



Off Menu – Ep 209: Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Ed Gamble

Welcome to the Off Menu podcast, taking the spoon of the internet, scooping out the inside of the passion fruit of humour and adding it to the fruit salad.

James Acaster

Oh, that's a lovely looking fruit salad now.

Ed Gamble

Getting a bit tropical.

James Acaster

Pretty tasty. That's Ed Gamble, my name is James Acaster. We own a dream restaurant and every week we invite a guest in and ask them their favourite ever starter, main course, dessert, side dish and drink, not in that order. And this week our guest is Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock.

Ed Gamble

Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock. Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, one of the foremost leading space scientists in the UK, James, nay, the world, nay, the universe.

James Acaster

Yes, very exciting to finally have a legitimate scientist on the podcast.

Ed Gamble

We've had Brian Cox before, of course but-

James Acaster

We've had a fake one.

Ed Gamble

Yes, he gave us very short shrift on our idiotic musings.

James Acaster

When they were not idiotic, you know? There are no wrong questions in science.

Ed Gamble

Correct. Yes, that's true.

James Acaster

There are no wrong questions.



Ed Gamble

That's the old phrase.

James Acaster

Only wrong answers.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And we got some wrong answers on that one, so, hopefully, we'll get the right answers this time.

Ed Gamble

Yes, fingers crossed.

James Acaster

Dr Maggie has been involved in so many amazing scientific projects and also, like, on TV more and more these days as well.

Ed Gamble

Yes, absolutely.

James Acaster

I love it whenever she pops up in stuff.

Ed Gamble

Does panel shows and things, yes, and she's brilliant fun.

James Acaster

QI.

Ed Gamble

In QI, I think she's done Would I Lie to You as well.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

She's getting booked more than us for these things, James.

James Acaster

And rightly so.



Ed Gamble

Rightly so. She's a lot of fun and she knows a lot and she's got a new book coming out, James, The Art of Stargazing: My Essential Guide to Navigating the Night Sky.

James Acaster

The Sky at Night.

Ed Gamble

The Art of Stargazing.

James Acaster

My Essential Guide to Navigating the Night Sky.

Ed Gamble

Yes, very, very excited to read that. That is coming out on November 2nd.

James Acaster

On Ebury Press.

Ed Gamble

But, of course, if Maggie says the secret ingredient on which we have pre-agreed, we're going to put her in the airlock and blast her out to space.

James Acaster

Bye-bye.

Ed Gamble

Bye-bye, Maggie.

James Acaster

And this week, the secret ingredient is Milky Way Magic Stars.

Ed Gamble

Milky Way Magic Stars. Of course, Brian Cox, we picked Space Raiders.

James Acaster

Yes, so, you know, we're keeping the space theme.

Ed Gamble

Keeping the space theme.

James Acaster

Obviously, we like Milky Way Magic Stars, we're not idiots.



Ed Gamble

They're fine.

James Acaster

What?

Ed Gamble

They're fine. I'd rather have just the regular Milky Way.

James Acaster

Yes, me too.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, I would.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, the ratio is off with the Magic Stars.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I like the fluffy centre of the Milky Way and I'd like more of that really.

Ed Gamble

Yes and also, Magic Stars are one of those things that if I eat them, I feel like a little baby.

James Acaster

Yes, actually, I hate them and I'm glad we've chosen it as the secret ingredient.

Ed Gamble

Yes, feel like a little baby, I do.

James Acaster

Yes, feel like a little baby and Ed doesn't like feeling like a baby. I don't like it when my friend Ed feels like a baby and I prefer the main bars as well.



Ed Gamble

Yes, absolutely but we're very excited to talk to Maggie. Also, you've got to get her book, sure, but maybe add a little food book to your collection.

James Acaster

Oh, that's fun.

Ed Gamble

My food book, October 26th, Ed Gamble, *Glutton: The Multi-Course Life of a Very Greedy Boy*.

James Acaster

I'm going to read it but it's also available on audiobook, isn't it?

Ed Gamble

It's also available on audiobook. James is going to read it, I mean, he's probably had a proof copy by now.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Did you enjoy it?

James Acaster

I loved it.

Ed Gamble

Thank you but enough chat about my projects, James, unless you want to mention one of yours?

James Acaster

My name is James Acaster and please buy *Party Gator Purgatory* by Temps, the album of the year.

Ed Gamble

This is the Off Menu menu of Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock.

James Acaster

Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock.

Ed Gamble

Welcome, Dr Maggie, to the dream restaurant.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Thank you so much, lovely to be here. Love what you've-



James Acaster

Whoosh! Welcome, Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, to the dream restaurant, we've been expecting you for some time.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Have you?

James Acaster

Where do you stand on genies? As a woman of science, where do you stand on genies like me?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I do like a genie, I must admit. I mean, three wishes, all that? I mean, you can't knock it really.

James Acaster

Well, that's good.

Ed Gamble

I was expecting a genie sceptic in the room.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, I see.

James Acaster

I was expecting you to be a genie sceptic.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, I just watched a film, 1,000 Years of Longing. Actually, it's more than that, 3,000 Years of Longing and that was a genie and that was pretty cool, you see?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Which one's that? What happens in that film?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Idris Elba.

James Acaster

He's a massive genie in a hotel room.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

He is, that's it. And yes and that's it and his toes are poking through the bathroom.



James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I've not heard of this film, I feel like you two have got together and decided to make up a film.

James Acaster

I've heard about the film.

Ed Gamble

To gaslight me into-,

James Acaster

Yes?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

You think you're being gas lit?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh no. No, it's real, honest.

Ed Gamble

Idris Elba's a massive genie in a hotel room?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Bedroom, yes, with his toe-,

Ed Gamble

With his toes poking through the bathroom?

James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, honest.

Ed Gamble

Yes, nice one guys.

James Acaster

Who's the person who gets the genie? Tilda Swinton.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, Tilda Swinton.

James Acaster

Tilda Swinton.

Ed Gamble

Oh, great, Benito's getting involved now. You've all planned this.

James Acaster

Tilda Swinton's in the hotel room, right?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

James Acaster

And then the big genie comes in, Idris Elba.

Ed Gamble

Why does the big genie come in?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

She rubs the lamp. Well, it's glassware, actually, and she breaks it by accident.

James Acaster

She breaks the glassware, that happens sometimes.

Ed Gamble

Interesting.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

Ed Gamble

So, this genie comes out of glassware when it's broken rather than rubbed?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes but that happens with me as well sometimes, that's why in the dream restaurant, if someone smashes a glass.



Ed Gamble

Yes?

James Acaster

I come out of the glass.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

What, and tell them off?

James Acaster

Yes. I go, 'Wahey,' I do that thing that people do.

Ed Gamble

You used to work in a Greek restaurant, didn't you? It was too much in the end.

James Acaster

I was very busy, off my little feet. Are you a foodie, Dr Maggie?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes but a foodie with a caveat.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Okay.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

He's like that, 'Oh.'

Ed Gamble

We love a caveat.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, I have a thirteen year old daughter.

James Acaster

Yes.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And when she was born, I developed a horrendous dairy allergy and it turns out that dairy is in almost everything, especially everything tasty, everything butter, cream, virtually all French cooking is gone.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And it's very severe, I have to carry an EpiPen and if I ingest it, before my throat used to just swell up, which was, you know, the classic but now it's explosive in both ends. So, I do love food and that's why, I'm assuming, in this restaurant, that won't be a problem.

James Acaster

Yes, I can take that away.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's up to you, it's your dream meal, so, we can take that away.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Gosh, wow.

James Acaster

Take that away from you.

Ed Gamble

Is your daughter allergic to dairy as well?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No.

Ed Gamble

But it was her birth that caused you to be allergic to dairy?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Is that ever a source of resentment for you?

James Acaster

Yes. I think everyone wants to know.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Uh, No.

Ed Gamble

Do you never think about it?

James Acaster

But what about if you see your daughter and she's eating, like, a massive sundae and loving it? Are you like, 'Oh, is that nice, is it?'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, 'You enjoying that, are you?'

James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Actually, it was funny, she was very sweet because it cut in soon after she was born, she'd say, 'Yes, my mummy can't eat cream,' so, she used to really look after me that way but she's thirteen now, so, slightly less so.

James Acaster

Yes, now she doesn't care.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But actually, I do it vicariously, so, I'm always like, 'What you eating, Laurie? Is that butter on there? Oh, that looks nice,' which sounds slightly dodgy.

