

[Theme music plays]

Ione: 0:17 [Singing] The Polyester Podcast. We're your hosts, I'm Ione and I'm the founding editor-in-chief of Polyester.

Alice: I'm Alice, I'm the guitarist in Dream Wife and I'm producing this podcast.

Ione: It's Chloe Sheppard!

Chloe: Hello.

Alice: Hey Chlo.

Chloe: Hi.

Ione: What're you doing here?

Chloe: Our plans fell through, so now we're at your house.

Ione: So Chloe's joining us on our intro.

Alice: We've got the Chloe Sheppard bookend on this episode.

Ione: Have her at the beginning, have her at the end!

Chloe: Sheppard sandwich.

Alice: Sheppard sandwich!

Ione: We are, we're having a Sheppard sandwich.

Chloe: With a bit of skincare in the middle, it's the triple S! [All laughing]

Ione: But Chloe wanted to be the centre of attention today so here she is.

Chloe: Yeah, gotta make the most of it.

Alice: It's your big moment. It's your *big* moment.

Chloe: This is my Bradley Cooper "if there's one person in the room", but there's two, there's Alice and Ione that both believe in me, so... [All laughing]

Ione: How great is that.

Chloe: Great, fantastic.

Ione: I mean last week we said what TV we've been watching, but no one's been watching anything. I've had flu for a week which is probably why I sound disgustingly nasal today and just sound like the devil has entered my body and given me a virus. [All laughing]

Alice: I went to see Queen Zee play, they are so great.

Chloe: Oh I was supposed to shoot them last week.

Alice: Yeah Dream Wife toured with them last year so it was good to see them again. We've just been getting in the writing zone.

Ione: You heard it here first Dream Wife are writing a second album.

Alice: Yeah, we're sowing some seeds right now.

Ione: Before we get into it, the Polyester podcast is supported by Melissa shoes, who are supporting the whole series and also this episode. By now you should know that we have a discount code that you can use for 30% off at shop.melissa.uk which is MELISSAPOLY30 all in caps. You can use that on any full price item so go get yourself some shoes.

Alice: But yeah, as we said Chloe will be back with us again at the end of the episode.

Ione: Any words of wisdom before we leave? How do you find that one person in a room? How do you find your Bradley Cooper, Chloe Sheppard?

Chloe: I don't know.

Ione: And one that won't piss all over themselves at the Grammy's.

Chloe: Oh yeah.

Ione: Sorry, spoilers.

Chloe: And the truth is...

Ione: We're not moving on until you think of something.

Chloe: How do you find the one person that believes in you? Look in the mirror.

Ione: Anyway, moving on to the first section and we're back to Ask an Expert, which this week we're talking to Charlotte Ferguson, who is the founder and CEO of Disciple skincare. For those who aren't familiar with Disciple maybe, it's like a really great indie beauty brand that do like face oils and basically skincare that really has a onus on aligning how you feel, self care. She describes it as a mind-body approach to skin, and she actually came to skin through studying as a psychotherapist, so she kind of found that as her entry points through when she's seeing clients and stuff, and how heavily she saw skin linked to stress.

And I think even though obviously, you consider skin problems to be something that you leave behind in your teens or whatever, I personally had *flawless* skin until I hit 24 and then it's literally been in the shitter since then, so I was definitely down for hearing this advice. Charlotte's being interviewed by Hannah Farrington, or hannahlouise if you follow her Instagram, who's a close friend of the zine. So, here it is...

[Theme music plays]

Hannah: 3:45 Hi Polyester podcast listeners. My name's Hannah, I do Instagram stuff at hannahlouise and I DJ'd at the last Polyester launch. I'm here today with Charlotte who's the founder of Disciple skincare. Charlotte can you just give a bit of an intro to yourself and the brand?

Charlotte: So I am Charlotte. I'm a psychotherapist and I'm also the founder of Disciple, and we basically make skincare for stressed out people, which I think is everyone.

Hannah: So in terms of actual skincare issues that are related to stress, what sort of proportion of skin complaints are related to lifestyle, and how much of is just pure sort of genetic bad luck?

Charlotte: Scientists reckon that about 75 to 80% of skin issues like acne, psoriasis, eczema, premature ageing are all caused by stress. And that can mean stress in a few different ways. So it can mean stress from external factors, stressful lifestyle situations, and also stress within the body, so that can be in the form of inflammation and external stress can lead to inflammation in the body, so it's kind of linked. So yeah, most skin issues are caused by stress in one way or another.

Hannah: Interesting and kind of terrifying. So, would you say the skin issues are like a symptom of stress, or are they treated as symptoms, or do you really just have to stop being stressed in order to fix your skin?

Charlotte: Yeah, well, that is one of the things that's really important. I think that people are starting to realise that, you know, mind and body is totally connected. And that by just using skincare, for example, or taking tablets like Roaccutane which I've took, because my acne was so bad, you're not actually treating the root cause the end of the day. And so finding better ways to manage stress and to treat your anxiety in a sort of holistic long term way is a much better solution for sorting of skin out, than say spending loads of money on skincare that's going to essentially attack the skin as opposed to really heal it and nurture it and so yeah, I think people are definitely come around to that way of thinking a bit more when it comes to treating conditions to do with the skin. You know, your skin is a canvas really, and reflects what's going on inside. So yeah, I think that's kind of the way things are moving.

Hannah: So how does your brand then link in with that?

