

Wonderful! 97: 12 Angry Virtual Pets

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[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is—whoa, that's too loud.

Rachel: [laughs quietly]

Griffin: [laughs quietly] This time it's gonna be just right, baby. Don't worry, we got that perfect porridge, now. Ah, I'm a little quiet. Are you too loud? Now we got that perfect porridge. Let me dip my finger in it. Ooh, that's nice. [pauses] [snorts]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] We're ready, now! I'm a little hot.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs loudly] No, we're good now.

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hey, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Could you just point the mic just a little bit further down? That your... [laughs quietly] so it's more—now it's more of a physical... let me see. Oh, that looks great.

Yeah, so this is Wonderful! In this podcast we talk about things that we are really into right now, like, um... contained plosives and, uh, gain balance, and, uh, you know—

Rachel: Perfect porridge.

Griffin: Peeerfect porridge, and all that good stuff. Listen, we're near—we're rounding a hundred.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And we need to talk about what we're gonna do. Off—off camera, 'cause I don't have any fucking idea.

Rachel: I think we did actually talk about something.

Griffin: Did we?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Oh, shoot. How quickly we forget, huh?

Rachel: Well, I remembered. [laughs]

Griffin: Well, how quickly we both forget an equal amount. But anyway, a hu—you gotta—you can't come into a hundred sounding like complete shit, you know?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: There's just no excuse for it, people. Invest in some acoustics treatment, for God's sakes.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I can't tell you how many a hundred episode old podcasts I listen to that still sound like... the butt cheeks. So I want us to sound like some real... professional shit! Some r—some real Ira Glass shit!

Rachel: What's the opposite of the butt cheeks?

Griffin: Um... well, you gotta understand. The butt cheeks can be good or bad.

Rachel: Mmm.

Griffin: It depends on how you use it, and sort of like your cadence. Like, "Ugh, God. This audio is just—it's the butt cheeks." Or, if you're talking about a song, be like, "[excitedly] Ooh, this song is the butt cheeks!"

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Is this the new slap?

Griffin: I think so. I used to s—I feel like I used to say "That's the butt cheeks—"

Rachel: [laughing] Oh yeah?

Griffin: —for a brief period of my life, and I can't remember if it was the period where I was doing recorded audio entertainment for the masses or not, but I would like to bring it back. "That's the butt cheeks, man!"

Rachel: I like it.

Griffin: Yeah. Do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: I do!

Griffin: What is it?

Rachel: Uh, so I was looking today, and I saw that they posted some concert footage from Lollapalooza 2019 in the great city of Chicago.

Griffin: Hell yeah.

Rachel: Uh, I used to volunteer to be, um, a... volunteer—

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: —[laughs] at that festival!

Griffin: Not—you didn't volunteer to perform? "Don't worry, guys. I got this."

Rachel: No, no. It was like, 2005 to maybe 2008, I used to volunteer? Anyway, I have a real soft spot for Vol—Lollapalooza.

Griffin: Vollapalooza is fun. Is that what they called it for you?

Rachel: [laughs] Well, that was the volleyball festival—

Griffin: Oh, shit. You're right.

Rachel: —they have every year. Uh, and I saw an incredible concert video of Death Cab and Chance the Rapper performing Do You Remember? And it was very, very good. Chance the Rapper is maybe one of the best live shows, uh, I would say in the nation right now.

Griffin: Have you seen him before?

Rachel: I got to see him at ACL Fest one year.

Griffin: Oh, that's right.

Rachel: Uh, and he just puts on such a good live show. He just brings such like, energy and enthusiasm to everything he does, and to see him like, in his home city of Chicago—

Griffin: In front of a huge-ass crowd.

Rachel: Yeah. It was incredible.

Griffin: So good. I wanna talk about, for my small wonder, the chorus of You Are My Sunshine. It's a sweet song. I was gonna bring it as a big wonder, 'cause I sing it to Henry like, a few times every night, and it's sweet. Like, I just like—you know. You are my sunshine, my only sunshine, you make me happy when skies are gray. Uh, uh—you'll never know, dear, how much I love you. Please don't take my sunshine away.

That's sweet, right? That's nice, and you sing it to your kiddo and it's sweet, and I was gonna like, talk about that. I was gonna look into like, the history of it and talk about it, and then I read the verses. Did you know about the verses?

Rachel: There's more, right?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Yeah, but I don't—I feel like I knew that, but I don't remember anything about it.

Griffin: The verses are so creepy. The verses are so creepy and bad and unhealthy—

Rachel: Oh, no! I mean, the whole idea of "Please don't take my sunshine away" kind of suggests a foreboding element.

Griffin: Yeah... um... I'll just go through some of the highlights, here. Uh, "The other night, dear, as I lay sleeping, I dreamed I held you in my arms, but when I awoke, dear, I was mistaken, and I hung my head and cried."

So that didn't rhyme even a little bit, but that's fine. We can keep pushing through.

Second verse: "I'll always love you and make you happy, if you will only say the same, [serious tone] but if you leave me to love another, you'll regret it all someday."

Hey, You Are My Sunshine?

Rachel: Oh, this is not a song for kids, huh?

Griffin: No, it's kind of not? It's—"You told me once, dear, you really loved me and no one else could come between, but now you've left me and love another. You have shattered all my dreams."

Rachel: Phew!

Griffin: "C'mere, son! It's time for our beddy-bye song."

Rachel: I think this is maybe song for a lover and not for a child.

Griffin: It's a song for a lover in 1939, when you thought that this was an acceptable way to talk to your lover.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, when—it still wasn't, but yeah. I actually had a good, hearty laugh. Maybe that's the small wonder, is the big laugh I had while researching this and then, you know, ctrl+a, deleting all of my notes about You Are My Sunshine.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Who goes first this week? [singing] It's the who goes first this week song! When—

Rachel: I think it's you.

