

Sam Baines: [00:00:00] Sounds like you're peeing

(laughter)

Kerry Howard: are you in a box of wine for the afternoon?

Sam Baines: Just keep the box of wine going

Helen Thorn: Just go. Just a little top up.

Kerry Howard: I love it. Oh, it's a top up from your morning wine.

Sam Baines: We're absolutely keeping that as the start of the episode.

Welcome to the Divorce Social Christmas episode. And I am joined by lovely guests, Helen Thorn and Kerry Howard. Helen you heard there, pouring out some wine from her box of wine. How, how you getting on with that Helen?

Helen Thorn: I thought, well, in the Christmas spirit, you know, it's good to start drinking at lunchtime. So yeah, I thought I'd just have a little bit of red wine while we talk about Christmas and divorce and things. There's no rules now. It's in December. Is there there's no alcohol rules?

Sam Baines: Absolutely none

Kerry Howard: You can have it in your [00:01:00] cereal.

Sam Baines: And Kerry you are wearing a stunning little reindeer, headpiece, also red lipstick, very Christmasy. How were you feeling?

Kerry Howard: You've given me very sparkly ones - I'm feeling very festive. It's good. I'm kind of like nervous and festive and a little bit like, Ooh, cause I've dropped my kids off at school today and then I, because I have to 50, 50 holidays. So I won't see them until 6:00 PM. Christmas Eve. So it's a big, like, Ooh, what do we do now?

Sam Baines: How does that feel then? So is this the first Christmas that you're doing this arrangement?

Kerry Howard: Yes, yes. Cause last year I had them leading up to Christmas and I only had them Christmas Eve, but what I did was I did Christmas day,

Christmas Eve and it was bloody brilliant. So I didn't feel like I missed out on anything. And I quite, I really enjoy the week before Christmas. Like, it feels really fun and the kids are like really like anxious about Christmas. Doing it the other way. It's just, we have to vice versa miss the first time. And it just feels [00:02:00] weird because I'm like, I don't know what to do and I've canceled everything. Cause I was going to see loads of people in London. I was going to come to you and have just get absolutely fucked basically. And I can't do that now. Really annoying

Sam Baines: Helen. What's your childcare arrangement? Cause I'm with two lovely divorced mums and I'm a divorced singleton so I've just got a dog and a cat and they're mine. And so I'm just having a nice time with the dog and the cat, but Helen, what's going on with your arrangement over christmas?

Helen Thorn: Well, I had them from now until Christmas day and then they're going to go with their dad, uh, from Christmas day to new year's Eve. So we're a bit the same we do one week of in the holidays - is the arrangement. And during the school week, they're with me five days a week in two days with him. And so last year I quite enjoyed having that week alone because, oh, I was writing my book, so I had to get that done. But also I just had all the Christmas presents out on the table and did it very gradually, [00:03:00] very easily. And so it didn't feel like that sort of frantic omg it's 11:00 PM on Christmas Eve and I've got actually christmas admin

Kerry Howard: Yes - can't do it in front of them

Helen Thorn: Exactly. So, so, so I really liked that week and I had two, one night stands last time up with two different men and I've had a lovely, lovely Christmas shag

Kerry Howard: in between wrapping.

Helen Thorn: Yes, I was unwrapping myself.

Kerry Howard: Do you have orgasms though?

Helen Thorn: Oh, there was with the Portuguese one. Oh, he was, he was marvelous. He came over at two o'clock and we had some mulled wine and then had a couple of most excellent shags. And then he left at six. It was very good. And then I got back to writing my book. Yeah, it was very good. Um, so I wouldn't mind doing that again, but I'll maybe do that after Christmas. So yeah,

I, I hopefully we'll, um, we'll get some in, in the following week in my, in my shag window. Yes.

Kerry Howard: In your shag window. And do you always sort of like give it a three hour window like, your time starts now. Go!

Helen Thorn: Busy woman. I'm a busy woman Fernando. Yes. Come on.

Sam Baines: I'm imagining a klaxon goes off,

Helen Thorn: Like [00:04:00] a countdown clock!

Sam Baines: Well, this, I I'm loving the sound of mum's sex because with me there's just an, it can go on for hours. And sometimes I'm like, oh get out. Oh, I'm done now. So I'm liking this sort of, um, shag window. I think that's the top Christmas tip.

Helen Thorn: And also you're very direct because you like. Look, I've been gagging for it for about five days. Come on, get on with it. You know, I'm not, I don't want any chit chit chat. I just come on couple of glasses of wine and get your knickers off. Thanks.

Kerry Howard: I don't want to know about when your mum died. I don't want to know that. Just shag me. What happened once the first date.

Oh, really?

You know, it's not chat, it's not first aid chat. That's a, you know, date three. Maybe we'll get deep and meaningful, but not the first.

Helen Thorn: I don't want feelings. No!

Sam Baines: This is interesting because I saw an article about talking about your ex on a first date and loads of people replied and were like [00:05:00] on Twitter. Oh, my God, that's awful. I'd never talk about my ex on my first date, but then I host the Divorce Social, and quite often, you know, the person I go on a date with will know a little bit about me, so they'll know I do that. So I sort of feel like I have to talk about my ex because of my job. Do you think it's different when you've been married, talking about your ex? I quite like it. I like hearing about their ex?

Helen Thorn: Um, cause I wrote the book ' Get divorced, be happy', which is about how I was and, and, you know, and I'm easily Google-able, which I don't, you know, I don't really like it, but it is what it is. And I also think if they come on a date and they've seen what I looked like on the internet and what I do, and they still want to give me a good Roger, then I think they were kind of okay kind of person that they're comfortable with feminism, strong women, funny women, you know, Booby curvy ladies, confident Australian ladies, you know, they're already halfway there. So I kind of think, cause I used to really hide who I was and I just say, um, my name is H [00:06:00] and I'm a writer even saying, I mean, comedy they'll go, but what have you done? I've never heard of that.

Kerry Howard: Oh, it's awful it's awful. And you just want to talk about stuff that, and they often say, well, I don't watch TV, but don't fucking ask about my fucking CV then don't talk about it. Do you like potatoes? Let's keep it basic.

