

Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Allen Leech and Laura Carmichael of Downton Abbey

JVN [00:00:00] Welcome to Getting Curious. I'm Jonathan Van Ness. And every week I sit down for a gorgeous conversation with a brilliant expert to learn all about something that makes me curious. On today's episode, I'm joined by Allen Leech and Laura Carmichael, a.k.a. Tom Branson and Lady Fucking Edith of Downton Abbey, where I ask them: can I not have a nervous breakdown while I interview two of the most amazing cast members from Downton Abbey? Welcome to Getting Curious. This is Jonathan Van Ness. I'm literally going to shit my pants. We have not one but two cast members from the upcoming film Downton Abbey: A New Era. The film follows—you know what, if you are listening to this podcast and you don't know the name of, okay, fine—it's the Crawleys, it's the Crawleys. And it follows their journey as they go to the south of France, they uncover the mystery of the Dowager Countess' newly inherited villa. It is, it is such a stunning movie. You guys, I cried so hard. I literally had chills. As soon as I finished, I had to call my mom, both my aunties, my best friend Patty. I had to tell everybody and they were, like, "I feel you about to spoil it." And I was like, "Ah!" So anyway, everyone, we literally have Allen Leech, who is Tom Branson, and we have Laura Carmichael, who's Lady Edith. Welcome to Getting Curious.

ALLEN LEECH [00:01:16] Oh my gosh, thank you for having us.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:01:18] Thank you so much!

JVN [00:01:18] So let me just take you back. Obviously we're going to talk about the movie, but I just have to take us back to 2013. In America, we had to get your guys' DVD sets because we didn't have it on PBS yet. We were on this, like, horrific delay. Thank God my stepsister, who introduced us to Downton, was married to this Scottish man at the time, so we were able to get the hook up on the box sets before they came out here. It was, like, this whole thing. It really was emotional watching the movie because I feel like I've grown up with Downton, like, I have been watching it since it started. My life has, like, upended and changed 15,000 times, and it's my comfort food. It's, like, I've seen it 50 billion times. I watched it as many times in the 24 hours that the link would, like, let me watch the movie. I watched, like, six times. Okay, fine, maybe three.

Basically if you're interested in watching the Downton movie, you should probably skip this entire thing because it's going to be spoiler alert central. Like, I'm going to be doing, like, a full interrogation of this movie—not, like, a scary journalistic one. Just, like, an "I'm obsessed, like, fangirl. Like, you're going to be exhausted after this." Yeah. Okay. So first of all, just in case anyone's living under a rock, let's start with Allen. Only because Laura, I feel, like, as Lady Edith, honey, you were, like, you know, you were giving upstairs. Allen had to do a whole transition. It was a whole thing. I feel like Lady Edith has probably gotten this, although Lady

Edith always had to go second. Actually, no, I'm reversing course. First Lady Edith, you go first. So you are and what your character is.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:02:36] Oh, my God. So, I am Laura Carmichael, and I play Lady Edith, who is the middle of the Crawley girls. There's three sisters. She's the middle child. The problem middle child. You sort of meet her and she's kind of, she's a little bit nasty at times. She feels kind of a little bit overlooked. She lives in Lady Mary's shadow, the gorgeous Lady Mary, played by Michelle Dockery. And she has a beautiful, kind, gorgeous sister, Lady Sybil, who is married to Tom Branson at one point. Anyway, she has a full on journey through the seasons, she really becomes a modern woman.

JVN [00:03:14] Such a full journey. And also, can I just say, sidebar? I was just, like, a little traum after season three and I was, like, going through my grieving. I was, like, going through my feelings and I was, like, "Jesus Christ, I just can't do this right now." So I just, like, had to give it a pause. But it turns out this is, like, a controversial opinion, but it's true. I think season four and your journey with your baby, honey. When I watched it a few years after 2013, like, once the shock goes away, it's actually, it's—, I think it's the best season, I'm just gonna say it! Like, it's so good. That story is so rich. I love it so much. And I just yeah, I have chills on my triceps and my quads. You took us on such a journey. I'm obsessed. We're going to get there more later. Now, Allen, full disclosure, obviously I've had a crush on you for almost ten years. You know, everyone knows it, it's totally fine, I mean, you're just, your character is just such a charmer, so gorgeous. Oh, my God, season three. I can't even talk about it. Like, oh God, it's just, oh, fuck. You just, you took me there. Jesus Christ. You both are such good actors. I can't take it. But tell us who your character is and what your story is.

ALLEN LEECH [00:04:15] So I play Tom Branson, who rode into Downton Abbey as a chauffeur, fell in love with the youngest daughter, wouldn't take no for an answer. I said, "You know you love me, too. You just have to, like, look at this grubby little Irishman and see a little bit more than, you know, what you are used to." Finally, she opened her eyes and thought, "This is the greatest idea in the world." And then she died, directly after childbirth.

JVN [00:04:39] Fuck preeclampsia! I hate preeclampsia! [CROSSTALK] I hate it more than anything! I hate it so much. And actually it's still a really big problem. Not even joking. It's, like, a thing.

ALLEN LEECH [00:04:48] Yeah, yeah, it really is a thing. So through that, he then finds himself stuck at the, at the house. He can't go back to Ireland because of what's happened in the past with his, with his wife. And he has to reinvent himself and he becomes the estate manager. But still, he's very lost, very lonely. And by the end, he also manages to try and help Lady Edith and calls his other sister-in-law a bitch. And that was, that was a great moment.

JVN [00:05:16] I'll never forget.

ALLEN LEECH [00:05:17] And then in the first movie, towards the end of it, he finds love again, which is great. And that's where this new movie starts.

JVN [00:05:23] So Downton starts April 14th, 1912, there's, like, a little bit of a Titanic intrigue there, which we're obsessed with. But now this movie is in 1929. The hair is different, the clothes are getting different. Which, I'm just so enjoying that journey. And can I also just say, as long as we're at it, Laura, I feel like if I had been a producer on season one, actually, all of them, well, especially seasons one through three, I would have been, like, "Um, if you guys, like, want Lady Edith to have this whole, like, overlooked one, can we stop making her so hot?" Like, the hair is perfect, the clothes are perfect, like, she's so cute, like, you're so cute, your style is everything. And you just, the entire time! Lady Mary's is, too. But I just feel like I was, like, "What are they talking about? Really? She's like, she's so cute." And I've always been team Lady Edith. I love her. I, like, I just, we love Edith. Everyone does. So, the first movie was, it was, like, the last movie I saw before the world shut down. What was it like to kind of come back on the set and you're back?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:06:17] It was amazing. I mean, it was helpful for us to know it was coming because I think that feeling when the world shut down of, like, "Oh my God, will we-, what's going to happen next?" So to know that we had another Downton coming with it, it just felt like a lifeline, really. And then to come back together, we really are a family, you know, we've known each other for the longest time now and we've been through so much together. And this journey together, the show becoming this whole thing, you know, around the world. So, yeah, it was really, really special, and probably one of the happiest shooting experiences I've ever had, actually.

