

Sawbones 210: Fiona Apple (1999)

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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, our weekly check-in before we get started. Everybody doin' well?

Taylor: Well...

Sydnee: Y'all doin' okay?

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: Well... yeah. [laughs]

Taylor: Uh... "Well... " is the word, I think. [laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well...

Rileigh: It, uh, could be better, could be worse. It's kind of in a—a... forever purgatory, I think.

Sydnee: Hm!

Taylor: Wow, okay. That got dark fast.

Sydnee: Alright.

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: No! Like, you know what I mean? Just, like, it—just, like, stuck in in between. Just, like, being—feeling like everything's normal and feeling, like, awful?

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: Somewhere in the middle. [laughs]

Taylor: I—I feel like I'm just like this—like I'm—I'm a ghost that haunts my own apartment. [laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah!

Taylor: Just wander around and scream at the walls, and some part of me believes, like, I don't know. Is this, like, an *Others* moment? Like, maybe—maybe I *am* a ghost! [laughs] Maybe there are people here who are scared of me. I don't know!

Sydnee: You are not a ghost. [laughs quietly] We can see you and hear you.

Rileigh: This is all a dream!

Taylor: Maybe this is—yeah, you know? This could just be, like, weird electronic residue from my past.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Maybe—maybe I'm dead and don't know it. Could be!

Sydnee: It—it definitely has a *Groundhog Day*... feel.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Right?

Sydnee: That definitely is true. And Tey, when you sent me that video from *Space Ghost Coast to Coast* of Brak singing "What Day Is It?"

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yep.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] That—especially the chorus. "[singing] Maybe it's tomorrow, and maybe it's not."

Taylor: "[singing simultaneously] Maybe it's not." [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] "Maybe it's yesterday."

Sydnee and Taylor: "I just forgot!" [laughs]

Sydnee: That's where we are! I don't know.

Raleigh: Dad was, uh, remarking to the similarities to that scene in *The Jerk*. Where he's like, "And the first day felt like three days." [laughs]

Sydnee: Oh yeah. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: "[through laughter] The second day—" It's like some days feel like a week, some days feel like ten minutes. I don't—I don't really know what day it is anymore, or what time of year it is.

Sydnee: I have—this has caused me—I have talked before about Charlie's homework assignments, and this—I—we've been so on the ball trying to, like—part of it is just... you run out of new ideas of stuff to do with your kids when you're trying to constantly come up with new things to do with them inside your house, and in your... backyard.

Like, when those are your limitations—I don't know. Maybe if I was more creative... although creativity is a real problem right now. That's a—that's a real problem.

Taylor: Yeahhh...

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: That's true.

Sydnee: I mean, just getting there. But, uh, I—we were keeping up on all of her homework-ish—I mean, it's preschool, so it's not really homework. You know what I mean. They're, like, home—they called them home-based activities or something.

Rileigh: It's just, like, a fun craft to do at home.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: It's like a recommendation, too. It's, like, not—but the one thing that they were pretty clear on this last one was, "Make a chalk drawing and send us a picture." And they were—they were gonna put 'em all together into a collage.

Okay, cool. We can—we can handle that. We draw with chalk all the time. So that same day that we first got the assignment, took the kids outside, drew with chalk. Charlie drew Pac-Man, and some of the ghosts.

Taylor: Very cool.

Sydnee: And some cherries.

Rileigh: That's good.

Sydnee: Not sure what the current obsession is with Pac-Man. We have never played Pac-Man. [pauses] I... I don't know. [laughs]

Rileigh: I mean... there are worse video games.

Sydnee: I—no, I have no problem with Pac-Man! I just don't know—sometimes your kids get this stuff and it's like, "Where did... Pac-Man enter your—"

Rileigh: It has to come from Justin somewhere.

Sydnee: I mean, I guess. [laughs]

Taylor: It was just DNA built in to—[laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: She was born with Pac-Man fever!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: She requested that song yesterday! We were having a tea party. I actually tweeted about this. We were having a tea party and she was like, um—we were pretending to be the *Peppa Pig* family.

Raleigh: Of course.

Sydnee: And I was like, "[British accent] Peppa? [laughs quietly] What—"

Raleigh: Go ahead with your Mummy Pig impression Sydnee.

Sydnee: [laughs] I don't wanna do my Mummy—

Raleigh: No, go ahead!

Taylor: Now you gotta do it.

Sydnee: I'm so bad at accents!

Taylor: You gotta do it now.

Raleigh: You—you started it. You gotta finish it.

Sydnee: "[British accent] [holding back laughter] Peppa? Georgie? What— [laughs quietly] what music does one have at a proper tea party?"

And she was like—immediately, not—didn't miss a beat. "[British accent] Alexa! Play "Pac-Man Fever," please!"

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Immediately! And I'm like, "That's tea party music? 'Pac-Man Fe—" anyway.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: So she drew Pac-Man and the ghosts, and I took a picture of it, and I hadn't sent it to her teacher yet, thank goodness. Because her teacher sends out

to the class—or to all the adults, on this app that we have that we communicate through—uh, she sends out a picture of what she's put together so far as a reminder. Like, "Here's what I've got so far of all the kids. Now, don't forget to send in your picture!"

And what this is is their class photo.

Taylor: Wait, what?

Raleigh: Oh, no!

Sydnee: This is going to be their class photo, because they won't have a class photo, because they didn't get to do that. So she's putting together—it's very sweet, it's a lovely idea—a class photo of each of them *with* a chalk drawing.

Raleigh: Not *of* a chalk drawing.

Sydnee: Not *of* a chalk drawing! [laughs quietly] So there's all these adorable pictures of these cute little Pre-K kids with their chalk drawings. And they're all, like, dressed nicely and they've—some of them have, like, posed with—like, they're laying on the pavement, like, interacting with the picture, you know? And they've written their names in chalk. And they're just... great. And I have a picture of, like, Charlie's feet...

Raleigh: [snorts]

Sydnee: ... next to Pac-Man.

Raleigh: I mean, that's a good representation of Ch—[laughs quietly] of Charlie!

Taylor: That's a—yeah! I like the individuality there, you know?

Raleigh: Yeah!

Sydnee: So I—so this morning—'cause we realized this last night, and it was due today. So this morning, I, like—I got Charlie.

