

Kya Buller Episode Seven

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SPEAKERS

Kya Buller, Isabelle Gray (Iszy), Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 00:00

Welcome to Bite My Tongue, the podcast where we invite our fave people from the creative industries to tell on the topics we're so used to biting our tongue on.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 00:08

This week on the podcast me and Iszy are joined by Kyla Buller, the founder and editor of Aurelia magazine.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 00:17

Yeah, we are.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 00:19

Yeah, we are. And we talk about beauty, brains, specifically, with Kya being a writer and being a model. And her internalised conversations with that.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 00:35

Yeah, totally. It was a it was a lovely one. Yeah, and this conversation was based on a piece that she wrote called 'I became a model when I was trying to be a writer, can I be both?' And I really recommend giving it a read. It's a really great one. I feel like something that I haven't really read before, and I think it created a really lovely space to have that chat. And yeah, I guess it's always interesting to hear about people's internal what they think is contradictions, but yeah, discovered they are not contradictions and can work as one. How nice is that? Spoilers. Yeah, that it works.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 01:17

Wow, no need to listen now guys. No, I think, Kya is so fascinating with how she talks about this. And, yeah, also, a quick couple of beauty tips thrown in there. So yeah, let's, let's get on with it, shall we? Let's go for it.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 01:39

Hi, everyone. Welcome back to another episode of Bite My Tongue. This is Iszy, Fozz, do you want to say hello?

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 01:46

Hello, hello to lovely listeners.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 01:49

And we have another guest today as usual business as usual. And today we have the wonderful Kya, do you want to say hello.

Kya Buller 01:58

Hey, everyone. Thank you for having me. And I have got a kind of gruff voice at the moment. So I don't normally sound like this, but we'll power through anyway. Yeah, it's great to be here. Thank you.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 02:12

No worries. I like the voice I think it's cool.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 02:15

Yeah. Bring a bit of Husky.

Kya Buller 02:17

Sexy, isn't it?

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 02:18

Yeah. It's like in Friends and Phoebe as cold you know, gets her voice better.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 02:23

People are gonna love it.

Kya Buller 02:25

Did any of you watch One Tree Hill?

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 02:27

Yes.

Kya Buller 02:28

I always really wanted Sophia Bush's voice because she was like,

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 02:31

Oh my god. Yeah.

Kya Buller 02:32

Now that's me. So yeah,

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 02:34

There we go, dreams come true.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 02:37

Love it.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 02:39

So for people that may not know you, somehow don't know how that's happened. And would you mind introducing yourself?

Kya Buller 02:49

No, of course. My name is Kya, as I've already been introduced. I am a writer primarily of personal essays, sometimes dabble in a bit of opinion. Yeah. And I am the founder and editor in chief of Aurelia magazine, which is a digital publication that centres first person stories. And I've currently segwayed a little bit into creative writing too, it's been headed by somebody else that section. But yeah, it's great. I founded it in 2018. But I tend to think of the first year is sort of, not real year, because I was still at uni. And I didn't really put that much time into it simply because I didn't have the tools. I didn't really know what I was doing, because I just kind of did it on a whim. And then the other three years have been, you know, a proper graft. And I'm very proud of it.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 03:42

hmm. And what what like inspired you to start it like what's, what's a shower thought, you know, just came to you one day, like, how did it all kind of happen?

Kya Buller 03:51

So this is the main question that people ask me with regard to Aurelia. I wish I always wish I had a much better answer. It wasn't like that well thought out. To be honest, I kind of like I said, like, I write personal essays. And I was writing them way before I was ever published anywhere. And I found it was quite hard to get them placed because people weren't people didn't seem to be respecting personal writing. And I think that women are and still are pigeon holed when it comes to personal writing into writing about like traumatic things, or like your period. And there's obviously more than that, obviously. And I thought, well, you know, if it doesn't exist, maybe I should create it. And I googled, like, how to make a website, sat in a cafe in Liverpool. And I was just like, okay, like, bought the domain and we started on blogger.com, which is just like, when I think about that now we run on that for like, three years. How, I've actually got no idea. Yeah. And then it was born and then people slowly started to come. Yeah, that's the story.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 05:01

Yeah, I think it's such a great publication for as you say, like, so many people feel like they have to fall into the trap of like exposing all their deepest traumas in order to get their first bylines and stuff. Whereas this publication, like you can still have that personal writing experience, but like, talk about, you know, joyful things as well. And like, you know, things that aren't so deep inside of you, you know, and still be like, Yeah, get those experiences and getting get people to read your work and learn about other people as well. So I think that's, that's so great, that it has that balance.

Kya Buller 05:34

Thank you. Yeah, I agree. You know, I think that journalism, landscape media landscape in general is quite disheartening as a lot of that clickbait like, sensationalism is a lot of encouraging each other sort of like, argue online. And I think, you know, if you can spotlight who people really are, and encourage people to listen to what people have to say, then it's only ever going to bring people together. And that's what I aim to do.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 06:02

Yeah, definitely. And so for this episode, we're kind of centering around a piece you wrote for Aurelia. And that was about you becoming a model, whilst you're trying to become a writer. And so yeah, that's what we're talking about today, mainly. And so yeah, I guess I wanted to ask, When you first kind of formed your interests, both in writing and modelling, you know, was it kind of similar times? Or was it stretched out a bit more, and yeah, just to hear more about that.

