

I Wish I Was An Only Child - Kyle, Ali, & Kiri Pritchard-McLean

[Guitar and flute music]

[Birds chirping]

RACHEL MASON: Welcome to I Wish I Was An Only Child, with Cathy –

CATHY MASON: That's me.

RACHEL: And me, Rachel Mason. Where we speak to other siblings about the dynamic of their relationship so we can see where we're going wrong. This week we're talking to comedian Kiri Pritchard-McLean and her older brothers Ali and Kyle. We won't go on too much because this episode speaks for itself.

[Flute sounds]

CATHY: Who's the funniest?

KYLE PRITCHARD-MCLEAN: Hm, I guess it's got to be Kiri, hasn't it? She gets paid for it, right? I mean it's a pretty easy answer I would've thought, right?

KIRI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN: I think I'm the funniest, but only because I have honed it. I think that you're both funny in different ways, uh, but I have just built the muscle up.

KYLE: I would say maybe a get out would be Dad. But he's unintentionally funny.

ALI PRITCHARD-MCLEAN: Yeah, to laugh at rather than, uh, laugh with.

KYLE: He's just – yeah. 'Oh my god, did he just say that?'

ALI: He probably did.

KYLE: Yeah.

KIRI: When you said, um, which is the funniest, even though I know what you're asking because I'm obsessed with this podcast, I listen to it all the time, my first thought was Dad. Was to say Dad, even though he wasn't in the conversation. Because he is, yes, he is unintentionally funny, but also he can be very deliberately funny as well.

KYLE: And he also tells a good story, doesn't he?

KIRI: Yeah, but bullshits –

KYLE: Yeah yeah yeah. And like none of it is true.

KIRI: None of it's true.

KYLE: Apart from him being in some – somewhere, the rest of it's just made up.

RACHEL: Really? So what sort of – can you give us an example?

KIRI: Oh yes. Well –

KYLE: Have we got statues of limitations on this sort of stuff?

KIRI: Because the other thing is, him and Mum have had a pretty low-key incredible life. Not like the Bransons have incredible lives, but like, they have like worked very hard in very unusual circumstances and they're both quite unusual personalities. So there's lots of folklore with my parents. And then you have to filter it through Mum to find out what's true. And sometimes the thing that you think isn't true, like Mum being a fugitive in the Welsh hills for – for injuring a man and breaking his gun, and Mum dispatching a whole rugby team with a tire iron – end up being true.

KYLE: Because Dad has started a fight.

KIRI: Yeah, because Dad has started a fight. Um, they – those are the things that end up being true. And those are the things that seem the most far-fetched.

[Flute sounds]

RACHEL: Tell us about your family dynamic.

KYLE: Ooh.

RACHEL: Kyle, do you want to start?

KYLE: Um, yeah. I guess there was quite a bit of humour but it was normally – why's Kiri hiding her face? Um, but yeah. There was a fair bit of humour, I think, but um, being honest there was also like, uh, wanting to get out of the house as often as possible. Because they used to fight a lot. Um, and that used to spill over quite a bit. You know like, um, it feels like they argued all the time. To me anyway, that's what it felt like. So a lot of the time I was forever sort of disappearing somewhere, um. Alistair would,

um, in my memory would lock himself away in the granary or somewhere. Um, I don't know. I don't know about Kiri, really. Um, maybe I normally dragged her along with me a lot of the times. Um, but yeah. Um, I think it was more in the evenings and stuff. And I guess, um, I remember a lot of humour, um, around sort of meals and stuff. I felt that that was quite a bit thing in our family, to kind of sit – there was – that was definitely one constant, was that we all sat down and ate, uh, a dinner a day at least. [laughs] 'A dinner a day.'

ALI: If you see my Dad it's more than that.

KYLE: Yeah, yeah. But no, like, you know, your evening meal or whatever. That was always sort of done together. Generally sitting around a table until Dad like, 'Jesus Christ, it's 7:30, Coronation Street is on,' or something like that. And would just drop everything except his plate and, uh, and disappear, you know? To – yeah, to see that, basically. Which was also, I found, kind of weird. Um, maybe this sounds a bit sexist, but – but Mum never watched any of the soaps or any of the dramas and Dad did, you know? Dad –

CATHY: What was she doing?

KYLE: Um, well she –

KIRI: Working.

KYLE: Working, yeah basically. Wheel barrowing something or – or tutting at him, or – she generally – she didn't watch TV, although I guess because of –

ALI: 'Idiot's lantern', as she called it.

KYLE: Yeah, exactly. Although, um, she would – she was in the living room, but I think we all were, basically. So I mean, there's no – there was nowhere else to go, basically. So um, yeah, that's sort of my recollection anyway.

KIRI: I would say, um, that I totally agree with Kyle that all the – all the laughter and chatter and Dad holding court and – and everyone getting their turn, actually, is all – in my memories – always sat around a table at meal times. But I would say, I think what Kyle is sort of dancing around as well, um, about them arguing, is definitely a really prominent memory of my childhood.

But I think to say early doors is Alistair is 9 years older than me. Kyle is 7 years older than me. And they both moved out when they were young. Well, you know, 16 and 18. So from – I think we had slightly different childhoods. Because I was raised with brothers until 9, and then I became an only child except for Christmas, um, basically, and holidays. So I think we had – and also my brothers were raised when my parents had absolutely no – definitely in poverty when you guys were raised.

ALI: Oh yeah, yeah.

KIRI: Um, Mum tried to give the boys away –

CM: Oh, wow.

KIRI: Because Ali was in a cot and turning blue because there was no heating where they were. And then in the meantime, by the time I came along and was like 4 or whatever, I went to a private school. So we have had – although we're very close, I think,

brothers and sisters – we've had completely different childhoods I think.

KYLE: Yeah, I'd agree with that.

CATHY: Yeah, did that make – Alistair and Kyle, were you jealous? Or did you have any jealous feelings towards Kiri because she had a very different childhood?

KYLE: Ali, you go first.

ALI: I didn't. I would say that. Um, because it was just one of those things. I mean, um, if we go back to when my parents lived in, um, Brand Green in Gloucester, which is, um, Kiri was born there, really, weren't you?

KIRI: Yeah.

ALI: Before we – just before we moved up. So basically her very early years were on Anglesey. Um, going back, we were – we were poor as beans, you know? But we never went hungry. And what they said before about, you know, the raised voices and the rest of it, that's just the way they've – since I ever known, they've always communicated. And it's really weird because, you know, in that – in that same afternoon or that same evening, they'd be really affectionate towards each other. And it's like a complete sort of disconnect. Um, I've never seen them – because they've – they've got really, really angry with each other, but I've never seen one of them raise – raise a hand to the other one.

KYLE: No.

ALI: Raised plenty of hands towards us, but not each other.

KYLE: No, definitely.

KIRI: This is a really dark memory. I don't think you boys were even home then. I remember Mum and Dad having one of their arguments. So all – my abiding memory of arguing was nearly all – they're quite almost Mediterranean in that they yell at each other a lot anyway. It's a lot – big voices. So yeah, they definitely argued a lot because they're both quite – they – they're both quite stubborn, they both don't take things lying down, and they just communicate by yelling, um, and it's not actually much malice in it. However, I do remember serious arguments being about money.

The whole – the overriding theme of my childhood is, 'money money money money money.' And just us really struggling for it. I have a distinct memory, and I don't think you boys were living at home then, when Mum packed a suitcase and she came down – this is so dark, I would never do this to my child – she had a jewellery box, and she said, 'pick something from there and that's what you're going to have to remember me by.'

CATHY: [gasps]

KIRI: And she – and she walked out and she left. And she went for a couple of days, and I – and I remember I got these, um, earrings. And then I remember – she came back, but I remember going to a party in Benllech, a little village near us, in like a community hall. And I was wearing the earrings and I lost one. And I was so scared and upset because I thought, 'this is my thing to remember my mum,' even though she was back in the house.

But it's a big thing for a little kid to deal with. I don't – I think that that's my parents' lack of, um, they're not particularly emotionally articulate. So I think that they would sometimes – I don't fault – we were active pawns in it, but I think that was – that was aimed at my Dad and not aimed at me.

