

## Wonderful! 108: Hot Brie and Takis

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[theme music plays]

**Rachel:** Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

**Griffin:** Hello. This is Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful.

**Griffin:** We did it. We got past the spooky holiday, um, together. I was a little bit worried, there. People were talking about the uh, skeleton. The skeleton brigade that was gonna come and get us all. Uh...

**Rachel:** You know our last episode was past the spooky...?

**Griffin:** Ooh, was it? What day is it? What is the date? What's the current date?

**Rachel:** It's November 12<sup>th</sup>.

**Griffin:** Yeah, so, that's what they said is, the skeleton brigade didn't vanish when the sun came up on November 1<sup>st</sup> like they were supposed to. They hung around for a couple extra days, as like—

**Rachel:** Uh-huh...

**Griffin:** And that was their sneak attack strategy.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** Um, so, I wanted to give everybody—I wanted to tell everybody now, in case you're the first to hear it from us, is that we're in the clear. And the skeleton brigade has died, and we lived through it, and the casualties were very limited. So, no need to fear.

**Rachel:** We also made it past David Schwimmer's birthday.

**Griffin:** We got past David Schwimmer's birthday. That one's got skeletons of its own, if you know what I'm saying. In a closet.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** So, this is Wonderful. This is a show where we talk about things that we like, and also, it's the show where we forget what the date is by a pretty dramatically wide margin.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And it's also a show where I ask, uh, my wife Rachel if she has any small wonders that she's been thinking about—

**Rachel:** [interrupting] Disney+!

**Griffin:** Disney+, Rachel says. Interesting. It does have all of them on it, huh? And by all of it, I mean all media properties that exist in the world.

**Rachel:** So, Disney did this smart thing where they started slowly dripping things off of the regular Disney app, which is where we get—

**Griffin:** By smart, you mean very cruel, because like, Henry's been like, "No, I want that long Mickey Mouse Clubhouse." And it's like, sorry, we can do nothing for you here.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Well, it was smart, because I felt such relief today, knowing that I would have access to not just the Clubhouse again, but all of the Disney properties I could ever want.

**Griffin:** They got fuckin'... I could watch Newsies and the Rocketeer in the same online platform. It is very, uh... it is a very slick thing. Little, uh, wild just—sometimes I look at how much stuff I have on there and I go, "That's actually too much." I don't love that they got Simpsons. They have everything.

**Rachel:** I know. Turns out they own everything.

**Griffin:** Turns out they do own everything.

**Rachel:** And nobody realized it until just now.

**Griffin:** Well, I think people realized it, but this was the first time that... I don't know.

**Rachel:** That we've seen it all in one place.

**Griffin:** All in one big thing. But...

**Rachel:** It's like—it's like MTV Cribs, and that we just went to Disney's house, and we realize that Disney has way too many things.

**Griffin:** Too many things. But that's fine, 'cause I'm gonna watch Sandlot and Flight of the Navigator in the same afternoon. Do not sweat it. Uh, I should've spent that time thinking of a small wonder, but I... did not.

**Rachel:** You could talk about the movie we saw.

**Griffin:** Yeah. We went and we saw Parasite, which is, uh... oh god, I can't remember the director's name, but he made, uh... he made Okja, and Snowpiercer... it's Bong Joon-ho. Uh, yes. He uh... yeah, this is his new movie, Parasite, and Rachel and I went to it. We got a babysitter and went to a movie, which is a rare occurrence, but we also didn't know anything about the movie, which is super rare.

**Rachel:** No. We watched the trailer, which was not particularly revealing.

**Griffin:** No, yeah. Um, and saw it, and it was fuckin' great, and very like, um... very like, difficult to get up and use the bathroom during. 'Cause it was so entertaining and so funny, and also like, very, very, very stress-causing. Like, gripping.

**Rachel:** You could do like a whole series just on Griffin uses the bathroom during X movie.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I'm the best there is at what I do. Yeah, that was a good one. That is, uh—

**Rachel:** It's amazing to me how fast you get in and out, too.

**Griffin:** Yeah, well, I... y'know...

**Rachel:** Do you unzip in the lobby?

**Griffin:** I pee right in my pants. I don't unzip at all. I just need a private little corner to—

**Rachel:** Oh, you need private space?

**Griffin:** Yeah, so I don't even actually leave the theater room. I just sort of go in the corner where the trash can lives.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Uh, I go first this week.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** My first thing, and I'm... I'm pulling the like, ripcord a little bit fast here, because I am gonna start with the holiday themed topics.

**Rachel:** Ooh.

**Griffin:** My first thing is... and there's a few different names for it, so I'm going to say just sort of generally speaking... the holiday toy catalog.

**Rachel:** [gasps]

**Griffin:** The... whatever you might call it. The KB toys catalog.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Did you see that Amazon one we got?

**Griffin:** Uh, I didn't see that we got it. I have—I have it here to talk about it, but I learned today that they are sort of filling in the gap. Now, the KB Toys and Toys "R" Us are both gone, which is still, like...

**Rachel:** We got a hard copy of that thing.

**Griffin:** Heartbreaking. Oh, that's so wild. I'll have to take a look at it. So, this has been a thing for like, a very, very long time. Like, shopping catalogs date back to the, y'know, probably late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Like, people figured out—especially Sears came in in the '20s and '30s and sort of made it what it is today.

