

Dish: Season 2 - Episode 5 - 2nd November 2022

Name of episode Dolly Alderton, a Tuscan-inspired fish stew

NICK GRIMSHAW: Our podcast might contain the occasional mild swear word or adult theme.

Hi food fans! I'm Nick Grimshaw and this is my not-so-secret weapon, Angela Hartnett. Wahey! Hi Ange.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Hi Nicholas, how are you?

NICK GRIMSHAW: I'm good, I'm good. Excited to see you again. Welcome to Dish this week. Today on the podcast, we welcome a guest who said in September, and I quote, 'I don't want to interact with you at all unless you're a bowl of soup, or maybe a stew.' Dolly Alderton, writer extraordinaire, joins us on Dish today, and in September she'd had enough of summer. She was like, gimme the stews, gimme the broths, gimme the soups.

ANGELA HARTNETT: She doesn't want a vegetable does she, she just wants heartiness. Doesn't want a salad.

NICK GRIMSHAW: No salads. I don't really wanna see a salad now till maybe like- when would we go for a salad, guys? First month for salad? April.

PRODUCER OLIVIA: I think April.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Any advance on April?

ANGELA HARTNETT: April will do.

NICK GRIMSHAW: You gonna do a March?

PRODUCER SAM: Not March.

NICK GRIMSHAW: March. No March?

ANGELA HARTNETT: No, too early. You could do winter salad, you lot, you heathens. You can do a winter salad.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Ooh, sorry, we all don't have Michelin star.

ANGELA HARTNETT: I'm just saying, there are vegetables in winter that can be made out.

NICK GRIMSHAW: No, just soups. So, have you made Dolly a stew?

ANGELA HARTNETT: I have, yeah, it's a fish stew. So, I've made a lovely base, loads of fennel in there, tomato, little bit of garlic, onion, and then I'm gonna cook the fish in that tomato base. And then we're gonna have it with some bread, some wine, some cheese, parsley, and it's a Tuscan inspired fish stew.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Ooh, delish. So, Italians like a good stew.

ANGELA HARTNETT: They love a stew.

NICK GRIMSHAW: They love a stew, don't they?

ANGELA HARTNETT: They love a bit of - leave it on the stove, go out for three hours, come back and it's done.

NICK GRIMSHAW: What's the delicious stew that you make at Christmas at yours, that's like a broth?

ANGELA HARTNETT: Oh, anellini, yeah.

NICK GRIMSHAW: What's that?

ANGELA HARTNETT: So that's a broth, a chicken broth base, and then we make this little pasta that we braise veal and beef in a stew, take the braising liquid with parmesan and bread-crumbs.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Mmm that's a good one.

ANGELA HARTNETT: I've got you, you're on my list of people I have to deliver to on Christmas Eve.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Oh, yes!

ANGELA HARTNETT: So I'll be delivering you some anellini.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Well, Dolly Alderton might need to be added to that list come wintertime. Also, we're having a cocktail with Dolly. She wants a cocktail.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Good, well you make it.

NICK GRIMSHAW: We've not had a cocktail for a few weeks, you know?

ANGELA HARTNETT: I know, we've just been doing the wine and beer. What does she like, what are you making her?

NICK GRIMSHAW: We're gonna go for a classic champagne cocktail.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Whoo.

NICK GRIMSHAW: I think if she were to be a cocktail, that's what she'd be, innit.

ANGELA HARTNETT: If you were a cocktail, what would you be?

NICK GRIMSHAW: I don't know, what would I be?

ANGELA HARTNETT: I would be a pisco sour, 'cause I can be a bit moody. That's what Neil would say.

NICK GRIMSHAW: I might be, I don't know if it's a cocktail, but I might be black velvet, you know like when you have champagne and Guinness.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Ooh. That's nice, that's a good one.

NICK GRIMSHAW: That's where I like to position my tastes.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yeah, lovely, liking that.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Like the earthy grounded-ness of a Guinness and the faffiness of a champagne.

ANGELA HARTNETT: I'm with you on that. I think that's a good one.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Okay, let's get her in, shall we?

Today we welcome an award-winning author, journalist, and screenwriter whose books sit on top of bestseller lists everywhere. She also loves a dinner party.

ANGELA HARTNETT: We love her.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Which is great news for us. Round of applause, please, for Dolly Alderton.

[*Applause*]

NICK GRIMSHAW: Hi Dolly.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Hi!

NICK GRIMSHAW: Welcome.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Thanks so much for having me.

NICK GRIMSHAW: You're very welcome, we're excited you're here.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Thanks for coming.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Can I present you with my gift immediately?

NICK GRIMSHAW: Yes.

DOLLY ALDERTON: So basically, this butter, it's French butter that has sea salt crystals in.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Oh my god.

NICK GRIMSHAW: That is good.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know, and I do like to just have it as a little canapé chef's treat on its own.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Fabulous.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Just slither a tiny bit, little slither. But then I felt that was maybe a little bit too neanderthal, so it also brought my favourite sourdough.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Perfect.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Oh, thanks. Dream gift.

