

## Still Buffering 195: "The Killing Joke" (1988)

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[theme music plays]

**Rileigh:** Hello, and welcome to *Still Buffering*, a cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I am Rileigh Smirl.

**Sydnee:** I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Taylor:** And I'm Teylor Smirl.

**Rileigh:** I was on it that time.

**Sydnee:** You got it!

**Rileigh:** Got it.

**Taylor:** Good job.

**Rileigh:** Thank you.

**Sydnee:** That was good. That's—okay.

**Rileigh:** Phew!

**Sydnee:** We got that part of the podcast—

**Rileigh:** [out of breath] Got that out of the way.

**Sydnee:** —now we just need, like, content. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Yeah, right.

**Rileigh:** Um... I got this tea—this isn't what we're talking about. I've just been thinking about this the whole time we've been doing this intro, and it's a guava white tea, and I couldn't even tell you what a guava looks like.

[pauses]

**Sydnee:** Uhh—

**Rileigh:** But it—it's very tasty, and now I'm thinking about the fact that I like this flavor of guava, if this is even close to what guava is, or else it's just fake—it's probably just fake. But—

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

**Rileigh:** —I don't know what a real guava looks like. [quietly] And now I'm very concerned.

**Taylor:** Uh, I mean, it's like a little... green... oval.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** It's kind of pink inside, I believe.

**Sydnee:** You could google "guava." [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** I just did.

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Rileigh:** [laughs] Um—

**Sydnee:** Listeners at home, if you're interested in what a guava looks like—

**Rileigh:** [laughs] Shhh.

**Sydnee:** Rileigh just googled "guava," so—

**Rileigh:** [through laughter] I did. I just googled guava.

**Sydnee:** There it is! And there—there's a guava.

**Taylor:** I think I gave a pretty good description.

**Rileigh:** You did. That was very accurate.

**Taylor:** [simultaneously] I think that was an unnecessary google.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** It's very tasty. Anyways.

**Sydnee:** Uh—

**Taylor:** Well... that's... there you go.

**Sydnee:** Good. I'm glad that we, uh, figured that out. Uh, you guys caught up on *The Circle* yet, or...?

**Taylor:** Oh ho ho ho...

**Raleigh:** Well, new episode just dropped today.

**Taylor:** Oh no! That's what—why am I recording this podcast? I'm sorry—

**Sydnee:** I gotta go.

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] I know.

**Taylor:** —I gotta go! [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I gotta go.

**Raleigh:** And I have class after this until 6:30 tonight, so...

**Taylor:** Oh, wow!

**Sydnee:** Aw, man...

**Raleigh:** It's gonna be a while.

**Sydnee:** Uh, that I—I tweeted about how much I like *The Circle*, and *The Circle* liked my tweet, so...

**Raleigh:** I'm gettin' on that show.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Taylor and I *don't* wanna be on that show, but Raleigh does, so—  
[laughs]

**Raleigh:** I wanna be on that show so bad. It's all I want.

**Sydnee:** I just wanna keep watching that show forever.. and ever.

**Raleigh:** Hey, Circle? If you're listening, I heard you're filmed in the UK. I will be there this summer for an extended period of time—

**Sydnee:** [simultaneously] Manchester, I believe.

**Raleigh:** —so, um, if—if you're interested, while I'm, you know, studying at Oxford, I can just pop over real quick and... be a quick—quick contestant on *The Circle*.

**Sydnee:** Be on *The Circle*.

**Raleigh:** Be on *The Circle*. [laughs]

**Taylor:** I don't know, Raleigh. That's a dangerous game, because if you play as yourself, like, how many people catfish with the pictures of famous celebrities? And you, being famous—

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** —[crosstalk] Raleigh Smirl! Like... No one's gonna believe you're actually on it!

**Sydnee:** There's no way—

**Raleigh:** Every single person on *The Circle* would immediately be, like, "Aw, there's no way *she's* here. She's too famous!"

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs] It's true.

**Sydnee:** Uh, what—it truly is—what a time to be alive, that both *The Circle* is out and *Zumbo's* uh, *Just Desserts* has a second season.

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] *Just Desserts*. Oh, I love Zumbo.

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Sydnee:** What a time.

**Raleigh:** What a time!

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I know there might be some other stuff going on, but let's just focus on these two things.

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] Let's think about those. [laughs]

**Taylor:** I think the other stuff going on is making me watch a lot more TV, is the way the world's working right now. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Especially more TV like *The Circle*.

**Taylor:** Yes, and like *Zumbo's Great Desserts*.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Uh... I just finished that, the new season of that. It's—oh, it's amazing. I—I don't wanna spoil anything, but I can't wait for y'all to watch it, 'cause it's—

**Raleigh:** I haven't even gotten to start it yet. I just—

**Taylor:** There are a couple contestants that I just absolutely adore.

**Sydnee:** I, uh—I love that show because it is a—it's a baking, cooking, whatever you wanna call it show, that I can also get the kids to watch.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Because the desserts are so magical, and the dessert factory is so magical that's it's—that they're like, "Whoa, that one just released smoke! Is it gonna change colors? This is so cool!"

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** "That was a couch, but you ate it!" [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** It's like Willy Wonka, except real! Is Zumbo Willy Wonka?

**Sydnee:** Huh?

**Rileigh:** Is Zumbo Willy Wonka?

**Sydnee:** Is he, uh... I don't—well—

**Rileigh:** Maybe.

**Sydnee:** —maybe—do you think maybe, like, there will eventually be, like, a championship round and the winner will get to take over Zumbo's dessert factory?

**Rileigh:** [simultaneously] Take over Zumbo's factory?

**Taylor:** I don't—

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** I don't know, maybe.

**Rileigh:** And he just kind of, like, passes on the keys, and then just waves and just evaporates into thin air.

**Sydnee:** But doesn't it have to—

**Rileigh:** He was never really a person to begin with. Zumbo is just an idea that lives within all of us. [laughs]

**Taylor:** I believe it.

**Sydnee:** That—that'll be when they do Zumbo Jr., because it has to be a child, 'cause an adult would wanna do it *their* way.

**Rileigh:** Right.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I don't—

**Taylor:** Um—[pauses] no, go ahead.

**Sydnee:** I was just gonna say, an adult would wanna make cakes... you know.

**Raleigh:** The *boring* way.

**Sydnee:** The *boring* way. That just look like cakes.

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] With recipes.

**Taylor:** Not, like, upside down and flying and on fire.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** [holding back laughter] As all desserts should be.

