

## Wonderful! 69: The Billy Crystal Cube

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[theme music plays]

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

**Griffin:** Hey, it's Griffin McElroy.

**Rachel:** And this is Wonderful!

**Griffin:** We were just talkin' about Kingdom Hearts. Like, literally seconds before we started recording, which is very exciting for me, any time I get to sort of pull you into my world.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** Which is kind of appropriate. That's what the game's about. This is a podcast where we talk about things we like. It's just great. It's what the game's kind of about, y'know? This anime boy is now in the Winnie the Pooh. Right? It's him in The Hundred Acre Wood. He's hangin' out with Winnie the Pooh.

**Rachel:** Is it—does it feel like when Disney characters are incorporated, that it is done so in a way that is thoughtful to the integrity of the Disney character? Or is it more about the anime characters, and then, occasionally, like, Tigger shows up?

**Griffin:** Uh, the latter. The latter by an enormous, enormous degree.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** My first small wonder is actually the dog man, Goofy. I like his work in general.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** We watch a lot of Mickey-based programming. Henry is like... it's the only thing Henry likes. He loves the Mickey universe more than he loves his parents, and that's fine. Like, we'll... we haven't done as much for society as they have. And Goofy is there, and he's always putting in the work. He's always there trying to, y'know, earn a buck, and...

**Rachel:** Henry pronounces it 'Gooshy.'

**Griffin:** Gooshy, which is always great.

**Rachel:** It's fun.

**Griffin:** Um, and... I mean, *The Goofy Movie*, can't beat that. And obviously like, nobody thought he could carry his own vehicle, but he did, and then he tried it again, and it wasn't as good, 'cause he went to college and whatever.

But in *Kingdom Hearts*, you get to hear Goofy say things like, "Well gawrsh, Xehanort tried to pull Winnie the Pooh into a darkness corridor!"

**Rachel:** [laughing] And so you started playing the game?

**Griffin:** Oh yes. "Gawrsh, Kairi's heart was almost corrupted in the data cube!" Like...

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** And these are not—"Gawrsh, Buzz Lightyear's gonna get, uh, turned into a Nobody when his heart is absorbed by ultimate darkness! Hyuk!"

**Rachel:** Is he like, the narrator for the whole game? [laughing]

**Griffin:** No, but he is your partner. So, anime boy is constantly—his companions are Donald and Goofy.

**Rachel:** Oh wow.

**Griffin:** There's so much you don't know about Kingdom Hearts.

**Rachel:** So wait, Donald says stuff too?

**Griffin:** You're—Rachel is play acting right now, because she's like, the biggest KH fan I know.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** You were just mentioning out every outlet is like, doing these Kingdom Hearts recaps, so I was just wondering if you could just do like... we got just 60 seconds. Just like, break down the plot.

**Rachel:** No, what I'm saying is, I watch the Polygon breakdown, and then I got a bunch of suggested videos on my YouTube of other Kingdom Hearts recaps. Which I did not watch.

**Griffin:** And they must've been so frustrating for you, because you are like, the ultimate lore keeper. Like, Rachel is actually the admin for the KH Wiki.

**Rachel:** See, I was leading in a direction where I was hoping that you would do your Donald Duck impression, saying Kingdom Hearts things.

**Griffin:** [makes some awful Donald Duck-esque noises]

**Rachel:** Oof. Alright. Never mind.

**Griffin:** [continues making awful duck sounds]

**Rachel:** That's—I mean, it's very good.

**Griffin:** You can't do words. I don't know how the fuck he does it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Goofy is my first small wonder.

**Rachel:** So you want to hear about Kingdom Hearts then, I guess?

**Griffin:** Yeah, so just recap it.

**Rachel:** Okay, so there's this guy, and he's got real spiky hair.

**Griffin:** Yeah, I've said his name about eight times in the last minute, but the name is...?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I did say it in a Donald Duck voice, so maybe it didn't count.

**Rachel:** ... Doladord.

**Griffin:** Doladord is right.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Sounds like Voldemort and Donald Duck kind of got together and like, sort of spawned a hybrid, but okay.

**Rachel:** Uh-huh. And... um... he's...trying to, um... get on the magic carpet from Aladdin.

**Griffin:** There—that does happen in, I believe, KH1.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm. To defeat, uhh, the other anime guy.

**Griffin:** Whose name is...

**Rachel:** Which is... mmm... Mal... reiko.

**Griffin:** And how many of him are there?

**Rachel:** Oh, I mean, just one, right?

**Griffin:** Oh, that's the wrongest thing you've said yet.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, so, what's your first small wonder? You got anything good?

**Rachel:** I bought myself a step ladder, and...

**Griffin:** Oh yes!

**Rachel:** I told Griffin about it earlier this week, and it didn't seem like he was super excited about it. But I have to say... as a woman that does not like to be dependent on a man for anything... having this step ladder, I feel like, now I can do all the things in the house.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** Like I can live fully independently now with this step ladder.

**Griffin:** I mean, the only way I can relate to you on this is gonna be so demeaning. But when I had a step ladder in the bathroom when I was like, a little kid, and it was a very helpful friend, and it said something clever like, "If you need to get up, then step up, but if you want to rest, take a seat!" It was nice. It was cute.

**Rachel:** That is nice. Yeah, no, when I said that I got a step ladder, Griffin's first question was, "For Henry?" And I said, "No, no no no, for me, so I can get paper towels out of the cabinet."

**Griffin:** Yeah. But I mean, you're looking at 70 inches of raw stretching power. Just 70 inches, plus wingspan. I don't even know what that is. How

long is my arm? Probably like another... another two feet? So you're talking about 80...

**Rachel:** 80?

**Griffin:** Something like that, man. A lot of inches of reach power. I don't think my arms are ten inches long. I don't know much about spatial stuff.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, hey, I'm going first this week.

