

Beanie Feldstein

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:00:00] Hello, everyone. This is Jameela Jamil. I am reporting to you from a pandemic and I am in self isolation, as I am sure, and I hope so are you. But I feel like this is the perfect time to release a podcast because we all need any excuse that we can get to stay away from other people, even people living in our houses, even if we don't think they have Corona. Even if we just want to get away from their personalities for a while. And so I'm bringing you this escape. That is not just for me, but it's also for you. One of the things that I think we need most right now is some feeling of direction when it comes to our mental health. I know that that's the thing that I feel most tested on at the moment. And I feel, I can see from the timelines and watching my friends start to already fray at the edges and were only in week two of the quarantine. And we don't know how long this is going to go on. People are really struggling and they're no longer busy with work. They're no longer able to distract themselves the way they once were. We're really having to confront our inner demons and confront our pasts or confront our eating issues or our body issues. And so during this dark time, I feel as though there is no one more suited to cheer all of us up than my guest today, who is Beanie Feldstein from "Booksmart" from "Lady Bird" and the soon to come out, is that how you say, fuck it, I don't know, "How to Build a Girl" by Caitlin Moran. She is a true, true ray of fucking sunshine. She is the person I find it the most stressful to not propose to every time I see her. I love her. I draw so much inspiration from her strength and from her relentless fucking optimism. As an English person, I don't understand it, but I aspire towards it. And this podcast, we go through everything about how to build confidence, how to enjoy your body, how to fight back about the sizing of clothes, how to deal with your sexuality, how to deal with growing up in public. There is nowhere that she won't go and there is nowhere where she doesn't just shine light. So I hope you enjoy this episode as much as I enjoyed having this chat with her. She's just great. We should all be more like Beanie Feldstein. Hello, I'm Jameela Jamil. And I'm in love with Beanie Feldstein. Hi.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:02:56] I love Jameela Jamil. God damnit.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:02:58] How are you?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:02:58] I'm good. How are you? I'm very happy to be cozy on this couch with you.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:03:03] Same, I'm really happy to see you. I haven't seen you in ages. Is the last time I saw you when we were on set together?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:03:10] I think so.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:03:11] So have we only met in person once?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:03:13] That seems wrong, but I think it might be right.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:03:16] So we met on set at, on the set of "How to Build a Girl". Which is your first leading role in a film.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:03:24] Yes. Yes, yes. Yes. Very scary and very exciting.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:03:29] And I have a teeny tiny, but very invasive parts in that film.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:03:33] An amazing part.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:03:34] I can't wait to see it.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:03:35] An incredible and incredible moment.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:03:37] Do you find that to be a general thing that you get from acting as being able to try on all these different people and seeing if any of them resonate with you? Because I think as women from a young age, a lot of us, even some, not even necessarily by our families, but almost via osmosis, get told by society who we're supposed to be, what we're

supposed to look like, how we're supposed to behave, what we should and shouldn't speak up about. And so it's hard even with the best family ever to know exactly who you are.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:04:05] Of course.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:04:05] The conditionings coming from Disney. It's coming. It's coming from everywhere.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:04:08] Yeah. I mean, I was a sociology major in college, so I'll spare you my whole, my whole thing.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:04:13] You're whole schitck.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:04:13] Yeah, I mean, it's the ideology that we're fed is so subliminal. And it's not just your family can't control it. As you said, it's like anytime you're driving in a car and you see a billboard, anytime you're reading something, anytime you're at school and your parents aren't in control of what's said to you or who's saying it, or etcetera. There's no way we can avoid being a part of society. You know, that's part of life. But I feel like when I play different characters, it's more like bringing out one side of myself that I maybe knew was there, but like kind of pushing it to a, to a more intense degree. Like with "Ladybird", my character Julia was like kind of the warmest part of myself, I think. And then with "BookSmart", it was like the most intense side of myself for both of those things exist within me. It was just like kind of pushing it to the farthest kind of-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:05:03] Do you change?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:05:03] Degree.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:05:04] Do change after projects a little bit? Do you notice a changed? Do others noticed a change in you after you take on a new skin?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:05:10] I don't think so. The only thing I would say with "How to Build a Girl" was I felt much braver than when I started. And that was like a really kind of empowering feeling and a scary and exciting feeling, I think, because I never really felt like someone who took risks. I'm not a very spontaneous person or I don't really like act outside of myself that much. Like I like rules, I like boundaries and playing Johanna and going on this ride that she takes. I couldn't help but kind of have to put myself in situations that felt very outside my comfort zone in a very exciting way because they were obviously controlled and I felt very safe. But then by the end, I was like, wow, I really, even just moving to England and going to Wolverhampton and learning the accent. And I worked in a shop there.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:05:53] Did you?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:05:53] To learn the accent. Yes! For two, almost three weeks. I worked in a little store and I spoke in the accent the whole time, which couldn't be farther from my comfort zone because I'm not like method or anything like that. So I was just like I was like, wow Beanie, you like, moved to a different country. You went to a city you'd never been to. You pretended to speak like the locals. And you became kind of part of that community for a little bit, I hope. And and then just showing up to work every day and kind of going through what she went through, I felt much braver. So that was a really nice feeling. But I don't think it felt like she was a part of me. It was more just like that little aspect of her.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:06:30] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:06:31] I decided to take.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:06:31] So does this come from a place of like, you know, what's your relationship with shame?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:06:39] That's a good question. I think-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:06:41] Because there's a sort of like shamelessness. And shameless has been given a bad rap, which is crazy to me, because actually being shameless is the only way to access your true humanity.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:06:53] Right.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:06:53] Because what the fuck is shame?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:06:54] Right.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:06:54] Shame is not this helpful?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:06:56] It's made up.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:06:56] It's a hindrance. Yeah. It's kind of what we love about Caitlin Moran is that she doesn't really negotiate with shame at all.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:07:02] No.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:07:03] She's just like, nope, I don't know her.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:07:05] It's not for me.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:07:06] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:07:06] Exactly. It's so inspirational. I think.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:07:09] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:07:09] Like it was, I think that's what I was trying to say earlier. It's like just getting to even play a part of her was so inspirational in that way. Like you're saying, it just it made me feel more fearless in a way that I think I often like don't consider myself that.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:07:22] Mmhmm.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:07:24] But I think I think, it's, shame is such a complicated subject. And again it's also like so soci-, it's so like driven by society versus like real personal connection. I think it's also macro to me versus like micro day to day. But I try to live without it. I mean it's always it's not a perfect, I don't have a perfect score but like I tried to.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:07:48] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:07:48] Live kind of.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:07:50] I just meant more like with the ability to be openness requires a certain, either a decision to not acknowledge the shame that you have or it requires a certain shamelessness. And I wonder if you always had that, because that is so inspiring to me. It's something I'm only just stepping into and I'm a little bit older than you.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:08:08] Only a little.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:08:09] A little bit.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:08:09] I don't really feel like it's something that I've I've spent much time with in my thought.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:08:15] Great. Let's not start thinking about it now. Let's move on. I'd don't want to infuse you with shame.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:08:19] I don't know what to say about it.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:08:20] No, I just think that's really interesting. If anyone, did nobody ever curb your outspokenness? Has anyone ever in your life been like, "Okay, calm down".

