

Still Buffering 219: Archie Comics

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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 Taylor Smirl.

Sydnee: It's a very exciting time right now at the Maximum Fun Network.

Rileigh: What time is it?

Sydnee: It's MaxFunDrive time!

Rileigh: Woohoo!

Taylor: Alright!

Sydnee: Yes! Much delayed this year, for very good reasons. But, uh, but finally with us. It is time for the MaxFunDrive, when we come to our listeners and ask you, uh, if you would like to, if you can, to become a member of the Maximum Fun Family.

Um, we're gonna tell you more about it in the middle of the show, but I just wanted to mention it right now, that that is what's goin' on right now at Max Fun, and you can go to Maximumfun.org/join, uh, if you are interested. There are lots of different levels of membership, if it's something you wanna do. Five dollar, \$10 a month levels, wherever you can start.

Uh, you pick the shows that you listen to so that you can make sure that the shows you like will get some of that support, so that we can keep makin' the content that hopefully you enjoy. I think you enjoy. You're listening. That's a good sign. It's a good—

Raleigh: And also that means we're one of the shows you listen to. If you're listening.

Sydnee: So there you go.

Raleigh: So there you go.

Sydnee: It's an automatic, um, membership contribution every month. It processes automatically. You don't have to do anything else unless you want to cancel, or your card expires, something like that. But, uh, Maximumfun.org/join. We'll tell you more about it later but, um, if it's something you can do this year, we would sure appreciate it.

But that isn't the only big news this week.

Raleigh: Yes. Guys... big news. Big, exciting additions to the family going on. Um, I got a pet.

Sydnee: That is a weird intro!

Raleigh: I got—I got a pet!

Taylor: That sounds like you're gonna say something else, yeah.

Raleigh: I'm not pregnant. I got a pet. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: I—I have to ask, uh, did you decide which pet you were gonna get based on the name you wanted to give it?

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: It kinda sounds like you decided on the name first, and then you decided on the pet.

Sydnee: Wait. Before you tell the name—

Raleigh: Okay.

Sydnee: —I wanted to, uh—also—well, I think you decided on the pet that would upset Justin most.

Raleigh: Well, that was not part of it, but that was an unintended consequence, for sure.

Sydnee: So tell us—tell us what quality—what animal you have—what quality of pet. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs] Category. I have a guinea pig now.

Sydnee: You have a guinea pig.

Raleigh: Um, which I will say, I decided on the pet first, because I was thinking about what's gonna be easy to, like, have with me if I'm in, like, apartments, you know? If I'm moving around a lot. But also to have in the house.

We don't have any pets currently, so what's something that, like, wants to be played with and hang out with you, but also isn't, like, a dog that you need to take out and walk and all that kind of stuff all the time?

Sydnee: Dogs require a lot of time and attention.

Raleigh: Dogs are a lot of work. And, like, if I'm in college full-time or eventually in law school or whatever, it's hard to take care of an animal that you need to, like, you know, walk and...

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: ... take care of all the time. So—

Sydnee: It's good to know your limits.

Raleigh: Yeah. So I thought a guinea pig was a good place to start, because she can live in my room with me, I play with her a lot, take care of her a lot...

Sydnee: Justin's terrified of anything that's, uh, rodentia.

Raleigh: Justin hates—

Taylor: Oh, great. Alright.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: —anything rodent-related, and I apologized, but all I can do is promise that he doesn't have to look at it.

Sydnee: Now, you had had one a long time ago that you had named Pupcake.

Raleigh: Yes. Mom tells me this was because I could not say Cupcake, and I wanted to name it Cupcake, and instead it came out Pupcake.

Sydnee: You—I don't know if it was that you couldn't say it, but you did used to call cupcakes 'pupcakes.'

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: So.

Raleigh: So maybe I just—

Taylor: Hmm, that's one of those confusions we just let go.

Raleigh: Probably.

Taylor: That's cute.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Say it wrong forever. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yes. Charlie just figured out, by the way, that, uh, a forehead is not a headfore.

Raleigh: Aw, man.

Taylor: Aww.

Sydnee: I know.

Raleigh: Kept that goin' for as long as we could.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Um—

Sydnee: I was very bummed. But you ask—because of that, you ask my children what—what should they—what should you name this guinea pig? And so Charlie's first suggestion was... Pancake.

Raleigh: Yes. Charlie said Pancake.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: In that same vein.

Taylor: Natural follow-up.

Raleigh: And then she said, "Or something simple, like Sugar Booger, or maybe perhaps Susie Susie Cutie."

Sydnee: And then also when I said, "I don't think Baby Sis likes any of those," uh, Charlie suggested Orange Juice.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Oh, that's a good name.

Raleigh: Orange Juice, mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Pancake, Orange Juice. I think a breakfast theme.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Now, Cooper's were less creative.

Raleigh: Yes. Cooper, when I first asked her said, "Better Pet."

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Better Pet. Oh, okay, yeah. That's pretty good.

Raleigh: I should name it Better Pet. [snorts]

Sydnee: And then she shortened it to Pet... or Pets.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: So Pet, Pets, Better Pet—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: —are the three suggestions from Cooper.

Raleigh: That's actually its full name, is Pet Pets Better Pet. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] It—it's—it's very—

Taylor: That's actually pretty cute.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: —it's very strange. Cooper usually names—any of her baby dolls, she names them Baby, so that makes sense.

Raleigh: She just likes very literal names.

Sydnee: Um, or I mean, it's a departure from when she used to name everything Carpet.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Or the turtle that she named One Two Three Turtle.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. I don't think she quite gets the whole naming thing yet.

Sydnee: No.

Taylor: Yeah, it's like, maybe that's a later stage of development, understanding that things have names. Like, maybe she just thinks she is a Cooper.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: That is what a Cooper is.

Sydnee: No, she *does* think that.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: That is definitely true—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: —because whenever we're playing pretend and I'll be like—so, she'll say, like, "I'm Princess Cooper." And I'll say, "Hello, Princess." And she'll go, "No! I'm Cooper!"

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: I'm like, "Well, you just—oh—okay, never mind. I don't—"

Raleigh: [laughs] Oh... naming things to her is naming what the thing *is*.

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: Yes.

Raleigh: So yes, I have a pet.

Taylor: That's—that's a—yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: That's—that's an important recognition, you know.

Raleigh: Um, it took me a very long time, I will say. I waited until I actually got the—the guinea pig. I told Mom—

Sydnee: See what she looked like. [laughs]

Raleigh: I did! I told Mom, I said, "I need to look her in the eyes. We need to have, like, an understanding before I can name her." I can't just, like—that'd be like... I don't know.

Sydnee: It's a guinea pig!

Raleigh: Well, yeah, but, like, you can't just—the name has to fit with the thing, you know?

Sydnee: Okay.

Taylor: Well, this is—okay, now that—the fact that *that's* part of the story is making the name a lot weirder.

Raleigh: What—okay. [wheeze-laughs]

Sydnee: So what did you name the guinea pig?

Raleigh: So—so Mom and I were talking about things, like—she was like, "Well, think about, you know, what are characters you really like? Or whatever. Like, names that you like, foods that you like, things that you like."

I was trying to think about things. I almost went with Sabrina, like the teenage witch, because the guinea pig's, like, orange and black. I was like, "Her colors are very Halloween-y to me." I almost went with Sabrina.