ANGELA HARTNETT: But you know, another thing that I'm gonna tell you to do- do you like anchovies?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Obsessed with anchovies.

ANGELA HARTNETT: So, what you need to do. Do we have any anchovies here in the house? We do. I'm gonna give you a little treat then with your butter and the bread.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Oh, gorgeous.

ANGELA HARTNETT: And a slither of anchovy on top.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Ooh, yeah.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Lovely.

NICK GRIMSHAW: We're going off menu already.

ANGELA HARTNETT: We're going off menu. But this is originally from a little bar called All'Arco, which is right by the Rialto in Venice. And I went there about four or five years ago with a group of other chefs and restaurateurs, and we'd all drunk a bit the night before, and I literally stood in the corner with my sunglasses and a glass of Prosecco just eating my way, just to sober me, you know. And they were like, where is she? I said, I'm just, just making my head feel better. But they had this there.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Well, do you know what Angela? This is perfectly timed because I need to make my head feel a little bit better.

NICK GRIMSHAW: What happened last night?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Well, I went out and I did my rule of the week, which is always three drinks in the week, no more, 'cause I'm on a novel deadline at the moment and just, my head's foggy the next day, otherwise. So, I followed the rule, but it was three martinis.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Oh, that's like eighteen normal drinks.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know, I forgot the perfect amount is two. You can't have more than two.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Also, a martini hangover I think, is so specific, it's like, right here.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yes, that's what I had!

NICK GRIMSHAW: Right in between the eyes.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know I was being so extra this morning. I texted my friend and I was like, 'I think I've got Covid.' She was like, 'You haven't got Covid. You drank like a litre of cold vodka last night.' But you know how they served it as well, it was the Drapers Arms, and Nick Gibson does it with, I love anything, vinegary or pickle-y, he did it with frozen baby pickled onions.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Oh, nice.

DOLLY ALDERTON: On a cocktail stick. Absolutely delicious.

NICK GRIMSHAW: That is ideal. Cause sometimes, a martini you can't like neck back can you, so sometimes I think, one of my really serious life problems is, I wish this could be made colder halfway through. But the frozen pickle...

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, frozen pickle, and he serves him in beautiful frozen glasses as well. It was just such a lovely experience. And then once- 'cause the first one, I'm still a bit like a little girl pretending to like her dad's beer, as when I drink a martini, the first sip is a bit like, ooh, this a bit nail varnish-y isn't it? And then by the time you're on sip number three, you're like, this is the cleanest, purest high of my life and I can drink this forever.

NICK GRIMSHAW: You're into it. I had to really train myself to like them, and I had a few things like that when I was a kid, did you, that you like wanted to- 'cause I read somewhere that you like, didn't really have time to be a kid, you like quite liked adult things.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, totally.

NICK GRIMSHAW: So, was there like foods that you were like, I don't like this but I'm gonna force myself to like that?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Olives I had that with. And I also now do this thing. This is where my anecdotes get a little bit less accessible, I also do this thing where, you know things that you know are luxurious and you want to treat yourself or someone's treating you, or you're in a lovely restaurant, and you just force yourself, like, I have to like this because I know this denotes luxury. So, I think I've done that with oysters. I've certainly done that with caviar.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Yeah. Really?

DOLLY ALDERTON: I love caviar now.

NICK GRIMSHAW: I love caviar. At first I was like, 'Ergh!'

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know, same.

NICK GRIMSHAW: It's just like salty, mush.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Caviar's just one of those things where you just gotta have very pure thoughts when you're eating them.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Yeah.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Just, 'Yum, yum, yum.'

NICK GRIMSHAW: Knock it back.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I did have to train myself- Oh, this looks so good, Angela.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Anchovy was one I did have to train myself to like as well. Cause I thought it was posh.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Should I get the bubbles?

NICK GRIMSHAW: No, I'm going to make a cocktail.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Oh, you're doing it over here? Yeah. Okay.

[*Champagne popping sounds*]

NICK GRIMSHAW: We're gonna have a classic champagne cocktail, which is something that Dolly loves and really simple to do, and actually a really good cocktail. So, you're gonna get some sugar cubes, put them on a plate, throw some bitters on, pop that in your champagne glass, little bit of Courvoisier, and then top it with champagne.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Nicely done.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Very delicious.

ANGELA HARTNETT: So, this is your favourite cocktail, Dolly? Love it.

DOLLY ALDERTON: This is my favourite cocktail.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Am I making this right, Dolly?

DOLLY ALDERTON: I mean, I'm normally sloshing things around much more.

NICK GRIMSHAW: You go for slosh. I would've happily made it wrong if I didn't know it was your favourite cocktail.

DOLLY ALDERTON: This looks beautiful. Have you- do you like this cocktail, you two?

ANGELA HARTNETT: I've tried it, not for a while.

NICK GRIMSHAW: I haven't had a champagne cocktail for ages. Like a classic.

