

Can you hear that? Sometimes, when I stay very still, don't move a muscle, & stay very quiet, I hear music. I wish I could say it gives me comfort & strength. The music that I hear, it's not music I actually like—drenched in swelling strings, heavy on the ethereal choirs, very Andrew Lloyd Webber meets ABBA meets Reader's Digest Condensed Christmas Carols. Being able to hear this music is my super power. My stupid, useless, super power.

(4 seconds of silence)

That was FOUR seconds of silence. You're going to look back on that fondly, later. Four seconds of silence, brought to you by "Sweet Revenge". Throw away that kambucha, ditch the coconut water, douse the fire cider. All you need for a happier, healthier you is "Sweet Revenge". Best served cold.

SET UP: C'MON EILEEN

Before we begin, I need you to do something. In the comments section is a link. Click on the link, and then hit pause. At the very end of the show, when you hear me say the words "**Sir David Attenborough, tears streaming down his withered cheeks, smiles into the oncoming darkness and presses "Play"**"... open the tab and press play. Do you understand. It's IMPORTANT. I can't explain WHY right now. Just...trust me. Click the link, press pause, & then, at the very end of the show, when you hear me say "**Sir David Attenborough, tears streaming down his withered cheeks, smiles into the oncoming darkness and presses "Play"**"... open the tab and press play. Play LOUD.

Oh, and BTdubs, since I didn't receive that Emergency Alerting System Test thing, you know, the nation-wide test of the AlertReady system, by Pelmorex. Yeah. That one. I didn't get that. So, asking a favour, next time, if you could all just remember to **text** me, the next time it happens, that'd be great. Thanks. Can you imagine? Missing out on the apocalypse? Be such a bummer.

If you are currently in a relationship that isn't going well, and hasn't been going well for a long time, listen to me now. RUN. Stop trying to save people who do not want to be rescued. RUN.

Oh, and don't ever eat an entire bag of Oreos in a single sitting. Unless one of the items on your bucket list is that one day your body will magically transform into an Oreo fountain.

This has been a public service announcement.

We now return to our regularly scheduled deprogramming.

Welcome to "What's Wrong?...with J McLaughlin", a safe, natural and gentle way to soothe away the trials and tribulations, the stress and terror, of your busy pandemic day. Unlike those OTHER sleep/relaxation/hypnosis videos, such as Pan Flute Pop, or Waking up a Rabbit with Demure Objects, "What's Wrong?...with J McLaughlin" contains no secret messages or hidden ingredients. So now, let's just try to be quiet for a moment and listen, really listen to that voice in your gut. Stop wandering around your living room "trying to make the best of things." Sit back, relax those shoulders, take a deep breath, and stop crying. I said, STOP crying.

There we go. There you are.

For those of you too busy to watch the show, here's the big reveal:

ONE: No one gives a (**HORN**).

TWO: Go (**HORN**)yourself.

THREE: Just don't be a (**HORN**).

SWEARING

Ya, um the **HORN**. I got a late night call from Mark, and (sigh) he was just so concerned. He loves my work, and really wants it to reach a wider audience, but he feels that sometimes the language I use is overly aggressive, uh, you know, all the swearing. We even talked about the fact that censorship is like finger quotes, and sometimes, once you start, it's hard to know when to stop. I was worried that entire show would end up being **HORN HORN HORN**. But Mark(Oh my God this is so embarrassing) really believes that my "message" is so important(I mean, he was actually using terms like "life-saving" and "world changing", and he was crying), so I made a promise to really try & not drop F Bombs all over the place. It's going to be **HORN** hard. Sorry. It's going to be ducking hard, like so ducking hard.

SIGH. Okay. Shot, puss, duck, cut, cocktail sucker, mother ducker & tuts!

This one's for you, Zuckerberg! I love you, man!

Infidels, revenants, hermits, introverts, and beleaguered socialites, are you ready?

Are you living the dream? Because it's time to wake up! Wake up! Wake the

HORN up!

Some of the subject matter I'm going to touch on tonight, you might find challenging. There may be moments that are awkward, uncomfortable, unsettling, weird. If it helps, try imagining that I'm a cute fluffy anime kitten with big eyes, or maybe a unicorn puking rainbows. Or you could imagine we are floating together in a velvet blue bubble, drifting high above the planet, safe and warm in a beautiful dreamy sanctuary. And we slowly open our fragile tender hearts to each other, discovering and revealing thoughts and feelings we have never even dreamed of before.

