

EVEN MORE THAN THIS

Audio Transcript

Episode 4 Leon and Mr. E

- 0:00 ANIKA We acknowledge the custodians of place, the traditional owners of our lands, waters and skies, wherever you are in this moment.
We created this podcast here on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Eastern Kulin Nation and pay our respects to the Elders and Culture Leaders past, present, and future.
- 0:20 ANIKA Content warning. This is a quick heads up that this episode explores themes such as violations of consent, nude photo sharing, and student teacher relationships.
- 0:30 [Theme Music]
- 0:49 ANIKA Hey, and welcome to the show Even More Than This. My name is Anika, my pronouns are She/Her and I'm joined by Ling.
- 0:58 LING Hi, everyone. My name is Ling, my pronouns are She/They.
- 1:01 ANIKA And this podcast is inspired by the series More Than This, and today we're going to be spotlighting episode four of More Than This, the episode titled Leon and Mr. E. And collectively we're piecing together what it means to be an adolescent today.
- 1:15 LING Yeah, and so before we jump right in, just gonna give you a little outline of the episode. So in this episode, we unpack a lot more about the characters, especially Mr. E. So for example, he's not allowed to see his son, he crosses a little bit of a blurred line with Alex and there's an interesting confrontation with his students at a gay bar. And on the other hand, Leon struggles to hide his feelings for Charlotte from Legs, and this results in a lot of acts of jealousy and a really big blow out.
- 1:42 [Clip from More Than This]
- Leon* *Everyone will talk shit about her...*
- Legs* *What, Why do you care?*
- Leon* *It was so rude. Like, coming into Sammy's space like that.*
- Legs* *Yeah, hmm.*
- Leon* *None of them were even invited.*
- 2:01 LING So what you just heard was an excerpt, or more of a fight between Leon and Legs, talking about Charlotte's behaviour at the party. And even though this is at the end of the episode, it's just so heavy and such a big thing that we kind of have to talk about it first.

- 2:16 ANIKA Totally. I think it's very revealing, Ling.
- 2:19 LING Yeah, it's very revealing of the tension between Legs and Charlotte. And the fact that obviously there is like a large and very complicated history behind them. But I think it's a lot of internalised misogyny between Legs and Charlotte because essentially, Legs is still threatened by her. And even though there is some validity in Legs being threatened by Charlotte, it's still misogyny because she kind of hates her for having male attention almost, which is kind of what Legs wants. But it must hurt for Legs knowing that her boyfriend is essentially in love with somebody else. Let's have a listen to the confrontation between Charlotte and Legs.
- 2:58 [Clip from More Than This]
- Legs* *How do you do it?*
- Charlotte* *Do what?*
- Legs* *Walk into a room and have every guy look at you? What's the secret?*
- Charlotte* *I don't, there's no secret...*
- Legs* *Oh I think there is. You're like this weird magnet and you secretly love it.*
- Charlotte* *I guess I just have more in common with them than you do.*
- Legs* *What is that supposed to mean? Is it because I'm Black, Charlotte, is that it?*
- Charlotte* *No, Allegra that's not what I meant, that's.. I'm sorry. I'm sorry*
- Legs* *Don't try to be my friend, Jesus. You just fuck everything up don't you.*
- 3:30 ANIKA This sense of internalised misogyny is definitely heightened right at the end of this episode. Where Legs is seen going through Leon's phone, discovering some new photos of Charlotte and then sending them to a group chat.
- 3:42 LING So it's obvious that sending the photos to the public is evidently wrong. But I think the line is definitely a bit blurred.
- 3:49 ANIKA It's interesting because it's like who is to blame? Is Leon to blame for having the photos, is Charlotte's to blame for sending the photos? Is Legs to blame for sending those photos around? Like who is to blame in this situation?
- 4:01 LING Exactly. I think definitely Leon holds a responsibility, obviously. Because firstly, Leon and Charlotte are no longer dating. But then it's also like he didn't really do anything with them. They were just there and even, and the fact of them being there is wrong. But I do think that what Legs did was a lot worse, because now she's just exploited her completely. And now her photos are just everywhere. And you know, because it's the internet it's not going to go away.

