

Speaker 1:

Forever Dog.

Speaker 2:

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Sammie Cimarelli:

Hey, everyone. It's Sammie Cimarelli.

Savannah Palacio:

Savannah Palacio.

Courtney Revolution:

And Courtney Revolution.

Sammie Cimarelli:

And we are here to tell you about our new Forever Dog podcast called The Stream Queens.

Savannah Palacio:

The Stream Queens.

Courtney Revolution:

The Stream Queens.

Savannah Palacio:

You may know us from The Circle on Netflix, but what you don't know is that we love TV. We love TV so much we went on it. And as TV experts, it's up to us to keep you up-to-date on what everyone's watching.

Courtney Revolution:

So, each week on The Stream Queens, we will break down the ever-expanding streaming universe and give you the hilarious recaps you crave.

Sammie Cimarelli:

Newest Hulu craze, we got you, girl. The dating show that's got everyone tweeting, we're on it. Latest season of The Circle, oh, you know we're going to talk about that. It's going to be such a fun ride. So be sure to check out The Stream Queens every Wednesday on Apple Podcast, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts.

Courtney Revolution:

We can't wait to see you there.

Speaker 1:

Forever Dog.

Allison Raskin:

Hello, I'm Allison Raskin. I'm a writer, mental health advocate, and I think I'm somehow getting worse at cutting my own bangs.

Gabby Dunn:

Hi, I'm Gabby Dunn. I'm a writer, bicon, bisexual icon, wink, and I love a smiley face.

Allison Raskin:

Oh, like a little figurine?

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. I got really into smiley faces. I think it's like a '90s nostalgia thing coming back. I want to just look like the Delia*s Catalog model that I wasn't allowed to be as a kid.

Allison Raskin:

Why weren't you allowed to be it?

Gabby Dunn:

I had a uniform and I went into Abercrombie, I went into Limited Too. I tried to do the whole thing and it just never worked on me. I was just not. Ugh, I remember I really wanted a shirt from Abercrombie & Fitch because that was how you were cool, but I didn't have any money.

Gabby Dunn:

I wanted it for summer camp. The ones that were inexpensive were just plain shirts that didn't say anything on them. So, I had all these plain shirts that were expensive from Abercrombie. You couldn't even tell they were from Abercrombie, but I knew in my head they were, but I was like, "Well, now nobody knows that I'm actually wearing the brand that is cool."

Gabby Dunn:

I wanted those ones that said possibly offensive, fun things on the front. Coed Naked Lacrosse or whatever, I'm in sixth grade. But I could only afford the ones that were plain. So no one even knew I had the right stuff. So I was just failing all over the place.

Allison Raskin:

I'm sorry about that. I hope you feel now that you're able to fully express yourself through graphic Tees.

Gabby Dunn:

I went to the mall. I actually went to the mall because my computer broke and I was walking around and I was like, "One, I love the mall."

Allison Raskin:

I love the mall.

Gabby Dunn:

A wild thing as someone who's anti-capitalist. And two, I was like, "I'm an adult. I could go into Abercrombie right now. It's not in style. I could buy all the Abercrombie I want." Even though it's not in style, I was like, "Maybe I should just start buying stuff from Hollister because fuck it. All the things I wanted, I'll head right into Limited Too.

Gabby Dunn:

When I see a Claire's, the idea that I could go into Claire's and I have money that I could buy the things I wanted from Claire's when I was in sixth grade and didn't have any money, oh man, it's a high.

Allison Raskin:

You should go do it.

Gabby Dunn:

Should I do it? It's not for anything.

Allison Raskin:

Just go do it.

Gabby Dunn:

But I feel like these necklaces, I'm wearing these childish, beaded, smiley face necklaces that I got from American Eagle. I was like, "I'm in seventh grade, but now I'm rich." I had khaki shorts that I had gotten from Limited Too and I just wore them in a way that I was like, "Everyone should see that it's from Limited Too." So trying and so sad. But now maybe I'll just skip over to the mall and just live my dreams.

Allison Raskin:

I think you should. Why not? Take care of your inner child.

Gabby Dunn:

Get my ears pierced at Claire's just truly do it up. Fuck you mom and dad, I'm 33.

Allison Raskin:

This is Just Between Us, a variety show filled with heart-filled advice...

Gabby Dunn:

Ridiculous games...

Allison Raskin:

And brutal honesty about preteen clothing and everything else.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. Head right into an Icing, get a bunch of ear cuffs, get a bunch of tube socks. No one can tell me what to do.

Allison Raskin:

Nobody could tell me what to do and I still can't figure out how to put together an outfit.

Gabby Dunn:

Oh my God. Well, this week on the show, we're going to be talking to Catherine Baab-Mugira all about her book, Poe for Your Problems: Uncommon Advice from History's Least Likely Self-Help Guru.

Gabby Dunn:

I want to say that I love anyone who comes on this show with an expertise in something obscure. I love when it's like, this person knows everything about bacteria, or this person knows everything about Edgar Allan Poe, or this person knows everything about chimps. I want experts in things that it's a little bit like why?

Allison Raskin:

Well, I totally agree, but I have to put my foot down that we can never have an expert in bacteria on this show.

Gabby Dunn:

Why?

Allison Raskin:

Because I can't know more about it.

Gabby Dunn:

Got it. Got it. Got it. Got it. Got it.

Allison Raskin:

That's very dangerous for me. I can't know where the bacteria is. I can't know what they're like. I can't know what they do. I have to remain ignorant of that.

Gabby Dunn:

Okay. Sorry. I just said it and I didn't mean it. We should get someone who knows the history of-

Allison Raskin:

Clorox Wipes.

Gabby Dunn:

Babe, no. Well, I was going to say we should get someone who knows a lot about '90s fashion or maybe just a therapist who's like, "Here's why your inner child needs nourishing."

Allison Raskin:

Yeah, either of those two options. We're also going to be discussing traveling later in the show. Is it important? Is it a personality trait? What are our thoughts on it?

Gabby Dunn:

Think some people on Instagram think it is.

Allison Raskin:

But first, we have to answer a listener's question. So you know what that means. Hit it. International question. International question. International question. Abby, Virginia.

Gabby Dunn:

Oh, what a Virginia-heavy episode. Our guest is also from Virginia.

Allison Raskin:

This means something, I'm just not sure what.

Gabby Dunn:

I don't know what, but keep going.

Allison Raskin:

Hey, Gabby and Allison, I'm Abby from Virginia. I love your podcast and listening to you guys so much. I always feel like I relate to both of you from Gabby's queerness to Allison's mental health awareness.

Allison Raskin:

Listening to you guys has helped me through so much in learning about myself. My question today is specifically for Gabby, even though I, Allison, still picked it. So, pretty cool, but I would love Allison's advice too on some of the mental health parts of it.

Allison Raskin:

I recently got back together with my partner. We had been taking a break due to some mental health issues and just spending time getting ourselves together, but stayed in touch during that time. And I told them that I want to be polyamorous, but I'm not sure what level or what my boundaries are yet.

Allison Raskin:

For some context, I'm a bisexual, pansexual woman, she/her, and my partner is queer and non-binary, they/them. We definitely have the privilege of passing as a straight couple by how we present ourselves. But our relationship is super gay. During our time apart, I spent some time dating and experimenting with polyamory and found that I love it.

Allison Raskin:

When we had the conversation of if we were ready to get back together, I told my partner this and they were super supportive. They have been in a poly-relationship in the past. My issue is that I do not know what level of polyamory I want to do and what my boundaries are.

Allison Raskin:

I love the idea of us dating together, that I for sure want to do, but I'm not sure what level of dating separately I want. I know I could not have multiple serious partners myself. I don't have the energy for that. But I like the idea of casual partners.

Allison Raskin:

Gabby, could you share some of your story with polyamory, how you set boundaries and give some advice for a newbie. And I would love advice on how to stay on top of our mental health together during this transition.

Allison Raskin:

This is great. Not sure if you want to do this as a listener question or just topics. I am happy either way. Just writing it out already helped me so much. Love you guys, Abby.

Gabby Dunn:

That's really sweet. Thank you for producing the show for us. I appreciate it. Okay. Wow. Well, I was in relationships in high school and college where I didn't know the word polyamory. I didn't know that was a thing. I thought it was like some defect or flaw in myself, but I always, whenever I had boyfriends, I would always be like, "If you wanted to see other people, that would be fine."

