

Wonderful! 118: Butt-Shaped Fruits

Published January 29th, 2020

[Listen on TheMcElroy.family](https://www.themcelroyfamily.com)

[theme music plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: This is a smart show podcast for intellectuals. Like myself and Rachel, a couple of real tea drinkers. And...

Rachel: What's your favorite tea?

Griffin: Mine? Hot. Earl gray. Hot. That's what, uh, Captain, uhh, Jean-Luc Picard would drink on Star Trek.

Rachel: That sounded a lot like your 'Love, Actually...' voice, actually. Now that you mention it.

Griffin: [in a terrible British accent] Oh, 'Love, Actually...' does happen at Heathrow Airport.

Rachel: [laughs] No, I meant the woman that says, uh... "I don't want something I need!"

Griffin: Oh, okay. So there's a character in Love, Actually that I like to imitate for Rachel, because it's Rachel's probably favorite character. And it's the one who uh, tries to uh, seduce Alan Rickman's married character.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And she's so single-faceted. Why are we talking about this now? I don't know.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: She's so wildly single-minded in this... like, it's amazing she remembers to eat or use the bathroom, because this is all that she thinks about. And just every line she delivers in this movie is just... [in a British accent] Full of dark corners for doing dark deeds.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And it's like—it's Alan Rickman, he's great, but holy shit. Anyway, smart show podcast. Smart stuff. Um... uh...

Rachel: Tea. We drink tea.

Griffin: We drink tea. Couple of big real tea drinkers. Maybe I felt a little bit uncomfortable after the last episode, when I brought, um, uh... oh, what was the one I brought where you made fun—oh, sky cookies.

Rachel: Biscoff.

Griffin: Well, y'know what? No. Screw that. Biscoff is the smartest cookie that there is.

Rachel: That is true.

Griffin: The term 'one smart cookie' was written about Biscoff, so screw it. We're still in the dumpster, folks. You're here in the dumpster with us. We're a couple of real dumpster, uh, mattresses, and I hope you listen and enjoy today's episode of Wonderful. Do you have any small—that's just the—that's the cold open. We're gonna put that before the music. Do you have a small wonder?

Rachel: [laughing quietly] Um, I... y'know, just started seeing movies by myself.

Griffin: You have a couple ti—like, you never had in your life?

Rachel: I hadn't my entire life. Made it 37 years, and didn't do it. And then, recently, I have seen two films. Uh, first, Little Women. Second, Jojo Rabbit. Both incredible, and kind of premier solo viewing experiences, because they both left me quite weepy.

Griffin: Hm. Interesting.

Rachel: It was nice to sit alone in the dark with my tears.

Griffin: I think I saw, um, Fast and the Furious 7 by myself, maybe.

Rachel: Oh, similar weepiness I think, probably.

Griffin: Yes. Or whichever one had the tribute to, uh...

Rachel: No, I was with you on that one.

Griffin: You were with me, because you did see me weep.

Rachel: I did see you, yes.

Griffin: Bae caught me weepin'. Uh, I'm gonna say mole. I just got back from a trip to Houston, and uh, ate at a mole themed restaurant.

Rachel: Wait, was it called... Holy Mole?

Griffin: Baby, I made the same joke when I was there!

Rachel: Oh, of course you did! 'Cause we're soul mates.

Griffin: I love you.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, it was so good. I've had, like, y'know, since moving to Austin, obviously, before I moved here... uh, I shouldn't say obviously. Y'know, I lived in Chicago, and Cincinnati probably's got mole in places. But I'd never had it before I moved here.

Rachel: Yeah, but they put spaghetti in it, so...

Griffin: They do. [laughs] Uh, and it's really—it's like, so good. It's like—it's one of my favorite edible fluids.

Rachel: There's a richness to that.

Griffin: And this place had like, 13 different kinds of mole.

Rachel: Real depth of flavor.

Griffin: And they were all so, so, so, so good. I love it. I love it, I love it. I love mole! I think I go first this time?

Rachel: Oh, I don't know.

Griffin: Well, let me think. Yes, because I ended the show with sky cookies. Which means I must start with something classy.

Rachel: Please do.

Griffin: So, I was in Houston for the Royal Rumble.

Rachel: [pause] Okay.

Griffin: So that's what I'd like to talk about.

Rachel: Oh, the Royal Rumble.

Griffin: The format... I don't want to talk about the WWE as a franchise, because... kind of stinky. There's some stink in there that I don't necessarily want to, uh, dive into the rich, rich history of that stink. The Royal Rumble, as a sporting entertainment format, is about as good as it gets. It is just about the best sort of way that wrestling can be presented, can be consumed, uh, can be performed as an entertainment sport.

Rachel: Can you explain, just very briefly, the difference between the Royal Rumble and WrestleMania for me?

