

## Still Buffering 293: Kelly Clarkson

Published January 3, 2022

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[theme music plays]

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

**Sydnee:** I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Taylor:** And I'm Taylor Smirl.

**Sydnee:** Well, is everybody ready for a new year? [laughs quietly]

[all sigh]

**Raleigh:** Um...

**Taylor:** [with false enthusiasm] Yeah. Another one. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I'm trying not to be distracted. In front of Raleigh right now—

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** —and I know it's not fun to describe pictures of things on a podcast, but it's pretty simplistic. There is a piece of paper that says "love"...

**Raleigh:** Written in black eyeliner crayon.

**Sydnee:** And then a giant... egg?

**Raleigh:** It's one big oval with a colored-in, smaller oval inside of it.

**Sydnee:** I don't know what it is, and I keep looking at it and trying to figure out which one of my children did that, and why.

**Raleigh:** Or did Justin? [pause] [laughs]

**Taylor:** It's hard to say.

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** If you've introduced Justin to the equation of what this oval is...

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** ... I'm very concerned.

**Taylor:** It's the love egg.

**Rileigh:** Um...

**Sydnee:** It's a big love egg. If that's an eye, it's upsetting, 'cause the inside is sort of colored in, as if it's a pupil. But it's just...

**Rileigh:** The handwriting just looks... cleaner than either of your children's.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, Charlie's handwriting is pretty bad still.

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** She knows—[laughs quietly] she— she knows it's an area we keep working on. She holds her pencil really wild. It's because I taught her how to hold her pencil, and mom taught me how to hold my pencil, so.

**Taylor:** Hm.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. And Cooper doesn't know that you put the letters, like, one right after the other. So if you tell her how to write something, she knows how to make the letters, but then she'll just kind of put them wherever she wants on the paper.

**Sydnee:** All over the paper. [laughs]

**Rileigh:** It's like, "Well, if you put these in the right order, then yes it would spell what you think it's going to spell, but... [laughs] not—"

**Sydnee:** She wrote— she wrote "Merry Christmas" so many times, [through laughter] and it was just a— it was the collection of letters that make up Merry Christmas, but all over a paper.

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** I like how she also says she's reading, but is really just following context clues.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** 'Cause, like, I got her that book that was, I don't know, *Spooky Underwear*, and she looked at it and she was like, "It's called *Scary Underpants*."

And I'm like, "Well... that's close. Did you read that?"

"Yeah, I read that."

And it's like, [laughs] oh no.

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Sometimes she'll go— like, she'll say something and then she'll go, "Did I just read?!"

**Rileigh:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Then she'll say it again and then cover her mouth, like "[gasps] What?!"

**Sydnee:** Like, "Can you believe it?! Did I just— you guys! Did I just read?!"

**Taylor:** She's getting there.

**Rileigh:** The answer is always no. [laughs] You did not.

**Sydnee:** You didn't read. She fell out of bed again last night.

**Raleigh:** I love your kids, and I'm so sorry that she fell, but because she wasn't hurt and because she's fine, I feel comfortable saying the video of her falling is so funny. [laughs]

**Taylor:** [through laughter] Aww!

**Sydnee:** We still have, like, a little monitor, video monitor in there. Um, which she has almost outgrown, but then occasionally this happens where, like, I'm getting in bed for the night and I hear a thump. And then I check the monitor and it's like, "Oh, crap!"

**Raleigh:** She's on the floor! [laughs]

**Taylor:** You need a little— like, a little, uh, a little baby gate on her bed.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Justin built one. He just installed it today, so.

**Taylor:** That's good.

**Sydnee:** She had never done that before and now she's done it the last few nights, so.

**Raleigh:** I mean, she—

**Sydnee:** She's fine. I should clarify, she was totally fine. Not even a bruise on her. Like, totally fine.

**Raleigh:** She slid on her back headfirst.

**Sydnee:** I don't know how she did it. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Backwards off the bed.

**Sydnee:** But I had lined the floor next to her bed with squishmallows in case this happened while Justin was building this railing, so. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** So all is well, now. [laughs] She fell on the squishmallow.

**Taylor:** Do you think she saw those squishmallows down there and just thought, "Well, this is a landing pad."

**Raleigh:** "I *can* do this now."

**Sydnee:** It is possible.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** She was laughing about it when I went in to get her.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I said, "Did you fall out of bed?" And she was cracking up. "Yeah."  
[laughs]

**Taylor:** Hmm.

**Raleigh:** [laughs] She did just climb right back up.

**Sydnee:** She did. [laughs] She thought it was funny. Um, so we're ready for a new year.

**Raleigh:** I'm not. I'm sorry. I'm at a weird place in life where every year I don't really know what's gonna happen in terms of, like, where my life is going and, like, life changes. Like, I'm gonna graduate college next year and also start law school and I still don't know where I'm going. Um, so, like, there's a whole second half of my year that's just an unknown, and 2021 did kinda suck, so I'm ready for that to be over, but that doesn't mean I'm ready for the new one to start.

**Sydnee:** Hmm.

**Taylor:** Well, I— people have made the observation that 2022 also kind of sounds like 2020... too.

**Raleigh:** As well. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Uh, but I'm gonna treat it as 2020, like, Take Two. Like, just all of that that went on in the past two years? Those two years that I aged and did nothing with my life, went nowhere? I'm just gonna ignore that. Just gonna take two.  
[laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yeah. It's 2022.0.

**Taylor:** [through laughter] Yeah.

**Sydney:** 20— I was thinking 2022, Deuces are Wild.

**Raleigh:** This is not what we do on our show. [laughs]

**Sydney:** [laughs] I know.

**Taylor:** No, this is— that's not— that's not our bit.

**Raleigh:** This is not our show. [laughs]

**Sydney:** I know. I just thought—

**Taylor:** Did you get that bit in the marriage? Is it that equally shared?

**Sydney:** [groans]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydney:** No, I was just thinking about it. Like, we don't know what's coming. It's like a wild card. It could be anything. Who knows?

**Raleigh:** Yeah. I've thought a lot about how— actually, this didn't really hit me until today. When this pandemic started, I was a teenager. And now we are going into the year where I'm gonna turn 22 years old.

**Sydney:** Mm-hmm.

**Raleigh:** That's— that's a long time, guys! [laughs] That's a long time! I was still a teen. We were still doing the old version of this show where I was a teenager.  
[laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Remember the time before we talked about variants and vaccines and boosters and masks and... no.

