

STEPASIDE

SERIES BIBLE



created by
J.J. WATTS

"Stepaside" (a.k.a. "Hell on Earth", a.k.a. "The UK's Rectal Haemorrhoid") is a small coastal town in the North of England, and is, to quote Dostoevsky, "an absolute shithole". [citation needed]

Factories, litter, drugs, crime, gangs, scousers, poverty, chicken shops: Every negative aspect of modern Britain congregated into one glorious promotion for the local EDL chapter's next "anti-immigration campaign".

(Trust me, you're less likely to get shot staying in Syria)

Stepaside is emblematic of all the worst aspects of a rough, working-class Northern town. Imagine Hull and Sunderland had a baby..... and then Bradford pissed in its face. That's "Stepaside".

So, what happens when a well-to-do, upper-middle-class family had to up sticks and leave their secure and comfortable life in Highgate, London, and swap Waitrose for Pound Stretcher? Yachts for mobility scooters? Gastropubs for the kebab takeaway "daaaaaane roooooode"?



STEPASIDE

THE WORST TOWN
IN BRITAIN

Well, you get the not-for-the-easily-offended and crudely animated show of the same name. "Stepaside" follows the Arterberrys, a formerly well-off family who suddenly find themselves in that exact situation when Simon, the head father man breadwinner of the family is made redundant, forcing them to relocate downgrade to the titular wasteland, much to the chagrin of his stuck-up wife and children. You see, the Arterberry are, to be blunt, awful people. Which means they should feel right at home in Stepaside!

"Stepaside" is a cartoon explicitly for adults, but it is quintessentially British too, in its style, comedy, stories, characters, setting and themes. America has dozens of successful adult animated shows, with the number growing even more in recent years, and these shows are massively popular here too, but the U.K. has yet to break significant ground in this genre. "Stepaside" is an opportunity to break into that untapped market. Stepaside is that rough, crappy, unnoteworthy British town people will instantly be familiar with, probably because they grew up somewhere similar (I know I did), and the show unashamedly explores all of its problems and ugliness, while garnering a laugh at the same time. British comedy is at its best when it is cynical and self-deprecating, after all.

Characters

Aiden Arterberry

Aiden (12) is our protagonist and middle child of the Arterberry family, and his intelligence and maturity are matched only by his misanthropy and sarcasm. Being a child prodigy has made Aiden despondent with the world around him, and somewhat of an arrogant, anti-social egomaniac, who would rather spend his time reading *The Guardian* while smoking a cigarette or working on his screenplay than fraternize with family or peers. His parents have forced him to see a therapist several times, believing that he's depressed, although Aiden claims he's just a "realist". He's like a 45-year-old office worker in the body of a 12-year-old boy. (whoa, that came out wrong...)

However, the astute self-awareness and superior intellect he believes he possesses often blinds him to his own faults and ignorance, of which he has in spades. Aiden has been terminally friendless his whole life, something which secretly bothers him. Surprisingly, people rarely warm to you if you're constantly looking down your nose at them. As a result, he's a very lonely and insecure little boy on the inside. But that doesn't change the fact that on the outside he's a pretentious twat. Aiden is a well-versed film buff, and often quotes or makes references to classic or niche cinema/literature which flies over the heads of others.

Aiden is horrified at the prospect of moving to Stepside, particularly upon hearing how far north it is. His exceedingly low-expectation are confirmed, and then some, upon their arrival. Aside from having to live in the box room of a house which is a fraction the size of their old one, Aiden has to attend Copperfield High, the roughest school in the country, and rub shoulders with the "unwashed masses". Despite his snobbery, Aiden still somehow reluctantly befriends three other outcasts: Dassin Hussein, Connor O'Sweeney, and Jamal Musgrave.

Unable to accept his new life, Aiden immediately sets about applying his skills and wit into reclaiming the life of luxury he believes he's owed. Stories typically revolve around Aiden devising money-making schemes so he can add to his "escape fund". They typically range from morally questionable, to blatantly illegal, to exercises in outright super-villainy. (one week he'll be making bootleg football stickers, the next he's selling nude pictures of his mates to local paedophiles) Aiden doesn't care what depths he must sink to as long as he gets out of Stepside, and he has no problem dragging his new friends into it, hoping to use and manipulate them for his own benefit. Because after all, every good super-villain needs henchmen.



Simon Arterberry

Simon (44) is Aiden's father. After he's made redundant from the Feline Fine cat food factory (for eating supplies) the family is forced to move into the house Simon's aunt left him in her will, which just so happens to be in Stepside. Resented and blamed by his family for their loss of status, you'd think Simon would have the same jaded disposition as his son. On the contrary, Simon always makes the effort to put on a happy face and look on the bright side of life, even if he's an emotional wreck under the surface.

A little too British for his own good, in both his attitude and mannerisms, Simon finds joy in the most boring and mundane activities, and he's so polite and accommodating it leads to both his family and the thugs who make up the town walk all over him. Being a good person doesn't get you far in Stepside, and Simon exemplifies that. He is modelled after Wallace and Ned Flanders, with a little bit of Tobias from 'Arrested Development' thrown in.

Upon arriving in town, Simon starts regularly visiting the local Job Centre (described by Simon as a "magical place") eager to get back into the work force, but is perpetually unlucky, much like the story of his life (not that anyone would ever want to hear it). Simon has a new job almost every episode, but somehow always manages to lose it by the end.



Cecilia Arterberry

Cecilia (43) is the mother of the family, although she doesn't really do much in the way of mothering, often choosing a bottle of wine over a bottle of Aptamil. Or several bottles of wine. Or an entire vineyard's worth. There's no kind way of putting it: Behind her external efforts to convey an image of upper middle-class perfection, Cecilia is a toxic, alcoholic trainwreck who at times is barely able to function. She constantly berates and puts down her husband Simon, while neglecting her infant son Oliver.

Cecilia is by far the biggest snob in the family and where the children get the majority of their bad habits from. She is always the first to complain, speak her mind, or ask to see the manager, all while making snide and elitist remarks about the local "riff-raff", in spite of the tattered state of her own life (not that she'd ever admit to being anything other than an exemplary wife and mother). I'm probably being a little too hard on Cecilia, as Simon plays his part in enabling her behaviour. Their marriage is one of dysfunction and co-dependency, and a subversion of the standard sitcom couple, in which it's usually the husband that is constantly messing up. Cecilia is modelled after Patsy Stone from 'Absolutely Fabulous' and Hyacinth Bucket from 'Keeping Up Appearances'.



Freya Arterberry

Freya (17) is the eldest of the Arterberry offspring. She is your typical modern teenage girl, in other words: spoilt, entitled, self-obsessed and eternally glued to her phone. When she's not texting her long-distance boyfriend Nathaniel, she's snapping selfies in her new top from House of Fraser to upload for her 100,000 Snapchat followers (#blessed). It's like she's been plucked straight off 'Made in Chelsea'.

