

WOODEN OVERCOATS  
EPISODE 4.5 – DEAD MAN’S CHEST

By  
Sarah Shachat

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 Nigel Wavering ~ ANDY SECOMBE  
Lady Vivienne Templar ~ CATRIONA KNOX  
Sid Marlowe ~ PAUL PUTNER  
Agatha Doyle ~ ALISON SKILBECK  
Mouse ~ HOLLY CAMPBELL

**PRE-TITLES**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) Rudyard Funn runs a funeral home in the village of Piffing Vale. It used to be the only one. It isn’t anymore. The Mayor still dreams of turning the village into a town, and the answer may lie in the history books! Mind you, history has a habit of repeating itself. I wonder if Rudyard knows that...?

**THEME TUNE**

ANNOUNCER: *Wooden Overcoats*, created by David K. Barnes. Season Four, Episode Five: *Dead Man’s Chest* by Sarah Shachat.

**SCENE 1.**

**VILLAGE HALL. COUNCIL MURMURING.**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) Taking a break from my typewriter, I visited the village hall to watch the council locked in session. The Mayor, the Reverend, and the infamous Lady Templar were in predictably high spirits, though Eric seemed a little less buoyant than usual.

ERIC: (SIGHS) Right, is there anything else on the agenda or can we call it a day?

WAVERING: Now, Eric, just hold your horses. I’m not sure we’ve finished discussing the bike lanes yet.

MAYOR: Excellent point, Nigel. And I wonder if we need a lane for horses, now you mention it.

ERIC: I don’t think there are any horses on the island, Des.

MAYOR: *Yet.* There aren’t any horses on the island *yet.* Make a note of that, Miss Crusoe.

GEORGIE: Aye aye, m’lad.

ERIC: I mean, are we hoping some horses will come here for their summer holidays or something?

TEMPLAR: I hate horses! They’re so uppity, aren’t they? Always filling up the bus lane – it’s like, get out of the way!!

ERIC: We haven’t got a bus lane!

MAYOR: Miss Crusoe, I want a bus lane to go with the bus stop.

GEORGIE: On it.

ERIC: Honestly, do we have to go through these hypotheticals in every meeting?

MAYOR: We’re trying to do our best for the people who’ve entrusted us with the power to improve their lives.

ERIC: ... Of-of course. Sorry, Mr Mayor.

MAYOR: No worries, m’lad! I think we’re all agreed. We’ll ask Bill if he can ride his bicycle on the left side of the street from now on, and that will be the new bike lane.

WAVERING: Another improvement we can put on the list! We’ll be able to make our case to the Bailiwick in no time!

ERIC: Our case for... what?

GEORGIE: That we’re finally ready to become a town.

MAYOR: After all, we’re about to have a bike lane.

TEMPLAR: And a glue factory. For horses-

WAVERING: Yes, and the arty adult movies at the cinema are going down an absolute storm! Highlight of our week, eh, ha ha!

MAYOR: (CHUCKLING) Ha ha, er, shush – and we’ve got some new cafes and the ferris wheel and, gosh, you’re sure to have something exciting in the works, aren’t you, Eric?

ERIC: Uhm... actually... I’m closing down most of my side projects. (BEAT) Right now I’d really like to focus on running a funeral home.

MAYOR: But we already have one of those.

ERIC: What?

MAYOR: (BLITHE) Oh well, no matter. We simply need to prove that we’re a place where things are happening.

TEMPLAR: We need to show that we’re important!

WAVERING: Not that anyone blames you for not coming up with the answer sooner, Eric!

ERIC: I didn’t think anyone was blaming me.

TEMPLAR: And that’s what we love about you, Chappers.

ERIC: What does that mean?

MAYOR: But the problem in a nutshell is how are we going to put Piffing on the map, once and for all?

TEMPLAR: Oooh! What if we host a horse race, where at the end they all fall off the cliffs and into the sea!

ERIC: Why would we want that?!

WAVERING: Or some naughtier films! And an adults-only launderette!

GEORGIE: We haven’t got a health spa yet?

TEMPLAR: Oh yes, I love that idea! A spa with no horses allowed!

MAYOR: All tremendous ideas, yes, but we don’t need more *things*, exactly. It’s more that people must look at us and say, “Golly! Piffing Vale is quite a significant place. How silly that they weren’t a town before!” ... It’s a stumper isn’t it?

ERIC: It’ll work out, somehow. And anyway, Piffing would be a great town, Des – but it’s also already an *amazing* village.

GEORGIE: (BEAT) Smooth, Eric.

ERIC: All-alright! I’m sure if we all put our heads together, we can come up with something–

FROM BELOW, A BIG CRASH AS BOOKCASES  
KNOCKED OVER, SHELVES COLLAPSE, ETC

RUDYARD: (OFF) OOOOOOWWWW!!!

WAVERING: ... What the bloody Hell was that?

**SCENE 2.**

VILLAGE HALL CELLAR. AFTERMATH OF A  
DISASTER IN A RECORDS ROOM. RUDYARD  
COUGHING, TRYING TO STAND.