There you go. Now you've done it. Now you are trapped in a velvet blue bubble drifting through space & time with me, a sad, angry, desperate rainbow puke-spattered unicorn kitty. Good Luck with that.

None of what you see is supposed to make you feel any better, really. I just want to reassure you a little, like the way early one Sunday morning high on MDA, I found myself crouched behind a dumpster, carefully gazing at my friend's (very attractive) butthole in the pale dawn light, briskly chirping "You have not, I repeat, you have not, shot yourself. Stand up, zip up, let's go get a donut."

(Eat a donut) Shout out to the Thug! Seven Potatoes Forever!

This show ...you know when you are at your sweetheart's house in New York City & they're mad at you because you refused to obey the French nobleman who wanted you to wash dishes in dirty water & you go to write a letter explaining WHY you don't want to wash dishes in dirty water but the only paper you can find is a child's musical notation book that's already full of parody versions of Back Street Boyz songs including one that you suddenly realise is actually a rock ballad about boning police victim dolls?

Yah, this show is nothing like that.

TANTRUM

Who here is not meditating, hasn't adopted a cat, and is prone to fits of inexplicable rage? (point thumbs to self)

Just stomping around in little circles, being mildly pissed off all the time.

All those arrows telling you where to go.

All the restrictions & enforced ablutions.

All those nostrils on Zoom.

Sooner or later, you ARE going to get off the phone & give the phone the finger and say duck you you ducking cut. Maybe it'll be your mother, maybe it'll be your best friend. But it's gonna happen.

Where does all the unexpected yelling come from? Everything is FINE, and then suddenly I'm screaming at the closet, yelling at a doorknob, cursing out the Tupperware drawer—**HORN HORN HORN HORN HORN**

Stubborn pickle jar? SMASH that ducker!

Man on the bus, mask around his ankles? Punch that motherducker in the throat.

And that one (*stroke forehead*) duckin' HAIR, in my FACE, Cheeses Duckin' Kites!

These are unprecedeted times. And this IS self-care.

(*Breathe in. Breathe out. Close eyes. Give the finger with both hands.*)

YOLO, FOMO, FML x3

(*Breathe in. Breathe out. Open eyes, look around. Sigh.*)

Never should have bought my mantra off Wish.com. What the help was I thinking?

I wasn't, actually. I wasn't thinking. I can't...I don't...THIS doesn't work anymore.

Oh, it can memorise 14 seasons' worth of Bob Mortimer's clever bits from an obscure British quiz show, but it can't, you know, think. Like (*wave crossword puzzle & pen*) 6 Down & the clue is "fluctuate". The only word I can think of for fluctuate IS fluctuate. And it doesn't fit. AND it's the ducking clue.

(*Rip up crossword puzzle.*) Duuuuuck!

I don't WANT to watch TV. I don't want to read a book or listen to music.

I don't WANT to eat, or bake, or "garden".

"It's a beautiful day. You should go for a walk." I don't WANT to go for a walk. I would rather creep into the crawl space with my cellphone & a pack of smokes & scroll myself to death, whispering "it will get better, and it will get worse, and it will get better, and it will get worse, and it will get better, and it will get worse."

YOLO, FOMO, FML x2 (*Open one eye.*)

I'm probably dehydrated. Not drinking enough water, that's what wrong.

(*drink gallon of water*)

YOLO, FOMO, FML x3 (*Open one eye.*)

Someday soon I am going to listen to ALL OF YOUR podcasts. I promise.

I just have to finish Netflix first.

YOLO, FOMO, FML x3 (*Open one eye.*)

If we are all one, like Russell Brand says, then I am YOU, and that means that you, unfortunately, are me. I am so sorry. Because now you are a combination of Gollum and a grade nine girl who can't remember the combination to her locker. We are sitting alone in the long hallway by the library, waiting for our locker partner, radiant with shame, envy, and fear. It duckin' SUCKS to be us.

FUN FACT

You can have an opinion without other people being wrong. Your beliefs are opinions. My beliefs are opinions. Everybody always thinks they're RIGHT but really, it's just beliefs & opinions.

Just because YOU don't like Infinite Jest, it doesn't mean it's a bad book. It just means YOU don't like it. See how this works?

