

ROCHELLE: Hello, and welcome to the Invisible Cabaret Podcast! I'm Ferrero Rochelle.

ROS: And I'm Rosie Verbose.

ROCH: And together we run Invisible Cabaret, a performing arts troupe dedicated to opening up the conversation surrounding mental health.

ROS: Join us as we talk to some of the most bodacious burlesque babes, cabaret creatives and inspiring artists about how their creativity and mental health intertwine. Let's pull back the curtain and strip away stigma!

ROCH: Please note, we at Invisible Cabaret are not mental health professionals. If you're affected by any of the issues raised in this programme, we've made a list of resources for you on our website: www.invisiblecabaret.org/podcast/resources.

ROS: Hello, welcome indeed to another episode of the Invisible Cabaret Podcast. We hope you're all doing all right out there in Podcast Land. How are you, Ferrero Rochelle?

ROCH: I'm doing very well thank you, and yourself?

ROS: Me, Rosie Verbose? I'm good, thank you. I'm trying to go for a slick introduction today. How, how am I doing?

ROCH: Oh, I see. Sorry, I didn't play along at all there.

ROS: That's all right, we'll try again another day, no problem. We are here with another fabulous guest, very exciting. So this person, I have to go by her Twitter bio because it is really, really quite something. Get this for a tricolon. She is a 'sex worker, activist and socialist slut.' And we haven't talked about it yet, but I'm desperate to know, like, are you slutty about socialism? You know, are you slutty with a socialist, you know? Like, there's lots of ways that could be interpreted, and I'm desperate to dive into it, so let's get going. Victoria Rose, welcome.

VIC: Thanks.

ROS: Welcome, welcome. So, 'socialist slut.' Please put me out my misery.

VIC: Yeah, slutty for socialism, you know.

ROCH: Slutty *for* socialism. That's it, that's the one.

ROS: Well, it's a delight to have you here. We've got lots that we'd like to talk to you about. So we first found your account and your work via Instagram, as I'm sure plenty of people out there have done. And from the burlesque side of things, I have an image just enshrined in my head of

you in this fantastic, like, black like vinyl or latex skirt... You obviously know the one I mean, the one that laces up, like, just right at the butt crack, just – oh gorgeous, yeah. So you're a burlesquer, but obviously with pandemic stuff that's not been the easiest pursuit to follow. But how long have you been doing burlesque stuff, Victoria?

VIC: So I think I did my first performance, I think in 2017. I think? Or maybe 2016, towards the end of 2016. And yeah, I started doing, like, kink-friendly parties and, like, kink social parties. I saw a burlesque dancer there and I was like, I said to the guy who managed it, I said, 'Could I give that a go?' And then he was like, 'Sure, come do our Christmas show,' and I was like, 'Okay.'

ROS: Great, lovely.

VIC: That's about it, that's how I got into it.

ROS: Fair enough. So were you doing stripping before then, presumably, or was that all quite new to you at this point?

VIC: Actually, no, I – how some people would describe as, like, going backwards in sex work. So I actually started webcamming and escorting first, and then, I think, back in like, 2015/ 2016, and then... I always wanted to be a stripper since I was younger. I used to tell my teacher in school that I wanted to be a stripper –

ROCH: Amazing.

VIC: After I saw one on Jerry Springer. *(Laughter)*

ROS: Oh, okay. Wow, there's an intro for you, right.

VIC: They used to always get these, like, wild guests, like "women gone wild," and I was like, 'She looks like she's having a great time!' Like, I've never seen women like that, you know, like, just really owning their sexuality. And so I remember, yeah, going to school and being like, yeah, like they do, you know, when they go around like, 'Oh, what do you wanna be when you grow up?' And I was like, 'Yeah, I wanna be a stripper.' And they were kind of like, 'What?'

ROS: Because I have heard people say, like, nobody wants to be a stripper when they're little, so you are absolutely proving that wrong.

VIC: Since I was younger, like, even when I was like a toddler, like, the first thing I'd do if anyone came around, would be take my clothes off, in a non-sexual way, of course.

ROCH: Amazing.