It goes without saying that Freya has a bigger social media life than a... you know, actual social life. But in her brief interludes between Vlogging and Tik Tok'ing, she spends her time advocating social justice issues, such as Feminism, LGBTQ+, Black Lives Matter, environmentalism, #MeToo, ect. Only problem is, she's not very good at it, and usually completely misunderstands whatever group she's claiming to be fighting on behalf of, before hoping back online to tweet about how "woke" she is and how she's changing the world (#yaaaaasssss-queen-slay). Virtue-signalling is her priority, as opposed to actually helping others.

Fair to say, in a town where progressivism and political correctness is the last thing on people's minds, Freya tends to annoy people, A LOT. She usually takes some moral objection to whatever scheme Aiden and his mates are engaged in.



Oliver Arterberry

Oliver (4) is the baby of the family, and is always wearing his grisly bear onesie (seriously, it needs to be washed). You may have noticed something different about Oliver, but we don't talk about that. Simon's grandfather just had a very dark complexion, that's all. Cecilia definitely didn't bang their gardener and give birth to a bastard child. Now let us never speak of this again.

Oliver is a hyperactive, uncontrollable boy on account of the lack of stability and discipline at home, and speaks only in incomprehensible garbled nonsense. Yeeeaah, Oliver might be a little "special".

Schrodinger the Cat

Schrodinger (29) is the Arterberry's geriatric pet cat. He's decrepit, incontinent, flea-ridden, and according to Aiden, should've been dead 15 years ago. However, Cecilia refuses to put him down, despite every vet's recommendation, as he's like "the child she never had". Schrodinger can't do much at his age and spends the majority of the time sleeping.



Dassim Hussein

Dassim (12) lives across the road from the Arterberry's new house on Bell End in an off-licence, a family-run business operated by his parents, Ahkid and Yumum. He also has a younger sister called Nadia. The family are originally from Pakistan, but Dassim was born in Stepside. He meets Aiden on his first day in Stepside and the two become reluctant mates. The unofficial leader of "the lads", Dassim compliments Aiden's book smarts with street smarts, and his expert knowledge of everyone and everything in Stepside. Unlike Aiden, he has a more chill, laid-back attitude towards life, and usually just goes along with Aiden's schemes because there isn't anything better to do.

Despite being part of a Muslim family, Dassim has zero interest in his faith, and often indulges in depraved activities such as smoking, sex, pornography, gambling, underage drinking, eating bacon and just general anti-social behaviour with his mates. He is an overt perverted womaniser, and proud of it, considering himself to be a "player" and a "sex god", often bedding women twice his age and from a variety of different backgrounds. "Who limits themselves to one flavour of ice-cream?". Upon seeing her, Dassim instantly makes it his goal to "bang" Freya, but she continuously rebuffs his advances every time with disgust.

He places great emphasis on his appearance, putting a lot of thought and effort into his style and self-grooming. He is particularly proud of his hair, which he uses three layers of industrial strength German-engineered gel on every day. Dassim is also the biggest smoker of the four lads, which has given him a raspy voice.

Dassim resents being born into a religious household, and he considers Islam to be the antithesis to everything he is and everything he enjoys, often feeling trapped and suffocated. No one asked him if he wanted to be a Muslim. He constantly clashes with his father, Ahkid, who says that Dassim's behaviour brings shame on their family and gives them a bad reputation among Stepside's Islamic community. Dassim is bullied by the other boys at Mosque (which he hates being dragged to every week) due to his choice of mates, namely Connor. In Stepside, Muslim boys aren't supposed to knock about with white boys, and vice versa, which has led to both Dassim and Connor being ostracised from their respective peer groups and outcasts at school.



Connor O'Sweeney



Connor (12) is a rough, delinquent, all-round cocky little shit in Aiden and Dassin's class. He is the typical annoying, hoodie-clad, ASBO-wielding job one expects to find in a town like Stepside. By far the most foul-mouthed and aggressive of the lads, Connor spends the majority of his time shoplifting and trying to convince others that he's hard (by talking shit about their moms and threatening to stab them), only for him to turn around and run away while pissing his pants the second he antagonises the wrong person. Connor does not do well in school, on top of that he has extreme behavioural problems and anger issues.

His attitude stems from his abusive home life. Connor lives in squalor with his violent alcoholic father, Keith, and pet pit-bull, Shredder, on the roughest street in town. Despite being on the receiving end of both physical and verbal abuse from his dad on an almost daily basis, Connor idolises him and hangs on his every word, often lying to his mates about how badass his dad is, even though they know it's all bullshit.

Connor is the most tragic character in the show, and while he can be horrendously racist and homophobic, it's obvious he's just reiterating stuff he's picked up from his dad. At the end of the day, Connor is still a child, a victim of circumstance, and failed by a school system that doesn't care enough to help. It's clear he doesn't fully understand what he's espousing, evidenced by the fact that despite claiming to hate Muslims, his best mate is Dassin. Like Dassin's father, Keith doesn't like Connor hanging out with "one of them". Unlike their parents, Connor and Dassin were born and grew up in a diverse environment, and they've never understood why everyone has a problem with them being mates. The two often playfully insult each other's backgrounds, affectionately calling each other "Paki" and "Pikey", neither of them understanding the impact words like that have.

Shredder the Dog

Shredder is Connor's pet pit-bull. He was originally being trained by Keith for dog fighting, who would keep him chained up in the back garden, deprive him of food and beat him regularly in order to toughen him up. Thinking it would turn him into a man, one day Keith left the responsibilities of getting Shredder battle-ready up to Connor, but he couldn't bring himself to mistreat Shredder, and instead they grew an attachment to one another. Ultimately, Keith was unable to make Shredder ferocious enough for the fighting circuit, and he became Connor permanent companion. He is fiercely loyal towards Connor, the first human to ever show him kindness, and while he's for the most part a peaceful and docile mutt, he will spring into action the second Connor is in danger.





Jamal Musgrave

Jamal (12) is an odd, introverted and socially inept boy who is mates with Aiden, Dassin and Connor. He speaks with a lisp and lives in a tower block where his single mother, Rosie, raises him and his four siblings. Jamal's most defining trait is his awkwardness; he will often say weird and inappropriate things in front of other people, or make his mates cringe with his terrible attempts at humour. Jamal has a hard time understanding social cues, and just people in general. He is likely on the autism spectrum, but all of the adults in his life are too pre-occupied to get him officially diagnosed. His mother works three jobs, and his siblings are far more demanding than the quiet Jamal, meaning he gets very little attention at home, and his family sometimes forgets he exists.

Jamal is not very assertive, often just going along with whims of the other three lads. He can be easily manipulated and taken advantage of by others, usually Aiden. He may appear gullible and dimwitted, but he has hidden depths, and occasionally surprises the others with his insight and awareness. From Jamal's point of view, it's everyone else that are the weirdos.

