

# Bordertown

ABC TV Publicity, [Bordertown](#)

## Summary of ABC TV episodes

### **Episode One** ***Saint Columbine's Tears***

by Sue Smith

We're introduced to the world of Bordertown, "a place of mayhem, muddle and miracles" by 15-year-old Louise Pearson. Louise is hopelessly in unrequited love with Joe della Vergine, an Italian casanova who believes that life, money and women exist to be exploited at every turn. But Joe's wings are soon to be clipped when his "simple" brother Nino arrives from Italy. Joe tries to shake the bonds which tie him to this nuisance brother - to no avail.

As Nino makes Joe's life of leisure increasingly difficult to sustain, Joe takes serious action. When Nino threatens to ruin Joe's afternoon liaison with the beautiful but sad Adrianna van Leeuwen, Joe ties him to the perimeter fence. Hours later, Nino is found dehydrated, scarred and sunburned - and Joe knows his time is up. Colonel Forsythe, the camp's administrator, decides to expel the brothers from the camp.

During the long night that follows, strange things occur. Joe confides in Bev Stafford - the one woman in the camp who has his number. He tells her of the family mythology: that everyone believes as a teenager Joe tried to save Nino's life. In truth, Joe tried to kill him. And stranger yet: in the course of the same night, Nino proves that he may be simple, but he may also be truly "touched by God". Bordertown's first miracle occurs, and in the series of events which follows, a resolution is struck which leaves both brothers at Baringa, to play out their ongoing passionate, violent, and oddly tender relationship. And to create tidal waves through

the lives of those around them.

### **Episode Two** ***The Roof Is Singing***

by John Alsop

Bordertown is in the grip of drought. It's a source of frustration for Dante - a master umbrella-maker. Dante lives for the day when his wife Diomira will join him. He has meticulously planned an Antipodean future for them. Her arrival however, brings a shock. She has come equipped for a quite different future. She has taught herself English and has ideas of her own. Diomira wants freedom from her husband's worship and her first taste of liberty has been a shipboard flirtation with a younger man, Cesare. To add fuel to the fire, Cesare is a former apprentice of Dante's.

A hare and tortoise situation develops when the two men decide to compete for Diomira's affection by means of an umbrella-making contest. Dante suffers a humiliating loss of face, losing both professionally and, he fears, romantically.

However it emerges that Diomira is having no part of Cesare either, preferring to go and earn her living the hard way rather than be cosseted by either of these vainglorious men. In their mutual abandonment, Dante and Cesare are obliged to recognise an identity of interest, relinquish their rivalry and learn to trust each other again.

### **Episode Three** ***Lady Bev's Bones***

by John Alsop

Bordertown is temporarily in Bev's charge until the new Administrator turns up. As Acting

Administrator, Bev becomes even more attractive to Joe. When she catches him spying on her in the bath, Bev is both flattered and outraged.

In a bid to turn the situation to his advantage, Joe reluctantly accepts a job that Nino has signed himself and Joe for. The assignment is grislier than either of them expected and Joe barely manages to cope.

Louise, still in the grip of a crush on Joe, is alarmed when he and Bev show an increased interest in one another. Her anxiety is shared by Nino who fears that he will lose his prior claim over his brother if a romantic relationship develops.

But Joe and Bev's attachment runs aground of its own accord when Joe allows a moment's squeamishness to humiliate Bev. She questions the sincerity of his ardour and despite his best efforts to regain her confidence, they remain at odds.

The arrival of the new Administrator, a retired (not that you'd know it) Colonel G.H. "Henry" Bates, presents another obstacle to any immediate rekindling of the flame between Joe and Bev.

Thinking the way is now clear, Louise makes a play for Joe only to encounter a brutal rebuff. The episode ends with the whole camp romantically unsettled and on edge.

### **Episode Four A Note From The Underground**

by Sue Smith

When the ageing, stuffy, anal-retentive professor Pieter van Leeuwen dies suddenly and without apparent cause, his young widow Adrianna is thrown into emotional chaos. While others in the camp begin to believe the place to be haunted by Pieter's ghost, Adrianna begins a desperate search through his diaries to uncover their shared history, and seek a reason for his untimely departure.

The diaries take us back to occupied Amsterdam in 1942. Pieter is a university professor, Adrianna his student, Jewish. When her family "disappears" Adrianna seeks sanctuary with Pieter. He hides her and little by little, under her influence, begins to emerge from his chronic and crippling shyness.

Meanwhile in Bordertown in 1952, Adrianna fights to have Pieter buried according to Jewish tradition. And Dante increasingly comes to believe that Pieter's spirit is taking its revenge by sabotaging the new toilet block.

Both stories meld when Adrianna finds the missing pages from Pieter's wartime diary. It emerges that, in order to keep her safe, he committed a single act both traitorous and heroic. As Adrianna finally learns this information, Colonel Bates discovers the cause of the toilet blockage - Pieter's false teeth have somehow found their way into the drainage system. Perhaps, only after his death, did the tragic and stuffy Pieter truly discover a sense of humour.

During the funeral ceremony, Adrianna's hair is stroked by a hand which can only be Pieter's. At last their peace is made...

### **Episode Five The Poisoned Paprika**

by Sue Smith

Mihaly Bassa, Baringa's Hungarian gardener, is a loner. He keeps to himself, obsessed only with building an irrigation scheme for his vegetable patch. The secret in his past is a secret of betrayal.

When Dom a young gypsy boy enters his life, Mihaly is reminded strongly of the son he left behind the Iron Curtain - the son who betrayed him. And history is repeated when, on a thieving expedition, it is Mihaly who abandons young Dom. During a sudden and frightening meningitis epidemic in the camp, Mihaly nurses a seriously ill Dom, and manages at last to exorcise the ghost of that fateful betrayal.