ALLEN LEECH [00:07:00] Yeah, I completely agree with that, Laura, actually, because we keep saying goodbye to each other. The show ended after six seasons, we had this huge emotional goodbye to Highclere. We had an emotional goodbye to each other, promising to always stay in touch, which we have, the majority of us. And then suddenly, it was, like, "Oh, it's you again." We did have that kind of feeling of, "Okay," and then we did it again, after that movie, we're, like, "This was a one off. This was it. It was so special, amazing." And then three years later, like, "Hey, so this is awkward, obviously." But the difference is we keep saying goodbye in the hope that we get to come back to see each other because as Laura said, we are a family and we've, we've watched this show grow and be as successful as it is together. It's been a surprise for all of us, none of us expected it.

JVN [00:07:44] So, I don't know if you ever saw this, but gorgeous lady Maggie Smith, she did this episode of Graham Norton and he was, like, "So have you ever seen Downton?" And she was, like, "Um, I have the box sets." And I was, like, "Queen, it's, like, the best show of all time." But you guys have seen it, and binged it, obviously.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:08:00] We've seen it.

ALLEN LEECH [00:08:01] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JVN [00:08:02] Do you watch it more than once? Because it's, like, do you guys both realize, like, how fucking good it is? Or is it confusing since you were, like, there? So you're, like, "I lived it." But being, like, a purveyor of TV, like, you guys see that it's, like, such a gripping, incredible series, like, you're obsessed.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:08:18] Oh, that's so lovely.

ALLEN LEECH [00:08:20] But it's also so lovely to watch your friends' work, because there's all this stuff you weren't involved in. And then you get to watch them and you go, "Oh, that's wonderful. That's great." I tend not to watch it more than once, but I had to go back in when it came to doing this movie, I was like, and that was a really cool thing to do. I think we've all kind of done that. Yeah, especially during the pandemic, like, "What was that like, considering we have to go back?" And starting again on the first episode? Of course you hate everything you've done, but you love everything. Everything, you know.

JVN [00:08:46] Tom, you were, I mean, when you saved her from that fucking protest, that was so good—*Allen*, when you saved her from that fucking protest! Because I just, I have so many, so many questions, so because I think as a viewer, like, I always think, like, you know, cause when we shoot *Queer Eye*, like, usually when we're together, it's, like, we're all just, like, in a trailer, like, you know, 30 seconds away in case someone needs us. But I guess it's, like, if you're shooting a scene, *Edith*—, *Edith*, get it together, Jonathan. When you're shooting a scene, *Laura*, it's like, of course, maybe, like, Allen's not going to be there because, like, you're in, like, the journalist place in London. So, like, Allen's not going to be there because I mean, he's back. So it's not like they're, like, right in a trailer, like, you guys are all working at separate time.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:09:23] Well, and the Highclere stuff is separate from the Ealing, the studio stuff, that tends to be the way. So the downstairs, the servants, is all shot in a studio. They've built that kitchen. It's a set, it's very magical.

JVN [00:09:36] What? I can't! So when we go to Downton, which, you guys keep saying that word that starts with H—

ALLEN LEECH AND LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:09:41] Highclere Castle. That's the real name.

JVN [00:09:44] Highclere Castle, of course, darling! I actually knew that, I just wanted to make sure you all knew! But, so, the downstairs isn't there?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:09:49] No, no, no. Yeah. [CROSSTALK]

JVN [00:09:52] I'm so basic, I put, like, the "sick" in basic because, like, it's, like, of course, like I do TV, I should know this, but like, you guys just did such a good job of it, really. Like, it was like, right there. It's like the Golden Girls, that house isn't really the inside of that house! [CROSSTALK] It shocks me, I still, I can't, I can't wrap my head around it.

ALLEN LEECH [00:10:11] One of the most fun things to do was when you shot in Ealing. And as a family, you know, you said, "Okay, goodbye," to the servants. You have to pretend to go up the stairs. You'd literally get, like, we would all be rammed up beside each other at the top, trying to make sure that we cleared the bottom step so it looked like we'd left.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:10:27] You know, it doesn't go anywhere.

ALLEN LEECH [00:10:28] There's nowhere to go. [CROSSTALK]

JVN [00:10:29] I was actually wondering that for both of you. So, like, becoming a producer and becoming more into TV. I was always a hairdresser, but I've learned a lot in the last, like, ten years about telly. And I think that if you watch a TV show and you're aware that you're watching it, like that's the part of where it loses its magic. But I feel like Downton, what has always been its strength, is, like, when I turn on Downton, like my house stops, like I am there. I am, like, in the time, like, it's just, it's so complete. And I think as time has gone on, I've wondered, like, you're in this outfit and then, like, what about when you go to crafty and there's, like, it's 2021 or 2022, but then it's like, you look this way and it's, like, 1914 or 1929. Like, what's it like, is that, like, disorienting? Like being on set and it being, like, two different times?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:11:12] Well, there's so much, you know, camera shizznizz around that it's a constant, like, weird image. I think we've got sometimes, you know, the comfy shoes under those nice dresses, you know, the guys have hidden their iPhones in their pocket. Or have sat on it. You know, there's lots of those kind of weird glitches in the otherwise beautiful image. Do you remember there was that weird photo that got out of me and Hue—

JVN [00:11:41] Oh, yeah, I did, I wasn't going to bring it up. But you did! You said it, not me.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:11:42] Yeah, with a water bottle! If you had zoomed out a bit further, you would have seen like the lights in the, you know, the, the tape on the floor and all of the wires.

JVN [00:11:52] But that bottle got usurped by the Game of Thrones Starbucks cup. So that bottle really only had to live in infamy for, like, it was a very blip and maybe myself, like, I don't know if you guys watch Westworld, but I feel like, when I'm a super fan of something, it's, like, I become a robot and, like, I refuse to see any sort of press that, like, I'm like, "Ah, can't see it! It doesn't—ah, can't see it! I don't wanna know about it!" So I watched this Downton Abbey documentary and it was fierce because Michelle was talking about how—I was, like, "Don't call

her Lady Mary, don't call her Lady Mary." Michelle was talking about how, like, if she walked into a room and was, like, her body language wasn't right that—, was it, Julian or is there, like, another historian who's not Julian?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:12:31] Alastair!

ALLEN LEECH [00:12:31] Alastair Bruce. [CROSSTALK]

JVN [00:12:33] Alastair, yes! Oh god, that's like the perfect name for a historian. I can't stand it.

So what was that like for you, Tom? Because. Jesus Christ, *Allen*. You guys are, like, historians, like, in your own right because you have, you know, had to play these people around like all these, like, really like expert historians. So you learn a lot. Was that really as improbable as they make it seem? Like, at that time, like if a chauffeur for our family was going to like work as well, like, that really is, like, fucking scandal, right?

