

THE REANIMATING PROJECT

A devised show by the University of Manchester's Women's Theatre Society in collaboration with the Reanimating Data Project

Stage Description:

The stage is lined on either side by 2 rows of chairs, 9 in each row.

On each side of the stage there is a platform with a microphone on a stand. The back wall of the stage is covered in collages and images.

A red lip-shaped phone is placed on a table, at centre stage to begin with, but moved to the back after the first section.

Scene 1: A Phone Call to the Past (ELENA & LAE)

THE ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE: I'm sorry 1989 can't take your call right now, please leave your message, after the tone.

BEEEEEEP

Helloo, we're just calling from the University of Manchester Women's Theatre Society in 2020! Basically, we've been given some interviews here that were done in 1989 as part of a sociological study called the Women's Risk and Aids Project. Which was basically where some researchers interviewed 150 women about their experiences with sex and relationships. Kind of off the back of the AIDS crisis and at a time when it became really vital that sex became a more normal subject to talk about.

We're looking at them because there's a new study going on at the moment, called the reanimating data project, started by one of the original interviewers, Rachel. It's aim is to try out different ways of bringing the interviews to life as an exploration of measuring social change.

We've been given three of the interviews, all with women who were studying Drama at the University of Manchester at that time:

MAG 50, Mandy, and Haleema Katrina, all interviewed by Rachel.

We just wanted to have a conversation with you about what things were like for you, and what things are like for us.

What's different?

What's the same?

How much has changed?

So yeah, maybe get back to us when you can or if you have time...

Okay bye!!

BEEEEEP

Section 2: We introduce the Girls (Everyone)

Alarm goes off and lights come up as if the sun is rising. A girl comes in and turns on her speaker: it's Ride on Time by Blackbox. She starts dancing whilst getting ready. Another girl brings in a clothing rail with 3 items of clothing (one representing each girl). From here we haven't plotted out the scene, this is something we'll play around with in rehearsals but there will be different girls on stage getting ready and passing the items between each other, then taking turns to read some of the facts below into the mike before leaving the stage.

FACTS - (the binders have the girl's name on the front)

Cecilia:

Mag50. She Studies Drama at the University of Manchester despite feeling the pressure not to because she wants to be a director.

She's lived in the same house her whole life, and has always been surrounded by the arts.

Her mum is a teacher, her dad works for an arts organisation, and her sister, is three years older than her studying business.

Oona:

In her first year at university she was in a play about AIDS called 'Compromised Immunity' by Gay Sweatshop. She was very aware of AIDS at that time, especially because of the 1986-87, AIDS campaign.

She's career minded and she wants to be able to travel around, Go where she wants, and not be fixed to one place or one person, she doesn't like monogamy.

Chloe:

Mandy. Her family moved around a lot until she was thirteen, when her mum and dad split up. She stopped speaking to her dad, and started arguing with her mum a lot.

She started hanging out with who lived near her and started staying out late and taking speed.

She wanted to leave home so when she was 16 she went to a posh boarding school in the North of England.

Millie:

There were 30 girls and over 500 boys. The boys wore green and the girls wore scarlet. She didn't conform. It wasn't that she was rebellious, she just didn't agree with people and she didn't look how she was supposed to.

The first time she heard about AIDS was on TV in 1985.

Laura May:

Katrina. Her parents are from Pakistan and are casually practicing Muslims.

If it were up to her dad, she would marry her cousin back in Pakistan.

She learnt most of the things she knew about sex from her older sister but her knowledge was still very limited, causing her to feel insecure in that area. She feels she would have benefitted and felt less vulnerable if she'd had a better education.

She still struggles to use a tampon.

Ayesha:

She has always found women attractive but doesn't feel she could have a sexual relationship with one.

She feels internalised pressure to make her partner come if she does, often thinking that it's actually more important that he does than she does.

She only learnt about AIDS 2 years ago, after taking part in a play put on by the drama department.

Section 3: Sex Ed (Everyone)

(School Bell)

Teacher: Pippa

Mandy: Savannah

Interviewer: Megan

Catholic Family Planning Association (CFPA): Saph

1. Laura-May: Fucking
2. Juliette: Shagging
3. Oona: Screwing
4. Jade: Making love
5. Cecilia: Rumpy pumpy
6. Eve: Banging
7. Hollie: Piping

8. Alexia: Pumping
9. Chloe: Humping
10. Megan: Copulating
11. Hannah: Sleeping together
12. Millie: Play time
13. (Ayesha enters somewhere around here and hesitantly puts her chair down)
14. Sarah: Pulling
15. Mags: Fornicating
16. Saph: Hanky panky
17. Savannah: Having Sex
Laura: Having Relations
Juliette: Mating
Laura: Boning
Juliette: Hooking Up
Laura: Making Babies
Juliette: Putting the P in the V
Ayesha:... What *is* sex? [everyone looks at Ayesha]

[Here the girls share the different things they've heard about sex with each other, all with an air of confidence as though they are rivalling to seem the most knowledgable.]

Alexia: Sex is when a man and a woman hug and then the woman gets pregnant. [everyone sniggers]

Oona: Isn't sex just rolling around in bed together naked and kissing? That's what I saw in a movie once.

Cecilia: I saw a girl on TV and the man and the woman were kissing and then the man went down and her eyes started rolled back in her head and breathing heavily and making weird noises

Chloe: Like she was enjoying it?

Cecilia: I think so...It was hard to tell

Chloe: I always cover my eyes at those bits

Jade: Are you supposed to enjoy sex?

Saph: My mum works in a hospital and she said that boys need to play with their willies because it's important for their development

Hannah: What about girl's development?

Saph: She didn't say anything about that

Laura May: My mum said it's okay to touch "down there"

Juliette:: My mum told me if you have sex you could get an STD

Laura May:That's why you use a condom. I know all about condoms and the pill.

Alexia: My mum won't talk to me about it.

Oona: Have you heard about the organism?!

Ayesha, Chloe and Sarah::Nooo whats that?! What is it? Tell uss!! (Ask different questions intrigued)

Savannah: Do you mean an orgasm????

(Oona starts drawing a picture of a penis on a piece of paper)

Alexia: I tried to ask my mum what an orgasm is but she wouldn't tell me.

Cecilia: Maybe you're dad will tell you

Alexia: Ewwwww no way would I ask my dad that

Eve: In Church they said you shouldn't have sex before marriage.

Megan: Yeah definitely. It's a sin.

Eve: Yeah. It's a special connection between a married couple.

Sarah: You know I found a Judy Bloom book in the library, that only year 9's are allowed to read, and there was a girl in it talking about her pubes.

Mags: I found a book under my sisters bed called "how sex works" and it has loads of pictues in it. There's even a step by step guide to sex. (all the girls gasp, Can I see it?...)

Hollie: Well my cousin has actually HAD sex and she said that the first time it hurts and you bleed a lot and you make lots of wierd noises.

Everyone:(What kind of noises? Why do you bleed?...myriads of questions)

Millie: Listen, all you need to know about Sex is that its not a thinky thing. It's a feely thing.

(all of the girls sit back in awe: “woaaah”)

Oona: Look what I drew!!!!!!

*Oona shows the drawing of the penis she has been doing to everyone else
They're all grabbing it passing it between each other as teacher walks in.*

AHHH what is that?!

Oh my god thats gross!

Let me see!

It's so ugly

I think it's pretty

Etc. etc.

when SUDDENLY

Teacher coughs. All the girls freeze in horror and then run to the seats they're supposed to be in. They throw the drawing at Ayesha and she tries to hide it. There is silence as the teacher walks up and down the aisles inspecting the girls and sorting them out, she notices the drawing that Ayesha is trying to hide.

The Teacher: What have you got there?! (*She unfolds the note, she looks at it shocked down her glasses*) Does someone want to explain to me what this is?! No? No one?

Okay let me guess, is it a rocket? A fruit arrangement? (*some of the girls begin to smirk and contain laughter*) Maybe a canon? Or an aubergine perhaps?

(*One of the girls starts giggling, Oona*)

Oh you think this is funny?

(*More girls start giggling*)

What is so funny about a PENIS?! (*Shows drawing to the class and the audience*)

(*They all stop giggling, Teacher rips the drawing up*)

Honestly I expected better from you young ladies. (*Teacher slowly moves to the back. She looks at two of the girls, the one who started laughing*)

Fetch me the Diagrams!! Turn your chairs around. (*She makes them hold it, 2 diagrams: A PENIS, and A VAGINA*)

Before we begin let us bow down our heads in prayer. Holy mother VIRGIN Mary, we ask you to watch over these girls, may they look up to you as a divine example of virtuous virginity. May the lord guide and protect these girls from sin and sex. Though but that they should not know, but that they do, today, with your blessing I will teach. Amen.

