

Wonderful! 123: Nasty Jupiter

Published March 4th, 2020

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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: This is the podcast that, um, that everyone's talking about. Uh, it was recently profiled in, uh, New Yorker, and um...

Rachel: Uh-huh?

Griffin: Smart people...

Rachel: Business Insider.

Griffin: Business Insider had it. Business Outsider was all over it. There's just—

Rachel: We got that prize.

Griffin: We got the big prize from the Publisher's Clearing House. We won the McDonald's Monopoly game. We're doing—we're just—we're blowin' up right now.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: We're blowin' up right now.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: We're blowin' up right now.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I wanted to see if you'd say yeah a third time. And um, y'know, we're so glad that you're goin' on this journey with us. Now, does that mean that we're not gonna take part in the MaxFunDrive later this month? No. We are going to do that, because we still need your support in a big way. Um, but y'know, it—things are changing around here. Rachel's got a big, gold tooth now. She looks like the bad guy in Home Alone.

Rachel: And Griffin, as you all know, or may know, if you follow his other shows, likes to rip his clothes apart while he is recording, and that's... y'know, that's a hard habit to keep up without your support.

Griffin: Runs the tally up, for sure. Hey, do you have any small wonders?

Rachel: I do, actually! I thought about making this a big wonder, but I figured I would keep it small and talk about the Zamboni driver that filled in for the goaltender.

Griffin: Oh, yes! Unbelievable! I didn't read the story. I just saw the headlines.

Rachel: Uh, the Carolina Hurricanes, both their goaltenders got injured during a game in February. And they had nobody else to back them up. It so happened that the Zamboni driver had a history of playing goal. He actually had a pretty successful hockey career, and then he needed a kidney transplant, and his career got derailed. And so, he was helping the Toronto Marlies, which is an affiliate team.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: He served as their practice goaltender. So I think they knew, like, oh, he'd be able to do this. And so, he came in around the third period. They had a 3-1 lead when he entered.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And he stopped eight of ten shots. And so, they ended up winning 6-3. So Carolina, clearly the dominant team of this game.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But he also – eight of ten shots!

Griffin: That's pretty good, man!

Rachel: Not bad for a man that was in his 40s and doesn't play goal.

Griffin: That is so good.

Rachel: So because, I guess, he played this role, he gets, per NHL rules, \$500.

Griffin: Jesus! [laughs]

Rachel: [laughs] And he's allowed to keep his jersey.

Griffin: Okay. How—

Rachel: Very cas [short for casual], right?

Griffin: Thanks, NHL! Yeah! That's so nice of you. Uh, I'm gonna say, uh, The Worst Idea of All Time podcast.

Rachel: Oh, that's nice.

Griffin: These are our friends and cohosts on the 'Til Death Do us Blart show, but they have started doing a miniseries. Or I guess, wrapped it up, 'cause it was a miniseries called My Week with Cats where they watched the Cats movie every day for a week, and I just dipped back into that. And sweet god, it's still, like—it still makes me laugh very hard, this show. These

two boys hurt themselves with bad movies, and I enjoy hearing that happen a great deal.

Rachel: And it's more timely than some of their previous ventures, which were...

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: ... less focused on movies that are currently...

Griffin: Yes, exactly.

Rachel: ... a phenomenon.

Griffin: Hey, you go first this week. What do you got?

Rachel: Oh, great! Um, this actually—so, we are recording some of these batched, because we are about to travel.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And so, I was kind of struggling to come up with things, and so, I reached out to my good friends, one of which, uh, our friend, Grace, who is um, just a brilliant young woman. And she suggested... Jupiter.

Griffin: The planet?

Rachel: Yes, the planet! She's like, "Jupiter's a super cool planet. You should look into it."

Griffin: Um, yeah. I mean, it's big.

Rachel: It's real big!

Griffin: You can't fuckin' beat it for size, right? It's so big.

Rachel: Yeah. It's a big guy.

Griffin: Do you have any stats about how big it is, hun?

Rachel: Oh, of course I do. Were you trying to set me up right there?

Griffin: Yeah, a little bit.

Rachel: [laughs] It is 318 times as massive as earth.

Griffin: Ooh, wow, that's a—that scares me to think about.

Rachel: If you combine all the planets, it is still two and a half times more massive.

Griffin: Nice try, guys, but Jupiter wins.

Rachel: Real big guy. It takes only ten hours to complete a full rotation on its axis.

Griffin: The—what?!

Rachel: So not only is it like, super big, it's real fast, too.

Griffin: It's spinning so fast!

