

Still Buffering 201: "Hey Arnold!" (1996)

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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: Was that right? I kind of stumbled over it. I don't even know if it was right or not.

Sydnee: No, it was good. And I was right in there with my name.

Raleigh: You were. You remembered your name this time. And the podcast isn't haunted anymore!

Sydnee: Yay!

Raleigh: I have my voice back.

Sydnee: Uh, I'm very excited that you're living out a plot of *Dawson's Creek* right now. Um, we—we had to—

Raleigh: [through laughter] Wha—what plot is that?

Sydnee: —we had to record our episode a little early 'cause Raleigh has got to get to campus. What do you have to do on campus, Raleigh?

Raleigh: [sighs] You're gonna make me say it? I have to withdraw from a class.

Sydnee: She doesn't have to, I should say.

Raleigh: I don't have to.

Sydnee: You're choosing to—

Rileigh: I am choosing to, to preserve—you know what? This is good. I'm glad I am saying this. I am choosing to, to preserve my future mental health. And that is—that is honestly why I am. [laughs]

Sydnee: That's better. I withdrew from a class once in college because I was gonna get a B in it, I was afraid. I wasn't sure, but I was afraid it was gonna be a B and not an A—

Rileigh: That sounds about right.

Sydnee: —and it was gonna [through laughter] wreck my perfect GPA.

Rileigh: Sounds about right. Um—

Sydnee: That was not healthy. I do not feel proud of this. I am not endorsing it. I'm just admitting that this was the truth.

Rileigh: I have a 100 in this class right now, and I really respect the professor. But... it's a two and a half hour seminar once a week, and we have to read, like, a book a week, and it's a graduate level course, and I am a sophomore, and I did not realize how hard and upper level this course was before I signed up for it, and I don't expect my grade to stay this high, so I'm just trying to preserve myself the future stress of trying to maintain a good grade by withdrawing from the class and taking it again in a few years. [laughs]

Sydnee: Did you ever withdraw from a class, Tey?

Taylor: Umm... no. I had one class that I never once went to, ever. Uh—

Rileigh: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: —[laughs]

Sydnee: How does that work?!

Taylor: Well—

Rileigh: I—you know, I've never heard that one before.

Taylor: [laughs] No, but the thing is is—it was, like, this free draw class that, uh—

Sydnee: I have those nightmares, still.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: No, it was just—it was this free draw class that it didn't affect your GPA. Um, it just, like—it had an instructor. You showed up and you, like, drew from your imagination.

It sounded very fun. Uh, but because I knew it didn't affect my GPA, like, when I had other work to do I'd just be like, "Ah, that sounds really cool but I don't really think I can make it this week."

And then I just realized that I got to the end of the semester and was like, "Well, heck, I never went to that class once!" [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: And it—it was only after that that at an art show I met the professor and he—"Oh—oh, I had you in my class but you never came!"

And I was like, "Yeah, that was me!" [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: "Are you sure you got the right person? I don't think that was me."

Sydnee: "That wasn't me!"

Taylor: [unintelligible 3:11] He was like, "I know your name. Oh, I know your name because I said it every week—[audio cuts out]"

Raleigh: Oh, man.

Sydnee: Uh, you could've played that off, though. 'Cause they probably said Julia, and you could be like "Nope, no. I'm Teylor."

Raleigh: [simultaneously] "I'm Teylor."

Taylor: Yeah. Well, that—that was a whole other confusion in college. 'Cause, like, teachers that I was comfortable with knew me as Teylor, but teachers that intimidated me knew me as Julia, so I had, like, two identities... that just sort of depended on which one [through laughter] they were—

Sydnee: We should clarify. Teylor's given—

Raleigh: That what I was gonna say.

Sydnee: —given first name is Julia. I don't know if we've ever actually said that—

Raleigh: Middle name Teylor.

Sydnee: —on the show.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: That your—your middle name is technically Teylor, but you—

Raleigh: Which I—[laughs] I—

Sydnee: —you've gone by Teylor your entire life.

Taylor: And it wasn't—

Raleigh: I really enjoy watching the confusion on Twitter whenever you post art and you sign it JTS. And people are always like, "What does the J stand for?!"

Sydnee: [laughs] "Just. Just Teylor Smirl."

Raleigh: Just Teylor Smirl.

Sydnee: [laughs] I like that better. This is, though—this is the plot of an episode of *Dawson's Creek*.

Raleigh: Does Dawson withdraw from a class?

Sydnee: Not Dawson, Joey. It's called "The Lost Weekend—"

Raleigh: Joey Dawson.

Sydnee: Joey is at Worthington. She's taking a course from Professor Wilder, who... is so dreamy. And—and it's a very challenging English class. She's an English major. It's a very challenging, like, writing workshop class thing. And she keeps, like, not doing as well as she wants to, and she decides it's just too challenging. She's got too many classes. She's gonna drop this class.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And she spends, like, the whole episode trying to drop the class, 'cause the professor's—'cause you have to talk to the professor before you can drop it.

Raleigh: Yes, yes. Which—[sighs] oh, man.

Sydnee: And they have to agree to let you drop it. So she waits in this big long line. She finally gets to him. She tells him, and he's like, "Okay, fine, whatever." So he signs the slip. She takes it to the office to turn it in and they're like, "Very funny, Ms. Potter. This says 'Oscar Wilde.'"

Raleigh: [gasps]

Sydnee: 'Cause he tricked her.

Raleigh: He tricked her.

Sydnee: And so then she goes back and he argues with her, and she's like, "But I don't wanna be in your class, 'cause I'm not gonna get a great grade, and I don't think I'm good enough."

And he's like, "Write down how you feel about it."

And so she writes about all of her feelings. Then she turns it in to him and he gives her an A minus. And then she throws the drop slip in the trash.

Raleigh: Man. That's not how I feel like this meeting [holding back laughter] with my political science professor is going to be.

Taylor: Yeah...

Raleigh: Um...

Sydnee: [through laughter] Meanwhile, Audrey and Dawson are going on a campus tour—

Raleigh: Alright. Well, we're not—

Taylor: [simultaneously] Alright, alright. This is—

Raleigh: —well, we're not talking about *Dawson's Creek*. Now or ever.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Um—

Sydnee: Oh, oh, we *will*.

Taylor: Yeah. We—we will. You can pick that on *your* week, Syd. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. This is not your week.

Sydnee: Maybe you'll learn a lesson today, is all I'm saying. Maybe, maybe you don't wanna drop this class.

