

I Wish I Was An Only Child Episode 1: Henry and Josh Widdicombe

[Guitar and flute music]

[Nature sounds]

Rachel Mason: Hello, this is I Wish –

Cathy Mason: No Rach, you don't speak like that. You don't go, '*Hello!*' Stop it, you sound like Minnie Mouse.

Rachel: *Hello!*

Cathy: No, do it normally. Do it normally.

Rachel: Let's do it again, and I think you've got to stop –

Cathy: No you've got to stop going, '*hello, my name is Rachel Mason!*' Speak normally! Okay, go on. Just hello.

Rachel: Hello. Hello! This is I Wish I Was an Only Child, where we, Cath –

Cathy: That's me.

Rachel: And me, Rachel Mason, speak to other siblings about the dynamic of their relationships so we can see where we're going wrong.

Cathy: Today we spoke to comedian Josh Widdicombe and his half-brother Henry Widdicombe, co-founder of comedy production company Little Wander.

Rachel: Henry's three years older than Josh. Cath and I have 18 months between us. And they have the same father.

Cathy: I get upset that they're so functional.

Rachel: And I struggle to get a word in.

Cathy and Rachel: Enjoy!

Cathy: Alright okay, so let's just dive in. Let's go because we've pissed about. So, we've got to start with who is the funniest of you two?

Josh Widdicombe: That's an awful question to start.

Cathy: It's not!

Josh: I think Henry's a funnier person face-to-face, and I think I'm more willing to pander to a crowd.

Henry Widdicombe: I think Josh is obviously the most commercially funny out of the two of us. I think we came from a background where being funny was the currency, especially with our Dad.

Josh: Yeah.

Cathy: You mean that's how you got his attention?

Henry: No, that was like the good thing to do, was to make people laugh in the family. And I think we're both funny in different ways, and when we got into comedy Josh was far more comfortable with learning about every aspect of 'funny', and doing the work to turn that into a commodity. Whereas I think I was a bit more sort of instinct driven, and whatever I sort of learned about being funny I couldn't handle – I'd rather not know why something is funny.

Josh: Whereas I kind of, yeah I would obsess about how things work. And I'm quite kind of systematic, loveless some might say, in my approach. It's a want to please in the sense of you're... when you're doing material you like, you're doing it for the audience you like, and I think I probably even subconsciously just went towards the stuff that worked better, rather than went 'no, it's my way or the highway' – if that makes sense.

Rachel: Being half-brothers, what's the age difference?

Henry: Three years apart. I was sort of the bottom child of the previous relationship, so Josh came three years afterwards and we grew up in a different... so we would visit each other. Mainly me going to Josh. And I think going back to that sort of funny thing, we definitely just revert back to the family humour when we're together, which is quite sort of like, just taking the piss, isn't it?

Cathy: But hang on, I'm confused about... so you were both in different households.

Henry: Yes.

Cathy: You weren't in the same – okay.

Henry: I was in Cornwall.

Josh: So I grew up in Bristol up to the age of three and a half, and then we moved to Dartmoor. I have no memory of Bristol. We didn't live in a particularly nice area of Bristol because I was recently reading Tricky's autobiography and he was talking about how he squatted in Totterdown at the same period I was living there. So it was quite a rough kind of area, but then I moved to Dartmoor because my Gran moved down. And I think my Gran was a big kind of funny person, who's a big kind of comedy person in her

influence on the family. But she wasn't Henry's Gran, but she's a kind of old thespian actress, or was an old thespian actress.

Henry: That's weirdly where I put the difference between me and Josh down, in that I had that – I had a level of uncomfortableness with performance, whereas Josh has just embraced it. And I think he gets it from his mother's mother, which isn't my Gran. I would be sort of in Cornwall and we'd see each other about once a month for a weekend.

Josh: Yeah. And then –

Henry: And we'd absolutely like live in each other's pockets for that period.

Josh: I lived – because I'm the younger one – I lived with my Dad.

Cathy: So you share the same Dad. So you lived with the Dad, so your Dad had left you, Henry, to go and bring up Josh and that family. How did that make you feel?