I was like, "You have to get dressed, and I have to do your hair today. I know that seems weird. We have just been letting you wear whatever you put on every day, but I'm actually going to make you wear something... that you will—"

Because I know the way Charlie is. I mean, I don't care. But if she looks at a picture of all of her friends, all, like, lookin' cute with their chalk drawings, and she's, like, pajamas and raggedy hair, she's gonna get upset.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: So I make her get ready, I make her do her hair, I take her out to the driveway. I have to talk her through, like, "No, we can't draw a cake the size of the entire driveway. Like, no, we do not have time or chalk for that."

Raleigh: Mm-hmm, right, right.

Sydnee: I do the whole thing, and we get it in two minutes before—

Raleigh: Wow.

Sydnee: —yes. Of her holding—she drew a cake and she posed next to it like she was holding it, and she wrote her name.

Raleigh: That's good. That's very Charlie.

Sydnee: It was very Charlie. And it was all rainbow colored, and she had flowers in her hair, and... so.

Raleigh: That sounds right.

Sydnee: Of course then the teacher today during the Zoom meeting was like, "I know most of you don't have your pictures in for the collage. Don't worry, we're still workin' on it. We'll get together sooner or later."

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: I was gonna say, I bet they're operating—I bet they have some extended deadlines [through laughter] for the Pre-K kids!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: It's not like, "No, sorry. You missed it! You fail." [laughs quietly] "You're not in the picture."

Sydnee: "You don't get to be in the picture." I know. After all that, like, frantically... it was fine. It was fine. But anyway... so that's what—that's what we've been up to, is forgetting to do our homework until the morning of.

Raleigh: Yeah. Sounds like me.

Taylor: Yeah. I was—I think a lot of people are in that boat right now, probably. [laughs]

Sydnee: Anything for the adrenaline rush, right? [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. [holding back laughter] To feel anything.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Well, no—Raleigh, are you—you're done, though, right? Like, you're—

Raleigh: Yes.

Taylor: —finally donezo? No more homework?

Raleigh: We're recording this on the last day of April. On Wednesday, I had four classes that just required an essay as my final, and one that was an exam. And my one exam was on Monday, so, uh, I had to turn in four other essays. Two were due on Tuesday, one was due today, one is due tomorrow.

But I just figured, you know what? The sooner I write all these essays, the sooner I am done for the semester! So I—Tuesday, I wrote both essays that were due on Tuesday. And, uh, yester—no, Monday I wrote both essays that were due on Tuesday. Tuesday, I wrote both essays that were due on Wednesday and Thursday. So—

Sydnee: So you're done.

Taylor: Nice.

Raleigh: —I turned them both in last night at about 2:30. Um... you know? They're done. They're in.

Sydnee: Yayy!

Rleigh: All my teachers have been pretty good about some—some more lenient grading since all of this has happened, so, not too worried about it. And, uh... all that matters is I'm done with this awful, weird, dreamscape of a semester.

Taylor: [laughs]

Rleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Well, congratulations. You made it.

Rleigh: Thank you.

Sydnee: I know. That's wonderful.

Rleigh: I'm officially halfway done with college.

Taylor: Wow.

Sydnee: Maybe we can sneak you a White Claw tonight to celebrate.

Taylor: [laughs] Uh-oh.

Rleigh: Sydnee!

Taylor: Don't go on record sayin' that!

Rleigh: I'm a teen!

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rleigh: I would never!

Taylor: The alcohol police will come to your door!

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rleigh: How old does it make both of you feel that I am now... halfway done with college?

Taylor: [quietly] Yeah...

Raleigh: And only two years away from the real world? I mean, it's re—more school. But...

Sydnee: Yeah. I mean, who knows, really?

Raleigh: Who knows?

Sydnee: [through laughter] Who knows what the future holds?

Raleigh: Really.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Maybe I won't even have two more years of school. Maybe we just—everything is online always now. We all become half-robot... people.

Sydnee: I would have known your future, were we in the before times, so.

Raleigh: The before time—[laughs quietly] there is no before times anymore.

Taylor: Yeah. I don't—I don't know if there's a real world out there. [through laughter] That you can emerge into.

Raleigh: [laughs] I don't—I don't think there is anymore.

Sydnee: America has always been at war with coronavirus. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: It's like *Divergent* when they finally figure out their whole utop—er, dystopian society was actually just an experiment, and there's a real world out there.

Sydnee: Mmm.

Raleigh: That's how this feels.

Sydnee: Like in *The Giver*. That was how I always imagined the end of *The Giver* was.

Rileigh: Yeah. Like, someone out—like, there's a real world somewhere out there, and they're just experimenting on all of us right now.

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: That's what I like to think. [laughs]

Taylor: I—I feel like I'm kind of trapped in, like, a—a very on-the-nose video game about, like... end times?

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Like, I—whenever, like—I always judge, like, video games and movies when there's a lot of very blatant storytelling or, like, world building.

Like, the graffiti will say, like, "End of days!" And it's like, "Oh, who's really gonna graffiti that?" Except for every day that I go, like—or, not every day, but when I go to and from the store, there's a graffiti that says, "Global economic collapse!" [through laughter] And then there's another one that says, "Pandemic!" And I'm like, "Really?"

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [through laughter] Like, really? That's just—

Sydnee: Whose job is that? Who's doing that? [laughs]

Taylor: [through laughter] I don't know!

Rileigh: It's for all of our alien visitors so they understand the current state of the world whenever they land.

Sydnee: PS: UFOs? Did anybody see the article about UFOs?

Taylor: Oh, yeah!

Rileigh: There are aliens, too, now.

Taylor: [laughs] Did they—I was like, did they release that to try to draw us away from what's goin' on? You know that's when the government's in a bad place when it's like, "Man, we gotta distract everybody from what's goin' on. Just give 'em the alien stuff. Just let 'em have it."

Sydnee: "Tell 'em—[laughs] tell 'em about the UFOs!" [laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah. You know what this feels like? It feels like the end of a novel that had way too much exposition, so they just gotta cram in all of the plot twists and all of the loose ends all in, like, 50 pages. And it's just—we're in those last 50 pages. [laughs]

Sydnee: What—what I hope that—what I hope that means is that we're in the last 50 pages of the Trump presidency.

Rileigh: Oh, God. I hope so.

Sydnee: He's just cramming in all of the horribleness that he can because it is ending. That is my hope. That is my hope.