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** My first thing is... get this... crystals.

**Rachel:** This surprises me.

**Griffin:** My first thing is crystals. And I'm not necessarily talking about the homeopathic—

**Rachel:** Do you mean women named Crystal?

**Griffin:** I'm talking about Crystal Gayle. I'm talking about Crystal Bernard, who was my favorite cast member in Wings. I just thought of two famous Crystals. What the fuck you got?

**Rachel:** [laughing] I know. Nothing.

**Griffin:** Um... I'm talking not necessarily about the energy that crystals do, and if that's your jam, like, go for it. If that's your jam, for sure. I love it. I love that that's your jam. I'm talking more about crystals themselves. The crys—crystals themselves. Yes, I can speak in the plural about crystals. There's lots of them. Lots of these shiny little doodads called crystals.

We watched a Kiwami Japan video. It's the most recent one that they put up in which, uh, the creator of these wonderful knives – which, I've talked about this channel before, and I'm still obsessed with it – he made a knife out of bismuth. Which is a metal that I wasn't really familiar with, and it sent me down sort of a crystals rabbit hole.

I think bismuth might be—I still don't know much about crystals, but there's a part in the video where, first of all, bismuth, when you heat it to like, certain level and then expose it to cold air, depending on what the temperature was, it can form sort of these different iridescent hues. So like, he melts down the bismuth, and then like, pulls some out, and it's like this sort of glossy bronze color, and then it's like this sort of darker blue color.

But it also makes these like, wild shapes. So I got—I got obsessed with those wild shapes that this metal made, and I wanted to know everything about crystals. And so I did a bit of a crystal deep dive.

You're looking at me. I feel like you don't—you were telling me that you were super into, um, like fool's gold when you were younger, right? Like, py—pyrite? Is that what it was?

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, I had like, a little tiny rock collection.

**Griffin:** I did too! We would go to Ruby Falls in Chattanooga and get some rocks.

**Rachel:** I guess I just have never heard you talk about crystals before, so I'm just kind of wrapping my head around crystal Griffin.

**Griffin:** Well, I think there sort of—uh, they're sort of ubiquitous. I feel like, I did have rocks when I was a kid. I had a rock sort of collection. I remember getting like, a Christmas present that was sort of like a, uh, rock sifting kit.

**Rachel:** Oh, the tumblers!

**Griffin:** Like a tumbler, yes. And also, like, every Japanese roleplaying game has got to have crystals in it. I'm about three hours into Kingdom Hearts 3, but I'm pretty sure a fucking crystal is gonna show up at some point. And you're gonna need to, y'know, get five of them to save the world or whatever.

Um, I think crystals are super pretty, but I didn't know anything about crystals. I thought that like, um, crystals were just like gemstones? But the Venn diagram is, all gemstones are crystals, but not all crystals are gemstones.

**Rachel:** Oh, okay!

**Griffin:** What I learned about crystals, and that's really, really fascinating... I was mostly fascinated by these shapes that the bismuth made.

**Rachel:** Yeah, okay.

**Griffin:** Because when—when you—you can make a bismuth crystal, actually, really easily at home. It has a fairly low melting point. It's kind of in the lead family, which is also similarly kind of easy to melt. But it's not as, uh, toxic. It is slightly radioactive, which I thought was weird? But uh, it makes these shapes whenever you can—uh, you can make these bismuth crystals that have these shapes that, uh, the best way I can describe it is like a... like a stair step kind of pattern? Almost like a ziggurat, if that means anything to you?

**Rachel:** Oooh!

**Griffin:** And it's, uh—they can occur naturally. Like, they can occur in nature. Uh, and I was like, Googling like, "Why does it make that shape?" And crystals can make all kinds of different shapes. And in fact, that's kind of what makes them crystals. Crystals are defined by having this very, uh, specific ordered microscopic structure that informs its sort of macro shape.

So, in an instance where a crystal's, like, atomic makeup naturally arranges itself into like, a cube... like, that's just the way that the atoms sort of line



up, then that crystal can grow into a perfect cube. Like, it's rare, but you can find pyrite.

I remember, actually, when I was looking this up, that I was watching this like, um, Discovery Channel video about like, uh... I think it was about marble mining, but they did a segment on this pyrite vein that they found. And then you just walk into this cave, and then there's these weird, dull, metallic cubes everywhere, just growing out of the wall.

**Rachel:** Weird!

**Griffin:** It looks like something out of like a sci-fi movie. It looks like some sort of alien civilization playing with them. But as it just so happens, pyrite can have this atomic structure that forms itself into a cube on a microscopic level, and you do that enough times within this, y'know, cubic system, and it's just going to naturally grow into this like, nearly perfect cube.

It's so bonkers. And so, there's seven different sort of, um, basic, broad categories of crystal shapes. Crystallographers, which is a phenomenal word, uh, call them crystal systems. So this is a cubic crystal system, but there's all kinds. There's some that have sort of more defined shapes, and there's some that are a little more sort of, uh, abstract.

But like, I've never thought about it before. Like, you think of a crystal, and a lot of crystals just have like, smooth faces and, y'know, very defined edges, and like, that's not necessarily how rocks grow. And the reason that crystals grow that way is just because like, that's how they're defined, is because of their very specific ordered, atomic structure.

**Rachel:** Can I—can I say something real quick?

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** Billy Crystal.

**Griffin:** Billy Crystal has a very specific atomic structure.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** He is a perfect cube.

**Rachel:** [laughs] I was trying to think of another Crystal, and I just thought, if I don't say Billy Crystal right now... I don't know how I'm gonna make it.

