

Wonderful! 113: Field of Necromancy

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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: Everything's all topsy-turvy, folks. Everything's all... up and twisted around, isn't it? Cats and dogs are dogs and cats now. They switched. The sun and the moon... traded.

Rachel: Griffin is seated across from me, unfortunately getting most of my bad side, not my good side.

Griffin: Hell no. Aw, babe, you don't got a bad side. Only bad side of you is, uhh, your... well, I was gonna say the back of you when you leave me, but some scientists...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Might argue that your backside is actually a very good side! That there's cool stuff back there that folks are big fans of.

Rachel: We switched places. Switched microphones.

Griffin: Switched everything. It's a freaky frickin' Friday over here, folks. We're having fun, 'cause it's our last episode before the holiday break. That's right – we're not going to give you an episode next week.

Rachel: Yeah, because our episode would be launching on Christmas day, I believe?

Griffin: And that's not right. Folks... I'm not tryin' to get visited by three ghosts! And neither is my beloved bride! That shit's super spooky, and I'm not wild about it! By the way, quick update – uh, this is for Rachel, but I guess friends of the family listening to this... Henry likes kind of spooky stuff, right? And he's getting into like, some Christmas stuff, because it's the holidays comin' up, and he's about to go to Huntington and spend Christmas with his family, so he's into that.

Hey. Christmas Carol? It's those two things. It's a spooky Christmas.

Rachel: Yeah, that's true.

Griffin: Everyone's always like, "Nightmare Before Christmas. That's the spooky Christmas movie." I frickin' forgot all about Christmas Carol.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Henry's all about it.

Rachel: We watched the Mickey one, and I guess he's watched the Muppet one now.

Griffin: He watched the Muppet one now. Wow, this—

Rachel: Watched both.

Griffin: This doesn't really have a big cone. A big pickup cone, huh? You kind of gotta eat this microphone, huh?

Rachel: I don't.

Griffin: Is this what you've been suffering through?

Rachel: I don't. I don't eat it.

Griffin: Oh. Okay. Um, hey, do you have a small wonder?

Rachel: I do!

Griffin: What's that?

Rachel: Rallies.

Griffin: Rally's the roast beef restaurant?

Rachel: [laughs] No. A lot of people are rallying this evening.

Griffin: Oh my god, babe. I literally went to the restaurant. Rally's slash Checkers.

Rachel: [laughing] No.

Griffin: Of course that's what you're—of course you're talking about the rallies that are very good and important. But my mind immediately went to Rally's slash Checkers. I think I called it a roast beef restaurant. That's inaccurate. They have many things.

Rachel: No, that's Arby's.

Griffin: I was thinking of Arby's.

Rachel: Um, I've seen a lot of people on Twitter and Facebook, out in the world in the cold, rallying, and I just... hey, keep it up. You're wonderful.

Griffin: You're wonderful, and you're crushin' it. Uh, I'm gonna say that new Watchmen show on HBO. Babe, it's real good. I think you might like it.

Rachel: I'm gonna need you to remove that spoon from the mug.

Griffin: Oh yeah, I don't want to get at you. Um, uh, it's really good. It's good. I liked the graphic novel when I read it when I was in college, and was

a, y'know, a bit edgier than I am now. Had a bit more edge to me, and it's just like a really good companion piece to that that I do not think you actually need to know a lot about the thing.

It's Damon Lindelof, right? So it's the guy who did Leftovers, but also Lost.

Rachel: Ohh.

Griffin: And it's got—it's got big Lost energy, but like the good—the good stuff. The like, beginning of season two level Lost stuff. I'm like, really, really diggin' it.

Rachel: Can I ask what edgier Griffin was like?

Griffin: He... had the occasional clove cigarette, and um, y'know, he would go to the park and just look menacing in a corduroy jacket.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: That's about as—

Rachel: See, now I'm there. Thank you.

Griffin: Yeah, that's about as hardcore as I got. Hey, can I tell you about my first thing?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: What is my first thing? [laughs] I have two things. My—one of my things is a thing that I feel like is gonna be harder to get you on board about, so I'm gonna do that first, 'cause I feel like the second one, usually, I can lose attention. First thing is a video game called Stardew Valley. Folks, it's back. It's better than ever.

Rachel: Have you not talked about this?

Griffin: I talked about Animal Crossing, so maybe this is cheating. But I do think Stardew Valley is, uh, its own sort of thing, and I want to talk about why it is special to me. This is like a farm RPG life sim.

Rachel: Still farming.

Griffin: Uh, very much a farming game. Animal Crossing's not so much about farm—you don't really have a farm. You can like, grow fruit trees and flowers and stuff like that, but... listen—

Rachel: Which some might call a farm. [laughs]

Griffin: Okay. It's a semantics difference, I suppose. But Stardew Valley is like, you have, uh, a farm industry that you sort of brew up, and it's an indie game that came out in, I think, 2016. Uh, and it has been a really, really great game that I loved the first time I played it, and uh, they just released a big update for it this week. So I'm gonna go back to it and check out all this new stuff that came out.

But, the reason I want to talk about Stardew Valley is because I think it's a really, really kind of special thing. It is based on—first of all, it was made by a guy named Eric Barone, who uh, mostly, it was made by a single person, which is kind of remarkable, because it's been sold several million times now. And it's in this farming genre that started in 1996. There was a developer named Amccus that put out a Super Nintendo game called Harvest Moon. You ever heard of that, or anybody talk about that?

