



# Off Menu – Ep 212 – Garth Marengi

**Ed Gamble**

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast taking the pumpkin of humour, carving in the face of friendship with the knife of the internet and putting in the candle of interviews, it's a scary special James.

**James Acaster**

That it is Ed, Ghoul.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh that's good. Ed Ghoulble

**James Acaster**

Ghoulbe.

**Ed Gamble**

Ed Ghouble.

**James Acaster**

My name is James Screamecaster and-,

**Ed Gamble**

Dead Gamble is normally what I would go-,

**James Acaster**

Dead Gamble.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, thank you.

**James Acaster**

And James.

**Ed Gamble**

Maims, Maims Acaster.

**James Acaster**

Welcome. And together we own a haunted restaurant.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, yes.



**James Acaster**

And we invite in a guest every week and we ask for their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink, not in that order. And this week our guest is Garth Marengi.

**Ed Gamble**

Garth Marengi. Garth Marengi a famed international horror writer James.

**James Acaster**

Amazing writer of course also had the amazing TV series, Garth Marengi's Dark Place. Unjustly cut short, but, you know, we got to-, I think when we were teenagers it was finally aired and we got to see it and it's always meant a lot to us Ed. You know, I know it's a horror series but it's found a home in a lot of comedians' hearts.

**Ed Gamble**

Absolutely and as have Garth's most recent books, TerrorTome which came out last year, absolutely fantastic I listened to the audio book of that, in absolutely hoovered it up with my ears. And Garth has a new book coming out, well it's actually out, it's out as of yesterday if you're listening to this podcast on the day it is released because of course Garth's new book, Incarcerat was released on Halloween. I cannot wait t get stuck into this James.

**James Acaster**

It's going to be scary stuff so be warned, reader beware, you're in for a scare.

**Ed Gamble**

I believe it follows on the story of the horror writer Nick Stein from TerrorTome, which I'm very excited about, I love the character of Nick Stein and Garth really can weave some incredibly passages.

**James Acaster**

And weave some dreams as he's a self-proclaimed dream weaver and this is the dream restaurant, so it's quite exciting to have him in.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, very, very exciting. I wonder what he's going to pick James, it would be awful to have to banish him from the dream restaurant like a demon.

**James Acaster**

That's the thing every single week of course we have a secret ingredient, if the guest picks it, we will have to banish them from the dream restaurant. This week the secret ingredient is egg in soup.

**Ed Gamble**

Egg in soup.

**James Acaster**

Egg in soup.



**Ed Gamble**

Egg in soup of course was a dish that was feature on Garth Marengi's Dark Place.

**James Acaster**

It's like a fried egg in a soup.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, I'd say the egg is cooked in the soup. It's something I've done before.

**James Acaster**

You've done it?

**Ed Gamble**

I've done it before.

**James Acaster**

Because of Garth?

**Ed Gamble**

No, I think I just did it anyway, although who knows how that man has influenced my dreams and nightmares across the years, so perhaps it was Garth's influence. No, you just get the soup going on the pan into it and it cooks in there.

**James Acaster**

Wow, I mean, you know, it does sound quite nice, I'm not even going to-, what kind of soup did you do it with?

**Ed Gamble**

Just with a tomato-based one normally, you can do it with a cream of tomato, it's very good. I would say it also looks very nice on Garth Marengi's Dark Place, it's one of the only pleasant-looking things on that show, so.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, it's a gruesome affair most of that show. Well look, this is a big deal for us.

**Ed Gamble**

Absolutely.

**James Acaster**

We're interviewing one of our heroes, I cant wait to get stuck in, shall we just open our doors?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, let's open the doors to the nightmare realm. This is the Off Menu menu of Garth Marengi. Welcome Garth to the dream restaurant.



**Garth Marengi**

Right, yes.

**James Acaster**

Welcome Garth Marengi to the dream restaurant we've been expecting you for some time.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, did you get the message, I got my PA to call ahead, I haven't brought anything because it's not-,

**James Acaster**

Did we get the message Benito?

**Garth Marengi**

It's not a real restaurant is it?

**James Acaster**

No, it's not real.

**Ed Gamble**

No, it's a restaurant of the mind, it's a dream restaurant, yes.

**James Acaster**

I mean your mind has housed many a world.

**Garth Marengi**

Well I mean I thought I'll be honest with you I thought this was a reboot of After Dark. Do you know what that is?

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**Garth Marengi**

No, it was a late-night TV discussion, a post-meal discussion that various practitioners of the horror genre would meet around a table, a round table discussion of all things pertaining to the dark arts. That's what I-, I thought this was a reboot, so to be sat here in a fictional-,

**Ed Gamble**

Fictional.

**James Acaster**

Yes, imaginary.

**Garth Marengi**

Not enough for a novel. Just being honest.



**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, no, we've been told that before.

**Garth Marengi**

It's an okay idea but it's not enough for a novel, there's not enough meat for a novel were you turning this into a novel.

**James Acaster**

What do you think we need to add if we were to turn it into a novel?

**Garth Marengi**

We need a plot and we don't even know where this is going.

**James Acaster**

No, we don't know.

**Garth Marengi**

I mean, you can't sit down and write a novel without really having some idea of where you're going to end up.

**James Acaster**

So you always know where you're going, you don't just stare at the blank page and wait for inspiration?

**Garth Marengi**

Not always.

**James Acaster**

You've got a destination in mind?

**Garth Marengi**

I know what I'm doing.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

I guess yes, we've never really considered turning this into a novel I don't think.

**Garth Marengi**

That's wise.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, because we're hear to, sort of, discuss what you're thinking with the dream restaurant, this is all going to come from your mind.



**Garth Marengi**

You're putting the pressure on me?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, we're drawing out of you.

**Garth Marengi**

Okay, but I'm not giving you ideas.

**Ed Gamble**

Okay.

**James Acaster**

We won't use any of them.

**Ed Gamble**

No, we won't use any of them.

**James Acaster**

For our own financial gain.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Okay, we'll if you're happy to sign to that effect then we'll proceed.

**Ed Gamble**

Has that happened to you before, have any other novelist taking your ideas?

**Garth Marengi**

All the time.

**James Acaster**

Naming no names.

**Garth Marengi**

They know who they are.

**Ed Gamble**

Well your latest novel Incarcerat though-

**Garth Marengi**

Let me stop you there, it's not technically a novel, it is a novel consisting of three mini novels.



**Ed Gamble**

Okay.

**James Acaster**

Oh wow.

**Ed Gamble**

Would that be short stories?

**Garth Marengi**

No, a short story is between, I don't know, 2,000 and 7,000 words and novella is anywhere between 14,000 words and 30,000 words. These basically pan out at around 35,000 words, so it's like the sweet spot between novella and short novel I'd say.

**Ed Gamble**

So it's three short novels basically?

**Garth Marengi**

Three short novels.

**Ed Gamble**

And do they intertwine?

**Garth Marengi**

Of course.

**James Acaster**

I don't think anyone's ever done that before, have they, released three short novels at once?

**Garth Marengi**

No.

**James Acaster**

No. This is a first. It says, 'Bury your head in this book...' And then dot, dot, dot, 'Permanently.'

**Garth Marengi**

I hope so.

**James Acaster**

It's quite chilling.

**Garth Marengi**

It's important to have a warning on what I write, you know. That's me giving the reader something back, a friendly warning this could hurt.



**James Acaster**

You've been described as many things, a frightener man.

**Garth Marengi**

A frightener-men.

**James Acaster**

A frightener man. Dark scribe, doom sage.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Arch Duke of Darkdome, you missed that one out.

**James Acaster**

Sorry, Arch Duke of Darkdome.

**Ed Gamble**

Who described you as those things Garth?

**James Acaster**

I did.

**James Acaster**

No, this is about a horror novelist this book.

**Garth Marengi**

It is Nick Stein.

**James Acaster**

Where did you get the inspiration for that?

**Garth Marengi**

Hard to know really. I guess most of my characters are horror writers of one kind or another, so I'm sure I leant upon my own innate knowledge of the profession and forged something quite profound about said profession. But yes, I drew upon my experience in the horror industry, I drew upon the problems I've had with various people associated with the industry over the years, particularly editors of one description or another. And also my general readership. They have changed over the years, thankfully, some of them were quite difficult in the early days.

**James Acaster**

Your readership?





**Garth Marengi**

My readership, yes.

**James Acaster**

Do you want to expand on the difficulties you had with your readership?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, well, for example, I refuse to sign books now. Only in extreme circumstances because I had a very difficult period in the early stages of my career where, you know, people would be expecting me to sign, well anything from perineum to breastage.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

You've got to draw the line haven't you?

**Garth Marengi**

You have to draw the line somewhere, you know, I can't spend time singing your body I have to write.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, that's fair enough I think. Now obviously we're in the dream restaurant here, this is, you know, from your dreams.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, I'll go with this, I'm going with this, go on.