Gabby Dunn:

And they would go, "So, break up?" And I was like, "No." And they would be like, "So, I could just like, what are you talking about? Is this a trick?" And I was like, "It's not a trick."

If you wanted to see people other than me but still be boyfriend/girlfriend, that's fine." I did not know that was a thing.

Gabby Dunn:

That's just how I felt. And so they were like, "Okay." And to me, it actually reminded me of the '50s where you would go on dates, but you had your steady or whatever. So, I think we weirdly regressed back to this other type of monogamy. I think our parents may have actually understood polyamory in some ways.

Gabby Dunn:

But then my boyfriend in college was like, "Oh, okay. I see what you mean. Lie to you." And I was like, "No." And he was like, "So, date other people but lie?" And I was like, "No, tell me the truth."

Gabby Dunn:

And so, I had a lot of problems with people still not understanding that I was like, "This is chill." So they would be like, "Okay, great." And what I wanted was just to know about it. And that's a different comfort level, right?

Gabby Dunn:

So then I met comedian Myq Kaplan, who was the first person I ever heard use the word polyamory. And he was like, "I usually have a girlfriend and then I hook up with other people." And I was like, "What? That's a thing? That's a word?"

Gabby Dunn:

And then, I mean, look, this is a stereotype, but as a bisexual, it had been super helpful to me because if I, a lot of times I was dating cis men and I would want to figure out my bisexuality, hook up with women, date women. And so, I was able to do that.

Gabby Dunn:

In some instances, the people I dated were uncomfortable with that, and in some instances they were comfortable with it, and in some instances they were a little too comfortable with it. The way that my polyamory operates today is not the way it operated in the very beginning.

Gabby Dunn:

Everything changed as I had more experience and I got to understand myself more and understand what I was interested in, or what I wanted. I've been in relationships where we dated together.

Gabby Dunn:

Now, a lot of these relationships were people who started out as monogamous and were like, "I'll give poly a try because of you," but weren't necessarily poly on their own time. And that for a couple of them, one, it ended up being very exhausting for him. And in one instance, my ex was in a constant state of turmoil, whenever I dated was just hysterically crying.

Gabby Dunn:

So, obviously not super sexy. I would go on dates. That person would be sobbing at home. I'd be like, "You know what? I got to go home and deal with this." So I think people have different levels of comfort and you really have to get into the weeds about it. One of my exes and I had a full Google Doc with rules.

Gabby Dunn:

We would fill it out with different rules that we had for each other, which was like, "Please use a condom with other people. Please shower when you get home. Don't hook up with people that I know," or things like that. Which seems like homework, and it is.

Gabby Dunn:

And so, I mean, it's changed a lot over time. Then I dated someone who arguably was perfect for me in a lot of ways, because we were exactly the same. We dated and hooked up with other people. There was almost no jealousy. It was a lot of compersion, which is when you feel joy when your partner hooks up with someone else or you feel happy for them. So it's the opposite of jealousy. It could also even be that you're turned on by them doing it.

Gabby Dunn:

Whenever we dated other people, it was like, he could just go out and do what he wanted and I'd be like, "That's amazing. I have some movies I want to catch up on." There was no drama about it. It was super caszh.

Gabby Dunn:

So, that's the only person I've ever dated where I think we were 100% compatible in that regard, but it just changed. I've had situations where I've had a boyfriend and a girlfriend, where I've had multiple girlfriends. And it just changes. You just try. Trial and error, basically.

Gabby Dunn:

Obviously at a certain point, I, similar to you, Abby from Virginia was like, "This is a lot to have multiple, actual partners. This is very stressful. My days are being taken up too much. My social calendar is just too full.

Gabby Dunn:

And so, my partner now, we're both, Mal came into it also poly. There's people that I meet up with, or I talk to, but I'm very open and honest. My profile on dating apps is like, "I am non monogamous. I have a partner, please do not talk to me if you are not okay with this."

Gabby Dunn:

And then we have our own rules. Like we have our own, be home by a certain time, or... My whole journey. And I'm talking about this spans a decade. It's not something that I figured out in a year or in two years. It's taken a long time and it might completely change multiple times.

Gabby Dunn:

I mean, there's no set thing where you go, "This is my boundary," because things change. Also, you might think something is fine and then it happens and then you're like, "I actually didn't like that."

Gabby Dunn:

But the thing with that is that you can't then jump to blame your partner. Right? You have to be working on it as something that is within yourself. So if your partner does something that was previously okay, you go, "Actually, that didn't really feel that good to me." You have to approach it with them in the conversation by being like, "Hey, I know this was okay and you absolutely didn't do anything wrong. I just realize now that I don't really like it."

Gabby Dunn:

And it's tough. I have friends who are poly who they believed it would be fine if the person dated someone else. And then they got into a second relationship and the first person was like, "I actually now seeing this in practice, I don't feel good about it." And that person had to dump the second person.

Allison Raskin:

Yeah. I guess that's my question. If your partner does something and then you realize that you don't like it, is it the expectation that that partner would then change the rules of what you'd already agreed on?

Gabby Dunn:

It's tough. It's tough. You have to talk about it. And it could be a case of like, "I just feel weird about this and I need you to reassure me," or, "I just feel weird about this and we need to talk it out." It's frustrating. I get frustrated all the time. I don't like when the rules change, but I also know that that can happen.

Gabby Dunn:

I mean, everyone has their thing. I don't like exes. Mal doesn't care about any of my exes. I don't like Mal's exes, but I am suspicious of them.

Allison Raskin:

In what way?

Gabby Dunn:

I just don't like them.

Allison Raskin:

But I guess I'm wondering, when you realize that you don't like something, is it because the fear is that Mal will leave you for them and that you won't be the primary partner anymore?

Gabby Dunn:

No. Well, Mal and I have gotten to a place where it's very secure. We are like, "Where am I going to go? What am I going to do? Where am I going to go?" But you have to make sure that you can't just that... Polyamory is not just I go off and do what I want. You have to

talk to each other. You have to like, "I have a date tonight," and I have to be like, "I'm going on a date."

Gabby Dunn:

A few days in advance I was like, "I might have a date on Friday." And it depends on how everybody feels, what's going on, and who's the priority, right? If I was like, "Oh, I have a date tonight," but then, knock on wood, whatever. But at 5:00 PM Mal gets the flu and is like, "Oh my God, I'm throwing up. I'm so sick."

Gabby Dunn:

I'm not going to be like, "Well, I got a date." I'm going to be like, "Hey sorry, my primary partner needs me." It's building priorities and making sure that the second person, or third person, or fourth person understands that they are not top of the food chain, for me.

Gabby Dunn:

Some people are relationship anarchy. Some people are solo poly, which is just everybody's on the same level. And there's no primary partner. I happen to have a primary and then other situations. So, you might have a completely different, Abby. You might have a completely different idea of what you want.

Gabby Dunn:

You might end up being like, "Actually, I'm most comfortable if we were in a throuple," or, "I'm most comfortable if we were both dating this person." And even that can cause a little bit of problems, right?

Gabby Dunn:

What if you and the other person go out to dinner and your primary... Or you're all equal, right? There's no primary, but two people go out to dinner. One person's like, "I'm sad and jealous. I feel FOMO." It's a constant conversation.

Gabby Dunn:

And so, I think you just have to come at it with nobody's... Ideally nobody's intention is to hurt the other person. Nobody's intentions are malicious. If your partner does something and you're like, "Ooh, that actually made me feel icky." You have to come at it as, "I understand you did not do this to hurt me."

Gabby Dunn:

Your partner has to see that your intention isn't to control them and ruin their life. You have to come at it where everybody is assumed to have good intentions. That's been the key for me.

Allison Raskin:

What advice would you have for Abby in terms of how do you even start to figure out what is the right way for you to go about it? Do you try all different things at once? Do you try one thing at a time? How do you start that exploration?

Gabby Dunn:

I think maybe try dating together. But I also think apps are pretty harmless, like if you are on an app and you start talking to someone. I usually will start by, it will have a little bit of banter and then I'll say, "Hey, I don't know if you read my profile. Do you have questions about my situation?"