RACHEL: And they didn't – she didn't realise the impact that that was – yeah, they're very much in their own world by the sounds of it.

KIRI: Yes. I don't think it was blasé – it was like she just didn't stop to consider. And yeah, that was a really – I remember exactly where I was standing in the kitchen. I even remember like which lights were on when she said that.

CATHY: Do you remember her coming back and what she said? Did she apologise?

KIRI: No. No no no. Because they're not – [laughs] that's so funny that we're like –

ALI: [laughs] Please. Please.

CATHY: That's a lot of laughter there. Really?

KIRI: No, she just came – do you know what they're so bad for? Like no postmortems, which is why I don't think –

CATHY: Oh, right.

KIRI: Which is why they have the same 6 arguments over and over again. So nothing – I don't feel like much stuff is ever resolved, it's just it's not mentioned again. Is that – is that fair, boys?

ALI: Yeah, yeah. Pretty much.

KYLE: Pretty much, yeah.

ALI: I would be curious to know actually how much of it's down to their own upbringings, you know?

KIRI: Oh yeah.

ALI: Or like, Mum didn't get on with, uh, necessarily with her parents. Not in a bad way, but um, like Grandma wanted a little girl that would wear tutus and that isn't Mum to a tee. There's a photo of her in the garden in like a tutu, dressed up as a ballerina. I would imagine she's 6 maybe, and the look of disgust on her face – and like she remembers it vividly. 'I hated wearing it, it's not who I was.' And like she, you know, went and worked for a livery, wasn't it? So she could ride horses and all this sort of stuff. She was very tomboyish. And then like Dad's whole family thing's weird to the nth degree.

KIRI: My dad has huge like rejection issues, definitely. And had a real – you know, an affection towards his biological mother but was raised by his biological auntie. Do you remember? He always used to say, um, 'my real mum.' And it was our mum who went, 'no no, your real mum is who brought you up.' I remember he used to always call what would be our Mam-gu, well, 'my real mum'. And my mum was like, 'no no no, Nain is your real mum.' Like she's the one who –

ALI: Yeah, she's the one who fed and clothed you.

KYLE: Yeah.

RACHEL: So do you think with all that background it was important for your parents to keep you – you know, the dinners everyday? Were they – was family really important to them?

KIRI: I've got some theories and then I'll let someone else speak. Um, I don't – do you know what? I think my parents – I remember saying to Mum and Dad when I was little, I said, 'I don't want to be like you.' Because I love my big brothers so much. And I said, 'I don't want to be like you,' because my mum doesn't have really anything to do with her brother who, again, my brother was – sorry, our – so my uncle, my mum's brother, was adopted into the family and was very sick as a child, so he was in like an iron lung for most of his childhood. So Mum says, 'well, it's different.' She was like, 'I wasn't brought up with my brother, he was sick all the time. Your father wasn't really brought up with his –' She was like, 'it won't end up like that.'

And I was like, 'I'm so scared that I won't speak to my brothers.' That I – I was scared of having their life. So I don't actually think it was that deliberate. I think, more than them wanting family to be important, our parents are both odd, I now realise. And quite antisocial. And they sort of plough their own furrow. And I think they saw it as us 5 against the world.

CATHY: Yeah.

KIRI: Like –

CATHY: That's what I picked up, yeah.

KIRI: They lived in the village for like 30 odd years. And they were liked by everyone, but I wouldn't say they were friends with

anyone in the village. Everyone knows them and everyone's known them for years and, you know, would do anything for them. But you couldn't be like, 'oh, that's my dad's best friend.' Or my mum – I don't think either of them have a best friend. Is that fair?

ALI: You can use the, um, the Denbigh example. So my dad – I mean, this is another strange thing. In his youth my dad was in a band, um, obviously waxes lyrical about he's on a record somewhere for bands that played in the Cavern, because they played in the Cavern once.

KYLE: Mersey Beats, Volume 2.

ALI: There we go. [laughs] Available at all good record shops! Um, and then he went and met up with all of his sort of, uh, band mates. Was it 2 or 3 years ago? And then met up with them and it was like – my mum had said, 'oh, you should meet up. It would be good to catch up with them,' and all this sort of stuff. And they were like, 'yeah, we'll have to do this again,' and he never did. He just – that was it. And then whenever you mention it, he'll be like, 'oh, it's too late now. It's too late. It's too late.' And one of his bones of contention with his own family is like, 'oh, well they never ring me.' But he won't ring them either. And it's – it's a real sort of war of attrition. Like who's going to be more stubborn than the other?

KIRI: Yeah.

RACHEL: Right.

KYLE: So if I can raise a hand?

RACHEL: Yes, Kyle.

KYLE: I basically just want to kind of answer what you asked, uh, earlier on basically.

KIRI: Oh yeah.

KYLE: Um, so you were saying, did – you know, I think you asked Alistair, you know, did he have sort of any resentment about Kiri going to a private school. I don't think I did either, however I wouldn't say that she got away scot-free. Uh, and by that, you know, I mean Kiri sort of alluded to sort of the money or lack of that we had in our – in our house.

So, I mean I've always had a chip on my shoulder so I'm very similar to my dad, you know? Anything to kind of, you know, rile me up and I'm there. And I felt that, um... so for example, an example of like how poor we were, Alistair will attest to this, um, we used to have, uh, like wellies for the farm, you know? Um, so Mum then basically – when they were leaking and they were no good, she'd cut them down so we'd have to wear those to school. So cut down wellies. And that does seem like a small thing, but when you're in secondary school –

CATHY: Oh, it's terrible. Terrible.

KYLE: And they weren't even cut the same height either.

KIRI: Yeah.

CATHY: Yeah.

KIRI: She invented the croc, basically.

RACHEL: That's huge.

KYLE: Yeah yeah yeah. And to put – to put a bit of flair on it, she – she put like the little tag on the back of it, you know? I mean, um, and then we used to have to go to, uh, you know, go out wearing those things. And then I refused to wear them once, um, so I got – I got the good news off I think Mum or Dad for that, you know? Like, 'your mum's' – no, it must've been Dad – 'your mum's done all this hard work to give you a pair of shoes and you won't wear them,' etc. And it was like literally two minutes with a pair of scissors – a pair of sheep shears. Yeah, and then – because Ali, we used to go sometimes to the youth club at the school close by.

ALI: Yeah.

KYLE: The primary school. And uh, yeah, used to have to go down there in this wellies, our going out shoes, to – to play football. I don't know if I've ever really said this to Kiri, but it was when I moved away, and sort of when I started travelling a lot and um, you know, she mentions that, you know, only really saw us at Christmas and stuff, you know.

So what I – in my head, even though I wasn't really earning much money because I was an apprentice, I wanted to make sure that she wasn't in the same situation that I was. And so she didn't kind of have that same kind of sort of bullying. And I guess, you know, while she was at a private school, I'm sure compared to everybody else she was the poor one. So –

KIRI: Yeah.

KYLE: So for example, you know, when I – when I'd go disappear for two years, sort of travelling around, I would always send stuff back that I knew, um, that nobody else would have.

CATHY: Oh, that's lovely.

KYLE: Nobody would have a shirt from sort of Byron Bay surf shack. Or anything like that, or – I mean, there was a lot of stuff like that. Or like at Christmas, I remember I bought like a, um, like a little tape, mini hi-fi kind of stuff.

KIRI: Loved that.

KYLE: Yeah, so just little things like that so that, you know, she wasn't kind of scratching about as much, maybe. I hadn't got – I wasn't in the situation where I could give her money until I started, you know, really earning, which was about 19 or 20. That was kind of my way of, in my head, trying to rebalance. And I'm not saying that's the answer, to throw money at, but I just felt for me, because me and Ali are also quite different as in, can I say this, Ali? That I was more –

ALI: Say what you want.

KYLE: Yeah, alright mate, alright.

[All laugh]

CATHY: Come on.

KYLE: That I was more, uh, in the 'in' group per se, as it were, you know? I was more sociable than Alistair, you know? He'd got his friends, don't get me wrong, but you know, but with that came all

the, 'oh, you've got the crap jeans. You don't have the sports top. You don't have this, you don't have that.' So that kind of came around for me, really. Whereas Alistair, that – I don't think that stuff ever really bothered him. I mean, I don't think it does now to be honest. Like, hence the purple jumper.