Helen Thorn: Yeah. I like sushi. I'm a Scorpio. Let's go. You know.

Sam Baines: This is, I mean, we're going to talk about Christmas at some point, but I just feel like these are essential dating tips for, um, dating someone a little bit in the public eye. And I have to tell you, I mentioned this in my Roundup episode, but I was asked on a date by someone who listens to this podcast ! I know. So Helen, you were talking about people have seen you online and all the things that you do and they still want to date you. I was like, wow. Someone has heard all of my divorce crap and is like, yeah, that's sexy. I want to get involved in that.

Kerry Howard: Be careful. Be [00:07:00] careful. That's all I'm saying. Well, they know too much about you. They got ammunition. Just go lightly, go lightly there.

Sam Baines: I like this. This is like the angel and the devil on my shoulder. Helen. What do you think?

Helen Thorn: Yeah, I've had once when I met Matt Shugar on Tinder and he said, oh, I've listened to all this Scummy Mummy podcasts. It's like, how's your daughter. she's just been in hospital recently. And I was like, no, no. And also I liked the flirting and the intrigue when you first meet someone as well. And you control what information that you give them. So I think, um, yeah, I don't want, I don't want to, yeah I don't want people to know too much cause I like, I like finding out about them in another way. Like I try not to google um, you know, you want to know that they have don't have like a criminal record or, and they are who they

say they are, but, um, yeah, I, I like phoning them before I meet them, like talking to them on the phone. I think having hearing their voices is a really good thing beforehand,

Kerry Howard: You're so brave, you're so good. Like I, I go on Tinder or hinge and I start [00:08:00] chatting and then I delete the app. I get to a point where it's like, it's getting near to them, maybe asking me out, but then they haven't fucking done it. And then I just, I've just freak out and I just ghost I'm a chronic ghoster and I can't stop that's why I ain't got no cock.

Sam Baines: I think I'm a bit forward on apps. I would much rather just meet the person than do all the chit chat because sometimes the chit chats great and you're like really excited to meet them and then it doesn't go well. And sometimes the chit chat is awful, but they're great in real life. So I'm always just like, Hey, we're matched. Shall we go for a drink?

Helen Thorn: Yeah. And I, I would probably be more like more like that if I didn't only have one or two nights a week. So now, because my time is so limited. Now I want to really make sure that this person is who they say they are and actually worth my time.

Kerry Howard: Yes. Cause it, your time is so precious. I get resentful of like, why am I giving a stranger my Saturday? Like I only get a Saturday [00:09:00] every other weekend. And then maybe I want to see my friends that I haven't seen for like two months. And I get all those kinds of emotions and conflictions, and then I don't do anything.

Sam Baines: Well, I once rung my sister after a date. And I said, I put lipstick on for this that's how bad it was I was annoyed that I've wasted. I didn't even shave, but I'd put lipstick on and I'd wasted some of my nice lipstick. And Helen, you mentioned, you want to find out that someone doesn't have a criminal record. Do you search them on a criminal database before you meet them?

Helen Thorn: No. I often asked. I said, look, as long as you're not a murderer or a tory. You know, that's, that's my...

Kerry Howard: Hang on you asked you actually directly asked them that they're never going to say yeah. Yes. I am like who's ever going to go. Oh yeah, yeah.

Helen Thorn: Um, got me. Whoa, because that's a no then. Oh, it's a bit of an opener. It's a [00:10:00] bit of an icebreaker.

Sam Baines: To be fair. I did ask the person who'd listened to the podcast and then contacted me to ask me out I did ask them if they were a stalker. And if they knew weird facts about me from Wikipedia and they said no, and I took them at face value on that.

Helen Thorn: Okay, good. I'm just going to fill up the wine. Hang on.

Sam Baines: Here's the wine. Helen's having a little tinkle. So we've delved straight into dating and it is Christmas time. This is the season that is called the cuffing season, the winter season

Kerry Howard: cuffing. Oh, I've never heard of that.

Helen Thorn: Yes. I was reading about this last night. It goes from October to St. Valentine's day. And couples you -know, you, you hook up with someone over the cold months. So you've got someone to cuddle and bonk and you don't have to make too much effort. And then it just gets you through to spring. And it's because it comes from the term handcuffs. So you and, um, yeah, I was reading about last night, cause I I've started seeing someone and I started seeing them in October and I was like, am I [00:11:00] cuffing? Am I currently on the cuff!

Sam Baines: Are you cuffing or are you cuffed? It's the modern to be, or not to be, but you cuffing or are you cuffed? But I think this is a thing, isn't it? Cause you don't want to go outside when it's cold. Obviously at the moment, we don't want to go outside for other reasons also, but it's like, if I can just have one person that's delivered to me, like an Uber eats to my house for hugs and sex during this cold period, ideal.

Helen Thorn: Yeah, absolutely. Watch a film, get a pizza

Sam Baines: During this chat, I just have to say is just like slowly nodding and staring, like it's about the cuffing season. Is this something that appeals?

Kerry Howard: I like the sound of the Uber cock. Like it just pops in and literally, um, I don't like the idea of being cuffed. I just find it like a lot of people like rush to get a relationship before Christmas because it is a depressing time. If you're not with someone [00:12:00] and it's all very couply. And then you've got Valentines Day just around the corner, just to remind you that you're

incomplete without another person. So I don't know. I find it a little bit. Like agghhh I love Christmas because I love it for the kids. Cause the kids love it, but they're all those moments where I just think oh stop society, making me feel shit for being single. And I get a little bit angry. But most of the time, I feel fine being single, but it's just this moment now where there's so many of those hallmark romantic, like Christmas films that are just like, oh, I hate them.

Sam Baines: What is it about Christmas that makes people feel bad for being single. So we're all single women here because I love Christmas. I don't have kids, but I love Christmas. I love the decorations. I love the whole feel and the music and all cozy and jingly. And I love those hallmark films. And I think maybe in my first Christmas, after my divorce, I wouldn't have watched them, [00:13:00] but now I watch them and just thoroughly enjoy you know, cheesiness of it all, but what is it that makes you feel bad for not having a partner?

