

WOODEN OVERCOATS  
EPISODE 2.3 – TAKE A LETTER, MISS CRUSOE

By  
David K. Barnes

RECORDING SCRIPT

Rudyard Funn ~ FELIX TRENCH  
Antigone Funn ~ BETH EYRE  
Eric Chapman ~ TOM CROWLEY  
Georgie Crusoe ~ CIARA BAXENDALE  
Madeleine ~ BELINDA LANG  
Mayor Desmond Desmond ~ SEAN BAKER  
Reverend Wavering ~ ANDY SECOMBE  
Lady Vivienne Templar ~ CATRIONA KNOX  
Miss Scruple ~ ELLIE DICKENS  
Bill ~ PIP GLADWIN  
Tanya / Musician / Carbuncle ~ HOLLY CAMPBELL

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**PRE-TITLES.**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) Ruyard Funn runs a funeral home in the village of Piffing Vale. He used to run it by himself. He doesn't anymore. And whilst he and Antigone continue to argue, Georgie is getting fed up. A change of vocation is what she needs – and that's exactly what she'll get...

**THEME TUNE.**

ANNOUNCER: *Wooden Overcoats* by David K. Barnes. Season Two Episode Three: *Take a Letter, Miss Crusoe*.

**SCENE 1: MAYOR'S OFFICE**

**MAYOR PULLING DRAWERS OPEN, CHECKING FOLDERS, ETC.**

MAYOR: (MUTTERING, ANNOYED NOISES) Oh come on... This is just... It was in my hand a moment ago! ...

MADELEINE: (V.O.) It wasn't an easy life for the Mayor of Piffing Vale. His secretary, Marjorie, had effectively resigned from her post when she'd been convicted of multiple murder, and the Mayor had worked alone ever since – which was frustrating for all concerned.

MAYOR: Where could it be... The wastepaper basket! Yes!

**HE EMPTIES THE BASKET OVER HIS DESK AND SEARCHES.**  
**TELEPHONE RINGS. HE FUMBLES FOR IT.**

MAYOR: Oh, er, damn – Just a minute! – Oh, blast it...

PICKS UP RECEIVER.

Hello hello? This is the- oop, bugger!

DROPS RECEIVER, SCATTERING LOTS OF PAPERCLIPS.

Sorry! Won't be a moment – I just – no no no no no! -

A GLASS ROLLS OFF AND BREAKS ON THE FLOOR.

Oh for the love of – right, who is this Charlie anyway...?

PICKS UP RECEIVER.

(ANNOYED) Hello? This had better be important! You've broken one of my favourite glasses! ... Oh-ho, innocent until proven guilty – let me tell you, I run this village!

DOOR OPEN, CLOSE; WAVERING ENTERS.

WAVERING: Hello Dezzy!

MAYOR: (HAND OVER RECEIVER) Shan't be a tick, Nigel. (ON PHONE) What was that?... Yes, I know the swamps are dangerous, Mrs Frangipane, but you'd have to be a prize pillock to go anywhere near them, wouldn't you?... What?... Ah. Well, I'm sure we can find you another husband in the fullness of time Mrs Frangi- (HARRIED) Yes, sorry, yes, I'll put up some warning signs right away, sorry Mrs Frangipane, bye bye bye.

SLAMS THE PHONE.

MAYOR: My God, it's relentless. How am I meant to turn this village into a town with all this going on?

WAVERING: You poor old Mayor!

HE KISSES THE MAYOR ON THE CHEEK.

MAYOR: And there are people in reception waiting to see me-

WAVERING: You're working too hard, I keep telling you!

MAYOR: And now I've lost my stamper, for doing my special documents – it was in my hand just now, *so where is it?*

WAVERING: Try the other hand.

MAYOR: What? ... Oh. Yes, here we are. Well.

HE STAMPS A DOCUMENT.

There, good as new.

WAVERING: Come on, you. I'm taking you for a richly deserved lunch.

MAYOR: I'm sorry, I can't! I've got to sort out this swamp business, and then I'm seeing the Pushkin twins about the petting zoo – they want to stop people touching the animals – and after that I've got to go over to the-

WAVERING: But Desmond! Don't you remember? We're supposed to be spending the day together!

MAYOR: (GASP) It's your birthday, isn't it?

WAVERING: No!

MAYOR: Thank God.

WAVERING: It's yours! I'm meant to be at a funeral right now, I took the whole day off for you – it's not on, Desmond.

MAYOR: I'm sorry, Nigel...

WAVERING: I know you're usually kept very busy but there are limits! You've even forgotten to dress yourself!

MAYOR: I thought it was a bit drafty.

WAVERING: That does it: you're getting yourself a secretary.

MAYOR: No no no, I can't do that-

WAVERING: Just because your last one became a serial killer doesn't mean the next one will!

MAYOR: Yes, but, you see – they might!

WAVERING: You need your life back: I never get to see you anymore!

MAYOR: How about going out Sunday?

WAVERING: I'm the Reverend; that's the *only* day I know I'm working.

MAYOR: Or we could share some corn at the petting zoo, or, um-

WAVERING: Desmond. This is my final word. You can get yourself a new secretary, or you'll be looking for a new vicar!

HE STORMS OFF, SLAMMING THE DOOR BEHIND HIM.

MAYOR: Oh crumbs. Er... Um... Oh... Pull yourself together, Desmond! You're going to find a new secretary!

HE EXITS. A WOMAN OUTSIDE SCREAMS.

TANYA: (OFF) (SCREAM)

HE HURRIEDLY RE-ENTERS.

MAYOR: Yes, I think I'll put some clothes on first.

## SCENE 2: BEACH

MADELEINE: (V.O.) Meanwhile, the Funn Funeral that Reverend Wavering had successfully dodged today was getting off to a slow start on Piffing Beach.

RAINING, OCCASIONAL THUNDER. A BORED CROWD OF MOURNERS ARE CHANTING.