Griffin: [singing] Who goes first this week? [normally] It's me!

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: My first thing, like many subjects I've tried to tackle in the past, couldn't think of a good way to put it in words.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: But what I landed on his like, shopping for and like, picking your everyday load out. Sh—puttin' together your every load out.

Rachel: What do you mean by load out?

Griffin: I'm sorry that I can't—okay. To extrapolate, I think that back-to-school shopping is kind of like a great example of this, and the first, like, exposure you get to this idea.

Rachel: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Griffin: You're a kid, or in high school or college or whatever. You go to the store. You got a budget. You wanna find some cool bags with cool characters on 'em. Maybe. Depending on how old you are. Maybe you do need a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles one, because that's what's cool and you want people to know that you know what is up.

Uh, you want the hypest Trapper Keeper. Um, and maybe when you get older you're looking for maybe a more functional stuff. A more functional trapper keeper, but you still want it to look good, but it's like a different—it's a different set of priorities.

And all that, all that back-to-school shopping stuff is like a different kind of shopping from like, "I'm gonna go buy myself some nice things that I'm excited for." Because it's like an all day thing that is functional that people are gonna see you with all the time.

Rachel: Yes! Did you know I thought about doing back-to-school shopping as my topic?

Griffin: Wow.

Rachel: And I actually was curious to see what the back-to-school trends were for 2019.

Griffin: Oh! Well, lemme google that after I finish.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: That'll be a fun little miniature segment.

Rachel: It's not—it's not really anything that you would hope it would be.

Griffin: Oh, did you already google it?

Rachel: I did, yeah.

Griffin: Whoa, okay! Well, then go ahead and tell me, correspondent on the field, Rachel McElroy.

Rachel: So, I ended up on like, Seventeen Magazine.

Griffin: Ugh, they don't know. They're Seventeen!

Rachel: Yeah, and it was just kind of like, "Hey, wear this romper and maybe put a sweater over it in case it's cold."

Griffin: Get the fuck outta here, Seventeen!

Rachel: Like, this isn't what I wanted! I wanted like, real, like, now fashion.

Griffin: The real shit! I also wanted to know, like, is there gonna be seventh Paw Patrol member that they're debuting on a jacket or something. Um, anyway, I haven't gone back-to-school shopping in quite some time, but like, to bring it forward into the adult age, I get this way with some stuff.

Um, clothes are maybe like, too broad of an example, right? Because fashion is like, kind of its own thing. But like, a jacket. I will research a jacket, because a jacket, I want it to be suitable for like, a few different kinds of weather. The kinds of weather that I am likely to be exposed to.

Rachel: [laughing] Uh-huh?

Griffin: I want it to have good pockets, the right number of pockets, functional pockets. I want it to have form and function.

Rachel: You're saying this as if you have one jacket per year, and I know that to be—

Griffin: That's not true! I have several jackets, but I don't wanna just buy a fuckin' jacket willy-nilly. When we went to New Orleans to do our tour, it was about 30 degrees colder than I thought it was gonna be, and I spent like, half a day looking for... a peacoat. Just like, a nice peacoat, 'cause I know I look good in a peacoat, but I wanted one that doesn't look like and feel like—and doesn't have pockets—and feel like dog shit.

So I spent some time on it. The biggest like—the biggest thing I got into was about—last year I got real deep into shopping for bags, shopping for backpacks. 'Cause I had that Swiss Gear backpack that everybody has, and it fell apart, and I was like, "Let me look at some other shit."

Rachel: You say "everybody," but really it's just your two other brothers. [laughs]

Griffin: Me and my two brothers—no, it's like a best-seller on Amazon!

Rachel: Oh, it is?

Griffin: That's why we decided to buy it.

Rachel: Okay, okay.

Griffin: And so like, I needed a backpack that had the correct, uh, container size, that had the correct number of gallons, is how they measure that, right? And so like, if it's too many gallons it's not gonna fit under a plane seat and at that point, like, what the fuck am I even doing here? But I needed to—

Rachel: They measure backpacks in gallons?

Griffin: I'm pretty sure, yeah.

Rachel: Huh!

Griffin: Unless I'm like, wildly misremembering, which wouldn't be the first time that's happened on the podcast. But I needed it to be able to fit like, my backpack—a—a small—a second backpack—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: —I needed to be able to fit my laptop and like, my big headphones, and the Switch is like, always—like, those three are always coming with me—

Rachel: And then a third backpack.

Griffin: A third backpack goes in there. Uh, a stylus, maybe iPad, maybe pen, like, some Sharpies—

Rachel: See, this is why it's so hard to shop for you, Griffin. Is that you have opinions about a lot of things.

Griffin: Yeah... you do good, though. Like, you have never gotten me something that has like—

Rachel: I've never gotten you a bad item of clothing, I'll say.

Griffin: You've never gotten me a bad item of clothing, no. And for like, other things, like cooking implements, you crush it every time, and I feel like that's kind of—I don't know. That's not something I—that's not my everyday thing—

Rachel: But I would never buy you a backpack, is what I'm saying.

Griffin: Y—oh, you shouldn't. You shouldn't.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: You wouldn't get it.

Rachel: I know. [laughs]

Griffin: You wouldn't get it. It literally took me like, two weeks—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: —to find the perfect bag—'cause they're expensive! Like, nice backpacks are expensive. But I got so fuckin' into it, because I use it constantly, and it's held up really nicely, and it is perfect for me. It is the perfect size. Like, everything fits so neatly inside this bag that when I zip it up it's like, not an inch of space is—it's so, so nice, and I love it so much, and it's just like, that's part of my load out.

And the stuff that I keep in there is kind of, too. Like, I always take that Switch with me, everywhere I go, whenever I travel. That laptop's always with me. There's this concept called "everyday carry" that is kind of like this.

Rachel: Yes, yes, yes.

