I Wish I Was An Only Child – Charlie and Daisy May Cooper

[Guitar music]

[Flute sounds]

[Children playing in park]

CATHY MASON: Welcome to ‘I Wish I Was An Only Child’, where we, Rachel –

RACHEL MASON: That’s me.

CATHY: And me, Cathy Mason, speak to other siblings about the dynamic of their relationship so we can see where we’re going wrong.

RACHEL: This week, we speak to Daisy and Charlie May Cooper –

CATHY: Stars and creators –

RACHEL: No, that’s –

CATHY: Fucking hell. Just go from there!

RACHEL: In this episode, we speak to… in this episode, we speak to Charlie and Daisy May Cooper.

CATHY: The stars and creators of BAFTA award-winning series *This Country*.

RACHEL: Charlie is three years younger than Daisy and they live in the Cotswolds.

CATHY: Where we grew up, and we absolutely love them.

RACHEL: Do you want to twist it round?

CATHY: That’s all I want to say.

[Flute music]

CATHY: Let’s start with who’s the funniest?

DAISY MAY COOPER: I think I am.

[All laugh]

DAISY: I’m sorry. That’s really upsetting for you, but I think I am.

CHARLIE COOPER: No, it’s fine because you say it in every interview anyway.

DAISY: Yeah. But on a serious note, I think I’m the funnier one because – especially when it comes to writing –

CHARLIE: The arrogance, oh my god!

DAISY: You sort of… no, you’re great like… to I suppose like bounce off of, but –

CHARLIE: Yes, okay, you’re funnier.

CATHY: Are you a Stooge, Charlie? Is that what –

CHARLIE: Yeah. Well one of you has to be, you know, the serious one. Yeah no I mean it’s a classic partnership, really, which is quite nice. But no, I know my worth. I know my value.

RACHEL: You know your place.

CHARLIE: I know my place.

CATHY: But as you were growing up, so you used to get all the laughs basically? And you were quietly in the background?

DAISY: Yeah, I mean I was a massive show-off, even now just cutting him off to answer that question.

CHARLIE: Yeah, you’re a massive show-off. Yeah, and –

DAISY: Massive show-off.

CHARLIE: I always had to sort of sink to the background. And yeah, growing up she was always sort of the wild child. So I sort of adopted the straight sort of… strait-laced, sensible one.

RACHEL: Do you think you would’ve been wild had you had the chance?

CHARLIE: I don’t know, but I did have a sort of rebellious phase. But that was a lot later.

CATHY: What was that?

DAISY: When you had your ear pierced? That was all you did!

CHARLIE: For me –

DAISY: Charlie, that’s rubbish.

CHARLIE: For me, that was really… that was –

RACHEL: How old were you?

CHARLIE: I was like 20… 20? No, 19.

RACHEL: That’s okay.

CHARLIE: That’s when I left university. Because I did envy Daisy, because she was so free-spirited and um…

DAISY: Really? I thought you hated me!

CHARLIE: Yeah, so… no!

DAISY: Because we didn’t actually talk at all, like from the age of about 12 until –

CATHY: You’re kidding.

DAISY: He came to… he went to uni. We just didn’t.

CATHY: Why?

RACHEL: So what –

DAISY: We just didn’t talk. We just didn’t have anything in common, or…

CHARLIE: Yeah, but you were very difficult. You were so difficult.

RACHEL: In what way?

DAISY: How was I? Yeah.

CHARLIE: In… just like, real rebellious, sort of stroppy, argumentative. You were massively –

DAISY: Yeah.

CHARLIE: Can you not –

DAISY: Yeah, no I was. I just –

CATHY: Why were you?

DAISY: I don’t know. I just wanted to go out with friends all the time.

CATHY: Hm.

DAISY: It was just one of those really annoying… you know like when you get to teenage age and you just… I don’t know what it was. I was always butting heads with Mum a lot, but then Mum was a lot more protective of me I think.

CATHY: Yep.

DAISY: And let Charlie get away, I think, with a lot more than –

RACHEL: But why was she more protective over you?

DAISY: I don’t… because I’m a girl? I don’t know. Or maybe because I was slightly mental.

CHARLIE: Because you… you’re mental.

DAISY: Is it?

CHARLIE: Absolutely mental.

RACHEL: Yeah, and we had the same. We had the same. Mum was very protective of Cath, and I was just… when I went off to America, I couldn’t wait to get out of the house.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

RACHEL: When I hit 18, I was like, ‘I’m out of here.’ And I went off to the States for a year. Because it’s –

DAISY: But your mum wasn’t bothered by that?

RACHEL: No, no. I don’t think she noticed!

CATHY: She only cared about me.

DAISY: Yes.

RACHEL: Because Cath consumed all her time!

DAISY: That’s so weird! Why is that?

CHARLIE: Yeah, yeah.

DAISY: Have you ever asked her?

CATHY: Um, she was terrified of me, I think.

RACHEL: And worried about you.

CATHY: I think she was terrified of me because I think she, you know, I could’ve… anything could’ve happened to me. Trust me. Anything. And it’s the same with you.

DAISY: Yeah, because we don’t think… we’re not… you two, Chas and Rach, I think like they think things through. They don’t take… you guys wouldn’t take mental risks –

CATHY: They’re not mentally ill.

RACHEL: No.

DAISY: Exactly.

CATHY: Face it.

[All laugh]

CHARLIE: That is the, yeah, the crux of it.

CATHY: Think Daisy, you might be.

RACHEL: But I’m – so you weren’t close?

DAISY: No.

RACHEL: As teenagers?

DAISY: We weren’t really.

CHARLIE: I mean…

RACHEL: We hated each other.

CATHY: Hated each other.

RACHEL: I remember the physical fight we had where… because it was the old dial phones, back in the day when we were young.

DAISY and CHARLIE: Yeah.

RACHEL: And I was phoning an astrology line. And every time I got… 0, 4, 6, 8, yeah it was about 10 digits. Every time I got to the last one, Cath would cut it off. She would just cut it off. I did it about five times. Torture, you know what I mean?

DAISY: Oh my god!

RACHEL: Wait until it got to the last number. It took a while. And then cut it off. And then I whacked her finger away and that was it. We ended up in a cat fight.

CATHY: Physical fight.

DAISY and CHARLIE: Oh my god.

DAISY: I can totally understand why you would do that.