ALLEN LEECH [00:13:02] It was absolute scandal, yeah. And the family would have thought probably although they did try very hard, they probably would have fought incredibly, incredibly hard to make sure it didn't happen and certainly never got out that this had occurred. And the one thing that Alastair did say that did occur and we thought about this a lot, he's like, so immediately my character being an Irish socialist, you know, he would have changed and he would have tried to adapt. And I'm, like, "Eh, I don't think so." I think, and the way I ended up playing it, it was very much, like, "I can't believe you guys are all nuts, look how you live your existence." And that's what Julian really enjoyed because then he began to write to that, that Tom Branson became the eyes of the audience, anyone outside the social class and structure who has no understanding of it. Suddenly, Tom sitting there, going, "Seriously, what the fuck is this?"

JVN [00:13:47] I love that. So you guys, when you would see a script for a new season or a movie, if you, like, read something and you're, like, "Ah! Edith kind of feels like she would more do this," or "Tom feels like he would more do that." Like, producers would be open to your, like, feedback on that and incorporate it into your character?

ALLEN LEECH [00:14:02] I think it's more about how we would play it. [CROSSTALK]

JVN [00:14:05] Oh! So you can't change the lines, it's more, like, there's a difference of, like, if you were, like, with, like, Tom—ah, *Allen*! This is, like, the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. Not really, but. Allen, so what's an example of that? So you were just saying, like, "I don't know, like, I think he would have said it, like..." So the line was the same. It was just, like, how you performed the line.

ALLEN LEECH [00:14:27] How you would perform it. Yeah. So rather than say be, especially for Tom, if I had any point to show defiance rather than, you know, just carrying down to see a

lord or a lady who might be above me, the idea that he treated them, not that he's not respectful. He's respectful, but he's not reverential. So I would play it in that way rather than—, I try to treat him like an equal.

JVN [00:14:48] Ah, I love that. So then was there ever times where, like, you guys would be shooting? Like, like, like Laura, for instance, like at the wedding! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Ah! When you read that, were you just, like, "Why do we gotta do her like that?" Because that's what I said, I was, like, "Fuck me, why do we gotta do her like that?"

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:15:04] I mean, there are certain elements that I, I was like, "God, that's just so good. I'm so lucky that I get to play this, like, meaty storyline." So there was a lot of that, but I was famously, I didn't want to let Gregson go.

JVN [00:15:18] You loved Gregson, honey.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:15:21] I loved him. I was, like, "Really, guys, come on."

JVN [00:15:26] I'm also obsessed with a Zaddy. So I get it. Like, for your character, you know?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:15:30] Exactly, it felt right. So I think I was having a real moment during that time of, like, "He has to come back, he has to come back." And then Julian ended up writing that, like, they found bits of him to make it quite clear. Like, "Laura, like, let it go."

JVN [00:15:46] "Must let it go!" So would there ever be a time where, like, if you guys were in scene, like, and let's say that like Alaiater was, like, "Oh, like, it was, like, a little bit too proud or that was giving you, like, 2010 and I need it to be giving me, like, 1919." Like, would they, like, would they cut right in the middle or, like, let the scene end and then go back? Or would it be, like, either / or.

ALLEN LEECH [00:16:09] No, they would tend to let it play out because oftentimes we didn't shoot just one camera. It was multi-cam in a way that we always had, say, a master and then we might be popping off two characters' closeups or these mid shots, so we'd have to let it play out. I mean, it famously happened that Lily James didn't want to stop a scene, but they forgot to put a plate down for her, and she had soup. And so she was just, like, "I'm doing it," and she just poured soup under the table and onto to herself.

JVN [00:16:36] When was that!

ALLEN LEECH [00:16:38] That was, like, one of the first performances. Lily James came season four? [CROSSTALK] And we were, like, "What are you doing!"

JVN [00:16:45] What character is she? Because sometimes I get—

ALLEN AND LAURA [00:16:47] She plays Rose!

JVN [00:16:49] Oh my God, she was Rose! And it was her first time—

ALLEN LEECH [00:16:51] She was just, like, “I don't know what to do.”

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:16:54] What to do! And everyone's face around the table is just eyeballs looking at the table.

ALLEN LEECH [00:16:59] I would love to see those because they were, we were all looking at each other, like, “What? Why isn't she just letting people know. Oh, she's picking up the ladle.” [CROSSTALK] “Oh, she's pouring some soup on the table, and on herself.”

JVN [00:17:09] Is there any other, like, the times or like, like, any other, just, like, really funny moments from filming ever that you guys, like, still talk about, like, “Remember that time, like, you know, you fell down the stairs,” or like, someone, like, just farted really loud, right in the middle of a scene or something.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:17:24] We actually, Allen and I had to dance together. Were you going to say that one?

ALLEN LEECH [00:17:30] I was going to say that one.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:17:31] I think it was the Christmas Special, and we were just doing a very bad job at the dancing—

ALLEN LEECH [00:17:37] No, it was me. I was doing a bad job with the dancing. You were a very good dancer.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:17:42] Oh, God. It was just—

ALLEN LEECH [00:17:43] I didn't even know who was leading to the point that we started, and it was about to go. And they went on action. And I went back and so did Laura. That's how bad I was. [CROSSTALK]

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:18:57] But we had quite a lot of dialog. I was encouraging him to, I didn't know to keep searching for love or something, I can't remember, but I had a good amount of dialogue and, and I could not stop laughing. And it was really, really bad.

ALLEN LEECH [00:18:11] To the point that they stopped us laughing literally. It made no sense within the story where everyone else is just about to start dancing. And then I decided that I play it, that, “I kind of need to talk to you seriously. So we have to leave the dance floor.”

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:18:23] We could not make it a dance anymore.

ALLEN LEECH [00:18:42] So we, we used to get in a lot of trouble, me and Laura, for getting the giggles.

JVN [00:18:30] Because you just have too much fun!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:18:31] Too much fun.

JVN [00:18:32] I love that! Okay, so, wait, when you guys get ready because, like, the HMU seems really intense. Edith! I mean, Jesus Christ. *Laura*, your hair is not that dissimilar from Lady Edith's. Did they just finger wave your hair, or was that all wiggage?

ALLEN LEECH [00:18:49] Wiggage!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:18:49] Well, it was different first, different series. Yeah. In the films, it was a wig but there was a season, maybe, like, four and five when it was full marcel wave. And that was my own hair. That looked like a crisp.

JVN [00:19:02] But maybe season one was a wig because it was, like, so long?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:19:08] Yeah, yeah. So they had lots of clips in that. Yeah. My hair at the front and then pieces at the back. [CROSSTALK] And then we went into some wig worlds. But we had this amazing guy called Julio. And he was so good and he, he basically was in charge of all of the tonnage of the front of the hair. So and yeah, so, at the wedding with the veil and the throne, that was all my hair, but it was quite hot going on it, as you can imagine. A lot of heat.

JVN [00:19:40] Ah! So much heat! I've got to send you some Instant Recovery Serum, queen, Undamage, you'll love it. You'll love it so much. [CROSSTALK] So then, so, and then Allen, you're giving, like, you're giving like, uniform a lot. In this last movie, you're giving me, like, just, like, cutie pie 1929 man clothes, because you're not, like, in a uniform per say. It's a suit, you're, like, suited.

