

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Cast:

Cathy Mason

Rachel Mason

Charlotte Melia

Tom Melia

[I Wish I Was An Only Child Theme Song]

Rachel: Can I have Poppy?

Cathy: Sure you can have Poppy. Rachel is obsessed with the dog, more obsessed than I've ever seen her with. No you love animals anyway.

Rachel: I always did but I didn't want one but I've really fallen for her.

Cathy: She is extraordinary. It's just extraordinary.

Rachel: And I sat down with her on holiday. I actually followed her onto where she was on the sofa and she actually moved away because I think she'd had enough of my attention.

Cathy: Rachel just stalked her around the holiday house and just kept picking her up and saying 'Play with me, play with me'.

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: And eventually, Poppy is incredibly affectionate, just got fed up and moved the other way.

Rachel: She's so good natured, she's so sweet.

Cathy: She's unbelievable. The kids basically stick their fingers up the dog's ass, in its mouth, all over the place and she just sits there and takes it all. And I still think it's because I dropped her on her head that first week. She's so well behaved it's abnormal. It's abnormal.

Rachel: You never told me you thought it was that.

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Cathy: No I do, because she's got two sisters. My friends have the two sisters who are much more normal dogs. This one is so sweet.

Rachel: Welcome to I Wish I Was An Only Child with me, Rachel Mason.

Cathy: And me, Cathy Mason.

Rachel: In this podcast we speak to other siblings about the dynamic of their relationship to see where we're going wrong.

Cathy: Today our guests are brother and sister Tom and Charlotte Melia. Tom's a writer and Charlotte's a writer and actor.

[I Wish I Was An Only Child- Interim Music]

Cathy: Who's the funniest?

Rachel: Oh my God straight in.

Tom: [Laughs]

Cathy: Who's the funniest.

Charlotte: Oh mate. So work wise Tom is a joke machine. Like he'll be like 'Right, I think we can get a complex nuanced multilayered hilarious joke like about a dog in here right now'. Whereas I'll then be like 'So the character is scared of dogs, what childhood trauma led to that factor?' By the time I've thought of that, he's written four more jokes.

Cathy: Oh wow.

Charlotte: [Laughs] But like socially you're a really good story teller, you're a better story teller than I am. Yeah you're funny, it's annoying.

Tom: I was going to say you. Are we just being polite?

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Rachel: No.

Tom: I was going to say you.

Cathy: Don't be polite.

Tom: I do think I make more jokes but that doesn't make me funnier that just means I say more, I try and make more cracks. I think if you get going on a subject, pound for pound you are funnier.

Rachel: So what subject is Charlotte really funny? What kind of subject?

Cathy: Yeah go on enlighten me.

Tom: She's very good at venting. So if you give her something like if she's watched something that she doesn't like, she's like one of those toys where you just pull the tape around and it spins around the room. She will go off on one and it's always hilarious.

Charlotte: I don't know if that's intentional. So you're like she'll just go off on one [laughs].

Cathy: Charlotte are you a very angry person?

Charlotte: I? I? Um there are propensities um.

Cathy: OK.

Charlotte: Yeah for sure. I think I've chilled out a lot as I've got older. But yeah I think rage is a healthy emotion [laughs].

Cathy: Yeah in moderation.

Rachel: To the right degree yeah.

Charlotte: In moderation for sure.

Tom: Can I just say I love that that was the second question, that makes me so happy.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

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Cathy: I'll be straight, I'm not interested in the frippery stuff. Rachel loves it all.

Rachel: Uh I like a bit of that yeah.

Cathy: She will fire...

Rachel: She just commented on my comment about my cheese and crackers. I had cheese on corn cakes, I said under breath 'You can't beat a bit of cheese on' yeah? It was quite an old person's comment and you pulled me up on it in front of people.

Cathy: No but Rachel is going to fire some really bad questions at you.

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: Just give you a heads up. I, am going to do the really deep ones.

Rachel: Cath gets in the deep.

Cathy: No but anyway [laughs].

Rachel: So Tom have you been on the end of Charlotte's anger?

Tom: Oh yeah. Yeah loads of times. Well maybe not so much in recent years but when we were little definitely.

Charlotte: Oh for sure.

Tom: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rachel: So can you take us back Tom and tell us a little bit about your?

Charlotte: Yeah relive that childhood trauma, go for it.

Tom: I'm going to lie back.

Rachel: Yeah lie back, relax, no. I'd love a sense of the age difference between you. Who is older because we can't work it out and who is younger?

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Charlotte: I'm older.

Rachel: Right and what's the age difference?

Tom: We're 18 months apart so.

Cathy: Same as us.

Tom: Which feels at certain times like ten years and at certain times like no years at all doesn't it?

Rachel: Yes, yes.

Charlotte: But growing up, it's school years that matter growing up right? You're like 'We're two school years apart'. Whereas 18 months actually isn't that much.

Cathy: No not at all.

Rachel: No it's not at all. So where did you grow up?

Tom: We started in a very cramped house in Kensal Rise with no garden. And then when I was about seven or eight, so you must have been tenish, we moved to Surrey which was a lot leafier and a little bit less exciting.

Charlotte: Mm.

Rachel: Yeah [laughs] I mean that's the response it's had, Charlotte's disgust right.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Rachel: OK. And...

Cathy: You hated it.

Charlotte: It was fine, I think it was just a bit of a shock like now we moved to Teddington which now is like kind of bougie place where loads of people want to move out to, young families, all of that. And at the time it was just like a suburb which I think was a bit of a culture shock for us.

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Tom: Yeah it was weird. My wife comes from the countryside, she moved to London and now she's slowly trying to get back to the countryside. Whereas because we grew up in London it was so much fun and kind of dangerous and exciting, I would live in Leicester Square if I could, well not Leicester Square but somewhere where stuff was happening. Yeah so we moved to the suburbs but where did it start? We shared a room.

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: Oh.

Tom: We had bunk beds.

Charlotte: Yeah. We shared a room for a lot of our childhood.

Tom: Yeah.

Rachel: How was that?

Tom: It was all right.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Tom: I will say it was a small house but our did have an office so I think there was an opportunity for...

Cathy: Oh that's a bit outrageous.

Tom: ...for one of us to have a small room but we...

Charlotte: He didn't do any work in it.

Tom: No that's true.

Cathy: That's outrageous.

Rachel: OK that's bad. That is bad [laughs].

Tom: So I think yeah we fought a lot but I think that's because of we're very close in age and proximity I think that's the problem [laughs].

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Cathy: You couldn't get away from each other!

Tom: [Laughs] Yes. We were caged.

Rachel: OK so but you did fight a lot?

Charlotte: Yeah. Yeah for sure.

Rachel: Tell us more. Tell us more.

Charlotte: We would physically fight. Like it was proper. And I think I was worse at that. Like I'd use weapons.

Rachel: Really?

Charlotte: I'd throw a cup if I...

Cathy: Aww poor Tom.

Charlotte: But we carried on like physically fighting like. So Tom's 6'4" now and so you were 6' fairly early on and we would still physically fight, I don't know what I was thinking. Like I could have him.

Tom: You were scrappy. I think it's like being in prison and punching the biggest person you see. I think that you just wanted to make sure I knew that you could take me.

Cathy: And did you hit her back?