CATHY: But you… I bet you were like me. Did you just feel frustrated and angry all the time?

DAISY: Angry all the time.

CATHY: That was me!

DAISY: But I was wicked. I mean I used to like grab your hair, you know, like that.

CHARLIE: Tell them the birthday thing!

DAISY: Well the birthday thing… when I was, I’m trying to think how old you must’ve been, about 6 or 7, and –

CHARLIE: Probably younger than that, about 4 –

DAISY: But he knew what a birthday – he just got to that age where he knew what his birthday was. So I would go into his room at like 6, 7 in the morning, and wake him up, and go, ‘Charlie, it’s your birthday.’ And he would get really excited. I’d blow up balloons that I found in my mum’s cupboard, put them strategically on the stairs, and he’d come down and there’d be nothing there. And I’d just go, ‘haha, just joking.’

RACHEL: That’s mental!

CATHY: That’s evil.

DAISY: That is really fucked up, isn’t it?

RACHEL: Yes.

CATHY: That’s… even I wouldn’t have done that.

CHARLIE: It’s affected the way I celebrate my birthday ever since.

CATHY: Yes, oh my god!

CHARLIE: I couldn’t –

DAISY: We both had goldfish, the ones from the fair, and Charlie’s fish had died. And I said to Dad, ‘look Dad, let me tell him. I’d like to break it to him.’ And Dad thought that was a really responsible, nice thing. And he said all he can remember is looking out the window and I’ve got this dead fish out of a matchbox and I was just waving it in his face. And Charlie was just –

CHARLIE: Traumatised.

CATHY: Were you scared of Daisy?

CHARLIE: Uh, yes. Yeah, definitely.

DAISY: No!

CHARLIE: Yeah, I definitely was in that phase. I mean when we were younger, when we were young, there were moments where we’d really get on and we’d be the best of mates. Or either –

CATHY: Yeah.

CHARLIE: But I guess most of these are –

CATHY: Why were you the best of mates? What did you think? What did you like about each other?

RACHEL: But that’s normal childhood, isn’t it? Falling in and out with each other.

DAISY: Yeah, I suppose it’s like, well you’ve got… it would usually be if we were really bored on a Sunday and decided to make our own –

CHARLIE: Videos.

DAISY: Stop motion animation. And then it would be great because we’d be working on something together.

CHARLIE: Yeah, and we’ve always shared the same humour, which is so important, you know?

RACHEL: Yeah.

CHARLIE: Because you can be completely different ages or whatever, into different things. But if you have that same humour, if you find the same things funny, then that’s, you know, that’s brilliant. We’ll always get on because of that. Um –

CATHY: But hang on, back to you being scared. What was it that you were scared of? And what did she do?

CHARLIE: I mean she did make bad decisions, be unpredictable. Because I hated, you know, her arguing with my parents. That was always like –

CATHY: Was that what you did?

DAISY: I did, just really angry all the time.

CHARLIE: All the time. And I remember when she started smoking, which was like 15.

[Daisy laughs]

CHARLIE: And she’d [laughs]… I’d be like upstairs playing computer games or whatever. She’d come into my room and go, ‘Charlie’… she goes, ‘can you smell smoke on me?’ I’d go, ‘no, why?’ And she goes, ‘oh good, because I’ve started smoking.’ And then she’d walk out again.

CATHY: No!

DAISY: That’s exactly –

CHARLIE: But it was stuff like that, because I was always so worried about her.

DAISY: Oh my god, I was just desperate for you to be –

CHARLIE: More worried than scared, I think.

RACHEL: More worried than scared?

CHARLIE: Yeah, just concerned. Genuinely just –

CATHY: But as the younger sibling, that’s quite –

CHARLIE: Yeah, for years. So I was sort of… yeah.

RACHEL: Same, but I was more scared of you than I was –

CATHY: Yeah, you were terrified of me.

DAISY: Really?

RACHEL: And still am.

CATHY: Totally.

DAISY: But did you find – because I just wanted him to be impressed by me by like being an older sibling. I never felt that he was.

CATHY: Oh really? That’s interesting.

DAISY: Or I wanted his approval, I think. Yeah, and I just feel that you never really wanted to hang around with me, or –

CHARLIE: But then you never gave me a chance, so… She was out clubbing, and doing, you know, hanging out with older boyfriends.

CATHY: So you were wild?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

DAISY: I was just –

CHARLIE: She was always out of the house. So I was just… you know, I could see my parents worrying and being stressed out about it. So it sort of, you know, made me feel the same.

RACHEL: Right.

CHARLIE: Naturally.

CATHY: So you really did take the parental role, which is exactly what you did.

RACHEL: Yeah, totally. Still do.

CATHY: But I didn’t go unhinged, I joined a local Christian group.

DAISY: Did you?

CATHY: So my nutcase was… yeah yeah yeah, I did that.

DAISY: [gasps] Oh my god!

CATHY: Yeah, chant songs –

RACHEL: Because our dad left when we were really young. He ended up living in our house.

CATHY: Who did?

RACHEL: [bleep] Your boyfriend.

CATHY: Oh yeah, he did. Because I could’ve got anything I wanted, because I controlled the house. So my boyfriend –

DAISY: Oh my god!

RACHEL: That’s why we couldn’t have bread in the house, because Cath had an eating disorder.

CATHY: Yeah, couldn’t have bread in the house.

RACHEL: So Mum would hide bread. So you’d open a cupboard – bread. Or whatever, you’d go in the most random place, the bathroom cupboard, and bread would fall out.

CATHY: I ruled the entire house. Entire. But did you do that? Well, you had a dad in the house.

DAISY: Yeah, I suppose.

CHARLIE: Yeah, because our parents are so, you know, they’re always so supportive and so understanding. And not pushovers as such –

CATHY: But that’s the problem!

CHARLIE: Yeah, you never went to school. That was your problem.

DAISY: Yeah, I couldn’t. I just didn’t –

CATHY: [gasps] Daisy, I never knew that!

CHARLIE: Her attendance –

DAISY: I didn’t want to go to school. But Mum and Dad… Mum would let me have the day off, but that was only because like I hated… like there was a horrible clique of girls in our year and I just… it was just that you never knew whether the main girl, like the Regina George of the group, was going to ostracise you. And it was just hell everyday. It was just trying to get through.