Helen Thorn: Sometimes I, I watch those films and it's not that I miss having someone now it's I look back at my past relationship and say God, it was really shit. You know, it's a reminder of how inadequate he was in a romantic sense or how little I got from it. I think that's it. And I don't, but I, I remember last Christmas, which was my first, it got to about nine o'clock on Christmas day and I'd had the most brilliant day with the kids. I, and I love it. And like, you Kerry it. It's all about the children, but I just got that weird absence of touch and I just wanted to be held. And I think that that's, that's a weird thing that the films and, you know, the ads, you know, the John Lewis ads all about mum and dad and all that sort of stuff. And you feel like that that's, that's the end result. That's that's the completion is like, oh, and then you finished with a kiss and a cuddle and [00:14:00] you know, that's, that's happiness. And I think that's that, that can be very triggering when you're a single person. Not that you can just look out, look, this is the house that I own with my children. I've done everything this year, I feel really proud of myself. And then, but then that, that feels like the measure of success is, is the, is the other half. And I think that can fuck you off

Kerry Howard: it's, uh, barrage, isn't it? Oh, propaganda from the media of heteronormative families frosted in front of us. And it's like, we mosey along most of the time, me and the two boys. And we're a really good unit. And I don't feel less than, but I do worry. And I don't know whether the boys think that when they watch all these normal mum and dad movies, all the kids, whether they feel bad because they don't have that in their actual home, they are from two different families. And I just feel like there's not an, I like the Grinch, the modern Grinch was brilliant because it's a single mum and they don't really kind of, they just represent it and they don't sort of say who the dad or anything like

that They just go this is who they are, which [00:15:00] is that's my life. Most of the time, it's like, this is us. This is our unit. And we, we work together really well. Um, but yeah, it just feels like a kick in the teeth sometimes I've worked really hard this year. I've done a fucking good job being a single mum. And then like the TV is just like, we're a happy couple with our five kids and it's just like, oh, fuck off

Helen Thorn: yeh, not now, John Lewis.

Kerry Howard: I'm Santa. I've done all that. Everyone. Yeah. I get a little bit mad at Santa sometimes because the kids are like, oh, the presents, oh, he's such a great man. I'm like, oh, I am Santa, I'm doing all this, but I don't want to ruin their belief in Santa, but I cannot wait for when they come out of that. And they realize that mommy is buying all the presents. That'd be good.

Helen Thorn: Yes it comes from Amazon and not via the sleigh.

Kerry Howard: yes and they have to do lots of clicky clicky, and it hurts my finger.

Sam Baines: That's weird. Kerry do you think Santa is sort of a father figure?

Kerry Howard: Yes.

Sam Baines: [00:16:00] And that annoys you because you're the mum and your, you feel like you're doing everything. Is that what it is?

Kerry Howard: I feel like Santa undermines me. Like there's no acknowledgement and I go along with it. Like I go along with it and I don't do separate presents from mummy, all the presents are from Santa in their sack, because I just think it's. Better. And it's nice. They just love it. But there's a part of me that I just think I I've worked really hard and I bought these presents and I've done all this and I've cooked all this food and I've cleaned all this and dah, dah, dah, and I've, I've made, we've done ice skating. We've done all these things. It's like, and Santa is this great person who gets all the reaps, the rewards.

Sam Baines: I feel like Santa should be sending letters, you know, like kids send letters to Santa - Santa should said letters to parents saying, thank you for all that you do because yeah, it's not me. And I'm just getting all the credit.

Helen Thorn: We've just been doing the scummy mummies Christmas tour. And at the end of the show, we do a parody of, um, the band-aid song, the, the line. Moms do [00:17:00] all the work at Christmas time and everyone cheers. And we go free, the moms, let them have a fucking lie down. And then we get the whole audience to sing it. In Winchester the other night, there was 400 women just like swaying and singing. Let them have a fucking lie down. And we all cheered at the end, but it's true. The fucking list. And I did some standup in the show about us at all. Yeah. I really miss having a husband because he was so useful in December. Did everything bought all the presents. Got everything done. I don't miss him at all. All these times. It's a really interesting reminder when you're a single mom that you did all the work anyway, and now you just do it now with love actually, and Bailey's as company instead of some twat. So it's, it's, it's, it's kind of nice and freeing in a way. And I find it easier. I find parenting easier and more enjoyable now that I'm a single mom.

Kerry Howard: I don't have to do justify like what I bought and say why? [00:18:00] And, you know, It's great. I'm like, no, I bought that cause I like that for him. And he's going to love that. So that'd be brilliant and not like an hour argument about you didn't research it's not good enough and all that crap.

Helen Thorn: I think we were married to the same man. Um, and last year, last year was my first. And so I said for Christmas lunch, we're all going to choose three foods, each three, things to eat and there are three favourite bits of food will be on the table. So we had roast chicken, macaroni cheese, and pizza with a side of Skittles party rings and cucumber.

Kerry Howard: Oh my God. That's brilliant

Sam Baines: just cucumber right in the end there with the skittles and party rings,

Helen Thorn: We had to have one healthy thing. So it was like roast potatoes, cherry tomatoes, and cucumber. And then there was like, yes, Skittles and party rings because we all know party rings are the best biscuit next to the roast chicken and macaroni and cheese and, and day and a frozen pizza. But, but I thought, well, what's Christmas. Christmas is about joy. Christmas is about creating memories and traditions. So that was it. And the other thing [00:19:00] that I did was I gave my children my debit card and I marched them down to the local gift shop. And I said, I'm going to stand outside for half an hour. And I worded up the woman in the shop and they bought me my Christmas presents and had them wrapped. And then they went under the tree. And I thought that was a good idea. Cause then I had something to open and they sort of felt all

grownups genuine surprise. Yes, it was. It wasn't just me sort of going, Ooh, something from mommy.

Um, and I got some earrings and a candle, so they didn't spend they had a budget, obviously I didn't get a PlayStation, but, um, and then they bought themselves something as well, cheeky bastards, but of course.

Sam Baines: I was going to say, give a mum's credit card. They should have gone to town.

Helen Thorn: They got one of those stupid fluffy pens that you use once, and then it's too annoying, but anyway, they're in a gift shop, so they thought they'd buy themselves that.