Always remember: I believe in YOU, I support & celebrate your dysfunction, and I accept your bull (**HORN**) without judgement.

This Fun Fact was brought to you by **COULD BE**: the passive aggressive way to say “I don’t agree, but don’t want to say I don’t agree because I don’t know how to deal with conflict, so I am going to let you know that I think you’re wrong but I am going to do it in such a way that you can’t call me on it”. Try it in your own home, at the office, or when you’re out zooming with the gang. “COULD BE”: it just might be what you’ve been looking for. Now available in “Perhaps.”

Anyone else out there languishing tonight? I am hardcore languishing. I just, I don’t know, this is going to sound silly. I just, I really miss the early days of the pandemic, you know? I mean, how awesome was that first Lockdown? When I check my memories on Facebook, I marvel at our innocence, our determination, our can-do attitude, our not-knowingness. You remember, don’t you? Your first post of the first loaf of sourdough you baked, the day your seedlings sprouted, that (cuuute!)selfie wearing your very first mask, the moment you realised for the first time in your life you were actually too bored to masturbate. Good times.

Now I’m like this little kid, straddling the hump in the backseat, and all I can say is
Are we there yet?

We're never going to get "there". There is no there, there. The NEW NORMAL implies that there once a NORMAL, something agreed upon by everyone. And that's just not true. That's not just my opinion. That's a FACT.

I mean, here we are, on the crest of the third wave, and there are people who are still refusing to wear masks, still socialising outside of their bubble. There are people are going on vacation right now, watching the ice caps melt, there are people are exploiting workers, and having wars, and not doing their taxes RIGHT NOW. In the middle of a global pandemic. How RUDE.

"But I just want to get back to normal, back to my LIFE."

This past year, that is actually your LIFE. Pandemic or not, you were always going to be bored and lonely. Sometimes. "Life is what you MAKE it" and we're making it all up, all the time. I keep searching for meaning & significance & I keep thinking "I am making this all up." And the odd random pockets of enforced gaiety just make me even more aware that yes indeedy everything is meaningless, you have to make your own meaning & if you let up for a second, if you blink or breathe, everything just falls apart.

But I hear you. Me, I'm just waiting for the petting zoo to reopen. I keep telling myself, when the goats come back, everything will be fine. But honestly, I'm dying to be properly old school BORED again. I cannot WAIT to be thoughtless & careless. To be CASUAL. To be antisocial. To be truly LAZY.

I want to go back to making plans & breaking promises.

I want easy absolution. I don't want to do the work.

I wanna unrestore my faith in humanity, and be, not just ungrateful, but greedily, obviously ungrateful.

I swore I wouldn't let this catastrophic world-changing event CHANGE me. But, lately, lately I can FEEL myself changing. It's HORRIBLE. I can do things now I could never do before. Answering an email. I don't care, answer an email BLOOP just like that. I don't mean "I don't care" like "Hey man, I don't give a duck what YOU think, I'm answering this email because I am a ducking Goddess, duck you, man". I mean, I open the email, I read the email and I answer the email. Without having a panic attack. SOBER. Sometimes. So that's NEW.

(whisper) and sometimes, sometimes I'm HAPPY.

Wide awake at seven thirty like I have never been disappointed in my life. Sometimes I am so happy, in this skin, in this heart, in this brain, in this life, that I can't ducking believe it.

Baking cookies sober, on a Friday night, HAPPY. What the HORN?

So, you know, what with the meditation, and the happiness and the email answering, I think, no I KNOW. I am ready to finally tell you the truth.

(deep breath)

All these years, all this time, I have just been faking.

For years now, I have only been pretending that I have Imposter Syndrome. All my friends kept talking about how they felt like phonies, how they secretly believed that at any moment they were going to be found out as a fraud—"you don't belong here, you only got this far through dumb luck!" And I just wanted to fit in, be one of the gang, so I faked feeling ashamed and inadequate.

But really, actually, I am ducking AMAZING.

I always knew. When I was a kid, every time we drove by on the way home from McDonalds, there was this fountain that would surge upwards.

Every time. Like it was happy to see me.

And just listen to these testimonials:

“To do justice in every sense to Jackie’s abilities without seeming overly munificent with adjectives, it is deemed sufficient to say that is she is an excellent all –round student.” — Mr. J Hannam, Grade 4

and

“Every teacher should be delighted to have Jackie in the classroom!