4:29 ANIKA Yeah, it's interesting. And that brings up another conversation because Legs and Leon are dating is it right for her to go through his phone. Is that okay? Even though they do have this kind of relationship, and I think context really comes into play, it's like what are the motives behind logging into Leon's phone.

4:44 LING Exactly, because it's like, you can have your partner's passcode, you can have their phone, you can look through it, like whatever, like you should be fine to look through it because they evidently shouldn't have anything to hide. But it's like, if you have the intention of going through your partner's phone, thinking that you want to find something. You want to look for something bad so you can like fight with them or whatever. I think that's a very ill intent to have.

5:10 ANIKA Yeah, I totally agree. And I think in this context, it really brings up the conversation around privacy. And I always think about this. It's like, does privacy exist in a digital era because obviously the act of seeing somebody naked is a very intimate act that is shared between two people when they obviously feel very comfortable with one another. However, I feel as though sometimes in this digital age where people are taking photos and sending them to people, and then those photos then share to a larger group of people. There's that breach of privacy.

5:43 LING Exactly. It's not even a breach in privacy, it's a breach in consent in what Legs did. Because obviously Legs didn't have the consent to look at the photos. And she didn't have the consent to send them out at all. And in the context of an Australian High School, this act was actually illegal and it's called Image Based Abuse, and you can find more information about this at Kids Helpline.

6:05 ANIKA And speaking about privacy, we see a situation where Alex actually follows Mr. E home.

6:10 LING Yeah, that's a bit odd.

6:12 ANIKA Yeah, it's an interesting.. it's an interesting thing to have taken place but hey let's head over to that situation.

6:17 [Clip from More Than This]

Mr. E *Alex,*

Alex *Hey.*

Mr. E *Hey, what are you doing?*

Alex *I followed you home.*

Mr. E *ahh...*

Alex *Yeah, I just thought that now might be a better time for you to listen to my song. Maybe we can have a chat about it.*

Mr. E

umm..

Alex

Sorry. I realise how weird that sounds now.

Mr. E

No, no, it's ahh, it's fine. Um, why don't you come in.

6:41 ANIKA

So this brings to light a really interesting discussion around student and teacher relationships because I'm sure I've definitely experienced this, Ling you've definitely experienced this I'm sure, and I'm sure if you're tuning in now you definitely would have experienced this as well, where you feel very connected to some teachers, maybe they teach a subject that you're really interested in, you just connect on a deeper level. And we see this obviously between the relationship with Alex and Mr. E.

7:05 LING

Yeah, because in previous episodes they really bond over, you know, Alex opening up to him and his passion with music. Which I think Alex doesn't often do. So I think the fact that he shared this with Mr. E in the first place was really, a really crucial point in his character. And they've obviously developed this whole connection, which is manifested in Alex following him home. Which was a bit weird. That was used as a comedic trope in the show, but like, when you think about it, Like it's a bit off

7:35 ANIKA

It's true. If you do break it down it's like, hmmm, would you follow a teacher home? Probably not.

7:40 LING

I don't know why Mr. E was just like, yeah OK, like it was just skipped over it. Yes, come into my house.

(ANIKA: Yeah) Yeah, also the fact that Mr. E opened a beer for him. What did you think about that?

7:54 ANIKA

That's a whole added layer. Mr. E is at the end of the day, Alex's teacher. That is the, that is the reality of the situation so I think cracking open a cold one with your teacher, I don't know if that's the most appropriate thing to have taken place.

