



Off Menu – Ep 251 – Helen Skelton

Ed Gamble

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast, taking the big, flat cake of conversation, adding the cream of humour, the jam of friendship and rolling it all up on the internet. Swiss roll podcast.

James Acaster

That is Ed Gamble, my name is James Acaster. Together we own a dream restaurant and every single week we invite in a guest and ask them their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink, not in that order. And this week, our guest is Helen Skelton.

Ed Gamble

Helen Skelton. Helen is a TV presenter, she's done so many things James. Blue Peter.

James Acaster

You know what I'm excited about.

Ed Gamble

Blue Peter. Countryfile. She is a broadcaster of much repute. She has a book out now called, 'In My Stride.' It's a memoir all about her life, James, as memoirs tend to be.

James Acaster

She talks about Strictly in it.

Ed Gamble

Okay. You've got to promise me, man, that when Helen comes on the podcast, we don't just talk about Strictly the whole time because a lot of listeners may know this already. You are an obsessive Strictly fan, like, to the extent you are basically a mum in her 50s.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Like, you are obsessed with it.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Which makes me laugh because it's just not your personality in any other way.

James Acaster



Yes.

Ed Gamble

But you've got to promise me this doesn't get taken over by Strictly because-

James Acaster

Ed.

Ed Gamble

This is a food podcast.

James Acaster

This is a food podcast-

Ed Gamble

It's a food and comedy chat podcast.

James Acaster

Listen. All joking aside, you know that I love Strictly, but I respect this podcast. I respect you and Benito and your time and we are just going to stick to food. We might a little bit mention Strictly because sometimes we go off on tangents, but we're going to stick to food, we're going to stick to the book, 'In My Stride,' Helen Skelton and her life. But don't worry, I am aware man, like, I'm a professional and I know this podcast means a lot to you.

Ed Gamble

Well, if that's a promise then I'll take it as such.

James Acaster

You have my word.

Ed Gamble

Okay, thank you. If Helen mentions the secret ingredient that we have pre-decided upon, she will be removed from the dream restaurant, and the secret ingredient this week is spring onion beard.

James Acaster

Beard.

Ed Gamble

The beards at the end of spring onions.

James Acaster

Now-,



Ed Gamble

Benito came up with this one.

James Acaster

Well, he didn't. You did. You said it.

Ed Gamble

You know when you get a spring onion and it's got a beard at the bottom.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Imagine getting that in your food.

James Acaster

So, I guess, I'm going to interview you now Ed. Has that ever happened to you?

Ed Gamble

Well sure, little strands come off sometimes if you're using it, if you're chopping a spring onion and you chop the beards off, there might be a little strand of beard and it might get into your stir fry. And that's not pleasant to find.

James Acaster

No. So, if Helen chooses spring onions, or something with spring onions in-,

Ed Gamble

And we'll say, 'Do you want the beard?'

James Acaster

'Do you want the beard in there?'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Beard or no beard.

Ed Gamble

Beard or no beard.

James Acaster

And if she says 'beard' we kick her out.



Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Fair enough.

Ed Gamble

That sounds fair enough doesn't it? I think it's the best one we've done in a while.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes, it's a really good on, man.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's good stuff.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, it's good stuff.

Ed Gamble

Spring onion beard.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. He suggested it before the podcast. Benito was looking at his computer trying to find ones we'd been sent in by listeners and Ed went, 'Spring onion beard.' And Ben said, 'What's spring onion beard?' And he went, 'The beard of a spring onion.' And then Benito went, 'Oh, yes, okay fine.' And was like, 'Is that okay?' And Benito went, 'I don't give a shit.'

Ed Gamble

You know, I think you should give a shit, Benito.

James Acaster

He didn't give a shit. And then we just start-, and then he just pressed record and looked at Ed. Oh that was it, no that was another thing that happened before he pressed record. Ed was like, he was like, 'Are you ready, Ed?' And Ed went, 'No, obviously not. Obviously I'm not ready. I've got to think of what thing I've got to say at the top.' And Ben went, 'Swiss roll.' 'I don't know how to make a Swiss roll.' It's just cake I think, and it's like, got cream and jam. And Ed thought for a little bit and so his eyes went up to the top of his head and then he went, 'Yes, yes, yes, okay.' And then started and then he started talking about that.

Ed Gamble

Look, I can't be forced-, I've got to come up with the secret ingredient, spring onion beards, and I've got to do my intro. You know, I've got a lot of stuff to do at the top here.



James Acaster

Yes, yes, you're spinning a lot of plates.

Ed Gamble

I'm spinning a lot of plates, man. Not like Benito.

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

As far as I can work out, he just sits in the corner of the room making everyone uncomfortable.

James Acaster

Yes, he's got nothing to do.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Creeping out the guests.

Ed Gamble

It's just, they're literally sat her going, 'Who's this guy?'

James Acaster

They don't like it.

Ed Gamble

Unless you're Steve Coogan and then you just talk directly to Ben the whole time.

James Acaster

Yes, then you just deliver your whole thing to Ben, which no one would know, listening to the podcast. I urge the listener go back, re-listen to the Steve Coogan episode, and bear in mind that for 90% of it, or 95% to be more accurate, he's looking straight at Benito.

Ed Gamble

Yes. If you look, there are a couple of clips on our social media and there is one where he does turn to Benito to say something.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes. And that was, like, a tiny proportion of the times he did it.



James Acaster

Yes, yes minuscule.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but we're looking forward to chatting to Helen about her life and career, the whole thing, and definitely not just one thing.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

This is the Off Menu menu of Helen Skelton.

James Acaster

Helen Skelton.

Ed Gamble

Welcome Helen, to the dream restaurant.

Helen Skelton

Hello. Thank you for having me.

James Acaster

Welcome Helen Skelton to the dream restaurant, we've been expecting you for some time.

Helen Skelton

Thank you, sorry I'm late.

Ed Gamble

No, no, no, no, I always worry about James' catchphrase we've been expecting you for some time, and he says it to every guest.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

So, I always worry that guests think that-,

James Acaster

Every time someone's running late.

Ed Gamble

Think that they've been late.



James Acaster

They think that.

Helen Skelton

No, but I genuinely was late, that's why I said it.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but it wasn't your fault, for the listener.

James Acaster

That's what we worry about.

Ed Gamble

A little peep behind the curtain, there was a late cab and that's what's happened and I'll be honest with you Helen, we were very grateful for it, because we'd not eaten lunch, so now we have eaten lunch.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

And you're getting two boys in a better mood.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Everybody is better when they're fed.

Ed Gamble

Yes, exactly.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Fed and fresh air.

James Acaster

That's what the podcast is all about.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



James Acaster

And you've just eaten as well. You had a very long bit of mozzarella.

Helen Skelton

It was the stringiest cheese ever.

Ed Gamble

It was really stringy. I looked away when you were taking a bite of the sandwich, because I'm a gentleman, and then I heard a fracas and I looked over and I'd say the string of mozzarella was maybe three feet away from your face.

Helen Skelton

I could tell you felt awkward it was that, 'Oh we've just met, oh, she's eating a sandwich, oh, I don't know where to look, oh, and now there's cheese everywhere.'

Ed Gamble

That cheese will never end.

Helen Skelton

Yes. I feel like the ice was broken.

Ed Gamble

The ice was totally broken-,

James Acaster

The ice was definitely-,

Ed Gamble

Even if the cheese wasn't.

James Acaster

Very good Ed.

Ed Gamble

Thank you.

James Acaster

Also very excited about your book, 'In My Stride,' which is out now. What can people expect buying that book?

Helen Skelton

Adventures, confessions.



James Acaster

Confessions.

Helen Skelton

Laughs. Life. Some people are like, 'Oh gosh, you over-shared. Oh, you've under-shared.' So, do you know what I've enjoyed is that people have got a laugh and a smile and a nice tear out of it in places. Do you know what, before you put it out there, everyone said to me, 'Do you feel like you're about to run naked down the street?' And I said, 'Yes that's exactly it.' Because obviously, you're looking back on stuff, you don't know how other people look back on stuff. Like, your version of a time or a trip or an adventure or a challenge or whatever might be different to how other people saw it. So, it's just been a nice relief to get people's feedback. The weirdest thing that I've had so much of is dads buying this book for their grown-up daughters, which I didn't expect.

Ed Gamble

That's sweet, though.

Helen Skelton

Oh, it's cute, like, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Like, grown-ups going, 'Oh, my daughter wants to do this and my daughter wants to do that. And I just thought if she reads this book she might,' which is the ultimate complement.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Where do the dads know you from, do you reckon? What are the dads' plans?

Helen Skelton

Let's not pull on that thread. I want to say the Olympics, let's say that.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

The Olympics.



Ed Gamble

Yes, yes, yes, fair enough.

Helen Skelton

Countryfile.

Ed Gamble

Dads love Countryfile.

Helen Skelton

Yes, there you go.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

Yes, dads do love Countryfile. I think every dad who watches Countryfile would probably hope that their daughter would become, like, a presenter on Countryfile, because, like, there's just a good, wholesome person, right?

Helen Skelton

There you go. There. That's a great save and true. Yes. Like, no but it is.

James Acaster

That's how Countryfile comes across. I watch it and think, like, 'God, see her, we should all be like that.'

Ed Gamble

James doesn't have children, neither do I, but if he was a dad, he'd like to hope for his children to be presenters on Countryfile, is what he's saying.

James Acaster

I'd hope that, yes, I'd kind of, birthed Kate Humble or someone like that.

Helen Skelton

Or Ellie Harrison.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes, yes, oh, Ellie Harrison.

Ed Gamble

Or Helen Skelton.

Helen Skelton

There you go.



James Acaster

Helen Skelton.

Ed Gamble

So, the perfect example is in the room, James.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I don't know why you're bringing Humble up.

Helen Skelton

Oh no, I mean, we all aspire to be Kate Humble.

Ed Gamble

Yes, that's true, me too.

Helen Skelton

But I know what you mean, that Blue Peter and Countryfile.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

If your daughter's going to be a presenter on any show, it's Blue Peter and Countryfile and Five Live Sport.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Versus a lot of dads would probably aim for that, versus I'm not even going to finish that sentence.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, but it's the perfect mix.

Ed Gamble

If I had a son I wouldn't wish he would be a presenter on Blue Peter.



James Acaster

No?

Ed Gamble

They're up to all sorts those guys.

Helen Skelton

We fly Red Arrows and make stuff out of plastic.

James Acaster

Oh yes, but I get what Ed's saying, the male presenters, it's different isn't it?

Helen Skelton

Some.