**Griffin:** You're gonna burst. Yeah, I saw you over there sort of shuddering with anticipation.

Um, so, like, obviously, like, gems and crystals, you find them in nature. They're usually fairly small, but they can, y'know, obviously grow huge and unchecked. The largest crystal ever found was in Madagascar. It was a beryl, which is kind of like the family that uh, aquamarine and emerald are in.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** It was 59 feet long and 11 feet wide.

**Rachel:** Whoaaa!

**Griffin:** It was extremely heavy, and it was a huge, huge gemstone. I don't know how like, the entire, like, region—like, all of Madagascar wasn't like, "Well, everybody here is now rich. We found—we found the biggest shit ever." Um, and uh... so I was looking into bismuth specifically, right? Because of this video.

I almost went like—I almost went on eBay and was like, "I'm gonna buy some bismuth and see if I can melt it down and make my own like, geodes. I'm gonna get full Hank Trader up in this shit."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And the reason that it makes that sort of ziggurat shape, um... it's kind of—I'm not necessarily—it almost looks like a maze. It looks like a metallic maze that sort of grows naturally, because it has these like, raised

ridges, and then it looks like parts of it are just sort of hollowed out, but in this like, very perfect square pattern.

The reason that happens, it's called a hopper crystal. Because it grows—the edges of it grow faster than the faces of it. And so, when that happens, and it grows—like, a crystal grows extremely fast like bismuth does, when you heat it up and then take out of, y'know, into the exposed air, and it forms a crystal super quickly, like, it just like... the edges grow so much faster than the faces that it makes this like, really weird and hypnotic pattern.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm.

**Griffin:** And I think that's very cool. I also didn't know... technically... a snowflake is a crystal!

**Rachel:** Oh!

**Griffin:** It grows in a specific, like—

**Rachel:** I can see that!

**Griffin:** It grows in a specific shape, right? It grows in a—I mean, it's a unique shape, but it has a sort of specific pattern that it follows on a micro scale that it sort of turns into a macro thing. Actually, one snowflake can be, actually, multiple crystals. It can be its own sort of crystal system.

**Rachel:** Yeah, I can see that!

**Griffin:** Um, ice can grow like this. Like, ice, y'know... not even necessarily snow. Ice can grow like this. Gold can grow like this, and uh, y'know, these very, very specific, like, cube-like patterns sometimes.

Um, I just thought that was so interesting!

**Rachel:** Yeah! I mean, it feels like more of a visual thing. Like, part of me just wants to look at pictures of crystals now.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I kind of like... I—I feel like I've always been fascinated with, uh... I made a whole fucking arc of The Adventure Zone around crystals, and so like—and obviously, I think that sort of, uh, reveals that like, I'm into... I'm into the idea of like, these precious stones that grow out of the ground. Not necessarily for their worth, but for their like, uh... their...

**Rachel:** Complexity?

**Griffin:** Their complexity, and their beauty, and like, what they—that these things can just sort of naturally come out of the earth. Like, I think is really, really super neat, and is, in fact, way, way neater than I had any idea, because of uh, science shit that I've done a super bad job explaining.

I hope I've done an okay job explaining.

**Rachel:** I think you did a good job!

**Griffin:** Thank you. Crystals are tight. What's your first thing?

**Rachel:** My first thing... is middle names.

**Griffin:** This is—I'm gonna learn so much.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I know nothing about middle names.

**Rachel:** Uh, so, the three name structure began in the middle ages when Europeans were torn between giving their child a saint's name, or a common family name.

**Griffin:** Is that apocryphal? Is that really where the middle name comes from? Because that seems... that seems wild to me.

**Rachel:** So the—there was the first name, and then the baptismal name was second, and then, the surname third.

**Griffin:** Interesting!

**Rachel:** Uh, and it was also like a sign of nobility.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Y'know? So like, the more names you had, the more connected you were to like, a longer line of ancestors. I will also say that, uh—and this is something I found, um... when I was researching it. In England, middle names were for nobility. And there was an old law making them illegal for the rest of the population.

**Griffin:** Whoa!

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** That seems hard to enforce, huh?

**Rachel:** Yeah, I know. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Like, somebody's—some middle age mom gets mad at their kids for not doing—

**Rachel:** My name is John Stuart—I mean...

**Griffin:** [gasps] I mean—oh no! Some mom gets mad at her kids in the middle ages and it's like, "Dennis... David... Smith—[gasps] No!" And authorities come drag her away.

**Rachel:** And he goes to jail.

**Griffin:** And he goes to jail. And he's a kid. Isn't that fucked up?

**Rachel:** Uh, so the first time you saw middle names like, on a government document, was World War I on US enlistment forms.

**Griffin:** Really?

**Rachel:** No one on the Mayflower had a middle name. Only three of the first 17 presidents had a middle name.

**Griffin:** What?!

**Rachel:** Only about five percent of Americans born during the Revolutionary War era had middle names.

**Griffin:** This is—this is fucking wild!

**Rachel:** I know!

**Griffin:** I had no idea that this was such a new thing. No wonder there's so many like, celebrities and um, y'know, assassins that, y'know, have to go by their whole thing. John Paul Gosselaar... Paul... what was his name?

**Rachel:** [laughs] You're thinking of Mark-Paul Gosselaar from Saved By the Bell.

**Griffin:** I think I'm thinking of... Ron Paul Gosselaar. [laughs] Ron Paul Gosselaar.

**Rachel:** That's our trivia team name, now.

**Griffin:** Ron Paul Gosselaar is [??].

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, in Germany, middle names became common in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. So if you think about like, Johann Sebastian Bach...

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** ... was born in 1685. Um, German immigrants arriving in Pennsylvania are credited with being the first Americans to use middle

names regularly. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, you saw a greater population boom, just in America and Europe.

