

**THE ARCHERS: COVID-19 CATCH-UP (FAST FORWARD TO WEEK 4 OF LOCKDOWN)**

**SCENE**

1. TOM KIRSTY

2. TRACY SUSAN

3. PEGGY JILL

4. BRIAN JENNIFER TRACY

5. TOM KIRSTY

6. JIM JAZZER ALISTAIR

**ANNOUNCER:** Fast-forward 8 weeks in time. And Ambridge's residents are coming to terms with both past and present fallouts.

**1. EXT. BEECHWOOD ESTATE. ON THE DOORSTEP. 4.35 PM**

TOM (CALLING) Come on, Kirsty!

(KNOCKING DOOR HARD)

TOM Kirsty - at some point you've got to ...

(DOOR YANKED OPEN)

KIRSTY (HISSES) Tom - go away!

TOM (WHISPERS) I know we're not supposed to but ...

KIRSTY Get back! That's not two metres!

TOM Sorry. Easy to forget when you're on someone's doorstep

KIRSTY You're shouldn't be on anyone's doorstep!

TOM I know, but... I'm worried about you, Kirsty. We all are.

KIRSTY Well you shouldn't be.

TOM You're not answering your mobile, the landline ... no-one's seen you in over a week.

KIRSTY No-ones seeing anyone right now.

TOM I just want to talk to you.

KIRSTY       What if Joy Horville sees you? She's the sort to start ringing the authorities.

TOM           She won't. I just saw her sunbathing in her garden. I think she was topless actually...

KIRSTY       (SHOCKED) What?

TOM           Joke ... joke Kirsty.

KIRSTY       Not funny, Tom.

TOM           Yes. Sorry.

KIRSTY       If you've come here to gloat...

TOM           What? Why would I do that?

KIRSTY       Or out of pity.

TOM           (APPALLED) No!

KIRSTY       Because poor old Kirsty has had her wedding plans ruined again. A failure at two marriages before they even began.

TOM           You know that's not ...

KIRSTY       (OVER) ... That's what they'll all be saying... unfortunate Kirsty. Lost her baby too, didn't she? Poor cow.

TOM           That's not how people think of you.

KIRSTY       Yeah, that Kirsty. Gullible idiot. To be taken in - hook, line and sinker. About to marry a monster.

TOM           Kirsty...

KIRSTY       Can you begin to even comprehend how it feels?

TOM           No.

KIRSTY       Tom, I LIVED with a man who was trafficking human beings. Holding people as slaves!

TOM           I know... I can't...

KIRSTY       (OVER) A criminal! Whose deceit ... hasn't only ruined my life, but who nearly ruined the lives of Lynda... Freddy and Blake. Everyone at Grey Gables!

(BEAT, BLACKBIRD IN DISTANCE)

TOM But they're all okay, Kirsty. They're okay.

KIRSTY And... Gav! What he did - and ... (SOBS)

TOM (GENTLY) Kirsty... you didn't know. You can't do this to yourself.

KIRSTY (STILL SOBBING) But I should have known! I saw through Rob before anyone else did!

TOM Exactly! And you yourself said to Helen - countless times - that sometimes, some people ... are so manipulative that you can't see past ...

KIRSTY (COLLECTING HERSELF) Oh well, there you go then. If I said that, clever, insightful Kirsty - then it must be true.

TOM Please. Kirsty.

KIRSTY Go home, Tom.

TOM You can't isolate yourself.

KIRSTY I can and ... I must. It's what the government is telling us to do anyway. So, you ... just go home.

DOOR SLAMS SHUT

**2. EXT. VILLAGE GREEN, 4.35 P.M (OFF: JACKDAWS CALLING AND THE ODD WHINE FROM MONTY)**

TRACY Alright, Susan. You're not lookin' yer best.

SUSAN (ALARMED) Stay back, Tracy!

TRACY S'alright - I'm the regulatory 2 millimetres away.

SUSAN It's metres, Tracy. And even then - we're shouldn't really talk... being that we're not from the same household.

TRACY Well, I won't breathe near yer. I've just had garlic bread for me lunch anyway.