James Acaster

Absolutely, they're tear-aways. It's like you might as well blinking birth Sid Vicious as a Blue Peter male presenters.

Helen Skelton

Not in my day.

James Acaster

No, not in your day.

Helen Skelton

Matt Baker was a Blue Peter presenter.

James Acaster

Yes, end of story. I rest my case. I'm very excited about the book and, like, you saying about the over-sharing, under-sharing thing, that intrigues me a lot because my introduction to you was through the last series of Strictly the last year and I got very invested in your story throughout the whole series. But what was amazing about it was that it was this story that you weren't talking about it on the show and it was maybe what we put on it, rather than what you were actually-, I don't know. I felt like we were projecting a bit, or we were putting a lot of stuff on you and that maybe wasn't part of your journey with that show.

Helen Skelton

No, and I think that's a really astute assessment because in our generation, in our world, we share everything, don't we? And you get an opinion of someone and you're getting, you know, it's so easy to look at someone and go, 'Oh they must be mad.' Why? Because they posted a picture of their cheese sandwich. Like, you make an opinion based on what you think their life is. And I mean, there's loads of Strictly in the book and that, for me, again, was the biggest test when Gorka, who was my Strictly partner, and he read it and he was like, 'Oh yes, I cried in a good way. Like, I was really happy with how



you shared the story.' And I think, for me, it was just a crazy, full-on, wonderful time, but even as someone who's been in telly, you know, my whole adult life, I totally underestimated the eyes and the expectations and the perceptions that are put on Strictly. You know, you walk out onto a dance floor, bearing in mind you're wearing a massive hair piece that's not yours, a load of make-up that's not yours, and all of that is designed to make you feel amazing, and a costume that's designed to make you feel amazing. But if it's not yours, you're still a bit like, 'Oh my gosh, like, what is happening to me? Am I alright about this?'

Ed Gamble

Whilst also having to keep in your head a whole dance routine as well.

Helen Skelton

And do a cha-cha-cha. Like, I mean, if you don't do that, then it's really interesting now watching it, I can see the people who are just in their stride, hit the ground running, and the people who really want to like it, who are at the edge of the party but want to get in the middle of the dance floor but don't quite know how. And that was me.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

And I feel like I'm a bit upset that- I was always texting Annabelle Croft and various people, Angela Rippon, like, 'Just go for it, just get stuck in.' Because people tell you to do that, but quite often you don't until it's too late. So, I was glad that I got the chance to stay in as long. I guess, the long-winded answer to your question is, I didn't mind what people thought about me because I was in it and the longer I was in it the more I enjoyed it and found me feet. So, I didn't really mind what people were saying.

James Acaster

That came across as well, that was what, I think, people got invested in with you is that you, yes, and at the beginning it was like, maybe you weren't very comfortable and by the end you were a completely different person, which is quite rare on that show.

Helen Skelton

I mean, the first week I hid on the fire escape. Like, I did the dance. You have to go on a Friday and, like, do a camera block, and you learn the dance in your room and it's awkward at first. If you're not, I don't know, some people, we met and we're like, 'Oh, awkward hug.' Like, some people are quite physical straight away. I wasn't. So, even, like, standing in hold with someone for the first week is weird. You're like, 'Oh hello, nice to meet you. Oh, our cheeks are right next to each other. Oh, you've got your hand round my back. Oh, hello.' It's weird.

James Acaster

Yes.



Helen Skelton

And then you're in this costume, again, weird, the hair, the make-up, all of that. You have to go on the dance floor, did the dance, and they went, 'Helen, you look like you just can't wait to get off.' And I was like, 'They can have their turn, I'm fine.' And I went and I was on the fire escape and I was like, 'What am I doing?' And I couldn't understand why some of the others, like, Fleur and Molly and Tyler and James Bay, they'd be like, hyping each other up, dancing in the corridors, doing TikToks and I genuinely used to sit in the corridor and was like, 'How are they doing that? Why are they doing that?' Me and Ellie Taylor would look at each other and we're like, 'What has happened to our lives?' And you want to be that person, you know, I want to be Fun Bobby, but I think sometimes it takes you a bit of time to get there. And yes, by the end I got it, by the end I was like, 'Oh yes, I really, really want to do the dance.' The week of the final, I was like, 'I can't wait to get out there.' Whereas week one, two, three, four, up until the Charleston, I was like, 'Oh my gosh, are we still here? Must I?'

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Terrifying.

James Acaster

That came across, let me tell you. That was what was such a great thing about watching that series. It's like, I mean, look, I know we've got to talk about food-,

Ed Gamble

But that's what people want-,

James Acaster

And one of Ed's favourite things is how much I'm into Strictly.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it makes me laugh because it's so antithetical to your entire personality and everything else you like that you're just obsessed with Strictly.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Obsessed.

Helen Skelton

But you get addicted to it. Ellie Taylor and I stood in our dressing room one day and Will Mellor was in the next dressing room and he was doing videos and, like, role playing so we could hear him acting out characters. Molly and Fleur shared a dressing room next door and they were doing TikToks and signing, like, Acapella because they're insanely talented and just wonderful. And there was all this, like,



showbiz going round and Ellie Taylor was dressed as Little Bo Peep with this massive bonnet on, and there was a woman between my legs sewing the gusset of my pants to the dress so that my knickers didn't flash on the telly. And she looked at me and she went, 'Helen, we've got mortgages.' And just like, 'I know, what's happening?' But when you're in it it's so, I don't know, it's so wonderful. I was the same. I was like, 'I don't want to do singing and dancing on telly.' And the more you get into it, you're like, 'Oh.' It's like running down a hill as fast as you can, so fast you think your legs might fall off. If you commit to it, it's just the best feeling in the world.

Ed Gamble

I think viewers want that from Strictly, right? They want to see someone's journey from maybe being a bit uncomfortable at the beginning and then really getting into it and by the end, so you can compare the end and the beginning and go, 'Look at what you've achieved.' We don't need these people coming on episode one and being amazing at dancing and nailing everything. Sod that.

James Acaster

The ones who are confident from the start, they might get to the final, Helen, but they aren't going to win.

Helen Skelton

I've got a picture of me doing that Mein Herr dance on my wall.

James Acaster

I showed him that earlier today.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I showed him that one.

Helen Skelton

What was I thinking? I was in suspenders and a corset crawling around on a Spanish guy's back. What's happening?

James Acaster

Gorka, his name is Gorka. It was so-, that was so great-,

Helen Skelton

Who is wonderful FYI.

James Acaster

That dance. Me and my girlfriend, we were watching it at home, and after you'd finished it we were like, it's properly like, we'd just seen one of the best things on TV.



Ed Gamble

Do you think you should host a Strictly podcast James, because-,

James Acaster

No.

Helen Skelton

You should do the show. Would you do the show?

James Acaster

I'll just turn this one into a Strictly podcast slowly. You guys won't even notice.

Ed Gamble

You are doing a good job so far, I've started to notice.

Helen Skelton

But you get what it's about. Like, it is the magic of that show. It isn't about dancing.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

It's about, you know, like, I remember one week my samba was rubbish, and I was like, 'I'm not here to do the best samba.' I'm here to be like, 'Sometimes life is a bit hard but you've just got to get on with it and do the best you can and have a laugh along the way.' And what's great about everyone on that show, Gorka for me was the personification of it, their job is to make you feel great and you step over the threshold of that place and everything, you know. There are people designing a hairstyle for you to feel good. I mean, what a wonderful opportunity that is for you to appreciate that. I mean, I loved, apart from the actual dancing in the beginning, I loved every bit of it. And, like, when it came on this year I was so, in a good way, jealous.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. Because I tell you what, no one gives a shit about, at the start of each episode, all the professional dancers come out and they do a big dance number together. Fast forward.

Helen Skelton

Oh no, I'm the opposite.

James Acaster

Do not give a fuck.

Helen Skelton

I'm the opposite. I think now I feel like-,



Ed Gamble

What you fast forward the rest of the stuff?

Helen Skelton

No, I love the dance, I'm like, the geek that looks at all-, I slow down Gorka's bit and I'm like, 'You were particularly good then,' like I have a valid opinion.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, oh, I don't watch the professionals that dance at the beginning, don't care.

Helen Skelton

I just love how much you love Strictly.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

We can carry this on later between ourselves.

James Acaster

Yes, we can carry it on.

Ed Gamble

You should do a Strictly podcast.

James Acaster

No, no, this is the Strictly podcast.

We always start with still or sparkling water, Helen.

Helen Skelton

Sparkling.

Ed Gamble

It's the Strictly of waters.

James Acaster

Oh, if you want to carry on talking about it we will.

Helen Skelton

There you go.

James Acaster

We will.



Ed Gamble

I'm just trying to give this episode some sort of cohesion, James.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. Yes, fair enough. Have you always liked sparkling water?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

I mean, of all the TV shows you've done, obviously, Strictly-,

Ed Gamble

Oh my God.

James Acaster

I'm aware that-,

Ed Gamble

Oh my God.

James Acaster

I'm aware that, like, this might be leading, but like-,

Ed Gamble

Helen, I don't want you to feel that my reaction to this is personal against you.

Helen Skelton

No, it's fine, I get it.

James Acaster

I mean, you're drinking different waters on all the TV shows you've done, right. Say you're presenting Countryfile, are you drinking a sparkling water on that, or are you going to be a still water?

Helen Skelton

Yes, valid.

James Acaster

Walking around.

Helen Skelton

Probably still. And it's a big bone of contention, you're not allowed to buy a bottle of plastic water.



Ed Gamble

Yes, that's a good point. So, you can't get sparkling water when you're on Countryfile.

Helen Skelton

Gosh, no. You get whatever is in the local garage or someone gives you in their house.

James Acaster

Ever had wild water on Countryfile?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

Drunk out of a stream?

Helen Skelton

100%.

James Acaster

Where's the best?

Helen Skelton

The higher you are, the better it is.

James Acaster

As in stoned?

Helen Skelton

Higher up a mountain.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Got it.

Ed Gamble

Big revelation about what goes on on the set of Countryfile.

James Acaster

Wouldn't surprise anyone.

Ed Gamble

Worse than Blue Peter.

James Acaster

Wouldn't surprise anyone-,



Helen Skelton

Again, I'd like to distance myself from these comments.

James Acaster

I think even the people who watch Countryfile, if they learnt that the Countryfile hosts are always baked out in the country, then they'd be like, 'Yes, fair enough.' It's natural, comes from the earth. You'd be alright. So, you've had some good stream water. Some good natural spring water.