Charlotte: Our products have got three main components. We use prebiotics, we use adaptogens, and we use linoleic acid and that's basically because when you're super stressed, or you're experiencing anxiety or depression, your body is producing a lot more cortisol. And what cortisol does, firstly, it completely destroys collagen, so it's premature ageing, like non-stop. Cortisol also makes your sebum really thick in your skin, so your skin cells aren't shedding and then you've got bacteria forming on the surface of the skin. So that's like prime for creating spots and breakouts. Also, if you're experiencing depression, your immune system is really really low, so that bacteria is thriving and also you're producing less serotonin which means that you're more likely to feel pain, so you're experiencing really painful spots that aren't clearing themselves up, and because your collagens not producing as quickly your acne scarring is getting worse as well.

So what we do is we use adaptogens, the newest adaptogen we're using is CBD. Amazing for inflammation, you can apply it topically, really good for balancing sebum because it's just impure hemp oil, really high in omega threes. Adaptogens are natural plant extracts that help the body deal with stress internally, really anti-inflammatory, helps support the adrenal glands. We also use prebiotics, so prebiotics help feed the good bacteria on the skin, which is going to be really good for fighting off all that bad bacteria that's there from all of the cortisol. And we use linoleic acid, which is brilliant for thinning out the sebum on the skin, because basically your sebum's going to be like all thick and gross and clogging your pores.

So, those are the three main elements of the products. But really, you know, no skincare products, is gonna completely sort out all of your anxiety and everything, it's more more the first step in taking control of your skin, taking control of your health overall. Because when my skin was really really bad, I had acne all over my face, and I just would spend loads of money on products and then I took Roaccutane, and I knew I wasn't treating the root cause, but it's so much easier to just throw money at the problem or take a tablet than it is to actually be like "my self care is not what it could be". And so we're really about what else can you be doing in terms of holistic health to take responsibility for the reflection of what's going on inside you, which is your skin.

Hannah: So the products are there to treat the symptoms, but as a brand you want to encourage wellness?

Charlotte: Yeah, exactly. And if you want to wear makeup, like I love wearing makeup, but also I know that when my skin was really bad, I felt like I had to wear makeup and that's not a very nice feeling, and that begins to affect your confidence. And I think we're already told so much about what we should be looking like, and what our skin should look like that feeling like we have to cover it up is not very nice feelings.

It's not great for your confidence and self esteem. Up to 100% of what you put on your skin ends up in your body, so we use adaptogens that are absorbed into your bloodstream that are anti-inflammatory internally, so works on two levels. So yeah, it's just that sort of antidote to like sticking a plaster over it basically.

Hannah: Does a lot of that kind of come from your background as a psychologist? I mean, the message of the brand seems very linked in with mental health issues, perhaps, and also just mental well being in general.

Charlotte: Definitely. I saw a lot in my private practice - where I worked mainly with young people experiencing anxiety, and depression and trauma, phobias - and there was a definite correlation between people who were super stressed, really not having a good time. And, you know, it manifests itself in one way or another a lot of the time, and that could be your hair falls out, whether your psoriasis kicks off, whether your acne flares up, whether your eczema is really bad, it's all linked to how you're feeling. The more that someone developed better coping strategies and a bit more clarity on how they're feeling and why their feeling, often these symptoms began to clear up and it became really obvious that the two were really linked. And I knew that, you know that yourself intrinsically, but it's just sometimes you just don't want to admit it.

Hannah: Yeah, because it can be difficult if you're already feeling the symptoms of depression and anxiety, and then your skin gets really bad, or like, I know, personally, I experienced that as well, and hair falling out is definitely a thing. And then those things can often make you feel worse, or like it's harder to get out of that rut. Do you have any tips for the feeling that you can't break the cycle?

Charlotte: Yeah, they are both intrinsically linked, and it can feel like you're going round in a circle. I do think that the awareness that the two are linked is a massive sort of breakthrough in a way. For me personally, the biggest positive change that I see is when someone can get some distance between what they're thinking and what they're feeling, just because we think something, just because we have negative thoughts about something doesn't mean that it's a fact or that it's real. And being able to get that bit of distance between thoughts and facts is really, really helpful. I know this sounds like super cliché, but things like journaling, get it down, get it out of your mind, and to be able to get some separation that's really, really helpful.

And also just beginning to make those small lifestyle changes. Like if you go to the doctor and say, and you've got chronic acne, or even mild or moderate acne, they'll probably give you antibiotics, I don't have anything against, you know, Western medicine or whatever, but antibiotics attack the skin, they kill *all* the bacteria on your skin. And I think it's about thinking about that as a metaphor for like, how you're treating yourself. If you're attacking your skin, what does that say about how you're treating yourself? And actually, it's more about nurturing your skin and nurturing yourself into health and into wellness, as opposed to attacking your skin. It feels like it's a massive mountain. But actually, you could just break it down into small steps, like, what's the next small step I can make to make myself feel better, make myself feel a bit more confident today, and also feel a bit more in control?

Hannah: With Roaccutane, for example, obviously that's a really intense treatment, but it does seem to work for a lot of people. I think a lot of people seem to feel like the only thing that they've tried that has worked has been Roaccutane. Are you saying that that's not necessarily the case?

Charlotte: I mean, I took Roaccutane and it totally cleared my skin up. But it also triggered my anxiety, and Roaccutane is linked to anxiety, and so if that's something that you're experiencing, it might be worth just thinking about that. Also, it's totally personal choice. It's like if you're having breakouts, or eczema or psoriasis, and you're not really looking after yourself, is taking a tablet... like it's good for in the beginning, right, because it's definitely going to help you clear up your skin and get you out of that ditch in terms of confidence, but it's not really a long term solution. And I think being in optimum health in terms of your skin, mental health, biology, physiology, it's a long term holistic approach that you need, you need to have a toolkit of things that are going to get you through. There isn't a pill for everything, but definitely something like Roaccutane or antibiotic, if your skin is really, really getting you down, and you can't break that cycle it's definitely something that can help you in the beginning, but I think it's all about thinking about it long term and what you're doing.

