

**Positive
Stories
For
Negative
Times**

Season 5
2026/27

Presented by

**WONDER
FOOLS**

Staff Meals Not Allocated

by Alex Medland



Characters:

All the characters can be played by any gender. In the script, the first name is being used for ease of reading. Actors are also welcome to change the name of a character to suit them better.

The part of CUSTOMERS can be played by several individuals or played by one person. Whatever works for your group best.

Taylor: The catalyst. Determined to get their money, unite their coworkers, and hold the company to account.

Rosie or Robbie: The earner. Living paycheck to paycheck and needs this job. Is unofficially acting as the role of manager.

Jaden: The radical. Done with working at Jester's Burgers. Ready to burn the place down.

Esther or Ethan: The rule-follower. Doesn't want to upset the boss and believes that Jester's Burgers have good intentions.

Beth or Bevan: The old-hand. Been here a while. They've accepted the working conditions and have worked worse jobs, so this one seems okay in comparison.

Airlie or Arlow: The newbie. On their trial shift. Got no idea what's going on.

The Boss: Slimy, out of touch, a real asshole. A voice part and potential chorus role. Represented by a framed photograph. The Boss can be played in a bunch of different ways, including but not limited to:

- Being played by one performer
- Several performers speaking together. At the beginning of the play there could be many more voices that gradually decrease throughout the play as The Boss loses power.
- Different voices at different moments
- A voice recording (this could become more or less robotic as the play goes on)
- People or a person speaking through a microphone

Customers: Several customers that have ridiculous complaints and nothing better to do.

Setting:

Jester's Burgers Incorporated. It's the 7.30pm Saturday night dinner rush and extremely busy.

Inside the kitchen there are several stations: the deep fryers, the grill, the bun-toaster, the burger assembly counter, the burger wrapping area, the customer counter and the ice-cream machine (which is out of order). There will be more stations than there are staff working, so staff members will have to oversee multiple stations. This can be depicted as literally, or not literally, as you like.

You're also welcome to stage this play like a radio play. Feel free to invite the audience to imagine the kitchen by describing the kitchen, and making the sound effects for it throughout the play.

Throughout the play, the crew should be assembling burgers. Whenever a burger is made, it should go down the assembly line. This environment can be realised as literally or as non-literally as you like: the burgers could be mimed, it could be one burger prop that keeps going back and forth, you could use real food or a prop that represents food, you could use paper bags for orders, everyone could just high five each other. Feel free to do whatever your group finds the most fun.

On the side of the stage there's a framed photograph of THE BOSS smiling. He's a man in his 40s dressed in a suit. Behind him, there could be a microphone for cast members playing THE BOSS to voice him, or cast members playing THE BOSS could just talk from behind the photograph.

The audience are the customers. Cast members playing customers should begin the play in the audience and enter from there to complain.

If you like, you're welcome to give each audience member an order number at the beginning of the show and they can come up and collect their order once it's called.

Sound Effects:

This play uses a lot of sound effects. Each element of the kitchen has its own unique sound effect. You're welcome to use your own sound effects and soundscape that will be cued and played by a technician, or all of the actors could make the sound effects on stage, you could use different phone timers at each station and have them go off every couple of minutes or you could say what the sound effect is as a line e.g. 'Uber Eats notification'. The play is your oyster.

Notes:

A hyphen indicates when characters interrupt themselves or one another. The direction over indicates when the characters are speaking over one another. Full stops and commas are included as acting suggestions rather than grammatical rules.

The play is using they/them pronouns for each character, except The Boss, but please feel free to use whatever pronouns suits the characters best once the play has been cast.

Legality:

This play makes references to employment law in Scotland. If you're performing this play in another country I highly recommend having a session where you research your rights as workers together, and change the employment laws the play references to the employment laws in your particular country. The more you know your rights, the more you'll have the knowledge and confidence to stand up for yourself when they are inevitably tested by employers.

If you're performing this play in Scotland, please know the things that happen in this play that are illegal are also illegal in the workplace at the time of writing.