KIRI: No, that's a lovely jumper.

KYLE: But go on, yeah. Sorry.

KIRI: I remember Mum telling me that – or maybe Dad. One of them if not both of them told me that you resented me for going to private school.

KYLE: Me?

ALI: Yeah, you.

KIRI: Yeah. That you resented me. So that's what – yeah. I think it was – I think they said something like you took it as them saying that you weren't clever enough to go. And that therefore you resented me. And – but I do – do you know what? That's weird. I do remember those presents things.

I remember saying – I remember saying to someone in my primary school, when they were talking about their brothers and sisters, and so I must've been about 11 now, so I'd been on sort of my own for a couple of years. And I was sort of going – I said, 'it's weird. They are my brothers,' I said, 'but it's more like uncles.' Because the age gap is so vast when you're young. So there's just two adult men and I was still in primary school. And then I said, 'but what's really cool is at Christmas they're in competition to

get me the best presents. So I get – I do get loads. I get really spoiled.’ But it was always by you two over Mum and Dad.

KYLE: Um, I would just say, like just, uh, what Mum said. Yeah, that’s definitely not true. But uh, because one of my sort of, uh, chips on my shoulder is, um, I was forever told, oh, you know, the quote was, you know, ‘education’s clearly not your thing, son. Get a trade, you know? Nobody can take it away from you, because that’s all you’ll be able to do, yeah?’

So then I went away, um, and then, you know, when I was, uh, working away in London and living on my own, you know, I used to call up Mum, um, and it was really the first time she’d kind of talk to me more than a sentence or two. And it was always, ‘oh, it was so nice, I saw so-and-so in the village. And I was telling him how I’m finally proud of you because you’re out working, etc.’ And you know, and then there were little things like where I’d started, uh, training. Started doing running stuff. And then it was – Dad was, ‘oh, you know, oh, you can’t run, son. That’s your brother. Your brother’s the runner, bla bla bla.’

So then I, you know, so then I had to take that as far as I could, which was sort of a marathon, you know? And then I think that’s also why in a roundabout way I probably went, um, you know, we – we’d been – I’d been estranged to the family during this period. Um, why I also decided to go to university. And the sole drive for me was to prove that, you know, not only could I get a degree, that I’d get the best degree in the family, which I – sorry guys, but I did.

RACHEL: Brilliant.

KYLE: So there were little things like that. Like so I guess a lot of my motivations came from, you know, chip on my shoulder or basically being told that I couldn't or shouldn't do something because I wasn't sort of good enough for it. There was always that kind of battle between me and my father, I felt. Maybe because we were too similar, or I was too similar to him. So, you know, he didn't like a lot of what he saw. Um, and it was only sort of years later when I'd gone to see, uh, his brother. He goes, 'oh, I remember your dad saying, "oh, you know, I do worry that I'm too tough on him. That, you know, I'm too physical with him and stuff.'" And that broke my heart.

Like I was with an ex-partner at the time and I went home and I was in tears because for me it was like, you know, it was kind of that I wanted some kind of recognition out of him rather than just to be hit for being a bar stôl llaw chwith, which is a left-handed bar stool. Um, and uh, just be told all the things I couldn't and shouldn't do and that I had to hear that from his brother.

KIRI: Kyle, I don't – I don't deny that any of this went on, but my feeling was that you were the favourite by far. And like –

ALI: Who, Kyle?

KIRI: Kyle.

ALI: Yeah. Oh yeah.

KIRI: And the prodigal son is what I – what I used to call you. Because you would – you'd come home and –

ALI: You could do no wrong.

KIRI: Yeah, that's exactly my perception of it. You'd come home, there'd be a fight over something between you and Dad or you and Mum, you would leave, and all they would do is talk about how much they missed you. And also the air would change when they knew you were coming home. So I was like, 'I should be the favourite but Kyle is the favourite.' [laughs]

ALI: And – and it puts their backs up now, because when I say to Dad, 'well, he's still the favourite,' Dad goes, 'oh, no, we treated you all equally.' I'm like, 'no you didn't.'

KIRI: Bullshit.

RACHEL: But how did you have such different – different perspectives? Because Kyle, you clearly don't –

ALI: Because we're on the outside looking in and he's on the inside looking out. So going back –

KIRI: And it's not to say that that stuff didn't happen as well.

ALI: No, not at all. Going back to Kyle's example, you know, I've seen facets of that. Because Dad from day one has always been – with me, 'get a trade, we always need tradesmen. All these people are going to university and they're still working in Curry's or Dixon's', when it used to exist. And like he always pushed for that.

So when I – I went to university and I think I lasted four weeks. I was back home within a week. Well, I just – I basically didn't like my course. I was like, 'I need to get on a course', so I just went on any old course. I was like, 'I don't want to do this for three years.' Um, and then came back home. And then it's like, 'well, you're

not sitting around here doing nothing.’ So I ended up getting a job working in Butlins in Pwllheli, which was – yeah, and went back at Christmas to work over Christmas there. Who goes to Pwllheli at Christmas? And it was – it was still a dry county then, so the –

RACHEL: Oh my god!

CATHY: Wow.

KYLE: Was it?

ALI: Yeah. So the – yeah it was, it was a dry county.

KIRI: Yeah, it was really late for that to change.

ALI: But they had a license for a bar on the site that served on a Sunday. So all these buses would come out to Pwllheli, stop, drop loads of people off –

KYLE: Oh my god.

ALI: So that you’d have a drink – it was absolute bedlam. And I remember – slight change, but I used to work – it was 6 days a week and you like – it was alright money, and then they took money off your food and your accommodation. So you were like working for like the equivalent of like £10 a day. It was absolutely brutal.

But yeah, um, Mum’s always been like, ‘get an education, get an education, never take that away from you.’ Dad’s always like, ‘get a trade, get a trade, whether it’s spanners or plumbing or whatever, because they’ll always – you’ll always need a plumber, you’ll always need a, you know, a brickie, you’ll always need this.’

RACHEL: So – so Ali, you’re saying you had the same from your dad. But Kyle, you obviously – why was it so – did it feel so different for you?

KYLE: Um, I think – okay, I think generally, um, yeah, Ali was undoubtedly – and obviously Kiri at a younger age – at that age were smarter, 100%. I think, um, being honest, I did sort of, uh, mature – my brain matured a lot later than I did, let’s put it that way.

[Flute sounds]

CATHY: But what’s your relationship with Alistair? So Alistair, how – because you two haven’t really spoken about your relationship. Did you see him as the angry younger brother?

ALI: No, I mean I wouldn’t say that me and him have ever been close. Um, because although we’re quite close in age, I would say that, um, not that there’s a rivalry, but, you know, I would say it’s fair to say that at different points in our lives we’ve been compared to the other one for no real reason.

KYLE: Yeah yeah, totally.

ALI: And um, yeah. And we’re very different. Like, you know, he talked earlier about, you know, he sort of fitted in and all the hassles that came with that. But when we moved to Wales, I was, uh, it would be the first year of secondary school. And I’d missed the first four weeks because at the time we were moving. So I arrive in Wales, and I’m dumped in, um, the English medium school, which was not the English medium school. Um, and Kyle went to the local village school, um, and they basically sent him

away for 6 weeks to have like a crash course in Welsh. Because Anglesey's quite a Welsh area. North Wales is quite a Welsh area. Um, and then obviously very proud of the culture and heritage and all this sort of stuff. So it was a chance for him to pick up the language. So when he came back to school, he could speak Welsh. I mean, what would you say the percentage of people on Anglesey that speak Welsh? It's quite high, isn't it?

KYLE: Oh, yeah.

KIRI: It's the second highest proportion in Wales and then the highest is just over the bridge. So this is the highest concentration of Welsh speakers.