Tom: I think I probably?

Charlotte: Yes!

Tom: Not once I was 6'4" but yeah I definitely fought back. One time I remember you bounced my head off the floor.

Charlotte: What?

Tom: And like there was a lot of conversation about whether there should be a hospital visit but we never ended up going.

Charlotte: I don't remember that [laughs].

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Tom: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But I don't want to paint a picture that I lived in fear.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Tom: [Laughs] I gave as good as I got.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Rachel: You got the concussion, you weren't taken to hospital so I think the damage was probably done.

Charlotte: That's fine. Yeah.

Tom: And I'm still reeling.

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Cathy: Because we always ask, I'm sort of fascinated by all the siblings we've interviewed, they've never hated each other and I don't understand that because we hated each other. So Charlotte you definitely hated...

Charlotte: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

Cathy: Your entire family?

Charlotte: Yeah for sure. Yeah rage as I said [laughs]. You must have hated me at points?

Tom: Yeah I did [laughs].

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Tom: No I did. I think it was pretty usual like you guys. I think I spent the beginning like wanting to be your best mate. And then there was a lot of years of just not getting along. And then because we didn't get along my theory is that's why when we became adults we kind of refound each other.

Cathy: Mm, same as us.

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Tom: And we could just do it afresh and it was new and interesting rather than just the same old shit.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Rachel: So how did you come back together?

Charlotte: It was probably pretty slow actually. So we didn't like each other growing up but we were close.

Tom: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Charlotte: Like there were just two of us so it's that weird kind of dichotomy. And we share a lot of similar interests. And I think sharing a childhood is always going to be a bond of some sort whether it's a negative one or a positive one.

Rachel: Yeah.

Charlotte: And I think we just slowly started to appreciate each other over the years. Like it wasn't some sudden kind of reunion concert. It was just yeah I think we do share, we're not similar people necessarily but we share a lot of similar interests.

Tom: Yeah we definitely do. I feel like it was a little bit more, I feel like because you got to an age where obviously you were more mature, you were older, you could sort of see me as a person before I could see you as a person.

Charlotte: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tom: I feel like you got to about 18 and then it feels like you went, oh you know what? He's not so bad. And also I think it was always a bit comedy to take, like I remember going to the pub with you and your mates a bit. I think.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Tom: I can remember going like what is going on here? Like why is she? I can remember you just suddenly being a bit nicer to me and I thought, there's something going on

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here. Like what's she planning? But it was about you were 18 and I was 16, I think that's when it sort of got a bit better.

Cathy: But what was the hatred about when you were younger? Was it jealousy? Was it?

Rachel: Because you have a lot of similar, you have a lot in common you say.

Charlotte: Yeah. I don't even know whether it was like personality directed at all. I'm not sure. I had a crappy teenage years, like we can just say that.

Tom: Yeah.

Charlotte: And I think Tom had to deal with sort of being unintentionally sidelined because of that.

Cathy: Yeah.

Tom: Yeah.

Charlotte: I had a lot of the focus and attention on me, not positive. Yeah. And a lot of rage as we were saying right.

Cathy: Mm-hmm.

Charlotte: I mean looking back I was very obviously depressed. But I also had, it was a thing at the time that didn't have a name. So it was always just referred to when I was about 13 as my breakdown. Like my mates from the time still refer to it as my breakdown, they're like 'When you had your breakdown'. But it's pure OCD is what they call it now. So like obsessive compulsive spiralling thoughts that lasted about four or five years and it was fairly intense and I never went to therapy for it, never did any of that. And I think had a lot of rage because of that. And just had a difficult like chunk of time that is a very formative chunk of time I think in your early teenage years.

Cathy: Yeah.

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Charlotte: And I think Tom sort of was slightly in the shadows of that for a long time. So it was probably, I think that my anger was just at the world and I presume that you probably had a resentment towards me for that. Quite you know understandably for that.

Tom: Yeah because I had no understanding of what you were going through because a) it just wasn't talked about that much. And b) I was little. But I just remember thinking like, why can't she snap out of it? This is getting really annoying.

Charlotte: [Laughs] It was annoying.

Tom: And also there was that thing of like our parents always felt like they were sort of at a ten with you and then I could do something very small and get snapped at in the same way and I was thinking, what she's just done loads of terrible stuff and got exactly the same response as me. So I think there was a bit of that. But do you know what it's not totally Charlotte's fault because it was also a very loud house. Both our parents were actors and there was a lot of laughter but there was a lot of arguments. So if Charlotte was going to go through something she was always going to go through it loudly [laughs].

Cathy: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tom: She was never going to suffer in silence. So it's not like we were all the Waltons and then there was just this girl raging in her bedroom.

Cathy: No, no, no.

Tom: For the first couple of years that my then girlfriend, my now wife, was in my life, she would come for dinner at my parents' house and not utter a single word and they used to say 'She's very quiet'. And it turns out she was just waiting for someone to ask her a question and that was just never going to happen. If you didn't interject or

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have a differing opinion you didn't get to talk. So actually it was quite in fitting that you, yeah I think you weren't like the odd one out in our family.

Charlotte: No.

Tom: We all knew how to make noise.

Charlotte: Yeah there was like screaming matches, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tom: Yeah.

Rachel: It was a noisy house.

Tom: Yeah.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Cathy: But I have two friends who both had acting parents and they are so fucked up I can't even go there.

Tom: [Laughs]

Cathy: And it's sort of I think they would say a bohemian upbringing is a curse. Because it was a very chaotic household. They were made to grow up from a very young age. Very young age.

Tom: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Cathy: What kind of a household was it, apart from loud?

Tom: You're right it was a bit bohemian. And there was some really good stuff. Like our parents used to have these wild dinner parties. They had a dining room that had this big circular table and the dining room was painted dark red and there was an amazing drinks cabinet in there and we never ate dinner in there at all. They would just have dinner parties and Charlotte and I would listen from upstairs. But there was a lot of fun, they were very funny. And lovely as well. And in-between the arguments. But there could never just be a discussion. It was always an argument. But you're right the bohemian thing is good

and bad though because it also meant that when we were a bit older it was the house that our mates would love to come to because for them it was just like this is wild. And like we'd come back from the pub and our parents would be even drunker than us, having a great time with their mates and you could just segue into their evening.

Charlotte: But it's weird, like it was bohemian in that way like culturally bohemian I guess you say. But our dad was a stickler for discipline. He was a controller. Like it was very much I think he had an idea of what having a family was like and being a patriarch and I will instil what my vision of that is onto you. So partly I think why were close but not friends as kids is because we were always grounded. Always.

Tom: [Laughs]

Cathy: Right yeah.

Charlotte: Like rolling our eyes you'd get grounded for a month. Or no TV and all of that, he was a real kind of stickler for discipline and control. And so he was a weird mix of those two things. He would entertain, if he had an audience it would be very entertaining, he was good fun. And then there would be the flipside that was we were in a very strict household as well which was bizarre.

Tom: That would bond us though as well.

Charlotte: Yeah I think it did.

Rachel: That's what I was going to say. That's why I'm surprised you didn't bond more and gang up on your parents a bit more.

