

Wonderful! 210: Look at All These Wizards

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[theme music plays]

Henry: Hello.

Griffin: Hi there, Henry.

Henry: Hi there, er, poop.

Griffin: Well, let's— let's try to avoid that in the future, okay? This is a serious show me and Mommy do.

Henry: Alright. Hi, this is Henry!

Griffin: Yeah, you don't— so, you don't have to push your nose into the mic cover as hard as you're doing now?

Henry: [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. Oh, and this is Griffin McElroy, and this is *Wonderful!* What—

Henry: [simultaneously] Da—

Griffin: —wha—

Henry: [simultaneously] Bop.

Griffin: Hey, what kind of stuff—

Henry: [simultaneously] Bop. Bop.

Griffin: —are you looking forward to for the holiday season this year?

Henry: I really want a big spider, a, a robot mech.

Griffin: Well, that's what you've asked... uh, Mr. Claus for. But, like, what is— what's your favorite part about Christmas?

Henry: Because... it's because we get whatever— what we always wished for, and we can make snowmans.

Griffin: That's fair, yeah. Is— what about, like, spending time with family?

Henry: Um, I like the part where I spend time with Peeps.

Griffin: Yeah. I wish we could see Peeps this year.

Henry: A-ba-ba-ba.

Griffin: Yeah.

Henry: Ba-ba-ba-ba?

Griffin: Do you have any good jokes?

Henry: [very close to the mic] Why—I [unintelligible]— how did red-nosed reindeer get a red nose? It's because he's so— it's because he— he, um, sees so much lights on in houses that his— that his nose gets bright!

Griffin: Why is he looking in people's houses?

Rachel: [distant laughter]

Henry: It's because he's giving people presents!

Griffin: Oh, that makes a lot of sense. Okay. Any other, like, things you wanna do for this sort of impromptu... *Kids'll Say The Darndest Things?*

Henry: I like— I like— I like those gingie gingerbread-e-e-e-eds.

Griffin: That's a cool— what were you just doing, there?

Henry: I was doing a rap about gingerbreads.

Griffin: Okay, that was pretty good!

Rachel: What do you like about gingerbread?

Henry: Because they look like... e-exactly like Peeps!

Griffin: You think gingerbread looks like— by the way, Peeps is our dad, Clint. My dad.

Henry: Yes.

Griffin: Your grandpa. [rushed] Don't eat the microphone— what's your favorite Christmas song?

Henry: Um, [singing] jingle bells, Batman smells, I like tickling Mommy!

Griffin: Yeah, you do. Oh, that's part of the song— oh, I'm sorry! I got confused. That's part of the song.

Rachel: [singing distantly] Batmobile...

Henry: [singing] Smelled— smells a wheel.

Griffin: Alright.

Rachel: [singing distantly] And the Joker...

Henry: Gets a poop!

Griffin: Alright!

Rachel: Hey!

Griffin: Stop it!

Henry: [laughs] Hey! It is a capybara.

Griffin: Hey, what do you, uh— do you— do you like being a big brother on Christmas?

Rachel: Yeah, this is Gus's first Christmas! Do you think he's gonna like it?

Griffin: No? Why don't you think he's gonna like it?

Henry: Because he can't gingerbread. Because ginger bread is the hardest thing you know.

Griffin: Okay, okay.

Henry: Is it okay if I take the [crosstalk]—

Griffin: No, we gotta leave the squishy part on the microphone.

Henry: Why?

Griffin: It protects us from plosives.

Henry: What are plosives?

Griffin: You just did one.

Rachel: Pah!

Griffin: Pah!

Henry: Poo... kie, poo, poo, pook. Ah!

Griffin: Yeah, that's great. That's excellent. That's part of the sound check process. Okay.

Henry: Yeah.

Griffin: Is there anything else you wanna say to our enormous audience?

Henry: [laughs] Bye everybuh!

Griffin: ... dy.

Henry: Bah.

Griffin: Okay.

Henry: Have a Merry... Pissmas!

Griffin: He does not know what he just said, folks!

Henry: [laughs]

Griffin: And that's the best part of it. Okay, goodbye!

Henry: Bah.

Griffin: How do we step into it now? 'Cause was that the intro that our dar— our darling son did?

Rachel: I mean, yeah. We can just say, like, hi, this is Rachel McElroy, and I'm back, baby.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, we got— we got DJ Henry on the ones and twos over in the corner on the— on the beanbag chair. You'll probably hear a few— a few outbursts from him. He appears to be watching some sort of puppet-based programming, so that's fine. Um...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Are we gonna be able to do— to pull this one out?

Rachel: Well, of course, of course!

Griffin: Okay. This is our— this is the last episode of the year. Uh, we were thinking we were not gonna do one this week, but then we figured we're not doing one next week, so we gotta give people something to, you know, snack on over the holiday weekend. So here— here it is.

Rachel: Plus, this is the longest conversation we will have with each other all week.

Griffin: Which is exciting, yes. We've had, uh— we've had big son home all week. Little son is kickin' it at his place until Christmas Eve.

Rachel: His studio apartment.

Griffin: His studio apartment that he has, down in the city?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: He's very metropolitan. He's a very metropolitan baby, and people are always telling us that about him. Um, but yeah! Happy— happy holiday. Whatever holiday you've cele— well, I guess if you celebrate Hanukkah, that's— that's been over and done with for a couple weeks now.

Rachel: Yeah. See, that's what's always kind of confusing. I think people want to be inclusive, but they also say "Happy holidays," and sometimes your holiday's been over for a long time. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, there's a lot of holidays so, like, blanket statement. You're usually catching more holidays than you're missing.

