

EVEN MORE THAN THIS

Audio Transcript

Episode 7 Interview with Olivia and Luka

- 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 [Theme Music]
- 0:39 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
- 0:48 ANIKA Hey I'm Anika, my pronouns are She/Her and all throughout the series, we have been piecing together what does it mean to be an adolescent today? And so we've been exploring this through the show More Than This as Ling said, and today we're joined by the creators Olivia and Luka, hello.
- 1:03 OLIVIA
LUKA Hi!
- 1:04 ANIKA How we feeling?
- 1:05 OLIVIA So ecstatic
- 1:05 LUKA I'm ecstatic, oh my god. (Laughs)
- 1:09 OLIVIA Connected
- 1:10 ANIKA Honestly, vibes. On the same wavelength. And hey, before we jump into it, do you guys want to give us a little bit of an introduction about who you are.
- 1:16 OLIVIA I would love to. Hello, my name is Olivia Deeble. I use She/Her pronouns and I am the writer and co-creator of the More Than This show.
- 1:25 LUKA And I am Luka Gracie, my pronouns are They/Them and I am the co-creator of the show as well.
- 1:31 OLIVIA
LUKA Hooray!
- 1:34 ANIKA Yay, amazing. Thank you so much for being here guys. We're so excited to chat.
- 1:38 OLIVIA Pleasure.
- 1:39 LUKA Thanks for having us

1:40 OLIVIA We love talking about ourselves and the things we make, (*LUKA we do*) it's like an egotistical trip all the time.

1:44 LUKA My favourite thing to talk about.

1:45 OLIVIA Yeah, it's actually the only thing we do talk about.

1:48 LING I know it's so surreal to like, see their faces. (*Group laughing*) No, after seeing them on a screen and then you guys walk in and I'm like, Whoa..

1:55 OLIVIA was it weird having coffee with us before?

1:57 LING Yes! I was like, Oh my God. They're real people.

2:00 ANIKA Yep, they're not just two dimensional. (*LING yeah*) Yep, that's usually how it is. But hey, we're here to talk about the show *More Than This*. And we want to jump right into the conversation because that's what people are here to listen to.

2:11 LING Alright, so starting off with the first question, very simple, but what inspired you to make the show?

2:18 OLIVIA A couple of things. So I think I approached you with the idea after I'd like come back from America and I was doing all of these auditions that was for the same cookie cutter roles. And I'd like read the same scripts and it would be about the same like popular girl, nerdy girl, Hot Jock boy and maybe like a funny character. And I just didn't feel like it resonated or or even that like it was actually doing anything interesting. So during kind of that, when the first lockdown hit, I had like, come up with the concepts and we live really close to each other. So we were going on walks like probably every day, we go and sit in our little park, I like to call Luka my intimate partner and they refuse to use that, but I say that to people. Every time I say that Luka says we're not, but now I've said it on a podcast so now you can't deny it (*LUKA Fantastic, now we're labeled as that*) yeah, intimate partners. And yeah, that's kind of where it blossomed and grew. I had a couple of the characters kind of conceptualised in my brain. I knew that I wanted every episode to be about a character and that we'd follow their home life and their journey to see why they do it. And I knew that I didn't want to have any exposition in the show. I knew I wanted to like when we met the characters, you see what they go through, maybe you get a little bit of context along the line, but that's it. That's something I was really wanting to push because you know, what a lot of shows is like my mother died four years ago, and that's why I don't drive and it's like what? So it's like, you don't get that kind of context in real life with people you meet them at face value, and then you get to judge how you feel about them the more it develops your relationship with them so I thought that that was really important. And then yeah, we kind of got to work and we, you came up with a lot of the characters and then we were like, Okay, what, what are we, what's the main thing that we want this character to go through? So for example, Zali, we were like, we really wanted that to be a depiction of like, you know, mental health illness and self harm and eating disorders and the effects that that can have on that. You know, like, yeah, all the characters kind of had something they wanted to go through and that we'd really follow them through

that. So we started that. And then our process was to do improvisations. So we cast most of our cast pretty early on, hey?