Griffin: The Royal Rumble is... think of it as the penultimate sort of major event in the wrestling year.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, WrestleMania usually happens around April, and so, uh, the Royal Rumble sort of sets up the big storylines.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: The winner of both the men and women's Royal Rumble events, uh, the individual Royal Rumble matches, get to fight in a championship match at WrestleMania. So, whoever wins the Royal Rumble is going to WrestleMania. That is the whole conceit of the event.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Uh, I have been to WrestleMania before. And this was—this was way better. Because the Royal Rumble is a very powerful, powerful event. I should say, I am not like, a huge wrestling fan, especially these days, really, since Henry was born. I feel like I've kind of, uh, dropped off quite a bit. I used to just like, watch all the pay-per-views. I've never been one to watch all the wrestling programming in a given week, because there's like, seven fuckin' hours of it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I'm going to say 'wrestling' a lot. I am using it interchangeably with WWE; although, there's a lot of other wrestling franchises that my friends, the Minskys, will tell me about pretty regularly. All Elite Wrestling sounds hot. We gotta get down on that.

But anyway, I'm talking about the Royal Rumble for the WWE. If you've never watched it before, the Royal Rumble match is... two opponents enter the ring, and then, every 90 seconds, another contender enters the ring, until 30 people have entered the ring. And the only way that you can be eliminated is if somebody throws you over the top rope, and your feet touch the ground.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: That's it. Those are the rules. There's no pinning, right? So there's none of that like, "Oh, he's got him! One, two... oh, he kicked out!" It's, if you get thrown out of the ring, like DJ Jazzy Jeff, that's it if your feet touch the ground. The feet touching the ground is important, because Kofi Kingston, I have shown you. And we definitely have watched a Royal Rumble before, and I showed you Kofi Kingston, where he did some—like, he like, walked it back.

Rachel: They do this like, floor is lava routine, where they like, hop from item to item to not touch the floor.

Griffin: He's grown up a bit. He was the champion for like—I say he's grown up. I mean, WWE has given him like, more storyline. So actually, this time, he didn't have a skit, which was heartbreaking. Naomi did in the women's Royal Rumble. She like, fully jumped all the way to the barricade between the ring and the crowd, and then built a bridge out of like, a big placard thing on one of the commentator's tables and walked across it.

Rachel: [laughing] Gosh, that's great.

Griffin: It was so fresh. But that's it, right? And so, there's no confusion to it. If you don't follow wrestling, you still know when somebody's out,

because they've been—they are big, and they've been launched out of a ring to the ground.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That is very good to watch. It is... I don't watch, like, wrestling programming. Not only because there's seven hours of it a week, but also because – especially in like, a non-pay-per-view format – the matches are so *long*. And there's so much talking. And there's so much business. And there's so much stuff. And there's so many like, big, cool spots where they do sweet ass flips and dope stunts. And then they'll lay on the ground for five minutes.

Rachel: Yes, there's a lot of recovery.

Griffin: And that's—I get it! That's good. I don't want them to hurt themselves. I mean that. But the matches are so long sometimes.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Royal Rumble... every 90 seconds, something new! New entrance! Nobody knows who's gonna be in the Royal Rumble. Nobody knows the order that people are gonna come out. So like, the 30th person could win, because they have the fewest number of people to eliminate, ostensibly.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: This time, the big gimmick was, uh, Brock Lesnar, who is the big, big boy. The big, strong, former MMA champ.

Rachel: Jimmy John's, right?

Griffin: Jimmy John's man, yes. Went out first, and then just proceeded to throw the next ten guys out of the ring, basically as soon as they got in there. Uh, which sucked, except it was really sweet when he got chucked. Although, Shinsuke Nakamura died for our sins there, which is heartbreaking.

Rachel: That is—that is the tricky part of this Royal Rumble, is that, if you have any faves, you can't guarantee you're gonna get to spend any time with them, because they may just...

Griffin: They may just get launched.

Rachel: One foot in the ring, one foot out, immediately.

Griffin: But you never know who's gonna be in it. This year, the big thing was, Edge came back, who was like a, like, Attitude-era wrestler who retired, like, 15 years—like, a long ass time ago. Uh, came out, looked great. Started a new feud. It was hot. It was great.

But like, one time I was watching it, and Drew Carey came out. Fuckin' Drew Carey came out.

Rachel: Wh—really?

Griffin: Yeah. He got pretty much squashed right away, but um, hey, that's Drew Carey from the TV show.

Rachel: Yeah! [laughs]

Griffin: Shaquille O'Neal came out at, I believe, uhh, uh... either Royal Rumble, or a Royal Rumble-esque event during WrestleMania. Uh, and it was just like, "Oh. [laughs] There's Shaquille O'Neal." And then you remember, like, "Oh shit, he's a big fella!" Because he's actually doin' pretty good out there!

Rachel: Did you get any surprise cameos like that?

Griffin: Uh, mostly they were, um... either like, NXT, which is like, the development league wrestlers. This guy named Keith Lee, who made his WWE debut for NXT, who seemed fuckin' radical. But no, I think it was mostly like, sort of, uh, referencing wrestlers of the past.

I've talked about the men's Royal Rumble mostly, here. The women's Royal Rumble was also, like, totally, totally radical. Naomi was great. There's a, uh, NXT wrestler named Bianca Belair, who had like, an incredible run.