VIC: But just, I've always been very comfortable being naked. I haven't ever had a problem with that. And growing up and going to parties and stuff, I'd be like, 'Who wants a dance?!'
(laughter)

ROS: So this was the easiest thing in the world for you to kind of decide to do.

VIC: Yeah. I think when I see burlesque performers or dancers, like, I was really into dance growing up. I did ballet for a few years in my teens but I think because I started late, it's quite hard to stick to it. And I always wanted to be a dancer. I really – one, I just really love being centre of attention, and two, I really love dancing. I think it's something that really can make you feel so amazingly free. And yeah, I've always wanted to do it. I always wanted to be on stage, but you know, I thought I kind of missed my chance by not training to be a dancer.

ROS: Right, right.

VIC: As I kind of discovered burlesque, I spoke to more people who did burlesque and I'd be like, 'Oh, so you trained?' And they'd be like, 'No.' And people always ask me, 'So how did you train?' I said, 'I didn't.' I've always really known how to move my body and I've always been really comfortable in my body, and I think that's what's given me quite a big advantage with – as I got older, towards, like, my late 20s, I kind of was even more comfortable and accepting who that person was, of me. Because, yeah, probably we're going to go into a bit later, but one part of me, before I went to therapy was that I was ashamed of that part of me, and I thought that's not how someone of my age should behave. That's not how women should behave. There's something wrong with me. And for a while, you know, I was like, I should hide that, I should keep that aside. But then, once I got comfortable with that, I was like, 'No, that's just who I am. If you don't like it, then that's it, you know, like what can you do?' But yeah.

ROCH: So you've just touched on it there, that you have had experiences of feeling ashamed would you mind going into that a little bit more?

VIC: Yeah, sure. Like, I'm originally from Portsmouth, down south, and I think down there, I grew up with all my friends from school, so they're all very familiar with what I was like. If we went on a night out, I'd be like, 'Okay, bye-bye! See you later.' I'm off on the stage.

ROS: (laughs) "There she goes."

VIC: If there's a pole, like, I'm dancing. Like, and they knew it, they'd just be very used to it. They were very comfortable with it. When I moved to London and I got closer to other friends who lived in London, I was with a guy, and every time he was pissed, I think, he always used to, apparently the way I danced was slutty, so he always used to call me a slut when I was dancing, and even when I was with his mates. And I thought, like, I'm not trying to pull your mates, like, I'm not a fucking idiot. Like, this is how I always dance, like, you know. And that's how it would always end. So it kind of got me thinking, okay, well, is it something wrong with me? But I want

to dance like that. What is the issue of me doing that, like, you know? I wasn't kissing anyone or getting with them. I probably wanted to, but I didn't.

But I think it wasn't until I went out with my friend one night, we went out in Clapham. We were all very drunk, and this is the first time I'd gone out, like, properly, like, clubbing with them, I guess, like, in a kind of nightclub atmosphere. Most the time, we'd just go to bars or things like that. So obviously, there was a stage and I was like, 'See ya!' So I was like, on it dancing, me and this girl I'd just met were like, trying to do the splits. This is before I could do the splits! So, I was like, trying to do the splits on the stage, like, it wasn't very sexy at all. And I could see my friend, like, calling me down off the stage and was kind of like, 'What are you doing?' And I was like, 'Er, having fun, like, what's up?' Like, you know, like, I was so confused, I literally could not understand, like, why she called me off the stage. She was like, 'You need to be careful of what you're doing up there.' And I said, 'Oh, why? Is there glass?'

ROS: Love that that's where your brain went.

ROCH: Good question.

VIC: And she's like, 'Oh, you know, guys could see you dancing like that and, you know, they could get the wrong idea of you.' And I said, 'Well, to be honest, I don't give a fuck what Jonny Clapham thinks of me.' And she's like, 'Yeah, but you know, he could follow you after the club.' And by now, I was like, even if I was dancing like that, how is that my fault? Like, I should be able to leave the club fucking naked and not get attacked. Just because I'm dancing in a seductive, raunchy way, that's nowhere my fault. You should be having a word with the men in here. And we got into kind of an argument. It was quite heated, and in the end, I got so upset because I was just like, that's my friend. Like, that's someone who's meant to love me for everything, unconditionally. And obviously, she'd never seen me out like that, and kind of, I left and we met the next day and had a chat about it, and it kind of didn't really ever get resolved. It was kind of like, put to bed. She was like, you know, 'If I was out with my boyfriend and he was looking at a girl like that, like, I'd be really annoyed.' And I was like, 'Well, talk to him! *(laughs)* I'm not dancing like that to get attention of your boyfriend or someone else's boyfriend. I'm doing it because that's how I want to do it, and I should be able to do that, no matter.' That was while I was going through therapy as well, so thankfully I could go to my therapist that way and be like, 'Oh, this happened,' and kind of unload it on her. But yeah, that's where the kind of shame come from it, comes from opinions of other people, other people's perceptions.

