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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

lesbian, feel, mom, honestly, literally, friends, disability, talk, sister, spaces, person, thought, art, people, parents, dad, growing, queer, family, white

SPEAKERS

Olivia N, Karishma

Olivia N 00:02

Today is January 19 2023. I'm Olivia Newsome interviewing Krishma virtually over zoom. Do I have permission to record this interview?

Karishma 00:11

Yes, you're already recording.

Olivia N 00:14

So you know, you can stop this recording at any time.

Karishma 00:17

Yes, I probably will at some point.

Olivia N 00:21

Can you say your name agent pronouns?

Karishma 00:24

Yes. My name is Karishma Johnson. I am 23. And I use any pronouns.

Olivia N 00:30

How would you describe yourself?

Karishma 00:32

I gave like a very one liner thing. So I would say disabled Gujarathi lesbian artist. Well, yeah.

Olivia N 00:42

Can you tell me where you're from where you grew up and what your childhood was like? Yeah, I

Karishma 00:47

was born in Hayward. But I grew up in this small town in the Central Valley. It's called Mountain House. It's cow town.

Olivia N 00:55

And

Karishma 00:58

I was really close with my cousins growing up. We played outside a lot. I was definitely like, responsible for my sister. You know? So as an oldest child, very fun. I like to draw a lot as a kid. I still like to draw a lot. Yeah. Are there follow up questions for what my childhood was? Like?

Olivia N 01:24

Can you talk more about your relationship with your with your younger sister?

Karishma 01:30

Yeah, I can talk about my relationship with my younger sister. We are six years apart.

Olivia N 01:35

So

Karishma 01:37

I was really like, there to take care of her. I remember like, wiping her ass a lot when she was a baby. Also, like having to play with her things like that. Anytime she was in school, I was kind of there to help her with homework. I mean, I still am. She's in high school now. So what does that involve now as an adult, and you can kind of imagine how it translates is now I still kind of have to cook for her and teach her how to do things. She's learning how to drive. There's a lot of questions they're applying to colleges. I think she kind of looks up to me like a role model. That's kind of stressful. But it's definitely the dynamic we have.

Olivia N 02:23

Just because there's such a huge age gap. Can you talk a little bit about

Olivia N 02:28

what it was like growing up with all your cousins? And maybe if you had like a big extended family network where you were?

Olivia N 02:35

Oh, yeah.

Karishma 02:36

So when I was a wee little lad, I actually. So I was in Union City, and I was just a couple blocks from my grandma's house. And so I was always there. So we would call her daddy, right? There's like the Indian term for that. And so I would actually stay with her and my father most of the time, while my mom was working, and my dad was in school, and they would watch me, we would color a lot. That was very fun.

I remember drawing a lot of mountains and birds all the time. And then a block away from them was my cousins. So I would see them all the time. They were, I have two cousins. They're both older than me. One of them, she's kind of mean, but he would play a lot. And I hear a lot that she bullied me as a kid, but mostly her brother, and we got a lot up to a lot of little crazy shenanigans. Definitely got her a lot doing those things. Yeah, so I spent a lot of my time with them when I was a kid, for the most part.

Olivia N 03:45

What else could I say about them?

Olivia N 03:47

What's your favorite memory that you have with your grandparents?

Karishma 03:51

My favorite memory with my grandparents? I would definitely say it's drying with. Yeah, I would draw with my brother. And he would like sit me down. And he was like a really serious guy. But he wasn't that serious with me, actually. And yeah, he would like pull out all the crayons and stuff. And basically everything at that house kind of felt like mine. And I will also pick another memory there. Because I think it's funny is this thing would happen where I would run into things a lot, or like get hurt. Because we're kind of rough players like us, kids, me and my cousins were very rough with each other. And so like, I would like run into tables and things like that. And my like, I would be like crying like you know, sobbing my eyes out. I'd be like, Oh my god, like this hurts so bad. And my that the issue would go up to whatever furniture I hit or like, whatever hurt me. And she would go smack it and she would be like, bad table or whatever. And I would be like laughing because like That's so ridiculous. You know, why are you blaming the furniture, but then it would not hurt so like, because I'm so distracted and I'm probably Didn't hurt too much in the first place if I'm being honest.

Olivia N 05:04

So what did your What did your mom do for work?

Karishma 05:09

My mom worked at this like, she had like an office job. She kind of just did like accounting related things. I think she stopped working pretty soon after that, so I don't remember too much. But I remember we ended up with like, a shitload of paper. Like, because that company closed down, and then my sister was born and she just stopped working. She was like, I'm done. I'm watching my little baby. So she was deaf. My sister is definitely the favorite.

Olivia N 05:40

Was your dad working? T said he was in school.

Karishma 05:45

He was on school. Now he like works the most he he's an accountant.

Olivia N 05:51

Okay, he has a boring job. A boring accounting job. Yeah.

Olivia N 05:57

So would you say that, like, overall, you had a pretty

Olivia N 06:01

nice childhood. I've been thinking about this

Karishma 06:04

a lot. Like, just in life in general. Like, overall, I think it's like fairly nice. You know, like, I did see a lot of my family on my mom's side. And stuff like that. But like, also, like, my mom kind of hit me a lot. So that was not that fun. But I overall, I like to think I had a good childhood.

Olivia N 06:29

Did your mom hit your sister too? Or just you?

Olivia N 06:31

Just me? Yeah.

Olivia N 06:39

So

Olivia N 06:40

can you talk a little bit about what middle school was like? Did you like it? Ooh, what kind of

Karishma 06:48

talking about it. I was a super nerd. So I was actually really good in school. But like, my mom's super hard on me, like, she would go to the teachers. And she'd be like, hey, I want all of your assignments, like the PDF, like the raw file. And then she would print it for me like five times, and she would make me study them. And then like, you know, when you're like a kid, and you're like, learning handwriting, and stuff, she would do those. And then if they were bad, she would smack me and rip them up and make me redo them. So it was kind of wild and you like, it just kind of kept going. Like those times sheets. I kind of love those are so fun. I wish someone would give me an multiplication sheet today. But she would hard hardcore, make me do those every single night. And I would be doing homework like so late in the day.

Olivia N 07:39

Yeah, so I kind of hated school, but I was really good at it.

Olivia N 07:42

What were your relationships with your classmates at the time?

Olivia N 07:47

Um,

Karishma 07:49

well, my relationships, like with my classmates, I had a couple of good friends, I think each year. I did not like bringing people to my house, though. I was like, super uncomfortable with it. Because, like, everyone thought my mom was cool. But like, I felt like my mom was not cool. You know, like, I thought she was mean to me. And so I didn't want them to interact whatsoever. But overall, like, what were my relationships, like with my peers? I would say like most people were kind of at a distance, because I didn't know how to interact with them. Well, why

Olivia N 08:23

were you struggling to interact?

Karishma 08:25

You know, I kind of pieced this together recently, is when your parents are the way they are. You kind of like learn from that. And especially when you are conditioned to not feel certain emotions, in environments like that, like in public settings, you can't empathize with your peers. So like, if they're very emotional, I was kind of just like, calm down, like, go to your room or something like, relax. So I kind of didn't get it. But like, that's definitely a normal response. And children shouldn't feel that way. You know? Yeah.

Olivia N 08:57

Can you talk a little bit about more about your relationship with your parents? What was your home like life? Maybe you can talk about your home life pre and post your sister, if that helps you orient change, or time a bit more, if you can talk more about your relationship with your mom. It seems like when she stopped working, she was mostly the parent that maybe you saw the most.

Karishma 09:20

Yeah, so like,

Olivia N 09:21

I guess? Yeah.

Karishma 09:25

My sister being born also coincided with us moving. So like that definitely is a timeline shift for me. So before it was like, I wouldn't really see my parents I mostly like was with my grandparents, and they were kind of my primary caregivers. So like, English wasn't my first language. I was with them most of the time. I got to see my cousin's every day. And then we moved. My sister was born like, two, three months later. And then, like my mom stopped working. She was taking care of my sister most of the time. I was also taking care of my sister. I'm in a new like city like an hour away. I didn't see my grandparents as much. I saw my mom a lot more. But also like she was really focused on my sister. I feel like

Olivia N 10:14

did you grow up speaking good?

Olivia N 10:15

Did you grow up speaking Gujarati? Like are your grandparents uncles right? Okay. So your grandparents are from Gujarat? Did your parents? Like are your parents from the United States?

Karishma 10:28

My mom is not they all immigrated together. Okay. My dad is a white guy.

Olivia N 10:33

Okay. So your mom and then your grandparents are constructing from Bootstrap? Can you talk a little bit about what it was growing? Like? What's it like one immigrant parent and then two immigrant parental figures?

Olivia N 10:56

Yeah, I want

Karishma 10:57

to say I like it, I feel like, on my dad's side, I'm not really connected to them at all, like he was adopted. And I definitely know his side of the family, but I don't relate to them as strongly, maybe it's the distance, but I feel like also, there's a sense of community like, oh, and I feel like familial ties are much stronger on my Gujarathi side, like, if I needed anything, they would be there for me. And then they're also like, huge caregivers. And I think the expectation is that I would go to them if anything were wrong, you know, like, I have a giant box of fruit that is kind of their love language, you know, is. And I feel like I'd never gotten that kind of like, love, quote, unquote, from my dad's side of the family. So it's kind of this different level of just family dynamic and what the expectations are. And I feel like that's very unique to the culture.

Olivia N 11:57

So let's go back to school, middle school. Mom was pretty over overwhelming and pressing a lot. Now I'm trying to use like,

Karishma 12:11

no so valid

Olivia N 12:13

language, at the best, overwhelming school, and assignments and beat you about assignments and stuff. And you liked school, kind of you hated it, but you were good at it.

Olivia N 12:31

I mean, school, I liked school for

Karishma 12:34

it not being home, you know, like, yeah, I liked that. It's the space and I had fun in it. Do I think I like and I also was good at it. Like, I think, yeah, we like things that we're good at. So I was good at school. I

liked being there. You know, I was on a lot of clubs. So I think that also took up my time. Okay. Like nerdy stuff?

Olivia N 12:57

What nerdy stuff like robotics or some shit?

Karishma 12:59

No, I wasn't into robotics yet. At the time, like, I definitely do that kind of thing now, but they had like the gate program. I don't know if that's a universal thing. But they had it for a couple of years when I was in middle school. And I was doing like the language and then also like the art programs, and I was also into the like Science Olympiad and the Math Olympiad. Yeah.

Olivia N 13:33

So can you talk a little bit about high school, big transitional life period,

Karishma 13:38

high school was a big transitional life period. I went to high school in 2013. And then I finished in 2016. And I actually, I wanted to be out of my house so badly that I went to community college while I was in high school. And I was like, I'm going to graduate early. So that's kind of where that timeline 2013 to 2016 comes from, is I was like, I am going to go to college, because that's something my parents would allow, or like, approve of. And then like, it's a valid reason for me not being home, and all this stuff. And so I was just like, I was on the grind. all through high school. I was doing my community college classes. And then so like that took up my afternoons. I was also president of a couple of clubs that took that takes time, you know, APS take time. And then what else was I doing? And I was also in sports. I was like an athlete. I think I was kind of popular in high school. Like a lot of people knew me. I also went to a really small high school. I don't think it's hard to be popular in a small high school, to be honest. But yeah, I think I knew a lot of people I don't think I was like close friends with a lot of people though. And then when I skipped a grade, I lost a lot of friends. Seems like they were just like, it's not worth knowing you if you're gonna leave, which is like kind of bullshit. But whatever. I get it to an extent, you know?

Olivia N 15:09

Yeah. Well, it's a public school. Yeah. Okay. So can you talk a little bit about how class influenced you growing up?

Karishma 15:23

Okay, I didn't have any notes for this one. See? That's

Olivia N 15:26

okay. You have to go off notes.

Karishma 15:28

Um, I know, but I don't remember what I wanted to say.

Olivia N 15:32

That's okay. Do you want to circle back to it a little bit? And I asked you a little bit later.

Karishma 15:38

Yes. And I think this may actually be one of those things. I want to know what other people said. Okay. Or do it now.

Olivia N 15:47

I can talk a little bit about what other people said. And then I can go through different question. So it honestly depends on your family background. So some people who grew up wealthy, they talked about never having to think about money that much, or maybe moments where they interacted, or were aware of class difference, for the first time in their life. Like, that's sometimes a great way to source something to say is when you think about a specific memory or story that you have. So maybe if you remember, one of the first times where you realized money was the thing that affected you and your family, or when you were first when you first realized that Oh, wow, some people have this and some people have less. And how maybe like how your parents interacted with money, their thoughts about money having to think about money from a young age, or maybe not. And in fossils, like this also can revolve around like college costs and those kinds of conversations. So maybe like thinking about class

Olivia N 16:51

in that way.

Karishma 16:53

Okay. I remember my dad lost his job during the recession. So like, 2008, what was that? So I was probably like nine years old. And I remember my mom being like, super stressed about it, and I get it, it was a recession and no one was working. And then I don't know, it becomes very abundantly aware when like, your mom starts talking to you about like, don't spend money on this and don't do that. and things of that nature. I feel like they also my mom also just didn't like spending money on me loci like she was just like, we don't need to get you anything. And I'm like, that's fair, I guess. Because I'm nine years old. What do I know? And so like, I think that affects you long term, like not wanting to spend money. So I'm actually very financially conservative, and like, I like to hoard my money in my bank and like, try and keep it available, because I feel like something is gonna happen at any moment, you know? Yeah. So I feel like that was kind of like, foundational growing up.

Olivia N 18:08

So we've talked about class.

Olivia N 18:10

Now we're going to talk about race, we're going to hit the big three. Okay. How did race affect you growing up? I know that you mentioned that you could strathy

Olivia N 18:19

and white. Yeah. That was kind of conversation. Yeah, I feel like I was

Karishma 18:27

in a very, like, diverse area. I feel like a lot of California is pretty diverse. And a lot of Filipino friends growing up. Don't think I've ever been mistaken as white and I actually played around with this a couple of years ago, is like my aunt, she was super, like, you know, you're white. Right? And I'm like, Okay, interesting. Sure. Yes, yes, I do know that actually. But then I would go to my friends and I'd be like, as a white person, and I would say like very normal things. You know, like, as a white person, I think crushed red pepper on pizza is unnecessary, like is a necessity. You know, like, just like, random things. And maybe like, What the fuck are you like, you don't even look white? Like, nothing about you screams white. I have never once assumed that about you or thought of you in that way. Um, so? Yeah, like, I feel like I also just haven't had many white experiences or where like, people have assumed I look white. I think my sister gets the very like the opposite. Like, she doesn't know the language, and she looks very white. So like, I think we get treated differently, especially in public. Like, I get more looks than she would. And I don't know I also speak the language. So like, sometimes I do that and people don't necessarily like that in certain areas.

Olivia N 20:01

So you were mentioning how you and your sister get very different treatment. Right? Yeah. And the treatment that you're talking about is you would receive, like, poor or treatment, as opposed to your sister or just think so?

Karishma 20:18

Yeah, I think they think of her as like much more dainty and innocent and like, she can't do anything kind of thing. Or like, they're not threatened by her presence in a space.

Olivia N 20:32

And they're threatened by yours.

Karishma 20:34

Maybe, and I don't know, if that's just the different ways we carry each other, like, carry ourselves in the same spaces, but I think it probably plays a factor.

Olivia N 20:43

So did you grow up religious?

Karishma 20:51

Um, I mean, technically, yes. Like, I would go to the Monday ear, and stuff with my parents. I don't even know what my dad is to be honest with you. Because that's how like, agnostic, my family kind of raised itself in my childhood, but like, I used to go to the temple, but only once in a while. And like, I know certain things and what to do and what not to do, or when I'm supposed to be doing certain things. And like, I definitely still do certain cultural ceremonies. So like, if we're doing Rakshabandhan, or, which is like, an annual celebration, or like, just things of that nature, just annual things that we may do. Within the culture, I wouldn't necessarily tie them to religion, but I think they are very closely related.

Olivia N 21:49

And then, once upon

Karishma 21:50

a time, my sister actually asked my mom because she's, she's brave, and I'm not. She was just like, are we supposed to, like be religious in this house? And my mom goes, obviously, you're like, Hindu. And I was like, since when, you know, like, yeah, sure we do these things here and there. But like, we don't do it consistently. Like my body. I see her she does. She does her prayer every day. Right? Like, I know, she goes, she's going upstairs, she's gonna go do the evil. She's gonna ring the bell. She's gonna like, but do I know how to do that? Absolutely not. Because no one taught me. So I would say we're not a religious household. But like, we definitely have elements in it. And it's always been there. I have never been to a church, but apparently my dad has. That's all I know.