SUSAN Honestly, Tracy. But I supposed it is allowed. If we stand far enough away from each other. For a minute.

TRACY Speak up. I can hardly hear yer through your womble mask.

SUSAN Oh sorry, I've been in the shop. Keep forgetting. I'll take it off (TAKES MASK OFF)

TRACY Yer still look rough though. Not like you to be showing so much of yer roots.

SUSAN Yes, well. (POINTEDLY) Somebody snaffled all the hair dye from the shop.

TRACY Not me. I'm a natural blonde, I am.

SUSAN Hmmm. So. Walking Mungo again?

TRACY Yeah. Lynda and Robert are payin' us to take him out.

SUSAN That's good of them.

TRACY Lucky boy's had nine walkies today. (MONTY WHINES)

SUSAN Nine!

TRACY Yeah. He's a big lad. Needs his walkies.

SUSAN (SLOWLY) But there's only five of you at yours...

TRACY Well, Robert takes him out first, then Brad, then Dad, then our Gary. Then Chelsea and then me.

SUSAN (NCREDULOUS) But that comes to ... six people ... walking one dog. Nine times a day?

TRACY Does it? Well. Maths were never my strong point.

SUSAN (UNCONVINCED) No it wasn't. Anyway. How's your lot coping?

TRACY Fine. Only difference for me is the amount of food they're eatin'. Brad's on his Xbox, Chelsea's Tik-Tokking herself to death.

SUSAN        Isn't that the one where they sing - and upload it?

TRACY        Yeah. Screechin' at the top of 'er lungs non-stop. Next door were bangin' on the walls again.

SUSAN        So, how's the home schooling going?

TRACY        Yer what?

SUSAN        Your lessons. The government says every school has to set home-working for the kids.

TRACY        (GENUINELY) Have they?

SUSAN        Well, yes ... our Emma's been crying her eyes out she has over it all.

TRACY        What the 'eck for?

SUSAN        Says she can't even help Kiera with her maths - never mind George with his.

TRACY        Ah, she's just a bit down. Everyone is. But me.

SUSAN        Well, she's feeling the pressure. Wants the kids to do well at school.

TRACY        Yeah, well - that's why we pay our taxes. Teacher's jobs, that is. Bet they're 'avin a right holiday them lot, with all of this.

SUSAN        Tracy! They're key workers!

TRACY        Yeah well, nearly all of 'em are stayin at home. Pingin' off a few emails or what 'ave you.

SUSAN        Emma says they've been ever so helpful on the email.

TRACY        (BREEZILY) Well, I don't do email and I don't know nothing about what lessons Brad an' Chelsea are supposed to be doin'.

SUSAN        Well!

TRACY        Nah. We're just actin' like it's an early six weeks summer holidays.

SUSAN Well. I suppose that works, for some.

TRACY Folks should take a leaf outta my book. Stop stressin' an' teach 'em more life skills at home.

SUSAN Hmm. Maybe the younger generation do need to learn a bit more about basic life skills.

TRACY Yep! An' tomorrow, I'm teachin' them how to read the gas and leccy meters.

SUSAN Is that 'teaching' them with the meters .. in the same way that Dad taught us to...

TRACY I'll take the fifth amendment on that.

SUSAN (TRYING TO IGNORE) So, has Robert said how's Lynda bearing up?

TRACY Not too badly, apparently. For a woman who was nearly burned to death at Grey Gables and was then almost murdered by that sicko, Gav.

SUSAN Oh -the thought of that psychopath having had spent time with our Emma! Sends shivers down my spine.

TRACY An' if it weren't for Little Lord Fauntleroy saving the day again, then all us in Ambridge'd never again get to 'ave the joys of one of her Christmas Pantos again.

SUSAN You shouldn't joke about it Tracy!

TRACY I'm not! He's got some guts on him, has that Freddy. Managed to get that nutter off Lynda before he suffocated her.

SUSAN Is it true that she was in bed when Robert was walking Mungo? That that Gav snuck in and tried to smother her with a cushion...

TRACY (OVER) Yup...

