

Katie
Welcome to Queer as Friends: brilliant conversations on the beauty of friendship with Tanith Ilsley and Dr. Katie Hall

Katie
Friends and familiar faces Robert Sheehan, from Misfits and Umbrella Academy; Adam Young, starring in the upcoming Season 3 of The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power and Adonis Siddique, who will be appearing in the new National Theatre production of The Rise and Fall of Little Voice met while performing in Withnail and I at Birmingham REP in 2024. They joined us for a brilliant conversation on the joys and perils of being friends with actors and the importance of frivolity in friendship.

Tan
Welcome to the Queer as Friends podcast.

Rob
Woohoo!

Adonis
Thank you.

Tan
We are joined by Robert Sheehan, Adonis Siddique, and Adam Young. Would you like to give us your best summaries of each other?

Adonis
On a cold winter December night, when frost silvered the Shire and the woods stood silent beneath the moon, Young Adam wandered barefoot with his faithful dog at his side. Far off a circus glowed with golden light and merry song. Curious and brave, Adam slipped beneath the canvas tent. And soon found himself among acrobats, clowns and performers/

Rob
/sounds like Enid Blyton

Adonis
/his quick wit and gentle manner won every heart. Before the season had passed, Adam and his dog had become cherished members of the circus, traveling wherever adventure called.

Rob
Adonis Siddique was born in Manchester, just off Coronation Street, he spent his childhood smoking Richmond Superkings and drinking brown ale. At the age of 18 he realised it had rained every day of his life and he thought to himself ‘Hang on, in London I can get a quarter of the space for three times the price’ and so he was London bound. Upon arrival, Adonis got trapped inside one of the Tubes on the Piccadilly Line. For 40 days and 40 nights he went back and forth from Cockfosters to Uxbridge until one day, a statue disguised as a man said he would help him. Adonis could tell he was a real statue because he was painted gold. The statue took Adonis to Shaftesbury Avenue where he realised he had finally found his destiny - to usher people to their seats in the theatre - but there were no jobs going so he became an actor instead.

Adam:
Robert Sheehan was a mystery baby found in a basket on the steps of a church. After a simple DNA test carried out by the parish priest, it was discovered that Sheehan isn't actually human, but closer in composition to that of a yogurt. But he overcame his ‘yoghurtness’ to become a professional actor, stinking out sets as prodigious as Misfits, The Umbrella Academy and cult classic, Summer of the Flying Saucer/

Rob:
/true story

Adam:
/where Sheehan played a human being from Galway whose hippie hairstyle is intensely disapproved of by his father, played by actor/

Rob:
Lorcan Cranach/

Adam:
/who, as far as Sheehan is aware, is an actual human.

Rob:
Woohoo!

Adonis:
Way-hey.

Tan:
Beautiful. Welcome

Rob:

There. Finally, the world knows the truth.

Adonis:
Got there.

Tan:
From more than one corner of the world: welcome. Shall we dive straight in?

Rob:
Yeah.

Adam:
Yeah!

Rob:
I've got some pressing questions for you.

Tan:
Why are you friends?

All:
Oh, God.

Adonis:
Well, we were really forced into this situation.

Rob:
We were…yeah, we were forced into a room in, in north London. Not unlike…

Adonis:
To a hotbox

Adam:
/yeah, yeah.

Rob:
/room with…

Adam:
/was it Belsize Park?

Adonis:
/yeah, Belsize Park

Rob:
/no windows that opened or ventilation or anything.

Adonis:
Yeah.

Rob:
And I think it was mostly sort of sweat and pheromones. You know, the friendship happened on a chemistry level/

Adonis:
/they made friends before we did

Rob:
Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Like..yeah…felt all confused in my tummy.

Adonis:
I don't really think we were properly friends until after, not the show, but after the rehearsals - we didn't have time.

Adam:
Yeah, we were full on

Adonis:
Like, we were, we were hanging out, but we were also very much working whilst hanging out.

Rob:
It was, what, 2024? Springtime, sort of March? And then we, at the end of every rehearsal day, you and I, and Adam yourself/

Adonis:
/went to the pub

Rob:
/were basically in a mild panic

Adonis:
/but not to hang out. We just sat in the pub and just/

Rob:
/and just repeated the lines over and over and stared out the window and drank a couple of pints/

Adonis:
/for hours and then we went, oh, you know, can't wait to get to know you.

