

Still Buffering 216: To All the Characters That Made Us Queer

Published June 27th, 2020

[Listen here at themcelroy.family](https://themcelroy.family)

[theme music plays]

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

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: Uh, well, I hope—how are you all doing?

Raleigh: [muffled laughter] Fine.

Sydnee: I was about to tell you how I'm doing, and that's rude. I didn't ask how you all are doing, so.

Raleigh: I feel fine.

Taylor: Fine, you know.

Raleigh: Hm. Everything is kinda... the same, always, so... not much fluctuation. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Uh... [pauses]

Taylor: Go ahead.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: That's it? You got nothin'?

Taylor: You really—you really wanna tell us how *you* are.

Raleigh: Yeah, how are you?

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh, I'm good, 'cause my garden's growin' really well.

Rileigh: Oh, good.

Taylor: Okay!

Sydnee: Yeah. I, uh... Charlie said that about us yesterday. Justin was talking to somebody on the phone and she was like, "My Dad builds things now, and my Mom grows things." So—

Taylor: Wow!

Sydnee: —that's my new thing. I grow things.

Rileigh: Quarantine turned Sydnee and Justin into that, you know... just homemaking couple.

Sydnee: We're a—we're a homesteading couple.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm. Husband builds the things that wife plants things in. [laughs]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. He has, he has. He built—

Rileigh: I know! [laughs]

Sydnee: —he build flower boxes out of bricks with our father, and now I'm planting flowers in them, and he built me a garden box out of wood, and I am—I planted a garden in it!

Taylor: I really want—I—I—I did wanna ask you for confirmation, if all that woodworking is, in fact, what he's doing. 'Cause I wasn't sure if this was just an extended comedy bit on his Instagram.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: No, he is really—he's really doing this. Uh, he has built, now, in addition to the garden box, uh, a table—we have a banquette in our island, but we never had a table for it.

Rileigh: Which, if you didn't know what a banquette is, like I didn't until about, like, I don't know, a month ago, it's like a—like a window seat into your island that you put a table at.

Sydnee: It's like a restaurant booth.

Taylor: Yeah.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: Built in to your island.

Sydnee: Yes, and we need—we had—we needed a table for it, and we never had one, so we would just kind of awkwardly... sit at this... banquette, for fun? I don't know.

Taylor: Stare at the wall. Yeah, I—I've sat at that banquette and stared at that wall before. [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] So anyway, now we have a table! And he made two stools to go under the table. And, uh, what else has he made?

Rileigh: He made a coat rack that looks like Legos for Charlie's room.

Sydnee: That's right, he did that.

Taylor: I saw that.

Rileigh: He made a tiny little yellow table for out by your pool.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: It's a nice yellow table.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: He made his own workbench to make other things out of wood on.

Raleigh: [holding back laughter] Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: A little meta moment.

Sydnee: I know. [laughs quietly] Snake eating its own tail kind of thing there.
[crosstalk]

Taylor: It's very impressive! It's just—for every picture he uses the exact same caption, and then it's just, "Here's a picture of a very professional-looking piece of woodworking."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, I don't know if this is just some real out-there comedy, if he's just goin' real—[laughs] just—[laughs]

Sydnee: No, I told him that—

Taylor: [holding back laughter] —performance art with woodworking.

Sydnee: I told him that I support this hobby, because maybe he could become part of the woodworking community, and someday I can meet Nick Offerman and Megan Mullally. So—

Taylor: Ah.

Raleigh: Ohh, what if he becomes a contestant on that, um, crafts show that Nick Offerman and Les—er—

Sydnee: Amy Poehler?

Raleigh: —Leslie—[laughs] Amy Poehler do? [laughs]

Sydnee: Yeah. There we go! See, this is—that's all I'm ever thinkin' about.

Raleigh: There you go.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] I can meet people I'm a fan of.

Raleigh: One degree of separation. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] With your woodworking abilities.

Raleigh: Uh-huh.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: I'm sure that's how it works, right?

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Everybody who is—everybody who's into woodworking knows each other.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs] Yeah!

Taylor: You get added to a group text, just out of nowhere. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: But you have to keep it secret, so maybe he's already met, you know, Nick Offerman—

Sydnee: Who are—

Raleigh: —and they already are best buds.

Taylor: Yeah, you have to start making wood to truly know the secrets.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Making wood. Woodworking.

Sydnee: Mm—well—well, no, here's the thing—no. Not—

Rileigh: Making the wood. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Making the wood.

Taylor: No, you don't do that.

Sydnee: That's not—

Taylor: Well, you—you *are* growing things, so I guess in the long run, [holding back laughter] you could get there.

Sydnee: That's true, I could make—yes, I could make wood.

Rileigh: You could grow a tree.

Sydnee: Yes, that is making wood.

Rileigh: And then turn it into wood.

Sydnee: Uh, I—who are some—who are some cool gardening fame-o's? [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Um...

Sydnee: That I can be best buds with now?

Rileigh: Um... do you think Gordon Ramsey gardens?

Sydnee: [hums thoughtfully]

Rileigh: I bet he would grow his own fresh produce.

Sydnee: I—

Rileigh: Right? Or herbs?

Sydnee: —or at least herbs. Don't all fancy chefs have an herb garden?

Taylor: Yeah...

Raleigh: Yeah, I would think he would at least have an herb garden.

Sydnee: I also have an herb garden. [laughs]

Raleigh: Right, right, mm-hmm. Um—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: —herb gardens have always confused me, because they're kind of ready once—like, if you don't buy the seeds—like, we bought the starters here at our house and at your house. Like, the little starters that you plant so you don't start from a seed.

They're kind of ready from the moment you plant the starter. Right? Like, an herb is just, like—it's just the plant.

Sydnee: I mean—

Taylor: Yes.

Sydnee: —it—yes.

Raleigh: So you're just growing more of the plant.

Sydnee: Uh-huh.

Raleigh: So you have to be constantly using your supply of the plant, or else you just have... all of these herbs.

Sydnee: Well... yeah—I mean, you do wanna keep using—I mean, like... there's no point, otherwise. If you're not gonna—like, you shouldn't wait for something to happen—

Raleigh: "What do I do with all these herbs?!" [laughs]

Sydnee: Like, I—I started using them, like, day two of planting my herb garden. But, um, they get bigger. I mean, like, if you look, like... my herb garden is quite lush. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Oh!

Taylor: See, that—I—I find that the opposite problem is what I've had, where I'll, like—I mean, I've had, like, little potted herbs in my apartment.

But, like—it's like, "Okay. I've got some basil. Okay, I took—I took the six basil leaves that I've grown, and I put it in the salad. Well, now I guess I gotta wait for a plant to be a plant again, for more basil."

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: Gotta wait for more basil! [laughs]

Taylor: Like, you need a lot of it to be, like, an active thing you can rely on. My, uh—actually my boss, like, hung a hanging herb garden at the restaurant and was like, "You can use this in your cocktails!" And I would get, like... ten sprigs of rosemary off of it at a time. I'd be like, "This is not—no. [through laughter] Like, I can make—okay. If we have five customers a day, then we can say these drinks are made with fresh herbs from our garden. Anything more than that, and we gotta go buy some."