James Acaster

Well, no, hey, I think she deserves it.

Ed Gamble

It just seems unfair, doesn't it?

James Acaster

I didn't know that that happened.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, the idea is that when you're carrying the foetus, your immune system is suppressed, so you don't attack the foetus but then when it comes out, your immune system is meant to go to normal and it is just a very small percentage of people but they just develop random allergies. So, I had a few allergies before but it was things like Brazil nuts, which are really easy to avoid but then suddenly-, and it took me a long time to work it out because my asthma was playing up and my eczema was playing up and I couldn't work out what it was. Turned out to be all dairy.



James Acaster

Oh, man.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I mean, I'm really glad that I will never give birth to a baby.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Many of us are too, actually.

Ed Gamble

Yes, we're very happy. Although, it feels like genies could give birth.

James Acaster

Does big Idris Elba give birth in that film? I've not seen it. Spoiler alert for anyone listening.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, I'll say no.

James Acaster

No, he doesn't? I reckon he could.

Ed Gamble

But if I had three wishes-

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

That would be one of your-

Ed Gamble

One of my wishes could be, 'Genie, I want you to give birth.'

James Acaster

Oh, yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Like, skip the pregnancy, just give birth.

Ed Gamble

Yes, give birth.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Straight in there.



Ed Gamble

'Genie, I want you to have a dairy allergy,' that would be a harsh thing to do to a genie.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Actually, no. No, I wouldn't wish that upon anyone.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

You would find a genie in a lamp and you would have three wishes, and give birth and have a dairy allergy would be two of them?

Ed Gamble

No, I think it'd be one or the other.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I see, yes, you don't want-,

Ed Gamble

Because I think I could cover off what I want from a genie in two wishes.

James Acaster

Yes?

Ed Gamble

Don't you think?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes but-,

Ed Gamble

Like, you don't need three wishes.

James Acaster

What are you talking about?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

What would your wishes be then?

Ed Gamble

Unlimited money, obviously.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Obviously.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

There you go.

Ed Gamble

Obviously, and I don't know actually, then I'd just do-,

James Acaster

That's actually all he needs.

Ed Gamble

Give birth and have a dairy allergy.

James Acaster

Yes?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

So, you reckon with unlimited money you could do anything you wanted?

Ed Gamble

Yes. Don't you think?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No.

James Acaster

What would you say? As a woman of science.

Ed Gamble

Money talks.

James Acaster

What would you say?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

'As a woman of science.'

James Acaster

What would you say?



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, thing is, because my dream is to get out there into space, so, money, unlimited money, yes.

Ed Gamble

Money. Money would help, yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I know. And if you look at the battle of the billionaires at the moment with, sort of, Musk and Branson and people like that but thing is, no, I want to go to the stars, I don't want a low Earth orbit and things like that, I want to go, 'Yes,' out there.

Ed Gamble

So, that would be one of-,

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Star Trek.

Ed Gamble

That would be one of your wishes?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

Ed Gamble

That Star Trek was real and you were the captain of the Enterprise?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Actually, I'll be Uhura.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes? That's exciting. How close can you get to a star before it gets a bit dodgy?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, actually, there is a probe called Parker which is approaching the Sun and doing orbits of the Sun at the moment and it gets pretty close. But, thing is, I want to go the, sort of, next-door star system, so, there's our Sun and the planets, I want to go to the next-door star system, 4.28 light years away, 40 trillion kilometres away and actually go and visit the planets that are going around the star because, yes, the star itself is a bit hot.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



James Acaster

Yes. So, you want to see the other planets?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

James Acaster

And see if there's life there?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Meet the aliens. Yes, meet the aliens.

James Acaster

Meet the aliens.

Ed Gamble

I'd wish to never be ill.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Actually, yes, unlimited money and-

Ed Gamble

Sorry.

James Acaster

Welcome back. We were talking about going to other planets, mate.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, health, wealth and happiness, that's the one.

Ed Gamble

Yes, never be ill. I don't want to live forever.

James Acaster

Yes?

Ed Gamble

So, I'd like to be able to set my own death date but be completely fine up until then and then die.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

You go, bang.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But what if you could live forever but with other people? You know, the people you're close to.

Ed Gamble

I just think I'd just get knackered.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Just bored.

Ed Gamble

Yes, just get so bored.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Because technology's developing so quickly, I think, if I lived long enough, I could make it into space.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

So, you see, hanging around a bit might be quite nice but I wouldn't want to do it on my own, I'd like to, sort of, bring a gang.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's annoying now because I don't have a spare wish to give you a dairy allergy.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Now you've gone for health and wealth.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Thank god for small mercies. But the older you get, isn't it more dangerous going into space? If you're, like, well old and then they fire you up there, you'd break.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Things could go a bit wrong but mentioning Star Trek, so, William Shatner, he went into space when he was 90.

James Acaster

Yes.



Ed Gamble

Wow.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

So, I've got a few years.

James Acaster

That's true, yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But I think you'd go, sort of, gently and it was low Earth orbit but he was weightless and there's a video of him going, 'Oh my-, whoa.'

James Acaster

Yes, he's loving it.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

James Acaster

How long do you think it would take you to get to where you want to go though? Because that's a while away, right?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It is. So, using current technology, and that's travelling at 16km/s.

James Acaster

Whoa.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, I know, nice.

James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I could do with some of that as well but 16km/s, from our star to the next-door neighbour star, is 76,000 years.

James Acaster

Ah.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I like to have a crazy dream.



James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But there's new technology we're trying to develop and you could shorten that down because there's something called Breakthrough Starshot and it's what they call a solar sail. So, a sheet of metallised plastic with a probe in the centre and in the past, we've used sunlight to, sort of, accelerate them but now you could have a bank of lasers, turn off the power to London, fire these lasers, laser beams shoot up and it would accelerate this probe to a fifth of the speed of light.

Ed Gamble

Whoa.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And if you can do that, that's warp factor a quarter. Sorry, I'm a real Trekkie, it's coming through here but yes, warp factor a quarter. And if you do that, you can get from our star system to the next-door star system in twenty years but the probe can weigh no more than one gram, so, again, a limitation, a small point.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

And then how do you get back?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

You don't.

Ed Gamble

You don't, yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

You accelerate to a fifth of speed of light and you just continue.

James Acaster

Well, then, here's the question then, if they get it sorted so that, like, they can do that with people, would you do it, Dr Maggie? Twenty years to get there and you can't come back. That's one hell of a thing. Imagine looking at that, if you've called an Uber, and you're looking at that and it says twenty years.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, twenty years. Well, actually, also, because you're going at a fifth of the speed of light, so, blink and you miss it.



Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

So, you don't even know it's twenty years? So, you've lost twenty years of your life.

Ed Gamble

You can have some of my wishes, Maggie, because it sounds like you need a load of them.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, well, actually, what I would do is, rather than doing that, although I want to get to the stars, I'd retire to Mars, a one-way ticket to Mars because if you look at the planets of the solar system, I think Mars would be the place to go because, you know, Mercury, very close to the Sun. Ugh, you know? Too hot. Venus, actually, is even hotter than Mercury, on average, because it's got the greenhouse effect, it's got things in the atmosphere that heat it up. Earth, we know, quite nice but Mars is a rocky planet, it's cold, so, it's like Antarctica. We know it used to have liquid water running over the surface, there could be signs that there was life there. So, you know, people retire to their gardens? You know, I'll just retire to the surface of Mars, pottering around, 'Oh, what's that?'

James Acaster

I don't know, man. I think you want to meet aliens and you already know there are no aliens walking around Mars. I reckon if they offer you-

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It's true. What, the fly-by?

James Acaster

Yes, I reckon you're doing that.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

We'll see.

Ed Gamble

We'll see.

James Acaster

Before we get into your menu, we should also mention The Art of Stargazing because it's very exciting. What can you tell the listeners about it?



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, as an astronomer, I do some stargazing, sort of, you know how it goes, although that was a passion of mine, right from the get-go, space and astronomy. Sorry, that was me.

James Acaster

No worries. Is that from the future?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. Oh, Captain Kirk, no.

James Acaster

If you did get a text message from Captain Kirk, what would you hope it would say?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Beam me up.

Ed Gamble

Beam me, yes.

James Acaster

What, asking you to beam him up?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, I hope he's beaming me up to some far-flung destination.