Gabby Dunn:

And then the person will either be like, "No, I'm good." Or they'll be like, "I do actually have questions." And then it depends on what your partner wants to know. So, I think starting slow or starting with just talking to other people like, "Oh, I'm just like having a flirty DM," or like whatever. And then see how the partner feels about it. See how you feel about it.

Gabby Dunn:

There might be a thing where like sometimes I'll be flirting and then it'll be like, "I actually just want to hang out with Mal." It's not a free-for-all and I don't think you should do everything at once, I think.

Gabby Dunn:

And depending on what your partner wants to know, you can run stuff by them. Like, "Hey, I've been talking to this person. What do you think about that?" I want to see, if Mal someone I'm like, "Show me pictures. I want to see." Mal is like, "I don't want to know anything about them."

Allison Raskin:

Oh, really?

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. So, it's very different. Whereas like the guy that I was dating in 2017 wanted to know everything.

Allison Raskin:

So you can have different rules per person.

Gabby Dunn:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And different people have different levels... Last summer when I was seeing that other person, that person was like, "Oh, I would come over and hang out with Mal. I have no problem." Mal was like, "Over my dead body." So, people have different levels of comfort.

Gabby Dunn:

I think you guys should start slow. Even though you both have experience in it, I think you should start by just talking to people, talking to other people and then see like, "How do you feel that I'm talking to this person?"

Gabby Dunn:

And setting up rules too that... I had a rule initially with the person I was talking to last summer where it was like, "I'm not going to respond to texts from this person while we're in bed about to go to sleep."

Gabby Dunn:

If you and I are laying in bed together, napping or anything like that, I'm not going to respond. And that was just a personal rule. So, if they texted, I would either say, "I can't talk right now," or I would ignore it because I had made the promise of keeping that separate from our bed.

Gabby Dunn:

And it's rules you wouldn't even think of. It's rules you wouldn't even necessarily think of, but it comes from like, "Okay, what is respectful?" So, trying to be respectful to the secondary people as well. You have to be respectful of their time and you can't just cancel on them with five minutes' notice. It's things like where you're just like, "How would I want to be treated?"

Allison Raskin:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). So it sounds like you got to allow yourself the grace for time to figure out what works and then also accepting that what works today might not be what you want tomorrow or what your partner wants tomorrow. And then it's a fluid relationship with polyamory perhaps.

Gabby Dunn:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And that some people will want to hook up once and then disappear. There's certain elements of the person that I'm seeing tonight who I think is more chatty and wants to be more texting during the day. And I have to be like, "Okay."

Gabby Dunn:

Even the secondary people are all going to be different with what they're comfortable with and what they want. It's a lot of navigation. But yeah, I think communication and going very slow, even though you both seem to think you have experience, but you don't have experience with each other's specific needs.

Allison Raskin:

Right. Well, I found that helpful and I've absolutely no intention of becoming polyamorous. If you want to submit your international question, send it to justbetweenuspod@gmail.com. That's justbetweenuspod@gmail.com.

Gabby Dunn:

Stick around after the break, we've got a juicy interview with our highly esteemed guest, Catherine Baab-Mugira. Stay tuned.

Gabby Dunn:

Oh boy, my old underwear was not that soft. There wasn't a great fit. All underwear seems like it's made for the same type of body. Nobody took any time to design authentic underwear for strong, independent, I'm comfortable with me people like us.

Allison Raskin:

But TomboyX did. They created underwear that makes me feel like this underwear doesn't just fit me, it gets me.

Gabby Dunn:

I mean, I have so much TomboyX underwear, but I love my black Boy Shorts that have the little rainbow logo on the front. I mean, not even just underwear, I have a bunch of TomboyX shorts too or leggings. I love them. I have so many things from this brand.

Allison Raskin:

I also really appreciate that they have high waisted options, because for me, having high waisted underwear has been a game changer. Wow. It is way more comfortable than the regular underwear.

Gabby Dunn:

TomboyX since 2014 has been making brazenly unapologetic underwear for all bodies, all shapes, all genders and all sizes. Really all sizes.

Allison Raskin:

From boxer briefs to bikinis, boy shorts to bras, every pair of TomboyX is created to fit you and how you see yourself. And they've expanded beyond underwear too.

Gabby Dunn:

Like I said, beyond underwear. Each product is built on values of quality, fit, and inclusivity. They pay attention to every detail, like no back seams for a wedgy-free experience that never rides up and super comfy, silky smooth waistbands that never roll down.

Allison Raskin:

Wherever you fall on the size, shape, or this is me spectrum, TomboyX is the underwear your body will love. And with their love-at-first wear guarantee, you can order risk-free while you find your perfect fit.

Gabby Dunn:

Discover your inner tomboy and let me get you started with our special discount. Go to tomboyx.com and enter just between us to get an extra 20% off. That's an extra 20% off when you enter just between us at tomboyx.com. Tomboyx.com restrictions apply. See site for details. I might use our own code.

Allison Raskin:

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Gabby Dunn:

I mean, getting out into the world again, the little bit that I have been, the social anxiety is through the roof. I have forgotten how to talk to people, I have been actually really having to gear myself up to go out. And so, I think that probably the pandemic has really affected a lot of people's mental health in the same way. And so, if you need to talk to someone, there's no shame in that. No matter where you are, BetterHelp is there for you.

Allison Raskin:

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Allison Raskin:

Welcome back to Just Between Us. It's time for the juiciest, most scandalous, controversial segment known to all of podcasting, Tough Questions.

Gabby Dunn:

This week on the show, we're asking Catherine Baab-Muguira some tough questions about her book, *Poe for Your Problems: Uncommon Advice from History's Least Likely Self-Help Guru*. Catherine is a writer and journalist who has contributed to basically every place. And so, we wanted to talk to you about Edgar Allan Poe.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Awesome. I'm so glad to be here.

Gabby Dunn:

So, what drew you to Poe?

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Well, we're from the same place. So, he grew up in Richmond, Virginia and so did I. I encountered him as a child like so many do. I heard *The Raven* in school and I read his stories when I was in elementary school just scaring the shit out of myself.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

And then as an adult, this was about five years ago, I always had chronic depression. But this, it was late 2016, and maybe you guys can remember how it felt like the world was going dark. And I just fell into the worst episode I've ever had.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

And over a couple of weeks, I got really into reading Poe again for the first time since I was a kid. He wasn't someone I had even thought about through undergrad and graduate school even as I was studying English literature.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

But I picked him back up and I suddenly had this different experience where I realized his stories were metaphors for depression, anxiety, and despair. And they were moving because of that.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

And then I started digging into his life because there are so many Poe biographies and the field is so controversial and disputed that I got drawn into that too. And it all pulled me out of myself. Then okay.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

So, one night I'm having a beer with a friend of mine and I say, "This is so strange, but Poe is cheering me up." And he said, "That sounds like a book." And I joked back. I was like, "Oh yeah, I'll write a book about reading Poe for self-help and call it how to say never more to your problems. And I wrote it down on a napkin. And so, here we are a couple of years later.

Allison Raskin:

I love all things that start by writing it down on a napkin.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Yes, a cocktail napkin.

Gabby Dunn:

So, what is the typical view that people have of Poe and how is that a little bit skewed?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Yeah. I mean, we have a real one dimensional association with him, those of us who do know him. We think of him as just solely concerned with horror and the macabre and writing these outrageous stories.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

And we don't realize that those stories carry tremendous psychological insight that you almost can't believe someone was describing in the 1830s and 1840s. Even some of his scientific takes Reed is very prescient. Now a lot of people think he even predicted The Big Bang Theory.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

So anyway, there's way more to the guy than we thought. And his life is even weirder than you may have heard and darker and stranger.

Gabby Dunn:

He had a lot of tragic things happen in a row.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Gabby Dunn:

And you frame that as like that can be empowering. So, what is the like crux of it for you?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

I mean, listen, I don't, not endorsing trauma as a great thing to happen to somebody or lead to an artistic career. It's not that kind of bright-siding, but I have come to see Poe's career as explainable in terms of his childhood trauma.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

He lost his mom between the age of two and three. And the remarkable thing about that phase of child development is that children can perceive, and absorb, and feel a great deal, but their language skills aren't there yet. So they can't articulate their griefs.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

And for Poe, losing his mother at that exact age and then spending the rest of his life writing some of the most beautiful and powerful examples of grief in literature, I think you can almost explain his career from that instance of childhood trauma.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

I don't mean to put a spin on that like, oh, it's such a hopeful message, but for those of us who have dealt with those sorts of things, it is in a sense maybe some light can come out of the darkest spots in our lives.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

I mean, in my own life, I got this idea at one of the worst moments I've ever experienced. So there's also the angle I would say, outside of the trauma, of using your weirdness, like leaning into the things that make you very strange, and maybe those will become the things that people love about you. Let's hope, right?