Olivia N 22:39

Okay, so there was like this undercurrent of religion, maybe a little bit of like, yeah, obligation. Yeah. Like, I like a general. You know, we're going to do this like annual celebration, and there's some understanding, there's some background or grounding in Hinduism, but it's not like something that y'all practiced. Often. Yeah. Consistently. It's like, okay,

Karishma 23:06

at least not me and my mom. And I guess I mean, yeah, yeah. It's really hard for her and my dad to figure out like, oh, which religion do we raise our kids with? And I guess they decided on really neither. No religions, actually. Yeah. So I don't know what they expected for me and my sister, but apparently it was to be religious. And somehow neither of us are.

Olivia N 23:30

Yeah, parents are interesting that way. So

Olivia N 23:36

can you talk a little bit more about how gender norms affected you coming? Growing up? You mentioned how you're the eldest sibling and you ended up maybe raising your sisters that could be one way to start.

Olivia N 23:47

Okay.

Karishma 23:51

Yeah, the gender norm of like, caregiving, I feel like definitely presented itself like oh, you should be cooking for your sister and cleaning up after her and like teaching her helping her getting her acquainted with the world I guess. So I think that was definitely prevalent in like the things I had to do. And then also, I feel like there was this like long time of forced femininity, you know, like you have to dress this way. Or you should I think this is my daddy. She just didn't really know English very well because she doesn't speak English, but she knows some things and she would go like so sexy. You know, like, to me as a kid. You look so sexy, so pretty, so hot. And she would say things like this a lot. And I think it was like an encouragement for me to dress up nice or like wear my Jenya Jodi's which is

like India, Indian clothes. And just things of that nature. And I feel like there was a lot of pressure to be looking that way and I was totally a little tomboy. Like, my mom was like, You're a little tomboy, you always want to wear your shorts and like T shirt and like run around the house and things like that. I think it also did not help I got my period when I was eight years old. And so like hormonal and bodily changes very, very early, like, huge role in just how I was expected to dress. And especially, like, conservatively, like, they were like, You should be covering up and I'm like, I'm nine, like, what am I covering up? Who's looking? I don't understand. And it's a very confusing time, I feel like Yeah.

Olivia N 25:49

So, you talked about kind of how your mom would say that you were a little tomboy, and you felt really pressured to be feminine, like other than your mom, and maybe your grandma, were you feeling any of this pressure anywhere else in

Olivia N 26:03

your life. Um,

Karishma 26:08

I mean, I feel like it's mostly that, like, I feel like, those two people have the most presidents in my life, and therefore, I probably want to impress them the most or make them the happiest. Like, I honestly don't really consider my dad in any of the decisions I make. He's very much a sideline character, sorry to add. But, ya know, he kind of isn't my priority. And now honestly, it's probably not my mom or my daddy, either. Right self over my family. But I think they were like, the sole source of pressure. And then obviously, like, whatever society kind of conditions you to and what assumptions you can make from there. Like I knew I was not into guys very rarely. But I was like, okay, but this is expected of me. And I was definitely trying to hit this like, sis normative, like heteronormative bubble and exist within it. So I would like pretend to have crushes on people, you know, I'd be like, Oh, I like this boy in my class. Like, I don't give a shit about this guy. But I was like, no, no, no, we really have a crush on this guy. And I feel like, I was trying to be like, pretty for that guy. But like, didn't care about it at all. Like, I definitely just wanted to wear my shorts.

Olivia N 27:38

So

Olivia N 27:41

how did disability and chronic pain affects you growing up?

Karishma 27:45

Oh, hot topic. Okay. Um, so my family was actually like, very, largely, they were very largely disregarded a lot of my health issues when I was growing up. So like, I would have asthma attacks. And I'd be like coughing up blood, because of how raw my throat was. And they would just be like, you're literally fine, be quiet. And then I'd be like, my head hurts so bad. I'd be like, curled up in a ball and like sobbing for days. And like, they would just be like, go to school, go to school, like, you're literally okay, like, take an Advil or something. Actually, it was Tylenol. For me growing up, it was always Tylenol in the house, and then like, I would have a lot of back pain. And I would be like, Oh, I literally can't walk

and maybe like, go to school. Come on, you know, like, doesn't matter, figure it out kind of thing. Or I would actually get a lot of ear infections as a kid, like, every single year, I would get an ear infection. And like, I did swim, you know, for a lot of my life. So they were like, oh, yeah, it's from like the pool and stuff. But every single year without fail, I would get an ear infection. And I would be like, this is awful. I can't hear like I'm walking off balance all week and stuff. I'd be like, Mom, please, please, please like, give me a doctor appointment. And then she'd be like, you're fine. It'll go away. It'll go away, whatever. And then, and then I'd usually like wake up like a couple of days later, and my ear would literally wake me up in the middle of the night and it would be bleeding because my eardrum ruptured and then they they'd be like, Okay, well, we have like, your drops from the last time we'll just put them in. Or they'd be like, Okay, well the next appointment with the doctor is in like, a week, two weeks, whatever. And then I'd go and they'd be like, This year looks awful. You know?

Olivia N 29:42

So, yeah.

Karishma 29:45

Like now I have like an inhaler. And I have been on and off like, chronic migraine relief plans and like, I have arthritis surprise, you know, who would have ever known? What were the side And

Olivia N 30:01

but yeah, so

Karishma 30:04

I feel like those kinds of things have affected me in different ways. You know, like, maybe I'm putting too much weight on my back or like pushing my limits too far a lot of the time. And then like, prolonging doctor visits just because I'm like, maybe it's not actually necessary. Maybe we can just kind of see where this goes. And it'll fix itself. So like, I'm currently trying to figure out like the bounds of my own body, and how to not push those limits to beyond repair kind of thing.

Olivia N 30:46

Can you talk a little bit about how sides affected you growing up?

Olivia N 30:51

Oh, yeah, my mom is also

Karishma 30:54

like an overweight person, but she was like, You're fat as hell. And so she would be like, You need to exercise you need to be healthier, things like that. All the time. Um, I definitely like had periods, especially in like middle school where I was just like, okay, so we won't eat. And then she'd be like, upset. So I never really knew what she wanted. Like, do you want me to be skinny? Or do you want me to eat? Or do you want me to? Like, I don't? I don't know. I'm getting kind of mixed messages from you. And most of the messaging

Olivia N 31:27

came from your mom. Like it didn't come from any classmates at school, like, literally no one else cared Except your mom.

Karishma 31:34

Yeah, I think I went to a really, really surprisingly accepting school. I just I feel like I lived in a good area for that, or like, surrounded myself with good people. Or maybe I really just didn't care what my peers thought, like, maybe they did think I was fat. And I was literally just like, I never

Olivia N 31:50

noticed. I mean, honestly, it's almost better that you either didn't like didn't know didn't notice didn't affect you. Like, who cares at this point? Like he didn't happen? I didn't notice I didn't notice.

Olivia N 32:02

At the time you were living? I was.

Olivia N 32:06

I mean, good. Honestly, you don't really have to know much in middle and high school. So how did this affect your sense of self? Like you're like, you can either talk about it and segments or you can talk a little bit about maybe how, like the forcing the pressure to be feminine. Like the chronic pain that you were having? And then maybe like the pressure to be skinnier? Eat less, eat more from your mom, like, how did this affect your sense of self? Big question. But like, what were you thinking in your little mind at the time about yourself?

Karishma 32:41

In my little mind, I think I was probably just thinking what would make my mom happy? Like, what would get her off my back? What would please her? What would make all my problems go away? Kind of. Yeah. i

Olivia N 32:58

Your mom was the source of a lot of those problems.

Olivia N 33:01

I think so. Yeah. Like, sure.

Karishma 33:05

Oh, actually, I want to add in my aunt, she's, she's like the worst. She would like pinch my stomach all the time. Like, she'd be like, Oh, look, you're so fat. And then she would like pinch my stomach. I was like, she's like, I hated being at her house. You know? And it's one of those things where I think about it a lot. Like, I'm like, I hate this bitch. Like, I'm an adult. I'm like, This is wild. My sister loves her because she never got this my sister. Yeah, she's like, Let's go spend the night at their house. Like it would be so cute. So fun. Um, like, honestly, it was. It's like the last thing I would want to do ever. Yeah, I think they were super mean. I remember I like when I first got my period. Like, they were awful. Like, I got smacked. They were like, you need to, like, why are you complaining? What are you trying to get our attention for? And I was like, I'm literally bleeding. Like, I don't know what's going on? Like, I'm

Olivia N 33:58

eight. Yeah, exactly. I'm

Karishma 34:00

like, I'm a little child. I

Olivia N 34:02

don't want to learn about periods that, like no one was learning about that eight.

Karishma 34:06

Definitely not like I was so confused. And I know we have like guests. So I was like, Thank you know, Mom, come here. Like, I don't I don't want to draw attention. But I'm also like, I come in need someone to help me out. Right? And yeah, they were not super nice. And like, my aunt was like, Oh, it's so disgusting that you like blood everywhere and blah, blah. And so.

Olivia N 34:33

Oh, no, I think

Karishma 34:34

it took a while but definitely early on. Like her high school. I was kind of just like, I literally can't care about what you think anymore. And I was like, I'm gonna get out. I'm gonna fix this. And I think a lot of my friends see me as someone who is like, I really love my body. And now I do like for sure. And definitely like in high school. I was just like, This is what it is. And I don't want to put work otherwise. Like come As you are be, which like, you know, whatever if it would make you happier, not because you're trying to achieve some goal that I'm so thrilled that you're like making different health choices or like, exercise things, but never like, cause harm to yourself is my goal. You know, I don't ever want to encourage that. But I feel like those are kind of lessons that my parents and like, or like my mom and family definitely did the opposite of.

Olivia N 35:31

We're gonna go to another big overarching questions.

Olivia N 35:33

Okay.

Olivia N 35:35

We're what influenced you the most growing up? You kind of talked about your mom? Yeah,

Karishma 35:41

like, honestly, sometimes I'm literally just like, am I always going to be wondering what my mom wanted me to do? You know? Or, as I'm existing in the world, I kind of go, oh, but what is the correct solution? Or like, what am I supposed to do next, like when it comes to, I don't know, anything in young adulthood, you know, like, bank accounts, credit cards, life decisions, jobs, things like that. I'm like, oh,

like, what would my mom think is a good decision, you know, and what it would be valid, and a lot of the times I have to go, I don't care what my mom thinks, you know, anymore, it doesn't really matter, you should put yourself first. And that's like a big discussion I have to have with myself. So I definitely think she influenced me like the most like, she's just like, this little voice in the back of my head, always telling me, like, what I should be doing, or how I should be doing it. And that if it's not perfect, it's not good at all, and things like that. So,

Olivia N 36:45

you mentioned a little bit earlier that you knew pretty early on that you weren't into guys, but you like pretended to have crushes when you were very young on like boys in your class. So around, when did you start to realize that maybe your sexuality was maybe different from what was around you.

Olivia N 37:01

Um,

Karishma 37:07

when did I realize it was different from people around me, I feel like I kind of always knew, like, intrinsically, and that's why I was trying to not present in that way. My cousin, she's a lesbian on my dad's side. So I wasn't very close with her at all. But, um, and she's also like, a lot older than I am. But you know, I did have, like, a queer person in my life at a very early age, but also not someone who is close enough for me to go, oh, this is accepted. My family also has a lot of history with arranged marriages. So it's kind of I know, my mom broke that, like, she definitely like said, I am going to run off with this white boy, even though my parents are gonna disown me. So they're like a love story or whatever, you know, like, or whatever. Like, they did it for love, which is like, nice, you know, like, at least I can say My parents loved each other. Love each other. They're still together, they still love each other. Still, they're still holding strong, you know? Don't Don't put that in. There. They do love each other. For sure. I never saw them. Like, as openly loving like, I've never seen my parents kiss, you know, like, a love marriage. And I've never seen you, like, ever show any emotion it. Like, representation. That's wild. The question was going back question you asked me was about when I realized I was not the normative, like heteronormative situation, right? That was okay. Um, no, I think I knew that kind of intrinsically, very early, just like, oh, this is kind of what's expected. I'm supposed to,

Olivia N 39:04

like, marry, dude.

Karishma 39:07

Maybe even through an arranged marriage, theoretically. I mean, I still get that, like, my family still asked me when I'm gonna bring some dude home. It's kind of wild.

Olivia N 39:22

A little bit wild,

Karishma 39:23

a little bit wild. Um,

Olivia N 39:25

yeah. So

Olivia N 39:33

when did you first start identifying as a lesbian?

Olivia N 39:36

And how did you get there? Um, I

Karishma 39:42

first started identifying as a lesbian when I was in college, when I think because then I don't have to deal with small towns. My graduating class was 48 students just for the record. Wow. I was in a very small school where everyone knew everyone and like my mom knew every one's parents and things like that. So I, I honestly, still, if I was in high school now, I still would not tell anyone from high school just in case they got back to my mom, you know. So, like college, that was definitely a different space. I think people can tell I look queer just looking at me. I wasn't aware of a very long time. But I think it's on my face or something, you know that people can kind of see it or just like how I dress how I carry myself? I don't know. I also don't really care what people think most of the time. Unless you're my mom, then I probably really care low key, but I say I don't. It turns out

Olivia N 40:46

but yeah, in college,

Karishma 40:49

I was definitely like, I tried to make it work. But let's be real. I can only peg so many guys and be so disgusted at the end of it. For so many, like so many times before. I'm just like, Yeah, this really isn't gonna work. My mom is never getting me to marry a dude.

Olivia N 41:07

See, we're pegging a lot of guys in college.

Karishma 41:09

Yeah, I was really trying. I was really trying to make the straight thing work.

Olivia N 41:13

How are you finding so many straight men that like to be pegged?

Karishma 41:18

Look, there's actually a lot of them. And they're like, they just don't want to say it. They're also like, huge nerds. And I was also a huge nerd. Like, okay, like, I have a math degree like I was

Olivia N 41:30

throwing Wow, do you make money?

Karishma 41:34

To make money now?

Olivia N 41:35

You make money? Yes, I'm sorry.

Karishma 41:41

Yes, I'm terrified of spending it because of the 2008 recession.

Olivia N 41:46

I love spending money. Real.

Karishma 41:49

Eggs are so expensive right now. I'm literally like, I guess I'm just not buying eggs.

Olivia N 41:54

I keep eggs for a very long time.

Olivia N 41:56

Oh, really?

Karishma 41:57

Do you do the egg test with the water?

Olivia N 41:59

No, I just eat it. I get sick a lot.

Karishma 42:05

You know, it's so easy to test your eggs actually.

Olivia N 42:08

Yeah, I'm sure I could. I think it's like float or sink or something? Yes. No, I know the

Olivia N 42:12

rule. Yeah.

Karishma 42:15

If it floats, there's gas in it, which means it's bad.

Olivia N 42:18

Oh, yeah, I could probably do that. Anyway.

Olivia N 42:24

Okay, so you knew you were a lesbian around, around around the polish because you were like, You reached a point where you're like, I pegged so many dudes.

Karishma 42:32

I mean, I definitely knew I was gay before them. But that was when I finally like, Yeah, this isn't gonna work.

Olivia N 42:39

Just like you like pegged your last butthole. And you were like, your last guide. But hold on, you were like, Ah, you just like the last one happened. You were like, no more. Like, how did you how did you decide to start identifying as a lesbian?

Olivia N 42:53

Um, you know,

Karishma 42:56

I think people already like, I had a roommate. And she was just like, I have always known, like, she knew I was pegging guys when she was still just like, why are you doing that? Like you do not enjoy? And so I think it, I'm very lucky. She's my best friend. And she's like, Yeah, I honestly didn't understand and didn't get it. Like, why you were trying to do this, but you know, you come as you are. Change, and so I'm very grateful. But she's, she's a good best friend, you know, and was ready to be like, things change, you know, and I'm not going to make a big deal out of it when it does. But he was already Yeah, I don't know. She was always just like, imagining me with girls. You know, like, in her head. She's like, if you're gonna be with someone, why is it not a girl? Or like, you know, the girls gaze amaze? Like, you know, not a man, basically. Yeah.

Olivia N 43:52

You never identified as by you were just like, you secretly knew that you didn't like guys.

Olivia N 43:58

Yeah.

Karishma 44:01

Okay, when I was in like, sixth grade, there was this guy. And he was like, he was, I don't remember what he was saying. But I was basically like, everyone is a little gay. Every single person, it is a spectrum. I like even if it's just the tiniest bit where you can objectively, like, objectively acknowledge another person of the same gender is attractive. That's a little fruity, you know? And I was like, I was a hardcore spreader of this message in like, sixth grade. What stray person is doing that. Let's be honest. But yeah, and I actually didn't put a label on it. Like I wasn't saying I was straight. And in high school people were definitely like, Oh, you're flirting with the girls and things like that, you know, but I was unintentionally doing it. It's probably just because I thought they were pretty.