She has been a delight!”— Miss E. Wolfe, Grade 5

and

“I have not taught such a talented person for a long time.”—Mrs. Bunch, Grade 7

And (pin on button) this. My MOTHER gave me this. On Valentine’s Day.

100% LOVED. I am 100% LOVED. Of course I am.

Because I am AMAZING.

So, now you know. I am a phony phony who faked having Imposter Syndrome in order to fit in with the popular crowd.

I really wish I could tell you I feel bad about that.

FALSE ENDING BURN WITH ME

So, let's say, instead of you bringing me down, making me feel small, making me feel afraid and unsure, why don't you just join me? Cuz really, deep down, I think YOU are secretly exactly like ME. And rather than having me dim my lights & douse my fires, I am gonna ask you to get big, burn bright.

Leave the crumbs in the butter, stack the dishes any way you want, make the mistakes. Give it to me, I can take it.

So, how's about it, Gollum Girl, you join me, up here in the velvet blue bubble, you and me and Zuckerberg(I promised) floating through time and space, eating frozen pizzas, saving the world, and laughing so hard we pish our pants?

Ride with me. Dream with me. Burn with me. You know you want to.

CUE: PHONE RING (3 times)

FALSE ENDING MATRIX

"I know you're out there. I can feel you now. I know that you're afraid. You're afraid of us. You're afraid of change. I don't know the future. I didn't come here to tell you how this is going to end. I came here to tell you how it's going to begin. I'm going to hang up this phone, and then I'm going to show these people what you don't want them to see. I'm going to show them a world without you, a world without rules and controls, without borders or boundaries, a world where anything is possible. Where we go from there, is a choice I leave to you."

CUE: NETFLIX

ENDING Be The Netflix Show You Want To See

It's midnight, the witching hour, and deep in the labyrinth of an Amazonian warehouse somewhere in New Jersey, the evil Doctor Bayzos is working fiendishly, attempting to animate the deadstock of unpopular onesies (rats and slugs and bats and fleas and silverfish), desperately trying to create a workforce that will never die. Or allow itself to be unionised.

But because he purchased all his scientific equipment from Wish.com, SOMETHING goes terribly wrong and ALL the onesies in the world suddenly come alive, swarming the streets, busting out of closets and storage bins, a fuzzy, cuddly rising tide of Pure Evil bent on world domination. Dragons and tigers, pandas and pikachus, bloated and moulting, drifting through deserted streets, wreaking havoc.

Meanwhile, in an abandoned castle in Wales, Sir David Attenborough and his team of mighty Do-Gooders(including Louis CK, who had a revelation on ayahuasca, did his shadow work, & walked away from a lucrative stand-up career to join up with Greta Thunberg, the Dalai Lama, David Suzuki, & William Gates the Third).

The Do-Gooders have built a Time Portal, & they all go back in time to find the one person who can stop the onslaught of Bayzos's Evil Onesie Army. After a hilarious series of missteps (Nixon! Cleopatra! Shirley Temple!)they finally find The One. Rumi. That's right, Rumi, the 13th century poet & mystic. By promising to save Rumi's beloved sidekick Shams from assassination, the Do-Gooders convince Rumi come to the 21st century and battle the Onesies. On the way back to now the Do-Gooders rescue all the extinct animals in all of time and space, who eagerly join the fight against the tyranny of Bayzos & the onslaught of the Evil Onesie Army.

That's right, Bayzos is still out there, still evil, still plotting his own takeover of the world. He's fighting the Do-Gooders AND his Evil Onesie Ex-Army. There'll be hijinks and shenanigans galore, pathos and plot twists, thrills and chills and a great soundtrack.

Can you imagine? Rumi & the ghost of Shams leading the ragtag team of Do-Gooders (Ishi, riding on the back of Martha (the last Carrier Pigeon), hand in hand with Greta Thunberg, riding on the back of Louis CK, all the extinct creatures leaping, galloping, flying) triumphantly soaring over the war torn shores of New Jersey, backlit by a glorious nuclear sunset, and then, then, Sir David Attenborough, tears streaming down his withered cheeks, smiles into the oncoming darkness and presses “Play”...

CUE: CMON EILEEN