Rachel: Yeah. We hope that you have some warmth and some hands to hold.

Griffin: I hope it is peaceful. I hope it is graceful for you. 'Cause maybe you're not having a happy holidays. That's okay, too. I hope it's— I hope it's, uh— I hope it is a restful holiday.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: 'Cause it won't fucking be for us! Do you have a small wonder?

Rachel: [laughs] Oh, boy. Our bathroom's done!

Griffin: Y'all, I don't know— real— true fans, the real ones will remember.

Rachel: Ten— ten months, y'all.

Griffin: Will remember when, ten months ago, uh—

Rachel: Uh, everything broke.

Griffin: Everything broke in our bathroom— both our bathrooms and our bedroom and closet all got destroyed in the great winter freeze. Uh, I'm using "great" as an adjective that means, like, "huge" and not, like—

Rachel: [through laughter] Yeah.

Griffin: —what a kick— what a kick-A winter freeze that was.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I really don't cuss around Henry. I don't think people know that who listen, 'cause I cuss a lot on the show.

Rachel: Yeah, that would surprise everyone to know. I think we are— we are the holdout McElroys when it comes to the curse words around the children.

Griffin: Yeah. Um, but anyway, we can finally use the bathroom again, and it's good.

Rachel: Yeah. We got sinks in there, we got a toilet, we got a shower, we got a tub.

Griffin: Yeah. Just all the real—

Rachel: Those are the things.

Griffin: —all the real bathroom stuff.

Rachel: Those are— not to brag, but those are the things that we have in there.

Griffin: It's amazing to not have to... go all the way upstairs every time I want to clean my body, brings clothes up from, like, a pile in our shoe closet that we had goin' for a while.

Rachel: There was a process if you wanted to use our shared bathtub for a while where you had to scoop all of the action figures out of the tub so you could take a shower. [laughs]

Griffin: And that was my fault. Like, I should really be better about cleaning up after myself.

Rachel: [amused] Uh-huh.

Griffin: I'm gonna say my big water bottle.

Rachel: Ohh.

Griffin: A listener sent this big water bottle, I think 'cause I talked a while ago about how I was never getting enough water, 'cause I need to be able to see it.

Rachel: What did you say it was? It's, like, 112 ounces or something?

Griffin: I think it's 116— let me see.

Rachel: 116?

Griffin: Yeah, 116 ounces, and that covers you for the whole day.

Rachel: It's got little motivational sayings and little time stamps on the side.

Griffin: Where am I at? I'm just shy of three o' clock. Oh, man. I'm, like—

Rachel: You're behind.

Griffin: I'm, like, 20 minutes behind, if you'll just excuse— you go ahead and bant.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah, that's what's helpful about it. I think, you know, Griffin likes things to be gameified, and since this tells you what time you should be it, when you reach that level of water, it really, like, sets a—

Griffin: It's so much water. So much water. And it makes me realize how bad I was doing, 'cause I've been—

Rachel: [through laughter] Yeah.

Griffin: —I've been peeing about 28 times a day, and before, that was not the case.

Rachel: Before it was, like, four. [laughs]

Griffin: No, I was still going a bit more than that. People don't need to know the specific...

Rachel: Okay, I'm just guessing.

Griffin: ... number of it.

Rachel: I don't actually know.

Griffin: But I'm feeling— feeling— feeling powerful. Feeling wet.

Rachel: So, we picked a topic for this week, kind of a shared topic.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Um, when we have little time to prep we like to come up with a thing that we think we both can talk about with a certain level of expertise.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And so, in the spirit of the season, uh, and a location that I think many of you might be familiar with, we are going to talk about the most wonderful stores at a shopping mall.

Griffin: We've talked about shopping mall as a segment before.

Rachel: Yes, yes.

Griffin: But I don't think we've ever gotten granular with the shops.

Rachel: Yeah. We— we've never provided free advertising to multiple locations within the mall. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Right. You said this is gonna be a topic familiar to lots of our listeners. I don't know that that's true? I don't know that, like, the mall is a hotspot, necessarily, for teens and 20-somethings.

Rachel: Yeah, that's... that's fair. Uh, yeah, 'cause I guess a lot of people get their stuff online.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: But, I mean, where do the teens go if not to the shopping plaza?

Griffin: I mean, we're in late-stage capitalism, baby. They make sh— they make stuff. Hmm?

Rachel: Hmm!

Griffin: They make stuff. They make shirts.

Rachel: Yeah, that's fair.

Griffin: Out of other shirts.

Rachel: They go on the Etsy.

Griffin: They go on Etsy!

Rachel: They let somebody else make it for 'em.

Griffin: That's right. Uh, we... we went to a mall today, which was, um... boy howdy, they... really weren't wearing a... *lot* of masks... there.

Rachel: Yeah. We— so, when we went to Seattle, we got to experiment with a place that requires that you are vaccinated and that you wear a mask in any public location you enter.

Griffin: Everywhere.

Rachel: In Texas... [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Even in Austin! This is, like, the big shopping mall in Austin, and it was, uh— it was— it was—

Rachel: We— we masked up and then walked in, and we were, like, way in the minority of masked— masked folks.

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah.

Rachel: In a very busy time of year.

Griffin: Right. Yeah, I don't— we don't have to drill down on this, 'cause this is— I don't want our final episode of 2021 to be, like... super righteous. But hey, oh,

wait! We do have lots of people who listen to us. Please wear masks, and get vaccinated, and boosted, and— and— me and Rachel got boosted this past Monday, and we're strong as hell right now.

Rachel: It's true.

Griffin: Anyway.

Rachel: Anyway.