ANGELA HARTNETT: But it fizzes up quite a bit, 'cause of the sugar, isn't it?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah. It's completely lethal, and I just love Courvoisier as well.

[*Champagne cork pop*]

ANGELA HARTNETT: There we go. Lovely.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Because we had Stanley Tucci, and you know, he like loves a cocktail, loves a negroni. So, I made one and I was making it really like [*nervous noises*]. He said it was perfect.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I think I OD'd on the old negronis. I just drank too many, I can't really drink them anymore.

ANGELA HARTNETT: I've got that with tequila.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Really? Oh, tequila does kill you.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Well, it's that one where, you know, very young, thrown in the back of a taxi with the taxi driver going, 'She's gonna throw up.' And I've never really been able to look at a bottle since.

DOLLY ALDERTON: You know what, I had the same, and then I got Casamigos in my Waitrose order.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Nice. Lovely, yeah.

DOLLY ALDERTON: You have it on the rocks. Have you had this George Clooney tequila?

NICK GRIMSHAW: I have. And the bottles are like signed, but I think that it's like printed on. And my friend once came home for a Christmas party, he like lives in LA a lot of the time and he came over and he was like, 'Got this.' And I thought he'd got it signed by George Clooney, and we just didn't open it for ages, I was like, 'Oh my god.' And then I did see it in a supermarket and that's like, that's the logo. But I really thought like, he probably knows George Clooney. That's what I thought. And then I was like, actually not that special a Christmas gift, is it?

DOLLY ALDERTON: And also, can you imagine going up to George and being like, 'I'm so sorry, would you sign my bottle?'

NICK GRIMSHAW: 'My mate loves your films, he loves Ocean's Eleven. Would you sign this?' My dad used to work for Findus and like, Nestlé or, I can't remember who owned who. But like they made Nescafé and I remember when, you know, George Clooney obviously did all the coffee adverts, my dad would be like, 'You should do them. They should get rid of him.' and I was like, 'I don't know if they're going to swap George Clooney out.'

[Crunching sounds]

NICK GRIMSHAW: Angela, I've got to eat something.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yes, eat away.

NICK GRIMSHAW: You go first, Dolly.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Oh, thank you so much.

ANGELA HARTNETT: I'm just gonna get the next course going.

DOLLY ALDERTON: That is good.

ANGELA HARTNETT: That butter's good, though. Where do you get that? At your local little deli? You must have.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I got it at Fromagerie in Highbury.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Ah, my favourite shop in the world.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I love that place.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Oh, I love that one. My friend saw Nigel Slater in there and followed him home.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Oh really?

ANGELA HARTNETT: Slightly weird.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I'm very obsessed with Nigel Slater.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Well, that's what- she was like, I just want to know where he lives.

ANGELA HARTNETT: I know where he lives.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Do you know where he lives?

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know where he lives.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Does anyone else know where Nigel Slater lives?

DOLLY ALDERTON: I would've loved to have watched what he was buying. I would've just been like, 'Yep, same for me.'

NICK GRIMSHAW: Yep, get that. I know you fell out of love with cooking, but do you love hosting at yours? Do you love having people around for dinner?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Love it, yeah.

NICK GRIMSHAW: But will you like do something like fancy or will you-how do you cook if you had like friends coming around?

DOLLY ALDERTON: So, I think you just learn, don't you, of how to make life easy as possible. So that's normally like cold starter.

NICK GRIMSHAW: This.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, exactly.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Also, I think simple stuff like anchovy on butter on bread, is quite like, chefy.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Totally. Yeah, really amazing ingredients just layered. Oh my god, what are those things called that literally make me- Gildas, Gildas. Have you had a Gilda?

NICK GRIMSHAW: What's a Gilda?

DOLLY ALDERTON: There's a restaurant that's made them, like, big, now everyone's doing them. It's a Perello olive with an anchovy and a gherkin on a cocktail stick. My theory is basically when people come round for dinner, that all they want is carbs and salty stuff. Like that's why if I ever do, like- I won't say a house party, I think I'm probably a little bit too near early middle age to say that now- a drinks thing at my house, I will only ever do cocktail sausages and cheese.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Banging. Can't go wrong.

DOLLY ALDERTON: It's all you want. It's all people want.

NICK GRIMSHAW: And the worst thing is when you go to someone's house for dinner and like, not saying this now, 'cause Angela's quick, but you know when you're sat, and the, the hosts like, away for ages. You've gone to someone's house for tea and then they're like, 'Oh, I need to get this.' And they're all like panicked and flustered. But I think everything we do on this and everything you cook is no nonsense. You're not a faffer, Ange.

ANGELA HARTNETT: No.

DOLLY ALDERTON: That is the key though. I think that took me time to learn as well, that people would prefer for you to get amazing takeout and serve it on plates.

ANGELA HARTNETT: They've come to see you.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Exactly. And I just think, you just feel the nervousness of a host and you feel someone trying to impress and it just makes it so awkward. And actually, for that exact reason as well, I don't really have a massive sweet-tooth, and I hate baking, and I actually just hate making desserts and puddings. So, I now just don't ever, all I do is get like one amazing cheese and then like really good chocolate.