Raleigh: Can I just say, for those of us that have social anxiety, it is *so*—it is my worst nightmare to have to go to a professor's office hours and look them in the eyes and say, "I'm going to withdraw from this class you are teaching me."

And then have to give them an explanation that is good enough for them not to just be like, "Oh, okay. You're *that* kind of a student."

This is my worst nightmare. I have been dreading this and having nightmares about this for a week. I even emailed her ahead of time and I was like, "Can I just, like, come in really quickly and you sign my paper, 'cause this is why I'm withdrawing?" Because it's easier to write in the email than say that in person.

And, uh, she said "You know what? You're a great student. Let's talk about this before you choose to withdraw. Come meet with me during my office hours."

And I was like, "Why do I have to—no! I don't wanna talk about it!"

Sydnee: She's gonna talk you out of it.

Raleigh: No. I already—I told my roommate. I was like, "She's gonna try. She's gonna tell me she'll work with me, but I refuse. I am helping future Raleigh, and I am not letting her talk me out of it," and when I come on this podcast next week, I will be in one less class.

Sydnee: Alright. Well, we'll see.

Taylor: [crosstalk] do that.

Raleigh: And if I don't, then, well, she... she talked me out of it. [through laughter] Because I am easily pushed over.

Sydnee: I don't know. I don't think Joey Potter regretted keeping... Professor Wilder's class. *Especially* with everything that happens later.

Raleigh: Oh my gosh... okay. Well, we're not talking about *Dawson's Creek* this week. It's not Sydnee's week. It's Taylor's week.

Taylor: Yeah, we're gonna—

Raleigh: So Taylor, what are we talking about?

Taylor: We're gonna talk about something a little less dramatic.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Uh... I—I wanted to talk about *Hey Arnold!* A, uh—it was a cartoon that started in 1996 on the Nickelodeon network. It had five seasons—[audio cuts out]—created by Craig Bartlett, who I—I learned this when I was doing some re—[audio cuts out]—he actually created the Arnold character when he was working on *Pee-wee's Playhouse* in the late 80's.

Raleigh: Ohh.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Uh, as, like, a little claymation. So Arnold started his life as a claymation figure, and then, uh, when he had the opportunity to pitch a series to Nickelodeon, he kind of went through a lot of things before, like, you know, some of the execs saw the little *Hey Arnold!* character and was like, "That guy's weird. Let's talk about him some more."

And eventually evolved into—into *Hey Arnold!*

Sydnee: It's funny, because I—I read all that too, and I—Charlie is a big fan of *Peewee's Playhouse*.

Raleigh: She is.

Sydnee: We have watched all of the series of *Peewee's Playhouse* several times in our house. Um, in recent years. I know we watched it when we were younger, but, like, in recent years. So it's—it's fresher on my mind. And when I saw that, I started to think, like, "Well, surely—" and then it clicked. The Penny Cartoons.

Taylor: Yeah!

Sydnee: He was—he was part of the Penny Cartoons.

Raleigh: Ohh, yeah, he was!

Sydnee: And then it was like, "Oh my gosh! How had I never put it together?" 'Cause he—the hat between the two sprouts of hair—

Raleigh: Uh-huh.

Taylor: Yeah!

Sydnee: —is the same.

Raleigh: Uh-huh.

Sydnee: So the—the head is very similar. Now, the clothes and stuff are different. But, like, the Arnold head is the same. And I was like, "How have I never connected this?!"

Rileigh: Yeah. Oh, man!

Sydnee: How did I not just know this is Arnold from the Penny Cartoons?

Rileigh: I never knew that.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: I also didn't realize it started that early. Because, I mean, [holding back laughter] it started four years before I was even born.

But I remember watching it, like, a good amount growing up. Like, I remember it being on TV and watching a good amount of *Hey Arnold!* in my early years of watching cartoons.

Sydnee: How is that possible? Like—

Rileigh: I don't know if they showed a lot of reruns. I—I don't know if it was the movies. Did they come out later?

Sydnee: They did.

Taylor: The movies came out later. And I don't think—'cause it wasn't, like, five consecutive seasons over five consecutive years. Like, I don't think it ended til 2004.

Rileigh: Okay.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Um, so I think it was kind of like a season—I mean, the seasons were pretty long too. And then, like, a lot of reruns, and then another season.

Rileigh: Yeah. I probably just saw a lot of reruns. Um—

Taylor: Well, and the—

Sydnee: I guess the—'cause the—the most recent movie just came out in 2017.

Taylor: [through laughter] Yeah.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Which I remember being in a hotel room and catching that on TV. Like, a—it was, like, late night in a hotel room trying to find something to watch. I'm like, "Wait, what *is* thi—*what?! What?!*"

Raleigh: "Sorry?!"

Taylor: "This is *new Hey Arnold?* What is going on?!"

Sydney: Um, what makes you—what makes you love *Hey Arnold!* so much, Tey?

Taylor: You know, I was a big fan of a lot of the Nick—[audio cuts out]—so kind of like—choosing this, I thought back, like, "Ah—" [audio cuts out]—what stood out to me—I felt like... a lot of those cartoons I can't rewatch as an adult.

They—they were funny at the time, but, you know, it was, like, gross-out humor. It was kind of the same, like, sort of violence and, like, hyperac—like, hyperactivity that was sort of trademark of, like, Nickelodeon cartoons at that time, that I loved. Didn't really—like, that was the—it was fun for me as a kid.

Hey Arnold! had a lot of heart to—[audio cuts out]—it's—rewatching it as an adult, I was really surprised to see how rarely, if ever, they tried to, like, wrap things up in a neat little package. How rarely they tried to really drive home, like, a lesson, you know?

Things don't really work out in that world, and I think *Hey Arnold!* did a lot of... I mean, it presented something that I think was a lot more u—[audio cuts out]—to kids, as far as, like, developing how you looked at the world, you know?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydney: I think that's interesting. I—I rewatched some of it, uh, since we—since last week, so that I could refresh my memory. And, uh, that is very true, which is not common—even—I—I feel like [holding back laughter] I watch a lot of cartoons these days.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: It's not necessarily common on kids shows even today. That idea that, like, part of the kid experience is that things... like, you—you can only affect so much change in your circumstances at any given moment. And so, like, sometimes you do the best you can, and things might get a little bit better, but you didn't really fix the thing, and then something else happens, and that was that, and you move on.

