

Still Buffering 208: "Animal Crossing: New Horizons" (2020)

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[theme music plays]

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Teylor Smirl!

Sydnee: So, have you both been keeping busy?

Taylor: Yeah?

Rileigh: [weakly] Yeah, I mean...

Sydnee: As best you can?

Rileigh: As much as I can.

Taylor: I hung—I hung some shelves that have been in my closet—

Rileigh: Hmm!

Taylor: —intended to be hung for... eight months? [laughs] That was—

Sydnee: That's good!

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Yeah, got around to that, so that was... it was on the back burner.

Sydnee: Excellent. Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: I, uh...

Sydnee: Got a lot of homework, Rileigh?

Rileigh: Yeah, I've been doing homework and online classes, and there have been a few articles I've read where some larger schools have created, like, a—a plan that they said in the unlikely event that we can't do in-person classes until January of 2021, they have started creating plans for that.

And *I* have decided, if I can't go back to in-person class until 2021, I'm just gonna quit college for a few months, because online classes are the worst and I'm not learning anything. [laughs]

Sydnee: Aww... it'll—it'll get easier, I'm sure. It's new. It's new, you know? You're adapting.

Rileigh: Uh, yeah, except that I have several professors that don't know—that are great professors, but don't know how to use online formats to teach classes that are supposed to be discussion-based classes, so in turn have just tripled the amount of written assignments to make up for, like, participation and discussion points, so now I'm just kind of drowning.

Sydnee: I—that's rough, 'cause that—I think it's a hard switch to flip. Like, in my mind, this is temporary, and so I don't have to, like... [through laughter] get to acceptance.

Taylor: Right. I—I don't have to learn how to navigate this, right? 'Cause it's gonna stop. It's like, "Oh no, what if it doesn't?" [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: I think that's what they all think, as well! I think they're like, "Well, when we did this, there were only about four weeks left in the semester anyways, so I'm just gonna come up with a plan for this one class for these four weeks, figure out how to get through it, and I'll never have to do it again." [laughs quietly] That's how I feel.

Sydnee: Well, that's—that's kind of how I'm going at all of life right now. Like, I can't—I—it's gonna take a lot of psychological, like, energy and time and effort to get to a point to, like, accept if this was reality forever. And I'm not gonna do that work, 'cause it's temporary.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah, I've seen—there was an article about the new normal that I started to read, and it was talking about, like, what things might be like for the next several years. And then I just stopped, 'cause I'm like, "Oh, I will consume and respect this information as it comes into my life. [through laughter] On a daily basis."

Sydnee: Exactly.

Taylor: Like, whe—when—when it becomes a thing that, at a restaurant, I have to serve customers, like, for a very long time with a mask and gloves on, I'll... I'll do that when I get there! I'm gonna... you know. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: When I get back to work, I'll think about what work is. Not before.

Raleigh: Yeah, we'll think about getting back to work first.

Taylor: [through laughter] Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: [through laughter] That—that's it. Take it one step at a time.

Sydnee: Exactly.

Taylor: Just—don't—don't wanna—don't wanna think that far.

Sydnee: No. I am not—I am not—I'm not ready to—to digest that. I, uh—I've been too busy with all of Charlie's, uh, homework that she gets. And she is, I should note, in preschool. I think that's important to understand. She's in preschool.

Taylor: They give preschoolers homework?

Sydnee: Well, I mean, not usually. But, you know, in these times. In these times of—of plague. We get—we get our home assignments. And it's mainly, you know—and it's very clear, I should say, that—her teacher is very clear.

This is just—it's suggestions. It's not like she gets grades. It's not like you have to do any of this, but if you want the kind of things that I would do in class, these are some ideas, and then you can continue your child learning at home, and that's good, 'cause I do—I do value that. I do want that.

And it started off with, like, when we first started doing this remote learning stuff it was like, "Go outside in bare feet and walk in the grass or the dirt or whatever, and describe how it feels and what it's like, and we can all talk about what it felt like to walk outside of our houses in bare feet and what that sensation was like."

So, pretty easy... homework.

Raleigh: Does Charlie go to Triangles from *New Girl*?

Sydnee: It started like that. It felt like Triangles at first. It was all very just, like, experience the world around you, kind of. But it has built, and so, like, last week it was a little more intense.

Like, we had to make a page in a book. Like, the teacher read a book, and then it was about if you could be different animals. And so we had to pick what animal Charlie was gonna be for a day, and then write a little—hers rhymed. I was very proud of her. She wanted to make sure it rhymed. It didn't have to rhyme, but she wrote a little rhyming thing about if she could be this animal.

So it escalated to kind of that, which was, like, a little more work, but still, you know, okay. We drew a picture. We wrote a little poem.

And then this week, day one it was like, "Do this experien—do this experiment that explains static electricity and talk about the exchange of electrons—"

Taylor: What?

Sydnee: "—between this plastic spoon and this dish cloth that enables the pepper from this plate to stick to it and not the sa—" and I was like, "Whoa, whoa, whoa! Okay. Okay." So it was easy to set up and do, but I did have to explain the atom... to Charlie.

Raleigh: Who is five.

Sydnee: In order to do—so, like, Justin came in and there were, like, diagrams of atoms and, like, protons and neutrons and electrons on the table. He was like, "What were you doing?"

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: I was like, "I—it was the preschool assignment. I don't know, I did it." And then the next day was, like... "Okay, now design a wind-powered car."

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: Now...

Sydnee: [laughs] I am not joking!

Rileigh: Wait a minute.

Taylor: How do you get from "this is what grass feels like" to a wind-powered car in a week?!

Sydnee: [through laughter] So... so—and I mean, it—like, the reality of it is that we had to build a sail, and then find a toy car. She chose her Barbie car, which is, like, the biggest, heaviest—

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: —so it had to be a giant sail. And then we had to, like, take a hair dryer and blow it down the hallway. So it took forever. We succeeded in this. And today's assignment is, "[through laughter] Build a bridge."

Taylor: How—

Rileigh: Uhh...

Taylor: —what's the scale on this bridge?

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: This is very...

Raleigh: Charlie's homework sounds like the homework my engineering major friends have taken home. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Seriously.

Sydney: That—well, I mean, that's really—like, I think tomorrow is—we have to build one of those things to hold an egg so that you can drop the egg and it won't break.

Raleigh: Oh yeah.

Taylor: Oh, God, yeah. Wow, this is—that's stuff that I did in, like, advanced classes in elementary school. Like, late elementary school.

Sydney: Right.

Taylor: That was—that was the thing that I did in, like, the—the TAG program in, like, the fourth and fifth grade.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, you built the bridge out of toothpicks and then the egg thing, yeah. I don't—what's goin' on, there? [laughs]

Sydney: I don't know. 'Cause she's still in preschool. [laughs] As far as I know.

Raleigh: I think. [laughs]

Taylor: Are you getting the wrong lesson plans? Does this teacher maybe teach multiple things?

Sydney: I had a moment where I thought that. I had a moment where I was like, "Oh, this has to be for one of the older classes."