Sam Baines: But I love that idea and that's it. I think that's a top tip that other people could use. And also, you know, if maybe your kids are too young, you could send them off with a relative or even a friend. Yeah. And just say, [00:20:00] can you just take them into the shop for a minute and I'll have a coffee and they can get my Christmas present? Cause it can be sad if you're like want to buy yourself a present. Some people feel great about doing that and wrapping up. Awesome. But if you don't feel great about doing it, then I think that's a brilliant way. Maybe I could send someone into the corner shop with my dog and she could just pick out something for me.

Helen Thorn: If custard could just bark at some Joe Malone candles, that would be..

Sam Baines: I mean, it will probably be like a cheese chew that she'd get me, just something. Um, well, this is great. So I, I actually asked some people cause we've covered a few tips already. I asked people on Instagram, if they had any top tips for spending your first Christmas on your own. So I'll just read out some of the replies. And then if you guys have any top tips, ideal, there's some great replies here. Just someone's written Pizza and I have to say, I asked a few questions and this person just wrote pizza for every single one of them. [00:21:00] I, I appreciate the consistency. Um, but people have said it's your first Christmas on your own. Make it special for you and Carol, wine. Good food. Um, someone else says stock up on wine and chocolates treat yourself. Uh, someone else said morning walks and community events. That's quite a nice thing to do if there's like a Christmas market or something going on. Um, and someone else said, think of all those running around after they're useless partners. So that's a full day activity.

Kerry Howard: Uh, do you know what it was last year was the first time I didn't have my children on actual Christmas day and my parents did something really beautiful. We always, always have a Christmas day together and cook together, blah, blah, blah. Never done anything out of the norm. It's just at the Howard house. And then my dad booked The Pig and we went out and we went to a restaurant and we had - oh like Christmas meal cooked for us. [00:22:00] So me and mum, weren't doing any of the cooking and it was so brilliant because it just totally took out all the nostalgia because it was completely different. So I didn't miss the children because it was just like, my brain was just like, this is a different, this is a different day, different experience.

And that was the best gift that my parents gave to me it was just something, that was just rewiring the day.

Sam Baines: I love that. And also we should say The Pig is a place where you can eat. It's not just an animal that comes and cooks you.

Helen Thorn: The don't take you to the farm. And, uh, stand around

Sam Baines: we booked The Pig and then it just ran around with us for the day.

Other people have said lots of similar things. I said, I did my Christmas, my first Christmas very differently, the same. I just changed it all up. So I went somewhere different with my mom and my sister. And we just had a nice time together so that it didn't feel like we were trying to recreate something with the kind of missing [00:23:00] whole of the person who was missing. And that's what we did after my dad died as well. Like. You know, just do something completely different. Um, other people have said have an activity that focuses your mind when you feel low, like em knitting, which I love obviously, or puzzling, um, someone else that, except that you might feel sad or low at times and surround yourself with your favourite food and telly and hobbies. And then we've talked about this before, but, um, someone suggested to buy yourself a couple of treats and wrap them up under the tree. Um, or you'd like, Helen did, you can send your children into a shop with your credit card. So trusting.

Helen Thorn: Poundland, send them into poundland.

Sam Baines: I think it might be cracker time. Should we open a cracker? Helen, should we start with your cracker and inside will be a prompt.

Helen Thorn: Oh, God. Oh, that's heavy. That's a heavy smell. Oh, hang on. I've got, a fortune teller miracle, fish. And I've got aw what's this, [00:24:00]

I've got a thing that says. Christmas presents for or from a partner. Oh, I might transfer me antlers to make my Christmas hat.

Sam Baines: Do it ,get the hat on. So the prompt was gifts. Yeah, because one of the main things I miss about my ex at Christmas is the fact that he used to get me a really amazing gift because he'd spend more money than everyone else because he had to because I lived with him and also I'd give hints like throughout the year. He'd pick up on one of those hints and normally get me like a really nice gift. And that would always be the gift I was looking forward to because I knew it was going to be good. Is there anything you miss about gift giving from your ex? Were they good or bad?

Helen Thorn: Absolutely not, terrible.

Kerry Howard: I mean, Helen mine, mine spent more on his mother than he did on me.

Sam Baines: Wow.

Helen Thorn: My moment. A couple of years ago, I was wearing a green velvet dress and I came [00:25:00] downstairs and he said, oh my God, he looked like a deer faced sofa. And that was a Merry Christmas present. Indeed. Um,

Kerry Howard: No, because you were like, I was like, this is gorgeous. I love this. And he just,

Helen Thorn: Yeah, is my velvet dress. Yeah. Yeah. And he's like, just joking. And then yeah, he gave me a vegan cookbook. That's what? That was that year's presence. No, I don't miss that at all.

Kerry Howard: I got, I got a cookbook how to eat to yourself pretty. Oh, okay.

Sam Baines: So your exes were like insulting you through cook books, like what a weird and also that DFS comment is like our unacceptable, how rude.

Helen Thorn: Yeah. And he's like, oh kidding. I was like

Sam Baines: I hate it when people are like, oh kidding. It's like tell a racist joke. Oh, I was just kidding. Well don't

Helen Thorn: no, no, no,

Sam Baines: That doesn't make it. It doesn't take it back. Is that you can't punch someone in the face and go, oh, Kidding. Well, you still did the punch in the face. I have to say that when you said that about the DFS comment, [00:26:00] Kerry and I were mouth open staring at you with shock, that's a divorceable offense in itself.

Helen Thorn: Yeah. I think I think there were some red flags that I may not have picked up on.

Kerry Howard: You don't want to, you don't see it, but like, you know, when you put on a velvet dress, that's a moment, isn't it? That you've, you've made an effort.

Helen Thorn: Yeah, I thought it was Christmas. It was like a green velvet dress and I really liked it. And um, yeah, I just, I just thought, oh God, would it kill you? To say something nice. But it's out. But it's those sort of things. And that make me very happy to be single on Christmas day.

Kerry Howard: Yes. Yeah. Cause I, I will put on like a little jumpsuit. I'll just prance around. My kids fucking love it I put a when on they're like, oh mommy, you look like a princess. And I'm like, yes, I do. I am. It's great.

Helen Thorn: Yes, you do. Well.