Together they complete Mihaly's precious irrigation scheme - and Mihaly fulfils a peculiar promise. He quite literally makes frogs "fall from the sky".

Kenneth too suffers a betrayal of sorts. A short story he has written is accepted for publication by the local rag. Kenneth has visions of literary stardom - but the truth, as always, is filled with bitter disillusionment.

When Joe battles his weak stomach and nurses Bev through the fever, Louise realises at last that her dreams of Joe have been childish and foolish.

### **Episode Six But What If The Wind Changes?**

by Sue Smith

Louise has been so obsessed with Joe that she has not even noticed that his brother Nino is in love with her. But a magical nocturnal trip on Nino's hand-made gondola changes all that.

But perhaps too late: Nino's proxy bride is on her way from Italy. When Bianca arrives, many things become clear. The two families have done a deal: a freak for a freak. Bianca is albino. She is also carrying a tragic and humiliating secret.

But honour must be upheld, and both resolve to go through with the marriage. Louise swallows her disappointment and wishes them well - until in the depths of the pre-nuptial night she discovers Bianca taking extreme measures to abort the child she is carrying. A deal is struck between the two women: Louise will keep the secret, and it is she, and not Bianca, who will share Nino's wedding night.

The romantic atmosphere infects the camp. Joe finally declares his love for Bev, and as the young lovers consummate their relationship in secret, the more mature, vexed love of Joe and Bev reaches its inevitable conclusion.

### **Episode Seven The Cracks And The Squares (Part One)**

by John Alsop

Life has almost passed Maeve the kiosk-keeper by. She sees Dante as her last chance for happiness and is overjoyed when he at last returns some affection. But just when it seems that these two more senior members of the camp's population might be on the brink of discovering happiness together, Dante is reminded of his undischarged obligations to his wife. He backs off.

Though disappointed for herself, Maeve decides to cheer him up by sending Dante a love letter purporting to be from his estranged wife. The plan backfires when Dante learns that Diomira has deserted him to take up with an American lover. Far from smoothing over the difference, Maeve's confession that she wrote the letter pushes Dante over the edge. His revenge is swift and frightening.

Louise, meanwhile, is tiring of having only a part-time claim on Nino's affections, while he seems to be falling more and more under the thrall of his bride Bianca. Her alarm is underscored by a very real fear that she may be carrying Nino's child. Gaining confirmation of her condition forces her into a potentially dangerous alliance with Dante.

### **Episode Eight The Cracks And The Squares (Part Two)**

by John Alsop

Dante begins to crack under the burden of his guilty secret and Louise, while contending with her own problems, begins to guess that he knows more than he's saying about Maeve's disappearance.

A discontented Bianca hatches a plan to make some fast money. She ropes Joe into helping her

organise a brothel in one of the disused huts. Joe digs himself into an even more precarious position by compromising Bev's integrity. He borrows Bev's keys to the official jeep which he uses to smuggle prostitutes onto the premises.

As the police investigation into Maeve's whereabouts escalates, Nino is momentarily held as a suspected murderer and it becomes inevitable that Bianca's get-rich quick scheme will be blown sky-high. When the hammer hits, Joe and Bianca face deportation and Bates and Bev's fitness to run the camp is exposed to official investigation.

Joe's admission that he had been promised a percentage of the proceeds for helping Bianca organize the brothel leaves Bev unable and unwilling to defend him.

Dante's last-ditch attempt to evade the weight of the law misfires tragically and a fatal secret concerning Kenneth is hinted at.

## **Episode Nine Meteorite Nights**

by Sue Smith

As Baringa's inhabitants await the appearance of a meteor in their skies, few realise that their lives are changing around them in profound ways.

When Joe is sent away to face trial, Bev believes her last chance at romantic happiness goes with him. But she doesn't count on the influence of Baringa's "fairy godmother" - her own mother, Cora, a free spirit who roams the countryside as a picture-show lady.

Cora's influence galvanises those it touches. Henry Bates, stuttering and underconfident, is finally induced to declare his feelings for Bev, and, in the absence of Joe, believes he has some hope of making her his wife. But Joe is not easily forgotten.

Louise, at long last, confesses to Nino that she is carrying his child..

A dream of Kenneth's is fulfilled in a bizarre fashion - under the influence of medicinal ether..

And Adrianna has a vision, through Cora, of how her life might be lived..

But Cora has her own plans. She has lived a marvellous, stubborn, desperately irritating life. And now that she believes her time is up .. she resolves to depart that life in the same way.

At the story's end, Henry Bates must make a sad announcement which will change all their lives.

## **Episode 10 Whirligig**

by John Alsop

The camp is set to close. Nino has disappeared on the eve of his wedding to Louise. The Administrator, Henry Bates, learning of Joe's likely return, corners Bev into accepting his proposal of marriage.

Joe manages to smuggle himself back into camp, but intercepted by Bates he agrees not to press any prior claim on Bev. By way of proviso, however, Joe insists on the right to see Bev and explain himself. Bates's own code of conduct requires him to accept these terms, even though he knows it jeopardises his own future happiness. Everything hinges on Joe's dubious word of honour.

Bev finds herself in a dilemma that can only be resolved with the help of her semi-senile mother. While Joe's word is being put to the test, Louise requires proof from Nino that he is ready to take on the responsibility of parenthood before she will consider marriage.

Kenneth's potentially fatal illness pushes him to new levels of recklessness and he trifles with everyone's plans for the future.

The spectre of an officially-decreed death hangs over the last few hours before Bordertown is permanently closed.