ALI: So then I arrive, um, into my class, which is essentially the English class. But it was like – I'd guess a good 75% of the kids in there were Welsh speakers or Welsh people who weren't very bright. So apologies to any of those now. Um, so they were stuck in the English class because it would be easier for them. Uh, so from day one I was an outsider. So that's why I didn't ingratiate myself. Like he says, I do have a circle of friends. It took a long time. I think personality wise, I'm near to Mum. And Mum would be happy not seeing somebody for a year.

KIRI: Yeah.

ALI: And just getting on, you know. And just getting on with your business. So I found it really difficult. And I've, you know, I'm what, 44 now, you know? And still live in Wales and everything else. But I'm a huge hang-up.

[Flute sounds]

KYLE: Alistair would do something or sort of wind me up and then would be able to run away because he was faster. So he had this – he had this habit of being able to get me so like literally I was shaking with rage. You know, and I remember – this is not maybe a great story, but um, one of the defining points of my childhood was actually catching him. And we were in the garden, and something had happened where he'd done something to me and there was a piece of 3x2 close by. Do you remember this, Ali?

ALI: No, I remember the, uh, fire poker. You know, the big – the big steel fire –

KYLE: Did I hit you?

ALI: You tried to hit me with it and I had the stool.

KYLE: Right, right. Okay. Well, this one – I don't remember that one, to be fair. But um...

ALI: It's probably because he was that angry.

KYLE: And he'd done something and he was just [imitates teasing] like goading me, literally sticking his chin out. And I remember I just looked over and there was this piece of wood just asking to be picked up. And I picked it up and I swung it, and I couldn't have hit it better. Because I hit him right – right on the shins. And he folded up like a wet wallet.

And I just – and I remember that was – that was a highlight of my point. Now, to say that Alistair never really bullied me. He – I don't think. I was kind of scared or intimidated by him because I guess he was – I always felt that he was angry or sharp in a

different way. Um, but I don't think we generally fought too much.

ALI: No, we never fought.

KYLE: We might have argued, but I don't think we necessarily like fisticuffs or anything like that.

ALI: No, and I mean if I think back to school, like I can count on probably only two fingers, you know, physical altercations with other people. It's just not in my nature. I tend to bury things and seethe for a very very long time. Just like my parents, really. Hold grudges for a very long time. That's –

KYLE: Yeah. For me, I'll take my shoes and socks off to be honest with you.

ALI: Yeah.

CATHY: But did you – did you ever hate each other then? You didn't, I'm guessing. Not properly hate each other.

ALI: No.

KYLE: No, I wouldn't – no. I generally like I'm saying that I don't think I ever hated him. Obviously, when I was shaking with rage, you know, what I would have –

KIRI: Yeah, but that's –

KYLE: Yeah, but that was literally – and then, you know, he'd do something that would make me – he would let me come into the granary, you know, and watch, uh, watch part of, um, 'Escape

from New York' on his little – he had this basically uh, a hi-fi system with a black and white TV on the top of it. Do you remember?

ALI: It was like – yeah, two inches wide. So you're like that.

KYLE: Yeah, yeah, basically. So you know, and I guess that was his kind of way of sort of making up or something, you know?

CATHY: If you were upset or frustrated by the – by your parents, would you speak to each other about it? Would you turn to each other?

ALI: No.

CATHY: Okay.

ALI: We have – we have done.

KYLE: Yeah.

ALI: We have done. Because I –

RACHEL: So was it you against them? Was it you against your parents?

ALI: No, I don't think so. Sometimes we would be like, you know, 'what was that about?' Because like, um, if he got into trouble, and we were punished, it would be we that was punished. Even though I might not have even been there. Because I was the older brother and should've looked after him and made sure he didn't get into trouble.

CATHY: But when Kiri came, did things calm down a bit? I mean, did anything change?

KIRI: I was the youngest by a long way. I was the only girl. I was definitely spoiled. I was given a much easier ride in terms of, um, how much was expected of me. I still worked a lot around the farm and did stuff –

ALI: We all did.

KYLE: Yeah.

KIRI: But not to the extent – we all did, but not to the extent that you – like Ali was just like an unpaid farm labourer, definitely. Because also – and you were as well, because Ali was a bit older. And Ali was like freakishly strong as well, and fast. So this is a true story. They didn't buy a sheepdog because Ali was fast enough to round the sheep.

CATHY: No!

KIRI: Yeah, yes.

CATHY: No, that's brilliant!

KIRI: So they sent him around the fields. Because Ali used to like run for Wales.

CATHY: Wow.

KIRI: And was like incredibly good and short and long – long distance in particular, but Mum would just go like, 'send Ali.' So he was like this resource, basically.

ALI: The time of year that was the most stressful – because farming is something that felt –

KIRI: Lambing.

KYLE: Oh – baling.

ALI: No, baling.

KYLE: Yeah.

KIRI: What?

ALI: So what used to – what – when they lived in Gloucester, my dad worked for, um, a famous donkey sanctuary that might be in Devon. And, um –

KYLE: Nice.

ALI: Uh, yeah, just in case. Um, and he moved to North Wales because he was the Welsh inspector, and he was told he was going to get this whole region. Um, they sold the house that they had in Gloucester, and they had enough where they cleared their mortgage they had in Gloucester and were able to buy the house outright on Anglesey and have a small amount left over. And within 6 weeks of moving there, he was made redundant.

CATHY: Oh, right. Yeah.

ALI: So suddenly, the main breadwinner, or source of income, had gone. And farming had been a ‘hobby’ – and I use that in inverted commas – that my Mum had taken on. So when she was

pregnant, um, with my sister, she went to horticultural college and was doing stuff like that and suffered terribly from morning sickness. She's also a stress head so never sits exams. And so it became this like, 'what else are we going to do?' Um, and then went into farming. And there's no doubt that Dad had some form of breakdown because of how he was treated.

KYLE: Yeah.

ALI: And loads of – I mean, yeah. Like grew a beard, didn't look after himself for like 3 or 4 years, was really depressed. Thankfully he didn't drink, otherwise he'd have probably killed himself.

CATHY: Yeah.

KYLE: Or us.

ALI: Or us, yeah. The most stressful time of year is baling. So what ends up happening is you – you grow the grass and it's cut to lie on the field for a certain amount of time. And it dries out in the sun, and it's turned over a few times. And then you bale it and you bring it in and stack it. If it rains, you have to go back to the start again. And it was always – you know what British weather's like, well the Welsh weather's even worse. Um, and then basically it was like a game of chicken. And Dad would always leave it like a week too late.

KIRI: Yeah.

KYLE: Yeah.

ALI: He'd cut it, and then two days later it would rain. And then he'd have to like wait for another few days to turn it and all this

sort of stuff. So we end up baling, and we're using all this antiquated equipment you see in health and safety videos kill people. Um, and he would basically sit on a tractor all day, rolling ciggies, smoking all day, tuck tuck tuck, pulls forward. I would be throwing bales onto the trailer while Kyle, Kiri, and my mum were then stacking them. And then we'd stack it probably about 5 high, wasn't it? Put that in –

KIRI: More than 5 tall.

KYLE: To be honest – to be honest, Ali, the way I remember it was I was on the trailer, you were loading, Dad was doing the ciggies, and then Mum and Kiri were in the barn. But it was definitely more than that. It was about 7 high.

KIRI: I thought it was really high.

KYLE: So to give an idea, I think Ali – Ali – he was probably 5'7" – 5'8" then, and he was, uh, you know, how old were you, Ali? You must have been like 14 – 15.

ALI: 14, 14.

KYLE: So he – he was having put a whole bale above his head and then at least throw it another couple of – probably another meter above. So, you know, and then as he got more and more p'ed off, and more and more frustrated, his aim was –

ALI: I'd throw higher.

KYLE: Was to throw – hit me, to hit me off – off the trailer. But yeah, but as Ali says though, there was basically – with the baling, you had basically 7 – you needed a 7 day window to get it all

done. And – and honestly, like every single time that we brought that last trailer in, literally the heavens would open, basically. Wouldn't they?

ALI: It's great farming material but everybody else is bored with us.

KYLE: Yeah.

CATHY: I like it!

ALI: The other thing with bales is it scratches you.

KYLE: Oh god.