CROWD: (CHANTING) Whyyyy are we waiiiiiting, we are suffocaa-

RUDYARD: (ANGRY) Shut up! Come on Georgie, we need a grave and we need it now!

GEORGIE IS DIGGING A GRAVE IN THE SAND.

GEORGIE: (DIGGING) I'm trying!

ANTIGONE WALKS OVER TO THEM.

ANTIGONE: Rudyard! Everyone's getting cold, wet and bored – what's the hold up?

GEORGIE: (EXERTION) Have you ever tried to dig a grave in the sand when it's raining and the tide's coming in?

RUDYARD: I thought you said you were great at that?

GEORGIE: Yeah, when I've got a shovel!

RUDYARD: You'll have to make do with the bucket and spade.

GEORGIE: These are for children!

RUDYARD: Look, for the last time, we are not asking a child to dig a grave for us. I was outvoted on that one, and I'll have to accept it, so keep digging.

ANTIGONE: Oh, it's another fiasco. Not even the vicar's turned up.

RUDYARD: Bill's doing it.

ANTIGONE: Bill? What does he know about doing a service?

RUDYARD: Well he's read the Bible, so he's one-up on the vicar.

AN IRRITATED BILL WANDERS OVER,  
DRESSED IN A BAD VICAR OUTFIT.

BILL: Hey Rudyard! Are we doing a funeral or what?

RUDYARD: We'll keep you posted, Bill. Faster, Georgie!

GEORGIE: I. Am. Trying!

SHE'S SPLASHED BY THE TIDE.

Blaargh!

ANTIGONE: At least things can't get any worse.

ERIC APPEARS; BAD WEATHER INSTANTLY  
TURNS TO GLORIOUS SUNSHINE.

ERIC: Afternoon everyone!

RUDYARD: Thanks, Antigone.

ERIC: Funeral on the beach! Lovely idea! Er, where's the coffin?

RUDYARD: It's over-... Georgie, where's the coffin?

GEORGIE: The tide took it out. It's floating away, look.

RUDYARD: Get it back! Quickly!

ERIC: Don't worry, Rudyard, I'll get it – I was about to go for a swim anyway!

RUDYARD: You're wearing a suit.

ERIC'S CLOTHES COME OFF IN A FLASH.

ERIC: Not any more!



RUDYARD: Good God! Antigone, don't look!

ANTIGONE: (TREMOR) You can't tell me what to do.

ERIC: Anyone care to join me?

RUDYARD: No thank you Chap-

BILL: I thought you'd never ask!

BILL'S CLOTHES OFF IN A FLASH.

RUDYARD: Bill!

ERIC: We'll get your coffin back, Rudyard!

RUDYARD: But-but-but-

ERIC / BILL: (OFF) Enjoy yourselves!

ERIC AND BILL RUN OFF TOGETHER.

RUDYARD: I... But... Can you believe that man?

GEORGIE: I'm going to stop digging now.

RUDYARD: Coming over here, stealing our vicar.

ANTIGONE: (TREMOR) Wearing those trunks.

RUDYARD: What a farce!

GEORGIE: At least it's nobody's fault.

RUDYARD: Yes it is, it's Antigone's.

ANTIGONE: What d'you mean?!

RUDYARD: Oh yes, let's do it on the beach, make it special-

ANTIGONE: That was your idea!

RUDYARD: Well *you* ruined it!

GEORGIE: OK, that's it. I'm going for a walk.

ANTIGONE KICKS SAND AT RUDYARD.

RUDYARD: Argh! Antigone! Stop kicking sand at me!

ANTIGONE: Shan't! (KICKS)

THE CROWD START UP AGAIN

CROWD: Whyyy are we waiiiting, we are suffocaaaating...

RUDYARD: And I have had it up to *here* with – Blargh! Antigone! (etc)

GEORGIE: (SIGH)

GEORGIE WALKS OFF. THE SOUNDS OF THE  
FUNERAL FADE AWAY AS SHE SITS ALONE  
ON A BENCH. THE WAVES GENTLY LAPPING.

GEORGIE: (DRAINED) Ohhhh Godddd.

THE MAYOR APPROACHES, TIMIDLY.

MAYOR: Um, er, excuse me?

GEORGIE: Oh, hey Mayor.

MAYOR: Do you mind if I sit with you?

GEORGIE: ‘Suppose. It’s a free village.

MAYOR: And it always will be!

HE SITS. PAUSE.

Um. How are you?

GEORGIE: Yeah. Fine.

MAYOR: You don’t look fine.

GEORGIE: Oh, it’s nothing. Just. They argue, like, all the time.

MAYOR: Who?

GEORGIE: Them, you know.

MAYOR: Oh yes.

GEORGIE: Yeah.

MAYOR: Upsetting is it?

GEORGIE: Nah. Just boring. Like, really boring.

MAYOR: Yes.

GEORGIE: Oh, happy birthday, by the way.

MAYOR: ... You knew?

GEORGIE: Yeah. I'm great with dates.

MAYOR: I see...

GEORGIE: (SIGH) You know something?

MAYOR: No.

GEORGIE: I really need a new job.

MAYOR: That's funny... I need a new secretary.

GEORGIE: Huh. Mr Mayor, shall we walk and talk?

MAYOR: Yes!

GEORGIE: Brill.

MAYOR: (BEAT) Actually, I'm not very good at multi-tasking.

GEORGIE: OK, let's stay here.

MAYOR: (RELIEVED) Yes, let's!

### **SCENE 3: FUNN FUNERALS**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) Elsewhere, I'd been propositioned by a crab (who actually took me out for a few drinks later and behaved the perfect gentleman, thank you), but perhaps more relevantly, Rudyard and Antigone had given up their funeral as a dead loss and tromped back to Funn Funerals. It wasn't until the late afternoon they realised that they'd forgotten Georgie, and began to grow worried.