Raleigh: Her fourth grade students are getting assignments like, "Go draw the kind of flower you want to be." And they're all like, "I, uh... Okay."

Sydnee: No, really! 'Cause, like, one of our other assignments was "Take a walk around your neighborhood and look for shapes." [laughs] And so, like, that—okay. We did that.

Taylor: Now that we've covered triangles, we're moving on to electrons, the obvious progression.

Sydnee: [laughs] And—and don't get me wrong, I love challenging Charlie. I like introducing—'cause it's—kids understand a lot more than we give 'em credit for, and so, I like challenging her with ideas that I think are bigger than what she's been exposed to, to see what she can retain and what she doesn't. I—the pace of this, though, is a lot.

Like, "Build a wind-powered car in this week..." That makes sense to me.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: "Build a wind-powered car in the same week that you build a bridge and an egg-protecting machine *and* understand the atom." [laughs] That—that seems like a lot. Like, the pace is just too much.

Taylor: Yeah. I mean, I think in high school we spent, like, a week or so on—on the atom. [laughs] Like, we spent some time on that!

Raleigh: I, uh—yeah, I couldn't tell you about it right now! I haven't thought about it in, like, three years!

Taylor: It's little. I remember that it's little.

Raleigh: It's very smol. [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, that's what Justin was saying. Like, "I'm really glad you took the lead on that one, 'cause, like..." [laughs]

Raleigh: I couldn't, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah! It would be—

Raleigh: I got nothin' there.

Sydnee: He said it would be tough to just, like, from memory, here are all the part of the atom and their names and what the—how—how do the—how does the plastic spoon and the dishcloth exchange electrons?

Rileigh: It is interesting to think that now my five-year-old niece know more about electrons than I do. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. [laughs]

Rileigh: Well. [laughs]

Sydnee: And—and I should note, this is a public school. It's a—I mean, it's a wonderful public school but, like, it's not some—it's not fancy shmancy. It's... it's her public—

Rileigh: It's Triangles.

Sydnee: —it's her public preschool. [laughs]

Taylor: I don't know, I like—I like this—this—this teacher's energy of just, like, "Let's just push 'em. Let's see what—let's see what they can get down." [laughs]

Sydnee: I mean, I appreciate it, and I think—and the good thing is, like, again, if we didn't do any of it, it wouldn't—it wouldn't matter. Like, she doesn't have to prove it.

Rileigh: The first assignment was a joke. She was like, "Let's see how many of these kids actually do this." And then everyone came back and did it and she was like, "Oh. Uh... I guess I gotta keep doin' this until one of 'em figures out I don't really want to do it."

Sydnee: We gotta escalate! [laughs]

Rileigh: Gotta keep goin'.

Taylor: She sent you the fourth grade lesson plans once by mistake and is now just like, "I don't know. They turned in good work. We're just gonna see. This is—"

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: "—we're conducting a social experiment now." [laughs]

Sydnee: Oooh, we're the—ooh! We are—maybe we're the subjects of an experiment! I love this.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Tell Charlie to ask that next time in class.

Sydnee: I will. Uh, well, as—as busy as that has kept me, uh, I have still managed to make time to, uh, pay off my tent.

Taylor: Oh, good!

Sydnee: And build a small house with a purple roof.

Raleigh: I'm glad that all three of us now are several thousands of bells in debt to a raccoon together.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: I—I'm beginning—we should talk about *Animal Crossing*, also.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, that.

Raleigh: Because I think we're the only people in the world who have not talked about it at a public platform yet, other than my Twitter. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Uh, I tweeted about it and confused many people.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: [laughs quietly] Sometimes I forget that there are people that aren't playing *Animal Crossing* when I see—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: —oh, that's a weird one. [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh-huh.

Raleigh: So, this is—this is my thing, even though we're all playing it. And Taylor was playing it before, you know, I made you all play it so we could talk about it.

Um, I have been playing *Animal Crossing*... I tried to look up when the first game that came out that I played was, and it was in 2005. So I've been playing *Animal Crossing* for a solid 3/4ths of my existence.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Um... there was the first one called *Wild World* that came out, and I had it on my DS, and then *City Folk* came out and I played it on my Wii, and then *New Leaf* came out and I played it on my 3DS, and now I'm playing *New Horizons* on my Switch.

Um, and I have always loved *Animal Crossing*. I actually think Griffin McElroy was the one that introduced me to *Animal Crossing* for the first time. Um, back in 2005.

But it's just the kind of video game that has pretty much no consequences, no requirements, really, that are that hard, and you can play it just—and just walk around and plant flowers. Or you can build a house, or you can...I don't know, build waterfalls and change the layout of your island, or just, like, catch fish and dig up fossils. Like, it's just... it's just relaxing, and it requires little to no brain effort. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: When—when you were little, was that where Plaid Becky came from? Was it—was she an *Animal Crossing* character?

Raleigh: [wheezes] Yes! [through laughter] I forgo—yes. I had a tiny stuffed plushie of one of the *Animal Crossing* villagers, and now I am blanking on—

Sydnee: It was a bunny, right?

Raleigh: —which one it actually was. It was a bunny that was wearing—

Sydnee: It was, like, a blue bunny in a plaid dress.

Raleigh: —a plaid dress. Um, I am forgetting which villager it was. It was an *Animal Crossing* villager. Charlie saw it when she was much smaller, and loved it, and named it Plaid Becky.

Taylor: [laughs] Plaid Becky.

Raleigh: But it was an *Animal Crossing* villager. [laughs]

Taylor: Oh, that—that—

Sydnee: And that was her best friend for a long time, was Plaid Becky.

Taylor: That is a great name.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Um, but I mean, *Animal Crossing* has always been the same. As far as I can remember, it has always been you live on this island, or this small town or small city or whatever. Everyone else is a talking animal, and Tom Nook—either you work for him to pay off your money or you buy—like, you take out a loan and you pay off your house. Like, he's always in charge of your finances. [laughs] Uh—

Sydnee: You always owe him money, is what I'm—

Raleigh: You always owe him money, eternally.

Sydnee: Which is bells.

Raleigh: Yeah. Um, but that's what it always is. It's always been, you dig up fossils and you turn 'em in to Blathers, and then you catch fish and you catch bugs and you sell 'em, and...

Sydnee: Are there people out there, do you think—and I—I assume neither of you do this. But who don't check with Blathers, who is the owl who runs the museum, in case you don't play, about the fossils before you sell them? Because—

Rileigh: Yes.

Sydnee: —because the—the thing with the fossils is, like, you can take them to the museum, and if they don't have 'em, they just take 'em as a donation, but you don't get anything for 'em.

Like, you did the work of finding the fossil and bringing it to Blathers and he's like, "Thanks for this!" And then you leave. Or you can sell 'em, and they're worth a decent number of bells, typically. I always take them to Blathers first.

Rileigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Now, if—if he already has 'em, I sell them. But if he doesn't have 'em, I donate them.