Rachel: I know! [laughs] I think it—I didn't read this. This is why my friend Grace suggested it. She said that it like, keeps our planet safe from a lot of like, asteroids and meteors and stuff, because it pulls so much energy towards it.

Griffin: Interesting!

Rachel: Yeah. It is not only big and fast, it is the third brightest object in the solar system after Venus and the moon. So, you've probably seen Jupiter in the sky and not realized that's what you were looking at.

Griffin: Yeah. I hate to... jump in here and disagree with science... but I think the sun is one of the brightest things in our solar system.

Rachel: I mean, probably, yeah. But you can't see the sun at night, can you?

Griffin: Well, yeah, that's a good point, hun. Didn't think about that.

Rachel: [laughs] Uh, Jupiter also has a ring system. So Saturn gets all the credit for the rings. Jupiter has them, too.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: They're pretty faint.

Griffin: Yeah. Kind of gassy, right? It's a gassy planet.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, it's a gassy thing. It's like, material that was ejected by moons.

Griffin: Eugh.

Rachel: That just kind of orbits.

Griffin: Moon dook. Just floatin' around, and that's gross, Jupiter. You nasty.

Rachel: [laughs] Speaking of moons, Jupiter has 67 confirmed moons.

Griffin: I thought it was like, in the 70s. Did it lose a few moons?

Rachel: Well, 67 *confirmed* moons. Like, as of... as of now.

Griffin: Io is one of them.

Rachel: Oh, I didn't write—did you think maybe I knew all the moons?
[laughs]

Griffin: Titan I think is one of them?

Rachel: Sure. [laughs]

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Um, it has over 200 natural satellites orbiting it. So maybe that's why.

Griffin: Whoa. Okay, yeah.

Rachel: Some of them are moons, some of them aren't. Do I know what makes something a moon? I don't.

Griffin: No, but the rest of them, I think we can agree, is just space trash.

Rachel: It is spinning so rapidly, that it is flattened out a little bit as its pulls and bulging at the equator. So it's not like, super round.

Griffin: Ooh. Got kind of a dummy thicc planet a little bit.

Rachel: Yeah. It's thick in the middle. [laughs]

Griffin: Alright, I like this!

Rachel: Uh, the last time we saw Jupiter, NASA's New Horizons made a fly by in 2007. So it's been a little while. Who knows what's going on up there?

Griffin: Yeah, a lot can change in 13 years. Gosh, I mean, what were we doing in 2007? Y'know, it was a different time for all of us.

Rachel: Yeah, I was still in Chicago.

Griffin: You were still in Chicago.

Rachel: You were in college?

Griffin: I was in... college, yes. I was in college. This was 2007, so this was like... George Bush was president. Y'know what I mean? Like, shit was wild.

Rachel: Pretty sure the song, Drops of Jupiter, had been out for a long time by then.

Griffin: Yeah. Maybe not, actually. Who knows. That song feels immortal in a way that I really appreciate.

Rachel: [laughs] I think that's all I want to say about Jupiter. I just think, uh, there's a lot we don't know about up there.

Griffin: Mm-hmm.

Rachel: And I've never been particularly a space person.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Y'know? I've never had a desire to go into space. Um, I've never been particularly fascinated with it. Didn't realize how big Jupiter was out there. Got me kind of interested in space more.

Griffin: It's one of the things I remember, like... [sighs] In school, talking about the scale of different, like, celestial bodies, where like, the thing was like, "Oh man, earth can fit into the sun like, 1.5 million times!" And like, it was something like, you can fit 13 earths in Jupiter. Something. Something like that. But that doesn't seem correct. I think I just made that number up.

Rachel: Well, so, there's—for example, so there is a red spot on Jupiter.

Griffin: Yeah. Its butthole.

Rachel: [pause] [laughs]

Griffin: That's what I always—every time I look up at it, I'm like...

Rachel: Oh yeah?

Griffin: Ew. Jupiter! That's not—that's gross, Jupiter. Put that away.

Rachel: What would you call its rings, then? If the red spot... is it like its um... its belt, maybe?

Griffin: Yeah, that's its belt.

Rachel: Okay. Uh, so that red spot can contain two or three planets the size of earth in its diameter. So just that red spot alone.

Griffin: And maybe it does. We've never gotten in there.

Rachel: Right?

Griffin: But maybe a couple—maybe we used to have like, 12 planets in the solar system, and Jupiter ate it all up.

Rachel: Oh, that's a good point.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: There was actually—I saw a line that if um... if Jupiter were more dense, it would start pulling in on itself.