- 4:21 LUKA In fact, most of the main five were (*OLIVIA except for Alex*), except for Alex, were in that original..
- 4:26 OLIVIA Yeah, were in the original workshop. Yeah, and that was like a year before like had really set off in full swing and because we consistently had like, picked them so early, and that I've been doing all these improvisational workshops, that then I would film and then I'd come back and write the scenes. We got to know the characters so well, and that's why they're so authentic because they've been part of this journey for so long, and they got to just put, like, when, because the actors were comfortable in improv'ing, then we got to culminate these amazing characters. Yeah, and then we got it written. And then it got made, and here we are.
- 5:00 LUKA I feel like my motivation to make it was different to yours (*OLIVIA yeah absolutely*) Because like, you'd been getting all these auditions for quite superficial characters. (*OLIVIA Yeah*) like that blonde character, (*OLIVIA Yeah*) you know what I mean, (*OLIVIA the mean girl*) because I really wanted to make More Than This because I'd never seen a non-binary character in Australian television. And also, as an actor, I had been doing auditions but I'd only go for lesbian roles or trans men. And I'm none of those. So it was like, oh, I need to create a character for myself before (*OLIVIA I can see myself in them*) Yeah. So yeah, creating that, creating Jamie and most of the queer characters on our show stem from that in actor's being felt seen. Yeah. Because, yeah, Oisin, who plays Benson, and Selena who plays Zali, like I don't think they had ever seen, well Selena, it was her first thing ever.
- 5:59 OLIVIA She works at Officeworks, (*LUKA Yeah*) Like, amazing.
- 6:03 LUKA But they'd never seen a, you know, a character like theirs before on..
- 6:07 OLIVIA And it wasn't also like fetishising queerness, either. It was about that these people like you know, you've seen the show, like it's about that these people are queer, but they also go through things. So why does it really matter who their sexual orientation is.
- 6:19 LUKA It's just who they are, and who they are, it matters. But in the way that we're seeing them at the moment in the series, like it doesn't (*OLIVIA Yeah*) they're not (*OLIVIA Yeah they're just people*) doesn't care, and everyone just supports each other.
- 6:31 OLIVIA When we were also starting to culminate scripts we, Luka and I, put a call out on Instagram for like, like maybe 50 kids. And we were like, anyone want a zoom call with us? And we asked them questions about that, what they wanted to see on TV, what kind of representation they wanted, how year 12 was for them. And we culminated it all and that's what really helped us talk about the experiences as well. So it wasn't just that we were talking to our actors, it was also regular year 10, 11, 12 kids, and what they were going through. And that remained completely anonymous, but a lot of our inspiration, yeah, came from kids all over all over Melbourne and Sydney, who were like followers of me, and we asked them questions we could because we really wanted to get an authentic feel for that as well.

7:11 LUKA And there was some, there was some actually that we, that are on YouTube. (*OLIVIA Yeah, then we released on, to YouTube*) some of the interviews because (*OLIVIA We didn't know where More Than This was going*) we were trying to do this series, we didn't know where More Than This was going, so we tried to do the series.

7:22 OLIVIA First of all it was going to be on Instagram as a little IGTV and then..

7:26 LUKA and we put on YouTube these, us interviewing, like year 12's through 2020. And that was really interesting. They didn't do well, but (*OLIVIA that's okay. It wasn't the place that it was going to*) Now everyone should go and watch them.

7:39 OLIVIA Wellyeah. Yeah. I don't even know what the YouTube channel is called.

7:43 LUKA Actually not TV.

7:45 OLIVIA Ah, There you go.

7:47 LUKA Actually not TV. ANT.

7:49 OLIVIA ANT, yeah.

7:51 ANIKA oh my god that's amazing. AntV.

7:53 OLIVIA And I think the most important thing for us was that was written, like by teens, for teens. It's a perspective that, like, I really, like we had a conversation about this, when people like when you know, we were trying to get it off the ground before like ACTF discovered it and stuff, it was very much like no, that's not going to work. Like it's not real. And I was like, how are you, a 52 year old white man, going to tell me, a young teenager, or like us as young queer teenagers that the show that we're writing about, like majority queer teens isn't going to work. So like it was, it was insane to me that people couldn't understand. And that's why it was so important. Like that, that was so important to make something that was with our voices because there hadn't been anything like that before, to the degree. The people who had the money didn't believe it was going to do well because it was a genuine story, which is like incredibly concerning. That like people yeah, anyways, so that was yeah, the most important reason was to make it so that people could feel equal and it's not that like you're, you're getting some kind of subliminal jargon like shoved down your throat or like, we're not trying to fetishise or like romanticise real issues. It's about the things that we're doing that are real (*LUKA it's authentic*) yeah, it's authentic.