Um, and I decided eventually on... Ruth Bader Guineas-burg. [wheezes]

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: At first it was just gonna be Ruth. I was like, "You know what? The name Ruth is pretty cute, actually, for a tiny little guinea pig." Um, and also in honor of RBG. And then I said, "I like that name."

And Mom said, "Well, you know, you can just finish it with... [sing-song] Guineas-burg!" [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Well... there you go.

Taylor: I do not—that origin story is hard for me to believe. How did you not start from the name and be like, "Well, I guess I'm gettin' a guinea pig!"

Raleigh: Uhhh... it just—it came out that way.

Sydnee: We'll just have to accept that that's true. Well—

Raleigh: I promise! I—

Taylor: I know. I just—so that means there was a moment where you looked at this guinea pig, you looked it in the eye and you went, "Yep. That's an RBG."

Raleigh: Ruth, yeah!

Taylor: I don't know how—how RBG would feel about that. [laughs]

Sydnee: I—I mean, I will say that our first—our first cat, um, who I miss very much, CJ—

Raleigh: Yeah! You can't say anything about me wanting to name it after characters or people!

Sydnee: We went back and forth between CJ Craig from *West Wing* and Anya Anyanka from *Buffy*, and when we got her, we just knew right away she was a CJ.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: We just looked at her and went, "Well, you're—you're not an Anya. You're a CJ." Nothin' against either character, but we could just tell. Now, Amelia we named Toby at first... and then we found out information that we did not know—

Raleigh: Amelia's a girl. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] We did not know. But, uh, either way.

Raleigh: Yeah. Um, but yeah. I went with Ruth, and I love Ruth. Um, apparently Ruth's new favorite show is *Adventure Time*. She really liked watching it with me. She really likes carrots... and hay.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: We've been hangin' out a lot.

Sydnee: These are—these are so many—

Raleigh: Um—

Sydnee: —personality traits.

Taylor: Things I'm learning about my new friend. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: I ran a little late today to recording because she did poo on me.

Taylor: Oh.

Raleigh: Um, but apparently that's pretty standard, because they just—they poo a lot. So, you know, you're supposed to hold 'em and let 'em get used to you and hang out with 'em. They like to be held, so I was holding it, and it let a tiny poop out on me. [pauses] So...

Sydnee: Well...

Raleigh: But you know, that's just... you live and you learn. [laughs]

Sydnee: Yep. Live, learn, laugh.

Raleigh: Now I know.

Taylor: Get pooped on.

Sydnee: Love.

Raleigh: It didn't—didn't hurt anything! We're—we're friends now, we're closer, we bonded.

Sydnee: Eat, pray, get pooped on—

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: —learn, love.

Raleigh: It wasn't gross.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Dad really likes it, and Dad usually isn't a big fan of pets!

Sydnee: Dad doesn't like animals, usually.

Taylor: Well, I'll just say, wait 'til it poops on Dad.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Raleigh: Well, yeah. But Dad held it, and it just sat there in Dad's hands, and he was like, "Ooh!" Dad wants to name it Pound Cake.

Sydnee: Dad just loves pound cake.

Raleigh: Yeah, that's true. [laughs]

Sydnee: Dad's gotta stop eating cake every night.

Raleigh: Yeah...

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: It's his quarantine cake.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Every night.

Taylor: You know what? I don't think Dad—I don't think anyone in quarantine [through laughter] has to stop eating anything that they want to eat right now.

Raleigh: [laughs] Yeah.

Taylor: Honestly?

Sydnee: I don't know. [holding back laughter] It's getting to be a health concern.

Taylor: Is it gettin' you through? Well, that's valid. But still.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: I don't know. You're—you're gettin' through it. If that's takin' pound cake, that's—that's the least of our concerns. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Well, I have something I am excited to talk about this week... and that's our topic. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: [snorts]

Sydnee: How 'bout that?

Taylor: Alright. That's a good thing to talk about on this show.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: Is the topic.

Sydnee: Is the topic.

Taylor: We don't just talk about... fun guinea pig facts?

Raleigh: No, it's okay.

Sydnee: [excited] We talk about *Archie*! I'm so excited! This is a good kickoff for our Max Fun episodes, our MaxFunDrive episodes. They're all Max Fun episodes I guess... in a way. [laughs]

Raleigh: Always.

Sydnee: Always. But, uh, it's a great—I think we have talked a lot peripherally about *Archie* on this show through the years.

Raleigh: Yes.

Sydnee: Um, because of how much *Archie* means to me, and how angry I am about *Riverdale*. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: So those two things! [laughs] Have made it a topic of discussion a lot. I—you know, as I was doing some, like, background research just to make sure I kind of knew more about *Archie Comics*, for the show, uh, I found that there's, like, a whole collection of other people on the internet who are every bit as angry about *Riverdale* as me! [laughs]

Taylor: Oh, you found your people!

Raleigh: She found 'em. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Did you just join some weird Subreddit that you live on now?

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Some—I'll tell you, though, sometimes it's hard to look in that mirror and go, "Oh, that's my reflection I see. [laughs quietly] Is this what I sound like?"

Raleigh: Man.

Sydnee: It was a long, hard look at myself.

Raleigh: You know, at first I wasn't with you on that *Riverdale* train. Like, I started watching it the very first season. I was like, "You know what? I'm actually kinda into it!" Like, I know it's not *Archie*, but I'm into the show.

The more I watch it, I just can—I can't anymore! It got so ridiculous and so bad! [laughs]

Sydnee: Does it get more ridiculous?

Raleigh: Yes!

Taylor: There are weird supernatural elements that sort of are there. I don't—I don't know. It's—at one point, *Archie's* in jail? And I'm like, "What?"

Like, in an underground boxing ring, and... Veronica has a speakeasy? And I'm saying, "These kids are in high school!" [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: And then they just sing a lot. They do a lot of musicals. [laughs quietly]

Taylor: Yeah...

Sydnee: Really?

Rileigh: [holding back laughter] But none of 'em are very good at singing!

Sydnee: Uhh... well—okay. Do you know—Tey, I wondered if you knew—I watched some—some different, like, histories of *Archies* to get prepared for this.

Rileigh: [snorts quietly]

Sydnee: Do you know, like—I say this because you studied comics. Like—

Taylor: Oh no, you're testing—testing my comic knowledge via *Archies*?

Sydnee: No! Well—

Taylor: That's not a fair representation. [laughs]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: I wondered if it ever came up! Like, it's a—it's a weird little... story. Like, *Archies* date back to 1939.

Rileigh: Whoa.

Sydnee: They're really old!

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um—

Rileigh: That's, like, 80 years.

Sydnee: It's—yeah, 81.

Taylor: Are you asking me if I know the origins of *Archie Comics*?

Sydnee: They—they're—well, I won't put you on the spot. So, two—two guys, uh, John Goldwater and Louis Silberkleit, uh, founded *Archie Comics*. It was initially—and there was another guy initially, Maurice Coin, 'cause it was called MLJ Magazines at first.

Uh, and they were like—before they had comics they were, like, helping to take, um, magazines in the US and sell them overseas was their main kind of thing, and they were making money off of 'em that way by marking 'em up for foreign audiences. Uh, but then when the war happened, World War II, that got really difficult. And around this same time, there was a very famous comic that came to be...

Rileigh: [crosstalk]

Sydnee: Superman.