Adam:

Yeah

Rob:
It's a symptom of acting that the first few weeks of trying to learn something and get your head around something is agonizingly painful, you know? And then it, it only gets worse as you age, apparently. So we've all, we've got that to look forward to, gentlemen

Adonis:
I won't make that. You first! You first.

Tan:
And when you did have space to get to know each other, what do you think it was that made you then continue to be friends after

Adonis:
Pub

Adam:
The Prince of Wales pub shout out/

Adonis:
/shout out

Adam:
/shout out Prince of Wales pub right next to the Birmingham REP…and just hanging out

Rob:
Yeah, I think we're all very…what's the right word…unsentimental in our friendship, and not very…sincere? I think we, I, instantly bonded with this ragtag bunch of circus freaks because we were all instantly taking the piss out of each other/

Adam:
Yeah

Rob:
/and that's where I'm most at ease, ironically. Yeah. And you know yourself. Sometimes you can walk into a room and everyone's like, 'Hi. Oh, my God, I love your pants. And your shoes are great, too. And I think everything is great about you' and I start, I start silently screaming/

Adonis:
/and I'm like, I fucking hate those trousers, and your shoes look shit too

Rob:
/Yeah, yeah. 'So you're wearing odd socks, you fucking oddball.'

Adam:

I do, I do remember what you were both wearing. You (Adonis) were wearing a wacky shirt, as always/

Rob:
Naturally.

Adam:
/and then you were wearing a hat and I think you were in a trenchcoat by that point.

Rob:
Me as in Robert Sheehan the yoghurt?

Adam:
Flip flops and trench coat - you were already in Withnail brain/

Rob:
/mode. Yeah. Inspired by Richard E Grant's teetotalness, you know, from afar.

Katie:
Why are you still friends?

Rob:
Yeah. Well, you know, we are still friends. We're old friends now, even though it's been two years.

Adonis:
I think our friendship's weird.

Rob:
Yeah, it is weird

Adonis:
Because it's like, obviously we hung out doing the show. You never really think you're going to stay friends with people after the show, as in, like, you all want to, but it's logistically impossible even for people that live in London. And I didn't really presume…I mean, you weren't living in London.

Adam:
No, I wasn't at the time, no.

Adonis:
So it was, like, never gonna happen. And we're also very different.

Rob:
Yeah. Yeah.

Adam:
I mean, it's pretty rare that you do a job and you make a couple of friends.

Rob:
Yeah!

Adonis:
That you really will talk to and, like, fly to Ireland and see.

Adam:
Yeah. And like, you know, have a little holiday and, but I feel like doing a play kind of helps.

Rob:
It does

Adonis:
But there's so many plays where you're convinced at the end of it you're going to stay friends with the one dude you've been hanging out with, and then you just never speak again.

Rob:
Yeah, yeah, yeah. It happens all the time.

Adonis:
It happens so much.

Rob:
Tan, you'll remember we had very little rehearsal time before we were kind of, in a friendly fashion, shoved onto the stage of the Birmingham REP, going 'You're on! You've got 15 previews!' or something. So we had sort of quite a short…

Tan:
With all sorts of furniture sliding on and off by pulley

Adonis:
We were rehearsing in front of an audience.

Adam:
Yeah, yeah. I remember you coming off one rehearsal going,'I love this play, but…'

Rob:
It was a mad kick bollock scramble/

Adam:
/Yeah, it really was

Rob:
/because all the sets fled the stage

Adam:

I think as well, coming in that first week, I was bricking it because I was like, I really hope that everyone loves the film as much as I do. Everyone loving it as much as each other really helped. And and that that helped us click for sure.

Adonis:
Sort of replicating the play and film off the stage, but really not intentionally.

Adam:
Yeah.

Adonis:
It was very hard to do that play and then not have a pint afterwards.

Rob:
Yeah. It's true.

Adonis:
It was really a workout

Adam:
Especially for you two. I was chilling, but you two were at it, like, you didn't stop,

Rob:
What?!

Adonis:
On the stage, or off?

Adam:
I had a bit in the first half and then a bit in the second half. I spent, I spent the whole play on the sofa

Tan:
For Adonis and Rob it was more relentless

Rob:
It was. Yeah, yeah.