Rachel: No, not at all.

Griffin: It was this life sim RPG where you inherited a farm from your grandfather in this like, tight knit community, and you had to sort of ingratiate yourself to this community while like, fixing up and starting this farm. And that was such a novel idea back in 1996, where it was a roleplaying game, but instead of like, y'know, dragons and mummies and stuff, it was like, "Hey, here's a farm. Go start it up."

And people like, really fell in love with it, and the series sort of uh, took off after a while.

Rachel: This sounds like Field of Dreams a little bit.

Griffin: Huh. Y'know, I would, uh... I would give you that. I would give you that.

Rachel: Kevin Costner bought a bunch of farm land. I mean, he didn't end up farming successfully, but he did bring—

Griffin: He did mostly baseball stuff.

Rachel: —baseball players back from the dead, so...

Griffin: That's—and that's something. I mean, it's better than nothing. The farm was a failure. And nobody likes to talk about that in that movie, but he did not do a good job farming.

Rachel: No. Terrible farmer.

Griffin: He did good necromancy.

Rachel: Yeah, good medium.

Griffin: I think you can give him that. But he didn't produce the crops that he wanted to produce, and in that sense, he is a tremendous failure.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: And nobody wants to talk about that. They only want to talk about, "His dad was a bluh bluh bluh." But me, I look at him, I see dollars and cents. You fucked up, Kevin. Try again. No, don't, 'cause who knows what sort of grim specter you're gonna raise this time?

Anyway, uh, it created this new genre, right? This farming RPG. And people really liked it, and they continued to make games. To date, they have made 26 different games in the Harvest Moon franchise. It has changed names, I think, a couple times, but it's still like the—the same thing.

The problem is that, uh, they started to get bad. They started to not be good anymore, and development, like, changed hands, and the teams that made it sort of changed. But nobody—there wasn't much competition. There wasn't a whole lot of other people making these like, farming RPGs.

For people like myself who enjoy a good farming RPG life sim, uh, we had nowhere to go, and Eric Barone was one of these people who was like, "Ah, I miss Harvest Moon. I just graduated from, y'know, game development school and haven't been able to get a job. I'm just gonna make this game in this genre that nobody's making right now." And he did it, and made the best one of them.

Rachel: What's like—what's like, the first farming game that you like, were into?

Griffin: Uh, I mean, I played Harvest Moon, I believe, on Nintendo 64. There was basically one on every sort of Nintendo generation. And the last kind of like, good one was out on GameCube. I had one for the Gameboy Advance called Friends of Mineral Town. That is like, one of the best.

Rachel: Ooh, okay.

Griffin: And folks are like, wild about that one. I borrowed that from a theater friend named Bubba. He let me borrow his game tape of Friends in Mineral Town, and I played the hell out of it. Had a lot of fun with it, and sort of set the stage for me to fall in love with Animal Crossing. We are less than 100 days out, people. Get fuckin' stoked.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Um, I just really like that uh, Eric Barone, like, uh, with some help, but mostly just him working like ten hours a day for five years, revived a

video game genre singlehandedly. And it's one that I really love, and I think that it's like... and this is sort of, I don't know, I think it's easy for a, uh, professional game critic – which, I am no longer one of those, I suppose – to sort of get up their own butt and be like, "It's all Call of Duty shoot and murder games!"

Which it's not. Obviously, it's not. But like, I think it's important for weirder sort of game genres like this to thrive in a way, because I like the message that that sends about what games are viable and what projects are worth investing time and energy and resources and creativity into. And this like, nailed it. Like, it is the perfect one of these games.

And not only that, since it came out, Eric Barone has been updating it with like, a bunch of stuff. So this new thing that just came out adds like, dozens and dozens of new features and items and events and all kinds of big things. And it's free. And the game came out five year—came out three years ago now. So it's like... everybody who's bought it is probably gonna buy it. He's just updating it to be good.

Rachel: Can you play with other people?

Griffin: That was one of the things he added. I think it was like the fourth update to the game, a couple years after it came out. He added multiplayer. He didn't have to do that, right? Like, the game had already sold millions and millions and millions of copies. But I think it's just... I don't know, it is a rare thing that is so admirably made, and admirably, like, sustained.

And I guess in practice, Eric Barone has fuck you money now at this point, so uh, it's maybe just a passion project, keeping this thing going for him. But it's—it is wild how beefy this game is, and continues to get, when it already was like, really, really great, and I think that that's a special thing.

Rachel: 'Cause it could've just been like, "Oh, now you can play as a man with a mustache! Here's your update!"

Griffin: They did add several new, I believe, facial hair options in this update. But they added new pants as well. And several different new dogs. I'm very excited to explore all of it.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Uh, what is your first thing?

Rachel: My first thing is jumbotrons.

Griffin: The Maximum Fun thing, or the actual, physical, big boy screen objects?

Rachel: The big boy screen.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I do think it's funny that now we have talked about rallies and jumbotrons, and you have assumed it was potentially the other thing.

Griffin: The jumbotrons one I can be forgiven for. The Rally's one is unforgivable.

