K: So, lately I’ve been thinking about LGBTQIA+ and the importance of the plus because I’m part of the plus. I’m pansexual, so, L is for lesbian, G is for gay, B is bisexual, T is for trans, Q is for queer, I is for intersex, A is for asexual, and you can be one or multiple of those things, and plus is for other things such as pansexual and, for me, the plus is so important because I’m a member of the community, and I’m not – I’m kind of more demi-sexual than pansexual in that I’m attracted to people’s intellect. And that’s what I find… drives my sexuality. Not physicality so much.

C: The way people think.

K: Yeah. The way people think, their beliefs, and… more like the beliefs, humor, ability to reason, ability to agree with me. (laughs)

C: I think the plus, too, also captures some things that are culturally specific and differ between cultures. So, like, there’s the two-spirit, which is mostly, you know, American indigenous culture has two-spirit, and then in the Indian culture, there’s hijra. There’s a lot of different things, and I’m not well-versed in all of them.

K: Yeah, and some people consider themselves to be a third gender, and that doesn’t always mean trans.

C: Right.

K: And then there’s also non-binary, gender-fluid, genderqueer, and the list goes on and on. And when you look at, like, pansexual and demi-sexual and quasi-sexual, those are all… outside of the binary and outside of cisgendered heterosexuality.

C: Well, I think not just cisgendered heterosexuality, but cisgendered heterosexual, heteroromantic.

K: Yes.

C: Because I’m seeing a lot more people discussing the fact that some people are sexually attracted to one or more types of people and romantically attracted to a different subset of people.

K: Yes. And, so, I believe something that is controversial, which I find, for me – I think it’s more controversial to say in the United States than it is to say in Japan. I believe that straight men can have sex with men and still identify as straight. And I believe that straight women can have sex with women and still identify as straight. And, in the United States, that’s a really controversial statement. And I find it to not be as controversial in Japan. There are a lot of – I know more so about – I know a few men, but I know more women that identify as straight but want to have sex with women. And I think the reason why I know more women is because I’m a woman.

C: Because you know more women, yeah.

K: Yeah. And because they hit on me, and I’m like, “right now, I’m in a monogamous relationship.” So, I think – right now – I plan to be with you for the rest of my life, and you identify that you would like to be in a monogamous marriage for the rest of our lives. So, we weren’t always monogamous. Now we are.

C: Yeah.

K: So, that’s why I say now because our current state is monogamy. So, do you think that people who are polyamorous are part of the plus?

C: I do not think that people who are polyamorous are part of the plus, and that’s why I was trying to introduce the distinction between who you’re sexually attracted to and who you’re romantically attracted to.

K: So, do you think that the LGBTQIA+ is about romantic attraction?

C: I think that it includes it, but I think that polyamory is different than being part of the

K: Queer community.

C: Yeah, I’m just going to call it the queer community rather than saying the whole thing each time.

K: Yeah.

C: I think that you – being polyamorous is a decision about monogamy versus non-monogamy rather than who you’re attracted to, who you want to have sex with, who you want to have relationships with.

K: Yes.

C: I think, let’s say, you’re a woman, and you are only polyamorous with men. You only want to have sex with men. You only want to have relationships with men.

K: Yeah.

C: You have no interest in women or non-binary people or anything else. I think it’s fair to say you’re heterosexual and heteroromantic.

K: Yeah.

C: That you’re polyamorous on top of that is a relationship choice.

K: Yes.

C: Just like I would say that, if you’re into BDSM or something like that, that’s a relationship choice, and that’s a kink choice, and that doesn’t make you part of the queer community.

K: Yeah, so, for me – just outing us, we’re part of the kink community, both of us are, and – so, for me, I don’t feel like our kink has ever had anything to do with the queer community.

C: No.

K: So, you’re cisgendered heterosexual, and while you would be okay with being in a threesome with one woman and two men, you would not want to sexually interact with the male.

C: Right.

K: And, so, you’d want to be in different orifices – and sorry if that’s too graphic for anyone out there.

C: (laughs)

K: And, for me, that makes you completely not part of the queer community.

C: Mhm.

K: I feel like you’re an ally to the community – I feel like you’re a friend to the community – but you are not part of the community. What do you think about that?

C: I think that’s fair.