**Raleigh:** With a person that pops out of the middle.

**Taylor:** Uh, that just—you said couch—edible couches. Uh, this just brought back a memory. There's a Japanese show where they make things—they make household objects out of chocolate, like, to high, high detail, like, accuracy—

**Sydnee:** Wow!

**Taylor:** —and the whole—the whole point of the TV show, though—the don't show you the making of it. The whole point of the TV show is they make people... try to decide if this object is real or chocolate, and then they have to take a bite of it to see if they were right or not.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs loudly]

**Taylor:** [through laughter] So sometimes it's just people just bitin' down on a shoe and bein' like, "Nope! It's a shoe!" [laughs]

**Rileigh:** That's very good. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [through laughter] I just need—I don't—I don't wanna watch the show as much as I want a compilation of those moments, of people just—

**Taylor:** That's—

**Sydnee:** —biting objects that aren't chocolate.

**Taylor:** —that's the only way that I have watched this. I've never actually watched the real show, I've just gone down YouTube holes where I'm just watching compilations of people biting random things and being like, "Yay, it's chocolate! Oh no, it's a purse!" [laughs]

**Sydnee:** What is it with our obsession of making things out of food? I would also watch, like, a compilation of just the episodes of *Project Runway* where they made clothes out of food.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** If I could just see those, 'cause they usually did that once per season. Like, just the one where they made it out of food, please. No other.

**Rileigh:** No others, please. I don't care who wins.

**Sydnee:** [through laughter] I just need to see more things that are edible around me!

**Taylor:** I just think that's fascinating. It goes back to that—that initial Willy Wonka memory of just walking through a place where you can just eat everything.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** When he eats that cup, that little buttercup cup—

**Taylor:** Oh yeah.

**Sydnee:** —that little flower cup.

**Taylor:** Hm.



**Sydnee:** [through laughter] One of the greatest moments in movie history!

**Raleigh:** Since I know you all are dying to know... I want you to just know and be comforted in the fact that I am still watching *The Bachelor*, and I am still on my mission to get on *The Bachelor*—

**Sydnee:** [tired] Okay...

**Raleigh:** —and destroy it from the inside—

**Sydnee:** So you, uh—

**Raleigh:** —and create a new *Bachelor*.

**Sydnee:** So you were—you were part of—you were part of the audience viewing champagnegate? Hashtag #champagnegate?

**Raleigh:** [loudly] Yes, oh my gosh!

**Sydnee:** I just saw that—

**Raleigh:** That was the funniest—the funniest moment—

**Sydnee:** —that GIF [pronounced "Jif"], yeah.

**Raleigh:** —that has ever happened on TV. It was so good. It was *so* good. I, uh—I would never recommend that anyone, you know, unironically watch *The Bachelor*, but... watch it for that moment, because it's just so good. If you wanna see some awful person get champagne just shot up—shot up their nose and all over their face—

**Sydnee:** [simultaneously] Get champagned in the face. [laughs quietly]

[pauses]

**Raleigh:** So good.

**Sydnee:** Uh, I—the GIF [pronounced "Jif"] was good.

**Raleigh:** It was good. GIF [pronounced with a hard "g"]. The GIF [pronounced with a hard "g"] was good.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm. I had no idea what was happening, but I did say, "Justin, look at this! Ha ha!" [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Well, Hannah Ann stole Kelsey's champagne that Kelsey was going to give to Peter, and then Hannah Ann opened it with Peter, but really there was a secret second bottle of champagne, so Hannah Ann *didn't* steal Kelsey's champagne. Hannah Ann was drinking the champagne that was there for her. So Kelsey got mad for no reason, and then Kelsey drank the champagne with Peter, and it ends up all over her face.

**Sydnee:** Well...

**Raleigh:** There you go. Champagnegate.

**Taylor:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Now, Raleigh has both brought the tea and spilled the tea, so... [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** The guava tea.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] The guava tea and the *Bachelor* tea.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** We're soaked in tea, here at *Still Buff*. What are we gonna talk about, though? [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Yeah, none of this! Interestingly enough. Uh, we're goin' a whole different direction. There—there was a moment of a segue there, and then we just bulldozed past it, [through laughter] so I guess we're just gonna... just... uh, yeah!

**Sydnee:** That's okay. We're doubling back to—we—we—people know. You teased it last week.

**Taylor:** So, yeah. So, I brought to the table this week, um, the, uh... comic, the—the—the small graphic novel, uh, *Batman: The Killing Joke*. Uh, written by

Alan Moore, illustrated by Brian Bolland. Came out, I believe, in '88, but is kind of held up as one of the, like, most important Joker stories, one of the, you know, books you have to read if you're into Batman, if you're into comics.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Uh, and definitely a book that—I first read it when I was, uh, I think a senior—a senior in high school. Um... and I—if you'd asked me at the time, and definitely in college, I would have said it was my favorite comic book. That seems very long ago to me now, um, but I still think it's—it's... a fascinating book, especially right now where we're having—you know, *The Joker* is winning all the awards, is a lot of Joker fandom that's very rabid nowadays. And it's, you know—back when—when I was a fan of this book, that wasn't quite—he was a popular character, but it wasn't quite what it is now.

Uh, it's—it's very, uh... it's a lot more intense now. [laughs] And I am not—not so much a part of it anymore. So, anyway—

**Sydnee:** When—how do you think—how has the—is this, do you think, the origins of that, though? Because I do feel like there's a—a special, uh... I don't wanna say "obsession," 'cause that's not fair.

It's not an obse—but people do—the Joker has a fandom that you don't see a lot of, uh, comic book or movie villains necessarily cultivate. Um, 'cause it's like a—it's like a love/hate. Like, he's a bad guy, but there are a lot of people who are very devoted to Joker love.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Well, um... yeah. I think—'cause I think part of it comes from the fact that just in the Batman world to begin with, it's one that I've always found the rogues gallery to be more interesting and engaging as characters than actual Batman.

I love Batman, but, like, there's a lot of sympathy built into the characters, uh, the bad guys. Like, they all have—just as Batman has kind of a tragic origin story that makes him Batman, all the—all of the villains have tragic origin stories that make them villains.

Uh, and the Joker never really had one. You know, the Joker's one of the earliest Batman villains, and he never—he never really had a backstory. Uh, this is kind of the first one that gives him one.

Now, if it's really him telling the truth, that's one of the debates about this book, but it is one that gives him *his* sympathetic backstory, and I think a lot of people probably—especially, I'm gonna be honest, a lot of young people that haven't really experienced the world, that have had their first brushes with pain and with rejection.