All the girls: Amen

When a husband and a wife... COME together. Come.. come come! (2 girls holding picture of the vagina, and picture of the penis) that is the holy act of sex. From which sprouts a baby!! (She grabs the posters and the two girls are stood behind)

Alright now girls back to your seats.

(The girls turn their seats around), and turn to page 69 of today's reading by E.L James.

(Laura May tries to get the teacher's attention)

Laura May: So...does that mean sex is just---?

Teacher interrupts: hush hush now. Back to reading.

Laura-May Personal Moment

I had sex for the first time when I was a senior in high school, with a girl that I would later fall in love with, on the day of Prom. VERY cliché.

A girl eats a girl out

Before this the only person I'd really dated was a guy. He and I decided that we would wait for a while to have sex, but in the build up to that we hooked up a LOT, and did, essentially, everything other than penetration

A guy eats a girl out

And then we broke up. And I thought “Bummer that it ended before we got to have sex”. And then I met the girl, and I realized that what I did with her and called sex, was exactly the same as what I did with the guy, and called something less than sex.

The two couples do the eating out action at the same time

And then I got VERY confused. My whole life I’d been told what sex was. That it was
(Laura and Teacher)

When a man puts his penis inside a womans vagina.

And I’d been surrounded by friends who I thought *definitely* knew what sex was

Two Friends on either side discuss

#1: Yeah so, he ate me out and it was honestly like, eh, so I was like, “oh do you want to have sex?” And he was like “nah I’m kinda tired” so I just sucked his dick, which was fine, and like I think HE liked it but/ it was just kinda like

#2: Mmm yeah idk for me I just don’t really like only hooking up or being eaten out or whatever, so I just always prefer it if we just like, have sex

#1: Ugh yes! Same!

And even though I knew from a young age that I was into women as well as men, and though I knew that I would have sex with women (and did the extensive independent research on HOW to have sex with women) I hadn’t taken the time to really consider that it would change my perception so much. I was surrounded by a world that, that made sex seem so clear cut and obvious, I don’t think I understood, before i did it myself, how untrue that is. I started to think, well, If what I’d done with The Girl was the same as what I’d done with The Guy, had it been sex with him? Why could I call it sex with her, but with him, when there was the “added possibility” of penetration, somehow it was lesser??

INTERVIEWEE: I think it was something he wouldn't let himself think that anything else was as good or as serious. That it just wasn't proper sex unless penetration was involved. It was just an extension of snogging really, it was foreplay even if it happened afterwards or during, or whatever, it was still just foreplay.

So I expressed all of this to the girl I was sleeping with. In my new conception of sex, what he and I did was included. What if at some point I'd started to have sex with him and I hadn't even known it? And she was, understandably, hurt and angry that I hadn't thought this through before fucking her, but she was also kind and, at one point, had gone through her own re-definition, and one day she essentially said-

(Laura and Lover from the girl+girl oral sex)

Sex is something that is mutually agreed upon. You and I were having sex because we both agreed we were, and whatever the two of you decided you were doing, you can't change that in the aftermath

And that made So Much Sense. Sex is just a understanding, and whatever those two people who are doing it agree on as sex, that's what it is. I feel so much more freedom now, in all my sexual experiences, and I don't even feel like there needs to be a rigid definition of what act, with a girl or with a guy, makes something sex. Because sex is so fluid and exploratory and different every time, and to me it's so much more about pleasure and sensuality and orgasms than it is about saying "at this point, after doing many other sexual things, we began to REALLY have sex".

After dating The Girl for about four months, in an "off again" period, I had penetrative sex with a guy for the first time, and the morning after one of my best friends asked me-

#1: How does it feel!? Now that you've like, *really* had sex?

Because I am a queer woman there was simply no way that what I had been taught that sex was could apply to me. But for many women, because it CAN apply, it does.

INTERVIEWER: He didn't see that it was one of a variety of things that you could be doing together?

INTERVIEWEE: No. As far as he was concerned anything else was nice and alright but it wasn't quite proper sex.

Although it was alienating and uncomfortable to know that the world's definition of sex didn't include the sex that I was having, ultimately, I think it was a good thing. It gave me the opportunity to question my conceptions, to realize that the sex I had been taught about in school, on TV, and even from friends was formed from a heterosexual and patriarchal perspective, and was in many ways designed to limit our understanding of female pleasure and desire. Through realizing that it is impossible for this to apply to me, I've realized that I wouldn't *want* it to anyway. Though it took a while, I've found delight in choice and freedom, and I've gotten to decide /I/ want sex to be. And that sex, is Great ;)

Mandy: Catholic Planning Association

(Savannah and Megan go and get the binders and sit back down at the front).

[Still within the framework of the sex ed class, we will stage this interview moment as part narrated story part live action]

Mandy: When I was in the fifth form we had two consecutive Monday mornings and the first Monday morning all the boys went to the Library and someone from -

(Saph goes to get rosary)

Teacher: Girls, we have a special visitor today, a wonderful friend of mine from the Catholic Planning Association!

Mandy: some title like that, came along to -

Teacher: She's going to tell us about // the rhythm method.

Interviewer: // the rhythm method.

Mandy: The rhythm method yes except that she didn't,

CFPA: When a man and woman connect to each other in a sexual way, it is the most intimate physical expression of their total union, therefore this union is SACRED and therefore sexual relationships should only happen after marriage. Do you understand girls?

(Saph is in centre)

Mandy: then the next week all the girls went in.

(girls turn their bodies towards Saph to listen)

INTERVIEWER: When you say she didn't, what do you mean?

Mandy: Well all the girls went into the Library, but she didn't actually tell us how any method of contraception worked at all she just said

CFPA: Right, now we are going to talk about contraception, and what the catholic attitude to it is and lets start with abortion

Mandy: and she just started to describe abortion and oh.

INTERVIEWER: In lurid terms?

Mandy: Oh just buckets of blood and screaming babies and just really awful and how terrible it is and by this time two girls in my year had left because they were pregnant as well. So it was quite bizarre having this talk.

[CFPA repeats some phrases after Mandy says them: 'buckets and buckets of blood', 'babies screaming!', 'it's terrible really.'

INTERVIEWER: What was your reaction to this discussion on abortion, did you think yes abortion is disgusting?

Mandy: No. I thought she was really wrong because I didn't think abortion was wrong but I didn't know why. I just didn't know how to argue with her and I felt a lot of things in school I felt really frustrated, but I didn't really know how to articulate it at all. She went through all these different methods of contraception [*during this monologue, the CFPA will be listing different types of contraception the copper coil, the IUD, the implant, the injection, the patch in disdain*] and she talked about the pill and she said that you could die from being on the pill and that was basically what she said.

CFPA: I am a health visitor and there's a woman that I visit in Cardiff and she is dying because she has been on the pill.

Mandy: And everyone just thought

Everyone: oh my god.

Mandy: And that was it.

INTERVIEWER: And that was it there was no other forms ..?

Mandy: Yes she discussed all the different forms but I can't remember what she said now. She talked about condoms and she said

CFPA: They are really bad, they will really spoil your sex life, and they are really awful for the men, it really spoils it for them.

Mandy: Then she said

CFPA: And don't forget, you could get pregnant even without having sex!

Mandy: She didn't quite say how, but everyone in the room was just like,

Everyone: oh God.

Mandy: She kind of hinted really vaguely what she meant.

INTERVIEWER: So your imaginations ran riot?

Mandy: And then she said

CFPA: There is only one method of contraception that you can use in God's eyes

Mandy: I can't remember what she called it but it wasn't the rhythm method so then we thought yes go on tell us, and then she said,

CFPA: well when you're married come along to the Catholic Family Planning Advisory Service and we will tell you all about it, its to do with taking your temperature.

Teacher: Thank you so much for that wonderful lesson.

Mandy: And that's what we got -

Teacher: Say thank you girls!f

Everyone: Thank you, miss. [the girls turn to each other to talk about what's just happened]

Teacher: SILENCE! Back to your textbooks.

Mandy: There wasn't any forum for discussion at all.

Jade's Monologue

When you said that sex is the deepest way of connecting with someone, I thought that was so beautiful but I didn't know what to say, because I'd never experienced sex like that. I'd never experienced sex at all. But I wanted to believe you. And when we held each other that felt like the closest that I'd ever gotten to something sacred. In the moment when I looked into your eyes, I felt the whole world spinning around me. I was trying to reach across the divide, between the worlds that separated us.

Religion was there from the beginning. Smiles at the sermons spoke a secret language. Whispered conversations about saints in the church and afterlife in the cemetery. Talking about scripture in crackly voice notes. You made me think I could believe in God again, or at least that I should. You knew something that I didn't, felt something that I couldn't.