Miss Kay

Miss Kay is a teacher at Copperfield High, specifically she is the form room tutor for the bottom set of Year 7, which consists of Aiden, Dassin, Connor and Jamal among others. She repeatedly fails to control the class and commands zero respect from any of them, with her classroom more typically resembling an exhibit in the zoo than a place of learning (and that includes the flinging of faeces), coupled with the fact that she's just not a very good educator in general. But the thing that separates Miss Kay from the other teachers at school is that she continues to try, in spite of her incompetency. While every other teacher has given up on these forgotten kids, Miss Kay refuses, and passionately perseveres with them, even if they resent her for it. Miss Kay chooses to work at the underprivileged Copperfield High because she dreamt of making a difference, inspired by films like 'To Sir, with Love' and 'Up the Down Staircase', however there may only be so many knocks she can take before she ends up as cold and indifferent as the rest of the staff.

Miss Kay has a hard time relating/communicating with kids (which makes her choice of career even more mind-boggling) and will often try to act "cool" and reference things she thinks they're into, only to end up embarrassing herself. However, she genuinely cares about the four lads, and acts as something of an unappreciated mentor-figure to them. While she looks uptight on the surface, outside school she has more of a wild side, enjoying parties and nights out.





Ahkid Hussein

Ahkid (39) is Qassim's strict, overbearing father. He owns and operates the off-licence on Bell End. He immigrated to England with his wife Yumum in the 90s before Qassim was born. He takes his faith as a practising Muslim very seriously, and disapproves of Qassim's behaviour and choice of friends. Ahkid is not hesitant of telling Qassim what a disappointment he is, never showing his son encouragement or support, and always expecting the worst from him.

Mr. Patel

Mr. Patel (35) is the headmaster at Copperfield High and is originally from India. He is in complete denial about the sorry state of his school and has almost deluded himself into believing that everything is going well and that he is doing a good job, even as the asbestos-filled walls physically deteriorate around him. He keeps a close eye on the lads, fearing that their shenanigans will expose how truly terrible the school is to the world.



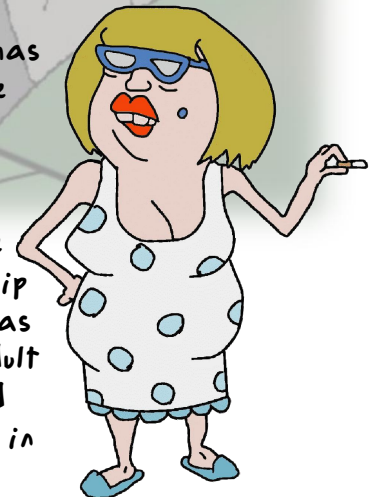
Keith O'Sweeney

Keith (30) is Connor's racist and abusive alcoholic father. He doesn't work, and spends the majority of his time day drinking and watching football. When he does step out of the house it's either to head to the betting shop or to attend an EDL meeting at the (ironically titled) Working Man's Club. He has a particular hatred for Stepside's increasing Muslim population, believing that "Muslimic extremists" want to bring "Shakira Law" to their town.



Aretha White

Aretha (56) is the Arterberry's chain-smoking, bigoted, spinster next-door neighbour. Crass and shameless, Aretha has a rough, coarse voice from years of smoke inhalation. She loves gossip and being at the centre of drama, and will often exaggerate small issues into matters of life or death. When the Arterberrys move into Bell End, Aretha forces her friendship upon an unwilling Cecilia, often using her as an emotional crutch. She lives with her adult son Scott in their run-down semi-detached house where they play loud rap and grunge in the middle of the night.





Scott White

Scott (25) is Aretha's son. He is lazy, work-shy, childlike and always high. He thinks quite highly of himself, despite still living with his mom, and the lads often come to him for "sage" advice, as he still carries an infamous reputation from his time at Copperfield High. He and Aretha have a relationship which switches between toxic/hostile, and bordering on 'Oedipus Rex'.

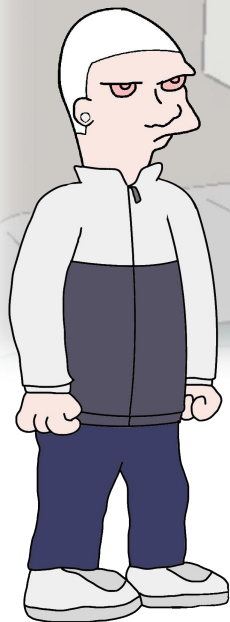
D'Rail (32) is a pimp operating in Stepside and a respected figure within the town's seedy underbelly. He modelled his persona after various pimp characters he saw in American movies growing up, and draws a lot of inspiration from 'Black Dynamite', whom he bases his voice off of. D'Rail treats pimping like a serious profession, and has respect for its routes. He also has his fingers in many other areas of illegal activity in Stepside, from drug trafficking to dog fighting, and clashes with the lads whenever one of their money-making schemes effects one of his various "businesses", leading him to act as an antagonist and threatening figure in the boys' misadventures. Despite his line of work, D'Rail often displays a vast and elegant knowledge of world culture and history.



Paul Glover

Paul (34) is Simons' work coach at the local Job Centre. He is a bleak, slightly effeminate, condescending, judgemental man who talks to Simon and his other claimants like they're children. He won't even make eye-contact with them, preferring to type away on his computer while they talk, before regurgitating something about "Pre-Outlined Work Goals" and signing them up for an unrelated course.

Imogen and Hugo



Shane Tasker

Shane (12) is an albino boy in the same class as the lads. He is a bully with a short-temper, who will often intimidate them, backed up by his two lackies, Alex and Reece.

Imogen is an elderly blind woman who lives in Stepside. Her guide dog Hugo is really a man in a suit, who takes sexual pleasure from her giving him walks and cleaning up after him. Imogen is completely unaware of the fact that he isn't a real dog, but the locals have collectively decided not to let her know. After all, ignorance is bliss.



MAP OF STEPASIDE

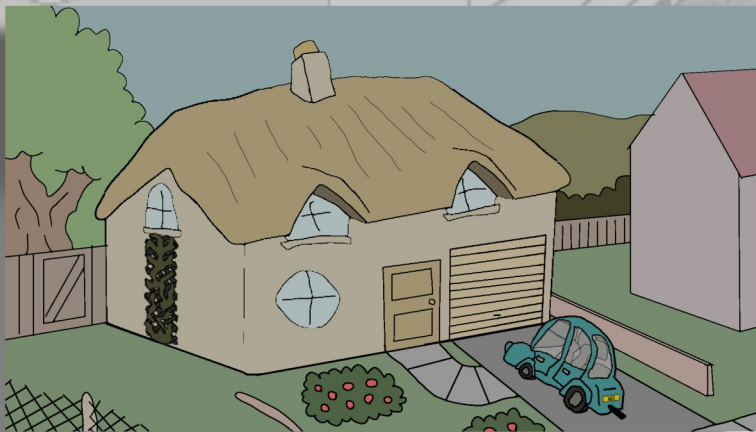
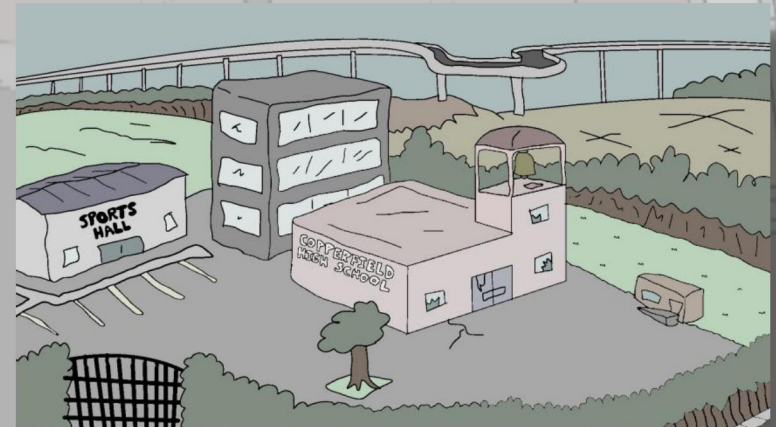


