

This episode of *The Accessible Stall* contains content that may be sensitive to some listeners. Listener discretion is advised.

[Music]

EMILY: Hi, I'm Emily Ladau.

KYLE: And I'm Kyle Khachadurian.

EMILY: And you're listening to another episode of *The Accessible Stall*.

KYLE: What do you want to talk about today, Emily?

EMILY: Not a super fun topic, but a super important topic.

KYLE: And what's that?

EMILY: Sexual harassment.

KYLE: That's way more important than I was expecting.

EMILY: Yeah, it's... it's intense. It's an intense topic, but we need to talk about it for a lot of reasons. We need to talk about it because it's relevant regarding the current election, and we need to talk about it because it's relevant regarding disabled people.

This has been on my mind for a while and I keep thinking I wanted to write about it, but I'm finding it difficult to articulate, and so I think maybe talking it out is better.

KYLE: Let's hear it.

EMILY: Okay, so... first of all, fair warning that I will be sharing a story of *me* being sexually harassed, so that's fun stuff. I wouldn't say it was anything super traumatic compared to what some people have been through, but it is a story that has stayed with me and so I want to share it.

When I was in high school, I had a thing for the older guys in the drama club. I liked to be in the drama club productions, and I liked being around the older guys, and they were all very talented and could sing, and they were kind of like... these little local superstar... hometown heroes. So I had a crush on one of them in particular, and he was super talented, and I thought he was cute – I would say most people didn't; most people thought he was, like, a total jerk, but I guess I was just enchanted that he had a good voice and also was older than me, 'cause I was a sophomore and he was a senior. So...

KYLE: You're describing the beginning of a *Lifetime* movie, jeez.

EMILY: (laughs) No, it's not. So... I was never one to keep my mouth shut about when I had a crush on someone, so he inevitably found out – either that or I was just super obvious – and being that he was a senior guy and I was a silly little sophomore – and also, I think, because of the wheelchair he never quite took me seriously, so he enjoyed, like, milking my crush on him for all it was worth and, you know, being like kind of obnoxiously flirty but not in any sort of serious way. Like... just enough so to give you that false hope, but enough to know that he's also kind of ridiculing you.

So one day, I was backstage waiting to go on during a show rehearsal, and he was back there as well. I don't know what prompted it, but we were talking and he... would always make, like, these lewd inappropriate comments, I didn't really think anything of it, *but*, on this particular day, he decided that he wanted to give me a lap dance. That was not with my permission, he basically... got me cornered against a wall in my chair, he sat on my lap and he started giving me a lap dance and was, like, laughing maniacally about it and just thought it was the funniest thing in the world. Um, and I kept trying to push him off me and asking him to stop, and I was getting really flustered and I just didn't feel comfortable anymore, and I felt like he was completely violating my boundaries and my space and not listening to me when I asked him to stop, and he... just kept going until it was his cue to go onstage. And, of course, I'm the weaker, smaller one in the wheelchair and I can't push him off.

So, I just kind of had to sit there and deal with it. Um, and then when we were both onstage, he was just making awkward eye contact with me the whole time, kind of like... asserting his dominance over me, like he knew what he had just done and he was proud of it. And I was really shaken, I was really upset. I know it doesn't sound like much but, you know, it was one of those things where I couldn't... defend myself, and I tried to defend myself, but he kind of exploited the fact that I was *sitting*, to use that as a means of sexually harassing me.

So then, I went to go tell my teacher what had happened, and I explained, you know, I didn't really know *how* to explain it, I was like 'yeah, he started giving me a lap dance', and rather than take me seriously and recognize that I was complaining about being sexually harassed, she started cracking up. Like, she... thought it was funny. And... I wasn't really sure what I wanted, I guess I just wanted an apology or something, or some recognition that that was just not cool. But instead my *female teacher* started laughing at me, because like, 'ha ha it's so hilarious, like, how original, a guy gave you a lap dance because you're sitting down in a wheelchair'. Um, so that... that really stung.

And there was no recourse against him, you know. We just pretended like it didn't happen, he graduated, I never talked to him again. I saw him several years later at a local restaurant near my house and he... you know, like, *barely* made eye contact with me, you know, that sort of like recognition-but-I'm-not-going-to-acknowledge-it. And it's always stuck with me, like, now I wonder if anything ever happened to me again like that and I go to report it somehow, if someone's just going to laugh in

my face or find it funny or not take me seriously, or.... think that I'm just somehow making up the story, or making more of it than it actually is. So... it stays with me. It *has* stayed with me. I never talk about it. I know, again like I said, that it's not nearly as traumatic as a lot of other people's experiences with sexual harassment and sexual assault, but... you know, it was formative for me, because I was growing up, still growing up, and basically was taught the lesson that it's funny when someone sexually harasses you and no one's going to do anything about it. So... that is my very fun story of sexual harassment!

KYLE: Can I ask you a question?

EMILY: Yes.

KYLE: You were a teenager in high school?

EMILY: Yes.

KYLE: So you were, what, sixteen?

EMILY: Uh... sixteen, I guess, yeah.

KYLE: And he was seventeen, eighteen?

EMILY: Yeah. So, you know it was just like –

KYLE: So, if you're – I guess my question is, do you think – and this is, there's no way you could really know this, but like... the way that you tell the story, it's not like you realized later in life that that was wrong, you knew it was wrong, like... immediately.