Griffin: We went to the mall, and guess what?

Rachel: We went to the mall.

Griffin: The mall is basically a lot like the mall was when I was a youngster, except with more kiosks. I— you—

Rachel: Yeah, so many kiosks!

Griffin: There's so many kiosks!

Rachel: And the people that work at the kiosks... I don't— I don't really understand how kiosks work, I guess?

Griffin: Yeah. I think they're all, like, money laundering.

Rachel: I think it's just— to me, it seems like you could just roll a kiosk out at the end of the day and never come back. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah, sure. Or you could roll one in, and nobody would, like, ask any questions.

Rachel: There's something so mobile about a kiosk that it just seems like a different set of kiosks could show up every day, and I would never be the wiser.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: So, okay.

Griffin: So, not the best— not the best mall visit. Our mall has the followings stores: every department store, it's got a Build-a-Bear Workshop, which Henry is a big fan of.

Rachel: Let me suggest— let me suggest a format for the show.

Griffin: Oh, alright, alright.

Rachel: Alright, 'cause I'm sure everyone's very interested in what our mall has. [laughs quietly] But—

Griffin: Yeah, I'm sure everybody isn't hearing the sound of our voices and saying, like, "They sound so tired."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "What are they doing?"

Rachel: I wanted to kind of break it up into, like... for example, best food court establishment.

Griffin: Oh boy. I mean, that's a lot! That's a big one!

Rachel: So, I— I have some particular favorites in mind of, like, if I am at a mall and I am going to get a food item, what are my top food court locations?

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Um, and it doesn't necessarily have to be entree.

Griffin: Um, oh, it doesn't have to be— well, I think we should make it there for a meal or there for a snack.

Rachel: Okay, yeah.

Griffin: 'Cause it's hard to beat— it is hard to beat a pretzel— a pretzel from my— my Aunt.

Rachel: [laughs] Griffin's Aunt, Anne.

Griffin: My Aunt and the incredible pretzels she makes. Like, that's undeniable. Those are good as heck. You can't beat that.

Rachel: I know, God, they're so good.

Griffin: Um, if I'm sitting down for— okay, I will say this. When I was a wee lad and I would go to the mall, there was one dining establishment that would have people stand outside with a little tray, with little munchums, little samples of their wares, and that was the Chick-fil-A restaurant. Obviously, in 19—

Rachel: What were they sampling?

Griffin: —in 1994, I didn't know what kind of sinister stuff they were up to.

Rachel: What were they sampling, though? How do you sample at Chick-fil-A?

Griffin: Little— little chicken nuggets.

Rachel: Ohh.

Griffin: Yeah, man. So anytime you would walk by, it was right next to the arcade. It was dope. I would go play at the arcade, walk away, get in a little nugget, walk back, get a nugget on the way back. You know what I mean?

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: It was a d— it was a dope little setup. Um—

Rachel: Uh, can I talk about something that if we don't talk about soon it's gonna be hard for me?

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: Uh, and that is the Sbarro.

Griffin: Sbarro!

Rachel: This was a trip to New York City. [laughs]

Griffin: Eh!

Rachel: For a small Midwestern girl, just with big city dreams.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Goin' to the Sbarro. Just felt like, "Look at this slice of pizza."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "This is how they do it in the big city."

Griffin: I used to roll the Rs.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Because I didn't know... sort of what the— the— the, um—

Rachel: You didn't know the nationality of—

Griffin: Well, yeah, I didn't know the, uh... what— what is the... en— en— entomology? En... ento... anyway, I didn't know where—the source of [rolls R] Sbarro.

Rachel: Hmm, I like that.

Griffin: It sounds good, though, right?

Rachel: Yeah, it is nice.

Griffin: I would eat at [rolls R] Sbarro also.

Rachel: I just, like— if I'm going to a mall... I want a slice of pizza.

Griffin: I hear you, I hear you. I— I— I tended toward, once I reached a certain age, there was a store, there was a restaurant called Big Loafer at the Huntington Mall—

Rachel: [laughs quietly]

Griffin: —that did just, like, *huge*, like, pepperoni pizza sandwiches and, like, just outrageous, unhealthy foods.

Rachel: What is with West Virginia and the pepperoni?

Griffin: It's good meat!

Rachel: Just put it in everything all the time.

Griffin: We don't put it in everything, but the stuff we put it in, we put it in a lot, and we love it.

Rachel: I saw you make a pepperoni sandwich the other day, and I was like, "This would have never occurred to me before I met you."

Griffin: A pepperoni sandwich?

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Okay! What do you think— what are you— are you saving it specifically for the realm of pizzas?

Rachel: For the pizza, yeah! I didn't really know you could put it other places.

Griffin: You can put it wherever you want to.

Rachel: [laughs] I love it.

Griffin: Um, but I hit a point where all I wanted was, like— like, Chinese food. And I feel like every food court has that to some— some degree.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Uh, and it's never great, but there is a lot of it. And so, like, if I'm at the mall, I just wanna eat some, like, greasy... just some greasy food.

Rachel: That's wild.

Griffin: Yeah. I like it! I still like it. I was— I was tempted by the— there was a— what was it? There was a Panda Express at our mall.

Rachel: Oh...

Griffin: Which, like, I'm not, you know... a fan of. But I'm at a mall, you know?

Rachel: Yeah, yeah.

Griffin: Do as the— do as the Romans do.

Rachel: [laughs] Um, okay. Now, I wanna talk about, uh, the immersive store.

Griffin: Oh my.

Rachel: There are certain stores in the mall that are like little Disney rides, in that you walk in and they are really creating—

Griffin: They transport you away.

