

THE LEFTBEHINDERS

by

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Episode 1: Toby

60 minute TV drama pilot

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FADE IN:

**EXT. STREET IN INNER-CITY COUNCIL ESTATE - AFTERNOON**

Running. Fast. It's a chase.

A balaclava-clad young MUGGER, over-sized black hoodie, matching jogging bottoms being pursued by --

-- TOBY, 18, boyish looking, in full burger joint uniform; branded polo shirt, trousers, cap. A bizarre and amusing sight... apart from the large kitchen knife in TOBY'S hand.

The MUGGER takes evasive action, a sharp right into --

**EXT. SUBWAY - AFTERNOON**

-- a subway. Trot, trot, trot down the steps and into the main subway tunnel. TOBY's not far behind. Hectic footsteps echo as they charge through the poorly lit concrete tube. Near the other end, TOBY is almost upon him. He reaches out, grabs the MUGGER by the hoodie and yanks him to a halt. It's a desperate scuffle.

TOBY

You attacked my little sister, you  
shit! Give me back her stuff!

The MUGGER grabs the wrist of TOBY'S knife-wielding hand and turns the blade away from danger. They wrestle, they pull, they push, they struggle. Oops, TOBY loses his footing, falling flat on his back. The MUGGER collapses on top of him. Oof!

They quit the scrap. The reason, oh, shit, they've both noticed it. The kitchen knife embedded deep in TOBY'S chest.

Not thinking, TOBY yanks the weapon free of his body. Argh, geysers of blood erupt from the wound, staining his uniform, pouring onto the concrete, forming a crimson bed around him.

Sod this, it's time for the MUGGER to get the eff out of there. TOBY reaches out, wide-eyed, scared, fingers grappling, but the MUGGER succeeds in making his escape.

Oh, God, this is the end. Losing consciousness fast, TOBY can only lay back and wait for death to come a'calling.

Then oh. AMY, early 20s, appears, wearing a cardigan over a student nurse's uniform. Off comes the cardigan. She presses it hard against TOBY'S wound, attempting to curb the red-water rapids of blood.

With her other hand, she plucks a mobile phone from her handbag and hits 999. She waits. Erratic, panicky breathing. Then --

AMY

Ambulance! Now! A guy's just been  
stabbed. The subway on Turner Street.

We are TOBY, looking up at this angel. Everything is fading  
fast, a dissolving world of blur and echo.

AMY

Hang in there, yeah? Help is on its  
way. No! Stay awake. You need to stay  
awake.

Too late. We fade to BLACK.

No sight. No sound.

Nothing.

Oh, and let there be light, we're back in the subway. TOBY sits  
bolt upright, gasping for much-needed air. He checks the knife  
wound. Oh. It's gone. No blood. Yay, he's alive.

He clambers to his feet. That's when he clocks the distraught  
AMY a few feet away on her knees... beside the motionless victim  
of a stabbing; blood everywhere, a horrific sight.

WTF? Curious yet wary, TOBY inches forward to investigate. He  
recognises the dead youth as... OMG... himself!

TOBY. Horror-struck. Confused. Faint. Nauseous. What the hell is  
going on? He can't take it. It's all too much. He turns and  
runs. Fast. Up the subway steps and into --

#### **EXT. MAIN STREET - AFTERNOON**

-- a main shop-lined street. Strangely deserted. No people. No  
moving cars. No anything. He stops dead, very much alone.

The sunlight fades. A distant rumble of thunder. Dark clouds  
gather in a greying sky. Ooer, it's an unnerving sight.

What now? He turns to flee and --

-- blocking his way are THREE GRUESOME FIGURES dressed in soiled  
18<sup>th</sup> century smuggler attire; their skin pallid and grey, their  
teeth stained and blackened.

The leader, CEPHAS GRIMM, steps forward, grinning like an  
imbecile, his gait theatrical, almost a flamboyant mince. His  
two companions MR LEFT and MR RIGHT snigger and cackle.

CEPHAS

Greetings. So glad you could make it.