James Acaster

Because if he text you saying, 'Beam me up,' you'd go, 'Man, you've got the wrong number. I can't do that. I hope you're not in danger, Captain Kirk.'

Ed Gamble

Also, I don't think I ever saw, on Star Trek, anyone saying, 'I'm going to beam you up.'

James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, I see.

James Acaster

'I'm going to beam you up, Captain.'

Ed Gamble

It was always a request, wasn't it? Rather than a promise.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

More, 'Beam me up now.'

Ed Gamble

Yes, 'Beam me up now.' 'I'm going to beam you up.'

James Acaster

Yes. 'Just so you know, I'm going to beam you up.' 'No, I'm not ready yet.'

Ed Gamble

And I look forward to Star Trek boffins getting in contact with me to let me know the exact episodes where someone has said, 'I'm going to beam you up,' because I'm sure it has happened.

James Acaster

Dr Maggie's probably biting her tongue right now. Knows exactly when it's been said.

Ed Gamble

Yes, she's going to flip out on me in a bit.

James Acaster

Moron-

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Hold me back.

James Acaster

So, The Art of Stargazing, which, of course, we're all made of stars, right?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, stardust.

James Acaster

So, do you think stargazing makes you a pervert?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I never saw it in that way. Actually, well, no, I'm feeling quite embarrassed now because.

Ed Gamble

Is it too late to change the book?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, I know. Yes, we'll change the title. So, we are all made of stardust because the stuff that's in us is made in the heart of stars and stargazing, I think, is important because I've been doing it since I was a child but it's something that every culture across the world has done. So, to me, it's the oldest science



and if you do look at everybody, they've always looked up and wondered and that's what we continue doing today. So, it's just, sort of, a few handy tips about where to go, if you live in a flat, for instance, turn off the inside lights, open the windows, look away from street lights. If you can get somewhere dark and glorious, you know? Yes, places with dark skies status, go out there. I used to lie on the ground with a glass of Prosecco. The wine really helps.

James Acaster

Yes. Where's the best place you've found? Like, best location, where the stars looked the best.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. So, I've been lucky enough to work on some of the big telescopes, they build them in great locations. In fact, I'm going to visit one next month. It's called the ELT, the Extremely Large Telescope.

James Acaster

What? Who named that? What kid named that?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, it comes on the heels of the VLT, the Very Large Telescope. So, got the Very Large Telescope and now we're going for the Extremely Large Telescope.

Ed Gamble

Well, VLT's a vegan BLT.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

You're on a mountain in the Atacama Desert, yes. But yes, because it's the Atacama Desert, driest place on Earth, the stars there are-, and as the Sun sets, the sky goes a deep purple and then the stars appear and they make my heart sing to see them.

James Acaster

Wow. Are you excited, one day, to be invited to look through the FMT?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I'm worried here.

Ed Gamble

They will get to a point where they have to say FMT.

James Acaster

Yes, they've got to say the FMT. They've got to go, 'Do you want come look through the Fucking Massive Telescope?' That's going to happen one day.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No, sorry, yes, I'm happy. I mean, the bigger the telescope is. Yes, we've got the VLT, the ELT, we've got the OLT, the Overwhelmingly Large Telescope but the FM-,



James Acaster

Overwhelmingly Large Telescope, the OLT, wow.

Still or sparkling water?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, this has to be still because sparkling water makes me burp.

James Acaster

Right. You don't like burping?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, actually, I was thinking, because this is the genie restaurant, so, burps could be a lot more fun here.

James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

In which case, yes, I would go for sparkling water because if burps were, sort of, rainbows and tasted of, yes, anything you could think of, then that would be worth it.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

What would you like the burp to taste of?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Gosh. I've got a thirteen year old daughter and she's got a vodka thing at the moment. I don't know why.

James Acaster

What?

Ed Gamble

Right.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No, she doesn't actually drink it.

Ed Gamble

Maggie, that's very worrying.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, except she doesn't actually drink it but she's got an obsession with, sort of, 'The minute I'm turn eighteen, I'm going for the vodka.'

James Acaster

She wants to have vodka, she really wants vodka when she's eighteen?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes and the thing is, I don't think vodka's that nice on its own.

Ed Gamble

No.

James Acaster

No, it's not.

Ed Gamble

But that's such a thirteen-year-old thing to think, I think.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I know.

Ed Gamble

When I was younger than that, actually, I had to write a story at school, about hunting for treasure, and I was, maybe-,

James Acaster

I know about this story.

Ed Gamble

Six or seven.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

Ed Gamble

And I wrote a whole story where I was digging for treasure and I kept finding what I thought was the treasure but it was empty gin bottles and empty vodka bottles and I handed it in and I told my mum about it and she was like, 'They're going to think I'm an alcoholic.'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.



Ed Gamble

'They just think you're finding all these empty spirit bottles in the house every day.'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Sort of, 'Mum, I've got another one.'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Do you know what sparked the interest in the vodka?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No, not really. I think a high percentage proof, as far as I can tell. She's a scientist, what can I say?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

She's already following in your footsteps. Maybe she heard our Dan Aykroyd episode and really wants the crystal skull.

Ed Gamble

Maybe.

James Acaster

Crystal Head.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Get that right, James, he said it enough.

James Acaster

Holy shit, I can't believe I got it wrong. Crystal Head vodka. That is delicious on its own, by the way.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it is actually.

James Acaster

No additives.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Is that what we've got here?



James Acaster

Yes, that's what you've got in that glass, we thought you'd make your daughter jealous, give you a tumbler full of Crystal Head vodka.

Ed Gamble

Leave her to her dairy, you should just sip vodka in front of her and go, 'Look what I can have.'

James Acaster

Yes, 'Only when you're eighteen,' and then she'll rebel against me and do it tomorrow.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. Don't do that.

Ed Gamble

You want to have special burps in the dream restaurant?

James Acaster

That taste like vodka?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, vodka. Actually anything. Well, I do like Amaretto because that's quite sweet and Cointreau, again, quite sweet.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

So, boozy burps?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Boozy burps, yes.

James Acaster

Yes.

Ed Gamble

Obviously, in Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, they do burps that give them weightlessness, essentially, like zero gravity burps.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. Now that would be fun, yes because if I drink enough, I could reach for the stars.

Ed Gamble

Yes.



James Acaster

So, as a woman of science, how long do you think it would take you to burp yourself in outer space?

Ed Gamble

As a woman of science.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. Well, as a woman of science, I've given this lots of thought and the thing is, if I want to count myself as an astronaut, I need to go 100km above sea level because there's, sort of, an imaginary sphere around the Earth and then you're an astronaut. So, I'd have to do that, so, it has to be at least that but that would be fun. So, 100km up and, let's say, goodness me, how much am I going to move with each burp? 10cm?

Ed Gamble

Well, it depends on the strength of the burps, I guess.

James Acaster

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, yes, it's about 10cm a burp, I think.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, yes. So yes, oh, you want me to do the calculation?

James Acaster

Yes, yes. How long would it take you to burp yourself to the point where you're officially an astronaut? And how much fizzy pop would you have to drink to get up there?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. And also, when I got up there, you'd want to wear a spacesuit because otherwise you can't breathe.

James Acaster

Yes, then you can't breathe.

Ed Gamble

But then you wonder how the burps are helping, if they're trapped inside a spacesuit.

James Acaster

Yes, because if you do that.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, yes, that's it. But can you breathe off burps? It's getting very complicated now. But these are the things we should consider.



Ed Gamble

Do you just want still water?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. Now you've said it, I think we'll stick with the still.

James Acaster

That's fair enough if you just want still.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

You look disappointed.

James Acaster

Well, I wanted you to have the one that burps yourself into space.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Fulfilling my dream.

James Acaster

Yes, I mean, if they said to you, 'Dr Maggie, we can send you to this other galaxy, but you have to burp yourself there, and that's the only way we can do it.' Would you do it? And it will take twenty years, but literally twenty. Not blink of an eye twenty years.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Okay, but sustained.

James Acaster

It'll be twenty years of burping yourself over to the other planet.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

That sounds horrible.

James Acaster

Yes, but this is-

Ed Gamble

Get there eventually, though.

James Acaster

You'll be the first one to meet aliens.

Ed Gamble

And you can burp yourself back, as well.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I see. That is helpful. Yes, it's not just you can come back.

James Acaster

Would you do it?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No.

James Acaster

You would say no. So your dream's not worth that.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Trying to work out if it would be better if I was farting.