But Toys"R"Us and KB... I keep saying KB. KB's offering was like... it was fine. I think we got it in the newspaper for the most part, and it was a few pages, and you got what you needed to get out of it. But the Toys"R"Us one was like a fuckin' phone book, full of just present opportunities in it.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Would you guys like, go through and circle, and...

**Griffin:** It was—I never received mail in the mailbox when I was a child. And so, when I got this thing that came in the mail that like, was kind of for me, uh, yeah. Hell yeah we would go through it and circle it and like, get wild about it. Uh, it was so exciting to get those, these just like, novella-sized advertisements for uh, y'know, stuff that...

A lot of the times, it would take two passes for me, because I would go through the catalog, adding to my Christmas list, which I think I've talked about a bit before, about like how, uh, we were not really a family that, uh... I didn't have weird, expendable child income. Like, my allowance—I don't think I got an allowance until I was like, in eighth grade, and it was like, five bucks a month.

So like, if I wanted something, I saved up. Or if I wanted a video game, I would have to trade in a bunch of shit at Babbage's. Like, that was—until it got to the point where I had like, one game left, because I had just funneled all of my funds, all my assets, into like, Gameboy camera or something like that. Boy, that's heartbreaking. Boy some of those games are worth a lot of money these days.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, and so like, the holidays were like, uh, obviously, exciting for many reasons. But like, this—the like, crass commercialism really, really hit home with me.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Well, and if you think about it, this is like... this is before the internet.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** So, if you were to know about a toy, it was on a TV commercial for a program you watched, or, in an actual, physical catalog.

**Griffin:** Right, exactly. And I was also not the kind to like, keep wish lists. And so, it's kind of like fun just to make a wish list, right? And so, I would go through the Toys"R"Us big toy book, and y'know, circle a bunch of stuff, and then would have to take a second pass where I say like... or my mom would say like, "Okay, so I see that you've circled this like, game—this tic-tac-toe game that you throw the bean bags at. Do you really want that?" And I was like, "No."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** No, I just saw that and I got very excited, and so, I did circle it. Uh, I just—they were this beautiful treasure trove of toy opportunities, and uh, there's video games in the books, too. Like, don't even get me started on that. I would have to—I would do the video games part first, because obviously, it's a bigger investment, and Santa Claus only has so much to drop on each of the three of us. And so, y'know, I didn't want to circle a bunch of garbage, and then make it to the Super Nintendo page and be like, "Oh shit, there's so much good stuff in here."

**Rachel:** I'm bringing out my phone, because I definitely went through the Amazon catalog and made a list of things that Henry might like.

**Griffin:** Oh, okay! What are we talking about here?

**Rachel:** So there's an Avengers play trunk, where you can—it comes with like, four costumes.

**Griffin:** Oh my god.

**Rachel:** That you dress as Avengers.

**Griffin:** For a little—for a little guy?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Like a little, little guy?

**Rachel:** Yeah. So it's like—

**Griffin:** Ooh, that's good!

**Rachel:** It's like, Iron Man's in there. And it's all the ones that he doesn't have.

**Griffin:** That's fun. I do think that you are missing something with the Amazon one, in that there's not a store that we can like, go to to like, y'know, see the stuff first hand once we've...

**Rachel:** That's true. That's true, but some of it, like the Pokémon battle action figures eight pack...

**Griffin:** Oooh.

**Rachel:** He's gonna be about it.

**Griffin:** He's gonna be very, very about that, yes.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Um, I wanted to point out another thing that's great about them is, now, 2019, I can go back and look at them, and they are like little time capsules. They are like little, uh, like, this was the only—video games especially, but to a lesser extent, toys were like, the pop cultural thing that I cared about, growing up in middle school and high school and college and now.

Uh, and so like, I went back, and like, when I was researching this, I looked at the 1996 Toys"R"Us holiday catalog.

**Rachel:** How did you find this, by the way?

**Griffin:** There are some scans on it, like, Archive.org, the government archive has a couple of them.

**Rachel:** Ohh.

**Griffin:** Uhh, I saw—I found a couple on Reddit. I wish there was a place I could find that had like, all of them. Like, I want the Library of Congress to like, have all of them.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** 1996 Toys"R"Us holiday catalog included launch Nintendo 64, the Sega Saturn, PlayStation with Crash Bandicoot and Twisted Metal 2, Sega Genesis was still on there, Super Nintendo with Donkey Kong Country was on there, Gameboy and Gameboy Pocket, Game Gear, Tamagotchi, and Giga Pets. Like...[chef's kiss]

**Rachel:** What an era.

**Griffin:** What a fucking year, though! What a good book that was! Uh, it's—oh, 1994, I was reminded of the Dr. Dreadful's Food Lab. I saw that in the big toy book and I was like, "Gotta have that." And I did get it, and I made like, one thing, and it was like, foamy worms! And it's like, oh, that sucks shit, Dr. Dreadful.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I never got into that gross thing of like, "Hey, here's a toy that's really gross, and you want to do it just because it's a gross thing."

**Griffin:** Right. I mean, I did have Gak. Which I guess sort of—

**Rachel:** Well, I had Gak.

**Griffin:** —is in that same vein. Uh, I didn't—we didn't really party on too many... that's not true. We never had like an Easy Bake Oven around the house, but we did have the two... there was one that you could melt like, uh, little rubber things in, and you could mold them into like, spiders, and like, spooky shapes.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** But then they have one where you can melt down little ball-bearing, lead-like things into a sort of mercurial substance—

**Rachel:** Ooh, that seems dangerous.

**Griffin:** —that you could then like, mold into, uh... yeah, super fucking dangerous. But you could make like, racecars, and little pewter wizards and shit like that. Like, uh, I forget what that was called. Somebody on the Facebook group is probably gonna remind me, because they, y'know, still have theirs and use it every day today.