I think there's something in relating to the idea of, like, the pain you're given can justify you being a... a big ol' jerk. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Well, and I think there's definitely—it's—it's weird, 'cause having—and Raleigh, I'll be interested to see your take on this because of this aspect.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Knowing that this came out in the late 80's, and, like, you would've read it in the 90's, and that's when I—I read this a very long time ago, so I remembered little bits of it, but I had to read it again for this 'cause it's been so long.

Um, I feel like the kind of, like, gleeful nihilism... uh, that is represented in it is—was very much in vogue at that moment in time? Like, this is—this is—like, I could see this fitting into a lot of the 90's psyche very well. This idea that, like, "[bored skater dude voice?] Who cares... everything's so messed up anyway... what can we even do..."

Like, there was a lot of that. It was very—it was a very popular kind of aesthetic.

**Raleigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Which is *not* where we are anymore.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** And so I—I could see-like, I could see where maybe a younger me would've connected to some of those themes, whereas, like, the me now does not at all.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. I mean, I don't think I do as personally connect to those themes, and I feel like it's harder to for my... generation too, almost, because it's like—there's this new surge and wave of, like, we have to be... a good balance of optimistic and pessimistic, because we all feel responsible for, like, fixing the problems that have been given to us in the world. So—

**Sydnee:** So, like, realists.

**Raleigh:** —yeah. Like, you can't be "Well, everything's awful. We can't fix it, so let's just take this excuse to, like, be—you know, whatever we wanna be, and be awful, and do whatever we want."

But it's also not, like, "Everything's great and we don't have to fix anything!"

Like, there's that—that good middle ground that I feel like we would—I mean, I read this and was very much like, "I get it? I don't relate to it, but I get it." It wasn't hard for me to understand.

**Sydnee:** Did you enjoy it? 'Cause this was your first reading.

**Raleigh:** I did enjoy it.

**Sydnee:** It was your first—

**Raleigh:** It was my first reading. Um, it reminded me very much—which makes sense, because it's by Alan Moore—I had to read *V for Vendetta*, the graphic novel, and watch the movie for, um, an English class last semester.

And just the—the style of the storytelling reminded me very much of that. Um, and... the, um—the themes were all kind of the same. Kind of just, like, it—*V for Vendetta*—I don't know when that was written, but it was in the 80's or 90's, right?

**Taylor:** Uh, yes.

**Raleigh:** Some—sometime like that? But those kind of themes that were written back then, but you could still see them being very prevalent in different ways

today. Like, I could still see themes of this book being... prevalent to modern day, but I did enjoy it.

**Taylor:** Well, and I do—I wanna briefly summarize the book. I mean, we all know, you know, Batman and the Joker fight. Basic point. But—

**Sydney:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs] [fake shock] What?!

**Taylor:** —uh—yeah. [laughs quietly] Uh—

**Sydney:** Batman is supposed to be the good guy, the Joker's supposed to be the bad guy.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydney:** We—we can all debate the nuance of that.

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] I totally missed that.

**Taylor:** [simultaneously] Well—

**Sydney:** But—[laughs]

**Taylor:** But—so basically, uh, the Joker escapes Arkham. He shoots Barbara Gordon/Batgirl. Uh, he kidnaps Commissioner Gordon and he takes him to his weird creepy circus, and tries to basically drive him crazy, 'cause he's operating on this premise that one bad day can drive a person insane, can make a person, you know, break.

And through this, we're shown flashbacks of a possible origin story for the Joker, where basically he's just a guy that had a *really* bad day.

Um, and this is all kind of framed with Batman grappling with the idea of, like, he and the Joker keep going back and forth. One day, one of them is going to have to kill the other, that they're on this road and they can't get off of it, and he wants to reason with the Joker and get off of this.

Um, and then, you know, the story ends with—with Batman coming to, you know, save the day, Commissioner Gordon's rescued. He does not break, and they do it by the book. Bring the Joker in and, you know, put him back into Arkham. So that's just the—

**Sydnee:** Although—[sighs] they do—they do end with the Batman and Joker just laughing.

**Taylor:** Well, that's true. Uh, you know, there's actually a couple—there's a funny interpretation of the last page, um, that was Grant Morrison that actually proposed it. Or—I don't think he's the first one to propose it, but he talked about it in an interview famously, where he sa—he says that his interpretation of those last few panels is that the Batman strangles the Joker—

**Raleigh:** Hm.

**Sydnee:** Huh.

**Taylor:** —and that's why the laughter cut off, and then it goes black. Uh, and it's to mimic that story that he tells at the end. Um, I don't think—I mean, you know, that's—I feel like the comic itself kind of.. that would not make sense given, I think, that there's a bigger theme going on under the story. So it would not end that way.

And also because from this, after Barbara Gordon was shot, she's then—you know, she's in a wheelchair. She becomes Oracle, so this story is canon. It goes canon in universe, and the Joker is still alive so, it—you know. This is not the canonical ending of the Joker.

**Raleigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. No, I—I did not interpret it that way.

**Raleigh:** Yeah, me either.

**Sydnee:** You know. At face value it did not occur to me that that was happening. Um, I thought it was... kind of undermining, like—you think that, uh, goodness or order or whatever has triumphed, because the Commissioner still wants to do things by the book, does not wanna just murder the Joker for what he's done.

He wants to arrest him. And Batman wants to rehabilitate him! I mean, he says that very clearly. He wants—he wa—he believes that he can get better.

**Rileigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** And not want to do these things. And, like, all of this is—seems to be what has won the day. And then I felt like that that last—Batman laughing with him at the end was, like, a way of kind of undermining that a little, and saying, "Well, did it really though? Or is there still more—" like, Batman specifically... is there more darkness there than any of us are willing to admit? You know?

**Taylor:** Uh, I mean, I kind of—I've always enjoyed the reading of Batman that is, like, just as much as all of these villains had something happen to their life that broke them in such a way that they've changed, and now they're this supervillain, that Batman's just—he's exactly the same thing. It's just the thing he targets are villains. So, like... he is one of them, but he has some sort of self awareness of that, you know? Like—

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** He's like Dexter.

**Taylor:** May—maybe? Kind of?

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Except for he doesn't kill 'em.

**Taylor:** No, but he—he—

**Rileigh:** He just—

**Taylor:** —ye—yeah.

**Rileigh:** —hits 'em. [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** I guess that he has the exact—he's a lot closer to the villains than he is to a normal person. Like, you know, Commissioner Gordon having that horrible day and everything happening to him, he's still a good man who wants to do things by the book. Batman is... is aware of goodness and fights for it, but maybe has something that is broken in him that he can't... really belong in—in the same kind of humanity as Commissioner Gordon. I don't know.