#### **RUDYARD PACING, WORRIED.**

RUDYARD: (PACING) Could she have been swept out to sea?

ANTIGONE: Too good at swimming.

RUDYARD: Or fallen down a hole? She's quite short.

ANTIGONE: She'd find a way out.

RUDYARD: Attacked?

ANTIGONE: She'd win.

RUDYARD: Seduced?

ANTIGONE: She wouldn't be.

RUDYARD: Kidnapped?

ANTIGONE: She'd take over the gang in half an hour and make a fortune in organised crime.

RUDYARD: I don't know. Maybe she ran away to join the circus...

ANTIGONE: I nearly did that once. I wanted to be a clown.

RUDYARD: (NOT LISTENING) Really?

ANTIGONE: I still have the face paint.

RUDYARD: (NOT LISTENING) Yep.

ANTIGONE: Gathering dust.

RUDYARD LOOKS TO A MOUSE, MADELEINE,  
ON THE COUNTER.

RUDYARD: Madeleine! Did you see anything, know where she went?

MOUSE: (SQUEAK SQUEAK)

ANTIGONE: What'd she say?

RUDYARD: She was too busy getting picked up by a crab. OK, there's only one thing for it.

HE GRABS THE PHONE AND DIALS.

ANTIGONE: What are you doing?

RUDYARD: I'm calling up the papers and putting in an advert.

ANTIGONE: That's your answer to everything and it never, ever helps!

RUDYARD: Oh shush. (ON PHONE) Now look here, Mr Marlowe? I need your help. An advert, missing person: Georgina Crusoe, my assistant. We'll pay anything for it...

INDISTINCT REPLY ON THE PHONE. BEAT.

RUDYARD:            Maybe not that much... Or that much... Look, if you could just stick your head out the window, see if she's there, I er-

FRONT DOOR OPENS AS GEORGIE ENTERS.

GEORGIE:            Hey everyone.

ANTIGONE / RUDYARD:        Georgie?

RUDYARD SLAMS THE TELEPHONE DOWN.

GEORGIE:            ... Y'alright?

RUDYARD:            Wha-? No, we are not "y'alright!"

ANTIGONE:            You've been missing for hours! Where have you been?

GEORGIE:            It's a little difficult to explain. I've, um... I've got a new job.  
(BEAT) Actually, that was pretty easy to explain-

RUDYARD:            *A what?!*

ANTIGONE:            Georgie!

GEORGIE:            I'm sorry, OK, you have to understand that

RUDYARD:            *A new job?!*

ANTIGONE:            What as?

GEORGIE:            The Mayor's secretary.

ANTIGONE:           You're working for the Mayor?

RUDYARD:           I don't believe it! We pay taxes to keep him there, and he turns around and steals our assistant!

ANTIGONE:           When do you start?

GEORGIE:            Tomorrow.

RUDYARD:            But we've got the Beiderbecke funeral tomorrow night! By the observatory, during the meteor shower!

ANTIGONE:           Everything's planned!

RUDYARD:            Those meteors don't wait for anyone!

GEORGIE:            I'm sorry, I'm... leaving.

RUDYARD:            Georgina. I think you'll find that your contract-

GEORGIE:            Doesn't exist. You never gave me one. And you haven't paid me in months.

RUDYARD:            Well it's been a very lean period! Antigone's had to sell off all her clothes, she's only got that one dress left!

ANTIGONE:            There's a hole in it.

GEORGIE:            Where?

ANTIGONE:            I shan't tell you.

RUDYARD:            So frankly, you've picked a fine time to suddenly-



GEORGIE: Look, I'm sorry! But it's not about the money – it's you two. You're... You're no fun anymore.

RUDYARD: No fun?! I have never felt more entertaining in my life!

GEORGIE: You never get on, all you do is fight.

RUDYARD: There you are, Antigone! It is your fault after all!

ANTIGONE: How dare you!

GEORGIE: There! See! You can't help yourselves!

ANTIGONE: We can change! Can't we, Rudyard?

RUDYARD: You first.

ANTIGONE: Christ alive!

GEORGIE: It's too late. OK? I'm sorry.

FRONT DOOR OPENS AS SHE EXITS, CLOSES.

ANTIGONE: ... She's... gone.

RUDYARD: Well. We'll just have to... carry on without her, that's all. Maybe even... replace her.

ANTIGONE: Could we?

RUDYARD: (BEAT) No. Not really.

MOUSE: (SQUEAK SQUEAK SQUEAK)

RUDYARD: That's a kind offer, Madeleine. But you couldn't lift a coffin by yourself.

MOUSE: (SAD SQUEAK)

#### **SCENE 4: VILLAGE HALL RECEPTION**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) There followed an evening of stunned silence, as the events of the day sank in. And the next morning, Georgie Crusoe reported to the Village Hall as the new secretary to Mayor Desmond Desmond himself.

#### **MAYOR SHOWING GEORGIE AROUND.**

MAYOR: Your desk, your telephone, er, some executive stress toys, about half a dozen...

GEORGIE: Uh-huh.

MAYOR: And this is your computer, though I can't seem to get it working.

GEORGIE: Is it plugged in?

MAYOR: That's the sort of question I've hired you to answer.

GEORGIE: On it.

MAYOR: Also, I don't like to ask, but, er you're not feeling... anxious or... aggressive towards me, at all?

GEORGIE: You're fine.

MAYOR: Good, well, I've confiscated the letter opener just in case.  
I'll leave you to get settled.

GEORGIE: Cheers m'lad.

MAYOR: Press that button if you want to get through to me in my  
office – though if you could pop your head round the door  
before you do it, it's a bit startling otherwise...

GEORGIE: Will do, sir.

OFFICE DOOR CLOSSES AS MAYOR EXITS.

Oh-kay! Got my desk, got my filing...

SHE SIGHS HAPPILY. BEAT. THEN:

(CONCERNED) I'm bored now.

HALL DOORS OPEN AS ERIC ENTERS.