SUSAN Because he'd heard she'd gotten the truth of his and that Phil's slave trafficking out of that poor lad in hospital?

TRACY           Yup. An' Freddy hit him with her bed pan. Four times.

SUSAN           Goodness (DRAWING BREATH). I hope it wasn't ... full.

TRACY           No, Lynda would have been backed up for weeks, what with all the morphine

SUSAN           (IGNORING) So what was Freddy doing at Lynda's in the first place?

TRACY           Oh, he was doin' that Russ a favour.

SUSAN           What do you mean?

TRACY           Russ sent him over to Lynda's. Wanted to 'gift' her that right spooky portrait of 'Not Lynda'. The one what he painted for the Ghost Story tales at Lower Loxley.

SUSAN           What on earth for?

TRACY           Oh, you know. Artist - totally up himself. Thought it'd cheer her up. Weirdo.

SUSAN           Finish her off more like.

TRACY           Anyway, Freddy were deliverin' it, 'cause Russ is too scared to leave the house - I mean mansion - nowadays.

SUSAN           Well, it's a frightening world at the moment.

TRACY           'Russ the Wuss' our Brad calls him.

SUSAN           So Freddy saw Gav's van outside Lynda's?

TRACY           Yeah - 'an the front door was open. Freddy thought it a bit odd. With you not supposed to be goin' in peoples' homes an' that.

SUSAN           And?

TRACY           Said he knocked, no answer - and the light was on. Lynda's asleep in a chair in the front room and Gav had just begun to try smotherin' her.

SUSAN           Horrible!

TRACY           I know. But she's fine is Lynda. Tough old bird.

SUSAN        Poor Robert. He must feel dreadful for not having been there to protect her.

TRACY        Yeah.

SUSAN        My Neil would never forgive himself if he hadn't been there to save me - if someone had been trying to smother me!

TRACY        Yeah, well - that's not what he said to me yesterday.

SUSAN        Pardon?

TRACY        Yesterday. When I rang your house - and you were in the middle of that argument

SUSAN        Only a little tiff

TRACY        Ha! He sounded like he was all set to do away with you ... because you'd tried to use soya mince in your 'special chilli' instead of beef!

SUSAN        (ANNOYED) Well, that was because someone bought all the beef from the farm shop!

TRACY        Well, don't look at me - we've only been buying up the frozen stuff.

**3. OVER PHONE - JILL ARCHER/ PEGGY ARCHER 4.40p.m**

JILL        So, how's Chris doing?

PEGGY        They don't tell me anything when I phone. It's horrible.

JILL        But I'm sure the hospital staff are doing an incredible job.

PEGGY        Oh they are - but it's the ...not being able to see her.

JILL        So, is Peter there right now?

PEGGY        No. He's had lots of important meetings. Since lockdown



JILL (APPALLED) But surely he works from home? He can have his online meetings anywhere.

PEGGY But he can't stay in Chris' room can he? The Laurel's won't allow anyone else in.

JILL Oh ... no.

PEGGY And all of the hotels are shut.

JILL (BEAT) I can't bear to think of her being on her own.

PEGGY Nor can I.

JILL All we can do is pray.

PEGGY Yes. And be grateful that at least we're surrounded by family who look after us.

JILL I must say that I was very grateful that Leonard came to stay with us when I began to feel quite ill the other week.

PEGGY You can't be too careful - your lot are all key workers.

JILL I felt dreadful for not being able to help out with Rosie.

PEGGY I'm sure.

JILL But not as bad as poor Toby. Pip says he's missing her terribly.

PEGGY I can imagine. But it's a small sacrifice to make when you think of how much our health workers and making for us all.

**4. EXT. BEECHWOOD ESTATE, FRONT DOORSTEP. 4.45pm**

TOM I'm not going anywhere.

KIRSTIE Stay there then.

TOM            I will. It's probably ... better having a door between us anyway.

KIRSTY        Fine.

TOM            If you don't want to talk to me, I'll send Helen round to sit here.

KIRSTY        (OVER) Don't be an idiot.

TOM            And then she'll have to leave her children alone with their grandad and his torturous rounds of charades.