Sam Baines: So what are you wearing on Christmas day this year?

Helen Thorn: Oh, this is exciting. I was going to confess something last year because I had a few different [00:27:00] blokes on the go, uh, last year and now I've just got the one and, and, and so I took a photo I had a red, red booby bra, and I sent this photo to someone I thought was a sexy friend, sexy male friend. And I just, I just wrote, uh, I took a photo of my boobs in a red bra and just read the caption jingle boobs. And he wrote back at that's very inappropriate. Oh God.

Sam Baines: Had you had sex with him before?

Helen Thorn: A couple of times with him before. Yes. And I thought, oh, Merry Christmas to you.

Sam Baines: Why was it inappropriate That's the sort of Christmas cards, loads of people would enjoy.

Kerry Howard: Was that like the end of that sort of frisson? Or did you see him again?

Helen Thorn: No, I, I had another little, you know, yeah. In and out, but, um, but that was a few months later when he was available and I was available and, you know, it suited us both. Um, but it was a very, I thought I was being quite jolly and flirty, but maybe I'm not going to do that this year. I won't send my boobs off into the...

Sam Baines: you do you babe, if they can't have you at your jingle [00:28:00] boob, then they don't get you at your velvet dress. You know what I mean?

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Well what a perfect time talking about Christmas outfits to welcome our lovely guest all the way from Thailand Micaela Sharp is with us hi.

Micaela Sharp: Hi, how are you all?

Kerry Howard: Good

Sam Baines: Well Micaela welcome to our Christmas divorce party (woo hoo) now you are travelling, tell us where you are and why you're there.

Micaela Sharp: Yeah, so I'm in Thailand at the moment I'm in Ko Pang Yang, I'm visiting a friend that lives here. So I decided to give myself a bit of a prolonged break, just because with everything that has happened this year. Cause I'm still not technically divorced. So filed for divorce in March. Um, I was hoping it would all get done before Christmas and the new year, but it's not. So that's going to kind of drag over into the new year, but I just thought because I have to sell my flat and I didn't want to rush, like having to buy somewhere new. [00:30:00] So I thought I'd just give myself this little break to travel, reset,

and then come back to London and sort myself out. So, yeah, it's been great so far, three weeks I've been here so far.

Sam Baines: Nice. It's amazing that you've taken yourself away on a little trip. And did you plan it that it would be over Christmas? Cause obviously we're talking about your first Christmas on your own and am I right? And this is your first Christmas on your own.

Micaela Sharp: Yeah, this is Christmas number one, flying solo spreading my wings. Um, yeah, I did plan it this way. I wanted to be away for Christmas and new year, just because Christmas is already quite a difficult time for me because, uh, I lost, I was brought up by my grandparents and they both passed away. So I always find Christmas quite sad actually. But having this as the first Christmas divorce, I thought it was just going to be too much to handle. But actually, I mean, being out of the UK means there are no reminders really like in Thailand today for the first time we went for dinner and I had some really cheesy christmas songs, but they're [00:31:00] not even the versions that we recognize, you know, they're like the cheaper knockoffs. So even though are like kind of fun and

Kerry Howard: just kind of funny.

Micaela Sharp: Yeah. They kind of make you laugh rather than think. Oh, I remember a time when we danced in the kitchen to this or whatever is they actually quite funny? So, so far I haven't had too many reminders.

Kerry Howard: Is it kind of like a sexy Silent Night?

Micaela Sharp: Not even that sexy, just like full on cheese,

Sam Baines: what a song, Christmas song to pick to go sexy. Silent night. You want a banging night

Kerry Howard: well, certainly for Helen.

Sam Baines: Helen's had lots of cock. That's what we've been talking about just to update Micaela

Micaela Sharp: fill me in and give me the tip.

Helen Thorn: That's what I say.

Sam Baines: Apart from not getting any reminders of Christmas, what's been good about being away. And what is your plan for Christmas day in Thailand?

Micaela Sharp: To be honest I haven't really thought too much about the day, but what's been good so far, I think is just [00:32:00] the space to process - 'cause I think you guys are probably further through your divorce journey, right? So you can kind of think back to that first Christmas and remember all those feelings and all of that processing you had to do. I think I've had such a busy year after interior design, masters ed, and all of the work that I got afterwards that, um, I just haven't really had time to think and to just, I dunno, just the kind of feel the feels, you know, and I've just been doing and kind of trying to not fake too much. So this has really given me time to process. So I have had some like, you know, not great days, but most of the, most of the days have been good. And it's just allowed me to just do the things that I couldn't really do in London. So to like not work as much and to have some massages and do some workouts and eat some healthy foods and, you know, just kind of be a bit more [00:33:00] mindful. So that's been really good. And I think that's what I need to kind of heal a bit. Um, but yeah, for the day, I'm not sure. So my friend, Isabel, who lives here, she's, uh, Dutch. So she celebrates on Christmas Eve, which is kind of perfect because I was kind of feeling like I didn't want to do too much of a Christmas celebration on the day, but she wants to have a celebration, but on Christmas Eve, so I'm like great Christmas Eve, but you can do whatever you want. And then Christmas day I think would just be Margaritas on the beach.

Kerry Howard: Oh, heaven yeah.

Sam Baines: I mean jealous.

Kerry Howard: Cause I think when you, when you're freshly divorced and it's the first year for you, it's also the first year for your extended family and they've gone through it and they're all freaking out and they don't know what to say. Or some people ask too many questions and it's just really brilliant you've had the foresight to just go. I'm just going to take myself away from the crowds because I'm not ready to loop. Cause I I've definitely looped a lot in my first year where I was constantly talking about my divorce and what, [00:34:00] because the courts was, was an absolute nightmare for me. Um, but now I'm year four. So this is like my fourth year. I don't feel people don't to bring it up anymore, but it took a couple of like two Christmases. Cause they're just curious. Cause they it's almost like you're this new exquisite creature that they've never seen before. Like in the family, like, Ooh, you're the first one that got divorced. What are you? They want to know everything

Micaela Sharp: And how did you find that first one?