ERIC: (WHISTLING CHEERFULLY)

GEORGIE: Good morning, Mr Chapman.

ERIC: Oh! Oh. Um. Hello.

GEORGIE: What can we do for you today?

ERIC: (BEAT) Um... what... what's happening?

GEORGIE: I work here now.

ERIC: Oh. Blimey. You sure?

GEORGIE: Yes.

ERIC: Oh. Blimey. What about Funn Funerals?

GEORGIE: What *about* Funn Funerals?

ERIC: (BEAT) OK. I'm here for the council meeting.

GEORGIE: Why?

ERIC: I'm the Vice Chairman.

GEORGIE: Let me just look that up.

SHE TAPS ON KEYBOARD

That story checks out. You may proceed.

ERIC: Your computer's switched off.

GEORGIE: I said proceed.

ERIC: Yep sure.

HALL DOORS OPEN BEHIND HIM AS RUDYARD  
ENTERS QUICKLY.

Oh, morning Rudyard-

RUDYARD: Not now, I need to talk to Georgie.

GEORGIE: Rudyard, what are you doing here?

RUDYARD: It gives me no pleasure to say this, but I need to-

THE MAYOR CALLS OUT IN DISTRESS FROM HIS OFFICE.

MAYOR: (OFF, ANGUISHED) Miss Crusoe! Come quickly! Please!

ERIC: That's the Mayor! He's in trouble!

GEORGIE: (CALL) I'm coming, your worship!

THEY BOTH DASH TO THE OFFICE DOOR. FRANTIC DOOR HANDLE ACTION!

ERIC: The door won't open! He must have locked it from the in-

GEORGIE: Yeah, try pulling it.

DOOR OPENS.

ERIC: Oh, right.

RUDYARD: Georgie, I need to ask you-

GEORGIE: In a minute!

SHE AND ERIC RUSH IN

**SCENE 5: MAYOR'S OFFICE**

THE MAYOR STANDS AT THE WINDOW,  
MUTTERING ANXIOUSLY.

GEORGIE: OK, Mayor, what's the danger? I'm ready for it.

MAYOR: It's her! She's back again!

GEORGIE: Who is?

MAYOR: Look at her, there she is. Outside!

ERIC: She doesn't seem too much trouble.

MAYOR: You wouldn't say that if you'd had to put up with it!

GEORGIE: Put up with what?

ACCORDIAN MUSIC OUTSIDE.

MAYOR: There! There she goes – she does this for two hours, every day! It's driving me up the wall!

GEORGIE: Have you asked her to stop?

MAYOR: I've been glaring at her from this window, but she doesn't take a blind bit of notice!

ERIC: Don't worry, Des, I have an idea. I'll invite her out for coffee and ask if she wouldn't mind playing more quietly, or keep it to specific times so you can work around it-

GEORGIE PUSHES WINDOW UP.

GEORGIE: (CALL) Hey!

MUSIC STOPS.

MUSICIAN: (OFF) Yes?

GEORGIE: Knock it off, we're having a meeting!

MUSICIAN: (OFF) Ooop, sorry! Will do!

GEORGIE CLOSSES THE WINDOW.

ERIC: Ah. That was... also effective.

MAYOR: Miss Crusoe! What can I say?

GEORGIE: Please, Mr Mayor. It's what I'm here for.

KNOCK AT OPEN DOOR; IT'S WAVERING.

WAVERING: A-hoy-hoy! Here for the pow-wow!

MAYOR: Oh yes, excellent – come in, everyone!

THE COUNCILLORS ENTER, CHATTING.

Miss Crusoe, could you minute the meeting?

GEORGIE: Yep. Won't be a second. Excuse me.

SHE HEADS FOR THE DOOR.

**SCENE 6: VILLAGE HALL RECEPTION**

**RUDYARD IDLY FIDDLING WITH THINGS ON  
THE DESK.**

RUDYARD: Tumty-tumty tum...

GEORGIE: (FROM DOOR) Rudyard, you wanted to ask something?

RUDYARD: Ah, yes I wondered if you might be able-

GEORGIE: Yeah, just I'm in a meeting, but I won't be long.

RUDYARD: Oh, fine, should I just-

**GEORGIE SLAMS THE DOOR.**

... Wait. Mmm.

**SCENE 7: MAYOR'S OFFICE.**

**THE COUNCILLORS ARE ALL SEATED.**

COUNCIL: (MURMURING)

GEORGIE: Sorry, back now.

MAYOR: Could you take the roll call, Miss Crusoe?

GEORGIE: Yep. So, you're the chairman, Eric's the VC, and we've got Reverend Wavering-

WAVERING: Hello!



GEORGIE: Lady Templar-

LADY TEMPLAR: I've brought cakes!

GEORGIE: And Miss Scruple.

THE OLD LADY LEANS FORWARD.

MISS SCRUPLE: I 'eard there's a secretary job going?

GEORGIE: We've filled it.

MISS SCRUPLE: Fair enough! Bye everyone!

COUNCIL: (GOODBYES)

MISS SCRUPLE EXITS. DOOR CLOSSES.

MAYOR: To begin, Miss Crusoe here is my new secretary, and she's already proving to be quite invaluable!

LADY TEMPLAR: So she won't go potty like the last one? (CHORTLES)

MAYOR: Ha ha ha, yes, very funny – anyway-

WAVERING: You don't need to take that, Desmond-

MAYOR: No no, we'll storm through it – ah, Miss Crusoe, could you tell us what's on the agenda today?

GEORGIE: Er... Just taxes.

MAYOR: Oh yes. Do we think taxes are too high?

COUNCIL: (MURMURS OF ASSENT)

MAYOR: Shall we knock them down a bit?

ERIC: Yeah, could do.

MAYOR: All those in favour say aye?

COUNCIL: Aye!

MAYOR BANGS DOWN A GAVEL.