The Town

The town of Stepside is a character in its own right on the show. One of the oldest Northern mining and fishing towns which prospered up until the 80s, post-industrialisation has resulted in a steep decline to the point where it is now considered "England's shame". It is a town trapped in the past, where everything is ten years out of date, including attitudes. A now-abandoned and overgrown railway line runs through the middle of town, separating it into the 'Bad Side' and the 'Worse Side'. Unemployment, crime and poverty is at an all-time high, while GCSE results and revenue brought in from the town's football team are at an all-time low. Not to mention the streets, buildings, park, EVERYTHING, are all in need of some serious repair and upkeep, but it's just not in the budget... Is what we would say if there was a budget. Nevertheless, allow me to give you a tour of some of Stepside's most iconic and least-rat infested establishments.

Copperfield High

Copperfield is Stepside's graffiti-covered, underprivileged and under-performing high school, which Aiden and his friends attend. More like a concrete jungle than a place of learning, the school is run by the feral Burberry-clad monsters (otherwise known as students) and only on the rare occasions on which they decide to turn up at all. Most of the teachers are uncaring and pessimistic, living in fear of the children and turning a blind eye to bullying. When kids reach Year 13 they graduate to either the Job Centre or Her Majesty's Pleasure. The system has never been so streamlined.



Arterberry Cottage

This shabby, rustic cottage was left to Simon in his aunt Ruth's will, and it becomes the Arterberry's new home after they're forced to leave Highgate. Although it is still one of the nicer abodes in Stepside, it is a little small for a family of five, and a sharp step down from what they're accustomed to. The walls are covered with an ugly, dirty wallpaper. At least Simon has a garage with which to keep his beloved teal Volkswagen Beetle in. Arterberry Cottage can be found in the Bell End cul-de-sac, next to a small bridge. Behind the back garden runs the abandoned railway line.

Ahkid's Offie

Ahkid's Offie is an off-licence situated in Bell End next to a gully. It is run by the Hussein family and Ahkid often forces Qassim to help out against his will. It is popular shoplifting spot for many local scallies, including Connor. The family lives above the shop in a tiny flat.



Pigeon Shit Park

Burgundy Park, or what it's more commonly known as by the local youths, Pigeon Shit Park, is a large recreational area in the south-west part of town. It contains a playground, basketball court, skating rink, bandstand and a lake. Although it is of course not maintained and has become terribly overgrown. It gets its nickname from the large number of pigeons which live there, and the near bio-hazardous levels of animal crap found throughout the park. If you're still reading this, you should know enough about Stepside by now to safely assume that it's not a place where people clean up after their dogs. Aside from faeces, children can also find syringes, broken glass and used condoms in the tall grass and mud, and maybe even the occasional paedophile watching them from the bushes. Next to the park is a cemetery, and behind it is a thick woodland.



The Den

The Den is the lads' secret base hidden in a small clearing deep inside the thicket at the back of Pigeon Shit Park. The lads have filled it with discarded items they've found around town, such as a piss-stained sofa, cupboards filled with porno mags, a basket in the corner for Shredder, and the latest games console to hit the market in Stepside: a Nintendo 64. The four boys use it as a chill pad and to plan their next get-rich-quick scheme. Since none of them like their home lives, the Den acts as a sanctuary of sorts and is a very important location in the show, even though Aiden personally finds it "unsightly" and "rancid".

Other landmarks of note

The High Street - A long stretch of road which runs through the east side of town, including the town centre, the high street is home to Stepside's most luxurious dining experiences, a.k.a. several chicken shops. It also features other cheap high street staples, such as a TK Maxx, Primark, Poundland, Poundworld, Poundsaver, Poundstretcher, an arcade, betting and pawn shops (conveniently located right next to each other).

The Job Centre - Nestled directly in between BetFred and Cash4Gold (because where else would it be) is the busiest place in town. It's said that the only people in Stepside who are employed are the work coaches at the local job centre. It works very much like the school, in that the work coaches don't give two shits and treat the claimants like they're children. Simon comes here every week in his pursuit to find work, where he receives little support from his work coach Paul.

The Asian District - As a multicultural British town, the various ethnic groups have naturally been segregated to specific areas. These streets in the south east part of town is where the majority of Stepside's Muslim population reside, and where the local Mosque is. However, Qassim's family lives on Bell End, which is slightly north of the Asian district.

The Factories - Once a thriving industrial town, Stepside has several factories on the west side of town, some abandoned save for a few transients and meth addicts, some, like the sulphur factory and meat processing plants, still in operation, and the main cause of Stepside's water pollution distinct pungent aroma.

The Beach - Much like Blackpool Pleasure Beach, there is very little pleasure to be found here, as the water is too dirty to swim in and the sand too littered with rubbish to sunbath on. Not that the sun ever shines on Stepside.

The Stadium - Once the heart of the community, the home stadium for Stepside F.C. has seldom seen use in the last decade. Once greatly respected, the team's popularity and revenue has plummeted following several disappointing series. Their team is one of the few things the locals still feel a sense of town pride towards, however Stepside F.C. fans, or "Steppos", have a reputation for being violent, abusive drunks and the first ones to riot at an away game. This is all, of course, completely true.

The Actress and the Bishop - A tiny old-school British pub tucked away down a forgotten backstreet. It is somewhat of an oasis from life in Stepside, as the owner, Isaac, actually works to make it a nice place. It only has a small pool of regulars, including Simon and Ahkid.

The Working Men's Club - The main congregation point for the rough, far-right working class of Stepside. Keith and his mates gather here to drink and blame foreigners for all their problems.

The Underpass - Behind Copperfield High are a number of fields, bridges, walkways and tunnels that run under the A16 motorway. It is a sketchy area, popular for graffiti and frequented by tramps and gangs. The lads sometimes play chicken on the railway tracks.

The Tower Blocks - Built in the 60s, still standing, and getting less structurally secure every year. Jamal lives in the South Block.

Club Lush - A popular nightclub and drug scene among Stepside's younger crowd. Found in the Red Light District.

Quality Save - Stepside's biggest discount supermarket. Many families, including the Arterberrys, do their weekly shop here.