**Ed Gamble**

But you normally deal in nightmares, is that fair to say?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

So how do you feel about putting the nightmares to one side for today and going with dreams?

**Garth Marengi**

As I say I thought this was a reboot of After Dark, so I'm not happy about it but I will do it.

**Ed Gamble**

Okay.

**James Acaster**

If you delved into your dreams now and looked at the restaurant what would you see?



**Garth Marengi**

A mess, a mess. Lots of blood, flesh, of one kind or another, beast or human who knows.

**Ed Gamble**

And is that where you would like to eat if you were going to this dream restaurant? If you stepped into a restaurant is that what you'd like to see?

**Garth Marengi**

Not particularly, but you just asked the question.

**Ed Gamble**

So, but what would you like to see then if you were going into a restaurant?

**Garth Marengi**

A seat.

**Ed Gamble**

A seat, yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Comfortable seat. A stacked bar and hopefully a kitchen out the back.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, okay, that's good. Not a lot of people mention that there's kitchen out the back actually.

**James Acaster**

No, that is a point actually, thank you Garth. Would you be and I think I might know the answer to this, but would you be dining alone or with friends?

**Garth Marengi**

Ideally alone, but no more than three, otherwise conversation tends to get disbursed among various guests and then I get well, frankly I get a bit offended or bored.

**Ed Gamble**

Who would the other two people be? If there were two other people with you who might they be?

**Garth Marengi**

My wife Pam, who generally accompanies me most places, she's not here today, but she's having some new leather fitted and our slaughterer. I have a personal slaughterer who runs a farm up near us and I would probably have him here because he knows how best to, sort of, dispense with the animal and present the best part of it for consuming.

**Ed Gamble**

So would that be happening at the dream meal live in front of you then?



**Garth Marengi**

Yes, you know, I like to see what I'm eating. It's last moment essentially, so yes the slaughterer would invite Pam and I aside, you know, maybe a room out the back, aside to the kitchen. You know, health conscious, hygiene conscious there would be a slaughtering area quite close to the kitchen and we would go out there and we would select and we would watch it and then we'd come back have a drink and await, you know, what it turns into.

**James Acaster**

That's lovely. You know, I think that people a lot of time say, you know, 'If you couldn't kill an animal yourself you shouldn't eat it.' And I think if you can't meet it seconds before it dies and okay the slaughter-

**Garth Marengi**

Precisely, precisely. It's respect at the end of the day toward the beast.

**James Acaster**

We always start with still or sparkling water Garth.

**Garth Marengi**

Neither.

**James Acaster**

No.

**Garth Marengi**

Beer or wine, I don't want water I want beer or wine.

**James Acaster**

Is there a reason for that, have you never trusted water?

**Garth Marengi**

Well have you read my book? Can Water Die? That was the tag line, I can't remember the title. Bottom line is, it can't. Now that's a frightening thought because all water ends up coming back round again. And it remembers what's been done to it.

**Ed Gamble**

Of course yes, yes, because it can-

**Garth Marengi**

Do you think it's going to be happy coming back to you having passed through him?

**Ed Gamble**

No.



**Garth Marengi**

No.

**Ed Gamble**

But I guess there's like a filtration process.

**Garth Marengi**

You think, that's what they tell you.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. But you're saying that when we urinate that it-,

**Garth Marengi**

I'm not saying, read the book.

**Ed Gamble**

Okay.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

I am suggesting.

**Ed Gamble**

You can't remember the title?

**James Acaster**

You can Google the tag line though.

**Garth Marengi**

Hmm?

**James Acaster**

He can Google the tag line.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, he can.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, can water die.

**Garth Marengi**

Do so.



**Ed Gamble**

I will.

**James Acaster**

So yes, you wouldn't want to ever consume anything that's disgruntled is what you're saying?

**Garth Marengi**

Pretty much.

**James Acaster**

That's why you want to witness its last moments a lot of the time. If you could witness the waters last moments before drinking it, say if you saw-

**Garth Marengi**

Well I do, as I say it doesn't die, but you, sort of, see the last of it pass through you. So you essentially wave goodbye, but you know it's coming back. May not come back to you though, it might come back to your nearest and dearest.

**James Acaster**

Yes, that's a good point.

**Ed Gamble**

With beer is there not quite a lot of water used in the production of beer?

**Garth Marengi**

No idea.

**Ed Gamble**

I think there is, does that not scare you?

**Garth Marengi**

Well. I'll do my research first.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes. So you would like wine or beer. Do you have a preference between wine or beer?

**Garth Marengi**

Not particularly.

**James Acaster**

Do you have a go to?

**Garth Marengi**

Get one of each.



**James Acaster**

One of each.

**Ed Gamble**

One of each, yes.

**James Acaster**

That's perfect.

**Ed Gamble**

That's still and sparkling really, isn't it?

**James Acaster**

In a way, it depends what kind of wine you want I guess.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, depends if you're having a spritzer really. And I'm not, so.

**Ed Gamble**

No, you're not. What sort of wine would you like for the wine bit?

**Garth Marengi**

A soft wine, very wine.

**James Acaster**

Yes, gentle.

**Garth Marengi**

A gentle wine and a very heavy beer. A hard beer.

**James Acaster**

A hard beer. Soft wine, hard beer.

**Ed Gamble**

What sort of percentage beer are we talking in terms of alcohol?

**Garth Marengi**

Enough.

**Ed Gamble**

Enough, okay.

**James Acaster**

Enough to kind of grease the wheels early doors?



**Garth Marenghi**

Yes, well you never know what's going to happen at the meal.

**James Acaster**

Yes, so that's a point. I mean do you know what Pam would have at this point?

**Garth Marenghi**

Oh she'd match me glass for glass or I should say goblet to goblet, goblet for goblet. She will match me. I only drink in goblets I don't drink in glasses.

**James Acaster**

Ah, I didn't know that about you, that's great.

**Garth Marenghi**

I can see because you've only got glasses on the table.

**James Acaster**

Yes, if we'd have know, that's Benito's fault.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Benito's the producer of the podcast he's called The Great Benito because he used to be a magician Garth.

**Garth Marenghi**

Oh right, are you a mesmerist? Okay, well when you are we'll talk.

**James Acaster**

I'm sensing some distrust towards Benito, is it because-

**Garth Marenghi**

Well don't trust anyone who practices magic or the archaic arts. You know, often they're nice, often they're quite friendly, very friendly people at times, too friendly in the right-, in the wrong circumstances, they're too friendly. But, you know, just be wary, be wary.

**Ed Gamble**

We're always very wary of him.

**Garth Marenghi**

Good.

**James Acaster**

Yes, are familiar with the work of Derren Brown and David Blane?



**Garth Marengi**

Yes, yes.

**James Acaster**

Do you have any opinions on those kind of like-

**Garth Marengi**

He's not exactly John Dee.

**James Acaster**

No.

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**James Acaster**

Who's John Dee?

**Garth Marengi**

A dark magician from the well probably the 14th, 15th, 16th century. I say all three because I don't believe he died and I think he was alive before he was around so it could be three different centuries that he was practising in.

**James Acaster**

Wow, like water.

**Garth Marengi**

Like water.

**James Acaster**

Poppadoms or bread, poppadoms or bread Garth Marengi? Poppadoms or bread?

**Garth Marengi**

Poppadoms or bread, well poppadoms and quite a few please.

**Ed Gamble**

How many are we talking? What's the dream amount of poppadoms?

**Garth Marengi**

Five for me, five for Pam.

**Ed Gamble**

So is she matching you poppadom for poppadom as well?





**Garth Marengi**

Yes, we often race, so she usually comes in quite a close second.

**Ed Gamble**

A close second.

**James Acaster**

That's admirable.

**Garth Marengi**

And the dips too please.

**James Acaster**

Yes, are we talking all the dips or, like, what ones do you want?

**Garth Marengi**

All the dips. I didn't touch the salad dip for a very long time, fifteen years I think of curry eating before I actually decided to give it a go, and actually it's a good compliment to the other spices.

**James Acaster**

Yes, when mixed with the other ones it's very effective, not on its own.

**Garth Marengi**

On its own well, you know, it's nothing on its own, it's just a salad.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes.

**Garth Marengi**

But combine it with the other elements and you have magic, don't you?

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, looking at Benito there as our resident mesmerist.

**Garth Marengi**

I'm just trying to engage him in some kind of conversation because I don't know what he's thinking and that is a concern.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes, yes it is. You say 15 years of curry eating, did that start-, when, when did that start? When did you have your first curry?

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, childhood, I think. I mean it's the-, it's the-, it's the food of choice for the horror writing community.



**Ed Gamble**

Is it?

**James Acaster**

Oh.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

I didn't know that.

**Garth Marengi**

Most conventions will revolve around curry-based conversation, essentially, and discussion. The best conventions are where you can get a curry-based theme for breakfast, lunch and dinner. And only, only select hotels will do that. The only problem is this-, the hotels that do do that often have a bed-bug problem.