Olivia N 44:52

Yeah. So

Olivia N 44:55

did you have any gay friends growing up?

Karishma 44:59

Um, But yes, but like, I don't think anyone was out until we're out of high school kind of vibe. Um, I'm actually not really friends with them anymore, but I do know they're queer. They're there. They're queer. Love them for that.

Olivia N 45:20

Yeah, I think my closest

Karishma 45:20

friends were definitely clear. And I talked to them the longest and then talk to a lot of my friends from high school after high school ended. But I guess we just flock I was kind of weird. I mean, I'm still weird, but that's just, you're you're nodding because it's, you're just like, Yeah, it's true. That's true. It's true. I know. I'm self aware. I'm self aware. Thank you.

Olivia N 45:51

No sane. Okay, so your earliest interactions with queer spaces? Those can be online or in person. Okay, spaces, queer space, loosely space with lots of queers in it. Um

Karishma 46:10

I'm gonna say online when I was in high school, for sure. Like, I was definitely on. I said, I wasn't gonna bring up Tumblr, but I was on Tumblr, with like, the, you know, the LGBT community tags at the time. And they had so many like gifts of girls kissing and, you know, those were my, you know, those were my like, posts. And I am a person who just likes looking at the same content that I enjoyed. So I was always in my liked posts, you know? That like still like Today I'm on Tik Tok. I'm like, I'm exclusively going through my favorites. I'm just rewatching the same videos I watch every single day. Like, just how I navigate the world. And that's what I was doing on Tumblr, as a wee little kid. Watching the girls kiss and all the gifts. So it

Olivia N 47:03

was just were you on Tumblr porn or just girls kissing?

Karishma 47:07

I mean, Tumblr Porn was definitely there, but I actually was on the animes Apelles on

Olivia N 47:15

what kind of like what anime Tumblr side were

Olivia N 47:17

you on? Um I was definitely

Karishma 47:24

into like, the Shonan stuff.

Olivia N 47:28

You were shown in fan? Yeah.

Karishma 47:33

I mean, I was definitely I think the first anime I watched was Death Note, and I actually very recently so good. It's so funny.

Olivia N 47:40

Yeah. Yeah. I had a had a good giggle.

Olivia N 47:45

Okay, that makes sense. i That makes sense. My first I think my first ever anime was full metal.

Karishma 47:53

Okay, I mean, okay, I technically have

Olivia N 47:57

I didn't know it was anime though. I didn't know it was anime. It was like it's a show that I recorded on my DVR

Karishma 48:01

reel. I think I definitely did watch things were that were classified as anime as a younger kid like my cousin he would watch Naruto a lot and that would be on the TV. I would see it but I wasn't really watching it and I guess like Pokemon was on and stuff like that. But like I wasn't I wasn't like choosing to watch that myself. Were

Olivia N 48:21

like super into shonen so were you like why did you like show me like what was interested about like, what did you like about shonen? Isn't have to be deep. You like cool. Yeah, I

Karishma 48:29

just thought it I thought it was cool. Like Hunter

Olivia N 48:31

like Hunter Hunter who? Like bleach.

Karishma 48:35

I didn't want to bleach but I saw this one tick tock of someone in it and I liked it. It was like an edit and I was like oh she hot. I gotta watch this one of these days

Olivia N 48:45

of hunting someone in Hunter Hunter That was hot. Does she have a vacuum? Oh, she seen Oh, they're gonna kill me. Oh god. She's in the fuckin spider clan. She's in the spider clan. And she's got that it's got a ripped up tank top and she because I vacuum cleaner that eats bitches.

Olivia N 49:07

Yes,

Olivia N 49:09

she know. She fuck. I don't know her name. Is a Gu she's Dooku fuck. Okay, I was like Shinobu was not right

Karishma 49:18

here so ballad I wasn't. I wasn't gonna know.

Olivia N 49:25

I haven't seen that show in a while. I rewatched it over quarantine though. The first quarantine. Okay,

Olivia N 49:32

what was the fucking fighter group? The Phantom Troupe.

Olivia N 49:40

I was like y'all have done spider tattoos. Yeah, Phantom. The, the unpopular opinion. My favorite arc is actually the Chimera ant Ark. I like it a lot. Literally,

Karishma 49:50

like the best. I know.

Olivia N 49:53

You're an ark. And I was like, you don't have it's really good. It's good. It's so good. And I was like, okay then next would be your kids like that's

Olivia N 50:06

that's yeah. Yeah, so when that goes crazy

Olivia N 50:10

I cried my eyes out like your work new is the next best arc

Olivia N 50:16

and then the like the training arc, and then oh

Karishma 50:23

great Island.

Olivia N 50:24

Thank you I was like game Island know

Karishma 50:28

what you meant

Olivia N 50:29

like he played a game Green Island yeah but your new is good.

Olivia N 50:36

The whatever the fuck the name of this phantom note with Yorknew okay? Yeah, no okay yeah, I don't Okay, let me explain. I don't like Carrillo I was never a crow lo bitch.

Karishma 50:45

I love those earrings though I love I love those drip.

Olivia N 50:50

Okay number that number those video I don't know if you're on Tik Tok Are you on Tik Tok? Oh, yeah, you know those like Karolos come video.

Karishma 50:57

I think there's so funny. Okay, so

Olivia N 50:59

you know what I said? I was like, Dude, I suppose.

Karishma 51:02

I'm all like, I'm all over the weird tiktoks Like,

Olivia N 51:09

I was like, that was just like my whole for you page. That wasn't weird. It was just what I was seeing.

Karishma 51:13

No, honestly, I wish I could make it my whole whole pitch. Like I wouldn't be giggling all day.

Olivia N 51:20

I was never in a colo. My brain is really bad. I don't find bad people hot and shows a lot of the time. I know. That's like not very gave me but like, I just don't like that was like genocide. I was like, this negatives genocide. Yeah, and y'all are like, I was like, There's hot characters who don't to genocide, y'all. And he's like, he doesn't care that he does genocide. He's like, Yeah, I did it. And I did it for a billion dollars, but I didn't need

Karishma 51:49

at least he did it for like money. Like, okay. Hold up. Hold up. Okay. Wait, that was a very anti-capitalism of me.

Olivia N 51:58

That was an anti lots of things. Have you? At least he did genocide for money?

Karishma 52:04

No, I don't believe in genocide. I don't believe in him

Olivia N 52:07

doing it for money. Like for the record, just for

Karishma 52:11

the record. Just putting it out there. I just wanted to backtrack on what I was on Tumblr for. I just remembered I had a vivid flashback of you will explain. Explain. I was on red versus blue tang blue. That that's what it was. And actually, like, I have never played Halo once in my life. But I want to show you my shirt. It's a new shirt. It says great at making extremely hot girls.

Olivia N 52:39

I was that shirt?

Olivia N 52:42

That masterchief I have no idea. I've never played mean either. I watch my cousin play

Karishma 52:49

real I yeah, I never played I never played but I'm a diehard

Olivia N 52:54

red versus blue fan. Yeah, that is masterchief I'm a genius.

Karishma 52:58

You're so smart. I'm sorry. Like I'm here I'm in deep. I've been watching since like 2010 Yeah. Like I'm in it now.

Olivia N 53:14

No, you can't stop. Do you watch like playthroughs and stuff? Have

Karishma 53:17

literally not any Halo stuff. I just watched a red versus blue. Well, yeah, I like the plot. I actually own some of the DVDs is how into it. I was and I also got posters and my roommate in college. My best friend that I mentioned earlier, she let me decorate she let me like control decorate. So we just had Red vs Blue posters and like, LED lights. Hey.

Olivia N 53:43

And I was like, God, I can't I look like a teenage boy. Yeah, and like Monster Energy like underneath the table and like a calm sock. I'm sorry. No, because

Karishma 53:53

that's me. Oh, I don't actually have a comm sock because that sounds really unsanitary. But yeah, I bet if I would have bet if I had a penis, I would have a sock but I would probably wash it very often.

Olivia N 54:06

Okay, so would it be a comm sock like comm sock what would it be like a sock that you occasionally wiped your come in? And then you clean it

Olivia N 54:14

but yeah, I say sock

Karishma 54:15

I honestly I don't understand why it's in the sock like are you doing in sock?

Olivia N 54:22

I think so. Or you're just finishing

Karishma 54:25

in this I don't I honestly don't

Olivia N 54:27

know. I think it's in because like I've seen like moms on tick tock like they pull up this like crunchy s sock. The mom will because they're cleaning their son's rooms are teenagers. Okay? Yeah, yeah, you were like, oh, no, no pedophilia like this. No pedophilia, but like they pick it up and I'm just like, damn. Nothing. No, nothing on planet Earth could get me to pick that up.

Karishma 54:52

Same but also

Olivia N 54:54

like, here's the thing.

Karishma 54:56

I understand. It's okay to have a designated comes Ha, but you should clean it frequently. Like every time it's used, you should go wash. And I say this sustainability because the same sustainability very important. And so like, you know, towels over paper towels, you know, sock over tissue, sustainable practices. So maybe I am in support of the sock but only if it's clean like I can't imagine like sticking my penis back into a dirty like cup sock that

Olivia N 55:32

I'm not a fan. It just sounds like

Olivia N 55:35

BV Okay, not bacterial vaginosis. The Peanuts verkopen yeast infection. It sounds like like peanuts. Maybe? Ti

Karishma 55:47

UTI? Oh, yeah,

Olivia N 55:48

you're right. UTI. I was like, no, they don't have a penis. You don't get BT. Okay. Anyways, so what was your first exposure to lesbianism? Like do you remember like when you first saw it, when you first knew it wasn't thing and you were like, Oh, yes.

Karishma 56:05

My cousin on my dad's side. She's much older than I am. She's a lesbian. When when she came to town, we would sometimes go to pride in San Francisco

Olivia N 56:14

for her. Yeah.

Karishma 56:20

And now I go to pride for me. You know, I was Hello. Looking at the dykes on bikes though.

Olivia N 56:29

Speaking of dykes on bikes, I Okay, so we have a diva Dyke March where you are. Okay, yeah. So, I would like to take March this summer. And when the dykes on bikes, and then like the leather dikes came by, I was like foaming at the mouth. I was like

Karishma 56:48

me as a child. For real pose like, Yo,

Olivia N 56:53

Who are ya? Ya know? They're out there. And it was good. I need to like, I need to get in. That to do it.

Olivia N 57:07

I don't want to ride the bike. I want to be the bike. That makes sense. I want to be ridden. I don't want to ride that shit. I'd like to be there. Real. Okay,

Karishma 57:20

I'm here ready to ride the bike. I don't ride a motorcycle. But my grandpa, he had a Harley. Actually, a lot of my family had Harley's and he liked when he was old and dying. And so the motorcycle was in my garage. And I was so upset when we got rid of it when he died. Because I was like, I could have had that.

Olivia N 57:39

That could have been your Harley.

Karishma 57:41

I could have been my Harley like and you know, why old dudes and their motorcycles? You know, they're taking good care of that.

Olivia N 57:47

Oh, yeah. Better than their wives better than their kids.

Karishma 57:51

Yeah. And he was hardcore, like, right in that thing every month doing the Harley like meetups and stuff.

Olivia N 57:58

Yeah. Yeah. So who was your first clear crush? real or fictional? Okay. Pause for a second.

Karishma 58:14

Well, you don't actually have to pause. I'm just looking for where I wrote my answer. Because I know I thought about this one a lot last night.

Olivia N 58:21

Did you number your notes? Yeah,

Olivia N 58:24

what number Okay, then it's question 23.

Olivia N 58:27

What do you know? I lied. It is?

Olivia N 58:29

Oh, yes. Okay.

Karishma 58:30

Okay. Um, okay, my first queer crush, I had total crush on my first grade teacher. She was so fine. And she would play like, pour some sugar on me by Def Leppard on the stereo, and I would be profusely sweating in my seat. And I had like, I had dreams about my teacher, like, you know, and I actually, someone told me about this in the last couple of years. And I remember the music video of pour some sugar on me of like this like hot lady, and she's like in this blue light, and then she pulls this lever and like water rains down on her. And I always associated that with like, first grade and just me seeing the Def Leppard music video for pour some sugar on me. Someone went Krishna I hear us telling the story. But I don't think that's in the music video. And I actually went and watch the music. It is not in the music video. I made this up. I have spent years trying to find where I came up with this imagery, but I think it was just me fantasizing about my first grade teacher.

Olivia N 59:48

I think that's really I

Olivia N 59:54

am I like they know that scene you're talking about. So you think it's I'm something it's definitely in something.

Karishma 1:00:03

I mean, like, it's in things like it's in movies and things like that. But it should definitely be to something in the nature of like, pour some sugar on me. Or like honey, honey. You know, some kind of like sexy song from like, around that time period kind of like rock song.

Olivia N 1:00:28

Yeah, it's really bothering me. Is it Flashdance? I have, I've never heard that. Okay. It's there's like a like, are they sitting in a chair and then water's coming down from them. They're like, they're standing in water standing

Karishma 1:00:43

while they're standing. And then they like tug on this lever and they lift their opposite knee up, and then they lean back and they're all arch. You know?

Olivia N 1:00:54

Yeah. What?

Olivia N 1:00:56

Okay, so pause on that. I will think about it for you. And I'll check back. Okay, that was like, I know the scene. There's like a scene from Flashdance. But she's in a chair.

Olivia N 1:01:08

Yeah, I've never that's not it. That's not no, no. Okay. Okay, we

Karishma 1:01:12

have another crush.

Olivia N 1:01:13

Yes. Talk about it.

Karishma 1:01:15

Linda Cardellini as Velma. How would you feel about her looking so hot? Actually, what the fuck. And I actually still like will watch things. I'm not a TV person. But I will still intentionally watch things with Linda Cardellini.

Olivia N 1:01:32

And that read like latex.

Olivia N 1:01:35

Yes. Yes. That is exactly correct. Yeah.

Olivia N 1:01:43

And that you're like, This is something's doing something for me. I don't know what it is. Yeah, to doing something,

Karishma 1:01:49

I knew what it was doing to me.

Olivia N 1:01:52

Even though you knew I knew you knew. Okay. So, we're going to talk a little bit about maybe,

Olivia N 1:02:07

if identifying as a lesbian or deich ever felt scary to you? Oh,

Karishma 1:02:15

I was very averse to any labels. So like, when you asked me about if I ever used by, or like, you know, anything, I really was just no labels period, at that time, and I was very against it. And then when I was finally ready to like, tell people or like, in spaces, if someone asked me to identify, I would say I was a lesbian, you know, like, in college. Anything before that? It was very scary. Because I was like, that means I'm giving up on this, like, attempt to be straight, or like, make my mom happy and things of that nature. Like, so. Yeah, it's, it's scary. And I mean, like, I definitely got called like a dyke in high school and not in the nice way. Um, yeah, like, I feel like a lot of guys were calling me a dyke and actually had a fake boyfriend at the time. Honestly. Yeah. I mean, it was a real boyfriend. But like, I did it just because my friends were like, hey, Krishma aren't you like interested in guys? And I was like, Yep, totally am and. And they were like, Oh, this guy likes you. And I was like, Okay, great. My parents are getting on my ass. You're getting on my ass. What to do that biggest mistake? Oh, honestly, one of the biggest mistakes in my life.

Olivia N 1:03:44

Because think about that. I think about it a lot. Because honestly,

Karishma 1:03:51

I don't know if you'll know this analogy, but I did not consent to tea as a 13 year old dating an 18 year old. That is not how that works, you know? So like, what is a big mistake? Yeah, I was a wee little freshman. And he was like, an 18. Year. He was my senior mentor, actually. So like when you do the freshman functions they give you like a mentor group.

Olivia N 1:04:17

Yeah. We you

Olivia N 1:04:20

that's a sign of the police. Yeah. 1818 And you're 1318 1318 13 at 1318? Yes. How long did you guys date?

Olivia N 1:04:33

Definitely a couple of months.

Karishma 1:04:34

Oh, god. Yeah. Is very early into my freshman year. And then like, I want to say I definitely got a couple like, five, six months at least.

Olivia N 1:04:49

That's next

Karishma 1:04:51

major bumner. Anyways, all I've learned is like to not beat myself up over it because I was just doing what I thought was right. At the time,

Olivia N 1:05:01

you know, yeah.

Olivia N 1:05:04

Yeah, cuz you skipped a year. So you were small for ninth grade? I was 13. Yeah, you were young for ninth grade? I was 13 in seventh and eighth grade.

Olivia N 1:05:15

Okay.

Olivia N 1:05:23

Have you ever struggled with? Would you say, would you say? Have you ever struggled with your identities other than maybe your gender identity?