ALLEN LEECH [00:20:04] Yes. It is so much more relaxed, and the south of France, it allowed for the costumes to change and show, like, that kind of chic. All the linens that we used to start with, they started wearing them. And just just the chance for, I think, all of our characters, you can see it in the movie that their shoulders kind of dropped to suddenly in a very different environment. I mean, it was so beautiful to shoot there. It was incredible. But there was that moment where we had our Anna, Anna Robbins, our incredible costume designer, was, like, "You guys are going to be completely different from Ealing," when we cut back to the other main storyline back at the house.

JVN [00:20:36] So that is really in the south of France. When you guys got—it was giving!

ALLEN LEECH [00:20:39] That was yeah. I mean it was yeah, it was. We all got the script. There were some angry texts from people who weren't going. [CROSSTALK] They were, like, "Fuck you!"

JVN [00:20:49] Because Michelle, Michelle had to stay, and she didn't come to France. And then, oh my God, that storyline had me so fucking stressed because that's what I was going to ask earlier, Allen. Because it's like I feel, like, at the end of the first movie, like you guys probably a little there. It's like, "I'll see you in a year or two," because, like, that was, like, such a cliffhanger. We had to know what was going to happen with the dowager. You know, and then my auntie, because I was, like, obviously, I told her what happened in the second movie, like, any normal person would, you know, I got an early link. So I was, like, I had to tell her, and I was, like, "You know, the dowager..." And she was, like, "Don't fucking..." And I was, like, "Bitch, did you not see the first movie? Of course, that's what—, she said she had a terminal illness at the end, like, this... You were, like..." Yeah, but didn't, no one saw, no one saw, not Cora! I was so upset. Oh, yeah. So it was that and also the movie, the subplot, that was— didn't you love that?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:21:39] It's so great.

ALLEN LEECH [00:21:40] It's so great, it's so fun for the characters that everyone has known for so long.

JVN [00:21:46] So then the lady who plays the movie star with, like, a hardcore, like, northern accent. What's her real life name again?

ALLEN LEECH [00:21:54] Laura Haddock.

JVN [00:21:55] We love Laura Haddock.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:21:56] Oh, yeah. And she can do an American accent and she's brilliant and kind and lovely. She's gorgeous. We love her.

JVN [00:22:03] And that was, like, a cousin Cora accent she learns at the end.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:22:08] That's right. Yeah. She picks it up. She goes for, like, a little 5 minute chat with Cora and comes back with a perfect American accent.

ALLEN LEECH [00:22:14] Pitch perfect American accent.

JVN [00:22:16] I was clocking that she was going to come back with the perfect Lady Mary accent, right? That's what I was expecting. But then, but then I got, like, I got convinced that,

"Oh, she's going to America, honey, yes!" Okay, we're obsessed with her. Also, I'm just, like, obsessed with Thomas's ending. I hope they just get to, like, gay sex all through, like, the thirties, forties, fifties, and just, like, you know, just be so old and happy together. That was really cute. And also, can I just say, Allen, you were saying earlier that, like, "Now we hope that, you know, we get to come back, like, each time," but it's, like, the movie feels like we really, like, wound people's stories down. I mean, I felt complete, which is also part of the emotional ness because I was like, "Where do we go from here?" I feel, like, I mean, you can both do spin-offs, like, Lady Edith's, like, hot fucking like career into journalism, you and your new gorgeous wife, because are you going to go to you guys just to live in London? Are you, are you going to America? I know you went to America, but then—

ALLEN LEECH [00:23:11] We have our own estate now. [CROSSTALK] The wedding was actually their home.

JVN [00:23:17] Because wasn't that in the first, like, didn't you try to do American you're, like, "Wait, I don't like it," cause then you came back and you're, like, "I don't like this."

ALLEN LEECH [00:23:22] It was so funny. Yeah, it was written at the end of season five. It was, like, "He's gone, he's gone to Boston." And I feel like he got to Boston. I was like, "It's really fucking cold here. Bye!" And yeah, he was back within five minutes.

JVN [00:23:33] Yeah. I was so relieved. I did not want you to leave. I really didn't. So what was your guys's, like, dressing situation? Like? Like, let's say cameras all at ten. What time? And we'll do Allen for this, and then we're going to Edith. Jesus! Ah! Laura! What do you have to do? This happens all the time, right? Like, I'm not the only one. Like, it's, like, really annoying, and it's just like, I'm sorry. [CROSSTALK]

ALLEN LEECH [00:23:58] It's funny, you know, when people care that much, that they're that invested, that they really see you as the character. I mean, you can't ask for more really, you know.

JVN [00:24:06] But I want to see you guys as, like, 75 other characters too. So it's, like, I'm not —, like, I am, like, as a fan, I'm ready for you guys just, like, to do everything. I'm like, I'm here for it. Like, smack me in the face with your other roles. I can't, I can't wait. So but let's say for Downton and now that we know that, like, there is obviously such rich material for spinoffs as I think about it, but I'm just putting that out there for if anybody's listening. Because Julian's an expert in like the thirties, too, right?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:24:28] Yeah, yeah.

ALLEN LEECH [00:24:29] He can really write at any period that involves some kind of aristocracy.

JVN [00:24:37] But back to HMU! So, like, so Allen, it's ten. Like, the cameras are like ten. You have to get to like the new trailer at....

ALLEN LEECH [00:24:46] At 9:53. For guys, it really is, the guys really are much easier than the girls.

JVN [00:24:53] But you can't have any hair on your face. You had to, like, you had to be, like, clean ass shaven. But would you just do that at home?

ALLEN LEECH [00:24:59] No, you do that, there's a little place that you'd stand. And we all have special razors for that. But I mean, okay, so 15 minutes before and then quick blow, dry the hair, you know, a little bit of hairspray. I've got very light, fine hair. So I'm like, "You're wasting your time. We might as well do it down there because the minute a wind comes, it's, like, 'woosh!'" I had a great guy called Finn who would get us dressed and he obviously is very specific about, you know, your attire, and you make sure you're only taken down enough that when you do—, you know, it's like a child, getting a child dress because you think you look lovely. And then by the time you get to set, they're, like, "How the fuck have you done that? What have you done, where did you go?"

JVN [00:25:32] Yeah, cause, like, you can't sit down and those suits, right, cause you'll get all these wrinkles and then if you have, like, a shot from behind you...

ALLEN LEECH [00:25:38] Yeah, the starched shirts are the worst because as you do those dinner scenes, the starch goes out of them and then, like, they start to malform. And so you have to you really can't see you're sitting there like that, like basically moving around like a robot for, for the whole day.

JVN [00:25:51] Okay. And then we have to go back to dinner later. I just, like, wrote that down, so it's, like, a whole other thing I learned from that documentary. But, Laura, so you: and obviously it's probably different because it's, like, if you have like an in your bedroom scene, maybe that's different from like a dinner scene, but let's say it's, like, dinner and, like, you know, we think that like, you know, Anna's gotta come up there and, like, get Mary ready and then you ready because you guys are, like, sharing the scene. So, like, how long would it take you to shoot a dinner scene? Like to get in HMU.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:26:18] Maybe two and a half hours? Yeah, and then, but they would also have to stagger it because the cast is so enormous. So, and we might have a team of four or five key makeup artists, and so they would start you and then you would maybe go with the after 2 hours in the chair, maybe go and maybe have some breakfast, get dressed or, like, half dressed. And then, my makeup artists Elaine would start Maggie, and then I would come back and she'd do the last half an hour and then and then throughout the day, if and particularly if you're not if you're in a looser, you know, wave, then they don't want it to drop. So then it's, like, "We need to put another ruler in. We need to see you with a tong." All of that.