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:08:29] I mean.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:08:29] The truth.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:08:30] I think when I was really young, I was, I was fearless. And I was so outspoken and I was so stubborn and kind of in an incredible way, like very bossy and opinionated.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:08:40] Cool.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:08:40] And then I think, like my mid teens, I sort of didn't want to ever, I think gratitude came in. And like my I kind of took a step back and I was like, I want to be very thankful for everything that I get to experience so that in some ways those two things battled each other because I didn't want to be like this is what I want and it's how I want it. And then but then I also wanted to be very thankful for those things. You know what I mean? So all of a sudden they became kind of at odds with each other. And I think gratitude won, so I felt myself like looking back. I sort of backed off of myself, like I became less outspoken and kind of whatever you want, like people pleasing. And now I'm sort of-

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:09:19] You found a balance?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:09:19] I'm trying. I'm trying. 'Cause I admire that. Like that young, like, radical strength that I had as a kid, like a kid, kid. Like eight, nine, ten.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:09:30] Well we're kind of born perfect.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:09:31] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:09:32] We bor-, we're born saying exactly how the fuck we feel like that's it.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:09:37] And asking for what we want.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:09:38] I've just shit my pants. Someone come and help me.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:09:40] Exactly. I want that to wait right now or I'm going to scream.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:09:42] Yeah. I'm hungry now, bitch.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:09:45] Exactly.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:09:46] Give me your breasts.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:09:46] Right now.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:09:48] Now.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:09:48] Please.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:09:49] I, there's usually not even a "please".

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:09:50] No no. And so like obviously there's an element of that where it's like very demanding and not at all aware of other people's needs or boundaries. But I think there's such a an iconic beauty in like how honest we are. Like, I feel lonely or I feel rejected or I need you. We stop even saying those things.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:10:07] I know.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:10:08] By the time we're like in our maybe our teens, we develop like a shame around us saying, oh, I need I need someone.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:10:16] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:10:16] And I think that that's really sad. I I. I'm spending my adult years trying to find a way back to that level of like complete honesty that I had as a baby.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:10:28] Absolutely. I mean, I think it's kind of irresistible when you are older and you're looking back on it like that feels delicious. And I want to have that again.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:10:36] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:10:36] But it's hard to get to because it's it doesn't always fit in with what we're told supposed to act like.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:10:42] No, it's the exact opposite.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:10:42] Yeah. Yeah, exactly. So I think-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:10:44] That's cool that no one's ever curbed that.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:10:47] Yeah I think not, not a ton. I mean my, my parents and my family, in my school, they're always like really supportive. And I think I always say like my brother asked me once, actually, like, "How do you find your confidence"? Because he didn't really feel the same way growing up. And I said, I think the gift of having a passion so young and also being just like working really hard at being good at it, but also just like being lucky enough to like understand it and be fairly good at it gave me so much confidence. Like when I was onstage, I felt invincible. And I grew up doing musical theater. And I just, I just loved it so much. And I had such singular passion for it and worked so hard. And and it just I felt like I could do anything because I knew how how much joy it brought me and that it would make me people laugh and make people smile and clap and all of those things that I think that was, having that for me to look four was really such a gift. I see. Because it's like, here, let me like literally create an arena for you to build confidence. Is kind of what I saw.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:11:53] Yeah. That's incredible. I was going to ask you, what is it about playing these teenage girls that you also drawn to? You play such iconic roles as teenage girls. And I was wondering what it is that you're so drawn to.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:12:06] I think it's like, you know, with with "Ladybird" and with "Booksmart", it was the portrayal of a true friendship and two very different friendships. But like my friends got me through adolescence, you know, like your best, best, best friends are your family, the family that you choose. And like my rocks and my crutch and my everything. So just I had never really felt like I'd seen those narratives played out before. And in a way that honors them with such gravity and such love.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:12:35] And so much nuance, because we don't-.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:12:39] Complexity. Exactly.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:12:39] We don't show enough of that in women or, you know, we show girls who in particular we share the narrative of women who are in competition with each other.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:12:46] Exactly.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:12:46] Or who, you know, hate each other.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:12:48] Or one is the girl and one is the friend. And what does that even mean?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:12:53] Exactly.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:12:53] You know what I mean?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:12:53] Exactly.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:12:55] I think Greta is like beautiful writing of a best friend in my character Julie was so important because it valued that character as much as it valued Ladybird's experience. And in some ways you're like mad at Ladybird for-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:13:08] For sure.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:13:09] For her treatment of Julie. And I think that really like celebrates her her loyal friendship that she had. You know what I mean? It's an it's a kind of romantic storyline, if you will.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:13:20] It's the greatest, one of the great love stories of our time.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:13:23] Love affair. Yeah! And it's like that honoring of it is so special. And then with "Booksmart", it is a true equal partnership. Those girls meet each other halfway and have each other so truly. And it's a true two hander, which I thought was so beautiful and it was so interesting on "How to Build a Girl" because I didn't have a friend. And it's really the story of a young teenage girl without friends, which I also think is very important because not everyone is lucky enough to find their tribe that early on in life.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:13:50] Didn't have any friends till I was 19.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:13:52] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:13:52] So I totally get it.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:13:54] It's important. So I felt like it was important to tell not only these beautiful friendship stories, but also explore what happens when you're kind of at it alone and and what path that takes you down. But the most beautiful thing is, is when teenage girls come up to me on the street. To answer your question.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:14:09] What do they say when they come up to you?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:14:11] It's often like two or multiple and they are just like we felt like I'm the Molly and she's the Amy and and we feel-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:14:18] Feel seen.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:14:19] Yeah. And it just like it makes me want to cry because it's so just what I wish I could have had when I was that age.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:14:26] What do you think? What do you look back on and think you most needed to know that you didn't when you were younger?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:14:32] I think. I think I was a very late bloomer. And I-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:14:37] In what way? It just as far as like romance and intimacy. I think it was a very late bloomer. And I wish that there are more narratives of that growing up, because I felt like every show was like the second the teenage girl character turned 16 she was like having a whole intimate, romantic, sexual, whatever it was.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:14:59] I didn't have my first kiss till I was 21.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:15:02] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:15:02] And the way that people respond to that is like I've just murdered someone in the street. They can't, they can't get it. And I'm like, this is, I understand like a little bit of like, oh, but the level of surprise is so extraordinary and extreme that makes me feel suddenly like, oh no, is there something wrong with me? And there fucking wasn't.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:15:20] Absolutely not. Exactly.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:15:21] I just wasn't ready. And also, like, I'm so glad that I didn't have, and not to say something wrong with having a first kiss at 12. But neither of you know what the fuck you're doing.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:15:30] Braces are usually involved.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:15:31] Braces. There's a washing machine technicality to the whole thing. Whereas I actually highly recommend the late kiss and I kiss someone who was like five years older than me and he was glorious at kissing.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:15:45] Yeah, he knew what was up.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:15:46] Oh my God, it's a great teacher. And it was so calm and in my own time. And I wasn't as afraid.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:15:53] Yeah. Totally.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:15:52] People used to taunt me so badly about it. People. I remember on my 21st birthday, I was given like 20 copies or 21 copies of the "40 Year Old Virgin" by different people that I knew who were all like you're going to die alone because you haven't kissed anyone by the age of 21. And then I was threatened by my friends. They were gonna make, which just shows the times, by the way, that they were gonna make one of, this guy that I was very unattractive to kiss me if I didn't find someone on my own kiss. So that did, like send me into a rush. And I'm just really lucky that the person I did kiss was great.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:16:24] Yes.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:16:24] Oh, my God. Don't do that to your friend.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:16:27] No. And it's also just like because there are no narrative-. Like there are no narratives of that.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:16:31] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:16:31] That are triumphant, complex, interesting, thoughtful, you know?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:16:36] Yeah. And just okay.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:16:37] Yeah. We don't hyper-normalize late bloomers.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:16:39] Exactly. And I think so I think for me that would have been really meaningful if I had seen something like that. I think particularly because-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:16:46] Did you think there was something wrong with you?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:16:49] I don't think I felt there was something wrong with me, but I did feel different. I definitely felt less kind of a part of whatever that was.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:16:59] Did you ever lie? When you were younger about having done it?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:17:05] Totally. Totally! Of course I did.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:17:08] I should have. I didn't. And so everyone thought I was a freak. But also, I shouldn't have and I'm glad that I stuck to my guns-