Tom: Yeah well I'll tell you what it was, we did. We definitely did and it was nice to always have someone else that was going through it as well. My thing was just like, and I think that has changed now but my thing used to be

when I was little like I'd just do anything for an easy life. I sort of just wanted everyone to get along. So I'd push back to a certain extent and I'd roll my eyes to a certain extent but then I'd draw a line because I knew this argument would go on forever or someone was going to get sent to their room or something. But I always felt like Charlotte didn't know when to just give in and it turns out she was having a much harder time than me. But from my point of view it was just like just chill out and we could be out of this argument in ten minutes.

Charlotte: Yeah whereas I would not back down. I had a much more difficult relationship with our dad than Tom did. And actually I think I've chilled out on that front a lot as we've got older and I think you potentially got more frustrated [laughs].

Tom: Do you know what, the lucky thing is, our mum was and is amazing. So it was mainly down to her it was an incredibly warm house as well. Like we'd all scream at each other but then there was a lot of hugging and that side of it was really lovely.

Cathy: So your parents didn't fight? Was your mum quite submissive or?

Tom: Oh they'd fight.

Charlotte: Oh no they fought.

Cathy: Oh they did with each other OK.

Tom: They fought but it's not like we were off in our rooms crying to ourselves.

Cathy: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tom: It was...

Cathy: Passionate.

Rachel: Yeah.

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Tom: Do you know what, that is exactly it. It was an incredibly passionate household.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Tom: For better and worse.

Charlotte: Wow.

Cathy: I know, I know.

Rachel: That's like an explosion into this podcast that I wasn't expecting.

Tom: [Laughs]

Cathy: But every time we do the podcast, you know because we had chaotic childhoods.

Charlotte: Right.

Cathy: And all sorts of stuff. And everybody is just 'Yeah we got on great and it was lovely and our parents'. And it was like fucking hell, I don't know where to go with that shit.

Rachel: Yeah exactly.

Tom: [Laughs]

Rachel: And then you keep digging and you get you know.

Cathy: Sorry, sorry, but I've found it here, I'm happy.

Tom: They're probably hiding something those people though.

Cathy: I don't think they are.

Tom: Oh my God OK.

Cathy: I thought they were but I genuinely don't.

Rachel: I think some of them are but.

Cathy: I'm not sure.

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Charlotte: Are you guys comfortable like talking about the fact that it was chaotic. Because I think we're totally OK with being like.

Cathy: Totally, totally.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Rachel: I'm less OK. I'm less OK.

Cathy: Rachel sort of cares about what people think. I don't give a fuck because I went through, Charlotte, I went through a lot of mental health issues.

Charlotte: Right, right, right.

Cathy: I went through all sorts of shit when I was younger.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Cathy: So I sort of don't, no it doesn't bother me.

Rachel: And I admire Cath's ability. So our parents divorced when we were quite young so there's 18 months between us, I was four, you were six. And that's caused all sorts of problems. And yeah I'm always nervous, I'm always nervous about what we're going to say and how it's going to go down. She foghorn [foghorn noise] you know you just say it.

Cathy: [Laughs]

Rachel: And I sort of hate it but I admire it because I wish I had a bit more you know.

Cathy: Yeah.

Rachel: But going back, in terms of you two, the light was always on Cath because Cath needed, Cath went through so many problems. Because the people always think, how did that make me feel? Because I was in the shadow, very much so but I just thought, God I'd rather be me than her.

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Cathy: Tom did you feel that?

Rachel: You know going through what she's going through.

Tom: Yeah.

Rachel: I'd rather just sit in the corner quietly but yeah I'm always the peacemaker fundamentally.

Tom: I know exactly what you mean. I do. Because I feel that very strongly. I think that Charlotte has more guilt about me being sidelined than I have hang ups about being sidelined.

Cathy: Yeah totally.

Tom: And I also think, yeah looking back we'd go on a holiday and she wouldn't want to come out of the room and she'd be having a shitty time and I would meet six people that would instantly be my best mates [laughs].

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Tom: So yeah it always seemed much easier to be me.

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: But were you embarrassed by Charlotte? Was that ever a feeling?

Tom: I think I? No do you know what I wasn't embarrassed because she was always really nice to my mates. And I think had she have been as angry as she sometimes was to me, to them, like if she was just trying to tell them to get out of our house, I think I would have been embarrassed. But actually they always thought she was much cooler than me.

Rachel: But were you ever embarrassed by any terrible fashion that Charlotte used to wear?

Charlotte: [Laughs]

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Tom: No do you know what? She's always been pretty trendy. I think all the embarrassing photos are actually of me because we're very close to our two female cousins growing up. Like almost like they were our other sisters. So we've got photos where all four of us are in pink velour tracksuits.

Cathy: Aww.

Charlotte: We looked good man, we looked good.

Rachel: Yeah. Charlotte has Tom ever worn anything apart from the tracksuit? It doesn't really work between male and female does it?

Cathy: It doesn't, it doesn't.

Charlotte: I don't think he did. I mean other than just '90s fashion in general which was sometimes dubious.

Rachel: Yeah.

Charlotte: You frosted your tips for a while.

Rachel: What was that?

Charlotte: Yeah that sounds like a weird euphemism doesn't it?

Cathy: I was going to say blimey.

Charlotte: You know that like '90s boy band bleached tips of the hair thing that boy bands had going on. You had that for a while.

Tom: I did, I was quite yeah, I have ginger hair and I didn't want to have ginger hair so I was quite blond for a while.

Rachel: Aww, you frosted your tips.

Tom: I did.

Rachel: That's very sweet.

Charlotte: It didn't look that bad though. I don't think.

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Tom: Yeah our mum was quite into it. Buffy was all the rage at that time, there was a character with very white hair in Buffy and she kept saying you look like him.

Charlotte: Oh yeah Spike.

Tom: Yeah [laughs].

Charlotte: And I think a lot of your mates did that. We both actually have a really tight group of mates from when we were at school.

Cathy: Do you share?

Charlotte: No.

Cathy: Do you share mates? No. OK.

Charlotte: No.

Cathy: Not at all?

Charlotte: But. No I don't think we do. But I know Tom's mates really well. And he knows a lot of mine really well because we've known them all since a lot of, like those particular group of friends since we were 11. So like Tom's best mate TK was just around all the time.

Cathy: Yeah right.

Charlotte: Like just in the house all the time. So yeah. So we kind of socialised-ish but?

Tom: There was a point sort of when it was unavoidable when we were sort of 18/19 where we'd bump into each other in pubs and clubs and stuff and I had a couple of jobs with a couple of your mates by coincidence.

Charlotte: Oh yeah.

Tom: So there was some crossover.

Cathy: What kind of job? What do you mean? What jobs?

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Tom: I got a Saturday job in a pub doing the dishwashing and one your mates was there.

Charlotte: We both worked there. I got a job there as well, we worked together.

Tom: Yeah we did, yeah, yeah.

Charlotte: We worked together when we were teenagers, yeah.

Tom: I don't remember there being crossover?

Charlotte: Well we spent a lot of time, it was populated by a lot of like Kiwi and Aussie bar workers who were doing the kind of like tour around Europe and they'd come and work in the pub. So we did actually spend quite a lot of time socialising with people that were way too old for us to be socialising with when we both worked in that pub [laughs].

Tom: Yeah.

Rachel: And it sounds like you couldn't avoid each other.

Charlotte: No.