Taylor: I—I—you know, I had that—that just pinnacle moment of when I was, uh, telling you a minute ago, trying to figure out the stimulus check situation, and that the—the key to it on the IRS website is you have to use all caps on your address, and that's why millions of people haven't gotten their checks yet.

And I'm like, "Aww! Aw, everything is so much dumber than it should be!" [laughs]

Rileigh: Everything is falling apart.

Taylor: [through laughter] Everything is just so stupid!

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: Ah...

Sydnee: Yes, it is.

Taylor: Oh... alright. Let's talk about something that's not—

Raleigh: Taylor, I need a distraction, yes.

Taylor: Yeah. Uh—so we're gonna—we're gonna go back to when *I* was in college. Um, even though this—the album that we're talking about today is Fiona Apple's *When The Pawn*. Gonna talk about adjacent Fiona Apple as well.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: But specifically that was the album that I really loved. It came out in '99, I believe, so that was before I was even in high school. But I didn't really get into it until, uh, I'd say—or about my—the same place in college, Raleigh. Around my, like, sophomore year I think was when I really, really got deep into Fiona Apple. Yeah, just... really, uh—really impactful album for young Tey.

Sydnee: Had you—uh, Raleigh, before you listened to it, had you heard this album or some of the songs?

Raleigh: Um, listening through there were definitely a few songs that I feel like I had probably heard in, like, a TV show or in passing or something. Um, but overall, no. I had never, like, intentionally listened—like, sat down and listened to a Fiona Apple album.

Um, but I really enjoyed it. It was, um—I remember we did an episode way back when we first started this, and we did the episode on Dodie Clark. You all had mentioned that there were some similarities there to—to Fiona Apple. And I see that.

It's very, like—the kind of, like, alternative but not, like, all the way alternative music. That's, like, right on the edge of pop or rock or... um, I don't know. It was... it was very good. I enjoyed it. I listened to all of *When The Pawn...*, and then I listened to a few songs off her album that just came out this year. Or last year? This year?

Taylor: Oh yeah.

Sydnee: Just came out.

Taylor: Yeah. Just, like, this—

Raleigh: Just came out, yeah.

Taylor: —a, like, week—two weeks ago?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Some—some unit of time. Time is—

Raleigh: Yeah. Time doesn't exist.

Taylor: —hard to measure. But recent! [laughs]

Raleigh: But, uh—I—I actually did prefer the older album, as opposed to the newer one. I thought—just, you know, I'm a teen, it's 2020, I'll probably like the newer one better, but I—I like the old one.

Sydnee: I have to say, on first brush I would agree with you, because, um... I—part of it—it's hard to untangle something like, um... the—something that was a big part of your growing up and finding things that, like, felt like they were made more for you; like, aimed more at you, in a world where so much of culture doesn't feel like it's aimed at you.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Something that was like, "Oh!" Like you find a secret treasure of, like, "Hey... Sydnee." [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: "This one—this one's for you."

Raleigh: "It's for you."

Sydnee: Yeah. And, like, I—so I think it would be hard for me to not, like, always have a special place for those songs and that music, um, because of that connection and the nostalgia and everything.

Uh, I have—I have enjoyed—I've listened to *Fetch The Bolt Cutters* once, and then a couple of the songs over again, and I have enjoyed it—

Raleigh: Oh yeah.

Sydnee: —but I don't think I have the love for it that I will always have for a lot of the songs on *When The Pawn...*

Taylor: Well, and I think—'cause I—I... *Fetch The Bolt Cutters* is brilliant. Um, but there's something almost, uh—like, when we get into *When The Pawn...*, there's so much conflict and, like, declaration and defense of yourself that's there that I related to when I was young, and there's something really beautiful about *Fetch The Bolt Cutters* that seems to be like, "I am—I'm not easy to understand all the time, and I'm an artist, and this is me creating work as I see fit."

And that's—it's a very, like, resolute presentation. Like, it's a very confident presentation that I really love on, like, an artistic level, but maybe it doesn't have that, like... that's not a read on it. I think it's like an evolution.

But maybe the conflict was the thing that I really related to more, you know? When I was younger. Like, now it's like, "Ah, yes. I can sit back and enjoy this on an artistic level." But the early stuff was just so... I don't know.

I mean, I—you know, Fiona Apple is a really kind of fascinating creator. Uh, has, uh... I can't—I—I... I feel like maybe, uh, a current parallel is like Billie Eilish, maybe?

Sydnee: Hm.

Raleigh: Okay. I can see that.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Because that's what I didn't realize. Uh, Fiona Apple was, uh, like 18, or like 17 when she was producing *Title*, her first album. Like, she was young. In the "Criminal" video that is, like, hypersexual, and that was what she, you know, won her first Grammy for. And, like, she was so young, and got so much fame so quickly, and so much judgment so quickly, and, like—

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: —how that shapes you as a person, that's just... that is such a—a hard road to walk now, but especially back then, when I feel like the way we treated... women in the music industry was so... brutal.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: You—you've probably heard that song, Raleigh. "Criminal?" [pauses] I—we'll play it for you after the episode.

Raleigh: I was gonna say...

Sydnee: I was gonna—you—you will recognize it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Because it was... it was huge.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I would say, of the time, do you think it was her biggest? Even—even over anything from *When The Pawn...* ?

Taylor: Uh, yeah, it was. Uh, it definitely was. Um... and the song—it's about kind of... on the face, it's about using, like, your sexuality to get what you want, and how easy that is, but how you feel bad for it, like, as a woman. That's what it's about.

And I feel like that song, as much as it was her big hit that launched her to fame, it also sort of encapsulated her as this, like... you know, messed up, seductive, like, dangerous, you know... dark girl. That persona that was not really her, you know? That she—she had to kind of fight back against that in her career.

Sydnee: It—it really—and I think you're right, in that the video did that so—like, it—it put the—in case you were wondering if the song was like that, I think the video stuck a pin in it and said "Yes," because—and Raleigh, I don't know if you've ever—I know that music videos are not as much a thing now.

But, like, when the video came out, it's—she's in, like—like a slip kind of thing. Like, everybody in it is kinda, like, layin' around, sittin' on the floor, in a closet, on a bed.

