

## Still Buffering 199: "The Circle" (2020)

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[theme music plays]

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

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

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

**Raleigh:** Can't even tell it's a new tagline now.

**Sydnee:** Just flows.

**Taylor:** Yeah, it's seamless.

**Sydnee:** Just came right out—

**Raleigh:** Seamless.

**Sydnee:** Yes. It's good.

**Taylor:** Well done.

**Raleigh:** Thank you.

**Sydnee:** Good. Have you been practicing?

**Raleigh:** I have been.

**Taylor:** In front of the mirror every—

**Raleigh:** In bed.

**Taylor:** —yeah.

**Rileigh:** In bed at night. My roommate—I think she's asleep, but then I'm just muttering it to myself, and she's like, "[quietly] I hear you. Are you okay? Is everything—"

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** [laughs quietly] "Are you—are you—"

**Sydnee:** "This is my mantra."

**Rileigh:** "Are you having a nightmare?"

**Taylor:** "This is how I go to sleep every night."

**Sydnee:** Uh, so I have been trying to find a new look.

**Taylor:** What?

**Rileigh:** Oh?

**Sydnee:** Yes. I need—well, I don't have—I—I say a new look as if I have a look. [laughs quietly] But my look currently is... I don't know. This fits. I think it's fine—I think it's appropriate for the occasion.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Um—

**Taylor:** I felt like your—your look for a while there was just, "I need to access my boobs quickly, and at all times, 'cause I have breastfeeding children." [laughs]

**Sydnee:** That is still part of my look. That—that—whatever look I'm—

**Rileigh:** That's still in—that's still in there. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Okay. It's a lotta deep V's.

**Sydnee:** In the—in the summer, I—as I have said before, I like the, uh, Laura Dern from *Jurassic Park*/Helen Hunt from *Twister* look.

**Taylor:** Oh.

**Raleigh:** Right.

**Taylor:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** Um...

**Taylor:** [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** 'Cause then you—you have the tank top with the loose-fitting button-down over top. Maybe some cargo shorts. [laughs quietly] Um... and that's good for summer. But, like, in the winter, it tr—it doesn't translate as well.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hm.

**Sydnee:** And also, not so great for, like, work *or* really nice occasions? [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** When you're wearing cargo shorts, yes.

**Sydnee:** [holding back laughter] Frowned upon to wear tank tops out to, like, a fancy party. Or a funeral. Not a good look.

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Raleigh:** Yeah. This is fair.

**Sydnee:** I realize I don't have clothes for grownup things. To wear to the grownup... places.

**Raleigh:** [holding back laughter] What grownup places, Syd?

**Sydnee:** Like—like I mentioned, like work, and funerals.

**Taylor:** Work—the—

**Raleigh:** [through laughter] Work and funerals!

**Taylor:** —that is actually an accurate depiction of grownup things. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I need—and I do own, like—I realize for a while there I was just getting shirts to wear to work. And, I mean, I worked, especially in residency, so much, it was really just, like, this—I will not get in trouble—my boss won't bo—won't bother me if I wear this shirt. It's appropriate for work. I will wear it.

Do I like it? I don't know. It's appropriate for work.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That was really the answer to a lot of my questions.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Um, and also none of my clothes fit anymore. There's that, too.

**Taylor:** Hmm.

**Sydnee:** So—

**Raleigh:** That's always rough.

**Sydnee:** I've been searching online. Uh, Taylor, you had to help me, because I have realized from the two of you that... just buying clothes off Amazon is not always a good idea. [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** No...

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** No...

**Raleigh:** And—and nothing against Amazon clothes. Sometimes you can find some good, high-quality stuff on there. Like, something very specific or something that you really need. Like, one kind of thing.

But it's just—it's not, like, a clothing website. So you never really know what you're gonna get.

**Taylor:** Well, and any—any time you can *not* give money to Amazon—

**Raleigh:** Yes.

**Taylor:** —I think that's good. [through laughter] I don't wanna—I don't want to come out as us endorsing Amazon in anyway.

**Sydnee:** No, no. It's—and it's okay for things for kids, sometimes. If, like, I realize, like, "Oh my gosh. How did—how—why do I not have any socks for my baby?"

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** I had that thought. "How did I—how am I raising a child with no socks?" Um—

**Raleigh:** What a sad world... [holding back laughter] she lives in.

**Sydnee:** I know. I don't have time to go out and buy socks so, like—

**Raleigh:** Her feet are always cold! [laughs]

**Sydnee:** To buy a bunch of socks all at once. Like, there—it's—it's useful for that kind of thing.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I really did realize, like, Cooper had no socks.

**Taylor:** Oh no!

**Raleigh:** Poor baby.

**Sydnee:** I mean, I think it's—it's that—

**Taylor:** You've had that baby for a couple years now! How did you not get around to socks yet?

**Raleigh:** [through laughter] You've had that baby for a *while*, Syd!

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** It was a seasonal thing—

**Taylor:** That's, like, an old baby at this point.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** When they're really little, they tend to wear a lot of items that have feet in them.

**Taylor:** Ahh.

**Sydnee:** And then they get bigger and they need socks, but it was summer. So it was like, "Meh. You don't need socks in the summer."

**Taylor:** What—what do you—

**Raleigh:** Well—well, that's not necessarily true! [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I mean, she—she wasn't walkin' anywhere for a while.

**Taylor:** At what point did we decide that we needed to, like, separate socks from the rest of clothing and, like, make them two separate entities? Because why didn't we just keep that going for adulthood?

**Sydnee:** Just attach them?

**Raleigh:** Always? Yeah.

**Taylor:** Like, just, I'd—

**Sydnee:** Yeah, attach them to your pants?

**Taylor:** —that's one less thing I'd have to worry about.

**Sydnee:** Uh, but I—I was intimidated to buy clothes off other websites. Um, other than very specific ones that I have, like, a long history with. Because, one, I

have no idea if something's gonna be of a decent quality or not. Like, and by that I don't mean, like, "I only wear..."

**Raleigh:** "Brands."

**Sydnee:** No. I mean, like, won't fall apart when I put it on. The sizing scares me, 'cause it's different everywhere, and I am bad about sending things back if they don't fit.

**Raleigh:** I never do.

**Sydnee:** So then I just hold onto it and think, "Well, either I'll eventually get smaller or larger, maybe, and then I'll wear it." [laughs]

**Raleigh:** "Or—"

**Sydnee:** "[holding back laughter] Perhaps I will get smaller or larger at some point in the future. I don't know."

**Raleigh:** "It just lives in my closet."

**Sydnee:** "Or it lives here with me now." Um, or I donate it, I guess. I never send it back, though.

Um... but, uh—but the other thing is, I still get intimidated by putting my, like, payment information into a new website—

**Raleigh:** [inhales loudly]

**Sydnee:** —on the internet. It makes me nervous.

**Taylor:** Well...

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** And I—and it—and I—and it feels, like, scary. And I've already done it... like, with Amazon. So... I don't have to do it again.

**Raleigh:** Is it from those days of using the internet, like, when internet was first a thing and you never really knew who was getting your credit card information?

**Taylor:** Yeah, you just sent it to 'em in an email?

**Sydnee:** I think that's—

**Taylor:** Like—[laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** I think that's it. 'Cause I still—like, every time I go to plug in information to buy anything online from anywhere, I'm always like, "[quietly] Oh no... what if this is fake?"