Uh, and so, that's when you saw more people with middle names, because there were just a lot of duplicates. I mean, like, there were, y'know, probably thousands of John Smiths, and it was like, "Well, let's start throwing a middle name in there."

**Griffin:** I'm so fucking ignorant. I thought this whole time, literally, not just throughout time, but every culture on the planet was like, "Oh, well, you gotta have a middle name."

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm. So I started doing some research on the multiple middle names, too.

**Griffin:** Yeah!

**Rachel:** 'Cause I was kind of curious about that. Um, it was a German tradition. A lot of members of the royal family that immigrated from Germany to Britain had the multiple middle names. Traditionally, the British upper class used multiple names to indicate family connections. And so, some examples are, uh... George Herbert Walker Bush. J.R.R. Tolkien. Do you know what his middle names are?

**Griffin:** Really, really Tolkien.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs] Jim Really, Really Tolkien.

**Rachel:** His dad was just Really Tolkien, and then the next one was Really Really? [laughing]

**Griffin:** [laughing]

**Rachel:** His grandchildren have so many R's, though.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** No, it's John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. Reuel was a family name from his father's side.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** George R.R. Martin. Do you know what his middles are?

**Griffin:** I mean, I could do the same joke. But...

**Rachel:** Raymond Richard.

**Griffin:** Really... Really makin' his weight for the next—I don't know. I haven't read all the books.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Do you know... Kiefer Sutherland's full name?

**Griffin:** No, but am I going to?

**Rachel:** This is a really good one. Kiefer William Frederick Dempsey George Rufus Sutherland.

**Griffin:** [gasps] What?!

**Rachel:** Yes sir.

**Griffin:** His dad is famous! Like, you can't hide—you can't hide from what you did, Donald!

**Rachel:** So his father, Donald Sutherland, picked Kiefer to honor Warren Kiefer, who directed him in the first film he did.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** But I don't know how you explain all the other ones.



**Griffin:** Yeah, that's a lot.

**Rachel:** Um... I love my middle name.

**Griffin:** Yeah, Rachel's middle name is beautiful and elegant and I love it.

**Rachel:** It's Celia. C-E-L-I-A, and it was my great grandmother's name.

**Griffin:** Yes. It's funny that you mention the saints thing, because... I weirdly don't want to say what our son's middle name is, but it's a saint, and so is mine. My middle name is Andrew.

**Rachel:** I know that.

**Griffin:** I know that you know that.

**Rachel:** Do you want to know—

**Griffin:** I knew you knew my middle name.

**Rachel:** Oh, you're sharing it with our audience?

**Griffin:** [laughs] Yes!

**Rachel:** [laughs] So Griffin, I have a surprise for you.

**Griffin:** I'm getting a new middle name?

**Rachel:** No, I reached out to, uh, one Clint McElroy to see if there was a story behind your name.

**Griffin:** Oh! Okay! This is new information for me.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm. I said, "Hey, I'm thinking about talking about middle names on Wonderful, and I'm wondering if there's any story behind Griffin

Andrew." And he said that your mom was convinced you were having a girl, so they hadn't even considered boy names. But then, when you, quote, "turned profile to show junk during the ultrasound"...

**Griffin:** God, Dad.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, they realized it was crunch time. So they got every baby name book on the planet. And they had the two syllable two syllable thing, with uh, Justin Tyler and Travis Patrick, so they knew they wanted to stick with that.

**Griffin:** Right.

**Rachel:** But they spent literally every evening for a month, looking through baby name books.

**Griffin:** This is a long ass text.

**Rachel:** Oh, it keeps going.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** He said that he really pushed for, uh, Clinton Emil McElroy III.

**Griffin:** Yep. My dad—my dad's a junior. We never, ever, ever talk about that. I've seen him referred to as Clinton Emil McElroy Junior maybe twice in my life.

**Rachel:** Mm-hmm. Uh, they apparently were watching an episode of Amazing Stories that had the actor, Griffin Dunne in it, and that appealed to your mom as a first name.

**Griffin:** Okay. Now I'm gonna fucking Google this guy, are you kidding me?

**Rachel:** Griffin Dunne, D-U-N-N-E.

**Griffin:** He's on This is Us! Oh!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Okay! I think I know this guy!

**Rachel:** I think it was more the name than the actor. I think that's where they got the idea. It wasn't like... your mom was super into him as a thespian.

**Griffin:** It doesn't matter! I have his name! I need to—I need to write him a letter or something!

**Rachel:** Uh, your dad said they picked Andrew in the delivery room.  
[laughs]

**Griffin:** Cool, Dad.

**Rachel:** And I said, "Oh, I guess by the third kid, you're less pressured about names." And he was like, "Actually, we felt more pressure for Griffin, because we knew he was going to be the last co-production."

**Griffin:** Yeah, true.

**Rachel:** And then he goes on to talk about his middle name, Emil, and how terrible it was.

**Griffin:** Yeah. Wow. Well, sounds like you got in way over your head.

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** [laughing] Um, but hey, can I steal you away?

[ad break stinger plays]

**Griffin:** So we don't have any ads this week, but we do have gumbotrams. And I'm going to read the first one, and do you wanna... allyoop it with the second one?

**Rachel:** Of course!

**Griffin:** First one here is for Classiest Miracle, and it's from Rodgey Roo, who says, "Hey, Classiest Miracle. For being a Gemini, you're pretty cool." I don't think I know enough about that stuff to know what that means.

**Rachel:** I don't either. I think it's a summer birthday?

**Griffin:** I thought for Gemini, it means that you have—there's two of you. Somewhere on the earth.

**Rachel:** Oh, okay. I like that.

**Griffin:** You have a duplicate. Anyway. Uh, "I just want to let you know, I think you're wonderful, even though you never reply back to my sexy emoji chain texts." Lot of give and take with this message. Sorry for commenting on it so much.

