

WHITECOATS

Episode One: "I Hate Gordon Stern"

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The Situation

The adventures of a group of researchers in a small lab in a British University biological science department.

A group of twenty- and thirty- somethings with diverse ambitions and attitudes; they exist in a cut-throat environment in which egos seethe over the rewards offered by success in science, ranging from the trivial to fame and riches. Sadly, substantial success will never touch any of their lives; this is one of the more mediocre scientific groups. They just aren't that good.

The Characters

Dr. Malcolm Anderson: Late 40s, pompous, erudite group leader; thinks he is the greatest undiscovered scientific talent in the world – he's not.

Dr. Clare Greer: Late 30s, attractive, dryly witty, left-wing and slightly new-agey, in a home-spun "Little Women" sort of way.

Jake Bassett: Mid 20s, energetic Australian graduate student, Jake 'takes things up' on a regular basis. Indecisive, he still cannot decide whether to pursue science or music.

Dr. Ben Fisher: Late 20s, handsome, ambitious, fueled by nervous energy, Ben is a Jewish New Yorker, obsessed with getting a paper in the highly prestigious journal "Cell", plots of vengeance against his hated ex-boss, and cult movie trivia.

Maggie Dowling: Early 30s, Mancunian single mother working as a part-time technician. As smart as any of the PhDs, her family has so far stopped her studies.

The Locations

1: **Meeting room** of Malcolm's lab. A room with a large table, a sink, coffee cups, microwave, fridge, and a white board.

2: **The Lab** – a lab with six work benches, a sink at one end and a writing desk at the other. Malcolm has a small adjoining office with a small desk and laptop computer, shelves of scientific journals. His door is usually open.

3. **Café St Gil:** A local restaurant/café where the group members often congregate.

4. (Episode 1 only) **A Hospital Room**

Episode One: I Hate Gordon Stern

Plot:

The lab receives a visit from Dr. Ben Fisher, a scientist from a top lab in the USA, where he is so badly treated by the famous scientist Gordon Stern, that he can't stop talking about him or obsessing about the various ways in which he wishes to harm him. At lunch with Clare, Ben and she argue over global politics and cutlery. Back in the lab Ben boasts about a new technique he has developed and spills a toxic mixture of chemicals onto his left hand and his leg. What looked like a superficial burn is bad enough to threaten his life by poisoning. Ben waits in hospital, the whole ensemble by his side, to hear whether he is shortly to die in agony from poisoning. Losing control completely, Ben yanks up the dial on his morphine drip, passing out. When he comes around, he is told that he will live. Ben reflects on how he has wasted two years of his life being unhappy working for Gordon Stern and accepts Malcolm's invitation to join his group.

Subplot 1:

Jake does an all-night experiment, coming into the lab at 1am after a night out and uses up four people's lab benches without their permission. He spends the night going between five sets of equipment, tending his experiment, using five alarm clocks that go off all the time, giving him no time to eat his sandwiches.

In the morning the contents of everyone's benches are mixed up. Exhausted, Jake calls up Maggie at 7am and begs her to come in early and help him to work out where everything goes. Maggie agrees, but insists that in return, he must find her a date for that evening. Jake, in the role of matchmaker, shows Maggie digital photos from his files of single men in the department. Jake tells the guy (Adrian) that she picks that Maggie is a 'sure thing'. Maggie finds out and later relates the date: she plays along, until Adrian tries to follow her home. To avoid hurting Adrian, Maggie tells him that she is a founder member of a youth cult of abstinence and can't have sex with him unless they marry, possibly not even then.

Subplot 2:

Malcolm tries in vain to plan a group hike to the local dales. It is not that anyone really hates hiking but everyone agrees that his personality is intolerable without a background of 'noise' provided by scientific discussions.

SCENE 1: INT THE LAB – DAY#1 8.45AM

CLARE ARRIVES FOR THE DAY. SHE MOVES SOME PAPERS ON THE WINDOWSILL, UNCOVERING A PORTABLE STEREO. HAPPILY, SHE TURNS THE RADIO ON, TUNING TO JAZZ FM.

CLARE:

So that's where you've been hiding!

MAGGIE ENTERS, LOOKS AT THE RADIO IN HORROR.

MAGGIE:

Turn that off! Get it off, NOW!

CLARE:

What...?

MALCOLM ENTERS, SINGING TO HIMSELF, SOME ARIA BY WAGNER.

MALCOLM:

Ah, radio on is it? Good-oh. Pop me down for a shot of Wagner later on today. Let's see, what are we carrying today... Oh look, Tristan! You'll enjoy that, mark my words.

HE SLAPS A CD DOWN ON TOP OF THE STEREO, THEN EXITS, STILL HUMMING, TO HIS ADJACENT OFFICE.

MAGGIE:

Another fine mess.

CLARE:

Sorry, I forgot. It's been so long.

MAGGIE:

Yeh well. When the others get here...I'm telling.