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** "[quietly] What if this isn't real?"

**Taylor:** I don't know what kind of websites you're—you're going to, Syd, that—that... encourage you to think that way. Like... usually there's security, like, right there, evident on the site.

**Sydnee:** It makes me nervous because the way I—before you gave me some ones that, like, you had used, and actually you received clothing from—

**Taylor:** Oh, yeah.

**Sydnee:** —[laughs quietly] that's what I wanted. I wanted somebody to tell me, like, "I put my financial information into this website, ordered clothing, and it did come. And it was what I ordered." And I just wanted to make sure that happened before I put numbers in there.

Um... because—I mean, it really—it makes me nervous as I'm putting it in! Like, I don't know...

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Well...

**Sydnee:** And I—I've found them before by just googling something like... [pauses] "Cool clothing website."



**Rileigh:** [sighs] Oh, man.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** [through laughter] What I would give to see your search history when you were trying to find clothes.

**Sydnee:** "Best clothing websites."

**Taylor:** Oh no.

**Sydnee:** Uh, "Trendy online shopping."

**Rileigh:** Oh, man.

**Sydnee:** Um... [laughs]

**Rileigh:** "[stiffly] How to dress like a cool mom." [laughs]

**Sydnee:** "[stiffly] How to dress in your 30's" may be in my...

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I don't know! I feel like you go to a department store and—'cause I've done that to just, like, look and, like, wander. And I hate shopping, but, like, to wander and see, like, what catches my eye. What should I wear in this room? What—what appeals to me?

And I feel like I look at one half of the room and I'm like, "Well, I'm not there yet. That's, like—"

**Rileigh:** "About 20 years too young for that." [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yes. I'm not there yet. Someday. I recognize those as clothes I will probably wear someday, but I'm not there yet.

And then I look at the other half of the room and I'm like, "Well, I'm not there anymore, either. That was... that's Rileigh. That's not me."

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Um, and I—you can't—and I don't know what—I feel like there's almost nothing for me!

**Rileigh:** Mm-hm.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** Hm...

**Rileigh:** You know, whenever I think about ordering online horror stories, I always think of our father. [laughs quietly] The first time he was ever able to order something online for himself—

**Sydnee:** Oh, no...

**Rileigh:** —was just within the past, like, year. That was the first time he'd ever ordered clothing online for himself, ever.

**Sydnee:** It was so bad.

**Rileigh:** And he ordered a coat, and it came, and it took several, several weeks to get there. It was a website he found, I'm pretty sure, on, like, a Facebook ad.

**Sydnee:** It was a popup ad, he said.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Oh, no...

**Rileigh:** It was not, like, a—like a good website he, like, searched out. And it came, and it... [laughs quietly] did *not* fit... anyone, really. [laughs] And it was not what he ordered!

**Sydnee:** It was not made for a human.

**Rileigh:** [through laughter] It was not!

**Sydnee:** It was not shaped, uh... or constructed in a way that any human body would wear this, of any size, shape, or gender. It was just not for a human.  
[laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Hm. Yeah, I feel like increasingly more, and especially with those targeted ads or those popup ads on, like, Facebook and Instagram, there is so much, like, poorly-made, probably not ethically-made, like, fast fashion that's being thrown in your face. And everything costs, like, five dollars. And you gotta question, like, how—how probably—probably not—

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** —uh, at the benefit of any human is that made for five dollars. Uh, but it's—it's hard, because it's—it—it's increasingly, I feel like, nowadays. Like, so much of it is right there and, you know, you just don't—like, just—I always suggest, like, even on websites that have good reputations, sometimes, like, I'll see something.

I'll be like, "Wait, I feel like I've seen that elsewhere." And it's, like—it's a thing that, like, a website that kind of sells on having good taste has bought from a third party, and now they've marked up the price, but it was an original cheap thing that's on another website. Like, there's a lot of that stuff. So I feel like kind of—trying to buy from the people that make the things is usually a good rule to follow.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. Here—here's my—my conspiracy, because I have purchased from these very cheap clothing websites before—that I have somehow developed very, very targeted ads on my Instagram feeds. Like, are picking... shirts or sweatshirts or jewelry that, like, I have bought almost the exact same thing before. They definitely have all my data. Like, *all* of it's in there.

**Sydnee:** Oh, yeah.

**Raleigh:** Um, but—

**Sydnee:** Mine—mine are all ModCloth, just all day long. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yeah. Like, I have bought from these five-dollar, six-dollar clothing item websites before, and I think they're all the same company under three different,

four different names. And they all just have four different, you know, like, names online. So they get, like... even more money from people who are like, "Oh, I tried from that one. Let's try from this one."

They're all the same!

**Sydnee:** I'm sure that's true. As someone who has purchased too much in the past from Amazon, I will tell you that that happens, and I will find the exact same thing listed under ten different brands, and it's all the same.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Like, I—I ordered from—

**Sydnee:** And it's usually not a high-quality item.

**Raleigh:** Right. I ordered from one of those websites before and got clothing in a bag that was labeled with the name of another company that is also very similar; it sells, like, the exact same stuff for the exact same prices. They're all the same!

**Sydnee:** I—that—I think—I finally—I'm old enough to understand and really appreciate the value of, like—I—I do want sustainable clothes that fit me. I do want clothes that fit. Um... that's nice.

**Raleigh:** And I don't wanna spend, like, tons and tons of money.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** No. But, like, I—I—but I do wanna—I do wanna buy something that is made to last, and I can wear—'cause I don't really care about being trendy. I just want things that look nice, and fit me, and, um—and I'm happy to seek those things out so that I can wear them for years and years and years to come. [holding back laughter] And not have to worry about them literally falling apart on my body.

**Raleigh:** Um... wow. This is not what we're talking about today! [laughs]

**Sydnee:** No.

**Raleigh:** Sorry. I just... we—this has been, like, a... this is all we've been talking about.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Um...

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Speaking of... trendy... online—

**Sydnee:** Oh, here we go!

**Taylor:** There you go.

**Sydnee:** Alright!

**Raleigh:** —living...

**Sydnee:** Uh-huh? Keep it—

**Taylor:** Yeah—

**Sydnee:** Yeah?

**Taylor:** And you can't always trust things online, too.

**Raleigh:** You can't always trust things online!

**Sydnee:** You don't know what you're gonna get.

**Raleigh:** Especially on social media!

**Taylor:** Hey, there it is.

**Raleigh:** Like... on *The Circle*.

**Sydnee:** Let's talk about *The Circle*.

**Raleigh:** Came full circle.

**Sydnee:** The amazing Netflix show.

**Raleigh:** Yes. This is technically my contribution this week, but we've all watched *The Circle*. We all consumed it very quickly.

**Sydnee:** It—it's funny. So—well, Raleigh, go ahead and—if anybody haven't watched it, briefly describe the plot. The—the premise, I should say.

**Raleigh:** So, it's a reality competition show with a bunch of people living by themselves; like, each in their own apartment in the same building, and they each have a profile on this fake social media website that they all use called The Circle. They can post pictures, they can talk to each other, and the goal is to be the most popular. And every week, they select two influencers that are the most popular, and they get to block someone, and that person gets replaced.