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

KYLE: It's not one of those things where you like, retroactively look back and go, 'ah, that was messed up', you know? You knew that it was wrong... immediately. But you also said that you didn't quite *grasp* it until later because it was such a... fresh thing that you didn't really know what to do because the only thing you *had* done had got laughed at. So my question is, much like you grew up and learned to appreciate it for the horrible thing that it was, do you think that this douchebag – I'm not going to censor that, *douchebag* – that did that to you –

EMILY: (laughs)

KYLE: 'Cause, like you said, you knew he remembered you, so do you think, like, he looks back on that and like went, like, 'Jesus Christ that was terrible', or did you get the vibe from him when you saw him that he's still, like, a jerk who never learned a damn thing? I mean, I don't expect you to *really* know the answer to that, but like...

do you think that him as an adult would do the same dumb, horrible thing to somebody that him as a teenager would do?

EMILY: Well, so, I think this is a larger question about people who are like that in general, you know. Do they ever learn from it? I mean, again, like we say, we're a political honest podcast but –

KYLE: (Overlapping) Well, try to be, yeah –

EMILY: What the hell, I'm bringing up Donald Trump right now. Like, everyone keeps saying 'oh, that was eleven years ago, whatever, whatever', but like... do you learn from those mistakes?

KYLE: (Overlapping) Well –

EMILY: I know I'm sort of, like answering your question with a question, but I'm not sure.

KYLE: Well, no because – well, the difference between this kid and Donald Trump – not that I'm defending this jerk, but –

EMILY: Is that he was a kid and Donald Trump was a grown-ass man?

KYLE: Right. Because a lot of people –

EMILY: Yeah.

KYLE: I mean, I'm just going to say this point-blank to anyone who isn't very clear on what I'm saying, is that what this person did to Emily was horrible and wrong on every single level... and inexcusable, even for his age. But what I *am* saying is that there is a difference between a sixteen-year-old kid, who grew up to be someone respectable – which, I don't know, and neither does Emily – and someone who was, what, in his fifties at the time?

EMILY: Yeah, huge. You're absolutely right, *huge* difference.

KYLE: There's a difference in, like, brain – like, you're still growing up. You know?

EMILY: Right, but then I also wonder – you know, the fact that this... however-old-he-was, seventeen, whatever, eighteen-year-old kid not getting any sort of punishment for that –

KYLE: Oh yeah, no, obviously like he should –

EMILY: Does that, like, reinforce the culture of sexual harassment?

KYLE: That's – I mean, well, I'm of the opinion that that age – even though you are a dumb teenager and still growing up – that you're old enough to know that that's wrong. If you don't know that that's wrong yet, you need to be told yesterday. Having said that, I'm sure there are outliers, but we're not talking about outliers, we're talking about people who really ought to know, and this is one of those people.

I don't know. I – you know, 'cause not only am I a man, but, I mean, I have had things happen to me in my life by women that you can consider sexual harassment. But... I would wager that that's – even that, even the same thing – it wasn't the same thing, but even such things happening to me as a man is different than you. So... I really can't speak to your experiences, and I really don't feel comfortable speaking on my own in this public forum, because I just don't, and you're braver than I am, um...

EMILY: Well, I mean, speaking as someone who knows what you're talking about, you know –

KYLE: Oh, that's right, you do!

EMILY: I understand why you don't want to venture into yours, but –

KYLE: Damn, that's right, you do, I forgot I told you! Well - why am I excited about this?

EMILY: Sorry listeners at home! But anyway, the reason that I wanted to bring mine up, despite it disturbing me, is because it's been consistently disturbing me for a while now. You know, it's one of those things where, um, it... I pretty much buried it in my memory, forgot about it, chalked it up to high school stupidity even though I knew how wrong it was, and lately it's just been rearing its ugly head again because... you know, like, not only is it something to do with Donald Trump and all of his obnoxious and horrible and disgusting and chauvinistic comments, but it's also something that I'm grappling with now as I'm back in the dating world again, because – I've had a couple of forays into the dating world too, especially online dating, where it's just sort of devolved into sexually harassing comments, and that's *after* people learn about my disability. I mean, forget, you know, just the jerks who message you and say obnoxious sexual things and send you unwanted pictures, but I've also had people who somehow find my disability a sexual turn-on, and then persist in harassing me about that.

So... I'm conflicted, because I know that my disability was not some kind of sexual turn-on to this *guy* who was giving me a lap dance, but it was still somehow part of the reason that I was, like, sexually objectified. I'm – I'm having trouble – you can see why I couldn't write about this, because I'm having trouble even reconciling the whole thing in my head.

KYLE: I don't think that those two things *need* to be reconciled, I think that those two things are two separate sides to two separate issues that are just – they're

equally terrible (laughs), but they're, they're uh – well, they're equally valid. I don't know, maybe to you they're not equally terrible, I don't know, but they're certainly equally valid.

You know, just on a slightly lighter note – and then we can get back to serious, 'cause I can't handle this much serious all at once –

EMILY: (laughs)

KYLE: Unwanted pictures... is like when, like, your pet cat – the best analogy I've ever heard is like when your pet cat brings you a dead bird. (laughs) It's like, uhhh you appreciate the thought, but you really didn't want it.

EMILY: (laughs)

KYLE: I mean, I don't know, I've never done that, I've never gotten any, and as a man I –

EMILY: Oh, for real?