**SCENE 2: EXT: BACK DOOR TO LAB– DAY#1
9.15AM:**

JAKE ARRIVES CARRYING THE REMNANTS OF A GIANT PINK ICED DOUGHNUT IN ONE HAND, A STACK OF PAPERS AND A BOX OF LATEX GLOVES IN THE OTHER. ATTEMPTING TO GET HIS SWIPE CARD OUT OF HIS BREAST POCKET, HE FIRST STUFFS THE DOUGHNUT FRAGMENT INTO HIS MOUTH, WHICH IS ENTIRELY FILLED AND THEN SOME. HE GROPEs AROUND HIS CLOTHES IN VAIN, THEN IN ANNOYANCE MAKES FOR THE FRONT ENTRANCE.

**SCENE 3: EXT: FRONT ENTRANCE TO LAB –
DAY#1 9.16AM**

JAKE STOPS LOOKING FOR THE CARD, REMOVES THE DOUGHNUT AND HITS THE INTERCOM BUTTON ON THE SECURITY GATE

JAKE:

Jake Bassett here. I forgot my card. Can you let me in.

THERE IS NO RESPONSE.

JAKE:

Its Jake Bassett here. From the Anderson lab. Can you buzz me in?

BARBARA:

Do you have an appointment?

JAKE:

No I work there for Pete's sake!

BARBARA:

Is there someone I can call to verify that?

JAKE:

BARBARA!

BARBARA:

Because you know we can't let you in without ID. Or an appointment. Or perhaps you can ask someone in the lab to come down and vouch for you?

JAKE:

Barbara, will ya give it a rest? C'mon. You didn't enjoy the date either! It wasn't just me. So, cut me some slack here. Stop pretending you don't know me.

BARBARA:

I'm reading from the proceedings manual here, Jake. "No member of staff shall grant access to another member of staff in the absence of appropriate ID unless they are prepared to sign that member of staff into the building for a verifiable purpose." Now, I'm not qualified to assess the purpose of your visit to our department, Jake, so you'll understand...(THE REST IS DROWNED OUT)

THE DOOR OPENS, CLARE STANDS THERE WITH A BEMUSED EXPRESSION.

CLARE:

Now, what have we learned about a woman scorned?

JAKE:

Never leave your hair on her pillow in case she clones your evil twin?

CLARE:

That's not it. Need any help with that doughnut?

JAKE:

Its under control, I'm on the final stretch.

SCENE 4: INT: THE LAB – DAY#1 9.19AM

JAKE AND CLARE ENTER THE LAB.

MAGGIE:

Ooh, nice doughnut, Homer. Is that the work of Mr. Binky D.?

JAKE:

It *is* a Binky.

MAGGIE:

But is it a doughnut? I don't detect a curve...

JAKE:

It's like the curvature of the Earth, we're too close to see...

MAGGIE:

Ah, the Crater Size...

JAKE:

I felt the day called for it.

CLARE:

What's the event?

JAKE:

My big experiment. Finally, I have all my samples. I'm gonna analyse them all in one day. 400 samples, 50 per gel. I'll use all 8 gel tanks, a roasting hot probe and have the result tomorrow.

MAGGIE:

Okay, I'm clearing out. I can't bear to watch you lose a month's work on a single day.

JAKE:

No, listen, cos its gonna work! All I have to do is...

CLARE:

Its another of your mad schemes, Jake. Do it if you must, but not today. Malcolm's invited the seminar guy to come over and meet us all this morning.

JAKE:

The seminar!

CLARE:

Yes, the regular Monday seminar, and on a Monday too. It's like the Twilight Zone.

JAKE:

Jeez, I lost track of the day. I thought it was Tuesday. Are you sure it isn't Tuesday?

MAGGIE:

Start working normal hours and maybe you'll notice.

JAKE:

I've tried. I lost the knack somewhere in 2003, when I went nocturnal with the Internet girlfriend.

CLARE:

Ah yes, "Tallulah".

JAKE:

It was too her real name...

EXAMPLE SCENE 1. INT. THE LAB – DAY#2

08:30

MAGGIE AND JAKE HAVE JUST FINISHED RETURNING THE LAB BENCHES TO NORMALITY. JAKE FLIPS OPEN HIS MOBILE PHONE ON WHICH HE DISPLAYS A VARIETY OF IMAGES FROM HIS LIST OF ELIGIBLE BLOKES.

JAKE:

Okay, you ready? Have I got the guy for you!

MAGGIE:

Go on then.

JAKE:

Bachelor number one: Bob Ingersol. Attractive, brilliant, has his own group, Bob has three years left on his fellowship! And a house!

MAGGIE:

And a wife. His stag party was last month - you went!

JAKE:

I did? I remember losing some time last month. So probably not an alien abduction after all...

MAGGIE:

Probably not the Mothman either. So far, I'm not impressed.

JAKE:

Wait a bit...Freddy Bartoli. Almost finished his PhD, has his own car, great job prospects.

MAGGIE:

Face like a camel, wears polyester ties. Move on.

JAKE:

Mitch Leeds. Nice body, does martial arts, had a paper published in *Genes and Development* last year.

MAGGIE:

Jake, he's a headcase. I've seen him pull karate moves on people who jostle his arm at the salad bar!