Rileigh: [mumbling indistinctly] Er—yep.

Sydnee: Superman.

Taylor: [mumbling indistinctly] Superman!

Rileigh: Yep. [laughs]

Sydnee: And everybody was like, "Wow! People like to read about Superman! So perhaps there are other things we could do."

So they were inspired by that to make their own comics, and they had, like, three different kind of areas that they were publishing comics in, and the *Archie Comics* story starts as *Pep Comics*.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Which initially this guy named The Shield, who was a superhero—

Raleigh: Okay.

Sydnee: —who was, like—

Raleigh: Okay, this makes more sense.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: I was trying to find the connection between the *Archie* gang and Superman and how we got there. This makes more sense.

Sydnee: So it was The Shield. And then in, like, issue, like—I—22 or something like that, they introduce these other characters, namely Archie Andrews, who is just this regular teenage boy. And The Shield, like, interacted with him somehow, or saved him, or—

Raleigh: They hung out.

Sydnee: —something. They hung out. Uh, and they started, like, noticing that audiences really gravitated towards Archie and the friends they started introducing of his. It was I think just Betty and Jughead first, and then it expanded. Uh, a lot more than The Shield.

And so eventually, like, The Shield—like, quite literally on the cover, like, hands over... [through laughter] the comics...

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: ... to Archie. [laughs]

Raleigh: "This is yours now."

Sydnee: And is like, "Obviously, no one wanted me."

Taylor: [laughs] That's really sad, actually!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: "Well..." [laughs]

Sydnee: There are covers with him, like, building statues of Archie. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: That—they really—they really—like, that blend in to the narrative, there.

Raleigh: Yeah, they did.

Sydnee: Yep. So—and then they—and they changed the name then from *Pep Comics* at some point to *Archie Comics*.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And there you go. *Archie Comics*. Ever since then. Uh, and it's funny, 'cause if you, like—if you read through the story of *Archie Comics*, their big thing up until, like, 2007 was, "We don't change." [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: No matter—[laughs quietly] No matter how much the world changes around us, we take pretty much the same sort of story lines and archetypes and just... do it over and over and over again in different settings. And for a long time people, like, really dug that. And I think this helped me—I was learning about this. I think this helped me understand [through laughter] why I connected to *Archie* so much. They're very soothing. They're very predictable.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Yes.

Raleigh: They are.

Sydnee: Yes. You know exactly what's gonna happen.

Raleigh: Yeah. It's like when people say that, uh, people who are anxious tend to watch the same shows over and over again more often than people who aren't, because you know what's gonna happen. Like, that's how I feel about *Archies*, even if it's one I haven't read, I know how it's gonna end.
[laughs quietly]

Taylor: It's—it's funny hearing that background, 'cause I can't believe that this is not a product from the Comics Code.

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: Of, like, 19—what was it, '54? Like, is basically like a—a board of authority that decided in America that comics were poisoning the youth. Uh, what was that—there was, like, the—the article written on it. Like, "Seduction of the Innocent" I think it was called? But—

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: —uh, there were all these rules that went into place where you couldn't use words like terror, or horror, or gore, or scary. Um, and, like, you couldn't have any authority figures represented in bad ways, and you couldn't have any criminals represented in good ways. It's all these rules that came down just to make comics as bland as digestible as possible.

The fact that *Archie* predates that [through laughter] is actually kind of impressive!

Raleigh: You would think *Archie* would be the result of that. Just, like, the epitome of just pure innocence in comic form.

Taylor: It really is!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, it's really weird how much in that—I don't know if people were just looking for something, like, that would cause you no anxiety.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I mean, that's—I mean, 'cause really that's—*Archies* cause you no stress. Which may be why I rejected *Riverdale* so strongly, because it's not supposed to be soothing. You know? It's supposed to be challenging. At least—

Raleigh: It is dramatic.

Sydnee: —from the bit I watched. I watched a few episode and was, you know, repulsed, so I—[laughs]

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: So I stopped. But that was the whole idea about *Archie*, and it wasn't until they really—they started to lose relevance, and they started to kind of fade, eventually, that they had to, like, adapt and change with the times. Um, which there's a long story—if you're ever interested, there's a whole long story of, like, how the company was handed down to, like, the sons of the founders, and then they both passed away the same year.

Raleigh: Oh, wow.

Sydnee: And so, they had to hand it down to, like, the next family members who inherited the business, and they butted heads a ton and, like, the one wanted to take it in a much more progressive direction, and the other one did not, and there was a whole lot of back and forth, and—I mean, it gets very—it's very dramatic! [laughs]

Um, but the progressive voice for change in *Archies* kind of won out. And so, that's why they started, like, introducing more diverse characters, and experimenting with what *Archie* could do. And that's where you see, like, *Life with Archie* comes out, which shows them as adults, you know? Uh, where it shows, like—or where they did, like, *Afterlife with Archie*, which was the zombie *Archie* series. Um—

Taylor: That got dark!

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: I never read those.

Sydnee: I—I couldn't. I read a couple, and again, it was too upsetting!
[laughs]

Taylor: Yeah.

Sydnee: It was too hard for me to read! But, um—but it really made—I mean, it made *Archie* more relevant, to the extent that eventually they got the show *Riverdale*. I mean, because they were relevant again, you know? I don't—I think you could argue that if they hadn't changed, we wouldn't have *Riverdale*.

Raleigh: Sure.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Raleigh: I will say, though, that *Riverdale* is very loosely based on the *Archie* universe, to the point where the only things that I think you could probably pull directly from the comics are the names and appearances of the characters. And beyond that, you just kinda...

Taylor: Yeah.

Raleigh: ... took 'em in a whole other direction.

Sydnee: That is the, uh, number one problem that most people level against it, is that it really does not—especially even the characters stray so far from who we kind of expect these characters to be.

Raleigh: Yes. [laughs]

Taylor: [laughs] I—I remember seeing the complaint going around back in season one that—they were like—I don't know. Maybe, like, the whole first season you don't see Jughead eat a burger? [laughs] And everyone's like, "What?! He didn't eat a burger!"

Sydnee: [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I—yeah. And I will say, that was one of my first, like... Jughead had, like, a bit of a tortured angle to him on *Riverdale*, I felt like?

Raleigh: I mean, he has that whole monologue where he's like, "I'm weird. I'm a weirdo. I don't fit in. Look at this hat."

Taylor: [simultaneously] "Do you see this hat?" [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Does he say that?

Raleigh: He does!

Taylor: He does.

Sydnee: [groans]

Raleigh: Like, that's not word for word, but it's almost word for word. [laughs]

Sydnee: But that's so frustrating, because the thing about Jughead that I loved... because, like, over time I—as much as I identified with Betty Cooper growing up, I... I yearned to be Jughead.

Raleigh: [snorts]

Sydnee: I wanted to get to a place where I could be a Jughead.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: Because he was the one who had the confidence, and the, like, self-esteem and assuredness to just be Jughead. And he was cool about it! He wasn't tortured. He didn't—it wasn't like, "Oh, I'm weird and different." He was like, "I don't care. *You're* weird. I'm not weird! Every—society is the problem! I'm not the problem."

That was Jughead's whole thing! He didn't even have to open his eyes half the time! [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Taylor: Well, I mean that's—that's why I really liked the—I think you read some of it, Syd. The Mark Wade, with Fiona Staples as the artist, the *Archie* comic that—

Sydnee: Yes.