Griffin: —uh, I remember there was a phase where like, a couple of my buddies back in Huntington were like, doing this, where you just sort of lay out all the things that you carry with you, and you take a nice picture of it. Like, what's the gear—Travis is more into this than I am, 'cause Travis almost always has like, a bottle opener. Like, that's what I'm talking about. Like, you know, you got your.. your phone, your wallet, your—you got your, you know, some folks like a watch, a pocketknife, like a craftsman multi-tool—

Rachel: A comb that looks like a switchblade.

Griffin: —a little comb switchblade. Like, whatever. I'm into it. I like that idea of just like, "Here's my—"

Rachel: Your Tamagotchi.

Griffin: "Here's my inventory." And—

Rachel: Your slap bracelet.

Griffin: I don't have—I don't have, like—I don't know. I don't get excited to shop for th—I get more excited to shop for stuff like this than I do for like, frivolous stuff. And I don't even leave the house all that often, so it's not like, the biggest thing—

Rachel: I would argue you're the same way about travel mugs.

Griffin: Hmm—oh, yeah.

Rachel: You've had, uh, many a travel mug since I've known you.

Griffin: Uh, I just—mostly because I keep losin' the ding dang things, or, um—

Rachel: Or you don't wash 'em and then you buy a new one. [laughs]

Griffin: I don't wash 'em and I leave 'em in a backseat of a car for a month and a half and I'm like, "Well, that one's just toast. That one's got amoebas in it."

What's your first thing?

Rachel: So, my first thing is a nonfiction piece that was published in the Paris Review back in July, and it was called The Crane Wife.

Griffin: I saw this pop up, like, everywhere I feel like.

Rachel: Uh-huh? Kinda—it kinda blew up.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: A little bit. It was written by CJ Hauser. She is a professor in Colgate University of Creative Writing.

Griffin: Well, and dentistry, right?

Rachel: And—[laughing] dentistry—

Griffin: They all have to also do... they do have—they do have to do some teeth stuff on the side.

Rachel: So, this piece got passed around a lot because it very precisely captures the experience of many women that date somebody who makes them feel, um... just less than, I guess?

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: You know? Just more insecure than they were when they started? So the piece begins in this really kind of compelling way. The first sentence is, "10 days after I called off my engagement, I was supposed to go on a scientific expedition to study the whooping crane on the Gulf Coast of Texas."

Uh, so she—she has written a couple novels, and her second one is called Family of Origin, and it came out that same month, in July. I think—and I haven't read this novel—but I'm assuming what she's referring to in her essay is studying for the novel that just came out.

Griffin: Is it about cranes and stuff?

Rachel: It's just about—just the natural world.

Griffin: Hmm!

Rachel: In many ways.

Griffin: Cool! Like a Zoobooks.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs] Nice, man! She wrote a Zoobooks! I love it!

Rachel: Sometimes it's as if you've been frozen for 20 years and then your frame of references are all based on...

Griffin: I still get Zoobooks, dude.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I still get Zoobooks. Check the mailbox. Oh, that's right. I sneak 'em in the house as soon as they get here and I hide 'em in my closet—

Rachel: [laughs] Under the mattress.

Griffin: —'cause I don't want—I don't want you taking my freaking Zoobooks! I don't want our kid shlobberin' and blobberin' all over 'em—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: —ruining my freaking Zoobooks. There's new Zoo animals all the time, man!

Rachel: Um... [laughs] so... wait, are you saying that each issue has a new zoo animal, or that all the time new zoo animals come out?

Griffin: New zoo animals poppin' out, man! Elephants 2! The sequel to elephants!

Rachel: Like Koalas? You know, and alligators!

Griffin: Super—supergators, man!

Rachel: Just—just furry gators.

Griffin: Yeah! They're big furry gators—

Rachel: On trees!

Griffin: —that have two torsos, two heads, no legs, no tails! So cool, these guys are.

Rachel: [laughs] And so this story kind of goes back and forth between the end of her engagement and her previous relationship, and then her experience studying, you know, the various... you know. Pond life.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: Uh, in Texas.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] You know, pond life.

Griffin: Yeah, sure, sure.

Rachel: I shouldn't have to go into that. Everybody knows pond life.

Griffin: Everyone knows who ponds are, and what they can do.

Rachel: [laughs] So The Crane Wife may sound familiar to you because it's actually based on Japanese folklore. It's a story about a crane that tricks a man into thinking it is a woman, uh, so she can marry him. So she plucks out all of her feathers, and continues to do so to continue to keep the man.

Griffin: Interesting. I didn't—I didn't know that. I only knew the Decemberists' album.

Rachel: Yeah, exactly. That may also be why it's familiar.

Griffin: Maybe I knew it back when I was in college listening to that album. I've forgotten a lot of things since college.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Uh, so the story is about her and her engagement to this man who is very unromantic and very emotionally unavailable, and so she gives some examples, kind of, of their relationship, and points in which he, you know, kind of let her down or left her feeling kind of more lonely and sad than she was before.

But I wanted to read this excerpt from it, because I felt like this is an example of how precisely it kind of captures the experience of just generally being in a bad relationship. Not necessarily gendered in any way. So, I just wanted to share this.

"I need you to know, I hated that I needed more than this from him. There is nothing more humiliating to me than my own desires, nothing that makes me hate myself more than being burdensome and less than self-sufficient. I did not want to feel like the kind of nagging woman who might exist in a sitcom. These were small things, and I told myself it was stupid to feel disappointed by them. I had arrived in my 30s believing that to need things from others made you weak. I think this is true for lots of people, but I think it's especially true for women. When men desire things, they are passionate. When they feel they have not

received something they need, they are deprived or even emasculated, and given permission for all sorts of behaviors. But when a woman needs, she is needy. She is meant to contain within her own self everything necessary to be happy. That I wanted something to articulate that they loved me, that they saw me, was a personal failing, and I tried to overcome it."