K: Because I don’t think you can marry into it is my point. (laughs)

C: No, definitely not.

K: It’s not something you can marry into in case people are wondering, and if you have a relative who’s queer, you can’t – it’s something that is, to me, for me, the community, it has to do with how you identify and how you think of yourself. And I find that, in Japan, it’s just not talked about.

C: Right.

K: And it’s so strange to me how much it is just not talked about. And… I was watching a show on queer Japan, and they have… two men who are in a committed, monogamous relationship with each other who are both lawyers who are on this show, and they’re talking about it. And they ask, “wow, you’re coming out. Are you out?” And they’re like, “no, we’re not out.” They’re like, “you’re coming on this show. Doesn’t that make you out?” They’re like, “no, our family’s not going to watch this show.”

C: Mhm.

K: They were so cut and dry like, “nope. Nobody’s going to know. And when we go into queer spaces, everybody there is queer, so there’s no danger. We don’t come out.” And they say, “why don’t you come out?” And they say, “why would I?”

C: Yeah.

K: So, I know a lot of queer people in Japan that just don’t understand: why come out?

C: Well, I thi

K: Why be out?

C: I think that being out is a tricky thing because a lot of it, unless you like wear a pin that says, you know, “kiss me, I’m gay” or declarative things that are definitive is about signaling. And that signaling is so culture specific.

K: See, and I think that being out or in, for me – the reason I came out is because I wanted to do public displays of affection with my partner.

C: Right.

K: And, so, I wanted my partners to be out, and I wanted to be out because I like to do public displays of affection. And I still do. You had to come over to the public displays of affection side

C: I did.

K: Because that was not something you were into when we met. And, in Japan, there just isn’t… as much stigma around men touching men as there is in the United States.

C: And this is exactly what I mean about signaling.

K: Okay.

C: I think that, if, like, two guys are walking down the street holding hands, in the United States that’s usually a very clear signal, assuming they’re both adults and not father and son or whatever, that they are in some kind of romantic relationship.

K: And in Japan I think, “wow they must have known each other since the second grade.” That was my first thought. Childhood friends? Because we’ve been in Japan for so long because we’ve seen two elderly men that are arm in arm with each other and, like – older Japanese nationals love to talk to Chad.

C: Yeah, they do.

K: They’re like heatseeking missiles, and I don’t know why. They don’t like to talk to me as much. Sometimes they do. But they will come up to you and feel the need to tell you their entire life story.

C: Yes.

K: And, so, we’ve had lots of interactions with older Japanese nationals who are doing physical displays of affection with a same-sex friend that is saying, “this is just – this is my longest friend. This is my brother. I love this person. I love them with my whole heart.”

C: I don’t travel as much for work anymore, but when I was doing my PhD, I was teaching English on the side, and sometimes I’d have to sit and wait. And there was one guy who just liked to come up and put his arm around me and talk to me.

K: Yeah.

C: Not in any kind of making an advance way on me. Just talk to me

K: Just like, “we’re going to be friends.”

C: Yeah, “we’re going to be friends. Here’s how much I hate Americans.”

K: (laughs) That’s always weird to me when they come up and they’re super affectionate and they want to talk about the imperialist Americans and how they fought them back and how we ruined Japan.

C: He was in his 80s, so he grew up during the occupation, and it was a whole thing. But I think that – that, yeah, there’s affection between men and between women isn’t assumed to indicate romantic interest when it’s done in public.

K: So, I feel like – ooh, ooh. This is an epiphany that I’m having right now. I feel like, in Japan, I assume less that I know anything about the person across from me.

C: Mm. Yeah.

K: And I – for in Japan, I don’t presume, and they don’t presume to understand me. Inside Japan, Japanese-to-Japanese person, there is the same level of assumption.

C: Yeah.

K: But Japanese-to-Foreigner, there’s less of a level of assumption. And, for me, there’s less of a level of assumption. And the Japanese just assume everybody’s straight.

C: Yeah.

K: They just assume that everybody is whatever they consider to air quotes “normal” to be.

C: Yeah, I think you have to go really far outside of the norms.

K: Yeah.

C: Like really, really far outside of it. So, I have two things that I’m thinking about. So, one – and I think you were with me – we get on the subway and sit down, and sitting across from us is a guy in a leather jacket with fringe and fully-sequined, and he’s wearing a shirt that says, “sexy beast” in glitter.