Rileigh: No. Yep. [laughs]

Sydnee: I tell you, the only thing that would work for is mint, because I have—one of my—I have, like, um, barrels... on my back deck, that I've put all the herbs in.

Rileigh: Yeah, of various sizes.

Sydnee: Yes, various sizes of barr—I tried to make them look nice.

Rileigh: It does look nice!

Sydnee: Aes—aesthetically pleasing barrels. [laughs]

Rileigh: They are aesthetically pleasing barrels.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] Filled with herbs.

Rileigh: Yeah!

Sydnee: The mint barrel... has gone wild. The mint barrel is—

Taylor: Ooh, mint gone wild!

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Ye—mint does. You can't plant it with other herbs, 'cause it will just... it will rule all herbs. Um, and so my mint barrel—I'm still worried. Even though it is separated by barrel walls from my other herbs, I—I feel like it's going to—like it's plotting.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: It looks like it's plotting to take over my other barrels. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Well, you need to make some lemonade. Don't people put mint in their lemonade? You need to make some—

Sydnee: [stage whisper] I don't know why I planted it! I don't know what to do with it!

Taylor: Make some mojitos!

Rileigh: There you go! Make some mojitos.

Sydnee: [wheeze-laughs]

Rileigh: You could make some, like, uh, chocolate milk, and then put mint in it, and then it's like a peppermint... chocolate—

Sydnee: That's true. I have—I have both peppermint—

Rileigh: —[simultaneously] like a peppermint patty.

Sydnee: —and spearmint.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: You should—you should just—I mean, you could turn a bunch of it into a mint syrup, and that'll last for a long time.

Rileigh: Ooh!

Sydnee: I could do that. I need to do something, 'cause it—

Rileigh: [simultaneously] or just eat it.

Sydnee: —I really—I feel like it's looking at the other barrels, and...

Rileigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: ... plotting domination.

Rileigh: Just laughing at them.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: [laughs] "Soon... " [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs loudly]

Sydnee: "I'm comin' for you, oregano."

Rileigh: "Soon... " [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: "I'm gonna make you mine, cilantro! There's so little of you, I'm gonna take you over!"

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: What has it done to the spearmint?

Sydnee: Oh, no. It's—

Raleigh: Are they both growing?

Sydnee: —they—they're both huge.

Taylor: They've teamed up.

Sydnee: Like, the—yeah.

Raleigh: Oh! They've teamed up! Okay, well, yeah, they're *definitely* gonna take over all your other herbs.

Sydnee: Synergy. Synergy.

Raleigh: Mmm.

Taylor: Hmm.

Raleigh: There are—there is no spear or pepper, it is just mint.

Sydnee: It is all mint. Uh, that's not—we're not gonna talk about gardening for the whole show, though.

Taylor: I don't know, it seems like we're tryin'! [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. And I don't even garden! [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Uhh... we were supposed to talk about, uh, *Edward Scissorhands*. But then Tey, you had a different idea that I thought was—we both thought was a good one. I was gonna take all the credit. *I* thought it was a great idea.

Taylor: Well—

Raleigh: Hey! I did too!

Sydnee: But it was your idea, so you tell us about it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Well, I mean, you know, I—uh, we've got a week left in—this is usually Pride Week. Like, this weekend is usually when we have New York Pride here in New York, so we haven't done anything Pride-related this month, and we got a good question—I think it was on Twitter.

Somebody asked, um, in response to I think the *Sailor Moon* episode if we'd ever talk about, like, the sort of queer icons, or the fictional characters that helped us figure out our, uh—our identities. And I thought that would be a pretty fun discussion for us all to have together!

Raleigh: Yeah!

Sydnee: I thought that was a great idea, and we can—we can return to *Edward Scissorhands* in the future. But, um—but to celebrate Pride before it is over, because our next episode will no—it will no longer be Pride—

Raleigh: That's true.

Taylor: I mean, you can still have pride after... this weekend.

Sydnee: Well, sure.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Just forever. It's okay.

Raleigh: Time is nonexistent, anyways, so.

Taylor: Well, there's that. But... yeah.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: We're on the dot of the i in Jeremy Bearimy, so it's fine. Um, I—I thought this was a really—I'm really glad you brought this topic up, or whoever—I guess the listener who tweeted it at us, I'm very glad they—the asked this question, and that you mentioned it, because it really got me thinking—and I have some thoughts on this, but I don't wanna start us off, 'cause...

Rileigh: Oh.

Taylor: Oh?

Sydnee: ... I—I—I—well, I mean, I don't have, like, defined answers to this question, so I feel like I'm not the best one to launch into this topic.

Taylor: Um...

Rileigh: Tey, do you want to get us started?

Taylor: Well—okay, I'll—I'll give the, you know, the obvious answer, 'cause it's the one that I think inspired this question to begin with. Uh, *Sailor Moon* was a very revolutionary show, I think, for a lot of us young people.

I will say, a lot of—looking at my list, a lot of them are cartoons. They're almost all anime, so for all the parents that were worried in the 90's that anime was gonna make their kids gay, oops, it did! [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs] Oops!

Taylor: You were right!

Sydnee: [laughs] Was that a worry?

Taylor: It was like, "Oh no, they're gonna watch all that weird, perverted anime! And it's, you know... It's gonna ruin 'em!"

Sydnee: Ohhh. Oh. No.

Taylor: Yeah. And they were absolutely right. Uh...

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: But, uh—but, I mean, *Sailor Moon* had a—'cause obviously the—we were talking before this about how we have lists, um—it kind of, like, the—the

characters that I'm like, "Oh, they were either queer-coded or they were just queer, and that inspired me to investigate my identity." Or it was like, "Oh, that's not a boy, and I think they're pretty."

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, that—that's kind of two different lists?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: But I feel like—like, in *Sailor Moon*, you've got the couple of Sailor Uranus and Sailor Neptune, and that kind of helped me clarify that. Because that's that thing, you kind of—there's—you don't get those clear delineations, 'cause you just don't see, like, enough representation, so you just kind of would cling to what you would get.

But with them it was like, here's a couple. I wanna be cool and look like Sailor Uranus, and just say "F you" to gender boundaries. But I think Sailor Neptune's really pretty and magical.

So it was a very good—good kind of guidepost in my young life, that couple being represented.

Sydnee: I think—I think that's really interesting, 'cause I can see where that would—I mean, I remember being aware that they were a couple, because you told me. Because of course in the dubbed version, they were... [pauses] cousins?

Taylor: [tiredly] Cousins.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Rileigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah...

Sydnee: So—but I—but I remember you telling me that and being, like, fascinated by the idea that that would be—because, I mean, at that point in time, there were... very few non-straight relationships represented in media, of any kind.

Taylor: And I don't—I mean, it would be a while, I think—I'm trying to think another—I mean, there are other examples I can think of, but in media where I would see not only, like, a queer couple, but a couple that was so... like, their rela—of all the relationships in *Sailor Moon*, I think the most, like—the one you'd wanna be in would be in—in Uranus's and Neptune's relationship, because they're endlessly supportive of each other, they have total confidence in their relationship, you know? It's like—it's almost just like, "Yeah. I mean, this is my person. I'm—I'm their person. There's no question."