Griffin: Oh, then, Jupiter, stop.

Rachel: Yeah, right?

Griffin: Jupiter, stop. You're good, like, as is. I love you. You're our big, helpful friend keeping us safe, I guess, from uh, asteroids and the like. But please calm down, because that would be bad, if you imploded.

Rachel: Yeah. Like, don't change a thing.

Griffin: Don't change a thing. Like—

Rachel: Don't slim down.

Griffin: No! God, no. Don't—

Rachel: Just stay right as you are.

Griffin: Right as you are is really, really good. Just maybe put that butthole away.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: People are looking. Maybe you don't know this, 'cause you're wicked far away, but we've invented telescopes. So we can see that nasty thing. Like, we know what you're doing up there. One day, Saturn's gonna be like, "Oh shit, Jupiter, I think they got telescopes." And Jupiter'll be like, "Oh my god."

Rachel: This whole time...

Griffin: "This whole time, my bung's been just out. Man..."

Rachel: Hey, what's your first thing?

Griffin: My first thing is the greatest breakup song of all time. Wait, weird. That felt very familiar. I feel like we've done a song where we said like, "Oh, that's the greatest breakup song of all time." Like, we've talked about what—I can't remember what it was.

Anyway, it's A Case of You by Joni Mitchell.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: I don't think we've talked about Joni Mitchell on the show before.

Rachel: No, we've referenced her a lot, though.

Griffin: Right, because we talked about Judee Sill, and so like—

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: It's a pretty obvious comparison there. But uh, the album, Blue, by Joni Mitchell is like, front to back, one of the best albums I think ever made.

Rachel: Yeah. It's one of the like—it's one of my first, like, treasured record albums that I got.

Griffin: Uh, and I was sort of a late comer to it. But this song, A Case of You, is off that album, and it is like, widely regarded as one of her like, greatest song writing accomplishments. I am a, uh, just hilariously uncultured fella, and this was especially true before I like, moved to Austin and uh...

Rachel: And met me and changed your life. I made you so much better.

Griffin: I met Rachel and got turned cool. The first time I heard this song was actually at a concert in Chicago from the Decemberists.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: Uh, and Colin Meloy did just a solo acoustic cover of it, after the encore, and it was like, so great. I was like, "Man, this song kicks ass! The Decemberists at it again with another big hit!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, and then I learned it was a cover, and that is like, when I got super into Joni Mitchell. Like, that year, living in Chicago, because man, that's good wintertime music, too. Holy shit.

Uh, I just—I... this song is so gorgeous, right? Musically speaking, we can start there. Like, it is just these really rich guitars, like, layers and layers of guitars, and steel guitars, and just like, gentle sort of alt percussion tapping. And y'know, Joni Mitchell's voice just like, really explores the space, which is like, a very Joni Mitchell thing. Just like, launching her pitch, like, just all over.

If you've never heard it before, I'm gonna play a little bit of it, which is kind of tough. I don't know which part to play, because it's a very efficient song, and all of it is really good, but here's a little bit of A Case of You.

[‘A Case of You’ by Joni Mitchell plays]

Griffin: So like, the music is kind of sad and lovely in a really nice way. Like, it's among my favorite songs of hers, just because of that.

Rachel: Is it weird that I never really realized it's a break up song?

Griffin: Uh, well, it's funny, because I was listening to our wedding playlist on Spotify, and it was on our wedding playlist. [laughs] But like, it super is a break up song. I don't know, maybe you could interpret it some other way.

But uh, the lyrics of this song, oh my god. Like, she's a brilliant lyricist, and I think she's firing all cylinders on this song. There is a sort of ongoing metaphor about sort of communion in this one. The chorus, obviously, is, "You're in my blood like holy wine, tastes so bitter and so sweet."

This idea of love being this like, visceral, physical thing, like, having it be embodied in that way, is such a, I think, powerful way of writing about love. And this is like, for me, the iconic thing about Joni Mitchell, is... if you read it like a break up song, which is how I do it, uh, there is a sort of like, humor to it as well.

Uh, just the first verse, it paints this image of like, somebody sitting at a bar by themselves, drawing a map of Canada on the back of a coaster, just like, in a dark bar, illuminated by blue TV screen light. And then just like, while they're doodling like that, like, absentmindedly drawing the face of a lost love... that is such a like, crystallized, like... such a clear image. Such a clear scene that she like, paints like that, and uh... it's like, the kind of thing that she is so fucking good at.

Rachel: Yeah, and you believe, like, she did or witness or happened to her. That's what's like, so authentic about Joni Mitchell is that like, anytime she sings anything, I'm like, "Oh, that must've actually happened to her."