Kerry Howard: Horrific. It was horrible. Um, cause I, when did I leave April? So I'd had a long time, but my, my youngest was only eight months old, so I had a baby and I had, uh, Wesley, he was just turned four. So I was really busy and I was so skinny because of nerves and stuff. And then like a few months before Christmas, I got like the court order, which I was not expecting. And it just was just a, quite a horrific time and my family were amazing, but it was just, it was overwhelming. And I, [00:35:00] everyone was asking questions. Some people shut down. Didn't want to talk about it, which was hard because I was in that ranty phase. Um, But, yeah, I always know when I meet someone who's just freshly divorced. Cause they just that's their favorite subject. That's all they want to talk about because it is it's, it's a weird time

Sam Baines: Well tell them to come on the podcast.

Micaela Sharp: Actually. You say that Sam, earlier I posted something on my private Instagram just saying like, oh, it's taken me three weeks to feel like I'm actually starting to relax. Cause relaxing is really hard. Right. People always say, just go and relax. And you're like, but actually just relax all of a sudden it's, it's the most complicated thing to do, which is what I'm figuring out. But someone messaged me and they said, oh, do you know what I found really helpful? Um, the divorce social, and I was like, shut up. I'm just literally about to film.

Sam Baines: That's so nice also, will you like um, I was on there. Have you not listened to my episode?

Micaela Sharp: [00:36:00] I did say that it's linked to me.

Sam Baines: Well, hopefully they'll find this episode useful as well. I mean, I, I think I had the opposite to you, Kerry. I had a really nice first Christmas, but mine was quite early on, so we broke up in September. And then obviously my first Christmas was only a couple of months later, but I was working on Magic Mike at the time. So I think that obviously I was performing on Christmas Eve, um, and sort of at work for all of that period. So I was kind of in a different world. And then on Christmas day I just spent it with my mom and my sister in my mom's new house that she had. So it was like completely different, like no memories there. Um, I think I did have a sad moment on the day. Um, but I remember, I mean, it's a bit of a blur, always is for me that first year, but, um, I remember on the day [00:37:00] just having a nice time and a nice relax. And Helen, what were you like on your first Christmas?

Helen Thorn: Mine was last year. So it was the first in lockdown. So it had to be small, which I kind of really liked actually. And, um, so it was just the three of us and he came over for an hour and so at 11 to give presents to the kids, and then I just went into my neighbor's garden and we drank Buck's fizz. And, um, and then I came back and then we just like to savour our favorite food. And then I watched soul, which was an amazing film, the new Pixar film, drank, drank some more, and then just had a bit of a nap. And it was lovely. I really, really liked it because I didn't have to go anywhere. It wasn't like that, you know, like we've got to, you know, there was no stress. And so I, I think go as low key as possible. I think that's really nice. And yeah. And set your own traditions and new rules, but oh, to be in Thailand to be in warmth. I, as an Australian, I love a warm Christmas. That's lovely, but it's, I don't know. I just, I don't, I love Christmas even more as a single person I really [00:38:00] do. And it doesn't feel, and now that I'm away from his family, like, I don't have any expectations of in-laws or doing any of that stuff. Like he has to deal with his mother.

Sam Baines: I think Kerry has a cracker and inside will be a talking point and you have to pull the cracker on your own, but we're virtually pulling it with you straight away strong. What did you get?

Kerry Howard: Oh, I got the fortune teller fish. Oh,

I'm going to do that straight away. Cause I really like it, Hey, you want to hear my shit joke?

Sam Baines: Shit joke please.

Kerry Howard: Hey, um, what kind of motorbike does Santa ride? A Holly Davidson. Uh, Holly Davidson. So it's a Harley...

Sam Baines: which as a pun doesn't really work.

Helen Thorn: It doesn't really work. No. Can I, can I do my joke? I didn't get to do my joke.

Kerry Howard: Oh yes. Do your Joke, Helen.

Helen Thorn: What happened to the man who stole an advent calendar? He [00:39:00] got 25 days.

Sam Baines: Um, cool. Yeah. Um, and what's your prompt carry for us to chat about?

Kerry Howard: Things you did on your first christmas single.

Sam Baines: Oh, amazing. We've done it.

Kerry Howard: Well, I must stress like Christmas day, day was actually the best Christmas day that I've ever had because before then, My ex would always cause arguments over presents or something wouldn't be right. It always, always had to be perfect. So Christmas day was also a stressful time for me. And then it was the first Christmas that I was like, no, one's going to tell me off for getting the wrong gift. Um, no one's going to tell me off for not appreciating a present enough. Um, and nobody told me off. Like all day. And it was brilliant. That's an insight to my hell shit show of marriage.

Micaela Sharp: No but I can relate to that. I mean, my ex didn't tell me after getting him the wrong presents cause I think I'm actually very good at giving presents but there was that last Christmas, when, you know, it was like a few months before I found [00:40:00] out that he cheated on me and then we were getting divorced. It was just a weird, weird vibe. You know, when you can't quite work out and you're like, oh, I'm trying to do everything right. But it's just falling very flat. And now it's like, oh, I'm so glad I don't have to do that anymore. Walking on eggshells with someone is the worst isn't it?

Helen Thorn: That horrible. It's that whole boiling a frog, analogy, isn't it? That you just don't know, it gets worse and worse and worse and worse, and you, you're just used to bad behavior and it wasn't as bad as last week, but it just, it just builds doesn't it. And that's the, that's the hardest thing. And you like, oh, that's okay. And they occasionally do something that's almost nice. And you go, oh, well, that's all right. And your, your level of your benchmark of shit is, is so depleted and the, like all that, oh, just take that. Take that bit. And then, yeah. And then when you're out of it, like, I what!?

Micaela Sharp: Ironically I've just realized as well. That was the year that he probably gave me the most presents he's ever given me. And I was like, oh, why is he giving me all this stuff? And now I know it was a guilty [00:41:00] conscience. It was like, you know, I made a few hints at some things that I would like, and he got me, all of them. And then like, plus more. And I was like, oh my God, why do you, you know, but then there was no love or care giving it to me, it was just like, oh, I got you all this stuff. And I was like, okay, you've got me all these gifts, but the vibe is so awkward between us. Like what's going on? I gave all that stuff back, unfortunately. Um, otherwise, yeah, I, maybe I should have kept it all but

Kerry Howard: Yes.