**Sydnee:** I—I do think—

[think in background]

**Sydnee:** —I think that it's interesting, 'cause I watched—even though we're not—we're not talking about the movie *Joker*. I did watch that, um, after reading this, because I was curious to see if there were—I—you know, Teylor, you had said that there were some similarities in the interpretation of the character. And so I was curious, and there was so much talk about it. I really hadn't intended on seeing the movie because of a lot of the talk about it.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It didn't sound like something I would enjoy.

**Teylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And, full disclosure, I can't say I enjoyed it... in the s—in the word "enjoy."

**Rileigh:** I didn't a ton either, yeah, yeah.

**Sydnee:** I did not *enjoy* what I experienced. I, uh—I found parts of it very impressive, uh, in terms of Joaquin Phoenix's performance. I thought he is a good, talented actor, and he is very talented in what he does. Um, and I can understand and respect that.

But, like, it's so dark, and that's not really my thing, so there it is. Um, but I did—there was an aspect to it that I found in both of them where the Joker does have a bad day, in the book, *The Killing Joke*, in the sense that he wants to [laughs quietly] be a stand up comedian... but he can't seem to make it, ostensibly 'cause he's not funny.

**Rileigh:** He's just not good. [laughs]

**Teylor:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Like...

**Sydnee:** So he can't—he can't succeed in the—what he wants. Uh, and so he tries to make money quickly by doing something illegal, and he needs to make

money quickly for a—it's a noble motivation, right? He has a wife and a baby on the way, so he needs money to support them. That's very noble, but then he—he tries to engage in a criminal activity to, you know, succeed in this goal.

And in the midst of this, in a totally freak accident, his wife dies, in a totally unrelated accidental thing that has nothing to do with anything. And, uh—and then, in the midst of his criminal activity, he falls into... [pauses] clown... juice?

**Taylor:** [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Yep.

**Taylor:** Uh, no—well, I mean—

**Raleigh:** [sing-song] Clown juice!

**Taylor:** —the—it, I believe—

**Sydney:** [laughs breathlessly]

**Raleigh:** [sing-song] Clown juice, clown juice.

**Taylor:** [crosstalk] It's not clown juice.

**Sydney:** [through laughter] I—I mean, I don't know what—what it—[wheezes]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** It's some chemical, 'cause there's a chemical company next to a playing card manufacturer company.

**Sydney:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Which... you know, that's where one thing—as I was rereading it, especially going through the past stuff where you kind of have to go, like, "Oh, but this is still a comic book."

**Sydney:** Right, right, right.

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] Yeah, right, right.

**Taylor:** This is still an origin story of a supervillain, and this is not some gritty reboot. This is... there's still a lot of, like, the wackiness of, you know—I mean, I don't—I didn't know that you had giant industrial complexes to make playing cards, but—

**Raleigh:** Yeah!

**Taylor:** —in—[through laughter] in Gotham, you do!

**Raleigh:** I guess they just have what—they don't play by any rules there.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydney:** It's just a weird vat of stuff that makes your skin white, and your hair green, and your mouth red... it's just, like... [pauses] what?

**Taylor:** I mean... that's comics, you know?

**Raleigh:** [quiet sing-song] Clown juice!

**Taylor:** Like, yeah. Whatev—whatever it is, it's... it's a comic.

**Sydney:** Clown juice.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydney:** [laughs] Um, and so, like, as a result of all this, his theory is that this was a very bad day, obviously. It's a bad day. So he's justified in everything else he does. And I think you see, like, that definitely it's not one bad day, it's not one bad thing. There's a whole series of unfortunate... [holding back laughter] events.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydney:** In the movie, that justify him doing the things he does. But either way, there's a—it reeks to me a bit of privilege.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** The idea that, like, I am experiencing things that are hard... that are not fair, for sure. Not fair, not necessarily deserved. But as a result of those things, I get to do bad things to the world.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** That—it just—there was—I mean, like... you know, not everybody gets to be a stand up comedian. I'm sorry. *I* couldn't be one.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I mean, you know. It's just—so, like—

**Rileigh:** [exaggerated silly voice] We're sit down comedians, 'cause we sit at our microphones! Ha ha!

**Taylor:** Oh...

**Sydnee:** I just—I feel like—

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** —and I felt that, and maybe the movie is going back and coloring my experience of the book, but I felt that a lot. Like, come on, man... like, really? You want me to accept that, like, "Oh, well obviously now you get to go murder people. That's true! That's fair! That's the way—"

**Rileigh:** "You're right, yeah!"

**Taylor:** Well—

**Sydnee:** "That's the way things work!"

**Rileigh:** "Them's the breaks!"

**Taylor:** But I think that's why—and I think that's one of the things that I—one of the, I think, important things—I don't think the themes in *The Killing Joke* are "Bad things can happen to you and then you're bad actions are justified." I don't think that's what Alan Moore is saying at all. And I don't—because I think that

this book is often referenced as a lot of the inspiration for *The Dark Knight*, the Chris—uh, the—

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** —yeah. Um, and, uh, the thing that happens in both the book and *The Dark Knight* is the Joker's trying to prove his point, right? In the book it's the setup with Gordon.

In the movie, he's got the two boats that are gonna—one has to explode the other, or they're gonna die, so they have to turn against their fellow man. And in both situations, Gordon does not break. He doesn't want the Joker dead. He wants it by the books. The boats don't kill each other. They choose to have faith in each other.

Both things reiterate the idea that the Joker is *wrong*, that he has this idea to justify his actions, that, you know, inside of everybody is some sort of unhinged monster just like him, *he's just bein' honest*. Which is such, like, that internet rhetoric, you know? Or that—

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** —it *is* kind of that modern stand up comedian, like, rhetoric. Of, like, "I'm just sayin' what everybody's thinkin'!" Like—

**Sydnee:** Yeah, that's true. That's true.

**Taylor:** But not—both things make a point of saying, not everyone's thinking that. Like, you *are* alone. You—you *are* the one that is—you've given in to your baser instincts. You've used your pain as an excuse to cause other people pain. And you're alone in that, in that justification. Nobody's waiting for you to come along and free us all from our cages.

And that's the one—I'm not gonna get into anything else about the new movie as far as critiques. *That's* the thing that I think it lost, is that this is the first time that you've had that setup. 'Cause not every interpretation of the Joker has that.

Sometimes he's just goofy and weird, and I kinda almost prefer that Joker. But if you're gonna use this Joker that has this thesis statement, the new movie is the first one that kinda said, "And he was right all along!"

And that really bothered me! 'Cause I think that—

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** —that was an important tenet to the Batman universe.