Rachel: —an experience for you.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: It's not like— you know what store you're in while you're in it, I guess is a way to say it.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, the biggest was Hollister, I feel like. Hollister.

Rachel: Yeah, and Abercrombie.

Griffin: Abercrombie I think even less than Hollister, 'cause Hollister had, like, this black facade that you had to walk around.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And then you would be in this dark... stinky... pol—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: —like, polo shirt breeding ground. And I was always so out of place while I was there. It was more aspirational.

Rachel: Exactly. [laughs]

Griffin: When I was— when I was 17 years old.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then by the register they had a big TV set up that always had a live cam feed of Huntington Beach. And I was like, "This is what it's all about."

Rachel: Wild!

Griffin: That was the Huntington Mall experience.

Rachel: That's interesting.

Griffin: I don't think I ever bought anything— I think I may— I only shopped on clearance there, and at the American Eagle Outfitters, which was where I got a lot of clothes, but it was less, sort of...

Rachel: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Griffin: That was less of a journey.

Rachel: No, the clearance at American Eagle was choice.

Griffin: They always had something right.

Rachel: Um, another immersive store... uh, I mean, the Disney store, right?

Griffin: Yeah. We didn't have one of those in Huntington.

Rachel: You didn't have one?

Griffin: No.

Rachel: Oh, man. It was always a treat.

Griffin: I kind of like grownup stuff.

Rachel: [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Um...

Rachel: Alright. Now, do we wanna talk about... the Spencer's and the Hot Topic?

Griffin: Yeah, that's— those are sort of their own thing. I think—

Rachel: I would argue that Hot Topic was pretty immersive. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Yeah, for sure! And I would say Spencer's was too, because it's, like, you're going from a pretty wholesome mall into a place where they sell shirts and greeting cards that say [quietly] ass [normal volume] on them.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: And I— Henry wanted to go inside a Spencer's today. I stepped inside, and there was a card game called, like, "For Weed Smokers Only," and then, like, a bunch of towels that had the F word on it!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I gotta get my little child out of here! He ain't ready for this.

Rachel: Where there any, like, three-dimensional, uh... items with the human form on them?

Griffin: Like, erotic?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Not that— maybe they keep that stuff at back of the store. I did not let us get very deep in.

Rachel: I just feel like there— it was— it was unusual to find, like, a mug or a hat that had a— a busty silhouette.

Griffin: Oh, that's alright! No, there— I mean, today when I walked in there were, like, a dozen people looking at the same, like, three pieces of *Demon Slayer* merchandise.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I was like, "I don't wanna go any further in here." Didn't check out the Hot Topic, but Hot Topic was— I'm surprised that, like, the religious leaders of Huntington, West Virginia did not lead some sort of boycott or protest when the Hot Topic got added.

Rachel: Well, I was confused. You're right, 'cause you'd walk in and you thought, like, "Oh, this store is so metal." And then you'd be like, "Oh, but there's a *Care Bears* hoodie."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like, there was just enough of a mix that you were like, "Wait, what is this store?" [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Yeah, that was the first store I think I ever saw that capitalized on, like, nostalgia. So, like, there was, like, NES, like, *Zelda* shirts, and stuff like that. And then there was also, like, *Invader Zim* jeans and stuff like that.

Rachel: [holding back laughter] Uh-huh?

Griffin: And I remember thinking, like, "This is so cool! This is the first shop at the mall that has... shirts with things *I* care about on them!"

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, but that phase didn't last... terribly long, I feel like.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Um, what were your other kind of, like, go-tos? Like, if you're gonna hit a mall...

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: ... like, what—

Griffin: I mean, I always beelined for Babbage's. For a while, our mall had Babbage's on one end and Electronics Boutique a little bit further down, both of which got absorbed into Gamestop eventually.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, which that was a sad day. But I had two video game stores playing off one another, trying to get the best deals. I would check the trade-in value for my Super Nintendo games at Babbage's and I'd be like, "Okay, hold up right here. 'Cause I'm gonna go price match over at the Electronics Boutique." That was a sweet little racket I had going there.

Rachel: [laughs] When I was— when I was coming up was when Forever 21 hit the scene.

Griffin: My God!

Rachel: This was just— like, just starting. And this was where you could go get, like, five pairs of thong underwear for \$20.

Griffin: Is that a good price?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Okay. It's just not much—

Rachel: \$4 a pair! I mean, that's not—

Griffin: It's not much material

Rachel: That's true. [laughs quietly] That's true. But when I was coming up, thong underwear was, like, a new thing.

Griffin: I like that you call it thong underwear.

Rachel: Was I— am I just supposed to say thongs?

Griffin: I guess— yeah, I think people are gonna assume.

Rachel: I wanted people to know I wasn't talking about the sandals.

Griffin: I think when you talk about— when you use the term "thongs" and "Forever 21" in the same one, they don't think...

Rachel: Yeah, I'm not gonna say the p-word.

Griffin: P-word?

Rachel: [quietly] Pan— pan... ties.

Griffin: Honey, you're a grown woman.

Rachel: [quietly] Panties. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: You're a grown woman. You should be able to... express that.

Rachel: It sounds so infantile, though, to say that word!

Griffin: Yeah, I guess it does.

Rachel: Like, "Oh, I'm gonna put on my slippies and my [quietly] panties."

Griffin: You really can't get through that one!

Rachel: I can't, I hate it! Um, yeah. I—

Griffin: That is also not a word that we want our— our co-star today to start running around the wor— house shouting.

Rachel: Um, yeah, the Forever 21. Now, one thing we didn't talk about when we hit the food court was the dessert options.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: We'd pass today at the mall the, uh— the cookie cake?