MADELEINE: (V.O.) “*That*” was four bookcases in the cellar toppling over like dominoes, submerging Rudyard in papers and shelving. As the council’s archivist, he’d claimed the cellar for his office, allowing him to study the very same records that had nearly killed him a few moments ago.

GEORGIE, ERIC AND MAYOR COMING DOWN  
STEPS.

GEORGIE: (COUGHING) Sir? What happened?

RUDYARD: I was trying to climb to the top shelf for a nap.

ERIC: (COUGHS) All you had to do is read some books, and you’ve destroyed every bit of furniture in the room!

MAYOR: Oh, we’ve all been there at some point, haven’t we?

WAVERING: (OFF, CALLING DOWN) What’s happening? Is he dead?

TEMPLAR: (OFF, CALLING DOWN) Should we just seal off the room and bury it forever?

ERIC: (CALLING UP) No, don’t do that. (TO RUDYARD) Come on, Rudyard, let’s pull you out from under this lot.

RUDYARD: No! You’ll ruin my filing system.

ERIC:                   What system! Thanks to you it’s just a pile of manuscripts!

RUDYARD:             But for the first time I can actually reach them! Go away!

GEORGIE:             Hey, while you’re literally buried in the history of Piffing, you might be able to help us out.

RUDYARD:             Really?

MAYOR:                No, highly unlikely.

GEORGIE:             Wait, listen, we’re trying to build a case for Piffing becoming a town, yeah? So maybe he’s found something in his research, like an important bit of history?

MAYOR:                Or an achievement, or a triumph! Yes, something we can make a ruddy great fuss about – what a splendid idea!

GEORGIE:             How about it, Rudyard? What have you got for us?

RUDYARD:             Let’s see... Are there any glorious epochs in Piffing’s past with the historical importance worthy of further study and celebration...? (PAUSE) No!

GEORGIE:             No?

MAYOR:                But that can’t be true!

RUDYARD:             Oh yes it can! It turns out nothing that’s ever happened here has remotely affected the wider world!

ERIC:                   There must have been at least one event!

RUDYARD: Well, there was AD 45, and the rout of the Eighth Legion under Emperor Claudius by some particularly aggressive sheep. But it didn’t really change anything. Technically the ceasefire is still in place.

MAYOR: So there’s absolutely nothing we can celebrate?

RUDYARD: I’ve been researching for months, and I can tell you, without a shadow of a doubt, that Piffing Vale has been inconsequential bordering on worthless. It’s fascinating!

MAYOR: (HEARTBROKEN)... Oh.

ERIC: (SIGHS) Look, guys, maybe this isn’t such a bad thing.

GEORGIE: How can it be a good thing?

ERIC: Piffing has always been a quiet, out of the way place, never causing harm. There’s no shame in that, is there?

MAYOR: Perhaps...

ERIC: We don’t need to pirate some old traditions to know what makes Piffing great. We can show off the best that we can offer in the here and now! That’s worth celebrating, isn’t it? The Piffing we are today! What do you say?

RUDYARD: ... PIRATES!

ERIC: Out of everything I just said, the word you took was-

RUDYARD: Pirates! Now where was that chronicle?

PULLS OUT A BIG BOOK

RUDYARD: Aha! Yes! We were briefly ruled by pirates!

MAYOR: / ERIC: / GEORGIE: What?!

GEORGIE: Pirates ruled Piffing?!

RUDYARD: Twice, if you count when a Gilbert and Sullivan touring company washed up here by accident in 1891. But the first time was very nearly as frightening.

THUMPS BOOK DOWN, OPENS, PAGES TURN.

1565. Pursued by Her Majesty’s fleet, a group of scoundrels under Captain “Fibber” Fernandez dropped anchor at Piffing and forced the villagers to pull their ship overland into the middle of the square to hide it.

MAYOR: / ERIC: / GEORGIE: Wow! (etc)

RUDYARD: But as it turned out, the fleet were only returning a ball that had been kicked onto their flagship by mistake. So the pirates took their ball back, thanked the villagers for helping, and hauled their ship back to the sea, leading a sing-song as they went. The event soon became known as the ‘Big Lug’ and word spread quickly – even reaching Blankenberge!

MAYOR: Crumbs, as far as Belgium, eh? Now that’s when you know you’ve made it!

GEORGIE: There you are, Mr Mayor: an exciting story, with a parade!

MAYOR: Yes! We could revive it! Bring Piffing’s history back to life and put together a wonderful brochure we can submit to the Tourism Board. How soon could you organise it?

ERIC: Well, if you really like, I could pull an event together by-

MAYOR: No no no, not you Eric – I meant Rudyard!

RUDYARD: Me?

MAYOR: You’ve read the books; you know all about it!

RUDYARD: I do, but if it’s an event that people are meant to enjoy, then... (RESIGNED) I think Chapman is better equipped to waste his time on it.