Which is very—it sounds very anticlimactic. But, like, that's often the case when you're younger—heck, maybe through all life. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, that our lives don't have the—like, every—every story we encounter doesn't have this great arc where there is, like, a conflict, and then this great resolution, and everything's wonderful until we encounter our next problem.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Just more kind of keeps on ploddin' along.

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: Yeah. Like—like a—I—[audio cuts out]—one of the episodes that I was just rewatching w—[audio cuts out]—The List, where Arnold tries to have the perfect Saturday, and do everything that a kid's supposed to do on a Saturday. And, uh—and, you know, everything goes wrong. Like, he can't really check anything off the list. And, I mean, that's the episode.

You know, you'd think—I don't know. To me, it was like—you'd think it'd, like, end with, like, him having somehow a better than ever, or whatever. But it kinda just ends with, like, everything goes wrong. He comes home. His—his grandmother is playing a piano on the roof, and he's kind of lookin' down on the street and seeing, like—like, [through laughter] a car crash. And, like—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: —other things are going wrong. And he's just sort of like, "Well, that was the day." Like, it was—you know, there's not, like, a—there's not a bow on it. It's just kind of like, "Yeah, some days you don't get what you want."

[through laughter] And that's the lesson! It's just that.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's very born of the 90's in that sense. Because I feel like—as I was thinking of—I was trying to come up with other cartoons that felt that way to me, and I couldn't come up with a lot of animation that made me feel that way. But I felt—I feel like—like *My So-Called Life* would be a good—[laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: —you know what I mean? Like, a corollary to that. Like, there were a lot of shows like that. Um, at that—like, that was a very, like, 90's kind of philosophy. Um, and this idea that even as young people... I don't know. I—I feel like it was even built out of, like, the 80's. Like, with *The Breakfast Club* and that kind of thing.

There's—there's a little bit of a nihilism to it. A little bit of a, like, apathy. A little bit of a... there's only so much you can change, let go more, accept that things are crappy sometimes.

I don't know. It was a—it's a very 90's thing. And I just—I couldn't think of another, uh, cartoon that—

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: —you know, embodied that.

Taylor: Yeah. And it did that, but it—there was a—there was a sense of—I think that, like, kind of "Oh well" quality. I mean, there was—I feel like there was—it was ultimately a—a show that had a lot of hope to it.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: But it was kind of at a deeper level of, like, you know—it wasn't saying, like, "Everything'll turn around!"

It was just more like, "You'll get through it. You have to." [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, it was a very honest—like, good stuff will happen and bad stuff will happen.

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And they won't necessarily balance out at any given time, but you're guaranteed that both will continue to happen to you. [laughs] I don't—is that—is that helpful? [laughs] Is that anything?

Taylor: No, absolutely. Well, and there was a lot of—I mean, I was kind of surprised, like, how much—I mean, I think part of it comes with the setting, which—this was interesting to me. I always thought it was Brooklyn. I was sure of that. Uh, in my memory. It's not. It's a completely made-up city called Hillwood.

Rileigh: Interesting.

Taylor: Um, yeah. And it's an amalgamation of the creator's—like, the creator grew up between, like, Portland and Seattle, spent some time in Brooklyn, but it's kind of an amalgam of all of those.

Rileigh: Okay.

Taylor: Um, but they still kind of have, you know, the, like, mixed bag of characters. Like, there were people from lots of different, like, ethnic backgrounds in it that influenced the stories. Uh, which I thought was different than everything we were seeing on TV in the 90's, you know? It was all, like—you know, kids in suburbs, outside of that.

Like, *Hey Arnold!* presented a very different, very—much more real-world view of, like—you know, it's not just—there are lots of different people from lots of different backgrounds and you have to learn to work with that. [laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I always think that's cool, especially as somebody, like you said, who grew up in a more rural area. Like, the—the cartoons that introduce kids to the idea of, like, there are people who live in totally different, like, places and areas. And, like, this is what—like, it's like to grow up in a more urban area. I think that

that's—that was neat for me. Although I guess *Sesame Street* does that too, and...

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, now *The Casagrandes*. That's a great show.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I could sing its praises.

Rileigh: I was, uh—I was thinking about other cartoons that I watched that felt very similar to *Hey Arnold!* to me, and I do remember—and I feel like most of them honestly were probably 90's to early 2000's cartoons that maybe I just ended up seeing reruns of somehow growing up. But I remember watching a lot of *Hey Arnold*, *Rocko's Modern Life*, *Ren and Stimpy*, um, the—the beaver one? The two beavers that live together?

Taylor: *Angry Beavers!*

Sydnee: *Two Angry Beavers*.

Rileigh: *Two Angry Beavers*.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah. Those always felt very different to me, watching those, and I remember watching all of them and enjoying all of them. Then, like, cartoons that started becoming popular as I was getting older, like—I don't know, *Fairly Odd Parents* or, um... *Danny Phantom*.

Stuff like that, that was different in a way that was less... I don't wanna say less *real* but kind of. It was less about, like, real-world situations and—I mean, of course.

Sydnee: I was gonna say, *Fairly Odd Parents*... yeah. [laughs]

Rileigh: Of course, like, *Ren and Stimpy* are not, like... real... people.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: No.

Raleigh: But I felt like it was just always a much more, like—

Sydnee: They're animals. [laughs]

Raleigh: —yes. But I always felt like it was like *Hey Arnold!* in the sense that it was a much less, like, of a fantastical storyline every episode.

Sydnee: Yes. Yes.

Raleigh: More realistic storytelling, I guess.

Taylor: Yeah. I think that there was kind of an era where shows didn't feel the need to talk down to kids. Like, you know, I'm gonna tell you a story, and yeah I might use sli—I might simplify it a little bit 'cause I know I'm making something for a younger audience, but it doesn't have to be kid stuff.

And I feel like that—that element in the 90's and 90's cartoons specifically is why we—those creators that grew up in my age group, like, grew up with those cartoons, then went to make the cartoons that we have, you know, kind of popular today, that sort of are built off of that.

Like, I can make entertainment for people. It doesn't have to be, like, dumbed down for kids or—or smart because it's for adults. Like, it... a cartoon can be for anybody, and it can be for people across age ra—[audio cuts out]—respect our audience.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Well, and it—it doesn't—it also recognizes that, like... kids—there are some grand themes that you don't have to water down for kids. The reason that they've stuck around so long—the reason that, like, Helga can sometimes, like, drop into sort of, like, a Shakespearean, like, sonnet—[laughs] sort of description of her love for Arnold—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: —the reason that that plays with kids is that, like, these kinds of ideas, these themes are universal. They're touchstones for humans across time and age and whatever, and, like—it's funny, I was watching it with Charlie, and at first—you're—you're not introduced immediately to the secret that Helga loves Arnold. And then when you are, she went... "Oh, she loves him."