Allison Raskin:

What was your relationship to self-help books before you wrote one?

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

I've always had a really dubious view of them. I mean, in my experience, I've read plenty of them. I'm not anti-self-help, just in general. Been moments in my life where I would read 10 at a go trying to figure out how to change something.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

But a lot of times maybe guys have seen this too, they're presenting an impossible standard. You have to be this paragon of virtue and you have to give 110% in your relationship and in your parenting or your career.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

And you have to be so fit and have a six pack on top of these other things. And I just find that really tiring. For somebody in a dark spot, it's not that accessible of a message whereas Poe's message to my mind is that you can fuck up almost everything and still be a wild success, which I find way more heartwarming in its way.

Gabby Dunn:

In his actual life, he wasn't very well-regarded.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Mm-mm.

Gabby Dunn:

Can you talk about his series of career fuck-ups?

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yeah. So, in addition to the arguable mental health problems, he also just had an impossible personality. He was convinced of his own superiority and he couldn't get along with coworkers or bosses.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

So, really from the earliest jobs he ever had, like the first one at the Southern Literary Messenger where he talked his way into an editorship, he screwed that up within two

years by writing vitriolic criticism of other writers that was basically an early form of internet trolling.

Gabby Dunn:

What? What do you mean? What do you mean?

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Okay. So, he was writing in... The 1830s were a chaotic information age a lot like ours. There was this tech breakthrough that had led to this boom in publishing. And yet the journalism industry was incredibly unstable with things coming and going very quickly, just like our own age.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

And Poe's strategy for getting attention amidst this chaos was, "I'm going to say the meanest possible shit about your novel and that will bring attention to me," just in the same way that trolls work now, where they're trying to provoke the actions.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

He would write these vitriolic articles and then get into fights with other editors as a strategy for increasing subscriptions to the magazines he was working for and to just making a name for himself.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

I'm not saying I totally endorse that behavior, but the fact that you can identify it in the 1830s, even his colleagues would say, "He's striving to gain notoriety by the loudness of his abuse." It's a perfect description of trolling now.

Gabby Dunn:

Which is so funny because I think his, you talk about his most popular stories were essentially selling out. So, what leg does he have to stand on? Can you talk about how he was selling out, and those are the ones that we love today?

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yeah. There's a total teapot kettle issue here, which makes me love him more because was a total hypocrite about these things too. So, in his day, magazines and newspapers loved these sensational graphic stories and Poe leaned right into that.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

They were the easier sell. He didn't want to do that. He had wanted to spend his whole life writing really pretentious, Mooney poetry, but he couldn't afford to. So, he started writing these Gothic stories for the market, and yet he put his own spin on them.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

So, it was in a way a brilliant market adaptation, which allowed him to eke out a living. At the same time, he put his own stamp on these things and did insist on his own vision. But yeah, it was totally a sellout.

Gabby Dunn:

Like The Raven wasn't even something that he particularly enjoyed?

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

I mean, he thought it was brilliant, but also, he told friends, "I just wrote that to get famous." And it worked. It did make him a celebrity almost overnight. It was a [inaudible 00:34:05]. You know what I mean? It was his one hit single.

Allison Raskin:

Wow. When you're thinking about people reading this book, what are the main takeaways from the way that Poe lived his life that you think could be helpful for people to incorporate into their own?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Well, I think you can insist on your own vision and bring your unique weirdness to your work, whatever kind of work you're doing. And that can be the thing that becomes memorable about you.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Also, during his lifetime, Poe made almost no money off these contributions to magazines, just because of the IP law at the time, which is actually not that different from our IP law now, where giant tech companies absorb all the revenue from people uploading videos to YouTube or whatever.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Anyway, financial success may be no indicator of your being a world-changing genius or not. I think it shows that you can use the darkest stuff from your life in your work. And then that can speak to millions of people across multiple decades after your death.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

And one thing I find really hopeful about him too is, I mean, I've just mentioned how he talked so much shit himself, but also he was horribly maligned, as a lot of people know, even his obituary was a complete hit job.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

And after his death, people just piled on because he had been a troll in his life. I mean, the knives came out when he died. People said he had been possessed by the devil. They accused him of various sex crimes, which not credible accusations from men, other critics that is.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

So, they accused him of all manner of things, and yet this worked to his advantage. So, maybe the lesson for us is you can be horribly maligned, and talked about, and gossiped about, and an absolute outcast and yet it can work for you.

Gabby Dunn:

One of my absolute favorite things is other writers shitting on other writers in the past. And I related to the book a lot, I read it. And I feel like nowadays, there's this thing of like, everyone has to, in the public eyes, be kind to each other. And you can't say, "I find this other book to be shit," if you're in the same sphere.

Gabby Dunn:

And then in the back of the book, it's Mark Twain being like, "Fuck this guy." At WHOD and being like, "Fuck this guy." And all these people... The insults are so smart and biting and you can tell that they're just by other writers. Can you talk about some of the best ones?
Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Okay. My absolute favorite is from WHOD and which a lot of you will know is absolutely brilliant poet in his own right. And he said, "Poe's love life was confined to crying in laps, which is one of the worst things I can possibly think of." A university president said, "He wrote like a man not accustomed to paying his debts."

Gabby Dunn:

Oh, wow. There was one that was like, "He was brilliant in the way that someone before puberty is brilliant."

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yeah. T. S. Elliot saying that.

Gabby Dunn:

T. S. Elliot.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yeah.

Gabby Dunn:

Oh, it's so funny. I love it because it makes my criticisms of other people's work feel like this isn't mean. This is a history, you know?

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yeah. Like kind of almost like a roast where it's both loving and also extremely pointed.

Gabby Dunn:

Literally people are being like, "He's the worst writer ever." Oh, this one I loved, "The poet of unripe boys and unsound men." Put that in your bio.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

The funny thing is, in a way you could say that Poe was being attacked precisely because of his success. I mean, if he's such a second rate, horrible writer, why do we still read him today? Why is he one of maybe the three writers, if you ask people to name writers in America, you'll probably hear Mark Twain, Stephen King and John Grisham and maybe Poe too.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Because so many people know him. Most people recognize his face. That doesn't mean he was a failure. It's a strange way to read the situation on this, but you can feel these folks' snobbery, you know what I mean?

Allison Raskin:

What was something when you were researching the book about his life, that was either shocking to you or you were like, "Oh, this makes perfect sense."

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

So, okay. He had a mommy complex like no other. The putdown about crying in laps lands really close to the truth. His relationships with women were driven by his wanting to be comforted by them. I thought relatively clear to me that he wasn't actually trying to have sex with people, he more like wanted them to take care of him and pet his hair.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

So anyway, when he was an editor in New York in 1845 and *The Raven* came out, he became a celebrity overnight. He was married, but his wife was very ill and he started to get a lot of attention from women at parties and even through his editor job at the time.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

And so, sometimes he started to correspond with them and it reads just like a DM slide now where they were basically flirting, and then they would even publish poems to each other in the newspaper.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

So, I think people don't know about his flirty writings on the side that probably never went into any kind of actual affair, but definitely existed. And even editors at other papers would be like, "What the hell is going on in 19th century terms publishing that in the paper?"

Gabby Dunn:

They would write basically like their sexts to each other, like publish it in the paper for the other one to read.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yes. And it was so transparent too. She would write, one of them, Frances, would write poems like, to EAP. As if that was some kind of disguise. And he did the exact same thing, like writing to the initials. So, it was just like, guys, everyone sees what's going on here. You're not hiding from anybody. It's like if you've ever observed somebody flirting on Twitter.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. Or it's like celebrities posting with... It's like going Instagram official with someone.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. It's funny how transparent that behavior is 170 years later. I love it.