CATHY: So did you get bullied? Or you –

DAISY: It’s difficult to explain it. It was exactly… Mean Girls I think completely summed it up. Where you are still friends with like the leader of the group and you just want them to like you. But they are just a fucking bitch to you when they decide to be.

CATHY: Yeah.

DAISY: And will just like run away from you at lunchtime if you’re the one that’s chosen that day to be… that was fucking mind games. It wasn’t even consistent with somebody being –

CHARLIE: Bullied.

DAISY: Yeah, and that really fucking screwed me up I think.

CATHY: And then… so your mum let you not go to school?

DAISY: Yeah, but I would say that I… I’d just pretend I was ill. I remember somebody telling me that if you put toothpaste underneath your tongue, it makes the thermometer go like a couple of degrees higher. And it does work.

CATHY: No!

RACHEL: So you did that.

DAISY: I did that all the time. My mum was constantly taking me to the GP and he’d be like, ‘I don’t’… like I was having blood tests all the time. He was like, ‘I don’t know what’s wrong with you.’ Because there was nothing wrong with me.

CATHY: Oh my god! So hang on, were you thinking, ‘I want to take time off school,’ but you couldn’t?

CHARLIE: Yeah, I had quite a few days off just because Mum was a pushover. But uh… no, I mean.

RACHEL: But you were coming from a different place, you didn’t have –

CHARLIE: Yeah, I didn’t have the same problems at school.

RACHEL: You weren’t… yeah, exactly.

CHARLIE: So it was –

CATHY: What were you at school? Were you the cool one? Or…

CHARLIE: Um, no, I was sort of… I mean I think we both have that ability. We were sort of funny in our own groups at school. So I think we both – if you can make the bully laugh or, you know, the cool kids laugh, it’s sort of accepted. So I was sort of that version in my year. Um, probably not as funny as you, though.

DAISY: [laughs] No.

RACHEL: But you were never bullied? You were never in the cool camp? You were never in the uncool camp?

CHARLIE: Yeah, a massive inbetweener.

DAISY: Although you were punched on your prom night, weren’t you? Which really upset me.

CATHY: You did a prom night?

DAISY: Yeah, we had… it was like a leavers do. And you got punched by a guy in your year, didn’t you?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

RACHEL: Why?

CHARLIE: I don’t know.

[Daisy laughs]

[Flute sounds]

RACHEL: So growing up, obviously there’s this sort of chasm where you were not as close in the teenage years, and then you end up working together. Not now, I mean previously, so you were cleaning together –

DAISY: Yeah.

CATHY: Why did you do that? Why did you go for jobs like that?

DAISY: Well, what would you say it was?

CHARLIE: Well, I was trying to think back to when we really became close.

CATHY: What happened?

CHARLIE: So I was – we both left, um, although Daisy’s three years older than me, we both left for university at the same time. You went to RADA for three years and I went to Exeter. And after two years, I dropped out. I hated it.

CATHY: Why did you hate it?

CHARLIE: Because it was just so academic. I mean I’m not academic. I just didn’t – I got there and I just realised there was nothing I wanted to do. And I didn’t really –

RACHEL: You did two years there?

CHARLIE: I did two years, yeah, trying to stick it out and then it – I couldn’t do that last year.

RACHEL: Trying to do the right thing.

CHARLIE: Yeah, trying to do the right thing. I’d go – in my second year at Exeter, I’d go and visit Daisy a few times because I loved London and I was getting into music and stuff like that. So I’d spend a weekend there occasionally and we’d have a great time.

DAISY: Yeah, we would.

RACHEL: So that was – that brought you together?

DAISY: That was like – it was really weird because it was the first time that we were meeting up. I remember he came to see me and we went to like Nando’s or something. And it was like meeting up as adults as opposed to –

CHARLIE: Yeah, away from home, away from our parents.

DAISY: And I remember him having to go back and he left – he got on the tube at Covent Garden I think. And I just cried and cried.

RACHEL: Aww.

DAISY: Seeing him go, I felt completely bereft. It was horrible and that was when I – because I knew he was having a really hard time.

CHARLIE: Yeah, I mean, and then we’d talk about, you know, what I should do. And I was like, ‘I’ve got to see this last year out.’ And Daisy would just be like, ‘no, why should you? You know, if you’re not enjoying it.’ And that’s what I always admired about her. She would never normally do anything she didn’t want to do.

RACHEL: Yeah, and I’m exactly the same with Cath.

CHARLIE: And that’s amazing.

RACHEL: That freedom.

CHARLIE: That freedom, yeah.

RACHEL: My brain doesn’t work like that.

CHARLIE: And she was born free. And having that switch in your head, it was like, ‘fuck, I can just do what I want! I can drop out.’ And so she sort of encouraged me, amazingly. And it was never about upsetting my parents, because I knew they wouldn’t be. So yeah, I just – after my second year I left all my stuff in my room and just got on the train to London and never went back. And I just literally from then stayed that final year with Daisy.

CATHY: The whole year?

CHARLIE: The whole year.

RACHEL: On the floor in her room?

CHARLIE: On the floor in her room. Which is like these student halls.

RACHEL: And what did you think of the course she was doing? You were obviously hearing all the –

DAISY: Oh god.

RACHEL: Because you hated it.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

RACHEL: The people, I’m guessing you met Daisy’s –

CHARLIE: Yeah, but it was exciting. She lived in these halls of residence in Gower Street in central London. So it was discovering London for the first time and meeting all her friends and actors and whatever. So it was exciting for me. Obviously she was struggling.

DAISY: But I could not have done it had he not been there.

CHARLIE: Oh yeah, she was desperate to drop out. Well –

DAISY: I needed that emotional – just being able to come back and just see him on his pathetic little bed just made my heart – it was like –

RACHEL: That’s amazing!

CATHY: Were you unhappy because you were frightened of not having that – were you quite a homebody? Or were you unhappy because you really hated the people? What was it?

DAISY: I just – it was all – it was a mixture of all of that. I mean, I hated – I fucking hated it. And I hated being away from home, I hated the people. Everybody was so ambitious and so kind of – I mean nobody was like me. I didn’t – wasn’t interested in plays or reading scripts. I didn’t ever want to be cast as the lead. I wanted like the least amount of lines so I had the least amount of work. I think it was fucking hell.