Rileigh: I think there is a distinct personality difference between *Animal Crossing* players who just sell every bug, fish... bug and fish they catch and fossil they dig up, and those who donate the first of every kind first to the museum, and then sell all the others.

Because I am one who will donate the first of every fossil or of every bug or fish, but then I will sell the rest. But I think our father, which I did get both of our parents playing this game a lot, um... I think he will just sell everything. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Ah.

Rileigh: I'm pretty sure he sells everything. [pauses] So... there's two different kinds of people.

Taylor: I—I always donate the first of every one, but sometimes I do, when I find something rare, I go just to torture myself and see how many bells I *could* get for it.

Rileigh: Hmm.

Taylor: And then go, "Aw, yeah. That—that would be great. That's 15,000 bells for that big ol' fish. Okay, I'm gonna go give it away for free to the museum."

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: I do think about that a lot.

Taylor: It's worse when it's a rare bug.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like—'cause I'm like, "Oh, Blathers is gonna hate this!" And I—and then it's gonna—like, but I'm gonna bring it.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I, uh—I do think, in the bug realm, that the, um, tarantula representation in this game is not fair. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh yeah.

Sydnee: Because I have twice been bitten by tarantulas, and they, like, attacked me.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: And it's—

Sydnee: I wasn't even trying to catch 'em!

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, they just—they just run at you.

Sydnee: They just attacked me, yeah!

Rileigh: They'll run at you, yeah.

Taylor: I—

Sydnee: That's not fair! That's not what tarantulas do.

Taylor: I—when I was younger, I had pretty bad arachnophobia. I've gotten much, much better with that. With actual spiders, I—I now like them. But the way that they—the way that you interact with the tarantulas in this game, like—like, brings back those old fears, and I can't do it! Like, I get so scared when I'm like, "No. No, not—not going on that side of the island until that tarantula, you know—"

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: "—like, disappears." Because I can't handle it! I have caught... two, so far. And that was not—that was... that was not fun. I don't like it. I see people that have, like—like... tons of them, and, you know, that's their investment bank is just all tarantulas. And I'm like, "No. No."

Rileigh: I, uh—I have one, it appears, innate skill that I was born with in my life, and apparently it is catching *Animal Crossing* tarantulas. Because I have yet to be bitten by one, and I actually took a Mystery Island tour the other night at, like, midnight, that took me to tarantula island.

Taylor: Ugh!

Rileigh: Which is just—there's nothing else there except it just spawns a bunch of tarantulas, because there's nothing else there, and it—it's—

Sydnee: Taylor looks so terrified right now. [laughs]

Rileigh: [holding back laughter] So I went there with empty pockets, and just filled up all my pockets with tarantulas, and then came back and sold them, and I made tons of money!

Taylor: Now that I know—

Sydnee: Are tarantulas worth a lot?

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: I think you sell each one for 8,000 bells.

Sydnee: Whoa.

Raleigh: So, yeah. I had, like, 20.

Taylor: Oh, if those Dodos ever took me to tarantula island I would get right back on the plane. I'd be like, "Nope. Give me my ticket back. [laughs] We are—next island, please."

Raleigh: "Orville, please!"

Taylor: "[through laughter] No, not Tarantula Island! Oh my God!"

Sydnee: No, I—I didn't even know, like—the first time, I was just walking by a tarantula and it attacked me, and that seemed mean. And so then the next time I saw a tarantula I was like, "Well, gotta get my net out. I guess I should try to catch that guy."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: But I didn't know there was a special procedure, so then I—

Raleigh: There is, yeah.

Sydnee: I got—but I had—I wasn't even really attempting. Like, I got my net out, and that was all she wrote.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: That was about it. Um, it still takes me a minute to get my tools out.

Raleigh: Yeah. You don't have your little tool ring?

Sydnee: I got a tool ring. It's still—I find the joystick cumbersome.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: I keep landing on the wrong tool, and then I accidentally hit the wrong button, and—

Taylor: Just pull out a watering can. The tarantula's like, "Nah." [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] It's usually the ladder. I find, like, I constantly am trying to do something, and I am holding a ladder instead of whatever, and I'm like, "Why am I holding a ladder?"

Rileigh: I, um—my favorite—my favorite trick has been, I recently got a wand for the first time, and I got it on Bunny Day. And on Bunny Day, I was wearing my egg outfit, to—to please the bunny. I thought he would enjoy it if I was wearing my egg outfit like all my villagers.

Sydnee: He doesn't care.

Rileigh: He doesn't care. Um, but I got a wand that day, so I filled up all my little wand outfits and I changed my outfit, but apparently that doesn't count as changing your clothes, it just counts as, like, putting clothes over your clothes?

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: So before you can, like, go in a fitting room at the Able Sisters or anything, you have to take off the wand. So now, whenever I need to go into the fashion store to buy new clothes, I have to stand out front and wave my little wand, and now my egg outfit is always underneath. [laughs]

Taylor: Oh no, you gotta—you gotta change that! That—

Rileigh: I know.

Taylor: —that egg outfit is bad.

Rileigh: It's just always my egg outfit

Taylor: Oh, gosh. I did all of the—I did all the bunny things. I—I—

Rileigh: Mm-hmm?

Taylor: I pleased the bunny, and then as soon as Bunny Day was over, I sold everything.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, I know you can get, like, points for having it, having, like, a weird egg room, but I was like, "Nope. I'm sellin' everything. Every bit of this bunny stuff." [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. Our dad got a better Happy Home whatever rating than I did, because he has an entire bunny house. And they were like, "Oh, your house is all one theme and it's all bunny stuff. Here's, like, the highest score you can get!" [snorts]

Sydney: Wow.

Raleigh: And I was like, "Ha—but... ha—I put so much work into my decorations!"

Sydney: So, I live on Epcot 2 with Justin and Charlie.

Raleigh: [through laughter] Yeah, the best island name.

Sydney: Our little houses all in a row. And, uh, Charlie... I love her house because, first of all, once you go inside, it's really hard to walk around inside it, because she has put dolls all over the place.

Raleigh: Oh, no!

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydney: [laughs] Um, she has, like—like, dolls strategically placed so there's only one path that you can get through the room. Um—

Raleigh: [snort-laugh]

Sydney: —and things like—she has, like, a snow cone maker and things like that in her room. But, uh, outside of her house she has, like, a giant wall of fish tanks—

Rileigh: Oh no.

Sydnee: —because she likes all of her fish, and she did keep them all in her house, but she filled her entire house with fish tanks. And so, then, Justin convinced her to move 'em outside. So, like, in between—[laughs] Charlie's house and my house [through laughter] is a huge wall of fish tanks.

Rileigh: Wall of fish. [laughs]

Sydnee: And she won't sell 'em. They're her pets.

Rileigh: Aww, Charlie. [laughs]

Sydnee: Do you all have pets? I—I have a pet. Do you all have pets?

Rileigh: In *Animal Crossing*?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: No.

Taylor: What—what is your pet?