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:17:14] No, I'm so embarrassed that I lied. Like I wish I could just kind of held my my truth. You know what I mean? And I didn't. I was 13. So, you know.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:17:23] What did you say? What was the lie?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:17:24] I'm just like-. No. I told someone that I kissed who, this guy who is now my best friend. Who-. So it's OK. So it's like, fine.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:17:35] But did he cover for you?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:17:36] He didn't know. But now he know.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:17:38] That's so funny.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:17:39] But it's just, yeah. Now I'm like getting red.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:17:42] No, I know, I can see that you're embarrassed.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:17:43] No, it's good. It's important.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:17:47] It's important.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:17:47] But I.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:17:48] It's so funny, though.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:17:49] And then also like now with, like I'm in a relationship with a woman. I. I feel like it's I find it important to talk about not because I'm in a relationship with a woman, but because I didn't understand that that was a part of who I was until like two years ago. And I think the narrative is which it is for a lot of people. True to, true to their experience, like a secret that is being kept and then let out at a specific time once they feel comfortable or ready in their society.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:18:20] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:18:21] Which is very true for a lot of people. But for me, it was not a secret. I hadn't come to that conclusion yet. You know what I mean? It wasn't like I was keeping anything from anyone. I was just like, hadn't really thought about it. So I guess I'll kiss boys. And then I was like, yeah. It was like this thing where I, I just kind of assumed because that's what society typically tells you was like, I was just like oh, I'll kiss boys and see how that goes. And I was never particularly.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:18:46] Fussed.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:18:46] Fussed. Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:18:47] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:18:47] That's the word I would use. And I was kind of like cold. I didn't care. I wasn't that invested. And even with like with people with men that I really cared about and loved as people, when it became romantic, I just sort of like ambivalent. It wasn't bad. It was just like I was just like, okay. Sure. And then when I came to the discovery that I was queer, I was very open and honest myself right away because I was lucky enough to be in a society, in a community that accepts that.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:19:19] Did you question it at first? Were you were like, oh, is this just friendship? Is this just?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:19:24] No, I think I was like-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:19:25] So you so you knew very quickly when you-.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:19:28] When it came to me. Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:19:30] Was it the person that you're now with?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:19:30] Yes.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:19:31] That you now realize that you are queer?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:19:33] Yes. Yes. And I think it's even if you take like, even just the idea of like being romantic or sexual or intimate at all. I just even came to that late. So I think it just would've been really meaningful for me if I had had the ability to see or read or watch something that showed women or men or non-binary people being just late bloomers, just being coming to those conclusions a little bit later, maybe in the middle of college or after college or whatever it is.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:20:09] 'Cause that's the things we don't prioritize. You know? Like people prioritize different things when they're younger.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:20:13] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:20:13] Some people don't realize their mental health struggles when they're younger and all kind of comes later. We don't tease anyone about that.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:20:20] No.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:20:21] You know what I mean?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:20:22] Yeah! I was, I was never teased, but I think it was more just like the narrative is harder to understand versus like something that you've known for a long time, even keeping to yourself the narrative of like, no, I'm really just coming to this, recently, as an adult woman, it, or as an adult person, is just less common of a narrative that to hear or see or read about or think about. So I think that would have been meaningful for me. And I think that's why I am so open about it because-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:20:51] Were you nervous when you came out publicly?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:20:55] No, I I didn't even, like fully realize that I had done it. Which-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:21:00] It was the Instagram post.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:21:02] No, I think it was a Twitter post about jeans. And it was, speaking of jeans, because you're talking about jeans before we started rolling.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:21:10] Yeah, we'll talk about this in a minute.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:21:12] Ok. But I, it was like the patriarchy is so real that my girlfriend was boyfriend jeans. And that's I tweeted that and everyone was like huh? And I was like, oh. Because I had just been living and loving for a couple of months at the point. You know, like it just never really crossed my mind. So it was never something, again, like I'm very open and that's feels real to me and feels honest to me. So it's never something that I was thinking about or like made a-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:21:39] It wasn't like a big statement.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:21:41] It wasn't, no. And if it is for some people, I completely and utterly understand that. And I do feel like what a gift like. I'm very privileged that I it was not a struggle for me. And I know that. But it never. Yeah. I just like love her. And just if we take a nice picture, I want to share it. But it's not like a-

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:22:04] Political statement to you in those moments. You understand, obviously, that it's-

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:22:09] I feel so-

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:22:10] There's a huge weight behind it. But you know?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:22:12] I just I think I just share because it would have been meaningful for me to see someone or and it has been meaning for me to see couples that look completely different and are of all different age, sexualities, etc. be open. I just think it's really beautiful and at does like subliminally help shift society.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:22:32] Yes.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:22:32] And so I think that-

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:22:33] Sometimes it more than subliminally helps shift society, like you saw "Will and Grace" changed America's perception of gay people.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:22:40] 100 percent.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:22:41] Beyond belief and "Pose" is doing that now around the trans community.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:22:45] So good.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:22:45] And the black queer community. But yeah, it's that that expression, "If you can see it, you can be it".