**Rachel:** [laughs]



**Griffin:** Um, but yeah. Uh, gosh. Yeah, I just flipped through it, and like, 1999, the Pokémon Pikachu virtual pet pedometer came out. You know that was on my list.

**Rachel:** Wait. Pedometer?

**Griffin:** Yeah, it was like a little—like a Giga Pet, but it was like a pedometer, so you would charge up Pikachu by walking, and then you could like... I think you could also like, catch stuff and transfer it to the game. Uh, because the Gameboy Color came out this year. Uh, Darth Maul's double-edged lightsaber. Like... all these things were like, a high pri.

**Rachel:** Ohh.

**Griffin:** Uh, these—I like it now, because they're like, little time capsules. But back in the day, they were just like dream encyclopedias. And uh, yeah. Doing this segment really made me miss Toys"R"Us, and uh, and KB.

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** It really breaks my heart, genuinely, not goof time. We have great toy stores here in Austin that are like, independently owned and rad and we go to them like, all of the time.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** But there was something sort of like, magical about uh, going to Toys"R"Us when you were a kid, and there was something really fun about taking Henry when he was like, a little, little kid. But we only got to do that at an age where he was like, old enough to know what was going on like once or twice, and now it's gone.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh.

**Griffin:** Makes me sad.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** So what's your first thing?

**Rachel:** My first thing.

**Griffin:** Should we talk about the fact that you have a desk right now?

**Rachel:** I have a table now. So, Griffin invested some time into this office, and bought some new furniture to kind of arrange things appropriately, and he got me a little table to put my little beverage and my phone, and my little paper on.

**Griffin:** I thought you would be excited about it.

**Rachel:** I am very excited about it.

**Griffin:** You look like Conan O'Brien over there. You look so natural behind a desk. You look so good.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Thank you. I think.

**Griffin:** No, you—

**Rachel:** I've never been compared to Conan O'Brien.

**Griffin:** That's a flat—I mean, not physically.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** You're the opposite of Conan O'Brien physically.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I am the the opposite of him in a lot of ways. [laughing]

**Griffin:** Yeah. What is your first thing?

**Rachel:** My first thing is brie.

**Griffin:** Brie, the cheese!

**Rachel:** The cheese, brie.

**Griffin:** Ooh, this is—[snaps] Yes, babe! Hell yes!

**Rachel:** When you think of your first experience with fancy cheese, isn't it always brie?

**Griffin:** It's always, always brie. Because it was the fancy, fancy cheese that they sold—it was like, I think when you're in the cheese aisle at the Kroger's or whatever, it's like, here's that sliced orange shit that I know so well, and here's the Kraft singles. And then like, brie is the first...

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** It's the first little like, lily pad that you get in the fancy cheese pond that you can step onto.

**Rachel:** I feel like I remember... I feel like I had brie at somebody's house when I was like, in high school. And it like, blew my mind.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Uh, yeah. I was so scared. Now, here's the thing I didn't know then, and I still will confess to not really knowing.

**Rachel:** You can eat it.

**Griffin:** [pause] Moving on.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Was that really your question?

**Griffin:** Let's continue.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Okay.

**Griffin:** Let's continue the segment.

**Rachel:** Um, hey, brie's been around for a really long time.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rachel:** And I was doing research to figure out the origin of brie.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** The little anecdote that I saw over and over again was, in 774...

**Griffin:** That's way too early.

**Rachel:** The French emperor, Charlemagne, was traveling through this area in north central France, and stopped in this place where the monks were.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** And they had really good cheese, and he liked it so much, and he wanted it delivered to his castle.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** So that's like, obviously, nobody knows if that's like, the origin of brie. But it's like this little anecdote from 774!

**Griffin:** That's a really long time ago for us to know where a cheese came from.

**Rachel:** That's so much earlier than Takis.

**Griffin:** That's way earlier. Oh god, why wasn't that my small wonder?

**Rachel:** That should've been your small wonder.

**Griffin:** Ugh. We just started eating Ta—we watched the Bon Appetit makin' Takis video.

**Rachel:** They should sell them in smaller bags.

**Griffin:** They need to sell them like a carton of—like a pack of cigarettes.

**Rachel:** 'Cause nobody—[laughs] Yeah. Nobody can eat more than two or three at a time.

**Griffin:** That's what they need. Just 20 Takis in like, a little travel pack that you can take with you.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** I think I can probably eat 20 of those throughout the day. But today, I ate five of them within like, a five minute span, and it put me on the ground, crawling to the toilet.

**Rachel:** So.

**Griffin:** So. Brie.

**Rachel:** Anyway. Cheese. Brie. Uh, most people probably know brie as the soft, creamy cheese. And it's got a rind around it.

**Griffin:** A lot of people—and a lot of people don't know this – you can eat that rind, folks. Don't worry about it.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Here's what might make you not want to eat it, but this should not be a deterrent. But that white rind around it is actually mold growth.

**Griffin:** Yeah babe, that makes me wicked not want to eat that extremely much.

**Rachel:** The—the rind breaks down the fats and proteins of the cheese, making it creamy and runnier. But it's, um... it's edible.