Olivia N 1:05:34

Hmm. I wouldn't say I struggled

Karishma 1:05:37

with that. Like, I don't think of it as a struggle. Have I had like, transitional periods? Yes. Did I feel like it caused me any turmoil? Not necessarily. I feel like I was already kind of like, I already wanted to break gender norms at a very early age, like, I didn't want to dress very girly. Or, like, I associated it with things I didn't want in life, you know, based on like, familial expectations, get married, have a kid, Be beautiful, be sexy. And I'll just like, don't care about that, like, you know.

Olivia N 1:06:11

And so,

Karishma 1:06:15

I don't know that those kinds of things just didn't matter to me. Or, like, either, I wanted to be hyper feminine at times, like when I was like, let me try this and see that I can make it work. And then there were also times where I was like, This is so disgusting. Like, I can't do this. But I didn't have any particular feelings about like, how to identify I was just like, I am, who I am, it doesn't really matter. You know, and I could label it as whatever, I don't care what pronouns people use for me, as, you know, as long as they're respectful, but also like, I feel like I've cultivated enough space in my life, where it is always with respect. So I don't really mind, you know, I'm thinking about something else also, is when I was in middle school, I 100% would spend so much time like packing my jeans, like I was like, let's just see what this looks like. And kind of forget about that. Yeah, there was. And I was like, what was I doing? I was always trying to pee like a boy. Like, I was trying to get like little tubes and like, stand and pee.

Olivia N 1:07:22

I got good at it, too. You know, practice, practice makes perfect. That's a very gender activity. It is really just curious. Like,

Karishma 1:07:40

you know, like, just like, what would it look like if I didn't have to? What would it look like if I was packing? Hold? And when I was in high school, I would make jokes. I'd be like, I actually have like, the biggest dick in this room. Like, I wonder what that was all about. And no one thought anything of it. I don't think like, my friends are just like, Oh, that's funny. You know, like, you have the energy. You're carrying yourself. You're comfortable with yourself kind of thing.

Olivia N 1:08:12

Yeah. Yeah. The closet we'll see through the clothing person who was surprised

Olivia N 1:08:22

was you?

Karishma 1:08:27

Yes, I like the number of times my mom was like, Are you gay?

Olivia N 1:08:29

Tell me and you were like, No, literally all

Karishma 1:08:33

I was just like, No, no, you're simply mistaken. I'm, I'm trying to make this work for you right now. Like, quit breaking the illusion. You're hitting the fourth wall here. Stop that. Like, no. You're not supposed to know about that. It's like telling like, like a kid kind of finding out about Santa to earlier like Shin. You're not supposed to know about that yet.

Olivia N 1:09:00

Give it a couple more years. Though, you

Olivia N 1:09:03

mentioned earlier how people just seem to look at you and know that you're gay. Mm hmm. So can you talk about how clothing jewelry, makeup, tattoos, piercings, or other body mods or forms of gendered expression have assisted with your lesbianism or your gender identity or gender expression.

Karishma 1:09:23

I'm a super body mod person.

Olivia N 1:09:26

I

Karishma 1:09:28

would pierced my ears when I was like, I think definitely by sixth grade. I was just piercing my ears all the time. And like, I'm almost my mom was super against any jewelry. Actually, some of it was kind of like punishment lols because they pierced my ears when I was like a newborn. And they itched my ears so bad. I ripped it out and I tore my ear lobe. And then they were like, That's it. You're never getting earrings again until you're sure. And I'm like I'm, you know, like, I'm a preteen like, I'm not I'm sure I know. I know what I want. I want to look emo. And I want the piercings. And they were just like, No, no, because you ripped them out when you were a newborn. Okay, heartache. Anyway, so they did pierce my ear lobes. And then they were always like, no, no, you're not allowed to do the others like no more. You're only allowed to have your yellows pierced and then what did I just do on myself? You know, take a little safety pin. Enjoy. And then like, honestly still have them which is like, great, because I was I was good at taking care of it. I got hurt a lot as a kid. I knew how to take care of a boo boo. You know, like, I know what to do. I know what to Google. Like how to take care of it. You know, you do the little sea salt soaks or whatever they recommended back in the 2000s. Honestly, that's still exactly what I do. And I've never had a problem with a piercing heartache. People. People are like, my nipples took so long to heal, homie, I did that in my college dorm room bathroom by myself. I have four nipple piercings, and I have never had an issue once in my life. And you know what? Maybe you just don't know how to take care of.

Olivia N 1:11:09

Do you have horizontal and vertical? Yeah, yes.

Karishma 1:11:13

I have the tiniest nipples to like, what? Honestly, they

Olivia N 1:11:17

look great. But you did it yourself. Oh, yeah. And it was always like, piercing your nipples is so wild.

Karishma 1:11:26

I literally did it in my dorm bathroom. Okay, I had like an apartment style dorm. Yeah, but still, no, yeah. I have like, I had like class in like an hour. And I was like, I'm gonna do this before I get on the bus. And I was like, great. And then I went to class. I

Olivia N 1:11:46

don't like hurting myself.

Karishma 1:11:48

I did my septum when I was like, 12 years old. And well, yeah. So like I said, I do I don't wear it. I mean, I still have the hole because I wear it sometimes. But it has never tried to close on me. And I'm so glad because sometimes I feel like I want to wear it. And I'm uh, I'm able to. Yeah. And honestly, I feel like these years I only put it in like, once a year for like a day. And it still goes in no issues. And then I'm like, I keep touching my nose. And I feel weird about it.

Olivia N 1:12:25

So that I think missing. Oh, because you have it.

Karishma 1:12:28

Yeah, cuz I have it like it goes in just fine. No issues. I just feel weird about wearing it again, because I'm like, I'm so used to not having it. But like as a teenager, I was like this. This is gold.

Olivia N 1:12:41

need this? Yeah, yeah. So

Olivia N 1:12:50

you just love doing your own piercings.

Karishma 1:12:52

Oh, yeah. And then like, high school comes around, and I'm like, let's, let's tattoo ourselves. And so I would do stick and pokes on myself. And I did do one on my friend too. She's the one who kind of got me into it. And then when I was in high school, also, I was in a huge rebellious phase. I think this was when I was really like fucking mom. And I shaved my head. And actually, I feel like, yeah, she was she was really upset about it, actually. I was like, I want my hair short. Honestly, the pictures of it. They kind of look awful. Like, oh, I had like, like sports pictures. And I was like, This looks so bad in retrospect, like it was not flattering on the face. But my selfies they did look good. So I think it was just professional photography. They were just not good at their job.

Olivia N 1:13:44

Yeah. But yeah, I was like,

Karishma 1:13:49

haircuts, tattoos, like, all the rage. I was like, I need a side shave at one point. And I was like, this is all the rage. And I haven't undercut now too. So like, what's new, very affirming low key having short hair.

Olivia N 1:14:07

Who would have thought? What a thought?

Karishma 1:14:12

Who would have thought people were outraged though, they were like, your hair is so nice. It's so soft, so beautiful, so long. Like it went down to my butt at that point. And they were like, and you just like, cut it all off. And I was like, I don't

Olivia N 1:14:24

hair, hair. Be real. It's gonna grow back,

Karishma 1:14:30

literally. And it did. And like, someone actually asked me recently, they were like, how do you have like a relationship with your hair? Like, is it important to you? And like, how does it relate to gender? And I think it was because they were going through their own, like hair gender journey. And

Olivia N 1:14:47

I was kind of just like, I have

Karishma 1:14:51

never really thought that much about my hair. If I want it one way is probably just for aesthetics. You know, like right now I want to grow my under cut out, but it's only because I want to bleach the part that comes out from under my ears because I saw some like manga, where the dude had his hair bleached there, and I'll just like, I want that for me.

Olivia N 1:15:14

Now I get now what

Karishma 1:15:15

manga it was, I was just like, See, you're rocking it. Right? It's

Olivia N 1:15:20

all the rage. So let's talk about how art

Olivia N 1:15:28

impacts your lesbianism and you and your identities and how you understand yourself. It's not just that you're lesbianism, it can be talked about how art impacts, like, growing up, and being disabled or talking about chronic pain or talking about other aspects of yourself and how art has helped with that, because I know that you're an artist.

Karishma 1:15:48

Okay. Is this like a offshoot from question? 21?

Olivia N 1:15:53

Oh, it's question 21. I just don't phrase them all the same. Okay,

Karishma 1:15:56

because I haven't answered for 21. And I have a different answer for what you just asked.

Olivia N 1:16:00

Okay. So I always feel like I'm saying the question, but I honestly don't recall what I said before. But you remember, so answer 21? And then answer what I said or answer what I said in the answer. 21. Whatever makes the most sense to you.

Karishma 1:16:14

I'm going to answer what you said, which I felt was more about, like my art practice, and how that yeah, like helped me and I feel like the question is more towards what art Have you seen?

Olivia N 1:16:25

But oh, yeah. It's what I said.

Karishma 1:16:30

No, and I think they're super, they're both super valid questions. So I want to answer both of them for you, actually, because you're forced to listen to me right now. Great. So as for, like, how I feel like are impacted me growing up. Or like, for my personal experience making art, I feel like it was like a good source of expression. And I definitely drew a lot of girlyies and boobies that was, you know, just just how it goes. I feel like I actually didn't make a lot of art when I was younger. Because when it comes down to expressing your feelings, like, I feel like if I had art, my mom would go through it, you know, like, my stuff wasn't private. So like, if I had journals, she was definitely reading them. And so I just didn't have a journal, you know. And so like making art, I actually drew some like, dark shit. Like I was like, I don't know, like schools and stuff. And I mean, like, obviously darker than that. But just for an example, like my mom didn't like skulls. So she would go through, like any art I made and like, throw it out. And so I feel like I wasn't super expressive in my art at the time. Did I like doing it? I really do. I love doing it. Yeah, yeah, I did. And I like, I enjoyed that. I was in like these after school art programs. Or when I was taking art classes. I really liked that. And I thought that was very fun. But I wasn't like, engaging with it as I am now. Like, I think now it is more therapeutic. And I'm like, what of my life can I share in my art? You know, and I feel like in my life, I have been gaslighted about a lot of things. Like, my mom was like, I never hit you. I'm like, Well, you know, Where's this coming from? And just things like that. And it was actually really validating my dad recently was like, oh, yeah, I remember when your mom used to, like, beat you purple. And he was like, Thank you for like, being the first person to ever be like, Yeah, I remember that. Because, like, who? Who else is gonna remember that for me? You know, especially if you're lying to me and saying this never happened. Very gaslighted behavior. But going with this, um, I look, give me a second.

Olivia N 1:18:44

I was saying

Karishma 1:18:48

about art. Yeah, now it's much more therapeutic, like I can make the art I want to make. And like, no one else can take that for me if this was my opinion, and how I existed in the world. Like, that is a good way to present that and share it for me. And so yeah, I I feel like also, like, no one is looking over my

shoulder at what I'm making anymore. Like, I can really just do whatever I want. That's like freedom of existence. Basically. No one's gonna say you can't color that. You can't draw circles. Like maybe someone will judge me for whatever. I don't really care.

Olivia N 1:19:25

But to

Karishma 1:19:28

go to the second question, unless there were a follow up on this one. Okay, to go back to the other question about what art and like media kind of shaped or helped me find my lesbianism. I watched so many of those lesbian web series on YouTube. Like those were a cultural revolution. Actually, I was prepping for this question. And I was like, I'm gonna find the name of it. The one I loved watching was till lease do iPart do us part to lease do us part from unsolicited project. Absolutely a game changer. I was watching that shit all the time, they would make all these like, like one that was entertaining.

Olivia N 1:20:18

And then to I also loved

Karishma 1:20:20

watching those like really artsy videos like they'd be like, this is a film, you know, like an indie film, and they would do like little gay, lesbian love stories, and I would eat that shit up. I was like, This is what I'm doing with my afternoons and you know it?

Olivia N 1:20:38

Yeah, the washed a lot of lesbian web series. Yeah. Yeah. On YouTube. Did you watch that? Carmilla one.

Karishma 1:20:47

I feel like that rings a bell, but I'm not 100% Sure.

Olivia N 1:20:51

That's okay. I was just curious. Like another one of the people on the project, Maya loves and actually spent like 30 minutes of her oral history doing a breakdown of lesbian YouTube and talking about lesbian web series. So you can like Command F search the transcript when it gets published for that timestamp section. If you if you want to hear and then like DM her about it. She would love to talk about it. Okay, genuinely, I'm not joking. She know, I believe

Karishma 1:21:21

you. And like, I want her to reminisce on that. Because hardcore. I literally watched two hours in the middle of last night, just like I looked up the name, but now I have to watch it. And all of a sudden I was in season two, you know?

Olivia N 1:21:36

Yep. Yep.

Olivia N 1:21:39

does happen to know that. So

Olivia N 1:21:44

you want to talk about that you can talk about it with her.

Olivia N 1:21:48

I'm actually supposed to watch that Carmilla web series, so that I can talk about it with her because she loves it so much. I love it.

Olivia N 1:21:57

I'm like, Huh?

Karishma 1:21:59

I love that you're engaging. Yeah, well,

Olivia N 1:22:01

the things you do for your friends.

Karishma 1:22:06

And yeah, my friend is super into BTS, and I watched a video and we would watch the video, I would take notes. And then we would have a 30 minute discussion for every single video about like, the metaphors and like the things they were referencing and how it all tied to the overarching plotline. It was kind of crazy. It took weeks because like I was working, and she was in school, and like, you know, we'd have to coordinate the evenings and like if we had other things going on. Yeah, it was wild. And I think we're supposed to do another night where we catch up on them, because it's been a couple of months.

Olivia N 1:22:47

Hell yeah. Like

Olivia N 1:22:51

that's something I would do. I don't even listen to BTS. I don't know siddik about like Kpop except the fact that there's interactions between Kpop in anime on tick tock so sometimes they get the stray like the straight fandom and then like the head cannons they have about like the all girl groups being lesbians.

Olivia N 1:23:13

Yes.

Olivia N 1:23:15

I think that can be problematic. You shouldn't headcanon about real people's sexuality.

Karishma 1:23:20

Oh, yeah. I'm also not that into Kpop. So like, but like,

Olivia N 1:23:23

oh, I don't know shit about Kpop. Some of them,

Karishma 1:23:26

they do be like, I'm just thinking about some of the songs like you're talking about scissoring and you're saying that's not fruity.

Olivia N 1:23:31

Like talk about scissoring

Karishma 1:23:34

some of them. I'm like, yo, what? Oh, my God, I'll send this to you later. But I saw this tic tock of this girl group. And they're they're literally like, scissoring on the stage with clothes on. Like, their, like, their legs right there. They're laying down on the stage and they cross legs and they go poop boom. And that's like part of the like routine. And I'm like, You telling me that's not like, I'm not I don't know anything about them. But I'm like, if I were just to assume something about you, it might be that they're gay.

Olivia N 1:24:04

Yeah,

Olivia N 1:24:06

weird vibes.

Karishma 1:24:09

Weird. Like so great. Like I love

Olivia N 1:24:13

I bet you love that. That makes sense. I love it. I just don't like that men are also seeing the same thing. You're so right. But I wonder how many is the part that it's a probably for men. Anyways, think about that. We're still there watching the watching

Olivia N 1:24:29

your stuff. Okay, so

Olivia N 1:24:33

what were your first encounters with lesbian sex? both directly and indirectly? And what thoughts did you have about it before afterwards?

Karishma 1:24:44

I have an answer for this pause.

Olivia N 1:24:48

All right, great.

Karishma 1:24:51

So I don't know if it's trauma or if I'm a weird kid, or what? Maybe both maybe all of the above. But like, I was watching hardcore lesbian porn and like fourth grade. Like, I had zero points doing that, and I don't think that should be the case for people. But it's the truth. I just like being real with you here in this moment. And I'm talking like BDSM fetish content, but like, also like the real time like, I wasn't into the fake, like lesbian stuff, like I was like, it used to be the homemade kinky content, kind of, you know. And I remember my parents actually found it in the browser history on the laptop. And I was just like, it wasn't me. I'm like, 10 What am I even looking at? And then I actually like, it was totally me. Like, I don't know, it's me, you know, but I don't know if they believe me or not. Like, maybe they kind of bought it because I was 10. You know, like, they kind of didn't ever say anything about it. Like, after that, they were just like, okay, and then let me walk away from that conversation.

Olivia N 1:26:01

But yeah,

Karishma 1:26:04

that was like my first encounter with like, lesbian sex. Damn,

Olivia N 1:26:12

you were so you were like searching for homemade fetish content. Homemade lesbian fetish called What drew you towards that ish content?

Olivia N 1:26:21

Um, I am going off.

Olivia N 1:26:25

No, I know, I'm going off notes. But

Karishma 1:26:30

I don't I don't know. Because I honestly don't really. I feel like I've repressed a lot of memories. So actually, all the things I've told you about my childhood today, I've had to take so long to think about like, yeah, what to remember. And I think I've actually gone through almost every memory I've ever had. So

Olivia N 1:26:50

congrats, so prepare for this.