Griffin: [quietly] Jeez.

Rachel: I thought that was so powerful.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I mean, so—so I don't talk about this a lot, but before Griffin and I were together, I was in a relationship from when I was like, 19, all the way up to 28. Uh, and I would say that both of us had a lot of trouble with being emotionally available, and it just kind of... bubbled over at a certain point.

And we are still on good terms today, so it wasn't as if I, you know, totally burned all the bridges there, but I just—I recognized that neither of us was getting what we needed from the relationship, because both of us were just unable to communicate and unable to be vulnerable with each other, and I ended up feeling very uncomfortable, like, saying what I needed in that relationship. And it really made me realize a lot of things about myself, and I think this is true for a lot of people.

You know, the first time you're in a relationship, you don't really know what is just being in a relationship—

Griffin: Yeah, you don't have that context.

Rachel: Yeah, and what compromises are appropriate, you know?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And what is actually, like, not appropriate, you know? And shouldn't be done, to be in a relationship?

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Griffin and I have talked about this a lot, because I think we were really surprised when we got together how little we felt like we had to sacrifice to be together.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know? I think we were both like, "Oh, you mean I get to be me all the time, and I can be happy?"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "Together with this person who is also being themselves?" [laughs]

Griffin: It's pretty fuckin' good.

Rachel: [laughing] Yeah.

Griffin: I feel like this—it's like, so cliché to like, write off all of your like, past relationships as being like, silly or something, because you have aged—like, I'm thinking of like, high school—I know you didn't like, date a lot in high school or anything like that—

Rachel: No, yeah.

Griffin: But I look back at like, relationships from then, most of them anyway, and, you know, my relationships from college, and thinking like, how, um... you know, ultimately compared to our marriage, it was something that was more like, immature in a way.

But really it's just because like, now I have the context from this relationship to look back and realize like, "Oh, I didn't know that that's how it could be. I didn't know that that's—"

Rachel: Uh-huh?

Griffin: —and not to say that like—it's a neutral thing. Like, I didn't know that that's what I should've been doing. Like, it's not like the other person was failing. Like, I feel like a jag for not, you know, being better about being in a relationship, because now I know. But like, I think you have to let yourself off the hook and just say like—that context is so valuable!

Rachel: Yeah, no, it's completely true. I think that's why a lot of people feel like you have to date a lot of individuals before you, you know, commit to anyone, because you have to figure out what you want.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And there is something to be said for that, because you just—you just don't know how to be with another person until you've done it for a while.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I like this piece a lot. Again, it's called The Crane Wife and it was in Paris Review. It's pretty easy to find. I liked it, too, because—you know, she's critical of her partner, but she also kind of presents it very factually of just like, "This is the person he was, and it was completely the wrong person for me, and I realized it slowly over time."

And so it doesn't feel like you're reading about this like, evil, villainous person. It's just somebody who just was categorically not the right person for her, and I just—I really—I think it's a really good piece. I recommend it.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, hey, before we move on, I do need to admit something to you.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: [inhales] [high pitched squawk]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [distant high pitched squawk]

Rachel: [laughing] Oh, no! Griffin's been a crane this whole time!

Griffin: [high pitched squawk]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [high pitched squawk]

Rachel: Is that what a crane sounds like?

Griffin: [high pitched whoop]

Rachel: There you go.

Griffin: [high pitched whoop]

Rachel: That sounds right.

Griffin: [several high pitched whoops]

Rachel: Did you read about this in your Zoobooks? [laughs]

Griffin: [laughing] [several high pitched whoops]

Rachel: Uh, hey, crane?

Griffin: [high pitched inquisitive noise]

Rachel: Can I steal you away?

Griffin: [high pitched affirmative noise]

Rachel: [laughs]

[Home Improvement theme, raising in pitch]

Griffin: So our first friend here that's come out to support us in our time of need is ZipRecruiter, because hiring is very challenging, and so I want you to take care of yourself, self care. It's really important right now. Go to the place where hiring is simple, fast, and smart. That place is ZipRecruiter.

Go—just—it's like a mud bath. Just go dip your toes in these soothing waters of Zip Recruiting. Uh, they're gonna send your job to over 100 of the web's leading job boards, but they don't stop there. They're gonna put the cucumber slices over your eyes. They're gonna put some Enya on the radio, and then with their powerful matching technology, they're gonna scan thousands of resumes to find people with the right experience and invite them to apply for your job. They're so

effective that four out of five employers who post on ZipRecruiter get a quality candidate through the site within the first day.

So, uh, what I want you do is if you're hiring for a job—hell, if you're not, if you just wanna go look at a cool hiring platform, just for funzos, then go to ZipRecruiter!

Specifically, you can try ZipRecruiter for free at this exclusive web address: [Ziprecruiter.com/wonderful](https://ziprecruiter.com/wonderful). That's [Ziprecruiter.com/wonderful](https://ziprecruiter.com/wonderful). ZipRecruiter: the smartest way to hire.

Rachel: Hey, can I tell you about our next sponsor?

Griffin: Shoot, yeah.

Rachel: It's Rothy's!

Griffin: Oh, my best buddy!

Rachel: Can you tell me about Rothy's?

Griffin: [sing-song] Rothy's is the shoes one—

Rachel: They are the shoes one!

Griffin: —they make 'em out of recycled materials.

Rachel: That's very true.

Griffin: They have 'em in all kinds of sizes and colors.

Rachel: That's true.

Griffin: Uh... let's see. You have them. They're sustainable and stylish and comfortable for everyday wear anywhere.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. They, uh—they also are versatile!

Griffin: [hisses] Shit!

Rachel: [laughs] You can wear them—

Griffin: I forgot...