8:09 LING

Yeah, and it must have felt really uncomfortable too. Because I can't imagine like having a beer with my teacher because you see them as like this figure of authority. And then when you almost diminish it to like a super casual relationship, it feels a bit off because when they're your teacher, there's a sense of like professionalism that you have to keep. And I wouldn't say that Alex was completely at fault here because even though he is 19, he is technically older and an adult and can think for himself, Mr. E is the one here who's like the actual quote, real adult in the situation, where he kind of has the upper hand of the dynamic. So I do think that what Mr. E did was rather inappropriate given the situation, but at the same time Alex is still a mature adult. There does need to be a sense of professionalism within the relationship.

9:06 ANIKA

Yeah, I totally agree. I think at the end of the day, Mr. E does have a duty of care and I can totally resonate with the whole idea of like, as you get older and you become more of an adult, student teacher relationships tend to feel like more like peer to peer relationships, rather than there being a big disparity between power dynamics. And I think that's something that's really interesting to know. But as I said, he does have a

duty of care at the end of the day, and I think that isn't honoured. And obviously when you bring in the role of Alex's mum, she brings in that alternate perspective of like, hey, what's happening here isn't actually right.

9:36 [Clip from More Than This]

Alex's Mum *You're not his parent. You're his teacher. It's not your place to do this.*

9:41 ANIKA And that's when he really comes to his senses of oh my gosh, like what's happening?

9:45 LING Yeah, exactly. He kind of had this like realisation, almost like he was like, snapped back into reality. And he was like, oh, no, what am I doing? Like this is not right. But I also feel like Alex's mom was being a bit authoritative in the sense that she wouldn't listen to Alex in that situation.

10:03 ANIKA Yeah, and I feel like this is a common character trait of Alex's mum throughout the entire series.

10:09 LING Yeah, for sure. Like the entire time. She just doesn't listen to him and just imposes what she thinks is best. Rather than seeing that Oh, Alex is actually having a good time with somebody who isn't Charlotte, who I assume they hang out all the time.

10:25 ANIKA Yeah. And speaking of duty of care I think this is really showcased through the scene where Mr. E goes to the drag show, and he sees all the students at the event.

10:32 [Clip from More Than This]

Mr E's Date *What happened in there?*

Mr E *Umm, a student I know was performing, and umm, other students probably underage, probably drinking, it's been a long weird day with many inappropriate encounters with students... (laughs) Sorry, sorry.*

Mr E's Date *You don't have to keep saying sorry. It's fine. What would you like to do, you want to call it a night or... would you like to go somewhere else?*

Mr E *Yeah, I'd love that.*

11:13 LING Yeah. So I think it was really interesting the dynamic of the situation because there's so many factors that play into hand because there's the fact that Oh, Mr. E is on a date with a guy for the first time in such a long time, and he's finally getting to spend time with himself. But then there's also the the fact of him seeing his students at the gay bar, where, number one, maybe he doesn't want to be outed. Maybe he's not comfortable with people knowing that piece of information yet. Or number two, it's yeah, like you said, really just the fact of student teacher relationships outside of class. So what did you think about that?