**Raleigh:** No.

**Taylor:** No.

**Raleigh:** No. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I don't.

**Raleigh:** It's gone.

**Sydnee:** Anyway.

**Raleigh:** Anyways, um, new year.

**Sydnee:** I think— I think it's gonna be better. There's my prediction.

**Taylor:** Oof.

**Raleigh:** It's the year named after a Taylor Swift song, so... it's gotta be good, right? 22? Like, she has the song "22," but this is, like, the year where it's all— we're all— we're all in 22?

**Sydnee:** Yeah?

**Raleigh:** You know?

**Sydnee:** We're all 22?

**Raleigh:** I'm also— I'm gonna turn 22 in 2022.

**Taylor:** Oh.

**Raleigh:** So...

**Sydnee:** But you did turn 21 in 2021.

**Taylor:** Yeah, this is gonna be a thing.

**Rileigh:** [simultaneously] But the Taylor Swift song. The Taylor Swift song.

**Sydnee:** 20... 2020...

**Rileigh:** The Taylor Swift song, Sydnee!

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** I mean, I'm finally gonna be— like, there's gonna be a year of my life where I can sing that song and it's accurate, but there's also gonna be about four months of my life where that song will apply to the year we are in and my age.

**Taylor:** Hmm.

**Rileigh:** So, I'm just saying.

**Sydnee:** That's huge.

**Taylor:** It's huge.

**Taylor:** I wonder how they made the silly glasses this year, you know? Like, they just keep getting worse, 'cause—

[all laugh]

**Taylor:** 'Cause, like, they can't see through a two!

**Rileigh:** They really should've stopped after 2009.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** Like, then you had 2— you know, even 2010.

**Taylor:** Even in there, though, is— yeah.

**Rileigh:** 'Cause, like, you could have the one between the two big circles for your eyes.



**Sydnee:** You kind of shift it all to the left, yeah.

**Raleigh:** Yeah, but... [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** [laughs] No. You just got— you're just blinded by just numbers. You can't— not good for visibility.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** You just get one eye hole.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Just a zero, and then just a solid 22 over your other eye.

**Taylor:** Just an eye patch.

**Sydnee:** Maybe— maybe we shouldn't— maybe we should keep it real low key this year and just sort of quietly slip into 2022 and hope it doesn't notice.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Hope time doesn't notice that it has passed? [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Hope 2022 doesn't notice that we're here.

**Taylor:** It's got its cards lined up like, "Oh, I've got some big surprises. I gotta outdo 2020 and 2021. Just wait— waitin' to go."

**Sydnee:** We just kind of, like, gently open the front door with just, like, a very light tap. Like, "[very quietly, high-pitched] Hello... we're here... we're here... don't mind us!"

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** "[very quietly, high-pitched] We'll— we'll show ourselves in! Don't mind us! Don't trouble yourself!"

**Taylor:** No— no popping champagne this year. Get twist-off.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** I will— I will say, one positive out of this year, um, is they made—last year they made that death to 2020 on Netflix about, like, all the— that mockumentary about all the horrible stuff that happened in 2020. They made another one this year.

**Taylor:** Oh.

**Raleigh:** We watched it, and it wasn't as funny.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** But I think that's be— well, no, listen. It's because there wasn't as much bad stuff. There was still a lot, but there wasn't as much.

**Sydnee:** Okay.

**Raleigh:** So there wasn't as much for them to... you know, make jokes about. So there's at least that.

**Sydnee:** That's true. I mean, when last year started off with an insurrection—

**Raleigh:** That was this year. [laughs]

**Taylor:** That's true.

**Raleigh:** [through laughter] This year started off with an insurrection!

**Sydnee:** This year... started off with an insurrection. Like, you can only go— it could only get so much wilder from the— from— you know? Like, if that's your jumping off point.

**Raleigh:** From that point. Can you believe that was this year?

**Sydnee:** No! [wheezes] It's not funny.

**Rileigh:** It's not!

**Sydnee:** I mean, it's— it's—

**Taylor:** No.

**Sydnee:** It— we're laughing, but it's— [laughs quietly] it's not fu— it's not "Ha ha" funny.

**Rileigh:** I'm also— I'm also crying. Don't worry. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** It's— we're— yeah.

**Rileigh:** [laughs] Um, anyways...

**Sydnee:** That's a given. [laughs]

**Taylor:** So we're just in a slightly less entertaining episode of *Black Mirror*.  
[laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Oh... anyway.

**Rileigh:** Uh, so—

**Sydnee:** I know what you need.

**Rileigh:** Anyways, um, it's still December, which means it's still time to listen to Christmas music.

**Sydnee:** Yes. And, uh, I wanted to talk about Kelly Clarkson, specifically the new Christmas album. But I really wanted to utilize that as a way to talk about Kelly Clarkson.

**Rileigh:** The overall umbrella of Kelly Clarkson.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Rileigh:** Um, I would like to first note that this al— we listened to the Christmas album, mostly.

**Sydnee:** *When Christmas Comes Around*, her new Christmas album.

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** 'Cause she has past Christmas albums as well.

**Rileigh:** Right. Um, somehow, I think this is the first time it has ever been done in history, ever, and maybe the only time it ever will be done. She made a divorce and Christmas album in one.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Rileigh:** And that is a— that is a triumph.

**Sydnee:** It's a breakup Christmas album.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** That's a— that's a wild choice.

**Rileigh:** It is. It works!

**Sydnee:** Right?

**Rileigh:** But it's— it's— 'cause Adele just came out with her, like, breakup, divorce album, which is not... jolly. It's not about Christmas.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** And Kelly Clarkson then has her Christmas divorce album and it's like, well, I didn't know this could exist. There we go.

**Taylor:** I really wish they would team up and do some sort of, like, epic divorce ballad. Could you imagine? [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** Oh, man.

**Sydnee:** No, I can't imagine. And those two voices singing together?

**Raleigh:** It would implode.

**Sydnee:** It's too powerful.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Uh, I have— I— I am really glad you all listened to this Christmas album, because I have been obsessed with it. I saw that it had come out, and it honestly— what caught me, 'cause I'm usually not much for, like, new Christmas music, I'm just kind of like, "Turn on a old stuff we all know, put it on in the background." I'm not, like, gonna sing along. [laughs quietly] It's just there. It creates the ambiance. That's it. That's its job.

Um, but she's wearing this gorgeous purple dress on the cover, and it caught my attention. I was like, "Ooh, Kelly! What are we wearing?"

**Raleigh:** [laughs quietly] "Hello, Kelly!"

**Sydnee:** "I love that, Kelly!" [laughs] "I love this purple dress!" And then I was like, "Well, I'll listen to Kelly's new Christmas album. What's this all about?"