9:00 ANIKA Yeah, no, that's so important. And yeah, it's, it's got to be a reflection of society, people like need to feel seen. And it actually brings up a really interesting discussion like around representation. So obviously, you guys held the improv classes, which definitely would have contributed to getting that authentic character, but what steps did you really take to ensure that kind of representation was being kind of achieved?

9:20 OLIVIA The most important thing to me is that no one feels like it's not an authentic story to them. And if this is the character that portraying. So people are really, really, really

involved. We also want to make it a safe space, which is the most important part so that they can do the best realistic acting that they can possibly do. So we did that in a couple ways. I think the impro's really helped. We had an intimacy coordinator, which is really, really, really important. So an intimacy coordinator, typically, with pretty intense like an emotional and vulnerable scenes. It's just the intimacy coordinator, the director and however many cast members are in that scene. And you rehearse it to a place where then it doesn't feel like you're just being thrown in the deep end. Because I've been on shows before and I've been like, Oh, you have to go and make out with someone in that corner, and I haven't, like that's really unfair to put you in that position because maybe I don't want to do, like I just needed to word. So having it like this, it ensures that whatever the scene is, it's never going to change after you've rehearsed it in that room, with the intimacy coordinator, and because we do like have like some sexual depictions, and they're very, like vulnerable and intimate, we really wanted to make sure that everyone was as comfortable as possible. And I thought like, I think that was a really big saving grace because a lot, like a lot of our cast hadn't done anything before and further more to that, then were put in like very vulnerable places where they had to be like depicting sex so it was really awesome on that degree, and made them feel a lot more comfortable and know that they have the safety that what they were rehearsing, that was the only thing that was going to be on screen and that they were not allowed to have any fills, anything else thrown at them.

10:44 LUKA When we were kind of developing the characters, and having these kind of improv workshops, I think one of the most important things, it wasn't like check listing we weren't going okay, we need this type of person in, this type person in, this type person, it was we'll bring these actors in and not, not like writing around them, but kind of going oh, that, they, like we kind of maybe take a bit of who they are.

11:06 OLIVIA Yeah, like if you've found like, you know, we'd like for example, let's use Zali, like Selena just has this presence that makes you drawn in and we were like yeah, of course this is now Zali, of course it is. And then from there to make Selena comfortable and because they've never acted before it was about creating a space for them where they felt comfortable portraying this character. So it is a lot of like taking from own experiences, which necessarily I don't think you need to do with all acting but I think for this was really important that you were had, that you had quite a few similarities to your character, because it was all about being as authentic as possible.

11:41 ANIKA I think like it's really interesting because obviously everyone had very different experiences with acting. How do you feel like that came together and like was played out?

11:48 LUKA I think I can say on my experience with Selena and I, I mean, I'd been on sets before but never acted in front of a camera. And same with Selena and Selena had never been on a set before. So we all kind of figuring it out as we went. And we were kind of scared to ask some of the more experienced actors what was going on. So we kind of like paired up a bit. I mean, we had a lot of scenes together as well. So we kind of paired up and kind of figured out as we went along, and eventually we got the hang of it. But I remember our first day was like, what is going on? We don't know. What does on the day mean? Like, we were so confused.