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:22:51] Totally and I think it's hard because it's like I don't want to put any sort of like this is what I'm doing and this is why I'm doing it. And also, I don't want to put any pressure on myself to be doing something specific. But I do think it feels nice to be open because I love her so much. And also, it's more a narrative of like coming to those conclusions a little bit later that I think is kind of nice to be sharing because I never really saw anything like that.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:23:17] I also love how carefully you speak about it. You always acknowledge your privilege. You also always.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:23:21] Well, it's important.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:23:21] Acknowledge how lucky you are to have had like a family that never made you feel bad or ostracized about it. And I can imagine that as one of the few young out people in your industry with this big limelight and in such big films, there's so much buzz around you, so much. You are truly, I think, the most beloved young person in Hollywood now.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:23:42] Oh stop it. I'm gonna cry.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:23:43] No. It's insane. It's insane. My gosh, this rise happened so fast and I'm so happy because you are exactly who you know, what you say on the tin, like on the inside. You're so wonderful to me.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:23:55] Thank you, as are you.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:23:55] But I also imagine that some people, thanks, some people kind of can look at queer people or brown women as a monolith and then try and make you the spokesperson, where has there been any?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:24:07] Right, and I'm like "I don't know. " I'm just figuring-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:24:08] Yeah, exactly.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:24:09] Like, I'm just figuring it out. I'm just all I know is that I like I'm in love and I love being with her. And I am so comfortable in myself and and in that that that's all I know. But I do also like because of I don't know just who am as a person and what I've studied in college and everything like it is very important for me to acknowledge how privileged I am in so many ways, but particularly in this, because there's so many people that don't get the privilege of growing up-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:24:38] No. It's illegal in some countries.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:24:40] In a family or in a country. Yeah. And so it is it's it's so easy for me to be like. And I just came out on Twitter and didn't even realize. But I also know the gravity of that is like.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:24:47] Huge.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:24:48] Very real. And, you know, how lucky am I? Then I got to to come out in a very safe way that didn't feel weighted.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:25:05] Another thing that I find you so glorious and delightful in is the fact that you are a curvier actress in Hollywood. And again, it doesn't seem to be a part of your identity or persona. It's never something I even think about when I think about you. Like I love how you are, like, finally, we can see a woman just for who she is rather than just her skin color or just her size or just her sexuality. Like I remember when Kate Winslet came out like as a not as an was emerged in "Titanic". All anyone could talk about was her weight. She was a size fucking 6.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:25:45] Yeah. I was like, what size?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:25:48] People were like, she got naked in that film. Nobday could believe it. Bridget Jones's fucking Diary. I love that movie. I love that movie. I think it's very funny. But I look back now and think there are elements of that film that are fucking psychotic because of the fact that she is a slim woman who all the jokes are on her weight, all of the commentaries about her weight and defines everything.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:26:11] It's hard because it's a different time too.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:26:13] Oh sure.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:26:13] And at that time it's so much.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:26:14] Yeah, like I'm not angry with it. Yes. And I loved it. And even seeing her representation, I remember as a teenager going like, oh, thank God. And now I feel so seen because I was you know, I was this I was bigger than her, but I was like, oh, finally this someone I can't just see ribs. And she's curvy. And and it made me feel a bit more seen. But also now I look back and I'm like, oh, wow, I thought I was, yeah, big, or deserving of fat jokes because that was so hyperbolized. I'm not criticizing it necessarily.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:26:43] No.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:26:44] I know it's of the time, but that's what we were fed.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:26:47] It's interesting. Totally.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:26:48] I feel like that's not happening with you, which makes me really happy.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:26:51] Thank you. I'm that means a lot to me because it definitely is purposeful in some way. I think growing up I was obsessed with musical theater. It was all I did, it was I talked about it all I ever wanted to do. And because of that, I heard a lot of, it came out around the time I was like 10, I think. But after it came out, it was like have you ever played Tracy Turnblad in "Hairspray"? Do you want to play Tracy Martin in "Hairspray"? How about Tracy Turnblad in "Hairspray"? And I was like I was so frustrated that that was the single only role that people could see me in, in their mind's eye for musical theater where I was at that point, ten and eleven and playing any shape, size, age, you know. I played Grandmas and and 7 year olds and all of it. And I just did anything I wanted because you're a kid doing musical theater. And I was like, why is this the single only role that people want to see me as? And it really frustrated me and I kind of became this thing. And the thing is, I love the women that have played that role. And I think they're beautiful and effervescent and gorgeous and funny and so talented. But I said to myself early on, I was like, this is never a role I'm going to play because she is a symbol of her weight, basically. And that was you, she's like an embodiment of weight. And that is her main characteristic for people from the outside. If you actually watch the show, those those performances and the writing is so nuanced.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:28:14] Yeah !The women who played that role should have been able to play other leading roles.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:28:17] Exactly.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:28:17] Fundamentally.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:28:18] And also-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:28:19] If you played her and Sandy in "Grease".

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:28:21] And also, exactly, she so many other things other than her weight. But when people think about roles in musical theater, that's the only one that comes to them. And so it was really something that I was like. This is going to be a thing where I don't want to play women that are talking or if this their sole character trait is that one of their main character traits, other is about their weight. I want to just play human women in the world. And that was very important to me. And I am lucky that I'm at a time right now where those roles are much more prevalent than they were before. And they're also being given to people of all shapes, colors, nationalities, backgrounds, everything. But it still is a work in progress. It's still happening. But I do I do take things very purposefully. And I don't. I just can't read something and have it all be about body, because that's just who I am.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:29:17] No. Have you ever struggled with body image stuff?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:29:20] Yes, OK. So when I was like 12, 13, things were not great. Like, I I really struggle with my my body image. And I mean, growing up, I remember like I was really slow in PE. I've never been that athletic of a person. And this girl was like, because your stomach's full of beans. That's why your name is Beanie, like, you know, all then all the horrible like bullying.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:29:43] Oh God.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:29:44] And it really affected me in.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:29:47] Got to you.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:29:48] And people in my family and my friends families had like perceptions of what I should look like and how I should eat and things like that. And it really, really affected me for a long time. Andthen-