"I'm also glad I finally got to meet one of your boyfriends, so now I know they are real. Here's to more memes and vine compilations." Rodgey Roo.

Um... [laughs]

**Rachel:** Do you see the preferred time frame on this one? [laughs]

**Griffin:** Is that this?

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Holy shit! This is episode 69. [laughs] Rodgey Roo said, "Episode 69 – nice – which I think is late February or something. Calendar math is hard." It sure is. You scrooged it by a little bit, but uh, not that I knew any

better. Oh my god!

**Rachel:** I know! Should we go back and change the theme?

**Griffin:** I don't know, but I'm definitely gonna change what my second thing is. What's uh, what's the second jumbotron here?

**Rachel:** Uh, this next message is for Sarah. It is from Dorian. "Sarah! By the time you hear this, I'll be back in your time zone again. Phew! I'll make this quick. You're my best friend and I love you a whole lot. Out of all the people to get kicked out of Shakespeare class with, I'm glad it was you. Let's meet up again soon and make an obscene amount of pancakes together. P.S. Give your cat a kiss for me."

**Griffin:** I mean, you know what an obscene amount of pancakes would be, right?

**Rachel:** 69?

**Griffin:** It'd be 69 pancakes!

**Rachel:** [laughs] That's good.

[Maximum Fun advertisement plays]

**Griffin:** My second thing is... the number 69. I'm looking at the Wikipedia page, and first of all, hey, did you know that Wikipedia has entries on sex positions? This is the real Wikipedia. There's a picture, a cartoon, and there's... it's... folks...

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Variations of 69—there's variations, according to Wikipedia!

**Rachel:** Well, I guess it depends on... where you are.

**Griffin:** "Sixty-nine, also known by its French name soixante-neuf..." What's nine?

**Rachel:** Neuf.

**Griffin:** Neuf. Soixante...

**Rachel:** Soixante-neuf.

**Griffin:** Soixante-neuf. "... is a group of sex positions in which two people align themselves so that each person's mouth is near the other's..." [leans very far away from the microphone] ... genitals.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** My second thing is actually a band.

**Rachel:** The number 68.

**Griffin:** It's the number 54. Um, it's uh, The Polyphonic Spree!

**Rachel:** Oh, good!

**Griffin:** Uh, so, my oldest brother, who is called Justin, uh, Justin Tyler, uh... turned me onto this band when I was like, just about to enter into college. And I just pretty much instantly fell in love with them.

Um, I have this very vivid memory while I was like, writing out notes about this, of, um, one of their albums had just come out while I was working at TCBY. And I had one of those old, like, radio emitters that you could plug into your iPod.

This was like, before, uh, like, Bluetooth and everything. So you'd have to like, plug this thing into the top of your iPod, and then it would like—you could set the radio frequency that you wanted it to play to, and then you could like, turn your car radio to that frequency.

**Rachel:** Oh! I'm not familiar with this at all.

**Griffin:** Yeah, so there was a radio at TCBY, like, over the sound system, and I figured out like, "Oh, I'll just put on this album all fucking day." And so like, my entire shift, I would just have Polyphonic Spree blasting in the... in the room, which delighted and also confused a lot of patrons.

If you're not familiar with Polyphonic Spree, you are, because their music was in like, every movie and TV show and commercial in the like, mid-aughts, I want to say. Um, you've probably seen them before, even if you didn't know who they were, and thought, "Hey, that's weird," because there's 23 of them, currently.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** There's been sort of more and less of them. Um...

**Rachel:** They're the act, if you have gone to a music festival and seen a bunch of people in robes, that's like—

**Griffin:** Yes. Sort of arranged in a very sort of choral, uh, choral arrangement. Uh, the band is super, super unique, and I think that's like, won me over—what won me over back in the, uh, mid-aughts when I sort of got into them. Uh, so, it is—the band is led by a guy named Tim... DeLaughter? It's not laughter, right? Because it's spelled that way.

**Rachel:** No, it's DeLaughter [De-Lotter].

**Griffin:** Thank you. I thought that was it. Um, and his like, inspiration for making the Polyphonic Spree, and I'm gonna play some music here in a little bit, and you'll hear this, um... was to sort of mimic the kind of music that he grew up listening to. Specifically, like, the um... the choral arrangements, and orchestral arrangements of like, pop bands like The Beatles, and ELO, and Beach Boys.

Um, and according to Wikipedia, he wanted to blend that with the vocal style of Ozzy Osbourne from Black Sabbath, which you can totally get. [laughs]

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** And what's so great about this band is that all of their—well, most of their songs have this like, cosmically uplifting sort of message and tone about them, um, most of the time. And probably their most popular song really captures this, which is a song called Hold Me Now.

All of their songs, actually, from their earlier albums are called 'sections.'

**Rachel:** The music video for Hold Me Now is so great, by the way.

**Griffin:** It's very good. It's puppets, right?

**Rachel:** Yes.

**Griffin:** Yes. Uh, I forget which section this is, because I forget which album it is on, but it's like—the song is all about this person who like, hits rock bottom, and then like, goes seeking for like, love and help, which they receive from somebody else, which is like, a nice message. So here's a little bit of Hold Me Now, a song that you've probably heard selling you a Volkswagen back in 2005.

[ 'Hold Me Now' by The Polyphonic Spree plays ]

**Griffin:** So like, all their songs, for the most part, are these like, really upbeat orchestral arrangements that are very sort of, uh, happy. But the band's origins are actually super sad. Tim's like, uh, first break out act was this band called Tripping Daisy, which broke up in 1999 when their guitarist, who was also like, Tim's dear friend, this guy named Wes Berggren, died of a drug overdose.

