

JMG Stories

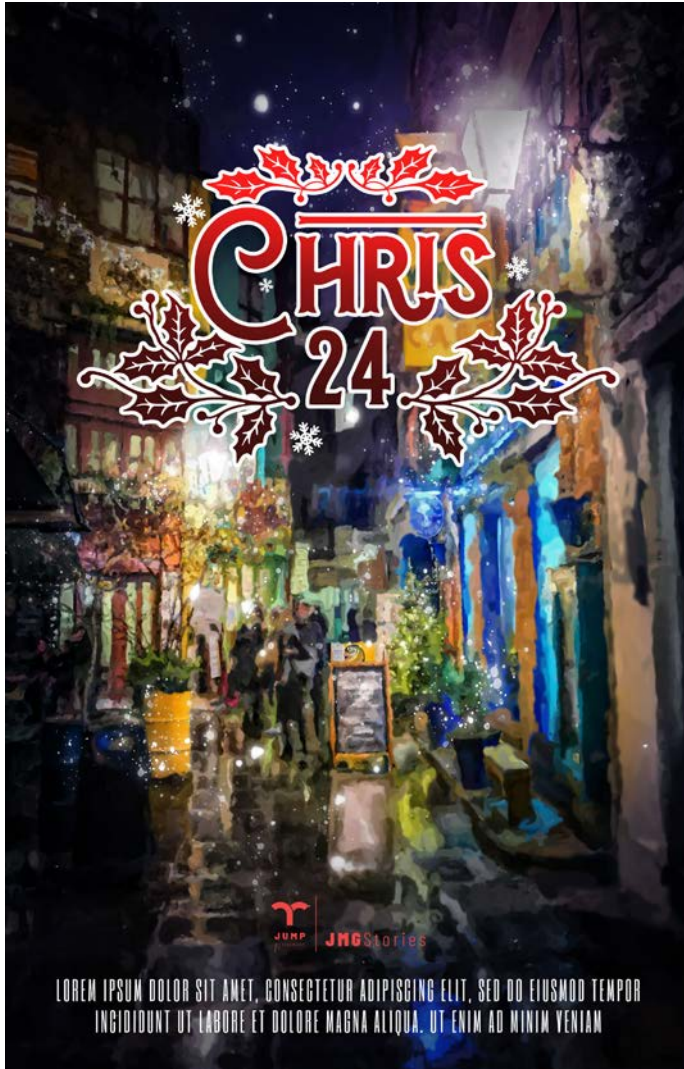
CHRIS 24

Written by: Alice Holt, Emily O'Hara
and Rebecca Sandeman

CHRIS 24

— *The gift that keeps on giving* —

Created by: JMG Stories | Written by: Rebecca Sandeman / Alice Holt / Emily O'Hara



— ” —

Chris and Shola are out the back of the store sorting through old stock and polishing some dusty Christmas baubles.

CHRIS: You my friend, are not only looking at a guy who owns a shop but one who woke up to 11 new matches and I only downloaded the app last night. This Christmas, I'm honestly expecting my balls to get at least half the treatment these baubles are getting.

SHOLA: Chris that's disgusting.

CHRIS: Thank you.

Genre: *Comedy, Period piece*

Format: *24 episodes of 25 mins each*

Targetgroup: *15 years old and over*

Potential buyers: *Netflix, Amazon, HBO, various TV channels*

At Pitch-level Q1 2021

>>>



Chris 24 is a completely new and innovative format. Based on the Norwegian Julekalender-concept, it's 24 episodes that centre around the build up to Christmas, one each day, that interweave a romantic comedy narrative whilst also capturing the magical spirit and nostalgia of the festive period.

After inheriting a crumbling Christmas shop from a mysterious relative, directionless and in his early twenties, Chris attempts to prevent the shop from ruin over the days of Advent. He is joined by his quirky friends, infuriating family and Emma, his love interest.

Chris, an awkward graduate in Classics (excellent job prospects there Chris!) has inherited, to his exasperation, a rundown Christmas shop near Neal's Yard from his Great Uncle George. A relative he's never met and only heard bizarre rumours about on the family grapevine, including something to do with modern piracy?

What's even worse is that Chris isn't even that bothered about Christmas. An absolute travesty for any self-respecting protagonist of

a CHRISTMAS-THEMED TV series. He attempts to navigate the disorganized clutter and chaos that George has kindly left him. The mounting bills, the fact the roof and walls are damp and caving in, visits from a jobsworth building inspector... not to mention the eccentric and peculiar customers that 'George's Christmas Emporium' attracts. A sausage roll eating pervert. A Lululemon clad mummy-blogger, hell-bent on leaving bad Google reviews. A cheese and pineapple hedgehog wielding confidant. An elderly lady 'accidentally' shooting her husband with a decorative musket for watching porn.

Every time the front doorbell rings, Chris is left cowering, wondering what could possibly go wrong next. And is it even worth the hassle; the shop a seemingly endless time and money pit? Chris is joined by his useless but well-meaning best friend Hugo, recently disinherited from a confectionary dynasty, and Shola, a gutsy and smooth-talking tattoo artist he met at school.

And then there is Emma. His first ever kiss in the ball pit at GymBobs. She kicked him in the



mouth when she was doing a handstand. He lost a tooth and a tiny slither of his heart that day. Fast forward twenty years, she's a music teacher/aspiring singer and now that she has moved back to London permanently, the four friends are as close as ever. She also teaches his grunge-wannabe nephews, who are terrifying and keep asking Chris to buy them fags. Deep down Emma and Chris secretly harbour feelings for each other, not that they will even admit it to themselves.

Chris's family are an assortment of highly-strung, dysfunctional messes. His mother, a ghastly portrayal of middle class obliviousness. She voted Brexit, despite spending 6 months a year at her second home in Spain. 'Well darling, I just thought it would stop those immigrants from coming over here. I didn't realise the free movement bit would work both ways. That wasn't on the buses was it?' Then there's Beth, the mildly sociopathic sister, with the wayward twins Oscar and Henry, the browbeaten Dad Richard, and Beth's husband Jeremy who has suddenly developed a conscience, much to the annoyance of Beth and their cutthroat law firm representing London's elite white-collar criminals. It's a family that can't communicate with each other, all quick to offer advice (or better scorn) when it's not warranted. This is now only

exacerbated by Chris' sudden windfall; if you can even call it that.

Chris 24 is a rom-com set against the backdrop of Christmas; leaning into its magical and fantastical elements with a satirical edge. It's hyper-aware of its predecessors, *Love Actually*, *The Holiday*, *Last Christmas* and the feel-good factor with a bit of cheese a festive spin on the genre can bring. And it has it all: love (naturally), friendship (obviously), families coming together in spite of their hypocrisies, tears, adversity...and an antique advent calendar that appears to be marginally psychic?

Over the 24 episodes it has an omniscience of the character's thoughts and feelings, giving presents that are insightful, mysterious, or propel the action forward in a further episode. Towards the climax, the advent calendar drops hints of an explosive family secret that will shake Chris' world to its foundations. Who was his Great Uncle George, really? And why on earth did he leave him this Christmas shop full of (how would you say this politely...) junk?





1 December

– Pilot episode –

Christmas in Covent Garden

Written by:

Alice Holt, Emily O'Hara and Rebecca Sandeman



MONTAGE - CHRISTMAS IN COVENT GARDEN

EXT - COVENT GARDEN/OXFORD CIRCUS - LATE MORNING

Establishing Crowd scenes of Oxford Circus/Covent Garden doing Christmas shopping and showing Christmas setting and decorations.

Slow build of Christmas music. Lights being switched on around the shopping area.

INT - SEVERAL SHOPS IN OXFORD CIRCUS AND COVENT GARDEN

Shop assistants, gift wrapping presents in stores and putting final touches to Christmas displays and decorations.

INT- VARIOUS HOMES

People doing their Christmas present wrapping and writing Christmas cards, getting in the Christmas spirit.

INT- EMMA'S CLASSROOM

EMMA is setting up her music lesson in a classroom. An unruly group of teenagers start filtering in.

EMMA

Right, settle down 8G. Everyone get their xylophone from the trolley. Remember Grace, you are banned from having any sticks after what you did to Tyler last week.

GRACE tries to protest. TYLER has a bandage on his nose. She turns to the whiteboard and tries not to laugh, drawing a piece of holly on the board with the date.

INT- BETH AND JEREMY'S LAW FIRM

BETH is looming over her assistant, LINDSAY, who is decorating the tree. Lindsay is trying to place a Christmas decoration of a teddy bear dressed as an angel with a harp.

BETH

No, no, not next to the crystal trombone. It's too many musical instruments in close proximity together. We need some variety.

Lindsay, inwardly grimaces and tries not to show it. She moves the ornament further down the tree near a penguin in a

scarf.

BETH

I'm sorry, I'm just going to stop you there. Now you are just grouping together animals? Are you Charles Darwin? I don't understand what you are finding so difficult with this task?

Lindsay has a pained but restrained face. She tries to move the ornament again. Beth looks ready to criticise again.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. COVENT GARDEN STREET - MORNING

CHRIS, SHOLA and HUGO are standing outside George's Christmas Emporium. Chris is awkwardly holding two large holdalls and a large suitcase, Hugo is sipping on an iced matcha latte whilst Shola reads her weekly copy of "The Deeper Mind". One of the letters from the shop name swings and stops crooked. Hugo turns towards an unimpressed Chris.

HUGO

Well at least it looks like your classics degree will finally come in handy!

INT. SHOP FLOOR - MORNING

The shop is a complete mess. Chris is sitting behind the ancient till in the corner amongst mountains of paperwork. Hugo is looking around at the diverse range of peculiar ornaments which are covering the old oak flooring, whilst Shola is standing barefoot with her eyes closed. Hugo drops an ornament on the floor.

SHOLA

SILENCE! I'm connecting...

Hugo looks over at Chris who is sitting with his finger over his lips like a child.

Shola opens her eyes and pulls out two objects from her tie-dye drawstring bag.

SHOLA

Black tourmaline! Keep this behind the till, it will shield you against any negative energy. Oh and some carnelian

for your date tonight... will add a bit of sexiness to your vibe.

After putting her shoes and socks back on, Shola places a Black tourmaline stone behind the till and a carnelian crystal into Chris's pocket.

CHRIS

So you're saying my vibe isn't already sexy?

Shola looks Chris up and down.

SHOLA

That's exactly what I'm saying, chuck me that pen please.

Chris chucks Shola an old fountain pen from the side which she inspects, she pulls out a pad from her bag and begins sketching. Hugo excitedly runs over to his bag and carefully pulls out a box.

HUGO

Don't worry, this will help.

Hugo places the box on the till and opens it to reveal a Paris-Brest french dessert.

CHRIS

How precisely?

Hugo looks incredulous, as if Chris is being unreasonable.

HUGO

Chris, it's a
(French accent)
Paris-Brest. My old nanny Adalene would make me one every time one of my pets passed. You really should be more observant.

Shola has a moment of realisation.

SHOLA

Oh my god. My mate Cornelius still refers to you as 'lactose brow'. I mean come on, how do you even manage to get it stuck in your eyebrow?

Hugo screws up his face.

HUGO

I was clearly in emotional distress
Shola. One of my prize winning
Siberian dwarfs, Wilbur, had just gone
to hamster heaven. Anyways, I never
liked Cornelius. And he's one to talk
about eyebrows, his are ghastly.

Hugo turns his nose up at Shola then leans towards Chris at the till, eagerly waiting for him to try some. Chris takes some cream on his finger and licks it off.

CHRIS

Hmmm as grateful as I am, I don't
think my great uncle's death and your
many tragic pet deaths are quite the
same.