MAYOR: Actually, Eric has expressed a desire to step back from some of his more public commitments.

RUDYARD: (SENSING A WIN) I suppose he has...!

ERIC: That’s not quite what I said.

MAYOR: Don’t be coy. So, if you were able to fill Eric’s shoes, I’m sure all of us on the council would greatly appreciate it?

GEORGIE: I’m game if you are, sir.

ERIC: I’m really quite happy to pitch in-

RUDYARD: Your worship, unlike Chapman here, I would be delighted to help! One parade to remember, coming up!

### **SCENE 3.**

#### **FUNN FUNERALS**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) There was of course one very important person whom Rudyard had not yet consulted on this new and nautical venture. But he was sure that once he could explain it to her, face to face, she’d have to answer:

ANTIGONE: No!! We are not going to celebrate *pirates*!

RUDYARD: But it’s a pageant! An historical recreation. We won’t be committing acts of piracy – will we, Georgie?

GEORGIE: Let’s not rule things out this early.

ANTIGONE: You do remember that we’ve got Commander Kildare’s funeral this week?

RUDYARD: We’ll combine the two! The council are funding the parade – which means if they cover the cost of the funeral at the same time, we stand to make a very tidy profit!

GEORGIE: Twenty-five quid.

RUDYARD: Twenty-five quid, Antigone! The Commander would want us to have that money! Not to mention the glory of staging an event that Chapman’s too scared to do himself!

ANTIGONE: You have no idea what the Commander wanted! We only got the funeral because you shut him in a cupboard and wouldn’t let him out until he booked with us.

RUDYARD: And his last request was, “Just throw me into the sea, for God’s sake; I don’t care anymore.” In our profession that’s called *carte blanche*.

ANTIGONE: Well I’m drawing the line at this mildewed manuscript’s half-drunken entreaty to lawless debauchery.

GEORGIE: When you put it like that, it just sounds awesome.

ANTIGONE: I know! But it shouldn’t do!

RUDYARD: Antigone, this manuscript contains no debauchery of any kind. It was a civil occupation; just read this account here.

POKES FINGER AT A PAGE.

GEORGIE: “Why did he resign?”

RUDYARD: What? (CURIOUS) Oh, it’s a note.

RUDYARD WHIPS OUT A SHEET OF PAPER

“Why did he resign?” I wonder what it means.

GEORGIE: You should keep that in case it’s important later on.

RUDYARD: Don’t worry, I will!

ANTIGONE: Rudyard, history isn’t in the words, it’s in the space between the lines! It’s all up for interpretation – and I interpret this as mindless, piratey mayhem!

RUDYARD: The people of Piffing Vale are far too sensible to allow a few high spirits to turn them into a dangerous mob.

ANTIGONE: Rudyard.

RUDYARD: (BEAT) OK, but this time I’d be on *their* side.

ANTIGONE: There won’t be any mobs, because we’re not doing this event! Have you even imagined what it would involve?

GEORGIE: All we have to do is construct a life-size replica of a 16<sup>th</sup> century caravel, set it on wheels, organise food, drinks and souvenir stalls, then turn out the entire village as we parade the ship – with Commander Kildare’s coffin at the helm – through the square, down the beach, and into the sea, before we blow up the whole thing with fireworks and a remote detonator. (BEAT) It really is very simple.

MOUSE: (SQUEAK SQUEAK)

RUDYARD: Exactly, Madeleine – even a child could do it.

ANTIGONE: No they couldn’t! And what about this part, where three Billy goats burst into flame when the ship left the square?

RUDYARD: Antigone, those were from an accidental cannon blast. We’re only going to blow up goats on purpose.

ANTIGONE: Rudyard!!

GEORGIE: OK, no Billy goats. But I’m so up for the rest of it.

ANTIGONE: Why, for Heaven’s sake?

GEORGIE: The client booked his funeral on the cheap. He thought we couldn’t do more than a halfway decent job, right?

RUDYARD: We shook hands on it.

GEORGIE: But we can do way better than half decent! This parade will take a lot of building, and organising, and scheduling, but guess what? That is what we’re best at.

RUDYARD: Exactly. Tightly controlled, historically accurate, and fun for all the family, so long as they obey the rules.

ANTIGONE: But we’ve never done anything on this scale before.

GEORGIE: So we’re going to do it now. Are you in, or are you in?

ANTIGONE: That’s the same option twice. ... But it would be an incredible coup for us if we succeeded... I’m so conflicted.

MOUSE: (PERSUASIVE SQUEAKS)

ANTIGONE: Damn it, Madeleine – you’ve won me over. I’m in. But if we’re doing this, it’s got to be magnificent.

RUDYARD: I wholly agree.

ANTIGONE: We’ll spare no expense.

RUDYARD: No, hang on a moment-

ANTIGONE: And, if we’re going to create the most inspiring spectacle the island has ever seen... we’re going to need help.

