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unexpected source of help allows her to stay one step ahead of us. Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Christmas Fishing BBC Two, 8.10pm There's a real jingle to this Yuletide edition as Middlesbrough-raised Bob Mortimer takes Whitehouse on a trip to fish the Esk and Tees in a bid to bait his old pal into festive spirit. Little Axe: Education on BBC One, 9pm The last of Steve McQueen's five films is the quietest shocking. Sharlene Whyte is excellent as hard-pressed Agnes Smith, who in the early 1970s discovers her 12-year-old son, Kingsley (Kenyah Sandy), being badly let down by racist education policies by her local council. The Bee Gees: How to Repair a Broken Heart? Sky documentaries, 9pm Hollywood mover-and-shaker Frank Marshall directs this enthusiastic tribute to the hugely successful pop brothers, thus ensuring there is a stellar line-up of contributors - from Chris Martin and Noel Gallagher to Justin Timberlake and the Jonas Brothers - to their love-up legacy. The Christmas adventures of Romesh Ranganathan on BBC Two, 9.10pm The comedian heads for a week in the Hebrides, relying on eccentric local guide Sweeney to introduce him to the almost Caribbean pleasures (if it wasn't so cold) of Skye, Harris, Lewis and St Kilda. The South Bank Show Sky Arts, 10.45pm closing another lovely series. Melvyn Bragg talks about poet laureated Simon Armitage at the latest Magnetic field: A Poems and how the West Yorkshire landscape not only stirred up the first poetic efforts, but continued to be a lifelong inspiration. GO The Grinch (2018) ★★★★★ TV, 5.20pm If the best animation feels like soul nourishment, think of the adaptation of the beloved Dr Seuss tale as the spiritual equivalent of moreishly sugary cereal. Benedict Cumberbatch speaks with a sardinic American accent on the Grinch, but as a narrator, despite the trendy casting of singer Pharrell Williams, the character seems completely true to the lovable crudmudgeon originally created by Theodor Seuss Geisel. The Godfather (1972) ★★★★★ BBC Two, 10.10pm Endlessly quoted, copied and spore, is the first installment of Francis Ford Coppola's epic trilogy of one of the most influential films ever made, now believed to be a high watermark in American cinema. Marlon Brando and Al Pacino (then relatively unknown) play American-Italian mafia boss Don Vito and his son and reluctant heir, Michael Corleone, caught up in the eternal struggle for power over crime and close ties. Mother! (2017) ★★★★★ Channel 4, 12.05pm Jennifer Lawrence is exceptional in this polarising film directed by Darren Aronofsky (Black Swan). It's a psychological horror look inside an introverted worst nightmare: a young housewife (Lawrence) and her husband (Javier Bardem) find their relationship explored when more and more deranged uninvited guests (Ed Harris and Michelle Pfeiffer among them) visit their tranquil country home and refuse to leave. Monday 14 December The Real Full Monty: On Ice ITV, at 9pm Perhaps sensially, long-time host and participant Alexander Armstrong has bowed out for the fourth iteration of the Emmy award-winning annual celebrity charity Stripper since being believed to be on the ice rink. Singer and presenter Coleen Nolan enters the infringement alongside the ever-playing Ashley Banjo in diversity with another two-parter, where they and some famous friends bare all to raise awareness of cancer symptoms and the importance of early controls by encouraging shedding of body inhibitions. Should any further evidence be required of the importance of the issue, one of last year's participants, snooker player Willie Thorne, passed away from leukemia in June. This year's 11-man line-up includes former Woman's Hour presenter Dame Jenni Murray, former Page Three girl Linda Lusardi, This Morning's Dr Zoe, Welsh rugby hero Gareth Thomas and jockey Bob Champion, who were either directly affected by cancer or seen suffering from those close to them. Dancing on Ice Dan Whiston will be choreographed, shortly before returning to the traditional celebrity ice dance competition (Jason Donovan and Mylene Klass are among their competitors). The big performance closes tomorrow. GT Tiny Pretty Things Netflix Netflix continues to forays into the world of young adult fiction, this time adapting the book by Sona Charaipotra