Rachel: [laughs] So I was thinkin' about this the other day.

Griffin: Yes?

Rachel: While we were watching hockey.

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: 'Cause one of my...

[pause]

Griffin: Don't tell everyone what I just did!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Don't tell them what I've done, Rachel, please.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Don't tell them what I've done, Rachel. Please.

Rachel: I won't. I won't. You remember—

Griffin: You have to tell them what I've done.

Rachel: You remember when Griffin made fun of me for using my phone as a coaster?

Griffin: [laughing] Sweet retribution.

Rachel: Griffin found the other coaster that is, granted, less expensive, but also ridiculous, and that is a sock he found on the ground.

Griffin: Actually, it just came off my foot.

Rachel: Oh, he just took it right off his foot.

Griffin: Well, I was makin' rings on my desk, and so I took my sock off to wipe it off, and then I put it over here on this thing, and I was like, "It's just gonna make rings there." So I took my sock off, used it as a coaster. Um... [snorts]

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: I'm broken deeply inside.

Rachel: Uh... [coughs]

Griffin: Sorry. I've derailed it.

Rachel: Okay, so I was thinking about jumbotrons, 'cause we were watching hockey the other day. One of my favorite things after a player scores a goal is when the camera pans to them, and you can see them looking up at the jumbotron, and they're trying to watch their own replay.

Griffin: Yes! I love that, too! That's so good.

Rachel: It's like everything in hockey moves in so fast, and when you shoot at the net, you really have no idea whether it's gonna go in. And when it does, I feel like everybody immediately rushes back to the bench so they can watch their goal again.

Griffin: It's such a—I mean, obviously, like any athlete who does a good job, I imagine wants to watch themselves do a good job. But hockey is so uniquely necessary that you do this, because like, people... I don't know how anybody scores in hockey, and if they didn't have the loud, loud sirens telling you you've just scored, you would have no fucking idea.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah. A lot of times, you'll see players like, raise their hands up in celebration, uh, because they assume it went in.

Griffin: Yeah, and that's not true at all.

Rachel: Nobody knows.

Griffin: When they whip all the way around the back of the goal and just kind of... boop! Scooch it in on the other side. There's no way they know that that actually went in or not.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, and so, I did a little research into the history of the jumbotron.

Griffin: Is it the history of TVs, but just very big?

Rachel: Sort of!

Griffin: Oh wow, okay.

Rachel: So, it makes sense, like, the progression that got us to jumbotron. Um, so first, electric lighting made it possible to watch sports inside. And then, after World War II, television coverage of sports began in earnest. By 1980s, team owners and stadium architects wanted to make games more like what fans had at home.

Griffin: What? Okay.

Rachel: So you're like, you're watching the game at home, and you can see the players close up. Y'know, you can see the pitcher, and like, you're very connected to who's batting and what people look like when they slide into a plate. And when you get to a stadium, and you can't see any of that.

Griffin: Yeah, that's true. I do catch myself watching the jumbotron more than I actually watch the thing.

Rachel: Yeah. So, while Sony kind of popularized it, it was Mitsubishi in 1980 introduced the first large-scale video board called the Diamond Vision...

Griffin: Whoa.

Rachel: ... which was demonstrated at the 1980 Major League Baseball All-Star Game in Los Angeles.

Griffin: [laughing] I have to watch that, because I imagine it was like, the opening of 2001: A Space Odyssey, of just everybody like, "That motherfucking TV! Do you see that fucking thing?! Oh my god, I'm gonna barf!!"

Rachel: [laughs] Or the screen was so bad that all the little baseball players looked like Mario.

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: Just like, jumpin’.

Griffin: Yeah. It’s really big. It is 16 pixels total. So... that’s not—it’s not our best.

Rachel: So, Sony actually created what they called the jumbotron, and what made that unique was that it was more like a TV screen. Like a big TV screen.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Uh, and what’s interesting... so, it first appeared at the World Expo in Japan in 1985. And this was a fully digitized screen. And then, kind of the next place it sprung up was at mega churches. So...

Griffin: Wow.

Rachel: At the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, it was 12 stories tall, this church.

Griffin: Wh—oh, I thought you were gonna say the jumbotron was.

Rachel: No. And so, kind of when you look at the early records of installations of jumbotrons, this was one of the first locations. At the time, the price ranged from \$500,000 to two and a half million, and it was estimated that there were 60 jumbotrons nationwide.

The standard size back then was 27 by 36 feet. And so, pretty much every sports arena had this. Uh, except for Wrigley Field. It wasn’t until April, 2015 that they finally got a jumbotron.

Griffin: Will always just gotta be...

Rachel: [laughs] I know. They did a huge renovation, ‘cause that stadium is...

Griffin: Not gr—Chicago, I love you. It’s not a great ball field.

Rachel: Can you guess when Wrigley Field was built?

Griffin: I'm gonna say 19... 21.

Rachel: 1914.

Griffin: Lord.

Rachel: Super old guy.

Griffin: It's beautiful. It's great. But don't get me started on the—let's just say, the facilities.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Where one might excuse one's self.

Rachel: [laughs] I have never been to a game there. I've just seen a lot of drunk fans on the L after the game.

Griffin: I mean, that's its own kettle of fish.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. I wanted to talk about the video board at the Dallas Cowboys' stadium.