Rachel: —just with a nice pair of jeans, or, you know, like a fancy ensemble.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: They go to day to night, night to day—

Griffin: Love it.

Rachel: —day to night, night to day!

Griffin: So good.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Uh, check out all the amazing styles available right now at Rothys.com/wonderful. That's Rothys.com/wonderful to get your new favorite flats. Comfort, style, and sustainability: these are the shoes you've been waiting for! Head to Rothys.com/wonderful today.

Griffin: Got a message for Jessica, AKA Spooky, and it's from [deep voice] Kevin.

"Jessica! You're a wonderful person. Here's a list of my small wonders about you: your artistic ability, your eye for fabric and color, your fashion sense, your empathy and kindness, also you have really cool hair. My wonderful thing is our love. I love you a bunch and wanted to commemorate it through our favorite podcast. Love you forever, Kevin."

It's—self-love is also so important. I think that that is really special.

Rachel: Has anyone ever told you you have cool hair?

Griffin: Me?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: No. We've talked about this.

Rachel: Me neither.

Griffin: I have the most base-ass hair ever.

Rachel: [laughs] I just—I think that's maybe one of the best compliments I've ever heard.

Griffin: Rachel gets, uh, pretty upset if you don't tell her how soft her hair is when you're touching it.

Rachel: I just—there's some times—[laughs]

Griffin: Go ahead and explain.

Rachel: [laughs] I think I have really soft hair.

Griffin: [fearfully] You do. Oh my God, you do!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [shakily] Please!

Rachel: And there's been many points in my life where I've just kind of, you know, touched my own hair and thought, "How has nobody ever told me how soft my hair is?"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So I casually mentioned it to Griffin—

Griffin: Casually.

Rachel: —and by casually, I mean that I recommended that he compliment me on my soft hair, and now—

Griffin: Once? The one time?

Rachel: —now it's—

Griffin: Is it once?

Rachel: —pretty frequent! I'd say it's, uh, almost daily. [laughs]

Griffin: The demands.

Rachel: [laughing] Yes, the demands.

Griffin: The requests.

Rachel: This is what I need, Griffin.

Griffin: Yes, and I give it to you!

Rachel: You do. Do you wanna hear this next message?

Griffin: Yes I do.

Rachel: It is for Amy, and it is from Past Amy.

Griffin: What a coincidence!

Rachel: [laughs] "Dear Amy: right now you're probably working super hard, getting used to living on your own, and having an amazing time in Portland. It's hard to tell yourself this, so I'll do it for you: I'm so proud of you for getting into art school and taking this huge leap out of your comfort zone. You're doing great, and I can't wait to be where you are."

Griffin: Oh, shit. Is this—this—then this is the moment of singularity.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: This is the—this is the time where Amy leaps into Amy in the future—

Rachel: Oh, see, I was thinking this is where Marty McFly sees himself performing at the Enchantment Under the Sea dance.

Griffin: Oh my God, then there's another Amy! A pr—a future—future past Amy.

Rachel: Past Amy, don't do anything to—

Griffin: Do not.

Rachel: —mess with Future Amy, and vice versa.

Griffin: In fact, this message alone is probably a huge violation of the time scanner rules!

Rachel: Uh, that said, thank you for buyin'—

Griffin: Thank you for the Jumbotron.

Rachel: —buyin' this message. [laughs]

[music plays]

Rileigh: I'm Rileigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: And together, we host a podcast called Still Buffering, where we answer questions like...

Rileigh: Why should I not fall asleep first at a slumber party?

Taylor: How do I be fleek?

Sydnee: Is it okay to break up with someone using emojis?

Taylor: And sometimes we talk about butts.

Rileigh: Nooo we don't. Nope.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Find out the answers to these important questions, and many more, on Still Buffering, a sisters' guide to teens through the ages.

Rileigh: I am a teenager...

Sydnee: And I... was... too.

Taylor: [simultaneously] And I... was... too. Butts. Butts, butts, butts butts.

Rileigh: Nooo. [laughs]

[music plays]

Griffin: I wanna tell you about my second thing. I am about to—have you ever watched 12 Angry Men?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Do you know the scene where the guy is talking about like, the knife, and he's like, "This is a tortoiseshell knife with this pattern, with this inch blade. What are the odds that somebody else would just like, have one of those knives?"

And then one of the other guys stands up and pulls one out of his pocket and stabs it into the table and is like, "What's up. I have one."

Rachel: I didn't remember that until you just described it in detail.

Griffin: But you remember that—

Rachel: Yes, yes.

Griffin: —now that I've described it in detail. Okay.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I'm about to do that to you. Are you ready?

Rachel: Okay.

[pauses]

Rachel: [laughs loudly] Is that why your eyes got real big?

Griffin: [laughing] Yeah. Explain to everybody what you're holding.

Rachel: [laughs] Earlier when Griffin was referencing, um, the type of items one might keep in their pocket and he said things like, um... gosh, I don't even remember now, I'm so flustered.

Griffin: I know. Wallet, keys, whatever?

Rachel: Wallet, keys, yeah. And I made the joke that it would be a Tamagotchi, and—[laughing] he just reached in his pocket and handed me a Tamagotchi.
[laughs]

Griffin: Hell yeah I did! That's the Tamagotchi On, that the new shit. Just came out last month.

Rachel: Ohh!

Griffin: Yeah. This is the new—this is all new stuff.

Rachel: Okay. Okay. All right.

Griffin: It takes two double A—triple A batteries, which I haven't put in there yet, so I haven't brought my child to life. Maybe I'll do it later on in the show, and we'll do like, a live hatching.

Rachel: See, I—[laughs]

Griffin: That would be exciting for people, don't you think?

Rachel: I never had one of these.

Griffin: Oh shit, you got the back off! Nice.

Rachel: Could you not figure that out before?

Griffin: No, I loosened the screw while I was in the closet earlier. I didn't want you to see that I had it.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I wanted this amazing reveal moment.