Taylor: —that—I mean, that was the thing. It brought them into the modern age and definitely made them less, like, wholesome. But, like, that Jughead was that Jughead.

Sydnee: It was much more true to the—the characters that I had learned and, like, grew to love when I was young, than I—than I found at all in *Riverdale*. Um, so yeah. I—I actually liked that, even though it was—I mean, 'cause I—*Archie* has always evolved to try to keep up with the times in the sense of, like, the stuff around the characters. It took them a long time to evolve some of the... culture of the gang, *Archie* gang, to, like, reflect modern society.

Um, but they've always tried to, like, keep it up to date somewhat. I remember—I think I've specifically mentioned, like, places where you can see they've painted over roller skates to make them roller blades. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Oh yeah?

Sydnee: [laughs] You can tell it's been—'cause I have both versions. I have the old one and the new one.

Raleigh: Wow.

Sydnee: Um, but—I know. I'm old. [laughs] Uh, but I want to get into some of the more reasons I love *Archie* now, and especially all the work that, you know, Raleigh, I assume you would probably know about how Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa, who was involved with *Glee*—

Raleigh: Yes, yeah.

Sydnee: —became, like, the creative director at *Archie Comics*.

Raleigh: I didn't know that!

Sydnee: And is the reason for *Riverdale*. Yeah.

Raleigh: I did not know that.

Sydnee: And Sabrina, the Sabrina show.

Raleigh: Ohh, okay.

Sydnee: Yeah. He has really—if you want to talk about why *Archies* are as relevant today, that is why. He is the—he's the creative force behind a lot of that. Um, yeah. They brought him on board.

Raleigh: Wow.

Sydnee: But before we get into all these other—all of my—I will stop my *Archie* love for a moment.

Raleigh: [laughs quietly] Let's check the group message.

--

Sydnee: Uh, first, I wanna tell you all about my deodorant.

Raleigh: Okay?

Sydnee: Uh, I've been workin' hard outside these days, um—

Raleigh: With your plants.

Sydnee: Yes. I'm homesteading.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: No, I'm just gardening. [laughs] I'm growing things, to eat *and* to look at. Or both, you know? [laughs quietly]

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: My cilantro flowered, so now I can eat and look at it. It's lovely. Uh, but I get—I get sweaty outside, and I need something that's gonna help me smell good and control my sweat and, uh, I want a—I want a premium product if I'm gonna work that hard outside. And, uh, Native Deodorant is going to block odor better, with ingredients that I've heard of, like coconut oil, shea butter, and tapioca starch. It's also vegan!

Raleigh: Ooh!

Sydnee: And never tested on animals.

Raleigh: Wow.

Sydnee: Uh, yeah! And it—

Taylor: [simultaneously] I can eat it!

Sydnee: —and I can say—

Raleigh: [through laughter] Yeah!

Sydnee: —it smells delicious.

Raleigh: It does.

Sydnee: Don't eat it.

Taylor: Okay.

Sydnee: Don't eat Native Deodorant.

Raleigh: Smell it, though.

Sydnee: But you—but do smell it, and appreciate how wonderful it smells.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Uh, they have over ten scents, including rotating seasonals. Uh, their most popular are coconut and vanilla. I'm really partial to anything with coconut in it, so—

Raleigh: That is my favorite one.

Sydnee: Yep. But they've got lavender and rose, cucumber and mint, citrus, herbal, whatever you like. And it's risk-free to try. Every product comes with free shipping within the US, and free 30 day returns and exchanges.

So, try Native today by going to nativideo.com/buffering, or use promo code "buffering" at checkout and get 20% off your first order. That's nativideo.com/buffering, or use promo code "buffering" at checkout for 20% off your first order.

Raleigh: I have something else I want to tell you all about.

Sydnee: Go for it.

Raleigh: So, I have been trying to get into a new workout routine since I've been stuck at home, and part of that routine to make important is listening to music while I'm doing it. So I can, you know, block out the rest of the house while I'm stuck inside, focused on my workout.

Raycon ear buds have made that possible. They are my go-to work out and working-from-home accessory when I need to listen to music, or perhaps a podcast? Um, so I can focus on what I'm listening to, and not what my parents are listening to on the TV!

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Maybe their news, or their programs.

Sydnee: It's just always news with them.

Raleigh: It's just always news.

Sydnee: Just always new—TV news. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: But I don't have to go drop hundreds of dollars on a pair of wireless ear buds, because I have Raycon ear buds that start at about half the price of any other premium wireless ear buds on the market. And they sound just as amazing as the other top brands.

I have their newest model, the Everyday E25 ear buds. They are stylish, discreet, they have six hours of playtime, seamless Bluetooth pairing, more bass, and a more compact design that gives you a nice, noise-isolating fit.

Which is true. They're the kind you can just stick in there. You don't have to worry about 'em falling out when you're running, or... sit ups, whatever you're doin'. Movin' all around. They're not gonna fall out, which is the worst. When you're in the middle of, like, a true crime podcast and you're just

about to find out what happened, and your ear buds fall out. Don't have to worry about that with Raycon.

Sydnee: Who done it? Who done it?!

Rileigh: I never know who done it! But not—with Raycon, I always [through laughter] know who done—[holding back laughter] So—so Tey, if our listeners want to check out Raycon, what should they do?

Taylor: Well, now is 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 ear buds. Once again, it's buyraycon.com/buffering.

Sydnee: Just wanted to mention, uh, one more time before we get back to the show, that it is MaxFunDrive time of year. Uh, havin' a—havin' a longer MaxFunDrive this year, so more opportunities for you to join us here at the Max Fun family.

Um, again, you can go to Maximumfun.org/join, if that is something you would like to do. And if it is something you're thinking about doin', never hurts to just do it now. If you're like me, you'll forget... five minutes from now.

Rileigh: Yes.

Taylor: Yep.

Sydnee: Uh, but most listeners choose to join at the five or 10 dollar a month level as your starting point. If you already are a member, this is also a great time to upgrade your membership, if you are capable of doing so and it's something you're interested in. Um, it would be great, because we've got gifts for new and upgrading members! Five dollar, \$10, 20 and \$35 monthly levels, we got a lot of great gifts. What, uh—what kind of gifts do we have?

Rileigh: Well, uh, at the five dollar a month level – so, just five dollars – you get exclusive, members-only bonus content from all Max Fun shows. So, it's not just the ones you listen to that you check off when you're joining.

That's every Max Fun show, and it's not just from this year when you join. It's every past MaxFunDrive bonus content episode.

So, we have episodes on there. We did our own little spin off of *My Sister, My Sister, and Me*. We, uh, did a D&D episode with our mom a few years ago, and I think this year we're gonna—

Sydnee: There's gonna be a new D&D episode with our mom.

Taylor: Yeah!

Raleigh: Do a new D&D episode with our mom, so that'll be on there. Um, all the other shows as well. Tey, what's—what's up at, uh, \$10 a month?

Taylor: Uh, oh, at the \$10 a month level—this is really cool. You get the pin and membership cards. So, you get a MaxFunDrive exclusive enamel pin designed by Megan Lynn Kott, and this design is really cool, guys! [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Like—

Sydnee: Yeah.

Taylor: —can we describe it? Is that—

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: —is it a surprise? Oh, no, okay. It's, like, a—

Sydnee: No, no, go ahead.