**Ed Gamble**

When you're at these conventions who, who are you hanging out with and chatting to?

**Garth Marengi**

Well I don't really hang out with anyone. People will try and hang out with me, essentially.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

I'll tolerate a little bit of that.

**Ed Gamble**

Mhmm.

**Garth Marengi**

But at the moment they start, you know, handing me their own novels in progress, that's when I'll cut the conversation short.

**James Acaster**

Yes. You strike me as someone who wouldn't let them down gently if they try that sort of stuff.

**Garth Marengi**

Well, you'd be a fool to.



**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Because they won't-, they'll persist, believe me. They'll hang on.

**Ed Gamble**

What do they want from you then? Are they-, do they, they want advice?

**Garth Marengi**

They want my mind.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. They want you.

**Garth Marengi**

They want my mind and they want my success.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Guess what? They're not me, they're not going to get it. It's very hard to break that to someone. You have to do it hard.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Because they do think that if they linger long enough and if they hang onto you for long enough, they'll somehow suck up some of your innate essence.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

It's not true, won't work.

**Ed Gamble**

So if I came over to you with-, and I brought-, I brought my, you know, new novel that I'd written and said, 'Garth could you give me some advice on this?' What would you say to me?

**Garth Marengi**

No.



**Ed Gamble**

Okay. And then just-

**Garth Marengi**

I'd say, 'Take it away'.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Take it away. Because if I get so much as a glance of that, a glimpse of it, you could sue me for potentially stealing your copyright or whatever.

**Ed Gamble**

Right.

**Garth Marengi**

You could say, 'Ah, you glimpsed my paragraph here and you've come up with a very similar paragraph in your new novel Mr Marengi, I want some of your millions.' It's not really millions, it depends. Hopefully it will be. But you-, do you see what I mean?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

It's very dangerous. So you-, I have to keep that away from my vicinity.

**Ed Gamble**

Mhmm. Because they're trying to trap you?

**Garth Marengi**

That's right.

**James Acaster**

Yes. This sounds like the voice of experience here.

**Garth Marengi**

Mhmm.

**James Acaster**

Maybe someone's accused you a glimpse in their paragraph.

**Garth Marengi**

It's, it's not pretty. It's, you know, but it's a fact of the industry.



**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

And you guys probably have it to a certain-, to a-, to a certain extent.

**Ed Gamble**

But we could never write a novel, so.

**Garth Marengi**

Cleary.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Hence the, the podcast, the format.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Which isn't an art form, by the way.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Podcasting?

**Garth Marengi**

Podcasting. There's a lot of talk about it. It's not an art form. It's what it is. It's three, plus this guy, sitting in a room just talking.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

You've never thought about doing a podcast yourself?

**Garth Marengi**

I'm too busy writing.



**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

How long in the day do you write? What's your schedule like when you're writing a book, like *Incarcerat*?

**Garth Marenghi**

Well I dream-, I, I mean I don't sleep, I dream. I dream, I wake, then it is a waking dream for a while. Which hopefully will turn into a waking nightmare. Then I'll start writing.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marenghi**

Then I'll stop for, what's that, that Channel 4 lunch discussion programme?

**James Acaster**

Loose Women?

**Garth Marenghi**

No, that's, that's the other one. Anyway, I turn all those off if Pam's had them on.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marenghi**

And I'll sit in the lounge and just eat. And I'm back to writing. And then I'll, you know, finish around about six o'clock, call the slaughterer.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marenghi**

And dine and then back to dreaming.

**Ed Gamble**

So, you say you have lunch. If you're-, you don't, this doesn't need to be part of your dream menu, but what, what's the best sort of brain fuel for you when you're writing?

**Garth Marenghi**

Brains, funnily enough. Doesn't particularly matter what the animal is, but brain, brain is a good thing to absorb, I think.



**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Do you feel like you get anything, any of the, sort of, thoughts from-, that were in the brain of the animal initially, or?

**Garth Marengi**

I, I suppose it depends. I mean, I don't particularly want a cow's thoughts, you know?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

But it tastes nice.

**James Acaster**

Start with your dream starter, as any good meal would.

**Garth Marengi**

What have I got down here? Yes, a, a very large prawn cocktail. I love prawn cocktail and I can't stand it when it's small.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

But this is the stipulation. Like we spoke about earlier, I want to see the prawns and pick them.

**James Acaster**

Right, yes, we can do that for you. It's the dream restaurant, so of course we can do that.

**Garth Marengi**

So I don't how you get them in, but, you know, whether there's a tank I can look at, or a trawler nearby that I can go and pick them from a, you know, plastic crate or something, a net.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

But I'd like to see them. And this is all part of respect for the animal in question, you know. You get a one small moment to commune with them before they get boiled. So a prawn cocktail with prawns that I've selected. Maybe some flecks of lobster. Again, I'd to see the lobster.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Of course.



**Garth Marengi**

I'd like to see crab if there's some crab. Bit of a-, I know technically prawn cocktail is prawn, but, you know, throw some other things in there.

**Ed Gamble**

A seafood-,

**Garth Marengi**

It's, it's going to be a big prawn cocktail, a large one.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Seafood.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. When you see the prawns when they're alive, what are you looking for in the prawns that makes you want to pick them?

**Garth Marengi**

A certain look.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

A certain look in its eye or cluster of eyes. I, you know, it's very hard to tell with a prawn isn't it.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, tricky.

**Garth Marengi**

Because they've got all those things in the way. I suppose a knowing look. A kind of, a, a sense of, 'I know what you want from me, I'm happy, I'm happy to put down my, my prawn life and feed you, because ultimately what you are doing is benefiting your species, you know. In order to evolve your species, I know that my species must pass, and I'm happy to do that.'

**Ed Gamble**

Mhmm.

**James Acaster**

And you can sense all that in a look?





**Garth Marengi**

I'm a writer.

**James Acaster**

Would the slaughterer be slaughtering the prawns? And if so-,

**Garth Marengi**

Ideally.

**James Acaster**

How do you slaughter a prawn? There aren't many-,

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Good question. I mean, he has a number of ways and devices to, to go to town on them. See I could-, I could elaborate, but I'm-, you, you'll probably edit it out, I would have thought.

**James Acaster**

Yes, it would get cut.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, it's too much.

**Ed Gamble**

It's too gruesome.

**James Acaster**

And obviously you will have some lettuce in the prawn cocktail.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, not much. Don't like the lettuce part.

**James Acaster**

So just the-,

**Garth Marengi**

Lots of the sauce though, the sauce is good.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.



**James Acaster**  
The Marie Rose?

**Garth Marengi**  
Yes, what is it. Get it in a jar, that's fine. A jar's fine.

**James Acaster**  
You trust the jar.

**Garth Marengi**  
It's the best way. You don't know who's prepared it otherwise. Again, back to water.

**Ed Gamble**  
So that must be an issue in restaurants if you'd like to know who's prepared it.

**Garth Marengi**  
Yes.

**Ed Gamble**  
You're quite suspicious.

**Garth Marengi**  
Well I, I will always call up in advance.

**Ed Gamble**  
Yes.

**Garth Marengi**  
And get their CV sent through.

**Ed Gamble**  
Yes.

**Garth Marengi**  
And if I think they're up to the scratch, you know, my slaughterer will approve if we're out and about. If we're back at home, then the slaughterer will, kind of, do it all. But if we are away, then I will-, I will get the CV and I'll run it past him.

**Ed Gamble**  
That's good.

**James Acaster**  
Does the slaughterer live in your house or do they have their own?



**Garth Marengi**

Sometimes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Sometimes, if we're having a heavy weekend, he'll come over. And we'll put him up. But no, he's always around.

**James Acaster**

He's, he's only a phone call away, pretty nearby.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, I mean he's a phone call from us-, you can usually hear him shouting quite close by.

**James Acaster**

Okay. So you don't know that he's-,

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, you'll hear it, you know, you can hear his handiwork from a mile off.

**James Acaster**

Yes, yes. Do you know if anyone else uses him as a slaughterer, or, or is it just you?

**Garth Marengi**

I don't know that. I, I doubt it. I doubt anyone would.

**Ed Gamble**

Why, why do you doubt anyone would use him?

**Garth Marengi**

It isn't pleasant.

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**Garth Marengi**

For most people. But I'm a writer of horror, so, you know, it doesn't phase me.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, it inspires you if anything.



**Garth Marengi**

I wouldn't say inspires me, I-, it, it nourishes me.

**James Acaster**

As a writer of horror, what do you think of the genre, the state of the genre at the minute?

**Garth Marengi**

Terrible state.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Terrible state.

**James Acaster**

TV horror? You, you yourself were treated quite unfairly in that genre.

**Garth Marengi**

Mhmm.

**James Acaster**

And now when you see modern TV horror, there's probably more horror series now than ever before.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

How do you feel, when you-, when you see them?

**Garth Marengi**

Go and watch A Dark Place.

**James Acaster**

Yes. There's the new one just come out. House of Usher.