**Raleigh:** I didn't know you were on a first name basis.

**Sydnee:** I— she's important to me.

**Raleigh:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** And then— and then I became obsessed with it. Especially the first track on the album caught me immediately, and I went back and listened to it again before I listened to the rest of the album and I was like, "Oh my gosh. Is this, like, an old standard that I've just never heard?" It just— it felt so classic and timeless, and she wrote it. And I was just blown away.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. I mean, she's a great songwriter.

**Sydnee:** I know! I just— it would— I mean, it— I don't feel that way—

**Raleigh:** I know what you mean. I know what you mean.

**Sydnee:** Like, Christmas music doesn't always strike me that way. It's like, you know... Christmas.

**Rileigh:** Right.

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] The theme is, like... "[singing] We're happy, we get presents, we love one another."

**Rileigh:** There's snow, and it's cold, and... family.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Rileigh:** And Santa.

**Sydnee:** And you say some things about mythical creatures, or... snow, or... I don't know.

**Rileigh:** Mythica— sorry?

**Taylor:** Yeah!

**Sydnee:** Yeah, you know.

**Rileigh:** Mythical—

**Taylor:** Elves and reindeer.

**Sydnee:** Santa.

**Taylor:** Sugar plum fairies.

**Sydnee:** The— those.

**Rileigh:** I think they're all maybe— I think we shouldn't just immediately discount them as mythical, guys.

**Sydnee:** Well, I mean, rei— reindeer are real. [laughs]

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Well, the flying ones. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Yes. Now, the flying ones... no, but...

**Raleigh:** How do you know?!

**Sydnee:** How do I know that [holding back laughter] reindeer can't fly?

**Raleigh:** How do you know that there's not an alternate universe where they can—

**Sydnee:** A— are you—

**Raleigh:** —[holding back laughter] and the veil between our two worlds is at its thinnest on Christmas?

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs] Like Halloween. And they appear, and are now in our world for one day. [laughs quietly]

**Taylor:** I don't think that's this holiday. I think...

[all laugh]

**Sydnee:** I like— I like the alternative that you're— that you're positing, which is, if you haven't seen an animal fly, that doesn't mean it can't. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** It doesn't! I think that's a fair theory!

**Sydnee:** Well, but that— is that true for all things? Like, you haven't seen me fly, but do you know I can't?

**Raleigh:** No, I *don't* know that you can't!

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Thi— this is an interesting logic through which to view the world.

**Raleigh:** I'm just saying.

**Sydnee:** Teylor, can Jack fly?

**Teylor:** I— not that I've seen, I guess.

**Rleigh:** Oh? Ruth might be able to fly. [bursts into laughter] Wait, can you imagine that? [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Justin would be terrified. Flying guinea pigs?

**Teylor:** Levitating [crosstalk].

**Rleigh:** [laughs] Yeah, she doesn't have any wings, she'd just be levitating. [laughs] Like, zooming—

**Teylor:** Just a levitating potato.

**Rleigh:** [laughs] Zooming through the—[laughs]

**Sydnee:** Well, I mean, I think that's the thing about—[laughs] that's the thing about reindeer, is that they don't have wings. And so, if what you're suggesting is that maybe they can fly, we've just never seen it...

**Rleigh:** Well, okay. But when you see, like—

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rleigh:** When you see the animated or, like, the CGI reindeer flying, they kind of, like, are doing, like, a gallop thing, but through the air. Like, that's what's propelling them. You know what I mean? Like, their feet are moving, all their legs.

**Sydnee:** Do you—[laughs]

**Rleigh:** Their powerful legs are propelling them through the air.

**Teylor:** No.

**Sydnee:** Do you think that if a human ran fast enough [through laughter] they would lift up off the ground and just, like, run through the air in flight?



**Rleigh:** Have you seen those pictures of, like, jaguars and cheetahs that run really fast and, like, they're all— they're just basically flying?

**Taylor:** They don't fly, though!

**Rleigh:** Like, just saying. But—

**Taylor:** There's no liftoff.

**Rleigh:** —*could* they?

**Sydnee:** They're jumping.

**Rleigh:** Just because we've never seen them... fly.

**Sydnee:** They're like— they're like Princess Peach in the *Super Mario Brothers 2*.

**Taylor:** Yeah, they just—

**Rleigh:** That's just her dress.

**Taylor:** Well...

**Sydnee:** No, it's just hang time.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Rleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. She can't fly. She's just got great hang time.

**Rleigh:** Yeah. That's what I mean. Her dress just kind of...

**Taylor:** [croaks] Alright. So— so, uh... so Kelly Clarkson...

**Rleigh:** Anyways, Kelly Clarkson.

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** If anyone could fly, it'd be her.

**Sydnee:** Uh, on the— from the power of her voice.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Um, I... I watched the first season of *American Idol*. Because that's how old I am. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** You wouldn't remember. You were two.

**Raleigh:** I was two.

**Sydnee:** You were two. Uh, and I loved Kelly Clarkson from, like, the first episode I saw her on. I was obsessed. I was like, "Oh my gosh! That little girl can sing!"

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** That *little girl*?

**Raleigh:** Wait, wait, wait. Yeah. You were what, like, 20?

**Sydnee:** I... yeah, I guess. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs] And she was...

**Sydnee:** Thereabouts. I was, like, 19, right? Yeah, that'd be about right.

**Raleigh:** And she was, like, the same age?

**Taylor:** Mmm, yeah.

**Sydnee:** Uh, yeah. She's— she's about— she's around a year older than me, so... [laughs]

**Taylor:** Okay.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** But she always seemed like such a little girl, you know?

**Raleigh:** Well, I think that's fair. When you have teenagers or, like, young— like, early 20's, you know, young adults in those shows, they do seem very young.

**Sydnee:** And they really used to play on, I feel like on *American Idol*, that sort of— and maybe they still do. You know what, honestly, haven't watched it in a very long time, so maybe this is still the theme. Of, like, somebody from— not from, like, a big city, not from somewhere where you could've ever discovered them otherwise, basically, like, there is this hidden talent in sort of these small towns in America, and we're going to find them. And then they all give off, like, this kind of "Aww, shucks," energy."

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Like, "Gee willikers, mister." [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** "I can't— I can't believe I'm in the big city!"

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** You know? And they all sort of, like, have that vibe, and Kelly Clarkson very much was, like, the... I guess the first one. I mean, she was the first winner, so I guess sort of set that mold of, like, here's this small-town girl.