Rachel: So, I never had one of these.

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: Um, but I remember a friend did. Uh, and this one is pretty large. It's larger than I remember them being.

Griffin: It's big. Well, it's like, full color. It's like, a full color LCD screen.

Rachel: Ooh, full color?

Griffin: It's pretty technologically advanced. Uh, I am talking about Tamagotchi, because, uh—

Rachel: Do you say Tamagotchi? ["Tam" pronounced like it rhymes with "ham"]

Griffin: Uh, it's T-A-M-A-G-O-T-C-H-I.

Rachel: I always said Tah-magotchi.

Griffin: Well, it's a—Tah-magotchi is right. It's—I guess I was putting a little bit of Appalachian stink on it, because it is a portmanteau of the word "tamago", which is Japanese for egg—

Rachel: Ohh.

Griffin: —and—

Rachel: Did you have one of these?

Griffin: Uh, yes, I did. Uh, I had an earlier generation one, which is the one that got schoolkids in trouble because like, if you didn't interact with it for like—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: —like, 10 hours, then it would just fucking die. Like, that was the time limit that you were on. Which is fair. Like, if we didn't interact with like, our infant child for 10 hours he probably wouldn't be in a very good place.

Rachel: Oof.

Griffin: Um, but, uh... yeah, I wanna talk about Tamagotchi, 'cause I got one for Christmas when I was younger and that little dude was just my whole life. I loved that sweet little egg boy.

Rachel: What did they look like? Like, the little digital screen would show what, exactly? I don't remember.

Griffin: Well, it would depend on what stage of life they were at, right? Like, most—pretty much all the version of Tamagotchi, you would hatch the egg, inside of the egg, uh, and there was all this lore about like, how the physical egg you were holding was like, the containment unit for it so it could survive.

Uh, and then when it was like, an infant, then it was just like, a little blob, but then as it grew up to be like, a child, it would grow ears and then like, as it was a teen and then an adult, and later ones you could grow it into a senior—you know, it would just get bigger and get like, more stuff, and then til it died.

Rachel: What did it look like, though?

Griffin: Uh, like bunny ears sometimes, it would grow? Uh, I—

Rachel: Would it like, grow legs and arms like a human being? Or no?

Griffin: I think so, yeah. I think—I think it can get there. It's been a long time since I've seen any of the old—the old—the old crew.

Rachel: Can I give this back to you? [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, please. Tamagotchi. Obviously, lots of competitors came after Tamagotchi, 'cause it was hugely successful. Then you had your like, Giga Pets, which I had one of.

Rachel: Did you think about this 'cause I was talking about little computer people? Remember?

Griffin: Uh, it probably was—that probably was what got me there. Um... so, it was invented, Tamagotchi was invented by a woman named Aki Maita who was an

office worker working at Bandai, which is a toy company and an entertainment company that has merged to become Bandai-Namco.

Um, and she was 30 years old. She had this idea of just like, a pet that you could take anywhere, that like, anyone could take care of, a kid could take care of and it would not have like, the downsides of owning a pet, which is to say like, poop everywhere.

Uh, and so she teamed up with a toy designer named Akihiro Yokoi, and they put together this concept, and they made hundreds of prototypes and they would just pass them out to like, schoolgirls in Shibuya and just say like, "What do you think? What do you think of this lil egg?"

And in all their QA testing there—well, not QA testing but like, R&D stuff there, and then they released it in November, 1996, and by the end of the year it was being sold in over 30 countries and was like, wildly, profoundly the biggest thing ever.

Rachel: Isn't it kind of fascinating that somebody came up with the idea of this little device that had a screen on it that you carried around with you all the time, like, before there were smartphones? [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: Like, somebody just had that idea of like, "You know what? I don't think this is gonna be too much to ask. I think people will be willing to look at a screen on and off all day."

Griffin: Yeah, they were certainly right about that one. Um, so, since then, since November, 1996, which is when the first one dropped, over 44 different versions of Tamagotchi—Tah-magotchi have been released. Uh, and they've gotten more sophisticated as time went on.

As of 2017, 82 million Tamagotchi units have been sold worldwide, and then this past summer the new shit dropped, Tamagotchi On. Uh, I actually saw some people tweeting pictures of their Tamagotchi On, and it reminded me like, "Hey, I could do a Wonderful segment about this, and buy it, and I can expense it."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "I'm going to expense this purchase." Um, and so the gameplay—it like, changed and got more sophisticated. Um, they became less quick to die, starting in like, generation three. You could let 'em go a little bit longer and the penalties wouldn't be quite as severe.

Um, they would include newer like, age ranges that they could age up through. You could play games with them and like, get points that you could use to unlock stuff—

Rachel: Yeah, that's what I was gonna ask was like, at its core, was it just like, feeding... a thing? And like, cleaning it or something? Like, what did you do with these things?

Griffin: I mean... yeah, you fed it and you cleaned it.

[melodic electronic beeping]

Griffin: [quietly] You hear him?

Rachel: [laughing] Yeah.

Griffin: He's comin' to life.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I don't know how to turn the sound off. Oh well. We'll figure it out as we go.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, anyway, yeah, you would feed it, you could play games with it, you would have to, um... you would have to... what's the word I'm looking for? Not punish, but if it like, acted up—

Rachel: Discipline?

Griffin: Discipline—[laughs] yeah, discipline is a much soft—

Rachel: Really? What would you do?

Griffin: Uh, I don't remember. I think you would just—it's probably in this version, so I'll tell you once I get it up and running.

Rachel: Time out? [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, put 'em in time out. I don't think you, you know, used corporal punishment or anything horrible like that. Um, but yeah, you had to do a few things that had all these different meters.