KYLE: No, I, yeah, I mean, I'm a guy, but *as* a guy who has the things that they... they send to women, it has legitimately never crossed my mind, and I'm not saying that in a hashtag-not-all-men kind of way, I'm saying that just as a person, it has never crossed my mind, to like (laughing)... unsolicited send somebody a picture of my –

EMILY: Yeah, just like –

KYLE: ... Genitals.

EMILY: - assault someone's senses.

KYLE: Yeah, just –

EMILY: Forget *actual* sexual assault, like, when you open that up and you're not expecting that –

KYLE: Yeah, it's just gross.

EMILY: Yeah!

KYLE: Um, anyway, so, yeah I can see totally why you wouldn't want to write – how could you? I mean, just talking about it we're both sort of jumbling messes, but... there's a difference, I think, between – and, you know, I'm a man, so take my words with a grain of salt. I know *you* are, but I'm saying that more for the listeners at home –

EMILY: Mm-hmm.

KYLE: I think there's... a difference between, like, some jerk-off showing you that he can physically dominate you by forcing a lap dance on you, and... you know, you on Tindr or whatever getting lewd comments from someone. Because, at least, at least in the context of online dating, at *least* that is, in some vein or another, to be expected – like, that, you know, 'cause you're online dating –

EMILY: Oh, for sure.

KYLE: Yeah, so like it's – even though it's *gross*, it's a different kind of gross, I think – I mean, again I'm – this is all grains of salt, people –

EMILY: No, but you're kind of making a point, but I think as you're saying this, like the connection is coming together in my head that I *was* trying to make, which is –

KYLE: No, by all means –

EMILY: That, like, this... really, really sad part of me, after that all happened, wondered if... harassing and embarrassing and 'what someone thought was funny' sexual touch was going to be the only sexual touch that I would ever be privy to.

KYLE: *Ohhh*, I see.

EMILY: At that time, you know, I mean –

KYLE: (overlapping) I see, I understand, okay, no no, yeah yeah –

EMILY: In high school, like, I hadn't even so much as been kissed, or had... interest returned to me, you know, that all – my love life and my sexual life blossomed in college, okay? Like, I think it's... okay to divulge that detail, but in high school like not at all. And I think that largely had a lot to do with my disability, and nobody wanted to be associated with *the girl in the wheelchair*, especially because I was the *only* girl in a wheelchair at my school. So... you know, I was kind of like a 'stay away from her!' and so, I kind of thought, like... is this it? Am I only ever going to be touched by a guy in a way that suggests that I'm just some kind of joke?

KYLE: Well, I'm glad that that was sort of... that somebody along the line proved that wrong for you.

EMILY: Yes.

KYLE: I mean no, I mean I can't imagine, I *genuinely* cannot imagine the... feeling, besides the obvious, you know, physical feeling, of how... like that *weight* that must have been lifted off of your shoulders and brain when you sort of realized that that *wasn't*, in fact, the only sort of physical intimacy – if you can call it that – that you'd

get from somebody. But... you know, you brought up fetishism earlier, which is... we said on our sex episode that, although we respect consenting adults, that personally it's just something where we both sorta just go... eh, and draw a line.

EMILY: Yeah, devotee-ism, that is.

KYLE: I mean, again, I'm going to say it again, if that's your thing and you –

EMILY: If you're into disability as a fetish?

KYLE: No, I mean, no, if you *are* a disabled person who's into that, and –

EMILY: Oh, okay.

KYLE: - you find someone, disabled or not, who's into that, like – by all means, but it's my right as a person to say that that's (laughing) it's not for me?

EMILY: (laughing) Or me!

KYLE: And I just, quite frankly, don't get it, but whatever gets your rocks off, man, but having said that – having said that – again, I don't know how to navigate that field, because I'm not a wheelchair user, but I'm interested if you – I mean, if you're coming forward with assault I don't think this is too much of a tough ask, but I'm interested in, sort of, the difference in, sort of... tone, if you will, I guess? I don't really know what I mean – like – how does the conversation differ when you encounter one of those people, before and after disability? That's my – that's a good question. I like that question.

EMILY: Okay, wait, so let me make sure I understand the question –

KYLE: Okay, yeah.

EMILY: So... how does the tone of... online dating sexual-obnoxious-harassment comments change versus like when they are just talking to 'random girl' and then when they know that I'm in a wheelchair?

KYLE: Yeah, like when you're unknowingly talking to a devotee.

EMILY: I don't know if I've ever had a devotee approach me and that I've indulged this person, like I think one time I was talking to someone who found my disability to be a turn-on, um... and they took that way too far.

KYLE: Oh really?

EMILY: Almost, like, infantilizing me.

KYLE: Right.

EMILY: But I don't think that they were a devotee, I think they just had this realization that suddenly, like, disability was hot to them.

KYLE: Well, I mean... I suppose you opened their world to a whole –

EMILY: (laughs)

KYLE: You helped them discover themselves.

EMILY: Well, good. I hope I never ever hear from him again. This was, like, *years* ago, but –

KYLE: I mean, it's an interesting – it's interesting to me because I *don't* understand it. I would love to understand it! I really would, like I would love to understand the mindset between the two people, like, I... that's interesting to me.