James Acaster

Yes. Well, okay. Here's your options. You can burp and it'll take twenty years or you can fart and it will take ten years, but it will stink.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, you know, in the vacuum of space, who's going to-,

James Acaster

Would no one know? Can you smell farts in space?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, so-,

Ed Gamble

As a woman of science.

James Acaster

As a woman of science, can you smell farts in space?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

In space. So space is vacuum, so if you fart, the gas would be there, and if someone passed through it and could sniff without, sort of, you know, freezing and suffocating, yes, you could.

James Acaster

So you could smell it.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, but your senses in your nose might, sort of, freeze. But I think it'd be just easier to fart in your spacesuit.

James Acaster

So you would smell it.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Fart in your spacesuit, seal it up.

James Acaster

So you would smell it in your suit I guess.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, yes. Yes. Oh, yes.

James Acaster

Yes, you'd smell it in the suit. Yes. That's good to know.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I'm glad we're considering these, these often not pondered things.

James Acaster

Yes, well, get ready for more of that, because I've got loads of questions. Poppadoms or bread? Poppadoms or bread, Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock? Poppadoms or bread? People with double-barreled surnames are very hard to shout 'Poppadoms or bread at,' so I have to do it really quickly.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, poppadoms, Pocock, you see? Poppadoms, it all pops together, so it's quite nice.

James Acaster

Yes, poppadom, Pocock.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

One of the things I really miss is, you know, really crusty-, sorry, I'm going to go in your Marks and Spencers speak here. A really crusty bread, slathered with pure salted butter.

Ed Gamble

Of course.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Because I can't do the butter at the moment.



Ed Gamble

You can't do it anymore.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And the margarine isn't quite the same, and so that was one of the things on my menu. So it would definitely be bread, and it would be definitely really good quality butter, and lots of it.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. Are you like Ed, and you're buttering every little morsel of bread?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, so I can get more butter per crumb.

Ed Gamble

Yes, tear off chunks and butter the chunks, rather than doing the whole thing.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Have a mouthful, butter it again.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

When I see people at a restaurant take a whole slice and butter it like they're at home, I just think, 'Where's your fucking ambition gone?'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

You've got that pat of butter in front of you. You're not going to get through half of it.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes. Luckily, I'm there to get through it.

James Acaster

So, is this going to set the tone for a lot of the menu? We're getting rid of the dairy.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Actually, no. Some things are, sort of, reminiscent, some things I could probably actually cook at home. So, actually, I was surprised. I thought I might just go for, 'Ah, yes,' but see, though I've got a dairy allergy, it's not too bad for me, because I never really liked, you know, solid cheeses. You know when people bring a cheese board round, I'd never eat that.

James Acaster

Disgusting, I know.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, I didn't like that anyway.

James Acaster

Disgusting.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, that's pretty unanimous, actually.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, it is unanimous.

Ed Gamble

Not unanimous at all. That's the opposite of unanimous.

James Acaster

Ed agrees.

Ed Gamble

I think cheese boards are the best invention of all time.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, see.

Ed Gamble

Yes. And I count as two votes, so it's a draw.

James Acaster

How do you count us two votes?

Ed Gamble

I do.

James Acaster

Since when?

Ed Gamble

I'm the cheese guy.

James Acaster

How long has that been happening for? All the decisions we've made, that Ed's got two votes? Quite a while? Ed says always. No wonder I never get my own way on this podcast.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

You just didn't notice.

Ed Gamble

Benito gets no votes.

James Acaster

Oh yes, that's fair enough.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Actually, you get Benito's vote.

Ed Gamble

Yes, I get Benito's vote, exactly.

James Acaster

Every time I think we've all voted, it's actually you voting twice, that's why I always lose.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

That's a big shame. As a woman of science, do you think that's fair?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

As a woman of science, no, I do not. I believe in equality for all.

Ed Gamble

Fair enough.

James Acaster

Thank you.

Ed Gamble

I'll hand back one of my votes.

James Acaster

Let's get into your menu proper, your dream starter.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

So, dream starter is actually going back to my childhood, and it's something that isn't affected by the dairy allergy at all, and it's Nigerian because my parents come from Nigeria, even though I was born here. And it's something called Jollof rice with dodo.



James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, you're familiar.

James Acaster

Jollof rice, oh.

Ed Gamble

We've got a running chat about Jollof rice on this podcast.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, my.

James Acaster

We've had many guests.

Ed Gamble

We've had many guests from Nigerian backgrounds, many guests with Ghanaian backgrounds, we've had guests with Sierra Leonean background as well.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, definitely. West African.

Ed Gamble

Yes. So a lot of West African guests, and there's always the Jollof Wars.

James Acaster

The Jollof Wars on this podcast.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Okay. So yes, I take a step back.

James Acaster

Who has the best Jollof? And a lot of opinions flying around. Weirdly, so far, no one has chosen a country that they do not themselves come from, or have heritage from. No one has gone, 'Yes, to be fair, actually, it's someone else.'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, actually, next door, Ghana, their Jollof rice is pretty good. Well, I'm three quarters Nigerian and one quarter Sierra Leone. So both do pretty well. Nigeria's slightly better, of course. Well, it's 75% better.



James Acaster

Yes. Would you have that mix in the bowl? 75% of Jollof of Nigeria.

Ed Gamble

You could have like a little lunch tray with segments. Three Nigerian segments and one Sierra Leonean segment.

James Acaster

Good maths. As a man of maths, may I congratulate you, Ed? Yes, very good.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But I think perhaps this is the thing. What you need is a Jollof rice taste off, where you actually have your little Benito box with the little sections and stuff, and sort of Nigerian. Oh, but yes, but unspecified, so people don't know.

Ed Gamble

Blind tasting.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Blind tasting.

Ed Gamble

Blind Jollof.

James Acaster

Yes. A Jollof-off.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Jollof-off, I like it.

Ed Gamble

Brilliant.

James Acaster

Very exciting. Okay, well, we will do that. I mean, but for you, Nigerian is-

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, I haven't tasted the others, so yes, as a woman of science, I can't really judge.

James Acaster

As a woman of science, yes, you know that you have to at least try all of them.

Ed Gamble

So what was the thing you wanted with the Jollof rice.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Dodo.

Ed Gamble

Dodo?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, that's what we called it when I was little, but it's fried plantain.

Ed Gamble

Nice.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But yes, to me, this as a child, this was the nectar of the gods. Ambrosia, stripped down from on high, and yes. But the thing is, choosing your plantain is an art form, because you don't want to go for green, because they're really fibrous. So plantains are like bananas, but it's like a slightly overly ripe banana, because if it is too fresh, then yes, it's too fibrous. Sometimes they do go mouldy, so then you know you've gone too far, but there's a sweet spot probably for about a day or two where you slice into it and it's sticky, and sort of when you fry it it sort of caramelises, and so you get sort of a crisp outer coating and then chomp into the delicious centre.

James Acaster

That sounds very good.

Ed Gamble

I love plantain.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

So do you fry it?

Ed Gamble

I don't think I've done it at home that much, but whenever I'm out and I see it available, I will absolutely get plantain. Because, especially if you're having it in the main meal, it feels like a little cheat where you get, it's almost an extra dessert that fits in perfectly.

James Acaster

There you go, he's not made of stone.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Because it is quite sweet, but yes.

Ed Gamble

Delicious.



James Acaster

Also, you mentioned there coming from on high from the gods and the ambrosia of the gods. Now, I didn't expect that from a woman of science. We had Brian Cox on, who I refuse to give him some sort of, whatever he is, professor or whatever.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

He's professor.

James Acaster

I'm not saying that shit, because that guy-,

Ed Gamble

You never called him a man of science.

James Acaster

And I'd never call him a man of science. I didn't respect him as much, because he would refuse to say 'Ambrosia of the gods.'

Ed Gamble

Yes, he would not say that.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Why?

James Acaster

He would hate the gods.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, I see, gods full stop, any size, shape or form.

Ed Gamble

Also, he didn't enjoy us asking him if dark matter was evil. He wouldn't be drawn on that.

James Acaster

Yes. Can you believe that? We're inquisitive.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, well, as a watcher of the Marvel universe, dark matter, it sounds a bit dodgy to me.

Ed Gamble

There we go, this is what I'm talking about.

James Acaster

Thank you very much.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Again, it's like the ELT and the VLT, I think they should have thought about the name a bit more.