So it shouldn't have surprised me when it was in bed with us too. Yet it shocked me when you didn't want to speak about sacred things when we were at our most vulnerable, when I had revealed myself more than I ever had. I guess that's what happens when we say something is sacred. We draw boundaries around it. Sometimes we use religion to say sex is the opposite of sacred, a contamination, locked out of what is pure, banging on the holy gate. With you, we built those walls inside sex, a maze of ideas that I didn't understand, tripwires that I shouldn't cross. So many things that I left unspoken.

I still want sex to be sacred, even if I don't believe sacred exists, even though I don't want the rules that come with it. I want to lose myself to something greater. I wanted to draw hallelujah from your lips, traced patterns like curling smoke from Sabbath candles up and down your back. You said I'd make time stop for you someday but I never did. And now you're like a God to me. I feel like you're watching me, watching my life.

Purple Dildos

Teacher: Right now ladies. Before we disperse there one more thing we need to address. *(Pippa goes along handing out to the front row the dildos, cucumbers, carrots and condoms. hand out the condoms to the front row of audience as well)*

The most important thing for you to remember here is that these are only for after you're married!

[Using a myriad of dildos, cucumbers, carrots, and other phallic objects, the girls will put a condom on the object in a choreographed way to the beginning of 'Sexual healing'. It will be stopped suddenly by the school bell ringing]

Teacher: Alright That's enough of that! Lesson over! See you tomorrow!!

Most people move their chairs out of the way.

Contradictory Messages from Magazines:

[Sarah and Hannah on the microphones. The girls are scattered around the space, on the bus, walking, linking arms with friends, just generally making their way home whilst reading magazines - think back to Alison's workshop. Oona hands out the magazines]

Sarah: Hallway make-out sessions: dos and don'ts

Hannah: Advice on packing in pleasure when doing the deed full speed

Sarah: Are teenagers having as much sex as Riverdale thinks they are?

Hannah: 14 things no one tells you about losing your virginity

Sarah: 20 Ways to use your boobs in bed

Hannah: Why are there pimples near your vagina? Read more to find out!

Sarah: Your Orgasm Face: What He Thinks When He Sees It

Hannah: Untamed Va-jay-jays: Guess What Sexy Style Is Back

Sarah: His Butt: What the Size, Shape, and Pinchability of Those Sweet Cheeks Reveal About His True Self

Hannah: These Hot Moves Will Start a Bonfire in His Pants *and* His Heart!

[Lights change and all the girls lift their magazines up to reveal a placards reading '1989']

Sarah: I just wanted to start off, you know, dive straight in, talking about sexuality, and differences between men and women I wanted to ask you if you think of your sexuality in terms of physical things, like orgasms, or in terms of emotional needs like getting close and relationships?

Hannah: That's something which, at the moment, is difficult for me to say really because I am still quite career minded, I don't really want to feel. I do tend to feel that I could really commit to a

relationship or one where it's more about getting really close, and sharing things, but it's one which would in some ways hold me back.

Sarah: Do you think there's a...an incompatibility?

Hannah: Yeah. I feel like you can't have both.

[Lighting changes back and girls start reading again]

Hannah: Bopping on top will give you both the most stimulation.

Sarah: Go deep with doggy, you're sure to get a woof!

Hannah: Think of his shaft... like the outer curve of your breastTake his shaft between your open palms and tap it back and forth, almost like you're volleying a tennis ball.

Sarah: Use your electric toothbrush, or iPhone, when your vibrator is out of batteries.

Hannah: Not eco friendly? It could be a sign that he'll trash your relationship too.

Sarah: Introduce doughnuts into your lovemaking.

Hannah: Sprinkle a little pepper under his nose right before he climaxes. Sneezing can feel really similar to an orgasm and amplify those feel-good effects.

Sarah: If he touches his belt, he definitely wants you.

Hannah: Embrace the erotic potential of insect repellent.

Sarah: Dr. Fleming advises against "faking" anything during sex, but sometimes, it's inevitable.

[Lights change again and all the girls on stage lift their magazines up to reveal a placards reading '2020']

Hannah: Do you think of your sexuality in terms of physical things like orgasms, or in terms of emotional things like getting close, relationships?

Sarah: Um... I feel like it's quite a closed question really. I think it's only recently I've been confronting what my sexuality means to me, I think that binary thing of... well, it's either a sexual or emotional... women typically being consigned to one or the other - it's limiting. I think I'm trying to navigate having both, accepting both, and it being my own.

Interview Extract: Weird Ideas of Women

Mandy: Oona

Mandy: I think because there was a mixture of boarders and day people but boarders had so little contact with women. There were women teachers there, they saw the women teachers and there were always loads of porn magazines being passed around so they would see porn magazines from when they came to school at eleven and they just had a really bizarre idea of women and what they were like and what they were supposed to do which I have never encountered. Although the other school I went to was really sexist it was in a really different way, they weren't so harshly critical.

(Laura-May walks down the aisle last reading her mag during above section so she ends up on stage alone after Oona. Turns around as if surprised to see audience)

THE PERFECT WIFE (Juliette, Laura-May, Millie, Pippa) {advert music and

Juliette: Assistant

Laura May: Presenter

Millie: Prototype

Pippa: Model A

Presenter: Oh hello, didn't see y- Karen [Juliette comes on] [Juliette gets the mike and they turn around to start again. Cue ad music] Oh, hello! Didn't see you there, you know a better wife gives you a better life isn't that right Karen?

Assistant: Haha yes Ken!

Presenter: Will you fetch our prototype please Karen.

Karen: Sure Ken.

Presenter: Has your wife gotten tired? Are you sick of listening to the same moany, groany, fat.. Bitch ? PMS? Menopause? Give me a break! Has your wife stopped shaving her armpits and her vagina ? Has she stopped wearing make-up and buying the latest products and, has she stopped watching what she eats?

Karen: ~GASPS~

Prototype: See I actually don't have time for these things because I have a full ti-

Presenter: AHAHHHAHA, okay, That's enough.oes she complain about all the shit she has to do, and is always too tired to have sex? Please! What else has she got to do, am I right Karen?

Karen: HA HA SO right Ken

Ken: Well, that's not good enough for you and we don't think so either SO... without further ado... Karen can you bring in model A. Can I get a round of applause for model A please!!

[Everyone claps, prototype claps slowly]

As you can see model A is completely hairless from the nose down but she has this amazing head of hair . Of course, hair like that doesn't come for free and there are a number of products to keep it in tip-top condition for the small price of extra £100 a month to keep her updated.Isn't that a bargain Karen?

Karen: What a steal Ken!

Presenter: Okay Model A can you talk me through a normal day with you as a wife.

Model A: I wake up before my husband, put on my make-up, my heels, wake him up with a blow job, and then cook him steak and eggs! Then I get the kids ready for school, pack their lunches, and kiss them goodbye, and then to my job where I'm perfectly content making 18% less my male colleges, and you'll never hear me complain about being groped in the lift! After working a full 13 hour day I pick the kids up from school, get my asshole bleached, make a three course meal, and prepare for a raunchy night of anal sex- which I definitely enjoy every time!

Presenter: Thank you very much Model A. Model A is also extremely buncy in the bedroom, she has a very perk bottom and we do not sell any models that are below a D-cup. All she consumes is raw kale and pornstar martinis and she comes with built in birth control, so YOU'LL never have to use a condom!

If you'd like to order the perfect wife, please call the number on your screen now. And remember, a better wife, gives you, say it with me now, a better life!

Ayesha Individual Moment: Falling In Love

Love, so beautiful, isn't it? Something I've never experienced myself yet but honestly, I am dying to, and hopefully soon! In fact, I've been wanting to be in love since I can remember. The reason to blame - movies. Well specifically bollywood movies, they are heavily romanticised, like to the point that you can't find a movie without a 'hero' and 'heroine' falling in love...regardless of what the film is about.

So anyway, yes they're the reason why I now have VERY unrealistic expectations for falling in love. For example, when I meet my 'special someone', It might just be because I was holding too many folders and *oops* they dropped down and now I'm accidentally touching hands with the boy that tried to reach for them too and now we're looking into each others eyes and can already picture our future together. (*Get lost for a bit then come back*)

Yeah.. so, jumping to a few weeks later in our relationship, and we're just taking a stroll in this Manchester weather and surprisingly it's cold outside and get this; he takes HIS jacket off just to keep ME warm! But of course, every relationship has its ups and downs, so we're already on our first break up :(But then I get a text message saying 'Look outside' and there he is standing outside my window begging for another chance and OH! It's raining (of course) and I just can't take all this love and I promise to leave his side again....