**Raleigh:** Yeah. Well, I mean—

**Sydnee:** Who's living in a [through laughter] lonely world.

**Raleigh:** Okay. Um, isn't Carrie Underwood basically, I mean, the same kind of story for her, right?

**Sydnee:** I guess, right?

**Taylor:** She went for the same vibes, I think.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Just more country, whereas Kelly Clarkson, her first album was more of a country album. Um, and then she very quickly veered over into pop music and went further and further into pop music.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** It's wild how big that first season was. Really the first few, I feel like everybody watched it. Like, that was the only thing you talked about, like, after the episode was on.

**Sydnee:** Yes, everyone was obsessed with it. Um, and the last— my recollection is that the final— the final battle... [laughs quietly] between Kelly Clarkson and Justin Guarini was very hotly contested. Like, people were very angry about— or very excited, but, like, one way or another. Like, it was a huge deal.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm. Um, can I ask, just because I was too, was there any sort of audience— there was no audience voting, I guess, by phone. You didn't have cell phones. Could you call?

**Sydnee:** You could call, right?

**Taylor:** Yeah, there was. There were, like, codes—

**Sydnee:** Even back then?

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Okay.

**Taylor:** There was audience vote.

**Raleigh:** 'Cause I remember some of— I mean, probably five or six years later that you could text a code. Um, but I assumed you could call. I didn't know.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, you could call and vote, um, for your favorite. And, uh— and, I mean, it wasn't— like, she won, but it was, like, by 50-something percent. It wasn't, like, a landslide. I mean, she definitely won, but... um, and then then they made that weird movie... *From Justin to Kelly*.

**Taylor:** Oh, that— yeah. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** What was that?

**Sydnee:** It was a— they made a, like, a movie musical that was— it was very *Grease*-esque, um, about Justin and Kelly, like, as love interests...

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** ... basically. I don't really— I watched it once, I think, but I don't have, like, a firm—

**Raleigh:** That's wild. I didn't know that existed!

**Sydnee:** Yes. [laughs] And then— what was weird about it is that on the show, you never got any sort of vibe that that— that, like, they had a romance.

**Raleigh:** Well, I mean, you don't see much from the people in the show, like, while they're on the show, other than them performing.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, I guess that's true.

**Raleigh:** And then either, like, staying or getting voted off.

**Sydnee:** But then— and maybe that was to reunite America after the [laughs quietly]— after the episode.

**Raleigh:** "This will heal the country."

**Sydnee:** When the Guarini stans were like, "I can't believe he didn't win!" They were like, "Well, let's make a movie with both of 'em." [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** "And they can sing, and they're adorable." And then I don't know what happened after that with Justin Guarini. I haven't tracked his career.

**Raleigh:** I couldn't have told you that was who came in second behind Kelly Clarkson.

**Taylor:** I was curious, so I looked it up. Apparently he's done a lot of, uh, work on Broadway, and he's about to direct his first musical.

**Raleigh:** Oh, wow!

**Taylor:** And he's also written a book!

**Sydnee:** Aww!

**Taylor:** Yeah, so he's—

**Raleigh:** Good for him.

**Taylor:** —kept busy.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I mean, very talented.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I enjoy him. He was not Kelly Clarkson, who had my heart. Uh, the music that Kelly Clarkson started putting out when she started releasing albums... I mean, like, that first album was the... with the song that I assume was computer generated by *American Idol* AI. AI, *American Idol*— [laughs quietly] I don't know.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** The one, "A Moment Like This"?

**Rileigh:** Oh yeah.

**Taylor:** [through laughter] Oh yeah.

**Sydnee:** That does not feel like a song that, like, a human... like—

**Rileigh:** Would create.

**Sydnee:** Like, in a moment would feel, like, moved to, like, "These are words I must write down on paper and sing, because I'm so—" it felt very much like, "This is what we would like our winner to sing."

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I mean, no— you know, if you like the song, that's fine. But it was not the song that make me think, [laughs] "I will love this woman till the day I die." [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Forever.

**Taylor:** Did you prefer "Miss Independent" on that album, Syd?

**Sydnee:** Well, yes.

**Taylor:** [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** That's fair.

**Sydnee:** And she was— that was one of the things, too, about Kelly Clarkson, is the very early, like— my assumption is that *American Idol* locks you into a lot of stuff. Like, if you win, you've sort of, like— you owe them now, forever and always.

And so, uh, she took great pains early on to start pushing away from *American Idol*, and from the image that they had sort of helped her craft and, like, towards her own stuff.

**Rileigh:** Yeah. Well, for a while they did that tour, right?

**Sydnee:** Oh yeah!

**Rileigh:** I don't know if it was in the first few, but I know there were several seasons where it was like, both previous winners and, like, some of the last final few from the current season go on tour and, like, sing together I guess? I don't know.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** I only remember that because the one season that stands out in my mind was the one with Haley Reinhart and, uh— oh, there was a boy with curly hair that I also like.

**Sydnee:** Casey...

**Rileigh:** Casey something.

**Sydnee:** 'Cause he played the bass.

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** And he goes by Casey Bassy.

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Rileigh:** The two of them. Neither of them won that season. I couldn't even tell you who won that season, but I remember both of them, and I remember they went on a tour afterwards with the *American Idol* crew and I was like, "[gasps] Oh my gosh!"

**Sydnee:** They were really good! I thought Casey was really cute with his bass, I liked him. And she was— Haley is a great singer.

**Rileigh:** Now she sings in that gum commercial.

**Sydnee:** What?

**Rileigh:** That Extra commercial?



**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Wow!

**Rileigh:** She does the cover of "Can't Help—" "Can't Help Falling In Love" that's on the Extra commercial?

**Sydnee:** Oh, I didn't realize that.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Okay.

**Rileigh:** It's great, but it's her.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Anyway.

**Rileigh:** Anyways.

**Sydnee:** Well, um, before you can tell us who sings on more gum commercials...

**Rileigh:** [laughs] Shut up.

**Sydnee:** ... um, I'm assuming you have some more info on that, but first...  
[laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** Let's check the group message.

**Sydnee:** Uh, so a new year is coming, and we don't know what's in store. Will we be working from home? Will we be working at work? [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Who knows?

**Sydnee:** Uh, and we're gonna need pants!

**Rileigh:** [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** And we need comfortable pants. [laughs quietly] Because I— I can't tell you, there is nothing worse than coming home from a long day at work and think— and all you can think the whole time is, "I can't wait to get home and get these pants off 'cause they're so uncomfortable."