- 12:26 OLIVIA I think again, the impro'ng was such a vital part. And you know, my mum Kate directed three episodes. And then John Sheedy directed three as well. So because we had this like close knit, and because the set was so small, I think because there was this level of like friendship and camaraderie, and we're making it and it's gonna be great. That like, I guess eased it a little bit.
- 12:47 LUKA Yeah, we're like a little family.
- 12:48 OLIVIA Yeah, and the cast all really got along. Yeah, you guys kind of got thrown in the deep end. But you figured it out.
- 12:55 LUKA Yeah, we did. We had fun. It was good
- 12:57 OLIVIA We didn't get into much trouble.
- 13:00 LUKA No, it all went very smoothly.
- 13:03 OLIVIA It all went very smoothly. I had great fun. I loved it. And I loved being able to wear so many hats as well. Like I had a producer hat, I had a writing hat, I had like an acting hat. So it was kind of to come on set and like I don't know, it was, it was really cool, people could've been like this line, Like she said a different line in this, is that okay? I was like, oh my god, I have the control to say yes or no ok. Yes.
- 13:21 LING Going back to representation because I'm actually very interested in it, like in terms of the show, because there's just so much of it. But how did you kind of construct the characters who were queer, or people, or people of colour? Like how did you construct their character based off of them?
- 13:36 OLIVIA So we, first of all, we really asked people, we really spoke to like lots of people and there was so many reference points to try and engage experience and like to be telling stories that they were comfortable with. So that was kind of our first step, again, we didn't like like as you said, we didn't have a checklist of like, okay, we need like a POC here, person here, we need this and this and this. It kind of fell into place, I guess.
- 14:04 LUKA And especially with kind of secondary characters like Legs and Emma, like they auditioned. They, like Celine who plays Legs and Tharanya who plays Emma, they auditioned they weren't part of the original improv workshops so they were the best ones, the best actors for the characters.
- 14:21 OLIVIA Kamil also like, there was another actor originally for Kamil, but it fell through because of COVID. And then so Kamil auditioned and we were like he's just the best person. (*LUKA for Alex*) for Alex, exactly. And then it just Yeah, I think it kind of fell into place. When we did like, want it like for example, there's the tiff, Charlotte like makes an implication in the bathroom. And I talked to, Celine is actually my housemate, side note, yeah I live with Celine and we're best buddies so fun little tidbit. And I remember just having a conversation with Celine and being like, that was a really interesting and helpful kind of educational place because it was like they were both in the wrong, they both did wrong things but like Charlotte was racially insensitive and made an implication that obviously would have hurt her especially like with you know, if you've

watched the show everything that happened. So it was about like adding in the micro-aggressions that we don't talk about. And it was this overarching picture that people like, the POC people just have to like a lot of the time are forced to feel like they have to let slide. So we wanted to really highlight important things like that. But again, it was never our main focus to try and like, tick all our boxes for who was going to be perfect for it. I think our main intention was like queer representation. *(LUKA Yeah)* Yeah, like especially.

15:32 LUKA I think, because the queer representation was again not check-listing, but we knew Zali was..

15:37 OLIVIA Zali and Jamie were the two main, like we knew *(LUKA Queer characters)* we wanted those two characters.

15:42 LUKA And then when we kind of created Benson it was just like, oh we need Oisin.

15:46 OLIVIA Benson was created off Oisin.

15:47 LUKA Like we just need Oisin

15:48 OLIVIA Because, you know, first of all Oisin is just this force to be reckoned with. And he's hilarious in it. And I think I didn't write any lines for Benson. It was just kind of like, all right, it was very *(LUKA Oisin would just like go on set and just talk)* it was I was like listen, this is not like set in stone. You say what you'd like to say and it will go.

16:08 LUKA I feel like the script was, a lot of it was kind of like that as well.

16:12 OLIVIA Yeah it was inspired by like a Mike Lee film and like, you know that you do the six months workshop and then you like writing it with the person and yeah, like it's, I think it was also good for me as a first time writer, that was really helpful and getting to write that way. And also like, I want I remember, like when I was young and on television series, perhaps I wouldn't like a line or I wouldn't feel like it was authentic and I'd try and challenge it and be completely shut down and have to say it. And I didn't want that, I wanted like my, our actors to feel like they were intelligent and that they had a voice and they had a say because again, it was about all of us being young and making something for other young people. So yeah, it was a completely open space if something, if someone wasn't comfortable with something, we would change it. Nothing, I didn't want anyone to feel pressured or forced to do anything and that it was just about telling this story. But if you're not comfortable telling the story, or if you're not comfortable participating, it's not going to be an authentic story.

17:02 LUKA I was thinking with the, back on representation, with Mr. E. Mr. E was always going to be gay.

