

SOAP DISHES UP A FESTIVE FEAST



Corrie, EastEnders and Emmerdale are getting into the festive spirit. Yule not want to miss them, says Mike Ward

ITVI CORONATION STREET

Chesney and Katy receive a special gift but who will be lonely this Christmas?

Weatherfield is no stranger to festive births. It was 21 years ago this Christmas, for example, that we witnessed the arrival, just hours apart, of both David "Ratboy" Platt and Dozy Rosie Webster.

But there's a uniquely seasonal twist to this year's special delivery, as Chesney's pregnant girlfriend Katy adds a realistic touch to the local nativity play. As for the daddy, he and Gary rush to the scene – kitted out in elf costumes! Newborn baby Joseph is then home in time for Christmas Day.

Elsewhere, the big day is less merry for poor Becky, who's fallen victim to twisted Tracy Barlow's latest lie.

Tracy reacts to a personal tragedy by realising she can put rival Becky through hell – reminding us she's still as venomous as ever.

With Steve having angrily turned on his ex, as Tracy planned, a despairing Becky is then left

alone in her flat. It's here that she starts setting fire to photos of her and her former hubby, before unwisely passing out in a booze-induced stupour...

Elsewhere, Peter's slip-up could blow his affair with Carla wide open, Sophie spends Christmas struggling with doubts over her and Sian's wedding, Tina is shocked when Kirsty starts acting pally, and Eileen looks set to be lonely.



Sian (Sascha Parkinson, left) and Sophie (Brooke Vincent) prepare to wed

Far left: Katy (Georgia May Foote) delivers a very special Christmas present

CHESNEY'S PREGNANT GIRLFRIEND KATY ADDS A REALISTIC TOUCH TO THE LOCAL NATIVITY PLAY... AND NEWBORN BABY JOSEPH IS HOME IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

CHANNEL 5 NEIGHBOURS

Tash struggles with her burden and Kate struggles to free herself from Noah

Tash is forced to become her dad's carer as we head into the Christmas break. Michael has just come out of hospital, the stress of recent events having taken its toll in dramatic fashion the week before, during a clash with Summer. But can his troubled daughter seriously be expected to look after him while she's studying? The alternative option is to call in her Aunt Emilia to help out – the prospect of which leaves Michael horrified.

In other news, Kate is still struggling to shake off Noah, despite his claims that he's finally got the message. Andrew has already found out, to his horror, what's happened between these two – and now Kate's sister Sophie is about to stumble upon their secret.

Elsewhere, Karl finds out about Mal's affair with Jade and urges him to finish it. But Mal has realised that Jade isn't that interested in him.



Tough times for Tash (Valentina Novakovic)

CHANNEL 5 HOME AND AWAY

Romeo and Indi's problems multiply while Liam lies in a coma

Indi has a huge row with Romeo just before Christmas. She's furious to hear he's turning his back on Harvey and the boat business. "Fine, go and have fun!" she screams. "The bills will just magically pay themselves!"

Romeo's problem is that he's been the victim of a sinister stitch-up. A few days earlier, Harvey has carried out an act of sabotage involving the Blaxland – for which he's made Romeo look responsible. Acting the innocent, Harvey has then complained to Alf, and offered to buy the boat. Despite Romeo's protests, Alf has accepted. Only eye-witness Liam can confirm what has happened.

By this point, Liam is lying in a coma, Charlie and Brax having crashed into him and knocked him off his motorbike. For Charlie, the accident comes in a traumatic week after she has stolen evidence to clear Brax's name after he's been linked with a robbery.



Tempers flare for Indi (Samara Weaving) and Romeo

press ahead with his and Laurel's wedding vow renewal, despite the disapproval of his father, Sandy – and despite being told by Marlon that the whole thing is a sham.

It's an emotional time, too, for Amy, who's unsure how she feels about her new baby. Val is longing for her to keep him – but the only thing Amy seems able to decide upon for the moment is a name, choosing to call him Kyle.

For the Bartons, there's very little let-up in their recent misery, brought about by Moira's fling with Cain.

Adam is keen to play peacemaker, and Moira is certainly desperate to spend the festive season playing happy families with her husband and kids, but will she be welcomed back into the fold?

Elsewhere, the fallout from the brutal attack on Debbie's dad Cain (which happens this Thursday night) still hangs over the village. Look out for a big development between Christmas and New Year.

ITVI EMMERDALE

Debbie and Alicia square up for a Christmas Day catfight

They don't come much more patient than Andy Sugden's girlfriend Alicia. But this Christmas she's set to be pushed to breaking point, thanks to a desperate Debbie Dingle.

Debbie and Andy's daughter, Sarah, is still very poorly, a saviour sibling her only hope of survival. But although Sarah's estranged parents have agreed on this drastic step, it's Debbie who's coming up with the increasingly barmy ideas for achieving it – each of which is creating a greater gulf with their current partners.

Trying Alicia's patience further still, an insensitive Andy announces they'll be spending Christmas Day at Debbie at Cameron's place – an occasion that turns out to be as fraught as you'd expect. But if Alicia thinks this is a low point (particularly the bit where Debbie shoves Alicia's face in her turkey dinner), she's in for a nastier shock the next day.

Meanwhile, Reverend Ashley is determined to

IF ALICIA THINKS SPENDING CHRISTMAS AT DEBBIE AND CAMERON'S PLACE IS A LOW POINT, SHE'S IN FOR A NASTIER SHOCK THE NEXT DAY

BBC1 EASTENDERS

A fire devastates the Square and there's a sad farewell to a resident

Mandy is set to spend Christmas as the new Mrs Beale. Or that's the plan.

In truth, she isn't exactly turning cartwheels when Ian announces, days before the festivities (and in front of ex-wife Jane), that he's gone ahead and booked their wedding.

After we've seen what Mandy has secretly been up to hours earlier, and given the on-off nature of her and Ian's strange relationship, it's anyone's guess whether she'll show up at the register office – particularly after Pat has given her a serious talking-to.

Elsewhere, Walford's most dramatic scenes over Christmas involve a fatal blaze that breaks out during a party at the B&B, with huge repercussions for many of the locals.

The fire, started deliberately and triggering an almighty blast, is part of a shocking climax to the long-running storyline involving Zainab

Bianca (Patsy Palmer, left) returns to Albert Square while Mandy (Nicola Stapleton, right) is furious with Ian



Alicia (Natalie Anderson) prepares to fight for her man

and her control freak fiancé Yusef, with Zainab having at last realised the terrible predicament she's landed herself in by letting her twisted ex-husband back into her life.

Yusef has not only shown his violent side, but a particularly cruel act a few days earlier has shown just how far he'll go to cut off her ties with her current life.

As he demands they leave for Pakistan, can Zainab alert Masood to the danger she's in?

Meanwhile, Ricky and Bianca are back – Ricky returning from a less than lucrative spell in Dubai, Bianca from a spell behind bars. Bianca's release is delayed, but will she make it in time to see daughter Tiffany in her school play?

Ricky and Bianca's return is followed by what, for millions, will be the season's most heartbreaking storyline, as we bid farewell after 25 years to Walford stalwart Pat Evans. Pat's health has been a cause of concern for some months, and this Christmas, which sees her son David return to the Square, turns out to be her last.

In other news, Janine and Michael's relationship takes a twist, while Jean's mental health takes another turn for the worse.