This is it though, right? Like, I don't follow wrestling. But coming out of the Royal Rumble, I know about sort of like, Drew McIntyre's arc, because I watched it in a single event! That's all I need, gang!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It's like a little magazine. It's like the Toys-R-Us big toy book of big wrestlers, because it's like, "I like that one, and I like that one." I don't have to watch seven hours a week of them! Having not okay storylines, most of the time!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's an ideal way to consume a very, very goofy thing, and uh, I like it. Even, uh, even though I'm not a big wrestling watcher these days, uh... I think I didn't even really watch WrestleMania last year.

Rachel: You're saying that a lot, and I think it's okay. It's okay, Griffin.

Griffin: Well, no. I'm following that up with saying, I will watch the Royal Rumble every year until I die, because it is a—it is a just completely entertaining event. Um, and I had a ton of fun with it! Went to Houston with some friends. Stayed there. Hung out with a bud.

Rachel: Did you get a soft pretzel?

Griffin: No. The bathroom situation at the Minute Maid park was a... absolutely catastrophe. So I—at a certain point, I just started to stop put things in my body.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Except for the last event, which was the men's Royal Rumble, where I did have a big margarita. And it was a fun time for everyone nearby.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: What's your first thing?

Rachel: Oh, we should also say that if any wrestling enthusiasts are listening to this, they should check out Tights and Fights.

Griffin: Tights and Fights! Yes. Uh, I have not listened to their coverage, uh, or their discussion of the Royal Rumble, but I'm excited to. What is your first thing, though?

Rachel: My first thing is a trip to the ring.

Griffin: Ooh!

Rachel: But not the wrestling ring. It is a trip to the poetry ring, by which I mean Poetry Corner, by which I mean... [sings] Ba dum boom boom boom doom baboom boom doom...

Griffin: [sings the WWE theme] Here comes... Robert Frost! Holy shit, Robert Frost? Back out of retirement?

Rachel: [laughs] And his catch phrase that he says, which is, "Let's... get... chillyyy!"

Griffin: And then he blows snow in their eyes.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And they fall over. Anyway. What's up?

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, actually...

Griffin: Is it frosty fresh? You got him?

Rachel: No, it's not.

Griffin: Oh, dang.

Rachel: No. But it is Rita Dove, and I imagine, there could be a wrestling nickname made out of that, easily.

Griffin: Oh, yeah.

Rachel: Y'know, 'cause the dove is like, the sign of peace, and maybe she... brings... peace to the wres—no. Never mind.

Griffin: That's not...

Rachel: That's not a thing.

Griffin: I know you haven't watched a ton of wrestling, but they don't typically go that... route. I think Bayley has that market cornered.

Rachel: Oh, yeah! Bayley.

Griffin: Apparently, she's Dark Bayley now. That's—okay, anyway. We cannot talk about wrestling any more than we already have.

Rachel: [laughs] Okay. Rita Dove has been in the poetry, and just general, like, writing game for over 30 years now. She's born in Ohio. She went to Miami University. Um, and then, got an MFA from Iowa Writer's Workshop. She was the US poet laureate from 1993 to 1995. And at 40, she was a youngest poet laureate.

Griffin: Oh, wow! That's great!

Griffin: I thought you were gonna say lovers. And I was gonna be like...

Rachel: I mean, probably that, too.

Griffin: Heyyy. Come on, now.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, yeah, she has apparently like, performed in showcases with her husband as a ballroom dancer.

Griffin: Hell yeah! She sounds radical.

Rachel: Uh, and you can kind of see that musicality, as I mentioned, and... somebody actually wrote about it. Emily Nussbaum, in the New York Times, said that, um, "For Dove, dance is an implicit parallel to poetry. Each is an expression of grace, performed within limits. Each an art, weighted by history, but malleable enough to form something utterly new."

Griffin: That's great.

Rachel: That was a really nice way of describing it. That's the thing, I think, that really is appealing to a lot of people about poetry, is that there is some structure to it.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: Y'know? And so, you can kind of be creative within that structure, much the way that you can in a lot of other art forms. Uh, like dance. So, I wanted to read a poem of hers that I really, really enjoy. And this—this one's jam packed. There's like... not a lot of lines here, but each image is—is kind of incredible.

Griffin: Okay, I'm listening.

Rachel: Uh, the poem is called Flirtation.

"After all, there's no need

to say anything

at first. An orange, peeled
and quartered, flares

like a tulip on a wedgewood plate
Anything can happen.

Outside the sun
has rolled up her rugs

and night strewn salt
across the sky. My heart

is humming a tune
I haven't heard in years!

Quiet's cool flesh—
let's sniff and eat it.

There are ways
to make of the moment

a topiary
so the pleasure's in

walking through."

Griffin: Ooh! [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Mrs. Winer! Hoo hoo hoo hoo!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: That is... something.

Rachel: “There are ways to make of the moment a topiary, so the pleasure’s in walking through,” is such...

Griffin: That is... real good stuff.

Rachel: So good. I am so envious of this poem, because I feel like it is doing a lot of what I have tried to do in poetry, which is to very precisely create something that is so evocative, that once you hear it, you never forget it.