NICK GRIMSHAW: How many times have we heard Angela say this?

ANGELA HARTNETT: That's all I do.

NICK GRIMSHAW: That sounds like you literally read Angela's script.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Really?

NICK GRIMSHAW: Every time, Angela's like, 'Not bothered with a dessert. Have cheese.'

ANGELA HARTNETT: Honestly. I just do cheese, and then I buy just chocolates I like, like Maltesers.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Love a Malteser.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Or I buy posh chocolate to, you know, fancy it up. But everyone just eats the Maltesers and the cheese, and it's perfect.

DOLLY ALDERTON: That's all anyone ever wants. And then you just need to do like, a really great satisfying, tasty, filling main course.

NICK GRIMSHAW: What about when you are writing and in writing mode? Say you've got a book to finish. How do you eat then? Are you like, I'm gonna distract myself and cook for a few hours? Or are you like, we're having takeaways, or I'm gonna just have like toast.

DOLLY ALDERTON: It's so weird you should ask that, 'cause I was literally thinking about this today 'cause I'm on a novel deadline, and I'd forgotten that I'm like a sort of boomer, widowed man who's never cooked, or like a tiny terrier. I just have, like, I look at what I eat in a day and it will be like four crackers with a wedge of cheddar, and then an instant noodle pot, and then four tangerines. I can't, I don't- the meal goes on all day, because I just think I'm always, like most writers, when I'm in it, I love it. But the getting to being in it thing takes a really long time. And actually, I'm always looking for ways to not get into it. So, the minute that I start cooking, I just know that's gonna be an hour and a half faffing, you know, gone.

NICK GRIMSHAW: I had to write a book, and I found like the distractions and the procrastination was like, insane.

DOLLY ALDERTON: What were you doing the most as a displacement?

NICK GRIMSHAW: Cooking. And then being like, oh, I'll look at a recipe, and then I'd find something, not on purpose, that I didn't have in. So, then I'd be like, well, I've got to go and get to the shops and get that, and like the distraction was mad.

DOLLY ALDERTON: And also, if you are passionate about food, I have this thing in my head that once I start going, ooh, what am I gonna have for lunch today? I get an idea in my head and then nothing's stopping me. I'm walking to the like, Turkish specialist shop three miles away. I'm like, I have to get the thing. So, it just, it's basically- and also, the thing you've got to be careful about with cooking, with distracting you from writing is, it is creative. So it does sort of exhaust weirdly the same part of your brain, so I just think it's a way of not writing.

ANGELA HARTNETT: I'm waiting for you to say, 'And then I got on the Eurostar 'cause I had to go and have this and that, so I was away for three days and that's it, I missed my deadline.'

NICK GRIMSHAW: Just off to Paris, yeah.

[*Dinner sounds*]

DOLLY ALDERTON: Oh my god.

NICK GRIMSHAW: God, Angela.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Oh, I've just seen a tentacle. I'm so excited. Anything with a tentacle, shove it down my gob.

ANGELA HARTNETT: There you go.

NICK GRIMSHAW: This goes look like, and correct me if I'm wrong, if that got brought to my table, if it went someone's house who wasn't a chef, I'd be like, wow. But actually, is that quite easy to do?

ANGELA HARTNETT: Once you've done the first layer, the sauce layer, you should be good.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Where do you buy your fish from, Angela?

ANGELA HARTNETT: Everything here on this recipe we got from Waitrose, but I think there's great places where you live. I mean, we are lucky, we get it from our suppliers. And who's the one up by we are, Islington Way.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Steve Hatt?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Steve Hatt, I love Steve Hatt.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Shout out to Steve Hatt.

ANGELA HARTNETT: See we all, you know, we love all these people.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Do you know, had a bit of a vibe going on with one of those fishmongers.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Oh, okay.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Because something-

ANGELA HARTNETT: Is this in the book, we hope so. Yeah, go on.

DOLLY ALDERTON: It was in that winter lockdown, and on a Saturday I was like, I'm gonna go walk to Steve Hatt, this is when I was living in Camden, and then I'm gonna get some fish and then walk home and have fish for Saturday night dinner. And it became, I think it was because I was so starved of company and romance, it was sort of my highlight of the week going and having a little bit of a flirt over the fish with one of the fishmongers.

NICK GRIMSHAW: At the fish counter.

DOLLY ALDERTON: He would always ask me about like whether I was cooking for my boyfriend, which obviously I loved. And then we get to the classic like, 'Oh, I can't believe a girl like you is single.' It was just like the absolute like, most cheesy, basic flirting, I think it was the only flirting I did all of lockdown. I must go back to that guy, actually. I wonder if there's any chemistry, like, out of lockdown.

ANGELA HARTNETT: So, this is a Tuscan-inspired fish stew with tomato, hake, mussels, squid, little bit of garlic, onion and some parsley at the end. Bon appétit.

DOLLY ALDERTON: That hake is lovely.