James Acaster

Yes, dark matter.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But dark matter is just sort of a name they gave it because we just don't know what it is. It's just dark. We can't see it, it's dark.

Ed Gamble

Yes, we can't see it because it's hiding, because it's evil.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It's lurking out there, up to mischief.

James Acaster

So that's fair enough, if Brian Cox is listening-,

Ed Gamble

I'm sure he will be.

James Acaster

Will you say to him, 'Be fair, Brian, it could be evil?'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, actually, as a woman of science, I think I can say, 'Brian, yes, it could be evil, we don't know. We have no idea what it is.'

James Acaster

Thank you very much.

Ed Gamble

In your face, Cox.

James Acaster

In your face. We knew it. We called it before, and he spoke down to us.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I can see papers coming out. 'The evil-ness of dark matter'. What should we do?'



James Acaster

Everyone's going to be reporting on how dark matter is evil. I mean, there's a lot of reports now about aliens and stuff, isn't there?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

James Acaster

Are you excited about this?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, actually, yes. In fact, I'm working on a programme at the moment looking at sort of the alien files.

Ed Gamble

Really?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And sort of looking at people's experiences of aliens and sort of what they see and trying to put a scientific bent on it and say, you know, 'What else could it be? What they've seen, was it really aliens? Or, yes, or what else could it have been?'

Ed Gamble

Yes. Could it be, for example, that they're absolutely crazy?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, batshit crazy.

James Acaster

Could be that they're crazy.

Ed Gamble

First question you ask. 'Quick question, before we get into the alien stuff, are you crazy?'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Then wait for the answer. If you say you are crazy and you know it, well, I mean, because you're aware, so does that mean you're not crazy?

Ed Gamble

No, they're the craziest guys of all.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, 'No, I'm crazy.'

James Acaster

They're so crazy, even they can't deny it.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I say I'm a self-certified lunatic.

James Acaster

Yes?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

James Acaster

You do?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

James Acaster

Benito, we've got to tighten the booking policy for this. I didn't know we got a self-certified lunatic on.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Just let anyone in.

Ed Gamble

But by lunatic, do you mean you love the moon?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I do.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

So, yes. Oh, you sound disappointed.

James Acaster

No, no, that's nice. I like that. I feel safe again. You love the moon, that's why you're a lunatic.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I'll drink to that.



James Acaster

Yes, genuinely both drinking now. It's for the listener.

Let's move on to your main course.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, and so this I found quite troubling, because I was thinking in this fantastic restaurant, this wonderful location, what would I like to eat? And I came up with-, well, it was almost a combination of-, sort of a Christmas dinner or just a Sunday roast.

Ed Gamble

Yes?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And I don't know why, but that just really appealed, and I don't know if it's just now. I mean, maybe ask me next week and it'd be something different and it's a Sunday roast, I decided to do a roast pork, so it's not too fatty, but it's got the crackling on, and not the chewy crackling, because that just hurts my teeth, but you know the crisp stuff with the fat removed and then, yes, and then the roast pork, which is moist with apple sauce. I'm trying to sort of skirt around the side at the moment because I want to do something separate for that, but yes, with apple sauce and the roast potatoes and roasted parsnips, and then maybe, sort of, unfortunately, Brussels sprouts. My daughter and I really love Brussels sprouts.

Ed Gamble

Lovely.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh yes, see, I don't know many people who do.

Ed Gamble

If you do them right, you know, they're absolutely delicious.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, with a few lardons and things like that, roast chestnuts.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Yes, very good. Nice and crispy, those good ones.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, so that's what I was thinking. Yes, sort of quite a sizeable plate with this all piled on. Oh, but actually the pièce de résistance is the Yorkshire pudding.



James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, and so this is sort of the non-dairy-,

James Acaster

Absolutely delicious.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

So it could all be served in a massive Yorkshire pudding as far as I was concerned.

James Acaster

Yes. I love it.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Because the thing is, using sort of the non-dairy milks, I can't make Yorkshire-, I used to make fantastic Yorkshire puddings. They'd fluff up in the oven, they'd come out, they'd hardly sink at all and I'd eat them. But I can't do it, because with non-dairy milk, there's something in the cow's milk that enables the Yorkshire. And so they come out sort of like little flat pancakes now. It's just so disappointing.

James Acaster

Sad, yes. But you'd want a big, dairy Yorkshire pudding, big enough to have the whole roast in.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, the roast inside, and so I can chip away at the corners.

James Acaster

Yes, absolutely brilliant. That's taking up no real estate on the plate, because it is the plate.

Ed Gamble

Well, this is what I'm going to say. Normally, I have a go at people who pick Yorkshire puddings, because I think they take up too much real estate on the plate. But if it is the plate, that's a great loophole.

James Acaster

You got it. You got it. Because, you know, I'm enjoying, actually, how Dr Maggie's quite at odds with you, Ed.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Loves Yorkshire puddings, doesn't like cheese boards.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Cheese board, yes.

Ed Gamble

But if it's a big Yorkshire pudding, I completely understand that. Would it be fair to call the big Yorkshire pudding the black hole of the roast dinner?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, yes. Everything gets sucked in, yes.

Ed Gamble

Yes. Everything gets sucked in. You can probably get a lot more in one of those black holes than you think you can, right? Surely.

James Acaster

Is that true?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. And think of the gravy, because you could really go high, because you've got a lid now.

James Acaster

Would you do that? Would you just pour it until it's filled to the brim with gravy?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No, no, I want to-,

Ed Gamble

I thought you were asking, 'Would you put gravy in a black hole?'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

'And what would happen?'

James Acaster

Actually, would you put gravy in a black hole?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

All I know is if you did put gravy in a black hole, like everything else, it would get spaghettified.

James Acaster

Spaghettified?

James Acaster

Stupid Brian Cox didn't say spaghettified.



Ed Gamble

Two questions. What do you mean? And what would happen if you put spaghetti in a black hole?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Okay, okay, okay, okay. Okay, so spaghettification is actually a scientific term. But what happens is, with spaghettification, because a black hole, the gravity is so strong, the gravity at your head and the gravity at your toes would be significantly different. So as you fall into the black hole, you get strung out into a string of spaghetti.

Ed Gamble

Wow.

James Acaster

What the-,

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, and if you are spaghetti going into a black hole, spaghetti is already spaghetti, but I guess it gets just even more elongated.

Ed Gamble

It wouldn't turn into a different shape of pasta.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No.

Ed Gamble

It would get penne-fied.

James Acaster

Penne-fied.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

'Oh look, that black hole's been penne-fied.' I need to say that very carefully.

James Acaster

Penne-fied. Yes, yes, yes. I mean, that's exciting. I reckon if you put spaghetti in a black hole, it wouldn't know what to do with it.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It'll just sort of throw it out.

James Acaster

It would go spaghettify it and then go, 'What the? this has already been-', and then it would malfunction.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It would cease to be.

James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Can not compute.

Ed Gamble

That'd be it. It would just suck all the sauce off and spit the spaghetti back out.

James Acaster

Yes. Take your spaghetti back, I've got enough. Who would you most like to be spaghettified? What human being who's alive right now?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh, no, no. Actually, oh. Actually, I'm going to take the high moral ground and say I can't think of anyone, because it would be an awful death.

James Acaster

It would be an awful death. I'll give you three options.

Ed Gamble

Brian Cox is quite tall and thin, anyway.

James Acaster

He's tall and thin anyway. He kind of already looks like he's been spaghettified.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

So therefore, he'd be rejected from the black hole, so therefore, he'd be saved.

James Acaster

Yes, he would get rejected.

Ed Gamble

Maybe he has already been in one.

James Acaster

I reckon he has. I reckon if you look at old D Ream footage, he actually looks completely different because he hasn't been spaghettified yet. And then he got really into science after D Ream, and he looked at a black hole that spaghettified him, and then he came back and started doing documentaries.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And wanted to understand what had happened.

Ed Gamble

Yes, and that's why he got into it.

James Acaster

That's how he was able to reinvent himself, because people didn't recognise him from D Ream because he'd been spaghettified. This all sounds lovely. You said, like, earlier it was a cross between a Christmas dinner and roast dinner, but it feels just like a Sunday roast. There's nothing very Christmassy.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, yes, that's because you haven't met the rogue element, the pigs in blankets.

James Acaster

Oh, yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Pigs in blankets. I must admit, I'm one of those people that do eat pigs in blankets not at Christmas.