Until... we go through another break-up. But this time it's serious! Like I'm so upset with him, I can't stand to be in the same country as him, so there I am ready at the airport to leave but just before I can board the plane, he runs towards me, confesses his love and even proposes!! Now, I don't know how he got past security without a boarding pass, but we'll just skip over the details, and any type of logic for now.

And then it comes to our wedding, he looks so handsome as I walk down the aisle, I can see him crying at how beautiful I am, and just this moment. We say I do and then, and well, like after that, um (*starts mumbling trying to imagine what post wedding life should be*)... hmm well I don't know, they don't really show that part in movies.

Crazy, right? I know I know it's never gonna happen like that... I think. No of course not pfft. I mean he'll probably just slide in my DM's or something like that. But I'm not wrong to believe in soul-mates, I know there's someone out there for me and I just have to find him. I'll still believe and keep hoping, because hope is a beautiful thing and no-one can take that away from me.

Juliette's Monologue [removed at request of author / performer]

MOTHERS (EVE, SAVANNAH, OONA, JADE)

Daughter: Savannah

Mum 1: Eve

Mum 2: Oona

Mum 3: Jade

3 mums enter the kitchen and begin to cook with their backs to the audience. They follow the same physical sequence so it appears they are the same person.

A young girl enters

Savannah: Mum

Mother: Hello darling just making an omelette

Savannah: I need to talk to you

Mother: Of course, what is it?

Savannah: I've just.. I've just had sex.

At this point the mums are no longer in unison. 2 freeze giving the other a turn talking to the daughter:

- *Mum 1 is overly excited, taking it as an opportunity to show off how liberal she is.*
- *Mum 2 is overly conservative, conspiring about what the neighbours will think.*
- *Mum 3 is overly awkward, very 'British'.*

None of them ask any questions, they say their bit and turn back to the omelette.

Daughter (talking to their turned backs): Thanks for asking...(more will be said here)

Lack of Communication over Dinner

Haleema walks over to the bookshelf and gets out the binder as the interviewer walks downstage.

INTERVIEWER: So how much influence has he had on you and the family? [father crosses haleema on stage putting a chair down where they cross centre stage]

INTERVIEWEE: It is quite strange, I mean when I was younger he used to go on massively long trips, he was away for three years at a time and then he started coastal work in England so

he was around much more often. And my sister has had a lot more problems with him because *she* was the one who used to have screaming fits with him every Saturday because she couldn't actually go out sort of thing and I have managed to ease my way through that sort of thing.

INTERVIEWER: Is she older than you? [enter mum]

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. But it's always been 'Dad, can I go out with a bloke?', 'No.!', 'can we talk about it?', 'No.! Men are only after one thing.' I mean it has had quite a negative influence on me in terms of how I relate to men.

INTERVIEWER: I should think definitely. What is your mum's attitude, is there a clash between your parents then?

INTERVIEWEE: Oh all the time. There has been quite a problem with that. She is much more, I mean she is the sort of person I tell everything to, what is going on in my sex life and everything, the whole gammit. So there is quite a tension there and she basically says, we can do what we like as long as we are sensible. She says things like 'well I don't think this is a good idea and we actually listen to her.

INTERVIEWER: So you respect her advice. Does she actually argue with your Dad over your freedom?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

Saph's Stand-Up Story

Soooo I'm like a mini me version of my mum, we're exactly the same person, we're best friends, what she hates in me is what I hate in her which but we both refuse to change that same quality in ourselves so when we fight its big, honestly with our hair and bonkers energy its like two yetis going for each others throats when we do. I can tell her anything, I tell her about all my problems with frineds and people in my life which we sort through together, she's a gp and I have health anxiety so i'll tell her any gross detail about my health and she'll want to gimme a slap but deal with my crazyess, we gossip about our friends to each other because we know that we we get it off our chests and it won't get back to them :/ if you're my friend in the audience... soz yeh I've talked about you to my mum!!!

You get the gist, we're close and we tell each other about anything and everything in our lives, except for sex and all complications surrounding it (by complications I mean people I ever have sex with lol). Like honestly no joke its just something we've never discussed so its something I

feel so weird talking about with her now. Like honestly if she we're to ever talk to me about my sex life I'd go like

"ewwww mum don't talk about sex (like miranda) that's gross"

And that was just last week ! so yeh no sex talk with my mum. Which when I was younger worked in phases. I was the weirdo kid when I was younger, too tall, too badly dressed, podgy in a sea of stick thin girls, just really weird so boys were not a part of my life for a loooooooooonnggggg time. So not talking to her about any of that was good because I was so scared of talking about it because even the idea of it made me feel tragic. Which is stupid but you know what the deal is with teenage girls minds. And then when I did start having sex it wasn't in a relationship, I've never had like that teenage long term boyfriend thing its always been for a while but always like super casual you know (in a gap yah voice) so then I felt awkward telling her about that. Then I started sleeping with someone from the office we both worked in lol so was defo not going to bring up the subject at that point. And now it just feels too big to even try to talk about, like the idea has been built up too much it feels too big a thig to talk about sex with her now.

Like honestly the only way my mum found out I'd had sex is when she found me crying in our basement and when she asked me whats wrong I just kind of stammered out

"iiiiiii tthththttkkkkk imiiimmmmmm pregenannnnntttt"

So she told me to take a pregnancy test. I took it – was a ok btw theres no mini Sophia walking around behind the scenes. And that's literally only time we've had a proper convo about it.

So why am I telling the story. Basically I wouldn't say it's the biggest problem ever and that its scared me not talking to my mum about sex. I know loads of people aren't open with their parents about it. But I'm so open with my mum about eveyhting else that I think in retrospect it had made me really underconfident with all sexual experiences for a while when I stated engaging In coiitttuussss!!! Now that im confident in myself and more sure of who and I am and what ii want from diffent people I wouldn't say its really a problem any more. But I kind of have this nagging feeling, that if its not super normal to discuss with my mum then will it ever really be a super normal thing to me in any other aspect of life. Like how can it be a weird subject in one part of my life and then not in all? Or am I overthinking.

Basically moral of the story – the fun bit- what you've all been wanting to hear to know that we're getting to the end. IISSSS TTHHHAATTTT... I've made it my 2020 mission, start the decade off right to start talking about sex with my mum. By the ned of the year or decade, haven't decided yet which one I want it to like dominate the convo... like if im gunna do this may as well go full out right?

So I've already started, over chirstmas. Wouldn't say I liked dropped a bomb into the convo more like those fire cracker things that annoying 13 year old boys throw on the floor. Yeh like a few of

those, got a few eye brow raises in surprise from the mighty Rebecca but im going to take that as a good sign so we move ... now im figuring out how to make it even more commen and just super casj and cool you know. Also thinking I want to tell my mum that I like boys ...i ad girls... but is that kid of pushing it... like should I go with baby steps and just keep that in the closet until 2021 or should I just go in with confetti cannons and jazz hands?

Either way I'm excited to see what if any impact it will have on me, our relationship, other relationships? But yeh for now just thinking of the next move ill make to sneak attack Rebecca with another sex story!

Mum and Daughter Growing Up (Alexia and Cecilia)

(Cecila sits on stage-Alexia enters holding some "sweets" and sits down next to her)

Alexia: Mum what are these?

Cecilia:Um..those? Are some special sweets.

Alexia: Can I eat one?

Cecilia: No no no no no. They're...They're just for mum.. so I'm just gonna (she moves the "sweets")

Alexia: But I want sweets!

Cecilia: You can have some Haribo or something...and I'll have those ones

Alexia: When can I have the Haribo?

Cecilia: You can have them now. Just not these...ok?

(Alexia stands up, turns in a circle)

Alexia: 3 years later (Sits down next to mum) Mum. I found some blood in the toilet.

Cecilia: Ooooh...ok so basically. Sometimes, when women go to the toilet. There's blood. And its only (Alexia starts to look very concerned) no no no it's completely normal. It just happens when your a bit older. And it's completely healthy, it's fine.

Alexia: How much older?

Cecilia: Umm 12. Maybe 14, 15, 16.Round then.

Alexia: Okay...I'm gonna go watch CBBC

Cecilia:Yeah you do that. Okay.

(Alexia stands up)

Alexia: 4 years later.(Turns in a circle..Sits down. Alexia dials and Cecilia answers the phone)

Cecilia: Hello?

Alexia: Hello..um..mum..I'm at the toilets at school.

Cecilia: Is everything ok?

Alexia: I think I started (whispers) MY PERIOD.

Cecilia: Oh. Don't worry.We'll get some pads, get some tampons. You'll be fine. Dont worry about it.

Alexia: Okay but what do I do while I'm still at school?

Cecilia: Um so you can go to the office and you can maybe ask them for a pad. But if you feel a bit nervous

Alexia: Okay thanks mum. Love you

Cecilia: Love you.