NICK GRIMSHAW: This is good. Really good.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Bon appétit. So, how's the new book writing going? So, you've done three books? Two books?

DOLLY ALDERTON: I've done a memoir, a novel. This book coming out, which sort of is a bit of a cheap book because it's my columns collected, and then I'm writing another novel now.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Wow. So busy, busy.

DOLLY ALDERTON: How long did it take you to write yours?

NICK GRIMSHAW: I don't know... Because- I did actually write it, but I was so distracted. January, I thought I'd go away for a month and write it. Like, a whole month.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Really? Where did you go?

NICK GRIMSHAW: I went to LA.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Well, that's a bad place. You need to go out into like the Swiss Alps, to a cabin on your own.

NICK GRIMSHAW: I know, and I just went to like, spin classes and went for walks.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yeah, and out to dinner.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Yeah, I went for dinner, and then I came back and they were like, 'It's due in April!' and I was like, ****. So I got on with it then, but I couldn't really do it until I was like, under pressure. How about you?

DOLLY ALDERTON: I'm exactly the same.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Cause when it's like, six months, I'm like, that's sort of eternity in front of me.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know.

NICK GRIMSHAW: How do you do it? How do you think it best works?

DOLLY ALDERTON: I do exactly what you did. I just, I have to wait for the-

NICK GRIMSHAW: Feel the fear.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah. And there's always been this thing where I've just like, I just assume Father Time's gonna write it. You know that-

NICK GRIMSHAW: I'm thinking, maybe it'll just be done.

DOLLY ALDERTON: It will write itself. This is the craziest deadline I've ever been on. The thing that helps is, with my first novel, I knew what worked for me after that, which is I did three months of planning. You know, it's like 25,000 words of planning that I was working off, so, it meant that the structure being there, when it came to writing it, it felt sort of like just having a laugh. It felt like improvising, it felt like just mucking around actually, because I'd already worked out all the important beats. So, I've done the same, I spent all summer

researching this book and planning it, so now it is a little bit easier. It is my favourite thing to do, writing a novel, I've realised.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Wow, that's amazing.

DOLLY ALDERTON: It's my favourite type of writing.

NICK GRIMSHAW: When I read your column in The Times and its letters from people, I always think that seems to be so hard, to like give advice.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Oh, do you think?

NICK GRIMSHAW: One on one, and then the country reads it.

DOLLY ALDERTON: It's funny, isn't it? Cause like, they post a teaser every Wednesday, The Sunday Times, on Instagram being like, this is the question coming up. And I can get the temperature underneath because it's a million comments of people's weighing in. So, I always have this weird moment in between Wednesday and Sunday that I will know if I've really had a different read on it to everyone else.

ANGELA HARTNETT: And actually, the skill of you is that you write from your soul and your heart.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Oh, thank you.

ANGELA HARTNETT: No, but you are answering a question. But it, it's one of, isn't it? It's like friendship. You know, we've all got those best friends, but there's certain ones, you know, actually you're gonna give me the real, honest answer. You're not gonna sit and pander, you know, and I know if I go to like my sister or my mum, I'll get the absolute truth whether I want to hear it or not. And that's what people are asking with you in a way, you know, they want to know what you think.

DOLLY ALDERTON: And also, I'm not their friend, like they're friends are the people who will tell them they're right and then whatever. I think the role of an agony aunt actually is to sort of imagine all the people involved in this situation.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yeah, yeah, of course. Actually, yeah, see the broader picture of it. But you love this, don't you? This is like your dream.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Oh it's great. It's totally a privileged position to be in, and I love it. It's all- it's strange though, particularly because I feel like I make the wrong decisions about my personal life on a daily basis. So, it's weird that. And most of the time it is really lovely. Like I love hearing about people's lives, I love, the more problems that I hear, the more I realise that like every problem is a communal problem. Like, it's very rare that I get a problem in Dear Dolly where I'm like, wow, you are really out on your own. So it's reassuring, I suppose it's nice to feel connected to people. But I just worry sometimes, 'cause I just think like, what on earth qualification do I have to tell people how to live their life?

NICK GRIMSHAW: I think you just know. You know, some people just know. Like, you know, you have like some friends, they just know what's up.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Are you two good at giving advice?

NICK GRIMSHAW: No, I'm terrible at giving advice.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Oh really?

NICK GRIMSHAW: I think so, yeah.

DOLLY ALDERTON: That surprises me.

NICK GRIMSHAW: I think I am. Cause, I don't know, I don't really like confrontation. And I'm very like, 'But on the other hand...', and then I give like the polar opposite. So, I'm a bit rubbish like that. Who do you go to for advice, do you have your own personal Dear Dolly?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, so I dedicated the book to my friend India. So the dedication says 'For India Masters, my agony aunt.' She's just one of those friends where she's like a sort of round the clock WhatsApp nurse. She's like 111 for all our emotional lives on WhatsApp. And I'll get- cause we're in a big group of girlfriends, we'll go out for dinner and India will look at me and be like, 'How did that go, by the way, with the podcast? Did that go well? Did they like the sourdough and the butter? Oh, I'm glad.' And then she'll turn to the other one and be like, 'Did the meeting go okay today?' And she'll go around every single person, and I'm like, do you work? Because it feels like you're this incredible support system. She knows everything about everyone's life, she offers incredible support. She herself, actually, I'm sure she wouldn't mind me saying, she is a Samaritan. She trained to be a Samaritan a few years ago. And my god, when she did that, I just suddenly understood what actually listening is.