Henry: Well let's not put all the blame on him [laughs].

Cathy: [laughs] Well let's put all the blame on *my* father.

Henry: I mean I worked through a lot of that stuff in my twenties, so let's –

Cathy: Yeah.

Rachel: Well you, yeah. Cath hasn't worked through any of it in our family.

Cathy: I haven't worked through any. I'm absolutely fucking livid.

Henry: So I would say I was livid in my twenties because I had no... you don't have that feeling of, 'these people are just humans'. They're your parents, you're still putting them on this huge pedestal. And I had a sort of outburst at my Dad in a letter. And I was sort of like, 'why weren't you there, more there for me?' and stuff. And then over time, we've had lots of discussions about... just me understanding the circumstances of the breakup and him being absolutely torn apart by it. And him going through stuff, like now that I've got a child, the thought of not being able to be with that child everyday –

Cathy: Exactly, that's what I... that's exactly –

Henry: And so like back then it was incredibly hard. And Josh knows this as well. Seeing Josh have that relationship with my Dad, which was different to my relationship with my Dad, was very difficult.

Cathy: You remained close? The two of you remained close?

Josh: I was much closer I think... yeah. I think even though there's a three and a half year age difference, I think we were closer... I mean I don't want to make claims, but I'd say I was closer to Henry than his actual siblings in the sense of we were into the same things. Even small things, it would be like there's various – you know for want of not using that kind of fever pitch style cliché – but there'd be various things that we'd bond over like football and Plymouth Argyle, which we went to with our Dad. And even the fact that we both had Amigas, which were like the kind of thinking man's Snes computer game thing. And we both had them, and having that kind of shared interest I think drove us... not drove us together, I think we would've been friends in different circumstances. And I don't think, you know sometimes you've got siblings and you're not like them, and sometimes you've got siblings and you're interested in comedy and computer games and football and similar music. Do you know what I mean? So there's lots of that being into the same things that I think is worth a hell of a lot in that situation, because you're not clutching for common ground.

Cathy: So Rachel had a relationship with my Dad. I didn't have any relationship with my Dad. And I was... we hated each other. So Henry, why weren't you furious with Josh because he had your Dad?

Henry: I think probably because we got on so much.

Cathy: Blimey!

Henry: So I had a choice, really. In the four that I was a part of, in the middle, the sister above me was three years above, and then four and then five. And Josh was three years below. So whereas in my little unit, I always felt quite far behind my brothers and sisters. Whereas with Josh, I guess probably it was quite nice to be sort of looked up to in a way. And I probably thrived on that. And we would just get on massively. Our personalities are quite different I think, but also sort of share so much because of all of that time spent together. And you know like it is with family, you just sort of key in with that family member and within five minutes you're speaking in a different way than anything else.

Josh: I think also having your kind of... you look for these things that are like, 'oh are your personalities the same or different?' or whatever. But when you actually think about the friends you have, or the partner you have or whatever, you don't necessarily gravitate to someone who has the mirror image personality of you, do you know what I mean? So I could choose comedians: I could be friends with James Acaster and Matt Forde and they're very different people. And they're very different people to me. But there's something about the way you relate to people that, you know, goes beyond just being similar people if you know what I mean. And I think our personalities just gelled in that sense. And I think part of that was having a similar sense of humour. And that Henry watched a lot of... you know I remember Henry talking a lot about Vic and Bob and I think he might have even gone to the Fast Show Live or something. And was big into that kind of world. And that just, I think that kind of... it's not that we were both into it but it represented that we both found the same things funny, which is probably about you know 80% of the battle when you're friends with someone, isn't it?

Henry: Yeah, and I think to go back to the Dad bit, I think our humour and Dad's humour is incredibly similar. And I think my relationship with my Dad at that age is... the thing I wanted most of all was a relationship with my Dad. So it's kind of like that's why I didn't want to bring any barriers into that. I wanted to move as many barriers as I could to sort of... for those visits to be as good as they possibly could be I guess.