Sydnee: I kept one of my fish. I kept the Dory fish.

Rileigh: Oh, wait! You know what? No, I have a goldfish.

Sydnee: I kept the Dory fish, and it's on my nightstand right next to my bed, and I turn it on—I turn its fish tank light on at night.

Rileigh: That's nice.

Taylor: See, I—I will have—I haven't saved any yet, because I wanted to wait until I had a room that aesthetically could include... fish tanks.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: Right.

Taylor: Uh, I—I just got—I just made the payment, or I just... uh, commissioned my third room, and so that's gonna be my science room, my science and crafts room, and that room I think will aesthetically fit a fish tank or a bug tank, so then I will—then I will have a pet.

Raleigh: Now, you will be pleased to know, the reason I kept a goldfish is because when you place a goldfish, it does not place in a regular fish tank. It places in a little bowl that is, like, blue and white china.

Taylor: Ohh!

Sydney: Aww!

Raleigh: And has, like, plants in it and, like, moss on top, and you see the little goldfish swimmin' around. So, I kept it for that reason, because it is very aesthetically pleasing.

Taylor: See, that's good to know, because I—I got excited when I—when I caught my second koi fish 'cause I was like, "Ooh, I'm gonna keep this." I had a cherry blossom room goin' for a while and I'm like, "This is gonna go in that room. It'll make sense."

And then I put it there, and it was in that big ugly tank. I'm like, "No! This is—this isn't aesthetic! Go away, fish!"

Raleigh: That's bad. [laughs] Yeah.

Taylor: "I disinherit you."

Sydney: Uh, we should try to explain why this game is so important to everyone right now. Uh, but before we do that...

Raleigh: Let's check the group message.

--

Raleigh: Sydney, who do we have on the group message today?

Sydney: Well, this week on the group message, I wanna tell you all about StoryWorth. Right now, it can be challenging to stay in touch with your family.

Well, I guess it's not, 'cause we live in 2020 and there are lots of ways of—modes of communication.

But it requires remembering to, you know, check in with people, check on people, and, for your own sake, check in with people, um, even if you can't visit 'em in person. There are so many—like, for instance, maybe you could do a podcast. That's a great way—

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: —to check in with your family that you can't see in person. Hi, Teylor!

Teylor: Hi!

Raleigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs] Uh... um, but you can connect with your loved ones in a whole new way, not just phones and computers and all your high tech gadgets.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: But with StoryWorth. It's a great way to learn family history and—and all kinds of stories that, um, maybe you've never heard before 'cause you just—you didn't know to ask or you didn't think to ask, and your loved one didn't necessarily think to tell you until StoryWorth prompted them with the right question, and then all of a sudden, you learn a whole new thing about somebody that you loved and already knew so well, um, that you never heard before.

So, every week, StoryWorth will email your family member a different story prompt. Uh, all different kinds of questions, like, "What have been some of your life's greatest surprises?" Or, "What's one of the riskiest things you've ever done?"

Uh, all kinds of neat, though-provoking questions that will get them to tell you a story that, uh, maybe they had never... never really thought, "Oh, hey. That might be something they'd be interested in."

And after a year, StoryWorth will compile every answered question and photo you choose to include into a beautiful keepsake book, and it ships for free. So you can, uh, keep one of these books and treasure it.

I think it's a really neat idea. They used to always have books like this, I feel like, that you could do, like, pen and paper versions of.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: But this is—is so much—this is such a better way to do it, because you get this email, you get this prompt, you just answer the question and don't worry about compiling it or keeping it anywhere, 'cause StoryWorth is doin' it for you, and then you can get it at the end of a year.

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

Taylor: Uh, connect with family and discover untold stories with StoryWorth. You can get started right away without the need for shipping by going to StoryWorth.com/stillbuffering. That's StoryWorth.com/stillbuffering. You'll get 10 dollars off your first purchase! So head on over to StoryWorth.com/stillbuffering, get that 10 dollars off, and start makin' memories!

Raleigh: Get those memories.

Sydnee: Get all the dad stories... from our dad. Well, not our dad. You can...

Taylor: I mean—

Sydnee: ... ask your—I mean...

Taylor: —they're—they're pretty good. They're good ones.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: You could use our dad, though.

Sydnee: You can ask our dad.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: I wrote a whole essay about our dad's stories. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs] "Check out our dad's stories!"

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

--

Sydnee: Uh, so why—I think there might be an obvious answer for the moment, that *Animal Crossing* is so big at the—on—at this exact moment in time. I think that might be a little easier to answer.

Rileigh: Yeah. I mean, we're all stuck inside.

Sydnee: And it—even more so, like, we're all stuck inside, so a lot of people have more time. Not everybody has more time, but some—but a lot of people have more time. Uh, but the other thing I think is, like... it's so easy to control that little world.

Taylor: Yeah...

Rileigh: Yeah. That's what's nice about it.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: All I have to worry about in that world are, like, goin' to the Able Sisters and getting today's fashions, and then I gotta find my four fossils, and... that's it.
[laughs quietly]

Sydnee: You—you have steady employment, if you have fruit to sell.

Taylor: And I gotta say, I know a lot of people give Tom Nook a hard time, because you're always in debt to him. But man, if someone came along to me and was like, "Look. You're gonna—I'm gonna make you a property owner. You're gonna—I'm gonna give you—buy you a house, or build you a house, give you a loan that you can pay back whenever. Like, no interest. Just pay me back."

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: No interest.

Taylor: "However long it takes. Once you pay that off, I'll give you a bigger house and a better house, but you know, you're gonna start with a house." I mean, if that person was a cute li'l tanuki, that's even better, but you know. Just even just if it was a person, it's fine. That'd be great! Like, that's a really good deal. [through laughter] It's—it's a really nice property opportunity.

Sydney: It is! He's—

Riley: Yeah.

Sydney: —he's a very generous landlord.

Riley: [laughs] He, uh—he certainly has evolved from past games, where he will chase you down if you did not pay your loan back—

Taylor: Really?

Riley: —properly. Um, or, like—yeah, I forget which game it was. I wanna say maybe *City Folk* or *Wild World*, one of the two. But you work for him starting out to pay off your loan, so you work at the Tom Nook shop and, like, he'll tell you to go plant flowers or deliver things to people or whatever. Um, and I remember one time, I didn't put on my uniform to wear to work, and he got *very* upset with me. [laughs]

Sydney: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Riley: So I think all the complaints about Tom Nook being, you know, like, the—the—the money hungry capitalist of the game certainly influenced his character development in—in *New Horizons*.

Taylor: And now he's got, like, two adopted nephews—

Sydney: Yeah.

Taylor: —and is super chill. Just laid back. I—I like this Tom. I'm glad I didn't encounter any other Tom Nooks.

Riley: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's a weird—I always feel weird when I go into whatever the main building is. City hall, I don't know. What is it?

Rileigh: Yeah. Resident services, I guess?

Sydnee: Where—where Tom Nook is.