Alexia: Bye

Cecilia: Bye

(Alexia stands up and turns)

Alexia: 3 years later

(Sits back down and starts texting)

Cecilia: Okay so you're 16 now so its time for the sex talk.

Alexia: OH MY GOD NOOOOOOOO

Cecilia: No no no its fine! Wait no listen... listen! Its gonna be fine...look we just need to talk about safe sex. Because you have to be safe-And you need-

Alexia: (Interrupts) I know what safe sex is I'm not talking to you about this! Oh my god!

Cecilia: Just so you know, Just remember..Use a Condom

Alexia: I know what a Condom is

Cecilia: Yes but , you might boyfriend

Alexia: I know what Condom is we did that banana condom thing when I was 11.

Cecilia: Yes ok But I'm just making sure that you know that you have to be safe.We can talk about anything, I'm here.

Alexia: Thanks.

Cecilia: Yeah. You wanna talk about anything else?

Alexia: No thank you.

Savannah Personal Moment

An extract from an imagined interview with my mum.

It was this fantastic evening. Absolutely packed with people! It was just in someone's back garden on a backstreet in Accra in Ghana. There were about 70/80 people. Men and women too which was nice. And plenty of them knew each other as well, some not so much but you could tell there's just this whole community that's been created. And I suppose it was an underground community but still I was surprised how open it all was – the gate was open and we passed a microphone around to speak. Later on, there were people dancing to loud music in the streets, they even posted it all on social media.

To be honest it was a revelation. A wonderful one. Seeing all of these Ghanaian LGBT people turning up to come together in this space that's for them. And unashamed as well – they were in unbuttoned flowery shirts and dungarees without t-shirts underneath, or baggy jeans and bright trainers. They were being themselves. And proudly. And some less so, a bit more reserved, a bit wary but that was ok. And through the discussions I think some people were saying things that they'd never said out loud before because there were people there who would listen and – it was a very positive space. There were all these really tricky negative experiences that people have had like the woman whose brother got teased at school because she 'seemed gay' or the man who never sings in church because his voice sounds too high or this man who got beaten up by some random strangers for walking 'like a girl'. But all of these stories were heard and respected and people were praised for their bravery and for 'doing them'.

Like I remember this one woman's story really stayed with me – she dressed differently, not girly enough whatever that means, people started to make comments, to see her as a bit different. Because sorry before this, she'd been always pretending, she'd wear the clothes and behave like everyone wanted her to at home and then hide clothes in her bag that she'd change into as soon as she left and was able to become herself. I think eventually she was kicked out. And when people were giving each other advice, the workshop was on empowering ourselves so we tried to share a bit about that, and I remember she offered her own method and she says, despite everything, everyday, morning and evening, she looks at herself in the mirror and says, "You are amazing. You are beautiful. You are enough."

My daughter and her friend were there too that evening. I'd look over at them sometimes and think, wow. Yes, that we're lucky and our lives in the UK are so different but also what a privilege, for me too, to hear these experiences and people's lives and to be inspired and motivated about things in our own lives because of how they still are in theirs. And of course it's always ironic, the colonialist influence on it all: growing up in Ghana you'd often here all of this praise for the British because everyone is taught to think that way but now the UK has same sex marriage and Ghana, a place where queernes was once normal and accepted in some communities, has so many people who can rarely be themselves because of hate.

Last summer, it was a few months after I'd done this workshop I think, I went to Black Pride with my other daughter. Being in that space, this huge park with so many people of colour who all

share this part of their lives or their identity and were there to celebrate it, it was... And my daughter got whisked away by this group of other young black queer women and there was delicious food, some jollof in there too, and then later they were playing Dave I think it was (I do know about Dave now) and Lizzo and then black queer icons like Janelle Monae and Little Nas or something and it was – phenomenal. This feeling of complete freedom, and acknowledging how lucky that freedom is and how rare but saying it shouldn't have to be rare because right now we're here, and knowing that you're maybe celebrating yourself or the person next to you and also all those people back in Ghana. I think that's so special. And sharing that with my daughters – them seeing what it is and what it was and what it can be to be yourself. That's the best.

*****INTERMISSION*****

TAROT READING (SAPH, SAVANNAH, JADE, MAGS)

Tarot Reader: Saph

Girl 1: Savannah

Girl 2: Jade

Girl 3: Mags

Three young women visit a tarot reader for advice on varying questions/reflection they are having on sexuality:

Girl 1 is questioning why she considered penetrative sex as losing her virginity when she's had 'sex' with women previously.

Girl 2 is questioning what defines sexuality and why it must be defined - she is questioning her own. [This description was for when Lae was in the scene but you can change it to whatever you want to talk about Jade]

Girl 3 is warring within herself about frigidity and her conflicting feelings about wanting to be sexual and not at the same time.

MAG 50- Lust? (Hannah and Cecilia)

(maybe walk around the table)

Cecilia as Interviewer, Hannah as Interviewee

Cecilia: When you think about a guy you fancy, do you think about it in terms of lust, a physical thing?

Hannah: Yes, I do. It is a contradiction in me, and I think probably in most women. It is a feminist thing as well, I feel if I want that, that's what I want, the sort of bloke I want, then really that's OK. But at the same time, like the relationship I've got at the moment, it's not particularly fulfilling, because that's basically all it is. And that throws up questions of is it really worth it if there's not more communication and more caring in it? And I don't know.

Chloe Personal Moment

(maybe here jade could go over to millie and take her hand to dance - dappled starry lights, soft love song in the background)

She held his hand quite tightly
Afraid to let it go
With their heart amongst the stars
How were they to know
The world around them was changing
Too much happening to keep track
And with their heads up to the stars
There was no looking back
They were enough for each other
Just them the cold the sky
For when they were together the world could pass them by

She crashed down , harder than she ever thought she could
She hadn't stopped to notice she had fallen in love
Young love doesn't last she'd hear a cynic say
But she knew this feeling was too real to ever let slip away

The sky looked clearer now
She hadn't noticed that
It wasn't until she saw the reflection in his eyes
She took a step back

Everything was calmer now
The closeness was pure bliss
As he took her by the hand
She knew
This was something she would miss

(from here millie and jade would go into the interview)

Walking Round Naked/ Enjoying Sex For the First Time (Millie and Jade)

(maybe back to back sitting on the table)

Interviewer: Jade, Interviewee: Millie

Mandy: I went out with a bloke at school for quite a long time for about four months before I slept with him and I went to see him in Germany and his parents were away so we had the house to ourselves for ages and he was just really a nice bloke and that was really different.

Interviewer: It was the first person who you'd really enjoyed ?

Mandy: And it was really nice. We just spent two weeks in the house but looking back

Interviewer: You discovered it?

Mandy: Yes this is nice, I like this. And it was just a golden opportunity that neither of us were going to miss. A nice house in Germany with no parents and it was brilliant.

Interviewer: Things like that at that age and where you are can make a huge difference rather than groping in the back seat of a car.... to be able to discover yourself

Millie: I can remember laughing loads as well, just having a really giggly time and being really quite uninhibited. Really very inhibited at the beginning and just got used to walking around the house and making a cup of tea with no clothes on.... which was really nice.

Oona Personal Moment

There is so much pressure to fall in love. To find your partner, your soulmate, your other half, the one love of your life. It doesn't matter that I'm 19 and not ready for the rest of my life.

It's like everyone wants you to think there is this weird law of nature; that the longer you take to fall in love (and have sex) the less likely you are to ever fall in love at all.

I've never been in love but it's not like I haven't loved. I know I have. I know I love readily and with my heart. And yet somehow that doesn't matter. Hearing me gush about how much I

love my friends isn't interesting. Sometimes it seems the only love that counts is the one that comes with sex

When I went home for christmas, I met up with some girls I once would have called my friends for lunch. Well, I still would, but we hadn't been in touch and I hear from them maybe twice a year. It was lovely to catch up, everyone talking about what they had been up to before the talk turned to relationships. Suddenly it was my turn, and 6 eyes turned to me "what about you? Any boys?" And so I reluctantly told them I had had a relationship, and we had broken up after about a month. "What's His name?" They asked me. And suddenly a chasm opened up in front of me. A gaping tear I couldn't stick together. And Lucy became Luke and it slipped out my mouth. I don't know why. I'm not ashamed..... I just hadn't had the energy, and there wasn't the time, or the interest, to explain this deeply personal part of myself. Because I knew an explanation would be needed. Needed to defend that this wasn't some new exciting development in my life, this thing about me that they didn't know. It wasn't news, but to them it would have been. And worse; gossip. These were not people whose judgement I feared, but the heaviness of facing an Explanation.