and Dhonielle Clayton, which tells the story of the three young hopefuls of Chicago's only elite school, whose student population e-love every month representatives of all social strata and ethnicities. Britain's strongest man of 2020 Channel 5, 7pm Annual tradition as festive as shoots and to-do over the Pogues, the qualifier for the world's most powerful man competition begins in Sheffield. British champion Paul Benton is back in action alongside veteran Mark Felix and Scotland's Luke and Tom Stoltman. The Joy of Painting: Winter Specials BBC Four, 7.30pm Bob Ross' meditative art classes will adopt the winter theme in the coming weeks, starting with a scene almost as soft and billowing as the awesome hair. Nigella's Cook, Eat, Repeat BBC Two, 8pm Giving herself permission to monkey around in the classics, Nigella Lawson this week tweaks a chocolate cookie, macaroni cheese and comfort-food chicken. The vicar of Dibley at Lockdown BBC One, 8.55pm Geraldine Granger's (Dawn French) online sermons will reach the summer when he reveals the exciting results of the village quiz and the less salty result of a night of advocaat. It's a paean of praise for the great outdoors (complete with excerpts from The Sound of Music) and a poignant tribute to her late verger, Alice (Emma Chambers, who passed away in 2018) and the enduring power of friendship. Hospital BBC Two, 9pm Brings the story of the Royal Free Hospital almost completely up to date, this humiliating series finds the doubtful team begin preparing for a mass vaccination roll-out next year while ploughing through waiting lists and dealing with crippling staff shortages. GT Scott of Antarctica (1948) ★★ BBC Two, 2.30pm This is one of Ealing Studios' more lavish productions (directed by Charles Frend), tells the story of Captain Robert Falcon Scott (played here by massive charm by John Mills) and his doomed 1910-12 expedition to the South Pole. The fact that the denouement has been known does not somewhat take away the drama, but the hostility of the Antarctic environment ensures it is still exciting and largely faithful to Scott's diaries. The Lady in the Van (2015) ★★★★★ BBC Four, 21: 21 years since Maggie Smith first played the dilapidated resident at the heart of the Alan Bennett game on which this film is based. That's six years longer than when the real lady who inspired him stubbornly parked outside the playwright Camden's house. Time has only deepened Smith's ability to join this part and watching it recreate it with Nicholas Hytner's cozy screen adaptation is a treat. Vicery's House (2017) ★★ BBC Two, 12.30pm British-Indian director Gurinder Chadha was not yet born when the supposedly peaceful transfer of power from Britain to India took place in 1947, but the resulting horrors of Partition are the subject of this solid film, which is involved in a serious-minded way the mess has made so many lives. Hugh Bonneville plays Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroe, and a scape goatin for a secret division plan by the British has been preparing for years. Tuesday 15 December Year that changed Love Channel 4, 10pm It would be tempting to dismiss this melodramatic film about love during the lockdown. And initially the premise, which sees the crew follow seven people looking for love during the pandemic, seems more than a little cheesy. Stick with it, however, because the years that have changed love turn out to be a warm-hearted gem. Yes, some attendees, like 23-year-old Bradley, who immediately announces that he is desperate for, were clearly chosen to be willing to spurt out, but amid the one-liners, some touching stories emerge. From Louise, 50, who dated after the breakdown of her marriage, to Fion, 26, who has Down syndrome and can't see her boyfriend, these are tales of love, desire and loneliness. There are also some interesting scenarios: in Edinburgh, Jade and Claire move in together after just one date (and despite Claire admitting that she's not the easiest person to live with). Meanwhile, in Bradford, they separated Dean and Emma to lock them up for the sake of his four-year-old son Cole. As the episode progresses, a handful of real love stories unfold. You'll be lucky to get through without shedding tears. SH Great British Christmas Menu BBC 2, 8pm The festive cooking competition continues, with eight former champions