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: And I said, "Yeah."

And she went, "So she pretends she hates him."

I was like, "Yep."

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And, I mean, she's five. Like—[laughs] it's not hard. But, I mean, like, it's a—it seems like a complex idea. But, like, nah, kids get it.

Rileigh: They get it, yeah.

Sydnee: "Yeah, okay. Oh, she's hidin' it. Yeah, she doesn't want everybody to know. She's being cool. Okay. I'm five. I get that."

So, like, everybody gets it. I don't know. I—but it really—like, it—it understands that there are some feeling someone things that kids feel the same that we feel, and they might express it differently, but if you—if you show it to 'em, they'll get it. They'll pick it up.

Taylor: And that's even, like, I think further exemplified by the episode, uh—[audio cuts out]—Helga on the Couch, I thi—[audio cuts out]—um, where Helga goes to a—to therapy. Um, and it's a—it's one of the—there are a couple—most of the episodes in *Hey Arnold!* are 15 minutes, and it's like you get two per—per episode.

This is one of the ones where they took the whole half hour to do it. Uh, which—[audio cuts out]—over the course of the show. Um, and in this one, like, you know, it... it—it really does a lot for a half an hour cartoon. Like, you know, you see the stigma. Like, her parents are embarrassed that she's been asked to go to therapy because of behavior at school.

Like, you know, it shows how people look at it. Like, it shows how her fixation with Arnold started when he, like—you know, 'cause—'cause Helga has the older sister who's perfect and, you know, her parents ignore her in—in lieu of the older sister, and how Arnold was one of the first people that was, like—or, Arnold showed her, like, kindness when, uh—when she—after a day of neglect at the hands of her parents, and that's sort of when her fixation with him began.

So, like, what he represents to her. I don't know. I mean, and it—but it's a—it's an episode that treats her—her feelings... very respectfully. And also, just shows—like, I think as a kid, to see the representation of a kid who feels like they're not good enough for their parents, so they act out in response to that. Like, that wasn't—that was, I felt, like, made for kids that might be feeling that way, and it's—you know, to show, like, "Hey, your feelings are valid and you could talk to somebody if you want."

Like, that's... you don't usually get those sort of narratives for the bully character, you know? The bully is a bad person. They're a bad guy, and they're—that's what it is. If you—whatever bad stuff happens to them, that the punchline of the episode, is "Ha ha, the bully got what was coming to them."

But Helga's the bully, but also it's all of this stuff that makes her the way she is, and it's really painful and sad.

Sydnee: I think that's really true. I think—I think Helga is a really well-developed character as the series goes on, and I think that's especially rare considering that the creator was male, and so much of it is based on kind of his own memories of his childhood and stuff growing up, and he even talked about, like, girls that liked him and girls that didn't.

Like, they're all represented on the show, and you—you run the real risk of not ever seeing a fully developed female character if that's the lens through which you're creating it, and that doesn't happen. Like, she is a very well rounded, fully developed character, you know? All unto herself, which is nice to see.

Raleigh: It is.

Sydnee: It's not just through the lens of Arnold. She exists in her own right as her own person.

Raleigh: I, uh—I have some popular conspiracy theories—

Taylor: Oh, no.

Raleigh: —about that, that I want to share.

Sydnee: But before we do that...

Raleigh: Let's check the group message.

Sydnee: Did you know I was gonna say that?

Raleigh: I was counting—

Sydnee: Ahh, good.

Raleigh: —I was looking at you. I was counting on that—that sibling telepathy to kick in.

Sydnee: Uh, do you—do you two feel like you've just got a never-ending to-do list?

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: I definitely relate to that, you know? You—you're running from a flight to a meeting, you gotta cook dinner. Uh, you've got a lot of places to go. You don't have time to change clothes in between. You need pants that can get you from the office to home to out to dinner, to wherever you gotta go. Right?

Raleigh: Yep.

Sydnee: Uh, to go drop a class, perhaps.

Raleigh: Ye—yep. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: That's true! To go drop a class.

Sydnee: To never go to a class, perhaps.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: [through laughter] To never once attend a class. Perhaps you want to sit at home in these pants. They're comfortable enough to do that. Betabrand has dress pant yoga pants that are super comfy. They're perfectly stretchy. They stay wrinkle-free, so, uh, I—I have been a fan for a long time. I have worn the—the dress pant yoga pants to work for a long time before we started talkin' about 'em on the show.

Um, and they really do—it's nice, too. As soon as I get home from work, I usually would wanna go change clothes before the girls would, like, attack me. And, uh, with dress pant yoga pants from Betabrand, it doesn't even matter if I don't have time to change. Like, I can roll around on the floor with the kids and play and move around, and I'm still comfortable, and I can still, like, get down on the floor and play with them and stuff.

And they come in dozens of colors and patterns and cuts and styles, and, uh—um, even premium denim, now. So—

Raleigh: Wow!

Sydnee: —all kinds that you can check out. So, uh, Tey, if our listeners wanna check out Betabrand pants, and other clothing items, what should they do?

Taylor: Well, uh, you can get 20% off your first order if you go to betabrand.com/buffering. That's 20% off your first order at betabrand.com/buffering. Millions of women agree: these are the most comfortable pants you'll ever wear to work. Go to betabrand.com/buffering and get that 20% off.

Raleigh: Um, I am a small business owner.

Sydnee: Hm. What is your business?

Raleigh: It is... I...

Taylor: Small business.

Rleigh: ... sell... um... homemade, personalized... animal sweaters. [pauses] And I got into this line of work because it is my one true passion.

Sydnee: Hm!

Rleigh: [whispering] This is—this is all fake.

Sydnee: I had—I—

Rleigh: [whispering] I—I don't, but just go on with it.

Sydnee: —I had no, idea, but go with it.

Rleigh: But do you know what gets in the way of keeping me from, uh, making all those personalized, custom animal sweaters?

Sydnee: What gets in your way?

Rleigh: All the tedious admin work that goes along with having a small business.

Sydnee: Hmm. I hate tedious admin work.

Rleigh: Me too, and it gets in the way of that job I really love, I turn to HoneyBook, because HoneyBook takes all those tedious tasks off my to-do list so I can keep focusing on why I started my small business in the first place, which is just to... dress animals in very cute sweaters. I wish this my small business now.