**Sydnee:** I agree. I wanna—I wanna go into this more, 'cause we haven't talked a lot about Barbara Gordon.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Which I think we need to talk about. And I also want to talk about mental illness, as it relates to this book, and somewhat the movie, a little bit. Um, but before we do that...

**Rileigh:** Let's check the group message!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Sydnee:** Uh, sisters, the first thing I wanna tell you all about, uh, on the group message, are my pants.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** [through laughter] Okay?

**Taylor:** Great!

**Rileigh:** Tell us about your pants.

**Sydnee:** Uh, I am so excited that Betabrand is a sponsor of our show now, because I bought their dress pant, uh, yoga pants a long time ago. Uh, it's been several years. Um, because I was looking—I actually found them in, like, a group for doctor moms who were looking for good pants to wear to work, that *were* dress pants but would feel really comfortable and get you through the whole day,

and especially as a—I know that this—this—[pause] this—you're gonna make fun of me for this—[holding back laughter] as a doctor—

**Raleigh:** Ughhh...

**Sydnee:** —I actually spend—no, I actually spend a lot of time—like, when you're examining patients, I'm, like, up and down. Like, I gotta look at feet, sometimes I'm down on the floor, lookin' at things—

**Raleigh:** Gotta look at those feet.

**Sydnee:** —I mean, I'm crawlin' around—

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** —you gotta be able to move. You gotta be flexible, and you gotta feel comfortable, and the days can get really long, and it's really hard to find pants that look professional, that look nice, that you can wear to work, um, but that also will be comfortable like that and won't get wrinkly and, you know, will be stretchy, will breathe, will feel comfortable, and you could even wear—like, you can wear at home, you can wear at the office, you could wear out to dinner? If you—if you, like, pair 'em with a nice top.

Like, they're super comfortable. Um, and Betabrand's dress pant yoga pants were exactly the—the solution I needed. I've had them for several years, and I love them. They are my go-to work pants, and for, like, any kind of nice event where I just wanna get dressed real quickly and feel comfortable in what I'm wearing and be able to move.

And with kids around, like, being able to crawl around on the floor and chase people and stuff in my pants and not have to worry about 'em gettin' all, like, wrinkled and stuff? It's so great.

And they have all kinds of colors and patterns and cuts and styles. You can get boot cut, like I have. You can get straight leg or skinny. Um, whatever you—whatever you want. They have premium denim, now. They have other clothes, too, Betabrand has—I have a sweater from there that I really love. But, um—but the pants, I cannot tell you enough how much I love these Betabrand pants.

Uh, Teylor, if our listeners want to check out Betabrand, what should they do?

**Taylor:** Well, right now, our listeners can get 20% off their first order. You just go to [betabrand.com/buffering](http://betabrand.com/buffering). That's 20% off your first order at [betabrand.com/buffering](http://betabrand.com/buffering).

Millions of women agree: these are the most comfortable pants you'll ever wear to work. [Betabrand.com/buffering](http://Betabrand.com/buffering) for 20% off.

[pauses]

**Raleigh:** Hey! [pauses] I—are—are you—

**Sydnee:** Hey!

**Taylor:** [simultaneously] Hey!

**Raleigh:** —are—are you a small business owner? Say yes.

**Sydnee:** [simultaneously] No.

**Raleigh:** Say yes.

**Sydnee:** Oh. Yes!

**Raleigh:** Did you get into your line of work because it's your passion?

**Sydnee:** Yes!

**Raleigh:** But is—is tedious administrative work keeping you from doing the part of the job that you actually love most?

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** That's actually true. That is—that is right.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Well, HoneyBook can take those tasks off your to-do list. HoneyBook is an online business management tool that organizes your client communication, bookings, contracts, and invoices, all in one place so you can get back to doin'



those parts of your job that are actually fun, that you actually care about doing. So you can stop worrying so much about, you know, keepin' track of all your appointments, all your invoices, all your papers, all your documents. HoneyBook 'take cares' of all of it for you.

**Sydnee:** I also think it's a great nickname, maybe, that I'll give Justin.

**Raleigh:** Hey, honey book!

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Honey book!

**Raleigh:** Yeah, that's very cute!

**Taylor:** I like that.

**Sydnee:** What—what're you up to, honey book?

**Raleigh:** Um... it's perfect for freelancers, entrepreneurs, small business owners like both of you are now, because that's what I have... made you—

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** —um, and if you wanna consolidate services you already use like Quickbooks, Google Suite, Excel, Mailchimp, they can do all of that for you. But, you know, overall they just simplify your to-do list, and make it so you can stay in control of all of the things you have to do, but make it a lot easier.

So, Taylor, if our listeners want to check out HoneyBook, honey book, what should they do?

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** Well, uh, you should go to, uh... [honeybook.com/](https://honeybook.com/)—or, sorry—[tryhoneybook.com/buffering](https://tryhoneybook.com/buffering), because right now HoneyBook is offering our listeners 50% off. Uh, payment is flexible, and the promotion applies whether you pay monthly or annually. Go to [tryhoneybook.com/buffering](https://tryhoneybook.com/buffering). That's 50% off your first year. Uh, [tryhoneybook.com/buffering](https://tryhoneybook.com/buffering). One more time. Do it! Make things simple.

**Rileigh:** Do it.

**Sydnee:** Do it.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Sydnee:** So I think—I think the thing that stood out to me the most on this reread of *The Killing Joke*, um, aside from all the, like—the—the Joker's kind of perspective on the world—uh, first of all, I remembered that this is where Barbara Gordon got shot, and as a result of this used a wheelchair and became Oracle, because I read a lot of *Birds of Prey* books.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Where she was Oracle. Yeah, loved that. And so I—I knew that this is where that—I remembered that this was the book in which that happened. I did *not* remember.. what the Joker did to her after that.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That—I—on—on reread, I don't know if I had just erased that from my... brain, or whatever. But the Joker, after he shoots her, um, take—he—he kidnaps Commissioner Gordon, so he's not there to see this happen. He's—he strips Barbara Gordon naked and takes pictures of her.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Bleeding and naked. And then uses those pictures to terrorize Commissioner Gordon, by putting them inside, like, the—whatever the tunnel—

**Rileigh:** Yeah, the thing that he's—

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

**Rileigh:** —that he's in.

**Sydnee:** Funhouse?

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Whatever it's supposed to be.

**Rileigh:** Clown juice factory.

**Sydnee:** Yes. [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Well, no.

**Taylor:** No, we're not—

**Sydnee:** This is at the carnival. [laughs quietly] This is at the carnival. But, uh, he puts—he puts those pictures up so that the Commissioner has to see them, and see this—these horrific images of his—of his daughter in such a, you know, horrible condition, and bleeding, and desperate for help and all that. And in an attempt to, as he says, drive him insane.