And like, right after that, the band, uh—I think they finished the album that they were working on when he died, and then broke up right after that. Um, and so, it was just the following the year. It was 2000 when he started looking into making this band that he, um, wanted to sort of explore doing all of these weird choral things with.



And he found 12 collaborators one day, and then, sort of two weeks after pitching them the project, they had this 30-minute long set that they would perform at various sort of small venues and festivals and stuff like that. And then they put that 30 minute set together as a demo, which they were like, "Eh, let's just send this to some record labels."

And then, that 30 minute set was, basically, *The Beginning Stages Of*, which is their first album. It very, very quickly came together, and I think they were like, released from their first label, because they weren't selling very well. But then, once it started to get sort of mainstream appeal, it was on like, an episode of *Scrubs*.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** I mentioned the Volkswagen commercial. It was—they had songs, I believe, on *The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* soundtrack.

**Rachel:** They did the cover of the Nirvana song, too.

**Griffin:** They did the cover of *Lithium*, which... I was gonna close with this, but Rachel, uh, got me tickets to see Polyphonic Spree for my birthday, I believe, one year? And we went, and it was a very intimate venue. It was a very, very—we were like, right up on the stage, like, inches from him, Tim DeLaughter, and the band. And um... he like, closed with *Lithium*, and got super angry, because he kept like, going up to people in the audience, including us, and like, holding the mic to their mouths, thinking, "Everybody knows the lyrics to *Lithium*!" And nobody... nobody knew them as well as he did, and he got really frustrated.

**Rachel:** Turns out... yeah. We all felt terrible.

**Griffin:** We all felt so—I've never felt like I've failed the, y'know, a member of one of my favorite bands before. That was an eye-open—it was still a great concert, but that part was very... it set my anxiety sort of to maximum.

Um, but yeah. That whole first album, and a lot of their early work, is sort of informed by this like, tragic thing that happened when they were Tripping Daisy. Uh, and like, Tim is super forward about that. Like, a lot of the lyrics on the first album are kind of about, um, trying to bounce back from this terrible thing, and becoming very reflective about your life after sort of a pattern of sort of self-destructive behavior.

Um, which you may not get, like, face value, listening to, "Hey, it's the sun, and it makes me smile," but um... y'know, knowing that, I think it's very clearly there. Um, and there's also like, roots for what Polyphonic Spree became in what Tripping Daisy was.

There is—like, probably my favorite Polyphonic Spree song is a cover of a Tripping Daisy song called Sonic Bloom. Which you actually played for me the first time, uh, the Tripping Daisy version. And I was like, "Wait, why does this sound familiar?" And because it sounds like a Polyphonic Spree song, and then they covered it back in 2006.

I'm gonna play that one now, because I think it's just so beautiful and uplifting.

[‘Sonic Bloom’ by Polyphonic Spree plays]

**Griffin:** I just like, um, this band more than any other that I can think of off the top of my head, like, has this like... nice core aesthetic that I think is so special. Um, and...

**Rachel:** I saw Polyphonic Spree in Chicago. Probably would've been 2005, maybe?

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** And it was just one of the most joyous concerts I've ever been to.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I just like, felt very optimistic and very like... comforting, and just the like... everything's gonna be okay.

**Griffin:** Yeah. I got really into them, and the Flaming Lips, which is both like, sort of confetti—

**Rachel:** Yeah, exactly.

**Griffin:** The two confetti concert bands. And weed, in the same sort of year, my college experience.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I went to Spencer's Gifts...

**Rachel:** Oh no.

**Griffin:** ... and I bought like a um, light ball. Like a—it would like—sort of like a disco ball, but it had like, different rainbow colored lights. We would just like, shut the door to my apartment bedroom, turn on that light ball, listen to Soft Bulletin, and some Flaming Lips, and some Polyphonic Spree, and just, um... not—your parents listen to this show, so we would just sit there and not... not do anything.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Just hug.

**Griffin:** Yeah, we wouldn't do anything. [laughs] What's your second thing?

**Rachel:** [laughs] My second thing is untranslatable words.

**Griffin:** Alright! You're bringin' that fuckin' heat this week!

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, so there's a couple things that made me think of this.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** First, uh, is the like, hygge phenomena? Y'know, the Danish word that means, like...

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** Warm, cozy?

**Griffin:** Hooga?

**Rachel:** I mean, it's spelled H-Y-G-G-E. Do you know what I'm talking about now?

**Griffin:** No.

**Rachel:** Okay. This is like, a year ago, there was this phenomenon of people trying to harness this like, warm, cozy, Danish energy. And everybody was referring to this word, uh, because there was a book that came out that was all about like, The Big Book of Hygge, or Little Book of Hygge, something like that.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** So that made me think of it, because that's one of those untranslatable words. And also, when I was in graduate school, and I was writing poetry, I was taking this class all about like, translating from another language. Uh, and so, I was trying to write a poem kind of similar to that. And I found the word 'ilunga,' which is a Shalouba word, which is the Bantu language spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** And it is specifically a word for a person who is ready to forgive abuse the first time, tolerate it the second time, but never a third time.

**Griffin:** That's a—they got one word for that?

**Rachel:** Yeah, and so I wrote this poem called Translator's Blush that was all about like, trying to translate another language. And I was thinking about it the other day. And so, I started Googling untranslatable words.

**Griffin:** I bet there are infinite of them.

**Rachel:** There's a whole bunch! I found this guy, Dr. Tim Lomas, who is a lecturer at the University of East London, and he wrote a book called Happiness Dictionary.

**Griffin:** Wasn't that the name of the guy from the Halloween movies? Who was like, Michael Myers' like, therapist? Dr. Tim Lomas? Okay, sorry. This is for nobody.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Uh, so he wrote this book called the Happiness Dictionary, um, which is all about untranslatable words. Uh, and so, in a Scientific American article, he talks about why they're so fascinating. And I thought he said it really succinctly. He said, "An untranslatable word alerts us to something in the world that English-speaking cultures might not have noticed, or not analyzed with much detail, but which in other cultures picked up on."