But... that does not need to be your problem anymore, because of Betabrand. Betabrand dress pant yoga pants are designed with the fit and flexibility of yoga pants, but they're professional dress pants, so nobody knows how comfortable you are. Only you know. It's your little secret. Why are you in such a good mood? Aren't you uncomfortable in your work clothes? Nope, not me! 'Cause I've got Betabrand.

They're made of wrinkle-resistant, stretch-knit fabric. They look good all day, so no matter what you have, no matter how busy your day is, how many different places you've gotta get to, um, they've got you covered. Through work, through after work fun times, home with the kids and the family, whatever.

There's a ton of different styles to choose from. Straight leg, skinny, joggers, uh, they've got all kinds of colors and patterns, whether you just need something basic like black pants that go with any old top or something like stripes or houndstooth, Betabrand dress pant yoga pants have you covered.

So, Teylor, if our listeners want to get these pants, what should they do?

**Teylor:** Well, right now our listeners can get 30% off their Betabrand orders when you go to [betabrand.com/buffering](https://betabrand.com/buffering). That's B-E-T-A-B-R-A-N-D.com/buffering for 30% off your order for a limited time, and when you use our special URL, you're supporting our show, too!

Find out why people are ditching typical work pants for Betabrand's dress pant yoga pants at [betabrand.com/buffering](https://betabrand.com/buffering) for 30% off.

**Rileigh:** So, you know, time for a new year, new me, resolutions, plans for the new year, all that kind of stuff. For me, one of the things I always say I'm gonna prioritize every year is making the most of my time, being more efficient in my day, waking up earlier, getting more done. Um, but one of the things that always takes so much time out of my week that I also don't really enjoy doing that much is going and shopping for groceries.

There's lots of people. Especially now, I don't like being around that many people. It takes time, I gotta put energy into unloading 'em, all that kind of stuff. Um, but Imperfect Foods makes it easier for you to get intentionally sourced groceries delivered right to your door with just a few clicks! Make it so you can stay inside, stay safe, or, you know, just have time to do other things you don't have to put into getting groceries.

Imperfect Foods is a grocery delivery service offering an entire line of sustainable groceries that taste delicious and reduce waste, and also it's super easy to use. All you have to do is visit [imperfectfoods.com](https://imperfectfoods.com) to see if they deliver in your area, and once you sign up, you can personalize your weekly grocery order with fresh, seasonal produce, pantry staples, and yummy snacks.

Uh, and I can attest to that. They have very many yummy snacks, in addition to the great produce and stuff like that you can get fresh, uh, right to your door. I know one of my personal favorites is they have little chocolate mint cookies.

**Sydnee:** Oh, they're so good.

**Raleigh:** They're so good. Uh, and they're right from Imperfect Foods. They have lots of different options. You can choose what you want and get it right to your door. Uh, and you say goodbye to packaging guilt, because Imperfect Foods is the only national grocery delivery company that makes it easy to return your packaging after every order, so you can feel good about getting stuff delivered to your door, you have more time for yourself, and you're getting some great, fresh produce and great, yummy snacks.

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

**Taylor:** Well, right now, Imperfect Foods is offering our listeners 20% off your first four orders when you go to [imperfectfoods.com](https://imperfectfoods.com) and use promo code "buffering." Again, 20% off your first four orders. That's up to an \$80 value at [imperfectfoods.com](https://imperfectfoods.com), offer code when you use promo code "buffering." [Imperfectfoods.com](https://imperfectfoods.com), and use "buffering."

**Sydnee:** Um, so... moving on from gum commercials. Uh, one of the—[laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** [laughs quietly] Wow, okay. Brush right past it. That's fine.

**Sydnee:** One of the other, um—

**Taylor:** Did you have more? Sorry! [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** No. I actually didn't.

**Sydnee:** You didn't?

**Raleigh:** I don't know of any other gum commercials.

**Sydnee:** Aww.

**Taylor:** Okay.

**Raleigh:** That one's cute 'cause— you know the one I'm talking about? It's the couple that— he starts drawing little pictures on the extra gum wrappers from, like, their first date.

**Sydnee:** Oh, yeah, yeah. I remember that.

**Raleigh:** And then when he proposes to her, he, like, lines them all up in, like, a little exhibit along the walls, and the last one is a drawing on a gum wrapper of him proposing, and she turns around, and he— and it's her singing "Can't Help Falling In Love" in the background.

**Sydnee:** Beautiful.

**Taylor:** This— this made a real impact on you.

**Raleigh:** It di—[laughs] it did! I couldn't even tell you when this commercial was from, when I saw it... I think I've probably only seen it, like, maybe twice, but I remember it.

**Sydnee:** But lasting.

**Raleigh:** It was lasting.

**Sydnee:** Just like the flavor of Extra gum.

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] Of Extra gum! [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Not a sponsor, we just really like it!

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Just love that gum.

**Raleigh:** I love that gum!

**Sydnee:** I actually can't stand any gum, but that's a...

**Raleigh:** Okay. [stammers] [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I'm just saying. I don't like gum.

**Raleigh:** Let's get into your feelings about gum.

**Sydnee:** I don't wanna talk about gum! I wanna talk about Kelly Clarkson.

**Taylor:** Talk about Kelly Clarkson.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Um, one of the things I liked about Kelly Clarkson, and this has been true through her career, is that she just says exactly how she feels about things. Um, like in that "To Justin From Kelly—" "*From Justin to Kelly*—" whatever that movie was, that bad movie. [laughs] And I say "bad," you might love it, and I'm not saying that I think it's bad. It was not—

**Raleigh:** Sydnee loves *Grease 2*, so.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, exactly. It was not critically received well. [laughs] Um, and she didn't like it. She said, "I just did it basically 'cause they made me. It was, like, a contractual obligation. I just had to do that movie, so. Yeah, I don't like it."

And she would say things like that. She uses profanity in interviews and stuff. Um, and, like, basically all of the sort of rules of, like, "Well, now you're really trying to,

you know, brand yourself and make a name for yourself, and you really don't wanna step on any toes and anything," and she just never... seemed to care.

**Rileigh:** I just— I wanted you to know you're not alone. I looked up this movie to see what it was actually called. It does have a 9% on Rotten Tomatoes.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** Phew!

**Rileigh:** So... single digits. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Um, but, uh— but Kelly Clarkson has consistently been making amazing music.

**Rileigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Uh, "Since You've Been Gone" is a great song.

**Rileigh:** Oh, great song.

**Sydnee:** Remember that song?

**Rileigh:** Wasn't that your ringtone for a while?

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

[all laugh]

**Rileigh:** I remember that.

**Sydnee:** That was a great song. Um, I used to love, uh, "My Life Would Suck Without You."

**Taylor:** Yeah, that's a good one.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Um... "Breakaway" was pretty good back in the day. That was one of her first. Uh, and "Behind These Hazel Eyes"? Just, like, song after song.