ANGELA HARTNETT: But as you, I think you've just hit the nail on it. The best friends are the ones that listen. And actually don't, in a way, necessarily give an opinion straight away. Cause we've all had that and it's like, 'Oh god, this happened to me at work', and then someone rather than actually- 'cause sometimes you just want to vent. So, you don't necessarily want the advice, you want to vent and then someone will go, 'Oh God, the same thing happened to me.'

NICK GRIMSHAW: And you don't want like your friendships and your relationships to be just me calling you to complain. And then like, see you later then! Cause you're like busy and you're not going out as much.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yeah, of course.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Sometimes you feel like when you are in your thirties, that you're like, it's just complaining, and our bond is like, like slagging people off.

DOLLY ALDERTON: That's so true. I tried to give slagging people off up for Lent one year. I lasted I think four days.

[Cooking sounds]

NICK GRIMSHAW: Okay. Let's talk about Everything I Know About Love, which is your memoir. First of all, before we get onto the telly adaptation, how was it putting out your life to the world?

DOLLY ALDERTON: It had so many different stages, I think, because I had such- I didn't really have a profile back then, I had a tiny following online. I was much younger, I was twenty-eight when I wrote it, well, you know something about the difference between being twenty-eight and thirty-four just feel like different countries to me. I was just so open in a way that just makes me shudder now. So, it's like, at first it felt cathartic, and it felt exciting and it felt, you know, it was amazing to feel connected to lots of different people. And then it felt scary and I felt self-conscious, and then you feel terrified about how you write afterwards, after something like that, you worry that that might be your biggest hit or whatever. You worry that you don't have anything to offer other than just turning yourself inside out, and then you get to this amazing point too that I thankfully got to quite quickly, which is, that may well have been my biggest thing I ever do, and that's amazing. Like how amazing that I got to do that at twenty-eight. And as long I can make my peace with that. And I'm actually pleased that I did get there because I think some, I've seen so many

writers and creatives and artists like be in competition with themselves their whole life, and I wouldn't be able to do that. And I couldn't write a book like that again, I couldn't put myself through it.

NICK GRIMSHAW: And then how was the adaptation for you? Did you have to like, pick a Dolly?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, so we made it semi-fictional. Just to stop me from going insane.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Fair. Very fair.

DOLLY ALDERTON: So, we changed their names, and it was more just sort of like, essence of the book and essence of the real-life people.

NICK GRIMSHAW: And is it weird to watch?

DOLLY ALDERTON: The more difficult conversations that happen between characters, there's a scene where Maggie tells this awful musician, like 2012 east London musician man, that she loves him and he laughs in her face, which happened to me, like, verbatim. That was a strange day. Like it was weird, when the climax of the series is the two best friends, it's basically one of them saying, 'I don't want to be friends anymore.' That was sort of things that me and Farly said to each other years and years ago, so again, that was like, a difficult day.

ANGELA HARTNETT: And after they'd read the book, have people come out of the woodwork and recognised that they're the people in the book, like the musician, you know, anyone come forward afterwards and said, 'You've written about that. I did that, didn't I?'

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, the musician actually.

ANGELA HARTNETT: No!

DOLLY ALDERTON: He's really funny. He's like friends with lots of my friends and we are still like sometimes vaguely in touch and he messaged me and said, the worst moment in his life was when his dad picked him up from the station and he was listening in his car to the audiobook.

ANGELA HARTNETT: That is divine retribution. That is karma.

NICK GRIMSHAW: That is karma.

DOLLY ALDERTON: No on the whole it's been fine, 'cause my friends got all the permission. And then the men that I wrote about, on the whole...

ANGELA HARTNETT: Loved it.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, they either love it- I mean, the portrayals were pretty sh**ty as well, so they're just like, well I didn't do that. So, they're not gonna, you know. And also, the thing I've learned about men over the years is they do love being written about.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Exactly.

DOLLY ALDERTON: They really, really love being written about. You can say, this man broke my heart, he ruined my life, he behaved terribly- the number of DMs I get from girls where they say, 'I went on a date with someone who told me that they dated you. This is their name. Did they date you? This was the first thing they said.' And I'll be like, so funny that they're so keen to show off that we dated 'cause they were not very keen to date me or be particularly nice to me back in the day.

ANGELA HARTNETT: That's insane.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know. It used to drive me crazy.

ANGELA HARTNETT: It's that voyeurism of living their fifteen minutes of fame through you.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, and it was just, it's just like that tension that I found really difficult in the aftermath of the book coming out. Like it seemed like- well, it's my fault for always dating narcissistic men. But it felt like their enthusiasm for having an anecdote about me was so enormous compared to their enthusiasm for me.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yeah, exactly.