Griffin: Yeah. That’s incredibly good. That’s one of the best ones that I have heard on this show.

Rachel: Yeah, she has written a lot. I mean, that’s not necessarily representative of all of her work. She’s written a lot of like, historical poetry, like, based on like, specific moments in American history. Uh, but I feel like that really precisely, like, captures her talent, which is to just, like... take a concept, and make it so, um... sensual.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: Y'know?

Griffin: I mean, if you're writing about fruit in a poem, it’s gonna—it kind of—and that’s, I guess, my one criticism. Writin’ about fruit in a poem is kind of a sensuality shortcut, isn't it?

Rachel: Well, or in a painting. Y'know, fruit in a painting.

Griffin: Yeah, true.

Rachel: Fruit in music.

Griffin: Well, and let’s just get into it. Let’s just get into it.

Griffin: They do have seeds.

Rachel: Hmm.

Griffin: But I've never looked at a brocco-locco-li and been like, "Mmm!" I have for eating it, but not for the other thing.

Rachel: So what's your thesis? [laughs]

Griffin: All fruit is made horny.

Rachel: Okay. I'm not gonna argue. I mean, there's a lot of good points you made there.

Griffin: Thank you.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Melons.

Rachel: I—yeah.

Griffin: [laughs] Can I steal you away?

Rachel: [simultaneously] Can I steal you away? [laughs]

[ad break music plays, accelerated]

Griffin: Oh no, we got sponsors. Oh wait!

Rachel: Oh wait, it's a good thing!

Griffin: Sponsors are amazing! Especially Dashlane. Dashlane, I've talked about before. They offer a invaluable service for, y'know, professional world wide web surfers like myself. Whenever I'm cruising around the information super highway, I'm gonna get my car in the Dashlane. Because Dashlane

helps you fill out forms fast, remember all your passwords, and it keeps all your online data accessible and safe with an all in one app.

It safely remembers and auto fills all your login and payment information, so you don't get slowed down filling in your info across all devices. You can safely send passwords and secure notes, share streaming passwords with your family, send coworkers access codes, let visitors know your Wi-Fi password, and so much more.

I don't know how many, like, conversations I would be able to get out of in this house...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: ... by not having to tell everybody where our Wi-Fi password lives.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It would be incredible...

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: ... to just have Dashlane do that for me. And then I could talk about other cool stuff that I want to talk about, like popular music.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. And the sensuality of fruit.

Griffin: And I am gonna start talking about that a lot. And, if you want to start dashing through the internet and help support the show, you can visit www.Dashlane.com/Wonderful to start your 30-day free trial of Dashlane. No credit card required. If you like it, use the code 'Wonderful' at checkout to save 25% on your premium subscription.

Rachel: Can I tell you about our next sponsor?

Griffin: Yes, you may.

Rachel: It's Rothy's.

Griffin: Rothy's is here. For shoes. On your toes. Cover 'em up. Won't you please? With Rothy's.

Rachel: [laughs] That's incredible. Did they pay you for that?

Griffin: I was actually—that's another Rita Dove, um, joint.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: She said I could use it.

Rachel: Well, that's nice. Um, I have... four pairs of Rothy's now.

Griffin: Mm, it's a real problem.

Rachel: Uh, so I can basically just wear them every day, all week. And often, I do.

Griffin: She could dress two horses, folks.

Rachel: [laughs] Do you think about shoes that way when you look in the closet?

Griffin: Uh-huh. About how many horses worth is it? Yeah. And I look at your pants. Like, you've got 16 pairs of pants. That's eight horses. We'd need to go out there, and we'd need to go acquire, um, more shoes. Approximately 16 more. A lot—it's—24 shoes.

Rachel: [laughs] Rothy's are stylish, sustainable, comfortable, washable, really all-in-one pair of shoes. They're perfect flats for life on the go. Playful designs add fun pops of color. Perk up every outfit while still looking polished and professional.

I have this like, black pair that they have this little like, gold thread woven through, and it's just like... it's like a little classy and sassy, y'know?

Griffin: Mm-hmm. In equal measures.

Rachel: Uh, they're also made from repurposed plastic water bottles, so you can feel good about it. Y'know? It's like, I'm not just lookin' sharp, I'm savin' the world.

Griffin: Uh-huh. One shoe at a time.

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

Griffin: Have a message for Lauren, and it's from Kathleen, who says, "Howdy, Lauren! I love you so much, and I have no idea where I would be in college without you. You have introduced me to this sweet, sweet family, and they have almost become a personality trait of mine at this point. I cannot wait to be real life adults in the next year. But also, I wish I could live with you forever. Anyways, gig'em and whoop and stuff."

Rachel: Ooh, I wonder if they're Texas A&M folks!

Griffin: Is that what that means?

Rachel: That's like, an A&M thing.

Griffin: Is yelling 'whoop'?

Rachel: I don't know, but I know that—I don't know if other places gig, but I know that A&M gigs.