tonight tackling edible snow globes and a brand new take on the Christmas selection box. They will be both competing and blind taste-testing each other as well - leading to some interesting results. And Oliver hosts, and tomorrow the first three chefs will compete in the final courses of a special Christmas feast. The Great British Bake Off: The Winners Channel 4, 8pm Aware that much of the nation is now suffering from a sugar hangover after Peter Perfect's well-deserved victory last month, Channel 4 is helpfully easing its comedown with this reminder of previous winners and their best moments. This is the first episode of the first five, one of the series is Edd Kimber, who left his job as a debt collector after his victory to become a chef writer, the series' fifth Nancy Birtwhistle, who in 2014 became the series' oldest winner in 60 years. Inside KFC is Christmas Channel 4, 9pm Another Day, another fly-on-the-wall documentary from Channel 4. This is one of the focuses of life behind famous chicken buckets with a look at how KFC is preparing for Christmas at a time of lockdown. Would you like a burger with a sod, please? Christmas at Hampton Court Channel 5, 9pm historian Tracy Borman heads behind the walls of Hampton Court Palace for this special programme looking at how former residents spent Christmas, the excesses of the Tudor era (Henry VIII certainly enjoyed a KFC sauce burger) to today's more subdued celebrations. Margaret Thatcher Night on BBC Four, from 9pm at a time following up on the latest series of The Crown, BBC Four devotes an evening of repeats to the former Prime Minister. The first is the final, a very British Revolution (9pm). This is followed by great speeches, looking at Geoffrey Howe's seismic 1990 resignation speech (10pm) and a chance to give Thatcher an encounter with Russett Hartly (10.20pm). Industry BBC 2, 9.15pm The horribly addictive drama series about the excesses of a lot of young city bankers continues. Christmas is coming, bonus time is approaching and the pressure mounting as Harper (Myha'la Herrold) faces a difficult decision and Gus (David Jonsson) starts to wonder if banking life is really on him. SH King of Kings (1961) ★★ BBC Two, 1.45pm This refreshingly serious biblical epic takes on the humble task of dramatising the life of Jesus, the birth and the ministry of crucifixion and resurrection. Jeffrey Hunter plays the son of God, Siobhán McKenna as his mother and Rip Torn plays Judas. The Roman invasion of Judea begins in Pompey in 65 B.C., and the appointment of King Herod; the rest, as they say, is history. It is directed by Nicholas Ray (Rebel Without a Cause). Little Women (2019) ★★ Sky Cinema Premiere, 8 p.m. It would be almost impossible to love Little Women more than Greta Gerwig did. Gerwig's star-studded film, led by Saoirse Ronan jo and Timothée Chalamet as Laurie, from Florence Pugh as Amy, gives a softly millennial sensibility. By Finest (2016) ★★★★★ BBC Two, 12.30pm This fictional peek behind the scenes at the Ministry of Information during World War II is a rousing entertainer with which you can't help but play along. The head of the film department (Richard E Grant) brings in Catrin Cole (Gemma Arterton), a young writer, to bring a rare female eye to their screenplays. There's going to be some strife... Sam Claflin and Bill Nighy also excel in this rosy, and when it comes to the politics of the world, surprisingly fine work. Wednesday 16 December Christmas Highclere Castle Channel 4, 9pm It has been a tough year for most tourist attractions, not least imposing homes that rely, to some extent, on the income of visitors to keep their silver polished and hedge-sheared. While the Dowton Abbey effect recedes into the distance, it is hoped that the small number of guests will still be able to visit Highclere Castle, where Julian Fellowes series was filmed. Nevertheless, the owners of the Hampshire pile - perhaps reluctantly, perhaps not - are inviting the cameras on their own once again. Brent Gundersen's two-part documentary follows the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon overseeing a giant 22-foot Christmas tree, hundreds of metres of wreaths, thousands of trinkets and other assorted festive decorations courtesy of their loyal hench men. A real Carson, eyebrows and all, will he be one of them? This year's color scheme, they