ALI: So when you were sort of undressed at the end of the day, you'd look like you'd been slashed with razorblades. There were cuts all over you because you were – you lift it, put it onto your, uh, tops of your legs. Your quads.

ALI: Yeah.

KIRI: Yeah, like your knees.

ALI: And you'd put it onto there, and then push up from there to throw it up.

KYLE: Basically a deadlift, guys, is what it is.

KIRI: Yeah.

RACHEL: Yeah.

CATHY: Wow.

KYLE: A deadlift but then with a throw at the top of it.

RACHEL: All day.

KYLE: Yeah yeah, they'd have to – they'd have to be like 30 kg, Ali.

KIRI: My memory of – see, it's so interesting that you say that. Hay baling to me was the most fun. It's what I looked forward to every year.

ALI: Ah, I wish you burnt it all.

I honestly like – I thought it was really – because we – they'd fill the barn full of hay bales, which then we got to make dens in and I'd be out all day. Honestly my happiest times are when I can remember being out with you boys in the fields.

And like now, like when we've come over and done stuff together outside, is like when I'm at my happiest. When we're just like, you know, clearing something. But the worst time for me was this time of year. Was lambing. Because it's the dead of winter, they're both – because to pay for my education, they had the farm and then they both got other jobs. So Dad was either on the lorries, um, Mum was working night shifts in old people's home, or Dad was doing some other dodgy stuff around the place. Bits for the council, gritting, all this sort of stuff.

Um, so they were working those two jobs themselves, and then lambing time is one of them has to stay up through the night to make sure none of the sheep get in trouble. Because if a sheep gets in trouble and, you know, 3 lambs die, that's a lot of money

you've lost. So every – they were getting probably about 2 hours of broken sleep each every day.

CATHY: Oh, that's horrific.

KIRI: And this would go on for weeks, and money was tight. And I just remember it being – one of them would always be on a sofa sleeping because they'd do shifts. And I just remember it being incredibly tense. Because on top of everything else, it's cold and it's grey and it's depressing. And they are incredibly sleep-deprived. And they're not patient people at the best of times. It was – I hated lambing time. That's what I hated.

[Flute sounds]

RACHEL: After that incredible – all those stories –

CATHY: What's your relationship with each other like now? And have you ever had periods where you've not had anything to do with each other, or... yeah?

KYLE: Yeah.

KIRI: Well, so – as lockdown, Kyle came up and lived with my partner and I during lockdown. And we realised at the end of it, it was the longest we'd lived together since, um, I was 9 years old. So – and now I'm what, I'm 34. And the – the big thing I suppose is something that we've never talked about as well. Is that was a decade where Kyle didn't speak to me. And then I – there was a –

CATHY: Really? Why?

KYLE: Well, come on. The whole family, really. Yeah.

KIRI: Yeah, but it was bit by bit.

KYLE: Slowly, surely. Yeah.

KIRI: Because you were – it was – first it was me, then it was Mum and Dad, and then – and then it was eventually everyone.

KYLE: Was it really 10 years, guys? I thought it was a little bit less than that.

KIRI: It was – no, no. It was from when I was 19 years old to when I was 29.

KYLE: Yeah. Um, so, uh, it was – it was I guess a series of things. I guess it started all really, it started with Mum. Um, I think when she got, uh, cancer for the first time. I remember, you know, um, I don't know if it's a statement on me or her or whatever.

But basically she told everybody about this, including the person that I was living with at the time. So everybody knew about this but she didn't tell me. And then when I found out about it, I was like, 'well, you know, don't you think, you know, you told everybody. Don't you think I should know?' And – and her response was, 'well, you're never here, you know? What's it – it's none of your business. What's it got to do with you?'

CATHY: Wow.

KYLE: But she – but she didn't think there was anything wrong with telling the person that I live with that – that, you know. So that was kind of the start of it. And at the time, uh, for good or for bad, I was like – I basically got really into my rugby. So I started

quite late, and after a couple of seasons I – I, you know, I was lucky enough to be liked by some guys that sort of played pro and stuff. So I got to tour a lot. And then, um, I was playing for a – a club.

We basically got through to the finals and we were going to play in Twickenham. So, you know, I probably would've been benched, but I would've caught splinters all day to play in Twickenham, right? So – and Kiri was coming down that weekend. And she sort of, 'oh, I'm coming down this weekend, bla bla, can I stay with you?' etc. etc. etc. 'Yeah, yeah, of course you can. Of course you can.' So then during the week, um, it was like, 'oh, you know, everything on?' 'Yeah yeah yeah, I'll see you, you know, I'll see you sometime Friday night,' basically. So then, you know, I basically took my name off – off the team sheet, and then, uh, I didn't hear anything from Kiri for that whole week. She – you didn't show up. Um, you didn't sort of let me know why. I got no contact from you for about two or three weeks subsequently.

And for me it was just like, 'well, this is just why' – my side, obviously, uh, you could say, was like, 'I put out all this stuff I kind of, you know, I make these efforts and I don't get anything back. Why am I – why am I doing this?' Like, you know, if there's something that isn't helping you in your life, or – or something that keeps on kind of pushing you sort of back or, you know, or is causing – at the time it just felt like it was just more heartache. And I was like – and I just kind of like, 'I don't need this anymore. I don't need it or want it in my life anymore.' And then so I just decided that was it, basically. I'd just had enough. And that is literally it, yeah. I couldn't necessarily say it was a major thing. Like it wasn't necessarily Kiri's fault or Ali's fault, or – or – but –

CATHY: So you blocked Ali as well?

KYLE: Yeah.

CATHY: You blocked both of them.

ALI: Not straight away.

KIRI: That's –

KYLE: Yeah, I didn't – no, hang on, hang on, hang on, Kiri. Right? So, um, no, not Alistair straight away. Um, and the reason, uh, I – I had to do Alistair, or I felt I had to do it, was because they were using Alistair as a sort of a vessel or a bit of a tool to kind of, uh, contact me. And sort of dragging him into stuff. And I remember, um, having to come back for something. And Alistair giving me, you know, a lift back to the station. I don't know if you remember this, Ali?

And I remember, uh, it was sort of – we were talking about something and I like – and I apologised to him. And I was like, 'I'm sorry I've put you in this position.' And Alistair, being the way he is, 'oh, it's alright. Don't worry about it, bla bla bla.' And I was like, 'no, it's not okay. It's not okay.' So Alistair was really almost the last sort of link to, um, to them. So I just kind of – it was – it wasn't necessarily, uh, to sort of cut Alistair off, it was basically to – so that I didn't have to have – I didn't have to have that contact anymore, basically.

CATHY: And how, Alistair and Kiri, do you – or did you feel about that?

KIRI: AI?

ALI: Um, well I'll go on my side, then. Because I was obviously the last one to be sort of, uh, cut off. And I remember Kyle explaining it to me. It was like, 'oh, it's for the best and, you know, it puts you in an awkward position and yada yada yada.' So basically I had then between 3 and 6 months of my dad saying, 'what have you said to him for him to cut contact from you?' I'm like, 'I've not said anything. He's bla bla bla.'

And it was always – it just came back as it was my fault for not being involved – not really doing anything. I mean I wasn't like bringing it up, saying, 'oh, well I don't think so.' Saying, 'oh, you need to ring Mum and Dad or anything like that. It was – it was almost like, uh, you know in the war when you have someone that – that – I'd be Switzerland. Hiding the Nazi gold.

CATHY: Yeah.

ALI: Now I was just passing information backwards and forwards in as non-confrontational way as possible. So that there was still some form of contact going on. And, um, they'd – they'd tried to drag other people in. They'd tried to drag in your old landlady um, and other stuff had gone on. And, yeah. And he'd just had enough and said, 'that's it.'

And then it's genuinely, I mean, Kiri can either agree or deny to this. I mean, there's this period of our lives where he – he wasn't part of the family. And it's not like we went, 'oh, okay, we'll just put that in a cupboard and forget about it.' But it was like – I can remember having a conversation with my sister now and again, thinking, 'you know, are we going to get a knock on the door of the police or something like that?' Because we had no contact with him whatsoever. And he just fell off the face of the earth.