Kya Buller 06:33

So interesting to be talking about this piece, because like, I've written about, like, kinks, or having an abortion and never like, even thought twice about putting it out in the world. But this piece, like I was just so and obviously published it on Aurelia because I wanted to have like, full control over it. But I was just, like, so nervous, because it's just something that plagues me. But, um, so I got scouted, as in I put myself forward to an agency when I was, how old was I? I don't I was looking into this other day. I think it's in the piece. But I was young, and I wasn't really expecting much from it. But a couple of people had said that I could do it. And the agency at the time was really new didn't have that many models. So it didn't seem that overwhelming. I didn't really know what to expect, really. And they signed me and, it was great. And then, you know, work was slow. At first, I had no experience, I didn't know how to not look stiff. You know, like there's a lot of them this is the interesting bit is that modelling is real work. And it's, you know, can be tough. And there's a lot of skill to it, which I don't think people give enough time I thought it when discussing it. But and then I'd always been writing I've been writing since I was a kid and varied from my diary stuff to when I was getting a bit older things that I thought people might want to read or things that I would want to publish, but my first byline in gal-dem when I was eight, how old was 19? I think it was on my 19th birthday. But basically, from that moment, I was like, oh my god. So I've done it, the thing I was wanting to do, I've always wanted to be a writer, and now I am. So I can't be a model too because that's not serious. But being being a writer is so serious. I had a really internal conflict with that and as the writing started to make more pace or became more comfortable with telling people I was a writer, instead of always saying I want to be a writer. Once I've made that change in my head, I would like to do really strange things like go through my Instagram, like delete all modelling pictures, all that I don't want to be seen in this way I want to be seen as a serious person. And the thought that models weren't serious people, which, you know, isn't true. And left my agency flailed around a bit and got a job in retail thought it was awful because it was and and again had another sort of like, what what is going on and then by this point, that's obviously a very condensed, but by this point, this takes us up to last year and I was just like, what am I doing like I was good at it. I was good at modelling I enjoyed it. Finally enjoyed it because it didn't always enjoy it but we'll talk about that but the industry's changed a lot it's great. There's been a lot of like positivity, there's much more room now in modelling industry to be yourself you know, like this, not the same level of like body shaming and

stuff. So I really like the industry now. I think it's great. And I knew that and I knew that my agents have always been very supportive because I've never gone anywhere else went back and it's been great and the money is great, you know, something that we shouldn't leave out is the money is really good and enables me to keep Aurelia going fundamentally and but I still struggle with it. I still struggle with who I am. Am I one, am I both am I one on some days like it's really complicated. Okay, well, that was like really convoluted answer. But no. Hope it made sense,

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 10:06

No, it made perfect sense, because I think it's something that everyone will be familiar with of this idea of like the beauty versus brains dichotomy, like, we still don't have this accessible conversation about how the two work together or just exist together sort of thing, people. Yeah, don't have the vocabulary around that. Yeah. Which is absurd. But so yeah, your answer completely makes sense of how that like, then, you know, surfaces as like a personal struggle when you're very actively, you know, working within two industries that sort of neatly embody both those concepts sort of thing. So how do you sort of like, practice the self assurance? And, you know, despite your modelling career, that you are worthy of a place as a writer, and a journalist, how do you? Yeah, sort of keep yourself motivated and settled within that, like, dual identities thing?

Kya Buller 11:12

And I'm still working on that, to be honest. And everyone that I talk to about this is like, What do you mean, of course, it's possible to be both, like you're stressing over something that really doesn't exist. But it does, it does exist to me, and if I'm on set on a shoot, and people are like, oh, what do you do? And I was like, I'm a writer, and then everyone immediately is like, oh, like, ih like have you written a book and I'm trying to explain. And then I'm kind of thinking, well, if I was a serious writer and I was successful I wouldn't be in this room with you, because I'd be writing somewhere on a writing retreat. And everyone think I was amazing. And I'd have like, a book deal. And then when I'm talking about myself, in terms of writing to people that I deem to be serious, or people I'm trying to impress, or, when I'm gonna write a bio, for example, I've got this thing coming up that I can't talk about, I had to write a bio about myself for it. And I admitted the fact that I model because it seemed completely irrelevant, and I've built myself a website and and left out that I model on it, and I was like, why did I do that, went back, added it in. I guess the only way to come back to the question that I'm learning to reconcile it with myself, is that because the industry is changing, as I said, there's started to be opportunities now that I've got modelling because of who I am as a writer and editor. So for example, did a shoot for galaxy. And I've got that because of, Aurelia and they wanted me to talk about my work as an editor and stuff. And I think that has been really helpful for me in making headway. But I do think that I sort of split myself into two selves. I wish I didn't, I wish, I wish I could just get over it. But when I'm on set, and working as a model, I'm very much like, this is a job. And this isn't my appearance and I'm going to be that charming, and get it done and go home. And then all but when I'm at home, and I'm writing on working on Aurelia I feel like I'm my true self bit stressed out, like, think of myself in an entirely different way. I don't know if other people have that feeling, but they probably do. Surely.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 13:22

Yeah, I yeah, I think they do. And it sounds like also, it's a lot of sort of your own internal monologue being very tough on yourself sort of thing. Is it more that that's where the negativity comes from? Or

have you had sort of negativity externally from other people sort of making judgments on what you do? And you know, these two sides of yourself that you have?

Kya Buller 13:52

And no, no one's really ever made me feel that bad about it. Sometimes you'll be working and there'll be some as I model and they'll be someone on set who isn't a very nice person and doesn't take your work seriously. Because when you tell people you run a magazine, they think, Oh, is it like a fashion magazine print? I try to explain it's not and they're like that's cute, like, you know, and I'm like, well, it's not it's my life. Okay. But other than that, and especially in my normal life with people that I've talked to on a daily basis, people think it's fine because it's cool, but I because I always know I wanted to be a writer from a really young age. And I knew the kind of person I wanted to be. I knew that I wanted to be talented at it, I knew I wanted to be taken seriously. And I knew I wanted to emulate all these writers that I've adored, none of them that not many of them were ever sort of taken seriously like when women have had it really hard in general like Eve Babitz for example is a writer and she's absolutely beautiful. But then sometimes you'll buy a book of hers. And there's a picture on the front, like, with her tits out, you know, and I got my tits out all the time. But I find it hard to imagine that image of me being associated with my work. And so if and that's why you're right it is an internal monologue. And it probably comes from the fact that I write personal essays. You know, I'm thinking all the time, about who I am, what it means to be me. But I guess modelling is based on the way I look. And that won't last forever. And there'll be a time when people stop booking me because I won't fit their beauty standard anymore, but writing will always be there. So I feel like when I'm modelling sometimes I'm wasting the time that I should be investing in this very serious thing. But yeah, like I said, without it, Aurelia wouldn't really be what it is today, because I wouldn't have had the funds to sort of keep it going. But yeah, it is an inner monologue for sure. It never stops. It's constant.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 16:06

You know, what you're saying about someone saying like, the magazine is cute. I feel like cute is such a violent word sometimes. Do you know I mean, it's just like, you don't think it's cute? Like? No.