Like, they're so confident. And, you know, with Mamoru and Usagi constantly being like, "Oh no! Now you don't remember me again!" Like, "Oh, now you're trying to kill me!" Like, "Oh no!"

Like—[laughs] "Even when you know who I am you're really mean to me!" Like, it's not a great relationship. But then Uranus and Neptune, you know, in comparison are just so calm and, like, committed to each other.

Like, it was a healthy, functional queer relationship. Which a lot of adult media, even that recognized queer characters in the 90's, didn't know how to make functional queer relationships, you know? They always had to be dramatic, and somebody probably died.

Raleigh: Right. Yeah. Um, I actually, thinking about this is one that I hadn't thought about before, but is kind of an interesting more modern comparison, I think. Taylor, I know it's a show I think you've watched. Sydnee, I don't know if you have or not. It's a cartoon. Um, *Adventure Time*?

Taylor: Yeah!

Raleigh: Which I watched a lot growing up. I always remember being fascinated by the friendship between Princess Bubblegum and Marceline, and always wishing I had, like, you know, that—that female best friend that was kind of like your opposite, but also like your counterpart. But then, at the end of the series, they kiss. Right?

Taylor: Yeah!

Raleigh: So, like, there's that hint, and they never define it as anything—bisexual, lesbian, you know, whatever—that I remember. But also, I remember I was always fascinated by their relationship, and also kind of had a crush on

Marceline the whole time I was watching it growing up. And then I remember it ending when I was much older, and watching that, and I was like, "Oh, right, right. Because they—okay, right." [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. Well, and see—it's funny, 'cause I watched the show. Obviously, uh, I was a lot older than you when I was watching it, and I felt like I—I picked up on stuff the whole way where it's like, "Noo, they—" 'cause now, like, canon, they used to—they dated before.

So when we meet the characters in the show, they previously had dated and had a breakup. And, I mean, you get hints. Like, Bubblegum has Marceline's t-shirt that she, like, sniffs every night before she goes to bed. Like, there's—there's a lot of stuff there. And it's funny because like, "Oh, which one will Finn end up with?" I'm like, "Finn's not gettin' either one of them!" [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs] That was just the wildest moment, because I just thought—see, when I was watching it I was probably, like, 12 years old, maybe 13. And I just remember thinking, like, "Oh, they're just—they're best friends! They're—they're girl best friends, that's her girl best friend."

And then at the end I was like, "Oh no, wait! I was wrong! It was so much more, and also, I think maybe this means something more to me than I originally thought!" [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. Well, and that song that Marceline sings? Like, "I'm Just Your Problem"? Like—

Raleigh: [gasps] Yeahhh.

Taylor: —oh no, there are *feelings* there, yeah. But I—I—I obviously, like—it's not one of my young influences, 'cause I was a lot older when I was watching that.

But definitely to me that thought that was like, "Oh, this is a sign of things to come." This is positive, like—they're real—they're two of the best characters on the show, and they had—they didn't, like, have, "Oh, look! There are some gays in the background! You—you can see 'em if you squint!"

It's like, no, they're, like, two of the main characters, and they unabashedly made them queer, which I really appreciate.

Raleigh: Yeah, I do really like that.

Sydnee: It's really interesting to see, like, cartoons, um—animated series kind of leading the way in that. Because I was just thinking, like, I didn't watch—I was never as much into animated stuff as I think you two... were and are.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, but I watch a lot more of it nowadays [laughs quietly] because of Charlie and Cooper. And, uh, it's—it's so interesting to see it, like, in shows like *Craig of the Creek* or *The Loud House* or certainly, like, *Steven Universe*. Where, like, uh, relationships that aren't straight are just casually... part of it.

Raleigh: They don't make a big deal out of it, it's just there.

Sydnee: It's just there. It's just—and it's—and it's very, uh, consistently represented, and... [pauses] I—I don't know. It's so—but it's—it's so interesting. And, I mean, it makes me really happy. I feel very good about media that I'm exposing my kids to that show that kind of diversity.

Um, but it's just there, and I don't ever remember when I was younger it just being there. As if, like, also this is something that exists and is real and is... fine. It just wasn't.

Taylor: Well, I feel like part of that is the—I mean, I feel like... not so much in, like, nowadays, but I think that when you had a character that was queer and you had a show based in reality, you felt like you—they had—you had to explain their struggles, or their—that had to be part of their plot line.

When you've got a fictional universe or an animated universe it's kind of like—I think that's what drew me to that, is because it was never a plot point, really. It's never, like—the story line wasn't, "This character's gay! Watch them suffer!" Like—which is most of, like, what—like, set in reality from the 90's, that's it.

Uh, but it was just like a world where, you know, in this—in the *Sailor Moon* universe, nobody cares if you're gay, really. You know? In the *Adventure Time* universe, it doesn't seem to be a thing. It's like they just don't have that. So characters can just exist and be themselves, and...

Sydnee: And—and even shows like—I think about, like, *Buffy* as an example of a show that, I mean, I watched, and then definitely you had Willow and Tara, who were together. Um, it—I—[sighs] my recollection of, like, the understanding that—here we have Willow early on dating Oz, who is a guy. And then she is friends with Tara, and they're together a lot, and then it is finally kind of revealed on the show that they are together now, they're a couple. And everybody kind of understands that.

I don't remember, like... [sighs] I feel like it was, like—it was dealt with in the—"Well, we'll just say that this is happening, and then move forward." You know what I mean? I don't remember, like... watching it and... I don't know. I—it—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Do you know what I mean? It just was sort of the truth. It was just there.

Raleigh: Right.

Taylor: Yeah. Well—

Sydnee: And I—

Taylor: Go ahead.

Sydnee: Well, and I—it really—like, even now, I guess—I don't know—and I'm not gonna—I can't, you know—I [holding back laughter] had nothing to do with the making of *Buffy*—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: —so I have no idea [laughs]—

Raleigh: [laughs] What?!

Sydnee: Like, what is—what is the character Willow's sexuality? I presume bisexual, but I don't know that. Um, that's me putting my understanding on to the character.

Uh, but I felt like there was also an interpretation where it was like, was it that Willow couldn't... you know, be who she was because of that time period, and because there weren't a lot of—you know, she didn't have friends who were lesbians. And so, is she a lesbian? I don't know. And I felt like both of those were options as to how you could interpret this character.

Rileigh: Right.

Taylor: Well... I mean, in the—you know, I have—uh, as much love as I had for *Buffy* as a young person, I think as an adult you kind of have to look at it a bit more critically. 'Cause there's a lot about the presentation of Willow's sexuality that's kinda... kinda not great?