(BEAT)

TOM            And their grandmother and her tales of 'how I alleviated boredom when I was a child.'

KIRSTY        Hmmph

TOM            She's been telling them how she used to run through cornfields as an act of rebellion.

KIRSTY        (TRYING NOT TO SMILE) Hmmph

TOM            Thought you'd like that one.

KIRSTY        (BEAT) (SIGH) Tom?

TOM            Yes?

KIRSTY        I ... its good of you. But - you should be getting back. Natasha will wonder where you are.

TOM            Yes, well... she's. She decided to go her parents as soon as the lockdown began.

KIRSTY        Oh. Are they - vulnerable then?

TOM            No more than anyone else is, who's over the age of 70.

KIRSTY        Right.

TOM            No (SIGHS). Well, you know... she needs her space at the best of times and ... Well. People act a bit ... differently sometimes. In crises.

KIRSTY        True. (SLOWLY) I don't think Phillip expected me to give him a black eye.

TOM            Yeah. You didn't even give me one when ... when I didn't turn up to the wedding.

KIRSTY        (DISTANT) You never even came close to this one, Tom Archer. Not even close.

TOM            (UNSURE) Well. Thanks, I guess.

KIRSTY        If the police hadn't been there to drag me off him, I don't what I would ...

TOM            Best not to think about that.

KIRSTY        I've nothing left to think about. Right now.

TOM            You never have to see him again. If you don't want to.

KIRSTY        (FLATLY) And I don't. Want to.

TOM            And I can't see him escaping a hefty prison sentence. Sorry but ...

KIRSTY        (OVER) No need. That's where I want him. Behind bars. Blake and Kenzie and those other poor, poor lads..

TOM            Your real friends are sticking by you.

KIRSTY        I can't even bring myself to text them.

TOM            People understand that.

KIRSTY        (BEAT /EXHALING) But.. well ... in a strange way, I ... it helps that I'm not the only one having a hellish time of it at the moment. Makes me feel ... less alone. Ironically.

TOM            Yeah?

KIRSTY        Yes. Look at what Oliver is going through with Grey Gables...

TOM            Thought he was getting it back on track. And then - whoomph. Lockdown.

KIRSTY        And The Bull and the tea rooms. The doctor's surgery. And the stables. And Lower Loxley.

TOM            Adam won't be able to get any fruit picking done.

KIRSTY        At least the two farm shops can stay open.

TOM            In some ways I think it must be worse if you're in a city.

KIRSTY        We've got the air... the countryside...

TOM            And so many of us are key workers. Times like this I think people begin to realise who reliant we all are on farming.

KIRSTY        I know but... still. It's ... it's tragic. For so many.

TOM            (CHANGING SUBJECT) Have you spoken to your parents?

KIRSTY        Just the once. I've not told them. About Phillip. And prison.

TOM            Is that a good idea?

KIRSTY        Yes. They worry enough at the best of times.

TOM            Even so, you need to..

KIRSTY        Tom.

TOM            Okay. Alright. Auntie Chris got taken in ... she's in Intensive Care.

KIRSTY        No! Oh Tom - how awful! Is it...

TOM            They think so. Awaiting the result.

KIRSTY        Your parents must be worried sick.

TOM            They are. Especially Gran. Ringing Auntie Peggy non-stop.

KIRSTY        And here's me ... just worrying that my sociopathic ex-fiance is going to rot in jail for a few years.

TOM            Oh Kirsty... am I supposed to laugh at that?

KIRSTY        (HALF LAUGHING) I don't know Tom. I don't know anymore.

**4. INT. WILLOW COTTAGE, LIVING ROOM. 4.40 P.M.**

BRIAN            Jenny! Jenny! Can you sort this nappie out ... you know that I don't do the number two's!

(DOOR BANGING)

JENNIFER        You don't do the number anythings if you can help it.

BRIAN            Look, hey - don't flounce over here like that - you nearly knocked my wine over!

JENNIFER        I wish that I did have room to flounce in this place! Honestly Brian! That's my best crystal!

BRIAN            Is it?