Sydnee: Oh, they're—they're *for* animals.

Taylor: Ohh!

Rleigh: Yes. They are for your animals to wear.

Sydnee: They don't have animals on them. I thought they just had animals on them.

Taylor: That's what I thought too.

Rileigh: No, I love—I love animals in clothes, and they are for animals to wear. Um... [holding back laughter] HoneyBook is an online business management tool that organizes your client communications, bookings, contracts, and invoices, all in one place. It's perfect for freelancers, entrepreneurs, small business owners—maybe you're like me and you just love... crocheting little sweaters for your—for your dogs to wear.

Uh, and if you want to consolidate services you already use, like Quickbooks, Google Suite, Excel, Mailchimp, HoneyBook does all this for you. So basically, you simplify that to-do list, you stay in control, and you keep doin' all the work you love to do in your business, with HoneyBook.

So, Tey, if our listeners want to check out HoneyBook, what should they do?

Taylor: Well, right now HoneyBook is offering our listeners 50% off your first year with promo code "buffering." Payment is flexible, and this promotion applies whether you pay monthly or annually, so go to honeybook.com and use promo code "buffering" for 50% off your first year. That's honeybook.com, promo code "buffering."

Rileigh: Welcome, everyone, to this edition of Rileigh's Conspiracy Corner.

Sydney: [groans quietly] Oh no.

Taylor: You're gonna take something beautiful and pure like *Hey Arnold!* and then—

Rileigh: No. I—I think you're gonna—I think you're gonna enjoy this one, because it goes along with what we were talking about.

Sydney: Rileigh dismembers NickToons from our youth.

Rileigh: No, there—there are several, and this one I think you will enjoy. And it is that really *Hey Arnold!* is about Helga, and she is the show's protagonist, and she is the most clearly developed character, given the most time to explore her inner self and her development as a character, more so than Arnold. And she is really the protagonist of the show, and everything that happens happens to further her character. Mostly.

[pauses]

Sydnee: Hm... I mean, I don't—I haven't watched the whole series in a long time—

Raleigh: Of course, the show is called *Hey Arnold*, but—

Taylor: [laughs] Well—

Sydnee: Well—

Raleigh: —I think the point here is that Helga is the protagonist, and she is not just a bully character.

Sydnee: No, I agree that she is not just a bully character, and I do—I do think that because the stories are somewhat personal, or at least based on personal experiences, um, I do think that they are somewhat like—Arnold functions as the narrator.

Taylor: Right.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Which—which makes him not necessarily the protagonist in any given tale. I mean, sometimes he is. Sometimes it's a tale about Gerald or it's a tale about Helga or one of his neighbors or family members, so.

Raleigh: Yeah. Um, there are others, but I don't wanna—I don't wanna ruin it for you, so I'll just...

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: ... [quietly] I'll just say that one.

Sydnee: If you want to tell us others—

Taylor: You seem really excited, so I don't know. I—

Raleigh: This is—this is the first cartoon I remember seeing conspiracy theories about.

Sydnee: Really?

Raleigh: When I—like, a long time ago. Like, in the early days of YouTube when conspiracy theory videos first started popping up, this is the first one I ever saw a video about.

Sydnee: I thought the hideous *Rugrats* one was the first one.

Taylor: That one's [crosstalk]—

Raleigh: No. that was close after.

Sydnee: Which I will not discuss.

Taylor: No.

Raleigh: I will not discuss that. Um, so—

Sydnee: You can google it yourself if you're that interested out there, but I would advice you not.

Raleigh: And I will put a disclaimer that the creator of the show did actually a Polygon article where they asked him about all of these specific conspiracy theories, and he was like, "No, they're all fake. Of course. Like, those are all false."

Sydnee: On *Hey Arnold*?

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Yeah, okay.

Raleigh: Um, but the other biggest one that I remember seeing is that *Hey Arnold's* real parents are actually—and yes, I will only refer to him as *Hey Arnold!* [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh-huh.

Raleigh: Uh, are actually his grandparents. They are his real parents.

Sydnee: Oh, well that's not... go ahead.

Taylor: Well, that's definitely wrong, 'cause there's a whole movie where they—they find his parents. That—it—

Sydnee: Precisely. Precisely.

Raleigh: Right. But—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: —this was before—[laughs] this was before the movie.

Sydnee: Okay. Well, maybe the movie was made to settle that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Sydnee: I do want to—go ahead.

Raleigh: So, there's—

Taylor: No, go ahead.

Raleigh: —that.

Sydnee: Do you—do you need to address that, Taylor?

Raleigh: Yeah, go ahead.

Taylor: No, I was gonna—I was gonna ask, because that was, to me—I don't know. Like, I—the whole... it seemed like such a strange change in direction to actually have this big climactic movie where they find Arnold's parents. 'Cause I felt like so much of the show was, like—I mean, yeah. Some kids don't—like,

about, like, those kind of—we don't have to have, like, a nice answer to everything.

Like, Arnold's parents aren't there, and maybe we don't have some epic story as to why. That seems very much like what a kid would build up in their head, and then I feel like the way that the—the gravity of the show would say, "But we don't get answers to such things." And they're like, "Well, but if we just have a whole movie [through laughter] where they go to Central America—"

Rileigh: [laughs] Yeah.

Taylor: "—and..." it's a—it's very, like... it's like, well, I kind of just—I loved his grandparents. I thought they were pretty good parents. In fact, they had a whole episode called Parent's Day where they, like—

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: —show how, like, his grandparents are, you know... how much they're there for him, and how they *are* his parental—[audio cuts out]—seemed very kind of, like, "Well, why'd we do that?" I liked the—I thought it was sweet as it was. [laughs]

Sydnee: I would—I would agree with you there, 'cause I actually think there's a huge amount of value into having, um, on kids' shows, that representation. People who are not necessarily raised by their parents. Um, especially—I always think about that because of where we live, and in—in West Virginia, we have an incredibly high rate of children who are being raised—largely by another family member. Um, but by someone other than their parents, and specifically, I often see grandparents.

Um, and, uh, I—I think that that's really important to show that, like, there are so many things that are a family. I—I actually think that that was a really beautiful thing. That, like, we don't have to know. You know? Make up whatever you need to in your own head to explain it, but that doesn't need to be—the important thing is, he has caretakers who love him and who are invested in him and—and provide for him, and that's—that's what a kid needs.

Um, plus, if we're gonna bring up a movie, can I say—have you all seen the *Dora the Explorer* live action movie?

Rileigh: No.