ROS: So you've done DBT, is that right?

VIC: Yeah.

ROS: Can you talk us through a little bit about your experience of DBT – what it is, what it's for and how you found it?

VIC: Yeah, so yeah, I was diagnosed, officially diagnosed in, I think, 2017, with Borderline Personality Disorder, or, I think the other term is EUPD: Emotional Unstable [Personality] Disorder, I think.

ROS: Something like that, isn't it, yeah.

VIC: They first put me on to do CBT. One of the things that you have to have to be diagnosed with Borderline Personality is, like, the fear of abandonment. Like, you have that fear from people that are close to you, and when I was doing CBT, I think three sessions in, she was like, 'I can't treat you. I have to –' And I was like, 'No, you're leaving me as well!'

ROS: (*laughs*) Oh my god, that is so awful. That must happen to so many people with BPD, being – oh my goodness. That's ironic.

VIC: Obviously, it was a good thing.

ROS: Yeah, yeah.

VIC: It was just like, 'Oh, so you don't want me either!' And she's like, 'No, no, no, no, no, no.' And she was amazing, like, honestly. She was like, 'I'm going to make sure that you get probably diagnosed,' because this is before I was diagnosed, so they were just, like, trying that first. She spoke to me after a few sessions. She was like, 'I can see that you need something more. You need a bit more of an intense therapy.' So she said, 'Don't worry, you can keep my number.'

ROCH: Oh, she sounds great.

VIC: Yeah. So then after that, after I was officially diagnosed, then, yeah, they said, 'Okay, we want to put you on DBT, which is Dialectical Behavioural Therapy. CBT is all about changing those behaviours, changing those little behaviours to make you feel better. So you know, if you don't want to get out of bed, get out of bed, if you... And that's what CBT is. DBT is about more about accepting, it's more about accepting about who you are, about accepting those things about you that you feel you should be ashamed of, or things that have happened to you, and it's all about accepting. It's also really based around emotions. So, growing up, I feel I come from a family which was very invalidating, so I got, I was very confused with emotions. I didn't really understand when I was angry, you know, because I'd get things, like, if I missed my Dad, who's an arsehole, my Mum would be like, 'Why'd you miss him?' So I'd be like, 'Oh, but I do, but I shouldn't.' So you know, that's a really confusing environment for a child. So yeah, so DBT kind of breaks down each emotion. It breaks down, like, how to recognise them, so like, really basic stuff. So instead of going, 'When do you feel anger?' It's about what are you feeling, what do you want to do? So like, if you're angry, for example, like, you want to, you know, you want to hit something, or you want to shout at someone, then you'd be like, 'Okay, that probably means that I'm angry.' And it's literally, like, going step by step. So I did two hours a week of group therapy, which was, like, a course kind of thing. You go through each module and you do that for six months with about six other people on your course, and then you do an hour of

one-on-one therapy a week, and then you have an hour of phone time as well. So doing four hours of therapy a week, yeah.

ROCH: That is intense, isn't it?

VIC: So yeah, it was an intense time, but yeah, I am a very big advocate for therapy. I think everyone should have therapy (*laughs*).

ROCH & ROS: Me too!

ROS: Absolutely.

ROCH: Oh, everyone. I have a question. One of the things that people who have BPD suffer with is fear of abandonment. I want to ask you, as someone with BPD, how has that played into your sex work? Because you are having quite short-term, for want of a better word, relationships with clients, with people. What is the relationship between your mental health and that kind of short-term interaction that you have with people?

VICTORIA: Yeah. I think that's a really, really good question, by the way.