Kya Buller 16:19

Nothing is anything anyone does cute. Like, you wouldn't say if they asked me what I did. And I was like, at uni, studying biomedical science. Yeah. Don't be like, Oh, that's cute. Yes, yeah. Yeah, I think it's because I want my work that exists online. And in when I do like events and stuff, I think I want people to maybe think of me more as that person than a model. But because being a model is obviously visual. If you type my name, and on Google, that's what comes up most of the time, or, that's what's easy to share to Instagram, because it's easier to sort of do that. And I have to, like Instagram, is where a lot of like, clients will find me and you get booked because of that. So I feel like on one hand, I'm not constantly pushing out all these images of myself to like, prove that I'm like, good looking, or whatever. And on the other side of it, it's like, what this I'm very serious. And you can book me to talk on your panel because I'm clever.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 17:21

Yeah, it's funny how like, it can, like intersects both negatively and positively. Like what you're saying, like in the negative sense, but also in how both sides of those careers are like pushing each other in a

good way. Like, like how you're saying that, you know, Aurelia is getting stuff because of your modelling. And then the other way around, too. So is it must be like a hard cycle of like, well, it is helping each other. But then also, like, it's making me like confused about my identity. And like, what I should focus on more. Yeah, that's really interesting.

Kya Buller 17:54

Yeah, I think also, you know, it comes because women are told that if they sort of acknowledge that they are conventionally attractive, then that's something to be ashamed of. But, you know, like I said, I'm fully aware that every day time's running out, you know, so I'm just trying to like capitalise on it whilst I can. And, you know, embrace the fact that the industry has changed, because it really has changed so much. But then there's always something in the back of my mind, like, you should be writing more. You're not spending enough time on the magazine, or you should be out there more like, maybe you should make a LinkedIn. I'm like I don't want a LinkedIn.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 18:39

I'm full of LinkedIn. I hate it so much. And the whole rise of LinkedIn influencers. It's a corner of the internet, I cannot fathom. I don't need it.

Kya Buller 18:51

It's where my dreams go to die, honestly. Everytime I think about it, my brain's just like nope, no, maybe tomorrow.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 18:59

But definitely not tomorrow, either. But it's interesting, what you're saying about the sort of importance of like, your writing sort of thing, especially because you do focus on like personal essays and stuff and how it pushes like, you're thinking, sort of that idea. But I was wondering sort of what you think about, like, the importance of things related to your modelling career. So like, in terms of beauty, because I think there's been this rise of like, self care in recent years, and those sort of rituals, and the idea of like, these self absorbed pleasures, which can be very much shunned, but I think do have an importance for people's lives. And so, yeah, I kind of wanted to see what your thoughts were on that.

Kya Buller 19:53

Yeah. It's interesting like to think about self absorbed pleasures. Because writing personal essays is self absorbed, I am absorbing myself to talk about myself. And I guess one of the main things that makes me feel the way that I feel is I write, you know, I've written very honestly about being bullied when I was younger I've written about being bi I've written about not really understanding my identity as a person of colour. And sometimes, you know, sadness and trauma has worked its way into my writing, because I think it's important for me, as a writer, to face up to that. But then it's like, if I'm also existing as a model, it's very easy for someone to look at me and go, Well, your life's not hard. So why are we? Why are we listening to you? Why are you writing this? Like, your life can't be that bad kind of thing. And it's like, those two things are quite self absorbed, I guess. But, yeah. I mean, it's great. I love it. Like what I feel so awful about myself, but I have my nails done. I think it's part of the ritual of getting it done, you know, I love it. I love everything about it. And it makes me feel good. So of course I do it. But then again, even things like that. It's like, Oh, you're so self centred, or, like, what you said about self

care it is whatever makes you feel good. As a person, you know feel that for ages, we were kind of thinking of self care as like a bath and a glass of wine. And for some people it is, but for some people, it's much more. Some people self care is like, you're taking the time to read or making sure you're actually checking in with new friends. Like I always realised that I'm depressed when like, I don't ask my friends how they are, or I don't, doesn't come as naturally to me to do kind things for them. I don't know, another way, you know, in another way, I get really self absorbed. So yeah, I think that self care is something that started to be sort of judged and laughed at. And probably because it's now a hashtag, you know, or buzzword, but everyone deserves it. We were everyone works so hard. And it's important, so time for yourself. And it shouldn't be, you know, laughed at I love it. It's great. I do it all the time. And definitely do like, sometimes I'll feel better. I will do it and spending 40 pound on nails like is extortionate. But I do it anyways, because it makes you feel good.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 22:18

Yeah, for sure. And I think, yeah, it's it's a shame that like, self care is getting laughed at because you know, of its like, original political roots sort of thing. very vital. And, and I think that there's been this very, like, you know, worthy critique of like, well, we can't reduce it just down to like, bath bombs, and like, sort of vanity sort of things. But at the same time, I'm sort of hesitant against that, because that can also be helpful. Like, for me recently, I was like, sort of, on an edge of like, Oh, I could have a mental health dip sort of thing. And I was like, Oh, I won't, you know, that would impact all aspects of my life, including, like, my political engagement, my work all sorts of things. And, and the thing that actually really helped me was getting really into my skincare regime, which I felt so dumb about, like, I was, like, really, like putting on this serum is gonna make me feel better and like function better, but it did. And I think, yeah, again, like, it was really interesting, what you're saying about, like, personal essays are self absorbed as well. But because of this beauty brains, you know, dichotomy that people still function with. We don't compute it as the same thing. Even though Yeah, they are so obviously, wrapped up in each other sort of thing.