It's illegal for your boss to (secretly or otherwise) monitor your working over CCTV unless they have good reason to believe you'll hurt yourself or others, it's illegal for them to record private spaces and it's illegal for them to record you without disclosing how they manage access to your data (protected under Data Protection Act 2018 and Human Rights Act 1998). It's illegal to work for more than six hours without a 20 minute break, to work different shifts without an eleven hour break between them, to work for seven days without a day off, or to work more than eight hours per day or 40 hours per week if you're under 18 years old (protected under The Working Time Regulations 1998).

If your rights have been breached, there's lots of things you can do. You can talk about it with your employer, complain formally to the company, report to the health and safety executive or their local authority, call the ASAS helpline, talk to the citizens advice bureau, make a claim at an employment tribunal, or join and speak to a union about it. Don't ever feel bad about standing up for yourself. It is a big deal, they're breaching your legal rights and you deserve to work in a place that's safe, at the absolute bare minimum. If you haven't worked in a safe workplace, then you deserve compensation for it. By standing up for yourself, you're making the workplace fairer and safer for all.

Lights up onto Jester's Burgers, a generic and soulless burger chain. There is a framed photograph of THE BOSS hanging up on the wall.

Rosie enters, Airlie trailing behind them.

Rosie (stressed): I'm gonna be honest, this will be really busy for a trial shift, okay? We've got lots of people out sick so we're um, really, understaffed and um. Normally they rota the trials at a better time. But you're going to be fine! Have you worked in fast food before?

Airlie: No, never.

Rosie: Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. That's-. That's okay. You're going to be- okay. Our manager isn't in today, but I've been here the longest, so I'll be um like the acting manager today, so I'll be taking orders and responding to complaints and wearing the productivity electrocution watch so if you need anything-

Airlie: Wait, wait, the what?

Rosie holds up a watch on their wrist.

Rosie: The productivity electrocution watch. If we're not productive enough, this watch lets me know

Airlie: By electrocuting you?

Rosie: Only a little bit. Anyway, if there's a really bad complaint like if a customer threatens you in any way today just come straight to me and I'll handle that.

Airlie: Do they normally threaten us?

Rosie: No. No. Well-. No. But if it happens, come to me. I'm Rosie. By the way.

Airlie: Airlie.

Rosie: Introductions! So, this is Beth and they're on front of house or the customer counter, as we like to call it.

Beth and a customer appear at the customer counter.

Beth: Welcome to Jester's Burgers, how can I help?

Customer: Hi, can I get a um. Um. Um. A Big Jest with extra mayonnaise.

Beth: Would you like to-

Customer: Actually no, maybe make that a ummmm a Grandslam instead

Beth: Okay-

Customer: Ah now I'm not sure

Beth: Do you want the Grandslam?

Customer: Cut the Grandslam. Make it a. Um.

There's a long, long pause. It's agony.

Customer: What do you think is better, the cheeseburger or the hamburger?

Beth: It depends if you like cheese

Customer: Oh gosh. Do I like cheese? Hmm. Oh gosh I see I'm holding up the line! Silly me! Can I get a um. Um. gosh. Um. Make it a- um. Sorry. Um. Just make it. Just make it a. Just make it a, what do I feel like? Just make it. You know what. I am just going to do the Big Jest. With the extra mayonnaise. Make that a combo.

Beth: What do you want for the drink?

Customer: Oh gosh. Gosh. I should have thought about this earlier. Um-

Rosie cuts off the interaction between Beth and the customer. They return to the ensemble.

Rosie (to Airlie): We'll get you on the counter later. And this is Jaden.

Jaden appears at the cooking section. They manage jumping between several stations.

Rosie: They're covering the grill, deep fryer, warmer, bun toaster and normally the ice cream machine but that's currently out of order-

Jaden: If anyone asks for an ice-cream, tell them to fuck off

Rosie: Yeah, well. Nicely. And you should stay away from the grill and deep fryer probably because the deep fryer, it kind of leaks oil sometimes a bit, like it's okay-

Jaden: There's always oil on the floor there. It's dangerous, so watch your step

Airlie: Okay

Rosie: Hey where's- Is Taylor still cleaning?