Raleigh: Go ahead.

Sydnee: You can pick whichever one you want, but ours we like a lot this year.

Taylor: Yeah, it's a denim jacket. It's like a like a little denim jacket with *Still Buffering* on the back like a back patch, and a bunch of cool, uh—cool patches around it. Uh, it's—it's really cute. I—I want one.

Raleigh: You can wear your little denim jacket *Still Buffering* pin on your denim jacket.

Taylor: Yeah!

Raleigh: So meta.

Sydnee: Hey, I love it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: There you go.

Sydnee: And then, uh, there's a \$20 month level where you get a game pack with some cool cards, dice, dice bag, and there's a \$35 monthly membership level where you can get a really cool Rocket Camp mug.

Um, there are other higher levels, if that's something you can do, are interested in. Um, thank you to everyone who is a monthly member, whether you're upgrading or joining or whatever, thank you, uh, if you're already doing that. Your support keeps us going.

Raleigh: Yeah, you make this possible every week.

Sydnee: Yeah, especially through these—these, you know, harder times where we're all trying to stay at home more. Um, we really appreciate if you can give us support. Uh, if you—if you can't right now, if you can share our show, we really appreciate it. That always helps us out too, if you can tell somebody about us or send somebody a link, and—

Raleigh: Tweet about us.

Sydnee: Yeah, tweet about us. Anything like that really helps out. Um, this is the one time a year with MaxFunDrive where we try to come and say, hey,

if you like what you do, and you're in a position to help us out a little bit, we super appreciate it.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: So again, MaximumFun.org/join, if you wanna join the Max Fun family.

Raleigh: Yeah.

--

Raleigh: *So, Archie.*

Sydnee: *So, Archie.* [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Back to *Archie*.

Taylor: Syd, all I can think now is, knowing your love of *Dawson's Creek* and the fact that you had a *Glee* show runner involved, like, what if you had gotten a *Dawson's Creek*-esque *Archie* TV show? How sad is it that you did not?

Raleigh: Ohh.

Sydnee: I know.

Taylor: It's so built for that.

Raleigh: Yeah, the original gang of *Dawson's Creek*, if it instead was Jughead, Archie, and Betty and Veronica?

Sydnee: I would love that. I would *love* that. It's hard for me—I think that—that is—[laughs quietly] I—if you grew up reading the books—if you didn't, I could see where, like, *Riverdale* is very, um, relevant to today. I feel like there are a lot of teen, like... high drama... [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: ... type shows in that vein, and it fits into that. Where, like, really wild stuff happens, and these characters, uh, have experiences that are well outside what I would say are usual teen experiences.

Raleigh: And look like they are aged pretty well outside [through laughter] of a standard teenager in high school.

Taylor: Yeah...

Sydnee: What—what I loved about *Archies* is that their problems... their lives could be tumultuous, but they were tumultuous in the way that teen lives were usually tumultuous, which usually didn't involve speakeasies. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I guess they may have, but...

Raleigh: Yeah. Or, like, serial killers.

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Uh, and I—and that was—that was the great thing about *Archie*, is that you could see every—you could really learn everything about these characters, because you saw them in all these different—especially for—I mean, I—I have read—I could not tell you—I could not put a number on how many *Archies* I've read in my life.

Raleigh: Yeah. I, uh—I inherited all your old *Archies* at some point, I think maybe when you moved out of our old house, and it was literally a giant tub of over a hundred *Archies*.

Sydnee: And I have more here.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: And I have—I have read the updated ones. Um, *Life with Archie* is tough, because I don't really want them to grow up?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Um, for me, that's the—that's the thing with *Archie*. They are forever teens, and that is their magic.

Raleigh: Sure, like me, mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Um... [holding back laughter] I certainly don't want to follow them out to their death!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: It goes there, right?

Raleigh: Yeah, it does! It does.

Taylor: That is not a thing anybody I think ever wanted to see.

Sydnee: I have no interest in knowing how they die! I—[laughs]

Taylor: Well, don't watch *Riverdale*. [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah. Yeah, no. I remember—

Sydnee: Ugh.

Raleigh: Yeah, you don't wanna know, Syd.

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

Raleigh: Um, I remember you gave me the big *Life with Archie*, like, variety book that had every issue of every *Life with Betty* and every *Life with*

Veronica together. I was so excited. I was like, "Oh, this is where they, like, get married, and you see the two different lives."

I didn't know that it went all the way to their death, so I remember getting to the end of, like, I think maybe *Veronica* was first and I got to the end of that, I was like, "Wha—sorry?! What?! I had to watch *Archie* die?!"

Sydnee: Well, and I—I should have learned my lesson when I watched—have you ever seen the *Archie* movie?

[pauses]

Raleigh: Wait.

Taylor: Oh, like the—the kind of—the bad one from the '80s?

Sydnee: Yes, the live-action *Archie* film—

Raleigh: Oh, no, I have not.

Sydnee: —which has them all coming back to *Riverdale* as adults.

Raleigh: Oh no.

Sydnee: And Jughead raps.

Raleigh: No!

Taylor: It's—it's bad.

Raleigh: Oh no!

Sydnee: It's so... [pauses] Okay. [laughs quietly] When we're—

Taylor: Is it called *Return to Riverdale*?

Sydnee: I think you're right, yes. Uh, when we're—listeners at home, you could pause right now if you need to experience this immediately—

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: —but at least after this is over—and Rileigh, I will insist you do this. You need to find on YouTube the clip of Jughead in *Return to Riverdale* rapping "Sugar, Sugar."

Rileigh: Oh my gosh.

Sydnee: Because everyone—if I have seen it, everyone deserves to see it!
[laughs]

Rileigh: [holding back laughter] Everyone has to see it.

Sydnee: I—I—

Taylor: We should share that link on our Twitter, I think. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I think we should.

Rileigh: I will do that. Oh my gosh.

Sydnee: Uh, it's... it's a lot. It's hard. It's a lot.

Rileigh: I—I've only seen the old cartoon. I don't know when that came out, I don't know where that came from, but I remember—

Sydnee: Oof, long time ago.

Rileigh: —at one point you got me a DVD set of the cartoon. Super old.

Sydnee: There was the—yeah, the cartoon, and then... I mean, the song "Sugar, Sugar" was—I mean, it was a big hit, and it was from the fictional band, The Archies. [laughs] Uh, but yeah. I never wanted to—that was the thing. Like, I watched that movie—and, I mean, the movie is not... great.
[laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: It's—[laughs]

Raleigh: But were the characters at least still *Archie* characters?

Sydnee: Yeah...

Raleigh: For the most part?

Sydnee: Yeah, sort of. I mean, more or less.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: But in a very, like... [sighs] I don't know. I mean, again, for me, Jughead is a good bellwether. If you get Jughead, you get *Archies*. And if the Jughead character seems off, I feel like everything's gonna—

Raleigh: Sure.

Taylor: [laughs] Just, like—

Sydnee: I don't know. For me that's the—[laughs]

Taylor: —the canary in the cave of decent *Archie* translation!

Raleigh: [laughs]

Taylor: How's the Jughead?

Sydnee: [laughs] I mean, it really—because it was—I think if you love *Archie Comics*, you get to a point where you realize, like, Jughead is on another level!