So, basically, it's like a social media competition, and they can be whoever they want to be. They don't have to be themselves. Or they can be themselves. They never meet each other. Um... yeah. And they—but one per—well, they *do*—

**Sydnee:** They eventually do, but—

**Raleigh:** Eventually. But week-by-week, you don't actually—

**Sydnee:** Not within the game.

**Raleigh:** —yeah. You don't actually meet them. You just kind of talk to them online, and you get to vote on who you like most.

**Sydnee:** They each have nice little—I do really enjoy the aesthetics of—they have an apartment building—

**Raleigh:** They're all so nice.

**Sydnee:** —for this.

**Raleigh:** It's so cute.

**Sydnee:** And each, uh, participant has their own little apartment that is decorated in kind of their own, like, color and design theme. I mean, I—not necessarily that they picked. Although sometimes I—I got the sense that, like,

they were kind of for them. Like, there were hints that maybe it was, like, stuff—colors you might like or, uh—anyway.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I—I enjoyed that. Aesthetically, I always liked the—who matches each room.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** I wanted to—it's funny, though, 'cause did you notice that there—there was one guy on the show that was catfishing as a female—

**Raleigh:** [snorts] Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And that his apartment was very, like, cutesy, and all pink. And I'm like, "Did they design them for the person that you're *supposed* to—that you're playing?"

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** 'Cause I think that's really funny! [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I had that exact same thought. That's funny that you bring that up, 'cause I had the same thought. And not only that, it was very... uh, one, he was pretending to be a woman, and it was a very, like, stereotypically girly kind of apartment.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** But also, the woman that he pretended to be was—uh, like, the character was very, like, sensitive and... I would say a very, like, feminine woman. So even that—even—not just, like, a woman. Like, a very feminine woman, was the apartment. Yeah, I felt—I thought that too. I thought that was funny.

**Raleigh:** Um, also, before we get too far in—spoilers, I assume, for—

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Raleigh:** —several of the outcomes of who is who, and who wins, and stuff like that. Um, if you haven't watched all of *The Circle*.

**Sydnee:** When—when I saw a trailer for this, like when Netflix—the thing that you can turn off now where—

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** —you can—it automatically starts playing...

**Raleigh:** Mm-hm?

**Sydnee:** ...a video from whatever.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I don't know how to turn it off, but I understand there is a function that turns it off.

**Raleigh:** I also don't know how to turn it off. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I saw that trending. "You can turn that off now!" You could probably figure—I don't know. Google it. But anyway... [laughs] um, I—I remember Justin and I watched that trailer, and I went, "This is a bridge too far. We cannot watch this. This—no. No. This looks so—"

**Raleigh:** But then you started. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** "—so dirty. Just—"

**Taylor:** Oh yeah.

**Sydnee:** "I'll feel so dirty." Um, I mean, I try to justify—like, we still watch *Survivor*, although we bailed on the last season. But we—we do watch *Survivor*, and I feel dirty enough with that.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]



**Taylor:** It just—it looked like that was the final step of, like—we all enjoyed *Black Mirror* and recognized as, like, "Oh, this is what might hap—be in our near future." And then that show it's like, "Ope, it's here. We're here! We're—"

**Raleigh:** "This is it!"

**Sydnee:** "Here it is!"

**Taylor:** "—we went—we went through the mirror. We're in the mirror now."  
[laughs]

**Raleigh:** It is like a very weird—if you think about it. Like, all these people living by themselves—they *can* go outside onto this very, like, artificial rooftop with a Jacuzzi and, like, all that kind of stuff. They can go in a workout studio, but they always have to go by themselves. They can't ever go at the same time, or they'd be seeing another contestant.

**Sydnee:** I assume there's a schedule.

**Raleigh:** Yeah, that's what I figured.

**Sydnee:** That—that was my guess.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And they probably have producers who come, like, escort you.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Because they don't want them meeting each other. Which is, like, part of the game. But you think about it in terms of, like... that's—I mean, we're getting closer and closer to this every day. Of, like, avoiding all human interaction and just going places when we know we're, like, most likely to be... like, I go to the gym when I know there's most likely to be, like, the least amount of people there, so that no one else sees me. Or, like, sitting in my room by myself, just talking to people through the internet.

**Sydnee:** But that—see, you say that, but it's really interesting—and I don't know if this is a... I would say that this is selection bias. The people who... you know, audition to be on this show, knew what they were getting into and were chill with that idea. I would never go on a show like this, because if I couldn't have human interaction—like, face-to-face interaction with people every single day of my life... I—I don't know what would happen to me. I—

**Raleigh:** And this—this is exactly why—hi, I'm Raleigh Smirl, *Circle* people. I'm auditioning to be on your next season of *The Circle*. Because I can go as long as I humanly need to without interacting with another human person, and be entirely fine! [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** I—see, I—I... it's interesting to me that I guess maybe all the people on the show are introverts? Or—or they—if they—

**Raleigh:** I don't know if that's necessarily true!

**Sydnee:** —well, if you're an extrovert, can you get enough energy from other people... via social media?

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Like, can you get enough to fill that void, I guess?

**Taylor:** 'Cause I—I would not say that they're introverts, because although the game requires them to interact on social media—which I actually find to be more stressful than inter—like, a phone call. Like, oh, we're just talking. Like, I don't lo—like, when people call me it's aggressive. [through laughter] Like, we've all agreed on that in the modern day.

**Sydnee:** It's not aggressive!

**Raleigh:** It is.

**Taylor:** It is.

**Sydnee:** It's not! It's just—

**Raleigh:** Very aggressive.

**Taylor:** It is.

**Sydnee:** It's just if you wanna—

**Raleigh:** I hate phone calls.

**Sydnee:** —talk!

**Taylor:** But I also—the problem with—at least a phone call, once it's initiated—like, you just—you talk. Like, you don't—you don't really pause to think about what you're saying. You're just talking.

With social media or even texting, I have so much time alone in my head to think about how things that I type could be misconstrued, or how maybe this emoji is a step too far. Oh no, I used three exclamation points! But one exclamation point—that seems like too few, and it seems too forward. I don't know. Oh, God.

Like, I—I would be terrible at that game, 'cause I wouldn't know how to, like... I wouldn't know how to talk to people, given the space to consider how bad I am at it. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Yeah. I—I totally understand that. I will say that. I have issues with communicating on social media and, like, not being able to properly explain myself. Wanting to, like, add nuance in a way that I feel like only a vocal conversation can do. So I—I feel like that's part of it.

The other part of it for me would be, I just have no interest. I don't want to text with people all day. I don't wanna message with people all day.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** If you have something to communicate to me briefly, like... "Meet me at 2:00," or whatever, that's fine.

**Raleigh:** [snorts]

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** You know. [laughs quietly] But if it is any kind of, like... conversation, I don't wanna have it in text! I wanna have it—either face-to-face, ideally, over drinks, or... [holding back laughter] or perhaps on the telephone. You know.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** But... I don't know. [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** Here's my—my theory. They're not all introverts. In fact, most of them... probably are very extroverted people. Like, look—just watching them. I think that, like, maybe, like, Shubham was probably pretty introverted. Other than that, they all were pretty extroverted people. But—

**Sydnee:** I don't know, though!

**Rileigh:** —the average age of these people had to have been—they all were between the ages of, like, 21 and 25.

**Sydnee:** They were young, yes.

**Rileigh:** No one was older than that. I don't think—

**Sydnee:** It could—this could be generational.

**Rileigh:** —I don't think there was one person on there was older than, like, maybe 26 or 27 years old. And they've all grown up like I have—not grown up, maybe. But, like, their formative years, talking to people, and teenage and early adulthood has been on social media.