Gabby Dunn:

Aww. I mean, his wife was dying, but still. Can we do a rundown of the other thing that people say about him, which is like, he married his 13-year-old cousin. So let's break that down.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yeah. There's a lot to unpack there. So, she was 13-years-old. He was in his late twenties, so it wasn't the case that they were both teenagers. And she was his first cousin. He'd even lived in the house where she grew up.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

The reason I have come to understand something about it is, it was not true that in the 1830s girls routinely got married at that age. You had to have permission from a parent, and her mother did consent to. Her mother was close on and consented to the marriage.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

The reason he wanted to marry her was because his parents were dead, his foster parents were dead, he'd lost his brother, they had lost multiple family members, his aunt and cousin. And at the time, it was like their little household was going to spin apart.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

There was another family member who was going to take these ladies into his own household under his protection and Poe basically threw a fit and threatened suicide unless she would marry him.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

So they got married, but the consensus of most biographers is that they didn't consummate their marriage for several years. And he implied that in a short story, Poe. And then according to friends, it was a very loving, doting relationship.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

So I don't say it like, "This happened, but it was fine." It's a complicated situation. And then parts of it are unclear. So, to me, it seems his motivation was that he was trying to form a family at a moment of great loss.

Gabby Dunn:

Wow. It seems like everything he did was just trying to find family. And when he didn't get that, it was throw a fit time.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yeah. The infantile shrieking of that letter he wrote to his aunt and cousin of like, "I have nothing left to live for." It is crazy how identifiable that is now too. You know when someone's at their nakedest, most vulnerable place of need that is touching the deepest issues in their soul and they're just an absolute mess. Poe was identifiably that.

Gabby Dunn:

Wow. It's so funny that he is so popular and people have tattoos of him and people like, their Baltimore Ravens are named after him. And he was such a shithead.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yes. A fuck-up bigger than any in literary history that I have ever seen. I mean, everything he could screw up, he did. Every bridge he could burn, he burned.

Gabby Dunn:

It just is so identifiable in some ways. If that's not you, you have a friend like that where like, you talked about he showed up to do a lecture and he just didn't prepare and then was wasted. His wife died and he wrote 800 pages on how he thought the universe started.

Gabby Dunn:

And then through an event where he could read it out loud and everyone by hour four was like, "We got to get out of here." What a nightmare person, but so confident.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Yeah. And yet at the same time a genius. Parts of Eureka, his total meltdown of prose poem about the universe, parts of it are so beautiful. Among the best writing he ever did. There's this whole metaphysical section at the end, which is batshit on one hand and at the same time it's this beautiful vision of a world that will eventually be renewed and we'll all be together. But it was totally crazy.

Gabby Dunn:

Do you think in your own work it's just confidence? Sometimes I feel like with art, it's like being shameless pays off in some ways.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

I think that's super true. One of the things I felt Poe has taught me is I loath self-promotion and putting myself forward, but you can see how that worked for him. His conviction in the value of his own work is in a lot of ways really admirable and contributed to his success in a huge way. And this is when he wasn't just puffing himself up and literally inventing heroic fits in his own paths.

Gabby Dunn:

Oh, yeah.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Because he did plenty of that too. He falsified his resume huge, in huge ways.

Allison Raskin:

I'm wondering how you're going to apply what you've learned in the process of writing this book to how you deal with the reception of your first book being out, because that's such a vulnerable thing. Are you taking a stance of like, "Fuck every reviewer," or how does that influence it?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

I wish I could say that his help has brought me that far. I maybe got half of the way there. I can stick my neck out at all and deal with what comes or at least try to face it without crawling under my desk, because it can work for you to do this sort of thing.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Yeah. I wish I had the courage. Maybe I need to read my own book. I wish I had the courage to go full-on throwing punches on social media and so on and getting myself into horrible feuds. I guess getting halfway there is good.

Gabby Dunn:

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. I think there's a lost art to literary criticisms or literary feuds. I think that it's interesting now... For my other podcast, I was talking to some young TikTokers who are, I don't know how old you are, but I'm a millennial and I think we were like, "Oh my God, stay away from any controversy. Ooh, anything could happen," whatever.

Gabby Dunn:

And then Gen Z is just, I think, monetizing being bullied and getting very into this feud or kind of... They're coming back around to what I saw in your book where they're like, any press is good press. And I recognized that.

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

Yeah. I admire it when people do that to the world of beefing on TikTok and YouTube and so on. It's a little like, "Yeah, I'm an older millennial." And so I was never brought up to do that. I feel like it was beaten out of me if I ever did have the instinct to.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah.

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

But I noticed these, I guess, for lack of a better term, social media stars, completely just making a career out of fighting with each other and it inspires me a little bit.

Gabby Dunn:

I know. Me too. Because I feel like, say the truth. Don't kiss ass. If you think Poe is a drunk idiot, then say that, I don't know. I think we've risen these literary heroes to this height of, they're all equal and then when you read Mark Twain being like, "Fuck [inaudible 00:46:56]," you're like, "You know what? Yes, you were human. You were people. You had opinions."

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

It's way more illuminating and revealing. These people reveal themselves to be fully human just like us and screwing up in various aspects of their lives. It's such more accessible message than this idea that you have to approach them only in one vein of respectfulness and a polite inquiry. Right? It's not that I always practice it, but you can get a lot of the way there doing impolite inquiry.

Gabby Dunn:

How do you think he would feel today about the way that he's viewed in society?

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

I think he'd be intensely gratified by how famous he is and how much influence he's had, because he definitely thought he deserved it. He was a snob about venues and genres and so on. He might not like how popular the culture is around a lot of his work to the fact that Britney Spears had a dream within a dream tour and Lou Reed covered him, and so did Stevie Nicks. He might not like those manifestations because he was a high culture wannabe in some ways. But I think his ego would be incredibly satisfied.

Allison Raskin:

What are your thoughts on separating an artist from their life? So, obviously he has some problematic stuff, especially with the young wife and as we learn more and more about our "heroes", what are your thoughts on that?

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

I think that it is a convention that largely came to us out of a certain school of literary criticism. Like you could call it something that grew out of new criticism where, oh, we see strictly no relationship between the product and the life. And that just seems to me like some weird social rule we observe knowing it's not true.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

I don't understand how you could grasp the work outside the context of the life. It's not that you can't enjoy it, but to really get at its depth and dimensions, how else would you get there? I don't know why we're forced to pretend like these things are not related to each other. They're obviously the most closely related things you could have.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Maybe we do that too because we want some plausible deniability in our own lives. Like, "Oh, I didn't write a book about Poe because I feel like a screw up, I wrote about it because I'm strictly interested in him from a literary history perspective." You know what I mean? That's obviously not true.

Gabby Dunn:

And I think it comes through in their work. I mean, obviously it informs. The biggest example that I see a lot is Woody Allen where it's like you go, "Well, I like the movies." And it's like, okay, in half those movies his girlfriends are teenagers, so you really can't... It comes through in the work.

Gabby Dunn:

And so, I think it depends on... That is more worrisome to me than someone from the 1830s who was a fuck up. And I think context and the way it manifests in their work, and also, I'm not here to be like, "Cancel Edgar Allan Poe." I just don't think that that allows us to engage with what he contributed to the world in his art.

Gabby Dunn:

But I think in a more modern sense, it does make sense. But yeah, I think it's afforded a lot of times to certain types of people like white guys or whatever. Right? And then his contemporaries at the time who maybe were not white guys maybe weren't risen to the same sort of like, "Oh, well he's just quirky."

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

Yeah. I agree with all of that. These issues in Poe's life, I can't even say that I've taken a settled view of them after all this time. I don't know that it's possible to take a settled view or it would be appropriate to take a settled view of something like marrying a 13-year-old.

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

I have my ideas about it and what I've come to think, but I would never say I'm absolutely certain I know what was going on there. I mean, there would be more than one reason to cancel Poe if you wanted to, he's such a large institution now. His cultural influence is so vast that I don't even know how you would. To the point where...

Catherine Baab-Muguira:

And he has 4 million Facebook fans and his work is constantly brilliantly re-imagined by diverse film makers from Romero to Peel, plus all this other influence that it's almost even hard to track. Scholars generally agree that he has had more influence on Spanish language literature than any other American author in history, which is a strange thing, given some of his stances. So, I don't know how you make peace with that.