Griffin: The Great American— The Great American Cookie?

Rachel: Oh, man, a cookie cake.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I would still take that for a birthday. I don't even know—

Griffin: A Great American cookie cake?

Rachel: Yeah, I don't know if the kids know that about the cookie cakes.

Griffin: I never felt... not miserable after eating a— after eating a Great American cookie cake.

Rachel: Oh! Too much— like, with the icing and the cookie?

Griffin: 'Cause you eat— you eat a slice of it and you're like, "That was normal." Without realizing that cookies typically are not three inches deep.

Rachel: [through laughter] Yeah, that's fair.

Griffin: It's not usually a deep dish cookie. I mean, again, I have to go back to my Aunt's place to get, like, them cinnamon crusted—

Rachel: Oh, yeah.

Griffin: —cinnamon sugar crusted pretzels.

Rachel: I was gonna ask you what your stance is on Dippin' Dots.

Griffin: Hate it! Terrible! It's like, "Do you like ice cream without the smoothness and good flavor of ice cream, and also your tongue gets burned?"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "By ice cream?! Are you sure, Dippin' Dots?"

"Yeah. Also, it's way more expensive."

"Alright... "

Rachel: [laughs] It's the ice cream of the future!

Griffin: It's the ice cream of the future! 'Cause the future— and guess what? They were right. The future... got worse.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: And so it makes sense that the ice cream would get worse.

Rachel: Did you have in your mall, like, a candy store?

Griffin: Yes.

Rachel: That was just, like, bin upon bin of, like...

Griffin: Yeah. You gotta understand, there was a period for me where I could go to the mall, I could hit up Babbage's, hit up EB, maybe walk around Borders for a while, check out the clearance rack at American Eagle, go grab, you know, some Chinese food for lunch from the food court, go to the candy store to buy, like, a sh— shoot ton of sour tape and Jelly— Jelly Bellies and all that jazz, go see a *movie*.

Rachel: Oh, yeah!

Griffin: ... and sneak that candy in and eat that, eat *dinner* at the food court, and then dip back— dip back home. Spend, like, seven hours at the mall.

Rachel: Yeah! Gosh, that reminds me of the mall that used to be near our house had a... little Mexican restaurant, uh, called Chevy's.

Griffin: That's dope. That's a good name!

Rachel: Uh, and—

Griffin: Are you sure it wasn't [hard C-H] Chevy's?

Rachel: I mean, that's how it was spelled.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: Uh, but I think we all thought we were... [laughs] being— being true to some kind of pronunciation by calling it Chevy's. Uh, and you would get a sombrero on your birthday.

Griffin: That's... hmm!

Rachel: It was just an exciting—

Griffin: [with false enthusiasm] How authentic!

Rachel: [through laughter] It was just an exciting place to be.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: We also— I don't know. Did your— did your mall have a lot of restaurant— like, go sit down restaurant options?

Griffin: It had, like, two?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Um, I think one was, uh, Outback Steakhouse maybe? Or something in that— they had onions, fried onions. [muffled laughter] So it was somewhere in that— in that range. Um, 'cause I definitely had, like, a homecoming dinner there once. Yeah, it wasn't— it wasn't haute cuisine, I would say.

Rachel: And for those St. Louis listeners, I want you to know that I am not talking about the Galleria, which was the fancy mall.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Rachel: I'm talking about Crestwood Mall.

Griffin: Which was very close to where I lived.

Rachel: Sure.

Griffin: And, um... I guess you all didn't have the luxury of, like, the fancy mall and just the okay mall.

Griffin: Yeah, we just had the... okay mall.

Rachel: Just the one? Just the one?

Griffin: And then, like, a satellite Toys R' Us in the region. Hey, can— this— speaking of... commerce, can I steal you away real quick?

Rachel: Yeah.

[Home Improvement theme plays]

[ad break]

Griffin: We have some very special holiday... Jumbotrons. [pause] That's right. Straight over the plate Jumbotrons.

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: It's a— it's a Christmas miracle. This one is for Ian, it's from Jamie, who asks... no, they don't ask. They say.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Conclusively.

"To Ian, my angel from the moon. The lum in my limes. Thank you for 11 years as my wonderful thing, and thanks in advance for all the years to follow! I can't wait to marry the heck out of you. You can marry the heck out of me at the same time, and it will be like a mutual love fest. PS: Shoshie says hi, and would like to play with mouse on string."

Rachel: Hmm.

Griffin: That's wonderful and good.

Rachel: You think that's a cat? Or do you think that's, like...

Griffin: Shoshie?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Hmm!

Rachel: Do you think that's, like, their roommate who likes mouse on string?

Griffin: I mean, here's the thing. In the studio today, we have a little gentleman who I bet I could shake a mouse around on a string and he would get hours of entertainment out of that.

Rachel: [laughs] That's fair. Uh, you want me to read this next one?

Griffin: Please?

Rachel: It is for Danielle. It is from Jackson.

"Hello, my dearest Danielle! I love you more than the moon and the stars. Thank you for being a wonderful wife and a magnificent mother. You have been the greatest gift life has ever given me. Thanks for listening to silly podcasts made by silly brothers with me. Can't wait to listen to many more with you. You are my love and my light. Love, Jackson."

Griffin: That's so beautiful—

Rachel: Think they're talking about you, or they're talking about, like—

Griffin: I mean, there's lots of silly brothers out there, aren't there?

Rachel: Like the Duplass Brothers.

Griffin: The Duplasses. The— the Greens.

Rachel: The Wilsons.

Griffin: Um... the Jigglepantses. Those are a bunch of silly clowns.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: They're related.