[pauses]

Sydnee: I—I just wanna point out that the plot is essentially the same.

Taylor: Oh.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Which came first?

Rileigh: *Hey Arnold!*

Sydnee: *Hey Arnold!*

Taylor: Okay. So *Dora* stole *Hey Arnold's* plot. Alright.

Sydnee: I—I just want to point out that *Dora* also goes to somewhere—I—you know, it's not exactly clear where she's traveling. It's it's—it's similar to *Hey Arnold!* where they make up the names of locations. Um, somewhere with her friends to seek out her parents, who are lost. And the friend of her parents that helps guide them along the way—spoilers—turns out to be a bad guy—

Rileigh: [gasps]

Sydnee: —and was just using her to help him find the lost city and the treasure and blah blah blah—

Rileigh: So yes, it is essentially the exact same plot.

Sydnee: This is the same plot! I mean, like, from there—there—it diverts a little bit—

Rileigh: Right.

Taylor: [through laughter] How often does this happen?!

Sydnee: —but—right? Like, doesn't that seem odd? Like, no one in—in my life has ever been like, "Sydnee, your parents are lost in a—[through laughter] in a Central or maybe South American—it's not clear—country, somewhere!"

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: "And we need you to come find them with your friends. Please bring your untrained, unskilled [laughs] friends who have no business being lost in the jungle with you, but bring them along. And then once you get there, uh, surprise! I am not your parents' friend, I'm a bad guy!"

This has never happened to me.

Rileigh: Dun dun dun. It's not relatable enough? Is that what you're saying?

Sydnee: No. [pauses] I'm just saying it's the plot—which also, by the way, *Dora* is a great movie. [through laughter] I would highly recommend it.

Rileigh: Interesting. Would not have guessed that.

Sydnee: Uh, Justin and I watched it with Charlie and Cooper and we—we enjoyed it. Charlie thought it was a little too intense.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm. That's fair.

Sydnee: Um, it is—it is pretty intense. But, uh—but it's actually a really good movie.

Rileigh: The, uh—the last—

Sydnee: She's still Dora, is the thing.

Rileigh: Right, mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like, she's still cheering people—like, she's in high school and she's goin', like... at the end of her first day of school she's like, "We did it! We did it! We went to high school! We went to our first day! Woo! Good job, everybody! We did it!"

It's great. It's funny. Anyway.

Rileigh: You know, it took me a long time to realize that her name is Dora but the Spanish word for female explorer is *exploradora*. So her name is Dora the Explora.

Sydnee: Oh, I don't think I knew that.

Rileigh: Hmm. Um, that's not a conspiracy theory. That's just, like, a—that's just... clever.

Sydnee: I love Dora. And Diego. Anyway, continue with your conspiracy theories about *Hey Arnold!* [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs] The last one is kind of sad, and we can—we can breeze past it very quickly, but I feel like it is worth mentioning, because I feel like this is a conspiracy theory for every cartoon where there is a central character with lots of friends, and it is that *Hey Arnold!* was bullied a lot for [holding back laughter] his head shape, so all of his friends are imaginary, and that is why they all also have unusual head shapes.

Sydnee: [snorts]

Rileigh: Because he made them all up. [laughs]

Taylor: But everybody in the world of *Hey Arnold!* has unusual head shapes.

Rileigh: He made them all up. [laughs]

Sydnee: No, they just have—

Taylor: It's all happening in that football shaped head. Yeah, I don't—I don't know.

Rileigh: Yep.

Taylor: I don't know about—

Rileigh: Also there's the one that he's Stewie Griffin grown up, but [through laughter] I don't really know how that one works!

Sydnee: No... no... that's just a popular cartoon head shape, I—I feel.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And it—also, the unique outline of each character—uh, I thought this was cool, 'cause it was a—a... the creator accredits it to a discussion he had with Matt Groening, creator of *The Simpsons*, who basically said "Every one of your characters—" and this is a common concept in cartooning— "All of your characters should be recognizable by, like, an outline alone."

[through laughter] Um, but I just think, like—like, *Hey Arnold!* takes that to, like, the 10th degree. Like, every single character you could recognize just from the cutout.

Raleigh: [laughs] Yeah.

Sydnee: I think that's very true. I—but that's—I mean—

Raleigh: Honestly, just, like, a head outline, I feel like I could identify the *Hey Arnold!* character.

Sydnee: I think that's helpful for kids in general.

Raleigh: Oh yeah.

Sydnee: Um, for distinguishing all the characters, and then I have to imagine that that's nice for, uhhh, merchandise. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I—I was thinking that as we were playing with some little Spongebob toys today, me and Cooper. I was thinking, like—I bet it's nice. They're all different colors and shapes and—yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. Well, and if you want to go a little deeper, then you don't have cartoon characters that are displayed for kids that are, like, what people quote, unquote, "Should look like."

Like, you don't have any, like... I don't know. Unreachable standards of what you should look like, based on this popular characters—

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: —because none of them look like real people, so they're all just like—they're there for their story, not there because of what they look like. You're never gonna look like Helga. [laughs]

Sydnee: And that's true. Like, nobody's trying to make their head look like Arnold.

Rileigh: Uh-huh.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Like, that's not... nobody's gonna attempt that.

Taylor: Yeah...

Sydnee: That's not like an unrealistic beauty standard that you may—you may—

Rileigh: That Arnold shape.

Sydnee: —harm yourself in an attempt to... [through laughter] achieve.

Rileigh: Yeah, right.

Sydnee: Uh, I do like that they have—it's funny, 'cause I hadn't remembered this until I was rewatching it—that, like, even though Arnold is, like, the main character—um, and we've talked a lot about Helga and all the action that she plays in the various stories. Um, Gerald's the same way. I was watching the one where they, uh, have to dress as fruit for Helga's play.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. That's the first episode.

Sydnee: Is that the first one?

Taylor: Yeah!

Sydnee: Oh, okay. I watched—I watched, like, the first—I don't know how many. I just left them on and watched them throughout the day, so. But, uh, it's—it's funny, because they don't wanna go, but Arnold was—was definitely gonna go to that play.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Because Helga was the director, and she would've been very angry if he hadn't showed for the school play where he was fruit.

Uh, it's Gerald that talks him out of it. And, uh, and starts the whole action of the plot. Like, Gerald's the one who's like, "Don't pull that cord on the bus. Let's not get off. Let's just keep goin'."