DOLLY ALDERTON: And that was weird.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Weird. And even not like a- t's not a nice anecdote.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah exactly, exactly. I remember reading Caitlin Moran saying, and I must have been in my twenties, and I read it and I remember thinking, that's ridiculous, where she was like, 'You shouldn't take anything anyone says seriously until they're thirty.' And I remember being in my twenties being like, 'No, that's not true, I would be like, so happy for every opinion that I say at the pub at three in the morning to be like committed and carved in stone.' And now I'm like, I don't think anyone should be held to account for things they say before they're thirty.

NICK GRIMSHAW: I thought I was like, really good on the radio. When I left Radio One and they played me about the first shows, I was like, oh. My.

DOLLY ALDERTON: How old were you on your first show?

NICK GRIMSHAW: Twenty-three.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Geez.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Exactly, I mean, that's so young.

NICK GRIMSHAW: So, like, not been to bed.

DOLLY ALDERTON: That's tough though.

NICK GRIMSHAW: It was so cringe.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Cause, I have that with my podcast as well. I just can't listen back.

NICK GRIMSHAW: No.

DOLLY ALDERTON: It's like listening to yourself, drunk, leaving yourself a voicemail. It's so embarrassing.

NICK GRIMSHAW: It's so embarrassing. Yeah, just don't listen back. What about reading back?

DOLLY ALDERTON: I get cringed out reading my novel as well. I'll probably get cringed out reading this and all. I think it's just like...

NICK GRIMSHAW: Yeah, I don't think you should really love your own stuff, should you?

DOLLY ALDERTON: No. And also you should-

NICK GRIMSHAW: I don't think musicians sit home and are like, I love this number one hit Like sure, when you're doing it, but like, I don't know if they're like...

DOLLY ALDERTON: Although, I got into a lift with Ronan Keating once and he was humming Life Is A Rollercoaster.

NICK GRIMSHAW: No. Way.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Was it at time of release or like recently?

DOLLY ALDERTON: No, years later, years later.

NICK GRIMSHAW: I mean, it is catchy.

DOLLY ALDERTON: That's what I thought, that's what I did think. I was like to be fair to him, and if someone had mentioned it to him, it really gets in the noggin.

NICK GRIMSHAW: It really gets in the noggin. And also, wise words. Life is a rollercoaster.

DOLLY ALDERTON: It really is.

NICK GRIMSHAW: And you just gotta ride it.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Nick, I literally am now, as a review for you, in one of my Dear Dolly's in the next month, I swear to God I'm going to write, 'Life is a rollercoaster and you've just gotta ride it.'

NICK GRIMSHAW: Please, please.

[Drink pouring sounds]

NICK GRIMSHAW: The Tuscan fish stew was really, really good. Did you enjoy that?

DOLLY ALDERTON: So good. I loved it.

ANGELA HARTNETT: You could do that in half an hour, no problem.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Oh really?

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yeah, of course. So, when we go to Dolly's for that dinner party.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Yeah, we'll come round to Dolly's and expect it.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Cheese and champagne. That's it, it's perfect.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Yeah, well if you want to try it, the recipe is on [waitrose.com/dishrecipes](https://www.waitrose.com/dishrecipes), you can go and check it out. Also, this recipe is up there as well: cheese. The perfect dessert: cheese on cheese board is never not good. So, while we enjoy some cheese, we thought we could do a little role reversal. You have Dear Dolly, sometimes on this podcast we get questions for Angela. You may have matters to do with the heart, Angela maybe has matters to do with offal, that sort of thing.

DOLLY ALDERTON: The queen of our offals.

NICK GRIMSHAW: So, we thought we could swap over and do a Dear Angela and an Ask Dolly.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Great idea.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Okay. This one is for Angela. So, Dolly, if you'd like to read this and see what your advice would be.

DOLLY ALDERTON: 'I'm on the hunt for a meal I can ace every time, one I can wow friends, family, and hopefully my new partner with, when the algorithm goes my way on Tinder.' Aw, it feels like a question for both of us. Okay, so meal you can ace every time, I think: slow cooked meat.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yes.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Because you just know, if you get the temperature right, that you're gonna have like, beautifully textured meat, and you don't have to think about it all day.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Can't go wrong really. I've not cooked for someone on a date until it's like, we're firm boyfriends.

DOLLY ALDERTON: No. My boyfriend, I cooked him on our second date.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Oh wow, that's ballsy, that.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know.

NICK GRIMSHAW: And what did you cook?

DOLLY ALDERTON: I did, like a baked gnocchi.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Oh, nice.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah.

ANGELA HARTNETT: And that's another one straight in the oven. Don't have to worry about it.

NICK GRIMSHAW: And were you like, 'Oh god, this has been stressful', or were you like, 'I just knocked this up.'

DOLLY ALDERTON: Of course I was like that.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Yeah, you were like, 'Oh it's just my gnocchi.'

