

Fruit

Episode 5

Old and Young Gays

THE QUEEN: Oh my goodness, girls, gays, non-binary people, it's been another raucous week in the run up to our sweet sweet FRUIT. Prepare yourselves though for a little less sweetness than usual.

It's been a hot minute since we saw our beloved band of butches and bitches - and things, I'm sorry to report, are on a downward spiral. Mostly.

Zara, after weeks of pounding pavement in search of financially sustainable work, finally has a piranha-level bite come down the phone from our Charlotte.

Despite the impending move the girls want to make back into their college-eras, Aisling's growing more and more uncertain of her decision to rejoin her friends - and is meeting with Charlie today to try and truly sort her head out. Oh boy/Ay ay ay.

And, perhaps most worryingly, after the uncomfortable date and the skin-crawling TERF bathroom encounter, a secretly depressed Izzy hasn't seen the rest of her fruity friends in over a week - but she's not escaped to the country like her tastefully portraitless instagram photos of fields would have them believe. It's so bad, in fact, that her old queen of a roommate Reggie has had to step in and enlist an equally-secretly-suffering Shane to try cheer her up. *Shane?* Really? Ahem. Wow. Get settled in, girls - this I've simply *got* to see.

Regicide

Sound of someone dialing a phone number.

Ringling.

Voicemail.

SHANE: Eh, this is Shane. Who leaves messages any more? Grow up. Text me.

Beeeeeeeeeeep.

REGGIE: Shaaaaaaane! Daaaaaaarling! My Donegal Dreamboat! I hope you've been out causing nothing but trouble for those city boys, lord knows they could do with a little *cunt*-try, you know what I mean? Stop! You kill me. Listen - I'm not ringing today for a flirt, as much as you may wish for it. I've been doing my yoga in the kitchen every morning for the past week, as per, you know, keeping flexible in my *middle* age... and usually, I'm interrupted by our dear friend Izzy making her morning *carafe-con-leche* 'round the time I've finally got my supple form into the inclined canine, you know? Normally we'll share a giggle and moan and go on and get up to whatever faggotry we have planned for ourselves. But eh, I haven't seen her come out of her cell all week except to piddle and bring mouldy mugs out - it's not like the girl at all. Though I've no clue what the daughters of Eve do be doing any more I know but no woman of any age should be listening to Fiona Apple that loudly without some kind of check in on her wellbeing, no? I've been trying to ask, but you know me, I'm all rapping on her chamber door - "Do you want a cup of tea so you don't off yourself, Izz Bizz?". I mean I've none of the Princess Di-esque gayboy "sensitivity" you have, you know? Listen Shane, do you think you could pop round to the house and check in on her? I wouldn't ask, only I am actually worried about her - and worrying gives you wrinkles, Shane, don't condemn me to that in the twilight of my luxurious life. Give me a buzz back whenever you get this. Slán darling.

Beep.

Gay Girls Gossip (Minus Izzy)

SHANE: Girls we have problem dot dot dot

AISLING: I know Alma all booked out for brunch this week SAD all caps

SHANE: No it's Izzy full stop. I got a message - like a proper voicemail-

ZARA: Were all the stone tablets taken lol

SHANE: I'm serious now fullstop. From Reggie comma, he wants me to come check on her question mark?

AISLING: Why, She's down in Wicklow with her Mam dot dot dot living it up with the blackberry bushes question mark?

ZARA: Yah her insta's been on fire slayage and silage etc etc

SHANE: They're old photos full stop. Should have known fullstop. You really think there's ever been a week in Arklow where it hasn't pissed rain and been bad vibes question mark?

AISLING: Focus Shane what did Reggie actually say

SHANE: Ash I'll call u fullstop

ZARA: Is this college again question mark question mark? Shane do group call.

SHANE: How do I dot dot dot...

ZARA: I got it

Sound of a Messenger group call.

AISLING: Talk.

SHANE: Hasn't come out of her room, Reggie only sees her bringing out dirty crockery. All take aways no vegetables etc. The fake Insta posts. With what happened last week? I don't know. I'm on my way there now.

ZARA: Fml remember in college? That room sometimes was so bad it was like a Dunnes Stores Homeware section got cancer died and decomposed

AISLING: Okay. Well we know what to do, we've done this before.

SHANE: You've done this before! You're always the one to fix things.

AISLING: Stop it.

SHANE: It's true you should come now like right now you'll know what to do.

AISLING: I'm busy.

SHANE: Doing what? It's a Saturday.

AISLING: Look I just have. Work. To do! I'll come over later you're a big boy Shane you can handle it.

SHANE: No I can't. I'm not nice. Apparently.

ZARA: Told you to stop listening to twinks. Why expect wisdom from malnourished homosexuals?

AISLING: Exactly! Just be with her Shane. You'll be okay.

SHANE: Zara where are you?

ZARA: Handing out CVs today for a new job will come after.

SHANE: God. I've the emotional empathy of a cockroach I'll be so bad at this!! Why in God's name did that old gay call me??

AISLING: You're not that bad Shane you've that Donegal accent it's soothing just whisper some affirmations at her you'll be fine.

SHANE: You are Mother! You should be here!

AISLING: I'm busy!

ZARA: Is this bad? She was pretty sad last week but I thought we cheered her up. Is this bad? Like 2nd year college bad?

SHANE: I fucking hope not.

ZARA: I don't mean to alarm but if we're already at the hoping stage...

AISLING: Okay, let's not plan her funeral yet, Zara, it may not be that serious, she always kinda gets like this. Granted okay it's been a while since her last one but look. Worse comes to worse we call Alana.