[Flute sounds.]

Henry: A relationship breaking up with kids must be one of the hardest things you can go through and you don't really understand that until you're much older. Like you don't understand...

Cathy: No, but it seems that and also Henry and Josh you haven't discussed this together at all.

Josh: Yeah, I think we have bits and bobs, but like nothing Henry's saying is new to me, in the sense of I'm aware of it. I remember, you know, Henry sending that letter... no I don't remember but I've talked about it. So I'm aware of all of that, but what I mean is at the time I was totally... had no idea. And also I don't think we'd... I mean it's not that I don't think... we wouldn't meet up and talk about this, do you know what I mean? In the sense of I don't think we're a group of... I don't think we're two people or even a family of people who outwardly want to share their emotions with each other very much.

Cathy: Interesting.

Rachel: I wish we were like that.

Cathy: Yeah.

Henry: Yeah, when we get together it's sort of like, what can we do to make this most enjoyable? Like the time we get together as a unit, like me, Dad, and Josh, there is no way... like we go to Argyll games now and it's the best relationship I've ever had with my Dad and as that unit. And like there's no way I'd want to go there and go, 'right, can we discuss this today?' I want to go there and feel as relaxed as I possibly can.

Cathy: You are so much more evolved than me and Rach, it's unbelievable. Do you not.... You've never hated each other?

Henry: Me and Josh?

Cathy: Yes!

Josh: Yeah I'm sure.

Henry: Well I think we've had one... oh, alright mate.

Josh: No no no. [All laugh.]

Henry: I think we've had one proper argument and when I mentioned it to Josh he couldn't even remember.

Josh: I couldn't even remember it, but I now know it because Henry said it in the best man speech.

Cathy: What was it?

Josh: I can't even remember it now, I can't even remember it!

Henry: So I went to stay with him in London when... in my twenties. And he was still sort of, he was post-uni, still living with a bunch of uni friends and stuff. He'd just started working at the Guardian, so he was out during the days. And one night I told a story about how Josh got into refereeing when he was 14 years old. And it was quite um, he gave like a 10 year old kid a red card.

Josh: Yellow! Yellow! Yellow mate!

Henry: The parents were berating him and we were all having a good old laugh. Josh got back and the next morning his mate said, 'oh, Henry told me about your refereeing'. And Josh just sort of said to me, 'it was a really dark period of my life, I didn't want to go there, I didn't want these guys knowing about it.' And like I had to leave and go and stay on his friend's floor because I'd upset him so much that he had to go back to this period of his life where he was refereeing. But he has since done it on the Jonathan Ross show, so I know it's open...

Josh: No.

Henry: Graham Norton?

Josh: No, it was on Would I Lie to You. But it was, I don't think it was like a... it's weird isn't it, because now I don't even think of that as a dark – I mean it might be a reflection of quite how easy my life was up until that point that this was considered a dark time in my life, when I had a bad game as a youth referee. I vaguely... I only vaguely remember that. I still vaguely only remember that happening. It's bad that, isn't that? But I don't know.

Cathy: Yes, it's terrible. It makes me feel like Satan, it's awful. I've hated Rachel most of my life.

Josh: Do you think that's because you spend so much time together? That you've got the...

Cathy: No no no, we didn't use to.

Josh: Oh okay.

Cathy: No, we didn't use to. Henry I think you're cool as fuck to be able to be cool with all of that. Genuinely. And not let it eat you up.

Henry: Well I think it did eat me up when I was a child. And there was a resentment there in terms of how Josh had a relationship with my Dad that I didn't. And still to this day, we'll have a different relationship because if you live with someone you will develop a different relationship to the one that if you don't.

Cathy: Of course.

Henry: But also, because Josh's Gran was quite a successful actress actually sort of, Josh would get quite spoiled I think is a fair enough...

Josh: Yeah.

Henry: And so I would see this sort of... he would get all of this stuff coming down the maternal Grandmother's side, that I wouldn't. And like Dad would clearly do his best but there was clearly a run of Christmases where sort of in my mind – this wouldn't have been the case – but in my mind I got a whoopee cushion off my Dad and Josh would get like a computer or something.