Like, they—they don't really—they don't ever really talk about it, you're right. Like, the characters—they just always are a little bit, like... kinda grossed out by it? Like, there's a lot of comments by Buffy and Xander where they're just like, "Ugh!" Like, "Let's just not—" you know? Or, like, with Dawn, when—remember in the musical episode when they say, "Oh, they're—they're studying. They're definitely studying." It's like they don't—even the idea of romance between two women—they don't want Dawn to be exposed to that.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like, they're kind of weird about it. And—

Sydnee: Yes. It—it does feel like it's something that weirds them out. Not that they say that. I'm not—I'm not gonna—they don't say that, but yes, I do get that sense.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Yeah. It's just kind of like, "We accept it. But, y—you—alright, keep that to yourself." Uh, but then it's also like that—that magical, like—we don't say bisexual, we—Willow was in a loving—had a—you know, like, had a crush on Xander, was in a very loving relationship with Oz, and then she dates a woman and then it's like, "I'm a lesbian now! I—I—forget all that!" It's like—we never even broach the idea of, like, well... maybe you're bisexual? But I think that's—

Rileigh: Yeah. Maybe you could have... two real loving relationships with both of them?

Taylor: Yeah. And that's kind of a consistent—I don't—I think that that's part of—I mean, that's part of bisexual erasure, which we all know is a thing. Uh, and I think the—particular heinous about it in the 90's. I was saying earlier, not—not a thing that I would put on my list, because I do not like this movie, but the movie *Chasing Amy* that the—

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: —literal plot is, you know, there's—a guy falls in love with a character who identifies as a lesbian. Um, she falls for him eventually and they have a relationship.

She kind of destroys her entire life, because her whole life is centered in, like, lesbian culture. And then this guy ends up breaking up with her, and, uh, she goes back to being a lesbian.

But *that's* what it is. It's like, "She was a lesbian, and then she goes straight, and then she's back to being a lesbian." It's like, was she maybe bisexual all along? Is maybe that it? [laughs]

Sydnee: I don't think they ever call her that in the movie.

Taylor: No!

Sydnee: I don't think that word is used. I mean, it's the same thing for me. Like, I was—I was really thinking about this hard when you proposed that we talk about this. Like, *RENT* came to mind.

Is Maureen bisexual? I assume, again—like, this is my assumption that I am making based on my own life experiences that she must be, because she's—we know she was with Mark. You know, and—

Raleigh: The had a real relationship—

Sydnee: —now she's with Joanne, yeah.

Raleigh: —and now she's with Joanne, yeah.

Sydnee: So we—we assume. But in my—when I was exposed to *RENT* the first time, when I was a teenager, and back—back at that period of time in history and my age, in my brain, the way I interpreted that was, "Well, she probably, because of society and the heteronormative culture we live in and all this, she thought she had to date a guy. But then she went out into the world, realized that she wasn't straight, she was a lesbian, and now she is in a, you know, satisfying lesbian relationship, because that is who she is."

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: And that was the way my brain understood it when I was a teenager. I am not saying that that is the truth, and I think you could easily say "Well, no, she just *is* bisexual. It looks like she's bisexual 'cause she is, and that's the end of it."

And I understand that now—now, in 2020, as an adult. But in the 90's, that—I—I don't know that I'd ever seen that.

Raleigh: Yeah. Which I think is interesting as an interpretation of the same movie. Well, I only—the musical movie. My first experience with *RENT* was the movie. I was very young. I didn't have the filmed onstage version—

Sydnee: Yes, yes, uh-huh, uh-huh.

Raleigh: —now I obviously prefer the onstage version. But, um... I remember watching it for the first time, I was probably 13 or 14, and my immediately thought was "Oh, she's bisexual."

Like, there was never—and I don't think that's a difference in, like, person. I think that's just a difference in the culture that we both were raised in where, like, to you there was no representation of being bisexual in media, so either you were straight or you were a lesbian. But for me, I grew up knowing, like, there is such a thing as bisexuality.

And in the—in the onscreen version, you see Maureen date both Mark and Joanne, but also she flirts with other men, and she flirts with other women, and Mark and Joanne both talk about her cheating on them with men and with women. Like, you see that she obviously has attraction to both men and women.

Sydnee: Right.

Rileigh: So that was always just kind of understood for me, and she was one of the characters I actually initially thought of when I thought who made me realize, like, that being bisexual was a thing that I might be.

Sydnee: It's—it's funny. I really think we're talking about, like, representation, and then also vocabulary problems, here. Um, and I want to talk about that more, but before I do that...

Rileigh: Let's check the group message.

Sydnee: Uh, so a lot of us are workin' from home right now. Uh, not only that, we're doing things like working out from home right now, because... it's probably not a good idea to go to the gym.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That would be my advice.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Stay home. Work out from home. Uh, but when you're doin' that stuff, whether you're workin', hangin' out, relaxing, whatever, uh, you'll wanna be, you know, listening to your tunes, your jams, your podcasts, perhaps?

Rileigh: Your beats and your bops.

Sydnee: [holding back laughter] Your—all those things.

Rileigh: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Uh, and the best way to do that is with wireless earbuds from Raycon. They're stylish, they're discreet, and I would say perhaps best of all, they start at about half the price of any other premium wireless earbuds on the market.

They sound just as good as all those top audio brands that you're gonna pay a lot more for, um, but you're gonna save a lot of money. Uh, they aren't gonna fall out of your ears, which I love.

Raycon earbuds do not, um, constantly fall out, like maybe when you're, uh, cleaning up after dinner, after your children have made a mess of the kitchen and you're trying to, like, bend over and pick up mashed potatoes off the floor.

Rileigh: Right.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Raycon earbuds... [laughs quietly] are not gonna fall out of your ears... [holding back laughter] while you're doing that, which I love.

And their newest model, the everyday E25 earbuds, are the best ones yet, with six hours of playtime, seamless Bluetooth pairing, more bass, and a more compact design that gives you a nice noise—uh, noise isolating fit. They're so comfortable, and they're perfect, whether you're on a conference call or you're listening to your favorite podcast.

So, Taylor, if our listeners want to check out Raycon, what should they do?

Taylor: Well, now's the time to get the latest and greatest from Raycon. Get 15% off your order at buyraycon.com/buffering. That's buyraycon.com/buffering for 15% off Raycon wireless earbuds. [Buyraycon.com/buffering](https://buyraycon.com/buffering).

Sydnee: So, the reason—we're kinda getting into what I have struggled with when you mentioned that we should talk about this, Tey. Um, I really started wracking my brain to think about what characters on TV shows, movies, books, comic books, whatever, that helped me figure out who I was. And I could not with come up with any.

I mean, I could—like we've talked about, I could name characters who weren't straight, but as far as, like, really honestly saying that there was somebody who helped me figure it out, I really—I was really comin' up empty.

And I think the reason is that in my head, when I—'cause, I mean... I knew that I was attracted to both men and women from as early as I remember being attracted to anyone. I mean, I knew that about myself.

Um, and I knew... I knew not to talk about it, or at least I thought I couldn't talk about it. Um, in retrospect, a lot of that was probably me assuming I couldn't.

But, uh, I knew not to talk about it. But the reason I thought not to talk about it was not because I thought, "Well, I'm bisexual, and I'm just not ready to tell anybody, or I'm worried what people will think."