K: Yeah. I remember him.

C: I don’t assume that he’s not a straight guy.

K: And he was wearing pink, leopard print – so, it was pink and Black leopard print pants.

C: Leggings, right?

K: Yeah, leggings. So, like, the material of, like, yoga pants.

C: Right.

K: And cowboy boots with lots of jewelry. Very gothic looking.

C: Right.

K: But all of the colors were pink. It was all like a pink and Black landscape.

C: Yeah.

K: And what we would consider, in the United States if I saw him, I would think, “work, queen.” But, in Japan, I did not think, “work, queen.” I was just like, “okay, he’s dapper.”

C: Right.

K: “He’s dandy.” So, like, men that go to Dandy House – there’s like a men’s, we might have talked about this before on the podcast.

C: Yeah, we have.

K: Called Dandy House that they go to very proudly to get coiffed and waxed and all of those things. And it’s considered to be very masculine to remove all of your body hair by waxing.

C: Yeah.

K: And to make your body smooth and to primp and to – like, most of the men in Japan pluck their eyebrows or shave their eyebrows.

C: Okay, and then another time, I was at Denny’s – and this time I know you weren’t with me – I was at Denny’s, it was near Christmas, and there were two men sitting waiting. And they were both wearing red halter tops, Santa hats, and miniskirts.

K: (laughs)

C: With their legs spread, so you could see they were wearing panties. And I thought, “okay, you are trying to make sure that nobody can misinterpret this.”

K: Yes.

C: That nobody’s thinking, “maybe they’re just having fun.”

K: Yes.

C: So, I think that that’s what I mean you have to go really far outside of the social norm for people to make assumptions.

K: Well, like, too, there’s a lot of high drag that goes – everyday high drag that happens in December and January, at least in Aichi.

C: Yes.

K: Where you just see heterosexual – cisgendered heterosexual men – in high drag.

C: Yes.

K: Like beat face, like

C: This was not high drag.

K: So, I’m saying but tons of makeup, full-on individually placed sequins on the lips kind of level of going on, and I’m envious. That is skill and craft. And you see them in the female kimonos, and in female dresses and such.

C: And I took classes in Japanese theater when I was at university.

K: Yeah.

C: And there’s the tradition in Japan of the onnagata, which is like the form of the woman.

K: Yeah.

C: They’re men who dress as women for theater, and it was passed down from father to son, and they were considered the cat’s meow for women.

K: Yeah.

C: Like, historically they were always married. They usually died young because of all the lead paint they used, but

K: Yes.

C: But it wa

K: Some of them, some of them were gay, some of them were straight, some of them were trans.

C: Right.

K: But that profession didn’t necessarily dictate which one of those that they were.

C: Well, and the profession dictated that they had to have a family though because it was passed down from father to son, so even if they were not straight, they had the obligation to continue the line.

K: Yes.

C: So, and I think that Japan has often separated like… the relationship pairings from sexual and romantic pairings. You have a lot of stories of love between samurai and different things, so I think that Japanese history… it’s not that it’s more open about there being non-straight relationships. It’s that people more readily read them as non-straight, I think. I think, if you look at, let’s say, European history – and I see a lot of jokes of it on twitter – are like, historians, and “they lived together for thirty years and shared every meal. Weren’t they just such great friends?”

K: Mm.

C: Rather than just concluding, okay, they were a couple.

K: Yeah.

C: And Japanese history doesn’t do that.

K: There’s not that sterilization of same-sex relationships. Which is so interesting because, back in – it feels like back during the Shogunate era that Japan was so forward-thinking when it came to relationships and pairings. Lots of women had multiple husbands, lots of men had multiple wives. Sex was – it was just like a free-love era, and then you fast-forward to today, and it’s archaic and barbaric that they want to sterilize trans people before they let them change their gender marker on their identification. And I’m just like, “what the hell, Japan?”

C: Yeah.

K: Like, what happened? And I don’t know if that’s… something that happened when – and this is going to be controversial – I wonder if it came with Christianity, and I haven’t done my research. And I think I am going to look this up because I’m interested. I wonder if, when Christianity came, if that’s when things changed.

C: The Meiji Restoration changed a lot of… of things.