**Ed Gamble**

Fall of the House of Usher.

**Garth Marengi**

Fall of the House of Usher.

**James Acaster**

Mike Flanagan.



**Ed Gamble**

You know him?

**Garth Marengi**

I do know Mike. Yes, I think he has a tendency to sit round a campfire too much and spin yarns, you know. It's fine but, you know, I'm waiting for him to get back to me.

**Ed Gamble**

Is he perhaps going to adapt some of your work maybe?

**Garth Marengi**

He wants to. He says he wants to. But we haven't talked contracts yet.

**James Acaster**

Is that an exclusive, you telling us that? Because that's quite exciting. I think everyone wants to see that crossover.

**Garth Marengi**

No. Sorry, it's not actually true.

**James Acaster**

Your dream main course, Garth.

**Garth Marengi**

Beef. A piece from every part of the carcass please. Heart, guts. Not the balls though. I know a lot of people like the balls but I don't. So, please skip on the balls. And, also, I want to commune with the animal first. I'd like to see it. I'd like to see it go.

**James Acaster**

Of course.

**Ed Gamble**

So, is it also a sign of respect to not have the balls as well? Is that part of the respect thing?

**Garth Marengi**

Do you really want to cover this?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Absolutely. We'd love to, you know, hear about the whole dish really.

**Garth Marengi**

Okay. Well, I have tried the balls but they're just obviously too chewy and they repeat.



**James Acaster**

And the animal was dead when you tried that?

**Garth Marengi**

Luckily for it, yes. Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. So, there's obviously a lot of different cuts available on a cow. You know, all the different normal cuts of steak but then, like you say, the heart, the tongue, all of that stuff. There's stuff on the head that you can eat as well. What's your favourite? If you could only have one bit from the whole cow, and you can have all of it for the dream meal but if you had to pick a favourite, what would it be?

**Garth Marengi**

I would like it's left rear leg.

**Ed Gamble**

Left rear leg?

**Garth Marengi**

The haunch area. Whatever that is on a cow.

**James Acaster**

I'm not sure what that would be called but, like, yes, I know the area that you mean.

**Ed Gamble**

Rump. You know the area.

**James Acaster**

Yes. The left haunch.

**Ed Gamble**

Rump maybe? Rump?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. I think that's probably what it is, the rump.

**Ed Gamble**

Why the left one in particular?

**Garth Marengi**

Well, you know when you go and take your car into the thing and there's more weight on the right hand side?



**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Cows are similar. They lean a little bit to the left I think, which basically means they're exercising that muscle a bit more. No. Sorry, to the right. That's right. So, they exercise the muscle more on the right, which means that is chewier and less tender. So, you go for the left because, you know, it's the less tough side.

**Ed Gamble**

It's tender and soft, like the wine.

**James Acaster**

Will you be looking in the cow's eyes as well before?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. They don't really tell you much though. There's not much happening there.

**James Acaster**

Not as much as the-

**Garth Marengi**

But you can look at them.

**James Acaster**

There's more with a prawn, more going on.

**Garth Marengi**

What's quite good, if you want a very good effect, if, like me, you are prone to-, you know, on Halloween I will often decorate the house and I'll often take an eye from one of these creatures and I will conceal it in mud in the garden on the front lawn. So that anyone that comes up they might just see a glint of something, they look a bit closer and there's a real jelly-like eye looking up from the ground. A cow's best for that.

**James Acaster**

Yes? Yes. Yes. That's good.

**Ed Gamble**

That's a good way to scare the kids on Halloween.

**Garth Marengi**

Or scare anyone. Yes.



**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Scare anyone with that.

**Garth Marengi**

The key is to try and keep people away from your front door at Halloween.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Right. So, you don't like trick or treaters on Halloween?

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, no. They don't like me, more importantly.

**Ed Gamble**

But surely you're the house to go to. That's the one everyone's excited to go to.

**Garth Marengi**

Exactly. But I'm writing. And I can't be putting up with, you know, 'Can we-,' 'Can you what? Can you what? What do you want? Take a handful of those and go.'

**Ed Gamble**

And what are you giving them?

**James Acaster**

What are those?

**Ed Gamble**

What are you giving them a handful of?

**Garth Marengi**

Well, just sweets.

**Ed Gamble**

Just sweets?

**Garth Marengi**

Just sweets.





**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Any particular sweet that's a favourite in the Marengi household?

**Garth Marengi**

Whatever is in the bargain bucket at Aldi or other supermarkets of your choice.

**Ed Gamble**

We don't have to do balance here.

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, fine. Aldi then.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. If you're an Aldi guy, absolutely fine.

**James Acaster**

As a child though you must have enjoyed Halloween and trick or treating?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, I did. But, again, I was always writing. Halloween wasn't as big a thing when I was younger. You know, it was an American thing. It was more, Guy Fawkes was the-, you know, bonfire night was the thing. So, there was a lot of setting things alight. That, I enjoyed.

**James Acaster**

Did you ever set anything alight that, like, really sticks in your head as the best thing?

**Garth Marengi**

Well, we set alight a local tramp once but we were caught. Now, this feeds into my book, Incarcerat, okay?

**James Acaster**

Yes. Yes. Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Okay? I'm not just being frivolous.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Yes. Yes.



**Garth Marengi**

Right? The third story in this, the randy man, that's about a tramp. Well, he wasn't actually set alight in the story. He's not set alight in the story. He's actually drowned. He's a toilet attendant and he works in a toilet block and local kids pump the outlet pipes back into the toilet block and drown him in sewage. That was a variation on an experience I had as a child where my mates and I, decided to set fire to a local hobo. Because they do like fire. This is the thing, they were always around fire. You know, when you see them in films they're always standing around a fire.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Because they like fire.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Now, I'm not saying what I did was right. It was wrong.

**Ed Gamble**

No. No. No. No.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Yes. Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

We didn't know then that they need the fire to keep warm. We didn't understand that then. We just thought-,

**Ed Gamble**

They liked it.

**Garth Marengi**

'They like this stuff.' So do we. What can we do?

**James Acaster**

Yes. No. I understand that.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. How do you want this beef cooked? What, sort of, level?

**Garth Marengi**

Medium rare.



**Ed Gamble**

Medium rare?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

All of it?

**Garth Marengi**

If you're going to do the heart, rare. I like absorbing that pure. But most other stuff, no- You know, again, you've got to be a little bit careful where it's come from. You don't know what can exist in uncooked meat. So, you've got to be careful.

**James Acaster**

I can see through the glass your publicist is going haywire. I think it's because of the story you told a second ago about the homeless person.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. But you'll cut that out I presume.

**James Acaster**

Well, it's up to you.

**Ed Gamble**

I mean you said it's an inspiration.

**Garth Marengi**

You asked me.

**James Acaster**

Best get it out the way now.

**Garth Marengi**

There is nothing I am saying. When I say that I was wrong, I'm right. I was wrong.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.



**Garth Marengi**

What was the question when we talked about that anyway?

**James Acaster**

We asked what's your favourite thing you've ever set on fire?

**Garth Marengi**

Are you sure you said favourite?

**James Acaster**

I think so.

**Garth Marengi**

Or did you say the thing that you most regret setting on fire?

**James Acaster**

Well, we'll have to listen back to it. I'm pretty sure I didn't say the thing you most regret.

**Ed Gamble**

No. I think it was in the, sort of, area of favourite.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. It was definitely one of the, sort of, words that you used, favourite.

**Garth Marengi**

The most vivid thing I remember setting on fire.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Yes. Yes.

**James Acaster**

It's vivid. But you've said that you acknowledge it was wrong.

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, it was completely wrong. And, you know, I got stiffly told off.

**Ed Gamble**

Who told you off?

**Garth Marengi**

I think his mother.



**James Acaster**

So, your dream side dish, Garth.

**Garth Marengi**

Turducken. which is a beast consisting of three other beasts. You have a turkey, you have a chicken and you have a duck. These were actually bred for real in a laboratory in the late 1980s. They fused these three different types and over time we've managed to create the actual beast, the actual turducken. It is a thing that does exist. My slaughterer breeds them on a farm up where we live. So, it actually is a thing. It takes a while to dispatch it. It does take a while to get rid of it because it's quite hard. You have to kill it three times, essentially.

**James Acaster**

Okay. So, this is amazing. This is my-,

**Ed Gamble**

So, I didn't know that.

**James Acaster**

I thought it was a bird within a bird, within a bird, or something, but you're saying.

**Garth Marengi**

I mean, that's how it's, traditionally cooked.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

I'm saying we breed them, breed the actual animals.

**Ed Gamble**

I wasn't aware that anyone had managed this.

**James Acaster**

The slaughterer managed it.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. But how does it look? What, sort of, elements of each animal does it have?