RUDYARD: From who? (BEAT) ... No! You can’t mean-

**SCENE 4.**

**CHAPMAN’S BAR**

TEMPLAR: Eric! Honestly! I don’t know what you’re so concerned about. I think the meeting went wonderfully.

SID: Can I quote you on that, Lady T?

ERIC: You can if you like, but she’s wrong.

SID: “Some mixed messages from the council on this under-wraps event slash very public parade” - I like it!

ERIC: There’s no conspiracy, Sid, and no story either.

SID: Oh, c’mon, Eric boy, you normally give me some copy for the paper! And in return, I use it. Fair’s fair.

TEMPLAR: Got the media in your pocket eh, Chappers?

ERIC: No I haven’t! Here’s your Gin Fizz and peanuts.

**COCKTAIL AND BOWL PUT DOWN.**

SID: Ta, Eric. Now if you want me to drum up excitement for this shindig of yours, you’re going to need to give me some facts, or at least some very plausible lies.

ERIC: It’s not my event and I’m not running it.

SID: (SHOCKED) You’re not?

TEMPLAR: He threw his toys out of the pram and Rudyard picked them up.

SID: Wait, Rudyard? Surely not Rudyard Funn!

DOORS SLAM OPEN.

RUDYARD: The very same!

SID: / TEMPLAR: (GASP)

ERIC: Rudyard, this is a private lounge!

RUDYARD: Not anymore!

ANTIGONE: Lady Templar, Mr Marlowe. Chapman.

ERIC: Dragged you along too, has he? OK, what can I do for you? Cocktails are on the house.

RUDYARD: Don’t try to turn our heads with tiny umbrellas, Chapman. This is official Council business. We’ve got a parade to prepare, and Antigone thinks there’s only one person on the island who can provide the help we need.

ERIC: Ah. I see.

RUDYARD: Quite. So. (CLEARS THROAT) Lady Templar, we need your help.

ERIC: What?!

TEMPLAR: Oh, snap!

ANTIGONE: We’d like to borrow decorations from the Yacht Club. You bought the place last year.

TEMPLAR: To make sure Rudyard never went there again. But you can take whatever you want, my dears! On one condition.

RUDYARD: Which is?

TEMPLAR: I get to make someone walk the plank!

RUDYARD: Oh! Well, er-

SID: D’you mean this parade is gonna have a pirate ship?! With ropes and mizzenmasts and cursed doubloons?!

RUDYARD: The caravel detailed in the account predates our popular conception of the golden age of piracy by over a century.

ANTIGONE: So... no plank.

TEMPLAR: (TERRIFYINGLY FURIOUS) No plank?!

ANTIGONE: I mean I mean I mean, maybe just a little one perhaps.

RUDYARD: Yes, we can take... a tiny amount of historical license.

TEMPLAR: Yes! How marvellous! Well then, let’s talk terms! Tiny umbrellas all round, Chappers.

ERIC: In a sec, Vivienne. Antigone, can we talk for a moment?

ERIC AND ANTIGONE MOVE AWAY.

MADELEINE: (V.O.) As the others began to hash out ideas for the parade, Eric took Antigone aside.

ERIC: I’m surprised you’re going along with this.

ANTIGONE: Oh I know it could be doomed to fail, but we’re planning it very carefully – and so long as nobody gets hurt, what’s to stop us trying?

ERIC: That nearly sounded optimistic.

ANTIGONE: Thank you. If I’d left this to Rudyard, it’d be a disaster, but I’m keeping an eye on everything. It’s going to be fine.

ERIC: What if the parade gets out of hand?

TEMPLAR: (OFF) Gunpowder, everywhere!

ANTIGONE: It’ll be educational, respectable and tastefully done. Don’t forget, we’re doing a funeral at the same time.

ERIC: You’re doing what?

ANTIGONE: So, yes, we may have to stretch a few points, and annoy the academics, but it’ll be an event we can all be proud of.

ERIC: And win you lots of great publicity too, I suppose? Just so we’re clear about that.

ANTIGONE: Of course, Chapman! We’re a business! And unlike you, we have to fight for everything we get!

ERIC: Hey!

RUDYARD HAS APPROACHED.

RUDYARD: Antigone! We’ve made a deal with Lady Templar. She wants us to bury some treasure for her.

TEMPLAR: (OFF) I’ve drawn a map!

SID: (OFF) Wow!

SID TAKES A PHOTO.

RUDYARD: Shall we go?

ERIC: Antigone, wait! Just promise me you’ll take care!

ANTIGONE: Relax, Chapman! Everything’s under control.

**SCENE 5.**

A PARTIALLY BUILT SHIP IN THE MIDDLE OF  
THE SQUARE. DIN OF HAMMERS, SAWS AND  
GENERAL CONSTRUCTION.

MADELEINE: (V.O.) Work began on the recreation of the Big Lug, and to my astonishment, the village had turned out to help the Funns! You could have knocked me down with a feather. Even more so than usual.

GEORGIE: How you doing with the windlass, Nigel?