It's all shot in almost like a spotlight lighting up, like, a dark room kind of shots here and there. Like you're just seeing a glimpse of the—what looks to me—I don't know if you interpret it this way, Tey, but, like, the aftermath of a sexual encounter, or multiple sexual encounters.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And there's a lot of, like, bruised legs and things. You know? I mean, it—it looks like something you're not supposed to see, something dirty, something—and, I mean, it was like—I—I don't—it was huge.

I mean, I remember—I watched it repeatedly, because I just found it so, like, "Oh my gosh!" [laughs] like, "I'm not supposed to—oh my gosh! I can't see these things! But I—I have to look!"

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And, I mean, it's—it's a—the—the video had a lot of acclaim, 'cause it—for good reason. It—it's shot like a crime scene! [laughs] Like, it's—literally. Like, it feels like—it reminds of—

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: —you know in the opening of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* when they're going through the basement and, like, it's kind of the shaky camera, and the lights directed, and that's—it has that feeling of, like—yeah, documenting the aftermath of something really terrible, which makes sense with the song.

But even, like, lyrically, yes, that is—you know, that's what the song is about, is using your sexuality to get something. But it's not just on the nose, like, "Ooh, I'm sexy, I get what I want!"

It's like, "I feel really conflicted about the fact that this is the way the world responds to me."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And I—I saw an interview with her when I was doing some research for this where she was talking about that. Like, "What does it mean that, you know, you can shine the light on my face a certain way and I can, you know, pose a certain way and get what I want? Like, I—maybe I don't like that. Maybe I don't like—like, that this—that's a weird thing to contend with. That, like, my words have less meaning, but my body has more power."

And I think that—it runs to, like, such a deeper thought process than just what I think a lot of people stapled her as, very early in her life and in her career! As, like, "Oh, you're sexy and troubled." [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: [through laughter] Like, "Oh, thanks."

Sydney: Yeah. Yeah, it very—the crime scene is exactly—I mean, obviously it's called "Criminal," but, like, yeah. There are—there are flashlights. It looks like the police investigating a murder scene.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Interesting.

Sydney: Yeah. You should—you should watch it and listen—you'll—you'll recognize the song.

Raleigh: There were lots of songs, I have discovered, that I have definitely heard before and recognized and even, like, the—the melodies I know, but I just don't know names.

Taylor: Hm.

Sydney: Um, I think—I think the other thing, uh, that I'll mention briefly, and then I think there's probably a lot more to say about this. But I think the other thing that, for my impression of Fiona Apple at the time—and I don't know if this was good or bad in the long run. I feel like she got tossed in with a lot of other artists, because there was—she was at that time where it was like, "Well, now women can make music for themselves!"

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: "Go ahead, girls! Make your little songs." Like, it felt very, like, "You're allowed now. Get angry and make some songs about it! [laughs] We'll let you."

And she got tossed in with every other artist who was doing that. And that's not necessarily a bad thing, because it was a—it was very popular. She rode that wave of—of that kind of music becoming popular, and women my age at the time seeking it out to try to find more of it.

Um, but I think it also lumped her in in way that, like, didn't distinguish her as an artist. And you could make that—you could level that same complaint towards a lot of the female artists who were tossed into that basket.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: When the things they were doing, yes, had similarities—you know, they—they were both playing a piano or whatever. But the music they're making and the stories they're telling were their own.

But it's so like our culture to say, when—you know, when music is made by men, or a man, like, it is allowed to stand alone and be viewed as its own thing.

Whereas, at the same moment, all these women are making music, so we'll just call it all chick music, and angry chick music. That's what it all was. It was all, "Oh, that's some more of the angry chick music that everybody's listening to right now."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: And it was all just tossed in together, where all these artists were doing their own thing, um, and getting very little recognition for the individual artistry behind what they were doing.

Raleigh: And she was young, too, right?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: When she started? I mean, that's even more so just... a... I don't know. I feel like there's a difference between making the—the quote, unquote "chick music" and, like, using your position as a quote, unquote "chick artist—"

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: —to, like, make a statement about the music industry, and about being a famous woman when you're young? I feel like that's what she did a lot. That's how her music sounds to me. It's like—it's not just, "I just wanna be famous and make popular music and everyone'll like this, so that's why I'm making it!"

Sydney: No.

Rileigh: It was like, "This all has meaning. There is meaning in the words, in the way the song is crafted, and the—the... you know, things I've chosen to sample and put in here."

And, like, it's all very much like a statement. Like a cohesive, almost like when you listen to a musical theater album and it's all, like, one cohesive message in music. Like, that's how I felt listening to her album was just like, "This is all one... thing. This is meant to be listened to as a whole."

Sydney: I think that's very true.

Taylor: Well, and I think, uh, it's beautiful, kind of—the—the reason she gives to why she started writing—because she started young. Like, she was writing songs and learning the piano at, like, seven. She is a—

Rileigh: That's crazy.

Taylor: —like, young—like, "This is what I'm gonna do." But she says that she started writing because when she wanted to be more succinct in an argument with her parents, instead of arguing with them face-to-face, she'd go to her room and write a letter about how she was feeling, and then she'd come quietly and give it to them. And I think it's really beautiful. Her statement was, "At that point, it didn't matter if I won the argument or not. What mattered was that I succinctly said what I wanted to say."

Rileigh: Wow.

Taylor: And that's—and I feel like that—that idea of, like, "I'm writing what I—I'm writing my side of the argument. And that is my piece."

That is something that a lot of her music continues to do throughout her life, is feel like, this is—you know, "This is my punch back," or "This is what is what I have to say on the matter." [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. Um, let's talk—I wanna talk more about the music itself, and, uh... some of that. But before we do that...

Raleigh: Let's check the group message.

Sydnee: Uh... Taylor, Raleigh. You know how much I love to talk about pants.

Taylor: [laughs] You do!

Raleigh: *Love* to talk about pants.

Sydnee: I do love to talk about pants, 'cause there's nothing like finding a great pair of pants... that can take you throughout the entire day without having to switch to alternate pants.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: I hate having to have multiple pairs of pants to fulfill my needs throughout the day. Uh, and the thing is, Betabrand's dress pant yoga pants fulfill all of my needs, by looking professional and stylish, but also having the same comfort as my favorite sweats.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: They are not yoga pants! They are dress pants. They just *feel* like you're wearing yoga pants.

Raleigh: There's a very important difference, there.

Sydnee: Yes. They're that comfortable. So you can wear them to work, and nobody'll be like, "Are you wearing yoga pants?"