Cathy: Oh, see that's terrible!

Henry: Yeah but it wasn't... Dad wouldn't... it was no one's fault because when you look at it... but back then as a kid you couldn't understand why, what the difference was.

Cathy: Well our paternal Grandmother left Rachel a Grand in her will and left me nothing.

Rachel: Which I didn't tell you about for a long time.

Cathy: No, so that was all going on.

Rachel: Yeah, I couldn't face it because I knew you'd go ballistic.

Cathy: Yeah, and I did.

Rachel: And you did. So yeah, I don't know quite why I told you. [All laugh.] I mean I've barely said a word, you can see how this dynamic works.

Josh: So when I was what, 10 maybe, our great-Grandma died, and there's probably 15 children across our generation below her. And we each got left £800 by her. And there

was this kind of difference in policy I suppose from our parents. So my and Henry's Dad allowed us to have the money. So I was a 10 year old with 800 quid. Which was absolutely mind-blowing at the time. And I spent like £350 on a stereo, a Sony stereo, which was probably the best investment. And then I kind of fritted the rest away. But I remember our cousins' parents kept hold of the money and said you can have it when you're 18, and invested it in their business and they never saw it. This is like going live. But my question is, Henry, can you remember that and what did you spend your money on?

Henry: Yeah of course. I bought an Amiga 1200 and I bought a bodyboard, wetsuit, and flippers. A set up for life! With my £800.

Josh: Do you think that was the right decision to let us have the money?

Henry: Yeah I think so. I mean what a moment when that £800 landed! I had to work, I had paper rounds, I worked making crab sandwiches, all of this stuff, and to get £800 and just to go, 'oh my God, I can just have the things my friends have got.' And I got to pick what I wanted, I remember really being careful and going, 'don't blow it, you've got one shot at this 800 quid.' [Josh laughs.] And then yeah setting myself up for a career in bodyboarding was fantastic, I loved it.

Rachel: Yeah I think that's irresponsible parenting. [All laugh.]

Cathy: But it's a bit shit being the elder sibling.

Henry: But I'm also the younger sibling. I have siblings looking out for me. I guess until my sort of early twenties I felt like I was looking out for Josh.

Cathy: Right.

Josh: Yeah, I think the interesting thing about it is obviously when you don't grow up together, I don't think you end up with any of the day-to-day frustrations in the sense of almost your relationship becomes like a 'best of' situation if you know what I mean. You'll only see each other a little bit, and you'll do the best things, you'll always go to the football together. In your twenties I'll go to Swansea when Henry's at uni, and we'll go out on the piss or whatever. You know if you have a flatmate, it magnifies all of the issues between you and that person. I think it's possibly one of the reasons we found it easier to have a good relationship: we never had that spotlight day-to-day of what would happen if you were growing up in the same house for 15 years together. When you really get to the bottom of who that person is when they're ill or tired or grumpy or want to watch a different thing on TV to you.

Cathy: Yeah yeah.

Henry: I think it's so astute, like literally every single memory of Josh is top drawer. So when we meet up, we're doing something.

Rachel: Yeah, you said obviously Henry you had some jealousies, you've talked through those. But I'm feeling...

Henry: I did, but I'd also be too... on visits I would then probably dominate in a sense in that I could use all of that stuff Josh had got. So that was the bonus. Like Josh would get a PC, and when I went to visit I could play on that PC.

Josh: Yeah, I think... I actually do think that was the one thing I was slightly aware of and slightly embarrassed by in a sense. But because my Dad wasn't the breadwinner, and so my mum was the breadwinner, and so obviously my mum's not Henry's mum. And so my stuff is nominally, obviously parenting is a team and it's not about who owns the money, but it's nominally coming from the money from my mum's work. And from my Gran who's not Henry's Gran, who's got savings. So all of that stuff is, you know, it's not like I'm getting it instead of Henry. But I was still... I definitely remember being not embarrassed, but you kind of check yourself, don't you? And you're not like, 'look what I've got', I don't think. Or maybe I was without realising it. I think that was the one thing I was aware of being slightly awkward about.