Griffin: I have seen this board.

Rachel: 'Cause it's a big boy. Uh, so, remember I said 27 by 36 was the standard? 72 by 160.

Griffin: Feet? Inches?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Feet?

Rachel: Feet.

Griffin: Feet!

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs] You thought it was inches?

Griffin: Feet! Daggone! Well, in my defense, it couldn't possibly be feet!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: What the fuck?

Rachel: It weight one point two million pounds.

Griffin: What?! That's so much! [laughing] Holy shit!

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Oh my god. If I could send one object back in time to the '80s, it would be this thing. It would destroy the planet.

Rachel: [laughs] Everybody'd be on their huge cellphone, and then they'd look over and be like, "Whaaat?"

Griffin: "Whaaat?"

Rachel: [laughing] Uh, this thing cost 40 million dollars, which was more than the original cost of the building.

Griffin: Wh—okay. Good investment, I'd say.

Rachel: So maybe you don't need one that big.

Griffin: I mean, uh... it's tough to say. When you see John Cena's big powerful body slam a man to the ground on that TV, and you feel the shockwaves from said slam, and you see it on the big TV... ooh, I don't know. It was—it felt like 40 million worth to me. To me.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, there's a lot of other stuff to talk about related to jumbotron that I'm not gonna get into. There's a really good article from 2015 in uh, on SB Nation that I read a lot about. And it talks about all the little like, features that they do on jumbotrons, like kiss cam, for example.

Griffin: Oh yeah.

Rachel: I'm not a huge fan of that. Um, but I do... I do like that there is a screen that lets me see, close up, what is happening. 'Cause that means that no matter how bad my seats are, that I can still see that concert. I can still see that little—

Griffin: The concert thing is the big one for me.

Rachel: Little pass.

Griffin: I used to be able to get, y'know, uh, competitive about my spot at a big, like, outdoor concert.

Rachel: Right?

Griffin: There is like, now, I would much rather chill on a blanket with some drinks and some buds, and just watch the big screens.

Rachel: Yeah! I know.

Griffin: That is way more my jam. You mentioned, uh, jumbotrons in churches, and it reminded me of the fairly... I don't know, small to mid-range sized Southern Baptist church that I grew up in. Uh, when I was like... 13 or 14, they added two, like, projector screens, like you would have in like, school.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Just like, roll down screens where they would put up, like, the hymns. Like, the lyrics for the hymns so that you didn't have to use your hymnal. And it led to just a full-blown meltdown for the like...

Rachel: [laughs] Why?

Griffin: For some of the older, uh, patrons of the—

Rachel: Oh, did they think it was an eyesore?

Griffin: I think they thought that, y'know... it's like how people don't like the new math. What's it called? The common core math stuff now?

Rachel: Oh.

Griffin: That's just like... we had to use the book. We had to flip through this 600-page book anytime it was singin' time. You must also.

Rachel: Well, and there was a lot of outrage about the jumbotron at sporting events, too, because a lot of the players and coaches felt like it was really distracting. 'Cause y'know, for a long time, when it was like a new invention, like, how could you not look at this giant TV?

Griffin: Yeah, sure. It's the big one! The big TV! Put fuckin' Frasier up there! Let's go!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Yes.

[ad break music plays, but with sleigh bells]

Rachel: Our first sponsor this week is Third Love.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: I'm actually wearing a Third Love bra right now. Could you tell?

Griffin: Um, no. But you have a shirt on, also.

Rachel: [laughs] That's true.

Griffin: Which is why.

Rachel: I probably should mention that. Uh, they're super comfortable. I like to wear them a lot. Um, they look real good under clothes, and without clothes.

Griffin: Hey, alright.

Rachel: A+ all around. Uh, memory foam, no slip straps, and smooth, scratch-free band. All of these are great reasons to buy a Third Love bra. If you aren't sure what size you are, you can take a quiz and find your perfect fit in 60 seconds.

Third Love knows there's a perfect bra for everyone, so right now, they are offering our listeners 15% off your first order. Go to ThirdLove.com/Wonderful now to get your perfect fitting bra, and get 15% off your first purchase. That's ThirdLove.com/Wonderful for 15% off today.

Griffin: MeUndies is so good. This is a sponsorship message for them.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Let me start over. MeUndies is so good. MeUndies is great. All my undies is MeUndies now. Most of my lounge pantses is MeUndies now. Uh, it's the best. It's the softest. They are not fucking around when they say it's the micro modal, y'know, space age future tech shit. It's really good, and I want you to know that from the bottom of my heart.

Rachel: So super soft. I also kind of love their no-show socks. We don't talk a lot about their socks, but I love their socks, too.

Griffin: No-show socks. You cannot see them. Invisible to the naked eye, more or less. Uh, I really do love these lounge pants. And y'know who else would love them? Anybody. So hey, if you're looking for a last minute gift, think about MeUndies, because I guarantee you, uh, it's a good gift that anybody can enjoy.

Everybody's always looking for that universal present. Everybody, y'know, most folks wear underwear, and everybody wants lounge pants. So like, don't even think twice about getting MeUndies, 'cause guess what? They have a special offer for our listeners.

Any first time purchasers, you can get 15% off and free shipping. To get that offer, that 15% off your first pair, free shipping, and a 100% satisfaction guarantee, go to MeUndies.com/Wonderful. That's MeUndies.com/Wonderful.