Helen Skelton

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

So, for your water course now, still or sparkling, but is the water from the stream the best water you've ever had and would you like that instead?

Helen Skelton

Do you know, the best water I've ever had, I did this trip and I was, obviously, no shops or anything, had everything that I needed for the whole month in my sledge. So, you had to melt the ice for your water. It takes so long.

Ed Gamble

Wow.

Helen Skelton

Yes, so you have to, obviously, put your stove up, melt the ice, get water. Massive big block of ice gives you a tiny bit of water. That's satisfying because you have to really graft for it.

Ed Gamble

Is it the grafting that makes it taste good, or is it the water itself is good?

Helen Skelton

No, it's the grafting.

Ed Gamble

It's the grafting.

Helen Skelton

And the fact there's nothing else to do.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

So, you're like, 'This is amazing.'



James Acaster

So, would you like that for your dream meal as the water?

Helen Skelton

Yes, water that someone has really put their effort into.

James Acaster

But does that have to be you though, for the graft?

Helen Skelton

Ideally, I'd like someone else to do it, just as a token.

James Acaster

Okay. Ed?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I'll do it.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I'll melt down that water for you. Whereabouts was it, this trip?

Helen Skelton

South Pole.

Ed Gamble

South Pole, great, I'm off to the South Pole to get some ice and we'll melt it down for Helen.

James Acaster

You wouldn't last two seconds.

Helen Skelton

I think you'd be alright.

Ed Gamble

I'd be alright, thank you Helen.

James Acaster

No.



Ed Gamble

I'd be great in the South Pole.

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

What are you talking about?

James Acaster

I've gone walking around-, me and him had to walk from Kendal to Buxton once. He can't go to the South Pole this guy.

Helen Skelton

I do enjoy that you said to me before, 'Where you from?' 'The Lake District.' 'Oh, we're going to the Lake District,' and then you named a Michelin star restaurant and I was like, that's not-,

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes. It would be-,

Ed Gamble

Well, it's in the Lake District, Helen.

Helen Skelton

It is, it is.

Ed Gamble

Back in your box, Helen.

Helen Skelton

Yes. Valid. Valid. It's just when you said, 'We're going to the Lakes-,'

Ed Gamble

And it's three Michelin stars. Know your area.

Helen Skelton

I thought you were going to be like, 'Oh, we're going camping and, like, have beans and stuff.'

Ed Gamble

No, fuck that.

James Acaster

No, no.



Ed Gamble

We did go to Kendal on Celebrity Hunted.

Helen Skelton

Oh.

Ed Gamble

So, we roughed it for that, thank you.

James Acaster

Yes, we roughed it.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

I respect that. Fair play.

Ed Gamble

Yes, we only went to two Michelin star restaurants when we were on doing Hunted.

James Acaster

We had to lay low.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

You didn't want to peak too soon, good.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. If we went to a three star, they'd find us.

Helen Skelton

I think I've seen this clip, you know, yes, you just went for a good time didn't you?

James Acaster

Yes, a lot of people were not very happy with us actually. A lot of people, Jamelia for example, said we annoyed her on it.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



Helen Skelton

Bring us full circle to what we said before. On these shows you've just got to do you, stay in your lane.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Post and ghost. Doesn't matter what other people think.

James Acaster

Yes, they can keep their opinions to themselves.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Post and ghost, I love that.

James Acaster

Poppadoms or bread? Poppadoms or bread, Helen Skelton? Poppadoms or bread?

Helen Skelton

Poppadoms.

Ed Gamble

Nice. Now, I'd say percentage-wise, we're on tour at the moment and we get the percentages from the audience on who wants poppadoms or bread.

Helen Skelton

Okay.

Ed Gamble

It's pretty consistent everywhere and it's, like, 85% bread, 15% poppadoms. So, it's always a delight for a guest to say poppadoms, because it's rarer than bread.

Helen Skelton

But bread is risky because if it's nice, warm, baked, little loaves, yes, but you're never sure of that, are you?



Ed Gamble

Well, in the dream restaurant you're sure, because we can make sure to get you your absolute dream bread. But if poppadoms are the way you want to go, we can go poppadoms.

Helen Skelton

With a chutney.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Mango chutney.

Helen Skelton

Yes, definitely poppadoms.

James Acaster

None of the other dips, just the mango chutney?

Helen Skelton

No, just the chutney.

James Acaster

Just the chutney.

Helen Skelton

I don't, yes, the other pots just get put in the fridge for another day and I never eat them. So-,

Ed Gamble

How much chutney are you getting through?

Helen Skelton

Oh, no, more chutney than poppadom to be fair.

James Acaster

A jar? A jar of the mango chutney?

Helen Skelton

If I've had a takeaway, one of those will be gone, yes.



Ed Gamble

Are you breaking into shards and dipping, or are you keeping the poppadom whole and biting it like a big crisp?

Helen Skelton

No, like, I would say like a half and half.

Ed Gamble

Half and half?

Helen Skelton

Yes. Not shards but a half.

Ed Gamble

A half.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

And then dipping or spreading?

Helen Skelton

Dipping. Specific, I like this.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Or dipping I think is always the riskier because it could break, but you give it a little spread or a little, you know, then you know what you're dealing with.

Helen Skelton

You don't get this level of excitement with bread and butter do you?

Ed Gamble

That's true. No-one is thinking, 'Am I dipping the bread in the butter?'

James Acaster

No, I mean, you are now-,

Ed Gamble

I would actually do that. I'm thinking-,



James Acaster

I saw the glint in your eye. As soon as you said, 'No-one's thinking, am I dipping the bread in the butter?' you were, like-,

Helen Skelton

With a bit of salt you are.

Ed Gamble

Yes. I think I'm-,

Helen Skelton

I mean, that is good. Let's not stray from poppadoms.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

But that is a good idea, dip the bread in the butter.

James Acaster

How many poppadoms do you want?

Helen Skelton

Five.

James Acaster

Are you going to plate-, are you going to be mother?

Helen Skelton

What and share?

James Acaster

Smash them.

Helen Skelton

Oh no, no. No, no, no, because they'll-, again, the kids will smash the poppadoms, that's a bit of entertainment. That's the messy house equivalent of a colouring book at the table.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

You play with your poppadoms. I'm going to enjoy mine.



Ed Gamble

You play with your poppadoms.

Helen Skelton

Yes, you pick the little wins when you've got kids.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

You got kids? No.

James Acaster

None of us have.

Ed Gamble

You were saying it's a quieter life in the Lake District compared to London, you were telling us earlier, and that's the entertainment in the Lake District. Get the kids to smash the poppadoms.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

Play with those.

Helen Skelton

Living the dream.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

It's like give them a bucket of ice, 'There you are, go outside kids, knock yourselves out for five hours.'

Ed Gamble

Have a glass of water.

Helen Skelton

No, quite the opposite, because they're so noisy kids.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



Helen Skelton

Like mine just literally-, and people think it's a bad analogy but I often refer to my children as feral and people think that's bad.

James Acaster

Yes, it sounds bad.

Helen Skelton

That's wonderful. They're, like, wild and free.

Ed Gamble

It is great. I mean, I've always lived in London but we go and visit my cousins in Northumberland now and again and you just go anywhere-,

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Run around. Go feral. It's great. You feel, yes, totally free as a kid.

James Acaster

I'd love to.

Ed Gamble

Shot my cousin in the arse with a BB gun. It was a great life.

James Acaster

I've just got back from Leeds and the food there was amazing.

Helen Skelton

Oh, the food is amazing. Did you go in the market?

James Acaster

No, I went to a few places. I had an amazing meal at a place called Ox Club.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

And I had-, I went to a place called the Doh'hut, which is a doughnut place, but they do a savoury doughnut which is a bagel doughnut called a dangel and that is one of the best things I've ever eaten.

Helen Skelton

Have you had a Yorkshire wrap?



James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

That is also an excellent thing to put in your mouth.

James Acaster

I like that a lot. Ed doesn't. Ed doesn't like Yorkshire puddings.

Ed Gamble

I don't like Yorkshire puddings.

Helen Skelton

But it's a meal in a wrap. Like it's a proper meal.

James Acaster

Yes. Yes.

Ed Gamble

I think I'm more on board with that because it's totally self enclosed and it's, sort of, flatter isn't it than a traditional Yorkshire pudding.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It's the flavour of a Yorkshire pudding but without take up too much real estate on the plate.

Helen Skelton

And you can grab it and go.

Ed Gamble

You can grab it and go.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

So, when the kids aren't entertained by poppadoms and you need to be on the move, that works.

James Acaster

Yes, definitely.



Helen Skelton

But the market in Leeds is so good for food because it's that old school-,

James Acaster

Yes, I have been in the past actually. Now you've just said that about that wrap, that's where I've had it. Yes.

Helen Skelton

It's where Marks and Spencer's started.

Ed Gamble

Is it?

James Acaster

What?

Helen Skelton

Yes, see.

James Acaster

What?

Helen Skelton

I don't know why I said, see, like I was just-,

Ed Gamble

See, you didn't believe me did you?

James Acaster

Well, no, you've proved your point.

Ed Gamble

My grandparents lived in Rothwell.

Helen Skelton

Oh, yes.

Ed Gamble

So, my grandma would always go to Leeds market and bring back, I'd say sack fulls of broken biscuits.

Helen Skelton

Oh, 100-, yes.



Ed Gamble

Yes, absolutely love it. Why are broken-, broken biscuits should be more expensive I think.

James Acaster

Yes, they're the best.

Helen Skelton

Well, my first job was just down the road from McVitie's factory and I used to do breakfast. So, I used to have to go to work every morning at 4:30, but it was so good because I had to go past the factory, and on the way back they sell off the boxes of broken biscuits.

Ed Gamble

Do they?

James Acaster

What?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

Oh, I wish the Weetabix factory did that when I was growing up.

Helen Skelton

There's less of a good smell from a Weetabix factory though.

James Acaster

Yes, it's disgusting.

Ed Gamble

Stinks.

Helen Skelton

If you enjoy a factory, I did a whole series, you know, on factories.

Ed Gamble

Did you?

Helen Skelton

McVitie's, Walkers, Heinz-,

James Acaster

Food factories.



Helen Skelton

Guinness.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

There was another one. Wasn't my best work. Can't remember.

Ed Gamble

What was your favourite factory?

Helen Skelton

Well, I was pregnant with my-, my least favourite because I was pregnant with my third child, was Heinz.

James Acaster

I thought you were about to say, 'I was pregnant with my least favourite child.'

Helen Skelton

No, my least favourite is-

Ed Gamble

I won't say which one.