**Taylor:** Right.

**Rileigh:** And texting. So, like, they don't need to have interactions, like, face-to-face with people to feel like they're interacting. Because for them, most of their interaction, like mine, probably comes from social media or texting! So that's, like, normal for them.

**Sydnee:** That's so—it's so weird for me to think about it that way. 'Cause, I mean, I—I used to think when I was younger that I was an introvert, and then when I really started reading about, like, what that meant—I'm not. I very much feel energized by the presence of other people. I—I do not like being alone. I—I mean, other than, like, when I go to the bathroom. That's pretty much it.

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] And even then, periodically my children wander in. And, like, I don't *want* them to be there, necessarily—

**Rileigh:** But you don't mind it.

**Sydnee:** —but it's okay.

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Like, it's—they can visit with me if they want to. When I'm in the shower they always come in and talk to me, and I'm fine with that!

**Rileigh:** Sydnee needs a bathroom buddy.

**Sydnee:** [holding back laughter] I—I don't mind! I love having people around. If I am in a room alone for too long, I start to, like—I talk to myself in my head. I do have an inner monologue. I now understand some people don't.

**Taylor:** [quietly] That's so weird.

**Rileigh:** I—the fact that people don't blows my mind.

**Sydnee:** It—it blew my mind too.

**Taylor:** And then I saw—not to get too distracted, but I saw the companion, which is some people can't picture things in their head?

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** That—that's a... that's just so strange.

**Sydnee:** The brain is so weird.

**Rileigh:** It's so fascinating.

**Sydnee:** Our brains work in so many different, strange ways, and it can do so many thing—I—it's so wild.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Anyway.

**Rileigh:** Okay. [laughs quietly] Anyways. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Well, but I—I—it's—I will—I say that—they've—there's gotta be a way to get energized via social media, like in the "extroverts can feed off of this" way, because as a definitely introvert, it can certainly exhaust me. I will have a successful email exchange back and forth, and I'll have to go lie down after that and be like, "Whew! Okay."

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** "I did it. I conversed. I scheduled an appointment to get my... fire detector fixed." Like, that literally has just happened just—

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Fire detector?!

**Taylor:** [through laughter] Smoke detector! Whatever.

**Rileigh:** [high pitched laughter]

**Taylor:** The hell.

**Sydnee:** I love the idea of a—of a fire detector, though!

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** You light a match and it goes, "[high pitched] Oh no! Oh no! Fire! Oh no!"

**Rileigh:** "[high pitched] Oh no!" It's just a little voice that goes, "[high pitched] Oh wait, did you know there's a fire? If you do, it's okay, but did you know?"

**Taylor:** "[high pitched] It's hot! Be careful, it's hot!" [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [through laughter] Taylor, I think—I think we are supposed to be our own fire detectors.

**Rileigh:** [simultaneously, through laughter] Fire detectors!

**Taylor:** Yeah, that's fair. You know what I meant. Alright. See, this is why I don't like conversing! You say one thing wrong, and then you get made fun of for a while.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Uh, yeah.

**Sydney:** No, that was funny. That was cute.

**Raleigh:** Oh, that's good.

**Sydney:** That was cute. It reminds me of, uh—from *Mean Girls*. "My boobs can tell when it's raining."

**Raleigh:** Yeah. [laughs] "[high pitched] There's a 30% chance it's already raining." [laughs]

**Sydney:** [laughs] Um... I—no. You—and you—it's funny, Tey, 'cause I—we both, when we were younger, spent a lot of time kind of doin' our own thing. Like, me reading and you drawing, typically. Um, although sometimes you were also reading. I was never drawing.

**Raleigh:** [snorts quietly]

**Sydney:** Um... [laughs] 'cause I couldn't.

**Raleigh:** The roles were never entirely reversed.

**Sydney:** No, I could—I knew from a very young age I can't—this is a thing I can't do. Uh, but I was—but you are very much an introvert, and have been as long as I can remember, and I have always been an extrovert, even when I didn't know I was. I was always—probably because I was in your room, bothering you.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydney:** If I was alone too long.

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Raleigh:** I think I'm in this weird—it's called an ambivert, if you're kind of both.

**Sydney:** Is that a thing?

**Raleigh:** I think that's both. I, like—I can be very okay being by myself for long periods of time. Like, I could be on *The Circle* and be in that apartment by myself with no real face-to-face human interaction and be fine. *But...* I also do very much going out and, like, being at parties or being around people, and talking to a bunch of people. But not for too long.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** I do enjoy it. It's not, like, a task for me. But I can't do it all the time. I don't need it all the time. But I also don't like being alone all the time.

**Taylor:** Well—hmm.

**Raleigh:** I think this is just my—my social media brain that has developed instead of, like, a real human one.

**Taylor:** I don't know. 'Cause yeah, 'cause the—the thing for me is always, like, the—the way that I describe best, it's like, I love running. I go out and run every day. But I can't run—like, once I'm done with the run, I'm tired, because there's a limited—there's a finite amount of energy that I have for that run. I like social—it's not that I *don't*—it's—or I'm not capable of socially, I don't get any enjoyment from it. It's just that it is—it—it takes something away from me. I don't get something from it. And I don't—

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** —I can't imagine what that feels like. To, like, leave a party and be like, "Man, I can't wait til I get to go to another party!" [laughs quietly] To finish a conversation and be like, "Not enough. Somebody else talk to me!" [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** "Need another conversation."



**Taylor:** Oh, God! [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Welcome to my brain.

**Taylor:** Oh... I can't.

**Raleigh:** Welcome to *The Circle*.

**Sydnee:** As you—as you contemplate my brain and how fantastically it operates—

**Raleigh:** Oh, God.

**Sydnee:** —[laughs quietly] Um... b—uh...

[pauses]

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

**Sydnee:** Thank you!

**Raleigh:** [laughs loudly]

**Sydnee:** I realized I had nothing else—that was the whole transition. That was it.

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**Sydnee:** Uh, you know, siblings, when you're out at a party, um, it can get, like—it can get hot... there.

**Raleigh:** Sweaty?

**Sydnee:** And sweaty.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hm.

**Sydnee:** And you know what you need?

**Raleigh:** What?

**Sydnee:** Well, I mean, I guess you don't need. But *I* would need. I would want.

**Raleigh:** What?

**Sydnee:** Deodorant.

**Raleigh:** Okay. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I don't wanna put that on you. Like, maybe you just like that sweat. That's fine. But, like, for me personally, I like to wear some deodorant. And I like a deodorant that's gonna make me smell nice. And that I'm gonna feel good about using.

**Raleigh:** Right, mm-hm.

**Sydnee:** And that's what, uh, Native have. They have safe, simple, effective products that people use in their bathroom every day. And, uh, they have 9,000 five-star reviews from their customers to back up that claim.