HUGO

Wilbur had just placed 2nd in breed in
the hamster version of Crufts. He was
going to be a star.

Shola and Chris look at each other, trying not to laugh.

SHOLA

I tattooed all their names on him in
Times New Roman.

HUGO

Most of my family live in Rome, so it
is twice as sentimental.

Hugo rolls up his sleeve, showing a list of six dead pet names. Unfortunately, they make an acronym for WANKER. Chris catches Shola's eye - she rapidly changes the subject.

SHOLA

It's a bit strange how you got this
shop... You'd think he would've left
it to someone with a bit more
experience, I mean even Beth would've
been a better shout.

CHRIS

Exactly! I don't even know if i'm
gonna keep this place anyway...

SHOLA

Really?

CHRIS

Shola, It's riddled with debt and you
can clearly see the amount of work
this place needs done to it.

Chris leans on a part of the wall which immediately crumbles.
Chris jumps back. Shola gives him a look.

CHRIS

And I'm not sure the upkeep is even
worth it.

Chris flicks to another page of paperwork, Shola leans
towards Chris and peers over his shoulder.

SHOLA

And what would you be doing without
this place then?

CHRIS

Erm.. answering phones for Fortune 500
companies where nobody knows my name.

Shola shrugs as if her point has been proven. She puts her
sketchpad back into her bag. Chris continues reading.

SHOLA

Grab me that bag please Hugo, let's
start detoxing this place.

Shola hands Hugo some yellow cleaning gloves from the bag.
Hugo freezes as he looks down at his perfectly colour
coordinated outfit.

HUGO

Woah, woah, woah. Sorry, but I'd
rather get bleach on my hands than
wear yellow with periwinkle.

Hugo cringes as he watches Shola put on her blue gloves which
clash with her green jumper.

EMMA runs into the shop with a massive smile on her face. She
pulls out a ring binder of stickers from her satchel, and
selects a different one for each of them. She gives Shola
'cool!', Hugo 'Great effort!' and finally Chris
'congratulations' as she's sticking it on him he becomes
flustered and immediately begins cleaning the till.

EMMA

One for you, one for you and one for

you!

Shola notices that Chris is acting flustered all of a sudden, brushing through his hair.

SHOLA

You alright there mate?

Chris leans against the till, knocking over a huge pile of papers he has just sorted. Shola rolls her eyes and shakes her head. Emma begins looking around at all the ornaments.

CHRIS

I'm fine?

EMMA

Chris this is amazing!

HUGO

Em, look at this.

Hugo pulls out a music box.

EMMA

My nan used to have one just like this, remember?

Emma begins inspecting the music box and shows it to Chris.

SHOLA

Hold up, so it took Chris inheriting a shop to make you available?

EMMA

I've honestly just been so busy with the new job and moving all my stuff back down here-

Chris puts his arm around Emma and cuts her off from apologising, Hugo raises his eyebrows and smirks.

CHRIS

Well you're here now and that's all that matters.

Chris winks at Emma, she smirks.

SHOLA

Oh here we go again, you make me sick.

Hugo continues brooming the dirty floor whilst Shola winks at

a builder walking past the window as she 'seductively' wipes it.

Chris quickly signs some of the papers, closes the folder which spits out dust and places it underneath the till. He walks over to Emma who is fascinated with the vintage music boxes.

CHRIS

Tour?

Emma follows Chris out the back leaving the others cleaning.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRCASE - DAY

Emma is walking in front of Chris up the narrow staircase which is cluttered with old photos across both of the peeling walls. Emma stops abruptly and a distracted Chris bumps his head straight into her bum. Emma doesn't even flinch, Chris's eyes widen as he immediately jolts back.

EMMA

No way... is that baby Chris I see?

Chris leans closer to the picture and reads the faint writing in the corner. 'George. Covent Garden. 1944'

CHRIS

That's George, the very man who left me this structurally sound, well kept shop.

The sound of a bauble breaking echoes from downstairs. Hugo shouts from a distance.

HUGO

SORRYYYY!

Emma gets to the top of the stairs and looks to the left where she can see a small kitchen with a tatty curtain for a door and a mouldy bathroom to the left of it.

EMMA

It's just like a Bridget Jones' apartment.

CHRIS

I mean yeah... if she was a 70 year old man.

Chris points to the room on the right, they enter.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Chris sits down on the edge of the bed as Emma wanders around the empty, outdated room.

EMMA

Despite the size, I reckon you could do a lot with it.

CHRIS

With all your help I'm sure I can.

EMMA

Exactly why we went to separate Uni's, I would have been studying for two degrees. To be honest, I have missed your annoying self.

CHRIS

Of course you have, I'm your soulmate.

EMMA

A throwaway comment that I made when we were about 9, let it go.

Emma sarcastically taps Chris on the leg. Chris's phone starts pinging repeatedly. He pulls it out of his pocket.

EMMA

Since when did you become so popular?

CHRIS

It's just my date for tonight, I'm finally getting myself on the scene. Getting ready for the new year, new me.

Emma's eyes widen, she slowly nods her head.

EMMA

Ohhh... that's nice. I don't know what's taken you so long.

Flashback of young Chris giving a girl a flower. She crunches it up and eats it.

CHRIS

Neither do I...

EMMA

Well let's see what she looks like then?

Chris shows a picture of IVY, who looks very similar to Emma, she leans closer to properly examine the picture.

INT. SHOP FLOOR - 5 MINUTES LATER

Shola and Hugo are on the shop floor. Hugo holds up a particularly tasteless candy cane chandelier.

HUGO

How cute is this?

SHOLA

About as cute as my Aunt Casey's Pomeranian when it caught rabies.

HUGO

My Nanny had something similar. Mamma dissolved it in a bucket of acidic limescale remover.

HUGO

Oh, Sho, my Mamma gave me these flyers, would you pop them up? They're on the till.

Shola heads over to the desk, in which there are flyers campaigning to recognise billionaires as a minority.

SHOLA

Justice for Billionaires?!

HUGO

Yeah, it's Mamma's new charity.

SHOLA

Is this a joke?

HUGO

(genuinely concerned)

You do know there's only 2000 of them, and they still aren't officially recognised as a minority?

Shola rolls her eyes and ducks into the back.

Hugo climbs up a ladder to put the chandelier on a top shelf. Next to the chandelier, there's a shelf of ornaments with a

plaque, reading *"Some of the first ornaments ever made, by Hans Greiner, 1840"*.

Hugo falls, and sends the almost priceless ornaments flying, and smashing. He gasps, and steadies himself.

HUGO
(checking the plaque)
Phew, they're really old, won't have
been worth much.

BERNARD enters, walking with the help of a stick, a bottle of Baileys in his other hand, which he pours into a hip flask and drinks from before setting down.

Hugo replaces the antique baubles with Tiger King ones, and climbs down the ladder.

Bernard begins pulling ornaments out of bin liners and re-arranging the shelves.

Hugo clears his throat. Bernard turns.

BERNARD
Don't mind me.

Pause.

HUGO
Um. Can I help you?

BERNARD
(fatherly)
It's OK, you have a rest, son.

Bernard resumes his unpacking and reshuffling of the bags. Hugo sighs and walks upstairs.

Bernard hobbles over to the radio by the till, whacking it on full blast. Chris Rea's Driving Home for Christmas plays. Grabbing his stick once more and sipping Baileys, he does a little shimmy around the shop as he works.

BERNARD
(singing to himself)
Driving home for Christmaaaaaas yeah..

INT. UPSTAIRS - DAY

We can hear the music blasting from downstairs.

Hugo walks in on Chris and Emma laughing, close together. He clears his throat, raising his eyebrows.

Chris leans away from Emma a little.

HUGO

There's an elderly man working in the shop.

CHRIS

Eh?

HUGO

Yeah, he's causing quite a bit of mayhem, actually. I asked him what he wanted and he said he didn't need any help, so I've sort of left him to it.

CHRIS

Any help with what?

Hugo shrugs and exits, leaving Chris and Emma bemused.

INT. SHOP FLOOR - DAY

Chris and Emma come downstairs to see there is indeed an elderly man messing up his shop, as Hugo simply watches him.

CHRIS

Hey! Excuse me!

BERNARD

(looking surprised)

Are you talking to me, Sonny? I'm Bernard, nice to meet ya.

CHRIS

Hi, Bernard. Um, what are you doing?

BERNARD

Your job.

CHRIS

Um - this isn't a trading shop and we aren't hiring, I'm afraid.

Bernard pretends to be in another world, then jerks back to reality.

BERNARD
(Smiling)
Hi. I'm Bernard.

Bernard smiles broadly and goes back to his work. The viewer sees him rolling his eyes behind Chris' back.

Chris has to step in.

CHRIS
Um - Hi, Bernard, is it? I'm Chris,
this is my shop you're destroying.

BERNARD
I'm fixing it. George would be turning
in his grave if he saw it like this.

Bernard shakes his head.

EMMA
You know George? Who left him the
shop?

BERNARD
No.

CHRIS
But you just said his name.

BERNARD
(shrugging, unhelpful)
There's a lot of people named George.

Pause, while Chris tries to work out how to handle Bernard.

CHRIS
(frustrated)
Look, you need to stop, NOW.

Pause.

Bernard looks away and whistles while he works.

Hugo giggles. Chris throws him a look.

HUGO
I think he's putting it on.

CHRIS
What?

HUGO

I did something similar when Mamma cut me off. I pretended my hay-fever tablets were making me black out and transfer large sums of money from her account to mine.

CHRIS

Bernard, are you faking being senile so I'll leave you alone?

BERNARD

No.

Pause.

BERNARD

Maybe. It usually works for a little longer than that.

Chris rolls his eyes.

CHRIS

Look, I think we got off on the wrong foot. I don't know what I'm going to do with this shop, OK? I woke up the other day, and there's a solicitor knocking at my door, telling me I've now got a damn Christmas shop. OK? I just - I need a clean shop, a clear head, no decisions are being made today, OK? So why don't you come back in a few days, I'll keep you in the loop.

BERNARD

No thanks.

Chris turns to Hugo and Emma.

CHRIS

What do I do now?

EMMA

Um. How do you feel about forcibly removing an elderly man with a walking stick?

BERNARD

That wouldn't be a good look.

CHRIS

Yeah, thanks! Look, I'm going to go upstairs, get ready for my date, and can you just be gone by the time I'm back?

Bernard shrugs noncommittally. Chris, looking as though he'd quite like to throw something at Bernard, exits, with Emma following.

Bernard, nonplussed, goes to the till, gets it set up, ties an apron on himself then opens the front door.

Customers begin flooding in, with Bernard buzzing round helping them select items to purchase. He throws Hugo an apron.

HUGO

Oh, um, I think Chris said - well, OK.

Hugo hurries over to a lady who is trying to pick between two huge, outdoor plastic snowmen. One has the face of Hugh Laurie, the other Emma Thompson.

LADY

Which of these do you like best?

HUGO

Emma Thompson was in Love Actually, so that's more Christmassy. Obviously.

The lady nods, impressed by this logic.

INT. SHOP FLOOR - LATER

Chris begins coming downstairs, and spots the packed shop, and Bernard with an apron on, serving at the till, Hugo hurrying around helping customers.

CHRIS

Oh, for the LOVE of GOD!

He hurries downstairs.

A harried looking man walks up to him, brandishing a nativity set.

HARRIED MAN

How much for this?

CHRIS

Um -

HARRIED MAN

Here!

He thrusts £100 into Chris's bemused hands and exits.

Chris squeezes into the centre of the shop. He spots Hugo, keenly laughing with an elderly woman.