Rachel: One way or another you were still sort of in each other's lives.

Tom: That's true but I think by that point we were sort of OK again. Like there was this crossover period when I was about 16/17 where she started to like be a really good older sister in a way. Like there was still sort of like that like she wouldn't get on with our parents very well but to me she would get us 18s from the video shop and she'd sort us out beers and fags. And suddenly she was sort of OK. By the time we were drinking in similar places, it's not like I'd bump into her and go 'God there's my sister' it was sort of fine.

Cathy: She's cool.

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Tom: Yeah exactly.

Charlotte: And I think I was like, oh Tom's got a personality. And it's not that he never had one, it was just that I had too much shit going on for him to be anything more than my younger brother to an extent. And all of the sudden it was like, oh he's got a personality and it's a pretty good one. Like that's all right [laughs] we can make this work.

Tom: Not great, pretty good.

Charlotte: You know, I don't want to go overboard, there's such a thing as overkill.

Rachel: Yeah that's at the end, you have to say nice things to each other at the end.

[I Wish I Was An Only Child- Interim Music]

Rachel: So you ended up working together?

Charlotte: Yeah. Yeah.

Cathy: So how did that come about and why? Because we do as well.

Rachel: Yeah.

Tom: [Laughs]

Rachel: And it's something people always ask us. That's why we're doing the podcast because we work together and people either say 'Oh I could never work with my sibling' or you know we hear interesting stories so how did that end up happening? Or is it a really boring story?

Tom: Do you know what it probably is pretty boring [laughs].

Charlotte: It is pretty boring [laughs].

Rachel: Oh.

Cathy: It's fine, we can edit it down.

Rachel: Yeah cut it out.

Tom: I think Char was always very supportive of me writing and used to read everything I would sort of send her and give me notes and stuff like that. She was always the sort of one that was very good at English and I'd always respect her opinions. So I think yeah, so I always knew we sort of were on the same page when it came to that kind of thing. And then so it always felt a little bit inevitable so I don't think there was a big eureka moment where we went 'We should' ah. But I think we had an idea and we went 'We should probably write this one together'. Is that how you remember it? Or was there a eureka moment?

Charlotte: Yeah. No I don't think there was. I think it was just kind of like fairly gradual, it probably went from one project to another. So when you have like three or four bubbling away. Yeah and I can't remember how long ago it was? Probably about eight years ago. It was probably a long time.

Rachel: OK.

Cathy: And how does it work working together? I mean how does it work?

Charlotte: God knows, how does it work? I don't know technically I guess we always bat around ideas, we'll be on the phone for ages. The conversation always ends with one of us going 'Well we're not going to decide this now, let's talk about it another time!'.

Tom: It's normally me, like I think I get a bit snippy. Like I have to leave the house or something you know.

Charlotte: [Laughs] You do get a bit snippy. And then we'll mull over stuff, get back together, hit on a kind of headline idea or like a vague theme. And just if we feel like it's worth

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pursuing like we do. It's a really dull kind of process [laughs].

Cathy: But does one of you work harder than the other and the other get irritated by that?

Charlotte: Oh.

Rachel: Oh there's a big smile from Tom there.

Tom: [Laughs]

Charlotte: I don't know? The word harder is an interesting one.

Tom: Yeah.

Charlotte: Tom. Go on.

Tom: I was going to let you off the hook here and say I'm more of a perfectionist so I will.

Cathy: So you work harder?

Tom: Well no I think it's, I think it's more like I won't let a scene go out until I've rewritten it way too many times. But that is sometimes arguably take all the air of it and Char can do two drafts on something and it's fresher and cleverer. So I probably put in more hours but that doesn't necessarily mean the finished product is better, would you say that's fair?

Charlotte: Yeah and you're really good at having a structured day as well. Like Tom is a writer, it starts at a certain time, he's got two kids so it ends a certain time. And I'm much more like you know watching Below Deck at 11am but writing at 3am.

Rachel: Freedom [laughs].

Charlotte: Yeah [laughs]. So I always respect that so but yeah Tom will rework a scene multiple times and we always have the argument over, not always but like what does better mean? Sometimes one of us will be arguing for

something being better and actually what we're just arguing is, is it's different. And we need to have the conversation about what we actually both want from this particular thing that we're writing. But you definitely, like Tom could write on like a stag-do outside Greggs at 3am and like rehash a scene and send it out.

Tom: That would be wicked.

Charlotte: And I'm like, where's my special pen? I just can't, I'm not you know.

Tom: Yeah.

Charlotte: So in that sense I think you do work harder. I'm doing air quotes "harder".

Tom: Yeah but that's the good thing I think about being siblings when it comes to writing together is we have a shorthand and yes that means that sometimes you can be too blunt and like if you're working with someone that you're not that close to, you could probably sort of talk it through a bit more...

Cathy: Totally yeah.

Tom: ...without hitting a bit of an angry wall. But it also means we just get to do away with a lot of the bullshit all the niceties and like I hate that idea but I don't know you well enough to tell you how much I hate it. We can sidestep all of that and just go 'That's bollocks, let's not do that'.

Cathy: And do you generally like the same things? Did you grow up watching the same telly? Do you have the same taste in comedy?

Charlotte: Yeah.

Cathy: OK.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Charlotte: Yeah for sure. I mean growing up we just had that VHS of Black Adder, three episodes of Black Adder that we just watched on repeat.

Cathy: Over and over.

Charlotte: It was the Baby Eating Bishop of Bath episode, I remember that.

Tom: Yeah Char has very good taste in lots and lots of things. Like her house looks amazing. And I would say that I inherited her tastes growing up. So like a lot of things that were very formative for me and like still feed into my writing, were completely introduced to me by just sneaking into her room and seeing what she had on her walls at that time. And we were into a lot of the same music. And I remember thinking...

Cathy: So you had separate rooms by then?

Tom: Separate rooms in the second house yeah. And I remember one time like for instance one of my favourite films of all time is Dazed and Confused and she dropped that on me in such a, she just went 'I think there's this film you might like, it's on later'. And I sat and watched it and it blew my mind. Like it sort of changed everything.

Rachel: Aww yeah.

Tom: And she would do that. She came back from a night out once and she'd gone to see Kevin Smith do a Q&A, it must have been Mall Rats or something like that, and she got him to sign a fag packet saying 'Ha, ha, ha Tom wasn't here' or something like that. And I had no idea who Kevin Smith was but kind of pretended I did. And then I watched everything that he had done and that sort of was massive to me growing up.

Rachel: Wow.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Tom: So I think we have very similar tastes but I don't think that's by accident. I feel like I've sort of stole those tastes a little bit.

Cathy: Yeah, yeah.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Cathy: Do you feel that Charlotte?

Charlotte: I've never really thought of it like that. I kind of think of it more as it's so nice to have someone to talk about telly and film with and not bore them. Like we could sit and talk like for three hours about whatever shit we'd been watching the night before. And I think you're probably one of the only people I can do that with. My wife's eyes glaze over if I try and do that. And also if Tom recommends something to me, I will watch it. It's not an empty, 'Oh yeah cool I'll check that out'. I will genuinely be like 'All right, done that's next on the list'.

Rachel: Yeah. Whereas when I recommend something to you...

Cathy: Rachel bangs on about telly 24/7.