ROCHELLE: Oh, thanks! (*Laughter*)

VICTORIA: I've never been asked that in regards to sex work. And I think, when I started sex work, I was going through therapy and one of the things that my therapist put on there was like, 'Oh, so you want to stop sex work, yeah?' Like, thinking that I was doing it because I needed to and because I was doing it out of sense, because I was in such an unstable place.

ROS: Right, right.

VIC: The fact I went into sex wasn't 'cause of my mental health, it was because of capitalism (*laughs*). You know? I was working full-time.

ROCH: Sure. It's where the jobs are (*laughs*).

VIC: I even, at one point, worked seven days a week. I needed extra money. And then I went down the sex work route, which I think a lot of people do. But, yeah, I think at the beginning of me doing sex work, I've always seen it as transactional. I've never seen any kind of emotions. I'm very good as well, because I've probably think I went through a long period of time without knowing I have BPD, of using sex as a way to kind of make myself feel better, you know? I did go through a point where, you know, if I went out on a night out and I didn't take someone home, I would feel that I was ugly, you know, I was worthless. And it wasn't till I started going through therapy and doing sex work that it kind of showed me as it, it's transactional. It, you know, I'm doing stuff because I'm getting paid. That doesn't stop you building relationships with people at all, you know. I met one guy when I first started escorting, it got to the point where he didn't

even wanna do anything sexual. He was just like, 'I just like hanging out with you,' but would still pay me for my time. I think the worst thing is, though, which happens to a lot of sex workers, is that you have regular clients for a long time, and then suddenly they ghost you and it's the same as any relationship, you know. It's quite sad, even that you, you know, that could happen. It's a transactional thing. It's a business. That's why they get into this business, because they can just drop you like that. You know, you can't be bitter about it, unfortunately. But you can be sad. You know, I've got clients that I used to hang out with all the time, and I haven't spoken to them for years, like, they've have literally just dropped off the face of the Earth. Sometimes I'm just like, I just hope they're okay. Like, you know? Just like, out of curiosity. But in terms of abandonment, I've never felt that with sex work because I know there's an end to it. I think, always, the fear of abandonment is tied into those relationships which I feel like someone's meant to love me, and someone is meant to have unconditional love for me, which comes from parents, partners, other family members and friends. And I just think, I think the only time I ever feel shit about myself during sex work in regards to relationships is like, sometimes at a strip club, I normally have a regular. And then if he's coming in you're like, 'Okay, I'm gonna make some money tonight.' He comes in and he's like, 'No, I'm going to go to that person.' You're like, 'You fucking bastard.'

ROS & ROCH: Yeah! *(Laughter)*

ROS: That'd piss anybody off, never mind the mental health stuff, yeah.

VIC: Exactly, but that's just the nature of business and you kinda, there's nothing - it's never personal. And I think that's why I never get that, because I know it's not personal. I know it's not, it's for a number of reasons people stop getting involved in sex work. They've been caught, they can't afford to, or they've caught feelings for you and they don't wanna continue. Like, there's gonna be a number of - or they've died. You know, I've had quite old clients *(laughs)*.

ROCH: Gosh.

ROS: Sure, right. An option, yes, mm-hm.

VICTORIA: I don't think I've ever had it with sex work. It's definitely more around, like, personal relationships that I've always felt that, yeah.

ROS: It's a fascinating area to think about, and I could ask you loads more, but I don't want to hone in on it too much, because there's loads of other stuff that you do. And, like, organisey producery stuff as well, like, the Hoxton Cabaret and Cybertease, and, you know, that it's, you've got a lot of strings to that to that bow. So can we talk a little bit about sort of your creativity, Victoria, and, like, however all of your jobs and your pursuits helped you, sort of, voice your creativity?

VIC: So, I think with burlesque, I think it kind of gave me a stage to be sexy. And I've always loved stripper style, I've always, you know, obsessed with sex worker style and things like that.