Um, he doesn't use social media very much. Neither do I, to be fair. Um, and, you know, and there was no real way of reaching out to him. Just to make sure he was okay. Which was fine because that's the way he wanted to do things, you know. Um, and I think, I mean, this is not me throwing him under the bus, I think it's something that comes from our parents, that our mental health isn't the best. And I think we tend to push people away that try to help us, and then potentially have people that aren't very helpful, um, don't see those warning signs, and think that they're okay. Um, at least I have in my own personal history. Um, so yeah. It's –

CATHY: Well, you've been trained to be stoic. You've been trained to be insanely stoic. And Kiri?

RACHEL: Kiri?

KIRI: Um, well mine was – that was the first time I knew about the Twickenham thing. That's like literally the first I knew of it. My perception was, I was like 18 and I used to go down to London to see friends and I'd – I'd usually stay with Kyle, sometimes I'd stay with them. But I was – I was coming fairly frequently. And then what had actually happened is, I knew I was meant to go and see Kyle that week, or like the week after, and then during that week – this is so embarrassing – I'd been taking money out of my account and I was like, 'do you know what's amazing about student grants is? You just can't get to the bottom of them.' And what I was looking at was I was looking at the money I was overdrawn by. And not what was in my account.

So I was like, 'I just keep taking money out and getting more money, it's absolutely unreal.' Um, so I obviously got to the point where I tried to take a tenner out and they were like, 'there are

insufficient funds.’ And I was like, ‘shit, I can’t afford to – I hadn’t bought my train or anything. I couldn’t – I definitely couldn’t afford to go down to London, probably on the piss, which was what I was intending to do.

So I spoke to my parents like that night, being like, ‘I have no money in my account.’ And they were like, ‘well, it serves you right.’ And they were like, ‘you’re meant to be going to see Kyle.’ I went, ‘well, I can’t afford to do that now.’ And then in the meantime, like the next couple of days, they spoke to him and she was like, ‘oh, she’s not coming down.’ And he said, ‘well, she’s not said anything to me.’ And yes, I hadn’t. Because I was a stupid 18 year old and I just hadn’t got around to doing it. And I also didn’t – like I literally said, this is the first time I’ve found out this thing was riding on it. And the next thing I knew was them saying to me – they were like, ‘well, he’s really pissed off with you.’

And then that was it. We didn’t speak for 10 years. And – but I was always aware of – although he wasn’t around, I don’t know if you agree with this, Ali, he was at every Christmas and every occasion. Because it would always be like, ‘imagine if Kyle was here. Imagine if your brother was here.’

ALI: Yeah.

KIRI: ‘God, we miss your brother. I wonder what your brother’s doing? I hope he’s okay.’ So he was like this spectre at the feast.

ALI: Constantly.

KIRI: I’m pretty sure it was about the same time – well, you were still working, um, with the White Wellies?

ALI: Yeah.

KIRI: And you were definitely in a very unhappy relationship. So you were this bundle of anger and exhaustion. And so I felt like you having to – you had literally the world on your shoulders. And then this other brother disappears, but is still there because all you hear about is your parents talk about how much they wish he was there. It was – it was really horrible.

And I remember being in London. A couple of years had passed. My friend who had met Kyle a few times was like, 'does your brother still live in London?' I was like, 'I don't know.' I was like, 'he won't talk to me.' Because I was a bit like, 'I don't know what I've done.' Except I'm – to me, I'd just missed an appointment. And I was like, 'he's the big brother.' And they were like, 'just reach out. Just message him.' And I was like, 'okay, I'll try.'

And I remember messaging – it was – I think it was like when I'd just started doing comedy. I remember where I was when I read the reply as well. And I said, 'hey big brother. I'm coming down to London. Um, I'm doing some gigs. I do comedy now. I'd really love to see you, but I understand if you're busy. I really miss you. It would be great to see you.' And I got back two words and it was, 'not interested.' And I was –

CATHY: Oh no.

KIRI: Oh my god, it was so horrible.

CATHY: Oh no, that's horrendous.

RACHEL: That's awful. And you've never talked about it together, have you, Kyle and Kiri?

KYLE: No. Basically, I do remember the replying, 'not interested.' Um, and I was going to say something else then. Sorry, what was it?

CATHY: Well, you were just very very angry. They got everything – you were just very very angry.

KYLE: Oh, 100%. Um, but oh yeah, that was it. So there was – there was something else happening at that time as well. There was – that was 100% probably the worst possible time that she could've, uh, could've messaged.

Um, I was with – with now an ex-partner. But basically, she would come home and basically tell me, you know, that, uh, how worthless or – quote, 'beneath her' that to her friends thought I was. And then, you know, and then she'd get upset with me because I then didn't want to go and have a meal with these guys, um, that I knew already hated me. And, you know, sit there while they all did loads of Charlie all night, you know? Just totally not my scene.

Um, and then, so then it kind of developed to that point where she basically started accusing me of, uh, cheating on her. Um, which, like, I never had. I hadn't done it, you know? And that was like a real thing in my life where I was like, 'that's the one thing that, you know, if you could say anything that I haven't done.' So I was kind of stuck in this, uh, situation.

You know, I'd just, you know I was sort of getting through my – or I'd literally just done – finished my degree. Where like I loved it, I absolutely adored it. And then – and then she was like, 'yeah, but you can't go into what you want to do because then you won't be

earning enough money. And then I won't be able to get my degree. I won't be able to get my visa and it'll be your fault.'

So I basically spent sort of four years and a lot of money of my own money, um, basically getting a degree and then having to go that very next day straight back to a building site for about 60-70 quid a day less than I was on. So it was – it was – for me, it was just like, you know, going in reverse, basically. You know? That kind of came around that time. Um, but I would – hang on, hang on, sorry, Kiri. Uh, but I would say, um, Kiri kind of alluded to it earlier. This is kind of I guess maybe the sort of first time we've sort of spoken about it. Um, and you know, it's obviously still not the full story. But Kiri's right. A lot of, you know, things that have happened in our family, you know, like I didn't know about sort of Mum, you know, doing that, 'oh, pick a piece of jewellery' kind of deal and then just coming back like nothing has happened, you know? A lot of our stuff has kind of gone unspoken.

KIRI: The first time she got cancer, I had some friends – this granary that we keep referring to, it's a shed where there's a room upstairs and that's – that's where –

ALI: It's open to the elements.

KIRI: It's open to the elements. And that's where – that was Ali's bedroom. And then when I was older, I kitted out the bottom bit as well so I'd always have friends over. We'd be in the granary. And she was like, 'oh, when your friends are gone, I've got something to tell you.' And I was like, 'oh, just tell me now because I don't know when I'll be back.' And she's like, 'okay, fine. I've got cancer.' Like and there's like 7 of my mates. And I'm 16.

CATHY: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: And was like, 'right.' And then so it was just – she just never handled things well. And then the next time she got it, because it came back 10 years later, she texts me and said, 'I've got cancer again.' And it was – I was about to walk onstage. I was recording – in fact, it was a radio show that I did for BBC Radio Wales. And I remember I just had to put it in my thing and I welled up and this guy was like, 'are you alright? They're about to call your name.' I said, 'my mum's got cancer again.' And I just had to walk out onstage.

And the other time she texted me, was I'd just like won the first heat in the New Act competition. And I got offstage and I got a text saying, 'your Nana's dead.' And she did it with one of my aunties as well. She said, 'this auntie's passed away.' And then the next message, within the same hour, was, 'do you want any of those shoe racks that hang over doors?' And I said, to Mum I said, 'you have to stop messaging me life-changing news by text message.'

And she – because I said – I said when she said the cancer thing, I said, 'how dare you message me this by text?' And she said, 'it's my news, I'll tell people however I want.' I said, 'you have to not do this again.' And she said, 'oh, well next time one of them dies, it'll be one of the ones you're closer to, so I'll probably call then.' And I was like, 'you – it's not – like, it's' –

ALI: It's not a competition.

RACHEL: Not normal, yeah.

KIRI: Yeah, it's – but it's just – she just doesn't think. She's not very emotionally in tune at all.

[Flute sounds]

RACHEL: In light of all that, you three are very close, aren't you?

KYLE: Yeah, I think we are.