SHANE: I'm on my way over now I'll keep you posted I'm Just waiting on the bus...

ZARA: God if you're waiting on the bus she'll be halfway decomposed by the time you get there.

AISLING: I'm thinking we go old school on this. Pizza, no wine, girlbossy feel-good film, the works.

ZARA: Understood.

Sound of the bus pulling up.

SHANE: Right, bus is pulling up. Fucking Bermuda Triangle of transport in this city. I'll text you both, okay?

AISLING: You got this.

ZARA: Tell Reggie we say hey!

SHANE: Yes. No. I will. Fuck off.

The PussPussPatrol Proposal

ZARA *fluttering CVs in her hand.*

ZARA: Fuck saaaaaake, who even takes paper CVs any more? “Aw hi, I’m Zara, I’m a friendly addition to any team with a tireless work ethic and a big fat dykey haircut.” Load of BOLLOCKS!

ZARA *starts texting.*

ZARA: I wish I never let you talk me into going round with CVs full stop. I should just stay at H&M exclamation mark!

SHANE: Nearly at Izzys fullstop.

ZARA: Okay ignore me lol sit on the Spire and spin slag exclamation mark exclamation mark!

ZARA’s phone rings. Her ringtone is a tinny version of “Nothing Compares To You” by Sinead O’Connor.

ZARA: Ahem. *(in a high-pitched phone voice)* This is Miss Zara. Speaking?

CHARLOTTE: Ehhhh, sorry, this is Zara Rafferty, yeah? Or have I reached the British embassy?

ZARA: *(in normal voice)* Charlotte is that you? Sorry, I’ve been throwing the CV around all morning. Thought it was someone calling me back.

CHARLOTTE: “Miss Zara”? What were you thinking with that voice? Ghost of Queen Lizzie? Ghost of Queen *Lezzie* actually.

ZARA: Listen. This H&M job is wrecking my head. If I have to pack one more slave-labour cutout bodysuit for Larissa in Donnybrook I will genuinely kill myself

CHARLOTTE: Speaking of jobs - that’s actually what I was calling you about, Queen Lezzie. You remember where I’m working now right?

ZARA: Some e corporate media grindset right?

CHARLOTTE: An advertising agency, Zaz, sure.

ZARA: Oh! Oh, that’s like, really deadly. Don Draper slay.

CHARLOTTE: I don’t watch Breaking Bad but yeah it’s small enough, but we’ve been bringing in some pretty sexy up-and-coming clientele thanks to the devastating charms of yours truly.

ZARA: Doesn’t surprise me.

CHARLOTTE: Damn that's the closest you've ever come to complimentin me.

ZARA: Char, c'mere sorry, I don't mean to be rude or anything, but there's a Centra and a Paddy Power with "Help Wanted" signs in the window and my friend Izzy is really like, depressed, so I've to go see her and to be honest I've only so much willpower before I toss myself into the fucking canal-

CHARLOTTE: Okay, well, don't do that. Liffey's polluted enough. What I'm meaning is, we've booked a fairly sexy big campaign with this American company opening up a few stores here dya know PUSSPUSSPATROL?

ZARA: Duh. Shane has their entire collection of Spice Girls jockstraps. Posh is hanging off the washing line on a weekly basis like.

CHARLOTTE: Well, they're launching a luxurious new line of the slaggiest girlo's club clothing I've ever seen, and they're looking for "cool, modern, unique" people to get dressed up in their dental floss. It's a bit last minute, but one of their lead models dropped out. Something about a car crash or something.

ZARA: Damn automobile accident? That sucks.

CHARLOTTE: Yeah she's in like hospitals I've been saying prayers for her but anyway I'm really stuck thinking fuck who do I book now but then I remembered oh? I know an upcoming young starlet with a desperate desire for the spotlight.

ZARA: Me? Do I seem desperate?

CHARLOTTE: Yes. And everyone knows "unique" is advertising code for they want a queer!

ZARA: They're looking for queer people?

CHARLOTTE: You've no idea how popular your look would be in ads. The mullet, the viobes, the vaguely non-binary aesthetic, the negroni-sbagliato-with-prosecco of it all - the gay girlies would *rush* to PUSS.

ZARA: Really? You think so?

CHARLOTTE: Oh, I know so. It's only a small campaign, but I can see it now: the big gay head on you, on every billboard in the city-centre-south-Liffey-Dublin 2 region. A couple tidy four-figure paychecks. But like if you're booked up already or not available, I totally understand.

ZARA: No! No. I'll do it. I'll do it. One hundred percent yes. One thousand percent yes. I'm so not booked I'm like a feature film. So, consider me officially a part of the PUSSPUSSPATROL.

CHARLOTTE: Are you still with then Caroline Sinclair?

ZARA: It's Coraline but yeah... "with" is a strong word-

CHARLOTTE: I thought that was a typo?

ZARA: No it's her actual name. I don't know don't ask.

CHARLOTTE: Right well anyway I've just emailed her with the details. You'll be dripping in PUSSPUSS in no time.

ZARA: Char, I don't know what to say. You're an actual guardian angel like properly sent from heaven. Thank you so so so much.

CHARLOTTE: You're the one saving me here! Besides I saw first hand just how devastatingly hard your life is and my Mother Teresa complex kicked in and...

ZARA: Yeah yeah yeah whatever if your Dad was a famous twat and your Mam a sunbed addict you'd be sad all the time too ye?

CHARLOTTE: My Ma is an alco and I didn't know my Da so.