TOBY

Who... ?

CEPHAS performs an over-blown courteous bow and arm sweep.

CEPHAS

Cephas Grimm at your service. Consider us your welcoming committee.

TOBY

I don't understand. What's going on?

Finger planted upon lips, CEPHAS delivers mock mulling over.

CEPHAS

Hmm. Methinks you need an explanation. Three little words should do it.

He lunges forward, nose to nose with TOBY.

CEPHAS

You're dead, boy!

TOBY yelps with fright. Another rumble of thunder adds to his unease. He looks right, looks left, desperate for help.

CEPHAS

There's no point in running away. You've got nowhere else to go. So be a good lad and come with us.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Get away from him.

TOBY twists around to face the firm, well-spoken, stiff upper lip voice. His face goes all WTF as he lays eyes upon --

-- CAPTAIN GEORGE TRENT, 30s, a World War Two British Army officer in full battledress, head held high, standing tall;

-- GEMMA, early 20s, professional airhead, wearing the iconic Gerri Halliwell union jack mini-dress and red platform boots;

-- EGG, 16, a chavvy girl with messy coloured hair, facial piercings, baggy American football shirt, camouflage cargo pants and trainers. Typical modern inner-city streetwear.

Eh? This motley crew is a bizarre sight to behold.

CEPHAS

Captain Trent. Must you always spoil the party?

GEORGE

You know the rules. This street is under my jurisdiction.

CEPHAS

True. But the subway he died in is under ours.

GEORGE

This boy is on my patch now. Which means he's coming with us.

GEORGE beckons TOBY over. Clearly seeing the trio of soldier, Spice Girl and chav as the lesser of two evils, an unsure TOBY shuffles closer to them.

CEPHAS

Oh, dear, oh, dear. Mr Black won't like you butting into his private business.

GEORGE

I've seen too many souls led astray by your vile gang. I won't let it happen today.

CEPHAS

You really think you can stop us?

GEORGE

I'm always prepared to do my duty.

CEPHAS

Oh, yeah? You and whose army?

GEORGE produces a service revolver from its holster and points it at CEPHAS. The smugglers are highly amused.

CEPHAS

Mere bullets cannot harm us.

Nevertheless, GEORGE fires several shots into CEPHAS' chest. Upon impact, small clouds of black smoke mushroom out from each bullet hole. A giggling CEPHAS skips and dances like a loon.

CEPHAS

Ooh, stop it, Captain. It tickles.

Each smoke plume fades to nothing. All bullet wounds heal and disappear. Even the holes in his clothes cease to be.

Fail. Back in its holster goes GEORGE'S gun. Nevertheless --

GEORGE

I'm not letting you take him.

CEPHAS mulls it over. It's a tense stand-off. Until --

CEPHAS

I'll tell you what. You can keep young  
Toby. For now. But rest assured,  
Captain, you will be seeing us around.

The cackling smugglers morph into the blackest of ghostly shapes  
and soar into the distance at breakneck speed.

In an instant, sunlight returns. As do passers-by going about  
their business. Cars sail past. The street is back to normal.  
Although nobody seems to notice this unusual foursome.

TOBY

Can somebody please explain to me what  
the fuck is going on?

**EXT. RECREATION PARK - AFTERNOON**

TOBY sits next to GEORGE on a park bench. GEMMA and EGG stand  
close by. TOBY doesn't look at all convinced by --

TOBY

You're telling me I'm a ghost?

GEORGE

Yes. We all are. From different time  
periods, naturally. Gemma here is from  
the 90s, I died in 1945 and --

TOBY

No. No way. You're talking bollocks.  
None of this is real. It can't be.

TOBY stands up, as does GEORGE. TOBY steps back.

TOBY

Stay away from me! I'm going to prove  
you wrong.

He turns and legs it, leaving the ghosts standing in silence.

**EXT. STREET OUTSIDE TOBY'S PARENTS' HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

Run, run, run, TOBY reaches his own street. It seems a pleasant  
place to live... apart from the view of two ugly tower blocks  
reaching skywards on the not too distant horizon.