**Griffin:** Um...

**Rachel:** I mean, if you think about, y'know, bacteria. And y'know, all the ways you eat bacteria in your regular life...

**Griffin:** I—I don't think about that, traditionally, very much.

**Rachel:** Uh, yeah, a lot of people don't eat the rind. But like, in, y'know, French culture, it is customary.

**Griffin:** Yeah, okay.

**Rachel:** So, French brie, if you are in France, the brie is made from unpasteurized cow's milk.

**Griffin:** Ohh.

**Rachel:** But it can't be imported into the United States, because cheeses made with raw milk must be aged at least 60 days to qualify for US importation. And the average aging time for brie is one to three months. So, by the time...

**Griffin:** Oh, I see.

**Rachel:** You see what I'm saying?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Like, by the time it hit the 60 days, it would've already have been ripened for, potentially, well past its... its prime in France.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** So what they do here is they make versions out of pasteurized whole and skim milk.

**Griffin:** Ugh.

**Rachel:** But apparently, it has a milder flavor.

**Griffin:** Oh, I bet. Oh, I bet.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Give me that unpasteurized shit. Give me that—I know what I just said about not wanting to eat the solid mold rind, but now I'm a dirty monster, and I want that slime. I want that garbage slime all over my soft cheese.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Uh, I definitely... well, I don't want to say definitely. But when I went to France, I did have brie.

**Griffin:** [mockingly] When I went to— [in a bad French accent] When I went to France... all day like this.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Tell me about it. Go ahead and tell them. Hey, pronounce croissant. Do it how you do it.

**Rachel:** What, uh... oh, do you mean [in a traditional French pronunciation] croissant? [laughs] Uh, I don't remember the brie being particularly better.

**Griffin:** Oh. Okay.

**Rachel:** Brie is good. Brie is good wherever it is.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rachel:** I don't remember thinking like, "Ohh, this brie is so much better."

**Griffin:** Yeah, fair.

**Rachel:** Everything I had in France was delicious, so I don't remember like, "Oh man, this is so much better..."

**Griffin:** Especially the... [somehow says some gibberish in a French accent]

**Rachel:** Um, the thing about brie, it's a pricier cheese.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah.

**Rachel:** I went onto the HEB website, just to see, "How much is brie?" So like, if you want a block of cheddar, it's like, three dollars a pound. But like, brie will run you at least eight dollars a pound.

**Griffin:** Shit.

**Rachel:** That's a pricey experience.

**Griffin:** I'll just get a lot of cheddar and let it get super old.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** So it'll turn into... brie...?

**Rachel:** Won't get softer though, unfortunately.

**Griffin:** Ah, farts.

**Rachel:** Uh, yeah, so when you get brie, you're supposed to leave it out for like an hour so it gets that kind of warm, soft, meltiness.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Uh, and then you're good to go. But y'know, it'll only last for like a week or so after you slice in there.

**Griffin:** Around me, it's gonna last about two minutes, 'cause I'm gonna eat it. I'm so fucking bad.

**Rachel:** What about Takis and brie?

**Griffin:** [exasperated] What about Takis and brie?!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** You could—and I always think about this, looking at these little guys. They are essentially long, hollow Combos, with the—with just lunatic flavoring.

**Rachel:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Griffin:** So if you could just sort of stuff the inside of those with brie...

**Rachel:** Oh, with some brie. Yeah.

**Griffin:** And then you can just sort of like, stand over an open grave. And that way, when you eat it, it can be really convenient for your loved ones, because the whole sort of precession's gonna be like, right there for you.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Um, it's hard for me to know with brie if I just like it because of the taste, or if I like it because it's like, the first fancy cheese I had. And like, any time I eat it, I feel fancy.

**Griffin:** Uh, we keep saying first fancy cheese. I don't think you and I are necessarily like, cheese heads. Like, I don't think we—

**Rachel:** No, it's just like, the first cheese I had that wasn't like, cheddar or Swiss or provolone.

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's fair.

**Rachel:** Y'know, wasn't like a cheese I could find on a Subway sandwich.



**Griffin:** Mmm, they probably fucked around with that at some point.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, oh, with apples? A slice of green—a thin, green apple slice with brie on it? Oh my god.

**Rachel:** Oh yeah. When I was at the airport, uh, in Washington D.C., I got a sandwich that had like, brie and cranberries on it, and I basically just ordered it because there was brie on it.

**Griffin:** Oh yeah.

**Rachel:** And it was incredible.

**Griffin:** So good.

**Rachel:** So good.

**Griffin:** And Brie Larson. Uh, Room. Captain Marvel. Scott Pilgrim. What a talent. What a talented Hollywood star. Just phenomenal work.

**Rachel:** Also covered in mold.

**Griffin:** Also, and she won't tell you this in any of those interviews on Entertainment Weekly. Like, she won't be like, talking to Mario Lopez and be like, "By the way, I'm also covered in a thick rind of mold." But um, where do you think she got the name?

**Rachel:** [laughs] Hey, uh, can I steal you away?

**Griffin:** Please.

[ad break music, but somehow more awful than usual]

**Rachel:** Can I tell you about our first sponsor this week?

**Griffin:** Oh yeah!

**Rachel:** It's Rothy's.

**Griffin:** Ohh yeah!

**Rachel:** So I was just on that Rothy's website this week. Uh, so, they have like, some new wool Rothy's for the wintertime.