The Courthouse - A place everyone in town ends up in at some point or another.



Episodes

First Episode -

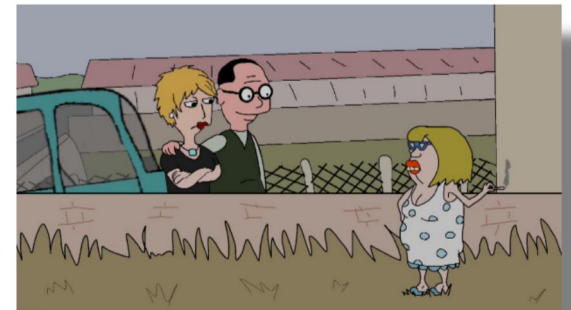
The Worst Town in Britain

Status: Fully animated (29 minutes)

Act I

Aiden is attending his weekly therapy session, where his therapist expresses frustration that they've been unable to make any progress. After being collected by his parents, and returning to their home in Highgate, Simon breaks the news to Aiden and Freya that he has lost his job, meaning the family has to relocate to his late aunt Ruth's cottage in the northern town of Stepside. The family is vocally incensed by this. Nevertheless, before they know it they're packed up and hitting the road.

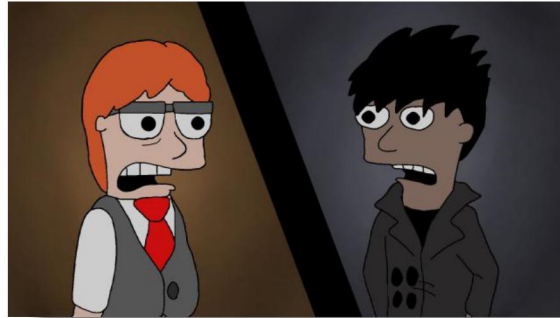
The Arterberrys arrive in Stepside and Aiden is immediately horrified upon seeing the town and the uncouth locals, particularly when he spots what appears to be a pimp having sex with a prostitute up against a wall in an alleyway. It is clearly a place someone of his stature does not belong. He is left even more disappointed when they get to Ruth's poky cottage and realises he's been allocated the box room in the corner of the house. Meanwhile, Simon and Cecilia meet their new neighbour, the obscene troll-like spinster Aretha.



Act II

Because he's getting on her nerves, Cecilia sends Aiden across the street to the off-licence while the rest of the family unpack. At the off-licence, Aiden finds a boy the same age as him, Dassin, behind the counter, masturbating over a lads mag. Aiden asks for some cigarettes, which Dassin gets for him, before mocking Aiden's posh voice and asking him if he has a sister he can bang. Before a repulsed Aiden can rush out of the shop,

Dassin's father Ahkid comes downstairs and scolds Dassin. Once he realizes Aiden is new in town, he tells Dassin to show him the way to school the next day, a prospect both Aiden and Dassin are horrified by.



Aiden and Dassin arrive at Copperfield High School the next day. Aiden is shocked when he sees the state of the place, as it's even worse than his already rock-bottom expectations, and he fears for the future of his education, and his survival in general. Dassin tells Aiden that he'll be fine as long as he keeps his head down, at which point Aiden is hit in the head by a rock thrown by Connor, who is taunting



Shane and his gang. Aiden meets Dassin's mates, Connor and Jamal, who are every bit as vulgar and common as Dassin. Aiden feels as though his life is cursed.

After experiencing a full day of school, Aiden is left even more dejected. He goes with Dassin, Connor and Jamal to the boy's toilets where they all light up cigarettes. Aiden complains about how terrible everything is and how his life is plummeting downhill, which annoys Dassin, who doesn't appreciate Aiden looking down on them.

The headmaster, Mr. Patel, enters the bathroom and busts them for smoking, sending Aiden home early, but not before warning him to stay away from Dassin.



Act III

That evening in the cottage, Simon and Cecilia express their disappointment in Aiden for getting sent home on his first day. That night, Aiden decides enough is enough. He cannot live in this hell-hole. He orders a taxi back to Highgate and sneaks out of the house. He quickly realises a short ways into his taxi ride that the driver is not willing



to go outside the city limits, essentially trapping Aiden inside Stepside. He forces Aiden out of his vehicle, dumping him in the middle of downtown in the dead of night.

A terrified Aiden wanders around the dangerous

streets of Stepside, encountering tramps and the sound of gunfire.

He by happen-stance runs into Dassin, who is nonchalantly graffitiing a wall. Dassin is completely at ease being on these streets at night, which shocks and confuses Aiden. All of a sudden, they're accosted by the pimp Aiden saw as he entered town, who forcefully takes them back to his drug den.



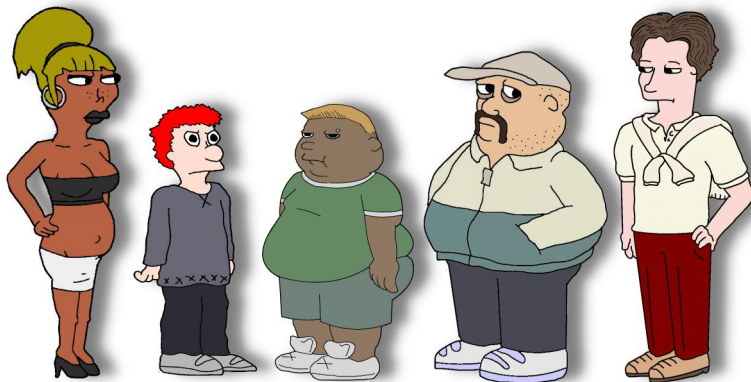
The pimp, D'Rail, ties Aiden and Qassim up and reveals that he has been searching for Qassim because of his outstanding debt. However, when one of his prostitutes suddenly goes into unexpected labour, Qassim seizes the opportunity to wriggle loose from his ropes much to Aiden's amazement. Qassim opens the window to sneak out, but at the last second has a change of heart, and begrudgingly unties Aiden. They escape the den together.



Outside in the alleyway, Aiden finds it difficult to believe that someone like Qassim would save him without having some kind of ulterior motive, so he gets his wallet out to offer him some money. Insulted, Qassim asks Aiden how he's ever managed to make any

mates acting the way he does, before starting to walk away. In a rare moment of vulnerability, Aiden tells Qassim that he's never had a mate before. Qassim says that explains why Aiden is such a cunt.

The two of them exit the alleyway. Qassim asks Aiden if he still wants to leave Stepside, to which Aiden replies that his life was already shit in Highgate anyway, so it doesn't really matter. Qassim realises that the sun is starting to rise, so the two of them start heading to school as Qassim asks Aiden, again, if he can bang his sister.



Second Episode -

Kitty Kitty Bang Bang

Status: First draft script completed

As Bonfire Night fast approaches, Miss Kay shows her class an old Public Information film from the 70s on firework safety. The film is so scary and gory it naturally encourages the lads to get their hands on some fireworks to play with in Pigeon Shit Park. Aiden looks down on them, but Qassim and the others peer pressure him into setting one of the rockets off himself, which collides with a passing pigeon, creating an explosion of guts and feathers. Aiden is horrified by what he's done, but the lads are impressed, thinking it was "badass".