say, is green, gold and red. No, maybe, he tore up Christmas, but with a Victorian theme dominating and a looming view of both a virtual gin cocktail party and some guided tours, there's also a race against time without which no such film would be complete. GT The Expanse Amazon Prime The fifth and penultimate season of this acclaimed drama - the natural successor to sci-fi series Battlestar Galactica - finds Christen Avasarala (Shoshreh Aghdashi) and the crew of the Rocinante continuing their efforts to thwart the Martian attack on Earth. Three new episodes land on Amazon today, with the last arriving weekly. Vicky McClure's Dementia Choir Christmas on BBC One/BBC Two Wales, 7.30pm Eighteen months after her deeply moving documentary work on a chorus of dementia sufferers, Vicky McClure joins the singers for a performance at the English National Opera. Paul O'Grady's Great British Escape ITV, 8pm Paul O'Grady completes the Kent odyssey of locals Pete and George, getting the low-down of the county's forbidden history: smuggling into Botany Bay, secret tunnels into the chalk white cliffs of Dover and plenty of booze. Portrait artist of the year 2020 Sky Arts, 8pm The double-bill climax: the three finalists first paint Eddie Izzard and then the winner goes on to complete the £10,000 commission: a portrait of Carlos Acosta, now the director of the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Gordon, Gino & Fred: Desperately Seeking Santa ITV, 9pm Gino D'Acampo has a letter from his daughter that delivers, Fred Sirieix hopes the Northern Lights and Gordon Ramsay want his fellow travelers to sample reindeer. Would their goals in Lapland be in the midst of a blizzard of bants? Nine parts three stooges a part three musketeers. The Vanishing of Suzy Lamplugh Channel 5, 9pm Documentary filmmaker Marc Sigsworth tries to discover the pishes of estate agent Suzy Lamplugh, who went missing in July 1986. The focus is on John Cannan, a convicted rapist and murderer who has long been associated with his disappearance. If the results are inconclusive, the studies are detailed and sensitive to treatment. 537 Votes sky documentaries, 9pm Billy Corben's excellent documentary about a truly contentious US election result examines the dangling Chads and the undervotes of Florida 2000. The excruciatingly painful story of young Cuban-American refugee Elián González provides an instructive context. GT Holiday Affair (1949, b/w) ★★★★★ BBC Two, 2.50pm Robert Mitchum deviated from the usual roles in Noirs and Western to make this early romantic comedy, directed by Don Hartman. A young widow played by Janet Leigh breaks through a boring businessman and a romantic but unsuccessful veteran who works as a salesman at the New York department store Crowley's during the busy Christmas season. The inevitable meets cuteness, indecision, and finally, statement follows gentle predictability. The King's Speech (2010) ★★★★★ BBC Two, 9pm Tom Hooper's mixing film of the future George VI struggles to overcome the stuttering of the nation The need won several Oscars, including deserved best actor Colin Firth as the king. But this double involves Geoffrey Rush as the speech therapist Lionel Logue that gives the film its heart, and the doublehanders among them, courtesy of screenwriter David Seidler, are full and fascinating. The Duchess (2008) ★★★★★ BBC Two, 12.35pm Saul Dibb's film usually simplifies the life of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire and best of a rather hygienic view of the 18th century. The dresses and wigs are as sumptuous as you want, and Ralph Fiennes is dry, trimmed and quizzically dominating turn as the Prince cracks. Thursday, December 17th in The Soul of America Sky documentaries, 9 p.m. Joe Biden won the U.S. election, feels that many millions of that soul of America have been saved. Historian and presidential biographer Jon Meacham would probably agree, according to a thoughtful documentary based on his 2018 bestseller but filmed before the last election. It's a gentle look at Meacham's sudden promotion as managing editor of Newsweek at the age of 29, but more importantly, a study of how the United States has reached the Trump era. Trump is not an aberration, says Meacham - on the contrary, nativism, isolationism and racism are eternal U.S. forces that ebb and flow, and history gives us the