One of the most interesting things I did, which was really eye opening, was have a food intolerance test. I didn't realise because it didn't have any real physical symptoms, for example, someone might if they had Crohn's disease, which is a really brutal condition. But when I did my intolerance test, it was like, you're intolerant to, like salmon and spelt and like hazelnuts, I'm like, "really? I eat that shit all the time". But what you're doing is inflaming your body over a long period of time. When I started cutting those things out, my skin began to clear up over the course of like six months. If you're stressed all the time, *and* you're eating the hazelnuts, and you're drinking a bottle of Prosecco for dinner, and you're getting three hours sleep. It's like, it's pretty obvious what's going on there, you know, but just breaking it apart and doing some more things. Making small changes is the best place to start.

Hannah: Going back to skincare and skincare products. What areas of skincare would you invest in, and which areas would you save? So like moisturisers, serum, things like that? Would you say it's worth investing money in all kinds of skincare or is some of it bullshit?

Charlotte: Yeah, a lot of it's bullshit. Whether you love or hate The Ordinary they did kind of change the game in a sense, because it's about ingredients, and being able to buy a 2% retinol product for like £11. That's insane. You couldn't have done that even what, five years ago, because all of big companies had a monopoly on it. It is definitely about finding the products that work best for you, finding the ingredients that actually really do work. I read something a few months ago, and it was saying they're only like three or four ingredients that are clinically proven to work, and it's like vitamin C, retinol and fruit acids that actually can change your skin. So I don't think you have to spend a load of money but I think it is about using the right product at the right time for you. If your skin super sensitive obviously you want to avoid using retinol every night, but you can introduce it a couple times a week.

Yeah, it's not about spending loads of money, but it's definitely about finding the things that work for you, particularly if you have got oily and breakout prone skin there are some ingredients that you don't want to use. You know Sharmadean, she *loves* coconut oil, she puts it everywhere. If I did that I would have a face full of acne, it just does not work for me. And it's cheap and it's lovely, and because it's natural you think oh yeah it's natural, it's gonna work for me, it's gonna be amazing. It's a *nightmare* for acne prone skin so like, just don't go there. It's more about education and research than spending loads of money I think.

Hannah: Where would you start then, if you had sort of no idea about skincare routines? Would you recommend like a few base products or is it all kind of trial and error?

Charlotte: I would definitely recommend a good cleanse, so a double cleanse is great, particularly if you wear makeup. It doesn't have to be super expensive, even if you if you haven't got loads of money or you don't want to spend a load of money even doing an oil cleanse like some grape seed oil, that's a really nice deep cleanse and you just massage it into dry skin. Take that off with a muslin, that's really nice and super cheap. A chemical exfoliation once a week, so even something like you know you can get those pads, fruit acid pads, those once or twice a week, you can pick those up in any high street store.

And finding the right oil for you, oils are amazing, they work so well with the skin. The skin secretes oil, it works perfectly. People often think "oh my skin's so oily, why would I want to put oil on even more?", but if you think about it, water doesn't cleanse oil. Only oil gets rid of oil. So that's why I use oil as a cleanser. Certain oils are really, really good for acne prone and oily skin, and so it's worth just doing a bit of research into what oils have got a high linoleic acid content. So that would be things like hemp oil, grape seed oil, safflower really, really nice. Really good for clearing up acne.

Hannah: Can we talk a little bit more about CBD oil, because you've just launched it, it's relatively new as an ingredient in this country and I feel like people are confused by it maybe. It's sold as if it's gonna fix your anxiety, depression and like everything else that's wrong with your life. [All laughing] So what are the facts, and the overhype? Is there overhype?

Charlotte: Yeah I think there is overhype, it's definitely not gonna solve all your problems, [all laughing] unfortunately, or else I'd be a very rich woman... [all laughing]. It's really anti inflammatory. There's so much research coming out saying that inflammation is the cause of so many health problems - long term health issues like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's - caused by chronic inflammation throughout a lifetime. Things like anxiety, depression. I feel like it has to be used in conjunction with other things. If you're experiencing anxiety, or any sort of phobia or panic disorder, CBD is not going to solve the problem, but CBD works really well. So I use it quite a lot when I'm on the tube - I find the tube a bit anxiety inducing at times, especially when it's like super crowded - a couple of drops under the tongue, kind of works within three or four minutes., just helps to really calm you down.

You know, long term it's about going to therapy and talking about what that phobia's about about but when you're feeling stressed or anxious, a couple of drops of CBD is really going to help to take down that panic. We've got a receptor in our central nervous system that's designed to connect with CBD, so it's completely natural, and it's just a really good alternative to other things. Some people have a glass of wine when they're feeling a bit stressed or anxious. Taking CBD is probably a more healthy habit. It's non-addictive as well, and it won't get you high, so I really love taking it, it's definitely really helped me. You don't even have to take it if you've got anxiety, it's got so many other health benefits long term as well, you can just introduce it as a supplement into your into your lifestyle.