Sam Baines: That's like I was going to say

Kerry Howard: Cause mine tried to take back an eternity ring that he gave me the last Christmas. And it was like two months after some really bad behavior. And I took him back anyway. Um, and he gave me an eternity ring and I just felt like my stomach was like lurch. Cause I was like, you can't buy me, like a ring is not going to fix our broken marriage. And I remember feeling like such a hypocrite, like, but it was in front of my family. And I was like, oh my God, I've got this ring. Anyway. You know, a couple of months later, April I've left [00:42:00] him for the final time I've done over this, but he wants the ring back and my lawyer was like, you don't need to give back gifts ever. I was like, really? Really? She's like, no, but I pawned it.

Micaela Sharp: What did you buy with the money? Anything fun?

Kerry Howard: It just went into my bank account and I bought more nappies for the kids. You know, it just went on the kids.

Micaela Sharp: Yeah. Good for you for keeping hold of it.

Sam Baines: I have a bag that my ex gave me designer a bag and I feel fine about using that.

Kerry Howard: I did a deep cleanse, everything that he touched. I burned, I got rid. I got rid rid rid.

Micaela Sharp: Yeah, I'm the same as Kerry I got rid of everything. Like the day after he moved out, I sent him back. Everything he'd ever bought me. Anything we'd ever bought together. I just didn't want all the reminders, but full disclosure, he did send me some gifts then after we were broken up and I did keep or eat or consume those. Cause I was like, well, you know, like some of them were edible. [00:43:00] Like some of them were like candles or whatever. I was like, fine. They don't, they're not sentimental at that point. I already knew what he was and what had happened, but one of them was like a piece of jewelry and I did keep that. Yeah, but I just thought you know what fuck it. I want to wear it. I want to keep it.

Sam Baines: I got my X to pay for, so we had two cats together and I still have one of them, but one of the other cat Albert died in the first lockdown, got hit by

a car and I got my ex to pay for half of the cremation. So that was his gift to me. And then I scattered the ashes in the garden. Oh. So I sort of kept the gift.

Micaela Sharp: I don't think that counts as a gift. Cause it's more of a responsibility isn't it.

Sam Baines: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And so it's very expensive to have a cat cremated don't know if you've ever tried it's like hundreds of pounds anyway. On that note cremation. I never thought it would be something that would [00:44:00] come up in the Christmas episode, but it has, I'm going to pull my cracker, see what I've got in here. I'm sorry. You don't have a cracker Micaela but Thailand was a long way to send it. Not sure it would arrive in time. I've got, I've got a prompt Christmas memories, Any, we need to divorce moments? So I definitely have one of these. So I remember. One Christmas we'd gone to his, oh, this was it. So traveling was always an issue because there were lots of different families to see because his family was two split in two, in, in different parts of the country. So we'd gone to his parents' house his mum's house for Christmas Eve into Christmas morning. And then we were going to drive down and come to my mom's house for Christmas day Eve into boxing day. So. You know, you know, this is the plan, but obviously we've got to make sure [00:45:00] we leave at certain time to get to my mum because my mum's cooking Christmas dinner and it's going to be ready at a certain time. So obviously, we didn't leave on time and I was trying to get us ready to leave. And then it seemed like I was being rude to his mom, apparently, you know, cause I was trying to get out of there, but I was like, no, we have to get out of there because my mom's cooking Christmas dinner. So is it all this stress. And so we were in the car, so I don't drive. So he was driving the car, which was a massive point of contention. He was driving the car and we started having this argument about the timings. Cause it's always about something silly.

Kerry Howard: I had that problem with the driving the car. It's like massive, like. They hate you don't they, if you don't drive,

Helen Thorn: I don't drive either. I don't drive.

Sam Baines: Yes. Micaela?

Micaela Sharp: I do drive but he cheated on me anyway.

Sam Baines: Well, we've covered all driving basis here. Um, but yeah, so I don't drive. So he's driving the car. And we're having this huge argument in the car. He revs the car and like speeds up in a [00:46:00] scary way. Cause he's

annoyed with me. And then I was like, stop the car, stop the car. So he stopped the car on the side of like this motorway that no one else was on. Cause it was Christmas day. I got out of the car crying and I was like, I'm not getting back in that car with you. And just crying along the side of a motorway in the now looking back, it's funny because like, where did I think I was walking? Like it's Christmas day. There's no buses. It's very hard to get a taxi. So I'm just like in my Christmas outfit and a scarf on, just was like crying down the side of a motorway. And then he's like, all sorry, obviously, because I got out of the car and made a fuss and then just driving alongside me. Like when are you going to get in the car? Then I got back in the car eventually. Cause I realized where else was I going to go, got back to, um, where my mum was. And obviously I had to be all happy it's Christmas and pretend that we hadn't had this huge fight. And I'd got out of the car on the motorway and like tears, you know, still in my eyes, you know, when you [00:47:00] get puffy eyes cause you'd been crying and I'd just like Hello, Christmas, fake smiles all around. And I remember that really strongly as a, like, this is not a good time.

Helen Thorn: This is shitty. This is a shitty time.

Sam Baines: Do you have any, any, uh, we need to get a divorce memories to do a Christmas?

Kerry Howard: My last christmas. So the night before, um, I ran away from him in mid November, and then everyone was like, I only had Callum and he was only four months old.

So it's like, oh, try again. You never know. No one really understood what I was going through. So it was like two weeks before Christmas and I just felt so bad for him cause he was doing the whole like, oh, I'm so broken. And I took him back and he'd had all this time on his own to sort of gather Christmas. I'd had like Calum who was four months and Wesley three looking after them and I filled their sacks. I bought all everything for them. And so he came upstairs. And I was so proud of like, after all this drama that [00:48:00] we've gone through, um, I still delivered Christmas and I was showing all the presents to him and he looked at my presents. Oh, Kerry. I was like, what? You've got the wrong gift. This is not the right. Ah, I'm sorry. I love my son and this isn't correct. Like fuck. And he and I looked to him was I was so angry and I looked at what he brought -two books. And they were free because his friend had written them. And it's like, he came to my house, my parents' house with two books, nothing, no other presents. And then he had the audacity to start to micromanage and criticize all the presents that weren't correct cause I hadn't done all my research. I just, I literally couldn't, I couldn't speak. I was like, I had

a lump in my throat of like, I can't believe I've let this man in my house. And he's now telling me that I'm shit at Christmas. I hate you but I couldn't do anything. It was awful. Awful.