But... what I wonder is this, as long as we're taking the topic from like totally dark and scary to something a *teensy* bit lighter, is... I think that there is a genuine difference between somebody who finds your disability attractive, for some reason or another, and a straight-up *fetish*, in the same way that I like boobs but I don't have a boob *fetish*. I think that there's... there's a big difference in my brain between liking something, even liking it a lot, and making it into a fetish. And I – I don't know where that line is, but I think that with disability, un I – I mean, again, I've never been told that my disability is attractive or not, like that's a *weird* thing and, it's going to happen in my life, I've had... I've come close to hearing that, but I've never heard it quite like that, but I've also never heard '*Oh my god I wasn't attracted to you and then I learned you had CP and I'm so attracted to you now*', like that's... that's just a foreign thing to me.

EMILY: Yeah, disability and sexuality are super weird. And I know we tried to broach the subject once before –

KYLE: We were *new*.

EMILY: Yeah, we were just newbies at that point, like I honestly thing that there's so many ways that we can dive deeper into this topic and this is a good start because there's a lot to untangle here. Like, I mean, and also just.... I think it's a matter of willingness to discuss personal experience, because –

KYLE: I agree.

EMILY: That wasn't *fun* for me, to recount that story, but at the same time it was also... kind of liberating? Because I... literally, I dunno - tell me, do you do this, Kyle? Like, I narrate my life in my head sometimes.

KYLE: Eh, it depends on the situation. Yeah... yeah.

EMILY: So, like –

KYLE: Yeah.

EMILY: I'm sitting here almost narrating, like, the situation, like playing it back out in my head, and then thinking of all the ways I could have handled it differently if only I was older and more of a badass, and like –

KYLE: Well, if you're talking about *that* then of course –

EMILY: Sure, but also literally *narrating* it, like playing it out, like *Emily did this*, and then *this guy did this*, and like – just sort of recounting it to myself.

KYLE: (Overlapping) Well, it depends on the situation, but like... when I'm recounting something in my life... yeah, totally.

EMILY: I don't know, I don't know if 'narrating' is even the right word, but just... this constant *replaying* of it, and it's been keeping me up at night, because I think the fears that it kind of inserted into my brain, like this 'you'll never be taken seriously sexually' and like, also 'you have no recourse if you're sexually harassed or assaulted' I'm now carrying that knowledge with me while also trying to navigate the dating world as a disabled woman.

KYLE: I have a question.

EMILY: Yes?

KYLE: You said earlier – in fact, you said right at the beginning, before, I think, you even told the story, I don't remember, that's just how bad my memory is – (laughing) but before you even started telling the story you said it wasn't traumatic... to you. And I sort of understood what you mean, in that it doesn't, it's not something that you think about *today*, I mean I understood you, but then I just heard – you just said *that*, you just said like, it's in the back of your head, and you *know*... that it's always *there* especially because – not –

The way you're making it sound – and please correct me if I'm wrong, because it's your life – is that the *event* wasn't as traumatic as the fact that nothing happened, even though you tried to report it. Or, say something. I think that that was – the way you're describing it makes it sound like that was the more traumatic... part. If I'm understanding you –

EMILY: (Overlapping) Yeah, I think that makes sense.

KYLE: Okay.

EMILY: I mean, I think I mean, it wasn't traumatic in the sense that, like... I was not raped. I don't, I do not claim, and I know it's not fair to play 'Oppression Olympics' or 'Sexual Assault Olympics' over here, but I do not claim to have had something that caused, you know, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in me.

KYLE: Okay.

EMILY: Or something like that. Or that had completely turned me away from sexual interaction because I was so scarred by it.

KYLE: I see.

EMILY: But my psyche was scarred by it, my interactions are influenced by... that particular interaction.

KYLE: Do you... I mean, I don't know, this is a hard thing, I'm not even sure what I want to ask, I mean... if, indeed, the aftermath of the event, in that you weren't taken seriously, was the more traumatic thing... if that's the case, then has there ever been a moment in your current life where, when you've thought about that, and this experience previously – like when you went to write about it, for example – that you hadn't considered – and again this is not me being apologetic or anything – that's to my listeners, not to you – that... your teacher could have just been a dick? And, like... like, your teacher laughed at you. Did you tell another one?

EMILY: (Overlapping) No, that was –

KYLE: Like, did you ever take into account that maybe it was the teacher, not the fact that... like, the *teacher* thought it was funny that the little girl in the wheelchair was assaulted and not the fact that it was the assault itself, is what I'm saying.

EMILY: Yes, I definitely, well –

KYLE: Okay.

EMILY: The other thing too was, we're talking here – I guess this is an added layer – we're talking about, like, the Golden Child of the theater program, too, who did this to me.

KYLE: Oh! I didn't... yeah, okay, so...

EMILY: So, like... you know, 'Ha ha that's so funny but we can't get him in trouble because also he's the lead in our play!', like, do you know what I'm saying?

KYLE: Well, I do, but that's like... the worst thing, because–

EMILY: I don't think that was the motivation behind it –

KYLE: (Overlapping) No, I know, but I mean –

EMILY: I literally just think that she was like, 'Um, okay, I can't do anything about it, ha ha ha that was funny, I think it's kind of hilarious and what a clever way to play a funny joke on someone'

KYLE: I don't think it's funny.

EMILY: No, me neither – I, like, cried about it a little bit. I was super upset and... also, it's just like... it was backstage, it was dark, it was disorienting, I mean it was just one of those things like – I know I keep insisting that I'm not traumatized by it, because I don't think that's the right word, but I'm affected by it. Like, make no mistake, if you get too close to me in a dark place and I don't really know you or trust you, my immediate reaction is to, like, make sure I'm kinda covering my body up.