ZARA: Oh shit. I forgot. Am I a horrible person?

CHARLOTTE: Shit, that's my boss on the other line, I gotta go, but you tell your agen to call us ASAP. See ya later Slater.

CHARLOTTE hangs up.

ZARA: YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEOOOOOOOOOWWWWWWWWWW HAHA! Fuck this *shite*! Yup The Balbriggan! Curriculum Vitae my *hole*! WOO!

Zara's phone rings

ZARA: Oh You Better Werk Bitch.

Click as Zara answers the phone.

ZARA: Em, Hello Coraline?

CORALINE: AN ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN ZARA! FOR PUSSPUSSPATROL! My husband loves them! I NEVER DOUBTED YOU FOR A SECOND I'M "GAG" ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU GAY PEOPLE SAY NOW I'M COMPLETELY "GAG"-

Music. Into...

Visiting Hours

Knock on the door. Sounds of the TV.

SHANE: Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let in your quare. Izzy open your door, I know you're watching *Sex and the City* in there. I can recognise Sarah Jessica Parker's voice anywhere. You know I'm like a bloodhound for culturally significant white women.

Door opening.

IZZY: Pervert. You're lucky I stopped wanking an hour ago.

SHANE: A lady like you masturbates? For shame!

IZZY: Shane, what are you doing here?

SHANE: Well, I could ask you the same thing, sweetheart.

IZZY sighs. Turns the TV off.

SHANE: If I'm seeing a HBO series on your screen it's worse than I thought. You only binge prestige television when you're on the verge of losing it.

IZZY: Look, if you came over to criticise my coping mechanisms, you can fuck off. I've seen the way you look at Aidan Gillen when you're in a bad mood.

SHANE: He was taking it up the arse on television in 1999! That's national treasure status.

IZZY: Shane. Just stop.

SHANE: Can I come in please? It was freezing on the way here, it's freezing on this landing whatever happened to central heating for gods sakes... come on Izzy I feel like your man with the cards outside Keira Knightly's house in that one film...

IZZY: Then you've to stay outside. What if my husband hears?

SHANE: The only other man in this house is Reggie, and if he's your husband, Isobel, then I'm fucking Jackie Kennedy.

IZZY: You're Jackie Kennedy?

SHANE: Yeah, and you're JFK AKA I'm waiting to watch your head explode.

IZZY laughs.

IZZY: Come in.

She puts back on SATC.

SHANE: Here you, what's going on?

IZZY: Nothing, really. Just taking some time for me, you know. I just got back from Arklow this morning. Self care and all that.

SHANE: I saw, it looked gorgeous.

IZZY: Yeah, I was going to text you and the girls-

SHANE: Gorgeous for some *fake posts*, you little *viperess*! Reggie called me this morning and told me you've been locked up in here like a little kermit for the past week!

IZZY: Shane-

SHANE: I mean really, Izzy, when *Reggie* calls someone a hermit-

IZZY: Stop.

SHANE: I'm worried about you, Izzy. We all are.

IZZY pauses SATC.

IZZY: I'm sorry I didn't tell you. I don't know. I don't really know what's going on with me. Well, I do, but I don't know what to do about it. I don't know what anyone can do about it.

SHANE: Go on. I won't say anything insensitive.

IZZY guffaws/snorts.

SHANE: Okay, unless it's necessary. Go on now, I'm not leaving this room till you tell me what's wrong.

IZZY: I keep thinking about the date I had, with Hunter. About that awful woman, in the bathroom at Street 66. About finding another place to live, about the gig, about my music.

About me. It feels so selfish to be thinking about all my own problems when everyone's going through their own horrible thing right now, but I just can't help it.

SHANE: It's not like any of those things are your fault, Iz. There's a housing crisis. There's a straight male crisis-

IZZY: That's the point though, isn't it? Like, none of it is my fault, but it *is* my fault, you know? Like, I'm nearly thirty, and that evil voice in my head that says "everything would be better if you weren't trans" still hasn't gone away. It goes on a little boozy city break with the girls every now and then, yeah, but it always comes back heavier than before. I'm just so tired of it, Shane. I've been out over a decade, and it feels like it doesn't get better. Just worse. Everything always just gets worse.

SHANE: Izzy, I-

IZZY: Sorry. I just can't do this. Can we not do this?

IZZY presses play on SATC again.

Music. Into...

Gay Girls Gossip (Minus Izzy): Remix

SHANE: Girls we are at defcon 2 with Izzy

ZARA: Defcon 2 question mark? That's positive isn't it question mark question mark?

AISLING: Ooh is that the new brunch place on parliament street question mark?

ZARA: Slayyyy i'm in celebration mode so let's get mad out of it yup Izzy!!

SHANE: Nice try but not to be blunt dykes but I'm fearing Iz is close to annihilation here. Reggie was right to call melting head emoji. We're talking second year of college-level mood right now full stop. Where ARE all caps you both question mark question mark?

ZARA: Literally on my way from town

AISLING: In the middle of a work thing rn but I'll be there ASAP

SHANE: Fuck sakes

AISLING: Make her a cup of tea Shane watch The View on Youtube we'll b there soon full stop

SHANE: Ok sad face

Music. Into...

The Clash-ling With Aisling

AISLING: (*whispered*) Shit.

Footsteps approaching.

AISLING: Charlie! Hi.

CHARLIE: Aisling.

AISLING: Do you want a coffee? This place apparently has this amaaaazing avocado blend haha millennial of me or what?

CHARLIE: Y'know, I wasn't even sure if you were going to come or not.