JVN [00:27:04] Then that also is making me think, like, you know, like, as fans we hear about, like, not on Downton Abbey, but, like, any time someone is like a method actor. Was there ever anyone who was just, like, "Don't fucking call me Laura, like, I'm Lady fucking Edith until 6:00 tonight. Do not fucking, like," like, did anyone, and you have to tell me who, but, like, did anyone have that approach to their character?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:27:28] I don't think so!

ALLEN LEECH [00:27:28] No, not really. And there was never even the kind of sense of, like, as you say, like, someone acting out within the cast, mainly because there's no ego from the top. And if there's no ego at the top with Maggie, no one's got a chance to have an ego further down. You know, so and, everyone, and the way she would even just interact with us in between takes, we all just sit around and Laura used to show her great cat memes.

JVN [00:27:50] Cause she's just, like, really cool and chill, Maggie Fucking Smith is?

LAURA CARMICHAEL AND ALLEN LEECH [00:27:54] Yeah, it is. Yeah.

JVN [00:27:55] I think I just now realized, I think I just realized that I'm only, like, two degrees of separation away from her. Like, I know people that talk to her and, like, stood next to her. Fucking Maggie Fucking Smith.

ALLEN LEECH [00:28:11] And if we had been doing this while we were filming, we would be talking about you tomorrow.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:28:16] Absolutely, yeah.

JVN [00:28:18] Okay. Can I just say, season three. I can't remember if it's, like, I think it's after, I think it's after Matthew, or it could be after Sybil, but it's, like, when she walks into the high, that castle, and it's just like all she has to do is walk a certain way. Like, she didn't have a line. Remember? It's, just, like, that wide shot and she's, like, walking. I don't think I've ever cried harder in my life, including when I got HIV and my dad died in our living room. Like, I feel like I like that. Like, I was *bereft*. Like, like when you guys watched that scene, did you cry? Like, you had to a little, right?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:28:51] Oh, my God.

ALLEN LEECH [00:28:52] How do you after the back of your head and, like, better. And just her physicality of how she took on the matriarch again, ugh, just so beautiful.

JVN [00:29:02] Ah, the cane! Like, "Not this again," like, I got to go be the strong one. So were you guys on set when that happened? No, she was just doing that by herself. Probably.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:29:10] I don't remember that day, yeah.

JVN [00:29:12] Can you guys ever like if you're there earlier, something like, is there like monitors where you can, like, watch someone else's scene?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:29:17] Yeah. And for the Highclere stuff, we would be around for a lot of it. And, you know, it's TVs so you are kind of shooting fast. You would be around for some of those moments. But I don't remember being there that day, but there's there's been plenty of times where we've gone, "Do you want to come to see Maggie do that scene?"

JVN [00:29:38] So, I'm sorry I'm bouncing all over the place. I've never, like, done, like, a less structured interview. I just, like, literally have too much, like, endorphin. Like, I'm so high on my fan-girlness, that, like, I can't even stand it. So back to the movie, her—, the final scene. You guys were all there, you were both there for the final scene. [CROSSTALK] When she's talking to the Earl of Grantham and he's, like, you know, "You've always been, like, more clever than me." And she's, like, "That's true." Like, that last quip is so funny. Like, I laughed because I was so sad and like that maybe lol. And then when her maid wouldn't stop crying, what, her, like—

ALLEN LEECH [00:30:10] Denker.

JVN [00:30:11] Yeah yeah yeah yeah! Denker! "I can't even hear myself dying again." Like, I just, I really wanted to, like, stand up in my living room and slow clap the writers because I feel like that moment was so sad. Like, you needed that moment of, like, you just needed that moment in her character. Just like she was like a quippy, funny queen. So I just love that they, that, that's how she got to go where you did, you guys. You felt that in that scene. I cried.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:30:33] Yeah. We had to—

ALLEN LEECH [00:30:34] Oh, yeah. It was, it was very emotional.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:30:37] And in the rehearsal, I felt like we couldn't really look at each other. We knew that it was just going to be a big crier, like, I'd just, with Michelle, go, "Okay, well, I can't really look you in the eye, cause we've got a while to shoot the scene, and I'm just going to be—." And it was the same with Sybil. You know, there's always those scenes that you go, "I think if anything, I have to just concentrate. I'm not going too far into it" because it feels so personal in that moment. And yeah, it was an amazing day that, that scene.

ALLEN LEECH [00:31:05] Yeah.

JVN [00:31:06] Allen, what was like for you, that scene?

ALLEN LEECH [00:31:08] The same, I think sometimes you have to be careful that you the, I suppose the gravitas of what was happening in relation to this character that everyone, even us cast members have absolutely loved and watched. And, and we've had the experience of doing it directly there. So you're also saying goodbye to a cast mate saying, "Everyone else has to go on." So that was massive for, for, for me as well. And you're also then just trying to be in the scene and be there. But as you said, the way he wrote it, he does a brilliant thing of the British kind of finding humor in even the great the the darkest of times, which is that the way that he writes the British way, it works so well, as you said, that it has to be a quip of someone else to deflect. And then you turn around and she's gone.

JVN [00:31:53] Okay, two more things for you, Allen, from the movie, and there will probably be more, knowing myself. One, this isn't really a question. I loved your swimsuit. Like, that swimsuit was so cute with your little hat and that little top. My first thought was, like, "Eew, I hate that in the 1929s, like, we didn't do full topless swimsuits." Like, I think that's what the gay audience will probably say, which is fine. But then I was like, "So fashionable, so cute." I love it anyway. So just offering that, love the look, but take it after we find out because what's your, what's your new wife's character's name?

ALLEN LEECH [00:32:23] Lucy.

JVN [00:32:24] Lucy, of course. And so when we find out that Lucy is pregnant, I was kind of, like, "I would have been really fucking nervous if I was you," because you're like, "Yay, like, we're having a baby!" I was like, "Um, I don't even remember the last time your wife had a baby. Like, just, like, it was, like, you know," I just was like. And I was just thinking about, like, it's already nerve wracking, like, now having a baby, which is, like, precisely why I don't have one. But back then, it was, like, really fucking dicey in the streets, having babies.