Tan:
Get on, get off, change costumes, all this furniture disappears

Rob:
Yeah, I felt like it was Legally Blond or something. I had about five costume changes/

Adonis:
/in one scene.

Rob:

Yeah, yeah. And the thing was, as well, you know, we're supposed to be freezing cold, and I was sweating buckets.

Adonis:
It was that, it was that April where it was, it was so hot/

Rob:
It was a heatwave/

Adonis:
It was a heatwave, and we were on stage going, ‘God, it's so cold out here…

Rob:
‘God it’s cold!’

Adonis:
‘It’s freezing out here. Oh my God.’

Rob:
‘So freezing out here…’

Adonis:
‘Put a jacket on, warm up’…with beads of sweat dripping down our faces

Rob:
I finally figured out, I think it was the last week of the show, where I just put on the aircon in my dressing room, as high as it would go, right, and in my underpants I stood there and got my deep heat stuff painted on by lovely/

Adam:
Matt, yeah/

Rob:
and I'd get really, really freezing before the show just so I wouldn't be sweating. It was, you know…

Tan:
Do you think your friendship was partly born out of a sort of trauma bonding?

All:
Yeah

Adonis:
It was so intense - and I really hate it when actors are like,’Oh, it was so intense!’. We were just like this <clings to Rob> the entire time.

Adam:
Yeah.

Rob:
Yeah, we were literally, literally like joined at the hip. But you know, by rights, Malcolm Sinclair should be here as well.

Adam:
Ah, he should

Adonis:
He really should.

Rob:
‘Cause we've remained as friends with Malcolm

Adonis:
She’s at the Barbican right now.

(Laughter)

Adonis:
Malcolm is very much within this. Yeah it was, particularly for me anyway. Malcolm Sinclair played Uncle Monty in our show, and whenever he was on stage, it was almost like I had a rest. I just had to stand there and enjoying myself.

(Laughter)

Rob:
Oh, it was brill…it was such a joy.

Adam:
Hare. Hare here.

Rob:
And it was, after a while it was like, apart from the costume changing bits like at the very beginning, being on the stage, doing the show, it was almost like a rest, and then it would kick off again the second half when we had to do all the car stuff. We were sort of like, running to get the thing, the props…and then be like…I was asleep and also operating the windshield wipers underneath the dashboard.

Tan:
I never knew whether that cloth was going out and the car would be there…with you in it

Rob:
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tan:

Not one time

Adonis:
There was the night when the blanket set on fire on stage. Yeah I just went off and threw it

(Laughter)

Katie:
So setting the stage alight

Adonis:
Yeah.

Rob:
Yeah, quite literally

Tan:
In more ways than one.

Adonis:
But I don't know why we're still friends/

Rob:
Yeah, yeah, yeah

Adonis:
/to go back to your question

Tan:
The sort of friendship that you'll fly to Ireland to see

Rob:
I think because when…prolonged friendship, I think, requires every party not to be a hassler.

Adonis:
That's true. And we're just like, 'Do we want to do this? Yep.'

Rob:
Yeah!

Adonis:
And you're right, it isn't really about…we don't really go, 'Oh remember when, remember when…' It's like, 'Oh this is happening. Let's do that.'

Rob:
Yeah.

Adonis:

We don't really look back.

Rob:
No.

Adonis:
We are very much about ‘Oh, this cool thing’s happening’.

Tan:
It’s not sort of misty watercolor memories. It's more like, ‘Oh, let's do this cool thing’.

Adonis:
It's in the present

Tan:
Like, we can all hang out - now.

Adonis:
Yeah, yeah.

Rob:
Let's find other vaguely traumatic experiences to throw ourselves into

Tan:
Any spring to mind from…recent times?

Adonis:
Are we going to talk about Ballydehob or not?

Adam:
Well, now we’re here

Rob:
Speaking of setting things on fire that shouldn't be on fire. We…the lads recently joined me in my local village, Ballydehob, because there's a big jazz festival that happens every year…but yeah, night three, it was about 2:00 in the morning and everybody had kind of descended down into the campsite at the edge of the village

Adonis:
It was like being in Snatch.

Rob:
It was. Yeah, yeah. It was like being in the haunting side of Snatch and everything was a bit damp, and there were people trying to start these lackluster fires, you know.