AISLING: Course I came. I love when you like, make me come - fuck me, I guess I don't know. I was surprised *you* wanted to meet *me*.

CHARLIE: I don't. Robbo and the lads have set up an obstacle course at the Ben Dunne gym in Tallaght and they asked me - jokingly maybe - if I would be a human punching bag at the end and it honestly sounded like it'd be more craic than this.

AISLING: Right. I can leave if you want.

CHARLIE: Go on then. Do it again. I'm used to it now.

AISLING: Charlie don't be like this, it's lame...

CHARLIE: No really, Aisling! First you break up with me, after we live together and we go to big Dunnes together and we have matching Walking Dead mugs together. FOR YEARS. Then you move out, you don't talk to me for weeks, and then you expect me to be lovely over lunch? Fucking hell, there's not enough lattés in the *world* for this pain.

AISLING: Hasn't exactly been rainbows and unicorns for me either, Charlie-

CHARLIE: Seems like it has been! With all those gay parties you've been going to! Is that why you left? What you meant by "finding yourself"? That you're going back to women?

AISLING: That is so foul of you to even think-

CHARLIE: No! Was I just that? A pit stop on the Lesbian Express? Choo choo next stop Scissor Street?

AISLING: Fuck off Charlie! That is so fucking ridiculous!

CHARLIE: It's how I feel sometimes! It's what the lads say too, and they're roided-up idiots I know and I shouldn't listen but it's how I feel though. Maybe I was never right for you.

AISLING: Oh come off it, I'm not sure who I *really am*. Like on a *human soul* level. But I do know this that I'm bi-fucking-sexual so tell your roid friends they can suck my cock.

CHARLIE: I love you whoever you are. Even when you got that mad green streak in your hair, I loved you.

AISLING: You said you liked that streak! Said it was "vibrant".

CHARLIE: It looked like Shrek's cum.

AISLING: Wow.

CHARLIE: I never said anything because I LOVED YOU. And it MADE YOU HAPPY. And then two months ago you turn around out of nowhere and say everything I love doesn't make you happy and you're sick of our "routine" and you wanna "find yourself"? I feel like I don't know you. How can you find yourself when you don't even know what yourself looks like?

AISLING: What are you talking about? I need space, Charlie, I'm figuring out what I want. In life, in love, in my work. If I don't do this right now, with 30 right there, I might wake up at 50 and feel like this is it. Like I'll just die with the life I've had and that's it. I won't do that.

CHARLIE: You know who needs space? Astronauts! Elon Musk! Hedgehogs!

AISLING: You know what I mean...

CHARLIE: Is it the waking up beside me at 50 that would kill you? Realising you've spent your life with me?

AISLING: (*struggling*) I... I don't know.

Chair scrapes as CHARLIE stands up.

AISLING: Charlie, don't go.

CHARLIE: I made you happy! We spend all our time together laughing and how many fucking dinners in Mayo have I had to endure! Your Mam makes the worst roast dinner I've ever had, Aisling! I'd rather suck coddle my entire life than eat that shit again. But I just can't have you saying you don't know who you are! Who you are is the most special perfect woman I've ever met who takes her time with everything and only speaks when she's like, ready to speak and has the sharpest like, mind ever.

AISLING: Charlie-

CHARLIE: That's who you are, Aisling. But you know what else you are? You're selfish. Do you not think we're all figuring out who we are? But I thought the one thing I had figured out was that we were right for each other. I mean this - you have til the end of the month to decide if you still want me. Because after that, we're done forever! I mean it Aisling! It's a Bourne Ultimatum.

AISLING: It's just an ultimatum Charlie, look, sit down.

CHARLIE: Goodbye Aisling.

CHARLIE'S footsteps departing.

AISLING: Okay! Okay. Charlie!

CHARLIE: *(sniffing)* Yeah?

AISLING: I will take no Bourne Ultimatums! I won't be held ransom by you but. Give me time! To think! To work this out. What I want.

CHARLIE: I've already given you time it's been two months you never came home.

AISLING: I don't know -

CHARLIE: Aisling I will not wait forever for you. I just won't.

AISLING: Okay. Fine. Then go piss off head back to the Ben Dunne be a fucking punching bag.

CHARLIE: Do you know what do you know what Ash I've wanted to say this for two months I've wanted to say this: Fuck you. Fuck you.

AISLING: Oh Charlie, that's maybe the hottest you've ever been.

CHARLIE: Bye Aisling. Forever.

AISLING: I'm sorry I...

Music. Into...

Diagnosis Is Positive

Texting.

ZARA: On the bussy now. Sorry autocorrect.

AISLING: Omg

ZARA: lol

The kitchen door opens.

REGGIE: Do mine eyes deceive me? Is this a faggot which I see before me?

SHANE: In The Flesh.

REGGUE: Now there hasn't been a young man this beautiful in my kitchen since 1993. Allegedly.

SHANE: Doubt that. I've seen you plenty on Grindr.

REGGIE: Darling, one gets to my age and you're simply searching for the chance of a slight titillation. But enough about me, sweetheart. You're stirring that tea with all the enthusiasm of a mortician spooning guts.

SHANE: It's for Izzy.

REGGIE: Well I for one know she'd love if you put some pizazz into that pinkie pop. Energy transference or whatnot. Would you look, you're stirring bad vibes into the tea!

SHANE: I asked the gals to come round too, I need the backup. I don't know if Izzy's vibes could get much worse at this point.