ability to understand the scope of America's current cultural wars. He points to key historical moments such as the Ku Klux Klan designed to make America great again during World War I in response to white anxiety about immigration, suffragm and Catholicism. He claims that America has previously been pulled back from its core instincts by leaders who have shown humility and empathy and acted fairly. Meacham's is a liberal view, but compelling for those who hope that in his words, Americans just voted for the right angles to trump their worst instincts. VP Nadiya's American Adventure BBC One, 8pm Nadiya Hussain is seeking immigrant communities in California on the last leg of her food safari. Helping out in an LA halal taco truck that brings Together Latinos and Muslims and hearing immigrant stories makes Hussain reflect onto Bangladeshi heritage, bringing depth to this uplifting journey of glee. Tin Star: Liverpool Sky Atlantic, 8pm & 9pm Merseyside awash with blood as this ultra-violent murder mystery continues. Tim Roth's ex-cop Jack, whose one-liners add roughish charm to his sociopathic behavior, is a hoot. Meanwhile, Angela (Genevieve O'Reilly) plays a cat-and-mouse game with a would-be executioner. MasterChef: Professionals BBC One, 9pm This cheffing show has brought us a tasty help haute cuisine after a year spent avoiding restaurants. In tonight's finale, the finalists will be given about three hours to beat up three courses to impress the jury trio. New Elizabethans with Andrew BBC Two, 9pm Andrew Marr's cheering series concludes with a celebration of pirates who have incarated as Britain's industrial base has collapsed. These include lone geniuses like hovercraft inventor Christopher Cockerell and technology wizard James Dyson. On Savoy Christmas TV, 9pm This visit to this luxury hotel combines lashings of Christmas tins with some quiet gems as a guest of Howell Harris, visiting for the first time since losing his mother, and new butler Michael, who grows emotional about this chance for a new beginning. Taskmaster Channel 4, 9pm Tonight's finale of the loonies competition is not a laughing stock for them, but an excellent entertainment for us. The contestants' desperation to win puts the outcome of silly party games in the lead, as do the cutting criticisms of Greg Davies. Jerry Lewis: The Man Behind the Clown Sky Arts, 9pm This documentary celebrating comedy actor Jerry Lewis sees Martin Scorsese and Jean-Luc Goddard, among others, discuss the fruitful bromance of Dean Martin, evolution of a director and writer, and popularity in France. VP The Bishop's Wife (1947, b/w) ★★★★★ BBC Two, 2.30pm Be careful what they pray for. This gentle and charming church romantic comedy stars David Niven as Henry Brougham, the harried bishop obsessed with making money from a new cathedral. After kneel and beg for divine help, an angel (Cary Grant, at the best time of her life) descends and begins to see all sorts of good deeds—but Henry did not foresee the spark between his wife (Loretta Young) and their heavenly guest. Far from the Madding Crowd (2015) ★★★★★ BBC Four, 8pm Thomas Vinterberg's lovely adaptation of Thomas Hardy's love rectangle will be the book's windstraded soulfulness just right. Carey Mulligan is a perfect Bathsheba for our time - reflective and serious to the fault. It's just a shame that male co-stars (Matthias Schoenaerts, Tom Sturridge and Michael Sheen) never quite match her pace. (Stephen Frears' modern update, Tamara Drewe, is at 11:25 p.m. Education (2009) ★★★★★ BBC Two, 12.30pm Lone Scherfig's film, adapted by Nick Hornby in Lynn Barber's coming-of-age memoir, returns to us to make the Sixties more square than swinging. Jenny (Carey Mulligan) is a bright, Twickenham sixth-was being prodded toward Oxford's parents until she meets David (Christoph Sarsgaard), a Jewish wheeler-dealer who immediately introduces her to a high society, but is the kind of secret for which no textbook could prepare her. Friday 18 December The Grand Tour presents: A Massive Hunt Amazon Prime with fabulously full throttle turn treat as Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May roar back onto Amazon just in time for Christmas on their latest road trip. This time they're out in the Indian Ocean for a high-octane treasure hunt in Madagascar. Not surprisingly, it makes no mention of the island's