K: Yeah, and that’s like… Christian. That’s when the Catholics finally broke in. Because, for years, they were just like killing Catholics.

C: So, the Meiji Restoration was after Japan re-opened itself to the rest of the world. So, yes, Catholicism came in at that time and Christianity, but it wasn’t entirely that. There were a lot of other things going on, so… I’ve only studied some of

K: So, just so you guys know, Chad did study Japanese history, so he’s not just pulling this out of thin air. In university, he studied it, so we might not get everything perfect. Hit us up on Twitter if we’re getting something wrong. We always love to learn. Be respectful. If you’re a hater, we’ll block you. (laughs) Just keeping it real. So, for me, trans rights, intersex rights, and genital mutilation are very near and dear to my heart. I view circumcision as genital mutilation. There’s female circumcision and male circumcision. I view both as genital mutilation. Nobody will ever change my mind on that. That’s my position. Please stop circumcising your children. That’s my PSA for that. Intersex children I believe should be allowed – their genitalia should be allowed to develop, and the child should be allowed to, once they go through puberty, be allowed to self-identify and see who they are. Give them a chance.

C: I would be careful about saying, “once they go through puberty” because I know a lot of trans kids don’t want to go through puberty because they want to transition before that.

K: And, so, for me – I think the way I think of it as “right when puberty starts to hit” to me, that’s going through puberty.

C: Okay.

K: And I think people need to know, for me, I started menstruating at age 9.

C: Yeah.

K: So, because I started menstruating at age 9, I think, at age 9 I knew who I was.

C: Yeah.

K: And, so, I feel like that’s the important part of letting them see who they are. Letting them – giving them time to figure out who they want to be and figure out who they want to express. And I’m not talking about trans kids. I’m talking about intersex kids.

C: I know you are.

K: And, so, intersex kids are completely different than trans kids.

C: Right.

K: And, so, it’s a completely different issue. And I feel like this is what happens with the LGBTQIA+ community when it’s talked about. We just blend all of those together, and, as part of the plus, I’m not – I used to be bisexual. I used to identify as bisexual. There was a time of my life when I was a militant lesbian – and I say militant because that’s how I describe myself: I wanted to burn down the patriarchy and burn down anything that promoted heterosexuality as the normative. I would never say, “go straight” I would always say, “go forward.” I just was really hardcore, “I’m a lesbian.” It was a byproduct of when I came out to my mother: I said, “hey, I’m gay. I think I might be bisexual, I’m not sure which one.” She took me to a psychiatrist who tried to convince me it was a phase.

C: Mhm.

K: And… I still like pie. I don’t eat pie, but I still know I like pie. (laughs) Suffice to say. So, for me, I feel like… understanding who I am, when we take it to the individual level, and we look at what intersex people want, I think that I should not be the educator on the topic of intersexuality.

C: Right.

K: I think we should seek out intersex individuals, but I do think we should stop mutilating their bodies.

C: Yes.

K: And that happens when they’re babies. So, the timeline for any one person I think would be different.

C: I think it would.

K: I have an intersex friend who wished that they had been asked when puberty hit. They wish that they had been able to go through puberty.

C: Yeah.

K: In an organic way because they wished that puberty had decided.

C: Mm.

K: And that’s where that thinking comes from. Their strong belief is that, if their genitalia had not been mutilated when they were younger, that whichever hormones dominated is the way they would have went is what they believe.

C: Yeah.

K: Now, keep in mind, I’m 50. And… they’re older than I am. And their way of thinking might be different if they were from a different generation. And no one person – my point is no one person should decide for another.

C: I agree with that.

K: And that’s what makes it so hard for me because Japan is like this – such a bizarre dichotomy. Like… being trans, for most people, in Japan will not put their job in jeopardy. And there are a lot of institutions that help trans individuals find work. And there’s a lot of support for trans individuals. But... the leading trans doctor – oh my gosh, I won’t say their name – but they are like nails on a chalkboard to me because they say, “you have to know by school age that you’re trans, or you’re not trans.”

C: Mhm.

K: And I think that’s completely bullshit. You can discover at 50 that you’re trans. At any point in your life, you can discover that you’re trans.

C: Yes.

K: There’s no age limit for it. You know?

C: You could be like, “I’m finally putting a name to this thing that I’ve felt my whole life.”