And... I don't know. I was just thinking, like, it's—it's fun, 'cause we all had that friend.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Who, like... [laughs] we were trying to do—like, be dutiful and, like, do the boring thing, and then we all have that one friend who's like, "What if we didn't?"

Raleigh: "What if we just didn't do it?"

Sydnee: "What if we didn't?" And, like, makes you feel like, "I'd be okay. Just this once. Just this once."

Taylor: I also love—I love, like, the—the weird kind of character quirk of—there's all of these—like, the—the—you know, there's kid lore. People that have the—like, all the stories they tell, the ghost stories about the city they live in or the weird characters in the neighborhood.

But that, like, Gerald is the keeper of the lore. Like [through laughter] whenever it's like, "Oh, Gerald, you tell the story." Like, he's the one that knows all of the—the stories of—of their neighborhood, and just—I like that they have that consistently. Like, whenever they have one of those episode that is kind of based

around an—[audio cuts out]—character in their hood. Like, Gerald's the one that knows the story.

Sydnee: He's the, uh—he's the leader, really.

Raleigh: Maybe *he* is the protagonist.

Sydnee: Uh...

Raleigh: *Hey Gerald.*

[pauses]

Sydnee: I don't know.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Maybe!

Raleigh: That doesn't—it's not as catchy.

Sydnee: Maybe. No, I think—I think that, um, if people feel that way about Helga, I would imagine that it was... if you were a young woman watching those shows, that you were desperate for female characters that you could connect to.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And it's hard to find, uh—not as much now, but when we were young, I feel like it was very difficult to find characters that were nuanced. That had sides. Like, it was either the good girl or the bad girl or whatever, and, like, if you weren't just that, like, I can't relate to that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It was nice to have somebody that was multidimensional.

Raleigh: It was hard to find a female character that wasn't just there to be the object of another... usually a man's... like, love or crush. Even in cartoons. Which I think is why all those kind of, like, earlier—early 2000's, late 90's cartoons kind of

fell into the same category. Like, they didn't have a lot of that same... normative storytelling.

Sydnee: They remind me a little bit of, uh... um, the Judy Bloom books. Um, starting with, uh, *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, and then went on from there, like, with *Super Fudge*, and then, uh, *Otherwise Known as Sheila the Great*

I feel like Sheila and Helga would get along.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: You know? I feel like they're cut from the same cloth.

Raleigh: Uh-huh. Maybe Junie B. Jones. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Throw her in there too. [laughs]

Taylor: I—I did think it—I thought it was cool. I was—it was one of the articles that I found on it was talking about how, like, people that grew up with it, how they remembered it, and that there were a lot of women that really related to and embraced Helga.

I don't particularly remember, 'cause I was not—I mean, I was never a—in any way a outspoken or aggressive—like, that's not how I was, so Helga kind of scared me [through laughter] when I watched the show when I was younger?

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: But, uh... but I thought that, like—that was—[stammering] I could see that, how you didn't have, like—like, the—a show that attempted to look into the emotional depths of a girl that would've just in any—[audio cuts out]

You know, to be a young girl and see that as somebody that... reminded you of your—[audio cuts out]—and then also see her get screen time I'm sure was very important, and different than what was going on—[audio cuts out]

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Well, I mean, especially since, like, if I think about, like, my TV idols who I wanted to be like when I was young, um, again, it's hard to look to animation 'cause there just—I mean, not that I didn't watch cartoons. I did, and I loved a lot of them. But, like, I don't know that I drew inspiration from specific characters as to, like, who I want to be like.

Um, other than maybe Gadget. [pauses] Gadget the mouse.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Gadget definitely was an inspiration.

Taylor: Gadget was good.

Raleigh: A mouse. But yes.

Sydnee: Um, but there weren't a lot. Uh, but I think—I always think, like—well, DJ Tanner. DJ Tanner from *Full House* is who I wanted to be, and that was my, like, inspiration for everything. I wanted her hair, I wanted her clothes, I wanted my room to look like hers. I did all those things. I got a perm—

Taylor: [laughs] I got a perm.

Sydnee: —I wore [crosstalk] scrunchies, I got the DJ—I did! I—I did everything I could to look like DJ Tanner. And I—I remember that one of the things that was hard for me is that I always felt like DJ Tanner is pretty and nice and smart, and she has the cool boyfriend that she loves and, like, everything about her was so perfect.

And even the moments where they would show her, like, get in trouble or, like, break the rules in some way, it was never really because she was a bad person or wanted anything bad or had any bad habits or anything. It was just like—you know, drama was around her.

And, like, that's a hard... that's hard to try to, like, live up to when you're a—especially an awkward preteen. [laughs] Like, I'll never be DJ Tanner.

Raleigh: [laughs] That's something we all have to face at one point or another.

Sydnee: But I can be Helga. There are parts of me that are Helga. Like, that is—

Raleigh: There are parts of me that are very Helga.

Sydnee: —that—yeah! And, I mean, I think that—I think that that's very powerful, to have, like... it's okay. There are good and bad parts of you, and you don't have to define yourself either way. You can encompass it all. Which is what, you know, male characters have been doing—

Raleigh: For always.

Sydnee: —for always, yeah.

Raleigh: I—I do think it's nice—there—you can go back to a large percentage of shows from the late 90's, early 2000's, and find problematic bits and you're like, "Oh no! This wasn't this when I was, you know, watching it the first time! I didn't realize!"

Hey Arnold! was not one of those shows. You can watch it, and it's still pretty much, like—

Sydnee: Really?

Raleigh: I—to me it was just like I was watching it—I was like, "Yeah, this is like—I would see this on TV *now*."

You don't, really, but there are other good cartoons, but—

Taylor: I think it was—it was attempting to do things way before its time. I mean, I even remember, as a young person, watching the episode where Mr. Hyunh—it's the Christmas episode, and he talks about how—I mean, and—

He speaks Vietnamese, so you can assume he's escaping Vietnam, or he—he gives his daughter to an American soldier to get her out of Vietnam, and then he comes to America to try to find his daughter years later and he can't find her. And, like, that's is a... for a kids' show, like, that's a—

Sydnee: That's a heavy storyline.

Taylor: Yeah! And that's—the whole point is that, you know, Arnold's trying to find his daughter to reunite them. And, uh—like, I remember as a kid watching that and thinking, like, "Well, what is this—what is this about? Where would—where in the world would a kid have to be separated from their parents like that?"

'Cause I was just too young to really kind of get what they were talking about. Yeah.