Uh, their formulas contain things like tapioca starch and coconut oil. Um, they come in a wide variety of enticing scents for all genders. They've got limited edition seasonal scents. Uh, and there's an unscented formula, if you just... you just wanna have that, like—

**Raleigh:** Wanna feel fresh.

**Sydnee:** —you wanna feel fresh, but you don't necessarily wanna smell like coconuts. I *always* wanna smell like coconuts, personally.

**Raleigh:** Me too.

**Sydnee:** That's just me. Uh, but if you would like to check out Native Deodorant—Raleigh, you seemed very excited about this. You sound like you're jumping in to—

**Raleigh:** I'm jumping up and down about all of this.

**Sydnee:** Uh-huh. Yeah. Do you wanna tell our listeners what to do?

**Rileigh:** Yes. You can get 20 percent off your first purchase if you visit [natedeodorant.com](http://natedeodorant.com) and use "buffering" during checkout. That's [natedeodorant.com](http://natedeodorant.com) and code "buffering" for 20 percent off your first purchase.

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**Sydnee:** So, uh, let's get into some of the nitty gritty of *The Circle*, and what it tells us about life.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [snorts]

**Rileigh:** Um—

**Sydnee:** [holding back laughter] What have we learned about humanity?

**Rileigh:** I think... of all the things I have learned from *The Circle*—one, it was just very entertaining.

**Sydnee:** Yes. I can't believe how much I loved it.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I can't believe how, like, I instantly needed to watch more.

**Rileigh:** I needed to watch all of it.

**Sydnee:** Um.. I was so in for—although I did—I did frequently feel, like... suffocated by their inability to... physically interact with other humans. But other than that... yeah.

**Rileigh:** It's great. Um, I think the most astute observation about the show I have heard is—came from our father, who watched the show also. And he said he thought—and this is a spoiler—the person that wins is this guy named Joey, who is this, like... to be fair, when you first meet him he's kind of, like, obnoxious? Kind of, like, loud? Kind of like that guy that if you met at a party you probably wouldn't [through laughter] wanna talk to very much?

**Sydnee:** No. He seems like a guy who's very into, like, his looks and his grooming—

**Raleigh:** Himself, yes.

**Sydnee:** —and himself, and the—like he's just out to try to get girls.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And that he probably wouldn't have a lot of, like, really deep thoughts to have a conversation with him about things, or be interested in you or the rest of the world. I mean, he really—not to be stereotypical, but that's the way—

**Raleigh:** That's how he came across.

**Sydnee:** I instantly assumed he was that kind of person.

**Raleigh:** Um, but he wins, which means he's, like, the most popular, and the one that all of them thought was most deserving of being, like, an influencer, and they all enjoyed the most and liked the most.

Um, and dad watched it and said, "You know, I don't—I don't think if this would've been a show where they would've all, like, been interacting with each other on a daily basis—" and he used the example of, like, a *Big Brother*, where they're all living in the same house—that he would've been one of the first ones voted out. He wouldn't have won. He thought it was only because they were on social media, being able to text and think about what they were saying to each other that he won.

And I think that says a lot about—one, *The Circle*, but also... what it says about social media. And, like, do we—would we not like people that we like on social media, like influencers or YouTubers or Instagrammers or whatever—would we not like them in real life? Would we only like them... over the internet?

**Sydnee:** I think it's an interesting point, 'cause it's not—it's not like he was necessarily hiding who he was. 'Cause you—I mean, you could make that case. Well, like, of course on social media you might like somebody who you normally wouldn't like, 'cause they're putting their best foot forward, and they can... really think about and craft every response. It's not what they come up with off the top of their head. But I—and maybe I'm wrong—I really felt like that was just who he was.

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Raleigh:** Mm-hm.

**Taylor:** Well—

**Sydnee:** I mean, he seemed genuine.

**Taylor:** I...

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Am I the only one that felt that way about a lot of the character—all of the people's games was to kind of be themselves? I mean—

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Raleigh:** And I—

**Sydnee:** I agree.

**Raleigh:** —I felt like even the ones who were catfishing—in terms of, like, using other people's pictures, weren't necessarily being entirely different people. They were still kind of being themselves, just using different pictures.

**Sydnee:** Except for Rebecca.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Except for Rebecca. Which was... maybe the best part of the entire show. This man named Seaburn was using his girlfriend's pictures and going under the name Rebecca, and was kind of being himself, but also was trying to be more...

**Sydnee:** It was the—

**Raleigh:** ...feminine? Quote unquote? And at one point he gets in this group message that one of the girls made as just the girl contestants, and they start talking about... [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** Oh, no...

**Raleigh:** ...period cramps. [through laughter] And watching him try to participate in this conversation was maybe the best part!

**Sydnee:** And take wild—wild stabs at what that might be like.

**Raleigh:** Like, at one point he says—'cause the way they text is they have to speak into, like, this voice-activated TV screen.

**Sydnee:** You know it's not really a voice-activated TV screen?

**Raleigh:** Yes. But, like—

**Sydnee:** It's really a producer typing what they're saying.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Okay.

**Raleigh:** But that's what it looks like.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** They have to speak everything. They're not just typing it. So he's speaking everything, and he's like, "[slowly] Sometimes... when I get cramps... just my left side hurts really bad."

And you see all the other women go, "I've never heard of that before. Who feels that way? I've never gotten that before!"

One of them goes, "Is that where your appendix is?" [laughs]

**Taylor:** I like that he felt the need to comment—

**Sydnee:** No, it's not.

**Raleigh:** It's not.

**Taylor:** 'Cause it's like, he could've just gotten through that conversation being like, "Oh, that sucks, yeah." But no, he was like, "I gotta—I gotta prove—I gotta prove that I know what a period's like!" [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** And the way he talked about it was legitimately like he had never heard of it before.

**Sydnee:** He—well, it's so—it was so weird. That was the one thing about it that I couldn't understand how, like, people did not figure out—and we do. We have a bias towards, um, honesty. As, like, humans do. We tend to assume people are telling us the truth, most of the time.

Um, and I know somebody out there's going, "I don't! I always know—" No, but most—most of us do, like, assume if we hear or see something that it's probably true, and you make it prove you wrong. But I did not understand how everybody—the first few things he said were, like—hold on a second.

**Raleigh:** Now, wait a minute.

**Sydnee:** Hold on. 'Cause it was like he was—it wasn't just, like, "I'm pretending to be a girl." It was like... a bot.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It sounded like a girl bot.

**Raleigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Like, if the computer generated, like, I don't know, "What does girl say? Here's girl—here's a girl thing."

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I can't believe everybody just fell for it.

**Taylor:** And so deeply, too! Yeah!

**Raleigh:** And he made it to the final few, yeah!

**Sydnee:** Yes!

**Rileigh:** Yeah. And there was—

**Taylor:** Well, I—go ahead.

**Rileigh:** —I was just—there was never any skepticism that I saw. For the most part.

**Sydnee:** Towards the very end.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. But for the—I mean, he was there from—because they added new people every time someone got removed, and he was there from the very first episode until the very last one. So he knew everybody, and it was like he made it through this whole time and everyone was just like, "Yeah, okay."