**Rileigh:** Oh, yeah.

**Sydnee:** Right?

**Rileigh:** I didn't realize that was Kelly Clarkson! I love that song.

**Sydnee:** She also did, um— and this was something I hadn't— until I was reading back through all the stuff— I was reading back through all the stuff she's done and thinking about how amazing she is.

Uh, the song from *Love Actually*, "The Trouble With Love Is."

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** That's her.

**Rileigh:** Oh, I didn't know that.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm. That's a great song, right?

**Rileigh:** Man, those songs. That was, like, right there in, like, the early to late, like, 2000's to, like, early 2010's when all that music came out and I was first listening to music. Man, those songs. That brings back memories.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** It's of an era.

**Sydnee:** Of Kelly Clarkson?

**Rileigh:** Yeah!

**Sydnee:** And, I mean, it takes a lot, you know, to have that kind of staying power in, like, the music industry, and to consistently, like— every album, there were at least a few songs on there that were instant hits.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Even if the whole wasn't, necessarily. Uh, especially "Making That," which, I mean, I know what you're gonna compare it to. But that migration from country to pop.

**Rileigh:** Hmm!

**Sydnee:** Hmm.

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm!

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** I wonder who else has— who else has done that?

**Sydnee:** I can't think of anybody, certainly, that we haven't discussed many times.

**Rileigh:** Shania. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Shania.

**Taylor:** There you go.

**Sydnee:** Like Shania. Uh, but this particular album, I didn't realize when I first started listening to it that it was gonna be about divorce.

**Taylor:** [laughs] You don't expect that from a Christmas album. That's a...

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** No. [laughs]

**Rileigh:** [laughs] That's a fair assumption.

**Sydnee:** And it's not— and I say very specifically, it doesn't feel like a breakup album. It's not— and I'm making a distinction, here. It— it really— I have felt very, um... it really spoke to me, because it felt like the ending of a grown-up relationship with a lot of repercussions, the way that— and that doesn't have to be a divorce, certainly. You don't have to be married to have that. But it didn't



just feel like "I'm sad because we broke up." It feels so much deeper than that, like a loss of a future together that had been counted on and planned for and assumed in the way that, like, breakup songs don't always feel that way, you know?

**Rileigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Breakup songs are more about, "This is sad, I thought we had something and we didn't."

Whereas this is more about, "We had a future. We had a— like, we had it all, and then I realized we didn't." And, like, I don't know, it feels more devastating.

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** But— but it is interspersed with classic Christmas songs.

**Sydnee:** Yes. [laughs]

**Taylor:** And I do think— I almost— I almost wish it had just been full concept Christmas divorce album, because going from, like, you know, the "Merry Christmas (To The One I Used To Know)," which I'm sure you wanna talk about, but then straight to, like, "Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree"?

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** It's just very— like, oh, I'm— I have so many complex feelings. This is such a sad, nuanced idea she's expressing. Oh, I... I know this song. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** It is really weird, and I found myself, on relistening, just skipping all of the classic Christmas songs just to get—

**Taylor:** And she does a great job with them, but yeah. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Just so I could listen to the songs she wrote, because I find those songs so, like, captivating, and the other ones are like, you know, "Santa Baby." [laughs]

**Taylor:** Right.

**Sydnee:** They're fine.

**Taylor:** Great version of "Santa Baby," but...

**Sydnee:** Yes! And they're fine, and I'm not— there's nothing wrong with them, it's just not...

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** ... the same. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** I gotta say, "Christmas Isn't Canceled, Just You," is a bop.

**Sydnee:** Right?

**Raleigh:** You told me it was and I was like, "Okay, Syd." But then I listened to it and I was like, "Okay! Okay! Yeah, it is!"

**Taylor:** I love a song that's, like, super upbeat but has a really kind of mean, nasty message.

**Raleigh:** Yes.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** 'Cause this being, like, "You ruined so many things that I love, but you won't ruin Christmas. I've got backup singers!" [laughs] Like, it's great!

**Raleigh:** That is— yeah. That is my favorite genre of breakup song is just, like, sarcastic and a little bit bitter and a little bit mean, but also very upbeat and catchy. But this is that, and also Christmas.

[all laugh]

**Sydnee:** And also Christmas.

**Raleigh:** Like, there's sleigh bells. [laughs] I think.

**Sydnee:** It really is. I saw that title. That was one of the things that really snagged me, too. I saw that title and I was like, "What is this?" [laughs] "What—like, okay, yes!"

**Rileigh:** Can you imagine her just looking at her ex-husband just, like, "You're canceled." Not just, like, "We're over," like, our relationship's over, like, that's all gone. "You're canceled." [laughs]

**Sydnee:** You're canceled, this year. Christmas is gonna be great. I drink just enough to let us go.

[all laugh]

**Sydnee:** I love that line! Drink just enough. She's not advocating getting drunk. She's just saying—

**Rileigh:** Just enough.

**Sydnee:** —just enough to let us go.

**Taylor:** However much you need. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Now—

**Taylor:** To get divorced.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] What is just enough?

**Rileigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I don't know, but—[laughs] it's the divorce amount. [laughs]

**Taylor:** Well, because that line's paired with, "I'm gonna shop too much, and then I'm gonna drink just enough and, like, I think the original draft was like, "I'm gonna drink too much," and, like, someone was like, "I dunno about that—"

**Sydnee:** I don't—[laughs}

**Rileigh:** Ehh...

**Taylor:** "Let's workshop this a bit." [laughs]

**Sydnee:** I— but see, I— you know, I don't think— I'm not gonna say, like, yeah, I think that's probably what it was. But I do think that there was probably some version of that line about drinking and somebody was like, "Kelly, you're still Kelly Clarkson. [laughs] Like, are you sure?" And she's like, "[sighs heavily]."

**Taylor:** "It's still a Christmas song, Kelly!"

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Eff it. [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Um, the first song on the album, like I said, I think is absolutely beautiful, and very timeless. It felt, like I said, when I first heard it I thought it was some sort of classic song that I just wasn't familiar with.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** You know, 'cause sometimes you find those on a Christmas album. Like, "Oh my gosh, where did this song come from?" And it's been around for a decade or two decades or whatever and you just didn't know. Um, it felt very classic, and it's new, um, but it's beautiful. And yeah, the one, uh, "Merry Christmas (To The One I Used To Know)," which is, again, just this very lovely idea of, like, "I don't— this Christmas, I don't miss you. I miss who you were when I met you, and that memory, I miss. But I don't actually miss you, the person, because you're not the one."