ALLEN LEECH [00:32:54] Yeah. It seriously was. I mean, and the way that babies were born, I mean, that idea that it was the man stands downstairs, "Get me some hot water and some towels and let's see what happens." Terrifying. [CROSSTALK]

JVN [00:33:06] My family has a bed in this cabin in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan that my great grandmother was born on. And I remember, like, I was like it was like a thing, like, "You get to sleep in the bed!" And I'm, like, "Why didn't you think that was cool?" Like, fucking, like after birth and, like, umbilical cords and stuff all over this, like, bed, you know? It's, like, gross! I'm just trying to think if I dive back in my questions or ask the questions, I'm, like, writing down furiously. Okay, also from the documentary, I learned that like remember how in your dinner scenes, like we're saying how, like, Cora's, took the matriarch of the times she would have, like turned this way in that everyone talks to the person on their right for like the little bit. And then she turns this way and they talk to that way. And then it's like a free for all. And you can, like, talk across the table. That's true, right?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:33:46] That's true. Yeah.

ALLEN LEECH [00:33:47] Yes. Yeah. It's the person of the highest rank at the table. A female of the highest rank gets to decide who speaks or the head of the household.

JVN [00:33:56] So if Cora had been on vacation and Mary had been sick, you would have gotten to do it, Lady Edith?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:34:04] Oh my god, that's a good point. I don't know. I guess so. I never got that hot seat.

ALLEN LEECH [00:34:08] Or if we had all gone to your house.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:34:10] Yes, I supposed at my house. Yeah.

JVN [00:34:12] But your house was Downton.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:34:14] So now. But now she's got like now she's--

ALLEN LEECH [00:34:17] She's a marchioness.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:34:18] Yes, a marchioness.

JVN [00:34:19] But in one through five. Or six. Yeah.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:34:20] I guess then maybe I would have got that seat if they were out of town.

JVN [00:34:24] When did you get your own house?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:34:25] When I marry Bertie, she gets, like, *the* palace, she, like, outranked them all by the end of the season.

JVN [00:34:31] Oh yeah! Because that's in the first movie!

ALLEN LEECH [00:34:33] She becomes the most powerful.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:34:34] Oh that's the end of the last season.

ALLEN LEECH [00:34:36] End of season six. [CROSSTALK]

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:34:40] Because there's like, a special, because we finish with, they're, like, "What's going to happen?" and then there's an extra special where Bertie and Edith get back together.

JVN [00:38:49] But that was the genius part because then Lady Mary was, like, "What the fuck, how did she just, like, what?" Like, she just got whiplash. Yeah, that was amazing. What was it like when you got to read that or you, like, "Finally!"

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:35:00] That was really cool. We'd gone to that location in the previous season and the locations guy Sparky and Donald, the production designer, they were saying to me, like, "So, do you like the house, do you like it?" And I was, like, "Yeah, it's, like, an amazing castle. It's brilliant." And they're, like, "Yeah, yeah, it's good that you like it," and they sort of, like, they knew the storyline was going to be that I was going to end up getting it, and that she was going to get this sort of fairytale ending. So I had a little hint, but I mean, I never saw it coming. And I think Julian just kept on piling on the hardships for Edith knowing she's going to get this really good, happy ending. And that was so cool. I liked it.

JVN [00:35:40] You deserved that! And can I also just say it's interesting to me that my brain, like, did that because we also did this episode of Getting Curious of misinformation and we learned from this, like, misinformation expert that the way that your brain sees something the first time, it will always want to remember it that way. And then you were just saying, like, you know, it's, like, you had, like, it was, it was, like, hardship after hardship after hardship. So, like, when I think back about it, I think about that before I think that you have like this ultimate fairytale ending, which is so cool. And then it's like in the movie you're just kind of, like, I just I think my brain just my little queer brain just spaced because, like, she's a fucking journalist now and she's nailing it.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:36:13] Mmmhm, that's so cool.

JVN [00:36:16] So, okay, when you guys got the script for the last movie, I was kind of hoping, slash wondering, "Is there gonna be a dream sequence?" You know, with baby Sybil and baby Matthew? No such luck. There is no dream sequence. But wouldn't that have been kind of cute? If, like, Sybil had come in your room and, like, "It's okay, like, girl, just just diddle, like, fuck her." And, like, I love it. Like, "The family's so obsessed and, like, I loved it. The family loves you, too, so much. Like, yay!"

ALLEN LEECH [00:36:50] Yeah. I would have been up for that. Well, like, if one of the ghosts came through, like, at one of the big ballroom scenes. Yeah, wouldn't that be good?

JVN [00:36:57] Agents and actors alike, if everyone could have gotten together. I would have lived for it. I would have been like, it's just sort of been fierce. Yeah. So just that was not even a question. I just had been writing something that I wanted to, like, say *at you*.

ALLEN LEECH [00:37:11] What about the musical? We've always thought there should be a Downton Abbey musical with like the titles of the songs. Edith has to sing "Jilted at the Altar." Which is a little upbeat number [SINGING] because she was jilted at the altar, jilted at the altar.

JVN [00:37:25] Yes! Yes! It must happen! Okay, so now we have 12 minutes left. I'm going back to my questions because I have more. Jesus Christ loves us. Okay, so it starts in '12. Ends in '29. And with Alastair's expertise, can you each, and I'll start with who wants to go first before I ask the question, you guys tell me.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:37:43] You go, Allen.

JVN [00:37:45] Allen's going first. You're on the hotseat. How did your carriage and approach to playing time have to change because of the years? So, like, how did he change from, like, 1912 to 1929 in terms of, like, the eras?

ALLEN LEECH [00:37:59] It's a really great question and I think the way the character, certainly Tom, had to adapt wasn't just about the time frame, but also the circumstance. I mean, my character probably went on probably the greatest journey of how to do to have to, you know, adapt within each situation, going from working for the household to suddenly the household working for him when he became estate manager and trying to traverse all of the, you know, difficulties that that brought was probably one of the most fun things that I've got to do. And again, I think that was not just because of the time period, but also my character was one of the ones that was probably the most advanced in his thinking, along with Edith. And he was, like, "We've got to move on to a modern world. We've got to, we've got to change our thinking." And I love that he gave both—Julian Fellowes, the writer—he gave both myself and Laura the opportunity to be those kind of progressive characters, especially in the face when everyone else is, like, "Well, we're getting hitched." We're like, "Well, you know what? Maybe that's not the be all and end all, you know?"

JVN [00:38:58] Yeah, you're right. Your characters are progressive as fuck. I love that!

ALLEN LEECH [00:39:04] And I think probably for him, it's one journey because he's doing a social class thing whereas segue into you, Larry. The fact that for, for a woman to take on what she did was absolutely revolutionary at that time.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:39:17] Yeah.

JVN [00:39:18] I just want to sit with you for 2 seconds, Allen. I have one more follow up on that and I'm jumping right back into you, Laura, because I need this. We're going on the same journey. Was there anything that, like, Alastair would have said to you that was like, actually, "That was great, Tom. We loved it. But like, actually, that's, like, that phraseology or, like, that body movement would have been more like in 1919. But we're, like, you know, 1924 now it's

that season four or whatever." Like, "Yeah, can you, like, not say, 'Aw shucks,' or whatever the British version of that is." You know what I'm saying?

ALLEN LEECH [00:39:43] Yes, absolutely. And I was the worst for that. I mean, he sewed up the pockets of my pants because I kept putting my hands in my pockets because no one put their hands in their pockets at the time. And I was, like, "Well, why the fuck are they here?"

