

EVEN MORE THAN THIS

Audio Transcript

Episode 6 The Party

- 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 consent, and the influences of drug use on health conditions.
- 0:29 [Theme Music]
- 0:48 LING Hey everyone, welcome to the show. Even More Than This, based on the TV show More Than This. My name is Ling, my pronouns are She/They and I'm joined by Anika.
- 0:57 ANIKA Hey I'm Anika, my pronouns are She/Her. And in this episode, we're gonna be exploring episode six of more than this where we are piecing together what it means to be an adolescent in today's day and age. So a little bit of a recap of episode six as we reached the sixth and final episode of the series, all the tensions come to an absolute boiling point and erupt in the explosion of emotions and drama. I feel as though, in everyone's teen journey there was that one party and for the More Than This crew, it was definitely this one that Benson hosted. Can you relate to that Ling? (*LING Yep, totally*) Throughout this episode, there were lots of saucy kisses, dramatic breakups, and not only did an ambulance rock up to the scene, also Mr. E did as well. But right at the beginning of this episode, we see the unfolding of the situation between the Charlotte and Carlisle, so let's get into an interaction between them two.
- 1:51 [Clip from More Than This]
- Carlisle Morning. Made you coffee.*
- Charlotte Thanks*
- Carlisle You Ok?*
- Charlotte Yeah, I just got something to tell you.*
- Carlisle There another guy. 'Course there's another guy. Where is he, I'll kill him.*
- Charlotte I'm 17.*
- Carlisle No you're not.*
- Charlotte yeah I am*

Carlisle *No you're not!*

Charlotte *I'm sorry. I should have told you.*

Carlisle *I should have asked beforehand. Ah...*

Charlotte *And I don't want to put you in any kind of position, and I'm okay.*

Carlisle *You're insanely mature for 17 year old*

Charlotte *I'll probably finish this coffee and then bounce.*

Carlisle *You know, I think that's a good idea.*

2:33 LING

So what you just heard was Charlotte ended up telling Carlisle that she was actually 17. And I think his response was a very common one. And he was like, Oh, you're certainly mature for your age. And I feel like men often say that when they found, when they find out about a girl's age, because the girl is often more mature of her age. But I feel like a lot of people use that as an excuse to justify their behaviour. And so this situation is so complicated because it was clearly unethical, but again, who is to blame? Because Carlisle is obviously the older person, but he didn't know her age, which in that sense, is not his fault. But he also didn't bother to ask, which to me hints that like some part of him knew, but he didn't really care, because he just wanted to sleep with her without like complicating the situation. And if he asked her, and the answer was something that he didn't want to hear, it would like he would have to say no, even though he didn't want to. But then on the flip side, I think, part of it falls on Charlotte as well, because even though she is the child, she still knew, like to a certain extent that he was older, and that she was in high school. And yeah, so just what do you think about this whole situation?

3:48 ANIKA

I think that relationships are always two way and I agree, and I think a quote that really accentuates that whole idea is the I should have told you, I should have asked little sequence. And I think that's really important to note. I think something that I noticed in myself and my own kind of viewing habits whilst I was watching this scene, was that I was really on edge the whole time. And I was kind of really waiting for something bad to happen, like the situation and the unfolding of the situation in itself was not obviously a very positive thing. Obviously Charlotte was very vulnerable, kind of turned to Carlisle as a means of kind of support and that validation. I think I was definitely anticipating for something really bad to happen. Following on from all of this bad luck. Is that something that you were also anticipating as well Ling?

4:26 LING

It was like just so uncomfortable, the whole interaction. But I think it's also because of, like, we're watching this happen in front of us and we expect bad things to happen because that's what society has kind of nurtured us to think. Because you often see the trope of like, young girl older guy never ends well. So I think yeah, that was why, you know, we were anticipating that and I also think in terms like of representation, like we were saying, the whole like after she told him and then his response. I think that was represented well, because it was like, the lines and the characters for trying to show

the audience like, Oh, this is what you should do. If you encounter this. This is what you should say, and things like that. But I also think that he wasn't, like Carlisle wasn't violent or anything, and he did regret what he did and he admitted his part of the responsibility. But I felt like he didn't really feel bad about what happened to her, but rather how it could impact him because he was like, Oh, don't tell anyone and things like that. I feel like that comes across as like, I don't want to get in trouble. But, you know, like, this is on you.