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That's not who it is. "The person who I love is gone forever," basically.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [wheeze-laughs] Which is, uh, very sad.

**Taylor:** Merry Christmas! [laughs loudly]

**Rileigh:** Yeah. You know, when you think about it, though, talking about heartbreak and sadness around Christmas and making it into one, like idea isn't actually that wild. 'Cause, like, when it's Christmas time, like, you wanna be around, like, people you love and, you know, you wanna be around your family and everything. And if you've just been through a divorce or a breakup or whatever where, like, you're single and you aren't with anyone, like, that idea of, like, wanting things that were from before or, like, wanting what other people have or whatever, like, that makes sense. I feel like the holidays in general, like the wintertime, is a very nostalgic time for— for... love. [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** Yeah. It is. That sort of bittersweet thing fits very well into the Christmas aesthetic. Um, I think it is rare that you see an album lean into it, which I'm assuming—

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** —[laughs quietly] I'm assuming is why you have "Jingle Bell Rock" and "Last Christmas" and all that on there.

**Rileigh:** I mean, we have— yeah. But "Last Christmas" also is, like, a breakup Christmas song.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It is, but it's not sad.

**Rileigh:** It's a little sad!

**Sydnee:** You think— I mean, but, like, when you hear it— and, like, especially, like, does it make you sad to hear it? I know that what they're saying is sad but, like... it's just so sort of, like, [humming].

**Rileigh:** Have you heard the *Glee* version?

[pause]

**Rileigh:** [laughs quietly]

**Sydnee:** [laughs quietly] It sounds like a song you're sort of making up on the spot. It doesn't sound like "I'm sad." It sounds like... I don't know, whatever.

**Taylor:** But it's not a sad song. It's, like, "Last year you broke my heart, this year I got somebody else."

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Well, that's true.

**Raleigh:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sydnee:** But yeah, I—

**Taylor:** It's a revenge song.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] It's a— it's—

**Raleigh:** There you go.

**Sydnee:** But even as a revenge song it's not particularly intense! It's not an intense revenge. It's just kind of like a—

**Taylor:** [simultaneously] Yeah, it's [crosstalk] committed.

**Raleigh:** [simultaneously] It's not angry.

**Sydnee:** It's a very matter-of-fact, like, "[singing]Here are some things that happened, and I sang a song about it." [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [laughs] Yep.

**Sydnee:** [through laughter] That's— that's basically what it is.

**Raleigh:** That's how "Last Christmas" goes.

**Sydnee:** Uh, it is not— I'm revealing that it's not one of my favorite Christmas songs.

**Raleigh:** No, I can tell!

**Sydnee:** I thought that other songs on it, the Ariana Grande song, the one she does with Ariana Grande, "Santa, Can't you Hear Me?" That's a good one.

**Raleigh:** I love them together.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, they're really good.

**Taylor:** They don't even clarify what it is that they want. They say what they don't want a lot.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** And I know they don't have it. But they don't say what it is.

**Raleigh:** You know, you make a good point.

**Sydnee:** That's really true.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** I thought there was gonna be some resolution.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Um, I think, uh... the other one that I really liked was, um... oh, what was it? "Christmas Come Early." I felt like that was, uh, sort of something we could all relate to. [pause] When it was just like... "We just need Christmas now."

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Like, I just can't anymore. Just— just go ahead and bring Christmas on. Just something. Just something different, something new. How is this year still happening?

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I felt like that was very relatable. [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Especially this year.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm. I felt like that was. I didn't— I don't think— and again, this is not me throwing shade at Kelly Clarkson, 'cause I absolutely love her. But, uh, naming a song "All I Want For Christmas Is You," is a wild move.

**Rileigh:** That's a big choice.

**Taylor:** Yeah! And it's not *that* song.

**Rileigh:** Yeah!

**Sydnee:** It's not *that* one.

**Rileigh:** I'm wondering how she— how'd she do that?

**Sydnee:** [whispering] I don't know.

**Rileigh:** How'd she, like, legally, copyright-wise, how'd she do that?

**Sydnee:** I guess— maybe you can name a song the same thing?

**Rileigh:** It just seem—

**Sydnee:** I don't know! [laughs]

**Rileigh:** —like, yes, I'm sure you can name songs the same thing. But it just seems like with a song like Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas Is You," that seems like one of those titles that's, like, locked down. That is Mariah's, that will always be Mariah's, and no one else's.

**Sydnee:** The audacity is— I kind of love it. Like, that's— you—[wheezes]

**Rileigh:** Okay!

**Sydnee:** That's what you want as a reference point is Mariah Carey singing, like—

**Rileigh:** The most iconic modern Christmas song of all time.



**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Taylor:** Also, it's very— like, lyrically it— it's making the same points as the original.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** It is. It's not like, "Oh, same name, but completely different song." It's like, "No, no, no." [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** It's very close.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. I mean, it is. Lyrically, it's very— I mean, it's not the same words and it's not the same tune, but it's very much the same feel.

**Taylor:** "Here's all the stuff I don't want. I want you."

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And it's not— you know, for all the songs on here that I would argue should become Christmas classics, that they're that good. Um, "Christmas Isn't Canceled (Just You)," should be. It's amazing. And "Merry Christmas Baby" should be. But I would not argue that this outpaces Mariah's "All I Want For Christmas Is You."

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** I certainly wouldn't make that case. It has its own loveliness. It's not the same. Yeah, I thought that was very strange, 'cause Charlie saw that on the track listing and was like, "Ooh! That one!" And I was like, "Oh... it's not."

**Raleigh:** That's not gonna be that.

**Sydnee:** "It's not what you think." [laughs]

**Taylor:** I wonder if there's— there's gotta— I wanna know the discussion that went on for that to happen, or if there was something there. Like, did she wanna put the original on the album, and for some reason she wasn't allowed, so it was just like, "Fine."

**Raleigh:** There had to have been—

**Sydnee:** I mean, I would love to hear her sing it.

**Raleigh:** Oh yeah.

**Sydnee:** I'm sure she could tear it up.

**Raleigh:** There had to have been someone in the room who was like, "Are you sure. Are you sure this is the name you wanna go with?"