James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Because why'd you save them for Christmas? They're good.

Ed Gamble

Also, like, people eat sausage and bacon all year round. Why aren't they thinking, 'I'm going to wrap that bad boy around that bad boy?'

James Acaster

Yes.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Quite. So yes. So yes, just a few of those within the giant Yorkshire, with limited gravy. I don't want it full, but sort of localised gravy. But yes, they're in there, too.

James Acaster

Yes, you've got to have it in there.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And the Brussels sprouts, too. So it's reminiscent of a Christmas dinner.



James Acaster

Yes, I guess it is quite Christmassy. Again, you know, I didn't expect a scientist would come on and choose a Christmas related thing. Science meets religion once again in this podcast.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, but you see when I was growing up, my father thought I was going to be a nun because I was really religiously-, and I went to sort of thirteen different schools, but some of them were Catholic, some of them Church of England. So I like to spread the joy. But I was brought up really religiously, and I don't see necessarily a clash between science and religion. And I go out to lots of schools and speak to kids and they say, you know, 'How does the Big Bang fit in with the fact that creation was the seven days?' And I said, 'Well, when did day and night come in? Because before that, you know, a day could have been billions of years.' So yes. I like harmony.

James Acaster

Well, that's nice. Bit of harmony on the podcast.

Ed Gamble

Quite often religion's used to explain science back in the day, right?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. Explain things we don't understand.

Ed Gamble

Yes, yes.

James Acaster

Didn't expect this from Ed.

Ed Gamble

What do you mean?

James Acaster

You're wiser than I thought.

Ed Gamble

I'm a man of science.

James Acaster

Wow. Man of science and religion.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

You saw him with those numbers earlier.



James Acaster

Yes, yes.

Ed Gamble

You heard about the Jollof tray.

James Acaster

Wow. I guess the Jollof tray should have tipped me off. Your dream side dish, then. Is that going to be Christmassy? Is that going to be roast dinner-y?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No. And it's quite weird. I think it's called a tomato consommé.

James Acaster

Right.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Because I had something like this once, and only once, in my life. And a friend had taken us to a really expensive restaurant, and there was, it was like tomato soup on the menu and we're thinking, 'Yes, that's a bit cheap.' And I tasted it, and it blew my taste buds, because it's like just slightly coloured water, but when you taste it, the explosion of tomato was fantastic. And also, actually, this was before the dairy allergy, but it was creamy tomato in a liquid that was clear, and I don't understand how they got that flavour.

Ed Gamble

Yes, it's amazing that sort of thing, because it's like they've got the very essence of tomato. You had something like that on your dream menu for the 100th episode, there was like a tomato dish that had like that on it, right?

James Acaster

Well, kind of, yes. It was tomato done loads of different ways, but weirdly, last night I was talking to someone who was saying about what you're- they went to Aulis, a restaurant, and they got a bloody Aulis, which was like an Aulis bloody Mary. But that was clear.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It was, yes.

James Acaster

And they said it just taste exactly like a Bloody Mary.

Ed Gamble

Wow.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. And yet, it's clear.

James Acaster

Yes. Had a little leaf of basil in it, and they thought, 'They've brought me the wrong drink.'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

'Take this back.'

James Acaster

'This doesn't look bloody at all.' But they said it was delicious.

Ed Gamble

So it's just Mary, really, isn't it?

James Acaster

It really is. See, I said this.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

I said last night. I said, 'That's just Mary,' and they all just went, 'Okay, so, yes'.

Ed Gamble

This is why, and I've said this before, Maggie, this is why we shouldn't hang out with anyone else.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Why?

Ed Gamble

Should just be me and James, because we understand each other and the world's not ready.

James Acaster

It's got to that point now where we're just basically thinking differently worded versions of the same thoughts.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. Actually, I do that with my daughter and it's creepy. We actually come to the same conclusions at exactly the same time. 'That was my thought.'

James Acaster

'I should have some vodka.'



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

'Get the vodka.' She's going to kill me for that. She is.

Ed Gamble

I was about to say that.

James Acaster

Yes, yes, Ed was going to say it. He was ready. That's why I had to get in there real quick, I thought, 'He's going to get there before me on the vodka joke. It's a race to the vodka joke, now.'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

Ed Gamble

I think this is lovely as well, because you've had the Jollof rice, plantain, full roast dinner in a Yorkshire pudding. The consommé might act as quite a nice, sort of, palate cleanser.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, an amuse-bouche. That's what I was thinking. Because it was a side, but I thought, perhaps I could, you know, and that's it. Because it's slightly acidic, you clean the palate, ready for the next. I like that idea.

James Acaster

Sounds delicious. So, when you, not when you had it for the first time, do you immediately try and figure out how they've done it, and your scientific brain can think, 'Okay, how have they done this?'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. And how can I do it at home? But yes, because as you say, it is like the essence of something, the very best of it, in a glass. And so what process have they gone through? And I think it's something pretty complicated. But yes, the fact that they can do that, I do want to know. And that's what I do with food, I analyse it. 'You know, that crackling was very good. I wonder what temperature their oven was.'

Ed Gamble

Oh yes, you're straight to temperatures, methods.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I know. Temperatures, pressures, that sort of thing.

Ed Gamble

I get a lot of videos of crackling on the internet, because of my algorithm.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Your algorithm?



Ed Gamble

My algorithm pitches me stuff it thinks I might like and a lot of it's pork. And I get a lot of videos, I think they do it in Chinese kitchens a lot, where they'll cook the pork and then the skin is like, there's no crackling on it whatsoever but the pork is cooked. And then they get oil that's super hot and they just ladle it over the top and the whole thing puffs up into amazing crackling.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, a short, sharp shock. And the temperature change, it just expands everything out. Oh, I haven't tried that.

James Acaster

That's pretty impressive.

Ed Gamble

It looks dangerous, it looks pretty dangerous.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, I guess you need an industrial kitchen or something.

James Acaster

I mean, the person who came up with that, would you call them a scientist?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh yes. In fact, I'll call most chefs scientists. I think there's an inner scientist in everyone and my job is to bring it out.

James Acaster

Well, you do that. As you were saying, with your visits to schools and stuff. How long have you been doing that for now? Going to schools and talking to kids about science.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, about eighteen years.

James Acaster

That's long enough now that some of them-, have you seen them have proper jobs and then you catch up with them after you'd seen them when they were a little kid?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. Actually, sometimes, it's usually when I'm arguing with my daughter, 'Put down the vodka.' And someone will come up and say, 'Oh, Maggie, you came to my school when I was a kid and now I study physics, and now I'm going on and doing something else.' My biggest question is always, 'Are you enjoying it?' Because my biggest fear is that they didn't actually want to do it and I somehow coaxed them into it, 'I hate this job, why did you torture me?'



Ed Gamble

You think you've ruined their life.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, because it's scary having an influence like that. But it's also wonderful. Actually, there was one girl who said, 'Hi, you came to my school and after that, I started doing A-level physics but I didn't like it, so I gave it up. I'm so sorry.' 'Don't be sorry, just do what you love.'

James Acaster

You gave her some options.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

James Acaster

And then she explored it and went, 'Not for me.'

Your dream drink, then. So you've had the consommé, a bit drinky.

Ed Gamble

A bit drinky.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, yes, true. Oh, I see. So this isn't just a drink that goes through the meal?

Ed Gamble

No, no, it can be.

James Acaster

It can be however you want it to be. It can go all the way through the meal, you can just have it once and savour it, whatever you like.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It's a bit like you were saying, Ed, when you were talking about digging up the bottles. I have something about Prosecco, and there was a sign at my daughter's school saying, 'Prosecco and cheese.' And she said, 'Prosecco, that's the stuff Mum loves.'

Ed Gamble

She loves that!

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Drinks it every morning.



James Acaster

She doesn't like the cheese, though.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, skip the cheese, just the Prosecco.

James Acaster

She hates cheese.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I was thinking, sort of, a nice Prosecco to go. And it's funny, because I said I won't take fizzy water but Prosecco, somehow, no burping.

James Acaster

Now we're burping all the way to Mars.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But one of the things about the water as well, I like still water but I like it really cold. And the Prosecco, not quite so cold, because you want the flavours. But yes, maybe at this time, I've sort of settled. I'm probably pretty full by now. But, yes, sort of a light Prosecco.