Helen Skelton

No-, yes, I filmed this series in food factories, Superbrands-, oh, Warburton's, that's a great factory smell.

James Acaster

Oh, nice.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

But Heinz Beans, when you're heavily pregnant, you do not want to put your head in a big massive vat of blanched beans.

James Acaster

Oh, my god.



Helen Skelton

Not great.

Ed Gamble

But is that would you say for all pregnancies, or is that specific to yours, do you think, that beans made you feel ill, because some people might have a craving for it, right? It might be the best thing possible.

Helen Skelton

Well, that, combined with, I spoke to the wonderful people who do the testing, they have people who do the quality control and they just all day taste cold bowls of Spaghetti Hoops, Alphabetti Spaghetti, cold soup, all of that, and that's their job is to just constantly taste stuff. A couple of hours of that, coupled with the blanched beans, it wasn't a great day for me.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Look, I didn't meet these people and I've not seen the show, I don't want to cast aspersions, but I bet those people look awful.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

No, quite the opposite, and they've all worked there for, like, 40 years.

Ed Gamble

Yes, they look like ghosts, Helen, let's be honest.

James Acaster

Yes, surely.

Helen Skelton

I mean, as I say, it was a dark time in my life, so, I was just trying not to be ill.

James Acaster

I think those people would look like, you know, have you seen The Descent?

Helen Skelton

No. Actually you're wrong. Very happy. No, no, no, can't have it. They were so happy about their cold bean tasting.

James Acaster

Yes, alright.

Ed Gamble

They think they're happy-,



James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

But they look like they're in The Descent.

James Acaster

They look like they've just not seen daylight, not seen daylight for years-,

Helen Skelton

I liked them a lot.

James Acaster

And not eaten properly.

Helen Skelton

No, they gave me a personalised bottle of Ketchup. I can't say anything negative.

Ed Gamble

That's pretty cool. That's pretty cool. We live quite near a bread factory, me and my wife, and during COVID when we'd go on our little cycle every day, we'd really treat ourselves if we went the bread way.

Helen Skelton

Oh, see.

Ed Gamble

Cycle past the factor and cycle through the smell. That was our one bit of hope and excitement during COVID.

Helen Skelton

Guinness, that was another good smell.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

You can do that in South London, cycle past Hops places.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



Helen Skelton

God, we're old now aren't we?

James Acaster

We are-

Helen Skelton

We're not even talking about going drinking the Guinness.

James Acaster

Molly and Fleur aren't talking about this. They're doing TikToks.

Helen Skelton

No.

Ed Gamble

TikToks about the best smelling factories.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

But those TikToks are really good. They're still worth a watch.

James Acaster

Oh, I bet. I love Molly and Fleur. Love that Fleur's doing It Takes Two now.

Helen Skelton

Oh, of course, you are an avid fan. But she's good at It Takes Two though to be fair isn't she?

James Acaster

Brilliant.

Helen Skelton

One of her TikToks, I'm in the background just eating a KitKat. It was, like, really tragic.

James Acaster

Let's get onto your dream meal proper. Your dream starter.

Helen Skelton

Prawn cocktail, old school.

James Acaster

So, old school, what has changed over the years?



Helen Skelton

Well, now it's, like, fancy prawns in shells.

James Acaster

Oh.

Helen Skelton

I like the small frozen prawns that have been defrosted in a sieve under hot water. I mean, that's so risky isn't it, but that's what your mum did.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Old school.

Helen Skelton

With loads of mayonnaise and tomato sauce mixed up on top.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

And a bit of soggy lettuce underneath.

James Acaster

Yes, so, you've made that sound pretty gross, Helen, but, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, a lot of the words you're using are gross words.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Yes, but perfect, right? You nodded.

James Acaster

We nodded because we know what you meant.



Ed Gamble

Yes, I was showing you that I understood.

James Acaster

Prawn cocktail is a very popular starter on this podcast.

Helen Skelton

Okay.

Ed Gamble

As it has every right to be.

James Acaster

As it has every right to be, but often when people have said, like, how they used to be, actually what we get is, like, they go, 'Massive prawns hanging off the side of a glass that's, like, you know, for an ice-cream sundae.' And that's what they want. So, I was expecting that.

Helen Skelton

Oh, no, I mean, like the teeny tiny bag of frozen prawns.

Ed Gamble

That's what I used to think prawns were.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I'd no idea that prawns could be so big.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

And I get-, we lived in France for a while, so, I get the whole, like, it's proper classy to de-head it and de-shell it and all that.

Ed Gamble

Sure.

Helen Skelton

But it is a faff isn't it?

Ed Gamble

Oh, it's a total faff, yes.



James Acaster

Yes, can't be bothered.

Ed Gamble

Yes, and it's basically the prawns are the same you get in, like, a prawn mayo sandwich, right, the little tiddlers.

Helen Skelton

James Martin taught me how to cook a fish before I moved to France because he was, like, 'Look, you're going to have to cook for-, people come round.' Never made that dish once. It was so complicated. You know when you-, the whole time I was, like, 'Aha, this is-, yes, got it.'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

The key bit of the recipe is having James Martin.

Helen Skelton

100%.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

And he's since gone, 'Have you done that?' I'm like, 'Oh, yes, massive hit.' I just couldn't do it. It was too complicated.

James Acaster

Also, when someone who is like a proper professional chef is showing you, I just think it's always going to be too complicated isn't it? You want just, like, a mate who is, like, 'Oh, I can do this.'

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

'So, I'll show you how to do it.' 'Yes, okay, fine.'

Helen Skelton

And also in that kind of professional environment you feel the need to be, like, 'Yes, yes, I've got that utensil.' No, I haven't. I don't have any of that stuff.



James Acaster

Yes, yes, whatever. James Martin has got a load of like trixie little bits of cutlery-,

Helen Skelton

Oh and he's got a knack. He does it with flair, you know.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Mum's favourite.

James Acaster

Are you saying your mum's favourite, or, he's the mums' favourite?

Ed Gamble

Both.

James Acaster

Because he is generally speaking he is mums' favourite isn't he?

Ed Gamble

And my mum's favourite.

James Acaster

And he's your mum's favourite?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Does he ride a motorbike?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

So-,

Ed Gamble

He does.



James Acaster

You'll be happy.

Ed Gamble

Oh, I told this to James the other day-,

Helen Skelton

He's got lots of motorbikes hasn't he?

Ed Gamble

He does ride motorbikes I think. When I was a little kid, and this was a few years after my mum and dad had split up, I decided that my mum should get a boyfriend, but he had to ride a motorbike. And she was, like, 'Just shut up.' Basically. And I was, like, 'No, no, no-,'

Helen Skelton

Oh, that is so cute.

Ed Gamble

No, he's got to ride a motorbike and she remembers one day this delivery man came to the door and he had his motorbike and the she turned around and I was stood next to the stairs going, 'Brmm brmm.' Like winking.

James Acaster

Revving.

Ed Gamble

Yes, revving and winking.

James Acaster

Revving an invisible motorbike. Going, 'Mum, mum.' Pointing at the guy.

Helen Skelton

Oh, that's, like, so cute and mildly worrying at the same time isn't it?

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

I used to try and get my mum to get off with the delivery guy.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I didn't think getting off was in my-,



Helen Skelton

Okay.

Ed Gamble

I wasn't saying, 'Go and get off with that motorbike, guy.'

Helen Skelton

Right.

James Acaster

Ask him on a date.

Ed Gamble

Yes, ask him on a date.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Be with him forever.

James Acaster

Yes. There you go, James Martin.

Helen Skelton

That's cute.

James Acaster

James Martin, mum's favourite.

Ed Gamble

James Martin. Mum's favourite, yes.

James Acaster

That's exciting.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I think he does have motorbikes doesn't he?

Helen Skelton

Yes, he's like-,

Ed Gamble

He's a car guy as well, right?



Helen Skelton

Yes, he's cars and motorhomes, yes, he's vehicle minded.

Ed Gamble

Yes, a lot of my knowledge of James Martin comes from the new Alan Partridge book and I'm not sure a lot of that is real.

Helen Skelton

Has he got a new book? Sorry.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, he's got a new book out, yes.

Ed Gamble

In the Alan Partridge book there's a bit where Alan goes to meet James Martin.

James Acaster

Great.

Ed Gamble

I'm not sure James Martin will be happy with it, but.

Helen Skelton

I used to work in local radio. I often feel like Alan Partridge had an insight into my soul.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

You must have been on-, I mean, I imagine there's not a single mode of transport you haven't been on, Helen, because-,

Helen Skelton

I'm so happy that you rephrased that question because you could have asked it in such a different way.

James Acaster

So, I was going to say, you must have been on a motorbike, but it's because I know that, like, a lot of the things you've done for TV you've been, like, 'Helen will try anything.'

Helen Skelton

Well, when I started Blue Peter I think, like, Joel was the funny one. Ayo was the, sort of, cool cultured one, and what was left? She'll be the one that's, like, not afraid of stuff. So, I used to get-,



Ed Gamble

The three rolls.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

So, they just used to chuck me out of helicopters and, yes, you're right, I mean, that-, motorbikes. I mean, when I started on Blue Peter it was different. Like, every shoot had a helicopter, a motorbike, a boat, whatever. I mean, it was just a really great time to be part of the show.

Ed Gamble

What do they do now then?

Helen Skelton

Well, there are a lot more kids shows now isn't there-,

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

So, there's a lot more-, you know, like, Steve Backshall does a lot of the sort of stuff we used to do, or, now-,

James Acaster

Steve Backshall, the javelin thrower?

Helen Skelton

No. Steve Backshall-,

Ed Gamble

No, that's Steve Backley.

James Acaster

Sorry.

Helen Skelton

But valid. Steve Backshall is like a animal-,

Ed Gamble

Animal guy. He's an animal guy.



Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

He's actually in the second Partridge book.

James Acaster

I'm sure I'd know him if I saw him. Is he?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Yes, he's cool. He's done Strictly. You'll know him from that.

James Acaster

Okay, yes.

Helen Skelton

It's like there are a lot more kids shows now, so, it's different. But, yes, back in the day, I mean, I'm trying to think. Helicopter, yes. Boats, motorbikes.

James Acaster

Hovercraft?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

This is great. Think of everything-,

Ed Gamble

What other modes of transport are there?

James Acaster

Hand glider.

Helen Skelton

Yes. I'm annoying myself.

James Acaster

Unicycle?



Ed Gamble

Oh.

Helen Skelton

No. Valid. Don't think so, no.