Adonis:
There was little tiny, pathetic bonfires

Rob:
Little wisps of fire. And then do you remember there was lads throwing batteries into the fires and throwing lighters into the fire?

Adam:
Throwing sleeping bags

Adonis:
They were going this isn't working. And they just started picking up all the tents and mattresses. Yeah.

Rob:
And just won one big, like, quite successful-looking fire in the corner of the campsite. And they were just throwing tents into it, throwing mattresses and blankets

Adam:
And a swarm of people,

Adam:
So-called sober, drinking cups of tea, watching it all happen.

Rob:
Yeah, just breathing in the fumes.

Tan:
So, as I understand it, Rob, you invited your good friends to spend a few days with you, and upon picking them up at the airport, declared they were working/

Rob:
Yes/

Tan:
at a festival

Adonis:
Didn't even tell us we were working.

Adam:
Yeah, Rob picked us up

Adonis:
On the day

Adam:
We got in the car. We went to Lidl. We got supplies

Adonis:
Supplies being bottles of wine

Adam:
And on the way there, on the back roads, there was a sign to Ballydehob festival and I was like, ‘Oh, that looks like fun’. And Rob was like, <Irish accent> ‘That's where we're going!’ And we were like, what?

Rob:
Is that how I talk?

Adonis:
It is.

Adam:
What do you mean ‘That’s where we're going?’ And and then we spent the next three days there. I don’t think we saw much jazz though.

Rob:
Because originally I thought we'd all be puppeteering in the actual parade that happens on the Sunday, which is kind of like a jazz funeral, because at the center of the parade is a coffin all covered in skulls and these kind of jazzy pallbearers

Adonis:
Do you know what that was? They told me what that was.

Rob:
Oh, yeah?

Adonis:
The year, the year before, all the Garda tried to close down, they said it got way too much the year before.

Adam:
Shock.

Adonis:
And they said you can't close down the streets for a festival. And then the organizers, your friend who we were talking to

Rob:
Joe, yeah

Adonis:
Said the only reason you can close down the streets is if it's for a funeral.

Rob:
For a funeral, yeah.

Adonis:

So they had a funeral for jazz

Rob:
So they had to have a someone who has recently died in the coffin…No, I'm only joking. They don't actually have a real corpse.

Adonis:
We were all in there after the three days we had.

Rob:
Yeah, but we ended up being stewards in the parade. So we had hi-vis jackets on, trying to keep children from tripping up the puppets and stuff. I was actually genuinely terrified/
Adam:
I was scared/

Adonis:
and we weren't totally sober.

Adam:
Nope

Adonis:
You know, it's like, your job is this whole street. Just make sure no one runs in front of that, that huge, you know, parade float.

Rob:
Yeah, 15 foot puppets coming down the road, you know, we were trying to protect them from the throngs of people. And then at one point, my friend Deirdre danced passed in the parade, and her and her friend came running over to me and went, ‘Oh, Rob, thank God’, and then handed me their phones, wallets, scarves…like, it's about nine things. I went ‘I can't hold these, I can't, I'm supposed to be stewarding, I'm supposed to…my patch, there’s children in my pa…’ And they were like, ‘What are you talking about?’ It's like ‘I'm a steward. I can't take all this shit’. And they're like, ‘Waaahh’. I was in way more of a flap than I predicted.

Adonis:
Oh, it was, it was a flap fest.

(Laughter)

Adonis:
Take…leave that? Cut that out. Edit that out. That's next year.

Rob:
Yes. Flap Fest!...well, you know, Ballydehob has nine festivals across its calendar, a tenth nobody’d even notice - Flap Fest.

Adonis:

But they said that like, the people that live there…

Rob:
Well, in the winter time, it goes down to about 300 people.

Adonis:
And there was 8000.

Rob:
Yeah, yeah. It was about five or something

Adonis:
It was crazy.

Adam:
It was lawless.

Rob:
Yeah, it was wild.

Adam:
It was pretty lawless.

Rob:
So yeah, that was the latest traumatic incident. What did we do? We saw we saw Malcolm recently in an amazing play, at the National darling, called Man and Boy by Terence Rattigan.

Adonis:
He was marvelous

Rob:
Where he played a predatory homosexual.