So I think they were the main people that inspired me to do burlesque. It's all connected, it's all intertwined. And I wanted to, you know, kind of pay homage to that more filthier side of burlesque and stuff like that, and I think taking inspiration from those, but then looking around at what's currently, you know, sexy and what is currently filthy and stuff like that really inspired me. With the act you mentioned earlier, my Secretary act, it's inspired by my favourite film, 'The [sic] Secretary,' which is probably like, I think, a lot of people's kink awakening, into spanking and being submissive and things like that. And, yes, that's kind of where my creativity comes from it originates from sex work. I also sew as well, like, I sew and create costumes. Like, my costumes...

ROS: I learned that just this minute, how cool!

VIC: Yeah, I forgot that part. *(Laughter)*

ROS: So cool.

VIC: So yeah, I did sewing when I was younger in college. And one of my acts, I made the corset, I made the skirt. I take a lot of inspiration from high fashion, because I did a lot of fashion, so some high fashion catwalks and kind of taking bits of those and kind of trying to incorporate into something I can take off, which is really difficult to kind of work out.

ROS: It's a whole other thing, isn't it? Yeah.

VIC: It is, yeah. I was also thinking about this question, 'cause i thought you might ask this question, but, like, how it links to like mental health and stuff. I'm actually like, I wish I could draw and be creative for when I'm in a really dark place and from when things have been really bad for me. I find that when I am in that place, I'm kind of, like, blocked off creatively, like, yeah.

ROS: I'm sure lots of us can relate to that, definitely.

VIC: And I think the last year has been really difficult, because I've had to completely focus on making money. I can't take the time to be creative, and just, you know, kind of lose myself and do something that doesn't bring me money. I think what a lot of sex workers will say, as well, is that it's really hard to stop working, because, especially if you're working online, you could work all week and –

ROS: Absolutely, where do you switch off?

VIC: Yeah, where do you switch off? You don't have normal hours, you're working all the time. If you have like an Only Fans or a subscription site, you're normally talking to people until late at night, you're talking to them first thing in the morning, you're talking to them over the weekend, you're filming stuff... I'm telling you, I don't know anyone who works harder than fucking sex workers, because even like, I try to switch off. I try to implant like 9 til 5, that is my

week, like, Monday to Friday, but sometimes if I work in the club, you know, I'm there 'til 4 am, right? And then obviously I'm tired, so the next day is probably a complete write-off.

ROS: Yeah, that sounds really tough, man.

VIC: Yeah, but because obviously we make quite a lot of money, we are able to take that time off the next day. The people that I know who earn so much money on Only Fans are constantly, working. Constantly. The first girl in the UK to make a million on Only Fans, she does not stop working. Like, every single day, like, she's on her phone. Like, 18 hours a day, she'll be on her phone.

ROS: Oh, man. That must take a toll on your mental health. It can't not, can it?

VIC: That's why I'm, like – that's why I have to switch off. I have to have my evenings. I'm very, I'm very lucky because I've been doing online sex work for five years. Most of my clients know I'm on in the day, so I don't have to do nights.

ROCH: Okay. And also, you're not new to it, so this isn't like, 'Oh my gosh, this is such a surprisingly lucrative venture! Like, this is something that I must make the most of before it goes away or before I have to go back to my normal life.' Like, you're aware of it, you're used to it and so you're able to create those boundaries and go, 'This is when I'm on, this is when I'm off, the end.'

VIC: Yeah. Yeah, and I think what's really important to mention is probably 95% of sex workers have a normal living wage. Like, you know, it – you always hear about these people that earn so much money doing Only Fans, so much money being a sugar baby, and actually, you know, the people that I know, we do this work to live. Like, you know, we're not dancing around in money, you know, we're not driving, like, really expensive cars. We haven't got all, like, designer bags or anything like that. If we have, clients have bought them, we ain't bought them. *(Laughter)* Especially last year, because they're like, 'Oh, you know, I could go on Only Fans and I can make all this money.' It's like, it's so hard, like, it's not easy at all. If you don't have over 20,000 followers on Instagram, you are going to struggle. You are really going to struggle. I've been on Only Fans since October 2019. I've never got over 40 odd fans. I think the closest I got was like, 49. It's really hard. It's all about promotion, it's all about marketing. It's all about, it's just constant, constant promoting of yourself. And if anyone's listening to this and they want to do Only Fans – don't. *(Laughter)* Because over the last year, it's so saturated. Like, I've started to like, dwindle mine down, because these sex workers who are banging out new content every day, every week, I'm literally, like, 'I can't do that.'