Griffin: Hm. Well, uh... [laughs] I mean, get 'em—go get 'em... big Texas.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [laughing]

Griffin: Oh yeah! Stomp the other team. They're not us. That's what they like to say. Stomp the other team! They're not us! We're Big Texas!

Rachel: [laughs] Can I read the next personal message?

Griffin: Uh-huh, you may. Have I intimidated you?

Rachel: A little bit, yeah.

Griffin: With my Big Texas energy?

Rachel: You know me. I'm not a sportsman like you.

Griffin: Nah, not like me.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. This message is for Laura. It is from Alex. "Laura, you are my most wonderful thing, my favorite weirdo. You are the strongest, funniest, best woman I know. Your laugh is magic. Your smile is my joy. I'm so lucky to spend my life with the wonder that is you, and I hope that hearing this message fills you with some wonder of your own. You deserve it all. I love you all the time, every day."

Griffin: [sings] Every day! Lift me up, love! Lift me up, love! Lift Laura and Alex up, love! Every day! Up and down town!

Rachel: Seeing Griffin McElroy do Dave Matthews karaoke...

Griffin: [singing gibberish]

Rachel: ... is a life changing experience. And it's made me...

Griffin: [singing gibberish]

Rachel: ... the way I am today.

Griffin: [singing gibberish]

Rachel: There it is. Sometimes, if I consume a lot of food in the presence of Griffin, I will find new ways to say that statement. Specifically...

Griffin: [laughing]

Rachel: ... so that he doesn't respond with his Dave Matthews.

Griffin: But I'll find a way to sneak it in there.

Rachel: I'll be like, "Oh, I'm so full from the food I consumed."

Griffin: [singing gibberish]

Rachel: Mm-hmm. [laughs]

[music plays]

Helen: Hey, J. Keith?

J. Keith: Hey, Helen. I hear you have a true false quiz you want me to finish.

Helen: I do! Here we begin. We host a trivia game show podcast on the Max Fun network called Go Fact Yourself.

J. Keith: True!

Helen: Correct! The show is all about celebrity guests answering trivia questions about things J. Keith enjoys.

J. Keith: False. We sometimes don't talk about baseball or cats.

Helen: Thank god. It's questions about things *they* enjoy. Next, we bring on surprise experts every episode.

J. Keith: True!

Helen: Correct! Final question – it’s just the two of us sitting alone with these guests.

J. Keith: False.

Helen: Correct! We have a live audience at the Angel City Brewery!

[small audience cheering]

Helen: See?

[ding]

Helen: You can hear Go Fact Yourself every first and third Friday of the month, and if you don’t listen, you can Go Fact Yourself!

J. Keith: True!

[music ends]

Griffin: Tell you about my second thing.

Rachel: Please do.

Griffin: My second thing is, uh, a wild one. I am surprised that I'm talking about it. Uh, but I got kind of into Minecraft. And I never thought that, uh, I would experience this again. It came out in like, 2009 originally, which is 11 frickin’ years ago.

And I played it back when it came out, because like, all the, like, gaming people were talking about it. Uh, about this weird sort of like... voxel based, like, cuboid, like, crafting game? I was like, “Oh, that sounds neat.” And so, I played it for a while. I'd dip in over the course of maybe like, a year. I

would just like, check in every now and then. And then I stopped for a *decade*.

And then, it ended up being like, the only game that, uh, every child plays, and how also, like, the next generation of, uh, computer programmers and shit are like, using to learn stuff. And it's the biggest game ever, and I like, completely just sort of ignored it, or just occasionally watched it from afar.

But then, this week, I was looking for something to play on Switch. I was like, "I'll get that." I opened up my own, like, server, and like, put out a code for it, and said, "Hey, everybody, let's all hop in this and let's see what happens." And like, after a week of that, I was like, "Oh, now I get why people enjoy this game!" 'Cause it's a really special kind of thing.

How much do you know about like, Minecraft?

Rachel: I mean, I know that there's like, a little pickaxe, and that you're like, building stuff. And that a lot of people will make like, little houses or fortresses and stuff. I don't really know what happens beyond the building.

Griffin: Mmm, interesting. I mean, it is mostly about the building. Uh, but there's a lot of other stuff that like... and most of the stuff beyond the building is like, what has been added to this game in the last ten years that I wasn't necessarily aware of.

I should mention that the—one of the co-creators of the game is a real premium shithead. But he has been like, more or less bought out from the property at this point, so... y'know, good riddance. Uh, it's—you make stuff, right? There are little—the basic loop can be summarized as this.

You start out, you have nothing, you're in this big, randomly generated world. You see a tree. You punch the tree to get wood that you then can turn into a wooden pickaxe that you can use to get stone, that you can use to make a stone axe, and now it's faster and better. And then you can cut down trees faster, and get more wood. And it's sort of just about like, y'know, acquiring stuff to make more stuff. That's basically it.

But... there's a lot of other wild shit going on, uh, that they have added since the game came out. So like, they added a whole sort of agriculture update, where now you can farm, and you can create a ranch where you breed animals, and y'know, shear sheep for their wool that you can dye and put into a loom and weave into different sort of things.