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:29:57] Did it ever make you give, sort of-. Did it ever make you weaponise food? Because I happened to me when I was younger, I was about eleven when I got weighed in front of my whole school.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:30:09] I heard the story. And you're really resilient.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:30:10] Yeah. Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:30:11] Oh my god.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:30:12] So I was weighed in front of my whole school and that was it. Like I suddenly realized overnight that it was a thing and I immediately started thinking about diets and googling diets and investigating them. Reading little books and I started to look at food as like food is love, food is comfort. Food is anything but just fuel.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:30:27] Right.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:30:27] Did you ever go through that?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:30:29] I think definitely. I mean, there were different doctors and and people that wanted me to go on diets or eat a certain way. And it always felt horrible to me and it something that I loathed and and didn't like and would resist. And shopping was always kind of stressful. And-

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:30:46] Shopping for clothes?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:30:47] Yeah, just like feeling like uncomfortable with like the options I had or the size I was wearing. And then at like, I think around 16, I just sort of like threw my hands up and was like, I started saying this thing, which is carried me through my whole like rest of my adolescence and into my adult, which is like "They either want the Bean or they don't want the Bean". And they can be anyone. It could be like.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:31:16] The bean is also the clitoris in Australia. So that's what happened in my head.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:31:23] To me, it's just me. Not what I was going for. Not what I was going for. But.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:31:32] I know that because a friend of mine had sex with an Australian man who was going down into it couldn't find it, and he just like popped up and was like, "Excuse me, love, but where's your bean"?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:31:48] Do I have to change my name now or what?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:31:51] I think so. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:31:52] God damnit.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:31:52] I'm sorry, they either want the Bean or don't want the Bean. How the fuck did you come to that conclusion? I just came to that 30.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:31:59] You know?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:32:00] How did you reach that at 16? Was there a thing that happened?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:32:03] I think it's you know, if you kind of approach it like a statistics point of view or like a socio-, I don't know, like my academic brain kind of kicks in. I'm like the farther you, you are away from the norm. The harder or like just like the more space between you and the norm, you just kind of feel less close to it. Like you feel less, you value it less. And so I think at a certain point I lived with this for so long, I just like I'm chubby. I'm never gonna be that

way. This is just who I am. And I like it. It suits my personality. It suits who I am. I love clothes. They look great on me. And that's just kind of it. And I think it was like, you know, a lot of my friends who are are very thin and beautiful. I mean, not thin because, not beautiful because they're thin, but they are thin and beautiful. Say to me like, you have such a great relationship to your body. I wish I had that. And they are in my eyes, like the epitome of what the norm.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:32:59] Society, yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:32:59] But to them, they're so close to the norm, but they are not it. In their own heads and their own bodies and their own minds. But it plagues them, whereas I'm far from it. And so it never, it never plagued me after a certain time, because I was just like, this is just who I am and I'm just going to own it because I don't want to be that thing. It's is very far away. And it's not the thing that I want, you know, but if you think about it's like if you're very, very close to something, it's very attainable. But if you're very far away from something, it is what it is. You know what I mean?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:33:30] Yeah. Although anyone could feel that way. Like, you don't have to be very, very far away from something to just be like, you know what, I just can't be bothered to negotiate with this. So. Okay, so I'm in a place where I don't I don't necessarily love my body, but I don't really, I just don't really engage with my body. I'm like, this is just my guy.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:33:51] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:33:52] This is my guy. My guy takes me away. Breathes for me. Lets me swallow cake.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:33:57] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:33:58] You know, my joints are kind of working. I, I can see and all these different like luxuries that I have and I just appreciate every tiny little thing.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:34:08] Right.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:34:09] I grew up deaf and so now to be able to hear. It's just always like every time, every time I listen to music which is every day.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:34:16] Yeah. Suh an emotional experience.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:34:16] I thank my body. The fact that I can hear this music, especially when it's good music. Sometimes when like you know, Pitbull or something is playing. I'm like, oh, I'm not that grateful right now. But still, anyway.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:34:29] What's your qualm with Pitbull?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:34:29] I don't know. I just don't like Pitbull's music. I don't know what to tell you. I admire Pitbull's business acumen.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:34:37] But.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:34:37] And taste in suits.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:34:39] Ok.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:34:40] Anyway. Well, we don't need to keep that. But I, I don't engage with my body, I guess, in an aesthetic way. I kind of practice body neutrality. Which is just me just being like, I accept you. Whatever it is that you're doing. You do you, I'll do me. And we'll just go everywhere together. I don't have to adore you. I don't have to look at you lovingly in the mirror. Where you are you at? Are you like I love my body.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:05] I'm just sort of like-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:07] Like me?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:09] Yeah, well I think that.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:09] Just like this is this my body.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:10] I'm just sort of like, also, just I always.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:11] This is my friend.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:12] Yeah. I'm like, she's cool.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:16] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:16] She's like, totally cool.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:19] You also are like, not to objectify you. Unbelievably gorgeous.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:23] As are you.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:24] Like, I find you, so gorgeous in every way.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:27] Thank you, the feeling is mutual.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:28] And I love, I love looking at pictures of you. Is that weird? I love looking-

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:31] It's so nice.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:32] It releases endorphins in my brain. And so I feel like this love that you have on the inside does radiate out of you. Aside from the fact that you have fucking big green eyes, you bastard. And-

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:45] They used to be brown.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:46] Your general-.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:46] They've morphed.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:48] Oh, fuck you.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:50] Why is green better than brown?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:52] No it isn't. I just love green eyes.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:53] Okay.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:35:54] It's my favorite color.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:35:55] You always like. Here's the thing. You're always going to want what you don't have. Like my brothers and my nephews and my dad have blue eyes. I think blue eyes are so beautiful.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:36:03] Yeah yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:36:03] But I don't have them.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:36:04] No.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:36:04] And I have great eyes.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:36:05] Yeah yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:36:06] So what? Why waste, as you say, why waste the time? Right? It's just like. But I do think, like I you know, I do try to like really work on trying to help sort of shift the people around me to think about what they're saying around bodies because-

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:36:22] Same.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:36:23] When, I was doing "Hello Dolly" for a year and it was a musical. My costume weighed like 20 pounds. Eight shows a week. And without realizing it, I guess the pounds just dripped off me. I didn't think about it literally at all. I wasn't trying. Wasn't a part of my thought process or didn't change the way I ate. Nothing. But just if you do that consistently enough, that's the result.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:36:45] Well, it's like any sport. Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:36:47] And I had one week off and I went back to L.A. and all I heard for seven days, my only seven days off was you look so good, you look so much better. You look so much better. You look so good. What did you do? You look so good? How? How much better do you look? I was like, what? Like I just didn't. And then I understood what they were saying, and it was so-