WAVERING: Just fine, Georgie! It’s quite meditative, coiling all this rope. I should make them do it in church.

GEORGIE: Be a nice change from the life-drawing classes. (CALL) Antigone, where’d you put the toolbox?

ANTIGONE: (OFF) It’s hanging from the bowsprit.

GEORGIE: Cheers!

MAYOR: (OFF) Miss Crusoe! Erm, help please!

GEORGIE: Your worship, where are you?

MAYOR: (OFF) Uhm, I’m not sure of the nautical term...

WAVERING: He’s hanging upside down from the pointy whatsit!

GEORGIE: Not again! Hold on, Mr Mayor! I’m coming.

MAYOR: (OFF) Don’t worry, Miss Crusoe. I think I’ve got it!

A LARGE PIECE OF WOOD CRACKS.

MAYOR: (FALLING) Wahhh!

LANDS WITH A THUD, BREAKING LOTS OF  
WORKBENCHES. THINGS GO FLYING. BEAT.

MAYOR: ... (OFF) I’m alright!

WAVERING: (CHUCKLING) Fifth time today.

GEORGIE: That’s the tiller busted. Which means goodbye to my afternoon, and dinner with Jennifer, and Timmy’s walk tomorrow morning.

WAVERING: We’ll fix it up, you’ll see! The whole village is behind you! For once.

GEORGIE: Cheers Nigel. (CALLS) Oi, Rudyard! Could you check and make sure the Mayor hasn’t broken anything?

**SCENE 6.**

**VILLAGE SQUARE, BASE OF SHIP. RUDYARD  
HELPS UP THE MAYOR.**

RUDYARD: I’m doing it, Georgie! Up you get, your worship.

MAYOR: It’s lucky Nigel strapped all these cushions to me, isn’t it!  
(WHISPER) He thinks I’m clumsy.

RUDYARD: Well, not to worry, we’re still ahead of schedule.

MAYOR: I can’t praise you enough for taking on this project and  
jumping into it with both sea legs! You’re a credit to us all!

RUDYARD: Oh! Thank you! We do try.

MAYOR: Even Miss Crusoe has outdone herself! And as for your  
sister, I wasn’t sure she really existed, but I’m finally  
willing to believe it.

RUDYARD: She’ll appreciate the compliment.

GEORGIE: (OFF) Oi, Rudyard! We got company! Three points off the  
starboard bow!

**SID APPROACHES.**

SID: Wotcha Rudyard! ‘Allo Mayor! Galley’s coming on a treat  
‘innit! I never knew pirate ships had so many wheels.

RUDYARD: They didn’t, historically speaking, but if we’re going to  
drag a caravel across the island then it’d be easier if-

SID: Oi, I think your pointy whatsit’s broken.

MAYOR: I did that!

SID TAKES PHOTO.

SID: Incredible! So what exactly are we dealing with when it comes to this sailor soiree? Any updates for the paper?

RUDYARD: With thanks to the council’s cooperation under Mayor Desmond Desmond-

MAYOR: That’s me.

RUDYARD: - yes, we’re happily on our way to reviving a legendary celebration of our maritime history. As you can see!

SID: Mmm... Don’t get me wrong, Rudyard, it’s a handsome ship. But it’s not very piratey, is it?

RUDYARD: We have a plank. Look.

SID: I’ve seen bigger.

RUDYARD: (SIGHS) Georgie!

GEORGIE: (OFF) Yeah?

RUDYARD: Bigger plank! Happy now?

SID: Not yet, Rudyard. What you need is a Jolly Roger!

MAYOR: You’ll take that back and apologise.

SID: I mean a flag, a skull-and-crossbones, something scary and intimidating, for the kids.

RUDYARD: Ah, that’s an invention of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which is far too late for the event our parade is based upon-

SID: Look, do you want this to become an annual celebration?

RUDYARD: So long as I’m in charge.

SID: Then you need to inject more drama, boy. Some yo ho ho razzle dazzle. Give the public what they want.

RUDYARD: No no, Mr Marlowe, we’re going to re-create the event as accurately and responsibly as possible, thank you.

MAYOR: Actually, are you sure we couldn’t have a scary flag, Rudyard? Just a little one.

SID: Maybe a cutlass or two? And a Kraken.

RUDYARD: Gentlemen, no! We’ve made a few concessions, but as an archivist I must observe the proprieties of history.

SID: How about your picture on the front page of the paper?

RUDYARD: Will it have a flattering caption?

SID: It will now. What do you say? Throw in a few extras?

MAYOR: We promise to be good.

RUDYARD: Oh... all right. But remember, it’s a funeral. You can have hooks and eyepatches, so long as they’re respectable!

SID: No worries, Rudyard, I’ll get the word out! (GOING) Best of luck getting those sails hoisted and everything! Ha ha!

RUDYARD: We don’t need luck! We have rigorously researched facts!

MAYOR: And Miss Crusoe.

RUDYARD: Exactly, yes. (CALLS) Georgie!