Karishma 1:26:53

I just, I really don't have a lot of my memories, like from my childhood, like, honestly, anything until like,

Olivia N 1:26:59

I turned 17 I probably

Karishma 1:27:02

won't have like, like, I could tell you like concepts of things. Here was a behavior or like a weakly occurring activity that happened, but I couldn't tell you like most things. But I could tell you, I remember what like, I know, I did do this, like hardcore lesbian porn. Like, watch it. But was I like, do I remember how I got there? No. Like, I feel like it was probably some add, you know, some malware existing somewhere. And I was just like,

Olivia N 1:27:41

like, you don't have to think that hard. Babe. You don't have to think that hard. Okay, like, you could just go to like, when you're 17.

Olivia N 1:27:49

Like, it doesn't have to be that far. Like, were you like,

Olivia N 1:27:52

did you continue to watch porn?

Olivia N 1:27:55

I mean, yeah.

Karishma 1:27:57

I feel like no one else was watching porn. Like, I don't know, if I was just a weird kid, or was exposed to early. Or if I have like very childhood trauma. I can

Olivia N 1:28:06

tell you that you are not a weird kid. And most of the people in this project watch porn very young. Yeah, so you're good. So you're good. I was like, Look, I'll break the fourth wall. I do that a lot. Thank you so much. There's like several other people. It's like most of the people. I'm like,

Karishma 1:28:22

sure that is true. But I'm also like, I feel like I've told people and they're just like, that's a really young and I'm like, I was also probably hormonal. Like, at that point. I had my period for like, two years, you know? Yeah. There are bodily changes happening.

Olivia N 1:28:39

Like, no, it's definitely for sure. Young. But I don't think that's like, a huge thing. Like, I don't think that's like a like a like a thing on you. Like, I think that's just a lot of young people in our age group found porn very young, because our parents didn't have the internet literacy. To know how to make sure we didn't encounter these things yet.

Karishma 1:28:56

You know, my dad, he definitely worked with computers. So like, I feel like he knew they just didn't do it.

Olivia N 1:29:03

Yeah, that's what I mean. I was like, did you just like not? That's what I mean. Yeah, they didn't care or they didn't know.

Karishma 1:29:10

Yeah. So I don't know. But then I just got really good at like, not like making sure to clear my browsing history and shit like that. And my parents actually have like, my dad has like a stick up his ass. He's actually I've mentioned my mom being like, awful. My dad is also kind of awful.

Olivia N 1:29:31

Yeah, I figure

Karishma 1:29:32

I'm like, so he would actually check not just like the computer history, but he would also he was like, step up. He was like, let me check. The Wi Fi. He was like, let me go on like, the router logs or whatever. And so like, what does that do? You just like, they're always talking about like, oh, we hope you're smarter than us. You know, like, as our children we want our children to be smarter than us. And I'm like, Look, guess what, I'm a fuck. genius out here. Just kidding, like not being serious at all. But like, I'm a genius. I'm gonna figure out how to get around like this thing you're doing. And he was also like, super into, like, monitoring my bank account and like, shit like that. He's, he's another problem in my life. Honestly, his issues came a lot later, like, in my early adulthood,

Olivia N 1:30:22

but yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Karishma 1:30:34

Like, that's a whole mess. I'm gonna leave.

Olivia N 1:30:38

No, like, if you feel a place where you think you want to talk about your relationship with your dad more? Because you didn't like it getting it really like you said like he was kind of like a non entity.

Karishma 1:30:48

Yeah, I kind of forget. Honestly. Lack of object permanence. Haven't seen my family and a couple days.

Olivia N 1:30:55

days. Yeah. I saw them over

Karishma 1:30:59

the weekend.

Olivia N 1:31:04

Yeah, no, I get that. No real. I get that.

Karishma 1:31:13

Yeah, no, I saw that. I saw them recently. Honestly, I started taking notes on things to talk to my dad about like, just so that we have points of conversation. Also. Like, when I graduated from college, I moved back home because they were like, Christian, we need you at home. We need you to like watch your sister. She has such bad anxiety. Like, we need you to help us out with taking care of her. And I was like, I don't really have a job lined up. I I had just turned 21 I was like, I don't know what I'm doing with my life. Okay, so I moved back home. And like, all kinds of wacky shit. Like my dad, he was saying, so he found his like, biological family. Okay. Okay. Like he finally started exploring this. And they're all a bunch of racist white people. And like, they're like, oh, we should meet them. Like, no, thank you. And I actually met, I met his like, he calls him his dad, which is crazy. Because it's only been like, three years. I'm like, yo, I won't even call you dad half the time. You know, like, you

Olivia N 1:32:20

don't know this. You don't know this man.

Olivia N 1:32:21

Right? Also, like,

Karishma 1:32:24

his adoptive father. I knew him my entire life. Like, you know that. That's the only person he didn't even remember his birth father. And I was like, that's past wild. You and your ancestry.com type shit. That's That's why people stuff from real. Like, you wouldn't touch me on ancestry.com

Olivia N 1:32:42

I don't really think I really care. I also can't do it. Real chattel slavery, wah wah.

Karishma 1:32:54

But no, like, that's totally some white people

Olivia N 1:32:56

to be. Yeah.

Karishma 1:33:00

And yeah, so he found this guy. And they, this was like p COVID. Right. He's like, Oh, he wants to like, come stop by and say hi. And I was like, Okay, well, you can like meet him at work or whatever. Like the rest of us aren't like, comfortable with your antivax father from Florida coming in? Yeah, like, and this was like, March, you know, like, the very beginning of COVID. Nobody really knew anything. And he like, my dad brought him home. Like literally brought him into our house. I was like, I'm strange,

Olivia N 1:33:34

man. No, seriously. And

Karishma 1:33:38

oh, my god, he was saying the most out of pocket shit. He was like, yeah, he was telling us about how he was like in the army. Oh, no, I'm not. I'm like anti military and shit. So like, yeah, I don't really know. I don't know which one he was in. I don't really care that much about him to remember. But he was like, Yeah, and I was in the Philippines. And then I saw this woman, and I said, your mind and she was only like, I can't remember what it was now. But she was a teenager. And he was like, you know, an adult in the military. You know, like, at least 18 For sure. I think he was like, 20 something. Actually. He was like, You're coming home with me. And then he brought her home. And like, they had children and things like that. And I was like, that is so disgusting. One the way you talked about her, just like the colonizer in you. It's ridiculous. And yeah, like he was saying these things. And he was talking about how his daughter who is like, I actually don't know how old she is, but she's like, young adults, right? I guess like, she had a boyfriend and she got pregnant. And he was like, I'm gonna lock you in my basement and like you're gonna marry my daughter and all this thing and she told he told the guy he asked to join the army or military law. Whatever, we don't care about the details, but like, you know, she was like, You're gonna do that and you're gonna marry my daughter, and you're gonna look after this kid. And I was like, That is so crazy. Like that you're even like thinking the same. And he was saying them. He was just like Soul repulsed, honestly. And so my dad, I don't know, he's spending too much time with these white people.

Olivia N 1:35:20

Like, he's white though. They that's what they do.

Karishma 1:35:23

I know. And like, I had never seen this before my life because I, I never really saw his side of the family. And all of a sudden, there's all these white people from Florida who don't like me. And then, and then my sister is watching TV. My sister's watching TV. She's watching Love Island, her and my mom watched love island together. And real. If I'm home, like, they'll be like, Crispo, please watch with us. Please watch with us. And I'll be like, Okay. And so like, we're all watching it like as a family and my dad happens to be in the room. And he's like, Oh, this is going to start making you like act like a whore to my sister. He's like, maybe we shouldn't allow her to watch this. I'll lock you in the basement. I was like, I wonder where he got this language. And I was like, I literally, this wasn't in the last couple of years, obviously. And I was just like, you can't be talking to her like that. Like she's doing just fine. Honestly, like, you need to be quiet. You have no place to be talking right now. And honestly, you should go reflect on that. And then he started saying like racist things. And I yeah, I was just like, you need you can't be saying these things. Mahima isn't like Sorry, redact her name. Yeah. But I was just like, you can't be saying this to my sister. She's an impressionable like, teenager, like, Who are you to even be saying this stuff and you should go think about it. And he was just like, I Booba I, I can say what I want a man in his household. Excuse me. And my sister. It was so funny. Because like my sister started getting a little rebellious around this time to like, we were reorganizing the kitchen. And she goes, I don't know where to put the like recipes. Like how should I organize them? I go, you should do it this way. My dad chimes in he gets a different solution. And my sister goes,

Olivia N 1:37:20

you don't even cook like I'm listening to her.

Karishma 1:37:25

Like, iconic. I love this moment. Like, in your face. My dad looks so shocked. Like he couldn't ever. But honestly, that's what he deserved.

Olivia N 1:37:37

It is what he deserved. It is what he deserved.

Karishma 1:37:39

Yeah. Crazy little man.

Olivia N 1:37:41

Oh, God. So when were your

Olivia N 1:37:48

first encounters with lesbian sex directly?

Olivia N 1:37:51

Indirectly is porn directly? Having? Yeah. Um, I feel like high school,

Karishma 1:38:03

I guess sex. Not so much in high school. Like definitely like, kissing girls and stuff in high school. But I don't I wouldn't say it was like sex. I think that came more in college. When I had like space to be doing things. Like without my parents watching or like, trying to be in my business. Actually, when I was in college, they didn't like talk to me at all. Only when I was at home. Otherwise, they would totally. I can pause if you need.

Olivia N 1:38:34

No. Okay.

Karishma 1:38:37

Yeah, I think I think they called me like three times when I was in college. And I was like, surprised every time I was like, someone's dying. Clearly. No one was ever dying when they called. Just for the record. It was just like, kind of random.

Olivia N 1:38:54

But yeah,

Karishma 1:38:57

like so like college was a very, like freeing time. And I could, you know, have my lesbian sex in peace.

Olivia N 1:39:07

And were you scared?

Karishma 1:39:10

Was I scared? No. Cuz, I mean, like, I had already had sex. I mean, it was significantly better after this. Because it was just like, me pegging a bunch of dudes. And I was like, this is literally awful. Don't touch me. So

Olivia N 1:39:24

your first time you had sex was when you pegged men

Karishma 1:39:28

in college? No, I was doing that in high school to

Olivia N 1:39:31

your pegging. Wow. So what?

Karishma 1:39:36

No, like I ordered like a strap. I have

Olivia N 1:39:38

your house. Yeah.

Olivia N 1:39:41

So you've had a strap for that long. I have had a strap for your straps linear. You've been a strap slinger for years. Yeah.

Karishma 1:39:47

Like I was like, I'm gonna be doing this. Yeah, I was. I was just like, that's so cool. Anytime a guy like it was a guy and I was like, arbitrary like jump Really speaking, I feel fine with this. But like, you have a penis. I don't know what to do with it. I don't want to look at it turnover. Like I was like this. This is the part I can be strong enough for. Yeah.

Olivia N 1:40:16

You thought high school boys who were willing to get strapped down? Oh yeah.

Karishma 1:40:21

And there was this one guy actually did it for like, let's see, I started my sophomore year of high school.

Olivia N 1:40:28

So this was like

Karishma 1:40:31

2014 Maybe. So I was like, 1415 years old. And then I continued to do this with this guy, like,

Olivia N 1:40:40

through

Karishma 1:40:44

I want to say like, a year into college, or so. And yeah, so like, it was like a good few years. Like, I was like, I could

Olivia N 1:40:52

work like, Yeah,

Karishma 1:40:54

I thought about it for a good, good while I was really trying, like, and also it was part of the experiment. Like could I like maybe I need to develop like an emotional attachment to be okay with this or like, enjoy it. Like maybe it just like takes time. And so I committed to it. You know, I was out here really, really

Olivia N 1:41:14

trying. And it didn't work out and did not work out.

Olivia N 1:41:20

Not at all. And so your first time you had sex like was with someone who wasn't a man was in college after your sophomore year. And it just felt right.

Karishma 1:41:30

No, I think because we're overlapping. Okay, so

Olivia N 1:41:33

you were having sex with non men and men? And you were like, Huh?

Karishma 1:41:41

Yeah, I was like, one of these is clearly superior.

Olivia N 1:41:44

Yeah, we'll get to it eventually.

Karishma 1:41:46

I was also like, I knew I was very ready to accept that I was queer not ready to put like a label on it or even, like bio or anything like that. But I was definitely like, liking women is part of this reality. I can explore that. But like, having this fallback of I'm still trying to make this work for now. You know?

Olivia N 1:42:09

Yeah. So like your first time having like, lesbian sex, like when you just committed to it, and you were like, you know, what, were you still like, did you like were you entering like different positions? Or were you still mostly slinging strap? Were you a strap wearer even when you were having lesbian sex?

Karishma 1:42:27

I was still mostly slinging the strap. I mean, I still usually am by choice. Um, yeah, I'm very nervous about having people touch me. Yeah. Just because like with that first boyfriend when I was 13, I did not consent to the T as they say. And so like, Do you know what that means?

Olivia N 1:42:54

You don't have to explain it.

Karishma 1:42:55

Okay. I mean, I can it's an analogy for like, coerced rape kind of stuff.

Olivia N 1:43:01

Okay, I was trying to read between the lines, but I don't know that metaphor. Okay. And I couldn't figure it out. But I was gonna Google it later. Okay.

Karishma 1:43:11

I recently discovered this. I mean, for a long time, I thought of it as like, Okay. I mean, I put myself in that situation. But I think that's really not what you're supposed to do. Or 13. I was 13. He was 18. He definitely known better. I also was definitely saying no. So like,

Olivia N 1:43:30

yeah,

Karishma 1:43:32

you know, but for a long time, that was like, I don't know, internal debate, self blame. But yeah, so like that tech. I don't like to count that as my first time. I would count my first course not. Thank you. Yeah. I would count my first time as like pegging that that guy. That was what's fair a couple of years. And then like, cuz I consented to that, like I said, this, this is an activity I'm willing to participate in. You know,

Olivia N 1:44:02

I definitely gave consent to that.

Karishma 1:44:04

Even if it wasn't, like, enjoyable, kind of, yeah. But, like, after that, yeah, no, let's be much better. But also, like, just from my experiences, I'm not willing to give up that like space. And so I'm really glad within like, the lesbian and queer community that like stone tops are like a thing and like a label that people have. Oh, that's very nice. That's very good and relieving, but like, I'm not the only one. You know, identify, just

Olivia N 1:44:37

don't talk. I think so. Okay.

Olivia N 1:44:46

Have you been

Olivia N 1:44:46

seeing any of the discourse online? This stone top pillow Princess discourse, or any of the Butch femme discourse, or have you mainly escaped that?

Karishma 1:44:56

I feel like I see it, but like, I really just don't care. Like yeah,

Olivia N 1:44:59

you're like DNI has nothing to do with me.

Karishma 1:45:02

Yeah, like, does it have something to do with me if I identify with those? Sure. But I'm also just like, these are terms that have existed, like, longer than most of these people have been alive. You know, there's a reason they exist. And like, I feel like labeling has become so like serious these days. Like, they're like, you should have a label, you should know what it is. And I'm just like, Yo, I mean, I feel like I was very lucky. And like, nobody really pushed me into having labels at any point. But like, you know, people ask, but no, no one at the time was really, like, you should have it and you should be correct about it the first time, you are like, you should know exactly what you are, like how you identify. And it feels so aggressive. And I'm really glad I didn't have to, like, explain myself away, or like, be forced to have an answer. So like, I never had to say, Oh, I'm bisexual, like, in the interim, when people knew I was seeing girls, but like, wasn't super open about it, or like, didn't put a label on it and things like that. And then when I was like, Okay, I'm a lesbian, like, this is, this is just a reality. Yeah. You know, then I was comfortable. And then I'm like, Yeah, sure. I like that I can have this label. But also, I like that I feel like I can exist without it if I wanted to, you know. So that's escape that discourse. Like, I'm just like, just leave it alone. The term exists, like, as long as you're not hurting anybody, as long as you're not like, define, like, the definition, or the original intention. And like, things can fluctuate, it's, it's complicated, but I feel like yeah, of course. Like, if people are using the term wrong, then that's a different story.

Olivia N 1:46:46

Well, yeah. So

Olivia N 1:46:54

do you believe in coming out? Have you come out multiple times before? And does the phrase coming into your identity resonate more? You mentioned not being out to your mom, as well.