CATHY: What made you stay there? Because you’re such a free spirit. Why didn’t you – why didn’t you just get the fuck out?

RACHEL: You were telling Charlie to leave.

CHARLIE: Yeah, I guess it was the prestigiousness of –

DAISY: It was, and it was like if you – if I left and I didn’t have an agent or – I mean it was just – I would’ve felt like I let my mum and dad down. Thinking back at it, I would’ve just fucking walked and not put myself through that. Like it was fucking horrible.

RACHEL: But obviously we know through that time came the –

DAISY: Through that time I just, you know –

CHARLIE: It was a great – it was just sort of the perfect situation. Because I needed to be in London, somewhere different that wasn’t either at home or Exeter and –

CATHY: Were you working?

RACHEL: Yeah, how did you –

CHARLIE: Um, I would literally – I worked for like three months in Topshop in Oxford Circus. And then for the rest of the time I was just on the dole there.

DAISY: Can I just say, because I remember – because Charlie bought a guitar and started playing the guitar, which was so unlike –

RACHEL: I thought you were going to say he started busking!

DAISY: Well, you would go around, wouldn’t you? With your guitar, and just write songs and like –

CHARLIE: Yeah, it was like proper –

DAISY: And that was like the first time I’d ever seen Charlie ever be creative in that sense, which was really –

CHARLIE: That was sort of, not my rebellious phase, but it was like me – it wasn’t until I was out of education that I felt that I was – that I could hear myself think, basically. And then you sort of know who you are. So that was my really like self-discovery time. And… [laughs]

RACHEL: So what happened to the guitar?

DAISY: I’m feeling really emotional because this is the first time you’ve ever said stuff like this. So you know, I just thought that –

CHARLIE: What?

DAISY: I don’t know, because you never really open up to me about anything. I can never read you. I never know what’s going on in his head.

CHARLIE: Not a lot. [laughs]

And I find that – for me, somebody’s who’s like – I just – it’s really –

RACHEL: And is that because you feel like there’s not enough room? Because certainly between Cath and I, I feel like she takes up so much. It’s like sitting on a bus seat, and Cath takes up so much, you know? You’re just sort of on the edge. There isn’t really enough –

CHARLIE: Definitely. No, there isn’t.

RACHEL: … Time to explore.

CHARLIE: Yeah yeah, definitely.

CATHY: Daisy, I think we need to just…

DAISY: The way that’s described! That absolutely just hits me!

RACHEL: That has come from Frank. That has come from Frank.

CATHY: I know.

CHARLIE: You have to assume a role that fits around her. You can’t be your –

CATHY: Oh, Daisy, we should be ashamed of ourselves.

DAISY: I know! I could – oh my god.

CATHY: I know.

DAISY: The fact that they even feel like that. That they’re just on this planet to serve us or to look after us. They feel that they have to do that for us.

CATHY: Totally. Well, because we are massive.

DAISY: But oh god!

RACHEL: Yeah, and what are we? [laughs]

CATHY: What are you?

CHARLIE: I don’t know what I am.

RACHEL: No, but – there’s a film where they talk about there are gardeners and flowers in this world. Oh, I can’t remember the film. I’ve just seen it.

DAISY: Oh god, don’t!

RACHEL: And I’m definitely a gardener.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

RACHEL: I’d describe myself as a gardener.

CATHY: We’re the flowers.

RACHEL: You’re the flower.

DAISY: We’re the fucking massive sunflowers, with massive like photosynthesising –

[All laugh]

DAISY: Every fucking ray of sunshine to the whole garden –

RACHEL: And do you know what? While you’re doing that, you’re blocking our sun!

DAISY: Yes, absolutely!

CATHY: Oh no, what do we do about this?

DAISY: Oh my god.

[Flute sounds]

RACHEL: You’re in a position where you’re working together now on *This Country*. You’re writing together, so you’re – you’ll always have that, which is actually a lovely space. How has that changed the relationship? Or how do you worry it might change the relationship?

CHARLIE: Um, how has it changed? I think…

DAISY: It’s brought us closer, I think.

CHARLIE: Yeah, definitely. Especially since the show’s been out and it’s been – well, when it was going badly, it was difficult. Because, you know, the more depressed you were… well, you know, we were both so down about when we did the pilot and it failed. We got dropped by a production company. It’s quite easy to turn on each other when that happens – when the pressure’s on.

CATHY: Did you blame each other?

DAISY: No, it was –

CHARLIE: No, never.

DAISY: Completely the opposite. It was actually we were more supportive of each other, because we only had each other. Charlie was the only person that was going through the same thing. Like there was no other – we didn’t have any other peers. Like we were still living at home. We had to completely depend on one another.

RACHEL: What did you see the future as? Because you’re the one championing it, being positive I guess.

CHARLIE: Yeah, always trying to be positive. But, well, I didn’t know because it was our first thing. I was so naïve and I guess we’d – I thought it would just smooth itself out in the end. But I didn’t – in hindsight it was probably worse that I thought it was at the time.

DAISY: Yeah, because I would say to Charlie, because I need his reassurance and stuff, because I knew something wasn’t right. And I’d say to Charlie, ‘are you happy with this? Like is this what we want to write? Is this what we should be doing?’ And you would always say, ‘yeah yeah, absolutely.’ And because he would say that, I would be like, ‘oh, it’s okay.’

CHARLIE: Yeah, but it was more to keep her, you know, keep her up.

CATHY: I just want to interject here and say that you did a pilot that was badly managed. They made it into something – the production company made it into something that it just shouldn’t have ever been. And you just thought, ‘that was it, career over, our one shot.’

DAISY: Yeah, especially because we had – this is like one of the biggest moments that happened for us was we had – our producer phoned us at the time to say that ITV had dropped the pilot. And then I phoned our agent at the time to say, ‘look, what the fuck do we do?’ And she turned around and said, ‘well, you’ve basically got a debt of £350,000.’

CATHY: She said that?

DAISY: Yeah, she said there’s no way anybody else – her exact words were, ‘there’s no way anybody else would take you on with that amount of debt.’ And hearing somebody like that, for Charlie, was – you have this sort of fear of authority. An authority figure saying that. Where I just – I felt kind of the same because I saw him. We had that joint call with the agent. I saw him – he had to walk out of the house. I thought he was just going to go… I’ve never seen him as sad or as lost as that. He physically had to walk out of the house because he didn’t know what to do. And that was really upsetting. But I just knew that – I don’t know, I just thought, ‘this can’t be the end. This just cannot.’