- Hannah: So does taking it under the tongue, because obviously then that's just going to get into your system, how does that then relate to your skincare?
- Charlotte: So you can use our CBD topically, or you can take it under the tongue. It's basically just pure CBD and hemp oil, so it's like food grade hemp oil. So you can mix it with your night oil, you can use it on its own on your on your skin. If you've got any pain in your neck or your shoulders, you can put it on, it's really, really good for that because it works topically for pain. If you do want to take it internally, a few drops under the tongue, because it's so anti inflammatory and skin conditions are caused by inflammation is going to really, really help with any sort of hormonal breakouts, stress induced breakouts, psoriasis, that kind of stuff. So works on two levels.
- Hannah: What would you say is the most overrated skincare product or products, or even brands?
- Charlotte: Creme de la Mer, 100% [all laughing], no shade but that stuff is so expensive, and I know the ingredients are great but I definitely think it's just more about marketing behind that product personally. I don't know, I just didn't get on with it. I actually would say that I prefer Skin Food by Weleda, I just think it's a dupe and it's like £7 product. Creme de la Mer is just so overpriced, it's all about the hype. So yeah, sorry guys.
- Hannah: What's the biggest skincare myth?
- Charlotte: That oil is going to break you out. People get really freaked out by putting oil on their skin, I probably get about four emails a day from people saying "I've got really bad acne, is the oil going to break me out?". And I just think, all oils are totally different. It's definitely about using oils for oily skin, they can totally clear up your acne and give you like really glowing skin. And also you can use oils that are really light and use them underneath makeup as well, and they're almost like a serum as opposed to an oil. So yeah, oils are good for oily skin, some oils.
- Hannah: And do you have a number one skincare tip that you would recommend first, over everything else, a secret?
- Charlotte: A secret. I've given away my skin food hack now. I think oil cleansing is brilliant, and it's just really cheap and cheerful and anyone can do it. And also you can make your own oil cleanser with oils that you like. So grapeseed is a really good base, you can get like a litre of grapeseed oil super cheap, mix in some of your own essential oils. That whole school of thought of like stripping the skin with like foaming cleansers, that's definitely a myth because that's just going to make your skin produce more oil and make your skin breakout more. So yeah, not stripping the skin and nourishing it as opposed to attacking it is definitely the way.
- Hannah: So, coming from a psychology background, how did you then make the transition to founding a skincare brand? Obviously a lot of the ethos behind the brand is based in that, but like how did you get there?
- Charlotte: When I was a student, I worked at Space.NK on the weekends, which I *loved* so much. So I've always loved skincare, and then I trained to be a psychotherapist when I was like 25, after having anxiety and depression myself, and then I did that

up until only about six months ago, in private practice and in the NHS and I just saw this massive correlation with my clients between stress and skin. But mainly to do with my own stress and my own skin issues.

When I turned 30 my skin was the worst it ever had been, and I was just like "what is going on?", because you think when you get into your thirties "yeah I'm going to be like super confident, my skin is going to have cleared up" and it was all just like the opposite for me. I knew that it was caused by stuff that was going on inside, like my diet was terrible, I was probably drinking too much alcohol, not getting enough sleep and working nonstop. I was seeing clients from like eight in the morning to eight at night.

I did a load of research into it, and discovered this huge link between cortisol and skin issues, and yeah I just went down the rabbit hole with it and started sort of blending oils and trying to clear up my own skin and so yeah, I just became really interested in that link. And also my clients were just so amazing, and they just wanted to feel better, and that was really inspiring and I just thought like, if they're being brave enough to come to therapy to be able to talk about their stuff, then I have a responsibility to work on my own self care as well, you know. And I go to therapy every week now as well, but I just think it's a lifelong sort of commitment really, a journey into being well.

Hannah: Yeah I think that's definitely something that everyone can relate to but maybe you have a bit more authority behind it [all laughing], I'm like "yeah I'm depressed" and that's about as far as it goes.

[Theme music plays]

Ione: 24:13 That was Charlotte and Hannah, you can follow Hannah @hannahlouise, obviously we'll link everything down in the description. You can keep up with Disciples @discipleskincare and you can keep up with Charlotte @charlotte.fergs. So here we are with Chloe Sheppard. Chloe is a photographer slash visual artists who works across a variety of mediums. I know this because I wrote her artist bio back in the day. Chloe actually started as my assistant art director for Issue Five of Polyester which was three years ago in summer, and we've worked together on and off ever since, and now she shares the studio with me that Polyester is based at. Chloe's work encompasses themes of nostalgia, exploring yourself, it's about romanticising the experiences and the image of fat women, and loads of other stuff which Chloe will probably explain more in her intro to herself. So Chloe, what are you gonna be speaking about in this section?

Chloe: Well, I'm going to be speaking about my experiences as a fan and my obsession with like, being a fan since I was really young, like 12, I think I've been an obsessive fan of people, like bands...

Ione: And how old are you now?

Chloe: 22, decade of fandom. Moron. No, it's fine. I speak about the guy that I followed a lot around the country back in 2014 and...

Ione: [Coughing] Jake Bugg [coughing] [all laughing].

Chloe: Ha, fuck yourself. And with that, here we go [all laughing]. Jokes!

[Theme music plays]

Chloe: My name is Chloe Sheppard, and I'm a visual artist from London. I do photography, make videos, make collages, all kinds of things. Today, I'm going to speak a little bit about my obsession with obsessions, like fan culture, and stuff like that, and my experiences within that.

Ione: Would you say that you became a photographer because you are a fan?

Chloe: Yeah, I actually can put it down to that. I've been like a fan of so many things. There was just always some kind of void in my life that I tried to fill with the Jonas Brothers and stuff like that when I was younger. But then actually, I was a really big fan of an artist... oh, fuck it, I will name him. He was called Jake Bugg. Yeah [Ione laughing]. So it was Jake Bugg, lol, in like 2013. Me and like my friends became massive fans of him after he saw him at Reading.

I'd already had like a Twitter account for Demi Lovato and the Jonas Brothers and Lana Del Rey, so I extended my stan-ness to Jake Bugg. And then I met all these fans and had like an actual group of friends and some of them lived in America, and then I went there on holiday and like met up with them all for like a month and shot a big series. That work got published, and then, I mean, I didn't start photography because I was a fan, but it has excelled my career, in some bizarre way.