**Sydnee:** Shubham fell in love with him, essentially.

**Rileigh:** Yes! Yeah. Aw, poor Shubham. [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah... well, it's—it's weird, because I think I went into it—and I've—I've said this before. I don't like reality TV where people are mean to each other. Where they're, you know—

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** —like, working against each other and stabbing each other in the back. I hate that stuff. I know that's a whole... category of reality TV, and that's just not for me. And I was expecting this to be that. I thought people were gonna be trying to deceive each other and lie to each other and turn people against each other, and there was a little of that, sort of. But it legit played out like everyone's just competing to see who can be the most, like... nice? Like, supportive? And everyone kept calling it out as fake, which some of it was, some of it wasn't, but it still ultimately was, like, a pleasant thing to watch. Like, "Can I out-nice these other people? I'm gonna try!" [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Yeah.



**Sydnee:** It—it's funny. Justin and I talked about that while we were watching it, 'cause I—that's one reason we're really hit-or-miss on some reality TV shows. Like, Justin and I used to be really into *Survivor*, but sometimes I feel like you can get—you get the feeling that these—a lot of the people were cast because they're—they're gonna start a lot of stuff, you know?

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** They're—they're gonna fight with a lot of people.

**Raleigh:** Or you wonder, like, how much of it is producers telling them to—or, like, especially on a show like *The Bachelor* or *Bachelorette*. Like, producers telling them to be mean to other people or whatever.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, and somebody being mean intentionally. And, like, I just can't... [sighs] I can't get on board with that.

**Raleigh:** No.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** When somebody's just being mean. And, like, "This is just who I am! I'm just a mean person."

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It's like, I don't wanna watch you, then. I don't—I don't wanna see—like, I know you're out there, but I don't wanna watch you on TV and know you—you're out there being mean.

And this show was so different. And Justin made the good point—they didn't wanna cast people for their interactions with each other, necessarily. 'Cause the majority of the time as the viewer—

**Raleigh:** You're just watching them.

**Sydnee:** —you're just watching them. 'Cause you're seeing all the stuff they're just saying to themselves.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hm.

**Sydnee:** Like, around the text messages they're sending. All the things that they think through as they decide what to say, and then react to what the other person said. So what you need is somebody who the audience will connect with, not who will connect with other players. And so I think you got people who, like—I mean, I genuinely wanted to hang out with a lot of them by the end.

**Taylor:** Yeah!

**Rileigh:** Yeah!

**Sydnee:** Like, I felt like—I mean, I'm too old. They're all much younger than me. But, like—

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** —[laughs] I felt like—like, you guys would be cool to grab a drink with! Like, I think you seem like cool people!

**Rileigh:** And honestly, there were a few people that would come in as people got eliminated that I just did not like. That, like, their personality or, like, the way they were towards other people just, like, rubbed me the wrong way. And they always got voted off. [laughs] Like—

**Sydnee:** Oh, yeah.

**Rileigh:** —the people that I didn't like just always—like, everyone else also felt there was something, like, fake or not cool about them, and got rid of them. Which I thought was very cool to see, that, like, you didn't get rewarded necessarily for being, like, the most manipulative or the best game player. It was really just, like, who is, like, the most genuine, authentic, like, having good conversations with people.

**Sydnee:** It was nice, yeah.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah. And even the one character that I think tried to come in and be the person that was gonna say, "All of you are fake, and I'm just bein' real!" Like—like, they got rid of him real fast.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hm.

**Taylor:** But it's also 'cause it kind of, like, brings up the question of, like, at what point is just being kind... is it manipulative or is it just—like, it's not that hard. Like, there's kind of—you know, there's—there's—there's lying to people outright to get what you want, and then there's just—"I'm just bein' nice to you 'cause it's not that hard."

And it's not that hard to—to be supportive and to, like—like, it's not the difference of, like, "Kindness is all lies, and I'm tellin' the truth, and that's why it's ugly!"

It's like, sometimes it's just, like... you know. You could say something mean or you could say something nice. They're just sayin' nice things. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** I think that's a really good point, that we seem to—to lose a lot. Is that if somebody's nice, we assume that, like, "Well, they're just fake."

And it's like, "Well, no. would—wouldn't it be better if we could all just be a little—"

**Raleigh:** Be nice?

**Sydnee:** "—nicer?"

**Raleigh:** Mm-hm.

**Sydnee:** Like, just be nice. And that doesn't mean—that's not, like, a "So if someone, you know, is trying to negate the existence of other humans with their speech, let's all just be nice to them."

**Taylor:** Right.

**Raleigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** No. But, like, generally speaking, in a setting like that where you're meeting new people for the first time, the idea that we could all just try to be nice and see what—what happens... [laughs quietly] that's not—that's not a wild idea.

**Raleigh:** And—and this cast of people was all, like, very diverse in terms of, like, you know, identities and all kinds of stuff, beliefs. But they all—there was never any drama of someone just, like, not liking someone for who they were. Any sort

of, like, suspense or drama in the show was because of, like, "Who's gonna get voted off?" And, like, "Who's gonna be an influencer?"

It was never like, "Oh, there's this big fight going on!" Like it was just—you know.

**Sydnee:** And nobody wanted to vote people off.

**Raleigh:** Yeah!

**Sydnee:** No—nobody—I mean, like, they really didn't. I mean, other than... I don't even think they really knew how to win. I think, like, the rules of the game—

**Raleigh:** I didn't really know how anyone was gonna win, honestly. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I—I didn't either.

**Raleigh:** I didn't get it.

**Sydnee:** I didn't know what was gonna happen; like, how they were gonna end—end the whole thing. Um, and I think nobody else did either, and nobody really wanted anyone to leave—they were all sad when people left.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Every time.

**Raleigh:** And at the very, very end, when it was down to the last few, they all got to meet each other in person.

**Sydnee:** Which was great.

**Raleigh:** And it was like—you think about it logically. These people have never met each other before. They have online. They've never met each other. But they all sit down to have dinner together, I guess is what they did. And they all were like, hugging, and they all were happy to see each other, and they all just wanted to talk to each other and get to know each other, and no one was mad if anyone was catfishing. They all were just, like, interested and wanted to talk about

everything. It was just like seeing people, like, see their friends for the first time in a long time. It was just so pleasant! [laughs]

**Taylor:** Yeah, that was one thing that really surprised me, is I thought for sure the—when the catfish was revealed that there was gonna be some anger or—'cause everybody else had played themselves, and it was the final four, right? And, like, three of them had been themselves, and one of them was a catfish. I thought for sure there was gonna be some anger or whatever, but they really just—there was kind of a, like, "Yeah, here's to bein' ourselves. And oh, you were fine." [through laughter] But it was, you know, not—

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** —not that, like, reality TV show confrontation that I was dreading. I was—I was happy that it was just, like, "Oh, you played the game really well. Like, you got us all."

**Sydnee:** And it really—I think that part of it is that even though he was sort of being girl-bot, um... [laughs quietly] he—I mean, obviously enough of him was coming through to be relatable and human, you know? It wasn't all just, like, scripted. I mean, he—and I think in a situation like that, you wouldn't be able to help but eventually start to try to re—start to even accidentally reveal who you really are. Uh, gender notwithstanding, but just, like, "This is how I feel about things."

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] Personality-wise, yeah.

**Sydnee:** "This is what I think. This is what I say." I did think it was interesting. A lot of people, uh, could not believe—a lot of people were suspicious of Chris, because they thought he was—like, he was being himself 100 percent of the time.