Although some... I guess sometimes that's okay. Where *I* work, they would say, "Are you wearing yoga—" and then I would say, "No."

Rileigh: "They're Betabrand."

Sydnee: "They're Betabrand dress pant yoga pants, as you can tell." But nobody would say that, 'cause they look like dress pants! They're dress pants.

Rileigh: That are as comfortable as yoga pants.

Sydnee: Yes. Did I make that clear? [laughs]

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Uh, so that way you can, uh—you can wear your Betabrand dress pant yoga pants to work, feel totally comfortable. For me, I already owned a pair long before we ever started, uh, talking about them on the show, because they, uh, are perfect for somebody who has to, like—in my job, when I'm examining people, sometimes I have to, like, get down—crouch down or, like—I mean, you know, with kids, like, sometimes I'm on my knees listening to heart and lungs, whatever I have to do. And dress pant yoga pants allow me to do that, move, feel comfortable.

I get home, I can play with my kids. Um, I don't have to change into sweats, because I'm already totally comfortable. They're wrinkle resistant. Uh, I really can't—I really can't say enough. They are the most comfortable dress pants you'll ever wear. Um, they take you from day to evening to whatever you gotta do. I would highly recommend them, uh, if you gotta go to work lookin' good, but you also wanna feel good.

So, Teylor, if our listeners want to check out Betabrand dress pant yoga pants, what should they do?

Teylor: Well, right now you can get 25% off your first order if you go to betabrand.com/buffering. That's 25% off your first order for a limited time at betabrand.com/buffering. Find out why women are ditching typical work pants for

Betabrand's dress pant yoga pants. Go to betabrand.com/buffering and get that 25% off.

Raleigh: Go get that money.

Taylor: Get it.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Pants seem really good for right now where you wanna be comfortable, but you also wanna feel like you've—

Raleigh: Like a person?

Taylor: Yeah. That's, like, the perfect pant for this moment. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: They really are. I wear them at home when I'm doing work.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: I don't blame you.

Sydnee: Like right now, when I'm working from home.

Raleigh: Right now.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Right this second.

Sydnee: So, uh—yeah. So, one thing I thought we should talk about, 'cause, Rileigh, you mentioned that you feel like the whole album, almost like a musical theater album—like, it all is a cohesive thought.

Um, and I think that's very true. I always—I wonder, too, as you say that, it hit me that, like, I often have trouble remembering the titles of her individual songs.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Like, if you ask me about a song or about Fiona Apple, I'll say, "Well, you know that one song?" And then I'll have to sing a bit of it, because I don't remember what each one is call—or I'll just name some random lyrics from it, 'cause I don't remember the titles. And I wonder if it has that—'cause that's often—that can be true, sometimes, about a really cohesive musical theater album, is you don't remember what that individual—

Rileigh: Song was, just the moment.

Sydnee: Yeah, the moment.

Rileigh: They all kind of flow together.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. And it—and it has that feeling to it. Um, but the title is really interesting.

Rileigh: I don't know the—the story behind the title.

Taylor: Uh—well, so, the title—of course we always refer to the album as *When The Pawn...* , or *When The Pawn...* , dot dot dot... [laughs] and the dot dot dot is because it's actually—the full title of the album is a poem. Um—uh... I don't know if I should read the whole thing. I don't know. It's not a—

Sydnee: I don't—it's not that long.

Taylor: It's not very long. Uh, so the actual poem is, uh:

"When the pawn hits the conflicts he thinks like a king
What he knows throws the blows when he goes to the fight
And he'll win the whole thing 'fore he enters the ring
There's no body to batter when your mind is your might

So when you go solo you hold your own hand
And remember that depth is the greatest of heights
And if you know where you stand then you know where to land
And if you fall it won't matter 'cause you know that you're right."

Uh, really kind of beautiful and succinct.

Rileigh: Yeah!

Taylor: Um, and the story behind the poem is actually, uh—so, this is the thing about Fiona Apple. She, you know, had *Title* come out, uh, the "Criminal" video, the "Criminal" song got, you know, massive praise. But then she got so much hate. Uh, you know, was really put in this box of just being this, like, difficult, moody, crazy... like, somebody described her as more insufferable than Courtney Love. Uh, like I'm a fan of Fiona Apple *and* Courtney Love, but that's a statement in the 90's.

Um, like—so she was—she was on the—on tour, and found this article where she was, I think, on the cover of *Spin Magazine*. And then inside, there were all these letters that they published about her. People just complaining about her and hating on her.

And she, you know, kind of says, like, "I couldn't run away from it, so I wrote this poem." And so she wrote this poem in response, kind of as her own personal pep talk in response to all of these people just... you know, reading her in this magazine.

Um, and, uh—and when she chose to make it the title, uh, her reasoning was kind of cute to. Is, like, uh—she said, "I don't know. Like, every song is its own little world. To title an album feels strange, so I just put this—this poem as the title."

Also got—got crap for that, too. People thought it was pretentious, and begging for attention, and people made all these jokes about her album title. Uh, it held the world—like, was in the Guinness World Record as being the longest album title, but only for, like, a year or two.

Because then, like, a year or two later, another band—like, a—a bunch of dudes had a really long album title, and then Chumbawumba did, and they never got crap for it. But she—you know.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: She only did that for, like, a minute. Uh—

Sydnee: "[through laughter] And then Chumbawumba did... "

Taylor: Yeah, I think—I think they were the ones, like, they—they took the title for a minute of having the—the longest album title. I don't know. But... you know.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: That's just one of those stupid things that you make fun of someone famous for, usually because they're... like, a woman. [snorts] Like, that's honestly—like, if that would've been a man doing that, some popular, famous, I don't know, 90's artist—I'm not even gonna try to name one, because I'm... not gonna name one that was probably actually popular.

Um, if they would've done that and made it, like, a super long, like, deep, meaningful poem they had written, everyone would be like, "Oh my gosh... they're so, like, deep and sophisticated and intelligent."

But Fiona Apple does and it's like, "Ugh, she's so pretentious and snobby."

Sydnee: It—well, and it really speaks to the—the shame of, like—I mean, I guess—I was about to say men—male artists don't get thrown into the same bucket that we're talking about Fiona Apple and other female artists of the time. Um, but I guess, like, boy bands would probably...

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: ... dispute that.

Taylor: Yes, they would have something to add to the conversation.