**Sydnee:** But this— this is part of why I love Kelly Clarkson, is because I feel like she went, "Yeah."

**Raleigh:** "Yes."

**Sydnee:** "I am."

**Raleigh:** "Mm-hmm."

**Sydnee:** "Moving on."

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** "Next." I mean, I just— I get that vibe from her and I really love that. It's powerful, it's irreverent, and it's very unique and... she gives me strength. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** I used to turn on her song "Heartbeat Song." [laughs]

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** Anytime I was feeling down, that was the song that would pick me back up. [laughs quietly] [pause] You know?

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Rileigh:** I— I do love—

**Sydnee:** [laughs] No.

**Rileigh:** [laughs] I do love her and Ariana Grande together on that song. Um, but I do think it— it is— I will say, it's hard, I think, for probably anyone to write a Christmas song that is good enough to fit into that, like, new canon of Christmas songs. Like, you gotta do a lot to get up there in, like, the same level of, like... Christmas notoriety as, like, "All I Want For Christmas Is You." But she has several that do. I don't think the one with Ariana Grande is one of them.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Rileigh:** 'Cause Ariana Grande on her own wrote a great new pop Christmas song.

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Rileigh:** Kelly Clarkson on her own has written many new great pop songs. Their voices together... amazing. Kelly Clarkson's cover of Ariana Grande's "Seven Rings"...

**Sydnee:** Oh my God.

**Rileigh:** ... on her show.

**Sydnee:** Check that out if you haven't.

**Rileigh:** Oh, man.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, that is really good. And Kelly Clarkson has a TV show now, in case you weren't familiar.

**Rileigh:** Yeah, just called *Kelly*. Is that it?

**Sydnee:** I think. You know, as much as I love Kelly Clarkson, I don't watch her TV show. I just wanna hear her sing. I mean, and I enjoy her as a human on Earth. I'm glad she is on Earth. [laughs quietly]

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And I can [laughs quietly] enjoy her presence and her beautiful voice, but I don't— I don't— I don't watch a lot of daytime talk shows. [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** There's some song, and it comes on— I have, like, a upbeat, positive, running mix that I put on sometimes, and it's a lot of, like, diva pop music. And, uh, it— it'll, like, auto-suggest stuff once it runs out of my original playlist. And anyway, there's a song she did, I didn't know what it was for, called "Broken and Beautiful," which is like, oh, this is a really great song. It's really inspirational. It's from the *UglyDolls* movie. [laughs]

**Rileigh:** Yep! Yep! [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Taylor:** I was like, "Oh, wow. What album is— oh, it's from a kids' movie. Alright, Taylor."

**Sydnee:** Charlie and Cooper loved that. They, uh— they loved that movie, and when I was playing this Christmas album Charlie actually said, "Is that the girl from *UglyDolls*?"

**Taylor:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Like, she could tell right away. I was like, "Yes, this is the girl from *UglyDolls*." [laughs]

**Rileigh:** [laughs] When that song, like, came out, that movie came out, that song would be on at my gym constantly. But, like, it's— also we had the TVs everywhere so it would— like, if there was a music video, sometimes it would play, like, little scenes from the music video as it played the song. And I just remember

constantly looking up from the treadmill and just seeing, like, the little UglyDolls up there dancing [laughs] every once in a while Kelly Clarkson was singing. Um, it's very good. But yeah, that is, uh... that is from that movie. [laughs quietly] It's a great song, though.

**Taylor:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Well, I just, uh— I appreciate you both listening to this Christmas album. [laughs quietly]

**Raleigh:** Of course.

**Sydnee:** Um, I really— I— I will probably continue to listen to— not, again, not her covers of classic Christmas songs but, like, her new ones, I'll probably still be listening to those. I need to just condense those into a playlist.

**Raleigh:** Mm-hmm.

**Taylor:** [laughs] I will say that listening to Christmas music after Christmas I thought was gonna be a bummer, but those songs are different enough that I was like, "Oh, this is fine."

**Raleigh:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Yeah. Well, thank you. I really appreciate you both listening to them.

**Raleigh:** Of course.

**Taylor:** Thank you!

**Sydnee:** Tey, what's next?

**Taylor:** I thought, uh, I would bring some classic anime to the table. I thought we could all watch Akira together.

**Sydnee:** Ooh, I've never seen that.

**Raleigh:** Ooh.

**Taylor:** A seminal movie, yeah.

**Sydnee:** Alright. Now, what does Kelly Clarkson do in this movie?

**Taylor:** N— uh...

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** She sings the theme song.

**Sydnee:** Oh, yes!

**Raleigh:** Okay!

**Sydnee:** Excellent! Alright. Well, we will watch Akira for next week. And, um, thank you, listeners. If you haven't heard of this talented young lady, Kelly Clarkson... [laughs]

**Raleigh:** [snorts quietly]

**Sydnee:** ... please check her out. Um...

**Raleigh:** What have you been doing for 20 years?

**Sydnee:** Yeah. [laughs] Justin Guarini fans. Just, they won't listen.

**Raleigh:** [laughs]

**Taylor:** There you go. They refuse.

**Sydnee:** They still stan. Uh, thank you to Maximum Fun. You should go to [Maximumfun.org](http://Maximumfun.org) and check out all the great podcasts there. You can tweet at us @stillbuff. You can email us at [stillbuffering@maximumfun.org](mailto:stillbuffering@maximumfun.org), and thank you to The Nouvellas for our theme song, "Baby You Change Your Mind."

[theme music plays in the background]

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

**Sydnee:** I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Taylor:** And I'm Taylor Smirl.

**Raleigh:** I am still buffering...

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

[theme music plays]

**Sydnee:** And a happy new year!

**Raleigh:** Happy new new!

**Taylor:** Happy new year.

**Sydnee:** We'll see you next year!

**Raleigh:** Woo!

**Sydnee:** Woo!

[music plays]

**Annabelle:** Hi! I'm Annabelle Gurwitch.

**Laura:** And I'm Laura House.

**Annabelle:** And we're the hosts of *Tiny Victories*.

**Caller 1:** My tiny victory is that I... sewed that button back on, the day after it broke.

**Laura:** We talk about that little thing that you did that's a big deal to you, but nobody else cares.

**Annabelle:** Did you get that Guggenheim Genius award? We don't wanna hear from you. We want little, bitty, tiny victories.

**Caller 2:** My tiny victory is a tattoo that I've added onto this past weekend.

**Annabelle:** Let's talk about it!

**Caller 3:** My victory is that I'm one year cancer free. But my tiny victory is that I took all the cushions off the couch, pounded them out, put them back, and it looks so great.

**Laura:** So if you're like us, and you want to celebrate the tiny achievements of ordinary people, listen to *Tiny Victories!*

**Annabelle:** It's on every Monday on Maximum Fun.

[music and ad end]

[chord]

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