KYLE: Are you sure it's because of that? I mean, I'm not –

EMILY: No, that's probably just in general, as a disabled woman I'm –

KYLE: (Overlapping) Well I say that because –

EMILY: (Overlapping) Kinda vulnerable in those situations.

KYLE: The reason I ask *that*, just so that you all know, is that Emily also does that with people she *does* know –

EMILY: (Laughing)

KYLE: Having snuck up on Emily before not knowing this at *all*, by the way, this is the first time hearing this... yeah, so I dunno. It's weird how things that you –

EMILY: But I'm super touchy-feely though.

KYLE: Yeah, that's true. You're like a puppy.

EMILY: Like, and it's also, if I – okay, my college roommate would just, like, pop over and climb in the back of my wheelchair, or like sit on my lap and give me a lap dance, but that was funny. And... I don't think that's a double standard, I think that's because she knows me better than almost anyone on the planet and I knew it wasn't sexual harassment, it was just her trying to get my attention.

KYLE: That's not... it's not a double standard. There's a difference. It *would* be if it was the exact same scenario and you thought it was cool, but the difference isn't that she's a woman, the difference is that you know who she is and it's your *best friend* –

EMILY: (Overlapping) Yeah.

KYLE: And you're clearly comfortable with who she is and – yeah, no, that's not a double standard, anyone who think that it is–

EMILY: Or it's like, okay, it's like, okay – so *you* are a man who I allow in my personal space, a rarity but like – it's okay, so like you, for instance, could hop on the back of my wheelchair – because we do that a lot, just to clarify, like, Kyle always hops on the back of my wheelchair – and then if I need him to look something up on the phone while we're going somewhere, he'll, like, lean over and his arms will be, like, on top of me as he looks something up so he doesn't fall off the wheelchair. And that doesn't bother me, despite being a total invasion of my personal space, because I *know* you.

KYLE: Yeah, that's exactly why – it would be a double standard if it did bother you, and with your roommate it didn't, but it's... it's not because I'm a man, it's because you know who I am and that's – yeah.

EMILY: Yeah, so I just want to clarify, I'm not, like, afraid of men over here.

KYLE: Yeah, no, well that's – you know, it's important, you know? You don't know who's listening, that's why I keep clarifying every other sentence I say. Um...

EMILY: But also, I feel like the clarifications are, like, kind of frustrating in and of themselves, because I hope that people know that in no way would we justify...

KYLE: Yeah, but you know, I mean... I'm not shy about saying that I'm not a fan of having to do that, but when it comes to things that are this serious... this isn't something that you play around with, so...

EMILY: Yeah. And also, like, to bring it back to Donald Trump for a minute, I think the reason this came up in particular is because of the Donald Trump stuff.

KYLE: Right!

EMILY: And just, like, this idea that, like, there is no recourse for –

KYLE: Just grab 'em by the pussy.

EMILY: Yeah, come on now! Are you kidding me? Like –

KYLE: By the way – you can finish, I don't mean to interrupt you, but –

EMILY: I'mma let you finish.

KYLE: But, you know, Beyoncé had one of the best vid – Anyway –

EMILY: (Laughs)

KYLE: You know, you say that we're apolitical on this show – and we are, but I... it's hard to imagine a world, and I know there are, they're out there –

EMILY: Can you just say my favorite line?

KYLE: I just... it's apolitical –

EMILY: Can you just say my favorite line?

KYLE: What's that?

EMILY: 'In a world', can you just say it?

KYLE: (Deep voice) *In a world...*

EMILY: Thank you, ugh.

KYLE: In a world –

EMILY: (laughs)

KYLE: It's apolitical to talk about Donald Trump, because I don't know anyone who likes him. (Laughs) Like, I –

EMILY: I don't think people who listen to our show are fans of Donald Trump.

KYLE: Well, that too, so like... talking about him is still apolitical, because to me he's just the host of The Apprentice and for some reason he's the Republican nominee for president.

EMILY: Do you know I liked that show?

KYLE: Yeah, well, we all make mistakes in life.

EMILY: (Deep sigh) Man.

KYLE: He'd fire me.

EMILY: (Laughs)

KYLE: He'd fire you too!

EMILY: Oh, for sure. But, yeah... the whole Donald Trump thing, like, the reason that I guess I wanted to talk about this sexual assault business is because that really kind of brought it back up for me, you know? It reminded me that, like, guys can be that much of a jerk and still get away with it, and that, you know, you can be that much of a jerk and run for the President of the United States. So I guess in the back of my mind I'm sitting here hoping, like, is this guy who did this to me, like, still being a total a-hole to other people?

KYLE: (Overlapping) Well that's why I asked you –

EMILY: Or did he grow up and learn? Like, I know you asked me that in the beginning –

KYLE: No, no, but I mean, that's – when you're that age – that's an important distinction,. It doesn't make what he did to you any less terrible, but there's still a lot of growing up to do when you realize stuff you've done as a teenager is horrible and wrong and terrible and unforgiveable, but still you are an adult now and you might grow up and say 'wow, that's terrible, I'll never do that again'. Or you might turn into... Donald Trump. (Laughs) I don't know; it's different for every person.

EMILY: (Laughs) Yeah, and... it just, it kind of bums me out. Like, I'm just super bummed out by the whole 'Donald Trump' and making, you know, sexual assault and rape-related comments. It just really upsets me. And –

KYLE: Oh, he's a disgusting man, Emily, that's just what he is.

EMILY: Of course. Of course. He is a chauvinistic jerk.