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:37:09] It's so the coding of that language.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:37:12] It was so infuriating to me. And I wrote this piece for Refinery Twenty Nine. That was about it. It's called "Please Stop Complimenting My Body". And it's just about like when we tell people that they look better because they're thinner. Do you understand what rhetoric you're producing?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:37:30] Exactly.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:37:30] And it's so damaging. And I actually felt worse because all of the sudden I felt on display. I felt like a mannequin in a museum or like at a shop, like waiting for people to look at me, whereas like normally I'm just bopping about my day being me with the bop, like it's all fine.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:37:45] Yeah. And it also sets an expectation that maybe you didn't feel but for some people it sets an expectation of like, did they think I looked bad before and now do I have to maintain this aesthetic-

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:37:57] 100%. That's what their saying.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:37:59] How does that not seed in your mind?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:38:00] Of course. Through their language that's what they're saying. And it's also saying that they've been tracking me this whole time.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:38:05] Exactly.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:38:05] Which I hate and freaks me out, it makes me feel very spooky. And so I wrote this thing and I and I it's a beautiful response to it, not just from people who struggle with their weight. I had a lot of people, a lot of people that have been sick say to me, people tell me I look so much better and in fact, I'm ill and they don't know that I am. The response has been across the board from so many different people in different walks of life and going through different experiences very, very meaningful to me because I just was like we need to not give, why society give everyone permission to comment on each other's bodies? There is a difference between saying that skirt is so beautiful and oh, you look so much better in that skirt than I thought or whatever, you know, or even like you look good in that skirt because it's shows

off your legs or whatever the comment is. It's like just say you look beautiful today, not because of one specific thing that your leg looks slender or your ankle looks skinny or whatever it is. You know, I mean, it's also coded. And it's it was really frustrating to me. And I think it was interesting when we did "How to Build a Girl" because I was coming off of "Hello Dolly". And I was still like for me, my like towards my, like the smallest I've been in my whole life. And the character is a big girl. And they reference sometimes that she's a big girl. And it was so interesting for me because I was the thinnest I've been since I was a child. And it was so interesting because I was like even now this is sort of the Hollywood version of what being big looks like. I was like, I'm actually the smallest I've been in in decades. And yet this is still kind of seen as big and that's even, you know, like interesting. And it just was so fascinating to me, like who these lines are so arbitrary. And the film is so triumphant in saying that that doesn't matter. And who gives a shit. And her body is her body. And it's it's not the narrative of the film that saying that but it's characters in the film that you're supposed to be mad at. That say that. And I think it's just so interesting because.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:40:00] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:40:01] The narrative of the film tries to combat that ideology. But it is like so prevalent.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:40:06] It's inherent, it's everywhere. I am. I was filming something once where they were supposed to describe my character as someone was going to sort of objectify me. Be like or think I was supposed to objectify myself or something and call myself slim and beautiful as an arrogant sort of moment. And one of my costars at the time on that set was like, oh, we should probably take out the word slim. And they didn't mean it in a cruel way or sort of just like came out of their mouth as like a, oh, we should probably take out the word like thin. I think that was it. I referred to myself as thin and I was immediately like, I am a size 6, but also that's crazy that you just said that out loud cause you a look at my body type. But it is you know, it's a, it's a six.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:40:57] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:40:57] And you're like, that's not my idea of thin. And then you've objected to it out loud publicly on a microphone.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:41:07] That like makes my chest tight.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:41:09] I don't know. I was just like I wasn't offended.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:41:11] No.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:41:11] Because I've come to a point where I'm just like I, I'm so unable because I have body dysmorphia. I'm so unable to even contemplate my body that I don't even care. It's abstract to me. My body is a Picasso, right? You know, so I don't know what, you know, whatever. It doesn't matter. But I was more amazed by the hyper-normalization of that objectification. Where I was like, Jesus Christ, this is still really an issue, even now. And that was just a couple of years ago.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:41:38] Yeah. It's so. I'm sorry, you had to go through that.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:41:40] No, it's fine. I'm fine.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:41:41] No. But.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:41:42] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:41:42] It's not fine. You're fine, but it's not fine.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:41:44] I'm fine. I know. It's definitely not fine. That's kind of why I have all these complications with people.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:41:48] I say that to people so often, by the way, because the number of like women that I love and I do it, too, that really I'm fine. It's fine. It's like it's like you are fine, because you are strong. But it wasn't fine, whatever the "it" might be. It's, I think it's a nice like kind of.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:42:00] I think that's a great way of putting it, because that also says something needs to shift and something needs to change.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:42:04] Like you're okay because you're strong.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:42:06] Something else I love is that when I see curvaceous women happy publicly, that is something we need so much more representation of. Because I found it really interesting. A couple of years ago, I got sort of fat shamed because I'd gained maybe, like I was maybe 200 pounds or something. I don't know, like I was on medicine and I was eating loads of cake and I was having a fucking brilliant time. I loved everything I ate and I had the money to eat really well. It was just pretty fancy, delicious food that I've always dreamed of being able to afford to eat. And I was criticized for it so much. And what was interesting, because I didn't really care. I fought back. That was the sort of the beginning of me just being like, okay, fuck you.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:42:47] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:42:48] But the pictures were really interesting. So all the pictures that anyone would publish of me were always like me on my own, walking somewhere with like a sort of solemn expression. And they would never catch me when I was ready for the photograph. It was always-

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:43:02] When you were smiling.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:43:02] When I wasn't ready for the photograph. Or like does it, whereas when I when I'm thin, photographers will speak to me so respectfully, they'll let me put my bag down so I can pose like in my outfit properly and smile, they'll ask me to smile. And those are the pictures that will be published. And I was like, God, I hadn't noticed until now the narrative of like actually when there's really thin pictures are taken. I was thoroughly anorexic like crazy anorexic, zero sex drive, not happy. Always thinking about food. Always thinking about how much my hips are jutting out. Like totally insane. And in the pictures that were taken when I'm fat, I was happy, I was having so much sex. I was doing the best I'd ever done in my career. My friendships were the healthiest I've ever had. My health was actually the best it had ever been. I was. I was thriving. You could never have known that from the way that the photographs painted our society. So it's so important for women of different sizes to show the truth of like how we feel inside. And you are just fucking thriving in love. Your career is insane right now. You have your first, like, big starring role coming out this year with "How to Build a Girl". You'll going to the Oscars.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:44:22] I'm going to the Oscars.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:44:22] You're going to be awesome.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:44:23] I know, I'm presenting it.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:44:24] I know.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:44:26] It's really nutty. I know. I think like also that that also is kind of not to bring it back to "How to Build a Girl" on purpose, but like genuinely-