Ione: What was the series that you shot in the States?

Chloe: I shot it in like July 2015, and then in October it went up on Dazed. Most of the images I shot then, and then that article is the one that kind of like started snowballing everything.

Ione: So like, going back to the Jonas Brothers Demi Lovato days, how old were you then?

Chloe: Yeah, the reason I got Twitter was like 2000 and... I wanna say 2008, 2009, and that was for the Jonas Brothers. Because my username... I didn't want it to be the same as my Instagram username, so like eolhcsheppard, I wanted it to be Chloe Sheppard, and then one day I like was looking and somebody had already taken the username, obviously because it's a very common name. And I went on it, to see like who it was, and the only tweet was "is watching Jonas Brothers with Carly" or something like that. And I was like, "holy fuck, that's me". Like, that was me like five years ago. So I managed to hack it and get that username back, but anyway...

Ione: Wait, so you have Chloe Sheppard?

Chloe: So yeah, it was me.

Ione: But then why do you use eolhcsheppard now?

Chloe: Cause Chloe Sheppard's like my private one, that has like tweets from the Jonas Brothers days that I don't want to like delete.

Ione: Why don't you want to delete them?

Chloe: Because it's sentimental ennit [Ione laughing]. I'm a Gemini, what can I say? So it was like 2009 to 2012 that I was like Demi Lovato, Jonas Brothers obsessed, and then Lana Del Rey came on the scene in like late 2011. And then in 2012 I was like, okay I need to grow up. And so I stopped using it as much because I was, not ashamed, but like, I guess it was kind of embarrassing, isn't it, to be like a Twitter stan.

Ione: What does it mean to be a Twitter stan?

Chloe: I guess it's changed now, because Twitter has grown horrendously. So it just was like me tweeting them all the time, and like talking to my friends that I met through them and like watching videos, promo-ing stuff.

Ione: How did you meet people through it?

Chloe: Just like followers, and then you have like, mutuals and you start speaking to them. And then one time, Demi Lovato was on the radio, and if any of your mutuals were going you'd like hang out with them when you get there.

Ione: What do you mean, like waiting behind the barrier to get autographs?

Chloe: Yeah, or like in the queues and stuff

Ione: Why was like going that step further something you were compelled to do?

Chloe: Well, I didn't really realise it was something you *could* do until I became a big fan and saw other people doing it. It's not something that's really spoken about, like you wouldn't say become a fan of someone and be like "oh, I'm gonna go wait at Radio 1 to try and meet them after", but that happened in like the 60s and 70s. So it make sense that it's carried on, I just was like young and naive and never realised that was a thing until it was literally shown to me. You wouldn't have thought it was possible to meet these people, but... it really is. I met Jake Bugg literally like fifteen times and then it all came really full circle -

Ione: Do you have a Jake Bugg tattoo?

Chloe: No I don't have a Jake Bugg tattoo! [Ione laughing] I have a Twin Peaks tattoo but I'm not like a stan of them I just really love their music and the tattoo doesn't say Twin Peaks by the way, it literally says Natural Villa which is my favourite song by them. So it's not like I literally have the band tattooed on me somewhere. Who else did I meet? Well I've met Lana Del Rey and, I'm trying to think from my stan days, Ian Beale from Eastenders [Ione laughing].

Ione: Why were you stanning Ian Beale?

Chloe: No, Jake Bugg was playing that one show that day and Ian Beale was there and I was like can I get a picture. But yeah, then it came full circle, I ended up photographing Jake Bugg in 2016, I went to one of his shows, got backstage, like his friend asked me if I wanted to go backstage and shoot them for the day. And I was like, yeah, but it was like, it was too weird.

Ione: What happened?

Chloe: I don't really wanna talk about that, cause it was quite bad.

Ione: Go on.

Chloe: Well, like it wasn't bad, but it was just very awkward, like I felt really out of place.

Ione: Where was it?

Chloe: Birmingham. Because obviously the London shows would have been way too busy. And obviously because I'd met him in all these really bizarre situations. like he'd be playing at a radio station and me and my friends would wait outside and meet him, he knew who I was.

Ione: Did he actually?

Chloe: Yeah, so when I was backstage, he was like, quite rude, like didn't really even say hello, his friend was like "did you say hello to Chloe?" and he was like "yeah I said hello" and I was like "well you didn't". He literally didn't speak five words to me the whole day. And I was like this is so awkward, but I guess I really understand now that I'm older, that it was definitely an awkward situation for him to be in because he would have been like "oh, she's wangled her way back in here", not that Jaz literally asked me to be there. And he must have just thought like I was there on a false pretence of being a photographer [Ione laughing]. But like, it made it really difficult to get pictures cause I'm not the kind of person who would like, jump in a room and be like "oh, come on, Jake, get up, get up", it was Jaz having to try.

Ione: Who's Jaz?

Chloe: Jake's best friend. It was obviously just awkward for both of us. And because even sometimes people come up to me, I don't really know what to say. So I can understand that if that was the same with Jake, and I was in the room with him for the whole day, then it would have been quite intense.

Ione: How would you contextualise your work in this world, because obviously stuff that is groupies or fan culture or like, all feeds into your work in some ways, I feel like most people who I know who are creatives, they kind of create out of a need to create more of what they love or document what they love, like do something around that. And I feel like a facet of your work is also like that.