Rileigh: That's fair.

Sydnee: [laughs] Uh, they—they definitely—

Rileigh: They've entered the chat.

Sydnee: Right. They definitely did, and—and I guess do? Are there new ones? I don't know.

Rileigh: Boy bands?

Sydnee: Are there new boy bands?

Rileigh: I... could not tell—[laughs] I have no idea. Do The Jonas Brothers still count? Are they a man band? They're all kinda old now.

Sydnee: Uh... I guess—

Taylor: Are they allowed to have emotions and individual presences now? Is that—has that happened for the The Jonas Brothers?

Rileigh: I think they are!

Taylor: That's good.

Rileigh: You know what? I think they are now.

Taylor: That's good.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: 'Cause that's really the difference, is that—I always feel like—I mean, women kind of have to be products, and products have to, like, have reliability and, like, shiny packages, but men can be people, and they're messy and they kinda—you know, they can—they can walk out on a show and it's like, "Oh wow, he got mad and walked out! That's so... manly."

But, like, a, you know, a woman does it and it's like, "No! You're not supposed to do that! You didn't function properly!" [laughs]

Sydnee: Well, and you don't see, like—I always think, like, so much was made about the time about—like, I saw one description of Fiona Apple as, like... "her moody piano playing" or something.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: So much was made of—

Taylor: [through laughter] I'm in a bad mood, so I just compose an eloquent piano composition! Yeah, that's how it works! [laughs]

Raleigh: That's how I get out my angst.

Sydnee: It's like the idea that—

Taylor: [through laughter] Are you on your period? You wrote a concerto!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] Well, and the—I—what they're trying to talk about, I think, is, like—is when it's heavier, when the music is heavier. When you can tell that she is—she is hitting the keys more forcefully.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: And... Fiona Apple is not the first person to ever—

Raleigh: No!

Sydnee: —uh, [through laughter] use music to also express emotion. Um...

Raleigh: Or to, like, forcefully play a piano.

Sydnee: Or any other instrument!

Raleigh: With emotion. [laughs]

Sydnee: But it just—but so much was made of that. And, like, you heard the same thing—I would say Tori Amos got some of that too.

Raleigh: Uh-huh.

Sydnee: Like, although it was always like "her *weird* piano playing." [laughs quietly] Um, either way, it's a way of skirting saying, like, they're very talented musical artists... in addition to—I like their music, they're also really good at what they do.

But they—but there was so much, like, about that and, like, "Well, they're just girls playing piano, and whatever." And you don't—I will say that, boy bands aside, you didn't hear, like—Ben Folds wasn't like, "Well, I mean, he's basically just Elton John, right? Like, he's a guy on a piano."

Taylor: [laughs] That's what—that's what that is, yeah.

Sydnee: You know? I mean, you weren't like, "Well... Billy Joel. There's—[laughs] just Ben Folds, Billy Joel—" You know? I mean, like, you didn't—you didn't see these people, like—like, male artists, because they play the same instrument, like, "Well, they're just all basically... the same." You know?

But you—but you did see that. And, like, if you look at, like, Tori Amos music and Fiona Apple music, I know that there is a lot of, like, they're telling personal stories that oftentimes are not male stories, you know?

And so, like, there are those similarities. But their music is distinctly different. The feel of it is different. Everything about it is different, and I—I enjoy both immensely. But, I mean, I don't—I don't think that all music played on a piano is ever thrown in the same bucket, and so why were so many artists of the time?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Well, and that's—'cause when *Title* came out, uh, that was kind of—I think that was '96. That was definitely that, like, *Jagged Little Pill*, you know, like Lilith Fair moment that we were having. I think that the thing that I really love about *When The Pawn...* is—this is a little bit forward in time. It was kind of after that—that trend had died down, you know? And—and it was such a purposeful, like, "No-no-no-no. It—it wasn't, like, a trend. This is—I'm—I'm me, and I'm gonna, like, make my piece."

Like, it was very much an identity album. And, uh, I—I love, like, the reviews at the time of this album, which were largely written by men, uh, are, like, so begrudgingly praising. Like, somebody was like, "Yeah, it's a real ball breaker, but

I mean that as a compliment." [through laughter] Like, it's like—these people that were angry—

Sydnee: Okay?

Taylor: —they were mad that she'd made a good album. Because it's like, "I mean, yeah, it's—you know, it's good, but yeah, she's still mad." [laughs] Like, well, yeah!

Sydnee: Well... it's just a shame, 'cause it's the—they're the same people who were just so pleased with themselves when, like, Jewel's second album did not do as well as her first. Or when Alanis Morissette's second album did not do as well as her first. The—these people were just so pleased to say, like, "[smugly] See? Told ya." [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: "Told ya! They weren't that good. It was just—they were—it was just trendy." Yeah.

Taylor: Well, and that's—I mean, if you—like, the—I think, 'cause—what—what was it about this album specifically that meant, like, so much to me? And sometimes you don't always know why an album means something to you. But, like, this is one where I can succinctly say what it was.

And it's this treatise against this—I mean, she—she talk—uses the word "crazy" in three songs over this album, and it's such an in depth portrayal of her, like, grappling with that identity that was put upon her, which is just such a thing to be a—a young, like, you know, like, woman-identifying person.

Like, you just have to accept, the world's gonna staple an identity to your chest, and that's what you get. And it's just so hard being, like, "Oh, I'm crazy? Okay. How crazy am I?" Like, "Oh, you're—" you know, like, "I'm a mess? Yeah! Let me show you how messy I can be."

And at my—you know, when I was in my early 20's, like, in college, like—such a difficult time for me, and I think that there was that... that desire to be perfect and be good, and fit the image that I should fit. This album was a counterpoint of, like, "Or, you could be whoever you wanna be, and just be like, 'Deal with it, though!'" [laughs]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And—and the—the music, it really, like—it's—well, I do think there are hooks in there, for sure. I don't think you can deny, some of the songs have some—some really hook-y moments, you know?

Um, it is not reliant on that. It is—I feel like it is—it is someone who is making the music that they want to make, that is in them to make. And hopefully others will enjoy it, but it's also okay if they don't. I feel that—I don't know if—I don't know, Tey, if you agree, but I feel that amplified in *Fetch The Bolt Cutters*.