[Flute sounds.]

Henry: I think there was an age, probably 14 I think...

Josh: Yeah, maybe, yeah.

Henry: Where you became so aware of yourself and you literally physically did work on your personality I think.

Josh: Still doing it.

Cathy: Good man!

Henry: But like because he was kind of an only child as well, he had some only child traits. Would have a meltdown for instance, or he wasn't very good... he's very competitive, still is, but like you can't see that now in Josh. You can't see that he's competitive. When we got into comedy, and people would talk to me about Josh and go, 'oh my God he's so chilled and such a nice guy,' and you'd go... because you were still remembering the 10 year old.

Cathy: Yeah.

Henry: But I can remember Josh physically working on his personality and going, 'I don't want to be the person that can't lose.'

Cathy: Did you do that yourself, Josh? Or did you get help?

Josh: No, I did that myself. I don't think it was even as conscious as that. I am a very competitive person. Not in the sense of I'm eaten up by it and can't get to sleep at night because, I don't know, because Romesh is playing so many nights at the Apollo. But like I default to being competitive in game situations and don't actually enjoy them that much. And so... but what I do generally is not put myself in those situations if you know what I mean. I was definitely overly competitive as a child, but I definitely realised you know, that's not a way you can live your life because you will go absolutely mad. So I kind of was like, right well I've got to do something about this.

Henry: I think you sort of – without sounding too cheesy – you sort of harnessed that competitive energy for good things. I think we both avoid direct competitive situations, probably because of that period. But actually we're both very competitive in our own way. So I think mine's quite subtle competitiveness and not necessarily overt. Yeah, I think we both sort of managed to turn that energy into something that drove us forward.

Josh: Yeah, definitely.

Cathy: So neither of you is jealous of each other?

Henry: I don't think so.

Josh: I don't think so. I think Henry would hate my life. Henry would hate to look at a tour and go, 'oh my God, I've got to be there and there and there and there.' And I don't think you'd enjoy that.

Henry: No.

Josh: You realised that early on. I remember you doing a weekend in Brighton and just it was the most... you were like, 'this is horrible.'

Henry: Yeah.

Josh: Do you remember that? And like...

Henry: Absolutely, it's the weekend I chose to quite comedy.

Josh: Yeah [laughs].

Henry: And I think that's the weird thing: we realised we were going in different directions. And I think that was hard, and was hard for a long time in that in our twenties it felt like we were going to do it together. And then we realised, 'oh, here's a point where you go over there and I go over here.' And it wasn't jealousy because I wouldn't want what Josh has got. But it's still hard to be doing something together and then see someone go so huge. But what kept me going... it wasn't what Josh would think, because I know Josh has so much respect for what I've done. So we've got this... between me and Josh there's this shared respect. I think for me what sort of weighed was the people that

didn't understand comedy. So they could see Josh being huge, but wouldn't understand that what I was doing with Machynlleth and Little Wander and all the stuff I was doing also had merit. Do you know what I mean?

Cathy: Absolutely. Yeah yeah yeah.

Henry: Whereas I knew Josh understood what I was doing...

Rachel: But what do you mean? Who didn't understand?

Cathy: People, just people.

Henry: [laughs] Should we talk about that again?

Cathy: Yeah, of course.

Henry: I think family. When you've both been on a thing together and your family know we're going to do comedy, we're going to do comedy. And then Josh is very much a comedian, and I am not. Yes, but I do all of this great stuff. That was all in my head, you know, that wasn't in anyone else's head.

Josh: I think in comedy, there's so much of your judgement of yourself and what you're doing, that the stuff that is the most difficult to deal with is almost this hypothetical view in your head that other people... how they're analysing your career. So you'll do something and it's very easy to say, 'yeah I'm just doing this for myself, you know, and do you know what? I'll be really proud of this, whatever happens with it.' In your head, you think that everyone is comparing and contrasting – and they're not really. I totally agree with Henry in that sense that I don't think there was ever a case that it was between us, but I can totally see how that comes in that almost all of the judgement and criticism of your own output, whatever you're doing, is in your head from hypothetical people that don't really understand what you're doing, if that makes sense.