Chloe: True. The whole reason I think I started photographing people, well I started photographing when I was like 11 but I didn't really shoot people properly until I was about 14 or 15. The reason I did start photographing people was because I would've wanted to be them, if that makes sense. Like, I didn't like how I presented myself, so I photographed other people, because I would want to be them. And I think it kind of links back to being a big fan of someone, because you're living for this other person. Not vicariously, because I don't want to be a singer, I don't wanna *be* Lana Del Rey, but her aesthetics and her visuals was something that I really enjoyed, and in a big way, Lana Del Rey, especially had kind of a major influence on my work. That was when I was like 15.

And then I was thinking about how I would want to continue with my photography, and I really enjoyed how vintage all her visuals were and all my favourite bands like Black Sabbath and stuff like that were from the 70s and late 60s. So the more I just kind of delved into that hole, I just realised that I wanted to kind of derive the way my work looks from that. I'm probably so drawn to that style, because I'm quite a nostalgic person. Obviously, I understand that the politics and stuff like that was not good at the time, but the visuals from that time I just really love and I feel nostalgic towards it even though I never experienced it, all my favourite music is from that time, so it kind of goes hand in hand, because I'm so inspired by music and fans and groupies and stuff like that that I think there was always going to be something that my work was so much more focused on than photographing someone outside, I don't know, sci fi building or something,

Ione: You've got this quite like meta thing where it's like, you are interested in the act of people being fans or like the behaviour that they undertake when they are fans, so why do you think that's something that you shift your focus to a bit?

Chloe: I think I probably focus on it, because it was something that completely defined me as a 12 year old, well till now, I'm still a big fan of so many things. And I feel as if it's really not represented in a nice way, it's always like "oh yeah, they just want to fuck the guys in the band" and all this stuff, when that's literally not what it is. I want to like, do a big documentary on it and stuff because I want to show why people get so obsessed with these people, and why it's such a like phenomenon, because it totally is. Like, the 1975 have a huge, huge, huge fan base. And personally, I'm not a fan of their music, but there's reasons that people are so drawn to them, and I think it's so interesting to see why people are so drawn to them.

To be honest, I have a very addictive personality, and I think that with that kind of culture, you just get hooked on it, and you just want to like, constantly be seeing new photos of them and hearing new music and helping them promote their singles and shit like that. But like, I can see how people misinterpret it as people just wanting to sleep with the really good looking guys in the band and stuff like that, but it isn't. Thinking of specifically like Elvis, and how that was so absolutely fucking wild. I mean, I think it was very easy for people to just shove these teenagers into a box that was like "oh, yeah, they're just dumb and brainless just following this Elvis guy around, they just want to fuck him", do you know what I mean? Rather than being like "there's a meaning as to why these people are acting like this".

Ione: What is the meaning?

Chloe: I mean, I don't wanna keep saying Elvis because he's, you know, he is what he is. But he's dead and wasn't great [all laughing]. But like, I don't know, I think people find like solace in things like that.

lone: But even One Direction fandom, that was all about tweens being obsessed with them, and it was like always the onus on them being like stupid girls, so yeah why do you think that is?

Chloe: It was just such a big thing, wasn't it? And if you see all these people doing something, I'm sure it would make more people want to do it, and then like there was always going to be concerts and merchandise and shit they could buy and be involved somehow and fill this nothingness with, like the Beatles like Beatlemania was absolutely mad, girls would like pass out seeing them. That's so insane.

lone: Do think for you it was and is a thing of like being in a community, or like that kind of shared values?

Chloe: Like I wasn't like a literal loner at school, I did have a group of friends, but none of them just, I suppose it's having -

lone: You also did go to a very small school though so it's not as if you had like a very wide community.

Chloe: That's true, but like even going to like my sixth form... I think it's more people you know, the likelihood of them being so obsessed with an artist as you are like the very same artist, isn't that likely. So if you find a whole group of people online, who are fanatically completely in love, or whatever with a certain artist just as much as you are, then it just drives your passion, do you know what I mean. And that's why you'd want to be friends with them. Not necessarily because like you don't have other friends, but you don't have other friends that get that on that level.

lone: The groupies in the 70s ended up making their own band and like being their own thing, I don't know if you know about that. So it's like all the groupies from the 70s-

Chloe: The GTOs?

lone: Yeah, they made their own band at some point and stuff, like why do you think they basically became celebrities in and of themselves?

Chloe: Well the reason that happened was because of Frank Zappa. It was like Pamela des Barres and her group, they were always kind of like fans of him, and because I think back then, it wasn't so much about "oh if we let these girls backstage, they're going to take photos of us and leak it all online" in the same way that it is now. So they would actually hang out with them, and spend time with them, and like go to parties with them in a way that is definitely not the same now.

I think it was Frank Zappa, who they started hanging out with, and he had a recording studio in his house. And they were like, okay, we want to make something out of this, like, we all really love each other, we have this great energy, like the girls in the band. And so Frank was like "okay, well come for a thing", and then they started recording music and put it out under the GTOs. So I think it was more that they just had someone who was already in that industry who believed in them. And the reason they were groupies or whatever is because they wanted to feed the music. I mean, I suppose to an extent it was a conquest of like who they

could fuck, but it was also who they could inspire. So if they're trying to inspire, why would they not want to do it themselves as well?

Ione: Alright, chill out Penny Lane [all laughing].

Chloe: [In an American accent] "We're not groupies, we're band aids." That's literally the phrase.

Ione: But you also love that film, so why is it with stuff like Almost Famous that you find yourself like wanting to like consume of these things? Because you're saying, you were a fan and obviously you like partook in the culture surrounding specific musicians, but now you're at the point where you like, enjoy consuming stuff about like, other bands, or like that culture in general, or that, you know, I mean...

Chloe: I think with Almost Famous it's just a good film, because it's stylistically amazing, and the soundtrack is so so good. And I just always wanted to be like, I want to go on tour, I mean, it's not accurate, I suppose. I don't know, it's like some life you've never lead, do you know what I mean?