The big thing, and I think the reason that it is such a like, big thing for STEM, is that one of the updates added a thing called redstone, which essentially lets you create, like, circuitry. It lets you create, um, basic sort of programming systems. Like, uh, and/or gates.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And y'know, it starts off with fairly basic stuff like that, but you can also use it in tandem with a bunch of other stuff, and make actual, like, computers. You can make actual—from something as simple as like, a calculator, to something like, really complex. Like a music synthesizer, using just stuff inside of Minecraft.

And seeing all that stuff, and seeing like, being actually inside of this thing that I've kind of watched from afar, kind of knowing that it was turning into something weird... uh, I didn't really appreciate it until I got into it, and also got into it in this, uh, y'know, online world that has been populated by, so far, really chill people making completely buckwild shit, uh, in this Realm, is what it's called.

And every time I dip in, I walk in, and it's like, somebody's made a 40 foot high Bart Simpson. That's pretty good.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Somebody made one of the first features in this Realm, called Goodtown, was just a museum of dirt, where they showed off some of their favorite dirt that they have.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, I had a horse, and I named him The Mayor, and then he died, and I let everybody know about it, and then, next time I logged in, somebody had built me like, a whole stable with new horses. New Mayors that I could choose from.

Rachel: [laughing quietly]

Griffin: Uh... And I recognize, that's probably not everybody's experience playing Minecraft.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But it's like, uh... The last time I played this game, it was this completely other thing, right? It was this like... thing that started a fire that made this entire new genre of crafting survival games, that like, now there's dozens and dozens and dozens and hundreds of.

And it is a really unique experience to come back to it after, no joke, almost ten years of not playing it, and... it is like... just something else. It is something huge and complex and inscrutable, but like, kind of... when played in the right, like, circumstances with the right people, like, kind of magical. Like, kind of amazing.

And I think, as somebody who like, y'know, covered the games industry professionally for over a decade, like... it is always such a like, neat, satisfying experience to have that kind of awakening onto like, having a thing that you wrote about without barely understanding, to like, a thing that you are now sort of engrossed in, and finally having the context of like, "Oh, shit," like, "This is why every kid likes this game. This is why everybody plays this game."

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Uh, and it's... I don't know, I'm having a lot of fun.

Rachel: That is cool, when you think about like, kids being into it. That it is, like... more constructive than destructive. Y'know?

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: I feel like a lot of games are built around this idea of destroying things. And I feel like Minecraft seems more about creating, which is kind of cool.

Griffin: It is cool! It is like a—and also, like, no joke, from a, uh, the like, STEM teaching perspective, like... I think I have a broader understanding of why it is a valuable tool for that.

When I was a little kid, I, uh... we had QBasic on our computer. Which I think everybody had, if you had Windows. And it was just this like, programming language that wasn't used by a whole lot of stuff, but it taught you like, the basics. It was literally like the ten, print, "Hey, what's up?" And then, 20, go to ten. So it would just say, "Hey, what's up? What's up? What's up? What's up?"

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: But I like, learned how to use it. But that's like, all I had. I didn't know how to like, make any visuals. I would just do like, text based choose your own adventure games and stuff like that.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: If I had something like this back then? Like... I would've been so deep in it.

Rachel: So why do you think it's so addictive? Like, why are people so like, compulsive about it?

Griffin: Because of that loop that I described. Punch a tree, get the wood, turn the wood into an axe to make a stronger axe to cut down the tree faster... repeat that... infinity times. Like, repeat that one concept of getting stuff to create cool shit, but also, to facilitate the easier or more productive getting of future stuff.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: That loop is like, really, very, very, very compelling, and it's compelling pretty much instantly. Like, as soon as you make, like, your first thing, you have now seen what is the big thing. Like, the big hook for this game. And it will just sort of sink its teeth into you, like, right away. It's not like people will play the game for a couple hours and be like, "Eh, I don't get it," and bounce off.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You get it, and then it just keeps kind of revealing itself to you, if you keep like, peeling back the layers. Uh, it's a cool game, and I hope that the—this world stays cool for a while, and doesn't get just like, completely, y'know, carpet bombed by some sad weirdo.

Rachel: [laughs] I mean, you could say that about the real world, too, y'know?

Griffin: You could say that about the real world, too. That's true.

Rachel: Do you want to hear my second thing?

Griffin: Please!

Rachel: My second thing is bloopers.

Griffin: [laughs] I love these things!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: They did it wrong!

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughing]

Griffin: They fucked up.

Rachel: Um... I... I—y'know, when DVDs first came out...

Griffin: Oh, yeah.

Rachel: It's the first thing I look for, man. Is that gag reel there? I gotta see that gag reel.

Griffin: Did you... I have to ask this. My first exposure to bloopers – because again, like Rachel said, wasn't really a thing that you could get on a lot of stuff, except at the end of Jackie Chan movies. Where you just see his reel of being horribly, horribly injured.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But, we had a cassette tape, a VHS cassette, of MST3K bloopers, that I feel like was on the store, and like, everybody who bought VHSs from them, like, had it.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: We had the whole set, and I watched that bloopers tape like, so many fuckin' times. When I was like, six. Like, I did not get most of it.