It was because I thought, "Oh. I'm deviant. I'm—

Taylor: Right.

Sydnee: "—I—I have—I have abnormal, unnatural desires, and I bet there are probably other people like me—[laughs] and I'll find them someday, but I won't tell anybody, because then they'll know that I'm bad."

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: I mean, for me it was very much tied up with, like, I have—I want things that are bad. And I—it never occurred to me—the word "bisexual" never... even sprung into my brain as, like, an option for what I could be.

Um, which I'm—and I say this not for, like—I don't think that it did great damage to me. Eventually I figured things out, and I have been very privileged in that I've always been surrounded by supportive people.

But, uh, it... there was nobody on TV or anywhere that I ever remember just being bi, and showing me that, like, "Oh no, that's just a way... you are. That's just who you are."

Um, and I really—I—I came up dry on this—this particular issue, because I just—I don't feel like that was ever represented to me.

It was always like a pathway to being gay, is the way I feel like media portrayed it. I remember there's a *Sex and the City* scene where they explicitly say that. Being bi is like a stop off on your way to—I think the way they word it is like, "on your way to gayville" or something.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, but, like, you say that for a while, until you're ready to admit to the world that you're gay. And I knew that I wasn't a lesbian, 'cause I knew I also liked guys, and so I didn't know what I was.

Taylor: That—that *Sex and the City* episode that you're referencing is particularly heinous.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Uh, it's—and, I mean, you know, like, I'll put on *Sex and the City* as, like, a stupid thing that's kind of entertaining sometimes. Um, but man, that one... 'cause what's Carrie—just, like, is narrating through the whole thing, and the plot line is that she's dating a bi man.

She finds out he's bi, and she tries to roll with it, and then she decides that, you know what? That's just—she just can't handle that, and that's fine, and that's the resolution on the episode, is it's totally okay that she doesn't want to be with this person because they happen to be bisexual.

And, like, oh, what a damaging, you know, choice you made, writers.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And it's so—I mean, it really is, like, the whole—I think they even might use the "bi is a lie" line. I don't remember if they do. But, like, I remember that being said so much back when I was a teenager. I remember that—that quip being thrown out, like, at school, among my friends, on TV, as just, like, a truth. Just a universal truth.

And so, like, the idea that I would ever be that, it... it wasn't an option. It wasn't a thing that you could be.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: And so, I—I don't know. And I really—it's funny. When I was thinking about, like, female characters that I was attracted to, it was really hard for me to process what that meant. I—I remember being very obsessed with Helen Hunt in *Twister*. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [laughs] Oh, we all know what that means now!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] I—I was obsessed with—I saw that movie so many times.

Taylor: And this point, that's just coded language for not straight. "So, uh, you a fan of Helen Hunt in *Twister*?" [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] I—but I really—like, I was obsessed with that! And I—I thought—the way my brain tried to process it was, "Well, I must wanna be like her. I want to be like that character, because what else could that mean?"

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Um, because the—the idea that it's like, "No, you just have the hots for her." Like, that wasn't... I don't know! It just wasn't something that was—but, I mean—what we're getting at is, like, why representation matters, right? Because when you're a kid, you don't even know what you *can* be unless you see all the options, and that wasn't an option for me.

Taylor: Well, that's—I guess that is—'cause, you know, I have to be wildly thankful for my—[laughs] my weird anime obsession as a young person.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Because, I mean, like, you're right. Compared to what you were seeing on, like, mainstream TV, you know, like a character like Haruka who's gender non-conforming, who's queer, like, that was totally, you know, revolutionary.

And speaking of revolutionary, like, that another show that I watched as a young person was *Revolutionary Girl Utena*, which I don't know if you ever watched, Syd. Did you?

Sydnee: Mm-mm, no.

Taylor: Uh, which—it was actually made by one of the people that worked on *Sailor Moon*. He had a story for Uranus and Neptune that he kind of wanted to do separate, and then he spun it off into just—it's its own show with completely different characters.

But the whole basis is there's, like, a young—a young girl who is, like, sort of—meets a prince at a young age, and he's very kind to her. But instead of, like, wanting to be with the prince, she basically decides she wants to emulate the prince, and be a prince to other young princesses.

That's the main character, Utena, who's very—you know, I think in modern terms we'd call her gender non-confirming or non-binary, genderfluid, maybe. Um, and she's trying to win the hand of this princess, is kind of the... the mo—it goes in weird places. It's a 90's anime, there's a lot of drama.

But also, it was one of those, like, things that I saw that was like, "Oh, you don't—you know, you could—you could be the prince! You could be the hero. You don't have to just wait to be rescued. You can be the one that rescues," and that was really important to, like, the idea of existing outside of a gender binary, and also more—more queer representation, 'cause it was clearly, you know, two women in the lead roles.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: Yeah. Um, there's one teen TV show that came to mind when I was thinking about this that's more modern that I remember watching... very, uh, soon before I came out as bisexual, which was *The 100*.

I don't know if either of you have seen it. Um, but it's just a typical teen drama, very kind of post-apocalyptic weird world that they live in. But the main character is a girl named Clarke who—the series starts, and then she starts dating a guy, and then you meet this other woman named Lexa, who then—you know, they're kind of enemies, but then they end up together, finally they kiss, and it's never a conversation that's had.

It's never, like, "Oh, well I guess I'm a lesbian now." Or, "No, that was just, like, a fluke, or I didn't really mean it when I liked the guys before." It was very much accepted among all the characters in the show, this is just a bisexual character.

But then, uh, the show got a lot of criticism and I actually stopped watching, because then it kind of fell into that "bury your gays" trope—

Taylor: Noo!

Raleigh: —where Lexa and Clarke kiss, you see them together I think maybe one or two episodes, and then Lexa dies.

Sydnee: Aww...

Raleigh: Um—sorry, spoilers for anyone who hasn't seen the show. It's been out for a while. But yeah, it's—it's like—it wasn't even this—I was reading criticism of the show before this episode. It wasn't even what you would call, like, a quote, unquote "noble death." It was, like, a bullet that was meant for someone else that ended up hitting her.

Taylor: Oh, so—so Tara. [laughs]

Sydnee: So Tara.

Raleigh: Tara. So Tara.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: And it was a lot of comparison between that, where you finally had this, you know—Lexa was never defined as a lesbian woman, but that is what, you know, watching the show, what you would probably label her as if you wanted to. Um, and a bisexual woman, who you see together, and it's accepted and it's great and you get this representation, and then... almost immediately, she is killed.

So... you know. [holding back laughter] It was very close to being good representation, but then, you know, they had to get rid of her.

Sydnee: Did the—was it a good—was it a good representation on *Grey's Anatomy*? I stopped watching.

Raleigh: Ohh—oh!

Sydnee: But they had a couple who—

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: —uh, one was a lesbian and one was bisexual, two of the doctors.

Rileigh: Uh, Callie—

Sydnee: I don't remember their names, 'cause I—

Rileigh: Calliope and... is her name Alas?

Sydnee: Alas?

Rileigh: Arizona.

Sydnee: Arizona. It was a state.