James Acaster

Well, it's not really a mode of transport, is it, but-

Helen Skelton

I know what you mean though. Being on like Ripley's World of Weird Inventions you used to regularly bring stuff to studio. So, it was normal that, 'Oh, what are you doing on Tuesday?' 'Oh, riding the world's smallest car.' Or, you know, taking the dogs on the back of a three wheeler lorry.' It was-, yes, it was a weird fun time.

Ed Gamble

Does the novelty ever wear off with that sort of thing? You know, like a three wheeler lorry with dogs on it just going, like, 'For fucks sake.'

Helen Skelton

That's why I left when I did, because I didn't want to be the person for who it wore off, and I went to Antarctica and that was, like, my last big challenge. So, I'd done mad stuff and, like, you name it, my first day at work on Blue Peter I went to Alaska for six weeks-,

Ed Gamble

Wow.

Helen Skelton

And you like chase bears, get dropped into, you know, Mulans. Then you'd go off to-, I don't know. As I say, you name it, we went Turkey. Swim from Asia to Europe. All of that. And then I came back to the office and they went, 'Today, you're going to the World Worming Championships and you're dressing as a chicken.' And that was the moment at which I thought, 'I need to go soon.' Because it's fun dressing as a chicken once-,

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

But do you know when you're, like-,

James Acaster

Yes.



Ed Gamble

Yes, what if this becomes a regular thing?

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

Of the worming championships.

Helen Skelton

Yes, and ironically I literally was, like, 'I don't do, like, dressing up and singing and dancing on tele.' And then ironically given the whole Strictly thing-,

Ed Gamble

Yes. What's a worming championship?

Helen Skelton

You stamp on the ground to try and get worms to come out-,

Ed Gamble

Oh right.

Helen Skelton

And whoever gets the most worms out wins.

Ed Gamble

That makes more sense than what I was thinking.

James Acaster

Yes, it's not-, yes-,

Helen Skelton

Oh, no, it's not like a-,

James Acaster

Wouldn't have to dress like a chicken would you?

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's not like a thing for pets?



Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, that's how you know which one they're sending you to.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

What they say you're dressed as.

Helen Skelton

I also don't know why I just tried to action that out so it made more sense because that was probably worse.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

It's probably good for the pod.

Helen Skelton

It's not good for me though.

Ed Gamble

Yes, we've got a video of that now.

James Acaster

No, not good for you or your life.

The dream main course.

Helen Skelton

Roast chicken dinner.

James Acaster

Oh, is this because you used to dress-

Helen Skelton

Takes me back to that good old day-,

James Acaster

Yes.



Helen Skelton

At the Worm Worming Championship. Proper chicken, loads of stuffing, like, in a big bowl, stuffing bowl, good.

Ed Gamble

In the chicken?

Helen Skelton

No, separate.

Ed Gamble

Separate?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

You don't want it in the chicken?

Helen Skelton

No. Oh, quite high pitched there.

James Acaster

You sounded like a chicken there, Ed.

Ed Gamble

Ooh chicken. Sorry, I'm secretly a chicken and I'm offended because you don't want to eat the chicken from inside the-,

Helen Skelton

That was very funny.

James Acaster

Yes. Protective isn't he.

Helen Skelton

You wouldn't want to be stuffed if you were a chicken?

James Acaster

No.

Helen Skelton

Roast parsnips, definitely. Loads of gravy, definitely, and I wouldn't go Yorkshire pudding on a roast chicken dinner.



James Acaster

Wow.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Not a Yorkshire pudding fan either.

James Acaster

This is a double fucking winner here.

Ed Gamble

So, you're not a Yorkshire pudding fan?

Helen Skelton

No, I get the practicality of a wrap-,

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

But I wouldn't put it on my dinner.

Ed Gamble

Absolute result.

James Acaster

This is too much of a result.

Helen Skelton

I think it's the first time there's someone here who backs me up on it.

James Acaster

But also someone-, are you from Yorkshire?

Helen Skelton

No, Cumbria.

James Acaster

Oh, well, then fair and fair enough.

Ed Gamble

What?

James Acaster

It's not that much of a win for you.

Ed Gamble

Well, it is, I-,

James Acaster

I thought you'd got someone from Yorkshire-,

Helen Skelton

Well, I had a child born in Yorkshire and I lived there for a long time, so, can't it mean I'm, sort of, adopted.

Ed Gamble

There you go. That's pretty good.

Helen Skelton

They claimed me.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

No, no, it's not the same as-, you can't claim this is someone from Yorkshire is agreeing with you about Yorkshire puddings, you can't-,

Ed Gamble

I just think anyone agreeing with me about Yorkshire puddings is a win because people are evangelical about Yorkshire puddings in this country.

James Acaster

Yes, as well they should be.

Helen Skelton

Some people put them on Christmas dinners.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I don't know what they're playing at.

James Acaster

It's quite nice.



Ed Gamble

No. Think of everything else on a Christmas dinner. There's so much lovely food to eat and then you're putting essentially a lump of polystyrene on the plate. You're putting packing materials-,

James Acaster

It's not. If you did a blindfolded taste test and I gave you a Yorkshire pudding and a lump of polystyrene, I think you'd be able to tell the difference, Ed.

Ed Gamble

Well, if you hadn't put me headphones in and then-,

James Acaster

What?

Ed Gamble

Because I'd hear the squeak of the polystyrene wouldn't I?

James Acaster

Okay, yes. I'll put some headphones on for you, you can listen to the Olympics or whatever makes you feel calm.

Ed Gamble

I wouldn't tell the difference.

James Acaster

And then I'll get you to eat them. You'll be able to tell the difference.

Helen Skelton

Polystyrene, halloumi, yes or no?

James Acaster

What?

Ed Gamble

What are they the same?

Helen Skelton

Just to eat it, do you like it?

Ed Gamble

Yes, I love halloumi.

Helen Skelton

Okay.



James Acaster

I like it, but if I could get rid of the squeak I would in a heartbeat. I hate the squeak.

Helen Skelton

Because I had a television disagreement with Paul Hollywood about halloumi.

Ed Gamble

Was this on Bake Off?

Helen Skelton

I argued for halloumi. He argued against halloumi.

Ed Gamble

Really?

Helen Skelton

And I didn't realise in that environment you're supposed to just nod and listen, aren't you? Because they're the judges and they're there to critique you.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

But I thought it was like a chat.

Ed Gamble

What were you doing with the halloumi though?

Helen Skelton

Putting it in on a pizza.

Ed Gamble

Right, yes, I can see why he disagreed with that.

Helen Skelton

Yes, he wasn't a fan.

Ed Gamble

Was he a fan of halloumi in general?

Helen Skelton

No, because apparently he lived-,



Ed Gamble

He lived in Cyprus.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Too much halloumi.

Ed Gamble

Too much halloumi-

James Acaster

He doesn't know what he's on about.

Helen Skelton

Well, that's basically what I said, which didn't go down too well.

James Acaster

Well, yes, well, good on you. Good on you for sticking up to him. He doesn't know what he's talking about. He's stealing a living, Paul Hollywood.

Helen Skelton

But you clearly haven't met him in the flesh, because when he's stares-,

James Acaster

I have, yes.

Helen Skelton

The eyes.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, I've seen those god damn eyes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes, he looks like one of the White Walkers from Game of Thrones.

Helen Skelton

Well, I said Siberian husky.



Ed Gamble

Yes, that's a nicer way of putting it.

James Acaster

But also he knows-, I've never looked into someone's eyes before and seen that-,

Ed Gamble

What?

James Acaster

I have looked into people's eyes before. It's not comfortable for me. I don't like doing it, obviously.

Helen Skelton

No, you can't hold the stare.

James Acaster

But, like-,

Helen Skelton

Go on.

James Acaster

No, I can't hold a stare. I don't like it. Stop looking at me, Helen. But when I've looked in Paul Hollywood's eyes you can see that he knows he has nice eyes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And I've not had that with someone before, where you look at them and they look at you, and you can tell all they're thinking is, 'My eyes are nice, aren't they?'

Helen Skelton

No, I know what you mean because they're, like, so blue.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

You can relax and feel comfortable staring into my eyes because I'm technically cross-eyed. So, these are not great eyes.

James Acaster

Oh, okay. Well, I feel a bit better about that.



Ed Gamble

What does technically cross-eyed mean?

Helen Skelton

So, if I took my lenses out-

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

My eyes would meet in the middle. Really attractive.

James Acaster

What, are your lenses like made of magnets that propel each-, they repel each other?

Helen Skelton

Don't know.

James Acaster

They keep your eyes-,

Ed Gamble

Yes, how does that work?

Helen Skelton

I don't-, I've got no idea.

Ed Gamble

It's amazing. Well, that's going to be a great big finish for the end of the podcast. You take your lenses out and look right down that camera. That's where it is for future reference before you take the lenses out.

Helen Skelton

So, is this off track?

James Acaster

No, it's great. Also, you know, I'm going to be on Strictly again, but in that dance you did from cabaret you looked straight down the camera and you mimed along to the song, saying, 'You're better without me.' Or something like that. And now I'm imagining if you'd done that and taken your lenses out at the same time. When you did it it would have been a brilliant bit in the song.

Helen Skelton

That was all the way through the show they keep going, 'Just stare at the lens, stare at the lens.' I've spent my life around cameras and live TV and none of that phases me. But, honestly, when you're



dancing it is a bit like, 'Don't look at me.' You know like when you were a kid and you think if I'm playing hide and seek, if I can't see you, you can't see me.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

But then I think that was the difference on camera. They were, like, 'Just do it.' I was, like, 'Okay.'

James Acaster

It was great. It was a great bit. Made me emotional when you did that.

Helen Skelton

Ah-,

James Acaster

You looked at the camera and you mimed along to that. I was, like 'She's done it.'

Helen Skelton

I know we're taking the mickey out of them, but that's really nice of you to say. Thanks.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, thank you.

Ed Gamble

No, I mean, he means it. He absolutely loves the show.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Very excited.

James Acaster

A really powerful moment in the show.

Helen Skelton

Have you been to the show?

Ed Gamble

Oh god.



James Acaster

Get this. Get this, Helen. I was invited this week-,

Helen Skelton

Oh no.

James Acaster

The last Saturday just gone and I couldn't go. I was invited very last minute to go and do the terms and conditions and I was so-, literally the week before when my girlfriend and I were watching it, she was, like, 'Why haven't you done the terms and conditions yet?' And I was, like, 'They never offered me.' And then a couple of days later I get the email, but we couldn't do it. Absolutely gutted. And I said to them-,

Ed Gamble

I've not been offered it, Helen.