KIRI: Kyle's been back in our lives, I don't know how many years now, like 4 or 5, maybe. What happened first is, you phoned Mum and Dad and were like, 'hey, it's me,' after like getting on for a decade. And then Dad was phoning me and was like – I can remember – being like, 'guess who phoned me? Guess who phoned me?' And I was like, 'who?' And he was like, 'Kyle.' And I was like, 'right.'

Because this guy, as far as I'm concerned, I've really reached out and doesn't want anything to do with me. And so straight away I go to Ali and I was like, 'do you know Kyle's been in touch?' And he was like – they were like, 'yeah, they told me straight away.' And then, uh, and then Dad's like so excited. 'He's done this, you know? And he's done this, you know? And he's doing this and he's –' I was like, 'right, okay.'

And then you were starting to speak to Mum and Dad on the phone. And then he said – Dad said to me, 'you know, um, he says it's okay if you want to give him a ring. Um, I've got his number.' And I said, 'you give him my number and if he wants to speak to me, he can.' And then after that I didn't hear anything. And then Dad would be like, 'have you spoken to your brother yet? Have you spoken to your brother yet? Have you spoken to your brother yet?' And I was like, 'no.' And then one day I sent a text and I went, 'listen, I'm going to be in London doing this thing for work. Are you going to be around?' And I remember we met in the, um,

Pret by Great Portland Street station. And I can remember being so frightened, um, because I didn't know what you were. It was 10 years. I knew you were my brother, but I didn't even know what you'd look like. And I remember you coming in and your accent was different from how I remember. It was way more London. And it was just sort of like, you were sort of telling me the things you'd done and I was – I was not scared, but – it's not fear, it's – and I still have it, I feel like I'm – because you had these things that you definitely take after Dad: a physical cloud will come over Kyle and his face almost changes colour with it.

CATHY: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: And he just gets like this thing, hot – and you go from being like the guy – very social, very like, 'hail fellow well met' or whatever the phrase is, to being this like really quite negative, you know, not angry as in shouting, but there's just this thing about you.

CATHY: Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: And I'm forever still now living in fear he's going to come back. And even now with our relationship. Because when I was in London, I would live with Kyle. Like I was in the spare room and I was working so much in London I'd be there for months and months and months. And I would always have in my head, 'he's going to come home and this cloud's going to be over him and he's going to kick you out.' And it was always in the back of my head that this wasn't actually a safe place. And then it did happen. It happened a little while ago. Because you're very like Dad, and I'm like this as well, in that you'll kind of, I think, cut off your nose to spite your face. So you'll be like, 'no, no, on my terms' and throw everything away. And there was a thing –

CATHY: That's me, Kyle, I'm with you.

KIRI: Yeah, yeah. And you did that, and it was like – I got a text message going, 'you've got to find somewhere new to live.' And at the time I had all my work was in London. And I was like, 'I'm just going to have to turn down this job and this job and this job that I've worked so hard to get because there's nowhere – I can't possibly like couch surf. I can't afford a hotel. So I was like, 'oh no.' But at the same time, before that, being like, 'shit, is my brother okay?' Because he wouldn't do this unless things weren't okay. And then me being like, 'how long until he stops speaking to me again?' That's the – that's the fear.

And I – this is why I was so worried about doing this. And I kept going to you guys, 'you should listen to an episode before we do it,' because I was like, 'we're going to have that conversation about us not talking for 10 years, and that's going to be what stops him talking to me again.' It's always there. This thing is, 'this is going to happen, I'm going to lose him again.' And – and then Ali will have to deal with the emotional fallout from me and Mum and Dad, because he's the one that picks up everything.

RACHEL: It's like Jack will explain about our relationship, Cath and I. He says it's like, yeah, when we have bust-ups – do you remember in the Christmas podcast?

CATHY: Mhm.

RACHEL: He was saying – what was the term he used? That it was winter – I can't remember. I can't believe I can't remember it. Great anecdote from me here.

CATHY: 'It just became winter.'

RACHEL: But yeah.

CATHY: That's why she's not a comedian.

RACHEL: That's – oh god. That's –

CATHY: Can I just say?

ALI: Ice ages.

CATHY: Ice ages.

RACHEL: It's ice ages.

CATHY: Ice ages, yes.

RACHEL: So my husband – because obviously Cath and I are really close, but we've had a couple of huge, huge rows. And even now, Cath isn't aware that I think they could –

CATHY: And I'm like you, Kyle. I will close down.

RACHEL: I think they could rear up at any – do you know what I mean?

CATHY: Yeah, yeah.

RACHEL: There's a couple of things and I live in fear of them. Cath's not even aware in many ways.

CATHY: Well, no. I – yeah, I’ve become aware from doing the podcast.

RACHEL: Yeah, that’s true. We’re learning so much.

KYLE: Uh, to be fair, I think that’s probably the most difficult thing for – well, certainly myself and Kiri to – to talk about. Because Alistair again, you know, stoically sort of sitting there, um, you know, he was always kind of, you know, the Malcolm in the Middle. Whereas, you know, the issue was really – well, I wouldn’t necessarily even say it was Kiri’s fault. It was nobody’s fault. I mean I, like I say, I was in a pretty, pretty bad relationship at the time.

KIRI: Do you know what I think is interesting from listening to this? Is that myself, I might be speaking out of turn here, Ali, and Kyle early on got in fairly long-term toxic relationships around money. Where money –

CATHY: Oh wow, yes. Yes.

KIRI: Where money was a toxic element. Is that – Ali? Maybe I’m speaking on behalf of you there and that’s not right.

ALI: Yeah, yeah.

KYLE: Yeah, that’s – I’d never thought about that.

CATHY: That’s interesting.

KIRI: That we all have had this – at least one defining relationship where the burden of finance has been heavy and we have gone –

that's also, that's how you show someone – I'm better for it now. That's how you show someone you love them.

CATHY: Yeah, right.

KIRI: You give them the one thing that doesn't exist, which is money. Which is like – as someone who's newly wealthy, is like – you said to me the other day, Kyle, you're like, 'why are you buying me stuff?' And – and my truest answer is like, 'it's the easiest way for me to show someone that I love them.' Is this thing that we didn't grow up with. Look at what we can have now.

CATHY: It's so powerful. It's so powerful.

KIRI: Yes, but – powerful, yeah. Powerful.

[Flute sounds]

RACHEL: And we often don't know. We don't know what the other person's going through. I don't know the full story. You don't get the full – we have our own, only our own perspectives.

CATHY: And one day, Alistair is going to blow his shit. He's just going to explode. [laughs]

KIRI: Well, this is the thing, is he does. Like – like Mum does that: seethes, seethes, seethes. And the example I have in my head – I remember – do you remember this, Al? There's two – the house we grew up in, on the bathroom there's two locks on the door. And the reason why is I kept going downstairs into the living room and going, 'Ali Ali Ali Ali Ali!' Winding him up while he's trying to play his computer games.

CATHY: Oh god. Really annoying.

KIRI: And he – and I would run up the stairs and he would try and grab my legs through the stairs. Great fun, right? And then I came – so I was running up the stairs and going in the bathroom, the only door with a lock on, right? Well, on the outside. We used to have them on our bedrooms. But inside, right? So, um, ran into the bathroom, locked the door, and he kicked the lock off the door. And he stood there with like this vein on the side of his head that he gets when he's angry and wild eyes. And I was literally sat on the toilet like, 'oh my god!'

CATHY: [laughs] Oh no!

KIRI: Uh, and he just stood there for a second and like, just looking at me, he obviously knew that I was like shitting myself. He just looked at me and then turned away. And obviously I didn't do it again. But it was just like – Ali's got this thing. This guy had been a [bleep] to him, winding him up, winding him up. And then one day Ali snapped. And the guy had to have his jaw re-wired and he had – he knocked teeth out. Because Ali is hard as [bleep] like Mum, but he just is – is – he's like – like you say, stoic.

CATHY: Mhm.

KIRI: And – and Ali is still the person who, probably over my parents, I'd go to when I need something. Because Dad is great, but he is un – so unreliable. If I think of Dad, I think of a lot of things and one of them is, uh –

ALI: Failed promises.