Kya Buller 23:52

Yeah, I mean, this skincare thing makes perfect sense. Because when do we actually stop and let ourselves indulge in something like that, without that letting ourselves feel stupid about it? Not very often. Like I said, we all work so hard. I mean, that in a real sense, like capitalism is the devil. Like, I really struggle to function in a way that other people can apparently thrive off, but I don't think you really thriving if you're, like, not ever letting yourself stop or breathe. So act of like putting skincare like serumon your face is where you've literally decided to finally take a bit of time for yourself. And you are right about the political route of self care, like, obviously, coined by Audre Lorde. Like it was like a political resistance thing because of her identity. But like, things, language changes and evolves all the time. And I think we would be remiss if we didn't let people grow alongside that. And so I get why people get frustrated with what self care is associated with now. But we have to let people be happy. You have to let people enjoy things. Yeah, you're right, the beauty brains thing. I mean, before this chat I was sort of like thinking like, as I do all the time, I'm racking my brain like, Where Where is this, like insecurity about come from? Is that well, if you think about, like, some major classics here, but think about like, Princess Diaries, like, make over scene, okay, so she's really, she's really smart, really bookish, and then it has sleek, and she's like, gorgeous, and then, you know, gets with a prince or whatever. And then you've got, like, Mean Girls like Cadey's really smart. And then she gets a

makeover again, and then she's like, hot and like bit mean, and then you've got Legally Blonde, like, no one takes her seriously, because she's pretty, and it's like, maybe it's all of these, like, stereotypes, cuz obviously I watched all those films, the first time when I was young, is in your brain, it's like, if the world sees you as, like, a commodity, or beautiful, or whatever it might be, then that is all that they will care about you for, and you will sort of be and don't get me wrong, like, obviously, privilege is a very real thing. But there's also a lot of hard stuff that comes about with that, especially as a woman because like I keep saying, you know, you're sort of your, your time runs out, it goes away, and then sort of you're not useful anymore.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 26:21

Yeah, it's funny that you kind of mentioned those, like, iconic pop culture characters, because obviously, like, none of them are men and like, that's never like a characteristic that's ever really explored with like, I don't know, like, yeah, that's not an ever a thing we see. And I think in general, this idea of being vain and like being into beauty, and that being kind of shallow narcissistic is like, yeah, often, like a gendered conversation. And, and yeah, vanity and being concerned with beauty is often seen as being complicit in the patriarchy. So what do you what do you think of that as a criticism?

Kya Buller 27:04

And I think it's very valid, but I think, you know, it is valid, because women are told all the time how to look and the goalposts constantly moving and we are somehow expected to keep up with that. And I was just thinking, all those characters I mentioned, do you know, also, White and come to peace with make peace with once once they have this beauty moment, and they're like, hot, or whatever, or like guys want them, then most of their character arcs go back to what you know, I'm going to try and figure out who I was before and I keep hold of that. And that's great. Like, I'm sure it happens to people, but like, as a writer, as an as, you know, a person of colour I, who was called really awful stuff for being non-white when I was younger, I feel like you know, I always feel like I have to work a bit harder to be accepted. And I do wonder about how much of that has come into it. So I think for me, personally, I think more in terms of being queer or like, even though I'm light-skinned, like being a person of colour, more than I think about gender and I don't know why maybe it's just, I'm just used to, I think I've made peace with being a woman way before I've made peace with the other parts of myself, but it's obviously very much alive and kicking. Women have it hard every day.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 28:32

I think it's interesting, you bringing up like, your gender with like, other aspects of your identity, because I think while I understand the criticism of like, you know, fueling patriarchy by giving into like beauty, I think what that does is encourage a really narrow idea of what beauty is, like, I was thinking about there's lip gloss lezza on who was on the most recent season of Glow Up in is the beauty Agony Aunt of Polyster zine. And they were asked question of like, how do I indulge in beauty without like giving into the male gaze, and they were just like, use beauty to look as ugly as possible sort of thing which I really loved of like, ugly in quotation marks of things that aren't you know, the conventional beauty standards with like, you know, loud, garish, tacky, sort of makeup styles. And I think we sort of forget that beauty has been used by like, different cultures and like the queer community, to actually be sort of air quotes, ugly and not be like pretty, but be stunning and like gorgeous in a different way. And I think that's been a big thing for like, my personal like beauty style evolution is like, you know, being loud and

tacky and garish, but like loving that. So I think, yeah, we need to sort of realise that beauty isn't the exact same as like male gaze patriarchy, it's so much bigger than that, especially for like marginalised identities, it can be used as a tool for something else.

Kya Buller 30:18

Yeah, 100%. And like, I don't know, a single woman who hasn't been harassed by a man or hasn't experienced, like gendered violence at some point in their lives. And that doesn't really matter. Like it just to men, it just matters that you're a woman and that they can intimidate you, I guess. But I do think you know, when people resist beauty standards, and I really do love that quote about being ugly, and it's great, isn't it? But I mean, I'm, I don't ever let myself do that. I feel like I always some, for some reason, even though I know who I am, and I know that, you know, fuck the patriarchy and all that. I still do give in to the male gaze. And it's something that I've thought about a lot and can't seem to stop doing. But yeah, I'd like choices that I make with regard to like clothes, or like makeup or whatever, is always in the hopes of making myself more attractive. I don't know why I feel like a need to be attractive. But sometimes I do like people say don't know, like, women don't wear makeup often, women make wear makeup for themselves. But I think there's a part of me that's kind of like, if I buy this lipstick shade, it'll look hot and everyone will think I'm hot. And like, that's good. I don't know. It's, it's difficult to unlearn.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 31:42