Raleigh: Yeah. And I will say, when they announced the cast of *Riverdale* before it ever came out and I saw it was Cole Sprouse, I got very excited. Because, like, Cole Sprouse I remember from *Suite Life of Zack and Cody*,

an old Disney show. But he was always, like, the... the weird, nerdy one of he and his twin brother. I was like, "Oh, this is great! He'll be, like, the weird, kinda—but, like, different but okay with it, cool Jughead. He'll be funny, he'll be cool."

And then it started and I was like, "No, wait, I don't want edgy, emo, weirdo Jughead that knows he's a weirdo and has a whole weird monologue about how he's so weird!"

Taylor: Yeah, I think—I don't think it's a fault to the actor himself.

Raleigh: Oh, no, not at all.

Taylor: I think he does what he—what he does, what he can, with the material. But yeah. Still, though, he's still the most popular character on the show, I'd say. Like, definitely the one that everybody flocks to.

Sydnee: They—they—not on *Riverdale*, but in the books, they definitely took time to evolve Veronica in more recent years, which I appreciated. Because they—over the years, I feel like Jughead got a lot of depth. I feel like somebody was writing Jughead from, like, a very personal place.

Raleigh: Someone was crying every time they were writing out that dialogue.

Sydnee: Well, I mean, Jughead went from—

Taylor: "[tearfully] This is me! I *do* love hamburgers more than people!"

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs] Jughead went from, like, "I like hamburgers," to, like, really speaking great truths about humanity. Um—

Taylor: [muffled laughter]

Sydnee: —pretty quickly in the series. Archie was always kind of a well-meaning goof, you know? That was kind of his thing.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, Reggie gets more development over time because, like, he's the quote, unquote "bad guy," but in, like, the... [pauses] I mean, only in an *Archie* way is he a bad guy.

Raleigh: In the worst way you can be in the *Archie* universe.

Sydnee: He plays pranks on people. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, and he—you know, you get this—you get a sense that, like, he's under all this pressure from his dad who he can never live up to and, like, that's part of why he's kind of a jerk is, like, he's trying to be the person he thinks his dad wants him to be. And, um, eventually, like, Betty gets much more rounded out. From the early days of *Archies* where she is just... I mean, very much like a blonde ditz. Um, who, like, just chases *Archie*.

Taylor: I was gonna say, in the very early *Archies*, it's not like a "*Archie* has to choose between Betty and Veronica." It's like, "Betty's an annoyance, and he wants Veronica." Like, Betty's kind of the Big Ethel before Big Ethel.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm, yeah. I think when it started, he had a crush on her, but it very quickly transitioned to she was chasing him, when they introduced Veronica. And Veronica's whole thing was she was rich, and mean, and manipulative at first. And—

Raleigh: And dressed really well. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Yes.

Raleigh: She's pretty. [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: And it took 'em a while to evolve her, I feel like, into somebody with more depth and more dimensions and, like, they eventually give her traits like, um... she's really business-savvy.

Veronica's very smart. And so, like, the fashion and stuff, yes, but Veronica could take over her father's business and run it, and be great at it. And that is made clear eventually in the books. Now, I don't know if that's a plus or a minus, 'cause it just means she's a really great capitalist. [laughs]

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: But—[laughs] But, but, she is given other dimensions eventually, and the friendship between Betty and Veronica is believable later in a way that, like, early on... Veronica's this mean rich girl, Betty is very much this, like, martyr character who is just all-sacrificing for everybody all the time, and desperately in love with *Archie*, and you don't understand why he doesn't see it. And it's hard to buy, like, why would they ever hang?

Um, in later books, you get more of a sense that, like, okay, these are people, and they have other—and they round Betty out. They, you know, she goes from just being, like, Boy-crazy Betty to, um... she's great at sports, she fixes cars, she writes—

Raleigh: I was gonna say, cars are her thing.

Taylor: Cars, yeah.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. She writes gothic romance novels. Uh, she volunteers for everything.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: She does! [laughs] She writes a gothic romance novel!

Taylor: No, I just—yeah.

Sydnee: Uh—[laughs]

Raleigh: Was that where you were inspired to have a—

Taylor: Just—you know, like a well-rounded person. Fixes cars, writes gothic romance. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. It's really the two ends of the spectrum, there. Um, is that where you were inspired to have a nom de plume, was the—

Sydnee: Probably.

Raleigh: Yeah?

Sydnee: I think she did. What was it called? Something Twixt the Gables. Wind—wind—something. Aw, man.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Anyway. [laughs] Yeah. And, I mean, over time, like, they do evolve the characters, and they add more diversity into the book over time. 'Cause initially it's a very, uh, white, straight, cis book. Um, and they definitely evolve that over time. That was actually—it was funny, reading about—early one, um, there was a musical that almost came out that was about *Archie* being gay. It was, like, a fantasy musical—

Raleigh: No way.

Sydnee: —that was based on the idea that *Archie* was gay?

Taylor: Oh!

Raleigh: Oh my gosh.

Sydnee: And the old, um—at the time, the people who were in charge of *Archie Comics* had it shut down. Because they were like, "You're, uhh... " I forget. They sent 'em a cease and desist based on the idea that you're

changing the whatever of our character too much, and it—I don't know. I forget the terms for it, but whatever, it got shut down.

Um, it was made by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa—

Raleigh: Really? Wow.

Taylor: Huh!

Sydnee: —who is now the Chief Creative Officer for *Archie Comics*, because he's loved *Archie Comics* his whole life, and he made this thing that was supposed to be, like, a tribute.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: But, um—but then, was instrumental in things like Kevin Keller getting his own book, who was the first gay character introduced to *Archie Comics*.

Raleigh: It makes sense knowing that he, uh, was instrumental in *Riverdale* and *Sabrina*, because to me, having watched both and also having read the Sabrina editions of *Archie* and her in the *Archie* comic books, and also read *Archie*, I feel like Sabrina was a more—they're both very dramatic teen shows, but Sabrina's almost made more sense, because... I don't know, she *was* a witch, so, like, it already had the supernatural stuff in it, so throwing all that in there in the TV show didn't seem crazy.

Um, but taking the *Archie* world, which is very pure and innocent, and having, like, um... well, I don't know. It's kind of believable that Veronica's Dad would probably have some sort of sketchy stuff going on with his business at some point, right?

Sydnee: Yeah

Raleigh: That's believable. [laughs]

Sydnee: Mr. Lodge periodically did things that were, like, stopped by *Archie* in the gang because it was, like, capitalism run amok.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: And I think of all the characters translated into the TV show, I think Veronica kinda got—like, I thought they did a—I liked Veronica in the TV show. I thought that she was—she was cool, she was smart, she was savvy. Like, I thought they translated her really... probably of all of them the most successfully.

Raleigh: I agree, yeah.

Sydnee: They—they do a better job—early in the books—and I think, like, part of it is reflective of what the society will tolerate. Veronica early on in the books being, like, "I'm rich and I want nothing to do with you, Archie, with your poor friends," was apparently a viewpoint that was just like, "Okay, that's fine. We don't mind that!" [laughs] And, like—

Taylor: It's an archetype. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Later on they were like, "Well, people aren't gonna want to read about a person who says that." And so, like, they give her more dimension and show that, like, she was kind of raised in this stuck up, snotty environment, and she's trying not to be that way and... I don't know. Like, you—you—it grows eventually. They have that—and it's a pretty old story where they do a spin on the, um, *The Gifts of the Magi*, with *Archie Comics*.