JVN [00:39:55] [CROSSTALK] Good point! "We're getting rid of them."

ALLEN LEECH [00:39:58] But he did, he sewed them up, and then as we went into the later seasons, you're actually allowed to put your hands in your pocket, it became fashionable around the late twenties to do so. It was so, so freeing within the movie, this movie as well in the south of France, I was, I was doing a lot of pocket action.

JVN [00:40:12] That's totally what I wanted to go for. Thank you for taking us there. Okay, Laura, so it's 1912 for you. I feel like definitely in the hair, it's very obvious. Like, you know, you have like it's more like Victorian, like, those big ass low buns in season one. Then we get more like finger wavy, Marcel-y, it gets more, like, flapper-ish as time goes on, which I have to say really appreciate that. That was so good. I actually just got chills in my triceps just thinking about how good the hair was. So what was that like for you? Like in body language and character, especially with like because like into the Downton set, like you're, you know, you have to be this, like, like, chin up, you know, like super proper. But then as you start going into London and almost living this kind of, like, double life-adjacent, as double life as you can get in the 1920s, honey. Actually, you fully doubled lived. That was, like, full on double life as I think about it. That's, like, you had another kid. It was like a whole thing. Did your character's body language change, like, did you think of it differently based on where you were?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:41:04] Yeah, I think I did. I think to begin with, Edith probably was one of the more traditional characters. I think she thought she was going to have a life very much like Violet's. You know, she was just going to get married, live in a big house, and do that thing. But it wasn't that way for her. And I think the biggest thing for all of the characters, but especially the women was, was living through the war. And, you know, they got to do some stuff. They got jobs. She, like, worked in the farm. She learned to drive a tractor. And all of that really changed her feelings about herself and what she thought her life could be. And then, yeah, after she was jilted, women who were married were allowed to vote, but single women under 30 weren't allowed to vote. And that's when she wrote the letter to the Times. And it sparked off this interest with this journalist. And that changed her life. And yeah, she then got to go to London and go to all these sexy parties and she really transformed. But I loved how it really felt like an emotional journey about her finding self-worth and finding something for herself. And that just changed her into this more modern character. And then, yeah, she got to have fun with the fashion that changed.

JVN [00:42:18] The fashion was so good, but was Alastair ever, like, you know, like, in season six or the special or, like, first movie or two, like, "You're kind of like a bad bitch now, like, defying everybody," because, like, I feel like I saw you, like, your character becomes more confident.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:42:31] Yeah, I think that's right. There was some stuff I remember, like, kicking off her shoes. There was a scene with Bertie where we decided to play it, like, on the sofa. And, and I think Alastair was kind of twitching at that point. He was like, "Ah ah ah ah!" [CROSSTALK] "That's not right, that's not right, that's not right." But we were, like, "We're going to do it. We're going to say it like that." So sometimes there was a bit of push back because then obviously there's like the proper way of doing things of the time, and particularly for these characters, you know, these aristocrats, they really cared about the rules. So it definitely became, like, "No, this is a character choice that they're ignoring them," and that, that should feel, as you say, like it should feel like a break from the norm for them.

JVN [00:43:17] Because there had to be people back then that would, like, bend it. I'm sure that did happen. So we have, like, 6 minutes left. I'm going to go onto a rapid fire. But before I do that, it just, it came back to me. Season two: the Anastasia male cousin. I was feeling some kind of way for you on that. Like, obviously, like, we, like, in real life, like, we didn't think he was the one.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:43:39] Yeah, no. Really, no.

JVN [00:43:41] Like, I was—, talk about hardships!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:43:43] Totally. It was a hard one.

JVN [00:43:46] Why did they make you fall in love with him! Or, like, have a crush on him!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:43:50] She really, just. I felt like these early, like, love interests for Edith were really, like, she was really trying, she was really trying.

JVN [00:44:01] Really! She was really like even in 2014 and like, I was still, like, struggling with drug addiction then, I was, like, going through it, and even, like, in my meth fog. I was, like, "Why are they doing Lady Edith like this? Like this Anastasia..." And it's, like, I just, I just think that you actressed me right through that, like, you're not making you, you're like some type or that like you the choice. Wow. Okay, so, so there's that. Oh, then I also just have to say before lighting round, is it true that like I read that like Tom Barrow, Barrow, of course, was he really was only supposed to do like a three little storyline arc in the beginning, but then he just, like, ended up staying forever.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:44:34] Tom Branson. That was Tom.

JVN [00:44:37] Oh, that was you?!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:44:38] It's confusing that there's a Tom and a Thomas.

JVN [00:44:41] Yeah, but I feel like these queer journalists got confused because I feel like in like Out Magazine and like Instinct, like instinct and stuff, there's these like articles and like the earlier that were saying, like it was like Thomas was like, yeah, Thomas was like supposed to like, oh, that. But that was you. You charmed them.

ALLEN LEECH [00:44:56] It was Tom Branson. Yeah. Was only supposed to stick around for a little while and it was, I suppose, Julian just like the idea of number one, him being, you know, out of the, you know, social order and then also being Irish, added another element to it, and a socialist and a bit of a, a rebel. Yeah.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:45:13] And a hottie.

JVN [00:45:14] Such a hottie. It's not your fault. It's not your fault. It's okay. Rapid fire questions for the last 4 minutes about that. I'm going to start with—, we're going to go to Laura first on this. And you could star in another period drama. When would it take place.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:45:26] Oh! Maybe the fifties.

JVN [00:45:30] Okay, Allen. Same question.

ALLEN LEECH [00:45:32] Oh, I'd love to go further back. 1800s.

JVN [00:45:36] Ah, okay. If you time traveled to 1920s England, how would you spend a day? Laura!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:45:12] And, you know, in my newspaper office, I'm going to channel Edith and just live, like, that glamorous journalist life.

JVN [00:45:48] Ah! Allen?

ALLEN LEECH [00:45:50] I'm hitting the Ritz. I'm going to try and duck in and see the queen or the king at the time. You know, I'm going to try and do all this stuff and pretend that I'm so upper class that I can just walk into places in my top hat.

JVN [00:46:03] I would, not that the question was for me because I would go have like all the 1920s gay sex I could have, especially because it's, like, pre-HIV/AIDS. I would just, like, "Come in me," like, I just—, not to be, like, you know, but I just like that, you know, I'm probably not. I guess you could get syphilis. You could get syphilis. [CROSSTALK] But it's only a day. And then when you come back to present time, you can take an antibiotic. So you could

do, like, just. And so that's what I would do. If you hosted a Downton-themed dinner party, what would you serve? Laura!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:46:29] A Downton-themed dinner party? Loads of champagne, and then probably some sort of weird meat jelly. That's what they have. Everything in aspic. Really weird, a bit gross.

JVN [00:45:42] Allen?

ALLEN LEECH [00:46:43] Oh, it's so true. I would do what we-, I would do a Downton filming day theme and I would make chicken instead of fish, but call it fish. And then I would make everything that looked sour be much more sour cause it's been sitting on a plate for 12 hours.

