

Mr Mets 11: “Dr Inness’s Long-Awaited Mr Mets Debut”

[★] We begin this episode with an announcement. It’s official – the Mr Mets are ten years old. [★] Dreamed up during Sappo Club in autumn 2010 and inspired by a fake panto poster, who would have thought we would still be representing members of the Met Department as squares, circles and lozenges 10 years later.

[Scene 0: *the customary apologies to Prof Clark and Dr Inness*]

[★] We continue this momentous occasion with an apology. [★] We have made a terrible oversight. In those ten episodes, Dr Inness has never appeared in the Mr Mets. [★★] This is despite his immense love of tephigrams, [★★] his attendance on many a rainy MSc field trip, [★★] and his occasional interruption in WCD to help Dr Frame with the more complex details of the weather. [★] Like finding England on a weather map. For this [★] horrific oversight we apologise most profusely and guarantee that Dr Inness will play a starring role in this year’s episode. [★] And thank you for pointing this out to us in person earlier this year during WCD. [★]

[★] “Hey! [★] What about my apology?” [★] said Prof Clark, angrily.

...We also apologise to Prof Clark. [★] For ten years of humiliation. In particular, last year we insinuated that, following a trick by his undergraduate class, he signed up to an app that he believed was called ‘Grin Doctor’. [★★★★] As we reach this milestone, [★] we feel that it is time to stop making Prof Clark [★] do stupid things. [★] Maybe the time has come to introduce a new character to do all of the stupid things... [★] hmm. [★]

[★] And now, it’s time for [★] The Adventures of the Mr Mets! [★] (Theme plays.) [★★] Episode 11: “Dr Inness’s Long-Awaited Mr Mets Debut”.

[Scene 1: *a look around the empty Happy Met Land with tumbleweed*]

[★] It had been an odd year in Happy Met Land. [★★] For several months, Happy Met Land became Empty Met Land. [★★] A pandemic struck the land, and everyone was sent to work from home. [★★] Even the coffee room, the hub of activity, fell silent.

[Scene 2: *foyer next to the coffee area, then the one-way system*]

[★] Over time, however, things changed and gradually the Mr Mets returned to Happy Met Land, although under quite different conditions.

[★] One day, Dr Inness was on his way to the coffee area – [★] wearing his mask, of course – to get a coffee. [★] But standing in his way was Mr Guest, [★] the new Happy Met Land Health and Safety co-ordinator. [★] Mr Guest had set up a [★] one-way system to limit [★] social interaction. [★★] Dr Inness’s new route to the coffee area long and circuitous. [★★] One theory behind Mr Guest’s route was that, if the route to the coffee room was long, [★★] people would be less inclined to go there and gather, hence social distancing could be maintained. [★★] Not everyone was convinced that the route should go via the roof, although all health and safety measures [★] had apparently been considered. [★]

[Scene 3: *coffee area*]

[★★] Dr Inness finally made it to the coffee area. In the coffee area was Prof Clark, [★★] who was very proud of his new-found skill [★] of drinking coffee while wearing a face mask. [★★★★★]

[★] “Hello!” said Prof Clark. “Welcome to Happy Met Land! [★] Do you have time for a chat?”

[★] “Well... yes,” [★] said Dr Inness. “But it can’t go on too long. I am presenting in [★] WCD on Friday.” [★]

[★] “Well, that’s OK, because it’s [★] Wednesday afternoon [★] and I make the rule never to chat for more than 24 hours at a time. [★ ★] I need to run you through some [★] important induction information, [★] as you are new to Happy Met Land.” [★]

[★] “But I’ve been here working for decades,” [★] said Dr Inness. “I have just never [★] been included in the Mr Mets.” [★]

[★] “There are four [★] tasks you must master to make it here,” [★] continued Prof Clark. “These will ensure you forever [★] appear in the Mr Mets. Are you ready [★] to begin?”

[★] “I guess,” [★] said Dr Inness.

[★] “Right,” said Prof Clark. [★] “Task one. Talk about yourself for [★] several minutes. Go!”

[★] “Uh... [★] no,” said Dr Inness.

[★ ★] “Hmm. Task two, [★] then. [★] Hit yourself on the head with a plastic bottle, like so.” [★ ★ ★ ★ ★]

[★] “Uh... [★] no,” said Dr Inness.

[★] “Then maybe [★] task three [★] is the one for you,” said Prof Clark, slightly annoyed now. [★] “Stand on one leg and hop up and down, shouting “bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-bl-blah!” [★]

[★] “Uh... [★] no,” said Dr Inness, “and I know [★] what you are trying to do. [★] You are trying to get me to do the things [★] you do so that I replace you [★] in the Mr Mets as the one that does [★] daft things. And if the [★] fourth task is something even sillier [★] – like flossing, [★] for example – I’m not doing that either.”

[★] “How [★] did you know my undergraduate class taught me to floss?” [★ ★] said Prof Clark. “They introduced me to something called [★] TikTok.” [★] Prof Clark launched into his best flossing routine. [★ ★ ★ ★]

(He sings to himself.) [★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★]

[★] “There is [★] no way I would ever do that,” said Dr Inness. “I’m [★] not going to do anything that leaves me looking foolish.” [★]

[★] At that point, their conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Mrs Robinson, who did not look impressed. [★]

[★] Prof Clark spoke. [★] “Good afternoon, Mrs Robinson. [★] Your e-mails tell us all we need to know.”

[★] “Oh, oh, oh!” [★]

[★] “I need your help [★] with something,” [★] said Mrs Robinson. “I have just been to the [★] fridge. There is a carton of milk inside. Someone has left in there since March. [★] It is now December. [★] I need one of you to help me dispose of it.”