GEORGIE: (OFF) Over here sir! The Reverend’s got stuck in a net!

RUDYARD: Leave that for now! We need a scary flag, immediately.

WAVERING: (OFF) But Rudyard! Dezzy!

MAYOR: It’s for a good cause, Nigel!

WAVERING: (OFF) (WHIMPER)

**SCENE 7.**

VILLAGE HALL

MADELEINE: (V.O.) With great determination, and Georgie Crusoe, the ship was finished before the end of the week. It was now the day of the Big Lug, and I went back to the village hall to observe the council and their last-minute preparations.

RUDYARD: Now look here, Reverend. When the ship turns past the Broken Tooth, that’ll be your cue. Remember, you’re using Middle English, but in a very bad French accent.

WAVERING: It’s the part I was born to play!

ERIC: And how does the peg leg and parrot come into it?

MAYOR: They’re getting him into character.

ERIC: But he’s meant to be one of the villagers.

WAVERING: One of the villagers disguised as a pirate.

RUDYARD: He’s written his own backstory, too. None of it gets used but you’ve got to admit he’s keen.

ERIC: Rudyard, I think we’re missing the bigger picture here.

TEMPLAR: Oh don’t listen to him, he’s been putting the mockers on this all week.

RUDYARD: Chapman, we’re trying to honour our past and present, and what’s important is that we get it right.

MAYOR: And get some exciting photos for the brochure!

RUDYARD: Yes, that too.

ERIC: But how can you get it right when you’re going for historical accuracy, they’re all going for the full Robert Newton, and none of you have the remotest idea what it is you’re actually trying to celebrate? What’s it all for?

TEMPLAR: Oh honestly Chappers.

ERIC: Do you have a problem, Vivienne?

TEMPLAR: Only with you being so boring. You’re actually raining on our parade. And I think we’re all getting pretty damn tired of your oh-so-knowledgeable, I-know-best routine.

ERIC: (SHOCKED) I... I’m sorry to hear that. I don’t mean to come off that way.

WAVERING: Oh, look Eric, it’s only a bit of fun.

RUDYARD: No, it’s an important depiction of our island’s legacy, and also a funeral.

ERIC: But have any of you read Sid’s article this morning?

RUDYARD / MAYOR / WAVERING / TEMPLAR: (MUTTERED NO’S)

WAVERING: I was practising my accent. (FRENCH) “Allo. I’m a pirate.”

ERIC: I think you ought to see it, then, because-

DOOR OPENS.

GEORGIE: (ENTERING) Right, lads. Coffin’s loaded, fireworks all set, and the ship’s ready to rock and roll. Are we on?

MAYOR: Yes we are! I appreciate your caution, Eric, but we can hardly put the pirate back in the bag now can we?

ERIC: I... (SIGH) Fine. Enjoy yourselves.

TEMPLAR: Then come on, everyone who isn’t Eric! Time for larks!

RUDYARD / MAYOR / WAVERING: (CHEERS)

THEY FILE OUT, UNDER:

MADELEINE: (V.O.) The councillors left to join the parade. But there was good news and bad news. The good news was that the whole village had turned out for the festivities...

**SCENE 8.**

EXT VILLAGE HALL. ABSOLUTE CHAOS IN  
SQUARE. A PIRATE RIOT. UNRULY MOB.  
GLASS SMASHING, LOOTING. ETC

MADELEINE: (V.O.) ... Which also happened to be the bad news.

WAVERING: Sweet Christmas crackers! What are they doing?

MAYOR: They’re looting! Pillaging! They’re an unstoppable mob!

CUTLASSES UNSHEATHING.

AGATHA: The only law I obey today is the law of the sea!

SID: You’ll surrender that caramel nugget yet, Doyle! En  
gARRRRde!

SID AND AGATHA SWORDFIGHT NEARBY.

RUDYARD: What on Earth is happening here? Those tricorn hats  
wouldn’t enter fashion for at least another few decades!

GEORGIE: Sir, you know that article Eric was talking about?

RUSTLE OF NEWSPAPER.

RUDYARD: Let’s see. (READING) “A license for plunder and booty?  
That’s right! Drink up, me hearties, and unleash your inner  
buccaneer at Rudyard Funn’s pirate parade funeral  
festival thing! Shiver your timbers with a bottle of rum and  
begin a-smuggling. Yo ho ho.” (BEAT) Well.

GEORGIE: I think they’ve got overexcited.

A FIRE STARTS. MOB CHEERS.

WAVERING: Dezzy! What are we going to do?

MAYOR: I think at this point we’ll have to take Eric’s advice.

WAVERING: You mean...?

MAYOR: Yes. Enjoy ourselves! Avast the swabs, Mr Marlowe! I want some pieces of eight!

WAVERING: I say! Right behind you, Captain!

MAYOR & WAVERING RUSH OFF.

RUDYARD: No! Come back! We need leadership!

ERIC: Let them go, Rudyard. Best if they tire themselves out with the rest of them. There’s nothing else to be done.