Cathy: But do you ever wish that you were still working – I know you're working together sort of in a sense, but I sort of panic if I think of not working with Rach.

Josh: I'd love to work with Henry. Genuinely, that'd be a lot of fun to work with Henry again. And it would be sad to think that would never happen again. But it's like circumstance, isn't it? One of the big issues we always had was geographical. And I know that sounds really small, but it's not in the sense of like...

Henry: Yeah, it's life.

Cathy: Yeah.

Josh: Henry and I do live four hours apart. Once I was established in London, it's a long way away. I think that's probably the most we were apart and drifted apart was almost

partly because you just don't see each other as much. And the weird thing that I think has brought us back together... but it's even like the advent of WhatsApp and the ability to text for free and all that kind of stuff I think has really kind of broken down those geographical barriers to an extent.

Henry: I agree with Josh in that life got in the way.

Josh: Yeah.

Henry: But I think we both think... we've never said it out loud, but I think in my head I've always thought we will get back to a point where we're sat in a room making each other laugh. And that is what we were always chasing right back in the beginning, of like, 'oh, why can't we do this all our lives?' Definitely I think that Josh's willingness to move into London and play the system of comedy, whereas my insistence... being so stubborn about it and going, 'no, I won't go there'. I think we've reached a point in comedy where in our twenties we were often the funniest – I mean, this is going to sound braggy – but as we were growing up in whatever little comedy pools we were in, me and Josh would always be the funniest people in the room. And then we reached a point – late 2008 or 2009 – where I wasn't the funniest person in the room to Josh, and Josh probably wasn't the funniest person in the room to me. So suddenly you're sort of blinded by these talents and going, 'oh my God, I'm friends with this person who's hilarious.' And so whereas Josh was in London and surrounded by those people, it was so accessible for him to go, 'okay here's something I'm going to write as part of, and here's something.' And I shut all that down and also sort of the business was beginning to grow, so I built myself an out. I think the competitive nature of that, like we were in a sketch group together and I loved that time, I absolutely loved it. But the competitive nature of it did affect me for a long time I think as well.

Rachel: That's huge, that's a huge chasm to suddenly realise you're...

Henry: Yeah, but I think that moment happened 10 years ago and we've massively moved on from it.

[Flute sounds]

Cathy: Have you ever been embarrassed by each other?

Henry: Yeah, hit me Josh.

Cathy: Go on.

Josh: Uh, no I don't think I've been embarrassed.

Henry: Yes you *have*! You *have* been embarrassed by me.

Josh: *I* don't think I have as a child.

Henry: So I think I embarrassed you in 2008 in Edinburgh.

Josh: I've got no memory of that.

Henry: When you were in So You Think You're Funny and you introduced me to the main person behind that.

Josh: What, Karen Koren?

Henry: I was an absolute asshole.

Josh: Julia Chamberlain?

Henry: Yes I guess it will be, yeah. And they won't remember it, no one will remember it apart from... but in my head, it was a real... because I was so anti-competition. A real wanky comedy purist type. And Josh was like, 'oh, this is the person who does this,' and I was just really non-responsive. That's another moment where I felt like I pissed you off. But they're so few and far between.

Josh: Yeah I've got no... so in terms of growing up, I imagine Henry's more embarrassed by me because I was the younger brother, but I definitely looked up to him in that sense. You're not embarrassed by your older brother. And also when you're three and a half years their junior, you follow their teaching for want of a better word, in the sense you think that they're the coolest person there is. So I don't think he could've when I was a kid. I reckon Henry might've found me a bit of a tag-along at points. There was points, like when Henry was getting a bit older, so I don't know what summer it would've been, but you'll remember Henry that you were working at Plymouth. And so Henry had a full-time job but he was back in Cornwall for the summer, so he would've been 19 or 20 or whatever. And because he had a full-time job he couldn't come up to visit us. So I'd go down to visit and I must've been 15 or 16, and I think I became like a slight tag-along. Whereas when Henry was out with us, he was always away from his friends. So there was no worry about this three and a half year junior brother tagging along. Henry wouldn't have thought about the embarrassment of me in front of his friends when he was staying in Devon. Even the period when I got into Games Workshop, I just remember Henry coming up and being non-judgmental about that, or at least not openly, about that. So I don't think I would've been embarrassing except when I was kind of visiting you. I wait to be corrected on that.