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: And she's actually singing about it.

Griffin: And she has a quote about that. Uh, she was interviewed in Rolling Stone by Cameron Crowe, and she was talking about Blue. And she said, "The Blue album, there's hardly a dishonest note in the vocals. At that period of my life, I had no personal defenses. I felt like a cellophane wrapper on a pack of cigarettes. I felt like I had abso—" That's an amazing little turn of phrase that you just fuckin' dropped.

Rachel: Yeah, that she just like, pulled out in an interview! [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, "I felt like I had absolutely no secrets from the world, and I couldn't pretend in my life to be strong or to be happy. But the advantage of it in the music is that there were no defenses there, either."

So like, not only do you have to be a... a brilliant sort of, y'know, person, a poet, to create stuff like this, you also have to be like, extremely vulnerable, I think, to tap into the kind of stuff that this song taps into.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Uh, and... I mean, then you could get into the kind of difficult conversation of like, um... y'know, suffering and art, and like, the whole concept of...

Rachel: Yeah! I've been thinking about this a lot lately, because um, I found it a lot easier to be artistic when I was unhappier. [laughs]

Griffin: Sure. But on the receiving end of that, like, I think it is easy to say, um... uh, I think maybe we talked about this with Nick Drake, too. This idea of just like, yeah, he suffered so much, but the art that came out of it! Like, that is such a like, not human way of thinking about it.

Rachel: It's not that I don't believe that there is a way to create art from a happier place. I feel like it's something that like, you and your family members do all the time.

Griffin: Absolutely, yes. Yes.

Rachel: I just—I respect it even more, because I think it's like... it's difficult to be vulnerable when you are not feeling particularly vulnerable, I guess.

Griffin: Yeah, romanticizing somebody else's suffering for the art they create feels, like, gross to me. But like, doing it for yourself is like, a way of reclaiming that time. Like, reclaiming, uh, those like, shitty feelings that you had when you were feeling low.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I think that that's really... I don't know. Really strong. Uh, if you are not a Joni Mitchell fan, like, y'know, I was not until I heard The Decemberists cover her, like... this song, and I feel like, Blue as a whole, just like... listen to that front to back. It is such a like, good sampler, I feel like.

Rachel: Yeah! 'Cause I will say, like, she is an artist that was always kind of experimenting with her style. And so, you may find some of the later albums, like, not as pleasing.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But I feel like Blue is, um... you can recommend that to anyone.

Griffin: Yeah. Go uh... go dig it up. Dig it up from the bone yard. That's what she calls it.

Rachel: Oh yeah?

Griffin: She calls her body of work 'the bone yard.'

Rachel: So she would say like, a cellophane wrapper on cigarettes...

Griffin: Yeah. But also, come out to Joni's bone yard and listen to my tunes.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: My new mix tape. She's got a great SoundCloud. Can I steal you away?

Rachel: Please.

[ad break music plays]

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Griffin: Hey, I have a jumbotron message here. This one is for Daniel, and it is from Noah, who says, "Ever since our first date, you've always been my biggest wonder. I've loved getting to know you a little better every day. I'm honored that you've let me into your life, and I still get a little choked up when I remember that I got to marry you. Here's to many more snuggles with the dog, yummy drinks at Epcot, and a wonderful life with you."

Rachel: Mm, I love keeping that romance going post-wedding. Sometimes people are just like, "Welp, I'm done."

Griffin: No.

Rachel: Seems like these two...

Griffin: Not Daniel and Noah.

Rachel: ... keepin' it up.

Griffin: They're like, "Let's go get fucking faded at Epcot together and snuggle with that pup!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Into it.

Rachel: Can I read the next message?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: It is for Haley. It is from Dominic. "Haley, I love you more than I could ever put into words. Thank you for introducing me to this show and this good, good podcast family. With luck, we are listening to this one together while snuggled up with our cat, Oatmeal. I have no idea when this is being read, and if it means anything, I bought it the day before Valentine's Day."

Griffin: Does that mean any... does that... I guess so. It's close to the love day.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: That's the love day, right there.

Rachel: That's the love day!

Griffin: The message came out after love day, but that doesn't matter.

Rachel: I am so charmed by these lovely, loving jumbotrons.

Griffin: I love them too, but don't make cat oatmeal. That's inhumane!

Rachel: [laughs]

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Griffin: What's your second thing?

[pause]

Griffin: I mean, you don't have to get angry and punch the microphone about it! We've talked about—don't bring your rage into the studio, hun.