In every relationship I have ever had, from the girlfriend I had to the briefest flirtations at house parties I have entertained, I have felt I needed to explain it to those who knew about it.

So much pressure to have them! And then when you do you have to justify it???!!!

I think one reason why icons like Miranda Priestly or Regina George are memorable, is that in their narcissism they don't have to explain any of their actions to anyone. Is that ruthlessness part of their villainy?

HOT OR NOT (MILLIE, MEGAN, AYESHA, OONA, SARAH, LAURA-MAY,)

Laura-May: yellow teeth, detox tea to lose weight, show less skin,

*Ayesha: more make-up, straightening hair, the pout
Oona: more curves, more cleavage, wax facial hair,*

Laura-May: This one's quite good although I feel like my teeth look a bit yellow

I'm thinking of starting detox tea

Is it good enough to post?

Sarah: Does she give head though

Millie: yeh bet it would be bare teathy still

Sarah: she's got fangs

Millie: haha fangs like Dracula

Sarah: yeh

Megan: what you talkin about, she's a slice of heaven... 9 ½

Sarah: nah she's too skinny, 4

Millie: yeh 4

Ayesha: I don't know I feel like my hair looks kind of messy

Is the picture too bright? I feel like my acne's really obvious

Someone else: maybe try posing like this

Sarah: ooh cheeky tongue, filter's a bit booky still

Millie: yeah is she a dog though, woof woof

Sarah: yeh

Megan: her hair is softer than birdsong on a spring morning, 9 ½

Sarah: clapped, 3

Millie: whaaaaat that's what I was gonna say, 3

Oona: *guys be honest do my eyebrows look okay (Laura-May: cleaner)*

What about my ass?

Squeeze tits together, adjust her posing

Sarah: Bit tooo much cushion for the pushin

Millie: yeh bit toooo much cushion for the -

Sarah: swear.

Megan: ahhhhh man...ahhhh man, MAN, you know i think this is the one - that is one beautiful bountiful bootylicious bad bitch. You know what i'm gonna say it, you know what l'm gonna say it... who's gonna stop me? You? You? You? I'm just gonna say it ... 10

Sarah: it's a five maximum

Millie: Dead ting, 4.

Katrina-Very Few Of Us are Allowed to Be (Mags and Pippa)

Interviewer: Pippa, Interviewee: Mags

Mags: I started going out with this bloke when I was about seventeen I think and we were going out for quite a long time and I don't know, I had very fixed ideas about what happens when you go out with people and it was very much the external things like holding hands and snogging and that sort of thing. And then when he was actually saying do you want to take it further I was actually frozen solid at the thought of it and then eventually I unwound a bit. And it was so different from what I had imagined. I was just so detached from it I was just thinking well is this what happens then. He goes up and down and things like that and the actual physicality of it was quite a shock. When you see it on television and you read about it in romantic novels and that sort of thing but it is something that is totally different.

Pippa: Did it have any relation to how you felt about your body at that age?

Mags: Yes. I have never sort of been happy with my body.

Pippa: Very few of us are allowed to be.

Eve Personal Moment [removed at request of author / performer]

Pressure to be in Relationships (Sarah and Ayesha)

Interviewer: Ayesha, Interviewee: Sarah

MAG 50

Ayesha: Do you think it's quite difficult being young, free and single? Do you feel pressure on you now?

Sarah: I think so, yeah. Because a lot of my friends, most of them, are in a steady relationship. It doesn't put me off that much because I've only seen about one relationship that I've thought I wouldn't mind being in. Mostly, I've thought - Oh my God, why are they in that?

Ayesha: How important is having a relationship, what sort of priority is it in your life?

Sarah: I don't know, I'm quite happy on my own usually, but there's always that feeling - Oh, who do I fancy? It would be quite nice. But I usually find it more of a burden being in a relationship. I've found that the whole time. And that's why they've only lasted six weeks generally, because I prefer to do my own thing really.

Ayesha: Do you think there's pressure on women to always be in a relationship?

Sarah: I think there is, yeah. I think, definitely. I don't know anyone who doesn't feel that

GROUP CHAT (Eve, Cecilia, Alexia, Hollie, Chloe)

Eve: Hey ladies, I'm in bed with Fred right now. He satisfies me like no other! How's your Tuesday going?

[cacophony of 'I'm so jealous', 'wet emoji', 'so happy for you']

Cecilia: OMG guys I'm going on that date with George tonight and what do you think of this outfit??

[cacophony of 'yas queen', 'fire emoji']

Chloe: Guys, it's our 2 year anniversary where do we go? I have no idea!

[cacophony of 'aww you guys are so cute' 'you're gonna get married and I'm gonna be the bridesmaid!']

Alexia: So last night at the club I got off with 3 different guys xx

[cacophony of 'you go girl', '#feminism', 'get ittt']

Hollie: Guys I actually had such a good day yesterday! Woke up early went to the gym, getting them gains, had an omelette then watched a film in the evening, you know what I just had the best day ever, I'm so happy.

[cacophony of 'babes I'm so sorry', 'there are plenty of fish in the seas', 'I love you and that's what matters']

This will go directly into Hollie's moment

Hollie Personal Moment

People make sex seem like this massive thing but it just isn't. Like, they say a lad prefers you to be a virgin yet make out that you're a freak if you're a virgin too. It doesn't make sense. If you've slept with loads of people you're a slag yet if you're a virgin you're frigid. Why? These double standards make me not want to put myself out there, but wouldn't that just make me more of a freak avoiding it all? Who knows. I just think people should do what they like with who they like. It's your body after all.

Recording from Rachel, Difficult Conversations

Need like a long silence before the recording starts.

Hollie and Chloe go and get chairs. They sit down. With the interviews, then scan through them, flicking pages, in silence then the recording plays. They open their mouths as though they are about to ask a question, to each other, turning behind them-then hesitate, shake their head and then go back to reading the interview. Coughing and shifting uncomfortably, this continues as the recording starts

(A recording of Rachel talking about what she found difficult to interview to certain women about plays overhead)

(an idea? As the recording plays Chloe and Hollie go and get chairs, place them down

Reactions to Questions (Chloe and Hollie)

(Chloe and Hollie sit on chairs back to back)

Chloe: What do you think about the prospect of other partners? Of having other relationships? Do you find it ideal that you should find someone that you are sexually compatible with? In terms of the way you feel about that now, do you find that a daunting task.

(Hollie puts her head in her hands, Chloe and Hollie switch)

Hollie: Did you feel any guilt about not wanting to have penetration in terms of feeling that a man had to?

(Chloe turns towards audience)

Chloe: Do you think you're less likely to have a quick fling? Whereas before you would have. And now you're at risk. So..are you less likely to?

Hollie: (frustrated) Yes! (switch) Did you achieve Orgasm in that period without intercourse?

Chloe: The sexual relationships you've had in the past. Have you found that's okay, people you've had relationships with have accepted that perhaps you don't want to have penetration?

(Hollie turns away slowly and uncomfortably. Switch)

Hollie: Is the idea that casual sex is a positive part of the drama scene?

Chloe: I mean, I guess so. (switch) When you say that you were really rebellious at home, was that because of the bad relationship with you..

Hollie: (standing up) I'm not answering that question!

AIDS Interview extract (Ayesha and Laura May)

Interviewer: Laura May, Interviewee: Ayesha

MANDY

Laura May: When was the first time you can remember hearing about AIDS?

Ayesha: Probably watching the news when I was in the upper sixth so that would have been 1985.

Laura May: What was your reaction to it?

Ayesha: Oh it was just all to do with gay men and nothing at all to do with me. I thought it was quite horrific and all the rest of it. I just thought it was really bad but it was never anything that was going to touch me at all.

Laura May: When was the first time that you thought it might have something to do with you or relevant to you?

Ayesha: Quite shamefully a long time after that. It was when I started seeing this bloke in Manchester about two years ago who was bisexual and that was the first time I thought about it and then I thought I really wanted to use condoms because before then I had been on the pill for a bit and then I got a diaphragm but I just couldn't use it and I never got the hang of it at all. So I just stayed on the pill and this bloke I decided I was definitely going to use condoms.

Sarah and Hannah extract from a play

A blackout.

A section of sound from the AIDS video plays.

Lights up. Sarah and Hannah are sat on stage, they perform an extract from Revolt. She Said.

Revolt.

Lights out

Mags Personal Moment

Margherita enters with a laptop, looking quite content. She sits down centre stage and starts typing away, nodding at herself. The big red phone rings. She closes her laptop and answers.

Hello? Yes, I'm just finishing up. You're going to love this new character, she's feisty, she's resourceful, she just brings so much to the table. I'm really excited for you to – What?

Are you sure?

You want me to write a sex scene?