Gabby Dunn:

It just depends on how much it matters to you, but I think broad strokes is not the way to go, especially with... And I say that about old. I mean, look, Hamilton, we made a whole musical of Hamilton, and Hamilton owned slaves. You know what I mean? I feel like it's way more complicated than people give it credit for, or want to engage with, especially with literary criticism.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Yeah. I question myself on this. I'm like, "Am I just lionizing another white dude?" But he was so strange and so unfortunate in his life that I think there's some mitigation there.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

And what he's come to mean to people.

Gabby Dunn:

Right. I think the weirdos of the world have felt very seen and comforted.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Yeah. That's putting it really well.

Allison Raskin:

It's an interesting concept because to have him as like a figure in the self-help world, because do you think that he was miserable his whole life?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

I think he was miserable for lots of parts of it. I mean, in a way, that's the message. Through everything he experienced, he kept going and he produced reams of work, 2,500 pages in the Library of America additions despite everything that he went through. And that's not to make some claim that we should all be productive no matter what, but the sheer fact that he could do that is crazy and inspiring to me.

Allison Raskin:

Yeah. I always wonder about the difference between my productivity and my internal world and which holds more value in a way?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Yeah. It's a super, big question and one I'm interested in myself. I almost want to see, in some ways to speak to that question, I think we need to diversify our self-help heroes with screw-ups and people who did things badly and went through shitty periods in their lives that didn't just, in some toxic positivity arc, then everything was fine.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

It wasn't that case with Poe. He had moments of happiness, but his life overall was incredibly difficult. And that's true for a lot of us, you know what I mean?

Allison Raskin:

Yeah, definitely. There can be pockets of beauty and brilliance throughout it despite the hardship.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Yeah. I like that. I agree.

Allison Raskin:

Would you like to play a game show?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

I would love to, yeah.

Allison Raskin:

Okay, great. So, this game is called hypotheticals. You and Gabby are my contestants. I'm going to give you a series of hypothetical situations. You can ask any clarifying questions that you might have, and then you would tell me what you would do in that scenario. You can either play as yourself or play as Poe.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Which do you prefer?

Gabby Dunn:

Play as yourself. Play as yourself.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Okay. Okay.

Allison Raskin:

Yeah. So, the first game is America's favorite game show. Would you stay with this cheater? Your partner of seven years goes on a yearly camping trip with their friends from college. You find out they spent the most recent trip sharing a sleeping bag and sleeping naked for the body heat-

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

What?

Allison Raskin:

... with one of their very good looking friends. Would you stay with this cheater? They kissed a little in the middle of the night, but your partner was half asleep and thought it was you.

Gabby Dunn:

What? How long have we been together?

Allison Raskin:

Seven years.

Gabby Dunn:

What's the deal with this friend?

Allison Raskin:

Just a very good looking, cool, hip friend from college.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. I'm going to have to go. Unless is the friend interested in me too or no?

Allison Raskin:

No, but they say they're not interested in your partner either. It was just for body heat and then just a confused, half-asleep make out.

Gabby Dunn:

Well, why didn't they bring enough stuff to keep warm if they camp all the time?

Allison Raskin:

It's very hard to keep warm, Gabby.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

I actually, it's not the act itself that bothers me. It's the shitty excuses. And you expect me to buy that? That would be the reason why I couldn't stay there.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. What do you think my intelligence is?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Right? There's the condescension in those excuses.

Allison Raskin:

In their defense, they make out with you in the middle of the night all the time.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Well, that changes everything.

Gabby Dunn:

No, it doesn't. Oh my God. But the other person doesn't really know that. So, I feel like...
Hmm. No, I think the bad excuses and I think they should know by now what to bring. So, I got to go.

Allison Raskin:

I like that you're leaving because they didn't have a good camping packing list.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. I mean, come on. You camp all the time. You didn't bring enough stuff. I don't buy it. I don't buy it. Catherine?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

No, I'm with you. I don't like these explanations even with the middle-of-the-night make out. Why was the other person receptive to that if it wasn't put across in some way like that might happen.

Gabby Dunn:

Mm-Hmm (affirmative). Exactly.

Allison Raskin:

Well, it turns out that they also are used to making out in the middle of the night with their partner. They're both just nocturnal maker-outers. So, it's a bad combo.

Gabby Dunn:

I don't buy it. I don't buy it. This feels like some sort of long con.

Allison Raskin:

Okay. But unfortunately you'll never kiss ever again.

Gabby Dunn:

By anyone?

Allison Raskin:

No, you never get kissed again just through a series of events after you leave them.

Gabby Dunn:

Fine. That seems fine.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Are you becoming a nun at that point?

Gabby Dunn:

No, you're just crying in a lot of laps.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Yeah. Oh, that's everybody's love life, right?

Gabby Dunn:

Exactly.

Allison Raskin:

Okay. Our next game. Is this a date? While at lunch, you complained to your coworkers about having to file your taxes because you hate doing it and always mess it up. Later that night, one of your coworkers shows up at your door to help you with your taxes in exchange for a drink and a snack. They majored in accounting. Is this a date?

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

I think it's wonderful no matter what it is, somebody else doing my taxes is my fantasy. So yeah, I would call that a date myself proactively.

Gabby Dunn:

What time of night is it?

Allison Raskin:

7:00.

Gabby Dunn:

And they don't want dinner, they just want a snack?

Allison Raskin:

Yeah. Because they thought it'd be too presumptuous to require dinner. So they just would like a drink and a snack.

Gabby Dunn:

I didn't know they were coming?

Allison Raskin:

No, it was a surprise.

Gabby Dunn:

What am I wearing?

Allison Raskin:

What?

Gabby Dunn:

What am I wearing? Am I in PJs?

Allison Raskin:

No, you're in a jumpsuit that's pink valor.

Gabby Dunn:

It's a date. It's a date. And honestly, I might marry that person.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

And then you could have your taxes done for the rest of your life.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. You get your taxes done for the rest of your life. Marry an accountant, baby.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

This is the life hack that Poe didn't have to offer us, but is totally valid.

Gabby Dunn:

Forget the 13-year-olds, got to marry someone who graduated accounting school, baby.

Allison Raskin:

Okay. Our final game. Are you a terrible parent? Your daughter, 14, recently shaved their head as a fashion statement, but now she is getting teased at school. You decide to your older daughter, 16, into also shaving her head because she is very popular and you know if she does it, people will stop teasing your younger daughter. Your older daughter agrees to shave her head for a new car and the teasing stops. Are you a terrible parent?

Gabby Dunn:

Wow.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

Can you afford a new car?

Allison Raskin:

Yes. You're very rich.

Catherine Baab-Mugira:

I think it's a good example of getting things done then.

Gabby Dunn:

Wow. I'm really stumped.

Allison Raskin:

Thank you.

Gabby Dunn:

I don't know. I think maybe you are a good parent.

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

It's creative problem-solving in a way. And being bullied at school is so awful that sticks with you the rest of your life. I can see you doing almost anything to get that to stop.

Gabby Dunn:

Also, fuck these kids who are mad about a shaved head. Get mad about climate change you dummies. I'm going to go with you're a good parent.

Allison Raskin:

This is very cool. Do you think I should... Should I write a parenting book now, you think?

Gabby Dunn:

Look, if there's self-help books about Poe, write a parenting book, Allison. Give it a go. You don't have any children, but why not?

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

Poe would say that makes you even more qualified.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. Jesus Christ.

Allison Raskin:

Perfect.

Gabby Dunn:

Wow.

Allison Raskin:

Kat, thank you so much for joining us. Where can people find out more about what you're up to and also buy your book?

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

Yeah, all right. Like everybody else, I have a Substack, it's called Poe Can Save Your Life. I have a website catherinebaabmuguirra.com. And then you can find a book anywhere Barnes and Noble, Amazon, bookshop.org, my local bookstore, Fountain Bookstore is selling [inaudible 01:00:21], if that's a thing you're into.

Gabby Dunn:

Aww.

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

So anyway, I would love for you to check it out and I hope it has a weird effect of cheering you up too.

Allison Raskin:

I'm sure that it will. Thank you so much.

Catherine Baab-Muguirra:

Thank you guys. This was really fun.

Gabby Dunn:

Stick around after the break, we'll be talking all about traveling.