- 11:51 ANIKA I think it was really interesting, the way that he navigated it in that he was like, oh, like I need to get out of here. But I think what was more interesting was the way in which his date actually navigated the situation as well. When we talk about these themes of consent, he was really checking in and really prompting conversation and making sure that Mr. E was comfortable with what was going on and didn't feel pressure to do anything, didn't feel as though he has been forced into anything and really made it as though he was making the choices.
- 12:20 LING Yeah, exactly. He was really giving him like a lot of options, and things like that. But yeah, going back to the whole seeing your students at a gay bar thing. Firstly, that must have been really horrifying for Mr. E, can't imagine like, just suddenly you're on a date and you see like tons of your students.
- 12:38 ANIKA I feel like that would be any teachers nightmare. Like I'm just trying to go on a date
- 12:43 LING Exactly, his heart must have just dropped. (ANIKA: I know) There was one scene where Jamie actually saw Mr. E, think he was like exiting or something, but it was so wholesome, because Jamie actually smiled. And they were, you know, happy that Mr. E was part of the community and it was really mature of Jamie as well, to not tell anybody else because I think they were the only person who saw it.
- 13:10 ANIKA Yeah. And I feel like that's a real respect of privacy. And obviously, like, Mr. E hasn't been forthcoming with that information about his identity and the fact that Jamie was respectful of the fact that he hasn't been forthcoming throughout the series, is very telling of Jamie's personality. I think Jamie is a very mature character.
- 13:30 LING I think they really are, and the act of Jamie giving Mr. E like, the rainbow badge, was so wholesome. (ANIKA: It was very wholesome) It was just such a nice way of saying like, Oh, I support you through an action rather than just words you know?
- 13:47 ANIKA Exactly. Just another case of Jamie being supportive, taking on a different approach, which is so important. So I challenge you to put yourself in the perspective of Jamie and really think about what would you do if you were in Jamie's situation? And so we went around and we asked some young people about what they would do if they saw a teacher out. And here are some of the responses.
- 14:08 [Background Music]
- Participant 1* *If I saw my teacher out at the club, I probably would not say or do anything, because this is their unprofessional side of their life so you know, I'd just leave them to it.*
- Participant 2* *I would have a big fat chinwag with them because I'm a chatty Cathy. I also feel like once we've left school, it's like you're no longer a teacher. You are just another member of the public. And we're on the same level now. We can you know, we can discuss things we can we can have a good chit chat. Have a yarn, have a good old yarn. And yeah, I think I would definitely, definitely have chat for sure.*
- Participant 3* *If I saw my teacher at the club, honestly, I wouldn't really find it that awkward. In fact, I would actually go up and say hi, and try and talk with them. Because, you know, even though I can understand why it would be awkward for them, because throughout their*

whole lives, they've always seen you as sort of a student and in that sense, they almost feel like they're responsible for you. So it can feel weird seeing you in this adult situation. And same goes with the student right? They've always seen a teacher this sort of mentor position and when they randomly see, you know, someone they deem superior to them in like someplace where they're supposed to try and relax and have fun. It's a bit awkward, but, you know, instead of letting those, that awkwardness get to you and make you uncomfortable and ruin your experience, honestly, I would just go up and say hi and have fun because you know that way you don't ruin your own experience and you can actually relax because you're always going to meet people of different age groups and rather than letting the awkwardness get to you and actually make it, let it become a problem to you. You should just embrace it and just enjoy meeting new people.

Participant 4 *It definitely depends which teacher. If it was a teacher I liked, I would just vibe with them. Have a dance, have a shot together. Cause why not. If it was a teach I didn't like, I'll probably just avoid eye contact and any interaction at all. Because it can be quite awkward like if you see a teacher out, if you don't get along, just like not getting on with a friend or a person, if you see them out you, one, don't want it to ruin your night. And two, you don't want it to, you just can't be bothered. Like you want to have a good time like you don't want to. You don't want to have to converse with people that you don't want to see or you don't want to talk to you don't like in general. But if I, if I like them definitely have a dance. Because why not.*

Participant 5 *If I ever saw my teacher at the club I would do my best to just forget about it. I would just be in denial about it because that is extremely mortifying, and I would just never bring it up in any context with the teacher. And just try to pretend that nothing ever happened.*

Participant 6 *I've actually kind of experienced that in a way like, in year 12. Like once I turned 18 me and my mates would sort of go to the pub sometimes between lockdowns when we weren't stuck at home. And there were sort of times we'd be at like a pub near our school and see teachers after school, which was pretty funny. I guess growing up you're sort of not used to seeing your teachers drinking beers and whatnot, but um, what would I do? I guess if I saw like a teacher I wasn't particularly fond of I'd be a bit weirded out by it. But you know, maybe say hi. Maybe try and grab a snapchat photo, (laughs) Yeah, I don't know what I'd do.*