Rileigh: Kind of city hall, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. Uh, whenever I go in there to just check the ATM so I can get my free Nook Miles, um, and he's, like, staring at me, and I have this weird moment where it's like, "This is about the bells, isn't it."

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: "You know I haven't paid 'em back yet."

Sydnee: "You know I haven't paid you back the bells. I'm just, uh, checkin' the ATM? Uh, I got my—okay! I'm just gonna—" and then I run out the door really quickly, 'cause it makes me anxious. [laughs quietly] He never says anything, though.

Rileigh: He doesn't.

Taylor: No. It's just if you're like, "How 'bout a new room?" And he's like, "Well, how 'bout you pay off that other room first?" That's about it. [laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah. "Current, you still owe me 500,000 bells so, uh... when you gonna... when you gonna pay those off?"

Taylor: We'll have this conversation later. [laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah. Um, I will say, though, my favorite character in *Animal Crossing* games is Isabelle. And she is the best part of *Animal Crossing* games, because I don't think she made an appearance in an *Animal Crossing* game until *New Leaf*, which was the most recent one before this one, even though it came out seven years ago.

Um, but she's just your li'l—your li'l public service dog that's like a little Leslie Knope, almost. Just there to help you with all of your—your needs, and talk to you about villagers you don't like or evaluate your island and how good you're doin'. Or she's just there to, like, give you your morning announcements and a fun fact about... I don't know, bugs. She's very good.

Sydnee: I haven't talked to her much. Maybe I should talk to her more.

Raleigh: You should talk to her more.

Sydnee: I—my game suffers from the fact that I only play it at night.

Raleigh: Yeah. Well, you also are, like, the—not the main player, I guess, on your island.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: I guess Justin is.

Sydnee: Justin is.

Raleigh: So he—he probably makes more of the decisions and stuff—

Sydnee: He does. He—

Raleigh: —than you or Charlie would.

Sydnee: —he's putting in all these blue ramps everywhere.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly] Just like Epcot.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Um, that—that is also what I find Mom and Dad arguing about most is—when they're playing *Animal Crossing*, is, uh, Mom was the first player on their island on our other Switch, so Dad had to join her. [through laughter] But Dad's method of playing *Animal Crossing* is just, come on, start fishing as much as he can fish, and then if he fishes out trash or, like, his pockets get too full, he just starts throwing stuff on the ground.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: As he's fishing it up, or as he needs to make room for other fish. So then Mom will come on her island and it's just like, "Oh, there's trash all over the beach, and there's random stuff laying outside of my house that he made for me, and I—I don't know what's going on." [laughs] "Everything's everywhere."
[laughs]

Taylor: He—he only wears the egg suit, which is weird.

Raleigh: [through laughter] He only wears the egg suit!

Sydnee: Mom keeps trying to get us to have Dad move to our islands, but we keep trying to—like, that's not how it works.

Raleigh: Yeah, what was the text? She sent all three of us a text this morning that said—

Sydnee: I think she offered us bells.

Raleigh: "Anyone who would like to—" Yeah. "I would like to offer up your father for adoption. Anyone who would like to have him on their island, I will pay you 30,000 bells or 5,000 Nook Miles. I will also pay all moving and construction fees."

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Which isn't that many of either, and also that's not how the game works.
[laughs]

Taylor: I don't—I don't—you—I know there are ways you can get animals off your island, but I don't think you get humans... [laughs] ... off your island.

Raleigh: Okay. I—I—I am glad you brought this up. I wanna talk about this. There is a—there is a big community online of a lot of *Animal Crossing* players who don't like certain villagers. Whether it's their personality—because all of them have certain personality types. I don't know if you all have noticed. Like, there is the—the jock ones, and there is the natural ones, and...

Sydnee: Sure. There's one that asks me about lifting all the time.

Rileigh: Yeah. So, they're all different types of—of animals and personalities. [through laughter] And then there are some that players just don't like, because they want only cute villagers, or whatever.

Sydnee: Aww...

Rileigh: So there are lots of people online who will go to extreme lengths to get villagers to move off their island. [laughing] Like hitting them repeatedly with their bug net, or... you know, just angering them, placing mean signs outside of their home. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Makes me—

Sydnee: That's so—

Taylor: I know—well, look. I mean, it's your game. Play however you want. Like, you know, that's—it's for your enjoyment.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: If that's enjoyable to you, that's fine. But I... [pauses] I think that makes me really—yeah, makes me really sad! I love all of my villagers! Like, I don't know.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Maybe I just got lucky? Like, maybe I just have good ones. My—my starters were, uh, Cheri and Hamlet.

Rileigh: Aww.

Sydnee: Aww.

Rileigh: Hamlet's good.

Taylor: Hamlet is my—I—I love them both, actually. I was talking to Mom about it the other night, and I felt like I got my parents in *Animal Crossing* as my first two villagers!

Raleigh: [laughs] Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: 'Cause Hamlet—he's the jock type, but you know, like, I—his favorite gift that I gave him was a protein shaker. He, like, put it in the middle of his—of his house, like, on display.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Aww!

Taylor: Uh, but he's always talking about lifting and stuff, but then he's also always walkin' around eatin' a donut? [laughs] I'm like, "So that's—that's Dad."

Raleigh: That's Dad!

Taylor: Uh, and then Cheri's really chill. She's—you know, she loves, like, the musical instruments. She's always like—she drinks her peach juice every night on the beach at 5 o'clock and then sings—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: —like, sings to the moon. [laughs] I'm just like, "So that's Mom."

Raleigh: Oh, that's Mom! [laughs]

Sydnee: Oh, that's Mom. I—I love that in *Animal Crossing* that's what you do with things you like. "It's a protein shake. I'll display it in the middle of the room."

Taylor: [through laughter] Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. That's—that's one of the best parts about *Animal Crossing*, though, is if you like your villagers and you give them things, if you go in their house later, it's just on display in their house. And it's like, I just had a random extra bug in my pocket and I accidentally clicked that I wanted to give you something, instead I wanted to talk to, so I gave you a bug. But now it's just on display in your house!

Sydnee: I gotta give people stuff. Charlie doesn't like to talk to the villagers.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Oh!

Sydnee: And—and so, like, a lot of the villagers don't get talked to much. So I—

Raleigh: Aww.

Sydnee: That's part of my job—so at night, my job is to find the fossils they didn't find. I try to go, like, sell some fruit, like, keep the trees... [holding back laughter] groomed. 'Cause otherwise the trees are all filled with fruit, and then they won't make new fruit, so I try to do that with the trees. Catch some fish, of course.

That kind of thing. Find a balloon to pop, get a present. Um, and—and sell, so that I have bells the next morning. Uh, but I also try to go talk to everybody and just, like, check in with them and make sure they're doin' okay.

Uh, 'cause there was one who was like, "I'm thinking of leaving."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I was like, "No, don't leave!" And they were like, "Oh, thank you for saying that."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Aww.

Sydnee: I was like, "Oh, phew."