Rachel: Mm-hmm?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I like that.

Griffin: Yeah, they're— they're— they get— they're a lot, actually. A little bit of the Jigglepantises goes a long way.

Rachel: [laughs and coughs]

[music plays]

Danielle: This week on *Tights and Fights*, Austin Creed, better known as WWE Superstar Xavier Woods, on balancing his many passions.

Austin: This dude actually wants these things. He wants to wear a crown. He wants to be at G4. He wants to have a yacht rock band. Like, he wants to DJ at a festival one day.

Danielle: WWE and G4's Austin Creed on *Tights and Fights*. Find it on Maximum Fun, or wherever you get your podcasts.

[music and ad end]

Griffin: Let me hit you with this. Ever have a mall date?

Rachel: Oh, God.

Griffin: Yesss!

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: Yes. I had, like, a mall double date kind of? I had a friend who— and everybody has this friend, who dated a lot, and always found somebody's... like, found a friend to set me up with. And so, this was a friend that I talked to on the phone, and then we were gonna meet at the mall for the first time.

Griffin: I feel like I'm— I feel like I'm hearing a audiobook of *PEN15* right now.

Rachel: Yeah, I know, exactly! Exactly. And so this was, like, my first time meeting this friend. And it was never clear to me, because I was always kind of

naive. Like, am I— am I supposed to, like, date this person now? Like, it felt like— I never knew how to play it.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: So I was always very aloof, and that never worked in my favor. [laughs]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It was always like— so I just remember this circumstance where it was like, we were all milling around the big clock. And, like— and, like, he sat down in the clock area, and I was like— I could tell that maybe I was supposed to sit next to him, but I was very unclear of whether or not that was welcome, and so I didn't. And then that felt like a very pivotal moment.

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: I just never knew, like— where is this supposed to go? Did you have more, like, hand-holding, like—

Griffin: So, that's the— that's the... that's the thing. I remember I went one time, and it was, like, a group situation, but there was one very lucky lady [holding back laughter] who I had my eye on.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But I cannot remember who that was. Um, there was a Minsker on that date. I can't remember if it was Justin or—

Rachel: [through laughter] You can't remember which one it was?

Griffin: Uh, and we just walked around the mall for a while. We hit up Hot Topic. I remember very clearly I bought a ring that had, like, a flame emblem on the front of it?

Rachel: Wow.

Griffin: And I bought that, and was wearing it. And then we went to see *Crazy Beautiful*.

Rachel: [whispering] Wow!

Griffin: In theaters. And the whole time I was doing that, like, inching the hand closer and closer and closer.

Rachel: The one with the flame ring?

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: It would've been, yeah. Uh, trying to— trying to get some— some hand-hold situation. And I think I did. I think I got there.

Rachel: You got hand-hold!

Griffin: But also I remember we walked out of that movie, 'cause it was— we weren't on the right level to meet *Crazy Beautiful* at—

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah.

Griffin: —with the energy it was sort of trying to give us.

Rachel: Yeah. [laughs] Although I will say, you remember the name of the movie, but none of the people that were there. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Uhh... oh, I thought you were gonna say who's in the— I think it was a Kirsten— Kirsten Dunst—

Rachel: That's what I'm saying, though. You— that movie must have made some kind of impression. 'Cause you don't remember whose hand you were trying to hold.

Griffin: No. I mean, there were so many hands, baby. You gotta understand.

Rachel: [laughs] Yeah, and then I just— I went with friends a lot. I mean, it was the kind of thing where somehow we would find a way to spend hours there.

Griffin: Yeah. I mean, it— I— I don't know. I cannot imagine... living that way at the mall that we have here in Austin, 'cause it feels like the demographics have,

like, changed pretty dramatically of, like, who wants to spend money on what stuff. But the Huntington Mall, man. Like, I didn't even get to the arcade! Tilt? We would go to Tilt and just, like, play *Dance Dance Revolution* and all these—

Rachel: We had Exhilarama.

Griffin: Oh, that's good too!

Rachel: That's what ours was called. I know.

Griffin: So it's like, what kind of stuff was I into at the time? Video games, candy...

Rachel: [laughs] Uh-huh?

Griffin: ... toys, movies. Like, I'd just go and kick it there for a whole day.

Rachel: Now, I wanna— I wanna speak about, um, Claire's, but I imagine you don't have a lot of Claire's experience.

Griffin: I know— here's what I know. It's where you go to get your ears pierced.

Rachel: Correct.

Griffin: And as such it is a sort of, like, necessary— like, you have to— it's a pilgrimage situation where you have to go— you *have* to go to Claire's at *some* Point.

Rachel: [laughs] I never got my ears pierced there. Or ever, actually, for that matter. Um, but I— you'd get the, like— you'd get the cheap Yin Yang necklace.

Griffin: Oh, I mean... I had plenty of places to get a cheap Yin Yang necklace.

Rachel: Um, and I will also say there was a period of time where I would purchase temporary tattoos.

Griffin: From Claire's?

Rachel: From Claire's!

Griffin: That's pretty cool.

Rachel: And, like, temporary nail tattoos. There was a— it was a strange time. 'Cause I can't imagine spending money on that now.

Griffin: On temporary— you— sorry.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: You can't imagine spending money on temporary nail tattoos as— at the—

Rachel: Well, I just can't imagine *anyone* doing it.

Griffin: Yeah, honey.

Rachel: I guess— I guess flash tattoos are a thing now.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Maybe that's what they're called now.

Griffin: There's so much in this episode so far that is, like, our parents telling us dumb stuff that they did when they were, you know, when they were little guys. And we hear that saying, like, "That's so dumb— like, why did you do that? Why did anyone care about that?"