Karishma 1:47:06

Okay, I don't personally believe in coming out for me. But it is complicated. Right? Like, should people assume it things? Do I hate it when they do? Is that Is it like, obvious? Like, I think it's kind of obvious on me, like, people perceive me as gay when they see me? Or like, don't I like it when people know, I'm like, a lesbian sometimes. And then I don't have to, like have this burden of having to address anything in the first place. Like, I don't have to think about it. Like I people know, people know, I'm in the LGBTQIA plus community. They are aware, and like, you know, I feel like there's all these like, like complicated pieces, because then I could even take it and go, isn't it? Like, don't I also believe that there's no right way to look queer, you know, and just like, there's a lot of nuance to it. I mean, I never

came out to my family. As I kind of mentioned, my cousin actually, like, let it slip to my mom a couple times. And I was, I was really pissed off. I'm still I'm actually still don't talk to him because of this. Yeah. Um, but this is the one I grew up with. So I was actually very close with him for a lot of my life. And like, he just kept letting it slip. And he's stupid. That's, that's what it is. The brief side tangent is he goes, I know, all the family secrets. And my mom was like the one and he like listed some things, you know, just kind of common knowledge. Like everyone knew this stuff. And my mom was like, all I really want to know is is charisma gay. And he was just like, I think you should have this conversation with her and said, Yes, basically, like, Don't be stupid. Anyway, and then, like, I visited home, and I had no idea he had had this conversation with her. And I was just kind of like sitting innocently, in the house, you know, just existing as a person on my phone or whatever. And my mom literally lectured me for like, three hours. It was wild. I was like, a scared little kittens and, and shaking. I was like, no, no, no, no, I was so like, I was denied. For our Yeah, yeah. And like, I'm definitely not like ashamed of being a lesbian. But I also just feel like I don't need it to be like, information that is that they could like weaponize against me. You know, like, how I don't need to give them ammunition for anything.

Olivia N 1:49:37

And

Karishma 1:49:40

yeah, I just feel like that's something that's so beautiful about me that I wouldn't want it tainted by my family in any way.

Olivia N 1:49:46

Yeah. But what has that I

Karishma 1:49:51

feel like I'm always lying, like I'm doing like I'm in queer ancestors project. So I'm literally like, making queer art and it's attached to my name and exists Sal in the world, and like, I'm doing this here with you, right?

Olivia N 1:50:07

You know, and like,

Karishma 1:50:10

I I'm just I'm tethering myself to like, the things I love in the world, especially like being a lesbian. And so I have to lie about that stuff. If I'm gonna go under this illusion, like, they can't be knowing that. Yeah. So, I mean, it means I lie a lot. And sometimes I'm like me, it would be so much easier if I didn't have to think about like, this giant web of lies I have constructed for the last 23 years, you know, like, every single part of my existence, I have tried to like, keep under wraps from them. But I'm also just like, they don't deserve to be a part of that in any way. And so like, Yes, I get really upset with like my cousin for like telling my mom things like that. Or my sister, she kind of lets it slip a lot to these days. Really? Yeah. And I'm like, I don't know. It's not that hard. Thank you. Thank you. No, it's super ridiculous. I actually had a conversation with my cousin about it. Hey, do you see like, what the problem was? In you telling your mom I had an art show? And he was like, Yeah, I get it, that it's like a queer program.

But she doesn't know that. And I was like, Well, here's the thing. They also don't know, I'm in an art program, too. But you could just have like,

Olivia N 1:51:27

not said anything.

Karishma 1:51:29

Exactly. And it was just never that deep. He just didn't want to tell his mom when the next time he was coming home was like, he just, that's That's it. And I was just like, but do you understand, like, why I'm not telling my family? And he was just like, I don't know. And his sister is his sister's by just for the record. And so like, she has similar experiences of like, not telling her parents these things. And she actually was in queer ancestors project to accidentally dishing her whole life out here. I shouldn't do that. Huh?

Olivia N 1:52:09

I mean, if this is not going to be like, someone would have to sit in listen to like the whole thing to be able to see this. Okay. Okay. Do you know what I mean? So like, you're really fine. And I'm only putting in your first name. Okay, so you're fine. Okay. Yes. That's cool.

Karishma 1:52:29

Anyway, sorry, if my cousin is listening to this, I don't mean to spill all your tea into the world. If you somehow got here, if you're upset by this, anyway.

Olivia N 1:52:47

Yeah. And he was just kind of like, you and

Karishma 1:52:50

my sister have so many secrets. It's not my fault. I can't keep them. Like, yeah, he was really wild. And with that, and I was just like, Yo, I was already like, we're done. We're done. Yeah, that's really a key. Yeah. So like, Ah, I don't get along with him right now. Maybe ever again. But we'll we'll see. I guess only time can tell.

Olivia N 1:53:16

Yeah, I'll really like him that much.

Karishma 1:53:19

Like him either. He needs to be humbled. Um, but going back to your question on like, coming out.

Olivia N 1:53:28

Yeah. I

Karishma 1:53:32

like so obviously, the answer for my family is very complicated. I don't ever plan to come out to them. I just don't think it's their business. But like, for friends, acquaintances, I feel like I'm not secretive about it

at all. I think like, I definitely say things like, if I am dating somewhere, I will say like my girlfriend or like things like that, like, but I'm not intentionally like going out of my way. I feel like it's generally unnecessary, unless I'm in a queer space. And I'm, like, super excited about it, you know, but then it's also like, I'm not coming out. I'm just I'm in a queer space. And I'm like, hello. Like, that's just that's just part of it. Like I'm happy. That's that's the zone. So

Olivia N 1:54:25

can you talk a little bit about how your views on marriage changed support after you identified as a lesbian both as an institution but also means of romantic unity? Okay,

Karishma 1:54:36

I was very anti marriage for a very long time. My family definitely knows I have always said like, I'm not getting married. I still kind of am like, just from a family where like arranged marriages are still like a topic of conversation. Like I have family members who had an arranged marriage last year. Like this is definitely like popular I have some like Indian friends who are trying to get arranged marriages right now. I think that's kind of wild.

Olivia N 1:55:08

But I felt like it's kind of like an easy stance

Karishma 1:55:11

to be like, I'm against marriage when it's like that, or like, it feels like that. And also, any time it like comes up, you know, it's usually like my family, like, when are you getting married? When are you having kids? And I know they mean with a man and that sounds so icky. Yeah, I'm just like, no marriage, no marriage. For me. I'm super into the idea of like, finding someone to like, share life with. Yeah, like, give and take, you can, like fill the gaps of each other. I don't know. I'm like a romantic, like, I love. I love a love story.

Olivia N 1:55:56

But I think if I found that

Karishma 1:55:59

and I wanted to make that legally recognized, I like if that person wanted to do that, I would be so honored. But otherwise, I think is kind of arbitrary. Like it's just a label, you know, like, I guess tax benefits, theoretically. You know, like, the government prefers relationships, but I don't know that they're out here preferring like, queer relationships.

Olivia N 1:56:24

Yeah. Wow. Yeah.

Olivia N 1:56:30

So now we're gonna move on to our discussions about community and yourself and lesbian community and queer community.

Olivia N 1:56:38

So how do you think

Olivia N 1:56:44

race informs your interactions with lesbian community? And second question kind of related? Do you have an understanding of how race informs your gender identity? Or if you think about race and gender at all at the same time?

Karishma 1:57:00

I'm okay. With the lesbian community, how does race and for my interactions

Olivia N 1:57:08

with your friends with people in your like, outer lesbian circuit, like making meek and making in meeting lesbians where you are now? Okay, your understandings of what lesbian community should be or what it looks like? Okay,

Karishma 1:57:23

I think when I was in college, I was definitely in the woowoo or W L. W. Like groups at my school, and like, it was super white. Like, I was not enjoying it. I was kind of just like, is this like, is this what queer spaces are? I didn't like going to the meetings, but I was also just like, I want to have like, sapphic spaces to be in. And so like, I would go to like events, but also kind of be like, I don't relate to these people at all. And I think that's because they're white, like, they don't have certain experiences. Or like,

Olivia N 1:58:05

yeah, it's just, it's different. I

Karishma 1:58:06

think we as a society can recognize that it is different. And so I didn't like to do that nowadays. I feel like a lot of my lesbian community is people of color. So I feel very lucky and like, grateful that that was able to be like, become a thing. And like, more available. A lot of them I've met through like art. So that's also very freeing, you know, I feel like art people and like creatives have this openness to sharing, or like, are very vulnerable with their own feelings, even just to themselves, which I think makes them more able to have conversations with or like, you can have deeper friendships with them because of that. It doesn't feel so surface level. So I feel like it allows for like, deeper community even. Just being able to be vulnerable with them that way, and like, Be understanding and

Olivia N 1:59:10

yeah. So

Olivia N 1:59:15

you were in you talked about race, and mostly when you were in college, was your interaction with lesbian community? Because you were in like, what you said was women loving women's spaces. And they were mostly white. Yeah. If not almost all white other than you. And now you would say that most of your community are like POC lesbians.

Karishma 1:59:39

Yeah, I don't think I really have any white friends to be

Olivia N 1:59:46

real. Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

Karishma 1:59:49

I am the token white friend, if you will. Yeah.

Olivia N 1:59:52

Yeah.

Olivia N 1:59:54

Which is? Yes.

Karishma 1:59:57

So my energy tells me the CHA

Olivia N 2:00:01

I thought you were either No, I thought you were either Christian because of your last name. Like because maybe you had like Christian parents, or. Or, or, or like previous marriage or something and then like you felt like I didn't think that you liked what you said. I was like, Oh, I honestly thought you were just like a Christian South Asian person. Okay. And that's why your last name was Johnson.

Karishma 2:00:31

Yeah, nobody ever thinks I'm white. I think people even who have known me for years like and I feel like it's if they have been friends with me that long is probably come up like you probably see my dad, but he is a white dude.

Olivia N 2:00:44

Yeah, yeah, I didn't think about that. I just just, I truly just thought you were like Christian.

Olivia N 2:00:50

Okay. Okay. I was

Karishma 2:00:53

just wondering like this. This is kind of where I started that as a white person. crushed red peppers on pizza is a must. You know,

Olivia N 2:01:03

that's hot tea. People can look some people are allowed to some mixed race people can be that ambiguity or pass as white and you are not one of the people. I just think about it. Just thought you were a Christian. Like I grew up in like a relatively I don't I wouldn't say a South Asian context. But most

of my neighbors were South Asian. Yeah. And I so I genuinely just assumed you were Christian. I was like, I don't know. I knew. So I'm like Christian Johnson. I was like, who were like South Asian on both sides. Like, yeah, I just was like, I was like, Yeah, you're just

Olivia N 2:01:35

Christian. But no, no, that's awesome. Olivia, Lord. Some background on me. That's still there and clocked me though.

Olivia N 2:01:48

No, I didn't I just I the only thing I clocked was maybe a little bit of Christianity. Generational Christianity, but no. I didn't clock the half white.

Olivia N 2:01:59

Yeah.

Karishma 2:02:01

I don't. I don't think anyone has. I've gotten like Mexican, Hispanic, around.

Olivia N 2:02:07

You not racially ambiguous though. Look, I don't your name is charisma.

Karishma 2:02:13

Look, I can't get into other people's minds.

Olivia N 2:02:18

racially ambiguous.

Karishma 2:02:20

I have never thought. I mean, like, if I remember went to Mexico, like, actually.

Olivia N 2:02:28

California, but like, Okay, I don't see it. But I could see why they would think that.

Olivia N 2:02:38

Yeah, I don't see it. Yeah. I don't either.

Olivia N 2:02:44

But I could see why they would think that. Especially because of your name would be like, where else could you? I know your work is Rocky. But like, that was the only thing that I clocked. That's not like, anyway. Okay, so, how does disability inform your interactions with less being clean, nice to your lesbian community. And like going out and stuff.

Karishma 2:03:10

Um, honestly, it kind of makes it hard to do anything. Just in general, living is hard with like disabilities. Interacting with people takes a lot of energy. And I say this in the most loving way. Lesbians love to do things. Like lesbians do love to do things. I love doing things. However, lesbians also love doing high energy things like hiking and rock climbing. Rock climbing is all the rage these days? Oh, no. It's because of

Olivia N 2:03:41

the fingers in the in the forearm strength? Well,

Karishma 2:03:46

I'm out here with arthritis.

Olivia N 2:03:50

You're like I'm arthritic.

Karishma 2:03:51

I am arthritic my my age I arthritic I have been for years. It is just the dilemma of the times, I guess. But yeah, in like woodworking, like just, I know I do art things that is also physically taxing. But like, I can't really just I can't be keeping up with all of this sometimes. So it makes a lot of like, community things take a very long time. Like I'm like, oh, I need my hiatus. And I hope the people in my life are understanding of that. I mean, I think they are like, I hope that is true. And I'm right to assume that of them.

Olivia N 2:04:35

Do you ever did you ever like adapt? Or does your community ever like accommodate?

Olivia N 2:04:44

Uh, yeah,

Karishma 2:04:45

I think so. I mean, I feel like a lot of the people that recently in my life are also have disabilities. And I feel like I've gotten a lot closer with those people. Because of that, like, you know, it's easier to do things or find tasks. sucks that are accessible. Like I love hiking, I used to be an athlete I love, I love doing that kind of stuff. But also, we, I feel like we're not accounting for the number of breaks that is necessary. Or like, just, I don't know, it's, it's too high intensity, and I need us to slow it down like hardcore, or, like, I need it. Like I too, would like to continue hiking, but I should know my limit a little better. And like, it's not always, like fun to be the person who is saying, No, we need to stop and turn around, you know, um, but

Olivia N 2:05:40

I don't know, I feel

Karishma 2:05:41

like also, a lot of my community now is also very art centric. And so I can kind of lead that a little better. Like, I could do that sitting, I could say, Let's do different art activities in the same space, you know, and like things that may be less difficult for me at the moment. Yeah, but like, other interactions with the lesbian community makes dating really hard. Like, I feel like I get judged, just a little bit, just a smidge for not dating right now. But like, kind of on a relationship hiatus, I'm trying to, like, maintain my health a little better. And like, you know, deal with having arthritis as it gets worse. And like, just being able to take care of myself in those ways.

Olivia N 2:06:34

Also, like, I have could have a lot

Karishma 2:06:37

more control over my life as an adult, which is very, very nice. You know, it's not at all like when I was living at home, and I couldn't really do anything about it. Like, today, I hardcore went to Target and just like, I feel like I have carpal tunnel. I think I'm getting like symptoms of carpal tunnel. And like, I got a bunch of recommendations. I want to target spree this morning. I was like, we're, we're getting all the remedies. We're trying them. We're trying to fix this right now. We're getting on the right track in our life. And it makes dating really hard. Because, you know, like, the lesbian stereotype of like, you howling and like having really long dates and stuff. Like, that's so true. And I would love to be doing that. But also, I'm in pain, I want to go to bed. Like, I can't be ruining my routine, I need to go do my morning and evening stretches, my midday stretches, I need to like go take some medicine. And like, I don't know, like having to think about those things so often. And like, am I drinking enough water and like constantly like trying to just do the bare minimum for maintaining my body? Sometimes. And honestly, more than the bare minimum? Because it's not just food and like drink? It's like, is it the right stuff? Is it going to cause inflammation? And like, also, like, I can't drink, like just because of it because it really aggravates my migraines, and my arthritis and things like that. And people love drinking, like, people love drinking. And I, I can't be doing that a lot of the time. Like I can go to those spaces, but then people like, feel weird about inviting me, I think just because they know I'm not going to participate. Yeah, but so like, it just takes up so much of my time and energy to be trying to like, Okay, do my morning stretches and like, do my nighttime stretches and like try and coordinate maybe going back to physical therapy, and like having all these doctor's appointments and like just trying to take care of myself that like how am I supposed to date in between all that, you know, and I actually was dating someone kind of recently. And they, they called me out and they were like, you don't know your own limits. They're like, You shouldn't be like taking a break sooner, and blah, blah. And I was like, honestly a major stress point. And I think that's kind of a big reason we broke up. But I was just I was so offended. I took that. So personally, I was like, You have no place to be saying that. I have been doing this for a really long time. And honestly, I definitely owe them an apology. Wow, I was not ready for that conversation yet. And like, I also had said, I wasn't really ready for the relationship because I was just, I had just moved out of my parents house. I was just like, trying to get my feet on the ground and like learn what it's like to be a person again. And I was just like, I'm not ready for this, but we can see where it goes. And then they're having these big conversations with me about like, I don't know my limits and I'm gonna be a little defensive about that because like,

Olivia N 2:09:40

I just I barely know you.

Karishma 2:09:42

Yeah, exactly.

Olivia N 2:09:46

I was just like, I think you wouldn't

Karishma 2:09:49

have said this. If we were just friends and I just think this is too early for you also to be gone that headfirst.

Olivia N 2:09:55

I would have said it if we were friends

Karishma 2:10:00

Real, that's really real. Have you?

Olivia N 2:10:01

Honestly, I would have said it if we were friends more than if we were dating.

Karishma 2:10:06

And honestly, I probably would have taken it better from a friend. Yeah.