Anxious, distraught, the lad gallops up the garden path and over to the front door. A search in his pockets for a key. No joy. Plan B: He pounds frantic fists upon wood.

TOBY

Mum! Dad! Let me in! Please!

No answer. He trots over to the lounge window. Nose pressed against glass, he peers inside. That's when he sees --

-- two solemn POLICE OFFICERS, post-news. Standing before them are TOBY'S MOTHER, FATHER and 11-YEAR-OLD SISTER KATIE who wears the facial spoils of a recent mugging. They're crying, barely able to stand, holding onto each other for dear life.

It's obvious. They're being informed of TOBY'S death.

TOBY'S face drops from a great height. The weirdoes back there were right. He is a ghost. It's all too much. He explodes into tears. We feel his pain, his gut-wrenching anguish.

Something makes him turn around. GEORGE, GEMMA and EGG stand nearby; compassion etched on their faces.

GEORGE

It's no use trying to communicate with the living. They can't see or hear you.

TOBY

If I'm dead... why am I still here?

GEMMA

You're one of us. A leftbehinder.

TOBY

A leftbehinder?

GEMMA

Yeah. When people die, they go upstairs. Or downstairs. But us... well... we've kind of been forgotten. Left behind.

**EXT. SUBURBAN STREET/GHOST HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON**

GEORGE, GEMMA, EGG and a sullen TOBY walk in silence. EGG notices TOBY'S continued gloominess.

EGG

It's any consolation, Toby, I died today too. Lost an argument with a car.

TOBY

So how come you're not as depressed as me about it?

EGG is about to reply when --

-- GEORGE stops outside the house we will recognise from now on as the GHOST HOUSE. In the garden, a For Sale sign stands guard.

GEORGE

Here we are, chaps. This has been our home for the past two years. The owners live elsewhere. The house comes fully furnished, yet they're having trouble selling the place.

EGG

Why?

GEORGE

(with a grin)

Because it's haunted.

**INT. GHOST HOUSE - LOUNGE - LATE AFTERNOON**

GEORGE, GEMMA, EGG and TOBY enter the room.

GEORGE

Please. Make yourselves at home.

GEMMA and EGG claim the sofa. Sulking TOBY takes an armchair. GEORGE remains standing, ready to lead, never off duty.

GEORGE

Right. Sleeping arrangements. Toby can take the spare bedroom. Egg, you can share with Gemma.

GEMMA

Me and punk features? You are joking, right?

EGG

Oi, excuse me. I am house-trained.

GEORGE

Gemma, you've been begging me for months to find you female company.

GEMMA

Yeah, somebody like me. Not a total fashion disaster.

EGG

Hah! Says the twat in a Gerri Halliwell outfit.

GEMMA

At least I've got a proper name. What the hell is Egg all about?

EGG

Gemma, let me guess how you died. Your friends beat you to death for being so bloody irritating.

GEORGE groans. He's had quite enough bitchiness.

GEORGE

Right, that's it. It's high time we lightened the tone. Who's up for a trip down the pub?

A pleased GEMMA stabs a hand high in the air.

GEMMA

Me, me, me, me, me!

But EGG and TOBY swap bemused glances.

EGG

The pub?

### **INT. PUB - EVENING**

It's a trendy High Street establishment, young people chattering, music blasting out.

GEORGE props up the quieter end of the bar. Before him stand at least twenty drinks of all types. A giggling, almost manic GEMMA scampers over with two more drinks in her hands; a pint of lager and a voddy and coke.

GEMMA

Two more to add to my collection.

GEORGE

(amused, but)  
Must you keep stealing people's drinks?

GEMMA

It's fun. And I'm hardly likely to get caught, am I? They can't see me. The highlight of this game is checking out their reactions. Look.

She points to a GUY who's just discovered his lager is missing. He searches in vain, FFS, some bastard's nicked his drink.

GEMMA

Oh, I'd give anything to be able to sink all this alcohol right now. I so miss getting totally off my face.