**Griffin:** [gasps]

**Rachel:** And then, they have these new seasonal ones that are like, black with this like, gold thread in it.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** That look very holiday friendly.

**Griffin:** That sounds very fancy.

**Rachel:** I did definitely order a pair.

**Griffin:** Ohh, nice.

**Rachel:** Um, but you may remember, Rothy's is the company that makes stylish shoes out of recycled plastic water bottles. Stylish, sustainable, comfortable, and washable. In a pair of shoes? Can you imagine, Griffin McElroy?

**Griffin:** Nnno. Oh, I mean yes.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, they're perfect shoes for life on the go. I wear them to work, and then I can wear them, y'know, at the grocery store, and then I can wear them if I'm going for a walk around the neighborhood. They're quite versatile. Um, and Rothy's own and operate their manufacturing workshop, so you can be sure that they are prioritizing sustainability at every step of the way.

To check out all the amazing styles available right now at Rothy's, go to [Rothys.com/Wonderful](https://Rothys.com/Wonderful). That's [Rothys.com/Wonderful](https://Rothys.com/Wonderful) to get your new favorite flats. That's [Rothys.com/Wonderful](https://Rothys.com/Wonderful).

**Griffin:** Our next sponsor is a really really neat one if you are trying to get somebody passionate about like, tech stuff, like coding, or video game development, or robotics. Our sponsor is iD Tech, which is a really neat

program that has instructors that can help young folks get interested in, well, the aforementioned things that I talked about.

Techie cool stuff, whether they're like a casual explorer, interested in getting started in coding, or whether they are sort of more on a collegiate track, going in one of those techie fields. Uh, they have rock star instructors that transform a love of apps and video games – yes, like Fortnite – that one—you know that one?

**Rachel:** I know that there's dances.

**Griffin:** That's all it is.

**Rachel:** Ohh.

**Griffin:** Yeah, you press the A button, and the guy does a dance.

**Rachel:** Neat!

**Griffin:** Into a foundation for college internships and dream careers. Uh, and they have courses for all skill levels, at campuses all across the world. Beginners are welcome, and advanced students have a place to be challenged and grow. Nurture your child's interests with iD Tech! Visit [iDTech.com/Wonderful](http://iDTech.com/Wonderful) today to reserve your child's spot and receive \$75 off. This is a great gift for the holidays, so now's the time to do it. That's [iDTech.com/Wonderful](http://iDTech.com/Wonderful) for \$75 off. [iDTech.com/Wonderful](http://iDTech.com/Wonderful).

**Rachel:** Can I read you this next personal message?

**Griffin:** Yes. I almost spit my—I thought it would be funny if I spit the water out that I was drinking. Like, "Wha—a personal message?!"

**Rachel:** This message is for Lauren, it is from Jeremy. "Hi Lauren! I love you bundles. Jeremy, not Griffin and Rachel, but I'm sure they also love you, but in a cool friend way. I know things are scary with us finishing our degrees and applying to grad school, but I know you'll do amazing. Knowing you for the past three years has made my life so full of joy. You're my favorite bear friend. Love, Shark (Jeremy)."

**Griffin:** Jeremy... you can't tell me who to love, Jeremy.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** You can't tell me how to love, Jeremy! [getting fake choked up]

**Rachel:** Lauren sounds great.

**Griffin:** So great.

**Rachel:** And I'm on board.

**Griffin:** Unlike Jeremy, who is a shark, apparently, and those are the sharp fish with monster teeth.

**Rachel:** Whoa.

**Griffin:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Rachel:** I am nervous about you teaching our son sometimes. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Well, they're great animals, and they, uh, they get a bad rap. But at the end of the day – and let's not get it twisted – they are the sharp fish with monster teeth.

**Rachel:** Maybe that's why things are scary. Not because they're finishing their degrees, but because of the shark.

**Griffin:** Because Jeremy is a shark. Uh, hey, I have another message. This one's for Mike, and it's from Haley, who says, "Hello my dude! Thanks for being a V cool oldest brother, and always introducing me to the best games, music, those good, good McElroys, and indirectly, the best partner, John. You're the supreme champion of bros. Smoke a breezy." [snorts]

**Rachel:** Whoa! [laughs]

**Griffin:** Whoaaa! [laughs] Can you see it? I've got goose bumps.

**Rachel:** What do you think that means, smoke a breezy?

**Griffin:** Does it matter? It's a very powerful—it is a—it's like a Dovahkiin just sort of power word. I feel like I saw—

**Rachel:** Yeah, if somebody came up to me at a party and said, "Hey, you want to go outside and smoke a breezy?" I would say yes.

**Griffin:** I—I don't know what that means, but the answer is going to be yes.

**Rachel:** Yes!

[music plays]

**Moujan:** Hello! I'm Moujan Zolfaghari, and I play a bunch of characters on Mission to Zyxx, an improvised science-fiction podcast on Maximum Fun. And this is our incredible sound designer, Shane.

**Shane:** Hello!

**Moujan:** Now, Shane makes it possible for me to play a thousand billion characters in our galaxy. Such as the Bargarean Jade, ship of the stars!