Gabby Dunn:

For me, this time of year usually means getting back into a busier schedule. You know I love food, but when I'm swamped, thinking about what's for lunch, let alone actually finding time to grocery shop is almost impossible. Thanks to Daily Harvest, my freezer is always stocked with delicious options that are ready in minutes.

Allison Raskin:

Daily Harvest delivers delicious harvest bowls, flatbread, smoothies and more, all built on organic fruits and vegetables right to your door.

Gabby Dunn:

Daily Harvest takes literally minutes to prepare and never uses preservatives, added sugar or artificial anything. And that goes for everything.

Allison Raskin:

I absolutely love their artichoke and spinach flatbread. If anything has artichoke in it, sign me up, baby.

Gabby Dunn:

And I love all of the ingredients that come for the smoothies. The smoothies are incredible. A Daily Harvest harvest bowl is the perfect comfort food meal on chill fall days, and they are ready in minutes. So get that harvest bowl.

Allison Raskin:

Daily Harvest is all about preserving and protecting the earth for current and future generations to come. From their recyclable and compostable packaging to investing in organic farming practices and reducing food waste, they believe in leaving the earth a better play than they found it.

Gabby Dunn:

Daily Harvest is delicious food all built on whole organic fruits and vegetables that conveniently stays fresh in your freezer, so it's ready when you are. It's really the whole package.

Allison Raskin:

Enjoy this time of year even more like I do with Daily Harvest. Go to dailyharvest.com and enter code just between us to get up to \$40 off your first box.

Gabby Dunn:

That's code just between us for up to \$40 off your first box at dailyharvest.com.

[Dailyharvest.com](https://dailyharvest.com).

Allison Raskin:

Welcome back to Just Between Us. It's time for top X.

Gabby Dunn:

X, X, X, X, X, X, X, baby.

Allison Raskin:

Baby. Hello traveling.

Gabby Dunn:

Okay. So here's the thing. Some people obviously make traveling their entire personality. I'm a little jealous of those people sometimes because I feel like they know something I don't. They're more organized or they're better at planning or something.

Gabby Dunn:

They've also, I guess, figured out how to manage money in a way that I don't know how to do. Like nomadic people. Like people who are like, "Oh, I have my studio apartment, but I'm mostly just going around Europe or whatever." Who are those people and how do I become one?

Allison Raskin:

See that's the thing is like I traveled a good amount growing up. My parents did a really great job of having great family vacations and I got to go to different countries and it was amazing. But then as an adult, I haven't traveled as much. And sometimes I'm like, is it strange that I don't care that much?

Gabby Dunn:

You don't?

Allison Raskin:

Well, I do and I don't. I would love to go places, sure. But it's not top of my list priority-wise. And maybe part of that is that I have to travel to New York quite often to see my parents. So just like I am on a plane often, but I'm just going home. You know what I mean?

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah.

Allison Raskin:

Also, I guess we go to Mexico once a year, so...

Gabby Dunn:

But you go to the same place every time. Yeah.

Allison Raskin:

That's what I mean. And so, part of me has been like, "Is this some personality flaw that I have that I'm not planning these elaborate trips to Norway or Australia. And am I missing out on some experience by not traveling more? Or is that just something I've been taught to believe that isn't true?"

Gabby Dunn:

I don't think it's a flaw. It's different personality traits. I mean, I really want... I had trips planned and then the pandemic happened. So, that sucked. That super sucked. Me and Mal had this whole thing for my birthday and then the pandemic happened and I didn't get to go.

Gabby Dunn:

So, we had to cancel it and we never went and then every five days or so, Mal and I will be like, "Remember when we were supposed to be in Cabo?" And then we're sad about it.

There are so many things on my bucket list of travel that I want to do. I'm so scared of not budgeting correctly for it.

Gabby Dunn:

I really want to go to New Zealand. I really want to go. I've never been to Asia. I want to go to Tokyo is top of my list. I have all these places that I want to go to. So, a producer that I'm working with just went to Iceland and was sending me pictures and I was like, "Ugh." And he was like, "I saw things that I'll never see again in my life." And I was so cool.

Allison Raskin:

Like what?

Gabby Dunn:

Glaciers and stuff. And I was like, "Oh, man." I feel like the world is so big and I've only seen such a small part of it. And I'm like, "What is the point of the world being so big if I'm not going to go and see?"

Gabby Dunn:

Even different cultures. Cheyenne used to go to Amsterdam all the time for work. So she's been to Amsterdam like four or five times. And she was like, they ride bicycles, there's pot cafes. She's like even the way that people live and the culture of these different places, I'm like um.

Gabby Dunn:

I definitely had a bad travel experience. I would say I went to Paris in a manic episode in 2012. You can read all about it in my book, *Bad With Money*. But even in my complete psychotic break, I loved seeing all the landmarks that I went to Versailles and I got to see the castle and all this stuff that, the palace or whatever. I got to see all this stuff.

Gabby Dunn:

I feel bad that I didn't prioritize travel in college because Emerson had a program where you could literally go to the Netherlands for an entire semester. And I am a workaholic and I chose to stay and intern at The Globe, which I don't regret. But also part of me is like, "You were 20, it doesn't matter." It wouldn't have mattered another six months working at The Globe, but in my head it really did.

Gabby Dunn:

I didn't take advantage of the ability to just pay my same tuition and live in the Netherlands. I regret that. I wish I had done it.

Allison Raskin:

Yeah. I feel conflicted about it because it can be so expensive. And so it's like, "Do I prioritize this thing?" And also with my OCD, I can't stay at hostels. I have to stay at a certain level of a place that is expensive so I don't feel unsafe in my own body.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Allison Raskin:

So, when I think about it, I think I have a lot of things. The idea of going on a trip and changing hotel rooms every three nights, like there is some stuff that is anxiety-producing for me about that and like packing, repacking, pack. And so, I think it is like this thing maybe I just haven't had a big trip in a while. And so, I think it would be a good thing to do and push myself towards.

Allison Raskin:

But then I also feel like all the time I'm like, "Where do I want to go?" And I don't have one clear, top-of-my-list place, which makes it harder. And we had thought of going to Costa Rica for our honeymoon, but then he left. So now it's like, "Do I still want to go to Costa Rica?"

Gabby Dunn:

You could be in Costa Rica right now.

Allison Raskin:

But John and I were talking about Berlin.

Gabby Dunn:

Okay. Yes.

Allison Raskin:

That feels like a city that would be really cool to see, that is artsy. I have this now. I have this fear of planning anything that's too far in advance.

Gabby Dunn:

When I was in my psychotic episode, I went to Belgium and France and Madrid. And because of COVID now, I could never do what I did. I mean, I stayed with different people, I was staying with strangers, I roamed around and did all this stuff. That was in 2012. With COVID, the way that I went about that trip, I could not do that now.

Allison Raskin:

Yeah.

Gabby Dunn:

And when will I be able to do that again?

Allison Raskin:

I know. So that's a whole nother element of it is like, is it safe to do it? When will it be safe to do?

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah.

Allison Raskin:

But I feel like I need to just maybe... I mean, it's hard also because I'm in school. Right? So I don't have a lot of free times in the year where I know that I have time off. But part of me is like, "Should I just push myself to make a commitment, book a trip and then have that to look forward to?"

Allison Raskin:

Because I think one of the greatest things about traveling isn't even the traveling itself, but the having something to look forward to.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah.

Allison Raskin:

Like the six months before a big trip being like, "Oh. Well, I'm going to Italy. So, fuck all you people."

Gabby Dunn:

I want to go to Italy very badly.

Allison Raskin:

That was the last major trip I did. I think it was 2014 I went with one of my college friends and that was my first time ever traveling internationally. I guess I did my tennis teen tour, but without my parents.

Gabby Dunn:

Oh my God.

Allison Raskin:

My tennis teen tour where we played tennis in Spain and France, which was very normal.

Gabby Dunn:

Wow. We didn't do a lot of international travel when I was a kid. My parents, we went to France with may-may, my grandmother, who's from there, allegedly. And my parents, I remember when Cheyenne and I were maybe eight and four, whatever, my mom was turning 40 for her birthday. My parents went to Italy by themselves for two weeks and just like left us with, I think, grandma Lee or something.