Ed Gamble

I think Prosecco, yes, throughout the meal as well. I think it's perfect.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But you see, I couldn't work out why not Champagne? Because this is unlimited, I can have my own-, I don't know.

James Acaster

Do you like Champagne as much? Not as nice?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I think Champagne for special occasions but a meal like this, I think I might prefer Prosecco.

Ed Gamble

Prosecco would be great with the spice of the Jollof as well.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. It would match it well.

James Acaster

When you say special occasions, has there ever been anything you've been involved in with work, with scientific breakthroughs where you've popped out the Champagne?



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

There is the James Webb Space Telescope, JWST, largest space telescope ever built, mirror of the telescope, which is the bit that gathers the radiation, is 6.5 metres. And 10,000 scientists across the world worked on it and I was one of them. And it was launched on Christmas 2021, I think. And the thing is it was horribly late, horribly over budget and it was launching, and you know, sometimes launches go horribly wrong. And it launched, and it was successful and so yes, Christmas Day. It was a good excuse for it. Yes.

Ed Gamble

That's good.

James Acaster

You worked on the biggest telescope in the world?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, the biggest space telescope ever.

James Acaster

I'm surprised you didn't lead with that straight away. You're the most humble person I've ever met. You sit here, let us chat nonsense about dark matter being evil, and there in the back of your mind.

Ed Gamble

That should have been the answer to poppadoms or bread.

James Acaster

'I made the biggest space telescope in the world'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Get it out there.

Ed Gamble

'Why are you asking me poppadoms or bread? I made the biggest space telescope in the world.'

James Acaster

How long did that take, then?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

That's the problem, it was horribly late. So it's meant to take fourteen years but it actually took about twenty.

James Acaster

Did you work on the whole thing?



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No, no.

Ed Gamble

Are you imagining Maggie building this by hand?

James Acaster

Just working on it for twenty years.

Ed Gamble

Polishing the mirror.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

So, with it, it's the telescope itself with the mirror, and actually, that was quite clever, because it was so big they actually had to unfold it in space and then it had something called a heat shield underneath, which is like sheets of plastic, again, but they're about the size of a tennis court and it all had to fold up really small so it could get inside the rocket. Then it's launched and it sits 1.5 million kilometres away from Earth.

Ed Gamble

Wow.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And it looks in deep, dark space because it's not an optical telescope, it doesn't look at visible light, it looks at heat energy. So, it looks deep into dark space and, sort of, picks up radiation that way. So, you've got the telescope itself, which gathers the light, for want of a better word, but also you get instruments and I worked on two of the instruments. The Near Spec, the Near Infrared Spectrometer, and MIRI, the Mid-Infrared Spectrometer. Yes, these two instruments on board. So I probably worked on them for about five, six years. And then you do your stuff, you make your units and it all goes together. And then eventually it gets launched. But yes, it was nerve-wracking. And yet, 10,000 scientists. But it's lovely to be in a team like that, of people across the world.

James Acaster

With 10,000 of you, are you being like, 'Please don't let the MIRI be the thing that breaks'? 'What if it's my one? What if it's my thing?'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And also, because often you're just a subsystem for one of the instruments and you're always worried that it's sort of, 'Oh no, something's stopped working, it seems to be this.' You shrink down.

Ed Gamble

Imagine everyone having to sign a birthday card for someone on the team.



James Acaster

'It's Pocock's birthday. Sign this.' The card's fucking bigger than the mirror.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It would have to fly from place to place as well.

James Acaster

I'll tell you what, Maggie, I didn't think of that one. And that made me laugh. Sometimes it gets me when- I wasn't there at all. I was in serious mode, thinking about this telescope.

Ed Gamble

Yes, bad luck. Someone was doing their job.

James Acaster

Thank God, thank God Ed was there to pick up the slack. I'm there thinking seriously about a telescope, thinking about if 10,000 comedians had to work together on something. It wouldn't happen.

Ed Gamble

The Fringe.

James Acaster

Yes, look at that mess.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But comedians, you think so sharp and so witty. That spontaneous.

Ed Gamble

Not all of us.

James Acaster

Not all of us, Dr Maggie and those of us who are, are very selective about when we actually do that. When we choose to employ those skills. I don't think, if you see two comics try and write a script together, that script's never getting handed in. Any time I see a sitcom that's written by two comedians I think, 'Well done. Well done for doing that together, guys.'

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Was there someone holding them together as they went off in different directions?

James Acaster

There has to be.

Ed Gamble

I always think, 'One of you wrote it.'



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, and someone else 'Yes, that's good, mate.'

Ed Gamble

And the other one's more famous.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

That's the way it works, yes.

James Acaster

We arrive at dream dessert. Very exciting for me, as a sweet-toothed boy. I'm pretty sure I'm in good hands. You pooh-pooed the cheeseboard already.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, that's gone.

James Acaster

We're fine.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

And so, actually, this is a very specific dessert. And because of the dairy allergy, one of the things I really miss is lemon meringue pie. But not just any lemon meringue pie, oh no. When I was working on the telescopes in Chile, I used to spend day and night on the telescopes and so I was installing an instrument there, something called BHROS, bench-mounted high-resolution optical spectrograph. I just took the telescope light and stretched it into rainbow colours so we could analyse the light. But I was there on my own, living in a little bungalow on top of a mountain. And so I would go to the telescope during the day and work on it and come home at night. But once a week I would go down to sea level, off the mountain, down to sea level, and I would stay there for one night. I would go to the supermarket and get supplies and take them back up to the bungalow the next day. And there was this wonderful supermarket in this town called Las Arena and there, they had the ultimate lemon meringue pie. Have you ever been to Costco?

Ed Gamble

I've never been in one.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

In Costco they do these, they're about 30 cm in diameter.

Ed Gamble

Because everything's massive in Costco. You have to buy like 400 rolls of toilet paper and stuff.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

They don't do the individual ones. So they do these massive cakes. And it's about that size, it's about 30 cm across. And it was lemon meringue pie. And I would take one up for the week and work through



it. But the thing is, it was just so lovely, and it was just a treat. If you had been working all day on the telescope and you were tired, you would come back, have a glass of Chilean champagne, toast the moon as a lunatic, and have a piece of lemon meringue pie. So it's this very specific lemon meringue pie. And I didn't realize I went on about it quite so much, but my daughter, who's thirteen, I went to this telescope about twenty years ago, my daughter's thirteen and we're going out to these telescopes. And she says, 'We need to go to the telescope and get the lemon meringue pie.' Because obviously, I had just bigged it up. So yes, that's what I'd like. A slice of that lemon meringue pie.

James Acaster

That's such a lovely story.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

And are you saying you haven't been back there yet?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No. We're going there next month.

James Acaster

Do you think it'll be there? What if it's not there, the lemon meringue pie?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, the thing is, even if it is I can't eat it, because it will have dairy in it. But I can do it again, 'Laurie, have another slice.' 'No, Mum, I'm full.' 'Go on, eat it.'

James Acaster

You can see her enjoying it.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes.

James Acaster

That's really lovely. Just to be working on the telescope, go down to sea level, get your lemon meringue pie, bring it up for the week, toast the moon.

Ed Gamble

Eat the pie, toast the moon.

James Acaster

Eat the pie, toast the moon.



Ed Gamble

When the moon hits your eye like a lemon meringue pie.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

That's amore.

James Acaster

That's really nice. And would you have anything with the lemon meringue pie in those days? Or was it just the champagne?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, actually. Just the champagne, really. Because I was thinking creams, or stuff like that.

Ed Gamble

But you don't need it, do you?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

No.

Ed Gamble

It's all there, in a lemon meringue pie.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

That's it, I totally agree. Because you've got the tart lemon, you've got the fluffy meringue, you've got the pie base.

James Acaster

How big is the meringue on top of the lemon? Is it a massive chunk of meringue, really high? Or is it quite shallow?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Well, actually no. The lemon to meringue ration was about 50:50.

James Acaster

Great.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Because sometimes you can get too much lemon, as well, that sort of overwhelms everything. But it was about 50:50 and the meringue stood up to the lemons.

Ed Gamble

Here's a question. I've just been thinking about it. Where's the dairy in a lemon meringue pie?



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I think it could be in the base.

Ed Gamble

Could be.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It depends on how you make it.

Ed Gamble

I guess butter might have to go in the base, right?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, and if you're making a really good pastry I think it's butter, but you can make it without. And I do make pastry, sort of, with margarine and things like that, or butter substitutes. And then I think in the lemon, I don't know if there's dairy in that.