Rachel: Just like, puppet pieces fallin' off.

Griffin: Yes, literally! Just like, Tom Crow's eyeballs, like, falling out. Yeah.

Rachel: You mean Tom Servo? Or Crow?

Griffin: Tom Servo. Yes. [laughs] I've combined them into one. Well, that's what we call the ship in, uh, on the very active MST3K online forums.

Rachel: Oh, oh, yeah. Mm-hmm. What's your username on that?

Griffin: Uh, Tom... Tom... well, Tom Riddle, uhh... 69.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: That's, uh... but it's the same one I use for the Potterverse.

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughing] Um, there is—there's actually—there is a rich history to bloopers, which I was delighted to see. And I'm speaking specifically about like, the US history of bloopers. I know that there is a whole UK history of bloopers as well.

Griffin: Except they call them... [in a British accent] Whoopsies!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: [in a British accent] Wuh-ohs! Ahh, a real cockup!

Rachel: The term 'blooper' was popularized in the '50s and '60s in a series of albums produced by Kermit Schaefer, entitled, "Pardon My Blooper."

Griffin: [bursts into laughter] What was—Kermit Schaefer?

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Mr. Schaefer, I do not believe I will!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: When put in that context, the word 'blooper' becomes a foul thing.

Rachel: Uh, it was, uh, a mixture of actual recordings of errors from TV and radio broadcasts and recreations. So I guess they would take documented bloopers and recreate them.

Griffin: Oh my god.

Rachel: Uh, Schaefer also transcribed many bloopers into a series of books that he published, up until his death in 1979.

Griffin: Blooper books?

Rachel: So you could just open the book and be like, "Oh, he meant to say this, but then he didn't!"

Griffin: Yeah, and then Johnny Carson... his belt came undone.

Rachel: [laughs] Wuh-whoa.

Griffin: And it was so—guys. It was so frickin' funny. You had to—I guess you had to be there.

Rachel: Um, in the '80s is when Dick Clark revived the bloopers concept for a series of specials on NBC called TV Censored Bloopers. Do you remember this?

Griffin: Oh yeah, I remember those.

Rachel: Yeah. Um, it was a weekly series from 1984 to 1992, cohosted by Clark and Ed McMahon. Uh, and then followed by more specials that appeared on ABC irregularly until 2004.

I remember just kind of turning on TV and being like, "Oh. This is a surprise."

Griffin: [laughs]

Rachel: Seemed like there was no regular schedule for these specials. However, there is a early, early history of bloopers, and this is... this is delightful. Uh, 1930s radio broadcaster, Harry von Zell, who accidentally referred to then US president, Herbert Hoover, as Hoobert Heaver during an introduction. [laughs]

Griffin: [snorts] Hoobert Heaver!

Rachel: Uh-huh. [laughing]

Griffin: Is so good. God, I wish that was one of our presidents was Hoobert Heaver.

Rachel: [laughing] That should be your username in your blooper forum that you're in!

Griffin: Hoobert Heaver.

Rachel: Hoobert Heaver. I bet there's a bunch of them already, though.

Griffin: Yeah, prolly.

Rachel: Uh, a similar situation occurred decades later when then new president, Gerald Ford, was introduced as Gerald Smith, which was the same name as an American fascist leader from the 1930s.

Griffin: Yeah, that one's not so much of a gut buster.

Rachel: Kind of a—kind of a rough blooper, there. But see, we became familiar with them – at least, I did – in the '90s sitcoms, like Fresh Prince of Bel Air and Home Improvement, in the closing credits.

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah, and then, I feel like, it's taken on a completely different shape now, with the, uh... mostly like, NBC sitcom blooper reel.

Rachel: Yeah. You can find a lot of that on YouTube. So like, Parks and Rec, and The Office, Friends, Arrested Development...

Griffin: There is one Parks and Rec blooper reel that I watch... like, semi-annually. Like, I watch it a lot. It's the one where Andy throws the briefcase.

Rachel: Oh, and like—yeah.

Griffin: He like—it's like they steal a briefcase from like, a genealogy center or something like that, and uh...

Rachel: He knocks out a light or something?

Griffin: Rob Lowe tells him to throw it back, and so he just literally launches it towards the back of the room, and it smashes a light switch, and it breaks the lights in the room, and everybody's like, "Uh oh. That's not gonna be easy to fix."

Rachel: [laughs] Apparently – I didn't know about this, and you might, 'cause you're more knowledgeable about this culture. Uh, Star Trek produced many famous outtakes, which were shown at gatherings, and have been extensively bootlegged.

Griffin: Oh!

Rachel: You know about this?

Griffin: No. But I'm not a... y'know...

Rachel: Just thought maybe, y'know, your people...

Griffin: Well, I'm a big strong muscular jock.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh. Um, this—this was more of a common thing for like, kind of cast party sake. Apparently, there was a cast wrap party for Peter Jackson's Lord of the Rings, and partygoers had access to a gag reel, which has never been released to the public.

Griffin: Oh shit!

Rachel: It's very coveted.