**Garth Marengi**

It doesn't look appetising, I'll be honest. One of the heads is, sort of, appears through another one of the heads, you know? And there are too many wings, and it doesn't look, which is why it's important to, kind of, deal with it as quickly as possible.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

And it does take a while, which is why I have a slaughterer. You know, he's happy to do it.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, so it's not bred into one animal. It's, essentially, there's three heads, are there six wings as well?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. There's a whole mixture.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. And lots of legs as well.

**James Acaster**

So, it sounds like all three just, kind of, stuck together.

**Garth Marengi**

It's-, essentially. That's how it turns out.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Wow.

**Garth Marengi**

But on the plate, it is beautiful.

**James Acaster**

It sounds terrifying.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

I mean, I'm sure you can handle it, but for mere mortals, that's a lot to take in.



**Garth Marengi**

Yes. I wouldn't advise it.

**Ed Gamble**

Do you watch the turducken being dispatched? Is that part of the respect?

**Garth Marengi**

That's the only one I won't watch because it just takes so long. I'd happily watch it.

**Ed Gamble**

Do you know what's involved?

**Garth Marengi**

I know what tools are involved.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

From time to time.

**Ed Gamble**

Go for it.

**Garth Marengi**

G clamps, workbench, sometimes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

What's that, sort of, square thing? The handle and a-, is it a set square? No. That's maths, isn't it?

**James Acaster**

I think it was a type of a square, of a blade?

**Ed Gamble**

Is it?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. It's got a blade in it, yes. This is really about keeping it still.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. So, you'd need a vice and all of that sort of stuff, yes.



**James Acaster**

And is there a way that you like your turducken cooked and presented for you?

**Garth Marengi**

I like that cooked very well.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Because it's three different birds, you know. And bird is, you've got to cook bird well.

**Ed Gamble**

You've got to cook bird well.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, cook it three times as long if you need to.

**James Acaster**

And are there any seasonings on it or any spices on it or anything like that?

**Garth Marengi**

Just salt and pepper.

**James Acaster**

Salt and pepper, lovely.

**Garth Marengi**

Keep it simple, yes. There's enough flavour going on.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Do you know what I mean?

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

They compete, and they contrast, and they complement. So, just salt and pepper.

**James Acaster**

And will that go well with the beef, do you think?





**Garth Marenghi**

I don't care. For me, it will. I mean, I wouldn't serve it to anyone else. But I like to have, you know-, I always get that thing when I'm eating, you know, you have the meal, and you get instant regret, 'I wish I'd ordered that one instead.' The answer to that is order two, order one as a side dish.

**James Acaster**

You don't strike me as a man with regrets, who dwells on the past, or any regrets.

**Garth Marenghi**

No.

**James Acaster**

No, move forward. Grudges are-

**Garth Marenghi**

I'm slightly regretting the discussion we had earlier.

**James Acaster**

We're aware of that, and we know that you'll probably try and get us to take it, but-

**Garth Marenghi**

It's too late.

**James Acaster**

We've got you on mic saying it's fine for us to include it.

**Ed Gamble**

And also, I think it's interesting to hear the background to the Randy Man stories.

**Garth Marenghi**

It is. I mean, let me just give you a little bit of clarification for that, before you all-, So, let me find the offending passage.

**James Acaster**

Are you finding the Randy Man?

**Garth Marenghi**

The Randy Man. Have you read this, guys?

**James Acaster**

We only just got given it today, but we definitely will read it, we're big fans.

**Garth Marenghi**

Only just been given it-,



**James Acaster**

The genre.

**Garth Marengi**

Here we go, you have to remember, this is actually quite painful for me to read this because I drew on my guilt-

**Ed Gamble**

Real-life experiences, yes.

**Garth Marengi**

'Roz suddenly realised as she turned her head away from the demon's terrifying weapon toward that squat building on the far side of the green that the rancid reek factory was none other than Randy's home, a disgusting public convenience. The local gents in Dankton Park was where Randy had been drowned by a local gang of youths. He later emerged as a hideous dream demon, hellbent on supernatural revenge. And she thought desperately and she sought to evade the pursuing demon, there would've been no Randy Man novels at all if Roz hadn't advised Nick to add one crucial element, no run of ever-popular sequels, no Randy Man 2, Nightmare in Danktown, no Randy Man 3, Mirror Streaker, no Randy Man 4, Night Stench, no Randy Man 5, You Benders, a.k.a., You Bend or You Break, nor all those other terrifying toilet-attendant-based horror novels leading up to the final instalment, Randy Man 17, Death Plunge Sally. None of these would've existed if Roz hadn't advised Nick to make one small change.' See, the whole point of this is that Nick wrote a book where you didn't feel for the Randy Man, Randy Streak. Roz, as his editor, advised him, 'You have to have sympathy here.' The Randy Man was a victim, okay, Randy Streak is a victim. That is the lesson I had to learn as well as Nick, that he wasn't just the bogeyman. You know, the Randy Man was not just a demon, he was a person who'd been badly treated, okay? That is the lesson that the book is about, and that is what I draw upon when, you know, when I refer to what happened all those years ago.

**James Acaster**

Also, you seem to be, through your writing there, critiquing the horror films and-, what do you think of, like, a lot of the modern-day horror films-

**Ed Gamble**

Franchises.

**Garth Marengi**

Not much, if I'm honest.

**James Acaster**

Saw a film called Possum, have you seen that? A horror film.

**Garth Marengi**

I have seen, I watched it once.



**James Acaster**

What do you think of it?

**Garth Marengi**

Very slow, yes.

**James Acaster**

Your dream drink, Garth?

**Garth Marengi**

My dream drink is-, well, depends what I had earlier. If it wasn't wine, I'll have the beer, if I had the beer earlier, I'll have the wine.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, I thought you were having both the beer and the wine to start the meal.

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, that's true, isn't it? In which case, I'll have a potion.

**James Acaster**

Any particular type of potion?

**Garth Marengi**

Ask him.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Benito should know.

**James Acaster**

Benito can do this choice, he can give you whatever potion you want?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. Within reason, Benito. Okay? Rustle me up something interesting but not dangerous.

**Ed Gamble**

Okay. In your ideal world, what effect would the potion have on you?

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, I would like it to expand time. There's not enough time for me to write all I need to write. There just isn't.



**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Having said that, I do believe in reincarnation. I do know that I will be reincarnated as another writer. I was a writer in a previous incarnation.

**James Acaster**

Oh wow.

**Garth Marengi**

But it's just a bit annoying to have to die and then start the process again. Because you waste those valuable years, you know, from naught to twenty, 25 where you are growing again as a human being.

**James Acaster**

Getting used to curry again.

**Garth Marengi**

All of that. Learning the lessons of who do you not, or who do you, you know, play with fire with, you know what I mean?

**James Acaster**

Yes. You don't want-,

**Garth Marengi**

No. I mean, I've learnt that lesson.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Do you know who you were in the previous incarnation? What, sort of, things you would write?

**Garth Marengi**

I don't know his name. I know of his work, I can't say any more than that.

**Ed Gamble**

Okay.

**James Acaster**

Are you a better writer than him?

**Garth Marengi**

I think so.



**James Acaster**

Do you think, when you come back again, you'll be an even better writer or do you think that's not possible?

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, undoubtedly.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

It all depends whether mankind is evolved enough to understand and learn from the work that I'm doing at that stage, which I doubt.

**James Acaster**

So, relatively speaking, you might be as good because you evolve-, with each stage of evolution, you improve?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

But relatively you're still, like, as good?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. I mean, I don't evolve because I am evolved. You know, I'm here, I'm a sage, I'm a doom-sage, I'm here to help and facilitate your minds heading towards the next stage of evolving-, evolvment? So, I don't necessarily need to evolve but you guys certainly do.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Well, thank you, as well, for helping us.

**Garth Marengi**

That's okay. That is a step towards evolving.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you. Good.

**Garth Marengi**

Learning to say thank you and recognising when your life has been improved.

**James Acaster**

I've noticed you're sometimes occasionally glancing at Ed's tattoos.



**Garth Marengi**

Yes, why did you get those?

**Ed Gamble**

Just thought they looked nice. I like the artists. Just, you know, collect them. I've got a really scary one here, Garth, you might like this one.

**James Acaster**

It's quite scary.

**Ed Gamble**

Look at that demon there. What do you think of that?

**Garth Marengi**

That looks like something you've covered up to change. Was it an old girlfriend?

**Ed Gamble**

No. No, this is the original piece.

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, okay.

**Ed Gamble**

It's got teeth coming out of its neck there. Nice idea, isn't it?

**Garth Marengi**

Quite similar to a story I once wrote.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh, really?

**Garth Marengi**

Did you get that checked?

**Ed Gamble**

No, I didn't. I should have asked the artist, really, whether-,

**Garth Marengi**

You should. You are going to have to get that changed potentially. Again-,

**Ed Gamble**

What was the story?



**Garth Marengi**

Because it's an infringement.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Yes, I'm on Garth's side with this.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Do you know the story?

**James Acaster**

It sounds like you do.

**Garth Marengi**

I don't need to point it out.