GEORGE clocks a COUPLE eating each other's tongues. Yuck.

GEORGE

Things were very different in my day. There was none of noise, this binge drinking, this... debauchery.

GEMMA

God, it must have been so boring.

We shoot off to a table in the far corner. EGG and TOBY.

TOBY

You don't need to babysit me if you don't want to. It's not like I can slit my wrists. But thanks anyway.

EGG

It's okay. Just thought we'd appreciate each other's company, seeing as we're both kind of new here. It's about time I did something good. When I was alive, I was a bad person. I did horrible things.

TOBY

Like what?

EGG falters. Saved by GEORGE and GEMMA joining them.

GEMMA

Cheer up, Toby, it might never happen.

TOBY

I have good reason to sulk. I died today.

GEMMA

So did face full of metal over there, but I don't see her complaining.

EGG

At least I ain't a fan of an ancient girl band people's mums like.

GEMMA

Nor am I. I can't stand the Spice  
Girls.

EGG

Erm, does not compute. You're dressed  
as Gerri bloody Halliwell.

Then oh, the lights flicker. Out they go. The music dies.  
Darkness. Silence. Then comes illumination, a cold, eerie blue  
haze. Oh, look, the pub's revellers, they've all vanished.

Our four ghosts are totally alone.

Right hand hovering by his holster, GEORGE stands up and creeps  
forward, slow, cautious. The other three rise to their feet,  
staying close to their leader, nervous, apprehensive.

EGG

What going on?

GEORGE doesn't reply. But he looks hugely concerned.

GEMMA

Is it me or is it getting cold in here?

Question answered, ice crystals begin to form on the windows.  
Spooky stuff. And oh, even the drinks glasses begin to freeze.

GEORGE

Whatever you do... stay behind me.

Bam! By themselves, the double doors fly open. And in march  
CEPHAS, MR LEFT and MR RIGHT, emitting the usual cackling.

CEPHAS

Presenting the all-seeing, all-knowing,  
all-powerful... Mr Black.

CEPHAS flings both hands towards the open doors, as if welcoming  
a star to the stage.

And here we see the arrival of MR BLACK. Face pale and craggy,  
eyes as dark as his heart, wearing the long black coat, clothes  
and wide-brimmed hat of a 18<sup>th</sup> century parson. One click of his  
fingers, the double doors slam shut.

Ever gallant, GEORGE stands tall, protecting those behind him.

MR BLACK

Captain Trent. I'm growing tired of you  
interfering with my recruitment  
procedure. That lad was ours.

GEORGE

Why? He's just a boy. What use could you possibly have for him?

MR BLACK

In the closing moments of his life, there was a rage in his eyes I have not witnessed for generations. So be an obliging soldier and hand him over. If you don't, you'll be very sorry.

Behind GEORGE, EGG shields TOBY, extra protection.

GEORGE

You don't scare me. I fought in the war.

EGG steps forward, fronting up to MR BLACK.

EGG

Yeah. And I lived in a tower block. You can't do nothing to us. We're already dead.

MR BLACK emits a derisive chuckle.

MR BLACK

Do you honestly believe ghosts can not be harmed? Oh, I assure you they can.

MR BLACK raises an arm and flicks a hand sideways. Without any physical contact, an alarmed EGG flies through the air and collides with the wall. There she stays, stuck like glue, legs dangling, arms forced into a cross, a replica Jesus.

MR BLACK

One twist of my hand, that's all it will take to extinguish you.

TOBY

No, please! Don't harm her. You can take me. But only if you let her go.

EGG looks somewhat touched by TOBY'S heroic gesture.

GEORGE

No! You don't need to do this.

TOBY peers at EGG. The birth of a bond; friendship. Or maybe even something more. Then adamant eyes on MR BLACK.

TOBY

Take me.

MR BLACK is impressed. He glances at EGG, then back at TOBY. Hmm, clearly he can see this bond. He's working something out.

MR BLACK

A heroic sacrifice. But something tells me your heart's not quite into joining my band of merry men just yet.