Tom: [Laughs]

Rachel: My husband's a writer.

Cathy: Her husband's a writer it's all bollocks.

Rachel: Yeah I can't get her to watch fuckin' anything and it drives me mad.

Cathy: She will describe the plot of everything and then...

Tom: It would drive me mad if I said to someone 'You have to watch this and tell me whether he's good or bad' and then they were like 'Nah probably not going to do that'.

Rachel: Yeah I know. Yeah. Yeah.

Cathy: She does it every day. 'Watch this film, it's amazing'. No.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Rachel: I know she doesn't watch anything. OK.

Cathy: Not interested.

Charlotte: You know the last thing Tom got me to watch, sorry I know we're going off on like a telly tangent, it is my favourite type of tangent. Married At First Australia Season Six, very specific.

Rachel: Yeah.

Charlotte: It was one of the best 48 hours of my life watching that entire season.

Rachel: OK writing it down, yeah.

Cathy: She will watch it, I won't.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Rachel: Married at what?

Tom: Married at First Sight Australia.

Rachel: OK.

Tom: So they lay eyes on each other once she's walking up the aisle.

Cathy: Oh God that's awful!

Rachel: Yeah.

Tom: It is amazing.

Rachel: I'll watch that, I'll watch that.

Charlotte: Season six specifically.

Rachel: I've wrote it down.

Charlotte: Yeah.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Tom: You follow them way too long, like you follow them way too far into their marriage. It should really end on that night but you...

Cathy: Did it show them having sex like the first time and stuff?

Tom: They insinuate as to whether they've slept in the same bed.

Cathy: Aww that's terrible!

Tom: But it's not about that, it's about, it's not very Love Island like that. What they're after is when they've been together a month or so they have dinner parties with all the couples and it is...

Rachel: Oh that sounds brilliant.

Tom: It is brilliant.

Charlotte: They have to meet each other's parents.

Rachel: Yeah, no I'm watching that.

Charlotte: It's insane.

Rachel: I'm watching that, that's perfect. Right.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Rachel: So is there a song or something from your childhood or from early memories? Like for Cath and I, you know mahna mahna, na, na...

Charlotte: [Laughs] Yeah.

Tom: Yeah.

Rachel: That's something that we used to dick around to all the time. So just something that you two will just make you, or we had cheese and chocolate where you would have cheese stuck in your cheeks and then eat chocolate and it would set off this really weird pain in your jaws.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Rachel: So we'd go cheese and chocolate.

Cathy: I don't remember any of this, I'll be straight with you.

Rachel: Anything like that because that always amuses me.

Cathy: She's making it all up.

Rachel: I'm not making it up.

Tom: Did anything come into your head?

Charlotte: Yeah.

Tom: Immediately?

Charlotte: What came into yours?

Rachel: Is it going to be the same?

Charlotte: Probably not, no.

Tom: Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat.

Charlotte: Oh yeah that wasn't what I was thinking but yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah. Mega mix.

Rachel: Go on.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Rachel: That's just very reminiscent about childhood. You were in it once and then we went to see it with Jason Donovan and I just remember it, I think we wore out that tape in the car.

Cathy: Oh that's lovely.

Charlotte: [Laughs] Yeah.

Rachel: Yeah and Charlotte what was yours?

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Charlotte: If I was talking about a musical tape, what tape am I thinking of?

Tom: The Eagles?

Charlotte: Yeah. Greatest Hits.

Rachel: Aww.

Charlotte: Because it would be when we were on holiday. Because we spent a lot of our summer holidays were if our dad was, so Christmases we spent wherever our dad was doing panto. And a lot of summer holidays were if he was doing like a three hander thriller, like touring like around towns then, so we'd go and spend a lot of time wherever he was. And I remember summer holidays, we'd have one tape in the car and like for three years running it was just The Eagles greatest hits [laughs].

Rachel: Aww.

Charlotte: So that's a real childhood. And then we transitioned onto Alanis Morissette.

Tom: Yeah.

Charlotte: Jagged Little Pill. And then I think it was Moby.

Tom: And we'd sit in the boot. Remember those days?

Charlotte: Oh yeah.

Tom: You'd just sit in the boot and they'd bung some Asterix books in the back and you'd just listen...

Cathy: Oh that's lovely.

Tom: ...to music and read books while we drove round to different digs [laughs].

Rachel: And did you have any family pets? A dog or anything?

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Tom: We got a rescue cat quite late on. Oh no God what am I thinking? We had loads of pets. We had hamsters.

Cathy: [Laughs] That's the weirdest response, that was like.

Charlotte: Uh no, their deaths meant nothing!

Tom: Do you know what it's because you said dogs and that's why I was thinking about bigger animals but yeah God we had so many gerbils and hamsters and mice.

Charlotte: You had a hamster called Sophie which is weird because that's my middle name.

Tom: [Laughs] What a creep. What. A . Creep.

Cathy: Why did you do that?

Tom: She probably told me to.

Charlotte: I don't think that's true.

Rachel: I think she could have done. I think you could have done Charlotte.

Tom: And I definitely would have done it as well if she'd told me to. But yeah we had lots of hamsters that would have inevitably escaped and then gnaw a hole in the side of the bath and then live under there for three months and our parents would get more and more angry [laughs] and leave cheese out every night.

Charlotte: We had a cockerel. Do you remember the cockerel?

Tom: Yeah we did.

Charlotte: Our mum and dad's mates like ran a farm in Wales and they came to stay for the weekend and they bought a cockerel that they were planning on killing and Tom was like no.

Tom: It was a reveal, this was like this was Sunday lunch and they opened a box.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Cathy: That's awful.

Charlotte: And Tom was like 'Not on my watch'.

Rachel: Yeah.

Charlotte: And then you spent your pocket money buying like chicken wire.

Rachel: Aww.

Charlotte: And made dad built like a coop for it. I mean dad then left the door open on purpose [laughs]. We lived near a railway line so.

Rachel: Aww.

Tom: I mean to be fair this cockerel was a menace. I had to wake up before school, like it was in the dead of winter and I had to wake up before school in the dark and go and like shovel its shit.

Cathy: Aww.

Tom: And feed it and throw straw in and feed it and stuff. And then we got a horrible letter from our neighbour because it escaped and went into their house and caused havoc. So they were like 'Can you come and pick your cock up please?'

Cathy: [Laughs]

Tom: And eventually, well I got told a fox got it and I was reasonably upset but secretly happy. And then years later at a BBQ when everyone was pissed, my dad told my mates that they drove down a motorway and he got my mum to slow down and he chucked it out the window.

Cathy: Oh no!

Charlotte: Is that what he did? I never knew the specifics.

Tom: I think it might have been a joke.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Charlotte: I don't know [laughs].

Tom: The specifics were a joke, I'm sure.

Rachel: I don't know what to say.

Cathy: That's traumatising.

Rachel: What a weird conflicted feeling in terms of the cockerel disappears and you're quite upset but quite happy because you haven't got to clean shit and do all of that before school.

Tom: Yeah it was too much work.

Rachel: Yeah.

Tom: And I think if you do a good thing you should be rewarded not punished.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Rachel: Exactly.

Tom: And I felt that the universe had punished me by saving that cockerel.

Rachel: Yeah that was a horrible life lesson.