So I just I think that's okay. Personally, like, I think it's alright to wanna like feel attractive and people to think you're hot. Like I just, I don't know, I just think this whole issue with like beauty and patriarchy. I think it just like takes choice away from women to like, be like, you're not being a feminist. If you buy this lip gloss, like, Oh, my God, like there's bigger discussions to be had here like, that's not really like, taking the movement back 50 years, if I wear makeup, I mean, like, Yeah, and I just think the whole point should be that Yeah, like, we should be able to do what makes us happy. And if that is indulging in beauty, then why not? And yeah, like, I think it's like refreshing for you to admit like, yeah, like, sometimes you do give into like the male gaze, because I think that's the thing I like a lot of people can relate to something I relate to. And I just, I don't think we should blame ourselves for it. Because we didn't set up that system. Do you know, I mean, I don't know. It's like, yeah, it's a tricky one.

Kya Buller 32:45

Because at the end of the day, I can do whatever I want. I can, I can, you know, as you're saying, give in to it, and I can sort of indulge in it and enjoy it. But it doesn't. Like, it doesn't serve, it doesn't necessarily serve me in any way. But not not, it shouldn't either. It should just be me putting on makeup to look nice for the sake of looking nice. And it doesn't have any bearing on the way men will treat me like, Yeah, but my point in a way that they will appreciate that they will leave me alone or treat me with respect. usually quite the opposite. You know, you'll get shouted at in the street, or they'll touch your waist in a bar or make you feel uncomfortable. But remember, I mean, I'm sure we've all heard it. But if it's a tweet or something a bit more concrete, but someone said, all you need to be a hot girl is to just think of yourself as hot and believe that you're hot and that's true. We can we can have these impossible standards. But you know, as long as you let yourself feel good, then you are gorgeous. That's It's that simple.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 33:50

It is that simple. And I also think of the thing of like, we've been using a lot of sort of language of like the idea of like giving into the male gaze, which makes us somewhat we're sort of like, losing to it. But I think Yeah, as Iszy was saying, it's just like, let people be sort of thing like, oh, I've been reading the book, Pretty Honest by Sali Hughes, which is like, it's now one of my favourite books ever, like I found it life changing. But it's you she fully addresses this idea of like, Is it so bad to want to look desirable to men, or to anyone for that instance? Because it's the sort of thing of that, like, I think it's really reductive with our conversations around empowerment, to have this sort of absence of wanting to be sexually desirable, because that's a very human emotion. So we need to, yeah, sort of bring back the new nuance of being like Yeah, sometimes I do want to get dressed up so that I get attention, let me be.

Kya Buller 35:02

yeah, it's so true. I'd like to know like, taking, like selfies and all that. So it's so it's such a powerful thing and thinking you look good and thinking that sexy and then wanting to show the world like, there's a lot of like sort of. I'm trying to avoid words like reclaiming and empowering here because I've been sort of overused, especially in this context. But I don't know, it's like, if people get to decide what my worth is all the time, based on how I look, or men gets to decide how they want to treat me, just because they get to walk around making those choices with not many repercussions, then if I just want to go get my nails done, and like I say, like, get my eyelashes done, put my makeup on, and the way it makes feel sexy, and take selfies and put it on. Like that is like I just think that's a really beautiful thing to do. Because we're talking a lot about the male gaze here and about how, you know, we sometimes want to look gorgeous, and that wants to appeal to men or want to appeal to people that we hope was sexually attractive attracted to. But what about just doing it for the gram? You know? I do it all the time. Sometimes I just put make-up on and I won't even leave the house but Instagram knows that I look that I feel like I look good. Yeah, that's great.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 36:20

I saw a tweet recently that wrecked me of saying saying like, it said something like just post the fucking thirst trap. I don't need the Audre Lorde quote. And it's just wrecked me cause I think that is the sort of thing of when you post a selfie, you need to put a caption, that's like taking the piss out of yourself, or, you know, just sort of off balance it as like, no, if you want to post a pic of you like flirting with the camera, or you don't need to justify it sort of thing. You don't need to explain it away. So

Kya Buller 36:56

yeah, it's weird because it's the internet and obviously everyone can see it I don't have a private account, but it feels kind of safe to me a safe place to be sexy and be attractive because like my what I called it statistics or whatever, like my people follow me is that overwhelmingly women. And the only people who comment on my pictures are my friends are hyping me up, gassing me up. And it was great, you know, because like, I guess it's like the same effect of looking good. And people didn't see it without the threat of like, someone like following me or shouting at me or I'm, you know, obviously, men are all over the internet. And weird as anything on the internet, but I don't know how it feels. But I can control a little bit more. So maybe that's why I like it so much. Yeah,

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 37:45

definitely. I think I actually don't have that feeling with Instagram at the moment. I don't know why I haven't posted a selfie like it's stressful. I don't know why it's just over. I'm kind of feeling like yeah, it's fine. Now, let me let me go.

Kya Buller 38:00

Can we get a ring light?

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 38:03

Yeah. Yeah, literally. And I guess we kind of already touched on it a bit. And so feel free to say you've already answered this question. But um, you know, I totally agree like getting my nails done. Like, it's like one of my favourite activities to do like, it's like therapy for me, like, I talk to myself the whole time, like, so are all my, my stuff. And whilst I'm watching like this beautiful art being done, it's just great and great time. And so yeah, what do you think the power is indulging in your beauty and like, letting yourself kind of not letting yourself know I keep kind of saying that stuff. But yeah, enjoying beauty and stuff.