KYLE: Watch, he's going to tweet at us, like, (imitating Donald Trump) *Just heard The Accessible Stall, horrible podcast. Sad.*

EMILY: (laughs; imitating Donald Trump) *What losers!*

KYLE: Actually, dude, that would be amazing if he –

EMILY: (Overlapping) I mean, bring it Donald Trump, I don't even care.

KYLE: (Overlapping) I'm not even kidding, I want some of your 22 million Twitter followers, man.

EMILY: (Laughing) You know how many Twitter followers he has?

KYLE: He said it in one of the debates.

EMILY: Oh, god.

KYLE: I doubt it's actually 22 million, but it just... that's such a large number that I was like, eh. You know, much like his net worth, he's probably...

EMILY: But still, the thing is, and this is just sort of like tying it together in my head, so... as much as we are a show about disability, I also think that current events and life experiences play into that, even if they always don't tie directly back to disability. The fact is that we're experiencing all of this through the lens of disabled people.

KYLE: I mean, yeah, everything can tie into disability in some way or another. This happens to be a very unfortunate topic in, you know, even if it's not as disability-related as *pre-peeled oranges*, for example –

EMILY: Aww, our first episode, when we were just mere babies!

KYLE: Yeah! This is a good episode, not just for its content, but it shows that everything *can* come back to it, so. You know.

EMILY: Yeah, disability affects how we experience the world, and it affects how people interact with us. It's just a reality. And I think... another question is... would that same thing have happened to me if I had just been sitting on a regular folding chair and didn't have a disability? Would he still have done that? Would there have been another way to sexually harass me? Would he have found some other way, or would he have taken no interest in doing anything so completely douche-y if –

KYLE: There's so many answers to that, though. I mean, on the one hand... you could have just gotten up and been like 'what the hell, man?' and he would have been like 'ehh, uhh', but on the other hand it could have gone much worse. I mean, there's no – you can't do that, because there's always a better and worse scenario to everything ever if you could consider every possibility of everything. So...

EMILY: Very true.

KYLE: Yeah, so, I'm not – you know, that's a silly thing, if you say – I mean, like, what's silly is like 'oh, well it could have been worse'. Well, yeah! But like, you know, we're not soothsayers, we don't know, it doesn't make what happened any less good or bad, it's terrible still, no matter how you slice it.

EMILY: This is actually reminding me of an article that I read in the *New York Times* recently, because the *New York Times* is doing a series of op-eds related to disability. And so, someone published an op-ed about how she has never really been subjected to the male gaze as –

KYLE: Oh, yeah yeah yeah!

EMILY: I just found it – it's called 'Longing for the Male Gaze'.

KYLE: We'll put it in the thing.

EMILY: Yeah, so, it's basically an article about how this woman is visibly disabled, and she's actually never really *been* subjected to the things like the cat calls and the, you know, the sexual comments and the sexual glances and things like that. And... I think that I actually related to that story immediately, because there's part of me that's like... I wish people *would* look at me more, or cat call me more or find me sexually attractive more often, and that the wheelchair wouldn't be like a... giant...

KYLE: Immediate turn-off?

EMILY: Yeah, or like a giant neon warning sign, like '*Do not find her sexually attractive*', you know, but...

KYLE: That was such a great article, man. Sorry.

EMILY: It was really good, but then I thought more about it and I read a couple of responses to it and, like, do I really want to, for the sake of feeling better about myself, in terms of attractiveness and sexually, want to get to the point where I have to be harassed? Like, I'm just looking at the article right now and it does say that the author was harassed at one point, um –

KYLE: I think the point of the – I mean, again, I'm a man, *I'm a man*, so anyone listening, know that, right? But –

EMILY: I don't think that delegitimizes your perspective on being disabled and being sexually harassed.

KYLE: (Overlapping) Well – I don't either, but just so anyone knows, like – (laughs) I don't think that the point of the article was *Oh, I wish my disability wasn't such an issue that I do get harassed*, it was more like.... These are things that able-bodied women... I'm not going to say 'take for granted', 'cause it's not like it's a thing to yearn for, but that a catcall, as disgusting as it is, is rooted in finding someone physically attractive, and that's something that the author doesn't get to experience. So, it's not like she's yearning for a catcall – from what I understood about the article – it's more that she wanted to yearn for attractiveness so much that she was willing to accept what came with it, good and bad.

EMILY: I think, more than that, it was about this feeling of being invisible to the male gaze, the one in which you are an object of attraction to them. You know, I mean, that's something I think about all the time, I mean, especially because I would venture to say a lot of my friends are... pretty good looking.

KYLE: Yeah.

EMILY: And also non-disabled. I've, like, I've got some good-looking friends!

KYLE: (Imitating Emily) My friends are pretty!

EMILY: Yeah, I have very pretty friends! And when I go out with my pretty friends, you know, they definitely get the looks and they get looked at and they get appreciated for their bodies, and on the one hand I'm like *ew, you gross pigs, stop, like, looking my friend up and down*, and on the other hand I'm like, (whining voice) *what about meee? Like, I'm pretty over here, but I just happen to be sitting on a tank!*

KYLE: Tanks are pretty!

EMILY: (Laughs)

KYLE: I dunno. There's a difference, though – there's a *huge* difference between, like, a glance up and down and then, like, 'huh, yeah' and, like.... An *ogle*. Like, there's a... I mean, like there's... I mean, you know.