Cathy: Have you always got on with each other's partners?

Charlotte: Yeah I mean Tom's...

Tom: Yeah.

Charlotte: You've been with Meg for ages, since university.

Tom: Yeah we've been together a long, long time.

Charlotte: And she's great. She's awesome.

Tom: And I feel very close to your wife. I did a puzzled face because I was trying to remember before.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Charlotte: I mean mistakes were made if we're talking about the past [laughs].

Tom: Yeah.

Cathy: Charlotte made loads of mistakes, Tom didn't, that's what I'm guessing.

Tom: Yeah I don't think I would introduce, I don't think there was a lot of introducing back in the day. We weren't close in that way like it wasn't like 'Now you must meet my sister'.

Charlotte: No.

Tom: I don't remember that.

Rachel: OK.

Tom: So yes but we all get on. We did something recently didn't we? You came around not a couple of weeks ago.

Charlotte: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tom: I'm sort of forgetting what we did but yeah we do get together quite a lot.

Charlotte: [Laughs] We cooked dinner. Yeah.

Tom: Did we have dinner?

Charlotte: Yeah at yours.

Rachel: We talked to two brothers, who one of the things he said was that he never invites them for dinner, do you remember that?

Cathy: I know.

Rachel: It was like they're really close and they get on well but they were like there's one thing I'd like to say 'Can you just invite me around for dinner some time?'

Tom: [Laughs]

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Rachel: And he was like 'Oh it never really crossed my mind'. It was very weird.

Tom: Although our wives do a lot of texting to organise specifics.

Charlotte: Yeah they do.

Tom: Because they are the organisers. But it's not like we're surprised. It's not like once it's in the calendar I'm like 'Why did you do that?' [laughs]

Charlotte: [Laughs] I mean we should do it more often, I will say that. Because you end up talking about work right? Like there's a lot of like our conversations will then just kind of be about work all the time if we're on the phone to each other. And so it's really nice to go and have an occasion that's actually social. We should probably do it more.

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: Is there anything you wouldn't talk about with each other? With me and Rach it's sex. Never go there.

Charlotte: 100%

Tom: Oh yeah we wouldn't do that.

Charlotte: Absolutely not.

Cathy: Yeah. Yeah.

Rachel: But I think we're learning that that's quite normal.

Cathy: No I don't think that it is normal, loads of them are talking, no it isn't normal!

Rachel: How many siblings have said they talk about sex?

Cathy: Most of them.

Charlotte: Do they?!

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Cathy: Yes! Very open.

Charlotte: Of what like sisters talking?

Cathy: They're just open yeah.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Cathy: Yeah to be fair brother and sister is going to be more difficult but is there anything else you wouldn't talk about? You would never, you'd be embarrassed if the other started talking about it?

Tom: No, do you know what I think for me, I don't think there is anything. We're pretty good at communicating. Even if we beat around the bush with the bigger subjects I think we are those people who get on the phone 'I've just got something quickly I want to double-check with you'.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Tom: And then we're on the phone an hour later. And it's not like we're talking about life stuff, like asking each other advice. But also it would be weird if it segued into life stuff.

Cathy: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And you're both totally honest with each other? Tom you don't tiptoe around Charlotte do you? Because I think Rachel still tiptoes around me.

Rachel: Yes.

Tom: I think I might tiptoe but just for good reason. Like I think you can be too honest. I think when people just go 'I'm really honest, I just say what I feel' I think they're missing a filter where you...

Cathy: I agree with that yeah.

Tom: ...hurt somebody's feelings.

Rachel: What?

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Cathy: No my partner does that, he thinks it's fine to be...

Rachel: Yeah but you do that.

Cathy: No I don't.

Rachel: You do that.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Rachel: So yeah I take on a bit of that yeah.

Cathy: My partner is honest to a very offensive point.

Charlotte: Yeah that's tough.

Tom: I never want to get into anything that we can't solve on the phone in that moment. I'd hate to think that she was back at her house bitching about me.

Cathy: Right yeah, yeah, yeah.

Charlotte: Yeah totally. But weirdly as we've got older I think, tiptoe is the wrong word. I think I might be more careful around you than like...

Cathy: Oh, why? Why?

Charlotte: Do you know why? Because we talked about this not that long ago and it's not in like a dramatic way or anything like that. It's because for me our sibling relationship shifted when we started working together. Because Tom had been writing, like I'm an actor as well, I've been doing that, Tom had been writing for a few years before we started writing together. So for the first kind of time the power dynamic had shifted. Because we talked about this, Tom hadn't really kind of thought about it and I absolutely had thought about it. And I think for a while I went way too passive with it.

Cathy: Oh.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Charlotte: Because I was like oh well I have to be respectful that this is what he. So tiptoe is the wrong word. I don't know. I think we're both just pretty respectful of each other. I would hope. Work wise.

Tom: Yeah it would be rubbish to have beef at this point.

Charlotte: Yeah [laughs].

Tom: We had enough of that I think.

Rachel: Yeah you've had enough of it around you.

Cathy: No one of my partner's opening lines when he met me was 'You smell like a derelict house'.

Tom: [Laughs]

Charlotte: Wow.

Rachel: And they're still together after 18 years.

Charlotte: Solid opener, I mean. Where did he go? What was the follow up?

Cathy: And you look like Michael Jackson.

Rachel: Yeah I know, they're still together.

Tom: [Laughs] That sounds like a Smiths song.

Cathy: 25 years on. I know! 25 years on.

[I Wish I Was An Only Child- Interim Music]

Rachel: So you've sort of touched on your parents and the passionate household. What traits have you got from your parents? Good or bad?

Tom: Oh this, this is dangerous ground. Well let's start, I think we are both quite sensitive and empathetic and I think we get that from our mum.

Charlotte: Mm-hmm.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Tom: And both reasonably anxious which we sort of get from our mum as well but I think it's harder to be sensitive and empathetic if you're not slightly anxious.

Cathy: Completely yeah.

Tom: And then I think we probably, if we're being really honest I think we both can be a bit, we can get a bit moody and we get that from our dad.

Rachel: Both of you? Both of you can be a bit moody?

Charlotte: Yeah I think so.

Tom: Yeah.

Charlotte: And I think we can sometimes be a bit glass is half empty. For me it's like.

Tom: Oh God yeah.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Tom: We can be very pessimistic but we're also people pleasers so I think the good thing is we can be moody but only in front of people we really trust. But we are the type of people who could have the worst news in the world just before we walked into the pub and then no one would know it when we walked out to go.

Cathy: Oh OK.

Tom: We wouldn't want to bring people down. Or actually I'm speaking for both of us, are you?

Charlotte: No I think that's.

Tom: Because you can come in like a bit of a hurricane sometimes.

Charlotte: Yeah but I know you.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Tom: Now that I've said that. No that's true, no it's because you.

Charlotte: [Laughs] So, and so can you. I mean the amount of like 'It's all shit'.

Tom: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Charlotte: Like we can be a bit like that with each other.

Tom: It's a very good impression of me actually.

Charlotte: Thanks I'm working on it. Yeah I think that's all really accurate.