Olivia N 2:10:09

Like, yeah,

Karishma 2:10:11

I was just like, you don't have any right to be demanding like that. I'm like, Yeah, I wasn't ready for that conversation yet. And I feel like it was probably maybe a little both of us. Like, they didn't get back on me so far. But also, like, I didn't need to be so defensive. But yeah, so like, it makes dating really hard. And then like, the fellow lesbians are, like, judging me, they're like, Oh, you're not dating right now. And it's just like, Yo, can you like? Yeah, I'm like, I've had a migraine for a month. Who am I gonna date right now?

Olivia N 2:10:48

He's,

Karishma 2:10:50

like, let me my oranges. Let me like, try and find the vitamins. I need her something. Like, I don't know. Yeah,

Olivia N 2:11:02

have you tried finding other like? Like, is it hard? Trying to build community or disabled lesbian community? Um,

Karishma 2:11:13

I feel like yes, like, I have a good few friends. But I think the majority of people don't really, like haven't experienced that. And that's, that's fair, I'm actually so glad. I'm so glad that there are people in this world who don't have to deal with these things. You know, they don't have to, like, worry about their health in these ways. Yeah. And I think that's a good way to live your 20s. Like, there's nothing wrong with having a disability, like, you know, go crazy, like, I'm out here living, you know, nothing wrong with that. And like, no shame. Take pride in it, even if you want. I don't care if people can feel how they feel about that. But like, you know, I'm just, I'm happy with whatever you perceive the world as, but like, I'm Loki so glad that people don't have to experience hardship. So like, is it a good thing in society that like, there isn't a huge community, maybe like, because then people aren't dealing with like shitty things. And that's nice. But also, like, selfishly, it would be kind of nice to have people to relate to. And especially, I feel like a lot of like, queer community that I found who relates to me is definitely significantly older, you know? And so like, Okay, I'm relating to like, people in their 40s and up, and like, they're so lovely. I love them with all my heart, but

Olivia N 2:12:35

also,

Karishma 2:12:38

you don't understand, like, where I'm at, like, we're not at the same stage of life to be relating in certain ways. You know?

Olivia N 2:12:46

Yeah. I know what you mean.

Olivia N 2:12:50

So you like you, you're finding disabled lesbian community, but mostly, it's older disabled lesbians. And it's okay to not to not want to wish chronic pain on people. And they still be like, proud of yourself for thinking about disability in a way, disability as a title. Like, I think a lot of times, it depends on the person or if they're multiple disabled, or have like inter disability community with people who are disabled in different ways than then, like physical disabilities, to think about the fact that like, it's okay for some people to wish that they weren't in pain. And it doesn't mean that they aren't proud or have some sense of pride or ownership of disability. Like it's okay to wish to not wake up with a migraine, or be so rad. Yeah, it would be so rad. And you can still be like, proud of disability or claim disability or be in like disability community and not want to wake up in chronic pain.

Olivia N 2:13:44

You're like, oh, sweet,

Olivia N 2:13:45

like, I'm honestly not that nice. I feel like this. Like, I just want to say this. This, I think people suck. And I think there's some like, comments online or about disability or conversations about that, that lack. Thought I was like, why are you saying this person is ableist? Because they don't want to be in pain anymore.

Karishma 2:14:08

Yeah, I'm just like, I wanted to cover my bases. I feel like people be getting cancelled all the time. Like, I don't think that's gonna canceling. Perfect. I have a

Olivia N 2:14:18

cancel you have what I like there's nothing to cancel you for, like, you're not you're not taking like a medical like sanest like curative understanding of disability if we're going to use like, feasibility studies terms. Like that's not what that means. You just like don't want to be in pain. Okay, cool. Like people like our pain adverse. You're like, you're like disability is awesome. And it is and it can be and you respect it and it's a part of your life and you identify as disabled. But like you don't have to want to be in pain.

Olivia N 2:14:51

Like like that's you can wish

Olivia N 2:14:56

to not be in pain, like the two things can exist at this Same time, and it doesn't make you ableist.

Karishma 2:15:02

I'm so glad that was clear though.

Olivia N 2:15:04

I normally wouldn't break the fourth wall like this. I do usually with this let you talk, but I was like, I can see that your anxiety, you're a little bit anxious about this. And so I was like, I should probably say something because I know it can feel bad that I'm just sitting here listening to you, and then you like drop a bomb. And then I say nothing except write on my paper. And I'm really, I just am like, giving you space to speak and process your own thoughts. But I felt like in this moment, I was like, Yeah, I should probably say something. Okay. Because if you're, like you're talking about, like, coming to terms with like, actually seeking help for your various disabilities. Sounds like a pretty vulnerable topic. Like I should probably

Olivia N 2:15:44

say something.

Olivia N 2:15:47

So also, I didn't mean to say that I was mean, I just meant like, you need more people in your, in your life. That said, what I said, because I didn't say a crazy thing. Okay, I said, a very average thing.

Karishma 2:15:59

I think I just don't talk to people a lot. So like, maybe I'm just not getting this opinion. You know,

Olivia N 2:16:05

I don't think this is a common opinion, unfortunately, especially in people of our age group who are not disabled, or have an understanding of disability. Um, I don't think it's that common for our age group. I just wish that you knew more people. Or we could like or that more people existed like that.

Karishma 2:16:21

Yeah. I mean, like, preferably like our age. Yeah. Who

Olivia N 2:16:26

are our age?

Karishma 2:16:27

Like, do I get this affirmation from like, my older friends? Yes. Do they also have like children, and like,

Olivia N 2:16:35

they also have like, Ira like Roth IRAs, and like EBIT Sheila Roth IRA, do you have a high yield savings account, don't you? I do. Yeah, that was the wrong word. I should have used like a 401. Yeah, I realized that what

Olivia N 2:16:50

I said it, damn. I'm sorry, I don't know. They're fucking old.

Karishma 2:16:55

Kids home. So

Olivia N 2:16:56

terrified. I need to get better at money. That's one of my worst things. Like someone gave me a money book with my mom's friend who's a Kenyan lesbian. And she gave me this book about money. And I was like, I'm not reading this shit. I'm not gonna read about I'm not gonna read some white men telling me what to do my money. That's not true. I also am bad at it. And I don't like being bad at things.

Karishma 2:17:21

It's so hard and so scary. And like, the only reason I have saved money is because I'm literally so terrified of having to move back home. I'm so terrified. I

Olivia N 2:17:33

don't have enough money to have a high yield savings account yet.

Karishma 2:17:36

You can just open it. I don't think you have to put anything in it.

Olivia N 2:17:40

That's so scary. Anyway, getting off topic. But yes, yes, I wanted to break the fourth

Olivia N 2:17:45

wall. I think I have it.

Olivia N 2:17:51

But yeah, um, but find the community.

Olivia N 2:17:55

Hopefully,

Olivia N 2:17:57

there'll be some more accommodating events. Honestly, I don't really like going places for sensory reasons. Because a lot of lesbian community spaces are loud as fuck, and not very sensory friendly. So my apartment with all my ambient lights and wheelchair accessible doors, is the is the meeting space. I love it. And that's where my and we just watch TV and movies of it. We're gonna have, we're gonna have a Valentine's, like, like, platonic love tea party. So we're gonna make like Valentine's collages and we're all gonna wear red white in

Olivia N 2:18:35

in pink.

Karishma 2:18:36

Okay, so cute. I need to

Olivia N 2:18:40

and we're all disabled and one of us is bisexual. The other ones are Jake's. There's one bisexual and the bisexual white. But I love CO and they're in Africana Studies major. So they're like with it. No, there's like, we love po we

Olivia N 2:18:58

know there's like, okay.

Olivia N 2:19:02

They're dating. They're dating like a black gender Cooper's in a project Sasha, who you don't know. But I don't know. I was like, oh my god, Sasha, like, you'll you'll see the URL history. Okay, make pretty much jewelry. Don't really forget I'll show you their jewelry account. Okay. That was off topic. Anyways, they're all that's part of my like, disabled lesbian community. And I didn't put in the scare quotes that is part of my disabled lesbian community RSP signs. Yeah, there's also other disabled lesbians who are in this maybe you guys can connect. Okay, I don't know. I said you guys. I can. I'm so sorry.

Olivia N 2:19:44

I can connect you guys. I'm sorry. There's like quite a few was

Olivia N 2:19:53

like more than more than five less than 2015 Who would claim disability? Like there's people claim like neurodivergent sort of like mental illness, and I haven't been

Olivia N 2:20:05

like putting,

Olivia N 2:20:07

like, I haven't been like if someone doesn't claim disability, and you listen to the oral history, and you're like, Oh, they're talking about disability, like they have ADHD, or they have depression or they had cancer, like I if it's not there, that's because they didn't self identify as that in the pre interviews, and we talked about it and they didn't want to,

Karishma 2:20:27

okay. I was lucky hesitant to say it, because I'm like, who am I? Like, I feel like I'm

Olivia N 2:20:34

relatively disabled. You have multiple different, I don't have to tell you, like,

Karishma 2:20:40

like, I know, things.

Olivia N 2:20:45

Like, you're the person.

Karishma 2:20:47

Like, no, I am personally aware of that. But I also feel like my mom's voice was in the back of my head going like this, what you're talking about, like, yeah,

Olivia N 2:20:55

I don't know if this is like an immigrant woman of color thing. But like my mom was was also the same way and isn't doctors so? I don't know if you think about that, like disabilities, like autism is for white people.

Olivia N 2:21:10

Or anxiety are for white people.

Olivia N 2:21:14

And we don't get sick. We don't go to doctors, even though I'm a doctor.

Karishma 2:21:21

You're just spitting facts. And I'm just

Olivia N 2:21:24

like, you're so funny, mom. Yeah.

Olivia N 2:21:28

You're so funny.

Karishma 2:21:29

That was like a joke. Like the way I was saying that was like, just

Olivia N 2:21:34

Okay, I just was like,

Karishma 2:21:35

I was like, No, it's like, playing the character for Yes.

Olivia N 2:21:39

Like, we don't have the same mom but I feel like some of us share like our mothers I'll share like the same spirit.

Karishma 2:21:46

Yeah, so like, sometimes I'm like, Oh, I'm Loki gaslighting myself. You know, like, I'm out here like, you don't have a disability.

Olivia N 2:21:55

As you're like struggling through pain all night.

Karishma 2:22:00

Last night, I literally had like a carpal tunnel flare up kind of vibe. I woke up in the middle of the night like

Karishma 2:22:12

literally are my hands on five,

Olivia N 2:22:14

even though like Oopsie?

Olivia N 2:22:22

Like, is it a scary funny thing? Sometimes it's just like a silly world.

Karishma 2:22:25

Right? I'm like, I'm out here like, not disabled. Like, oh my god. I have literally had glasses since I was in first grade. Okay. I'll put them on. Damn. I have literally had glasses since first grade. I have to like I have chronic dry eye. So I have to put in eyedrops everyday like prescription eye drops. Like they have prescribed me eye drops. And so I got these glasses in before I went to college. So 2016 the summer I

went to college, I got new glasses, let's say we were twinning. And I got these glasses. And I kind of just like kept wearing them. You know, I'm still wearing them out here in life.

Olivia N 2:23:21

But a couple years go

Karishma 2:23:24

by and I'm like, oh wow. My glasses are really musty, dusty, crusty. And my friend was once I was like, you know, optometrists and I was like 2016. And this was a couple of years ago, too. And they go, you know, people with eye problems, eye conditions, they're supposed to go every year. And I was like, Well, here's the thing before that, sorry. Sorry, let me read, say the story. And they were like, you've had those glasses for a while. And I was like, oh, but like, I don't need to go to the optometrist because it says if you like on, like, you know, the standard person. I think they're supposed to go like three to five every three to five years. Something Oh, really? Yeah. Something like that. I feel like you probably should go every year anyways. But they go Yeah, it's been three years, but also Karishma. Here's something you need to think about. You are a person with an eye condition. You have glasses, you've had glasses for a long time. Also, you use prescription eyedrops, I see you every single day. I'm just like, but it says I have three to five years and that's only been like four. And so then four years. I have I went in 2016. It is 2023. Now, I still have not gone to the optometrist. It is my 2023 resolution, quote, unquote, to go to the optometrist.

Olivia N 2:24:55

I believe in you.

Karishma 2:24:57

So one day I'll get there I have a couple of months. It's only January.

Olivia N 2:25:06

I don't know. Honestly,

Karishma 2:25:09

I really thought about it because I've lost these glasses for like a month. And then I found them in my mom's sofa, like at my parents house. Yeah. And I like in that month, they were missing. I was like, I will go to the optometrist. And I didn't. You didn't know. I found them. Like, I went home again. And I was like, let me just list the sofa. And I just like,

Olivia N 2:25:34

immediately hit them.

Olivia N 2:25:37

To be completely fair.

Olivia N 2:25:39

I also

Olivia N 2:25:43

didn't go to the optometrist for many years, but I don't have an eye condition.

Olivia N 2:25:49

You wear glasses? Yeah.

Olivia N 2:25:54

Many years. I just didn't like going I was like, I want to talk to you. I don't like when you tell me to do these things.

Karishma 2:26:00

I hate when they do the iperf test. Yeah,

Olivia N 2:26:03

I think they don't have to do that anymore. I think they can take like, image of your eye for \$30 instead.

Karishma 2:26:10

It's how they figure it out. I have dry eye though.

Olivia N 2:26:13

Oh, but they don't have to do that anymore. There's like a really high tech camera.

Karishma 2:26:17

I love that because maybe that's why I am okay with going to the doctor or to the optometrist. Now, like I was like, okay, like, maybe I'll be okay with it. I also have trauma with my eyes. I have another memory to share with you from my childhood answers anything you're talking about? Or like want to know about, but I will still share this story is I needed eyedrops. I can't remember why. But when I was a kid, I needed eyedrops. I'm done with wearing the glasses now. I'm over it. So I had to, I had eyedrops, and they're like you need you need to put these in my eyes, like twice a day or whatever. Like, I think I was like sick like I needed to maybe I had pinkeye I don't, I don't know. Yes, something. I had something. I was a kid. Again, I don't remember details. But I needed my whole family like strapped me down to the sofa and put them in. And so I would have like, like my whole family, my aunt, my uncle, like my parents, my grandparents are all like, around me on the sofa. And I can't remember if my cousins were helping, but they were definitely in the room. But so like I would have like a person on each arm, a person on each leg and they were holding me down on the sofa. And then I had someone holding my eyelids open and then they put the eyedrops in and I was like sobbing. And then they would be like we have to do it again because you cried it out. And I was like, I hate this. And so like honestly, it's awful. Like I hate putting in my eyedrops every day. I'm terrified. You know, but now if you're telling me they're not putting my eye at the optometrist?

Olivia N 2:27:50

No, yeah, they're doing pictures. They're doing pictures now. Okay, because they were like, do you want and it was only \$30. Like, it was like, I was like, \$30. And then No, I put off. I was like, yeah, we'll pay \$30 real?

Karishma 2:28:05

Yeah, maybe I maybe I'm less hesitant. Maybe I'll even go next month.

Olivia N 2:28:09

Maybe even go you should text me if you end up going. I'll be such a brave little boy, will you? We actually don't know it. Okay. I'll just sighs inform your interactions with lesbian community.

Olivia N 2:28:28

I don't know, I feel

Karishma 2:28:33

like I don't really care enough. Like, if you think I'm fine, or whatever, like I am at the end of the day. Like, just to be real with you. That's just the truth. But I don't feel like anyone has been mean. That's good. I like when people are nice generally. I feel like actually I bond with people. Like I have some good friends friends where I'm like, we're fat. The gays are nice. And I think that's a nice solidarity. And I think it also has like a huge intersection with like, the disabled community. And like those friends. I have.

Olivia N 2:29:19

Can you talk about how your gender identity informs your interactions with lesbian community? And what it's like being non binary? Yeah, we Sorry, I just like couldn't remember if you identified or not. And so I was like, Is this wrong?

Karishma 2:29:39

Honestly, like most of the time, I just, I don't give a shit like, Okay, and what's that got to do with anybody else? Yeah. And if I want to kiss girls, that's my business and there's whoever I'm kissing. And I yeah, I think I haven't really faced any judgement. For that, I feel like I get questions about it like, Oh, this must be a political statement that your hair is the way it is, or things like that, like, That is hot too.

Olivia N 2:30:11

What's your hair? Like?

Karishma 2:30:14

They talk about, like, my journey with my hair, or like if I've had any experiences with it. Actually, some people have actually told me that, like, they felt so emboldened by the fact that I had long hair, and like, exist as like a non binary person. And they're like, oh, wow, that's so crazy. Like, I thought my hair had to be short, because I wanted to, like counteract gender norms, but like, I guess the true thing is, just do what you want. Like, there is no right presentation. And I'm like, That's really great that you discovered that but like, also, I didn't have to be a part of your discovery. And I also didn't have to know that.