James Acaster

No, well, you're not-,

Helen Skelton

You don't have the appreciation for the show.

Ed Gamble

But I would not not appreciate it.

Helen Skelton

No.

James Acaster

You wouldn't fucking appreciate it. It would be wasted on you.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

But I said to them, 'Please bear me in mind for the future. Any time there's a gap I'd love to do it.'

Ed Gamble

But they're going to ask you to do the show now.

James Acaster

Yes, then they said, 'Will you do the Christmas special?' Which I know is the first thing-, you did Christmas special in, like, 2012-,



Helen Skelton

Yes-,

James Acaster

And then-, or something like that, and then you came back and did the proper one. But I couldn't do it. I'd be too stressed.

Helen Skelton

No, you didn't, no, you wouldn't.

James Acaster

I'm not doing it ever, Helen.

Ed Gamble

You'd be really really good.

James Acaster

Here's how I replied to it, and I'm sure my agent would have reworded it. But I said, 'I'd rather be dead.'

Helen Skelton

No, because, no, after the Christmas special I said, 'Don't ever let me do the show, absolutely not.'

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

But I honestly I cannot tell you enough, it's the best thing I've ever done in my life, every bit of it.

Ed Gamble

Okay, Helen, for context, you said to James that he's not met Paul Hollywood in the flesh, so, you don't know about the time James went on Celebrity Bake Off, which is widely regarded as the worst performance on Celebrity Bake Off of all time. The clip of his flapjacks has gone viral multiple times.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

He's a meme.

James Acaster

I'm a meme because of how badly it went.

Ed Gamble

And that would happen on Strictly as well.



James Acaster

It would.

Ed Gamble

He'd be the first contestant to shit their pants live on air.

James Acaster

Yes, like, whilst looking down the camera.

Ed Gamble

Yes, and shouting-,

James Acaster

'You're better without me.' Like, two days is Bake Off.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And it's not as hardcore as what you have to do on Strictly. And I absolutely fell apart. I could not do a week on Strictly.

Helen Skelton

When I got kicked off Bake Off, they thanked me for bringing the comedy element.

James Acaster

Well, do you know what, I wished they'd said that to me. I'm a comedian.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but what you did was tragic.

James Acaster

Yes, they went, 'Goodbye.' That's what they said to me when I went.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Who did it when you were on?

James Acaster

Rylan, god bless him.



Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

Russell Tovey. Michelle Keegan.

Helen Skelton

Oh.

Ed Gamble

She won.

James Acaster

She's won and she's been on this podcast. She gloated. She rubbed it in my face.

Helen Skelton

Yes, but it is a hard one. I didn't take it as seriously as I thought you meant-, I thought when you got there, they told you what to cook like they do on Blue Peter.

Ed Gamble

You didn't practice?

Helen Skelton

I didn't know.

Ed Gamble

Oh my god.

James Acaster

I didn't practice.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but, I know that.

Helen Skelton

I dropped all my cakes and didn't realise there were hidden cameras-, there's all cameras everywhere isn't there.

Ed Gamble

I don't think they're hidden though, Helen.

Helen Skelton

No, but I mean there's a lot of cameras.



Ed Gamble

There are men holding them.

Helen Skelton

No, there are a lot of cameras, you don't realise.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

And I dropped them and I picked them up and put them up on the table and just, like, dusted them off. And they were, like, 'Did you drop them?' And I was, like, 'No, no, it's fine.' I didn't think anyone had seen.

James Acaster

Lied.

Helen Skelton

Yes, so, they made a thing of it and they were, like, 'Helen, did you drop them?' And I was, like, 'Oh, I'm committed that I said no, so, now I have to stick to my no, even though knowing I had.' And then they were, like, 'You've just dropped them and dusted them off and offered them to Mary Berry.' And I was, like, 'I wouldn't have stuck to this lie if I'd known that you'd seen it.'

Ed Gamble

Tried to kill a national treasure.

Helen Skelton

Yes. But I won't circle away from you doing Strictly.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

You'd really like it.

Ed Gamble

You'd really like it.

James Acaster

Your dream side dish.

Dream side dish, Helen Skelton.



Helen Skelton

Corn on the cob.

James Acaster

Wow, we haven't had corn on the cob before. Wild.

Ed Gamble

We've never had corn on the cob.

James Acaster

Maybe never.

Ed Gamble

As a side dish, I don't think.

James Acaster

Exciting.

Helen Skelton

Because people feel nervous, someone said to me she'd never have a corn on the cob on a date, and I was, like, 'Why?'

Ed Gamble

Yes, I get it.

James Acaster

It gets in your teeth.

Helen Skelton

I don't care.

Ed Gamble

It gets in your teeth, it's not a dignified eating process, I guess.

Helen Skelton

Like the cheese. On our first meeting.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's like the cheese.

James Acaster

Yes.



Ed Gamble

Never have a mozzarella panini or a corn on the cob on a first date.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

I didn't clock that.

Ed Gamble

Yes. The corn on the cob, I guess it's, like, there's no way of eating a corn on the cob that can make you look mysterious. Do you know what I mean?

Helen Skelton

That's where I'm going wrong.

James Acaster

Yes, you can't really look mysterious.

Ed Gamble

Because, basically, you have to eat it like a beaver.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. Unless you're very accurate.

Helen Skelton

Some people are into that.

James Acaster

Imagine if you held it, and you looked at them, eye contact. But what you're doing is.

Ed Gamble

You're going up and down.

James Acaster

You're picking out individual corn kernels and you're spelling out a message in it. So that when you turn it, to eat the next bit.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

It says, like.



Ed Gamble

What's the message?

James Acaster

'Kiss,' question mark.

Ed Gamble

But how would you know you're doing it right? You'd have to really practise.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Because you'd have to do it the right way round.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

Because if there's a backwards kiss on there.

James Acaster

Yes, you don't want it backwards.

Ed Gamble

You're going to look like an absolute chump.

Helen Skelton

Or you don't want to get sick. In my head, I was imagining you ripping out individual kernels.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Do you know, I've also noticed he can hold my stare now he knows I've got bad eyes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, he's learnt how to do that.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, it's fine now.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes.



James Acaster

It's fine now. I know that.

Helen Skelton

I bet you couldn't with Michelle Keegan, could you?

James Acaster

No way. Can't look her in the eye. She's a cheater, for one. Never look a cheat in the eye.

Ed Gamble

How do you want this corn on the cob prepared?

Helen Skelton

Bit of butter.

Ed Gamble

Bit of butter? But how do you want it cooked? Because I do it on the barbecue, Helen, I don't mind telling you.

James Acaster

He does everything on the barbecue.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I do actually. That's true.

Helen Skelton

I don't mind that. I like an outside dining experience.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. Countryfile.

Helen Skelton

Yes. Honestly, in my cellar, I've got so many, like, outside cooking things. Everything that you can cook on outside, I've got. It's quite sad.

Ed Gamble

But inside.

Helen Skelton

Yes.



Ed Gamble

You've got them inside.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

It's sad when they're all inside.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Have they been given to you as a gift?

Helen Skelton

No, no. I am that person. And again, you know we were saying about dads want their daughters to be the kind of person to be on Countryfile? I'm that person that would go to an outdoor shop and buy all the outdoor cooking equipment.

Ed Gamble

And not use it.

Helen Skelton

I've used the stove.

James Acaster

Yes?

Ed Gamble

That's alright.

Helen Skelton

But I haven't used the griddle. I haven't used the little box. I haven't used any of the seventeen other things I've got. But I appreciate corn on the cob.

Ed Gamble

But normally when you have corn on the cob, how do you cook it?

Helen Skelton

Boil it or grill it, also on the barbecue.



Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

I've got a little barbecue you can turn on with your phone.

Ed Gamble

What?

James Acaster

Interesting.

Helen Skelton

See, outside equipment.

James Acaster

He wants it. Immediately, he wants it.

Ed Gamble

I want it because I could be on my way home and turn the barbecue on so it's ready when I get back.

Helen Skelton

That's the point. That's the point. You can turn it on, like, from wherever you are.

Ed Gamble

Hang on, is it a gas barbecue?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I'm not messing with that.

Helen Skelton

Okay.

James Acaster

Turn up and the whole house has burnt down.

Helen Skelton

Well, you leave it outside.

Ed Gamble

It's outside. It's a barbecue, James.



Helen Skelton

Really good.

James Acaster

I'd worry that I'd turn it on on my phone and it makes the whole thing, like, judder towards the house or something. You know?

Helen Skelton

It's not a robot.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's not a Roomba.

James Acaster

It is a robot. You turn it on on your phone.

Helen Skelton

Valid, valid.

James Acaster

That's a robot. That could go crazy.

Ed Gamble

So you think it's jiggling all the way to the house?

James Acaster

It's juddering towards the house.

Ed Gamble

It's opening the door.

James Acaster

No, it's smashing through your window.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Your patio window.

Ed Gamble

And then what's the issue?



James Acaster

And then it sets your whole house on fire.

Ed Gamble

Right.

James Acaster

Because it's a turned on barbecue.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Also, you've got a cat, so you might turn it on and then the cat's like, 'What's going on here?' And then, like, jumps on the barbecue.

Ed Gamble

But the cat can't go outside.

Helen Skelton

What kind of cat is that?

James Acaster

Yes, what kind of cat's that?

Ed Gamble

Siberian cat.

Helen Skelton

That stays inside?

Ed Gamble

It's a house cat.

Helen Skelton

Where does it poo?

James Acaster

Yes, where does it poo?

Ed Gamble

In the litter box. That blew your mind, didn't it?



James Acaster

Disgusting.

Helen Skelton

.Yes

Ed Gamble

Have you never heard of a house cat before?

Helen Skelton

But it never ever goes outside?

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

Gross.

Ed Gamble

You've got four cats that never go outside, so imagine what his house is like.

Helen Skelton

They never go outside ever?

James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

Also, we live in London. People nick cats.

James Acaster

Yes, especially handsome cats like ours.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Stunners. We've got real stunners.

James Acaster

We've got real stunners, Helen.

Helen Skelton

I mean, I'm so happy that the gender stereotypes are just being shot here, aren't they?

James Acaster

Yes, correct.



Helen Skelton

Cat guys, okay.

Ed Gamble

Yes, we're cat boys.

James Acaster

We're cat boys and proud.

Helen Skelton

Okay.

James Acaster

I've got four. They all stay in the house. My whole life stinks of shit.

Helen Skelton

That's unusual, isn't it?

James Acaster

Yes. Well, I think the guy doing the catio is coming this week, and I can't wait.

Helen Skelton

You'd enjoy that my dog's called Spider-Man.