**Enforcer Droid:** And the Enforcer Droid. Prepare to eat pancakes!

**Wink:** And Wink! Let's get dusted up, baby!

**Turk:** And Emissary Turk Mannaket. Hey, I just got another amp.

**Horrible Wife:** And the horrible wife! Ahhh!

**Moujan:** Oh, also, there are five other cast members, and we'll give them just all a second to say hi.

**Speaker 1:** Uh, hey.

**Speaker 2:** Hello.

**Speaker 3:** Hey.

**Moujan:** Yeah, that's enough. Okay, so the season finale of Mission to Zyxx is coming out next week, so it's the perfect time to dive in and catch up with our intrepid crew as they explore the Zyxx quadrant. So give us a listen. Mission to Zyxx on Maximum Fun.

**Rachel:** Can I hear your second thing?

**Griffin:** My second thing is music. It's a music one, and it's gonna be a quick one, because I'm fairly new to this band. Uh, they are called Hop Along, and surprise surprise, I found them on Spotify. And the reason I wanted to talk to them—talk to them. I'd like to talk to them.

**Rachel:** Bring `em in, guys. [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] I wanted to talk about them because like, I have been listening to them in a way that I do not listen to that many artists, and it's like a really special thing for me when I do find it, and it's that I can just put on their whole discography on some sort of streaming platform and just let it ride, and not like, constantly have to dip in to skip songs, and not have to constantly like, micromanage my listening experience.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I can just put it on and play it, and I think that speaks to the fact that, A, Hop Along is a very good band, and B, that like, they're super fucking consistent, and a lot of their songs are just really, really great. Hop Along is an indie rock band that formed in the early aughts, and it was originally a solo freak folk project, according to Wikipedia, from their singer-guitarist, Francis Quinlan. And they have gone in a different direction since then, which is good, because I don't know what freak... solo freak folk is.

**Rachel:** I don't either. I was hoping you would.

**Griffin:** Uh, I would imagine it's sort of more psychedelic in nature, but now it is a—now it is a more sort of straight-laced, very clever indie rock. And it's like, it's very much like checking a lot of the boxes of things that I'm into. Uh, there's like that sort of super clean guitar sound, like a Pavement. And also, Quinlan's vocals are very like, run-on sentence-y in a way that like, really, really reminds me of Pavement, and that's a very, very flattering comparison, I feel like, `cause I adore that band.

Uh, there's like—there's big Rilo Kiley energy radiating out of these songs, which is a very, very welcome energy to find in any artist. Um, and yeah, the first thing that caught my ear when I was listening to this band when it popped up on the Spotify weekly playlist was Francis Quinlan's voice, because like, holy shit. Uh, it is wild. I could go on, but I'm gonna play one of the songs off their 2015 album, Painted Shut, and this song is called The Knock.

[“The Knock” by Hop Along plays]

**Griffin:** That voice is so wild. It’s so wild. I remember when I talked about Regina Spektor, I talked about like, how I like a vocalist who can go in all of these, like—

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Conjure up all of these different sort of like, ways of singing, and like, the uh, speed with which she goes from the sort of more breathy, quiet, sing-songy voice to like, that awesome, like, wail. That awesome fuckin’ scream voice, is like, so radical.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Kind of reminds me of when I brought Miya Folick that one week.

**Griffin:** Yeah, yeah yeah! I also had that thought when I was listening to them today. It’s unbelievable. It’s got like, this like, Tom Waits, like, meets Tommy Pickles sort of tambour to it.

**Rachel:** Whoa!

**Griffin:** I know. It’s a weird comparison, but I heard it, and like, that’s where I went. And I don’t know if that sounds flattering or not, but uh, it’s—she has a fantastic voice. Pitchfork reviewed that album, Painted Shut, which is probably my favorite of their albums. Go like—if you’re gonna listen, just listen to that one front to back. You will not regret it.

In their review of that album, the writer remarked that she “sings in the wild voice of someone casting out demons, or having the demon cast out of them.” Which I really, really like. I don’t know how you sing like, uh... my throat is a little bit raw just from, y’know, life, and I’m about to go on the road, and I tell butt jokes for an hour a night. I don’t know how you do that on a stage, and like—

**Rachel:** You do a fair amount of loud talking, though. I would say there is a little bit of screaming when you are on stage.

**Griffin:** I—I guess that’s fair. Um, I don’t really have much else to talk about, ‘cause I did just kind of discover them, so I don’t really have any like, anecdotes about how I, uh—

**Rachel:** I also listened to a whole album on YouTube today, and I don't remember which one it was, but I found myself just like, very comfortable just like, putting it on.

**Griffin:** Right?

**Rachel:** And just like, riding it out.

**Griffin:** It's so—and that is such a like, uh, I guess that's like the anecdote for me, is like, I can count on two hands the number of albums that I can do that with, or the number of artists that I can do that with.

**Rachel:** Yeah. I did that with a Sigrid album, too.

**Griffin:** Sigrid, yes. I can just let that one play. Uh, there's a couple like, Andrew Bird albums that I can just uh... Armchair Apocrypha, I can just listen to that front to back and just like, ride it out. Some of the songs blend into the background, but in like a super pleasant way. But I'm never like, "Ugh, this—skip this track."

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** And like, all their songs are like that, which is really fantastic, and a really—I think a really tremendous feat.

**Rachel:** You can't get better than that sell. When Griffin told me, he was like, "Oh hey, I think you might like this band, it's like a combination of Pavement and Rilo Kiley," I was like, "Oh, okay, well..."

**Griffin:** Oh, here I go!

**Rachel:** I'm bought in.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I'm gonna stop now, but I'm gonna leave off with one last song. It's off of their most recent album, Bark Your Head Off Dog, and it's called How Simple. And I don't know, I just really—that Rilo Kilo—Rilo Kilo energy... [laughs]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** ... is really strong with this one, and uh, yeah. Here's How Simple.