Sydnee: But it—it really does know—like you said, though, when we first started talking about it, it—it really respects the fact that if you think this stuff that maybe adults are tasked to, like, do and cope with, isn't affecting the children around you—isn't, like—if you think they're not aware of it, then you're fooling yourself.

Kids know when this stuff is going on, and so, like, the idea that we're seeing it through, like—a situation like that through Arnold's eyes, like, as a kid who finds out about the situation and wants to help... that's happening.

There are—you know, our—our kids—the kids all around us, not just mine—[laughs]—are listening, and they're watching, and they're experiencing sometimes very deeply and personally all these things that adults are going through and talking about and are happening around them, and they're having to cope with it with a much more limited set of life experiences and lessons than us.

Um, which is—which is when you get into, like, all the stuff about, like, urban myths and legends and lore and all that kind of stuff, because that's how—that's how that forms, right?

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: But, um—but I think that's—I think that's very powerful in a kids' show.

Taylor: And that—that kind of falls in line with—I do—I—we're—we're getting there, time-wise, but I want to talk about my personal favorite epis—[audio cuts out]

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Uh, which is The Pigeon Man. If—if anybody listening has not watched any *Hey Arnold*, if you watch any of it, just watch—it's a—you know, one of the 15 minute ones.

It's short, and I think it kind of encapsulates everything that I—that I connected with about this show, 'cause it's—it doesn't have a—a tight understanding—it doesn't—it's not trying to teach you anything. It's not showing you, like, a—a lesson—[audio cuts out]—sad, but it's really beautiful, and it's basically just that Arnold, uh, is—is training pigeons, and one of his pigeons gets hurt, so he learns that there's this, like, pigeon man that lives in this old, like, burnt down building and just takes care of pigeons, and that's what he does.

So he takes his injured pigeon to the pigeon man. And, like the—I believe the pigeon man's name is Vincent. And he—he's kind of—he's like a hermit. Like, he's cut himself off from society. He doesn't interact with people anymore. And you don't really get why, but he just kind of says "Well, people are cruel. Like, I don't deal with people."

And Arnold gets him to come out and have pizza with him. So you think, like, maybe it's gonna move in a direction where Arnold helps this pigeon man reconnect with people, but while the pigeon man's away from his—his house, these kids break in and kind of—[audio cuts out]—ruin everything, bust up the place.

Sydnee: Aww...

Taylor: And so, in response to this—I'm getting choked up just thinking about it! You know, he says, like, you know—'cause all the pigeons escaped. And he goes "No, the pigeons will come back, because I can trust them. It's the people that I can't."

And so then all of his pigeons come back. And, like, he's been wearing this coat the whole time that has all these little hooks all over it, and all these little hooks, like, the pigeons latch on to and pull out and they lift him up into the sky. And he says, "I'm gonna go find somewhere else where I can be with my pigeons."

And that's the end of the episode! And it's—

Raleigh: Aww...

Taylor: —it's so sweet, and it's so sad. And I remember seeing it when I was little and... I don't know.

Sydnee: Aww, Tey!

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Tey... [laughs tearfully] you made me sad thinking about it!

Taylor: [through laughter] It was really sad! And it was really sw—

Sydnee: And it had birbs! That's a lot for you.

Raleigh: It had birbs!

Taylor: It had birbs. But you know, I'd just like to—to give that—to serve that to a kid and kind of say, like, "Yeah. Life can be really sad sometime—[audio cuts out]—and isn't gonna come around to a happy ending."

Like, I don't know. It's like they were trying to say something that wasn't like a—it's not a lesson. It's not a fable. It's just, "Here's just how life can be." You know? It can be sad and it can be beautiful, 'cause in that visual of the pigeon man with his pigeons on the skyline, it was really beautiful!

Sydnee: Well, I think that was a beautiful note to end our discussion of *Hey Arnold!* on.

Raleigh: Wow.

Taylor: [through laughter] So everybody go watch that episode.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Go watch that episode if you can't watch any others.

Raleigh: Um, next week is mine.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: I'm claiming it. And I wanna talk about a movie on Netflix called *To All the Boys I've Loved Before*.

Sydnee: Alright.

Raleigh: The—the sequel to *All the Boys I've Loved Before*, *PS: I Still Love You* came out on Valentine's Day of this year, so it is very recent. I have watched both. I will probably be touching on some aspects of both, but we'll focus on the first one. So if you have time to watch both, watch both. But if you only want to watch one, watch the first one. It'll make more sense.

Sydnee: I will do. I have heard of it. Justin and I have talked about watching it. We just haven't gotten around to it, so we'll do it.

Raleigh: It's a—it's a cheesy teen... rom com-type coming-of-age story, so we will check it out.

Sydnee: [simultaneously] Check it out.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Alright. Well, thank you both. This has been—this has been fun!

Raleigh: Thank you, Tey, for the—

Taylor: Thank you.

Raleigh: —the cartoon watching.

Sydnee: Yeah. It was good. It was good to—

Raleigh: I enjoyed it.

Sydnee: —put something else in the rotation for the—for the girls.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Not just *Spongebob*.

Sydnee: [through laughter] Yeah, not just *Spo*—not just *Spongebob Musical* and *Peppa Pig* these days. Uh, thank you, listeners. You can tweet at us @stillbuff. You can email us—email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org.

Check out Maximumfun.org for a lot of wonderful shows that you will enjoy! And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

Raleigh: This has been your cross-generatio—cross—

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: —let me try that again. [through laughter] Cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I'm Raleigh Smirl!

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

[theme music begins in the background]

Raleigh: I am still buffering...

Sydnee and Taylor: And I... am... too.

Raleigh: At least I can say "still buffering."

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: [mumbling]

Taylor: We're still buffering the *Still Buffering*.

Raleigh: We are. [laughs quietly]

[theme music plays]

Manolo: Hey, you've reached *Dr. Gameshow*. Leave your message after the beep.

Speaker One: *Dr. Gameshow* is my favorite podcast, and the only podcast my parents let me listen to, because I'm 12.

But even old people love this show. Basically, you call in, play games, and have fun. If you win a game, then they will send you a magnet in the mail.

I have *soo* many magnets, and put them all over my locker, and pretty much everyone at school is jealous, because they are very cool custom magnets, and it also means that I'm really good at winning games.

And they even let me practice my recorder live on the air! [a few squeaky recorder notes]

Listening to this show is like going to a real doctor, but... pretty much kind of better. *Dr. Gameshow* rocks! [a few squeaky recorder notes with a trill]

Jo: Listen to *Dr. Gameshow* on Maximum Fun. New episodes every other Wednesday.

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