RUDYARD: But we worked so hard! We did everything right. We organised! We built a ship!

GEORGIE: Oh God, the ship. I left Antigone onboard! There she is!

ANTIGONE: (OFF) Back! Back! Get away from that coffin! Oh, why are there so many pirates???

ERIC: That changes things. Let’s-

RUDYARD: Don’t “let’s” me, Chapman. I’ll handle this!

**SCENE 9.**

**SHIP’S DECK. UNRULY PIRATE MOB.**

TEMPLAR: Top ho, scoundrels! The ship is ours!

**MOB CHEER. A BELL RINGS.**

RUDYARD: Now look here!

**MOB QUIETENS DOWN. RUDYARD WALKS  
INTO THE MIDDLE, FOOTSTEPS ON DECK.**

RUDYARD: Citizens of Piffing! Get a hold of yourselves! Can’t you see what you’re doing - here, in our beloved village square! Have you all gone mad? Now let’s calm down and do this quietly, properly and with dignity. Are you with me?

**PAUSE.**

TEMPLAR: Make him walk the plank!

**MOB CHEERS.**

RUDYARD: What?

SID: Get him, you old seadogs!

TEMPLAR: (WILD CHORTLE)

**MOB SURGE AND ATTACK RUDYARD**

RUDYARD: Argh! Unhand me! I created you! I am your master! Gahh!

**SCENE 10.**

EXT. VILLAGE HALL. RENEWED CHAOS.  
RUDYARD BEING MANHANDLED BY THE MOB  
ON THE SHIP.

GEORGIE:           Every flipping time. When will he learn?

ERIC:                OK. Do you want to be the distraction while the other one  
saves the Funns, or shall I?

GEORGIE:           (CONSIDERS) Let’s flip a coin.

**SCENE 11.**

**SHIP’S DECK. PIRATE CROWD.**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) The crowd had gathered upon the ship’s deck, prodding Rudyard with their fake swords and pointy broom handles. Unsatisfied with the plank provided, they were using Commander Kildare’s coffin for the purpose, as directed by their captain, Lady Templar.

**CREAKING WOOD**

RUDYARD: You can’t do this! Think of the Commander’s family!

TEMPLAR: It was their idea to use the coffin!

**PIRATEY LAUGH FROM CROWD.**

SID: Now stop yer belly-aching, you scurvy orange!

RUDYARD: Oranges help *prevent* scurvy! Be reasonable!

TEMPLAR: Enough talk! Make him walk! (LAUGHS)

**CROWD CHEER.**

**SCENE 12.**

**SHIP’S MAST.**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) I looked on helplessly from the mast, to which Antigone had been tied with some of Agatha Doyle’s liquorice bootlaces. But the crowd were so carried away by their nautical naughtiness that Eric was able to creep up onto the deck nearby.

ANTIGONE: (LOW) Chapman? Is that you?

ERIC: (LOW) Yes! Hold still. I’ll set you free.

ANTIGONE: But how?

ERIC: I’m going to eat the laces.

**HE STARTS EATING.**

ANTIGONE: Never mind me, Chapman! What about Rudyard? They’re making him walk the plank! I mean, he’ll only fall six feet into a flower bed, but we should probably stop it anyway.

ERIC: (CHEWING) Don’t worry, I intend to. There – you’re free!

**ANTIGONE FREED.**

ANTIGONE: We’ve got to distract them somehow.

ERIC: Great minds think alike. Can you load a cannon?

ANTIGONE: No!

ERIC: Well I can. Take this sword. You’ll have to defend me.

ANTIGONE: What??

SID: (OFF) Oi! Look! Eric’s releasing our prisoners!

MOB SURGES.

ERIC: Antigone!

ANTIGONE: Yes, alright alright!

ANTIGONE SWINGING SWORD.

ANTIGONE: Aaaaah! Back! Back you pirates! Get baaaaack!

**SCENE 13.**

**SHIP’S DECK. OFF, ANTIGONE SWINGING  
SWORD AT THE CROWD.**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) Rudyard observed all this from the makeshift plank.

RUDYARD: All I wanted was to build a 16<sup>th</sup> century ship and have a nice parade. Was that really so much to ask?

TEMPLAR: Yes! You have to set your sights lower in this life, old thing. All I wanted was to make someone walk the plank - and here we are! Now keep walking.

RUDYARD: Oh, fine.

GEORGIE: (OFF) Sir!

RUDYARD: (CALL) Georgie?

GEORGIE: (CALL) Prepare to be rescued!

MADELEINE: (V.O.) Distracted by Eric, the crowd hadn’t noticed Georgie climbing aloft into the rigging! Grabbing hold of a rope, she leapt into the air, swung down towards her employer...

**GEORGIE SWINGS DOWN...**

GEORGIE: Woohoooo!

**GRABS RUDYARD...**

RUDYARD: Woah!

AND THEY SWING AWAY. CROWD GASPS.

MADELEINE: (V.O.)... and carried him clear away!