K: Yes. And you don’t have to have body dysphoria to be trans.

C: Right.

K: That’s not every – some trans people have very strong body dysphoria, but also some non-binary folks have very strong dysphoria, and some cisgendered heterosexual folks have body dysmorphia and dysphoria.

C: I think it depends on the social environment that you grew up in. And I think it depends on how you were socialized. I think – like, thinking of myself – I don’t have any – I know that I’m cisgendered.

K: Yeah.

C: I don’t have any kind of doubt about that. And I know that I’m heterosexual, and I’ve never had any kind of doubt about that. But my whole life, people have told me that I’m not.

K: Yeah.

C: And I remember I was like 8 years old, in a cub scout meeting, and I crossed my legs, and somebody told me, “if you cross your legs like that, it means you’re gay.”

K: Yeah.

C: Like, “if you cross your legs, you have to put your ankle on your knee because, if it’s above your ankle, it’s because you’re gay.”

K: And you had a lot of gay slurs – you and one of your brothers because I remember one of your brothers who was heterosexual was gay bashed.

C: Yeah.

K: And… I gave you all the information for how to get it classified as a hate crime. I was totally appalled. I don’t care – beating anyone up

C: Yeah, that happened to him as an adult.

K: Yeah, and that was just – to me, it was so stupid. Like, if you don’t want to sleep with me, and even if you do, why is violence based on my sexual preferences – why is violence the answer?

C: Well, and, for him – like so many people who experience that kind of violence – he was just working his job. He was working at a gas station.

K: Yeah.

C: So many people who are… who don’t even necessarily identify as gender-nonconforming but don’t conform to people’s

K: I considered him new wave, which he did not like at all. He’s alternative. At the time. I don’t know anymore now, but he identified as alternative in terms of his style of dress. For me, a child of the 80s, he looked like a new waver.

C: Yeah. He’s in his 40s but not his 50s, so.

K: Yeah.

C: But, you know, I think so many people who encounter that are being policed by social forces.

K: Yeah.

C: And associating with policing with violence, to me, is natural, but… that’s, I feel like, another discussion.

K: Well, I have a friend that, his whole life, he was told that he was gay. And… he – this is something that only he and I ever discussed, so I’m not going to say anything that identifies him because this is a very private story that I’m sharing just to show you how you can treat somebody a certain type of way and change who they are.

C: Mhm.

K: When I got my first girlfriend, and I came out, they were like, “am I?” And I was like, “I don’t know. I don’t know if you’re gay or not.” “But everyone says I’m gay.”

C: Mhm.

K: “And, so, I must be.” And I was like, “why must you be?” And they were like, “well, look at you. You’re my best friend, and you are. And I wouldn’t be – I wouldn’t have been drawn to you as a person if I wasn’t.” And then they became… they – even though they enjoy women. Even though they prefer women, they sleep with men.

C: I think that’s such a pernicious myth. Not – not your friend, but

K: They’re living their whole life because everybody was like, “finally. Finally, you came out. Oh, it’s so good. Kisstopher did such an amazing thing for you.”

C: Yeah.

K: I was like, “I didn’t do this. I didn’t do anything.”

C: (laughs) “Don’t blame this on me.”

K: Hello. I’m coming out as a lesbian. But they’re like, “you paved the way. You gave them the courage for them to stand in their truth.” And then their entire family accepted them and was so welcoming, and… we got a whole group of friends and family and culture and stuff, and they were like, “I just like all of the stuff that comes with it, and I don’t mind. I don’t mind having to sleep with men to get it.” And I was just confused by that. To this day, I’m confused by them. And I wonder – because they would, when we would talk, they preferred partners who liked straight pornography.

C: Yeah.

K: They preferred partners who, every now and then, would invite a woman into bed with them.

C: Mhm.

K: So that both of them could have the opportunity to sleep with a woman.

C: Mhm.

K: And, so, I felt at the very least that… it’s not that cut and dry.

C: Yes.

K: And I don’t know if their family – and then, later, they had a relative that was coming out and their family was doing the same thing. And I remember them sitting down with that family member’s mother and saying, “I don’t know if I’d be gay if you all hadn’t told me that my whole life.”

C: Mhm.

K: I was like, this is really profound. Were they bullied into being gay? I don’t know. And they don’t know.