17:08 OLIVIA Yeah. And we really wanted to show that depiction of a

17:11 LUKA Of an adult, a gay man just living his life. And I've never seen that in a positive light in a TV, especially in Australia, in a TV show. Where it's just oh, it's normal. He has

(OLIVIA he's broken up with his partner and like that's sad, he's dating) an ex-husband you know, he has a kid, yeah

- 17:27 OLIVIA And I remember we got met with a lot of criticism when we did that because they were like, no one's gonna be like, again before we kind of had it running, everyone was like you should cut the Mr E storyline out, no one's gonna be interested. All of the people have been like, that was so amazing. I loved it. I was so happy for Mr E. I was like, yes, exactly. Because mysteries that teach you that we all love and we just want him to be happy. So it's so important to see him macking out with a man after a one night stand. Like that's great.
- 17:55 LUKA I think it's also like for a young gay boy to see an older gay man, to like, oh, I can grow up. I can, that can, that could be me. I can be happy as an older person. And I think that's really important.
- 18:09 ANIKA Just on that, I think it's really interesting because obviously, from the sounds of it, you guys had some pretty deep conversations with different groups of people speaking about their different experiences being a part of like minority groups and groups that aren't represented accurately within, on our screens. What is your advice, I guess for people just in general, whether it be young people, older people, anybody around having those hard conversations, not even hard conversations, but just truthful conversations with people who identify as part of minority groups that the person doesn't identify with.
- 18:40 LUKA I think you need to be mindful. You need to be open to being educated. And like I mean, for me, like when we would talk like Olivia is not non-binary. *(OLIVIA Surprise!)* So when we would talk, you know, I would just say, some, like we just have a normal conversation. It wasn't like a big like, deal in a way. Like I'm non binary. I'm queer. I'm biracial. I'm chubby, like I'm a lot of minorities. I'm too many. But yeah, so when we spoke to people in minority groups, you just have to be mindful and be open minded, which are the same thing. And yeah, just be willing to be educated, because I think education is really important in terms of telling your story.
- 19:27 OLIVIA Yeah it's vital. I guess what I learned like, and you know, we've been, you've been such a wonderful, I'm so lucky to have you as my like, educator and kind of like, you know, taught me all these wonderful things. And I guess it was for me, it's like, I'm never going to understand that experience. And it's never going to be my experience and I shouldn't have an opinion on it because I'm never going to understand it. So I should just listen. And it's just really important to be respectful and not like question or make them debate that that's the validity of what they've been through. Like I'm it's not my job to tell you whether that's correct or not for you to have had that experience because I've never going to understand that.
- 19:59 LING There was very insightful guys, thank you. But I think we're gonna change the subject a little bit and talk about, like, tropes in the show or even specific characters. So firstly, I really want to ask, what was the scene between Charlotte and Carlisle? Like, what was the intention behind that scene?
- 20:20 OLIVIA So, the Carlisle Charlotte interaction centres around a lot of things. First of all, the conversation about having really clear conversations about consent before doing things,

which can always be tricky. So I also didn't want it necessarily to be a lesson, but it's just also like, hey, nothing went wrong there because they were both consensual. But that could have been really bad if no one checked, and she was 17 and he was 30 something. Like that's a really big age gap. And like, sure Charlotte didn't blame him for it and he obviously felt bad but that could have gone a lot worse because they didn't check. So it was a little telltale sign of that. I think it was also Charlotte, like, I guess I felt this a little bit when you have been like so hyper sexualised, or especially because she's just been seen as this image or this really vulnerable thing of her has just been taken out of context, like and it was just an intimate photo for her ex partner. And that has now been like turned into, onto websites and things. I definitely know that when I was younger, and I was sexualised, like it was, I thought that then I was like, Okay, well, that's the perception of me. So I wanted to portray that Charlotte was hurting and she had been so sexualised if that's what she thought she had to do. She thought that like okay, well, I just go and have casual sex now because that's what everyone thinks. And I know like a lot of girls who've been through that like if you put them in this box, if that's all that they are, they then start living it and it's not authentic and true. So that's also another thing that I wanted to portray, and that like, and it's up to the audience on how that made them feel. Like I don't, like Charlotte, you know, she doesn't necessarily regret it. And I wanted to also highlight that as well because I hate it when we make sex this thing that we need to be embarrassed or regret about. But it's also that like, okay, well what like, I want the viewer to go what would I have done in that situation? Would I have gone through with it, would I have told them my age, would I have not been into it, like they made a train station, wild. So it was just more so like a question for the audience to see and also to sympathise with everything that Charlotte is going through.

22:13 ANIKA Yeah, and I think that's so true, because we were even chatting about it. It's like who's in the wrong? Is anybody in the wrong like, should Charlotte have told Carlisle her age, or should he have checked? It's just like, it's, it kind of goes both ways would you say?