DOLLY ALDERTON: Can you imagine? I literally was just like, 'What, this?' Yeah. And also like, you know that thing you do at the beginning of the relationship, where I was like, I wonder if he thought I cooked wearing like that white silk kimono dress, in a pair of heels with like blow dried hair, and I hadn't like prepped it at two o'clock that afternoon.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Whacked it in the oven. So, Angela, this is from Dear Dolly, which is a collection of columns from the Sunday Times, which Dolly does every week, all collated together in one handy book. So, you don't have to have loads of newspapers in your house, just buy the book.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Exactly. Thanks Nick.

NICK GRIMSHAW: ‘Dear Angela, I'm worried I love dogs more than men. I'm worried I'm unable to form successful deep relationships with men. I was married for fifteen years to a gentle, sweet man who I met when I was young and naïve. I thought I was in love with him and we had many happy years bringing up our children, surrounded by our dogs, but there was a void in our relationship and a loneliness inside me. I always felt like our dogs understood me better than he did. Can a man ever give me the feeling of unconditional love and understanding that I feel with dogs?’

ANGELA HARTNETT: Crikey.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I know, that's quite a lot to chew over.

ANGELA HARTNETT: That's a lot to chew over. I would like to think that a man could, if you found the right person or the right man in your life. And remember, a dog is a dog. I don't know, is that the right? You know, I love my dog and I love the fact it's unconditional love, but by the same token I woke up today and she'd **** in the f***ing living room.

[Laughter]

And I was like, mm, don't love you now. No, I think you can find unconditional love. I think she has to realise that a dog is a dog and it's an animal, and a human's a human, and I think you've gotta- what she's given to her dog, I think she needs to give to another human person I think, and then she'll get it reciprocated. Is that a good answer?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, I think that's a great answer.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Great answer. Are there any similarities, and I'm not joking-

ANGELA HARTNETT: Between Neil and Betty?

NICK GRIMSHAW: Between Neil and Betty.

ANGELA HARTNETT: They're both messy.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Are there any, like, lovely things?

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yeah. They're very cute- well, this sounds a bit weird, they're cute in bed.

NICK GRIMSHAW: That's a wrap. We are done.

ANGELA HARTNETT: You know what I mean? Like, if she's like snuggled up like that, and Neil, it's quite a cute little scene, but yeah.

DOLLY ALDERTON: I was literally gonna ask you, 'cause I've just got my first pet.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Oh, you have!

ANGELA HARTNETT: Oh my god, she looks so cute.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Yeah, she is. Little, tiny, little golden British Shorthair.

ANGELA HARTNETT: What's her name?

DOLLY ALDERTON: Goldie Hawn.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Oh, I love it.

DOLLY ALDERTON: But I have made that very difficult decision in parenting where I've just decided, she is always gonna sleep in my bed.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Oh, that's it, yeah.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Does Betty sleep in your bed?

ANGELA HARTNETT: No. Occasionally she might sneak in, but no, its discipline, she sleeps downstairs. Is she out and about? Have you got a cat flap? Is she allowed out and stuff or is she still a bit young?

DOLLY ALDERTON: No. I will have to let her out at some point, but it's so funny, I've took her to the vet for the first time. It was so traumatic actually, 'cause she hated the carrier, and she kept pawing the plastic window, so her little head got stuck, so her head was like, with her big bulgy eyes, she's like stuck out with carrier. It was so stressful. The Uber driver was pissing himself. And the vet said to me, I mean, I'll show you a picture of her, she literally looks like Marilyn Monroe.

NICK GRIMSHAW: No she is gorgeous, we saw a picture, yeah.

DOLLY ALDERTON: But the vet said to me she was- I was like, I don't know what to do about the outside/inside. And she was like, 'You know, some cats have a hunting nature, and they need to find their prey and they need to be out in the wild. With this cat, I don't see that so much for her.' And I was like, indoors forever.

ANGELA HARTNETT: I see her more on the couch.

NICK GRIMSHAW: In bed. We have to keep Angela inside so she's not hunting, of a night. Dolly, thank you so much for coming round to see us.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Thank you, this was so lovely.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yes, thank you.

NICK GRIMSHAW: The best present, genuinely, of bread and salted butter.

ANGELA HARTNETT: Yes, fabulous.

DOLLY ALDERTON: Great, I'm pleased.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Dolly Alderton, everybody.

[*Applause*]

ANGELA HARTNETT: Thanks for coming. Such good fun.

NICK GRIMSHAW: Thank Dolly. That was fab.

All the recipes and drinks can be found on the Waitrose website at [waitrose.com/dishrecipes](https://www.waitrose.com/dishrecipes).

ANGELA HARTNETT: Follow Dish from Waitrose wherever you get your podcasts. Tell your friends, tell your family, and why not leave us a review on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

NICK GRIMSHAW: We can't all have a Michelin-star chef in the kitchen, but you can get some Michelin-star advice. Email questions for Angela to dish@waitrose.co.uk.