JAKE:

Can you afford to be this fussy? Hey easy now! Ooh wait, how about Andy North? I hear great things from the Prof about him...!

MAGGIE:

Then the Prof can date him! Or could if only he were gay too!

JAKE:

Really? Geez, I'm really out of date. Okay; Hugo Pilkington.

MAGGIE:

So blond, he's almost albino.

JAKE:

Freddy Blumberg.

MAGGIE:

Too intellectual.

JAKE:

Liam Barnett.

MAGGIE:

Too working-class-hero.

JAKE:

Karl Hoffman.

MAGGIE:

Too Mittel-European.

JAKE:

Maggie, this is gold you're rejecting! These are my best guys!

MAGGIE:

Come on Jake. What are you keeping under the table?

JAKE:

All right...but this one is not really on the approved list yet. Adrian Dempsey.

MAGGIE:

Adrian, Ade-you're-dumped, Adrian?

JAKE:

Nope, I'm pretty sure it's just 'Dempsey'...

MAGGIE:

You daft ha'p'orth. Adrian who that Lina Tedoldi dumped last week. She couldn't be doing with the whole "This isn't working out" thing so she just told him: "Ade, you're dumped" on the way to a seminar.

JAKE:

Any good?

MAGGIE:

Well, he's dead fit. He was good enough for Lina...at least for six months he was. Go on, let's try Adrian.

JAKE:

Adrian, you beauty! Have I got a date for you!

MAGGIE:

So, how will you persuade him?

JAKE:

Oh, I can be very persuasive.

MAGGIE:

Because we had a deal...

JAKE:

Hey, no worries Maggie, I'm all over it.

MAGGIE:

Okay, Jake, do your worst. Tell him to pick me up at 7pm.

CUT TO – INT. MEETING ROOM

EXAMPLE SCENE 2. INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM

WITH ONE BED – DAY#2 21:30

BEN LIES IN BED, BOTH LEGS AND ONE HAND DRESSED IN BANDAGES. HE IS COMING ROUND FROM THE ANAESTHETIC AS JAKE, MALCOLM, MAGGIE, AND CLARE ENTER.

BEN:

Did they get it all off...?

CLARE:

They said they'd never seen so much graffiti on a human being – you had "I hate Gordon Stern" written all over you.

BEN:

Funny. When do I get to see a doctor?

JAKE:

That's gonna take some time. Hey, what did they do?

MALCOLM:

Looks like a skin graft...

CLARE:

Yep, they've robbed your Peter to pay your Paul.

JAKE:

The good news is, they didn't touch your Thomas...

BEN:

So, what happens now?

MALCOLM:

Well, assuming things erm, you know, turn out okay, then...

BEN:

Assuming? (SHOUTS) Let's assume!

MALCOLM:

At this stage an assumption may be premature.

BEN:

Okay, rewind!!! What are you saying?

MALCOLM:

Well, it could be kind of bad.

BEN:

Are you saying...I could die?

MALCOLM:

(SHRUGS)

Yes.

BEN:

Jesus, Mary, Joseph and all the saints!

MAGGIE:

Oh, you're a Catholic?

BEN:

No, Jewish...it's just that my nanny was Irish, it's what she said when things were really, really bad...

JAKE:

Look out posh boy. Me nan was Oirish too.

BEN:

Death? But it's too soon! There's so much I haven't done! Walked the Inca trail! Taken food aid to refugee camps! Donated blood!

MALCOLM:

I don't think anyone's going to be wanting your blood. It's tainted.

BEN:

Because of my chlamydia? But that was years ago!

UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE

MALCOLM:

Because of your blood poisoning from the phenol.

CLARE:

But we'll file that away for future reference...

MALCOLM:

You see, you may have absorbed enough phenol over the surface area of your skin, to die from the poisoning.

BEN:

Poisoning? Oh God, slow-death-in-agony-type poisoning?

JAKE:

If you've had less than 7% of your skin affected, you'll probably be okay.

MAGGIE:

7%...what would that be, say, an arm and a leg?

JAKE:

Or, could be, two arms and the face.

MAGGIE:

Yeh, the face has to be what, 3% right there.

JAKE:

Completely. Or, you know what, it could be, an arm, and the front of two legs.

MAGGIE:

Probably only have to be from above the knee.

BEN:

What, suddenly I'm a roast turkey?!

I'll either walk from this hospital with a couple of ski runs in my thighs...or else I'll die like a fallout victim!

It can't be! I must be okay... I don't feel unwell...

MALCOLM:

Oh, that wouldn't kick in for a few hours.

BEN:

Kill me now. I can't face the future. Come on do it, quickly, before the doctor gets here. Turn off my life support.

BEN INDICATES DRIP MONITOR

CLARE:

That's your morphine dial.

BEN:

(RANTING)

Turn it up! Turn it right up, bring on the dancing chickens!!!

JAKE AND CLARE TRY TO RESTRAIN BEN AS HE REACHES OVER AND TURNS THE MORPHINE DIAL UP TO MAXIMUM. HE PASSES OUT.

CUT TO – INT. HOSPITAL ROOM DAY#2 22:30