola, Loren and Amy being dropped off in Nicola's Mum's sports car and heading inside another (much cooler) fast food chain over the road. Alex quickly puts a hand to the side of his face to try and disguise himself and follows his family inside. Simon and Maddy follow - Maddy briefly looking at the sign above the door, which features a cartoon Prince with an elongated nose beaming out.

MADDY  
Hey! He looks just like you Simon -  
I think it's the nose.

Simon frowns at the picture, self-consciously touches his nose and follows her in.

31

INT. PALACE BURGERS - DAY

31

Alex is waiting for his friends inside, whilst his family are heading to a table.

ALEX

Well, I suppose if I get through this meal without anyone from school seeing me here it'll still have been a slightly better birthday than last time.

BURGER STAFF (O.C.)

Birthday?!

Alex spins round to see a young guy dressed up in a medieval costume.

BURGER STAFF (CONT'D)

Who's birthday?

Simon excitedly points at Alex.

SIMON

His! It's his birthday!

Alex angrily stares at Simon... But it's too late, the staff member turns towards the counter and shouts.

BURGER STAFF

WE'VE GOT A BIRTHDAY PRINCE!!!

ALEX

What? No! Arrrgh!

And before he knows it Alex is surrounded by knights and maidens - ushering him into a chair, sticking a paper crown on his head, a sash round his neck and lifting him and the chair up in the air.

Mum's squealing with amused delight, clapping and nudging her husband. A sadistic Samantha takes a picture, Simon can barely breathe from laughing so hard - and Maddy is just watching it all bemused.

BURGER STAFF

How old are you your majesty?

SIMON

He's twelve!

ALEX

I am not! I'm fifteen... no... fourteen!

ALL STAFF  
 ONE...  
 (RAISING HIM)  
 TWO...

Alex suddenly realises they're about count him up to fifteen.

ALEX  
 Oh no! ..Okay I'm twelve! I'm  
 twelve!

ALL STAFF  
 THREE...  
 (RAISING HIM)  
 FOUR...

ALEX  
 Don't! Stop!

Alex looks around - various other patrons and families looking at him.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
 Seriously - feel sick, I need some  
 fresh air.

Simon, loving every minute of this, claps his hands together.

SIMON  
 You heard him! Fresh air for the  
 Prince!

ALEX  
 What?!

Simon grins and opens the door - and the staff start carrying Alex out...

...out he goes on his "throne" - a few more customers on tables outside turn and see him, start clapping. The family, Simon and Maddy follow him out - Simon doubled over in mirth - Maddy just watching the proceedings curiously.

MADDY  
 Is this really how royals celebrate  
 birthdays?

Alex clings to the side of his chair as the raising and counting continues, his crown now hanging half off - then to his horror he sees Nicola, Loren and Amy leaving the opposite fast food outlet with some drinks.

Alex groans - but to his great relief they don't look over, instead they just head off down the road.

Suddenly Howe, half dressed in medieval uniform and carrying a trumpet, comes hurrying out the main doors, straightening his outfit as he goes.

HOWE  
Sorry I'm late, I couldn't find my trumpet.

Alex looks down at him in shock.

ALEX  
What are you doing here?

Howe shrugs.

HOWE  
I work here.

Then raises the trumpet to his lips.

ALEX  
No! Don't! Please!

But its too late - Howe blows out a royal fanfare identical to the one from the card... And like the card it gets the attention of our A-List girls - all three of whom turn, look over and stare at Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Right! That's it!

He angrily tries to get off the chair as its being raised, causing everyone to struggle to hold it - as they stagger around he steps onto a table, which immediately flips up underneath his weight... he slides down it onto the floor where a couple of burgers, a carton of coke and a selection of french fries rain down on him... Over the road Loren and Amy start laughing - Nicola just stares in shock.

Mortified with embarrassment Alex picks himself up and hurries into the restaurant.

DAD  
Alex!