Rachel: We have another sponsor this week.

Griffin: [makes a horrid squawking noise]

Rachel: ... And it's Flamingo.

Griffin: That was just a noise that my... sick pipes made. And I apologize to Flamingo, deeply.

Rachel: Hey, can I pull you aside for a minute, Griffin?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: There are a lot of people out there, and this message is for them.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Rachel: Uh, is your shave game bad?

Griffin: Oh no!

Rachel: Do you have a bad shave game?

Griffin: What's wrong with it?

Rachel: Are you not investing in your shave game?

Griffin: What's—is it all—what's going on with it? Now I'm worried about these folks!

Rachel: Flamingo makes body care for women with hair, and offers a great razor, shave gel, body lotion, the works. The Flamingo shave set is anything but routine. It's a \$22 value, but for you, it's \$16 with free shipping. The set includes the Flamingo razor, the two five-blade cartridges, one body lotion, one foaming shave gel, one shower hook, and a reusable travel pouch.

Griffin: Fuck yeah.

Rachel: That's a lot of stuff.

Griffin: That is so much stuff! How can you even lift this up off the ground, this set?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: 'Cause of how big and full of stuff it is.

Rachel: Also, they don't mention how attractive the Flamingo razor is, but I have one, and it is. A+.

Griffin: And it gets it smooth, I guess. That's what it does.

Rachel: It does.

Griffin: That's—from what I understand, that's what it does.

Rachel: [laughs] Think about it. You probably spend more than \$16 on razors and blades already. With the Flamingo shave set, you can upgrade for less or the same as you're paying now. It comes, as I mentioned, with the Flamingo razor, foaming shave gel, body lotion, shower hook, and reusable travel pouch. Get your Flamingo shave set for just \$16 with free shipping today when you visit ShopFlamingo.com/Wonderful. That's ShopFlamingo.com/Wonderful.

Griffin: Here's a personal message, speaking of jumbotrons! This one's for Amanda, and it's from Patrick, who says, "Amanda, thank you for all the love and excitement you have brought into my life this past year. From photo shoots of our cat to evening coffee and snacks, I love every minute of it. I can't wait to see all the places we want to go together, from Phoenix to Toronto. I love you forever."

Phoenix or Toronto. You get them both. The hot. The cold. The...

Rachel: Have you been to either of those cities?

Griffin: Spicy. I've been to Phoenix. I've done shows in Phoenix. They know me in Phoenix.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I went to Phoenix.

Rachel: I've been to Toronto. I went to Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto.

Griffin: See? We know. Spicy! Cheese and gravy!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Hot! Cold! Y'know?

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Both poles. Y'know?

Rachel: Yeah. No, good energy. Uh, can I read the next message?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: It is for Stephy. It is from Bree. "To my big baby Stephy, the cutest and smartest girlfriend. Thank you for the endless kitty cat pictures of Hobbs, and the unboxing videos. I can't wait to put a ring on it, and not just on Stardew!"

Griffin: [makes an air horn noise]

Rachel: "Cheers to watering our greens. I will now plant big smooches on your face. I love you and thank you for loving me, too. Yours truly, big baby Bree."

Griffin: Yeah, I mean, water your greens, but only until you build, y'know, that ladder up to that wine game. It's all about that artisanal wine. That's where the real money is.

Rachel: What is putting a ring on it in Stardew?

Griffin: Getting fuckin' married.

Rachel: You can get married in Stardew?

Griffin: Yeah! I mean, I wouldn't, because I'm married in real life.

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: And that's—that's cheating, folks.

Rachel: Thank you.

Griffin: No one can tell me it's not.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: No one can tell me it's not, 'cause it's—digital love is still love. Anyway, jumbotrons for our show are gonna be available to air during the first half of 2020. We're doing the drawing again, because y'all are here for it. Uh, starting—oh, Jesus. Today. No, wait. Yes.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Wednesday, December 18th. Uh...

Rachel: That is today.

Griffin: That is today. You all can head to MaximumFun.org/JumbotronDrawing to enter a drawing to purchase one of the limited jumbotron spots on Wonderful. This is how we have to do this, because the demand is, uh, much much bigger than the supply. So, uh, that drawing closes on Thursday, January 2nd, 2020. We're only accepting personal messages at this, and the air date is estimated, not guaranteed. But for all the details, go to MaximumFun.org/JumbotronDrawing. And if you have any questions, go ahead and email Daniel@MaximumFun.org.

Rachel: Reminder – it closes January 2nd. So if you're the kind of person that unplugs from Christmas through New Year's, go ahead and do that now.

Griffin: Just do it.

Rachel: Sign up for that drawing.

Elliott: Have you ever watched a movie so bad you just needed to talk to somebody about it?

Dan: Well, here at The Flop House, we watch a mad movie, and then talk about it.

Stuart: Yeah, you don't have to do anything. We'll watch it, and we'll talk it. We do the hard work.

Dan: Featuring the beautiful vocal talents of Dan McCoy...

Stuart: Stuart Wellington...

Elliott: And me, America's rascal, Elliott Kalan.

Stuart: New episodes every other Saturday at MaximumFun.org, or wherever you get your podcasts, dude. Bye bye.