Kya Buller 38:41

I guess because it's just for you. And it's something you've done. Like the thing I love about getting my nails. I can't go on my phone, because someone's using my hands. So I'm forced to just be in that moment. But I don't know, it's like, maybe it's to do with work as well. It's like, I keep going back to this but I just think the amount that we're all expected to work for not a lot of financial reward but that's problematic in itself. Financial income is so stressful. And, you know, there's this act of like, self indulgence it's just great and it's like there's just so many options, you know, and like it's a choice is entirely yours, like what colour do I want my nails to be a choice that I'm going to make, and it's to make myself feel better. And I don't know, there's just something that just like, lifts me if I feel it feel like I've made that little extra effort. But I'm also you know, you like the woman that does my nails is like incredible. I probably wouldn't have met them in any other scenario. Because we live different lives and they're older than me and we wouldn't have really been in the same circle. I love my time with her. I think it's important. Yeah. And I don't know, maybe it just all comes back to wanting to look nice so that people think she looks nice. And I can look in the mirror and think I look nice. I don't know. There's a lot of resistance with letting people acknowledge that they look good. But why? You know, why is it okay for for a man to tell me that I'm fit and I should be grateful for that. But then if I'm like, I'm fit, everyone's like, oh, you're self obsessed. You're think alot of yourself, like, Surely it's more. So it's more important for me to think that I'm sexy than for anyone else isn't sexy? Because, yeah, I just think you know, if other people are going to have, you know, not everyone does. Some people have been very open and honest with me, especially when I first started modelling about the fact that they don't think I'm attractive whatsoever, isn't an objective thing, by any means? But if I should get so used to being grateful for compliments? Maybe it should be a bit more normal for me to give them to myself.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 41:05

I think for sure. And it's still something that people are very funny about, but if we're sort of been working on ourselves to make us look nice. And then we can't admit ourselves like, Oh, yeah, well, I do look nice. I do think that I look fit today. It just doesn't track like, you know, something's going amiss there. It doesn't make sense.

Kya Buller 41:30

Yeah, think of all the times someone said to you, oh, God you look gaorgeous today like, No, I don't. Like you get so used to be in like, I can't admit this, or, you know, people genuinely don't believe that about themselves. And if there's something and it's obviously not possible for everyone, because beauty industry is expensive. But if there's something as simple as like, a manicure, or I don't know, like brand new lip gloss that's going to help you believe it a bit more because of the world we live in. And because of the way that we're told to look, we can't be ashamed about buying into that. Yeah, no, it's what once you start letting yourself feel nice, I feel like it's really freeing.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 42:14

And so true, what you say about compliments, sorry, you go.

Kya Buller 42:16

No, it's good that you actually just about to pick up on it.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 42:20

And I was just gonna say about what you said about compliments. It's like, you know, when someone says, You look nice, then you go like, Yeah, I do, actually. And they're like, Alright, calm down. Like, they always take take back the compliment because they're not expecting you to like, agree with them. Yeah, I always find that funny.

Kya Buller 42:35

Yeah, that's so true. And like, like, say, men can just be like, you know, give you a compliment. You've meant to be like, really receptive to me let off that, you know, thanks. I'm so grateful. But, I'm not really because I don't necessarily, I'm not necessarily into men, I don't know give me compliments. But strangely, when women stopped me to say, Oh, your dress is nice, or I like your bag like thanks you look incredible. But for some reason, I always stop myself from doing it. Like I think so many nice things about women in the street. And I'm like, I should say, I should say it but I'd get too scared. And my friend is really good at just being like, You look amazing, like strangers or like, you know, your hair is beautiful or your skin or you know, just things like that. And you can always see women when they get a comment from a woman being like, well, not obviously can't speak for the entire gender, but I think they're a bit more genuinely pleased about that. When it comes from another woman. I think.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 43:35

So true.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 43:36

It's genuinely The best thing that will happen to me all week. If a stranger comes up to me and compliments me. I'm just like, Oh my God, thank you like shower me in it, please. I'm begging.

Kya Buller 43:50

I know. It's probably because you know women are like, love that dress where's it from It suits you so much. You look gorgeous. And it's like thanks and is a man like nice tits. Thanks great, leave me alone.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 44:05

But then it still if a woman said nice tits to me in the streets, I think I'd still be grateful. Yeah,

Kya Buller 44:11

Exactly. Exactly.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 44:13

Like when you know, you know, the drunk girl in the club bathroom who says, Oh, you've got great tits and it's like yep I do, thank you so much.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 44:18

I do think it's because it's like, without the Power Trip thing. It's like not an intimidation way at all. Like, you can just tell. Like, it's like, I'm actually just genuinely trying to like, lift you up there. I'm not like doing it for my own mental, like, gain just feels more genuine, I think.

Kya Buller 44:33

Yeah. Yeah, I agree.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 44:34

For sure. And I think that links to you mentioned it very briefly earlier on, but I think it all sort of ties in together of Yeah, admitting when you look good, sort of thing of this idea of like pretty privilege and being privileged because you have you adhere to a conventional beauty standard sort of thing. But then also like, how admitting that you look good can easily get dismissed or like as, Iszy said, like taking back the compliment sort of thing. People are still very sticky about it. So what are your sort of thoughts on the idea of like, pretty privilege? And do you think it's a way to take, you know, women specifically less seriously, or? Yeah, what do you think the conversation is like around pretty privilege.