CATHY: So actually you were the more positive one?

CHARLIE: Yeah, she ended up staying really strong.

CATHY: But I think me and you, in a weird way, we’ve got sort of low self-confidence but also shot through with an arrogance, aren’t we? That kind of –

RACHEL: But that’s true.

DAISY: Oh, definitely.

RACHEL: That’s the sort of situation and that’s what we get from – I keep saying we, but – what we get from you guys, is actually when the shit hits the fan, we’ve got the fear of authority and all the worries and a bit more stress.

CATHY: Whereas me and you are like, ‘fuck this.’

RACHEL: Yeah, so actually that is more – it kind of pulls –

DAISY: Did you guys have a similar thing when you left the agency?

CATHY: Oh, always. All the time. All through our lives, I suppose we have.

RACHEL: Yes, yeah.

CATHY: Totally.

RACHEL: Yeah, and I’m much more, ‘we can’t do that.’ Do you know what I mean? I just walk a much straighter path. And Cath will be like, ‘fuck it, why can’t we?’ You know? So –

DAISY: No, that’s – I find it really interesting how you need each other for different –

CATHY: I need her more. I need her more than she needs me. So I would travel Rach around at all times. And feel like I can’t do –

RACHEL: Cath worked for Channel 4, I ended up working there. So that’s kind of – she –

CATHY: Every job I’ve got, I’ve taken Rachel there, basically.

CHARLIE: Wow.

DAISY: I totally see that. Because it’s like having a carer, isn’t it?

CATHY: Exactly.

[All laugh]

CATHY: And the fear – we were talking about earlier – the fear of her not being around. Imagine if Charlie disappeared. He decided to move to Lithuania.

DAISY: I would – that would kill me.

CATHY: And that would kill me, whereas they –

RACHEL: But you don’t have these open conversations where you talk about the depth of emotion and we don’t either. All this stuff goes on and we don’t really – like you just said, you heard Charlie saying things then that you haven’t heard him voice.

DAISY: Oh god, would’ve never thought.

CATHY: But you’re coming out of yourself massively, aren’t you?

CHARLIE: Yeah, I mean it’s amazing. I mean obviously I was never meant to be in the show at all. Never considered myself an actor or performer. So now, you know, a couple years down the line and suddenly I’m in it. And it’s great, but I always – I said this the other day – if I lived my life again, you know, 99 times out of 100 I’d probably have ended up working at WH Smiths or something like that.

CATHY: Is that what you thought was going to happen to your life? Honestly, at the back of –

CHARLIE: I think… I knew – but that’s a credit to her, how much she’s changed me and given me the confidence to come out of myself and to be a performer. Like the idea of just standing in front of a room and talking to people would’ve been horrendous for me five years ago. And now to be in a show –

RACHEL: Because you were just, to give it again context, you were writing together and you were casting for the Kurtan character.

CHARLIE: Yeah, with different actors.

RACHEL: Different actors and nothing was quite right.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

RACHEL: And then you stepped up.

CHARLIE: Yeah, and it was – well, because she sort of gave me a kick up the ass basically.

CATHY: You said, ‘it has to be’ –

DAISY: It has to be him. It just had to be him.

CHARLIE: She always saw it there.

DAISY: But it was like every line Charlie said, it was like – the inflection, the accent, it was everything. He was just a natural performer. I feel that what had happened growing up is that everybody – like with Mum and Dad you’d always been like, ‘well Daisy’s there.’ She’s the performer, Charlie’s the background person. And I think that you actually always were a performer. Because you were going – and you’d started your band and were getting up on stage and performing in front of –

CATHY: Oh so you did that?

CHARLIE: Yeah, and that’s when, you know, the same sort of time when I was learning guitar. I mean it was a rubbish band, but yeah I was being creative. There was something in me that wanted to – I guess a sort of extroverted introvert or something like that, I don’t know.

DAISY: Yeah, but you just listened to what other people thought about you.

CHARLIE: I guess my life could’ve taken a very different path had I not been so close to Daisy. And it was those formative years, you know, being in that room in London and in the years after that that completely changed the way I’d think.

DAISY: Oh, I would – but then if it wasn’t for him, I’d be dead I think. I would’ve completely just gone off the rails.

CATHY: Why? You would’ve… yeah, so would I.

DAISY: Just taken – like overdosed completely by accident, or just not –

CHARLIE: Yeah, because I’m quite methodical, you know, straight-up thinker. And I don’t particularly think outside the box, whereas she completely does. And that, for me… it is a perfect partnership in that sense.

CATHY: But how has it been affected by Daisy settling down with Will?

CHARLIE: Um, it’s been good for me because it’s taken so much pressure off me.

CATHY: Yeah, exactly.

CHARLIE: All the burden is now on Will, Daisy’s partner.

CATHY: Yeah, totally.

CHARLIE: Which is brilliant, poor sod. But that means there’s more time for us just to get on. And, you know, when we’re working and it’s going well, there’s nothing better.

CATHY: So there’s no jealousy of Will? There’s no – there’s nothing negative about –

CHARLIE: No.

DAISY: Oh god, no.

CHARLIE: Pure sympathy for him.

[All laugh]

[Flute sounds]

CATHY: We didn’t share a bedroom. You shared a bedroom for years.

CHARLIE: Yeah.

CATHY: When we first met you, you were sharing a bedroom.

DAISY: Oh god, we were sharing a mattress. We were actually sharing a bed.

CATHY: No, really?

DAISY: We were sharing a bed, yeah. And it was a horrible mattress that was on the floor that was broken in the middle. So we would both fall into – which is mental. It was mental.

CHARLIE: For a bit of context, when Daisy left RADA, we both moved back home with our parents. And they were living in just a two up two down house, so there was only one spare room. So we both shared it. And we had no money, so it was this horrible bed.

CATHY: Were you on the dole then?

CHARLIE: Um, yeah. We did a series of crappy jobs. I worked in a pub for a bit and we had cleaning jobs. But this was all while we were writing the show. So it was just something to keep our heads above the water, really. Again, when you’re sort of put together in those circumstances, you have no other choice but to make it work.