REGGIE: Are we talking about Izzy now, or is there something behind that dewily moisturised forehead I should be aware of? You look like a dead rabbit. Oh pass me one of those Guinness glasses will you sunshine? Before you say anything it's not for the devil's drainwater, it's lemon and hot water for digestion. Don't get old Shane.

SHANE: Didn't have you pegged as a "my body's a temple" kinda guy.

REGGIE: If you're trying to have me pegged I'll be charging for it. My body is more like a church in a modern town.

SHANE: A local ruin?

REGGIE: Falling to pieces, but still beloved by my dwindling community.

SHANE: Dwindling? Are all your friends dead Reginald?

REGGIE: Dead or in nursing homes darling. I'm the last man standing. A dying breed if you will.

SHANE: Let me just bow down to the king then.

REGGIE: Don't bother. Shape of your knees you mightn't be able to get back up.

SHANE: I consider that a compliment

REGGIE: It wasn't always that way, mind you - being on my own. I was born in Carlow did you know that?

SHANE: Carlow? With a plummy accent like that?

REGGIE: Well, one must enjoy the finer things in life right?

SHANE: It's all the books of Shakespeare you read.

REGGIE: There's the sharpest mind you will ever meet.

SHANE: Here I was thinking you're the sharpest mind I'd ever meet.

REGGIE: Chancer!

SHANE: Carlow? Really? I'm not convinced Carlow is a real place.

REGGIE: Donegal is?

SHANE: God's Country.

REGGUE: Emphasis on the cunt?

SHANE: Of course.

REGGIE: No no I am a Carlow girl. I came to Dublin at seventeen. Now that was Manna from Heaven. Ended up meeting a tribe of hooligans and running wild all over Dublin with our

dangling earrings and tight tight jeans! So tight your blood'd clot. In fact we'd do so much amyl nitrate our arseholes would take the rest of the week off.

SHANE: Jesus.

REGGIE: Oh! It was a perpetually unsustainable lifestyle! But we did nothing but sustain it.

SHANE: It sounds divine.

REGGIE: It was. Times I long for it. Though truly all I ever was back then was hungover and heartbroken.

SHANE: Would you go back if you could?

REGGIE: No.

SHANE: Really?

REGGIE: It's silly to chase the past like that, Shane, don't you think?

Beat.

SHANE: I'm worried about Izzy.

REGGIE: I am too darling. But she's a strong, strong girl, what with what she's had to go through.

SHANE: Did she tell you about what happened in college? And about her Dad?

REGGIE: Bits and bobs. I wouldn't ask more than she wants to tell. Those American army bastards would love hearing me say that now wouldn't they? Unstylish facists. I knew a lot of girls like Izzy in the 80s. Stunning lot. The bravery! Exquisite.

SHANE: Can I ask you something?

REGGIE: As long as it's not about my diet or the men I've slept with, yes.

SHANE: You say you ran wild all over Dublin. What was that like? Living through all of it, the eighties. The protests. The first Prides. Losing people-

REGGIE: Losing people you love? Hm.

Beat.

REGGIE: The irony is when I actually met other gay people here in Dublin they were light years ahead of me in understanding themselves. I came here at 17 but you know, Shane, I only came out at 24. Though I think everyone knew... Some of those brave men and women they'd been to England or Paris, seen what the world had to offer. Decided Dublin wasn't good enough the way it is. I often wonder if I hadn't met those people what life would have been like for me.

SHANE: Terribly dull probably.

REGGIE: Well I would have had less sex anyway.

SHANE: What was it like? Meeting them?

REGGIE: Bliss, Shane. Bliss. Wasn't a straight man on Dame Street who could tell me what... But then Tommo was the first to go. I'd known him about three years before.. The first case here was in 82, but we weren't really taking it seriously. It was an American thing. Then an English thing. Then just as suddenly it was our thing. Every one of us knew someone. Tommo. Then Micheál. Then Andy, Pádraig, Will. Then Taylor.

SHANE: Taylor? Was he from Carlow?

REGGIE: American chap. A black American fella with HIV in Dublin in the 80s. You can imagine how popular he was with the health services. Some of the doctors on his ward wouldn't even touch him.

SHANE: Scum.

REGGIE: That's the worst part. They weren't scum, Shane, they were normal people, fed a lie about us. Moral outrage, from the state spoon to hungry little mouths.

SHANE: Did you ever feel like that? Disgusted or horrified. Of HIV.

REGGIE: We all did, at first. No point in pretending we were all solidarity and sex parties. We were scared. But it did get better with time. The drugs started to work. People stopped dying.

SHANE: Do you think it's still horrifying now?

REGGIE: God no. With the treatment nowadays? We're in the golden age of HIV medication! It's a whole new world, babe.

SHANE: Yeah. That's what I've been thinking.

Beat.

SHANE: I tested positive a month or two ago.

REGGIE: Ah. That explains it.

SHANE: What?

REGGIE: The Twenty Questions. My turn now. How do you feel?

SHANE: Terrified.

REGGIE: Why?

SHANE: Why?!

REGGIE: Well you know the science and I'm certain you're on the right meds -

SHANE: I've heard all this a thousand -

REGGIE: Well sweetheart by the look on your face I think you need to hear it again. You're safer now with your diagnosis than you were without it. It's the not knowing your status is the problem. You're on the path now to being undetectable which means keep taking those pills Shane and pretty soon you could be the safest person in all of Stoneybatter to have unprotected sex with.

SHANE: I know all of that though but thank you.

REGGIE: Then why the face like a slapped arse?

SHANE: Because there is still a part of me inside that's. Scared.