Raleigh: I guess they all go through, like, a cycle of days that they'll live on your island before they'll tell you they're thinking about moving. Um, and I've had two of my villagers do that to me now, and I've told them both not to move, but there—there—there is one I'm just... waiting for him to tell me he's going to leave, and I'll be like, "Explore the world! Go! Spread your wings!"

Sydnee: Aww.

Taylor: Which—which one?

Rleigh: His name is Rodney. Um, he is a tiny blue hamster who—I saw him angry one day, like, stompin' around with steam coming out of his ears, and I was like, "Hey Rodney, what's wrong?"

And he started complaining that one of my other villagers gave him a present, but it was a present that he obviously wouldn't like, so why would she give him that present? And I was like—

Sydnee: Ohh...

Rleigh: "Rodney, you're being a jerk! She was trying to be nice! Let Tutu give you a present!" [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [through laughter] Aww.

Rleigh: So—

Sydnee: This is all fine. [laughs] This is fine.

Rleigh: It's the state of the world.

Sydnee: There's no problem with any of this conversation.

Rleigh: Um... I don't know if either of you have reached this point in your game, but there is a point you reach when you quote, unquote "beat" the game, or finish the game, which you never really beat or finish *Animal Crossing*.

But, like, as much of the story progression or progress within your world, I guess, that you can make, um, where you get to unlock a tool that lets you customize your island layout as much as you want.

Taylor: Ohh.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rleigh: Like, you can build cliffs, break them down, build waterways, cover up waterways, build pathways, stuff like that.

Sydnee: Sure.

Rileigh: Um, and I just unlocked this feature, like, two days ago. And it has been my entire day for two days now. Has just been, like—

Sydnee: Terraforming.

Rileigh: —yeah!

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: And you've nev—I mean, there has never been this kind of—this kind of, like, ability in an *Animal Crossing* game before! You can move any building to wherever you want.

It's not just like, you pick where it's going to be once, and that's where it is forever. You can change any building. You can—except for, like, the—the main one. You can build cliffs wherever you want. You can take 'em down wherever you want. You can build rivers and lakes, and it's just like—and pathways.

Like, I built a little road that goes between all my houses in, like, a little organized community that goes from my house to the plaza to the shops to the other houses. It's just—

Sydnee: Goodness.

Rileigh: It's so relaxing! [laughs] I get complete control over *this* world, because I have no control in the real world!

Taylor: I—I'm really happy to learn that that is an eventual earned ability, because I was watching—I was watching Griffin's, uh, livestream, walkin' around his village. And I'm like, "How much—how many bells did you spend movin' all this stuff?!"

Like, I know you can build bridges and, like, move houses, like, for—for bells in the game. But there is no way that you just did all of this with bells! So, okay. At some point you can do it more easily. That—that's a relief. 'Cause I was like, "Well, I'm never gonna do that stuff. [laughs] That's—that looks impossible!"

Rileigh: Yeah. I guess the main goal of this game, which I do enjoy, because K.K. Slider is, I think, my... second favorite after Isabelle character from any *Animal Crossing* game—um, the main goal of this game is to get him to come want to perform a concert on your island.

Sydnee: Ohh, Justin was saying that.

Rileigh: So once you have gotten your overall island rating to three stars, then K.K. Slider will come perform a concert on your island, and it's very cute because he just sits on a little stool in your plaza, and all of you and your villagers gather around him while he sings, and the credits roll to the game.

And the next day you open up your game and Tom Nook is like, "Here, here are these tools that let you destroy and build anything you want on this island."
[laughs quietly]

Taylor: [laughs] Wow.

Sydnee: Well, that's cute.

Rileigh: Yeah. It's very good.

Sydnee: Well, it's good to know there's a goal, 'cause I don't—I mean, the only goal I have for myself right now is I don't like the shirt my character's wearing.

Rileigh: [muffled laughter]

Sydnee: And—

Rileigh: [bursts into laughter]

Sydnee: —[laughs quietly] um...

Rileigh: [through laughter] Why haven't you changed it?

Taylor: You know you—

Sydnee: Because I don't like any of the ones at the—right now I went to the Able Sisters store and it was all, like—there were gym shirts, and there were, um, these tennis sweaters and dance team jackets. Those were all the tops.

Raleigh: And you went in the fitting room, too?

Sydnee: Yeah! And I didn't—and, like, I'm—I—a dance team jacket does not suit me. Um, a tennis sweater doesn't suit me. The gym shirt... looked just sort of like a t-shirt, and I probably could've pulled it off except that I know in my heart it's a gym shirt, and a gym shirt doesn't suit me.

So I just need some sort of grey shirt. If they could just have a grey, comfortable-looking shirt... [laughs]

Raleigh: You should just make a custom design.

Taylor: Yeah, I was gonna say.

Raleigh: For a shirt, that's just all grey. [laughs]

Sydnee: I gave myself glasses. They're not red, but I did give myself glasses, and I gave myself shoes that I like. I couldn't find Chucks, but they're close enough. And then I put on a little backpack, 'cause I really like backpacks, and it's a traveler's backpack.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: And so I was like—and then I'm wearing jeans, and that's fine. I just need a new shirt.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Preferably grey.

Taylor: You could just custom that. You can just—yeah, that's—that—well, I—

Raleigh: Yeah. You say as you're wearing a grey shirt.

Taylor: I will say, I started the game wearing, like, a—a—like, a yellow striped sweater. It was not cute, and I did not like it. And, uh—

Sydnee: That's what I'm wearing. [laughs]

Taylor: Oh, yeah? 'Cause that's what—as soon as I got—not the regular editor, 'cause that—that's a little bit—like, that's not quite as great as the—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: —advanced editor, where you can actually pick patterns and stuff. But, like, as soon as I got that, I—I made a, uh, black, sleeveless t-shirt. And I used, like, the color of the—the character's skin so that I could make it look like it was cut up. Like—[laughs] Like it was, like, kind of—

Sydney: [laughs]

Raleigh: Ohh, that's great.

Taylor: —torn on the bottom and ripped off sleeves, because in real life when I get a black t-shirt I, even now as a old person I'm like, "Cuttin' off the sleeves! Punk rock! So cool!" [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

[pauses]

Sydney: I need to do that, 'cause I—that's the only thing I—I really don't like about my, uh—my little life on *Animal Crossing* is my shirt. [laughs]

Raleigh: My, uh... my character started the game wearing a short-sleeved, blue, Hawaiian print shirt. Like, button-down shirt.

Sydney: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: And khakis.

Taylor: Ugh.

Raleigh: And, um... uh, red, slip-on Vans.

Sydney: Hmm!

Raleigh: And I felt like I just started the game dressed as Justin.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I was gonna say, you were Justin. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah. Uh, but now my—my goal every day when I go in, now that I have the Able Sisters shop, which is the clothing shop in *Animal Crossing* that you build eventually, um, I go into the fitting room and pretty much buy every color of everything that I see myself wearing at any point, that I like even just a little bit, so that now I just have the most expansive wardrobe in my house I can just go in, open it up, and it's like, "I have millions of options!"