Uh, and I... that, to me, was really hard. I had forgotten that, and I—I—man, that was hard reading on repeat. Because it is—all of her suffering, uh, and her vulnerability, is used in the service of the story of the Joker and Batman and Commissioner Gordon.

**Taylor:** Well, it—it's... you know, a few steps short of a classic case of—of fridging a woman. Um, which you all know that term, correct?

**Sydnee:** Yes, but I think it would be helpful to—

**Taylor:** Uh—

**Sydnee:** Elaborate.

**Rileigh:** Yeah, I actually don't, so—

**Taylor:** I can't think of the comic—[stammers] the—the origin of this. It's basically a—a—when you kill off a female character to inspire a male character to action.

**Rileigh:** Okay.

**Taylor:** Um, it comes famously from, like, a male superhero who found his female love interest dead in his refrigerator. Um, and it's—you know, it's

something that we see in—we see in film, we see in comic books, and it's kind of—it's—I feel like, you know, in more modern comic discussions where—where, I think, women are involved in these discussions, it's really heinous.

Because it kind of creates the idea that these women are just props, you know? To be disposed of as needed to drive the story, versus having a story of their own.

Which, in the case of Barbara Gordon, is—is particularly painful, and I agree. It's really hard for me to reread now, um, because it's like—Barbara Gordon is—she's Batgirl, you know? Like, there's—

**Rileigh:** Right.

**Taylor:** —there's a whole... like, this wasn't—this isn't even her title. Like, she—she existed in her own comics, and this story took, you know, took her mobility away from her. And it's just very—you know, she becomes Oracle, it's a really beautiful story, but I do agree that it's like—it's not a sacrifice that she made. It wasn't part of her story. It was just... in service of a bunch of dudes' stories.

**Sydnee:** Um, it was a... it refers to a *Green Lantern*.

**Taylor:** Oh, okay. That was it.

**Sydnee:** Story from 1994, in which he—Kyle Rayner comes home and finds his girlfriend, Alexandra DeWitt, in the refrigerator.

**Taylor:** Thank you. Thank you for looking that up.

**Sydnee:** She'd been killed by Major Force. [through laughter] I am not familiar very much with the Glu—Green Lantern [crosstalk]—

**Rileigh:** You're so... knowledgeable of the Green—the—the Green Lantern—

**Sydnee:** No, I had to look this up.

**Rileigh:** —canon.

**Sydnee:** I—I had heard this term. I knew what it referenced, but I—yeah, I did not know that. Uh, yeah. I felt that way. I felt very much like she was being, like, used in that sense.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And the fact that she is naked, also, it just felt so... [sighs] it felt very, um... I don't know.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It was just—she was so exposed, as a human, as a character, as a—literally, figuratively. I thought that was very hard, and I—I agree with that kind of interpretation of it.

Um, I think that it's hard, because it is the origin of Oracle, who is such a great character and I enjoyed so much in those books. Um, but on the flip side, it is—that's the last of Batgirl as she was before, who was also a great character, and who has kind of had a—like, a—a resurgence, as Batgirl has been brought back in—in new iterations of the character, and stuff like that.

And I think—I think even Gail Simone has said, you know, it's nice to have both. I think we can celebrate both characters. Um, because it is not... I don't know. The way that—the way that Oracle was created is not necessarily the most... positive, affirming story, you know?

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** You know, she—because it's not her story.

**Rileigh:** Well, and I mean, for someone like me who has never read anything else in that canon, any Oracle stories at all, this is, like, it. There's no—I don't get that "Well at least this is, like, kind of the beginning, in some way, of a *good* character story line."

In terms of *this* book and this story, that's just her treatment as a character. You don't get that sort of redemption. And that was very hard for me, but also... I don't know. I—I see it as... I hate to say—[sighs] it's hard, because it is important to the Joker's character, to understand him as a—a villain, and also a person, and how far his boundaries go. But it also—

**Sydnee:** He has none.

**Rileigh:** —yeah, yeah. But it also—I don't know, was just hard to watch as—or read, I guess.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. It—it—I think it's—I think it's very hard to read, and it is—so you know, Oracle is a—a super cool, um, hero who is—she's a genius. She's, like a computer genius and just a genius genius.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** And she helps the Birds of Prey, which is a bunch of female superheroes, by, like—she can do all kinds of fancy computer stuff.

**Raleigh:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** And, like, you know, gadgets and all that, the techno end of things, and hack into any system, and all that kind of stuff. And, like, talks to them through headsets to, like, supervise, oversee, manage a mission and make things happen for them remotely.

**Raleigh:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Um, because she is a wheelchair, so she is not necessarily out in the field with them.

**Raleigh:** Yeah, okay.

**Sydnee:** So it's a very cool character. It shows, like, the power of the brain. That's why—that's why I was always very attracted to the character—

**Raleigh:** Yeah, that makes sense.

**Sydnee:** —'cause it's like, "She uses her *brain*. I've got that!"

**Raleigh:** "Wow."

**Sydnee:** "I'm—my arms are so wimpy, but I've got a brain!"

**Raleigh:** Big brain.

**Taylor:** Well, and I do—I—I—I agree, because I remember—I remember when they were—I guess it wasn't a retcon, because they do—Oracle still exists in the DC—in the Batman universe. Um, but when they decided to, you know, start

*Batgirl*, kind of erase that part from this story line.—the new Batgirl's history—you know, she's just Batgirl.

And I think it was Gail Simone that wrote this really beautiful letter about it, about how she just—she wanted to see Barbara Gordon fly again, and it kind of felt very poignant, because—well, um—you know, she was—she had that identity taken away from her in such, just, an offhand way, in service of something else. And to have it given back to her, in a comics universe where you could have many versions of a character exist at once.

**Sydnee:** Yes. [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** But to have that, you know, reinvigoration of that and have that given back to her, I felt was very... at first I was kind of like, "No, Oracle's great. We have Oracle. Oracle's... leave Oracle alone." Then I was like, "No, I—I get it. Like, you're right. It is—it is good that we have both out there.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Yeah, there's no reason we can't have both. There have been—I saw that thing on *The Flash* with the infinite Earths.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** They were like—

**Raleigh:** There are so many.

**Sydnee:** —I saw, like, three different Supermans. It's fine. [laughs] Uh, many Batmans, too.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Batmens?

**Taylor:** Batmens?

**Sydnee:** Batman? Batmans? Batmans?

**Raleigh:** Batboys.

**Sydnee:** And then there's that—anyway. I was gonna talk—there's that new movie coming out where there's a literal bat man, *Morbius* or something.