**Griffin:** The thing that like, peaks my interest in it is like, what is it about our culture that differs from theirs, where we didn't need a word for this? Like, what are we not—[sighs] Like the hygge word, right? Like, why don't we have a single word that captures that aesthetic?

**Rachel:** Yeah, I know.

**Griffin:** Like, what's different about our two, like, cultures and lifestyles that like...

**Rachel:** I know, exactly!

**Griffin:** They needed—"We need a faster way to say this shit!"

**Rachel:** That's what he's saying. So he—he started a website, which you can find if you Google his name, and that's L-O-M-A-S. So, there are seven thousand languages on earth, and he has created this, what he calls a positive lexicography, uh, which as of May, 2018, had a thousand terms in it that were untranslatable.

So, my pronunciation on these is all gonna be terrible, because it's very difficult to figure out how to pronounce untranslatable words when nobody is using them.

**Griffin:** Yeah. You can't even use them in a sentence. Yes.

**Rachel:** Uh, okay. So this is an Inuit word, and it's... 'iktsuarpok.'

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** And it refers to the feeling of anticipation when you're expecting someone that leads you constantly check to see if they're coming. [laughs]

**Griffin:** [laughs]

**Rachel:** So this is like, when you're standing by the door... when you're like, standing by the door and looking out the window, and you keep like, checking to see if they've come. That's what this word means.

**Griffin:** It's 2019. And with like, millennial culture – and don't get me wrong. I'm one of you, and I'll die for you. But like... why aren't we using this word constantly? You're describing the human experience in 2019 for every single person under the age of like, 45.

**Rachel:** Exactly! There were so many, by the way. There were so many of these, and I had a really hard time narrowing it down.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** Um, but here's the next one. This is an Arabic word, and it's... 'ya'aburnee,' which literally means 'you bury me,' and the concept

represents, uh, declaring your hope that your loved one will outlive you because of how unbearable it would be to live without them.

**Griffin:** Wow, that's so beautiful!

**Rachel:** Isn't it?

**Griffin:** And sad. But nice.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Sad nice. We need a word for that, that means sad nice.

**Rachel:** Sad nice. [laughs] Uh, okay, here's a Hindi word. It's 'jivishā.' It refers to the desire to live and continue living. It is usually used to talk about a person who loves life, and always has intense emotions and desires to live and thrive.

**Griffin:** Now, I hate to come at you like this. I hate to take your shit apart.

**Rachel:** Okay.

**Griffin:** But YOLO.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Like, sorry. We do have it. And what's great about YOLO is, you can't translate it. It's a fuckin' acronym. You only live once.

**Rachel:** I mean, okay. [laughing]

**Griffin:** So... it's good. It's a good word. I'm not saying—I don't want to take away from the word, but..

**Rachel:** Well, and YOLO is timeless. I mean, clearly, you're still hearing that all the time today.

**Griffin:** I say YOLO constantly.

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** I—I live a life. I have engineered a life. I have built and designed meticulously, like a clockmaker, a life that would never require me to do anything that I could possibly say 'YOLO' after. I do not—I have not been on a skateboard in many moons...

**Rachel:** Okay, you're saying this, but I guarantee you, before you have sat down in front of a large meal, or a lot of cheese...

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** ... you have probably said YOLO. [laughs]

**Griffin:** I have been at the samples—in front of the samples of fresh cheese at the Costco, and they're like, "You want some of this?" And I'm like, "I mean... I'm supposed to go to a baseball game later today, but... yeah, YOLO."

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** And then my butt explodes, and I'm like...

**Rachel:** [laughing] Okay, I have one last one.

**Griffin:** Yes.

**Rachel:** And this one is perfect for our podcast, Wonderful.

**Griffin:** Okay.

**Rachel:** It is a Serbian word. It's called 'merak.' And it refers to a feeling of bliss, and the sense of oneness with the universe that comes from the



simplest of pleasures. It is the pursuit of small daily pleasures that all add up to a great sense of happiness and fulfillment.

**Griffin:** How—now, how often are they saying this one? 'Cause I feel like I have moments like—

**Rachel:** Our podcast would be called Merak if we were Serbian!

**Griffin:** Yeah, I guess that's possibly true.

**Rachel:** Yeah!

**Griffin:** Yeah, that's a nice one, too.

**Rachel:** Isn't that nice?

**Griffin:** This is neat. This is one of those things that like, if I see a Facebook article in my feed that's like, "You'll never believe these ten words!" I will click on that a hundred times out of a hundred.

**Rachel:** So I would encourage you—I have not looked at The Happiness Dictionary myself, but this Dr. Tim Lomas, his website is just full of these words. And you can just download it and look at all of them.

**Griffin:** He got any fun games on there?

**Rachel:** From all over the world.

**Griffin:** Has he got any fun games or cool pictures?

**Rachel:** I mean, he's probably looking for support, uh, creating a game. So if you want to reach out to him, I'm sure you could put together an app.

**Griffin:** Any funny pictures, though? GIFs?

**Rachel:** I...

**Griffin:** Does he have that one GIF of like, a guy, like a stick guy, and he's like, shoveling, and it's like, "This page isn't finished yet." With like a counter.