MAYOR: Done. Well, thank you all for coming, I'll see you again in-

WAVERING: (SOTTO) Your party, Desmond.

MAYOR: Ah, yes! Thank you, Nigel. Miss Crusoe, this bit's off the record, so you can stop writing.

GEORGIE: I haven't got a pen.

MAYOR: Splendid! Now, yesterday was my birthday, apparently, so I thought I'd throw a little party this evening? You're all invited of course.

COUNCIL: (HAPPY MURMURS)

MAYOR: The usual thing: buffet, karaoke – say it under your breath: blackjack – and, of course, bring your own booze.

LADY TEMPLAR: (HOPEFUL) Will there be cheese?

MAYOR: All the cheese you could wish for!

COUNCIL: (ASSENTING MURMURS)

MAYOR: As to the venue, Nigel and I were thinking the vicarage, but it's a bit small, isn't it, Nigel?

WAVERING: (AGREEMENT) Bit small.

MAYOR: Yes, and doing it in the hall's too much like going to work.

WAVERING: Any ideas, Eric? Events are your pigeon.

LADY TEMPLAR: He does have that smashing yacht!

ERIC: Ye-es, but we've all been on it, haven't we?

LADY TEMPLAR: (LASCIVIOUS) Some of us many times-

ERIC: (CLEARS THROAT) Yes, thank you, Vivienne.

GEORGIE: (LOW) Jesus.

ERIC: Wait a minute – of course, I remember now. There's meant to be a meteor shower happening tonight!

WAVERING: Didn't lay it on yourself, did you?

COUNCIL: (CHUCKLES)

GEORGIE: (DEEP SIGH)

ERIC: No, but seriously! It should be spectacular: shooting stars, all sorts, and the best view is from the Piffing observatory!

GEORGIE: The observatory?

WAVERING: I thought the telescope didn't work?

ERIC: No, because it's made of cardboard, but we could have the party in the field outside!

LADY TEMPLAR: Under the stars! Oh, it sounds so romantic, Chappers!

MAYOR: Fantastic idea, Eric! Just the ticket!

GEORGIE: (TO SELF) Outside the observatory...

MAYOR: Are you feeling quite well, Miss Crusoe?

LADY TEMPLAR: I told you: potty! (CHORTLES)

MAYOR: Oh God.

GEORGIE: No no, I'm fine – er, do you think I could use the toilet?

MAYOR: Oh. By all means. It's down the corridor-

GEORGIE: I'll find it.

SHE DASHES OUT TO RECEPTION.

**SCENE 8: VILLAGE HALL RECEPTION**

GEORGIE CLOSSES DOOR BEHIND HER.

GEORGIE: Rudyard? You've got a funeral tonight?

RUDYARD: Yes, that's what I wanted to-

GEORGIE: Where's it happening again?

RUDYARD: By the observatory during the meteor shower.

GEORGIE: Does anyone know?

RUDYARD: Aside from the family no –

GEORGIE: Wait there a second.

RUDYARD: But but but-

DOOR SLAMS AS GEORGIE EXITS TO OFFICE.

**SCENE 9: MAYOR'S OFFICE**

DOOR CLOSSES AS GEORGIE ENTERS.

WAVERING: You were quick.

GEORGIE: I don't hang about. Er, I've been thinking; I'm just not sure about the observatory tonight.

ERIC: Oh? Why not?

GEORGIE: Well... Um... You see...

LADY TEMPLAR: Loopyyyy!

GEORGIE: Professor Carbuncle might not be up for it!

ERIC: Professor Carbuncle's up for anything.

LADY TEMPLAR: (SMIRK) Is she, Chappers?

ERIC: Not now, Vivienne. But yes.

GEORGIE: I mean, we could do it at, I dunno... the lighthouse!

MAYOR: The lighthouse?

LADY TEMPLAR: Yes, remember! Where your last secretary killed a man!  
(CHORTLES) Because she was MAD.

MAYOR: THANK YOU, so, I think we're all happy with the observatory. All those in favour-

GEORGIE: What if someone was already doing something there?

MAYOR: Then they must have submitted an application. Has that happened, Miss Crusoe?

GEORGIE: Not yet-

MAYOR: Then if anybody *is* doing something there without permission then it is *illegal* and they'll be arrested.

GEORGIE: I see... I need the toilet again.

SHE HURRIES OUT.

MAYOR: Er, take your time if you need to-

DOOR SLAMS.

LADY TEMPLAR: She seems nice. ... (CHORTLES INSANELY)

**SCENE 10: VILLAGE HALL RECEPTION**

GEORGIE CLOSSES DOOR BEHIND HER

GEORGIE: Rudyard? Where are you? Rudyard?

PICKS UP CRINKLED PAPER FROM DESK.

GEORGIE: What's this?

RUDYARD: (V.O. ECHOEY) "Georgie. Afraid I had to go. Lots of work to do for the funeral tonight. Actually, I was going to try and get you to come back to us. But I see now that you're already being kept very busy, and that Antigone and I must accept... that you don't work for us anymore."

GEORGIE: Oh, Rudyard.

RUDYARD: (V.O. ECHOEY) "You've got a future here. You might even become Mayor yourself, one day. Yours sincerely, Rudyard. PS. As a final token, please accept these chocolates. PPS. I had two of them while I was waiting."

GEORGIE SCRUNCHES UP PAPER.

GEORGIE: He needs to find himself another meteor shower for the funeral! Or maybe just a different field.

SHE PICKS UP THE PHONE. IT'S DEAD.  
PRESSES IT A FEW TIMES.

Great. Telephone's dead.

MAYOR: I'm afraid so.

GEORGIE: Aargh! Mr Mayor!

MAYOR: I forgot to pay the bill. I was hoping you could arrange it.

GEORGIE: How do I do that?

MAYOR: You phone them up and pay them.

GEORGIE: How can I if the phone doesn't work?