Adonis:
I was jealous, I was watching him sort of go all over this guy, thinking, that used to be me.

Rob:
Yeah, yeah

(Laughter)

Adonis:
I used to be that young and cute.

Rob:
Yeah, yeah. You're old news now.

Tan:
So a strong foundation of trauma bonding/

Rob:
Trauma bonding/

Tan:
and living in the moment is what I'm getting so far

Adam:
Yeah, spur of the moment

Adonis:
But also just, yeah like I said, very different personalities that complement.

Rob:
Yeah

Adonis:
These two like - you two! You. You're like/

Rob:
You two!/

Adonis:
Your base state right, is like total like meditation and Zen, like that's just how they operate at the, at the core.

Adam:
I don't know about that.

Rob:
Yeah. Yeah. I mean…

Adonis:
Is it not?

Adam:
But thank you for the compliment.

Adonis:
That's how it comes across

Rob:
It's just the impression that I've been working on putting out for you

Adam:
It's all a mask everyone

Adonis:
I’m just like, anxiety and stress. It's weird. It's like, it's yin and yang.

Rob:
Yeah. Do you remember you were describing how you wake up in the morning, Adonis? When we were in West Cork recently, he was basically…Adonis just wakes up in the morning like this <noises of panic> ‘Wuh-aargh-aah!’

Adonis:
I wake up so stressed. And these two, I see them just like, you know, levitating around the flat, like…Let's be stressed about this thing.
Rob:
Yeah. Yeah.

Adonis:
They’re like it's okay. I'm like, ‘No, it's time to argue now.’

Rob:
It’s time to freak out

Adonis:
It’s unbearable being around this sort of calm energy all the time.

Adam:
You’re in the countryside, like ‘Waaahhhhhh. Where’s the big city?’

Rob:
Yeah, the city’ll do it to you alright. But also from I want to say make honorable mention about how funny these two fuckers are. I'm constantly laughing when we're together.

Adonis:
This is true

Rob:
That’s, iif that's not there, that's a deal breaker. It really is. You know, if you're not like if you don't have a perverted sense of humor, I'm not going to be sticking around. You know, if I have solemn children, I'm gonna abandon them, you know?

Adonis:
Why are you serious? What's your standup routine?

Rob:
Yeah, yeah. Come on, say something controversial. You're boring me to death.

Adam:
You're so nice. You're so nice.

Adonis:
Who don't you like out of your friends?

Rob:
Yeah, yeah. You know, that's the funnies. It's gotta be there.

Adonis:
The humor is at its core.

Rob:
What about you two? You've been friends, I heard you mentioned for 28 years?

Katie:
Correct

Adam:
Boom

Katie:
Yeah, we met at uni.

Tan:
We did. Yeah. University.

Rob:
Did you click instantly or was there combativeness?

Katie:
Definitely no compbativeness.

Tan:
We've never had an argument.

Adonis:
Really?

Rob:
Really? Well, never say never.

Adonis:
Have you ever had a little tiff?

Tan:
Never say never.

Katie:
We've had, like, I guess, disagreements or different points of view, but

Tan:
Yeah

Adonis:
But, see, those should lead to arguments, guys. That is exactly what I'm talking about

Rob:
Lead to a tantrum, at least

Tan: Feel free to get tense about it, Adonis

(Laughter)

Adonis:
I'll take on the stress for you. Just message me.

Katie:
We just haven't needed to

Tan:
No, even those have been few and far between.

Rob:
Of course, we say it in jest because it's…friendship shouldn't be hard. You know, we've all had those friendships, I think,where the person feels like a monkey on your back, you know, and you're constantly having to talk them down off a ledge, but those things just can't last, you know…hasslers.

Adam:
They fizzle out.

Rob:
They do. Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Adonis:
That's also a thinking with age, right? Like I've been on both sides of that friendship where you've been the person who's just like, ‘Oh my God, back off a bit’ or you've been the friend who's like, ‘Why does my friend not want to talk to me anymore?’

(Laughter)

Rob:
You've been walking a tightrope your whole life.

Adonis:
That's what I feel now. But it's weird, like, I feel like around a certain age, you do lose a lot of friends.

Rob:
Yeah, yeah

Adonis:
A lot.

Adam:
People come and go. It's good.