Taylor: I don't have the shop yet, but the second time that I got an Able Sister with a little—like, the little, you know, town square setup, the little booth.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: I felt like she came, and she was like, "So here's the thing. I heard you were queer." Uh, because—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: —she had a tweed jacket, with, like—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: —she had a—a flannel, like a green and black flannel shirt.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: She had something that was just, like, a—like, a laboring shirt or something. It was just, like, a—like, a tan button-up. Like, a little hat—like, a little, like, uh, you know, a little hat. Like, a little, uh... like, a—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: I was gonna say toboggan. We've learned that's a weird word that we say that no one actually says. A beanie.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Uh, glasses. Like, a new color of—of the tennis shoe. And I'm like, "Oh, thank you. [laughs quietly] Thank you for all of this."

Rileigh: Yeah. I, uh—

Sydnee: Does that make you worry? How does *Animal Crossing* know?

Taylor: [through laughter] Right?

Rileigh: They *do* know.

Sydnee: How do you know so much, *Animal Crossing*? And where's my flannel, *Animal Crossing*?

Taylor: I know!

Sydnee: I need a flannel.

Taylor: You gotta—you gotta bring me to—

Rileigh: I, um—

Taylor: —your island. I'll give you flannel.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I need a flannel!

Rileigh: I finally—I finally got a wand, which lets you just design multiple outfits and switch into them very quickly, and you can name them whatever you want. And the first one I made was the outfit I had been wearing most frequently that I just named "bi."

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: Like, B-I. Because it is my light, acid washed denim jacket, my dark, acid washed jeans...

Sydnee: Hmm.

Raleigh: My red basically Doc Marten boots that are called work boots, my, uh, little crocheted messenger bag, my short toboggan beanie, and glasses. [snorts] I was like, "Yep, that's my—my bi outfit. Thank you, *Animal Crossing!*" It's the first ever outfit I had.

Sydnee: It—one—one fun thing that I have learned is, because I live on the island with Charlie and Justin, I have this, like, great side mission for my character, which is, find things to delight Charlie.

Taylor: Aww.

Raleigh: Yeah. I also do that a lot. [laughs]

Sydnee: So, this has been very fun. Like, 'cause Justin—one of the first things I did—I got a recipe for a peach umbrella, and so I went and used a bunch of peaches to make a peach umbrella.

And Justin was like, "You have, like, no bells. Why did you not sell those? Those aren't native to our island. You could have sold them for, like, a lot of bells."

And I was like, "But I—the peach umbrella... look at... Charlie loves it."

Raleigh: "Look at my peach umbrella. Charlie'll love it!"

Sydnee: But I found frilly knee-high socks, and she loves knee socks. And so I got her frilly knee socks, and I left her an Easter basket.

Raleigh: Aww.

Sydnee: I love—that's—that's my favorite part about *Animal Crossing*, is I can, like, find outfits or make things or stuff in the store that I can, like, leave out front of Charlie's house, and then she leaves her house every morning and goes, "[gasps] Look!"

Raleigh: "Presents!" I found a pink fairy dress, is what it was called, in my Able Sisters. And I immediately bought it, and then just sent it to Justin and said, "Please deliver this to Charlie immediately." [laughs]

Sydnee: She—you know, she does the same, though. Justin, uh—the other day, she was playing, and he had commented that he liked one of the pairs of shoes that Kicks was selling. And the next day, they were sitting out front of his house.

Raleigh: Aww.

Sydnee: Charlie had gone and bought the shoes that he wanted and left them out front of his house for him.

Raleigh: What a good *Animal Crossing* neighbor.

Sydnee: I know!

Taylor: That's sweet.

Raleigh: But, I mean, all this to say—I think we have spent the entire episode just talking about our *Animal Crossings*. [laughs]

Sydnee: I know.

Taylor: Yeah...

Raleigh: Our various animals and their crossings. Um, it's—it's just a relaxing game. I think even not during a global pandemic. It's just this whole world where nothing bad really happens. I think the worst things that happens is, like, you get stung by a bee, but then you can just take some medicine and your swollen eye goes away.

Um, and it's just peaceful and relaxing. And it happens in real time, which a lot of people find frustrating but I find nice because it's just like—I got so much time to just do whatever I want with my whole day! And it's real time, real world. I can just pretend this is my real world, because it matches my—my real world time.

Sydnee: And you can just live in one room that has a radiator—

Raleigh: Yeah, sure.

Sydnee: —and espresso machine, and a punching bag.

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: Or, you can have—

Sydnee: [through laughter] Like me.

Rileigh: —three rooms. I have my—my bedroom, my kitchen room, and my—my living room. I got—got all my furnitures and themes.

Taylor: I—when I, uh—'cause this is the first time I've played an *Animal Crossing* game. And, you know, I've—I haven't in recent years been as much into video gaming.

But in the past, I liked, you know, the kind of games I played were always, like, survival horror, you know, action games, uh, RPGs. I never really would've—I don't think I ever would've been drawn to something like this. 'Cause usually the stuff I hate in games, like... I hate grinding. Just having to do the thing to get whatever money, or experience. Like, I usually—I'll do it, but I don't love it.

[through laughter] And specifically, I hate fishing mechanics. Like, I don't know!

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: I've had some bad Zelda experiences. Final Fantasy XV. I—I let my character fish once to feed a cat, then I'm like, "Never again, boy." Um—[laughs]

Rileigh: To feed a cat.

Sydnee: The Zelda fishing mechanic was rough.

Taylor: It was like—it's very stressful. Like, this—but this fishing mechanic is just so peaceful. Um, and when—like, it was really after the—after the first, like, week of, you know, like, everything closing down and everybody losing their jobs, I just kind of had hit a point in, like, being sad and depressed. Like, I wasn't cleaning up after myself. My house was gross. I couldn't do anything. I couldn't be productive.

And I was like, "Well, I guess I'm gonna get back into gaming, [through laughter] 'cause I can't do any—can't get out of bed." And somehow, like, getting in the game and, like, making a space and, like, you know, getting—getting my little character out of bed and, like, fixing their hair and getting them clothes. I'm like,

"These are things I like. I—I like these feelings of accomplishing things. I—I need to... *Animal Crossing* my life, in the real world for a day."

And, like, it actually in a weird way helped me then, like, get out of bed. I'm gonna clean my space. You know, like I said, I hung some shelves and, like, spent time designing what went on them.

I, like, put clothes on and, like, set my hair just because. Like, and I—I kind of feel like it—it came at a very needed spot in my life. I'm very appreciative to where this game kind of came in and was like, "Oh, you like accomplishing things. And, like, having an aesthetic space that's clean. You could do this in the real world!" [laughs] I did.

Raleigh: You *Animal Crossing*'d your life!

Taylor: I did! [laughs]

Sydney: Aww. Well, that's inspirational.

Raleigh: That's great, yeah. Um...

Sydney: Well, if you need the recipe for a peach umbrella, I have it.