**Ed Gamble**

You know, it was the artist who came up with the-

**Garth Marengi**

They know the story.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. I think they probably know the story. Sorry, Garth.

**James Acaster**

I'm surprised we haven't- You know, we've moved on to the drink here and we've got dessert around the corner but I'm assuming we've left the savouries behind and-, as a fan of your TV show, I was slightly disappointed not to see broccoli on the menu.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

I won't touch it.



**James Acaster**

You don't like it?

**Garth Marengi**

You might think that was a frivolous moment, I was deadly serious, I don't touch it.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

So, you do hate it?

**Garth Marengi**

I don't hate it, I tire of it. Actually, I do hate it, I do hate it.

**James Acaster**

You can do great things with, you know, tender stem broccoli now, you can char-grill it and it gets that, sort of, smoky-,

**Garth Marengi**

You can dip it in cheese, hot cheese, which is nice.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

There's that as well, yes.

**James Acaster**

I mean, tender stem wasn't as big when you made the series originally. Tender stem broccoli wasn't really a thing, it wasn't in the zeitgeist.

**Garth Marengi**

That's right. I think tender stem came about because of that show, in fact. That episode. I think people realised they had to do something.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Thus tender stem was developed.





**James Acaster**

It must feel good to know that you've made a positive change in the world.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, I just wish we'd phased it all out as a vegetable.

**James Acaster**

That was the aim?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

That was the true aim.

**Ed Gamble**

What other foods would you phase out apart from broccoli?

**Garth Marengi**

I would phase out ice. But I don't need to because that is happening.

**Ed Gamble**

Of course, yes.

**James Acaster**

That's comforting to know.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Do you want another water? You've just-,

**Garth Marengi**

I would like another water, yes please.

**James Acaster**

I think some listeners might spot an inconsistency here.

**Garth Marengi**

I'm still fearing it.

**James Acaster**

Yes, okay. It's not a pleasant experience for you drinking the water, but you are on your second glass.



**Garth Marengi**

I'm doing it because you haven't provided beer or wine.

**Ed Gamble**

Or potion.

**Garth Marengi**

Or potion.

**James Acaster**

Would you like the potion to be smoking? In some horror films there might be some smoke coming off the top of the glass?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. And maybe a little umbrella in the top as well.

**James Acaster**

Oh yes, that's nice.

**Ed Gamble**

If you want.

**James Acaster**

Cocktail umbrella in it.

**Ed Gamble**

And in the goblet of course as well.

**Garth Marengi**

In the goblet.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, please.

**Ed Gamble**

You've never told us about the goblet. You've never described the goblet. What's the one at home like?

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, it's large, it's long. Often it will require two arms to lift. But it is, I think, genuine Nordic.

**Ed Gamble**

Oh wow.



**Garth Marengi**

Or genuine Viking, at least.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Where did you lay your hands on it?

**Garth Marengi**

Gift-shop up in Reykjavik. There was a gift shop there.

**James Acaster**

Was the gift shop adjacent to a tourist attraction?

**Garth Marengi**

A hot spring, a hot-spring.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, nice.

**James Acaster**

I can't imagine you in a hot-spring, Garth.

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, well, now you can. It's why you're not a writer.

**James Acaster**

Yes. My imagination is limited to what's in front of me I guess.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Because I guess you can look at any of us and imagine us in any scenario.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, I can.

**James Acaster**

If you were to write a book about Benito, for example-,

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

What situation do you think would best suit him?



**Garth Marengi**

A man who wanted it all and took it, and paid the price.

**James Acaster**

That's great.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, I can imagine him in that situation now. Only now after you've said it.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, that's quite a-, I'd read that book.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Now, if you do write that book, do you think we would maybe have, like, a-, Ben would know that it was based on him.

**Garth Marengi**

I'm not writing it, no. But I am copywriting it. You cannot have that idea.

**Ed Gamble**

Right.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

We can't have the idea of a man who wants it all and took it and then paid the price?

**Garth Marengi**

No.

**Ed Gamble**

No?

**Garth Marengi**

I'm copyrighting that.



**James Acaster**

Those exact words?

**Garth Marengi**

I'm copyrighting that whole plot development. I'm copyrighting story.

**James Acaster**

A man who wanted-,

**Garth Marengi**

You've got to now because that's what AI are trying to do. Yes. They're trying to copyright.

**Ed Gamble**

Are you worried about the rise of AI?

**Garth Marengi**

I'm worried about the rise of copyright plottage.

**Ed Gamble**

Right.

**Garth Marengi**

Plottage copyright theft.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

You know, if you steal plottage, it leaves writers pretty stumped. I'm not so much frightened by the technology because I can always lift a hammer or something and I can smash the screen if I want. You know, if there's going to be a fight between me and AI, ultimately I'm going to win.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Because you're effectively speaking about a screen, an inert screen.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. But of course you remember from TerrorTome, the typewriter was very much the evil demon figure. So, technology-,

**Garth Marengi**

One of.



**Ed Gamble**

Yes, one of. But technology can be quite terrifying.

**Garth Marengi**

It can.

**James Acaster**

But you can smash it.

**Garth Marengi**

I mean, I could smash these mics if I want. I could smash the recording.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Well I could, couldn't I?

**James Acaster**

You could.

**Ed Gamble**

You could.

**James Acaster**

You could smash them.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

The recording is digital, so it's, like, on loads of-, it can go everywhere.

**Garth Marengi**

I can go around and smash everyone's, if I want.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

So, you'd have to smash everyone's in the world.

**Garth Marengi**

Time permitting, but it could be done. This is what you've got to remember, time permitting.



**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

That's why I argue so much for the extension of time. This is the one thing that holds it-, time permitting, we could go around and break everyone's computer screen in the world.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

And on a space station if we wish.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

It's time, it's the crucial element, always is. We fall down on time.

**Ed Gamble**

Which is why you've got the potion, you can expand time.

**Garth Marengi**

That's right, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

So, if you smash all the screens, then AI goes away?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

And that's the end? That's where AI is?



**Garth Marengi**

Then you come back to me, you'll still want stories. You people will need stories. Human beings need stories, they need tellers of tales.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Okay? Which is what I am. In order to evolve. You'll come back, you know? AI can't copy my thought process, you know?

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**Garth Marengi**

It can't tell a tale the way I tell it. It can't come up with, for example-

**James Acaster**

He's going into the book again.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

"No," yelled the voice of the Nullifier, raging inside Nick's mind. "This cannot be. I was about to wreak ultimate havoc on that very plane of existence. I was that close to causing total ultimate destruction, and then you came along. How dare you?" "

**James Acaster**

Wow.

**Ed Gamble**

Wow.

**Garth Marengi**

You see?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, AI wouldn't be able to come up with that.





**Garth Marengi**

Or the Randy Man, it can't come up with the idea for the Randy Man.

**Ed Gamble**

Where did you get the idea for the Randy Man?

**Garth Marengi**

Well-,

**James Acaster**

Oh, we know that.

**Garth Marengi**

I mean, the name, really, and, yes, the, sort of-,

**James Acaster**

Oh, where did the name come from?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, and, sort of, the story.

**James Acaster**

Randy Streak.

**Garth Marengi**

I was talking. I was afflicted for some time with a series of stonk-ons. The only thing that got me through it was to actually write about it. So, I came up with this, 'Have you seen the Randy Man streaking through the night? Have you seen the Randy Man flashing them affright? Wrapped up in his macintosh, with is grubby trilby. If you aren't now dead in bed, then pretty soon you will be. Watch out for the Randy Man who's living in your pillow. Beware his grubby macintosh when both flaps start to billow. Seventeen times, Nick remembered, say his name seventeen times and he'll appear. And if the legend was true and you happened to catch sight of whatever the flashing dream demon kept inside that billowing rain-mack of his, then blood would rush instantly to your extremities. The body's internal temperature would rise suddenly under the collar area, and before you knew it, you were dead from exposure. Not the weather-related kind', okay?

**Ed Gamble**

Okay. That's amazing.

**James Acaster**

To your knowledge, is there any other story that's similar to the Randy Man?

**Garth Marengi**

No.



**James Acaster**

Your dream dessert, Garth?

**Garth Marengi**

Kedgeree. Now, technically, that is still a savoury dish.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Okay. But I have a meat-tooth, not a sweet-tooth, okay? I don't like sweet stuff. So, I would go for kedgeree. I don't want to select my haddock, okay?

**Ed Gamble**

Okay.

**Garth Marengi**

Haddock actually frightens me a bit.

**Ed Gamble**

Right.

**Garth Marengi**

I did a series of haddock-related horror novels back in the '90s and the '80s. 'Night of the Haddock,' have you read that one?

**James Acaster**

Not yet.

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**James Acaster**

I will.

**Ed Gamble**

I'm working my way back through them.

**Garth Marengi**

It's out of print. And then there was, 'Haddock Two: More Killer Haddock.' Did you read that one?

**Ed Gamble**

No, I've not got to that. I'm going backwards, so I've not got to haddock ones yet.