22:25 OLIVIA Yeah, exactly. And it's not like I also didn't want it to be a lying thing because that's messed up. Don't ever lie about your age, god no. But I wanted it to be like, I think More Than This is all completely grey areas. Like there's so many times someone does something wrong and we're like ah, and that's what I want to see, the rep, the representation of people like watching it going I actually would be on the other person's side. And like if that was me, I would have been the other person. And it's about, you know, and then other people like, no, well of course, I'd be on Jamie's side opposed to Zali's side. And it's for the audience to make up themselves. It's an open ended question of well, depending on the kind of personality you have or who you are, there's a right or wrong directly in this.

23:03 ANIKA Yeah, definitely.

23:05 LING Yeah, so speaking of the audience, what do you think the feedback has been like? How do you think that the audience has received it so far?

23:12 LUKA Really well. Really well, thank God. But I've just, especially coming from me from the queer community, like I've been getting messages still, even though it's been how many months it's been out? (*OLIVIA three*) Three? 3 months, three? March, April, May.

Yeah. Three and I'm still getting messages the people, new people are watching it every week. I'm getting messages saying thank you. And that's so rewarding. And I used to do that to actors I used like, and it's like coming back to me it's like going both ways now. So I think yeah, the reception has been great and especially when it first coming out, the reviews were really great as well

23:54 OLIVIA Amazing, amazing reviews and that was for me, really special because I like, I said this like on another podcast like a review person who I like, I really respect and like I like reading his work because I agree with him, kind of hit the nail on the head with everything. He was like they're trying to portray this and they did and I was like, oh my god, like it got through to not just our age range as well. And what's been so interesting is that adults we get (*LUKA adults are loving it*) adults are loving it and like I've had parents come up and be like, I've changed the way I speak to my children. So it's been so like rewarding in those aspects as well. That yeah, we did something like, we came in like, you know

24:33 LUKA I remember like in terms of adults, I remember the cast and crew screening. And during, we watched three episodes had little intermission and watched last three episodes. And Bert who plays Mr. E, and the last episode is that Jamie and Zali episode and there's the argument same between Caroline and Jamie and Burt came up to me and was like, you broke me. (*OLIVIA Yeah, people are crying*) Yeah. And he was saying that, you know, he works a lot, and he kind of feels like his kids are in the like, he feels sorry for them, because he's not there as much. But he's a good dad.

25:13 OLIVIA Bert's amazing. It was such an interesting, I don't know, it made me so happy that like everyone was impacted in a different way. And I think that's what art is. It's all about the perspective and like you may not like the show, but I still hope you took something away from it. And it was so lovely that, yeah, our art form that we've made, it was subjective and taken subjectively. And everyone got like a separate thing out of it, depending on how they behave.

25:37 LUKA The range of the audience like, my conservative family members liked it. (*OLIVIA yeah*) So it's like, yeah, they're like Benson was my favourite character, and I was like, (*OLIVIA wow ok*) okay, uncle. (*OLIVIA Pop off*)

25:51 ANIKA Like, like initially when you guys were creating this piece, was that the intention? Like who was the target audience?

25:55 OLIVIA Our target was our age.

25:57 LUKA Yeah, always. Always had been teenagers.

25:59 OLIVIA Always has been teenagers.

25:59 LUKA Cause it's been written by teens for teens

26:01 OLIVIA That was our whole like, plot point. And I guess younger as well like making it a safe like, we like, Luka you're, I remember like very early on your whole intention was like

young being a safe space for queer young kids to come and watch and like you know, you always say that like, Jamie's based like 15 year old you.