Ed Gamble

What?

Helen Skelton

I knew you'd enjoy that.

Ed Gamble

No. Wait till you hear this.

James Acaster

My cat is called Spider-Man.

Helen Skelton

We were destined to be friends.

James Acaster

We were.

Ed Gamble

This is amazing.



James Acaster

And check this out as well. The cat that's called Spider-Man, he's got eyes like yours.

Helen Skelton

What, he's cross-eyed?

James Acaster

You know, they go a bit cross-eyed.

Helen Skelton

And do you love that about him?

James Acaster

Yes, it's why we got him.

Ed Gamble

It's only when you take his lenses out.

James Acaster

Only when we take his lenses out.

Helen Skelton

That, on its own, is a really nice compliment.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

Slightly creepy.

Ed Gamble

With the context, yes.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

Oh, guess what? My cat has got eyes like Paul Hollywood.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Doesn't he?



James Acaster

Yes, he does actually. And he looks at you like he knows it as well.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes. He definitely knows it.

Helen Skelton

So you can't look him in the eye?

James Acaster

No, I can't look the cat in the eye. No way.

Helen Skelton

My kid wants a cat for Christmas.

Ed Gamble

You've got to do it.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Really? But I'm not sure Spider-Man would be alright about it. Spider-Man's quite aggy, he got kicked out of the police. That's how we got him.

Ed Gamble

He got kicked out of the police? Right, I'm obviously imagining him in an office getting his papers.

James Acaster

Yes, obviously.

Ed Gamble

Yes, hand in your badge.

Helen Skelton

Sorry.

James Acaster

Your badge and your bone.

Ed Gamble

Helen, I'm going to ask you a question. Your dog got kicked out of the police. Is your dog racist?



James Acaster

I was thinking that. I'd just been, like, trying to get around this.

Helen Skelton

No. He's delicious. He likes everyone.

Ed Gamble

What?

Helen Skelton

He's definitely a bit anti-man.

Ed Gamble

Anti-man.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Right.

Helen Skelton

So he's a great guard dog.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

Strictly reference for you. My first Strictly VT where they go meet your partner.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Obviously, I've got three kids, I work, I've got a dog. No one has time for the chit-chat small talk. I live up north, I work in this industry, I know I'm getting Gorka and I'm really excited about it. Because he's northern, I'm already friends with Gemma.

James Acaster

Is he?

Helen Skelton

Yes, well, they live up in Manchester.



James Acaster

Okay.

Helen Skelton

So I'm, like, 'This is brilliant. I'm super excited.' But they do this whole thing, don't they, where you have to build up the anxiety and run and jump at each other. You don't know me, but I'm sure you're guessing, I'm not a run-y jump-y on a stranger kind of person. So we're in the park, I've got the kids and the dog and they're filming. And in order to answer the question, 'How excited are you about meeting your partner?' I kept having to throw the ball. So they asked the question. Right, throw the ball. The kids and the dog would go for the ball, and I'd be, like, 'Diddle-diddle-la-la.' You've got until they get back to answer the question.

Ed Gamble

I love that the kids are part of this as well.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

You can't just say to your kids, 'Can you stand over there? I'm just doing some work.'

James Acaster

Yes, Frisbee fling a poppadom across the park. And all of them go chasing after it.

Helen Skelton

Yes. And so, bless Gorka, he's stood in the wings. And again, we both have to do this whole, like, 'Yes, this is amazing,' but it's just weird. We're in the park, it's meant to be a secret. There's a glitter ball. It's really busy. There's a crew there. There's no end to this story, I just thought you'd enjoy the story because you like Strictly.

James Acaster

I do, I love it. I love hearing about Gorka.

Helen Skelton

He's so nice.

Ed Gamble

I thought Spider-Man was about to attack Gorka.

James Acaster

Gorka's the most attractive man on Strictly.

Helen Skelton

But, what's nice is, he doesn't know it. You agree?



James Acaster

No.

Ed Gamble

Benito just held his hand up to say there's five minutes, but it looked like you were agreeing that Gorka is the most attractive man.

James Acaster

It looked that was a vote from Benito.

Helen Skelton

A lot of people do agree. But, what's nice is I wouldn't say he's one of those people who's like, 'I know how attractive I am.'

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

If we made you do it, you have to do it for the sake of Spider-Man your cat, right?

James Acaster

Gorka. Gorka.

Helen Skelton

Yes, that would be a great pair.

Ed Gamble

That would be great.

Helen Skelton

Yes, because you'd have fun.

James Acaster

It's never going to happen.

Your dream drink.

Helen Skelton

I do like a gin and tonic, but that is boring. So if it was a special occasion, I am going to say a Kir Royale.

James Acaster

Lovely.



Ed Gamble

Is this the first shout out for Kir Royale?

James Acaster

I know we discussed it with Rob Brydon, but I don't know if he actually chose it. I don't think he did.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Remind us, Helen, of what Kir Royale actually is.

Helen Skelton

Champagne and cassis with a little liqueur in the bottom. I just like the way it looks.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes. And tastes?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

It's a very fancy looking drink though.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

You're not having one of those at home on the regular, are you? If you are, how often are you having one?

Helen Skelton

No, not often. But I feel like it's an occasion, you know. It's a Christmas drink. It's a 'girls are round' drink, isn't it? And I feel like gin and tonic is something that everyone would say. You've had that a lot.

Ed Gamble

Who are the 'girls are round'?

Helen Skelton

Of my friends?

Ed Gamble

James will want to know all of the girls who come round, their names please.



James Acaster

Not in a creepy way.

Ed Gamble

But true.

James Acaster

I always ask people this. Yes, it is true. But whenever people say, 'I want it with a group of friends,' I'm always, like, 'Who are your friends, what are their names?' I'm never, like, 'What girls are round and what are their names?'

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes, and their measurements.

Helen Skelton

Shelly, wonderful, most organised person. Can tell you what she's doing every day for the next six months. She's the one person of my friends who, like, schedules in getting too drunk and boy, does she go for it when she goes for it. Okay?

James Acaster

Yes, Shelly.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Great.

Helen Skelton

Wild. Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

The line, she's leaping over the line. You know, the line is a dot to her.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Kim. Works in music, super organised. Just stupidly good fun. We'll go to Kim's for drinks, she's hired the local busker to come and sing at her house for us. She's got, like, marquees, she's got caterers,



she is putting on a spread. She's a good time girl. And also, just, like, fun sporadic. 'It's Thursday, shall we have a do? Let's have a do.' She's bringing the Kir Royale.

James Acaster

Great.

Helen Skelton

Jill. Super smart. Do you want all the friends that would come?

James Acaster

Yes, yes, I was just laughing at Jill because it reminds me of, 'Why hello Jill,' and that's why I'm laughing.

Helen Skelton

Jill just rolls with the chaos.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Rocks up at my house on Saturday with five pizzas for my kids with her three kids. There were already seven kids there, and she was, like, 'Which ones are yours?' By that point, I'm not going to lie, I'd lost track.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

So, they were all there. So, yes, she'll just come in and roll with the chaos. So much fun. Olga, exact same thing.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

She has to drive past my house for work, so quite often on a Friday, she calls back in with a bottle of Prosecco. She is the kind of girl who her boyfriend gets, like, an outdoor swimming pool. I don't know why I'm talking fast.

James Acaster

I love it.



Helen Skelton

And then they get a tractor, and, I mean, the health and safety would not be into this. So that's why I will make sure it's exclusively Olga and not me.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

You know, like, a bucket on a tractor. So, the kids jump out of the bucket.

James Acaster

What?

Helen Skelton

And use that as a diving board. Tractor's not moving.

James Acaster

Yes, it doesn't sound like a diving board. But, yes.

Ed Gamble

Well, it's a bucket.

James Acaster

It's a bucket, isn't it?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

It's a high-sided diving board.

Helen Skelton

So, those girls. My sister-in-law, she's also fun.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

Our other friend, Rebecca. She just gets so stressed out by the chaos of my life. We used to house share.

James Acaster

Yes.



Helen Skelton

You'll enjoy this. We used to house share in London. We were, like, born three beds apart. One of my best friend's, like, family. We lived in a flat in London.

Ed Gamble

It took me a while to work out that you're talking about in a hospital. Because I just imagined a house with, like, eight beds in one room.

Helen Skelton

It's Cumbria.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

Helen Skelton

We lived in house in London for three years. When we left, we said, 'Let's have a leaving do.' I was, like, 'Okay, great, I'll make a chilli.' And then went to open the oven and we realised there's still plastic on the inside of the oven. We'd lived there three years and never used it.

Ed Gamble

Oh my God.

James Acaster

Wow.

Ed Gamble

Firstly, I like how quickly someone says, 'Shall we have a leaving do?' And you go, 'Yes, I'll make a chilli.'

James Acaster

'I'll make a chilli.'

Ed Gamble

It's got to be a chilli.

James Acaster

Open the oven, 'This is brand new.'

Helen Skelton

Still a running joke. I mean, that was probably twelve years ago, I've never made a chilli.



Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes. You've got to do it at some point, but I guess the longer you leave it the funnier it is.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

That you've never actually done the chilli.

Helen Skelton

It's a running joke. Every time we're, like, 'Let's have a get together. Helen's going to make a chilli.' No. She won't, though.

James Acaster

So, for this part of the meal, for the drink, do you want all of those people there?

Helen Skelton

Yes, 100%.

James Acaster

You'd like them all to turn up? And do you want the tractor with the bucket and stuff and everyone diving out of that?

Helen Skelton

100%. Slip and slide, we had last time, as well.

Ed Gamble

I love slip and slides.

James Acaster

I mean, people are breaking bones on that, right?

Helen Skelton

Yes. Especially, like, where we live, because big gardens, big hills.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

So there's a tarpaulin out and then just covered it in washing up liquid?



Helen Skelton

Yes, Fairy Liquid, hosepipe.

James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

I tell you what works well, the, like, crash mats from Ikea. You can get a right run on those.

Ed Gamble

They sell crash mats in Ikea?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

What? Why?

Helen Skelton

Like, kids' play areas and stuff.

Ed Gamble

Right, okay, it's not like crash mats for, like, stunt work or something they're doing in Ikea.

Helen Skelton

I don't think so. I mean, you can use it how you want. But, yes.

Ed Gamble

Do you want a slip and slide? We can do the Kir Royale instead of the washing up liquid.

Helen Skelton

Kir Royale fountain as you go down.

Ed Gamble

Yes, slip and slide all the way down.

James Acaster

Ikea Royale.

Ed Gamble

Ikea Royale.