The next day at school, word has spread about Aiden's bird murdering, and Shane's gang approaches him wanting to see it for themselves. Aiden realises that he can raise money for his Escape Fund by charging the gore-hungry lads from school to watch him shoot fireworks at local wildlife, so, after the lads visit Scott to restock on fireworks, he puts his new bloody business venture into practice that day after school.

Following several profitable performances of animal mutilation, Aiden comes home to see that his crimes are being reported on on the local news. Fearing he'll be caught if he continues, he decides to call it quits, but Qassim convinces him to do one final extravaganza, and go out at the top of his game. In order to make his last show the best one ever, Aiden decides to use the family cat, Schrodinger, believing he should've died fifteen years ago anyway.

That night Aiden is visited in a wet dream by his hero, Guy Fawkes, who tells him that he'll regret killing his cat. Later on at the park, in front of the crowd of Year 7s, Aiden prepares to blow up Schrodinger by shoving a firework up his arsehole, but can't bring himself to do it. Feeling guilty over all the needless death he's causes, Aiden decides the only suitable punishment for himself is to take Schrodinger's place, so he asks Jamal to shove the rocket up his arse instead. Aiden then realises how insanely moronic he's being, but it's too little too late. The firework has been lit, and Aiden's buttocks are blown clean off. The episode ends with Aiden in hospital, being told his testicles have been replaced by prosthetics.

Meanwhile, Simon attends his first appointment at the Job Centre, which he has been very much looking forward to. Simon arrives at the centre to find an angry woman being dragged out by security. Simon is confused as to why someone would kick off at the Job Centre, as it is a place of "employment opportunities galore". After waiting over an hour, he meets his work coach, Harsha, who explains to him how to do his weekly job search. Simon gives her some paperwork to send off, as he's applying for SMI (Support for Mortgage Interest) so that they can pay off the mortgage his aunt Ruth left them on her house.

A few days later, Simon calls the Job Centre helpline to check on the progress of his SMI application. The family's money troubles are growing worse and it's making him anxious. Unfortunately, after waiting three hours to speak to someone other than a machine recording, the woman he speaks with on the other end is no help at all.

At his next appointment, Simon discovers his work coach has changed, and it is now a man called Paul. Paul isn't pleased with how Simon has conducted his job search, despite him following his previous work coach's instructions. Simon tries to get information from Paul regarding his SMI application, but he is also no help, signing Simon up for a CV course, which he doesn't need. Insulted by Paul's condescending attitude, Simon loses his temper, and has to be dragged out by security.

(First-draft scripts for around a dozen episodes have been drawn up, each with varying degrees of completion and in no particular order, but the following two are the ones I am most proud of)

Connor the Dogger

Status: First draft script completed

The episode opens with the lads being chased through the park by Shane and his gang, who shout that Connor has nicked Shane's charger, which Connor denies. Connor ditches his mates resulting in Aiden, Dassin and Jamal getting battered. When they later find Connor relaxing in the den Dassin lays into him, discovering Shane's charger in his pocket and also accusing him of stealing a six-pack from his dad's shop. Connor gets very defensive, and threatens them because his dad is a policeman and he's been in prison, facts they all know are lies.

Upon returning home later, Connor gives the six-pack to his dad Keith, who is annoyed Connor didn't get him the brand he asked for. Keith is slumped in his chair, drunk, and watching football as usual. Connor asks if he can watch with him, but Keith smacks him over the back of the head. Before Connor goes to his room, Keith tells him not to feed Shredder, the dog they have caged up out back, because he needs him good and hungry before the big fight. In his room, Connor uses Shane's charger to turn his phone on, and watches a video of his late mother on it before he falls asleep.

The next morning, Connor wakes up to the sound of D'Rail threatening Keith in the back garden, who is angry that Keith has still not gotten Shredder into fighting shape. Once D'Rail has left, Keith notices that Connor was eavesdropping. Keith puts Connor in charge of toughening Shredder up while he goes to the betting shop, and tells Connor to give him a savage beating. Connor tries throwing rocks at Shredder while he's in the cage, but a rock knocks the hatch open. Connor shrieks as Shredder darts out the cage towards him, but to Connor's surprise Shredder doesn't attack. In fact he's harmless and friendly.

Connor spends all day playing with Shredder in the park. He later brings him to school. Shredder protects Connor when he's approached by Shane's gang, scaring them away. However, when Shredder causes trouble in the dinner hall, Mr. Patel calls Keith and tells him to come and collect the two of them. Keith is not happy when he gets there, however Connor tells him that he's been beating Shredder the entire time, and that's he's really tough now. Keith is impressed, and says he's taking Connor with them to the allotments so he can watch Shredder in his debut fight. Connor is horrified, as he knows full well Shredder will be torn apart.

Connor texts Dassin and the others, asking them to come round, despite the fact that they're still pissed off at him. They arrive to find Connor in his back garden with Shredder, on the verge of tears. Before he can explain, Keith comes out the house and whisks them all to the allotments. As Keith takes Shredder to D'Rail, Dassin convinces Connor that he has to tell his dad the truth, or Shredder will be killed. Connor confesses to his dad that he's actually been playing with Shredder. Keith is disgusted and ashamed. He calls Connor weak, like his mother, before dragging Shredder away, promising that Connor will never see him again. He's fighting tonight regardless.

That evening, while watching the video of his mom on his phone, Connor decides he needs to rescue Shredder. The lads return to the allotments at night, right as Stepside's criminals and gobs are coming out to watch the various dog fights. While Keith forces Shredder into the ring against a much larger pitbull. Connor arrives to see Shredder about to be attacked and dives in the way, causing the pitbull to attack him, clamping its jaws down on Connor's shoulder. Shredder begins fighting the pitbull.

Meanwhile, Dassin, Aiden and Jamal break open the cages where all the vicious dogs are being kept, who immediately start attacking all of the patrons, turning the scene into a bloodbath. Keith shoots the pitbull attacking Connor and Shredder between the eyes, killing it, but he's then set upon by three other dogs. Keith tries to shoot them, but he's out of bullets. Shredder protects Keith, growling and scaring the other dogs away. The feral dogs all flee from the allotments, bearing down on Stepside where they begin mauling innocent people. Aiden comments on how they really didn't think this plan through. However, with D'Neil badly mauled in the attack and in no condition to be carrying out threats any time soon, Keith reluctantly allows Connor to keep Shredder as his pet.

Dassin Going on Sixteen

Status: First draft script completed

Aiden finds Freya in the living room watching a Jeremy Kyle-esque program called 'Real Chat with Nat', which is hosted by her long-distance boyfriend Nathaniel. Aiden comments on how trashy and degrading the show is, but Freya insists she's only watching it to support Nathaniel. Aiden doesn't believe her. Dassin comes to the door and Aiden finds him scratching his crotch. He needs to go to the STI clinic... again.