5:41 ANIKA Yeah, totally. And I think something that's important to flag in this scene is that this is purely just an isolated example. It is, it wasn't a completely negative and completely dangerous experience, on the whole. And both parties were safe, I guess eventually. But this is not always the case. So I think it's really important to flag that this is just an isolated example.

6:03 LING Yeah, absolutely. And I think like the worry that we feel for Charlotte as the audience is completely valid, because even Alex was worried about her, like, the next day at school, you know, and I think these concerns that he voiced were just totally valid.

6:16 ANIKA I agree and that conversation takes place just before they head off to Benson's party. So I reckon let's switch up the conversation and take it to the main event of the episode.

6:26 [Clip from More Than This]

Benson Do you know what I haven't played in the longest time?

Background
Voices What?

Benson Spin the Bottle!

Background
Voices Oh my god / oooh / yes

Benson Oh yes, don't test me! Don't test me, come on, where is it now?
Here it is. Sit down, Sit down, Sit down, Sit. Down.
I'm telling you, come on

6:42 ANIKA So the big question Ling, should you play spin the bottle, if you're in a relationship?

6:47 LING Ok, personally, I would say no. And in terms of the show, I think Zali's decision to play spin the bottle while having a partner was really weird. And to me kind of showed that she was already over the relationship and she was trying to break up with Emma in the most non straightforward way as possible. And it's obviously you know, very hard to watch the person that you're in love with kiss somebody else and just unpack that and let's have a listen to the interaction after the kiss, which is the exchange between Zali and Jamie after Zali and Emma's breakup.

7:21 [Clip from More Than This]

Zali *I just ended things with Emma.*

Jamie *Oh, I'm sorry.*

Zali *No it's ok. it was meant to be. Over, I mean, it was meant to be over.*

Jamie *Right (Jamie kisses Zali)*

Zali *Jamie...*
Sorry, I don't like you like that.

Jamie *Sorry. I'm sorry.*

Zali *I appreciated you being there for me.*

Jamie *Forget I did anything.*

8:01 LING So, Zali and Emma have broken up, breaking news, and then now Jamie is trying to shoot their shot right, in the bathtub scene. So yeah, I think that when Jamie tried to kiss Zali when they were alone, it was not necessarily them misreading the situation. Because before it was clear that Zali wanted to kiss them. But this also brings up the question of consent yet again. Should you ask someone before kissing them?

8:26 ANIKA I think it's very context dependent. I don't have a straightforward answer. I thought I had a straightforward answer, but I don't have a straightforward answer. So I'm just gonna say it's very context dependent. Yeah, I think sometimes it's important to read the room and kind of take things slowly but then on other occasions, I think there is something to be said about asking before kissing somebody. What do you think Ling?

8:44 LING Yeah, I think when I ask people this question, a lot of the times answers like, oh, but it ruins the vibe, you know, but is there a vibe if there's no consent? You know what I mean? (*ANIKA Consent is a vibe*) Exactly. So I feel like it's kind of sweet when you know, they ask you, because it's clear that, you know, they're thinking about how you feel with the situation and all of that. But yeah, I think it is still context depending like you kind of have to do, read the room and you have to judge the context on your own.

9:14 ANIKA I do agree and I think when we compare different kissing scenes throughout the episode, that of Zali and Jamie and then that of Alex and Sammy. It is very context dependent. And we can see that obviously throughout the course of the show, we're building up to, we're building up the tension between Zali and Jamie and this kiss kind of like almost consolidates all of the tension that's built up. However in the kiss between Alex and Sammy, I have questions Ling.

9:38 LING Yeah, Sammy did not read the room. That was very clear. Really just came out of nowhere. It was such a curveball because there was no like, build up, there was no hints. The hints were not dropped, that they were going to kiss and I think that, but that still does bring up you know, the consent thing, because the context was definitely not there. And the consent definitely was not either. So I felt like that's such a weird combination of those things.