- 26:18 LUKA Jamie is 15 year old me. I was shy. I was introvert, I'm still introvert, we're getting better at it. But yeah, Jamie is basically me and I think with Jamie in the show they're finding their tribe and finding that group and they hadn't had that before. And that was my experience when I was around 15, 16. And yeah, Jamie is 15 year old me.
- 26:51 OLIVIA Yeah, so it was yeah, it was mostly for that. But I'm so glad that people other people have been able to take away from it too. And I think we thought they might because my mom and my aunt who were the two producers, one of the two producers was so like, they were like, oh my god they were so invested. And they can be like, This is awesome. This is amazing. Like what? Oh my gosh, (LUKA: That's a good impression) And they got so in-
- 26:59 LUKA That's a good impression of Charmaine.
- 27:00 OLIVIA Actually is a good impression of Shah, yeah it was Shah. And them being so invested in the characters and like resonating, or they've helped us right, like the conversations with the parents. And they was, like they felt so much for like, you know, my corporate father was like, oh, yeah, that was really powerful and special and I loved how you did that. We knew that it was having a result on adults and parents so we really then when it started to get full swing we implored like parents to try and watch it as well because we thought it could be, like start really good conversations.
- 27:43 ANIKA Yeah that's so important. I think just like, on the, on the fact that your mum was involved in producing, your aunty was involved in producing, obviously
- 27:49 OLIVIA like heavily involved as well. Like hands on.
- 27:40 LUKA Very involved.
- 27:41 OLIVIA Yeah
- 27:54 ANIKA I love this. Like on, just on that like having a predominantly like female and like queer and young kind of cast, not cast - obviously cast, and crew but also behind the scenes, yeah cast and crew, how is that different from like your past experiences with having different very different kind of demographics.
- 28:14 OLIVIA So I think, like I'm third generation in the show business. So when I do get onto set, typically someone's worked with my grandfather most of the time, like "I know Reg" so like, there's a reputation that that has, which I love because I've love my grandfather, and my mother and I think they're both, you know, incredible. I guess it's weird. It's like there's more professionalism and also a lack thereof, because we were in the writing room, and I'd be writing with them so frequently, you know, and they'd be at my parents house and that's when I was still living with my parents for the first season. I like rock up like, you know, nine I'd roll out of bed sit on my computer, chat on them, and then you know, at lunchtime go on Tik Tok in my bedroom. But then also, my mom and I have this really interesting thing where if she's directing, she'll come on and

just point at me and go, you know, that bit. I'll go Yeah yeah yeah and then we'll change it. And it's because we so like, we work so similarly and we like I know what she wants from me and she knows what she can get out of me that we work very quickly and very professionally together. But then on the other side front, if I'm like "mummy I'm tired, I want to finish this scene now" she'd be like right go rest. So yeah, I think me and my mum worked really well together. And then Charmaine is just this, such a girl boss, she's just like happy go lucky, and then I'd be like, What are you doing? She was like, Oh, I've been up for 30 hours just like organising this little bit here. Just so you know, having these strong and especially like that they're family who believe in me, and we've put like, time and money and effort in everything, having that much support is so wonderful and so lovely. And I'm so inspired by them every day and they've taught me so much, which I'm really grateful for.

29:40 LUKA I think everyone who worked on it as well really cared about the project, and really thought it was important.

29:45 OLIVIA Yeah, or like most, and most of our grip department who were like you know big, bloke-y men, like their kids were coming out as queer and that they come up to us and be like, you know, this show is really helped me, like, understand that. And that was so like, what, Yeah, and then, you know, we also had like, a lot of our, like a lot of our crew were queer as well,

30:04 LUKA Flick, who was B Cam. They/Them.

30:07 OLIVIA They/Them as well, it was awesome. Like we had lots of Yeah, it was it was this really supportive group of people who were continuously learning as well.

30:17 LING That's so wholesome. Oh, my gosh. Speaking of support, what is like the main piece of advice that you would give to young people like watching the show or listening or just like young people in general?

30:32 OLIVIA Like life's really tricky, and none of us have it figured out and it's okay. And it's like, hard. Like, it'll get better. But it's, it's and don't ever let anyone invalidate how you're feeling. Because like being a teenager is really hard and sometimes very depressing. And sometimes it's amazing and wonderful and happy. But I think it's important that we sit in our feelings and we process what we're processing. Because if we don't then it turns into trauma and we can't fully function as a human later. So it's very important to sit with your feelings and know that they're valid and they're okay and that it's okay to get help and that we're all. We're all trying to figure it out. We've all got shit going on, and it's really tricky.

31:12 LUKA I think it's, this is really cheesy, but follow your dreams. (*OLIVIA nice, yeah throw that in there*) But it's really cheesy, but like, you know, like, for the longest time, like I wanted to be an actor, couldn't get any roles because of who I am. And then I was just like, damn, like, I'm just gonna. (*OLIVIA Yeah, and we did it*) talk to you, I'm gonna make a show. (*OLIVIA And we fully did it*) Fully did it, and achieved it. And we were also really lucky because, like, your family, and my dad's also directed too so, also Olivia and I've known each other since birth, so

31:43 ANIKA I was gonna ask how you guys knew each other

31:44 OLIVIA a 20 year friendship. So, Luka's

31:47 LUKA Wait, let me finish

31:48 LUKA [*Laughing*]

31:54 OLIVIA No, finish please.