biodiversity. Rather, they are drawn by terrible roads, which are extremely difficult to challenge in the Cars: Clarkson's sedan-equipped Bentley, Hammond's caterpillar-chain Ford Focus RS and May's chunky rubbery Caterham. The adventure begins on the neighbouring French island of Réunion (the eu's southeast outpost), where a truly unique drag race awaits the world's most expensive 12km concrete - a ring road built over the sea. In Madagascar, the search for the legendary pirate's long-buried ruby-studded golden cross takes them through some of the planet's most weary and bottom-blooded road surfaces. Foul-mouthed fun and laddish antics are pretty much non-stop. It may be the old shtick, but it is served with relish. GO Inside the Steam Train Museum at Christmas Channel 5, 7 There are festive frolics from the rail enthusiasts at Bressingham Steam Museum as the vintage fire engine makes an appearance at the local Christmas lights parade, and manager Al has to take over in the grotto when Santa Claus goes missing. Cigar Box Blues: The Makers of a Revolution BBC Four, 7.30pm This enjoyable short film explores the world of handmade three-string cigar box guitars, which, after a long association with the American blues tradition, has earned a fervent new following on this side of the lake, in post-industrial British cities. Sinkhole: Africa Animal Oasis BBC 2, 8pm The rains back at Mwiba Wildlife Reserve and presenters Chris Packham and Ella Al-Shamahi are there to observe the many herbivores drawn as the area around the sinkhole returns to lush pasture - and predators who follow them. George Clarke's Amazing Spaces: Winter Tour Channel 4, 8pm In the enforced absence of new homes to show, George Clarke takes us on a tour of the most eccentric, breathtaking and magical architectural discoveries from four previous winter breaks in Norway, Finland, the Alps and Canada. Have I Got 2020 News For You BBC One, 9pm; N1, 12.05am During the show's transition to pandemic, the stork-based remote video links to more successful Perspex-swathed studio performances by virtual audiences are the defining feature of this compilation of the record-breaking 60th series' best bits. The Sound of TV with Neil Brand BBC Four, 9pm At the end of an immersive series, Neil Brand talks about composer George Fenton (who wrote the scores for everything from Blue Planet to The Jewel in the Crown) exploring how, in the age of HBO, Netflix, and Amazon, TV music has become richer and more ambitious than ever. The Graham Norton Show on BBC One, 10.45pm; N Ireland, 11.15pm Netflix is the dominant theme tonight with stars George Clooney, Viola Davies and Vanessa Kirby promoting their new productions for the streaming giant. Also, Michael Sheen and David Tennant reprise the double act of Stage and Michael Ball and Alfie Boe perform. GO Today Rainey's Black Bottom (2020) ★★★★★ Netflix When Chadwick Boseman died in August aged 43, we saw almost everything he achieved - but only a fraction of what he could do. Amazingly talented actor left another role in the editing room: the raging, fast-tempered trumpeter Levee in this adaptation of August Wilson's big play, directed by George C Wolfe. This is the story of struggling black musicians from 1940s Chicago and it hits me like a steam locomotive. It's a Wonderful Life (1946, b/w) ★★★★★ Film4, 3.15 Starring James Stewart as a desperate family man contemplating suicide the night before Christmas, before his guardian angel (Henry Travers) intervenes, Frank Capra's film flopped for release, but became hugely influential thanks to a barrage of TV shows during the late 1970s after some quirks of copyright ceased. This mother lode festive flicks and cut seasonal schedules around the world. Happy Prince (2018) ★★★★★ on BBC Two, 9pm Rupert Everett played a dying Oscar Wilde, and perhaps that's why the film's directorial debut debuted. Jowly and lumberjack, mow-faced under prosthetics, the Wilde is on a fast track to forgetting, frittering away the last inches of joys of the body. There are real virtues of the film's relative lack of Polish: the story wins a seamy force of rough edges, an exploratory style, even a somewhat unstable editing. Television trailers for Sarah Hughes (SH), Gerard O'Donovan (GO), Vicki Power (VP) and Gabriel Tate (GT) (GT)

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