**Rileigh:** Mothman?

**Sydnee:** No.

**Rileigh:** [snorts]

**Sydnee:** He's a Spider-Man villain? Morbi—Morbius?

**Taylor:** Uh...

**Sydnee:** Morb-something?

**Taylor:** Okay.

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Anyway. He's, like, half bat, half man. He's a literal bat... man. He's a literal bat man. Batman. Anyway.

**Rileigh:** [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** Uh... [crosstalk]

**Sydnee:** It's unrelated to Batman. It's a whole other thing. But he's, like, got bat blood in him.

**Rileigh:** Well, they might be related.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** No.

**Sydnee:** Uh, the other—the other thing, though, that I did wanna mention, because it's talked about in *The Killing Joke*. I feel like it is very prominent in the movie *Joker*, but it's talked about in *The Killing Joke*. It—there's so much use of



terms from—that I think they're sometimes genuinely referencing mental illness, and then sometimes they're using them in a pejorative sense.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** When we talk about things like madness or insanity or... lunacy, or—you know? And—and these words... sometimes when they're talking about cra—crazy is the best example of this—sometimes they're actually trying to use these terms to reference a diagnosed mental illness. And then sometimes they're being used as, like, "wild."

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Well—

**Sydnee:** And I have—I—

**Taylor:** "Crazy" is not an actual diagnosis, though. Correct? Right? Like, I have—

**Sydnee:** No.

**Taylor:** —I have decided this is your diagnoses: you are crazy. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Crazy.

**Sydnee:** No, no, of course. These are not. But sometimes they're—they're used to... I mean, there's a question here. Is the Joker mentally ill, or is he... a bad person?

**Taylor:** Right.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** And I feel like there's a danger, because he talks about this idea that, like, "I'm going to do these things to make Commissioner Gordon go mad. I'm gonna make him go crazy," is what he is saying.

And then once he's crazy, he'll also do bad things, or see that, you know, he could be capable of bad things, or whatever. And all that.

And I—I—for me, that just—it's really hard, and maybe this is just over time we've hopefully evolved to see that this is problematic. Um, because people with mental illness are much more likely to harm themselves than anyone else.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** And I—I see too often this conflated. Uh, and I think in the movie *Joker* it's *definitely* there.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** He is said to have some—I don't know what his diagnosis is, they don't say. But he is on psychiatric medication, so he is seeing a therapist, counselor, psychologist, something of that stripe. I don't know what her credentials are.

So he is diagnosed with something, and he is on medications, and this is *part* of why he does the things he does. I don't think we can—it's not, like, said, "This is why." But it's definitely in there. It's in the milieu, along with the bad things that happen to him.

And I just—I really would like to push back against that. He's a comic book villain. He's an exaggerated caricature of evil.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** And that should not be connected to... mental illness.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** To actual, diagnosable mental illness. It's a very dangerous connection that—and we have a whole history of it. It's still the same thing, every time you hear word of a shooting.

Everybody wants to talk about mental illness, and it stigmatizes people with mental illness and makes us think that they are dangerous inherently, or capable of acts of great evil that someone without mental illness may not be capable of, and none of that is true.

And I just—that was the other thing that *The Killing Joke* hints at that bothered me, *The Joker* I feel like embraces so much more. Um, and I—that always irks me.

I hate when I see that in a film. That no, no, somebody with mental illness is not this... dangerous person that we need to, like, stay away from and be scared of.

**Rileigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** It's and who needs help, and medicine, and doctors, and therapy, just like somebody with any other chronic illness.

**Taylor:** I agree. Um, that the conflation of, like, evil and ill in terms of, like, your mental welfare is very—it's a massive problem in our society today, I think, that—I think that people that have grown up—I mean, and I think part of—'cause I spent a lot of time trying to figure out—I was obsessed with this character when I was young.

Like, my first tattoo was Harley Quinn diamonds, and, like, what was it about this character that I loved so much that I had this? And I think, you know, when you realize that, like—'cause it took me a long time to kind of grapple with the things that were... it was so hard to talk about, like, "I think—I think I have, like, problems. Like, I have anxiety, I have depression. Like, I think these things affect me."

Because those things were, like, hush hush words, you know? You—the stigmatization of that—like, "Well, that means you're—you know, you're a crazy person! You're—you're bad, you're wrong."

Like, that... there's a weird sort of sympathy that—and I'm just trying to also understand why I think there's a cultural fascination with this character. I think that there's a certain amount of, like, just—you know, if you're gonna villainize me for things that I can't help, fine. I'll be a villain. Like, and I don't think that the ultimate answer. I think that there's, you know, there's a step beyond that, obviously. And I think that you kind of gotta meet society halfway.

But I do think that that is something that—we have these characters because they represent that—that very... you know... malignant, like, processing of mental illness that we still have in our—in our society. We still have those things, really.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** And so inevitably people that have mental illness might be prone to relate to these evil characters because they, in some way, see—have sympathy

for them because they know what it—they've been... made to feel evil because of that.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. That almost is one of the parts—and while it's not—I do think this book does a better job of almost not... crossing that line, most of the time.

**Sydnee:** Yes, I agree.

**Rileigh:** Than the movie. And—and other things, certainly, I've seen. Um, I do think that's almost one of the facets of this book that makes it... seem like it could've even been written now. Or made for modern day. Because that's just such a common rhetoric, I think, when certain politicians and people in positions of power are talking about mental illness and what it does to people and how dangerous it is.

Even if you have a larger and louder contingent of people saying that's not what it is now than maybe you did... you know, when this comic book was written, you still have that rhetoric, and you still have that—that mindset, and you almost could read this now—'cause this was the first time I've read it, obviously—and see that as, like, a—I don't wanna say, like, a—an important political commentary on how mental illness is discussed, but it kind of it. It's kind of like a—a comment on... what we think of people that are mentally ill.

**Sydnee:** No, it's true, it's true. 'Cause you could—whether you're talking about—from the events that the—that the Joker suffers in *The Killing Joke*, in his past, um, could easily result in, you know, PTSD.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I mean, if you look at that. Or if you're talking about the movie in which he has, you know, had adverse childhood events that we *know* are related with, you know, all kinds of, uh, issues as you get older. Whatever you're referencing, these are true things, and there are ways of talking about them and understanding the reality and dealing with them, and the—the ways it changes people as they become adults, um, and how they suffer as a result of it.

[holding back laughter] But none of it is what *The Joker* does.

**Rileigh:** Right.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** None of it translates to becoming a, um... an outlandishly, you know, ridiculous supervillain. Like, that—that is not the result of it. Uh, the results are a lot, um, less entertaining, and a lot harder and sadder and more difficult to talk about.