MAYOR: (BEAT) Yes, well I'll leave you to sort that out. Oh, one more thing. We've decided to keep this party tonight on the quiet, if you take my meaning. A few close friends, quite *confidential*. Is that clear, Miss Crusoe?

GEORGIE: Gotcha. Confidential.

MAYOR: Exactly. Oh, we're having cakes, if you'd like one?

GEORGIE: No thanks... I don't feel very hungry...



**SCENE 11: FUNN FUNERALS BACKYARD**

**RUDYARD HAMMERING NAILS INTO A COFFIN.**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) On the other side of the village, Funn Funerals was in a state of emergency. Neither Rudyard nor Antigone had slept in twenty-four hours, and preparations for the funeral were falling behind...

**ANTIGONE DRAGS THE STIFF, EMBALMED  
BODY ACROSS THE COBBLES.**

ANTIGONE: Here's the body – do we have a coffin yet?

RUDYARD: Very nearly – God, Georgie made it look easy –

MOUSE: (SQUEAK SQUEAK)

RUDYARD: I'm sorry I got your tail, Madeleine, but you *were* in the way! Right, that should do it – let's get the body inside.

ANTIGONE: We can't fit him in that!

RUDYARD: Antigone, I'm in no mood to argue; I was up all night measuring the wood-

ANTIGONE: Yes and now the coffin is four foot long.

RUDYARD: You're quibbling and we haven't got the time for it-

ANTIGONE: What do you want me to do, fold him up?!

RUDYARD: That seems the most helpful thing to do, yes.

ANTIGONE: What?!

RUDYARD: If you can see a better way I'd love to hear it – now come on!

ANTIGONE: Oh bloody Hell.

THEY HEAVE THE BODY UP.

RUDYARD: God, Mr Beiderbecke's heavy.

ANTIGONE: And tall, Rudyard, very tall!

RUDYARD: Could you just-

ANTIGONE: OK, OK!

THEY DROP THE BODY IN THE COFFIN.

RUDYARD: There! Right, let's get folding.

ANTIGONE: (EXHAUSTED) I can't do it, Rudyard, I can't!

RUDYARD: Antigone, we haven't got time! We've got to finish this, get the flowers – get the moped working!

ANTIGONE: I'm telling you, it won't start!

RUDYARD: Unless you want to carry a coffin up a hill then we need that moped so try again!

ANTIGONE: I'm not a mechanic, only Georgie could make it work! It – just – won't – start!

ANTIGONE HITS THE MOPED. IT BACKFIRES.  
SHE GETS SOOT IN THE FACE.

ANTIGONE: BLAAARGHHH! JESUS *WEPT!!*

RUDYARD: Get that soot off your face or they'll think you're a racist.

ANTIGONE: (BREAKING DOWN) Why is this happening?!

RUDYARD: We know why.

ANTIGONE: We can kidnap her. Put her in a bag, bring her back!

RUDYARD: Face it! She's gone! (DEEP BREATHS) We must be noble about this. We've got a funeral in a few hours time, and a hundred things to do, so you've got to keep Mr Beiderbecke folded while I nail down the lid so he doesn't spring out of the coffin in the middle of the service!

ANTIGONE: We're not... bad people, are we?

RUDYARD: We're fine. It's everyone else that's the problem. Now let's try and force his head down between his knees.

GEORGIE: (CLEARS THROAT) Hey.

ANTIGONE: ... Georgie?

RUDYARD: Georgie, what are you doing here-

GEORGIE: Look, sorry, I can't stay long – the funeral tonight.

RUDYARD: What about it?

GEORGIE: You can't do it. I mean you can do it but you can't do it where you want to do it.

RUDYARD: Why not?

GEORGIE: There's a thing.

RUDYARD: There's a thing?

GEORGIE: There's a thing.

ANTIGONE: What thing?

GEORGIE: A big thing.

RUDYARD: I've heard nothing about a big thing.

GEORGIE: Trust me though: it's a big thing.

ANTIGONE: What big thing?

GEORGIE: Can't tell you.

ANTIGONE: Why not?

GEORGIE: Because of the thing.

RUDYARD: The big thing?

GEORGIE: It's the sort of thing I'm not allowed to talk about beyond the fact that it's a thing that buggers up your thing so you've got to do your thing somewhere else. OK?

RUDYARD: No it's not OK! We've got everything planned, the family will be expecting us-

GEORGIE: I mean there's a good chance that they'll come to this other thing instead.

RUDYARD: What thing?!

GEORGIE: Can't tell you.

ANTIGONE: This is ridiculous, Georgie!

GEORGIE: I'm sorry, I'm doing the best I can! But you can't go to the observatory tonight because there's a big thing on that you're not allowed to be at and I'll probably get the sack if you are. So could you please do it somewhere else?

RUDYARD: ... Alright, Georgie. We'll think about it.

ANTIGONE: Rudyard-

RUDYARD: No, that's the least we can do.

GEORGIE: Thanks. (BEAT) God, you look knackered. Are you OK?

RUDYARD: Of course we are.

GEORGIE: Just you're covered in dust and grime and... oil?

ANTIGONE: My skin feels itchy.

RUDYARD: We're all systems go, Georgie. And very busy.

GEORGIE: Good. Well. Um. See you later. I guess.

RUDYARD: Georgie.

ANTIGONE: Georgie.

GEORGIE EXITS THE YARD.

ANTIGONE: Rudyard, we can't change the funeral now!

RUDYARD: We're not going to.

ANTIGONE: But if we go then Georgie could get the sack and then...

RUDYARD: (DEVIOUSLY) And then she'll come back to us, yes!

ANTIGONE: But what about being noble and facing up to things?

RUDYARD: It's easy to be noble when there's nothing you can do.  
But that was then, this is now.

ANTIGONE: Rudyard, we can't be that ruthless. Can we?

RUDYARD: How itchy does your skin feel?

ANTIGONE: Very.

RUDYARD: Let's fold up the body, shall we?