Like, there are moments where she's even just talking, where they're—they're not, you know, musical moments necessarily. And I feel like it is—it... it's a whole artistic work. It is more than just music. It—you know? It is elevated to an art piece in and of itself.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Well, and I'm—I'm gonna talk about something that's a little—a little difficult about her personal life.

[[trigger warning for sexual assault]]

So, you know, trigger warning about sexual assault.

She was—uh, she was raped when she was, like, 12 years old. Uh, and she's said that she's never purposely written about that, but I think that, like, there is a purposefully impenetrable quality to her music that, uh—and she's—on *Fetch The Bolt Cutters*, she talks about it more directly. She has references to her assault.

But, um, I think that that is something that a lot of people can feel in her music is, "I—I don't wanna be accessible to you, and I don't have to be. I don't have to be digestible, accessible, or, you know, penetrable to you."

And that is a very powerful, like, amazing quality to her music that I definitely... connected to when I was young, without even knowing about her history, without even knowing about her past. I felt that in the music.

That—that desire to say, like, "No-no-no-no-no. I'm difficult, and maybe, you know, you don't have to get me." That's what I—I love those, like—the off tempo moments, the moments where—that just, like, you know—like, the—the discord that sometimes comes into it. I just think that is such a quality of her music that is important to the whole idea behind her.

[[end of trigger warning]]

Sydnee: And that is—you know, it—it speaks to the difference between the time, like, in music. Like, um, the business of music, now and then.

Uh, back in the 90's, it was so—there were so many artists coming out constantly who were, like, getting big for five minutes and, like, for one song, and then they would just move on. The—you know, the music company would just move on to the next one, move on to the next one.

And, like you said, Tey, it had to be packaged. It had to be either part of the trend, part of the theme, you know, just throw this song out there 'cause it fits. They don't have anything else that fits? Move on to the next band.

Um, or it had to, you know—if it was gonna—if an artist was gonna have a career, they had to have their own, like, already—

Raleigh: Thing.

Sydnee: —you know—yeah, merchandisable thing. Um, and it is hard to do that, I think. I think that, uh, the more you listen to her music, the more attached to it you become. But as, like, a radio hit... not every song is gonna immediately pull you in on the radio. Listening to it as a piece is more of an experience.

Raleigh: Right. I was thinking about that when you all were talking about, you know, bands having to come out with their next great thing, and getting replaced, and being one album wonders and stuff like that. I feel like that's just not... the same music culture that exists today. Like—

Sydnee: No, it's different now.

Rileigh: —I could not think of a band or artist other than—it became super popular for a while that, like, all the Disney Channel actors that, like, left acting at Disney Channel made albums for a while, and then some of them stopped.

But all the people I listen to, like, continue to put out music, and have been pretty popular since their first big hit, and then it just continued to grow since then.

It's very different... environment. I don't know if it's just changing on the way people buy music. You know, you can't buy albums and CDs anymore. You go to concerts, and that's how artists make their money, so they go on a lot of tours and they just appeal for a lot more people, and then you just wait for their music to come out. But I—I definitely think that contributes to her being able to put out this more... raw, even more emotionally vulnerable album in 2020 than the culture would allow her to in 1999. Because, like, it is just "make what you want," and people will still criticize and talk about it if they don't like it, but it's not "You have to make whatever's trendy and whatever's going to be... popular I guess."

Taylor: Well, yeah. 'cause that's such a—that's such a thing to be able to do as, like, a—I think as an artist, to put out work that is—that requires more time and requires personal investment from the listener. It's not just instantly catchy and instantly like, "Oh, I like this. It's a bop."

Like, to be able to put that out and have people respect you enough to give you the time to listen to it. Because that's really what, like, I think *Fetch The Bolt Cutters* does, is it opens up. You know? It's like—[through laughter] it's like a fine wine. You gotta kinda let it sit there. You gotta let it sit in the background and go like, "Oh, yeah. This is beautiful."

And I—I do agree that it—the—the atmosphere is so different now that maybe—also I think the respect that we give to women creators is hopefully, I feel like, increased a little bit. But, uh—

Sydnee: It's better than it used to be.

Taylor: Yeah. That, you know—now—now it's like—we're willing to say, "Oh, I'm gonna listen to this, and I'm gonna try to get it." Like, it's not—it's not your job as an artist to give me something that I can just instantly understand. It's my job as a consumer and appreciator of art to actually try to engage and interact with it,

which is more—the respect that she always deserved, but, you know, she can command now.

Sydnee: It... it's—the way we're talking about it, that's a lot more akin to the way you should really experience, like, a classical piece. You know? I mean, to really appreciate, like, a—like, a classical piece of music, the more you listen to it, the more you find those things and feel those things, and it becomes something that you're close to.

And, um, I think her music—it reminds me of that feeling. Like, the more I listen to it, the more I feel like I experience it and I get it and I feel it, and I—I find things in there that were hidden that I hadn't noticed before. And, um, that's quite an accomplishment for an artist to do on their own [through laughter] without an entire orchestra.

Taylor: Right.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: You know, to back them up and do—that's—that's—you know, that's... that speaks to a composer working on this.

Raleigh: Especially when there's so much of society and culture that is seemingly actively rooting against you.

Taylor: Right. Well—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: To do all that.

Taylor: —and that's—I mean, that's, I think—you know, *When The Pawn...* just happened at such a collision of, like, all the criticism she was getting, and her just absolute fighting back of like, "Nope, I'm gonna—not only am I gonna keep making music, I'm gonna make a whole album that says 'Well, actually here's my side. [laughs] Here's my point.'"

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Uh, she did have a—she worked with Paul Brion? Paul Brian? Brion? Uh, was the producer. And, uh, I loved him recounting, like, how she approached him with it was basically like, "Look. I'm good at writing, I can sing, and I can play the piano. You're good at all the other stuff, so let's do it that way."

'Cause she walked in with basically a fully formed *When The Pawn...* as far as the lyrics and the piano parts, but obviously there's so much other orche—orchestral stuff going on in it. Like, he added all that in. But, you know, for her to really—after getting such a beating and just to come forward and be like, "This is what I'm good at, and you do this. [laughs] That's how we're gonna make this album."

Uh, that's just—yeah. The confidence that must've taken.

Raleigh: Wow.

Taylor: Uh...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydney: Well, it's great, and I'm glad that you decided to bring it to share with us.

Raleigh: Me too.