Elliott: Bye bye.

[music plays]

Griffin: Can I tell you about my second thing?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: This one's gonna—you're gonna like this one. You're here for this one.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Riiicolaaa!

Rachel: Am I? Am I here for it?

Griffin: Do you not like Ricola?

Rachel: I mean, I like the product.

Griffin: Riiicolaaa! Do you remember?

Rachel: I don't like what you're doing right now.

Griffin: But do you rem—

Rachel: I do, yes.

Griffin: But do you remember it?

Rachel: Yes. Yes, I reme—yes. Griffin, I remember.

Griffin: The big horn.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: The silly pants.

Rachel: Yes. I remember.

Griffin: He does it so loud. And it's like, why? Isn't it a avalanche danger?

Rachel: 'Cause his pipes are so cleared out from these sweet cough drops.

Griffin: Riii—yeah, I think so too. I am glad you remember that commercial. I think about it sometimes and just laugh myself awake from the dream I was having about Ricola.

Rachel: Were you expecting we would talk about this commercial longer?
[laughs]

Griffin: I... y'all know, I think from the Sudafed episode, which may have been the first episode of this show, how I feel about most over the counter remedies for things. I'm a little suspish, right? Or not suspish, but like, if I have a headache or something, I'll go pop a couple ibuprofen. But I'm not like, doing that like, "Ah, this will fix it for sure." It's like, yeah, I'll take these, and maybe it'll help. Maybe it won't. I don't know. It's sort of hit or miss for me.

Sudafed? Guaranteed a hit. It's gonna be a success whenever I take it. It's gonna do something to me. It'll make me healthier, or it'll keep me up all night. It's gonna do something.

Rachel: [laughs] Something.

Griffin: Ricola, I also hold with the same amount of reverence. If I have a cough, if I am congested in the chest, if I have a sore throat like I am, I have one in my pocket right now. I'm not eating it until I am done with this segment about Ricola, which is maybe ironic. Um, but I don't want the sound of it rattling around in my mouth on the microphone.

Rachel: I will say, unlike Sudafed, I believe that this cough drop really only holds back your symptoms while the cough drop is in your mouth.

Griffin: Yes. It is a stopgap measure, absolutely.

Rachel: Do you think anyone says "Ricko-lah"?

Griffin: No.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: No one on earth has ever said it. Uh, my child mind operates like this. Uh, I don't want Halls, because Halls has chemicals in it. I want Ricola.

Rachel: Oh, interesting.

Griffin: Because Ricola is...

Rachel: Do you think they're made out of like, dandelions?

Griffin: It's just Swiss herbs, baby, and that's health, isn't it?

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Not Halls. Made in a lab somewhere. Ricola? These little brown, craggy sort of turd-colored little lozenges?

Rachel: The more you say it, the weirder it's starting to sound in my head.

Griffin: Ricola. Uh, here's some fun facts about Ricola. It is a portmanteau. Or, not a portmanteau. They've taken letters from several different words.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, company started in 1930. It was a confectioner's shop called, uh, and I'm gonna butcher this, and I apologize... uh, Richterich & Company Laufen, which you take the first two letters of those three words. Ri-co-la. That's where the name comes from.

They were a confectioner back in the '30s, but in 1940, they started to put out this Swiss herbal sweet, which had a blend of 13 herbs and spices. No, just 13 herbs.

Rachel: Ooh, can I guess them? Do you have them in front of you?

Griffin: I do have them in front of me. It is the same recipe, except in America. America has a slightly different recipe. But let's see if you can guess, uh... well, obviously, the main active ingredient in it is not, I guess, technically an herb. You know what it is? It's just menthol.

Rachel: Oh, okay.

Griffin: That's what gives it that like, y'know, effervescence that actually does shit.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The flavor comes from these 13 herbs. Let's see if you can guess some of them.

Rachel: Well, lemon's not an herb, right? [laughs]

Griffin: No. It's not an herb. Most people are still trying to figure out if it's a fruit or a flower.

Rachel: Uh, ginger?

Griffin: Is ginger one of them? Can we confirm ginger? No.

Rachel: Okay. Um...

Griffin: Some of these are wild.

Rachel: Wild like...

Griffin: Like—

Rachel: Like crazy?

Griffin: You will not—you've never heard of them wild. Yeah.

Rachel: Oh, okay. Um... mint?

Griffin: Uh, there is a type of mint in it. Can you guess which mint?

Rachel: [laughs] No.

Griffin: Peppermint.

Rachel: Okay. [laughing] I'm gonna stop now. This isn't fun.

Griffin: Uh, well, there's some—y'know, there's some hits in here. Sage is an ingredient. Thyme is an ingredient. And then you get into sort of wilder ones, like lady's mantle. What? I don't know. But it must taste good, 'cause they put it in this. Horehound, of course. I think that is where, actually, some of the flavor is derived, because horehound candies were, I think, some derivative of this.

Uh, and then, stuff like cowslip, burnet, yarrow, marsh mallow, uh, speedwell, AKA Veronica... huh?

Rachel: Veronica?

Griffin: I'm Veronica Speedwell.

Rachel: [laughs] I like that.