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And we have definitely hit the point where we have— I mean, most of our stuff from before the year... I'm gonna say 2012... is that.

Rachel: Mm-hmm. Um, I will— can I say just a few of my other favs?

Griffin: Shops?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yeah, sure!

Rachel: Uh, so there was the Nature Company. Did you have, like, a nature-y store in your mall?

Griffin: Absolutely not.

Rachel: When I say "nature" I mean, like, this is where you would go to get your wind chimes and your rain sticks.

Griffin: No.

Rachel: And maybe your, um... kaleidoscopes? [laughs]

Griffin: [laughs loudly] Where did— who was your, uh, chosen kaleidoscope retailer?

Rachel: [laughs] Um, our Nature Company was right next to the Wicks and Sticks, which was a candle store.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And so they really kind of, like— they cornered the market right there. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Like, you could get in and get out real easy if there was a particular audience you had in mind.

Griffin: We had a dope corner that was, like, uh, Sears, and then... a shop that I'll name later, and then, like, a fancy jewelry store. And the shop that was in between them was called Excalibur.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And all they sold was pewter fantasy statues.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: And swords. It was so sick! I went in there every time I went to the mall. Never bought anything ever, but I was like, "Look at all these wizards!"

Rachel: [laughs] This is one of those moments where I think of, like, if I had known the Griffin of yesteryear...

Griffin: You would've— you would've gone wild for him.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Borders, too. I mean, Borders was like, you gotta kick it at Borders.

Rachel: Yeah, see, we didn't have... we had, like, a B. Dalton, I think.

Griffin: I thought you worked at a cafe— a Borders cafe at some point.

Rachel: I worked at a Barnes and Noble, but it wasn't attached to a mall.

Griffin: Oh, okay.

Rachel: Uh, and the other— the other place I was gonna talk about you and I discussed recently, which was the, uh, Gloria Jean's Coffee Beans.

Griffin: Did we talk about this recently?

Rachel: Well, we were talking about chocolate covered espresso beans.

Griffin: Oh, right.

Rachel: And how that was a big thing.

Griffin: For some reason.

Rachel: And Gloria Jean's, before Starbucks, I feel like, really blew up, was the place where you could go get, like, an icy mocha drink with whipped cream on top?

Griffin: Ooh, yikes.

Rachel: Uh, and some chocolate covered espresso beans.

Griffin: Stop it.

Rachel: And just— just bounce around the mall for a while.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It was great.

Griffin: It makes me sad. I mean, I will never have a place like that again, I suppose. Uh, outside of, like, I don't know, Disney World? Where I just go and I'm like, "Everything's here that I need!"

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Uh... but it also— I don't know that that fills the same void for, like, younger— younger people than us. I don't know! I mean, I see lots of younger people at the mall but, like...

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Are y'all— are y'all— do y'all live here today? 'Cause that's how it should be, I feel like.

Rachel: I just— here is— here is the thing. Here is what I think makes the mall kind of a wonderful date.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I mean, there's lots of walking around.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: It's nice to have a place to walk around.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Um, you know, and you can kind of— you do a little flirting. Like, "Ooh, I'd like to see you in that... sweater." Or, like—

Griffin: Oh, that was g— oh, babe, that got me real hot under the collar!

Rachel: [laughs] Or, like, "Oh, let's— let's go get a pretzel we can share."

Griffin: "I'd like to Gad *your* Zooks."

Rachel: [laughs] "Let's set on this bench by a fountain."

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: You know? It's like a [laughs quietly] trip to Europe.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: I don't know! I don't know. You learn a lot about a person at a mall, I guess.

Griffin: You do.

Rachel: Like, if I had gone on a date with you and you had wanted to go in the wizard store I would've been like, "Okay, now I know something about Griffin."

Griffin: No, you would've fuckin' I—[quietly] I...

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: He's got the headphones on. You would've loved the wizard store. It was so wild! I really hope it's still there.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I never saw anyone else in there!

Rachel: [laughs] So it's probably not still there, honey.

Griffin: But it was there for, you know, ten years or whatever when I was at my prime mall-goin' age.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Everyone was wild for that wizard store.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Anyway, anything else we want— how should we close this out? I will say that... I loved— I very— for a long time, deeply associated Christmas with the mall.

Rachel: Yeah. I mean, that was part of the reason I wanted to go today, honestly.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: We are, like, looking for ways to siphon off Christmas cheer right now.

Griffin: We, uh— we were gonna go to Huntington and spend Christmas with the family, but we, uh... due to the... omega virus, we have— we canceled those plans last week, which was very, very, very sad for us.

Rachel: Yeah. And so we hadn't really set up a plan for, like, getting in the spirit in our— in our local area. And then we were just like, "Okay. What is available to us, still, now that we are a few days out?"

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: That's when I was like, "Oh, a shopping mall!"

Griffin: Yeah! And also, you know, they had Santa, kids waiting to sit on Santa Claus.

Rachel: Yeah, Claus'll be there. We'll have some trees.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Some music playing over the speaker.

Griffin: Uh-huh. Great American Cookie company probably has some things that look like Christmas trees.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Um...

Rachel: I guess, um— and you talked a little bit about this. I guess... kind of, like, if you were to plan out— like, if you could go to any mall store through time in, like, a little visit, just like a trip. Like, let's say I'm 14. I'm going to the mall.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: What's, like, my best mall day ever?