CHRIS

Hugo, you were meant to be controlling the situation!

HUGO

Sorry! I don't know what happened!

CHRIS

OUT! EVERYBODY OUT!

He ushers the odd person out. Shola enters.

CHRIS

SHOLA! HELP!

Shola runs into the back, coming back with a megaphone.

SHOLA

EVERYONE. OUT. NOW. THIS ISN'T A TRADING SHOP. GO HOME!

Shola yanks an ornament out of an elderly lady's hand. She starts shoving her none too gently towards the door with a broom. She pulls a decoration out of a child's hand, who instantly dissolves into tears.

SHOLA(CONTD')

WHOEVER'S KID IS BROKEN OVER HERE, COME AND GET IT PLEASE.

A disgruntled Mum approaches.

DISGRUNTLED MUM

Excuse me, you can't just kick us out, this is appalling customer service!

SHOLA

Oh, lovely, do me a favour, write a letter in your best fountain pen and address it to Santa, maybe he can

help. OUT!

The Mum, appalled, hurries out. Finally, the shop is clear, apart from the gang and Bernard.

Chris pats Shola on the back as a thank you, and she goes back into the back of the store.

Bernard tuts at Chris as the customers leave.

BERNARD

They won't come back if you yell at them.

CHRIS

(losing it now)

I don't want them to! I don't even want this shop! I need to tell them whether I'll keep it or sell it by the 24th, and it's just too much! I'm through, it's not worth the effort!

Bernard glares at Chris.

BERNARD

It would have broke George's heart to hear you say that.

Bernard throws his apron down, retrieves his walking stick from behind the till, and hobbles out.

Chris locks the door behind him.

Hugo enters as Chris sighs with relief for having finally gotten rid of Bernard, but his expression is tainted with guilt.

HUGO

I liked that bloke. And look -

Hugo fingers the till, prizing it open.

He glances at the cash, calculating.

HUGO

You've made money. If you don't want to run the shop you can give the takings to Mamma for her Justice for a Billionaire's fundraiser. They need a swan ice sculpture.

CHRIS
I made money?

HUGO
Well, no. That guy with the walking
stick you just banished did.

Hugo nods towards the door which Bernard left through.

Chris's phone rings.

CHRIS
Oh god, it's my Mum.

SHOLA
Don't answer it.

CHRIS
She'll just keep ringing until I do.

Chris darts away from Shola and Hugo to answer the phone. He takes a deep breath to compose himself.

CHRIS
Hi Mum.

There is a rustling on the phone as it is connecting. SUSAN is unimpressed and moving around. Shot on screen, half Chris, half Susan like they are Facetiming.

SUSAN
Hi darling, one second (lowers her voice to scald Richard), no, no Richard, move the ringletted Miss Moffat next to Celeste. That's not Celeste, Richard, that's Anabell. And be careful with the straw boater hat. That's worth 60 pounds mint condition!

CHRIS
Mum?

SUSAN
Sorry darling, your father is just being a moron.

RICHARD is in the background being sheepish, scared to come near Susan.

RICHARD
I heard that.

SUSAN

(shouting to Richard)

Richard, why don't you be useful and toss the beetroot and quinoa salad we are having with Bob and Sandra later?

CHRIS

I thought Bob and Sandra were already in Spain?

SUSAN

Oh they are darling, but we are doing one of those virtual dinner parties. They are quite fashionable these days.

CHRIS

I see.

SUSAN

The only problem is, well you know I love Bob and Sandra, friends for thirty years. But Sandra...she's doing a butterscotch pudding for dessert.

CHRIS

What's the problem with that?

SUSAN

Well, it's a bit trashy isn't it? For a dinner party.

CHRIS

Virtual dinner party, so you won't be eating it surely?

SUSAN

Of course darling, I just think she might feel a bit inferior when she sees my lavender creme brulees. They have more star quality than something you can make out of a powder. And I wouldn't want that, for Sandra, to feel bad. (Changing subject) Anyways are you at the shop? Let's have a look.

Chris turns the phone round so that Susan can see the debris of the shop.

SUSAN

It's very... rustic.

(calling to Richard)
Richard, what were you saying to me
earlier that I needed to mention to
Chris?

Indistinct mumbling in the background.

SUSAN
Oh that was it. Asbestos, Chris.

CHRIS
What about it?

SUSAN
You need to check whether the building
has asbestos. It can give you cancer
of the... lungs, can't it Richard? You
should probably be wearing masks or
gloves. Or both. When I used to sit
next to uncle George at Christmas, he
did smell a bit.. well damp, but I
assumed it was to do with him being a
pirate.

CHRIS
Mum, not the pirate story again.

SUSAN
Don't change the subject Chris,
asbestos is serious business. the last
thing you want is to end up dead...How
do you know that Uncle George didn't
die of asbestos exposure?

CHRIS
Okay, great, thanks Mum...really need
to get back.

SUSAN
One more thing, your sister's on the
way with the twins...
(change tone)
and Jeremy.

CHRIS
On the way to the shop?

SUSAN
Yes, I gave them the address darling.
Beth was very keen to come and take a
look around. Since she was left out

the will. As was I...and everyone else.

CHRIS

Ok, bye mum.

Chris ends the call and frantically runs to where Shola, Hugo and Emma are still clearing out the stock slowly.

CHRIS

Okay, we have a really big problem.

SHOLA

Anymore than we already do?

CHRIS

My sister is on her way here, with the twins... and Jeremy.

SHOLA, HUGO AND EMMA

Jeremy!

HUGO

He's coming here?

CHRIS

Yes. Now.

SHOLA

Let me sage all the rooms Chris.

CHRIS

We don't have time Shola. He's coming.

HUGO

Remember, when he met my parents?

FLASHBACK scene with Jeremy, Hugo's parents at an indeterminate party. They are grouped together and laughing.

JEREMY

But in all seriousness, it's a good thing you are rich as Hugo would never amount to anything if he was left to his own devices.

Everyone stops laughing. Hugo's mum drops her mouth and the eclair she is holding.

END FLASHBACK.

EMMA

Or the time he came to watch me perform.

FLASHBACK of Jeremy at a bar clapping half-heartedly after Emma is singing. Shola, Hugo and Chris are cheering loudly.

Cut scene of Jeremy coming up to Emma as she is being congratulated by everyone else.

JEREMY

I enjoyed it, but I wasn't really overwhelmed. I probably wouldn't bother wasting too much time and energy pursuing this avenue. Listen, have you thought about working in recruitment for the pharmaceutical industry?

Everyone looks around at each other.

END FLASHBACK.

The doorbell rings indicating someone has walked in. Everyone stares in horror at the sound. BETH, HENRY and OSCAR, enter the shop.

BETH

Oscar, Henry make sure you don't touch anything. I can't guarantee you won't catch anything. Chris, are you in here? Or are you buried underneath a pile of manky baubles?

There is the sound of Oscar and Henry stomping around the shop, touching things. They come into the back where Shola, Emma, Hugo and Chris are. They are dressed in complete 90s grunge outfits.

BETH (O.C)

(shouting)

Boys, what did I say about touching things?

OSCAR

Alright, uncle Chris.

HENRY

Nice shop you have here.

Oscar and Henry clock Emma and look at each other in a weird

way.

HENRY

Miss...

OSCAR

Everleigh?

Recognising Oscar and Henry and jumping into teacher mode.

EMMA

Oh, hello boys.

HENRY

What are you doing here?

OSCAR

Yeah we thought teachers, like, lived at school?

Before Emma can answer, Beth barges in and is surveying the back of the shop. She nods at Hugo, Emma, Shola and directs her attention at Chris.

BETH

So why do you think George left you this and nobody else? Seems a bit strange if you ask me.

CHRIS

I don't...

BETH

I'm not bothered or anything, obviously Jeremy and I have the firm, which has actually just increased in revenue for the 15th year in a row but still...

Chris is about to answer but Beth's phone rings and she puts her finger in the air to silence him.

BETH

Sorry, got to take this.

(Answering phone)

What is it Lindsay?

(Pause)

What do you mean it's been alphabetised wrong? So are you saying you don't know your A-Z? Well evidence would suggest otherwise.

She walks off the set. Chris turns to Oscar and Henry who are rifling through his stock and laughing at the grotesque ornaments.

CHRIS

Boys, where's your Dad?

HENRY

He's just parking the car. But I'll warn you... he's acting a bit...

OSCAR

Weird.

Jeremy bursts in with a huge smile on his face. He looks like a kid on Xmas morning.

JEREMY

Chris, this place is so charming! So charming indeed!

He gives Chris a huge hug. Chris doesn't know what to do. Everyone looks very confused.

JEREMY

So good to see you.

Jeremy goes around hugging everyone really passionately, claspings everyone to his chest with sincerity.

JEREMY

Emma, wonderful to see you again. So pleased you've moved back. Shola, you look radiant... and so kind.

(pausing at Hugo)

Hugo, your cologne is really powerful and demonstrative of you as a person.

OSCAR

See, told you. Weird.

JEREMY

Now boys, Rex Allen says '*connection rapport*' is one of the five mandatory requirements for my '*happiness quota*'.

HENRY

Dad's joined a cult.

JEREMY

(laughing)

It's not a cult, it was a five day course on 'conscious empathy', Rex, he told me to call him that, actually gave me some 15% discount cards if any of you are interested. You do get a full buffet lunch each day.

(rummaging in his jacket pocket)

We are also friends on LinkedIn. He endorsed me for my 'above average listening skills.'

SHOLA

Sounds a bit culty if you ask me.

JEREMY

Thank you Shola, I really appreciate your honesty. I will add that to my feedback chart. Everyone looks at each other again.

JEREMY

And what are you going to do with the Emporium Chris? As I said before, or what the French would call...charmante.

CHRIS

Erm, well I don't know yet. Everything's kind of...

EMMA

Falling down.

JEREMY

(thinks and has a moment of realisation)

I'm going to help you. Yes, I'm going to help you fix the shop!

CHRIS

You are?

JEREMY

Yes I am. I am going to help you... Chris.

CHRIS

Really it's not necessary, you're busy with the law firm.. and the twins...

JEREMY

(he clasps Chris' shoulder)
Nope, I won't hear another word. We are family. Families help each other. And really how hard can it be?

HENRY

Dad, you've never done DIY in your life. And remember you always said that builders were 'stupid and poor'.

JEREMY

(remembering)
No, I don't think I said that. That must have been your mother.

OSCAR

You definitely did say it. Several times.

JEREMY

Anyways, Chris, I'm going to watch some YouTube videos on... Woodcraft or...

(looking around)
structural engineering? Maybe a bit of plumbing? And I'll see you bright and early tomorrow morning! I'll bring my toolbox!

HENRY

You don't have a tool box.

JEREMY

I will buy a tool box. And put spanners and hammers in it. Don't you worry Chris, this is going to be really good for us. And the shop.

Beth returns from her phone call.

BETH

We need to drop the twins off at fencing club and get back. Lindsay's posted the legitimate tax returns to the defence instead of the doctored ones.

(Looking around at everyone and waving her finger)
Confidential info. Don't make me sue you. Let's go boys!

OSCAR

But we hate fencing club.

BETH

Hobbies aren't meant to be enjoyable
Oscar. They are to put on your
university application to make you
seem well-rounded.

Twins exasperatedly drop the ornaments and make their way
out.

BETH

Good luck with the shop Chris, looks
like you'll need it!
(to Jeremy, quieter)
This place is a cesspit.

JEREMY

I actually think it's quite *charmante*.

BETH looks at JEREMY weirdly. BETH does a fake smile to
everyone and immediately drops it. They leave and the
doorbell rings to signal their departure. Everyone is scared
to breathe. Silence.