Griffin: Yeah, I like that a lot, too. Uh, so anyway, in America, we don't get all 13. We get seven of the original 13, with three new herbs in the mix, which are linden flowers, wild thyme, and hyssop. I don't know why... I guess thyme... they wanted to flavor blast it, I guess, for American taste palates. And they're like, "Let's get that wild thyme in there."

Uh, Ricola has six show gardens in Switzerland where you can go and learn about the special herbs.

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: And uh, the power that they give you. I would love to go one one day. Get one just fresh off the tap. Uh, I just really—I like these things. I get excited, uh, when I know that we have them when I am feeling under the weather, because I can put one in my mouth and they will stop me from coughing for a little bit, and I think that that's pretty great.

Lemon Ricola are just okay. I would much rather prefer the brown craggy one. But... and now to celebrate that I have finished this segment, and most of my speaking for this episode, I'm going to indulge. Farewell, everyone.

Rachel: So, if Griffin doesn't say anything in the next few seconds, that means that he agrees with everything I'm saying. So, I'm—

Griffin: Riiicolaaa!

Rachel: I'm just gonna say... uh, that Griffin is smelly.

Griffin: Hey!

Rachel: Um, and...

Griffin: I don't like this!

Rachel: He only likes olives.

Griffin: The smell is from my coaster.

Rachel: [laughs] Your sock coaster?

Griffin: Mm-hmm. Hey, what's your second thing?

Rachel: My second thing...

Griffin: Mm-hmm?

Rachel: ... is a trip to the Poetry Corner.

Griffin: Hell yeah!

Rachel: Do you want me to do the song, since you're busy with your cough drop?

Griffin: Yeah, I'm suckin' on a Ricola, and also, I want you to feel the dreadful weight of having to do the Poetry Corner theme song.

Rachel: A boom boom boom, tss, boom boom dee, tss, boom da doom tss tss. Boom ba doom tss tss. [whispers] Poetryyy.

Griffin: Holy shit, that was so good.

Rachel: Yeah, see? This is why my expectations of you are so high.

Griffin: Well, now I have to start bringing poems to the show.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: So that you can do that.

Rachel: I would love that!

Griffin: If I brought a poem to the show?

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: It wouldn't be good.

Rachel: How can you say that?

Griffin: It wouldn't be a good po—because I don't think I have very good taste in poems.

Rachel: You're a man with good taste.

Griffin: In certain things. In independent farming RPGs.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But not in poems.

Rachel: The poet I am bringing this week is Maxine Kumin. Uh, she was born—

Griffin: That's not one of the spices in Ricola.

Rachel: [laughs] It's actually K-U-M-I-N, so it might be "Kyu-man"? Or, I'm not sure which.

Griffin: Oh.

Rachel: Uh, she was born in Philadelphia in 1925. Got her BA and MA from Radcliffe College. She is somebody I found because she is associated with the confessional poets, because she was pals with them. So, Anne Sexton, Silvia Plathe, Robert Lowell. But she's not particularly a confessional poet herself.

So, she met Anne Sexton at the Boston Center for Adult Education. There was this like, poetry workshop that they both were in, uh, at this adult learning center, basically.

Griffin: That's interesting.

Rachel: Even though she got started, y'know, a little bit later in life, uh, her first book didn't come out until she was... um, well, I guess almost 40, so not like, particularly late in life.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But getting published was still a challenge. She gave an interview where she said, "It was commonplace to be told by an editor that he'd like to publish more of my poems, but he'd already published one by a woman that month."

Griffin: Jesus.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, she had a pretty great career. Taught English at Tufts University, and spent the last half of her life in New Hampshire, breeding horses.

Griffin: Who could ask for anything more?

Rachel: [laughs] I know. Uh, she won a Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1973, served as a poetry consultant to the Library of Congress, and she's often compared to Robert Frost and Elizabeth Bishop.

Uh, so I wanted to read one of her poems. Uh, so I wanted to give a little bit of a content warning before I read this poem. It's a poem about loss, and

specifically, uh, her friend, Anne Sexton, that I mentioned earlier, that died by suicide. The poem is called How It Is.

Griffin: I'll drop in a time stamp here for uh, after, if that's not something you want to sit through. The poem ends at 37 minutes and ten seconds, which is about a minute and a half from now, if you want to skip ahead.

Rachel: It's a very beautiful poem. I wouldn't read it, typically. It's hard to read anything associated with the confessional poets, because it was a pretty... kind of a dark—

Griffin: Heavy. Yeah.

Rachel: A dark, heavy bunch. But I found this particular poem very lovely. For anybody that's experiencing kind of loss, I feel like she does it in a really beautiful way.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: So the poem is called How It Is.

“Shall I say how it is in your clothes?
A month after your death I wear your blue jacket.
The dog at the center of my life recognizes
you've come to visit, he's ecstatic.
In the left pocket, a hole.
In the right, a parking ticket
delivered up last August on Bay State Road.
In my heart, a scatter like milkweed,
a flinging from the pods of the soul.
My skin presses your old outline.
It is hot and dry inside.

I think of the last day of your life,
old friend, how I would unwind it, paste
it together in a different collage,

back from the death car idling in the garage,
back up the stairs, your praying hands unlaced,
reassembling the bits of bread and tuna fish
into a ceremony of sandwich,
running the home movie backward to a space
we could be easy in, a kitchen place
with vodka and ice, our words like living meat.