Griffin: I mean, there's a lot of like, skull and bones, like, secret society shit around those movies.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like all their little secret tattoos.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: They did. The Fellowship, all nine of them, got little secret tattoos.

Rachel: Really?

Griffin: So fresh.

Rachel: Uh... [laughs] Um, yeah. So, a lot of... a lot of movies used to do this just for kind of internal purposes, like cast and crew. And now, it's more of a thing you can see. And then, even like in animated movies now, you'll see a lot of like, Pixar movies will do gag reels at the end.

Griffin: Those weird me out. Those, I don't like.

Rachel: It's a little strange. It's a little intentional. Little heavy handed.

Griffin: I mean... it's a computer animated product. It's not only intentional – it costs them like, \$300 million to make each one. Like, it's... it's... yeah, it weirds me out a little bit.

Rachel: There are a lot of websites, too, that like, capture, uh, movies where they maintain that the blooper reel is actually better than the film itself. Which happens a lot when you get like, a lot of really funny comedians and really bad movies. [laughs]

Griffin: Oh, yeah. I mean, there was the whole, like, all the Judd Apatow movies had... I remember, 'cause I had like, the DVDs of all of them, 'cause I was like, obsessed in college.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Uh, where they would have the blooper reels, but they would also have the line-o-ramas, where it would be...

Rachel: Oh, just over and over again.

Griffin: Just improvised, just the same, like, uh—

Rachel: Like Anchorman has a lot of those, too.

Griffin: Anchorman. I mean, Anchorman had so many of those that they made a second movie out of... out of... I forget, like, that that was a thing, but like, I remember there's a version of that movie you could buy at Best Buy, that it was literally just a completely different movie. Like, it was just a completely different—

Rachel: Whoa, I didn't know that!

Griffin: With like, a completely different plot line. I may be misremembering this, but like, they had so much extra, like, shit from that movie that they made a whole 'nother movie out of it.

Hey, can I tell you... I'm gonna watch—I wanna watch nothing but bloopers right now. It's like, you've got me. You've stuck me with the bug. Uh, here's some submissions from our friends at home.

Rachel: Okay.

Griffin: Caroline says, "My wonderful thing this week is adopting animals from a shelter. I volunteer with dogs at a local shelter, and I got to see how they change, get confident, and learn to trust humans during their time at the shelter, and how happy they are when they leave with their new family. Bonus – my boyfriend and I just adopted a six year old, perfect, soft orange boy cat named Jarvis from the same shelter."

Rachel: Oh, that's so nice.

Griffin: That's a good cat. That's a good cat name. And I wish you the best. I wish you the best. Uh, orange cat, too, is like, good. 'Cause that's what the funny Garfield looks like.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh. And Heathcliff! Y'know, people forget about Heathcliff.

Griffin: I swore I'd never forget about Heathcliff, but here I go. Slippin' on Heathcliff. Delaney says, "I live in Ohio, west of Cleveland, where corn is a big deal. We have a whole festival devoted to it, complete with three corn mascots." And Rachel... these are... those mascots.

Rachel: Oh, there's a candy corn. There's a... a cob corn, and then there's a... what I think is a popcorn, but looks a little bit like Lambchop from Lambchop's Sing Along.

Griffin: And hey, this is Griffin with my own sort of editorialization. They're all ghoulish and terrifying.

Rachel: [laughs] I think they're friendly! They're all smilin' real big.

Griffin: I think the corn cob is friendly. The corn cob looks like the corn cob knows how to party. The candy corn looks fucking dead inside, and the popcorn has no right to like, exist in its current state.

Rachel: Can people find this online, or was this sent to us specifically?

Griffin: Maybe. Uh, just Google Corn Fest. Ohio Corn Fest. Maybe you can find it. Anyway, Delaney adds, "Looking at these pictures now, I'm kind of surprised I wasn't scared of them as a kid. Nonetheless, I have so many fond memories of the Corn Fest, and went every year growing up. It wasn't summer without it."

Rachel: I will admit that candy corn... that candy corn is a little scary.

Griffin: The candy corn is planning something. My demise.

Rachel: Yeah, the eyes are kind of off to the side, like...

Griffin: Yes. It's thinking about something. The corn also won't look you—the corn cob won't look you directly in the eyes.

Rachel: No.

Griffin: The corn cob is looking upwards at Jesus in heaven, saying like...

Rachel: [laughs] Soon.

Griffin: This is how you doom me. 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. And hey, thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network.

Rachel: Yeah, thank you Maximum Fun. I mentioned it earlier, but if you are interested in wrestling, Tights and Fights is a great podcast for you to check out on the Maximum Fun network.

Griffin: Yeah, go do that immediately. Don't make me remind you. Don't make me tell you twice. Or else I'm gonna getcha! And I'm gonna slam ya! I'm gonna—[laughs] And I'm gonna slam ya up into the... ceiling tiles!

Rachel: [laughing]

Griffin: Okay, baby!

Rachel: That's the cutest thing I've ever seen.

[theme music plays]

MaximumFun.org
Comedy and culture.
Artist owned.
Audience supported.