HUGO

What..

CHRIS

Yeah.

SHOLA

Is.. er?

EMMA

Jeremy's..

SHOLA

He's coming to help you with the shop?

CHRIS shrugs his shoulders, speechless of everything that's
just happened.

BLACKOUT

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Chris is on his date in a small italian restaurant, Ivy's
sequined dress is reflecting across the walls. Chris has a
bowl of bolognese and Ivy has a side portion of chips and

gravy. Chris misses his mouth as he is too engrossed by Ivy's extravagant Christmas headband, he tries to wipe the mark on his shirt but only makes the stain bigger.

IVY

I remember it as if it was yesterday,
my 13th birthday in Lapland, getting
that dreadful news...

Chris is half distracted trying to use ice from his drink to clean the stain.

CHRIS

Sorry to hear that, I actually just
lost a family member too.

Ivy giggles.

IVY

Noone died silly! My parents just told
me Father Christmas isn't real... but I
know he's real, I'm not that stupid.

Ivy turns serious, seems a bit choked up and worried. She spins her fork in Chris's spaghetti and eats it, she begins smiling again. Chris immediately jumps up.

CHRIS

I just need the toilet.

Chris's fake smile drops as soon as he heads to the toilet.

INT. RESTAURANT TOILET - EVENING

Chris is sitting on the toilet with his phone to his ear.

CHRIS

Hello... Yes, yes I'm fine... Look, In
exactly 3 minutes call my phone and
say you're in urgent need of my help..
I'll explain after... Okay, bye.

Chris puts away his phone, flushes the toilet and exits the cubicle and is confronted with a gentleman who heard all of the conversation, he shakes his head at Chris and heads into the cubicle.

INT. SHOP FLOOR - EVENING

Emma, Shola and Hugo are getting ready to lock up. The shop is looking a lot cleaner than earlier, all the ornaments have

been separated into bags and boxes.

EMMA

Hugo you won the bet, he couldn't even make it to dessert.

Hugo jumps excitedly up and down.

HUGO

Yes, yes I knew it!

SHOLA

Carnelian couldn't even save him?
Damn.

HUGO

That poor girl, I bet he's bored her to death about Plato's republic. I've told that boy a million times, dead philosophers are not sexy!

Shola is fixing her winged eyeliner in the reflection of a bauble.

SHOLA

There's a really nice bar down the street...

HUGO

Tequila?

Shola and Emma nod in sync, Emma starts humming 'Tequila' by The Champs.

EMMA

Tequila!

SHOLA

But hey, first let's take these stickers off, Emma remember what I taught you, not every situation is a stickuation...

Emma nods her head and regretfully removes her sticker, humming the Tequila song at a slower pace.

SHOLA

Besides, I doubt you have a sticker for being completely wasted.

Emma begins to rummage through her bag. Hugo holding in his

laugh.

EMMA

Well actual-

SHOLA

No!

Emma grabs the spare key from behind the till and locks up the shop.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Chris is tapping his fingers on the table anticipating his escape call from Emma. His phone begins to ring, he immediately picks up.

Ivy is not dropping eye contact with Chris, smiling with some gravy on the side of her mouth. She can hear Emma on the phone.

CROSS CUT SEQUENCE

CHRIS

I hope this is INCREDIBLY important,
you know i'm on a date right?

EMMA

We need you at the shop now! MAJOR rat
infestation.

Ivy drops eye contact and looks down at the table.

EMMA

They're crawling all over the ceiling...
NO, NOT HUGO, THEY'RE SMOTHERING HIM...
NOT HIS SCARF IT'S... CASHMERE!!!

Chris looks up at Ivy and makes an awkward smile. He puts his hand over the phone.

CHRIS

So sorry about this. Just a bit of
drama at my shop, major rat
infestation! Typical, just my luck ay.

Ivy looks in shock.

IVY

You have your own shop?

CHRIS

Yeah, It's been in my family for years, a Chri-

Chris pauses awkwardly, Ivy is grinning with excitement.

CHRIS

A halloween one! Rats got into the blood bags. The shop looks like a murder scene, you would HATE it.

Ivy looks terrified.

EMMA

HELLO?

CHRIS

(WHISPERS)

Yep, I'll be there in 20.

Chris smiles at Ivy who is already getting her jacket on to leave.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Emma, Shola and Hugo enter the bar and begin taking off their coats, Emma notices Bernard sitting alone in the corner clearly extremely upset with a pint of lager and some scampi fries.

Emma nods her head to his direction to alert Shola and Hugo.

SHOLA

Nah, uh, no way, not tonight. There is no crystal on earth that can heal that man.

HUGO

I agree with Shola, let's just sit at the bar...

EMMA

Come on guys, imagine if that was your grandad sitting all alone, upset.

SHOLA

Well my grandad is dead, so I wouldn't have to worry.

HUGO

Yeah and mine hates me... he always says

"You bring shame to this family's name"

The three are leaning over Bernard. He wipes the tears from his cheeks and looks up.

BERNARD

Oh I don't want no sympathy...

HUGO

(mutters under breath)

Let's goooo then.

Emma gives Hugo an intense stare. She nudges him forward.

BERNARD

It has been hard... and well, I don't really have anyone to talk to anymore.

Emma takes a seat next to Bernard.

EMMA

Let's be honest, In the shop earlier you didn't create the best first impression but it's fine, we all deserve a second warning... I mean chance, second chance, right?

Emma sticks a 'getting there' sticker on to Bernard and smiles at him as she taps him on the back. Shola shakes her head in disappointment.

Hugo pulls up a seat to sit with Bernard. Shola walks over to the bar.

HUGO

Exactly, I mean once I wore navy and black together to an interview so trust me... I know about bad introductions.

Shola brings over a tray full of shots.

SHOLA

I think this should lighten the mood.

Hugo rubs his hands together and grins, Emma puts a serviette down her collar.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Chris now in his PJ's grabs a glass of water and gets into bed, he takes a big gulp and puts down the glass of water.

MATCH CUT

INT. BAR - EVENING

Bernard slams down his shot glass.

BERNARD
ANOTHER! BRING ME MORE!

Bernard, Emma, Shola and Hugo are all downing shots of tequila. The table is covered in scampi fries. They are cheering Bernard on to do more shots. He takes three tequila's, pours them into a glass and downs them all. He makes gun signals in the air with his hands. The four of them are dancing around.

Camera pulls back to reveal a quiet bar with awkward couples just watching them in silence.

Shola starts looking around at the table.

SHOLA
I left my bag at the shop.

BERNARD
No! The night is still young, you can't leave yet. You haven't seen my famous head spin!

Hugo grabs Bernard's hand.

HUGO
Oh honey, don't you worry, the party has just begun.

Shola looks over at Emma.

SHOLA
You still got the keys.

EMMA
Of course, you boys have fun and I expect to see you both tomorrow!

Shola and Emma leave the bar.

Bernard pulls out a funnel from his pocket, Hugo looks confused. Bernard puts the funnel in his mouth and gets Hugo to pour the drink straight down. Bar staff are shaking their heads. Hugo has a turn and projects it everywhere. Bernard attempts to do some electric boogie popping. Hugo fears Bernard is having a seizure so dramatically dives on top of him and tries to move all the chairs and tables around him.

HUGO

NOOOOOO!

INT. SHOP FLOOR - EVENING

After multiple attempts to fit the key in the lock Shola finally manages to unlock the door. She stands at the front and places two fingers on either side of her head trying to remember where she left her bag. Emma stares at her weird and begins to look around.

SHOLA

It's by the till.

Emma is looking under the till when she notices a hatch at the very back, she crawls under and opens it, pulls off a dusty rag to reveal a cove which is where a large Victorian antique relic advent calendar is. She attempts to pull it, however it is too heavy. Shola finds her bag underneath a box by the till.

SHOLA

Found it, let's go.

Chris enters the shop floor in a daze, confused as to why Shola is in the shop.

CHRIS

What are you doing here? It's late.

Chris rubs his eyes and notices Emma's legs sticking out from the till.

CHRIS

Emma? What are you doing down there?

SHOLA

Well, I don't know about you two but I have a client early in the morning. Another boomer who wants the chorus of Wonderwall tattooed on his bicep. You'd think there were no other songs in the world. Bye guys.

Shola leaves.

Chris walks over to Emma who is still leaning under the till, he looks past her.

CHRIS

What piece of junk have you found
under here then?

Emma moves back to reveal the calendar.

EMMA

That, but I can't get it out, It's too
big.

Chris moves in and attempts to pull it out, with the help of Emma he manages too. Acts as if he wasn't struggling to carry it up.

Emma looks intrigued beaming her phone flash light across it. A slight mechanical sound occurs, sounding as if it is coming from inside the calendar. They both lean closer. Door one pops open and startles them.

Emma pulls out what was stuffed into door one. She reveals a small red velvet sachet labeled 'bird feed'

Chris screws up his face.

CHRIS

Well that's underwhelming... What do the
other door's have?

Chris leans to undo the next door. Emma stops his hand.

EMMA

NOOOO! Sorry, that was a bit
dramatic... but you can't do that? You
can't open December 2nd when it's
still the 1st, that's against the
rules!

CHRIS

I'm not waiting till tomorrow to see
which pet food I get next, we don't
even have any birds. Chris tries to
open the second door, it won't budge.

CHRIS

Well that's weird, probably old and
needs some oil.

EMMA

Chris it's wood?

CHRIS

You try.

EMMA

See unlike you I like surprises, I'll wait until tomorrow.

Chris looks at the time, it's 10pm.

CHRIS

You can stay if you want, I'll sleep on the sofa?

Emma raises her eyebrows and crosses her arms.

EMMA

Ohh, so because your date didn't go quite to plan, I'm second best?

Emma laughs as Chris tilts his head.

CHRIS

(Sarcastically)

Come on now, I think we both know that you're third.

EMMA

Idiot.

CHRIS

Seriously though, you can tell me all about how Manchester was, I can make us some ketchup sandwiches just like old times?

EMMA

As much as it breaks my heart to turn down a ketchup sandwich, I've got to take Mum to an appointment in the morning so i'll come round after.

Emma gives Chris a tight hug, he leans his head on top of hers and smiles. After a long hug Emma pulls away.

EMMA(CONTD')

Right, I'll see you tomorrow.

CHRIS

Night Em, let me know when you get home.

Emma turns to leave and trips on the uneven flooring. Chris holds in his laugh. Emma smiles and leaves. Chris locks the door, glides his hand across the advent calendar which creates a subtle twinkle in the top window, he heads back to bed.

BLACKOUT.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris is asleep. There's an ongoing thumping sound. A particularly loud thump wakes Chris up.

Chris checks his phone: 11.55pm. Another deafening thump.

CHRIS

Don't tell me this place is haunted, too...

He climbs out of bed, and heads out of the door.

INT. SHOP FLOOR - NIGHT

Chris arrives at the top of the stairs. He sees Bernard, having clearly broken in, hard at work.

His shop now looks like a Christmas wonderland, kind of like if Rudolph and Blitzen had vomited all over his walls. They're lit up, decorated beautifully, the shelves organised, the floor clean and sparkling.

CHRIS

OH FOR F-

END OF EPISODE ONE.



– Chris24 –
Character Bios



CHRIS 24



Chris Patterson

Age - 24

Job - Reluctant Christmas Shop Owner

Chris has recently found himself the bemused new owner of a Christmas shop, courtesy of his recently deceased Great Uncle George who, frankly, Chris never realised existed. He leaves his current dead-end temp job to move into the shop, glad for an excuse not to pay rent anymore and to have his own, Bridget Jones-style flat. He begins the process of deciding to keep it or sell it. While his Classic Civilisations degree from Coventry University did not equip him to run the shop, it has not equipped him for any other areas of life or career prospects either.