Gabby Dunn:

And they were just like, "Bye." And they went to Italy and good for them. They went all around Italy. My mom still talks about it. It was like the best trip ever. They had such a great time. And so, I saw international travel as very special, like a 40th birthday present, like a special thing.

Allison Raskin:

Yeah.

Gabby Dunn:

A cousin of mine had a Bat Mitzvah in Israel and me and my family went to that. So we went to Israel. And then when I was in college, I went on birthright. So I also went to Israel again when I was 20, which is hard to talk about here because we don't have time to unpack all of that.

Gabby Dunn:

But yes, I've been to Israel twice over a decade ago. And so, those are the things that I've done, but I want to see the pyramids. I want to do more travel that's just me. I don't think I've ever traveled with a partner, with a romantic partner. I went to Montreal with my ex in college and he got incredibly drunk and it was a terrible experience.

Allison Raskin:

I don't think that counts.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. I don't think it counts. But now that I'm thinking about it, I don't think I've gone on an adult international trip.

Allison Raskin:

Should we put this on our list for next year, that we'll each try to do it?

Gabby Dunn:

Where can we go because of COVID though?

Allison Raskin:

How about in two years?

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah, Tokyo 2024.

Allison Raskin:

Berlin 2025.

Gabby Dunn:

I want to go to Asia. I want to go to Japan and I want to just eat my way through Japan. I want to just eat all the foods that they have and I don't care what's in it. I want to go to a restaurant and be like, "What's their best thing?" And then I want to have that. Like an Anthony Bourdain situation.

Gabby Dunn:

And I want to see the Hobbit. I want to see all the Hobbit stuff in New Zealand. I got to figure it out. You know what's funny, me and my ex wanted to go to Cuba and my mom threw a shitfit.

Allison Raskin:

Oh, really?

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah.

Allison Raskin:

I want to go to Greece and see the island from Mamma Mia.

Gabby Dunn:

You think they have like a Mamma Mia tour?

Allison Raskin:

I really fricking hope so. Sign me up.

Gabby Dunn:

And also, I just want to say, not just international travel Mal and I have driven across the country twice and that was delightful.

Allison Raskin:

Yeah. That's the other thing. There are some places in the U.S I want to... I really want to go to New Mexico. I want to go to Roswell.

Gabby Dunn:

New Mexico is great.

Allison Raskin:

I want to go to New Orleans. I've never been there.

Gabby Dunn:

Ah, New Orleans is fun. Yeah, I've done a lot of Nashville and New Orleans, Memphis. A lot of those places are great. I had a very lovely time in El Paso, Texas. I don't know, Texas is really on the chopping block right now, but that was a fun town.

Gabby Dunn:

As long as you find a food restaurant, that is the top of that... So, in Texas, Mexican food or in New Orleans, seafood. Something that is the top of the line for that place. And you find a gay bar, you're pretty much set.

Allison Raskin:

I also think that in this time of COVID, thinking about smaller trips. So just like weekend trips just to spice things up a little bit. But that's a cool way to do it, to feel like you're traveling but you're keeping it local and just changing your scenery and still having something to look forward to.

Gabby Dunn:

Me and Mal, for Mal's birthday two years ago, I rented an Airstream in the desert and we just went out to the Mojave Desert and stayed in an Airstream and it was great. Very isolated. We looked at the stars. It was so like a hundred bucks.

Allison Raskin:

Melisa, want to come on in and share your thoughts?

Melisa D. Monts:

Traveling.

Allison Raskin:

That's your full thought?

Melisa D. Monts:

Well, with traveling, because I live so many places I've been to so many places domestically. And I've gone, like Italy's my favorite place that I've gone "abroad". But at this point in my life, and this is going to sound very pretentious, but there's a certain amount of things that I expect when I travel and it's out of my pocket right now. I'm not in the tax bracket to travel the way that I want to travel.

Gabby Dunn:

Wow, guys.

Allison Raskin:

That's how I feel too.

Melisa D. Monts:

Yeah.

Gabby Dunn:

Wow. I had a great time, I stayed with friends.

Melisa D. Monts:

See, I don't like that. I don't like staying with people. I like to have my own space. I like to be waited on.

Gabby Dunn:

But they can tour-guide you around.

Melisa D. Monts:

I don't like that. I don't like being in other people's homes. I don't like being on other people's time. I like to be on my own time doing my own thing.

Gabby Dunn:

Wow. All right. When I was in Belgium, I met this guy on the train who's Australian and we were like, "Yeah, let's just hang out and see the things together." So we were going around together.

Gabby Dunn:

And then we went into a bar and we met a 15-person, Midwestern family. And they were all wearing matching shirts because it was their vacation in Belgium, their big family vacation. And they took us under their wing. And for the whole day, they just bought us all our food and took us out to dinner with them and got...

Gabby Dunn:

It was like mom, aunt, uncle, dad, cousins, whatever. And then at the end of it, we were like, "Thank you so much." And they were like, "Oh, please. You guys were by yourselves. Your parents would do the same thing for one of our kids."

Gabby Dunn:

And I was like [inaudible 01:15:08]. And it was just nice. It was nice. We just hang out. They bought us waffles, pasta, beer. They were so lovely. Never talked to them again.

Melisa D. Monts:

For me, that would be my worst nightmare. Being stuck with people from some place I've lived. And I know for you that didn't feel like you were stuck. You were having a good time. But for me, I wouldn't like it.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah. I never talked to that guy from Australia ever again. I found a photo of us on my computer and I was like, "Oh my God, Ben." If you're Ben from Australia and you met me on a train in Belgium and we hung out for a day, hit me up. Well, it must have been 2012, so almost 10 years ago.

Allison Raskin:

I feel like I've forgotten what it's like to travel. So, now I want to do it.

Gabby Dunn:

Yeah.

Allison Raskin:

I went to San Francisco at the beginning of 2020 and really enjoyed it after having previously thought I didn't like San Francisco.

Gabby Dunn:

Because of the hills?

Melisa D. Monts:

You just have a fear of hills.

Allison Raskin:

Yeah. I'm just terrified of hills.

Gabby Dunn:

What do we rate this episode? I rate it 11 out of 10 timeshares, baby.

Allison Raskin:

I'll rate it 22 out of 17 difficult personalities.

Melisa D. Monts:

I'll rate it 30 out of 10 justice for Abercrombie. Abercrombie's back and I will die on this hill. In the last couple of months I've spent a lot of money at Abercrombie and it's very cute.

Gabby Dunn:

Does it still smell good in there?

Melisa D. Monts:

I don't know. I don't physically go anywhere. I haven't in years. Pandemic are not. They have such cute clothes now that all my summer clothes are from Abercrombie.

Allison Raskin:

Wow, really?

Melisa D. Monts:

Yes. And it's very inclusive too.

Gabby Dunn:

Really?

Melisa D. Monts:

Yeah. They have very short to tall and plus size curvy. They're very inclusive.

Gabby Dunn:

We are not sponsored by Abercrombie, but if Abercrombie wants to come on and... Please.

Melisa D. Monts:

I like to be-

Allison Raskin:

That's a gig pivot. That company did not use to be inclusive.

Melisa D. Monts:

Yes. I mean, they fired everyone and then rebranded completely. They're very different now.

Gabby Dunn:

I'll DM them. When this episode comes out, I'll DM it to them and be like, "Do you guys want to give us money?"

Melisa D. Monts:

Great. I'll have a picture of me post it in full Abercrombie.

Gabby Dunn:

Okay. Well, thank you to Catherine Baab-Mugira for being our guest.

Allison Raskin:

Just Between Us is a Forever Dog production hosted by me, Allison Raskin.

Gabby Dunn:

And me, Gabby Dunn.

Allison Raskin:

Produced By Melisa D. Monts, Abercrombie & Fitch's newest model.

Gabby Dunn:

Executive produced by Brett Bo and Joe Cilio and Alex Ramsey.

Allison Raskin:

Brandon Barnes composed our killer theme music.

Gabby Dunn:

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Please leave us a five star review. It really helps the show.

Gabby Dunn:

Also, I heard that you should be promoting your Patreon on your podcast. So, Allison has a Patreon for Emotional Support Lady, so go do that. I had a meeting with the people from Patreon and they told me to do that.

Allison Raskin:

Okay. Thank you.

Gabby Dunn:

Bye.

Allison Raskin:

Bye.

Speaker 1:

Forever Dog.