Participant 7 *I love this question. Um, if I saw my teacher out... I don't know. I think I'm a pretty relaxed kind of person. But maybe it's also just because I'm a bit, I was a goody two shoes in high school. I'm very comfortable to kind of go up and chat to people who were my teachers because I respect a lot of them and, you know, the influence that they had on who I am now and hopefully who I will be in the future. Like I owe so much to so many high school teachers because they were the people who, like read my work first, who encouraged me to apply for things who kind of, yeah, just really facilitated an environment where I was able to pursue what I'm now pursuing, I suppose professionally so if I saw a teacher in a bar, I think I'd definitely go and chat to them and just sort of catch up on what's been going down since we left because yeah, everyone has a story to tell and I think teachers are very, very human despite what people kind of have in their minds as an image of, I suppose, what teachers are like.*

Maybe when you were at high school, I think things are very, very different when you chat outside of that kind of environment.

Participant 8 So basically, it depends on the teacher, because at school, I had a great relationship between certain teachers, right? Some of them weren't actually my teachers, some of them were just staff members. So obviously, they were a lot more opening and you could just talk about whatever you want. They were basically friends. Right? So if you see, if I see them out, I'm gonna go oh, hey, how you going, right? I might even get a bit of a gee up, if I see them. But, if there's some teachers that are like, I had a bad history with, right? They didn't respect me. I'm not gonna give them the same respect, obviously. Right. So yeah, it just depends on the person.

19:55 LING So those are some really interesting responses from such a funny question, to wrap up this episode, and I really want to know what you think Anika? What would you do if you saw your teacher out?

20:04 ANIKA Look Ling I'm going to be honest, I probably walk up to them, have a good chat. You know, how the kids going? How's the hubby going? What's the vibe? What are our plans for tonight kind of situation? That's me. I'm all about making awkward, not.. I don't go in with the intention of making awkward conversation, but it always pans out in that way, that's what I'd personally do. What would you do Ling?

20:24 LING I think cause now I'm in Uni, like, it's kind of like whatever, but if I was in high school, probably go up to them, you know, ask for an extension, you know, blackmail them a little bit. Like I saw, I saw you there the other day, you know, are you going to give me that A, you know? Anyways, but just to go back to the initial question of the podcast, you know, the whole umbrella, what is it like to be an adolescent in today's day and age, and from this episode I think what resonated with me the most to help answer the question is actually a small scene where Leon's talking to his little brother,

20:54 [Clip from More Than This]

Leon's brother You know, how at school you and Legs kind of like a pair. I don't know if I really want to be in a pair with Gina.

Leon You think we're in a pair?

Leon's Brother I mean, you're always together at school. Weird, because it wasn't like that with Charlotte. Like you did your own things, but you were still a couple, you know.

21:17 LING I think it's so important to share things with other people, but also still grow on your own at the same time, because this is your journey, and it's hard to find yourself when there's someone else next to you.

21:26 ANIKA I agree. I think what I found most interesting was just the grey area surrounding issues with consent in regards to nude photo sharing. I think there's an important conversation around what happens when two people break up and what should be done. And what I find most interesting about, like the adolescent experience, in this day and age is essentially navigating relationships almost in two worlds. Like once

again, you've got that disconnect between relationships in the online world and in the real world. And personally, I believe that if you're in a relationship with somebody in real life, there's that consent to do certain things. And that should also translate in a virtual space as well.

22:01 LING Yeah, that's a really perceptive response. And I think that's a great way to end this episode. Thank you all for listening and we'll see you next time.

22:08 [Theme Music]

22:40 If any of the content in this episode raises any issues for you, Kids Helpline's qualified counsellors are available via web chat, phone or email anytime and for any reason. Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, even from a mobile, confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. Visit www.kidshelpline.com.au or call one 1800 55 1800.

23:07 End