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:44:34] No, do it.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:44:34] One of the reasons that I love that movie and that script and I love the experience of making that movie and playing Johanna was like. She I mean, she goes through such a journey as you know, because you've read it. And but she is so full of life. And even when she's morose or she's down, she still is so optimistic. Her optimism kind of knows no bounds. And that was kind of the connective tissue I felt between me and her. And even when

she's, like, hit in the face at school with a book or like, you know, things happen to her, it's like it's not easy for her, but she picks herself up and she keeps going.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:45:19] Yeah, she pushes on and she pushes back.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:45:21] Boundless. Yes. She pushes back and on and with boundless optimism. And I just love that. And there's so much hope in that. And that was so inspiring to me. So it just feels, I don't know. It's not like I'm choosing to be happy. And and sometimes I'm I'm really I really struggle because I've had tragedy in my life. But I think, like, I. It just feels. It's just who I am. I think I'm inherently.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:45:44] You're living a very natural life.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:45:46] I just think I'm inherently optimistic and positive.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:45:49] I love that. Talk to me about clothes.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:46:03] I love clothes.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:46:05] All my comments on you are just, "You have no permission to kill us with these looks". You are so fucking stylish. I love everything that you wear. I love the way that you dress yourself. But we were talking earlier about the frustration of the fact that only really now are we starting to find more variety for different bodies. I can't find single samples, I'm a six. I can't find a single sample that ever fits me. Everything has to be completely restitched and added. And like, like big panels have to be added. And so I know that anyone over 6 for most designers is just like, forget about it.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:46:41] It's it's a really it is nutty and it's nutty because we've come so far in such a short amount of time. I think even like two years ago, we've come so far, but there is still so much farther to go.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:46:51] So I think everyone paid attention to the fact that two years ago, Christian Siriano expanded his sizes and tripled his income.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:46:59] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:46:59] No one, even so, even if it's just.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:47:00] Money is power.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:47:01] A business decision, that's fine. Just do the thing that is good for business.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:47:04] Do you know how many-?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:47:05] It's dumb to leave people out.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:47:06] Do you know how many people, not just women, but men, non-binary people want to feel good and have variety in what they're wearing? Like it's just as simple as that. But I love clothes. My mom was a costume designer and stylist and is the most fabulous human being you'll ever meet. And so I grew up in such a visual house. My, actually my staircase in my house is all leopard. My parents' stair case is.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:47:28] Oh, my God. I love that.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:47:31] And my mom was just this this this personification of style and trend. And she's effortless and fabulous and she's just like a queen and closer how she-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:47:44] Expresses herself.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:47:44] Expresses herself like to the Nth Degree. And so I sort of grew up thinking like, I'm nothing like her because I'm I'm not. But I always enjoyed clothes. I, I wasn't as like bold or trendy or radical as she was. But I always enjoyed clothes. And I was with her so much at her fittings that I just grew up around clothes. And, you know, I think what's been hard for me in the past couple of years is I sort of fluctuate between a 14 and a 12, which is, interestingly enough, normal size and plus size. Which is such an interesting thing, because depending on the month, the year, whatever it is like I'm either able to shop at like you, I don't even know what the right word is, like standard size stores or-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:48:34] Straight sizes I think. Yeah yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:48:35] Straight sizes? Interesting. Or I shop at plus size stores. And I really am literally like on the edge at all times like just depending on the day, time of the month, anything. And it is really interesting because people often ask me like, what is it like to be plus-size? Do you identify as plus-size? And I'm always like, I don't even know if I am. And it doesn't matter to me at all.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:49:02] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:49:02] But it is interesting because the access to clothes in that kind of middle of the two is actually very small because it's it's kind of a lost zone between like the top of one and the bottom of another.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:49:15] And the top of one there still isn't nearly enough variety. It's insane.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:49:18] No. And I think I-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:49:19] And it's so dumb. It makes no sense to me.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:49:20] Yeah. I just feel so lucky because I found Erin Walsh was my stylist at a time that I really needed her. And she is the most joyous, loving, compassionate woman in the fashion industry. And she is so on this journey, the two of us together to make clothes and to curate clothes that I just feel so confident in and so good in and-. But it's also hard because sometimes they make things for me that actually aren't available for women my size. And that's so hard because how lucky am I?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:49:51] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:49:51] To get to wear that. But also, if I wasn't in my position, I would want to have access to that. And it doesn't exist because they need it for me.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:49:59] You're telling me you went into a jeans store.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:50:02] Yes.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:50:02] Well you went into Madewell. Fuck it. You went into Madewell. We both love Madewell.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:50:07] We love Madewell.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:50:08] Such comfortable jeans. But now that doing XL.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:50:16] Now they have way extended sizes now.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:50:17] Way extended sizes.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:50:17] Within a couple years, I'm telling you.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:50:18] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:50:18] In the last few years, I think their jeans go up like 37 or something like that.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:50:22] Right. But you had a sort of an incident-.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:50:26] I would say maybe a tantrum.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:50:27] It was a tantrum. Ok.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:50:29] Like three years ago. I went into my local Madewell in Flatiron, or Union Square, and I was like, hey, can I try this on in XL? And they're like, oh, it's only online. And I was like, but I, I'm, I want it.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:50:45] But I'm here.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:50:45] And I'm trying to figure out if I'm a large or an extra so I'd like to try them both on. They're like, well, we could order it to the store. You have to pay to have order.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:50:51] You don't have one single XL in any color in the store.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:50:55] In the store. And I was like, why? And I started getting not upset, but like jokingly upset, but I was like, this is crazy. Like, this is crazy. Like I'm here. I want to try them both on. You make them already. Like-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:51:08] I have money to spend on them.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:51:10] Like I want to spend the money. Just let me spend the money. Let me, let me do it. And they were like, we really hear you. And then I walked in like, I went to film something and I came in a couple months later. And that same girl that had been helping me, it was like, Beanie, Beanie, they they did it. They've added all the sizes to the store.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:51:26] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:51:27] And I was like-.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:51:27] High five.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:51:29] I mean, a little change.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:51:31] Good tantrum. Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:51:31] And now I think they have way more sizing that they still only some of it's online and some of it's in stores. So they're they're getting there and I really appreciate that they're working on it. But again, they're still like farther to go. But I think it really is just insane to think that. To my understanding, also the most common size in the US for women is like a 14 or something like that.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:51:49] Mmhmm. 14, 16. I think.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:51:50] The most common size is not available in stores.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:51:53] It's ridiculous.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:51:53] Which just like doesn't make any sense.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:51:55] It's such bad dumb business that it makes me feel physically sick.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:51:58] Yeah. It just doesn't make any sense. So I think and also like what I was saying about trying to gently persuade my friends and family to change their wording. I was with someone recently and they were like, oh, that looks so good on that person because