Taylor: I—I'll give you—I have a—I have a—what do I have? I have a cherry blossom umbrella. I think that's...

Sydney: Oh.

Raleigh: Ooh!

Taylor: Yeah, I have all the cherry blossom stuff.

Raleigh: [gasps]

Sydney: Charlie would love that.

Raleigh: I only have the wand.

Taylor: I got—yeah, I got a lot of it. I don't know if you have any cherry blossoms left, but if you have petals, I've got—I've got the ability to do stuff with 'em.

Raleigh: I do. I only have ten, but I do.

Taylor: I have six. We could—we could make some stuff.

Raleigh: We could make some stuff. Um, very quickly before we go, what is everyone's favorite *Animal Crossing* villager on their island?

Sydnee: Quillson.

Taylor: You have Quil—oh, I just got Quillson.

Raleigh: Quillson...

Taylor: And I was worried he was gonna be a li'l—li'l hipster jerk bird. Is he cool?

Sydnee: Yeah! I think Quillson's pretty cool.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: I—oh.

Raleigh: Um, Tey?

Taylor: That's, like—that's hard. I mean, I love Hamlet and I love Cheri. I have Zucker. I love Zucker. I love that he's—he keeps to himself.

Raleigh: I love Zucker.

Taylor: He's kind of shy. Like—but then I also—I have Norma. She's the cow and she loves to read.

Raleigh: Aww.

Taylor: Uh, and then I have Carmen who's, like, the stylish bunny.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: I—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: I love them all!

Raleigh: [simultaneously, through laughter] Taylor loves all of the villagers.

Taylor: They—they all—I—I walk around the island at night and give them all coconuts before they go to bed. Um...

Raleigh: That's very sweet.

Taylor: [through laughter] And, like—

Sydnee: "Good night, here's your coconut!"

Taylor: [through laughter] "Here's your—"

Raleigh: Your nightly coconut, from Tey.

Taylor: "—here's your weird gay neighbor, bringing you a coconut at midnight!"
[laughs loudly]

Raleigh: [laughs loudly]

Sydnee: Okay.

Taylor: Like, well...

Sydnee: That's just—uh, you do—you do that, 'cause that's probably standard in Brooklyn, right? [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, yeah. Everybody goes around and gives each other coconuts late at night. Um...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I don't think I can pick. I love them all! I—I maybe—I—I'm closest to my first two, because they were my initial—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: —my initial two. But... I even love Tom Nook! I wish I could give Tom Nook presents. I wish I could give him something other than money.

Raleigh: Aww.

Taylor: I don't know. What about you, Raleigh?

Raleigh: Vesta has and always will be my favorite. Um, she's a li'l—a li'l sheep. And she's just—she's the sweetest, the best, and—she moved on to my island and I was so happy, 'cause she's always been my favorite. And the next day she had fleas, and then the next day she had a cold.

Taylor: Oh, no!

Raleigh: And it was just, like, the saddest two days of my game where I had to catch fleas off of her and then bring her medicine to fix her cold. But now she's okay, and now we're best friends.

Taylor: I—I did not realize that you had to catch the fleas. Hamlet had fleas first on my island and I—

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Taylor: —gave him medicine thinking like, "Oh, this'll work, right?" And he just looked at me like, "Thank? Okay?" Like—[laughs]

Raleigh: "I—I don't know what you want me to do with this, but okay." [laughs]

Taylor: I was like—I was trying to catch a butterfly, and it's the cutest thing. He runs laps, but you know how all the characters run with kind of their arms back, like, "Wee!"

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Uh, he—he—yes. [laughs]

Rileigh: How I run.

Taylor: It's like kind of a Naruto run. Uh, he—

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: —running by me as I was swatting at a butterfly, and it swatted the flea off his head, and I thought I hit him and I was like, "No!" And then he was like, "Oh, thank you!" And I was like, "Oh! You're welcome?" [laughs]

Rileigh: "Okay?"

Sydnee: Aww. Well.

Rileigh: How pleasant.

Sydnee: That's good that we have all these friends.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: These are my friends right now. Um, thank you all for indulging me, and—and Sydnee, for playing *Animal Crossing*.

Sydnee: No problem.

Rileigh: Taylor, you already were, but thank you for playing it more.

Taylor: Thank you—

Sydnee: Well, I'm not gonna—

Taylor: —for encouraging me to play.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I'm not gonna stop until at least I get a new shirt, so.

Raleigh: Good.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Um, Sydnee, what's—what's next, next week?

Sydnee: Uh, next week I thought it would be fun if we watch the movie *Josie and the Pussycats*.

Taylor: Yes!

Raleigh: Delightful.

Sydnee: Yes. It's a fun movie. Music is great. Cos—the—gonna say costuming, I guess. [laughs quietly] Clothes. They're great. Anyway, *Josie and the Pussycats*. If you haven't watched it and you want to play along at home, it's—it's a really fun, feel-good kind of watch right now.

Raleigh: For sure.

Taylor: Really good soundtrack.

Sydnee: So. Yes.

Raleigh: Alright.

Sydnee: Uh, and that'll do it! Thank you for joining me, Taylor, Raleigh. Thank you, listeners, for joining us. Thank you *Animal Crossing* villagers, for not [laughs quietly] leaving our villages.

Taylor: Yes.

Raleigh: Yeah. For letting us give you coconuts.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh, and I apologize to all the tarantulas out there whose good reputations are being maligned by *Animal Crossing* right now.

Taylor: That is fair.

Sydnee: [laughs] Uh, if you would like to listen to more podcasts, you should! What else are you doin'? Uh, go to MaximumFun.org, and there are a lot of wonderful shows that you would enjoy.

h, thank you, uh, for everybody who tweets at us and emails at—uh, emails at us. Sure. You can do that, uh, @stillbuff, or stillbuffering@maximumfun.org. And thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

Raleigh: This has been your 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: And I... am... too.

[theme music plays]

Raleigh: I haven't played *Animal Crossing* yet today. I've gotta go do that, so.

Sydnee: I already checked in, got my Nook Miles.

Taylor: I couldn't sleep, so I just started playing.

Raleigh: Oh, that's good. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah, good.

[theme music plays]

[static]

Speaker One: Welcome back to Fireside Chat on KMAX. With me in studio to take your calls is the dopest duo on the West Coast, Oliver Wang and Morgan Rhodes. Go ahead, caller!

Speaker Two: Hey, uh, I'm looking for a music podcast that's insightful and thoughtful, but, like, also helps me discover artists and albums that I've never heard of.

Morgan: Yeah man, sounds like you need to listen to *Heat Rocks*. Every week, myself, and I'm Morgan Rhodes, and my co-host here, Oliver Wang, talk to influential guests about a canonical album that has changed their lives.

Oliver: Guests like Moby, Open Mic Eagle, talking about albums by Prince, Joni Mitchell, and so much more.

Speaker Two: Yo, what's that show called again?

Morgan: *Heat Rocks*: Deep dives into hot records.

Oliver: Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

[static]

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