Rob:
They do, yeah, yeah

Adonis:
It’s kind of this weird core, and maybe you don't see them as much, maybe you don't talk to them or…whereas like in your 20s, like you're talking to all your friends, or you're seeing this huge group all the time

Adam:
Yeah

Adonis:
Maybe you see someone once every two months or whatever, but it's way more like meaningful.

Tan:
We spoke about how we've never, apart from when we met because we lived together for two years at uni, we've never lived close to each other.

Adonis:
Interesting.

Tan:
Ever.

Adonis:
Where do you live?

Katie:
I now live in West Sussex but you've been in Northampton…

Tan:
Yeah.

Adonis:
Yeah, yeah

Tan:

Yeah, in Northampton for 20 years. And Katie's been London or further south.

Adonis:
Right.

Rob:
Mm-hmm

Tan:
And so we've never been in each other's pockets. We've never like, been those friends that live next door to each other or see each other all the time. So I think there's a certain calmness that comes with not being in an intense
Adonis:
It's like a relationship, some of those friendships like

Katie:
Not codependent

Tan:
Yeah, not codependent.

Rob
Yeah. Friendship is a thing you can pick up after years.

Tan:
Yeah. There was a period/

Rob:
And it still feels pretty much the same/

Tan:
where Katie was living in Cornwall and I was just well, I was freelancing in theater, so I was here there and everywhere

Adonis:
All over the place.

Tan:
And we didn't see each other. I mean, we didn't even have that much regular contact

Katie:
It was only a couple years

Tan:
Yeah, I really hear what you're saying about as you get older/

Adonis:
Yeah/

Tan:
you fizzle out of that intense like

Adonis:
Group of like ten friends

Tan:
But your friendship was sort of born in that intense

Rob:
Yeah.

Adonis:
Our friendship was like, it's like school right? You're like forced to all be in a you have no choice. You're all in this situation. You kind of have to get along. But I do find it interesting that like all the shows and stuff, it is super rare.

Rob:
It is very rare, yeah. It really is

Tan:
From my perspective, like obviously as a stage manager I've seen dozens and dozens of companies of actors.

Rob:
Yeah.

Tan:
And also for myself as part of those companies, I also have virtually no friends that I keep in touch with because, you know, we've done a show together.

Rob:
Yeah, yeah, yeah

Tan:
And like you were saying, Adonis, you have those intentions, don't you? You think ‘Oh’ we’re gonna be friends for life/

Adonis:
You do, and you’re tricked into it/

Tan:
this has been the most special time.

Adonis:
Yeah

Tan:
And often like

Adonis:
It has

Tan:
With Withnail it was, it truly was. I mean, what a company.

Rob:
It was. It was brilliant. We had such good craic.

Adam:
We were very lucky.

Rob:
We were incredibly lucky

Tan:
We had some of the best of times as a group of people.

Rob:
We did. Yeah.

Adonis:
Madness

Tan:
It was so much fun.

Rob:
Yeah, yeah, yeah

Tan:
It is interesting that your friendship has kind of transcended that ground zero moment

Rob:
Yeah. You know, I wouldn't usually want them to hear this within earshot, but I've come to care deeply about these two fellas really and truly, you know, as real friends.

Adonis:
I’m working on it

Rob:
So you're you're stuck with me now. Yeah.

Tan:

That's interesting. As performers and maybe, as performers who have been involved in shows that have been very much in the public eye and in front of huge international audiences, is it difficult to sometimes ascertain whether friendships are genuine?

Rob:
Friendships are real, yeah

Tan:
Yeah

Adam:
I think it's about making an effort. We turn up for each other at the end of the day. I know that I don't have to talk to these two for a while, and it'll be fine because they'll be doing the same thing/

Rob:
The key to any great friendship - not talking to each other for long periods of time!/

Adam:
you know

Adonis:
I'll tell you what that does do. It means that, us all being so far apart, when we are together, I don't just mean it's like, y'know, crazy but it is like, well, let's really make the most of whatever this is, okay? What are we doing?

Rob:
Yeah

Adonis:
We've got a couple of days, and it's got to be at ten. There's no point. Just sort of doing a half-arsed version of whatever event we might be attending

Rob:
Later on

Adonis:
Like tonight. Burlesque cabaret.