[“How Simple” by Hop Along plays]

**Griffin:** Hey, what’s your second thing?

**Rachel:** My second thing...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Is a trip...

**Griffin:** [gasps]

**Rachel:** ... to the Poetry Corner.

**Griffin:** Oh boy!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [sings] Hey baby, I hear the poetry...

**Rachel:** N-no.

**Griffin:** [singing] Bum bum bum bum bum... hey baby, I hear the poetryyy...

**Rachel:** I think you said... tossed verse and scrambled rhymes last time, I feel like?

**Griffin:** I'll just cut and paste it from the last episode, 'cause apparently I'll never do it right.

**Rachel:** You used to do like an original, like, jazz composition.

**Griffin:** Okay, let me try again. [sings] We built this city...

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** [singing] ... on poetryyy.

**Rachel:** That's beautiful. I can't really argue with that. You really hit that note.

**Griffin:** Thank you. What uh, what poem are we talking about today? Got some Shel Silverstein?

**Rachel:** No.

**Griffin:** Fuck.

**Rachel:** Uh, Louise Glück.

**Griffin:** Oh, alright!

**Rachel:** Y'know.

**Griffin:** Related to Jiminy Glick, the hysterical Martin Short character.

**Rachel:** [laughing] This is a hard segment to do with you sometimes.

**Griffin:** [laughs] Because I cut you off, because that's exactly what you were about to say next?

**Rachel:** Yeah. [laughing]

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Uh, Louise Glück is a well-celebrated poet. Uh, she has been a poet laureate in 2003. She received the Pulitzer Prize for her book, *The Wild Iris* in 1992. And in 2014, she won a national book award for her book, *Faithful and Virtuous Night*.

**Griffin:** That's like the trifecta, I imagine.

**Rachel:** Yeah, there aren't really too many more awards out there for you.

**Griffin:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Rachel:** Uh, so she released her first collection in 1968 when she was 25 years old. But lately, her big thing is teaching. So she has taught at Goddard College, University of Iowa, Williams College, and now Yale University.

**Griffin:** Whoa.

**Rachel:** Um, this is pretty common for poets, 'cause it's difficult to make a living as a poet. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Um, but if you are able to teach, y'know, creative writing or literature courses, you can... you can do okay. And then you're constantly in the community, and that's one thing that Louise Glück said, is that once she began teaching, it was so much easier for her to write.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Y'know, 'cause she was in this community of like-minded people, all being creative together, and that's when she was able to release a whole... whole bunch of books. Uh, I like her a lot, because she is maybe, uh... maybe the most unsentimental poet. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Oh!

**Rachel:** Um, a lot of the poets I've brought to Poetry Corner kind of paint these like, beautiful, nostalgic pictures of childhood and relatable experiences. That is not her.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Her first book, in particular, she came across as very angry and alienated, which I think was a little unsettling for some critics. But she's also very original and skilled in her approach, and so, I think it kind of gave her a shot. And she kind of continues to be very intense and straightforward, but she's so precise and clear in what she's saying, that it's not like a downer. It's not like you read these poems that have these kind of complex concepts and feel bummed.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** And so, I found one that is, uh, a little complex. But I just—it really stuck with me.

**Griffin:** Let's hear it.

**Rachel:** It's called Mother and Child. It's from her book, The Seven Ages, which was her ninth book that came out in 2001.

"We're all dreamers; we don't know who we are.

Some machine made us; machine of the world, the constricting family.  
Then back to the world, polished by soft whips.

We dream; we don't remember.

Machine of the family: dark fur, forests of the mother's body.  
Machine of the mother: white city inside her.

And before that: earth and water.  
Moss between rocks, pieces of leaves and grass.

And before, cells in a great darkness.  
And before that, the veiled world.

This is why you were born: to silence me.  
Cells of my mother and father, it is your turn  
to be pivotal, to be the masterpiece.

I improvised; I never remembered.  
Now it's your turn to be driven;  
you're the one who demands to know:

Why do I suffer? Why am I ignorant?  
Cells in a great darkness. Some machine made us;  
it is your turn to address it, to go back asking  
what am I for? What am I for?"

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's, uh...

**Rachel:** That's kind of a dark one.

**Griffin:** Yeah, bud. Yeah, pal.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** It's got some, "I have no mouth but I must scream" energy to it that is a little chilling for this guy.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I, um... obviously, very unsentimental. Um, I like this thought, though, of just like, you spend your whole life kind of obsessed with these big questions, and this big sense of purpose, and then you have a child, and you're kind of like...

**Griffin:** Now it's your turn. [laughs]

**Rachel:** Hey, I made you, and now, you are gonna make me, y'know... irrelevant. [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rachel:** And you're gonna take on all the big stuff.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** Um... and I don't know. I was hesitant to bring it, but I just found it really powerful.

**Griffin:** It's a staggering poem. It's extremely good.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I didn't mean to dismiss it. It just freaked my bean a little bit.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, I found this interview with her in 1981 from uh, Columbia, a journal of literature and art. And the interviewer asks her about the darkness of her poems. And she says, "Y'know, of course, I go through stages in which I'm unhappy, but I don't feel that I'm a terrifically unhappy person. I'm certainly not as unrelievedly black in my moods as the poems would suggest, but I suppose poems come out of your ultimate views, and I suppose I feel that human life is tragic."