Helen Skelton

Very good.



James Acaster

Yes.

Helen Skelton

He's come back to me now. He can look at me in the eyes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, I can see you in the eye now.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I've never had a guest challenge me so much on the eye contact before.

Your dream dessert, Helen.

Helen Skelton

Well, this is what I'd have at home as my comfort, hidden food. You know, like, a jelly with tangerine segments in? No. Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

That your gran made.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

So, like, tin of orange segments.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

And then a jelly.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

But the segments are suspended in the jelly, right?

Helen Skelton

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

It's like magic.

Ed Gamble

It is like magic, and it does look cool.

Helen Skelton

And it's joy.

Ed Gamble

It's joy.

James Acaster

I don't know. I don't think I've had it since I was kid, that kind of jelly.

Helen Skelton

And that's why you should have it more often.

James Acaster

Because it'll remind me of being a little kid. Maybe.

Ed Gamble

You need to be more childlike, James.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. I do.

Ed Gamble

You've hardened in your old age.



Helen Skelton

Grown-up desserts are so, I don't know, I just think they're underwhelming. They taste good but they don't look good. And jelly looks good.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. Jelly looks good, yes, yes.

Helen Skelton

Suspended in the jelly.

James Acaster

I like jelly. I just think, like, as a kid, I remember those little tangerine segments in there and being absolutely gutted about those.

Helen Skelton

Why?

James Acaster

Because I love the jelly.

Ed Gamble

But they're trying to sneak fruit in.

James Acaster

What the hell? Yes, why have you got a tangerine in there?

Helen Skelton

What about a bit of pineapple in there? They sometimes did that, didn't they?

James Acaster

I'd like that a bit more, but I never got those. I never got given those. It was always the tangerine.

Ed Gamble

Would you eat round the tangerine?

James Acaster

No, I'd eat it.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Because there's no way, like, if my parents saw that I'd left all the tangerines, they'd be, like, 'What are you doing? You've got to eat those.'



Helen Skelton

It was a close call between that and a butterscotch Angel Delight.

James Acaster

Wow.

Ed Gamble

Wow. This is proper party food now. This is, like, kids' party food.

Helen Skelton

We're Kir Royale deep, now. We've slip and slid.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Helen Skelton

No one's got time for a crème brûlée.

James Acaster

Imagine if you just covered an Ikea crash mat in Angel Delight.

Helen Skelton

That is a different kind of film.

James Acaster

I had some friends from America come over this year, and one of them really got into Angel Delight without really knowing, you know, where it sits in the cultural landscape. How people in England feel about it, how it's viewed. So they were, like, 'I've just discovered this amazing-,'

Ed Gamble

But you can tell, it comes in sachets. It's, like, a sachet of powder.

James Acaster

Yes, but they were, like, 'Wow.'

Helen Skelton

I love B and M, I love it. Home Bargains, B and M, the northern massive Woolworths, like, modern day Woolworths. You can buy Angel Delight in batch.

Ed Gamble

In batch?

Helen Skelton

So much Angel Delight.



Ed Gamble

And are you doing that?

Helen Skelton

Of course I am. Listen. I've got three kids. There's about seventeen kids in my house at any one time. You've got to have a lot of Angel Delight in the cupboard.

Ed Gamble

When they were naming Angel Delight, they really went for the name that was going to sell it the most, didn't they? 'We want this thing to sound amazing.'

James Acaster

Yes, that was clever.

Ed Gamble

Angel Delight.

James Acaster

Whoever they came up with that.

Helen Skelton

Are you a hand whipper or an electric whisker?

Ed Gamble

I beg your pardon?

James Acaster

That's private.

Ed Gamble

We both did the joke.

James Acaster

And I will not make eye contact with you while I do it. Helen, before you ask your next question. I'm going to read your menu back to you now, see how you feel about it. Water, you would like ice water from the South Pole that's melted. Poppadoms or bread, you would like five poppadoms with mango chutney. Starter, old school prawn cocktail. Main course, roast chicken dinner with stuffing, parsnips and gravy. Side dish, corn on the cob with butter. Drink, Kir Royale. And dessert, jelly with tangerine segments, like your grandmother used to make.

Helen Skelton

Yes.



Ed Gamble

We can throw a bit of butterscotch Angel Delight on there as well, can't we?

James Acaster

Have a shot?

Ed Gamble

A shot of that.

James Acaster

A shot of Angel Delight butterscotch.

Helen Skelton

Listen, I think that sounds like a fun time.

Ed Gamble

It does sound like a fun time. And I would like to have that jelly again in my life, so.

Helen Skelton

See?

Ed Gamble

Yes. You've made me remember that jelly.

James Acaster

What flavour's the actual jelly? Orange?

Helen Skelton

No, red. Strawberry.

Ed Gamble

Red.

James Acaster

Yes, okay.

Helen Skelton

I don't even know. Cherry, raspberry, what is it?

Ed Gamble

Red.

James Acaster

Yes, red.



Helen Skelton

Did you ever the eat the jelly cubes?

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

Yes. Amazing.

Helen Skelton

That was a good time, wasn't it?

James Acaster

Whenever you were allowed to do that, you're, like, 'Why are we bothering with the actual process of making the jelly?'

Ed Gamble

It's just better jelly.

James Acaster

'Why are you not just giving me this jelly cube?'

Helen Skelton

You were allowed? We had to sneak it.

James Acaster

Yes, we were allowed one.

Helen Skelton

Okay.

Ed Gamble

Okay, everything makes sense now.

James Acaster

What?

Ed Gamble

How much you like desserts. How addicted you are to sugar. Basically, like, your parents giving you an E.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. But just one, or a half, like, half an E. There you go. I'm addicted but I can't get a lot of it. And then I get old enough that I can get my own ecstasy, so now I've gone insane.



Ed Gamble

Helen, thank you very much for coming to the dream restaurant.

Helen Skelton

Thank you for having me.

James Acaster

Thank you, Helen.

Ed Gamble

James.

James Acaster

Yes?

Ed Gamble

What did I say?

James Acaster

Listen, I owe you an apology, man.

Ed Gamble

You knew what you were going to do.

James Acaster

I didn't know.

Ed Gamble

You knew you were only going to talk about Strictly.

James Acaster

I tried really hard not to talk about Strictly. I'm sorry, man.

Ed Gamble

You didn't try at all.

James Acaster

I wholeheartedly apologise. I let you down.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



James Acaster

I tried really hard. I just wanted to find out about food in Helen's life, and it just kept naturally coming up in conversation.

Ed Gamble

It didn't.

James Acaster

And I'm sorry that-,

Ed Gamble

You crowbarred it in every time. And then, obviously, Helen talked about it because it's in her career, and once she realised that you were a fan of Strictly. At one point, she even said, 'You'll enjoy this because you're a Strictly fan.' She was tailoring answers to you because you like Strictly.

James Acaster

But I can't help that. That was out of my hands, that one.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And I'm genuinely sorry, and it won't happen again.

Ed Gamble

We're never having a guest on who's been on Strictly before, ever again.

James Acaster

Well, I think you're narrowing our pool of guests pretty severely there.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

I think a lot of people would like to have Molly, would be great on it.

Ed Gamble

Molly who?

James Acaster

From the same series.

Ed Gamble

Molly who? What's her surname?



James Acaster

Strictly.

Ed Gamble

Molly Strictly.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Right. So you want to have a guest on who you don't even know their surname and all you know them from is Strictly?

James Acaster

You know, I just know them as Molly when I was watching. Molly and Carlos. She danced with Carlos. Get Carlos on it. He's one of the dancers.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

Carlos would be great.

Ed Gamble

We've recorded one with a professional dancer from Strictly.

James Acaster

And it went great.

Ed Gamble

It did go great.

James Acaster

And one of the judges. That went great. So we get Craig Revel Horwood on.

Ed Gamble

Benito's just told us Craig Revel Horwood once pushed past him and said he had a lot of bags.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Sounded like he did have a lot of bags, though, Benito.



James Acaster

Yes, at the theatre.

Ed Gamble

Yes. That would annoy me if I turned up to the theatre and tried to get to my seat and someone was sat in the middle of the row with loads of bags.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

And I would say, you've got a lot of bags.

James Acaster

Yes. I'm sure Craig Revel Horwood's been to loads of theatre gigs.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And seen loads of performances.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

So, he knows what the correct etiquette is.

Ed Gamble

Yes, and how many bags you should have.

James Acaster

So, if he sees someone with shit loads of bags, he's going to tell them.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Apparently, Ben had been Christmas shopping and then went to the theatre.

Ed Gamble

See, now I want to have Craig on because I want to ask him, 'Do you remember when a guy had loads of bags at the theatre?'



James Acaster

Yes. So that'll be great. So we can get Craig on.

Ed Gamble

And then I'll say, 'That was him.'

James Acaster

Get Craig on. Get Gorka. Get Carlos.

Ed Gamble

I think you should speak to Benito. Benito will produce a Strictly podcast for you, here at Plosive Productions.

James Acaster

Why don't you want this for our podcast?

Ed Gamble

Because I can't stress enough, I don't like Strictly.

James Acaster

Yes, but I think the listener already loves the fact, I can speak for them, that I love Strictly and you really don't like it.

Ed Gamble

But the listener doesn't like Strictly.

James Acaster

There are quite a lot of listeners who like Strictly.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

But also, for the ones who don't, you're their voice. So it's perfect to have them as guests on this podcast.

Ed Gamble

Yes, but they also need to listen to your voice. And it's mainly your voice on these ones, because all you're doing is talking about fucking Strictly.

James Acaster

You were talking on that one. What did you talk about?



Ed Gamble

Talked about, 'Can we stop talking about Strictly now and talk about food?'

James Acaster

That probably didn't make the edit, though. You, maybe, were hoping I was going to say spring onion beer and I'd get kicked out from the dream restaurant.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I'd love that. But she didn't say it, so she stayed in the restaurant to deliver her full menu. Do not forget that Helen's book, *In My Stride*, is out now. You can go and buy that.

James Acaster

Yes. and also, you can buy Ed's book, *Glutton*.

Ed Gamble

The multi-course life of a very greedy boy. That is available also. Do go and buy it.

James Acaster

My books.

Ed Gamble

For all of your book needs. James's books are all out as well.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

And look out for his next book, *I Love Strictly*.

James Acaster

I Love Strictly So Sue Me.

Ed Gamble

That's a good idea for a book, that.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, yes. Benito could produce it.

Ed Gamble

Thank you very much for listening, we will see you again sometime soon, bye bye.

James Acaster

Goodbye.