- 10:05 ANIKA I agree Ling and I think before we go any further, let's take a few steps back and let's unpack the breakup between Zali and Emma.
- 10:13 LING Yeah, totally. So after the whole Spin the Bottle game, Emma, within good reason I suppose, breaks up with Zali and I think this was justified. You know, the breakup, but the way she went about it was I feel so controlling and manipulative as if she was like trying to make Zali feel guilty because I remember what she said she was like.. after all I've done for you.. And something like that, as if Zali owes Emma something back for caring about her when in reality I don't think she does. And Emma has a very fixer mentality, you know, those relationships where it's like, oh, I can fix you, you know, you, we are in this together. And she thinks that she can fix Zali like if she tried hard enough, but I think in reality, the only person who can fix Zali is Zali herself. Because in order to really heal and process things, you kinda have to do it on your own. Because when you share pain with somebody who cares about you, it's like they feel it too. It's like they're carrying the pain with you. And when you share a healing process and pain with them, it makes it hard for you to grow on your own because you have someone to care about. And in that sense, hurting yourself or simply just being in pain is still hurting the other person which I think just described like their entire relationship, and it's a whole other burden to carry. Because you can be with somebody else, but I feel like you kind of have to be your own person at the same time. You know what I mean?
- 11:32 ANIKA Oh, 100 percent. I'm such a big advocate for that whole idea. And I think it's interesting because you can't be mad at Emma for trying to care. I think it's the approach that she takes that is the downfall, essentially. But I think as you progress through each relationship that you and especially as an adolescent and as you progress through your years of life, I think you kind of learn from each relationship, and once you like, once a relationship concludes, especially an intimate relationship you're like okay, what did we do in this, what did that, how, what kind of person was in this relationship? How can I improve and how can I change and how can I evolve for like the next relationship? How will the relationship itself be different and what will like the kind of hurdles that we encounter, how would they differ from the past relationship? I think you evolve as you go. Through every relationship in your life.
- 12:19 LING Exactly. Yeah. So I just hope that their relationship concluding is a learning lesson for them for the better health of the characters.
- 12:28 ANIKA I agree. And speaking of better health, we run into a bit of a situation where one of our characters, Alex, has an epileptic episode, where some of the characters at the party do need to call the ambulance but they also call good old Mr. E.
- 12:43 LING I know, right? But honestly, like, I could relate to that because I feel like oh, no, like somethings happened, we're all kids, Oh, there's an adult. Ok, they can fix everything, you know, because they're older. It's fine. You know.
- 12:55 ANIKA I agree. Would you call your teacher Ling?
- 12:56 LING Yes! Definitely. I feel like, yeah.

- 13:00 ANIKA So with that we've come to the very final scene of the episode of the entire show, which is basically a full circle moment because we revisit the first scene in the show.
- 13:09 LING I know, yeah, very bittersweet, very bittersweet. So I absolutely love the way that they decided to end the show, which was with a series of reflective quotes from each of the main characters. So let's start off with Zali's quote.
- 13:20 [Clip from More Than This]
- Zali* *Who am I as a teenager? I'm smart, a high achiever, and yet I have no control over anything. Not even my mind.*
- 13:38 LING I think this is actually very common in teens. Because when you're the type of person to have control your whole life, and suddenly you've just lost it, it's like you have no ground to stand on and you kind of lose your way. You know what I mean? Like, things don't seem to click like they used to, and it's like you lost a part of you, you know.
- 13:54 ANIKA I think something that happens as you get older is that suddenly situations become more complicated. Things are not as simple and it does tap into that whole idea of you do lose control of situations. And I think in the case of Zali it's really interesting because she taps into that theme of imposter syndrome, not feeling good enough. But what is good enough?
- 14:11 LING Exactly. Yeah. I never really thought about it that way. So after that, quote, we have Jamie which is also really interesting.
- 14:18 [Clip from More Than This]
- Jamie* *I'm passionate, creative, full of colour, but no one really sees it. The colours swirl together to make a grey.*
- 14:32 LING I think this quote is actually so reflective of Jamie's whole personality and their journey throughout the whole show because as you can see from set design and costume and things like that, they are very bright and very out there. And like it's so great, but I feel like yeah, people don't really see them for what they really are. And it just gets confusing.
- 14:54 ANIKA I agree. And I think this is a very common feeling throughout adolescence where people have this external perception on you. However, internally, it doesn't always reflect.
- 15:03 LING hmm, yeah, I can definitely see that in Jamie as well.
- 15:07 ANIKA I agree. And that also aligns with Leon's quote as well.
- 15:11 [Clip from More Than This]
- Leon* *I don't know how others perceive me. I don't even really know how I perceive myself. I'm another outsider. Even to me.*