Rachel: That's where my passion comes from, Griffin.

Griffin: I know.

Rachel: You know how passionate I am when I'm raging.

Griffin: You create so much great art when you're furiously trashing the office.

Rachel: [laughs] This one, I think, is gonna be a fun one.

Griffin: Oh boy!

Rachel: Mnemonic devices.

Griffin: Okay! Yes.

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Yeah. It took me a second. I thought you were talking about onomatopoo-ea. Po—that's not how it's said, is it? Onomatopo...

Rachel: It's spelled that way, but people say onomatopoeia.

Griffin: Onomatopoe... why can't I say that word?!

Rachel: Get rid of the O.

Griffin: Onomatopoeia.

Rachel: There you go.

Griffin: Okay, sorry.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, mnemonic devices are uh, devices used for aiding memory. And they come in all sorts of forms, which I didn't really think about. I'm more familiar with the initials. Y'know?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: But there's all these different memory tricks that are considered demonic devices.

Griffin: Ooh. I think you may have just said demonic devices a little bit.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Which, that's cool. What's that mean?

Rachel: You can find it in Joni Mitchell's bone yard.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Uh, mnemonic devices are actually... I didn't realize, it goes back to philosophers, which surprised me a little bit. Like, to me, it just seems like a hack, y'know? Something you'd find on BuzzFeed.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But it's like something that... like, Plato and Aristotle were like, all up on.

Griffin: I believe it was Aristotle who invented 'My Very Energetic Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas.'

Rachel: Right? See, that's the thing about doing Jupiter is I was like, oh, this fits in!

Griffin: Fits right in there!

Rachel: Uh, there's this story... about a poet named, uh, Simonides in 5th century B.C., who is kind of credited as being one of the first ones to like, come up with a mnemonic device. But this is more of a visual thing.

So, initially, when mnemonic devices were kind of put together, it was a way to create a visual picture in your head, and then use that to remember something.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: So the story with him is that he was performing at a banquet hall. He left. The banquet hall was destroyed in like, an act of violence. And then, they couldn't identify the people that were killed during the destruction, and he was able to remember, using a visual picture...

Griffin: This is a horrific origin story for this!

Rachel: Yes. Yes. Um...

Griffin: That is not like My Very Energetic Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas!

Rachel: No. This was an idea that, by using locations and um, pictures in your head, you're able to remember things.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: It was only later... so, go forward until uh, like, the 15th century, when people started saying, "Hey, let's use letters of the alphabet." [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Um, and people that could do this were often viewed as like, sorcerers.

Griffin: [bursts into laughter]

Rachel: Which was a problem. So, there was a German poet named Konrad Celtes. He used letters of the alphabet for associations, rather than players. Um, he uh... kind of took off with this idea. And then, later in that century, there was a man named Petrus de Ravenna who brought such astonishment in Italy through these mnemonic devices that he was believed to be a necromancer.

Griffin: This is—guys?

Rachel: So people would demonstrate this thing, like, "Hey, I've created this device. Ask me these questions, let me show you I can do it." And then, everyone's like, "You are evil."

Griffin: Okay, so it's just, their incredible memory recall is why they thought they were a sorcerer, not the fact that they could create—like, look at a list of objects, and then, combine the first letters of all the object names, and then come up with a mnemonic device?

Rachel: No, it was like, the demonstration of it.

Griffin: That's so wild! Why is that sorcery?!

Rachel: In 16th century, Lambert Schenkle, who taught mnemonics to people in France, Italy, and Germany, um, demonstrated his ability and was denounced as a sorcerer.

Griffin: Okay. Alright. I guess.

Rachel: [laughs] So, here are some of the other mnemonics. So, the first letter thing is the one that a lot of us know.

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: There's also the idea of like, music mnemonics, like the ABCs. Like, you create a song, and it helps people remember the alphabet.

Griffin: Yeah, I guess so. By the way, I had Henry sing it to me this morning in the car. He wanted songs, and so, he wanted, uh, number songs. So I did a number song, and then he was like, "I'll do a letter song." And I was like, "Good." And it was so fucking dope.

Rachel: Does he still do... up to G?

Griffin: He does, [sings] "A, B, C, D... F and G..." And then he was like, [sings] "Spider Man... go on vacation. Get on boat, one horse open sleigh."

Rachel: [laughs] That's incredible.

Griffin: It's a really good song.