**Raleigh:** Always.

**Sydnee:** Real real. Uh—

**Raleigh:** Sometimes the most real.

**Sydnee:** The most real, yeah. Um, and they couldn't believe that that was a—like, nobody would be that—that way.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That couldn't be real. That's gotta be an act.

**Raleigh:** And he was my favorite. [laughs] He was great.

**Sydnee:** Oh, he was so funny. He was—he was always making the best observations and jokes and...

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** ... the most interesting—yeah.

**Raleigh:** I have an important question for you two, um, that I want us all to answer. What would your strategy be if you were on *The Circle*?

**Sydnee:** [quietly] Oh...

**Raleigh:** In terms of, like, would you be yourself? Would you be someone else? What would your, like, game plan be?

**Sydnee:** I would, uh—first of all, I would never do this.

**Taylor:** Mm.

**Sydnee:** 'Cause—

**Raleigh:** I really wanna be on the show! This is not a bit. This is not me joking. I want to be on this show. I want to be on *The Circle*.

**Sydnee:** I understand you want to be on *The Circle*, and—

**Raleigh:** [through laughter] I want to be!

**Sydnee:** —I—you asked me what I would do. I would, um—I would last 24 hours—

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** —and then there would be a Sydnee-shaped hole in the door where I— [laughs quietly] ran out. Or it would just be me typing over and over again,

"[shakily] Please vote me out now! Please vote me out now! I need to see a human!"

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** "[shakily] I can't handle this!" No, I would have to be me. I wouldn't be able to fake—it would be—it'd be so stressful to do it already. The added level of stress of having to—

**Raleigh:** Of lying? Yeah.

**Sydnee:** —yeah, pretend like I was something else. I wouldn't be able to. I would just—I would have to be me, and I would just try to be as absolutely nice as I can possibly be to everybody.

**Taylor:** [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That would be my whole thing, and I don't—I don't know. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah...

**Sydnee:** Taylor?

**Raleigh:** Taylor?

**Taylor:** Yeah, I mean I—kind—kind of—you know, I don't—I would never put myself in the situation of this show. Uh, that seems very stressful. But, uh, I would definitely be myself. Um, I don't think I would be very adept at—at being somebody else? And I also don't think, like—this is purely strategically, after watching the season—I don't think who I am as a person would be that, like, of a bad move in the game. Because I genuinely do care about being nice and supportive to people.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Like, that is a genuine concern of mine. Uh, so I don't know. I would—I don't know how long I'd last, but I would definitely just try to be myself and, uh, you know, get—I don't know. I'd—I'd do some emoji research beforehand, [through laughter] because it's—it's pretty nerve-wracking!

**Sydney:** Oh yeah.

**Raleigh:** Emo-jos.

**Taylor:** [through laughter] Yeah.

**Sydney:** I'd have to do a lot of emoji re—that is—that is very true.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydney:** Yeah, you would be well-liked, and you would've kicked butt at the, uh, art competition.

**Raleigh:** Oh yeah.

**Taylor:** I—I could've made the cake, probably, too. [laughs]

**Sydney:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. Cake and art.

**Taylor:** That was my favorite segment, largely because I think I've never seen someone, like, do the opposite of making a cake so hard as Joey did.

**Raleigh:** [laughs breathlessly]

**Taylor:** Like... [laughs]

**Raleigh:** They... for—for clarification, they, like, occasionally would have these, like, games or activities that everyone would do to just, like, get to know each other better, I guess. Like, a game they would all play or, like—this one time—

**Sydney:** And just to keep you as the audience from being very bored.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.



**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** This one time they all had to try to copy this Pinterest cake, and they had the cake made for them. They just had to decorate it and then post a picture. And Joey just, like...

**Taylor:** [laughs breathlessly]

**Raleigh:** ... just grabbed handfuls of icing and just was—I don't even know!

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

**Taylor:** It was—there was more cake on, like, him and the floor than on the cake. Like, it was just...

**Raleigh:** Yeah!

**Taylor:** It was great to watch. 'Cause you got this—

**Raleigh:** It was great.

**Taylor:** —it didn't seem like a bit. Like, I think he was actually trying! Like, that... he was definitely trying.

**Raleigh:** He was trying.

**Taylor:** Well, anyway. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** [through laughter] Raleigh, what would you do?

**Raleigh:** Um... I would—I would be myself, and I think I would be... very good at... picking, like, the—the best parts of myself to put as, like, my—my bio and my pictures, but also being able to, like, have conversations with people online. And I only say this—I'm not bragging, but this is just because most of my conversations with people are online already. I've had lots of practice being online.

**Sydnee:** I—I have no doubt you would be better than me. I'm not gonna speak for Taylor, but I—I have no doubt you would be better than me. I—I would probably accidentally send half of a message at some point.

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Which I don't even know how you do that if you're not typing it—

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** —but I typically do that in text or messaging, so I would probably—like, my status one day would be, "Feelin' pretty grea—"

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** That's it! [laughs]

**Sydnee:** And then there'd be some more, "Oops, sorry, got cut off." [laughs]

**Rileigh:** I do think, though, the strategy is not to try to be... the best every week and try to be the most liked every week.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** I think that the goal is just to have, like—every week just have a few good conversations with a few specific people, so it doesn't feel fake, and then by the end everyone will have gotten to talk to you at some point. Because if you looked at it, the persons who got—or people who got voted first and second every week were not the ones who won.

**Sydnee:** And try to leave romance out of it.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Yes. I would not try to have any—any flings of any kind.

**Sydnee:** No. 'Cause it seemed weird, and everyone knew it seemed weird. And so I think leave—leave the romance out of it and just be like—I mean, 'cause you notice, like, Joey and Sammy both did really well, and they were like—

**Rileigh:** And they just had friendships with people.

**Sydnee:** They were flirty.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** But they—they didn't, like, take it to that next—

**Rileigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** I mean, you could—

**Rileigh:** Well—

**Sydnee:** —well, Joey kissed Miranda, but—

**Rileigh:** That was very weird.

**Sydnee:** —that was very much, like, her goin' after—

**Rileigh:** [groans loudly]

**Sydnee:** —him, I felt like, way more than him goin' after her, you know?

**Rileigh:** When they kissed in—when she met him, I couldn't sit still! I was up, like, covering my face, like, "This isn't happening!"

**Sydnee:** Justin left the room.

**Rileigh:** [through laughter] I could not handle it!

**Taylor:** I—I will—I did find it interesting that everybody that had a partner when they entered lied and said they didn't. Like, that was across the board. I don't think anybody owned that they had a partner. Uh—

**Rileigh:** Everyone said they were single.

**Taylor:** —which is weird, because it's like—is that—was that an important—to, like, leave the possibility? Uh, I don't know. That—that's kinda weird. 'Cause it's not like romance worked in anybody's favor, but the idea that there *could* be seemed to be very important.

**Rileigh:** That's true.

**Sydnee:** I think so. I think you're right. I think it's that, like, "We're building a friendship," but I guess there's always that possible other path this could take that I think people find very enticing.