C: And I think that question around, it becomes a lot more obvious that the answer can be yes. Because I think if you say, “was this person bullied into being straight?”

K: Yes.

C: That a lot of people who were queer would say, “yes, absolutely. I was. I had to pretend for this many years.”

K: Well, I know that my mother tried to bully me into being straight, and my mother did try to get – did try to put me through conversion therapy.

C: Mhm.

K: And… I know that, for me, it was just like, “this makes no sense. I’m not doing this. And, no.” And at the time, I hated my mother. And, like, give me just one more thing to rub in your face.

C: Yeah.

K: So, for me, it was like the rebel yell. So that’s why I was like, “I won’t even say straight. I won’t even say that word.” And I was like, “if you say that word, you’re offensive and you’re trying to oppress me, so you can’t even tell me that if we’re driving in the car together.” And I would literally go off at my mom if she was like, “go straight.” I was like, “do you mean forward? Or are you trying to pressure me into being straight again?”

C: (laughs)

K: “What do you mean by that?” And it would be a whole thing, and I would be serious as a heart attack.

C: Yeah.

K: That’s where my mind went. So, I don’t want to say – I don’t want to invalidate my friend’s choice to sleep with men.

C: Right.

K: I just want to say that we should stop telling people who they are – is my point.

C: I think so, but I want to go back to the thing that I said is pernicious myth to clarify what I meant. Which is that I think that… just because your friends are gay or bi or pan or trans or whatever doesn’t mean that you, necessarily, are.

K: Yeah.

C: There’s nothing that prevents people of different sexualities from being friends. A lot of

K: Because when you met me, only two of my friends were straight.

C: Yeah. And a lot of my closest friends throughout my life have been gay men.

K: Yeah.

C: Like, I’ve had a lot of women friends and a lot of gay men friends. I don’t tend to have a lot of straight guy friends just because they usually… act creepy in public, and then I’m like, “okay, I can’t hang out with you in public because you’re going to embarrass me.” And if you embarrass me

K: Yeah because we have a friend here that we love to death, but we can’t ever be with him in public because they’ll be like, “hey sexy mama. Hey pretty woman. (kissing sounds)” And like, that’s the kissing sound, and it’s just like… man. No. That’s wrong. You are sexually harassing these people. “Hey pretty. Smile. I see you sexy. You looked back at me. I see you looking.” No, you’re yelling at the top of your lungs in English.

C: Right.

K: They’re looking at you like, “what are you saying?” “No, they understand me.”

C: “What are you saying? Are you a threat?”

K: Yes. And I’m like, “dude. Knock it off. NC. Not cool, man.”

C: But… none of my friends have ever hit on me.

K: Some of my friends have hit on you.

C: Yes.

K: In front of me.

C: Yes.

K: After we were married.

C: Yes. That’s a different thing.

K: Just rude.

C: But that goes for both men and women.

K: Yes.

C: So, I can’t help just, like, how attractive I am.

K: Yeah. The animal magnetism.

C: Yeah, there’s the…

K: You make fun of like… your animal magnetism. And it’s after people get to know you, they know that you’ll probably be good in bed. That’s what my theory is.

C: Yeah, I know that’s your theory.

K: Because I knew you were good sex after we hung out for a little while. (laughs)

C: I know, I know. But I feel like we need several podcasts in a row to just break that down.

(laughter)

K: When we first met, I was always looking for good sex.

C: Yes, you were.

(laughter)

K: I was like, “you look like you might be fun.” I was just really in a free-love phrase.

C: Yup.

K: I still have the tooth thing, so my plosives are off.

C: That explains why you were yelling, “Eureka.” The day after we first hooked up. “Eureka. I found it.”

K: I was not. I was not.

C: (laughs) We each have our own story.

K: No. No, that is not any part of the story.

C: (laughs)

K: So, I want to circle back to something I was saying about Japan that I think is so weird. Is that all of the support for trans people but then requiring sterilization.

C: Right.

K: And then you look at the United States where they rape and murder trans women every day.

C: Yeah.

K: Every single day. And this isn’t just strangers. These are… like… intimate partners. The police. There’s just no safe haven for trans women – and especially trans women of color – in the United States.

C: Yeah.