TEMPLAR: No! Noooo! You’ve ruined my fun! You’re worse than horses!

SID: They’re getting away! After them, maties!

FERVENT PIRATE CROWD.

MADELEINE: (V.O.) But as the crowd grew increasingly piratical, Eric lit the cannon’s fuse and...

CANNON BLAST. LOUD. ECHOES. CROWD GO QUIET, SNAPPED OUT OF THEIR MANIA.

ERIC: Right. Do I have your attention? Now listen up. No more plank walking. No more looting. No more sword fighting.

TEMPLAR: But it looks so cool!

ERIC: I know it does Vivienne, but it’s got to stop. And in return, I offer... free drinks at mine, followed by a fireworks show on the beach in an hour; how’s that sound?

BEAT. CROWD CHEERS AND BEGINS FILING OFF THE SHIP.

ANTIGONE: That worked. Thank you, Chapman. You’ve done it again.

ERIC: It was just like the old days. ... A long time ago...

**SCENE 14.**

**PIFFLING BEACH. CROWD WATCHING A  
FIREWORKS DISPLAY OUT AT SEA.**

MADELEINE: (V.O.) An hour later, the villagers of Piffing Vale were considerably calmer as they sat upon the beach, sipping their margaritas. The ship was out at sea, with Commander Kildare’s coffin restored to the helm. And as we watched the fireworks, Eric Chapman came over to join us.

ANTIGONE: Well, Chapman. Go on. You’re dying to say it.

ERIC: Say what?

RUDYARD: Don’t give him an inch, Antigone.

ERIC: Oh, you mean “I told you so.” No. I’d never say that.

GEORGIE: You don’t have to. It’s written all over your face. (SIGHS) I suppose Piffing wasn’t ready for its own past.

ERIC: Maybe. I’d say the past is what we make of it.

SID: Can I quote you on that, Eric boy?

ERIC: If you don’t rewrite it, sure.

SID: Fair comment. Actually, I came over to apologise to you all. I got carried away back there. What with the looting and keelhauling and everything.

ANTIGONE: That’s alright, Mr Marlowe. We should have known better. In fact, I did know better, and I talked myself out of it.

SID: I suppose that’s a moral for us all: never talk yourself out of anything.

ANTIGONE: What? No-

ERIC: And, well, at least you gave Piffing a day to remember.

SID: Yeah! You’ll want to put this in your archive, Rudyard.

RUDYARD: The day we nearly destroyed Piffing?

GEORGIE: He could be right, sir. A little mayhem now and then is part of what makes Piffing... home.

HUGE EXPLOSION FROM THE SHIP. CROWD  
APPLAUD.

SID: And now that ship’s exploded. Magic.

GEORGIE: Bon voyage, Commander... I should go and explain to Jennifer why building a giant death boat was a higher priority than us watching *Bake Off*. See you.

RUDYARD / ANTIGONE / ERIC: (GOODBYES)

ERIC: I’d better be off too. I’ve got to close up the bar.

SID: The pub’s shutting? I need to nab some more peanuts while I still can! G’night, Funns! Oi, Eric boy, wait!

SID RUSHES AFTER ERIC. BEACH IS CALM.

ANTIGONE: (BEAT) So, it’s us then.

RUDYARD: Us and the falling embers of Commander Kildare.

ANTIGONE: No, I mean... at the root of every failure we’ve ever had... there’s us. It’s always down to us.

RUDYARD: I’m not sure that I would call this a failure.

ANTIGONE: *Rudyard.*

RUDYARD: Well of course it was a failure! But, on balance... I think it’s exactly the funeral our client deserved.

ANTIGONE: Doing a proper funeral by accident isn’t the same as doing it properly.

RUDYARD: But if we can get close... one day we’ll get all the way.

TAKES OUT NOTE.

And it seems I’m not the only person with a research project. This note. “Why did he resign?”

ANTIGONE: Handwriting looks familiar.

RUDYARD: It does. But what does it mean? ... I wonder if-

ANTIGONE: Rudyard?

RUDYARD: ... Leave it for another time?

ANTIGONE: Mmm. We ought to get home. See if we’ve been plundered.

RUDYARD: We haven’t. I checked. Nobody thought we’d have anything worth looting.

MADELEINE: (V.O.) As we left the sea behind us, I mulled over the mysterious handwritten note. Perhaps, I thought, it would remain in the dustbin of history... or maybe its secret would be later revealed – if only in the fullness of time...

### THEME TUNE

ANNOUNCER: *Dead Man’s Chest* was written by Sarah Shachat and edited by David K. Barnes. It 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, Paul Putner as Sid Marlowe, Alison Skilbeck as Agatha Doyle, and Belinda Lang as Madeleine, with mouse squeaking by Holly Campbell. The production manager was Elizabeth Campbell, and the music was composed by James Whittle, with special thanks to the Sutton Music Service. The program was recorded at the Octagon, Brixton, and was directed and produced by Andy Goddard and John Wakefield.