**Raleigh:** Although... I feel like if you came in and you, like, were in a relationship, but it was one of those—this is gonna sound awful. It was one of those very, like, "Oh, we take a lot of, like, very cute pictures together and post them on social media," and, like, those were some of pictures was with your significant other, and everyone was like, "Aw, what a cute, like, social media relationship!" I feel like that could also be very—very good. You know what I mean?

**Sydnee:** Maybe.

**Raleigh:** Like, you could be a good friend to people, but also just, like—I don't know. Like, a very marketable... part of you that everyone's like, "Aw, I wanna take pictures like that with somebody."

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** But it couldn't just be like, "Oh yeah, I kind of—I kind of have a boyfriend/girlfriend that I'm never gonna... talk about."

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** It's gotta be a part of your... your thing, though.

**Sydnee:** It's gotta be a part of your thing. I don't know. I—you could do it.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** But I think the path of least resistance would be to—whether or not you were with somebody—

**Raleigh:** Just say you're single.

**Sydnee:** —just say you're single.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Um...

**Rileigh:** But yes, *Circle* casting... please. [laughs quietly] I assume you probably have to be 21 to be on the show. Next year I'll be 21. Just, like...

**Sydnee:** Well, they keep giving 'em those little bottles of champagne.

**Rileigh:** [through laughter] They give them little bottles of champagne, like, every day! But next year I'll be 21. Please—I know it's in the UK that they film the show.

**Sydnee:** Uh-huh.

**Rileigh:** Just let me come be on your show. I think I'd win.

**Sydnee:** That's the last weird fact. The opening shots are from Chicago.

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** But it is filmed in Manchester.

**Rileigh:** That's so weird.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Interesting.

**Sydnee:** No, that's very interesting.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I mean, they already had the building with the big circle on it. What would they—what else were they gonna do with it? [laughs quietly] Uh, okay. Well, if you haven't seen *The Circle*, you should.

**Rileigh:** It's on Netflix. All of it's out.

**Sydnee:** It's way better than—than you think it's gonna be.

**Taylor:** But I wonder—'cause I'm sure they're gonna—I'm sure they're making more of it right now, because it was such a hit. Uh—

**Rileigh:** Oh, hope so.

**Taylor:** —I just wonder, like, how—if the goodness of it was just contingent on casting, getting a good cast of people. Like, I'm curious to see.

**Sydnee:** It'd be interesting.

**Raleigh:** Yeah, for sure.

**Sydnee:** Like, what if they cast a bunch of manipulative garbage people? And that's—that's the game? I... I hope they don't, [through laughter] because I really just like... for me it was just, "Here, I'm gonna watch some nice people be nice to each other. Oh, what a nice show!" [laughs]

**Raleigh:** I almost just wanna go back and rewatch it just to feel good. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Yeah, right?

**Sydnee:** I wanna see all those people on a new show.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Could they—could we give them a new show?

**Taylor:** Just—just—right?

**Raleigh:** Shooby and Joey.

**Taylor:** Some sort of, like, *Friends* situation—

**Sydnee:** Shooby and Joey?

**Taylor:** —but they're real people?

**Raleigh:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Sammy and Chris?

**Raleigh:** Oh, yes.

**Sydnee:** Oh, they should be hosting *something*.

**Rileigh:** They should be hosting something for sure. They should've let them host the Oscars.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yes!

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Yeah, okay.

**Sydnee:** Oh, I'm so here for that!

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Uh, okay. Next week.

**Rileigh:** Yes, what are we doing next week, Sydnee?

**Sydnee:** My—my pick. Next week, um, we're gonna go classic. Uh, it is our rebuttal to the news article that we discussed previously about Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill*.

**Rileigh:** [yawning] Uh-huh?

**Sydnee:** About how it was bad. We're gonna talk about it.

**Rileigh:** [simultaneously] So that's what we're listening to.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Rileigh:** Okay. Alright.

**Taylor:** I'm excited.

**Sydnee:** I know—I know it's—I know it's cliché, but it—it was formative.

**Rileigh:** Yeah!

**Sydnee:** One of the first pieces of media that I ever, like, sought out and purchased for myself.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** So...

**Raleigh:** Alright.

**Sydnee:** Alanis Morissette. *Jagged Little Pill*. There, uh—for all of you out there listening, if you wanna play along, there are cuss words.

**Taylor:** That—that's true.

**Raleigh:** [gasps dramatically]

**Taylor:** Yes.

**Raleigh:** Curses?

**Sydnee:** Yes. There are curses in it.

**Raleigh:** Oh my gosh.

**Sydnee:** We will not be saying them on the show.

**Raleigh:** Aw, man!

**Sydnee:** But Alanis will be saying them on... the CD. Well, you probably won't get it through the—[laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** [through laughter] On the CD!

**Raleigh:** I will not get a CD. [quietly] Ha, you really said CD.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** The year 2020, Sydnee!

**Sydnee:** I still have that CD.

**Raleigh:** Man.



**Sydnee:** I don't even have a CD player.

[pauses]

Anyway. So, uh, that's it, though. Thank you.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Thank you both. Uh, thank you for listening. You should tweet at us with other things that you think or feel or want to talk about, uh, in relation to the show, @stillbuff. Email us at [stillbuffering@maximumfun.org](mailto:stillbuffering@maximumfun.org), and check out Maximumfun.org for lots of wonderful, uh, shows that you would love to listen to.

[pauses]

[holding back laughter] And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

**Raleigh:** There you go. This has been your, uh, cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I am Raleigh Smirl.

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

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

**Raleigh:** I am still buffering...

**Sydnee and Taylor:** [out of sync] And I... am... too.

[theme music begins in the background]

**Sydnee:** I can never—other than the little bottles of champagne. That was the only enjoyable thing for me, personally.

**Raleigh:** [laughs] [quietly] I just wanna be on *The Circle*, please.

[theme music plays]

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**Alden:** Hey, everyone! Alden Ford here with the cast of *Mission to Zyxx!*

**Cast:** [together] Hello.

**Alden:** Our fourth season premieres on February 19<sup>th</sup>, and for those of you who aren't familiar with the show, we decided to ask one of our characters to give you a quick recap of what's happened so far. Say hello to the clone trooper, AJ!

**AJ:** Who are you people? What's happening? [sound of an energy weapon powering up]

**Alden:** Okay. AJ, put your... gun down. Uh, A—AJ, can you just tell us what's happened in the Zyxx quadrant in the last couple seasons?

**AJ:** Oh, well, we destroyed the emperor.

**Alden:** Oh really? Okay, great.

**AJ:** Yeah. I mean, I think—I think so. We knocked him into a chasm. Mr. Robot Man of Bargie's ship crashed through a window, and Dar and [unintelligible] and I took out, like, a bunch of bad guys. Papa fulfilled his destiny. And the Lizard was there too!

**Alden:** [tired] Okay, great. I guess I was sort of asking what the show was like.

**AJ:** Oh, you mean like it's an improvised, serialized, workplace space opera featuring brilliant sound design, incredible guest stars, and an epic, hilarious tale of fresh versus wack?

**Alden:** [pleasantly surprised] Oh! Yeah, wow! Where did you come up with that?

**AJ:** Jesse Thorn told me to write that on my palm.

**Alden:** Okay. Alright. Well, *Mission to Zyxx* season four debuts on February 19—

[cuts off suddenly]

\*\*\*\*\*

[chord]

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