ANTIGONE: Alright... I'm sorry, Mr Beiderbecke...

THE BODY CREAKS... AND SNAPS.

Oh dear.

**SCENE 12: OBSERVATORY GROUNDS**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) And so Rudyard and Antigone worked hard to meet their meteor shower deadline at the observatory, whilst Georgie threw herself into organising the Mayor's birthday party. By 9 o'clock, the shindig was in full swing.

**A HAPPY PARTY, LOTS OF GUESTS ENJOYING THEMSELVES OUTSIDE THE OBSERVATORY.**

WAVERING: Happy birthday, Dezzy! (KISS)

MAYOR: You darling! Oh oh, Eric lad!

ERIC: Hello you two! Enjoying yourselves?

MAYOR: Enormously! And as you suspected, Professor Carbuncle was totally up for it!

CARBUNCLE: (OFF, DRUNKEN CRY) Let's all take our pants off!

WAVERING: (CALLS) Who says we're wearing any?

ERIC: I love doing things like this. Reminds you that you don't need a funeral to have a good time.

MAYOR: Exactly! Any more ideas in the pipeline?

ERIC: Yeah, games nights, singles nights – oh, and for couples of a certain spirit, there's the Chapman's Swingers' Club.

MAYOR: Oh, wonderful! What's a swinger?

WAVERING: I'll tell you later, Desmond. I think I need to visit the little Reverend's room, before I try some limbo dancing!

ERIC: Watch where you go; the swamp's not too far away.

WAVERING WANDERS OFF.

MAYOR: You've really done a bang-up job here tonight, Eric.

ERIC: Georgie's really the one to thank. Turns out she's great at organising parties at incredibly short notice.

MAYOR: Where is she anyway?

ERIC: Haven't really seen her much. I think she's at the buffet...

**SCENE 13: PARTY BUFFET**

WE SHIFT FOCUS TO THE BUFFET TABLE  
WHERE A SAD GEORGIE STANDS ALONE.

GEORGIE: (SIGHS)

LADY TEMPLAR BUMPS INTO HER.

LADY TEMPLAR: I say, watch where you're... oh, it's you!

GEORGIE: Yep.

TEMPLAR PICKS OUT SOME FOOD.

LADY TEMPLAR: I must say, you've done a rather smashing job tonight! You should be very proud.



GEORGIE: Cheers.

LADY TEMPLAR: The Mayor seems awfully keen on you. I said, “You mark my words, Desmond, you want to keep hold of that one!”

GEORGIE: Sure.

LADY TEMPLAR: And it’s SUCH a relief to know that you’re not... you know... insane. (CHORTLES) How does it feel, being the new Marjorie?

GEORGIE: I prefer to say I’m the only Georgie.

LADY TEMPLAR: Oh.

GEORGIE: How’s your cheese?

LADY TEMPLAR: (APPEASING) Oh yes, thank you, very good! Mmmm!

RUDYARD’S VOICE RINGS OUT.

RUDYARD: (OFF) Well well well!

LADY TEMPLAR: Did you hear something?

GEORGIE: Oh flip.

LADY TEMPLAR: Good God, it’s *him!*

RUDYARD: (OFF) So this is what a big thing looks like!

LADY TEMPLAR: And he’s being obscene!

GEORGIE: No he’s not – (CALL) Rudyard! What are you doing here?

A CRAZED RUDYARD & ANTIGONE TRUDGE  
UP THE HILL CARRYING THE COFFIN,  
FOLLOWED BY A SMALL GROUP OF  
MISERABLE MOURNERS.

RUDYARD: I'll tell you what we're doing here, Georgie! We're getting the body in the coffin in the ground on time like we always do – isn't that right, Antigone?

ANTIGONE: (WAILING) I'm so tired!

LADY TEMPLAR: Oh my Lord, have you brought a *coffin* to a party?

RUDYARD: We weren't invited to the party, were we, Georgie?

GEORGIE: Rudyard, you've got to leave-

RUDYARD: So Antigone and I have carried this coffin all the way up the hill, with our happy band of mourners, and our substitute vicar-

BILL: I'm proper knackered, mate.

RUDYARD: Not now Bill – so we can give Mr Beiderbecke the funeral he deserves! Isn't that right, Antigone?

ANTIGONE: Please let me diiiiie!

GEORGIE: Rudyard, we can't do this now, alright!

MAYOR APPROACHES GEORGIE.

MAYOR: Miss Crusoe! Nigel's looking for the limbo stick, so could-

RUDYARD: Hello your worship! I do hope you're "enjoying yourself!"

MAYOR: Oh my God. I'm going to be assassinated aren't I?

GEORGIE: No!

RUDYARD: Don't mind us, we're just doing our jobs!

LADY TEMPLAR: This was meant to be a private party, you little gremlin!

RUDYARD: You know what I say to that, Lady Templar?

LADY TEMPLAR: What?

RUDYARD: Knickers!

LADY TEMPLAR: (GASP)

MAYOR: This has gone far enough! Miss Crusoe, I don't know why you decided to ignore my instructions-

GEORGIE: I didn't!

MAYOR: - But, considering how magnificent you've been today, I am willing to overlook it, so long as you get rid of them!

GEORGIE: Look, why don't we just let them do the funeral, and invite them up for a drink or something?

LADY TEMPLAR: Wha-? Did you *hear* what the man just said to me?

MAYOR: Don't you worry, Lady Templar, nobody else is saying knickers on *my* watch!

RUDYARD: We're not staying where we're not wanted! We've got better things to do, haven't we Antigone?

EXHAUSTED ANTIGONE IS ASLEEP STANDING UP. RUDYARD BANGS THE COFFIN AND SHE WAKES WITH A JOLT.

ANTIGONE: Wha – oh, why am I still here?!

RUDYARD: Time to bury Mr Beiderbecke! Follow us, everyone!

BILL: Actually, Rudyard, I think we all want to go home.

MOURNERS MURMUR, AGREEING.