ROS: Yeah, well done, but yeah.

VIC: That's why I have so many different jobs, because one, I think I have ADHD, because that's why I think I have so many different jobs, because me concentrating just on one job for, like, a

long time seems absolute madness to me. Like, my brain does not compute with that. So I'm very glad that I can literally, like, bounce from different jobs, in and out quite frequently. That really works for me, and that's why I choose sex work, maybe, because it is better for my mental health. Maybe, like, maybe that's why it's really worked for me because I can take time off when I don't want to work.

ROS: You've got to be so good with your boundaries, though. That must be a whole thing.

ROCH: You also said that sex work is actually good for your mental health. I find it so interesting, because how many people who have regular – let's just use the word “regular” – 9 to 5 jobs and have trouble switching off at the end of the day, taking work home with them, and staying up till 10 pm, 11 pm and working on that project or, you know, going for that deadline, people working themselves into the ground, and then have come to lockdown and are like, ‘Huh. Actually having a break is quite nice.’ And then you're saying that as a sex worker, you've actually been able to do that for a while. A) It's very clear that these are transactional experiences and there is a beginning and an end, like, very clearly. And also, you are able to control it yourself and say, ‘This is when I'm on and this is when I'm off.’ But you're right, Ros, you do have to have, like, very strict self-control.

ROS: A lot of what you've just said is freelance life, and I'm – my time management's rubbish, so like...

ROCH: *(laughter)* Exactly.

VIC: I was about to say, like, it is very similar to freelancer, but the difference between freelancing and sex work, like, I think – I know people that have been freelancers and they've gone through kind of, like, a dry spell of, you know, not having work and kind of, you know, in a position where, you know, they didn't get that, they didn't get the job that they applied for. But like, you will always be able to sell sex. Like, it one of those things, it's not going anywhere, it never will. And I think that's why a lot of people got into it and I think that's why a lot of people got into it this last year. That's why people have gone on to webcamming, that's why people got into Only Fans because, you know, they're going ‘Well, I can't get a fucking job anywhere else. I've got to make money, I've got to pay my bills.’ And that's why a lot of people do go into sex work. People think a lot of people just go into it because they're like, ‘Oh, you know, I want to be rich.’ No. A lot of people go out of desperation, that people get because they can't afford to put food on the table for their kids, like, you know? When I worked in the strip club, there were a lot of single mums that worked there. People go like, ‘Oh, I can't believe you're a stripper and you're mums.’ Like, well, actually I can work two, three nights a week, I'm at home the rest of the week with my children. Probably another big subject we can get on is these so-called, like, feminists who are trying to bring in the Nordic Model which is to criminalise buyers of sex, which is fucking terrible because if you're gonna, like, criminalise the buyers, it's going to go underground. It's going to get more dangerous than it already is. And there's apparently a feminist group trying to shut down Bristol strip clubs. We've now had one come out in Blackpool, and apparently Hackney's about to start trying to shut down strip clubs. It's

absolutely terrible. None of them speak to us and go, 'Hang on, you work in a strip club. What do you want?' We'll be like, 'Well, decriminalise sex work and, you know, let's break the stigma.' "No, no, no, you need saving, you are definitely being human trafficked." Like, no. Human trafficking is already illegal. If that's happening in a strip club, that should be reported anyway. Every strip club I've worked in – I'm not saying it doesn't happen. Of course it fucking does. Every strip club I've worked in, every girl's worked there because they wanted to. They've signed a contract, they've done something, they're able to leave and go when they want. And I think people get confused, like sex work and human trafficking are the same thing. It's absolutely not, it's very, very different. And they just, they don't listen to us. We've tried to have debates with them and talk to them, even inviting them on to Cybertease, because we have a great time there. And it's kind of like, yeah, they're not interested. It's always going to be around, it always has been oldest trick in the book. Oldest trick in the book is selling sex. So why don't you make it safer for us and, you know, respect our work and let it happen? Why are you just always trying to shut it down? I don't understand.

ROS: I was really struck earlier by what you said about your friend saying, 'If my boyfriend was looking at you...' And I wonder if that's part of it. That it's, like, you know, "I don't want my husband looking at you, I don't want my husband being able to go there, or my partner or my brother," or, I don't know, whatever.