Ione: But now you have lived that life in a way, like going on tour with Charli XCX and stuff. How would you say the reality lived up to the expectation?

Chloe: I mean, you definitely do see a side to it that is, like the exhausting side, so you get really tired. And I didn't even do like a proper full leg of the tour. It was like festivals, but you do see kind of the side of fans waiting airports and shit like that, and that's really intense. That's something I never did, because I always felt like that crosses a boundary. I would hate to come off a flight if I was a celebrity, and then have people come meet me, that would actually be my worst situation. You do see that it's not all just like, party party party all the time. It's like, people are tired, and people have to have a break, and it can't be, I don't know, this thing all the time

Ione: I suppose like going back a bit to what we were talking about and the girls in the 70s and all of that, and how you kind of touched upon like things changing like maybe musicians aren't so open to letting these people into their lives in the way they once were, would you say that there's like an element of exploitation from like male musicians back in the day of the way they were treating these women, and do you feel like that's like a problematic emblem of fan culture?

Chloe: Recently, there was an article that came out, there was a thing about David Bowie, and then someone put an article out and listed literally like 30 different male musicians from the 70s who had then slept with like 13 year old girls and stuff like this. And now it's less of a thing about sex. I don't know every groupie in the world, or every big fan in the world, but I feel like these days fans aren't sleeping with people as often as they would have been in that time, if that makes sense? I mean, I can't, I can't statistically say that, but I feel like bands and people are more worried about what they would happen if they let a fan backstage and fucked them and then it would get all over the news. And like, obviously, it's still does happen, but I just don't think it does to the same extent. Because in the 70s, they just probably weren't worried about getting caught. Whereas now you could take photo and have that as evidence or leak it on Twitter or like live tweet it or something, do you know what I mean?

- lone: Yeah. In these situations it seems like fault always lies with the person who is like, the fan, do you know what I mean?
- Chloe: That's true cause that's kind of as if you'd say "oh, well, she would want to fuck him he's David Bowie, like, why should he be blamed?". I don't want to mention Roman Polanski because he's not a musician, but he said this thing, and I guess a lot of those fucked men do have that mentality, he was talking to a judge and he said to the judge something like "these young girls, they want to be fucked" and stuff like this. And I guess some egotistical male rock god may have that same kind of mentality as if to say, like "this is all mine, you come to my shows, you're doing this for me, I'm doing this because I want to, but you're going to partake in it, because you love me".
- lone: Something that happened 5 or 10 years ago or whatever, is that fan culture kind of shifted in a way when everyone got on Tumblr and stuff, and then especially with the rise of people like Tavi Gevinson and Petra Collins where Tumblr or other social media platforms allowed for girls to have a mutual exchange of these things, it felt like women were starting to be more fans of each other?
- Chloe: I suppose the internet definitely probably did have a hand in that because look at me, I was an obsessive fan of Demi Lovato and Lana Del Rey.
- lone: You obviously being a contributor to Rookie, like back in the day and stuff, that seemed like a mutual fan base in a way, of teenage girls being fans of each other.
- Chloe: I mean I suppose in like, the 90s, and stuff like that you could say about Riot Girl, and shit like that, and that probably was the wave that then like, kicked it. But now obviously, because social media and Tumblr and stuff is so massive, you can find out about artists way easier and follow their live, like Instagram, you feel like, you *know* someone because you look at their stories all the time. So with photographers like Petra, I'm sure some people feel that same way.
- lone: A huge impetus for me to make Polyester was seeing that there was a shift towards what young women were paying their attention to and it was less towards traditional celebrities and more towards people on the internet that were artists or activists.
- Chloe: Yeah, I mean, look influences like, I mean, obviously it's something that you can admire, and people hustle to make all this money and have these huge fans that YouTubers and stuff like that. There's just so many things that you can be a fan of these days, and the internet is just one massive fan base.
- lone: How do you think fan culture has changed then with that shift, like, not only are we seeing more female musicians in general, but we are seeing this turn where people can get super into just like a specific girl or woman or whatever, on Instagram. And like see representation that more closely resembles them, so you do have these people that closely follow people's careers, wherever it's yours, whether it's like, lots of people we know have other people that are younger than them, or starting out maybe in their career, and it feels like it's a different type of fan?
- Chloe: The ways in which you can be a fan now are like limitless, and how you can have

an Instagram page dedicated to someone, or you can run a photo blog and get all the paparazzi pics and all this shit. And there's so many ways people want to distract themselves from their life. Like, it's a form of escapism do you know what I mean? People don't want to be thinking about school 24/7 or doing this 24/7, or thinking about how bad the world is. Being an obsessive fan of someone is a way to escape that.

lone: It feels like especially, yeah through what you've already mentioned, like Riot Girl or like Tumblr era, it was always about not just documenting these feelings or thoughts that were associated with fandom, but then creating something out of them?

Chloe: When we have all these thoughts and love towards something, it's nice to be able to regurgitate it in another way, do you know what I mean, rather than just sitting in your bedroom, listening to whatever all the time. It's cool to be able to make art out of that and then foster another community because of that. Yeah, it's just a celebration of all the things that you enjoy and that you're obsessed by I suppose.

lone: My own personal experience or whatever with making Polyester on the beginning, it was about trying to a certain extent get close to people that I admired in a way and I feel like you might be quite similar like it's just taking that documentation on that like exploration another step further isn't it, so do you think it actually ruins things when you you know, the phrase "never meet your idols", do you think that's true?

Chloe: I mean, I guess so to an extent, especially because of what happened with... JB [lone laughing] ...was not it.

lone: He who shall not be named.