Raleigh: I remember this one.

Sydnee: *Archie* sells his jalopy to buy this brooch for Betty that went with this gown that she didn't buy so that she could get snow chains for *Archie's* jalopy, and they present them to each other and they're both, like, trying to be nice about it, and Veronica shows up and is like, "And I bought back your jalopy, *Archie*! And I've bought the dress for you, Betty." And... you know, is very...

Taylor: Aw.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: ... giving, and, like... I don't know. But that's an old story. So, like, Veronica was being given this kind of like, "she's not so bad" angle early in the books.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: [quietly] I know too much about *Archies*.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: You know a lot.

Sydnee: I know—[laughs]

Taylor: Well, I, um—I do think, like—'cause as far as in the more modern comics, um, I think it was really cool that they made a point of making Jughead asexual, which is another thing that they retconned on the TV show that I kinda wish they hadn't, 'cause—I don't know. Like, there's very, very little asexual representation out there. And, like, of all the characters, I think that really fits with Jughead historically in the comics. Like...

Sydnee: Jughead was never—I can't even remember a book where he was interested in dating anyone. I just don't—it was never—I mean, he was chased around by Big Ethel, which was an unfortunate... [laughs quietly] ... um, continued plot line. But, uh, I don't ever remember that being canon that Jughead was interested in anyone. It just wasn't his thing. Burgers were his thing.

Taylor: [laughs] Everybody's got a thing.

Raleigh: And that's okay, yeah.

Sydnee: And sometimes pizzas. [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: Yeah. But then they, you know, made *Riverdale* and made Jughead and Betty fall in love.

Taylor: The worst ship name to ever exist.

Rileigh: Bughead.

Taylor: Ugh!

Rileigh: [laughs quietly] It's the worst.

Sydnee: That was very hard for me, because , um—that was actually—it's funny, that was when I knew I could never watch *Riverdale*, when I heard—I think you probably told me, Rileigh, that they had put them together.

Um, because on some level, like, well, I always used to read them thinking, "I identify so much with Betty, and I think Jughead is the superior character here to *Archie* in many ways, so why have... " And Jughead and Betty liked each other in a—in a platonic way. Like, they were good friends independent of Archie. Jughead was always rooting for Betty, because he thought Betty's, you know, a swell gal—a swell gal.

Rileigh: Mm-hmm? [laughs]

Sydnee: And—[laughs quietly] Veronica's mean. And so I would rather my pal *Archie* be with Betty, 'cause I would like to hang with Betty, and I don't wanna hang out with Veronica.

So Jughead was always rooting for Betty. So they had this, like, sort of little team that they were on together. And I could—I could get where you would wonder, like, is Jughead the Duckie? [laughs quietly]

Rileigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: And does she just need to look and go, "Oh!"

Rileigh: "Duckie."

Sydnee: "Duckie! You've been there all along!"

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Uh, but... they didn't. They were *friends*. They're—that was never the thing. They weren't romantic. They were friends! And even if, like, you write an alternate history where Jughead isn't asexual and he might be interested in Betty, he would never do that to his pal, *Archie*!

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. His best pal *Archie*.

Sydnee: [loudly] He would never do that to his pal *Archie*! [laughs]

Raleigh: And that is just one of the many problems with *Riverdale*. [laughs]

Sydnee: [laughs]

Taylor: That's—that's what I think they got so right about the comic reboots, is that it's just so clear that he's, like—he's trying to help Betty and Archie get back together, because he's just like, "This is right, in my world. This is right." [laughs] "This has nothing to do with me, but this is important." [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. And I think it—it is out of, like, "I like Betty and I like hangin' with her," but it's also like, "I think—" and Betty is often framed that way in the book. Betty means well. Betty is trying to help. Whatever the—whatever the... I say "conflict." Conflict is used in the loosest sense—

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: —in *Archie Comics*. [laughs] But whatever the conflict is, Betty is trying to make things right, is trying to do good, and Veronica is... sometimes she is, sometimes she's not. It just depends on what serves her

purposes the best at that moment. Um, yeah. But that—that was hard for me. I agree. I think that's very problematic that—[laughs quietly]

Raleigh: It's very clear that *Riverdale* was not intended for people like Sydnee, who grew up reading *Archies* and now are adults looking for a good TV adaptation of *Archie*. It's very obviously for current teens who maybe have heard of *Archie* and know that those characters exist, but probably aren't as invested in them as you are. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah. I wish they'd done it for you, Syd, though. I don't know.

Raleigh: I do too.

Sydnee: I do too.

Taylor: I think—especially in the world we live in now, man, I could—I could—I could go for some just super, like, low stakes teen drama.

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: Just, you know, some fashion sequences... like, I'd be happy with that. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, I mean, you have so many great—do you know how many times Veronica gave Betty great makeovers?

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That would be so great.

Raleigh: I remember the little—the little fashion inserts—

Taylor: Yes!

Raleigh: —between, like, the Betty and Veronica digests. Those were my favorite, where they just have, like, two pages of, like, "Here's their beach

outfits, and then, like, their '60s outfits, and their '30s outfits." Like, those were my favorite.

Taylor: I—I loved those. I remember opening to those and trying to draw them.

Raleigh: Yeah!

Taylor: Like, that's [crosstalk] first characters that I ever tried to draw, were just the Betty and Veronica fashion pages.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Well, and I really always appreciated camp. And *Archie*, especially in a TV show, could lend itself so well to, like, real broad camp.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Um, just, like, whenever there's a famous person mentioned in an *Archie* comic, they change their name just a little bit. As if, like, the—almost sort of like *The Flintstones* do? [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That was the one that—like, they really—like, they talk about hanging out with—I think they call him—this is old. This dates it. Micheal Jackstone?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Taylor: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I mean, like, but they always—or, like, the Front Street Boys?

Raleigh: Yeah. That's very good.

Sydnee: But they always—yeah, but they—they—and it's so silly and obvious, and I don't even know that it's, like—I don't think they have to—do they *have* to do that? [laughs] Is that—

Taylor: I don't know.

Sydnee: —is that necessary?

Taylor: They do it for, like, technology too. Like, "Oh, I just logged on to Faceplace!" [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Sydnee: They do! They do, they change all of that kind of stuff to just, like, this slightly alternate world where everything is off by a couple letters. And I always found it so funny, and that would lend itself so well to a... TV show.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: They also—they, um, they meet weird chara—like, there's a whole series where they meet KISS. There's a whole *Archie* series—

Raleigh: I remember that.

Sydnee: —where they meet The Punisher? [laughs quietly] Um—[laughs] the—with the—

Taylor: They meet The Ramones. That's a—that's actually more recent. Uh, not super recent, but I have that issue. That was pretty funny. They go back in time to meet The Ramones.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. There's a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles meet the *Archies* crossover. There's, um, a *Glee* crosso—I have that one.

Raleigh: Really?

Sydnee: Yeah. *Archie* and *Glee* crossover. I have KISS too, but that one didn't speak to me as much.

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Um, but they did a series of fairy tales with the *Archie* gang, where they retold 'em with all the *Archie* characters.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: [snorts]

Sydnee: Anyway. They've done so many creative things, and I do think a show that is very much like *Dawson's Creek*-esque, using the characters and using some of the more goofy, like, campy kind of things, and making the drama what the drama always was with *Archie*, which was, like... who will *Archie* choose? [laughs quietly] There was that drama.