Olivia N 2:30:57

You need to keep shit inside.

Karishma 2:31:00

But like, that's great. Like, I feel like that means I think it's supposed to be like a compliment. of sorts, like, Okay, I perceive you as like this. I don't think I look androgynous. But they're like, I think you definitely present as like masculine while also like maintaining feminine things. I'm like, interesting. But like, also, I'm just doing me

Olivia N 2:31:22

like, a feminine thing. Feminine is when long hair and masculine is when pants.

Olivia N 2:31:29

Yeah,

Karishma 2:31:30

I think we I think that's it. I think it's also Yeah, I don't know, like, I don't know if it's like how I do my hair. I don't know if it's how I carry myself. I don't know if it's pants. But like, also, I'm out here. Like

Olivia N 2:31:48

sometimes if I want to

Karishma 2:31:49

go to pride with my titties out, like, is that feminine? Like, I don't I don't know.

Olivia N 2:31:55

Doesn't have to be. I just isn't.

Karishma 2:32:02

I just wanted to flex my cross nipple rings. Yeah.

Olivia N 2:32:06

Yeah, that's pretty exciting. Like you did them yourself.

Olivia N 2:32:09

You know, so slow.

Olivia N 2:32:12

Honestly, yeah, that's pretty metal. I couldn't be me.

Olivia N 2:32:17

No more. That's pretty metal. Okay.

Olivia N 2:32:23

What's it like making a meeting lesbians in your city now. Um,

Karishma 2:32:29

sometimes easy, sometimes hard. I am very lucky, because I get to exist in a lot of like queer art spaces that are very beautiful, and have a lot of like, community. And so I can just kind of go and exist and like, be a lesbian making art. And then there will also be other lesbians making art. And that's pretty sweet.

Olivia N 2:32:54

I think like,

Karishma 2:32:57

queer mixers and stuff. I don't know that they've historically worked. But I also haven't tried recently, like maybe now in a different location. Maybe I will find it maybe maybe they're all the rage. Maybe it's super popular. Also, I feel like sometimes I kind of weird, like certain, like meeting other lesbians. Like, I saw this thing. It was like a lesbian Cuddle Party. And it was like in someone's apartment. And it was like, it was listed publicly. Like, it wasn't like, that's the way that's like a group chat kind of thing. You know, like, Oh, hey, friends of friends. Like we're gonna have like a little lesbian Cuddle Party. And they were like, Yeah, and you should bring snacks and this is a scent free zone. And like, it was so weird. And they were like, bring someone don't bring someone, whatever. And they were like, yeah, and we'll have the windows open for like COVID

Olivia N 2:33:51

like that there was no bass mandate.

Karishma 2:33:54

No, there was there were like employees, you have to show us like a net negative PCR test the day.

Olivia N 2:34:00

But but but but but but there were so

Karishma 2:34:03

many butts. And it also meant I was like, Absolutely not. Yeah, no, that's definitely like group chat content, not public forum. Here's like the invite. I can't remember what it was. Maybe Eventbrite. Is that where they like list look like you can search areas maybe? Yeah.

Olivia N 2:34:24

Eventbrite or, like, Lex or something.

Karishma 2:34:27

Yeah. Um, and then also like, the apps everyone's using the apps. I'm not using the app because I'm too tired. Yeah. I also think people have told me I'm a mean texter or like I sound mean over text,

Olivia N 2:34:42

or you just direct over text. I think I'm just direct as a personality and they're just annoying.

Karishma 2:34:48

Thank you. I appreciate the validation.

Olivia N 2:34:51

I'm also autistic

Olivia N 2:34:52

just so.

Olivia N 2:34:54

Like, I don't really know if that's the person you want. About your tone and eggs.

Karishma 2:34:59

I mean, they I'll take it. I'll take it. I don't care. I trust you. That's fine. Yeah, no, but like my best friend, she thinks I found me. And she's like, I think that's just you, though. Like, I don't think you're trying to be mean, I don't think you've ever tried to be mean. She's like, I think actually, you try and go out of your way to be nice. And so that's kind of counter intuitive. If that's that were the case. But yeah, so like the apps, I think I'm not good at the apps.

Olivia N 2:35:34

I'm not a fan. The apps are a lot.

Karishma 2:35:37

And they are a lot. So but I feel like that's like the big way people make community. But like, now, once you have a couple of friends, it's like, nice. You have friends of friends. Let's all just do things.

Olivia N 2:35:53

Yeah. Sorry, my alarm take my

Olivia N 2:35:56

meds went off, but I'm ignoring it. Go take it. No. Pause. Okay.

Karishma 2:36:02

It's a good break.

Olivia N 2:36:04

Okay, I'll be right back. I'm not turning off the camera. I'm just going to my room. It's like I live in. It's right behind me. Okay. Pause. So, have you experienced or felt any isolation or disconnection from like, the broader queer community or even the lesbian community in some way?

Karishma 2:36:23

Oh, like earlier, I was like, I'm gonna face judgment for this, you know, like, I had concerns? Like, am I gonna get canceled for this? So I think there's a large, large portion of just the world and the community. That's like, gonna disagree. But so I also get a little scared, like, I'm a little skeptical of joining certain communities, because I'm like, I don't know how, like, strongly you feel about this. Like, there's like a lot of hate against like, or like, just like the concept of Goldstar lesbians, which I think is like, Yeah, I'm, like, super icky, but like, there are people who believe that, and I don't want to, I don't want to be in those spaces. And like, I don't know, just, especially any groups of people who may be super into over analyzing gender, or sexuality. And it makes me a little worried or hesitant to join a lot of spaces. So like, some of it is like, my own self induced isolation, because people be acting wild. But also like, it's because there's a disconnect, like, we don't agree on certain levels. And like,

Olivia N 2:37:45

it makes you feel a little

Karishma 2:37:47

ostracized if there is this very, like, controversial take, like,

Olivia N 2:37:52

just especially people who

Karishma 2:37:55

I feel like tried to force their heterosexuality at some point, like, I feel like they're sometimes there's people who are just like, Okay, this you're not actually good, or, like, you know, different things like that. And so I'm a little nervous. I feel

Olivia N 2:38:08

like I have found a lot of people who

Karishma 2:38:13

agree, you know, like with me and like, or who I think would agree and have similar views, just based on like, general things like how they perceive the queer community, or like their personal values and things like that. But I think those kinds of divides definitely exist. Okay, I actually had a note here, and this is kind of like a side take is the queer community loves Trader Joe's and I hate Trader Joe's with a passion. So like, I feel disconnected with them on that front for sure. Like I don't get it. I'm not here

Olivia N 2:38:52

for Trader Joe's. Why?

Karishma 2:38:56

I just What do they have there to offer for me, like shitty precooked meals? Like I literally went in there, but someone asked me to go to Trader Joe's for them. And it was like, Can you can you get me like Fuji apples? Can you pick up Fuji apples for me? And I was like literally every single one of them is bruised. Only Trader Joe's would do like this. Only Trader Joe's

Olivia N 2:39:20

I didn't even know Trader Joe's had that much produce

Olivia N 2:39:23

to offer. Well,

Karishma 2:39:26

it's shitty what they do offer.

Olivia N 2:39:29

I am not a Trader Joe's to premises. I don't live near one so I don't

Olivia N 2:39:33

really go.

Karishma 2:39:35

When I was in college, I would literally drive like 20 minutes to go to a different grocery store even though the Trader Joe's was less than a blinker it was like a five minute

Olivia N 2:39:45

walk. Look here at Trader Joe's hater first in the lesbians second period. And I believe I believe on that. I won't say anything about that. But I believe I believe you. I don't love Trader Joe's

Olivia N 2:39:58

I haven't I don't I Don't need ingredient I don't need like, I don't need like bits and bobs. Yeah, you need like, Yeah.

Karishma 2:40:08

And you're not getting that at Trader Joe's and I agree. Like, how am I supposed to bake bread with what I get at Trader Joe's? You can't

Olivia N 2:40:15

know. So what was your

Olivia N 2:40:21

first visit to a lesbian related place or event

Olivia N 2:40:24

like?

Olivia N 2:40:32

I

Karishma 2:40:33

feel like the biggest like are like my first intentionally lesbian related place was probably at that, like, woman loving woman group like, and I didn't like it. Yeah, it was not the vibe, a lot of white people. You know, like, went there, I'm like, I'm gonna find community so sick. I don't think I found that.

Olivia N 2:40:56

And that was just, that's

Karishma 2:41:00

just my experience, you know, like, I hope somewhere in the world. You know, that is not the case. But I have found that like, typically, if I'm just, if I were to peek into lesbian related spaces, especially, like, facilitated in that way, they tend to lean towards white. I don't know why that is. And maybe it's just like, maybe it's people like me who are like, Oh, that's a lot of white people. Let me not do that. But that also means we don't get to meet each other either them.

Olivia N 2:41:33

And

Karishma 2:41:36

yeah, I think that was like the first

Olivia N 2:41:40

kind of how it. I was hoping it was different. But it wasn't.

Karishma 2:41:47

And yeah, I think I think I've found different avenues. Like once, once you get your foot in the door, you know, like, Oh, I found my lesbian friends that I can, you know, build

Olivia N 2:41:58

from there? What are you?

Olivia N 2:42:01

How are you in your lesbian? aren't friends, building these? Like, what spaces are you involved in now?

Karishma 2:42:10

I think we're ancestors project is like a huge one for me, especially for the last two years that I've been in it. And there's also things we do like recurring art nights, you know, where we can make art together. And so it also brings like alums from other programs, and then I meet more people talking to friends of friends, you know, once I get to know someone, you know, you can start meeting their friends hanging out, and then just kind of grows from there. I think artists friends definitely attract to each other. And then yeah, if you're in the queer community, you're probably looking for other queer people as well.

Olivia N 2:42:54

So you say that your blessings visitor and is mostly like art lesbian spaces to get a queer ancestors project. And you guys sent her around? Like, sometimes you have recurring art nights where you get to

meet other like lesbian alums and stuff. Oh, no, go ahead. And like you mostly meet other lesbians that way, and you guys hang out and do mostly art things. And we're talking about getting your foot in the door. So you get your foot in the door to clear answers just project and then you guys go do what and meet other lesbians how? I

Karishma 2:43:30

think yeah, it's kind of do that friends of friends. Like it's like, Okay, hopefully someone else knows someone, or like is on the apps and like, meet some cool people. And I feel like, when you have cool friends, you like to introduce them to other people. It's like, Hey, look at this cool person. I know. Like, I think YouTube will get along. And I feel like that's very common. When I was like living with my parents as a small town, there's not a lot of queer spaces at all. Like, I don't think there were any clubs or things like that, that I can remember. Or at least definitely not popular at the time. They probably exist now. I feel like my sister knows about them. Like, she knows they exist. And she like yeah, she's like, Oh my God. I'm like, I would probably have never been in that. But ya know, yeah. Um, but so like, yeah, joining queer ancestors project. I was like, Oh, hey, here's some cool people like you know, that are that I get to make art with and then I actually do this thing. through it. You kind of learn this practice of doing art dates where you schedule time to work on art with people and I just I love it so much. I love to hang out with my friends and make art with them. And I'm just like, hey, my place I'm going to do sinners printmaking night.

Olivia N 2:44:54

Want to come over?

Karishma 2:44:55

I'll make pasta,

Olivia N 2:44:57

you know, and like That's fun. I think

Karishma 2:45:01

people like that. Yeah. Hey, I want to roleplay a chef tonight. Come eat my food. You know, just like fun things like that. Are things I think are fun. Maybe they're not fun to the general.

Olivia N 2:45:14

No, that's fun. That's fun as hell.

Karishma 2:45:18

But yeah, so like, I feel like through that, and then, you know, other people get involved over time, like, Oh, hey, you're dating so and so or they know another person, or we'll go to an event together. Like, my friend and I were trying to go to sour cherry comics. I think it's like a lesbian bookstore in San Francisco. I think that's what it's about. Yeah, no, no, I think I'm pretty sure. But so like, we want to go there. Probably a lot of lesbians there. You know, that's, that's the or yeah, just like kind of spaces like that. You also like, now you have a person to go to, with those, like go with to those things. So it kind of just brings it spirals from there.

Olivia N 2:46:07

And it's so beautiful. What does

Olivia N 2:46:15

identifying as a lesbian mean to you?

Karishma 2:46:19

As jokingly women. But like, it's kind of just the feeling kind of like the person I would see myself with. Just like, what does that mean? Like when I say I'm a lesbian? What does that mean? Yeah, it's kind of just like the vibes. This is the kind of person I would see myself with. It's not a man, I have tried that. And confirmed, it is definitely not the case. I'm not that not saying that people have to do that or anything. But like, just for me, my experience is definitely like, I know that to be the case. And that is like, affirmation for it in a weird way. And then also, like, it's a source of pride. You know, I'm like, I'm glad I'm a lesbian. That's dope. I like that about me.

Olivia N 2:47:12

I like myself.

Olivia N 2:47:17

So what does lesbian community mean to you?

Olivia N 2:47:23

Big question.

Karishma 2:47:24

Hi. Now, let's say I keep bringing it up, like, oh, like it exists? For sure. Yeah,

Olivia N 2:47:30

you have a lesbian community? I do. And I'm pretty intact lesbian community, which is, unlike most people are, ah,

Karishma 2:47:38

that's very nice. I'm so glad I feel so lucky. That's the world.

Olivia N 2:47:45

I think it

Karishma 2:47:48

is about I think, for me, what it is, for me is being with a lot of other lesbians, wherever they are in their journey, you know, like, it doesn't mean any particular way. But just like, that they agree and have share experiences, doesn't have to be all of them. But like, we can find solidarity in this.

Olivia N 2:48:11

And yeah, like, you know, you

Karishma 2:48:15

have a unique experience attached to it. Like, that's just what it is that like, also just being a lesbian. There's

Olivia N 2:48:22

different conversations that happen, like, oh, like,

Karishma 2:48:29

are we being fetishized? Like, that's a very, like, lesbian specific issue. You know, not to say that doesn't happen otherwise, but like, very heavily. So in the lesbian, like, realm of things, especially through porn, which is how I got into the homemade content, as we talked about. But yeah, like, is this catering to the male gays? Like, do you understand what I mean, when I say that, and like, that's a lesbian experience at the root of it. And so like having people who relate to that, and can understand that that's, that's lesbian community.

Olivia N 2:49:09

So lesbian community is really about

Olivia N 2:49:14

making and meeting people in which you all's experiences relate to each other, like an innate sense of understanding?

Olivia N 2:49:22

Yeah, yeah. On some level, I think, like, experiences

Karishma 2:49:29

are not unique, like, you know, like, yeah, there's always going to be someone else in the world who has shared it, but also I like this thought that like, it is special like that is something only you can say that that is your experience. And it's kind of like a balance between the two, you know, but so like, having community is the line between that like you share some things you don't share some things you can, like, still have this overlap

Olivia N 2:49:55

and bond over

Olivia N 2:50:01

What lesbian spaces do you wish existed?

Olivia N 2:50:05

Hmm I

Karishma 2:50:11

wish there were more disabled lesbian spaces. Like that would be really nice for them to be accessible. And in a lot of places, you know, like, I don't want it to just be in a big city, I want it to be like, able to be accessible not just physically, like physically but also regionally. And I know like COVID brought into this whole realm of like, digital community and that's nice, but also, I like a physical interaction. That's that's also nice to to not feel so distanced in that way there. So,

Olivia N 2:50:57

what is lesbian joining to you and when are you happiest as a lesbian?

Karishma 2:51:01

When am I happiest as a lesbian? I'm a happy lesbian. I'm always happy to be a lesbian. I have never been like

Olivia N 2:51:12

them. Oh, no,

Karishma 2:51:13

I don't even backtrack. When I was younger, I definitely was like, I wish I wasn't. But like, you know, if it's not for pressure than if it's not to appease someone else, then I have always been happy, like, putting myself forward. And then when do I find joy?

Olivia N 2:51:33

I think like, making art that's

Karishma 2:51:37

a beautiful one. For me. Definitely top of the line, make a lot of like, gay or lesbian. I

Olivia N 2:51:47

definitely my favorite thing to do.

Karishma 2:51:48

I especially like making art about like experiences. Just like, because no one can take that from me. Like, this is this is what I want to put into the world. It's how I perceived reality, especially like my own stories. So like, that's a great outlet and a lot of it relates to be lesbian. So yeah, it brings me joy that I'm able to do that.

Olivia N 2:52:16

Is there anything else you want to talk about before we stop the recording?

Olivia N 2:52:20

Huh? No, I think I've covered

Karishma 2:52:26

everything I really had notes about and I'm so glad we had this time and space.

Olivia N 2:52:32

Yay.