Tom: Yeah and I suppose if we're being, I mean our mum stopped being an actor, she became a teacher when we were quite little but our dad was an actor all the way through us being young. So he was a jobbing actor so it's not like there was ever an opportunity for nepotism, like he never helped us into jobs or anything. But we were incredibly lucky that on inset days we'd go to sets or our drawing paper would be the backs of scripts and stuff.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Tom: And so I think we obviously got that from them where it was kind of like going into that business was always an option.

Cathy: Mm, mm, mm, mm.

Tom: And obviously you don't get that if you've never met anyone who's been anywhere near the stage or TV.

Cathy: Of course.

Tom: So obviously I think we wouldn't be doing what we're doing if it wasn't for what our parents did. And they were always incredibly, I think it's a bit of dichotomy because it's like they were always incredibly supportive. Even our dad who was a bit stricter, I never remember him giving

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

me shit about being second place or anything like that. It always felt like as long as you tried it was quite a positive household that way. In that very specific narrow way [chuckles].

Charlotte: Yeah and there were no gender divides or anything like that. Which thinking, I've only kind of realised that recently that we were never treated differently.

Cathy: Yeah I was going to say, yeah. Really?

Charlotte: Yeah like you know and I think they just went with what we were interested in. Like Tom's a really good cook. I can't cook for shit.

Cathy: Yeah, yeah.

Charlotte: And he's great. And I can hang a door and Tom can't.

Cathy: [Laughs] That's right yeah.

Charlotte: Because that's what I was interested in so our parents taught me how to do that and Tom was like 'I'm all right thanks'. So like he is a very good cook.

Tom: I could watch a YouTube tutorial and hang a door if I wanted to, just so you know.

Charlotte: Sorry I'm not trying to denigrate your DIY skills [laughs].

Tom: [Laughs]

Cathy: Exactly. So who's the happiest now?

Tom: Oh God?

Charlotte: That's tough! I think we're both pretty all right.

Tom: I think we're both as middling...

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Tom: [Laughs] when it comes to happiness. I think we are both a bit moody and a bit like why isn't this happening this

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

way? But also quite aware of how good we've got it in our personal lives.

Cathy: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Charlotte: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rachel: That makes sense. Yeah.

Cathy: I know.

Rachel: But also I will say things to you like you know 'I'm depressed' whatever and have a real vent and then she'll tell her partner and he'll be like 'Yeah but Cath said you're really depressed' and I'm like, 'Oh I didn't, that was just for her!' Do you know what I mean?

Tom: Exactly.

Rachel: That was just my way because I'm a glass half full pretty much all the time, Cath isn't. But sometimes you've just got to pull some shit out, do you know what I mean?

Tom: You do. But that's really good that you are either side of the seesaw.

Rachel: Yes.

Tom: Because I think sometimes we can work each other into a funk.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Cathy: Really? OK.

Rachel: Whereas I'm...

Cathy: Give us an example, give us an example.

Tom: Well I just think if there's bad work news.

Cathy: OK.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Tom: Sometimes one of us can pull it out of the bag but it's normally invariably we'll go 'Oh God that was terrible' and what you need is the other one to go 'Do you know what? It's OK because we're going to do this, this and this' but the other one will just agree. It was terrible.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Cathy: Really?

Tom: Yeah.

Rachel: Whereas Cath is like from the moment she wakes up 'I haven't slept' I mean it's not just glass half, it's like the glass if fuckin' smashed. Do you know what I mean?

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Rachel: It is 'Oh God I got two hours sleep. Oh God the printer is broken. Oh God' you know whatever. It's relentless.

Cathy: Mm, mm.

Tom: But having said that, Char is more likely to turn up and say she hasn't slept and give some caveats as to why shit might not be that good today.

Cathy: [Laughs] That's what I do.

Rachel: All the time. Every time we do the podcast she's like 'You've got to do it all, you've got to this, you've got to that'.

Cathy: You've got to carry it because I'm very tired.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean every time.

Cathy: Yeah.

Rachel: And maybe I wouldn't know how to react if you weren't like that, it's really weird.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Cathy: But if one of you is down about something, the other would be the person you would phone first? No?

Tom: Well I think we'd go to our partners first.

Cathy: OK.

Tom: But I think if we were on the phone and one of us was really down, the other one is good at knowing the right buttons to press to lift the other one up.

Charlotte: Yeah.

Tom: I think definitely career stuff, I would go to Charlotte first.

Charlotte: Yeah 100%. And it's like yeah and we can both kind of do the spiralling downwards. I think I'm, it's weird. I think I'm slightly better at dealing with rejection, just from being an actor, I'm like standard it's the third job I haven't got this week, whatever.

Cathy: Yeah of course, yeah.

Charlotte: And I think Tom's better, like Tom can write a reply email in two seconds flat and it will be great and I don't understand how he can do that. I will spend like five hours trying to word something like for work correctly. And Tom is just like, we've had a vent, done, send the email. And I'm like hats off [laughs] I don't know how you do that. But yeah I think as much as we can potentially spiral each other down we can also lift each other up. I would hope.

Tom: Yeah, yeah definitely.

Rachel: Because it is through doing this that I do get more and more irritated by you.

Cathy: Oh thanks.

Rachel: But at the same time I value you so much more.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Rachel: But it's true! Because you don't realise, because we work together.

Cathy: Fuck sake!

Tom: [Laughs]

Rachel: No see you, yeah? But no it's true because sometimes you have to sit back and think bloody hell.

Cathy: Mm.

Rachel: 'Cause you know you've got your friend whose sister died.

Cathy: Mm, mm, mm.

Rachel: And you just think God yeah that hole in terms of.

Cathy: I know.

Rachel: And our friendships we've got very shared, lots of shared friends. We've got separate friends but yeah we work together. I'm moving onto her road.

Tom: Really?!

Charlotte: Oh wow!

Rachel: Yeah it's properly weird.

Cathy: I can't do anything without Rachel. I forced her to live...

Rachel: But that's I think what I'm saying the podcast has made me think that it is. But your mental illness has forced me to do quite a few things. But the other side of that we are now, it's good. It's good.

Tom: Do you think you're going to be curtain twitching and then if you see her coming out of the house are you going to hurry across the road?

Cathy: No I'm just going to make sure she takes the dog.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Rachel: No I'm moving far enough up.

Tom: OK.

Rachel: I'm far enough away that there's a little bit of space. Because that's how it works, in terms of carrying bags it's always me. So she's just got a puppy and I had to sit her down and say 'I'm not sharing the puppy' because there was that idea.

Cathy: Mm.

Rachel: And I said 'I don't want to share the puppy' and Cath's like 'But you love animals' yeah but I know I will be doing everything

Tom: [Laughs]

Rachel: You know and she just looked at me and she went 'Yeah, yeah you would'. She would just palm the dog off on me.

Charlotte: Did you get the puppy before having the conversation about we could share the puppy?

Rachel: No after.

Cathy: No I got the puppy just presuming that Rachel would take it off my hands when I needed her to and she said no.

Rachel: Yeah so.

Cathy: So I'm slightly panicking now having to phone everyone.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Rachel: I'm getting stronger guys, I'm getting stronger. But now I've fallen in love with the fuckin' puppy, it is lovely it's a Cavapoo. Wait I want to ask.

Cathy: She's going to ask you the really crap questions now.

Rachel: Do you spend Christmases together?

Charlotte: Yeah.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Rachel: Yeah?

Tom: Yeah we do.