Kya Buller 45:31

This is something that I've, you know, I think it's good to admit, like, not really decided how I feel about it yet, I know that it exists. I've benefited from it in certain situations. But I've also been in situations where so for example, pretty privilege, yeah, exists. But and this is where it gets complicated, because beauty standards are always changing. But for a long time, it was thin, white, able bodied women. And then the Kardashian look sort of took over. And that was what everyone wanted to emulate. So I don't know if it's relevant, that I'm not white when to talk about privilege. But I do know that maybe the way white women get treated is obviously going to be different to the way that a beautiful black woman's going to be treated, because even the way they're complimented right at the time will be completely different. But it's, I don't know if you remember this, but someone anonymously wrote an article for the Cut called this is what it's like to be a beautiful woman or something, and then went viral, because everyone was being like, can't believe you're trying to make out that sometimes you have a hard time, if you're so beautiful. And you want to tell everyone about it, like you're attention seeking shut up kind of thing. But some of the points in the piece were really good at specifically about pretty privilege, because she was sort of saying that sometimes women will immediately be sort of Off with you or assume things about your personality, that maybe you'd be a bit because you're pretty, which can make them feel

quite alienated, which I think is relevant as well. And she has that overarching thing of like, I was absolutely gorgeous. And everyone, like men loved me, and I wanted men to love me, but women didn't always like me that much. And also, like, now I'm older, and no one gives a shit about me anymore, because I'm not useful to them. And I think all these things should be taken into account. I don't know if it's a way of silencing women, because it's something that we definitely need to address the fact that if you don't fit into what people deem to be attractive, then a lot of the time people will overlook you, and will sort of try and bring you down or I mean, there's men in the world who openly say that someone's ugly, do you know what I mean, like, there's just no, there's no room for that. I don't think there's no, what does that even mean? Like I said before, to be hot, like, I genuinely think you just need to feel hot. But yeah, pretty privilege is one I struggle with, I can definitely admit that I've benefited from it. And but it's not always easy, you know, like, a form of pretty privilege, obviously, being a model, like, because someone took a chance and thought that I was pretty enough to do that. But for a long time, it really, really messed up my mental health and made me question everything about myself and I was became so obsessed with parts of my body and face I'd never even thought about before. And because you start to really hyper analyse it. And I do think I have to try a bit harder sometimes to prove that I'm a nice person, because people don't always expect me to be. But then also, you know, I'm a person of colour and people are always like but where are you from. Like, I don't know how to answer that. And then they're like, you know, like I was with someone want to admit that they were with me, because I wasn't white. And they're not into white girls. It made me feel really weird. And but he thought was pretty. So I don't know if I was benefiting in that situation. It's, it's I don't think people talk about it enough, in general, because people don't like to talk about being pretty or what it feels like to be pretty. But I think we definitely need to, in general, have more discussion about what pretty privilege is and how it how it actually functions.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 49:37

Yeah, I think also people are talking about pretty privilege in this sort of vacuum. But when you brought up the Kardashian ideal, it sort of made me think of, well, what if pretty privilege is very much built on other privileges because I mean, I'm going to do a terrible job of like, paraphrasing this But in the Disclosure documentary on Netflix, which like, yeah, listeners, please like, watch it for a much better explanation of this, but they were saying about how like, the Kardashian body and beauty ideal is sort of its roots are from trans women and like that aesthetic that they built in their culture. And yet, you know, it's those aesthetics are not treated equally, you know, one, I think, would be associated with pretty privilege and the other one, you know, a lot more complexities and like, violence towards it. So, yeah, I think it's worth a conversation, more of pretty privilege in its like complexities and nuances and how it works with other forms of privilege sort of thing.

Kya Buller 50:56

Yeah, I definitely agree. You know, I think it's sort of redundant to not admit that if you are considered pretty that your experience in life will be easier than people who aren't traditionally deemed to be beautiful. But also, you are right, there's nuances that then go into that, because who decides if I benefit or not? Not me, it's not me. Like I don't. I have no say in it. It's just the way other people treat me. And yeah, sometimes it's been good. And it has been a privilege. And sometimes, it isn't a privilege, but I never get to decide when I benefit or not. So yeah, that's why the conversation needs to continue. But that documentary sounds really interesting I'm gonna watch it.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 51:41

Yeah, please do. But anyway, we are sort of coming to the end of our time, and we went deep there for a second. So we're gonna bring it back to the surface level. And ask a couple of final questions. First of all, very surface level. Do you have three top beauty tips? That's sort of like your go to recommendations or advice to people?

Kya Buller 52:07

Um, I'm so I'm very, I'm still learning how to do that. I mean, obviously, I mean, without a good concealer, like we are in hell, essentially. So I couldn't live without it. I don't know.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 52:27

What's your favourite concealer?

Kya Buller 52:30

So, NARS, guys, it is NARS. What's it called? This is how bad I am. I don't know, the one. I know the one you mean. Yeah. Rectangler little one, just that really is the only thing. And I mean, one thing that took me ages, I don't know if it counts as a beauty tip. But it does, because it made me feel more beautiful, is let yourself like free yourself from like sdo you know like for example, if I'm like the size eight or 10 or 12. And you become so tied that number that sometimes if you're like walk through life thinking you're a size 12, then you will only wear size 12s and if you go into a certain shop and the size twelve doesn't fit you you won't let yourself buy the size up because it'll make yourself feel bad. And like now I am different sizes in each shop, we go into so somethings just need to fit you. And you'll feel good about yourself. Like there's no point trying to, like, engage with these ridiculous sizing things because no one literally no one benefits from that. And I mean, what else? One more now? Earrings.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 53:39

You're ho- earrings?

Kya Buller 53:39

Earrings make me feel beautiful. Yeah,

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 53:42

I'm so glad you're I'm I don't have a pair in at the moment. I'm so sorry. I am obsessed Iszy knows this,

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 53:48

Fozz has a great collection.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 53:49

Yeah, I have like a cork board in my room. Yeah. Stuck to the wall with all my earrings.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 53:55

That's such a fun way to display them.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 53:57

Well, it's because they used to be in a box. And you know if I'm leaving the house,

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 54:02

You lose them don't you?

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 54:03

Yeah. And you lose the backs. And you know, you want to be able to just see them and be like, Yes, that one will go with my outfit, but I love huge dangly ugly, loud earrings that

Kya Buller 54:14

I can't not buy earrings every time I leave the house, but I think they do a lot of the work, you know, good pair of earrings. So yeah, it's not really they're not really beauty tips are they but they're mine. So

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 54:26

Yeah, fuck it.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 54:27

No, I rate it. And it's, I once Someone once told me if you're ever hungover or looking a bit rough, if you put on a dress and a pair of earrings, people automatically think you look nice. You know, it's like the easiest thing to do. But they think oh, she's made an effort so yeah, earrings.