- 15:20 LING I think this quote out of everyone's is super valid and understandable because being a teen is such an awkward stage in your life, because it's so in between, like you're not fully an adult, but you're not a child. And you're expected to do things with maturity. But still, yeah, treated like child and it's confusing, because you're not here, you're not there. And essentially, you are an outsider. And while managing all of this, you still have to find yourself on the way.
- 15:47 ANIKA I agree. And I think sometimes you do things or you're part of things or you're in certain social groups, where you don't really align with those people. Maybe you do, and then you lose touch with that kind of community. And you kind of lose your sense of self, (*LING Yeah, yeah*) in that regard. And I think that definitely shines through in the case of Leon. I think what's really interesting is that like, this going to get a bit deep, but I feel is there like everything and that happens in life, everyone that you meet in life is there to teach you something positive, negative, neutral, irregardless, it's there and they're there to teach you something. And it's what you take out of those situations, which is essentially what makes you the person that you are. And I think being in adolescence and in the case of Leon, and that quote, I think he's really on that journey of discovering who he is, and how all of these different life experiences are essentially informing that character.
- 16:37 LING Yeah, I think that's such an interesting way to put it because I feel like people who you associate with kind of reflect who you are, as well. And yeah, so just to wrap it all up. Charlotte says,
- 16:47 [Clip from More Than This]
- Charlotte* *I'm so much more than just one specific thing. But I don't know how to tell you why.*
- 16:55 LING I think with this quote, it's the one I relate to the most, because it's really understandable in terms of like outlooks and reputation. Because for example in school Charlotte was defined kind of by the whole nude situation. And she couldn't really be seen as anything else after that happened. And I think the world tends to categorise people with one specific label. And it's frustrating when like you are other things as well. But people don't see that because of like the way you looked or the way you act and then what other people say about you, and yeah, you kind of just have to look close enough to really see it.
- 17:30 ANIKA I agree. And I think our society is obsessed with binary structures, whether it be within gender, sexuality, culture, race, age, etc, etc. We're obsessed with binary structures, and that also translates in a social sense. It's like, oh, you're this person, and you do this, that is your thing. It's like, why can't you just be a person? Why can't you just exist? Why can't you have different quote unquote, phases? Or, you know, why can't you just pursue what you want to without judgment, or without being pigeonholed and I actually really resonate with this as well Ling because I think that yeah, as I said, people, society is almost programmed to pigeonhole to look at, to look for binary structures. However, why can't we just exist humans are so complex and so multifaceted. It's a really, there's a really interesting conversation in that.

18:16 LING Yeah, so after all these character reflections, let's reflect ourself and reflect on what we've been asking for this entire podcast. So what does it mean to be an adolescent in today's age?

18:28 ANIKA The adolescent years of today's day and age are really special and really transformative I feel. I feel like the overall experience is really pressuring but like forgiving at like, the same time. And it's pressuring in that you feel as though the whole world is watching you, especially through the digital world and the real world, as well. But I feel like it's also forgiving in that you're also a bit of a rookie in lots of the things that you do as you're, you're experiencing new challenges. You're experiencing new experiences and on top of navigating who you are from a day to day, on a day to day basis. You also have to open yourself to the opportunity of finding yourself in like new contexts and understanding yourselves in other ways, I guess like never before. But being, being an adolescent is about growth. It's about existence. And I guess, life is essentially like one big journey about finding who you are. Your place and your purpose in this universe and your adolescence essentially initiates the process and discovery of that introspection. I feel, but I guess adolescents of today enjoy like a catalogue of experiences, which soundtrack the people that they become, and I guess I'm a big music fan, and this discography is so multifaceted, and incorporates different genres, stories, sounds and vibes that people are just so complex. And essentially, they'll never be understood. And it's like, that's okay. And I feel like your adolescence is realising that that is okay. It's the beginning of the process that, of realising that life is not linear, and things will happen as they're meant to, and you're meant to be here and things will turn out how they are intended to. There's a really awesome quote from an artist I'm obsessed with. His name's David Lee Pepe from a band called Gang of Youths and he goes by the quote of "Life is one big mess and it's so much fun figuring it out." And I feel like it's an awesome sentiment to kind of finish on, personally. Yeah, totally. What about you Ling?

20:26 LING Love the music analogy by the way. Feel like my answer is like so much shorter than yours, but yeah, for me, talking about all of this, like you said, was a journey of self reflection and closure on a lot of topics because I really hadn't had a chance to discuss or think about these things in a context like this. And to answer the question, I think being an adolescent, or just like even being human today is about learning. Because like I said before, you're expected to act like an adult, but treated like a child. And even though that duality is confusing, I think it opens up like this perfect gateway to learn, because you're expected to make mistakes, but you also are given the chance to learn from them. And so looking back at my life experiences, you know, at the old age of 18, I can definitely say yeah, they were hard. And they were difficult to get through. But like, I don't regret a single one of them. Because the lesson I took from that is something I can bring forward in life. So after all that deep reflection, we're just going to throw it to the people and see what they have to say.