Taylor: Yeah. Well, I—yeah. I think it's a—it's a really... it's a—it's a... so formative in my youth. Like, I don't know. I... yeah. Just that—and also, I mean, I know we're—we're kind of at point.

But, like, she was talking about mental illness before we were ready to really stop talking about it in hush hush voices, you know? Like, she was engaging with her mental illness. She was engaging with her internal monsters, and she wasn't shunning them as much as she was embracing them and saying, "This is part of me."

And that's another thing that I think was so ahead of her time. Uh, to be doing in the mainstream, to be doing with pop sensibilities? You know?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: It's—it's nice to see, 'cause you don't always, to see an artist who in retrospect you can look back and realize those things about, and they were not given credit for a the time. Um, be able to have the kind of longevity where they can come out with something as new and—and high quality as *Fetch The Bolt Cutters*, and be celebrated for that, and then you can kind of—

Raleigh: Look back.

Sydnee: —retroactively celebrate them for their entire career. It's nice to see somebody get that, 'cause you don't always. You don't always get that second wave, and so it's nice.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: She deserves it. [laughs] It's what she deserves!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, if you have not listened to Fiona Apple, you should.

Taylor: Yes.

Raleigh: For sure.

Sydnee: Uh, Raleigh?

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: You're next, right?

Raleigh: I am, and I didn't realize this until we were about halfway through the episode, so I started frantically searching through my list of things.

Taylor: [simultaneously] Oh no.

Sydnee: Yeah, it—usually we check in. There's a little peek behind the curtain.

Taylor: Whoops!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Usually we check in with each other before we start recording to say, "You've picked something for next week, right?"

Rileigh: Um...

Sydnee: And—

Rileigh: ... thank—

Sydnee: —we forgot.

Rileigh: —yeah. Thankfully I have a running list on my phone, so I was just looking up things. Um, I don't think I've done a T—have I done a TV show?

Taylor: *The Circle*?

Sydnee: I don't think—

Rileigh: If I have, it hasn't—oh, I did *The Circle*. That was a while ago. I wanna do a TV show.

Sydnee: Okay.

Rileigh: Um, it is called *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: Oh, okay.

Rileigh: Starring Rachel Bloom. Um, there are lots of seasons. You don't have to watch all of them. Maybe just, like, a few episodes, trying to get a sense for, like, the... format of the show and the characters, and stuff like that. Um, it's one of my favorites, but I also think it's really different and important, culturally, so.

Sydnee: Okay!

Rileigh: Talk about that next week.

Taylor: Alright!

Raleigh: It's on Netflix if you wanna watch it.

Sydnee: We will do so.

Taylor: I think I have time. [laughs] I have—

Raleigh: Yeah. We all have time, so. [laughs]

Taylor: Whatever that means.

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: I don't know how many chalk drawings I have to do before next week, so. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: That's true. That's true.

Taylor: "Why is the ghost that haunts our apartment watching *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend*?"

"I don't know!"

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] You're not a ghost, I promise you.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: And for all you listening at home—

Raleigh: Unless we all are ghosts.

Sydnee: —uh, you are not ghosts. [laughs] I know that it can feel that way right now. Um, I told Justin I feel like the guy from *Memento*.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] I feel like every few minutes, all of the sudden I become aware again and look around and go...

[pauses]

Raleigh: And just start frantically leaving—

Sydnee: "What just happened? Did I forget—"

Raleigh: —Post-it notes on the mirror.

Sydnee: Yeah, "Did I forget something?" So I only say that because if you, at home, are feeling like a ghost or you're in *Groundhog Day* or the guy from *Memento*, or any other... analogy you can come up with for this, um, you're not alone. We're all feeling that way. This will pass. [sighs]

Raleigh: We will all get through it together.

Sydnee: Yes. Just continue to stay home and stay safe. I think most scientists feel that if you are in a state where things are opening back up, maybe things are getting rushed just a little. So just continue to be cautious. Be—be careful. Um, you know. It's—it's okay, if you're still thinkin', "Maybe it's not—maybe I'm not ready to go to a restaurant or movie theater just yet," that's okay.

That's... there are scientists who would back you up on that decision. Um, so stay safe. Take care of each other and yourselves. And thank you both.

Taylor: Thank you!

Sydnee: Thank you.

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: I'm nodding at you.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: In approval.

Raleigh: Yes, yes.

Sydnee: Thank you, thank you, mm-hmm, thank you. Thank you to Maximum Fun. You should go to Maximumfun.org for a lot of podcasts that you would enjoy.

Uh, you can tweet at us @stillbuff. You can email at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org, and thank you to The Nouvellas for a 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: [weird emphasis] I am a teenager... [pauses] I am still buffering— [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] I got so confused!

Raleigh: I am still a teenager! But I am still buffering is our new thing. I am still buffering.

Sydnee and Taylor: [out of sync, holding back laughter] And I... am... too?

Raleigh: I'm sorry! I'm still a teenager, so it's just confusing!

Taylor: It's fine. It's all fine! It's just—that's all—it's—it—we're well. [laughs]

Sydnee: Is it Sunday?

Raleigh: We're well. I don't know what day it is.

Sydnee: Is it Monday? [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: I don't know.

Sydnee: Is it—[laughs]

Taylor: Tuesday? Wednesday? Better-wear-shoes-day?

Sydnee: [???

Rileigh: [groans]

Sydnee: [scatting]

Taylor: Yeah. Oh, no. Alright.

[theme music plays]

Kirk: Video games.

Jason: Video games!

Maddy: Video games. You like 'em?

Kirk: Maybe wish you had more time for them?

Jason: Maybe you wanna know the best ones to play?

Kirk: Maybe you wanna know what happens to Mario when he dies?

Jason: [laughs]

Maddy: In that case, you should check out *Triple Click*. It's a brand new podcast about video games.

Jason: A podcast about video games? But I don't have time for that!

Kirk: Sure you do. Once a week, kick back as three video game experts give you everything from critical takes on the hottest new releases—

Jason: —to scoops, interviews, and explanations about how video games work--

Maddy: —to fascinating and sometimes weird stories about the games we love.

Kirk: *Triple Click* is hosted by me, Kirk Hamilton.

Jason: Me, Jason Schreier.

Maddy: And me, Maddy Myers.

Kirk: You can find *Triple Click* wherever you get your podcasts, and listen at Maximumfun.org.

Maddy: Bye!

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