Rachel: Um, and then—

Griffin: I mean, he doesn't know his letters. So like, we should—

Rachel: No, he doesn't. He's three, though.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: He's got time. Uh, there are a lot of mnemonics with um... letters and, uh... that I just—I never knew before. Like, for all the Great Lakes, people learn HOMES.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: Did you know this? I feel like I never had to learn the Great Lakes.

Griffin: Yeah. Huron, Ontario, uh, Michigan, Erie, and... oh man! Do I—oh my god.

Rachel: Superior.

Griffin: Superior! Yeah. That's embarrassing.

Rachel: Yeah. I don't think I ever had to learn the Great Lakes.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Uh, Roy G. Biv.

Griffin: Roy, oh yeah. Of course.

Rachel: Uh, there are a lot for math.

Griffin: Oh yeah!

Rachel: Do you remember Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally?

Griffin: Sally, yeah.

Rachel: Do you remember FOIL?

Griffin: Uh... oh, First Outside, Inside Last?

Rachel: Like a—yeah! Mm-hmm. And then there are some for foreign languages that I thought you would like.

Griffin: Ooh!

Rachel: So apparently, to remember command verbs in the you/tu form in Spanish, people say, "Vin Diesel Has Ten Weapons."

Griffin: [bursts into laughter]

Rachel: I don't know enough about Spanish to like, know what all those stand for.

Griffin: Vin Diesel... Has Ten Weapons?

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I mean, and not only is it a good mnemonic device... it's true.

Rachel: It's definitely true. At least ten.

Griffin: At least ten weapons. On him. At all times.

Rachel: Uh, in music, the lines of the staff, Every Good Boy Does Fine.

Griffin: Oh, yeah. Uh...

Rachel: In between that is FACE.

Griffin: Uh, when I was taking piano classes last year, and starting from like, basically the beginning, it would be so embarrassing. But like, my teacher would point at a note on a scale and be like, "What's that?" And I'd be like... "All cars eat gas... oh, well, that's a G right there!"

Rachel: [laughs] Oh yeah, 'cause that's for piano.

Griffin: Well, that's the bass clef. The bass clef has the different set of things. Yes.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, that's fun, babe! I don't like that they were thought of as sorcerers, but it is a kind of magical power, if you think about it.

Rachel: I find it so useful. I like... um, I have a really bad memory. It's always been really bad. Like, I remember, in fifth grade, we had to memorize all the presidents, and I just couldn't do it. And I would watch all these kids get up there, because the teacher had a lot of time to kill, and had each person get up and recite all of them in front of us for like, a week. And I just watched everybody do it, and then I got up there, and I just stalled out, man.

Griffin: I remember, there was a game show. I don't remember what it was called, because I think there were a few game shows like this, where uh, for a million dollars, uh, a contestant would be challenged to do something, like, impossible. And they would give them a month or so to like, prepare.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: And one of the episodes was uh, doing like, the first hundred digits of pi. And they brought the person into the studio, gave them that challenge, sent them away for a month, and then like, the rest of the episode just kind of focused on what they had to do to memorize the first hundred digits of pi.

Uh, and like, the number of mnemonic devices that they came up with was like, wild, because they essentially tried to boil it down to like, 30 mnemonic devices. Like, okay, that's the birthday. That's the last four digits of your secur—like, social security number, that's the...

Rachel: Wow!

Griffin: Uh, yeah. It's... and then you need to like, nest them, because you have to have mnemonic devices to remember the order of the mnemonic devices. Like, it was really wild.

Rachel: There are a lot of spelling ones, too. Like, I before E, except after C.

Griffin: Yeah, that's a good one.

Rachel: Um... anyway, I can't remember all of them. But I just—I think it's a...

Griffin: TMNT. TMNT. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. That's how you remember that.

Rachel: Well, see, now you're just getting into acronym territory.

Griffin: Y'know? But I would sometimes mess it up, y'know? I'll be like, "Oh, those Teenage Turtles Ninjas... Ninjas..."

Rachel: Mutants?

Griffin: Mutants... Turtles? Uh, hey, my second thing is a bit abstract, and I apologize, and you may recoil at it at first thought, but I promise I'm gonna keep it loosey goosey in a place that you will feel comfortable playing. Okay?

Rachel: Okay. Alright.

Griffin: I want to talk about the sort of Shire aesthetic. I like the aesthetic of that Shire.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And I know you haven't—

Rachel: Were you inspired from the week that we talked about, um, my Lady of the Bracelets?

Griffin: A little bit. I was inspired by that. Uh, and I was inspired by, uh, a news article that I read about something wonderful that I will get to at the end of this segment. Uh, I guess I'm talking specifically about Hobbiton, which is the sort of focal point of the Shire as seen in the Lord of the Rings trilogy. And I'm not gonna talk about the whole of the Lord of the Rings, because that's—there's a lot.