Micaela Sharp: That sounds [00:49:00] shit.

Helen Thorn: That's really hard,

Kerry Howard: but now it's like, great. Cause you like, they're the reason why you're divorced because you're coming from a shit show. It's such a relief, like to be divorced now is such an art, like a badge of honor. I'm like thank fuck!

Helen Thorn: Yeah. What I kind of reflect back on is that I always was the one getting up early with the kids. And, um, when father Christmas arrived, I would go downstairs at 5:00 AM and he would stay in bed and I would, I'd be like, come down, you, you, you want to watch the kids open their presents and he didn't, he stayed in bed. That's the joy of joys is like, that is what we as parents, like, these are the golden sort of nuggets of seeing the kids excited, like all the magical stuff. And I was like, I want the kids to feel this magical stuff and he'd just stay in bed and go, oh, I'm too tired for that. Now that I'm single, I still get up obviously at 4:00 AM or 5:00 AM with the children. And I just, I, I found that kind of sad or that thought, you know, you have children for all these magical moments. Like seeing them sing in the nativity or all those sort of things. [00:50:00] And yeah. So when I reflect back on those sort of past Christmases, when, you know, I bought the food and I sorted the things and, and yeah, and then it was it was similar to Kerry that, just the pick pick picking as like, oh, you didn't wrap that nicely enough. I was like, well, I spent four hours buying it and doing all the other things. And then just to kind of quick that there's the sort of paper cuts that sort of build up. And I think that's yeah. And that, and that just so, so now, you know, Christmas morning just feels like an absolute fucking joy because it's all mine and, and, and it's without compromise and criticism and that's, that's, that's sort of my catch phrase of being a single person is without compromise, without criticism. And, and, and, and that's what I keep reminding myself is, is it's just, it's just us and joy and you know, it's hard and I'm tired, but I'm tired and happy.

Micaela Sharp: And Helen, I guess there must be like a different feeling knowing someone has opted out and they're sleeping upstairs and then having years when they're not there at all. And it's like [00:51:00] lighter and more joyful that they're just not even there, you know, if they weren't there to begin with, but at least now they're not upstairs in bed.

Helen Thorn: Yeah. It's a different kind of absence. And, and I think, I think they get away with it when they're not there as in like at a different house, because it's not, it's not like he's chosen not to be there. They'll get him at a different time. And in a way you hope when you do hand them over that they get their full attention.

Th th th finally, that that is their, their time.

Sam Baines: And Micaela do you have any?

Micaela Sharp: Well, typically mine was also the last Christmas that we were together.

Sam Baines: I think mine was as well, by the way, always the last one.

Isn't it? The

Micaela Sharp: straw that broke the camel's back, but for me it was, um, so my ex had cheated on me in December, so I didn't realise. And then that like a few weeks later we went to America to see friends and it was meant to be this like big, amazing trip. We were staying with like lots of people that I know that live in America. And, uh, for Christmas day we stayed with one of my best friends and. I just [00:52:00] remembered, there was just a weird mood between us and I, I had no idea why, you know, everything had been great between us until he cheated on me. And I was just, I couldn't really put my finger on it. And then we went, you know, I didn't want to have an argument or whatever in front of my friend and her husband. So we like went into our rep and, and had this kind of like hushed up argument. You know, like for god's sake, what's wrong with you? Like trying to be loud. And I just remember thinking, I just don't know this person anymore. Like, something's happened, like something's going on. Something has shifted. Um, I just, I'm trying to have a conversation with someone who just will not engage. You know that feeling of like, I can, I could ask every question in the most, perfectly worded way and I still wouldn't get a straight answer. And I just thought something's just not right. And then, yeah, it was just a really awkward day. So yeah, I didn't think, oh, we're going to get divorced, but I just thought this is the shitiest Christmas we've ever had. And I don't know why.

Sam Baines: It's funny. Cause um, lot of people [00:53:00] would say, oh, don't look back and dwell on past Christmases. You know, think about being in the moment. But actually I think for all of us looking back helps you realize that now you're so much better off and thank goodness we're not in that situation

anymore. And it kind of makes you appreciate the day, a bit more, and the fact that we can do whatever we like, but thank you so much for joining me for my Christmas special.

I think just to write, it's been a joy I'm just to wrap up if anyone's listening and it is their first Christmas on their own, or they're facing one of our memorable, sad Christmases, um, just a sentence that you would give them to give them a bit of encouragement for this Christmas coming up. Kerry?

Kerry Howard: You're amazing. You're brave. You're courageous. You are enough. Keep flying sister.

Sam Baines: I love it. Micaela?

Micaela Sharp: Oh, that's so nice. I was going to say margaritas margaritas which is no way.. [00:54:00]

Sam Baines: But just as important

Micaela Sharp: OK margarita, margarita, sparkling water, something like that.

Sam Baines: Lovely, Helen?

Helen Thorn: Don't send a picture of your tits to a guy you're not sure about, and that's just the lesson to live by. Remember, you are totally loved by all the right people. You are loved by the people you need to be loved by. And also if you have sex with yourself, you're guaranteed to come.

Micaela Sharp: Okay. I wish I had thought of something better.

Sam Baines: fly high drink, margaritas, have sex with yourself. Ideal. Um, I think my, my words to anyone will be. You going to be okay. No matter what situation you're going to be in, you are going to be okay. We are here for you at the Divorce Social. We've all been through what you're going through [00:55:00] and we're sending you so much love, and we hope you have a very Merry Christmas.

Should we all say Merry Christmas together in a joyful way after three one, two, three.

All: Merry Christmas!

Sam Baines: Amazing. Thank you for joining us for this Christmas special. We will be back next week with a new year's special. So I hope you enjoy that as well. I wish you a very Merry Christmas. I hope it is merry and we'll be here for you at new years as well. And the new series, we'll be starting a few weeks after that.

We'll have a little break so I can lie down. Thank you. See you soon.