21:34 [Background Music]

Participant 1 Do I like being a teen, and would I want to go back in time, or would I want to grow up quicker? Honestly, I really like being a teen and I would definitely want to go back in time. Seriously, when you're a teenager, that's basically your sweet spot. You have a lot of freedom. And you don't really have financial pressures you don't have to pay rent,

you don't have to work you're not financially independent. So you have a lot of freedom without really any liabilities or burden.

Participant 2 I have no idea if I like being a teen because oftentimes I find myself wishing that I was younger, so I didn't really understand much about the world and like struggle and like having to find a job and get my life together. But at the same time I'm more than ready to be independent and live my own life. So at the end of the day, I just find it best to be in the moment and try not to think backwards or forwards because both alternatives can be depressing.

Participant 3 I think that I've loved being a teen. They've been some of the best years of my life for sure. My teen years, particularly the last couple, I think COVID sort of taught us to appreciate the small moments so that when we were together, we would always have a good time. You know, whether whether it was you know, going to parties together or the limited time we did have in the classroom together outside of you know, lockdowns. I'd say I love being a teen and I'd love to do it again because growing up is boring.

Participant 4 So I love being a teen because like you just spend, spend time with mates. Just do whatever you wanted. But even today, I still, still feel like I can do whatever I want. You should try and stay young as possible. So you can have that freedom experiencing different things, enjoying yourself. Would I go back? I probably wouldn't because I like the history that I have. Oh actually if I had to go back I'd go back just for the moments. Just to remember the moments if that makes sense. Yeah.

Participant 5 This is really interesting because for me, it's changed throughout my teenage hood. I think earlier on in my teenage years, I was definitely keen to grow up quickly. I think just because I've always felt like an 80 year old woman on the inside, in the body of like an you know, a 19 year old but yeah, I think now I'm kind of at a phase in my life where I've really accepted that it's okay to like just take every day as it comes and not feel like you need to have completed a whole lot of things or reached a whole lot of milestones by a certain age because really the experiences that you want in life and the things the opportunities and the achievements you want to have. I think they come to you when they come to you for a reason.

Participant 6 That's a really good question. Because I feel like when you're the age that you are, you don't want to be that age. But what I've realised especially after finishing school, that your teens are actually very special years because I'm comparing to when I was younger, I was very timid kid and like not very confident. And like, I don't think I understood my value, my worth. But as I've grown up I've experienced different things. I've done certain things to make myself more confident. I've focused on myself more. And I've done more to grow my character and develop me as a person. And I'm actually very appreciative of my teens because this point in my life, this is all I know and I know that the most, most growth that's happened has been in say the last year the last two, three years, being a teenager.

Participant 7 Love, love love being a teen. Because when you're a teen no one is like hold up a second you're like 30 now and you're still at uni like what's up with that? Like, shouldn't you have a proper job? You can just be like, Yes, I'm at uni, I'm a teen, this is what I'm doing. And I'm learning, I'm still learning and it's okay to still be learning then.

25:40 LING So as we approach the end of this podcast, and really this whole journey, we wanted to thank the ACTF and Queer Town for facilitating this whole process. It's been such a great experience not only to host a podcast, but to also discuss the teen life. I just wanted to thank Archie and Bridget for being so supportive and guiding us throughout this whole experience. We really couldn't have done it without the both of you and of course, thank you to Anika. It's been great to work with you to create this safe space.

26:05 ANIKA I want to say a big thank you to you Ling for having the most awesome outlook and always bringing really insightful discussions to the table. We obviously also have to say a massive thank you to Olivia and Luca and the team behind the show More Than This, firstly for creating a body of work that very accurately reflects the adolescent experience of today. But also enabling us the platform to explore and dissect many of the themes, moments and broader discussions within it. And lastly, thank you, thank you for tuning in. Thank you for being here. Thank you for going on this journey with us. We hope that this process has been equally introspective and entertaining.

26:40 LING Thank you all,

26:41 ANIKA Until next time,

26:42 LING
ANIKA Bye!

26:43 [Theme Music]

27:14 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 1800 55 1800

27:41 End