Rachel: Hey, please don't.

Griffin: A lot to unpack there.

Rachel: Please don't.

Griffin: Um, but whenever I would watch those movies, which uh, I used to do very regularly after they came out, uh, I would always just like, adore the beginning of Fellowship of the Ring, the first one, because it spends a lot of time in Hobbiton in the Shire. And it's just such a like, chill ass vibe. It is such a good vibe that I like looking at and thinking about a lot.

Rachel: Is it... now, you know that I'm pretty unfamiliar.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: But I picture a lot of moss.

Griffin: There's a great deal of moss.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, if you've never like, read the books or seen the movies, the sort of thing you have to keep in mind... and this informed like, a lot of fantasy sort of staple ideas moving forward, is that a lot of Lord of the Rings, like... races, other than like, the humans, all sort of lived among nature in a way that like, fused this idea of civilization and nature, right?

So, the dwarves all lived, like, in the mountains and these mines that they would carve out down to the heart of the mountain, or the elves, like, lived among the trees. And the Hobbits sort of did that idea, but just like, in the plains. Like, just in grassland, just among sort of like, empty, vast hills. And that is how you get this aesthetic.

And like, the most sort of iconic thing about it are the like, burrow houses that they build into the hills with like, big, circular, wooden doors and windows coming out of them. Where just, y'know, you look at the hill from a different direction, and the house is completely invisible to you. Uh, and then, you go inside, and it's just like, nice and warm, and like, nice wood floors, and rafters above, and... it's just all just so nice and rustic as fuck in there. I like that vibe.

Rachel: You like cozy.

Griffin: I like it cozy. And on the outsides of the houses, you get just like, flowers all over. Gardens. These little wicker fences.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, I just... I've always—I like a loamy roof, right? And I think that's the, uh, real life interpretation of the aesthetic that I dig. Like, whenever you see a, uh... this is not common in the states. I feel like this is more of like—

Rachel: Yeah, I'm trying to figure out what you're referencing right now.

Griffin: I'm talking about like, deep cabin, like, deep, uh, rustic, like, Norwegian sort of vibe, of like, actual, like, dirt roof with grass on it. Like, actual, like, you are growing some actual sort of flora up on the top of your cabin.

That vibe just really does it for me. I like that a lot. Whether it's in fantasy, or y'know, whatever.

Rachel: Do you like, uh... do you like David the Gnome?

Griffin: I love David the Gnome. I mean, that's a different vibe, though. Like, now you're talking—they lived in a tree, right? I think they lived in a tree. Gummy bears, you live in a tree. That's fine. But that's just like, one thing. I always liked, like, this idea of just like, living in the hills. Like, living in—just like—and then you get like, the shit they were doing in there.

Don't get me wrong, the Hobbits were a deeply prejudiced folks with lots of sort of problems amongst themselves. But they were just kind of fucking chilling in these little hill houses that you would go inside, and they'd be like, "Hey, come on inside. Look at all this dope food we have. Do you want to smoke—do you want me to smoke you out? Because you're a wiz—I want to smoke out with this wizard in my hill house that has a circular door." Like, how do you not get down with that?

Rachel: No, I'm into it. I'm actually surprised that there haven't been more like, Harry Potter style, Universal Studio opportunities.

Griffin: Weeell...

Rachel: Did I just set you up for your next thing?

Griffin: You did! You set me up real, real nice. Uh, I was gonna talk about like, the inspiration for it, but like, Tolkein grew up most of his life in England. And so just like, English countryside shit. He lived in this village called Sarehole in Birmingham that was just like, wide open plains, and uh... it had a corn mill on the river, which is also, like, a part of the geography in Hobbiton.

But... like, my vision of what it looks like didn't come from the books, which I think I read after I saw the movies. It comes from the movies, uh, and like, building Hobbiton was like, this huge undertaking. They built it on an actual working, like, sheep farm. Uh, and like, obviously, had to excavate a bunch of shit, and uh, do all this stuff. But they shot all of this in New Zealand, on North Island, and... they didn't tear it down when they were done filming.

Rachel: Oh!

Griffin: So, Hobbiton is still there.

Rachel: Oh, man!

Griffin: And you can get a ticket and go visit it, and go chill there, and go to the Green Dragon Inn, and get yourself a food and some drink. You can... they do like, events there. The winter solstice is coming up, I think, in June. And they have like, a special event planned around that.