Griffin: I've described it, I feel like. I described it earlier.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Two different video game stores. Candy. Movie.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Two different meals of mall Chinese food.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I think for me, a lot of clearance racks, right? Like, hitting up the Limited Too.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Hitting up Express, you know? Hitting—

Griffin: I'm so glad to hear you talk about this, 'cause I never... bought anything that wasn't on a clearance rack at—

Rachel: Yeah, yeah! I think it was like, I recognized that these were the clothes that people would wear that were, like, popular and attractive. But I couldn't, like, really buy into it, or invest into the look. But if I could find a skirt that was half price... [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: I could justify it. And, yeah. Gloria Jean's and then, you know, a slice of pizza. We used to like to go into the department stores and kind of... kind of wreak a little—

Griffin: Goof around, yeah.

Rachel: —wreak a little havoc, you know?

Griffin: I'm sure the employees who are making \$7 an hour—

Rachel: [simultaneously] Like, you know those—[quietly] I know, I know.

Griffin: —really appreciated that.

Rachel: I felt really bad about it in retrospect. But you know those tables where they would spread the ties out in, like, a perfect, like, pattern all of the way around in a circle? I'd like to go...

Griffin: Oh, cool, cool, Rachel!

Rachel: ...ruffle those up.

Griffin: Cool, teen Rachel!

Rachel: [through laughter] I know. It was terrible.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: "[sarcastically] I would go over to, like, a display case with all these different perfumes on it and just kick it to feel something."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: I never did anything like that, but that's only because Justin worked at pretty much every store at the mall, and so I sympathized with literally everyone who had to, uh— had to do that.

That was sweet, though, when my man worked at Toys R' Us.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: Got those— the friends and family discount.

Rachel: That was always a great— a great spot. Another place we had— sorry. I'm just really— I'm traveling right now, through time.

Griffin: No, take a— let's go!

Rachel: Oh, God. Was it called Splashers?

Griffin: [incredulously] Splashers?!

[pause]

Rachel: It was like— it was when I was in middle school, and you were looking for a place where you could get jeans with a patch on them. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: And it was called Splashers?!

Rachel: I wanna say it was called Splashers.

Griffin: Was it Dan Flashes?

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: This— these jeans have the most complicated—

Rachel: [simultaneously] Somebody will correct me on this.

Griffin: —designs on 'em.

Rachel: [laughs] But it was like— there were swimsuits, and there were jean shorts that had little smiley face patches on them.

Griffin: Oh, God, yes!

Rachel: And you could get, like, the John Lennon sunglasses and, like, a bucket hat. It was like everything... I think Splashers was the name of the tanning place in my college town.

Griffin: [high-pitched laughter]

Rachel: Now that I've said— I think it was called Splash. I think it was just Splash—

Griffin: Splashers.

Rachel: —singular. Not— not one who splashes.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: I think it was just Splash. Anyway, it felt like— it felt like a— like a trip down to, like, a— like, a hip college neighborhood.

Griffin: Yeah, sure. For somebody who had no idea what—

Rachel: Yeah, uh-huh!

Griffin: —a hip college neighborhood looked and sounded like.

Rachel: Exactly. Anyway, so that— yeah, that's my— that's my mall trip right there.

Griffin: I'm glad we talked— I'm glad we discussed this.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: I like thinking about... the mall, I guess, in particular. What it represents.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Which is to say, a simpler time.

Rachel: Mm-hmm.

Griffin: Where you could buy things. Or mess up a tie display.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And not feel anything... any guilt or anything. Man, Henry is really kicking those blinds now, isn't he?

Rachel: Yeah... [sighs]

Griffin: I think we're losing him. So maybe we should lose the audience too.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Hey, everyone. Thank you for listening. I know it's a weird one, and I know we sound like, um... two people on their last— on their last legs, but that's only because we've been sick all month.

Rachel: Well, and another reason that I wanted to record is I wanted to remind folks, if you haven't bought tickets yet for the January 7th *Wonderful!* virtual live performance, please do that.

Griffin: Yeah. Go to bit.ly/wonderfulabc2021.

Rachel: Yeah, tickets are \$5, or more if you're able to give more. And we will have something remarkable planned, no doubt.

Griffin: Yeah. And all those ticket sales go to benefit the Austin Bat Cave.

Rachel: Yeah, which is a creative writing program for youth here in Austin. Uh, and they do really good stuff.

Griffin: They do. Uh, thank you to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, "Money Won't Pay." You can find a link to that in the episode description. And... we got merch, over at mcelroymerch.com. And... that's it, y'all! Have a— have a happy— happy rest of your year. We'll be off next week. We'll talk to you in 2022. Um... and— and we really appreciate all of y'all. And, uh, even during a year like the year we've had, love— love— love doing this show.

Rachel: Yeah! It means a lot to us to be able to do this show, and to have so many people that like it.

Griffin: Yeah. So, um, don't stop liking it. [laughs quietly] And... the... end.

Rachel: [laughs quietly] Ho, ho, ho!

Griffin: There he goes.

Rachel: He's... we gotta— go to bed, 'cause he's here. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Is that— that would be dope. It's 3: 49 PM. I would love to— "Sorry, son. We all gotta go to bed right now. Santa Claus is on the roof, and he's waiting." If Santa Claus tried to climb on our roof, he would die.

Rachel: Yes, a dangerous roof. [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Oh. Before we go, maybe— do you wanna open this present I got you?

Rachel: Oh, sure!

[package crinkling]

Griffin: What do you think, babe? Tell everybody what it is.

[clicking]

Rachel: Ooh, it's vitamins! [laughs quietly]

Griffin: Actually, those are my, uh, anti-depressants.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: But I promise you, you take those and you're gonna have a sky-high Christmas, man.

Rachel: [laughs]

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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[music plays]

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[lion roar]

[music and ad end]