Jaden: Yeah.

Rosie: Seriously?

Jaden: Yeah I mean. It was a lot of vomit they had to clean there.

Rosie: How much?

Jaden: The bathroom was covered-

Esther appears at the burger assembly point.

Rosie: Actually, I've thought about it and I don't want to know!

Jaden: Aye aye

Jaden returns to the ensemble.

Rosie (to Airlie): you'll meet Taylor soon. And this is Esther, they're on the burger assembly point-

Esther (panicked): Rosie, I really need you to call out the order numbers, I am not keeping up here, I nearly put three pickles on someone's burger when they didn't order extra pickles! I'm losing it!

Rosie: Just give me a minute.

Esther: Ahhhhhh!

Esther returns to the ensemble. Rosie and Airlie walk over to the framed picture of The Boss.

Rosie (rehearsed): And this is the Boss. He started Jester's Burgers in his parents garage all the way back in 1999, from three £2 pound coins, a leftover packet of mince, and a dream. Jester's Burgers has now grown to become one of the largest international franchises, with over 50,000 restaurants worldwide. We provide mouth watering burgers, made from high quality ingredients at supersonic speeds. Jesters Burgers-

Everyone except Airlie: Don't Run From It

Rosie shakes their wrist.

Rosie: Look, that's the basics. You stay with Esther. I've got to get Taylor because we need them for service so I'm going to have to just throw you into it okay? Good luck!

The ensemble takes a deep breath in and out together. The deep fryer, grill, Uber Eats order notification, and warming trays all beep at once and the crew are thrown into the 7.30pm Saturday night dinner service. It's chaotic.

Esther: Order 203!

Beth: Welcome to Jetster's Burger's, what can I get you?

Jaden: Behind.

Esther (to Airlie): Lettuce is here.

Customer: Grandslam combo fries and coke.

Rosie: Taylors on their way back!

Beth (to customer): That'll be about a ten minute wait.

Customer: A ten minute wait? What do you mean a ten minute wait?

Beth: We're very busy-

The warming tray beeps.

Customer (over): I thought this was supposed to be fast food?

An Uber Eats notification goes off.

Beth: I can cancel the order-

Customer (cont.): 20 minutes! I might as well sign up for a retirement home, I'm going to be grey haired by the time I get my dinner. This is a breach of my human rights!

Beth: Do you want me to cancel the order?

Customer: No. Of course not. Don't be stupid. I'm fine to wait, I'm not going to make a big deal out of it. I'm just going to sit down and write a review that's very fair and reflective of my personal experience. What was your name?

Beth: Jaden

The deep fryer beeps.

Jaden: HEY

Customer: Good to know

Beth: Thank you for jesting with us today.

The customer leaves.

Jaden: You can't keep doing that

Beth: You can't keep not going on the counter

Rosie shakes their wrist.

Rosie: Order 205!

Esther and Airlie on the burger assembly counter:

Esther (*pointing to things on the burger assembly counter*): Then you've got your red onions, white onions, diced onions, sliced onions, shredded onions, rings of onion, and your pickles. Never get them confused. There's three types of cheese: swiss, cheddar, and vegan cheddar. Be really careful to grab the right cheese because they're right beside each other and look exactly the same. That clear?

Airlie: Yup

Esther: And never forget to put the Jack the Jester sticker on the box. The boss can get really mad if he hears about boxes going out without their Jack the Jester sticker.

Airlie: Okay-

Esther: No seriously, do not forget the sticker. I heard there was a guy working here who forgot to put stickers on the boxes for one shift and he got fired. Like fired. Like trespassed from the shop level fired.

The grill beeps.

Airlie: Woah

Esther: We have to keep really high standards. That's what makes it fun. You're going to love it here! If you get the job.

Airlie: Yeah. Thanks. Maybe I can go over this again with you when we have dinner?

Esther: What do you mean?

Airlie: Well we get free food right? On our breaks. It said that on the job portal.