JENNIFER        Yes! You know jolly well which cupboard is for which set. Not that I have more than a handful of cupboards anymore in this...

BRIAN            Here's the wipes. I'll just pop out for a bit.

JENNIFER        (CALLING) You're only allowed out for one lot of exercise Brian!

BRIAN            (ON WAY OUT) Yes Yes.

JENNIFER        (CALLING) What are you doing drinking wine in the middle of the day anyway?

BRIAN            (TO HIMSELF) She has to ask?

(FRONT DOOR BEING UNLOCKED) BRIAN SPOTS TRACY OUTSIDE

BRIAN            (CALLING) Tracy? Tracy?

TRACY            Oh, hello Mr Aldridge. Nice day for it.

BRIAN            Ah, I see that you're walking Mungo. Again.

TRACY            Nature calls, Mr A.

BRIAN            You see, I was wondering if you do babies too.

TRACY            I beg yer pardon?

BRIAN           No, no - I mean - do you walk babies? In prams.

TRACY           Yer not havin' another one are yer?

BRIAN           What? Me? Good God no.

TRACY           I did wonder. I mean, you started again a bit late on in life with your Ruairi.

BRIAN           (TRYING NOT TO SEEM OFFENDED) No, no - it's for our grandson, Zander.

TRACY           Good job. 'Cause our Susan says you've not got room to swing a cat, since you fell from the grace of Home Farm.

BRIAN           (TRYING VERY HARD) Yes ... it's just that our son-in-law - Ian - he's feeling a bit grotty with ... something, so Adam's looking after him. And best for Zander to stay with us for now.

TRACY           Yeah? 'Ope it's not The Virus.

BRIAN           I'm sure it isn't.

TRACY           'Cause I don't fancy looking after a baby what's got that.

BRIAN           No, no. Listen, Tracy - all you'd have to do is wheel Zander about in his buggy for half an hour. It'll give Jenny a break.

TRACY:          (BEAT) Yeah. Alright. Twenty quid a go.

BRIAN:          Twenty quid?

TRACY           Yeah - Robert's payin' us fifteen quid a day to walk Mungo. An' between us, that comes to...

BRIAN           Five pounds each?

TRACY           No, there's five in our house.

BRIAN           Right

TRACY           So he sometimes goes for his walks like, nine or ten times a day.

BRIAN (CAREFULLY) But if there's five people living at yours..?

TRACY (BLASÉ) Sometimes we need the essentials. Like bog roll. And popcorn. We get Mungo on the way. Gives him another walk.

BRIAN But Lynda lives over that way.

TRACY (SHIFTY) Sometimes I'll get some fruit for Robert.

BRIAN Right, look. Okay. Fifteen it is.

TRACY Great! I'll send Brad over in the mornin'.

BRIAN Brad?

TRACY Yeah. He won't go anywhere near the kid. Just push him about.

BRIAN (TO HIMSELF) I suppose we could extend the pushchair handles. So, he's that bit further away.

TRACY Put the hood up in case Brad sneezes.

BRIAN (RESIGNED) Great.

TRACY Fab. I'll send him round about then?

BRIAN Yes. Good. (BEAT) I'd rather Jenny not know about this though.

TRACY Oh. Thinks you're taking the baby out, does she?

BRIAN Yes, but I've got to... I have business to attend to.

TRACY Oh yeah? Key worker business?

BRIAN Something like that.

TRACY Right you are. That'll be another fiver then.

BRIAN What?

TRACY Insurance. I've seen your wife when she gets a bee in her bonnet. She's scary.

BRIAN Hmm. That's true. Go on then. But keep...

TRACY (OVER) My lips are sealed. Bye then.

BRIAN Right, yes (CALLING) Tracy? Your Brad - but what does your Brad know about babies?

TRACY (CALLING BACK) To be fair, Mr Aldridge - probably a lot more than what you do.

BRIAN Terrific. (MOVING BACK INTO THE HOUSE)

JENNY Oh (JOINING BRIAN AT THE DOOR WITH A HICUPPING ZANDER) Is that Tracy ... with Lynda's dog?

BRIAN Yes.