Rileigh: Yeah. [laughs] [unintelligible] Alaska. Yeah, no, they end up—they get married. They, uh, have a child that Calliope gives birth to, but they had a surrogate and it's their child, and, um... yeah!

Sydnee: At some point, *Grey's Anatomy* just lost me, because of... doctors just aren't...

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: ... having all that sex in the hospital, and—

Taylor: [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: —like... they don't have all that free time, and, I mean... it's just not that cool, guys.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But anyway, so—[laughs quietly] *Grey's Anatomy* lost me for all those reasons, so I never found out what happened to those two, but I remember that they were getting together.

Raleigh: No, that was a good—that was a good, um... couple, I remember.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: But then the only other one was—and this is a series I have problems with for multiple reasons, but *Pretty Little Liars*, which I read the books of, and then it was a TV show.

Its whole point was it's big murder mystery whatever, but one of the main girls, Emily, is shown a lot in the beginning that she had a secret crush on Allison, the main one that went missing.

And it's especially prevalent in the books that at one point they even kiss, and Emily realizes then that she is a lesbian. But she has these secret feelings for her friend, um, and then eventually in the series, you know, she goes on to date several women, and that's, you know—that's part of her character, and it's never, like, a bad thing about her on the show.

It's a very—I think it's a very good character when it comes to representation of her sexuality. But I do think that moment where you're a teenager and you're, like, a freshman in high school, and you have all these friends, and you're at a sleepover, and you're talking about, like, boys that you like or whatever, and everyone's talking about it, and then there's the one character who doesn't have anything to add, because she is attracted to one of the other girls in the room, but doesn't feel like she can say that.

And that's a moment I have been in before, where it's like, "Oh no, this is a friend I have who I don't just, like, really like as a best friend, who I don't just, like, want to be around all the time. I have a—I have feelings for this other woman in my life, but I know she is a straight woman, so I am just going to not say anything about it."

And I think that's really interesting that that was represented on media probably six or seven years ago, because... I don't know, I feel like that—that wasn't anything I felt like I could talk about then.

Sydnee: Sure. Well, and I do think, like, when... when I think about times where it was, like, represented, there was a lot of, like—I felt like bisexual characters—or, like, even in references to somebody who is straight who then, like, starts to have

an attraction to, you know, someone of the same gender. Like, it's sort of played like they're kind of promiscuous?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Like they're kind of—I mean, like, later on *Sex and the City*, like, Samantha has a relationship with a woman, right? [pauses] And I—I feel like that happens later—and I feel like it's ver—it fits very well into that time period, that it would be the character whose whole thing is kind of that she has more sex than everybody else.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: And she has had more partners than everybody else, and so, like, obviously that's the character who would... like, I feel like that that was always kind of it. Like, "Well, and some people just wanna have sex with a lot of people, and so they might be bisexual." As if, like, that's automatically what that makes you.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: Um, but I remember that always—like, seeing it that way.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Or that it—for—as a woman, I felt like it was often also played for, uh... it's like a hot thing to do.

Taylor: Right.

Raleigh: Right.

Sydnee: You know? And I always found that very troublesome and upsetting, the idea that, like, "Oh, you're just doing that to display this so that guys will like you better," and... that's very gross. Um, but I feel like there was a lot of that, too.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah. Which is something... I have heard, even in, like, real interactions with other people since I have been in college, and been out as bisexual. Is, like, "Oh—" mostly from men, um—only from men, actually—"Oh, you only like girls to get attention from guys."

Sydney: Yeah.

Raleigh: Or my—my least favorite was, "Oh, you're too pretty to also like girls. You only like guys. You don't mean that."

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: "I was like, "Well, nope! No, no, none of those are accurate statements, and all of those are homophobic and biphobic, and I don't appreciate any of them." [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Well, that's—I do think it's—it's not—none of the characters from it were influential on me, but I think as far as a movie that completely just skewers the whole, like, "depraved bisexual" trope, um, I can't say enough good things about *Jennifer's Body*, Diablo Cody's, like, very much maligned, uh, horror movie. But your main character, Jennifer, is, you know, a... [pauses] brought—like, sacrificed by this... [hesitantly] pop punk band? And, uh, comes back to life as, like, a demon.

But she has, like—it's implied—I mean, she's had a relationship with her best friend that maybe has been physical at some points. They're very—like, the relationship at the center of the movie is the two female leads. But Jennifer is literally, like, a bisexual woman that eats men alive and is demonic. [through laughter] And, like, that's, like...

Sydney: [laughs]

Raleigh: I love that. [laughs]

Taylor: But it's—but it's, like, tongue firmly planted in cheek. Like, they definitely—it's purposefully done, and I love it, because it's like, "Okay, fine. All bisexuals are evil? Here, they're gonna eat your souls." [laughs]

Sydney: [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's what—that's what we say at the meetings.

Raleigh: Yep.

Taylor: Yep. [laughs] We will eat your souls.

Sydnee: I—as an adult, I will say—'cause I was really thinking hard, like, when has any character influenced me? And it really didn't happen until I was an adult. Um, Stephanie Beatriz on *Brooklyn 99*.

Taylor: Oh yeah!

Raleigh: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Sydnee: Uh, because—not only the character that she plays but also, um, the—like, when her—she herself has come as bisexual, and she wrote, I thought, I very nice essay when she got married, 'cause she was marrying a man. And, like, "I'm still bisexual."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And it was—I remember reading that and it really spoke to me on a personal level, like, that this was a thing I could still own, despite being married to a man, and that that doesn't—I'm not—that does define my sexuality.

It—and I know I'm very old to be coming to these [laughs quietly] realizations, but it really did. I mean, it was the first time where I saw anyone in the spotlight say out loud what I had—what I had felt, and it was very, like, freeing for me. Like, "Oh, okay. [laughs quietly] Phew! Alright. [laughs] That's—oh, okay! I'm—that's me! That—okay, I get it now."

But, um, it really, like... until then, I just didn't... it was just kind of like my own private thing, because there wasn't—there just wasn't enough of it. Nobody said it out loud. Nobody was that. It's nice to see that represented somewhat more, although I still think you don't see a ton of bisexual characters.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I mean, I think we're doing better, but we're still not quite there.

Raleigh: I do appreciate her coming out scene, even in the show, when her character comes out, because if I remember correctly, they're talking about bringing a date somewhere or going on a date, and she just very flatly, like, just says, "It is a woman that I am bringing, or I am going on a date with. I am bisexual. That—that's that." [laughs]

And doesn't go any further into it, which partly is because, you know, her character's very dry and non-emotional, but also it's—it's just a moment in the show that shows, like, this is a character clearly defining, you know, she is a bisexual woman, but it's not a thing that requires any, you know—there doesn't need to be a bad guy that thinks that's a bad thing.

There doesn't need to be a whole conversation about it. Like, is she sure? Like, what does this mean? It's just, "This is who I am as a person," and I really appreciate that, because it's one of the first—I think the first time I'd ever seen a woman come out as a bisexual woman on—in any sort of media, and it was treated just very—

Sydnee: Well, yeah. I—and Holt says that really nice thing. What is his line, about any time we find out the world's... like, a little more different, it makes it more beautiful."