There is irony in Chris being handed a Christmas shop, as he has never really been bothered by the holiday himself. His parents usually go to Spain, leaving him to endure a noisy dinner with his snobby, nosey and highflying sister Beth, her two loveable but unruly kids - and not forgetting her awful husband Jeremy, who has lately been awakened to a path of redemption.

Chris is lucky to have a close group of friends, Hugo, Shola and his previously unresolved love interest, Emma, but none of them prove particularly helpful when it comes to assisting him in deciding what to do with the shop -

they're more interested in combing through all the junk it holds. George's old friend Bernard is very keen to help Chris keep and run it, though, taking it upon himself to break in in the dead of night and organise the shelves and open the tills in the morning.

In terms of his friend group dynamic, Chris is definitely "the sane one". This has few perks, as a lot of the time he is caught in a tug of war with his friends, who often bicker about silly or ludicrous things, and want him on their side.

Although he is nowhere near certain, people do seem to love buying overpriced Christmas tat in Covent Garden, so maybe Chris should stick out running the shop? However, even when he hires his friend Hugo to help out, Chris struggles financially with the business, even if the public will pay £100 for a set of Christmas hatted gnomes. He finds himself growing attached to the shop, but genuinely unsure whether he can keep it running.

Chris, trying to suppress his feelings for Emma, instead pours his energy into an active dating life, and loves the apps - but maybe if he spent less time on dates, he could make the shop turn a profit. Besides, to put it mildly, dating doesn't always go well for him - and the girl he really wants, his best friend Emma, he is too nervous to make a move with, as he doesn't want to kill their friendship. As the series goes on, it gets harder and harder for Chris to suppress his feelings for Emma, feelings which he's beginning to suspect may be mutual.





Emma Everleigh

Age- 25

Job- Secondary School Music Teacher

Selfless, caring and good taste in music. How can you not love her? Emma and Chris have been best friends since primary school, but there's clearly something more there that they both try to suppress. After graduating in Manchester, breaking up with her 'University lover' and completing her first NQT year as a music teacher, she is now being transferred from her school in Manchester to one in London, which happens to be Chris's nephews' school.

Everyone thinks of Emma as the softly spoken, sweet girl. However, since becoming so invested in her job, she now has random outbursts of shall we call it... 'teacher mode'. Where she speaks to everyone as if they are a child. Not to mention her bag always being full of 'teacher essentials', there is a sticker for every mood as she believes it's a great tool to let people know how you're feeling. To put it bluntly Emma is a nerd, in particular, a music nerd. Hum a second of any song and she'll be able to identify the artist, song title, where it

was produced and every other irrelevant detail.

Emma, unlike the rest of the crew, is incredibly close with her parents who she currently lives with since her move back down from Manchester. Especially her mother Linda who still treats Emma like her little princess. It is heartbreaking to discover that Linda has been diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and despite Emma trying to keep her emotions under control, it is clear to see that Emma is suffering with the distressing news of her mother's illness.

Despite being overloaded with work, trying to write music and troubles within her personal life she helps Chris as much as she can with the shop, as she always puts others before herself. It's not until Shola has a heart to heart with her she finally begins to focus on what she really wants. A job offer which would involve her moving out of London is a huge decision she will have to make on her own...

Over the series we see Emma progressively getting more jealous as Chris begins dating. After realising life is simply too short, she decides to team up with his nephews to create a huge gesture that she hopes will win Chris over once and for all.



CHRIS24



Type of actor/visual aid

Hugo Romano

Age - 24

Job - Previous careers include interior designer (2 months) marine biologist (this failed because he can't swim and doesn't have a biology GCSE, 2 days), luxury beekeeper (3 weeks) and landscape colourist (which isn't a real job, but he managed to string this along for 5 weeks).

Hugo is one of Chris's unlikely friends. He is a very wealthy heir to a confectionary company, and was educated at the poshest boarding schools in England and abroad - until his Nanny, Adalene, decided he was becoming too much of a brat and switched him to a state school without his parents' knowledge. This is where he met Chris, Emma and Shola.

Hugo is trying to live independently from his parents' money, being cut off other than his flashy cars. Eventually, after a string of unsuccessful job interviews (which Bernard may or may not have sabotaged), Chris takes sympathy and hires him

for the shop, arguably against his better judgement - there are some hiccups along the way. He is awful with handling finances, breaks things a lot, knows very little about Christmas or running a shop, but luckily most of the customers find him sweet and charming, so it kind of balances it out.

Hugo is very outgoing, gay and single - happily so. He enjoys dating - but sometimes he wishes he had something more than this. His friends are everything to him, since his family are cold and distant, and he'd sooner die than screw one of them over. Chris knows and appreciates this, and values him in return.

Being a bit on the naive side, Hugo often misses the mark and a lot goes over his head. For example, he breaks priceless ornaments, one of the first ever made or invented, and doesn't bother to tell anyone due to them being old so likely not worth much. He is easily manipulated, often being used by his mother for her various schemes, campaigns and charity work, such as her "Justice for Billionaires" movement which aims to get billionaires recognised as a cultural minority.





Shola Ikoro

Age- 25

Job- Tattoo artist

Every friendship group tends to have a clear leader, and in this case it's, without a doubt, Shola. She also takes the title for the coolest one - which isn't hard to be within this group. Shola is the spokesperson, the one who always speaks her mind - maybe too much but that's why everyone loves her. Shola taught Emma how to do her makeup, Hugo how to actually dance without being completely mocked and Chris how to tie his shoelaces - yes, he didn't know how to until year 7. To them she is a saviour and to her, they are her favorite project!

Shola is a social butterfly and has many other friends, from artists to porn stars, she has an endless list of contacts. Her distinctive edgy style and homemade jewelry is part of her trademark.

It goes without saying that she is a very spiritual individual, If there is a hint of negative energy the sage will immediately appear along with any crystal or stone needed to resolve the issue.

Shola lives with her two older siblings and hardly speaks with her parents who live in Nigeria which may be why she is such an independent individual. Shola believes she can read Chris like a book and has known since the very first day of year seven that he is in love with Emma. And of course they are? She can feel the energy between them, after all.

Unlike the rest of the crew, Shola never studied at University and instead has been working in the same tattoo shop since leaving school. Which is where a psychic once came in and told her that she possessed a sixth sense - which till this day Shola has not let go of. Being the enthusiastic best friend she is, she is keen to help Chris fix up the shop and make it a successful business, even if this means tattooing some of her own clients out the back...



Dolly Corbett

Age-76

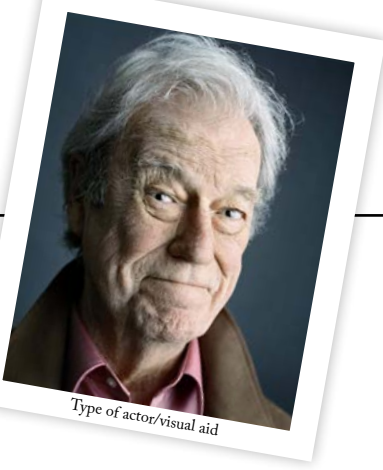
Job- Former Model

Dolly is a born and raised south Londoner with a distinctive cockney accent to match, being a model in her younger days she is still as confident as ever and loves to have a good gossip – for as long as she can keep you for. Dolly is an old friend of Chris's uncle George and is devastated to discover the news of him passing away. Dolly, George and Bernard used to be inseparable, however George's mysterious and secretive personality began to cause problems between the group.

Dolly was incredibly upset to find out that Bernard just forgot to tell her about George passing away. Luckily, the two begin to resolve their issues and a lovely friendship begins to blossom once again. Despite being such a lovely, caring woman she is extremely clumsy and manages to knock over and smash some expensive items in the shop. Even though there is sometimes a lot of damage caused on her regular pop ins, Chris enjoys her visits and makes her feel welcomed as he can tell she is very lonely.

Dolly does not speak about her family much and only briefly mentioned once how her only daughter goes to America for Christmas, leaving her to celebrate all alone.





Bernard Trewarthen

Age - 77

Job - Retired Cornish Livestock Farmer

Bernard originally hails from Tintagel, Cornwall, where he had a sheep farm. He sold it in his thirties to move to London, where he met George, and held down odd jobs when he needed money, but, like Hugo, ended up in the Christmas shop full time - quite the career change. Upon George's death, Bernard takes it upon himself to teach Chris not only about the ways of Christmas Emporium ownership, but forces life and love advice on him and the gang too.

Bernard appears every episode and his main role initially seems to be to cause strife for Chris, which Bernard always insists is for Chris's own good. For the first part of season one, he is initially nothing short of a menace. He takes great delight in telling Chris when he is running the shop badly, and what his uncle would disapprove of. Bernard's strategies to prevent Chris selling the

shop include pretending to be senile and harmless so that he cannot be kicked out, professing the shop is haunted to put off potential buyers, as well as breaking shelves, pipes

and the roof amongst other things, to slow the process down and make things more costly for Chris, in an attempt to force him to trade.

Bernard is gay. Having suffered in love himself, he gives Chris and Jeremy endless unasked for advice with regards to their lives - and he isn't shy to pry about personal aspects of this, either! In his old age, he prefers to meddle in other people's love lives than work on his own - much to the gang's annoyance.

He is very scruffy and quite typical of his generation in some ways, and relatively woke in others. He gets along brilliantly with the gang, after a tumultuous initiation period, and they remind him of his friendship group hanging around the shop so many years before. At the end of the series, having persuaded Chris to keep the shop and becoming part of the crew with his friends, Bernard has Christmas dinner with them all in the back of the shop.



CHRIS 24

Beth Addington

(Sister)

Age- 37

Job- White Collar Defense Lawyer

Some people really can have it all, and Beth is no exception. She met the devilishly charming and handsome Jeremy her first week at Cambridge, they bonded over the famous Vosburg vs. Putney Tort case and the rest is history. Fast forward 15 years and they have their own law firm representing white collar crime defendants who are given the full criminal defense/ PR spin treatment despite their obvious illicit activity. For Beth the truth isn't necessarily a requisite, it's how you present the truth that matters.

Not only excelling in her career, she's also managed to raise 'two incredibly gifted and talented' boys. They were actually put in the 98th percentile

for IQ by a child psychologist, this is a fact she likes to drop into any conversation she can. She treats Oscar and Henry as if they are still five, and refuses to entertain the idea of them being in a band, hence why they have to use Chris's shop to practice.

Beth thinks Chris's lack of achievements professionally and in the love department is a direct reflection on her, she is quick to interrogate Chris and offer unsolicited advice on his failings and how he can improve. Although being the Queen bee isn't without it's hurdles, and it's certainly a lot further to fall. As the series progresses it's clear that a high profile client facing 15 years for a shell corporation scheme has gotten under Beth's usually infallible skin. As Chris matures and becomes more comfortable in his abilities, Beth is slowly unravelling. Will she risk everything she's built for a dalliance with the East London equivalent to Jordan Belfort?