EMILY: Yeah, but I don't exactly get ogled. Or I get ogled and it's because, like, *oh she's a person in a thing on wheels*.

KYLE: Yeah, yeah, well, it's – wasn't that your point? It's that you get ogled for the wrong reason? Like, if there was a right reason–

EMILY: (Overlapping) Yeah, but some people get ogled because they're hot.

KYLE: Well, I know, and I would say that that's still a little weird. I mean, I know a lot of men that do that but there's a huge difference between going, like, *I'm glancing up and down* – like, exaggeratedly, for those who can't see – and just like... looking up and down at someone and just nodding in your head, that *oh, they're pretty!* Like there's – it's not the same, I don't think.

EMILY: Yeah. But you know the other thing too is –

KYLE: (Overlapping) But again, I'm a guy, so like what the hell do I know.

EMILY: But honestly – and this is maybe the first time I'm ever having this thought ever in my entire life – what if someone, like... *is* looking at me, initially because of the wheelchair, but then also realizes that I'm not, like, an ugly... disgusting person?

KYLE: (Laughing, overlapping) But they're staring at you anyway!

EMILY: I mean, like, is that possible?

KYLE: No, but they're staring at you anyway, because of the wheelchair, and now they're all nervous and they don't know how to, like, approach you and it's all weird, and like, you're thinking that it's because you're in a wheelchair and you're unattractive, and they're thinking it's like, *oh, she's in a wheelchair and she's attractive, what do I do? Oh, that's just -*

EMILY: Right, but that's also assuming, like, assuming I think I'm attractive, which is a whole other thing entirely.

KYLE: That's – well, that's a sitcom, is what you just described.

EMILY: (Laughs)

KYLE: But I don't know, I mean again –

EMILY: Like I just wrote a new disability sitcom!

KYLE: I've never had that problem, mostly 'cause I'm, like... you know what my problem is? My problem with my disability – because you can't really tell if I'm, like, sitting down somewhere – for me it's height. For me it's height. In the same stereotypical way that, like, *men don't like fat chicks, women don't like short guys* – it's all stereotypical and it's not true for everyone, and it's only the worst people that think that – but it does happen! And I have been –

EMILY: I'm okay with short guys. (Laughs)

KYLE: No, of course! And there's nothing wrong with how a woman weighs at all, like that's a terrible thing that – but people do think that!

EMILY: Oh, for sure.

KYLE: But... like that's – for where your disability is, like, the most *for you*, for me it's height. I'm not saying my disability has never played a part in – for all I know it has – but my most obvious feature when I stand up isn't that I have CP, it's that I'm short. I'm 5'4". And to some women that's a turn-off. And does it bother me? Yes. But do I lose sleep over it at night? Not really, 'cause I can't change it. You know?

EMILY: See, I... also cannot change my particular circumstance, but it definitely... it causes me to beat *myself* up. Like somehow it's *my* fault that I have a disability and that I look the way I do and not the other person's fault for being narrow-minded.

KYLE: Well, I mean, but – if they're so narrow-minded, I mean, if they're *that person* and then that narrow-mindedness got taken away – sure it might be fine for a while, but they're still narrow-minded in other ways, probably. So it's sort of like a good BS detector. That's your one silver lining.

EMILY: Yeah, I mean I definitely – I have my radar for sure, um, you know, my, like, douche radar, if you will – can we say that on this podcast? Yes we can. We just said it a lot in this last episode, but –

KYLE: I know.

EMILY: (Sigh) Yeah, I don't know. Like, there's disability and my sexuality, and sexuality in general, and just... the election man, like, come on–

KYLE: (Laughs, imitating) *The election man* –

EMILY: (Laughs, overlapping) Everything just –tangled up in my head –

KYLE: Wait, hold on, can I ask you a question? Did you say 'The Election Man', as in Donald Trump, or 'the election-comma-man', like 'oh gosh, this election' – which one was it?

EMILY: The election-comma-man –

KYLE: Oh, that's disappointing!

EMILY: But I mean, it applies to Donald Trump as well.

KYLE: That's disappointing, I thought you were calling Donald 'The Election Man'

EMILY: (Laughs)

KYLE: Which is what I'm going to call him from now on, until November 9th.

EMILY: (Overlapping) Oh. Oh my god.

KYLE: He's The Election Man. And Hillary's The Election Woman!

EMILY: (Laughs)

KYLE: Oh, god. Go vote, kids.

EMILY: Oh, my god. I don't even know what's going to happen when I wake up on November 9th. Who am I kidding? I'm not going to sleep until they call that.

KYLE: You know what's going to happen is that I'm going to deactivate Facebook, because I'm not going to be happy either way. I love Hillary, like – no I don't, but I love her more than Trump, a lot more – but I just... there's, like, no matter – (laughs) the amount of self-righteousness that's going to flood my social media on November 9th, no matter the outcome, is going to be too much for my brain to handle.

EMILY: I already have my status ready for, like – if Hillary Clinton gets elected –

KYLE: (Overlapping) You see, that's exactly what I'm talking about.

EMILY: And it's a good one. So I'm not telling anyone.

KYLE: That's exactly what I'm talking about. Like, I just... I'm glad... well –

EMILY: You know where I thought of it? In the shower.

KYLE: Well, I mean, where does anyone think of all their good thoughts?

EMILY: In the shower. (Laughs) Always in the shower. I'm so glad we've once again devolved to talking about nothing useful, as we do on this show.