Raleigh: Yeah, it makes it more beautiful, mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Yeah. That made me cry. Um, yeah. No, I thought it was—'cause, I mean, even if you look at a show like *Orange is the New Black*, I don't think they ever explicitly call Piper bisexual, but I...

Raleigh: I mean, she was married—

Sydnee: Is she?

Raleigh: —she was dating Alex, who is a woman, then she married a man, and then she—when she went to prison, she started dating Alex again, and then ended up getting married to Alex.

Sydnee: Does she?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That was another show, like, at some point I stopped watching it. I don't know why.

Taylor: Yeah, she ends up with Alex.

Sydnee: I liked it. I—yeah. No shade on that show. I just—at some point I stopped watching.

Raleigh: But again, they never say she's a bisexual woman but, I mean, she now has had two marriages, one to a man and one to a woman.

Sydnee: So you would—you would guess.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Hmm.

Sydnee: But—but the only way we know that is if you say that. Um, and—

Raleigh: Right, you can't assume that about anyone just based off of, you know, their dating history.

Sydnee: No, you shouldn't assume it. And it seems like—and I know that you can seem a little pedantic when it's like, "But we're showing very clearly she had relationships with a man and a woman, so we're demonstrating it. We don't have to say it, 'cause we're demonstrating it."

And I think that that argument would make a lot of sense if there weren't... decades of media [laughs quietly] in which bi people don't exist!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: We're not—we're not something that can exist, and it really—I can't say enough, if there had ever been a single character when I was a teenager who just said that, like—like, on Buffy, if it was, "No, it's not that I couldn't—it's not that because of societal pressures, I felt the need to be in a straight relationship, but I have been a lesbian my whole life and now I can finally be who I am. I am bisexual."

If that conversation had ever happened, that would have meant the world to me as a young person. If that was, like, explicit on *RENT*, that would have meant the world to me. So I think that it is important to say out loud, "This character is bisexual." "I am bisexual. That is a thing you can be," because there are young people who I guarantee today, especially living somewhere like here—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: —who are, in their head, not knowing who they are or what they—I mean, knowing it but not having the words for it yet. 'Cause you know who you are. You always know who you are. But seeing what that looks like in the world is a process we go through when we look out and see what's around us.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: And until you see someone like you, it's hard to define that.

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: So...

Taylor: [unintelligible] [laughs]

Sydnee: ... we need it said explicitly.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: I wish I would've shared more of my—my media with you, Syd, when we were younger, but I guess I was still kind of—it was my—I don't know.

It's like, for me, any media that had queer representation I was engaging in felt like we—you know, dirty or wrong. Like, even if it was completely nonsexual it's just like, you know—like, oh, this is—that was—that was my version of smut as a teen. It's an anime with a queer character.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Or, uh, one of the things that was really influential on me was the comic *Love and Rockets*, which is done alternatively by the Hernandez Brothers, Gilbert and Jaime.

But Jaime's story line is—is always centered on these two female best friends, Hopey and Maggie. And they're sometimes lovers, they sometimes date men, they are sometimes together, and it just was always very—like, it was not questioned whether or not—"Are they into men, or are they into women?"

They're into both. Like, it's explicitly clear, and sometimes they're into each other! And it was just so, like... naturally presented, you know? That it just kind of felt like, "Oh, this is just a way you can be." Like, you can—it's—it's fine. Like, you know. And none of the other characters in the comic book ever questioned it.

Um, yeah. Also, the Hopey character I think falls in line with my canon of, like, Hopey was kind of—kind of masculine, but also could be very feminine, was kind of genderless. Just, you know was like just one of those, you know, style icons for me. But a really—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: —really great comic book. It's also, like, punk rock culture in LA in, like, the 80's and 90's is sort of the setting for it, so it's a really great book. But, like, you know. I definitely had to search into, like, underground comics or, you know, like, other—other—there was nothing in the mainstream.

I think that was what led me into my interest in both comics and animation, was really that that's where I could find myself represented. Um, and ultimately directed my career and my life.

Sydnee: Like, uh—like Gadget the Mouse.

Taylor: Yeah! Uh—[laughs] lesbian icon, Gadget the Mouse. I do think—like, when you get into the characters that are maybe—they weren't queer, but they were queer-coded. [laughs quietly] I mean...

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: 'Cause let's be real: Chip and Dale both had a thing for Gadget. Gadget did not pay them any mind.

Sydnee: Never. Never. I always—that was another character—I mean, I'm not saying I was attracted to Gadget—[laughs quietly]

Taylor: Oh, who *wasn't* attracted to Gadget?

Raleigh: But you're not saying you *weren't* attracted to Gadget. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: I will *proudly* say I was attracted to Gadget. [laughs]

Sydnee: But that was another that, like, it was—in my head it was very much mixed up. Like, I wanna be that way. I wanna wear a jumpsuit and goggles—[laughs] and not care what anybody thinks, and be good at something that was, you know, I think previously considered kind of a masculine thing. Like, fixing things. It shouldn't be, but it has been, traditionally.

I wanna be good at all that, and kind of be like the—the boss, in the sense that—I mean, I'm not the leader, but I'm the one who really knows what's going on, and...

Raleigh: Yeah. See, that's how—

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: —I always felt about, um, one of the villains from *Kim Possible*.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Shego. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Who now, looking back and reading about the show, obviously was I think to a lot of people a queer-coded villain in the show. But I remember watching that show and just thinking, like, "Yeah, being Kim Possible would be cool but, like, look at Shego. Look at that green and black jumpsuit—jumpsuit she's wearing, and she's so powerful and so smart," and then, like, "Oh, wait, no. [through laughter] I just had a crush on Shego." [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. Yeah... I, uh—I—

Sydnee: We're, like, watching—watching the movie *Tombstone* and really realizing that, like—

Taylor: Kate!

Sydnee: —Kate, who was with Doc Holliday—[laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, that's what—I wanna be like—I wanna be like Doc Holliday, but Kate [through laughter] is who I wanna, like... date.

Sydnee: Yeah. I—I—yeah! [laughs] I—I remember that moment, realizing, like, "I don't really wanna *be* Kate. I... think I *like* Kate." [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Well, I—I had—I remember—the earliest one maybe, outside of Gadget the Mouse that I can think of is, uh, I really like the—there was, like, a remake of *Jonny Quest* in the late 90's. Uh, I think—what was it, *The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest* or something?

Sydnee: Yeah, I remember that, yeah.

Taylor: It had really bad, like, CGI in part of it, they went into the Quest Zone. Um, but, uh—but, uh, Race Bannon's daughter, Jessie Bannon, was just like—she was smart, and she was cool, and, uh, she... I don't know.

Like, just—like, a really smart, awesome redhead. Which I realize when I look at the characters—not that I wanted to be like, but that I was attracted to in media, I have just a line of, like—like, smart, brave, like, femme redheads. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: Jessie Ban—Jessie Bannon was the first.