31:56 LUKA I think if you really want to do something, just go out and do it. And it's rewarding and you know,

32:06 OLIVIA And that you'll be met with challenges but you can like persevere and you know, do it. Like we wrote this during year 12. Like, you know, we were doing exams and writing too and we did it. And yeah, we worked really hard and we had connections and we got up but it's, it's possible. And there's always somewhere to start and I hope that this like, we want to start getting more young people onto sets with us and help them learn and teach and give them an opportunity to experience it. Because you know, the world of film and television is a wonderful, beautiful, amazing world if you're creating the kind of art that you want to.

32:37 LUKA Like, we're the future of film and television, but why be the future when you can just do it now.

32:43 OLIVIA Yeah, and you don't have to wait until after school.

32:45 LING wow

32:46 ANIKA I feel so inspired right now

32:47 OLIVIA Yes!

32:48 ANIKA That was honestly that was so like, so relevant, because it's just like, there are literally no limits, especially with social media. Like you can literally connect with people (*finger snap*) just like that.

32:58 LING So thank you to both of you so much for being on this podcast. And thank you for our listeners for tuning in. We really enjoyed both of your insights and responses. But just to wrap it all up, we're going to ask you a question that we've been exploring for the entire podcast. What does it mean to be an adolescent today?

33:15 LING Silence..

33:16 ANIKA Feels like a massive full circle moment not gonna lie.

33:20 OLIVIA What if we answer this like terribly, and the whole concept of our show collapses?

- 33:24 LUKA I think, to make mistakes, I think that's what it means to be an adolescent because it's the time to do it. And, you know, everyone makes mistakes at that age. And I think it's important to make mistakes because you learn from them. And I think learning, learning is important in adolescence.
- 33:42 OLIVIA Yeah. And it's like, you know, it's different for everybody because everyone has just a universally different upbringing and experiences. I think again, what we're trying to say with this is that we need to stop taking adolescence for granted or that we like, aren't as clever as we get credit for. Like I think, you know, adolescents are incredibly intelligent especially in this day and age now when we have access to information and a lot of us are very involved in politics and we know a lot about that like, especially in Australia like you couldn't, you can have a conversation about politics with like any kind of adolescent and they really gonna be able to speak to you about it. So it's also like not under estimating our intelligence that we are the future as well. And so we deserve more respect, because we're going to try and assist in making this country better, hopefully. And so yeah, it's validifying that yes, we're still learning and we're growing and we're making mistakes and we haven't all got it figured out, but we also are clever. And we're, we're growing up to be the future and so we also deserve respect. And respect that the things that we're going through aren't just phases as well. Because when you know, when your adolescents like, I know for me like things that happened to me 15 16 17 have completely altered my life or changed like, like personal things that have happened have changed my complete like view of the world. And it will continue to be that way because of what happened then. So I don't like how we're like, oh, you know, you're just a teenager, it really changes everything for you. So it's about what's going on here for you to really feel like centred in them. Well, you know, if you need to go to therapy, talk it through, whereas you have decided that that's a big shift that a change and it needs to be appreciated and accepted.
- 35:16 LUKA I think also, like I know, you said, oh, like phases, you know, but phases aren't a bad thing. *(OLIVIA No)* phases of what makes, makes us grow. *(OLIVIA Yeah)* and we all have phases when we're teenagers. I was a bit of an emo when I was 13 *(OLIVIA You were)* I was listening to screamo music, now I listen to nice ukulele music and show tunes. I went completely..
- 35:38 OLIVIA You used to wear that pink fluffy jacket. *(LUKA yeah)* Yeah, hectic times. We have been through lots of phases together and look at us now.
- 35:45 LUKA Look at us now.
- 35:46 LING that was so beautiful, guys. Thankyou
- 35:49 ANIKA Honestly guys, thank you so much for jumping on. *(OLIVIA Pleasure)* We really appreciate it.
- 35:52 OLIVIA Thanks for having us.
- 35:53 LUKA Yeah, love being here.
- 35:54 ANIKA Bless

35:56 ALL Bye!

35:58 [Theme Music]

36:31 LING 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

36:58 End