K: It’s just really completely unsafe. And, here in – but you can change, in some states, you can change your gender marker without surgery.

C: Well, and I would include trans men in that.

K: Yeah, there’s a lot of – a lot of danger for trans men as well. And they’re being murdered and raped, and trans men of color. And, yes, I am going to talk about color. I am going to talk about race because it is a completely different world for Black and brown people. It’s just not safer. That is just a fact in the United States. And I find that, in Japan, while things are offensive, and there is racism, for the – for being Black, I’ve never felt afraid

C: Yeah.

K: That someone was going to kill me because I’m Black. And, in the United States, I have been afraid that people were going to kill me for being a woman.

C: Right.

K: That people were going to kill me for being Black.

C: Right.

K: And, so, I view Japan as a lot safer but harder in ways. Because, in the United States, you can be strategic and find enclaves where… things are more acceptable. At least, in my lived experience when I was in the United States. If you disagree about the enclave situation in the United States, please hit us up, inform me. Boots on the ground kind of thing. Let me know. Holler at your girl.

C: I think that, for me, having grown up in a religious enclave, which is different but kind of the same, I think that there’s always the potential when you say, “this is a safe place for this kind of person” that that safety starts being a reason to exert control, and they can become manipulative.

K: Oh, absolutely. Because there were places, tea parties – tea parties is old school for queer parties. And, so, there were tea parties that I would dress up as a drag queen to go to because no women were allowed.

C: Mhm.

K: And everyone was like, “oh girl, you look like fish.” And I was like, “thank you.”

C: (laughs)

K: I wouldn’t let anybody sleep with me. I wouldn’t hit on anybody. I wasn’t creeping. I was just wanting to go where the good music was. The music was good, the dancing was good. The vibe was good. And there was a song at the time, “it’s not my fault that I’m not a boy” – and that was just my anthem.

C: Mhm.

K: “I wait outside of the boy’s bar” – and I was like – a friend of mine said, “you know what, I bet if we put you in drag no one would know.” And I was like, “let’s do it.”

C: Mhm.

K: And then I actually – please don’t hate me – I actually took money as a drag performer. I’m sorry all the queens out there who couldn’t find work at the time. But this was like 30 years ago, so if you’re going to be mad at me, you have to have been out of work, in San Francisco and San Jose 30 years ago.

C: Okay. You need to be at least in your late 40s.

K: No. They need to be at least in their 50s. Let’s be real.

C: Yeah? Because you were too young.

K: Yeah. Because if you’re underage – like I know I was doing it and I was underage – but I don’t feel nothing for you. (laughs)

C: That’s what I was asking. Were you underage?

K: Yeah, no, I was underage when I was doing it. But I shouldn’t have been there because I was underaged. And they should’ve let me in the boy’s bar. And then, afterwards, some people found out that I was a cisgendered girl and assigned female at birth, and they were like, “you’re cool people. You’re not hitting on anybody. We’ll give you a pass because you are actually a lesbian.” And I was like, “yes, I am. Thank you. Can I bring my girlfriend?” And they were like, “yes, you can.” And, so… me and whoever I was sleeping with at the time could go into all of these cool circuit parties and mazes and dungeons and things. And if you don’t know what a maze or dungeon is, then I’m not going to explain it because you shouldn’t. (laughs)

C: Okay. Don’t look it up. Don’t corrupt yourself. But I think that’s the difference – a difference – between being welcome in the community and being part of the community.

K: Yes.

C: Because I have always felt welcomed by the queer community.

K: Yeah.

C: One of my first jobs in San Francisco, I think more than half of the people identified as something other than cisgendered heterosexual. But… I have never been part of the community, and I don’t feel the need to be. Like, I think that people have the right to associate with who they want to and have their community be the people who can understand at a fundamental level what they’re going through. I can only ever understand it as somebody viewing it from the outside, and, however sympathetic I am, I know I’m still viewing it from the outside because when I walk away, I am, you know, a straight guy again.

K: Yeah.

C: Who doesn’t have to worry about anything except for being perceived as part of the community and being attacked for that.

K: Yeah. But being able to explain yourself or have people observe you

C: Or vouch for me.

K: Yeah.

C: Yeah.