Jeremy Addington

(Brother-in-law)

Age- 38

Job- White Collar Defense Lawyer

Jeremy is trying to change his ways, after recently attending a five day course on ‘conscious empathy’ he realises that perhaps his ruthlessness and ambition have hindered his ‘happiness quota’. He is attempting to reconnect with his sons, who have largely been left to raise

themselves, whilst him and Beth climbed the career ladder. This sudden change in philosophy and drive, has put him in direct opposition with his wife, him now questioning whether he should retrain as a social worker and donate half his wages

to charity. This infuriates Beth, she becomes more exasperated with his behaviour in meetings with clients, his unexpected moral compass alignment now at odds with the swindling bankers he is meant to represent. Jeremy has never paid much attention to Beth’s underachieving younger brother in the past, but with his new perspective he offers well-meaning emotional support that causes more problems than it solves. This includes helping with the renovations of the shop, despite having never held a saw or hammer in his life. His lack of self-awareness combined with his former alpha male traits are a source of bemusement for Chris, however he tries to placate Jeremy’s freshly mobilized good nature. Jeremy develops an unlikely friendship with Bernard and Hugo throughout the series, leaning on them as his former life implodes in a sea of noble intentions.



Susan Patterson

(Mother)

Age- 60

Job- Retired (never worked)

Not very maternal is an understatement when it comes to Susan. She loves to bring up the achievements of Chris' much more successful sister, Beth, who is everything that Chris isn't. Reminiscent of mum in Bridget Jones and Miss Featherington in Bridgerton, not altogether unkind but no emotional intelligence or tact. Communicates with Chris via Facetime and is always trying to suggest ways for him to improve or find love. Spends a lot of time in Spain, somewhat of an expat but refuses to learn much

Spanish or assimilate to the culture. Pronounces all the Spanish words wrong and complains about not finding British items in supermarkets. One of her favourite pastimes is either gossiping or sunbathing. Has an obsession with antique dolls and makes Chris go to auctions for her to get rare ones. She can't ask Beth as Beth is much too busy with being a high flying lawyer who 'defended that poor man in the papers framed by his ex-wife for tax evasion'. Susan is always comparing herself to her villa neighbours, Bob and Sandra, who have grown up children of a similar age. Susan and her husband's 35 year marriage works because Richard doesn't really have much of a say in things. She is a retiree, however she's never really worked a day in her life, apart from if you can call meddling in other people's affairs a valid occupation?



Richard Patterson

(Father)

Age- 62

Job- Retired

Gentle and mild-mannered, Richard has learned to keep quiet in order for an easy life. He spends a lot of time at the golf club now he's retired, he always has anecdotes about 'the lads at golf' that make no sense to anyone else. Richard continues to try and get Chris into golf for some father-son bonding time but Chris doesn't have the hand-eye coordination, and quite frankly, is appalling at all sports. He is a bit more cultured than Susan but is still very much a 'Brit Abroad'. Richard has reached the age where he is attempting to recapture his youth, he starts dressing a lot younger and buys an electric scooter. Richard can be a bit aloof and preoccupied with his various hobbies, but he does want the best for Beth and Chris. He finds Beth's success and intensity slightly frightening, Beth being 'very much a spitting image of Susan.'

Oscar and Henry Addington

(Nephews)

Age-14

Job- 90s Kurt Cobain throwbacks

Oscar and Henry, 'the twins', have been mollycoddled for most of their adolescent lives, however they're doing their best to quietly rebel. They are obsessed with 90s grunge bands and

try to dress and act accordingly, becoming mini Kurt Cobains and Chris Cornells. Beth is mildly horrified by this and does everything to steer them away from an activity that will turn them into 'heroin addicts'.

She makes them go to various extra-curricular clubs such as rugby, archery, chess and fencing, her thinking that being accomplished at a sport will look good on a uni application, certainly not being in a rock band. With Jeremy now practicing 'conscious empathy', he is heavily interested in the band, as it's part of his era, much to the annoyance of Oscar and Henry who think their Dad part of the establishment, not to mention ancient. This forces Oscar and Henry to ask Chris if their band can practice at his shop. Chris agrees but is a little frightened of his nephews to begin with, especially when they start impersonating how 90s grunge bands used to behave.

Over the series he grows closer to Oscar and Henry, bonding over their outcast status and the importance of being who you want to be, not what others expect you to be. The final performance at the end of the series unites all the family and shows Beth and Susan how talented both Oscar and Henry are. Oscar is the more gregarious of the two, always trying to push the boundaries further than Henry who is more shy and reserved.



CHRIS24

George (Great Uncle)

Age- 83 (deceased)

Job- Former owner of George's Christmas Emporium

Eccentric, oddball of the family, George was a mysterious and mythical figure who was often spoken of at family gatherings with various outlandish stories and tales, all conflicting and bizarre. These stories include:

- He was an illegitimate child of the Prince George, Duke of Kent
- He was a pirate that was mentored by Felix von Luckner
- He was a prominent leader in the Freemasons
- He was put in prison for stealing 'Boy Bitten by a Lizard' from the National Gallery

His shop specialises in antiques, wood carvings and hand blown glass Christmas ornaments that are unique and you couldn't find elsewhere. As he got older and was diagnosed with cancer he was unable to take care of his shop, with it falling into disarray. He leaves Chris the shop and a wooden advent calendar he has to open every day in the run up to Xmas. Chris is dismissive of the advent calendar at first but it soon shows to reveal greater insight/advice/reflections of what is happening in the episode and Chris's life. Many of the patrons that come into the shop

also tell Chris grand stories of his great uncle, leading him to question who the real 'George' was, something he strives to uncover with the help of his friends.



Henry O. Sullivan

Age- 34

Job- Building inspector

Henry is a 34 year old man who lives alone in a small flat where the most communication he receives is from PPI calls, they end up being the ones who hang up on him. Following in both parents footsteps Henry aspired to be a police officer but after failing training multiple times... Henry decided to go into the next best career , a building inspector for the local council. I mean who doesn't love an inspector right?

On a regular basis Henry dramatically enters the shop and makes himself known with a loud sniff "testing the pollution within the shop". He immediately begins running his right index finger across EVERY shelf to measure the amount

of dust and ever so often takes out his small notepad and pen from his blazer pocket to write down "extremely important" notes. But mainly doing this to take his time trying to listen in on conversations.

Keen to get a promotion, he picks out the smallest issues as he states he is "just doing my job". There is one thing that completely throws Henry off and that is female attention, even eye contact with a woman for more than 5 seconds causes Henry to begin to have a weird reaction where his left leg will begin vibrating non-stop. Shola plays on his weak ability to engage with females and always tries to sweet talk him when he comes in, despite him being older she would eat him alive, and plans to.



Linda

Emma's mum

Age- 58

Linda is a very sweet, gentle and caring lady. When she was well, she taught history at universities. She absolutely adores her daughter, and wants the best for her. She really likes Chris, and sees a lot of potential between the two of them. Consequently, she sometimes drops in hints, comments, or plans to get the two of them together.

Harrison Jackson

Age- 25

Job- Rugby teacher

Manchester born and raised, Harrison is a handsome, well-groomed muscular man who screams stereotypical sex appeal and painfully regrets his break up with Emma. After being inseparable for the whole of university, Emma had no choice but to end things when she walked in and found him sleeping with her flat mate. Not the best thing to return home to as you can imagine. But he has 'grown up' within the last months... apparently and is in London to surprise Emma and in his mind, win her back.

If you think you know someone who is a little too self-absorbed, multiply that by five and then you have Harrison. If there is any opportunity to boast about something he will take it and not stop. Harrison found out that Emma is working nights at a Christmas store in Covent garden and after going to "every Christmas store in London" to

find her he is confronted with Chris. Chris acts as if he is unaware who Harrison is even though he has stalked his Instagram and Facebook multiple times. Chris claims Emma is going through a tough time but will let her know Harrison stopped by. Harrison's final plea to win Emma back is by singing to her... in front of everyone at the bar.

Arabella White

Age- 31

Job- Real Estate

Picture an upper class, materialistic woman with an addiction to red lipstick and overpriced perfume... and you have Arabella. A highly motivated individual with the constant desire to keep achieving; Arabella's next 'project' is Chris. After Chris's sister Beth sets them up on a blind date Chris becomes mesmerized, believing he has finally found the one. Little does he know, she only began listening to the conversation when she heard he owned his own shop. Arabella thrives from power so being the more successful one out of the two fuels her, which she isn't afraid to boast about. Chris is blind to this as he is amazed by her and does everything to impress her, even leaning towards selling the shop...

Despite being instantly approved by Chris's family (minus the nephews) his friends can sense something is not quite right from the get go. Arabella, however, assures him that they do not have Chris's best interests at heart which begins to create cracks within the crew.



Ivy Thompson

Age- 23

Job- Part time Christmas Elf/ Drama Student

Ivy is Chris's first ever date that he has met from an online dating app. Despite being a lovely girl, her obsession with Christmas is Chris's absolute nightmare. Christmas time is the time of year Ivy thrives and she makes sure that everyone knows this, as soon as it's December she has to wear her lucky elf knickers, she has three pairs on rotation.

After being convinced by his friends to give her a second chance he turns up to her house where he is faced with Ivy and to his shock her parents too... all in matching Christmas PJ's. After downing a few eggnogs and watching some old family Christmas videos a trip to the toilet is his master escape plan. That is the last we see of sweet Ivy.

Marcia Romano

Age - 54 but pays well to look 39

Job - Heiress and socialite

Hugo's mother Marcia was born into an Italian family who all moved to the UK when she was a teenager, Marcia is both terrifying and an awful snob. She has embraced her wealthy lifestyle thanks to her husband's money and has developed a taste for entitlement and the finer things in life. She often chastises Hugo for his general uselessness

and for bringing shame on the Romano name. She is a great character for generating comedy, as she is often rude or intimidating, and usually ignorant of other cultures and ideas.

She is a catholic, but like many she is doing her best to embrace the twenty-first century, so this does sometimes cause friction between herself and Hugo, who is openly gay. More often than not Hugo merely has to endure faux pas from her.

Giuseppe Romano

Age - 60

Job - Entrepreneur and businessman, owns a confectionary empire

Giuseppe is a darling. He is a very quiet and gentle man who made a large fortune as an entrepreneur, building a confectionary business. He came from a very poor family in Africo, in the Calabria region of Italy. He studied hard though and managed to earn a very good living, and eventually he became extremely wealthy and moved to England to improve his language skills - here he met Marcia. Giuseppe contrasts massively to his wife, who is quite a fearsome presence at times. She constantly talks for him and is a force to be reckoned with, but he is one of the few who genuinely knows her and looks past all her more irksome traits.

Giuseppe tries very hard to have a connection with his son - but he is so quiet and his son is so loud, so although they love each other very much, they find it difficult to share common ground. He isn't a particularly religious



Adalene Chauvette

Age - 58

Job - Hugo's retired Nanny

Adalene was Hugo's Nanny when he was growing up, and she essentially raised him. She is scheming, interfering and overbearing, but looks out for him a good deal more than his own mother did. Adalene, while not stupid enough to say anything to her face, is highly disapproving of Marcia, and liked to make fun of her behind her back.

Adalene refuses to acknowledge that Hugo is in fact an adult, now, and to be honest, with his track record, she can't really be blamed for this. However, at times she takes it a little too far - for example coming to visit him then insisting on holding his hand to cross the road, and carrying around Star Wars plasters just in case he gets a papercut on their brief excursion to Prezzo.

She looked after Hugo until he was 18, and had a particular disliking for Emma, but loved Shola and Chris. She has disapproved of every boyfriend he ever brought home, and at times even chased them away - literally, and twice with a broom. Despite this, Hugo loves her to death, knowing she's got his best interests at heart, arguably more so than his own parents.

Hugo owes meeting Chris, Emma and Shola, all to Adalene. See, she feared Hugo was becoming a spoilt brat and not socialising with "real people." So, without his parents' knowledge, she moved him to the local comprehensive school in year nine. Hugo's parents continued

paying the boarding school fees until he was 18 and never even noticed he was at home, and not at the prestigious school.