clothes just hang off them. And I was like. And they were like, what? And I was like, clothes look great on me. They do not hang off with me. And she was like, you're so right. I was like, we need to stop saying that. And I love clothes. I think I look really good in clothes, but I'm 5'1 and I'm a size 14. Like I'm not the size of or the shape of that clothes are built for.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:52:36] I also feel like if a designer can't design for more than just one body shape, they are not talented. You're not talented. If you can't design for a variety of bodies.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:52:50] And I'm so lucky that I have had exquisite pieces made by Oscar de la Renta and ... I mean like how lucky am I?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:52:57] Talented.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:52:57] But also, they're so talented. But also, I just feel like it's it's important for people to see beautiful artistry through fashion on every type of body.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:53:09] Agreed.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:53:10] And it just as important. I think it's important. And also, it just something that I really love. And I think feels really fun and joyous to me.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:53:18] It is. It's art. You going to our art. I love that you speak out about this. I love that you wear these clothes. I hope one day we get to have a clothing line together for all different sizes. And people who-.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:53:31] And heights.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:53:31] Are in wheelchairs.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:53:33] Yes.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:53:33] And like every, everyone should be at the party and everyone should look fucking glorious.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:53:36] 100%. I completely agree.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:53:40] I'm excited. Maybe you'll be a designer or something after this or at least a creative designer or something.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:53:44] My dream is, and this doesn't make me do anything but like a nail polish line. That would really be. My nails are a little chipped, don't look, but like. Why would I do this to myself? But I think that would be really fun. I've always wanted to do like a hair accessory situation cause I love hair accessories.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:54:01] Yeah, but also you should have a full fucking clothing line.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:54:03] Yeah. Clothes, shoes, everything.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:54:05] The whole shit, bang. I would buy so much of the shit that I see you wear. But also some of it sometimes isn't even sold in my size.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:54:11] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:54:12] I'm a large in most stores that I walk around in and that's the bigger size.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:54:17] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:54:17] I walked into like Marge recently, is that how you say it? Marge?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:54:21] Yeah. I think.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:54:21] And I couldn't fit into their bigger shorts. And I was like, guys.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:54:24] I just think that some of the most fashionable people I know are not a sample size. I mean most the fashion people I know are not a sample size. And I think we should just all have, I mean like, what is this journey through life about? It's about like being able to have access to the things you want to do, whether it's like telling your story or wearing a certain garment or any of those things. And I feel like it's just about having the access to do those things. And if you don't have the access to a variety of different clothing and you're stuck within the parameters of like three different stores, where is everyone else gets like hundreds. It's just a disadvantage and it's not fair and it's inequality. And I think I'm all about telling the stories of people that haven't been able to tell their stories and representing those stories. And that's so meaningful for me. But also, just in your day to day life, you're like, I want to express myself this way, but they don't make it. And it's frustrating.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:55:15] Yeah. It's insane.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:55:16] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:55:16] Well, keep shouting about it.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:55:18] Ok.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:55:19] So what's next for Beanie Feldstein?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:55:22] Well, "How to Build a Girl" is going to come out in the world, which is very exciting. I'm going to turn 27 this year, which feels like mature in a fun way.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:55:33] Full woman. I feel like that's when you truly become an adult, by the way. In my opinion.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:55:37] Is that true? I feel it coming.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:55:38] I thought 21 and I didn't know shit.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:55:41] No. It's not 21.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:55:42] I can't believe how much shit I didn't know at 21 when I thought I was an adult and I was being treated like an adult, but I felt like a child. 30-, 27, 28, 29 is when you start to feel like, oh, oh, oh.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:55:55] I'm getting it. I'm getting it.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:55:56] Yes. This makes way more sense.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:55:59] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:55:59] Even then you feel like more of a teen but it is just, it's, it's a, it's a grounding time where you get to become the woman that you want to be or the person that you want to be.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:56:10] That's exciting.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:56:10] So I'm excited for you.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:56:11] Thank you.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:56:11] So before you go, would you tell me what you weigh?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:56:15] I weigh, being a very loyal, compassionate friend, daughter, sister, aunt. I'm trying to think, what else I am.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:56:27] You weigh?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:56:27] No, no, no. I was trying to think if I am any other. Girlfriend.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:56:31] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:56:33] I weigh being a very hard worker and approaching work with a lot of gratitude, but also a lot of intensity. I weigh being a feminist, I weigh supporting mental health issues, I weigh, what else? Loving vanilla cake with rainbow sprinkles, madly, being an obsessive. I, I weigh being a "Gilmore Girls" fan. I weigh my recent rediscovery of reading and how much I love reading and welcoming that back into my life. I weigh my stubbornness, even though drives me crazy sometimes. I own that it is a part of myself. I weigh my fear of authority. It's a real part of my life that I've tried to accept is a part of who I am.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:57:32] Yeah.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:57:32] And I weigh loving dogs, but hating cats.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:57:38] Oh, fine.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:57:39] And I have to own that. I hate them.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:57:41] Yeah, well, you're allergic to them.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:57:42] I'm very allergic to them. So it's like created a thing. What else?

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:57:47] No, that's that's enough.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:57:48] OK.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:57:49] Yeah. I think you weigh a beautiful amount.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:57:52] Thank you.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:57:52] I also love that you talk about mental health. You have therapy.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:57:54] I just came from it this morning.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:57:57] Great.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:57:58] Also, my mom is a really beautiful organization called "Your Mom Cares", which is all about moms banding together to change the narrative around children's mental illness, to celebrating mental wellness and removing the stigma from it. Especially for kids.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:58:11] Oh, my God. We will definitely investigate that.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:58:13] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:58:13] Can I talk to your mom sometime?

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:58:14] It would literally be her dream.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:58:16] Ok, great.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:58:16] But I think watching her and supporting her through her organization has been really special.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:58:20] Incredible.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:58:21] Yeah.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:58:21] Thanks. Thanks for coming and being so almost overwhelmingly delightful. You're so-.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:58:29] Oh my gosh, thank you for what you do. And thank you for creating a community where people feel free to kind of value the most important things in life, which is what it's all about. I think.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:58:38] And thank you for sharing your A, your talent with the world, but your sunshine with the world. It's so important. It's such like a weird dark time where we seem to be so much more drawn to the sad stories. And that's because there isn't, the happy stories aren't told enough. And you have a, I'm not saying you haven't tried to do within your life, but you're a you are a happy, hopeful story. And you give me loads of hope and inspiration.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:59:05] Thank you. That's so nice.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:59:05] And I'm really happy that I get to be alive when you're alive and see you out in the world. Thanks for coming.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:59:10] Oh I feel the same way. This was so lovely. Thank you.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:59:11] Love you.

BEANIE FELDSTEIN [00:59:11] Love you too.

JAMEELA JAMIL [00:59:13] A quick thank you to the people who make this podcast possible. Kimmie Lucas, my producer, and Sophia Jennings, who is also one of the producers in the podcast. A big thank you to my boyfriend, James Blake who I forced to make the theme tune for this, and I love it very much and I'd like to thank myself.