In a question period after one of her readings, somebody said, "Your poems are so sad." She said, "Yes, I know. I don't feel like I write out of despair. I think my drive is towards psychological complexity. I ask myself, have I gotten deep enough? Have I seen something in its full complication? The yes and no being said at the same time."

**Griffin:** Jesus.

**Rachel:** It's very academic.

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** Very, very like, intellectual. Uh, and y'know, kind of takes to task, like, y'know, William Carlos Williams and his red wheelbarrow.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** Y'know? Of just like, hey, go a little deeper there, Williams.  
[laughs]

**Griffin:** Actually, wait a minute... this wheelbarrow sucks!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** One day this wheelbarrow's gonna fall apart! Fuck this wheelbarrow!

**Rachel:** Wait, I'm in this wheelbarrow, and I'm going off of a cliff! Oh no!

**Griffin:** Oh no!

**Rachel:** Uh, I like that there's room. Y'know, there's room for this kind of poet.

**Griffin:** Yeah, sure.

**Rachel:** And there's room for Williams. Uh, Louise Glück is a heavier lady, and she's taking these kind of really, um, what can be dark concepts, but she's saying like, "Hey, poetry matters, and this stuff matters, and I want to do something that is, y'know, complicated and intense."

**Griffin:** That's badass.

**Rachel:** Uh, and I like—man, this is the kind of poet that if I met her, I would be super intimidated. I can't imagine being a student in her class and turning in a poem.

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rachel:** It's just like, "Hey, I went to the grocery store, and there was a kid there, and they had a balloon." And she'd be like, "Uh... alright."

**Griffin:** Okay, first of all, I don't think that you would write a poem like that.

**Rachel:** [laughing] Um... yeah, I think it must be challenging to work with her. But I think it also probably, these people in her class probably produce their best work ever.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Oh my god, yes.

**Rachel:** Because she is... she is pushing hard, and I think it's important.

**Griffin:** Mm-hmm. Uh, do you want to know what our friends at home are talking about?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Savannah says, "I think it's wonderful when the cashier finishes ringing up your groceries, you see that big number, and then it starts ticking down as all the sales and coupons are applied. Sometimes it goes for so long, the cashier will comment on how much I'm saving. What a rush!"

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Hell yeah, Savannah. Ride that shit.

**Rachel:** Now, see, Griffin, I feel like you hate coupons.

**Griffin:** Um, no. I enjoy them. I don't—not to the extent where I will like, go out of my way to do them. But if I'm like—

**Rachel:** I'm big on coupons, man. It works for me.

**Griffin:** If I'm at HEB or something like that, and they have the little like, yellow ticket guys, I will like, gleefully take one of them down and be overjoyed about it. I do like the surprise coupon, too. Where like, you didn't

know, or you didn't realize that, y'know, when you buy two heads of lettuce... why did I say that? There's very rarely sales on lettuce.

**Rachel:** I don't know. [laughs] And when are we ever getting two heads of lettuce?

**Griffin:** Yeah. We're gonna have a big sandwich party, folks. Uh, Josh says, "My small wonder is getting into a cold bed and feeling it warm up over time until it's a cozy temperature. Sometimes I'll even put my blankets under the open window to cool them down before getting into bed."

**Rachel:** Oh my god. This is my favorite.

**Griffin:** We just, last night, just threw the comforter on.

**Rachel:** Yeah, we got out the big ol' comforter, 'cause our bed was so chilly. It was so nice.

**Griffin:** It was so good. I did wake up at like five AM, absolutely a puddle.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, and had to deal with that, but uh, everything up to that point was super cozy and good. God I like that. It's like the only thing about winter that I'm a big fan of.

Uh, hey, thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, Money Won't Pay. You can find a link to that in the episode description. Uh, and thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org), check out all the great shows there. They got shows like Mission to Zyxx, and Beef and Dairy Network, and...

**Rachel:** And One Bad Mother.

**Griffin:** And...

**Rachel:** And Flop House.

**Griffin:** And Flop House! And all that is at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org). We got other stuff at [McElroy.family](http://McElroy.family). 'Bout to go on tour in the Midwest. Come see us, uh, for MBMBaM and some of them shows. I think we still have tickets in



Milwaukee. If you live in Milwaukee, hey, please come see us. It'll be great to see you. We're playing the Riverside Theater. It's a beautiful venue.

**Rachel:** And when Griffin says 'us,' he means him.

**Griffin:** I do mean me. But we're gonna be doing a live show at Candelights, which—

**Rachel:** Although, that's sold out, so...

**Griffin:** It's sold out, so eat our shorts, everybody.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Um, and I think that's it. So... love, peace, and taco grease, everybody. Y'know what I mean? This has been... Guy Fieri presents... isn't that what he says?

**Rachel:** I don't know.

**Griffin:** I think he says love, peace, and something grease.

**Rachel:** I mean, that sounds right to me.

**Griffin:** And I only know because there was a mural of it on the—those words on the wall of his short-lived Time Square restaurant.

**Rachel:** [laughs] That you did go to.

**Griffin:** What did it say? Love, peace, and... something grease. What was the thing? It may have just said guy grease.

**Rachel:** Oh, was it polar fleece?

**Griffin:** Love, grease, and my polar fleece.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Guy Fieri's... youngest niece.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Aww.

**Griffin:** It got sweet at the end!

[theme music plays]

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