VIC: But that's what people think, they think, 'Oh, it couldn't possibly be my husband.' It is your husband, it's all of the people that you think, 'They're not buying sex! It's all of them! (*Laughter*) And I think if people knew that it was their Dads, probably their Grandads, their brothers, their cousins, their friends... if they all knew that they were doing that, but probably – because, obviously, there's a massive stigma behind it and a massive thing, like, 'Oh, we should all hide it.' They just think it's this, like, creepy old guy, like, who's coming to, like, take us to get trafficked.

ROCH: That's it, isn't it? That's it, it's because people are going, 'Oh, it couldn't possibly be anyone I know.' Their mind is going to immediately jump to, 'So it must be the man in the trench coat.'

VIC: The man in the trench coat, down the park, looking at the kids. That's him. And it's like, and that's why we always say, you know, 'Someone who you love does sex work.' Because I have so many sex worker friends who aren't out as sex workers. Their family have no idea.

ROS: Wow, that must be so hard.

VIC: So you think, how many people actually do sex work, and you've got people going, 'Oh no, people do sex work, oh, gross,' like, 'couldn't do that.' And maybe that person's like going, 'Oh, fuck, that's me.' But you know, I'm – again, I'm in a very lucky position. All my family know, all my friends know, my partner knows. Like, you know, I'm in a very, very lucky position where I think I just, I don't think I ever just told them. I think I just always said, 'Yeah, I'm on webcam this weekend,' or like, you know.

ROS: Right, right. Not that it was a big thing, just, yeah, that's my work.

VIC: My mum's quite, like, liberal in that way, and just kind of, was one of the people like, 'As long as you're alright, cool.'

ROS: Yeah, absolutely. Do you feel there is a stigma within the burlesque community? Do you feel safe as a sex worker to be like, 'I'm a sex worker, that's cool, I also do burlesque'? Because I know that there is, there's almost, like, different camps within burlesque in terms of who's comfy with it and who's not. So what's your experience been like of that?

VIC: I think I've always been, when I've told people that I do burlesque, there's definitely more stigma around saying, 'Well, I also do sex work.' I think the difference is, is that I don't class burlesque as sex work. I think you get paid a fee and you leave when you do burlesque. You do it, you leave. And I think there's a safety issue as well, so I think with sex work, there's a big safety issue. If you're in a club, yes, you dance on the stage, but then you go upstairs. Like, on stage, you don't make money. You're normally only contracted to go on stage twice in a strip club. You make your money doing private dances, which is in a private room, you know, private room upstairs away from people, which – I don't think you have that aspect in burlesque. That's how I differentiate from sex work. I don't feel that burlesque comes under the same umbrella. I think they come from the same thing, I think they're both stripping, completely. But obviously, there's some burlesque dancers who don't strip, so, you know, you can't – I don't think you can put it all under one thing.

ROS: Okay, so before we go, we always have our lovely section of getting grateful. And as a mental health sort of practice and technique, we're not saying it's going to make everything sunshine and roses, but it does help just a little bit most days to be able to pick out something that you're grateful for. So I'm going to ask Ferrero Rochelle, would you start us off with what you're grateful for this week?

ROCH: I'm grateful for my Instant Pot. Do either of you know what an instant pot is?

VIC: No, but I need one. What is it? *(Laughter)*

ROCH: It's not anything exciting, it's really not. It's like a modern pressure cooker, but it essentially does everything. Ours is a seven-in-one, but they, I believe they also do a nine-in-one. So it can sauté, it can slow cook, it can pressure cook, it can make yogurt, it can, like...

ROS: Like, we need some sexy music!

ROCH: *(Peppy advertisement narrator voice)* And when I cook, I use my Instant Pot. *(Laughter)* Yeah, so I've been using it a lot recently. It basically, like, halves the cooking time of everything. It's a bit scary because it's a pressure cooker, so occasionally, like, when you – well, occasionally, whenever you have to release the steam, it's like, it's very violent. But it's been

doing me wonders because it's so quick and I'm lazy. And Matt's recently been working lots of late evenings, and so when I have to cook for myself, I just don't know what to do, so I just bung everything in there, and then it's ready in, like, five minutes. It's great. So that's what I'm grateful for this week.