KIRI: Letting me – failed promises. Yeah, letting me down.

CATHY: Right.

KIRI: He will never – Mum will see things through. She's quite good at that. But Ali is the person if I really need – if I need to trust someone to get it done, I – it'll be Alistair. He – and Mum and Dad always said, Ali was – Kyle was the one you used to play with, and when you wanted comfort you'd go to Alistair. When you wanted like a cuddle or to be quiet or to sit.

CATHY: Yeah.

KIRI: I'd go to Alistair. So that's my – and I don't think that dynamic has necessarily changed that much in that Kyle and I are quite social, like the same kind of things, and like being social and more sort of frivolous stuff. And Ali's the – the serious one, although Ali and my sense of humour is a carbon copy. We love all the same comedy. And I got my love of comedy from stuff Ali introduced me to.

[Flute sounds]

CATHY: But you're all actually very emotionally open, which is really interesting considering. You actually are. I know you're looking at me – Alistair's looking like, 'I'm not!'

ALI: Well, funny you should mention emotions because, uh, this brings me back to another anecdote about my father. Um, and like, if we watch – I'm incredibly emotional, um, with films. Like I'm the sort of person who would cry watching 'Neighbours'. Um –

CATHY: Oh no, that's terrible.

ALI: I know there's something definitely wrong with me. I wonder why. Uh, just want to be hugged.

KIRI: [laughs]

CATHY: [laughs] Yes!

ALI: Um, and like, I can remember 'ET' being on TV, and like I can't watch 'ET' because it – I just break down. And my Dad would take the piss out of me showing emotion.

CATHY: That's awful, yeah.

ALI: Any time I would show emotion, I would have the piss taken out of me by my Dad. And like, in school, I always loved art. I loved drawing and he was like – and we had options, um, which you could take stuff and I was – basically I couldn't take art because that's what girls do. And – and like really horrible masculinity.

CATHY: Yeah, exactly.

ALI: Going back –

KIRI: He's so old fashioned.

ALI: Yeah, he's really old fashioned.

KIRI: I would say that – I know you're saying that you're emotionally open, um, I don't necessarily know that that's true. I think my partner has done a lot of work on me. And also I think Ali, is it fair to say, your – my sister-in-law's incredible and articulate and a feminist and emotionally intelligent and I think

will have brought a lot to the table. Because I – the Ali I have now is not the Ali that I had when you were in previous relationships.

KYLE: I – I'd agree with that. I mean, I think, uh, I get on – maybe Alistair doesn't feel this, but I get on better with him now than I ever have. Um, I don't know whether that's just, um –

ALI: I – I have married my cousin, in case anyone thinks – I know we're Welsh, but –

[All laugh]

CATHY: That's one interesting –

KYLE: Yeah, yeah. So – so – I – yeah, sorry. Um, yeah. I don't know whether that all should be credited to my sister-in-law – or whether that's part of, uh, doing a job that he likes, or – but I can, you know, kind of see it in his face. Uh, and however, I would probably disagree with what you said. That I still think, um, I'm an SOB when it comes to sort of emotions a lot of the time.

Yeah, I mean I think maybe it's because, you know, I feel, I guess, a bit more comfortable with my brother and my sister here, but, um, you know, I haven't really since that relationship – I mean, I've obviously dated, etc. but I haven't really been in a long-term relationship since. And probably won't ever be again, you know? So that's probably an indictment of, you know, my openness or lack of it to be honest with you.

KIRI: But you are working on it. Yeah.

CATHY: Yeah, you're speaking about it.

KIRI: Yeah.

CATHY: Not many people can speak about it. People who are really closed can't articulate. You are articulating what's in your head. That's quite – that's a really big step forward.

RACHEL: Yeah.

KIRI: Yeah, I've seen – since we've lived together especially in London the last few years, I've seen you open up more and more and more. And like some of the conversations we were having, especially over lockdown, you were so – because also I think the jeopardy is having conversations where you don't always come off as the hero. Not you. The general you, not the personal you. Where you go, 'I did this and I was a piece of shit,' or, 'this was not the right way to treat someone,' or – and those are the big conversations that lots of people can't have and you were having those things.

CATHY: And they don't. They don't, they don't.

KIRI: And that's huge. That's – that is like growth.

RACHEL: Yeah.

CATHY: It really is.

KYLE: Um, yeah. But – but I think the thing it is with me, I have to be honest, is that yeah, I look at that, and then I can't – I can't seem to let, you know, the past was yesterday. You know, that whole, 'well, you should take what you've learnt from that and move on.' Whereas that still sits right here for me. I can't – I can't forgive myself for that stuff, basically.

ALI: But that's the Dad in you, that is.

KIRI: Yeah. Oh, Dad apparently used to – he was a big drinker when he was younger, so he's got like one of those hard, weird bellies that, you know, like darts players have. But he doesn't actually – the time I've know him, he's pretty much teetotal. But apparently, Mum used to say when they were younger and they were together – so this would be when they were first in North Wales, so when the boys were babies – she was like, 'oh god, if your father had gin, he'd just cry and he'd go, "I'm a bad father, I'm a bad partner to you, I'm not good enough.'" And he would – he would just – yeah, well she was like – he would get – 'oh, don't give your father gin, he gets maudlin on it.' It's her favourite catchphrase.

Um, if I was like, 'oh, do you want a gin and tonic, Dad?' Um, but yeah, she – the first thing that'll come out is that he thinks he's not good enough. I'm not making excuses because I think a lot of their behaviour was appalling, but I think they were two not very educated people with no money in a very stressful situation, trying their hardest, who've been raised by absent, uh, and inadequate parents. And then that coming together. But I do remember feeling loved. I do remember coming from a house with love.

[Flute sounds]

RACHEL: I saw you, Kiri, the other night on, um, Rhod Gilbert's show. And you – I need to know, [laughs] which car did your friend vomit on? Which brother?

KIRI: Alistair's. Yeah, Ali came – do you remember when Emily vomited down the side?

ALI: Yeah. And broke the handle on the – was it the – the window? Yeah, yeah.

KIRI: Winding the window down, yeah. And you would always come and pick me up from nights out, actually. You were amazing.

ALI: Well, yeah, it's – I think it's the age gap thing. Blokes will be blokes so I'd rather my sister was home safe.

RACHEL: Yeah, absolutely.

KIRI: Totally. But – but I remember because – petrol being a huge thing in my childhood. I'd say, 'Mum, can I go to so-and-so's party?' And she would go, 'where do they live?' And if it wasn't in the surrounding four villages, the answer would be no because of petrol. And I'd have to really pluck up the courage to ask if I could have a lift somewhere. And it would just be a default no.

So having Ali around, when I was especially a teenager going out on the piss and stuff, and – because taxis are so much money. It was about 25 quid back to where I, you know, the farm we grew up on. Which was a lot of money when you're like 19. And he'd be like, 'oh, just go. Just let me know.' And it would be like 1:00 or 2:00 in the morning. And he'd pick me up and drive me home.

RACHEL: Who's most likely to pull a prank?

KIRI: I remember Kyle dropping his trousers a lot when we were growing up for a laugh. Pulling a lot of moonies.

KYLE: Hm, yeah, I was going to say me I think.

[All laugh]

CATHY: Is there anything that makes the three of you just cry laughing? Like an in-joke thing?

KIRI: I think we – yeah, Dad. I think we make each other laugh loads. We know how to push each other's buttons.

ALI: Yeah.

KIRI: Like when we're together, we laugh lots and lots.

KYLE: Yeah.

KIRI: And it's usually about stuff to do with Dad. Because he is – honestly, he's like if Jim Royale had let himself go.

RACHEL: Have you ever thought about group – having counselling together?

KYLE: Nope. No – no chance.

KIRI: I can't think of anything worse.

ALI: I would just –

CATHY: Oh, interesting.

RACHEL: Clear.

ALI: It horrifies me.

CATHY: Stoic.

KIRI: Stoic.

RACHEL: No! Yeah, you're right.

[Flute and guitar music]

This has been a Little Wander production.

RACHEL: I'm always stressed when I'm near you, Cath.