**Rachel:** Mm, under construction.

**Griffin:** Telling you how many people have visited.

**Rachel:** Yeah. Hey, can we hear—

**Griffin:** Did you ever have a Geocities? A Geocities or an XPages?

**Rachel:** No, I knew people that did. I did not.

**Griffin:** Aw man. Everybody in my middle school had an XPages. And a Geocities. Hey, do you want to know what our friends at home—

**Rachel:** Yes, please.

**Griffin:** —are all about? Uh, Tom is here, and he says 69. So like, Tom just like, bringin' that heat, I guess. That's not what Tom said. So Tom has this thing to say.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Tom says, "My wonderful thing is seeing landmarks that mean you are nearly at your destination after a long drive. If you're visiting friends in Biggleswade, it's the windmills. For going home to my parents, it's the wicker man on the N5." Yo. The place you live sounds fuckin' cool as hell!

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Well, there's the windmill, so I'm in Biggleswade. But when I get to the wicker man...

**Rachel:** This is the story of Big Giant Head for you all!

**Griffin:** That is true. Oh my god, yes. That's the name of our, technically, the name of our business, which you know. If you watched our TV show and saw the logo we made. Uh, we would drive home—or we would drive to church, and on our drive to church, there was some, like, lawn that had like, a huge paper mache head in the front of it. I forget why it was. It wasn't paper mache, it was like, some sort of weird, huge, very detailed head statue. I forget the reason for it, but yeah, that's why. We would point out and yell, "Big giant head!" every time. That's true, wow.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** My memory is so shitty, and I'm glad that has—you have a—

**Rachel:** I'm glad you got married to someone.

**Griffin:** I'm glad I married somebody who can remember every like, story that's ever been told to them. Uh, Alexis says, "Something I find wonderful is that, next year, when I'm in college, I will no longer have to ask to use the bathroom. I can just get up and go when I need to go."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Do you fuckin' remember... do you remember your—

**Rachel:** Yes!

**Griffin:** Do you remember your first week at college when it's like, time to really stretch my legs and see what I can get away with.

**Rachel:** Oh, I thought you were gonna say, do you remember having to ask to use the bathroom. Because I definitely do.

**Griffin:** I did do that at least in one class, and somebody was like, "You don't have to do—you don't have to—"

**Rachel:** Oh, you did in college? No I meant like in high school.

**Griffin:** Oh, I remember doing that, but I think I was with my college advisors, so I was lucky that I was in sort of a safe space. And I was in like, Journalism 101 class, and I was like, "I have to use the restroom." And he was like, "Then... stand up? And leave."

**Rachel:** [laughing] I'm picturing the song, like Walking on Sunshine playing in your head as you like, go to the bathroom.

**Griffin:** But I gotta say, that amount of—I got drunk on that power.

**Rachel:** [laughs] Does that explain your life today? Where you just use the bathroom?

**Griffin:** Constantly? Yeah.

**Rachel:** Constantly. [laughs]

**Griffin:** I got drunk on that power. But I mean, it's a short walk to... "Oh, I don't have to ask to go to the bathroom anymore?" To, "I'm just gonna stop going to class altogether, I think, for weeks at a time."

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, here's one last one from Autie, who says, "I just moved to Chicago..." God, hang tough. Hang tough up there, Autie.

**Rachel:** Ooh. [laughs]

**Griffin:** "And I'm very fond of the heat lamps on the train platforms." I imagine you are, especially right now.

**Rachel:** Yes. [laughs]

**Griffin:** Uh, “Huddling under them in a group on a bitterly cold day like penguins makes me feel less socially anxious, and being the first in a group of commuters to turn them on gives me a disproportionate sense of accomplishment.” Those heat lamps are... the fucking tops.

**Rachel:** Oh, I remember those! I'd forgotten about them!

**Griffin:** I saw a video on Facebook, uh, and it was like—had a caption like, “This is a real Chicagoan.” And it was somebody, um... [laughs] It was somebody with a big slice of deep dish pizza, and they were just holding it up to one of those heat lamps to get a good broil going on it.

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** And I was like, oh, god, that’s so beautiful. Man. It says something that it’s fuckin’ 25 degrees below zero there right now, and this—talking about this makes me miss Chicago so desperately.

**Rachel:** I know.

**Griffin:** Anyway, hey—we could—we should do a live show there. I feel like we could totally like, knock that one out of the park. Like, we know enough shit. Anyway, um... so that’s it for the show. Thank you so much for listening.

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, big thanks to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. They got a bunch of new shows that you should definitely go check out, like JV Club with Janet Varney, with a recent episode featuring Wonderful’s own Rachel McElroy. It was so delightful.

**Rachel:** Aw, thanks!

**Griffin:** My wife is very charming.

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** Charmed the pants off me, that episode.

**Rachel:** Thank you.

**Griffin:** It's true. I was doing house work, and my pants flew off. Out the window, and a bear caught 'em. Ran away.

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** Is there another Max Fun show that you want to promote?

**Rachel:** Um, I mean, I really like One Bad Mother.

**Griffin:** Yeah.

**Rachel:** I started listening to it before we even had Henry. And I just—I find the ladies on that show just so... so funny. And so relatable. And I would recommend it, if you uh, have kids, or if you are interested in kids, or if you are just a big proponent of women. [laughs] I would recommend listening to it.

**Griffin:** Um, and... we have a website, McElroy.family, where you can find all of the like, news about our whole stuff. About all our podcasts and videos and stuff. There's a new Monster Factory that's coming out this week that—

**Rachel:** Oh, I'm excited about that.

**Griffin:** Oh my god, it's such a good one. I'm so fucking psyched. Um, and... what else? I feel like that might be it.

**Rachel:** Yeah.

**Griffin:** Thanks to everybody who—I was very, very—I missed you very much at PodCon.

**Rachel:** You mentioned that on our last episode.

**Griffin:** I know, but I feel like I left a deep wound, okay?

**Rachel:** [laughs]

**Griffin:** I'm sorry it left a deep wound! And I'm just gushing over here with wound juice!

**Rachel:** [laughing]

**Griffin:** Bye!

[theme music plays]

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