KYLE: You know what? You know what? Look, where we started to where we are – different worlds, man. (Laughs)

EMILY: Yeah no, look, that was a heavy topic, I didn't enjoy talking about it, but at the same time, it feels *good* to talk about something so substantial like that.

KYLE: Almost as good as a hot, relaxing shower at the end of a podcast! (Laughs)

EMILY: A shower!

KYLE: Jesus Christ.

EMILY: It all comes back to showers. What's your final takeaway? *My* final takeaway is that I want to go take a shower.

KYLE: My final takeaway is that we can talk about anything and within 45 minutes we'll devolve it into existentialism and what anything means.

EMILY: (Laughs) Yeah, I feel like we – I feel like we should have serious takeaways.

KYLE: I mean, my final takeaway is sexual assault is terrible and disgusting and awful and probably one of the worst things – if not *the* worst thing – that one human being can do to another.

EMILY: But I feel like you're just stating the obvious.

KYLE: Listen, if it was so obvious, it would happen less, so.

EMILY: Fair. As that was coming out of my mouth I was like, feeling that.

KYLE: It is obvious! It is. And I feel like to the majority of people it's obvious, but to those who are on the fence about whether or not it's the worst thing ever –

EMILY: (Overlapping) Oh my god, please get on the right side of the fence.

KYLE: I have some news: It is the worst thing ever. No, but in terms of the show, my final takeaway is that, you know, this type of thing is weird enough on its own; when you add disability to it it's even weirder. If you're somebody who has had an experience that you *think* is sexual assault, I mean, tell somebody you trust and if they laugh at you *tell someone else*. I mean, I'm sure that sixteen-year-old Emily didn't know that and that's why she didn't – am I right? I don't mean to speak for you, but am I right?

EMILY: No, I'm nodding my head hard right now.

KYLE: But, you know, I feel like if this happened to you tomorrow, heaven forbid, that you would tell as many people that you had to until someone believed you, right?

EMILY: Yeah, I mean, it... being someone who puts herself out there in various forms of media anyway, I feel like this is the one thing that would really give me pause. I'm able to talk about this now because we're over a decade removed from the situation, but... you know, this is one of those things where I understand why, you know, like – everyone's criticizing women now for *just* coming forward, but –

KYLE: Well that's a load of non – like, I can't stand that.

EMILY: But there's, like –

KYLE: That's so nonsensical to me. Sorry, go on, I just can't –

EMILY: What's nonsensical? The criticism for coming forward?

KYLE: Yes! Don't criticize anyone! Like, the reason that they don't come forward is because you didn't believe them when they told you seventeen million years ago!

EMILY: Right, so that's exactly how I feel!

KYLE: So now, when you still don't believe them seventeen years later, it's like... well, why even bother?

EMILY: Yeah! So now, for me – I don't even know if it was like – I was *believed*, but it was funny. So now I feel like I would really stop and think hard about it before I would go, like... report it publicly, because – for fear of somehow being rebuffed or somehow being told that, you know, of course – 'well you're disabled', like somehow

you were asking for it, or 'it's your fault', or 'you were the one sitting' – I don't know, like, I'm getting out of hand now with that, but –

KYLE: Which is funny – I didn't mean to extend this podcast for any longer than we have to, but – and I do mean *funny* in like a cosmic irony kind of way, because – you know, we're also completely asexual beings with no desire for anything whatsoever, so you know, that's just a whole other – that's the other stereotype where –

EMILY: *Ohhhh*, I thought you were calling *us* asexual! I was like... no...

KYLE: No, no, not you and me, but like, disabled people in general are also seen, at large –

EMILY: Right, we're either overly sexualized and fetishized, or we're desexualized completely.

KYLE: Which is like... weird? Because we're pretty much like anyone else in that most of us have... desires and needs and wants –

EMILY: Unless we don't, which is okay –

KYLE: Well, that's why –

EMILY: Because there are people *without* disabilities who don't.

KYLE: Well, that's why I said most.

EMILY: Yeah.

KYLE: (Laughs) I don't – I never say 'all' on this show. 'All' is relative, man. You never say 'all'. Well, 'all' is absolute, it's not relative. Nothing is 'all' except for 'all humans breathe air'. We do.

EMILY: (Pause) Can confirm. Can confirm. Although isn't it funny that I stopped to think about that? Because, like –

KYLE: Well, I mean, you never know! You never know. I'm learning new things about the world every day.

EMILY: (Laughs) But, anyway, this was a particularly liberating episode for me, and also just a good talk in general. Sorry that y'all had to... sit here while I was on my therapy couch, but also not sorry because I'm not apologizing for talking about my personal experiences.

KYLE: (Deep voice) *You're god damn right.*

EMILY: (Laughs)

KYLE: Don't ever apologize for feeling... liberated, or something! I'm trying to be a supportive friend, am I doing it right?

EMILY: Yes. (Laughs)

KYLE: Okay.

EMILY: Good job, Kyle, you get a cookie!

KYLE: Yaaay!

EMILY: But anyway, so, if you did make it through this whole episode, because I know that it was a little bit heavy in some parts, thank you, we appreciate it, we appreciate *you*, and we are glad that you listened. And if you would like to, you know, tweet us or get in touch with us on Facebook or through email, we're here.

KYLE: Please do! We welcome it.

EMILY: And on that note... I think that's a wrap!

KYLE: Good night, everybody!

EMILY: Thanks for listening!

KYLE: By bye!

EMILY: Bye!