Ed Gamble

I'm trying to think it through. I think you could make a very good dairy-free lemon meringue pie.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Right, yes.

Ed Gamble

I reckon you could. Because you're all right with eggs.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Eggs are fine, yes.

Ed Gamble

I'd regularly have an argument as to whether eggs is dairy.

James Acaster

What?

Ed Gamble

Are eggs dairy?

James Acaster

You regularly have an argument?

Ed Gamble

Yes, with my wife.



James Acaster

Ed's wife is a dummy.

Ed Gamble

No, but what do you think? Are eggs dairy?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I am very opinionated on this.

Ed Gamble

I think eggs is dairy.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Why?

James Acaster

What are you on about?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It's the cheeseboard all over again. Just when we were bonding on the pie.

Ed Gamble

Eggs is dairy.

James Acaster

So Charlie is saying they're not.

Ed Gamble

I actually can't remember which side I'm on. As a man of science.

James Acaster

You can't remember which side.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

'As a man of science, I'm not quite sure what I'm arguing here.'

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Is a cow laying an egg, Ed? I can't believe I'm having to say this to you in front of Dr Maggie.

Ed Gamble

No, but hang on, do you think all dairy has to come from cows?



James Acaster

Okay. A sheep, a goat, none of them are laying eggs.

Ed Gamble

No.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But also, I don't think sheep or goats is actually dairy. I think dairy is cow. It's not beef.

Ed Gamble

Goat milk. Could you have goat milk?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I don't know.

James Acaster

Benito, go and get some goat milk. We're doing an experiment.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Every so often I buy it, and I put it in the fridge. It's like vegan cheese. And I think, 'Oh yes, but it looks like cheese and it looks like milk.' And I find it physically hard to eat it because I know the effect it could potentially have on me.

Ed Gamble

It's probably not a risk worth taking, is it?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

It should be a risk where I've got, you know, the EpiPen and all the antihistamines ready to go. But physically, and it seems weird, because it's thirteen years since I've had this allergy. But I look at it and I think, 'I just can't.'

Ed Gamble

I mean, the lemon meringue pie, we can all agree, sounds delicious.

James Acaster

Yes but I think we're letting you off the hook here for saying chickens are laying eggs and that's dairy.

Ed Gamble

But I can't remember if I think that.

James Acaster

You can't remember if you think that.



Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

You're going to flip.

James Acaster

Even worse.

Ed Gamble

I might text Charlie later, check what she thinks, and then I think the opposite. Which is broadly the position I take.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

What, on most things?

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Great relationship.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

There's some friction.

Ed Gamble

Yes, you've got to keep things spicy, right? Just disagree the whole time.

James Acaster

Dr Maggie, before we read your menu back to you, I think it's nice that you are a woman of science but very, very upbeat and positive. And we live in times where we're very scared at the minute. There's loads of stuff going on that's terrifying. We've touched on people starting to say that aliens exist, we've got AI coming for us, we've got the climate crisis. How do you stay upbeat when you know so much?

Ed Gamble

You've saved a good question for the end.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes. Sit back and think about this one. I thought we were going to talk about farts, what's this?

Ed Gamble

I feel like you've got this the wrong way around, James.

James Acaster

I should have said that at the top?



Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

But everyone's heard the podcast, they've heard how upbeat Maggie is.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Actually, and also-

James Acaster

How positive?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I would have been in a different mindset if you had started with that. But see, I think I can stay positive because I go out and see a lot of kids, and I speak to them and I hear about them and I can see what they do, and we do have a hell of a lot of challenges. It's all the ones you've mentioned and more, as well, but I think we can do it. I think when we work together, we can achieve the seemingly impossible. It's a tag-line, but I think it's true. Yes, when we collaborate, but also, when we collaborate together, and I think there are silos. It's 'Scientists over here, creatives over there,' things like that. It's all part of the same thing, and when we sort of pick and mix and sort of move it around and work together, that's when I think we get results. I think that the world is in good hands. I think the kids are going to right some of the wrongs that some of us adults have committed.

Ed Gamble

I can't believe I didn't save a wish to stop the climate crisis.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, giving people dairy allergies, that was your wish.

James Acaster

Thanks for my dairy allergy, you son of a bitch.

Ed Gamble

Oh no. Man.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

See, if you had started with that at the top, it might have gone a different way.

Ed Gamble

Make sure you don't have eggs.

James Acaster

I'll avoid eggs. Easter eggs.



Ed Gamble

I think.

James Acaster

I think you're thinking of Easter eggs. I'll read your menu back to you now, see how you feel about it. A water, really cold, still water. Poppadoms or bread? Crusty bread with salted butter, loads of salted butter. Starter, Jollof rice with dodo. Dodo?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Dodo.

James Acaster

Dodo. Main course, roast pork with crackling, apple sauce, roast potatoes, parsnips, Brussels sprouts, pigs in blankets, loads of gravy, all inside a giant Yorkshire pudding. Side dish, tomato consommé. Drink, Prosecco. Dessert, lemon meringue pie from near-,

Ed Gamble

Las Arenas?

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Oh yes, Las Arena.

James Acaster

In Chile with a glass of Chilean champagne to toast the moon.

Ed Gamble

That's lovely, that's a good menu.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Yes, thank you, for enabling me to participate in that. Because actually, reading it back I was thinking 'Oh yes, yes.'

James Acaster

It sounds pretty delicious, right?

Ed Gamble

You'd hope you'd feel like that, because you've just said it all.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

I know. 'Actually, can I just change one?'

James Acaster

Also, we've just had a little surprise for you. We've also had your daughter's menu sent into us. We got her to do a menu.



Ed Gamble

Do you want to read that out?

James Acaster

I've had it texted to me during this. Water course, vodka. Poppadoms or bread, vodka. Starter course, vodka. It goes on like that. She chooses the lemon meringue pie at the end.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

But with vodka.

James Acaster

Toasts the moon with vodka.

Ed Gamble

Thank you so much for coming to the dream restaurant, Maggie.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

Thank you, it's been so much fun.

James Acaster

Thank you, Dr Maggie.

Ed Gamble

To the moon.

James Acaster

To the moon.

Dr. Maggie Aderin-Pocock

To the moon.

Ed Gamble

There we are, James. You know what, we learned a lot about science and space from Dr Maggie, but I felt like we also taught her some things about science and space.

James Acaster

We did. And that's what every great scientist should be open to.

Ed Gamble

Yes.

James Acaster

Is learning from their fellow human beings.



Ed Gamble

And thank the Lord, if the Lord does exist up there in space, that Maggie did not pick Milky Way Magic Stars.

James Acaster

Yes, thank you, Dr Maggie, for not picking Milky Way Magic Stars, and for sharing so much about your life, science, food, family.

Ed Gamble

A delightful guest. And you should get Maggie's book, which is coming out on November 2nd. 'The Sky At Night, The Art of Stargazing. My essential guide to navigating the night sky.' If you are an amateur stargazer and you want to know a little bit more about it, this is the book for you.

James Acaster

And someone from Penguin Random House, Morgana

Ed Gamble

Shout out to Morgana.

James Acaster

Shout out to Morgana, and said that last time, when we promoted one of their books, because it was out on Ebury Press, I sang a song about Ebury Press because of Cawston press. I can't remember the song.

Ed Gamble

No. Do you want to give it another go?

James Acaster

E to the B to the U to the R to the Y. Cause it's Ebury Press.

Ed Gamble

Brilliant. Because Morgana was saying that they considered putting your song as a reel on Ebury Press' Instagram. And now you've got two songs. You'll have a full album by the time.

James Acaster

Have Cawston Press used my song?

Ed Gamble

No, I don't think so.

James Acaster

That's mind-blowing, man. What's going on with that?



Ed Gamble

Ebury Press to the rescue, I think.

James Acaster

Yes, yes. Looks like I'm drinking Ebury Press from now on.

Ed Gamble

Get my book, Glutton. I'd love you to get it. I'm also on tour next year. Hot Diggity Dog, is the name of the tour.

James Acaster

Hot Diggity Dog.

Ed Gamble

Tickets are available on edgamble.co.uk

James Acaster

And the great Benito is also having a nice time.

Ed Gamble

Yes he is. Thank you very much for listening, we will see you next week. Goodbye.

James Acaster

Goodbye. Keep looking up at the stars and toasting the moon.