Henry: Yeah I'd agree with Josh in that when I went to Dartmoor I was anonymous. So I was entering a situation where Josh had one or two friends, because it's Dartmoor, and I could go there away from all my friends and just be into whatever Josh was into. So when he was into Games Workshop, let's hammer that home, [both laugh] I just sort of went along with it. And I can remember going home quite liking it, and talking to this really nerdy kid and borrowing his manual, and then I was like, 'oh no I'm back home now.' But yeah when Josh would come down, I remember being very protective of him and

trying to integrate that – you know I was in Cornwall, it was sort of like beach and surf... not surfing, let's not claim I was a surfer. That kind of thing of like coastal lifestyle rather than Dartmoor.

[Flute sounds] [30:00]

Rachel: Which of these questions that we've asked would you say you've been most uncomfortable about answering?

Henry: Probably the Dad stuff. Because when you've been through something and feel like you've worked through it and like I'll pop it in that box there, that's not completely therapy in any sense of the word, that you've popped it back away. I don't necessarily want to go back and think about going through that process again.

Josh: I'd say it would be talking about going our separate ways at the start of doing comedy. Because I think that was a weird kind of thing that happened and maybe you don't speak about a lot. And I think the childhood stuff: you kind of know how everyone feels about it and stuff. And so I think that was definitely the bit that I found the most difficult.

Cathy: But you're not at all turned... you both seem like you're just very calm about everything. Which for me and Rach is quite astonishing and like...

Rachel: I think it's also like Josh said it's about you know in some ways their relationship, seeing each other as they did, you get the 'best of' version. Which I think is true. Because we'd you know, argue over the remote control of the TV channel. So it's very different.

Josh: I think there's an argument to be made that me and Henry have got the relationship of cousins that are really close, as opposed to siblings in that weird sense if you know what I mean. Like you've got that physical distance when you're growing up, and so you're like just really close cousins as opposed to siblings with a weird gap if that makes sense. I think that would be a better description of it in a weird way.

Cathy: So we should've had you on the cousins podcast?

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: Fucks sake, Rach.

Josh: [laughs] No, I don't mean that to disparage it. We haven't had to put up with all the difficulty of the same house that you have, remote control-gate, etc.

Cathy: But you don't sit with your partners and slag off the other, do you? Ever?

Josh: No, I don't think...

Rachel: Yeah I think that only reflects on you so badly, Cath. [All laugh] Yeah, that won't be in it, don't worry.

Josh: Only thing that's happened here is Cath has come to deal with her own behaviour and hopefully see it reflected in us. And we've done the worst job of showing Cath that you're just typical siblings and they're all like it. [Josh and Henry laugh.] And in fact, we've set your relationship back 10 years by being quite balanced.

Rachel: Totally, of course she is! Of course that's what you're looking for. Yeah, Cath's looking for affirmation.

Cathy: Absolutely.

Rachel: [laughs] No, this is going to be a lesson for you, Cath. It'll be very useful.

Cathy: Exactly, it so is.

Rachel: Um, so I suppose we'll just wrap up. Is there any, I mean it all feels like it all got a bit too heavy. But is there anything you would...

Cathy: This was supposed to be a fucking hilarious podcast. I don't know how I went wrong. Josh, can you teach me in presenting? Immediately? In a fucking crash course.

Henry: I also think you're speaking to us at a time where we're both very... in satisfied positions.