Natalia Tuloczki

Age- 22

Job- Retail Worker/Designer

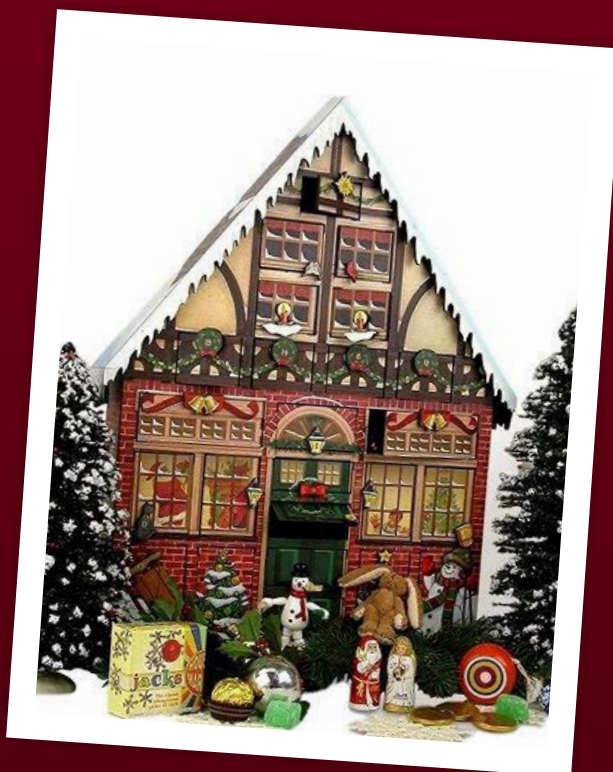
Natalia works for a shop nearby and pops in a lot. She has recently moved to the UK from Poland, and is taking a textiles course. Consequently, she is knitting and sewing a lot of garments - all of which are hideous. She likes to give these to Chris and the gang, and they are forced to wear them out of politeness. Crush on Chris.



CHRIS 24

– Chris24 –

Episode Outlines



1 December

Chris is up to his neck in paperwork and shocked with the amount of work that the shop needs done. Hugo, Shola and to everyone's surprise Emma come to lend a helping hand. A facetime check in from his mother alerts him that Beth is on her way to the shop with the twins and Jeremy. The revelation of Jeremys brand new personality gives the crew a small break from cleaning. Bernard comes in to 'briefly' introduce himself which turns into him starting a shift, which no one is happy with. After a hectic day in the shop Chris goes on his date with Christmas-obsessed Ivy which ends abruptly with a planned escape call from Emma. Bernard is spotted at a bar, Emma persuades Shola and Hugo to join him and discover how lonely he has been since George passed, and to learn that he loves tequila even more than they do. After forgetting her bag at the store, Shola and Emma rush back, Emma discovers a giant Victorian antique relic advent calendar, after Shola leaves, Chris finally takes some interest in it and lets Emma pull out the item in the first door... a sachet of bird feed. "Underwhelming" as Chris says.

2 December

Emma is updating the crew on stories from Manchester and how manic her first few months of teaching has been. Chris is too focused on his love life to actually care about what's going on and pushes an important letter from the bailiffs to the side. Bernard is ready to help in the shop however it's not the shop which acquires his help. Hugo's new crush is a professional chess player so he

needs Bernard to teach him how to play before his date tonight. During the intense training session there is a surprise visit from Dolly, she finds out Bernard knew about George's death and simply forgot to tell her which causes a frustrated Dolly to leave in a state. Hugo feels sorry for Bernard, so decides to blow off his date for an evening with him instead. Oscar and Henry are back at uncle Chris's shop and have two very important questions, first if they can have band practise out the back and secondly for some cigarettes. He only agreed to one. Beth and Jeremy have a discussion about their careers, Beth is trying to persuade Jeremy to stick to their job. However, his new shift in thought would prefer to help people who are actually in need.

Chris gets a facetime call from mum, but not to ask about him, instead moaning about Richards new electric scooter and how Bob and Sandra are already in Spain. Emma opens up to Chris about why she split up with Harrison, Chris opens the advent to find a pedestal sink slip joint wrench.

3 December

Amanda comes in looking for the perfect ornament however nothing is up to her taste, Chris suggests she comes back after a delivery. Shola creates the store's social media accounts as she tells Chris it is a must in this day and age. Dolly and Bernard make up after their disagreement. After persuasion from the crew, Chris is going on his second date with Ivy... and her parents to his shock. Whilst Shola is covering at the shop there is a surprise visit from the jobsworth inspector, Henry, who warns her that if immediate action



isn't taken in regards to the health and safety issues in store, then the store will be forced to close within the next month. Meanwhile, Emma has enlisted the help of Hugo out the back to help her write a song which will be used for a sex-ed class. Jeremy comes in to help with refurbishing even though he causes even more damage, he also catches his sons practising out the back but agrees not to tell Beth. When Chris returns from his date Emma is excited to sing him the sex-ed song, he misinterprets and thinks the song is for him believing that Emma is trying to flirt in a strange way. Before going up to bed Chris finds a peculiar shaped picture frame in the advent.

4 December

Chris's obsession with finding a girlfriend grows and Emma has had enough of hearing about his new matches, so she teams up with Shola to get his profile blocked. Chris is now convinced he will never find love and is fuming that he paid for a 3 month gold membership and will now miss out on all the perks. Jeremy is keen to help at the shop again and after battling with a bird infestation in the roof he divulges that all is not well with Beth. Bailiffs come knocking and shouting demanding for the owner to open up, Chris makes everyone hide and to no surprise it's an opportunity for him to be closer to Emma. After the bailiffs give up they warn they will return. Natalia comes in with a unique (to say the least) sweater on and the crew compliment it, which results in her returning with clothing they feel obliged to wear. Dolly and Hugo have an exhausting time teaching Bernard how to use his new iPhone, when Hugo goes for a quick toilet break, the sink in the toilet is found

to be broken. Bernard uses the pedestal sink slip joint wrench Chris found in the advent to fix it. Chris finds an extravagant snow globe in the advent.

5 December

Emma and Chris have been bickering like children all morning whilst putting away a huge delivery. Shola confronts Emma about being blatantly unhappy with Chris's dating obsession. Amanda returns to place her personalised bauble order with her grandfather's ashes. Chris secures a date with Natalia. Chris and Shola are confronted with keyboard warrior Karen who creates a social media war that Shola is not backing out of. Hugo has a surprise visit from his parents and Beth meets love interest Jordan for the first time. Meanwhile, Jeremy is doing more

things at the practice which infuriates her as he is keen to set up a charity for pro bono clients. In the evening Chris is on his date with Natalia at Winter Wonderland, where he dips into some of the money that is for fixing up the shop. When he gets back to the shop he opens the advent door to find a small packet of matches.

6 December

Shola is back to back with clients at her tattoo shop when Chris's nephews come in attempting to get the name of their band tattooed on their arms. Hudson and Mariah come into the shop loved up, Hudson secretly orders a personalised proposal bauble, Emma is in awe of their love



whilst Chris is too busy swiping on a new dating app. After over hearing that Chris is having a golf day, Natalia gifts him with a specially made golf vest which he accepts with a fake smile. Richard, Jeremy and Chris have a bonding golf session which Chris is absolutely rubbish at, Chris opens up to his father and Jeremy about how bad the financial problems are at the store, Jeremy becomes even more keen to help out. Susan facetimes as she's packing and is fuming because "dad left a red sock in the white wash!". Natalia sees him getting rid of vest before heading into the bar, she calls their 'relationship' off. The electric & gas switch off, Chris has to light up candles, he uses the matches that were in the advent. In the advent he finds a beautiful jewelry/music box.

7 December

Emma is swamped with lots of work but Chris is desperate for her to cover the shop as he has a date, when he arrives at the bar he is shocked how the sweet girl he had been chatting to online is, in fact, a hot headed nightmare who has no manners with the staff. He manages to make a quick escape. Whilst marking books and running the store Emma goes to the kitchen to make a cup of tea where she discovers a picture of her and Chris when they were younger. Chris returns from his date after a "communication issue" and is confronted with young Benji who believes George was in fact Father Christmas. Chris gives him the snow globe from the advent and tells him it is from where Father Christmas lives. Hugo helps

Jeremy to take his mind off his issues with Beth and takes him for a wild night out in Soho. Chris's parents are off to Spain and Susan is already on the phone complaining to Chris about what she can't find in the supermarket. On returning, Chris gifts Emma with the jewelry/music box. In the advent calendar he finds a recipe book.

8 December

Shola has a tattoo client out the back of Chris's store to the dismay of Hugo. Chris bonds with Bernard who fills him in on many mysterious tales about his uncle George, the stories make him appreciate the shop more. Oscar and Henry witness their parents not getting along. At dinner Jeremy opens up about wanting to retrain as a social worker and to no surprise Beth storms out. Susan facetimes Chris fuming as Bob and Sandra have a gazebo but she's apparently "not jealous at all". Shola manages to sweet talk the returning bailiffs with a free tattoo each in order to buy more time for Chris to make the money needed to repay. After previously planning to

have a catch up evening with Emma, Chris decides to cook a meal from the old recipe book he found in the advent to surprise her. Unfortunately, Emma can't be reached as she has just found out her mother has been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis... After waiting some hours Chris throws away the cold meal and opens the advent to find a skipping rope, one of his and Emma's favorite hobbies when they were younger.



9 December

Shola persuades a curious Dolly to get a tattoo, with interesting results. Beth is taken on a lunch date by Jordan, and is impressed with his lifestyle and keen to take the affair further. Susan facetimes Chris to gossip about Beth and Jeremy. Meanwhile, the gang is concerned about Emma, who hasn't been seen or heard from in a few days - Chris is beside himself, and is repeatedly calling her, but her phone is off. In a bid to increase profit for the struggling shop, Hugo, Shola and Dolly organise a Drag Queen Christmas Ball. This is a competitive drag race, followed by a Christmas ball, in which they use decorations from the shop, drum up publicity, and have a great night, following a lot of prep and last minute invitations. In today's advent calendar window, they find a beautiful Tiara: they use it to crown the Drag Ball winner.

10 December

Emma returns, being dismissive of their concerns, saying she was working: Shola doesn't buy it, and nor does Chris. It makes him angry that Emma won't be honest with him about where she was, causing friction between the pair. They find bandages in today's slot of the advent calendar, to general bemusement. Later, Beth is on the warpath come parents evening, and poor Emma gets the brunt of her dissatisfaction. To make things worse, Beth and Jeremy's marital issues come to a head in front of all in attendance. Later,

after a well needed drink, Emma confides in Shola about her mother's troubling diagnosis. Oscar and Henry take shelter from their parents' insanity in the shop with Chris. Susan facetimes to get the scoop on the latest with Beth and Jeremy, only to be joined on the call by Beth herself. Hugo and Bernard are left to mind the front of the shop and discover just how bad the finances are. It's a slow night, up until a Mrs. Irene Howard comes in asking for help, having just "accidentally" shot her husband with an antique pistol after witnessing him watching pornography: those bandages came in handy.

11 December

In today's advent calendar window, they find a blank contract for a shop employee. Emma is helping out at the shop, and gets harassed by Tony the Creep. Chris shoos him out and brings Emma a ketchup sandwich as a thanks and sorry for the pervert. Jeremy tries to connect with a distant Beth, and meanwhile Susan facetimes to tell everyone that Bob and Sandra won five grand at the bingo. Victor the general manager of five star Mayfair Hotel 'The Hyacinthe' comes into the shop with a problem about his vast and intricate order. Hugo has a string of very bad job interviews - it turns out, Bernard had been systematically sabotaging them, as he thinks he's a natural in the shop. Chris agrees, and formally hires him, hoping his sunny personality will bring more customers in.