CATHY: Because we were brought up by just our mum… Rachel saw Dad and I didn’t, so that fucked up a lot of stuff. You lived with both your parents. Who’s like who? Because I’m guessing you’re – Charlie – like your dad. And you’re like your mum, from what we –

CHARLIE: No.

CATHY: Really?

DAISY: I’m like Dad.

CHARLIE: And I’m like Mum.

CATHY: Okay, go on. Why?

DAISY: You’re like Mum because you – he’s a massive sulker.

CATHY: Oh, interesting.

DAISY: Our dad and I cannot – like if there’s a – if we have an argument with somebody, I have to apologise. I have to have it fine again. I can’t… whereas him and Mum will sulk for days and days.

CATHY: Really?

CHARLIE: Well, sulking’s like a really horrible word.

DAISY: It’s true! You can go without –

CHARLIE: No, it’s because we’re – if we argue, she can be quite cutting and really, you know, nasty.

CATHY: Can you be really nasty?

CHARLIE: Oh my god, yeah. Not so much in the last couple of years.

DAISY: But you can be really nasty too.

CHARLIE: Yeah, only if you’re nasty.

[Cathy laughs]

DAISY: No, you’re nastier.

CHARLIE: It takes me longer to get over something because I’m like, ‘god, how could she have said that?’ Whereas she’s expecting me just to forget about it and be fine again.

CATHY: Because you don’t mean it as deeply as Charlie does.

DAISY: No.

CATHY: That’s what it is. You can fire stuff out and you’re like, ‘well, get over it.’

CHARLIE: Yeah.

CATHY: I’m exactly the same. Whereas it matters to you. You’re very –

CHARLIE: Yeah, totally. And you’re – why are you like Dad?

DAISY: Because –

CHARLIE: Narcissist?

DAISY: Complete selfless narcissist, I think.

CHARLIE: [laughs] Yeah, selfless narcissist. You love doing good deeds, but only because –

DAISY: We get something out of it and people admire us for what we do. Fucking mental! [laughs]

CHARLIE: That’s mental.

DAISY: Which is why I could never do something –

CHARLIE: No, because you want someone to go, ‘oh, did you see Daisy give £10 to a homeless guy?’

DAISY: Exactly!

CHARLIE: ‘That’s the most amazing thing.’

CATHY: I’m with you.

CHARLIE: And it’s not got anything to do with the homeless guy. You couldn’t give a shit about him.

DAISY: But it’s like, you know like people do Just Giving pages?

CATHY: Yeah.

DAISY: Who the fuck?

CATHY: Anonymous, I agree.

DAISY: Who would be anonymous? The person has to know that I donated that fucking money!

CHARLIE: That’s crazy.

DAISY: Because otherwise I would never fucking donate it for your fucking pathetic boat ride for the British Heart Foundation. Or even worse, what was it? Um…

CATHY: Parachute jump?

DAISY: Just all that shit.

CATHY: No, absolutely.

DAISY: You have to – uh.

CATHY: Do you feel like you’re a complete lone wolf?

DAISY: Yeah.

CATHY: Apart from Charlie, you do?

DAISY: I have friends but I don’t like having friends. [laughs]

CHARLIE: You don’t like the commitment.

DAISY: I don’t like the commitment.

CATHY: But isn’t that because you’ve got Charlie? If you didn’t have Charlie, you’d have to have friends. Is that what it is?

DAISY: I don’t know.

CHARLIE: It’s difficult because obviously Daisy… people gravitate to Daisy because of the way she is. She’s funny and open, so people want to be her best friend. But Daisy just – when there’s ever any commitment or plans, it’s just – you hate that.

DAISY: Oh god, for me having friendships is like keeping a job. It’s like you have to put so much effort in. You have to see somebody every week or else they’ll get upset. The only friendships I can deal with are like if I don’t see them for ages and then they’re not shitty about it. It’s on my terms.

CATHY: And they’ll leave after an hour.

DAISY: And they’ll leave after, yeah.

CATHY: Absolutely.

RACHEL: They’ll probably cancel. That would be the ideal, if they cancel.

DAISY: Oh my god, that’s the best thing ever.

CHARLIE: What was it the other day? You were having a breakdown –

DAISY: I was beside myself because I had – this is how fucking mental I am. I had two girls from the NCT class coming over at 2:00 in the afternoon for their babies for an hour. It would’ve been really nice. I got myself in such a state at the thought of them coming round at 2. I just thought, ‘I can’t, I can’t fucking do this. I just can’t sit and talk to these people about – I don’t know.’

CATHY: But the problem is, I think you’re like me. We’re prick teasers. So what we do is we charm the shit – people think, ‘oh my god, this person loves me. She’s so exciting and good fun. And then we turn round to our partners or our siblings and say, ‘you’ve got to help me out of this shit.’

RACHEL: And then we get stuck with the leftovers.

CATHY: Yeah.

CHARLIE: Because if we’re in town together and we bump into someone, and it’s someone we really don’t like, Daisy will be so nice.

DAISY: Oh my god, overcompensate.

CHARLIE: Yeah, overcompensate because –

DAISY: Because I know I don’t like them and I worry they worry that I don’t like them. So I go out of my way to be really nice.

CATHY: [laughs] That’s exactly right! Totally!

CHARLIE: She’ll invite them round the next day.

DAISY: Why is that?

CHARLIE: And you’ll be like, you know, why –

CATHY: I can’t end a conversation without saying, ‘so we’ll go for a coffee.’

DAISY: Yes.

CATHY: It’s my way of getting away from that person.

DAISY: Yes.

CATHY: But then when they phone me and say, ‘let’s go for a coffee’, I pass it on to Frank or Rach.

DAISY: Yeah.

[Flute sounds]

RACHEL: So I get quite embarrassed by Cath quite a lot. So what embarrasses you about each other?

DAISY: How does Cath embarrass you?

RACHEL: All the time.

CATHY: Oh my god.

RACHEL: She just says – we’ll be in a situation and I’ll be thinking something and she’ll say it. Do you know what I mean? And you’ll think, ‘that is so embarrassing.’

CATHY: I wear terrible clothes, I don’t –

RACHEL: Yeah, Cath can still fit – she still fits into dresses from when she was 14.

CATHY: I couldn’t give a shit about stuff like that.

RACHEL: She’s really proud. They look – she looks – they look hideous!

CATHY: When we came to the set visit and you had those awful shoes in the cupboard –

DAISY: [laughs] Yes!