REGGIE: Scared? You? The first time I met you you walked into this house in nothing but a bejewelled g-string, a tatty cardigan and Lidl runners. Lidl Kim I used to call you.

SHANE: It's like there's nowhere for me to go from here. I'm gonna be the queer boy with the queer's disease for the rest of my life.

REGGIE: Now you listen to me young man. HIV is in your body now and all you need to be is a good host. Every day you take your pill, every day you go out with your girlies, every day you go on breathing with this virus in your veins it's a day that was given to you. Yes by science and by medicine, but by hundreds and thousands of people like us too, the ones who didn't get this day. And the.. thousands of people who submitted themselves to horrific drug trials so that we could have the lifesaving medication that *you and I* both take. I'm going to die of old aids at two hundred babes, that's the bare minimum because I'm living for Tommo, for Andy, for Pádraig for Micheál for Will for Taylor. You're walking through life standing on the shoulders of ghosts,

Shane. And the only way, the only way you can pay them back is to keep on living as best as you can. With no shame and no fear.

Pause.

REGGIE: Your diagnosis *is* positive, Shane. Start fucking acting like it.

Music. Into...

Izzy In A Tizzy

Knock on the bedroom door. AISLING opening it:

AISLING: Hey, I'm so sorry-

ZARA: Thank GOD I can't watch another ep of this Sex And the City Shit..

SHANE: What took you so long?

AISLING: Oh, - I was caught up at a work thing, so boring, couldn't escape - but I did bring some peace offerings.

ZARA: Oh my godddd. Not mini Toblerones. You beauty.

SHANE: Forgiven. Sit. We're investigating how best to bring our favourite Agony Auntie out of her agony.

IZZY: I'm fine...

ZARA: Fine is for losers we want sensational.

AISLING: I could order an Apache? Big dirty extra large stuffed crust type thing?

ZARA: Get barbecue dip.

AISLING: Vile, this is a garlic and herb household, mama.

ZARA: Butchphobia!

SHANE: Will we throw something on? Pause it when the food gets here? We haven't done *Legally Blonde* in a stone age.

AISLING: Yessss! Nothing like a bit of girlbossing to push you out of a funk.

SHANE: Izzy? What do you think?

IZZY: Sure. Yeah. Sounds fine.

SHANE: Come on, Sharon Stonewall. Tell us what your heart desires.

IZZY: I'm fine honestly I don't want pizza or a movie.

ZARA: Girl...

AISLING: When have you ever said no to a stuffed crust?

SHANE: Defcon 2!

IZZY: I just! I just feel like there's no point. To any of this.

ZARA: Absolutely no depression vibes Isobel please.

IZZY: Fussing! There is no point to this fussing!

ZARA: Let's put on a film, it'll be a laugh. Ash brought all your favourites, look, there's even the white chocolate buttons. Yum! You love them.

IZZY: (*snappy*) Actually Zara, I can be as depressed as I want to be.

ZARA: I was only messing.

SHANE: So, that's a no to the girlbossing, then?

IZZY: I'm sorry, I just don't think I'm in the mood for this. I just can't see how a *pizza* - a borderline racist pizza too actually, like *Apache* really Aisling! - and watching the same old films as anaesthesia again is gonna help.

AISLING: I don't think that's fair.

ZARA: Yeah. We're just worried about you babe.

SHANE: You've never said no to Reese Witherspoon in Gucci pumps before. Or to a big fuck off pizza and a moan with your coven. We are not doing this again, Izzy! We're not letting you slip.

IZZY: I'm just tired. I'm not slipping.

AISLING: Something's wrong.

ZARA: Duh this room smells like someone died.

AISLING opens a window.

IZZY: How are you all not so fucking *sad*? All the time?

ZARA: Oh Izzy don't you'll make me cry...

IZZY: Everything just seems to be getting worse. Like, I thought we'd done the first transgender everything by now. I thought things were supposed to get better over time. But then - then I can't stop thinking about that woman in Street 66. She looked at me like I wasn't in on the joke, you know? Like she knew something I didn't know about myself. I can't stand it.

ZARA: There's always gonna be people who talk shite, Izzy.

IZZY: They're not just talking shite any more, Zara. Like. I don't know... Like it feels so stupid to sit here and play pretend that things are fine when the reality is there is never going to be a place in the world for people like us. It makes me maybe insane that you're all looking at me like I've two heads for saying it too. Nothing we do, ever, will fix how this world treats queer people.

AISLING: We're not trying to play pretend Izzy, we're just trying to focus on the good stuff. Sitting in the shit won't get rid of the smell. It's not all bad. It can't be.

IZZY: No. Maybe it *is* all bad, actually.

AISLING: I mean. Okay. Sure, you are not wrong to say things are tough, It's bullshit out there I'll give you that...

ZARA: But we have genuinely come so far. You see that, right? We all make the world better just by existing in it as queer people.

IZZY: Zara-

ZARA: No Izzy I'm serious for a second - we, us, as a group, we're making the world better by being openly queer. We're going to protests, we're changing people's minds! I got some mad news today, absolutely mad. I finally booked a gig. An ad campaign.

SHANE: Seriously?

ZARA: Yes! And they wanted me specifically because I *am* queer. Like Izzy we all went to trans pride this summer and there were thousands of people there! You can't say that's not progress!

IZZY: There were, and that's great, but it's in this same year that hate crimes against trans people are at literally an all time high. You can't call everything progress.

ZARA: We have to accept small victories. Or what else have we got?

IZZY: Isn't it so convenient that all these small victories seem to be lining up at your door, Zara?

AISLING: Now that's not fair. Weren't you the one to get that agony aunt gig as an openly trans girl?