Dear friend, you have excited crowds
with your example. They swell
like wine bags, straining at your seams.
I will be years gathering up our words,
fishing out letters, snapshots, stains,
leaning my ribs against this durable cloth
to put on the dumb blue blazer of your death.”

Griffin: That’s one of the best poems I've ever heard. That’s really...

Rachel: Isn't that so beautiful?

Griffin: Beautiful and so sad. Happy holidays, folks.

Rachel: [laughs] I know. I, as I mentioned earlier, I really, like, love the confessional poets, and love, um, a lot of the poets around them, but have been hesitant to talk about them on this show, because again, as I mentioned, a lot of dark material.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But Maxine Kumin’s poem isn’t morose, particularly. Y'know? It’s more a recognition of what it’s like to be present in this time after you've lost somebody. And in kind of how your connection to them continues, and how... I don't know, how you're forever changed by that. Uh, and I just felt like that poem was so beautiful, and so vivid, to me. Like, I could picture everything. I could picture that blazer.

Griffin: Yeah, absolutely.

Rachel: Y'know? Like, it's just—it's just an incredible poem.

Griffin: Yeah, that was really nice. Thank you for reading that.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: See, I wouldn't have found anything like that. Mine would've been some like, um...

Rachel: Like an E. E. Cummings?

Griffin: I would've brought one, but it would've been a riddle, and then you would've been like, "Sweetheart, that's not a poem. You've found a riddle."

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Spittin' the Ricola out so I can read some submissions from our friends at home. Uh, here's one that was sent in by Max who says, "Something I think is wonderful is when you buy a used Pokémon cartridge, and the previous owner leaves their save data on it. It's exciting to see their collection, nicknames, and my personal favorite, their main party. Getting a glimpse into how someone else played feels like recommendations from a fellow fan." I used to do this when we would rent games from Blockbuster.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: You would get like, save files off like, somebody's Final Fantasy 6 cart, and be like, "Ooh, that's the party you used. Wow. You... leveled them up very, very high. How did you do that?"

Rachel: I never thought about that as a thing.

Griffin: Absolutely it was a thing. And then you would like, go, and you would like, try and save your save file at the very bottom save file, on the off chance that you would go back to Blockbuster and rent that exact

cartridge again and finish up that game of, y'know, uh, Super Mario RPG or whatever.

Rachel: Can people still borrow video games?

Griffin: Mmm, I mean, Redbox, I think, is actually just now stopping their...

Rachel: Ohh.

Griffin: Uh, game rental service, which is wild.

Rachel: `Cause it's all like, digital?

Griffin: Uh, I mean, partially it's that, but partially, I think it's just like, uh... games are such a—most games. Like, most successful games are such a like, long tale thing, right? Like, it doesn't make sense to rent Destiny or something. It doesn't make sense to rent Stardew Valley, `cause you're probably gonna be playing it for such a long time. So...

Rachel: Not like Cool Spot.

Griffin: Not like Cool Spot. There was a service called Gamefly. I don't know if it's still—

Rachel: Oh yeah, I remember that!

Griffin: Yeah, they had a lot of commercials. But theirs was pretty good, `cause you could keep the stuff for as long as you wanted, and then, I think like, if you wanted to buy it, you could get like, a discount for it. They had like, a lot of sort of hooks like that. It was alright.

Uh, here's another one from Frank who says, "My wonderful thing is driving under a bridge when a train is going by overhead. Growing up, I was always told that driving under a train is extremely good luck, so whenever this happens to me, I get excited for a little burst of good luck heading my way soon."

Rachel: That's so cool! I've never heard that!

Griffin: It's a good way to put, uh, a silver lining on what I think is kind of a spooky thing.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: Um, but uh, I suppose this is a nice way of looking at it. I'll now change my frame of view. Thank you, Frank. My Frank of view. That could be a new segment. Frank, you need to keep `em coming.

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: No, I don't want to put that kind of pressure on you, Frank.

Hey, thanks 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. Um, do you have anything to say? Do you have anything to say for yourself?

Rachel: [laughs] I wanted to thank MaximumFun.org for hosting our shows, and all the other great shows. Uh, it is a perfect site to find excellent content every day of the week.

Griffin: Yeah it is. And uh, we have other stuff at McElroy.family. We got new merch for the month of December.

Rachel: I forgot that there's a Wonderful Christmas ornament?

Griffin: Oh yeah!

Rachel: I didn't realize that until somebody tweeted about it, and then I thought, "Oh hey, that's cool!"

Griffin: Yeah, it's pretty cool.

Rachel: We should, uh... we should get some of this stuff, huh?

Griffin: Yeah, probably.

Rachel: Figure that out.

Griffin: Yeah, I'll see. [getting increasingly high-pitched] I might be able to talk to some people.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [high-pitched] Uh oh. I can only talk like this now.

Rachel: [high-pitched] Oh no!

Griffin: [high-pitched] Uh oh. No, I've lost the lower register of my voice! But... this is the last episode for—actually, wait. Are we gonna have an episode up on New Year's Eve? That's fuckin' wild.

Rachel: We should. That'd be fun.

Griffin: [high-pitched] Yeah, we should. We'll do it. Countin' down, baby. Here comes the big ball! Bye, everybody!

Rachel: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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