Rob:
But you know, one, one thing to that to, to your question Tan. Because I live in a rural, quiet place, you know, which has short bursts of crowds and insanity, I've made I think I made a promise to myself, not to, like you're saying, Adonis, we all kind of see friends come and go, and friends come back into our lives and they can mean something to us, different points in our lives and then drift away and come back and so forth. But I think a strong part of my game because I said to myself, 'Rob, you're always going to remain open to new friends' and I think a lot of men struggle with that. You know, they get to a certain age - I read an article not long ago and it said, 'Why do men of a certain age have no friends?'. And there's

a real truth to that, because they make, a lot of people, they make their bonds in school and college and everything - those traumatic experiences - and then they get to later in life and they sort of struggle to be vulnerable and be open enough to create meaningful friendships. But I must say, braggadociously, I'm the other end of that spectrum. I'm like, 'Yeah, let's go. Let's go walk the dog. Let's, you know, go for tea and biscuits. Let's you know…' I'm good at…I think I'm good at making friends.

Katie:
What does showing up and maintaining your friendship look like? Have you had the chance to support each other in future projects? How are you kind of being each other's friends in life now?
Rob:
I don't think there's any support required in terms of work, you know/

Adonis:
Our friendship is not really work-based, which is quite nice/

Rob:
because that becomes more, that becomes something else, doesn't it? You know, that becomes more of a professional lean. I think good friendships thrive on situations where nobody is asking anything of each other, really.

Adonis:
If someone's in a show we'll go and watch it.

Rob:
Yeah!

Adonis:
If someone's got an audition, we'll do a tape.

Rob:
Exactly.

Adam:
Yeah.

Adonis:
But really, that is kind of where it ends. It's, it's about, it's like fuck I can't deal with more talking about this industry and work. Let's just have some fun.

Rob:
The tape that you guys did

Adonis:
Oh. My. God

Adam:

Sidenote: Adonis had to do a tape outside Stansted Airport at 10 a.m. before our flight at 11 a.m..

Adonis:
I did it in the toilets at Stansted airport

Adam:
And then there was a guy playing ping-pong

Adonis:
Shall I tell the story?

Adam:
Please tell the story.

Adonis:
So basically I got a recall for a job and they were like, it can only be this time on this day, and it was when we were in Stansted Airport and I was like, what am I supposed to do? So I set up in the toilets in the cubicle, had the phone on the toilet roll thing, and then of course all the signal wasn't working and whatever, so I was running around Stanstead. Adam turns up, I was like, ‘You've got to help me, you've got to help me!’. Adam was like, you know, meditating, levitating

Adam:
The panic again.

Adonis:
And I was like/

Adam:
Not even a hug. Not even a ‘Hi’

Adonis:
/’help me now’, flapping around the place, going,’ I don't know what…’ I was…’Help me, help me now, help me!’ And Adam was like, ‘Hey, man, you know, it's gonna work out.’

Adonis:
I was like, ‘Well, it won't work out unless you help’. And then what did we do? I can't remember what we did.

Rob:
You went to the car park.

Adam:
Oh, we went to the car park, yeah, and we stuck your bags out.

Adonis:

Yeah. For the for the recall, there was nine people on the Zoom. I couldn't see any of them. And they were going, ‘Just imagine you're outside’. And I was like/

Adam:
Check

Adonis:
/’and it's really sunny’

Rob:
Get that for free

Adonis:
/and the sun was like, there

Rob:
Check.

Adonis:
‘And there's just a light breeze’ and like, my hair was going like this. And then she went…<whispers>...and it's absolutely silent. And then this fucking Emirates jumbo jet just went right over the top. But yeah, thank you for helping me with that tape

Adam:
Friends turn up for each other.

Rob:
What did you have to do, for the, did you have to sort of be wistful and

Adonis:
Yes, I was like imagining things. It was like us being freezing cold, you know, in 35 degrees. It was exactly like that.

Rob:
Imagine a bird.

Adonis:
Yeah. They were like ‘Butterflies flying everywhere’ and I could just hear like <engine roar>

Rob:
Yeah, yeah, yeah

Adonis:
But yeah, I think we don't…do we talk work?