Sydnee: Or, like—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: —it really is. It's all a retrospect thing for me, because then I start going back and thinking, like, how disappointed I was in Jessie Spano [through laughter] when she started dating AC Slater.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: 'Cause, like... Jessie, you could do so much better.

Taylor: Like me!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [through laughter] Like me!

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: Aww. [laughs] Well, I mean, I'm glad it's better now.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Raleigh, I think you certainly have had a lot more positive representation and role models.

Raleigh: For sure.

Sydnee: There is still not enough.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: I would say. I was—Justin and I were looking up a list to just try to, like, jog my memory, am I forgetting characters? Like, is there some—is there somebody that I could—you know, that I could've connected with that I just didn't watch or whatever, like, bisexual characters in media, and the list included one of the characters from the movie *Dark Harvest*—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: —which is a—a horror film...

Rileigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: ... uh, that was, uh, f—[laughs quietly] filmed in West Virginia with a lot of, uh, our—

Rileigh: Really?

Sydnee: —yeah, a lot of our friends.

Rileigh: I did not know that.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Rileigh: Wow.

Taylor: You know, I—

Sydnee: Yeah, so that was locally—not locally like Huntington but, like, that was—

Rileigh: It's a deep reach.

Sydnee: We—I—

Taylor: That's funny.

Sydnee: —Justin knows, like, everyone in that movie.

Rileigh: I did not know this.

Sydnee: I know some of them. I don't know all of them, but I know some of the people in the film. But, like, it's—it's a—hmm. It's a treat if you haven't seen it, but when you are reaching to *Dark Harvest* for a bi character, you're really reaching.

Rileigh: Yeah.

Taylor: You know, it's—this is more of an aside, but I do think it's funny, um, because I—you look at, like, beloved characters in the LGBTQ community, and in more modern times *The Babadook* comes up. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Which, you know, it was based on just a misclassification on Netflix where the movie got categorized as, like, a—

Sydnee: Sure.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: —like, a gay and lesbian drama. Um, but I do think there's a distinct connection between, like, young queers that didn't have good representation and a love of horror.

Like, because I—you just—'cause I think it's like a weird conflation of that sense of like—and hopefully this is outdated, because it comes from a very poisonous place.

That conflation of, like, there's something wrong and evil about me, and then pair that with so many queer-coded villains. Like, hyper-feminine vampires, you know? Like, so much of, like... overt sexuality is evil in so many horror movies, and I feel like that's also where, like, my love of horror and specifically, like, the bad guys in horror, the monsters, I've always loved them.

But I think it's because it's like, I don't have a—I don't have, like, a lexicon of queer characters, so I guess I just, you know, really... really like the—I don't know, the... Jason? [laughs] I really—I really like—

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Taylor: —Bad Ash from *Army of Darkness*. Like—[laughs]

Sydnee: No, I—but I really—I do think that's true. I think a lot of that—it was very clouded when we were younger. And, like, you had to really search for things, and there was a lot of—it's so weird how you get that messaging no matter what. Nobody ever—our parents never explicitly told me that it was bad to be anything other than straight.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I—I mean, it's not like—we weren't in kind of the—the kind of, like, conservative household where I would've ever thought I'd be kicked out or anything like that. It wasn't like that. It was just all of the world was—was, like—all of the world around me was oriented that way.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: And the idea that there were other options... it just wasn't in my head when I was that age. I know that—I know better know. I hope I've made that clear. Like, I know all of this is wrong, and I wish I had had people tell me that when I was that age. I know it's all wrong, but when I was a teenager I just didn't know.

Taylor: I think it's—I mean, I have hope for the way that things progress, you know? There's so much—there's so much media that's being made now. Live action, mainstream, animation, like, for kids, for adults, for teenagers, that all has, I think—makes an effort to have, like, healthy queer representation. And, you know, they can have queer story lines or just queer characters that just exist, you know, that are just part of the landscape.

I've been geeking out on *She-Ra* that just ended on Netflix. It just had a lot of, like—you know, it had lesbian characters. It had, like, you know—like, just not—it had a lot of not straight characters, and they didn't feel the need to explain it. It was just like, "Yep, there's a—there—not everybody's straight in this show. No big deal." [laughs]

Sydnee: Yep.

Raleigh: We need more of that.

Sydnee: More bisexuals, please. Thank you. [laughs]

Taylor: Yes. [crosstalk]

Raleigh: Please and thank you. [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh, I would appreciate that, personally.

Taylor: And they—they don't have to be, like, evil, and hyper sexual. They can just be—

Raleigh: They can just be people.

Taylor: —like, look at these two nice, nerdy bisexuals that we have here.
[laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. [laughs]

Raleigh: Hey. [laughs]

Sydnee: I can—I was gonna say, I can attest to the fact that some bisexuals are quite nerdy.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Uh... so, next week, shall we return to Edward Scissorhands?

Taylor: We'll get back to—yes.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Okay. Alright. So, next week will talk to Ed—ab—talk to Ed—[laughs]

Raleigh: Talk to Edward Scissorhands.

Taylor: He will be here on the show.

Raleigh: Special guest, calling him in.

Taylor: No. [laughs]

Sydnee: The character.

Raleigh: Yep.

Sydnee: [laughs] Uh, no. But we will talk about that movie. Um, but thank you both. That was—I'm really glad we got to have that conversation, especially before, uh, the official Pride month—you can always have Pride, but—is over. Um, and hopefully next year we can have a lot more Pride celebrations.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Uh, thank you, vaccines.

Raleigh: Yes. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: Fingers crossed.

Sydnee: Yes. Uh, well, thank you everyone listening at home. I hope you're staying safe, staying healthy, staying home. Um, thank you to Maximum Fun for being the network on which our podcast is... hosted. [laughs]

Raleigh: [crosstalk] [laughs]

Sydnee: You should go to Maximumfun.org and check out all the other great shows that you would enjoy, and, uh, you can tweet at us, @stillbuff. You can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org, if you have other thoughts or suggestions or questions or comments or whatever. 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.

Raleigh: Maybe we should just change it to, "I'm not straight... "

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: "I'm not either." [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] That's our Pride month [unintelligible]

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: Aw, yeah. Well, just imagine we said that.

Raleigh: Yeah.

[theme music plays]

[gavel banging]

Speaker One: *Judge John Hodgman* won a Webby in the comedy podcast category. After ten years of production, *Judge John Hodgman* has finally won. The Susan Lucci of the Webbys. What is *Judge John Hodgman*?

Speaker Two: Comedy writer and television personality John Hodgman settles disputes between friends, family, coworkers, partners, and more.

Speaker One: Is a machine gun a robot?

Speaker Two: Should a grown adult tell his parents about his tattoos?

Speaker One: Should a family be compelled to wear matching outfits on vacation?

Speaker Two: Listen to *Judge John Hodgman* to find out the answers to these age old disputes and more.

Speaker One: If you haven't listened to *Judge John Hodgman*, now is a great time to start.

Speaker Two: *Judge John Hodgman* is available on Maximumfun.org, and wherever you get your podcasts.

[gavel banging]

Maximumfun.org.
Comedy and Culture.
Artist Owned.
Listener Supported.