**Garth Marengi**

'Haddock Five: the Haddocking.' No.

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**Garth Marengi**

We didn't publish that one in the end, actually. 'Afternoon of the Haddock,' that was quite a good one because that was the time you least expected the haddock to attack.

**Ed Gamble**

Of course.

**James Acaster**

Yes, that's when you've got your guard down.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. So, yes, haddock. So, I don't really want to see them.

**Ed Gamble**

It's got to be smoked as well for kedgereee, right? So, it'd take a while.

**Garth Marengi**

Lots of curry powder. Put in too much curry powder.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Because quite often guests don't like it too spicy, which means there's more leftover the next day. If you put it in and they avoid it, means you've got lots left.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

But do you like it?

**Garth Marengi**

I love it.



**James Acaster**

When it's got that much curry powder in it?

**Garth Marengi**

Love it.

**Ed Gamble**

Now, James loves sweet stuff, so when a guests comes on and doesn't pick a proper dessert, sometimes he can get quite angry. Can't you, James?

**James Acaster**

I usually get very angry when a guest doesn't choose a proper dessert but I will-,

**Garth Marengi**

How angry?

**James Acaster**

Furious. I've screamed at them.

**Garth Marengi**

Physically violent?

**James Acaster**

No, I guess-,

**Garth Marengi**

You've never physically attacked anyone?

**James Acaster**

I closed my laptop screen once when doing it over Zoom.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

So, that was physical. But there's something stopping me from getting angry at you. I think there's a chilling presence and there's something that tells me that it wouldn't end well for me if I was to try and scream-,

**Garth Marengi**

Try me.

**James Acaster**

Well, I mean, obviously I think it's a poor-



**Garth Marenghi**

I mean, you shouted earlier on. You barked a couple of things.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. Poppadoms or bread-

**Garth Marenghi**

But you do have a but of a rage issue?

**James Acaster**

Yes. Definitely with desserts, there's a rage issue. I'm probably going to get angry about this later. I mean, I am a bit angry about it now that you've chosen fish as your dessert.

**Garth Marenghi**

Interesting.

**James Acaster**

Because, like, you've had a lot of seafood in your starter, so to end on kedgerree seems insane to me that you wouldn't just have-,

**Garth Marenghi**

But I am the guests.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Yes, you are the guest and obviously you can do what you like, I can't change that.

**Garth Marenghi**

It's Garth's dream restaurant, so Garth can pick whatever he likes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, sure.

**Garth Marenghi**

I think kedgerree for dessert sounds lovely, what a treat.

**James Acaster**

You've already had, like, a seafood medley for your starter, you've had beef-,

**Garth Marenghi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

From a cow, and a turducken. And now you've got kedgerree coming up for dessert, which is, like, a load of-,



**Garth Marengi**

Okay, what about an after-dinner mint?

**James Acaster**

Yes, I'd be happy if you had an after-dinner mint, that would be nice.

**Garth Marengi**

Look, I-,

**Ed Gamble**

I think you can have that as well as the kedgerree, though. I think after-dinner mint would be a lovely way to round off the whole evening.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. And a bottle of, what's that, Peptic-,

**James Acaster**

Pepto Bismal?

**Ed Gamble**

Pepto Bismal.

**Garth Marengi**

That's quite a nice dessert, you know, get and aniseed-tasting one. You know, keep it down.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

The heartburn.

**Garth Marengi**

The heartburn, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

That's usually my dessert of choice.

**James Acaster**

A Pepto Bismal and after-dinner mint?



**Garth Marenghi**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

I think it's lovely-

**Garth Marenghi**

I mean, does that qualify?

**James Acaster**

Well, I'll take it if it's after the kedgerree.

**Ed Gamble**

It's, like, a digestive, isn't it?

**Garth Marenghi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Very good.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you.

**James Acaster**

Very good.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you.

**Garth Marenghi**

I have hopes for you.

**Ed Gamble**

Great, I can be a writer.

**Garth Marenghi**

Well-

**Ed Gamble**

I've written a book.



**Garth Marengi**

Have you?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. It's not a novel, it's about me.

**James Acaster**

It's a memoir.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, okay. Technically a book.

**Ed Gamble**

It's coming out the week before yours, actually.

**Garth Marengi**

Right.

**Ed Gamble**

How do you feel about that? We're going to be going-

**Garth Marengi**

Well, we're not competing, are we?

**Ed Gamble**

We're going to be going head-to-head. Head-to-head in the charts.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes but this is horror. Is yours a horror-related memoir?

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**Garth Marengi**

Is it about that tattoo?

**Ed Gamble**

No, I don't think the tattoo comes up, actually. It's food, it's about food.

**Garth Marengi**

It's about food?





**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

He knows his lane.

**Garth Marengi**

Is it themed along this podcast?

**Ed Gamble**

This podcast comes up, yes. But I'm holding some of that back as well, so we can do our own book.

**Garth Marengi**

Oh. How do you feel about his book?

**James Acaster**

I haven't read it yet. I'm looking forward to reading it, you know? Ed's a very funny comedian. I'm sure it'll be a very funny memoir. I've always enjoyed hearing stories of him as a little boy choosing what to eat. He had a very advanced palette.

**Garth Marengi**

Did you?

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

What do you eat?

**Ed Gamble**

Poached salmon.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Ate that one as a little kid. I've never liked kids' menus or anything like that. It's about me being a precocious child. But I was just wanting to get it out there now, just so there were no hard feelings when the books came out at the same time.

**Garth Marengi**

No hard feelings here, pal.



**Ed Gamble**

Good. Do you think we have any crossover with our audiences?

**Garth Marengi**

No, none at all.

**James Acaster**

I think you're right. I don't think anyone is going to be choosing between those two books.

**Garth Marengi**

They'll have a hard time with this podcast. I mean, they'll be going, 'How did these guys meet?'

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Because, I mean, I guess a lot of your fanbase will probably listen to this podcast and it'll be the first time-,

**Garth Marengi**

My readership.

**James Acaster**

Your readership. And they won't have ever listened to this podcast before.

**Garth Marengi**

Well, I mean, I didn't know who you were.

**Ed Gamble**

Did you do any research when you heard-,

**Garth Marengi**

None.

**Ed Gamble**

No? Did you do After Dark when it was on the first time?

**Garth Marengi**

I did, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Did it go well?



**Garth Marengi**

It went very well.

**James Acaster**

Who were you on with?

**Garth Marengi**

I was on with Jimmy H., Stevie K., Clivey B., all the greats.

**James Acaster**

What did you discuss?

**Garth Marengi**

We discussed the fantastique.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Forgive me because I never saw After Hours, was it-,

**Ed Gamble**

After Dark.

**Garth Marengi**

After Dark.

**James Acaster**

Yes. Was it a show where someone won at the end? Did you win?

**Garth Marengi**

Well, if you took away a nugget of insight, then yes you were a winner, I'm sure. Yes, the world won when we chatted horror. When we talked horror, the world won.

**Ed Gamble**

Do you respect all of those practitioners of the dark arts?

**Garth Marengi**

Of course, yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, all great pals.



**Ed Gamble**

You still speak to Stevie K.?

**Garth Marengi**

I speak to Stevie K., I speak to them all. Good guys.

**James Acaster**

I didn't detect-

**Garth Marengi**

Great guys.

**James Acaster**

I didn't hear any women on the line-up there.

**Garth Marengi**

There weren't any on, I don't think. Or I didn't notice them.

**James Acaster**

Okay.

**Ed Gamble**

Are there any great female horror writers around now?

**Garth Marengi**

I'm sure there are. Somewhere.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. But you don't get involved in all that?

**Garth Marengi**

What do you mean get involved?

**Ed Gamble**

Do you read other authors' books?

**Garth Marengi**

I don't have time to read anyone else.

**Ed Gamble**

Because you're writing?

**Garth Marengi**

I will reread my own books every so often, you know?



**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

There's usually something in there I've missed the first time round.

**James Acaster**

There's, like, a theory that all of your work is set in the same universe.

**Garth Marengi**

Expand.

**James Acaster**

Just like in the Tarantino films, and people say it all exists in one universe together.

**Garth Marengi**

Well, we are all in one universe together.

**Ed Gamble**

I guess with Stevie K.'s books as well, people say they're all within the same universe.

**Garth Marengi**

Well, we are all in the same universe.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes but with fiction, I guess, you could, you know-,

**James Acaster**

Especially with, like, horror.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, with horror, you could say, you know, 'This thing has happened,' but then in the next book, it could be set in a parallel universe where the thing in the last book didn't happen.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Because if there was a book about aliens invading, you write the next book, you're going to have to start from scratch again with the world because otherwise all that people would be talking about in the next book would be about the aliens invading in the previous book, if you see what I mean?

**Garth Marengi**

I don't.



**Ed Gamble**

Okay.

**James Acaster**

Well, like, for example would the hospital in DarkPlace exist in the same universe as the Randy Man?