Kya Buller 54:47

That's very true.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 54:50

Yeah, and I saw actually in relation to what you're saying about clothes. I saw a good tweet once it was was it a tweet or something? It was like clothes are meant to fit you you're not meant to fit clothes or something. That's a good way to put it. It's so true. Also, like it's impossible to look bad in sunglasses. Do you think? I think I do.

Kya Buller 55:09

Like, as long as the ones that suit you, but like, when you walk around and then it's like, I look great right now because like, essentially so

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 55:17

I love the vibe of sunglasses. I just don't think I found the right shap for me, it's tricky.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 55:24

I think you'd suit a cat eye. I have a pair of cat eye ones that I'll lend you.

Kya Buller 55:31

Aw guys.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 55:35

But yeah, we have one final question, though. Yeah.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 55:39

We do and yes, what we ask all our guests, so and there's been a running theme. So far of kind of similar trends, I'm curious to see if you will answer, simalarly. But here we go. Is there a time where you've regretted biting your tongue in the past? And what would you like to bite your tongue on less in the future?

Kya Buller 56:00

That's a really good question. And I'm gonna think about this for a second. So very good question. I have let people tell me who I am my whole life. Like whether it be in terms of class, because I come from a working class background and teachers and stuff like sometimes didn't believe me, or whether it came to being bisexual people tell me it was a phase, or whatever, to being a person of colour. And because I don't have all the answers from where I'm from, people have literally sometimes tried to answer that for me without How would they know? And, or men have told me about my appearance and I've taken it on board. And I wish I would have just not let people do that, or shoulda told them to piss off and leave me alone. Let me figure out on my own. But I've never really been good at that. I will sort of I'm very soft and take people's, I take people's emotions on board, which is fine, too. And I'm fine with but that along with that comes taking people's opinions on board. And that's fine. But when it comes to me and my identity, and I don't think there's a place for it. And so I would have just not bit my tongue on that. But I'm interested in what the common theme answer is be?

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 57:19

Well we've had quite a lot of like outspoken people on the podcast to stay like, I don't ever bite my tongue. Yeah, it's nice. Yeah.

Kya Buller 57:31

I think I'm quite. I'm quite gobby. And I do say what I think, can be quite blunt. But yeah, I don't know. I think it's because when it comes to who I am, and all the intersections of that there's a lot of like, uncertainty. So I've let other people fill the gaps. And basically when I shouldn't have I should know like,

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 57:50

No, yeah, I think that's such a good answer. Definitely.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 57:52

And I think when you are like particularly gobby, or outspoken, I think it can be a lot more significant. Therefore when you do bite your tongue on something, right? sort of idea. So yeah, I loved your answer, then I think it's a very important one. I think one that a lot of people would relate to, as well.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 58:17

Yeah, I agree.

Kya Buller 58:18

Thanks.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 58:19

Thanks. Well, thanks so much for coming on the podcast. We've really enjoyed it. I hope you have too. Yeah, it's been it's been a blast.

Kya Buller 58:28

Yeah, it's been great. Thanks so much for having me.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 58:31

And that was our episode with Kya. I really hope you enjoyed it. And yeah, I really like this one. It was a lovely time and it was great to meet her. Well. Zoom. Meet all the same. And yeah, do let us know what you thought of it. And let's get a beauty discussion going. I want to know some tips. I need them.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 58:54

Yeah, lowkey. Actually, if any of the listeners are like, I have a hot tip, please.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 58:59

God always please tell us. I don't know if I said it in this episode. But wear SPF everyday baby. I think I did.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 59:06

Oh my god. Yes. This is this is something I only realised this year. And I feel so silly that I didn't do it before. So Please, I'm begging every one of you one of you. Every one of you. I also realised I I said that I would lend you a pair of my cateye sunglasses.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 59:28

Oh yeah.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 59:29

And I didn't I just I just did not.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 59:32

That was hurtful. I've been meaning to bring up so thanks for starting this conversation.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 59:36

It's okay, I will I will get it to you. I have a lovely bright pink pair that you can.

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 59:43

Gawj, give a go. Thank you.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 59:44

Test out. Yeah, Yeah, and apart from just like the superficial tips. And I also really like that it's a bit of like a tired conversation like beauty brains. But it's really, you know, when do we ever spend like an hour actually chatting about it?

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 1:00:05

Yeah, it's tired, but it's also kind of not.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 1:00:08

Yeah, like, you know, Kya shows that, like her rational beliefs know that there shouldn't be a contradiction, but she still feels that. So. And I feel like there's such a rush of like, with these sorts of, you know, tired conversations that happen online to do with like, you know, feminism and like, is it actually feminist to wear a lipstick, all that sort of stuff? You know, you sort of feel like you've already landed on your opinions and thoughts. But yeah, getting the time and space to really just pick apart all your feelings about it is something that, you know, often Twitter doesn't reward us with. So,

Isabelle Gray (Iszy) 1:00:54

absolutely, yeah, I don't think it's something I've let myself consciously explore before. So that was really nice. And yeah, we hope you enjoyed it.

Charlotte 'Fozz' Forrester 1:01:05

This episode was brought to you by Gals in journalism and you can find us on Instagram and Facebook. Our transcriptions are available on our website. This episode was produced by Isabelle and edited by Fozz. Our music is an instrumental version of 'Sertraline Gang' by Trannieboi. Trannieboi is the abolitionist queer Afro futurist hyper pop brainchild of Jolliffe Seville. As Trannieboi, he celebrates the multiplicity of Black, queer disabled existence by transforming what is frightening - mania, trans homelessness, trauma, the immense difficulty of being a Black working artist - and making it an expression of joy. Our logo was designed by Megan Shepherd, who also designed the Gals in Journalism logo. We'd also like to shout out to City Ventures for supporting this podcast.