The lads go to the clinic to pick up Dassin's prescription. As they're leaving, Dassin comments on how he's glad STIs are the only negative drawback from regular casual unprotected sex, and they're spotting by a scantily dressed young woman with a baby in a pushchair. Aiden arrives home to find Simon and Cecilia taking Freya to a rehab facility. Apparently she's become dangerously addicted to 'Real Chat with Nat'. Aiden goes inside to find the show still playing on TV. He mocks Freya for her genuine enjoyment of it, only to find that he can't look away. He's getting drawn in.

Meanwhile, Dassin arrives home to find Tatiana, the woman who was staring at him in the clinic, sat in the living room talking with his parents. She's claiming that her son, Phoenix, is Dassin's child. Dassin refuses to believe it, and his parents express their disappointment and shame. Tatiana immediately begins demanding child support.

Aiden manages to get his hands on an audience ticket for the filming of 'Real Chat with Nat', which he has already become obsessed with. Once there, Aiden strikes up a conversation with Nathaniel, although he doesn't remember him. Aiden asks if he can work on the show as a stage hand, and Nathaniel explains how his show is structured on exploiting uneducated working-class northerners, and that Aiden can earn a fair bit of money by joining him.

News of Dassin's parenthood has leaked to the local press, and newspapers are excitedly reporting on how a 12-year-old Muslim boy has become a father, thereby "successfully assimilating". After being flocked by reporters, Dassin flees to Tatiana's flat, begging her to tell them all it's a lie. Instead, Tatiana does an interview with them, and goads Dassin into taking responsibility for Phoenix live on air.

Tatiana wastes no time in calling Dassin over to babysit while she goes away for a Sun holiday weekend in Magaluf with her girlfriends. Not knowing the first thing about babies, Dassin naturally messes everything up, but weirdly finds himself bonding with Phoenix, particularly after taking him to the park and getting some fatherly advice from Simon, who is out with Oliver. However, as soon as Tatiana returns she takes Phoenix and kicks Dassin out, not letting him know if or when he can see him again, and to not be late with his next child support payment.

The next day at school, Connor and Jamal show Dassin a video they found on Youtube. It is of Aretha and Tatiana fighting in the street, with Aretha claiming that her son Scott is actually the father of Phoenix. Dassin is devastated. Aiden seizes his chance to impress Nathaniel, and tells Dassin that he's working for a show which handles stories like his, so he brings Dassin, Tatiana, Aretha and Scott onto 'Real Chat with Nat' for DNA tests. On the show, things naturally descend into chaos, with Tatiana and Aretha getting into a physical altercation and Nathaniel talking down to Scott. Because this involves someone he knows, Aiden sees things in a new light, viewing the people on stage as freaks in a carnival, with Nathaniel as the ringmaster and the audience the jeering crowd.

Dassim refuses to go on stage, he's too anxious, but cameras are still shoved in his face and Nathaniel brings everyone backstage to surround him. Dassim tells Aiden this has made everything worse. Feeling bad, Aiden sneaks Dassim out the back while everyone else is shouting in each other's faces and reveals the DNA results to him in private. Scott is Phoenix's biological father. Aiden allows a heartbroken Dassim a minute alone in the daycare room where Phoenix is being kept, and he says goodbye. As they're leaving the studio, Dassim asks Aiden if society will eventually stop making shows like 'Real Chat with Nat' which exploit the vulnerable. Aiden replies "probably not".

A few days later, Simon runs into Dassim on Bell End and asks him if he'd preferred not knowing the results. Dassim says he would, before riding off on his bike. Simon looks at an envelope he's received containing his own paternal DNA results regarding Oliver, which he rips up and throws away.

Other episodes

Petty Persuasion

Copperfield High is rocked by a scandal, as a number of teachers have been accused of sexual misconduct by students. When Aiden is tricked by the lads into spending all night playing video games, he forgets to revise for a very important Biology test which will determine what set he'll be in for the remainder of Year 7. Worried that he may have failed, he lies to Mr. Patel that the Biology teacher, Mr. Blunt, molested him. Mr. Patel, desperate to avoid another scandal, bribes Aiden into keeping quiet by allowing him to retake the test. However, Aiden's actions inspire Dassim and Connor to do the same, and they begin threatening every teacher with false accusations until they're ruling the whole school.

We Need to Talk About Skivin'

Cecilia feels that Aiden's new friends are a bad influence on him, and when she reluctantly lets them into the house only for Dassim and Connor to get into a fight in Aiden's room, trashing it, she forbids Aiden from associating with them. The very next day, Aiden ignores his mother's wishes and "skives" off school with them. Upon finding out, Cecilia tracks them down to Quality Save, where they have climbed onto the roof. Aiden however is struggling to get up, and Cecilia's sudden appearance causes him to fall, knocking him out. Cecilia must then rely on the lads' knowledge of the town to help her traverse the dangerous streets and get Aiden to the hospital.

My Fair Sweeney

Aiden discovers an exclusive Gentleman's Club on the outskirts of Stepside, but can only gain membership if he brings in someone else. Aiden makes it his mission to turn Connor into a proper English gentleman, so he moves him into the house and begins "educating" him, although it's mostly punishments, insults and a shock collar. Simon says they can't afford another mouth to feed, as the family's budget is stretched really thin. Once Connor is ready, he impresses the hosts at the club and they admit him entry, but reject Aiden based on Connor's advice, who betrays Aiden as revenge for his mistreatment of him. The Arterberrys are left poor and relying on a food bank while Connor enjoys life in the club.