Chloe: Like it was not a positive, but then I'd met him so many times before, but none of those experience were ever tarnished for me, it was the one that I met him when I was working. When I met Lana Del Rey, that was nothing but positive. So I don't think it's true never meet your idols, I think the thing with that phrase is that fans are very entitled and I'm speaking from being a fan, we go to these things we want a picture, we want an autograph, we want this this this, and sometimes people don't want to do that.

lone: Do you not think people are entitled though if they're directly funding someone's career?

Chloe: Well kind of but they're still people at the end of the day. Like I don't want to speak because I'm obviously not a celebrity, but I know when like someone's come up to me in a really inconvenient circumstance and been very, very, very over the top and unnecessary, and I know that some fans act like that too, to other artists, at that point you're just a human being, I didn't ask for that to happen.

lone: As someone who has fans now [laughing]...

Chloe: Lol.

Ione: How is it to have fans?

Chloe: It is fun, I mean I'm not gonna say otherwise... [all laughing]. I like it because it's very, very weird to me that people engage with my work and it was something I never expected. I don't know, when people are like "oh, you changed my life, you did this, you did this", I'm not a musician that's singing these words that resonate with you, I'm taking pictures that resonate with me.

Ione: One of my favourite experiences of your fans is someone asking me if I was you.

Chloe: But then she asked me how I made my money. She was like, "oh, so do you make enough money to like, live of this?" and I was like "it's none of your fucking business!". I would never dream of going up to an artist I really liked and being like "oh, so like, how do you make enough money to like..". I don't know, I just felt like that was a bit intense. Especially when you're drunk at a party, people always come up to me when I'm drunk and I'm like "this is the worst time to meet me".

Ione: So I think quite a lot when I see that you photograph musicians like Kate Nash or Oli Sykes, you write on your Instagram captions like "oh, this is a full circle moment for me", like what is satisfying about that for you?

Chloe: Okay, specifically talking about Oli Sykes and Bring Me the Horizon, that was when I was like 13 or 14, a very, very low mood Tumblr obsessed weirdo, I used to spend all waking hours of my day on Tumblr, in my school lunch breaks that were 15 minutes I would log on to Tumblr because I just had to get more. Their music was very comforting in a way I suppose, at the time, and I think of how I felt in that situation and would never have crossed my mind at that point cause I was never like a big stan of Bring Me the Horizon I would never have thought in that situation 'oh I'm going to get to work with him one day, because of what I'm going to do". Like you never know what's gonna happen, and I think there's plenty of times when I was a teenager specially that I just thought "oh what is the fucking point" and, without being ridiculously dark, but like not wanting to carry on with life, then those moments happen and you're " ah like this is what's worth sticking around for".

[Theme music plays]

Alice: 47:16 That was really great Chloe

Ione: Yeah thanks for coming in Chlo.

Chloe: Totally welcome, thanks for having me.

Ione: Anytime. If you don't follow Chloe already, her Instagram is *really* hard to explain it's @eolhcshppard which is Chloe backwards but we will link below because if you haven't figured that out like the majority of her 50k followers then there you are. Following on from Chloe's embarrassing confession of fandom, not that it's

actually embarrassing because fandom is not embarrassing in any way and I love fangirls forever I would love to hear everyone else's embarrassing fan stories

Chloe: Actually lone, I'd really love to hear yours about a Michael Cera?

lone: I'm not telling it! This will be a secret that's taken to my grave.

Chloe: Noooo.

lone: If enough people write in and tell us their fan stories maybe I will confess all next episode.

Chloe: Oh my god, I'm actually going to get everyone to fucking tweet you at this point now.

lone: Look alright, I'm not like Chuck E Cheese's or whatever that company was that gave that person free flights forever [all laughing]. I will decide my own time. If you write in with the most extreme thing you've ever done as a fan and we read it out, you can anonymise yourself so you don't actually have to be, you know, unveiled in your hysteria...

Chloe: But you should wanna be because it's funny and fun.

lone: Then I will reveal my Michael Cera story.

Chloe: Yes! It's gonna happen.

lone: And MC, if you're listening... [all laughing]

Chloe: I love you! We all love you! Tell your friend Jonah we love him too [lone laughing].

lone: This podcast is basically becoming a thirst trap

Chloe: Polyester's honey jar.

lone: That's a wrap on episode three! Done, done, done. We've already said we'd like to hear your fan stories which you can email to podcast@polyesterzine.com, but as always, we'd like your feedback on any aspects of the podcast. Please if you use iTunes and subscribe and leave us a review. We have been your hosts, and we'd like to thank George Townsend-Teague for her assistance with helping out on this podcast, we will link her Instagram again, we'll leave everyone's Instagram again. For now we'd like to say thank you to our partners Melissa for supporting us throughout the series and you can use our discount code MELISSAPOLY30 all in caps, we'll link that below. For those who maybe have been living under a rock, Polyester is a self published intersectional feminist publication, exploring

sociopolitical issues through various artistic mediums and bringing URL feminism to the IRL world!

Chloe: Bye! Wait, should I outro myself?

Ione: We intro'd you at the beginning don't worry.

Alice: You can outro *us*!

Ione: Yeah, you should outro us!

Alice: And then outro yourself while you're at it.

Chloe: So what do I say, how do I outro?

Ione: See yourself out.

Chloe: Do I pretend I've just finished my thing?

Alice: Pretend we've just finished the episode and then you're locking the door behind you type thing.

Chloe: Okay, so that was Alice and Ione, finishing off episode three, preparing you for episode four which I'm sure is going to be wonderful, but for now this is Chloe Sheppard signing off for the Polyester podcast episode three. I will see you later. Don't forget to follow me on Instagram! Thank you.

[Theme music plays]