“One of us, you say?” [★] said Dr Inness, a little nervously.

[★] “Dr Inness should open up the fridge. [★] It’s the very least that he could do.” [★]

[★] “Woo, woo woo!” [★]

[★] Dr Inness knew [★] that it was he that had to open the fridge [★] and remove the milk. [★] But how dangerous was it? [★][★] How disgusting [★] would a nine-month-old carton of milk be? [★] Would it simply explode in his face, [★] leaving him covered in rancid milk during his first appearance [★] in the Mr Mets...? [★]

Yes, it would.

[★] “What have we done, [★] Mrs Robinson? The time has come for us [★] to run away.”

[★] “Hey, hey, hey!” [★]

[Scene 4: online meeting]

[★] Meanwhile, a staff meeting was underway via Microsoft Teams. [★] For many of the staff back at work in Happy Met Land, [★ ★ ★ ★ ★] the principle of working via Teams seemed strange, [★] as many [★] of them were in offices [★] very near each other and were [★] often quite literally a stone’s throw [★] away. [★ ★ ★ ★]

[★] Prof Charlton-Perez was in the chair. [★] Since his recent reappointment as Tweetmaster General, he had also been given the title of Teamsmaster General. [★]

[★] “OK, let’s go round and report on progress,” said Prof Charlton-Perez. [★] “Since I became the newly resurrected superhero Dr Carbon, I can confirm that we have cut [★] our departmental carbon emissions by over 90%! [★ ★] Although I accept [★] that may have been because no one has been in the building.” [★]

[★] “As radiosonde representative,” [★] said Prof Harrison, “I can also confirm that our use of [★] helium has dropped by 95%. [★] Although that is probably because no one has been here to launch [★] any radiosondes.” [★]

[★] “As the atmospheric physics representative,” [★] said Prof Ambaum, “I am pleased to announce that all new MSc students [★] must buy the second edition of my book.” [★ ★]

[★] “I also have a second edition of my book,” [★] interrupted Dr Shonk. “It’s currently £9.69 on Amazon. [★] You can save 30p on the full price! It’s a great Christmas present.”

[★] “Who let Dr Shonk in?” [★] said Prof Ambaum. [★] “He doesn’t even work for Happy Met Land [★] any more!”

[★] Prof Charlton-Perez chuckled. [★] “It’s OK. He is only listening in to collect material for the Mr Mets. [★] Prof Methven, [★] as you like cycling, have you set up the cycle-to-work initiative?”

[★] “Oh,” [★] said Prof Methven. [★] “Well, I did, but no one has been around to use it. [★] I have found, though, that you really [★] have to be careful not to get your cycle clips [★] caught in the ceiling lights.” [★]

[★] “Right... What about your [★] report, Dr Tailleux?” [★] asked Prof Charlton-Perez. [★] “How have the exams gone?” [★]

[★][★] “Oh, very well indeed,” said Dr Tailleux. “This summer, the undergraduates in my oceanography class got the highest [★] ever exam mark since I starting teaching the course. One of them got 37%!” [★][★]

[★] “May I add a report?” [★] interrupted Prof Clark, slightly out of breath after running to his office. “Dr Inness just opened the fridge [★] in the coffee room and was hit by an exploding carton [★] of nine-month-old milk. We should go and save him.” [★]

[★] “Surely, that’s an item for [★] Any Other Business?” [★] said Prof Ambaum.

[★] “Ah yes,” said Prof Charlton-Perez. “I have just seen the e-mail [★] from Mrs Robinson. [★] I would be failing in my duties as a superhero [★] if we didn’t try to save him. All heroes, let’s meet in the foyer.” [★]

[Scene 5: foyer, then the one-way system]

[★] A small party of Happy Met Landers convened for the rescue mission. Well, actually, [★] it was only Prof Clark and Prof Charlton-Perez. [★] Despite the peril [★] in the coffee room, [★] Mr Guest [★] still insisted that they go around [★] his one-way [★] system. [★ ★] Closer inspection of departmental

guidelines [★] revealed that only two people were allowed in a rescue party, [★★] hence no one else was allowed to join them anyway. [★★] Once again, they had to go the long way round to the coffee area via the roof and the side of the building. [★★]

[Scene 6: the coffee room]

[★★] “Here he is,” [★] said Prof Clark. “Look at the mess! [★] The carton of milk exploded [★] and he is now enveloped in the remnants.” [★★]

[★] “Right,” [★] said Prof Charlton-Perez. [★] “We need a strategy to free him. [★] But how? [★] My usual approach to [★] solving a problem is [★] to tweet about it. [★] Let’s try that first... [★] ...Hashtag, Milky Blob.”

[★★] “If you could hurry, that would be great,” said Dr Inness.

[★] “The way [★] I see it, there’s only one way out of this,” [★★] said Mrs Robinson, appearing behind them. “He needs to shake [★] himself free. [★] That dance I caught you doing earlier should do the trick.” [★]

[★] “Yes!” shouted Prof Clark. [★] “That’s the answer. Dr Inness – you must Floss yourself free!” [★★★]

[★] “I have said it before, I am not flossing,” [★] said Dr Inness.

[★] “Floss!” [★] shouted Mrs Robinson. [★] “We’ll all do it with you!” [★★★]

[★] Sceptically, Dr Inness began flossing. [★] It worked. The Milky Blob disintegrated, [★] and Dr Inness was free. [★★★★★★] (He carries on Flossing.) He was very thankful to Prof Clark.

“Thank you for teaching me to floss,” said Dr Inness.

[★] “No problem,” [★] said Prof Clark. “I think this calls for a celebratory dance. [★] Here’s another one I picked up [★] off TikTok. It’s called Twerking.” [★]

[★] “...No!”

[★★★★] THE END