CATHY: I wanted to hug you. Because they were comfortable, and I’m with you on that. I don’t give a shit –

DAISY: Oh my god! We’re just exactly the same!

RACHEL: We were in the car before we got here and Cath went, ‘I think my feet smell – my shoes smell.’ You thought your shoes smell.

CATHY: Yeah, I’m quite clean.

RACHEL: Yeah, you are clean. But you know – but Cath will hold onto things –

CATHY: I just don’t care. I want comfort.

DAISY: Yeah, I could not give a flying –

RACHEL: And we’ll be in a meeting and she’ll just say something, and I’ll go, ‘oh my god, that’s so indiscreet. You can’t say that.’ You know? So yeah, I get regularly quite embarrassed.

DAISY: Oh my god. Because we don’t have a filter.

CHARLIE: Yeah, but even the shoes thing, going back to that. It’s not – I have so much admiration, but I’m obviously disgusted at the same time.

[All laugh]

RACHEL: It’s their freedom again, isn’t it? They’ve got freedom to not give a shit!

CHARLIE: Yeah it’s freedom, and thank god I’ve – yes.

DAISY: Are you embarrassed by how Cath dresses?

RACHEL: Yes.

DAISY: Really?

CATHY: I’ve dressed up today. You don’t know what I normally dress like.

RACHEL: Well there’s a hole in your sock. But no, normally – I mean, normally –

CATHY: I just don’t care!

RACHEL: I just can’t think of a good example now under pressure.

DAISY: That’s like what I’m wearing today. I’ve got no bra on and I don’t – but I’m comfortable and I can really enjoy –

CHARLIE: It’s fascinating.

DAISY: I just worry about what traits we’re going to pass on to our kids.

CATHY: That’s terrible. Terrible.

CHARLIE: Yeah but your kid’s going to be completely –

RACHEL: Because Charlie’s going to be there as the good, straight influence.

CHARLIE: Yeah, but I think – it’s like Ab Fab. You know, you’ve got straight kids.

CATHY: I think that’s what’s going to happen. We’re going to have really square kids.

CHARLIE: Just really nerdy.

CATHY: Totally.

DAISY: But it’s funny too because I feel that you – in a really weird way – that you… like with your ex-girlfriend, Mum said that you – she had a lot of similarities into what my personality is like.

CHARLIE: Yes, which is scary.

DAISY: And I find that really interesting that that’s what you’re attracted to.

RACHEL: I’ve married…

DAISY: You’ve married?

RACHEL: A version of Cath, yes.

DAISY: Oh my god!

RACHEL: Yeah, Jack is – no, he’s not like you, but he’s more eccentric –

CATHY: He’s a bit like me.

RACHEL: He’s more – yeah. And Frank is more like me.

CATHY: Totally.

RACHEL: Frank is more –

DAISY: And I think you will end up – when we’ve talked about relationships and when we talk about certain people, I feel, ‘nah, that’s not right because you’re going to end up with Daisy.’ I’m telling you now, he will. He will end up with Daisy.

CATHY: That is so –

DAISY: He will. He needs that – who’s going to compete with Daisy?

RACHEL: It’s inevitable.

CHARLIE: Exactly, and it’s like, again, it’s assuming that role. You take – well –

CATHY: Is it because you feel more comfortable in the role of –

CHARLIE: It’s what you’re used to.

RACHEL: It’s what you’re used to, absolutely.

CATHY: It’s because we’re absolutely amazing.

[All laugh]

CATHY: Let’s face it.

DAISY: There is nothing better.

CATHY: How’s he going to sit with somebody who’s dull? How is he going to do that?

RACHEL: Yeah.

DAISY: But don’t you think it would be easier to be with somebody who’s more like yourself? So you didn’t have the drama? Or do you like having the drama coming into your life?

RACHEL: Logically, yes. Logically, but clearly not. The reality –

CATHY: What’s Will like?

DAISY: Will’s very much like Charlie. Like really practical, you know, likes everything. Sort of organised. Where I don’t – yeah, so really – I was asking Will, funnily enough yesterday, why he is attracted to me because I’m so fucking mental. And there have been so many times where he should’ve just run out the door. I’ve been screaming and crying for no fucking reason.

CATHY: Over something ludicrous.

DAISY: Over something really trivial. Over like changing the channel. Like we’ll go to that fucking point… I don’t know, it’s just mental. You know I’m completely fucking mental.

CATHY: No, Frank will wake up in the morning and he’ll just quietly stand there and listen to my 25 terrible disasters. And he’ll say, ‘it’s 8:00 in the morning and that’s happened to you?’

[All laugh]

CATHY: It’s a fucking nightmare.

DAISY: Oh my god.

CATHY: It’s endless.

CHARLIE: When we turn up to the office to work, I have to give her an hour to drain the poison from her fucking mouth because everything is, ‘fucking hell, I went to get a coffee and the woman, fucking hell, treated me like I wasn’t fucking there.’

DAISY: [laughs] I know!

CHARLIE: ‘I passed a traffic warden and he stank. That annoyed me.’ It’s like anything!

CATHY: Are you a hypochondriac?

DAISY: Yes, totally.

CATHY: Are you?

CHARLIE: She was – oh my god, this is such a classic Daisy example. She was – the doctor rang about having –

DAISY: Because I had a swab taken of my fucking c-section [laughs]. I can’t believe I’m bringing this up!

CHARLIE: You had an infection, didn’t you? The results – the doctors rang and said, ‘oh, you need to come in because’ – what did they say? It’s borderline?

DAISY: They left a message saying, ‘your swab has come back and’ – [laughs] so they took a swab of my c-section. I’m looking it up –

CHARLIE: She walks into the room and goes, ‘I’ve got cancer.’

DAISY: I’ve got cervical cancer. I thought – I looked it up. Then I fucking messaged Will while he was at work saying, ‘I’ve come back borderline for cervical cancer.’ He’s fucking – [laughs] I don’t mean to worry him, but it’s because I’m worried about it so I’ve got to let everyone know immediately. But in the space of like five minutes, I’ve stressed everybody out.

CHARLIE: Yeah, to the point where everyone’s emotionally fucked.

CATHY: Oh no, I’ve had a brain tumour scan.

DAISY: Oh my god, really?