To Strip, with Love

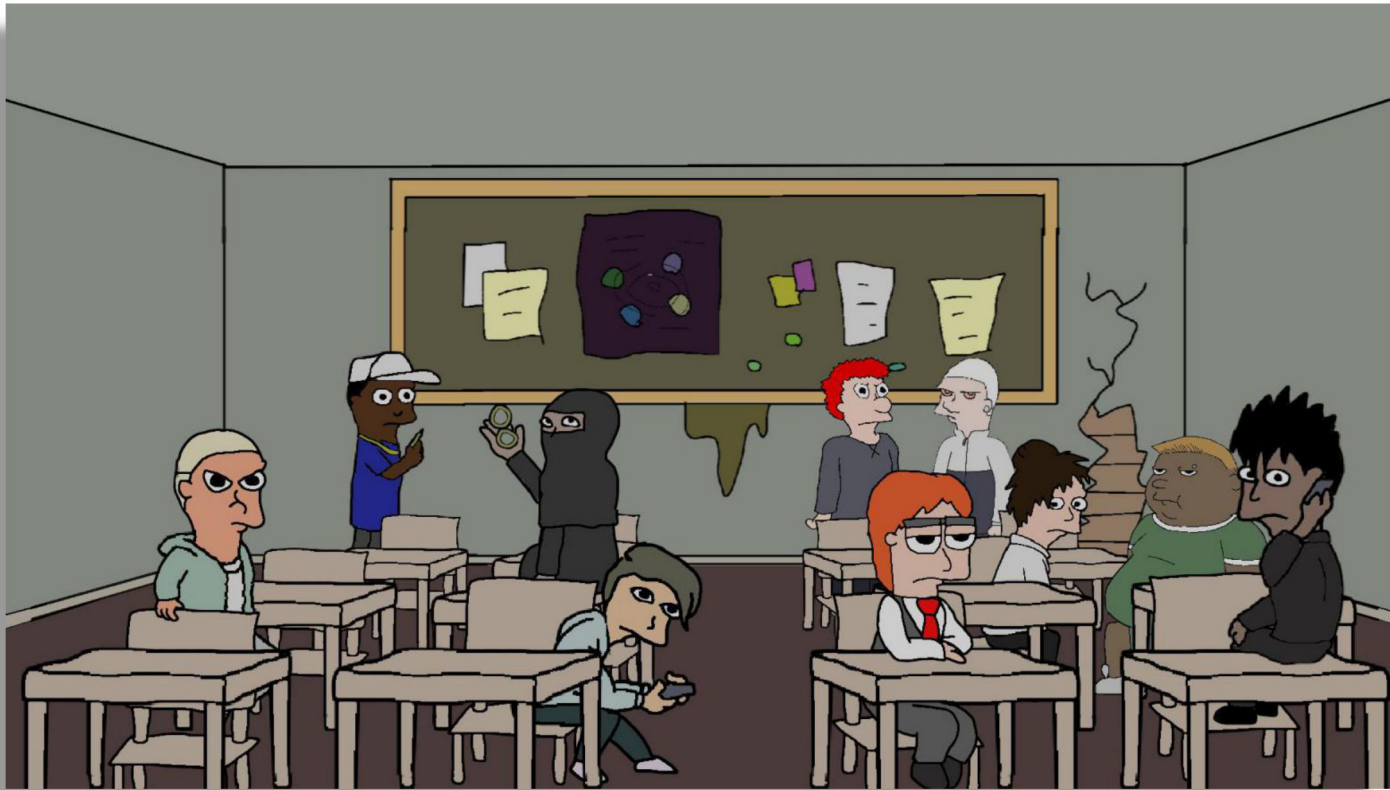
After confiscating some items from them in class, Miss Kay becomes determined to do more to help her most at-risk students, which means the lads. She starts by giving Aiden one-on-one mentorship sessions, which he despises. The lads decide to steal back their confiscated items, so they follow Miss Kay back to her flat, only to discover that she's moonlighting as a stripper at D'Rail's club. After taking some incriminating photos at the club, the lads decide to have some fun.

A Song of Ice and Simon

A snowstorm hits Stepside, and when Simon accidentally skids on a small patch of ice while driving, Cecilia kicks him out for "endangering the family". Simon finds solace in a small backstreet pub called 'The Actress and the Bishop' which is run by a friendly Irishman called Isaac. Simon offloads all his pent-up anger regarding Cecilia to Isaac, and he starts spending a lot of time at the pub so he can escape his awful home life and his wife. Cecilia is naturally unhappy about this, and sets about breaking up Simon's new bromance.

The BFG

Freya is approached by a talent agent who asks her to be a model for their new body positivity campaign. They give an overjoyed Freya a new diet to stick to, which for some reason causes her to quickly gain a massive amount of weight. Aiden realises they're actually fattening her up because they want a plus-sized model. Despite Aiden trying to warn her, Freya says she'll gain as much weight as needed to spread the message of "beauty at any size", even if it means endangering her health.



Style and tone

As an adult comedy, 'Stepaside' mainly deals in dark, blue and shock comedy, and being a cartoon it is able to push boundaries more, as the realism is muted compared to live-action comedy, and the designs and animation of 'Stepaside' naturally lends itself to absurdity. The show explores situational and observational comedy through its believable and relatable characters and setting, while also being capable of farce and surrealism, as plots typically escalate out-of-control. However, the show will avoid fantastical elements, existing in a semi-grounded reality only slightly adjacent to our own, ensuring the characters and stories have authenticity. While the characters are all deeply flawed and broken, I believe they will resonate with viewers, and the show will occasionally include more serious and emotional moments.

Themes

'Stepaside' will cover a lot of contemporary and controversial topics that effect modern Britain, and Western society in general, such as poverty, knife crime, unemployment, homelessness, government, the NHS, alcoholism, racism, Islamophobia, multiculturalism, immigration, terrorism, religion, child and animal abuse, domestic violence, police brutality, drug abuse, mental health, gang violence, prostitution, celebrities, exploitation, gambling, the education system, bullying, sex, puberty, technology, social media and cancel culture, as well as more recent events such as Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, and BLM protests. However, the central-most theme is classism, as the middle-class Arterberrys struggle to adapt to life in the working-class town of Stepaside. Likewise, the relationship between the lads is at the heart of show, and an understated aspect is that while the world around them seems so divided, these four outcasts have different backgrounds and they don't give a shit. It's important to me that characters are not tokenized. Stories are told from their perspectives as individuals as opposed to representatives of "X" group.

'Stepaside' also values freedom of expression, social liberty, rebellion, and anti-censorship, particularly in comedy. It is intentionally politically incorrect, anti-authoritarian, ascribes to the belief that no one group or topic is exempt from ridicule or satire, is an equal opportunities offender, and politically/ideologically unbiased, but with its finger always on the pulse and socially relevant. The show is meant for everyone (so long as they're above 18) who is willing to laugh at each other, our differences, and the insanity of the world right now.

Format

While for the most part 'Stepaside' will be episodic in nature, the show will contain serialized elements, and characters will evolve and develop. I have planned ongoing story-arcs for each main character and know the direction they're heading, as well as (depending on the series' length) several major status-quo changes that will hit the show unexpectedly, keeping viewers on their toes. The show will also contain homages to TV and cinema, potentially entire episodes will be films parodies. Experimental episodes will also be frequent, such as an episode where the animation gets sloppier the drunker the characters get.

Episodes of 'Stepaside' would typically be around the same length as most comedies (20-25 minutes). 'Stepaside's animation is intentionally crude to match the show's tone and setting, and it tends towards darker, bleak colours to emphasize the grimness of the town. Animating would be fast and cheap. The entire first episode was animated by me, on the easy-to-learn animation software TV Paint, on a budget of less than £70, over a period of nine months. (keep in mind that I am one man, and most animated shows are produced by a team of roughly 30 people over a period of six to eight months) The quick-turn around time means that 'Stepaside' can skew current events and be culturally relevant in the moment.

Animation is also a far more liberating medium, as there are no limitations on what can be portrayed or what stories can be told. As several of the main characters are children, 'Stepaside' will frequently place them in situations that would be next-to-impossible to do with child actors in a live-action setting, not to mention stunts, violence and surrealist moments. Animation is trending massively at the moment, and 'Stepaside' will appeal to a wide and growing audience. 'Stepaside' could be Britain's answer to 'South Park' or 'Family Guy'.