He lowers his arm. EGG slides south and lands on her arse.

MR BLACK

Change of plan. Toby. You stick with your newfound friends. But hear this. One day, you will be ready. And on that day, you will choose to become one of us.

GEORGE, GEMMA and TOBY say nothing and stand tall. EGG, rubbing her sore arse, comes to join them.

MR BLACK turns to face CEPHAS and company.

MR BLACK

Time to leave, gentlemen.

MR BLACK clicks his fingers. The double doors fly open. The men depart. The doors slam shut behind them.

A flicker of lights, then the pub is back to normal, music, illumination, chattering people.

Amongst them stand four ghosts, invisible to the living, trading disconcerted glances.

**INT. GHOST HOUSE - LOUNGE - LATE EVENING**

GEORGE, GEMMA, EGG and an even more depressed TOBY, all seated.

EGG

So who exactly is this Mr Black?

GEORGE

Let's just say he's somebody who decided to take the darker demonic route. He usually recruits recently deceased tramps, drunks and drug addicts to do his dirty work. But now I get the feeling the man is searching for something far more substantial.

EGG

Like what?

GEORGE

No idea. The chap has never confided in me. As you've no doubt gathered, we're not exactly the closest of chums.

EGG

Is he really that powerful?

GEORGE

Well, put it this way. We all saw what he did to you. And how he altered our perception of reality.

GEMMA

What I don't get is why he didn't just take Toby and destroy the rest of us on the spot.

GEORGE

Good point.

TOBY huffs, takes to his feet and marches towards the door.

GEMMA

Where are you off to?

TOBY

What's it to you?

GEMMA

All right, all right, I only asked.

TOBY

If you must know, I'm going to my room. I've had enough, I want to be alone.

He opens the door, but pauses.

TOBY

Oh, and don't expect me to join your little gang any time soon. I am not a leftbehinder, I'm my own person.

And slam! He's gone.

GEORGE

I think we're going to have a problem with that one.

**INT. GHOST HOUSE - GEMMA AND EGG'S BEDROOM - EVENING**

It's a pink and girly bedroom, two single beds. EGG sits on her bed, back resting on the headboard, reading a novel. GEMMA enters. Time for mock surprise.

GEMMA

Wow. I didn't know you could read.

EGG

You are so funny, Gemma. N.O.T.

GEMMA lies down on top of her bed and peers at her fingers.

GEMMA

I am so bored of my nails being this colour.

She studies her face in a compact mirror. Pouts her lips.

GEMMA

And my lips are totally crying out for an emergency re-gloss.

EGG

Then do something about it.

GEMMA

I've tried. Loads of times. It doesn't work. This is the outfit I died in. It never changes. So embarrassing. My advice to the living: Always keep your look in check, because when you snuff it, you're stuck with it.

EGG

I hope Toby's all right. You don't think he's done anything stupid, do you?

GEMMA

What, you mean like killing himself? It's a bit late for that.

EGG

I'm being serious. Maybe I should check on him.

GEMMA

You heard the guy. He wants to be alone.

EGG

That was four nights ago.

GEMMA studies the face of her room-mate.

GEMMA

You do realise, don't you? He doesn't fancy you.

EGG

I never said he did.

GEMMA

Okay, so he came to your rescue in the pub. So what? Toby would have done the same for anybody. Especially me.

EGG

Oh, I get it. You're planning on getting your claws on him.

GEMMA

Too right I am. Young, good looking ghosts like Toby are rarer than gold dust. Snap them up while you can, that's my motto.

EGG

Whatever.

GEMMA

He's bound to fancy me. It stands to reason. I'm the pretty one. While you... are just you.

EGG

Then go for it. See if I care.

GEMMA

Hah, look at you. It's written all over your face. You. Have. Got. It. Bad. No wonder he's locked himself away.

The burning glare from EGG amuses GEMMA.

GEMMA

Oooh. If looks could kill, I'd be a dead woman... again.

She's not worth the effort. EGG returns to her novel.