Esther: We're not allowed to take food. And you probably won't get a break tonight. We don't get breaks unless it's quiet

Jaden: Which is bullsh-

An Uber Eats notification goes off.

Rosie: Yeah, you've said.

Esther: Rosie is going to try to give us breaks though! We're just really understaffed today. And the food would be too expensive for the company if we all got free meals

Airlie: Oh. Right. Is this the busiest it's going to get?

Esther laughs in an unhinged way.

Esther: No. We're just at the beginning of service. It's about to get a whole lot worse.

Taylor enters, slightly out of breath.

Taylor: EVERYONE STOP WHAT THEY'RE DOING RIGHT NOW

Rosie: Oh great if you're back, can you get on the grill with-

Taylor: No! Everyone stop!

Rosie: Taylor, we obviously can't do that we're in the middle of service

The deep fryer beeps.

Taylor: Well. I have big news.

Beth: Spit it out then

The grill beeps.

Taylor: Look as I was cleaning up that vomit back there, I thought to myself. This is really bad. This is really, objectively, inarguably, disgusting. I was like surely I should have some gloves or something to do this with-

Esther: What's your point Taylor?

Taylor: I mean we don't even have a manager here to ask about this stuff! It's just us! And I don't remember anything like this being in my job description.

Rosie: Okay Taylor, we can talk about this after-

Taylor: And so I treated myself to a little google. A little five minute google! And it turns out, cleaning up vomit with nothing but paper towels is illegal and a health hazard! We should have a bio-hazard kit! The Boss asking me to do that was ILLEGAL!

Esther gasps.

Esther (to Taylor): Oh my god. Shhhhh!

The grill beeps.

Taylor: And I kept googling it and it turns out that a bunch of stuff Jester's Burgers makes us do is illegal! Like making us work 14 hour shifts, that's illegal, and not giving us a break, that's illegal, not giving us contracts, that's illegal, not giving us payslips with dates, that's illegal, and

above all else the productivity electrocution watch that electrocutes us when we're not productive enough is like a full breach of our human rights! Everything they do is illegal!

The warming tray beeps.

Esther: Woah

Jaden throws down their spatula.

Jaden: I knew it! This place sucks man!

Rosie picks up Jaden's spatula.

Beth: That stuff isn't illegal, that's just working hospo. C'mon Taylor

Taylor: No. It's illegal. I found lawsuits! I'll show you.

Taylor brings out her phone. Rosie shakes their wrist.

Rosie: Well we can talk about it after service. Put your phone away Taylor, just get on a station, please.

Esther: Yeah. I'm sure there's just been some kind of mistake. Jester's Burgers wouldn't do that to us. We're like a family here.

Jaden snorts.

Esther: What? We are!

Taylor: There hasn't been a mistake, Esther they are breaking the-

Esther: No, there has to have been a mistake. I mean look at him

Esther points to The Boss.

Esther (cont.): He's a nice man! You know, one time, somewhere in America, I heard there was an employee struggling to get to work at a Jester's Burgers, and he bought them a second hand

bike to get to work on! That's nice! I'm sure he'll notice all of the legal stuff and fix it when he can.

Taylor: He's been breaking the law. He's been fighting people in court. He's not a good person and he doesn't care about us.

Esther: But he set up the Jesters Besters charity and that feeds starving children for a small discount!

Rosie: Can we PLEASE talk about this after service?

Taylor: You know what else is illegal? Not having a manager on site

Rosie: Take it from me Taylor. This is not worth fighting. I've seen people fight Jester's Burgers before and bad things happened to them. You don't want to go head to head against The Boss. He's known as the stone cold burger business burger man for a reason.

The grill beeps.

Taylor: Well we should do something! We can't let him get away with making us work in unsafe conditions. That's what they are, Rosie. They're not just hard, they are unsafe for us to work in.

Rosie shakes their wrist.

Rosie: We can't just stand around chatting during a rush. Our productivity is dropping, Taylor. So get on a station, put your head down, and get on with it. Order 204!

A brief standoff.