CATHY: Yeah, of course. Yeah, I’ve had it all. Daisy, I’ve been everything. And I’ve had cancer and I’ve had –

RACHEL: She’s had nothing. She’s absolutely fine.

CATHY: Couldn’t be healthier.

CHARLIE: Yeah, and that was –

CATHY: And was she like that as a kid? Did you have to deal –

CHARLIE: All the time. I remember our parents went out for a meal. I must’ve been like 8 or 9, Daisy’s 11 or 12. Parents went out for a meal with friends and we were left at home in the house. And the whole evening, she – no, what did you do? She said, ‘Charlie, I feel really, really unwell. I feel so faint. I feel like I might die, this is serious.’

[Daisy laughs]

CHARLIE: And obviously, being so young, I was beside myself. I couldn’t get through – I rang my mum and dad, couldn’t get through to them.

DAISY: No, it was because I was on my period. And I was annoyed that Mum and Dad were out having a meal without us. So I thought, ‘fucking right, I’m going to make this absolute fucking hell so they never leave again.’

[Cathy laughs]

DAISY: And I basically wrote him a list saying, ‘if I pass out, you have to go across the road and get the neighbours [laughs] to go to the house.’

CHARLIE: Absolutely.

DAISY: ‘Here’s the number of the restaurant to phone Mum and Dad.

CHARLIE: This whole list, yeah. And if I –

DAISY: I remember watching like a really old Doctor Who –

CHARLIE: ‘If I choke on my tongue, you have to’ – like stuff like that.

[All laugh]

RACHEL: Charlie, this is traumatising.

CHARLIE: Yeah, traumatising.

DAISY: Only because I was annoyed that my parents had gone out for a meal and we weren’t there.

RACHEL: Yeah, how dare they?

[Flute sounds]

CATHY: Jealousies of each other. Do you have jealousies? Because when we were younger, Rachel was way more mature. Started her periods before me, and I went into – because obviously you didn’t know how to deal with that. And when I first saw you lift your arm up and you had underarm hair, I went fucking mental.

RACHEL: I was fucked.

DAISY: Really?

RACHEL: From that moment on, I was fucked.

CATHY: Life was over, yeah.

DAISY: Oh my god!

CATHY: I was fucking livid. Because she was growing up and she had – boys fancied her, nobody fancied me. I didn’t have underarm hair, didn’t have my period. It was a nightmare.

DAISY: Oh my god, that is mental!

CATHY: I know.

RACHEL: And she did make my life hell for that reason.

CATHY: I made her life hell. So were you jealous of each other about anything?

CHARLIE: Uh, no I don’t think I was jealous. Well, jealous probably about how everyone would, you know, pander around Daisy so much. Because, you know, if you didn’t then she’d go fucking apeshit [laughs]. So probably that, really.

DAISY: I get really jealous of when he – of his, like, last girlfriend. The last two girlfriends. I get really – I can’t –

CATHY: Oh really! In what way?

DAISY: I just end up really hating them. And I know it’s because of nothing that they’ve done wrong. It’s just because I’m jealous that he is… and I remember sitting you down. I said, ‘I have to know if somebody came into a room with a gun and said, “right, I’m going to shoot Daisy or I’m going to shoot your girlfriend”, would you keep me alive? I have to know that.’ And then you said yes.

RACHEL: Aww!

DAISY: And that was mental though.

CATHY: What’s going to happen when he meets someone?

DAISY: I think she’ll fucking hate me.

CATHY: She will hate you.

DAISY: And she’ll be difficult. I think she’ll be completely mental. I think she’ll be a foreign artist.

CATHY: [laughs] Why do you think that?

DAISY: I don’t know why. Who has mental like breakdowns. And I come over to the house and you’re always like, ‘look, you really can’t stay long because Lol is upstairs and she has a headache.’ I go through the fridge and you’re panicking because I’ve like taken one of her Yakults and she’s going to go fucking… I think it will be – between me and her, I think there will be loads of tension and you will have to mediate.

CHARLIE: Well it’s a huge… yeah. I mean, even when I meet girls now, I’m like, ‘I’ve got to… can I introduce you to Daisy?’

RACHEL: So it’s not connected to the parents. It’s can I take –

CHARLIE: Yeah, massively.

DAISY: Really?

CHARLIE: Yeah, because you’re so judgmental and critical.

CATHY: It’s just me.

RACHEL: Yeah, it is.

[Flute sounds]

CATHY: Is there anything you’d like to say to each other that you’ve never said before?

DAISY: Do you like me? I have to know it! Do you really like me?

CHARLIE: Of course! Why the fuck do you think I’ve practically devoted my whole life to fucking serving you!

DAISY: All my traits?

CHARLIE: … Your majesty, so fucking yes! I suspect I would have to like you!

DAISY: But do you like hanging out with me?

CHARLIE: Yes, of course. Of course!

CATHY: He fucking loves you.

CHARLIE: Yes!

CATHY: I can tell you –

CHARLIE: But I hate saying it.

DAISY: I love hearing that. That’s really beautiful.

CHARLIE: I hate saying it. I love you, I do.

DAISY: Aww!

CATHY: I can’t say it. Do we love anyone?

DAISY: We love ourselves more than we could ever love anyone. And we love – do you know what? I can sum it up: when you listen to a song and you don’t think about the person you love, you think about them thinking about you in the song. That is fucking mental! Like *Brown Eyed Girl*, and you’re imagining him thinking that about me.

CATHY: [laughs] That’s exactly what it is!

DAISY: That’s fucking mental.

CHARLIE: Yeah, I mean that’s a severe psychotic problem.

CATHY: Of course! We are psychotic. So what do you want to ask Daisy?

CHARLIE: Um, nothing. I don’t know, I don’t think there is anything. I think I’ve said it to you anyway.

DAISY: That sums up our relationship: that he doesn’t actually need to know anything from me.

CHARLIE: No.

DAISY: That upsets me because I want it to be more about me.

CHARLIE: Yes, because that’s –

DAISY: And even my question was about myself.

CATHY: [laughs] I know it was!

DAISY: Which is fucking mental.

[Guitar music]

[Flute sounds]

This has been a Little Wander production. Music from Rhodri Viney. Local artwork from Cathy Mason. 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. Voiced by Melanie Walters.

CATHY: Cirencester Massiiiiiiiiiiiiiive!

RACHEL: No.