His parents straighten the table and start helping the staff gather up the fallen goods. Howe suddenly looks down the street and sees Parker coming.

HOWE  
Here's Parker, he'll be after his free burger.

Howe hurries inside as Maddy and Simon look at each other anxiously.

MADDY  
Parker!

SIMON  
Don't worry. I'll warn Alex.

Simon gets out his mobile and starts tapping away as Parker stalks through the door...

SIMON (CONT'D)  
"Parker... Coming..."

MADDY  
Put a smiley face!

33

INT. PALACE BURGERS - TOILETS - DAY

33

Alex is over by the sink trying to turn on a stiff tap with one hand whilst reading a text on his phone with the other.

ALEX  
...Painter coming?

He shakes his head, puts the phone away and carries on battling with the stupid tap, which refuses to turn... In the mirror we see Parker walk through the door and spot Alex... Alex though is too busy with the tap to notice...

...Parker rolls up his sleeves and advances towards his quarry - as an increasingly irritated Alex starts yanking on the tap...

...and then just as the bully is reaching towards him Alex stumbles backwards, with the head of the tap in his hands - a jet of water shoots out horizontally, skims over the sink in an upwards arc and hits Parker on the trousers in exactly the place you wouldn't want to be hit on the trousers.

Parker looks down at himself, then up at Alex - who has finally worked out what the text message meant.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Oh... "Parker"!

Then Alex hands him the broken tap and legs it!

34

EXT. PALACE BURGERS - DAY

34

Simon and Maddy are helping Mum, Dad and Samantha tidy up the mess... Nicola, Loren and Amy are stood nearby having their drinks and pretending not to be watching.

Alex hurries out and over towards his family - as behind him Parker furiously bursts out the door... where upon Loren suddenly spits out a plume of drink with laughter. Parker looks over at her to see all three girls staring at him laughing. He looks down at himself, then back up at them.

PARKER  
No! It's not what you think!

But all his outburst does is attract more attention from other people sat around, all of whom look over and start laughing too - Parker goes crimson, turns and hurries back into the restaurant. A stunned Alex watching him go. Alex turns to look at the girls, makes brief eye-contact with Nicola, who even offers him a smile... then Nicola turns and heads off, her entourage following.

Maddy heads over to Alex.

MADDY  
You okay?

ALEX  
I'm better than okay Mads! That was me last time round, I was the one that wet myself!

MADDY  
Urrrgh!

ALEX  
I CAN do it Maddy - I CAN change things!

Dad glances up from where he's still picking up french-fries.

DAD  
Alex. Will you come here and help us please?

ALEX  
Er... No... Sorry Dad, I can't...  
I've promised to go round Si's.  
Right Si?

Simon is crouched down picking up a burger... He looks up.

SIMON  
Oh. Yeah right.

He drops the burger back on the ground and heads over.

ALEX  
So... thanks for the birthday, Mum,  
Dad... It's been great.

And he hurries off with his friends...

Further away from the restaurant - Alex is walking ahead of Simon and Maddy, going backwards - giddy with excitement as he talks to them.

ALEX

The universe isn't laughing at me!  
This isn't a curse, it's a gift!

SIMON

You do realise Parker will be after  
you all year now don't you?

ALEX

It doesn't matter!

SIMON

It does to me. I'm with you ninety  
five percent of the time - I might  
get hurt.

ALEX

Nobodies going to get hurt! I've  
been given a whole new start! Last  
year was the worst year of my life!  
This year is going to be the  
best... Starting NOW!

MADDY

Um... Alex?

But its too late, Alex has backed straight into a ladder and it falls, crashing down on top of a window cleaning van... The same window cleaner from that morning comes round the back of the van with his bucket and sponge - stares at the damage, then at our hero.

ALEX

...Okay... Starting NOW!

And he and his friends turn and leg it - the window cleaner chasing after them...

***As somewhere an alarm clock goes off...***