Josh: Yeah, definitely. I think now it feels like we've both settled down. It does feel in a weird way like our lives... even though there's three and a half years: when you're 12 and 15 and a half feels like *forever*. It actually... I feel like we're kind of getting to the same points in our lives at a similar point.

Henry: Yeah.

Rachel: Is there anything you'd like to say to each other that you've never said before? I think that's what we'd love to close on.

Henry: I think we've said it, in that we've never talked about that divergent path bit. And it's always felt *there*. And I think just saying that, just acknowledging that we've both got an aim to get back to that, being in a room pissing ourselves – that's the eventual aim. I don't think that's been said out loud since we went our separate ways really.

Josh: It's weird kind of, we're recording this obviously in a kind of lockdown. Particularly for Henry, because Wales is different to England. And it's weird that bits of our daughters seeing each other. They've probably lost... you know, 9 months there's going to be where they can't see each other and whatever. And we saw each other *a lot*

when I was a kid, even though we weren't together. And that was really fortunate, it was really good. There was, you know, so there was Henry's siblings and there was also our cousins who we were close to, Anna and Emily. And those kinds of things, when you're a kid, are really great memories of when you were a kid – those family times. And you want to give your own children those similar memories, even though you realise that for the adults that those memories that you're creating for the children are probably mainly based on, 'have you got all the stuff in the car?' and getting home, and all this stuff you don't know when you're a kid. But when you're an adult it's just a faff to make those things happen. But it's really good that they *were* made to happen.

Henry: Both having daughters that you know are going to get together and have fun together, that is such – and again my daughter is slightly older than Josh's, so again I'm just slightly leading the way. [Josh laughs] It's sort of re-started a new bit of our relationship, but it also feels very familiar. Oh great, our daughters are going to be friends, and they're going to meet up every now and again like we did, and they're going to play together.

Rachel: You know we're here away with partners and our two – we have two only children, Elliot's four, Buzz is 8, and it's the same. We're aware we've got only children and we want them to be as close as we are, hopefully not – I mean, intense would be good, maybe slightly less intense.

Josh: Can I ask a question? I never even until this would have gone... we are particularly together. If that's kind of how you're hearing it, does that make you A. want to adapt your relationship, or B. feel jealous of that, or C. does it make you go, 'I quite enjoy the fireworks'?

Rachel: I think that Cath, you *don't* want to adapt our relationship.

Cathy: No.

Rachel: You like it the way it is.

Cathy: Yeah.

Rachel: You like the ups and downs and the explosions. Whereas for me, although I think sometimes the explosions work really well because it's like bursting a spot, and then we get stuff out in the open and we move on, which is brilliant, rather than years of festering. But, I would rather adapt and have a much calmer relationship.

Cathy: And I find that quite stressful because I think I don't know, it just feels like you're sitting in a can with a lid on. And I think you should be very open and explosive, I suppose. I keep using that word, that's probably the wrong...

Rachel: I know, you repeat that a lot.

Cathy: Yeah, exactly.

Rachel: But that's because you're built that way.

Cathy: Yeah, of course.

Rachel: So we've got a lot of extremes at play here, but yes I hear your relationship and I strongly feel like I really hope it will help Cath to reassess [Cathy and Rachel laugh] and realise.

Josh: There's no drama really in that sense. Sorry.

Rachel: Yeah

Cathy: Oh boy.

Rachel: Right, that's it then.

Josh: Oh boy, drilling into another unmineable stone.

[Flute sounds]

[Nature sounds]

Rachel: Thanks for listening and please join us again next time.

Cathy: Say it again because I said zinger!

[Guitar music and flute sounds]

This has been a Little Wander production. Local artwork from Cathy Mason. Voice from Melanie Walters. Music from Rhodri Viney. With special thanks to Beth Forrest, Steve Pickup, Sam Roberts, Henry Widdicombe, and Jo Williams. Other podcasts from Little Wander include Here to Judge and Welcome to Spooktown. Subscribe now on iTunes, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Cathy: No, I've never done a notepad.

Rachel: But you've drawn all over the bed, oh my God.

[Door slams]