IZZY: That's *not* the same thing.

AISLING: You're right. But a couple of decades ago, it would have been unheard of in Ireland! How many queer advertising campaigns have you seen outside of pride month until now - and that slays, Zara, sorry, we need to celebrate -

IZZY: Whose side are you on here?

AISLING: I'm not on anyone's "side". You had a good point, and I'm just saying Zara has a good point too. The fact is that I could come out at work, and I thought it would be a huge deal in how people saw or treated me, and my boss just made a fucking stupid joke about her effeminate son who humps the couch.

IZZY: And you call that progress?

AISLING: It's way better than being fired For being who you are!

IZZY: I am really, genuinely happy for you that your lives are so easy that the most horrible thing you can imagine happening to you - a gay girl who was in a *straight relationship* is getting fired.

AISLING: (*wounded*) I'm aware of the privilege-

IZZY: I bet you are. But just *consider* that there are other experiences of the world and of straight people and of cis people than *your own*. It's so tacky to wallow in self-pity but I just- I can't help but feel like things would be so much better for me if I wasn't trans. Like if I-

SHANE: That's bullshit. I'm sorry but...

IZZY: What?

SHANE: I can't sit here and listen to you say something so horrible about yourself because it's *bullshit*. You being trans is a gift. You don't even need me to tell you that 'cos you fucking know it. Do you have any idea how many people like us died so we could sit here in a group of four

gay people and not be checking the windows to make sure the neighbours didn't see us gaying up the street?

IZZY: Don't you suddenly try and tell me you're completely happy and content with life? Most of the time you hate who you are!

SHANE: I can't tell you a lot Izzy, you know that, but I can tell you that there has to be more to being queer than just feeling bad about things. We have a responsibility to experience joy on behalf of everyone before us who fought so hard so we could be basic. You have to keep going. For them. For us. For the people to come who need to see someone living as beautifully as you. *(Pause)* Izzy, you can't write off your life saying shit like "I wish I wasn't who I literally am, who I have to be". We just... we won't fucking let you.

IZZY: It's not about that, Shane. It's not really about that...it's about everyone else. Look, I'm sorry, I just don't think I'm up for much right now.

ZARA: Oh Izzy!

IZZY: If anyone of you say Izzy one more time in a meaningful way I'm going to shove this Sex And The City boxset up your hole. Let's just put on the movie. I'm sorry I snapped, Aisling.

AISLING: It's fine. It's... fine. Erm, you know what, Shane I need to call my work really quick, I just remembered something can I use your phone?

SHANE: Use your own phone.

AISLING: It's died come outside and let me use yours..

SHANE: No it's not it literally pinged a minute ago..

AISLING: Shane.

SHANE: Oh right yeah sure okay. Seeing as I'm a Bill Pay Queen Sure.

ZARA: Oh look at these two culchie cunts abandoning us.

AISLING: Don't die without us. How many minutes have you...

SHANE: Like. So many...

SHANE and AISLING leave closing the door behind them.

ZARA: You always enjoyed me the most Iz anyway didn't ya?

IZZY: Sure.

ZARA: Fuck you.

ZARA's phone pings.

AISLING: (*in text*) Worse than I thought. Deafcunt 2 was right. Zara hold fort. Me and Shane gonna call Alana.

ZARA: (*in text*) Who's Alana question mark?

The doorbell rings.

IZZY: I thought Aisling wasn't going to order it in the end?

ZARA: Well fuck me pink and call me a pig we can hardly tell the pizza man to turn around now can we?

IZZY: I suppose it wouldn't be very pro-exploited gig worker of me to let him leave without a tip. I'll get it.

ZARA: Okay stay safe don't get sex trafficked. (*in text*) Izzy getting pizza she checkin if delivery driver unionised or not lol

AISLING: Cool back in 2 full stop.

Music. Into...

A Mother Calls

AISLING: Ho boy.

SHANE: Nothing we haven't seen before. Except maybe a touch more nihilistic.

AISLING: Except this time I think she's right.

SHANE: Not you too.

AISLING: Is this all it is? Life?

SHANE: Have we not been asking eachother that question for A Long Time now?

AISLING: It feels like it's getting harder.

SHANE: You're getting older.

AISLING: I saw Charlie today.

SHANE: Why?

AISLING: Why'd you see Liam?

SHANE: Pft. Self flagellation Girl.

AISLING: I don't know what I want anymore. Out of everything.

SHANE: You do. You're just taking your time getting there.

AISLING: Call the mother. Tell her it'd be good if she came. Don't panic her though. Tell her we've got her covered.

SHANE: Okay.

AISLING: God. I'm getting too old for this shit.

SHANE: It'll be okay Ash. It'll always be this hard maybe but we've to remember the luck - being able to be exactly where we are.

AISLING: Fuck off you. When did you get wise?

SHANE: I've decided to leave being a cunt behind me.

AISLING: Yeah and I'm straight and I love Tame Impala. Call her. I'm getting some pizza.

SHANE: Enjoy.

AISLING: You did good today.

SHANE: Mommy?

AISLING: Fuck off.

AISLING heads back in.

Shane dialing a number. Phone dialtone.

SHANE: Hi, is this Alana? Yes, it's Shane McGinley speaking, one of Izzy's friends. How are you?

Music. Into...

The Kicker? Flicker

AISLING: Well? What did she say?

SHANE: Well what didn't she say? To say hello to you all, and then she said to ask you Aisling did something happen with Charlie you haven't been posting him much on your Insta and then to Zara she said to tell your dad hello and she asked am I still single so clearly Izzy hasn't been updating her on much of late.