K: Because I know I vouched for you a lot. People were like, “are you guys really?” And I’m like, “yes. This is so stupid. Why do you care?” So, for me, I find this dichotomy where, in the United States, I felt like there was more of a community and, in Japan, I feel like… there’s a challenge in making a community. There are fewer bars.

C: Yeah.

K: There are fewer meetups. There are fewer hangouts. There is fewer doctors that specialize and that treat. There… no marriage equality. Difficulty with inheriting your partner’s things, but there aren’t some of the barriers that there are in the United States. Like, I can visit anyone I want in the hospital. I don’t have to be a relative.

C: And you can in the United States, now, too. That’s actually changed since we left.

K: Oh, okay. So, yeah. Dated. So, for me, I don’t ever feel like I’m at risk of being murdered for being part of the community here.

C: I feel like Japan, and we don’t have enough time to fully unpack this, but I feel like Japan… has much more rigid boxes, but you’re allowed to move from one box to another as long as you fully commit.

K: Yeah.

C: So, if you’re going to transition from male to female, then you have to start wearing makeup and a skirt and heels and all of the trappings of women.

K: Yeah. But women have to wear makeup to work in Japan.

C: They do. Yes.

K: You’re not allowed – like, they will think that you’re sick. They will send you home. You have to put on at least some colored lip gloss.

C: There’s a movement now to try and get parliament to say that it’s not legal to require women to wear heels to work.

K: Yes.

C: And that kind of thing. That’s what I’m saying about you have to be firmly in that box because Japan has that box. Okay, you’re a woman? You hmust do all the woman things, and here are the woman things.

K: Yeah. And the same with if you’re a man.

C: Yeah.

K: And, so, it’s… I’m really happy to be in Nagoya because, in some cities in Japan, you can’t get hormones unless you surgically transition. I’m really happy that, in Nagoya, that’s not the case. There are several doctors who will give hormones even if you haven’t surgically transitioned. They don’t require that.

C: Yeah.

K: In other, smaller, cities, they do require that you have surgery before transitioning. And I do not get this obsession with breasts because you either have to implant breasts or remove breasts to get hormones. Which I don’t understand it.

C: I don’t either because, speaking frankly, I have bigger breasts than a lot of Japanese women.

K: Yes. Yes, you do. And I love them. (laughs) So, yeah. To me, it kind of messes with my head because – not to stereotype anyone – but I don’t see a lot of large breasted women on a daily basis.

C: Be on the lookout. They’re there.

K: There’s a handful. I have not seen anyone with bigger breasts than mine in Japan.

C: Nor have I.

K: But I have ginormous breasts.

C: Yes.

K: I’ve boasted before.

C: Yeah.

K: They’re double E’s baby, what?

C: I feel like that’s a good place to leave the people.

K: (laughs) With my big ol’ titties.

C: They can head on over to Patreon if they want to hear if we’re going to talk more about your boobs.

K: Yeah, no, I do want to say one thing before we wrap up. That this is a beginning of a conversation. We’re starting a conversation, and we’re inviting you to be a part of the conversation.

C: Absolutely.

K: So, if we’ve got something wrong, if we’ve hurt or offended you, it was in ignorance. Not in malice. So, please educate us with compassion and with respect. And it’s not your job to educate us. If you don’t want to educate us, you just want to leave us ignorant, that’s fine. But don’t send us hate.

C: Yeah.

K: Because we didn’t come out here with the energy of hate or with the energy of speaking for anyone other than ourselves. I am only ever speaking for Kisstopher. And I did share some stories of people in my life that may be confusing or upsetting. Hey, send us a message. Ask me questions.

C: Yes.

K: Ask questions. Inquire. Be inquisitive, and the energy that we’re coming with is inclusivity. And talking about Japan versus the United States. This is one area that affects our lives on a daily basis that’s different in Japan than it is in the United States.

C: Yes.

K: Yeah, so haters get blocked. That’s just our policy. We will not engage. We will just block you. Well, not we, Chad does all the blocking. I’m going to be honest.

C: Thank you for being honest.

K: Yeah. I’ve got to give you your shoutout. Got to give you your props.

C: Thank you.

K: Thanks for listening, and we hope you come back next week, and we hope that you head on over to the Patreon and check out our check two. Our check two. Our take two.

C: Take two, yeah.

K: Yeah. (laughs) Bye.

C: Bye-bye.