Raleigh: How many hamburgers is Jughead going to eat?

Sydnee: There was that drama. And there was always Betty striving for, like... greatness in some realm.

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Whether it be, like—Betty makes the football team at one point, and is the only girl on the football team. Um, there's story lines where, like, Veronica's trying to break away from being the rich witch that she's cast as with her Dad. Like, why can't we just have those?

Raleigh: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: And Jughead's speakin' truth. Jughead's just there, hangin' out with his eyes closed and his beanie on... speakin' truth.

Taylor: Here's what I think, Syd. You write a script. You just start making fan...

Sydnee: [laughs loudly]

Taylor: ... episodes.

Raleigh: It's fan fiction.

Taylor: Yeah. Just, like—just—you know? Like, shoot it. Shoot your own... fan-made *Archie* TV show.

Sydnee: Um... I mean, I could. [laughs] There are enough plot lines that I have memorized. [laughs]

Taylor: Give 'em a—everything updates and gets rebooted every, like, two months now. So, you know, *Riverdale* will come to its end. You can just have the—have the nice, pleasant... post-plague reboot. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: We all just want nice things again. [laughs]

Sydnee: I'll start with a classic. Betty and Veronica show up at a dance in the same dress. Veronica got it as a Paris original, but Betty made it at home based on patterns that she bought and looked at herself, but then drama ensues.

Raleigh: Sure.

Sydnee: Classic.

Taylor: Great.

Sydnee: Uh, can I just say one last thing before we stop talking about *Archies*? One time, um, Victor Gorelick, who's now the editor in chief, was at—I think it was at New York Comic Con, Tey. And I saw him. And there was

not a line to go get a book signed by him. And I have... I don't know if I've ever been as nervous as I was in that moment.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: To walk up to him. I, like—I bought one of the *Archies* that was there. I'm sure I already owned it. [laughs] And I walked up to get it signed by him, and I was like—I could barely get a sentence out.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: I was, like, shaking. Like, I—'cause I've been seeing his name, you know, in the little margins between the boxes of books for so long. [laughs] And I walked up and I was like, "[shakily] I love... *Archies!* [laughs] Excuse—" Like, I'm an adult! I can't make a sentence. But it really—it was one of the most intimidating moments of my life. And he's lookin' at me like, "What is your problem?"

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: Not at all flattered. Just, like, really like, "Who is this weirdo who's, like, '[tearfully] I just want to know how much *Archies* mean to me!'" I was really—I was in tears.

Taylor: I don't know. He's a comics person, so it's highly possible that he was super psyched. It's just incredibly awkward. [laughs]

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: Either that, or because I am a lover of *Archie comics*, I bet there a lot of people like me [through laughter] who he's maybe had that same interaction with!

Raleigh: That's probably true.

Sydnee: Like, "Oh, no."

Taylor: I was gonna say, I can't imagine that's something new for anybody that, like—you know, you're saying, "Oh wow, I was such a nerd at Comic Con!" Like, eh, were you? I wouldn't worry about it. [laughs]

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: That's true. That's true. Well, I didn't even come in cosplay, so I really didn't fit in. [laughs]

Taylor: Oh no. That's the only thing with *Archie Comics*. I mean, I—like... you could—I've seen people—I've seen a lot of *Riverdale* cosplay more recently. Uh, but, you know, the classic—it's like—it's kinda hard to do, unless you're wearing, like, the... I don't know, like a cheerleader universe—uniform specifically? Like, just having, like, a blonde ponytail. Like, "I'm Betty!" It's like, "Okay?" [laughs]

Raleigh: Well, yeah. My blonde roommate Adria went as Betty for Halloween last year, and wore a *Riverdale* Letterman jacket that I borrowed from Syd, and blonde ponytail—

Taylor: Alright!

Raleigh: —and, like, Chucks. Sneakers.

Sydnee: Well, but that's why—I bought that jacket at a... [pauses] [holding back laughter] Okay. I bought that jacket—

Raleigh: At a Halloween tent!

Sydnee: —at the Halloween tent, and I—not for Halloween! [laughs]

Raleigh: Just to own it and wear it.

Sydnee: [through laughter] To wear it! Just so I could have a *Riverdale* Letterman's jacket that I wear!

Raleigh: Yeah.

Taylor: Good. Good for you.

Sydnee: Uh-huh, yeah.

Taylor: Do things that make you happy.

Sydnee: Uh-huh. Sure. Alright.

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: That's it for *Archies*. What are we talkin' about next time? [laughs quietly]

Raleigh: Yeah, what's next, Tey?

Taylor: Uh, well, I thought we, uh—we could go back to some music. Uh, I wanted to talk about, uh, Weezer!

Raleigh: Ooh.

Sydnee: Alright!

Taylor: '90s, early 2000's band? [pauses]

Sydnee: Yeah. [laughs] Are you t—we are familiar.

Raleigh: Yeah. [laughs]

Taylor: Yeah, I don't know. Usually I give a rundown, but I think everyone knows who Weezer is. You're right.

Sydnee: You know, Weezer. [laughs] That'll be excellent. I—I have many, um, concert t-shirts I can pull out for the occasion.

Taylor: Nice.

Raleigh: Because, you know, podcasting is such a visual medium. [snorts]

Taylor: We can describe the concert t-shirts. That's what we'll be doing.

Sydnee: Just—

Raleigh: Yeah. We'll describe them.

Sydnee: Just to inspire you all! [laughs quietly] Uh, thank you both. Thanks for letting me talk about *Archie*. I'll try never to on the show again. That's a lie, I will.

Raleigh: You will.

Sydnee: Regularly.

Taylor: I have no problem with talking about *Archie*.

Sydnee: Well, I will do it again.

Raleigh: [laughs]

Sydnee: No doubt.

Taylor: Alright. No problem.

Sydnee: Uh, once—one last time, just to remind you. It is MaxFunDrive, and you can go to Maximumfun.org/join if you want to become a member of the Max Fun family. Join us with a monthly donation. Five, 10, whatever you can do a month is great if you can. If you can't, um, tell a friend! Share our show. That would be wonderful. Um, that's a great way to connect with people right now, uh, virtually, is to send 'em a link to a podcast you like and say, "Hey, check this out! Then we can talk about it."

Raleigh: Yeah.

Sydnee: About how this... [laughs quietly] weird adult woman loves *Archie* so much, she cried about it.

Taylor: [laughs quietly]

Sydnee: Uh, thank you all for listening. You can tweet at us @stillbuff, and you can email us at stillbuffering@maximumfun.org, and thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

Raleigh: This has been your cross-generational guide to the culture that made us. I am Raleigh Smirl.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Taylor: And I'm Teylor Smirl.

Raleigh: I'm still buffering...

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

Taylor: As bonus content, Sydnee should do the Jughead rap from—

Sydnee: Oh.

Raleigh: Oh, yeahhh!

Taylor: "Sugar, sugar!"

Sydnee: Honey, honey.

Raleigh: [holding back laughter] Oh, she's doin' it already.

Taylor: [laughs]

Sydnee: You are my candy, girl!

Raleigh: Nah—okay, never mind!

Taylor: [laughs]

Raleigh: Tey, what have you done? [laughs]

Taylor: I did a bad.

Rleigh: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

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