So there was like, a happy meter and a health meter and a discipline meter and, you know, you had to keep 'em balanced, and if you did, they would get older and, you know, do more stuff, and then you could play games with them and, you know, add stuff to their environment, or... later versions had like, full blown kind of games going on in them where you could develop skills with them, which they would use to get, uh, careers? [laughs quietly] And then—which seems a little bit like, uh, my escapist fantasy of having a little egg child—now I have to worry about their job, also? It's too stressful.

Rachel: I feel confused, because the screen on these things is the size of a quarter.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Like, how do they indicate that your little Tamagotchi has a job? [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, that's a good question.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: There was also an IOS game that came out, that I think probably had a little bit more screen real estate to work with. They included wireless functionality after a while, so your Tama—Tah-magotchi could go hang out with somebody else's, and then they also added marriage and mating, where you could like, mix two Tamagotchis together to have like, a little baby. That's pretty cool!

Um, yeah. They just—they just got bigger and bigger, and... I don't know. I just like that it's just this benign little distraction.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I like—I like benign distractions. For kids, it's something where, uh, you know, it became so important to me and my cohorts who had one, and as adults it's just like, I don't know.

Rachel: Did you ever know anybody that had more than one?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah.

Rachel: Like, was juggling like, several?

Griffin: Well, no, you wouldn't juggle with them, 'cause if you drop them—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: —then that's it. They know if you drop them. They get really, really angry, and they tell you to do bad stuff if you drop them.

Rachel: Then you go to jail!

Griffin: You can go to jail! You can go to Tamagotchi Jail. What's your second thing? I am gonna be playing with my Tamagotchi the whole time.

Rachel: I know, I figured as much. My second thing...

[soft clattering]

Griffin: [distantly] I'm setting him down.

Rachel: No, you can play with it if you want!

Griffin: No, baby.

Rachel: I think that'd be like, a little fun spice to my segment! [laughs]

Griffin: Well, you're gonna tell—you're gonna say like, "[speaks close to mic] My second thing is a really serious and dramatic thing—"

Rachel: [laughs] No, it's not.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Rachel: It's vacation rentals.

Griffin: Yeah, okay!

Rachel: We, uh, just got back from a weekend—kind of a stay-cation, 'cause we were literally only like, 15 minutes away from our house now. Uh, we rented a big ol' house with a pool and had a bunch of our friends get together, and it was super awesome, and it's something we've been doing for years now.

Griffin: Yeah, it's our—Rachel and my birthdays are like, three weeks away, so we usually try to split the uprights and like, do it then, but all of our friends are old and have kids, and so that's harder to do.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah, yeah. So we, um—we started doing this when Griffin and I had just been dating. I think it was maybe for my 30th birthday, was when we started? And you know, now I'm 37, so we've been doing this on and off for a long time.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: We used to go a little bit further out from Austin, and we'd find like, an actual lake house, but it's just—

Griffin: It was usually a shithole—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: —which is the most fun kind.

Rachel: Yeah. We started on a real shoestring. We would ask our friends to kind of split the cost with us, and so we'd try and keep the price real low, and so we would end up with these weird... houses that had been kind of added on to and like, thrown bunk beds on top of bunk beds in like, bedrooms that maybe used to not be bedrooms. Um—

Griffin: These like, Winchester Mystery House-ass houses.

Rachel: [laughs] And that's—that's part of what I love about vacation rentals. Like, it really reminds me of playing in a dollhouse as a kid. Of like, you go into

this space that is for all purposes yours for, you know, 48 hours or however long you're there, and you get to kind of live this other existence.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, and most often, like, with a bunch of people around you, you know, having this kind of new experience together. Uh, and it's so much better than just like, a hotel or something where you don't feel that kind of personal experience with the space. You know? It's like, designed to not be personal. [laughs]

Griffin: It's like going to an open house, and then sleeping there.

Rachel: [laughing] Yeah, exactly! Uh, so the whole like, vacation rental concept really began in the 50s with this idea of like, timeshares.

Griffin: What? Oh, okay.

Rachel: You know, of people having like, beach houses, you know? That they would like, share with other people throughout the year.

Griffin: Right. [clears throat]

Rachel: But the vacation rental managers' association was founded in 1985, and Vacation Rentals By Owner, or VRBO [pronounced "verbo"] as it is sometimes called, started in 1995.

Griffin: Never knew that that's what that stood for.

Rachel: And it initially just listed one property in Breckenridge Colorado. [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs loudly]

Rachel: Which I kind of love. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, I love Breckenridge, though! It's a nice place.

Rachel: Uh, 2005 is when they got, um... the VRBO and Homeaway joined together. Uh, and then in 2007, 2008 is when we got AirBnB.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So the story of AirBnB is like, much more scrappy, so I thought I would share it. Uh, these friends that had grown up together named Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia moved to San Francisco in 2007, and could not afford their apartment. Uh, so they came up with the idea of putting an air mattress in their living room and turning it into a bed and breakfast. [laughs]

So in 2008, they had another roommate join them—or a former roommate, not like, they had three people living in this apartment.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, but this person brought Chief Technology Officer experience, and they founded their new venture, which they called Air Bed and Breakfast.

Griffin: Is that where the—it's 'cause they put a f—fuckin' air mattress in their living room?

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, exactly! And you can still do that. Like, you can rent a room in somebody's house. Like, when you're going through the listings and trying to specify what you want, there is an option of just like, choosing a bedroom in somebody's house.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Uh, in 2015, Expedia bought Homeaway, which was also with VRBO, um, to join together to try and compete with AirBnB, 'cause AirBnB is kind of like... you know, it's kind of the big thing, now.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Uh, as of 2015, the vacation rental industry is worth an estimated 85 billion—

Griffin: [blows raspberry]

Rachel: [laughs] Homeaway alone has more than 2.8 million rooms, which is more rooms than the four largest hotel chains in the world.

Griffin: Wow.