No, no, no, it's not that I'm not comfortable, it's not that. It's 2020 for crying out loud, we're past tiptoeing around our peepees and hooahas. It's just— I thought we were going for something more highbrow here. Less E.L. James, more Shakespeare. I want to write something profound, something resonant, something complex. There's just not that much to say about sex.

She rolls her eyes. Ok fine, I'll get you a draft by tomorrow.

She hangs up and opens her laptop again.

Right, ok. A sex scene. Hmph.

She taps her fingers in the floor, gets up, paces around her laptop like she's a cat sniffing a dead bird.

Sex. Sex. Sexity sex sex. Sexy times.

She does a couple of jumping jacks and shakes out her limbs like she's loosening up after a marathon. Then she sits back down and starts typing.

Ok. Oook. Think sexy thoughts. Peepies. Hooahas. Coitus.

“And suddenly, although she and her co-worker had a lovely platonic friendship cemented by years of mutual collaboration, and although she was a busy, career-driven woman who frankly did not have time for a man, she had a sudden urge to rip his trousers off and give him a nice big blowjob. She could not resist her violent desire for his – member. Shaft. Testicles? As she threw herself into his arms, she felt—

She felt—”

For fuck's sake.

She gets up and grabs the phone.

Hi, it's me again. I can't do this.

Yes, of course I've had sex before. I'm an independent, open-minded young woman who's had plenty of sex. What does that have to do with anything?

You think I should base it on my own experience? How sex makes me feel? Huh. I'll get back to you on that.

She takes her laptop and sits on the table.

Cinderella was the most hideous girl in the whole wide world. She had lovely grey-green eyes, but she was ugly. She had thick brown eyebrows that were suddenly all the rage around her twenties, but she was ugly. The scars on her legs and arms and face had mostly faded, but she was *ugly*.

Cinderella went on an adventure. It felt more like an ordeal. She watched her her sisters and brother crushed under the weight of that quest, one by one. The first by her prince charming, who had been drunk and, she insisted, was not a monster. The second in her very own palace, by a vengeful ex. The third, but not the last, in the middle of discovering that she was born to be a queen.

Cinderella had a prince. When it was the two of them together, naked and drowsy with summer sex, she could bear to look at herself in the magic mirror. They looked good side by side, melting on each other's shoulder. And still, Cinderella would have given anything to be in someone else's glass slippers. A body, a body, my kingdom for a body. A skin not damaged, a back not curved with cowering, a head not haunted.

Cinderella is living an ordeal. But on rare, precious mornings, her ugly body gifts her with an orgasm. I love you, she whispers to him. I love you, I love you, I love you.

GAME SHOW (CECILIA, ALEXIA, EVE, HOLLIE, CHLOE)

[it's raining men]

Cecilia: hello guys and welcome to are you a real woman? [cheers] Okay so today we've got the lovely Lucy, come on down Lucy. How are you feeling today Lucy?

Eve: Like a woman.

Cecilia: Oh good answer okay so the first round we've got is... the teenage years lets go, go, go, go, go!

Alexia: You're 16, it's the big year have you had sex?!

Eve: Yes! I was actually 15 but you know I've had it so-

Cecilia: Ooh we're gonna have to minus a point there because if you have sex before you're 16 its a bit slutty so...

[heckling]

Alexia: But you can't after 16 because it's a bit sad isn't it?

Cecilia: Yes so minus 1 point for Lucy

Alexia: Okay, but have you drunk alcohol before?

Eve: Yeah yeah, love my WKD!

[cheers]

Cecilia: 1 point for Lucy let's go to the next round, we're going for the uni days!

Hollie: University, freshers week, picture the scene! is your body count double figures? How - many - people - have - you - smashed??

Eve: Well I'm happy for girls who wanna do that but it's not really my thing and I was kind of thinking that I might be into girls as well so I was kind of hoping to... not just with guys ya know.

Hollie: Ooh okay... that's fine... but that's not real sex I'm talking boy on girl, girl on boy - what's your body count, how many boys have you had sex with?

Eve: I don't think I know what you mean by sex now-

Cecilia: Okay let's move on this round is going a bit pear shaped, let's go the next round Post-University!

Chloe: So you're out of uni, found your soul-mate?

Eve: No.. but I do have a really good job and -

Cecilia: Okay quick-fire round, let's go lets go lets go!

Alexia: You're 27, are you engaged?

Eve: No

Hollie: Do you have a house?

Eve: No

Chloe: Pregnant?

Eve: I hope not

Alexia: Do you live with a boyfriend?

Eve: No-

Hollie: Living at home?

Eve: Well I am now but it's not permam-

Cecilia: Okay well, it's time for the final lets see if lovely Lucy is a real woman... we'll find out after the break!

Alexia's Moment

Single. Stuck in Purgatory, thirsty in the middle of a bare desert, needing to get out.

Single. Never a moment to rest, always on the prowl for a potential mate.

Single. Gatsby on his dock, reaching out for the green light, never quite grasping it.

Single. A turtle, involuntarily retreating back into her shell at the slightest hint of passion.

Single. A quiz I take reveals my future on my own. The world comes crashing down.
Single. I'm so alone, I'm so alone. I'm going to die alone.

I'm single and for the first time in my life, I'm okay with that. From when I was 12, I wanted to be in a relationship. Looking back on it now, it couldn't be more blatantly obvious I was just doing it to be like everyone else. I wasn't even really attracted to anyone yet, I just forced myself to latch onto people I *could* have crushes on. The years went by and suddenly all my friends were dating and no one wanted to date me.

I felt like everyone in the world had had sex except for me. I kissed so many nameless people but never anything more. I tried hard to feel something in those fleeting moments. I never told people I hadn't had sex, stayed as vague about it as possible, steered questions away from the risqué in never-have-I-ever, stirred in insecurity as my flatmates talked about all the things they'd got up to. . . When I finally did have sex, I wasn't sure I liked it that much. I convinced myself that I'd grow to like it if I did it more, but whenever the opportunity arose, my body froze up.

Can there really be a right person out there for everyone? What does it take for a couple to be the perfect match? Anyone can be a perfect match if they hide enough of themselves.

I'm a hopeless romantic at heart. I write my romance stories and ship fictional couples and hope they will get together and get married and have children or otherwise adopt cats together. I get all gooey and emotional over my friends' relationships, my admiration mixed with a touch of jealousy, but I'd feel awkward and stilted in the same situation.

How am I supposed to filter someone else into my timetable? It requires emotional preparation to allow someone into your life. Facts and figures, rationality, do no good in love because it is all feeling. You can't just explain it with words. I am comforted by the idea that one day I will find the right person. There's someone out there for you. Thank you. But if I feel this way now, why should I feel any different a decade from now?

Why can't they teach us the monogamous or even romantic lifestyle isn't the ultimate achievement?

Single. Something I know logically is not a bad thing and maybe one day my heart will know that too.
Single. Not an absence, not incomplete, a whole.

Cecilia's Song

Maybe if I saw myself differently
If I'd Looked through someone else's eyes just to see their perspective

Then maybe I could accept that someone could fall in love with me
I've never believed it a possibility
It's anxiety that gets in the way

And I don't know if I've been in love
It's not easy to tell
It's a hell load of confusion
is one type of love the same as another
I don't really know
Can you come up with an answer

From a young age a girl is taught she will have to meet
The boy of her dreams for her to be happy
And that's not true

You see I've realized
That for me it's not all about the guys
Society is so heteronormalized
And I like girls too

And I still don't know if I've been in love
It's not easy to tell
It's a hell load of confusion
But I guess one thing that I can say
is the love you feel is yours
And no one should take that away from
Youuu

Ooo ooo ooo

Remember the love you feel is yours
And that's beautiful
And no one should take that away from you

Megan's Cooking Show

A Recipe:

How to make a happy (or at least self-assured) woman.

(Character wanders onstage carrying a baking tin, mixing bowl, wooden spoon, oven gloves and a little notebook...or perhaps these have already been placed discreetly on the stage.)

Lalalalaaaa.... Eau gawshhh. I'm so bored. I think today calls for a spot of... baking and I don't mean the kind that involves the MJ...

Right.

I have a recipe somewhere, yes this one! *(Reads slowly)*

how...to...make...a...happy...or...at...least...self-assured.....woman.

Well. This looks interesting.

Lets see:

Add 200 grams of not giving a fuck about patriarchal expectations... or something similar of the same consistency.

Add 200 grams of belly-laughing with your best mate – fantastic stuff.

4 eggs.

200 grams of self-raising... positive affirmations. Ha.ha.ha. Hmmmphmphff

1 tsp of pure fucking sass – it goes far.

2 tsps of chocolate brownies.

Mix together.

But it doesn't stop there.