JVN [00:46:57] Okay. Actually breaking this lightning round for just the second question. But it has to be fast, you guys. Only a few minutes left. You know how in, like, Golden Girls, like, the cheesecake was, like, mashed potatoes. They never eat it, like, it comes close, they never. So, like, when you guys were in those dinner scenes, like, you had to eat the food and what actually sitting there for, like, 50,000 years?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:47:12] Yeah.

ALLEN LEECH [00:47:13] Yeah, yeah. They would change it out all the time, with, the only thing that was different was when we were set in France on this movie, I stupidly agreed that I would de-shell the lobster that had been there for two days in, like, a hundred degree heat.

JVN [00:47:25] Oh, I bet that smelled nice.

ALLEN LEECH [00:47:27] His entrails on my face, dripping down the-

JVN [00:47:29] The green part?

ALLEN LEECH [00:47:30] We just had a moment. Yeah.

JVN [00:47:32] Okay. Back to the, back to the rapid. If you could keep anything from this movie, like a set piece from the movie, what would it be?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:47:40] My South of France wardrobe. Like all of it. It's really great, loved it.

JVN [00:47:45] You never get to? They never let you keep one thing?

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:47:47] Not one thing.

JVN [00:47:48] What the fuck!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:47:49] I know.

JVN [00:47:50] I would have my agents make a call, honey. If that's not, you need one that you deserve one dress. How-, you deserve that! Yeah. Allen?

ALLEN LEECH [00:47:58] I'm going to go with the same. I have to go for that, that linen, linen, that double breasted suit. But then for you, I would get the swimsuit and mail it to you.

JVN [00:48:06] I actually want the chandelier. I want, like, that big ass fucking chandelier that was in that south of France house. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm going for something a little bit pricier. Okay. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. And also, do you guys watch The Gilded Age? Have you guys seen the Gilded Age yet? Both of you.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:48:23] I haven't done it yet! I haven't done it yet!

ALLEN LEECH [00:48:25] I haven't seen it.

JVN [00:48:26] Because I have. Because I get it. It's like, you know, it's like it would be like if someone was, like, "Have you seen Queer Eye Germany?" Like, "No, I haven't fucking seen that!" But here's the thing, it's so fucking good. And I really want, like, a young Maggie Smith character. There needs to be because it's in 1885 in New York. So I feel like Maggie would have been like 40 and not because she was poor. We know. Let's think like that. If she was, like, 85 and 1912, I'm like, I should have only been like 50. That's hot. I believe Maggie Smith in her fifties in New York City, like I could.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:48:56] Or could it be the Shirley MacLaine!

ALLEN LEECH [00:48:58] Hang on. What about Shirley MacLaine? [CROSSTALK]

JVN [00:49:01] Even better! When would the dowager have had time to make it all the way to America when she was in Russia having that, like, hot fling. Yeah, it totally has to be Shirley MacLaine. You're so lucky. And baby Cora! Baby Cora was probably like, right across the street, like. [CROSSTALK] You guys! Okay, last question: What's next for you, Laura? What's next for you, Allen? We'll go to Laura first.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:49:24] Oh, my God. I really I'm no idea. At the moment, it's all exciting. Ah!

JVN [00:49:30] You're getting a box of JVN Hair stuff. That's coming!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:49:32] I love you for that! That's so exciting. Yeah, I don't know. I'm just on another series of *The Secret He Keeps*, which this Australian thriller thing. So that's coming up soon. So yeah. Talking about that next for a bit.

JVN [00:49:45] I love a thriller! We must watch.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:49:47] Yeah, she's, it's a completely different world. It's great fun. She's that kind of baby-stealing psycho. It's great fun.

JVN [00:49:55] I just got this VPN. That's how I get, like, my figure skating, like, that is not on in America. I'm but I bet I can smuggle it. I think I can watch it [CROSSTALK] I'll make it think that I'm in Sydney and then I can go. Oh my God, I can't wait. Allen, what's next for you?

ALLEN LEECH [00:50:11] I've got a movie coming out. What I did with J.K. Simmons called *You Can't Run Forever*. And then I had to do a movie just up in Canada, another thriller. And that was very cold. And that's coming out next year.

JVN [00:50:21] You guys are both giving, like, us thriller. You're, like, "Honey, look at our versatility." Ah! I'm obsessed with that for you guys. Can I just say, this is, like, medicine for my soul. I have never felt better in my life. I, this is, like, the most fun interview I've ever had in, like, three, 275 interviews I like. I've never lived, like, a better life than I have for the last, like, 56 minutes. [CROSSTALK]

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:50:43] You don't even know! I've been so excited. It's been the thing I've been looking forward to the most about this whole press tour and talking to you.

JVN [00:50:51] Really?!

ALLEN LEECH [00:50:52] I can't deny you're magnificent. You're so fantastic. We're mega fans of you!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:50:54] I love you so much, you don't even know. I'm sweating with excitement and it's just a total dream.

JVN [00:51:02] Oh, my God. Not also part of the movie I love. Before we go. When you got to see Daisy and Mrs. Patmore and—

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:51:08] Oh, Mrs. Hughes.

JVN [00:51:10] Oh, Mrs. Hughes. Yeah. Mrs. Hughes, of course, seeing Mrs. Hughes and Mrs. Patmore in their full on extra outfits!

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:51:16] Oh they're so good! So much fun.

ALLEN LEECH [00:51:18] Boobage! Boobage! Those corsets!

JVN [00:51:22] You know what I thought they finally did a really good job? But I have to give them credit before we end. And I thought they did such a good job because it's like I like when they did that, I was, like, "Oh, I wonder if they're going to, like, look, like, too much the part." But they did a really good job of like playing the characters. Like they were so excited to be like they didn't look, like, comfortable, and you know what I mean? Like, they just looked and I thought that was, like, so endearing and sweet. Like, I just I just the movie is so good. I, like, I haven't sung its praises enough. You guys, Downton fans. It's so good. And we should put a disclaimer in this for people to listen to it after they watched it. But, like, God, it's so good. You guys just did such a good job and you're just are such talented actors and so excited to watch the other stories that you tell, and thank you for pouring your hearts into this work. It's just it's so amazing. And this interview just gave me my whole fucking life. So thank you so much. Thank you so much.

LAURA CARMICHAEL [00:52:06] We love *you* so much!

ALLEN LEECH [00:52:07] Oh, thank you so much.

JVN [00:52:12] You've been listening to Getting Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness, our guests this week with Allen Leech and Laura Carmichael of Downton Abbey. Downton Abbey: A New Era is out across the US. You'll find links to their work in the episode description of whatever you're listening to the show on. Our theme music is Freak by QUIÑ. Thank you so much to her for letting us use it. If you enjoyed our show, please introduce a friend and tell them how to subscribe. Podcasts thrive when you tell your friends, honey! You can follow us on Instagram and Twitter @CuriousWithJVN. Our socials are run and curated by Middle Seat Digital. Our editor is Andrew Carson. Getting Curious is produced by me, Erica Getto, and Zahra Crim.