Rachel: Ohh.

Griffin: And that is very good to me.

Rachel: Maybe we should do this for your 40th birthday.

Griffin: I never have been in the like—I know there's lots of people who feel this way. Like, I really like those movies, but I was never one of those, like, it is my life's dream to fly to New Zealand and go on the helicopter tour of like, all... there's the mountain that they climbed up on and did all this! Like, that's never been my jam.

But like... the thought that this thing exists on our planet makes me feel pretty good. It makes me feel real nice.

Rachel: Yeah, that's true.

Griffin: And again, it's not limited just to like, this Lord of the Rings thing. I'm talking about the aesthetic. From what I understand, the um... the Studio Ghibli, like, park in Tokyo is also all about sort of like, this hidden little zone in amongst like, the mossy rocks and shit. Like, ooh! Ooh, that's good for me! Mm!

Rachel: That is very good.

Griffin: That's good for me. Thank you. Thank you, moss. I guess shout out to moss, too, like...

Rachel: Right? Like, none of this would be possible without moss.

Griffin: Moss is doing a great job. You don't want it on, um, your roof unintentionally, I think. Supposed to be pretty bad. Collects a lot of moisture, and then just kind of like, keeps it there. Not great for the roof's integrity, unless it's intentional, then it's like, "Oh, that moss isn't eating my roof – it *is* the roof." And it's just frame of mind, I guess.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Y'know? And...

Rachel: No, I could talk about moss for hours.

Griffin: Good. Because...

Rachel: Here we go.

Griffin: Lock in.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh, hey, can I tell you what our friends at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes!

Griffin: I want to talk about Sean, who sent us an email, and also, made a video showing us the message in a bottle that they have made for us.

Rachel: Oh yeah!

Griffin: Of you saying—

Rachel: Me saying [pronounced strangely] hot tub.

Griffin: [pronounced strangely] Hot tuuub.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. You don't—there's not an umlaut on it. You just kind of like...

Rachel: I don't know why I said it that way.

Griffin: Take it... hot tuuub. Uh, I love it so much, and Sean has built an actual bottle that, uh, whenever I open it up, I get to hear that little clip, and it makes me very happy.

Rachel: Yeah, we'll have to go pick that up.

Griffin: Thank you, Sean. It's gonna be in our P.O. box this week, I think, so... let's keep an eye out for it.

Um, and Marlow says, "I love cooking spaghetti squash. It looks just like a regular squash when you cut it open, and it looks like regular squash after you've roasted it. But then you drag a fork through its insides, and it falls apart into strands, just like spaghetti. It is the most satisfying thing I've ever cooked."

Rachel: We had some of that!

Griffin: We made it once. We got very excited about spaghetti squash, because we like, saw it in a video, and I think we were looking for sort of more side dishes to have.

Rachel: It's real easy to make.

Griffin: It's really easy to make, but we didn't do a very good job of it, if memory serves. [laughs] So I think just the recipe we used was bad. But it—the texture of it beats ass, and...

Rachel: Yeah, I remember it tasting good!

Griffin: Yeah. We'll give it another shot, spaghetti squash. Thank you, Marlow, for the inspiration.

And 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 uh, thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network.

Rachel: Yeah, thank you, Maximum Fun, for hosting our show, and so many great shows that are funny and topical, and... y'know, make you laugh, make you cry.

Griffin: Make you cry? Yeah, maybe.

Rachel: Maybe.

Griffin: Maybe, we don't know.

Rachel: I've heard some people like that, uh, Adventure Zone show. Get a little weepy over it.

Griffin: Oh yeah, we put a little bit of that cry juice on that. Uh, and hey, if you really like Max Fun, you'll have your chance to support it and support us here in a couple weeks when we have the MaxFunDrive, which we're gonna talk all about when it runs, uh, for a couple weeks.

Uh, but we're gonna have all kinds of cool stuff going for ya. We're gonna have a bonus episode for new members, and... it's just a lot more. We'll be back to talk about that later.

Uh, I think that's it. Um... and... you gotta go back to work now.

Rachel: I do! Yeah.

Griffin: Rachel's gonna come on a lunch break.

Rachel: This was a nooner.

Griffin: Is that what—is that what you said—hold on.

Rachel: [laughs] That's what I put on my calendar. Should I not have called it that?

Griffin: What did you tell your boss that you were doing?

Rachel: I put on the calendar, 'nooner at home.'

Griffin: Baaabe! That's a doin' it thing!

Rachel: [laughs] Well...

Griffin: [hurriedly] I've gotta go!!

Rachel: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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