**Taylor:** Well, I think it's—it kind of goes back to one of the important that I've learned in therapy, is that your pain can explain you, your pain can't excuse you, uh, is something that I've had to kind of frame in my mind, [through laughter] and definitely applies to these.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** I—I agree completely. I think that's a really good—a good note to—to end that, uh, *The Killing Joke* on. I think that's an excellent way of looking at it, Tey, because it—it really—it's an interesting exploration. I think it's a good—it's a good comic book.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I mean, other than—again, the Barbara Gordon stuff was really hard for me, but it is—I enjoyed the story. I enjoyed reading it. I enjoyed—the art is great. I mean, it—you know, Alan Moore, of course, is super talented, so the storytelling and the dialogue and everything—I mean, I can recognize something that is well done, and at the same time say, "I'm good on it for now. I don't wanna read it again right now." [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I can recognize quality and then say, "I'm good, though."

**Raleigh:** Right.

**Taylor:** [laughs] And I agree. I—you know, I never—I think if, like, 19-year-old Taylor heard 34-year-old Taylor having this discussion, uh... I'd be appalled. But now I'm very much like, "Aw, I—you know, I like *Sailor Moon* now." [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** It was probably my favorite comic book then too, I was just too afraid to say it, so I held *The Killing Joke* in front of me like, "No, I'm cool, look!" [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] No, I think I'll probably go back to *Archie*, now.

**Taylor:** That's fine.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** And not *Riverdale*!

**Taylor:** Uh-huh.

**Raleigh:** Not *Riverdale*. I'll go back to rereading *Scott Pilgrim*.

**Taylor:** We—we can't bring modern stuff to the table, Raleigh, so it's up to you to bring *Riverdale* to the table and make Sydnee watch it.

**Raleigh:** Ohhh...

**Sydnee:** No, please don't.... ugh, no...

**Raleigh:** Ohhh!

**Taylor:** [evil laughter]

**Raleigh:** Taylor, you've given me such a good idea!

**Sydnee:** How could you... how could you.

**Raleigh:** Next week, though, is my turn again.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Raleigh:** And while we will not be talking about *Riverdale* yet... Sydnee... um, I want to talk about a YouTuber next week, another one.

**Sydnee:** Okay.

**Raleigh:** But this one I don't—it's not a musician. I want to talk about her videos, and her as a person. And I want to talk about NikkieTutorials.

**Sydnee:** NikkieTutorials.

**Raleigh:** Because, Sydnee, you recently saw her in the news, and you had not heard of her before, and—

**Sydnee:** Yeah, she was trending on Twitter.

**Raleigh:** Yes, and I have been watching her videos for years, and I've always loved her, and recently she's been, you know, trending and the subject of some—some awful, you know, stuff, but we'll get into that next week. So, that's what we're gonna be doing next week.

**Sydnee:** Alright, that sounds good. I will go, uh... YouTube it up.

**Raleigh:** YouTube that up. Charlie'll like to join you.

**Taylor:** [simultaneously] YouTube that up, yes.

**Sydnee:** Makeup—makeup videos, right?

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Uh, Charlie will love that. She will love watching makeup videos. Okay. I will watch the—I'm vaguely familiar with the story of what happened, but I will watch the video of what came out recently as well as some of her older work so that I can be well established in this—

**Raleigh:** And we'll—we'll get into all of it. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** —YouTube personality. And, uh—and if you would like to, I guess, again play along at home—

**Raleigh:** Yeah? [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** —you could watch—

**Raleigh:** [through laughter] Watch some random NikkieTutorials videos.

**Sydnee:** You could watch some of those videos so that we'll all be on the same page. Yeah.

Alright, thank you again, Teylor, for bringing *The Killing Joke* this week.

**Rileigh:** Yeah, thanks, Tey.

**Teylor:** Thank you for, uh—for givin' it a read!

**Sydnee:** And now I have a copy of the deluxe edition.

**Rileigh:** Ooh.

**Teylor:** Oh, wow.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. There's, like, extra art in the back. I know. Uh, thank you, listeners, for joining us. You can tweet at us @stillbuff. You can email at [stillbuffering@maximumfun.org](mailto:stillbuffering@maximumfun.org).

Uh, if you have any thoughts, or suggestions, or things that you think we should talk about, um, that are relevant to the cultural history of teens or young adults. Uh—

**Rileigh:** [laughs quietly] Yeah.

**Sydnee:** From any era.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Uh, and you can check out Maximumfun.org for a lot of wonderful podcasts that we think you would enjoy! And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

**Rileigh:** This has been your cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I am Rileigh Smirl.

**Sydnee:** I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Teylor:** And I'm Teylor Smirl.



**Rileigh:** I am still buffering...

**Sydnee and Teylor:** And we... are... too.

**Rileigh:** Ehh. Did it all.

**Teylor:** Couldn't remember if we said "we" or "I" in that.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] It was good. It was good.

**Rileigh:** [unintelligible]

**Sydnee:** I watched *Zumbo* after *The Joker* last night. [unintelligible]

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

[theme music plays]

**Jesse:** Hey, gang! Jesse here, founder of Maximum Fun, and with me is Stacey Molski, who is, among other things, the lady who responds to all of your tweets.

**Stacey:** Hi, everyone! I also send you newsletters.

**Jesse:** Uh, so anyway, something really awesome: you! Max Fun listeners have given us the chance to do something really cool on behalf of our entire community, and we wanted to tell you about it.

**Stacey:** Last summer, following the Max Fun Drive, we put all of the enamel pins on sale to \$10 and up members, with proceeds going to the National CASA/GAL Association for Children.

**Jesse:** Your generous support and enthusiasm raised over \$100,000. Our bookkeeper staff would be quick to tell me the exact total is \$109,025, to be exact.

**Stacey:** Your money will go toward pairing kids who've experienced abuse or neglect with court-appointed advocates or guardian ad litem volunteers.

**Jesse:** In other words, kids in tough spots will have somebody in their corner. Knowledgeable grownups who are on their team through court dates and life upheavals and confusing situations, whatever.

**Stacey:** The money we raised together is going to help a lot of kids.

**Jesse:** Whether you bought pins or not, you can help us build on that \$109,000 foundation. Make a donation to support National CASA/GAL, and help some of our nation's most vulnerable children at [Maximumfun.org/casa](https://Maximumfun.org/casa). That's [Maximumfun.org/casa](https://Maximumfun.org/casa).

**Stacey:** And seriously, thank you. Our community rules.

[Maximumfun.org](https://Maximumfun.org).

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