Rachel: Um—

Griffin: Way to—way to brag, Homeaway.

Rachel: [laughs] I think—I think this is great, especially because a lot of times you'll be visiting a person, and they live in a location where there aren't a lot of hotels to choose from.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And you wanna be close by, and so you'll just go on one of these sites and kind of, you know, look at a zip code or look at a particular community and see what your options are, and you get that kind of convenience of, you know, potentially having a kitchen or, you know, having a nice like, living room, dining room setup so that you can like, buy your own food and make your own meals, and really kind of feel like a local when you're visiting a place.

Griffin: Yeah. That luxury is obviously like, just that, a luxury, and it is nice. For me, it is always just like, "Boy, I'm gonna get some stories out of this house."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Like, I feel like I remember—we stayed at like, a really wild, uh, apartment in Hong Kong when we went there a few years ago, and I feel like I remember so many things about that apartment.

Rachel: Me too!

Griffin: Like, it had this huge living room lined with all of these, uh, all these books, and then the bedroom was like, the size of a shoe box, and it was just floor to—like, wall to wall to wall just bed, and you had to climb in—

Rachel: And the windows looked out on that—

Griffin: A tennis court.

Rachel: —tennis court where people were doing tai chi in the morning.

Griffin: Yeah. Like, I remember that. I remember that. I remember everything about the weird Winchester Mystery House that we used to stay at that had, like, 2000 VHS tapes that we would watch. I watched so many—

Rachel: Like, seven huge projection TVs.

Griffin: Yeah, like, old—old CRT, like, four foot deep projection TVs.

Rachel: And like, eight copies of Jaws. [laughs]

Griffin: And that—yeah, I mean, that's where I watched a lot of—that's where I got turned on to like, classic horror movies. Like, that's where I watched Terminator and Predator and The Thing for the first time. It was just 'cause they all—like, I remember that shit. That's the stuff I remember.

Rachel: And the place we stayed in New Orleans that had all the nudes?

Griffin: It had a lot of wild nudes.

Rachel: [laughs] Every room had several nudes on the—on the wall.

Griffin: And not... tasteful [snorts] nudes!

Rachel: I remembered some of them being tasteful.

Griffin: Some of 'em were tasteful.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah, I—I think it, like—if you can swing it, I think it's a great option. Um... and I just—I love that it exists! I love that like, anytime we're traveling somewhere I can be like, "Oh, you know what? I wonder if I could find a place to stay that, you know, had like, access to... some really cool thing that I wanted to see."

Griffin: [crosstalk] Yeah. Especially if you're traveling with a big group of buddies, it's really nice.

Rachel: Yeah! Yeah, the place that we stayed had a whole bunch of bedrooms. So it was nice, like, you get to have a big ol' sleepover with your friends.

Griffin: I love it. Uh, I also love the song Money Won't Pay from Bo En and Augustus. You can find a link to that in the episode description. Rachel's gonna tell you about Maximum Fun while I bring my Tamagotchi to life.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, Maximumfun.org is the website that hosts our lovely podcast. It hosts our podcast and other podcasts! Podcasts that are focused on culture and on comedy, and you can listen to some narrative podcasts like Mission to Zyxx and Bubble, or you can listen to some interview podcasts like Bullseye—

Griffin: Keep goin'.

Rachel: Uh—

Griffin: I have to set the time and date.

Rachel: I would—I would recommend, if you are not familiar with the other shows on the network, to go to Maximumfun.org and check them out. They are all winners.

Griffin: Uhh, and, uhh... [whispers] fuck. [normal volume] Baby, I can't figure it out!

Rachel: [laughs] Um, for those of you that ordered pins, back when the Max Fun Drive had their pin sale, you should be receiving those shortly.

[pauses]

And, um... for those of you that are interested in checking out other McElroy programming—

Griffin: Oh, yeah yeah yeah, tell 'em about the merch.

Rachel: Uh, you can go to Mcelroy.family. There's all sorts of cool merch on there. Um... backpacks, fanny packs, shirts, mugs... pins...

Griffin: It takes so long. Did it! I put in my name. Here we go. Miracle of life. Oh, okay. Here he is.

[electronic beeping]

Griffin: Wake up.

[electronic beeping]

Griffin: [loudly] He's not even doing anything! He's still just an egg!

[pauses]

Griffin: [moving away from the mic] Baby, make him wake up!

Rachel: Oh, so it's a lil egg rollin' around in what appears to be a very nice living room...

Griffin: Crack him—smash him open!

Rachel: I'm pushing some buttons. Oh, that shows the time. Oh, you can—you can look at it in military time, too! That's fun.

Griffin: [whiny voice] Smash him open! I wanna play with him!

Rachel: I don't—I don't know which—there's three buttons on here. Which do you push to smash?

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] He's just rollin' around!

Griffin: Well, this was a big fucking waste of time!

[theme music plays]

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[gavel banging]

Speaker 1: Judge John Hodgman ruled in my favor.

Speaker 2: Judge John Hodgman ruled in my friend's favor.

Speaker 3: Judge John Hodgman ruled in my favor.

John: I'm Judge John Hodgman. You're hearing the voices of real litigants, real people, who have submitted disputes to my internet court at the Judge John Hodgman podcast. I hear their cases, I ask them questions—they're good ones—and then I tell them who's right, and who's wrong.

Speaker 1: Thanks to Judge John Hodgman's ruling, my dad has been forced to retire one of the worst dad jokes of all time.

Speaker 2: Instead of cutting his own hair with a Flowbee, my husband has his hair cut professionally.

Speaker 3: I have to join a community theater group.

Speaker 1: And my wife has stopped bringing home wild animals.

John: It's the Judge John Hodgman podcast. Find it every Wednesday at MaximumFun.org, or wherever you download podcasts.

[gavel banging]

Speaker 1: Thanks, Judge John Hodgman.