12 December

Chris struggles to balance the books, once again, putting him in a bad mood. Bernard finds a microphone in the advent calendar. Harrison comes into the shop looking to surprise Emma, but finds Chris alone on shift, as Emma is at the school helping Oscar and Henry out with their music. Chris feels jealous of Harrison's obvious attraction to Emma. Victor also comes into the shop, still unhappy with his order. Arabella and Chris have a blind date. It doesn't go great, up until Arabella discovers that Chris has his own shop. Richard takes over parental facetime duties today, to bring news of Susan's heatstroke. She allegedly fell asleep reading OK magazine. Jeremy finds an unlikely source of comfort for his marital problems in Bernard, who persuades him to do a public romantic speech for Beth in front of everyone, and this backfires horribly.

13 December

In the calendar, Bernard finds a lovely ornament. Chris and Emma deliver Victor's parcel and get invited to his hotel's Christmas party. At the do, they get complimented on being a "good looking couple" - much to their embarrassment. At the party, they also catch Beth and Jordan in the act. The inspector returns, and Shola and Hugo have to deal with it when a shelf breaks and falls on his head. Bernard visits George's grave, and reflects on his time as his friend, also placing the ornament on his gravestone. Flashbacks are used, both to show the old gang, and George asking Bernard not to tell anyone he is dying.

14 December

In the advent calendar, Emma finds sheet music for the Driving Home for Christmas and gives this to Oscar and Henry to practice - they do so out back, and Chris is enchanted by her accompanying his nephews on the piano. Chris schedules a date with awful Arabella. Later, he and Emma discuss what they saw at the party. Beth comes in, trying to scope out what they know, and catches Oscar and Henry practising their music in the back. She bans them from music, and we find out that Jeremy knows about the affair. Bernard goes on his first date with a man in a few years - Hugo and Shola help him prepare. Shola has to leave suddenly when she gets a call, saying her shop has been broken into. Susan facetimes about Beth and Jeremy, again, trying to prize the truth out of the gang. Chris tells them to be sensitive for once, this isn't an anecdote for Bob and Sandra. Chris and Susan then fall out over her continual absence. Looking at the shop's finances, Chris voices concerns, and Arabella plots to bring around potential buyers.

15 December

Bernard finds a ghost noise machine in the calendar. When Arabella brings an interested friend to come to view the shop, he puts the machine on and tells terrifying haunting stories about the building to put them off. He also breaks some expensive pipes, just to be on the safe side - Chris is furious given their financial position. Emma is going to cover the shop for Chris, but he mocks her for being stressed about teaching, calling it the "easiest job in the world", much to



her dismay. In revenge, Emma pretends she has a sudden tinder date and can't cover anymore. Dolly witnesses this, then runs into Emma later, alone in the bar. They get tipsy and moan about men for the remainder of the evening. Hugo and Shola are on storeroom duty, and find a full-scale replica (or so they think) of Waterhouse's *The Lady of Shallot* in a dusty cupboard. Susan facetimes, this time saying she has sent Bob and Sandra's daughter Lucinder to come in and look for design ideas for her flat in Hackney - she's a bit difficult, and the gang dislike her. Bernard applies his ghost noises to get rid of her.

16 December

In the calendar, Chris finds a load of vintage board games. Beth, Jeremy and a reluctant Oscar and Henry attend family therapy, only to bump into Hugo, who has a lot of therapy to deal with his relationship with his mother. Jeremy and the boys leave, and Hugo reschedules his date, taking Beth out to lunch and hearing her side of the story. The gang has a game's night at Beth's house, where Emma reveals her highly competitive streak, and the gang finds clues of art forgery inside some of the games, causing Arabella to be suspicious. Chris has brought Arabella to games night, and in short, the gang can't stand her. She spends the whole night trying to persuade Chris to sell the shop and cheats in the board game. Although the gang hate her, Beth seems keen, which says a lot about her as a person.

17 December

After the disastrous family therapy session Oscar and Henry return to the shop to practice with their band, no longer listening to Beth's demands. Emma helps them to practice a unique grunge version of *Driving Home for Christmas* for the upcoming Christmas Concert at school. Arabella goes to the library to dig up information on George's past, Shola sees her acting suspiciously and follows her to see what Arabella is doing. Shola tries to tell this to Chris but he's under Arabella's spell and won't listen. This causes further divisions in the group. A newspaper article comes out about Beth's upcoming trial defending Jordan, they are pictured close together and look slightly intimate. Jeremy sees this and realises that his marriage might be in jeopardy. Richard Facetimes Chris, acting as an intermediary between Susan and Chris' squabble. The advent calendar reveals a Christmas glass barometer. Meanwhile, Chris struggles once again to pay the shop's debts.

18 December

Arabella takes Chris out for brunch and tries to convince him to sell the shop. She tells him she has buyers lined up from contacts in Russia. This is heightened by a visit from the inspector, detailing all the current building regulations the shop is failing. Emma warns Chris that Arabella

is not to be trusted after speaking with Shola. Amanda and Hudson return for their personalized



orders, Hugo accidentally mixes them up with potentially disastrous results. He realises just in time and has to intercept the parcels before Hudson tries to propose to his girlfriend with the ashes of someone's dead dad. The gang (including Bernard) form a bowling team in place of one of Shola's friend's teams which had to drop out, and they develop an intense rivalry with another team for the LBC regional heats. The advent calendar reveals an old key. The glass barometer indicates a storm is on the horizon.

19 December

Chris is trying to find out where the old key fits in the shop during a busy shift, convinced George is leaving him a clue. The advent calendar reveals a map of blueprints of the shop. Shola comes in on her lunch break to help at the same time as Dolly who gives everyone her signature hot chocolate and cheese and pineapple hedgehog. Shola eventually uses the map to discover the secret hatch filled with forged art. Chris is terrified but realises this might be a way to solve their money issues. Dolly puts him in touch with a former member of hers and George's friendship group, Simon, who has connections with the criminal underworld. Simon explains how George used to be involved with art forgery and that he was one of the best. Chris, Shola and Simon meet with a counterfeit art gang. It quickly transpires that they are going to rob them. Although, a call comes through at the last moment from a mysterious source connected to Jordan, telling the gang to stand down. The counterfeit art is exchanged for the original amount of money and Chris,

Shola and Simon are let go. Emma is frazzled with the pressures of her Mum's diagnosis and the Christmas concert. Not knowing what to do Emma turns up at Chris' door, and stays the night on his sofa. Chris looks after her thinking it has something to do with Harrison. A snow storm begins.

20 December

Emma and Chris wake up and act awkwardly towards each other after the previous evening. Chris swears Dolly and Shola to secrecy about the exchange. Chris uses the money to pay all the bills and hire builders to come on Boxing Day to repair all the damage. He pays them double for working over Xmas. When asked by Hugo and Emma, Chris lies and says that George left him an unexpected sum of money and it's only just been found by the solicitors. It's the evening of the big Christmas party at the bar. Harrison returns, grabs a mic and tries to win Emma back through serenading her with a song, which is excruciating to watch. Emma runs out and Chris follows her. As Emma and Chris have a 'moment', Susan facetimes to 'bury the hatchet'. Arabella breaks up with Chris after hearing he is keeping the shop but claims it's because he is 'too immature and indecisive for a woman of her worth'. Harrison and Arabella hook up after realising they are both alone at Christmas. Shola and the Inspector stay for drinks after everyone has left and end up sharing more than just a Christmas kiss. The advent calendar reveals a tiny wooden heart carving.



21 December

Shola reveals to the gang her night of passion with the inspector. After Emma and Chris' heart to heart, Emma opens up to Chris about her Mum's diagnosis. Dolly and Bernard reveal they will be spending Christmas by themselves, the crew invite them over to the Christmas dinner they will be hosting at the shop. Emma is busy rehearsing for the Christmas concert and helping the nephews with their band performance. Beth and Jeremy break up. Jeremy doesn't know where to turn so comes to Chris's shop and asks to stay with him. Chris and Hugo take Jeremy for a night on the town to forget his woes. A drunk Jeremy tells Chris not to waste his opportunity with Emma and then throws up on his shoes. Oscar and Henry Facetime Susan for help with their family disintegration. Susan and Richard question whether to return to England, but Susan isn't best pleased with the idea. The advent calendar starts to reveal clues of a family secret with a painting of a family tree with rotten branches.

22 December

The advent calendar reveals George's prison records, which baffles everyone. Chris continues to try and console Jeremy. Oscar and Henry come over to the flat for an honest talk, including Susan virtually as an 'impartial bystander'. Jeremy takes his son's to a charity that he's been secretly working with which is serving Christmas dinners

to low-income families. Oscar and Henry's perspective changes and they see the new side of Jeremy. Bernard gives Hugo a really sentimental gift. The Inspector comes into the shop, ecstatic at his blossoming relationship with Shola, no longer bothered by any of the structural damage or damp. Chris is questioning his and Emma's relationship, he goes to the school to tell Emma his feelings where she is wrapping up the final rehearsals. However, Emma has just received a phone call about a job offer back in Manchester. Chris decides not to tell her how he feels and pretends he just 'stopped by.' He leaves and walks home in the snow alone.

23 December

The entire episode is set 6 months in the past told from the perspective of George. The episode follows George's terminal cancer diagnosis, being looked after by Bernard and George slowly deteriorating. George reflects on life whilst bumping into the various characters of the series in various circumstances, Hugo in the hospital with his parents, Shola on the street, etc. He spies on all of his family members to learn who to leave the shop to, settling on Chris. He spies on Chris talking to Emma animatedly on the phone, her saying that she might be moving back to London. A frail George fills up the advent calendar, pausing on the 23rd day which is an old picture. The episode flashes to the present day with Chris holding the picture showing that George wasn't his great uncle but actually his grandfather.



24 December

Chris is reeling from the shock of the advent calendar. It's the day of the Christmas concert and it's all hands on deck to get everything ready in time. Emma has asked Chris if they can borrow some stock from the shop to decorate the stage and hall. Shola is trying to convince Chris to say how he feels but he doesn't want to ruin Emma's big opportunity. Susan and Richard return

home from Spain earlier to surprise everyone but just get in the way. Beth wins her case and gets Jordan off the hook. Everyone including Bernard and Dolly attend the Christmas concert. Beth and Jeremy meet at the concert and agree to remain civil for the twins.

After all the stress and planning the concert is a great success. The nephews' grunge version of Driving Home for Christmas goes down a storm. Emma is seen fretting about whether to sing at the end and there's an unexpected five minute interlude. Shola works out what is going on and goes to talk some sense into Emma. Emma, with Shola's encouragement, decides to make a grand gesture and sing an original song dedicated to Chris. Chris watches in the audience, transfixed. When the concert is finished Chris can't get Emma on her own with everyone coming to congratulate her, including a parent who is a record company scout giving Emma their card.

Finally Chris and Emma can't stand the tension anymore and run off to the staffroom. Confessing their mutual love for each other, they passionately kiss; a lifetime of missed opportunities between them rising and bubbling to the surface.

The crew and Chris' family return to the shop for a special Christmas Eve dinner made by Dolly which is full of weird buffet items, including three different cheese and pineapple hedgehogs. Chris reveals the family secret to everyone and they propose a toast to George for helping him bring everyone together. The advent calendar then reveals a vintage bottle of port (George's favorite Christmas) tippie and a note from George saying 'Merry Christmas to my family from wherever I may be now'.





JMGStories

WWW.JMGSTORIES.COM