RUDYARD: So, Bill – you too have betrayed me! Antigone and I shall bury the body without you! Come along Antigone!

ANTIGONE: (WAIL OF EXHAUSTED DISTRESS)

RUDYARD AND ANTIGONE TRUDGE AWAY ALONE, CARRYING THE COFFIN. GEORGIE LOOKS AFTER THEM, ADMIRINGLY.

LADY TEMPLAR: What extraordinary people.

GEORGIE: Yeah. You know what? They're one of a kind.

WAVERING: Dezzy! Dezzy, I've found the limbo stick! We're quids in!  
(BEAT) Have I missed something?

MAYOR: Rudyard's conducting a funeral over there, that's all.

WAVERING: I hope for their sake they don't go too far! That's where the swamp is!

GEORGIE: What?

WAVERING: Yes, I nearly fell in when I wandered away for a you know what, but so long as they're careful they should be-

RUDYARD & ANTIGONE FALL INTO SWAMP.

RUDYARD / ANTIGONE: (OFF) Waaarghhhh!!!

WAVERING: I mean, I was just tempting fate there, wasn't I?

GEORGIE: (HAPPY) Ha! I don't believe them! They've done it again!

ERIC RUSHES OVER FROM THE PARTY.

ERIC: Hey, I just heard a splash, what's going on?

MAYOR: Funn Funerals showed up and now they've fallen into a swamp.

ERIC: Of course they have. Right, let's go Georgie, we'd better save them! ... Georgie?

LADY TEMPLAR: She's already gone.

ERIC: (SIGH) I'm getting too old for this.

**SCENE 14: SWAMP**

RUDYARD AND ANTIGONE SINKING SLOWLY  
INTO THE BUBBLING SWAMP. THE COFFIN  
FLOATING NEARBY WITH THE MOUSE ON IT.

MADELEINE: (V.O.) It was curtains for Antigone and Rudyard. I watched helplessly from the still-floating coffin as they slowly began to sink beneath the murky, gloopy waters of the bubbling swamp.

ANTIGONE: Yeaughh!

RUDYARD: Don't struggle, Antigone, you'll sink faster.

ANTIGONE: Oh why prolong it? You've killed us, Rudyard!

RUDYARD: Yes. I'm sorry about that.

ANTIGONE: Oh... It's not your fault.

RUDYARD: I mean, yes it is.

ANTIGONE: Yes I know it is, but I should have realised something like this would happen and stopped you in advance.

RUDYARD: At least we won't have to worry anymore.

ANTIGONE: From a certain point of view, this is probably the best thing that could have happened to us.

RUDYARD: Goodbye, Antigone.

ANTIGONE: Farewell, Rudyard.

GEORGIE: (OFF, CALLING) Hey, you two!

GEORGIE IS STANDING ON THE BANK.

ANTIGONE: Georgie!

GEORGIE: (CALLING) I'm going to try and save your lives, is that OK?

RUDYARD: How?

GEORGIE: (CALLING) By using the Reverend's limbo stick!

ANTIGONE: It's too dangerous! Stay back!

RUDYARD: Don't listen to her, Georgie!

GEORGIE: (OFF, CALLING) Don't worry! I'm great at pole vaulting!

GEORGIE TAKES A RUN AND VAULTS  
THROUGH THE AIR AND ONTO THE COFFIN.

Woah! Watch yourself, Madeleine!

MOUSE: (SQUEAK)

ANTIGONE: Well done, Georgie!

GEORGIE: Here, grab this! I'll pull you guys up!

THEY GRAB THE LIMBO STICK AND SHE  
PULLS THEM UP ONTO THE COFFIN.

RUDYARD: (GASPING) Oh my God, thank you thank you thank you-

ANTIGONE: You're an actual life saver!

GEORGIE: And now we just float here safely until we're rescued by...

ERIC CALLS FROM THE BANK

ERIC: (CALLING) Hello there! Need a hand?

GEORGIE: Bingo. (CALLING) Hey Eric! Get us a rope will yer?

ERIC: (CALLING) I'll see what I can rustle up! Stay there, enjoy the stars! And Georgie?

GEORGIE: (CALLING) What?

ERIC: (OFF, CALLING) You're amazing!

GEORGIE: (CALLING) I know!

RUDYARD: Georgie. Er... We don't know *quite* how to say this, but-

GEORGIE: Yeah, I'll come back to work.

ANTIGONE: You will?

GEORGIE: You're too much fun. I can't imagine anybody else I'd be sharing a coffin with in the middle of a swamp.

RUDYARD: What about your job with the Mayor?

GEORGIE: Meh. I'll do both. I can handle it. Just needs decent time management.



ANTIGONE: And you're great at that, presumably?

GEORGIE: I thought I'd learn. Hey, look at that!

RUDYARD: What?... It's a meteor!

THE METEOR SHOWER BLAZES ACROSS THE  
NIGHT SKY.

ANTIGONE: Look, there's another one! I think it's starting!

GEORGIE: Now this is what I call a party.

MADELEINE: (V.O.) And as we sat in the middle of the swamp and enjoyed the meteor shower in the skies above us, I reflected that some stories do have a happy ending after all. (BEAT) Just not many of them.

THEME MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER: *Take a Letter, Miss Crusoe* was written by David K. Barnes and was performed by Felix Trench as Rudyard, Beth Eyre as Antigone, Tom Crowley as Eric, Ciara Baxendale as Georgie, Sean Baker as the Mayor, Andy Secombe as Reverend Wavering, Catriona Knox as Lady Templar, Ellie Dickens as Miss Scruple, and Belinda Lang as Madeleine, with additional voices by Holly Campbell, Pip Gladwin and Maxwell Tyler. Original music composed by James Whittle and the production manager was Elizabeth Campbell. The programme was recorded at ArtSpace Studios by Tom Gillieron and was directed and produced by Andy Goddard and John Wakefield.