**Garth Marengi**

Why not?

**James Acaster**

Well, exactly. But that would mean the characters in Randy Man know about DarkPlace, know about all of the goings-on there, because that would have shocked the world, surely? What happened in that hospital. That wouldn't be a secret, would it?

**Garth Marengi**

No.

**James Acaster**

So, like, we're just asking if-,

**Garth Marengi**

This seems to be as very pointless discussion. Why do you care?

**James Acaster**

People like it when it's, like-,

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, and there's one world.

**Garth Marengi**

Do you need them to know?

**Ed Gamble**

No.

**James Acaster**

It changes everything, doesn't it?

**Ed Gamble**

But are there any little Easter eggs in some of your books that refer-,

**Garth Marengi**

Easter eggs?



**Ed Gamble**

Easter eggs, yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Why would I put an Easter egg in my book? It would mess up the pages. What are you talking about?

**Ed Gamble**

Easter egg is a term meaning, like, a little clue in one of your books that maybe is a reference to a different book that you've written, that ties them all together.

**Garth Marengi**

Right. I think, gentlemen, what you are trying to say is that, is there any, kind of, hidden meaning in my books. Is that part of what you're saying?

**Ed Gamble**

Well, do they interlink in any way?

**Garth Marengi**

I think you're overthinking. Right, I think you're overthinking. A book is a book, it's got a story in it, it's got a hero, it's got a demon, and it's, like-, if someone picked up, for example, my first book here, TerrorTome-, which is about a man who doesn't fall in love but he falls into lust with his cursed typewriter. I have questions from people, like you two guys, saying, you know, 'What's this about? What does it represent?' Okay. It's, like, Sigmund Freud looking at it and going, 'What does this typewriter mean, Garth? What is it about, what does it represent?' 'Doesn't represent anything, Sigmund. It's a guy shagging a typewriter, that's all it is. That's his problem.'

**Ed Gamble**

There's no deeper meaning to it?

**Garth Marengi**

There's no deeper meaning. So, I can't see why you need to have Nick Steen-, it depends. I mean, he meets someone who's very similar to Rick Dagless, for example, in DarkPlace, in TerrorTome, but I'm in control of that. It's a little raised eyebrow, 'Hey, I know and you know who this guy is.'

**Ed Gamble**

That's what I mean by-,

**James Acaster**

That's what that means.

**Ed Gamble**

That's what I mean by an Easter egg.



**Garth Marengi**

It's not an Easter egg, though, is it?

**James Acaster**

And, like, it exists in the same universe because Rick Dagless is walking around in both-

**Garth Marengi**

Again, I think you're overthinking it. It's an act of respect to the reader.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Give them a little nod.

**James Acaster**

But then the nod is saying-

**Garth Marengi**

Go on.

**James Acaster**

'This is all in the same universe.'

**Garth Marengi**

No, the nod isn't saying, 'This is all in the same universe,' it's saying, 'Hi guys.'

**James Acaster**

'Hi guys.'

**Ed Gamble**

It's saying, 'Hi guys.'

**Garth Marengi**

'Hi guys. Hi,' yes? Or if it was in print, it would be, 'Heh, heh, heh.' H E H, H E H, H E H. You know, it's that kind of moment.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.





**James Acaster**

Yes. Shall I read your menu back to you now, see how you feel about it?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. I'm actually feeling a bit filled up thinking about it.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

There's a lot there.

**James Acaster**

You would like two goblets, one full of soft wine, one full of hard beer.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

You would like five popadoms with all the dips.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, please.

**James Acaster**

Pam's matching you there for that.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes. In a race.

**James Acaster**

In a race. Starter, a very large prawn cocktail with prawns that you have seen and selected yourself. Flecks of lobster and crab also, killed by your slaughterer. Main course, beef. You would like a piece of every part of the carcass, not the balls, medium-rare-, heart-rare, though.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, hard-rare.

**James Acaster**

Also killed by the slaughterer. Side dish, turducken, very well-cooked. Slaughterer again.

**Garth Marengi**

Pure-bred, yes.



**James Acaster**

Pure-bred.

**Ed Gamble**

Pure-bred. From the slaughterer's farm, right?

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Drink, goblet of potion, chosen by Benito. Hopefully one that can expand time.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

Dessert, you want kedgeree. Very curried kedgeree. Then, after you would like Pepto Bismal and an after-dinner mint.

**Garth Marengi**

That's correct.

**James Acaster**

How do you feel about that, hearing it back?

**Garth Marengi**

Lovely. Yes.

**James Acaster**

Yes, sounds delicious.

**Garth Marengi**

Count Pam and I down. We're coming to that.

**Ed Gamble**

Would Pam match you all the way through?

**Garth Marengi**

Oh, yes. In fact, you know, she'd probably hog most of the prawns, I think.



**Ed Gamble**

Would she?

**Garth Marenghi**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

She's got a good appetite?

**Garth Marenghi**

Healthy appetite, yes.

**James Acaster**

Just for our generation of comedians, you know, we all have watched DarkPlace many times over, so I should probably ask, how were the rest of them? The cast?

**Garth Marenghi**

How are the rest of the people that were in Darkplace?

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

I know one of them is-

**Garth Marenghi**

Dean Lerner is serving time, Todd Rivers is working for Armitage Shanks, and parts of Madeleine have been found under a car-park in Milan.

**Ed Gamble**

Sorry, I don't know why I'm laughing at that, that's tragic.

**James Acaster**

That is quite sad.

**Garth Marenghi**

Which, you know, I was hoping to go and dig them up, but unfortunately at exactly the same moment parts of Richard III were discovered under a car-park in Leicester and the TV crew that were with us upped and went off to Leicester to cover that, and funding fell through. But, you know, I'd like to bring back what we can because I think if we put what's left together, we could probably get her going again through stop-motion and maybe make another film. Which contractually she still owes me.



**James Acaster**

That's exciting, thank you so much, Garth.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, thank you very much for coming to the dream restaurant, Garth.

**Garth Marengi**

Yes, thank you.

**Ed Gamble**

Sorry it wasn't After Dark.

**Garth Marengi**

I am too.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. But we've had a great time.

**James Acaster**

Yes, we've had a great time. We're very much looking forward to reading the book.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**Garth Marengi**

Well, there it is.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

It's right there.

**Garth Marengi**

Do read it.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

We will.

**James Acaster**

We will.



**Garth Marengi**

Yes, right.

**Ed Gamble**

Well, there we are. Chilled to our cores, James.

**James Acaster**

An honour. Thank you Garth for coming in.

**Ed Gamble**

Thank you.

**James Acaster**

What an honour.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes.

**James Acaster**

And thank you for not choosing egg in soup as well.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, there was-,

**James Acaster**

It couldn't have gone better.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, there was nothing that didn't have an animal product in it, I don't think.

**James Acaster**

Yes. There was nothing there that wasn't-, egg and soup was never going to come up.

**Ed Gamble**

egg and soup was never going to come up, and-,

**James Acaster**

Unless turduckens lay eggs.

**Ed Gamble**

They might do, actually.

**James Acaster**

Yes.



**Ed Gamble**

But he didn't want the egg, he just wanted the flesh of the turducken, yes.

**James Acaster**

Too late to ask now.

**Ed Gamble**

Too late to ask now. He's gone and I'm not sure he'll necessarily want to hang out with us afterwards.

**James Acaster**

Well, he didn't. He's left immediately.

**Ed Gamble**

He went immediately.

**James Acaster**

Didn't say goodbye.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. But don't forget that Garth Marengi's *Incarcerat* is out now. Go and get it, it's available in traditional book form, it's also available in audiobook. Do go and get it because it is fantastic.

**James Acaster**

You have a week to read it because then you need to start reading *Glutton: The Multi-Course Life of a Very Greedy Boy*, by Ed Gamble.

**Ed Gamble**

Mine actually is out.

**James Acaster**

Huh?

**Ed Gamble**

Mine came out before Garth's, so it's actually-, it came out before Garth's, so-,

**James Acaster**

Yes but-,

**Ed Gamble**

It is out now, *Glutton: The Multi-*,

**James Acaster**

It's the thought that counts there.



**Ed Gamble**

It's the thought that counts.

**James Acaster**

I'm a friend.

**Ed Gamble**

But now me and Garth are warring authors now, of course.

**James Acaster**

So, yours is out, Glutton is out.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, Glutton's out.

**James Acaster**

I've read it.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes, James has read it. Now as the podcast goes out, I'm sure James has read it.

**James Acaster**

Yes.

**Ed Gamble**

But I cannot wait for Incarcerat, personally.

**James Acaster**

You have a week-

**Ed Gamble**

So, do-

**James Acaster**

You've had a week to read Ed's and now this one's out.

**Ed Gamble**

Yes. So, go and get both of them. Thank you very much for listening to Off Menu, we'll be back next week with another dream guest for the dream restaurant.

**James Acaster**

Don't go having nightmares.



**Ed Gamble**

Ooo.