Jaden: No, don't. I'm with you Taylor

Taylor: Thanks, Jaden

Jaden: We should all take a stand, as a group, so they know that they can't treat us the way they are.

Taylor: Yeah, thanks-

Jaden: I've got some ideas for what to do.

Taylor: Yeah?

Jaden brings a notebook out of their pocket. The deep fryer beeps.

Rosie: Guys, stop. We can't do anything about it. They'll just replace us. Lets just get on with the shift and-

Jaden: They can't replace everyone. Who's going to run the shift?

Beth: True

Jaden *(reading off the notebook)*: We could rob them.

Esther: No!

The grill beeps.

Rosie: No Jaden.

Beth: You're crazy

Jaden: Hey hey hey. There's no bad ideas in a brainstorm. Um. We could blackmail them with something-

Esther: What is wrong with you??

Taylor: With what?

Beth: Go on

Rosie: Stop Jaden

An Uber Eats notification beeps.

Jaden: Okay. Fine. Not that. My last idea is we could set the place on fire.

Esther: Jaden that is illegal! The police could come after us!

Jaden: It would be good! It would be satisfying! Imagine seeing this place just burning to the ground. We could watch it from the hill. All of it consumed by flames, how the heat would radiate, orange turning into white, fire licking the walls, the posters crumbling, Jack the Jester's face melting away, roof all caved in and collapsed, until there's no more Jester's Burgers. No orders to fill. No customers that yell at you. No beeping that you hear in your dreams. Our clothes would stink of smoke but we'd be free.

A beat. The grill beeps.

Rosie: Jaden, you're a liability

Esther: What are you even saying right now??

Taylor: I do think arson may be just a bit far yeah

The warming tray beeps.

Beth: We're not going to light the place on fire Jaden we could die

Jaden: How come they get to break the law but we don't?

Beth: Jester's Burgers isn't even that bad though I mean when I worked at Pizza Shack they didn't even have a bathroom. You'd just hold it all shift. And people made the pizza without washing their hands.

Esther: That's disgusting

Beth: Yeah. It was shut down, to be fair. And they didn't even pay me my last paycheck. Compared to that, Jester's Burgers is great.

Rosie: All this stuff is just part of working hospo. Order 208!

Taylor: No. This being hospo doesn't give it a pass. We do so much work for Jester's Burgers, we literally run this place, and they can't even do the bare legal minimum! I mean just take a look at your payslip- look at it, it'll have the wrong-

Beth: I never check my payslips. I can't ever open that stupid thing.

Taylor: You've never checked your payslip?

Beth: You go to log in, it tells you that you need to update your password every two weeks or something stupid for 'security' so you can never remember your password and then you end up resetting it and it takes like 5 million years for the stupid reset email to arrive and you put in what you thought the password and it tells you-

An Uber Eats notification goes off.

Beth (cont.): that the new password can't be a previous password so I have to pick another one that I have no hope of remembering and just know that I'm going to have to go through this whole stupid process again whenever I try to do this the next time, but whatever, you put the new password in, and then it says you need to verify it by downloading an app and then entering a code and the stupid app never works and you're waiting forever for a code

An Uber Eats notification goes off.

Beth (cont.): and when the code finally arrives you enter it and it says that the verification window has timed out so you have to do the whole STUPID thing again and all the time I'm wondering who actually cares this much? You know? It's not my bank account. There's no money there. Who actually cares that I'm paid £10.12 an hour NO HACKER IS EVER GOING TO BOTHER TO GO THROUGH THIS STUPID PROCESS to get information that they can probably find from elsewhere but whatever there's a million steps to look at my stupid payslip and I can't do them!

An Uber Eats notification goes off.

Esther: You could try writing down your passwords?

Beth: I don't check my payslips.

Rosie: Order 211!

The warming tray beeps.

Airlie: Are you only paid £10.12 per hour?

Beth: Yeah. Why?

Airlie Well they've been advertising the job to me as £12.12. As a starting rate

Beth: Are you kidding me?

Jaden: No, I'm on £12.12 too

Esther: They didn't offer me that and we started at the same time!

Jaden: Sucks to suck I guess