ZARA: Well, you are still single.

AISLING: Ugh. Did she know Izzy's been carrying on this way?

SHANE: No, but- where is Madam?

ZARA: She went to the bathroom. Said the delivery guy gave her a weird look.

SHANE: Fucking hell-

The bedroom door bursts open, Izzy running in.

IZZY: Girls! Girls! Wait until you hear this. I got this voice mail earlier I don't know the number but it's! Listen listen to this ohmygod...

Beep as Izzy plays a voicemail back.

MAGGIE: Isobel doll, it's Maggie here, still sweating me tits off me even though it's nearly November. Can't tell if it's the hormones or of that global warming has finally sexed up Sandyford, god knows it could use it - anyway I didn't call you just for a giggle. I gave the house in Smithfield to a gang of boys in tech, incel kinda shites born into the silverware drawer you know what I mean but they're vacating the place after only two months! Something about joining a startup in Burma. They could have also been saying "your mama" but I didn't even understand what they were saying, I can never understand the Irish accent. So, I rang you first because every time I open Daft.ie I get a power migraine and I can't be arsed and to be honest, I think often of what you said. That in a perfect world with unicorns you'd be home or something like that anyway. Craig says being sentimental is a side effect of the menopause, but I told him if he didn't stop going on I'd affect his bloody side. Look, what I'm saying is, if you or anyone you can rustle up would still like the house, I'm putting out a one-time offer only. Oh goodness me, I feel like one of them Mafia don fellas off the telly. Take it or you'll sleep with the fishes. Just a joke... unless? Haha! Look. Just let me know by Monday anyway if you want it because if you

do it'll be yours at the end of month but if you don't I will need to nip to the shops for however much Panadol, Kinder Eggs, and chocolate pretzels... Isobel here's my last word now before I get cut off: maybe we do live in a perfect world huh? God bless -

Beep.

ZARA: Oh my god. Oh my *god!*

SHANE: Sorry I mean is this - I am so sorry does this mean...

IZZY: We've got Flicker. We're going back to Flicker.

AISLING: Jesus H Christ.

ZARA: I can't believe it. Oh my god! Girls!

IZZY: We can actually go back to Flicker. I never thought- You all still want to move back in together, right? I didn't ruin it all today? Aisling I'm sorry I didn't mean to insult you-

AISLING: No, not at all, of course I want to. Go back. Of course.

ZARA: Count me IN, Izzy. This day just can't get any better, can it? New job, new gaf, new future on the horizon. Am fuckin buzzin.

IZZY: Okay this is what I think this is what I think now we've gotten this gift. We gotta promise. We should all promise each other that this will be a fresh start. We'll let bygones be bygones, and start this new chapter all together leave all our baggage at the door and go forward always. Like we're best friends! Living together! Sharing everything! Like we were before

SHANE: (*uncertain*) Yeah, all together. Sharing everything. No secrets. Mhm. That's... Perfect Perfect Perfect.

Aisling's Phone Beeps

IZZY: Ash I thought your phone was dead?

CHARLIE: (*texting*) Ash full stop. Sorry bout earlier comma comma,, I will wait for u full stop. How ever long u need full stop. Love comma, Charlie full stop. X

AISLING: (*under her breath*) Fuck.

Next Time On Fruit...

SJP: TLDR. For this letter Agony Auntie Isobel, I'm wondering can we ever really not disappoint those we love?

ALANA: Oh Isobel you are not keeping this are you?

IZZY: Mam it's decorative!

ALANA: It's a Bejeweled Penis Isobel.

CHARLIE: *(typing)* Did I just see on Izzy's Insta question mark question mark question mark? That you've gone and done it moved back in to Flicker question mark question mark question mark?

SENSEI MARTHA: *(on phone)* If you're having friend troubles, don't you dare scroll past this TikTok girl. I'm your Sensei Martha and this is Friendship 102...

AISLING: And was this it? The life you've had, is it the one you wanted?

ALANA: Oh not at all. But sure doubts? You learn to live with them after a while.

SHANE: And don't get angry with me I know how you girls like to tussle but. I have to tell you something.

ZARA: You are being such a stupid bitch right now!

AISLING: I have done what everyone else wanted my entire life! Why can I not for once do what I want?

IZZY: If it hurts just as much as you're hurting now then let me say this... maybe friendships do die and become consigned to bittersweet memories in the back of our minds.

SHANE: What do we do now? What do we do without her?

THE QUEEN: So here we are girls and in God we trust cause welcome to the Fruit Season Finale!

Credits

Read by HK.

Thank you for listening to Fruit. If you enjoyed today's episode please don't forget to like and subscribe and tell your best friends too!

Fruit is presented by LemonSoap Productions, in association with Once Off Productions.

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Written by Ultan Pringle, Hiram Harrington, and Lora Hartin

Edit & sound design by Ultan Stanley, with compositions & theme song by HK Ní Shioradáin (that's me!)

Logo design by Sarah Brady

Photography and production support by Owen Clarke

Produced by Lisa Nally

With

Madison Cawley as Zara,
Ois O'Donoghoe as Izzy,
Lisa Nally as Aisling
Ultan Pringle as Shane
VedaLady as Reggie,
Hazel Clifford as Charlotte,
Luke Dalton as Charlie,
Cheryl Fergison as Maggie
and PJ Kirby as The Queen.

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Be sure to follow us on Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and Facebook to be first to hear all the latest goss and don't forget to tune in next week for another fabulous and fruity episode.