Charlotte: The majority of the time yeah unless we're with respective in-laws.

Rachel: Forget lockdown yeah.

Tom: Yeah we do a bit of swapping around but Christmas is an interesting one because it's just that thing and I don't think that we're alone in this. But like when you get to a certain again you are just sort of, it's like the puppy but you're sharing parents.

Cathy: Yes it's a nightmare.

Tom: So there's a feeling of if Charlotte's like 'I'm going elsewhere' there's a slight panic in my mind where I'm like oh Jesus Christ that's just all on me then.

Charlotte: Yes, yeah.

Tom: And there was definitely a period of time where you were off doing stuff and there was a lot of Christmases in a row where I had to take the brunt. So I probably do spend most of them...

Charlotte: But when I lived in Somerset you guys would all come and stay for like a week.

Tom: Yeah we did.

Charlotte: So I think I reeled that back in [laughs].

Tom: You did, yeah. But yes I think in all honesty the best Christmas is when we're all together. I always had a dream that there would be this massive extended family around a table and therefore there wouldn't be a spotlight with having to get on with certain people.

Cathy: Yeah, yeah.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Tom: So as many of us as possible around that table making as much noise as possible is happy days.

Charlotte: I agree.

Rachel: So what were Christmases like when you were kids?

Tom: I think Christmases were great. I think it was sort of our 20s where it you sort of like, you're going out on Christmas eve and being a bit hungover on Christmas.

Rachel: Yeah.

Tom: But I think Christmases were actually everyone was on their best behaviour. I mean we'd definitely have an argument about what to watch in the afternoon or something but I remember Christmases being quite happy.

Charlotte: Yeah and it was generally just the four of us as well. We never had kind of, Boxing Day was a big like extended family. Like our dad has got a very big family so Boxing Day was like family stuff. But yeah it was usually just the four of us.

Tom: I'm the youngest of a lot of cousins on that side.

Rachel: OK.

Cathy: I was going to say, you were talking about the two sisters who you're very close to?

Rachel: Cousins yeah.

Cathy: Oh no cousins sorry who are like sisters.

Tom: Yeah they're on the other side, they're on our mum's side. But on our dad's side we've got a lot of cousins so on Boxing Day you'd always just get enveloped into this.

Cathy: Oh that's lovely though.

Tom: Yeah it was great.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Rachel: Yeah.

Cathy: That's really nice. You know when you talk about the cousins I think of the Corrs, like you're a sort of paler version of the Corrs.

Tom: [Laughs] I'm the one that everyone hates, the brother.

Cathy: Do they hate him? I didn't know they hated him. Oh.

Tom: I think there's a general feeling in the ether that he doesn't need to be in that group.

Cathy: Oh OK.

Tom: [Laughs]Is that right or have I made that up? Am I projecting?

[I Wish I Was An Only Child- Interim Music]

Rachel: Who's most likely to complain to a waiter?

Charlotte: I wouldn't, I can't.

Tom: No!

Charlotte: That fills me with absolute.

Tom: We are not those people.

Cathy: Oh.

Rachel: Both of you?! Neither of you?!

Tom: We are both most likely to eat raw food.

Cathy: Yeah me too.

Rachel: Aww.

Cathy: Me too.

Rachel: That's amazing because normally I will complain, you won't.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Cathy: I won't.

Rachel: That gives you the fear.

Tom: But having said that there is the off chance that I might see it as my moment to step up and go and make apologetic noises at a waiter. I might. If we were at a restaurant together and you were adamant you wouldn't go up, I did it in [Bleep] the other day.

Charlotte: Oh yeah you did.

Tom: But I didn't get what I wanted.

Cathy: What did you complain about?

Tom: Well there was definitely some wrong with my...

Charlotte: Such a middleclass sentence [laughs].

Tom: There was something not right with my food but I was just like I've picked up the wrong thing like maybe it's just been opened slightly or something.

Cathy: Yeah.

Tom: And I went up very apologetically and I hardly ever do this. And the guy was basically like 'Nah it's fine'. And that's the point where if you're a different person you go 'Well actually it's not fine, I'm the customer'.

Cathy: Yeah.

Tom: But I just went 'Sorry, sorry you're right, you're right'.

Charlotte: [Laughs]

Rachel: Oh that's horrible.

Cathy: Did you get food poisoning?

Charlotte: I didn't eat it, Charlotte gave me some of her sushi.

Cathy: Oh no.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Rachel: Aww that is.

Cathy: That's sad.

Rachel: That's, that's very telling. Right. So our last question is, is there anything you want to say to each other that you've never said before? So we're going to ask you Charlotte if there's anything you'd like to say to Tom that you've never said before?

Charlotte: Considering that we spend so much time together and like all of that. We aren't particularly like positively emotional with each other. We don't say I love you. We don't do any of that stuff.

Tom: I think we do, don't we? Do we not?

Charlotte: No we don't.

Cathy: [Laughs]

Tom: We should say it now, you should built up to it now.

Charlotte: [Laughs] I love you.

Cathy: [Laughs]

Charlotte: See I can't even say it seriously that's how...

Rachel: You didn't. You didn't.

Cathy: Yeah.

Charlotte: But I think because we work together we never really have the conversation about how much we kind of appreciate each other's like traits? I don't know. I think like I will never have a work ethic like Tom. Like he's a properly talented hard working like bloke and a really good dad. And there's all of those things that you think a lot when you chat that you never say, I love you man.

Cathy: [Laughs] She's done it Tom. She squeezed it in.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Charlotte: He's good company, that's what I want to say. Tom is exceptionally good company. That's the thing that I've never told him that is absolute fact and truth. He's really good company, I really enjoy his company.

Cathy: Aww that's...

Tom: Jesus. I was so ready for her to brush this one off.

Charlotte: Ha, ha, ha.

Tom: Now I have to come up with. That was so nice. I don't have a problem saying I love you, I love you a lot.

Charlotte: I don't have a problem with it! I'm saying we never say it. I mean I couldn't even say it back then, but I'm saying...

Tom: Yeah I felt you blush through the Zoom then.

Rachel: Yeah we don't say it. We don't say it ever. We would never say it.

Cathy: No.

Rachel: But clearly there's a lot of love here but we couldn't say it.

Charlotte: Sure, yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally

Tom: Yeah. What do I want to say? I just think she should have more confidence in herself. She's great and do you know what? I was thinking about this earlier when I was thinking about doing this podcast. Charlotte was 40 a couple of weekends ago. And her mates organised like a thing where we all had to lip synch along to a song and then they edited it together to wish her happy 40th. And as my wife and I were like, we cringed through the whole thing but we did a sing-a-long, we did a dance. And then we were worried about what dicks we would look in this video but we didn't have to worry because we were hardly in it because there were so many people who turned up to make this video.

I Wish I Was An Only Child- Charlotte Melia and Tom Melia

Cathy: Aww yeah.

Tom: And I think that is a testament, I think people think she's brilliant and I think she should think that more.

Charlotte: Aww.

[I Wish I Was An Only Child Theme Song]

Melanie: 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.

Rachel: Oh sugar I didn't record.

Cathy: Today our guests.

Rachel: We haven't recorded any of it.

Cathy: Oh for fuck sake, right.

Rachel: Oh.

[End of Podcast]