ROS: Lovely. Victoria, what are you grateful for this week?

VIC: I'm grateful for the roadmap going down this week and us being allowed out. Literally, I'm the only person in my friend group that hasn't a baby this year. So I met my friend's baby for the first time. They were born in December. So I'm grateful for that, I was finally able to meet them and hold them and snuggle them and wipe dribble from their mouth.

ROS: Yeah, that's what we love! And you say you're the only person in your friend group who hasn't had a baby, but you decided to retrain to be a doula, which we didn't even touch on! But there. So it's just Baby Central in all the different ways.

VIC: Yeah, well, I thought, 'I've retrained so now it's my opportunity to, like, put all my skills to use.' And then when I do have a baby, maybe in a couple of years, who knows? I'll be, like, expert. I'm like, 'This is what's happening, this is what's happening. Put it on my boob, it's fine.'

ROS: You will be a whiz.

ROCH: That's amazing, yeah. Oh, that's a great thing to be grateful for. Rosie V, what are you grateful for this week?

ROS: I am similarly grateful for being able to get out. And as a spin-off, this afternoon, I watched my sister – from afar... Well, not far, like, not in the bushes, but just, like, you know, like a social distant afar – watched her paint a garden chair bright pink. And so this week, particularly, I am grateful for bright colours, because we were both talking about how they make such a difference to our mood. We feel, like, particularly, if there's an absence of bright colours, like, the mood will drop, drop, drop, and it just takes a little pop and you're back up there again, even if it's for a bit. So yeah, that's what I'm grateful for. Shocking pink.

VIC: Also happy with the sun, when the sun comes out. I'm like 'ahhh!'

ROS: Too right, yeah. And it makes everything look much nicer, doesn't it, and just get the vitamin D?

ROCH: Victoria Rose, thank you so much for joining us. It has been an absolute pleasure to chat to you.

VIC: Thank you, it was lovely.

ROCH: Do you have anything you would like to promote?

VIC: I am part of an amazing collective called Cybertease. We are a co-op run virtual strip club which started at the beginning of April last year from the strip clubs closing and sex workers not being able to work. Still a lot of sex workers cannot go back to work, so we have been running shows since last April, mainly every two to three weeks. It's been a lot. We are now on our 20th show, which is happening next week, which by this time, probably, you might have missed it. But we do have we do have a Patreon, so we have a Patreon which we ask people to subscribe to, to help us reinvest back into Cybertease, so it's really important for us to, you know, work on our technology, our logo, our marketing, even merch. Because the money from the show, we split completely equally between the performers. We're a non-profit. I'll give you our website: www.cybertease.co.uk . And on there, you'll be able to find our Instagram, our Patreon links, info about our next event and everything. It's amazing, strippers having fun. We do oil pours, it all pops off. Yeah, but yeah, that's that.

ROS: I love – I'm going to toot your horn for you. I love that you're like casually like, 'Yeah, it just started...' Like, you founded it.

VIC: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

ROS: It was, that was – it didn't just start, that was you, babes.

VIC: Yeah. Me and eight others from the Sex Worker Union. Yes, we have a union. Join our union if you're a sex worker... Socialism!

ROCH: Socialism. Socialist slut, yeah.

ROS: There it is, there it is.

ROCH: Slutty for socialism.

VIC: Oh yeah, baby.

ROS: All right, so you know where to go, and the links will be in the description. If you'd like more Invisible Cabaret, then you can find us on – well, hopefully you can find us on Instagram. We've been having a bit of trouble in that department lately. Ooh, I wonder why?

ROCH: Boobs, urgh!

ROS: But anyway, we're around, we're about. We should still be there. We will see you in two weeks' time. Until then, be kind to yourselves and we'll see you soon.

ALL: Bye.

ROCH: This has been the Invisible Cabaret Podcast, and thank you for listening. If you've enjoyed this episode, please reach out to us on one of our many socials. You can find us on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube – just search 'Invisible Cabaret.' We'd also be grateful if you could rate and review the podcast and share it with a friend, so we can continue stripping away stigma together.