JENNY But Lynda lives in that direction. Where's she off to?

BRIAN To bleed some other poor innocent dry, no doubt.

**5. INT. GREENACRES. LIVING ROOM. 4.50 P.M.**

JAZZER Ach, ah cannae stand this anymore!

JIM Just hold it...

JAZZER Ah'm gonna die of boredom!

JIM Hold it... right there...

ALISTAIR (CHEERILY) I do feel for you Jazzer

JAZZER It's no right - putting me through this.

JIM Ah... Got it!

ALISTAIR See, Jazzer - you did it!

JAZZER Did it? It's no like ah helped deliver a stuck weaner.

JIM Well, I must say that I've found this entire process as eminently satisfying as delivering a piglet.

JAZZER Ah just sat here with me hands as still as I could.

ALISTAIR As you moaned like an old woman for at least an hour.

JIM This is the art of soldering, Jazzer - if you want to become a master solderer...

JAZZER (OVER) Which ah never said ah did.



ALISTAIR Then you need vast amounts of patience.

JIM And very steady hands. Which Alistair doesn't have

JAZZER 'Cause he's getting' on a bit now.

ALISTAIR (AFFRONTED) Hey!

JAZZER An' yer eyesights goin' too. That's the only reason you wanted to buy us a new TV. Seventy-seven inches though. Ah'm not complaining.

JIM I still think it makes the place look very common. Hanging it on the wall like it's a piece of fine art.

ALISTAIR Well, the streaming has kept you contented over the last few weeks, Dad.

JIM The 'Idiot Box' was what us radio enthusiasts always referred to it as.

ALISTAIR I've had to hide the remote control from you.

JIM Only for the historical series. And they're much better on the mainstream channels anyway.

JAZZER (DEJECTEDLY) Can't even watch the footie no more.

ALISTAIR There's wildlife documentary on later. Meerkats.

JAZZER Ach, no merekats again! Those things're on more than the virus updates!

JIM Well, not to worry - we'll soon have...

(FAINT SOUND OF A RADIO TUNING - GROWING LOUDER)

JIM And there we have it! You did it, Jazzer!

JAZZER Me? I only sat here like a right tater, whilst you nearly soldered ma heends off.

ALISTAIR Well... it's quite a feat, Dad.

JIM Our own very - home-made radio. Wonderful!

JAZZER (UNIMPRESSED) Wonderful.

JIM I remember the first time that I showed Alistair how to build his own radio. It was quite the moment!

JAZZER (SARCASTICALLY) Every boy's dream.

JIM He was quite bitten by the bug. Went on to build dozens.

ALISTAIR Yup. And sold them all. A pound a pop.

JIM You did what?

JAZZER Ow! Watch it wi' that solderin' iron, Prof - nearly had ma eye oot!

ALISTAIR I made about three dozen. Sold them to kids at school.

JIM I never knew that. What a mercenary little devil!

ALISTAIR Heh.

JIM And there was I, thinking you were simply eager to share the love of the BBC World Service with your friends.

JAZZER Ha! Alistair the Young Apprentice! And there's Lovell James saying that he's a rubbish salesman!

ALISTAIR Yeah, thanks for that Jazzer. (BEAT) How long before I can go out for a walk again, Dad?

JIM Ermm ... Five hundred and thirty-seven minutes precisely.

ALISTAIR Oh, God.

JAZZER Right, enough of the home-craftin'.

JIM Building micro-receivers and radios is hardly 'Home-Crafting', Jazzer.

JAZZER Don't kid yerself, Prof. If ah'm no careful, it'll be 'Jazzer let's make a papier mache Meekat' next.

ALISTAIR (MURMURING) I honestly don't know how much I can take.

JAZZER Never mind, Ali ma lad! (SLAPS HIM ON BACK) Let's brek open a wee tinnie or two.

ALISTAIR (RESIGNED) Go on then.

JAZZER        Then ah'll get ma bagpipes oot. Get 'em ready to join in  
                 wi' the big clapping thingy at 8 O Clock.

ALISTAIR     Oh, God no.

\_\_\_\_\_ENDS\_\_\_\_\_