Add a pint of a Lizzo club night, mixed with a cup of a Sunday of aggressive 'self-care'

Add a gallon of 'sexy-time'. *(This seems to take an age to pour into the bowl.)* Wow.

4 eggs.

Add a squeeze of clearing all of the toxic relationships out of your life.

And a pinch of fucking salt.

Mix. And bake.

(She mixes the ingredients together and pours it into a baking tin. Puts it into the imaginary oven with oven gloves. Takes oven gloves off and waits for it to bake, checking her watch. When it is done, she attempts to get the cake out of the oven but has forgotten to put the oven gloves on.)

AH SHIT.

(Puts oven gloves back on, gets cake out. Tests to see if it is done.)

Perfect.

Right. I will go and devour this fantastic creation in the sacred area of my dining room. Yes I'm going to eat the whole bloody thing.

(Turns to go, carrying the cake. Turns back, winks.) You are what you eat.

MAG50: Ideal Relationship (Saph and Jade)

Interviewer: Saph, Interviewee: Jade

MAG50

Saph: What sort of relationship do you want? What is your ideal?

Jade: My tendency is to go for people that I find very interesting, rather than necessarily total lust, sort of thing. I think the ideal would be to have some support but a lot of independence. Really a lot because I need it that way.

Millie's Individual Moment

When I came to uni I was approaching the end of my first relationship. It was girl meets boy at Catholic school. It was choir girl meets choir boy, afro meets curtains, dramatist meets musician. I was 18 when I first had sex. He came round for dinner to meet my parents and after an evening of lots of food, nerves and red wine, we stumbled upstairs. My friends had given me a condom for my 16th birthday (as you do) so I fished that out of my memory box and we got to it. In hindsight I probably wouldn't use a condom that old or that cheap now but we were horny virgins

so, truth be told, I wasn't thinking about it. It was easy, cosy, not like the horror stories I had heard from friends, and of course, done in a flash.

We went to a Catholic boarding school that was connected to a monastery in the depths of the Yorkshire countryside. Benedictine monks in long black cloaks lurked around every corner, so sex was almost completely reserved for the holidays. The next two years, give or take, were filled with secret cigarettes after mass, downing bottles of wine before the school pub on a Saturday, family dinners, festivals, family holidays and a lot of time in bed. In the summer before I came to uni, cracks started to show and within 6 weeks of getting here, it was over. And to be honest, I broke. Since then, I can probably count the sexual encounters I've had on both hands.

Unfortunately, not many good ones.

It turns out that to many men, the vagina resembles something like a a Ps3 controller. You'll probably win if you prod at it enough. Or an ice cream that's melting really quickly act out ferocious licking

But there are a lot of things that I can't count. Nights in with my chosen family, all nighters finishing essays, dmc's, tears, spliffs, techno nights, debates on tricky topics, and moments of pure joy. I started to love my body, my belly, my boobs, my MY MIND! And the cracks were filled with gold. I've slowly but surely built myself from girl to woman with the help of some truly wonderful people. I used to pride myself on my neutrality. On being the middle man. The "cool" girl. The older version of me would tell you that "I'm not into politics", "I don't mind", "I don't believe in a bad person." (Although that last one lingers). But now I've realised that neutrality isn't an option. Not where we are now. Our very bodies are political, and our hearts are precious. And in terms of sex, well I'm taking my sweet ass time.

Sweet Time by Raveena

At this point we will clear up the stage which has become progressively cluttered with papers and props and costume etc. and bring on the chirs for the dance whilst Sweet Time by Raveena plays.

Contradictory Woman

*No matter what you wear,
No matter what you do,
Someone can always find something to hate about you.*

*Am I an angel? A damsel? A slut?
I could tick any box
Pick the parts of me you want*

*But I am fragmented, I'm sure you are too
I wasn't born to please everyone
It's an impossible thing to do*

*Still I keep on trying
living within myself
Spying from the outside
Pleasing somebody else*

*Expected to be patient,
Expected to self-sacrifice
Expected to provide emotional support
Virgin. Whore. Wife.*

*If she sinks, she's innocent
If she floats, she's a witch.
And if you call them out on it,
Then somehow, you're the bitch.*

*But I want to see the world prosper,
I control this Fantasy.
Contradictory Woman,
And only I can give it up for you.*

What do I think?

What do I want?

Sometimes I hide,

Sometimes I hunt.

Pippa's Personal Moment

We need to call out injustice, even in places where it is not easy to do so. If you're ranting to a group of feminists, if you're trapped in an echo chamber, if you like some vague girl power post on instagram, that's easy enough. We need to call out sexism when a woman we don't particularly like gets called, ugly, or a slut, or a prude. Sometimes you laugh at something you know is wrong, because it validates the way that you feel. Sometimes it's nice to stoop down to a level that just lets you be mean and angry. Sometimes we just nod along because it feels like the worst thing in the world to say what you think to a room of sneering people. When all you really want to say is don't use that word or don't act like that or don't speak to me like that. But most of all, I let people get away with things because I want to be polite. It's both a female and a very english affliction. There's this ever present need to say sorry, or to be diplomatic, when all I really want to say is fuck you.

A Moment of Darkness

(All the lights go out and we listen in darkness to the following extract from the interview with MAG50)

Oona: MAG 50

AN: [MARK] rang up and said - [AARNI] has turned up and I know you'd like to see him. I know it would be nice. Why don't we go to a cottage for a weekend? And I'll just make it possible for you to see each other, sort of thing.. And I thought this was a real change on [MARK'S] part. [MARK] brought two friends along. And so we went on this weekend. And I actually didn't sleep with [AARNI] although it came to that, sort of difficult, for these reasons, because I knew that he was extremely promiscuous. And I knew it wouldn't last; he lived in [COUNTRY2] he was living with a woman. And that I suppose I've regretted; that was an actual decision which was to do with AIDS. [MARK] was extremely jealous again, you know, he'd sort of slam the doors.. And after that, Mark had moved down to London, sort of rang up and said - Come to my house-warming...

I felt that it was safer, because he had said on this weekend - I've actually only had one sexual experience. And I thought - God, he's been going on about this for a long time, and it's just all

talk. And I decided that I could handle him for that reason. Because he was obviously less experienced than I thought he was.

QU: So you thought it was a possibility then?

AN: No, not really. I just felt that I would be able to say no. And he would accept that. And also there were supposed to be other people around. And of course when I went to his house-warming, there was no one else. Pretty obvious when I think about it.

QU: Well, only obvious if you think that's what a person wants to do to you.

AN: But I did know there was a sort of wariness, I did know that he would probably try it. Yeah, it just sounded like a good choice; either you go out into the middle of the night in North London, or you stay here, you know. Yeah, I did realise something at the time. It was a matter of saying no lots and lots of times, and then sort of waking up, going to sleep because I wouldn't be able to handle it, and then waking up...

QU: Did you use any protection?

AN: No, he didn't.

QU: Was this the first time you'd actually had intercourse?

AN: Yes.

QU: Did he know that?

AN: Yes.

QU: What a bastard.

AN: Yeah, I know. But it wasn't the sort of cliché, people tend to think of, one of the things I feel quite strongly about now is the myth of rape just being someone jumping out in a dark alley. Which is just not true at all.

Rose, Rose, Rose

(From the Darkness, the sound of a single voice singing 'Rose, rose, rose' comes. Another voice joins. Then another. Gradually voices continue to join in in canon, until all the girls are singing in solidarity)

A Question to the Audience

(Each girl addresses the audience with a question. A question from the interview, or a question they've come up with etc, something they'd like the audience to reflect on)

Chloe: How do **you** define consent?

Savannah: Are there good and bad reasons for wanting to have sex?

Eve: If someone has given verbal consent does the reason they consent matter?

Pippa: Have you received consent for everything you have ever done in a relationship?

Millie: Would you agree to do something with a partner even if you weren't happy with it?

Alexia: Have you ever done something sexual just to fit in?

Ayesha: Are you happy with yourself or do you live your life trying to please other people?

Hannah: Are you satisfied with the sex you're having? (or the lack of?)

Hollie: What do sex and relationships mean to you?

Oona: Do you place the same importance on your platonic relationships as your romantic ones?

Sarah: Would you raise your daughters differently to how you were raised?

Laura May: What conceptions have you been taught about sex that you want to change for yourself?

Saph: To the men in the audience, do you question your sexuality and your sexual experiences in the same way as we have just presented?

Jade: To everyone in the audience: What conversations would you have about sex and relationships if you weren't afraid to?

Cecilia: What advice would you give to your younger self?

Phone Call

(All girls sit on the chairs at the sides of the stage. The Red Lip Phone is illuminated. Each girl goes up to the phone, lifts the receiver, calls her past self, and gives one piece of advice. She sits on the ground)

End