Adam:
We do/

Rob:
I mean bits and bobs

Adam:
/we mention what we're doing,

Adonis:
We're also like the three stages of an actor's career/

Adam:
We're in the same game, all doing the same

Adonis:
Think what you like mate, y'know, Rob is obviously very well known, and like when we go places, people know who he is. Adam's just filmed an amazing job and is about to sort of go onto this trajectory, and I'm very much still jobbing and doing like theatre work and bits of bobs of TV. So it's like we are at very, very, very different points in our careers. And I think that it's just nice that we've/

Rob:
Yeah

Adonis:
/there's no judgment with any of it. None of us really care

Rob:
Yeah. And even though I'm not a particularly competitive person, I have very, very few friends who are actors who are of a certain cachet. I can probably count them on my one hand. I mean, I've y'know friends with small f, but not people you can bother in the dead of night, you know what I mean? And it's not because of competition or anything. It's just this, I'm not sure, there's some…

Adam:
There's a hum

Rob:
There's a strange hum that appears, you know, you're at a premiere or something and there's an Eddie Redmayne type or something wandering around and you're like, 'Alright? How are you?' You know, or whoever, some sort of fancy, fancy actor. I don't know, it sort of slightly gets in the way, that kind of success sheen gets slightly in the way, y'know. And then as well, I've had actor friends who are successful and have been quite intensely in my life, and then they just disappear and you never hear from them ever again.

Adonis:
After the fact?

Rob:
Yeah.

Adonis:
Really?

Rob:
Yeah. They never text you back.

Adonis:
Like you came up together?

Rob:
Yeah, yeah

Adonis:
Really?

Rob:
Oh, yeah. Or before or after. I mean, there's been many. There's been many.

Adam:
Chasing, chasing the uh/

Adonis:
I can't wait for that stage/

Adam:
/chasing the dream, as it were.

Adonis:
/That’s gonna be me! I’m gonna be next!

Rob:
Yeah. And it's probably for different reasons.

Adam:
The fake red carpet dream

Tan:
What do you think makes that happen?

Rob:
I think the chaos of success is a part of it, you know, I had to come to terms with the fact that when I was a kid, that the success of, that I was experiencing as an actor was making me emotionally miserable for a while because I was traveling around a lot, living out of a suitcase. Quite isolated in unfamiliar places a lot, and I was going quietly mad and unable to be by myself. And it was all for the purposes of fulfilling the childhood dream, you know? So my inner child was going, ‘This is great! It's working out! You're doing cool jobs and working

with people’ but my actual present self was going ‘‘This is fucking…this is such a pain in the ass, you know,

Tan:
It’'s like ‘I've made it. Why am I so miserable?’

Rob:
Yeah. You know, and that is an unforeseen thing that you're your little naive child self can't imagine in advance, and so that's one thing I think people go off the rails. Another thing is, I think people surround themselves with people who become everything to them but are actually a bit parasitic. That happens. And then other people, you know, I don't want to - I always want to give people the benefit of the doubt - but the other people, I think, look at you and think, well, you're not use to me now

Adonis:
That is unbearable to think. Especially if you/

Rob:
Yeah, but they do you a favour in the long run

Adonis:
Yeah. Well of course, but if people are, if you come up with people to an extent - you're the same age - for them to then turn around and think that is so… I understand friendships breaking apart

Rob:
Yeah.

Adonis:
I guess there are people…

Tan:
It’s depressing isn’t it

Rob:
It’s abrupt

Tan:
It's that sort of mercenary thing.

Adonis:
But you're right. I guess if they're doing it, then that's who they are and/

Rob:
Yeah

Adonis:
/Goodbye.

Rob:
Good luck. Yeah. All the best.

Katie:
Do you think you'll stay friends…?

Katie:
To find out whether Rob, Adam & Adonis think they will stay friends forever, and for more hilarious insights into their friendship, be sure to subscribe to Queer as Friends wherever you listen and Part 2 will download automatically when it's released on Tuesday 29th September

Tan:
Queer as Friends was brought to you by Tanith Isley and Dr Katie Hall. If you'd like to hear more conversations on the beauty of friendship then please subscribe and review the Queer as Friends podcast wherever you listen, and tell your bestie about us, so they know you've been thinking of them. You can also follow us on Instagram and Threads @queerasfriends and if you have any feedback, you can send that via email to queer.as.friends@gmail.com Information about the guests and topics discussed, plus the full transcript of each episode, can be found in the show notes on our website www.queerasfriends.uk